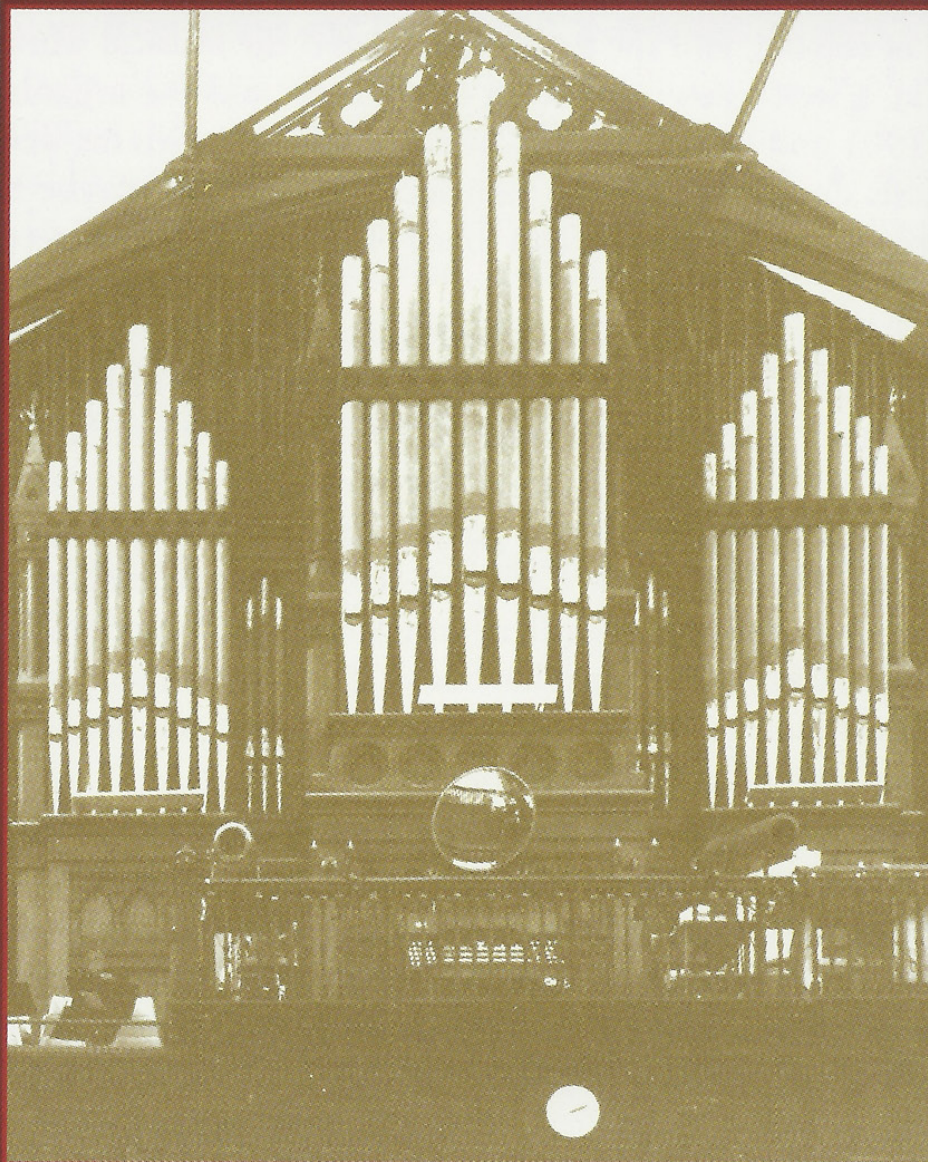


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# Victorian Gems



William  
Aylesworth

on the

1875 E. & G. G.  
Hook & Hastings  
Organ

Scottish Rite  
Cathedral

Chicago, Illinois



**THE ORGAN** in Chicago's Scottish Rite Cathedral was installed in 1875 by the firm E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings of Boston. At the time, the building belonged to the congregation of Unity Church, housed in its third building. Its first was destroyed by fire in 1862; the second building which housed E. & G. G. Hook's large (for the time) Opus 471 was also destroyed by the great Chicago fire of 1871. The present building was built on the walls and foundations of the old, and the new organ stirred the musical world of Chicago. Harrison Major Wild, a well-known musician of the time, was the organist of Unity Church from 1888 to 1901 and he enthralled Chicago audiences with his weekly Sunday afternoon organ recitals during the winter months. It is possible (maybe even probable) that he could have played on those programs many of the works on this recording.

The organ is the only surviving 19th-century three-manual and pedal mechanical action organ in the city. Unity Church members moved to a newer building further north in 1903, and Medinah Temple Association bought their building, using it until the new Medinah Temple was completed nearby in 1912 when it was bought by the Scottish Rite bodies. At that time, the organ was moved to the rear gallery, intact and with only a few minor changes (mostly cosmetic). The bars of the Carillons, struck with piano hammers and housed behind the fretwork over the keydesk still charm. Thoroughly modern for its time, the organ had a pneumatic assist for the main keyboard. The old bellows handle at the rear of the case still exists (without its feeder bellows) but the organ has been blown from a "modern" electric blower in the basement for many years.

In recent years, the two large wind reservoirs have been releathered in place, and the organ has recieved a thorough cleaning by the firm Erickson, Christian, and Associates. A thorough renovation of the action would now be welcome. Tonally, the organ is still the way it was at the turn of the century, just a bit more worn and noisy from years of use. The four organists of the Scottish Rite Cathedral (including the present one) during the 20th century have protected and maintained this instrument well. But, as an antique, the organ has all the earmarks of one: a somewhat noisy and loose action, noisy wind conductors loosened over time, a creaky bench, and an occasional small failure due to

drying leather and wood in the action. On the other hand, it has a tonal depth and weight typical of the period, surprising on first hearing, and rarely found in our present age of tonal brilliance, sheer loudness, and electronic enhancement of everything.

Confronted with a loud noise floor on the recording, the producer had to decide whether the final recording should be "de-noised," a task which is easy enough to accomplish with the latest and best digital technology. During the sessions, we commented to the engineer about the loud wind noise, the various clicks and clacks, squeeks and cracks accompanying the music. "But this IS an antique," he answered, "why should it not sound like one after all?" So we have chosen to leave the recording as it really is, noise and all. In reality, that's the way this marvelous instrument now sounds in the room, extremely delicate when needed, colorful, lyrically vocal, weighty, firm, majestic, sturdy and ultimately overcoming all background noise by its sheer beauty. It makes a strong statement about Chicago's musical past, one worthy to accompany the wonderfully strong and virile statements made by the magnificent history and architecture of this fascinating, energetic and muscular city. It is, like the city's renowned architecture, a thoroughly Chicago-style instrument -- having a bit more brute strength, a more forward and blunt affect than its more polite and refined New England cousins. It speaks with Chicago vernacular. Love it. We do.

— William Aylesworth, Robert Schuneman

### Program Notes

#### CHARLES-MARIE JEAN ALBERT WIDOR (1844-1937)

After the death of Lefébure-Wély on December 31, 1969, Charles-Marie Widor was named "provisional organist" of the Church of St. Sulpice, Paris, in January of 1870, a position (and title) which he held for the next sixty-four years. The magnificent 100-stop Cavaillé-Coll organ, then the largest in France, was the inspiration for all of his organ compositions. His first four symphonies, Opus 13, appeared in print in 1871, The "March" from *Symphonie III* is presented on this recording in the form found in early editions. The *Symphonie-gothique*, Opus 70, was first performed by Widor in 1895 in the Church of St.

Ouen in Rouen, where another magnificent Cavaillé-Coll organ was one of his favorites.

The “Andante sonstenu” features the “Flute Harmonic,” a stop which Cavaillé-Coll made famous. A beautiful example of the stop is used here.

#### **SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY (1810-1876)**

S. S. Wesley’s poignant “Larghetto in F-Sharp Minor” was published in 1868 by Novello in *A Second Set of Three Pieces, for a Chamber Organ*. Wesley was acknowledged as a fine organist, and was particularly noted for his improvisations. In the “Larghetto,” we hear the theme on the Swell Cornopean accompanied by the Great Keraulophone. The flute stop used in the graceful variation is the Solo Melodia. An exquisite, delicate and refined little piece, it truly represents the best of mid 19th-century English organ music.

#### **HORATIO WILLIAM PARKER (1863-1919)**

Unlike the other composers represented here, Horatio William Parker was an American who spent most of his life in New England. He studied organ and composition with Josef Rheinberger at the Conservatory of Music in Munich, Germany. Later he became organist of Trinity Church in Boston, and Professor of Music at Yale University. In 1899, his *Hora Novissima* for Chorus and Orchestra was presented at the Worcester Festival in England, the first composition by an American to be given at these festivals. He was awarded the degree Doctor of Music at Cambridge University in 1902. His *Four Pieces for Organ*, Opus 36, were published in 1893. He wrote several other sets of pieces for organ, as well as the *Sonata in E-flat*, Opus 65. In the present set, the *Canon* and *Fugue* display his ability with formal structures, and the *Fugue* is reminiscent of those of his teacher, Rheinberger. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines “eclogue” as a dialogue in which shepherds converse. The term was first used by the Latin poet, Virgil. One can only wonder at the subject of their conversation here.

#### **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)**

Although compositions for organ form but a small part of the total output of Camille Saint-Saëns, these pieces make an important contribution to 19th-century French organ music. The *Fantaisie in E-flat* is Saint-Saëns’ first organ piece, written in 1857 for the

inauguration of the new Cavaillé-Coll organ at the Parisian Church of St. Merry. *Trois Rhapsodies* were composed in 1866 while Saint-Saëns was on a trip to the shrine of St. Anne de Palud in Brittany. These pieces display the resources of the organ in a variety of moods, colors, and textures.

#### **LOUIS-JAMES-ALFRED LEFÉBURE-WÉLY (1817-1869)**

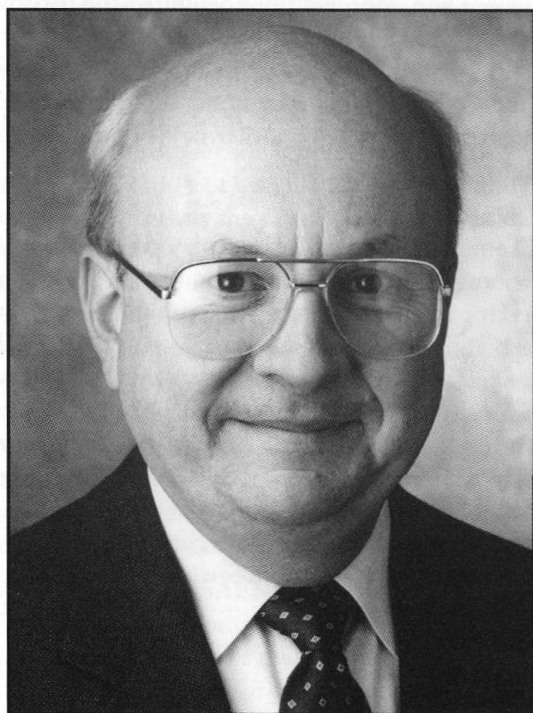
Lefébure-Wély was by far the favorite Parisian organist during the latter part of the Second Empire. Congregations relished improvised storm scenes, and music which was both secular and frivolous. His compositions and improvisations delighted the parishioners of *La Madeleine*, where he was organist from 1847 to 1858, and of St. Sulpice where he was organist from 1863 until his death in 1869. He was also in constant demand for recitals and organ inaugurations. Cavaillé-Coll was fully aware of his ability to attract a large crowd, perhaps inspiring enough enthusiasm to sell another new organ. The *Andante in F* is subtitled “Hymn of the Nuns.”

#### **JACQUES NICOLAS LEMMENS (1823-1881)**

When the young Jacques Nicolas Lemmens came to Paris to play the organ in the spring of 1850, he brought with him some of his own compositions as well as some organ music by Johann Sebastian Bach. Hearing this serious contrapuntal music beautifully played was a revelation to the Parisians who were much more accustomed to the minuets, barcarolles, and storm scenes of Lefébure-Wély. Lemmens was already Professor of Music at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, and Cavaillé-Coll was so impressed with his playing that he sent two young organists, Felix Alexandre Guilmant and Charles-Marie Widor, to Brussels to study with him. Lemmens published his *Ecole d’orgue* (“School for the Organ”) which was subsequently used in the major conservatories of Europe. The *Prelude à 5 parties* is a study in legato playing. The *Fanfare* is a study in staccato, and was the model for Widor’s famous “Toccata” from *Symphonie V*.

— William Aylesworth

**WILLIAM AYLESWORTH** holds degrees from MacMurray College, Union Theological Seminary, and Northwestern University. His teachers have included Robert Glasgow, Searle Wright, Karel Paukert, and Grigg Fountain. He has served on the faculty of Aurora University, and since 1971 he has been the Director of Music at St. John's Lutheran Church in Wilmette, Illinois. He is also organist for the Scottish Rite Valley of Chicago, and of Medinah Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S.



Dr. Aylesworth has also served as Dean of the North Shore Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and was chairman of the 1984 national convention of The Organ Historical Society which was held in Chicago. He has served the Organ Historical Society as a national councilor, and as President. As a recitalist, he has been heard at national conventions of the O.H.S., at the second and third International Romantic Organ Music Symposia, and at the 1991 Region V Convention of the American Guild of Organists. He has recorded previously on the Cornucopia Magna label, and is distinguished for his recitals on many historic American instruments.

**E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings Organ, Opus 794  
Scottish Rite Cathedral, Chicago, Illinois**

**Great**

Open Diapason	16'
Open Diapason	8'
Viola da Gamba	8'
Keraulophon	8'
Doppel Flöte	8'
Octave	4'
Flute Harmonic	4'
Twelfth	3'
Fifteenth	2'
Mixture	III
Acuta	V
Trumpet	8'

**Solo**

Geigen Principal	8'
Dulciana	8'
Melodia	8'
Stopped Diapason	8'
Dolce	4'
Flute d'Amour	4'
Piccolo	2'
Clarinet	8'
Carillons	

**Swell**

Bourdon Treble	16'
Bourdon Bass	16'
Open Diapason	8'
Salicional	8'
Stopped Diapason	8'
Quintadena	8'
Octave	4'
Violina	4'
Flauto Traverso	4'
Flautino	2'
Dolce Cornet	III
Cornocean	8'
Oboe	8'
Vox Humana	8'

**Pedal**

Open Diapason	16'
Violone	16'
Bourdon	16'
Violoncello	8'
Trombone	16'
Trumpet	8'

A complete set of manual to manual and manual to pedal couplers.  
Piano, Mezzo and Forte composition pedals to Great; Piano and Forte  
composition pedals to Swell and Pedal; Great to Pedal reversible.  
Bellows Signal, balanced Swell Pedal.