

Jean Guillou at Saint-Eustache (photo: Philippe Ponçon)

JEAN GUILLOU'S ORGAN CONCERTOS

Sylviane Falcinelli

CENTRAL to Jean Guillou's creative approach is the notion of an interplay of *dramatis personae*, i.e., of musical themes or individual colored fragments involved in a conversation or colloquy (*Colloques* is the title of a chamber music sequence in his catalog). Focusing his attention on the dialogue between organ and orchestra (two sound worlds rich in pictorial suggestion and spatialization), the composer develops a distinctive musical dramaturgy in which his inventiveness reshapes the nature of these opposing forces.

The seven concertos that Jean Guillou wrote for organ and chamber or symphonic orchestra, two of them being with separate instrumental sections (No. 3, with strings, and No. 5, "King Arthur," with a brass quintet), show the composer blending and intertwining tones drawn from both these musical palettes. His technique sometimes recalls that of the cinematic "dissolve" and leaves the listener at a loss to determine the source of a particular sound!

Beginning with his first experiment in such pairings, *Inventions* (Op. 7), he created new colors by combining techniques of instrumental playing with those for the organ and by superimposing a "colloquy" between piano and organ on the orchestral framework. Although this early work is still marked by the influence of Stravinsky (especially in its elaborate polyphony for winds and its rhythmic vigor), the young master's touch is fully apparent in startling emphases (like swipes of a lion's paws!) and in moments of emotion when time seems suspended.

Somewhat later, Jean Guillou opened up new horizons of the musical imagination. In

his *Concerto héroïque*, for example, the orchestral *strata* seem to wander in indeterminate fashion, their nebulous character interrupted by flashes of lightning in which we catch glimpses of various "sound characters" (the *dramatis personae*), while the organ proceeds by "orchestrating" its own resources of timbre.

The bewitching immensity of the *Concerto 2000* leads our imagination gradually away from dark regions into a radiant "assumption" of light, only to let it fall back again into a gloom where fiery eruptions burst forth. There, like scintillating stars in the night sky, sonic diamonds seem to sparkle in the orchestral shadows. Composite timbres move from orchestra to organ without being identifiable from a "concertante" point of view in the traditional sense. The composer acts rather like a producer in charge of the many-sided dimensions of his musical space.

The expressive power of *Concerto No. 3*—a very different world—originates in a polyphonic density freely inspired by serialism, developing a defective row. Even the *Concerto No. 5*, conceived for a reduced brass section with organ, organizes the layout of its instrumental writing to create a feeling of space and depth of field. This work represents an isolated experiment before the composer's return to the poetic appeal of symphonic scoring in his *Concerto No. 6*.

The new work (*Concerto No. 7*) realizes at its best the potentialities of a 40-player orchestra, achieving an acoustic and musical fullness through the intensity of vertical tensions and the individual writing of horizontal parts. The entire musical space is vehem-

ently occupied, animated by a generous vibration that informs the dialogues between organ and orchestral soloists (principally percussion or woodwinds). The registers of the organ prolong or anticipate figures played by the instrumental groups, and, at times, the overtones produced by mutation stops and by percussion instruments are drawn together in a spellbinding symbiosis.

Advancing years have in no way subdued the composer's indomitable temperament, which seems to have taken fire from a new experience, as seen, for example, in a recent work, *La Révolte des orgues* (Op. 69), for principal organ, eight positive organs, and percussion. Every new work of his (like every improvisation dictated by his genius) communicates an exhilarating strength that seems to rise from some hidden dimension of the inner epic that has unfolded over 70 opus numbers.

Jean Guillou is unique in having freed the concerto for organ and orchestra from the neoclassical or post-symphonic framework and in having infused in it a richness of truly contemporary orchestration. No one has created a comparable sequence of masterpieces in this genre, or deployed with such skill and inventive ingenuity the multifarious variations that this specific combination of resources offers.

Chronology of Jean Guillou's Seven Concertos for Organ and Orchestra

Inventions, Op. 7 (1960), for organ and chamber orchestra (2.2.2.2.4.2.2., percussion, strings), published in 1970 by Éditions Leduc. A new edition is forthcoming from Schott Music with some revision and various additions.

Concerto No. 2, Op. 10 (1963), for organ, brass, percussion, and strings, published in 1970 by Éditions Leduc, subsequently withdrawn from his catalog by the composer, was rewritten with full wind ensemble as the *Concerto héroïque*.

Concerto No. 3, Op. 14 (1965), for organ and string orchestra, published in 1972 by Éditions Leduc, is awaiting a new publication by Schott Music, including some revisions.

Concerto No. 4, Op. 31 (1978), never played and withdrawn from his catalog by the composer, furnished some material for the **Concerto 2000**, Op. 62 (2000), for organ and symphonic orchestra, commissioned by the French government and premiered on the composer's 70th birthday in his native city of Angers, then in Nantes and Paris with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Pays de Loire conducted by Vincent Barthe.

Concerto No. 5 (King Arthur), Op. 35 (1979), for organ and brass quintet, performed with the quintet of trumpeter Thierry Caens.

Concerto No. 6, Op. 68 (2004), for organ and symphonic orchestra, commissioned for the final round of the City of Paris Organ Competition, is awaiting a new concert life, having been presented at the Parisian competition in a shortened version without the composer's consent.

Concerto No. 7, Op. 70 (2007), for organ and orchestra of 40 players, commissioned by the Association ResMusica of Padua (Italy). It will be premiered on October 4 (Padua) and 5 (Milan), 2007.

Complete information about Jean Guillou's *Concerto No. 7*, in addition to various articles by the composer, is available at www.forumorganomoderno.splinder.com.

O Wheat Whose Crushing Was for Bread, Rosalie Bonighton. SATB/organ. Paraclete PPM00507, \$1.60. This is basically a cappella, since the accompaniment only enters between four-part choral phrases. A beautiful text by a Benedictine nun, Delores Dufner, is given beautiful music. This is an elegant Communion motet.

Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing, Aaron David Miller. SATB/piano. Augsburg Fortress 0-8006-7722-6, \$1.75. An original setting of Charles Wesley's famous text, 7/8 meter alternates with 4/4 to create a snappy, rousing piece. Considerable two-part and unison alternates with full choir. Well done and not difficult.

Peace, Allan Bevan. SATB a cappella. Classica 009 (available from www.classica.ca; phone: 604-435-5386). One of *Three Motets on Texts of Henry Vaughan*, this is for really accomplished choirs, but it deserves investigation by choral conductors. Traditional harmonies and interesting modulations maintain interest.

Praise Him, Noël Goemanne. SA children, SATB/keyboard and guitar. World Library 007124, \$1.15. The children sing mostly in unison, thirds, and fourths. The adult choir's part is not difficult, and the two together make a fine effect. Very rhythmical and a bit syncopated. Captivating.

Psalms 119, Ronald Arnatt. Unison or solo and congregation/keyboard. ECS Publishing 5458, \$1.45. This is another in the publisher's *Psalms Songs* series. Very easy. The refrain can be reproduced for congregational use.

Serdeczna Matko, arr. Richard Proulx. SATB/harp or piano and cello. GIA G-6223, \$1.40. This is just about the most popular Polish hymn. Starting out in 1816 as a patriotic hymn "God Save Poland," it was banned by the Russians in 1861 and the words changed to "Beloved Mother, sent to guard and guide us." The text is in Polish and English and a phonetic pronunciation is provided. The choir sings "Ooo" under a mezzo-soprano solo until the last third of each stanza when it picks up the words. Two verses are provided.

Somebody's Knocking at Your Door, arr. Aaron David Miller. Unison/piano. Augsburg Fortress 0-8006-7744-7, \$1.60. This is a one-rehearsal anthem; the only one who has to work is the accompanist—and not very hard. With an "upbeat gospel feel," Miller has crafted an excellent arrangement of this spiritual and a dream of an accompaniment. Now, if you have a Hammond . . .

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, arr. Charles S. Brown. SATB/keyboard. E. Henry David/Presser 392-02558, \$1.60. Registration is provided; a note explaining the pedal part says, "organ accompaniment is preferable." It is. Sung Lento, this is a beautiful arrangement of the beloved spiritual. The tessitura is high (the basses go up to middle F; sopranos to high A), so you'll need some good voices, but the effect is phenomenal.

Te Ensalzaré Señor/I Will Praise You, O Lord, John L. Bell. SATB, cantor, assembly/piano, flute and optional trumpet. GIA

G-5156, \$1.50. A superb bilingual responsorial psalm setting of Psalm 30. There are many ways to utilize this for a Spanish-English liturgy, but you don't have to do it in four parts. A reproducible antiphon in both languages is provided for the congregation; the cantor's part has the three verses in both languages; you could use two cantors, two choirs, etc.

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, Calvin Hampton. Unison/organ and solo instrument in C or B-flat. GIA G-5638. Hampton's tune "St. Helena" alternates 3/4 measures with 4/4 and just one note goes beyond an octave. Any choir could do this original setting. The instrument adds interest, of course.

Wherefore, O Maker, David Ashley White. Two-part/organ and oboe or C instrument. Selah 420-515, \$1.50. White has put together an easy arrangement of his D-minor hymn tune "Darr." Sung in unison first with an oboe descant, the second verse is a close canon with the organ duplicating the first voice. A separate oboe part is available for download at Selah's Web site.

Worship Leaders, Vol. 2, Mark Patterson. Unison or two-part/keyboard. Choristers Guild CGA1045, \$1.95. This set includes two Intros (Calls to Worship), a Prayer of Confession (Prayer Response), and a Benediction. Intended to involve the choir in worship (rather than be a "special feature"), the parts can be learned quickly, and offer the option of a handbell or handchime part.

ROLLIN SMITH

ORGAN MUSIC

CÉSAR FRANCK: The Complete Organ Works, ed. by Wayne Leupold. Wayne Leupold Editions Inc., 2002. Wayne Leupold Editions has released the newest American edition of the organ works of César Franck. The standard twelve pieces (*Six Pièces; Trois Pièces, Trois Chorals*) intended and prepared for publication by their author are presented here, borrowed from the Durand 19th-century prints with minor corrections and editorial emendations added by hand.

Presented in two volumes (Vol. 1: *Six Pièces*; Vol. 2: *Trois Pièces, Trois Chorals*), Wayne Leupold provides extensive prefaces with relevant information on Franck's biography, followed by detailed discussions of performance practices embracing touch and articulation, organs known to Franck, registration practices of the period, and rhythmic alteration, including essays on rubato, two-against-three rhythms, dotted rhythms, tempo, and ornamentation.

It is difficult to imagine a finer presentation of the potentially explosive matter of touch and articulation for a composer such as César Franck where recent generations of keyboard musicians have assumed a strict legato as the norm through most of Franck's life. In fact, such a touch crystallized rather late in the century, and was certainly not embraced by the rank-and-file until the waning years of *la belle époque*. Despite the best efforts of Widor, only during the lifetime of Marcel Dupré were non-legato touches definitively banished from *les tribunes*. Wayne Leupold does an absolutely masterful job in exploring and presenting discussions drawn from pianists Louis Adam and Pierre

Zimmerman on the multiplicity of touches practiced in Europe, especially during the formative years of the young Franck in Belgium and in Paris. Given recent publications of Fagius, van Eck, and Peterson on the subject, the profession has come of age and is no doubt able to examine this evidence carefully and make informed decisions about this vital issue of performance. Leupold guides the reader through many passages of Franck and presents compelling reasons why specific passages may or may not have been performed legato.

Similar, expert presentations of dotted rhythms and rubato may give even Franck "authorities" reason to sit up and take note: melodic rubato was not the sole domain of Frédéric Chopin. Franck noted an elegant example in his *Fantaisie in A Major*. Both Zimmerman and Adam admonish performers to enhance the effect of dotted rhythms by passing the short note quickly and smartly.

As superb as these aforementioned topics are presented, problems emerge in Leupold's discussion of organs and their registrations. Regrettably, this reviewer cannot understand how anyone in this day and age can be led to believe that there was ever a Trompette 16' on the Positif manual at Sainte-Clotilde, 1859. Even the stop terminology is wrong! This is not a matter of a small typographical error. The editor, using sources that are not disclosed, honestly believed, at least for a time, that this stop existed on the Sainte-Clotilde instrument as known to César Franck, and calls attention to it explicitly when he writes, "Since many contemporary organs do not have such or any 16' stops on the Choir/Positif, adjustments might have to be made in places, such as possibly playing these passages an octave lower, if within the range of the keyboards." In all fairness, my copy of the edition did contain a half-page of *Errata*, which corrects the stoplist itself, but given the ephemeral nature of loose errata pages, most especially in university libraries, student musicians in particular run the risk of being seriously misled by this discussion, which, I ought to add, is partially allowed to stand even after corrections are incorporated.

Given the outstanding presentation of articulation, rhythm, and tempo, it is curious that a similar historical overview of registration is missing from this preface. The editor presents the traditional explanation of the *Fonds + Hautbois* registration, with no mention of the late 18th- and early 19th-century systems of *Choeur* combinations from which the *Hautbois* registration probably evolved. Similarly, a major disservice is to ignore the evolution of *Grand-Choeur* registrations. Parallel to development of touch and articulation, the young Franck would never have heard the equivalent of a modern tutti by any French organist much before 1870 or even later. The fortissimo passages in the *Grande Pièce symphonique* and *Final* would not have been played with upperwork, and evidence from the manuscripts of the *Trois Pièces* (1878) suggest similar treatments in their fortissimo passages as well.

Furthermore, the editor informs us that the Sainte-Clotilde Positif played with direct mechanical action. Thanks to Claude Noiset de Crauzat, who published Cavallé's drawings of actions, we know that this Positif was played with Barkers, something the connoisseur suspects when discovering the *Octaves*

Graves *Positif* pedal. Similarly, there were no *Octaves Graves Récit* at this time. Divisions playing with direct mechanical action normally were not equipped with this coupler. However, there was an unusual *Octaves Graves Récit sur Positif*, omitted in this edition, yet notated by Franck himself in a series of colorful registrations concocted for his Magnificat versets.

Elsewhere, in the discussion of the *Fantaisie in C Major*, Op. 16, the editor does not cite the Forberg edition (1980), the first edition of the three additional versions of this fantasy. It was this edition that first brought these works to light along with the circumstances surrounding their composition, and at the very least, this work needs to be cited in Wayne Leupold's detailed presentation of the work.

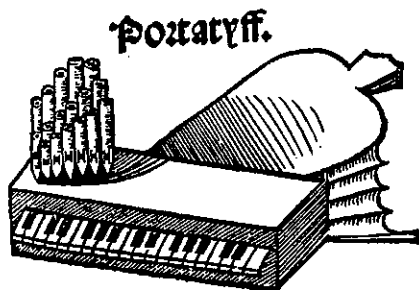
Given the scope of the preface, a detailed bibliography would have been in place, calling attention to the secondary literature on subjects such as articulation, organbuilding, and registration of the period.

Finally, the presentation of the music itself: The "old" Durand editions were elegant, but occasionally, when reprinted, some noteheads were only faintly outlined, as were accidentals and some performance directions. Rather than finding a solution befitting the style and spirit of these scores, the editor elected to trace over dim notes and directions by hand, and to add completely by hand several slurs and accidentals. While the editor has made astute decisions regarding these emendations, the use of freehand slurs between brackets, darkened notes, and darkened registration and performance suggestions seriously detracts from the visual presentation of the score and imparts a regrettable amateurish quality to them.

These reservations noted, Leupold's shrewd observation more than justifies investing in this edition: "Franck did not just conceive of one organ in Paris as his ideal. . . . When Franck came to publishing his organ compositions, he tended to simplify the registrations to basically a three-manual organ concept, thus making them suitable for a wide variety of French organs. He had more of a 'generic' French organ in mind rather than always the exact specifications of Sainte-Clotilde. From a practical and marketing standpoint, this made a lot of sense."

Wayne Leupold has accomplished a significant milestone in the history of the Franck organ works. The editorial prefaces, for the most part, amass significant information, which the evolving performer must contemplate in order to make informed, artistic decisions. Consulting this edition will cause many in our profession to re-assess their core canonic values, and this in itself is more than enough justification to purchase both volumes.

JESSE ESCHBACH

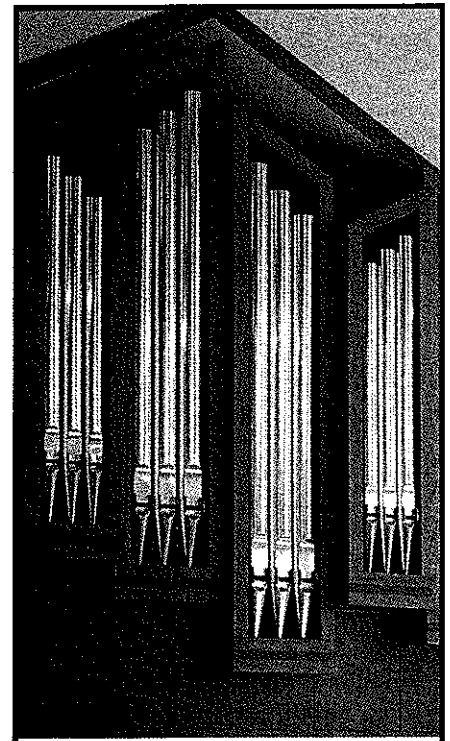


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