

THE COMPLETE  
WORKS FOR ORGAN

*Marcel Dupré*

JEREMY FILSELL

*Jeanne Demessieux*

STEPHEN THARP



SAINT THOMAS CHURCH  
FIFTH AVENUE

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FRONTISPIECE: Marcel Dupré at the organ, Ambrose McEvoy

CONCERTS *at*  
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PHOTO: IRA LIPPE

JEREMY FILSELL, *organ*

Jeremy Filsell is one of only a few virtuoso performers as both pianist and organist. He has appeared as a solo pianist in Russia, Scandinavia, New Zealand and Australia and throughout the USA and UK. His concerto repertoire encompasses Bach, Mozart and Beethoven through to Shostakovich, John Ireland, Constant Lambert and the Rachmaninov cycle. He has recorded the solo piano music of Herbert Howells, Bernard Stevens, Eugène Goossens and Johann Christoph Eschmann and recent releases include discs of Rachmaninov's solo piano music (Signum), the first two Rachmaninov Concerti (Raven) and the piano music of Francis Pott (*Acis*).

Jeremy is on the international roster of Steinway Piano Artists and has recorded for BBC Radio 3, USA, and Scandinavian radio networks in solo and concerto roles. His discography comprises more than 35 solo recordings. Gramophone magazine commented on the series of 12 CDs comprising the premiere recordings of Marcel Dupré's complete organ works for Guild in 2000 that it was '*one of the greatest achievements in organ recording*'. In 2005, Signum released a 3-disc set of the six organ symphonies of Louis Vierne, recorded on the 1890 Cavaillé-Coll organ in St. Ouen, Rouen. He has taught at universities, summer schools, and conventions in both the UK and USA and has served on international competi-

tion juries in England and Switzerland. Recent solo engagements have taken him across the USA and UK and to Germany, France, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Australia and New Zealand. In North America, he concertizes under the auspices of Philip Truckenbrod Concert Artists.

As a teenager, Jeremy Filsell was a Limpus, Shinn & Durrant prizewinner for FRCO and was awarded the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. As a student of Nicolas Kynaston and Daniel Roth, he studied as an Organ Scholar at Keble College, Oxford before completing graduate studies in piano performance with David Parkhouse and Hilary McNamara at the Royal College of Music in London. His PhD in Musicology from Birmingham City University/Conservatoire was awarded for research involving aesthetic and interpretative issues in the music of Marcel Dupré. Before moving to the USA in 2008, he held Academic and Performance lectureships at the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and was a lay clerk in the Queen's choir at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He combined an international recital and teaching career with being director of music at the Church of the Epiphany and then of St. Alban's in Washington DC, Artist-in-residence at Washington National Cathedral, and Professor of Organ at the Peabody Conservatory (Baltimore), before moving to New York in April 2019 to become Organist & Director of Music at the Church of Saint Thomas, 5th Avenue.

# Marcel Dupré

THE COMPLETE WORKS FOR ORGAN

✦c PROGRAM V ✦c

JEREMY FILSELL, ORGAN

APRIL 24, 2021 | SATURDAY AT 3PM



PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SI MAJEUR,

OP. 7, NO. 1

During his final years as a student before the First World War, Dupré was encouraged by Widor, his composition teacher, to enter for the prestigious national composition prize, the *Prix de Rome*, which he finally won in 1914, after two failed attempts. But the operatic world of the cantata around which the *Prix* revolved held little attraction for him; immediately after Dupré's first attempt in the summer of 1912, Widor suggested that he should spend his holiday composing a new cantata, and Dupré rebelled. He chose instead to 'refresh his spirits' by writing some organ music, and the result was the first major work of his maturity, the set of Three Preludes & Fugues, Op. 7; when he finally showed them to Widor, he could not help exclaiming 'Ah, *mon cher Maître*, I wrote them in the hope that you would free me, *free* me from the *Prix de Rome*!' Revolutionary in both conception and technique, these pieces were hardly a commercial proposition at that time — indeed, Dupré himself was probably the only organist in France with the technique to play them.

They remained on the shelf for eight years, until Alphonse Leduc finally agreed to publish them in 1920; by this time Dupré had made his name with his celebrated series of Bach recit-

als, and his reputation was sufficient to make the risk worthwhile. Each of the pieces now bore a dedication to a young organist who had died during the War - respectively, Louis Vierne's younger brother René, Augustin Barié, and Joseph Boulnois. In due course the Preludes and Fugues became standard repertoire works, but it is difficult to overestimate their originality in those early days before the First World War, when some pronounced them 'unplayable'. Described by the composer as 'music for a joyful celebration, like Easter', the Prelude in B major explodes into life in a joyful carillon of jangling fourths with a striding pedal theme beneath. The Fugue subject takes these pervasive fourths and builds them into broken chord figures; dancing semiquavers and snappy syncopations soon propel the music to a thunderous climax and a final return of the toccata figuration from the Prelude.

#### ÉLÉVATION, OP. 2

*É*lévation pour orgue ou harmonium by Marcel Dupré, Suppléant de Ch. M. Widor au grand orgue de Saint-Sulpice. Dupré's first published composition was commissioned by the Abbé Joubert for his multi-volume liturgical anthology *Les Maîtres Contemporains de l'Orgue*. The date of publication is 1913, but the piece was probably written much earlier; in this charming, elegant, but rather anonymous music there is certainly no sign of the revolutionary young composer of the Three Preludes & Fugues...

#### 24 INVENTIONS, OP. 50, NOS. 13-18

(For introduction, see Page 24)

**N**O. 13 EN MI BÉMOL MAJEUR (ALLEGRO GIOCO) — the third group of Inventions begins with a skittish scherzo with a solo line for the piquant combination of Bourdon and Tierce, punctuated by short chords and then accompanied by little rocking figures. On the second page the mutation is coupled to the pedal, with bizarre effect.

NO. 14 EN UT MINEUR (ALLEGRO MODERATO) — A trio with a distinctly neoclassical flavor; not for the first time, one thinks of Bach, and also perhaps of Hindemith.

NO. 15 EN MI MAJEUR (CANTABILE) — One of the gems of the collection. The pedals play a melody in long notes on an 8ft flute against an indeterminate harmonic background for four voices on the Voix celeste; the left hand plays a continuous repeated quaver figure while the two-note motif of the right hand is persistently syncopated, setting up a kind of ostinato effect, but with constantly shifting harmonies.

NO. 16 EN DO DIÈSE MINEUR (ANDANTE CON MOTO) — a refreshingly foursquare four-part invention in imitative style.

NO. 17 EN LA BÉMOL MAJEUR (ANDANTE SOSTENUTO) — a tender meditation for flutes.

NO. 18 EN FA MINEUR (MARCATO) — A splendid fugato, full of inversions, stretti and other contrapuntal intricacies. The combination of the minims and repeated crotchets of the subject with the running quavers of the countersubject produces a thoroughly Germanic effect.

### TROIS HYMNES, OP. 58

#### *Matines — Vesper — Laudes*

The *Trois Hymnes* of 1963 were Dupré's last liturgical work of any substance. They remain very little known, but contain some of the most charming and easily accessible music of his later years, and deserve to be much more widely played.

*Matines* takes the form of a theme and variations, which Dupré's pupil and successor Rolande Falcinelli aptly described as being 'fresh as a spring morning'. The theme is presented on a solo flute with a sparse accompaniment. And the variations:

- The separate solo phrases of the theme alternate with gliding chains of common chords in unusual juxtapositions, in a style rather reminiscent of another Dupré pupil, Jehan Alain.

- A delicate duo, with the theme on 4' pedal flute, surrounded by a garland of piquant figuration on Bourdon and Tierce.
- The theme is in long notes in the pedal, as the bass of this tranquil meditation for flute and strings.
- A sparkling trio in staccato triplets, with the theme broken up in the pedal.
- A meditative paraphrase of the theme, densely scored for the penetrating tone of the Vox Humana, with drone-like double pedal.
- The finale begins with a lumbering staccato trio with chromatic alterations of the theme. This builds up to a powerful tutti statement of the tune, accompanied once again by chains of unrelated common chords, and immediately succeeded by a softer harmonization that finally fades away to nothing.

*Vesper* is a gentle evening prayer; the theme passes from a flute in the treble to a cello on the pedal, then, lightly decorated, to a soft trumpet, and finally back to the flute.

*Laudes* forms a more extrovert finale, based on two musical ideas, the first in animated triplets, the second more expressive, in the style of a chorale. These ideas are first heard in succession, and then combined in the final section of the piece, which mounts to a brilliant toccata-style conclusion.

PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN FA MINEUR,

OP. 7, NO. 2

This Prelude and Fugue represents the slow movement of the cycle of three, and is perhaps the most eloquent of all Dupré's early works. A delicate filigree of dainty staccato semiquavers threads its way throughout the Prelude like stardust, accompanying the expressive melodic lines of the other parts, which are entrusted to 8ft flute combinations of varying intensity, ranging from a single voice to a rich four-part texture with double pedal. The Fugue is based on the same three-note melodic cell as the prelude, from which Dupré fashions a subject whose perfectly balanced rise and



fall is a model of expressive elegance. The registration is restricted to 8' *fonds* and Voix Celeste, and the music flows so naturally that one is hardly aware of listening to a fugue at all; towards the end there are some neat contrapuntal devices in the form of inversions and stretti, but they seem to float past in a dream, and the atmosphere of melancholy nostalgia is never disturbed.

PARAPHRASE SUR LE TE DEUM, OP. 43

This liturgical paraphrase was commissioned in 1946 by the American editor David McK. Williams for inclusion in his two-volume *Modern Anthology*, but it has never attained the currency of the other French piece in this collection, Jean Langlais' *Fête*. Dupré's setting of the familiar Gregorian theme is by no means a conventional hymn of thanksgiving, and the barrage of staccato chords on the opening pages introduces a wild and slightly unsettling mood, an evocation perhaps of the dark wartime years that had just come to an end. Inspired throughout by the different phrases of the hymn (most notably, of course, the first) the music passes through a variety of different textures and tone-colors, including two softer interludes, before a hammered rhythm of repeated notes, initiated by the pedals, introduces the final march-like climax.

HYMN.  
**T** E De-um laudá-mus: \* te Dómi-num confi-té-  
 mur. 2. Te aetérnum Patrem omnis terra venerá-tur.

ÉPITHALAME, WOO

This short unpublished piece was written for the wedding of Dupré's daughter Marguerite in 1948. When Marguerite told her parents of her engagement, Dupré played a little improvisation in celebration of the event, on a theme by Bach, Giovannini's Aria from the *Anna Magdalena Notebook* — a theme on which Beethoven had

apparently also improvised at the time of his own engagement in 1806. *Épithalame* is a written-out version of this improvisation, in which Dupré 'placed the happiness of our beloved children under the protection of those two great and venerated geniuses', as he wrote on the manuscript. It was played at the wedding in April 1948 by Dupré's pupil and friend Marcel Lanquetuit, the organist of Rouen Cathedral.

ANNONCIATION, OP. 56

'*Annunciation* consists of two short, meditative pieces. Amateurs or inexperienced students will find their repertoire enriched by these pages, as they are easily accessible without any sacrifice of musical standards. In fact, the combinations of vertical and horizontal lines in the first, and the purely harmonic expression of the second are of precious, rare quality.' (Rolande Falcinelli). Composed in 1961, these two meditations were inspired by the Annunciation of Leonardo da Vinci; there is a note to this effect on the manuscript, but not in the published score. The angular intervals of the Clarinet melody in the first piece seem to represent the hieratic stance of the Angel Gabriel with upraised fingers, 'Hail, thou that art highly favored', and the serene meditation for flute and strings which follows represents Mary's acceptance.

PRÉLUDE ET FUGUE EN SOL MINEUR,

OP. 7, NO. 3

The third Prelude and Fugue is technically the most innovative of the three; the lightness and dexterity of its semiquaver figuration look forward to the developments of the 1920s, when Dupré discovered the possibilities of electric action, and the textures produced by its four-part pedal chords puzzled many professionals in the audience when he gave the first public performance in Paris in 1917. The Prelude, which never rises much above a whisper, opens *ppp* (a novel effect in itself), with scurrying patterns of semiquavers on the manuals, against which a long melodic line stands

out in relief. The solo tune moves up to the treble register, and is then richly harmonized by right hand and pedals (this is where the notorious four-note chords appear), while the left hand continues the scurrying. The lively jig-like Fugue makes a wonderful contrast to the gentle colors of the Prelude. The melody from the Prelude returns in the middle, and dominates the vibrant final page, where the full power of the organ is deployed to thrilling effect.

40, BOULEVARD ANATOLE FRANCE  
MEUDON 15201  
OBS. 14-45

March 12<sup>th</sup> 1958

My Dear Mr. Arents,

I have had the honor and the great pleasure to give a recital on the magnificent organ in St. Thomas Church last October, during my visit in your country. It was such a thrill to play on an instrument of such beauty and power, and variety of tone on which either classical and modern music can be interpreted in the right spirit.

All organists certainly have a debt of gratitude towards you. I am one of them and want to express my personal thanks to you for having thus enriched the organ world.

Sincerely yours  
Maurice Dupin

Letter to Mr. Arents of Saint Thomas Church, 1958

# Saint Thomas Church

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street  
New York City

## ORGAN RECITAL

by

**MARCEL DUPRE**

Organist of The Church of Saint Sulpice, Paris

THURSDAY EVENING AT 8:30

OCTOBER 17, 1957

*Sponsored by the New York Chapter of the  
American Guild of Organists*

### PROGRAM

PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN A MINOR . . . . .	J. S. Bach
TENTH CONCERTO IN D MINOR . . . . .	G. F. Handel
Adagio and Recitativo - Allegro - Finale	
FANTASY IN F MINOR, No. 2 . . . . .	W. A. Mozart
PRELUDE, FUGUE AND VARIATION . . . . .	César Franck

*An offering will be taken to help defray the expense of the recital.*

### COMPOSITIONS OF MARCEL DUPRE

CHORAL: In Dulci Jubilo

PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN B MAJOR

TRIPTYCH

Chaconne  
Musette  
Dithyramb

IMPROVISATION ON SUBMITTED THEMES

— ✻ —

The organ was given  
To the Glory of God and in  
loving memory of

LENA RICHARDSON ARENTS

by

GEORGE ARENTS  
GEORGE ARENTS, JR.  
EMILY ANN ARENTS  
DOROTHY YORKE ARENTS  
JANE GINTER ARENTS

*The Organ was built by the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company*

Marcel Dupré at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, 1957