
Paris Milieu
Ryan Chan
2024 First Prize Winner
American Guild of
Organists National
Young Artists
Competition in
Organ Performance
AGO
Juget-Sinclair Organ
Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
Richmond, Virginia USA
Pro
Organo
7314

Pro Organo

Audio / Video Producer / Engineer,
Post-Production, Audio Mastering and
Photos of Mr. Chan: Frederick Hohman,
ProOrgano.com

AGO Production Coordinator:
Molly Davey

Recorded on 25 & 26 August 2025 at
the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart,
Richmond, Virginia USA

Paris Milieu
Ryan Chan

Program Notes from the Artist

I have always wanted to record a French album. When I first started playing the organ in 2010 — on a Rodgers at my secondary school in Hong Kong — I dabbled in a few simple pieces by Franck and Guilmant. I remember taking to the French Romantic style much more naturally than to anything by Bach or Pachelbel. Years later, I found myself equally drawn to the harpsichord works of d'Anglebert and Duphly. From elegance, refinement, and tenderness to fire, wit, and grandeur, French music up till the early twentieth century encapsulates the full range of human emotions — expressed with directness, yet never crudity. This album is my love letter to French organ music, and an homage to the city that inspired it all.

The seventeenth century, the *Grand Siècle*, marked the first era in which organ music flourished in France. Composers such as Lebègue and Nivers established the French Classical school, while builders like Carlier and Thierry laid its foundations and created the century's defining sound. **Nicolas de Grigny** (1672-1703) stood at the summit of this tradition. Although he spent most of his life in Reims, Paris served as a crucial training ground, where he worked at Saint-Denis and studied with Lebègue. His sole publication, the *Premier Livre d'orgue*, was first printed in 1699 and reissued in 1711 by the royal publisher Christophe Ballard. If that alone were not enough to secure de Grigny's legacy, the fact that Bach copied the entire work by hand certainly would. His five versets on ***Veni Creator Spiritus*** showcase the grandeur and variety of the French Classical style. In the *Plein Jeu*, the plainsong appears in the pedal, in long notes within the tenor range, while the hands surround it with bright, sonorous homophony. The *Fugue* employs

three distinct timbres — *cornet séparé* for the upper voices, cromorne for the tenor, and open flute for the bass. The *Duo* is a lively gigue, followed by the tender, songlike *Récit de Cromorne*. The *Dialogue sur les grand jeux* concludes the set in the manner of an overture, evoking those heard in Lully's *tragédies lyriques*.

From the sacred vaults of La Madeleine to the gilded halls of the Opéra-Comique, music reverberated across Paris in the nineteenth century. With its opera houses, salons, and conservatories, the city became Europe's musical capital. It drew the greatest artists from across the continent, including organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, who would dominate the French organ landscape for an entire century and beyond.

Where great instruments appeared, great performers followed—and among them was **Louis-James-Alfred Lefébure-Wély** (1817–1869). The son of an organist, he was born in Paris and trained in organ and composition at the Paris Conservatoire. Over his career, he held posts at prestigious churches including Saint-Roch, La Madeleine, and Saint-Sulpice. Yet he was best known for his collaboration with Cavaillé-Coll, travelling throughout France to inaugurate new instruments and demonstrate their vast palette of timbres and power. The ***Élévation ou Communion*** comes from *L'Organiste moderne*, a collection of thirty-four pieces first published in 1867 and originally improvised during services at Saint-Sulpice. The resemblance to the operatic style is unmistakable — one could easily imagine words set to its melodies. Lefébure-Wély's love of the theatre was no secret: his three-act opera *Les Recruteurs*, albeit not well-received, was premiered at the Opéra-Comique in 1861.

Grand, extravagant and interdisciplinary — opera was considered the most elevated of all musical genres. While Lefébure-Wély brought operatic flair into the organ loft, **Georges Bizet** (1838–1875) and **Camille Saint-Saëns** (1835–1921) brought it to the stages of the Paris Opéra and Opéra-Comique, creating immortal works such as ***Carmen*** (1875) and *Samson et Dalila* (1877). The Romantic obsession with drama was not confined to opera — it permeated orchestral and chamber music as well. The symphonic poem, pioneered by Liszt, elevated instrumental program music to an expressive level equal to that of opera. Deeply influenced by Liszt, Saint-Saëns introduced the genre to France, and his ***Danse macabre*** (1874) remains one of its most beloved examples.

Under the virtuosic hands of Edwin Henry Lemare (1865–1934), operatic and orchestral idioms found a new home on the organ. Lemare fully utilized a "thumbing-down" technique that created the illusion of a third hand playing — a hallmark of his flamboyant transcriptions. Listen for this effect in the castanet section of *Carmen Fantasy* and at the recapitulation of *Danse macabre*.

While much of interwar Paris celebrated cosmopolitan modernity — Les Six, jazz, cabaret— there was also a parallel movement in which musicians sought solace and permanence in the sacred. Many organist-composers turned to Gregorian chant, church modes, and theology for inspiration. At the same time, the *Expositions internationales* of 1925 and 1937 introduced artists to new sounds, colors, and ideas from around the world.

Jehan Alain (1911–1940) absorbed all of these influences, forging an utterly original voice. A man of many fascinations—mechanics, religion, Orientalism—he infused his organ works with inventive registrations, unconventional harmonies, and rhythmic freedom. His ***Deuxième Fantaisie*** (1936) intertwines elements of Christianity and Judaism. According to Marie-Claire Alain, the first theme derives from the Catholic burial chant *Exsultabunt Domino*, while the second, a recitative-like melody on the *cromorne* stop, is based on a traditional Jewish tune Alain learned while serving as a synagogue organist. Here, against a static harmonic backdrop, he evokes a scene that feels at once primal and ritualistic. Alain plays further with illusion and perception in ***Fantasmagorie*** (1935), a work that came to light only in 1980. The title refers to the early art of optical illusion used in "magic lantern" shows. On paper, the score's notation deceives the eye — the visual complexity bears little resemblance to what one hears. Marie-Claire noted that her brother later transformed some of its material into his celebrated *Litanies*.

Described by Ronald Ebrecht as "the last Impressionist," **Maurice Duruflé** (1902–1986) blended medieval chant with the refined harmonic language of Dukas and Debussy. His beloved ***Suite pour orgue, Op. 5,*** dedicated to his teacher Paul Dukas, dates from 1932 and was published in 1934. The dark, brooding *Prélude* — a favorite of the composer — rests upon a long B-flat pedal point, its somber tone recalling Chopin's "Funeral March" and Ravel's *Le Gibet*. The *Sicilienne*, delicate and lyrical, pays homage to Vierne and Fauré, with subtle echoes of

chamber music. Duruflé even orchestrated this movement for a small ensemble of winds and strings. The virtuosic *Toccata* poses a formidable challenge to any performer. Not only does it require pianistic virtuosity and precise rhythm, but also a masterful control of phrasing to bring out the lyrical themes.

We finally return to the *Belle Époque*, which seemed like a distant dream from the dark undertones of the 1930s. No composer represents the French tradition better than ***Gabriel Faure*** (1845-1924). Refined yet restrained, his mature works are characterized by fragmented melodic lines and non-directional harmony. The closing movement from his *Requiem* — ***In Paradisum*** — has a pristine, ethereal quality, and is heard here on a lesser-known transcription by Marcel Dupré.



Acknowledgments and thanks.

The album producer for the Pro Organo label, Frederick Hohman, and the production coordinator for the American Guild of Organists, Molly Davey, wish to express their thanks to the Clergy and Staff of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond Virginia, for permitting the use of the beautiful sanctuary for the making of this recording possible. Special thanks is extended to Director of Music & Litrugy, Principal Organist and Choirmaster, Mr. Daniel B. Sáñez, for his kind assistance on site, and to Mr. Robin Côté of the Juget-Sinclair firm, for organ case photos, the essay about the Op. 55 organ, and for arranging Scott Hayes to provide organ tuning just prior to the recording serssions.



Artist's Acknowledgements

I would like to thank those, without whom this recording would not have been possible: 1) Fred Hohman, for his sound recording expertise; 2) David Higgs, for sharpening all aspects of my musicianship and for being the most supportive teacher one could ask for; 3) my past teachers — Lisa Crawford, Jennifer Chou, Anne Lam, and Carmen Wong — for guiding me down the right path all these years; 4) Daniel Sáñez, for his hospitality and kindness throughout the recording process; 5) Scott Hayes, for his tuning expertise; 6) the team at Juget-Sinclair, for blessing us with Opus 55; and lastly, my family and friends, for their unwavering support through the ups and downs of this deeply meaningful project. This is not just a winner's album, but a tribute to all who inspire me and remind me why I make music — to share beauty, emotions, and stories through sound.

ALBUM TRACK LIST & TIMINGS

Nicolas deGrigny [1672-1703]
Les Hymnes: Veni Creator [1699]
• 16:05

1 Veni Creator en taille à 5 • 2:39
2 Fugue à 5 • 2:36
3 Duo • 3:12
4 Récit de Cromorne • 3:34
5 Dialogue sur les grands Jeux. • 4:04

6 **Louis-James-Alfred Lefébure-Wély** [1817-1869]
Elevation in A minor • 3:00

7 **Georges Bizet** [1838-1875]
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Carmen Fantasy • 12:07

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Danse Macabre • 8:45

Jehan Alain [1911-1940]
9 ***Deuxième Fantasie, JA 117*** [1939] • publ. Alphonse Leduc – SDRM • 7:11

10 ***Fantasmagorie*** from ***Quatre Œuvres pour Orgue*** [1935]
• publ. Schott Helicon Music Corp. • 3:06

Maurice Duruflé [1902-1986]
Suite for Organ, Opus 5 • 25:09
• publ. Universal Music – MGB Songs, obo Durand

11 Prélude • 9:18
12 Sicilenne • 7:04
13 Toccata • 8:47

14 **Gabriel Fauré** [1845-1924], **arr. Marcel Dupré** [1886-1971]
Requiem: In Paradisum • 3:47

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An on-line video about the making of this album, including commentary from the artist, and performance segments from selections on this album, acquired during the recording sessions, may be found at:

https://vimeo.com/112650789







Known for his "solid technique... imaginative programming... tasteful creativity in registering orchestral textures" (AGO Charleston Chapter), **Ryan Chan** is recognized as a versatile musician specializing in organ and harpsichord. His passions for both early and contemporary repertoire, performance practice, historic/antique keyboards, experimentation and teaching define his musical identity. Hailing from Hong Kong, he has performed in prestigious venues across U.S. and Europe, including Freiberger Dom, Katholische Hofkirche Dresden, St. James' in-the-City Church Los Angeles, St. Mark's Cathedral Seattle, and Syracuse University. Festival appearances include Piccolo Spoleto L'Organo Charleston, Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute, Rochester Early Music Festival, and Skaneateles Festival. His playing has been featured on the national radio program *Pipedreams*.

A laureate of several important competitions, Ryan was most recently awarded First Prize and Audience Prize in the 2024 American Guild of Organists National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance. In 2023, he won Second Prize in the 16th International Gottfried Silbermann Organ Competition, held in Freiberg and Dresden. He was also the First Prize winner of the 2018 Arthur Poister Scholarship Competition in Organ Playing.

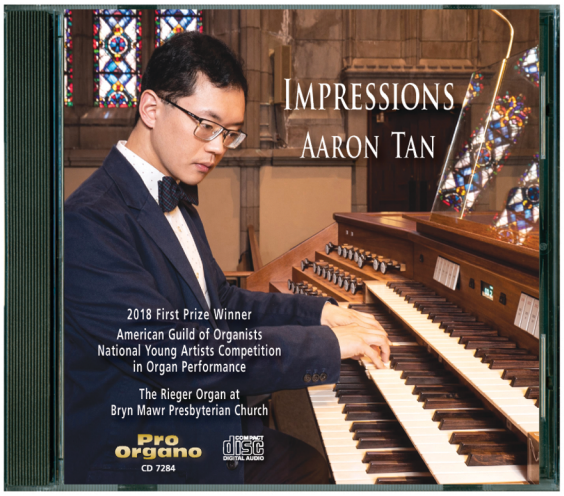
At the Eastman School of Music, Ryan is pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Organ Performance under the tutelage of David Higgs. He has already completed a Master's Degree in Harpsichord Performance, having studied with Lisa Goode Crawford.

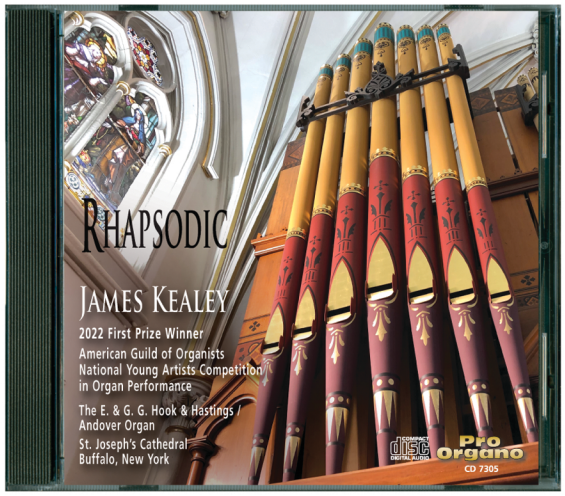
Ryan currently serves as Organist and Choir Director at the Rochester Christian Reformed Church in Rochester New York. Prior to this appointment, he was the VanDelinder Organ Fellow at Christ Church Rochester for three years, working with Music Director Stephen Kennedy. He is an active choral accompanist and continuo harpsichordist, having worked with Gloriæ Dei Cantores, Society for New Music, Eastman Collegium Musicum, Roberts Wesleyan College Chorale, and Genessee Valley Orchestra and Chorus.

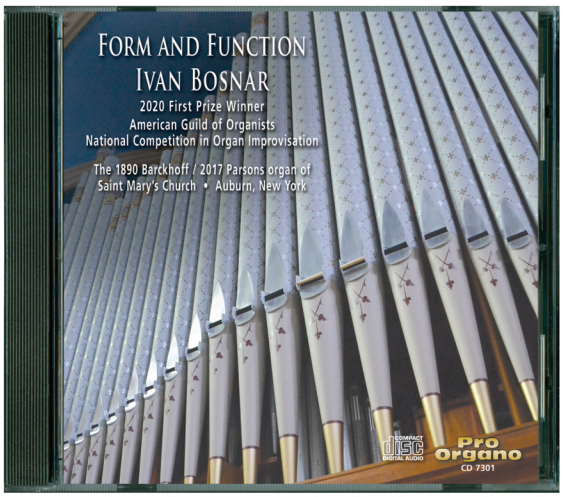
At the time of this album release, Ryan is based in Rochester, New York, USA.

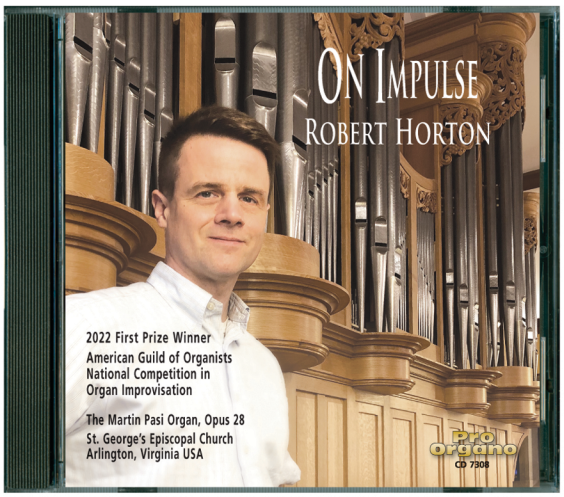
Album covers for recent AGO NYACOP and AGO NCOI Winner albums released on the Pro Organo label.













AGO NYACOP and AGO NCOI Winner albums are available in Compact Disc format from **ProOrgano.com**. The ablums and their individual tracks are available in digital format from Naxos Music Library, Spotify, YouTube, Amazon, Idagio, Pandora, and many other popular download and streaming platforms, with worldwide digital distributioin by Naxos of America LLC.

First Prize Winners in the American Guild of Organists' **National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance** (AGO NYACOP) receive a Pro Organo release as a key component of the First Prize. Since 2005, albums and NYACOP winners have been:

2022 Winner **James Kealey**
Rhapsodic - Pro Organo CD 7305

2020 Winner **-** *no winner, due to COVID*

2018 Winner **Aaron Tan**
Impressions - Pro Organo CD 7284

2016 Winner **Katelyn Emerson**
Evocations - Pro Organo CD 7277

2014 Winner **Jonathan Rudy**
Three Halls - Pro Organo CD 7268

2012 Winner **Daryl Robinson**
Sempre Organo - Pro Organo CD 7261

2010 Winner **Dongho Lee**
Modal Inspiration - Pro Organo CD 7245

2008 Winner **Michael Unger**
Universe of Poetry - Pro Organo CD 7235

2006 Winner **Scott Montgomery**
Water and Light - Pro Organo CD 7224

2004 Winner **Yoon-mi Lim**
Gifts from Above - Pro Organo CD 7205

Pro Organo has also released the following albums from recent previous NCOI First Prize Winners:

2024 Winner **Jerrick Cavagnaro**
Firm Foundations
Pro Organo CD 7312

2022 Winner **Robert Horton**
On Impulse
Pro Organo CD 7308

2020 Winner **Ivan Bosnar**
Form and Function
Pro Organo CD 7301

2018 Winner **Kalle Toivio**
Improvisations at St. Ignatius
Pro Organo CD 7286

Please find these titles, and many more choral and organ music titles on Compact Disc, DVD, and Blu-ray Disc on-line at: **ProOrgano.com**.

The **American Guild of Organists** (AGO) promotes the highest level of organ performance through its **National Young Artists Competition in Organ Performance** (NYACOP). The competition is open to organists between the ages of 23 and 33, and serves as a springboard for emerging organists. The final round is a featured event of the AGO's biennial National Convention. Cash prizes are awarded for first, second, and third place, and there is an audience-choice prize. In addition, the first-place NYACOP winner receives the exposure of a recital played during the AGO National Convention, professional career development assistance, and a commercially released and distributed compact disc audio recording. Details, competition repertoire, and official rules are published in **The American Organist** magazine and may be found at: **www.agohq.org.**



Notes from the organ-builder

Since the early days of the company, our approach to organbuilding is guided by our desire to build as much as possible ourselves. This is as philosophical as it is practical. We can realize the organ exactly as we imagine it, right down to the font of the pistons: but it allows us to approach challenging designs with confidence.

To further refine our musical vision for the gallery organ, Robin Côté (voicer and CEO) and his long time colleague Alex Ross (voicer and technical designer) spent a week in France and Spain to find inspiration and ideas in such masterpieces as Sainte-Croix in Bordeaux, Aire-sur-l'Adour, Saint-Sever, Ataun (Spain), and in Toulouse: la Dalbade, la Daurade, and Saint-Sernin. These organs (and others) informed our approach to the overall voicing scheme, but they also provided a few fun and interesting ideas such as a triple-length harmonic clarinet which we found at Saint-Sever.

Visually, we sought to create an architectural unity between the cathedral and the organ by respecting the neo-renaissance style of the space. To better integrate the organ into the community, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is displayed on the tympanum of the grand pediment to represent the patronage of the cathedral, and the favourite flowers of the principal donors are sculpted into the garlands. The sculptures and mouldings were gilded in-house with 23-karat gold leaf using traditional techniques.

Behind the central tower of the organ case, we find the Récit and Positif boxes stacked one atop the other. On either side of centre are situated the Grand-Orgue and Pédale windchests. On floor level, there are six cuneiform bellows, console action, and electric pedal windchests for the 16′ & 8′ flutes as well as the 32's. The blower and primary are located in the original blower room but our wind system draws directly from the loft.

Musically, we wished to create a Catholic organ; i.e. is well adapted to play music in many styles of Catholic liturgies from various times and places. For this reason, the organ is rooted in French traditions of various centuries into which features from other traditions are woven. To achieve this degree of flexibility while maintaining coherency, we needed to strike balances between traditions on the macro- and micro-scale.

The Récit is very symphonic; boasting strings, harmonic reeds, gambas, colour reeds, and harmonic flutes galore!

The Positif leans much more classical with its articulate principal chorus, flute mutations up to 1′, a North-German inspired trumpet, and an uncompromising 18th century French Cromorne. The Dulciane, Unda maris, Cor anglais, and Quintaton are chameleons that can be used to great effect in many different eras of music.

The Grand-Orgue and Pédale have one foot in each camp. The 16′ and 8′ Montres are slotted with a progressively smaller proportion of over-length as one ascends into the trebles. This concept continues right into the mixtures which are almost entirely cone-tuned. Similarly, light nicking in lower principals transitions to virtually no nicking in the Doublette and the mixtures. This allows the organist to have their four creamy 8′ fonds and a sparkling and articulate principal chorus. The slotting brings directionality to the basses, while cut-to-length trebles are more lyrical than a true symphonic organ.

We couldn't dream of a more solid foundation for Op. 55 than the Principal-basse 32′. For us, this is one of the most versatile stops of the entire organ: it can accompany the celestes, a Germanic plenum, a fond d'orgue, the tutti — it takes the liturgy to the next level! The reed batteries of the GO and PED are based on late 18th century French models both in construction and voicing. They are assertive, but they do need to be able to fill a cathedral after all.

Available on all manuals and pedal, the two chamades are very different from one another. The Trompette-en-chamade 8′ is French, round, and brings definition while still being able to blend into the tutti. The Chamade 4′-16′, on the other hand, has a much more Iberian character and breaks back from 4′ to 16′ at Middle C: it is rustic and exhilarating and opens musical possibilities which are seldom explored in the United States or Canada.

Robin Côté & Alex Ross,
Juget-Sinclair organbuilders

The organ stoplist is found on the next page.

Organ Specification • Cathedreal of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, Virginia USA

Completed 2024 by Juget-Sinclair • Montréal, Québec, Canada • 3 manuals, 67 stops

Grand Orgue I

Montre 16
Bourdon 16
Montre 8
Salicional 8
Bourdon 8
Flûte Harmonique 8
Prestant 4
Flûte ouverte 4
Quinte 2 2/3
Doublette 2
Tiercelette 4/5 –1-3/5
Fourniture IV+II
Cymbale III
Cornet V (Middle C)
Bombarde 16
Trompette 8
Clairon 4

Trompette en chamade 8
Chamade 4-16

II/I – III/I – III/I 16'
Ch I/I – Ch II/I – Ch II/I 16'

Récit Expressif III

Bourdon 16
Flûte traversière 8
Cor-de-Nuit 8
Viole de Gambe 8
Voix-Céleste 8
Salicional 4
Flûte octaviante 4
Nazard Harmonique 2 2/3
Octavin 2
Tierce Harmonique 1 3/5
Plein-Jeu III-V (2)
Basson 16
Trompette Harm. 8
Clairon Harm. 4
Basson-Hautbois 8
Clarinette 8
Voix-Humaine 8

Tremblant

Trompette en chamade 8
Chamade 4-16

Ch I/III – Ch II/III

Positif Expressif II

Quintaton 16
Principal 8
Bourdon 8
Dulciane 8
Unda-Maris 8
Prestant 4
Flûte à Cheminée 4
Nazard 2-2/3
Doublette 2
Flûte 2
Tierce 1-3/5
Larigot 1-1/3
Piccolo 1
Plein-Jeu V
Cor Anglais 16
Cromorne 8
Trompette 8

Tremblant

Trompette en chamade 8
Chamade 4-16

III/I

Ch I/II Ch II/II Ch II/II 16'

Pédale

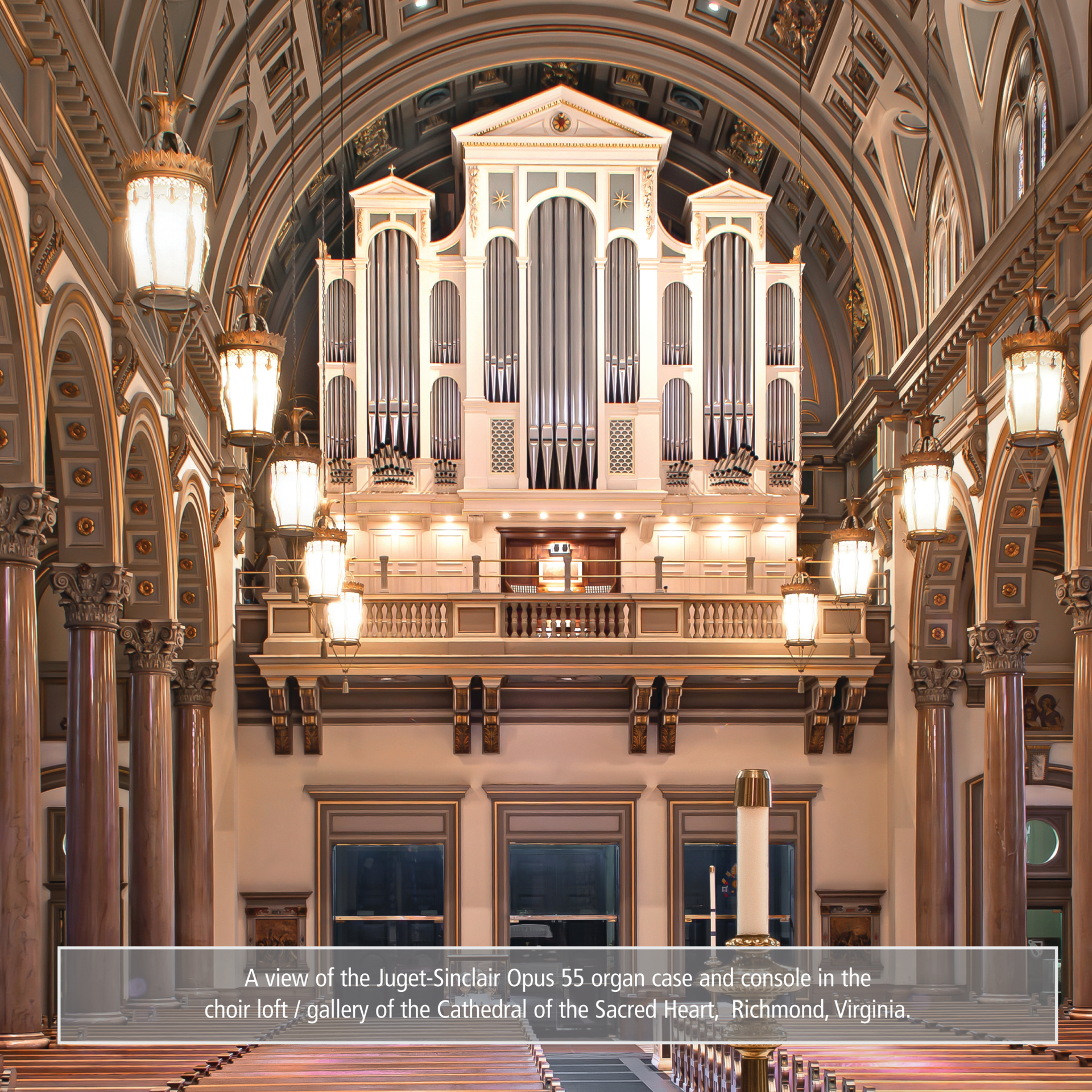
Principal Basse 32 (ext.)
Contre-Basse 16
Montre 16' (from I)
Soubasse 16
Bourdon doux 16' (from I)
Violon 16 (ext. Vclle 8)
Flûte 8
Bourdon 8
Violoncelle 8
Prestant 4
Flûte 4
Ctre.-Bombarde 32
(ext. Bb16)
Bombarde 16
Trombone 16
Trompette 8
Clairon 4

Trompette en chamade 8
Chamade 4

I/P II/P III/P

Ch I/P Ch II/P Ch P/P

- 58 note keyboards with bone naturals and ebony sharps.
- 30 note flat pedalboard with radiating sharps in oak with ebony faced sharps.
- Mechanical key action • Electric stop action • Multi-level electronic combination system 300 memory levels.
- Solid hardwood case, mortise and tenon construction • Adjustable bench
- Deagan Chimes, 25 notes g2-g4 • Rossignol • Clochettes (with 2 turning stars)
- All the stops knobs from the Choir Organ (opus 54) available at the console.



A view of the Juget-Sinclair Opus 55 organ case and console in the choir loft / gallery of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond, Virginia.

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Juget-Sinclair Organ, Op. 55 • Cathedral of the Sacred Heart • Richmond, Virginia USA

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11 Prélude • 9:18 12 Sicilienne • 7:04 13 Toccata • 8:47

14 **Gabriel Fauré, arr. Marcel Dupré**
Requiem: In Paradisum • 3:47

Pro Organo

Total time: 79′ 10″

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