

The Art of Stylish Organ Improvisation

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Prologue

The spontaneous musical activity of a man was the main source from which the entire musical culture of humanity was born. Before the musicians started composing their repetitive works, improvised music was used both for entertainment and for the needs of worship. For centuries, along with the development of instruments, the development of playing techniques has continued. The adaptation of organ for the use of the Western Church implied a dynamic development of this wonderful instrument. The flexibility of the liturgy meant that improvisation was the most optimal way of implementing live music during worships. In principle, until the early second half of the 19th century, improvisation was the dominant form of organ playing. At that time, organs in concert halls were located (e.g. Albert Hall in Sheffield, The Royal Albert's Hall in London, Palais Trocadéro in Paris), and regular concerts were organized there, during which organ literature began to appear regularly.

The subject of this article is the issue of showing the methodology of the performer's approach to the art of stylish organ improvisation, which after a period of stagnation at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, has been experiencing its renaissance in recent decades. Detailed analyses will be provided on the base of the 19th-century French symphonic era, but the same approach and methodology can be used for each epoch and each style.

Definitions

The dictionary definition of improvisation is "to compose a work of art on the spot, spontaneously, often under the influence of emotion or on a given topic, without any preparation"¹. The phenomenon of improvisation occurs in every field of art: in literature, music, theatre, or fine arts. Musical improvisation is a creation that combines elements of creativity and reproduction (performance)² in a spontaneous and one-off process.

In musical creativity, three types of improvisation are distinguished depending on the role of the performer-composer: 1) creativity based on a specific topic, in close communication with

¹ The entry "improvisation", in: Kopaliński Władysław, "Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych", Wydanie XVII rozszerzone, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1989, pp. 781-782.

² Oleszkiewicz Jan, "I ty możesz improwizować", Centrum Edukacji Artystycznej, Warszawa 1997, p. 7.

the form (e.g. fugue, variation, partita) or consisting in adding some of its elements to an existing work (e.g., parts, or implementation of basso continuo); 2) creativity consisting in introducing one's own part into an existing work (e.g. cadenza in an instrumental concert), and 3) creation which results in a completely new and independent work (e.g. free fantasy³, impression)⁴.

Improvisation includes the tension between the objectivity of a given model (form) and the subjectivity of spontaneous production⁵. Musical improvisation, in the sense of experimenting, especially in monophonic cultures (e.g. Gregorian chant), was a phenomenon that preceded the formation of the first musical works: first tried out, then remembered and transmitted orally, and subsequently written. Improvisation is also credited with the rise of polyphony⁶. Over the centuries, new forms and achievements owe their development to improvisation; the treaties on improvisation began to emerge⁷. The development of keyboard instruments, including organs, was particularly favourable to improvisation. On the basis of classical music, organists remain today's leading improvisers⁸.

Learning goals

As in every field of art, as in the case of organ improvisation, the key is improvisational talent, which according to many is an unteachable element⁹ and educational process, fully taught and possible to convey¹⁰, aimed at shaping talent into a certain framework that allows the creator to communicate with the help of an artistic work with recipients. In artistic education, organ improvisation is a practical subject taught during group activities (e.g. secondary education) or individual (music academies and universities). It should be emphasized that the learning of improvisation brings the best results when it has the character of individual work, in the master-student relationship. In the education process, the student learns to construct and develop a musical theme in many ways. Due to the varying degrees of creative abilities and technical skills of adepts of improvisation, the scope of material used in the learning process is usually adjusted individually – to the level of the group and to the level of individual students. An important task in the process of educating the improviser is to help break down his mental barriers and launch any ideas aimed at arousing motivation and encouraging individual work on particular issues.¹¹

³ Nowowiejski Feliks, "Improwizacja na organach", in: "Muzyka kościelna", rok II, nr 4, Poznań 1927, p. 78.

⁴ The entry "improvisation", in: Chodkowski Andrzej, "Encyklopedia muzyki", Wydawnictwo naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1995, p. 382.

⁵ The entry "improvisation", in: Dahlhaus Carl, Eggebrecht Hans Heinrich, "Brockhaus Riemann Musiklexikon", t. I, B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz 1978, p. 580.

⁶ The entry "improvisation", in: Chodkowski Andrzej, "Encyklopedia muzyki", Wydawnictwo naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1995, p. 382.

⁷ The first are considered: 1) "Tratado de glosas" written by Diego Ortiz in 1553 and 2) "Arte de tañer fantasia" by Tomás de Santa María in 1565. See: the entry "improvisation", in: Chodkowski Andrzej, "Encyklopedia muzyki", Wydawnictwo naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1995, p. 382.

⁸ The entry "improvisation", in: "Encyclopædia Britannica. Edycja polska", tom 17, Wydawnictwo Kurpisz, Poznań 2000, p. 126.

⁹ See: Keller Hermann, "Schule der Choral-Improvisation für Orgel mit 121 Notenbeispielen", Edition Peters, p. 4.

¹⁰ See: A. Guilmant, in: Dupré Marcel, "Traité d'improvisation à l'orgue", Leduc, Paris 1937, p. III.

¹¹ After: "Podstawa programowa dla przedmiotu 'Improwizacja organowa' w Akademii Muzycznej im. Karola

The results of learning process by the adept of the art of organ improvisation should be the following skills¹²:

1. the ability to reach necessary information (books, recordings, music materials), their analysis and interpretation in a proper, stylish way;
2. the ability to use knowledge of harmonics, metro-rhythmic aspects and the creation of forms and genres;
3. the ability to consciously use mutual relations between the theoretical and practical elements of the process of improvisation and the ability to integrate the acquired knowledge;
4. the ability to create, implement and express his own artistic concepts and independent improvisation based on his own creative motivations;
5. the ability to master the technical skills needed for professional improvisation;
6. the ability to practice in the right way, avoiding the hazards often resulting from daily hour-long contact with the instrument;
7. ability to deal with stressful situations resulting from public performances, including reactions to various acoustic conditions of interiors in which the improviser will perform;
8. ability to speak on the subject of interpreting, creating and reproducing music, and on issues related to broadly understood general humanist themes;
9. the ability to consciously use (through the ability of self-esteem) from his emotionality, imagination and intuition; this also applies to the ability to constructively evaluate the performances of other improvisers;
10. ability to use professional musical terminology in the field of improvisational activity.

Studying methods

The contemporary canon of organ improvisation textbooks includes the following items: 1) Dupré M., "Methode d'orgue" en deux Parties, Leduc, Paris 1927; 2) Dupré M., "Traité d'improvisation à l'orgue", Leduc, Paris 1937; 3) Gaar R., "Orgel Improvisation", Carus, Stuttgart 1996; 4) Schmid K. N., "Schule der Orgel Improvisation", Regensburg 1981, and also 5) a recently published two-volume work (textbook and exercises) in Polish prof. Roman Perucki "Improvizacja organowa"¹³. From the historical position in the German circle, it should also be mentioned Keller's "Schule der Choral-Improvisation für Orgel mit 121 Notenbeispielen"¹⁴.

The improvisation course of Marcel Dupré's "Traité d'improvisation à l'orgue", published in Paris in 1937, dedicated to Paul Fauchet, consists of the following sections: a) a detailed discussion of the technique of playing the organ; b) discuss the role of bass in song's harmony; c) presenting the elements constituting the musical theme; d) learning counterpoint; e) suites; f) fuge; g) variation and triptych; h) discussions on symphonic forms, i.e. Allegro, Andante, Scherzo and Final; i) discuss free improvisation on the example of purely musical forms (Fantasy, Rhapsody) and descriptive forms (Fileuse, Barcarole) and j) an allowance for improvisation used in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, in which the author describes

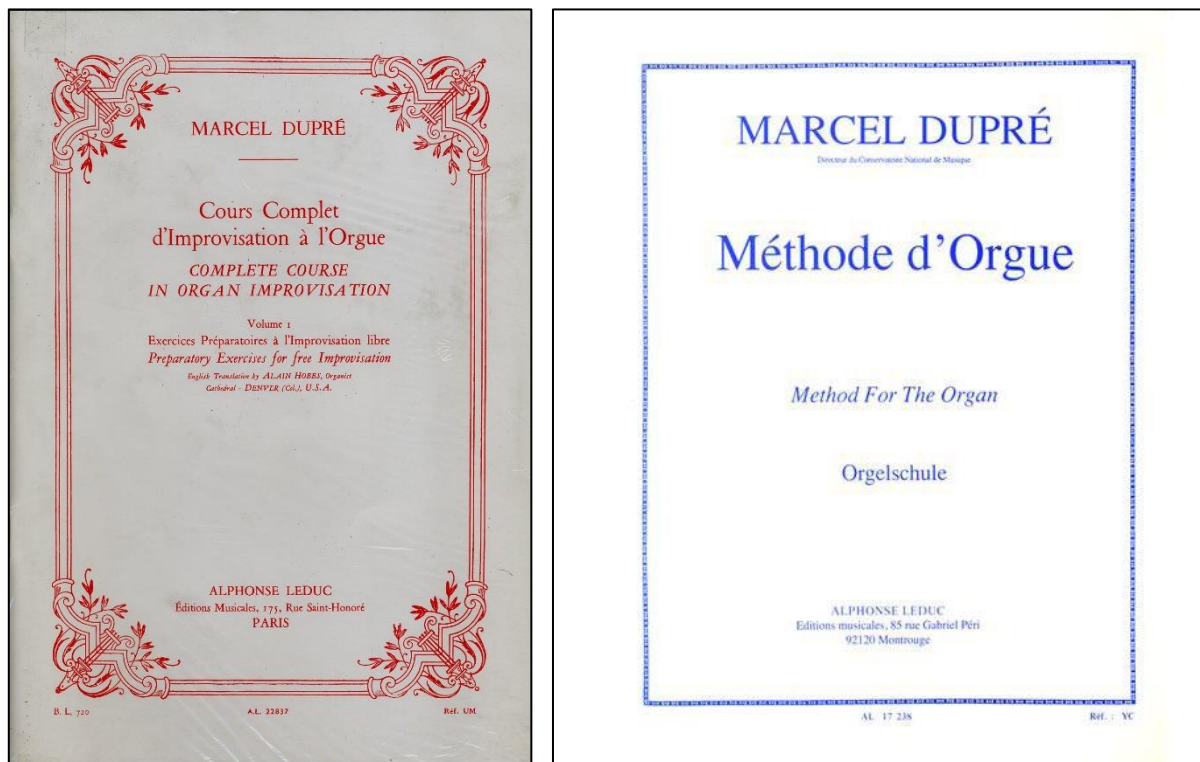
Lipińskiego we Wrocławiu", Wrocław 2017. From: www.amuz.wroc.pl/download/10350 [2019/02/10].

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Perucki Roman, "Improvizacja organowa", handbook and practicebook, Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej im. St. Moniuszki w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2015.

¹⁴ Keller Hermann, "Schule der Choral-Improvisation für Orgel mit 121 Notenbeispielen", Edition Peters.

the places in the liturgy accurately (matins, masses, vespers), where improvisation is desired and indicates previously discussed forms particularly predestined to be performed at a given moment¹⁵.



The course of improvisation prepared by prof. Roman Perucki for students of the Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk, Poland in the form of a textbook and a separate notebook of exercises contains the following chapters: a) the genesis of the phenomenon of improvisation and terminology; b) a description of the objectives, scope and organization of the organ improvisation teaching process at the faculty of the Academy; c) initial exercises on theoretical and practical knowledge (melodic line, harmony, meter and rhythm, compositional workshop); d) material related to choral partita; e) improvisation of chorale prelude and choral fantasy, Italian-style toccata, French-style suite; f) imitational forms, canons, inventions and fugues and free fantasies in any style; g) ostinato forms (Chaconne and Passacaglia). It is worth emphasizing that each of the chapters of this work contains additional examples and tasks for particularly gifted students¹⁶.

¹⁵ Dupré M., "Traité d'improvisation à l'orgue", Leduc, Paris 1937.

¹⁶ Perucki Roman, "Improwizacja organowa", handbook and practicebook, Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej im. St. Moniuszki w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2015.



Keller's course of improvisation, divided into five chapters, consists of: a) teaching harmonically harmonic accompaniment to the singing of the community conducted by the organist in a four-part system with a short introduction and ending, as well as simple modulations; b) learning how to run cantus firmus in soprano and conducting richer movement in other voices (including change of rhythm, transitional notes, figuration), learning of duos (bicingium) and figured cantus firmus; c) learning to tune in a tenor (also using a 4' stop in Pedal part) and bass; d) learning imitative and fugal techniques; and e) learning larger forms of choral preludes with the use of imitative technique, interlude technique, and the use of various techniques simultaneously or interchangeably¹⁷.

The performer who wants to improvise in a historically oriented way should achieve a number

¹⁷ Keller Hermann, "Schule der Choral-Improvisation für Orgel mit 121 Notenbeispielen", Edition Peters.

of preparatory activities before proceeding (or in parallel) to work on the instrument¹⁸, i.e.: 1) familiarize itself with the instruments of a given epoch and cultural circle; 2) get to know the views of the composers of a given era regarding the implementation of agogics, dynamics and articulation; 3) to study the source scriptures and treatises in which the spirit of a given epoch is reflected.

In this way, the performer, equipped with theoretical knowledge and the recognized historical context, can – in a historically oriented way – proceed to the implementation of the studied assumptions practically on an instrument. Starting from these assumptions, every epoch, cultural circle, and even composer, has its own unique, historically oriented performance style, which is worth studying.

In the context of further considerations and the complexity of the organ playing process, the words of the French music theoretician Albert Lavignac (1846-1916) will be relevant: “as organ is truly an instrument of instruments, in accordance with their Latin name ‘organa’ means instruments, so the organist is a musician of musicians; he must possess the skills of all techniques, harmony, counterpoint, fugue ...”¹⁹.

Role in the liturgical practice of the 19th century

Organ is an instrument closely related to the Western Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and from the 16th century also the majority of its Protestant factions. Obviously, organ composing creativity until the mid-19th century was intended in the vast majority for use during the liturgy. The important role of organ improvisation stemmed from the fact that the main task of church organists was to perform music for a living liturgy²⁰. Because the duration of the various phases of the liturgy varied depending on many factors (including the personal features of the celebrant, the number of the faithful), improvisation was a flexible way of reconciling the requirement of performing ‘live’ music during the variable time periods assigned for this purpose. In such dynamic circumstances, the organist had to follow the liturgical action on an ongoing basis so that the music would correspond to the character of the liturgical phase and would last the required amount of time. In the case of organ literature - even with the most intense attempts by the composer to adapt the length of the work to a given stage of the liturgy (Introit, Offertoire, Communion) – the organist often had to finish the song beforehand (when the liturgical action went faster), or compose an additional piece live (when the action lasted longer than predicted by the composer).

Due to the dominance of other fragments of the Christian Western Church, each of the major European cultural circles (German, English and French) developed their own separate pattern of liturgical organ improvisation.

¹⁸ See: Perucki Roman, “Niemieckie organy romantyczne – estetyka brzmienia, zagadnienia rejestracji oraz problemy wykonawcze”, in: Danuta Szlagowska (edit.), “Organy i muzyka organowa. W kręgu romantyzmu”, t. XV, Akademia Muzyczna im. St. Moniuszki w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 2014, pp. 141, 162-163.

¹⁹ Ebrecht Ronald, “Cavaillé-Coll’s Monumental Organ Project for Saint Peter’s, Rome. Bigger Than Them All”, Lanham et al., Lexington Books, USA, 2013, p. 188.

²⁰ After the Second Vatican Council, the issue of the importance and role of liturgical music underwent fundamental changes.

German circle

Dominant in the German circle, based on the Word of God, the Protestant Church introduced to the liturgy the chorale sung by the whole community. These songs constituted (and still are) an immanent element of the liturgy uniting the prayers of the faithful, and not just an accompanying element, as it was in the then Roman Catholic Church. Most of the introductions (preludes) to singing through the whole community were made, which aimed at presenting the melody of the chorale, its character and tempo. Larger pieces of organ music – based on the melody of the chorale – were also improvised, allowing the theological content of the chorale to be contemplated by the faithful. The power of the words of Protestant chorale can be extremely important for the development of improvised music. An example is the pre-romantic choral works of J. S. Bach, as well as the romantic studies of the majority of organists of the discussed period operating in the German circle.

English circle

In turn, the English circle is the dominance of the Anglican Church. Until the mid-19th century, there were basically no organists in smaller city churches and most of the rural churches. Liturgical music was played on music boxes equipped with a mechanism to activate the pipes with special projections or perforations on a rotating cylinder. Until the end of the 1870s, redundancies of professional organists were confirmed by low fees and the use of occasional amateur musicians²¹. A measure of the liturgical level of English music were performed fragments from Haendel's oratorios²². Concluding from the features of contemporary organ literature (Stanford, Parry, Elgar), the harmonic language of improvisation was probably conventional, diatonic in major and minor scales with little use of chromatics (mostly for modulations)²³. The dominant feature of British music of the 19th century was the need to enrich court ceremonies that were often held in temples. The characteristic features of this music were²⁴: 1) fanfare style; 2) the use of folk songs and melodic expressions typical of them, and 3) a procession style consisting of passages of rhythmical accompaniment, on the background of which long melodic lines were developed.

French circle

How much improvisation was important in educating the organists at the Paris Conservatoire in the 19th century is evidenced by the fact that the annual exams (called contests), which all students of this instrument had to stand, consisted from 1834 on the performance of: 1) accompaniment to the Gregorian monody (carried out in soprano or bass), 2) improvisation of the fugue on the topic given by the examination committee, and 3) free improvisation on a given topic. Thus, basically all the tasks concerned improvisational issues, not executive art (although the commission certainly also took into account the artistic quality of the works' implementation). It was not until 1852, as the fourth point of the exam, playing of the fugue with the pedal part from the memory, was added; from the list of a few works prepared by the

²¹ Sumner William Leslie, "The Organ, Its Evolution, Principles of Construction and Use", MacDonald & Co. Ltd., London 1958, p. 220.

²² Ibidem, p. 217.

²³ Andrews Collin, "British organ music from 1840 to the present", in: Janusz Krassowski (edit.), *Prace Specjalne 54, Akademia Muzyczna im. St. Moniuszki w Gdańsku*, Gdańsk 1997, p. 179.

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 180-181.

student, the commission chose one. It can be safely said that during the first half of the 19th century, improvisation was the dominant field of teaching in the organ class of the Paris Conservatoire, which directly resulted from the fact that the organist – mostly during liturgical duties – performed improvised music. Only the second half of the century brought more emphasis on performing arts; although the science and the position of improvisation was still high. This fact is also confirmed by one of the organizational changes in the category of teaching made in 1848 at the Paris Conservatoire, which included organ education in the composition and harmony category in accordance with the principle that the ability to compose and use harmony is a natural area for the organist, which is the source of organ improvisation²⁵.

Romanticism in the culture of France, despite the anti-religious turmoil caused by the Great Revolution (1789-1799), is still the dominance of the Catholic Church. Catholic masses (according to the Tridentine rite) celebrated in Latin and back to the faithful were a field for organists totally different than Protestant musical expression. French culture developed the following forms that were used in the Roman Catholic liturgy: Introit – a work for the beginning of the liturgy, Offertory – a work during the Eucharistic prayer, Elevation – a work for raising, Communion – a piece during the communion of the faithful, Sortie – a piece for the end of liturgy²⁶.

As for the musical content that filled these forms, the period from the early 1860s was an exceptional time. At that time, secular works of operatic provenance were dominating in the churches, street songs were the subjects of liturgical improvisations, waltzes and gallops were played during Offertoire, and hunting songs as a substitute for sequences; clerics even demanded this type of music from their organists, believing that it attracted people to churches²⁷. It must be remembered that until the end of the 1860s, there was a relaxed atmosphere in the French churches – far from the contemplative devotion that we associate with the sphere of sacrum. Men, like women, entered temples in hats; they were vividly reacted to music, turning to the organ during the liturgy and applauding the pieces they liked. Since the 1870s, there has been a breakthrough in improvised liturgical music and adaptation of its character to the seriousness of liturgical content. An important role in this process was played by educational institutions: ‘L’École Niedermeyer’ (with lecturers of Weckenthaler, Niedermeyer and Gigout) and later ‘Schola Cantorum’ (Bordes, Guilmant, Vierne)²⁸. In relation to the Protestant, founding of the Roman Catholic liturgy were other: Saint-Saëns postulated that French organists – similar to the German ones, enriching the organ literature through works composed on the basis of Protestant chant – should do the same with Catholic melodies, or Gregorian chant. He believed that this direction is very desirable for French organ music. In turn, Guilmant considered the possibility of composing and improvising polyphonic pieces on modal scales as an extremely interesting phenomenon²⁹. The continuator of this postulate was also Dupré.

²⁵ Ochse Orpha Caroline, “Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium”, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2000, pp. 149-151.

²⁶ A detailed description of the liturgical moments of the Tridentine rite of the Roman Catholic Church, where improvisation is desirable, can be found in: Dupré Marcel, “Traité d’improvisation à l’orgue”, Leduc, Paris 1937, pp. 134-135.

²⁷ Smith Rollin, “Saint-Saëns and the Organ”, Pendragon Press, Stuyvesant (NY) 1992, pp. 10-11.

²⁸ Ochse Orpha Caroline, “Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium”, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2000, pp. 204-223.

²⁹ Ibidem, pp. 138-139.

The style of French romantic organ improvisation

From the accounts of young Vierne (an adept at the class of improvisation at the Paris Conservatory), we know what elements particular professors paid attention to in teaching the art of improvisation. Franck was focused on detail, melodic invention, harmonic innovation, subtle modulation, elegant figuration – on everything related to musical purity and appropriate expression. Franck – as a student of Anton Reicha (1770-1836) – was very demanding in the matter of fugue science; he carefully prepared the subject for each lesson, which was then used by the students. Widor, in opposition to Franck, focused mostly on the formal side of the structure and logical development of the fugue; the themes drew from every possible source, modifying them in rhythmical needs if necessary. Widor conducted two groups of organ improvisation lessons per week, and devoted one lesson per month to the analysis of various symphonic forms using the work of Ph. E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (he focused a lot on these last two composers), Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann and modern symphonists. Widor was an opponent of the playing without understanding, believing that this is a natural feature for a parrot, not an artist.³⁰

Trying to go one step further into the arcana of stylistic improvisation, we should study the compositional styles of important figures of the epoch. We will do this on the base of French symphonic organists. The first and very original case is Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély (1817-1869); his style was described in detail in "The Organ" No 388³¹. The most important factors characterizing the composing workshop of César Franck (1822-1890) include: 1) the structure of the work based on strongly contrasting themes, which are developed significantly and undergo evolution processing (complex interlacing and joining especially in the final stage of the work); 2) rich harmonics (intensive modulation movement, frequent generation and discharge of the tension); 3) operating wide musical images of a dramatic and lyrical nature; 4) extensive use of polyphony; 5) characteristic sound colours.³²

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) was a supporter of calm tempos, comparing musical creation to the expression of a good orator, who is valued more for what he says and how he says: calmly and clearly; speed is not a feature of a good orator. The change of manuals was not a result of the artist's arbitrary preferences, but was a precise function of the intelligent change of the work's sound plans³³. Widor's comments on the registration referred to stop families and their tonal patterns rather than to individual registers; he pointed out to the students groups of stops (their quantity, volume proportions) adequate to achieve a specific effect. Achieving progressive crescendo was suggested by adding fonds stops while playing in the lower keyboard scales, while adding 'anches' while playing the upper keyboard scales.

Features of Louis Vierne's (1870-1937) music are: 1) legato: "is the most natural way to play the organ; the homogeneity of all the sounds in a given organ register naturally requires them to be combined"; legato also applies to middle voices and playing a pedalboard; 2) repeated notes: in moderate tempos they should be shortened by 1/2, and in slow tempos by 1/4 or 1/8;

³⁰ Smith Rollin, "Louis Vierne: Organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral", Pendragon Press, Stuyvesant (NY) 1999, p. 65.

³¹ Szostak Michał, "Louis-James-Alfred Lefébure-Wély - a sesquicentenary assessment", in: "The Organ", No 388, May-July 2019, Musical Opinion Ltd, London, pp. 4-21.

³² Karolak Elżbieta, "Pierwiastki polifoniczne w organowej twórczości Césara Francka", w: "Organy i muzyka organowa VII", Janusz Krassowski (edit.), Prace Specjalne 44, Akademia Muzyczna im. Stanisława Moniuszki w Gdańsku, Gdańsk 1988, pp. 189-205.

³³ Smith Rollin, "Louis Vierne: Organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral", Pendragon Press, Stuyvesant (NY) 1999, p. 79.

in three-way rhythms, the value should be shortened by 1/3 or 1/6 (or a multiple of 3); the striking and removing the chord should apply to all its components at the same time; 4) common notes in different voices: generally combine, but subject to exceptions that depend on melodic clarity; 5) pieces are ended with very long, drawn-out ritards; 6) tempo-rubato as an important factor of the music; music shouldn't be mechanical, it should be like rubber; 7) common trills; 8) fermatas over rests; which is the consequence of performing in large spaces; 9) using of swell box to underline important and less important fragments; 10) phrasing is depending more from the performer than from the work; 11) appropriate tempo to the acoustics of the space; the listener should always be able to understand the rhythm of the piece.³⁴

The style of improvisation, or its compatibility with the patterns of French symphonic music of the 19th century, consists of the following elements: 1) characteristic music forms: Sonata Allegro, Prière, Reverie, Offertoire, Scherzo, Meditation, Marche, Toccata, Sortie; 2) harmony rooted in the major-minor system with rich chromatics and modulations, the application density of which grew with deepening into the 19th century³⁵; the use of modal scales and harmony; 3) the use of specific stops combinations resulting from the aesthetics of French symphonic organs, e.g.: a) basic sound based on labial stops called 'jeux de fonds', often coloured with reed Hautbois, b) solo parts played on 8-foot reed stops like Hautbois or Trompette or 8-foot labial stops like Montre, Gambe, Flûte harmonique, c) characteristic sounds like 'choir de voix humaines' and 'choir de voix céleste', d) negligible use of the tremulant –with the Voix humaine only; Guilmant and Vierne considered this effect undesirable, a relic of earlier eras in organ construction and denoting a lack of taste when used³⁶; 4) smooth dynamic changes implemented by operating an swell box, copulations and stop combinations ('jeux d'anches'); 5) metro-rhythmics with an important role of tempo-rubato: a) school of Franck, Vierne and Tournemire using tempo-rubato broadly, b) school of Widor and Dupré using tempo-rubato slightly; 6) legato application (with varying intensity depending on the interior acoustics); 7) creative invention; 8) the use of relatively slower tempos, which resulted from the great interiors of French cathedrals and the key action; supporters of "peace and religious majestic splendour" were Franck, Guilmant, Widor and Vierne³⁷; 9) smooth tempo modification (accelerando and ritardando) to build and discharge tension (Lefébure-Wély)³⁸.

The above elements are also criteria for the evaluation of stylish improvisation as an artistic performance.

Epilogue

Equipped with above mentioned theoretical information, we need to start or to develop our adventure with organ improvisation. We should treat this adventure as an equal to performing

³⁴ Ibidem, pp. 571-591.

³⁵ Widor lived for a long time, hence – at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the twentieth century – as an advanced age and the spirit of the previous (more consonant) age, professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire criticized the new generation of organists (Vierne, Tournemire) for excessive and unnecessary according to him using chromatics. After: Thomson, Andrew. "C. M. Widor: A Revaluation", in: "The Musical Times", vol. 125, no. 1693, 1984, pp. 169-170.

³⁶ Laukvik Jon, "Historical Performance Practice in Organ Playing. Part 2. The Romantic Era", Carus-Verlag, Stuttgart 2010, p. 183.

³⁷ Ibidem, pp. 282-283.

³⁸ Ibidem, pp. 286-289.

literature part of organist work, not as a special gift given to a few from us only. Practice, patience and accuracy should be our best friends on this field, where beautiful fruits have been grew up for many centuries.

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