

L'ORGUE MYSTIQUE

Gregorian chant and organ meditations

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		Programme notes:	David Grealý

Born in 1870, Charles Tournemire was a student of both César Franck and Charles-Marie Widor. Just as his life straddled the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so too do his compositions trace a path from the romantic to the modern. In the context of sacred music, his treatment of Gregorian chant sought to free plainsong melodies from the constraints of nineteenth-century harmony and focus instead on the modality of the music, the fluidity of its phrases and its inner spirituality. In this regard, he was a major influence on composers such as Maurice Duruflé (who transcribed several of his organ improvisations), Jean Langlais and Olivier Messiaen.

Tournemire's most well-known work, *L'Orgue Mystique*, consists of a liturgical organ suite based on the Gregorian chants assigned to every Sunday and major feast of the Church year. In undertaking this mammoth task, he succeeded in framing centuries-old chants in a twentieth-century harmonic language, thus linking the ancient and the modern. This approach in music mirrored the ideals of the Liturgical Movement at the turn of the century, as well as wider cultural and artistic developments at the time.

The twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost (corresponding to the thirty-third Sunday of the modern liturgical calendar) falls in November, towards the end of the liturgical year. At this time, the traditional focus is on the departed and the Last Judgement. This is reflected somewhat in the texts assigned to this day, such as the *De Profundis* (Psalm 129). But just as at the end of Psalm 129, there is hope of redemption expressed in the texts of the introit and Communion antiphons, and in the texts of the antiphon upon which the organ *elevation* is based.

The Tournemire cycle is preceded by a short excerpt from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, taken from the liturgy for Holy Week; its depiction of desolation is perhaps fitting to the events of 2020. By contrast, the performance concludes with a *fantaisie* on the opening notes of the *Te Deum*, as we move with optimism from the old year to the new.

Plainsong: Lamentations 1:1,4

Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae: *Aleph*. Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo! Facta est quasi vidua domina gentium; princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo. *Daleth*. Viae Sion lugent, eo quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem; omnes portae ejus destructae, sacerdotes ejus gementes; virgines ejus squalidae, et ipsa oppressa amaritudine. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum Tuum.

The beginning of the lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah. Aleph. How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave. Daleth. The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to her appointed festivals. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her young women grieve, and she is in bitter anguish. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your God.

Officium Dominicæ XXIII post Pentecosten

Charles Tournemire (1870-1939)

Organ: Introit

Plainsong: Introit – Dicit Dominus

Dicit Dominus: Ego cogito cogitationes pacis, et non afflictionis: invocabitis me, et ego exaudiam vos: et reducam captivitatem vestram de cunctis locis.

The Lord says: "I am pondering thoughts of peace and not of affliction; you shall call upon me, and I will hear you; and I will bring you back from all the lands where you are held captive."

Jeremiah 29:11,12,14

Plainsong: Alleluia – De profundis

Alleluia. De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine: Domine exaudi vocem meam.

Alleluia. Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord: Lord hear my voice.

Psalm 129:1,2

Plainsong: Offertory – De profundis

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine: Domine exaudi orationem meam.

Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord: Lord hear my prayer.

Psalm 129:1,2

Organ: Offertoire

Plainsong: Antiphon – Dicebat enim

Dicebat enim intra se: Si setigrio fimbriam vestimenti ejus tantum, salva ero.

She said to herself, "if I only touch the hem of his garment, I shall be healed."

Matthew 9:21

Organ: Elevation

Plainsong: Communion – Amen dico vobis

Amen dico vobis, quidquid orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis, et fiet vobis.

Amen I say to you, whatever you ask in your prayers, believe that you shall receive it, and it shall be granted unto you.

Mark 11:24

Organ: Communion

Organ: Fantaisie sur le Te Deum et Guirlandes Alleluiatiques

Recorded 1 November 2020 at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, by kind permission of Very Rev. Kieran McDermott Adm.