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**Léonce de Saint-Martin : Organist and Composer**

**A study of his life and music**

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

**Doctor of Musical Arts**

at

**The University of Waikato**

by

**Philip Andrew Smith**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
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## **Abstract**

This study examines the life and work of the largely forgotten organist Léonce de Saint-Martin and the role he played in the life of Notre-Dame Cathedral Paris.

The Study consists of two parts:

### **A) Performance**

The performance part consisted of four performances in addition to the final recital. These were related to both the topic and the requirements of the University of Waikato.

1. Liturgical Improvisations on "The Stations of the Cross."
2. Organ Concerto in G minor - Francis Poulenc
3. Requiem – Maurice Duruflé
4. Solo Recital - St. Peter's Cathedral Hamilton.
5. Final recital - Holy Trinity Cathedral Auckland.

### **B) Thesis**

The thesis examines the development of the French organ in relation to the organ of Notre-Dame de Paris from 1198 to 1954. In addition, the life and work of the main protagonists Louis Vierne and Marcel Dupré are examined to put the role of Saint-Martin in context. The bulk of the work places the career of Saint-Martin into a fresh context, and examines his compositional and performance output purely on its musical merit, from a position of both chronological and geographical distance.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Rachael Griffiths-Hughes and Professor Dr Martin Lodge for all their guidance and encouragement given to me during the period of my research. Also, to Timothy Noon, now Director of Music at Exeter Cathedral for his expert organ tuition and support during his time at Holy Trinity Cathedral Auckland.

To John Pryer whose knowledge and love of all things French goes back to the early 1960's when he visited Notre-Dame in the pre-Vatican II days; my grateful thanks go him for introducing me to Léonce de Saint-Martin, French organ music, French culture and those liturgical traditions.

Two very important people in France must also be thanked, namely Jean Guérard (a pupil of the Maître) and to Marie-Christine Steimitz whom I had the privilege and pleasure to meet in Paris in January 2014. Les Amis de Léonce de Saint-Martin have been affirming in their support for the project from day one and have conferred on me membership of honour.

Thanks also go to Yves Berge, Organiste Titulaire Cathédrale Saint-Joseph de Nouméa and Roger Boisne suppliant, for their friendship and for giving me performance opportunities in beautiful New Caledonia; to Nathaniel Hood for introducing me to them and the wonderful Mutin/Cavaillé-Coll organ in the cathedral.

Recognition is also due to Dr Lynette Wrigley-Brown for her translation of French texts. To Stephen Vincent organist of St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, Remuera for acting as page turner for several performances, as well as his ongoing support and friendship. To Hilary Monteith for all her support, friendship and proof reading.

Sincere thanks go to Garry Schlöegl for his good humour, continuous support and for living with Léonce de Saint-Martin over the last 1200 days, during breakfast, lunch, dinner and everything else in between. To my cat Albert (2003-2018) who



sat with me while I practised the organ and typed, and died the day before my oral examination. Thank you, Albert.

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## Introduction

"Léonce de Saint-Martin? Why are you researching him? He was no good." And on showing this Parisian organist copies of Saint-Martin's music and asking if he played any I was firmly told with a look of almost incredulity, after showing a score of *Symphonie Mariale*, "How was this possible, as he was no good?"

This was not the most auspicious start to my research on a freezing cold January day in the church of Saint Eustache, Paris, back in 2014. Whatever people's opinions of this particular organist now or in the last 80 years, Saint-Martin was part of a tradition which can be traced back to the sixteenth century and continues in the twenty-first. It is appropriate here to spend a few pages outlining that tradition.

The "founding father" of the "French Organ School" Jehan Titelouze was born between 1562 and 1563 in St Omer, then in the Spanish Netherlands, but now in north-eastern France. Little is known of his early life but he had become a priest by 1585, the same year he was appointed organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral St Omer, where he had previously been substitute.

The appointment was short-lived, as in the same year Titelouze moved to Rouen, then a major centre for organ development. Regarded highly as a priest, he was made a canon of the cathedral in 1610. His liturgical and musical skills seem to have gone hand in hand with those of an organ consultant and builder.

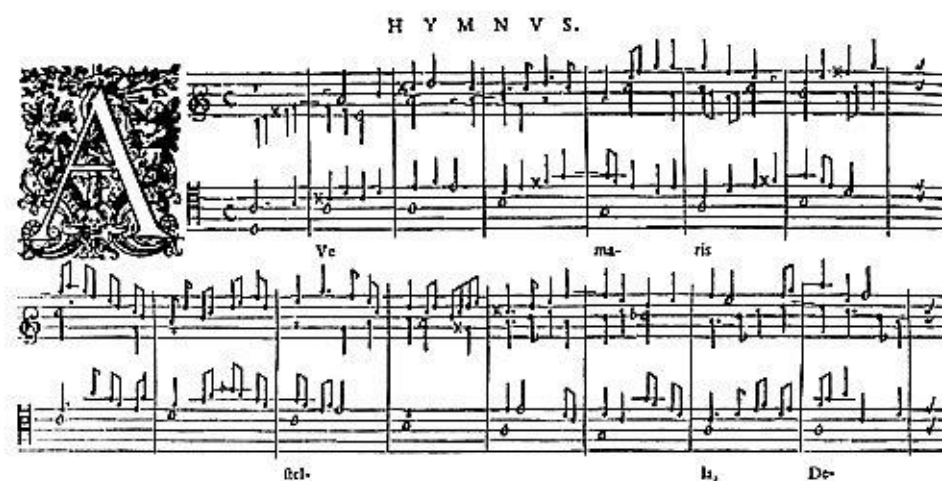
Titelouze's two publications of organ music of 1623 *Hymnes d'Eglise pour toucher sur l'orgue, avec les fugues et recherches sur leur plain-chant* and *Magnificat ou cantique de la Vierge, pour toucher sur l'orgue suivant les huit tons de l'Eglise*, are the earliest attributed publications of French organ music.

These works however are predated some 303 years in England by the *Robertsbridge Codex*, the earliest keyboard music in existence which is believed to date from between c1320 and c1360.<sup>1</sup>

Fenner Douglass (1969/1995 p.17) quotes Almonte C. Howell's introduction to five French organ masses, suggesting that as "only one copy of Attaignant<sup>2</sup> publications, 1531, has survived, possibly other examples of 16th century compositions (masses) have been lost."

Titelouze's two collections consist of versets for organ which are intended to alternate with the sung plainchant. In the preface, the composer discusses the recent advances made in organ construction, performing practice and the role of his music within the liturgy itself.

The music is written on two staves, the composer giving no indication as to the registration that is to be used, unlike the later French organist- composers.



Hymnes de l'Eglise Ballad 1624

([www.editions-classique.com/en/produit\\_classique](http://www.editions-classique.com/en/produit_classique)

[sheet\\_music\\_facsimile\\_Titelouze\\_church\\_hymns\\_to\\_be\\_played\\_on\\_the\\_0-1-3-932.php](http://sheet_music_facsimile_Titelouze_church_hymns_to_be_played_on_the_0-1-3-932.php))

<sup>1</sup> The codex is an incomplete two leaf manuscript from the Abbey of Robertsbridge, Sussex which was founded 1176 and dissolved in 1538. It contains six pieces; three in the form of an *estampie* and three transcriptions of motets. All are written in the form of an old German Keyboard tablature, but are believed to be French in origin.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Attaignant c.1494-1551/2 was a French music publisher based in Paris.

The style of the music can be considered austere, firmly rooted in the tradition of the choral music of the Franco/Flemish masters of the Renaissance, akin to vocal music played on the organ rather than to that developed by later generations.

Following the death of Titelouze in 1633, there was a unique flourishing of French organ music between the years 1660 and 1740. Fenner Douglas states (1969/1995 p.61) “without the strong guidance of these individuals, the stylistic course of organ building and organ music in France would have been undoubtedly retarded.”

All came to an abrupt end with the French Revolution. It was over 40 years before a new French organ school began to develop through the influence of the French organ builder Aristide Cavaillé - Coll (1811-1899). He was to encourage organists to seek tuition in Belgium from Jacques- Nicolas Lemmens, (1823-1881) who, through his teacher Adolphe Hesse (1809-1863), could trace his musical lineage via Johann Christian Rinck (1770-1846) and one of Bach's last students Johann Christian Kittel (1732-1809) back to J.S. Bach (1685-1750) himself.

It was through the influence of Lemmens that Cavaillé-Coll began to build his instruments with manual keyboards of 56 notes and pedal keyboards of 30 notes, this was to enable the performance of the music of Bach. The pedal board of the pre-revolutionary French organ, being merely designed for playing the long notes of a plainsong melody.

Pupils who went to study in Belgium with Lemmens include Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911) and Charles-Marie Widor, (1844-1937). It was through the influence of these and other organists that a new French school of organists and organ playing began.

These organist-composers were to hold senior positions at the Paris Conservatoire and as pedagogues were to teach the next generation of organists: this lineage has been passed down to this day in almost an apostolic succession.

The appointment process for organists in France has often involved a competition in which the candidate has to play before a jury of senior organists and other musicians. When Titelouze was appointed to Rouen Cathedral he was the



successful candidate because of his improvisational skills on the instrument. Improvisation has been an important part of the French tradition to this day, both liturgically and in many cases in the concert environment.

This tradition of the holder of the post being determined by a competition has not always been maintained over the years. For example, both Charles-Marie Widor and Marcel Dupré became organists of Saint-Sulpice without competition, and likewise Saint-Martin and Pierre Cochereau were both appointed to Notre-Dame in a similar manner. In the case of Saint-Martin's appointment in 1937, the Chapter of the Cathedral stated that they had heard him play at the cathedral since 1924. The decision of the clergy, though they were acting in good faith, has appeared to play an overwhelming role in the way that Saint-Martin has been portrayed as an organist and composer for over 80 years.

It is the intention of this study to revisit the performance and compositional reputation of Saint-Martin through the performance and analysis of his music, by examining contemporary accounts of his life in the organ lofts of Paris and through reviews of his performances. His relationships with other composer-organists of early twentieth-century France will also be re-examined, and a fresh and hopefully unbiased reassessment of his place in the French Symphonic tradition will be presented.

This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the technical development of the organ of Notre-Dame de Paris from 1198-1954, which encompasses the organ from the first instrument in the building until the death of Saint-Martin. Chapter 2 examines the significant influence and contribution of Saint-Martin's teacher and mentor Louis Vierne. Further, the relationship between Vierne and Saint-Martin's contemporary and another Vierne student, Marcel Dupré, is documented to provide context for the deterioration of the relationship between Saint-Martin and Vierne. A full biographical study of Saint-Martin, his career, his appointment as Titulaire of Notre-Dame, and the ultimate destruction of his reputation are covered in detail in Chapter 3. Three of Saint-Martin's organ works are analysed in Chapter 4. A CD recording of the final of my five supporting recitals accompanies this document.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Organs of Notre-Dame de Paris**

#### **1.1 The Grand Orgue Notre-Dame de Paris 1198-1954**

The first recorded reference to an organ in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris is to be found in the “ceremonial” for the Feast of the Circumcision, (1 January) 1198, during the episcopate of Edudes de Sulley, Bishop of Paris 1198-1208.

Nothing is known about this instrument, but it is presumed that it would have been a small, portable Positif organ situated in the Quire of the Cathedral. It may have been used not only for accompaniment of voices but also for the performance of organ compositions, improvised or otherwise, during the various offices of the church. The first reference to a static organ appears in the Cathedral records dated 1357. (Smith 1999 p.345)

In 1334 the first recorded organist of the Cathedral, Jean de Bruges, was appointed; it is not known when his tenure ended. Renaud de Reims was appointed organist in 1392, and shortly after his appointment he asked for the organ to be repaired.

On the 26 July 1394 King Charles VI (1368-1422) gave two hundred francs enabling this work to be carried out. This organ was suspended on one side of the nave in a “swallow’s nest” loft, at triforium level, similar to that to be found at Notre-Dame de Strasbourg, the casework of which dates from between 1385 and 1491.



The Organ Strasbourg Cathedral

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/686683228@No8/6429563165/>.)

In 1401 the organ builder Frédéric Schambantz provided a new instrument, the cost being borne by Jean, Duc de Berry (1340-1416). This organ was placed in a tribune at the west end of the Cathedral, “The tribune having previously been used for the performance of miracle plays.” (Beale p.286)

The organ was completed on 25 October 1403 and consisted of one manual with a compass of 46 notes, B1-B4 and played a “blockwerk” with eight pipes sounding for each note in the bass and probably 15 to 18 in the treble. A pedal board allowing for the playing of bass notes consisted of merely pull-downs, with no independent pipes.

Until 1425 the Cathedral possessed two organs, the 1394 organ and that built in 1403. In this year the organ in the "swallow's nest" was sold for the 800 pounds of

tin that it contained within its 600 pipes. The Cathedral was to function with a single instrument for over 400 years.

Restorations and revoicing took place at regular intervals, 1458, 1473 and 1565. In 1609 the organ builder Valéran de Héman (1584-1641), undertook major work and enlargement. It was during this work that the Positif division was added; this had independent stops enabling the player to choose individual tone colours.

The Grand Orgue remained, as before, a massive "Blockwerk" some of whose pipes were in the façade, the largest of which was 18ft in height. Eleven years later in 1620 Valéran enlarged the organ to three manuals.

The appointment of Charles Racquet<sup>3</sup> (1598-1664) as organist in 1618 brought about further work on the Cathedral organ, which was carried out by the organ-builder Pierre Thierry (1604-1665), who further enhanced the tonal scheme of the organ.

In 1672 the organ was again rebuilt and enlarged, this time by the organ builder Jacques Carouge. Carouge added a fourth manual, a three-octave Echo division of six stops. In addition, the Pédale gained its own independent stops for the first time, namely 12ft Flûte, 6ft Flûte and Trompette stops at 12ft and 6ft respectively.

Nineteen years later in 1691, Alexandre Thierry and Hippolyte Ducastel carried out further enlargements which included the addition of a 16' Bombarde to the Pédale. In 1733 the organ was enlarged to a 44-speaking stop five-manual instrument by François Thierry, whose work included the provision of the main case we see today (Sumner p.6).

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<sup>3</sup> A composer and organist whose sole surviving works are *12 versets de psaume en duo* and a *Fantaisie*. This work "Written on a large scale: a single theme is treated contrapuntally over some 100 bars, culminating in brilliant passage-work over dominant and tonic pedals." Higginbottom p.528 Grove 15.)

### **1788 François-Henri Clicquot (1732-1790)**

Clicquot's rebuild, began in 1783 and was completed in 1788, this work not only increased the size of the organ but can be seen as the "final flowering of the French classical organ" (Sadie p.113) before all was swept away by the Revolution.

The Positif was provided with a new case in the architectural style of the Louis XVI period, and the existing main case was extended. New pipework was provided for all the stops in the Positif apart from the basses of the Bourdon and the Cornet, which were retained from the previous instrument. The existing reeds were restored, and the Bombarde manual was enhanced by the addition of a Trompette de Bombarde 8'. A new wind system allowed for the provision of separate bellows to the Positif, Pédale and Grand-Orgue. In addition, the console was supplied with new keyboards.

#### **Positif (I)**

16 Bourdon

8 Montre

8 Flûte à Cheminée

8 Dessus de Flûte

8 Bourdon

4 Prestant

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nazard

2 Quarte

1 $\frac{3}{5}$  Tierce

VII Plein Jeu

V Dessus de Cornet

8 Trompette

8 Cromorne

8 Dessus de Hautbois

4 Clairon

**Grand Orgue (II)**

16 Flûte (ex 32' Montre)

16 Montre

16 Bourdon

8 Montre

8 Flûte

8 Dessus de Flûte

8 Bourdon

4 Prestant

3½ Grande Tierce

2⅔ Nazard

2 Quarte

1⅜ Tierce

V Grande Cornet

V Grande Fourniture

IV Fourniture

III Cymbale

8 Grande Trompette

8 Trompette

4 Clairon

8 Voix Humaine

Tremblant Fort

Tremblant Doux

**Bombarde (III)**

16 Bombarde

8 Trompette de Bombarde

**Récit (IV) – 27 notes**

V Cornet de Récit

8 Trompette de Récit

**Echo (V)**

8 Flûte  
 8 Bourdon  
 8 Trompette  
 4 Clairon

**Pédale**

16 Flûte  
 8 Flûte  
 5½ Grande Nazard  
 4 Flûte  
 24 Bombarde  
 12 Trompette  
 6 Clairon

With the outbreak of the French Revolution Notre-Dame, like all religious institutions, faced a period of great uncertainty. The abolition of the church as an institution saw the Cathedral converted to a *Temple of Reason* and then into a store room. The organ suffered from neglect whilst the organ case was shorn of its "fleur-de-lys" the symbol of the deposed Bourbon dynasty. The organ was used from time to time during this period at various ceremonies celebrating the "Goddess of Reason."

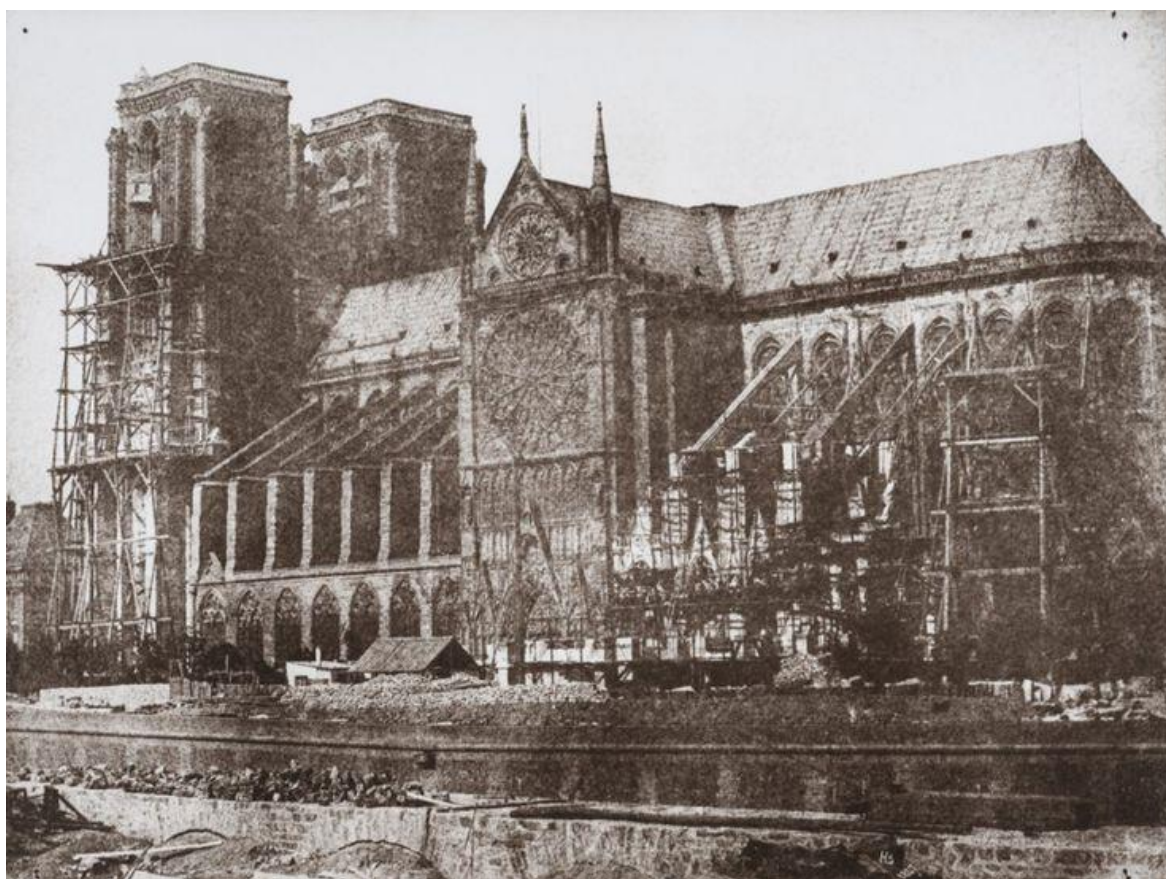
A visit from the Temporary Arts Commission on 22 Thermidor in year III (9 August 1795) placed the organ in the care of Citizen Gilbert, these two events no doubt helping to ensure the instrument's survival.

Following the signing of the "Concordat" between Napoléon Bonaparte (1769-1821) and Pope Pius VII (1742-1823) on 16 July 1802, Notre-Dame returned to being a Roman Catholic cathedral.

Antoine Desprez (b.c.1730) was appointed Titulaire and, as such may have played at the coronation of Napoléon as Emperor on Advent Sunday, 2 December 1804. The organ was restored in 1812 by Pierre François Dallery, Clicquot's

successor, who revoiced some of the pipe-work, namely the basses of certain stops. In 1833 Louis-Paul Dallery rebuilt the organ. The manual compass was enlarged to 60 notes but omitting the first C#. Dallery moved away from the classical scheme of Clicquot; the Grand-Orgue had 19 ranks of mixtures removed. The Bombarde manual gained a 4' Clairon and the Récit and Echo were combined as one larger Récit.

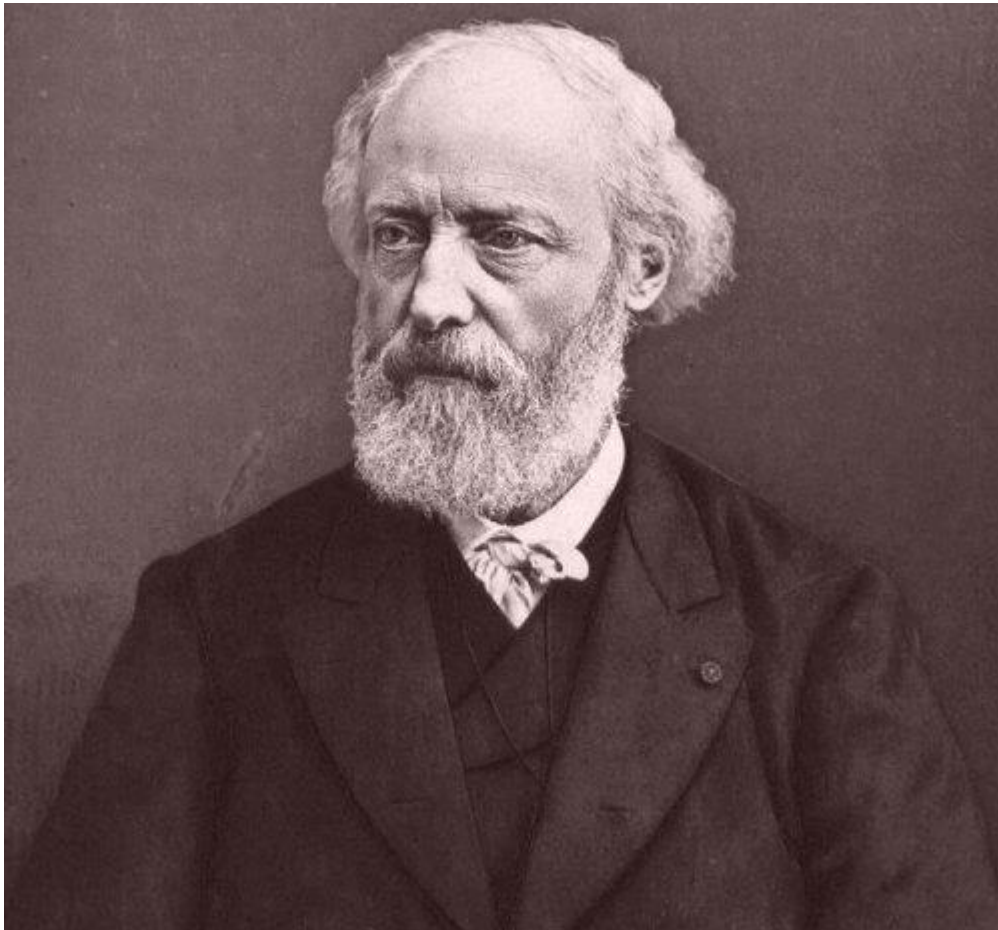
In 1840 a great restoration of Notre-Dame was commenced, and by 1847 the organ had become unplayable due to this work. The removal of the west rose window for repair certainly did not improve matters.



Notre-Dame during restoration

(<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/Inglis0356/notre-dame-paris-albumen-and/>)





Viollet-le-Duc

(<https://bonjourparis.com/history/eugene-viollet-le-duc-the-visionary-behind-notre-dames.restoration/>)

### **The Cavaillé-Coll Organ 1860-1954**

Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811-1899) presented his proposals to the Cathedral architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, (1814-1879) in March 1860. The proposed new instrument was to be an organ of four manuals and pedals incorporating as much of the existing instrument as possible, along with double casework; the budget was 115,547,50 francs.

The organ was to contain 64 speaking stops, of which 22 were from the previous instruments, including Clicquot's Voix Humaine, in a ten-stop Récit. New wind chests, bellows, Barker lever action and Pédale de combinaison were to be provided. The Positif organ pipework was to be placed behind the player and the key compass of the instrument was Cavaillé-Coll's now standard 56 notes to the

manuals and 30 notes to the pedals. Louis-Paul Dallery, who had rebuilt the organ in 1833, expressed a desire to be involved with Cavaillé-Coll to ensure the preservation of his own and Clicquot's work in the new organ.

However, Cavaillé-Coll was in his ascendancy; this was a journey that had not stopped since he built the organ for the Basilica of Saint Denis in 1841. At the time the proposals were submitted for Notre-Dame he was in the process of finishing the monumental 100-stop five-manual organ for the Parisian church of Saint-Sulpice, the largest organ in France. Furthermore, the ministry had been sent a petition backing Cavaillé-Coll's proposal signed by leading musicians, including Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) and Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868); it was the latter composer who had encouraged Cavaillé-Coll's move to Paris in 1833. Dallery's offer was not acted upon.

Cavaillé-Coll was selected on 23 December 1862 and work began on the 15 July 1863, with the intention that it was to be completed two years later. An organ workshop was set up in the south tower and the triforia of the cathedral.

When Cavaillé-Coll removed the organ to begin work, Viollet-le-Duc noticed a severe clash stylistically with the casework, which dated from the periods of Louis XIII to Louis XVI. He felt that the Louis XVI Positif case was at odds with his ideals in the restoration of a gothic Cathedral. From the nave the Positif case also obstructed the great west rose window, so the Positif case was removed (it is still in storage in the Cathedral) and the tribune or organ loft was tripled in size and fronted with a new wooden balustrade that is still in place today.

It was Cavaillé-Coll's wish to place the organ at a lower level in an effort to help project the sound of the organ into the vast nave of Notre-Dame, but this request was denied by the architect (Sumner p.6), and so Cavaillé-Coll had to use his considerable skill to build an instrument that would be able to achieve this. Twenty-one stops from the former organ were retained in this new five-manual 86 speaking stop organ.

Cavaillé-Coll re-planned the layout of the instrument, which was now to occupy just the main casework. The Pédale was divided into two sections and placed along the west wall. The Grand-Orgue was placed in the centre of the case with the Récit behind; this allowed for the Positif and Bombarde to be divided either side. Manual I, the Grand-Chœur, was placed at the top of the instrument; here Cavaillé-Coll was able to use the vault of the Cathedral as a sounding board to help project the tonal resources of this department into the nave.

### **Cavaillé-Coll 1868**

#### **Grand-Chœur (I)**

##### *Jeux de Fonds:*

8 Principal

8 Bourdon

4 Prestant

2  $\frac{2}{3}$  Quinte

2 Doublette

1  $\frac{3}{5}$  Tierce

1  $\frac{1}{3}$  Larigot

11/7 Septième

1 Piccolo

##### *Jeux de Combinaison:*

16 Tuba Magna

8 Trompette

4 Clairon

#### **Grand-Orgue (II)**

##### *Jeux de Fonds:*

16 Violon-Basse

16 Bourdon

8 Montre

8 Viole de Gambe

8 Flûte Harmonique

8 Bourdon

4 Prestant

*Jeux de Combinaison*

4 Octave

2 Doublette

II-V Fourniture Harmonique

II-V Cymbale Harmonique

16 Basson

8 Basson

4 Clairon

### **Bombarde (III)**

*Jeux de Fonds:*

16 Principal-basse

16 Soubasse

8 Principal

8 Flûte Harmonique

5 $\frac{1}{3}$  Grosse Quinte

4 Octave

*Jeux de Combinaison:*

3 $\frac{1}{5}$  Grosse Tierce

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Quinte

22/7 Septième

2 Doublette

II-V Grand Cornet

16 Bombarde

8 Trompette

4 Clairon

### **Positif (IV)**

*Jeux de Fonds:*

16 Montre

16 Bourdon

8 Salicional

8 Unda Maris

8 Flûte Harmonique

8 Bourdon

4 Prestant

*Jeux de Combinaison:*

4 Flûte Douce

2 Doublette

1 Piccolo

III-VI Plein Jeu Harmonique

16 Clarinette-Basse

8 Cromorne

4 Clarinette Aiguë

### **Récit Expressif (V)**

*Jeux de Fonds:*

16 Quintaton

8 Quintaton

8 Viole de Gambe

8 Voix Céleste

4 Dulciane

8 Basson et Hautbois

8 Clarinette

8 Voix Humaine

*Jeux de Combinaison:*

8 Flûte Traversière

4 Flûte Octaviane

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nasard

2 Octavin

III-V Cornet Harmonique

16 Bombarde

8 Trompette

4 Clairon

**Pédale***Jeux de Fonds:*

32 Principal-basse

16 Contre-basse

16 Soubasse

10 $\frac{2}{3}$  Grosse Quinte

8 Basse ou Flûte

8 Violoncelle

6 $\frac{2}{5}$  Grosse Tierce

4 Octave ou Flûte

*Jeux de Combinaison:*5 $\frac{1}{3}$  Quinte

44/7 Septième

32 Contre Bombarde

16 Bombarde

16 Basson

8 Trompette

8 Basson

4 Clairon

**Pédales de Combinaison***Left to Right*

1. Effets d'Orage
2. Tirasse Grand-Choeur
3. Tirasse Grand-Orgue
4. Anches Pédale

*Octaves Graves des Claviers*

5. Grand-Choeur
6. Grand-Orgue
7. Bombarde
8. Positif
9. Récit

*Appels des Jeux de Combinaison*

- 10. Grand-Choeur
- 11. Grand-Orgue
- 12. Bombarde
- 13. Positif
- 14. Récit
- 15. Grande Pédale Collective des Jeux de Combinaison

*Accouplements au Clavier*

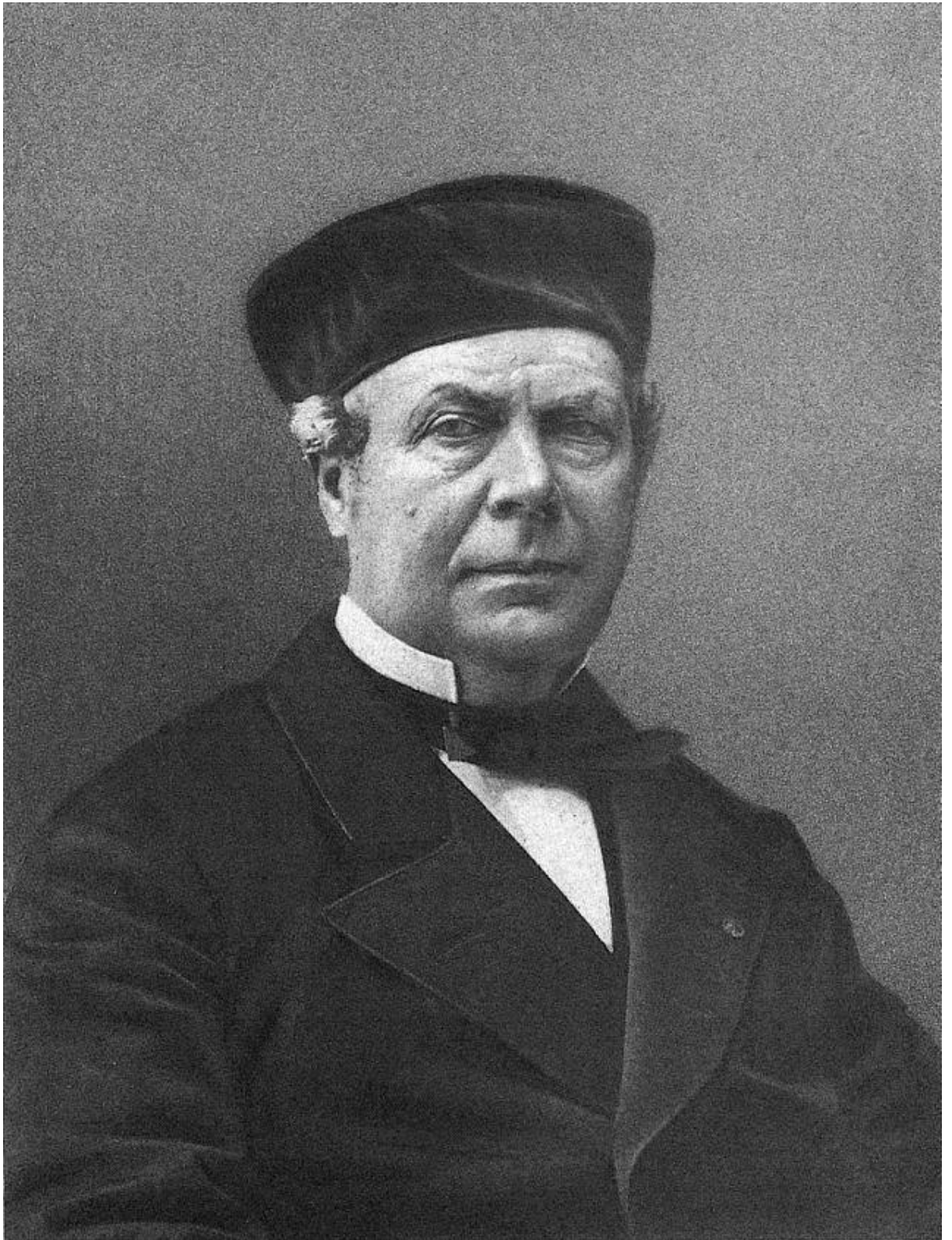
- 16. Grand-Choeur
- 17. Grand-Orgue
- 18. Bombarde
- 19. Positif
- 20. Récit
- 21. Trémolo du Récit
- 22. Expression du Récit

**Registres de Combinaison**

*First terrace of stops, duplicated left & right*

- 1. Pédale
- 2. Grand-Choeur
- 3. Grand-Orgue
- 4. Bombarde
- 5. Positif
- 6. Récit
- 7. Sonnette

Manual compass CC-G - 56 notes, Pedal compass CCC-F -30 notes.



Aristide Cavaillé-Coll

([https:// en wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristide\\_Cavaillé-Coll](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristide_Cavaillé-Coll))





The Cavaillé-Coll console ([www.josephbertolozzicom/notre-dame-Paris-organ-case-by-cavaille-coll-11-7-10-2/](http://www.josephbertolozzicom/notre-dame-Paris-organ-case-by-cavaille-coll-11-7-10-2/))

The new console was the second of the “amphitheatre” type consoles, the first being Saint-Sulpice and the final one in 1898 for the organ now in the Basilique du Sacré-Cœur, Montmartre, Paris. This was formerly the house organ of Albert, the Baron de L’Espée (1852-1918), Château Ilbarritz, Biarritz, which was installed in the Basilica in 1919 by Charles Mutin (1861-1931)

These consoles allowed the drawstops to be arranged in a spacious semicircle around the player on five levels but at the same time the console was kept low. It was therefore not only elegant but it was also much more manageable. This design, however did mean that the stop action could not be mechanical and as at Saint-Sulpice, Cavaillé-Coll used pneumatic motors for the slider action to the

soundboards. This survives to this day at Saint-Sulpice and Sacré-Coeur. Saint-Sulpice is the only five-manual to remain with its original action. Cavaillé-Coll's ingenuity is amazing, with its original Barker action, drawstop and slider actions involving almost 400 pneumatic motors, each with their own winding and the vast number of trackers for the five-manual and pedal division plus all the actions for *Pédales de Combinaison*.

One final mechanical innovation, used at Saint-Sulpice, Notre-Dame and Biarritz (now Sacré-Coeur), is the *Registres de combinaison*. This system is a precursor of today's general pistons and allowed for more rapid stop changes. There was one stop per division, giving Notre-Dame a total of six. This device enabled pneumatic machines to admit or stop the wind to all the pneumatic stop motors for each division. The drawstops operating the *combinaison* were duplicated either side of the console.

When the stopknob was drawn, wind was allowed to enter the stop motors of that division, and any stop changes that were made took effect immediately. When the *Registre* was disengaged by pushing the stopknob in, stop changes could be made, but would only take place once the *Registre* was engaged again. This ingenious system allowed for an unparalleled ability to make rapid stop changes on such a large instrument. However, for a piece not to be interrupted it was usual to have one or two registrants to assist; this is still practiced at Saint-Sulpice where the system is still preserved.

(See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Uyc87yMlto>)

The console at Notre-Dame was situated seven feet from the front of the casework, which was considerably farther away than any other of his instruments. The result of this was that not only did the organist have a clear view down the nave, but also that the sound of the instrument was direct for the player.

Maurice Duruflé described the experience as "intoxicating" (Smith 1999 p.208) and Louis Vierne said "the player hears the sound directly and in all its power. It is a joy seldom experienced elsewhere." (Smith 1999 p.209)

The organ was first used at Christmas 1867, and between 20 and 28 February a commission of some 20 people, whose members included Hector Berlioz, Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens and the architect Viollet-Le-Duc, inspected the instrument.

On 6 March 1868 the opening recital was given by Alex Chauvet (1837-1871), Auguste Durand (1830-1909), César Franck (1822-1890), Alexandre Guilmant, Clément Loret, (1833-1909) Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), Charles-Marie Widor and Eugène Sergent (1829-1900), Organiste Titulaire.

Despite the initial success of the organ, by 1882 Viollet-le-Duc's new tribune had sagged by ten centimetres, causing problems with the Barker action. It was to be 12 years before remedial work was carried out to the organ. On 31 July 1894 the organ was reopened by Eugène Gigout, (1844-1925), Guilmant, Widor and Sergent.

It was felt by Vierne following his appointment as organist that the Récit sounded thin in comparison with other divisions. To alleviate this, in 1903 Charles Mutin, Cavaillé-Coll's successor, replaced the Récit 8' Bourdon with a large scale 8' Diapason and the 8' Clarinette with a IV Fourniture; the composition of this stop was devised by Guilmant:

C1 - 2- 1-  $\frac{2}{3}$ -  $\frac{1}{2}$

F2 - 2 -  $1\frac{1}{3}$ -1-  $\frac{2}{3}$

C2- 2-2- $1\frac{1}{3}$ -1

F3-  $2\frac{2}{3}$ -2-2- $1\frac{1}{3}$

C4- 4- $2\frac{2}{3}$ -2-2

In addition to these changes the 16' Bombarde and Trompette on the Récit lost their harmonic resonators; the voicing of these new stops was supervised by Guilmant.

A major flood occurred in 1910 when the river Seine burst into the cathedral courtyard and crypt. Not only did this destroy the cathedral heating but the water-

sodden atmosphere caused cyphers and mechanical problems. The problems were repaired by Mutin in March of 1910.

The following year, during a very hot summer, Europe was gripped by a heat wave. The already damaged windchests and bellows became unglued and there were, in addition, major problems with the Barker lever action of the instrument. Mutin again carried out temporary repairs and submitted a report for the rebuilding of the organ at a cost of 60,000 francs; the report was not acted upon, due to the cathedral's lack of money.

Following an air raid during the First World War the cathedral glass was removed for its protection, while Cavaillé-Coll's masterpiece lay open to the elements, becoming a repository for dust as well as birds and bats, both dead and alive.

In 1924, at the behest of Dupré's English patron Claude Johnson, (1864-1928) an electric blower was paid for by subscription by English organists. (The Organ, p.116, Musical Opinion, p.160)

After a successful trip to America Vierne designed a scheme to rebuild the Cathedral organ; this design, had it come to fruition, would have completely changed the character of the instrument, as many new stops and couplers were to be added. Vierne wanted the Grand Orgue and Positif to be enclosed, and all to be played from an American style console with electric action, thumb and toe pistons, octave and sub-octave couplers and crescendo pedal! Vierne also wished to increase the soundboards to 73 notes, allowing the octave couplers not to run out of notes.

Vierne's long awaited rebuild took place in 1932, but his 'far-reaching design' was rejected for a more conservative rebuild carried out by Joseph Beuchet (1904-1970) and the Association de Cavaillé-Coll.

The Pédale gained a 16' Violoncelle and 8' Bourdon; the Grand-Choeur gained a new 8' Flûte and a III Cymbale, both stops paid for by Vierne himself at a cost of 15,000 francs (presumably from moneys raised on his American tour).

The Grand-Orgue's 4' Clairon was replaced by a 4' Soprano to match the 16' and 8' Bassons. Cavaillé-Coll's mixtures on the Grand-Orgue and Positif were purged of their 32' and 16' partials and the Tierce was removed from the Cymbale; in addition, the Positif 1' Piccolo was replaced by a 2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nasard. (Sumner p.10)

Mechanically, the organ was revised with the addition of a *tirasse* Récit and the addition of a Récit to Positif coupler (this was provided by pneumatic action.) A balanced pedal to operate the box to the Récit was placed in the centre of the kneeboard, replacing the original hitch down pedal which was situated on the extreme right of the console. Other changes carried out at this time included the duplication of the six *Registres* on hitch-down pedals and the *Anches Pédale* connected to the *Tutti des Anches* pedal. The pedal that operated the Orage, (i.e. thunder pedal) became *tirasse Grand-Orgue*; likewise the former *tirasse* Grand-Choeur and Grand- Orgue became Positif and Récit to Pédale.

Finally, the order of the manuals was rearranged as follows:

- V Grand-Choeur
  - IV Solo (former Bombarde)
  - III Récit
  - II Positif
  - I Grand-Orgue
- (Smith 1999 pp.278-281)

Both Vierne and Widor presided at the opening of the rebuilt organ in June 1932, the third time that Widor had done so.

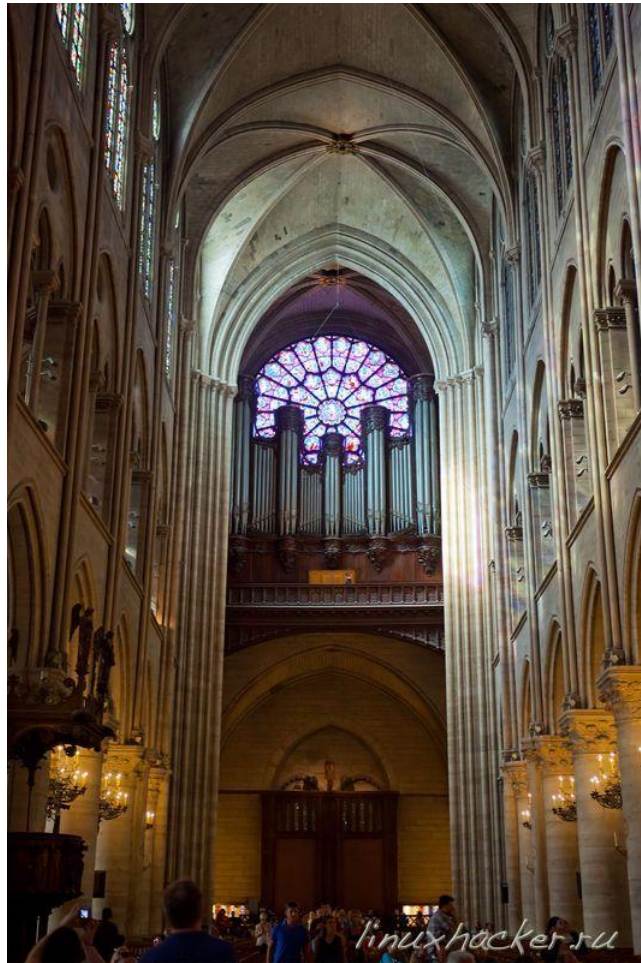
During his time as Titulaire, "Léonce de Saint-Martin oversaw general maintenance and conservation...No alterations were made, although Saint-Martin voiced significant concerns about the instrument's general state." (Hammond 2012 pp 270- 271)



Notre-Dame after restoration, a photograph taken in the 1860's by  
Édouard Baldus (1813 –1889)

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89douard\\_Baldus#/media/File:Cath%C3%A9drale\\_Notre-Dame\\_de\\_Paris,\\_east\\_facade\\_by\\_%C3%89douard\\_Baldus\\_c1860s.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89douard_Baldus#/media/File:Cath%C3%A9drale_Notre-Dame_de_Paris,_east_facade_by_%C3%89douard_Baldus_c1860s.jpg))





The Grand Orgue, Notre-Dame de Paris

([www.linuxhacker.ru/d//q=node/223](http://www.linuxhacker.ru/d//q=node/223))

## 1.2 The Orgue de Chœur

The provision of a separate organ specifically to accompany the choir did not come into vogue in France until the 1840's. The first one to be built by Cavaillé-Coll was for the Parisian church of La Madeleine in 1842.

The reasoning behind the provision of such instruments was that before the Revolution the Offices would be sung by the clergy and accompaniment was therefore not required. At Notre-Dame in 1790 there were 51 members of the Cathedral Chapter, 180 seminarians, 14 cantors and 12 children to sing the daily services.

The first Orgue de Chœur for Notre-Dame was built in 1841 by Daublaine & Callinet. This instrument was first used on 2 May 1841 for the baptism of the Prince Philippe Comte de Paris (1838-1894). It did not survive long, as by the end of 1857 Viollet-Le-Duc's great nineteenth century restoration of the Cathedral had reached the quire and the instrument was sold.

In 1863 a new organ was ordered from the organ builder Joseph Merklin (1819-1905.) The organ was placed in the third bay on the north side of the quire, the case work being designed by Viollet-Le-Duc in the gothic style, the reversed console being placed in the choir stalls.

After 27 years of daily use the organ was restored and the action converted to electro-pneumatic, with thumb pistons provided in the English fashion to aid registration in choral accompaniments. As with many early electric actions, it proved not to be successful and in 1911, Charles Mutin restored the organ, reverting to mechanical action.

Electric blowing was finally introduced to the Orgue de Chœur in 1928. By 1938 the organ was in a deplorable condition as a result of the 1914-1918 war as well as the organ builders using the organ as a quarry of parts to repair the Grand Orgue.

In 1953, the year before the death of Saint-Martin, Jean Hermann modified the wind system and provided a new blower.



## **Specification of the organ –Joseph Merklin 1890**

### **Grand Orgue**

16 Bourdon

8 Montre

8 Salicional

8 Viole di Gambe

4 Flûte Harmonique

2 Octavin

*8 Trompette Harmonique*

*4 Clairon*

### **Récit**

8 Bourdon

8 Gambe

8 Voix Céleste

*4 Flûte Octaviant*

*8 Basson-Hautbois*

*8 Clarinette*

### **Pedal**

16 Soubasse

*16 Bombarde*

Manual compass CC-F = 54 notes. Pedal compass CCC- C = 27 notes

3 pistons each to Grand Orgue and Récit. 2 General Thumb pistons- Fonds & Tutti.

Stops in italics = Jeux de combinaison



The Orgue de Chœur Notre-Dame de Paris

Casework designed Viollet-Le-Duc 1863

Chamades added 1969.

([https://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/file:choir\\_organ-of\\_Notre-Dame-de-Paris.-April-2011.jpg](https://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/file:choir_organ-of_Notre-Dame-de-Paris.-April-2011.jpg))

## Chapter 2

### Louis Vierne and Marcel Dupré

#### 2.1 Louis Vierne



Vierne pictured outside Notre-Dame

(<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/-rS5LL-Dfo/maxresdefault.jpg>)

Louis Victor-Jules Vierne was born in Poitiers on 8 October 1870, the eldest surviving of five children born to Henri Etienne Vierne (c.1828-1886) and Marie-Joséphine Gervez Vierne (c.1845-1911).

The family moved to Paris in 1873 and settled in Lille in 1875. At the age of six Vierne began his schooling at *Les Soeurs de la Sainte-Union*. In conjunction with academic work Vierne learnt the piano, being taught to read music by Braille, as a result of being born with cataracts which left his sight severely impaired. At the age of seven Vierne underwent two operations on his eyes; the result was that some sight was restored enabling him to walk unsupervised as well as being able to read large print at close range.

In October 1881 Vierne commenced study at the *Institut national des jeunes aveugles* (the National Institute for Blind Youth). From its foundation in 1784, this school was not only an academy and vocational school, but a music conservatoire. One of its most famous students, Louis Braille (1809-1852), had invented his system of dots while still a student. He later went on to be organist of Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Nicholas des Champs in Paris.

After nine years Vierne ended his studies at the institution in July 1890, obtaining first prize in organ and a prize for composition in the *Concours*. He now looked ahead to studying at the Conservatoire with César Franck, with whom he had studied privately for almost two years prior to admission.

Vierne was admitted as a pupil at the Conservatoire on 4 October 1890; recalling his first class with Franck he says, "I improvised some plainsong and a fugal exposition." (*Mes Souvenirs*, translated Smith 1999 p.47) In fact in the six hours per week allotted to organ tuition with Franck, five were spent on improvisation.

Improvisation had been the most important part of an organ students study at the conservatoire since the days of François Benoist (1794-1878), professor of organ from 1819-1869, who could count amongst his pupils Franck and Saint-Saëns.

Franck died on 10 November 1890, and on 11 December at 2.00pm, Vierne's class met the new professor of organ, Charles-Marie Widor. Widor began by saying the following:

In France we have neglected performance too much in favour of improvisation. This is not only wrong, it is nonsense... Furthermore, I do not see why organists

should be the only artists exempt from having to know the entire literature of their instrument. ... If, numerically speaking, organ literature is less abundant in masterpieces than that of the piano or of the voice, it comes immediately after; and what it lacks in quantity it makes up, perhaps in quality. I shall cite only that incomparable miracle, the organ works of Bach, the greatest musician of all time ..." (Near p.196)

"I hesitated a long time before accepting the position that falls to me today. I finally decided to take it with the determination to restore the level of organ playing in general, and, in particular, to revive the authentic tradition of the interpretation of the works of Bach. It was bequeathed to me by my teacher Lemmens, who had it from Hesse of Breslau, who received it from Forkel, pupil and biographer of the old Cantor." (Smith 1999 pp58-59) <sup>4</sup>

Although Vierne (like his fellow students) was discouraged at first, and it entailed a complete relearning of repertoire learnt previously, he adopted the attitude "better to die than give up." (Shi p.21) After the initial shock Vierne grew to appreciate the new perspective that Widor brought to the classes. Widor began to work on technique with Vierne and his fellow students. They were required to work in detail through the manual and pedal exercises of Lemmens *École d'orgue*. Pedal scales had to be learnt from memory, as Widor would ask his students to play any one at whatever speed he chose. In addition each student was required to learn and bring a new piece to Widor each week.

These reforms by Widor, according to Vierne, "gave birth in our country (France) to the most brilliant school of organists in the world." (Smith 1999 p.69)

Widor was so impressed by Vierne's "photographic memory" of themes whilst improvising that he gave him additional lessons on three evenings each week, free of charge. The growing rapport and respect that master held for pupil and vice versa saw Vierne appointed to teach technique, plainsong accompaniment,

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<sup>4</sup> To be correct Widor did not hesitate for long at all, it was only a matter of hours. On the day after the death of Franck, Widor wrote to the Director of the Conservatoire in the following terms: "The organ class becoming vacant...I put myself at your disposal." (Near p.191)

improvisation and fugue to "auditors"<sup>5</sup>, and to prepare them for admission to regular classes at the conservatoire.

In February 1892 Vierne was chosen by Widor to be his assistant at Saint-Sulpice. During the first month Widor was at Vierne's side ("I won't drop you in the ocean before having taught you to swim,") (Murray 1998 p.122) the master assured the nervous Vierne), as he was taught how to use the vast resources of France's largest organ. "The best way to train yourself is to come to my tribune as often as possible and to take notes as you do in class. I'll explain everything that you are unsure of." (Smith 1999 p.89)

In May 1892 Vierne applied for the position as organist of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the oldest church in Paris, encouraged in this application by Widor, who, according to Vierne also agreed to inaugurate the rebuilt organ for no fee and allowed Vierne to perform *Prélude, Fugue et Variation* of César Franck as part of the concert. (Smith p.91) However, the musical journal *Le Ménestrel* makes no mention of Vierne performing or of any music by Franck. (13 March, 1892, p.95)

Vierne was not appointed, the position going to Jules Stoltz (1848-1906). Stoltz was well qualified, having studied at the École Niedermeyer with Fauré and Gigout, winning first prize in organ in 1869, and becoming Professor of Solfège and later improvisation.

Vierne, who was at that time a student imagined, and not for the last time, that intrigue was at work! "The brother of the organ builder was an organist who wanted the position for himself, the priest appointed him in exchange for a reduction in the contract price." (Smith 1999 p.93)

After Vierne's failure to become Titulaire of Saint-Germain, Widor appointed him as his assistant, allowing him to use the title of *Suppléant de Ch.-M. Widor au grand orgue de Saint-Sulpice* and said, "I think that will do much more for your reputation than being Titulaire of a second-rate post or the Conservatoire's first prize." (Smith 1999 p.93)

This is an interesting comment in light of the opposition faced by Léonce de Saint-Martin, upon his appointment at Notre-Dame, on account of his not holding a prize from the Conservatoire. This is even more poignant since Widor had said

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<sup>5</sup> Less advanced students who though enrolled in the class could not participate in the *Concours*.

to Vierne "Competitions don't mean a thing...They're a small satisfaction for the families and an official stamp for the *bourgeois*. I don't have a prize for anything, and yet I can't complain. When you've made a name for yourself as a virtuoso and composer ... no one will ask whether you have a prize from the Conservatoire." (Smith 1999 p.105)

In the summer of 1892 Vierne participated in the *Concours* at the Conservatoire and, despite being assured of a first prize by Widor and his fellow students, obtained a second. He therefore continued at the Conservatoire for another year. In the following year's *Concours* the result was the same. According to Vierne in *Mes Souvenirs* this was due to political intrigue, which denied him the coveted first prize yet again. (Smith 1999 p.105)

Before the 1894 *Concours* the Director of the Conservatoire, Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896), warned the jury that he was aware of a cabal against Widor's pupils, and threatened to override the judgement if he perceived that prejudice had taken place. (Smith 1999 p.107) Finally in 1894 Vierne unanimously received the first prize denied him previously, with the praise of the jury.

Two days after receiving his diploma from Saint-Saëns, Widor had Vierne officially appointed as his assistant at the conservatoire. This position he was to hold for the next 17 years, and it was from here that Vierne was to exert a strong and profound influence over an entire generation of organist-composers, remaining faithful to the tradition handed down to him by Franck and Widor.

In 1899 Vierne married Berthe Arlette Taskin (b. 1880, date of death unknown), the daughter of Emile Alexandre Taskin (1853-1897), who was a baritone with the Paris Opéra Comique and a descendent of the eighteenth-century harpsichord maker Pascal Taskin (1723-1793). The civil ceremony took place on 20 April and the religious one three days later at Saint-Sulpice. Widor played excerpts from Vierne's recently published *Symphonie I*, Opus 14 which he had commenced the previous year. The marriage produced three children, Jacques 1900-1917, André 1903-1913 and Colette 1907-1961. The wedding lunch and dinner were held in the erecting room of the Cavaillé – Coll factory, where the main table incorporated a plank intended for Vierne's house organ.

## Specification of Vierne's Orgue-de-Salon

Built by the firm of Mutin-Cavaillé-Coll 1899

### Grand-Orgue

8 Montre

8 Flûte harmonique

4 Prestant

### Pédale

16 Soubasse

### Récit

8 Cor de nuit

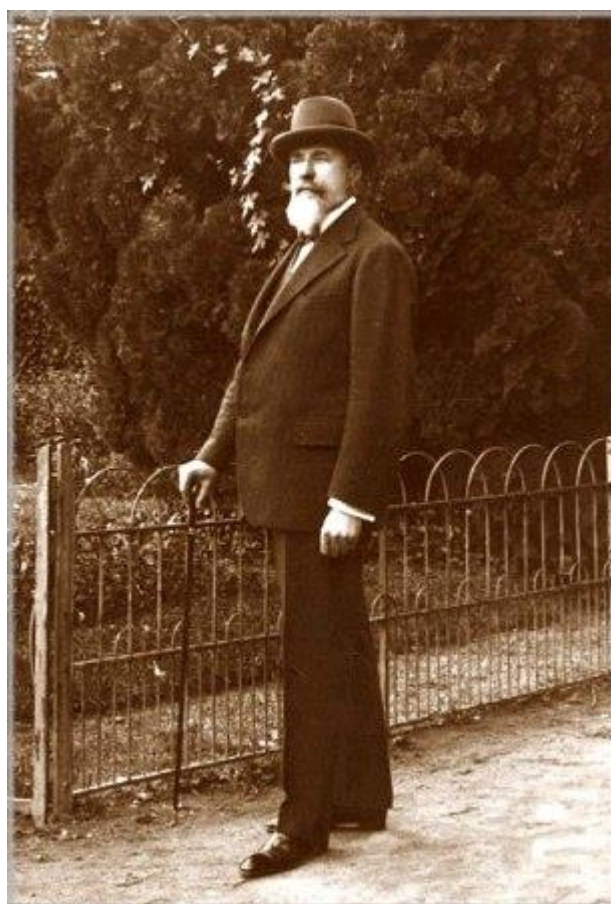
8 Gambe

8 Voix céleste

4 Flûte douce

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nazard

8 Hautbois-Basson



Charles Mutin 1861-1931, successor of Cavaillé- Coll, dedicatee of Vierne's Symphonie No.II  
([www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/cavaillé-coll/img\\_mutin\\_charles.jpg](http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/cavaillé-coll/img_mutin_charles.jpg))



On the completion of the organ Vierne wrote a testimonial about it which was featured in *Le Monde Musicale*.

"The orgue-de-salon, which used to require considerable space, and was encumbered by this fact and especially made inaccessible, Parisian salons and those of most of our large cities generally being of very limited proportions. A nine-stop organ with a 16' in the Pédale is now built in space 4 feet deep by 8 ¼ wide by 7 ¼ feet high. The organ has entered the home in every sense of the word." (*Le Monde Musicale* No.18, p.372)

1900 not only heralded the start of a new century, but was a major turning point in the career and life of Vierne. In February Eugène Sergent, who had been organist of Notre-Dame for 53 years, was diagnosed with stomach cancer. The Cathedral Chapter therefore approached Widor to find a substitute during Sergent's illness. Widor recommended and urged Vierne to take the opportunity saying to him:

"If I were considering only my interest, I would not propose this to you, because you are accustomed to my organ. But we must consider the future, and there is every reason to believe that Sergent will not be able to return to his post. It would seem to me that the title of organist of Notre-Dame, carried by an artist determined to restore its prestige, should tempt you. I see there a very strong card for the advancement of your career. You must accept it." (Murray 1998 p.131)

On 15 April Sergent succumbed to his illness, and the cathedral found itself inundated by 98 applicants for the vacant position of organist, "of whom ten were to be considered seriously." (Smith 1999 p.219)

The Cathedral Chapter therefore decided that only an audition by way of a competition would enable the cathedral to stop the intrigues that the Canons and other clergy were being drawn into by some of the applicants.

A jury was therefore assembled, comprising the following distinguished musicians: Adolphe Deslandres (1840-1911), Henri Dallier (1849-1934), Eugène Gigout (1844-1925), Alexandre Guilmant, Albert Périlhou (1846-1936). Abbé Charles Geispitz (1839-1928), the Maître de chapelle of the Cathedral and Canon Pisani, represented the Cathedral Chapter, and Charles-Marie Widor was chairman.

The requirements of the competition were then published, consisting of:

1. Accompaniment and embellishment of a liturgical chant
2. Improvisation of a fugue on a given subject
3. Free improvisation on a given theme
4. Performance from memory of an organ composition drawn by lot from a list of five pieces submitted by the candidate, who would remain anonymous (Smith 1999 p.219)

When the requirements of the competition were made known, only five of the original 98 maintained their application.

Vierne almost withdrew not for musical reasons but for financial, having been offered the position at Saint-Pierre-de Neuilly which had a new organ,<sup>6</sup> a salary double that of Notre-Dame, and the possibility of earning more from weddings and funerals in what was a populous parish.

Widor intervened and told Vierne that it was his (Widor's) "artistic ambition for restoring the great tradition of Notre-Dame which had been lost since Daquin's death." (Smith p.221) <sup>7</sup>

Prior to the competition each candidate was allotted eight hours' practice on the organ, apart from Vierne, who was allowed only two, because he had been playing the services since February and knew the organ well. These two hours allowed him just enough time to register the five pieces submitted in section 4 of the competition (see above.)

The competition began at 2.00pm on 21 May 1900, and each candidate was locked in a small room and guarded by a priest who was responsible for giving the themes and the chant.

Vierne, who had drawn to play first, was given the chant of the *Salve Regina* and a fugue subject by Guilmant, and the free improvisation theme was provided by Deslandres. The jury selected the Toccata & Fugue in D minor, BWV 565 by J.S.Bach.

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<sup>6</sup> Three-manuals, 54 stops built by Charles Mutin.

<sup>7</sup>Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772), Organist to Louis XV from 1739, Organist of Notre-Dame 1755.

5.  
**S**álve, Regína, \* máter mi-se-ricórdi-ae : Vít-a, dulcé-  
do, et spes nóstra, sálve. Ad te clamámus, éxsu-les, fí-  
li- i Hévae. Ad te suspi-rámus, geméntes et fléntes in hac  
lacrimárum válle. E-ia ergo, Advocáta nóstra, illos tú-os  
mi-se-ricórdes ócu-los ad nos convérte. Et Jésum, benedí-  
ctum frúctum véntris tú-i, nóbis post hoc exsí-li-um ostén-  
de. O clémens : O pí- a : O dúlcis \* Vírgo Ma-rí- a.



Improvisation themes presented to Vierne. (Smith 1999 p.223)

At the end of the competition Widor announced in the tribune the result that Vierne had been appointed unanimously by the jury. Vierne began his duties on Ascension Day, 24 May 1900, and was to remain Titulaire for the rest of his life.

In his new role at Notre-Dame Vierne changed the perception of the organist of the cathedral. His predecessor Sergent had never allowed anyone in the tribune or to play the organ unless forced to by the clergy or the *Beaux Arts*<sup>8</sup> (for example, at the funeral of President Sadi Carnot (1837-1894), the fourth President, who was assassinated. Saint-Saëns was commanded to play the organ for the funeral). In addition, he rarely used anything apart from 8' and 4' manual stops, much to the consternation of Cavallé-Coll, who died the year before Vierne's appointment and considered Notre-Dame to be his finest work.

All this changed with Vierne; his position at the Conservatoire enabled him to welcome any student into the tribune, not just those studying the organ. These students and other visitors including royalty, diplomats, artists and musicians such as Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936), Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921) and

<sup>8</sup> The *Ecole des Beaux Arts* is a French learned society founded in 1816 by merging the academies of painting and sculpture with those of music and architecture.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff (1844-1908) spread the word of Vierne's artistic doctrines that had been passed down from Franck and Widor, as well as the greatness of Cavaillé-Coll as it was exemplified in the instrument that they could see and hear.

Foreign journals and newspapers published accounts of the competition, bringing Vierne and the cathedral to the attention of the musical world. Sergent, Vierne's predecessor, had always taken a six-week holiday from 15 August to 1 October. One year after his appointment the clergy abolished this holiday; with increasing numbers coming to the cathedral, the clergy did not wish the organ to be silent for six weeks, and Vierne was allowed to provide a substitute for the period should he wish to take a holiday himself. (Smith 1999 p.247)

The Organiste Titulaire did not play for every service as the weekday services were accompanied, as now, by the orgue de chœur, and the grand orgue was only used on major feast days and Sundays. Because of Notre-Dame's position as the cathedral of the capital city, there were many state services, including the funerals of Presidents and other great statesmen, in addition to those days of great importance for France and the church, such as the Canonisation of Joan of Arc (1412-1431) in May 1920.

"1906 was the beginning of catastrophes ... for thirty years they have been without interruption." So wrote Vierne in "Mes Souvenirs." (Smith 1999 p.253). In May of 1906 because of his poor eyesight he fell into a hole and broke his leg in three places. The leg had to be reset three times with the result that he had to relearn his pedal technique over a period of two months, and it was not until December that he could play without terrible pain. In January 1907 he caught typhoid, which almost killed him. (Smith 1999 p.261)

By this time Vierne's marriage was on shaky ground; his third child, Colette, is believed to be the daughter of Charles Mutin, the organ builder.<sup>9</sup> When Vierne dedicated his *Berceuse* in (Livre II 24 *Pièces en Style Libre* Opus 31) to his daughter Colette his wife told him, "It's pointless to dedicate it to Colette, since she's not your daughter." (Smith 1999 p.533)

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<sup>9</sup> Arlette Vierne was the mistress of Charles Mutin at this time.

Vierne was granted a divorce in 1909 on the condition that he never marry again. The two younger children went to live with their mother and Jacques remained with his father. In 1913 Vierne's younger son André died, aged ten, from tuberculosis.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 was to bring misery and suffering not only to Vierne but to the whole of France. In May 1915 Vierne was diagnosed with the first signs of the glaucoma that led to a further deterioration in his already poor eyesight. In the same month his love of five years, a former pupil, the soprano Jeanne Montjovet (1887-1955), left him, and "he became obsessed with having been betrayed." (Smith 1999 p.267)

As pupils and concerts were non-existent, his publishers were not printing his music and refused to give financial advances on pieces he had not yet written. He therefore endeavoured to save what sight he could and left for treatment in Switzerland on 12 July 1916. It was to be almost four years before Vierne returned to Paris, on 12 April 1920!

Vierne's son Jacques had pleaded with his father to allow him to join the army. In May 1917 Vierne relented and seventeen-year-old Jacques was killed at the battle of Champagne on 11 November of the same year.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The *Quintette pour piano et cordes* Opus 42 was written in his memory (December 1917-May 1918)



Jacques Vierne in army uniform May 1917

([https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintette\\_pour\\_piano\\_et\\_cordes\\_de\\_Vierne#/media/](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintette_pour_piano_et_cordes_de_Vierne#/media/))

If this trauma was not enough for the fragile Vierne, his brother René was killed in the battle of the Marne on 29 May 1918; this death seems to have affected him more than the death of his son. "He had been struck by an Austrian shell and had literally gone up in smoke. Nothing was found. I have dug his grave in my heart, and there, for seventeen years, I have mourned him." So wrote an emotional Vierne in "Mes Souvenirs." (Smith 1999 p.157)

Upon returning from Switzerland, Vierne became friendly with Madeleine Richepin (1898-1962), a singer and a distant cousin of the French poet and president of the Académie Française, Jean Richepin (1849-1926.) Madeleine and her mother befriended Vierne, helped him find a new apartment and used their extensive social network to find him students to teach.

Vierne's finances were helped by organists including Marcel Dupré and Joseph Bonnet who gave benefit recitals; in America they were joined by American

organists Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958), a former pupil of Vierne, and Lynwood Farnam (1885-1930), who requested contributions to the fund to help the impoverished organist. In fact, over US \$20,000 was raised. In the United Kingdom, the journal *The Musical Times* also appealed for funds to be sent “direct to Vierne himself (c/o his publishers, Messrs. Durand & Co.) with a little note of sympathy and appreciation, expressing some of the sympathy in a form that may be cashed.” (*The Musical Times* March 1923 p.191)

In 1921 Vierne began to undertake recital tours, beginning in Germany; these followed throughout the 1920's with tours to the Netherlands in 1923 and the United Kingdom in 1924 and 1925. The United Kingdom tour was organised with the help of Henry Willis III (1890-1966) the Governing Director of Henry Willis & Sons, Organ Builders, and dedicatee of *Carillon de Westminster, Pièces de fantaisie* 3<sup>rd</sup> Suite. Opus 54.



## 2.2 Marcel Dupré: his early life, and relationship with Louis Vierne

Marcel Dupré was born in Rouen, Normandy on 3 May 1886 into a musical family. Albert Dupré (1860-1940), his father, had studied with Alexandre Guilmant. "Marcel thus grew up in a home filled with music" (Murray 1998 p.134)

In the winter of 1890-1891 the young Dupré began to learn musical notation and *solfège* from his grandfather, Aimable Auguste Dupré (1827-1908) who was organist of Saint Maclou in Rouen. This study was interrupted when Marcel contracted a staphylococcus infection in the marrow of his right collarbone. After several unsuccessful operations, the diseased part of his collarbone was eventually removed, leaving him bed-ridden for seven months and unable to move his right hand until May 1892. (Murray 1985 p.14)

Dupré began his formal music training with his father in 1893, with a piano lesson each morning. Within 25 days he had learned the same number of pieces, and as a reward for his progress, he was given a one-stop harmonium. The tutor book Albert prescribed for Marcel to work through was the *Ecole d'orgue et d'hàrmonium* of Lemmens (Jacques Lemmens had taught both Guilmant and Widor in Belgium). Piano and harmonium practice was occupying him for four hours per day, in addition to his study of harmony and counterpoint.

Dupré "was an ideal, if impatient pupil, and Albert [Dupré] found it hard to curb Marcel's eagerness." (Murray 1985 p.18) The young Dupré did not wish to learn scales and exercises but wanted to play Bach, and Albert therefore set his son the *Prelude & Fugue in E minor*, BWV 533.

By the time he was ten in May 1896, the young Dupré's repertoire included, in addition to BWV 533, several chorale preludes of J.S. Bach, the *Fugue in G minor*, BWV 578, and a movement of a Guilmant Sonata. (Murray 1998 p.137)

Marcel Dupré and Louis Vierne were to meet for the first time, by accident in July of 1896, when the Dupré family was on holiday in Saint-Valery-en-Caux on the Côte d'Albâtre in Normandy.

One Sunday the ten-year-old Dupré had been playing for mass in the church of Notre-Dame, Saint Valery; as father and son came down from the organ they were met by two men at the foot of the stairs to the tribune. One of the men asked Albert if he was the organist. "No Monsieur" replied Albert, "you were listening to my son." "I am amazed ... my name is Louis Vierne and this is my brother René. I am Widor's assistant at the Paris Conservatoire and at Saint Sulpice." (Murray 1985 p.21)

In the autumn, a new Cavallé-Coll organ was installed in the music room of Albert Dupré, and upon its completion Marcel exclaimed "now that I have a real organ I won't need to practice the piano anymore!" "On the contrary" said Albert... "for each forty-five minutes you practice the piano ... you may have fifteen at the organ." (Murray 1985 p.23)



Albert Dupré's house organ now in Rouen Cathedral.<sup>11</sup>

([https:// Fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/musique\\_dans\\_la Cathédrale-de-Rouen](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/musique_dans_la_Cathédrale-de-Rouen))

To celebrate his first communion in May 1897 Dupré was taken by his parents to Paris, where he heard the organs at La Trinité, Saint Sulpice and Notre-Dame; they also saw a performance of *Die Meistersinger* at the Opéra and had lunch at Guilmant's home in Meudon. After lunch Guilmant said to Dupré "you have been studying fugue ... I propose to give you a simple subject and you will improvise

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<sup>11</sup> Specification of the organ built for Albert Dupré: Grand-Orgue-8 Montre; 8 Bourdon \*; 4 Dulciane ; Pédale; 16 Soubasse; Récit 8 Cor de nuit; 8 Salicional; 8 Unda Maris; 4 Flûte douce; 8 Trompette; 8 Hautbois – Basson; Tremblant; \*\* Treble of 8 Bourdon, actually a Flûte Harmonique ;Compass CC- G – 56 note manuals; CCC- G – 32 note pedals. This instrument was gifted by Marcel Dupré to Rouen Cathedral in 1946 as orgue de chœur.

an exposition." (Dupré p.33) Guilmant continued to tell Dupré that what he had produced was good for someone of his age and that he expected to see him in his class at the Conservatoire one day.

On 20 October 1897 Marcel was appointed as the organist of the church of Saint - Vivien in Rouen. A new organ for the church was completed in 1898 and opened by Guilmant on 28 June and, as is often the French custom, Dupré as Titulaire played the opening piece, the *Prelude & Fugue in E minor*, BWV 533 of J.S. Bach.

Alongside his playing, the young Dupré was composing; his first piece was a one-page composition for organ dedicated to his father, *Prière* in G minor, and at the age of 13 a 30-minute cantata, *La Vision de Jacob*, scored for chorus, soloists and orchestra, followed. It was 12 months in gestation and first performed in Rouen in the music room of Albert Dupré on 3 May 1901.

At the age of 15 Marcel Dupré entered the Paris Conservatoire as a piano student at the insistence of Guilmant, this was before he was allowed to become a member of any organ class. Practising eight or nine hours per day, in July 1905 he won the first prize in piano, playing the *Second Ballade* of Frederic Chopin and the *Toccata* from the *Egyptian Concerto* by Camille Saint-Saëns. (Dupré p.41)

However, having won first prize Dupré was then advised by Guilmant to attend his organ class informally for one year. This was to enable him to finish his studies of counterpoint which were first with Louis Vierne, with whom he also studied improvisation and then, due to Vierne's illness, with Paul Fauchet (1881-1937); even at this early stage Vierne's health was delicate.

It was during the improvisation lessons that a friendship between Dupré and Vierne blossomed. Dupré dedicated what were to be his earliest published works to Vierne, namely the *Sonata* for Violin, Opus 5 and *Élévation* for harmonium, Opus 2. Vierne in return dedicated his *Symphonie* III, written in 1911, to Dupré, who gave the first performance on the Salle Gaveau's Mutin organ on March 12 1912. On 17 April Vierne sent a signed copy of the symphony to Dupré with the following inscription: "To my great interpreter Marcel Dupré, to whom I have dedicated this work, I give this copy in appreciation of his marvellous performance on March 12, 1912." (Dupré p.37)

In 1906 Widor's assistant died, and Dupré was summoned by Widor to play for a wedding at Saint-Sulpice. After the wedding Widor offered the position as assistant to Dupré, who was appointed in June 1906, despite still being a Conservatoire student without the coveted prize in organ.

In September of 1906 Dupré entered Guilmant's organ class at the Conservatoire and at the *Concours* in July of 1907 his playing was described by Vierne as "the most outstanding that I ever heard at the Conservatoire." (Murray 1985 p.42)

Vierne continues:

"Marcel Dupré was the first to play, and he boldly improvised on a liturgical chant a complete canon between the soprano and the bass at a fourth below, while the two inner parts were treated in third species counterpoint with a bold musical figure of the smoothest possible kind.... His fugue gave the impression of being written. He boldly maintained the counter-subject, leaving it in its normal place even for the entries of the subject and the answer in the inner voices... His free improvisation was full of poetry, with an ingenious development in the middle and a totally unexpected and striking return; at the end, he also found a nice little canon.

Finally, he performed with a dazzling virtuosity the last movement of Guilmant's Sonata in A, a piece of formidable virtuosity, strewn with snares and pitfalls and the pedal part of which in particular has some terrible passages." (Murray 1985 p.42)

Dupré was awarded the *premier prix d'orgue* unanimously; it was the culmination of ten years' work with Guilmant. He continued his lessons with Guilmant, learning the complete organ works of Franck in addition to receiving tuition in improvising a four-movement formal organ symphony. In the autumn of 1908 he entered Widor's fugue class at the Conservatoire, from which he emerged in 1909 with yet another first prize.

Between 1911 and 1912 Charles-Marie Widor was determined that Dupré should compete for the prestigious Prix de Rome, the demands of which were rigorous. Dupré presented himself for the preliminary examination in May 1912. The Académie required from the candidate a fugue and a chorus in four parts, which were to be composed in the solitude of the Chateau de Compiègne, a former royal

palace latterly used as the autumn residence of Emperor Napoleon III (1808-1873) and the Empress Eugénie (1826-1920) With a piano and a writing table and censored mail Dupré recalled they lived like “princes or prisoners.” (Murray 1985 p.56)

Six entrants were chosen to continue, this time imprisoned for a month, with the aim of completing a 150-page fully orchestrated score. Dupré failed to achieve the prize in both 1912 and 1913. In June of that year Widor asked for another cantata to be presented to him at the start of the autumn term. Although agreeing to Widor’s request he seemed to be suffering from a compositional block. Instead of taking a summer holiday he turned to organ composition and wrote his *Trois Préludes et Fugues*, Opus 7.

Dupré submitted his cantata for four voices and orchestra *Psyché* Opus 4. The jury was divided, with four votes for Dupre and four for Marc Delmas (1885-1931). Widor, who clearly had great power and influence, sent an urgent message to Saint-Saëns, who broke the impasse by turning up to vote despite having refused to set foot within the walls since the election of Gustave Charpentier (1860-1956) to the Académie. Dupré was awarded the Premier Grand Prix de Rome on 3 July of 1914. (Murray 1985 p.57)

With the outbreak of war in August 1914 Dupré, unlike Léonce de Saint-Martin, was exempt from war service because of his shoulder-bone operation as a child; he did present himself for service, but this was refused. Three weeks into the war Dupré offered his services to the hospital in Rouen, where he was employed in the dispensary. "His art seemed of use only in playing for the funerals of soldiers who had been his playmates and comrades." (Murray 1985 p.59)

As the war, which should have been over by that first Christmas, dragged on into 1915, Dupré began to replace Vierne at the organ of Notre-Dame, when not required at Saint-Sulpice or in the hospital dispensary. He did not do this without first asking the advice of Widor, who remarked that "to be organist of Notre-Dame, even temporarily, could do no harm to his reputation." (Murray 1985 p.60)

In 1916 Dupré again turned his attention to composing, the result of which was a choral work, *De Profundis*, Opus 17 which is dedicated "Pour les Soldats morts pour la Patrie." This 79-page work is scored for four-part choir, soprano, tenor and bass soloists with organ and orchestra. He also began to learn from memory the

complete organ works of Bach, some 800 pages in total, the process consuming his time for three years. It was in the same year that Dupré gave the first performance of his *Trois Préludes et Fugues*, Opus 7 in the Salle Gaveau.

In 1916 Vierne travelled to Switzerland for treatment to save what little eyesight remained; he intended to be away for months but in fact he did not return until 1920. It was Dupré who played for the victory *Te Deum* before a congregation of 7000 in Notre-Dame on 16 November 1918.

After Dupré's four years at the organ of Notre-Dame the press and the musical world were becoming confused as to who was organist of the cathedral. In *Le Guide du Concert* December 1919 under "La Musique Religieuse" this appeared :

"Notre-Dame [Cathedral], the Grand Orgue of which rivals in importance that of Saint-Sulpice, perhaps superior in beauty, had as titular, until recently, M. Louis Vierne, then M. Marcel Dupré, Grand Prix de Rome." (Smith 1999 p.331)

It was during this time at Notre-Dame that Dupré's playing was heard by the first managing director of Rolls-Royce, Claude Johnson, at Vespers on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15 1919. Johnson, who was wealthy and a patron of the arts, wrote to Dupré:

"I was present on the fifteenth of August for Vespers at Notre-Dame. After the service, I went to the sacristy to ask who the organist was and what pieces he had played. They told me that the organist was Marcel Dupré, and that he had probably improvised between each of the versets at Vespers. If these pieces are published, where can I find them? If they were improvised, would you be able to compose ten similar pieces for me? I am offering you the sum of fifteen hundred francs. I shall have them published in London by Novello and Co. Ltd, but you will retain the copyright." (Dupré p.68)

In his response to Johnson Dupré confirmed the fact that he had been listening to improvisations. Unable probably to guarantee an exact copy, Dupré promised that he would "try to re-establish the same mood... I would write fifteen versets, for the office of the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary." (Dupré p.68) These were published as *15 Versets pour Les Vêpres du Commun des Fêtes de La Sainte Vierge*, Opus 18, and dedicated to Johnson.

These relatively early works were to bring the unknown Dupré to the attention of the English public. They were in print in the United Kingdom before his Opus 7 *Trois Préludes et Fugues* were in print in France, and before he gave the series of ten recitals playing all of Bach's organ music from memory during the early months of 1920 at the Paris Conservatoire.



The Royal Albert Hall London showing the 1872 Father Henry Willis Organ, the Great division of which Willis had modelled on that of Saint-Sulpice.

(Henry Willis & Sons Ltd. Organ Builders used with permission.)

On 9 December 1920 Dupré made his English debut when he played *15 Versets pour Les Vêpres du Commun des Fêtes de La Sainte Vierge*, in concert in aid of the Officers' Association at the Royal Albert Hall in London.<sup>12</sup> He also played works by Bach, Daquin and Widor and his own Prelude & Fugue in G minor. A choir of 600 boys and men from the Gregorian Association chanted the plainsong before an audience of 9000 including Princess Mary (1897-1965) and the Prince of Wales (1894-1972) the future King Edward VIII.

The programme not only named Dupré as a winner of the Grand Prix de Rome but also as organist of Notre-Dame de Paris, and included a colour reproduction of a

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<sup>12</sup> On the original Father Henry Willis organ of 1872, before it was destroyed and rebuilt out of all recognition by Harrison & Harrison.



painting which had been commissioned by Johnson from Ambrose McEvoy ARA (1878-1927) of Dupré at the organ of Notre-Dame. (Smith 1999 p.333)

The confusion about who was organist of Notre-Dame had arisen because Vierne was absent for five years whilst receiving medical treatment in Switzerland. After his return to Paris there were further absences from time to time due to further periods of ill health. Dupré carried on playing at the cathedral in his absence. To the uninitiated it would seem logical that the person playing the organ at Notre-Dame was of course the organist of Notre-Dame.



Marcel Dupré at the Organ of Notre-Dame September 1920 painted by Ambrose McEvoy.  
([https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5a/Ambrose-McEvoy\\_-\\_Monsieur-Marcel-Dupré\\_at\\_the-organ-of Notre-Dame.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5a/Ambrose-McEvoy_-_Monsieur-Marcel-Dupré_at_the-organ-of_Notre-Dame.jpg).)

A further blurring occurred with the appointment of Dupré as *Organiste à Notre-Dame* as opposed to Vierne *Organiste de Notre-Dame*. It was somewhat inevitable that Organist at Notre-Dame would be confused with Organist of Notre-Dame. Another source of confusion arose because, according to some sources, Dupré asked for the title to be conferred upon him, whereas in the American music press appeared the following: "In 1920 M. Vierne returned and desiring to retain M. Dupré at Notre-Dame, requested Cardinal Dubois to create a new title for M. Dupré." (The Diapason August 1924 p.3)

This, however, is contradicted by Vierne in his unpublished Journal: "I should have considered the fact that his not being satisfied with the title of *suppléant*,<sup>13</sup> as I myself had been when I replaced Widor at Saint-Sulpice, implied on his part a lack of modesty, regrettable at the least, and possibly hiding some duplicitous motive." (Smith 1999 p.333)

In July 1923 Dupré was awarded the Croix de Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur.<sup>14</sup> According to Vierne's supporters it was Vierne who should have been so honoured and that Dupré was supposed to be campaigning for Vierne. These supporters of Vierne were also quick to add fuel to the fire condemning Dupré, particularly Madeleine Richepin, who intensely disliked Dupré. "It now appeared that Dupré was not only usurping Vierne's cathedral title, but also his national honor [*sic*]." (Smith 1999 p.335)

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<sup>13</sup> Suppléant is the title given to the assistant organist, who plays the organ in the absence of the Titulaire.

<sup>14</sup> The Legion of Honour – Ordre National de la Légion d'honneur- was established in May 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte who was at that time First Consul. It is the highest decoration in France, which can be awarded by military or civil merit. It is divided into five grades: Chevalier, Officier, Commandeur, Grand Officier and Grand-Croix.



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The medal of Croix de Chevalier

([www.medailles-officielles.com/ordres-nationaux/ordre-de-legion-d-honneur,32,3,20.html](http://www.medailles-officielles.com/ordres-nationaux/ordre-de-legion-d-honneur,32,3,20.html))

Further problems arose over the electric blower for the Cathedral organ, which was paid for by English supporters of Dupré at the instigation of Claude Johnson. Johnson had been present at the Cathedral when the team of six organ pumpers stopped blowing because they were tired or drunk. These pumpers were indigents recruited from the banks of the Seine by the cathedral at a cost of 50 francs. Vierende referred to them as "la soufflerie à alcool - the alcoholic wind supply." (Smith 1999 p.349)

On 31 December 1923 Vierende typed a four-page letter to the archiprêtre of the cathedral in which he describes his grievances against Dupré. Letters of a similar nature were supposedly sent by Vierende to Saint-Martin from 1930 onwards.

The tenor of the letter describes how he named Dupré *Suppléant* in 1906 though there were others in line. The appointment of Dupré to the Légion d'Honneur which he then goes on to contradict; "... It would be ridiculous for me to be decorated as an organist." (Smith 1999 p.337)

Secondly and more serious was the title of Organiste au Grand Orgue de Notre-Dame and the use of the title. Saint-Martin was to later have the same trouble with his use of *Suppléant*.

Finally, the letter ends "As for me, I have known every kind of suffering, all the deceits of the heart: every sorrow too and Marcel should have borne that in mind before treating me as a rival [and] before criticising my patriotism in front of one of my American student's mother. He told this woman that the subscription opened to buy back the organ that I had to sell after my illness and financial ruin caused by the war, dishonoured me as a Frenchman: that one must suffer and that strangers are not supposed to know about it." (Smith 1999 p.338)

It should be remembered that Dupré's contribution to the Vierne fund raised some US \$1,100 during his American tour of 1923, this sum allowing Vierne to buy an organ for his home replacing the one he sold in 1920.

Dupré resigned as Suppléant, and his place was taken by Saint-Martin; Vierne and Dupré never spoke again. At the precise moment that Vierne died at the organ of Notre-Dame, Dupré was dining at the Château de Candé, near Tours, with HRH the Duke of Windsor (the former King Edward VIII) for whose wedding to Wallis Simpson (1896-1986) Duchess of Windsor he was to play the next day on the Chateau's Ernest Skinner Organ.<sup>15</sup> If Dupré learned of Vierne's death before returning to Paris, and what his feelings were, he never made known.

Dupré didn't play a piece by Vierne for 14 years until June 1937 when he played the *Cantilène* from the Symphonie III in a concert in Philadelphia, in memory of Vierne. In his *Recollections* published in 1972 Dupré has less than a sentence to say about Vierne. Even when he was teaching it seems that there was an unspoken rule about bringing Vierne's music to the lesson; when an American student played to Dupré *Carillon de Westminster* by Vierne, Dupré uttered only one word, "Rubbish (Dries p.58).

Dupré's dislike for Vierne seems to have been so intense that he attempted to suppress his Opus 2 *Élévation* because he had dedicated it to Vierne. In each of Dupré's catalogues, Vierne's name is not included as the dedicatee, and in his 1963 catalogue the work is completely omitted.

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<sup>15</sup> Built 1928 (Opus 718), three-manuals, 48 stops, 27 ranks, 1812 pipes.

In 1926 Dupré was appointed Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatoire, a position he held until he became Director of the Conservatoire in the spring of 1954, resigning two years later when he reached the compulsory retirement age of 70.

In January 1934, after being Widor's *Suppléant* for 28 years, Dupré became Titulaire of Saint-Sulpice, upon Widor's recommendation, succeeding the 89-year-old without any competition being held. Dupré was to hold the position until Whitsunday, Sunday 30 May 1971, the day he died.



Dupré pictured at his house organ ([www.wikiwand.com/de/Marcel\\_Dupré](http://www.wikiwand.com/de/Marcel_Dupré))

## Chapter 3

### Biography of Léonce de Saint-Martin (1886-1954)

#### 3.1 Family and early influences

Léonce Marie Joseph de Saint-Martin de Paylha was born on 31 October 1886 at the Château Fonlabour in the municipality of Albi in Southern France to Count Henri and Countess Marie de Saint-Martin de Paylha.

The family originated from the Ariège region in the Pyrenees, but could trace their roots further back, across the border into Spain. On 20 November 1696, the family were ennobled, taking the motto *Liber, sed fides* – "I am free, but have faith."

Historically, the family had played an important role within both the army and the legal profession; during the nineteenth century they amassed a fortune due to wise investments in commerce, the family's château standing as a testimony to this.



Château Fonlabour - now an agricultural college.

([tula-albi.blogspot.go.nz/2010/02/lieux-de-vie-et-detude.html](http://tula-albi.blogspot.go.nz/2010/02/lieux-de-vie-et-detude.html).)

Léonce was one of two children to survive into adulthood; a younger brother died at an early age and his sister Elizabeth (1891-1973) married Lieutenant George Marie René Alfred Hugot-Derville on 7 July 1914 in the church at Fonlabour (L'Express du midi, No.7, 844, p.2.) Within six weeks of marriage he was killed in action in World War I, leaving her a widow for 59 years.



Madame and Lieutenant Hugot-Derville, a photograph taken on their wedding day at Château Fonlabour

(<http://gw.geneanet.org/public/img/media/deposits/70/a4/3648805/medium.jpg?t=1449542777>)

The young Léonce de Saint-Martin “revealed particularly precocious musical gifts” (Guérard p.13) His mother Marie, who was an excellent pianist, began to teach him the piano at the age of four. In addition to his musical education, he later became a pupil at École Sainte-Marie d’Albi, a private Catholic school.

In 1903 the composer M.T. Célestini dedicated his *Gavotte pour Piano* “à mon jeune ami Léonce de Saint-Martin.” This three-page work was published by Benoît in Paris. (Appendix 1 p.202)

In addition to the musical influences of his mother, two priests also were to have a strong influence on him: Abbé Louis Birot, (1863-1936), Archiprêtre of the Cathedral of Albi from 1908 until his death, and Abbé Pinel, Maître de chapelle l’ Institut du Bon Sauveur and future priest of Fonlabour, (the church next to the château.) In 1929 Saint-Martin composed and dedicated his Opus 10, *Offertoire pour les fêtes simples de la Sainte Vierge* for organ, to Pinel.



Saint-Martin's first encounter with the organ in the cathedral at Albi was at the age of nine; it was "a moment of epiphany... the pianist of Fonlabour was transfigured.'" (Guérard p.14)



Cathédrale St Cécile, Albi ([www.cite-episcopale-albi.fr](http://www.cite-episcopale-albi.fr).)

Commencing his organ studies, he was as prodigious with this instrument as with the piano and was appointed assistant organist of Albi Cathedral at the age of 14. During this time Saint-Martin immersed himself in the liturgy and music of the church, including Gregorian chant. The latter, as we shall see later, was to play an important part in his compositions, for example, his *Symphonie Mariale*.

Léonce de Saint-Martin's interests lay in music, the piano and the organ, but his father was totally indifferent to this. "Playing the piano or the organ was all very well, and character forming, but becoming an organist was not a serious option: it was scarcely better than being a sexton or a verger." (Guérard p.15) There was no way that Comte Henri de Saint-Martin would countenance the aristocratic Léonce entering a music conservatoire.

Bowing to the inevitable, Saint-Martin studied for his Baccalaureate, which he passed in 1901 at the age of fifteen; he then entered the University of Montpellier, where he studied law, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in 1906.

However, for Saint-Martin music did not stop whilst he was studying law; his *Marche Triomphale* in B flat major for piano was written in 1903 and published by Benoît of Paris. His mother continued to be complicit in her son's wish to be an organist during his time in Montpellier, where he studied organ under the direction of the organist of the chapel of Les Pénitents Bleus, who was also a professor at the Conservatoire de Musique de Montpellier.

Although he was not studying music, the years at the University of Montpellier seem to have been a happy time for Saint-Martin. During 1906 he composed a second piano piece, *Légende Castillonnaise* Opus 2. The work was dedicated to a young lady, Jeanne Caralp, with whom Saint-Martin seems to have been enamoured at that time. The work was published by Deramond of Marseille and is typical of the salon pieces that would have been performed in the homes of the "social elite" at the time.

At the same time Saint-Martin wrote a ballet and dedicated it to Jeanne. His father, who had forbidden any contact with the girl, as she was not of the correct social standing, found the score of the ballet by accident, and destroyed it.

During his time in Montpellier, Saint-Martin met Charles Bordes (1863-1909), who along with Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931), Alexandre Guilmant and The Prince Edmond de Polignac (1834-1901) founded the *Schola Cantorum de Paris*, where the curriculum focused on the study of baroque and classical works as well as Gregorian chant and renaissance polyphony. Saint-Martin was advised by d'Indy to join him in Paris (Guérard p.17).

On 9 May 1907 Saint-Martin composed the music and the words for *Prière à Sainte Cécile* for voice and organ, his Opus 3. The manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France shows the composer's gift for melodic line. It is obvious from the manuscript that Saint-Martin made numerous corrections and changes until he was satisfied with the result.

Guérard says that "these successive revisions signify the importance that he attributed to this piously preserved text. In writing this poetry on the eve of his

turning twenty-one ... he turned towards Saint Cecilia, the companion of his earliest artistic and religious emotions, ... and placed under her patronage the direction he wished to give his life ..." (Guérard p.17) Not only is Saint Cecilia patron saint of music but she is also the patron saint of Albi Cathedral. Saint-Martin saw liturgical music as the servant of the liturgy of the church from an early age and throughout his life.

*"O Saint who was always kind to our forefathers,  
Be kind to their sons who offer you their hearts.  
Just like incense, just like the candles and flowers,  
Musical offerings are also, for you, prayers.*

*On the wings of sound, our souls fly to God,  
But our effort is humble and our spirit feeble,  
And God will then hear us in his blue Paradise*

*We pray to you for those who have served you well  
And whose young hope blossoms on your altar.  
Protect their houses and bless their lives,  
And may their hearts be filled with the music of Heaven."*  
(quoted in Guérard pp17-18)

Saint-Martin's next work is in complete contrast to the prayer above: *Gaule et France* was written in 1908, after Saint-Martin's two years' compulsory military service in the army had been completed.

This 'Historical Allegory in Ten Tableaux' is scored for soloist, choir and accompaniment; the libretto by G. de Lys talks of "France, standing proud, on Gaulish soil! Immortalised her race and her exploits ... France, you will ever be the torch lighting up the Earth..." (Guérard p.18)

These are strong words from a French patriot whose country, 48 years previously, had been routed in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871), losing Alsace and Lorraine in the process, and witnessing the rise of the German Empire as its neighbour: Wilhelm I (1797-1888) King of Prussia had in fact been proclaimed

Emperor of Germany in the Hall of Mirrors at the palace of Versailles on 18 January 1871.

No reference can be found to G. de Lys, but as Guérard refers to Saint-Martin as "our young author-composer" (Guérard p.19), could this be a pseudonym for Léonce de Saint-Martin?

Abbé Pinel (whom Léonce had known since his childhood) introduced Jane-Martine Payet (1887-1961) to Léonce de Saint-Martin; described by Guérard as "intelligent, cultivated, devout and an excellent pianist." Count Henri, Léonce's father, was delighted with the match; she was of the correct social status and a generous dowry from her parents was expected, as they had made a fortune in the manufacture of toiletries.

The romance was to stir the young composer to write *Soir d'automne* for voice and piano, dated 20 March 1910. The dedication reads : "A ma chère Jane, en souvenir du soir où nous chantâmes ensemble." (To my dear Jane, in memory of the evening when we sang together.) The couple were married in Montpellier in the same year, 1910.

It was a marriage based on a common love of music. "Their happiness was not complete, Madame Saint-Martin... would be like a sister to him." (Guérard p.20) Guérard continues that the matrimonial situation was confided to him by chance after the death of Madame Saint-Martin; all through their lives they kept the secret of non-consummation to themselves. (The act of intercourse was too painful for Madame Saint-Martin.) Of course, this was grounds to apply for the annulment of the marriage but Léonce de Saint-Martin was not prepared to do so. (Interview with Jean Guérard, Paris 2014.)

### 3.2 Work and the War 1911-1919

The newly married Saint-Martin could now look forward to a musical future, adding his wife to the support already given to him by his mother. The Comte de Saint-Martin still wished his son to practice as a lawyer, however, it was clear that father and son were never to agree on the importance of music in Léonce's life. Having fulfilled the wishes of his father by obtaining a law degree he was now free and independent to pursue a career as an organist and musician, but his father's decision forbidding the study of music was to have far-reaching consequences.

As he had passed the age limit for entry to the Paris Conservatoire, a move to the capital was required to help push prospects of a career in music forward. The charge of never having attended a conservatoire has been levelled at Saint-Martin on numerous occasions since the time of his appointment at Notre-Dame and up to the present day. The non-attendance at a conservatoire was not for musical reasons, but because, after fulfilling the educational demands of his father, he was now past the age of entry.

The admirers encouraging him to move to Paris included Madame Jacquemaire-Clemenceau (granddaughter of Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929), who was twice Prime Minister of France and architect of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919.) She had met the young couple at Albi Cathedral and urged them to move to Paris "promising to make doors open for them." (Guérard p.22) This friendship lasted for life.

Before moving to Paris, Saint-Martin made several extended trips to the capital to listen to the great organists and their instruments. He heard and met Vierne at Notre-Dame, Widor at Saint-Sulpice, Bonnet at Saint-Eustache and Charles Tournemire at Saint-Clotilde. Saint-Martin was greatly impressed by the improvisations of Tournemire which would inspire him in the writing of his *Prélude pour une messe de Noël d'après Tournemire* and in his *Postlude for Laetare Sunday*. This Sunday, the fourth in Lent, was the only Sunday in the Lenten season where the Grand Orgue was authorised to be used in the pre-Vatican II ceremonial; the organ would otherwise remain silent until Easter Day. (It was however permissible for the Orgue de Chœur to be used to accompany the chant.)

Having established himself in Paris, Saint-Martin commenced a period of intensive study with Adolphe Marty (1865-1942). Marty was also from Albi and had been pupil of Cesar Franck. In 1886 he graduated as the first blind student from the Paris Conservatoire, winning first prize in organ. Two years later he was appointed organ tutor at l'Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles, a position he was to hold until 1930. From 1891-1941 he was also Organiste Titulaire at the Parisian church of Saint-François Xavier in the seventh arrondissement.

From his time in Paris, Saint-Martin's name is listed as a substitute organist to Marty at Saint-François Xavier. (Guérard p.23) On Tuesday 25 March 1913, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint-Martin was in Montpellier to play in the chapel of Les Pénitents Bleus in the presence of Cardinal François-Marie-Anatole de Rovérié de Cabrières (1830-1921). In the newspaper *L'Éclair de Montpellier* was reported "the congregation had the opportunity to hear on an excellent organ, a peerless organist, M. de Saint-Martin." (quoted in Guérard p.23)

On 8 July 1914 Saint-Martin completed *Veni Creator Spiritus* for voice and organ. The name *Veni Creator* suggests a liturgical work, but there is nothing liturgical about it. Saint-Martin does not use the text of Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz (c.780-4 February 856), nor the plainsong melody to which it is sung. Guérard describes this work as a prayer written in a similar vein to that of the *Prière à Saint-Cécile*. (Guérard p.23)

On 28 June 1914, the heir to the throne of Austria - Hungary, Archduke Franz Ferdinand (1863-1914) and his morganatic wife Sophie, the Duchess of Hohenburg (1868-1914) were assassinated in Sarajevo. Although this was not the cause of the war it has been seen as the spark that ignited it. As the European political situation deteriorated the alliances of the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Great Britain drew themselves together to face the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. However, "Italy declared her neutrality on the grounds that her German and Austrian allies had provoked aggressive war without consulting her ..." (Shirer p.118)

On 1 August 1914, French general mobilisation was ordered. Germany declared war on France on the 3 August. Saint-Martin was mobilised as a Sergeant in the

Artillery Corps, whilst Madame Saint-Martin returned to her family in Montpellier.

During the conflict Saint-Martin was awarded the *Croix de Guerre*; this medal, created in April 1915, was awarded to those soldiers who distinguished themselves by acts of heroism involving combat with enemy forces.

Throughout the horrors of war Saint-Martin managed to take a silent keyboard with him to facilitate his keyboard practice. It was "like a relic" [a religious relic of a Saint] (Guérard p.23). During periods of leave from the army he took the opportunity to visit the organs of the capital. In Notre-Dame during Vespers one Sunday in 1917 he met Marcel Dupré, who was deputising for Vierne (Vierne was away in Switzerland for medical treatment.)

Dupré, who was six months younger than Saint-Martin, invited him to play after the Magnificat. Although neither organist recorded their impressions that day Dupré was to recall in later years his impressions of Saint-Martin's improvisation in an interview for Les Amis de Léonce de Saint-Martin:

*Saint-Martin represented what I would call the Great Tradition of Cathedral organists. I realised this the day when, just after the 1914-1918 War, I asked him without warning to improvise a Recessional at Saint-Sulpice. He had, over the last four years handled, as a gunner, bombs rather than bombards. The result was exactly what I had expected: great resonant layers of sound, clear and phrased with authority, filling the whole nave and in a style which, while polished, was none the less sensitive and filled with emotion.* (Bernadette and Marchard p. 45)

Saint-Martin was finally demobilised (having reached the rank of Lieutenant) on 19 April 1919; after no active music making for five years it now seemed possible that he could concentrate on a career in music.

The reunited couple Léonce and Jane set up home at 20 Place des Vosges in Paris. This famous square, which was built by King Henri IV (1553-1610), was originally known as the Place Royale and straddles the third and fourth Parisian arrondissements.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Today the area is very affluent and such an apartment would now cost millions of euros, but when the Saint-Martins moved in, the area was rather shabby.



Number 20, Place des Vosges

([US.France.Fr/en/discover/place-vosges-paris-o](https://US.France.Fr/en/discover/place-vosges-paris-o))

A few rooms overlooked a courtyard at the rear, while two large rooms at the front overlooked the square. In his music room, "the red salon," was installed a double piano built by Pleyel et Cie, in 1903. The double piano had been invented in 1890 and had a keyboard at each end, and in Saint-Martin's house it sat between the two front windows. On a Louis XIII table were his scores, pencils, pens, rubbers and an endless supply of Gauloises cigarettes.

Having firmly established himself in Paris, Saint-Martin continued his organ studies with Adolphe Marty, whilst pursuing composition, counterpoint and fugue with Albert Bertelin (1872-1951).



### 3.3 New musical opportunities 1920-1924

At the end of 1920 Adolphe Marty declared to Saint-Martin that he had "nothing more to teach him" (Guérard p.27) and therefore introduced Saint-Martin to his former student, Louis Vierne, for tuition.

Saint-Martin's star was in the ascendant, and Jean Guérard refers to this chapter of Saint-Martin's life as the "Gates of Destiny" (p.31). It might seem, however, more appropriate to think of this time as a period when opportunities arose and Saint-Martin seized them, with caution from time to time, but nevertheless at the same time exhibiting his musical qualities.

In the winter of 1919 Saint-Martin encountered a fellow aristocrat in the tribune of Saint Francois-Xavier. The Count Armédée Mancat-Amat de Vallombrosa (1880-1968) had been a pupil of Widor, Vierne and Henri Libert (1869-1937). From 1910 to 1928 he was organist and choirmaster of the church of Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles (in the first arrondissement.) In 1928 he became organist of the Orgue de Choeur and Maître de chapelle at Saint Eustache in Paris, a position he held until his death. (Saint-Martin dedicated *Pastorale*, the second of 6 *pièces brèves* Opus 11 and the second movement of his *Symphonie Dominicale*, Opus 39, to de Vallombrosa.)

As Count Vallombrosa was to recall: "On a winter's Sunday in 1919 I had been to visit Marty... The standard sermon allowed me the time for a pleasant conversation with this high-class musician. Another visitor had got there before me, a young up-and-coming man. Marty told me his name, Léonce de Saint-Martin. Another pure Languedocien and not long demobilised, an excellent pianist and organist, now settled in Paris." (Gerard and Machard p.44)

Fortunately for Saint-Martin, Count Vallombrosa had recently conversed with the Maître de chapelle of Notre-Dame des Blancs Manteaux, Henri Van Lysebeth (1864-1947). It was during this conversation that Lysebeth mentioned that the church wished to appoint an organist for the Grand Orgue, which was a three-manual, 26-stop organ built by Callinet.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The instrument was rebuilt in 1924 during Saint-Martin's tenure, and six new stops were added with letters of support provided by Bonnet and Vierne. The organ was seriously damaged by German attack on 26 August 1944. In 1968 a new organ was built in the north German style by the Alsatian organ builder Alfred Kern (1910-1989).



Notre-Dame des Blancs Manteaux from the north. ([https:// CS.Wikipedia.org/wiki kostel\\_Notre-Dame-des Blancs-Manteaux](https://CS.Wikipedia.org/wiki/kostel_Notre-Dame-des-Blancs-Manteaux))

An interview and audition were arranged: "the priest, M. Van Lysebeth and I were amazed. The next Sunday my friend took possession of the three-manual organ." (Guérard p.32.) Saint-Martin would remain Organiste Titulaire here until moving to Notre-Dame.

Another turning point in Saint-Martin's career took place on 14 December 1920, when Dupré was unable to play at short notice at Notre-Dame. The choir organist of Notre-Dame, Albert Serre (1866-1940) was asked to find a stand-in, and it was fortunate that his son was choir organist at the church where Saint-Martin was Titulaire (Notre-Dame des Blancs Manteaux.) He asked Saint-Martin, who in the words of Guérard:

*Suddenly apprised of the service he was being asked to give, that is, to take over, without any preparation, the five-manual famous Cavaillé-Coll, in somewhat of a daze, started by refusing, pleading his unfitness. But the appeal to his inexhaustible helpfulness was so pressing, that never able to refuse when someone asked his help, he accepted.* (Guérard p.33)

Obviously, Saint-Martin played well, as with the permission and full agreement of Louis Vierne, Dupré called on Saint-Martin whenever he was unable to play at Notre-Dame for Vierne himself.

These opportunities might never have been afforded to either man had not Vierne's official assistant, Emile Bourdon (1884-1974) resigned in 1912. The aptly named Bourdon had been a pupil of Guilmant, Widor and Vierne and a student at the Paris Conservatoire.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bourdon had been appointed assistant in 1908 to Vierne at Notre-Dame. In 1911 he underwent treatment for tuberculosis in Switzerland, after which he was advised to live in the South of France. He became organist of Monaco Cathedral in 1922 and held the position for 46 years.



Emile Bourdon 1884-1974 ([www.editions-delatour.com/fr/63\\_bourdon-emile](http://www.editions-delatour.com/fr/63_bourdon-emile))

In 1922 Saint-Martin took delivery of a pipe organ for his home; the instrument was built by the firm of Gutschenritter. This new company was established in 1894 by the organ builder Joseph Merklin (1819-1905) in association with Joseph Gutschenritter and Philippe Decock.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Merklin's original company, known from 1853 as J. Merklin-Schütze et Cie, had purchased organ builders Daublaine-Callinet-Ducroquet in 1855. Merklin sold his original company to his son-in-law, and after four years with his new company retired, in November 1898. During his 55 years of organ building, he left "over four hundred instruments that he had either built, repaired or restored." (Smith p.134)



Léonce de Saint-Martin at the Gutschenritter organ in his apartment.  
 (www.avemariasongs.org/ave/S./Saint-Martin.htm.)

The stop list was as follows:

### **Grand-Orgue**

16 Bourdon

8 Montre

8 Salicional

8 Bourdon

4 Prestant

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nazard

2 Doublette

1 $\frac{3}{5}$  Tierce

### **Récit**

8 Flûte harmonique

8 Cor de nuit

8 Gambe

8 Voix Céleste

4 Flûte

2 Octavin

III Plein Jeu

8 Hautbois

**Pédale**

16 Soubasse

10<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> Quinte

8 Bourdon

Manual Compass, CC-G 56 notes.

Pédale Compass, CCC- F 30 notes.

**Pédales de combinaison**, from left to right.

Grand-Orgue – Pédale

Récit- Pédale

Récit Octave- Pédale

Récit Barker Machine

Récit Octave

Grand- Orgue – Récit

Récit Expression

Grand Expression

Récit prepared stops

Récit – Grand Orgue

Trémolo

Grand Machine

Reeds Récit<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Following Léonce de Saint-Martin's death the organ was sold to L'Eglise Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption-de-Passy in the sixteenth arrondissement of Paris. The instrument was enlarged to 35 stops, the action electrified and the pipework revoiced in the neo-classic style. The work was carried out by the organ builders Beuchet-Debierre of Nantes.

The picture above shows a three-manual console; the third manual was a coupling manual to which the Récit and Grand-Orgue could be coupled down. This gave the instrument the versatility of three manuals without the added expense of the extra soundboard and its associated pipework.

Saint-Martin's organ was inaugurated on 10 June 1922 in the presence of several distinguished guests including Count Bérenger de Miramon Fitz-James (1875-1952), a great lover of the organ and founder of Les Amis de l'orgue.

Saint-Martin and his wife played the *Ballade* (Opus 19) by Gabriel Fauré in the arrangement for two pianos; this work, over 20 minutes long, is of considerable difficulty. The cellist, Paul Mas (1890-1965), played *Chants russes* by Édouard Lalo (1823-1892).<sup>21</sup> Works by Albert Bertelin also featured, Marcel Dupré then played works by Franck and his own *Prélude et fugue en sol mineur*, from his Opus 7. The concert ended with an improvisation by Dupré. The following day a concert was given in honour of Louis Vierne, seemingly at the instigation of Count Miramon Fitz-James.

On 20 June Fitz-James wrote to Madame de Saint-Martin saying that "he would try to come next Sunday, before dinner, to see your delightful organ in private." (Guérard p.34) In the same correspondence he asks if Léonce would be able to organise another performance of *La Messe du Pape Marcel* at Sainte Chapelle.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Mas was born in Castres in the Tarn region, some 28 miles from Albi, a student at the Paris Conservatoire he won the *Premier Prix* in 1908.

<sup>22</sup> *La messe du Pape Marcel* is better known in the English-speaking world as the *Missa Papae Marcelli*. This setting of the mass was composed by Giovanni da Palestrina (c.1525-1594) in honour of Pope Marcellus II (1501-1555), who reigned for just three weeks in 1555. It was customary for this work to be sung as the Mass setting at Papal Coronations, most recently the Coronation of Pope Paul VI (1897-1978) in 1964, which was the last time that a pope was crowned. Succeeding pontiffs, John Paul I, Saint John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, have all chosen an inauguration rather than a Coronation.



Sainte-Chapelle

([https:// www.pariscity vision.com/en/tickets/attractions/sainte-chapelle](https://www.pariscityvision.com/en/tickets/attractions/sainte-chapelle))

Saint-Martin's organ was used in 1922 by Marcel Dupré to prepare and rehearse for the recitals of the complete organ works of Bach that were to be played at the Trocadéro in Paris. (He had already performed them in 1920 at the Conservatoire.) According to Guérard, at the home of Saint-Martin, Dupré "found accommodation, meals, warmth and kindred spirits. They helped to keep his spirits up, after he was a little downhearted due to the small audiences at the first performances." (p.34) The last sentence by Guérard contradicts both Dupré and Murray who inform us that the concerts were well attended. "The programs [*sic*] drew from first to last consistently large audiences." (Murray 1985 p.65) "The little hall and the stage were always packed..." (Dupré p.76)

In November 1922 Léonce became the Comte de Saint-Martin de Paylha upon the death of his father. Joseph Bonnet expressed his condolences to his *very dear friend*: "May the faith of our fathers sustain you in this vale of tears..." (Guérard p.35) Bonnet was also a dedicatee of the *Choral* from the *6 pièces brèves*.

During 1922 and 1923 Saint-Martin continued to substitute for Vierre in the absence of Dupré. From correspondence that exists (in the possession of Les Amis de Léonce de Saint-Martin) the ties of friendship between Saint-Martin and



Vierne grew closer; this can be seen in a letter which Vierne sent to Saint- Martin on 3 September, 1922 from Wiesbaden:

*From here, where I alternate between anti-rheumatic treatment and preparation for my concerts, I am thinking of you ... I also wish to thank you for the kindness with which you have agreed to cover my duties at Notre-Dame. In his latest letter, Marcel (Dupré) told me that the question of the motor was finally solved by the Englishmen who were making the foundations. I hope that in these conditions, the mechanism will finally be correctly modified and will release us from the humiliating dependency on the bellows operators ... I send you my very affectionate thoughts. (Guérard p.35)*

Madeleine Richepin added a little note at the end of Vierne's letter: *I do not want to let Monsieur Vierne's letter go without remembering me to you and to Madame de Saint-Martin. Vierne is working, he's composing, and he is very cheery and is remarkably well... I am sure you are as delighted as I am. (Guérard p.36)*

The friendship blossomed with Vierne and Madeleine Richepin joining Saint-Martin in the tribune at Blancs-Manteaux at times. One day, while "Bichette" (Vierne's pet name for Madeleine) was singing, the Countess de Saint-Martin noticed that Vierne was crying. She commented to Vierne that Madeleine Richepin had a lovely voice, and Vierne replied, "And even more, what lovely skin!" (Guérard p.36) Vierne had become both dependent on Madeleine and obviously attracted to her. Vierne would not hear anything spoken against her, and believed everything she said. The consequences of this were to be played out against both Dupré and later Saint-Martin.

The friendship of Saint-Martin and Vierne developed to such an extent that Vierne was asking Saint- Martin not exactly to lie for him but to massage the truth somewhat. Saint-Martin was reputedly a man of honour and integrity, and it is not documented whether he did what was asked of him, and Guérard does not allude to it, but Saint-Martin would probably have found it hard to refuse his teacher.

Vierne had written on 8 November 1922 to Saint-Martin about a booking to inaugurate the organ in Laon Cathedral, *these men have coolly dropped me with no warning, which I find completely unacceptable and utterly bad-mannered. I am thus going to the organ builder to demand an indemnity of five hundred francs, saying that he had booked my time and made me lose a fee. Would you be so good*

*as to write me a note dated earlier (say around 20 October), asking me to play at a soirée at your place for a certain fee, which will allow me, if necessary, to wave this note under their noses if they start nit-picking? You'll agree that these fellows are bounders of the highest water and that one wouldn't treat even the meanest of street-sweepers in such a fashion. Many thanks in advance; yours with very sincere affection. (Guérard p.36)*

On 24 August 1923 Vierne posted another letter to Saint-Martin, this time about Dupré's "treason" as he saw it, over the appointment of Dupré to the Légion d'Honneur.

*My Dear Friend,*

*We have been here for a month, Bichette, her mother and I... I have done the first two movements of my fifth symphony... I am working like mad, but I find it terribly difficult to get myself out of it.*

*What are you up to? Send me news of yourself and the Countess...*

*I have felt enormously sad reading about Marcel's treason in the papers. You know how much importance I give to honours of this kind, so the medal is the least of my worries. My heartache is the thought that I must consider Marcel to be my enemy, whereas for the last twenty-seven years I have loved him as my own son... Marcel knew full well that if he had spoken honestly with me about it all, he would have had no trouble convincing me of the necessity of that scrap of ribbon to his American career... But he preferred to be sneaky about it, and to calmly throw me into the rubbish heap... I can console myself easily, anyway, with simple logic: that we are living in a time where merit and personal worth are the last things taken into consideration when choosing recipients of the Légion d'Honneur... (Guérard p.37)*

The following day Madeleine Richepin wrote a letter to the Countess de Saint-Martin, showing the effect that the afore-mentioned problems had on Vierne:

*... I am bringing you back our dear man in good health... I have been quite worried... Vierne was so knocked back by it that he spent several days in a sort of slump, and nothing could shake him out of it. He wasn't eating, he wasn't sleeping... Little by little, he has recovered, and he retains towards his ex-spiritual son [Marcel Dupré] a bitterness and a sadness that you will see for yourself.*

*I am so looking forward to seeing you both... Would you do us the enormous pleasure of coming to join us at Vespers? [at Notre-Dame] We could all go back together afterwards to Vierne's place for a cup of tea... (Guérard p.37)*

From that time onwards Vierne never called Dupré to stand in for him again at Notre-Dame, but rather Saint-Martin and Pierre Auvray (1890- ?). Auvray was a pupil of Vierne and a prize-winner at the Schola Cantorum in 1918. Saint-Martin became sole assistant at Notre-Dame when Auvray moved to Le Havre in 1926; nobody, it seems had any complaints about this.

At that time, as now, organists booking a deputy or suggesting someone for an appointment put their own reputations on the line if the appointment was a failure or the playing of the deputy was sub-standard; Vierne certainly would not have been prepared to sacrifice his own reputation by choosing Saint-Martin if his playing was unsatisfactory.

In 1926 Vierne dedicated the *Andantino* from *Pièces de fantaisie* Opus 51 book I of this four volume set to Saint-Martin and later recorded it in December 1928 at Notre-Dame, the only one of his written works that he recorded.<sup>23</sup> It can be heard on youtube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLwe pvo-TD8>

The break in friendship between Vierne and Dupré did not affect the relationship between Dupré and Saint-Martin; Guérard quotes a letter from Dupré to Saint-Martin dated 8 December, 1923:

*My good friend, a letter from Jeannette (Dupré's wife) informs me that you played my Preludes and Fugues for her; this does not surprise me coming from such a thoughtful friend as you... she will tell you that I miss her. (Guérard p.38)*

The fact that Saint-Martin was able to play these difficult works to the satisfaction of the composer's wife further continues to establish his reputation as a performer. These three pieces, Dupré's Opus 7, had only been published in 1920 as they had been considered too difficult; Widor had in fact pronounced them unplayable.

During Dupré's third tour of America, Saint-Martin was busy organising a performance of Dupré's *De Profundis* (Opus 17). This work for choir, soloist,

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<sup>23</sup> It was released on a ten-inch Odéon record number 166149 in October 1929. The reverse side was an improvised Cortège.

organ and orchestra had been written in 1917 in memory of those killed in World War I. This, the first performance, was given at Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux with the Orchestre Lamoureux conducted by Paul Paray (1886-1979).

The friendship with Dupré would last to the end of Saint-Martin's life; Saint-Martin would often meet on Sundays for lunch with Dupré, Widor, Armédée de Vallombrosa and when he was in Paris, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) at the restaurant Foyet in the rue de Tournon in the 6th arrondissement, not far from Saint-Sulpice. This distinguished group of men would be "surrounded by Senators, writers and artists." (Guérard p.39)

The apartment in Place des Vosges was not only Saint-Martin's home and workplace but a space for musical gatherings, which he organised periodically, featuring chamber music, singers, piano and of course the organ. Sometimes as many as fifty people were present, with the two reception rooms opened into one to accommodate the guests.

Despite all his friends and connections Saint-Martin had no thoughts of how to manage a career or organise his finances. Like many of his social class he seems to have been ignorant or indifferent to the material world even though, for some time now, his wealth had been evaporating.<sup>24</sup>

Along with many others the Saint-Martins were hit hard, due to the post-war financial situation. The château of Fonlabour was taxed heavily because of the tax on windows and doors, which was not repealed until 1925. Photographs show 24 windows on the front of the main block of the château alone, excluding the sides, rear and other ancillary buildings.

Léonce de Saint-Martin, after a somewhat gilded aristocratic upbringing, found that his private income along with his pay from Blancs-Manteaux in addition to

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<sup>24</sup> From 1792-1914 in France there were only four direct taxes; however, the percentage taxed was fairly low for those whose income was in the top strata. Progressive income tax had been introduced in July 1914, but this only applied to the top 2% of households with a top threshold of 2% to the franc. During the war tax increased several times, but after the war to pay for the costs and war damage the top rate had increased from 2% in 1915 to 90% in 1924. In 1928 Raymond Poincaré (1860-1934), then Minister of Finance, "was able to peg the franc at twenty-five to the dollar, or one fifth of the pre-war gold value." This action saved the country from bankruptcy, but at a cost. "Hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen of the solid bourgeois class found their life savings, usually in the form of pre-war or wartime government bonds, reduced in value by four fifths." (Shirer p.141)

freelance organ playing was no longer sufficient to sustain him and his wife financially.

To help with the lack of income he took a position as manager with an advertising agency. On the musical front he was appointed organist of the Théâtre Champs-Élysées, which possessed a three-manual organ built in 1913 by Théodore Puget, Organ Builders of Toulouse. This instrument, whose façade pipes may still be seen above the proscenium arch in the theatre, was built with electro-pneumatic action and possessed fifty speaking stops in addition to a panoply of percussion stops.

In 1923 Henri Mulet (1878-1967) in his *Les tendances néfastes et antireligieuses de l'orgue moderne suivi d'une étude sur les mutations et les mécanismes rationnels de cet instrument* published in 1922 by La Schola, Paris, praised the organ builders for the plentiful supply of mutation ranks in the instrument.

While this of course was an instrument in a theatre, it could not in any way be considered in the same vein as what people would regard as a theatre/cinema organ today, which is the cinema/theatre organ as developed in 1910 by Robert Hope Jones (1859-1914, and Franz Rudolph Wurlitzer (1831-1914).

The Wurlitzer was based on the unit system invented by Hope Jones whereby many stops are derived at various pitches from a single rank of pipes. Even the largest four-manual and pedal Wurlitzer organs to be built contained only 58 ranks of pipes, whilst the company also built three five-manual instruments consisting of just between 21 and 28, the size of a moderate classical organ. Another feature of these instruments was the almost continuous use by the players of the Tremulant registers.

Saint-Martin was not much enamoured of the organ in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées but saw his employment as a means of paying the bills in the first instance, although later he was to make some fine recordings under the name Léo Stin and no doubt the experiences influenced him to produce a volume of twelve transcriptions published by Leduc in 1932. The album was reviewed in the Musical Times of February 1933 by the imperious Dr Harvey Grace (1874-1944) in the following terms:

*From Leduc comes also an album of twelve pieces arranged by Léonce de Saint-Martin drawn from works by Fauré, Jongen, Huë, [sic,] (Hüe) Pick-Mangiagalli, Nin, Ravel, Vittadini, and several other composers whose names are unfamiliar. Most of the pieces are difficult and call for a good organ; they are also very much off the beaten track. There is, for instance, a very spicy 'Blues' by Tibor Harsanyi. It is, I think, a fair complaint that the arranger gives no indication as to the source of the pieces. Information of the kind is not only of interest; it is of vital importance to the player. Obviously, we should not treat an arrangement of a string quartet in the same way as we should an arrangement from orchestra or pianoforte. I have an impression that here and there the arranger has stuck too faithfully to the original; a good deal of the music is unnecessarily awkward to manage. However, experienced players need never hesitate to make a slight rearrangement of an arrangement. (Harvey Grace, M.T. pp148-149)*

The first thing to note is that these works are published by Alphonse Leduc, a music publishing house established in Paris in 1841, which published works by Alain, Dupré, Gigout, Litaize and Messiaen, not an organisation that would publish second-class works.

Harvey Grace does not seem to have grasped that the pieces are designed for "Orgue de Salon". The registrations required throughout are mainly for a two-manual organ; only three of the pieces require three manuals. Apart from a Trompette Harmonique 8' and a 32' Pédale foundation (although this could be created with the 10 $\frac{2}{3}$  Quint), most of the stops required could be found on Saint-Martin's house organ. Some of the specified registrations would have seemed completely alien to the British organist of the 1930's. Only Henry Willis III was building instruments that included such stops as the Nazard, Tierce and Cornet, e.g. the Alexandra Palace, Liverpool Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral organs. This is probably Grace's reason for saying that a good organ was required, not realising that many small instruments in France were so equipped, but also because of the use "Grand Orgue" on the front cover.

In his introduction Saint-Martin wrote:

*By transcribing the following pages, we mostly think of the organ in the salon rather than the concert hall. These pieces which are small scale works of a few lines are charming and intimate. They don't require a powerful instrument, instead almost all highlight a solo stop. We have registered as general colours, leaving latitude for the player to change the stops; depending on stops that are available to him or personal tastes.*

*It will be of benefit to study the phrasing, articulation and melodic shapes as indicated.*

(Douze Pièces pour Grand Orgue, transcrites par Léonce de Saint-Martin.)

### **3.4 Happiness and Success 1925-1937**

On 25 March 1926 in the Church of the Blancs-Manteaux, Saint-Martin played the organ in the first performance of *Liturgia Domestica* Opus 79 written in 1917 by Alexandre Gretchaninov (1864-1956), under the direction of the composer, with the choirs of the Russian Church in Paris. The concert was then repeated on 28 April in the Salle Gaveau in Paris.<sup>25</sup>

On 15 January 1927, Saint-Martin accompanied Vierne and Madeleine Richepin to the Gare Saint-Lazare where they were to catch the train to Le Havre and then go on to the United States of America. (The date here mentioned in Guérard p.45 is brought into question by Rollin Smith, who states that "Gavoty is in error when he states that the departure was the 15 January 1927." Smith references the New York Times January 27<sup>th</sup> 1927, p.38 which gives the sailing of the ship S.S. France as 19 January 1927.) (Smith 1999 p.375) During Vierne's absence Saint-Martin presided at the Grand-Orgue of Notre-Dame.

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<sup>25</sup> The hall had a 3-manual organ built by Mutin/Cavaillé- Coll in 1900 which was removed in 1957.



Louis Vierne and Madeleine Richepin aboard the S.S. France

([www.gettyimages.co.nz/detail/news-photo/the-french-composer-louis-vierne-and-the-musician-madeleine-news-photo/104409547#](http://www.gettyimages.co.nz/detail/news-photo/the-french-composer-louis-vierne-and-the-musician-madeleine-news-photo/104409547#))

On the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 25 March 1927, at Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux, Saint-Martin paid tribute to Albert Bertelin by performing his oratorio *Sub umbra Crucis* (Under the shadow of the Cross) written in 1917: this is scored for choir, orchestra, tenor, baritone soloists and two organs. The choir, the Maîtrise de Saint-Eustache, were directed by Félix Raugel (1881-1975), who was Maître de chapelle of Saint-Eustache. The Orgue de Chœur was played by André Fleury (1903-1995) and the Grand Orgue by Saint-Martin. The concert was then repeated at Saint-Eustache on 15 April with the same performers.

During Vierne's absence Saint-Martin and Vierne were to correspond regularly. On 1 February Saint-Martin wrote "... Moreover, you know that I am shut up more than ever in my little box and that I am never happier than when I am between my organ, my piano and my work table. Regretting only the lack of a subsidy sufficient to allow me to confine all my desires to that small space." (Guérard p.45) The financial pressures on Saint-Martin and his wife were considerable, with not only the upkeep of Place des Vosges, but also the



maintenance and running of Fonlabour, where his mother was to continue to live for the next 19 years.

On 8 February Madeleine Richepin replied to "her dear friends" (Guérard p.45): Vierne had himself not been able to write for long as he did not have his typewriter with him. Richepin informs that the tour had been a triumph, with her participating by singing some pieces that Vierne had dedicated to her. "Little Bichette has had a great success in her own right..." (Guérard p.45)

What this success was is difficult to ascertain; she did carry out registration changes for Vierne and transmit the beat to him by tapping on his shoulder in concertos.

In his book on Vierne Rollin Smith devotes chapter twelve (pp. 370-418) to "Vierne in America." This chapter was written by William Hayes (1929-1997). Not until page 407 does Richepin receive a mention as a soloist and then the reports were not effusive. *The Chicago Daily News* of 7 April 1927 commented that she "sang in a reverential manner" (Smith p.407). *The Diapason* completely evaded the issue by saying, "[as] vocal art is outside the field of this paper, the reviewer is relieved of the responsibility of commenting on the young woman's work." The most scathing attack came from Karleton Hackett in *The Chicago Evening Post*, (7 April 1927) "She also sang a Bach aria but not very well. An intelligent musician, but not with the gift of a voice." (Smith 1999 p.407)

Likewise, a review of the final concert in Montreal on 12 April given in the Victoria Hall, Westmount, was reported in *The Montreal Daily Star* as follows: "Mlle Richepin's voice is more effective in its lower than its upper part." (Smith 1999 pp. 411- 412)

Richepin continues in the letter of 8 February: "I am collecting photos, programmes, etc. for you... What a pity that you are not with us... a word from you would give us great pleasure. We miss seeing you and talking with you so much... Vierne joins me in embracing you with all our deep and sincere affection." (Guérard p.45)

The Vierne/Saint-Martin correspondence during the American trip concludes with two more letters from Richepin. "... I am very pleased with my success as a singer... keep telling yourself that your little Bichette is always at your side, and

that this long separation is increasing and strengthening the great affection we feel for you both, forever. We both send you warm greetings, and we look forward to the moment when we will all see each other again, which we are all so looking forward to... Confidentially, I have great hopes for Notre-Dame's organ... It is something really big. I ask you to keep it absolutely secret, especially at Avenue du Maine [which was where the Cavaillé-Coll factory was]. If this comes off, it will bring with it a whole host of very serious things that I am preparing, this would completely alter your situation..." (Guérard p.46)

The assembly of this correspondence, and the undoubted influence Richepin had on a frail and blind Vierne, who was ready to imagine intrigue at each twist and turn, whether justified or not, shows how powerful "Bichette" had become. Vierne could see no wrong in her, and like the Dupré/ Vierne relationship, the Saint-Martin/Vierne relationship was also in danger of destruction.

Marcel Dupré, however, had the steely determination not to let things affect him and was ruthless in the protection of his own reputation, which was probably easy for him to do as a holder of the Légion d' Honneur and the Prix de Rome plus numerous other prizes. It appears that Saint-Martin neither had the inner strength to fight, nor the wish to besmirch his master, Vierne.

In the last week of April and first week of May Léonce de Saint-Martin travelled to Prague to give several recitals. Guérard quotes a note of appreciation from a professor at the Prague Conservatoire, a certain Mr Khodl. This could be Alois Khodl (1861-1944) a friend of Janacek and a school headmaster, choral director and composer.

*... Whereas in our country, where the German style is preferred, the organ resonates in the most compact way. French organists prefer to make the colours of the registers leap forth... Those who are following, in this respect, Monsieur de Saint-Martin's offerings, must admit that this organist has brought us a new art form... He supplements his art with a surprising precision of interpretation, which fascinated the audiences... art of a virtuoso, which on our organ, worked miracles which will not be forgotten.* (Guérard p.46)

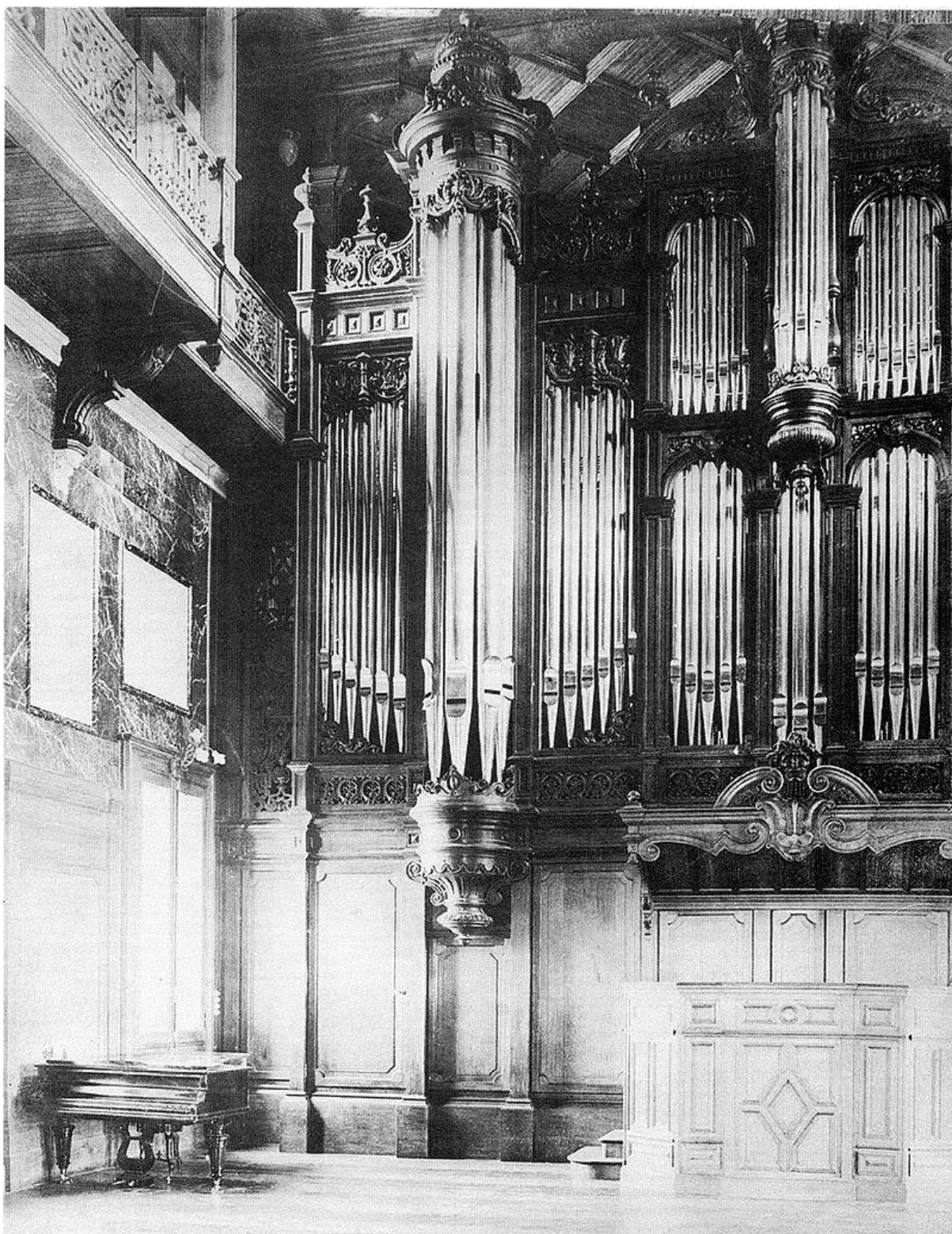
Vierne and Richepin arrived home on 17 May, the Saint-Martins meeting them at Gare Saint-Lazare.

In the latter part of 1926 Bérenger de Miramon, who resided in Neuilly-sur-Seine, a western suburb of Paris and the wealthiest (residents included Edith Piaf and later the Duke and Duchess of Windsor) not only had a three-manual organ of 30 stops built by Victor Gonzalez but was also planning to create the society “Les Amis de l'Orgue” (Friends of the Organ).

The aim of the society was to make known the importance of the organ and organists, in the eyes of musicians, the clergy and the politicians. Concerts given on the organ were rare, with only a small number of concert halls having an organ: the Trocadéro, the Conservatoire, Salle Gaveau, Salle Pleyel, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Théâtre Pigalle. The church was not supportive of secular organ concerts; this was the reason musicians such as Alexandre Guilmant, Albert Dupré and later Marcel Dupré built their own private concert halls complete with organ adjacent to their homes. In addition, a number of people owned an “Orgue de Salon” as catalogues of Cavaillé-Coll and Charles Mutin attest. These instruments were usually of two manuals and pedals, such as the instrument built for Winnaretta Singer, the Princess de Polignac (1865 -1943), for whom Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) wrote his concerto for organ, timpani and strings, which received its first performance in her salon on 16 December 1938. However, these organs could also be monumental, as in the four-manual organ built for Le Baron Albert de L'Espée for his Chateau in Biarritz.



The Princess de Polignac at her Cavallé-Coll organ.  
(<https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/7402792557470995425>)



Mutin-Cavaillé-Coll Organ 1898 built for Baron Albert de l'Espée Chateau d' Ilbarritz.  
([https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/chateau\\_d%27ibarritz](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/chateau_d%27ibarritz))



This was a very different scenario compared to the United Kingdom where an organ was a source of civic pride and could be found not only in the capital city in major venues such as the Alexandra Palace, the Crystal Palace and the Royal Albert Hall, but also in smaller halls. In the midlands and the north of England organs in the town halls were plentiful (Cavaillé-Coll had built organs for two of them, the Albert Hall Sheffield (1873) and Manchester Town Hall (1877). These two were joined by the organ in the Parr Hall, Warrington in 1925 which Cavaillé-Coll had built for Bracewell Hall, a private house, in 1870.

The original committee of "Les Amis de l' Orgue" consisted of the Count de Miramon, the Marquis de Froissart, Count Bertier de Sauvigny, the Count de Vallombrosa and the Count de Saint-Martin.

Although Saint-Martin was in the "club," was he just being used to get to Vierne? De Miramon wrote to the secretary Norbert Dufourcq (1904-1990) on 10 January 1927: "This is where we are at. The Saint-Martin question could not be side stepped. We needed to have him with us and for us, mainly because of his intimacy with Vierne. I thus saw Saint-Martin who is in, and agreed to oversee the money box and keep the accounts. [In fact, when the society was constituted it was not Saint-Martin who was treasurer but Lehideux.] Once that was settled, I saw Vierne, who is fully on-board. Soon I will go to see Widor and then Dupré, and we will have the three most important patrons..." (Guérard p.47) This behaviour seems strange, especially as Léonce de Saint-Martin had recommended Dufourcq to De Miramon as secretary and De Miramon was a supposed friend. The society did not, it seems, get off to a good start; even after a year the number of members was just over twenty. They failed to obtain the support of Widor, Dupré and the Cavaillé-Coll firm. De Miramon continues: "You can well imagine, when you are in the know as he (Vierne) and yourself are, that neither Bellevue, Meudon nor the Avenue du Maine want us to prosper... Tell me what you know please?" (Guérard p.48)

It was Widor who lived at Bellevue, and Dupré at Meudon, and the Cavaillé-Coll factory was in the Avenue du Maine. These two individuals and the firm of Cavaillé-Coll were seen rather as the bastion of the French Symphonic Organ as built by Cavaillé-Coll and his successor Charles Mutin, whereas Les Amis de l' Orgue was falling under the spell of Norbert Dufourcq and Victor Gonzalez and

their neo-classical ideals of organ building; the actions and influence of the group would be responsible for, amongst other things, the destruction of the organ in the Trocadéro when it was moved, rebuilt, enlarged and revoiced in the new Palais de Chaillot by Victor (1877-1956) and Fernando Gonzales (d.1940) in 1937.

Dupré had, ten years previously, worked tirelessly to restore the Trocadéro organ, and it was to his dismay that he learned that the building was to be demolished and a new palace was to be built for the Paris Fair of 1937.

The Cavaillé-Coll organ was rebuilt to fit the new hall and stage; the original Barker lever action was replaced by electro-pneumatic and the entire instrument placed on a movable platform. Fourteen new stops were added and the manual and pedal compass extended, and the organ was "In a word, altered beyond recognition." (Murray 1985 p.159) The traditional casework was abandoned and the pipework left exposed. Cavaillé-Coll's upper work gave way to high-pitched mixture work and the full-length reeds were replaced by those with half-and quarter-length basses.

The generation of organists led by Les Amis de l' Orgue could perceive "little value in organs like Saint-Sulpice, Saint Ouen or the Trocadéro." (Murray p.160) Its members such as André Marchal and Norbert Dufourcq extolled the new organ in the Palais de Chaillot, whilst to traditionalists such as Dupré and Saint-Martin the new organ "was a tragic loss of an irreplaceable masterpiece." (Murray 1985 p.160)<sup>26</sup>

On 11 May 1929 Saint- Martin was organist for a gala concert in the Trocadéro, in aid of "Russian invalids." Since the Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917 and the ensuing civil war, Paris had become home to many white Russian émigrés of all social classes. The Countess de Saint-Martin was very humanitarian in her outlook, and she and Léonce were involved in a number of fundraising concerts for the Russian expatriate community.

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<sup>26</sup> It was removed in 1975 and installed in the Auditorium Maurice Ravel in Lyon and opened by Pierre Cochereau on 27 November 1977. During this time, further unfortunate changes included the replacement of the full length 32' Principal with stopped pipes and the replacement of 32' Contra Bombarde by a light-weight 32' Contra Basson.

In the concert Saint-Martin played transcriptions of works by Russian composers including Glazunov, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov. The audience and music critic greatly appreciated his playing as reported in *Le Monde musical* Mai 1929:

*Monsieur de Saint-Martin is one of our perfect virtuosos, who knows equally well how to capture the interest of the general public and of musicians. He is a major force for a swing to the organ, which has been so neglected. He was well aware of this when he organised, last year, a series of organ concerts in the church of the Blancs-Manteaux.* (quoted in Guérard p.49)

Another fine review, written by Georges Migot (1891-1976), composer, poet and painter, is to be found in an article written in *La France active* 15 June 1929:

*The Count of Saint-Martin has just successfully proven that the organ could move away from its usual music and delight our hearing and our understanding with works other than those written exclusively for the organ, and it has been enormously satisfying. He made his transcriptions not with slavish pastiche of the orchestra, but rather with a remarkable sense of the transcription of the timbres. He combines his registration with assured and subtle mastery. A musician such as Léonce de Saint-Martin is capable, by his audacious action, of attracting both composers and audiences back to the organ. It is a fine mission.* (quoted in Guérard p.49)

It was a mission that would seem to set him on a collision course with members of his profession. He was, as we have seen, performing this kind of music to pay the bills, as with all his music-making he did it to very high standards.

Migot himself had entered the Paris Conservatoire as a student in 1909, studying harmony with Jules Bonval (dates unknown), fugue with André Gedalge (1856-1926), composition with Widor, organ with Guilmant, Vierne and then Gigout. Other tutors also included Vincent d'Indy and Maurice Emmanuel (1862-1938). For the first performance of *La Jungle* in the Théâtre Champs Élysées for organ and orchestra he chose Saint-Martin to play.

Writing in the Bulletin of Les Amis de Léonce de Saint-Martin April 1967 Migot had the following to say:



*With such a soul, linked to such complete mastery of technique: technique both elevated and musical, the organ, at once full and radiating out of its expressivity, was transformed into an instrument that seemed to breathe out music, as if it were released from all machinery. Hearing him play was, for me, decisive: I went to him to ask him to play the inaugural concert of “La Jungle”. Reading the work through together, I was able to witness his deep musical understanding of the piece. He understood it on every level: music, symbolism and organ. (p.16)*

At Christmas 1932 Saint-Martin's *Messe en mi* received its first performance in Saint-Eustache, Paris. The Mass, scored for choir, two organs, three Trumpets and three Trombones, was commissioned by Abbé Louis Merret (1890-1959), Maître de Chappelle Notre Dame de Paris. The choir and brass on that occasion were directed by the Count Amédée de Vallombrosa, the Orgue de Chœur was played by Saint-Martin, whilst the Titulaire of Saint-Eustache, Joseph Bonnet, presided at the Grand Orgue. The mass setting had been commissioned for the centenary celebrations of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul to be held in May 1933.

Saint-Martin like many organists was interested in organ building; he often went to the Cavaillé-Coll factory, both to try out new instruments and to give advice on the stop lists of those organs yet to be built.

In addition, Saint-Martin became involved with the *Orgue Radio-Synthétique*, investing both six years' work and capital in the project. The instrument was considered an important enough development to have had an article written about it in *L'Illustration*, 5 May 1934. The article shows a photograph of Saint-Martin at the console of the organ, which was installed in l'Eglise Maronite de Paris, the dedication being carried out by Jean, Cardinal Verdier, (1864-1940), Archbishop of Paris.

The composer Louis Aubert (1877-1968) gave the instrument a glowing report in *L' Illustration*: (p.22):

*...with sixteen stops, to be able to make more than fifty, from twelve hundred pipes, to obtain the same power and the same variety as from six thousand: it is this problem which has just been solved by the physicist, Abbé Puget, with his great radio-synthetic organ recently inaugurated in the Maronite church of Notre-*

*Dame du Lebanon by Monsieur Léonce de Saint-Martin, to whom we are indebted for having posed the problem and for having helped in its solution ...*

*The principal is the following: any given basic sound being completed by a sort of halo of harmonic sounds, whose number and volume determine its precise colour, that is, its timbre, it must be possible, and by artificially producing these harmonics, to create at will, by synthesis, the desired timbre.*

*Further, the sound is not emitted directly, as it would normally be, but collected by three microphones, and transmitted to electric amplifiers. This allows one to regulate the intensity...*

*For the first time, phrasing seems possible on the organ as on the cello or violin... it is easy to see the progress that this represents... a brilliant invention, which will not only make this magnificent instrument easier to use and thus increase the numbers of people playing it, but also to make available to it a new range of expression, and as a consequence, a whole new literature.*

Although this was a pipe organ using electronic speakers to enhance its output, it should be remembered that the late 1920's and 1930's saw a development of musical instruments that were purely electronic.

In France in 1928 Maurice Martenot (1898-1980) invented the Ondes Martenot, while across the English Channel, the Pipe Organ Company founded by John Compton (1876-1957) was experimenting firstly with electronic voices which could be added to pipe organs. The Melotone, which first appeared in the 1920's, was followed by the Compton Electrone, which was an electronic organ, in the 1930's. Compton was also using the luminous stop heads in place of traditional drawstops; these heads had a small bulb which lit when the stop was activated by hand or piston.

On the other side of the Atlantic Laurens Hammond (1895-1973) applied for a patent for his Hammond Organ on 19 January 1934. The first "Model A" came into production in 1935.

The Orgue Radio-Synthétique was not without its problems or its critics: the stop-head lamps proved to be troublesome, nor were the speakers sufficiently technically

advanced to be reliable. However, despite these teething troubles Laurens Hammond offered to buy the patent. Saint-Martin was strongly in favour of a sale but Puget, filled with confidence in himself, raised the stakes too high and the deal collapsed, and no doubt cost Saint-Martin financially.<sup>27</sup>

De Miramon was completely against this organ, or was it Saint-Martin? He wrote to the Count de Chantérac, a mutual friend, questioning the organ's reliability and how it would perform in public. He does seem to be silent on the subject of the completely electronic organ of 76 stops built by Eloi Coupleux in the auditorium of Le Poste Parisien de Radiodiffusion on 26 October 1932 when Vierne gave the opening recital with works by Bach, Daquin, Franck and Vierne and an improvisation.



Charles Tournemire at the console of the Eloi Coupleux electronic organ.

([120years.net/the-orgue-des-ondes-armand-givelet-edouard-eloi-coupleux.france-1929](http://120years.net/the-orgue-des-ondes-armand-givelet-edouard-eloi-coupleux.france-1929))

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<sup>27</sup> How long the organ lasted is not known: it had been replaced with a second-hand, small two-manual mechanical action pipe organ by 1970.

On 27 September 1936 Saint-Martin returned to Albi to play a memorial recital of music by Bach and Liszt for the late Canon Birot, a priest of the Cathedral who had a profound effect on the young Léonce as well as on the city of Albi. The city named a road, situated just below the Cathedral "Rue du Chanoine Birot", in his honour.

In October of the same year, he played in Italy at the Basilica of Assisi. As part of this recital he played the *Solemn March to the Holy Grail*, from *Parsifal* by Richard Wagner, and the audience burst into spontaneous applause at the end of the concert. It should be remembered that prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) any applause in a Roman Catholic church was forbidden, as were conversations spoken above a whisper, the norm being total silence.

What could be considered the most important and widely heard of recitals by Léonce de Saint-Martin were broadcast live on Radio Paris from January 1936 to April 1937. During this period, he was to play over 150 works written by 30 different composers, including Couperin, Daquin, Byrd, Glück, Schütz, Dandrieu, Rameau and Mendelssohn, 40 works by Bach, Liszt, Saint- Saëns, Guilmant, Franck, Tournemire, Widor, 19 works of Vierne, Bonnet, Ducasse, Florent Schmitt, Bertelin, Ropartz, Gigout, Augustin Barié and Georges Migot, in addition to works by Saint-Martin himself. (See Appendix 2 p. 207)

These broadcasts were reportedly made, according to Radio Paris, from Saint-Martin's apartment. Jean Guérard disputed this with me during an interview in January 2014, saying that the instrument in the apartment was not large enough and that broadcasts were made from the Cavaillé-Coll factory on an organ made for the International Exhibition in Liège in 1930.

Marcel Dupré had given the opening recital on this Mutin-Cavaillé-Coll instrument in the Palais des Fêtes on 4 September 1930 and played his own *Deuxième Symphonie*. "A weekly recital series followed with Léonce de Saint-Martin ... amongst the other artists." (Whiteley p.64.)

### 3.5 Years of Discord 1930-1933

We have seen the very friendly and sometimes overly effusive correspondence between the two couples, i.e. Vierne, Richepin and the Saint-Martins during Vierne's tour of America.

Richepin was very enthusiastic over her supposed vocal success during the tour of the USA with Vierne, and so she decided she must tour the USA again, although Vierne was physically not well enough to do this, because of a scare; this is something to which both Guérard and Gavoty attest.

It seems that Richepin would not be held back and suggested a joint tour, this time taking Saint-Martin with her. She broached the subject with Saint-Martin on several occasions under numerous pretexts saying that she had organised over 20 concerts for them both. Saint-Martin declined, giving reasons such as that he did not speak English, he had an elderly mother and in addition he was not willing to leave his wife and his work for months on end.

Two possible reasons present themselves: first Saint-Martin could judge Richepin's musical ability or lack thereof objectively, unlike Vierne; second, and maybe more importantly to Saint-Martin, he had known Vierne for long enough to gauge the reaction of going on a tour in former teacher's place with his mistress and confidante.

We have seen already how Vierne reacted to what he perceived as the treachery of Marcel Dupré. As a mutual friend and knowing the sensitivity of Vierne, Saint-Martin would have fully known the dangers of falling out with the Maître, and surely would not have risked it himself.

Richepin, who was probably so used to getting her own way with the weak Vierne, would surely not have expected such a rebuff; this was probably the first time that Saint-Martin crossed swords with her. Upon seeing Vierne, did she tell a different story? Did she reverse the rôles, claiming that it was Saint-Martin who suggested the tour? We shall never know, but the very situation which Saint-Martin wished to avoid at all costs, the upsetting of a sensitive Vierne, who today would probably be considered both clinically depressed and paranoid, was now an inevitability.

In 1928 a mutual friend of Vierne and Saint-Martin, Abbé Auguste Fauchard (1881-1957) a priest and organist of Laval Cathedral, told Vierne that it was his intention to dedicate his *Symphonie No. II* in D major to Saint-Martin. According to Fauchard Vierne replied; "You cannot believe how happy this makes me; Monsieur Saint-Martin has my full esteem, to such an extent that if one day I had to renounce my solitude and live with someone, I would like it to be him." (Hammond p.22) However, less than two years later he had fallen out with Saint-Martin in addition to Widor and Dupré. In a recently purchased copy of the Symphony (February 2017) which is a facsimile of the composer's manuscript no dedication to Saint-Martin is in evidence.<sup>28</sup>

The relationship, at least on the side of Vierne, was one of acrimony against Saint-Martin, and again, as in the relationship with Dupré, the slightest misunderstanding by the press caused Vierne to imagine all sorts of plots and subterfuge against him. One example is when the governing body of the Cavaillé-Coll company sent out an invitation to attend a recital in their factory on 11 February 1930 which had the wording "during this visit, you will have the chance to hear the Count de Saint-Martin, substitute organist of the Grand Organ of Notre-Dame de Paris and previously organist at the cinéma-théâtre des Champs-Élysées, playing several orchestral transcriptions." (Guérard p.60)

Vierne found out, and sent a letter to the Abbé Gustave Lenoble (1887-1963) complaining "My substitutes are only permitted to use this title for religious ceremonies and classical concerts." (Guérard p.61) This turn of phrase is inappropriate as this was indeed a classical concert. As Saint-Martin was the substitute this complaint could only be laid against him, and consequently Saint-Martin went out of his way to make sure that his name was only used as Vierne requested, i.e. for religious ceremonies and classical concerts. This could have also been the reason that when Saint-Martin recorded a number of records on the Polydor record label, he went by the pseudonym of Leo Stin.

Rollin Smith (1999 p.290) attributes three recordings to Stin (Saint-Martin) of works by Jules Massenet (1842-1912), Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), Nikolai

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<sup>28</sup> Fauchard like Saint-Martin was too old for the Paris Conservatoire organ class when he was in a position to enrol.

Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908) and fellow aristocrat Déodat de Séverac (1872-1921.)<sup>29</sup>

From now on even more careful, Saint-Martin made sure that if anything was incorrectly advertised or published he would ask the newspaper or journal to print a correction; this surely must have been a wearisome and time-consuming process.

This was not the end, for in the newspaper *Echo de Paris* of 25 April 1930 regarding the film "Quand nous étions deux" the organist was listed as Emile Bonnet, Suppliant Organist of Notre-Dame de Paris: this led Saint-Martin to request by registered mail a letter of correction.

It appears that the organist Emile Bonnet did not exist, and was probably yet another pseudonym for Léonce de Saint-Martin. If the title "Suppliant Organist of Notre-Dame", had not been used in the film no one would be the wiser, and Saint-Martin would have known that. The organ was recorded in Notre-Dame, and Vierne had given his permission for Saint-Martin to do so.

Four days later matters were to deteriorate further, when a cutting from the magazine "The Comedian" published on 22 April 1930 reached Vierne on 29 April. Again, this related to the film "Quand nous étions deux" produced by Léonce Perret (1880-1935) and provoked the following reaction from Vierne:

*My dear friend .... You will be aware, as am I, that through your negligence, the organ of Notre-Dame could be mistaken for an instrument based on a steam whistle and some little rotating drums, which appears to delight your friends... I had thought your friendship to be as solid as it was faithful... However, for some time, I have had doubts as to your sincerity, having learnt that you had procured certain articles which appeared in the Swiss Press a year ago. I had warned you that these articles were the result of a clique plotting against me. I ask you not to compound this by causing me the very great distress of ever seeing you again. I*

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<sup>29</sup> However, the radio stations 2YA Wellington and 3YA Christchurch (New Zealand) list a total of ten compositions performed by Leo Stin on Sundays between 10 June 1931 and 29 December 1931 with additional works by Franz Hitz (1828-1891), Benjamin Godard (1849-1895), and Alexandre Desrosseaux.

*hope I may count on your courtesy, if not on your affection, to spare me any visit, in any place whatsoever.* (Guérard p.62)

In the above letter, what seems to be more unpardonable than seeing the name of Notre-Dame mentioned in the film was that Saint-Martin had supposedly shown to *mutual friends* an article about a concert review of Vierne's "Bichette".

Saint-Martin had in vain tried to get the article corrected but the furious and somewhat unbalanced Vierne started to issue ultimatums, threatening legal action and writing to the Cathedral clergy in the following terms: "The experience with Monsieur Marcel Dupré was disastrous and the good times of Marcel Dupré have returned." (Hammond p.19) This was followed by a bizarre letter to the clergy forbidding them to mention Saint-Martin again because his doctor had said he would drop down dead and it would all be their fault.

The offending article appeared in the newspaper in Lausanne on 17 April 1929 and was written by Henri Remond (possibly a nom de plume.) After a few lines about the performance of Louis Vierne it continues:

*Why then did he have to choose as a partner and performer of seven of his romances a singer so far below his level? This choice was so unfortunate that it is not even possible to sketch out a critique. I can only sympathise with Monsieur Vierne for having allowed himself to entrust his songs to a performer who is also to be pitied, and all the more so for having accepted a task so infinitely above her talents. I was just able to make out the artistic intentions, but she is totally devoid of the vocal and technical means with which to carry them out. These intentions had no other effect than to accentuate the inability of this pathetic collaborator.* (quoted in Guérard p.62)

In *Le Monde musical* of January 1932 appeared a review of the first performance of Vierne's *Quatre poèmes grecs* Opus 60 which took place on 23 January. Richepin was soloist accompanied by Maurice Duruflé. The reviewer had the following to say: *Madeleine Richepin spoils everything with her unbearable pretension. Her voice is utterly lacking in charm and the incessant quavering on every note becomes truly irritating.* (Le Monde musical p.22)

Despite these reviews the partnership was indomitable and persevered in spite of criticism both in France and abroad, with Vierne jumping to her defence on every



occasion. The public were however not so easily fooled; during a concert in Agen in South Western France a clog was thrown at the piano, and the concert had to be abandoned because of the booing!

It was Henri de Chantérac (1887-1960) who finally stepped in. Chantérac, an amateur organist and a banker was a mutual friend of both Vierne and Saint-Martin. He believed that the root of the trouble was Richepin, so he therefore wrote directly to her on 20 May: *It is impossible for me to believe that these words, although signed Louis Vierne, are his own work. Has he even seen them? This could not normally demolish to such a point such a strong friendship, so selfless on both sides for years; there must be something else, probably someone else, deliberately messing things up...* (Guérard p.63)

Two days later Richepin wrote directly to Saint-Martin to clear her name, informing him that it was Vierne himself that had decided to end all relations with him. Again, the question must be asked, did Vierne even see the letter? The postscript of Saint-Martin's letter may reveal the truth. In his own letter to Richepin he writes somewhat pathetically:

*Dear friend,*

*I have read your letter. If it really is my Maestro who is the source of these letters, there is nothing more for me to do than to keep the insult and the pain to myself.*

*P.S. Why such a long silence since the letter sent by pneumatic tube of 29 of April, and why this letter written on the same day as the Chantérac visit, and the anonymous envelopes?* (Guérard p.63)

Reading the correspondence from Vierne to Saint-Martin one is struck by the contradiction of certain phrases and facts. How was it possible for Vierne to have written some of these phrases? How would he have seen Saint-Martin's letters with his poor sight? I have aimed to be unbiased, but it seems obvious that the work of a third hand is present, playing on Vierne's emotional fragility, and this was enough to set him off in disproportionate reactions.

The rollercoaster of emotions seems to have been played out almost on a weekly basis when Vierne, on a Sunday, would greet Saint-Martin with a kiss, but by the following Wednesday he would receive a letter written by Vierne saying:

"You are a pig. Do not attempt to see me again." (Guérard p.64) One day Vierne said to Saint-Martin with tears in his eyes: "My dear friend, they are trying to come between us, I will love you always, you know it well." (Guérard p.64)

In total contradiction, Albert Bertelin reported that in March 1937, a few months before Vierne's death, when the programme for the closing ceremony of the International Congress on Sacred Music was being planned at Notre-Dame, Vierne, who was not able to be present due to ill health, chose Saint-Martin to take his place: "Ask Saint-Martin, he knows my works thoroughly and plays them perfectly." (Guérard p.64) Do these verbal responses line up with what has been type-written on Vierne's typewriter? It is obvious that they do not.

By involving the cathedral clergy in the quarrels Vierne hoped to break up the relationship between them and Saint-Martin; however, it was to have the opposite effect. From 1929-1931 Vierne began to use one of his favourite pupils, Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986), as suppliant. Duruflé had been winner of the Premier Prix in the first competition held by Les Amis de l' Orgue.

Merret, the Maître de chappelle, had to speak to Duruflé on a number of occasions regarding his over-subtle playing that was lost in the vast spaces of Notre-Dame. Guérard comments that the "clergy took umbrage at the tendency, no doubt as a result of his great reputation and of the pressure of the little *court* that surrounded him, and of his own temperament, for Vierne's performances ... to descend more and more into a subjectivity and sentimentality unsuitable to the liturgy." (Guérard p.64) "One Easter Sunday lost in his own world the sortie resembled a funeral march, rather than a celebration of the Resurrection, much to the annoyance of Merret." (Interview with Olivier Latry 2014).

The behaviour in the tribune high up above the great west doors of the cathedral began to seriously displease the clergy as it took on the atmosphere of "the backstage of a theatre or of a salon, where gossip reigned rather than being an integral part of a church. Madeleine Richepin reigned as Lady of the Manor taking upon herself all the authority from Vierne." (Guérard p.65) Vierne himself had become more reliant on tranquillisers, and on occasion it was necessary for him to inject himself at the console.

All the while his behaviour became more unstable; he would shout violent curses and insults which were "less than delicate. (Guérard p.65) During the blackest

periods he denied his faith and seemed to be totally indifferent to the liturgical life of the Cathedral. The French organist André Fleury (1903-1995) describes Vierne's improvising: "after the war, he always tended to do the same thing. Every Sunday it was the same registrations." (Quoted in Smith 1999 p.465) Guérard describes the behaviour of Richepin at this time as 'dubious' and this comment is backed up by Rudolph von Beckerath.

Rudolph von Beckerath (1907-1977) was a distinguished twentieth-century German organ builder who, when he was an apprentice to Gonzalez, visited Vierne in the organ loft of Notre-Dame on 20 January 1929. "As always Richepin was in attendance as she always was, since Vierne depended on her due to his almost complete blindness. She often took advantage of this fact, and Beckerath found her to be quite grasping and greedy. She tried instantly to get him to give her 250 francs per lesson." (Carkeek.p.59)

The atmosphere of the tribune had become so toxic that if a chorister had to deliver a message to the tribune (in the days prior to the installation of the telephone), Canon Merret would make sure that the boy only had enough time to get up and back before the commencement of the liturgy so that the child could not be engaged in conversation.

Although Vierne was held in high regard by the outside world, his increasingly unstable demeanour and the apparent coterie that surrounded him caused some of his colleagues to avoid a relationship with him. When Maurice Duruflé was removed as suppliant and Saint-Martin reinstated, it was the fault of neither man. The clergy were aware why Saint-Martin was removed in the first place and Duruflé, although a complete innocent in matters, was guilty by his association with the two protagonists.

Of course, Vierne, his entourage, including Les Amis de l' Orgue, and all others in ear-shot of Richepin's tongue saw the hand of Saint-Martin at each and every turn, as they had with Dupré in the 1920's.

The clergy had had enough; Merret decided to intervene in the situation and called Vierne aside after one service, speaking to him in private. Vierne replied by letter a few days later, this time with a copy to the archiprêtre. Everything was Saint-Martin's fault; "for the last six months he has interfered to make the clergy, of whom I am so fond, take against me. I am to be pitied, I have done so much for

Notre-Dame, for the organ, for religious music, while this gentleman enjoys a situation in life, where the state of his health, his fortune, his talent and his career are so different to mine." (quoted in Guérard p.66)

The evidence is that Vierne did sign the letter; it was typed on his typewriter with faulty K in place of the L. It is perfectly possible for Richepin to have typed it and Vierne to have merely signed it. This is not possible to determine at this distance in time but it was designed to cause harm to Saint-Martin.

Why did Saint-Martin not react to these accusations? Did he discuss it with Vierne? He may have done so; he may also have replied to the letters. In the Vierne archive, according to Brigitte de Leersydes' 1977 doctoral thesis from the University of the Sorbonne, only two letters from Saint-Martin to Vierne are to be found. Did only two letters get past Richepin or was the interaction between the two men purely verbal? We shall never know.

Guérard implies that Saint-Martin took the insults without reacting in public at least. Did his aristocratic upbringing prevent him from doing so? He did compile a file containing the whole story of the scheming and intrigue. He probably realised that argument against Vierne's coterie was useless and that Vierne was totally influenced by Richepin.

The rebuilding of the organ, as discussed in chapter 1, was an occasion for a new quarrel. Charles-Marie Widor was given the responsibility for the first report on the condition of the organ. Widor set up a commission for which he called on Dupré and Saint-Martin. Vierne did not receive an invitation and therefore he sent an inflammatory letter to Saint-Martin. The Administrator (Dean) sent a reply to Vierne explaining that neither Saint-Martin nor the clergy had anything to do with this matter, the head of the commission being Widor, who was appointed by the Minister of Beaux-Arts. (Near p.366)

On the back of his copy of the letter Saint-Martin had written, "Canon Merret can confirm absolutely that Vierne had been summoned by Widor to present himself at the organ for the said inspection." He (Merret) had read the letter in question, that Widor himself had made known to him, in Widor's rooms at the Institute, no less. It included as a postscript: "Please come alone." Widor had a very strong dislike of Richepin. (Guérard p.69)

Léonce de Saint-Martin telephoned Vierne when he failed to appear at the appointed time. Vierne had forgotten, and for ever imagined a plot against him. In *Mes Souvenirs* he says, "Widor was chairman of the committee from which Mutin had taken pains to see that I was excluded." (Smith 1999 p.275) It is also probable that Vierne never received the letter and that it was spirited away by Richepin.

Widor wrote to Vierne: "My dear Vierne, Calm down! The B. arts (Beaux -Arts) have asked my advice about the reports on the restoration of the organs of Notre-Dame and Versailles, about which I have informed you..." (Near p.366)

Rollin Smith backs this up: "Canon Merret was with Widor when the latter threw the invitations into the mail, including the one for Vierne... that he later swore he never received." Merret concluded with "Cherchez la femme!" (Smith 1999 p.274)

A meeting of Widor, Vierne, Dupré and Saint-Martin together may have been the last thing that Richepin wanted, as she was the common denominator in all these men falling out. If they had all met together, maybe they might have been able to convince Vierne where the problem lay.

The growing discord in the tribune was beginning to be noticed in the outside world, and the smooth running of the liturgy seemed at stake. The Organiste Titulaire, no matter how eminent he (or she) is, does not own the tribune; they have titular use of the organ under the responsibility of the clergy. We shall see how this was forgotten by many following the death of Vierne.

The clergy of the Cathedral decided to act and confirm in position, as official substitute organist, Léonce de Saint-Martin. This was not some unilateral decision of the chapter but was done after consulting Widor (the chairman of the jury that had appointed Vierne back in 1900.) Widor told Canon Louis Favier, according to Albert Bertilin: "Saint-Martin knows this instrument thoroughly, no one else could play it better." (Guérard p.69) The clergy were happy with the appointment and Saint-Martin's diligence when it came to the liturgy.

Favier wished also to treat Vierne tactfully, mindful of his well-known sensitivity.

Canon Favier also wrote to Saint-Martin on 27 May 1932:

*Dear Sir,*

*I am sending you the rough copy of the letter which you so simply and so courteously ask of me. I have endeavoured to avoid anything that could hurt Vierne, and to put in, on the contrary, everything that could help bring him back towards us. However, let us entrust all of it to the Holy Virgin. It is the best thing we can do. She alone is able to incline hearts towards peace. (quoted Guérard p.69.)*

Saint-Martin wrote immediately to Vierne:

*Canon Favier, Administrator of Notre-Dame, yesterday informed me of the decision taken by the chapter and the clergy of the Cathedral, to appoint [sic] me in the post of Substitute Organist of the grand organ. This appointment obliges me to perform the duty, to which, moreover, I submit with a willing heart, of addressing to you these few lines. I have not forgotten that it is to you that I owe the better part of myself, and that it is thanks to the enlightened teaching that you gave me, along with the ten years of presence at Notre-Dame as your colleague, that I have arrived at this result. These lines would indeed be followed by a visit, if you were to give the slightest sign that it would be welcome. I dare not, for the moment, take any further initiative, your pneumatic letter of 29 April, having ended with this sentence: I hope I may count on your courtesy, if not on your affection to spare me any visit, in any place whatsoever. Yours, Maestro, with the utmost respect and gratitude. (Guérard p.69.)*

No reply from Vierne was ever forthcoming.

On 17 February 1933, *Le Figaro* and *L'Echo de Paris* advertised a concert at the Trocadéro at which Saint-Martin was listed as Organiste Titulaire Notre-Dame de Paris. Reacting immediately Saint-Martin asked for a retraction and this appeared on 25 February. Vierne nevertheless wrote to the Archiprêtre:

*When you imposed Monsieur de Saint-Martin on me as Substitute, you invoked a sense of fairness. I therefore now ask you to allow me to benefit in my turn from this fairness, in considering Monsieur de Saint-Martin as banned from my organ loft... It is high time to put a stop to the scandal provoked by Monsieur de Saint-Martin's attitude, a scandal which is currently spreading through the clergy and*

*through the music world, becoming a general outcry, which can no longer be silenced by any means whatsoever. (Guérard p.72)*

There was no reply to Vierne from the cathedral, which continued to witness a slow, physical and mental decline of their Titulaire.

### **3.6 Organiste Titulaire Notre-Dame de Paris**

Vierne died at the organ of Notre-Dame at 9.20pm on Wednesday 2 June 1937, during a recital sponsored by Les Amis de l'Orgue. Dr Ann Labounsky, a pupil of Langlais and Chair of organ at Duquesne University makes the following claim: "At last Maurice Duruflé quietened the pandemonium by courageously finishing the recital before a stunned audience," (Labounsky p.103) a comment not supported by any other writer or people who were in attendance.

Louis Vierne's funeral took place in the Cathedral on Saturday 5 June. As was the custom in the funeral rites pre-Vatican II, the Grand Orgue remained silent, shrouded in black crêpe whilst the Requiem Mass was sung to plainchant. Vierne's body was taken to Montparnasse Cemetery for burial, not far from the graves of Franck, Saint-Saëns, Guilmant and d'Indy.

The final prayers were said by Canon Merret, after which Bérenger de Miramon, President of *Les Amis de l'orgue* read the letter which Vierne had written on 4 February 1936 to the Archbishop of Paris, Jean, Cardinal Verdier (1864-1940):

*Your Eminence,*

*Organiste Titulaire of Notre-Dame for the last thirty-five years, I have been ill, and I am fully aware that, if the ordeal that I have come through were to recur, I would be unlikely, given the state of my cardiac health, to pull through. I am not without anxiety at the thought of what will become of the organ of Notre-Dame, an instrument of worldwide prestige, after my passing. With no other concern than to see it handed over to an artist worthy of France's most important basilica, and fit to continue the great tradition that I have served, I submit to your exalted benevolence the wish that my successor should be, as I was myself, subjected to the test of a competition and proposed to the ecclesiastical authority for approval by a panel of distinguished judges. I am sending a sealed copy of this letter to*

*Monsieur l'Archiprêtre of Notre-Dame and to the President of "Les Amis de l'Orgue" requesting that its contents be made known only after my death.*

*Please accept the respectful homage of his humble and devoted servant*

*(signed) Louis Vierne.*

Presuming that a competition would be held, Maurice Duruflé, Jean Langlais, Gaston Litaize and Jehan Alain presented themselves as candidates for the post.

The day after the funeral the Chapter of the Cathedral unanimously appointed Léonce de Saint-Martin as Organist Titulaire of Notre-Dame de Paris. True to form de Miramon sprang into action and organised a petition addressed to the Cardinal Archbishop, the Chapter of Notre-Dame and the Administrator signed by 55 signatories representing the French organ school:

*Louis Vierne taught the majority of contemporary French organists. As a composer, he has enriched organ literature with works of great inspiration, thus creating a symphonic style which has had a strong influence, in France and abroad.*

*In 1900, he was, after a competition, and unanimously, appointed organist of Notre-Dame of Paris. For the past 37 years, he has made it his job to make his instrument, one of the most beautiful in the Capital, and one of the most complete and most universally admired of French-made organs, widely known.*

*Its status enhanced by a master such as Louis Vierne, Notre-Dame's organ must have a titular organist worthy of its prestigious past and of its importance both to religion and to the Nation.*

*To this end, the undersigned disciples, friends and admirers of Louis Vierne, ask that a competition be instituted at a level at least equal to that of which Louis Vierne was the winner in 1900. The programme of this test should be set by the most highly qualified master organists, and the competition should be held on the organ of Notre-Dame in front of these maestros, accompanied by a representative of the Chapter.*

*Such was, moreover, the wish of Vierne himself. (Guérard pp 74-75)*



The signatories included Joseph Bonnet, Henri Busser, Alexandre Cellier, Norbert Dufourcq, Marcel Dupré, Maurice Duruflé, André Fleury, Jean Langlais, Gaston Litaize, André Marchal, Adolphe Marty, Olivier Messiaen, Béranger de Miramon Fitz-James and Charles Tournemire.

The very next day, Canon Favier replied as follows;

*I am replying without delay to thank you for sending me the petition addressed by a certain number of eminent Organists and Choirmasters and by the "Friends of the Organ" to his Eminence the Cardinal, to the Chapter of Notre-Dame and to myself.*

*May I now, in all simplicity, inform you of the decision which the Chapter has submitted to his Eminence. The Chapter met yesterday, Sunday 6 June, and unanimously expressed the desire to retain Monsieur de Saint-Martin as Organist of Notre-Dame.*

*Here, moreover, are the reasons which led to this decision:*

*I.- Monsieur de Saint-Martin was for many years Monsieur Vierne's official Substitute, chosen by the Maître himself, a choice made, it must be emphasised, with complete freedom.*

*II.- If, in 1930, he was removed from this position, this removal was not for any musical or technical reason. [They were obviously aware that this was for personal reasons only.]*

*III.- During this whole first period where Monsieur de Saint-Martin was Substitute for the Maître the Chapter and the Clergy of Notre-Dame have been nothing but pleased with his performance, and no complaint has ever come to their knowledge.*

*IV.- This is the reason for the official appointment, in 1932, of Monsieur de Saint-Martin as Substitute of Monsieur Vierne after the rebuilding of the organ. The Chapter judged that the employment of Monsieur de Saint-Martin by Monsieur Vierne himself justified his choice as far as musical mastery was concerned.*

*Further, the Chapter wanted to remind everyone that the organ is in the service of the Church, that the Clergy remains the sole master of the choice of an organist, and that any choice coming from outside the church could present serious problems for the smooth running of the services, and for the running of the organ tribune.*

*V.- From 1932 to 1937, Monsieur de Saint-Martin has had to take charge of the Grand Orgue very frequently, and he has done this all the more willingly that he was thus giving service to an esteemed Maître, allowing him to tend to his sadly seriously compromised health.*

*VI.- During this time, the Chapter has not received any criticism, neither from within France nor from abroad, of the organ playing at Notre-Dame. On the contrary, very often we have received praise for his playing which was all the more unbiased in that those praising him did not know who was playing. Several of them believed that it was Vierne himself that they had heard.*

*VII.- Monsieur de Saint-Martin has never dreamed of comparing himself to his Maître, nor of equalling him. The Chapter is filled with sincere respect for the competence and the value of many organists in Paris, and for the amazing virtuosity of several of them, but the Chapter retains the right to believe that Art must remain subordinate to the service of the Church, that the organ collaborates with the singing in order to raise souls up to God, and this is what it requires above all from its organist. This is why, while lamenting the great artist and the highly-venerated Maître that was Monsieur Vierne, the Chapter intends to retain Monsieur de Saint-Martin.*

*VIII. - Therefore, the Chapter of Notre-Dame appoints Monsieur de Saint-Martin Organiste Titulaire de Notre-Dame de Paris.*

*I would be grateful if you would communicate this capitular decision to those concerned, and I request this as a simple courtesy, since, in my opinion, His Eminence and the Chapter of Notre-Dame are the only ones who are required, by rights, to be informed of this matter.*

*If, in 1900, there was a competition involved in appointing Monsieur Vierne, this was by request of the Chapter, and because Monsieur Vierne was not Substitute, and had never been in charge of Notre Dame's organ. The Chapter wished to be in a position to judge.*

[Vierne of course had played from February-May 1900 filling in during Sergent's final illness, having been recommended by Widor to the Cathedral Chapter.]

*The situation today is not the same. We have been in a position to judge Monsieur de Saint-Martin for the last seventeen years; one does not show the door, with gratitude for his good work, to someone who has never given cause for complaint, and who, far from it, has always given full satisfaction. Not one of you would dare do it and not a single Curé de Paris [Parisian priest] would act in that way. I am sure that all those who signed the petition would be deeply and justly pained and wounded, if one were to act in such a way toward them.*

*Yours faithfully ....*

Albert Bertelin actually relates the appointment process of 1900 as follows:

*I have decided to relate what really happened. I was Widor's friend, which allowed me to know with the greatest certainty how things developed at that time. As soon as Sergent's death was known, Widor, whose great mastery in all things organ conferred on him an incontestable authority, declared that only Vierne was fit to fulfil the functions of organist at Notre-Dame. There was absolutely no intention of setting up a competition. But word came that a musician whom I will not name for, God be thanked, he is still living, put himself forward as a candidate. His titles and his distinguished position in the music world were sufficient to permit comparison with Vierne. That is when Widor had the idea of setting up a competition in order to get rid of this candidate, given that the latter would not put himself forward for such a test. He gained approval from the Chapter of Notre-Dame for this initiative... Vierne was elected unanimously. That is exactly how it happened. Some of my old colleagues*

*who, like me, enjoyed a certain intimacy with Widor, could attest to it. There was indeed a competition, but a competition necessitated by circumstances, one could say.* (Guérard p.45.)

Bérenger de Miramon was not going to be defeated; he wished to keep the flames of discord burning at all costs, so the signatories were summoned and an appeal was sent to Cardinal Verdier on 14 of June. Henri Büsser (1872-1973), who had very recently become President of the Union of Choirmasters and Organists, was granted an audience with the Cardinal on the 17 July. Büsser, accompanied by de Miramon, set out the signatories' arguments:

*Only a competition could allow a successor to Vierne to be found who was worthy of the brilliance of his predecessor. Eminent organists should not be denied the possibility of competing for such enviable positions. The Church should not discourage artists from whose talents they benefited, while the organists themselves received only modest moral and pecuniary rewards. The Chapter's decision was a subject of concern for the future of our glorious French School.* (quoted in Guérard p.78)

The Cardinal listened to the arguments, but did not rescind the decision of the Chapter of the Cathedral. It could be said that "Vierne's" letter of 4 February 1936 to Cardinal Verdier was intended to block the path of Saint-Martin from succeeding him, but it should be noted that Vierne did not question Saint-Martin's ability or skills as an organist when it would seem to have been an opportune time to do so. It would however have been strange for him to do so, as he had trained Saint-Martin.

The secret letter which was only to be opened after Vierne's death was not in fact secret at all. Gaston Litaize confirmed that the contents had been communicated to him at the start of 1937. Not surprisingly de Miramon had encouraged Alain, Litaize and Langlais to send in applications to l'Archiprêtre, with the aim of forcing the Cathedral to hold a competition. They reserved the right to withdraw at the last minute to allow the path to be cleared for the appointment of Duruflé.

Madame Marie-Louise Jaquet-Langlais (b.1943), the second wife of Jean Langlais, attests that "both Langlais and Litaize agreed that Duruflé should get the position and consented to a competition with the intention of withdrawing their names." (Frazer p.292)

Litaize also admitted "If there was a competition, Alain and I had agreed to play very badly so that it would be Duruflé who was selected. As all was not to be above board Alain also reserved the right to withdraw from any competition should the names of the candidates be revealed to the public." (Frazer p.292.)

It could be said that Vierne, by involving Duruflé in the politics and the deplorable atmosphere of the tribune, ruined his candidature, as the clergy would probably have seen him as Vierne's anointed.

Litaize and Langlais never forgave Saint-Martin for his appointment, and this animosity has been passed down via their pupils as well as biographers. People insinuated that the Canons had been bribed with visits to the château at Fonlabour (a very long way from Paris even in the twenty-first century): "Some of the clergy enjoyed a social acquaintance with Saint-Martin" (Frazier p.51.)

Similar comments have also been recounted to me verbally by a number of Parisian Titulaires, e.g. Olivier Latry (b.1962), François-Henri Houbart (b.1952) Frédéric Blanc (b.1967) on numerous occasions between 2004-2012. Blanc, who is a former pupil of Duruflé's wife, Marie-Madeleine, is particularly vitriolic in his condemnation of Saint-Martin.

It was inevitable that the press on both sides of the English Channel were to become involved in what had become a scandal. In *L'Art Musical* published on 30 July 1937 appeared an article written by Alexandre Cellier (1883-1968) containing the following:

*The very day after the burial of the famous organist of Notre-Dame, the Chapter named, to follow in his very large footsteps, Count Léonce de Saint-Martin.*

*Originally from Albi, living in Paris since 1920, Count de Saint-Martin, Director of an advertising agency, devoted his leisure time to the frequentation of musical salons and organ lofts. He rapidly brought himself to the attention of the music aficionados and to that of the Parisian clergy, who appreciated his gratis playing. Appointed Titular Organist of Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux, and having become a pupil of Louis Vierne, he was, from 1923 to 1930, one of his “assistants” at the organ of Notre-Dame. (This last comment is incorrect. In *Mes Souvenirs* Vierne lists his assistants.)<sup>30</sup>*

*In 1932, by an unprecedented privilege, he was offered the rôle of sole Substitute Organist by the Chapter. He accepted it. During the illness which often kept Vierne from the organ, the artistic activity of his Substitute increased considerably, particularly in the field of radio broadcasting. (quoted in Guérard pp.79-80)*

Cellier continues in a similar vein about the compositions of Saint-Martin, as follows:

*His mixed bag of compositions includes a suite of Parisian Sketches, a Mass, a Suite for organ and various melodies. It is clear to see how varied and eclectic is the activity of the organist to whom the majestic instrument has been entrusted by the Chapter of Notre-Dame...*

*... The world of the organ, and notably the winners of the competitions of the National Conservatory and of the “Amis de l’orgue”, who have lost, through this rushed appointment, the opportunity to prove their fitness for this prestigious*

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<sup>30</sup> In closing this chapter I wish to give the names of my substitutes. I shall mention only dates and titles, without comment.

1900-1904 Alphonse Schmitt.

1904- 1908 Émile Aviné

1908-1912 Émile Bourdon

1912-1914 Louis Andlauer

1914-1923 Marcel Dupré

1924-1925 Pierre Auvray

1923-1930 L. de Saint-Martin

1929-1931 Maurice Duruflé

1931 to the present: L. de Saint-Martin

*post, have their eyes and ears turned eagerly towards the organ which has gained such universal renown from the prestigious talent of Louis Vierne. A "parvenu" will now fulfil the mission to provide musical decoration for the services of the premier basilica of France ... If, in order to accomplish this, it is important for him to have the ear of the clergy, it is no less important that he have the ear of the professional musicians. (leonedesaintmartin.fr)*

One month later *L'Art Musical* published an anonymous article called "Dissonance" in August, 1937 edition:

*When it becomes public knowledge that the Count de Saint-Martin arrived in Paris 17 years ago to set himself up in business, that his only studies were short and incomplete, that his improvisations are so lacking in imagination that they bring a smile to the lips of all experts, when one knows that his professional experience extends no further than the gramophonic recording of a few piano pieces arbitrarily transposed to the organ, and that his repertoire on the organ consists essentially of transcriptions of the work of others ... one can then judge the unpardonable idiocy of such an appointment ...*

*In a repeat of Pontius Pilate's gesture, the Cardinal of Paris, in order to avoid trouble, is refusing to get involved in an affair which he considers to be an internal matter, whereas actually it is a matter of the dignity of the Church and of the dignity of our religious activity. The Chapter is taking up a rigid stance, declaring that it acted strictly within its rights, and that in any case, it is completely indifferent to public opinion. Thus, by the grace of obtuse and ignorant clerics, Notre-Dame's organ has been passed to a mediocre amateur, who, if the traditional competition had been held, would hardly have dared to run the risk of comparison with the other candidates. One wonders how the Chapter of Notre-Dame reconciles such criticism with the cultivation of spiritual values, of which the Catholic Church so smugly declares itself the guardian. Had the Chapter wished to cover the French Church and its representatives in ridicule, it could scarcely have chosen a better method.*

The pressure on Saint-Martin must have been great; Guérard alludes to the fact that he (Saint-Martin) considered renouncing the position and perhaps looking for a position at a provincial cathedral. But Notre-Dame insisted on their organist, and, ignoring the cabal, held onto him firmly. (Guérard p.81) The Cathedral was not going to be swayed: it had the organist it wanted and was unprepared to be dictated to.

English publications such as the *Musical Opinion* entered into the fray, with the very opinionated, amateur organ dilettante Cecil Clutton (1909-1991) being most vocal. (Clutton was of course not impartial, and was a great friend of Norbert Dufourcq, secretary of Les Amis de l'orgue<sup>31</sup>).

*Sir- I have read Mr Langridge's letter several times, but beyond a growing conviction it adds little but trivialisation to the argument. I must confess that the intricacy of his reasoning leaves my poor head in a whirl of confusion.*

*Having already said at least twice all that I have to say, I therefore propose to withdraw from the correspondence beyond reiterating that I shall continue to prefer the unanimous opinion of the Société des Amis de l'Orgue and the French Conservatoire to that of Mr Langridge, and I cannot help feeling that the average reader of Musical Opinion is likely to do the same. (p.640)*

Clutton continues as follows: "It must also be remembered that the Conservatoire and Les Amis de l' Orgue[sic] are enormously responsible bodies, beyond any suspicion of *axe grinding*." (Musical Opinion p.354) Clutton was obviously unaware of past intrigues regarding the supposed withholding of the prize from Vierne.

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<sup>31</sup> In an article on *The Great Organ at Rheims Cathedral* Dufourcq writes "I am happy, as a preface to the excellent article which my friend Cecil Clutton has devoted to this instrument..." Clutton while describing the instrument at Rheims describes the tonal scheme as that of his "good friend, M. Norbert Dufourcq." (*The Organ* pp 193 &195)



It is more than likely that Clutton had never heard Saint-Martin play, whereas Dr William Leslie Sumner (1904-1973) was able to add an opinion based upon the evidence of his own ears.

Sumner, who called Clutton "misleading and un-English" continues that the Comte de Saint-Martin had been a pupil of Vierne, but the master had dispensed with the pupil's services some time ago. Now, in Vierne's own reminiscences, Saint-Martin is referred to as having been deputy organist of Notre-Dame from 1923-1930, and from 1931 to "the present day" (and "in recent years" having been exclusive deputy.) Surely thirteen years of capable and regular service as deputy should give a man some claim for the post of his chief. In point of fact, in recent years the Count played more services than Vierne, and in seven visits at various seasons of the year the writer (Sumner) found the former gentleman at the console of the organ six times, and even on the occasion of the visit of the Cardinal Archbishop on an Easter Sunday afternoon. Clutton tells us the Count would not submit to a test in open competition with other French organists. But why should a man run after a bus when he has caught it? And would not an equivalent challenge to (say) an organist of Westminster Abbey be considered an impertinence, whatever the anticipated result of such a competition?

*The Comte de Saint-Martin is a man of mature years, a charming gentleman of the true French tradition, and an excellent musician. It has been mooted against him that he is an arranger (indeed, his arrangements for the organ of Debussy, and other composers, are brilliant and effective) but his original compositions – in particular his "Suite Cyclique" which contains an admirable last movement – have been overlooked. He has been called an amateur because he has never withheld his services gratis from any Paris church where he has been invited. Nor is the epithet a good one, for he has been titulaire of the church of Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux for a number of years. Saint-Martin has played the Notre-Dame organ to the delight of visitors throughout the summer, at a season when many of "les grandes orgues" of the French capital are silent owing to the long vacation. ... (Sumner 1938 p.354)*

In his July 1967 article on the organ of Notre-Dame for the British magazine *The Organ*, Sumner writes: "...and Léonce, le Comte de Saint-Martin who succeeded Vierne when he died, as he would have wished, at the keyboards of his beloved organ." (p.11)

The opposition to Saint-Martin's appointment soon began to manifest itself in various forms in Paris, perhaps none was stranger than in the saga of the congress organised by the U.M.C.O (Union des Maîtres de Chapelle et Organistes) which was to coincide with the "Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne" (International Exposition dedicated to Art and Technology in Modern Life) held from 25 May to 25 November 1937 in Paris.

The closing ceremony of the International Congress of Sacred Music was to be held on the occasion of the Exposition in Notre-Dame. As with such occasions, things had been prepared well in advance with Vierne. This congress was organised by U.M.C.O. of which Saint-Martin had been a member since 1920.

The original date in June had been put back to 19 July. Canon Favier had written to Armand Vivet (1869-1937), the General Secretary of the Congress, that "If Vierne is unable to play, you will deal with Saint-Martin, Substitute Organist and designated successor, appointed by the chapter." (Guérard p.82) Following the death of Vierne the date was put back to 24 July.

On the 12 June Vivet wrote to de Miramon:

*At our last meeting the question of the succession to the unfortunate Louis Vierne was raised as an agenda item. Here is the very simple position which was taken by our association. We are aware, through you, of the letter written by Vierne before his death to His Eminence and the as yet undecided consequences of the step taken by yourself. Now, the Titular Organist has now been appointed, and, while Vierne was still alive, he (Vierne) had given you his agreement for the announced programme. Under these conditions, the Committee believes it is best to wait. (Guérard p.82)*

This position however seemed too neutral for some members, as the appointment of Saint-Martin created, in fact, two camps, one of which was very virulent and very Parisian.<sup>32</sup> The other camp consisted essentially of the organists and choirmasters from the provinces, in particular from the cathedrals, members of "La Petite Maîtrise" or "Musique Sacrée" and the U.M.C.O. My conversations with Monsieur Yves Berge, Organiste Titulaire de la Cathédrale de Saint Joseph, Nouméa, New Caledonia, supports this fact. M. Berge has held this position since 1954 and is one of the longest serving French cathedral organists. Berge affirms that "Saint-Martin was not only a very fine organist but an excellent composer." (Interview September 2015)

On 3 July Gaston Litaize handed Armand Vivet a petition on the letterhead of Norbert Dufourq, who was the Secretary General of Les Amis de l'orgue. The petition demanded that the Grand Orgue was to remain silent on 24 July, and if it did not, the signatories, all 35 of them, would resign from the U.M.C.O. On 6 July de Miramon, as one never to be left out of the anti-Saint-Martin followers, decided to put his own participation in doubt, just to add more fuel to the fire.

This indeed was a bizarre situation; however, a strange compromise was brokered by Henri Busser. Saint-Martin would play the Grand Orgue, but his name would not appear anywhere. Saint-Martin "as no great lover of conflict" (Guérard p.82) agreed to this. When the programme was published, it contained only a list of choral works to be performed and the name of the Organiste du Chœur, Albert Sere. Cardinal Verdier, although listed, did not attend.

At the start of the ceremony the "anonymous organist" would play *Marche de Fête* Opus.36 by Henri Busser, perhaps in homage to the "peacemaker." At the end of the proceedings, however, instead of something triumphant as might be expected, Saint-Martin played *De Profundis clamavi ad te* (Aus tiefer Not. BWV 686) from the Clavier-übung Part III by J.S. Bach.<sup>33</sup> This chorale based on the words of psalm 130 "Out of the deep have I cried unto thee; O Lord, Lord hear my

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<sup>32</sup> The signatories consisted of members of Les Amis de l'Orgue, organists of numerous Paris churches and their friends and followers.

<sup>33</sup> I have chosen to use the Latin and French titles of these chorale preludes, as Saint-Martin used them. German titles with which organists of today are more familiar have been included in addition to make identification easier.

voice" was played "not without a touch of humour...in order to express musically his deep compassion for what was being inflicted on him." (Guérard p.82)

According to Guérard and those who knew Léonce de Saint-Martin, he did not react to the snubs; his face never revealed his feelings. He said "the best way to triumph over one's enemies is not to pay them any attention, nor to become irritated, but to simply acquire a moral and intellectual value sufficient to withstand their attacks." (Guérard p.84) However, I am sure that he was hurt very much indeed, as anyone would be in a similar situation.

In addition to the negative press and comments, he was to receive congratulations from various quarters; Georges Migot, the composer, wrote:

*I was unable to write this note to you any earlier after my concert, but I now wish to tell you my joy, as a man, as a friend, as a musician, to see you definitively appointed to this post because you have been worthy of it for years. Once again fate proves that victory remains for those who deserve it. I congratulate you, perfect servant of music that you are. With all my heart.* (Guérard p.84)

*All congratulations and joy at your appointment. It is well deserved, with your great and pure soul. May God assist you in your task. With warmest greetings.*  
From the Russian composer, Alexandre Gretchaninov (1864-1956) then living in Paris.

Two men who had helped, supported and encouraged Saint-Martin in his early years wrote letters that cannot have failed to touch him.

In a letter of 16 June from Abbé Pinel, the old priest of Fonlabour wrote: ... *What a reward for your efforts, for your determined work, for the fine example that you are, which struck Vierne himself so strongly, his admiration of which he was unable to hide from you for a single day.... Perhaps he would even have raised you to his console himself, if he had been left to his own ideas, to his heart, if he had not been systematically and diabolically turned against you...* (Guérard p.85)

Abbé Renault, who had been Maître de chapelle of Notre-Dame from 1905 to 1925 and had known Vierne and his predecessor Sergent, wrote the following from his retirement in Neussargues-Moissac (the birthplace of Olivier Messiaen) in the Auvergne:

*My very dear friend, your letter caused me great pain, at the same time as a great joy. There you are then, established at that great organ of Notre-Dame, of which I have now known three organists, one of whom remained 60 years, the other 37, and you as long as God wills it. But what sorrow to see you and Madame de Saint-Martin ostracised from the organ milieu by people lacking in all dignity.*

*But enough on this sad subject. The Chapter of Notre-Dame has replied without hesitation to this despicable attitude. Quietly carry out your magnificent duty, lock your organ loft carefully and remain alert to the possibility of continuing hard feelings against you.*

*Having been the private pupil of Vierne, you have as many rights as his public pupils. Thirty years ago, Guilmant put Vierne in charge of his organ class, and he never had any trouble or cause for offence from his Substitute, who taught quite a number of First Prize-winners. However, the administration did not appoint him to a titular post at the Conservatory. Why not? It remains a mystery. He had for his consolation Notre-Dame, and that is quite something. The Chapter has been more grateful to you, thank God... Vierne did not reject you because of any inadequacy, you know it well, but because of an antipathy created by you well know who, and even, so they say, because of the infamous singing concerts that were so awful.*

*I believe you did well to take Vierne as your teacher; Providence knows how to prepare encounters and all things with an eye to the long term. Keep your great happiness well hidden, as a precious thing: or people will steal it from you. Be at peace; you are where God wants you to be, as says the poet:*

*It is thus with all human life,*

*A force pushes you and unceasingly leads you*

*By various paths known only to God. (quoted in Guérard pp 85-86)*

On 14 of July, 1937 Cardinal Pacelli (1876-1958), (later to be elevated to the Papacy and to reign as Pope Pius XII, 1938-1958) visited Notre-Dame. The next day the Roman Catholic newspaper *La Croix* wrote "... At the Grand Orgue, Monsieur de Saint-Martin, worthy successor of Louis Vierne" (*La Croix* p.3.)

Speaking of Notre-Dame, the Cardinal had the following to say in his homily: *In the middle of the incessant noise of the city, amongst the agitation of business and of pleasure, in the harsh turmoil of the struggle for life, Notre-Dame, always serene in her calm and peace-making solemnity, seems to repeat to all who pass: Orate, fratres. Pray, my brothers.* (Association Notre Dame de Chrétienté p.3)

*The Musical Times* of August 1937 had the following to say: *The New Organist of Notre-Dame-de Paris. Almost immediately following the funeral of Louis Vierne it was announced that Comte Léonce de Saint-Martin has been appointed to the vacancy caused by Vierne's death.*

*This organist has for some years had a considerable reputation among French music-lovers, and among the Parisian clergy who appreciated his voluntary services. After his appointment to the organ of Notre-Dame-des-Blancs-Manteaux he became a pupil of Vierne and, from 1923-1930, one of his assistants. In 1932 against the will of his old master, he was given the position of exclusive deputy at the Notre-Dame organ. During the illness of Louis Vierne his activities increased and he broadcast frequently. He has had considerable successes with his transcriptions for organ of works originally composed for orchestra. His appointment has failed to please many French music-lovers who had hoped that the position which plays such an important part in the musical and ceremonial life of Paris would have been made open to competition, as in 1900 when Vierne succeeded to Sergent. Léonce de Saint-Martin will have no easy task in following in the steps of such an acknowledged master.* (*Musical Times* p.737)

In August of 1937 the English organist and organ consultant Ralph Downes CBE (1904-1993) visited Paris. Downes was responsible for the design of the controversial instrument built for the Royal Festival Hall and was also Professor

of Organ at the Royal College of Music (1954-1974), where his students included New Zealand organist Dame Gillian Weir (b.1941).

Downes describes his visit to Notre-Dame thus: "We went to Vespers at Notre-Dame, and the first sounds I heard as we ascended to the tribune were those of the coupled *Fonds* 8-feet, mellow and broad, with rich, clear tenor and slightly fluty treble, albeit with an edge to the tone... All the music was improvised, by Vierne's successor (Saint-Martin) – the former had been two months dead – and in true French style each piece, alternating with the liturgical chants from the choir, far below; each verset was based on one characteristic registration, as in the works of Couperin, De Grigny, Guilain etc. and in our own times, Dupré." (Downes p.47) Downes had described his visit to Saint-Sulpice as follows: "In spite of Dupré's absence, there was much to admire in the organ of Saint-Sulpice insofar as a mediocre performer was able to reveal its character." (Downes p.47) This is in contrast to the positive comments Downes made about the playing of Saint-Martin.

On Tuesday 5 October 1937, Saint-Martin returned to his home city of Albi, to the Cathedral where his love of the organ had been nurtured and where he had been appointed assistant organist as a teenager. The Cathedral of Saint Cécile was the first to invite the new organist of Notre-Dame to play a recital for them. As the first anniversary of Vierne's death approached, on 29 May 1938 he played, at Notre-Dame, his *Stèle pour un artiste défunt*. This piece is dedicated "à la mémoire de mon maître Louis Vierne" This work, conceived for the organ of Notre-Dame, makes full use of this organ's distinctive tone colours across all five manuals. It is available in two editions, the first of just over five pages in F sharp minor which is dated April 1938 and the second in F minor of almost eleven pages was written in March/April 1938. (See Appendix 3 (p. 217) for copy of original manuscript in Saint-Martin's meticulous hand, given to me by Jean Guérard in January 2014.) It was published by Edition Combre in 2016.

The American organist and carillonneur Dr Frederick Llewelyn Marriott (1901-1989), who held these joint positions at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago, was in Europe to study organ with Marcel Dupré, and

Carillon with Jef Denyn (1862-1941) the founder of the Royal Carillon School, Mechlin, Belgium.

In addition to his studies, Marriott visited numerous Parisian churches and heard their organists play, especially during low masses on Sunday mornings, when the organ would play almost continually. A special point was made to visit Notre-Dame to hear the new Titular Organist, (Léonce de Saint-Martin) "to whom he passed himself off as an American businessman." (Guérard p.89)

The reasoning behind this may have been to dispel the rumours that he heard and also read in the American journal *The Diapason* which had reported the "scandal of Saint-Martin's appointment." He quickly saw the truth of the slanders and insinuations coming out of a certain organ milieu, such as that Saint-Martin can't even play a scale; that he uses the "expression pedal" as if it were a "harmonium pedal," that he skipped part of the end of the Final of Vierne's 6<sup>th</sup> Symphony because of the perilous pedal part, ... (Guérard p.89)

In the American organ magazine *The Diapason* on 1 October 1937 had appeared the following:

*Appointment Rouses Great Storm in Paris — Vierne Successor is named — Election of Count St. Martin and Refusal to Hold Competition Cause Indignant Protests by Leading French Organists: (Diapason p.3.)*

*Reports received from Paris indicate that the appointment of Count St. Martin to succeed the late Louis Vierne has caused a veritable storm of protest in the French musical and artistic world. The Diapason has received the following statement from Count Miramon de Fitz-James, president of "Les Amis de l'Orgue" (an organisation corresponding to the A.G.O. American Guild of Organists, the American equivalent of the Royal College of Organists and the Royal Canadian College of Organists.) However, "Les Amis" had no formal diploma qualifications unlike the American Guild and the Royal Colleges.*



*One of Widor's last preoccupations was the eventual successor of his most brilliant disciple at the console of Notre Dame [sic]. He was aware that in 1932 the Chapter of Notre Dame [sic] had deprived Vierne of the right to choose his own assistant and had virtually forced him to employ Count St. Martin, one of his students, whose services Vierne had dispensed with two years previously. Widor held that the official organist of Notre Dame "as a witness for French art in the eyes of the entire world," should be named by competition as Vierne had been in 1900.*

*On June 6 the Chapter of Notre Dame unanimously appointed as its official organist Count St. Martin, a self-taught musician whom no professional organist would recognise as the lawful successor to Louis Vierne. Four distinguished prize-winners of the Conservatory and of 'Les Amis de l'Orgue,' all accomplished performers and equally brilliant in improvisation and composition, had already asked to compete for this post of honor [sic]. They were told since the chapter had made its choice, no competition would be held...*

*Henceforth foreign organists and amateurs will come no more to Notre Dame in order to judge the talent of executants, extemporizers [sic] and composers among Parisian organists." (The Diapason p.3)*

It appears that Marriott was impressed both by Saint-Martin's playing and by his compositions. In a review of a recital given by Marriott in the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, University of Chicago, on 23 May 1939 upon the latter's return from France the headline read "Frederick Marriott brings new work for home-coming recital." (The Diapason p.24)

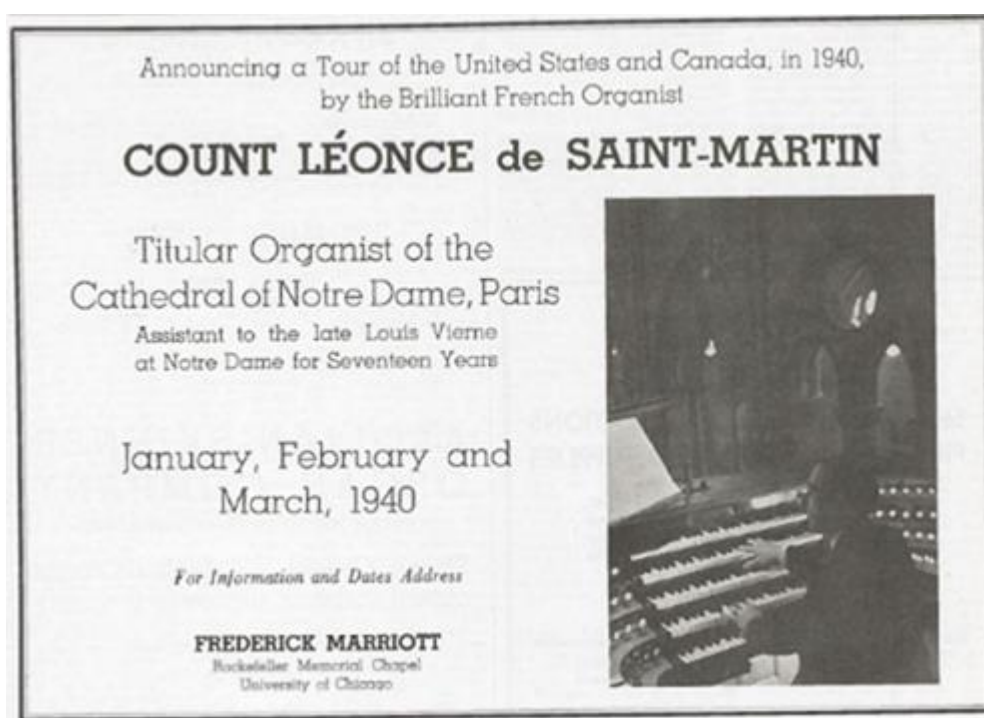
Marriott had been so impressed by the *Paraphrase du psaume 136* of Saint-Martin that he played it in the recital.

"One feature of the program was the first rendition in America of a paraphrase on Psalm 37 [sic] in four movements by Count Leonce [sic] de Saint-Martin, organist of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The Count will be remembered by readers of The Diapason as the center of a controversy that arose when he was appointed the successor to Louis Vierne, whose assistant he had been at the Cathedral for

seventeen years. .... Here is a new concert piece which our leading recitalists should put to good use." (*The Diapason* p.24)

A tour by the new organist of Notre-Dame was organised by the Los Angeles organist Dr Roland Diggle (1885-1954) who dedicated an article to him in the *American Organist Magazine*.

The July 1939 edition of *The Diapason* trumpeted "Announcing a tour of the United States and Canada in 1940, by the brilliant French Organist Count Léonce de Saint-Martin, titular organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, assistant to the late Louis Vierne at Notre-Dame for seventeen years: January, February and March 1940." (p.6)



From *The Diapason* July 1939 reproduced with permission.

In anticipation of this tour to North America Saint-Martin composed *Genèse*, a *Poème Symphonique* in three movements for organ which he dedicated to Frederick Marriott.

From the office of the Archbishop he received the following handwritten letter:

*Maestro, I am happy to pass on to you the letter from His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, confirming your bona fides to the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of Canada and the United States. Allow me to wish you, distinguished Maestro that you are, a pleasant voyage, which will allow our Catholic brothers of the New World to appreciate your great talent. This will be for the great renown of the Church and of France.*

The Archbishop had the following to say: “Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris, is pleased to recommend Monsieur de Saint-Martin, Organist of Notre-Dame, whose honourability is perfect and whose talent is recognised by all.” (Guérard p.90)

Alas, it was all to come to nothing; within six weeks the political situation in Europe was to change again, and for the second time in the life of Saint-Martin France was at war with Germany.

On 1 December 1939 *The Diapason magazine* made the following announcement: “TOUR OF DE SAINT-MARTIN CANCELLED BECAUSE OF WAR”

“The projected American recital tour of Count Leonce [sic] de Saint-Martin, titular organist of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris has been cancelled. Count de Saint-Martin was called to the colors on the first day of the war and is now engaged in defense work, which makes it impossible for him to leave France. He is granted leave to play for the services at Notre Dame on Sundays, however. The Count served in the world war from 1914 to 1918. His inability to visit the United States from January to March (1940) is a disappointment to those who had looked forward to hearing him play.” (The Diapason, p.5)

### 3.7 At War Again

The news of the German attack on Poland reached France on the morning of 1 September 1939. The French constitution of 1875 stipulated that the President of the Republic could not declare war without the assent of the two chambers of parliament, namely the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

At 5.00pm on 3 September France declared war on Germany. However, General Maurice Gamelin (1872-1958) the Commander in Chief of the French army was to delay the opening of hostilities until 5.00am on 4 September. In fact, the next eight months and one week were known as *La drôle de guerre* (the phoney war). In Paris "the feeling grew that in this peculiar war there was no need to suffer, to deprive oneself of the good easy life. Sacrifice was not needed. Or not that much sacrifice, at any rate." (Shirer p.535)

Paris suffered blackouts, and gas masks were given to the population, but the expected air raids never came and soon home life returned to normal! "The theatres, opera music halls and cinemas which had closed on the first day of the war were soon reopened and playing to packed houses." (Shirer p.535) Meanwhile two million French troops at the front did nothing.

At 53, Saint-Martin, a recipient of the *Croix de Guerre* in the First World War was too old for military action in the second. However, he was able to gain employment with the Ministry of War, in Paris, and this clerical job enabled him to continue to fulfil his duties at Notre-Dame, "during the sorrowful hours which were approaching, and which could not fail to find their echo in the heart of France's most important Cathedral." (Guérard p.92)

Even in a "secular" society such as New Zealand in the twenty-first century people are drawn back or drawn towards faith in disasters such as "Pike River" mine disaster and the Christchurch earthquake. Guérard describes the feeling in 1940's France as follows: "In times of War, patriotism and faith become allies." (Guérard p.92) This seems even more poignant as the Church and State had parted company on 9 December 1905, when the third Republic enacted state secularism

with the passing by the Chamber of Deputies of a statute *concernant la séparation des Églises et de l'État*.

The *Jour-Écho de Paris*, a conservative and nationalistic newspaper, drew a parallel between the resurrection of Christ and that of France in its edition of 23 March 1940, whilst talking about the Easter liturgy of Notre-Dame. "The Grand Orgue brought both Christian and French emotion to fever pitch, Léonce de Saint-Martin creating a sort of musical fresco, combining in the same entreaty the sacred and the Marseillaise." (Guérard p.92)

The battle of France began on 10 May 1940, the German forces invading at a speed which seems to have caught the French High Command out after so many months of inaction.

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On 19 May, in desperation and as a last resort, a day of public prayer was organised at Notre-Dame, attended by all the government, the diplomatic corps, members of parliament and city councillors. The Cathedral was filled to overflowing with people spilling onto the "Place du Parvis-Notre-Dame" in front of the western façade.

In the 1972-1973 "World at War" television series produced for Thames Television, written by Sir Jeremy Isaacs and narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier (later Lord Olivier), episode 3 "The fall of France" shows actual footage of this event, As Saint-Martin played for this service, the improvisation is likely to be his, and sounds very much as if it could be.

Notre-Dame had been covered with thousands of sand-bags to protect it, as it had been in the First World War. The glass was removed from the windows and replaced by midnight-blue fabric.

The French government did not wish to see Paris reduced to rubble as Warsaw had been, and by declaring it an open city the government abandoned its military defence, thus allowing the Wehrmacht to march in unmolested, ensuring the

protection of buildings and historic landmarks as well as the populace from unnecessary military action.

Saint-Martin was swept up in the exodus of the population from Paris, orders for which were given by the Civil Defence Headquarters when Paris was declared an open city. Shirer describes the desperate situation as follows:

*The plight of the refugees, utterly disorganised, eight million of them milling about on the highways and byways below Paris, without shelter, begging to buy food and water or pillaging for it, desperate to survive, to keep out of the clutch of the onrushing Germans but with no definite place to go except in the general direction of the South, stopping only when the logjams prevented further progress or when enemy planes machine-gunned them as they dived for the ditches to try and save their miserable lives. (Shirer p.774)*

France capitulated, and the armistice was signed on 21 June 1940 in the Forêt de Compiègne using the very railway carriage in which the French had received the surrender of Imperial Germany in 1918. After this, Hitler, his revenge complete, ordered the site to be destroyed.

The northern three-fifths of the country was occupied by the Wehrmacht, the cost of the occupation being borne by the French people. In July 1940 the French Parliament, meeting in the resort town of Vichy, which was south of the demarcation line dividing occupied and unoccupied France, voted to dissolve parliament and the constitution of the third republic which had been established following the fall of Napoleon III and the second empire. Full powers were given to the "Hero of Verdun", the eighty-four-year-old Philippe Pétain (1856-1951) who was to become Marshall of France and Head of State of Vichy.

"For four bleak years France was to disappear from the forefront of the war; some French men chose a courageous resistance at home or overseas, others were to settle into a routine of apathetic collaboration." (Isaacs, Ep.3.[www.dailymotion.com/video/x125jdn](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x125jdn))

Jean Guérard, who was a chorister at Notre-Dame during this period, remembers that the Grand Orgue was silent due to the enforced absence of both Saint-Martin and his Suppliant, René Alix (1907-1966).

Was this short absence confused by later writers, such as James Frazier, who incorrectly says Saint-Martin was absent from Notre-Dame for the War? "Indeed, he was away from the Cathedral for four of the war years." (Frazier p.62)

To Saint-Martin as a decorated soldier of the Great War, the defeat of France must have been a bitter pill to swallow. In a letter to Georges Migot which he wrote from Fonlabour on 11 September 1940 Saint-Martin said, "How difficult everyone's life is going to be. True Christians will entrust their destiny to the cross, placed above all else in their life, we will manage to endure this fate. I retain the hope that if God has not allowed our victory, he will give us the Grace to bring some good out of our defeat." (Guérard pp.92-93)

In addition to the privations of war being felt by the civilian French populace, such as restrictions of movement and shortages of food and fuel, over two million French soldiers were still being held as prisoners of war in Germany, where many would remain until the end of the war in Europe in 1945.

On the initiative of Gaston Henri Adolphe, Le Provost de Launay (1874-1957), the last peacetime President of the Municipal Council of Paris, a *Concert Spirituel* was arranged in Notre-Dame Cathedral for the benefit of the imprisoned soldiers on 8 March, 1941, in the presence of Eugénie Hardon Pétain (1872-1962), the wife of Marshall Pétain, who stood in for her husband. The *Concert Spirituel* was followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, as was customary at that time.

The concert consisted of three Bach chorale preludes followed by Franz Liszt's *Larmes-Plaintes*. Unbeknown to the audience Saint-Martin had composed a work for organ which he premiered in the midst of the concert. Jean Guérard describes what occurred:

"Many German soldiers, and especially officers, were present in the nave, attracted by this concert. The singing of a Bach chorale by the Cathedral choristers was hardly completed when in the silence which followed it, from the organ tribune, a trumpet played the poignant *Sonnerie aux morts* (the French equivalent of the *Last Post*.) When this was over, we heard the organ start a fugue subject that was at once sombre and war-like.

"In the successive re-expositions, we seemed to make out, imprecise, a few melodic sketches which hinted at the National Anthem. Then from a certain modulation, we looked at each other in incredulity: it really was the first few bars of the Marseillaise that we were hearing. They disappeared as soon as they had appeared, in a confusion of whirls and trills played on the *tutti*.

There was a moment of calm; then almost jauntily, the theme of the Marseillaise reappeared, revealing itself more clearly, although in a minor key. It became more and more distinct with the progressive entries of the reeds. Now here it was in a major key, it really was the Marseillaise, firmly played in broad chords. At first dumbfounded, the congregation then timidly began standing up one by one. The emotion was palpable. The theme seemed to hesitate once more in the middle of brusque modulations. A preparation of several bars held us all spell-bound, then suddenly, in a brilliant major, the brass rang out. It was the climax.

As clear as anything, triumphantly, in the middle of Paris under enemy occupation, supported by the full power of the organ, in a solemn tempo, it was the singing of the Marseillaise, not the Marseillaise of throat-cutting and impure blood, but its most beautiful verse, (verse six): *Sacred love of the Homeland*. The whole crowd was on their feet, overcome. At first hesitant, all the Germans could do was to stand up as well, and thus to give themselves up, despite themselves, to an homage to our France, wounded but still very much alive." (Guérard p.95)

Coming back down from the organ tribune at the end of the concert Saint-Martin, the composer of the just- premiered *In Memoriam*, Opus.33, may have wondered what reception he would receive from the occupiers of France. His musical actions could have led to arrest or even worse. For example, when a Parisian was caught out by missing the last métro home and was out after curfew the



punishment was a night of boot cleaning at the headquarters of the military police. "But if a German soldier was shot by the resistance that night, his price for missing the métro might be higher. It would be paid in front of the firing squad. The Germans liked to select victims for their reprisal firings from among the night's curfew violators." (Collins and Lapierre pp. 6-7.)

On 27 March, a letter arrived at Saint-Martin's apartment from Marshall Pétain, who wrote:

*I had been informed of the poignant emotion which had come over all those who were present on 8<sup>th</sup> March at the Basilica of Notre-Dame, and I wished to congratulate you myself on a musical composition which is called to have a great impact because you have put into it both your talent and your heart. I thank you most sincerely for this masterpiece, which will take its place in the annals of sacred music as one of the purest testimonies to French greatness. (Guérard p.96)*

The letter itself was emblazoned with the arms of the official emblem of Pétain which was to become the *de facto* coat of arms of Vichy France (see below). The first printed edition of *In Memoriam* carried a dedication of the work to Marshall Pétain, which was removed on subsequent reprintings, after the fall of Vichy France.



([https:// fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/liste\\_des \\_émissions\\_de\\_franc\\_français\\_sous\\_le\\_régime\\_de\\_vichy](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/liste_des_émissions_de_franc_français_sous_le_régime_de_vichy))

This letter from Pétain has been used by critics of Saint-Martin to accuse him of collaboration with the Vichy regime, still a very delicate topic in present day France. This claim could also be laid at the feet of other musicians as the government saw cultural prestige as the salvation of the country. "France was not defeated on the battlefield of the arts." (Sprot p.5)

The Directeur Général des Beaux-Arts, Louis-Eugène-Georges Hauteceœur (1884-1973) who was responsible for balancing French culture in an occupied country, used as a template the German Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber) to increase funding for French music by promoting its composition, performance, publication and recording. Between May and August 1941 270,000 francs was awarded for some 17 commissions. Nearly one third of those commissioned had solid ties to the Church, for example Maurice Duruflé, Jean-Jacques Grunewald and Gaston Litaize, who were not only recent graduates of the Conservatoire but also Parisian organists.

The Vichy regime positively embraced the church, putting behind them the separation of church and state. Old customs were revived, such as the procession of the Blessed Sacrament into the streets of Paris on the feast of Corpus Christi in June 1941.

The rights and wrongs of supposed collaboration are too complicated to discuss here, but it is not a black and white situation, and I contend that a letter from Marshall Pétain cannot prove collaboration any more than can a musical commission for 10,000 francs for a work such as the Requiem of Maurice Duruflé from the Vichy government.

Édouard Commette (1883-1967), who was organist of the Primatial Cathedral of Saint-Jean in Lyon from 1904 to 1963 and a recording artist who made some of the earliest gramophone recordings of French organ music, was present at the first performance in Notre-Dame. Commette was lucky enough to be working in the Free Zone, and he played *In Memoriam* on several occasions, including a radio broadcast on 18 November. The Central Committee for the Assistance of

Prisoners of War (the Red Cross) called upon the composer to play it at various recitals, to help raise funds for its humanitarian work.

For the Saint-Martins, life was becoming more and more financially difficult. The payments from Notre-Dame were simply not sufficient to live on, and this was Léonce's only source of income. Coupled with this was the fact that his capital and income continued to melt away.

In 1942, it was decided to sell the château and the many acres of land at Fonlabour. In fact, it was more of a giveaway at a mere 800,000 francs.

The large apartment was difficult to heat because of fuel shortages and in the winter they were freezing cold at home as well as in Notre-Dame, where the lights and organs were often out of order due to power cuts, so in the winter months clergy, choir and organists froze in their maintenance of the *Opus Dei*.

Guy Lambert (1906-1971), who during the war years was Saint-Martin's Suppliant (and also a lifelong admirer of Saint-Martin despite being a pupil of Louis Vierne) was forced because of a lack of leather to sole his shoes with wood, "thus adding unusual percussions to the sonority of the organ. This was novel, but distressing; everything was sad and without savour." (Guérard p.96)

The occupation must have been not only monotonous but at times intimidating and positively frightening. Marcel Dupré's Villa in Meudon was passed each day by soldiers from the barracks. Madame Dupré describes this: "They inevitably sang as they marched... and we felt like weeping every time they passed." (Murray 1985 p.181)

Having no employment apart from the Cathedral, Saint-Martin did not let time pass by unoccupied. In addition to his daily practice, he orchestrated *Genèse*, the symphonic poem for organ which he had intended to play on the cancelled tour of the USA in 1939. The orchestrated version was performed for the first and

probably only time on 5 March 1944 in the church of Notre-Dame du Taur, Toulouse.<sup>34</sup>

Two days after Christmas, 1943, Marie, the dowager Countess de Saint-Martin, Léonce's beloved mother, died. She had been the person who had encouraged his music-making from a young age, and had paid for his organ lessons behind the scenes without the knowledge of his father, thereby setting him on the path to holding the most prestigious organist's position in France.

In her memory he wrote the *Kyrie Funèbre* Opus 36 for four mixed voices, soprano, alto, tenor and bass, two organs and optional brass. This work of 19 pages in F sharp minor was published for the first time in 2015. The opening organ part owes not a little to the opening of the Kyrie of Vierne's *Messe Solennelle* in C sharp minor of 1901 and both are 92 bars in length. The opening material was also used by Saint-Martin in the first movement of his *Symphonie Dominicale* which he composed between September 1946 and January 1948.

The war, which was never far away, brought destruction to Paris when on 20 and 21 April the La Chapelle<sup>35</sup> area of the city and its marshalling yards were bombed by the Allies, resulting in the death of 641 people and the wounding of some 377 more. Six days later Marshall Pétain travelled from Vichy to attend a memorial service for the victims of the air raids in Notre-Dame at which Saint-Martin played the organ.

On 6 June 1944 D-Day arrived with the Normandy Landings and the commencement of the storming by the Allies of Hitler's fortress Europe.

On 1 July, the State Funeral took place in Notre-Dame of Philippe Henriot, (1889-1944), a devout Roman Catholic and Minister of Information in the government of Pierre Laval (1883-1945); Henriot had been assassinated on 28 June by the French Resistance, for collaboration. Saint-Martin was again at the Grand Orgue

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<sup>34</sup> It is believed that the orchestral parts are stored on microfilm. It is hoped to arrange a performance in New Zealand sometime in the future.

<sup>35</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement, a working-class area, not to be confused with Sainte-Chapelle in the 1<sup>st</sup> Arrondissement.

for this occasion, and his improvisations can be heard on a newsreel clip to be found on YouTube: (<https://youtube/7gsd3kEUUZQ>).

Early in July, posters went up in Paris announcing that on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, a first organ recital would be given on the great Cavaillé-Coll organ of Notre-Dame de Paris by Léonce de Saint-Martin.

This was indeed the first recital since 2 June 1937, when the Cathedral Chapter had informed Vierne that what in fact became his final recital would be the last public recital allowed in the Cathedral. (Frazier p.50)

Saint-Martin's programme consisted of the Chorale Prelude *De Profundis clamavi ad te* (*Aus tiefer Not* BWV 686) by J.S Bach which was played in homage to the dead of the war. This was followed by the *Concerto in A minor* by Antonio Vivaldi, a transcription made by Saint-Martin, not the more well-known transcription of J.S. Bach.

The remainder of the concert was made up of French music consisting of César Franck's *Fantaisie* in A, (written for the destroyed organ of the Trocadéro in 1878), Vierne's *Cathédrales*, from *Pièces de fantaisie* Suite 4, Opus 55. The two final pieces were both by Saint-Martin, *Paraphrase du Psaume 136, Super Flumina Babylonis*, Opus 13 and *Scherzo de Concert*, Opus 18.

Despite the war coming each day closer to the Capital, it seems that the Parisians remained calm enough to fill the Cathedral again on 13 August to hear a second recital by Marcel Dupré which included music by Bach, Mozart, Franck and Dupré, and concluded with an improvisation.

On 15 August, the police went out on strike, and four days later the National Committee of the Résistance decided on an uprising. Barricades went up, shots were fired, some 1500 members of the Resistance and civilians were killed and a further 3500 injured, whilst over 1000 Germans died (some of whom were executed after they had surrendered) and 2000 were injured.

On 25 August, Saint-Martin noted: "Waited at Notre-Dame for General de Gaulle from 2pm to 7:30pm; visit cancelled." (Guérard p.99) This was the day of the German surrender. "It was that night that the Paris church bells rang out through the night the first time since June 1940, announcing the entry of Allied troops into the city." (Murray 1985 p.185)

On the 26 August, Saint-Martin was summoned for a *Te Deum* planned for 4:30pm. Arriving at 3:30pm, he was unable to open the door of the South Tower to climb the stairs to the organ tribune, but even if he had been able to ascend to the organ "there was only enough electricity to power the east end of the cathedral." (Collins and Lapierre p.335) This enabled the choir organ to be used as well as small amount of lighting in the choir and the transepts.

James Frazier in his book "Maurice Duruflé: the man and his music" gives his opinion on why Saint-Martin apparently did not play:

*Nor did the Cathedral organist, Léonce de Saint-Martin, play for the service. Indeed, he was away from the Cathedral for four years, and was reproached for having his photographs taken at the side of some German organists in military uniform. Whatever the reason for Saint-Martin's not having played for the Te Deum, either because of his personal sympathies or merely because of his association with France's premier cathedral, Duruflé was invited to play the organ instead, implying his political innocence.* (Frazier p.62) Duruflé makes no mention of such an event.

In a letter to Frazier written in April 2002 Paul Duruflé (Duruflé's nephew) labels Saint-Martin "a collaborator." (Frazier p.294)

What Frazier has written is simply not true; he seems to have been more than willing to put into print malicious gossip rather than tautology. Saint-Martin's journal records the events of the day clearly:

*26 August 1944: Te Deum planned at Notre-Dame for 16.30. General De Gaulle arrived at 16.10. The clergy were not there to receive him (the Cardinal, held*

*prisoner, was released at 18:00. The bells and the organ were mute; the power had been cut. Machine gun fire upon the General's arrival. I could not get back to my post* (Hammond p.23).

Both Saint-Martin and Jean Guérard attest that the Cardinal Archbishop was held prisoner until 6.00pm. However, according to other sources Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) considered Cardinal Emmanuel Célestin Suhard (1874-1949) to be a collaborator and refused to meet him. "De Gaulle had urged the Cardinals and Archbishops to distance themselves from the Vichy regime and to consider an alliance with the free French overseas." (Bank and Geves p.315)

It was therefore the Archiprêtre of the Cathedral, Monsignor Brot, who welcomed the General at the great west doors. However, no sooner had General de Gaulle taken his place in the transept, when shots rang out from the triforium. The congregation pulled " their prie-dieus over them like covers," causing one of de Gaulle's ministers, André Le Troquer (1884-1963) to comment, " I can see more rear ends than faces" (Collins & Lapierre pp.335-336)

In fact, the shots were aimed at no-one, but were fired horizontally from the east end of the Cathedral to the west; eighteen bullets hit the façade pipes of the Grand organ, whilst another pierced the balustrade of the organ tribune. Having taken cover, Saint-Martin was not allowed back to the organ for his own safety. In the end it was not possible for him to play as the electricity to the west end of the Cathedral was not restored.

René Blin (1884-1951), the Organiste de Chœur, began to improvise an interlude to precede the Magnificat. Abbé Lepetit (who according to Guérard was famed for his awful voice) intoned the Magnificat in B-flat major instead of the customary F major, either through emotion for the occasion or sheer fright! "Realising it was folly to go on, he ended the service after the *Magnificat*!" (Collins and Lapierre p.336)

Finally, on 9 May, 1945, Victory in Europe was celebrated with a Te Deum in Notre-Dame de Paris. Saint-Martin was at the Grand Orgue, a fact that cannot be disputed.

The French dramatist, novelist, critic, poet and journalist François Mauriac (1885-1970) wrote in one of his editorials in *Le Figaro* in May 1945. (p.7)

*...the Te Deum suddenly rolled out ... When, on the great organs, the Marseillaise rang out, a Marseillaise for the angels and for the saints, transposed onto the eternal plane, I had the deep feeling that of this universal hope, France had its share... I felt myself to be all alone, when suddenly an immense acclamation rang out as if the very stones of Notre-Dame were shouting... This acclamation of the stones of Notre-Dame resounded with a “Paraphrase of the Te Deum” by Léonce de Saint-Martin, the singing of the Te Deum, the Regina Coeli, Saint-Martin’s “In Memoriam” and Widor’s “Toccata”. The Bourdon (bell) rang out together with the bells; the crowd screamed with joy.*

### **3.8 Peace for France**

The German instrument of surrender was signed in Reims on 7 May 1945 at 2.41 am by General Alfred Jodl (1890-1946) some six hours before it was signed in Berlin. A day later, V.E. (Victory in Europe) day was celebrated.

Now that the war was over could France forget four years of occupation, deprivation and suffering? During the occupation some 29,660 French people had been executed by the Germans, in addition to 68,778 civilians killed between June 1940 and May 1945.

As the country returned to normality would Saint-Martin be able to get on with being organist of Notre-Dame and be acknowledged, appreciated and respected for who he was?

On 12 November, 1945, a letter arrived from Frederick Marriott, the dedicatee of *Genèse* and organist of the University of Chicago. Marriott proposed that the cancelled tour of the United States and the Dominion of Canada that was planned



for 1940 could be resurrected and put into action. Saint-Martin declined for whatever reason; was it fatigue, age, or even a remembrance that the planned tour that Richepin wanted to organise 15 years before had led to so much upset and acrimony in his life?

During a short stay in Albi in 1945 Saint-Martin visited Fonlabour, which surely must have been a reminder of what he once owned and how little remained. His financial resources were simply melting away, the value of the franc fell, and taxation increased alongside the cost of living. For every 100 francs he'd had in his pocket in 1906, in 1925 he only had 22 francs, and in 1945 it was crippling 3 francs. Worse was yet to come: galloping inflation reduced capital to nothing. The 100 francs from 1906, by the end of his life, would only be worth 57 centimes!

Léonce de Saint-Martin, it seems, was not merely ignorant of and indifferent to financial matters, he was totally allergic to them. Like the aristocrat that he was, he probably didn't want to be troubled by such material things. At times, he came close to insouciance, for at the same time his generosity was incredible. When he thought that certain of his students suffered from limited means, he would give them their lessons free, or asked only token fees. He never negotiated for higher fees for his recitals. If a visitor admired a beautiful piece of art or ornament in his apartment, he would sometimes give it to him or her. He never asked Notre-Dame for a raise in his remuneration. He was waiting for them to make the offer, while Notre-Dame remained convinced that he had ample means to allow him to live at a decent level.

To a certain extent the couple fooled people with their impeccable appearance, but if one observed closer it was easy to spot the wear and tear of their clothes. "With Léonce's smiles, distinguished serenity, courtesy, and bonhomie, punctuated with bursts of humour, his manner that of a suave clergyman, and the beautiful apartment on the Place des Vosges always open and welcoming, who could have guessed what lay behind the façade?" (Guérard p.109) For example, in order to bring in a little more money, Saint-Martin gave up his bedroom to a paying lodger, and then he himself slept, right to the end of his days, in a little room off the kitchen.

Each morning he worked at his technique, always starting on the piano, before commencing on the organ. It was always probably in the back of his mind that he could not permit himself to play a single wrong note, as there could be certain people listening, waiting for him to make a mistake; the afternoons he tended to reserve for composition. Between 1946 and 1951 the last four works were composed, namely the *Symphonie Dominicale* 1946-1948, *Symphonie Mariale*, 1949 and finally *Cantique Spirituel* 1950 and the *Magnificat* for four-part choir and two organs (1950-1951).

That was the end of composing apart from in April 1952 when, following the death of nineteen-year-old Gabriel Steinmetz (son of Robert Steinmetz (1902-1959), organist of Notre-Dame de Saint-Mand , and a friend of Saint-Martin), he composed a piano accompaniment for a spoken poem, *Esp rance [Hope]*. This consisted of a few chords, and few simple arpeggios to support the words.

In 1946, he made his British debut at Westminster Cathedral, playing on the Henry Willis III organ, as had Dupr  and Vierne before him. (For specification of the organ see Appendix 4 p.224) The programme consisted of music by Du Mage, Couperin, Dandrieu, Bach, Widor, Vierne and Saint-Martin. (For the Programme see Appendix 5 p. 228)

The following review appeared in the Musical Times of June 1946:

*There was much curiosity to hear L once de Saint-Martin, whose appointment without competition to Notre-Dame, Paris on Vierne's death in 1937 aroused such a storm among our French colleagues. At his recital at Westminster Cathedral on 6 May it seemed to me clear once and for all that their opposition was justified. In spite of two assistants there were some bad mishaps, and each one put him quite out for the moment. In 'Erbarm dich' he sustained all the chords of the accompaniment; what was the use of Bach's writing them, for this single piece, as repeated ones? He used modern heavy reeds in old French pieces, and spoilt the gravity of the short E minor Fugue by apparently adding the octave coupler to a huge Swell in the middle section. Vierne's 'Carillon de Westminster' was slowed down in the most difficult passages, the articulation scamped [sic], and the vibrato chords played sustained. In two works of his own the Count showed a certain effectiveness, though of precisely what kind I am not going to say. A section of the large audience was obviously much taken by them, and it*

*could be wished that they had heard some other French or English player. Of the opinion of the organists there was no doubt. It is difficult to give M. de Saint-Martin due credit for his sincerity. If he thinks us severe he must reflect that it is one of the penalties of draping himself in the mantle of Elijah.* (A.F. p.180)<sup>36</sup>

In *The Musical Times* in April 1932 Freeman had written the following review of a recital given by Marcel Dupré on 1 March 1932 also at Westminster Cathedral. At this recital Dupré improvised on the notes of the Westminster chimes which had been used by Vierne for his famous *Carillon de Westminster*, Opus 54.

*M. Dupré opened by playing the theme in thick chords low down on an indistinct manual combination, jauntily duplicated on the half beats by the right hand high upon a very Nasardy and tremulated combinations; it was the most successful imitation I have ever heard on the organ of the manner, tone, and atmosphere of "Chu Chin Chow"- many a cinema organist would blush to produce sounds so barefacedly ribald. After toying at some length with the idea, and not discovering any resources in it, M. Dupré made a crescendo and broke off to develop a fugue. Of this he proceeded as far as the exposition of two voices, and then side-tracked into those staccato chords of which he is so fond, and whose advent I had been impatiently expecting for some time. The rest of the improvisation which seemed interminable, was devoted to ff staccato chords, mostly irrelevant to the subject and to everything else, of a blatancy that could scarcely be exceeded. Of the charge of finding no possibilities in the theme that perhaps contained none, M. Dupré is acquitted; but of lèse-majesté, of spending fifteen minutes in making the organ sound like a musical comedy and a circus- No, a thousand times No!*

(Musical Times April 1932, p.342)

Saint- Martin's recital was the first to be held in the post-war series. Westminster Cathedral website says that the "post war recital series resumed in 1946 with names such as Léonce de Saint-Martin, Fernando Germani (1906-1998), Jeanne

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<sup>36</sup> It could however be claimed that A.F., who was in fact the Revd. Andrew J. Freeman BA Mus.B. FRCO (1876-1947), was not the most objective of critics. After Cambridge University he held organist positions at a number of non-conformist churches between 1890 -1915 when he was ordained as an Anglican priest. It is quite possible that Freeman along with many others of the time would have been simply against these performers because they were Roman Catholic.

Demessieux, and again, Marcel Dupré..."

([www.westminstercathedral.org.uk/organs.php](http://www.westminstercathedral.org.uk/organs.php))

On Friday 10 May at 7.30pm he played a recital on the BBC Home Service from St Mark's North Audley Street in London's Mayfair. What he thought of the 66-speaking stop 1930 Rushworth & Dreaper organ is not recorded, but the smoothness of its ranks, especially the chorus reeds, would have been in very sharp contrast to those of the Notre-Dame Cavaillé-Coll.

He then went onto play in Liverpool at St Anne's Roman Catholic Church Edgehill; this fine three-manual organ built by Henry Willis & Sons Ltd was designed in consultation with Henry Willis III and Marcel Dupré.<sup>37</sup> Recitals then followed in Norwich Cathedral and Edinburgh. As all but one of the organs played were built by the English organ builder Henry Willis it is most likely that the tour would have been assisted in its organisation by Henry Willis III.

In addition, there was a reception in his honour at the French Embassy and at the Institut Français (French Institute). *"They had me play on all the instruments of the Capital. If you only knew how indifferent I am to all this, and how I would love never to have left my Cathedral of Albi"* (Guérard p.112)

When Saint-Martin was heard to play brilliantly, as he was at the funeral of General Leclerc (Philippe François Marie Leclerc de Hauteclocque, 1902-1947) in December 1947, one of his ardent critics, Bernard Gavoty (1908-1981) presumed it was Marcel Dupré who was playing because he had been spotted in the sacristy in the company of Saint-Martin, before the funeral began.

As the Sortie Saint-Martin played his *In Memoriam*. At the end of the service, Gavoty rushed towards Dupré and Saint-Martin, whom he saw walking towards him, arms linked. To Dupré he said, "Bravo, Maestro, for that powerful fugue on the Marseillaise." To which Dupré replied: "I didn't do anything; it's the work of my friend that everyone's been talking about so much these last few years." (Interview with Jean Guerard 2014.)

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<sup>37</sup> The writer played this instrument as an 11 year old, and even though in poor condition the sound made a memorable impression.

In 1950, he gave a Bach recital in Florence, and went twice to Siena, where he gave recitals in the concert hall - Palazzo Chigi Saracini.

Recitals were not unknown in France and in September 1950 he gave the opening recital for the dedication of the organ in the Chapelle Abbatiale d'Ourscamp where he played the *Fantasia* in G BWV 572 by J.S. Bach and a complete performance of *Symphonie Mariale*.

In the same year, the Ministry of Industry arranged for Saint-Martin to be appointed organ consultant at the Ministry of Reconstruction. This ministry was established following the war to evaluate war damage. Saint-Martin was no doubt grateful for the work, which was sufficient to get his finances flowing again. It was certainly time as he and his wife were about to start selling the silver! In addition, the travel necessitated by this position opened several possibilities for recitals and inaugurations, which were very welcome.

In December 1952, he was invited to Tunisia, where he played recitals on 10 and 14 December in the Cathédrale Saint-Vincent de Paul Tunis on the three-manual Mutin/Cavaillé- Coll organ, to great acclaim.



Cathédrale de Saint Vincent de Paul Tunis ([https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathédrale\\_Saint-vincent-de\\_Paul\\_de\\_Tunis](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathédrale_Saint-vincent-de_Paul_de_Tunis))

In 1952 Michael Howard (1922-1999), later to be Organist and Master of the Choristers of Ely Cathedral, was in Paris and describes his visit to Notre-Dame as follows. Howard, who did not suffer fools gladly, recalled in his biography written almost 50 years after the event the experience of hearing Saint-Martin play:

*On the Sunday afternoon we were escorted to Notre-Dame to meet M. le Comte de Saint-Martin, the Titulaire and successor to Louis Vierne, and to attend Vespers with him up in the west tribune while he supplied the necessary interpolations on Cavaillé-Coll's wonderful Grand Orgue (an instrument now destroyed, together with the liturgy it once enhanced). M. le Comte was urbane and courteous, carrying a tall silver headed cane; his hat was broad brimmed and floppy.*

*Far below and far away in the choir, the Canons were already chanting their way through the psalms, for the (improvised) organ commentaries did not begin until the singing of the Office Hymn and Magnificat. The little Orgue de Chœur (seemingly virtually in another building) gave an appropriate back-drop to the singing of the clergy. One heard the rustle of mechanism as de Saint-Martin drew the various stops and set the Jeux de combinaisons which he would require.*

*The console telephone croaked like an expiring frog with a message from the sanctuary advising him of pitch...and then it began. Verse by verse the Grand Orgue replied, sometimes like a pool of water, sometimes in a thunder of ecstasy that had the whole building shouting in echoing reply; and then at the end, and after Benediction, came the Sortie. To every man his instrument; to every dog his day; the thrill of it all is with me still. (Howard p.63)*

Another satisfaction for Saint-Martin was the admiring friendship of his pupils, who would supply a not-inconsiderable contingent of organists for provincial organs. It was very rare that they were following a course of study in a Conservatory, or if they were, they came clandestinely. Jean Guérard describes attending Saint-Martin's flat for lessons as follows:

*He welcomed his pupils in the minuscule entry of the apartment, to which he had just opened the door himself, with a big smile, his hand held out warmly, generally dressed in a smoking jacket, and wearing a tie, as was the norm. One would cross the dining room before entering the great reception room, lit by two windows overlooking the Place des Vosges. Between the two windows, the double piano. On the other side, the organ.*

*I will not describe the organ lessons, having played this instrument only a little. He called me affectionately "Mon petit Jean". To examine my work in harmony, counterpoint, fugue and composition, he had me sit at the piano close to him. Purely scholastic study was not his priority. First, one had to listen. He would play it through, then we would re-work the construction of the whole, for which he made very great demands. One examined the pertinence of the details. "It's really very good, but ..." Elimination after elimination, suggestion after suggestion, it all came together in an improved form. He left one a great liberty,*

*even in one's composition initiatives which were most removed from his own style. But he had a fine nose for all the false artifices: dissonances for the sake of dissonance, artificial harmonic subtleties, excesses of abstraction which more or less made sense when reading the score, but held no interest for the ear. It "had to sing!" He loved to get me to do variations or fugues on themes of Bach chorales. He agreed with the opinion, by the way, that the music of Bach is a sufficient proof of the existence of God.*

*He sometimes had me listen to extracts of a composition he was working on. And sometimes one could hear, coming from her salon, the voice of Madame de Saint-Martin disagreeing with this or that passage. The contentious point was identified. "My dear, we will re-do this little bit."*

*Always even-tempered, extremely kind, uttering only words of encouragement, he makes one regret not having spent more time with him, and not having drawn more benefit from his teaching. How could I not also regret that the age difference and the inattention of youth did not allow me to enter more fully into his friendship and his intimacy? (Guérard p.116)*

It is often thought that Saint-Martin was considered to be completely *persona non grata*, but this is not the case, as the organ loft did get distinguished visitors from time to time, such as Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), who often attended when in Paris.

Eugène Reuchsel (1900-1988) dedicated his *Jour de Fête aux Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer*, which is the ninth movement of *Promenades en Provence*, as follows: *en hommage à la mémoire de mon cher ami, Léonce de SAINT-MARTIN, Titulaire du Grand Orgue de Notre-Dame de Paris, et en souvenir de mes exécutions sur les cinq claviers de ce merveilleux instrument.* (Reuchsel p.47) (Amongst the other dedicatees were Cochereau, Demessieux, Dupré, Duruflé and Jacques Ibert.)

Dupré never deserted Saint-Martin and even asked him to be on the jury of an organ competition, as one of the few pieces of correspondence in the Bibliothèque Nationale dated 18 June 1953 attests:

*My dear and admirable friend,*

*I don't know if you were able to hear our conversation on the phone that I am deeply touched by your generous invitation. God knows I've been happy to*



*accompany you and sit under your shadow - but I guess, in life, one has to keep in touch with reality. I am not a member of the "house" and I am afraid my presence in this jury has been an occasion for criticism. I apologise if my negative response has caused hurt, but I know you too well to not believe that you fully understand my reasons for declining. Good wishes from us 2 to you 2.*

An important but unexpected friendship came about as the result of a recital in Moulins some 265 km south of Paris. It was here Saint-Martin met Paul Perrot, a pig farmer from Paray-le-Monial, in the Burgundy region of France. Perrot was passionate about the organ and its music and was so impressed by Saint-Martin's playing "that he would never accept the slightest hint of a criticism of his idol". (Guérard p.117)



Paul Perrot (leoncedesaintmartin.fr?p141)

Perrot was a man of means and paid for the restoration of the Merklin organ in the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur, Paray-le-Monial.

Perrot was also to use his comfortable financial position and his free time to help Saint Martin; he would send gifts of fowl from Burgundy, warm clothing to keep off the cold of the organ loft, he even acted as chauffeur and drove Léonce around in his powerful car. "Saint-Martin, who had not owned a car for a long time, loved speed." (Guérard interview, 2014)



Basilique du Sacré-Coeur de Paray-le-Monial

(<https://www.mon-coin-de-bourgogne.fr/paray-le-monial>)

Through his connection with Saint-Martin the voicing and tonal finishing was carried out by Jean Perroux (1874-1956) who in 1889 at the age of 15 had become the last apprentice to be trained by Cavaillé-Coll himself. Due to his voicing and tonal finishing skills he was known as the "Harmoniste National." (Steed p.172) Paray-le Monial was *en fête* on Sunday 20 May 1951 when Saint-Martin played the Grand Orgue for the Mass, the setting being his own *Messe en Mi*. Later that day he gave a recital which included music by Bach, Couperin, Vierne and the very difficult *Evocation* Opus. 37 by Marcel Dupré.

After Saint-Martin's death Perrot paid for the enlargement of the organ. The opening recital was given by Saint-Martin's successor, Pierre Cochereau.



Saint-Martin with Jean Perroux.

(Les Amis de Léonce de Saint-Martin)

Another important friendship was to be with Pierre Baculard, a medical student who was also to assist in the tribune with registration and page-turning. Baculard was able to observe that Saint-Martin was not in the best of health.

Saint-Martin had not recorded apart from a 1930 recording of J.S. Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (BWV 565) at the organ of Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux.

Fifty years later in 1980 this recording was reviewed by Michel Roubinet for a boxed set of CD recordings of *Orgues et organistes Français du XXè siècle* issued by EMI Classics:

"Léonce de Saint-Martin who was firstly incumbent of Notre-Dame des Blancs-Manteaux in Paris, where he recorded a *Toccata & Fugue*, BWV 565, of prodigious vehemence, far from the usual manner at the time, and in that sense undeniably modern." (Roubinet p.23)

In addition, he had made a number of recordings under the pseudonym of Leo Stin, but the lack of further recordings was probably due to the controversy of his appointment followed by the outbreak of war.

Saint-Martin with his modesty, and his consciousness that the reputation that had been given to him would never allow him to be considered as a major organist, never concerned himself with being recorded.

Baculard found it unthinkable that, when Léonce was dead, nothing would remain of the playing that he was hearing. So he brought a tape recorder, and microphones, and recordings were then made on a Sunday, or on a Friday evening, which was when Saint-Martin rehearsed in the Cathedral. "At first perplexed, then amused and admiring of these modern techniques, Saint-Martin was grateful for the time and the money that were being spent on him. The reserve that was natural to him, the age difference, and, on the other hand, the respect and shyness of youth, did not prevent the birth between these two of a musical intimacy and of a half-spoken friendship." (Guérard p.124)

On 6 January 1954, the feast of Epiphany, he had a minor fall, slipping on ice as he walked to Notre-Dame. On 11 April, in Moulins, he gave his last recital. In May, confined to bed by illness, he was unable to go to Orléans where he had been invited to play in the Cathedral for the festival of Joan of Arc.

Nor was he able to go to the annual service of confirmation at Notre-Dame-des-Blancs-Manteaux, which he had attended every year since his appointment at Notre-Dame. On 20 May, he wrote to Father Latreille, curate and future priest of the parish: "It is not at all serious, but this sudden indisposition has nonetheless obliged me to temporarily postpone all activity. So this year I must renounce my visit to Blancs-Manteaux, simply because it is the eve of the Ascension, and that it is wiser for me to save my energy for the next day." At the end of May, Father Latreille came to see how he was, Saint-Martin was to say: "I am so much better, but you never know! I would be happy to stay, there is still much to do. But whatever the Good Lord wills, will be fine by me." (Bulletin 4, March 1966)

For some time, Saint-Martin had been suffering from Peripheral Arterial Disease, a narrowing of the arteries, which was if not caused by, then probably at least aggravated by his chain-smoking. On 4 June he had an attack of vomiting, and despite being unwell two days later he was at the organ of Notre-Dame for the

Feast of Pentecost, but on the following Wednesday his condition took a turn for the worse.

Madame de Saint-Martin telephoned Pierre Baculard, who contacted Dr André Domart (1909-1980). A mesenteric infarction was diagnosed, which was caused by inadequate blood flow through the mesenteric vessels. This can result in ischemia and eventual gangrene of the bowel wall. Although relatively rare, it is a potentially life-threatening condition. Saint- Martin, accompanied by Pierre Baculard, was admitted to the *Clinique de l'Alma*, a private clinic in the 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, close to the Eiffel Tower. Unfortunately, it was a hopeless case, and Chanoine Merret was called over from the Cathedral to administer the last rites. Later that evening Saint-Martin was taken back home, and at the request of Madame Saint-Martin the ambulance drove past the flood lit west front of Notre-Dame. Léonce turned his eyes toward the cathedral. "It's so beautiful" he was heard to murmur. (Guérard p.124)

Within one hour of his return he died in his living room, near his beloved organ, "reuniting on that 10 June of that Marian Year, 1954, with the true Notre Dame, (the Blessed Virgin Mary) to whom he had sung his whole life through with all his heart and soul." (Guérard p.125) The Marian year, the first in church history, had been declared by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical of 8 September 1953, *Fulgens Corona* (Radiant Crown).

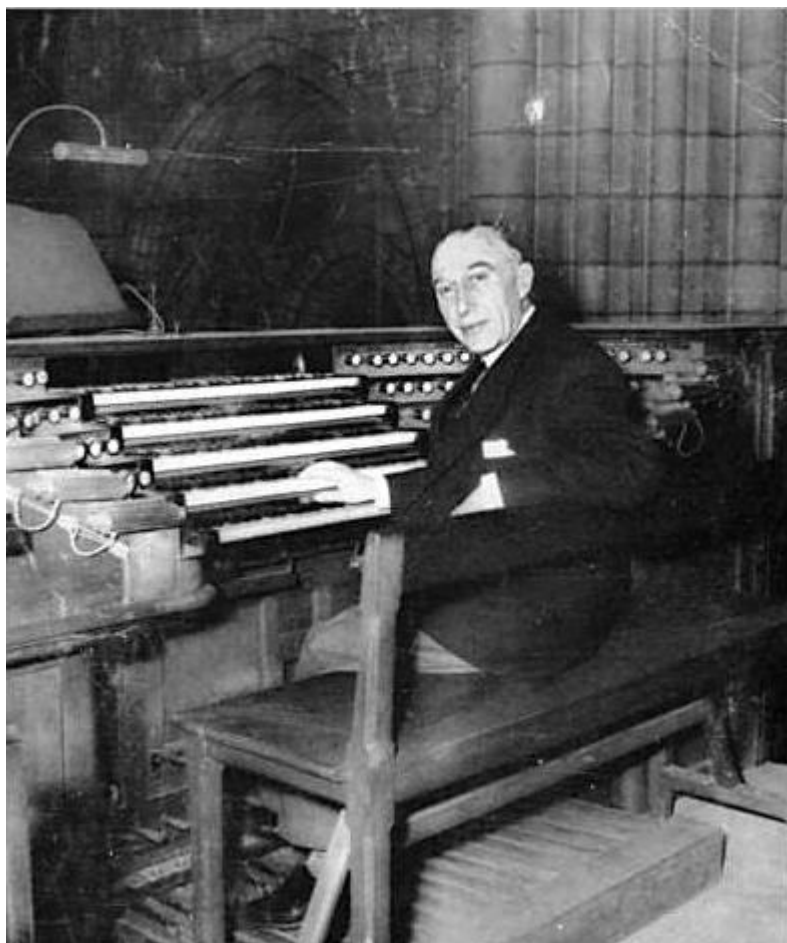
In homage to his friend, Marcel Dupré asked to play the organ for the funeral Requiem Mass at Notre-Dame, but Madame de Saint-Martin declined his offer as her husband had left specific instructions. The funeral took place on Monday 14 June, in the style of ceremonial reserved for Canons of the Chapter, the Grand Orgue was silent and, as was the custom, veiled in black. The only Parisian organists present were Marcel Dupré, Pierre Cochereau and Jeanne Demessieux.

On the coffin, Monsignor Rabec, Archiprêtre of the Cathedral, had placed the Cross of Saint-Martin's Papal Knighthood of the Order of St Gregory the Great, which had been awarded by Pope Pius XII.

Following the funeral Saint-Martin's body was returned to Albi where he was buried in the family tomb in the Cemetery of Planques, plot 271. Albi was to honour one its famous sons: a street, Rue Léonce de Saint-Martin, is named in his honour.

Writing in “Le Figaro”, Father Michel Riquet (1898-1993) paid Saint-Martin the following tribute, under the headline "The Organ and the Pulpit":

*... The pulpit is destined to the immediate service of the Word of God, while organ music is merely the auxiliary of prayer and of preaching. But what an auxiliary! ... It seizes souls, brings them into unison, leads them towards a common emotion, soon transformed into a common prayer ... How then could one refrain from paying homage to a master of the organ who, for thirty years, as Substitute, then as successor to Louis Vierne, succeeded, with such discreet magnificence, in giving to Notre-Dame de Paris the acoustic adornment of her feast days and of her mourning... Until this 10<sup>th</sup> of June last, when Death gathered him in his turn, Léonce de Saint-Martin would have no other ambition, no other care, no other occupation, than to give to the Cathedral of Paris a soul of music fitted to the dimensions of her greatest hours... Far from ever giving in to the temptation of turning the exalted position of the organ loft into a personal pedestal, he set himself the task only of satisfying the conditions which he set for his pupils: “Playing the organ ... is to provide a commentary on the liturgy from high up in the organ loft, just as a preacher would do it from the pulpit.” (p.34)*



Léonce de Saint-Martin at the Organ of Notre-Dame de Paris

([www.organimprovisation.com/leonce-de-saint-martin/](http://www.organimprovisation.com/leonce-de-saint-martin/))

### 3.9 After Léonce

Madame de Saint-Martin seems to have busied herself following the death of her husband with the succession process. Having lived through the unpleasantness of her husband's appointment in 1937 she seems to have wanted to prevent his successor from suffering a similar fate.

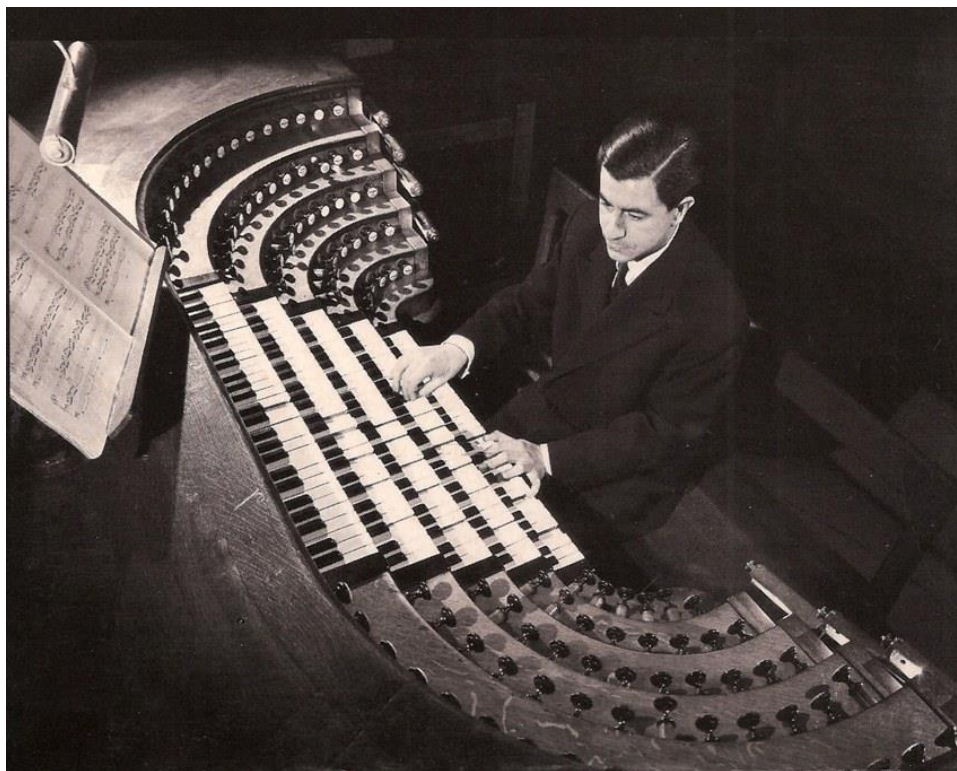
Some six months earlier the following meeting had taken place:

*When it was time for the sermon, and cigarette break, Saint-Martin saw the arrival in the 'smoking room' of a lively young man, his wife at his side, a man beginning to garner a flattering reputation. "What brings you here?" ventured the master of the place. And the man, with that suavity peculiar to those of a very shy disposition, said something like this:*

*"Let's say that after hearing so many bad things about you, I have come to see for myself!" "Ah well, while you're waiting my young friend" retorted Saint-Martin, showing no signs of being put out, "You can play the Offertoire". After a general laugh, and a lightning introduction to the console, for the first time in his life Cochereau was playing the organ of Notre-Dame. He offered us an improvised scherzo, a stunning whirlwind. The echo of the last chord had barely faded away when the internal telephone rang. "That'll be Merret!" Saint-Martin predicted. "Would somebody please tell me what on earth is going on?! What on earth was that!"*

*Saint-Martin with his harsh accent from the Tarn region, riposted grandly "Ça, monsieur le Chanoine? C'est de la Musique!" (Hammond p.12)*





Pierre Cochereau at the Cavallé-Coll console ([www.hetorgel.nl/e2009-05a.php](http://www.hetorgel.nl/e2009-05a.php))

Cochereau's wife, who was present on that day," told her husband that if Saint-Martin's expression as he played was anything to go by, he would succeed to the post when the time came". (Hammond p.12) In the meantime, Cochereau had become friends with the Saint-Martins following that first meeting.

When Dupré called on Canon Merret to offer his condolences upon the death of Saint-Martin, Merret asked if he was interested in the position. After declining politely Merret told Dupré that they were considering Cochereau. A meeting was arranged between Dupré and the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Maurice Feltin (1883-1975) to facilitate this. The Cathedral Chapter decided to hold a competition under the auspices of the Cardinal.

Over 50 applications were received. Cochereau had been supported by Saint-Martin and had also indicated that he wished to have the position. Having been advised to wait, he soon had the support of Pierre Baculard (Saint-Martin's other page-turner.) Madame Saint-Martin used her many social connections to support Cochereau's candidature and probably to help prevent others such as Litaize who again had the backing of Les Amis de l'Orgue and had helped cause much upset for her late husband.

Out of respect for Léonce (or as a stalling process?), the chapter agreed to delay the appointment for some six months.

In early December of 1954 Cardinal Feltin asked Cochereau to submit his application, which was endorsed by Marcel Dupré. From then on things moved apace; one week later the Cathedral Chapter sent a letter of appointment. On Saturday 8 January 1955 Pierre Cochereau was received by Cardinal Feltin in his palace and began work the following day.

On that Sunday in the company of Madame Saint-Martin and Marcel Dupré, Cochereau was in attendance at a slide show given as a memorial to his predecessor at the Musée Guimet in the 16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement and organised by Les Amis de Notre-Dame.

Madame de Saint-Martin died on 24 August 1961 aged 74. Pierre Cochereau remained organist of Notre-Dame until 4 March 1984, the day he died at the age of 59.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of 3 works by Léonce de Saint-Martin

#### 4.1 Symphonie Mariale Opus 40

*Symphonie Mariale*, Saint-Martin's second organ symphony was composed between October 1948 and January 1949, eight months after the completion of *Symphonie Dominicale* which he had commenced in September 1946.

*Symphonie Mariale*, may have had a longer period of gestation, as the second movement *Méditation Sur le Salve Regina* had been written as his opus 12 in 1931. This, however, is not that unusual; according to Dupré, Widor had taken a considerable amount of time with the development of his tenth symphony *Symphonie romane*, Opus 73. "The Master often told us that this theme lay for more than a year on his table before he brought himself to develop it." (Near p.264)

For Roman Catholics, the Blessed Virgin Mary plays a very important part both in their lives and within their daily devotions. In 1853 Pius IX had dogmatically defined the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in his Papal Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. 98 years later, during the dark days of World War II Pope Pius XII had performed a Marian consecration on 31 October 1942 when he consecrated the world to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

These proclamations would have been very important to the devout Catholic such as Saint-Martin, as would have been the *Motu Proprio* which Pius X (1835-1914) promulgated on 22 November 1903 (The feast of St. Cecilia, Patron Saint of music.)

The pontiff said the following:

... *Gregorian Chant, which is, consequently, the chant proper to the Roman Church, the only chant she has inherited from the ancient fathers, which she has jealously guarded for centuries in her liturgical codices, which she directly*

*proposes to the faithful as her own, which she prescribes exclusively for some parts of the liturgy, and which the most recent studies have so happily restored to their integrity and purity.*

*On these grounds, Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule: the more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savour the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple.*

Between 1929 and 1951 Saint-Martin wrote six works with Marian inspiration; two were choral with organ accompaniment, the other four were for solo organ.

*Ave Maria* Opus 17 (1934) solo voice and organ.

*Magnificat* Opus 42 (1950-1951) SATB and 2 organs.

*Offertoire pour les fêtes simples de la Sainte Vierge* Opus 10 (1929)

*Meditation sur le Salve Regina* Opus 12 (1931)

*Le Salut à la Vierge* Opus 34 (1944)

*Symphonie Mariale* Opus 40 (1948-1949)

*Symphonie Mariale* is based on Gregorian Chant, a precedent in the organ symphony genre set by Widor, whose *Symphonie Gothique* of 1890, introduces plainsong into two movements. In 1900 Widor developed the use of chant further in the composition of his tenth symphony the *Symphonie Romane*, a work completely based upon plainsong: The Easter Gradual *Haec dies, quam fecit Dominus*; in the first, second and fourth movements while the third movement uses the Easter Sequence *Victimae Paschali laudes immolent Christiani*.

In his first eight symphonies Widor made no use of liturgical themes, however, in the 1901 revision of *Symphonie II* he replaced the fourth movement, originally a Scherzo, with the *Salve Regina*.

Marcel Dupré's *Symphonie Passion* (Opus 23) began life as an improvisation at a recital given on 8 December 1921 by Dupré on the organ in the Wanamaker store, Philadelphia, USA. Over the next four years Dupré was to write the work down; it received its first performance in Westminster Cathedral played by the composer on the then partially built Henry Willis III organ on 9 October 1925.<sup>38</sup> Dupré's second symphony, Opus 26 was written five years later.

Organ symphonies by French organist-composers continued to be written throughout the twentieth century but never again would they be in the profusion of those written by Widor, Vierne and Alexandre Guilmant.

Alexandre Guilmant composed eight works in the symphonic genre but he chose to call them sonatas; in none of these works did he use Gregorian chant. The works which Guilmant composed based on chant for the liturgy are to be found in *L' Organiste liturgique* Opus 65 written between 1865 and 1891.

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<sup>38</sup> In its four movements plainsong themes (namely, Jesu Redemptor, Stabat Mater and Adoro Te) are used in the first, third and fourth movements, while the hymn tune *Adeste Fideles* features in the second. However, despite using plainsong melodies, the symphony can be considered to be more programmatic than liturgical, describing moments in the life of Christ, the four movements being as follows:

1. The world awaiting the Saviour
2. Nativity
3. Crucifixion
4. Resurrection



Dupré pictured above at the Wanamaker Organ. (Copyright American Theatre Organ Society). Dupré is listed as organist at the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris!

The organ symphony is a work written for solo organ containing numerous movements. The first symphonic piece for organ in France was the *Grande Pièce Symphonique* Opus 17 composed by César Franck between 1860 and 1862.

In his Opus 13 Widor's work bears the title *Symphonies pour Orgue*. Why use a title that people have usually reserved for orchestral works? In the 1887 revision of the symphonies, (something that occurred in 1901 and 1918) Widor gives his reasons:

"The modern organ is essentially symphonic. The new instrument requires a new language ... One will never write indifferently for the orchestra or for the organ, but henceforth will have to exercise the same care with the combination of timbres in an organ composition as in an orchestral work." (Near p.72)

The early symphonies can be seen to be experimental works. Harvey Grace says "The title symphonies is perhaps hardly suitable for works which are really collections of pieces. As some of the movements ... are of slender

proportions...the works might be more fairly called suites. (Grace p.132) It could be said that organ symphony refers not so much to the musical form but to the symphonic genre which had been inspired by the organs of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll.

Saint-Martin's symphony consists of five movements:

1. *Prelude*
2. *Salve Regina*
3. *Ave Regina*
4. *Alma Redemptoris*
5. *Postlude*

The registration indicated in the score seems to have been written for a generic, large three-manual French organ complete with a Pédale 32' flue whereas *Symphonie Dominicale* is registered for the organ of Notre-Dame using specific tone colours across all its five-manuals and pédale division.

Throughout the work, dynamic markings between *pp* and *ff* are used sparingly, and apart from crescendo and diminuendo signs, the composer relies on the choice of stops, which are listed in the score to indicate dynamics. This practice can trace its roots back to the French classical organ music of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, when composers such as Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers (1631/2-1714) and Nicolas Le Bègue (1631-1702) prescribed particular registrations for their organ compositions, a practice that has continued to this day.

Saint-Martin's harmonic texture is colourful and well-balanced, much interest is obtained by the juxtaposition of the chant melody between the manuals and pedals just by simple inversion. Often, seemingly surprising key changes are used; modulation by step seems to be a feature of Saint-Martin's harmonic language. In addition, movements and the sections of movements are often delineated by tempo and registrational changes which further serve to enhance the chant.

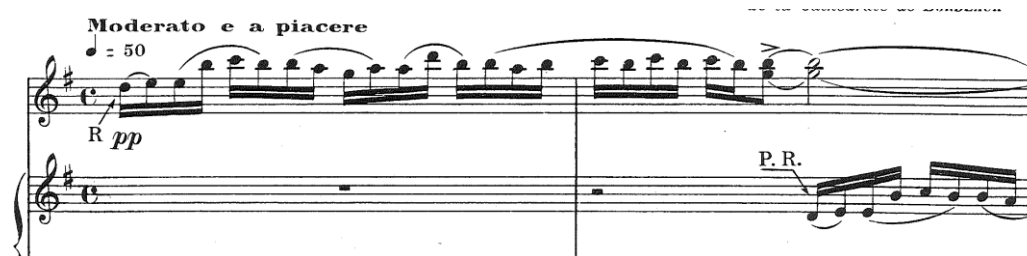
## I. Prélude

Composed in October 1948, the first movement is dedicated “A mon confrère et ami l’abbé Lacaze organiste de la Cathédrale de Bordeaux.” André Lacaze (1885-1964) was a fellow Cathedral organist, organist of Bordeaux Cathedral from 1943-1964.

This movement is akin to an overture, in which Saint-Martin presents the themes that are to follow in the other movements. The plainchant *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino* is introduced in e minor in the right hand, and then imitated in the left hand and subsequently in the pédale.

### Example 1

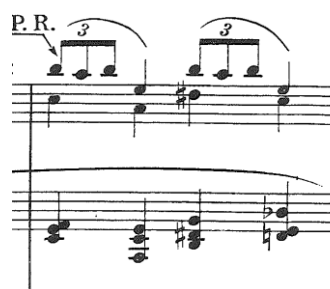
Bars 1-2



This is interspersed with triplet fragments of the *Salve Regina*. (Solemn tone)

### Example 2

Bar 5



In bar 15 the addition of the Récit reeds helps to reinforce the modulation to D major in conjunction with a tempo increase from crotchet = 50, to crotchet = 60 using the theme of the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*. The homophonic texture of bars 15-19 is followed by smaller fragments of the chant placed above running semiquavers in the left hand above a tied tonic note in the Pédale from bar 20 onwards.



**Example 3**

Bars 15-22

$\text{♩} = 60$   
+ Anches Récit

The addition of reeds to the Positif in bar 26 prepares for a right-hand trill over left hand chords leading to a further increase in tempo to crotchet = 80. Following the addition of the reeds to the Grand Orgue and the Pédale the *Inviolata* is heard in the key of F sharp minor supported by mostly quaver chords; this allows the chant prominence in the denser harmonic texture and registration.

**Example 4**

Bars 30-32

$\text{♩} = 80$

On the manuals alone fragments of the triplet figuration of the *Salve Regina* are played on the Positif coupled to the Récit before returning to the coupled Grand Orgue with Pédale for a further statement of the *Inviolata*. The coupled Positif

and Récit are then specified for a brief interlude of the *Regina Coeli* played on full organ in the manuals, with sustained crotchet and minim chords in the right hand against staccato quavers in the left.

### Example 5

Bars 70-71



A final acclamation is made with the theme played in octave crotchets in the Pédale against manual quavers.

### Example 6

Bars 77-80



Following four bars of material from the opening *Gaudeamus omnes*, the *Inviolata* is played on the tutti at a slower tempo leading into a *molto rallentando* before a gradual *diminuendo* over four bars. This is followed by a *pianissimo* return of the *Ave Regina* played on the Récit fluework to mixture, the texture evolving from one to four parts before ending with an A major triad.

It could be said that there is nothing sophisticated in the presentation of the chants in the Prélude: the chants used are not lost within the texture, while changes in registration and tempo help to delineate sections with ease.

Preceding the "reforms" of Vatican II, these chants were beloved, and well-known melodies of Roman Catholic Church and its people.

## II Salve Regina

Originally written as an individual work in 1931 called *Méditation sur le SALVE REGINA du 1er mode*. Saint-Martin incorporates this piece as the second movement of the symphony. In its 1931 form it was conceived for a two-manual instrument; the registration prescribed relating to the organ in Saint-Martin's music room. In this movement three manuals are prescribed.

The *Salve Regina* is dedicated *A mon ami Paul-Emile Andignoux*, but this is not indicated in the 1931 edition.

Marked *Calme et sans rigueur* the solemn tone chant of the *Salve Regina* is used alongside that of the simple tone chant, neither in their entirety. This movement commences with a plaintive solo in the right hand on that most romantic of all French flute stops, the 8' Flûte Harmonique (an invention of Cavaillé-Coll).

### Example 6

Bars 1-4



This is followed by a four bar passage on the Positif 8' Cromorne and 4' Flûte in the right hand using an ascending fragment of the *Salve Regina*, accompanied by the Récit strings with tied pedal notes.

### Example 7

Bars 5-8

The solemn tone melody is repeated with the Flûte this time accompanied by the Récit and Pédales.

**Example 8**

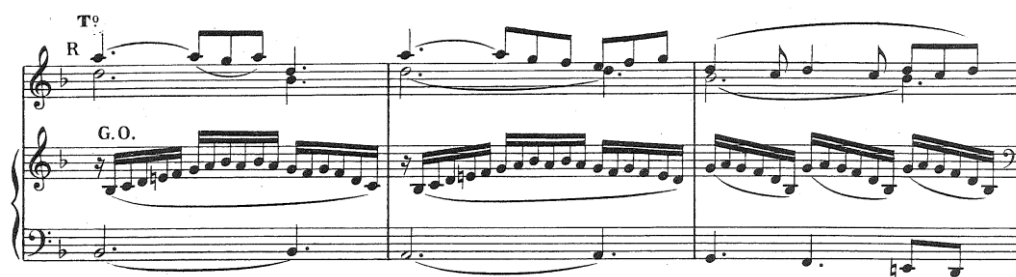
Bars 9-12



A two-bar link passage using the ascending pattern of the chant leads to a further harmonisation in the right hand in two and then three-part harmony while the left hand is occupied with running semiquavers. Fragments of both chants echo each other passing between both hands and pedals.

**Example 9**

Bars 17-19



A canon between right hand and Pedal in e flat minor uses the simple tone chant, still accompanied by left hand semiquavers, providing a continuous link supporting the interpolation of both chants.

**Example 10**

Bars 36-38



The movement ends with a short coda which is simply a harmonised statement of the solemn tone chant ending in D major.

**Example 11**

Bars 75-78



The three sections, of this movement are clearly delineated by the key changes, which never feel forced despite the surprising relationships between those keys. The melodic material remains chant-based and the accompaniment figures retain gestures from earlier in the movement.

**III Ave Regina Caelorum**

Louis Aubeux (1917-1999), the dedicatee, was organist of the Cathedral in Angers. This movement in D major contrasts three tone colours of the organ, namely the Récit Hautbois in dialogue with the Positif 8' Bourdon, Quinte  $2\frac{2}{3}$ , and 1' Piccolo. Contrasting with this is the Grand Orgue Cornet V, accompanied by the Récit Flûtes 8' & 4' with Pédale 16' & 8'. Different tempi and tone colours are used to differentiate between the chants throughout the movement.

The movement begins with the *Alleluia* for the Feast of the Purification (2nd February) in the right hand on the Positif, accompanied by the Récit playing the Introit chant of the feast day, at crotchet =60.

# Example 12

Bars 1-10

The musical score for Example 12, Bars 1-10, is presented in three systems. The first system, marked 'Moderato' with a tempo of quarter note = 60, features a Pos. (Poson) part in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The second system includes a 'rall.' (rallentando) marking and a change in tempo to quarter note = 54. It introduces a G.O. (Glockenspiel) part in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The third system continues the piano accompaniment and includes a 'rall.' marking. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time.

At the slower tempo of crotchet =54 the *Ave Regina* chant (simple tone) is announced on the Cornet accompanied by the Récit Flûtes. A return to the opening registration for six bars of the *Gaudeamus* at a faster tempo is followed again, by *Ave Regina*. This alternates with the faster *Alleluia* for six bars before returning to the *Ave Regina* for a further seven.

Fragments of both chants pass between the hands with a further statement of the *Alleluia* in the pedal beneath trills in each hand.

**Example 13a**

Bars 47-50



A harmonised version of the *Ave Regina* in the right hand is played against the *Alleluias* in the left over a tonic pedal note.

**Example 13b**

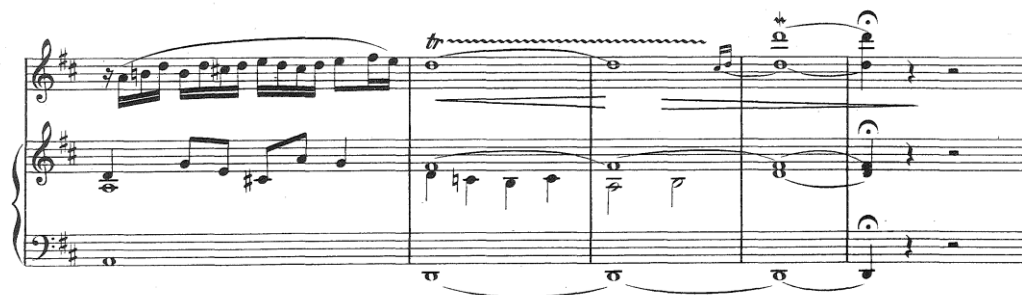
Bars 51-54



Following a change in dynamics and tempo the music ends with references to the chants in each hand with the left hand and pedal in augmentation before a final trill and an inverted mordent in the right hand.

**Example 14**

Bars 68-72



## IV. Alma Redemptoris Mater

The fourth movement is the simplest of all and possibly the most charming. The chant melody, which is used in its entirety throughout the movement is played on the Récit 8' Trompette and Flûte in the right hand, accompanied in the left hand by the Positif 8' Bourdon and Salicional.

### Example 15

Bars 1-4

**Adagio**  
♩ = 50

This is followed by a four-bar interlude based on the *Ave Maria*, played on the Récit Flûte, the tempo marked *ad libitum*.

### Example 16a

Bars 9-10

*ad libitum*

### Example 16b

Bars 11-17



After a return to the opening registration the theme is played in the left hand on the Trompette an octave lower.

### Example 17

Bars 65-68



The movement concludes with a continuation of the chant interspersed with the *Ave Maria* in an extended section which passes both chants from hand to hand, a distinguishing feature of Saint-Martin's chant-based organ compositions.

### V Postlude

This movement is in fact a Toccata similar to those found in any number of French organ symphonies. The movement is dedicated *A mon élève Mademoiselle Denyse Chirat* (1927-1978.) Denyse Chirat-Comet, a pupil of Saint-Martin, was Organiste Titulaire of Versailles Cathedral. The registration is as follows: Récit Tutti, Positif and Grand Orgue foundation stops up to mixtures while the Pédale has 32', 16 and 8' foundation stops.

Left hand quavers and semiquavers played on the Positif for two bars in C# minor prepare us for the chant of the *Inviolata*, played on the Grand Orgue with the right hand underpinned by the pedal at the cadence.

**Example 18**

Bars 1-6

Example 18 shows a musical score for Bars 1-6. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 100. The score consists of two systems of three bars each. The first system shows the right hand (RH) playing a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand (LH) plays a bass line of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system shows the RH playing a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the LH plays a bass line of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is labeled 'Pos.' and 'G. O.'

As often in Saint-Martin's music where chant is used, this is then inverted and the quavers and semiquavers are transferred to the right hand and the chant to the left, occasionally underpinned by the Pédale.

**Example 19**

Bars 28-30

Example 19 shows a musical score for Bars 28-30. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score consists of three bars. The right hand (RH) plays a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand (LH) plays a bass line of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is labeled 'G. O.'

This particular feature including the sparing use of pedal, is not unusual in French organ literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>39</sup>

Semiquaver figuration in both hands played on full organ in C major has the chant in canon between the right hand and pédale.

### Example 20

Bars 61-67

The musical score for Example 20, Bars 61-67, is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and a separate line for the pedal. The right hand plays a melody in C major, while the left hand plays semiquaver figuration in thirds. The pedal line is marked with a '+' and 'Anches Ped.'.

Left hand semiquavers in thirds provide a harmonic foundation to the melody of the *Alma Redemptoris* before a final tutti appearance of the *Inviolata* leads to a coda of *Gaudeamus* played on the Récit Gamba and Voix Céleste, bringing the symphony to a peaceful and prayerful conclusion.

<sup>39</sup> Eugene Reuchel in *Jour de Fête aux Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer* (dedicated to the memory of Saint-Martin (Promenades en Provence) employs the same technique. In this movement, 82 bars in length, the Pédale does not enter until bar 51.

**Example 21**

Bars 131-141

The musical score for Example 21, Bars 131-141, is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a melodic line with a 'rall.' marking. The bass staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, with a 'Lento' marking above the treble staff. A 'Pos. Flûtes 8-4' marking is present below the bass staff. The piece ends with a 'ppp' (pianissimo) marking.

**4.2 Le Salut à La Vierge Opus 34**

Described by the composer as a *Paraphrase Symphonique*, this work is based on the plainsong *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary) and *Ave Maris Stella* (Hail star of the sea); it was composed in 1944 and dedicated to Eugène Landais (1876-1950). Landais was blind and like Saint-Martin, had been a pupil of Adolphe Marty. Landais was organist of Poitiers Cathedral from 1896-1949, where he presided at the five-manual organ built by Clicquot in the eighteenth century.

“The paraphrase in works of polyphony involved the quotation, in one or more voices, of a plainsong melody... In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an original elaboration of pre-existing material, usually reworked as a vehicle for expressive virtuosity.” (Grant, Grove 14 p.179)

The piece begins with a tutti registration (there are no dynamic markings in the score, dynamics are indicated by stops) of the coupled Grand-Orgue, Positif, Récit and Pédale. Staccato unison semiquavers are interspersed with chords in the manuals which in turn are underpinned with a timpani-like figuration of semiquavers and crotchets in the pedal.

## Example 22

Bars 1-4

G.P.R. Tutti  
Ped. Tutti

Moderato  $\text{♩} = 84$

MANUALE

G.P.R. *stacc.* *(simile)*

PÉDALE

Ped. G.P.R.

This arresting opening, based on a fragment of the chant *Ave Maria*, is followed by five bars of the plainsong melody played on full Positif and Récit in two-part imitation.

## Example 23

Bars 5-10

P.R.

This in turn is answered by a slightly varied version of the opening material leading to a reiteration of the plainsong, this time in three parts and in the dominant.

**Example 24**

Bars 16-20



A development of the opening material follows, which climaxes on a diminished chord in bar 33.

**Example 25**

Bars 29-33



The Grand-Orgue and Pédale divisions are reduced to foundation stops for the first appearance of the plainsong *Ave Maris Stella*. This is announced in the left hand in single notes passing to the right.

**Example 26**

Bars 34-38



Afterwards is a return to the opening material this time in D major with contrary motion semiquavers for five bars cadencing in the final bar with a chord of C sharp major.

The Récit stops remain the same, the Grand-Orgue, Pédale and Positif are reduced to the foundation stops only. This of course would have been achieved with ease by the use of the ventil pedals.

The opening plainsong theme is again heard, this time in four-part harmony followed by small fragments in single notes or harmony played alternatively on different manuals.

### Example 27

Bars 60-63



The *Ave Maris Stella* follows in Db major, the melody in the right hand played on the Grand-Orgue, with coupled Récit and Positif accompanied in the left hand on the Récit and Positif with Pédale. After eleven bars the melody is transferred to the left hand with fragments of the melody in the right hand which leads to a held chord of C major on the Récit for five bars, while the pedals play the opening plainsong theme before settling on a sustained low C.

### Example 28

Bars 97-99



From this held pedal note emerges ascending manual semiquaver figuration beginning on the Récit and passed from manual to manual, culminating in a seven-bar right hand trill over the plainsong theme presented in quavers, then crotchets before the introduction of double dotted left-hand chords.

### Example 29

Bars 105-110

All through these twelve bars the player has added stops little by little until the tutti is again reached for the recapitulation, which explodes after a pause. The unison semiquavers found at the start are now replaced by intervals of a tenth.

The plainsong from bar six makes a return, this time in three parts, for five and a half bars leading again to the semiquaver figuration, before six accented chromatic chords lead to a Toccata in f minor marked *Large et très lié*. The plainsong melody appears at the top of the right hand. The piece ends with a short coda of six bars played in a very accented manner using the *Ave Maria* theme above a tonic pedal note ending with the chord of F major in the manuals (marked *Très large*, very broad) for two bars with a quotation of the opening plainsong in the pédale.



**Example 30**

Bars 139-143

**4.3 Paraphrase du Psaume 136 Opus 15.**

*Paraphrase du Psaume 136* was written in 1932 and dedicated *A mon ami Paul Perrot*. Perrot was a farmer from Paray-le-Monial, a great admirer of Saint-Martin and in later life a financial benefactor.

*Super flumina*

1. *By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept: when we remembered thee, O Sion.*
2. *As for our harps, we hanged them up: upon the trees that are therein.*
3. *For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody in our heaviness: Sing us one of the songs of Sion.*
4. *How shall we sing the Lord's song: in a strange land?*
5. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem: let my right hand forget her cunning.*
6. *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem in my mirth.*
7. *Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, in the day of Jerusalem: how they said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground.*
8. *O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery: yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us.*
9. *Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children: and throweth them against the stones.*

The words of the psalm, particularly the first four verses, have been like “a poetic catnip, a siren song, luring musicians, composers, and singers alike for more than two millennia.” (Stowe p.32) Examples include William Byrd’s Motet of 1584 *Quomodus Cantibus*; and J. S. Bach’s three Chorale Preludes *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* BWV 653, BWV 653a and BWV267 from the Leipzig Chorales. In addition to the afore-mentioned composers, the words have been used by Verdi, Dvorak and the German pop band Bony M. in 1978.

Saint-Martin’s work was written at a time of great turmoil and conflict between himself and Vierne. In France, the slaughter and destruction of the Great War was still raw and these words may have been of comfort to him as a former soldier.

However, it was King Nebuchadnezzar II (634-562 BC) and his destruction of the temple<sup>40</sup> in addition to the deportation of the Jews that was the inspiration of this work, which takes the form of a symphonic poem for organ and not orchestra. It was César Franck who famously described his Cavaillé-Coll organ at Saint-Clotilde as follows: “Mon orgue, c'est mon orchestre” (My organ is my orchestra).

The work is divided into four movements although the final bar of the first and third movements are marked *enchânez* which means that the two sections i.e. movements I & II and movements III & IV should be played without a break.

Each of the four movements focuses on an emotional state rather than an actual narrative of the individual verses, rather in the manner of the two sets of *Psalm Preludes* written by the English composer Herbert Howells (1892-1983) in 1916 and 1939 respectively.

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<sup>40</sup> BCE 586

## I Tristesse des Hébreux Captifs de Babylone

The first movement begins in F sharp minor on the Récit Foundations, including the 8' Voix Céleste, underpinned by the Pédale 32' and 16' foundation stops.

### Example 31

Bars 1-4



From this opening evolves a theme with a dotted rhythm in the right hand that is taken up in the Pédale and then the left hand.

### Example 32

Bars 5-8



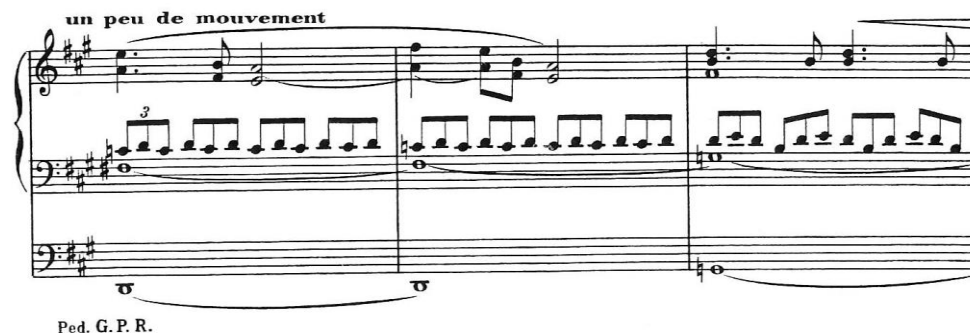
This figuration is continued in ascending lines in all parts; although dotted rhythms are often used in the description of happiness, Saint-Martin successfully depicts solemnity with them in this movement.

Dynamics are limited to the use of the Récit expression pedal rather than any addition of stops, the exception being manual and pedal couplers.

The dotted rhythmical figuration is continued by the right hand in augmentation from bar 21, accompanied by quaver triplets in the left hand and tied semibreves in the *Pédale*.

### Example 33

Bars 22-24



The dotted quaver rhythm does not appear again, apart from two bars in the pedal (bars 28 and 30). This leads to a return of the opening material for two bars and is followed by a bridge section in the key of C sharp minor. This is just played by the left hand, allowing the player to change registration via the *pédales de combinaison*.

### Example 34

Bars 34-37



## II Lamentations au Souvenir de Jérusalem

In this movement, the registration is prepared and remains constant throughout; dynamic contrasts are made by the changes of manual and use of the swell box.

From the bottom C# of the first movement emerges a gentle pianissimo rocking accompaniment on the Positif 8' Flûte in the left hand above a held tenor C#. In

the right hand a solo is played on the Récit 8' Cor de Nuit and 8' Voix Humaine with Tremulant introducing the plainsong theme, *Quomodo Sedet* from the pre-Vatican II office of Tenebrae, based on the words of the Lamentations of Jeremiah:

### Example 35

Bars 1-8

*How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people, how is she become as a widow...*

The theme is continued on the Positif 8' Flûte an octave higher, in augmentation, before returning in the left hand on the Récit.

**Example 36**

Bars 9-12



The movement ends on a diminished chord without resolution; this leaves the music and listener suspended making what follows as arresting as it is unexpected.

**Example 37**

Bars 27-31

**III Babylone la Superbe**

This movement opens with a dotted rhythmical fanfare in A major on the Récit reed stops modulating into C sharp minor.

**Example 38**

Bars 1-9





This dramatic start uses a dotted rhythmic motif to depict the proudness of Babylon, and leads into a slow, bombastic march, that builds into quaver broken chord figuration in the manuals followed by quaver triplets in the pedal against sustained chords.

### Example 39

Bars 31-34



The reed stops of the Positif, Grand-Orgue and Pédale are added in sequence leading to a recapitulation of the opening material played on full organ and marked with the dynamic *fff*. A diminuendo from tutti to 16' 8' & 4' foundation stops in all departments excluding the Récit, happens during the rallentando, and is achieved by the use of the ventils.

### Example 40

Bars 43-46



A tonic pedal note on A supports an A major chord in the right hand from which emerges the next movement.

#### IV Les Hébreux maudissent leurs vainqueurs

The final movement begins with a single note melody in the left hand which develops into harmonised fragments of the plainsong, in addition to a melodic and rhythmical interpolation from the second movement in a short fugato section.

##### Example 41

Bars 6-10



This leads to a diminished chord (the same chord as that which ends the second movement) on top of accelerando semiquavers leading into semiquaver tremolandos marked *fff* (an effect used by both Louis Vierne and Saint-Martin, amongst other French symphonic organ composers) while the full Pédale plays the theme from the first movement in octaves.

##### Example 42

Bars 27-29



The dotted rhythmic figuration continues to play an important role until the return of the plainsong theme from the second movement, this time in F sharp major,



with an interjection on the Positif Flute 8' using the opening melody of the first two bars of the first movement, bringing the work to a calm and reflective conclusion.

### Example 43

Bars 50-59

8' *a poco* ♩ = 60

R. Gambe Voix céleste  
S. Diap. Voix céleste

Ped. 32, 16  
Tir. R.

*pp*

P. (Flûte 8)  
R.

The work seems to have been a popular favourite of Saint-Martin who played it many times including during the war and also in his post-World War recital in Westminster Cathedral. Although written before World War II, the destruction, such as pictured below, has similarities with the destruction of the Temple, and during World War II with that of a defeated and conquered nation.



Notre-Dame de Reims, first German shell strikes the Cathedral 20<sup>th</sup> September 1914.

(unknown photographer published PF Collier (p.86))

Throughout this research I have looked for comparisons between the music of Saint- Martin and that of other composers. I believe the style in which he wrote was for the person in the pew, written by a man who, from an early age, had been totally immersed in the chant of the church. It is easy on the ear, liturgically appropriate and functional; Saint-Martin was writing music for church, not for the concert stage.

It is as if the *Chants d' Auvergne* written by the almost contemporary fellow composer Joseph Canteloube (1879-1957), have come into church. Canteloube, like Saint-Martin, does not lose the melody of the songs within the texture and colour of his orchestration, in fact both composers enhance chant and song by it.

Saint-Martin, may have been born an aristocrat, but he was not a dilettante. In the organ loft, he was capable of serving the church congregant through his music as a servant of the liturgy. He had the technique to play the demanding repertoire but understood it was his duty to serve that liturgy before by realising his own goals.

## Conclusion

“Léonce de Saint-Martin ? Why are you researching him? He was no good.”

Following this inauspicious start, it almost felt as if some Parisian organists were perturbed that, although they had shown no interest in the subject, I might find out something that went against the established party line. Why was a foreigner interfering in something that was best left alone? Some were openly suspicious. There appeared, in Paris at least, to be no middle ground: it was those for and those against.

Saint-Martin was considered an amateur by some of his contemporaries because at that time in France, being a professional musician was judged on whether the person had graduated from the Conservatoire. It was the need to graduate in law to appease his father and not lack of talent that prevented Saint-Martin from doing this. His move to Paris after the war enabled him to study privately with those who would have taught him at the Conservatoire anyway. The lack of a certificate to hang on the wall was held against him; but, it seems, only after his appointment as organist of Notre-Dame. At this point ‘amateur’ seems to have been used as an epithet for being a poor musician rather than being too old for the Conservatoire.

By examining the programmes of concerts and broadcasts played by Saint-Martin, it is very clear that he did not avoid challenging repertoire. The reviews of these performances and his liturgical playing are overwhelmingly positive, and on several occasions, his playing was presumed to be that of Vierne or Dupré. The reminiscences of Ralph Downes of the London Oratory and Michael Howard of Ely Cathedral, the invitations from Frederick Marriott for a United States tour both in 1939 and immediately post-war, the 58 organ recitals broadcast live for Radio Paris, and the website today of Westminster Cathedral, suggest that only in the minds of certain mid-century Parisian organists was the playing of Saint-Martin substandard.

The appointment of Saint-Martin as organist of Notre-Dame in 1937 was the source of his reputational problems. The tumultuous relationship with an unwell and manipulated Vierne, and Saint-Martin’s aristocratic, respectful reluctance to

besmirch or even stand up to him, led to the establishment of a group of detractors heavily influenced by Madeleine Richepin, who was a key player in the destruction of the relationship between Vierne and Saint-Martin, as she was between Vierne and Widor, and between Vierne and Dupré.

Saint-Martin began composing at an early age; 26 opus numbers are for solo organ out of a total of some 60. Many have been out of print and are currently being reprinted by *Edition Combre*. These are just reprints without any scholarly examination of the manuscripts made to correct mistakes. However, these reprints are of course helping to bring his music to a wider audience and are a direct result of the work of *Les Amis de Saint-Martin*.

The preparation of his works for performance has at times proved difficult, as Saint-Martin's music, written for his large hand-span, does not always make for easy playing for someone like myself with small hands. While the harmonic language does not seem at first to be as accessible as works written by Boëllmann, Guilmant and Bonnet, and even though it was written at the time of Alain and Messiaen and may seem dated in comparison, it is well worth discovering what he has to say rather than dismissing him out of hand by giving credence to the words of others.

Another problem that had to be solved was that much of his music uses registration for the Cavallé-Coll organ at Notre-Dame calling for the *registre de combinaison* which allowed elaborate registration. With this mechanical forerunner of general pistons and without proper understanding it can appear to be somewhat confusing. (In the last four years Dr Anthony Hammond has provided prefaces to explain this feature in a number of works. Dr Hammond has recently embarked on a project to record the complete organ works of Saint-Martin).

To celebrate 850 years of the Cathedral Olivier Latry (one of the three current Titulaires<sup>41</sup> of Notre-Dame) recorded a CD of those organists connected with the organ for 300 years; Saint-Martin, in the twentieth century, was missing, the torch passing from Vierne to Cocherneau as if Saint-Martin did not exist.

"Léonce de Saint-Martin's Mass rocks", was the comment of a Worcester Cathedral Choral Scholar on social media. I had the privilege of conducting this

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<sup>41</sup> The others being Philip Lefevre and Vincent Dubois.

work in Notre-Dame de Paris with John Pryer, Orgue de Chœur, and Olivier Latry, Grande Orgue, in the presence of Monsignor Jean Revert, former Maître de chappelle, who was a chorister when Saint-Martin was Titulaire. He bowed at me and signed my copy saying, "it has been a very long time since I heard this, thank you."

Although Saint-Martin may not have been in the same league as Dupré as a performer and composer, he certainly was equal to, and as highly skilled as, other organist-composers whose compositions are regularly played today. He put his work at the Cathedral above all other things, working through what was a very difficult time in the history of France. Saint-Martin never believed his own talent to be equal to that of either Vierne or Dupré: writing to Dupré he said, "God knows I've been happy to accompany you and sit under your shadow..."

Saint-Martin's contemporaries such as Dupré, Bonnet, Mulet and Vierne, amongst others, gain an entry in Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, whereas Saint-Martin gets no mention, and even "Wikipedia" only has a few lines. I would like to believe that my research prompts a rethink of the merits of Saint-Martin, his work as organist of Notre-Dame and his music.

In January 2017 Warner Classics released the first organ album recorded at the Philharmonie de Paris on the new Rieger organ, played by Olivier Latry, who includes as the eighth track *Flight of the bumble bee* by Rimsky-Korsakoff, arranged by Léonce de Saint-Martin. This is a major achievement and I hope a small step in rehabilitating the reputation of one who has been unfairly and undeservedly neglected as an organist and composer.

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Christian Robert Orgue

Recorded Bordeaux Cathedral 1995

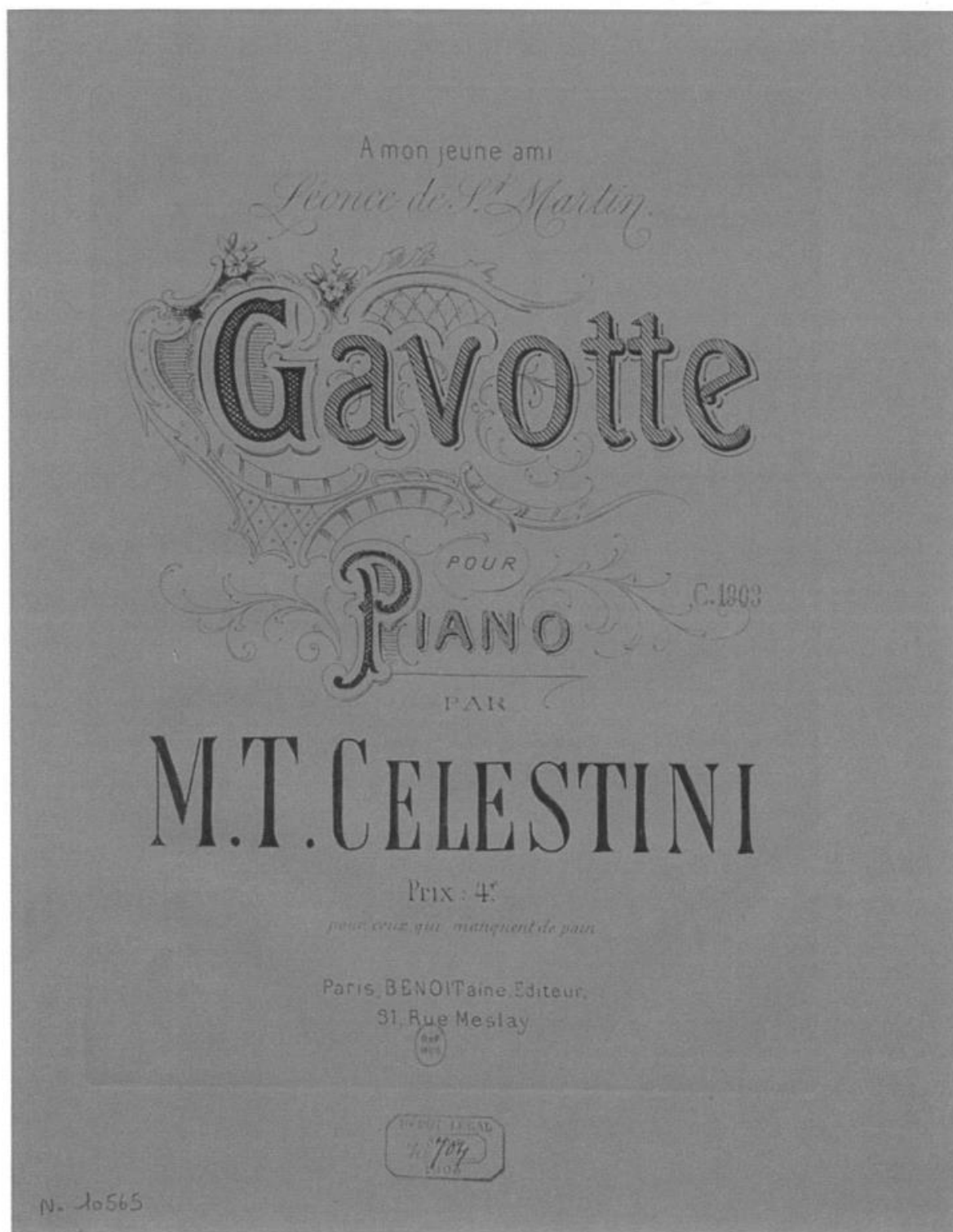
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L'Orgue Cavaillé-Coll

6 discs – Vrsina motette recording 1950-1999

Orgues et organistes français du XX'e siècle – EMI Classics 2002

## Appendix 1



1903.

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31, Rue Meslay.



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à mon jeune ami Léonce de S<sup>t</sup> MARTIN

## GAVOTTE

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M. T. CELESTINI

**Leggiero.**

PIANO.

 $\pi f$ 

**M.G.**

**M.D.**

M.G.

M.G.

**M.G.**

M.C.

M.D.

M. G.

M. G.

M.G.

▲

*delicatamente.*

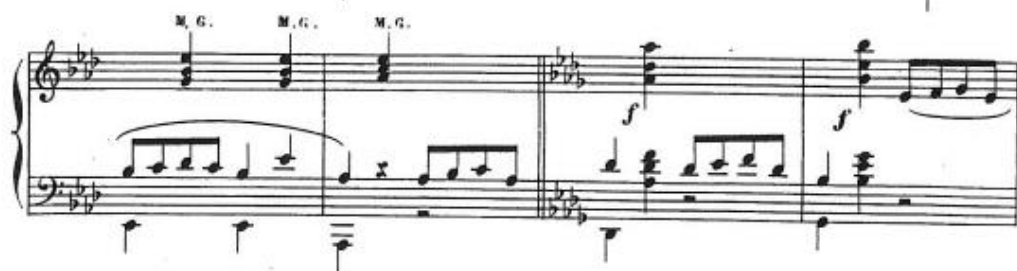
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2



B. a.

2

5-7

*sf*

*f*

M.D.

5-7

*sf*

*Tempo.*

*ff*

*riten.*

M.G.

M.G.

M.G.

M.G.

*mf*

M.D.

M.G.

M.G.

M.G.

*P* *poro* *ritenuto* *presto* *ff*

5-7



## **Appendix 2 Organ Recital Radio Broadcasts by Léonce de Saint-Martin 1928-1937.**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1928 – Radio Prague**, details not known.

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August 1935- Radio Paris, Schola Cantorum.**

(Organ 1902, Mutin- Cavaillé-Coll)

Sarabande et Fugue, - François Couperin

In Dulci Jubilo – J.S. Bach<sup>42</sup>

Romance – Louis Vierne

Le vol du bourdon- Rimski-Korsakov [The flight of the bumble bee]

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 1935- Radio P.T.T. Paris, Schola Cantorum.**

Fantaisie en sol majeur -J.S. Bach [ G Major] BWV 572

Pavane – William Byrd

Intermezzo- Augustin Barié (Symphonie pour Orgue Opus 5)

Naïades – Louis Vierne

Carillon de la Suite cyclique – Léonce de Saint-Martin

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Pastorale- J.S. Bach (BWV 590)

Andante – Claude Debussy

Extracts Symphonie 1- Louis Vierne

(Unnamed work) -Charles-Marie Widor

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<sup>42</sup> Where works by J.S.Bach are given without a BWV number this is because there are numerous works of that name, and it is not possible to identify.

**Thursday 6th February 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Grand Credo- J.S. Bach (BWV 680, (*Wir Glauben all'an einen Gott*)

Fantaisie in A – César Franck

Pastorale - Martini

Gavotte – Déodat de Séverac

Carillon de Longpont- Louis Vierne

**Thursday 13th February 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude (Suite cyclique) – Léonce de Saint-Martin

Légende Symphonique- Joseph Bonnet

Adagio- J.S. Bach

Feux Follets- Louis Vierne

**Thursday 20th February 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude (Suite cyclique) – Léonce de Saint-Martin

Légende Symphonique- Joseph Bonnet

Adagio- J.S. Bach

Feux Follets- Louis Vierne

*(Note this is the same programme as the week before, I have not been able to ascertain if the recital was repeated or this is a printing error.)*

**Thursday 27th February 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prelude in C minor – J.S. Bach

Oh homme pleure ton grand péché- J.S. Bach (*O Mensch, beweine dein Sünde groß*) BWV622

Larmes, Plaintes- Franz Liszt

**Thursday 5th March 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Paraphrase du Psaume 136- Léonce de Saint-Martin

Choral No. 1 – César Franck

**Thursday 12th March 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prelude & Fugue in E minor -J.S. Bach

Choral No.2 – César Franck

**Thursday 19th March 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Cathédrales – Louis Vierne

Choral No.3 – César Franck

**Thursday 26th March 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Passacaglia in C minor – J.S. Bach (BWV 582)

Sur le Rhin – Louis Vierne

Choral – Scheidt

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

De Profundis – J.S. Bach

Ardemment j'aspire à une fin heureuse – J.S. Bach (O Sacred head)

Devant ton trône je vais comparaître- J.S. Bach

Allegro, Symphonie No.2 - Louis Vierne

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Agnus Dei – J.S Bach

Le Martyr de Saint Sébastien – Claude Debussy

Prelude to Parsifal – Richard Wagner

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Paraphrase de la prose- Ludwig van Beethoven

Larmes - Franz Liszt

**Thursday 23<sup>th</sup> April 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Fantasia & Fugue in G minor- J.S. Bach BWV 542

Cantabile – César Franck

Final, Symphonie No.1- Louis Vierne

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Sonata No. III in A major – Felix Mendelssohn

Mon âme errait à l'aventure – J.S. Bach

Saint François de Paule marchant sur les flots – Franz Liszt

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prelude & Fugue in... minor BWV – J.S. Bach

Larmes Plaintes...- Franz Liszt

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin)**

Hymne au soleil- Louis Vierne

Fantaisie in A- César Franck

Toccata, Symphonie No. V- Charles- Marie Widor

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May 1936 –Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Kyrie – J.S. Bach

Sonata No.6 – Felix Mendelssohn

Scherzo, Symphonie No. VI- Charles-Marie Widor

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prelude in Eb major – J.S. Bach BWV 552

Variations sur O Filii et Filiae- Jean -François Dandrieu

Evocation à la Chapelle Sixtine- Franz Liszt

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude – Fl. Schmitt

Adagio – Gabriel Fauré

Trois pièces; Air majestueux, Prélude, Musette – Jean-Philippe Rameau

Fugue en si mineur (Fugue in B minor BWV 544) – J.S. Bach

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Grand Chœur – Alexandre Guilmant

Quatre Chorals: a) Lorsque Jésus était sur la Croix, b.) Du haut du Ciel, je vous apporte de bonnes nouvelles, c.) Jésus ma joie, d.) Aide-moi Seigneur, à chanter tes louanges. – J.S. Bach

Final Symphonie III- Charles-Marie Widor

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available, or no recital given.

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available, or no recital given.



**Thursday 13th August 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Toccata, Adagio et Fugue en ut majeur (C major) – J.S. Bach BWV 564

Ave Maria [Von Arcadelt?] – Franz Liszt

Paraphrase- Carillon (L'office de l'Assomption) - Charles Tournemire

**Thursday 20th August 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Toccata Symphonie No. V – Charles-Marie Widor

Fantaisie <sup>43</sup>– Camille Saint-Saëns

Aria – George Frederic Haendel { sic Handel }

Final – J.S. Bach

**Thursday 27th August 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 3rd September 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 10th September 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 17th September 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Fantaisie en la majeur – César Franck

Pastorale – J.S. Bach BWV

Carillon de la Suite cyclique- Léonce de Saint-Martin

**Thursday 23rd September 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

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<sup>43</sup> Eb Major or Db Major

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Marche de fête – Henri Büsser

Partita “ O Dieu, O Dieu bon” – J.S.Bach

Symphonie? Widor?

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Fantaisie en sol majeur – J.S. Bach

Rhapsodie – Guy Ropartz

Scherzetto- Louis Vierne

Saint François de Paule marchant sur les flots- Franz Liszt

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details listed.

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details listed.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude et fugue sur Bach – Franz Liszt

Pastorale- Jean Roger- Ducasse

Improvisation- Léonce de Saint-Martin

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 1936 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude et Fugue – Alexander Glazunov

Andante con moto- Alexandre Boëly

Marche du Graal de Parsifal- Richard Wagner

**1937****Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 1937– Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 21st January 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude et Fugue en mi mineur (e minor) – J.S. Bach

Prière – César Franck

Saint François d'Assise – Franz Liszt

**Thursday 28th January 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No recital listed or details available.

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

La Porte de Kiev – Modest Moussorgski { sic } Mussorgsky

Etoile du matin – J.S. Bach

Ciaccona- Dietrich Buxtehude

Sonata III – Felix Mendelssohn

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

No details available.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Ricercare – Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Toccata – Claudio Merulo

Canzona – ? Gabrieli

Sur le Rhin – Louis Vierne

Choral No. 2. – César Franck

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 1937– Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Prélude et Fugue en ut mineur – J.S. Bach

Christ qui est le jour Glorieux – J.S. Bach

Etude en la bémol – Robert Schumann

Sarabande – Claude Debussy

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Fantaisie et fugue en sol mineur- J.S. Bach

O Homme pleure sur tes lourds péchés – J.S.Bach

Christ gisait dans les liens de la mort – J.S. Bach

Cantilène – Albert Bertelin (first performance)

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1937 – Radio Paris, (Salon de Saint-Martin?)**

Passacaille – J.S. Bach

Variations [O Filli?] – Jean- François Dandrieu

Fantaisie- J Clerk

**End of Series**

## Appendix 3

Léon de saint-martin

Stelle pour un arfist d'après

# A la mémoire de mon maître Louis Vienne

- tout l'œuvre pour les 3 chœurs et la P.

Chœur du Saint-Musique

P/P - H. P. S. - P. - Solo - Tutti

Stelle pour un artiste défunt

P. 50 et R. Préface - Bombard 30

Adagio 1. 54

So ff

P. 50

Tutti

P. 50

P. 50

Com. 1. 54

Com. 1. 54

So ff

P. 50

P. 50





## Pede + Bombarda 32



*Al. Co* *Comb. Ped.*

The image shows a handwritten musical score for three systems of three staves each. The first system is marked 'Al. Co' and 'Comb. Ped.'. The second system is marked 'Tutti'. The third system is marked 'Al. Co' and 'Comb. Ped.'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Handwritten musical score for three staves, featuring various musical notations, dynamics, and performance instructions.

The score is divided into four systems, each consisting of three staves. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, key signatures (one sharp), and time signatures (3/4 and 4/4). The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and frequent use of slurs and ties.

Key performance instructions and markings include:

- Tutti**: Marked above the second staff in the second system.
- Allegro**: Marked above the first staff in the third system.
- Allegro**: Marked above the first staff in the fourth system.
- Tr. So**: Marked in a box at the bottom right of the fourth system.

The score concludes with a final measure on the third staff of the fourth system, marked with a double bar line.

Handwritten musical score on page 223. The score is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It contains several measures of music, including a measure with a large 'R' above it. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff contains a measure with a large 'R' above it, followed by a measure with a large 'A' above it. The date 'April 1938' is written in the right margin. Below the staves, there is a handwritten signature 'R. Anderson' and a large, stylized flourish.

## Appendix 4 Westminster Cathedral Organ Specification

Henry Willis & Sons 1922-1932.

### Great

16 Double Open Diapason

16 Bourdon

8 Open Diapason I

8 Open Diapason II

8 Open Diapason III

8 Flûte Harmonique

5 $\frac{1}{3}$  Quint

4 Octave

4 Principal

4 Flûte Couverte

3.1/5 Tenth

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Octave Quint

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Twelfth

2 Super Octave

2 Fifteenth

V Grand Chorus (15-19-22-26-29)

16 Double Trumpet

8 Trumpet

4 Clarion

### Swell

16 Violon

8 Geigen Diapason

8 Echo Viole

8 Viole Célestes

4 Octave Geigen

4 Saube Flute

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Twelfth

2 Fifteenth

III Harmonics (17-19-22)

8 Vox Humana

8 Oboe

Tremolo

16 Waldhorn

8 Trompette

4 Clarion

### Choir (enclosed)

16 Contra Dulciana

8 Open Diapason

8 Viola

8 Cor de Nuit

8 Cor de Nuit Célestes

8 Sylvestrina

4 Gemshorn

4 Nason Flute

2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nazard

2 Octavin

1 $\frac{3}{5}$  Tierce

8 Trompette

Tremolo

Solo (Enclosed)

16 Quintaton

8 Violoncello

8 Cello Célestes

8 Tibia  
 8 Salicional  
 8 Unda Maris  
 4 Concert Flute  
 2 Piccolo Harmonique  
 16 Cor Anglais  
 8 Corno di Bassetto  
 8 Orchestral Oboe  
 Tremolo  
 8 French Horn  
 8 Orchestral Trumpet  
 8 Tuba Magna (Unenclosed)

### **Pedal**

32 Double Open Bass  
 16 Open Bass  
 16 Open Diapason  
 16 Contra Bass  
 16 Sub Bass  
 16 Violon (Sw)  
 16 Dulciana (Sw)  
 8 Principal  
 8 Octave  
 8 Flute  
 4 Super Octave  
 3.1/5 Seventeenth  
 2 $\frac{2}{3}$  Nineteenth  
 2 Twenty Second  
 32 Contra Trombone  
 16 Trombone  
 8 Octave Trombone

16 Bombarde

### **Couplers**

Swell Octave  
 Swell Sub Octave  
 Swell Unison Off  
 Choir Octave  
 Choir Sub Octave  
 Choir Unison Off  
 Solo Octave  
 Solo Sub Octave  
 Solo Unison Off  
 Choir to Pedal  
 Great to Pedal  
 Swell to Pedal  
 Solo to Pedal  
 Swell to Choir  
 Solo to Choir  
 Swell to Great  
 Choir to Great  
 Solo to Swell  
 Swell Reeds to Solo  
 Great Reeds to Solo  
 Great & Pedal Combs Coupled

### **Accessories**

Thumb Pistons  
 6 to Great  
 6 to Swell  
 6 to Solo  
 5 to Choir

Reversible

Great Reeds to solo

Swell Reeds to Solo

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

Choir to Pedal

Solo to Pedal

Swell to Great

Solo to Great

Choir to Great

Swell to Choir

Solo to Choir

### **Toe Pistons**

6 to Pedal

Reversible

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

Choir to Pedal

Tubular Pneumatic Action

Wind Pressures 3½ to 30 inches.

Compass Manual CC- C = 61 notes

Compass Pedal CCC- G = 32 notes





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Westminster Cathedral Organ (west console)

Used with permission of Henry Willis & Sons Ltd. Liverpool



**Appendix 5**

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*Programme*

*of*

*ORGAN RECITAL*

*by*

*LÉONCE DE SAINT-MARTIN*  
*(Organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris)*

*at*

*WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL*

*on*

*MONDAY MAY 6th, 1946*

*at 6.45 p.m.*

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*PRICE 3d*

# PROGRAMME

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- 1 (a) Grand jeu - - - - - *Du Mage*  
 (b) Offertoire in G - - - - - *F. Couperin*  
 (c) Variations on : O filii - - - - - *F. Dandrieu*
  
- 2 (a) Two Chorales - - - - - *J. S. Bach*  
 Lord, have mercy upon us.  
 The Sermon on the Mount.  
 (b) Prelude and Fugue in E Minor *J. S. Bach*
  
- 3 (a) Cantilène - - - - - *Ch. M. Widor*  
 Extrait de la symphonie "*Romane*"  
 (b) Carillon de Westminster - - - - - *L. Vierne*
  
- 4 (a) Paraphrase du Psaume 136 - *L. de Saint-Martin*  
 Tristesse des Hébreux  
 Lamentations au souvenir de Jérusalem  
 Babylone la superbe  
 Les Hébreux maudissent leurs vainqueurs  
 (b) Toccata de la Libération - - - - - *L. de Saint-Martin*

### L. DE SAINT-MARTIN

Comte Léonce de Saint-Martin de Paylha was born at Albi on October 31st, 1886, of an old French family of the nobility.

He was a pupil of L. Vierne, who in 1922 took him as a substitute for the organ of Notre-Dame. He succeeded him in 1937.

He is the author of a mass composed for four voices accompanied by two organs, trumpets and trombones; a symphonic poem: Genesis for organ and full orchestra, a book of melodies and numerous religious organ pieces.

Psalm 136\* was played in New York by Frederick Marriott, organist of Chicago University on May 23rd, 1939 and was particularly appreciated by musical critics.

The toccata was written in August 1944, in Paris, during the Liberation.

## Appendix 6 Complete works of Léonce de Saint-Martin

Marche Triomphale Op.1 1903 Piano

Légende Castillonnaise Op.2 1906 Piano

Prière à Sainte Cécile Op.3 1907 Voice & Organ

Gaule et France Op.4 1908 Solo, choir & Accompaniment

Soir d'automne 1910 Voice & Piano

Six Songs Voice & Piano

L'enfant Voice & Piano

Veni Creator Spiritus 1914 Voice & Piano/Organ

Offertoire pour les fêtes Simples de la Sainte Vierge Op.10 1929 Organ

Tu es Petrus Op.7 1929 SATB, 2 Organs, Brass

Suite Cyclique Op.11 1930 Organ

Scherzo de Concert Op.18 1930 Organ

Marche Pontificale Venite exultemus Op.9 1931 Organ & Brass

Meditation sur le Salve Regina Op.12 1931 Organ

Offrande Op.8 1932 String quartet, harp and organ.

Messe en mi Op. 13 1931/2 SATB, 2 organs (Brass)

Paraphrase du Ps.136 Op.15 1932 Organ

A la très chère Op.13 1932 Voice & Piano

Sur les balcons du ciel Op.14 Voice & Piano

Sacerdos et Pontifex Op.16 1933 SATB, Organ & Brass

Ave Maria Op.17 1934 Voice & Organ

Offertoire sur deux Noël Op.19 1937 Organ

Stèle pour un artiste défunt Op.20 1938 Organ

Te Deum Op.21 1938 Organ

Prélude en ré mineur Op.22 1938 Organ

Fantaisie et air varié Op. 23 1938 Harpsichord

Berceuse de Noël Op.25 1939 Organ

Genèse Op.26 1940 Organ

Panis Angelicus Op.27 1940 Solo, choir & Organ

Passacaille Op.28 1940 Organ  
 Final (Sortie for Messe) 1940 Organ  
 Cantique Op.30 1940 Organ  
 Choral-Prélude pour Les temps de l'Avent Op.31 1940 Organ  
 Venez divin Messie Op.32 1940 Organ  
 In Memoriam Op.33 1941 Organ (Brass)  
 Genèse (March 1941) Version for Voice, Violin, Cello & Piano  
 Te Deum (Op.21) 1942 Organ & Brass  
 Pastorale Op.3 1942 Organ  
 Genèse (July-September 1942 Version for Organ & Orchestra)  
 Kyrie Funèbre Op.36 1944. SATB, Organ & Brass  
 Le Salut à la Vierge Op.34 1944 Organ  
 Toccata de la Libération Op.37 1944 Organ  
 A la Gloire de Saint Louis Op.33 1945 Organ and Organ & Brass  
 Esquisse musicale sur un Poème de Tristan Klingsor 1945 Voice & Piano  
 Toccata et fugue de la resurrection Op.38 1945 Organ  
 Anniversaire 1946 Piano  
 Symphonie Dominicale Op. 39 1946-1948 Organ  
 Symphonie Mariale Op.40 1948-1949 Organ  
 Cantique Spirituel Op.41 1950 Organ  
 Magnificat Op.42 1950-1951 SATB & 2 Organs (Also in a version for two pianos and organ alone)  
 Espérance April 1952 Spoken word & Piano  
 Tantum Ergo Bass and Organ (No date)  
 Salve Regina dit des moines d'Estaing Voice & Organ (No date)

## Appendix 7 Final DMA Recital programme

Philip Smith, 25th May 2018

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland

1. Le Salut à la Vierge:  
*Ave Maria, Ave Maris Stella* Op.34 Léonce de Saint-Martin  
 (1886-1954)
2. Passacaglia et Thema Fugatum BWV 582 J.S Bach  
 (1685-1750)
3. Andantino Op.51 Louis Vierne  
*Dedicated to Léonce de Saint-Martin* (1870-1937)
4. Variations de Concert Op.1 Joseph Bonnet  
 (1884-1944)
5. Choral No. 1 in E major César Franck  
 (1822-1890)
6. Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité Olivier Messiaen  
*Dieu est Simple* (Movement VIII) (1908-1992)
7. *Aie pitié de moi o Seigneur Dieu* (BWV 721) J.S. Bach
8. Paraphrase du Ps.136 Op.15 Léonce de Saint-Martin
  - i. Tristesse des Hébreux captifs de Babylone
  - ii. Lamentations au souvenir de Jérusalem
  - iii. Babylone la Superbe
  - iv. Les Hébreux maudissent leurs vainqueurs
9. Stornello Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli  
 (1882-1949)  
 (Transcribed Saint-Martin)
10. Te Deum Op.11 Jeanne Demessieux  
 (1921-1968)