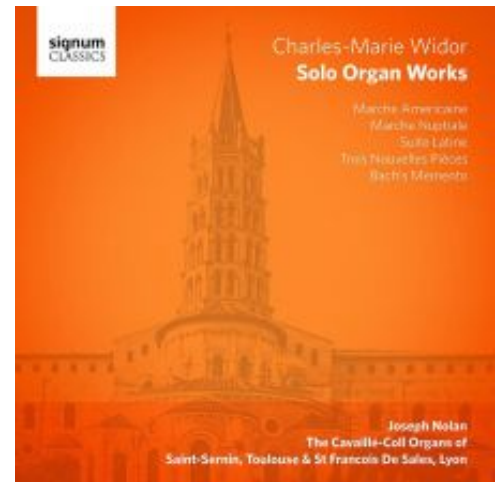


# WIDOR Solo Organ Works

As a postscript to his recordings of the complete symphonies, Joseph Nolan has mopped up the last crumbs of Widor's solo organ output for these two discs. He actually goes further. In addition to the three works all written after the symphonies and recorded here on the famous Cavaillé-Coll of Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, he includes two transcriptions recorded on the Cavaillé-Coll of St François de Sales, Lyon.



WIDOR Solo Organ Works

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It is tempting to regard Widor's solo organ works as afterthoughts for the symphonies. Yet the six movements of *Suite Latine* possesses a clear sense of coherence. Three of them make use of Gregorian chants, but unity is created more by a clear progression from the introverted 'Praeludium' to the extrovert 'Lauda Sion' and by music which is less concerned with organ colour than 'spiritualised sentiment', to quote Marcel Dupré. There is an abundance of trills – especially in the fourth movement ('Ave maris stella') – which Joseph Nolan delicately executes but which too often find themselves competing against uncomfortably prominent action noise.

Widor's very last organ work was the *Nouvelles pièces* of 1934. A mood of tranquillity permeates all three pieces, not least the concluding 'Classique d'aujourd'hui' (sadly misspelled in the booklet) in which Nolan deflects any tendency for virtuoso display in its toccata-like figurations by using the organ's delightfully delicate flutes.

*Bach's Memento* is a suite of six pieces which have their origins in Bach, but travel so far beyond that even the booklet's description of them as 'paraphrase-transcriptions' seems wide of the mark. Widor himself suggested they were 'orchestrations'. However, his own distinct voice, as well as the unique qualities of Cavaillé-Coll, largely obscures the hand of Bach. The fourth movement – 'Marche du veilleur de nuit' – starts off like 'Wachet auf' but quickly wanders so far off course that Bach seems a lingering memory. It ends with a stirring

movement derived from the *St Matthew Passion*.

We enter an entirely different world, both musically and sonically, with the two transcriptions. The boisterous *Marche americane*, transcribed by Dupré from one of Widor's piano pieces, has one foot in the fairground and another on the parade ground, while *Marche nuptiale* is a transcription by Widor himself of some incidental music to a stage play. Nolan delivers both with tremendous ebullience, making a gloriously upbeat conclusion to this superb Widor series.