



Presents
A Masters Organ Recital
Grace Jackson, organist

Fête, Op. 51 (1946)

Jean Langlais
(1907-1991)

“Jesus Loves Me” from *Gospel Preludes* (1980)

William Bolcom
(b. 1938)

Trio Sonata No. IV in E Minor, BWV 528

- I. Adagio
- II. Andante
- III. Un poc’ allegro

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Symphonie No. VI in G Minor, Op. 42 (1878)

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio

Charles-Marie Widor
(1844-1937)

Variations sur un Noël, Op. 20 (1922)

Marcel Dupré
(1896-1971)

Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame
Thursday, May 18, 2023, 8:00 pm

This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Sacred Music.
Grace Jackson is a student of Dr. Kola Owolabi.
Sacred Music at Notre Dame prohibits the unauthorized recording, publication, and streaming of live performances.
Please silence all electronic devices.

Program Notes

Fête, Op. 51

In celebration of his appointment as titular organist to Sainte-Clotilde in 1946, Jean Langlais (1907-1991) composed *Fête* (a celebration or festival). Sainte-Clotilde's long lineage of excellent organists such as César Franck and Charles Tournemire speak of the Aristide Cavallé-Coll organ being influential in their compositions. In her book, *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music*, Ann Labounsky says:

Fête, for solo organ, is a brilliant concerto in rondo form; it juxtaposes tutti sections on the main division against a colorful solo combination, with softer accompaniment for the solo sections. A soft contrasting interlude on the Cornet interrupts the pattern before the closing section, which incorporates a virtuoso pedal cadenza. Both the harmony and solo passages show the influence of jazz.¹

This piece is an exuberant festival showcasing the color palette of the Paul Fritts organ. The opening tutti section is presented in a variety of keys and is an aural guide to the sectionality of this piece. The jazz influence is prominent through the harmonic language and the architecture of the solo lines.

“Jesus Loves Me” from *Gospel Preludes*

William Bolcom's (b. 1938) four books of *Gospel Preludes* contain twelve pieces composed from 1979-1984. Bolcom is a Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award winner who spent 35 years on the composition faculty at the University of Michigan. These American hymn tunes are treated with avant-garde compositional techniques such as gospel and jazz styles. This tranquil setting of “Jesus Loves Me” is composed in a contrapuntal neo-baroque style with prevalent use of mordants. The opening ostinato is transformed throughout the piece from simple to lush and layered harmonies.

Trio Sonata No. IV in E Minor, BWV 528

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) *Six Sonatas* for two manuals with obligato pedal, were composed during Bach's time in Leipzig. This sonata is a compilation of an instrumental sinfonia and a later composed organ piece. Movement one is a version of the Sinfonia in E Minor from Cantata 76 (1723). The first movement is in two sections: *Adagio*, a fugal exposition, and *Vivace*, imitative with a concise ritornello form.² Movement two is performed on rich 8 foots, followed by an exuberant, triplet-fueled final movement.

¹ Labounsky, Ann. *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music*. (Amadeus Press, 2000), 135.

² Williams, Peter. *The Organ Music of J.S. Bach*. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23.

Symphonie No. VI in G Minor, Op. 42

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) premiered *Symphonie No. VI in G Minor*, Op. 42 at the inaugural concert series at Trocadéro Hall in Paris, France on August 24, 1878. Following the first publication of each symphonie, Widor often revised his work; he was his own most demanding critic. Widor found inspiration in architecture saying, “Go see the wonderful facade of Notre Dame, and tell me if there exists something that more resembles the plan of a first movement of a symphony than the conception of this central portal, vigorously framed with its two towers like a development placed between two symmetrical wings.”³ The first two movements, “Allegro” and “Adagio,” are performed today showcasing a variety of Widor’s compositional techniques.

“Allegro” from *Symphonie VI in G Minor*; is a grand and regal march; Widor infuses sonata form with elements of variation technique. “Allegro” is bookended with a dignified march. The inner sections include a recitative-like with elements derived from the opening theme. Widor intertwines and further develops the opening march and recitative figure.

“Adagio” from *Symphonie VI in G Minor*, conveys an expressive musical language with chromatic and melodic lines. “Adagio” is in ternary form (three-part) with consistent motivic and rhythmic transitions. This movement showcases the lush strings and flute sounds of the organ. In 1876, Widor attended the premiere of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* influencing this chromatic slow movement.

Variations Sur un Noël, Op. 20

Marcel Dupré (1886-1971) was titular organist at Saint-Sulpice from 1934 to 1971 and a successor of Widor. Dupré performed the complete works of J.S. Bach by memory in ten concerts from January 23, 1920 to March 26, 1920 and made his North American debut in the fall of 1921. During an American tour in 1922, Dupré composed *Variations sur un Noël*, Op. 20. A Noël is an old musical genre dating back to the Renaissance and Noël melodies were often used as themes for variation sets during the 17th C. French Classical period. These ten modern variations include a variety of compositional techniques and treatments on the theme, Noël Nouvelet.

The theme is presented boldly with the Trompette and is divided between the tenor and soprano in variation I. In contrast, the theme is obscured in variations II and V. Acciaccaturas (a grace note performed as quickly as possible) permeate variation VII while the theme appears in the pedal in variation IV. Variations III, VI, VIII all include a canon. Variation IX is waltz-like with legato running thirds, followed by a fugue and toccata in variation X.

–Notes by Grace Jackson

³ Favre, Georges. “Une grande figure d’éducateur, Charles Marie Widor,” *La Petite Maîtrise* 288 (May 1937), 34-35, quoted in Near, John R. *The Symphonies for Organ: Symphonie VI*. “Critical Commentary.” (A-R Editions, Inc.), ix.

