

**signum**  
CLASSICS

Charles-Marie Widor  
**The Organ Symphonies**  
**Vol.5**

Symphonie gothique, op.70  
Symphonie romane, op.73

D-O-M-S-V-B-I-N-V-O-C-S-M-M-A-G-D-A-L-E-N-A-E

**Joseph Nolan**  
**The Cavallé-Coll Organs of**  
**La Madeleine, Paris & Saint-Sernin, Toulouse**

WIDOR: THE ORGAN SYMPHONIES, VOL.5  
THE CAVAILLÉ-COLL ORGANS OF  
LA MADELEINE, PARIS & SAINT-SERNIN, TOULOUSE

**Symphonie gothique, Op. 70**

1	I. Moderato	[7.00]
2	II. Andante sostenuto	[5.58]
3	III. Allegro	[3.55]
4	IV. Toccata	[12.29]

**Symphonie romane, Op. 73**

5	I. Moderato	[7.24]
6	II. Choral	[9.50]
7	III. Cantilene	[5.20]
8	IV. Finale	[10.13]

Total timings: [62.12]

*This disc is dedicated to my friend and mentor, The Very Reverend Dr John Shepherd,  
Dean of Perth, Western Australia 1990-2014.*

JOSEPH NOLAN ORGAN

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ORGAN SYMPHONIES, VOL.5  
Nos 9 & 10, 'gothique' and 'romane'

Journeying from New York to Le Havre, then onwards to Paris, the American illustrator and painter Edward [Edouard] Cucuel (1875-1954) kept copious notes and pen-and-ink sketches documenting the raunchier, rougher side of life and gothicism in the French capital during the 1890s, the Third Republic period of Widor's final two organ symphonies. Written up by W C Morrow, these were published in 1899 in a book called *Bohemian Paris of Today* – a visceral narrative that sets the metropolis of Widor, Debussy, Ravel and Satie, Rodin and Verlaine, into flesh-and-blood context, giving the reader the under-belly of the city: girls, gangsters, poets, artists, buskers ... the beautiful, the depraved, the maimed ... the wreckage of empires oriental to occidental. Cucuel frequented Montmartre on the Right Bank. 'Here are hot-chestnut vendors at the corners; fried-potato women, serving crisp brown chips; street hawkers, with their heavy push-carts; song-sellers, singing the songs that they sell, to make purchasers familiar with the airs; flower-girls; gaudy shops; bright restaurants and noisy cafés ...' In the 'dazzling fairy-land' of the Moulin Rouge,

Susanne of the 'superb contour', 'queen of the models of Paris', springs upon a table, 'seizing a bottle of champagne, sending its foaming contents over as wide a circle of revellers as her strength could reach, laughing in pure glee over her feat, and then bathing her own white body with the contents of another bottle that she poured over herself'. One dark hour he climbed 'the great hill of Paris', taking the rue Muller to the fretted, unfinished torso of the Sacré-Coeur. 'We seemed to be among the clouds. Far below us lay the great shining city, spreading away into distance; and although it was night, the light of a full moon and untold thousands of lamps in the streets and buildings below enabled us easily to pick out the great thoroughfares and the more familiar structures. There was the Opéra, there the Panthéon, there Notre-Dame, there Saint-Sulpice, there the Invalides, and, uplifted to emulate the eminence on which we stood, the Tour Eiffel, its revolving searchlight at the apex shining like an immense meteor or comet with its misty tail stretching out over the city. The roar of life faintly reached our ears from the vast throbbing plain, where millions of human mysteries were acting out their tragedies. The scene was vast, wonderful, entrancing.'

Less than four miles south, across the Seine, is the Latin Quarter of Panthéon and Luxembourg, the wealthy 5th and 6th *arrondissements* of Paris. Saint-Sulpice, the second largest church of the city and Widor's realm for more than sixty years, dominates the 6th. Founded in 1646 (on the site of an earlier Romanesque *église*) with a distinctive façade and famously mismatched towers, it fronts onto a spacious 18th-century square dominated by pink-candled horse-chestnut trees and an elaborate fountain completed in 1848. Within its vaulting grey calm is an elaborate gnomon, a series of Delacroix murals, and a grandiose five-manual organ by Cavallé-Coll (the largest in France), inaugurated by Saint-Saëns, Guilmant, Franck and others in April 1862. Here the Marquis de Sade and Baudelaire were baptised. Before its altar Victor Hugo and his childhood sweetheart Adèle Foucher were married.

A stroll from the church, down bustling streets on either side of the Boulevard Saint-Germain, were two celebrated Left Bank eateries. The Restaurant Foyot, established by Louis-Philippe's chef, and the Café Procope, going back to the late 17th century. Widor and his *comtesses* held court at Foyot – 'haunt

of the old French aristocracy and gentlemen of the older generation' (*Paris Restaurants*, 1924); Verlaine and his *cocottes* at Procope – its gas-lit interior 'as dark as a finely coloured old meerschaum pipe' (Cucuel). The one a brilliant, witty raconteur; the other 'the great poet of the slums, the epitome and idol of Bohemian Paris'. Canons and can-cans.

Of this place and time, *la belle époque*, yet loftily detached, inspired by the Cavallé-Colls in the church of Saint-Ouen, Rouen (1890) and the basilica of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse (1888), all the while reflecting the antiquity and fabric of their corresponding buildings in their titles, the *Symphonie gothique*, Op. 70 (1893-94, 'Ad memoriam Sancti Andoëni Rothomagensis', published 1895) and *Symphonie romane*, Op. 73 (1898-99, 'Ad memoriam Sancti Saturnini Tolosensis', published c. 1900), contrasting their Opp. 13/42 brethren, favour moderation-concentration-unity above munificence-digression-diversity. High polyphony, intricate elaboration and imaginative registrations hallmark their manner. Held consonances, ambience-cultured cadence, their punctuation – moments like the closing prolongations of the first, second and fourth movements of the *Romane* or the conclusion

of *Gothique's* first movement enveloping the listener in a time-suspended halo of subterranean frequencies and humming, heroic harmonics. The balm and catharsis of ordered resolution mattered to Widor. A 'charming teacher, a most brilliant conversationalist,' Milhaud remembered, but one who 'would utter cries of alarm at every dissonance he came across in my works' (*Notes sans musique*, 1949).

Premiered by the composer in St Ouen, 28 April 1895 (Vierne having weeks previously aired a truncated version in Lyon), movements I-III of the basaltic *Gothique* were written in Persanges in the Jura during the summer of 1894. Overall the tonality scheme spells out the triad and octave of the home key: C minor – E flat major (*bel canto* inflected middle section in B flat) – G minor (6/8 fugue in four voices, excursioning to E flat minor and G flat major) – *tierce de picardie* C major (theme and variations). The third and fourth movements are based on pre-Solesmesised Gregorian plainchant – the Introit *Puer natus est nobis* (fourth Christmas Day Mass, *Ad Missam in Die*), admired by Widor for its purity of line and potential for 'polyphonic development'. Of the six variations comprising the *Moderato/Allegro* finale, a quasi-passacaglia

with origins possibly as early as the spring of 1890 when Widor inaugurated the St Ouen instrument ["Magnificat versets", a fragment composed for the occasion (*Symphonie gothique*)]: i) presents the plainchant as a long-note cantus *firmus*; ii) and v) are canons at the octave at four and two bars' distance; and vi) is in the style of a virtuoso toccata culminating in a paen of snarling thunder and lofty chorale. The contrapuntal genius of this movement, of the symphony as a whole indeed, takes the high-ground at every turn, baffling some, awing others. 'What is counterpoint,' Widor wrote in a *feuilleton* about the B minor Mass (*Piano-Soleil*, 27 January 1895), 'if not the art of writing luminously? It is not filling, *trompet-l'œil*, false means, possible tricks; all is displayed in broad daylight, out in the full sun; each note has its value in the whole; each detail, each modulation, each plan must assert itself in its turn, sparkling as the facets of a diamond. We need, we want, to hear *everything*.' The Ninth was Widor's favourite symphony. At Saint-Sulpice it became customary for him to play the first movement at the Feast of All Saints' Day (1 November); and the last movement, together with the *Allegro cantabile* from the Fifth, at Midnight Mass.

'The nature of a masterpiece is to remain eternally new; time glides by without leaving its mark on it' (*Estafette*, 10 February 1879). Distinct from the suite trajectory of Opp. 13/42, the *Symphonie romane* – 'the apogee of [Widor's] art' (John R Near), completed in the summer of 1899 at the ancestral family home near Savigny west of Lyon – confines itself, like the Ninth, to a four-movement design. The opening phrases of a single chant – the Gradual *Haec dies, quam fecit Dominus* ('This is the day the Lord hath made', Easter Sunday Mass) – pervades the work, turning it simultaneously into a vast set of variations and a comprehensive application of Lisztian/Franckian thematic metamorphosis. To Widor this melody and its 'elegant arabesques' was like 'a vocalise as elusive as bird song' – lending itself to be used either flexibly, repetitiously, without development (as in the opening *moderato*); or metronomically. 'When this theme is caught in a symphonic web, becoming part of the polyphony, it must be executed strictly in tempo, calmly and grandly without any kind of attenuation. It is not free any more, but has become the property of the composer.' Motioned into being by 'an introductory arabesque, as evanescent as a whiff of incense' (Near), the first movement

(12/8) initially presents the chant, *quasi recitativo, espressivo, a piacere*, against an F# pedal-point, the first four notes of the melody, F#-E-G-F#, delineating a familiar B-A C-H contour. The second and third voluntary-type movements are tripartite – a smoky adagio Chorale in F major (4/4), harmonising homophonic *poco agitato* in G major. Tonally discursive and temporally varied, the D major allegro finale, subdivided into five chapters, belongs among Widor's supreme achievements, an imposing, richly stratified paraphrase on *Haec dies* in compound and simple metres, the power of the instrument setting acoustic and soul into a *gloire* of resounding union and oceanic inexorability – before the 'incense' of the first movement and five bars of triadic blessing, *pianissimo*, return it to silence.

The Tenth is the only one of the cycle for which an autograph survives, albeit incomplete (Bibliothèque nationale). Widor gave the earliest referenced performance on 6 January 1900, at the then new Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Kirche in Berlin, his recital including also Bach's G minor Fantasy and Fugue, 'played marvellously'.

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Reading: John R Near, *Widor: A Life beyond the Toccata* (University of Rochester Further Press, 2011)

## JOSEPH NOLAN

Hailed by Australia's ABC Classic FM as an 'extraordinary musician' and BBC Radio 3 CD Review as a 'virtuoso', Joseph Nolan enjoys a reputation as an organist and musician of international repute.

Joseph holds the unique distinction of being the first British/Australian organist to have been recorded commercially on the organs of Buckingham Palace Ballroom, London, St Sulpice Paris, and in September 2015 at St Etienne Du Mont in Paris, the church and organ of Maurice Duruflé: all for award-winning UK record company, Signum Records.

A pupil of two legendary figures in the musical world, Marie-Claire Alain and Dame Gillian Weir, Joseph's studies were supported by scholarships from the Countess of Munster Trust, Hattori Foundation and Royal Philharmonic Society, following Joseph being awarded First Class Honours for his BMus final recital at the Temple Church, London. Upon completion of his organ studies in London and Paris, Joseph was appointed to Her Majesty's Chapels Royal, St James' Palace in 2004. Joseph broadcast with the



choir on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM, as well as performing as an organ soloist with the Royal Academy of Music Chamber Orchestra at the Thanksgiving Service for Princess Diana at Wellington Barracks. Joseph performed on many occasions at Buckingham Palace, most notably giving the inaugural recital of the refurbished Ballroom organ to a distinguished invited audience.

As a recording artist for Signum, Joseph's discography is unique with solo organ discs having been also recorded on the majority of France's most prized organs including St Sulpice and La Madeleine in Paris, St Ouen Rouen, St Sernin Toulouse and St François de Sales Lyon.

Joseph has recorded the complete organ works of Charles Marie Widor on many of these instruments to universal critical acclaim, described as 'utterly authoritative' by Gramophone Magazine and The Australian Newspaper. They have been awarded multiple 5 star awards in BBC Music Magazine, International Record Review, as well as receiving an 'Editor's Choice' in ABC Limelight Magazine. MusicWeb International awarded Volume 4 of the Widor cycle 'Recording of the

Year' in 2014, as well as describing the cycle as 'shaping up to be the Widor cycle of the decade'.

Joseph has also performed extensively across several continents and his work has been broadcast on most radio networks including BBC Radio 3, USA Pipedreams and ABC and UK Classic FM. He has worked as organ soloist and accompanist with The King's Singers at the Bad Homburg International Festival and with internationally acclaimed trumpeters Alison Balsom, Crispian Steele-Perkins and David Elton. Joseph is also accompanist to the West Australian Principal Flautist, Andrew Nicholson.

Joseph made his debut with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra at Perth Concert Hall playing Poulenc's Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony for the opening of the WASO Classics concerts. This concert was recorded and broadcast on ABC Classic FM.

Joseph is also an acclaimed choral conductor and was invited to take up the post of Organist and Master of the Choristers at St George's Cathedral, Perth, Western Australia in March 2008. Joseph conducts the nationally renowned

choirs of the Cathedral, who since his arrival are now regularly in demand on ABC TV and Radio, and have worked with The Hilliard Ensemble, the Academy of Ancient Music, and I Fagiolini. They have been described as 'elite, faultless and world-class' by The Australian and The West Australian.

As Artistic Director of the Cathedral's Concert Series, Joseph programmes core repertoire such as Bach's St Matthew Passion (which received a five-star review in The West Australian) and has brought new works and premieres to Australia. These include the Australian premieres of Pachelbel's Vespers and Alexander Levine's Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, and the West Australian premiere of Monteverdi's Vespers with authentic instruments.

Joseph was made an Honorary Fellow of The University of Western Australia for services to music in Perth and internationally in 2013.

## THE CAVAILLÉ-COLL ORGAN OF L'ÉGLISE DE LA MADELEINE

Built by the famed organ-builder Aristride Cavallé-Coll (working with his father Dominique), the Grand Organ of La Madeleine was inaugurated in 1846 by Alexandre-Charles Fessy, with Louis James Lefebure-Wély becoming chief organist in 1947. Originally comprised of 46 stops over 4 manuals and pedal, it was the third major instrument Cavallé-Coll had produced for a Parisian church, the others being in the Basilique Saint-Denis and Notre-Dame de Lorette. Modifications since then include: restoration work in 1927, extending the keyboard range; the addition of six new stops (including mixtures) in 1957; increasing the number of stops to 57 in 1971, also automating the key and stop action; and an additional stop in 1928. Classified as a 'Historic Monument', it currently has 60 stops and 4426 pipes.

Lefebure-Wély was succeeded by an eminent succession of notable figures in French Church music; Camille Saint-Saëns (1857-1877), Théodore Dubois (1877-1896), Gabriel Fauré (1896-1905), Henri Dallery (1905-1934), Edouard Mignan (1935-1962), Jeanne Demessieux

(1962-1968), Odile Pierre (1969-1979) and from 1979 François-Henri Houbart.

### STOP LIST

#### I. Grand-Orgue

Montre	16'
Gambre	16'
Montre	8'
Salicional	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Bourdon	8'
Prestant	4'
Quinte	2 2/3'
Doublette	2'
Piccolo*	1'
Fourniture	V
Cymbale	V
Cornet*	V
Trompette	8'
Cor anglais	8'

#### II. Positif

Montre	8'
Viole de gambe	8'
Flûte douce	8'
Voix celeste 8	II
Prestant	4'
Dulciane	4'

Octave	2'
Trompette	8'
Musette	8'
Clairon	4'

#### III. Bombarde

Soubasse	16'
Flûte harmonique	8'
Flûte traversière	8'
Basse	8'
Flûte	4'
Octavin	2'
Fourniture*	IV
Cornet*	III
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

#### IV. Récit

Flûte harmonique	8'
Bourdon Céleste‡	8'
Prestant*	4'
Flûte octavante	4'
Octavin†	2'
Larigot‡	1 1/3'
Plein Jeu†	IV
Cymbale*	IV
Bombarde	16'
Trompette	8'

Basson-Hautbois	8'
Voix humaine	8'
Clairon	4'

#### Pédale

Quintaton	32'
Contrebasse	16'
Flûte	8'
Violoncelle	8'
Flûte‡	4'
Bombarde	16'
Basson	16'
Trompette	8'
Clairon	4'

\* - Added in 1957  
‡ - Added in 1971  
† - Added in 1988

Manual compass - 56 Notes  
Pedal compass - 32 Notes

## THE CAVAILLÉ-COLL ORGAN OF LA BASILIQUE SAINT-SERNIN DE TOULOUSE

La Basilique Saint-Sernin de Toulouse contains the grand three-manual Cavallé-Coll pipe organ, built there in 1888. Together with the Cavallé-Coll instruments at Saint-Sulpice in Paris and the Church of St. Ouen, Rouen, it is considered to be one of the most important organs in France. It was inaugurated in 1889 by Guilman with 54 stops on 3 manuals and pedal. From the beginning it has been recognized as an important work of art and it remains essentially unchanged today.

### 1. Grand Orgue (II)

Bourdon	16
Montre	8
Flute harmonique	8
Gambe	8
Salicional	8
Bourdon	8
Prestant	4
Flute octaviante	4
Quinte	2 2/3
Doublette	2
Fourniture	V
Cymbale	IV

Cornet	V
Bombarde	16
Trompette	8
Clairon	4
Clairon-doublette	2
Trompette en chamade	8
Clairon en chamade	4

### 2. Positif

Montre	8
Cor de nuit	8
Salicional	8
Unda maris	8
Prestant	4
Flute douce	4
Carillon	III
Basson-Hautbois	8
Trompette	8
Clairon	4

### 3. Récit

Quintaton	16
Diapason	8
Flute harmonique	8
Viole de Gambe	8
Voix celeste	8
Flute octaviante	4
Octavin	2
Voix humaine	8

Basson-Hautbois	8
Cornet	V
Bombarde	16
Clarinette	8
Trompette	8
Clairon harmonique	4

### Pédale

Principalbasse	32'
Contrebasse	16
Soubasse	16
Grosse flute	8
Violoncelle	8
Octave	4
Bombarde	32
Bombarde	16
Trompette	8
Clairon	4



Basilique Saint-Sernin de Toulouse

*Symphony gothique* recorded at La Eglise de la Madeleine, Paris, from 4th-8th August 2011.

Producer - Adrian Peacock

Recording Engineer - Andrew J Mellor

*Symphony romane* recorded at La Basilique Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, from 25th-26th May 2014.

Producer - Tim Oldham

Recording Engineer - Mike Hatch

Recording Assistant - Anhad Arora

Editor - Claire Hay

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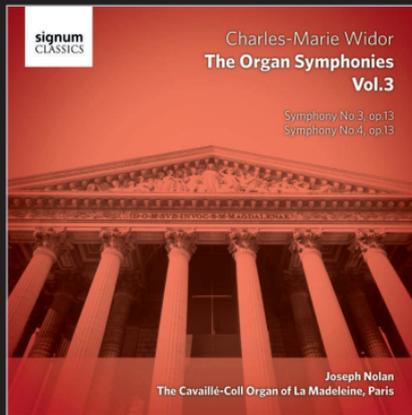
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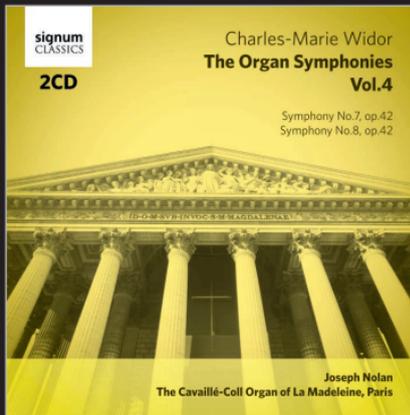
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★★★★★ Editor's Choice  
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Musicweb International



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Joseph Nolan

SIGCD337

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