

VERIZON HALL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

3 PM

MASTER MUSICIANS, ORGAN SERIES

Vincent Dubois, organ

Bach/Dupré

Sinfonia from 146th Cantata, "Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen"

Franck

Fantasie en la majeur

Vierne

2nd Symphony
Scherzo
Finale

—Intermission—

Durufié

Suite, Op. 5
Prélude
Sicilienne
Toccata

Improvisations

Guest Artist Sponsor: Scott and Nelly Childress

The Master Musicians Organ Recitals are generously supported by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

University of Pennsylvania Health System is a season sponsor of Kimmel Center Presents. American Airlines is the Official Airline of Kimmel Center Presents. Steinway is the Official Piano of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

The use of cameras and recording equipment is prohibited during performances. As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please turn off all beepers, watch alarms and cellular phones. Latecomers and those who leave the concert hall during the performance will be seated at appropriate intervals.

J.S. BACH/MARCEL DUPRÉ

(b. 1886, Rouen; d. 1971, Meudon, France)
Sinfonia from Cantata No. 146
"Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen."

Marcel Dupré was the foremost French organ virtuoso of his time, carrying on the great tradition of Romantic French organ performance and composition. Dupré was the only child in a home that has been described as "a temple of music." When he was only a few days old, his father's teacher Alexandre Guilmannt predicted, "he will be an organist," and the child's precocious musicality soon did show itself. First a student of his father and of Guilmannt, he showed an unusual aptitude for the organ, and at the age of 11, he was appointed Organist of the church of Saint-Vivien in Rouen. As a teen, he often took long walks with the organ builder Cavaillé-Coll and discussed organ construction with him. At the age of 16, he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied with Louis Vierne, Louis Diémer and Charles-Marie Widor. When he was 20, he became Widor's assistant at Saint-Sulpice. In 1912, he made his official Parisian debut at the Salle Gaveau, and in 1914, won the distinguished Prix de Rome for his cantata *Psyché*.

In the '20s, he came to the U.S., where he was particularly fascinated with the vast organs in use here. During his first American tour in 1921, he improvised on the huge Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia; that improvisation he later formalized as his first solo symphony, *Symphonie-Passion*. In 1926, he was appointed Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatoire, where he taught for 30 years. He also served as director of the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau. In the two years following his appointment at the Conservatoire, he wrote two important treatises on organ technique, *Traité d'improvisation à l'orgue* and *Méthode d'orgue*. In 1929, he returned to the U.S. to premiere his Organ Symphony No. 2 in New York. In 1934, upon Widor's retirement from Saint-Sulpice, Dupré became Titulaire, a post which he held until his death.

Dupré's highly demanding and expressive music is relatively unknown to non-organists, yet his works include a series of 76 chorales, a concerto for organ and orchestra, and two symphonies for solo organ as well as editions of the organ works of such masters as Bach, Handel, Mozart, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Franck and Glazunov. Most of Dupré's organ works range from moderately to extremely difficult, and some make almost impossible technical demands on the performer. He also wrote treatises on organ im-

provisation, harmonic analysis, counterpoint, fugue and accompaniment of Gregorian chant in addition to essays on organ building, acoustics, and philosophy of music.

Dupré's version of the Sinfonia from Bach's Cantata No. 146 has an interesting background. Bach introduced instrumental movements, most of them sinfonias, in around 20 of his cantatas. One, which came from the first movement of his Clavier Concerto in D minor, served as the prelude for this cantata with the clavier part rewritten for the organ. The prelude was actually not even originally composed for the clavier, but came from what has been understood to be one of Bach's lost violin concertos.

Bach composed Cantata No. 146 for the third Sunday after Easter, and it was first performed on either May 12, 1726, or April 18, 1728. In the Gospel reading for the date (John 16:16–22), the resurrected Christ tells the disciples he will soon leave them, but that their sorrow will turn to joy. As with the superb Cantata No. 12, composed many years earlier for the same Sunday, it has the theme of a journey from darkness to light.

Graham Steed, in his book about Dupré's organ works, suggests that Albert Schweitzer perhaps suggested to Dupré that he should create this Bach transcription because the registration, calling for Swell Flûtes, reflects Schweitzer's thoughts. The transcription for organ requires a difficult and awkward overlapping-hands technique as well as very challenging wide interval skips in the left hand. Overall, the Sinfonia, which begins in unison octaves, is lively, expressive and monumental.

CÉSAR FRANCK

(b. 1822, Liège, Belgium; d. 1890, in Paris)
Fantasie en la majeur

César Franck was a child prodigy pianist whose father wished him to create a career for him as a traveling virtuoso. Although the young Franck did give many concerts in Belgium, he never fulfilled his father's dream, but by 1835, he had exhausted the musical possibilities of his teachers in Liège and journeyed to Paris to find better teachers. In 1836, he entered the Paris Conservatory, where he won prizes in piano, organ and composition for his fugues. Later, when he became professor of organ at the Conservatory, his lectures, rather than the prescribed composition classes, attracted the most talented students and became the training ground for a generation of French composers. Franck lived a quiet life devoted to the organ, his students, and occasionally

to composition. As a significant mentor for a new generation of French composers, he emphasized the composition of organ music based on the counterpoint of Bach as he led young the French musicians toward an ideal of absolute music.

In late 19th century France, organs were developed that could fill the role of symphony orchestras. Until then, the organ had been associated with sacred music, but by the late 18th century, it was in use less frequently because of the anti-clerical mood of the time. When, in the 19th century, new organs were built with “symphonic” sound that appealed to masses of people, composers began to write secular organ symphonies for these instruments.

The organ symphony can be traced back to both Franck and Widor who, along with Vierne, were inspired by the infinite color possibilities of the symphonic instruments that Aristide Cavaillé-Coll had built in the second half of the 19th century in Trocadéro Hall and the great churches of Paris. Franck is credited with being the first to develop their unique sound and color in a symphonic manner. These new instruments allowed the clear enunciation of melodic lines and provided a variety of unique timbres.

The *Fantaisie en la majeur*, or *Fantasy in A* is the first of *Trois Pièces*, composed in 1878, in which the mature style of Franck’s final years is evident. Franck’s “disciple” Vincent d’Indy noted that Franck composed the *Trois Pièces* “expressly for the inauguration of the colossal organ at the Trocadéro during the exhibition of 1878.” Franck gave this work a formality suiting the public and secular character of the occasion, yet Norman Demuth, in his book on the composer, attests, “its general spirit is one of devotion and worship.”

The *Fantasy in A* begins with great simplicity with a thoughtful exposition of its primary theme in unison octaves: it is constructed sectionally in short phrases that make use of arpeggios. The initial subject eventually becomes impressively woven against a second theme, tender and lyrical, that has flow and continuity and is characterized by its descending line. These two main themes at first overlap and are treated successively, but finally they become superimposed to form a single theme.

Throughout, Franck uses beautiful harmonic and rhythmic effects. There are three well-defined sections in this work, and probably Franck had traditional first movement form in mind, but as the work is a fantasy, he was also no doubt aiming for freedom of form and

thus avoided creating a development section. Rather, the structure is based on a process that highlights the fusion of the contrasting and independent elements. The climax of the work comes when these two main themes reach complete union and are combined with double counterpoint. The end comes quietly, as Franck evokes expressive feelings with soft notes that become echoes and then move into silence.

LOUIS VIERNE

(b. 1870, Poitiers, France; d. 1937, Paris)
Scherzo and finale from *Symphony No. 2*

Louis Vierne, a near-blind French organist and composer, studied with César Franck and Charles-Marie Widor at the Paris Conservatory. In 1900 he was appointed organist at Notre Dame, and continued there until he died while playing organ at a service. A colleague and friend of Guilmant, Vierne taught organ at the Schola Cantorum and included among his students Nadia Boulanger and Maurice Duruflé.

The symphonic organs that Aristide Cavaillé-Coll had built in Paris became a direct source of Vierne’s inspiration as they had been for Franck. Vierne’s organ symphonies are all entirely secular in inspiration, and no composer since Vierne has developed the form of the organ symphony further than he did. Vierne composed *Symphony No. 2* from 1902–1903, for the organ of Notre-Dame. It drew on the good graces of a critic who was often harsh, and who one would not imagine was necessarily fond of the organ: Claude Debussy, who was not usually full of praise, was very impressed with the work. He wrote “Monsieur Vierne’s symphony is a remarkable work. It combines fulsome musicianship with ingenious discoveries in the special sonority of the organ. Old J S Bach, the father of us all, would have been pleased with Monsieur Vierne.” Vierne’s work, which is dedicated to Charles Mutin, the organ-builder who took over the Cavaillé-Coll firm in 1902, expresses a singular joy not present in any other of Vierne’s symphonies. Perhaps these uncommon good spirits reflect Vierne’s personal life: a time when he was appointed organist at Notre-Dame, had been recently married and expecting his second child.

The work is cyclic and thus draws almost exclusively on germinal ideas that he announces in the first movement. The dance-like delicate Scherzo is very light in feel. With an Impressionistic feel, the exposition of its primary theme features quick notes, while the contrasting second episode has longer values and limpid phrases.

After a majestic Introduction, the Finale, which has a feeling of foreboding and unrest, uses the second subject of the Scherzo, but with a different rhythm, as its main theme. It also reprises the main theme Vierne used in the *Symphony’s* first movement, only altered slightly. After a lengthy exposition, there is a development that modulates freely. This movement is demanding for listener and performer alike with skillful and intricate sections. The ending, however, is triumphant and it summarizes all the previous themes of the symphony. Some commentators have said that this symphony is either Classic or Romantic in form, while others feel the Scherzo and Finale movements seem more like they are firmly settled in the musical language of the 20th century.

MAURICE DURUFLÉ

(b. 1902, Louviers, France; d. 1986, Paris)
Suite, Op. 5

The French organist and composer Maurice Duruflé gained renown for his *Requiem*, a work unique in its application of medieval melody and modern orchestration as well as its comforting treatment of its subject matter. Duruflé began his musical career as a choirboy at the cathedral in Rouen, the location of a famous school of Gregorian chant. At seventeen, he went to Paris to study organ and composition with the composer, Paul Dukas. The Requiem composed by the head of the Conservatory, Gabriel Fauré, later served Duruflé as a model for his own.

Duruflé’s early *Suite, Op. 5*, is another outstanding example of French organ music of the 20th century. He completed the three-movement *Suite* in 1933 and dedicated it to Paul Dukas. The first movement, a *Prélude, Lento* in the minor mode, has a feeling of unrest brought about by a sustained chord juxtaposed with the interval of an augmented fourth. The section begins slowly but becomes livelier as it progresses. Duruflé gives it several changes in time signature. The tension set up in the beginning continues with several statements of the main theme, but finally Duruflé reaches a major tonality and resolves the tension with which he had begun. The movement returns at the end to the serious feeling of the opening.

The second movement, a flowing rather intimate *Sicilienne, Allegro moderato*, is more intimate. Sounding Impressionist in its harmonies, it has a delicate theme that repeats three times within its treatment in rondo form. In the second half of the movement, the composer again makes use of the disquieting interval of the augmented fourth.

The last movement, *Toccata, Allegro ma non troppo*, has the feel of a Spanish dance with two main themes. It makes virtuoso demands, perhaps reflecting Duruflé’s own ability as a performer on the organ. The first theme, which is strong and heroic sounding, is introduced in the pedal; the second has a more personal sound and reminds the listener of the intimate theme in the preceding *Sicilienne*. The work comes to a brilliant conclusion, but it is not the original ending. As with many of his works, the composer made significant revisions to the score, which in this case included writing a completely different ending.

Born in 1980, VINCENT DUBOIS is one of the finest young concert organists to appear on the world stage in many years. He is a graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris where he was a student of Olivier Latry, and earned First Prizes in Organ, Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue and 20th century composition.

In 2002 Mr. Dubois won two major organ competitions: the *Recital Gold Medal* at the 2002 Calgary International Organ Competition and the *Grand Prize* at the 2002 International Competition of Toulouse, France. As a result of these prizes, Mr. Dubois has performed throughout Europe, North America, Asia and the Pacific. His performances have included numerous international music festivals, and Mr. Dubois has also appeared as guest soloist with several orchestras and ensembles, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hong-Kong Philharmonic, the Orchestre Philharmonique of Radio France. His performances have been broadcast over Radio France, the O.R.F. Vienna, CBC Radio Canada, Australian Radio and American Public Media’s *Pipedreams*.

A recording by Mr. Dubois of the organ music of Franz Liszt is available, as well as two new CDs—one which was recorded at St. Sulpice in Paris and the other recorded at St. Etienne de Caen featuring the complete *Third Symphonie* of Louis Vierne and the *Op. 7 Preludes and Fugues* of Marcel Dupré.

In 2005 Mr. Dubois was appointed Assistant Director of the Conservatoire National of Angers where he previously was an instructor in harmony. He has also been the titular organist at the Cathedral of Soissons since 2001.

Vincent Dubois is making his Kimmel Center Presents debut with this recital.