

Eastman School of Music

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DMA 1 Recital
Studio of David Higgs

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Johann Sebastian Bach

Does he need an introduction?

Toccatà, Adagio and Fugue in C major

Toccatà in C, with its three quite independent movements, is unique among Bach's works. The piece commences with an impressive display of improvisation in the style of early preludes, with separate solos for manual and pedal. However, Bach manages to weave together the figures from the pedal solo in a coherent and deliberate manner. The sprightly fugue theme is reminiscent of the one found in BWV 532 and includes lengthy rests that allow for playful interjections later in the piece. Sandwiched between the two aforementioned movements is an Adagio (in A minor) that takes on the style of a sonata for violin or oboe, accompanied by continuo.

Pierre DuMage

Pierre DuMage was born in Beauvais and baptized on November 23, 1674. He died in Laon on October 2, 1751. A French composer and organist, he served at the collegiate church of Saint Quentin from 1703 to 1710 and then at Laon Cathedral until 1719. He abandoned his music career due to contractual disagreements and became a civil servant. DuMage's sole surviving work is *Livre d'orgue contenant une suite du premier ton* (1708), dedicated to the chapter of Saint Quentin. A second *Livre d'orgue* gifted to Laon Cathedral in 1712 remains missing.

Suite du premier ton

The existing *Livre d'orgue* contains eight brief pieces: *Plein jeu*, *Fugue*, *Trio*, *Tierce en taille*, *Basse de Trompette*, *Récit*, *Duo* and *Grand jeu*. DuMage, in his dedication, claims that these compositions were his first and that he took inspiration from his former teacher, the renowned Louis Marchand. These pieces are a prime example of French organ music during the 1700s as they showcase an increasing emphasis on exterior expression and elegance, culminating in the most musically convincing statement of this trend in Louis-Nicolas Clérambault's *Livre d'orgue* of 1710.

César Franck

César Franck was a Belgian-French Romantic composer and organist born in Liège, Belgium on December 10, 1822. He was the chief figure in a movement to give French music an emotional engagement, technical solidity, and seriousness comparable to that of German composers. Franck showed remarkable musical talent as a child and was sent to Paris to study under Anton Reicha. After winning several awards at the Paris Conservatory, he began giving concerts to please his father and earn money. Eventually, Franck married Félicité Saillot, an actress, and lived a simple life as an organist and teacher. His notable works include Symphony in D Minor, Variations symphoniques, Piano Quintet in F Minor, String Quartet in D Major, Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, and several organ cycles that contain his most important organ works, such as Six pièces, Trois pièces and Trois chorals. Franck passed away on November 8, 1890, in Paris.

Pièce héroïque in B minor

Pièce héroïque is a character piece in Trois Pièces, which Franck conceived as symphonic-style concert music. Although he did not offer any specific comments on the piece's derivation or meaning, it is traditionally believed to be a memorial to the soldiers of the Franco-Prussian War, which ended in a French defeat in 1871. The opening chords of the piece may represent a military march or a heartbeat, and the middle section uses the pedals to imitate orchestral timpani. Franck first performed Trois Pièces on October 1, 1878, at the Palais du Trocadéro in Paris, which was built for the Universal Exposition of that year. He used the venue's four-manual Cavaillé-Coll organ for the premiere. Although the piece lacks a dedication or engraving directions, the first page features an ink registration for the organ.

Maurice Duruflé

Maurice Duruflé was a French composer and organist born in 1902 who received his early music education at a choir school in Rouen. He was influenced by the choral plainsong tradition and was trained by Tournemire at the Conservatoire. Duruflé's contrasting musical inspirations can be traced in his compositions. He served as an assistant to Vierne at Notre-Dame and later became an organist at St Etienne-du-Mont, where he remained for the rest of his life. As a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, he held the post of professor of harmony from 1943 to 1970. Duruflé drew inspiration from plainsong and his compositions range from ethereal to powerfully foreboding. He also toured Europe, the USA, and the USSR as an organist.

Prélude from Suite for Organ, Op. 5

Duruflé dedicated his Suite for organ Op. 5 to his teacher Paul Dukas. The work was dated 1932 and first published in 1934. The Prélude premiered on February 22, 1932, at Saint Merry, and the complete work premiered on January 23, 1935, at the church of Saint François-Xavier, with Geneviève de la Salle as the performer. Duruflé himself performed the British premiere for the Organ Music Society at Christ Church Woburn (London) on November 8, 1938. According to Norbert Dufourcq, Duruflé's personality is evident in the Prélude, while the Sicilienne and Toccata demonstrate the influence of Vierne, especially in the choice of themes. The Prélude also shows the influence of Dukas's piano sonata, which is often underrated and neglected, with the first movement being in E-flat minor and expressing similar somber, dark, and even gruesome feelings. Duruflé considered the Prélude and the variations on Veni Creator to be the easiest of his major works to play, and he frequently performed them in recitals. He referred to the former only as the Prélude in E-flat Minor and did not indicate that it was part of a suite.