THE CULMINATION OF A TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITURGICAL GENRE

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Abstract

by

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Throughout his long career, Gaston Litaize contributed significantly to the cultural and religious life of the French nation as a concert organist, teacher, and church musician. He is remembered in particular for his long tenure as director of religious programming for French national radio, organiste titulaire at the church of Saint-François-Xavier in Paris, and professor of organ at the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles and the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Saint-Maur des Fossés. Even though respect for his memory and music lives on in France, especially through his many students, Litaize’s compositions remain relatively unknown and unperformed in the United States. No significant scholarship has explored his organ music in regard to its relationship to other prominent works of the twentieth-century French organ school or its contribution to the various musical genres in which he composed. In order to contribute to a wider appreciation of Litaize’s musical influence and legacy, this project focuses on his liturgical music for organ in three of his organ Masses: the Grande Messe pour tous les temps, 1948; the Messe basse pour tous les temps, 1949; and the Messe de la Toussaint, 1964. These three works represent the culmination of the organ Mass genre.
before its demise during the liturgical revisions in the Roman Catholic Church prompted by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Detailed analysis of these three organ Masses will reveal Litaize’s compositional language to be a synthesis of the symphonic techniques of Louis Vierne, the virtuosity of Marcel Dupré, and the Gregorian chant-based spiritual mysticism of Charles Tournemire. Litaize’s effortless facility with complex compositional devices, especially fugue and canon, also marks him as the heir to the contrapuntal tradition of organ music in France. No other French organist-composer of his generation displays an equivalent mastery of counterpoint, either in composition or in improvisation.

In these three organ Masses Litaize produced works of great craftsmanship and beauty that represent the culmination of a now extinct twentieth-century French musical and liturgical genre. In addition, this music proves that Litaize himself was the greatest proponent of historically-informed, yet innovative, contrapuntal organ music in the twentieth-century French organ school.
To my first piano teacher,
Barbara LeLievre Kemp

To my first organ teacher,
Phyllis Warner

To my mentor,
Gail Walton

I dedicate this project with gratitude and affection.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century the French organ tradition, centered at the Conservatoire de Paris, enjoyed particular prestige as an epicenter for performance, teaching, and composition. Each of the many prominent organist-composers of this period tended to cultivate a particular compositional skill. For example, Marcel Dupré (1886-1971) is remembered for his astonishing technical virtuosity at the keyboard and his remarkably difficult compositions for solo organ. Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) stands as the successor of French Impressionist composers such as Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. In Jean Langlais (1907-1991) one finds a brilliant performer and prolific composer who embraced the neo-Baroque organ building movement. The religious and mystical music of Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) sets him apart as the most adventurous and most spiritual composer of his generation. However, only one organist-composer from the twentieth-century French organ school represents the culmination of the contrapuntal and liturgical traditions of organ music: Gaston Litaize (1909-1991).

Born blind to a single mother in the French countryside outside of Nancy, Gaston Litaize worked his way through regional and national schools for the blind before joining the organ class of Marcel Dupré at the Paris Conservatoire in the late 1920s. There he won multiple first prizes in performance, improvisation, and composition, and, by the
1930s, achieved considerable fame throughout Europe as a concert organist and composer. After the Second World War Litaize became director of religious programming for French national radio, taught organ students at the Institut National de Jeunes Aveugles, and presided as organiste titulaire at the church of Saint-François-Xavier in Paris. His performing career took him across Europe and the United States, and his recordings encompassed a broad spectrum of the organ literature from the early Baroque to the avant-garde works of his colleague and friend Olivier Messiaen. From 1975 until his death in 1991, Gaston Litaize held the post of professor of organ at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Saint-Maur-des-Fossés. His legacy lives on in his former students who now hold prominent positions as performers and educators in France and beyond.

Throughout his lifetime Gaston Litaize composed organ music for the Roman Catholic liturgy, but in his organ Masses he created some of the finest works ever to be written in this particular genre. Complex counterpoint and an abiding sensitivity to the needs of the liturgy set his Masses apart from both those of his predecessors in the genre and the liturgical compositions of his contemporaries. In his organ Masses, as well as in his non-liturgical works for organ, Litaize also embodied a true synthesis of three styles: the French symphonic school of Vierne and Dupré, the learned science of polyphony, and the modal language of Gregorian chant. All of these aspects of his compositional style may be found in the Grande Messe pour tous les temps of 1948, the Messe basse pour tous les temps of 1949, and the Messe de la Toussaint of 1964. Together these three organ Masses represent three different subcategories of the genre, and, in each of them, Litaize brought a compositional complexity and creativity to the music that remains unparalleled.
The genre of the twentieth-century French organ Mass came to an end in the liturgical renewal begun by the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church (1962-1965). However, Litaize produced these three pieces during the height of popularity of the organ Mass in Paris, and they stand as monuments to his genius and his role as the champion of counterpoint and liturgical music in the French organ school.

Chapter 2 will explore three topics necessary for a contextualized understanding of Litaize’s organ Masses. First, the inherited tradition of French liturgical organ music for the Mass liturgy will be traced briefly from its earliest appearance in the late medieval period through the beginning of the twentieth century. Next, Litaize’s biography will highlight important events and influences in his life and career, taking special note of his study with important Parisian musicians in the early part of the twentieth century who deeply influenced his approach to liturgical music. Chapter 2 concludes with some additional consideration of the twentieth-century French organ Mass as a compositional genre, including new suggestions for definition and categorization.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 contain detailed analyses of Litaize’s three organ Masses listed above. As of 2016, only two previous scholarly documents have addressed Litaize’s organ music in any theoretical detail: Raymond Kotek’s 1974 dissertation, “The French Organ Mass in the Twentieth Century,”1 and Steven Wente’s 1990 dissertation, “Contrapuntal Writing in the Organ Music of Gaston Litaize.”2 Kotek mentioned all three of Litaize’s organ Masses in his catalog of pieces in the French organ Mass genre, but he

1 Raymond Anthony Kotek, “The French Organ Mass in the Twentieth Century” (DMA diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1974).

offered no theoretical analysis beyond listing the names of the themes in the *Messe basse* and attributing to Litaize a blending of “the modality and rhythmic freedom of Gregorian chant with the dissonant harmonies of contemporary music.”\(^3\) Wente addressed the *Douze Pièces* from the 1930s in his document and also made passing reference to the organ Masses, specifically the fugal movements. However, he did not include a complete analysis of any part of these works. Litaize’s three organ Masses, all significant contributions to the organ repertoire and important works in the history of the French organ Mass genre, deserve more analytical attention than they have been afforded to date. The analysis found in the central chapters of this document will demonstrate that Litaize’s organ Masses represent true continuity with the contrapuntal organ tradition, contain significant theological profundity (especially in the *Messe basse*), and synthesize both symphonic and contrapuntal practices in liturgical organ music. The final chapter will draw out specific examples from the musical analyses in order to provide some concluding thoughts on the importance of Gaston Litaize and his music within the twentieth-century French organ school.

Despite continued and widespread respect for Gaston Litaize and his music in Paris and throughout much of Europe, he has not been widely promoted in the United States despite his large catalog of works for a variety of musical forces. It is the hope of this author that demonstrating the masterful craftsmanship and inherent quality of Gaston Litaize’s organ Masses will lead to a greater recognition of him and his music in North America. In addition, this dissertation hopes to contribute to the ongoing exploration of the twentieth-century French organ Mass as a compositional genre and a musical form,

even beyond its demise as a liturgical genre with the promulgation of the Mass of Paul VI in 1969. A final quote from Sébastien Durand, Litaize’s biographer, summarizes the nature of Litaize’s music and provides a framework for this project: “Thus, the works of Gaston Litaize offer a synthesis between the symphonic legacy of Vierne and Dupré and the polyphony of the classical masters.”

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CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND BIOGRAPHY

2.1 The French Organ Mass

Liturgical organ playing has a long and varied history in France from the medieval period through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. The organ first appeared as a liturgical instrument in the Western Christian Church during the Middle Ages, and *alternatim* practice between choir and organ developed quickly from earlier patterns of alternation between two choirs or between choir and soloist in chant singing.\(^5\)

The practice of alternating verses of liturgical text between choir and organ can be documented as early as the Faenza Codex and Buxheim Organ Book from the fifteenth century.\(^6\) Both the Ordinary and Proper chants of the Mass and the canticles and hymns of the Office were subjected to *alternatim* practice.\(^7\) Providing short solo organ versets in


\(^7\) The Proper chants of the Mass, soloistic in nature and lacking textual or melodic repetition, lent themselves less readily to *alternatim* performance. Thus, they appear infrequently in the published organ literature.
alternation with a choir became and remained the predominant liturgical duty of French organists from this early period up through the twentieth century.

While organists often improvised their *alternatim* versets throughout the history of this practice, composers also published some of their organ versets for study and performance. It is in the published music that developments in the practice may be traced. Two early volumes of versets testify to the importance of *alternatim* practice in France by the sixteenth century. In 1531 the Parisian publisher Pierre Attaingnant issued seven volumes of keyboard music that included sets of organ versets for the Mass, the *Magnificat* at Vespers, and the hymn *Te Deum laudamus* at Matins and other occasions. The composer(s) of the pieces in these volumes remains anonymous. However, either the composer or the publisher assigned a textual incipit to each of the organ versets that indicates which verse the music is intended to replace in *alternatim* performance. The early date of this volume and the specificity of its liturgical function imply that *alternatim* practice was well-developed and widespread by the 1500s.8

Almost one hundred years after the publication of the Attaingnant collection, organist Jehan Titelouze (1563-1633) composed and published two volumes of versets entitled *Hymnes de l'Église pour toucher sur l'orgue, avec les fugues et recherches sur leur plain-chant* (1623) and *Le Magnificat ou Cantique de la Vierge pour toucher sur l'orgue suivant les huit tons de l'Église* (1626). Titelouze states in the preface that his *Magnificat* versets may also be used for the *Benedictus* at Lauds with the addition of one

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verset (which he supplies). When compared to the Attainant versets, these compositions exhibit greater formal and contrapuntal complexity. Titelouze appropriates the binary form of the psalm tones in his versets, and the imitative polyphony relates closely to that of sung motets.

Titelouze’s organ music appeared just after official ecclesiastical regulation of the organ in the Roman rite began with the promulgation of the Ceremoniale episcoporum by Pope Clement VIII (Rome, 1600). This document prohibited alternatim performance in the Nicene Creed and at some other critical points in the liturgy. However, it also called for use of the organ on every Sunday of the year (excluding the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent) as well as major feast days. Even though alternatim performance was widespread by the seventeenth century, the Ceremoniale officially approved of this practice for the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei of the Mass and the hymns and canticles of the Office.

In 1662, additional liturgical regulations for French organists were set forth in the Ceremoniale parisiense promulgated by the archbishop of Paris. This legislation required Gregorian chant incipits to sound plainly in the first organ verset of an alternatim performance. In response, organists tended to solo out the chant melody


10 Van Wye, “Ritual Use of the Organ,” 307-308, 313. Van Wye’s compilation of organist employment contracts from 1604-1670 reveals that Parisian organists played for highly-ranked feast days, both Mass and Office, and for the Mass on the first Sunday of the month. Organ music at weekly Sunday Mass was not a common practice until called for by the Ceremoniale.

prominently in the tenor or pedal reed stops (*plainchant en taille* or *plainchant en basse*) during certain versets.\(^{12}\)

During the reign of Louis XIV (1638-1715) French publishers issued volumes of liturgical organ versets under the title *Livre d'orgue*. These volumes by such organists as Guillaume Gabriel Nivers (three *Livres d’orgue*, 1665, 1667, 1675), Nicolas Lebègue (three *Livres d’orgue*, 1676, 1678, 1685), François Couperin (*Pieces d’orgue*, 1690), and Nicolas de Grigny (*Livre d’orgue*, 1699) contained complete Masses, versets for Office hymns, and miscellaneous other versets.\(^{13}\) Despite the musical requirements of the *Ceremoniale parisiense*, the versets in these *Livres d’orgue* do not always contain the appropriate chant quotations requested by the archbishop. Instead, by avoiding quotations of specific chant melodies, these versets became liturgically versatile in a manner similar to that of Titelouze and his flexible *Magnificat/Benedictus* settings. As long as the mode or pitch of the verset matched that of the chant, any set of pieces could be used. As an example, André Raison (1650-1719) recommended that the Mass versets of his *Livre d’orgue* (1688) be used for the *Magnificat*, and Nicolas LeBègue (1631-1702) suggested that his versets in all tones could contribute to psalms, canticles, and even the *Offertoire* or *Elévation* at Mass.\(^{14}\)

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14 Van Wye, “Ritual Use of the Organ,” 324. Regarding the church modes, Almonte Howell’s essay “French Baroque Organ Music and the Eight Church Tones” (*Journal of the American Musicological Society* 11 (1958), 106-118) explores how seventeenth-century organist-composers eventually abandoned modal harmonic language in their versets while still claiming to provide music congruent with chant. By the eighteenth century, a “mode” or “tone” designation simply meant that the organ music was set in a key that was also comfortable for choral singing, and particular keys came to be associated with each mode to facilitate ease of singing. The harmonic language for the organ versets, however, had become tonal rather
The beginning of the French Revolution in 1789 brought widespread change to accepted patterns of liturgical worship, the social position of the clergy, and the livelihoods of church-employed organists. Though this period is sometimes considered a lacuna in the history of organ music in France, Kimberly Marshall and William J. Peterson’s chapter “Evolutionary Schemes: Organists and Their Revolutionary Music” in French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor provides an informative link between the fully-fledged alternatim practice of the late eighteenth century, through the Revolution, to the restoration of the French Church and its liturgy in the nineteenth century. Marshall and Peterson conclude that, during the Revolutionary period, organists continued to perform, teach, and compose. They were prohibited from composing for or improvising in the liturgy due to the suppression of the Church in France, but they were able to adapt to the new political climate in clever and successful ways, especially through the appropriation of patriotic music. The Concordat of 1801, a political agreement between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII, restored the Roman Catholic Church in France, making arrangements for the appointment of bishops, payment of clergy salaries, and maintenance of church buildings. With official political recognition and protection in place, the Church resumed daily services, both Mass and Office, and organists once again took up their alternatim duties in much the same manner as they had before the Revolution.\footnote{Kimberly Marshall and William J. Peterson, “Evolutionary Schemes: Organists and Their Revolutionary Music,” in French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor, ed. Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 4-5.}

than modal. Not until the late nineteenth century would organists and composers return to harmony based on the modes of Gregorian chant.
Orpha Ochse has contributed significantly to the musical history of the post-Revolutionary period in her book *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*. In reference to the state of organ music at the restoration of the church, she writes, “Most organ music published in France between 1800 and 1840 was instructional or utilitarian, intended for those not capable of improvising their own music for church services.” Despite Ochse’s rather negative summary of post-Revolutionary organ music, some pieces from these first few decades of the nineteenth century exhibit the beginnings of new developments in liturgical versets.

Guillaume Lasceux’s (1740-1831) *Messe des solemnels majeurs* of 1819 offers a good example of both the restoration of alternatim practice in French Catholic liturgy and a revival of the Parisian rite tradition of chant *cantus firmi* within the versets themselves (a practice that had been neglected in the late eighteenth-century *Livres d’orgue* as mentioned above). Mass IV, *Cunctipotens genitor Deus*, forms the basis of Lasceux’s work; the tune appears most often in the pedal in long note values beneath two-voice counterpoint. Alexandre Boëly’s (1785-1858) published versets explore chant *cantus firmus* placement in various voices (not just the tenor or bass), a small but significant departure from standard pre-Revolution French Classical practice. Notably, the *Livre

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16 For more detail on this period, including a case study from the Le Mans Cathedral, see Jean-Marcel Buvron, “De l’Ancien Régime au Concordat: Les mutations du chœur de musique de la cathédrale du Mans sous la direction de François Marc,” *Revue de Musicologie* 94 (2008), 481-512.


18 Ibid., 225.

19 Ibid., 130.

20 Ibid., 128. See also Craig Jay Cramer, “The Published Organ Works of A. P. F. Boëly (1785-1858)” (DMA diss., The University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 1983).
d’orgue title all but disappears in the early 1900s, composers and publishers preferring the title “Messe” or “l’office divin.” Current scholarship offers no satisfactory explanation for this development.

Published sets of complete Mass versets fell out of fashion by the 1850s. Instead, publishers provided collections of organ pieces from multiple genres including music for the Offertoire or Elévation and generic free versets (i.e., not chant-based) for use at any point in the liturgy. François Benoist’s (1794-1878) multi-volume Bibliothèque de l’organiste, published from 1840-1861, catalogues this transition from comprehensive sets of Mass versets intended for alternatim performance to eclectic compilations of short, multi-functional pieces.21 While Ochse does not suggest a particular cause for this shift in organ music publishing, it is possible that improvisation had again become a primary skill as it had been before the Revolution, and organists were able to improvise without the aid of published models.

Two new trends arose among church organists and composers of liturgical music in France in the middle of the nineteenth century: 1) the popularization of the Low Mass with organ accompaniment and 2) the incorporation of modal harmonies and Gregorian chant into solo organ music. Along with a renewed interest in and promotion of Gregorian chant by the Benedictine monks at Solesmes, these two trends led French organ music for the Mass away from the centuries-old verset-based model toward a new suite-based form.

The Low Mass with Organ, sometimes called Messe basse des onze heures, Messe d’orgue, or even Récitals dominicaux, seems to have sprung fully-formed from the hands

21 Ibid., 131.
of Eugène Gigout, organist at the church of Saint-Augustin in Paris, just after the Franco-
Prussian War (1870-1871). Up to this time the Low Mass was normally celebrated in
silence, the priest and server speaking their parts inaudibly at the altar without musical
accompaniment. Though innovative, adding organ music to this celebration of the liturgy
found some small precedent in the custom of the organist accompanying the Nuptial
Mass (structurally a Low Mass with the marriage rite inserted). Apart from this related
practice, Gigout appears to have created an entirely new genre of Mass and liturgical
music. According to an observer in 1892, Gigout played a “regular succession of organ
concert numbers” during the Low Mass (1:00-1:45 p.m.) on Sundays at Saint-Augustin.
No ecclesiastical decree either approved of or banned this practice, and it is possible that
Gigout began these recitals at Low Mass to bolster the war-weary and politically agitated
city of Paris that had recently witnessed the execution of its archbishop, Georges Darboy,
in 1871.

The Low Mass organ recital practice spread quickly throughout the major
churches of Paris at the turn of the century, creating celebrities out of city organists.
Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) regularly enjoyed the company of fashionable people
in the organ loft of Saint-Sulpice when he performed during the Low Mass. His Sunday
organ Mass recitals became a veritable salon, filled with rich and influential figures of
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1910s, the popularity of the


23 Ochse, Organists and Organ Playing, 137.

24 Edward Schaefer, “Tournemire’s L’Orgue Mystique and Its Place in the Legacy of the Organ
and Stephen Schloesser (Richmond, Virginia: Church Music Association of America, 2014), 36-37.
Messe d’orgue had become so great that Parisian churches were filled to capacity for these liturgies; even the city newspapers and music journals published lists of organ music to be played each Sunday for the benefit of both local and visiting churchgoers.\textsuperscript{26} Despite the overwhelming popularity of the Low Mass organ recital, no less an organist than Louis Vierne was prohibited from playing the organ during the Low Mass at the Cathedral of Notre Dame until 1931. By then the practice was sixty years old and accepted throughout the country, but the cathedral chapter had considered the Organ Mass to be an unsuitable liturgical innovation up to that time.\textsuperscript{27} When Vierne eventually convinced the chapter to allow him to accompany the Low Mass, he refused to let his programs be published in advance, recounting in his memoir:

\begin{quote}
[Published music lists] I refused to give, as I felt that such an artistic expression must remain anonymous, simply serving to enhance the office being celebrated at the altar. The organ is not intended to distract the faithful in church, but should help them to pray...It seemed to me that the art of the church organ had the same right to be before people as stained glass windows, sculpture, and architecture. To my mind that art was a form of prayer just as much as the others.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Vierne’s ideas about the role of the organ and its music within the liturgy profoundly influenced the next generation of organists, especially Jean Langlais, Olivier Messiaen, and Gaston Litaize, as these men wrestled with new developments in music and changing patterns of public worship after the Second World War.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} W. L. Sumner, “Paris Organs and Organists in the ‘Twenties’ – some Reminiscences,” \textit{The Organ Yearbook} 2 (1971), 53.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Kotek, “The French Organ Mass,” 39.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Rollin Smith, \textit{Louis Vierne: Organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral} (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 1999), 287.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
In addition to the creation of the *Messe d’orgue* by Gigout, a turn from tonality to modality in liturgical music played an important role in the development of liturgical organ music through the twentieth century. Some years before the advent of the Low Mass with Organ in the 1870s, composers began exploring modal harmonies derived from chant.\(^{29}\) Of the many educational methods and theories of chant singing and organ playing published in the nineteenth century, Louis Niedermeyer’s modal method for organ-based chant accompaniment stands out as a true paradigm shift from earlier practice. In *Traité théorique et pratique de l’accompagnement du plain-chant*, Niedermeyer and Joseph d’Ortigue proclaimed that accompanying chant (and by extension, playing versets in *alternatim* with chant) in a tonal harmonic system violated the ancient modal language of chant.\(^{30}\) Gregorian chant, a primarily melodic system, should not be constrained or altered by modern tonal harmonies. This new and revolutionary approach to chant and its accompaniment influenced generations of students at Niedermeyer’s Ecole de musique classique et religious, and, even when Niedermeyer’s note-by-note chordal chant accompaniment was supplanted by a new emphasis on flexible rhythm introduced by the Solesmes chant editions, his system maintained a privileged position as the basis for modal harmonic language.\(^{31}\)

While not remembered primarily for his organ music, Charles Valentin Alkan (1813-1888) appears to be the first composer to have published modal music for solo organ in his two-volume *Petits préludes sur les 8 gammes du plain-chant* (1859-1860).

\(^{29}\) Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing*, 138.


Alkan’s modal compositional approach was not immediately taken up by his fellow composers, but Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens’s (1823-1881) volume *Oeuvres inédites* (published posthumously in 1883) included some modal pieces. 32 Eugène Gigout’s *Cent pièces brèves dans la tonalité du plain-chant* of 1888 received great acclaim as the first major collection of modal pieces for organ, and, like Alkan’s collection, through its title linked modal organ music to the modal language of chant in a deliberate way. These composers’ collections, along with other publications of the time, included relatively short versets for *alternatim* performance and the occasional larger-scale *Offertoire* or *Sortie*.33

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Low Mass organ recital had become a popular venue for organists to perform major works of the literature or to exhibit their own improvisational skill, and composers of organ music were rediscovering modal harmony and other techniques and forms derived from Gregorian chant. These two factors would eventually combine to form a new compositional and liturgical genre, the twentieth-century French organ Mass.

32 Ibid., 138. In *The Organ in France* (Boston: The Boston Music Company, 1917), Wallace Goodrich asserts that Lemmens based his *Ecole d’orgue* of 1862 on “Roman plainsong” (pg. 8). However, a close examination of the music shows Lemmens’ commitment to the tonal harmonic language of J. S. Bach. Only late in life did he turn toward modality over tonality.

33 Ibid., 127. Jacques Lemmens and Alexandre Guilmant both reflected on the importance of the *Offertoire* in the context of the Mass. This particular liturgical action gave the organist an opportunity to perform a piece of organ literature in a large-scale musical form such as sonata-allegro or fully developed fugue, often quite loudly on full organ. As the century passed, however, the *Offertoire* came to be considered a quiet and introspective moment in the Mass, and the accompanying music followed suit.
2.2 Gaston Litaize (1909-1991)

Gaston Litaize’s life and career are well documented in two French-language biographies: *Gaston Litaize* by Sébastien Durand\(^\text{34}\) and *Fantaisie et Fugue sur le nom de Gaston Litaize* by Alain Litaize.\(^\text{35}\) Additional material regarding his career and compositions appears in volume 34 of *L’orgue: Cahiers et Mémoires*, a publication dedicated to Litaize by the association *Amis de l’Orgue*.\(^\text{36}\) The following paragraphs will synthesize the biographical information from these three sources and will highlight moments and personal encounters in Litaize’s life that later influenced his liturgical compositions.

In August 1909 Célina Litaize gave birth to her eighth child, Gaston Gilbert. Their small village of Ménile-sur-Belvitte is located slightly southeast of Nancy, France, along the Belvitte stream. The young Gaston was stricken with blindness just after birth (purulent ophthalmia), a handicap that the composer would later credit for his career in music.\(^\text{37}\) Had he been sighted, he would have lived out his life as a factory worker in the city or as a farmer like his rural ancestors. However, blindness, along with the unrelenting determination of his mother, the dedicated support throughout childhood of his younger sister Jeanne, and a scholarship procured for him by the village mayor, opened a path from village life to the Institut des Jeunes Aveugles de Nancy in 1917. A priest of the Nancy cathedral founded this school for blind children in the nineteenth century.

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century, and, by the time of Gaston’s admittance, students were rigorously trained in Christian doctrine, reading, writing, history, and mathematics.\textsuperscript{38} The students were also assigned to practical work based on aptitude, and young Gaston’s musical ability surfaced quickly. His first music instructor was Charles Magin (1881-1968), organist at the Basilique du Sacré-Cœur in Nancy\textsuperscript{39} and a former student of Widor and Vierne.\textsuperscript{40} Magin set Litaize on a strict course of study in music including piano lessons, choral singing, solfège, musical dictation, harmony, and counterpoint.\textsuperscript{41} In 1920 he introduced eleven-year-old Litaize to the organ, emphasizing improvisation from the very beginning of his instruction on the instrument.\textsuperscript{42} By age thirteen Litaize could improvise on two themes, the first provided for him and the second of his own invention.\textsuperscript{43} His exam repertoire for piano included sonatas by Schumann and Weber and a Chopin concerto; at the organ he performed the preludes and fugues of Bach and the Final of Vierne’s third symphony. Further study on both instruments included works by Beethoven, Franck, Barié, Liszt, and Ravel.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 10-11.
\textsuperscript{39} Olivier Geoffroy, “Les orgues du Sacré-Coeur de Nancy,” Music et Memoria, http://www.musimem.com/sacre-coeur_nancy.htm, accessed 14 December 2015. The Church of the Sacred Heart was completed in 1905 and elevated to the rank of minor basilica in September of that same year. The organ was by Charles Didier Van Caster. Charles Marie Widor played the dedicatory recital; the program included his fifth symphony.
\textsuperscript{40} Durand, Gaston Litaize, 11.
\textsuperscript{41} Amis de l’Orgue, Gaston Litaize, 1.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
The organs Litaize played during his time at the Institut in Nancy are never mentioned specifically by his biographers, but he must have been acquainted with the Van Caster organs (Grande orgue and Orgue de choeur) in the Nancy basilica where Magin was titulaire. The church sits along the Rue Abbé Gridel, a five-minute walk from the Institut. In 1920 the organs were just over ten years old and undoubtedly in good working condition. The Grand orgue in the west gallery may have been the first large-scale organ Litaize ever heard. The stoplist and technical specifications resemble those of Cavaillé-Coll organs in Paris, including a Barker lever to assist the action, a five-rank Cornet on the Récit, and a Basson-Hautbois on the Positif. Litaize especially favored these two solo stops throughout his compositional career.

It was Charles Magin himself who first encouraged Gaston Litaize to leave Nancy for continued study at the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris. In November of 1924, Albert Mahaut, a professor at the Paris Institut, visited the Nancy school and, upon meeting Litaize and hearing him perform (in addition to the recommendation of Magin), demanded he come to Paris. Some difficulty arose regarding continued funding from the regional government, especially after the death of Paul Henry, the mayor of Gaston’s hometown and his early champion. However, financial support eventually became available after considerable solicitation by Célina to the regional authorities, and Gaston

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46 Mahaut was an agent of the Association Valentin-Hauÿ, an organization founded in 1889 for the assistance, education, and increased equality of the blind, especially children. The Association continues its work today and has a long-standing relationship with the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles (http://www.avh.asso.fr, accessed 23 November 2015).

47 Litaize, Fantaisie et Fugue, 29.
Litaize, a young blind man from Ménile-sur-Belvitte, departed for the capital of France in 1926.

Litaize excelled at the Institut National immediately, thanks in large part to the excellent musical training he had received from Charles Magin in Nancy. In the studio of Gaston Régulier he won first prize in piano in 1927 and again the following year in a higher division. In these early years the faculty predicted Litaize would have a brilliant career as a concert pianist. However, Litaize also studied organ and composition with Adolphe Marty, winning equivalent prizes in organ competitions where Louis Vierne himself, a jury member in the *division complémentaire*, took particular notice of him. The Institut’s cycle of competitions intentionally mirrored those of the Conservatoire de Paris, the latter’s faculty often serving on the juries. This relationship brought the Institut’s students into contact with the prominent musicians of the day and gave an opportunity to the Conservatoire faculty to find new students for their classes. In 1927 Marty arranged for Litaize to perform for Marcel Dupré (1886-1971), and Litaize was admitted to Dupré’s Conservatoire organ class as an auditor that same October.

Dupré’s appointment as professor of organ at the Conservatoire de Paris had been rather controversial. Charles Tournemire (1870-1939) had anticipated succeeding Gigout in 1926, but Widor mounted a successful campaign to pass over his former student in

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48 Durand, *Gaston Litaize*, 16. The INJA assigned students to numbered divisions (seventh to first) by skill, the best students competing in *division complémentaire* and *division d'honneur*.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 20.

51 Ibid., 24.
order to promote Dupré, a more stylish candidate with a cult-like following.\textsuperscript{52} While some organists and faculty hoped for a new pedagogical style involving greater freedom of repertoire, technique, and interpretation, Dupré continued in Widor’s tradition of intense technical training and a repertoire focused on the works of Bach and Franck.\textsuperscript{53} In addition to technique, Dupré’s approach to fugal improvisation made a particular impact on Litaize during these Conservatoire years, enabling him to improvise grand five- and six-voice fugues. During his later performing career he often concluded his organ concerts with these kinds of multi-voice contrapuntal improvisations.\textsuperscript{54}

Marcel Dupré’s Conservatoire organ studio in 1927 included three advanced students: Joseph Gilles, René Malherbe, and Noëlie Pierront. Litaize entered the studio with Henri Cabié, Olivier Messiaen, and Jean Langlais.\textsuperscript{55} Seemingly frustrated by the constraints of Dupré’s teaching style, despite its many advantages and benefits, Litaize sought out his friend and mentor André Marchal, a fellow blind organist and successor to Marty as professor of organ at the Institut National, for additional training. In the late 1920s, Marchal was one of the few organists exploring literature from time periods before J. S. Bach. Under Marchal’s tutelage, Litaize expanded his own musical horizons

\textsuperscript{52} Stephen Schloesser, \textit{Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933} (Buffalo NY: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 297-298.

\textsuperscript{53} Durand, \textit{Gaston Litaize}, 25.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 25-26. Durand recalls Dupré’s system for fugal improvisation as follows: the subject entrances of the first exposition began in the tenor, followed by alto, soprano, and bass. A counter-subject accompanied each subject. The first exposition was followed immediately by the first episode. In the second exposition, each voice entered in a related key, and this section was followed immediately by the second episode. In the third exposition, three voices entered at the sub-dominant on the \textit{Récit}; the fourth voice followed on the \textit{Grande orgue}. The third episode came next, and the performer was expected to conclude the fugue with stretto subject entrances. A comparison of Dupré’s procedure with Litaize’s \textit{Offertoire} fugue from the \textit{Grande Messe} may be found in chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{55} Litaize and Langlais had also been fellow students at the Institut National; the two organists remained friends throughout their lives.
into early music, musicology, and the works of the French Classical composers. Later in their lives the two men would be involved both in restoring and rebuilding historic organs throughout the country and in promoting the French Classical organ repertoire. Despite any disagreements he may have had with the faculty at the Conservatoire, however, Litaize excelled in his studies and earned the premier prix d’orgue in 1931 from a unanimous panel of judges.56

Gaston Litaize’s prominence as an organist had begun to rise in 1930 when he was appointed titulaire at the church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Croix in Menilmontant, Paris (twentieth arrondissement). This appointment was followed quickly by his first public performance in the city at the Institut.57 In one of his subsequent recitals in Paris he performed Charles Tournemire’s Clameurs et Chorale from the Office of Septuagesima in L’Orgue mystique. Tournemire himself attended the concert and was so moved by the performance of his music that he wrote to Litaize personally, calling him a Christian and a great artist.58 In 1932 the association Amis de l’Orgue sent Litaize to Germany to participate in an improvisation competition as a representative of the French organ school. His musicality won the day, laying the foundation for Litaize’s post-war career concertizing and teaching throughout Germany and the European continent as well as North America.

56 Litaize was the third of his classmates to win the prix d’orgue, Messiaen having won in 1929 and Langlais in 1930.

57 Notably, this first program included works by his organ professors Marty, Dupré, and Vierne, as well as his colleague Langlais. Litaize would continue to promote the works of French organists, particularly his colleagues and friends, throughout his long performing career.

In 1932 Gaston married Simone Durand, a young woman from Baccarat (near Litaize’s own hometown in northeastern France). Biographers, students, and friends consistently praise Simone’s lifelong devotion to her husband. Though sighted and not a trained musician, she learned both Braille and musical notation in order to aid her husband in his work.59 Together they raised three children, Ariane, Alain, and Martine, all born during the Second World War.60 Their union was a happy one, the spouses being devoted to each other, their family, and their faith.61

In 1933 Litaize won the competition for the post of titulaire at the church of Saint-Léon IX in Nancy. He and Simone moved out of the capital even as Gaston continued his compositional studies with Georges Caussade and won the premier prix de fugue the same year. Just one year later Litaize took the titulaire post at the church of Saint-Clodoald (St. Cloud), a Parisian parish whose previous organists included Charles Gounod (1877-1892) and Henri Büsster (1892-1906).62

Henri Büsster, professor of composition at the Conservatoire, and Louis Vierne, titulaire at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, both became important mentors to Litaize in the 1930s. Büsster’s compositional training propelled Litaize into more competition victories, including the Prix Rossini in 1936 for his cantata Fra Angelico and the premiere prix de composition at the Conservatoire in 1937 for his Concertino pour piano et orchestre.

59 Ibid., 33.
60 Ibid., 49.
61 Litaize, Fantaisie et Fugue, 39. Alain Litaize comments that his parents chose September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as their wedding date in order to place their marriage under the protection of the Mother of God. Alain also remarks that the two became oblates of St. Benedict at the Solesmes abbey and recited the Divine Office together daily.

Vierne seems to have been more of a mentor and supporter to Litaize rather than a teacher. He had encouraged young Gaston in his studies during his time at the Institut, and, in the 1930s, Litaize made his way regularly to the maître’s home on Rue Saint-Ferdinand. There they discussed interpretation and composition, and Litaize absorbed the symphonic tradition of the French organ school directly from the organist of Notre Dame.\textsuperscript{63}

The association Amis de l’Orgue honored Litaize again in 1935 when he won the \textit{premier prix} at their \textit{concours} along with special honors from Vierne (who was a member of the jury) for his interpretation of the \textit{Final} from Vierne’s third symphony.\textsuperscript{64} At this same time Litaize sought out Charles Tournemire for further study in improvisation. Tournemire, who had just completed his \textit{L’Orgue mystique} in 1932, imparted to Litaize a sense of Gregorian rhythm, chant-like improvisation, and “audacious new harmonies,” all of which influenced Litaize’s mature compositional style.\textsuperscript{65} Thanks to Tournemire and the chant repertory, Litaize became increasingly facile in manipulating the contour and rhythm of chant both in improvisation and composition. Many of Litaize’s organ works contain poly-modal harmonic language, and throughout his career Litaize was known for his elegant faux-Gregorian melodies.

One of Litaize’s greatest achievements toward the end of the 1930s was his second prize at the international competition for the \textit{Grand Prix de Rome}. In 1938 in Rome, with Simone at his side transcribing and notating every instrumental and choral

\textsuperscript{63} Durand, \textit{Gaston Litaize}, 41.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 42.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
part, Litaize composed a cantata for choir, soloists, and orchestra entitled *L’Anneau du Roi*. His close friend Henri Dutilleux narrowly defeated Litaize for first prize, but the experience of international travel and the prestige of the competition brought confidence and success to Gaston as he returned to Paris.

The trauma of the Second World War brought several years of strife to Gaston and Simone as they endured German invasion and occupation of their country from 1939-1945. The years shortly before the war had seen the deaths of many great organists and composers including Widor, Vierne, and Tournemire, and during the war the couple experienced the loss of their friends Jean Vuillermoz and Jehan Alain along with the internment of Olivier Messiaen in a concentration camp. Despite his blindness, Litaize actively contributed to the Resistance movement in France throughout the war. He and Simone held secret meetings in their Paris apartment, aiding the technicians and broadcasters of the Resistance radio operations. While the war years interrupted his performing career, Litaize continued to teach at the Institut National, becoming professor of harmony and pedagogy by 1940.

The end of the Second World War brought to Litaize one of the most significant musical posts of his career: director of religious broadcasting for French national radio. Already known as an accomplished organist and composer, his former colleagues from wartime Resistance radio recommended him for this new post. Each week he directed the production of five musical events for broadcast: a Catholic Mass, a Protestant service, a Jewish service, an organ recital, and a “concert spirituel” (this last event seems to have contained mostly sacred choral music). At the start of this new musical venture Litaize resigned his post at Saint-Cloud, devoting his efforts completely to the radio. He
performed for the Catholic services himself, improvising on the appointed Gregorian chants for the day and, encouraged and influenced by André Marchal, reintroducing French *alternatim* versets from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into the liturgy.\textsuperscript{66} He viewed the liturgies and the concerts as opportunities for public education and enrichment, initially utilizing various churches and organs around the city. He programmed a variety of choirs that performed Renaissance polyphony, J. S. Bach’s cantatas and other liturgical works, and new works by his own colleagues such as Büßer, Duruflé, and Langlais. The weekly organ recitals featured prominent Parisian organists as well as young emerging performers, all in an effort to bring the literature of the organ to the public and to encourage support for the instrument.

As much as he promoted the organ as a concert instrument, Litaize also held strong opinions about the place of the organ in the liturgy. As late as the 1970s, even after the introduction of the Mass of Paul VI, Litaize vocally opposed the pre-conciliar practice of the organ Mass-recital in which the organist performed a program of music during the liturgy, almost without pause. “The Mass is not a concert, the concert is not a Mass; these are two different things,” he said in 1972.\textsuperscript{67} This attitude served him well with the clergy of Saint-François-Xavier parish whose *titulaire* he became in 1946. At this church, just a few blocks from the Institut National de Jeune Aveugles, Litaize succeeded his former teacher Adolphe Marty at the console of the 1891 Cavaillé-Coll organ renovated in 1923 by the Gonzalez-Ephrême firm. According to Sébastien Durand, the priests at Saint-François-Xavier limited organ playing to the offertory, communion, and postlude,

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 52.

\textsuperscript{67} “Le messe n’est pas un concert, le concert n’est pas une messe, ce sont deux choses différentes.” Ibid., 53.
effectively banning the Mass-recital practice that was so common in other Parisian churches.\textsuperscript{68} The limited role of the organ forced Litaize to refine his improvisations and repertoire selections to serve the purposes of the liturgy alone. The musical result of such liturgical and musical strictures may be seen in his published organ Masses, especially in the finely-crafted fugal movements and efficient tripartite forms. In 1946 Saint-François-Xavier was not considered to be an important organ post in the capital city, nor was the instrument highly regarded, but during his long tenure as \textit{titulaire} (1946 until his death in 1991) Litaize succeeded in turning the parish and its music into an \textit{haute lieux} of Paris.\textsuperscript{69}

Even with his many responsibilities at the radio and at the organ at Saint-François-Xavier, Gaston Litaize continued composing, performing internationally, and serving as a consultant for organ renovation projects throughout France during the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{70} In 1951 he made his first commercial recording, and in 1953 he began editing the Schola Cantorum’s \textit{L’Organiste liturgique} series of music for parish organists playing on small instruments or harmoniums.\textsuperscript{71} His collaboration with the Institut National also continued, and he succeeded André Marchal as professor of organ there in 1959.\textsuperscript{72}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 58-59.
\item\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 58.
\item\textsuperscript{70} Along with André Marchal and Norbert Dufourcq, Litaize served on the French state commission charged with assessing and restoring historic organs, many classified as part of the historical fabric of the French nation. As of 2016, the French Ministère de la Culture remains actively involved in the protection and renovation of organs through its commission for national monuments (http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Politiques-ministerielles/Monuments-historiques-Espaces-protégés/Intervenir-sur-un-monument-historique/Intervenir-sur-un-objet-mobilier/Les-orgues, accessed 23 January 2016).
\item\textsuperscript{71} Durand, \textit{Gaston Litaize}, 64. Musicologist Jean Bonfils co-edited the series with Litaize until its cancellation in 1966.
\end{itemize}
Litaize’s national fame, bolstered especially by his radio broadcasts and recital
tours, along with his love of students and teaching, led to a third and final phrase of his
career as professor of organ at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Saint-Maur
des Fossés beginning in 1975. Sébastien Durand credits this academic appointment for
imbuing Gaston with a seconde jeunesse, so greatly did he enjoy teaching his many
students. As professor of organ throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he recruited, trained,
and promoted organists who are now well-known as performers and teachers. Litaize
also continued to compose, perform, and serve Saint-François-Xavier parish until his
death in 1991. He and Simone (d. 2002) are buried in the parish churchyard in Laval-sur-
Vologne, France.

2.3 The Twentieth-Century French Organ Mass as a Liturgical Genre

In order to place Gaston Litaize’s organ Masses at the end of hundreds of years of
development in liturgical organ playing in France, it is necessary to establish a clear
definition for the twentieth-century French organ Mass as a liturgical genre. Current
musicological scholarship employs the term “organ Mass” rather freely, applying this
title to a set of pieces from any historical period that were intended for performance

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72 Ibid., 76. An array of institutional and pedagogical concerns eventually complicated Litaize’s
work at the Institut, and he resigned in 1969.

73 Litaize resigned his post at the radio the same year as his appointment at the regional
conservatory, though he continued as titulaire at the church of Saint-François-Xavier.

74 Durand, Gaston Litaize, 77.

75 Among the most famous of Litaize’s students are Olivier Latry, titulaire at the Cathedral of
Notre Dame in Paris, and Eric Lebrun, Litaize’s successor as professor of organ at the Conservatoire à
Rayonnement Régional de Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.
during the liturgy. The term has been applied equally to such disparate works as Girolamo Frescobaldi’s *Fiori musicali* (Venice, 1635), Francois Couperin’s two Masses (one each for parish and convent, Paris, 1690), and Olivier Messiaen’s *Messe de la Pentecôte* (Paris, 1950). However, each of these collections serves the liturgy in a different way. For example, Frescobaldi provides *Kyrie* versets and incidental pieces for use throughout the Mass. Couperin supplies *alternatim* versets for the Ordinary of the Mass only. Messiaen composed a suite of five lengthy movements that are intended to cover the complete action of a Low Mass in the *Messe d’orgue* tradition. The wide variety of liturgical functions found in these and other examples necessitates a rethinking of genre, category, and definition for liturgical organ music, especially in the twentieth century. The following definition for the twentieth-century French organ Mass may help to refine scholarly language in this regard:

The twentieth-century French organ Mass is a liturgical suite of approximately five movements for solo organ published in France after 1900. Compositions in this genre usually belong to one of two categories: the *Messe basse* (Low Mass) or the *Grande Messe* (High Mass).

The remainder of this chapter will offer some context and support for this definition.

In the decades before the Second Vatican Council, adherents of the Liturgical Movement in Europe and the United States began to favor a deeper connection between the Christian people and the celebration of the liturgy. Various writings such as those of Dom Prosper Guéranger at Solesmes in the nineteenth century, Pope Pius X’s 1903 instruction on sacred music, and the proceedings of liturgical congresses in Europe and

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the United States favored a liturgical approach to theology; that is, theology developed from the liturgy itself. The liturgy of the Church, the public and prophetic act of God and God’s people together, and its worthy celebration provided the foundation for the entire life of the Church. Therefore, obscuring the liturgy with excess music, intrusive popular piety, or any other type of distraction lessened the power of the liturgy to connect the people with God. By the early 1900s, as these new ideas were giving primacy to the liturgy in the life of the Church, some French organists began to display discomfort with the Low Mass organ recital pioneered by Gigout; organ performances unrelated to the Mass became increasingly criticized as anti-liturgical and anti-spiritual. By the time Tournemire published his *L’Orgue mystique* in the 1930s, most organists of Paris were turning toward chant-based improvisation during the Mass as a result of the Liturgical Movement and the chant revival at Solesmes.

In 1974, Raymond Kotek helped to document the rise of the organ Mass as a liturgical genre in his doctoral dissertation “The French Organ Mass in the Twentieth Century.” Kotek compiled a comprehensive list of published French organ Masses, and, because published volumes of versets for *alternatim* practice had all but disappeared by

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79 Rollin Smith, *Louis Vierne*, 287. Vierne may be recalled here as a vocal opponent of the Mass-recital, preferring to support the liturgy through music rather than dominate it through performance in the manner of Gigout and others.


1900, the pieces he cataloged align with the definition of the genre proposed above. Along with a list and description of pieces, Kotek included in his work some brief biographical material for each composer, historical data, and an account of the demise of the organ Mass genre itself after Roman Catholic liturgical revisions in the late 1960s.

Kotek divided the twentieth-century French organ Mass repertory into two large categories: “organ Masses freely composed” and “organ Masses based on liturgical melodies (chant).” These two categories depend on the prioritization of the melodic content of the music, but they disregard the liturgical function of the music within the Mass. Instead of Kotek’s subcategories based on musical content, the subcategories of the Grande Messe (High Mass) and Messe basse (Low Mass) coincide better with the liturgical purpose of the works themselves. Twentieth-century composers, including Gaston Litaize, employ these titles, and they carry with them the ceremonial implications of the liturgical celebrations for which they are intended.

The organ music of a Messe basse covers most of the action of the liturgy itself, a practice developed out of Gigout’s organ recitals. The music of a Grande Messe supplements the singing of the proper chants (or other choral music), but it can also provide a counterpart and addition to alternatim versets such as those from the French Classical period (see chapter 3, Grande Messe pour tous les temps). Similar to the liturgical flexibility of old collections of versets, the movements of a Low or High organ Mass are interchangeable; an Offertoire or Elévation from a High Mass can be employed during a celebration of a Low Mass, or the reverse.

The Sunday liturgy schedule of a pre-conciliar twentieth-century Parisian church included both High and Low Masses, but the two forms of the liturgy required different
kinds of music. The Low Mass is generally the longer of the two types, usually around thirty minutes in order to cover the entire action of a Low Mass. Music for the High Mass, since it is combined with choral music and spoken or sung liturgical text (such as the sung Gospel, which is not heard aloud in the Low Mass), tends to be shorter, representing but a portion of the music heard during the liturgy.

A survey of the *Messe basse* organ literature of the twentieth century reveals relatively few pieces published with this title, and the majority of the composers who contributed to the Low Mass genre are somewhat obscure (Vierne, Messiaen, Langlais, and Litaize being the exceptions). A dearth of composed Low Masses implies some continued use of solo organ literature during the Low Mass (in the organ recital model) through the mid-twentieth century. However, improvisation, especially improvisation based on chant, could also account for the lack of a significant body of literature in this category. It was Vierne himself who composed one of the first suites for the Low Mass, *Messe basse pour orgue ou harmonium*, op. 30 (1913), helping to standardize the form (*Entrée/Introit*, *Offertoire*, *Elévation*, *Communion*, *Sortie/Postlude*) and contributing a well-crafted composition to this relatively new genre.

Organ suites published for the High Mass were far more prevalent in the twentieth century than suites for the Low Mass. Some examples of this subcategory of the genre include Tournemire’s complete *L’Orgue mystique* (1928-1936), Paul de Maleingreau’s (1887-1956) *Messe du Jour de Noël, Messe de la Toussaint*, and *La Messe du Pâques* (all from 1928), and Jean Langlais’s *Sanctae Familiae, Jesu, Mariae, Joseph* and *In Festo SS. Trinitas*. In order to explain the greater volume of published music for the High Mass than for the Low Mass, one must remember that the High Mass form of the liturgy
required musical accompaniment while the Low Mass did not. Organists in cities other than Paris, especially those with little training in improvisation, needed these published High Masses in order to fulfill their musical duties from week to week.

While the preceding information properly categorizes the genre and function of Litaize’s first two organ Masses (*Grande Messe*, 1948; *Messe basse*, 1949), some additional history must be presented in order to understand his third organ Mass, *Messe de la Toussaint* (1964), which is based on the proper chants for the Feast of All Saints. Embedding full quotations of Gregorian chant into liturgical organ music was an old tradition by the nineteenth century. Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911) was a particular proponent of chant, publishing many pieces based on chant melodies in *L’Organiste liturgiste* (op. 65, ten volumes, 1865-1899) and *L’Organiste pratique* (multiple op., twelve volumes). These volumes contained *alternatim* versets, pieces based on feast-day chant melodies, and free pieces.\(^\text{82}\) However, Guilmant intended his collections to be a resource from which organists could choose pieces appropriate for the liturgical occasion rather than unified suites designed for specific liturgical observances. The first complete collection of organ pieces based on multiple proper chants for specific liturgical celebrations appears to be Fernand de La Tombelle’s four-volume *Suites d’orgue sur des themes grégoriens* from 1911. These suites set the chants for *Corpus Christi*, Christmas (the Christmas pieces are based mostly on noëls rather than chants, save the *sortie* on *Jesu Redemptor omnium*), Easter, and Pentecost. The suites vary from three to five movements, each with a liturgical title.\(^\text{83}\) With these four volumes Tombelle transformed

\(^{82}\) For example, volume 5 contains: *Absoute, Offertoire sur ‘O filii,’* *Chorale en sol majeur, Allegretto en ut majeur, Quatre versets, Fuga alla Haendel en fa.*
the French organ Mass from a collection of versets for an alternatim Ordinary (as in the French Classical period) or an assortment of occasional liturgical pieces (as in the nineteenth century) into a suite of solo organ pieces based on Proper chants for a specific feast day.

Fernand de La Tombelle’s 1911 suites pioneered a new chant-based genre of High Mass, a genre that would later take full form in the magnum opus of Charles Tournemire (1870-1939), L’Orgue mystique. This massive cycle of five-movement suites for most Sunday and festal Masses in the Roman Catholic liturgical year is a monument of French musical and liturgical synthesis, hailed by twenty-first century chant enthusiasts as the model of proper Catholic liturgical and musical mysticism. There can be no doubt that Tournemire’s devotion to the liturgical chant and his adventurous tonal language established new possibilities for composers of High Masses. He proved that chant could be combined with non-traditional and non-tonal harmonic devices to create a new kind of modern liturgical music. As a student of Tournemire, Litaize learned his teacher’s compositional approach and techniques, and, for this reason, the Messe de la Toussaint can be considered an extension and development of the chant-based High Mass as it began with La Tombelle and as it was transmitted through Tournemire.

Having established the history and development of the organ Mass from its inception as a set of versets for alternatim performance to its rebirth as a suite of solo pieces for either High or Low Mass after 1900, and having surveyed Gaston Litaize’s life

83 The first suite contains Offertoire sur ‘Cibavit eos,’ Elévation sur ‘Oculi,’ Sortie sur ‘Lauda Sion.’

and compositional influences, Litaize’s three organ Masses will now be examined in
great analytical detail in order to uncover the specific formal and stylistic characteristics
that place these works at the pinnacle of contrapuntal liturgical organ music in twentieth-
century France.
CHAPTER 3

GRANDE MESSE POUR TOUS LES TEMPS

Gaston Litaize’s compositional career began in 1930 with Prélude and Double Fugue for solo organ. These two pieces later became part of Douze Pièces pour grand orgue published in 1939 by Leduc. The next eighteen years of his life were taken up with his marriage and the birth of his children, various organist and teaching posts, and work at French national radio. In 1946 he began his long tenure as organiste titulaire at the church of Saint-François-Xavier, which perhaps reignited his passion for liturgical music. Completed in 1948 but not published until 1956, the Grande Messe pour tous les temps was Gaston Litaize’s first published liturgical composition for organ.

The Grande Messe contains five movements arranged in what had become the standard organ Mass configuration by the early years of the twentieth century: Prélude, Offertoire, Elévation, Communion, and Postlude. The title Grande implies that these

85 Durand, Gaston Litaize, 167.

86 In France, the state-owned radio broadcasting company has had several names. Immediately after the war it was called Radiodiffusion Française, followed by Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française in 1945. From 1964 to 1974 the radio operated as Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, and today it continues as Radio France.

87 Litaize’s former student Eric Lebrun recalls that Litaize loved to improvise and compose for the Mass, viewing his organ playing as a “coloring” or “adornment” of the liturgy rather than a Gigout-style recital. His approach was distinctly liturgical rather than performative (e-mail message from Eric Lebrun, 17 November 2015).
pieces were to be combined with choral music to accompany the liturgy of a sung High Mass. For this reason each movement is rather brief when compared to Litaize’s *Messe basse* from 1949. The publishing house of the Schola Cantorum issued the *Grande Messe* in 1956 in volume 29 of its *Orgue et Liturgie* series edited by Norbert Dufourcq, Félix Raugel, and Jean de Valois. In this volume, entitled *Deux Grand’Messes*, the editors combined Litaize’s *Grande Messe* with a set of French Classical organ versets for the Ordinary of the Mass by Nicolas Le Bègue (1631-1702).

As was his custom for many of the volumes in the *Orgue et Liturgie* series, musicologist and organist Norbert Dufourcq provided a written preface for *Deux Grand’Messes* (the original French text and an English translation are included in Appendix C). In the preface he states that the purpose of combining these two very different compositions into one volume is to contrast historic and modern musical styles. He admits that the liturgical purposes of the two Masses differ (Le Bègue’s Mass was intended for *alternatim* performance with a choir and Litaize’s Mass for the solo organist), but he lauds the intent of the composers: to comment on and interpret the

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88 The pre-1969 High Mass liturgy (now called the Extraordinary Form of the Latin-rite Mass and celebrated according to the Missal of 1962) contains complex ceremonies and requires three clerics (priest, deacon, subdeacon) and multiple servers. The High Mass must be sung. In contrast, the simplified Low Mass requires only one priest and one server, and most of the text is spoken inaudibly at the altar.


90 Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Schola Cantorum published a variety of organ music, mostly by French composers, in its two series, *Orgue et liturgie* and *L’organiste liturgiste*. The former included works with *pedale obligée* while the latter provided pieces with optional pedal parts that were also adaptable to the harmonium. Litaize himself edited *L’organiste liturgiste* and contributed compositions to both series.

91 For this edition, Noëlie Pierront transcribed, edited, and registered Le Bègue’s second *Livre d’orgue* from the original editions housed in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Scholarly editions of French Classical organ music were a significant part of the Schola Cantorum’s publications throughout the twentieth century.
liturgy through music. Dufourcq devotes two paragraphs of the preface to Le Bègue’s music, especially that composer’s obedient response to the 1662 decree on liturgical music from the archbishop of Paris. In the penultimate paragraph, Dufourcq finally addresses the *Grande Messe pour tous les temps*, making special mention of Litaize’s use of Gregorian-inspired melody and the contrapuntal complexity found in the *Offertoire* fugue. Dufourcq also suggests that the movements of Litaize’s *Grande Messe* are liturgically suitable for the Low Mass as well as the High Mass.

Though his words about the *Grande Messe* are brief, Dufourcq’s preface intentionally places Litaize’s modern music within the centuries-long tradition of French organ music for the liturgy. The publication of two organ Masses separated by centuries within the same volume is Dufourcq’s commentary on the *continuity* of the French organ tradition from the French Classical period to the twentieth century. What Dufourcq may not have considered (or even thought possible) is the performance of both pieces at one Mass. Le Bègue provides *alternatim* versets for the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei* as well as a trio for the Elevation of the Mass. Litaize provides prelude and postlude, *Offertoire*, *Elévation*, and *Communion*. Only the movements for the Elevation overlap.

What the Schola Cantorum published, perhaps unwittingly, was a complete set of pieces for a High Mass with choir and organ.

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93 The *Ceremoniale parisiense* of 1662 required Gregorian chant incipits to sound clearly in specific organ versets during *alternatim* performance. This particular document was addressed briefly in chapter 2.

94 Composers from the French Classical period onward approved of performing versets or other short pieces at any time in the liturgy, whether for *alternatim* performance or for covering another action of the Mass, no matter the original intent of the music (a piece for the *Offertoire* could serve just as well at the *Elévation*). Dufourcq continues this tradition of liturgical flexibility into the twentieth century.
The opening movement of the *Grande Messe*, the *Prélude*, accompanies the liturgical procession of clergy and other ministers from the sacristy to the foot of the altar. Litaize organizes the music of this movement into six phrases, with each phrase demarcated by intervening rests or other breaks in texture along with registration and manual changes. Figure 3.1 shows the layout of the six phrases by measure as well as the accompanying registration directions, manual changes, and dynamic markings found in the score. Because of his detailed registration directions, Litaize includes few dynamic markings in this movement; dynamics implied by the registration directions are included in Figure 3.1 in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mm.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>12-19</td>
<td>20-28</td>
<td>29-33</td>
<td>33-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>(p)</td>
<td>(mf)</td>
<td>([f])</td>
<td>([ff])</td>
<td>([ff, \text{full organ}])</td>
<td>decrescendo to (p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>(\text{Récit})</td>
<td>(\text{Positif})</td>
<td>(\text{Grande orgue})</td>
<td>(\text{Grande orgue})</td>
<td>(\text{Grande orgue})</td>
<td>(\text{Récit})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Directions</td>
<td>Fonds 8-4, Mixtures, Anches 8-4 ((\text{Récit}) coupled)</td>
<td>Fonds 8-4 (all manuals coupled)</td>
<td>(\text{Positif} + \text{Anches 16-8-4}, \text{Grande orgue} + \text{Anches})</td>
<td>m. 32,( \text{Grand orgue} - \text{Anches})</td>
<td>as beginning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic Progression</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B-flat; C-sharp / D-flat</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.1: Grande Messe, Prélude, phrase structure**

The trajectory of the registration directions and dynamics reveals Litaize’s arch-like plan for this movement. In each phrase he employs the tonal resources of the organ, especially reeds and mixtures, to increase musical tension until the dynamic climax on full organ in phrase 5. The release of tension and quick decrescendo to *piano* in the sixth
phrase prepares for the celebrant’s intonation of the chant *Asperges me* (or *Vidi aquam* in Eastertide) and the blessing of the ministers and faithful with holy water (the next action after the procession in the liturgy of the High Mass).

Two other techniques accompany the musical ascent to m. 29 and contribute to the arch form: harmonic progression by thirds and an upward movement through the manual compass. Figure 3.1 charts the harmonic plan of the movement in the lowest row; Litaize proceeds upward by third (E, G, B-flat, C-sharp/D-flat, F) before falling back to E beginning in m. 29 (phrase 5). Each phrase modulates directly to the new tonal center, often with an upward-moving melodic anacrusis to the next phrase (see Example 3.1). As the tonal center moves upward, so does the range of the melody, reaching the topmost part of the manual compass by m. 29. Upward motion by harmonic progression and melodic range reinforces the movement’s increase in volume and registration, creating the greatest possible musical impact at the height of the arch. The correlating descent from the musical climax, beginning around m. 31, passes downward quickly through the manual compass to arrive at the original pitch level by m. 34. All of phrase 6 remains in E-mixolydian, the original mode in which Litaize began the piece.

Example 3.1: *Grande Messe*, *Prélude*, mm. 5-8
In addition to the arch form created by dynamics, registration, and harmony, the *Prélude* contains a secondary formal structure based on melodic return. The soprano melody in the opening phrase contains the basic musical material for melodies and motives in subsequent phrases (see Example 3.2). At the height of the arch (m. 29, phrase 5) this melody returns in the soprano on full organ and at two octaves above its original pitch level. With the return of the opening material, Litaize rounds the melodic form and provides the listener with aural “bookends” that frame the movement. By placing the melodic return before the ending of the arch form, he effectively overlaps these two different structural techniques (see Figure 3.2 for a comparison of the arched and melodic forms). The harmonic progression, tied as it is to the melody, also comes to rest on E in phrase 5 with the return of the opening material. The combination of these two forms or techniques (arch and melodic return) in the *Prélude* is the first of several occasions in which Litaize will integrate contrasting musical structures within a single piece.

![Example 3.2: Grande Messe, Prélude, mm. 1-6](image)

**Example 3.2: Grande Messe, Prélude, mm. 1-6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arch Structure</td>
<td><em>p</em></td>
<td><em>mf</em></td>
<td>[<em>f</em>]</td>
<td>[<em>ff</em>]</td>
<td>[<em>ff</em>; full organ]</td>
<td>decrescendo to <em>p</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melodic Structure</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic Progression</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G, B-flat, C-sharp/D-flat, F</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.2: Grande Messe, Prélude, structural elements**
Litaize presents a modern and complex fugue in the style of Nicolas de Grigny in the Offertoire of the Grande Messe. In this five-voice fugal texture, a reference to historical French Classical organ music, Litaize assigns two voices each to the Cornet (right hand, Récit or Grande orgue) and the Cromorne (left hand, Positif) and the fifth voice to the pedal (flue stops 16', 8', 4'). He also includes a number of mordents and trills throughout the fugue, similar to Grigny’s own ornamented style, in what Pierre-Alain Braye-Weppe calls a musical “wink.” The major sections of this tripartite fugue are found in Figure 3.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-section</td>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>Episode 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mm.</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td>15-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>SATB</td>
<td>Alto and tenor</td>
<td>Tonal instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedal entrances on</td>
<td>voices remain</td>
<td>pedal tacet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the final and</td>
<td>active; counter-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dominant of the</td>
<td>point based on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fifth mode (D, G)</td>
<td>head motive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic</td>
<td>G/D</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3: Grande Messe, Offertoire, fugal analysis

95 Alexandre Guilmant and André Pirro’s edition of Nicolas de Grigny’s Livre d’orgue (Paris: Durand, 1904) contains six fugues of this type. Litaize disregards historical practice slightly by calling for a 16' stop in the pedal. French Classical registration directions would only have called for 8' and 4' pitch (see Fenner Douglass, The Language of the French Classical Organ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995)).

Litaize begins the *Offertoire* with an exposition of the fugue subject that passes through SATB voices and pedal; he also includes a countersubject that is always paired with the fugal answer throughout mm. 1-14 (see Example 3.3). Following the exposition, episodes of free contrapuntal material alternate with subject/countersubject statements. In the two middle entries (mm. 15 and 22), the subject/countersubject pairs appear at various pitch levels (see description in Figure 3.3), shifting away from the original G-lydian modality. A second exposition based on an ascending scalar fragment of the original subject begins in m. 26 (see Example 3.4). Litaize concludes the fugue with stretto entries of the original subject (m. 31) and a codetta featuring rhythmic augmentation over a final pedal point.

Example 3.3: *Grande Messe*, *Offertoire*, fugue subject, mm. 1-5
Example 3.4: Grande Messe, Offertoire, counter-exposition subject, mm. 26-27

The Offertoire fugue follows the “prescriptive model” for the fugue d’ecole as taught at the Conservatoire de Paris in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Also called the “scholastic” or “school” fugue, André Gedalge (1856-1926) described its purpose and process in his Traité de la fugue of 1901. During his studies with Dupré, and later with Vierne, Litaize learned how to improvise fugues containing countersubjects, a counter-exposition, modulations, and stretto. However, the fugue d’ecole of the Conservatoire proceeds in slightly different ways than did the improvised fugue of Dupré’s organ class, the former based on compositional rather than improvisational skill. Three fugal forms, those according to Gedalge (composed), Dupré (improvised), and Litaize (Grande Messe), are compared in Figure 3.4.

---


Fugue d’école (Gedalge)

- Subject, Answer (réponse), counter-subject(s)
- Episode(s) (développements or divertissements) and middle entries (Gedalge does not suggest a particular number or arrangement of these sections)
- Conclusion: Counter-Exposition

Improvised Fugue\(^{100}\) (Dupré)

- Subject, Answer, counter-subject(s); TASB entries
- Episode 1: Middle entries in a related key
- Episode 2: Middle entries in the sub-dominant
- Episode 3: Middle entry
- Conclusion: Counter-Exposition

Grande Messe, Offertoire (Litaize)

- Subject, Answer, counter-subject; SATB-Ped entries
- Episode 1: Middle entry in a related key
- Episode 2: Middle entry
- Episode 3: Counter-Exposition
- Conclusion: Stretto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Episodes / Middle Entries</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fugue d’école</td>
<td>Subject, Answer (réponse), counter-subject(s) and middle entries (Gedalge does not suggest a particular number or arrangement of these sections)</td>
<td>Counter-Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvised Fugue</td>
<td>Subject, Answer, counter-subject(s); TASB entries; Episode 1: Middle entries in a related key; Episode 2: Middle entries in the sub-dominant; Episode 3: Middle entry</td>
<td>Counter-Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grande Messe, Offertoire</td>
<td>Subject, Answer, counter-subject; SATB-Ped entries; Episode 1: Middle entry in a related key; Episode 2: Middle entry</td>
<td>Counter-Exposition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.4: Comparison of fugal procedures

Figure 3.4 reveals the similarities between composed and improvised fugues and Litaize’s appropriation of elements found in each of those procedures into his own fugue in the Offertoire. The greatest variety among the three approaches appears in the episodes and the middle entries. In these sections of the Offertoire Litaize departs not only from the strict pattern of fugal entries required by Dupré at the Conservatoire, but also from the expected tonal patterns of Gedalge.

Litaize’s modal technique in this fugue is particularly complex and deserves special attention as an example of his modern creativity within a traditional compositional texture. Litaize manipulates patterns of whole- and half-steps in the fugue subject to create new variations on this melody as it moves into new harmonic areas throughout the episodes and middle entries (see the descriptions in Figure 3.3). Litaize’s compositional process is not readily apparent, however, and requires considerable study.

\(^{100}\) Ibid., 25-26.
in order to arrive at a satisfactory description of the technique. In order to decipher his procedure, each statement of the subject must first be arranged into a scale.\textsuperscript{101} The scales can then be analyzed according to their intervallic patterns and compared to each other. Comparison among the various patterns of whole- and half-steps reveals Litaize’s facility with advanced modal manipulation (see Figure 3.5). He alters successive statements of the subject/answer couplet by moving the final interval of the preceding statement to the beginning of the next statement (compare Subject, Subject R1, Subject R2). This procedure of intervallic alteration produces subtle shifts in pitch unrelated to expected tonic/dominant fugal entries. In standard tonal or modal analysis these shifts are unexplainable. However, when approached from a whole-step/half-step perspective, Litaize’s method of rotating the last interval to become the first interval of the next entrance becomes apparent. The intervallic set of whole- and half-steps for each subject and answer may be called the “array”; Litaize’s procedure of moving intervals from end to beginning may be called a “rotation.” Thus, Figure 3.5 charts the “modal rotational array” Litaize has employed in the \textit{Offertoire}.

\textsuperscript{101} For example, the series of pitches making up the first statement of the subject is, in order, D, E, G, F#, D, C#, B, D, C#, A, G, A, B, C#, D (see Example 3.3). After removing repeated pitches and arranging the notes in order beginning on G (the final of the lydian mode in this movement), the result is G, A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G. This series of pitches contains the following intervallic relationships: W(hole step), W, W, H(alf-step), W, W, H. This same procedure of arranging pitches was repeated for all statements of the subject and answer and compiled in Figure 3.5.
In the second and third rotations (R2, R3) Litaize introduces augmented seconds into the modal scale (labeled W+), marking the greatest departure from the intervallic content of the original subject. Litaize utilizes the secondary exposition, which immediately follows R2/R3, to return to the original modal pitch center of G and to rectus subject statements by m. 31.

In the Offertoire fugue Litaize combines old and new compositional styles and techniques. Couched in the sonority and texture of Grigny and the French Classical organ, Litaize introduces new techniques of modal manipulation into the polyphony. Rotating intervallic patterns build additional complexity onto existing quartal/quintal fugal relationships; remarkably, Litaize also maintains pleasing sonorities throughout the movement. His modal rotational arrays bear some resemblance to twelve-tone or serial technique in which the composer chooses sets of pitches from a matrix. However, instead of beginning with a self-created row, Litaize has utilized the arrangement of intervals
from his chosen mode as the basis for the array. It is possible that this procedure was one of Litaize’s hybridizations of new twentieth-century compositional techniques with the ecclesiastical modes and Gregorian melodies to which he was so thoroughly devoted. It must also be noted that, of all his contemporaries, Litaize seems to be the only twentieth-century organist to explore the creative possibilities of the fugue to such an advanced degree. Unlike those who shunned old forms and textures such as the canon and the fugue or those who left these procedures within traditional and tonal realms, Litaize embraced these musical constructions while at the same time manipulating them into new territory with the help of modern compositional techniques. The Offertoire of the Grande Messe is certainly the best example of Litaize’s contrapuntal compositional ability in this work.

The Elévation of the Grande Messe is a brief movement possessing an unpredictable and mystical quality. In just thirty measures, Litaize alternates between a lilting quartal/quintal pattern on the Récit Dulciane in the upper register and a contrapuntal bicinium on the Positif Bourdon (see Example 3.5). Two phrases of each texture form the A section (mm. 1-16, see Figure 3.6). At m. 17, the fifth and central phrase of the piece, Litaize combines figuration from both themes. The quartal-quintal pattern appears in the topmost voice while the accompanying voices present some figuration from the bicinium sections both in augmentation and retrograde.102 Two final phrases recall the two themes; the concluding measures quote the opening exactly.

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102 The bicinia are generally based on descending modal scales; the accompaniment in the sixth phrase ascends in quarter notes. While this could be a coincidence, the sixth phrase differs enough from both its preceding and succeeding phrases to warrant a more complex assertion, such as augmented retrograde.
Example 3.5: *Grande Messe, Elévation*, themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mm.</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Quartal/Quintal</td>
<td>Quartal/Quintal</td>
<td>Bicinium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Center</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.6: *Grande Messe, Elévation*, structure

The *Elévation* may be divided into three sections organized in an ABA' structure as seen in Figure 3.6. The outer sections (A, A') are comprised of balanced pairings of the quartal/quintal and bicinium themes (mm. 1-16 and 20-30). The combination of the two themes in the B section forms the crux of the movement, set apart aurally by the addition of the Voix Celeste stop on the *Récit*. This stop change is the only registration direction in the movement, and it results in an aural enhancement or coloring of the thematic combination present in the fifth phrase.
Harmonic progression provides another analytical entry point to the *Elévation*. Figure 3.6 charts the pitch center of each phrase, outlining motion by fifth in phrases 1-3. The fourth phrase departs from the fifth-relationship pattern with a modulation to G-sharp, another factor highlighting the musical importance of this phrase in the overall shape of the movement. Litaize re-spells G-sharp as A-flat in m. 16, and E-flat may be re-spelled as D-sharp. With these enharmonic spellings in place, the relationships between pitch centers become clearer. Nested within the fifth progressions (A-E-B and G-sharp-E-flat) is a third progression (B to G-sharp). When combined, the pitches of the harmonic centers also outline two triads, E major (E, G-sharp, B) and G-sharp minor (G-sharp, B, D-sharp). Pitch centers and cadences in this movement reveal Litaize’s reliance on both a traditional fifths-based system of modulation and a more contemporary thirds-based system, yet another example of his pairing of old and new compositional techniques.

All of these elements (contrasting themes, registration directions, varied harmonic shifts) contribute to the mystical quality of the *Elévation*. The movement accompanies the moment in the Mass when the priest, after consecrating the Eucharistic Host, holds it above his head for the congregation to see and to venerate. Roman Catholic doctrine states that, during the Elevation, the people view the true body of Christ in the Host. The music supplied by the organist during this moment in the liturgy was meant to heighten the religious fervor associated with such a mystical sight. Litaize’s *Elévation* resembles Charles Tournemire’s elevation settings in *L’Orgue mystique*, especially in registration.

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103 One must keep in mind that, in the Roman Catholic Mass prior to the Second Vatican Council, the priest most often faced the altar rather than the congregation. He was prohibited from turning his back to the altar during the Canon of the Mass, so elevating the Host above his head was the only way to show it to the people without turning around.
and thematic combination. This movement may certainly be considered an homage to Litaize’s former teacher.

Of the five movements in the Grande Messe, the Communion constitutes Litaize’s most remarkable construction. Consisting of five major sections, this piece contains fugue, chorale, and canon arranged in a musical palindrome (the first two sections are repeated in exact retrograde; see Figure 3.7). Section A opens with a fugal exposition of a faux-Gregorian subject in dorian mode on C (see Example 3.6). After all four voices have stated the subject, Litaize transitions to a slow-moving, homophonic chorale (section B, mm. 18-24; see Example 3.7). He constructs the vertical harmonies in this section from the pitches of the D-flat diminished octatonic scale (spelled enharmonically beginning on C-sharp) and provides the complete scale as a link between the chorale and the canonic section that follows (mm. 25-26). Section C presents the subject of section A in multiple canons (at the fifth and eleventh) above the subject stated in the pedal in augmentation at the double octave. Litaize extends the original four-measure subject to eighteen measures and maintains all of the voices in strict canon throughout this section. In m. 45 he reintroduces the octatonic chorale from section B in exact retrograde (both pitches and rhythms), and he follows the same retrograde process for the repeat of the section A exposition at m. 53. Section A in retrograde becomes a kind of anti-fugue, the voices exiting the texture rather than entering as the music progresses.
In this movement, Litaize has chosen to exhibit his mastery of multiple compositional devices, especially fugue, canon, modern scales, and palindrome. Similar to his combination of fugue and new modal techniques in the *Offertoire*, Litaize has combined in the *Communion* the older contrapuntal techniques of fugue and canon with...
the modern language of the octatonic scale, continuing his practice of fusing ancient and modern compositional forms.\textsuperscript{105} An allegorical or symbolic interpretation of the Communion could include an equating of the palindromic structure with the circular nature of the Trinitarian relationship.\textsuperscript{106} It is the wholeness of the Trinitarian God that is received in Communion, and the use of a musical palindrome in the Communion movement creates a sonic embodiment of this theological concept.

The fifth and final movement of the Grande Messe, the Postlude, contains four themes combined into a dance-like toccata in the tradition of Vierne and Tournemire.\textsuperscript{107} The Postlude may be divided into a rondo form (see Figure 3.8) with theme 1 and its variants serving as the ritornello or anchor-point within the structure. Litaize heightens the importance of theme 1 with chromaticism, dissonant harmonization, and a registration including mixtures and reeds on coupled manuals. In contrast, themes 2, 3, and 4 are

\textsuperscript{105} The presence of the octatonic scale recalls the works of Jehan Alain (1911-1940) and Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), both friends and colleagues of Litaize, who used this scale prominently in their compositions. Richard Taruskin’s article, “Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; Or, Stravinsky’s ‘Angle’” (\textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} 38 (1985), 72-142), tracks the history and transmission of this scale from Liszt through the Russian school. In “The Keyboard Idiom of Jehan Alain: A Survey of Musical Structures in Representative Works” (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2008), James L. Denman offers a study of the octatonic scale in the French organ tradition through an analysis of the works of Alain.

\textsuperscript{106} Durand, \textit{Gaston Litaize}, 109-110. In this passage Durand notes Litaize’s penchant for tripartite forms. Some examples include \textit{Pentecôte: Triptyque pour deux orgues} (1986), \textit{Sonate à deux} (Chorale-Interlude-Final, 1991), and three pieces from \textit{Douze Pièces} (Lied, Intermezzo pastoral, Final, 1930s). Durand suggests that three-part structures reflect both Litaize’s belief in the Trinity and his devotion to the classic form of exposition-development-recapitulation/coda.

\textsuperscript{107} Pierre-Alain Braye-Weppe, liner notes to \textit{Gaston Litaize: Jubilate Deo}, Marie-Ange Leurent and Eric Lebrun, Bayard Musique, 2009. In the Mass liturgy the postlude could begin any time after the final blessing, perhaps even during the reading of the Last Gospel, and accompanied the procession out of the sanctuary to the sacristy and the departure of the congregation. Compared to the final movement of Litaize’s \textit{Messe basse pour tous les temps} (\textit{Prière d’action de grâces}), the Postlude of the Grande Messe is rather brief. This brevity suggests that, with a choir present at the High Mass, a motet or other choral work could have been part of the final procession with an organ solo following the singing.
most often presented in a melody/accompaniment texture, soloed out on various manuals utilizing lighter registrations than theme 1. All four themes may be seen in Example 3.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tripartite</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A'</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A'</th>
<th>A''</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rondo (nested)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A'</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A'</td>
<td>A''</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mm.</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>15-22</td>
<td>22-32</td>
<td>33-43</td>
<td>44-46</td>
<td>47-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.8: Grande Messe, Postlude, structure

Each of the four themes found in the Postlude operates in a different mode: 1, lydian; 2, mixolydian; 3, dorian; 4, melodic minor. The intervallic patterns of each theme create complex chromatic harmonies when the themes combine in the final section.

Litaize’s use of multiple modalities in this movement parallels the use of multiple tonalities by other composers in the twentieth century. Committed as he was to modality
and the melodic patterns of Gregorian chant, Litaize translates the modern compositional technique of polytonality into his own sacral compositional language.

Theme 1 appears three times in the *Postlude*, labeled “A” in Figure 3.8 (in the Rondo row). Two contrasting sections, B and C, interrupt the A statements, creating an overarching form of ABA’CA". Within section C Litaize nests an additional rondo form that mirrors the broader structure. Here, theme 3 becomes a secondary ritornello separating statements of themes 4 and 2. To create a grand finale, Litaize unites fragmented statements of all four themes in A".

Recalling Litaize’s frequent use of tripartite structures, Figure 3.8 also offers an exposition-development-recapitulation (ABA’) reading of the form of this movement in the highest tier of the chart. The rondo nested within section C functions as the development of the larger tripartite form. Additionally, the four themes and their combination in the final section suggest a Franckian/symphonic *réunion des thèmes* process. These three approaches to the form (rondo, tripartite, and symphonic) all suggest that Litaize was highly skilled when working within both historical and modern musical structures and that he could synthesize and distill many of their formal characteristics into small-scale pieces. That he accomplished this kind of synthesis in the context of an organ Mass also suggests that he believed the liturgy deserved high-quality music constructed with detailed craftsmanship.

Each of the five movements of the *Grande Messe pour tous les temps* exhibits at least one particular compositional technique. The *Prélude* arches upward through various tonal centers to the extreme ranges of the manual and pedal compasses, displaying Litaize’s technical command of the instrument. The *Offertoire* demonstrates his mastery
of intricate fugal technique, his knowledge of historical styles of French organ music, and his innovative approaches to intervallic manipulation through modal rotational arrays. In the *Elévation*, contrasting contrapuntal phrases move skillfully through harmonic shifts of thirds and fifths. Complex counterpoint, fugue, and palindrome mark the *Communion* as a true work of genius. Finally, in the *Postlude*, Litaize reveals his ability to manipulate multiple modal themes within a fast-moving toccata texture, the toccata itself being a hallmark of the twentieth-century French organ school. Additionally, the *Postlude* models Litaize’s ability to condense multiple formal structures (tripartite, rondo, and thematic combination) into a brief but cohesive character piece. Due to this large variety of techniques, one might be tempted to view this organ Mass as a showpiece of compositional prowess. However, our knowledge of Litaize’s deep personal and spiritual relationship with the Mass and its Gregorian music suggests a less self-centered motivation in his approach to this liturgical music. Complex yet beautiful music was Litaize’s own spiritual offering when he improvised or composed for the Mass. Finely-crafted compositions such as this one, utilizing all manner of sophisticated techniques, were not his attempt at showmanship but rather an offering of his best work to God. In Litaize’s mind, the Mass deserved the best a musician could offer at his instrument, resulting in a suite of pieces of astounding complexity and technical difficulty.

108 Gaston Litaize, “Une Enquête des ‘Amis de l’Orgue’ sur le rôle liturgique de l’Organiste,” *L’Orgue: bulletin des Amis de l’Orgue* 69 (1953), 101-102. Litaize describes the role of the organist (and by extension, the composer) at the Mass to be one of a servant. Through beauty, dignity, and restraint (he did not believe the organ should dominate the liturgy as in the Gigout-style Mass recital) music should lead the Christian people into a deeper celebration of the sacraments and a greater internal participation in the liturgical offices. This outlook interfaces well with his attention to detail and quality in the published liturgical works, especially the *Grande Messe* and the *Messe basse.*
CHAPTER 4

MESSE BASSE POUR TOUS LES TEMPS

Due to its grand scale and thematic complexity, *Messe basse pour tous les temps* constitutes Gaston Litaize’s most significant contribution to the genre of the French organ Mass. Its five movements (*Prélude, Offertoire, Elévation, Communion*, and *Prière d’action de grâces*) contain multiple examples of Litaize’s skill in counterpoint and fugue, motivic manipulation, thematic combination, and thematic recall. Techniques drawn from the broader French organ tradition include *réunion de thèmes* in the manner of Franck (via Beethoven), five-part counterpoint on the Cornet and Cromorne in the style of the French Classical composer Nicolas de Grigny, and multiple canons and fugal expositions on complex themes. A structural and motivic analysis of each movement will demonstrate Litaize’s contrapuntal and thematic prowess. In addition, an examination of Litaize’s own liturgical and theological narrative contained within the work will reveal his deeply spiritual approach to the music.

Though composed in 1949, the *Messe basse pour tous les temps* was not published until 1959 when it appeared in volume 42 of the Schola Cantorum’s *Orgue et liturgie* series edited by Norbert Dufourcq, Félix Raugel, and Jean de Valois. In the first edition of *Messe basse*, musicologist Norbert Dufourcq supplied a one-page preface that offers a brief explanation of the role the organ played at Mass in the late 1950s, praise for
Gaston Litaize and the *Messe basse*, and quotes from Litaize himself outlining thematic and theological details in each of the five movements.109

Dufourcq begins by remarking on the role of the organ in the liturgy, specifically commenting on “recent” legislation for the Roman rite that allows the organ approximately twenty minutes of playing time during the Mass.110 He suggests that Litaize’s *Messe basse* serves as a model for playing the Low Mass according to these new guidelines. This suggestion raises an important issue: how can Dufourcq claim that the *Messe basse*, composed in 1949, is a direct response to ecclesiastical legislation from around 1959? Various answers are possible, one being that Litaize himself altered the composition in order to comply with new regulations and prepare the work for publication. However, Sébastien Durand’s authoritative *Catalogue des œuvres de Gaston Litaize* makes no mention of a revision of the music between its initial composition date and later publication date.111 Additionally, as will be demonstrated through detailed analysis, *Messe basse pour tous le temps* is unified by the interweaving of ten distinct themes. Such a well-integrated musical conception spread over five movements does not

109 The original French text of the preface, along with a translation into English, is provided in Appendix D.

110 Dufourcq is probably referring to the 1958 instruction from the Sacred Congregation for Rites, *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia*. This document outlined the role of the organ at Low Mass as follows: “In this regard, it must be noted that if any local custom of playing the organ during low Mass might interfere with the participation of the faithful, either by common prayer or song, the custom is to be abolished. This applies not only to the organ, but also to the harmonium or any other musical instrument which is played without interruption. Therefore, in such Masses, there should be no instrumental music at the following times: after the priest reaches the altar until the Offertory; from the first versicles before the Preface until the *Sanctus* inclusive; from the Consecration until the *Pater Noster*, where the custom obtains; from the *Pater Noster* to the *Agnus Dei* inclusive; at the Confiteor before the Communion of the faithful; while the Postcommunion prayer is being said; and during the Blessing at the end of the Mass.” (Chapter III-1, A, para. C, section 29. English translation available at http://www.adoremus.org/1958Intro-sac-mus.html, accessed 4 January 2016).

suggest post-compositional editing on the part of the composer. Another solution to this chronological problem could be Dufourcq’s own commercial interests in the success and sales of his *Orgue et liturgie* series. While there is no reason to doubt his own high opinion of Litaize’s compositions, his assertions regarding the contemporary suitability of the *Messe basse* to a changing liturgy may be more a marketing decision than an ideological one. In a musical and liturgical culture increasingly favorable toward audible participation from the congregation during the Mass, this work could have become problematic from a marketing and sales perspective. The music of an organ Mass, by definition, covered the entire action of the Low Mass, preventing outward participation on the part of the faithful. Thus, the preface to the *Messe basse* is likely Dufourcq’s attempt to mitigate negative reactions and promote the music of his friend and collaborator.

In the second paragraph of the preface Dufourcq remarks specifically on the nature of Litaize’s melodies; they are inspired by Gregorian chant but completely original to the composer. Litaize imitates Gregorian melodic contour, melody, and rhythm in many of his newly composed themes but avoids direct chant quotations in order to make the *Messe basse* truly *pour tous les temps*, “for any occasion.” The “Gregorio-Litaizian” themes in the *Messe basse* create instant aural association with the church and the liturgy, but their originality frees the music itself from specific festal or seasonal associations.\(^\text{112}\)

\(^{112}\) In his *Suite Médiévale en forme de Messe basse* composed in 1947 (New York: Editions Salabert, 1950), Jean Langlais accomplished this same aural association with the church by quoting chants from the Ordinary of the Mass such as *Asperges me* and *Kyrie fons bonitatis* and Gregorian hymns such as *Ubi caritas* and *Jesu dulcis memoria*. Langlais’s quotations of chants unassociated with a particular feast or season also create a piece of music *pour tous le temps*, but his process differs significantly from the complex and creative faux-Gregorian melodies of Litaize. However, the goal for each composer was to capitalize on the connection between chant and the liturgy in order to make their organ music not only suitable for the liturgy but also truly liturgical by connotation and association.
Dufourcq devotes the remainder of the preface to quoting a series of brief
descriptions of each movement provided by Litaize himself. Each description and its
implications for interpreting the music will be addressed in the context of the following
analysis. However, one important observation may be made here: Litaize assigns
theologically-charged titles to most of the ten themes in the *Messe basse* in a manner
reminiscent of the spiritual language of his colleague Olivier Messiaen. It is possible that
there is some ideological connection between the *Messe basse* of 1949 and Messiaen’s
*Messe de la Pentecôte* of 1950. Both are intended for the Low Mass, and both are
representative of the distinct styles of these composers. Messiaen takes his inspiration
from the Feast of Pentecost and thematically related biblical and liturgical texts; Litaize
draws on the Eucharistic themes of the Mass liturgy, employing bread-and-wine and
body-and-blood imagery in his themes. While the aural experience of these two works is
dissimilar, both composers express extra-musical theological ideas in their written
descriptions in order to unite their music deliberately with the liturgy.

Gaston Litaize’s *Messe basse pour tous les temps* was reprinted at least twice in
the United States, in each instance under a different English-language title: *Organ Suite
in the Form of a Low Mass*, McLaughlin and Reilly Co. of Boston (no. 2207, 1961) and
*Low Mass for Every Occasion (for the Organ)*, Kalmus Organ Series no. 4104, Belwin
Mills Publishing of Melville, New York (n.d.). The Kalmus/Belwin Mills edition is an
exact reprint of the Schola Cantorum edition (excluding the French-language preface),
but the McLaughlin edition includes a new preface in English directed specifically to
American organists.\(^{113}\) While this preface lacks Litaize’s compositional and thematic
details for each movement as found in the original French edition, its anonymous author
instructs the reader to coordinate the musical movements with their parallel parts in the
liturgy.\textsuperscript{114} The author praises Gaston Litaize for “exploiting the tonal resources of the
organ,” and suggests that, “The vibrant contrapuntal fabric of the music places it within
effective reach of polyphonic and even markedly classical or Baroque instruments.”\textsuperscript{115}
This latter statement must be read in light of the movement toward mechanical-action,
Baroque-inspired instruments during the mid-century \textit{Orgelbewegung}. Often traced back
to the writings of Albert Schweitzer in the early 1900s, the “Organ reform movement”
favored the building of new organs based on perceived historical principles of European
organ building, especially German organs from around the time of J. S. Bach. Indeed,
followers of this movement were said to judge the “success” of an organ on its ability to
play the counterpoint of Bach.\textsuperscript{116} Mentioning these types of organs in the preface to
Litaize’s \textit{Messe basse} carries with it the implication that Litaize’s music is sufficiently
contrapuntal and complex to “work” on organs informed by the \textit{Orgelbewegung} in
addition to so-called “American Classic” organs. The editor’s emphasis on the suitability
of the \textit{Messe basse} to various types of organs may also be found in the translations of the

\textsuperscript{113} Norbert Dufourcq included his initials after the 1959 French preface, but the preface to
McLaughlin and Reilly edition is unattributed. The complete text of the McLaughlin and Reilly preface
may be found in Appendix E.

\textsuperscript{114} It may be mentioned here that the Low Mass with organ was something of a French peculiarity
in the twentieth century. American organists at Roman Catholic churches were little acquainted with the
practice, necessitating this brief instruction on how an organ Mass should be performed. Additionally, for
organists working in churches of other denominations, this instruction perhaps prompted them to find other
liturgically suitable locations for the Mass movements within their worship services.

\textsuperscript{115} Preface to \textit{Organ Suite in the Form of a Low Mass} by Gaston Litaize (Boston: McLaughlin and

\textsuperscript{116} Barbara Owen and Peter Williams, “Organ, §VII; The Organ Revival, 1930-1970,” \textit{Grove
French registration directions throughout the score. The original indications are preserved, but printed below them are standardized English-language manual and stop designations (Grande orgue becomes Great, Récit becomes Swell, Principaux becomes Diapasons).

The anonymous author of the preface makes three additional and important points: 1) Gregorian chant is the inspiration for Litaize’s “melodic strands”; 2) the use of modality and Gregorian chant “achieves musical unity and liturgical propriety”; 3) due to its skillful construction, the work in whole or in part is suitable for recital as well as the liturgy.

Before examining the individual movements of the Messe basse it is necessary to consider the overarching structure of the work. Across five movements, Litaize introduces ten distinct themes; their names and the movements in which they appear may be found in Figure 4.1. For analytical purposes, each theme has also been assigned a number in this chart. Themes for which Litaize has not provided a title (nos. 1 and 10) have been assigned a bracketed designation. Example 4.1 presents each of the individual themes in the configuration in which they first appear in the Mass.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prélude</th>
<th>Offertoire</th>
<th>Elévation</th>
<th>Communion</th>
<th>Prière</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>[Ascending 5th]</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Introductory”</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thème du pain</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thème du vin</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Corps du Christ</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Précieux Sang</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Grandeur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Eucharistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Danse sacrée</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Crainte et le respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: *Messe basse*, thematic layout
Example 4.1: *Messe basse*, themes, pp. 65-66
No. 1, *Prélude*, [Ascending 5th]

No. 2, *Offertoire*, “Introductory”

No. 3, *Offertoire*, *Thème du pain*

No. 4, *Offertoire*, *Thème du vin*

No. 5, *Elévation*, *Corps du Christ*
No. 6, *Elévation, Précieux Sang*

No. 7, *Communion, Grandeur Eucharistique*

No. 8, *Communion, Danse sacrée*

No. 9, *Communion, Crainte et le respect*

No. 10, *Prière, [Scherzo]*
The initial motivic content of the *Prélude of Messe basse pour tous les temps* features an ascending fifth first presented in the pedal (see Example 4.1, no. 1). Litaize’s use of the ascending fifth, a characteristic introduction in mode 1, immediately recalls well-known chants of the Gregorian repertory including *Hosanna filio David* (antiphon at the blessing of palms, Palm Sunday), *Sacrís solemniis* (Eucharistic hymn for *Corpus Christi*), and *Gaudeamus* (introit, All Saints Day). Such immediate aural recall of the chant repertory exemplifies Litaize’s inspired and skillful borrowing of common Gregorian melodic fragments in order to reinforce the chant-like nature of his themes.

The opening five measures of the *Prélude* proceed in an imitative fashion, the head-motive of the theme gradually ascending from the pedal through the soprano voice to achieve a four-part texture by m. 5. This introductory musical gesture is also a good example of Litaize’s polyphonic writing. He links each statement of the open-fifth motive to its predecessor through common or neighbor tones, organically connecting each thematic statement to the next in order to achieve a natural crescendo (see Example 4.2). The opening ascending fifth motive appears first in the pedal (twice, D-A and E-B), then tenor (A-E), alto (D-A), pedal (A-E), soprano (D-A), and tenor (E-B). The succession of fifth motives allows the theme to ascend from the lower half of the pedal and manual compasses while the non-thematic voices provide conjunct contrapuntal supporting material.
Example 4.2: Messe basse, Prélude, mm. 1-8

As the chant-like melody and its accompanying counterpoint continue through the next several bars, the pedal sounds a complete mixolydian scale beginning on middle D and descending to low C (mm. 8-11). The arrival of the pedal scale on low C coincides with a cadence on an A-minor seventh chord in first inversion. Within the mode, A-minor functions as a minor dominant, and this cadence completes the first section of the movement.

In the Mass liturgy, the Prélude of the Messe basse stands in for the Introit chant, accompanying the entrance procession and the prayers at the foot of the altar. A tripartite structure of antiphon-verse-antiphon governs the form of the Introit chant genre, and Litaize follows a similar tripartite pattern in the Prélude (see Figure 4.2). The “antiphon” on the opening fifth motive (mm. 1-11) is followed by a “verse” from mm. 12-26.
Halfway through section B Litaize begins an extended crescendo leading to a return of the “antiphon” theme in canon in m. 25. This crescendo (mm. 18-24) is largely based on an inverted and transposed form of the descending modal pedal scale from m. 8, beginning here on D-flat and ascending from pedal low C. The canon between the right hand and pedal beginning in m. 25 undoubtedly represents the point of “intensity” that Litaize mentions in the preface. By this point the registration has increased to full organ (mixtures and reeds on all manuals and pedal, coupled), and the canon in parallel fourths and fifths suggests medieval fauxbourdon. From m. 29 to the conclusion of the movement, Litaize enables the musical tension to dissipate by recalling fragments of the chant theme from the “verse,” reducing volume and registration, and slowing the harmonic rhythm. The movement concludes with a “bookend” statement of the opening pedal motive.

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<td>D</td>
<td>G-Eb-Bb-F-C</td>
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Figure 4.2: *Messe basse, Prélude*, phrase structure

In the preface, Litaize states that the *Prélude* centers on the seventh mode, but he treats the mode not as a framework in which to construct the music but as a starting point for harmonic exploration throughout the movement (the harmonic progression is presented in Figure 4.2). Beginning in mixolydian mode based on D, the opening section

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117 “Le Prélude, du septième mode, est une ‘montée’ qui atteint un pole d’intensité exploitant la totalité de l’instrument.”
cadences on a first-inversion A-minor seventh chord in m. 11. The first ascent in harmonic register comes at m. 12 where the melodic material begins on G and cadences a third higher in m. 18 on a first-inversion C-minor seventh chord. Combined with four- and five-voice counterpoint in the manuals and an ascending mixolydian scale in the pedal, the next seven measures pass through tonal centers of E-flat, B-flat, F and C. In this cycle of fifths, C returns as the subtonic of D to reinforce the mixolydian mode. Additional pitch centers of D-flat and E-flat also feature prominently, offering conflicting harmonic poles to the final on D-natural. Even though Litaize’s harmonic language remains internally modal, his creativity becomes apparent in these adventurous harmonic progressions that move by fifth, third, and half-step.

The overall musical form of the Prélude to the Messe basse resembles that of the Prélude to the Grande Messe, especially in the dramatic arch created by Litaize’s treatment of melody, harmony, counterpoint, and registration. This movement is the opening of a great liturgical act in which the organ ascends to the height of its sonic potential and descends back again in the space of only thirty-eight measures. The only monothematic movement in the Messe basse, the Prélude exemplifies Litaize’s contrapuntal and harmonic skill as well as his brevity of musical gesture when the liturgy demands it.

The Offertoire of the Messe basse is a large-scale movement based on three themes that Litaize identifies in the preface: the “introductory” theme, the thème du pain, and the thème du vin. The names of the latter two themes refer to the bread and wine of the Eucharist that are brought to the altar and offered to God by the priest at this moment.
in the liturgy.\textsuperscript{118} It is unusual for Litaize to name the themes in his compositions; this kind of extra-musical, theological description is more often associated with his contemporary Olivier Messiaen.\textsuperscript{119} However, when considered in conjunction with the names of two themes presented later in the \textit{Elévation} movement (\textit{Corps du Christ} and \textit{Précieux Sang}), it becomes clear that Litaize has begun in the \textit{Offertoire} a musical and theological commentary on the Eucharist. The themes of bread and wine prepared in the \textit{Offertoire} will become the themes of the body and blood of Christ in the \textit{Elévation}. Those elements will then be received by the faithful during the \textit{Communion}.

The “introductory” theme of the \textit{Offertoire}, ornamented groups of thirty-second notes on high mixtures (see Example 4.1, no. 2), functions throughout the movement as a kind of ritornello. It appears three times (mm. 1, 54, 67) at three different pitch levels (C-sharp, E, C-natural); at each occurrence it announces a new musical section. After the first statement of the introductory theme, the solo Cornet on the \textit{Positif} enters with the chant-like melody of the \textit{thème du pain} beginning in m. 6. The left hand and pedal accompany the \textit{thème du pain} in imitative counterpoint. The theme begins in the second

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{118} In his series of volumes entitled \textit{L’Année liturgique}, Prosper Guéranger (1806-1875), abbot of Solesmes, offers a helpful description of the Offertory of the Mass. “See, then, dear Christians! bread and wine are about to be offered to God, as being the noblest of inanimate creatures, since they are made for the nourishment of man; and even that is only a poor material image of what they are destined to become in our Christian sacrifice. Their substance will soon give place to God himself, and of themselves nothing will remain but the appearances. Happy creatures, thus to yield up their own being, that God may take its place! We, too, are to undergo a like transformation, when, as the apostle expresses it, \textit{that which is mortal, will be swallowed up by life} [2 Cor. v. 4.]. Until that happy change shall be realised, let us offer ourselves to God, as often as we see the bread and wine presented to him in the holy Sacrifice; and let us glorify him, who, by assuming our human nature, has made us \textit{partakers of the divine nature} [II St. Peter, i. 4.].” (Prosper Guéranger, \textit{The Liturgical Year: Time After Pentecost}, vol. VI, trans. Benedictines of Stanbrook (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1903), 11-12).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{119} Messiaen’s copious writings about his works may be found in English translation in Irene Feddern’s volume \textit{Messiaen on Messiaen: the composer writes about his works} (Bloomington, Indiana: Frangipani Press, 1986). The composer draws from many religious texts for musical inspiration, including the words of the liturgy (especially the Nicene creed in the \textit{Messe de la Pentecôte}), Gregorian chant, the Bible, and writings from the saints. Litaize seems to limit himself to the actions and elements of the Mass liturgy in the \textit{Messe basse}.
\end{quote}
mode on F-sharp, modulating to C-sharp toward the end of the first phrase (cadence at m. 20) and returning to F-sharp in mm. 36-37. Overall, the melodic contour is conjunct, but this theme ranges widely from middle C-sharp up to soprano F-sharp.120

The companion to the thème du pain and the third theme of the Offertoire, thème du vin, makes its first appearance at m. 37 (see Example 4.1, no. 3). In contrast to its lyrical and chant-like predecessor, this theme is playful and dance-like. It is unified rhythmically by sixteenth-note passages in parallel fourths and dotted rhythms. Litaize’s registration directions of 8' and 2' flue stops on the Grand orgue heighten the aural contrast with the preceding two themes. Thème du vin begins on B, migrating after two measures to a repetition on A-flat. At m. 46 Litaize combines thème du pain and thème du vin for the first time, utilizing the melodic contour of the former within the rhythmic structure of the latter (see Example 4.3). In addition, he centers this combination harmonically on E. When considered together, the three modal centers found in mm. 37-54 make up a micro-progression of descending third relationships (B, A-flat/G-sharp, E).

Example 4.3: Messe basse, Offertoire, mm. 48-50

120 Middle C is the lowest pitch available on the Cornet of a French Classical organ. This and other examples in Messe basse illustrate Litaize’s familiarity with historic organs in Europe (especially the French Classical organs), knowledge that he acquired in part while serving on the historic monuments committee for the French government.
After the introduction of all three themes (introductory, *thème du pain*, *thème du vin*) and the combination of the latter two, the introductory theme reappears at m. 54 on E. This statement is pitched a third higher than the first statement of the introductory theme at the opening of the movement and continues on in the harmonic center in which the *thème du pain* and *thème du vin* combination concluded in m. 54. The second statement of the introductory theme gives way immediately to the *thème du vin* in m. 58, reproduced exactly as in its first statement in m. 37 but on new pitches (E, D-flat/C-sharp). At m. 67 the introductory theme returns once again, introducing a transformed *thème du pain* at m. 71. In contrast to the first statement of the *thème du pain* at m. 6, Litaize inverts the solo/accompaniment texture, placing the chant-like melody in the left hand on a Cromorne solo. At the completion of this thematic statement in m. 93, Litaize begins the final section (coda) of the *Offertoire*. With a return of the Cornet solo in the upper voice, he presents the *thème du pain* on F-sharp in mode four, transforming this melancholy theme into a peaceful melody in a major-sounding mode. The coda concludes with a brief, unaccompanied quote of *thème du vin* and a cadence on F-sharp major.

In the first section (mm. 1-53) of the *Offertoire* the themes are presented in succession, and the two themes of bread and wine are combined. This is a traditional treatment of contrasting themes and a technique that Litaize cultivated from an early age while attending the Institut des Jeunes Aveugles de Nancy. The procedure of the

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121 The *Positif* Cromorne, in contrast to the half-compass Cornet, is a full-compass solo stop.

122 Durand, *Gaston Litaize*, 12. Charles Magin, organist and instructor at the Nancy Institut, taught the young Litaize to improvise a sonata or symphony movement on two themes. Magin himself provided the first theme and the second had to be “found” (improvised).
second section is less apparent. Litaize introduces the themes again (mm. 53-95), but he alters the *thème du pain* from its original form, and the order of themes follows no immediately discernable pattern. The following paragraphs will frame the movement in two contrasting formal structures: sonata form and ritornello form. While the *Offertoire* does not fall completely into either musical structure, viewing this movement through two different formal lenses helps to explain the internal logic of the music.

Sonata form partitions the movement into three major sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation (see Figure 4.3). In the exposition (mm. 1-53), Litaize introduces all three themes in *rectus* form; the combination of the *thème du pain* and *thème du vin* functions as a cadence to conclude the section. The transposed return of the introductory theme in m. 53 signals the beginning of the development (mm. 53-95). This section manipulates the bread/wine themes by reintroducing them in reverse order (*thème du vin* precedes *thème du pain*), separated by another transposition of the introductory theme. The statement of the *thème du pain* in m. 67 is also texturally inverted and registered on a different solo stop. The recapitulation, beginning at m. 95, features the return of both the bread and wine themes in their original order of presentation, but in a new mode. The new mode itself results from thematic transformation in the middle section; in the recapitulation the themes resolve their modal and textural conflict encountered in the development.
Analyzing the Offertoire through the lens of sonata form helps to organize thematic statements into internally logical sections and to outline Litaize’s thematic procedure, which includes thematic transformation and manipulation. However, a sonata-form analysis does not parallel the aural experience of the music. The listener may not easily perceive differences between the exposition and development sections or readily identify thematic groupings. While acknowledging the strengths of the sonata-form analysis, additional consideration of ritornello form in the Offertoire is necessary to understand fully the structural and sonic underpinnings of this movement.

Dividing the Offertoire into three episodes separated by a ritornello figure (the introductory theme) coincides better with the aural experience of the music than does sonata form. The introductory theme, especially its contour and registration, stands out so markedly from the other two themes that it arrests the attention of the listener whenever it returns. By categorizing the introductory theme as a ritornello or structural marker rather than as an integrated thematic unit, the ritornello analysis is able to focus on the two Eucharistic themes as the true basis of the movement. Figure 4.4 organizes the music into ritornello form and notes the specific compositional devices that Litaize employs to manipulate the Eucharistic themes in each episode (combination, transposition, inversion, and modal shift).
Figure 4.4: *Messe basse, Offertoire*, ritornello form

As he did in the *Offertoire*, Litaize charts a course of thematic transformation and combination in the next movement of the *Messe basse*, the *Elévation*. A bi-thematic movement, Litaize names the two new themes *Corps du Christ* and *Précieux Sang*. In the preface he also refers to the *Elévation* itself as a “continuation of the Eucharistic drama.” As mentioned previously, Litaize names musical themes in the *Offertoire* and the *Elévation* with parallel yet liturgically and theologically charged titles (*thème du pain/Corps du Christ* and *thème du vin/Précieux Sang*) to create a sacramental narrative within this work. The bread and wine of the *Offertoire* have become the body and blood of Christ in the consecration of the Mass; the music of the *Elévation* sounds as the priest holds up the consecrated elements for adoration by the faithful, marking their substantial change from one state to another. While no direct musical correlation can be found between these two new themes and the bread and wine themes in the *Offertoire*, Litaize’s assigned names imply that the *Offertoire* themes have been altered by the liturgical action itself, *transubstantiated* into the new themes of the *Elévation*.

Close examination of the *Corps du Christ* and *Précieux Sang* themes (see Example 4.1, nos. 5 and 6) reveals opposing characteristics: the former descends, the

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latter ascends; the former is homophonic, the latter is contrapuntal; the former is chromatic, the latter modal. However, these observable and aural characteristics mask an underlying commonality. The two themes contain the same set of pitches: F-sharp, F-natural, E, D, C, B, A. Litaize manipulates this pitch set into two contrasting themes whose essence, nevertheless, remains identical. A theological-liturgical explanation of this musical phenomenon concerns itself with the nature of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharistic elements. Litaize, in a musical defense of the Doctrine of Concomitance, seems to assert that the body and blood of Christ are equally Christ himself, different in appearance but equally complete hosts of Christ’s Eucharistic presence. The pitch set represents the presence of Christ, the contrasting constructions mirror Christ’s appearance under the dual elements of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The organization of thematic statements in the *Elévation* may be seen in Figure 4.5. Litaize alternates between the two themes throughout the movement until he combines them in the final measures. A complex network of imitative counterpoint accompanies the first statement of *Corps du Christ* (mm. 1-8, see Example 4.4). An augmented form of the head motive appears in the alto beginning in m. 2, accompanied by the theme in *rectus* form; the same construction is repeated an octave lower beginning in m. 4 (this layering of the *Corps* theme upon itself may be considered canon or stretto). The chromatically descending head motive (F-sharp, F-natural, E) also appears in various accompanying voices throughout the opening statement.
The *Précieux Sang* theme appears within a contrapuntal bicinium texture in m. 9; it begins on B, the final pitch of the preceding theme (displaced by an octave in this instance, see Example 4.5). The two-part counterpoint in this thematic strand contributes to a general harmonic shift from B to D-sharp and a return of the first theme in m. 13. As the themes continue to alternate they also begin to fracture into progressively shorter statements, each one spiraling further outward from the initial pitch center on B. In addition to B and D-sharp, thematic statements appear on F-sharp (m. 22) and G (m. 26).
Each statement of *Précieux Sang* begins on the final pitch of the preceding *Corps du Christ* statement and modulates toward the next statement of the same. At m. 28 the two themes combine at the original pitch level with *Corps du Christ* in the topmost voice and *Précieux Sang* in the lower of the two left-hand voices. With their identical pitch sets, these themes can easily be combined; they fit together perfectly in contrary motion as seen in Example 4.6. A short codetta follows the thematic combination and contains the briefest of quotes from both themes before a cadence on B minor. Measures 28-35 contain complete statements of the themes, a welcome relief to the increased tension and fragmentation begun in m. 13.

Example 4.5: *Messe basse, Elévation*, mm. 7-9

Example 4.6: *Messe basse, Elévation*, mm. 28-29
Despite the thematic combinations present in the preceding movements and the inherent complexity contained in them, Litaize creates an even denser web of themes in the Communion movement. He adds three new themes to the matrix and quotes preceding themes from the Offertoire and the Elévation. His pattern of theological titles also continues here. He names the opening chant-like theme Grandeur Eucharistique, the second danse sacrée, and the third crainte et le respect (“fear and respect” directed toward the Sacrament; see Example 4.1, nos. 7, 8, and 9). Grandeur Eucharistique and crainte et le respect are both chant-inspired melodies while danse sacrée is a contrasting and lively triple-meter figure.

Litaize introduces the three new themes of the Communion in a pattern similar to that seen in the Offertoire (Figure 4.6). Each new melody is presented alone; then the first two are combined at m. 31 (danse sacrée in the manuals and Grandeur Eucharistique on a solo Trumpet in the pedal). At m. 40 Litaize quotes, for the first time in the entire Mass, a theme from a previous movement; the thème du pain from the Offertoire appears in canon between the outer voices. Manual and pedal registrations from the preceding thematic combination section remain the same, making this transition practically seamless. Halfway through the canonic passage (mm. 40-44), Litaize migrates from a canon at the octave to a canon at the fifth, shifting the pedal line to a lower register for greater contrast between the outer voices.\(^{124}\) A second thematic quote occurs in m. 46 at the conclusion of the canon: the thème du vin from the Offertoire appears in its rectus form. Litaize once again transitions seamlessly from this truncated statement to a return

\(^{124}\) The seamless nature of Litaize’s contrapuntal transition between different themes and different canonic procedures illustrates his facility with complex compositional devices. In the hands of another composer, these shifts in texture might be jarring, but here they are barely perceptible to the listener.
of *crainte et le respect* followed by the *thèse du pain* from the *Offertoire* in mm. 49-54. Thematic statements then become increasingly fragmented with small motivic units from the themes appearing in various voices. In mm. 52-54 (see Example 4.7) the *thèse du pain* is subjected to two- and three-voice canon at the fifth and at the octave in preparation for the return of *Grandeur Eucharistique*, the opening theme of this movement. Litaize marks the resolution of thematic fragmentation in m. 55 by subjecting the melody to three-part canon, augmentation of the theme in the pedal, and *fauxbourdon* at the fourth and fifth (m. 55-58, see Example 4.8). After this grand statement, additional fragments of *crainte et la respect*, *Précieux sang* from the *Elévation*, and *danse sacrée* bring the movement to a peaceful end on an E major sonority.

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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Offertoire: <em>Thème du pain</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Danse sacrée</em></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>Elévation: <em>Corps du Christ</em></td>
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<td>67-68</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Grandeur Eucharistique</em></td>
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<td><em>Danse sacrée</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Crainte et le respect</em></td>
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**Figure 4.6: Messe basse, Communion, structure**

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125 Increased fracturing and intensification of themes is reflected visually in the score. Double bar lines separate thematic statements, and volatile key and time signatures, manual changes, and registration directions signify increasing thematic, harmonic, and contrapuntal tension.
In contrast to the *Offertoire* and *Elévation* themes whose titles make theological claims about the modes of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, the titles of the three new themes in the *Communion* express the communicants’ attitude toward the Mass and, more specifically, toward reception of communion. The individual should approach the “Eucharistic grandeur” with joy (*Danse sacrée*), anticipating the “fullness of joy in your [God’s] presence” afforded by the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{126} However, this joy is tempered by “fear and respect” for God expressed through reverence for the sacrament as Christ’s

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\textsuperscript{126} Psalm 16:11, King James Version.
Eucharistic presence. These three distinct yet similar emotions (awe, joy, fear) coexist in the heart and mind of the communicant and are expressed within Litaize’s melodies.

The inclusion of Offertoire and Elévation themes within the Communion movement continues to propel Litaize’s theological narrative of the Eucharistic drama. In the Elévation the elements became the body and blood of Christ, leaving behind their earthly substance. No trace of the previous bread/wine themes remains, being replaced completely by those of the body/blood. In the context of Communion, however, Litaize uses themes of bread/body and wine/blood in conjunction to illustrate that the outward sign of the physical elements is unchanged, but the inner and invisible substance of the elements are now the body and blood of Christ.127 The communicant perceives the outward signs of bread and wine through the senses but also perceives the inner reality of the sign by faith. Litaize expresses this theological comingling of realities musically through thematic recall and quotation.

Prière d’action de grâces (translated as “thanksgiving prayer” in the English-language McLaughlin edition), the longest and most complex of the movements of the Messe basse, provides a grand summation of the entire Mass. In this movement Litaize introduces the tenth and final theme, a scherzo-like melody in the fifth mode (see Example 4.1, no. 10), while also recalling and transforming (in some cases) each of the nine preceding themes of the Mass.128 The broad structural outline may be seen in Figure 4.7; Figure 4.8 displays a more detailed thematic outline.

127 Through the mid-twentieth century this manner of explaining the presence of Christ in the Eucharist was particular to the Roman Catholic Church; Protestant and other non-Catholic churches, some also professing belief in the “real presence,” objected to such specific philosophical language until ecumenical dialogues began after the Second Vatican Council.
The new scherzo theme forms the basis for an opening set of three variations that comprise the first major section of the movement (mm. 1-38). To introduce the theme, Litaize presents it first in octaves (mm. 1-5) and then in harmonized form (mm. 5-11, see Example 4.9). In the first variation (mm. 12-21), the theme is subjected to a contrapuntal 128

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128 One theme, *danse sacrée* from *Communion*, does not appear overtly in the final movement of the Mass. However, its general contour resembles the ascending fifth theme from the *Prélude* and its triple-meter rhythm appears in the combined *Offertoire* themes. While Litaize does not quote *danse sacrée* directly, traces of the theme are present in this final movement.
treatment, the accompanying figures being derived from the theme itself. In the second variation at m. 22, the theme appears in a chromatically altered form in quick triple time. Litaize marks this section “scherzando,” presenting the theme in a playful, quirky manner. At m. 29 Litaize presents the third variation with the theme in canon at the octave between soprano and tenor voices (the texture here is not consistent, varying from four to five voices).

Example 4.9: Messe basse, Prière, mm. 6-7

The variations on the scherzo theme conclude abruptly at m. 39 with a direct quote of the thème du vin from the Offertoire. Thematic quotations define the next section (mm. 39-90), where this Offertoire quote is followed immediately in m. 48 by a quote of the combined thème du pain and thème du vin (a combination of the melody of the second theme with the rhythm of the first, similar to Example 4.3).

Having presented the two main themes of the Offertoire, Litaize reintroduces the ascending fifth theme from the Prélude in m. 60. However, instead of quoting this theme directly as he had the previous two themes, he sets the ascending fifth theme within a five-part canon between treble Cornet, bass Cromorne, and pedal flues 8' and 4'. This
particular combination of manual and pedal registrations within a five-part texture deliberately references the five-part fugal versets of French Classical composer Nicolas de Grigny. The introductory theme of the Offertoire marks an end to this section of thematic recall and a return to the scherzo theme.

The third section of this movement (C: fugue and canon, mm. 91-140) commences with a fugal exposition (TASB) in m. 91; the subject is based on the first section of the fifth-mode scherzo melody (see Example 4.10). An example of Litaize’s genius for thematic transition and combination appears in mm. 99-100, where he employs a fragment of this theme in retrograde to link the end of the first exposition with a second fugal exposition based on the second half of the melody. Unlike its four-voice predecessor, this second fugue employs five voices in the exposition from mm. 101-115 (see Example 4.11). At m. 120 Litaize combines two more themes, Corps du Christ from the Elévation and thème du pain from the Offertoire, amid surrounding contrapuntal voices based on the scherzo theme. This multi-thematic combination proceeds into another canon on Précieux Sang at m. 123. Thematic quotes become increasingly fragmented from mm. 123-129, which, along with increasing manual and pedal coupling and stop additions, heightens musical tension as the piece reaches its climax. At m. 132 the scherzo theme returns in its original mode in canon, accompanied by augmentation in the pedal (see Example 4.12). In one final and dramatic flourish, Litaize quotes Grandeur Eucharistique from the Communion in the pedal beneath the frenetic scherzo theme in the manuals in mm. 136-138. The Prière, and the Mass as a whole, then concludes with a

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129 In his organ Masses, Litaize imitates Grigny twice: here in the Messe basse in complex canon and in the Offertoire of the Grande Messe in fully-developed fugue (see chapter 3).
coda based on the Gregorian “amen” figure (m. 141, pedal: E, F-sharp, E, D-sharp, E; see Example 4.13), a fitting melody for a composition infused with Gregorian references.

Example 4.10: *Messe basse, Prière*, mm. 93-95

Example 4.11: *Messe basse, Prière*, mm. 104-106
Example 4.12: *Messe basse, Prière*, mm. 132-135

Example 4.13: *Messe basse, Prière*, mm. 141-142

This analytical survey of the *Messe basse pour tous le temps* has expounded upon various narrative strands relating to the Mass, Eucharistic theology, and compositional process present within the music. The first narrative is that of the Mass itself, or, in
Litaize’s own words, the “Eucharistic drama.” Along with the priest and server, the organ enters the sanctuary (Prélude), offers the bread and wine (Offertoire), elevates and adores the consecrated elements (Elévation), receives the consecrated elements (Communion), and offers final prayers of thanksgiving (Prière d’Action de Grâces). This is a narrative of offering and receiving, of personal and elemental transformation, that parallels the liturgy itself. The ten themes, both in their interaction within movements and in their appearance outside of their original contexts, offer a secondary narrative to that of the liturgy, a narrative of thematic transformation and reunion. Litaize’s compositional process here is an additive one; as the number of themes increases, so too do instances of thematic alteration and combination. The first movement of Messe basse is brief and monothematic; the final movement is of symphonic scale, containing all ten themes of the work. As the themes collide within movements, they offer a commentary on various theological aspects of the liturgy as well as demonstrate Litaize’s facility with large-scale, poly-thematic musical structures.
CHAPTER 5

MESSE DE LA TOUSSAINT

Throughout his long career Gaston Litaize was known for composing and improvising melodies and themes influenced by the modal language and melodic contour of Gregorian chant.\(^\text{130}\) However, on occasion Litaize borrowed directly from the Gregorian repertory; six of his compositions for organ contain chant melodies drawn from specific liturgical occasions.\(^\text{131}\) Other pieces contain chant quotations embedded in the musical texture, but the chant fragments themselves do not form the basis for the entire work.\(^\text{132}\) In the chant-based pieces Litaize tends to favor feast days of high liturgical rank, including Epiphany (Jan. 6), Pentecost (fifty days after Easter), and All Saints (Nov. 1). In the *Messe de la Toussaint*, composed and published in 1964 in the Schola Cantorum *L'Organiste liturgiste* series, Litaize sets four of the Proper chants from the Feast of All Saints (Introit, Offertory, Communion, and Alleluia) in four movements:

\(^{130}\) Litaize’s former student Eric Lebrun remarked, “Litaize loved to compose for the Mass...with Gregorian or semi-Gregorian themes. For him it was the most beautiful material [with which] to compose (e-mail message from Eric Lebrun, 17 November 2015).” The ten themes of Litaize’s *Messe basse* (see chapter 4) provide some excellent examples of “Gregorio-Litaizean” melodies.

\(^{131}\) *Toccata sur le ‘Veni Creator’* (1934); *Fugue sur l’Introït ‘Da pacem’* (1954); *Messe de la Toussaint* (1964); *Épiphanie* (1984); *Pentecôte* (for two organs, 1986); *Reges Tharsis* (1991). See Appendix A for a complete listing of Litaize’s compositions for organ.

\(^{132}\) For example, the *Prélude to Cinq Pièces Liturgiques* of 1950 quotes the *Ave maris stella*. 
Because works in the *L’Organiste liturgiste* series were intended for organists playing on organs of modest size or even the harmonium, Litaize sets the music on two staves with very few pedal indications, all of which are optional.

By the time the Schola Cantorum published this organ Mass in 1964, the Roman Catholic Mass liturgy had already begun to change under the influence of the Liturgical Movement and the 1963 promulgation of *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, by the Second Vatican Council. Litaize was a member of the Archdiocese of Paris committee on sacred music (along with Jean Langlais and other prominent musicians) that evaluated the many new trends in liturgy and music during the 1960s. While this committee of clergy and musicians ultimately disintegrated, the *Messe de la Toussaint* appears to be Litaize’s personal response to new liturgical and musical paradigms in a changing ecclesiastical environment.

In its broad structure, the *Messe de la Toussaint* resembles its predecessors in the organ Mass genre. Litaize seems to view this chant-based suite as a High Mass to be combined with choral (or perhaps by this time, congregational) singing. The length of each movement corresponds to that of the *Grande Messe* from 1948 (a total of approximately seventeen minutes). However, in this work Litaize omits the Elevation movement entirely, eliminating what had been a constituent part of the organ Mass from before the French Classical period. Undoubtedly this omission was due to liturgical

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133 This organ Mass is volume 47 in *L’organiste liturgique*; unlike the other two organ Masses addressed in previous chapters, the *Messe de la Toussaint* was published without dedication or preface.

trends current at the time. By 1964 organ music at the elevation of the Mass was no longer an accepted or acceptable part of public worship. The following analysis will show that the *Messe de la Toussaint* stands as Litaize’s tribute to the heritage of Gregorian chant and the organ in Roman Catholic liturgy, as well as an homage to his former teacher Charles Tournemire and that composer’s style of chant-based compositions for organ.\[^{135}\]

In a departure from the arched structure of the opening movements in the *Grande Messe* and *Messe basse*, Litaize composed the first movement of *Messe de la Toussaint*, the *Prélude à l’Introït*, in a ritornello form. The opening gesture, comprised of trills based on tri-tone intervals, punctuated chords, and triplet figuration, alternates with a modern harmonization of the Introit chant *Gaudeamus*. The complete formal structure is found in Figure 5.1. Litaize divides the chant antiphon itself into two equal parts (labeled Chant A and Chant B in the chart); the ritornello precedes each of the two phrases. The coda restates the A section in truncated form one octave higher than the opening phrase. Dissonant harmonies based on third and tri-tone relationships, along with exotic scale patterns, lend a modern sound to the medieval contour of this chant melody.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete Chant Statement</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Ritornello A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch Area</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic Progression</td>
<td>D⁰ / I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.1: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, formal and harmonic structure

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\[^{135}\] A comparison between Litaize’s *Messe de la Toussaint* and Tournemire’s Office no. 48 from *L’Orgue mystique, Festum Omnium Sanctorum*, may be found in the conclusion of this chapter.
The ritornello of the *Prélude* can be divided into three musical segments: tri-tone trills, alternating chords, and virtuosic triplet patterns. The tri-tone trill figure appears five times in the course of this movement, often presented in pairs and intended to announce the beginning of the ritornello (mm. 1 and 3, 21 and 23, 40). Litaize indicates that the performer should trill in whole-tones; the trills themselves move by tri-tone (see Example 5.1).

Example 5.1: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, mm. 1 and 3

In four out of five instances, a series of alternating block chords follows the trill figure. In this series of chords the pitch combinations in the right hand are quartal, in the left hand triadic (see Example 5.2). The chords themselves are neither harmonically functional nor particularly related to the trill figure. Rather, they seem to provide harmonic precedent for the third segment of the ritornello containing sixteenth-note sextuplets (Example 5.3). Comparison between Example 5.2 and Example 5.3 demonstrates that Litaize has taken the quartal-triadic combination found in block form in m. 2 and deconstructed those same pitches into the sextuplets found in m. 5. He follows this pattern in each presentation of the ritornello.
Example 5.2: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, m. 2

Example 5.3: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, m. 5

In the sextuplet figure, the right-hand quartal and left-hand triadic combinations each follow their own distinct pattern. The right hand ascends by step in sets of perfect fourths, the upper note of the figure following a whole-tone scale. The left hand remains locked in major triads in second inversion, but the intervallic pattern is not scalar. Rather, the triads proceed in an interlocking system of thirds and fifths as seen in Example 5.4 (the root pitches of the inverted triads are given):

Example 5.4: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, third/fifth intervallic pattern (mm. 5-7)
For the first two measures of this pattern, the pitches descend by third and then ascend by fifth. The brackets help to group visually the third/fifth intervallic patterns into minor triads. Due to Litaize’s strict adherence to the intervallic combinations in each hand, other internal patterns reveal themselves. For example, when grouped by measure, the root pitches result in split-third sonorities in mm. 5-6 (F, A-flat/A-natural, C). When considered as dyads, a rotating third progression becomes apparent. However, these secondary patterns may still be considered to be byproducts of the larger third/fifth construction. The interlocking sextuplet pattern in the left hand begins to disintegrate in m. 7 as the right-hand scale pauses at its peak on B and C-sharp. A final cluster chord in the left hand becomes the accompaniment for the chant melody when it enters in m. 10.

Litaize divides the first chant phrase (Chant A, mm. 9-20) into two parts, delineating each half by inverting the texture. In the first half (mm. 9-14), the chant appears in the left hand on the *Grande orgue* (with other manuals coupled) while upper voices harmonize on the *Récit*. In the second phrase (mm. 15-20), this melody/accompaniment texture is inverted with the melody sounding in the topmost voice of the right hand (see Example 5.5).
Example 5.5: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, chant phrases, mm. 9-11, 15-17

As he transcribed the chant into modern musical notation, Litaize chose to interpret various Solesmes markings, such as the dotted *punctum*, *quilisma*, and *strophicus*, as doublings of note value with the eighth note serving as the basic rhythmic unit. Example 5.6 shows three examples of this kind of rhythmic interpretation. On the last two syllables of “Gaudeamus,” Litaize interprets the ictus marking as a quarter note (simple double), the dotted *punctum* as a half note, and the quarter bar as a quarter-note rest. At the middle syllable of “Domino” there is another example of simple doubling. The dotted *punctum* and the first note of the *quilisma* are notated as quarter notes reflecting accepted performance practice for these neumes.
In this movement Litaize sometimes assigns long note values to pitches at the ends of phrases (see the final tied pitch in modern notation in Example 5.6). Often these elongations become pedal tones for extended cadences or prolonged chordal clusters (as in m. 14, for example), even though they are not an original part of the chant notation. All of the preceding examples of Litaize’s transcription of Gregorian melody from chant notation into modern notation demonstrate his retention of implied rhythmic relationships between neumes in an effort to retain the integrity of the chant itself.

At m. 21 (B), after the completion of the first chant phrase, Litaize begins a mechanical repeat of the ritornello transposed up a major third to F-sharp; this transposition represents a mediant harmonic relationship to the original statement of the ritornello on D. However, the succeeding chant phrase (m. 30) returns to its original pitch (E dorian). By m. 39, the remaining phrases of the Introit chant have been presented, and Litaize has also repeated his use of textural inversion for the B phrase of the chant. The final fourteen measures (mm. 40-53), the coda, present previous material from the ritornello and chant sections in truncated form. As a final gesture, Litaize quotes the
incipit of the chant in various voices at multiple pitch levels, creating a polytonal conclusion to the *Prélude à l’Introït* (see Example 5.7; incipit fragments bracketed).

![Example 5.7: Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude, mm. 43-48](image)

Generally, Litaize transcribes the chant melody from the neumes with great precision throughout the opening movement with the exception of three pitches in mm. 15-17. In these measures, he reinterprets a *clivis-strophica* ( ) as a *porrectus* ( ), transforming the pitch series A-G-G into A-F-sharp-G. Though a minor alteration, Litaize’s re-composition of the chant melody solves a specific musical problem. The removal of the repeated note and the addition of a lower neighbor (F-sharp) create forward motion within the melodic figure. Litaize harmonizes this chant phrase with static chord clusters, leaving only melodic motion to propel the phrase forward; the melodic alteration provides the needed musical propulsion. Had he retained the repeated pitch, the phrase would have been prone to musical stasis. Ideologically, Litaize’s willingness to alter the chant melody also suggests that he viewed the inherited Gregorian
chant repertory to be living and maleable rather than stable and reified. Perhaps his long-standing relationship with the Benedictine abbey at Solesmes and his interaction with chant-inspired composers such as Charles Tournemire helped him to craft this outlook on chant. Just as Bach altered chorales to meet his musical needs, Litaize altered chant to serve the purposes of his compositions.

As he did in the Offertoire of the Grande Messe, Litaize turns to fugue for the Offertoire of the Messe de la Toussaint. In this movement he composes four fugal expositions in succession, each one based on a different phrase of the Offertory chant and played on a different manual. See Example 5.8 for the fugue subjects and Example 5.9 for the Offertory chant itself. Figure 5.2 provides a structural outline of the movement.

![Example 5.8: Messe de la Toussaint, Offertoire, fugue subjects](image)
Litaize’s fugal technique remains consistent in each of the four expositions. The bass voice always enters first, followed by tenor, alto, and soprano. Each section contains a strict countersubject, and the countersubjects of expositions 2, 3, and 4 contrast greatly with the chant subjects. As each exposition draws to its close, the subject of the next exposition appears in the bass voice. In this way Litaize facilitates convenient manual and registration changes; while each exposition begins anew in the left hand, the right hand is free to make any necessary adjustments at the console.

Litaize treats the countersubjects in the Offertoire to graded increases in velocity by employing increasingly shorter note values as the piece progresses. Exposition 1 maintains a base value of eighth notes; exposition 2 increases to sixteenths; exposition 3 to tuplets of sixteenths. Finally, the episode (mm. 28-32) increases to thirty-second notes before returning to longer values of quarter and half notes (especially mm. 30-31). The
fourth and final exposition returns to a rhythmic value based on the eighth note, here in dotted rhythms. Litaize’s rhythmic variety helps to distinguish each exposition as well as to provide forward momentum toward the musical climax at the end of the episode (m. 32).

Litaize derives the four fugue subjects in this movement from the first phrase of the Offertory chant, *Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt*, which represents only one quarter of the entire text and melody. He makes no attempt to achieve a quotation of the entire chant within this fugal texture. To conclude this movement, however, he quotes a fragment of the Alleluia melody found at the end of the chant. In a clever reversal of previous procedure (fugal entrances ascending from the bass voice), the Alleluia fragment winds downward from soprano to bass, becoming an F pedal tone for the final chords (see Example 5.10).

Example 5.10: *Messe de la Toussaint, Offertoire*, mm. 42-48
The combination of four fugal expositions in the *Offertoire* can be considered an homage to Johann Sebastian Bach and the German contrapuntal tradition.\textsuperscript{136} This tradition was likely transmitted to Litaize through the *fugue d’école*, a particular method for improvising or composing fugue as taught at the Paris *Conservatoire*.\textsuperscript{137} Litaize’s strict approach to subject and countersubject entrances likely reflects the *Conservatoire* tradition, but other compositional details mark this movement with his own style. In particular, the progressive quickening of note values toward the musical climax of the piece, the dance rhythm of the third subject, and imitative counterpoint in the coda denote the *Offertoire* as a Litaizean composition.

The fourth movement of the Mass, *Communion*, treats the chant *Beati mundo corde* in various imitative and polytonal techniques. The music is easily divisible into sections based on the chant phrases as seen in Figure 5.3; Litaize’s phrase construction mirrors that of the Solesmes edition as indicated by the bar lines the monks inserted in the chant notation. Figure 5.3 also includes Litaize’s harmonic plan for this movement. He alternates between dorian mode on D (as the chant is notated in the chant books) and transpositions to F and A. This is a harmonic progression based on mediant relationships, and the finals of each transposition, when combined, make up a D minor triad. At the sixth chant phrase, section C, Litaize begins to negotiate a harmonic descent by third, ultimately creating a palindrome of pitch centers (D, F, A, F, D). The chant melody reaches its conclusion in the B’ section, but Litaize has not yet arrived at the original pitch.

\textsuperscript{136} Successive points of imitation based on a *cantus firmus* also recalls the Renaissance technique of paraphrase, found both in secular and in sacred music. However, Litaize’s connection to Bach and fugue through organ music is stronger in this instance.

\textsuperscript{137} A more detailed explanation of the *fugue d’école* as Litaize learned it, along with a discussion of how he employed this procedure in the *Grande Messe*, may be found in chapter 3.
center on D. With the addition of a coda he facilitates a harmonic conclusion. The three phrases in the A'/coda section (phrases 9, 10, 11) contain imitative and poly-modal counterpoint based on fragments of phrases 1 and 2 of the chant melody.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B'</th>
<th>A' / coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mm.</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>17-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22-28</td>
<td>29-32</td>
<td>33-41</td>
<td>42-44</td>
<td>45-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.3: *Messe de la Toussaint, Communion,* structure

Unlike the *Offertoire,* the *Communion* of *Messe de la Toussaint* contains a complete statement of the chant, but Litaize’s principles of transcription from square Gregorian notation to modern notation remain constant as in the *Prélude.* Measures 1-16 present the chant in the topmost voice supported by Litaizean modal harmonies. A contrasting texture follows in m. 17; two contrapuntal voices in the upper register carry the phrase “beati qui persecutionem patiuntur.”138 This is the first transposition to F, and Litaize marks the tempo “più vivo.” To mitigate the potentially jarring nature of both register and modal change in m. 17, Litaize began to introduce the pitch A-flat into the harmony beginning in m. 15. Hearing this pitch within the harmony of the preceding phrase renders it more familiar to the ear when Litaize employs it as the starting pitch of the chant melody in section B. He employs a similar common-tone technique to modulate to A in mm. 20-21; the pitch D from the final chord in m. 21 becomes the first note of the next chant phrase in m. 22.

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138 “Blessed are those who suffer persecution.”
Section B’, m. 29, marks the first instance of the chant being presented in the lowest voice as well as a reversal in the harmonic progression, making this phrase a moment of textural and harmonic inversion. The process of returning to D (mm. 35-41) treads on less familiar harmonic territory as chant fragments collide in imitation at remote intervals (see Example 5.11). The inner voices also contain an augmented chant statement that passes from alto to tenor in mm. 38-39 (in brackets).

Example 5.11: *Messe de la Toussaint, Communion*, mm. 35-40

At m. 42 (A'/coda) the incipit of the chant returns at its original pitch, accompanied by a continuation of polytonal imitation (see Example 5.12). The complexities of imitation, canon, and augmentation mask a definitive return to D, even though the soprano entrance at m. 42 is identical to m. 3. If examined carefully, mm. 42-44 reveal three nested statements of the incipit, one each on the three pitch centers of D, F (sharp), and A (the pitches of the harmonic palindrome). The return of the incipit contains within it vestiges of the pitch areas related by thirds in a harmonic summation of the entire movement. To provide musical resolution to the complexity of phrases 7-10,
Litaize registers the final phrase, mm. 51-55, on the *Récit* Gamba and Voix Celeste as the music comes to rest on D.

Example 5.12: *Messe de la Toussaint, Communion*, mm. 42-47

The *Communion* movement of *Messe de la Toussaint* is at once simple and complex. Analysis demonstrates that Litaize has filled this movement with intricate contrapuntal imitation, clever medial transpositions and modulations, and various manipulations of the chant melody. However, advanced harmonic motion passes by almost unnoticed to the listener, and only the most acute ear will hear nested chant fragments as in Examples 5.11 and 5.12. Perhaps, as in the *Communion* of the *Messe basse*, compositional intricacy layered beneath simple, lyrical melody constitutes Litaize’s commentary on the ritual act of receiving Communion during the Mass liturgy. For the Roman Catholic faithful, the Communion elements of bread and wine, after their consecration, contain the humanity and divinity of Christ beneath their outward form.
Litaize makes use of advanced compositional techniques in this *Communion* movement but disguises them within the simple outward form of a Gregorian melody.

Litaize signals his use of the Alleluia chant for All Saints, *Venite ad me*, as the basis for the final movement by employing the unusual title of *Postlude Alléluiatique*.\(^{139}\)

Analysis of this movement depends on an understanding of the form of a Gregorian Alleluia, one of the more complicated chants in the Proper of the Mass. Accepted performance of an Alleluia in the Roman liturgy of Litaize’s day began with the cantor intoning the Alleluia. The choir then repeated the Alleluia and added a somewhat lengthy *jubilus*, an extension of the final syllable “-a.” The cantor then intoned the verse, with the choir joining in for the last few words. The entire group, cantor and choir, then repeated the Alleluia and *jubilus* in their entirety. Figure 5.5 shows the structure of the Alleluia for All Saints day; Example 5.13 provides the full chant score. The chant notation from the *Liber Usualis* indicates cantor/choir divisions with asterisks marking the entrance of the chorus after the cantor’s intonations and the letters “ij” to signify a repetition. It would have been understood that the return to the Alleluia after the verse would not include a repetition of the first Alleluia as when the chant began.

\(^{139}\) Within the genre of the organ Mass, the two “intervenient” chants (the Gradual and Alleluia, sung between the Introit and Offertory) rarely appear. However, since the Mass usually requires “exit music” of some kind, composers of chant-based organ Masses often turned to these intervenient chants, hymns from the office, or a sequence to serve as the basis for their final movements.
In a manner similar to his setting of the Introit in this Mass, Litaize adopts in the
*Postlude* the performance practice of sung chant, integrating repetitions and cantor/choir
alterations into an instrumental texture (see Figure 5.6). Also, though the general contour of the melodic lines of the chant remain intact, he alters various melodic intervals by half-step throughout the movement to mold the chant to different modes or motives. Thus, the *Postlude* is a true combination of instrumental and vocal music.

![Figure 5.6: Messe de la Toussaint, Postlude, structure](image)

Throughout the *Postlude Alléluiatique* Litaize applies driving rhythms to the chant melody, incorporating chant-like groupings of two and three notes into the rhythm in order to offset expected rhythmic patterns and to displace strong downbeats (see Example 5.14). When performed at the indicated tempo of *allegro vivo*, the result is exciting and dance-like.¹⁴⁰ Throughout this and the other movements, the musical notation conveys important information regarding rhythm. In the same manner as the Solesmes rhythmic tradition, Litaize organizes chant phrases into groups of two and three notes, and these groupings are seen clearly in the opening two measures of the *Postlude* (Example 5.14, especially eighth-note beams).

¹⁴⁰ Eric Lebrun writes that Litaize loved to improvise in a “special dance rhythm” to convey joy in the liturgy (e-mail message from Eric Lebrun, 17 November 2015).
Example 5.14: *Messe de la Toussaint, Postlude*, mm. 1-3

Harmonic motion in the *Postlude* follows no particular structural pattern, but rather oscillates quickly through third and fifth progressions, common-tone modulations, and half-step alterations within modal scales. While these quickly moving and sometimes distantly related harmonic centers have the potential to be aurally unsettling, Litaize navigates through them with a compositional fluidity that belies their disparate relationships.

After stating the complete Alleluia and *jubilus* in G (mm. 1-18), Litaize begins to move away from this modal center in m. 27, the beginning of the first phrase of the verse. While using the chant phrase “venite ad me” as a point of imitation, Litaize alters the mode with the addition of A-flat and B-flat. These alterations make possible a micro-progression of ascending thirds in mm. 31-33 (D-flat, F, A-flat). A brief move to E in m. 35 (a result of intervallic expansion outward from a minor third to a perfect fifth, G-flat/A to E/B-natural) “resolves” quickly downward to E-flat; the melody begins on A-flat in m. 37. In m. 62, the chant phrase “reficiam vos” ends on E-flat in the top voice. At this pitch level, the next phrase would begin on D-flat, but Litaize instead uses E-flat as the starting pitch of the next phrase, forcing the chant to modulate by common tone to F. Curiously, an examination of harmonic centers in Figure 5.6 reveals that Litaize’s harmonic choices
make up a whole tone scale: G, (A), B, C-sharp, E-flat, F.\textsuperscript{141} Litaize’s use of chant, dance rhythms, and unusual modal shifts make the \textit{Postlude} an exciting final movement in the tradition of French toccatas.

A comparison between Litaize’s \textit{Messe de la Toussaint} and Charles Tournemire’s Office no. 48, \textit{Festum Omnium Sanctorum}, from \textit{L’Orgue mystique} will demonstrate that Litaize’s setting of the All Saints chants represents a development from and extension of Tournemire’s setting from forty years earlier.\textsuperscript{142} After laying out his plan for the entire cycle of organ Masses in the early 1920s, Tournemire began composing \textit{L’Orgue mystique} with the six most highly ranked feasts in the Roman Catholic liturgical year: Easter, Immaculate Conception, Christmas, Pentecost, Assumption, and All Saints.\textsuperscript{143} Tournemire completed his Office for All Saints in 1928.\textsuperscript{144} Robert Sutherland Lord, in his article on \textit{L’Orgue mystique}, notes that Tournemire wrapped the manuscripts of these first six offices in a special blue paper, marking them with special significance to the entire project.\textsuperscript{145} From these details we can assume that Tournemire took special care with his settings of the All Saints chants and that his compositional decisions in this organ Mass are representative of his contribution to the organ Mass genre. An excerpt from

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\textsuperscript{141} Even though A does not receive particular emphasis as a harmonic center, Litaize passes through it in the course of the movement. One may also note that the opening movement, the \textit{Prélude}, contained a whole-tone scale in the ascending sextuplet figuration from the ritornello. The use of this scale in multiple locations reminds us that, in the twentieth century, serious composers made regular use of scale patterns from outside the tonal system, and Litaize is no exception.

\textsuperscript{142} Tournemire entitled all of his organ Masses “Offices”; it is this term that will be used when referring to his Mass for All Saints.


\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 73.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 72.
Joseph Bonnet’s short preface to the first edition of *L’Orgue mystique* offers a helpful summary of Tournemire’s approach to setting the Mass chants:

> Our modern musical writing is extraordinary [sic] fit to adorn the Gregorian Melodies, so, without sacrificing [sic] anything of his rich imagination, of his brilliant originality, Charles Tournemire has succeeded in creating such a mystical frame for the liturgical melodies.¹⁴⁶

In the first movement (Introit) from Office no. 48, Tournemire employs sustained modal harmonies in the manuals to “frame” the chant, just as Bonnet suggests. The Gregorian melody is presented in the pedal (see Example 5.15). This arrangement of melody and accompaniment can be thought of as an architectural structure in which the chant itself is surrounded by harmonic scaffolding. Tournemire’s registration directions call for a 4' stop in the pedal, placing the chant an octave higher than written and therefore *within* the pitches of the accompaniment.

Example 5.15: Charles Tournemire, *Festum Omnium Sanctorum*, I, mm. 1-4

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In the *Messe de la Toussaint*, Litaize frames the Introit chant in a manner similar to Tournemire; the melody appears beneath a modern and modal harmonization (see Example 5.16). Litaize composes an even more static accompaniment than did Tournemire, but both composers utilize the same set of mode-derived pitches in their harmonies. In contrast to his mentor, however, Litaize expanded the opening movement of his organ Mass with the addition of a tripartite ritornello figure of great complexity. Litaize was able to embed the melody/accompaniment procedure he inherited from Tournemire within a larger and more complicated texture. One could say that Litaize provides for the Introit chant a secondary structural framework (the ritornello) in addition to the harmonic framework pioneered by Tournemire.

Example 5.16: *Messe de la Toussaint, Prélude*, mm. 9-12

In the second movement (*Offertoire*) of Office no. 48 Tournemire makes reference to *alternatim* practice by contrasting chorale-like versets with unaccompanied statements of the chant melody, the latter played on the solo Trompette.\(^{147}\) Though the musical form differs, Litaize also recalled an older compositional genre in his All Saints

\(^{147}\) Lord, “Liturgy and Gregorian Chant,” 65. Tournemire appears to treat a chant other than *Justorum animae* in the second movement (*Offertoire*) of his Office for All Saints. Lord attributes these kinds of variants (found throughout *L’Orgue mystique*) to Tournemire’s use of the *Liber Antiphonarius* published by Solesmes in 1897 rather than the *Graduale Romanum* or *Liber Usualis*. 
Offertoire through the use of multiple fugal expositions. In both instances, by utilizing older genres, these composers assert that chant holds an important place in the history of liturgical music and integrates easily into both older musical forms and modern harmonic systems.

The final movements of these two organ Masses for All Saints reveal more differences than similarities between Litaize and Tournemire. Tournemire’s fifth movement, Chorale, takes up fifteen pages of the score and twelve minutes of playing time (out of just over twenty-six minutes in all). This lengthy sortie recalls Tournemire’s improvisations from 1930-1931 that were reconstructed by Maurice Duruflé in 1958. Various short sections made up of manual figuration, augmented pedal melodies, and dissonant harmonic progressions careen toward a final chorale-like cadence on full organ. Chant melodies in this movement are less apparent, and, when it is possible to perceive them within the texture, they do not match those of the Proper chants for Mass on All Saints Day. Tournemire allows the chant to “inspire” his final movement, but does not tie himself to the chant in a strict manner. In contrast, Litaize chooses a specific chant from the Mass, the Alleluia, as the basis of his Postlude and treats it in an efficient yet rhythmically interesting manner (see Example 5.14). Also, unlike Tournemire, Litaize appropriates the pattern of sung chant (the sequence of assigned parts for cantor or choir, including repetitions) into an instrumental texture. Without making a judgment about the

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148 As mentioned previously in this chapter, Litaize’s fugal treatment of the chant could be considered an homage to Bach and the German contrapuntal tradition.


150 In this movement the chant melody (or melodies) may be taken from chants appointed for the Divine Office, not the Mass liturgy. Some further investigation would be required to make a specific identification.
liturgical suitability of either composition, one can say that Litaize’s composition retains
the chant melody and its inherited performance practice to a greater degree than that of
Tournemire.

Tournemire appears to treat the All Saints chants as starting points for
constructing a musical “framework” for the liturgy in his organ Mass; Litaize treats the
chant as a *cantus firmus* to which he can apply all manner of compositional devices such
as counterpoint (*Offertoire*) and complex rhythms (*Postlude*). One must then ask whether
Litaize’s style can be seen as having developed from Tournemire’s. Considering the
similarities in texture found in the opening movements of these two organ Masses, and
the deliberate references to older musical forms and genres in the *Offertoires*, the answer
must be in the affirmative. One can speculate that the older master imparted to his student
a commitment to the Roman Catholic Church’s *corpus* of Gregorian chant as the
fundamental music of the liturgy along with various compositional techniques for setting
these melodies within interesting musical textures. Litaize took these principles and
expanded them beyond Tournemire’s works into new musical territory that included
appropriation of advanced contrapuntal techniques such as polytonal imitation, canon,
and fugue.

It has been well documented that Tournemire owned and read Dom Prosper
Guéranger’s series of volumes on the liturgical year (*L’Année liturgique*), a particularly
significant contribution to the budding liturgical movement in the late nineteenth
century.¹⁵¹ Guéranger’s liturgically derived spirituality provided the theological
undergirding for Tournemire’s *L’Orgue mystique*. It is easily surmised, therefore, that

¹⁵¹ Lord, “Liturgy and Gregorian Chant,” 63-64.
Tournemire’s own spirituality made a great impression on Litaize, perhaps even contributing to the latter’s own spiritual and liturgical formation as a Christian, Benedictine oblate, and liturgical organist. Perhaps further comparison between Tournemire’s and Litaize’s liturgical organ music, combined with an investigation into their correspondence and other primary source material, will lead to new insight into both men’s lives and compositions.

Some examination must be made of the impulse behind Litaize’s composition of *Messe de la Toussaint* in 1964. In the mid 1960s, the Roman Catholic musical establishment in Paris, including Litaize himself, was becoming increasingly concerned with the quality of new music being produced for the liturgy as well as the suitability of experimental musical and liturgical practices in the parishes. In the *Messe de la Toussaint* Litaize provides a musical treatise defending his strongly held views regarding liturgical music in the face of an uncertain future. First, by using the proper chants for All Saints as the basis of this work, Litaize asserts, as he had all of his life, that Gregorian chant should form the basis for all truly liturgical music. In 1964, this was a particularly remarkable assertion when new styles of music and vernacular liturgy were the most prominent topics of discussion among musicians and liturgists. Secondly, by returning to the chant-based organ Mass, Litaize resurrected the memory of Charles Tournemire. To those familiar with Tournemire’s music, or to those who had known the man himself, Litaize’s reference not only looked backward to a revered church musician, but also claimed that Tournemire’s style and chant-based approached could and should be relevant in the contemporary life of the church.
The *Messe de la Toussaint* was Litaize’s final contribution to the twentieth-century French organ Mass genre before the promulgation of the Mass of Paul VI in 1969. He did not publish another solo work for organ until 1984 (*Epiphanie*) and not another organ Mass until 1988 (*Suite en forme de Messe*). Such a large gap in his oeuvre suggests that the Mass for All Saints marks Litaize’s final attempt to preserve a vanishing musical and liturgical tradition within French Catholicism.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The preceding examination of history, genre, and style has placed Gaston Litaize’s organ Masses at the pinnacle of this twentieth-century liturgical form. Not only did Litaize infuse the organ Mass with complex counterpoint, historically informed musical structures, and modern compositional devices, he also combined the organ Mass framework with larger musical forms such as the French organ symphony (as in the *Messe basse*). The following paragraphs summarize Litaize’s musical process within each of the three organ Masses and highlight the specific factors that place his works above all others in the genre.

The *Grande Messe pour tous les temps* (1948) showcases Gaston Litaize’s mastery of complex compositional devices within the liturgical confines of the High Mass. The High Mass subcategory of the twentieth-century French organ Mass calls for musical brevity, requiring only enough organ music to cover any liturgical action for which the choral music was insufficient. Litaize demonstrates in this composition that musical brevity does not preclude musical quality. His use of techniques and forms such as fugue, palindrome, and rondo display a compositional craftsmanship of the highest order. Litaize also couches the *Grande Messe* in an adventurous modal dialect and introduces the “modal rotational array” technique as described in chapter 3. The *Grande*
*Messe* is Litaize’s bold statement that liturgical music, specifically the organ Mass, can embrace historic forms and techniques as well as modern processes and contemporary sounds.\(^{152}\) For him, liturgical music was just as open to compositional creativity as non-liturgical or non-religious genres of music.

In the *Messe basse pour tous le temps*, Litaize makes a symphonic contribution to the organ Mass genre. This “symphonic” designation stems mainly from his use of ten distinct themes throughout the piece that ultimately combine in the final movement. Litaize stops short of fully developed thematic transformation or cyclic form, but the process of thematic combination on a large scale (five movements in this instance) places this Mass in the symphonic as well as liturgical realms. Perhaps it is the *Messe basse* in which Litaize comes the closest to uniting secular form (symphony) with sacred melody (chant). As discussed in chapter 4, he composed many of the themes within the melodic and rhythmic language of Gregorian chant in an effort to unite the music to the liturgy. In a similar but contrasting way, Charles-Marie Widor incorporated chant into his last two organ symphonies (*Symphonie gothique*, op. 70, 1895; *Symphonie romane*, op. 73, 1900). However, despite the presence of a Gregorian melody, Widor’s pieces remain firmly in the realm of concert music and make no attempt to interact with the liturgy. Litaize brought liturgy and symphony as close together as possible in the *Messe basse* by incorporating symphonic thematic combination into the liturgical movements of the

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\(^{152}\) It is sometimes stated that Tournemire was the first to open liturgical organ music to modern harmonies and new musical structures. However, Tournemire represents a pre-World War II school of composition. After the war, Litaize seems to have been the first to treat the movements of an organ Mass in a serious compositional manner. Also, some comparison may be made between both the *Grande Messe* (1948) and *Messe basse* (1949) and Messiaen’s *Messe du Pentecôte* from 1950. Litaize committed himself to composing within accepted forms of Western music, while Messiaen intentionally experimented with new sounds and constructions outside of strict formal considerations. Perhaps in these pieces both composers asserted their belief in the validity of innovative organ music for the liturgy but from different artistic vantage points within the tradition of Western music.
organ Mass. If developments in Roman Catholic liturgy had not deterred him, Litaize might have explored even more symphonic techniques in a liturgical context after the 1960s. Instead, after a twenty-year break from composing for solo organ between 1964 and 1988, he turned to very large, non-liturgical suites such as *Pentecôte: triptyque pour deux orgues* (1986) or very small pieces such as *Epiphanie* (1984). Further study of the late pieces for solo organ may reveal that Litaize continued to explore symphonic gestures after the revised liturgy of Paul VI, but outside of Roman Catholic liturgical forms.

Litaize’s *Messe de la Toussaint* from 1964 looks backward to Tournemire in its use of chant melody and modal harmony, but this work also stands as a monument to Litaize’s conviction that chant should continue to inform and inspire sacred music in the twentieth century. In the early 1960s, Litaize probably could not have predicted the degree to which the organ and Gregorian chant would be excised from Roman Catholic worship in the coming decades. The major churches of Paris retained their choirs and organists, but church musicians were compelled to find new ways to fit themselves and their music into the revised liturgy. As a response, Litaize composed a thoroughly modern Mass based on traditional and historical Gregorian themes.

Chapter 5 concluded with a comparison between Litaize’s *Messe de la Toussaint* and Charles Tournemire’s Office no. 48, *Festum Omnium Sanctorum*, from *L’Orgue mystique*. Various aspects of the *Messe de la Toussaint* place this work within the chant-based compositional tradition of Tournemire. However, Litaize’s addition of contrapuntal

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153 Litaize was certainly not alone in this conviction regarding Gregorian chant and its place in the liturgy. For example, much of Maurice Durufle’s sacred music looks to chant as a model, especially the *Requiem*, op. 9 (1941), and the *Quatre motets sur des thèmes grégoriens*, op. 10 (1960).
and formal complexities move this organ Mass into a realm beyond that of his teacher. For example, rather than simply framing the Gregorian melodies in modern harmonies, Litaize treats them to various types of musical manipulation. In the *Offertoire*, fragments of the chant become the subjects of multiple fugal expositions. Polytonal imitation in the *Communion* creates dissonant interaction between multiple layers of melody. Litaize derives the musical form of the *Postlude* from the performance practice of the Alleluia chant. No other French composer of organ Masses, including Tournemire, treated the chant in such creative ways. These advanced techniques place Litaize and his organ music at the forefront of innovation in liturgical music in the twentieth century.

This project has demonstrated through analysis that Litaize brought the genre of the twentieth-century French organ Mass to its culmination in the *Grande Messe pour tous les temps* (1948), the *Messe basse pour tous les temps* (1949), and the *Messe de la Toussaint* (1964). However, during the course of his compositional career, Litaize made two other contributions to the organ Mass genre that have not been addressed here: the *Cinq pièces liturgiques* (1950) and the *Suite en forme de Messe* (1988). Due to its chronological proximity to the *Grande Messe* and *Messe basse*, the *Cinq pièces* may reveal further insights into the twentieth-century French organ Mass and Litaize’s liturgical compositional style in the late 1940s. The *Suite* from 1988, on the other hand, holds particular interest for further examination of Litaize’s reaction to the revised liturgy in the Mass of Paul VI (1969). In this organ Mass Litaize completely abandons the traditional liturgical titles for the four movements, suggesting the work could be a
protestation of or even lament over the musical and liturgical state of the church during the late twentieth century.\textsuperscript{154}

Without doubt the French organ school in the twentieth century will continue to fascinate organists and musicologists in decades to come, and the compositions from this period will continue to form an admired part of the organ literature. Ongoing scholarship into the life and works of important but lesser-known composers will expand our knowledge of the musical culture of Paris in this period, and, in the process, bring to our collective attention the significant musical contributions of individuals such as Gaston Litaize. As the most skilled contrapuntist of his generation in France, Litaize brought the twentieth-century French organ Mass to its culmination. This is perhaps one of the most important accomplishments of his long and illustrious career.

\textsuperscript{154} The \textit{Suite en forme de Messe} from 1988 contains four movements: Prologue, Dialogue, Apologue, and Epilogue.
APPENDIX A

COMPOSITIONS FOR ORGAN BY GASTON LITAIZE

This list is extracted for the convenience of the reader from the complete works list found in Sébastien Durand’s biography *Gaston Litaize* (Paris: Bleu nuit, 2005), pp. 167-170.

Douze Pièces pour grand orgue, vol. 1 (pub. 1939)

Prélude (1930)
Double Fugue (1930)
Lied (1932)
Intermezzo pastoral (1932)
Final (1932)
Lamento (1934)

Douze Pièces pour grand orgue, vol. 2 (pub. 1939)

Scherzo (1934)
Toccata sur le Veni Creator (1934)
Prière (1935)
Jeux de rythmes (1935)
Interlude (1937)
Variations sur un Noël angevin (1937)

Deux Trios (pub. 1987)

Pièce en trio (1934)
Divertissement à trois (1943)

Symphonie pour orgue et orchestre (1942, unpublished)

Grande Messe pour tous le temps (1948, pub. 1956)

Messe basse pour tous les temps (1949, pub. 1959)
Noël Basque (1949)

Cinq Pièces liturgiques (1950)

Passacaille sur le nom de Flor Peeters (1953)


Fugue sur l’Introït “Da Pacem” (1954)

Thème et variations sur le nom de Victor Gonzalez (1956)

Trois Versets sur des Antiennes grégoriennes (1961)

Choral (1961)

Messe de la Toussaint (1964)

Prélude et Danse fuguée (1964)


Epiphanie (1984, pub. 1988)


Arches, Fantaisie pour orgue (1987, pub. 1988)

Suite en forme de Messe (1988)

Diapason (1990, pub. 1992)

Offerte vobis pacem (1990)

Reges Tharsis (1991)

Sonate à deux (organ, four hands, 1991, pub. 1994)
APPENDIX B

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Bessonnet, Georges. *Noëls de notre temps sur des airs d’autrefois*. Solstice SOCD142, N.D. CD.

Bouchard, Antoine. *Œuvres pour orgue: Prélude et Double Fugue; Lied; Intermezzo pastoral; Final; Lamento; Cinq Pièces liturgique; Préludes liturgiques; Noël basque*. REM 311128, 1990. CD.


Fetzer, Jean-Philippe. *Orgues des Vosges: Lied; Passacaille sur le nom de Flor Peeters; Messe basse pour tous les temps*. Inter Loisiers Disc, 1991. CD.


Latry, Olivier and Denis Comtet. *Gaston Litaize: Cortège pour Orgue et Cuivres; Lied; Scherzo; Epiphanie; Jeu de Rythmes; Prélude et Danse Fuguée; Prélude Liturgique (no. XVI); Pentecôte; Tryptique pour Deux Orgues*. BNL 112768, 1989. CD.


__________. *Missa solemnior; Adoro te; Chant de Pâques; Reges Tharsis; Sonata à deux; Cortège*. Solstice 222, 2004. CD.


Litaize spielt Litaize an der Abliez-Orgel der Propsteikirche Kempen.
Motette M1043, 1980. LP.

Messe basse pour tous les temps; Toccata sur le Veni Creator; Prière; Jeux
de rythmes; Variations sur un noël angevin. SM 33-98, 1961. LP.
APPENDIX C

PREFACE TO GRANDE MESSE POUR TOUS LES TEMPS AND TRANSLATION

The following text by Norbert Dufourcq was transcribed in its original French from Deux Grand' messes (Paris: Editions musicales de la Schola cantorum, 1956) by Kevin Vaughn and translated into idiomatic English by Louis MacKenzie. The original formatting is retained.

La Messe pour Orgue

Il nous a paru instructif de grouper en un même fascicule, et par là même de confronter deux Messes pour orgue: une, ancienne, et l’autre, contemporaine. Elles s’opposent en ce sens que l’une est destinée à une grand’messe chantée, puisque l’orgue alterne avec le chœr, et que l’autre, écrite pour tous les temps, s’adapte aussi bien à la messe basse qu’à la grand’messe, sans d’ailleurs que ses versets puissent, en ce dernier cas, s’opposer au chant, durant l’exécution de l’ordinaire.

La Messe de Lebègue, extraite de son Second Livre d’orgue, parait sans doute vers 1678. Le Cérémonial des Evêques faisant à l’organiste un devoir de répondre aux choristes de manière intelligible, datait de 1662. Le texte précisait que l’organiste se doit d’utiliser le plain-chant à découvert pour le premier et le dernier Kyrie, l’Et in terra pax


(du Gloria), le Suscipe deprecationem, l’In gloria Dei patris, l’Amen, le Sanctus, l’Agnus Dei. Lebègue est-il le premier à offrir aux organistes de la capitale, ses collègues, une illustration vivante de l’article que vient d’émettre l’autorité supérieure? On hésite à répondre. Un Charles Couperin, un Hardel, un Monnard, un Pinel, un La Guerre ne lui ont-ils pas ouvert la voie? C’est fort possible.

Lebègue tient en tous cas à suivre à la lettre le texte de 1662. Le thème du plain-chant apparaît en trois versets du Kyrie (Cunctipotens) sur cinq, en deux versets du Gloria, dans les premières gloses du Sanctus et de l’Agnus. Pour le reste prévaut l’esthétique du temps: duo, récit de cornet ou de voix humaine, trio, petite fugue. Lorsque le chant grégorien commande le jeu. Lebègue le dispose en valeurs longues à la basse, quitte à l’enrichir de quelques notes de passage. Une seule page para-liturgique: un Trio pour l’Elévation, qui évoque une atmosphère pré-haendelienne. Pour le reste, tout est simple, d’une écriture aisée, d’une interprétation n’exigeant aucune virtuosité. Le préfacier annonce que Lebègue n’a point travaillé pour les “savants,” mais qu’il a donné là - ce qui est vrai - “des chants très beaux, aïsés à jouer, parce qu’ils sont naturels, faciles à apprendre et en très peu de temps, parce qu’ils sont courts.”

La Messe pour tous les temps, de Gaston Litaize, emprunte son cadre à maints offices de l’Orgue mystique de Tournemire: son cadre, mais point son esprit, ni son écriture. Sans doute trouve-t-on là: Prélude, Offertoire, Elévation, Communion, Postlude. Mais Litaize n’exploite aucun thème du missel grégorien. Ses thèmes, il les forge lui-

mème et il les développe à son gré dans l’ambiance harmonique du mode par lui choisi.
D’autre part, au centre d’un office qui fait une large place à une certaine conception verticale et harmonique de l’écriture, il insère des épisodes entiers, des tempi qui doivent tout à la science du contrepoint, allant jusqu’à penser intellectuellement, en guise d’Offertoire une manière de “Fugue à 5,” semblable, quoique beaucoup plus modulante, à celle qu’écrivait le disciple de Lebègue, Grigny. Aux deux voix du cornet, comme l’organiste de Reims, il oppose les deux parties du cromorne. Ailleurs, ce sont les fonds qui prévalent - les flûtes, les bourdons, la moderne voix céleste - alors que le Postlude demande sa lumière et son éclat aux pleins-jeux et aux anches, jusqu’à l’énoncé de ses différentes idées mélodiques ou rythmiques...

Lebègue, Litaize. Deux époques, deux orgues; deux pensées; deux sensibilités, que réunissent, à trois siècles de distance, un même idéal, un même souci de commenter l’Office.

Norbert Dufourcq

Mass for Organ

We thought it instructive to group in a single fascicule, and in so doing to appose two Masses for organ: the one ancient, the other modern. They contrast insofar as one is meant for a sung High Mass with alternating organ and choir, while the other, written for all occasions, works for both Low and High Masses, without in the latter case the versets competing with the singing during the Ordinary.
Lebègue’s Mass, taken from his *Second Livre d’orgue*, seems to date from 1678.¹ The *Cérémonial des Evêques*, requiring the organist to respond intelligibly to the choir, dates from 1662.² The text specified that the organist is to use an obvious, plainly heard chant for the first and last *Kyries*, the *Et in terra pax* (in the Gloria), the *Susciepe deprecationem*, the *In Gloria Dei patris*, the *Amen*, the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei*. Is Lebègue the first to offer to his fellow organists in Paris a superior illustration of this? The answer is not obvious.³ Did not, for example, Charles Couperin, Hardel, Monard, Pitel, La Guerre open the door for him? This is a distinct possibility.

In every case, Lebègue is determined to adhere scrupulously to the text of 1662. The plainchant theme appears in two of five verses of the *Kyrie* (*Cunctipotens*), in two verses of the *Gloria*, in the first lines of the *Sanctus* and of the *Agnus*. As for the rest, the aesthetics of the day prevail: duo, récit du Cornet or Voix Humaine, trio, small fugue. Lebègue arranges it in long note values in the bass line even if it means embellishing it with a few passing notes. A single para-liturgical page: a trio for the Elevation, reminiscent of Handel. As for the rest, everything is simple, characterized by uncomplicated writing, demanding no virtuosity in performance. The author of the preface makes it clear that Lebègue did not write for specialists, but produced - and this is

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³ Between 1662 and 1678, no *Livre d’orgue*, currently known, contains versets offering commentary on the Mass. In 1667, the *Second Livre d’orgue* by Nivers illustrates the principal *hymns* of the liturgical year (see its first modern edition in *Les Grandes Heures de l’orgue*, 1956. Editions Musicales, 76, bis rue des Saints-Pères, Paris-7e). No composition for organ in the work of Henry Du Mont was specifically written for the Mass. But what was contained in the *Livre d’orgue* by Etienne Richard, which his widow sent in 1669 to Thomelin? (See my article *Notes sur les Richard*. Revue de Musicologie, décembre 1954 p. 116 (p. 128).
true - very beautiful pieces that are easy to play because they flow naturally and, because
they are short, are easy to learn quickly.

The *Messe basse pour tous les temps* of Gaston Litaize borrows its framework from a number of *offices* of Tournemire’s *L’Orgue mystique*: its framework, but neither its spirit nor its expression. Of course, one finds in it Prelude, Offertory, Elevation, Communion and Postlude. Litaize does not, however, turn to any themes from the Gregorian missal. He invents his own and freely develops them as appropriate to the harmonic ambience of the mode he has chosen. Moreover, at the center of an office featuring a vertical and harmonic conception in its writing, he interposes entire [musical] episodes as well as tempi that come directly from the art of counterpoint, inviting us to consider on an intellectual level, in the form of an Offertory a kind of *fugue à cinq* similar to, but far more modulating than the one written by Lebègue’s student, Grigny. As did the organist at Reims, he juxtaposes the two voices of the Cromorne and the two voices of the Cornet. Elsewhere, it is the *fonds* that prevail—flutes, bourdons, the modern Voix Céleste, whereas the Postlude gets its light and power, including the expression of its different melodic or rhythmic ideas, from the *pleins-jeux* and the *anches*.

Lebègue, Litaize. Two eras, two organs, two conceptions, two sensitivities that, three centuries apart, are brought together by a same ideal, a same concern for commenting on [interpreting] the Mass.

Norbert Dufourcq
[trans. Louis MacKenzie, 2016]
The following text by Norbert Dufourcq was transcribed in its original French from *Messe basse pour tous les temps* (Paris: Editions musicales de la Šchola cantorum, 1959) by Kevin Vaughn and translated into idiomatic English by Louis MacKenzie. The original formatting is retained.

*Messe basse pour tous les temps*

de Gaston Litaize

Messe “lue” ou messe “chantée”?... Les circonstances en décideront. Les dernières instructions romaines concernant le chant d’église et, par voie de conséquence, l’orgue, laissent une place à notre instrument: une vingtaine de minutes lui sont imparties pendant la célébration du Saint-Sacrifice. Soyons reconnaissants à ceux qui, dans la lumière de ces nouvelles directives, nous offrent des exemples de ce que peut être, dès lors, une messe pour orgue.

Celle de Gaston Litaize n’œuvre pas sur des thèmes appartenant au répertoire grégorien. L’auteur a forgé lui-même ses mélodies. Le lecteur jugera de son effort. Et, pour le mieux discerner, nous publions ici en leur intégralité les indications qu’il a bien voulu nous fournir sur l’esprit dans lequel il a travaillé:

“Cette œuvre, ainsi que son nom même l’indique, veut être d’inspiration liturgique. Elle serait une prière que l’auteur aurait atteint son but.
“Les cinq pièces qui la composent sont écrites sur des thèmes ‘originaux’ inspirés du chant grégorien.


“L’Offertoire comporte trois thèmes. Si le premier n’est qu’un élément d’introduction, le second sera le ‘thème du pain,’ traité avec le cornet, et le troisième le ‘thème du vin’ sur des fonds 8 et 2 p.


“La Communion débute par un thème que le compositeur appelle ‘de la Grandeur Eucharistique,’ auquel succède immédiatement une sorte de danse sacrée qui évoque la joie du fidèle recevant son Dieu. Dans son troisième thème seront évoqués la ‘crainte et le respect’ de la grandeur divine. Enfin, les deux premiers thèmes de la pièce se mélangent ainsi que les éléments de l’Offertoire et de l’Élévation.


N. D.
A “read” or a “sung” Mass? Circumstances will determine. The last instructions from Rome concerning ecclesiastical singing and, consequently, the organ as well, concern our instrument: it is allowed approximately 20 minutes during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Let us be grateful to those who, in the wake of these new directives, give us examples of what a Mass for organ can be.

Gaston Litaize’s Mass for Organ does not derive from themes belonging to the Gregorian repertoire. The author wrote his own melodies. It is up to the reader to judge his effort. In order to get a better picture of it, we publish here in their entirety the remarks he provided us on his own thinking about the work.

“This work, as its very name indicates, is of liturgical inspiration. The author prays that he has indeed attained his goal.”

“The five pieces of which it is composed are based on ‘original’ themes inspired by Gregorian chant.”

“The Prelude, in the seventh mode, is a [musical] ascent that attains a high point of intensity making use of the entire instrument. The [second] section of this Prelude ends up with the same plein-jeu coloration as the beginning.”

“The Offertory is comprised of three themes. If the first of these is but an introduction, the second is the ‘thème du pain,’ played with the Cornet, and the third the ‘thème du vin,’ on the 8 and 2 ft. foundations.”

“In the Elévation, the composer follows the evolution of the Eucharistic drama; two themes: that of the Corps du Christ [Body of Christ] and that of the Précieux Sang [Precious Blood].”
“The Communion begins with a theme that the composer calls ‘De la Grandeur Eucharistique,’ which is followed immediately by a kind of sacred dance evoking the joy of the believers receiving their God. In its third theme the ‘crainte et le respect’ [fear of and respect for] divine greatness is to be evoked. Finally, the first two themes of the piece run together along with elements of the Offertory and the Elévation.

“The Final is a prayer of thanksgiving: a theme in the fifth mode introduces it, and is then followed by several variations; after which reappear all the themes of the work, first as a canon, then with all the themes coming together. One cannot help but notice the writing of a fugue à 5 of Grigny, and two fugal expositions on the elements of a theme in the fifth mode. The Final will conclude in the initial [opening] tone which will bring to bear the whole power of the instrument.” (G.L.)

N. D.
[trans. Louis MacKenzie, 2016]
APPENDIX E

PREFACE TO ORGAN SUITE IN THE FORM OF A LOW MASS

The following text is reproduced in its entirety from *Organ Suite in the Form of a Low Mass* (Boston: McLaughlin and Reilly Co., 1961). The author of this preface is not named in the publication. The original formatting is retained.

Organ Suite in the Form of a Low Mass

The original design of this group of compositions is that of organ music to be played during the celebration of Low Mass. Each movement is intended to parallel one or another of the parts of the Mass. Thus separate pieces bear the titles Offertory, Elevation, Communion. The first and last movements are entitled Prelude and Final respectively.

Also part of the original design and perhaps even the musical point of departure for the work, is the obvious Gregorian Chant influence in the composer’s choice of melodic strands as well as his use of modality in its harmonic structure. One hears throughout the work motifs unmistakably characteristic of several of the Gregorian modes. In addition at the cadence points one is aware of a certain equivocal tonality often associated with modal harmony. Through these means the composer achieves musical unity and liturgical propriety.

That the composition as a whole or taken in each of its parts is suited to organ recital programs is obvious from the skill the composer displays in exploiting the tonal
resources of the organ. As one would expect from Gaston Litaize, the registration indications in this work are strongly suggestive of other contemporary French works written especially for typical French organs. It is not to be concluded however that this music will sound well only on such instruments. Quite the contrary. The vibrant contrapuntal fabric of the music places it within effective reach of polyphonic and even markedly classical or Baroque instruments.

The Composer

Gaston Litaize was born in Menil sur Belvitte, France on August 11, 1909. He has been blind from infancy. He studied at the National Institute for the Blind and at the Paris Conservatory. He is organist at St. Francois Xavier Church, Paris, and on the staff of the National Institute for the Blind. He won the 2nd Prix de Rome (unprecedented for a blind person). His first American tour was in the Autumn of 1957. He is the composer of several Masses and organ pieces, and of a canata [sic] : Fra Angelico (1936).
APPENDIX F

PROPER CHANTS FOR THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS


Introit (antiphon): Prose

Gaudeamus omnes in Domino, diem festum celebrantes sub honore Sanctorum omnium: de quorum solemnitate gaudent angeli, et collaudant Filium Dei.

Let us all rejoice in the Lord as we celebrate this feast day in honour of all the saints; it is a solemnity which causes the Angels to rejoice, and to praise together the Son of God.
Offertory: Wisdom 3:1-3

Iustorum animae in manu Dei sunt, et non tangeret illos tormentum malitiae: visi sunt oculis insipientium morti: illi autem sunt in pace, alleluia.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no malicious torment will ever touch them; in the eyes of the unwise, they seem to have died; but they are dwelling in peace, alleluia.
Communion: Matthew 5:8-10

Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt: beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur: beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God; blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Alleluia. Venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis, et onerati estis: et ego reficiam vos.

Alleluia. Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will comfort you.
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