

Introduction

Somewhere early on in my musical formation I became fascinated with hearing new music. I loved hearing something I had never heard before, loved the thrill of discovery. The longer I studied music, the more I became driven to seek out the unusual, the rare, the little-known and unheard. I began first to collect recordings and scores of unusual organ music, then my tastes expanded to other instruments and forms – piano, chamber music, orchestral, string quartets. Somewhere along the journey I finally resolved to begin sharing this knowledge. First I shared it informally with organist friends and fellow music lovers, then I expanded to sharing what I knew on a couple of Internet mailing lists and presenting seminars on lesser-known composers for organ. Eventually I began to notice my musical interests coalescing into a few specific areas, and I tried to focus my energies there. Namely, I began to be drawn to the Germanic music of the 20th century, and the rich heritage of music left by the French and Belgian romantics. From there, I began to be fascinated by the genre of the Organ Symphonie. After purchasing Dr. John Henderson's *Directory of Composers for the Organ*, I decided one day to begin counting as many organ Symphonies as I could find. I was stunned to find nearly 200 examples listed, and to this day I continue to find more. It seemed odd to me that no one had ever undertaken to research and write about the Organ Symphonie, except in dealing with French composers like Widor and Vierne, who are probably the composers most quickly recognized as propagators of the genre. So, I decided I would write a book on the Organ Symphonie, not just in its French and Belgian versions, but also as it has been written around the world.

I have made some decisions about the book that took some serious thinking, and I wish to share them in order to give the reader insight on my philosophies and some of the rationale for what I am doing.

1. This book and the research therein is copyrighted, but you may share it, post it, print it out, copy it, or do just about anything you want with it **except** sell it or make a profit from it.
2. I am giving this book and the information therein to the musical community as a reference tool, and it shall **ALWAYS** be a free resource. It does take a lot of time to do the research, but it is a labor of love for me. There is a link to send a donation if you wish, and while it is much appreciated, it is **NOT** required. The profits will be used to purchase and obtain more scores so that I can do further research and share more information. Donations of scores are welcome too – follow the link to my current email address.
3. In writing this book, I have decided to release the chapters as they are written, rather than waiting until the entire book is finished. That way, the benefits are immediate to other researchers, and the information is disseminated more quickly.
4. I have included some (actually quite a few) composers works that were not designated as Symphonies, as I feel the works in question are of such a scope that they warrant the designation.
5. I welcome feedback, corrections and further information, especially from relatives, close associates or students of the composers, as often they have anecdotes and information not generally known by others.

Finally, enjoy the thrill of learning – I hope you get hours of pleasure and satisfaction from reading this book, and I wish you a pleasant journey as you explore with me!

Best wishes,

Jonathan Orwig