

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE

MAYNOOTH

AN ANALYTICAL SURVEY

OF

THE ORGAN MUSIC OF

MAURICE DURUFLÉ (1902-1986)

BY

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INTRODUCTION

This study approaches the organ compositions of Maurice Duruflé from an analytical point of view. With the standard categories of form, harmony, counterpoint, rhythm and melody as a general frame of reference, each composition will be examined in its own terms. In this way it is hoped to form a general impression of the composer's style and method.

Each analysis will be preceded by a brief commentary which will include relevant information concerning the composition, publication and nature of the work in question.

The work-list is taken from an article on Duruflé by Gwilym Beechey in The Music Review issue of May 1971. House style follows that of the Royal Musical Association.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Maurice Duruflé was born in Louviers in 1902. From 1912 to 1918 he was a pupil at the choir school in Rouen Cathedral. Jules Haelling, organist of the cathedral and a student of Guilmant, provided Duruflé's early training in organ, theory and piano. In 1919 Duruflé began organ study with Charles Tournemire and later studied with Louis Vierne whom he replaced at Notre Dame from 1929 to 1931. In 1920 he began study at the Paris Conservatoire where he was a member of Gigout's organ class, winning the **premier accessit** in 1921 and the **premier prix d'orgue** in 1922. His composition teacher at the Conservatoire was Paul Dukas. From 1930 until his death in 1986, Duruflé was titular organist of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, although a car accident in 1977 incapacitated him from playing in his later years.

Duruflé's compositions include choral (the **Requiem**, op. 9, brought him widespread fame), orchestral, chamber and solo piano works, but organ music, encompassing five of the twelve opus numbers, forms the most significant portion of his output.

The four most important organ works of Maurice Duruflé are the **Scherzo** op. 2, the **Prélude Adagio et Choral varié sur le thème du 'Veni Creator'**, op. 4, the **Suite**, op. 5 and the **Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'Alain**, op. 7. They were written between 1926 and 1943 and have become substantial components of the organists repertoire. The two remaining compositions, **Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Épiphanie** and **Fugue sur le thème du Carillon des Heures de la cathédrale de Soissons** first appeared in anthologies. The latter has recently been published as Duruflé's op. 12.

Scherzo, op. 2

Durufié's first composition for organ was written in 1926 and published by his friend Jacques Durand in 1929.¹ During these years the composer was a student of Charles Tournemire,² also his assistant at the organ of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris. The scherzo is dedicated to Tournemire as a '**hommage reconnaissant**'. An orchestral arrangement of the movement was published in 1947 as the composer's op.8. The original version is conceived in a compositional style favoured by several French organists of the twentieth century who collectively created a genre of short, energetic, thin-textured and lively pieces for the instrument.³ Durufié's scherzo betrays the influence of Tournemire in the modal harmonic idiom and in the frequent fluctuations of tempo and metre which distinguish the work from others of its type.

The compositions of Marcel Dupré,⁴ the **Suite Bretonne** op. 21 of 1924 (especially the middle movement) and Scherzo in F minor op. 16 of 1920, may have served as inspirational models for Durufié. The orchestral scherzo in F minor, **l'Apprenti Sorcier** (1897) by his composition teacher Paul Dukas,⁵ may be included as an additional source.

The scherzo of 333 bars is cast in simple rondo form.

Introduction	bars 1 - 13	(13)
A (Ritornello)	14 - 61	(48)
B (First Digression)	62 - 122	(61)
A	123 - 168	(46)
C (Second Digression)	169 - 259	(91)
A	260 - 313	(54)
Coda	314 - 333	(20)

The introduction begins with a dominant pedal point which supports the principal melodic, harmonic and rhythmic ingredients of the work: (i) a syncopated oscillating fifth (bars 1-4); (ii) a progression of three chords whose roots establish the sequence $A\flat - G\flat - C$ (bars 5-7); and (iii) a two-bar unit in quaver movement made up of alternating intervals and a brief ascending scale (bars 8-9). After an echo of the $G\flat - C$ progression the music halts on a dissonant chord in which a form of the German sixth is placed over the dominant.

The ritornello theme in F minor is in three-bar phrase lengths and consists of the following elements over a running quaver line: (i) oscillating crotchet fourths and fifths (bars 16-18);

Example 1



(ii) a syncopated figure (bars 22-4); (iii) hemiola (bars 40-42) and (iv) the chordal sequence $A\flat - G\flat - C$ (bars 46-8). A concluding cadential passage emphasises the $G\flat - C$ progression (bars 48-58).

The theme of the first digression, beginning in A flat, is a development of the scherzo's opening phrase and has a basic two-bar pulse (bars 62-70):

Example 2



It is repeated up a minor third in B major and further mediant shifts to D and F major explore the first half of the theme (bars 78-89). This is then combined with pedal references to the ritornello theme in D flat major (bars 90-101). A direct reference to the parent theme from the opening of the work begins a winding down of movement which eventually relaxes into reflective and expressive oscillations ending on a dominant chord of C#⁶.

The return of the ritornello section in F minor presents the same material as before, but with added interest in the pedal part. The latter features an augmented recollection of the theme from the previous digression (bars 135-145) and an anticipatory four-note reference to the theme of the ensuing digression evolving out of the familiar progression A^b-G^b-C (bars 156-8):

Example 3



The four-note reference, repeated enharmonically with ascending parallel chords (bars 166-8), introduces the second digression in the key of A minor.

This digression, characterised by changing metres and tempo indications, is developmental in nature, combining the main rising four-note theme with references to the ritornello section. Two statements are answered by 'Vivace' ritornello excerpts (bars 169-200). The theme is then developed canonically in C sharp minor (bars 200-211). A further, more climactic development occurs in the tonic F minor. Here the last interval of the rising theme is progressively expanded (bars 220-221 and 226-7) eventually embracing with the note f''' the triumphant interval of a fourth (bars 235-6)⁷. This climax is overlapped by a reference to the ritornello and a development of the latter's syncopated figure prepares for the return of Section A (bars 236-259).

The final appearance of the ritornello section reinforces the key of F minor with dominant-oriented pedal references to the first digression giving its three-bar phrase a stronger sense of rhythmic purpose. A departure from the original ritornello (beginning at bar 284) extends and develops the hemiola idea over an incorporation of the theme of the second digression (bars 290-295). Stretto alternation of contradictory chords brings the movement and harmony to an intense yet unresolved climax (bars 295-304). Following a one bar rest, the theme of the second digression is recalled in its original key and is extended by a chromatic imitation which eventually resolves into the F major coda.

Here, the opening idea of the ritornello is recollected over tranquil and mildly reflective harmony. The tension between the two- and three-bar pulse is also recalled, and resolved in favour of the former. The closing eight bars echo the opening phrase of the scherzo in mood, content and pulse, concluding the work serenely on the chord of F major with added intervals of the second and sixth.

Scherzo op. 2

Footnotes

1. D & F 11, 703
2. Charles Tournemire (1870-1939) was a Parisian organist/composer, particularly famous for his improvisations. His most important work, **L'Orgue Mystique** contains 51 suites based on plainchant, covering the liturgical year.
3. See examples by Gigout, Vierne (Symphonies nos. 2 and 6) and Alain.
4. Marcel Dupré (1886-1971) succeeded Widor as organist of St Sulpice in 1934. Famous as a composer, improviser and virtuoso, he was highly regarded as a teacher and editor of organ music.
5. Paul Dukas (1865-1935) was professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire from 1909 until his death. A composer of limited but high quality output, he scored his only major success in 1897 with the orchestral scherzo **L'Apprenti Sorcier**.
6. This corresponds enharmonically with the concluding German sixth chord of the introduction (bar 13).
7. The evidence of previous statements of the theme suggests that an a " has been accidentally omitted at bar 233.

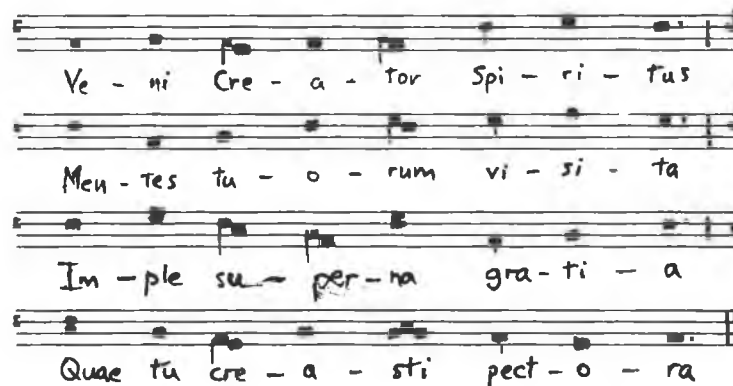
Prélude, Adagio et Choral varié sur le thème du 'Veni Creator', op. 4

Durufié's second composition, the first of his three major works for the instrument, gained him first prize in a competition in 1930 sponsored by 'Les Amis de l'Orgue'. At this time the composer was a student of, and assistant to Louis Vierne¹ at Notre Dame, and the work, which was published in 1931 by Durand², is dedicated to the blind master.

In the first decades of this century the renewed interest in plainsong melodies and their performance in France had a profound influence on French organists and none more so than Tournemire, whose improvisations and compositions were much admired by Durufié. It was only natural, then, that the younger composer should at some stage turn to plainchant for direct inspiration.

The Pentecost hymn 'Veni Creator' is one of the oldest and most beloved in the Church's heritage. The first verse runs as follows:

Example 4



Durufié uses the hymn as the basis of a tripartite structure, very similar to that of his previous op. 3³. The first two movements are based on motives from the chant, which emerges in its entirety only at the beginning of the final movement. The dimensions of the movements are well balanced.

Prélude	162 bars
Adagio	114 bars
Choral varié	119 bars

Prélude

This is set in a straightforward alternating form with a short coda:

A	Bars 1 - 46	(46)
B	47 - 70	(24)
A	71 - 122	(52)
B	123 - 141	(19)
A	141 - 156	(15)
Coda	157 - 162	(6)

Although the key-signature suggests A minor, the fundamental tonality of the movement is that of E major with a flattened seventh, reflecting the mixolydian character of the hymn melody.

Section A draws its inspiration from the third phrase of the hymn, 'Imple superna gratia'. The pervading triplet figuration and the main three-note motif are based directly on it:

Example 5



Example 6



The opening figuration emphasises D major. The main motif soon emerges in a middle part (bar 9), beginning a build-up by means of a series of overlapping statements (d', e', f#', g#, a#'-bb, c, c#). This leads into the first clear presentation of the motif in the context of A major (bar 17), answered by an overlapping reference in the pedals. The dialogue continues with a heightening of melodic and harmonic tension, and a pedal statement of the main motif, supporting the firmly cadential chords of IV^b and V^b, brings the music to the E major climax of the section (bar 25). Here the motif is expanded to include the next three notes of the original phrase. With right-hand/pedal imitation and occasional inner-part references (bars 27-8 and 32-3), the climax subsides amid chordal alternations of A and E^b.

The initial triplet figuration takes over on a dominant E major chord (bar 33). Despite fleeting references to such remote chords as B \flat dom.7 and D \flat dom.7, the primacy of E as a tonality is maintained and the note eventually assumes German sixth harmony in preparation for a new key (bar 46).

The resolution of this chord outwards onto B \flat major signals the beginning of Section B, with a change of time signature to 6/4. The main theme of this section, based on the second phrase of the hymn 'Mentes tuorum visita', occurs in the pedal part.

Example 7



It is combined with an arpeggio-based figuration and a sustained left-hand harmonic foundation. The pedal melody is developed, its thrusting appoggiaturas combining with mediant-related harmonies and soprano imitation to form a strong ten-bar passage which winds down with the tonal alternation of B \flat and its polar opposite E. The music is now repeated in F sharp major with the melody placed in the highest voice and imitated in the pedals (bars 57-66). This section dissolves with an echo of the final melodic gesture of its theme (bars 67-70).

Section A returns with the figuration emphasising G major. After eight bars a new sequential development discusses the figuration in its inverted and original forms respectively, firstly in D major, then in C (bars 79-86). A third expanded phrase beginning in B flat major leads into a brief soprano/alto imitation of the extended main motif in the context of D major (bars 93-6). The following 16-bar sentence, beginning with a G major statement of the three-note motif, transposes its earlier equivalent passage down a tone (compare bars 97-113 with 17-33). The ensuing resumption of the figuration alternates with two abridged references to the main motif (bars 114 and 116), before a six-bar cadential phrase emphasises B dom.7 harmony (bars 117-122).

As in the previous transition from Section A to Section B, this chord resolves outwards onto E \flat major, where triplet quavers in the right hand introduce theme B in the left hand over a double pedal line (bars 123-134). An abortive repeat of this passage in C major gives way after three bars to a dominant E major allusion to the triplet figuration of Section A. Theme B resumes in C major but breaks down after three bars.

Section A returns for the last time over a pedal E with right-hand figuration and oblique references in the left hand to the main motif. After a short build-up, alternating C \sharp and G major chords effect a winding down. The continuous quaver movement is reduced to a tremolo, becomes fragmented and eventually dies away leaving only the sustained pedal E (bar 157).

A five-bar coda recalls theme B with strong modal progressions and descending inner lines. The movement concludes on an open E chord.

Lento, quasi recitativo

This passage of seven bars acts as a dramatic link between the first and second movements, bringing the tonality from E major to G minor, the key of the **Adagio**. Elements from the preceding **Prélude** are combined with a striking rising appoggiatura.

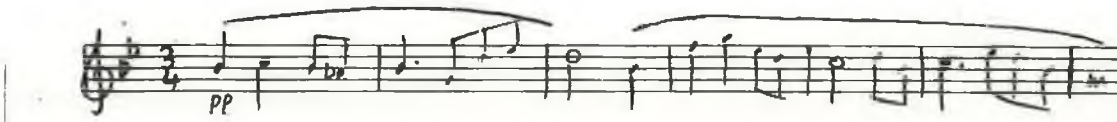
Adagio

The second movement of 107 bars is conceived ternary form with a development and cadenza:

A	Bars 1 - 30	(30)
B	31 - 52	(22)
A	53 - 78	(26)
Development	79 - 99	(21)
Cadenza	100 - 107	(8)

The opening six-bar melody, based on the first and third phrases of 'Veni Creator', represents the first clearly recognisable reference to the generating theme of the work:

Example 8



Following a brief commentary in the alto register, the melody is repeated and modified over developing harmony (bars 9-14). The hitherto relaxed three-bar pulse is now accelerated as a subsidiary two-bar idea whips the music up to a heightened version of the earlier commentary (bars 15-20). Two one-bar echoes begin a relaxation of the tension, and a three-bar expansion of the subsidiary idea leads the music back to G minor, enlivened with oscillating inner-part movement.

This oscillating idea and the 'recitativo' theme constitute the two main elements of the central section, B. These are presented together in the opening nine-bar G-major phrase. The core of the section, however, is the following nine-bar passage where the contrasting elements are dramatically juxtaposed in the mediant-related tonalities of B flat and D flat (bars 40-7).

The 'recitativo' theme is presented in a driving 4/4 time, and its groping mediant harmonic shifts seem to realise the darker portent of the 'Lento, quasi recitativo', while the idyllic oscillating movement in 3/4 represents a momentary escape to happier thoughts. An arresting reference to the ~~Prélude~~-based figuration from the 'recitativo' passage (bar 49) concludes this section and leads to the return of Section A in B flat minor (bar 53).

The melodic and harmonic contours of the section are not altered in the reprise, but an increased movement in triplet quavers is incorporated into the texture. The one-bar echo idea is explored in the enharmonic key-signature of C sharp major (bars 75-8), leading into the development section.

This begins with a two-bar reference to the main theme of Section A with accompanying semiquaver oscillations. A varied repeat, extended to three bars, is followed by change of time-signature to 4/4. This launches a massive build-up which combines the 'recitativo' rising appoggiatura with a triplet flourish. Amid increased movement and rising harmonies, a dialogue between the right hand and pedals develops progressively into stretto-like imitation, reaching the climactic point, a D \flat major chord with double rising appoggiaturas (bar 97).

The tension is released in the concluding cadenza, where a descending series of semiquaver flourishes and a commentary in the pedals echo the appoggiatura idea, turning the harmony towards B flat major. The movement closes mysteriously with expectant e'-f' appoggiaturas.

Choral varié

The final movement, a theme with variations, consists of the following:-

Choral	(14)
Variation I	(13)
Variation II	(11)
Variation III	(10)
Variation IV: Final	(71)

With the beginning of the last movement on a unison E, Duruflé's tonal masterplan becomes clear. The **Prélude** emphasised and ended in the tonality of E major; Section A of the **Adagio** began in G minor, returned in B flat minor and the climax of the movement occurred in the key of D flat major. The final mediant rise to the tonality of E completes the tonal circle i.e. E-g-b^b-D^b-E. Apart from Variation III (which is mainly in D major) and one extraneous modulation to B flat major in the **Final**, the whole of the **Choral varié** centres on the mixolydian tonality of E and so forms a distinct emotional contrast and relief from the highly-strung Adagio.

The 'Veni Creator' melody is given its first complete statement in the 14-bar **Choral** with which the last movement opens. The melody is harmonised in five parts within its mixolydian mode, and the initial phrase, with its held note E and descending crotchet movement, recalls the coda of the **Prélude**. The sustained final notes of each phrase provide the inner parts with opportunities for comment or anticipation.

Variation I employs a four-part texture where the third phrase of the plainsong theme is elaborated as a right-hand solo motif against a pedal statement of the hymn. When the pedal arrives at the third phrase, the right hand utilises the first phrase as a countermelody. The left hand, meanwhile, provides two inner parts, featuring a central thread of triplet quaver movement.

Variation II is set for manuals only. The theme is placed in the highest of three voices; in the other two, continuous triplet figures are contrasted against a regular quaver movement, producing tripping cross-rhythms throughout the variation.

Variation III is, in effect, a canon at the fourth above (although written a fifth below) with a few compromises to improve the flow of the music. The harmony is biased in favour of the trailing voice, hence the subdominant flavour of the movement.

Variation IV:Final. This extended movement bears all the hallmarks of a toccata-like improvisation on the plainchant theme. The basic structural device of canonic counterpoint is applied with the freedom of an improviser in full flight, and the thorough craftsmanship which typified the **Prélude** and **Adagio**, is not as striking here.

The movement, fuelled by a triplet quaver figuration, begins over a tonic pedal A with a toccata-like build-up based on the opening notes of 'Veni Creator'. From bar 7, the entire tune is treated in a loosely canonic fashion between the highest voice and pedals. The latter statement finishes on the note E (bar 29) giving rise to two brief acclamations based on the opening phrase of the hymn. A brass-like chordal harmonisation of the third phrase follows bars 33). This idea is then combined with overlapping references to the first line, bringing the music to D major (bars 41-2). A chordal statement of the third phrase begins here but dissolves quickly into B flat major.

The ensuing passage (bars 45-53) alternates a three-note motif from the end of the third phrase with the first phrase, while the accompanying triplet figuration recalls the opening of the **Prélude** (based also on the third phrase of the hymn). A rather abrupt change brings the music back to the tonality of E, where a short build-up precedes a broad 'Largamente' harmonisation of the last line of the hymn. This incorporates a pedal reference to the third line of the hymn. The last note of the hymn, E, provides a springboard for the 'piu vivo' conclusion in E major.

Here, a pedal ostinato in crotchets, based on the first four notes of the hymn, underpins and reflects the same pattern in minims. In the right hand, expanding quaver motives based on the third phrase, interchange with triplet quavers which refer to the first line. The former eventually embrace a brilliant recollection of the motif from the coda of the *Prélude*. The work finishes with an affirmation of its fundamental tonality, E major.

Prélude, Adagio et Choral varié, op. 4

Footnotes

1. Louis Vierne (1870-1937). A celebrated French organ virtuoso and improviser. He served as organist at Notre-Dame from 1900 to his death.
2. D. & F. 12,016.
3. **Prélude, Récitatif et Variations** for flute, viola and piano, Op. 3 (1929).

Suite Op. 5.

The second of Duruflé's major organ works, the Suite was composed in 1931, the year after his competition success with the **Prélude, Adagio et Choral Varié op. 4**. The Suite was dedicated to his composition teacher Paul Dukas and was published by Durand in 1934¹. A revised edition appeared in 1978².

The suite comprises three independent movements: **Prélude, Sicilienne** and **Toccata**, linked only by their respective mediant-related tonalities of E flat minor, G minor and B minor. Each self-contained movement is a work of considerable weight and stands on its own merits.

Prélude

The composer has described the opening movement of 112 bars as being 'sombre in character in the form of a diptych'.³ Reminiscent of the dirge-like movements from the symphonies of Vierne, it bears a close resemblance to the Adagio from the blind master's Symphony No. 6, published a year earlier in 1930. Both movements share the key of E flat minor.⁴

The two-part nature of the **Prélude** consists of a dramatic build-up based on the alternation of contrasting ideas, followed by a more reflective 'recitativo' section.

The movement opens on a sustained octave B \flat , under which expectant pedal fragments are heard. These lead immediately to the main theme, a sinuous ten-bar melody in the bass register:

Example 9



The ominous pedal fragments of the introduction return in a more organised and insistent four-bar phrase, with left-hand doubling and accompanying sextuplet figures in the right hand. The sustained octave B \flat finally resolves enharmonically (bar 20) into a statement of the main theme in B minor. Here, the theme is placed in a higher register and combined with an inverted dominant pedal and continuous quaver movement. The melodic line soon features octave doubling in the tenor range (bars 24-9). A series of alternating phrases, featuring the introductory pedal fragments and main theme, now harmonised in block chords and paired with its own inversion in the pedals, becomes increasingly frenetic as it approaches the powerful climax (bars 30-46). Here the main theme occurs in two versions simultaneously, with the right hand in diminution and pedal line inverting the first five notes at the original speed (bars 47-51).

With the descending chromatic motif from the main theme, the music subsides gradually to the initial key of B flat minor, where the introductory idea is heard in the treble register (bars 51-5). A further, more extended chromatic descent restores the introductory idea to its original register (bars 56-65).

A sustained octave B♭ serves as a bridge to the ensuing 'recitativo' section. Here an expressive melody over subtle harmonic changes reflects freely and rhapsodically on the opening phrase of the main theme (bars 68-81). The pedals also allude to the principal melody (compare bars 82-9 with 8-9). Further references to the opening bars develop into a melody incorporating both ideas (bars 89-101). A sustained B♭ introduces the coda, where a final recollection of the main theme is heard over a regularly-articulated tonic pedal. The movement concludes solemnly in E flat minor.

These lead into a return of Section A. The main theme, now in B flat minor, is placed in the left hand over a double pedal line. The right hand combines semiquaver figuration with commenting quaver ideas already initiated in Section B (compare bars 45 with 27). A final cadence in B flat minor is avoided by means of a harmonic twist (bar 55) and the resulting chord, enharmonically changed by the new key-signature of B major, forms the beginning of Section C.

The generating idea of this section also draws its life from the main theme, combining the rhythmic syncopations of the latter with a melodic phrase characterised by the tritone interval (bars 57-61):

Example 11



After two introductory bars, which employ a modified semiquaver figure from the previous Section A, the above subsidiary theme enters on the pedals, its striking intervals reflected in the alternating chords of C dom.7 and F# dom.7. A second statement alternating E and Bb major is extended from four to eight bars. An idyllic development of the idea follows with consecutive thirds in the right hand (bars 77-83). The material is repeated in its original context, with F# dom.7 and C dom.7 chords soon melting into E major, coming to a rest on an F# dominant chord (bars 84-90). Two brief recollections of the opening phrase of Section C are succeeded by two bars of triplet semiquaver movement which launch the final reprise of the main theme in G minor (bars 91-6).

The melody and accompaniment in triplet semiquavers are joined by a new rhythmic pedal line. This underpins the 6/8 flow with hemiola crotchets which later relax into compound time for the second half of the theme. The movement closes in G minor with a subdued plagal cadence.

Toccata

Durufle's Toccata in B minor of 173 bars is one of the finest twentieth-century examples of this French genre. Technically demanding but musically rewarding, it remains a favourite virtuoso piece among organists today.

The strength and originality of the **Toccata** lies in the depth of its rhythmic, harmonic and thematic content and in the development of its varied figurations. Instead of the simple quadruple time which characterises the majority of French toccatas⁵, Durufle opts for compound quadruple, a choice that is vindicated in the return at bar 118 from 4/4 to 12/8.

The movement is conceived in a broad ternary form with developmental central and concluding sections:

A	Bars 1 - 53	(53)
B	54 - 104	(51)
A	105 - 174	(70)

An introduction of 14 bars emphasises the home dominant F# and contains five different figurations. Three of these are subsequently developed: figure 1 (bar 1); figure 2, a hemiola pattern usually preceded by figure 1 (bar 3) and figure 3, an introductory idea (bar 13).

Theme A enters in B minor on the pedals (bar 15-28). It is an imposing melody characterised by a semiquaver anacrusis and diminished fifth outline.

Example 12



Its form is ternary, with a central section suggesting inversion. The manual accompaniment incorporates figure 2.

A reminder of figures 1 and 2 introduces a manual development of the inverted main theme A with staccato arpeggio quavers and anacrusis fragments in the pedal line (bars 32-43). This material touches on the tonalities of F sharp, A and E major before leading back to a reprise of the opening three bars. Figure 1 is then punctuated by off-beat dissonant chords as it resolves into B minor (bars 46-8). In a preparatory link, figure 3 is combined with anacrusis references (bar 49-53).

Theme B enters in B major. It is constructed in two-bar units with constant hemiola syncopations giving the impression of a broad 6/4 time, effectively off set by accompanying 12/8 arpeggio figuration in the left hand and pedal movement in dotted crotchets (bars 54-8):

Example 13



The texture increases in interest with an imitative pedal line and return of the staccato arpeggio quavers (bars 59-66). The syncopated nature of the melody prompts a brief recollection of the parallel thirds from the preceding *Sicilienne* (compare III, 64-5 with II, 77-83), and the theme concludes with a typical alternation of the polar opposites, B and F major.

Figure 3 introduces a process of development which alternates the inverted first theme with a rhythmic reference to the second melody (bars 70-83). Constant shifts of key create a fluid, uncertain effect. A further exploitation of the hemiola syncopation, which settles temporarily in F major, incorporates a ventilated treatment of the theme, diminution, and even a statement in augmentation (bars 84-93). A repeat of the augmentation is flanked by figure 2 (bars 94-8).

A brief but powerful climax based on figure 1 (bars 99-104), features staccato chords which lead into a return in B minor of the first main theme on the pedals (bars 105-118). This is now presented with a 4/4 accompaniment incorporating the staccato chords and a demisemiquaver pattern which may be derived from figure 3 or the second theme (compare bar 105 with 49 and 89).

References to all three initial figures (bars 119-122) lead to the second theme heard in the keys of B flat and C major respectively (bars 123-132). Both statements include parallel thirds, and are separated by figures 1 and 3. A final development of figure 1 (bars 133-137) merges into the extended and exploratory coda in B major (bars 138-174).

This is almost entirely devoted to the initial three-note motif of the second theme, which is highlighted and alternated with syncopated chords. The emphatic treatment of this motif culminates in a stark unison passage⁶ which precedes the rather abrupt final chord of B major⁷.

Suite Op. 5

Footnotes

1. D. & F. 12,350
2. For the 1978 edition Duruflé rewrote the ending of his final Toccata movement.
3. Taken from programme notes which Duruflé supplied for his first recital in London. This was to the Organ Music Society on November, 1938, at Christ Church, Woburn Square.
4. Gwilym Beechey (The Music Review, May 1971 p 150) has also drawn a comparison with the sombre first movement in E flat minor of Dukas' Piano Sonata (composed in 1899-1900).
5. For example, the toccatas of Widor, Böellmann, Dubois, Gigout (simple duple) and Vierne.
6. This peroration is almost identical to the climactic unison passage in the coda of the **Final** from Vierne's **Symphony No. 4** (1917).
7. The revised ending, presumably intended as an improvement to the original, remains curiously inconclusive.

Additional Footnote:

Duruflé himself was very critical of the **Toccata**, contending that its main themes were too weak. Neither he nor his wife ever recorded the movement.

Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'Alain, op. 7

Published in 1943¹, the **Prélude et fugue** pays homage to Duruflé's younger colleague, the organist-composer Jehan Alain, who was killed three years earlier in World War II. The musical tribute is achieved in two ways, by monogram and by quotation.

Only the letter A in Alain's name exists in notation. Duruflé arrived at equivalents for the other letters by simply extending the alphabetical scale beyond H (the German B natural) thus:

A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P
etc²

Thus, ALAIN produces the sequence ADAAF, the generating motif of both movements in the work. The chord represented by these letters determines the key of the composition, D minor. Another theme, hinted at during the course of the **Prélude** and identified by the composer at the end of the movement is that of Alain's best-known organ piece, **Litanies** (1939):

Example 14



Example 16



A two-bar link which refers more closely to the **Litanies** theme (bars 50-1) leads into a repeat of the section in E flat major (bars 52-61).

After two 'false starts' (bars 62-5), Section A returns in the key of G minor. It incorporates a slight expansion of the original music (compare bars 73-80 with bars 8-11). A subtle turn in the last bar of the section introduces the return of Section B in the key of A flat major.

Here, two statements of the first half of the melody in A flat and C flat, are separated by a reference to Section A (bars 117-120). The principal melodic material of the section is now accompanied by a hemiola figuration in both left hand and pedals. In addition, the second statement features the melody in canon at the fifth below (bars 121-124).

The final return of Section A in the key of E flat minor occurs in a shortened form, concentrating on its sustained chordal phrases (compare bars 125 ff with 26-43). The concluding auxiliary motif on the local dominant B effects a dissolution by means of fragmentation (bars 139-151)³.

An empty bar leads into the coda in the tonic major, D. Here a central statement of the original **Litanies** theme and harmony is flanked by Duruflé's derivative theme (bar 154-163). The movement concludes with fragments from the latter in alternation between Great and Choir manuals with the final imperfect cadence preparing the way for the succeeding fugue.

The Fugue represents Duruflé's most masterful display of contrapuntal skill and remains possibly the finest organ fugue to appear since the *Trois Préludes et fuges, op. 7* of Marcel Dupré, published in 1920.

Duruflé's composition is a double fugue of 136 bars in D minor, in which two contrasting yet not unrelated subjects are treated separately before being combined. The main subject of four bars, with an additional link in the fifth bar, is a lyrical one in 6/8 time based on the 'Alain' motif:

Example 17



This is exposed in the traditional manner with a regular countersubject which features 3/4 time in its second bar (bars 1-20).

The first episode, growing naturally out of the exposition, combines and develops the second half of the countersubject with the link bar of the subject (bars 21-7). This leads into a middle entry in F with the countersubject now modified.

The fourth bar of the subject and the 3/4 hemiola from the countersubject provide the material for a brief link (bars 33-6) which introduces an entry in C major. This statement is extended by two bars with further references to bar four of the subject (bars 37-42). The melodic contour anticipates the second fugue subject which follows immediately.

The new theme is also four bars in length and consists of a continuous line of semiquavers grouped in patterns of three. This gives an impression of 12/16 rather than 6/8 time:

Example 18



The subject is exposed in C, G and F major (bars 43-56). A further statement in B flat major is combined with the return of the earlier 'Alain' subject in that key.

A four-bar passage (61-4) develops both themes concurrently and leads to a statement of the main subject in E flat with the accompanying figuration in semiquavers derived from the second fugue subject (bars 65-8). Bar four of the main subject forms the basis for the ensuing 12-bar development. After variants in the right hand and pedals (bars 69-76) it is then combined with its diminution and inversion (bars 77-80).

The second fugue returns over a pedal point on the note A to initiate an extended build-up to the climax of the movement (bars 81-8). The theme is developed with increasing dissonance over a descending pedal line (bars 89-93) leading eventually to the triumphant return of the 'Alain' subject in the tonic D minor. This is answered at two bars' distance by a stretto entry in F major (bars 96-100). Accompanying arpeggio semiquavers in groups of three, recall the second fugue subject.

A link which corresponds to an earlier passage (compare bars 101-4 with 61-4) leads to an entry of the 'Alain' subject in the subdominant, G minor (bars 105-9). This subject is developed in diminution (bars 110-115) and the resulting semiquaver figuration remains on to accompany an entry of the inverted subject in the dominant, A minor, answered one bar later by a stretto entry in the tonic D minor (bars 116-120).

A further and more thematically potent bridge passage (bars 121-4) leads to the final entry in D major with a leaning towards the subdominant minor, treated in free canon between the right hand and pedal lines at two quavers' distance. The concluding motif of the theme is developed in dialogue between these parts, confirming the tonality of D major by local augmented sixth chords before its final brilliant reiteration.

Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'Alain, op. 7

Footnotes

1. D & F, 13, 159.
2. This procedure had been used previously by Ravel for his **Minuet sur le nom d'Haydn** (1910).
3. Compare with a similar process of dissolution in the **Prélude** of op. 4, (bars 154-7).

Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Épiphanie

This piece, which is without an opus number, first appeared as an item in the publication *Orgue et Liturgie*¹ in 1960. While the date of composition is not known, Beechey has tentatively suggested 1960², the same year as the publication of Durufle's *Quatre Motets sur des thèmes grégoriens* op. 10.

The title recalls the *Prélude sur l'Introit* movements from Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique*. These were usually quiet pieces between the conclusion of the 'Asperges me' and the beginning of the introit.

Durufle's composition, while meditative in spirit, reflects the declamatory nature of the Epiphany introit ('Behold, the Lord the ruler approaches') in its registration of 'plein jeu' and solo 'trompette'.

The first line of the introit chant consists of two melodic phrases, 'Ecce advenit' and 'dominator Dominus':

Example 19



This line of plainsong forms the basis for a movement of 55 bars in ternary form, with sections of equal proportions.

A ('Ecce advenit')	Bars 1 - 17	(17)
B ('dominator Dominus')	18 - 35	(18)
a ('Ecce advenit')	36 - 53	(18)

The writing is essentially in four parts and constantly fluctuating time-signatures ranging from 5/8 to 9/8 ensure that the rhythmic elasticity of the chant is maintained. The original chant melody dominates the composition, the only notable supplementary material consisting of a descending series of three notes (bars 13 et passim).

An introductory passage of eleven bars in the Aeolian mode of A minor states the opening phrase 'Ecce advenit' twice in the soprano and proceeds to develop it melodically and imitatively. Instead of the expected close in A minor, the entry of the left-hand solo emphasises the Lydian mode of F major with two further statements of 'Ecce advenit' (bars 12-17).

The central exploration of the phrase 'dominator Dominus' follows on directly. This is first discussed between the hands in a modal D major (bars 18-21). A statement in C and a brief imitative link bring the music to B minor (bar 22-5). Here, a more reflective treatment of the full phrase takes place (bars 26-30). The previous imitative material returns in E minor (bars 31-5) to form another link into the repeat of the introductory 'Ecce advenit' phrases, this time with a cadence in A minor (bar 36-47).

Over a tonic pedal the final entry of the left-hand solo, for the first and only time in the home key, brings the piece to a calm and introspective conclusion.

Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Épiphanie

Footnotes

1. **Orgue et Liturgie**, Vol. 48. Schola Cantorum

2. Gwilym Beechey: 'The music of Maurice Duruflé', The Music Review, May 1971, p. 147

Fugue sur le thème du Carillon des Heures de la cathédrale de
Soissons, op. 12

This movement first appeared in 1962 in a volume of *L'Organiste* issued 'pour le XXVe anniversaire de la mort de Louis Vierne 2 Juin 1937'.¹ The editor was Henri Doyen, organist of Soissons Cathedral, to whom Duruflé dedicated the piece. The fugue has recently been published as the composer's op. 12.

Carillon themes long been long popular as material for organ improvisations, and the simple but attractive carillon of Soissons Cathedral invites such treatment.

Example 20



A close examination of Duruflé's composition reveals more than a hint of extemporisation. The content, structure and craftsmanship rarely approach the composer's achievements in the fugue of his *Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'Alain* op. 7.

The form, which may be described as broad ternary is proportioned as follows:

A (Exposition)	Bars 1 - 31	(31)
B (Episodes, middle entry dominant preparation)	32 - 76	(45)
A (Return)	77 - 118	(42)

The loosely wrought exposition dispenses with some standard procedures. Over a tonic pedal, the meandering subject of ten bars in 6/8 time is combined from the outset with a free part. The key is A minor. A linking passage of four bars precedes the entry in the dominant (bars /15-24).

A third, abridged entry follows immediately in a loose context of A minor with considerable emphasis on the chords of F and C major (bars /25-31).

The first episode, mainly in F, is almost predictable in its treatment of thematic and accompanimental motifs, using the stock devices of sequence and circle-of-fifth harmonies (bars 32-49). This leads into an abridged middle entry of the subject in the pedals, which suffers from sharing the same key of F major (bars /50-55). The second episode explores a six-note motif from the subject, in B flat, Neapolitan relative of the fundamental key, A minor (bars /56-61).

The ensuing home dominant pedal generates an interesting build-up, featuring a stretto on the inverted subject (bars 62-5). A rising sequence of inversions eventually reach a 9/8 plateau (bars /64-76). This change to the broader time-signature presents a return in augmentation of the subject in its original form and key, imitated freely in the pedals at the distance of one beat (bars /77-84). This is followed by a more extended statement in the dominant, mirrored at one beat's distance by its inversion in the pedals (bars /85-96). A final reference to the subject, emphasised in right-hand chords, begins in F (bars /97-100), but gives way to a hemiola development of its opening interval.

The dramatic entry of the tonic A as a powerful unison (bar 110) is sustained by its harmonisations as a seventh, third and ninth respectively. These coincide with climactic references in the pedals to the opening interval of the subject, thereby giving added weight to the final emphatic repetition of the chord of A minor (bars /111-18).

Fugue sur le thème du Carillon des Heures de la cathédrale de Soissons
op. 12

Footnotes

1. **L'Organiste**, Vol. 50, 1962

CONCLUSION

In the course of my study of Duruflé's organ music, the most pertinent analytical categories to emerge were those of form, harmony and rhythm. The essence of Duruflé's style lies first and foremost in his handling of these elements.

Form

Duruflé's organ output of eleven movements is dominated by the two tripartite works **Prélude, Adagio et Choral varié**, op. 4 and **Suite**, op. 5. In the structural design of his individual movements, the use of ternary form or its extensions, alternating or rondo form, is almost universal. Even the **Prélude** of op. 5 which the composer has described as a 'diptych', cannot resist a return to the opening section.

Duruflé uses the alternating form not in a static but in a developmental way, with the return of main sections usually enriched by some new rhythmic or contrapuntal idea or by the incorporation of previous episodic material.

Harmony

Although he can use dissonance to powerful effect (as in the **Adagio** of op. 4 and the **Prélude** of op. 5), Duruflé's harmonic language is primarily modal in flavour, and is combined with the characteristically French penchant for mediant-related harmonies and tonalities. The latter informs the grand tonal design of his large-scale works op. 4 and op. 5.

One of the most distinguishing harmonic fingerprints of the composer is his use of alternating chords from opposite ends of the tonal scale to wind down or conclude a passage. Characteristic too, is the crossing of tonal boundaries by means of enharmonic changes.

Rhythm

Rhythmic freedom is an essential part of Duruflé's style. This is achieved primarily by the alternation of simple and compound metres, duple and triple times. Fluid changes of time-signature are also exploited to great effect. Syncopation is a fundamental element of the composer's rhythmic language and its offshoot, the hemiola, a hallmark of his style. This is employed frequently as an approach to cadences.

Duruflé's preference for triplet-based rhythm pervades even those movements in duple or quadruple time (see **Prélude** and **Final** of op. 4 and the opening movement of **Prélude et fugue sur le nom d'Alain**, op. 7).

Other Features

Counterpoint is almost exclusively of a two-part, freely-imitative kind, between the right hand and pedal lines (the **Scherzo** op. 2 being alone in its combination of truly independent themes). Stretto and canon are the most frequently-used devices.

Duruflé's themes tend to be based on motifs which provide material for subsequent development. Thematic transformations are mainly rhythmic in nature and are achieved by the devices of diminution and augmentation. Inversion also features in the more purely contrapuntal compositions.

The figurations which fuel so many of Duruflé's movements, tend to be based on oscillating patterns which lie easily under the hand and usually feature triplet movement.

The above observations are, for the purposes of this thesis, necessarily confined to general remarks, but they attempt to convey something of the composer's individual style and method, and to promote a better understanding and appreciation of his music.

While the list of Duruflé's compositions is modest, it forms an important contribution to the organist's contemporary repertoire, and although the compositions are in a traditional idiom - influenced mainly by Ravel, Debussy and Dukas and the modal features of plainsong - they use this style with distinct assurance and originality.

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