



RACHEL LAURIN

THE
CONRAD LETENDRE
SCHOOL

ORGAN WORKS OF
LETENDRE, DAVELUY & LAURIN

THE CASAVANT ORGAN OF
SAINT-JEAN-L'ÉVANGÉLISTE
CATHEDRAL

SAINT-JEAN-SUR-RICHELIEU
QUÉBEC, CANADA

**Pro
Organo**

7296

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This recording was originally released in 2002, commemorating the 25th of the passing of Conrad Letendre.

**TRIBUTE TO
CONRAD LETENDRE (1904-1977)**

Born in 1904, Conrad Letendre gradually lost his sight between the ages of two and ten. He nevertheless attended regular school and participated in all the family activities. From 1913 to 1927, he studied in Montréal at the Nazareth Institute for the Blind, a school which also functioned as a veritable music conservatoire. He studied organ and piano with Arthur Letondal, violin with Camille Couture, and harmony, counterpoint and fugue with Romain Pelletier and Achille Fortier. Letendre's training was largely shaped by the influence of these distinguished teachers whose musical

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Saint-Jean-L'Évangéliste Cathedral
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Québec), Canada

Recording engineer: André Archambault

Recording producer: Jacques Boucher

Artistic Advisor: Raymond Daveluy

Organist's Assistant: Mario Coutu

Remastered in 2025 for **Pro Organo**
by Frederick Hohman

background stemmed primarily from the French School; they had studied in Paris with Dubois, Gigout, Marmontel, and Giraud. When he graduated from the Institute, Letendre was already playing organ works by Vierne and Dupré, several of which had been transcribed into Braille.

EMERGENCE OF A SCHOOL

At the beginning of his career, Letendre was an organist in Saint-Hyacinthe and quickly became a highly sought-after teacher in that region of Québec. He moved to Montréal in 1936, and there he gradually developed, in collaboration with his colleague Gabriel Cusson, a school where all the disciplines inherent to performance and composition were taught in perfect balance. The school's students included organists Gaston Arel, Mireille Bégin, Raymond Daveluy, Kenneth Gilbert, Bernard Lagacé, Aline Letendre and Lucienne L'Heureux,

who at that time made up what was known as the “Conrad Letendre Group,” generally deemed to be the nucleus of the organ revival that began in Montréal in the early 1960s.

VERSATILITY

With the help of his wife and disciple Aline Chénier-Lavergne, who was a close collaborator throughout his career, Conrad Letendre simultaneously pursued a variety of activities. As a researcher, thanks to the support of Québec’s Ministry of Cultural Affairs, he developed a system of harmony and wrote a treatise which he considered to be his most important work. He also acquired remarkable knowledge in the field of organ building and conducted research from the organist’s perspective.

As a consultant, his ideas on organ design were implemented by the highly regarded Casavant firm in the construction of large-scale instruments, including the organs of the Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Church in Victoriaville, the Saint-Sixte Church in Ville Saint-Laurent, the Saint-Jude Church-Shrine in Montréal, and the renovation of the Gesù Church’s organ — also in Montréal, and the instrument for which his organ works were

conceived — as well as the organ of the Saint-Jean-L’Évangéliste Cathedral, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, where this recording was made.

As editor-in-chief, he supervised the publication of articles and editorials for the “La Bonne Chanson” and “Musique et Musiciens” periodicals. As a pedagogue, in addition to his teaching organ and composition in the greater metropolitan area, he taught harmony and organology at the Université de Montréal.

As a composer, Letendre left a body of work that, while not extensive in quantity, bequeaths a meaningful legacy to Canadian organ repertoire through the concrete demonstration of the compositional principles he embraced and developed. His organ works were published in three volumes.

His closest disciples in the field of composition were Jean Chatillon, Michel Perreault, and Raymond Daveluy, probably the best-known composer of the group. Gertrude Perrault, who worked closely with Letendre in his research and teaching activities, must also be mentioned.

LEGACY

Conrad Letendre died suddenly on 20 November 1977, surrounded by colleagues, in the midst of his work, just as he had wished.

Greatly appreciated for being unusually altruistic and totally committed, he lives on through his compositions, his writings, his contribution to organ building in Québec in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the principles of composition he generously transmitted to his students.

Raymond Daveluy has displayed the same fervor, conviction and generosity in his effort to promote Conrad Letendre's school of thought. Thanks to the training I myself had the privilege of receiving from Mr Daveluy in organ, improvisation, harmony and composition, I am fortunate to be able to make my own contribution, as a performer and composer, to the dissemination of its authentic message.

My own connection to the Conrad Letendre school developed quite naturally, helping me to live without compromise, faithful to my deeply held convictions, and guided simply by my love of music.

*2002 notes by Rachel Laurin, edited in 2025
by Marc Bourdeau for the Rachel Laurin estate.*



The Canadian composer, organist, improviser, teacher and speaker **RACHEL LAURIN** (1961-2023) was born in Saint-Benoît, Québec. After her studies at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, she became the assistant of Raymond Daveluy, titular organist of Saint Joseph's Oratory (Montréal), a position she held from 1986 to 2002. She was titular organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral (Ottawa) from 2002 to 2006, subsequently leaving this position to devote herself fully to concerts, composition, leading master classes, and presenting lectures.

She gave numerous concerts and recitals in Canada, the United States, and Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, United Kingdom, Switzerland, etc.). Under the auspices of the Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCCO), she travelled on more than one occasion across the country to present organ recitals and workshops.

Notable performances include Raymond Daveluy's *Concerto for Organ and Orchestra* with the Hamilton Philharmonic in 1999, Louis Vierne's *Six Symphonies* (in three recitals) in Montréal in 2000 and in Ottawa in 2001, and the première of Jacques Hétu's *Concerto for Organ and Orchestra* with the Edmonton Symphony in 2002 for the inauguration of the Winspear Centre's Létourneau organ, a work she reprised in 2008 with the Ottawa Symphony at the National Arts Centre, and with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony in 2009 at Toronto's Metropolitan United Church for the RCCO's Centennial Organ Festival.

As an organist-composer, lecturer and teacher, she was a frequent guest at several American and Canadian universities, including Yale University, Houston University, Saint Thomas University, Baylor University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Mount Royal College, University of Saint Lawrence, Kansas City University, and the University of Alberta. She also taught organ improvisation at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, the École de musique sacrée d'Épinal (France), and the Mount Royal International Summer School.

Rachel Laurin became an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre in 1989, and served as a "house composer" at Leupold Editions from 2006 until her untimely passing in 2023. Composing almost exclusively on commissions, she wrote over

one hundred works for solo instruments, chamber music ensembles, orchestra, voice, and choir. Her compositions are published by North American publishing houses and are regularly performed — notably those for organ — in renowned concert halls and illustrious places of worship at the four corners of the globe.

Her discography, as an organist and as a composer, includes some thirty albums for labels such as Pro Organo, Raven, Delphian Records, Regent Records, Acis, Motette, Atma Classique, Centaur Records, Centrediscs, MDG, Gothic, CBC Records, Analekta, Amplitude, Société Nouvelle d'Enregistrement, Musicus/Fidelio, and Richelieu/SRC.

Rachel Laurin received several awards and honors recognizing her valuable contribution to the organ repertoire: Holtkamp-AGO Composition Prize (2008); First Prize at the Marilyn Mason New Organ Music Competition (2009); member, since 2016, of the Honorary Committee of the Fédération Francophone des Amis de l'Orgue (FFAO); First Prize at the Orgelkids Composition Contest (2019); Distinguished Composer Award (2022) from the American Guild of Organists (AGO); winner of the Pogorzelski-Yankee Competition for New Organ Music (2022); Composer-in-Residence in 2023–2024 at Salle Bourgie (Montréal), a season during which her works, including two premières, were featured in four concerts.

In her memory, *The American Organist* magazine devoted some twenty pages to her in the September 2024 issue; that same month, Minnesota Public Radio's Pipedreams broadcast an in-memoriam program, hosted by Michael Barone and entitled "Remembering Rachel"; and in 2025, the RCCO organized the first edition of the Rachel Laurin Composition Competition.

For further information, including a complete list of her compositions, please visit the **RachelLaurin.com** website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and THANKS

The original compact disc, released in 2002, was made possible through the support of Aline Chénier-Letendre (1922-2011) —wife and collaborator of Conrad Letendre — an esteemed teacher at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal, as well as titular organist of the Gesù Church, also in Montréal.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CURRENT ORGAN

In 1934, the Saint-Jean-de-Québec diocese (now the Saint-Jean-Longueuil diocese) was established, and the parish church became the cathedral. In 1957, under the responsibility of the Episcopal Corporation, the Casavant Frères firm was commissioned to build a new instrument. It was

in fact a reconstruction since the new (current) organ retains a significant portion of the sound components of the previous instrument which dates from 1903. Modifications and additions were made to the instrument so as to obtain a more complete and more versatile organ.

The main changes were:

- Addition of a new division: Solo;
- Addition of mixtures in the Positif, Grand Orgue and Récit divisions;
- Addition of a 32-foot Résultant in the Pedal division, a must for such a large church;
- Addition of mutations which were absent from the 1903 instrument;
- Installation of a new four-manual console equipped with all the features available at that time.

Organists Conrad Letendre and Raymond Daveluy acted as consultants and their recommendations largely contributed to the rebuilding of this magnificent instrument which was inaugurated on 14 May 1958.

The organ specification follows on the next page.

Organ Specification • Casavant organ, Opus 2426 (1957)

Saint-Jean-L'Évangéliste Cathedral • Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Québec), Canada

4 manuals and pedalboard • 53 stops • 60 ranks • 3718 pipes • Electro-pneumatic action

GRAND ORGUE

Montre 8
Principal étroit 8
Flûte double 8
Prestant 4
Flûte à cheminée 4
Quinte 2 2/3
Doublette 2
Fourniture IV
Trompette française 8
Basson (REC) 16
Trompette (REC) 8
Clairon (REC) 4

RÉCIT (enclosed)

Bourdon 16
Bourdon 8
Gambe 8
Céleste 8
Violon 4
Flûte traversière 4
Nazard 2 2/3
Piccolo 2
Tierce 1 3/5
Plein-Jeu III
Basson 16
Trompette 8
Hautbois 8
Voix humaine 8
Clairon 4
Tremblant

POSITIF (enclosed)

Priincipal 8
Mélodie 8
Dulciane 8
Quintaton 8
Principal 4
Flûte d'amour 4
Quinte 2 2/3
Doublette 2
Larigot 1 1/3
Sifflet 1
Cymbale III
Clarinete 8
Tremblant

SOLO (enclosed)

Gambe 8
Grosse Flûte 8
Céleste 8
Flûte 4
Tuba 8
Hautbois 8
Basson (REC) 16
Trompette (REC) 8
Clairon (REC) 4
Tremblant

PÉDALE

Résultant 32 (Flûte ouverte 16 + Bourdon 16)
Violon 16
Flûte ouverte 16
Bourdon 16
Violoncelle 8 (ext. Violon 16)
Flûte 8 (ext. Flûte ouverte 16)
Bourdon 8 (ext. Bourdon 16)
Basse chorale 4 (ext. Violon 16)
Flûte 4 (ext. Flûte ouverte 16)
Bombarde 16
Trompette 8 (ext. Bombarde 16)
Clairon 4 (ext. Bombarde 16)

The music works appearing on this recording by Rachel Laurin are published by The Leupold Foundation. Works appearing on this recording by Raymond Daveluy were published under the insignia Editions Lucarel. Works on this recording by Conrad Letendre were published under the insignia Editions Jacques Ostiguy. The Daveluy and Letendre works are represented through the Canadian music rights agency SOCAN (Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada).

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Conrad LETENDRE

Suite Alme Pater

- 1** *I. Fughetta sur Asperges me* • 1:13
- 2** *II. Élévation sur Hosanna in excelsis* • 1:48
- 3** *III. Toccata dorienne sur les Kyrie I, II et III* • 2:46
- 4** *Berceuse modale* • 5:21

Raymond DAVELUY

- 5** *Prélude et Fugue en Mi bémol* • 6:06

Quatre Préludes de Chorales

- 6** *Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen* • 2:59
- 7** *Lobe den Herren* • 1:40
- 8** *Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn (version II)* • 3:00
- 9** *Straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn (version III)* • 4:04
- 10** *Épilogue sur Nun danket et Ballerma* • 6:41

Rachel LAURIN

- 11** *Prélude et Fugue en Si mineur, Op. 31, No. 1* • 5:54

Sonate en Fa, Op. 7

- 12** *II. Intermezzo* • 3:25
- 13** *III. Scherzo* • 5:36

Quatre pèlerinages en Lorraine, Op. 30

- 14** *I. Procession (Cathédrale de Metz)* • 5:03
- 15** *II. Invocation (Sanctuaire Notre-Dame de Sion)* • 4:07
- 16** *III. Fileuse (Basilique de Domremy)* • 4:39
- 17** *IV. Marche pour la Paix (Verdun, Centre Mondial de la Paix)* • 5:44

**Pro
Organo**

Total time: 70' 06"

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