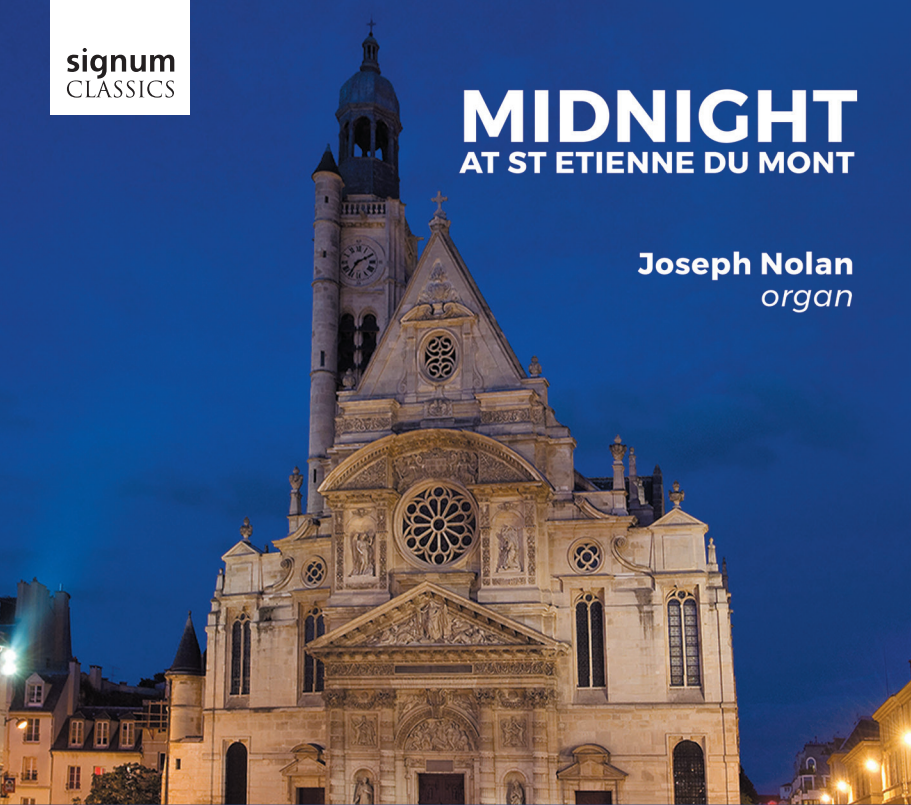


signum
CLASSICS

MIDNIGHT

AT ST ETIENNE DU MONT

Joseph Nolan
organ



TOURNEMIRE · VIERNE · DURUFLE · BRIGGS

MIDNIGHT AT ST ETIENNE DU MONT

[1]	Improvisation sur le “Te Deum”	Charles Tournemire, trans. Duruflé	[6.05]
[2]	Fantômes , from 24 Pièces de fantaisie, Op. 54	Louis Vierne	[6.01]
[3]	Scherzo , from Symphony No. 6, Op. 59	Louis Vierne	[3.44]
[4]	Finale , from Symphonie No. 5, Op. 47	Louis Vierne	[10.22]
	Suite Op. 5	Maurice Duruflé	
[5]	I. Prélude		[8.05]
[6]	II. Sicilienne		[6.03]
[7]	III. Toccata		[7.16]
	Le Tombeau de Duruflé *	David Briggs	
[8]	I. Veni Creator		[1.54]
[9]	II. Rorate Caeli desuper		[2.15]
[10]	III. Ave Maria		[3.01]
[11]	IV. Adeste fidelis		[2.22]
[12]	V. Hodie Christus natus est		[3.14]
[13]	VI. Puer natus est nobis		[2.17]
[14]	VII. 7. Omnes de Saba venient		[3.40]
[15]	VIII. Attende Domine		[3.44]
[16]	IX. Pange lingua		[1.19]
[17]	X. Ecce lignum crucis		[3.16]
[18]	XI. Christus vincit		[3.54]
	Total timings:		[78.35]
	* World Premiere Recording		

JOSEPH NOLAN · THE ORGAN OF ST ETIENNE DU MONT, PARIS

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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted that Signum have asked me to write a short introduction, for this, my ninth disc for the company. I have no words to describe the experience of playing and recording a disc at the church and organ of Maurice Duruflé, except to say that thank you is not enough to the Titulaires of St Etienne, Messrs Escaich and Warnier. I would like to take a moment however to explain the genesis of the programme and title of this disc, an aspect, with so many recordings available today, that is almost as crucial as the playing itself.

Recording the complete works of Duruflé at St Etienne was not an option as this is now reserved for the Titulaire organists, but one work by Duruflé was permitted. I chose the Suite Op.5 in its revised (1978) edition.

Although I used to play the *Toccata* in my Royal College of Music years, far too often (!), this piece left my repertory many years ago with the *Prelude* and *Sicilienne* becoming more appealing to me as my musical maturity developed. Coming back to the *Toccata* so many years later, the music behind the notes has become so much clearer. The *Toccata* comes

alive, for me at least, when it is played as a suite, not as a standalone and empty showpiece.

How to build on this programme was another question, but upon viewing St Etienne featured in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* the programmatic music of Louis Vierne sprang to mind. Duruflé of course was a much loved pupil of Vierne and was at his teacher's side when the maitre infamously died at the console of Notre Dame de Paris. All became instantly clear, to programme music by composers strongly linked to Vierne and that by nature were dark and spooky in character. Hence *Midnight at St Etienne* (with the film in mind) came to fruition.

Ateş Orga provides a wonderful and in depth narrative in the programme notes regarding the composers links to Duruflé and I will not add superfluous words here.

I would like to conclude by thanking David Briggs for the honour of recording the world premiere of his *Le Tombeau de Duruflé*. This substantial and brilliant work built on plainsong themes that Duruflé so loved himself, would surely have met with his approval.

Joseph Nolan, 2017

MIDNIGHT AT ST ETIENNE

Born in Bordeaux, **Tournemire** (1870-1939) studied in Paris with Franck, in 1898 succeeding him (following Gabriel Pierné) as *organiste titulaire* at Sainte-Clotilde. Today he's remembered principally for his *L'Orgue Mystique*, Opp 55-57 (1927-32) - fifty-one Gregorian-based Offices covering the cycles/feasts of the Catholic liturgical year (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost). But, like his organ teacher at the Conservatoire, Widor, a mile down the Boulevard Saint-Germain at Saint-Sulpice, he was prolific in a number of areas. His neglected orchestral symphonies (eight in all, 1900-24, the last two the 'Dance of Life' and the 'Triumph of Death') are ultra-Romantic propositions acknowledging programmatic theatre as well Wagner and Mahler – Mahler having in 1900 brought the Vienna Philharmonic on a money-losing trip to the Exposition Universelle (directing Beethoven's Eroica and Fifth, Schubert's Great C major and *Unfinished*, and Berlioz's *Fantastique*), and in April 1910 his long-awaited Second to the Concerts Colonne.

In 1930 Tournemire recorded some 78s for Polydor at the console of the 1859 Cavaillé-Coll

organ in Sainte-Clotilde. Besides programming Franck - the Chorale in A minor winning a Prix Candide in 1931 (forerunner of the Grand Prix du Disque, Josephine Baker taking the *musique légère* category that year) – he volunteered five improvisations. Consummate early 20th century examples of the art (along with the three Vierne cut for Columbia/Odeon in 1928), these were transcribed and reconstructed by Duruflé in 1956-58. The two ten-inch sides on the plainchant *Te Deum*, especially admired by gramophone aficionados during the 'menacing' time between the Great Depression and the Second World War, eloquently contour, carve and cherish celebration in hallowed places. 'Te Deum laudemus', 'Thee God we praise'.

Almost completely blind' from birth, a student at the Paris Conservatoire of Franck and Widor, **Vierne** from Poitiers (1870-1937) was Widor's assistant at Saint-Sulpice (from 1892) before unanimously overcoming 500 applicants to become *organiste titulaire* at Notre-Dame (1900-37). To this vast cathedral artists and statesmen, the minds of the day, his peers came to hear him – Clemenceau, Renoir, Rodin. A man formerly something of a 'rather cheeky [...] Parisian street-boy' (Olivier Latry), but then hounded, and in later years bruised

physically and emotionally, he died at his Cavaillé-Coll high above the nave in the closing minutes of his 1,750th concert, about to commence an improvisation on 'Alma Redemptoris Mater', 'Loving Mother of our Saviour', Duruflé at his side. Witnesses say he lost consciousness, slipping off the bench, his foot hitting a low pedal-E. The *Times* correspondent reported 'heart failure'. The old master gone, seer to a fraternity - Barié, Marcel Dupré (Messiaen's teacher), the Boulanger sisters, Fleury, Duruflé his favourite - embraced by the walls, pillars and casements, the candles and shadows, that had been his existence, the instrument that had been his voice, for half a lifetime. Wednesday, 2 June 1937.

Widor's ten organ symphonies (1878-99) defined a Third Republic genre, their development the pride of the Parisian Establishment – Vierne, Guilmant, Barié, Dupré and Fleury (who effectively brought the type to an end with his Second in 1949) carrying the banner. Encouraged by Widor, Vierne completed six between 1898 and 1930. In these he shows himself drawn compulsively, from within, to Beethoven (cellular construction) as well as Liszt and Franck (cyclic referencing), a determination of design and direction, a fluency of orchestral

sonority, climax and weight, underlying the creative impulse and urgently engaging the listener. He's a composer who crafts notes and polyphonies, harmony and tonality, with gritty northern nobility, old dusks and new dawns vying for the moment in arenas of apocalyptic tension, drive and drama. Paris the city may have been Satie, Debussy, Ravel ... Stravinsky, Prokofiev ... the Ballets Russes ... more – but Paris the organ loft of kings was his for the glorying. Defiantly.

Mighty and inexorable, the Fifth Symphony (1923-24), longest of the series, premiered by Georges Ibos in Paris in 1934, was dedicated to Joseph Bonnet, who on Vierne's death took over his teaching position at L'École César-Franck. For Vierne the period between the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies was one of heightened tragedy. Both his brother and son lost their lives during the Great War, his brother at Verdun. Ill health and worsening sight further forced him to retire for a while to Switzerland, enduring progressive hardship and loss of grace. Such biography will not be found in the Fifth's Finale. Rather, here is an all-conquering virtuoso 6/8 carillon-toccata of gripping figuration, texturing and foot-work, at times veritably

Chopinesque in its ballade-like 'pianism'. The closing pages - high octane, *senza ritardando* at a premium – find resolution in a thunderous *gloire* of A major that dazzles and consumes like a volcano at night.

Inscribed in memory of Lynwood Farnham (1885-1930), the Canadian organist of the Church of the Holy Communion, New York, the B minor Sixth Symphony (1930) was first performed by Dupré in Notre-Dame, 3 June 1934. Vierne composed it in Menton on the French Riviera - beloved of Beardsley and Katherine Mansfield, later Cocteau - during a summer when, Michel Roubinet tells us, his senses were especially drawn to the beauty and colour, the perfume, of the surrounding Mediterranean. The fleet-actioned Scherzo, placed third, is a chromaticised, modulating 6/16 affair, broadly in G minor – a technically exacting tableau of cicadas chirping beneath the *via lactea*, looking back to Mendelssohn fairies, Lisztian will-o'-the-wisps and *Gnomensreigen* capers, as well as the *Feux Follets* colour wash of the author's Second Suite, Op 53 (1926 [24 *Pièces de fantaisie en quatre suites*, Opp 51, 53-55]). Alternatively (Siegfried Schibli), 'the derisive grin of a gargoyle'.

Fantômes (Ghosts) comes from Vierne's Third Suite, Op 54 (1927), dedicated to Rodman Wanamaker the Philadelphia magnate. Exploring those darker, damper, debating realms of the forested night owned by a string of High Romantics from Liszt to Sibelius, and opening on Vierne's doom-note pedal-E, the music traces a series of dialogues between seven protagonists, appended, Debussy-like, at the end of the piece. The Evoker ('Who then prepares the future?'); the Young Aesthete ('It is I ... I am free!'); the Old Pedant ('It is I ... I maintain tradition!'); the Negro ('Future belongs to the dancer'); the Monkey ('Future is in the hands of fancy'); the Beggar who plays the street-organ ('It belongs to misery ... "Solo mio"'); Fate ('It is nowhere and everywhere' - cadencing *pianissimo* in coldest C-sharp minor).

Durufié (1902-86) - the boy chorister from Rouen Cathedral, fastidious, pathologically self-critical, withdrawn and reclusive to the last, 'a conservative in a radical world' - studied privately with Tournemire, and then, from 1920, at the Paris Conservatoire with Gigout ('a fine man, but that is all'), Gallon and Dukas (from 1927). Tournemire - 'this quick-witted, good-natured man [with] a very

exuberant and high-strung temperament, passing abruptly from calm to fury, all of which frightfully intimidated me' - tolerated but didn't warm to him. Vierne, though, with whom he worked independently, admired and encouraged, claiming him to be 'the most brilliant and most original of the young generation of organists [. . .] an improviser with abundant and varied imagination. Utterly sensitive and poetic, he has a rare, perceptive gift for composition'. Though he habitually claimed otherwise, for reasons only surmisable, the records of the Conservatoire show that he also studied composition with Widor for two years from 1925, under his tutelage winning prizes in 1926 and 1927. Durufié was briefly Tournemire's assistant at Sainte-Clotilde until Vierne extended him the same position at Notre-Dame in 1927. In 1929, endorsed by Widor, he was appointed *organiste titulaire* at Saint-Étienne-du-Mont near the Pantheon in the Latin Quarter, which position he retained to the end of his life, surrounded by the tombs of Pascal, Racine and Marat, and the shrine of Sainte Geneviève, Paris's patron saint. At his disposal he had a four-manual instrument, *Le grand orgue de tribune*, enriched by Cavaillé-Coll in 1863/73, with arguably 'the most beautiful [oldest preserved] organ

case in the French capital' (David Mason). He turned it into something definably his own, instigating radical changes in 1956 (Beuchet-Debierre) and 1975 (Danion-Gonzalez).

We know from his most famous work, the *Requiem*, that Durufié's purpose in life, playing and teaching was to perfect 'an aesthetic of the beautiful' (James E. Frazier), drawing on, among other elements, plainchant, Bach, Debussy and Ravel, as well as, to a lesser degree, Fauré. His catalogue was small but refined, his organ output minimal by comparison with that of the august brotherhood he was a part of. Purity, understatement, private worlds, the elegance of textures and cultured sonorities finely honed, of cadences in tandem with time, defined his signature. Monumentality of gesture, vastness of sound, he left to his predecessors. 'It is a perfectly honest art [...] He did not seek to innovate; he was searching only to be sincere with himself' (Marie-Claire Alain, 2004).

Dedicated to Dukas, the Suite (1931) places economy at a premium, its three movements journeying horizons from Dukas's E-flat minor Piano Sonata through Ravel to the elation of the Gallic/Latin toccata tradition, benevolently

watched over by Vierne. Duruflé visited London in 1938, giving a recital at Christ Church, Woburn Square, Bloomsbury (Organ Music Society, 8 November), programming works by Bach, Buxtehude and Vierne. For the recently published Suite he provided a short note in the phraseology of the day. 'The Prélude [E flat minor], which is sombre in character, is composed in the form of a diptych. A single theme, presented in three successive expositions, gradually accumulates the power of the organ. The second part consists of a long recitative, developing the first notes of the theme. The Sicilienne [G minor] is of classic [rondo] construction, comprising three statements of the main theme and two episodes. The contrasting of timbres and a quest for colour have been the composer's aim, as well as putting into relief the evocative character becoming to this style of piece. The Toccata [B minor/major], which is in ternary form, begins with a short introduction, preparatory to the entry of the rhythmic and vigorous principal theme, which is given to the pedals. In the middle section, a second theme appears, and is later combined with the first. Finally, a return to the opening measures, and a brilliant conclusion with the second theme'.

Reviewing the occasion, the *Musical Times* (January 1939) found the Prélude 'impressive' and the Sicilienne a 'delightful' example of 'an expressive modern French movement'. They noted that the Toccata was played 'considerably slower' than Thalben-Ball (a devotee), with a consequently 'firmer and more declamatory rhythm' but 'some loss in virtuoso interest'. 'M[onsieur] Duruflé,' their critic concluded, 'is essentially a modern. He confesses to little interest in ancient music or antique registration [...] He has a sure feeling for the organ, and ample brilliance without display. The same cool sincerity is observable in his compositions, which, if not great, are at least good.' Duruflé grew to sufficiently dislike the Toccata to re-write the ending in 1978.

Among the youngest Fellows of the Royal College of Organists, **David Briggs** (born 1962) studied in Paris with Jean Langlais - through whom he can trace his lineage back to Dukas, Dupré, Gigout, Marchal, Saint-Saëns, and Tournemire. Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge (1981-84), he was appointed Assistant Organist at Hereford Cathedral in 1984, then Organist and Master of the Choristers at Truro (1989), and Gloucester (1994). He won the Tournemire Prize for improvisation at

the 1993 St Albans International Organ Festival. Since 2002 he has followed a freelance career, his output largely but not solely liturgical in emphasis. Two areas of interest have drawn attention. His transcriptions of Pierre Cochereau's Notre-Dame improvisations. And his arrangements of Romantic symphonies from Schubert through Tchaikovsky to Elgar and Mahler. He's additionally transcribed challenges as viscerally complex as Ravel's Second *Daphnis and Chloe* Suite and Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*. The catalogue is rich. Since September 2012 he has been Artist-in-Residence at St James Cathedral, Toronto.

Opening the first Cirencester Organ Festival, Briggs premiered his *Le Tombeau du Duruflé* (2009) at the inauguration of the re-built Willis/Harrison organ in Cirencester Parish Church, 17 April 2010. Drawing together circuitous strands – Cochereau, Cochereau's links with Duruflé, extemporisation, chorale-prelude, tonal proclamation – the work is divided into eleven sections reflecting the Christ story, each based on the plainchant melodies associated with their respective headings. I 'Veni Creator', 'Come Creator Spirit' [*Majestueux*; source of Duruflé's apprenticeship *Prélude, Adagio et Choral varié*]. II 'Rorate Caeli desuper',

'Drop down ye heavens from above' [*Assez lent*]. III 'Ave Maria', 'Hail Mary' [*Modéré*, running quavers]. IV 'Adeste Fidelis' [*Animé, mais spacieux*, parallel chords]. V 'Hodie Christus natus est', 'Today Christ is born' [*Sans rigueur*, 'choral orné']. VI 'Puer natus est nobis', 'A child is born to us' [*Assez vif*, running semiquavers, left-hand thirds, introit on pedals]. VII 'Omnes de Saba venient', 'All they from Sheba shall come' [*Marche lent*]; VIII 'Attende Domine', 'Attend O Lord' [*Lent*]; IX 'Pange lingua', 'Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory' [*Moderato*, hymn (Aquinas/Corpus Christi) on pedals]; X 'Ecce lignum crucis', 'Behold the wood of the cross' [*Lent (Lointain)*]. XI 'Christus vincit', 'Christ conquers' [*Vif et brillante*].

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JOSEPH NOLAN

British-Australian organist and choral conductor Joseph Nolan has been hailed by ABC Classic FM as 'an extraordinary musician', BBC Radio 3 CD Review as a 'virtuoso', and Limelight Magazine, Australia as a 'remarkable musician'. Joseph was also nominated by Limelight Magazine as an Artist of the Year in 2016.

Nolan studied at the Royal College of Music, London winning the Canon Bark Prize for most promising organ student and was awarded First Class Honours for his final recital at the Temple Church, London.

Scholarships from the Countess of Munster Trust, Hattori Foundation and the Royal Philharmonic Society supported Joseph's advanced studies with legendary organists Marie-Claire Alain in Paris and Dame Gillian Weir in London.

Appointed to Her Majesty's Chapels Royal, St James's Palace in 2004, Joseph performed on numerous occasions at Buckingham Palace, most notably giving the opening concert of the refurbished Grand Ballroom organ to a distinguished audience.



Joseph Nolan has played in concert across the globe and made his solo debut at Sydney Opera House in the 2017 Sydney Symphony Orchestra Season to great critical acclaim.

Highlights in 2018 will see Nolan make his solo concerto debut (two performances of the

Poulenc organ concerto as well as a solo recital) with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra at Petronas Concert Hall, Kuala Lumpur, as well as performing as a soloist with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in Perth Concert Hall. He will also conduct the Cathedral Consort in collaboration with The King's Singers at Perth Concert Hall.

Nolan's interpretations of the complete works of Charles-Marie Widor for Signum Records – winners of Gramophone's 2017 'Label of the Year' award – have firmly cemented Joseph's international reputation, with both Gramophone and the Australian newspaper describing the discs as 'utterly authoritative' Music Web International as 'The Widor cycle of the decade' BBC Music Magazine as 'swashbuckling' and Limelight Magazine as 'Monumental'.

The Nolan/Signum Widor cycle features the finest Cavaillé-Coll organs in France including those of La Madeleine Paris, St Sernin Toulouse, and St François de Sales Lyon, with the discs being awarded multiple five-star reviews and 'Editor's Choice' awards in BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone, and Limelight Magazine. They have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and ABC Classic FM amongst many others.

Nolan was invited to take up the position of Organist and Master of Music at St George's Cathedral, Perth, Western Australia in 2008. Under Joseph's leadership the Cathedral music programme has been described as 'elite' and 'world class' in the Australian and West Australian newspapers. The Cathedral choirs have regularly performed for ABC Classic FM whilst the Cathedral Consort has performed with The Hilliard Ensemble and the Academy of Ancient Music at Perth Concert Hall.

Nolan has collaborated with some of the world's finest trumpeters, including Alison Balsom, Crispian Steele Perkins and David Elton, formerly Principal Trumpet of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and now Principal Trumpet of The London Symphony Orchestra.

Joseph Nolan was awarded the medal of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2016 by the French Government for services to French music. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the University of Western Australia.



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Principal	8'	Cromorne	8'	Bourdon	8'	Flûte		16'
Bourdon	8'	Chalumeau	4'	Salicional	8'	Grande Quinte	10 2/3'	
Flûte harmonique	8'	Clairon	4'	Unda maris	8'	Bourdon		8'
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Bombarde	16'	Fugura	4'	Régale	8'	Tierce		3 1/5'
Trompette	8'	Flûte	4'	Trompette		Nasard		2 2/3'
Clairon	4'	Nasard	2 2/3'	en chamade	8'	Flûte		2'
II. Positif			Octavin	2'	Clairon	4'	Fourniture	IV
Principal	8'	Tierce	1 3/5'	Fourniture	IV	Bombarde		16'
Bourdon	8'	Fourniture	III	Cymbale	16'	Trompette		8'
Flûte creuse	8'	Bombarde	8'	Trompette	8'	Clairon		4'
Prestant	4'	Basson-Hautbois	8'	Clairon	4'	Basson		32'
Flûte	4'	Voix humaine	8'			Basson		16'
Nasard	2 2/3'					Basson		8'
Doublette	2'					Basson		4'
Tierce	1 3/5'							
Larigot	1 1/3'							
Septième	1 1/7'							



This disc is dedicated to my friends Julian, Alexandra and Georgiana Burt in the deepest gratitude for the immeasurable support you have given me personally and professionally at St George's Cathedral, Western Australia.

Recorded in St Etienne du Mont on 3rd & 4th September 2015

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Recording Assistant – George Collins

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