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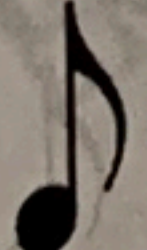
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Monday 16th July

Lunchtime Organ Recital

François Espinasse

1.15pm

Exeter College Chapel, Oxford

March in C major
Andante

L J A Lefébure-Wély
(1817-1869)

A pupil of the famous teacher François Benoist, Lefébure-Wély was an adept performer, Saint-Saëns holding his improvisations in high regard. His compositions were conceived in a pianistic, salon style and have undergone something of a renaissance in the last twenty years. His *March in C* together with his now famous (or infamous?) *Sorties* introduce into the church a merry and often boisterous note!

Choral no 2 in B minor

César Franck
(1822-1890)

César Franck's towering talent marked the start of the French revival in organ composition and performance. In the last part of the 19th century almost every sphere of French music had been touched by his creativity. Today his legacy abides chiefly in his organ works, particularly the masterpieces written at the end of his life - almost echoing the famous Elgarian thought 'This is the best of me..'. Franck wrote his three chorals on holiday at Nemours in 1889. They all differ in shape, but each one contains a beautiful original melody heard in many guises. This is what Franck meant by 'choral' as opposed to other composers who based their works on Gregorian chant or Lutheran chorales. The work we hear today is basically a passacaglia, the choral threading its way unobtrusively until it appears quietly again at the end, bringing the work to a serene conclusion after the passionate central sections.

Scherzetto (from 24 Pièces en style
libre, Op 31, no 14)

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)

Clair de Lune (from Pièces de fantaisie, Op 53)

Louis Vierne presided at the console of one of the most celebrated organs in Europe for thirty seven years, Notre Dame de Paris. A pupil of Franck and Widor, he was to emerge as a celebrated performer, improviser and composer, enriching the repertoire chiefly with his six organ symphonies. The beautifully crafted *Scherzetto* comes from the second of two collections of pieces written for the harmonium and published in 1913.

Undeterred by his state of near blindness, in 1927 Vierne embarked on an extensive recital tour of the USA. Inspired by this visit, he composed a series of concert works grouped in four collections. The titles themselves, like *Claire de Lune*, demonstrate a clear affinity with French impressionism (Debussy was an admirer of Vierne's music). This work is gentle, expressive and captivating, unfolding as it does over an undulating accompaniment.

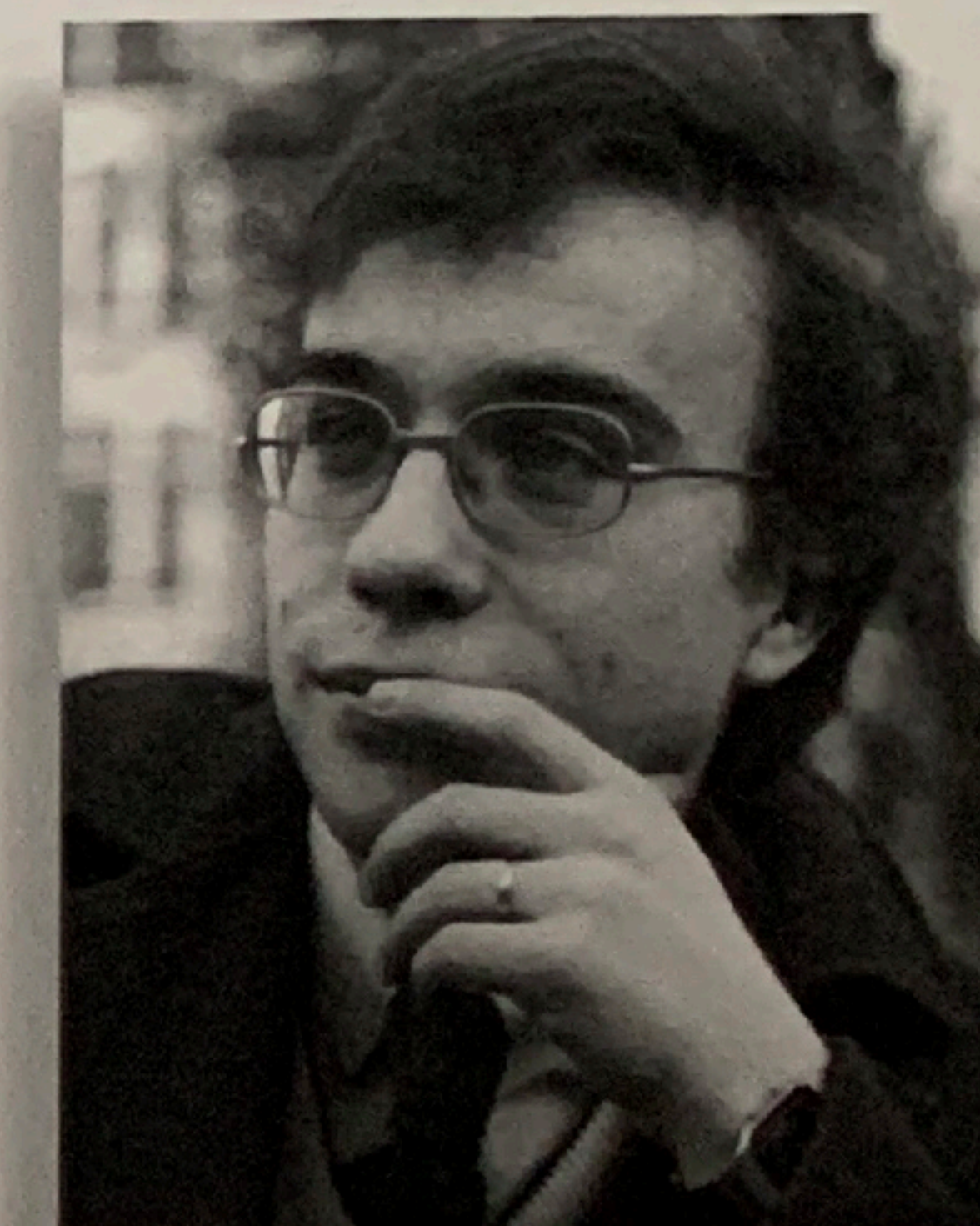
Pastorale, Op 24
Paraphrase-Carillon
(Office: In Assumptione B M V)

Charles Tournemire
(1870-1939)

Tournemire holds an important position in the history of French organ music as a musical 'bridge' between Franck and Messiaen. All three were liturgical organists, gifted improvisers and innovative composers, not only of organ music but also of symphonic and chamber works. Tournemire wrote a number of occasional pieces, like this early attractive *Pastorale*. Today, though, he is revered chiefly for his magnum opus - *L'orgue mystique*.

The whole *L'orgue mystique* cycle contains fifty one Offices for the Sundays and Solemnities of the Church's year. (The idea of the 'organ mass' has a noble history in France; Kenneth Leighton was inspired by it in his *Missa de Gloria*, the last movement of which we will hear in David Sanger's recital on Wednesday). The work we hear today is the final movement from the Mass celebrating the mid-August Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. There is an improvisatory quality freeing it from structure and suggesting a freedom from earthbound cares and constraints.

Tournemire uses the plainsong melodies *Salve Regina*, and *Ave Maris Stella*; he bids us look up and listen, to hear the beating of angels' wings.



François Espinasse

Now co-titulaire
organist at St
Séverin, Paris and
Professor of Organ at
the Bordeaux
Conservatoire,

François Espinasse makes a welcome return to the Festival and Summer School. His virtuoso technique is complemented by scholarship and sensitivity, as exemplified in his many recordings featuring music from the French and German baroque.

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