

CHARLES TOURNEMIRE, 1870–1939

Ruth Sisson

Introduction

Charles Arnould Tournemire is probably best known for his *L'Orgue mystique*, the plain-song-based collection of organ suites for the Christian year, and for his reputation as a brilliant improviser at the church of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris, where he served as principal organist from 1898 until his death in 1939. Less known is the fact that Tournemire composed eight orchestral symphonies, at least ten large works for soloists, chorus and orchestra, a sizable body of chamber music and, in the last seven years of his life, a half-dozen symphonic organ works—several of which are sets of two to six pieces each.

The organ works are particularly significant in that they represent a digression from the practices of other symphonic organ composers such as Widor and Vierne. While these men used the more traditional symphonic forms, Tournemire favored the improvisatory, cyclical forms based on the variation principles of Beethoven. The music of all these men was inspired by and conceived for the new "symphonic" organs developed in the 19th century by Aristide Cavallé-Coll, but it was Tournemire who pioneered new concepts in registration and "orchestration" for the organ, utilizing a wide variety of specific and innovative stop combinations as well as unique textures.

Tournemire's harmony and linear writing clearly place him as a 20th-century composer, but his musical footsteps span many centuries, with an eclectic sensitivity which carries the influence of a St. Martial organum, a Bach fugue, a Beethoven symphony or a Wagner "Liebestod," to say nothing of a "Sunken Cathedral," a "Boris Godunov" or a Strauss tone poem. One suspects that the mind of this master improviser could retain anything it heard, whether an exotic Hindu mode, an elaborate Gregorian melisma or a complex chord formation, and could recall it at will. His effective incorporation of plain-song into a symphonic style and his influence as an "orchestrator" is seen in the works of later 20th-century composers—particularly Jean Langlais and Maurice Duruflé. His fascination with repeated-note figures and with Eastern scales parallels that of Messiaen. Yet, for the most part, it would seem that Charles Tournemire's music represents a unique and very personal style—a summation of influences, old and new, guided by a flawless ear and wedded to a remarkable playing technique and a feverish imagination.

It is appropriate on this, the 50th anniversary of his death, to look at the life of this distinguished organist-composer, to examine the influences which shaped his work and to review the contributions he has made to 20th-century organ literature.

Biography

Charles Arnould Tournemire was born January 22, 1870, in Bordeaux, France. Descended from a family of organists, he began his musical training very early. By the age of eleven he had won a first prize in piano from the Bordeaux Conservatory and had made his first appearance as an organist. Before his 16th birthday he had already composed several pieces for piano.

At the age of 16, Tournemire was accepted into the National Conservatory of Music in Paris, where he studied organ with César Franck for three years and, after Franck's death, with Charles-Marie Widor. Although absorbed in the very demanding organ classes and piano study with Charles-Wilfrid Bériot, as well as harmony with Antoine Taudou, Tournemire continued to show a predilection for composition. He wrote his first organ pieces, identified only as *Pièces d'orgue*, the first year he entered the conservatory. During the next two years, while still in his teens, he composed, among other works, an oratorio, *The Deliverance of Israel*, and an opera, *Ernani*. Later student compositions included two cantatas, two organ pieces, two masses, a trio for piano and strings, a prelude and fugue for piano and an opera comique, as well as several works "voluntarily destroyed." Even as a student, Tournemire, the organist, composed for a wide range of performing media.

His organ studies at the Conservatory concentrated largely on improvisation, particularly during the three years under Franck. Tournemire's gifts as an improviser were admired by students and teachers alike. Louis Vierne, a classmate of Tournemire, wrote in his memoirs that Tournemire was considered the "eagle of the class. If ever I could get to improvise like Tournemire had been my one thought since I knew him."¹ Vierne also related that Franck particularly liked Tournemire: "When Franck came upon an independent nature among his pupils, a real temperament, he was delighted and did nothing to curb its expansion. Therefore, he was very fond of Tournemire."²

In 1891, Tournemire received the first prize in organ and left the Conservatory to become organist at Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. He continued to compose—a few organ pieces, but mostly small chamber works, piano works and vocal pieces. He



Charles Tournemire at the original Sainte-Clotilde console

also quickly gained a reputation as an organ virtuoso and began to concertize.

In 1898, Gabriel Pierné, who had succeeded Franck at the famed Cavallé-Coll organ at Sainte-Clotilde, resigned his position. Tournemire, then 28, set his sights on that coveted post and was chosen from a field of 30 candidates. On Easter day of that year he assumed his duties as principal organist at the renowned basilica. For over 40 years, until his death, Sainte-Clotilde served as the base from which Tournemire would develop an extremely productive career as church organist, recitalist, teacher and composer.

During the first years of the century, Tournemire's concert tours took him to several European countries, including Belgium, Spain and Portugal. He was also invited to Russia to participate in the inauguration of a new organ in Moscow. His recital programs reveal his admiration for the works of such masters as Frescobaldi, Buxtehude, Couperin, Grigny, J.S. Bach and, of course, his *maître*, Franck. The music of these men was to have a marked influence on his own style of writing for the organ.³

Around the turn of the century, Tournemire was married to Mlle. Alice Taylor.⁴ The Tournemires' apartment on rue Milne-Edwards became through the years a gathering place for young musicians. On the fifth floor, according to Tournemire's friend, Raymond Petit, was an "unforgettable" salon—spacious, with high ceilings—which housed two exceptionally fine instruments: an Erard piano and a nine-rank pipe organ built by Mutin.⁵ The latter must have been a remarkable instrument. Daniel-Lesur wrote in a letter to Petit that "Tournemire réalisait ce miracle de trouver dans cette petit instrument toutes les ressources nécessaires à l'exécution de *L'Orgue mystique* . . ."⁶ [Tournemire accomplished the miracle of finding in that little instrument every resource necessary for the execution of *L'Orgue mystique* . . .]

Flor Peeters expressed the admiration experienced by those intimates who came to the Tournemire home through the years: "At his home, the fellowship was something more than the empty, hollow word . . . In contact with this upright man one felt carried away by enthusiasm. The emptiness and meanness of our century remained ineffectual against his youthful idealism, the serenity of his talent, the nobility and beauty of his artistic concept . . . Witty talker and vivid storyteller, he recalled anecdotes of his artistic life with an inimitable zest, the stories of his many travels, his visits to the French Gothic cathedrals. The words flowed as from a spring, always fed by the rich temperament with the same simplicity and ease which suited an artistic nature of inexhaustible resources."⁷

It is a point of some significance, however, that not everyone saw the side of Tournemire described by Peeters. Gwilym Beechey expressed a totally contrasting perception when he described Tournemire as "elusive, withdrawn, reticent, not a persuasive advocate of his own music, overshadowed by his more extroverted colleagues and contemporaries."⁸

It is obvious from the comments of his associates that Tournemire's was a complex and multifaceted personality. Bernadette Lespinard reported that among his students and friends his creative spontaneity spilled over and he tended to be impulsive, enthu-

siastic, even playful; yet he was also quick-tempered when his sense of indignation was aroused. She went on to quote Daniel-Lesur: "Doué d'une émotivité extraordinaire, il n'était pas taré de le voir passer en quelques instants de la douceur à la plus véhémement indignation . . ."⁹ [Endowed with extraordinary emotiveness, it was not unusual to see him pass in a few moments from the sweetest of natures to the most vehement indignation.] Petit agreed: "Il y avait sans cesse chez lui un mélange de bouillonnantes explosions et de timidités inhibitrices."¹⁰ [There was constantly within him a mixture of hot-tempered explosions and inhibited timidities.] Maurice Duruflé was even more personal: "He could be charming or he could bite your head off."¹¹

Artistically, Tournemire was intolerant of mere eclecticism and dilettantism. He also held high regard for the role of the liturgical organist and had little patience with those organists who did not share his religious convictions. Petit suggested that he was in some ways an anachronism—displaced from another era—a man from the Middle Ages. He pointed out that Tournemire had a tendency to "flee the world," citing his choice of favorite residences: "L'île d'Ouessant, sauvage et désolée, où il s'était aménagé un vieux moulin; un village encore primitif et d'aspect quasi nippon du bassin d'Arcachon, etc. . . ."¹² [The island of Ouessant, wild and desolate, where he fixed up an old windmill; a village still primitive and in some respects quasi Japanese at the Arachon basin, etc. . . .]

Tournemire's love of nature, particularly the ocean, was obviously nourished in these places. The rugged surroundings at Ouessant, a windswept island off the westernmost tip of France, provided him with inspiration for at least one new major composition each year. Ouessant supplied something else for Tournemire as well. In a letter to his friend Pierre Garanger he wrote: "It is quite willingly that I confide to this savage island my secret thoughts, those which lead me into the realm of Peace."¹³

Despite the fact that it was his organ playing which gained him recognition and a prestigious position, composition continued to occupy a great deal of Tournemire's attention throughout his life. Interestingly enough, however, from the time he accepted the position at Sainte-Clotilde until the writing of *L'Orgue mystique* nearly 30 years later, Tournemire's compositions were almost entirely for media other than organ. The *Pièce symphonique pour grande orgue*, Op. 16 (1899), a *Suite de morceaux*, Op. 19 and 24,¹⁴ composed in 1900, a set of pieces for harmonium in 1902, the *Poème pour grand orgue et orchestra*, Op. 38 (1909), and the *Triple Choral*, Op. 41 (1910) (inspired by the three chorals of César Franck), represent his only works for organ during this entire 28-year period. (One can speculate that his artistry as an improviser satisfied his creative instincts for that medium.)

For whatever reasons, Tournemire seemed preoccupied during the first quarter of the century with large-scale orchestral and choral works of a programmatic nature. His first symphony, subtitled "Romantique," was composed in 1900. Three years later his *Le Sang de la sirène, légende musicale*, Op. 27, for soloists, chorus and orchestra, earned him the *Grand Prix* in composition given by the city of Paris. His tendencies towards the

obscure, towards mysticism, towards the ideals of greatness and nobility are clearly evident in this and the programmatic works which were to follow: *Nittetis* (1904–1907), *The Gods Are Dead* (Chrysis) (1911–12) and *The Legend of Tristan* (1925–26), all lyric dramas in several acts for soloists, chorus and orchestra; *The Quest for the Holy Grail* ("fresque for orchestra and invisible women's chorus"); and the unique *Trilogy: Faust, Don Quixote and St. Francis of Assisi*, again for soloists, chorus and orchestra. The latter, begun in 1919, took Tournemire ten years to complete.

The spirit of Romanticism is readily apparent in both scope and the subject matter of these works. Their texts are drawn from epic poems by various French authors. Tournemire's treatment of those texts reveals a fundamental characteristic of his creative approach in general—one which will be observed in the late organ works as well—that is, the procedure of free paraphrase. Whether borrowing a literary text or a musical theme, Tournemire did not allow himself to be literally bound to the original. Rather, he adapted and modified the original into a new, personal form in order to suit his creative purpose.

Tournemire's orchestral works during this period (1900–27) comprised a total of eight symphonies. Like the choral works, they flaunt the banner of Romanticism, as evidenced in their programmatic titles: No. 2: *Ouessant*; No. 3: *Moscou*; No. 5: untitled, but referred to as "The Mountain Symphony"; No. 7: *Les Dances de la vie* (The Dances of Life); and No. 8: *La Symphonie du triomphe de la mort* (Symphony of the Triumph over Death).

The sixth symphony, while untitled, is also clearly programmatic. Identified by Tournemire as the first of his works from the war,¹⁵ it incorporates organ, chorus and soloists, and utilizes biblical texts—particularly *Jeremiah*—deploring the horrors of war. Tournemire considered this work a turning point, presumably because of the introduction of a literary element into a symphony. While admittedly not a Mahler enthusiast, he wrote in a letter to Petit that it was probably the constant boasting about Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* by his friend Pierre Garanger that subconsciously influenced him to do this.¹⁶

Both Petit and the Fauquet catalog offer some insight into Tournemire's compositional process. Petit tells us that before the composition of a work Tournemire always worked out a detailed plan—usually in writing—in which he outlined the main ideas, the arrangement of movements, the principal key centers, etc.¹⁷ From the chronological listings in Fauquet's catalog we learn that Tournemire often worked on several compositions simultaneously, with longer works sometimes spanning several years as other compositions were in the making. The catalog also reveals that with his orchestral works Tournemire generally wrote a piano version first, the orchestration following sometimes a year or more later. In the case of the first, second, fourth and eighth symphonies, he wrote full piano reductions for performance.

A personal glimpse of the man as composer is afforded by Tournemire himself. In a letter to Garanger he referred to the progress of his seventh symphony: "Les thèmes existent, le plan est établi, la sub-

stance philosophique, le côté émotif sont sortie de mon cerveau et de mon coeur *volcaniquement*.¹⁸ [The themes exist, the plan is established, and the philosophical substance and motive aspects are coming out of my brain and heart like a volcanic eruption.]

Although large choral and orchestral works dominated Tournemire's compositions during this period, he did also write a number of piano, vocal and chamber works. Perhaps it was the latter that earned him an appointment in 1919 as Professor of Ensemble at the Paris Conservatory.

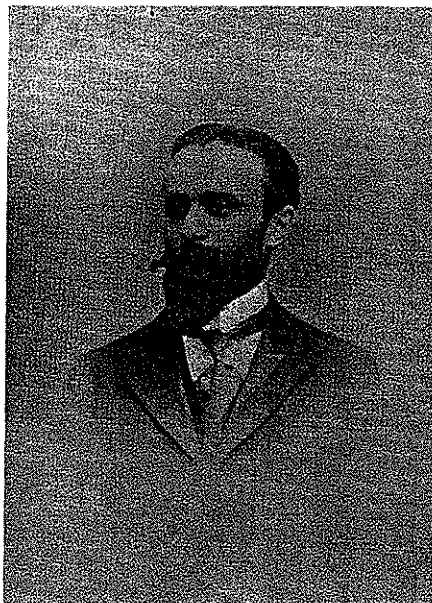
The death of his wife the following year left him grief-stricken. That summer, he withdrew to the Grand Chartreuse monastery on the Isere River, where he began the composition of his *Eighth Symphony* [Triumph over Death] in her memory. It was to take him four years to complete.

One other event occurred during this time frame which must have been a keen disappointment and an added frustration to Tournemire. In 1926, he competed for the organ professorship at the Conservatory. The appointment went to the younger Marcel Dupré. Dupré's memoirs suggest a certain amount of politics influenced the decision.¹⁹

In 1927, after a hiatus of 17 years, Tournemire directed his compositional efforts to the medium of organ. The years 1927-32 were devoted almost exclusively to the voluminous liturgical cycle, *L'Orgue mystique*, although he did manage to complete the *Trilogy*, to write one piece each for trombone and French horn, and to begin some piano works.

As preparation for the writing of *L'Orgue mystique*, Tournemire spent a considerable amount of time at the Solesmes Abbey studying the performance of plainsong by the Benedictine monks who were responsible for the restoration of its fluid, natural speech-rhythm. The idea for the collection of plainsong-based music for each Sunday of the liturgical year was suggested to Tournemire by his pupil, Joseph Bonnet.²⁰ According to Duruflé, however, Tournemire's improvisations at Sainte-Clotilde had always centered around the themes of the day: "Tournemire never played from a prepared score at Sunday Mass; the book of Gregorian chant was always on the music rack, open at the liturgical office of the day. He improvised the entire Low Mass, pausing for the gospel and the sermon. That meant a full half-hour of music. I hasten to add that this half-hour of music was always inspired by the Gregorian themes appropriate to the day and reflected the successive portions of the service. It was not a concert, but a genuine musical commentary on the liturgy."²¹ *L'Orgue mystique* apparently represents an effort to capture in writing the principles and the nature of those improvised services. Its 51 suites, each containing five pieces designated for the various portions of the service, are the culmination of five years of effort and provide an important collection of service music.

As he entered his 60s, Tournemire seemed to be just reaching his prime. In 1934, he remarried—a Mlle. Alice Espir (his widow is still living). During the 1930s, his compositional output was prodigious. Just during the last seven years of his life (1932-39), he wrote all of the symphonic or-



Tournemire in a rare portrait from *Le Courrier Musical* (Nov. 1904)

gan works, plus the *Sept Chorals—Poèmes d'orgue pour les sept paroles du Christ* (The Seven Choral-Poems for Organ on the Seven [Last] Words of Christ), the *Suite évocatrice*, two sets of pieces for harmonium and two organ method books: *Précis d'exécution de registration et d'improvisation à l'orgue* and a short form, *Petit méthode d'orgue*, which has texts in English and German, as well as French.

In addition, he composed several piano works, a sonata for violin and piano, a string quartet, *Le Cantique du soleil de Saint François d'Assise* (for vocal quartet and piano), and three large choral works: *Apocalypse de Saint Jean* (a sacred trilogy for orchestra, chorus, soloists and organ); the oratorio, *La Douloureuse Passion du Christ*; and his final work, *Il Poverello di Assisi* (a choral drama in five "lyrical episodes"). Flor Peeters stated that "just the score of this last work comprises about 900 large-size pages."²² Tournemire completed the orchestration of this enormous work (which, to date, has never been performed) only a few days before his death. He wrote in his journal, "I thank heaven for having sustained me in this vast task."²³

Left incomplete at the time of his death were projects for *Six Grand Chorals d'orgue*, whose biblical "arguments" had already been selected; two more *Fresques symphoniques sacrées* for organ; a mass for choir and organ; a *Symphonie* for piano; a programmatic orchestral piece, "Cette nuit-là, les coqs chanteront avec une persistance inaccoutumée!!" [That night the cocks crew with unaccustomed persistence!!]; and a work entitled *Physionomies de saints* (après Ernest Hello), with the very intriguing indication "2 heures de très grand piano" [two hours of very grand piano].

Also in the planning stages was a literary work entitled *De la haute mission de l'organiste à l'église* (On the high mission of the church organist). Judging from the fragmentary sketches of this work, Tournemire sought to share his conviction that the office

was never to be a concert, but that the duty of the organist was to present only music which was appropriate to the precise moment of the liturgical year. To facilitate the task, Tournemire had cited all of the liturgical texts that the musician should follow. According to Petit, he then planned to recommend a list of about 30 composers for the organ. Norbert Dufourcq was to have supplied the German citations. Next to the reference to French composers was the indication "some young composers," with such names as Marcel Dupré, Ermend-Bonnal, Maurice Duruflé, Joseph Bonnet, Jean Langlais, Gaston Litaize and Messiaen (the last, unlike the others, listed without first name). The major part of the work was to have been sample "programs" especially conceived for each Sunday of the church year.²⁴

Tournemire died on November 4, 1939, at his Arachon lake home, "L'Herbe." The circumstances of his death were apparently the subject of some speculation. Dufourcq related that Tournemire was recuperating from a serious operation when he wrote the *Deux Fresques symphoniques sacrées* pour orgue, his last works before completing the orchestration for *Il Poverello*. Yet, George Baker, in an interview with Maurice Duruflé, asked Duruflé to comment on the fact that there are still a lot of questions surrounding his (Tournemire's) death. Duruflé's reply was: "Officially, we do not know any details of his death, except that he drowned near Bordeaux."²⁵

The implication of this speculation seems to be that Tournemire might have taken his own life. Such an event is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine for a man who was so vital, so dynamic, so full of creative drive and fiery Christian zeal, and with so many projects unfinished. Far more plausible is the implication expressed by Peeters (who even borrowed the flowery literary style of the man about whom he wrote): "Death bore away the good master while he was seeking to realize new plans for composition. Alas, the poet of the organ, the spirit haunted by a grandiose plan is snuffed out in the contemplation of a mystical improvisation."²⁶

Historical Influences

Charles Tournemire was born into a period of active revolution in the world of organ playing in France. When he entered César Franck's organ class at the Conservatory, he became part of one of the most volatile developments ever to pervade the history of organ playing and composition. Three major influences motivated this phenomenon which gave birth to the symphonic organ school, which reformed church service playing and which turned Paris into the mecca of organ playing in the world, all during the formative years of Tournemire's professional career.

Cavaillé-Coll Organ

The first influence Tournemire was to experience was the development of a new design of organ by the young builder, Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811-99). The youngest son in a family of organbuilders, Aristide was gifted in mathematics and physics and, while still in his teens, had experimented with mechanical improvements in organ design. At the age of 22, he was awarded a prestigious contract for a new organ at Saint-Denis near Paris, based on several dar-

ing innovations—some original, some borrowed. These included the adaptation of new reservoir and bellows designs which, for the first time, made possible the stabilization of wind pressure and also permitted the independent increasing of wind pressure for the treble register of selected stops (particularly reeds); the use of pedal vents, allowing stop combinations to be prepared in advance; couplers for all manuals, which could be operated by the foot; the use of the newly invented Barker pneumatic machine which measurably lightened the key action, even when the manuals were coupled, and which also allowed the builder to increase both pallet size and wind pressure without affecting the key action; the development of many harmonic stops (including reeds) whose double-length pipes together with progressively increased wind pressures reinforced more upper harmonics as the pitch rose, thus providing a more uniform tone quality throughout the compass of the stops; the expansion of the pedal division, enabling it to carry bass function (something it had been doing for 200 years in Dutch and German organs); and several revisions to the Récit, which had heretofore been a short manual, controlling a few stops for tenor or treble melodies. Cavallé-Coll extended the compass of the Récit to a full 54 notes—equal to that of the Grand-Orgue. He enlarged the division to include powerful reeds. At the same time, he made it an expressive division by enclosing it. His plan for the swell box was again innovative, consisting of double-paneled walls, with sawdust between, and two sets of overlapping shutters. This design, according to Cavallé-Coll, allowed for "every possible gradation of volume. Thereby, the stops in this division take on the expressive qualities of orchestra instruments: by virtue of their compass and power, their qualities seem to influence all the stops in the organ when the latter are played together with the stops under expression."²⁷

The success of the Saint-Denis organ, some eight years in the building, caused Napoleon III to commission the young Cavallé-Coll to rebuild cathedral organs throughout France. In addition, Aristide received several contracts for new instruments in Paris. In all, it is estimated that Cavallé-Coll was responsible for the building or rebuilding of some 600 organs in France and other parts of the world. The result was a standardization of organ design unparalleled in the history of the instrument.

The tonal aspects of these instruments were of equal importance to their mechanical innovations, for it was in Cavallé-Coll's concepts of tonal design that the "symphonic" organ was born. The underlying principle was one of achieving blend rather than individuality. The character of the instrument was homophonic rather than polyphonic. The various divisions were designed with cohesion in mind rather than contrast. Their differentiation was one of power rather than quality. The Grand-Orgue was supreme, with the other divisions related to it so as to be added or subtracted successively for purposes of crescendo or decrescendo.

According to William Sumner's classic book on organ building,²⁸ high-pressure reeds of brilliant quality dominated the tone of the manual divisions. The full organ was a "blaze of reed color." Mixtures and muta-

tions were reduced in number. For orchestral color Cavallé-Coll incorporated imitative string-toned stops with their celestes. For solo stops, he developed the harmonic flutes and the Voix humaine. He moved the latter to the expressive Récit division. He also introduced the Clarinette and altered the quality of the Hautbois to resemble more closely its orchestral counterpart.

This, then, is the organ which reached its peak at the time of Tournemire's musical development and for which he was later to compose. This is the organ which enabled composers from the 1840s until the early 1900s to know exactly the nature of the instrument for which they were writing. The varied and colorful resources of the Cavallé-Coll organ made possible, indeed commanded, a symphonic approach to organ composition. As Sumner put it, "The St. Denis organ, designed by Cavallé-Coll, at the age of 22, was the starting point of a great school of French organ composition and playing. The symphonic style was inaugurated and in a remarkably uniform way persisted for some decades."²⁹

French Organ School

A second major influence on Tournemire's musical development was the training he received at the Paris Conservatory, as part of the French organ school to which William Sumner referred. The French organ school is, in the words of Félix Raugel, "more than a 'school.' It is a tradition which originated with the prizewinners, since 1872, from the Conservatory (under Franck and Widor), but also includes the training provided French organists at L'Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles de Paris (National Institute for the Young Blind of Paris) (Albert Mahaut, Adolphe Marty, André Marchal, Jean Langlais and Gaston Litaize), the Schola Cantorum, and the César Franck School, started by Guilmant."³⁰ Raugel pointed out that the tradition was carried to the United States by Guilmant and Decaux, the latter being succeeded at the Eastman School of Music by Harold Gleason.

Charles Tournemire, having studied with both Franck and Widor at the Conservatory, came directly from this tradition. He was one of the prizewinners to whom Raugel referred. An examination of the French organ school, therefore, not only serves as part of a historical perspective of the musical climate in which he developed, but is germane to the understanding of his musical style.

Perhaps the first observation to make about French musical training is that it begins at a very young age. Tournemire's first prize in piano at the Bordeaux Conservatory was earned at the age of eleven. Langlais began his musical studies at the National Institute for the Young Blind at the age of ten. Messiaen was eleven when he entered the National Conservatory.

Vierne's description of the course of studies at the National Institute gives us an insight into this early training.³¹ To summarize, each student was required to take, in addition to his general studies, a minimum of three years of solfège, three of harmony, two of composition, as well as take piano lessons and participate in the chorus and the orchestra. Examinations were administered three times a year. In the area of solo performance, the third examination each year was in the form of a competition, upon

which a great deal of emphasis was placed. Such was the musical training expected prior to being admitted to the organ class at the Conservatory.

At the National Conservatory, organ students, under Franck's predecessor and teacher, François Benoist, had begun to build an enviable reputation in the art of improvisation. By Franck's time the organ examination and competition consisted of the memorized performance of one masterwork and several assignments involving improvisation. The latter, according to Vierne and Tournemire, required the student to harmonize a plainsong (note for note),³² to improvise a three-part counterpoint to a plainsong cantus firmus given in the soprano and also in the bass, to improvise a fugue (school fugue) and to construct a free improvisation on a given theme (sonata-allegro form).³³

The esteem placed by the French on the art of improvisation is echoed by Tournemire in his method book: "L'importance de cette branche de l'orgue est telle que l'on peut affirmer, que l'organiste qui est frappé de 'paralysie'—au sens figuré du mot—et, partant, dans l'impossibilité d'improviser, ne peut être considéré, en dépit d'une grande agilité des pieds et des mains, que comme une moitié d'organiste!"³⁴ [The importance of this branch of organ playing is such that it can be said that the organist who has great technical ability of the hands and feet but is struck 'paralyzed,' so to speak, in his ability to improvise, can only be considered half an organist!]

Both Tournemire and Vierne offered firsthand accounts of their training at the Conservatory.³⁵ Under Franck's tutelage, improvisation continued to be the principal basis of instruction and the means of technical study. Five of the six class hours per week were devoted to the subject (the sixth was assigned to plainsong). Because of the examination requirements, the major portion of the time was spent on the classical fugue and the free improvisation. Franck insisted on a thorough training-in counterpoint. Tournemire reported that in the teaching of fugue, Franck required not only a well-constructed countersubject but also the incorporation of both a two-part canon and a four-part canon involving the subject.

When working with free improvisations in class, Franck emphasized thematic development. Vierne reported that he was particularly interested in the German techniques of cyclical construction and thematic variation. He taught ways to exceed the limitations of the prescribed forms, such as cultivating in the development section a new theme suggested by a fragment of the given theme. He demonstrated the devices of inversion, rhythmic transformation, ostinatos from fragments of the theme, and variety and subtlety of harmony. Chromatic harmony and the variation principles and cyclical forms of Beethoven are among the strongest legacies of Franck to the French organ school. There is no doubt that Tournemire absorbed these lessons thoroughly.

The sudden death of Franck in 1890 saw the organ class of the Conservatory taken over by Charles-Marie Widor, organist at Saint-Sulpice. The influence of this man on the French organ school was also enormous. While Franck's students adored him and affectionately referred to him as "Père Franck," they stood in awe and sometimes dismay of Widor, for this man turned the pri-

crities of their training completely around. A pupil of the Belgian, Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, who was responsible for a revival of interest in Bach, Widor brought to the Conservatory a commitment to the teaching of organ literature and the development of superior performing technique. His first words to the class were quoted by Vierne: "In France we have neglected performance much too long in favor of improvisation; it is more than an error; it is nonsense. [He added]: The organist must possess an instrumental technique capable of permitting him to execute any pattern whatsoever in any tempo . . . Moreover, I don't see why the organist should be the only artist exempt from the necessity of knowing the entire literature of his instrument."³⁶

Widor instituted a performance class, retained the class in plainsong, and reduced the number of improvisation classes to two per week. In the performance classes, Widor stressed Bach. Vierne related that he dissected every phrase, stressed precise articulation of repeated notes, tying of common tones, punctuation, respiration, shading, etc., all justified with marvelous clarity and demonstrated. The class was, in Vierne's words, "flabbergasted."

Widor also brought to the class the importance of analysis. He initiated them into the symphonic forms, from their origins down to the modern symphonists, with particular emphasis on the classical composers. As two students sight-read a given score at the piano, Widor would analyze and comment.

Registration was emphasized by Widor. Both Franck and Widor played on magnificent Cavallé-Coll organs at their churches and both reflected the influence of these instruments in their written works. Yet in class, perhaps because the organ on which he taught was so poor, Franck apparently ignored the subject of registration. It was Widor who awakened the class to the possibilities of registration, even on that "cuckoo of an organ," as Vierne called it.

It is a curious fact that Tournemire, outspoken in his admiration for Franck, never acknowledged Widor in his pedagogical writings. Yet the influence is unmistakable. On the subject of registration, for example, Tournemire said: "A knowledge of orchestration is indispensable . . . even mediocre ideas well orchestrated can . . . give the illusion of being truly musical."³⁷ Furthermore, Tournemire repeatedly recommended that his students analyze the works of master composers. His emphasis on technique, together with the merciless technical demands of his own works, clearly reflects the disciplined training under Widor.

Of Widor's influence, Vierne said: "His great reform, especially in performance, gave birth in our country to the most brilliant school of organists in the world."³⁸ Unquestionably, those students, Tournemire among them, who were fortunate enough to have studied with both Franck and Widor received a musical legacy all but impossible to match.

Plainsong Revival

The third major influence Tournemire was to experience was the plainsong revival of the late 19th century. During the 150 years or so that French organ playing and composition are acknowledged to have been mediocre or worse (c. 1700–1850), liturgical organ music inevitably suffered. Plainsong,

if used at all, was employed only in alternation, and then was treated in equal-note, chorale-style harmonizations. It took the combined efforts of several forces to bring about a much-needed reform. Among the most prominent influences were (1) the harmonic system developed by Louis Niedermeyer (1802–61), which, derived from the modality of the chants, made possible modal harmonizations of plainsong; (2) the restoration of plainsong by the Benedictine monks at Solesmes who, in 1859, published a method of performing chant in the natural rhythm of inflected recitation rather than in equal stresses; and (3) the efforts of the Schola Cantorum, founded in 1894 by Vincent d'Indy for the classical training of church musicians and for the cultivation of a contemporary style of liturgical organ music based on the Solesmes plainsong.

The first 19th-century organ work to reflect the influence of the Solesmes rhythmic interpretations was *L'Orgue liturgiste*, by Alexandre Guilmant, a cofounder of the Schola Cantorum. This ten-part work, published around 1884–99, was a collection of plainsong-based pieces arranged according to the Roman calendar and cast in the specific genres required of French Catholic organists of the day (versets, offertories, communions, elevations and postludes). It may well have been a model for Tournemire's *L'Orgue mystique*. Guilmant, however, in the opinion of researcher Benjamin Van Wye, "could never abandon entirely the forms and idioms of Bach's works . . . nor ignore the influence of the . . . French classical composers."³⁹

Widor, aware of the plainsong revival, incorporated Gregorian themes into his last two symphonies. He described the difficulty in transcribing the rhythmic flexibility of chant: "The rhythmical freedom of Gregorian chant clashes with our stern metronomic time. What task requires more delicate handling than the transcription into modern notation of a vocal Gradual or of an Alleluia? The transcriber is reduced to the necessity of verbal explanations: quasi recitativo, rubato, espressivo, a piacere, etc."⁴⁰ Widor acknowledged that when the plainsong theme was not being harmonized or treated polyphonically, it was completely transformed so as to lose its own identity and assume that of the composer. Each of the above practices is observed repeatedly in Tournemire's music.

In Van Wye's opinion, the influence of restored plainsong "reached its peak in the liturgical organ music of Charles Tournemire."⁴¹ Van Wye points out that, like Widor, Tournemire captured the flexible, rhapsodic quality of restored plainsong without literally reproducing the rhythm of the sung chant. Tournemire acknowledged this in his preface to *L'Orgue mystique*: "Le plain-chant, source véritablement inépuisable de lignes mystérieuses, splendides—le plain-chant, triomphe de l'art modal—est, en somme, paraphrase librement, pour chaque pièce . . ."⁴² [Plainsong which is truly an inexhaustible source of mysterious and splendid lines . . . plainsong, triumph of modal art . . . is freely paraphrased for each piece. . .]

Tournemire's fascination with plainsong led him to study it firsthand at the Benedictine Abbey. The influence of the Benedictines is unmistakable even in the

symphonic works which do not claim to be plainsong-based, as evidenced in their rhythmic flexibility, suppleness of phrasing, modal harmony and the rhapsodic quality of their themes. It would seem that Tournemire was developing a truly contemporary style of composition in which were blended the symphonic techniques of Franck and Widor, certain harmonic developments of the 20th century, and the subtle beauties of Solesmes plainsong. Van Wye's study concluded that Tournemire used restored plainsong "to create a style of composition which has ever since remained a model for French organist-composers."⁴³ This writer concurs.

Without doubt, Charles Tournemire was a product of his time. This innately talented man was a prizewinner at the National Conservatory at the very time of Franck and Widor, whose classes turned out "the most brilliant school of organists in the world." His post at the renowned basilica of Sainte-Clotilde provided him the opportunity to develop his prodigious talent as an improviser and to "orchestrate" those improvisations on one of the finest symphonic organs built by the celebrated developer of its type, Aristide Cavallé-Coll. At the same time, Tournemire actively participated in one of the most dramatic reforms in the history of liturgical music in France, the restoration of plainsong performance in the Catholic service. The French organ school, the innovations that resulted in the symphonic organ, and the Benedictine reform of plainsong-use all served as primary influences on the musical development of Charles Tournemire.

Other Influences

Certain other recurring influences affected this man and his music as well. Some are personal. Others are a product of what might be considered a generic French approach to music (especially organ music). The latter includes a reliance on symbolism and imagery, a preoccupation with color (in the sense of timbre), an assimilation of the rhythmic nuance of the French language, a reverence for the French cathedrals, and a coalescence of improvisation and written composition.

For the 19th- and 20th-century French composer, symbolism is pervasive, both as an inspiration for and as an interpretation of his music. In the French writings about music, analysis is not reported in anatomical terms; it is "fleshed-out" with descriptive analogies. Dufourcq describes the conclusion of Franck's *Choral III* as follows: "With all its breath, the Grand-Choeur of the organ states for the last time the theme, which stretches itself out in order to conclude in major, after a series of majestic chords flung at the end of the work. These are the highest and last flying buttresses of a cathedral in sound."⁴⁴ Messiaen, reviewing Tournemire's *Sept Chorals-Poèmes*, wrote of the fourth movement: "Un thème de pédale, effroyablement calme qui remasse toute la puissance de l'orgue en énormes si bémoles, et reçoit sur les épaules de sanglants gémisséments, d'aveuglantes et contrariantes clartés, puis s'amenuise jusqu'à un déchirant solo de clarinette, jusqu'à un soupir de bourdon!"⁴⁵ [A pedal theme, frightfully calm, which gathers up all the power of the organ in enormous B-flats, receives on its shoulders bleeding groans, blinding and vexatious bursts of light, then is reduced to

a heart-rending solo by the clarinet, to a sigh of the bourdon.] Symbolism and imagery are conspicuous in many of the titles of Tournemire's works: *Sei Fioretti* [Six Little Flowers], *Sept Chorals-Poèmes d'orgue pour les sept paroles du Christ* [Seven Chorale-Poems for organ on the Seven [Last] Words of Christ], *L'Orgue mystique* [The Mystical Organ], etc.

Color, in the sense of timbre, has been manifest in French organ music since the 17th century, when the color characteristics of a particular stop were thoroughly understood and registrations were reflected in the titles of pieces, such as *Récit de cromorne en taille*. Tournemire took full advantage of the wide range of color resources available in the Cavaillé-Coll organ.

There is, however, another sense in which color was used by Tournemire, and later by Messiaen, and that is the representational sense. Messiaen, in the 1940s, actually developed a system of modes which represented specific visual colors. While Tournemire at no time seemed to approach such a systemization, he did, perhaps, establish the precedent when he set before his students a table of both Gregorian and Hindu modes, with the advice: "Ainsi armés, les improvisateurs pourront songer, dans le vaste domaine de la pensée parée de riches couleurs, aux pierres fondamentales du mur de la cité sainte dont il est parlé dans l'Apocalypse: 'la première est du jaspé; la deuxième, du saphir; la troisième, de la calcedoine; la quatrième, de l'émeraude; la cinquième, du sardonix; la sixième, de la sarde; la septième, de la chrysolithe; la huitième, du beryl; la neuvième, de la topaze; la dixième, de la chrysoprase; la onzième, de l'hyacinthe; la douzième, de l'améthyste.'"⁴⁶ [Thus armed, improvisers can muse, in the vast domain of richly colored thoughts, on the foundation stones of the wall of the holy city, of which it is said in the Apocalypse: "the first is of jasper; the second, of sapphire; the third, of chalcidony; the fourth, of emerald; the fifth, of sardonix; the sixth, of sardine; the seventh, of chrysolite; the eighth, of beryl; the ninth, of topaz; the tenth, of chrysoprase; the eleventh, of hyacinth; the twelfth, of amethyst."] Tournemire's highly original orchestrations and his liberal application of a wide variety of scales, which included Hindu modes, reflect both dimensions of the French preoccupation with color. In the latter use, he, not Messiaen, may have been the innovator.

The influence of the French language, which is evidenced in the recitative style of melody suggested by the title *Récit*, is observed throughout Tournemire's organ works, particularly in the form of unaccompanied and often unmetred solos.

Inspiration from the great cathedrals pervades French organ music. It is expressed in Flor Peeters's writing about Tournemire's *L'Orgue mystique*: "The harsh and massive chords which disrupt the formation and diffuse it into shifting and harmonious lines is reminiscent of the architecture of the cathedrals whose pillars are bathed in shadow and where contemplation blossoms in the limpid light of the vaulted arches."⁴⁷ Both Henri Mulet's *Byzantine Sketches* and Widor's *Gothic Symphony* set out to depict the different parts of a cathedral. Tournemire's prefaces reveal that several of his works were inspired by specific cathedrals.



Tournemire in a photograph taken shortly before his death

drals. Introducing the *Symphonie sacrée*, he says: "Inspirée par la nef de la cathédrale d'Amiens . . . Cette oeuvre . . . est comme une exaltation de la beauté de lignes ogivales, et une synthèse sonore de la 'Cathédrale.'"⁴⁸ [Inspired by the nave of the cathedral of Amiens . . . This work . . . is like an exaltation of the beauty of Gothic lines, and a resonant synthesis of the 'Cathédrale.'] Tournemire and Messiaen each wrote one or more works entitled "Verrière" (Stained Glass Windows).⁴⁹ There is no doubt that the influence of the French cathedrals was absorbed by Tournemire as part of his French heritage.

Perhaps the most common trait of French organ composition inherited by Tournemire was the element of improvisation. The union of improvisation and written composition dominates the history of French organ music. Grétry, writing about the 18th century, said: "Organists are above all improvisers who know thoroughly the secrets of imitation and modulation, but who can only write with great difficulty what they improvise."⁵⁰

This mixture of writing and improvisation is seen repeatedly in titles of works and

the comments of composers. For example, the title indicated by Jean Langlais for the third movement of his *Suite médiévale* is "Élevation (Improvisation)." Messiaen, discussing his organ music in an interview, referred to his *Mass for the Pentecost* as the "résumé of all my improvisations."⁵¹ The degree to which the two concepts were merged by Tournemire is revealed in his *Précis*, where, without identifying the work, he used his *Fantaisie symphonique* as a step-by-step model for the improvising of a cyclical form.

The influence of improvisation on Tournemire's written compositions is reflected in several ways: his choice of free forms (the fantasy, the paraphrase,⁵² the grand variation); his frequent use of certain keyboard figures such as extended trills of all types; the frequent changes of texture, timbre and style within a single piece; and his emphasis on the thematic process for development and unification. Dufourcq made the following comparison of the contemporaries, Vierne and Tournemire: "When Vierne improvised, it sounded as if he had written it and when Tournemire wrote, it

sounded as if he had improvised."⁵³

A great personal influence on Tournemire was his mentor, César Franck. Franck's musical influence has already been cited and cannot be underestimated, but Tournemire had a filial devotion to Franck as well. He referred to him as "my revered master," and he wrote a small book about him which contains personal reminiscences as well as directions for playing all of the Franck organ works.

An undeniable influence on Tournemire was his ardent Christian faith. He is quoted by Robert Lord as saying: "La musique d'orgue où Dieu est absent est un corps sans âme."⁵⁴ [Organ music where God is absent is a body without a soul.] He inherited from Franck an intense commitment to the profession of the church musician. The book, *On the High Calling of the Church Organist*, left unfinished at the time of his death, is testimony to that commitment.

Tournemire's prefaces and program notes reveal that nearly all of his organ music was inspired from spiritual sources—either biblical, literary or original. Even his orchestral symphonies carry overtones of mysticism. Of the second (*Ouessant*), inspired by his ocean retreat, Tournemire said: "It tends towards a glorification of the Eternal."⁵⁵ He confided, in a letter to his friend Raymond Petit, that the third symphony (*Moscou*) was inspired in part by the intense spiritual fervor observed in a monastery near that city.⁵⁶ His seventh and eighth symphonies, *Dances of Life* and *The Triumph over Death*, clearly imply mystical connotations and are prefaced by deeply personal and mystical poems by the composer.

The *Fantaisie symphonique* is the only one of Tournemire's symphonic organ works which is not acknowledged by the composer to be inspired by specific biblical texts or by a religious source of some kind. Of the others, one of the more interesting sources is that for the *Sei Fioretti*, which is based on the *Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, a literary collection of tales from the life of this popular saint.⁵⁷ Tournemire's lifelong fascination for and idealization of this gentle friar is evidenced in the number of works whose titles bear his name.

Finally, there is contained in Tournemire's music a certain eclecticism which reflects the selective influence of several composers and style periods. It is manifest in the symphonic organ works in the following ways: (1) from the medieval period, certain organum-like practices (one or two rhapsodic melodic elements spun around a stationary pedal tone), the use of open fourths and fifths, and a cadence formula based on the Lydian mode, which is strongly reminiscent of the Burgundian School; (2) the use of sectional forms, recitative style and repeated-note figures from the 17th-century masters; (3) contrapuntal, modal and harmonic freedom from Frescobaldi; (4) cantus-firmus techniques from Bach and other Lutheran composers; (5) cyclical principles from Franck and Beethoven; (6) voice leading characteristics of Wagner's harmony; and (7) several of the practices of Impressionism as well as later 20th-century techniques. Seemingly, his remarkable tonal memory enabled him to file for instant recall appealing musical formulas and techniques from any style period.

The summation of the many influences, historic, personal and musical, together

with Tournemire's singular personality and gifts, resulted in a style of writing that was truly unique. That style is cohesively expressed in the symphonic organ works, all of which were written during the last seven years of his life.

Style

Not surprisingly, Tournemire's symphonic organ works are highly improvisatory in character. A glance at any of these loosely sectionalized pieces reveals a rapid succession of ideas delineated by changes of texture, tempo, rhythm and registration. Techniques of exposition, development and recapitulation interweave continuously. Even within sections, tempo, dynamics, articulation and harmonic coloring are subject to constant manipulation. The result is a mosaic-like fabric whose fragments are in a continual state of flux—a musical kaleidoscope, so to speak.

A poetic license-kind of freedom pervades these works as well, contributing to their improvisatory nature. Such freedom is seen in the shifting of a theme from one voice to another in the course of its progress or in the octave displacement of some of its notes. It is seen in the reordering of a theme's motifs in the process of its reconstruction (centonization) and in the choice and order of material for recapitulation. It is found especially in the harmony which exhibits frequent and sometimes abrupt shifts of tonality or modality and which combines free chromaticism with a wide variety of scales, producing linear dissonance ranging from gentle to sharp. Freedom is also apparent in the flexible treatment of rhythm which transcends the limitations of the bar line and at times eliminates the use of bar lines altogether.

Certain style practices appear so often in these works as to be considered mannerisms of Tournemire. These include the persistent use of pedal tones and ostinatos; the exploitation of certain figurations such as repeated notes, broken octaves and trills of all kinds (free, measured, double, triple, etc.); and the use of the raised fourth degree as a second leading tone at final cadences. A unique "mannerism" is the frequent use of a compound chord on C-sharp at open cadences (particularly, climactic ones) regardless of the tonal surroundings. Such a chord is part of a distinct family of tertian chords which seems to have been a favorite of Tournemire. The chords in this family are composed of tones from the octatonic scale; they are always ninth chords or larger; they appear most often over C-sharp; and they generally span four or five octaves. Because of their high visibility and uniqueness, these chords have been identified as the "Tournemire chords."

The two elements which provide structural organization for these improvisatory pieces are the tonal plan and the thematic process. Tournemire favored tonal plans based on the resolution of tonal ambiguity or conflict. The latter may be presented as one key in persistent alternation with another or as bitonality, while resolution frequently takes the form of a long tonic pedal introduced in the recapitulation section.

The generative force and principal structural element of Tournemire's compositions is the thematic process inherited from Franck and others of the French organ school. Based on the variation principles of

the late Beethoven quartets, the emphasis is on the *science of deductions*: i.e., the extraction of motifs from a theme and, through any of a variety of transformation techniques, giving them new identities. The process involved is one of acquiring new surface details while maintaining the original figure at the structural level. Tournemire was a master of the deductive process. By its application, he was able to develop a long theme (such as the 93-note themes of the *Symphonie sacrée* and *Trois Poèmes, III*) from a single motif, or to form from a *deduction* a secondary idea which, itself, could be varied in the progress of a piece. In an even more sophisticated procedure, an entirely new theme could be constructed from the basic contour and motivic transformation of a previous theme. This last procedure is found within and between movements of nearly every one of the symphonic organ works. Tournemire characteristically, however, selected for his deductions less obvious material as from the interior of a theme or from the unlikely amalgamation of several contrapuntal voices. At times, the transformation procedures are so radical that the relationship of the themes is neither visually nor aurally apparent. In the *Symphonie sacrée*, e.g., the totally dissimilar appearing theme of the Andante can be seen to be a transformation of the opening Allegro. In some works, such as the *Symphonie-Choral*, the deductive relationship of themes is evolutionary. Each of that work's five distinct themes shares a common structural core-motif and, through a process of progressive transformation, each theme is structurally reflected in the next, culminating in the 75-note aria of the fifth theme. By the application of the Beethoven transformation principle, Tournemire was able to provide structural cohesion within a long theme as well as an organic relationship among several themes. Thematic homogeneity provides a major structural control beneath the apparent freedom of these improvisatory pieces.

Perhaps Tournemire's most innovative contribution to symphonic writing for the organ was his apparent concept of orchestration, which takes into account both registration and scoring. Registration, which reflects the unique voicing qualities of the Cavallé-Coll organ at Sainte-Clotilde, features the particular color of individual stops or combinations in various tessituras. (Tournemire even experimented with the use of 32' registers on the manuals.) Registration is also subject to continual manipulation. The scores abound with specific directions for the adjustment of dynamics and timbre.

Textures, which also play a major role in Tournemire's orchestration, are not only subject to frequent successive change but are also manipulated contrapuntally in a layering effect. Tournemire's textures may be as simple as monodic recitative or two trebles intertwining in the same register (*Symphonie sacrée*) or as complex as ten voices with a solo melody "thumbed-down" (*Deux Fresques symphoniques sacrées, I*). Complex textures, which represent a distinct feature of Tournemire's style, often require four staves to notate and thumbing-down and double pedaling to execute.

This master improviser, for whom the boundaries between improvisation and written composition were virtually nonexistent,

created in his late organ works symphonic pieces ranging from short sketches to expansive symphonic poems. No two designs are alike, but all are cyclical. Through his adept handling of the Beethoven variation process, his ever-changing variety of harmonic color, his rhythmic freedom, his innovative and often complex orchestrations, and his personalized eclecticism, Charles Tournemire pioneered a new path for organ composition. In the words of his contemporary, Raymond Petit: "... qu'il soit l'un de ceux qui ont le plus efficacement contribué à forger le langage de toute une lignée de musiciens d'aujourd'hui, 'cela va sans dire.'"⁵⁸ [It goes without saying that he is the one who has most effectively forged the language of a whole line of today's musicians.] One wonders why then Tournemire's music has not received more recognition and has not been performed more often. Petit, deploring that fact, commented: "Si venait à être levée l'hypothèque que représente cette injuste ignorance, contre laquelle l'on ne peut que s'insurger, la figure singulière de ce véritable créateur pourrait enfin être mise à sa place véritable, et son influence, déjà considérable, encore que quelque peu souterraine, devrait bénéficier d'un renouveau d'activité."⁵⁹ [If the mortgage which represents this unjust ignorance, and against which one can only rebel, could be lifted, the singular figure of this gifted creator could finally be put in its proper place, and his influence, already considerable although somewhat subterranean, should benefit from a renewal of activity.]

The last ten years show signs of that renewal. Among them: festivals of his music in Europe; the publication (1979) of a catalog of his works;⁶⁰ the airing of the entire *L'Orgue mystique* in a series of broadcasts on Radio Canada (1980);⁶¹ the release of a new recording of *L'Orgue mystique* (1982);⁶² The Institute for Critical Studies of Organ Music's two-day symposium, "Charles Tournemire in St. Paul" (July 1989), which featured a recital of all of the Tournemire organ works of the 1930s; and the interest by this journal and others in recognizing this important musician on the 50th anniversary of his death. IN MEMORIAM: CHARLES TOURNEMIRE—1870—1939.

NOTES

1. Louis Vierne, "Memoirs of Louis Vierne, His Life and Contacts with Famous Men," trans. Esther E. Jones, *The Diapason*, November 1938, p. 10.
2. Vierne, "Memoirs," October 1938, p. 13.
3. Tournemire's respect for the early masters is evidenced by the fact that he edited for publication two volumes of Buxtehude organ works; three volumes of Spanish organ music by Cabanilles; a collection of Noël's by the French classicists Daquin, Lebègue and Dandrieu; as well as two volumes of works for harmonium by Franck; and a collection of manual trios for the organ by Beethoven. Publishing information for these editions can be found on pp. 54-55 of the Fauquet catalog: Joel-Marie Fauquet, *Catalogue de L'oeuvre de Charles Tournemire* (Geneva: Editions Minkoff, 1979).
4. The time frame is approximated from the date of the first of many works dedicated to "Madame Charles Tournemire" (née Taylor): the *Mémoires pour chant et piano*, Opus 25 and 28, dated 1901 (Fauquet, p. 74). (See footnote 14 for explanation of dual opus numbers.)
5. Raymond Petit, "Introduction à l'étude de l'oeuvre de Charles Tournemire," *L'Orgue*, No. 115 (1965), p. 113.
6. Ibid. Petit reported that this organ is presently in Vendée, at La-Roche-sur-Yon.
7. Flor Peeters, "Charles Tournemire, an

- Appreciation by Flor Peeters 25 years after his death," *The Diapason*, September 1946, p. 20.
8. Gwilym Beechey, "Charles Tournemire, 1870-1939," *Musical Times*, III (May 1970), p. 545.
 9. Bernadette Lespinard, "L'Orgue Mystique de Charles Tournemire, 'Impressions plainchantesques,'" *Cahiers et Memoires de L'Orgue*, No. 139 bis II (1971), p. 3.
 10. Raymond Petit, "À Propos de Charles Tournemire," *Revue Musicale*, April 1940, p. 235.
 11. George Baker, "An Interview with Maurice Duruflé," *The American Organist*, November 1980, p. 57.
 12. Petit, "À Propos de Charles Tournemire," p. 234.
 13. Ibid.
 14. The use of dual opus numbers apparently represents the combining of two sets of pieces into one suite. In the work cited, Fauquet lists the movements as: I. *Adagio*; II. *Scherzetto*; III. *Toccata*; IV. (*Cinq*) *Interludes*, Op. 19; V. *Pastorale*; VI. *Communion*; VII. *Ita missa est—Sortie*, Op. 24.
 15. At the beginning of World War I, Tournemire was mobilized into the army and served as a "territorial" [home guard] from 1914 to 1917.
 16. Petit, "Introduction à . . . Charles Tournemire," p. 114.
 17. Ibid., p. 116.
 18. Ibid.
 19. Marcel Dupré, *Recollections*, trans. and ed. Ralph Kneeram (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1975).
 20. The idea was not original, however. A precedent had been established in Alexandre Guilmant's *L'Organiste liturgiste*, Opus 65, which is discussed later in this paper.
 21. Maurice Duruflé, "My Recollections of Tournemire and Vierne," trans. Ralph Kneeram, *The American Organist*, November 1980, p. 54.
 22. Peeters, "Charles Tournemire . . ." p. 21.
 23. Ibid.
 24. Petit, "Introduction à . . . Charles Tournemire," p. 126.
 25. Baker, "Interview," p. 58.
 26. Peeters, "Charles Tournemire . . ." p. 21.
 27. Cavallé-Coll, as quoted by Fenner Douglass in *Cavallé-Coll and the Musicians* (Raleigh, N.C.: Sunbury Press, 1980), Vol. I, p. 25.
 28. William Sumner, *The Organ: Its Evolution, Principles of Construction and Use* (London: MacDonald and Co., 1952, 3rd ed., 1962).
 29. Ibid., p. 210.
 30. Félix Raugel, *Les Organistes* (Les Musiciens Célèbres) (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1962), p. 89.
 31. Vierne, "Memoirs" (September 1938), p. 6.
 32. Both Tournemire and Vierne were critical of the awkward note-for-note harmonization of plain-song required by the conservatory for this examination. In Vierne's words, "It was about as artistic as if it were applied to the vocal runs of *bel canto*." Vierne, "Memoirs," (October 1939), p. 12.
 33. Vierne, "Memoirs" (October 1938), p. 12, and Tournemire, *Précis*, p. 104. The accounts of each man differ on this requirement. Tournemire insists that it was the sonata-allegro with two themes that was used, and Vierne describes the problems of getting around the restrictions of a single theme.
 34. Tournemire, *Précis*, p. 104.
 35. Vierne, "Memoirs" (October 1938), pp. 12-13; Tournemire, *Précis*, pp. 102-107.
 36. Quoted by Vierne in "Memoirs" (October 1938), p. 12.
 37. Tournemire, *Précis*, p. 103. The original text reads as follows: "Cela est tellement vrai que des idées médiocres bien orchestrées peuvent, auprès d'auditeurs faciles à contenter, leur donner l'illusion d'être vraiment de la musique!"
 38. Vierne, "Memoirs" (November 1938), p. 10.
 39. Benjamin David Van Wye, "Influence of Plainsong Restoration on the Growth and Development of the Modern French Liturgical Organ School" (PhD dissertation, University of Illinois, 1970), p. 87.
 40. Quoted by Van Wye, "Influence of Plainsong . . ." p. 105.
 41. Ibid., p. 3.
 42. Charles Tournemire, "Note de L'Auteur," *L'Orgue mystique*.
 43. Van Wye, "Plainsong Restoration," p. 3.
 44. Norbert Dufourcq, "César Franck and the

- Revolution of the Religious Spirit," trans. Raymond Mabry, *Music*, July 1974, p. 31.
45. Olivier Messiaen, review of Tournemire's *Sept Chorals-Poèmes pour les sept paroles du Christ en croix*, in *Le Monde Musical*, No. 3 (1938), p. 84.
 46. Tournemire, *Précis*, p. 117.
 47. Peeters, "Charles Tournemire . . ." p. 20.
 48. Note de l'auteur in *Le Guide du Concert*, XXII année, No. 25 (March 20, 1936), p. 696.
 49. Olivier Messiaen: "Verrière"; Charles Tournemire: "Verrière," final movement of Suite No. 14 of *L'Orgue mystique*.
 50. Quoted in Jean Gaudet-Demombynes, *Les Jugements allemands sur la musique française au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1941), p. 301, fn. a. [See Van Wye, "Influence of Plainsong," p. 22, fn. 28.]
 51. Claude Samuel, *Entretiens avec Olivier Messiaen* (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1967), pp. 16-17.
 52. The French paraphrase is described by Richard Woods as an improvisatory form in which several themes may be used. Its sections are similar to sonata form, but because it is not bound by the harmonic dictates and exact formal sequence of the latter, it is freer. Richard Forrest Woods, "French Improvisation—An Approach," *Music*, July 1976, p. 41.
 53. Norbert Dufourcq, jacket notes for *Vierne and Tournemire: Organ Music* (Musical Heritage Society, no. 1016). Notes extracted and translated from the French by Helen Baker.
 54. Robert Sutherland Lord, "Charles Tournemire and the Seven Words of Christ on the Cross," *The Diapason*, November 1977, p. 1.
 55. Fauquet, *Catalogue*, p. 67.
 56. Petit, "Introduction à . . . Charles Tournemire," p. 117.
 57. For an English translation of the literary collection, *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, the reader is referred to *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographie* (English omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis), ed. Marion Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963).
 58. Raymond Petit, "Charles Tournemire," *Encyclopédie des musiques sacrées*, p. 76.
 59. Ibid.
 60. Joel-Marie Fauquet, *Catalogue de L'oeuvre de Charles Tournemire* (Geneva: Editions Minkoff, 1979).
 61. Announced in *The Diapason* (March 1980), p. 13.
 62. Tournemire, *L'Orgue Mystique: An Anthology* (Musical Heritage Society 844508).

This article is taken from Ruth Sisson's doctoral dissertation: "The Symphonic Organ Works of Charles Arnould Tournemire" (PhD dissertation, Florida State University, 1984, 381pp.) (Microfilm. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms).

Ruth Sisson holds a PhD degree in music theory from Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., a master of music in organ performance from the same institution, and a bachelor of music in organ performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio. She is associate professor of organ and music theory at Valdosta State College, Valdosta, Ga., and is the organist of the First Presbyterian Church of Thomasville, Ga. She has served as an officer, adjudicator, lecturer and performer for the AGO and the Music Teachers National Association.

Dr. Sisson maintains an active recital schedule. Since 1985, her programs have featured one or more of the symphonic organ works of Charles Tournemire. She has presented lecture-recitals on these works for AGO chapters in Louisville, Ky., and Tallahassee, Fla., focusing particularly on the unique aspects of Tournemire's symphonic style in organ composition. Her research has won the endorsement of Madame Alice Charles Tournemire, Tournemire's widow, with whom she visited in 1985 at the Tournemire home in Paris. This summer, Dr. Sisson took part in a two-day symposium, "Tournemire in St. Paul," sponsored by the Institute for Critical Studies of Organ Music and held in St. Paul, Minn. She presented a paper on the thematic process observed in Tournemire's symphonic organ works and participated in a recital of the complete Tournemire organ works of the 1930s.

TOURNEMIRE ORGAN WORKS

Andantino pour orgue, Op. 2, Paris: Alphonse Leduc, in *L'Orgue moderne*, 1894.
Sortie pour orgue (en sol M), Op. 3, Paris: Alphonse Leduc, in *L'Orgue moderne*, 1894.

Offertoire pour orgue, Op. 10, Paris: Gounin-Ghidone, 1895.

Sortie pour orgue (en mi b.M.), Op. 10, Paris: Gounin-Ghidone, 1894.

Pièce symphonique pour grand orgue, Op. 16, Paris: Schola Cantorum, "Répertoire moderne de Musique vocale et d'orgue," No. 17, 1899.

Suite de Morceaux pour grand orgue (1^{re} partie), Op. 19, Paris: Pérégally et Parvy, 1900.

Suite de Morceaux pour grand orgue (2^e partie), Op. 24, Paris: Pérégally et Parvy, 1902.

Variae Preces (40 pieces) pour harmonium, Op. 21, Lyon: Janin, 1904. Nice: Delrieu, 1949.

Poème pour grand orgue et orchestre, Op. 38, 1910. Unpublished manuscript: B.N., Mus., Ms 18939.

Triple Choral (Sancta Trinitas) pour orgue, Op. 41, Paris: Schola Cantorum et Procure

générale de musique, "Orgue et Liturgie," No. 54 (revised and annotated by Maurice Duruflé), 1962. Reissued, New York: Kalmus, n.d.

L'Orgue mystique, Cycle de Noël (offices nos. 1-11), Op. 55, Paris: Heugel, 1929, 1930.

L'Orgue mystique, Cycle de Pâques (offices no. 12-25), Op. 56, Paris: Heugel, 1928-31.

L'Orgue mystique, Cycle de Pentecôte, (offices nos. 26-51), Op. 57, Paris: Heugel, 1928-36.

[Licensed American edition: World Library of Sacred Music, Cincinnati, Ohio (1960-61). (Vol. I: Office nos. 2, 3, 7, 11) (Vol. II: Office nos. 17, 23, 25) (Vol. III: Office nos. 26, 27, 35, 48)].

Trois Poèmes pour orgue, Op. 59, Paris: Henry Lemoine, 1933.

Sei Fioretti, pages d'orgue, Op. 60, Paris: Hérelle, 1933, collection du Grand Orgue, série moderne, no. 38 (1^{re} série: 1-3) and no. 40 (2^e série: 4-6).

Fantaisie symphonique pour orgue, Op. 64, Paris: Gaston-Gross, 1936. Revised edition, Vienna: Universal Edition A.G., 1985.

Petites Fleurs musicales, Op. 66, Paris: Saint-Leu-la-Forêt, Procure de Musique religieuse, 1936.

Sept Chorals-Poèmes d'orgue pour les sept paroles du Christ, Op. 67, Paris: Max Eschig, 1937.

Postludes libres pour des antiennes de Magnificat, Op. 68, Paris: Max Eschig, 1936.

Symphonie-Choral d'orgue, Op. 69, Brussels-Paris: Schott Frères, 1939. Revised edition, Vienna: Universal Edition, A.G., 1982.

Symphonie sacrée pour orgue, Op. 71, Paris: Schola Cantorum et Procure générale de musique, "Orgue et Liturgie," No. 44, 1959. Reissued, New York: Kalmus, n.d.

Suite évocatrice pour grand orgue, Op. 74, Paris: S. Bornemann, 1938.

Deux Fresques symphoniques sacrées pour orgue, Op. 75 and 76, Paris: Max Eschig, 1943.

For further details, the reader is referred to Joel-Marie Fauquet's *Catalogue de L'Oeuvre de Charles Tournemire*, Editions Minkoff, Geneva, 1979.

Delaware

DELAWARE ORGAN COMPANY, INC.
PO Box 362
Tonawanda, New York 14150
(716) 692-7791

MEMBER: APOBA

Behind the
drawknobs of the
best pipe organs
made today, you'll

K-A

find our Mini Drawstop Solenoid. It's the
choice of the world's most respected builders.

KIMBER-ALLEN

P.O. Box 2178
Hagerstown, MD 21742-2178

mw lively

IIIIII & COMPANY

PIPE ORGAN BUILDERS

MECHANICAL AND
ELECTRIC SLIDER INSTRUMENTS

1617 VANDALIA AVENUE
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45223
513-541-0335

LYRIC CHOIR GOWNS

from \$21.95

"Professionally tailored gowns of
lasting beauty."

FREE
catalog and fabric
samples. Write today.

Since 1955...

LYRIC

CHOIR GOWN COMPANY
P. O. Box 16954-AO
Jacksonville, FL 32245
(904) 725-7977



Walcker

SINCE
1780 —

EXCELLENCE IN ORGAN BUILDING

E. F. Walcker & Co.
Postal Box 1128
6601 Kleinblittersdorf 2
West Germany
Telephone: (06805) 65-0

In the United States please contact:
Dr. James F. Mellichamp
P. O. Box 878
Demorest, GA 30535
Telephone: (404) 778-5264



CHOIR ROBES

EXPERT TAILORING **\$23⁹⁵** up

Finest Fabrics including Permanent
Press and Wash and Wear. Superior
Quality. Free Color Catalog and Fab-
ric Swatches on Request. Guarant-
teed Satisfaction.

Toll Free 1-800-826-8612
P.O. Box 10557RG Jacksonville,
Florida 32207

REGENCY

CAP & GOWN CO.