

The Diaries and Selected Letters of Jeanne Demessieux

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LYNN CAVANAGH

LYNN CAVANAGH
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Introduction

The French musician Jeanne Demessieux (1921–1968) was a trail blazer—a composer whose first published composition (1946) was the most virtuosic work for organ ever to appear. She was also the first woman to sign a recording contract for solo classical organ music (1947) and a concert artist who in the 1950s was the first female organist to make transcontinental tours of North America. Her diaries combined with letters fall into three sections—1932–1940, 1940–1946, and those from her North American recital tours. They are a rarity among self-writings of historic women musicians, a goldmine of insights into music education and career-building in twentieth-century France, and a frank view of the tribulations of a touring concert organist in the 1950s.

Composer and translator Stacey Brown and I here present the first English translation of Jeanne Demessieux's complete, extant diaries, and of selections from a smaller body of related correspondence. Together, they detail one historical woman's path from a music-saturated childhood to touring virtuoso musician. Unlike the archetypal woman's diary, Jeanne Demessieux's journals from 1932–1940 and 1940–1946 (both written in Paris) do not detail the minutiae of a young woman's day-to-day life. Even the German Occupation of Paris and events of World War II are given only occasional mention. Instead, the spotlight is steadily on music.

The chapters accompanying the translations do not form a complete biographical study.¹ Rather, introductory chapters to the three short periods in which Demessieux chronicled her experiences focus on the contexts in which the diaries and letters were written. To initiate readers into the periods spanning 1932–1940 and 1940–1946, I describe the significance of Demessieux's lineage and social class at birth, the nature of the Paris Conservatory as Demessieux experienced it, and how Demessieux served in the role of organist of the Church of St-Esprit. The diary of 1940–1946 is itself preceded by two chapters: the first examines the diary's other principal characters, specifically Demessieux's mentor Marcel Dupré and his wife Jeanne Dupré; the second defines the mid-twentieth-century controversies within the Paris organ world in which Demessieux became embroiled. The 1950s travel diaries and correspondence are introduced by an overview of Demessieux's three North American recital tours, including information on their organization, repertoire, and reception in print.²

The translations may be read straight through or in tandem with notes on the text (i.e., endnotes). Wherever possible, a note explains an incomplete or obscure reference in a diary or letter. Other notes provide specific background information not included in the introductory chapters. Where an event to which Demessieux refers is corroborated elsewhere in writing, this is cited. The diaries, particularly that of 1940–1946, also contain a plethora of names of other historical persons. To illuminate these, the first instance of the name of a noteworthy person in the translated text is linked to a short biographical note included in the alphabetical "Register of Persons Mentioned in Jeanne Demessieux's Diaries and Letters."

For readers who may wish to compare their reactions to the diaries and letters with mine, the chapter that immediately follows each of the three translations comments on and reads between the lines of the texts, demonstrating how the written words provide clues to more than first meets the eye. These commentaries also foreground dilemmas in the life of Jeanne Demessieux. The diary and letters of 1932–1940 present her, for instance, in the predicament of a young female spending all her time in the company of adults. One of the themes of the diary of 1940–1946 relates to mentorship, specifically what can happen when an older male decides to develop the career of a young woman—not the Catch-22 situation highlighted by the modern #meto movement but, rather, attribution of a "male brain" to the female protégée. Finally, concerning the diaries from the North American recital tours, I draw attention to Demessieux's frustration, as a prominent European *artiste*, at being expected to mingle with North American society ladies of the 1950s.

Sources

Following Demessieux's early death in 1968 at the age of 47, her older sister, Yolande Demessieux of Aigues-Mortes, went to great lengths to preserve the reputation and legacy of her sister. It is due, first, to Yolande that there exist primary source material pertaining to her sister's life and a collation of that source material in a biographical study

in French. Likely in the 1970s, she commissioned this biography from a friend, the Bordeaux organist, composer, and musicologist Christiane Trieu-Colleney (1949–1993). Supplied by Yolande Demessieux with mounds of her sister's diaries, photos, letters, and memorabilia, and Yolande's memories of Jeanne as a child, Trieu-Colleney turned these into *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire*, which was published in 1977.³

Among the readers of that biography was a former Liège Conservatory organ student of Jeanne Demessieux, the Dutch organist Goosen van Tuijl (1924–2005). Intrigued by his former teacher's story as recounted by Trieu-Colleney, Van Tuijl wanted to fill in more pieces of the puzzle of her life. Therefore, in the early 1980s he and his companion Ank de Groot travelled from the Netherlands to Aigues-Mortes in search of people who had known Jeanne Demessieux. As they solicited memories, a helpful townsman said to them, "Why don't you go and ask her sister?" The couple found Yolande Demessieux at her home on avenue Frédéric Mistral. There they heard stories of Jeanne Demessieux's life first-hand and caught a glimpse of a room that contained a treasure trove of her papers and musical manuscripts.

As Van Tuijl was soon to discover, in the early 1980s Yolande Demessieux was particularly concerned that her sister's unpublished musical compositions—autograph manuscripts of student works inherited by Yolande—not be given unauthorized performances or publication. In a bid to collect everything, she contacted Pierre Labric (b. 1921), a former student of Jeanne who had been her substitute organist at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris. She instructed him to give to Van Tuijl the manuscripts that Yolande Demessieux suspected he had in his position. (She also made a point of asking for her sister's organ shoes, which Pierre Labric had obtained from Jeanne.⁴)

With the assistance of Van Tuijl and another Dutch organist who had studied with Jeanne Demessieux in Liège, Jean Wolfs of Maastricht (d. 2003), Yolande Demessieux arranged with the Municipal Archives of Maastricht to transfer the manuscripts of Jeanne's unpublished compositions for preservation there. A document consigning these manuscripts to the Maastricht Archives, signed by Jean Wolfs and Goosen Van Tuijl in February 1984 and by Yolande Demessieux in March 1984, suggests the transfer took place that year.⁵

In the late 1980s, Yolande Demessieux moved from Aigues-Mortes to a retirement home in nearby Grau-de-Roi. Her residence was afterwards sold (the exact dates are forgotten); one section of the house was demolished, which is to say that only part of the structure that Demessieux family members inhabited remains. It seems likely that the papers of Jeanne Demessieux that Van Tuijl and De Groot had glimpsed (other than musical manuscripts) remained in this house and were lost when it was sold.⁶ Yolande Demessieux died in Grau-de-Roi in 2000.

In 1994, an American organ student of Jean Wolfs, Peggy Jane Johnson, completed a thesis focusing on musical structure and performance issues in the published organ compositions of Jeanne Demessieux.⁷ The biographical section of the thesis relied heavily on Trieu-Colleney's biography. Fast-forward to 2000, when I had read Trieu-Colleney's book and discovered Johnson's thesis, which gave me no indication of the location of the diaries and letters on which Trieu-Colleney based her biography. It did make me aware that the manuscripts of Demessieux's unpublished compositions were kept at the Maastricht Archives and could only be accessed by persons authorized by Jean Wolfs.⁸

In early 2003, with the assistance of Peggy Jane Johnson, I wrote to Wolfs and was graciously accepted to examine these manuscripts in Maastricht. Meanwhile, I planned a twelve-week journey around western Europe, beginning in the Netherlands and following Demessieux's path as a concert organist. Unfortunately for my hopes of speaking with Jean Wolfs concerning his memories of his organ teacher, he passed away only weeks prior to my arrival in Maastricht in May 2003. That disappointment led me, shortly after, to Goosen van Tuijl, who was living in 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands. He happily spent several hours with me in his home talking about Jeanne Demessieux, playing tape recordings he had made of her performances, and showing me personal possessions of Demessieux that she had entrusted to him. Van Tuijl and I remained in touch when I returned to Canada later that summer. After his death in 2005, I would inherit from him his tape recordings of organ improvisations Demessieux had performed at the Liège Conservatory in 1957, and a collection of papers, other recordings, textbooks, and photographs that had belonged to her.

In early 2003, as I was preparing for my research trip, the location of the diaries and letters from which Trieu-Colleney quoted in the 1977 biography was still a mystery. Bruno Chaumet, president of the Association des Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré, then led me in the right direction: he recommended that, as French organist Marie-Madeleine Duruflé had been studying with Jeanne Demessieux during one of the periods covered in the biography, I should enquire

with the Association Maurice et Marie-Madeleine Duruflé as to whether they had any clues. Correspondence with then Duruflé Association president Frédéric Blanc suggested to me that the diaries could still be with the husband of the late Trieu-Colleney, Daniel Picotin, whose address Frédéric Blanc was able to supply.

In a letter that arrived just as I was about to leave for Europe at the end of April 2003, Daniel Picotin informed me that the diaries were indeed in his possession and agreed to let me examine them when I came to France. When I arrived at his law office in Bordeaux in June 2003, I was presented with cartons and cartons of materials: diaries, letters, scraps of letters, photographs, and miscellaneous papers that had remained in the possession of Christiane Trieu-Colleney. I spent three days in his office combing through these. Examination of the Demessieux letters in the collection revealed that many of those from which Trieu-Colleney quoted in *Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* were not in the collection of papers that remained with Picotin. This suggested—perhaps—that some materials had been returned to Yolande Demessieux and lost. Daniel Picotin kindly gave me permission to photocopy letters in his office and, later, when I was back in Canada, supplied me with complete photocopies of the three diaries. At the time of my viewing of the collection in Picotin's possession, I recommended to him that he donate all the materials to a public archive; his choice was the municipal archives of Jeanne Demessieux's birthplace, Montpellier, where they were deposited in 2004.⁹

In 2005, I published an article based on my reading of the diary of 1940–1946 and began my long work of translating all the diaries.¹⁰ As I continued to decipher the diary manuscripts, I was surprised when the French text of the diaries of 1934–1938 and 1940–1946, and a selection of letters and photographs, were published in 2009 in *L'Orgue*, *Bulletin des Amis de l'Orgue*.¹¹ They were preceded by commentary in essay form by the French musicologist François Sabatier that focused on the period 1940–1946.¹²

In late 2013 I approached Stacey Brown, asking her to join my project to correct and polish my translations, to which she enthusiastically agreed. The existence of the typeset text from 2009 had the happy result of facilitating her own work. With this in mind, I should note that our present translation diverges from the text published in *L'Orgue* in the very few places where the latter differs slightly from the manuscripts. The texts of the North American travel diaries of 1955 and 1958 were not published in *L'Orgue*, likely because they had been printed in Trieu-Colleney's *Une vie de lutttes et de gloire*, though with editorial omissions and a few errors in transcription. Our translation of the travel diaries follows the manuscript.

NOTES:

1 It remains for someone else to produce a comprehensive English-language biography of Jeanne Demessieux. In the meantime, her life has been summarized in English by others: Laura Ellis, "The American Recital Tours of Jeanne Demessieux: A Documentation of Her Performances" (D.M.A. document, University of Kansas, 1991), which also contains chapters concerning her early career and her final years; Karen E. Ford, "Jeanne Demessieux," *The American Organist* (Apr. 1992): 58–64; Martin Welzel, "Jeanne Demessieux (1921–1968): A Critical Examination of Her Life," (D.M.A. diss., University of Washington, 2005); D'Arcy Trinkwon, "The Legend of Jeanne Demessieux: A Study," *The Diapason*, whole number 1188 (Nov. 2008): 30–33; D'Arcy Trinkwon, "Jeanne Demessieux, 1921–1968," CD liner notes accompanying "Jeanne Demessieux: the Decca Legacy" (Decca 484 1424, 2021), 21–43.

2 Other than the translations of the diaries and letters themselves, translations from secondary and primary sources that occur within the introductory chapters, the chapters of commentary, and the notes accompanying the actual translations, were prepared by Lynn Cavanagh, unless otherwise stated.

3 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977). Following a chapter dealing with Demessieux's childhood, this book does not trace events of her life in chronological order, but is instead structured around topics, with chapters on her teachers, difficulties in her life, and individual facets of her illustrious career. These chapters are followed by excerpts from Demessieux's letters and diaries, other selected writings by Demessieux, and an account of the last year of her life. The book concludes with a one-page chronology and relevant lists.

4 Conversation with Pierre Labric, May 2003.

5 In 2003, documents negotiating the transfer were part of the Jeanne Demessieux collection in the Maastricht Archives. Only Demessieux's earliest unpublished compositions, principally for instruments other than organ and for

voices, made it into the collection, not her late, unpublished organ works.

6 Conversation with Goosen van Tuijl, May 2003.

7 Peggy Jane Johnson, “The Organ Compositions of Jeanne Demessieux (1921–1968),” (D.M.A. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1994).

8 The collection of Demessieux musical manuscripts from her student days is now part of the holdings of the Regionaal Historisch Centrum of the province of Limburg in Maastricht, 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripten. Access to the collection currently requires permission of the RHCL archivist.

9 Archives municipales de Montpellier, 4S series: Demessieux.

10 Lynn Cavanagh, “The Rise and Fall of a Famous Collaboration: Marcel Dupré and Jeanne Demessieux,” *The Diapason*, whole no. 1148 (Jul. 2005): 18–22.

11 *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal (1934–1946)*, *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009).

12 François Sabatier, “Avant-propos” in *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal (1934–1946)*, *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009): 3–27.

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My thanks go first to those who assisted me in 2003 in locating the manuscripts of Jeanne Demessieux's diaries and letters: Bruno Chaumet, president of the Association Les Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré, who led me to Frédéric Blanc, and Monsieur Blanc, then president of the Association Maurice et Marie-Madeleine Duruflé, who led me to Daniel Picotin. Special thanks are due to Daniel Picotin, husband of the late Christiane Colleney, who generously made for me copies of the manuscripts of the diaries and letters.

My 2003 research trip in Europe was funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In preparation for that trip, American organist Peggy Jane Johnson kindly put me in touch with the Dutch organist Jean Wolfs, and my colleague at the University of Regina, Laurie Carlson-Berg, turned my letter to Jean Wolfs into elegant French. Though Jean Wolfs passed away before I arrived in Maastricht to speak to him in person, his family led me to the Maastricht organist Hans Leenders who, in turn, gave me contact information for Demessieux student Goosen van Tuijl. Van Tuijl and his companion Ank de Groot welcomed me into their home in s'-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands for two long interviews. Following van Tuijl's death in early 2004, De Groot received me in her home on a couple more occasions, in 2006 and 2011, and facilitated the transfer of Demessieux memorabilia that Van Tuijl had graciously bequeathed to me.

Many individuals in France agreed to be interviewed, most of these in 2003. Pierre Labric, Jeanne Demessieux's pupil, friend, and supply organist, spoke to me of his memories of Demessieux and gave me copies of her 1946–1947 Salle Pleyel recital programs. Demessieux friend Madeleine Chacun, then president of the Association Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux, shared with me her memories, and copies of recital programs from Demessieux's international career. Chacun also put me in contact with Demessieux's closest living relative, the late Dr. Jacques Peyle (grandson of one of Jeanne Demessieux's paternal aunts). At their home in Bourg de Péage, Dr. and Mrs. Peyle spoke to me about the Demessieux family. The late Rolande Falcinelli received me in her home in Pau to talk about what it was like to be a young female organist in Paris in the 1940s. My thanks go especially to Demessieux's friend and secretary Claudine Verchère, of the Association Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux, with whom I had several conversations over the period 2004 to 2012, when she visited Canada, or I visited France.

Staff of libraries and archives facilitated my research over the years. The first was the Municipal Archives of the city of Maastricht, where in 2003 I examined manuscripts of Demessieux's student compositions. That same year, France's Archives nationales provided me with documents concerning study at the Paris Conservatory during the 1930s and 1940s. Staff of the Bibliothèque nationale de France gave further assistance; in particular, in 2006 and subsequent years, the BnF music department enabled my research on the teaching and concert career of Marcel Dupré. Also in 2006, staff of the Archives municipales de Montpellier allowed me to re-examine the Demessieux memorabilia that had been transferred there and provided me with digital copies of Demessieux photographs.

Other institutions in France supplied information by email. In 2015 the physics department of Paris's Palais de la découverte clarified for me the nature of the “mannequin Cavaillé-Coll” referred to in Demessieux's diary entry of April 2, 1941: for this, thanks go to Kamil Fadel and Alain de Botton. In 2021 the archives of the Société nationale des chemins de fer français in Beziers, France provided me with scans of documents related to Étienne Demessieux's employment with the company.

Several individuals kindly responded to my inquiries. A 2011 email exchange with French musicologist Yannick Simon pointed me to documentation concerning Marcel Dupré's candidacy to head the Paris Conservatory in 1941. In Regina, French-born resident Nicole Sauvage answered my questions about family customs in France. Telephone conversations and email correspondence with University of North Texas organist Jesse Eschbach in 2020 expanded my thinking concerning Marcel Dupré's 1946 break with Jeanne Demessieux. In early 2022, the incumbent organist of St-Esprit in Paris, Hampus Lindwall, responded by email to my questions concerning Demessieux as organist of that church. Also in 2022, U.K. record producer Adam Freeman shared with me via email his research concerning female

organists who had made early commercial recordings. Meanwhile, email exchanges with organist D'Arcy Trinkwon in the U.K. gave me insights into the hurdles Demessieux faced during her career.

I am immensely grateful to Stacey Brown for having agreed back in 2013 to correct and polish my translations of Demessieux's diaries and letters, and for staying figuratively by my side during these past nine years. Finally, I owe a huge debt of thanks to Barbara Reul for her careful readings of this book—in particular, my chapters of introduction and commentary and my notes to the translations—and for her wise editorial advice.

The texts translated to English in this book are used with the following permissions:

Diaries and letters of Demessieux as a whole are used with permission of the heirs to the estate of Jeanne Demessieux: Dominique Badin Peyle, Laurence Peyle, and Pascale Peyle.

Diaries and letters of Demessieux published in *L'Orgue: Bulletin des Amis de l'Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009/III–IV) are used with the permission of the editor, François Sabatier.

Excerpts from letters by Demessieux derived from Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977) are used with permission of the heir to the estate of Christiane Colleney, Daniel Picotin.

Letters, and excerpts from letters, written by Marcel and Jeanne Dupré to Jean Guerner, published in the *Bulletin of the Association des Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré*, No. 20 (May 2002), are used courtesy of the president of the Association, Bruno Chaumet.

Photos appearing in Chapters 1, 4, 8, 9, and 10, and on the cover, are used with permission of the Archives municipales de Montpellier, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux, unless otherwise indicated.

Editorial notes concerning the translations

Simple misspellings of a person's name have been corrected without comment.

Formatting:

- Manuscript page numbers are shown in square brackets at the start of each new manuscript page.
- Paragraph changes not indicated in the manuscript have been added to aid comprehension when the topic has changed.
- Abbreviations for names of speakers in a conversation have been standardized and are not necessarily those of the manuscript.
- Underlining in the manuscript is shown as underlining, and strikeout in the manuscript is shown as strikeout.
- A footnote in the manuscript has been indicated with an asterisk (or other sign if two or more are in close succession in the manuscript). The content of the footnote is placed immediately following the diary entry, or, if the entry is very long, at a suitable place within the diary entry.
- Punctuation marks in the translations reflect usage in English and are not necessarily those of the manuscript.
- We have retained Demessieux's use of three unspaced dots to indicate a pause in conversation or a statement that trails off. In excerpts from letters quoted by Trieu-Colleney, three spaced dots indicate that the original likely continued beyond that point.

Formatting added to titles of musical works:

- Non-generic cover title of a published work: italics.
E.g., Dupré, *Symphonie-Passion*
E.g., Demessieux, *Six Études*
- Generic title of a published work: Roman type (i.e., non-italic).
E.g., Dupré's second set of Preludes and Fugues, Op. 36
- Title of a piece within a published work: quotation marks.
E.g., Dupré, "Berceuse" [from *Suite Bretonne*]
E.g., Dupré, "Cantabile" from *Suite* for organ, Op. 39
- Non-generic cover title of a work mentioned at a point when it has not yet been published: quotation marks.
E.g., Speaking to me of his symphony "Évocation," . . . Dupré announced to me that he had finished the sketch of the three movements.
- Plainchant title or chorale title: quotation marks.
E.g., "Ave maris stella"
E.g., "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland"
- Chorale prelude (i.e., organ chorale) by Bach: quotation marks.
E.g., "Das alte Jahr vergangen ist" (from the *Orgelbüchlein*)
E.g., "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" (from the "Eighteen")

Titles of German chorales, which occur in French translation in the manuscript, have been replaced by their German versions in the translation.

I. From the Midi to Paris, 1921-1946

*“I will tell you about this church’s organist, Your Eminence.
A young girl from Montpellier. When she was eleven years old,
her parents, witnessing the extraordinary development of this child’s gifts,
made the sacrifice of selling everything so they could take their child to Paris.”*

—Marcel Dupré, quoted in diary entry of March 26, 1943

*[T]he intimacy of this conversation was so intense that my parents undertook
to confide in the master [Dupré] the story of our life, our origins, and our rise.*

This was explained by Maman with delicacy and accepted with seriousness.

—Diary entry of August 22, 1943

Behind Jeanne Demessieux’s earliest diaries and letters is the story of her origins in the south of France and how, while still a child, she came to live and study music in Paris in the 1930s and 1940s. Modern-day readers of Demessieux’s self-writings may fail to appreciate just how remarkable were her geographical and social mobility. But as implied by the above excerpts from her diary of 1940–1946, in this time and place it ran counter to probability that—however talented, intelligent, and hard-working—a girl born into a lower middleclass family, 600 kilometres from France’s cultural centre, would have opportunity to study with some of the country’s finest musicians.

Indeed, the majority of France’s noted female pianists, organists, and composers of the twentieth century were born either in Paris or within 250 kilometres of Paris, giving them much easier access to France’s elite music teachers. They include Marthe Bracquemond, Jeanne Marie Darré, Reine Gianoli, Marie-Louise Girod, Monique Haas, Yvonne Lefébure, Yvonne Loriod, Paule Maurice, Marcelle Meyer, Germaine Mounier, and Noëlie Pierront. Alternatively, if born more than 250 kilometres from Paris, these females probably had parents who were highly educated, that is, of the upper class, and in contact with their region’s social and artistic elite—if not professional musicians or artists themselves. Among examples of these are Marguerite Canal, Yvonne Desportes, Ginette Doyen, Marthe Dron, Christiane de Lisle (née Frommer), Jacqueline Robin (née Pangnier), Henriette Puig-Roget, Blanche Selva, and Magda Tagliaferro. Others had both advantages, having been born in Paris, and to upper-class parents. These include Marie-Claire Alain, Elsa Barraine, Nadia and Lili Boulanger, Céliny Chailley-Richez, Adrienne Clostre, Lucette Decaves, Rolande Falcinelli, Lélia Gousseau, Monique de La Bruchollierie, Jeanne Leleu, Renée Nizan, and Germaine Tailleferre.¹

Exceptions like Demessieux are difficult to find. One was pianist Marguerite Long (1874–1966), born in Nîmes in the south of France to lower middleclass parents (her father worked for the railway).² Her parents appear to have had no artistic background or artistic contacts; intervention came when the Parisian composer-organist Théodore Dubois, visiting Nîmes as national inspector of conservatories, urged the parents to send their twelve-year-old daughter to Paris to study. The parents were hesitant for a few years but eventually placed Marguerite in a Paris convent, run by a distant relative, to live while she studied at the Paris Conservatory.³ Marguerite Long went on to make a successful career as a concert pianist and teacher.

Another counter example appears to have been organist Marie-Madeleine Chevalier-Durufié (1921–1999), born in Mediterranean port city of Marseille. Little is known of her early life, and nothing of her parents, but she may have been from a lower socio-economic background.⁴ Due to World War II, it was not until Marie-Madeleine was in her twenties that she arrived to study in Paris, but this delay did not prevent her from eventually forging an international career.⁵

Having in mind the backgrounds of the majority of Jeanne Demessieux’s counterparts among female musicians, the purpose of this chapter is first to describe the socioeconomic situation in which she grew up. I will then demonstrate that Demessieux’s educational opportunities depended upon her parents’ atypical thinking—specifically, ambitions for their daughter that were beyond their social class—and their willingness to make financial sacrifices.

Born in 1921, Jeanne Demessieux was a native of France’s sunny Mediterranean coast, the Midi. Her father, Étienne Prosper Demessieux, worked for the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée (PLM) rail company, which served France’s

southeast and connected the region to Paris.⁶ He was born on October 10, 1878 to Benoît Demessieux and Marie Martel in Sainte-Colombe, a town in central southeastern France on the Rhône River, in the general vicinity of Lyon. Part of a large family that would eventually be associated with the nearby city of Bourg-de-Péage, Étienne Demessieux was the second oldest of five boys (the youngest of whom died at age twelve and the second youngest in World War I at age twenty) and two sisters.⁷ Biographical details for Étienne suggest to me that his social status was lower middleclass: neither Christiane Trieu-Colleney's account of his daughter's life nor Étienne's surviving employment records indicate that he passed the examination for the baccalaureate, the climax of a secondary school education and a must-have for upper middleclass status.⁸

Documentary evidence of Étienne Demessieux's life comes largely from archived records relevant to his railroad company pension. These show that he began his compulsory military service around age twenty, in 1898, completing it on September 20, 1902.⁹ His pension records tell us that he was taken on by the PLM railroad company in March 1905. Exactly one year later, his employment was made permanent, at which time he joined the company pension plan. Some three months after that, on July 11, 1906, Étienne married Madeleine Mézy in Aigues-Mortes.

The couple's first daughter, Yolande, was born on June 26, 1908; her place of birth is not documented in readily available sources, though the family may already have been living in Montpellier, a major rail stop and transfer point near the Mediterranean Sea. There is no record of where the Demessieux family lived prior to Montpellier or when they established themselves there. What we do know is that it was in a first-floor apartment on rue Henri-René, in the vicinity of Montpellier's Saint-Roch train station, that they lived when Jeanne Marie-Madeleine Demessieux was born on February 13, 1921, almost thirteen years after her sister.¹⁰ Étienne appears not to have served in World War I during the intervening period, perhaps because he was employed in what was, particularly in time of war, an essential service industry.

Over the course of an almost thirty-year career, Étienne Demessieux rose to the rank of senior technical controller (or inspector) in the operations department of the PLM company.¹¹ According to Trieu-Colleney, he was a *haut fonctionnaire* or high-level civil servant, but this was an exaggeration: a document supporting his proposed retirement pension was signed by a highly educated administrator, named as the *ingénieur en chef* of the PLM company's operations department; the chief engineer's status would thus have equaled that of a *haut fonctionnaire*.¹² In contrast, Étienne's position as senior technical controller is better categorized as middle management, placing him in the *classe moyenne* or middle class.¹³ Jane Marceau specifies that this was "lower in the power and prestige scales than the English middle class."¹⁴ For clarity I use the term lower middleclass, rather than simply middleclass, below to describe the Montpellier social milieu in which Étienne found himself and, accordingly, in which his wife and children mingled during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

There were no musicians among Étienne Demessieux's forebears. Trieu-Colleney, wishing to explain his role as father of one of France's greatest twentieth-century concert organists, characterized Étienne as a man of naturally refined sensibilities with an interest in the fine arts. She states that he dabbled in watercolour painting and that, as another pastime, Étienne taught himself to play a bugle.¹⁵ Most importantly, we know from Trieu-Colleney that he attended opera in Montpellier, and from Jeanne Demessieux's diaries that he attended performances of classical music in Paris.¹⁶

His love of music would have an influence on his daughters' education, as will be described below. Étienne also appears to have been well-read: when homeschooling Jeanne in Paris during the 1930s, he assigned to her such classics of French literature as Victor Hugo's dramas.¹⁷ Therefore, the standard of conversation and debate around the dinner table during Jeanne Demessieux's youth may well have been higher than their social class and father's level of formal education would themselves indicate.



"After a snack." Yolande and Jeanne Demessieux, Adelaïde Mézy, and Étienne Demessieux hiking at the Argentière Glacier, July 1931. Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

Jeanne Demessieux's mother, Madeleine Marie Catherine Mézy, was born April 28, 1884, the only child of Antoine Mézy (1848–1928) and Adelaïde Guinoir (1858–1942) of Aigues-Mortes.¹⁸ Aigues-Mortes is a medieval town in the Mediterranean region of France (a little west of the Rhône River, in Provence) that is mentioned in Jeanne Demessieux's letters and diaries. To this day, traditional occupations near Aigues-Mortes have focused on the harvesting of salt from the sea and on agriculture, which has always included the cultivation of grapes. In antiquity, Provence was one of the birthplaces of French winemaking; in the nineteenth century, wine accounted for more and more wealth among the upper middleclass and for employment of the lower classes in the Midi. As suggested by reference to a member of the Mézy family in an October 20, 1935 letter from Madeleine to Yolande, grape cultivation and winemaking were likely the root of the Mézy family's livelihood. If, in the late nineteenth century, as in the twentieth century, they were dealers in wine (which would place their status as lower middleclass), the Mézy family would have suffered financially when, in about 1880, a parasite destroyed a huge segment of Provence's vineyards. In the wake of this blight, it took decades to restore the region's vineyards by grafting French vine stock onto imported vines.¹⁹ Therefore, it is unlikely that Madeleine Mézy, born in the 1880s, grew up in a well-to-do family.

In her description of Jeanne's mother, Trieu-Colleney makes no mention of academic achievement, musical inclinations, or musicians among her forebears. Her appreciation of music may, arguably, have derived entirely from her husband. But, in keeping with the renown that would eventually accrue to Jeanne Demessieux, Trieu-Colleney describes Madeleine as a distinguished woman, who displayed a strong temperament, combined, though, with a weak constitution.²⁰

Madeleine Demessieux appears to have modelled self-confidence in developing and sustaining social

relationships for her daughters. For instance, in the closing paragraphs of a 1935 letter written from Paris, she not only gives Yolande firm advice on cultivating her acquaintanceship Monsieur Le Boucher (director of the Montpellier Conservatory), orders her to send flowers and pass on news to Madame Mellot-Joubert (whose hyphenated name makes her sound upper class), but also asks that her regards be conveyed to two other social contacts in the Midi.²¹ Moreover, Madeleine had an eye and ear for the higher echelons of life: in a conversation recorded by Jeanne in her diary on April 16, 1946, she refers to herself as wanting to make her younger daughter *une femme du monde*, meaning “a woman of the world” or “society woman.”

Intriguingly, Madelaine Demessieux’s method of raising her daughters was the opposite of her husband’s. Étienne’s personality, according to Trieu-Colleney, was cheerful and gentle, and his manner with his daughters always calm and affectionate.²² Rather than inclined to be tender, Madeleine was demanding to the point of obsessiveness, meanwhile concealing her demands behind tremendous emotionalism.²³ Consistent with these characterizations, Jeanne Demessieux’s diaries and letters from the 1940s depict her father as supporting her by being a calming influence while her mother urged her on and emboldened her, though not in a way that Jeanne felt excessive.²⁴

In my descriptions of the personalities and parenting decisions of Jeanne’s father and mother, two features are foremost. Whereas the standard parental images in France of the time were the father as “dogmatic and strict *paterfamilias*” and the mother as conciliatory inculcator of moral and family principles, Jeanne’s parents reversed these roles, providing for her a model of an assertive female.²⁵ Each also acted or looked beyond their social class, Étienne in his interests, Madeleine in her aspirations, and both in planning Jeanne’s education.

As far as scholastic endeavors were concerned, Étienne Demessieux’s interest in music was such that he encouraged both of his daughters to make music the prime focus of their educations. Accordingly, it appears that neither daughter attended primary school for very long. In the case of Yolande Demessieux, a serious illness, originating during infancy, interrupted her schooling. When she recovered, her parents decided that instead of returning to school to catch up on her general education she should devote her days to studying music and piano-playing.²⁶ This decision was probably taken for practical reasons. First, her father would have been able to guide her primary-level education by homeschooling her. Secondly, if Yolande, so as to catch up in her academic studies, had stayed in school past the mandatory age of thirteen, she would not have been able to accept paid employment to help assist the family financially, as was usual in lower-class families. However, as an accomplished musician with credentials from Montpellier’s music conservatory, Yolande was able by early adolescence not only to earn money teaching young students privately, but also to hold an organist’s post from the age of 13.²⁷ In fact, she became her younger sister’s first music teacher, solely responsible for her musical development from ages three to seven.²⁸

In Jeanne’s case, her parents’ decision against continuing to send her to primary school was initially made because she had complained that her classroom teacher repeated herself too often.²⁹ To homeschool Jeanne, Étienne and Madeleine selected an unusual teacher. He was a member of the Demessieux family who had moved to Montpellier and was simply known as “*le capitaine Demessieux*”; Trieu-Colleney identifies him as a cousin of Jeanne’s father.³⁰ The gentleman’s title—which in the French military denotes a junior officer in command of one- to two-hundred men—suggests to me that he was a graduate of one of France’s military schools, such as the *École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr*. Like others of France’s prestigious institutions of higher learning (the *grandes écoles*), these specialist military schools accepted only the cream of baccalaureate winners who had passed further competitive examinations. Captain Demessieux’s credentials therefore placed him, and his accustomed social milieu, in the upper middleclass.

Captain Demessieux’s superior education was probably the reason Jeanne’s parents enlisted him to tutor her in their home; this lasted while she was between the ages of about eight and eleven years.³¹ I would argue that in her lessons Captain Demessieux would have honed and supplemented the social manners and style of conversation, the *savoir faire*, that her parents and older sister could teach her. This would account for how easily Jeanne would converse in Parisian upper-class company as a young adult in the early 1940s.³²

It was possibly from his instruction that Demessieux learned the rhetorical device that constructs a line of reasoning in the format thesis-antithesis-synthesis (or introduction-body-conclusion); French children were taught this early on in school to prepare them for competitive written and oral examinations.³³ At the same time, it seems likely that Captain Demessieux ignored the elements of primary-school curricula specific to girls' classes which involved instruction in moral precepts, running of the home, and care of a family.³⁴ This would arguably have maximized the amount of time Jeanne could spend practising and studying music. Already in 1928, at age seven, she had qualified to enter solfège and piano classes at the Montpellier Conservatory, eventually studying in the piano class of Léonce Granier.³⁵ Trieu-Colleney emphasizes that what came to be lacking in her childhood was opportunity to play and socialize with young people her own age.³⁶

By the time Demessieux was around eight years old her parents noted that she was unusually precocious in both music and general studies.³⁷ Their reaction was to think outside the limitations of their own educations and make an early decision as to their younger child's educational path: "Which to choose? Music? Or [general] studies?"³⁸ Hypothetically, an academically inclined daughter deserved to follow her primary-school education with attendance at one of the best girls' secondary schools to which her parents could afford to send her. After graduating she would ideally enter and succeed in the national competition for a baccalaureate, and then study to qualify for entrance to one of France's *grandes écoles*. Once accepted, she could aspire to a diploma, called a "prize," that would open the door to a career in the civil service or as an advanced-level teacher. But if a female were to choose music as her career, her path changed after primary school because France's national school for professional musicians did not require the baccalaureate for entrance. To be accepted to the Paris Conservatory, France's *grande école* for music, applicants, regardless of gender, would be required to play their musical instrument at the level of the very best of young adults.

Jeanne Demessieux chose music as her career—"I want to give piano concerts," she announced at age eight—and her parents thereafter did all that was needed to facilitate her blossoming as a musician.³⁹

This raises the question of what had inspired Jeanne's ambition to be a concert pianist rather than simply to emulate her sister in becoming a teacher of piano. Perhaps, she had opportunity as a child in Montpellier to admire performers of piano recitals; it is also possible that she had read about great nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century pianists—some of whom were women.⁴⁰ Demessieux's parents, excited by Jeanne's potential to equal these, would arguably have been aware that distinguished *virtuosi* among artists and musicians in France were treated as belonging to an upper class (unlike in Britain, for example, where they belong to the lower class⁴¹). To have a successful concert pianist as a daughter would have the effect of moving the entire family into the upper middleclass, a thought that would likely have appealed to Étienne and Madeleine alike.

As a student at the Montpellier Conservatory, it took Jeanne only four years to achieve what a hard-working young person would ordinarily accomplish much later, by around age eighteen: at age eleven, in 1932, she achieved first-class diplomas, called "First Prizes," in both solfège and piano.⁴² The prize in piano was conferred as the result of a public concert, of which a reviewer wrote:

Three concertos, two of which were accompanied by the orchestra, concluded the concert. The one by Widor, in particular, full of [musical] qualities, contained a good number of pianistic difficulties. Its orchestration was powerful, too powerful. Mlle Demessieux's performance emphasized an attractive, budding virtuosity and recalled somewhat the fine manner of Mme Ibanez-Fauquier. Nevertheless, the dryness [*austérité*] of this serious and powerful work, somewhat strong for her, gave impressions (I don't know how to say this) from the contrived to a preciousness that certainly tells of a fine temperament.⁴³

Despite Demessieux's First Prize in piano from the Montpellier Conservatory, and as was the case for holders



Jeanne Demessieux, circa 1931.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20,
Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

of a baccalaureate aspiring to compete for entrance to one of France's other *grandes écoles*, Jeanne would need further study to prepare her to audition for entrance to the Paris Conservatory. This would have to be with the very highest level of teacher, such as could only be found in Paris. Therefore, in 1932 Étienne Demessieux requested and obtained from his employer a transfer from Montpellier to Paris, solely in the interest of Jeanne's training beyond her present diploma in piano.⁴⁴ To make the move took not only ambition on his part, but also faith that, after intense preparatory work with Paris teachers, in as short as possible a period and entirely at the family's expense, Jeanne would prove a winner in a competition for one of the limited number of places in a piano class at France's elite music school. Despite the gamble, Étienne sold his Montpellier household belongings in 1932, and that October installed his family in an apartment at 8 rue du Docteur-Goujon, in a primarily working-class and immigrant neighbourhood of Paris, near his new place of work, Gare de Lyon.



Étienne and Madeleine Demessieux in their apartment at 8 rue du Docteur-Goujon, Paris, August 1947. Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

It is unclear how the Demessieux family—now consisting of husband, wife, mother-in-law, and younger daughter—made financial ends meet in Paris in the 1930s. During the three-year period May 1, 1931 to April 30, 1934, Étienne's average annual salary was 28,000^{FFR} before deductions, for a take-home pay of less than 2,333^{FFR} per month.⁴⁵ Rough estimates of the cost of living in Paris in 1932 indicate that this was barely enough for a family of four to make ends meet, even while living in a low-rent district. Rental of a modest, furnished apartment including light and heat would have been at least 1,250^{FFR} per month; food and drink would have averaged at least 1500^{FFR} over a month—already a total of 2,750^{FFR} per month.⁴⁶

It has been impossible to determine how the shortfall was made up, if barely. Like Yolande, who had already contributed to the family income in Montpellier by teaching music and playing for church services, Jeanne at age twelve

took up the post of organist for the Church of St-Esprit in the vicinity of the family's apartment. Given that the parish was new and in a working-class district, this would have been for a very modest stipend.



Yolande and Jeanne Demessieux,
undated photo.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20,
Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

One wonders, therefore, how Jeanne's family paid for her year of private piano study in Paris and for her private study of harmony. Whatever the answer, we can assume the family suffered privation—privation that was deemed justified by the fact that once accepted to the Paris Conservatory class in a particular discipline (by virtue of being better than other contenders), her tuition would be free, as at the Montpellier Conservatory.

Raising further questions as to how the family survived financially, Étienne took early retirement with an annual pension of only 15,322^{FFR} in 1934, when Jeanne was only thirteen years old.⁴⁷ In 1935 she wrote to her sister that she was considering taking piano students so that she could contribute more to the family income, but was dissuaded from this by Yolande, for the time being.⁴⁸ It would not be until 1941 that Jeanne made mention in her diary of having a student or students of her own.⁴⁹

To conclude, Jeanne Demessieux's birthplace in the extreme south of France, her family's limited financial means, and their lower middleclass status, made it remarkable that she came to study music in Paris in 1932, when only eleven. Extraordinary circumstances made this possible. Her parents were exceptional in their ambitions for their daughter that looked beyond their own social milieu. Fortuitously, her father's employment was transferable to Paris. Furthermore, the Demessieux parents were willing to make financial sacrifices to support her while she studied there. As would eventually prove important, prior to the move Jeanne

had been home-schooled by an upper-class male relative who would likely have imparted to her the manners and style of discourse of the upper classes that she would later use when socializing with her Paris mentors.

Demessieux's earliest diary and letters were written between autumn 1932 and summer 1940 and are largely concerned with her experiences at the Paris Conservatory, or preparing to enter it. Therefore, Chapter 2 will describe the nature of the Conservatory and what it was like to study piano, composition, and organ there during Demessieux's time.

NOTES:

1 These females were chosen for their renown and for their careers (like Demessieux's) falling mainly into the twentieth century. The Paris birthplace of organist-composer Marthe Bracquemond was found at <<https://www.presencecompositrices.com/en/compositrice/angot-bracquemond-marthe>>. Origins of organists Girod, Pierront, and Alain may be found in biographical entries at <<http://www.musimem.com/orgue.html>>. The entry for organist Christiane de Lisle at <<http://www.musimem.com/orgue.html>> indicates that her father studied at Paris's École Niedermeyer. That pianist Jacqueline Pangnier came from a family of artists is stated at <<https://gw.geneanet.org/chronobonne?n=pangnier&oc=&p=jacqueline>>. See also Denis Pierre, "Les Organistes français d'aujourd'hui, V. Henriette Roget," *L'Orgue: Bulletin de l'Association des Amis de L'Orgue*, No. 255 (2001/III): 40, which mentions that the father of organist-pianist Puig-Roget was a military officer. The distinguished secondary school education of pianist Blanche Selva's father is detailed in Guy Selva, *Une artiste incomparable: Blanche Selva, pianiste, pédagogue, musicienne* (La Touche: Association Blanche Selva, 2010), 2. The musical family background of pianist Chailley-Richez is mentioned at <<https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Chailley-Richez-Celiny.htm>>. According to Pierre Denis, "Les Organistes français d'aujourd'hui, XIX, Rolande Falcinelli," Falcinelli came from a family of painters. The upper middleclass Paris household into which composer Germaine Tailleferre was born is described in Georges Hacquard, *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1998), 13. Information on all others was obtained from Wikipedia, with the French site sometimes containing more information than the English.

(All websites were accessed Sept. 14, 2022).

2 Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long: A French Life in Music, 1874–1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 3.

3 *Ibid.*, 9–10.

4 American organist Jesse Eschbach knew Chevalier-Duruflé personally; his impression is that times were economically difficult for her family during her youth. Telephone conversation with Eschbach, Mar. 27, 2020.

5 “Marie-Madeleine Duruflé,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie-Madeleine_Durufl%C3%A9>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. Another woman organist who, though born a distance from Paris, studied there and made an international career, was Line Zilgien (1906–1954), but information on her family could not be ascertained. A brief biographical paragraph is on the web page for Line Zilgien at <<http://www.musimem.com/orgue.html>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, under the heading “Line Zilgien à Nancy.”

6 See “Chemins de fer de Paris à Lyon et à Méditerranée” <<https://www.doaks.org/research/library-archives/dumbarton-oaks-archives/collections/ephemera/names/chemins-de-fer-de-paris-a-lyon-et-a-la-mediterranee>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. Between 1858 and 1862 the Lyon-Méditerranée rail company joined up with the Paris-Lyon company to create the company that would employ Étienne Demessieux.

7 Information concerning Étienne’s parents and siblings derives from a conversation with Dr. Jacques Peyle, M.D., in Bourg-de-Péage, Jun. 22, 2003. Jacques Peyle’s maternal grandmother, Pauline Goud, was one of Étienne Demessieux’s sisters, making Peyle a first cousin once removed to Jeanne and Yolande Demessieux. Étienne’s place of birth derives from two documents: his employment records, Archives SNCF Béziers, dossier de pension éteinte, microfiche, Extinction 1970 CP 7873249E (hereafter AS) and Jeanne Demessieux’s citizenship certificate, Archives municipales de Montpellier, 4S, Jeanne Demessieux.

8 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 12. On the relationship between the baccalaureate and social status, see Jane Marceau, *Class and Status in France: Economic Change and Social Immobility 1945–1975* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 10. In regard to the unlikelihood of someone from the lower classes earning a baccalaureate, see Marceau 1977, 100–128 and particularly 114–115.

9 According to a record of calculations for Demessieux’s retirement bonus preserved in AS, he served in Champagne in northeastern France, and his actual service (exclusive of initial training and periods spent on leave) was for two years and ten months.

10 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 12.

11 AS. The years in which he was promoted are not stated.

12 *Ibid.* See also Marceau 1977, 9, n. 4: the term *ingénieur* in French has a specific meaning that does not readily translate to engineer and which indicates the holder of a diploma from an elite, specialist school of science and technology.

13 Marceau 1977, 7–9, categorizes occupations in France as follows: *Classe supérieure* or bourgeoisie (upper and dominant class): owners of industry and commerce, senior managers in industry and commerce, senior civil servants, senior teachers in higher education (which would include Paris Conservatory teachers), lawyers and medical doctors serving the bourgeoisie, and political leaders, to which military officers may be added; *classe moyenne*: middle supervisory personnel and technical staff, technicians, and in some cases engineers (i.e., in the more ordinary sense of engineer in English), along with artisans, shopkeepers, and other such white-collar workers; *classe populaire*: farmers, agricultural workers, and manual workers.

14 Marceau 1977, 8, n. 2.

15 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 12. Étienne’s bugle playing was confirmed in my conversation with Dr. Jacques Peyle.

16 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 13. As one example of Étienne’s attendance at musical events other than opera, the diary entry of Mar. 9, 1941 says that he and Jeanne attended an organ recital at Paris’s Palais de Chaillot together.

17 See Jeanne Demessieux’s postscript to a letter from Madeleine Demessieux to Yolande Demessieux of Oct. 20, 1935, in Chapter 4, “Jeanne Demessieux’s Diary and Letters of 1932–1940 in Translation.”

18 The names and dates of Madeleine Demessieux’s parents are from the Mézy-Demessieux family tomb in the Aigues-Mortes cemetery.

19 “Victory over phylloxera!” <<https://www.vinsdeprovence.com/en/le-vignoble/histoire>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

20 “[L]a mère, racée, a une forte personnalité, tout en étant d’une sensibilité malade,” Trieu-Colleney 1977, 12.

21 Mme Mellot-Joubert is likely the singer of the same name who, according to Trieu-Colleney 1977, 13, sang in a performance of Glück’s *Orphée et Eurydice* that the Demessieux family attended in Montpellier.

22 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 12.

23 “[U]ne mère à l’exigence presque tyrannique dissimulée par une grande émotivité,” Trieu-Colleney 1977, 12.

24 In the diary entry of Jun. 28, 1934, concerning Jeanne’s participation in a Paris Conservatory piano competition, her mother urges her to be “passionate in the ballade” whereas it is her father who, at the competition, calms her down after her performance. Furthermore, Trieu-Colleney 1977, 18, remarks that Jeanne’s father served as her moral support during her years of hard work at the Paris Conservatory.

25 On the stereotypical roles of father and mother, see Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 277, and Linda L. Clark, “The Primary Education of French Girls: Pedagogical Prescriptions and Social Realities, 1880–1940,” *History of Education Quarterly* 21/4 (1981): 415, <doi.org/10.2307/367923>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

26 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 13.

27 *Ibid.*, 15.

28 See Pierre Denis, “Les Organistes Français d’aujourd’hui,” XVI. Jeanne Demessieux, *L’Orgue*, No. 75 (1955): 37. In support of the excellence of Yolande’s teaching, Denis refers to an individual named “Philipp” as one of Yolande’s piano teachers, for an unspecified length of time. This could refer to the influential Hungarian-born and Paris Conservatory-trained concert pianist and Conservatory teacher Isidor Philipp (1863–1958). It is conceivable that as a child Yolande travelled with her parents occasionally (or once) by train to Paris to study with Philipp privately. His eminence in the lineage of pianism in France would have made him worth mentioning.

29 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 16.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.* In my conversation with Dr. and Mme Jacques Peyle, they raised the subject of this arrangement involving a young girl and a man, and expressed their doubts about its suitability.

32 See, for example, Demessieux’s diary entry of Oct. 23, 1943: “Chatted for a long time with the master [Dupré] about Aristotle’s ideas concerning different forms of government. Concerning the three human ideals: truth, justice, and beauty. Concerning the wars.” Recorded in another diary entry (Sept. 4, 1943): “the master said to Papa that I am proof that a young girl can have a male brain and engage with the highest subjects.”

33 Jean-Benoît Nadeau and Julie Barlow, *Sixty Million Frenchmen Can’t Be Wrong: What makes the French so French* (London: Robson, 2005), 62–63. Examples of Demessieux’s mastery of this rhetorical style include, for example: her response in an interview with Pierre Denis to the question of her preferred style and era of organ building (Denis 1955, 40); her essay, “Propos sur Henri de Montherlant,” published in Trieu-Colleney 1977, 219–20.

34 Concerning instruction in moral precepts, running of the home, and caring for the family in the curriculum for girls, see Clark 1981, 414–15, 417, 419–20.

35 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 16. Léonce Granier’s name appears to survive only in accounts of Demessieux’s life.

36 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 17, 225.

37 *Ibid.*, 16.

38 *Ibid.*, 16–17.

39 *Ibid.*, 17.

40 Perhaps Jeanne was familiar with Antoine Marmontel’s book *Les Pianistes célèbres: silhouettes et médailles*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Heugel 1888). It details the pianistic, concert-giving, pedagogical, and compositional achievements of pianists of the past who became famous in France. Among them were Madame de Montgeroult, née Hélène de Nervode (b. 1764); Madame Farrenc, née Jeanne-Louise Dumont (b. 1804); and Madame Pleyel, née Marie-Félicité Moke (b. 1811). As a child Jeanne may have known of two celebrated pianists born more recently and in the south of France as well: Marguerite Long (b. 1874) and Blanche Selva (b. 1884).

41 Peter Phillips, “Class prejudice is keeping talented children out of classical music,” *The Spectator*, Mar. 2, 2013 <<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/class-prejudice-is-keeping-talented-children-out-of-classical-music>>.

accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

42 Ibid., 17.

43 Edouard Perrin, "L'exercice public des élèves du Conservatoire," *Le Petit Méridional* (Jul. 3, 1932).

44 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 18.

45 AS.

46 Edward Acheson, *Password to Paris: Advice for the Thrifty* (Rahway, N.J.: Quinn & Boden, 1932), 149-50
<<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015026142383&view=1up&seq=168>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

47 AS.

48 Demessieux's letter of Dec. 1, 1935 and Trieu-Colleney 1977, 108.

49 Diary entry of Sept. 6, 1941.

2. The Paris Conservatory from its Origins to Demessieux's Time, 1933-1941

*My technique is coming along:
all I lack is a little stability in my fingers...
a successful entrance audition to the Conservatory is in sight.*
—Letter of May 22, 1933

Readers of biographies of nineteenth-century French musicians may be familiar with passing mention of the “Paris Conservatory”—as France’s national music school is generally known—but fail to appreciate how radically it differed from present-day conservatories and music schools in North America. Knowledge of the Conservatory’s origins and idiosyncrasies contributes to understanding Jeanne Demessieux’s experiences there. This chapter will outline some of the history and nature of the Conservatory, and features of piano, composition, and organ study there during Demessieux’s time.

Located in the capital city, the *Conservatoire national de musique et d’art dramatique*, as it was formally named during the mid-1930s to mid-1940s, was then France’s only institution for training the most advanced of young musicians.¹ It accepted singers, instrumentalists, and composers under age 30 who had already received training and were aiming to undertake music professionally. In pursuit of the highest calibre of musician for each individual area of study, the Conservatory required prospective students to compete for a limited number of places in each discipline. As can be gathered from reading Demessieux’s 1932–1933 letters to her sister Yolande, the level of competition for entrance to a Conservatory piano class was extremely high: despite her diploma in piano from the Montpellier Conservatory Demessieux needed to study privately with one of the Conservatory’s eminent performer-teachers, Lazare-Lévy, for a year before he deemed her ready to compete for entrance. This gave acceptance to the one class, not to a program of music courses. Then, because Demessieux wanted to pursue composition at the Conservatory, she studied harmony privately, prior to entering the competition for admission to a class in that subject.

Acceptance of students to individual disciplines rather than to a curriculum of music courses reflected the origins of the Paris Conservatory in two predecessor institutions, each of which was like a trade school.² One was Paris’s Royal School of Singing, created in 1784 during the reign of Louis XVI. Young men and women were instructed in singing, instruments, accompanying, dancing, declamation, and music composition, in support of the city’s opera houses and theatres, and the royal court.³ The School was directed by an esteemed composer of opera, symphonies, and choral and chamber music, François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829). The other, the National Institute of Music, was created during the Revolutionary period, in 1793. This was a renaming of the Free School of the Paris National Guard; it had grown out of a military band formed to provide music for the French Revolution’s outdoor festivals—events meant to bolster the patriotism of the Republic’s citizens. The National Institute of Music taught brass, woodwinds, and percussion to young students and was directed by the original founder of the band of the National Guard, the military officer Bernard Sarrette (1765–1858). Though a non-musician, Sarrette was a very capable leader and administrator. In 1795, the French government united the School of Singing and the National Institute of Music to form a national Conservatory of Music with the continuing mandates of providing musicians for Paris stages and for outdoor patriotic festivals. Gossec was appointed to a committee of “inspectors of teaching,” which oversaw standards of musical education and consisted entirely of French composers well-known for their operas.⁴ Sarrette became the administrative head of the Conservatory, a role he would retain until the 1814 restoration of the French monarchy.

That the Conservatory was born of two schools, one for opera and one that began as a military band, explains two features of the Conservatory, to be discussed next, that Demessieux experienced in the 1930s and 1940s.

Virtuosity

Charged with forming musicians for Paris opera houses, in the training of soloists the Conservatory aimed for the technical display desired by audiences made up of the average opera- and concert-goer.⁵ The syllabus for Demessieux’s

piano class during her first academic year at the Conservatory, 1933–1934, illustrates this focus.⁶ It begins with a group of pieces meant to build technique:

Chopin, *Études*
Liszt, [La] *Leggerezza* [concert étude]
[Gabriel] Pierné, *Étude symphonique*
[Joseph Christoph] Kessler, *Études*
Czerny, *École de la main gauche*

The syllabus continues with pieces by nineteenth-century composers well known to twentieth-century French audiences:

Beethoven, Sonata, Op. 109
Schumann, *Carnaval*
Liszt, Concert paraphrase on the *Songe d'une nuit d'été* of Mendelssohn
Bach-Liszt, Preludes and Fugues
Beethoven, Concerto No. 3
Chopin, Ballade No. 2 in F major

Elimination Exam:⁷

Beethoven, Sonata, Op. 101 (Adagio and Finale)
Schumann, *Novellette* No. 8
Chopin, Prelude No. 16

Competition:

Chopin, Ballade No. 3 in G Minor

Clearly Demessieux was required to learn piano works that are still considered among the most demanding by each composer. Beethoven's Sonatas Op. 109 and 101 count as two of the most challenging of the 32 sonatas, and the Concerto No. 3 is one of the more virtuosic of his five piano concertos.⁸ Schumann's large-scale piano works are all very strenuous for the performer, with *Carnaval* being among the most difficult of all and No. 8 of the *Novelletten* being the longest of the set.⁹ Chopin's Ballades Nos. 2 and 3 and the Prelude No. 16 are three of the most thorny of the composer's works.¹⁰ As for the Bach-Liszt and the arrangement from Mendelssohn, like all of Liszt's piano compositions, they show the composer to have broken new ground in piano technique and piano effects.¹¹

Knowing the repertoire that Demessieux tackled during her first year in a Conservatory piano class also casts light on comments about her piano playing in letters to her sister—as when she wrote, “The notorious passage by Liszt that I couldn't manage, well, I worked on it for a good half-hour, and I can now play it very well” (September 29, 1933).

Bureaucratic administration

The second feature experienced by Demessieux derives from the Conservatory's origin in a school run by a military officer: it was created with, and continued to have, a bureaucratic administration that enforced strict discipline upon instructors and students in observance of government-decreed regulations.¹² On two occasions, Demessieux found herself stymied by Conservatory regulations or bureaucracy. In 1934, when the piano teacher with whom Demessieux desired to work, Lazare-Lévy, sought to have her moved to his own class from the one in which she had been placed in 1933, the intransigence of her current teacher, Santiago Riera, caused the rule that balanced the number of students in each instructor's class to be rigidly maintained. As a result, Demessieux was consigned to remain with a teacher with whom she felt uncomfortable.¹³

In a later skirmish, after an authorized year's leave of absence (1941–1942) from her composition class, Demessieux wrote to the teacher, asking him to accept her complete withdrawal from the class.¹⁴ First there was no response, then Demessieux was perturbed to receive a stern note from France's Academy of Fine Arts declaring her withdrawn from composition unless she resumed the class by a set date—apparently, she had not gone through the proper bureaucratic channel to remove herself.

There were two other attributes of the Conservatory that Demessieux encountered during her studies, and that were original to the institution as founded in the late eighteenth century: its philosophical approach to musical style and its method of developing the highest calibre of performers.

A conservative approach to music

As implied by the name “Conservatory,” the school that Demessieux attended was meant to conserve all that was best in music and eschew innovation for its own sake.¹⁵ This conservative slant was strategically maintained. One way was by the appointment of the most venerated of well-established French composers as the institution’s composition instructors. Another, during the nineteenth century, was designating these instructors as the institution’s inspectors of teaching, overseeing the work of all other teachers. Moreover, a pattern developed when the government repeatedly chose the overall administrative director of the Conservatory from among the most musically traditionalist of composers. Following Sarrette (definitively ousted at the end of 1815), a harmony teacher, François Louis Perne, served as director of the Conservatory (1816–1822); he was known for his ability to write complex fugues and for publishing a textbook on harmony and accompaniment.¹⁶ Subsequently in the nineteenth century, the director was always chosen from among the school’s composition teachers; they themselves were laureates of the Conservatory and successful composers of French opera, though none were composers that would become internationally known.¹⁷

During Demessieux’s time, 1933–1941, the director was ultraconservative composer Henri Rabaud (1873–1949). He came to the post as a composer of opera and instrumental music, an opera conductor, and a former director of the Paris Opera.¹⁸ During the years Demessieux was in a composition class (1939–1941), both instructors teaching that subject—Henri Busser (b. 1872) and Jean Roget-Ducasse (b. 1873)—had begun their careers in the nineteenth century. So had other musicians Rabaud typically chose to serve on juries evaluating student compositions. In her diary entry of January 30, 1941, Demessieux noted the following as jurors for that day’s composition exam: Philippe Gaubert (b. 1879), Henri Rabaud (b. 1873), Henri Busser (b. 1872), Marcel Samuel-Rousseau (b. 1882), Georges Hüe (b. 1858), and Marcel Dupré (b. 1886). Since the average age of the jurors was 66, the majority of them had formed their musical tastes before the turn of the twentieth century. Therefore, it is not surprising that the violin sonata Demessieux presented for this composition exam in early 1941, which used dissonant harmony and angular melody, received almost nothing in the way of approval.¹⁹

Competitive training

As Demessieux recounts in her diaries and letters of the 1930s and 1940s, Conservatory students in her time were examined each January and May. But a diploma in the specific discipline was not awarded on the basis of a successful examination, nor were all diplomas equal in value. They were referred to as a “First Prize” or “Second Prize,” and the annual spring or early summer events at which qualifying students vied for these awards were literally “competitions.”²⁰ Competitions in the various instruments and singing, and the announcement of winners, were also open to the public at the time. The judging of entries in harmony, fugue, composition, organ, piano accompanying, and orchestral conducting occurred behind closed doors, but prizes in these disciplines, reported to the public, carried the same prestige.²¹

Demessieux would also have been aware that the number of First or Second Prizes that could be awarded for a discipline in one year was limited, at least notionally, adding to their value. Most importantly, First Prize winners were automatically viewed as members of the cultural élite and, in a sense, potential public servants: the highest diploma in a musical discipline was, theoretically, accreditation for an entry-level post as an opera singer, orchestral musician, accompanist, or conductor in France. Alternatively, First Prize winners would qualify for a position as a branch conservatory teacher, teaching assistant to a Paris Conservatory class, or teacher of a Paris Conservatory solfège class.

A student could not necessarily expect to win a prize the first time he or she competed. But there was always hope for at least a First or Second “Mention” (*accessit*), and that in subsequent years their standing would be bettered. In pursuit of a First Prize, ambitious students could continue in the same class for as many years as they were eligible (the upper age limit in Demessieux’s time was twenty-nine) and had sufficient financial support. Nevertheless, Demessieux hoped for immediate success. According to her diary entry for June 28, 1934, she was upset upon achieving only a Second Mention the first time she competed as a pianist.

Piano study at the Conservatory²²

When Demessieux arrived in Paris in 1932, with the intent of preparing to compete for a place in a Conservatory piano class, she was eager to study with the eminent performer and Conservatory teacher Lazare-Lévy (1882–1964). To that end, this section will begin with a short history of piano teaching at the Conservatory, to explain how Lazare-Lévy’s approach to piano-playing differed from that of his Conservatory colleagues in 1932.²³ It will then briefly describe the

approaches of other piano teachers with whom Demessieux studied from 1932 to 1938—Lélia Gousseau (1909–1997), Santiago Riera (1867–1959), and Magda Tagliaferro (1893–1986).

The history of French pianism begins with the founding of the Conservatory in 1795. Though after 1800 it discontinued harpsichord as an instrument of instruction and began to teach piano only, the style of keyboard technique that had been used for harpsichord playing persisted. By the mid-nineteenth century, the French style of piano performance contrasted that of eastern Europe in both manner of interpretation and technique. According to Charles Timbrell, the Conservatory's tendency to engage its own graduates as teachers assured the French style, built upon the "clarity, elegance, and sobriety of expression" associated with the French harpsichord school of the eighteenth century "in opposition to the interpretive 'excesses' of the Liszt and Rubinstein schools."²⁴ Technically, the French style came to involve

fast, super-articulated playing; light, transparent sounds produced with minimal wrist and arm motion. The fingers were high, but they never really felt the bottom of the keyboard.²⁵

This style of keyboard technique was also compatible with nineteenth-century French-built pianos by Pleyel, Érard, and Gaveau.²⁶

Emphasis on finger technique in French pianism persisted into the early twentieth century via the famous pianist-composer Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921, not a Conservatory teacher) and pianist, harpsichordist, and Conservatory teacher Louis Diémer (1843–1919), who taught at the Conservatory during the period 1887–1919.²⁷ It was also taught by other performer-teachers who had begun their tenure at the Conservatory as piano instructors prior to 1905, among them Antonin Marmontel (taught 1901–1907) and Isidor Philipp (taught 1903–1934).²⁸

I can only speculate on what style of pianism Demessieux learned from her sister or from Léonce Granier in the south of France in the 1920s and early 1930s. Yolande Demessieux is said to have studied with Philipp.²⁹ If so, she may or may not have been influenced by Philipp's emphasis on finger technique.³⁰ On the other hand, I wonder whether Montpellier teachers Yolande Demessieux or Léonce Granier had heard the playing, or been influenced by the teaching, of Blanche Selva (1884–1942), who was aware of the Russian school of piano playing. She adopted "weight-playing, 'free fall' of the arm from the shoulder, rotary action of the forearm, and related ideas."³¹ Selva supposedly had students not only in Paris but in cities in southern France, including Lyon, Toulouse, Montpellier, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Nîmes, and Valence.³²

It was through Selva and other leading French performers that, during the early decades of the twentieth century, the nature of French pianism gradually changed. Most influential of all during the first decades of the century were performer-teachers Édouard Risler (taught at the Conservatory 1907–1909), Swiss-born Alfred Cortot (taught 1907–1923), Belgian-born Lazare-Lévy (taught 1923–1941 and 1944–1953), and Yves Nat (taught 1934–1956).³³ All four were Conservatory laureates who had earned their First Prizes under Diémer but were subsequently open to other influences. Risler studied in Germany with three of Liszt's most important students.³⁴ Cortot, who took lessons with Risler, gained a German perspective when he studied conducting in Germany.³⁵ Lazare-Lévy and Nat, too, remade their techniques to incorporate much more arm weight and more legato than Diémer taught.³⁶ Lazare-Lévy's former student Lélia Gousseau (who became his teaching assistant and would go on to teach a Conservatory piano class in the 1960s and 1970s) has described his technique as "certainly different from the older school in France. You might say that it was Russian-like, but really it was his personal blend of arm use, a relaxed body, and firm fingers."³⁷

Lazare-Lévy alone of the influential four was teaching at the Conservatory when Demessieux arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1932. It is not known how he and Demessieux connected that autumn, but it may have been Montpellier Conservatory director Maurice Le Boucher who recommended them to each other.³⁸ According to Demessieux, to prepare her to audition at the Conservatory, Lazare-Lévy assigned her to work under his assistant Lélia Gousseau for the building of her technique and repertoire.³⁹ It is logical to assume that Gousseau taught the same approach to piano technique as Lazare-Lévy. He, himself, gave Demessieux occasional lessons, and was very encouraging of her progress.⁴⁰

When in 1933 Demessieux auditioned for entrance to the Conservatory as a pianist, there were five piano classes, including Lazare-Lévy's. Three of the five instructors were associated with the nineteenth-century style of French pianism: Isidor Philipp (who in 1934 was succeeded by Yves Nat), Victor Staub (taught 1909–1941), and Marguerite Long

(taught 1920–1940). A fourth instructor was Spanish-born Santiago Riera (taught 1913–1937). According to Riera's student Daniel Erincourt,

Riera . . . was an excellent teacher of an advanced class. . . his emphasis was very much on interpretation—color, emotion, dash, and the overall effect of a work. He had a hot Latin temper and no patience with unprepared students. . . I studied with him for three years, but I never heard him tell a student that he needed to relax or to use more forearm or shoulder. And neither did Falkenberg [Paris Conservatory teacher of a preparatory piano class]. What they taught was primarily high finger articulation.⁴¹

Contrary to what Demessieux would have hoped for after her successful audition, it was not Lazare-Lévy's, but Riera's class that had openings and into which she was placed. As a result, Demessieux spent four years studying under Riera, by which point, in 1937, she had advanced to winning a Second Prize. That year, the set piece by which all 45 participants in the women's piano competition were compared was the Allegro movement from Saint-Saëns' Concerto No. 3.⁴² According to Trieu-Colleney, Demessieux not only learned music of Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt, and Schumann for Riera's class, but also studied some Russian repertoire and music of Ravel.⁴³

As Timbrell points out, in the Paris Conservatory tradition, piano students performed in two different classes, that is, with two teachers, each week.⁴⁴ In addition to the class with the main teacher, there was a class for building piano technique taught by an assistant teacher called a *répétiteur* (*répétitrice* in the case of a woman). The assistant with whom Demessieux worked while she was in Riera's class is never specifically named in the letters and diary. However, ongoing mention of "Mademoiselle Gousseau" or simply "Mademoiselle" in letters from this period suggests that Demessieux continued to study with Gousseau after joining Riera's class. For instance, in a 1935 letter to Yolande, Demessieux's mother reports, "Mademoiselle was happy, Monday, with the Chopin sonata: Jeanne is progressing in strength," then adds, "From now on, all the Saturday classes will be for exercises, four Czerny études, a Bach prelude and fugue, which will make three classes per week . . ." (October 20, 1935).

Surviving letters also suggest that even after Demessieux began in Riera's class, Lazare-Lévy continued to give her occasional lessons.⁴⁵ According to Trieu-Colleney, the latter continued until 1937 to advise Demessieux on interpretation.⁴⁶

Demessieux studied with yet one more piano instructor in Paris: when Riera retired in 1937, his class was taken over by Brazilian-born Magda Tagliaferro (1893–1986). It was under her that Demessieux won her First Prize in piano in 1938, when the set piece was Chopin's *Fantaisie*.⁴⁷ From a younger generation than Lazare-Lévy and Riera, Tagliaferro was still in the prime of her performing career during her short tenure at the Conservatory (1937–1940). Most importantly, following her First Prize in piano under a Conservatory teacher of the old school of French piano playing, Antonin Marmontel, she took private lessons with Cortot.⁴⁸ Thereafter, Tagliaferro dedicated herself to "improving and leveraging the technique she had assimilated from Cortot," to use the words of Tagliaferro's Japanese student, Asako Tamura.⁴⁹ In 1997, Tamura published a short book on Tagliaferro's technical method, detailing "exercises that allowed pianists to develop flexibility and lightness of movement in the arms and in the hands, extremely important conditions in order to obtain the desired sonority in their performances."⁵⁰ Similarly, Tagliaferro student Germaine Mounier reported, "She taught us to play with relaxation in the arms, using rather exaggerated movements to free them up and get real *souplesse*."⁵¹

It is impossible to determine whether Tagliaferro's influence on Demessieux had more to do with technique or interpretation. Nevertheless, the impact of Tagliaferro's teaching is suggested by an undated film clip posted online by France's Institut national de l'audiovisuel (INA).⁵² Following an interview segment, it shows Demessieux performing an excerpt from a piano piece, using, in slow passages, large arm movements and great flexibility of the wrist.

Composition study at the Conservatory during Demessieux's time (1939–1941)

Since early childhood, Demessieux had enjoyed penning her own pieces in the style of composers whose music she played.⁵³ Therefore, she was as eager to study composition at the Conservatory as piano. Through her solfège course at the Montpellier Conservatory, Demessieux had also developed the music-dictation and score-reading skills needed to enter the Conservatory's composition stream of courses. This stream began with a class called harmony, and in November 1934, in preparation for acceptance to that class, Demessieux began studying this subject privately with Paris composer and Conservatory instructor Noël Gallon (who would later be the instructor of her Conservatory class in

fugue). According to Trieu-Colleney, in just one year of private lessons Demessieux mastered an entire harmony treatise (unnamed), and in October of 1936 she passed the entrance exam in harmony.⁵⁴

Demessieux was then placed in a class consisting largely of students in their second, third or fourth year of study, taught by composer and choirmaster Jean Gallon.⁵⁵ In preparation for examinations and the harmony competition, she and her fellow students worked exercises in adding three voices to a given melody or a given bass line. This may sound familiar to modern readers, but, as illustrated by an exercise that she completed (which is preserved in a collection published in homage to Jean Gallon), it does not fully describe what Demessieux was practising under Gallon.⁵⁶

Donning my glasses as a music theorist, I have included an in-depth musical analysis of the “given melody” exercise and Demessieux’s working of it below for the benefit of readers who wish to understand something of the harmonic language she was taught.

The given melody (the style of which is consistent with given melodies on Conservatory harmony exams from the 1930s I have examined):⁵⁷

- is notated in soprano C-clef, with a key signature of no sharps or flats.
- is 39 measures long.
- is conceived in an instrumental rather than vocal style, as it employs a wide range, flowing rhythm, many skips and leaps, and frequent chromatic passages that move either in half steps or skips and leaps.
- is punctuated by short silences every three to five measures that define its rhythmic motives, as well as its phrase structure.
- opens with an upward octave leap from A4, and in the next two measures circles around A5 and A4, avoiding motion from G-sharp to A, thereby implying A as a modal, rather than tonal, centre.
- avoids throughout any melodic motion that is clearly from a leading tone to its tonic and might imply functional harmony; the only exception is a hint of G-sharp to A that occurs four measures from the end.
- is conceived such that in some places its apparent pitch centre fluctuates so rapidly that a sense of tonality is suspended.
- is, throughout, unified by a small number of rhythmic motives and contour motives.
- has an overall shape governed by: a return, ten measures from the end, of the motive from the opening one-and-a-half bars; a climax on B5 five measures from the end; and an outline of an A-minor triad three measures from the end, concluding on E5.

Demessieux added three lower voices notated in alto, tenor, and bass clefs.

- In keeping with the style of the given melody, her lowest voice does not function as a conventional bass line, directing functional harmony, but is in the same melodic style as the upper parts. As a result, the effect is of modal counterpoint and, in some places, dissonant counterpoint.
- Demessieux’s setting is unified by motivic consistency and equality of rhythmic and motivic interest in all four voices, with occasional imitation from voice to voice.
- Demessieux accompanies silence in the given melody with flowing motion in two or more of the added voices.
- The larger-scale organizational principles of Demessieux’s solution to the exercise are also contrapuntal rather than harmonic. Her first-to-enter voice, the alto, anticipates by one measure the opening bar of the given melody (soprano). The next-to-enter voice, the tenor, anticipates a melodic idea from measures 11–12 of the given melody. The last-to-enter voice, the bass, imitates the opening bar of the given at another pitch level. Finally, the reprise of the opening bar that occurs in the given melody ten measures from the end is anticipated two and three measures in advance by modified imitations in alto and bass, respectively.
- Demessieux’s concluding cadences—to an A-minor triad (with a bass skip of a downward major third) three measures from the end, and to an A-major triad (with a bass skip of an upward major third) in the final measure—employ dissonant chords that, nonetheless, give a modal effect.

Having examined the given melody and listened to Demessieux's setting of it, I would argue that in her course with Jean Gallon, Demessieux was applying a quasi-impressionistic style of harmony and practising counterpoint just as much as harmony.

Before continuing to the next course in the composition stream, a student needed to earn a prize in harmony. In a 1920 essay explaining to Anglophones how the Paris Conservatory operates, Isidor Philipp described the scene of a harmony competition. Demessieux and other female students would have experienced similar circumstances:⁵⁸

The harmony competition takes place in privacy. Each competitor is locked up, some Sunday in June or July, at six o'clock in the morning, in one of the classrooms, where he remains until his work is done, at the latest until midnight. He is prohibited from having any communication with the outside world or with his fellow competitors, and he is watched so that no message can be carried to him by a restaurant waiter at meal-time, for his meals have to be eaten *incommunicado* by the student. When he reaches the class-room he is given the text of the composition he is to write; a bass and a song [a melody] of some forty measures. His work is to write, while he is segregated, the three complementary parts of the text given him, without consulting music, examples, harmony books, piano, etc.⁵⁹

The jury would then listen, in private, to the anonymous entries performed on piano, and vote on Prizes and Mentions to be awarded.

The next course to be completed by Demessieux focused on fugal writing. The aim was to be able to create, for any given melodic subject, a four-voice composition that employed all the features and contrapuntal devices of a scholastic fugue. A modern reader might wonder why ability to compose a genre of music that had become purely academic was required of those wishing to be composers in the 1930s and 1940s. This prerequisite was based on the notion that ability to control the reasoned-out, systematic requirements of the fugue—where it was impossible to rely on instrumental colour, words, or dramatic musical gestures to create interest—was a necessary counterbalance to the imagination and inspiration needed to compose in other genres. In fact, fugue composition was believed to be as essential to composers of music as drawing was to painters.⁶⁰

Demessieux earned a First Prize in fugue in 1939, which made her eligible to join a class called composition. That autumn she was placed with Henri Busser (1872–1973), whose class, compared to the prior year, was decimated because ten former students who were male were on leave “due to the war.”⁶¹ The four returning participants, joined by Demessieux and two other new students, worked on composition projects in a variety of vocal and instrumental genres. For the January 1940 exam, Busser's students presented the following work:

Valérie Hamilton (third year)—first movement of a Quintet for Piano and Strings;

Paul Constantinesco (Romanian national, third year)—a set of Chants de Noël for piano;

Rolande Falcinelli (second year)—three songs on poetry of Théophile Gautier and “Suite Fantaisiste” for Violin and Piano (six movements);

Eliane Pradelle (second year)—no pieces listed;

Jeanne Demessieux (first year)—two preludes for piano and “Barques Célestes” for three-part women's chorus and orchestra;

Jacqueline David (first year)—first movement of a string quartet and a song for solo voice (unnamed);

Claude Pascal (first year)—piano pieces: Anglais, Polonaise, Française, and a song for solo voice on poetry by Verlaine: “Pauvre Jeune Berger.”

Each composer would have performed their own pieces, with the assistance of instrumentalists and vocalists who were fellow Conservatory students, for the assembled jury.

Students who aimed for careers as composers had their eye, of course, on a First Prize in composition, but they aimed also to compete for an even higher prize, the Rome Prize in music composition. An annual award in existence since 1803, it was so-called because winners received funding for three to five years (the length varied from time to time), spent composing, and soaking in the culture, in the eponymous Italian capital city, renowned for its art. The award was administered and voted on by the country's Academy of Fine Arts, one of the academies of the French Institute.⁶² Candidates who made it to the final round of the competition for the Rome Prize were given a month in seclusion to compose two works: a fugue on a given subject, and a cantata with orchestral accompaniment setting

a given dramatic text. The fruits of their labour were then performed, with duo pianists taking the orchestral parts, before an audience consisting of all members of the French Institute, Conservatory instructors, and eligible students. As Demessieux describes in her letter of July 2, 1939, as many as three Rome Prizes might be awarded in one year. These were a First Prize (the “Grand Prize”), as well as a “first Second Prize” and a “second Second Prize,” depending upon how many candidates were thought worthy by members of the Academy of Fine Arts.⁶³

Organ study at the Conservatory during Demessieux’s time (1938–1941)

In 1935, the organist and composer Maurice Le Boucher, whom the Demessieux family knew as director of the Montpellier Conservatory, urged that once Jeanne had completed her Conservatory study of piano and harmony she undertake organ instruction with Paris organist Marcel Dupré.⁶⁴ This was a logical recommendation given that since 1933 the teenage Demessieux had been serving as a church organist.⁶⁵ Moreover, Le Boucher would have been well aware that Dupré was one of France’s most eminent organ teachers, attracting students from all over the country and abroad.⁶⁶

What is unclear is whether, when Demessieux took the step of auditioning for Dupré at his home in October 1936, she had any intention of aiming to enter the Conservatory organ class, let alone becoming a concert organist. Regardless, according to a letter to her sister describing this meeting, Dupré was so impressed after hearing about her background, and listening to her piano playing, that he chose to accept Demessieux immediately for personal instruction. She quotes Dupré as saying, “From this point onward, I am taking this child under my artistic protection” (October 8, 1936). Demessieux and her parents agreed to this instruction, even though her Conservatory study of piano and harmony were still underway. Two years later, in 1938, when Demessieux had First Prizes in both harmony and piano in hand and was likely urged to do so by Dupré, she auditioned for and entered the Conservatory organ class, taught by him.⁶⁷

Demessieux attended the class for three years, 1938–1941, but wrote little about it in her early diary and surviving letters. The diary she began in December 1940, however, frequently comments briefly on the success of some of the improvisations she played in the organ class.⁶⁸ The predominance of references to classes in which Demessieux improvised is explained by the greater challenge presented by this activity and the fact that two out of three classes a week were devoted to it. Dupré, who had inherited the Conservatory’s approach to organ instruction established in the nineteenth century, paid much more attention to training organists to be improvisers than interpreters of composed organ music. The reason was that, when the organ class had been established in the early nineteenth century, the most accomplished of church organists in Paris typically improvised the organ interludes and short pieces needed in a service.⁶⁹ As Dupré wrote in the appendix of his 1925 treatise on improvisation:

The organist of the great organ [*grand-orgue*] in a Catholic church is compelled to be an improviser: he must frequently play short interludes and often does not know, when beginning, how much time he is allowed. This is why it is preferable to improvise, rather than stop in the middle of a piece as required by the service.⁷⁰

Judging by the organization of Dupré’s improvisation treatise, however, he considered ability to spontaneously create original pieces of music not just a practical skill needed for service playing but part of what defined being an organist. Between an introductory chapter on organ technique and the short appendix about service playing, Dupré’s treatise comprises eight chapters. They go into elaborate detail concerning basic materials of music composition and all standard musical genres, forms, and procedures from the history of Western art music.⁷¹ Furthermore, as a concert organist Dupré frequently improvised a piece of music on a submitted theme at the end of a recital program of organ repertoire, demonstrating that he believed improvisation had an artistic as well as practical function. In other words, the importance he attached to improvisation meant that every organist in his class needed to be a composer and extemporizer of music in traditional forms.⁷²

An essay by organist Pascale Mélis describes the master’s organ class in the 1930s.⁷³ She notes that the eight to twelve participants met from 1:30 to 3:30 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Mondays were devoted to fugue improvisation, Wednesdays to improvising on a given “free theme” (*thème libre*), and Fridays to hearing repertoire, as well as (if there were time) improvisation on plainchant themes.⁷⁴

Under Dupré’s tutelage, the improvisational procedures practised in class were highly codified, in the manner described in his 1925 treatise:

- The fugue was to have all the elements of a written, scholastic fugue, including, for example, retention of the countersubject against the subject throughout.⁷⁵ In his treatise, Dupré also supplied detailed key schemes for the middle section of a fugue.⁷⁶

- The piece improvised on a given *thème libre* was to be in what was essentially a monothematic sonata form.

In words of David McCarthy, treatment of the *thème libre* was to have

strict proportions according to the length of the given melody: an exposition, bridge, exposition in the relative [or dominant key in the case of a major-key theme], development, recapitulation of theme (with something new, such as a canon), a bridge theme (half as long as the first bridge), and a conclusion (using the head motive from the main tune, which should have been avoided in the development).⁷⁷

- The improvisation based on a plainchant theme was to use one of the contrapuntal procedures Dupré had derived from Bach's chorale preludes—*choral canonique*, *choral contrapontique*, *choral orné*, or *choral fugué*.⁷⁸

Some of Demessieux's short-hand references in the diary of 1940–1946 to improvisational forms she performed in Dupré's organ class are puzzling, but become clearer with reference to his treatise on organ improvisation. In Chapter VIII, Dupré describes four musical forms under the title “Les Quatre Formes Symphoniques.”⁷⁹ He names these symphonic forms Allegro, Andante, Scherzo, and Finale (i.e., Rondo form), and it is under Allegro that he describes what modern readers know as sonata form. Therefore, when in her diary entry of January 19, 1941 Demessieux quotes Dupré as praising her “beautiful symphony, a lovely piece,” this likely describes a sonata-form piece created from a given theme (or from a given pair of themes, because in the previous sentence a summary of her improvisations that day refers to a “[p]iece on two themes”). That “symphony” is a short way of saying “movement in a symphonic form” is further suggested by the diary entry of February 19, 1941: Demessieux writes, “The symphony movement was a scherzo on two themes.” From this it seems, also, that Dupré allowed capable students to improvise in class using one of the other symphonic forms he described in his treatise.

Only one of Demessieux's references to the organ class concerns a Friday (February 14, 1941). It is here that she names a piece of composed music she performed—Franck's *Grande Pièce symphonique*. According to Mélis (referring to the 1930s) and Odile Pierre (who was taught by Dupré in 1954–1955), students were required to perform from memory a new piece or movement each week.⁸⁰ This had undoubtedly also been the case during Demessieux's time.

Even though Demessieux's diary does not indicate the range of repertoire heard in class, one can gather which composers Dupré placed emphasis on from records of Conservatory organ exams and competitions.⁸¹ They list large-scale works by J. S. Bach, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Franck, and Widor and, exceptionally, one by Buxtehude.⁸² Moreover, Demessieux kept her own record of organ works that she prepared for the year-end organ exam and for the annual organ competition. Here one notices an emphasis on Bach, Liszt, and Franck:⁸³

- **Organ exam, 1938–1939:**

“De profundis” [“Aus tiefer Not,” a 6]—Bach

Fugue in B Minor—Bach

Prelude and Fugue on B–A–C–H—Liszt

Competition: Fugue in A minor—Bach

- **Organ exam, 1939–1940:**

Sixth [Trio] Sonata (Finale)—Bach

Fugue in C minor—Bach

Prière—Franck

Competition: Third Choral in A minor—Franck

- **Organ exam: 1940–1941:**

“Jordan” [“Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam,” likely BWV 684]—Bach

Passacaglia and Fugue—Bach

Competition: Fantasia on “Ad nos, [ad salutarem undam]”—Liszt

Organ exams, held each January and May, and the organ competition, held in May or June, generally consisted of three tests: improvisation of a fugue on a given subject, improvisation of a piece based on a given *thème libre*, and performance of one major piece of organ music, or a movement thereof.⁸⁴ Judging from exam and competition documents I have examined, immediately in advance of performance of the two improvisations, each student had seven minutes sequestered nearby to examine the given melodies.⁸⁵ As for the repertoire performed, in advance of the May exam, each student submitted a list of three pieces they were prepared to play, from which the chair of the jury chose one piece immediately prior to the performance.⁸⁶ A satisfactory May exam qualified the student to compete in the next month's organ competition.

Documents examined also reveal that for an organ competition (unlike for a piano competition) there was no set piece to be performed. Rather, each student played a different work, probably chosen jointly by student and teacher from those prepared for classes. According to the list of Demessieux's repertoire above, for the last organ competition in which she participated (in 1941, at age 20) she performed the first section of Liszt's Fantasia and Fugue on “Ad nos, ad salutarem undam.” Filled with extensive passages in the style of virtuoso piano playing, this piece, in its technical demands, arguably hearkened back to Demessieux's training as a concert pianist.

At the same time as Demessieux was studying at the Conservatory, she held the post of titular organist at Paris's Church of St-Esprit. Chapter 3 will describe the church's organ and the repertoire Demessieux played for services, thereby providing context for references to St-Esprit in Demessieux's diaries and letters.

NOTES:

1 As is evident from the web page at <<https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/rechercheconsultation/consultation/producteur/>

[affichageLienProducteurByIdent.action?struts.token.name=token&token=F06805PHPZM4GD63GZIQDWONSXK9RA2K&formCallerNP=&formCallerLR=&searchNP=&searchLR=¬iceCourant.typeRelation=2&withoutContext=false¬ProdId=FRAN_NP_051493](https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/rechercheconsultation/consultation/producteur/consultationProducteur.action?struts.token.name=token&token=F06805PHPZM4GD63GZIQDWONSXK9RA2K&formCallerNP=&formCallerLR=&searchNP=&searchLR=¬iceCourant.typeRelation=2&withoutContext=false¬ProdId=FRAN_NP_051493)>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, the full name of the Paris Conservatory changed frequently in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today it is the *Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris*.

2 Unless otherwise indicated, details of the early history of the Conservatory in the remainder of this paragraph are based on D. Kern Holoman, “The Paris Conservatoire in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Oxford Handbook Topics in Music* (online edn., Oxford Academic, Apr. 1, 2014): 7 <<https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/42059/chapter/355875082>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

3 The scope of instruction at the Royal School of Singing can be found under the heading “Une antichambre de l'Académie de royale de musique?” at <https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/rechercheconsultation/consultation/producteur/consultationProducteur.action?notProdId=FRAN_NP_051491>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. “Declamation” refers to the act of reciting or singing in a rhetorically effective way.

4 As noted in Holoman 2014, 7, the other inspectors of teaching at the time were Étienne Méhul (1763–1817), André Grétry (1741–1813), Jean-François Le Sueur (1763–1837), and Luigi Cherubini (1769–1842).

5 Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years: Music in Paris 1917–1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 179, notes that creation in 1894 of a rival music school in Paris, the Schola Cantorum (which, unlike the Conservatory, included early and religious music in its curriculum), was a reaction against the Paris Conservatory's “narrow concern with virtuosity and the operatic stage (both singly and in conjunction).”

6 One of a set of dated lists of piano repertoire, each with the heading *Programme* (in English, “Syllabus”), handwritten by Demessieux, and photocopied in Daniel Picotin's office, June 2003.

7 The Conservatory's May examinations determined who would go on to participate in the June or July competition in

each discipline.

8 At <<https://www.pianostreet.com/smf/index.php?topic=6368.0>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, respondents' lists of Beethoven piano sonatas by level of difficulty specify Opp. 101 and 109 as among the most difficult five or six of the 32 sonatas. A list of piano concertos ranked by level of difficulty at <<https://www.talkclassical.com/62080-piano-concertos-ranked-difficulty.html>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, classes Beethoven's Concerto Nos. 3, 4, and 5 as more difficult than Nos. 1 and 2.

9 At <<https://www.pianostreet.com/smf/index.php?topic=30350.0>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, a respondent comments that "Carnaval is considered as one of Schumann's most difficult piano pieces."

10 The web page at <<https://www.pianolibrary.org/difficulty/chopin/>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, rates all three pieces as 4.5 out of 5 in level of difficulty of Chopin's piano works.

11 Domitila Ballesteros, *Jeanne Demessieux's Six Études and the Piano Technique* (Rio de Janeiro, 2004) illustrates technical demands of Liszt's piano music that influenced Demessieux's composing for organ, e.g., under the heading "Fourth Study: Accords Alternés."

12 Bureaucracy and strict discipline as characteristics of the Conservatory at its founding are discussed in Kailan R. Rubinoff, "Toward a Revolutionary Model of Music Pedagogy: The Paris Conservatoire, Hugot and Wunderlich's *Méthode de flûte*, and the Disciplining of the Musician," *The Journal of Musicology* 34/4 (Fall 2017): 484–89, particularly 485–87.

13 Diary entry of Jan. 31, 1935.

14 Diary entry of Nov. 6, 1942.

15 Nichols 2002, 181.

16 Nicolas Slonimsky et al., "Perne, François Louis," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, at <<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/perne-francois-louis>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. Perne's actual title as chief administrator of the Conservatory was "inspector-general of teaching."

17 Nichols 2002, 181, lists the Conservatory's nineteenth-century directors. Following Sarrette and Perne, they were Luigi Cherubini (1822–1842), Daniel Auber (1842–1871), Ambroise Thomas (1871–1896), and Théodore Dubois (1896–1905). An early twentieth-century exception occurred with the French government's choice of Gabriel Fauré, who served as director from 1905 to 1920, despite being neither a composer of opera nor a laureate of the Conservatory. Though he reformed the Conservatory's operation in some respects (Holoman 2014, 16, and Nichols 2002, 181–82), he could do little about the teaching staff he inherited.

18 Anne Girardot, rev. Richard Langham Smith, "Henri Rabaud" in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.22766>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

19 The score of Demessieux's three-movement violin sonata is preserved in RHCL, 22.012 Demessieux, J. It was published posthumously as *Sonate pour violon et piano*, ed. Maxime Patel and d'Alexis Galpérine (Delatour France, DLT2079, 2013).

20 The Conservatory's academic year was divided into three terms. As it appears to me from reading Demessieux's letters and diaries, the first term ordinarily ran from a point in October through January, with part of January devoted to exams. The second term was February through April. The third term, entirely devoted to exams and competitions, extended from May into July, as was necessary for holding all the annual competitions. The remainder of July through September was the vacation period. Most classes met three times per week for two hours each session, or, perhaps, two times for three hours.

21 Results of Conservatory competitions published in *Le Monde Musical* in 1939 begin under the heading "Competitions behind closed doors" (*Concours à huis clos*), followed by the heading "Public competitions" (*Concours publics*).

22 As indicated in subsequent endnotes, this section is largely based upon Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus Press, 1999).

23 Audrey Abela, "Piano at the Conservatoire de Paris During the Interwar Period: A Study in Pedagogy and Performance Practice," (D.M.A. diss., City University of New York, 2019), has at its core a detailed comparison of the approaches to piano playing of three Conservatory teachers: Isidor Philipp, Marguerite Long, and Lazare-Lévy.

- 24 Timbrell 1999, 46–47.
- 25 Magda Tagliaferro, quoted in Timbrell 1999, 103.
- 26 Timbrell 1999, 253–54.
- 27 Ibid., 220. It is noteworthy, though, that according to Abela 2019, 171, use of arm-weight was not entirely absent from the pedagogy of Diémer.
- 28 Timbrell 1999, 275–77, gives a chronological list of Conservatory teachers of advanced piano classes from 1795 to 1995. My account refers throughout to the Conservatory’s advanced, as opposed to preparatory, piano classes, unless otherwise specified.
- 29 Pierre Denis, “Les Organistes Français d’aujourd’hui,” XVI. Jeanne Demessieux, *L’Orgue*, No. 75 (1955): 37.
- 30 Nikita Magaloff, quoted in Timbrell 1999, 82.
- 31 Timbrell 1999, 68. Though Timbrell does not here elaborate on “related ideas,” he does note that Selva may have derived her technique from study of piano methods by Rudolf Breithaupt and Friedrich Steinhausen. Later in the book, Jean-Joël Barbier is quoted in a lengthy description of Selva’s technique (205–06). Also, Timbrell’s Appendix 4, “Selected Methods, Exercises, and Études,” lists two of Selva’s published piano methods, both from 1919 (324).
- 32 Guy Selva, *Une artiste incomparable, Blanche Selva: pianiste, pédagogue, musicienne* (La Touche: Association Blanche Selva, 2010), 149.
- 33 Timbrell 1999, 259.
- 34 Ibid., 63: “Returning to France, [Risler] became the first pianist to forge a synthesis of Liszt’s ideals and concepts—such as singing tone, romantic breadth, and spiritual qualities—with the best aspects of the old French tradition, such as clarity, taste, and discretion.” The Liszt pupils with whom Risler studied were Eugen d’Albert, Bernhard Stavenhagen, and Karl Klindworth.
- 35 Timbrell 1999, 99.
- 36 Discussing Lazare-Lévy’s piano pedagogy, Abela 2019, 171–172, describes the strong influence exerted by the technical writings of the Swiss pianist Émile-Robert Blanchet upon Lazare-Lévy’s use of hand and arm weight. Timbrell 1999 explains use of arm weight in the pedagogy of Cortot (103–04), Lazare-Lévy (114–17), and Nat (221).
- 37 Lélia Gousseau, quoted in Timbrell 1999, 115.
- 38 According to Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 24, it was the Montpellier Conservatory director who wanted Demessieux to study organ with Marcel Dupré while she was in Paris.
- 39 Letters of Nov. 5, 1932, and Jan. 1, Jun. 4, and Jun. 23, 1933.
- 40 See, for example, Demessieux’s letters of Oct. 28, 1932; Feb. 13, 1933; Feb. 21, 1934; May 21, 1935; and May 29, 1936.
- 41 Quoted in Timbrell 1999, 44.
- 42 AN, AJ37, 544, “Conservatoire National de Musique et d’Art Dramatique, Concours de 1937, Séance du 1^{er} juillet.”
- 43 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 21.
- 44 Timbrell 1999, 253.
- 45 Lazare-Lévy’s letter of Nov. 24, [1933] to Demessieux’s father, and Demessieux’s letter of Jan. 21, 1934.
- 46 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 20.
- 47 AN, AJ37, 544, “Conservatoire National de Musique et d’Art Dramatique, Concours de 1938, Séance du 29 juin.” This was, presumably, the *Fantaisie* in F minor, Op. 49, not the *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, Op. posth. 66.
- 48 Timbrell 1999, 273.
- 49 Asako Tamura, *The Pianistic Art of Magda Tagliaferro*, trans. Jacqueline Louise Hefti Caramurú from the Japanese-Portuguese translation by Dirce Kimyo Miyamura (Sao Paulo: Fundação Magda Tagliaferro, 1997), 30.
- 50 Tamura 1997, 38.
- 51 Germaine Mounier, quoted in Timbrell 1999, 210.
- 52 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/zytjvuozwu6gu54/274898608_1052520608661050_7887135>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.
- 53 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 15 and 234.
- 54 Ibid., 22–23.

55 AN, AJ37, 500, “Classe d’Harmonie, M^r Jean Gallon.”

56 It was published in 64 *Leçons d’Harmonie offertes en hommage à Jean Gallon* (Durand, 1953), 40–41. I did not seek permission to reproduce the score in this book. Entitled “Andante,” it may be heard performed by organist Michelle Leclerc on the recording *Jeanne Demessieux Orgelwerke* (Motette CD 11671, 1992).

57 The harmony exam of May 1937, consisting of a given bass voice and a given melody, is preserved in AN, AJ37, 535.

The given melody from the 1939 harmony competition is preserved in AN, AJ37, 521.

58 Demessieux’s account, in a letter of June or July 1937, of the harmony exam she sat differs from Philipp’s description in that Demessieux had to bring food with her!

59 Isidor Philipp, trans. Frederick H. Martens, “The French National Conservatory of Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* 6/2 (Apr. 1920): 220.

60 Jean-Claire Vançon, “L’art et la fugue ou la «composition» vue du prix de Rome (1803–1830)” in Julia Lu and Alexandre Dratwicki, editors, *Le Concours du prix de Rome de musique (1803–1968)* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2011), 91.

61 This paragraph and the list of student compositions is based on AN, AJ37, 504, “Examens semestriels 1940, Composition, Classe de M^r Henri Busser” and AN, AJ37, 502, “Classe de Composition Musicale, M^r Henri Busser.”

62 As described in the Wikipedia entry for the *Institut de France* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institut_de_France>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, the French Institute is a learned society comprising five academies. One of them, Fine Arts, has three divisions: painting and sculpture, music (i.e., music composition), and architecture. The other academies are Humanities, Sciences, Moral and Political Sciences, and an academy concerned with the French language. Each is made up of eminences in their fields who have been elected by current members, to a fixed number of seats. The Institute serves as France’s custodian of the arts and sciences.

63 According to Julia Lu and Alexandre Dratwicki, eds., *Le Concours du prix de Rome de musique (1803–1968)* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2011), 841–48, which provides a comprehensive list of Rome Prize winners in music composition, a “second First Prize” was sometimes awarded, making as many as four winners, but that prize was discontinued after 1945. The last Rome Prizes in music were awarded in 1968.

64 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 24.

65 Demessieux as organist of St-Esprit in Paris is the topic of Chapter 3.

66 Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 5.

67 How Dupré came to be organ instructor at the Conservatory is described in Chapter 6.

68 Demessieux mentions her work in the organ class in diary entries of Dec. 18, 1940, and the following dates in 1941: Jan. 29, Feb. 10, Feb. 12, Feb. 14 (when she performed Franck’s *Grande pièce symphonique*), Feb. 17, Feb. 19, and Mar. 10.

69 Orpha Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 136 and 151. Ochse 1994, 125 notes that competitions for organ positions typically required demonstration of improvisational skills as well as ability to perform prepared pieces.

70 Marcel Dupré, *Traité d’improvisation à l’orgue* (Paris: Leduc, 1925), 134.

71 Murray 1985, 107, mentions that “in late 1925 Dupré sent copies of his newly published *Traité* to several eminent musicians.” Therefore, another likely reason Dupré de-emphasized liturgical organ playing in his treatise is that one of his motivations for writing it was to establish his credentials as a potential teacher for the Conservatory organ class at a time when this secular institution wished to downplay the religious aspect of organ playing. David McCarthy, “Organ Teaching at the Paris Conservatoire,” 13

<https://www.davidmccarthymusic.com/technique/conservatoire_organ_class.pdf>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, notes that when in 1905 the French government, which funds the Conservatory, decisively separated state and church, organ instructor Alexandre Guilmant (1837–1911) had the difficulty of defending a mere token of liturgical organ playing in his class, which was plainchant harmonization.

72 Murray 1985, 106–07, quotes Dupré at length concerning the importance he placed on improvisation as a musical art necessary for its own sake.

73 According to <<http://www.orgues-chartres.org/pascale-melis/?lang=en>>, accessed Sept. 24, 2022, Pascale Mélis (b. 1962), studied at the Paris Conservatory in the organ class of Dupré's successor, Rolande Falcinelli.

74 Pascale Mélis, "La Pédagogie de Marcel Dupré dans les années 1930," *L'Orgue*, Nos. 295–96 (2011/III–IV): 159.

75 Ibid., 161.

76 Dupré 1925, 80–81.

77 McCarthy, "Organ Teaching at the Paris Conservatoire," 12. McCarthy's description is derived from Odile Pierre, *Témoignages écrits des épreuves d'improvisation: étudiées dans la classe d'orgue de Marcel Dupré en 1953–1954* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1990), 15. See also Anthony Hammond, *Pierre Cochereau: Organist of Notre Dame* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012), 44–50, for a much more detailed description (based on Dupré's class notes, translated to English) of the procedure Dupré taught for treating a *thème libre*. According to these prescriptions, a second exposition of a major-key theme in the relative minor instead of the dominant was "not advised for class use."

78 These four ways of treating a plainchant theme are listed in François Sabatier, "Pour le quarantième anniversaire de la disparition de Marcel Dupré (1886–1971), entretien avec Odile Pierre," *L'Orgue: L'Orgue à Paris dans les années 1930*, Nos. 295–296 (2011/III–IV): 332. See also Dupré 1925, 50–54.

79 Dupré 1925, 109–27.

80 Mélis 2011, 159, and François Sabatier 2011, 332.

81 BnF, Music Dept., Rés. Vm. dos 56 (1–3) consists of Dupré's own notes concerning the results of organ exams and competitions, of which the years 1938–1941 were examined. AN, AJ37, 521 and 535 preserve Conservatory documents related to some organ exams and competitions during the 1930s and early 1940s.

82 AN, AJ37, 535, "10^{ème} séance, Mercredi 10 Mai [1939], Orgue" lists Demessieux's classmate M^{lle} Girod as having performed Buxtehude's Prelude, Fugue, and Chaconne in C.

83 Demessieux, "Mémoire des trois années de Classe d'Orgue," in "Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées," AM 4S13.

84 According to Dupré's own record of these events—BnF, Music Dept., Rés. Vm. dos 56 (1–3)—the competition held on May 31, 1939 was an exception, as not two but three melodies were set for improvisation, the first being a plainchant. However, based on the record of this exam in AN, AJ37, 557, 192–94, "Mercredi 31 Mai à 1400 h., Concours d'Orgue and Improvisation," **four tests of improvisation were set: plainchant accompaniment, a chorale [prelude] on a given theme, a fugue, and a *thème libre*. Judging from Dupré's record, it seems likely that only the last three were adjudicated.**

85 AN, AJ37, 535, "7^e Séance, Vendredi 10 Mai [1940], Orgue" specifies seven minutes.

86 AN, AJ37, 535, "7^e Séance, Vendredi 10 Mai [1940], Orgue" specifies that the jury chairperson will choose one piece from a submitted list of three, chosen by the student and approved by the teacher.

3. Jeanne Demessieux as Organist of St-Esprit during the period 1933-1944

*This morning, I accompanied both masses,
at 10:00 and at 11:30.*

This was the last time before summer vacation.

—Diary entry of July 8, 1934

This chapter focuses on Demessieux's first decade as titular organist of St-Esprit. In total, she served for 29 years, until 1962, when she accepted the titular organist's position at La Madeleine.

Thirty years earlier, when the Demessieux family moved into Paris's twelfth arrondissement in the autumn of 1932, a new Catholic parish was in the process of being established in their neighbourhood. Named Église du St-Esprit (Church of the Holy Spirit), its building at the corner of rue Cannebière and avenue Daumesnil had been under construction since 1928.¹ In 1933, twelve-year-old Jeanne Demessieux—because she played the piano and lived in the vicinity of St-Esprit—was called to play for its services.² The building's sanctuary then still under construction, services were being held in the crypt of the church, and the instrument she played there was a harmonium.³ Meanwhile in 1933, two organs were planned for the new church: a *grand orgue* (great organ) and an *orgue de chœur* (choir organ).⁴ Their designs were by the organist-composer Albert Alain (1880–1971), father of the famous Jehan Alain.⁵

The organ of St-Esprit

When the sanctuary of St-Esprit opened in 1934, a side gallery contained the planned *orgue de chœur*, constructed that year by the firm Gloton-Debierre.⁶ It had fourteen stops distributed over two manuals, two pedal stops derived from manual I, and electric action. Due to a lack of funds, the *grand orgue* that had been designed to deliver the full range of organ music appropriate to worship services was never built, however. As will be shown later in this chapter, Demessieux served St-Esprit by performing not only music suited to an organ of limited resources, but also repertoire meant for a three-manual organ with independent pedal.

The St-Esprit organ's original specification was:⁷

Manual I		Manual II		Pedal (borrowed from G-O)	
<i>Grand-Orgue</i> (C2–G6)		<i>Récit</i> (C2–G6)		(C2–F4)	
Bourdon	16*	Cor de nuit	8	Soubasse	16
Montre	8	Gambe	8	Basse	8
Flûte harmonique	8	Voix céleste			
Bourdon	8	Octave	4	Couplers: †	
Prestant	4	Nasard	2 ² /3	II/I (16 and 8)	
		Plein jeu (3 ranks)‡		I/Ped., II/Ped.	
		Bombarde	16	Other controls: ♦	
		Trompette	8	<i>Récit</i> under expression	
		Clairon	4	Reeds on and off	

* For readers unfamiliar with the terminology of organ stops, the number beside each stop name indicates pipe length in feet (though not necessarily literal feet) and designates the pitch level at which the stop sounds: 16 indicates an octave lower than notated pitch, 8 indicates unison, 4 indicates the octave above, and so on. A fractional number such as 2²/3, indicates a non-octave or -unison sound, in this case one octave and a fifth above notated pitch; such stops are called “mutations.”

† A “coupler” allows stops drawn on a manual division of the organ to sound when another division (manual or pedal) is played. For example, II/I indicates that stops drawn on manual II are made to sound when manual I is played. The division upon which one is playing may or may not have stops of its own drawn.

‡ A “rank” is a set of pipes at one pitch level, normally a pipe for each key on its associated manual (or for each pedal of the pedalboard). Here, on manual II, “Plein jeu (3 ranks)” indicates a stop that involves three ranks of pipes, each at a different pitch level, including at least one mutation; such a stop is called a “mixture.” The *Plein jeu* of the St-Esprit organ likely consisted of ranks at 2-foot, 1¹/3-foot, and 1-foot pitch levels.

♦ “Under expression” means that the named division of the organ (here, manual II) is enclosed in a box that has louvred shades that may be gradually opened or closed with a foot-operated control to gradually increase or decrease the volume of sound. “Reeds on or off” is a control that when engaged (or disengaged) brings on (or turns off) all the reed stops—on this organ, manual II’s *Bombarde* 16, *Trompette* 8, and *Clairon* 4.

The firm that built the organ, Gloton-Debierre, had been headed since 1919 by Georges Gloton. In an article describing organ building in 1930s Paris, Marc Hedelin singled out Georges Gloton for the quality of his instruments and the St-Esprit organ as an example of their excellence.⁸ Hedelin also pointed to this organ’s mixture stop (the 3-rank *Plein jeu*) as an instance of the growing importance of mixtures in organ building in twentieth-century France, and to placement of the mixture on the *Récit* rather than on the manual called *Grand-Orgue*, as typical of medium-size Paris organs of that decade.⁹

The choices of stops for the St-Esprit organ arguably bear a resemblance to those of the most famous organ designed by Albert Alain, the instrument that, beginning in 1910, he gradually built for his home. In its original plan, Alain’s organ had three manuals—*Grand-Orgue*, *Positif*, and *Récit*—and an independent Pedal division. The following chart compares the specification of the St-Esprit organ with that of Alain’s home organ as originally designed by indicating correspondences in green.

Original Plan of Albert Alain's home organ (begun 1910)*

Manual I		Manual II	
<i>Grand-Orgue</i>		<i>Positif</i>	
Bourdon	16	Salicional	8
Montre	8	Cor de nuit	8
Flûte harmonique	8	Flûte douce	4
Prestant	4	Nasard	2 ² /3
		Quarte de Nasard	2
		Tierce (upper)	1 ³ /5
		Basson-Hautbois	8
Pedal [independent]		Manual III	
		<i>Récit</i>	
Soubasse	16	Flûte	8
Basse	8	Viole de Gambe	8
Flûte	4	Voix céleste	8
		Salicet	
		or Flûte octave	4
		Plein jeu (3 ranks)	
		Trompette	8

* Specification of Albert Alain organ from Linda Dzuris, "Six French organs and the registration indications in L'Œuvre d'orgue de Jehan Alain," *The Diapason*, whole number 1047 (June 1999): 16.

A comparison of the two instruments reveals that, in all, ten of the fourteen stops chosen for the St-Esprit organ were also included in the original plan of Albert Alain's home organ. Specifically, manual I of the St-Esprit organ is identical in its make-up to that of Alain's home organ, except that it features an additional 8-foot stop. Manual II of the St-Esprit instrument, like manual II of Alain's home organ, has a Cor de nuit 8 and a Nasard 2²/3. Manual II of the St-Esprit organ also boasts, like manual III of Alain's home organ, two string stops (Gambe and Voix céleste), a 3-rank Plein jeu, and a Trompette 8.

Among stops missing from the St-Esprit instrument are the independent pedal stops and two features of the upperwork on manual II of Alain's home organ—the latter being the 2-foot stop and the 1³/5-foot mutation.¹⁰ A 2-foot stop would have added further clarity to a polyphonic texture. A 1³/5-foot mutation (a Tierce in French) would have served to add color to a combination of other stops, thereby producing the effect of a solo stop sometimes called for in the registration of French Baroque organ music.¹¹

Notable additions to the St-Esprit organ are reed stops at 16-foot and 4-foot pitch levels, joining the Trompette 8—these stops could add power to a homophonic texture.

Lacking independent stops for its pedal division and lacking on manual I a complete principal chorus (stops at all pitch levels), the St-Esprit organ was, from a present-day point of view, more suited to performing homophonic

than polyphonic music, that is, more suited to Romantic-era than Baroque-era music. For performance of nineteenth-century repertoire, Demessieux could choose from the following:

1) manual I's three 8-foot ranks and one 4-foot rank, which together create the French-Romantic registration called *fonds*.

2) manual II "under expression," enabling *decrescendo* and *crescendo*.

3) a choice of quiet 8-foot stops on manual II. Specifically, Demessieux could select from either of two string stops for homophonic music (Gambe or Voix céleste), or a quiet foundation stop having somewhat of a horn sound (Cor de nuit) that could serve either as a solo or accompanying stop.

For performance of a polyphonic piece by Bach, Demessieux could have created a principal chorus on manual I by coupling manual II's *Plein jeu* to manual I's *Montre 8* and *Prestant 4*, and then coupling both manuals to the Pedal with *Soubasse 16* drawn.¹² The compromise was that the lack of an independent principal chorus in the Pedal decreased the polyphonic independence of the pedal part. Concessions would also have to be made to perform a piece from the Baroque era that required one manual for soloing a melody and one for a homophonic accompaniment, as for example, Bach's "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde groß" from the *Orgelbüchlein*. Ideally, the ornate melodic line of such a piece requires a solo stop characteristic of an early eighteenth-century organ such as a *cromorne* or *cornet*.¹³

Organ music performed for services

An impression as to what music Demessieux typically played during services at St-Esprit can be formed by examining running lists she kept from 1937 to the beginning of 1944. For the years 1937 through 1939, she tracked only services on some special Sundays and out-of-the-ordinary occasions. The following lists have been selected to exemplify where in a service Demessieux played, and what was typically played during those years.¹⁴

Holy Day of Easter 1937		
– 10:00 AM Mass –		
Entrance:	Choral in A minor	-Franck
Offertory:	Largo	-Handel
Recessional:	Toccata	-Widor
– 11:30 AM Mass –		
Entrance:	Prelude in G major	-Bach
Offertory:	Adagio	-Franck
Recessional:	Toccata	-Widor
– Vespers* –		
Entrance:	Choral	-Boëllmann
Recessional:	Toccata in D minor	-Bach
* Vespers was a Sunday late-afternoon service involving the singing of psalms, a hymn, and the Magnificat. As indicated in some of Demessieux's lists of music played for 1937–1939 services, on some Sundays at St-Esprit Vespers was followed by Benediction, which is a short rite, with its own prescribed chants, that venerates the stored eucharistic elements.		
Christmas [Day] 1937		
– 11:30 AM Mass –		
– Recital –		
Entrance:	Prelude in C	-Bach
Offertory:	Toccata and Fugue in D minor	-Bach
Communion:	Fugue in C	-Bach
Recessional:	Toccata	-Widor

Holy Thursday 1939

– 8:30 PM –

Chorale [prelude] “O! Homme, pleure sur tes iniquités”*	-Bach
Chemin de la Croix [excerpts]	-Dupré

* French for “O Mensch, bewein’ dein’ Sünde groß.”

These sample lists identify the three types of Sunday service for which Demessieux played: 10:00 AM Mass, 11:30 AM Mass, and Vespers in the late afternoon. In Demessieux’s diary of 1940–1946, only the earliest Sunday service is described as High Mass, meaning its liturgy was sung throughout; therefore, the 11:30 AM Mass must have been spoken, rather than sung.¹⁵ A spoken or “low” Mass provided much more opportunity for solo organ music. François Sabatier notes that during a low mass organ music began with the entrance piece and might cease only during the sermon, the Elevation, and before the final Benediction.¹⁶ According to Joachim Havard de Montagne,

in certain churches, for “low” masses, which is to say not sung, the organ played nearly without interruption during the course of the mass, clearly going beyond its normal function. These were referred to as “recital-masses.”¹⁷

Reflecting this, Demessieux listed the music she performed for the 11:30 Mass on Christmas Day 1937 under the heading “Recital.”

These sample lists also emphasize that during the period 1937–1939 the single composer most frequently performed was Bach. Demessieux’s other repertoire for service playing was typically nineteenth- and twentieth-century French organ music, with occasional representation of other composers. Franck’s *Choral* in A minor and Dupré’s *Le Chemin de la Croix*, stand out for being works that were conceived for a three-manual instrument, adapted by Demessieux for performance on two manuals.

For the period December 1940 to January 1944, Demessieux listed every Sunday morning on which she played at St-Esprit and specified what she performed (most often only for the 11:30 Mass). Examples are:

Sunday 10 August 1941

11:30 AM	Prelude in A-Flat	-Dupré
	Improv.: <i>Choral canonique</i> , 5 voices – Trio* – Fugue	

* In *Choral canonique*, “Choral” is Dupré’s label for a polyphonic setting of a plainchant theme or German hymn tune. A “Trio” is a 3-voice *choral contrapunté*. Dupré’s four types of improvisation termed *choral*, derived from Bach’s chorale preludes, are described in his *Traité d’improvisation à l’orgue* (Paris: Leduc, 1925), 50–54.

Sunday 3 May 1942

10:00 AM	Improv. on a theme of G. Fleury [theme quoted]	
11:30 AM	Chorale prelude: Gloria*	-Bach
	<i>Pièce héroïque</i>	-Franck
	Improv.: Variations and symphonic Allegro, theme of G. Fleury [quoted]	

* Gloria likely refers to one of Bach’s organ settings of “Allein Gott in der Hoh’ sei Ehr’.”

Sunday 18 April 1943 (Palm Sunday)

11:30 AM	Chemin de la Croix: 9 th , 5 th , 12 th , 14 th [Stations]	-Dupré
	Improv.: Symphonic poem on the [plainchant] Communion	

Saturday 25 December 1943 (Christmas [Day])

11:30 AM	Noël in D minor	-Daquin
	Variations sur un vieux Noël*	-Dupré
	Improv.: Fugue on “Dans une pauvre étable” [French Christmas carol]	

* This is probably Dupré's *Variations sur un Noël*, Op. 20.

Overall, these samples of Demessieux's lists from the 1930s and 1940s show some of the range of both repertoire and improvisational forms she played at St-Esprit. In her lists for December 1940 to January 1944 as a whole (though not shown above), the composer most often represented is once again Bach. This suggests Demessieux agreed with Dupré that the German composer's music was the foundation of all organ-playing, and that Bach's chorale preludes were as suited to Catholic as to Protestant services. For comparison, here is a program Demessieux recorded in her notebook after hearing Dupré perform on a Sunday morning at St-Sulpice:

Marcel Dupré, St-Sulpice, 1 January 1942 (Circumcision)

High Mass	[Trio] Sonata No. 6 (1 st mvmt.)	-Bach
11:15 AM	“Veni, creator”	-Titelouze*
	“En toi est la joie”†	-Bach
	“La vieille année s'en est allée”‡	-Bach
	Recessional: Improvisation	

* Jehan Titelouze was a French composer and organist (1563–1733) who lived and worked in Dupré's native city, Rouen.

† The chorale prelude “In dir ist Freude” from Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*.

‡ The chorale prelude “Das alte Jahr vergangen ist” from Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*.

Surveying Demessieux's complete set of lists, what further observations can be made about the period 1940–1944 as far as her approach to repertoire selection is concerned?

- The composer's name that occurs second-most-often is Dupré, reflecting Demessieux's loyalty to her teacher and mentor during these years.

- Otherwise, she included large-scale works by Liszt and Franck, movements from Handel concertos, and a sprinkling of pre-Bach organ music.

- The improvisational forms Demessieux used during this period include all those that Dupré specifies in his treatise on improvisation as being appropriate to Catholic worship services:¹⁸

- prelude
- fugue
- *choral* (e.g., *choral canonique*, *choral orné*)
- toccata
- variations
- passacaglia
- symphonic movements: singly, in pairs, or all four.

- Demessieux also indicated two exceptional titles for an improvisation: *fantaisie* and *poème symphonique* (one instance of each appears in the lists from 1940–1944).

- Where Demessieux named the theme upon which she improvised, it was typically a plainchant, or, if she also played a Bach chorale prelude that morning, she sometimes improvised on the same German hymn tune. In other instances

that an improvisation was indicated, she jotted down, beside her description of it, a theme of her own invention, or one proposed to her by someone visiting her organ gallery.

As outlined above, Demessieux's record of music played at High Mass at St-Esprit lists what she performed during the Entrance, the Offertory, and as the Recessional, and occasionally what she performed during the Communion. But Demessieux could arguably have played at other points during a sung mass as well.

First, in his treatise on improvisation, Dupré lists the Entrance, Offertory, and Recessional as the only liturgical actions that allow performance of a piece involving some development. In addition, he lists three other moments the organ may be required to perform something short—Gradual and Elevation, as well as Communion.¹⁹

Second, as is also explained by Dupré, and noted by François Sabatier, in the period between the wars (as in the nineteenth century and prior), French organists are said to have performed “versets” in alternation with the choir's plainchant.²⁰ In this procedure (*alternatim*), the singing of specific passages (versets) in the Ordinary of the Mass, and chants prescribed for Vespers, was replaced by a short organ setting, typically improvised, of the plainchant melody. In the diary of 1940–1946, there is one place where Demessieux notes that, at Vespers at St-Esprit, she “created some versets, responding to the hymn.”²¹ However, Demessieux's repertoire lists do not tell us whether during High Mass at St-Esprit substitution of organ versets at specific points in plainchant performance was the norm. Only one intriguing entry, under the heading 1937, suggests this practice:

Holy Saturday 1937		
– High Mass -*		
Entrance:	none played	<i>Gloria and Sanctus</i>
Offertory:	[none played]	<i>alternating with the</i>
Communion:		<i>choir and harmonium</i>
Recessional:	Toccata	–Scarlatti†

* Demessieux did not indicate the service time. “High Mass” suggests it was possibly held in the morning and was, in any case, not an Easter Vigil service.

† According to John Henderson, *A Directory of Composers for Organ*, 2d ed. (Swindon, Wiltshire: John Henderson Ltd., 1999), 525, Alessandro Scarlatti composed “some 16 toccatas,” one of which, Toccata 10, is in the *Antologia Organistica* (G. Ricordi & Co.), following p. 58, and may be viewed at <[https://imslp.org/wiki/Antologia_organistica_italiana%2C_sec._XVI-XIX_\(Scarpa%2C_Jolando\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Antologia_organistica_italiana%2C_sec._XVI-XIX_(Scarpa%2C_Jolando))>, accessed Sept. 25, 2022.

The following questions arise from Demessieux's note in the far right-hand column: Did she regularly play in alternation with the St-Esprit choir during the singing of certain portions of High Mass? Why was the harmonium used for this Holy Saturday service?

I asked these of the current organist of St-Esprit, Hampus Lindwall.²² According to what parishioners old enough to have sung in the choir during the time of Demessieux have told him, plainchant was, indeed, sung in this style. Therefore, this may have applied to all sung Masses as well as Vespers. Writing in 2022, Lindwall said that the harmonium had only recently been rediscovered in the crypt of the church: it appears to have been there all along. He also noted the possibility exists that—even after the church's main space came into use—smaller celebrations continued to take place in the crypt in times gone by. He could not say for sure, however, whether these were accompanied by the harmonium. Nevertheless, Demessieux's note concerning Holy Saturday in 1937 suggests that use of the harmonium, presumably for services held in the crypt, was the case, at least on occasion.

To recapitulate, in Chapter 1, I explained how exceptional it was that the young Demessieux was able to study in Paris; in Chapter 2, I described what it was like for her to study specifically at the Paris Conservatory. This chapter has focused on the organ and music she played at the Church of St-Esprit. It is time now to turn to Demessieux's own descriptions of her activities, beginning with her diary and letters of 1932–1940.

NOTES:

1 This paragraph is based on Vincent Hildebrandt, “The Organs of Paris: Saint Esprit” © 2021

<www.organsparisaz4.vhhil.nl/St%20Esprit.htm>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, unless otherwise indicated.

2 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 37. The present-day organist of St-Esprit, Hampus Lindwall, has learned from members of the parish old enough to have known Demessieux that, when she was first engaged, it was not known at all that she was an exceptionally gifted young musician (email of Feb. 17, 2022).

3 Conversation with long-time Demessieux friend, and parishioner of St-Esprit, Madeleine Chacun, June 2003.

4 François Sabatier, “Des relations entre liturgie, musique et facture d’orgues en France des origines à Vatican II,” *L’Orgue*, No. 274 (2006a): 24, explains that by the second half of the nineteenth century cathedrals and large churches in France often had two organs—a *grand orgue* located in the gallery above the entrance, and a smaller *orgue de chœur* (or harmonium) located in the chancel and near the choir—with each organ having its own titular organist. The smaller organ was meant principally to accompany the choir and the large organ fulfilled all other functions of the organ in Catholic services.

5 The web page at <https://www.jehanalain.ch/EN/organo.php?id_sezione=2>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, describes, in its present state, the most famous organ designed by Albert Alain, a 4-manual instrument that he himself built for his home. It is now located in the attic of the Grange de la Dîme in Romainmôtier, Switzerland.

6 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 37; and Vincent Hildebrandt, “The Organs of Paris: Saint Esprit,” © 2021

<www.organsparisaz4.vhhil.nl/St%20Esprit.htm>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. This web page also describes how the organ was altered and enlarged in 1968 and 1985, and, in a 2022 update, reports a plan to move a *grand orgue* of 45 stops and three manuals from a Rouen church to Paris, for installation above the main entrance of St-Esprit. Demessieux’s diary entry of Jun. 12, 1945 describes Marcel Dupré’s failed attempt to convince the parish priest of the time to invest in the building of a *grand orgue* for St-Esprit.

7 Pierre Denis, “Les Organistes français d’aujourd’hui, XVI. Jeanne Demessieux,” *L’Orgue: Bulletin de l’Association des Amis de L’Orgue*, No. 75 (1955/II): 39 n. 1. The current specification may be viewed at <<http://orgue.free.fr/a12o6.html>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

8 Marc Hedelin, “La Facture d’Orgues à Paris au tournant des années 1930,” *L’Orgue: L’Orgue à Paris dans les années 1930*, Nos. 295–296 (2011): 196.

9 *Ibid.*, 197.

10 “Upperwork” refers to stops whose pitch is above the 4-foot level, that is 2-foot, mutation, and mixture stops.

11 For example, in François Couperin’s *Messe pour les Paroisses*, there are movements entitled “Duo sur les Tierces” and “Tierce en Taille.”

12 In my discussion concerning Demessieux with Dutch organist Hans Leenders, who had studied with Demessieux student Jean Wolfs (probably in the late 1970s–early 1980s), Leenders noted that Demessieux’s preferred registration for playing polyphonic music by Bach was the combination known in French as *fonds*: 16, 8, 4, that is, without the 2-foot and mixture stops presently believed to create the sound Bach had in mind (conversation with Hans Leenders in Maastricht, the Netherlands, May 13, 2003). In other words, manual I of the St-Esprit organ had, in itself, the combination of stops Demessieux preferred to use when playing a Bach prelude and fugue.

13 A cromorne is a Baroque solo reed, and the French equivalent of the German stop called krummhorn. A cornet is a solo mixture stop combining stops at pitch levels 8, (4), $2^2/3$, 2, and $1^3/5$, or something similar.

14 AM 4S13, “Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées.” For the most part, the formatting of the original lists is retained. Some words have been translated from French to English.

15 See, for example, the diary entry of Dec. 25, 1940.

16 Sabatier 2006a, 43–44. The “Elevation” is the moment in the Eucharistic liturgy when the priest lifts up the bread and wine after each element is consecrated, becoming the body and blood of Christ.

17 Joachim Havard de Montagne, “Un rappel: la place de l’orgue dans la liturgie traditionnelle”

<[http://www.musimem.com/orgue-et-](http://www.musimem.com/orgue-et-liturgie.htm#:~:text=Avant%20les%20r%C3%A9formes%20liturgiques%20de,%C3%A0%20peu%20pr%C3%A8s%20%C3%A9gale%20importance)

[liturgie.htm#:~:text=Avant%20les%20r%C3%A9formes%20liturgiques%20de,%C3%A0%20peu%20pr%C3%A8s%20%C3%A9gale%20importance](http://www.musimem.com/orgue-et-liturgie.htm#:~:text=Avant%20les%20r%C3%A9formes%20liturgiques%20de,%C3%A0%20peu%20pr%C3%A8s%20%C3%A9gale%20importance)>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

18 Dupré 1925, 134–35. The only form that Dupré lists on those pages as appropriate to Catholic services that is not stated or suggested in Demessieux's lists is the binary form Dupré terms "air."

19 Dupré 1925, 134–135. On p. 134 Dupré notes that if the Offertory is sung, the organ piece is always very short.

20 Dupré 1925, 134, lists the versets for which the organ may replace the choir during the Mass, Vespers, Compline, and Benediction. Sabatier 2006a, 37, states that during the interwar period the traditional practice of alternating choir and organ continued to be permitted during the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Deo gratias of the Mass, and during psalms, hymns, and canticles of Vespers. By Deo gratias, he presumably means the response to the concluding *Ite, missa est*.

21 Diary entry of Dec. 25, 1940. Four diary entries note that Demessieux improvised versets when she played for Vespers at St-Sulpice: Jul. 27, 1941; Jan. 1, 1942; Feb. 7, 1943; and Apr. 1, 1945.

22 My letter of Jan. 22 and email reply by H. Lindwall of Feb. 17, 2022.

4. Jeanne Demessieux's Diary and Letters of 1932-1940 in Translation

The surviving diary and letters of Jeanne Demessieux's adolescent years embrace her first eight years of music study in Paris, particularly that undertaken at the Paris Conservatory, then located at 14 rue de Madrid. They do not comprise a complete account of her experiences. Indeed, most of Demessieux's 1930s correspondence survives only as excerpts published in *Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* by Trieu-Colleney. Moreover, Demessieux's diary of June 1934 to September 1938 was kept only sporadically. Therefore, the following text interleaves multiple materials to portray Demessieux's life during the period October 1932 to June 1940. These are passages that Trieu-Colleney selected from Demessieux's letters sent to family members, complete letters to her mentors that survive as drafts, diary entries, and a selection from Demessieux's record of organ music played for services at St-Esprit. Periods of Demessieux's life not covered by letters or diary, but for which information is available from other primary and secondary sources (identified in endnotes), are described in intervening paragraphs in the text.

To the extent possible, materials are arranged in chronological order. Each piece of dated correspondence occurs in a shaded textbox, and is headed with its date at the left margin. Diary entries are placed in unshaded textboxes, with each entry having a centred date above it. Explanatory comments on the content of letters and diary occur in endnotes. Names of persons that are highlighted are linked to a "Register of Persons Mentioned in Jeanne Demessieux's Diaries and Letters," which supplies brief information concerning those who could be identified.

From letters of Jeanne Demessieux to her sister Yolande:¹

11 October 1932

We arrived in Paris with the rain... Now [though,] the air is fresh, and the beautiful autumn sun is shining. My piano will arrive on Friday . . .

22 October 1932

My piano has a tremendous sound, but it is quite uncompromising. I inspected it from top to bottom and everything is in good shape.

28 October 1932

Monsieur [Lazare-]Lévy had me play my Bach, my étude, and my [other] piece, and said it was good...I owe my success mainly to you.

5 November 1932

. . . M^{lle} Gousseau had me play the Chopin étude, the Bach, and the Beethoven sonata... she said it was very good but that I pound too much.

[undated:]

Mademoiselle had me work on the Chopin finale in a surprising way! I was paying such close attention that I sat there with my mouth open, staring wide-eyed.

[undated:]

My piano study is going well. I've started to learn the Czerny toccata: very difficult. You can judge for yourself: it's all in thirds.

27 December 1932

I'm still working on my toccata. I managed to play it at 132 to the eighth note; it's beginning to sound like something [*ça commence à compter*].

1 January 1933

I know Chopin's Impromptu No. 2 by memory, J. S. Bach in transposition and, still, the Czerny toccata. I always do an average of three and a half hours, sometimes, four.

... Sundays, I don't work. Monsieur Lévy insists that I should rest on that day.

Technique is beginning to go well again. Mademoiselle Gousseau is very strict on this matter, with good reason I believe, for Monsieur Lévy is very lenient. He told Maman that he will present me [in an audition at the Conservatory] next year and that I will be received with open arms.

13 February 1933

... I am also composing ...

16 March 1933²

I began with Czerny's *École [du] Virtuose*:³ He showed me the fingering...

"You see, Jeanne," he said, "this fingering is going to facilitate your technique, but I don't want you to use this in your études, because they are meant to make you work."

Then came Bach:

"Well, there's nothing to say about this fugue. Really, it's perfect."

Then the rondo-finale of Frédéric Chopin's Concerto.⁴ It's very difficult, but with Monsieur Lévy's technique, everything becomes easy ...

22 March 1933

Monsieur Lévy has given me the Allegro from Chopin's Concerto... It's so very beautiful, an architectural marvel, one could say.

We have bought a pretty collar for Kety [family cat], decorated with a bell and nametag... The first evening we put it on her, she became very agitated, the bell annoyed her so, but now she thinks nothing of it. She's growing prettier all the time and, I believe, more mischievous.

22 May 1933

My technique is coming along: all I lack is a little stability in my fingers... a successful entrance audition to the Conservatory is in sight ...

4 June 1933

This morning, I worked for two hours on Clementi's *Gradus*⁵ and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 11, and I improvised for ten minutes.

This afternoon, I'm going to work on my Lutins rondo,⁶ Chopin's first étude (for an hour and a half) and, after that, if I have time, the Impromptu No. 2 (this is what I'll play for Mademoiselle's student recital, instead of the rondo: it will have more effect and it's more suited to my temperament...) The Revolutionary Étude⁷ I'm saving because I would like to play it for you during vacation—it is so beautiful.

23 June 1933⁸

. . . Maman had me dressed in my white dress to which she had added a Marie-Antoinette fichu tied at the back in a big bow.

I played Monsieur Lévy's two études and my Chopin impromptu. It appears to have gone marvellously well! In attendance were Mademoiselle and her entire family; Madame Giraud-Latarse [who is] Monsieur Lévy's former teacher and Mademoiselle [Gousseau]'s former preparatory teacher;⁹ and all the students' parents. Madame Giraud is said to have been jubilant...

Maman said to me that my touch was very delicate and that the passage work was so well done that one would think it was of no difficulty. I'm as fearless as ever, and during the day before the recital I was burning with impatience.

In all likelihood, Demessieux, with her parents and grandmother, left Paris for Aigues-Mortes for at least part of July through August 1933; correspondence with her sister Yolande resumed in September.

From letters to Yolande:¹⁰

29 September 1933

The notorious passage by Liszt that I couldn't manage, well, I worked on it for a good half-hour, and I can now play it very well . . .

11 October 1933

Every day, I go to the forest alone by bicycle; I go freewheeling down avenue Daumesnil and do two or three laps around the forest...¹¹ then, I head back up with difficulty; you must remember that "lovely" little hill . . .

I'm yearning to take the [entrance] exam.



Santiago Riera's piano class, ca. 1934. From left to right, standing: Pierre Darricau, Marguerite Godard, Jeanne Demessieux, Serge Postelnikoff, Suzanne Rémion, Léon Chauliac, Mlle Abrunêdo, Denise Feron, unnamed auditor, Maria Fotino, Valérie Hamilton; sitting: Paulette Madeuf, Françoise Labroquère, Colette Chambeau, Gilsèle Guérillon. Goosen van Tuijl collection.

In autumn 1933, the start of her second year in Paris, Demessieux successfully auditioned for entrance to one of the limited number of openings in piano at the Conservatory. She was assigned to the class of Santiago Riera, not to that of Lazare-Lévy as she had hoped. Unfortunately for Demessieux, a teacher whose class was already considered complete—twelve students was the limit in the 1930s—did not have final say with regard to adding new students, particularly when there was another, in this case Riera's, that was not complete.¹²

Letter-card addressed to Monsieur Demessieux at 8 rue du Docteur Goujon.¹³

24 November [1933]

Dear Sir,

M^r Riera has written to me that he cannot permit any other instruction for Jeanne but his own. In other words, he did not understand anything I said to him yesterday. Therefore, if he questions Jeanne, she should affirm that her relationship with me is purely friendly. The advice that I will give her must, consequently, remain confidential. As a precaution, I can no longer have her come to [the Salle] Érard, but only to my home. Embrace her for me.

With my very best regards,

Lazare-Lévy

From letters to Yolande:¹⁴

11 December 1933

Alfred Cortot is giving a series of Chopin concerts. I'm very pleased that I saved all the money given to me so that I can go and hear, next Thursday, the lecture-recital on the preludes and, on Thursday the 14th, I will hear the études for around 15 francs for standing room; after that, I don't know if I will be able to get the money together... To tell you that he plays well doesn't do it justice. You would think it was Chopin himself playing his works. He is a poet above all, and more so than anyone else.

. . . I am composing. I finished a waltz and am beginning a nocturne and another piece for which I haven't decided upon a title: Berceuse or Romance?...

21 January 1934

There is a student, Maria F[otino] (Romanian)¹⁵ whom I like very much: she is gentle and reserved. When I sit beside her in class, she is friendly, which pleases me. She is also a very good musician with an extremely soft and delicate touch... She is, perhaps, twenty? But that's not what's important to us because she has a youthful personality.

[Concerning a waltz composed by Demessieux that she played for Lazare-Lévy, undated:]

I performed it... When I'd finished, he expressed himself thus:

"Your first theme is very pretty and reminiscent of Chopin. However, the second theme is too long and modulates to keys that are too distant; it must return to the first; the trio, likewise, is long..."

I cannot reproduce all his explanations, but he told me to study Chopin's waltzes away from the piano, to gain inspiration from their forms. This is why I've been rising every morning at half-past seven and immediately getting to work. I am fascinated by the waltzes; they are inspired in their elegance; I am meticulously studying their every detail.

1 February 1934

Presently, I'm composing two nocturnes.

My criticism of Braïlowsky is that he lacks both suppleness in Chopin's melodic passages and sensitivity for melodic line. These are precisely the two things I love about Cortot's playing.

I am glad that Mimi is working hard,¹⁶ knowing that later on, when she is in Paris, working alone and properly, will be all right, but it's not easy... For the time being, I know that she is in good hands.

21 February 1934

Monsieur Riera hasn't been giving his classes lately. Monsieur Gentil has been replacing him.

This morning, [however] he reappeared... I presented the Liszt paraphrase. He was pushy with me, as usual...

"To think that she doesn't like this masterwork! This is inconceivable!" To this, I retorted, with a smile,

"But, Master, I like it very much now!" He had nothing more to say and seemed rather embarrassed.

[Referring to Lazare-Lévy:] Dear Master! Here is someone who deserves all my regard for him and my confidence in him! He takes a great interest in my compositions and gives me bits of advice... As for my piano playing, he is very happy with the results!

14 May 1934

Sensational, magnificent, marvelous news! The first competition is set for the 31st of this month and we have three new pieces... a program that pleases me to no end...¹⁷ Exam fever has again taken hold of me. I've had my pieces for eight days and I know them all by heart...

I am still accompanying at church, which gives me pleasure and takes my mind off my other work. One day, at rehearsal, the priest said to us, "I am bored... bored as a chicken with a toothbrush..." I'm still laughing.¹⁸

From Demessieux's diary entitled "Memories Impressions Diary 1934-35-36"¹⁹

Thursday 28 June 1934

I resume my ~~daily~~ diary with joy.²⁰ There is so much running through my mind these days! The end-of-the-year competition took place yesterday from nine in the morning to eleven in the evening. At half-past six Maman came to wake me. I quickly dressed and, everyone else still asleep, I attached the mute [*moliphone*] to my piano and did my daily exercises.

Finally, it was time. I was all dressed up in my white dress and I was reminded to be passionate in the ballade.²¹ I responded by opening one eye and yawning my head off. When descending the stairs, I slipped, caught myself and, by an effort of will, woke up completely. ~~Far~~ We arrived at the Conservatory at half-past eight. Immediately, I went to the green room. Once there, I became very reserved, as I always force myself to be as much as possible before playing. I had to wait an hour and a half before my turn.

Finally, my name was announced. I walked on stage [2] and sat at the piano. The benefit of that ~~big~~ long waiting period of an hour and a half was that I was able to give myself entirely to my ballade. It was for

me, as always, like experiencing a long dream; it seemed to me as if ~~all these~~ all the feelings of this beautiful poem were being improvised by me, since they so matched my spiritual state. The last chord struck, I rose, unsteady on my feet, while a murmur rustled through the crowd. My vision was blurry but with a great effort of will I managed to walk as far as the door where several mothers were waiting for me. Then, sheltered from the curious gaze of the crowd, I allowed a long groan to escape my lips, while a cold sweat broke out on my brow and my hands. A short command: "Hold her up..."

Nevertheless, little by little I recovered my composure and was able to walk. The first face I saw, all worried, was Papa's. He rushed to grasp me in his arms. After a moment, I was able to say,

"I played well...you know... [3] Oh! I can hardly go on... I thought I was going to faint."

We went around the street by the Conservatory to meet up with Maman, who had not been able to get out earlier. Soon, I saw her on her way down, crying and searching for a glimpse of me. She too embraced me lovingly and I succumbed, for my legs would no longer carry me. At that same moment, the intermission began. There was a crush of people, but I felt so weak that just to move was an effort for me. My classmates were at our side; everyone hugged and congratulated me. The mothers said,

"I thought she was going to faint: she looked as pale as a corpse."

M^r Lévy told me, straight out, his impressions:

"She will certainly win something, she played so well!"

And while he was encouraging me, my eyes searched the crowd for M^r Riera, but he didn't show up. I wasn't to see him until an hour later... Sensing my strength returning, I went to listen to some of the contestants, using Maman's ticket.

At noon, arm-in-arm, we returned [4] home. After lunch, I sight-read some preludes and fugues for organ by Bach. At five PM, we went out again to the boulevard Poissonnière.²² The ballades session wasn't over yet, which permitted Papa to make the acquaintance of M^r Labroquère, the father of a charming nineteen-year-old classmate of mine, Françoise, who is extremely musical, intelligent, and lively. The family is descended from Liszt, whom Françoise very much resembles. We are always together. Maman looked at us and smiled and described us as inseparable by dubbing us "Delacroix and Chopin."

After this aside, I continue. I was [feeling] a little better for the sight-reading [competition]. Everything there went very well. Only after I began a long wait did my nerves start to bother me. All I could do was sit and quickly eat a sandwich, and I immediately wanted to return to the Conservatory. We met up again, talked, traded predictions; some of my friends laughed, others fretted. As for Françoise and me, we looked like two people on their deathbeds, [5] each as pale and stiff as the other. All this was happening in the green room, among friends; our parents were in the hall.

Eventually, a man came to tell us that M^r Rabaud was going to read the competition results aloud. We quietly opened the door to the hall; a deathly silence reigned. Everyone was breathless with anticipation, everyone's lips trembled. Slowly, the director [Rabaud] announced the awards. First Prizes... Second Prizes... First Mentions... Second Mentions... finally, my name was pronounced, third in this last category. Hearing this, I tottered again, my eyes closing under the shock of such indefinable brutality; unfortunately, no one was looking after me and, if I didn't actually fall, it was only because there was such a huge crush of people. Oh! This moment! I will remember it for a long time! Propelled by the ceaseless wave of the students around me, I passed by M^r Lévy, who was holding in his arms a poor little blonde who had fallen to bits, M^{lle}

Berruyer, who was sobbing against his shoulder while he covered her with kisses. Then I saw M^r [6] Riera, who said to me, quite offhandedly,

“This is what the jury came to accomplish? They could have stayed home: you deserved better.” There was nothing I could say to him in response.

These two pictures, of M^r Lévy and M^r Riera, continued to dance before my eyes like ghosts: the first I’d like to think of always; the second I can only regard with a fleeting smile.

I found myself outdoors, jostled, blinded by photographers’ flashes. Amidst general high spirits, Papa and Maman soon ~~found~~ joined me. We heard nothing but shouting, almost like a riot. Such tears! Such sobbing! Presently we encountered Valérie Hamilton and her mother, in the throes of a terrible nervous fit.²³ Their cries were very nearly demented. The entire breathless crowd, all the discordant cries, upset me to the point that I simply clung to Papa, sobbing. All I could come out with was “Let’s go!” while nervous trembling [7] shook me all over.

This attack of nerves lasted in the subway with my complete inability to speak, and at home with endless tears. It was midnight when Maman put me to bed, tucking me in like a little baby, and after her tender, maternal caresses and kisses, and those of Papa, I slept, utterly exhausted.

Never has an exam affected me so profoundly as this one...

Thursday 28 June 1934 [second entry]

A day of rest.

Friday 29 June 1934

At 11:00 AM, Maman and I went to M^{lle} Gousseau’s. She received us with her usual good grace and talked to us with an open heart. “So, my little Jeanne, you are satisfied with your Second Mention?”

“Oh! Yes, Mademoiselle!”

“There we go: that’s good. I’ll acknowledge, though, that you deserved a First [Mention].”

“Ah....”

“Yes... But I prefer that it turned out as it did. M^r Lévy will now have less difficulty taking you in his class. M^r Riera remains to be convinced: that is the most difficult...”

“Oh! Mademoiselle, [8] he won’t agree!” I cried spontaneously. And I, who never weep, sensed something hot beneath my eyelids, boiling to the surface; but I immediately took control of myself and, gritting my teeth, I managed to drive away my heart’s overflowing, volatile [thoughts]. I don’t know if Mademoiselle saw this sudden jolt to my soul, but she carried on solemnly,

“Don’t worry, Jeanne... don’t think about it anymore; M^r Riera is out of the picture.” She put strong emphasis on these last words, then, turning to Maman,

“Jeanne isn’t looking well; she is too pale... which worries me.”

Maman said responded with nothing and looked at me with a sigh. After some moments of glum silence, she said,

“We are thinking of going to see M^r Lévy sometime soon; my husband must request an appointment....”

“Madame, if would you like me to telephone him, myself? It would save you the trouble of arranging

the meeting.” And without even waiting for a reply, she [9] picked up the telephone and asked to be connected. After a moment, a familiar voice could be heard through the ebony headset and Mademoiselle, putting on her pleasant smile, responded,

“Good day, Master... How are you? Oh! How amusing!... Well, here it is: I have with me Jeanne Demessieux who would like to know when she might come, with her father and mother, to visit you... Fine... Tomorrow at half-past three. Jeanne,” she said, looking in my direction. “Goodbye, Master; I shall write to you.”

Then she came and sat beside me, took my hands, and said,

“You must promise me to be sensible... Meaning that I want you to stop thinking about M^r Riera and be cheerful. It’s your age, my dear... If you remain sad, you will become seriously ill, and we don’t want that. So, it’s a promise?...”

“... Yes... Mademoiselle...”

“My poor dear! It’s hard at thirteen! But, it has to be.”

It has to be! Or so they say.

[10] Thursday 5 July 1934

This morning I went out with Papa. We went to the Vincennes Forest,²⁴ where I did my reading. This afternoon I did my piano practice.

What a day it was! During the entire afternoon, I could not concentrate on anything for five minutes at a time. Oh, longed-for summer vacation, are you coming soon? I wish it were tomorrow: I want to see Yoyo [Yolande] right away. Oh! Such joy! The sweetest I can ever know!... I feel as if I will die waiting, while my regard for her only grows stronger. Nevertheless, were I suddenly to find her, at this very moment, in front of me, I would probably not be able to think of what to say, even to her.

Saturday 7 July 1934

Only five days to go before we are all reunited. What happiness! I’ve begun counting the days and even the hours. God grant us the joy of being able to hear, embrace, and speak to her...! So many things to tell us! I think I cannot bring a quarter of them to mind. [11]



*Jeanne Demessieux at the console of the organ at St-Esprit, 1934.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds
Jeanne Demessieux.*

I'm composing music regularly these days, generally from 1:30 to 2 PM, a time that takes nothing from my work at the piano because I only start playing at 2 PM. This past winter, I mostly composed in the evening, after supper, but Maman forbade this because it made me too tired. Having to find another time, I had chosen seven to eight in the morning at the first glimmer of pale, winter sun behind my closed shutters.

But Maman put a stop to that too because I got one cold after another; therefore, afternoon is now my time.

Sunday 8 July 1934

This morning, I accompanied both Masses, at 10:00 and at 11:30. This was the last time before summer vacation... Next Sunday, we will hear Mass at the Church of the Sablons in Aigues-Mortes. At a quarter to six I went to Benediction²⁵ in the big crypt of [12] St-Esprit church. It is made entirely of cement, and footsteps resonate as if in a tomb.²⁶

Demessieux made no diary entries during her 1934 summer vacation in Aigues-Mortes. By the end of September, she and her parents had returned to Paris, and her correspondence with her sister Yolande resumed.

From a letter to Yolande:²⁷

30 September 1934

. . . It's good to have my piano again! As soon as Mass was over, I went and played until noon. What a warm and vibrant sonority! There is no other instrument like it.

Tomorrow I will begin diligently working five hours a day again, no question. I'm longing to return to my habits. I have the courage and the will... Just practising piano is sufficient for me to want nothing else.

In November 1934, Demessieux began private harmony lessons with Noël Gallon in preparation for the competitive entrance exam to a Paris Conservatory class in that subject.²⁸ She did not write in her diary again until January of that academic year.²⁹

Thursday 31 January 1935

Long after the end of summer vacation, I have, at last, returned to my diary. The time for mental turmoil has passed, I suppose. In every respect, the [academic] year began well, except for the disappointment of M^r Lévy's final response that it is impossible for him to admit me to his class without causing me serious harm. I am, therefore, resigned to this. I've worked hard, even righteously, on the anger in my heart and hope in my mind. Hope! Anger! Truly two things made to please me. I have never so well savoured the truth of two words, the terrible truth. Anger? Yes. Suppressed anger, a monstrous ocean against a hard rock; sadness—smothered yet boiling, steaming—that must not be allowed to escape. Hope?... [14] A poor thread of silk, the work of a spider who, firmly believing it safe, cast it out into space and attached it to the petals of a thought and the heart of a thistle. The wind blows. The situation is critical. But do not groan, oppressed soul; always stifle your protests, for the echoes would be too loud!

From a letter to Yolande:³⁰

16 February 1935

. . . In harmony, I've begun dominant sevenths . . . I've hardly any time now for composing, and this breaks my heart... It seems to me that I'm no longer good at anything, even when I do my homework perfectly. Academic work so little resembles the ideal that I have the impression the goal is getting further and further away...

10 April 1935

The eve of a happy day. Tomorrow, a recital by M^r Riera's students in the Conservatory Hall.³¹ I will play the first part of Schumann's *Fantasie* [Op. 17]. A sublime piece; incomprehensible or revealing. I am, as always, very calm.

From a letter to Yolande:³²

16 April 1935

The recital went very well.

11 May 1935

Time passes quickly... What is reality one day becomes but a memory the next. The competitions are upon us. For all students, they loom as something dangerous, arduous, even treacherous; I, on the other hand, see them as having one justification, merit [15] ~~won~~ rewarded, and one day, I'll be free!

Oh! Freedom! Kind friend! One day (can it be true!) you will introduce yourself to me for the first time, you will take me in your arms, and I will have only to respond to your call! Oh, yes, most certainly: it cannot be otherwise. I have believed I would be meeting you for several days now, since the day when (God forgive me!) I took vengeance!... Yet, took vengeance with justice and bravura.

Yesterday I went to class with a strong feeling of foreboding. Let us take note. Before entering the class, we were waiting for M^r Riera (or, rather, just Riera) in the large second floor corridor. My classmates were merry; they were laughing. Riera arrived, in a bad mood. First, we received a whopping outburst; [16] it seems this gentleman believed himself in a henhouse, which truly upset us. We entered and the class commenced or, rather, recommenced. First, we played the Debussy étude. Abusive words, curses, with no attempt to avoid being offensive. Seated, as usual, near Françoise, I felt depressed. My heart was heavy: I can almost still feel the sensation! But I was distracted [in the clouds] and my inner nature dissolved, merged into a burning tear. Suddenly: "Her!": as injurious a sound to my ears as an alarm bell. Awakened with a jump from my sad reverie, I slowly raised my head, and my ears could hear sounds of anger.

"Yes! Her, the one who's been day-dreaming over there: the last time [too] she [17] stood there (sniggering) with no pencil to mark the fingering I indicated; doubtless, she is already an expert! (furious). She listens to nothing; no, you are undisciplined, you know it all too well," and eternal jealousy, in his most bitter cruelty, showed in his eyes, his words, and his gestures.

Indignant that he would dare speak such a lie to my face and before my classmates, I leapt up and, clenching my fist almost to the point of breaking a bone, I threw these words back at him, with a look of fire:

"Even so!!... I have marked my fingerings; you've seen them for yourself!" I sat back down again, trembling with anger for the first time, and I added, under my breath, but with a hiss, "And besides, I've had enough of this!"

[18] My classmates, silent with fear, lowered their heads; thus I was able, with ease and haughtiness, to stare at that deceitful face, which, moreover, was quick to turn its eyes from the powerful and genuine sight of that was the object of his hatred. Pushed to breaking point, I had to step into the corridor for a moment to regain my composure. When I returned to the class, I was met by a frosty look, everything had changed... Even Françoise avoided my eyes: I was alone...

From a letter to Yolande:³³

21 May 1935

I'm in the middle of exams and competitions; the pieces please me very much and Monsieur Lévy, Monsieur Gallon, and Mademoiselle Gousseau are agreed... I'm on the way to playing an excellent exam. My goal for the year would be to be awarded a Second Prize [in the women's piano competition].

26 May 1935

Can inner dramas be commented upon? Yesterday, I was the fitting object of one of these dramas.

2 June 1935

I am having bouts of desperate sadness... My heart is always weeping ~~bleeding~~. My only confidant is my piano. When I speak to it, [19] it understands and it tells me so; I am immediately soothed, but not consoled. Nowadays, everyone shuns me; is this a coincidence?... I am alone.

Sometimes I would like to take over the world, but I immediately have the opposing wish to close myself in and be impenetrable.

10 June 1935

Why are there, in my nature, two opposing personalities...? On the one side, passion [*violence*], on the other, painful or overwhelming sadness. There are days when powerful reality discourages and exhausts me, and others where indignation intoxicates me to the point of being wild.

I have the impression of not living or, rather, of living in exile.

[20] [Diary blank page.]

On June 26, 1935, Demessieux was among the youngest of 49 candidates entered in the piano competition for women. The test piece that year was the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in C minor, Op. 111. She received a First Mention (last in a list of ten), improving upon her standing in the 1934 competition, though not reaching her goal of a Second Prize.³⁴

Most of July through September was likely spent in Aigues-Mortes—time away from Santiago Riera and the pressures of competing with students significantly older than herself. Diary entries and surviving letters resumed only with the new academic year in October 1935. A long letter from Jeanne's mother to Yolande, with postscript by Jeanne, translated in full below, reveals that in Paris she continued her general studies (apparently home-schooled by her father) and went on occasional outings.

Letter from Madeleine Demessieux to her daughter Yolande, with postscript by Jeanne Demessieux:³⁵

Paris, 20 October 1935

Dearest Yoyo,

It is I, again, who am assigned the pleasant task of writing to you. They send you warm embraces, and of course I'm referring to Papa and Jeanne. They left immediately after dinner for "Père Lachaise" [cemetery] to visit Chopin's tomb;³⁶ it was impossible last Thursday to find a minute and we put it off until Sunday. It was drizzling, but nothing holds Jeanne back; they went by bicycle. Today at High Mass and at 11:30, one improvisation, the march by Boëllmann,³⁷ the toccata, and some Franck. Father Emering presided; he rushed to disrobe and climb to the gallery to thank your sister for having truly spoiled him. So there you go, you are all caught up for today.

Last Sunday [Jeanne] walked to the Gravelle plateau with the girls' choir; these young ladies took photos "that we will send you if you wish," and let's not even mention fatigue, these choristers were hardly able to remain standing to sing Vespers.

The week passed as usual, with classes, studying, and lessons. M^r [Noël] Gallon thanks you for the gracious greetings you asked me to deliver on your behalf; lessons with him are going very well. Mademoiselle [Gousseau] was happy, Monday, with the Chopin sonata [in B-flat minor]:³⁸ Jeanne is progressing in strength. From now on, all the Saturday classes will be for exercises, four Czerny études, a Bach prelude and fugue, which will make three classes per week, in addition to her being at the piano [each morning] at 8:00.

Yesterday, she studied for eight hours, did a harmony assignment, and practiced her singing after supper. There! I think I've told you everything and forgotten nothing.

And now to Papa, who spends his time travelling around a 100-km area to promote his own wine; in other words, he intends to buy our wine from M^r Mézy³⁹ and sell it himself, which will net him 10 [francs per] hectolitre.⁴⁰ It's not much, but no matter, it distracts him and keeps him active. As he was saying this morning, the profits cannot be seen right away because of the purchase of the casks, but a year from now we will see the profits, and since it is impossible to draw off one-third of the harvest, we have to find another way to manage. Remains to be seen if he will have good clients. The wine is given away in Paris and Papa cannot sell it for less than 1 [franc] 60 [centimes] per litre, which makes 160 [francs] per hectolitre. He is taking on all the costs that come up: transportation, management, delivery of full casks and collection of empties, a total as I told you of 10 [francs] of profit for him and 10 [francs] per hectolitre to Mézy for casking and shipping, cleaning the returned casks, etc. They are agreed. The catch is that the order of casks, this advance, cuts into the profits for a short while. Never mind that, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

M^r Auxière never requested to see Papa, absolute fiction; do not plead with his brother any longer and let him say what he will.

Thank you for your kind letter. Jeanne had a good laugh over your story.

Have you been to see M^r Le Boucher? You must leave a token and repay him for having visited you. Send some flowers for M^{me} Mellot-Joubert and tell her that the dentist in Aigues-Mortes is looking for a manager so he can go complete his studies in Marseille. She must simply work it out with M^r Armingaud of rue Pasteur in A[igues]-M[ortes] or Grand rue Centre dentaire in Nîmes. (In case it interests her son.) Add our good wishes.

Friendly regards to M^{me} d'Espéries, an affectionate hello to M^{me} Cathata. For you my dear girl, sweetest kisses from your Maman who loves you.

Granny [Gramt],⁴¹ Papa, Jeanne send loving embraces.

Postscript in Jeanne's handwriting:

Dear Yoyo,

We're back from Père Lachaise, a bit tired, but that's not important. As soon as I got home, I plunged into reading *Hernani* [drama by Victor Hugo], and now I've also finished [Victor Hugo's tragic drama] *Ruy Blas*.

I see that Maman has enlightened you about my work. Don't throw your hands up [in despair]; you know that when I want something, I insist on it. Moreover, I've made up my mind.

With fond embraces, dear sister.

Don't scold me.

See you soon.

Your loving poppet,
Nanon

From a letter to Yolande:⁴²

23 October 1935

A new development! I'll be entering an ensemble class, that is to say, chamber music. It's compulsory once one has a First Mention.

I'll be with M^r Max d'Olonne, an excellent musician... I'm overjoyed.

On Monday I presented three of my pieces to Mademoiselle, two of which were composed at Aigues-Mortes and the other was finished two hours before my lesson.

... She said that I'd made astonishing progress... and that she found the Chopinesque influence to be almost undetectable; rather, there was a lot more power in the expression.

[21] 27 October 1935

It is now more than a month since I left the countryside where, ever since my childhood, I have spent my months of vacation, between the poetry of the region where I was born and the joy in this that floods my heart.

My homeland is so beautiful!

How moving are the things of which one has been deprived, this air whose salt makes the nostrils quiver, this wind whose touch is as sweet as a mother's caress of one's hair! Provence, Camargue! Languedoc!... These names conjure up for me a single intimate scene whose image is engraved in my memory. A great avenue of plane trees at whose feet wild grass pushes up, filled with crickets and dragonflies. The path is strewn with [22] gravel.

That autumn was a busy one for the fourteen-year-old Demessieux: as well as resuming her role as organist of St-Esprit and preparing chamber works for d'Ollone's class, she took lessons in piano technique with Gousseau and worked furiously for the piano class of Santiago Riera. Her father, Étienne Demessieux, was away from the Paris home for a time, perhaps in connection with his wine business.

From a letter by Demessieux to her father:⁴³

17 November 1935

I have a program of ten pieces, of which four remain to be—tackled. When I am in class, and another student is playing, I suffer from a violent desire to push him out of the way and take his place to play “with fire.” You see, I'm from the land of the sun.

From letters to Yolande:⁴⁴

1 December 1935

I may possibly start teaching. You find this surprising... But consider, I'm fifteen, and it's impossible for me to continue as I am, contributing nothing [to the family income]. Thus, it's decided . . .⁴⁵

The class with Max d'Ollone is going well. He's given me Fauré's [Piano] Quartet No. 1 in C minor [Op. 15] to work on.

16 December 1935

Saturday, I went to an Orchestre Colonne concert with Maman. They played Paul Paray's *Mass for Jeanne d'Arc*⁴⁶ and [Beethoven's] Symphony No. 9. The mass is splendid, a true masterwork: vibrant, with

wide-ranging ideas, while remaining classical in style. As for the symphony, upon hearing it again, I am again convinced that there is nothing more beautiful.⁴⁷ I prefer hearing the Ninth Symphony under these conditions⁴⁸ than *La Juive*⁴⁹ from a centre box seat...

2 February 1936

Certainly!... for the festivals... everything went very well! Here too; the notorious [setting of] Vespers of which I spoke, and that frightened me so, went marvellously. I've studied some Gregorian [chant], and today I'm going to accompany Vespers from the book of plainchant...

29 March 1936

Organ—We rehearsed Franck's Psalm 150⁵⁰ for Easter. For a solo organ piece, I worked on the Choral No. 3... It's so beautiful that I never tire of playing it.

At the moment, my only piano works are Chopin's Polonaise in F-sharp minor and Saint-Saëns's Concerto No. 2. I have them memorized.

29 May 1936

I took the exam around half-past eleven this morning. They had me play the Chopin nocturne in its entirety and half of the Liszt étude...⁵¹ I played as you know your little sister plays.

... I've been admitted [to the 1936 Piano Competition] . . . It appears that Monsieur Lévy talked with Mademoiselle after my recital... It would appear that he said, "She has extraordinary technique. By next year she will be fantastic and will have everyone talking about her."

In the 1936 women's piano competition, Demessieux was number 35 of 51 candidates. The test piece was Chopin's Third Scherzo. To her great distress, Demessieux failed to better her standing over the previous year's First Mention, resulting in no prize or mention.⁵²

Demessieux seems not to have gone to Aigues-Mortes for the 1936 summer vacation: a phrase from a July 15, 1937 letter to Yolande signals that she had not been to Aigues-Mortes for two years. Instead, she saw her sister when Yolande visited Paris in the late summer of 1936.



Jeanne and Yolande Demessieux outside the Louvre Museum, August 1936.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

6 September 1936

There are some hours that, as they fall one by one, resonate like raindrops; others are like an immense sunbeam that strikes suddenly, splendidly, upon clouds or earth, as over in Provence. The rest are but the tolling of a bell.

Yesterday, I was with my sister at l'Étoile;⁵³ the crowd was dense. We were all waiting for a colonial delegation coming to honour the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Perched on a stone bench beneath the Arc de Triomphe, we saw the arrival, with flags waving, of twenty or so colonial soldiers, and some French soldiers. Certainly, there was no "production," but [23] a single prop, a flag. At least, this is what was said by the few foreigners, some Bolsheviks, who had slipped into the crowd. The French flag passed in front us; men removed their hats to salute our homeland.

Without a doubt, these were former soldiers and elderly patriots, for they were sincere. But, at this moment a wave of pride rippled through the crowd and some arms were raised with hands outstretched in a gesture that seemed to me like a supreme and solemn oath. Suddenly, a great desire to raise my arm, to swear to France the patriotism of a French heart, reach out my hand to protect the

flag; such a desire leapt in my spirit. But I immediately took control of myself. Can one [24] know what is true and isn't, what one can do and what one shouldn't? Perhaps this gesture, like all the others, is cursed [maudit]. Why is it possible for a man to act against his will? Weakness, always, even among the strongest.

20 September 1936

Dreary weather; Paris is coming to life again. My greatest happiness is to see evening fall, this new twilight that resembles a winter twilight.

Soon, the summer vacation will be over. My sister will leave, and I will return to work. Were it not for being separated, I would wish this moment already arrived.

No diary pages survive for the 1936–1937 academic year or for the remainder of the calendar year 1937. First-person accounts consist of letters from which Trieu-Colleney recorded excerpts giving brief details of Demessieux's studies. Trieu-Colleney quotes at length, however, from a letter describing an event that occurred on October 8, 1936—a visit to Marcel Dupré's home. This was undertaken on the advice and recommendation of Montpellier Conservatory director Maurice Le Boucher: he suggested to the Demessieux family that after completing her study of piano and harmony their young daughter should study organ with Marcel Dupré.⁵⁴

8 October 1936

This Thursday morning... Maman and I went to Marcel Dupré's home.⁵⁶ How... to summarize in a few words this unforgettable meeting that lasted an hour and forty minutes?

... First, he asked me to go to the piano. I played the beginning of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 106 for him, which I was very pleased to know now by heart—then, upon his request—"Vision" and the "Feux follets."⁵⁷ My playing pleased him... he was very moved... He said that he found himself in the presence of a case of the highest order and that this interested him immensely... He asked me about everything I'd done since the age of three and made detailed notes of everything. When I got as far as saying that I'd been awarded a Second Mention, then a First Mention... and then [in the 1936 composition competition], nothing, he looked at me... he started to weep... After that, he asked me how many pieces I've composed... Then, he had me go to the organ. What an organ!... I played Bach's Fantasy... then he gave me a written theme to improvise upon . . .

I improvised like a dream . . .

He ended the session by saying, "From this point onward, I am taking this child under my artistic protection."

How beautiful it is at his home! A real palace, with a recital hall for organ and piano.

As a result of this audition, Demessieux received private instruction in organ and improvisation from Dupré over a period of two years.⁵⁸ Also in October 1936, Demessieux became one of twelve students in Jean Gallon's Paris Conservatory harmony class, following a competitive examination for a limited number of places.

From letters to Yolande:⁵⁹

22 November 1936

My work is, indeed, going well. But this is not without pain. I have bounced from one class to another. Some days, I leave home at half-past seven in the morning and do not return until eight in the evening.

Right now, for piano, I'm working on two of Liszt's *Transcendental Études*, "Vision" and "Chasse sauvage," Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 106 (all four movements), Liszt's *Spanish Rhapsody* (which I'm working up again for an audition in December), Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*, some Chopin études, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6...

6 February 1937

... My lesson [with Marcel Dupré at his home in Meudon] went very well. It appears I have made immense progress. I have a lot of work to do because in two lessons I must complete the [organ] method,⁶⁰ after which we will begin on improvisation... in two weeks I must play J. S. Bach's Trio Sonata [No. 1 for organ] in E-flat for him, from memory.

The piano class, at the moment, is close to being a triumphant success . . .

14 February 1937

. . . In truth, I think my joy is indescribable... Oh how happy am I! I can say nothing more.

This morning, Lazare-Lévy was horrified by the thought of the work I put in every day, but, when he heard me play...! I am very happy. In the harmony class, Jean Gallon was delighted; he loaned me the Honour Book as a token of favor.

18 April 1937

The third school term clearly seems to serve no purpose here; exams and competitions are already scheduled, and everyone has worked so hard that it's all just a matter of whether we will have enough time to sit for them.

At the piano, I'm battling with Baïlakirev's *Islamey*.⁶¹

Brailowsky is giving a Chopin recital on the 23rd. Among other works, he will play the preludes. If I can go to hear this, I won't miss it . . .

We are merrier than ever . . . [Am] following the advice of Jean Gallon.

Excerpt from Demessieux's record of organ music played at St-Esprit, May 16, 1937.⁶²

Feast of Pentecost

— High Mass —

Entrance:	Fantasy in G minor	-Bach
Offertory:	Fugue in G major	-Bach
	—Improvisations on liturgical themes—	
Recessional:	Toccatà and Fugue in D minor	-Bach

— 11:30 AM Mass —

Entrance:	[Trio] Sonata No. 1, Finale	-Bach
Offertory:	[Trio] Sonata No. 1, Allegro	-Bach
Recessional:	Chorale	-Mendelssohn

— Vespers —

Entrance:	Chorale from the <i>Suite Gothique</i>	-Boëllmann
	—Improvisations—	

— Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament —

Sortie:	Toccatà	-Boëllmann
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In a letter to Yolande, probably from June or July, Demessieux described the evening of the 1937 harmony competition:⁶³

Students [were] secluded from 6:00 AM to midnight... Travel bag stuffed with food, thermos, dressing gown, slippers and, of course, the satchel-full of paper with alarm clock, pot of glue, corrector... And last but not least: a deckchair!

Demessieux, after just one year in a harmony class, received a First Prize.⁶⁴ This qualified the sixteen-year-old Jeanne for the privilege thereafter of admission to Rome Prize competitions at the French Institute.⁶⁵ It also made her eligible to join a counterpoint and fugue class in the autumn of 1937.

Now in her fourth year in Riera's piano class, Demessieux performed, at the June 3, 1937 piano exam, works of Chopin and Saint-Saëns. She received a "Quite Good," qualifying her for that year's competition.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Riera at 70 was due to retire that year. Demessieux would arguably have been delighted when her father received a communication from Riera's designated successor, concert pianist Madga Tagliaferro:

Telegram addressed to Demessieux at 8 rue D^r Goujon and stamped as received at 168 avenue Daumesnil at 16:25-22-6-1937.⁶⁷

Garches⁶⁸

Unless otherwise instructed: I will be waiting for your daughter on Thursday 24 at 6:30 PM at Maison Gaveau, 45 rue La Boétie.⁶⁹

Best wishes,
Magda Tagliaferro

In the women's piano competition of June 29, 1937, Demessieux was one of 45 candidates. The test piece was the Allegro from Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 3, and Demessieux bettered her standing from that of 1936 by receiving a Second Prize.⁷⁰

When competitions were all concluded and Demessieux was able to extricate herself from her commitments at St-Espirit, she could finally look forward to leaving Paris for several weeks of vacation.

From a letter to Yolande:⁷¹

15 July 1937

What wonderful holidays we are going to have, it having been two years since I've seen Aigues-Mortes! I'm burning with anticipation of our departure.

While on vacation in Aigues-Mortes, Demessieux continued composing by writing a song, "Le Moulin," for soprano and piano, with poetry by Jeanne Marvig.⁷² A working copy of the score, signed and dated Aigues-Mortes, Aug. 10, 1937, includes hastily penciled indications of an orchestration.⁷³

No letters or diary pages survive from the academic year 1937–1938. In autumn 1937, Demessieux resumed participation in the chamber music class taught by d'Ollone, and in the piano class, now taught by Magda Tagliaferro.⁷⁴ The Conservatory had two classes in counterpoint and fugue, one taught by Simone Plé-Caussade and the other by Demessieux's private harmony teacher, Noël Gallon.

Whether fortuitously, or because of someone's design, there was a place for Demessieux in Gallon's counterpoint class.⁷⁵ In the fugue competition at the end of the academic year, Dupré and Messiaen were among the composers on the jury.⁷⁶ Demessieux was one of those recognized, receiving a Second Mention.⁷⁷



Jeanne Demessieux, October 10, 1937.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

For her performance of works by Mozart and Saint-Saëns at the June 2, 1938 piano exam, Demessieux received a “Not Bad” (“PM” for *Pas Mal*) and admission to that year's women's piano competition.⁷⁸ Competing for the fifth time on June 29, 1938, she was one of 53 pianists in the competition.⁷⁹ With the test piece being Chopin's *Fantaisie*, Demessieux achieved her goal of a First Prize in piano. Moreover, in the published list of laureates, Demessieux's name was second of nine who received a First Prize, doing credit to Magda Tagliaferro.⁸⁰

During a month spent in Aigues-Mortes that summer, Demessieux wrote friendly letters to Tagliaferro and her other mentors, corresponded with a Paris impresario concerning a possible audition in Paris, and negotiated her return to duties at St-Esprit. At the end of her summer vacation, she made one long, retrospective diary entry while on a train from the Midi to Paris.

[25] Some events and memories of July 16–August 16, 1938⁸¹

[Written] on a train on August 16th. Arrived in Aigues-Mortes on July 16th, a Sunday, at six in the evening, in splendid weather. We had left Paris together the previous evening, and arrived Sunday morning at Nîmes, where we heard Mass at Saint— to the sound of a badly tuned organ, in a very pious atmosphere. Upon leaving the Mass the church, we visited the Roman baths and the Fountain Gardens.⁸²

Very happy, my first day at Aigues-Mortes, but without being fully aware of this good fortune. During the night between Monday and Tuesday, Yolande fell ill with pneumonia, followed, some days later, by pleurisy. So unfortunate!

As quickly as possible, a curative regimen of work was established for me. I was finishing my sacred cantata.⁸³ Every evening, a solitary walk along the path from Grau⁸⁴ as far as [Étang] Perrier [de la Ville] to see the sunset. Unique impressions. Three weeks later, my sister's condition having improved, she wanted me to go by [26] bicycle with Papa to Grau. The sea! Raging, with foam-capped waves. We went to the far end of the pier, and stood on the breakwater, where we collected some crabs to take back. We returned twice. [T]he fourth time, I had advanced alone towards the wild, open sea. I experienced a sensation of tremendous terror faced with a succession of waves, that seemed to be trying to pull me into their depths and before this vastness, [this] image of God, that I imagined as a child was the “supreme being,” here on Earth, in His likeness, and which, to me, represents an allegory of the symphony.

During the first three weeks, I worked on orchestration for the very first time and wrote to Noël Gallon and his wife, and to Magda Tagliaferro.

I received a letter from the impresario Alfred Lyon asking me for an interview.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux to Noël Gallon and Madame Gallon:⁸⁵

19 July 1938

Dear Master, dear Madam,

Here I am, the day following my arrival in the Midi. My first thoughts are ~~for~~ directed towards you; be assured that if words could express it, all my affection could be read from ~~this~~ my letter. ~~But no more in my letter than in the words~~ But I prefer not to know that I no longer have need of polite formulas: your generosity is too sincere and it would be for me to fully ~~return~~ give back so little.

~~I wish to tell you how good I feel just being here~~ Since my arrival, I've had a sense of well-being, of relaxation that is truly restful. ~~This lifestyle change is so sudden~~ I am going to take advantage of this as much as I can, in all possible ways ~~because!~~ I would like to ~~be able~~ to compose for a month. ~~Do you think it would be dangerous to not write any fugues for a month?~~ M^{lle} [Paule] Maurice has offered to correspond with me: I am to send her drafts of the choral movements when and as I've worked on them. [Left margin insertion:] I've accepted ~~because I am~~ [the offer] bit by bit because it pleases me to prepare myself for the composition class. When I return [to Paris], I will show you my masterpieces, one of which ~~is not yet~~

~~finished~~ I will hold back from critique in order that you may see it, Master, with all its flaws, and to tell me face to face, and so that you are the first to tell me the whole truth...

With all my heart I wish you a happy summer vacation and good health, as well as for M^{me} Espinasse. Yesterday morning I visited Nîmes, a city I had until now too quickly toured. My sister Yolande ~~was not too overcome by the voyage; we hope that the change in climate will heal her completely.~~ I would be very pleased if you would respectfully remember me to her.*

My parents and ~~my sister~~ Yolande have tasked me with expressing to you their most sincere friendship and ~~all the plea~~ the joy they ~~will have~~ will feel at seeing you again in August.

My letter is not very long

* I'd have liked to write you a longer letter but am lacking subjects! Perhaps I could give you an ~~sense~~ idea of the ~~atmosphere~~ ambiance where I am by telling you that the song of cicadas ~~drowns out the noise~~ never ceases, that it is impossible to stay out in the sun, and that the wind blows as freely as can be across the plains! I envy it and I am going to try ~~to do as~~ to borrow its ideas... Excuse my chatter; ~~if I wasn't certain it could~~ but I think it pleases you, I would not write concerning these trifles that are so important to me.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to Alfred Lyon, a Paris concert agent:⁸⁶

22 July 1938

Monsieur,

I have ~~just~~ received your letter of the 19th. It is with a pleasure that ~~I will come to you as requested~~ I agree to a the meeting ~~with you~~ you have asked of me, but it is ~~unfortunate that I am unable~~ impossible for me to ~~grant it to you~~ accept this opportunity at present. I am presently on holiday in the Midi and must return to Paris around August 20th. If this is not inconvenient for you, I will ~~let you know by telephone~~ telephone you upon my arrival which day is convenient for me to set a date.

~~Meanwhile~~ In the meantime, I ~~pray you~~ please accept, Sir, my respectful regards.

J. D.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux without salutation or date, perhaps to Magda Tagliaferro:⁸⁷

Excuse the liberty I am taking by troubling your time of rest at the same time as I ~~fervently~~ truly wish this for you! ~~I had not that your students could it is eloquent to think that your students can I think now tha~~ but it would be most difficult for your students to regard you other than as their angel saviour.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to Magda Tagliaferro:⁸⁸

21 July 1938

Dear Madam,

Here I am in my dear land of cicadas and heat. I am writing from a land far removed from yours. I think that as I write to you we must be quite far apart at present! I still feel I am barely escaping the sensation I had during your [concert] tour last January... but here nature is gifted with such power but here the decor and surroundings are countryside here is more comforting than the thought that of our class when you were not there, the dear countryside that surrounds me too and it is what is even more comforting is the wish that I am making with all my heart that the summer vacation permits you fu[ll] complete respite from the strains and stresses of the year. You will be happy to note the sense of well-being I have here. Here, it's the And then I have the luxury of thinking You will be happy to note the sense of well-being I have here; the sudden calm that surrounds me and the complete change in my habits make me the life I lead, amidst a familiar and well-loved countryside liberates my spirit from all the quaint things accumulated there!⁸⁹ The sea is five kilometres away; we go by bicycle under a burning sun in a heat nothing like the evening; it's a great pleasure magnificent feeling to return while contemplating the at the setting of the sun. What pleasure it is to bring to mind *L'Isle joyeuse*!⁹⁰ Everything contributes to the sensation of beauty. I have access to a piano and to an isolated pavilion for composing from which the horizon extends as far as the eye can see and in which I compose. I am writing to you from there.

I suggested to M^r Le Boucher the program that we had adopted for the Montpellier concert; I still haven't had a response after two weeks. I think that looking forward to this concert will be very beneficial for me; it will make up for the training in the class that I will so dearly miss next year... What more may I say something else? That I think of you every day and that I would write this to you again if you don't mind, I will again tell you this in writing again.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to Magda Tagliaferro:⁹¹

22 July 1938

Dear Madam,

I have just received a am sending you a copy of the letter I just received from the office of concert agent Alfred Lyon. I've replied by accepting the proposed meeting, but only following my return to Paris on August 20, which is set for August 20th. I do not want to get involved in anything without your advice am writing to ask your advice because I do not wish to become involved in anything whatsoever without your consent.* I believe that I've told you my wishes plans for the future; it would be a joy to be guided by you at the start of the my career. If I could hope to achieve this I could happiness of seeing realized if, however, I could can see my wishes realized.** Please forgive the liberties I am taking and believe with feeling I pray you believe, dear Madam, in my deepest appreciation and I send you my most affectionate greetings.

* When I remember how not along ago I said to you not to concern yourself with your students! I am justifying the opposite at a time when you should not be thinking about us I wish you rest.**

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to Monsieur d'Argœuves, choirmaster of St-Esprit.⁹²

1 August 1938

Monsieur d'Argœuves,

We are going through something as painful as it is unexpected: my sister has been ailing since the beginning of our vacation here. First, she had pneumonia, which led to pleurisy. I foresee it being difficult for us to return to Paris in two weeks! You can imagine how this troubles me. For now, and before making a decision, I would like to ask you a question: is it possible, without too much difficulty, to replace me, only for the two weeks? Someone would need to play the Sunday services and the occasional services. Can you give me an immediate response? I will be very grateful to you for also telling me whether Father [de la Motte] is presently in Paris. I'm so terribly sorry to be obliged to ask all this of you and apologize for assuming taking this liberty. I trust that our friendship justifies these.

With my best wishes,

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to Father de la Motte, parish priest of St-Esprit.⁹³

8 August 1938

Father,

I have sad news to share with you: my sister has been ill since the start of our visit here. She was first afflicted with pneumonia ~~that~~ the consequences of which led to pleurisy. She has been bedridden for exactly three weeks, and it is impossible to imagine her return to Paris for several months; so that is the situation. Before discussing another subject with you I ask with faith that you think of her in your prayers.

I wrote some days ago to M^r d'Argœuves to enquire in case it is necessary ~~to~~ that I be replaced for a time ~~due to illness~~; you must already know this... But, having received M^r d'Argœuves's response, I realize that, despite the dedication he shows, this solution poses difficulties. So, I've decided to resume my duties at Saint-Esprit on August 17th. I will return to Paris with my grandmother⁹⁴ while my parents remain near my sister, whom they cannot possibly leave. If there are services to be played on the mornings of the 16th and 17th, it is confirmed that M^r d'Argœuves will look after these.

With my sincere respect and devotion, Father,

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to d'Argœuves.⁹⁵

8 August 1938

Monsieur d'Argœuves,

I thank you, with my whole heart for ~~having looked after~~ the information you gave me and apologize again for any trouble that I've given you.* Here is the solution we've envisioned: in all likelihood, my sister's illness will oblige her to prolong her stay in the south of France until the end of the vacation period; my parents, unable to leave her [here] alone, will stay as long as necessary while I go back to Paris with my grandmother. Given this arrangement, there is no reason compelling me to remain here. I've decided that I will be in Paris on August 17th. If there are any services that day in the morning, it is better that you not count on me, but I can take any services in the afternoon. Since I will not have the pleasure of seeing you before your departure, I wish you, from this moment on, a very good vacation and the rest you must be looking forward to enjoying! My family sends their best wishes.

With all sincerity, M^r d'Argœuves,

* I also understand fully the difficulty of replacing me for all services during vacation time.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux in Aigues-Mortes to Magda Tagliaferro:⁹⁶

11 August 1938

Dear Madam,

~~Before~~ My ~~warm~~ sincerest thanks for the advice you have given me. I now understand the situation and will take serious action in the ways you have ~~proposed~~ indicated to me. When I have news for you, I will make a point of writing to you.

I am happy that you are having a pleasant vacation in such a picturesque country, and I hope they will ~~carry on~~ continue as pleasantly as they have begun.

* With sincere affection, Madam,

* My parents and my sister send their best wishes.

[Continuation of retrospective diary entry penned on a train from the Midi to Paris, August 16, 1938:]

Family and friends were kind to us; but the land was still more affectionate.... In the final days [of the vacation], it was dark outside [and] I was sitting in front of our house (*l'ou stau*⁹⁹); the sky, resplendent and all ablaze, as mysterious as it was supernatural; I felt the dwindling breeze from a far-away [27] Mistral¹⁰⁰

ensnaring me in its web; the streets were of silver, [both] luminous and somber. Everything drew me in...! I left. Dreams are strange things, and my night was one of these.

Last impression, August 14th (Sunday), late in the evening: I was making my way, alone, towards the Porte de la Reine.¹⁰¹ Beautiful young women everywhere! Their youthful appearance stood out against the ramparts of old stone. I heard them laugh, chattering in their relaxed accent, calling out to me,

“Good evening, Jeanne Demeucien!”¹⁰² Good evening, lovely ladies! But the [Constance] tower was drawing me to it; my bicycle raced towards its shadow; I circled it: what blackness! Suddenly, there was nothing there but the immense, wild plain, the old canal that the moon barely allowed me to discern, and you, Constance, overpowering in your royal majesty; the diameter of your form twice as large as in the light of day; your height rising, rising higher than the stars above, which, for a moment, are held in your arms. You grow, higher and higher! Oh, Constance! You nearly crushed me like the waves of the old port.

August 15th, at High Mass [at Notre-Dame-des-Sablons in Aigues-Mortes], I played the organ to [28] please the kind parish priest, who brought Communion to my sister during her illness. For that matter, I once had the unspeakable joy of taking Communion at the foot of Yolande’s bed. The priest first refused to serve me, as it was not liturgical, but when I fell to my knees, he broke the host in two and gave it to me.

This morning, August 16th, I left for Paris with Papa and Grandmother, who will stay with me when Papa returns. It’s the first time that I have been separated from my mother: she cried a lot. My sister cried, too. I’ve left and won’t see them again for several months. We have passed La Roche [Larroche-Migennes¹⁰³]; in [another] two hours we will arrive in Paris. Not too tiring a trip or, at least, not for now. We breakfasted this morning in Avignon.

God bless us!

Thursday 18 August 1938

At noon, I was joyfully reunited with my organ [at St-Esprit]. This evening [played for] Benediction with only one chorister, but all went well. Did not write any music today [29] but sent two letters to dear friends at Aigues-Mortes. First day [back].

Friday 19 August 1938

Nothing particularly noteworthy. The day went by too quickly—it must be better organized. I worked on [the composition of] my étude and my nocturne. On our way to Benediction, we ran into M^{lle} Defrance, who seemed to be in a frosty mood today; she is back from Lourdes where she witnessed a miracle.

I did the shopping with Grandmother, and I take care of the accounts on a daily basis.

I am falling asleep this evening under the effect of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7, which I happened to hear on the TSF.¹⁰⁴

Saturday 20 August 1938

Worked on piano in the morning, organ at noon. In the afternoon, I organized all my papers, which occupied me until five. Then, I worked on my étude, my nocturne, and my ballade. At seven, I went to confession at the church; Father de la Motte heard my confession in his office. Afterwards, we talked from the heart. I hide none of my thoughts from him, [30] and he does the same: he is my spiritual advisor. At dinner that evening, Grandmother wished me happy name day [*m’a souhaité ma fête*].¹⁰⁵

Oh! To all be together! And in the same circumstances as before!...

Thursday 25 August 1938

Dined at the home of Noël Gallon. They received me as informally as if I were their daughter. After the meal, we made music for nearly two hours. I played my sacred choral piece, the start of a setting for choir and orchestra of words by Victor Hugo, my étude in F-sharp,¹⁰⁶ and my last nocturne, in A major. The last of these held the attention of Noël Gallon, who asked me to play it again and advised me to call it a prelude, because of its form and length. One of the most beautiful days of my life!

At a quarter to six, Benediction. Upon leaving, as I offered my arm to Grandmother, a child of about eight who is in the choir, and whom I've often noticed for his gentleness, passed by us with his mother. I leaned towards Grandmother and said to her, "He's so sweet, that little one!" and because she did not hear me, I repeated the [31] sentence a little more loudly. Thereupon, his mother turned and her face, amid her humble clothes, took on an expression I shall never forget. It was as if an involuntary feeling overcame her shyness and she showed a hint of a timid smile that greatly resembled her son's. She leaned towards the child and said a few words to him, but he was not brave enough to turn around and I lost sight of them.

Friday 26 August 1938

This evening, after dinner, on the T.S.F., I heard Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony as well as Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 and *Léonore* overture.

Monday 29 August 1938

This evening, on the T.S.F., I heard Richard Strauss's *Salomé*, broadcast from the [Paris] Opera.

Friday 9 September 1938

I haven't been able to finish my choral piece for tomorrow as I had wanted. This afternoon, copied twelve orchestral pages for this piece. This evening I heard Franck's Symphony in D minor. M^{lle} Defrance came over today; she was in [32] a talkative mood. No news for eight days.

Excerpts from Demessieux's letter to her mother and Yolande in Aigues-Mortes:¹⁰⁷

24 September 1938

. . . I again visited the home of Noël Gallon . . . They remain optimistic because they do not wish to believe that certain men are completely insane... Noël Gallon thinks that events could lead to a state of alert, even to general mobilization (that would handle it), but actually to a false alarm...

I showed my teacher [Gallon] a completed fugue on a subject of Bach, and my prelude... He considers my composing to be important work. He found my prelude "perfect," and the general idea handled very well. I'll not hide from you (not to boast, but to please you) that he was even moved... That's how well he understands my music! If only I could play it for you. But that happy time is coming; by then, perhaps other preludes will have appeared...

The new academic year is set to begin on October 3rd. I'll be able to see Magda Tagliaferro, Marcel Dupré, and Jean Gallon right away...

On the subject of current events [the threat of war], I am ready to make decisions that would be required should the worst happen. Do not worry... I have everything ready for our departure and pray to God that it will not happen.

Draft of letter from Demessieux to Magda Tagliaferro.¹⁰⁸

11 October 1938

I've learned of your nomination to the status of Officer of the Legion of Honour and am envious today that my letter [and not I] should have the privilege of reaching you to express my joy, and to address to you my ~~sincere~~ very sincere congratulations.

Yesterday I went to the Conservatory certain that I would find you; I was terribly disappointed. Three weeks to be added to two months of separation: it's so much! But I do not wish to be selfish. ~~Please know that~~ I have put myself back to work very seriously, thinking that you must be satisfied when you hear me again upon [your] return. Again, "see you soon," though it is always so long to wait. With a warm embrace with much and all my affection,

J.D.

From a letter to Demessieux's mother and Yolande in Aigues-Mortes:¹⁰⁹

15 October 1938

The evening of Papa's departure [for Aigues-Mortes], I finished off my [composition for] choir¹¹⁰ and the next day rushed to the home of Madame Lantier [Paule Maurice, married to Pierre Lantier]... She told me that I was very gifted in orchestration. I need to touch up my choral composition for presenting it to Henri Busser as soon as possible... I played my other compositions for her. The sacred choral work is first-rate, apparently... She was less thrilled with my étude. As for the nocturne, a total lack of understanding... Not everyone is Noël Gallon . . . She really insisted that I try for [the] Rome [Prize] this year...

From a letter to Demessieux's parents and Yolande:¹¹¹

22 October 1938

This evening I went to the Padeloup [Orchestra] concert. The program piqued my curiosity because it was all modern works (H. Busser, A. Doyen¹¹²...) As I am a future competitor at Fontainebleau¹¹³ (sooner or later), I wanted a "lesson." I received one from Busser.¹¹⁴ His works were classic examples of an entry for Rome, the style of which I am starting to understand...

I felt odd having to go alone to the concert; I would not have gone if the call of music hadn't been stronger than anything . . .

There are few surviving first-person accounts of Demessieux's experiences as a student at the Conservatory during the 1938–1939 academic year, the last before war broke out in Europe. Other sources indicate that Demessieux was again a participant in Noël Gallon's counterpoint and fugue class, and she may have been enrolled once more in Max d'Olonne's ensemble (chamber music) class.¹¹⁵

As well, on November 30, 1938, Demessieux successfully auditioned to enter the Conservatory organ and improvisation class, becoming at seventeen years of age the youngest current student (others ranged between twenty-one and twenty-seven years). Her classmates that year were returning organ students Ernest Rolland, Jehan Alain, Geneviève Poirier-Denis, Pierre Segond, Denise Raffy, and Marie-Louise Girod, as well as two other newly accepted students, Nelly Montnach, and Jacques Laboureur. In January 1939, Dupré recorded a note beside each student's name: for Alain he wrote "On leave until Dec. Excellent musician" and for Demessieux, "Very good progress. Very gifted."¹¹⁶

For the May 10, 1939 examination in organ and improvisation, Demessieux prepared Liszt's Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H. and two works by Bach—the organ chorale *Aus tiefer Not*, BWV 686 and a Fugue in B minor—and was asked by the jury to perform the Bach fugue.¹¹⁷ All eight students of Dupré's class also had to improvise a fugue on a given subject and improvise on a *thème libre* as well.¹¹⁸

As a result of the exam, Demessieux was among the seven students admitted to the May 31, 1939 organ and improvisation competition.¹¹⁹ Four tests of improvisation were imposed—accompany a given plainchant; improvise a chorale (i.e., chorale prelude) on a given theme; improvise a fugue on a subject by Achille Philip; improvise on a *thème libre* by Joseph Bonnet; performance of one organ piece was also required.

Each candidate, in turn, had seven minutes alone in a separate room to plan how they would execute the tests of improvisation. From these, three tests were selected by the jury; in 1939, they were harmonization of the given plainchant melody, the improvised fugue, and improvisation on a *thème libre*. In his personal notes concerning the improvisations as performed, Dupré recorded for both Demessieux and Alain: "Good"; "Quite good"; "Good." For Segond he recorded: "Good +"; "Good"; "Good". The minutes of the session document the following:

- The President declares that Mssrs Segond and Alain have obtained a First Prize; M^r Segond is first named. The President declares that M^r Rolland has obtained a Second Prize. The President declares that M^{lle} Demessieux has obtained a First Mention.¹²⁰

From a letter to Yolande.¹²¹

17 June 1939

. . . In eight days, it will be the last big day of the 1938–1939 “walk in the park...” [*la croisière* 1938–1939]. Let’s hope... that I won’t “fall flat” [*ne boirai pas le bouillon*].¹²²

On June 18, 1939, Demessieux was a contestant in the annual fugue competition for the second time.¹²³ The candidates were placed in individual examination rooms, from 6:30 AM to midnight, with the task of writing a fugue in four parts on a subject by Henri Rabaud. Demessieux was candidate number 16 of 18. At eighteen years of age, she was also the youngest of all. The jury convened on June 19 at 2:00 PM behind closed doors to “hear the work that the candidates had done and to make awards.” The readings of the fugues having ended at 3:40 PM, the jury proceeded to a second reading of each (except nos. 6 and 12), this time as played on piano by jury members Mssrs Bazelaire and Messiaen. The results were announced and recorded in the minutes as follows:

- No. 16 is awarded a First Prize by nine jurors unanimously. No. 16 is declared first. The original copies may be unsealed to reveal the following names [all First Prizes]: No. 16, M^{lle} Demessieux; No. 7, M^{lle} Pangnier; No. 18, M^r Devevey; No. 15, M^{lle} Falcinelli.

However, the results of the fugue competition printed in *Le Monde Musical* listed (rightly or wrongly) M^{lle} Pangnier at the top of the list of First Prize laureates and M^{lle} Demessieux second.¹²⁴ Regardless, all four First Prize winners were now eligible to enter a composition class in the autumn of 1939. But first, Demessieux would attend the current year’s competition for the Rome Prize.

From a letter to Yolande:¹²⁵

2 July 1939

This year’s Rome competition is over; it was yesterday afternoon at the French Institute. First Grand Prize: [Pierre] Maillard-Verger, who composed a very beautiful cantata and who had reached the age limit.¹²⁶ 1st Second Prize: J. J. [Jean-Jacques] Grunenwald, an organ prize and [it] created some discussion among audience members.¹²⁷ 2nd Second Prize: [Raymond] Gallois-Montbrun who, according to general opinion, deserved better.¹²⁸ [Pierre] Sancen, who presented his work for the first time wrote a very spiritual cantata,¹²⁹ and it was estimated that he would be among the chosen; he was short two votes. The only two [entrants] in [their] first year received no awards. More and more, I am convinced by Jean Gallon’s thought: there is no need to enter until one is capable of attaining the Grand Prize.

[The cantata by] Gallois was performed extremely well yesterday by artists from the Opéra comique and by Jacqueline P[angnier] and me at the piano. I was surrounded by some of Lévy’s students who had never seen me play from so close...

The day before at the Conservatory, we had played before members of the Institut de musique.¹³⁰ Florent Schmitt was particularly kind to me... and made me promise to go to his receptions in Saint-Cloud¹³¹ when school starts up again . . .

In summer 1939, Demessieux appears not to have written in her diary. She again vacationed in the Midi with her family and corresponded with at least two of her Paris mentors.

Draft of letter from Demessieux to Father de la Motte:¹³²

[Aigues-Mortes,] July 1939

I thought that you would be happy to once again look upon some of the wonderful sights of Nîmes, of which you've kept such fond memories; I hope that these vistas brought you some of the same pleasure as if you were here to contemplate these marvels.

Since my arrival, I have enjoyed a beneficial time of rest. Ah! This is not to say that I haven't been troubled by the temptation to compose! But I repelled it as much as possible during the first days. My hope is that your holiday will bring you the rest and benefits you desire, and that we will be so happy to see. My parents ~~remember themselves kindly to you and join me~~ send their respects and I pray you'll accept, Father, these my respectful and devoted sentiments as a mark of my regard.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux to Marcel Dupré:¹³³

[Aigues-Mortes,] July 1939

How long the days have been since your departure!¹³⁴ ~~I'm remorseful when I become aware [illegible] of my silence, [illegible] unintentionally in such contradiction to my feelings.* I have been in the countryside for eight days. The fugue competition was at first occupying all my thoughts and my time.*~~ When I think of the long silence that followed it [your departure], I am sorry and embarrassed. I hope that you will forgive this what is merely an appearance [as concerns writing to you], which is so inconsistent with my feelings.

My apparent negligence that is so [draft page 2] How the days have been since your departure! When I think of the long silence that followed, I am sorry and embarrassed. I hope that you will forgive my apparent negligence that is so inconsistent with my feelings. I often think of how happy audiences must be to hear you, whereas, here at home, Saint-Sulpice has become a sad subject. Be assured, dear Master, that my best wishes—and those of my classmates, without doubt—go with you.

For my part, I have something new to announce to you: my First Prize in fugue, for which I was the first named. This makes me so very happy that I cannot help but believe that you will share a bit of my joy. This is the least I can do to demonstrate the high esteem in which I hold you. I don't want you to have to read an overly long letter.**

* Presently, I am vacationing in the Midi and I thought that ~~when you get over to Greece~~ you might like to see some of the vestiges of Roman art here, in which case there is very little time left to contemplate these.

** I close, dear Master, asking that you trust in my respectful admiration and my devotion.

Please accept my respectful admiration and my devotion.

J.D.

Draft of a letter from Demessieux, likely to Noël Gallon and his wife, undated.⁹⁷

Dear Master, dear Madam,⁹⁸

I believe that I am in the process of contracting a variety of illness endemic to hot climes! Nonchalance, otherwise known as laziness. It's something so natural here that one ends up adapting to this new principle without questioning it.

It occurs to me that since my arrival I have been victim to this rule, but I would never have admitted this to you if I hadn't thought that you had reason to notice it... also, I am not trying to exonerate myself, and I count on your benevolence to forgive me.

~~I would like to be able to wish you something~~

Presently, I am blissfully savouring ~~my solitude~~ all that, to me, seems new since last year, especially solitude and the carefree life of the countryside. I think I'm becoming a countrywoman [*paysanne*]. If ~~you would allow it~~ I dared, in place of humdrum wishes for your vacation, I would wish with my whole heart for you to have a restful course of treatment like mine!

I am writing a little, all the same, when I am too tormented by a handful of notes, ~~forgotten in some far corner of my mind~~ arriving from I know not where: a first movement of a quartet, while awaiting the others, and a song. As for fugue, I only think of this again when missing the class.

In a few days, I will be in Paris, reluctantly. Fortunately, I will have the solace of my [organ] gallery. My sister will remain here for some time yet to make the most of the fine weather ~~and will join us in September~~. She is doing well and sends her best regards with those of my parents.

To close, I request that you, my teacher, be willing to forget that with which I began this letter... as I send you my warmest greetings, please believe in my very sincere affection.

From letters to Yolande in Aigues-Mortes.¹³⁵

18 August 1939

This morning we settled into the capital again. Our time in Lourdes was magnificent... indescribable... There were prayers in five languages for the same cause . . .

Paris is quiet... It's Sunday [Aug. 20th]... at last I can return to my keyboards [piano and organ].

1 October 1939

. . . We were shopping when the sirens surprised us... Ran home, [up] six flights; within ten minutes, shutters were closed, gas and electricity cut off; went back down to the far corner of the cellar . . .

It's almost certain that the Conservatory will be moved to Fontainebleau.¹³⁶

On September 3, 1939, France, with its ally Britain, declared war on Germany, despite considerable political

opposition within France.¹³⁷ Then began an eight-month period that became known as the *drôle de guerre* (in English, the “phoney war”), during which French and British armed forces made many plans for subduing Germany but carried out no large-scale military actions. Meanwhile, German forces, which were still dealing with eastern Europe, launched attacks at sea. But on land, western Europe was still quiet and Paris Conservatory classes opened at 14 rue de Madrid as usual that autumn.

Almost no first-person accounts of Demessieux’s 1939–1940 academic year survive. There is no doubt that she began her second year in the organ and improvisation class at the Conservatory. Marcel Dupré was on leave that autumn due to an overseas concert tour; he entrusted his class to former student Joseph Gilles (First Prize 1929).

From a letter to Yolande:¹³⁸

5 November 1939

The new academic year at the Conservatory has begun. We are fewer in numbers but continue all the same.

... Turning to the organ class, I will say that this Monsieur Gilles is very nice... We are three in this illustrious class: Marie-Louise Girod, as well as the good [Jacques] Laboureur, and myself¹³⁹... We’re hoping for the master to return on December 10th...¹⁴⁰

I will play my latest compositions on Wednesday for Noël Gallon at the École supérieure de musique.¹⁴¹

Also in autumn 1939, Demessieux was assigned to the composition class of Henri Busser. He was the composer to whom Paule Maurice had referred her and whose compositions she told Yolande she had decided to take as models for a Rome-Prize-winning submission. Of the eighteen names on the class list, eleven were “on leave,” mainly due to the war.¹⁴² The seven students who presented their work at the January 1940 composition examination were returning students Valérie Hamilton, Paul Constantinescu, Eliane Pradelle, and Rolande Falcinelli, and first-year students Demessieux, Jacqueline David, and Claude Pascal.

Presenting her work for that examination, Demessieux performed two piano preludes and—with M^{lles} Touget, Viard, and De Temmerman—her choral piece for women’s voices “Barques Célestes” (poem by Alfred Drouin).¹⁴³ Busser scribbled remarks concerning each student’s compositions; of Demessieux’s he wrote, “Has some [illegible], writes with ease, but lacks sufficient simplicity... Interesting [illegible].”¹⁴⁴

For the May 10, 1940 examination in organ and improvisation, Demessieux prepared the final movement of Bach’s Trio Sonata No. 6, a Bach fugue in C minor, and Franck’s *Prière*; she was asked to perform the Franck.¹⁴⁵ Two tests of improvisation were set: a *thème libre* and a fugue subject.¹⁴⁶

In the subsequent organ competition Demessieux played Franck’s *Choral* No. 3 in A minor, improvised a “trio sur les flûtes” on a given plainchant, and harmonized a given chorale melody played on the pedalboard using a 4-foot stop.¹⁴⁷ Highest honours in the 1940 competition were Second Prizes awarded to Demessieux and Girod.¹⁴⁸

The day of the examination, May 10, was also the day that the “phoney war” ended: that morning the German army launched its major offensive against France by beginning to penetrate the Ardennes Forest;¹⁴⁹ it breached the French line in three days.¹⁵⁰ First Belgians, then citizens of northern France fled southward in advance of the German invasion of May 1940.¹⁵¹ It appears that Demessieux was still in Paris in early June: Trieu-Colleney recorded that on the back of a photo (which was probably sent to Yolande) Demessieux had written the following:¹⁵²

Paris, 2 June 1940

The night before Paris was bombed for the first time by the Germans. At work for the composition competition.

The composition competition scheduled for June 10, 1940 did not take place as planned. By June 6, people were beginning to leave Paris.¹⁵³ This included the Demessieux family; Étienne Demessieux's position as a retired employee of the French national railways likely facilitated their departure by train for Aigues-Mortes. But thousands of refugees from northern France and Paris alike who had insufficient gasoline or did not make it onto the crowded trains had no transportation. They clogged the roads on foot along with any belongings they could carry or trundle.¹⁵⁴ On June 14, the German army invaded Paris and began commandeering facilities, food, and fuel.

Marcel Dupré was among those who remained in the occupied capital that summer. With a handful of Conservatory professors and students who also remained, he was, according to his own account, one of those instrumental in keeping the Conservatory running. As a result, German military authorities in command in Paris decided not to commandeer the building at 14 rue de Madrid after all.¹⁵⁵

That summer in Aigues-Mortes, according to Trieu-Colleney, Demessieux occupied herself with reading, analyzing music by Bach, and corresponding with the priest of St-Esprit. Father de la Motte kept the Demessieux family up-to-date concerning events in Paris.¹⁵⁶

Single-minded regarding her career, Demessieux returned to Paris, along with her parents and grandmother, at the end of the summer of 1940, as usual. Meanwhile, the German occupiers strove to make Parisian life seem normal on the surface; one way was by ensuring the continuation of musical institutions, events, and radio broadcasts.

The Conservatory's 1940 composition competition, postponed from June, took place on September 23.¹⁵⁷ One of six students competing, Demessieux presented the following: Suite pour piano, consisting of Prélude – Scherzetto – Menuet – Toccata, performed by herself; “Soudainement contre les Vitres” (poem by Henri Ghéon) for soprano and piano,¹⁵⁸ performed by M^{lle} Christiane Gaudel and herself. Then five months short of her twentieth birthday, Demessieux received a First Mention from the jury.¹⁵⁹

That autumn, Demessieux began her second year in Busser's composition class. Some of the male students who had been on leave from the class had returned from the front: Alfred Desenclos, Marcel Landowski, and Raymond Gallois-Montbrun. Her other classmates were again Rolande Falcinelli, Claude Pascal, and Eliane Pradelle, along with a new student—a M^{lle} Deschamps.¹⁶⁰

Also in autumn 1940, Demessieux began her third year in Dupré's class with only two classmates: Marie-Louise Girod and Denise Raffy. The Canadian organist Françoise Aubut, who had been accepted to the class in December 1939, was absent that academic year. As a Commonwealth citizen, she was being held by German authorities in a detention camp in Besançon, which lasted from October 1940 until June 1941.¹⁶¹

Demessieux's own accounts of her experiences as a student musician resumed with a new diary she began writing in December 1940—the diary that is here introduced by Chapters 6 and 7. But first, Chapter 5 provides an opportunity (for readers who wish) to compare their thoughts on the diary and letters of 1932–1940 with my own commentary on these.

NOTES:

1 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 98–101.

2 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 99, notes that this letter concerns a lesson with Lazare-Lévy at the Salle Érard (13 rue du Mail in

the 2nd arrondissement).

3 Carl Czerny's Op. 365, consisting of 60 exercises.

4 The final movement of Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11 is headed with the word Rondo. Its first movement is an Allegro maestoso, and is likely the "Allegro from Chopin's Concerto" referred to at the start of the next letter.

5 Muzio Clementi, *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Op. 44 (1826) is a set of 100 exercises in three volumes.

6 One of Liszt's *Deux études de concert*, "Ronde des Lutins," composed in 1863.

7 Chopin's Étude in C minor, Op. 10, No. 12.

8 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 100 notes that this letter is an account of a recital in which Demessieux participated. It may have been a recital by Lélia Gousseau's students.

9 Very little is known about piano pedagogue Madame Giraud-Latarse. Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus Press, 1999), 361, notes that Giraud-Latarse was active around 1920, which makes it doubtful that she was a teacher of Lazare-Lévy (1882–1964). Timbrell, 162, confirms that Lélia Gousseau studied with Giraud-Latarse prior to entering Lazare-Lévy's Conservatory class.

10 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 101.

11 The forest is likely the Bois de Vincennes, located on the southeastern edge of Paris, and named in the diary entry of Jul. 5, 1934. Avenue Daumesnil is a principal street near the Demessieux family apartment on rue du Docteur Goujon and adjacent to the church of St-Esprit, which is at the corner of rue Cannebière and avenue Daumesnil.

12 Cf. remarks by pianist Germaine Mounier, concerning her desire to study with Conservatory teacher Yves Nat, quoted in Timbrell 1999, 208 (with parenthetical comments by Timbrell): "After I got my medal [in 1935] . . . I auditioned for him, but he didn't have a space in his class that year [the limit was twelve students]. So I worked privately with him for one year . . . when I returned to the Conservatoire I was put automatically with Santiago Riera for one year before he retired."

13 AM 4S17.

14 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 101–03.

15 In all likelihood, this was Maria Fotino (1913–1996). In the words of Mircea Fotino, "The Art of Maria Fotino," CD liner notes for *Maria Fotino* (Sparrows Green, E. Sussex: Pavilion Records, n.d.), 1, Maria Fotino went on to become "the most distinguished pianist of her generation in Romania," comparable to the Romanian pianist Clara Haskil. According to Bryce Morrison, "Haskil, Clara" in *Grove Music Online*, 2001<<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.12507>>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, Haskil, while enrolled at the Paris Conservatory as a member of Cortot's class, more often studied with his assistant Lazare-Lévy (and with M^{me} Giraud-Latarse). Therefore, one might speculate that Fotino, too, came to Paris intending to work with Lazare-Lévy, but, like Demessieux, was placed in Riera's class.

16 "Mimi" refers to Mireille Auxiètre, a piano student of Yolande Demessieux and Montpellier friend of Jeanne Demessieux.

17 The "first competition" is the May examination that students needed to pass to qualify as participants in the official competition, customarily held in June or July.

18 To emphasize his feeling of boredom, the priest alluded to the expression "when chicken have teeth" (*quand les poules auront les dents*)—until which a chicken could have no use for a toothbrush. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this explanation.)

19 AM 4S1. The diary continues into 1938, but with large gaps.

20 The earlier diary, or diary section, implied by the first sentence does not survive. Demessieux appears to have crossed out the word for "daily" (*quotidien*) when she realized that she would not be making a diary entry every day.

21 This was Chopin's Ballade No. 1 in G minor, the set piece for the women's piano competition in 1934, which took place on June 27.

22 It is unclear which hall is referred to by "boulevard Poissonnière." The 956-seat Salle du Conservatoire, attached to a building at the corner of rue Bergère and rue du Faubourg Poissonnière (Hôtel des Menus-Plaisirs, the original location of the Conservatory), is officially located at 2 rue Bergère in the 9th arrondissement. On the other hand, "boulevard

Poissonnière” may refer to the 585-seat Théâtre des Nouveautés at 24 boulevard Poissonnière in the 9th arrondissement. As noted at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Théâtre_des_Nouveautés>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, this theatre opened in 1921 and was most often used for operettas and comedies.

23 Valérie Hamilton’s name would have been absent from the results of the 1934 women’s piano competition because she did not better the standing she earned in 1933, a Second Prize.

24 Large public park extending from the southeastern edge of Paris and considered to be part of the 12th arrondissement, where the Demessieux family lived.

25 “Benediction” here is short for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament (in French, *Le Salut du Saint-Sacrement*). It is a short rite beloved of the laity that venerates the stored eucharistic elements and, depending upon the parish, is celebrated either on an occasional basis or regularly on late Sunday afternoons, paired with an office such as Vespers.

26 This diary entry makes it clear that in 1934, though construction on St-Esprit’s building would not be complete until 1935, Demessieux was already accompanying Sunday morning services in the sanctuary, rather than the crypt, of St-Esprit.

27 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 105.

28 Ibid., 22.

29 Judging from comments in Demessieux’s letters and diary, the Conservatory’s academic year began sometime in October, with the first term lasting into January, when “semester exams” were held. The second term ran from February through April. The third term, entirely devoted to final exams and competitions, extended from May for as long into July as was necessary for holding all the annual competitions. The remainder of July through September was the vacation period.

30 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 106.

31 I.e., the Salle du Conservatoire, located at 2 rue Bergère in the 9th arrondissement. It is attached to the Hôtel des Menus-Plaisirs, where the Conservatory was originally located, before it moved to 14 rue de Madrid in 1911. Nigel Simeone, *Paris: A Musical Gazetteer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 183–184, describes some of the history of the Salle du Conservatoire.

32 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 106.

33 Ibid., 107.

34 “Concours de Conservatoire,” *Le Monde Musical* (July 1935): 240.

35 AM 4S15.

36 According to Simeone 2000, 253–54, Chopin (except his heart, which was taken back to Poland) is one of thirty-eight musicians who are among those buried in Père-Lachaise Cemetery, located in eastern Paris, in the 20th arrondissement.

37 John Henderson, *A Directory of Composers for Organ*, 2nd ed. (Swindon, Wiltshire: John Henderson Ltd., 1999), s.v. “Boëllmann, L.,” notes that Léon Boëllmann’s *Douze Pièces* includes a “Marche religieuse.”

38 Demessieux’s handwritten list under the heading *Programme* [in English, “Syllabus”] 1935–36, preserved in AM 4S, Jeanne Demessieux, includes Chopin’s Sonata in B-flat minor [Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 35].

39 Monsieur Mézy is, presumably, related to Madeleine Demessieux and to her father, Antoine Mézy (1848–1928).

40 One hectolitre is 100 litres.

41 *Gramt* is the apparent spelling of the name translated here as Granny.

42 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 107.

43 Ibid., 108.

44 Ibid., 108–09.

45 According to Trieu-Colleney 1977, 108, Jeanne’s sister persuaded her that, for the time being, taking up piano teaching was not a good idea, arguing that teaching “interferes with creativity.”

46 Paul Paray, *Messe du cinquième centenaire de la mort de Jeanne d’Arc* for soloists, chorus, and orchestra, composed 1931.

47 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 113, comments that, a year-and-a-half later, Demessieux was presented with a copy of the full score of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony by the choir of St-Esprit, in recognition of the First Prize in harmony she

received at age 16.

48 Following “under these conditions,” Trieu-Colleney added in parentheses, *au poulailler à 3 francs*, meaning “in the gallery for three francs” (Trieu-Colleney 1977, 111). *Poulailler* also means chicken coop and is a pejorative way of saying “in the cheap seats,” or the “nosebleed” section. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this explanation.)

49 Grand opera in the style of Meyerbeer by the 19th-century French composer Fromental Halévy with libretto by Eugène Scribe. As noted at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Juive>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, and as is typical of French grand opera, *La Juive* is based on “a powerful historic subject,” contains “spectacular situations,” and lends itself to “flamboyant staging.” Long a staple at the Paris Opéra, it went out of fashion in the mid-1930s.

50 Composed for chorus, organ, and orchestra. If St-Esprit did not engage the orchestral musicians, it is interesting to speculate whether Demessieux was provided with an orchestral reduction for organ, or she played from the full score. 51 Demessieux’s handwritten list under the heading *Programme* (in English, “Syllabus”) 1935–36, preserved in AM 4S, Jeanne Demessieux, includes Chopin’s Nocturne No. 7 (Op. 27/1 in C-sharp minor) and three of Liszt’s *Transcendental Études*: “Feux follets” (No. 5 in B-flat major), “Eroica” (No. 7 in E-flat major), and “Paysages” (No. 3 in F major), without any indication of which étude or études she studied. In a letter of Oct. 8, 1936, Demessieux reports having played “Feux follets” and another of Liszt’s *Transcendental Études*, “Vision” (No. 6 in G minor), for Marcel Dupré.

52 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 109.

53 Place de l’Étoile, the meeting point of twelve avenues, was renamed Place Charles de Gaulle in 1970. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arc_de_Triomphe>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, the arch standing at its centre, the Arc de Triomphe, was the traditional “rallying point of French troops parading after successful military campaigns.” The “unknown soldier,” entombed in a place of honour at the base of the Arc de Triomphe, is from World War I.

54 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 24.

55 Ibid., 110.

56 In the Paris suburb Meudon, at 40 boulevard Anatole-France. Dupré is the main subject of Chapter 6.

57 No. 6 in G minor and No. 5 in B-flat major of Liszt’s twelve *Transcendental Études*.

58 Dupré’s list of private students of 1924–1946, BnF Music Dept., Rés. Vmc, ms. 15, indicates that Demessieux had taken four lessons at 100 francs per lesson during the academic year 1936–1937. She likely had some private sessions with Dupré during the next academic year also, even though her name is missing from that list. Perhaps, Dupré was interested enough in guiding Demessieux to not charge for that year’s lessons.

59 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 110–112.

60 This would have been Marcel Dupré’s *Méthode d’Orgue* (Paris: Leduc, 1927).

61 Opus 18, subtitled *Oriental Fantasy*.

62 Jeanne Demessieux, “Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées,” AM 4S13.

63 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 112.

64 “Les Concours du Conservatoire,” *Le Monde Musical* (July 1937): 187.

65 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 113.

66 “Classe de M^r Riera,” AN, AJ37, 535, 154.

67 AM 4S23.

68 A residential area in the western suburbs of Paris.

69 According to Simeone 2000, 189, the Salle Gaveau (in the 8th arrondissement), is a concert hall built in 1906, and has studios attached to it.

70 “Les Concours du Conservatoire,” *Le Monde Musical* (July 1937): 186.

71 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 113.

72 Jeanne Marvig (1872–1955) was a French poet born in the Midi. According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeanne_Marvig>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, she participated in a movement to preserve the traditional Occitan language of southern France.

73 “Le Moulin”: mélodie pour soprano, preserved in RHCL, 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripten.

74 Index, and “Classe de Piano, M^{me} Tagliaferro,” AN, AJ37, 501.

75 “Classe de Fugue, M^r Noël Gallon,” AN, AJ37, 501.

- 76 “Fugue, 20 juin 1938,” AN, AJ37, 557, 96-100.
- 77 “Les Concours du Conservatoire,” *Le Monde Musical* (1937): 175.
- 78 “1938, 21^{ème} Séance, jeudi 2 juin, Piano (Supérieur),” AN, AJ37, 535, 216 and 219.
- 79 “Conservatoire National de Musique et d’Art Dramatique, Concours de 1938, Piano (Femmes),” AN, AJ37, 544.
- 80 “Les Concours du Conservatoire,” *Le Monde Musical* (1937): 175.
- 81 For the sake of chronology, this diary entry has been divided into two portions. The second portion occurs after a series of letters written during July and August 1938.
- 82 Nîmes is an old Roman city in the south of France, located about 25 km north of Aigues-Mortes. According to <<https://archaeology-travel.com/france/jardins-de-la-fontaine-temple-of-diana-nimes/>>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, its Fountain Gardens were built in the 18th century around Roman ruins at the site of an ancient spring.
- 83 Jeanne Demessieux, “Cantate pour le Jeudi-Saint” (Cantata for Holy Thursday) for 4-part mixed chorus, organ, and four soloists, with words by Abbé A. Guilloux. Two ms. copies (13 pp.), and an earlier ms. copy entitled “Chœur Religieux” (14 ½ pp.)—the last page signed and dated “26 juil. 1938, Aigues-Mortes”—are preserved in RHCL 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripten.
- 84 “Grau” refers to the fishing village Le Grau-du-Roi, located approximately 5.5 km from Aigues-Mortes.
- 85 Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 64-65.
- 86 Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 63.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid., 63-64.
- 89 The word here translated as “quaint” is *pittoresque*. It is not clear what Demessieux means by this.
- 90 Presumably the piano piece by Claude Debussy that bears this title.
- 91 Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 63.
- 92 Ibid., 62.
- 93 Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 61-62.
- 94 Adelaïde Mézy, née Guinoir (1858-1942).
- 95 Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 62.
- 96 Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 61.
- 97 Ibid., 60.
- 98 Salutation found only at the top of a second version of the beginning of this letter, reproduced in Jeanne Demessieux: *Journal* (1934-1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287-288 (2009): 65.
- 99 According to <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maison_landaise>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, *l’ostau* or *oustau* is a Provençal word meaning “house.” The Demessieux family’s summer home (which had become Yolande Demessieux’s home all year) was on avenue Frédéric Mistral, just outside the town walls of Aigues-Mortes.
- 100 A wind characteristic of the south of France.
- 101 The “Queen’s Gate” is the grand, central entrance to the medieval town of Aigues-Mortes, through the walls on the town’s southeast side. Demessieux was imagining that she had seen and conversed with some 18th-century Huguenot women on the ramparts. The tower is the Constance Tower on the north-pointing corner of the town. According to Marc and Denis Guitteny, *Camargue*, trans. Robert I. McLaren, (Monaco: Ajax, 2000), 65-67, the tower’s diameter is 21 meters with walls six metres thick at its base, and the bulk of it is 22 metres tall. It served as a watchtower and lighthouse during the Middle Ages and subsequently as a prison. Its most famous prisoners were Huguenot women held there in the 17th and 18th centuries for refusing to renounce their faith, some for as long as forty years.
- 102 It is conceivable that the appellation *Demeucien*, by being a compounding of her surname *Demessieux* and the adjective *musicienne*, was concocted by Demessieux to reflect the relaxed, flexible speech pattern she associated with Provençal women of the 18th century. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this explanation.)
- 103 Important connecting train station in the city of Migennes, about 132 km south-east of Paris.
- 104 TSF stands for *transmission sans fil*—in English, “wireless transmission” (or simply “wireless”)—as radio receivers in Europe were called at one time.
- 105 According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Frances_de_Chantal>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, in the General

Roman Calendar of 1769–1969, Aug. 21 was the feast day of Jeanne de Chantal (Jeanne-Françoise Frémyont, baronne de Chantal), making Aug. 20 the eve of Jeanne Demessieux's name day. Currently, Jeanne de Chantal's feast day is Aug. 12.

106 Cf. the ms. entitled *Étude No. 1*, marked *Allegro quasi presto appassionato*, in F-sharp major, undated, preserved in RHCL 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripts.

107 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 114–115.

108 *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal (1934–1946)*, *L'Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009): 60.

109 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 115.

110 This may be the “Cantate de Jeudi-Saint” first alluded to in the diary entry covering Jul. 16–Aug. 16, 1938, and preserved in RHCL 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripts.

111 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 115.

112 Despite how the concert was apparently advertised, neither composer named was then “modern” in any sense other than their having composed during the first third of the 20th century. According to Barbara L. Kelly, *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Büsser [Busser] (Paul-) Henri,” Jan. 20, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.04443>>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, the symphonic writing of Busser (1872–1973) was based on the French 19th-century tradition and “indebted to Gounod and Saint-Saëns.” As noted at <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Doyen>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, Albert Doyen (1882–1935) studied composition with Widor and was best known for having championed the social value of music to humanity.

113 During this era, candidates accepted for the preliminary and final rounds of competition for the Rome Prize were sequestered in the ancient royal castle at Fontainebleau.

114 The “lesson from Busser” comprised hearing compositions by Henri Busser, who had won “second First Prize” in the 1893 Rome competition.

115 In AN, AJ37, 502, the 1938–1939 index of Conservatory students lists Demessieux as a student of Noël Gallon, Dupré, and Max d'Ollone, but her name is not among those in d'Ollone's class list for that year.

116 Marcel Dupré, “Notes de concours et examens d'orgue au Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique: 1922–1956,” BnF Music Dept., Rés. Vm. dos. 56 (1–3), dos. 2, 14.

117 Demessieux, “Mémorandum des trois années de Classe d'Orgue” in “Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées,” AM 4S13; “1939, 10^{ème} Séance, Mercredi 10 mai, Orgue,” AJ37, 535, 257–258.

118 “1939, 10^{ème} Séance, Mercredi 10 mai, Orgue,” AJ37, 535, 257.

119 This paragraph is based on Marcel Dupré, “Notes de concours et examens d'orgue au Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique: 1922–1956,” BnF Music Dept., Rés. Vm. dos. 56 (1–3), dos. 2, 14, and “1939, 31 mai, Concours d'Orgue et Improvisation,” AN, AJ37, 557, 192–194.

120 AN, AJ37, 557, 193–94.

121 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 116.

122 Translation of these two sentences into idiomatic English does not capture the full meaning. [*L*]a croisière 1938–1939—referring to that academic year as “the 1938–1939 cruise”—is consistent with Demessieux's quip in the June or July 1937 letter quoted above that, in preparation for the grueling harmony competition, she brought along a deckchair. [*N*]e boirai pas le bouillon, which literally means “won't drink the broth,” conveys a *double entendre* appropriate both to the last days of a cruise—as in “Let's hope I won't fall in the water”—and the closing days of the academic year—as in “Let's hope I won't fail to do well in the competitions.” (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for these observations.)

123 This paragraph is based on “Concours de Fugue, 19 juin 1939,” AN, AJ37, 557, 255–260.

124 “Concours du Conservatoire,” *Le Monde Musical* (July 1939), 205.

125 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 116.

126 Pierre Maillard-Verger turned 29 in December 1939.

127 Demessieux was using sarcasm here. She knew Grunenwald as Dupré's official supply organist at St-Sulpice and hinted that she agreed with audience members who had questioned whether his cantata deserved a “first Second Prize” by wryly renaming it “an organ prize.”

128 According to the list of Rome Prize winners given in Julia Lu and Alexandre Dratwicky, eds., *Le Concours du prix de*

Rome de musique (1803–1968) (Lyon: Symétrie, 2011), 846, no “second Second Prize” was awarded in 1939. Therefore, Demessieux’s mention that Gallois-Montbrun won such a prize is likely the result of misunderstanding the announcement of awards. In the next two sentences, she accounted for three more candidates, making a total of six finalists for the Rome Prize, which accords with the practice of the time.

129 Lu and Dratwicky 2011, 846, notes that the text set by all candidates for the 1939 Rome competition was “La farce du mari fondu” (literally, “Farce of the ‘Melted’ Husband”). As suggested to me by Stacey Brown, “melted,” i.e., “fondu,” was possibly a play on the word “refondu,” which means “rebuilt” or “refashioned”—as in broken down and built back up according to one’s wishes. Given the humorous nature of the text, Demessieux’s description of Sančan’s cantata as “very spiritual” is difficult to make sense of.

130 Presumably Demessieux meant that she and fellow Conservatory student Jacqueline Pangnier played before musicians who were members of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, one of five academies within the Institut de France.

131 A Paris suburb.

132 *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal* (1934–1946), *L’Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009): 65.

133 *Ibid.*, 60–61.

134 According to Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 169–74, and Marcel Dupré, *Recollections*, trans. and ed. Ralph Kneerum (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1975), 137, Dupré left France in June 1939 to perform in Australia for the first time (twenty-five recitals), then, for the eighth time in the United States (sixty recitals).

135 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 116–17.

136 Fontainebleau is the site of a royal palace, the Château de Fontainebleau, one wing of which housed, then as now, the American Conservatory (Conservatoire américain de Fontainebleau). Demessieux’s prediction that the Paris Conservatory would move to the palace was wrong, as it turned out. However, according to Murray 1985, 172, “[u]nder threat of bombardment, the Paris Conservatory removed some of the priceless relics in its museum to Fontainebleau, where the American Conservatory had closed.”

137 This paragraph is based on <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoney_War#:~:text=The%20Phoney%20War%20\(French%3A%20Dr%C3%B4le,invaded%20Germany's%20Saar%20di%20strict.>](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoney_War#:~:text=The%20Phoney%20War%20(French%3A%20Dr%C3%B4le,invaded%20Germany's%20Saar%20di%20strict.>), accessed Oct. 26, 2022.

138 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 117.

139 In addition to the names listed by Demessieux on Nov. 5, 1939, more students appeared in the organ class later that autumn. According to AN, AJ37, 521, “Examens Semestriels 1940, Orgue,” as well as Girod and Demessieux, students examined in January 1940 included returning students Geneviève Poirier-Denis (in her fifth year), Denise Raffy (in her third year), and a new student, the Canadian Françoise Aubut, but not Laboureur (“on leave due to war”).

140 Touring North America during the outbreak of World War II, Dupré and his wife made an eventful return to France, arriving home in Meudon on Jan. 9, 1940 (Murray 1985, 174–77).

141 By École supérieure de musique, Demessieux likely meant Paris’s École normale de musique. According to Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years: Music in Paris 1917–1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 187–88, it was founded in 1919 by Alfred Cortot and music critic Auguste Mangeot as an alternative to the Paris Conservatory. It is not clear why Noël Gallon would be meeting Demessieux there.

142 This paragraph is based on “[1939–1940] Classe de Composition Musicale, M^r Henri Busser,” AN, AJ37, 503; and “Examens Semestriels 1940, Composition, Classe de M^r Henri Busser,” AN, AJ37, 521.

143 “Barques Célestes”: chœur pour trois voix de femmes avec orchestra; a fair copy, a working copy, a piano-vocal score, and parts are preserved in RHCL, 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripten.

144 “Examen de Janvier 1940, Classe Composition Musicale. M^r Henri Busser”: “Nouveaux Élèves,” AN, AJ37, 521.

145 Demessieux, “Mémorandum des trois années de Classe d’Orgue” in “Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées” in AM 4S13; and “Études Musicales, Examens Semestriels, Années 1936 à—”: “Vendredi 10 mai 1940, 7^e Séance, Orgue,” AN, AJ37, 535.

146 “Études Musicales, Examens Semestriels, Années 1936 à—”: “Vendredi 10 mai 1940, 7^e Séance, Orgue,” AN, AJ37, 535.

147 Demessieux, “Mémorandum des trois années de Classe d’Orgue” in “Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées,” AM 4S13.

- 148 “Classe d’Orgue, M^r Marcel Dupré, Concours et Récompenses,” AN, AJ37, 503.
- 149 As noted at <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ardennes>>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022, the Ardennes is an area of dense forests and rugged terrain, principally in Belgium and Luxembourg, reaching into France and Germany.
- 150 Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 118.
- 151 Ibid., 119.
- 152 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 117.
- 153 Jackson 2001, 119.
- 154 Ibid., 120.
- 155 Marcel Dupré, *Recollections*, trans. and ed. Ralph Kneeream (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1975), 109.
- 156 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 117.
- 157 This paragraph is based on “Concours de Composition, lundi 23 septembre 1940,” AN, AJ37, 521.
- 158 Mss. of these two compositions are preserved in RHCL, 22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripten: Suite pour piano, 16 pp., undated; “Soudainement . . .”, 6 pp., last page signed and dated “14 mai 1940—Paris.”
- 159 Demessieux’s First Mention in the 1940 Composition competition is noted in a document entitled “Concours de 1941, Composition Musicale,” AN, AJ37, 537.
- 160 “Classe de Composition Musicale, Henri Busser,” AN, AJ37, 504.
- 161 Hélène Plouffe and Andrew McIntosh, “Aubut, Françoise” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, July 17, 2015 <<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francoise-aubut>>, accessed Oct. 26, 2022.

5. Commentary on the Diary and Letters of 1932-1940

I resume my diary with joy.

There is so much running through my mind these days!

—Diary entry of June 28, 1934

Diary writing, or journaling as it is sometimes called, has a variety of origins and functions. In part, it evolved from record-keeping as it has existed from ancient times.¹ Instead of a method of accounting for inventory or finances, though, a diary is a way to account for oneself and—its entries being dated—to manage personal time.² Parallel to this, journaling has been recommended since ancient times as a spiritual exercise; according to Philippe Lejeune, the technique of examining one's conscience every night “seems to have come from Pythagoras” in the sixth century BCE.³ In more modern times, a collection of day-by-day entries of thoughts and events began to serve as a keepsake to be passed down to children and grandchildren as well as a record from which the diarist could revisit earlier stages of their life.⁴

Diaries of public personas, and particularly female musicians of the past, are rarities, also because, as Lejeune has noted, “it is the fate of the great majority of journals to be, at some point, destroyed, either by the authors or their descendants.”⁵ From this point of view, survival of even a sporadically-kept diary from Jeanne Demessieux's days as a Paris Conservatory student (the diary of 1934–1938) and preservation of mere excerpts from her letters from the 1930s, are strokes of good fortune.

The diary of Demessieux's adolescent years is, in part, confessional in genre.⁶ In many entries, to be discussed further below, she does not simply describe events. Instead, Demessieux reveals her soul's mental turmoil, owns up to feelings such as anger and desire for vengeance, or professes joy. This style of diary had a precursor in the sort of writing that the Medieval church urged upon members of religious communities in preparation for formal confession.⁷ Moreover, in nineteenth-century France the Roman Catholic Church strongly encouraged diary writing upon young women as a spiritual practice.⁸

Without meaning to suggest that preparing for confession was Demessieux's primary motivation for keeping a diary, I note that as a devout Roman Catholic she likely attended confession regularly: on August 20, 1938 she logged an occasion when Father de la Motte heard her confession in his office. She then noted, “Afterwards, we talked from the heart. I hide none of my thoughts from him, and he does the same: he is my spiritual advisor.”

Three years earlier, on June 2, 1935, Demessieux had affirmed the following in her diary: “My only confidant is my piano. When I speak to it, it understands and it tells me so; I am immediately soothed, but not consoled.” In other words, even though the diary was a non-judgmental companion of sorts with which to share her innermost feelings, it was not Demessieux's only outlet. Piano playing evidently allowed her to express her tribulations and joys that were too profound to express in words for a teenager. At the same time, dialogues with Father de la Motte, like entries in her diary, provided opportunities to put into words thoughts and feelings that would otherwise have remained nebulous. However, only Demessieux's diary entries left permanent traces that she could return to, and that modern readers can try to understand—from their own distant and varied perspectives.

In contrast, Demessieux's letters from the 1930s serve a different purpose and thereby complement her diary. They were always intended to be read by someone else (her sister Yolande, in most cases). They deal mostly with the writer's outward life, and recount her activities in a more consistently positive way than the diary does.

Taken together, Demessieux's earliest self-writings divulge the following:

- 1) An outward life: what it was like in the 1930s for one adolescent girl from the south of France to study music at the Paris Conservatory.
- 2) An inward life: impassioned thoughts and feelings of a young female whose public persona as an adult would be that of cool and detached woman of the world.
- 3) A critical thinker: inciteful observations about her environment in southern France, and of people in Paris, that are beyond her years.

4) A person creating her identity: her earliest writings as a teenager establish who she felt herself to be.

Both the letters and diary feature a narrating “I” that creates the narrated “I,” thereby shaping the character of the young Jeanne Demessieux.⁹ Before a public performance, she was habitually in control of her emotions: “Once there [in the green room], I became very reserved, as I always force myself to be before playing” (June 28, 1934, age 13). In a letter to her sister Yolande, she quietly claimed confidence concerning her performances, “I played as you know your little sister plays” (May 29, 1936, age 15). Demessieux was also ambitious and resolute as a young woman. Explaining to her sibling why she kept up a strenuous schedule of study and practice that worried her mother, young Jeanne wrote, “You know that when I want something, I insist on it” (October 20, 1935, postscript). Less than two months later, she positioned her musical taste above that of the average concert-going Parisian, indicating that she much preferred listening to Beethoven’s Ninth—even from the worst seats—to a warhorse of a grand opera heard from a centre box (December 16, 1935). Statements such as these arguably indicate that Jeanne Demessieux was a musician of serious intent already at a young age.

At the same time, the narrated “I” of Demessieux’s letters and diary revels in jests and sarcasm, as exemplified by:

1) Demessieux’s reference to “that ‘lovely’ little hill” that she ascended when returning home by bicycle (letter of October 11, 1933).

2) Her description of the morning of the 1934 piano competition: “. . . I was reminded to be passionate in the ballade. I responded by opening one eye and yawning my head off. . .” (diary entry of June 28).

3) Her list of the paraphernalia needed for an eighteen-hour-long written examination: “food, thermos, dressing gown, slippers and, of course, the satchel-full of paper with alarm clock, pot of glue, corrector... And last but not least: a deckchair!” (undated letter from summer 1937).

Other statements of the narrating “I” reveal that Demessieux identified as being unlike her classmates and Parisians in general. In a letter to her father from November 17, 1935, she noted: “When I am in class, and another student is playing, I suffer from a violent desire to push him out of the way and take his place to play ‘with fire.’ You see, I’m from the land of the sun” (meaning, from the south of France, unlike most of her classmates). Savouring her summer vacation in the Midi, she hyperbolized in a letter to an unidentified teacher, “I think I’m becoming a countrywoman [*paysanne*]” (undated; likely from summer 1939).

The narrative formed by the diary and letters is disappointingly uneven, especially to the modern reader. The letters begin in the autumn of 1932 shortly after Jeanne Demessieux’s arrival in Paris on a sunny October day. The motivation for beginning the diary (in a notebook entitled “Memories – Impressions – Diary”) appears to have been a desire to chronicle the momentous day of the June 1934 women’s piano competition.

Both the diary and the letters end abruptly. The diary concludes several weeks prior to the onset of the 1938–1939 academic year with brief entries of trivia; fortunately, letters of September and October 1938 broach some significant topics, to be discussed in more detail below. The surviving letters end on June 2, 1940 with mention that “Paris was bombed for the first time by the Germans,” and that Demessieux was preparing for the upcoming composition competition.

Between beginnings and endings, and even when these two sets of writings are taken together, the sequence of events chronicled is discontinuous. Nevertheless, by tying together separate references to the most prominent of topics discussed by Demessieux, and carefully reading between the lines of her letters and diaries, some larger understandings can be formed.¹⁰

The interpretations of these self-writings provided below are my own; other present-day readers will necessarily draw their own conclusions. What matters is that because the diaries and letters are elliptical, it is only by engaging deeply with them that a reader can begin to understand what they disclose about one young musician’s experience in 1930s Paris.

“Monsieur Riera remains to be convinced”—Between hope and anger

Scattered among the letters and diary between 1933 and 1935 are references to Demessieux’s thwarted hopes for admittance to Lazare-Lévy’s piano class at the Paris Conservatory. When there was more than one class in an area of

study, pupils were frequently accepted to the class of the teacher they had already been studying with; yet this was not the case for Demessieux and piano after her successful audition in the autumn of 1933.

In all likelihood, she was initially refused entry to Lazare-Lévy's piano class because (as was previously discussed in Chapter 2) his class had already reached the maximum number of students, while Santiago Riera's had not. And, as was his right, Riera forbade Lazare-Lévy to coach Demessieux privately once she was accepted into his class in the autumn of 1933.¹¹

After she had been part of Riera's class for one year, and in view of her disappointing showing in the 1934 women's piano competition, the possibility of Demessieux being allowed to transfer from Riera's to Lazare-Lévy's class was predicted by the latter's teaching assistant: "M^r Lévy will now have less difficulty taking you in his class. M^r Riera remains to be convinced: that is the most difficult" (June 29, 1934). That prior to the start of classes in autumn 1934 Lazare-Lévy did try to get Riera's agreement to this transfer, is suggested by a retrospective diary entry made by Demessieux on January 31, 1935: ". . . the [academic] year began well, except for the disappointment of M^r Lévy's final response that it is impossible for him to admit me to his class without causing me serious harm." In other words, should she transfer out of Riera's class, Demessieux's progress as a pianist was somehow threatened.

How is this unfolding of events to be understood? It is conceivable in my opinion that, given no politic reason for overriding this regulation, the Paris Conservatory in the 1930s could be so intransigent concerning class size to refuse a student and teacher from choosing one another. It is harder for me to imagine that allowing a student to transfer from one class to another would harm their advancement as a musician. For instance, could a competition jury's evaluation of a student be influenced by a jury member who was resentful that they had dropped his class? The answer "yes" is plausible because competitors were not anonymous: the printed program gave their surnames, ages, and standing in the previous competition, if any.

Whatever threat had been made, imbalances of power likely also played a role in Demessieux's hope not being fulfilled—specifically, Riera and Lazare-Lévy's unequal potential to exert influence, and the Demessieux family's lack of social connections. Specifically:

- 1) Riera had taught an advanced piano class since 1913, Lazare-Lévy since only 1923.
- 2) Riera was fifteen years older than Lazare-Lévy and nearing retirement age; his self-pride would have demanded that his class size be boosted.
- 3) Lazare-Lévy was only 52 years old in 1934, in demand as a teacher, and of Jewish background at a time when antisemitism was growing in France.
- 4) Because the Demessieux family did not, in 1934, move in the same circles as sufficiently influential musicians in Paris, Jeanne Demessieux had no one else to pull the necessary strings for her.

As a result, her hope of moving to Lazare-Lévy's class turned out to be, as she puts it in the diary entry of January 31, 1935, "A poor thread of silk," while her anger—"a monstrous ocean against a hard rock"—could only be suppressed.

"Opposing personalities" or emotional swings?

At age fourteen, Demessieux wrote in her diary, "Sometimes I would like to take over the world, but I immediately have the opposing wish to close myself in and be impenetrable" (June 2, 1935). A week later she wondered, "Why are there, in my nature, two opposing personalities...? On the one side, passion, on the other, painful or overwhelming sadness" (June 10, 1935).

Trieu-Colleney, who had identified dualities in many areas of Demessieux's personality and life, took literally the notion of contradictory character traits.¹² She believed that these were born from the opposite temperaments of Demessieux's parents, Madeleine tending to be emotional and Étienne calm and composed. Trieu-Colleney also described a specific duality in Demessieux's personality that she had likely recognized during discussion with Yolande, her sister: Jeanne was evidently very sensitive (and, therefore, able to intuit) but also had a need to analyze and rationalize.¹³

This may, possibly, explain a contradiction in Demessieux's diary entry of June 29, 1934 compared to the previous day's entry describing the piano competition of June 27. According to what she wrote on June 28, the day after the competition, after hearing the results, Demessieux cried all evening in disappointment. But on June 29, when asked

by one of her piano teachers, Lélia Gousseau, if she were satisfied with her Second Mention, Demessieux replied “Oh! Yes, Mademoiselle!” This reply was, perhaps, made simply to appear agreeable in polite company. Another possibility is that in the intervening day Demessieux had analyzed the competition results as a whole and come to the realization that standing third among the Second Mentions was an acceptable showing, in light of many factors, including:

- At 13, Demessieux was one of the youngest competitors, the average age being 20.
- She was in her first year of study at the Conservatory.
- Among her competitors were pianists who had studied there for a number of years and competed as many times before.
- Many of the forty-nine competitors were not mentioned at all in the results.
- It is likely there were quotas as to how many awards could be made in each category.

In other words, a teenager’s initially emotional reaction had given way to sober reflection of a young woman who was trying to behave more like an adult.

But as for the notion of “opposing personalities,” this need not be taken literally: feeling passion one day and sadness the next was, arguably, the result of common adolescent angst being experienced by a normally cheerful, vivacious, and enthusiastic individual. Demessieux’s mood swings can, in fact, be explained with reference to brain chemicals and the functions of different parts of the brain.

First, it is generally acknowledged that the sex hormones which spike during adolescence influence not only physical development but mood and behaviour. Fluctuations in levels of estrogen and testosterone (which are found in differing proportions in both females and males) can cause anxiety, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal, among other symptoms, in previously well-balanced individuals.¹⁴ Another culprit is the brain chemical allopregnanolone, which is released under stress. In adults and children, release of allopregnanolone calms anxiety-producing brain cell activity, thus alleviating the effects of stress. Studies have shown that in adolescents’ brains, particularly those of females, when allopregnanolone is released in response to stress it allows anxiety-producing brain activity to carry on unimpeded.¹⁵

Second, the prefrontal cortex of the brain—which foresees and weighs possible consequences of behaviour, inhibits inappropriate behaviour, and initiates appropriate behaviour—is not fully developed in an adolescent.¹⁶ As a result, activity in the prefrontal cortex is overbalanced by the more primitive limbic brain, which is the seat of emotions. The limbic system also signals release of stress hormones like cortisol or soothing hormones like oxytocin.¹⁷ The result of this imbalance is more intense emotions, and more frequent and wider changes of emotional state.

More specifically in adolescents, the parts of the limbic system that register signs of social acceptance and rejection are particularly sensitive: every compliment is perceived as acceptance and every slight as rejection.¹⁸ This makes release and withdrawal of hormones more frequent and more intense, which, it may be argued, is the reason why adolescents place a higher value on peer acceptance than adults do.¹⁹ But peer acceptance among classmates averaging age 20 would have been a particular challenge for Demessieux. According to her diary entry of June 28, 1934, despite an age difference of six years, Demessieux had one close friend amongst her fellow students in her piano class, Françoise Labroquère: “We are always together.” However, by making an angry retort to the instructor in class (diary entry of May 11, 1935, to be discussed further below), Demessieux embarrassed her classmates and promptly lost status with them: “Even Françoise avoided my eyes: I was alone.” Weeks later, she still felt disgraced, noting, “Nowadays, everyone shuns me” (June 2, 1935).

Psychologically, the teenage years also involve a surge in the importance of competence-based social status as opposed to one based on size, age, or entitlement at birth.²⁰ For Demessieux and other adolescents in the 1934 women’s piano competition, to be ranked lower than had been expected not only effectively lowered their status—it also resulted in the withdrawal of pleasant and soothing hormones and a rush of negative emotions. No wonder, then, that at age thirteen Demessieux wrote of this event, “Never has an exam affected me so profoundly as this one” (June 28, 1934).

“He was pushy with, me, as usual”—Tension in the piano class

In a letter of February 21, 1934 to her sister Yolande, Demessieux wrote concerning a piano class with Riera, “He was pushy with me, as usual.” Trieu-Colleney was the first to draw attention to Demessieux’s difficult relationship

with her principal piano teacher at the Conservatory. She attributes the discord between them to “differing artistic conceptions”—without specifying this difference—combined with their both being native to southern climes.²¹ But then, Riera was not known for cultivating rapport with his students.²² When Demessieux was ranked lower than had been expected at the 1934 piano competition, he had only offhand remarks, not reassurance, for her (diary entry of June 28, 1934). Indeed, Riera may well have treated his entire class of students appallingly on occasion, as Demessieux described in her diary entry of May 11, 1935:

My classmates were merry; they were laughing. Riera arrived, in a bad mood. First, we received a whopping outburst; it seems this gentleman believed himself in a henhouse, which truly upset us. We entered and the class commenced . . . we played the Debussy étude. Abusive words, curses, with no attempt to avoid being offensive.

Or had Demessieux’s attempts to get out of his class possibly cemented in Riera a belief that she haughtily regarded herself as above his level of teaching? This, it may be argued, could have predisposed him to single her out when he needed another scapegoat on whom to release his temper, as when, according to the same diary entry, he said angrily,

“Her,²³ the one who’s been day-dreaming over there: the last time [too] she stood there (sniggering) with no pencil to mark the fingering I indicated; doubtless, she is already an expert’ (furious) She listens to nothing; no, you are undisciplined, you know it all too well.”

Rather than accepting this punishment for having appeared not to be paying attention, Demessieux impulsively fired back a retort, concluding with, “I’ve had enough of this!” Judging from this response, only Demessieux’s limbic brain seemed to be activated: she spoke emotionally, as is typical of adolescents in situations of high anxiety, and she acted out her anger without considering the consequences. Worse, the immediate consequence was that she lost any chance of receiving the sympathy of her classmates.

Use of reason, I suggest, would have dictated that the class instructor was of a higher status and, whatever his behaviour, was to be deferred to. A mature response (governed by the prefrontal cortex) might have been to apologize briefly right then for appearing inattentive, and after the class calmly explain one’s actions to the instructor. A very brief diary entry two weeks later suggests to me that the next time Demessieux was the object of Riera’s ire, she refrained from answering him back: “Can inner dramas be commented upon? Yesterday, I was the fitting object of one of these dramas” (May 26, 1935).

Past the spring of 1935, the diary does not refer to experiences in the piano class, though Demessieux continued in it. I can only speculate that she learned over time to accept her teacher as always ranking higher, whatever he did or said, and that feeling rapport with him was not necessary to benefiting from the class. On February 6, 1937 Demessieux was able to write to Yolande, “The piano class, at the moment, is close to being a triumphant success.”

“My sincerest thanks for the advice”—Career planning (1938)

One of the issues that occupied Demessieux in 1938, which neither the diary nor letters brings to a satisfying conclusion, is her plan to develop a career as a concert pianist. Following Demessieux’s First Prize in piano that year, she was no longer eligible to participate in a Paris Conservatory piano class. As a result, her performance opportunities at the Conservatory became limited to playing student composers’ works for juries.

Judging from the biographies of twentieth-century concert pianists, a First Prize, even from France’s national Conservatory, was not in itself a sufficient launching point for a successful performing career.²⁴ More common in the twentieth century was to go on to broaden one’s education. For instance, one could study with another teacher who would impart a different perspective on performing the canon of piano literature, introduce piano repertoire not previously studied, and serve as a mentor. Or one could work with a contemporary composer, becoming the performer of newly composed music. Magda Tagliaferro (b. 1893), for example, who earned a First Prize in piano at the Conservatory in 1907, went on to study with Alfred Cortot for three or four years.²⁵ While a student at the Conservatory, Tagliaferro had managed to snag the attention of the celebrated composer Fauré with whom she took lessons in interpretation of his piano works; this led to her occasionally premiering works by Fauré. Another Conservatory laureate, Monique Haas (b. 1909), after her First Prize in piano (1927), studied in Switzerland with Rudolf Serkin and in Paris with Robert Casadesu.²⁶ Yvonne Loriod (b. 1924; First Prize in piano, 1943) famously allied herself with Olivier Messiaen; she

had met him in 1941 when participating in one of his Paris Conservatory classes and became the chief interpreter of his piano works.²⁷

In ways such as these, a career as a concert pianist might also have been built up for Jeanne Demessieux. She needed coaches and mentors who would recommend to her small, then gradually larger, opportunities to perform—in Paris, in France, and then all over Europe. As well, seeking out an ongoing position as a piano accompanist in Paris would, arguably, have brought Demessieux to the attention of more concert organizers.

Faint traces of her attempts to launch a career as a concert pianist are evident in her letters and diary entries. Writing to Magda Tagliaferro from the Midi on July 21, 1938, Demessieux refers to a concert to take place in Montpellier, seemingly planned in coordination with Montpellier Conservatory director Maurice Le Boucher: “I think looking forward to this concert will be very beneficial for me; it will make up for the training in class that I will so dearly miss next year.” But nothing is known about how this concert was received, let alone that it led to other concerts. A long and retrospective diary entry of August 16, 1938 ends with the statement, “I received a letter from the impresario Alfred Lyon asking me for an interview,” while a draft of her July 22 reply to Lyon agrees to set up a meeting with him when she returns to Paris in August. That same day, Demessieux wrote to Tagliaferro, enclosing a copy of Lyon’s letter and asking for her teacher’s advice. She explained, “I do not wish to become involved in anything whatsoever without your consent” and then emphasized that “it would be a joy to be guided by you at the start of my career.” Tagliaferro’s reply to this letter does not survive, but Demessieux’s August 11, 1938 response to the reply begins as follows:

My sincerest thanks for the advice you have given me. I now understand the situation and will take serious action in the ways you have indicated to me. When I have news for you, I will make a point of writing to you.

One facet of the “situation” Tagliaferro outlined to Demessieux was likely her busy international career as a performer, which was making it difficult enough just for Tagliaferro to teach her piano class at the Conservatory.²⁸ Consequently, she would have foreseen that upon returning to Paris in autumn 1938, she would have little time to coach or mentor Demessieux.

With no further reference in surviving documents to the “serious action” Demessieux was willing to undertake, it is impossible to know what Tagliaferro’s advice to Demessieux had been. Presumably, she did not outright refuse to give her student further coaching, as indicated by a statement in a letter that Demessieux drafted in October 1938: “I have put myself back to work very seriously, thinking that you must be satisfied when you hear me again upon [your] return.” Tellingly, nothing in the diary or subsequent correspondence suggests that they ever met again. Even Trieu-Colleney refers only to “their faithful friendship supported by occasional but continual correspondence.”²⁹

With regard to Demessieux continuing piano study, there is no doubt that her family had little in the way of financial resources to fund private lessons or to pay for further piano study, for example, at Paris’s École normale de musique where Cortot then taught. Of course, Demessieux could have begun earning more money herself from piano teaching, or by taking a piano accompanying position. But during the academic year 1938–1939 (the year her diary-writing lapsed) she took two time-intensive Conservatory classes—the organ class to which she had just been admitted as well as the fugue class in which she had a second opportunity to aim for a First Prize. Choosing to focus on her academic studies would have been an excellent reason not to take more piano students. If Demessieux continued to practice piano seriously after October 1938, readying herself to participate, for example, in open masterclasses, there is no indication of this in extant letters.

As for the interview with concert agent Alfred Lyon that was to be set up in August 1938, it seems never to have taken place. As far as piano performances are concerned, surviving letters of 1938–1940 make only one mention of Demessieux appearing as a pianist: this was in a two-piano rendition of a cantata entered for the 1939 Rome competition (letter of July 2, 1939). Granted, the letters that survive are principally those from which Trieu-Colleney quoted. But if Demessieux had ever reported in a letter to her sister a performance before a wider public than the Rome prize audience, this would surely have found a place among the excerpts Trieu-Colleney included in her Demessieux biography. As a result, readers are left wondering why, in the two years following her First Prize, she appears to have accomplished nothing towards forging a career as a pianist.

“As a token of favour”—Social acceptance (1937–1939)

An important theme running through Demessieux’s letters and diary during the period 1937–1939 is perception of her

rising status in the eyes of her Paris teachers. After a private organ lesson with Marcel Dupré in early 1937 she wrote to Yolande, “It appears I have made immense progress” (February 6, 1937). Though only in her first year in a harmony class in 1936–1937, Demessieux was also able to report that her teacher “Jean Gallon was delighted; he loaned me the Honour Book as a token of favour” (February 14, 1937).

Excelling in her studies paved the way for social relationships with some of the eminent musicians who were her teachers, as is evident from surviving correspondence. Her July 21, 1938 letter from the Midi to Tagliaferro abounds in affection. Near the beginning is this fulsome declaration:

... what is even more comforting is the wish that I am making with all my heart that the summer vacation permits you complete respite from the strains and stresses of the year.

And near the end, Demessieux confesses:

I think of you every day ...

In fact, this letter confides her innermost feelings, as in,

You will be happy to note the sense of well-being I have here,

and

the life I lead, amidst a well-loved countryside liberates my spirit ...

Another letter by Demessieux from the Midi, drafted on an unspecified date in July 1939 to Marcel Dupré (who had left on an overseas concert tour in June), similarly indicates an established bond of friendship.³⁰

How the days have been since your departure! When I think of the long silence that followed, I am sorry and embarrassed. I hope that you will forgive my apparent negligence that is so inconsistent with my feelings.³¹

In that same letter to Dupré, Demessieux imparts the news of her First Prize in fugue—“I cannot help but believe that you will share a bit of my joy”—and, promising that her letter will not be long, closes with a gracious formula: “Please accept my respectful admiration and my devotion.”

Letters and a diary entry from the late 1930s provide an especially full picture of Demessieux’s friendship with her counterpoint teacher Noël Gallon and his wife. She addresses them both in a letter from the Midi dated July 19, 1938. After an opening expressing her affection, Demessieux writes, “But I know that I no longer have need of polite formulas: your generosity is too sincere for me to give back so little.” That their relationship had gone beyond “polite formulas” arguably suggests that Demessieux knew the Gallons well from past social encounters. In keeping with this, that same letter mentions people with whom they were mutually acquainted: Demessieux expresses wishes for the Gallons’ health and happiness as well as for that of a certain M^{me} Espinasse.³² She then includes greetings from her own family: “My parents and Yolande have tasked me with expressing to you their most sincere friendship and the joy they will feel at seeing you again in August.”

The closeness of Demessieux’s social relationship with Noël and M^{me} Gallon is borne out further by her diary entry of August 25, 1938. Evidently, she dined at their home and was received “as informally as if I were their daughter.” The brief account continues with, “After the meal, we made music for nearly two hours.” Demessieux then lists her own compositions that she played, closing with “One of the most beautiful days of my life!” As a child of a lower middleclass family, the sixteen-year-old Jeanne Demessieux must have been proud to be accepted into the bosom of a very cultured, upper middleclass family.

That Noël Gallon also paid compliments on her musical compositions on that occasion was equally important to Demessieux, judging from a September 24, 1938 letter to Yolande:

He found my prelude “perfect,” and the general idea handled very well. I’ll not hide from you (not to boast, but to please you) that he was even moved... That’s how well he understands my music!

Social acceptance into higher echelons would, incidentally, play an especially prominent part in Demessieux’s diary of 1940–1946, as will be described in the concluding paragraphs of Chapter 6.

“The poetry of the region where I was born”—Geographical identity

Demessieux’s most fervent expressions of joy in her diary of 1934–1938 do not describe musical performances, but her homeland, the Occitanie region of southern France. In these portrayals, she waxes lyrical. One such passage was written on October 27, 1935 in Paris, during a moment of yearning. It is arguably characteristic of Demessieux’s ability to use metaphor, symbol, and rhythm to create an elevated plane of thought:

How moving are the things of which one has been deprived, this air whose salt makes the nostrils quiver, this wind whose touch is as sweet as a mother's caress of one's hair? Provence, Camargue, Languedoc!... These names conjure up for me a single intimate scene whose image is engraved in my memory. A great avenue of plane trees at whose feet wild grass pushes up, filled with crickets and dragonflies. The path is strewn with gravel.

Similarly poetic is her fanciful description from August 16, 1938 that refers to a late-evening encounter with the town walls of Aigues-Mortes, where she and her parents vacationed. Knowing some of the walls' history and some of the ancient Provençal language, Demessieux let her imagination roam:

I was making my way, alone, towards the Porte de la Reine. Beautiful young women everywhere! Their youthful appearance stood out against the ramparts of old stone. I heard them laugh, chattering in their relaxed accent, calling out to me, "Good evening, Jeanne Demeucien!" Good evening, lovely ladies!³³

The walls' most famous tower—the one where Huguenot women had been imprisoned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—is the Constance Tower in the northwest corner. Anthropomorphizing the latter, Demessieux painted this nighttime scene next:

. . . [T]he tower was drawing me to it; my bicycle raced towards its shadow; I circled it: what blackness! Suddenly, there was nothing there but the immense, wild plain, the old canal that the moon barely allowed me to discern, and you, Constance, overpowering in your royal majesty; the diameter of your form twice as large as in the light of day; your height rising, rising higher than the stars above, which, for a moment, are held in your arms. You grow higher and higher! Oh, Constance! You nearly crushed me like the waves of the old port.

Such romantic prose by a teenager makes it easy to imagine that Demessieux expected that one day someone else, perhaps Yolande or another relative, would read this diary. Equally possible is that she was not writing for posterity, but simply delighted in being creative in words, just as she was in music.

"An expression I shall never forget"—The gift of observation

Following the description of a visit to the home of Noël Gallon mentioned above, Demessieux's diary entry of August 25, 1938 recounts an incident that occurred earlier that evening as she was leaving church with her grandmother:

. . . a child of about eight who is in the choir, and whom I've often noticed for his gentleness, passed by us with his mother. I leaned towards Grandmother and said to her, "He's so sweet, that little one!"

Demessieux then repeated her remark a little louder, which was heard by the boy's mother. At that,

... his mother turned and her face, amid her humble clothes, took on an expression I shall never forget. It was as if an involuntary feeling overcame her shyness and she showed a hint of a timid smile that greatly resembled her son's.

Seventeen-year-old Demessieux's remark about the child, specifically his gentleness and sweetness, strikes me as typical of an adolescent girl. Her observation concerning the mother shows remarkable insight, however. As well as capturing the woman's demeanor, Demessieux registered from her facial expression a change in her innermost feelings, from insecurity to willingness to acknowledge the words of a stranger. Moreover, even though that day Demessieux had the memorable visit to the Gallons to report on as well, she was sufficiently struck by her detection of the woman's "involuntary feeling" to record the incident in her diary.

Demessieux also described people acting in an involuntary way in her diary entry of September 6, 1936. Being in a crowd gathered at Place de l'Étoile in Paris to see a procession of soldiers pass by, she observed people she assumed were "former soldiers and elderly patriots." As the French flag passed by, they removed their hats "to salute our homeland" in what Demessieux felt to be a sincere gesture. At the same moment, another action—people raising their arms and stretching out their hands "like a supreme and solemn oath"—spread through the crowd of onlookers. This movement and its spreading were so powerful that a teenage Jeanne, too, was tempted to reach out her hand as if "to protect the flag . . . But I immediately took control of myself."

The diary entry then continues with a series of existential questions, specifically, how to know what is true and what is not, which actions are good, and which, though seemingly good, may actually be cursed (*maudit*). And why, Demessieux wondered, would "a man" act against his will? The diary entry concludes with a brief answer to the last question: "Weakness, always, even among the strongest."

In other words, at age fifteen Demessieux seemed already to have discerned the notion of herd

mentality—people, swept along by a crowd, illogically acting in a way they would not have acted when alone, as if powerless to assert their own will. Therefore, it appears that, just as her musicianship matched that of classmates five and six years older, in ability to pose philosophical questions, too, Demessieux in her mid-teens was a thinker beyond her years.

In the foregoing commentary, I have treated Demessieux's diary and letters of 1932–1940 in a variety of ways. Some passages have been understood in a forthright fashion by pointing out that the adolescent Demessieux was a serious musician, hard worker, and confident performer; a perceptive thinker of intelligence, spirit, and wit; a young woman who delighted in her friendships and who identified strongly with the Midi. The trials and tribulations to which she confesses—apparent opposing personalities and an outburst in Riera's class that caused her to lose face with her classmates—I have interpreted through the lens of what modern science attributes to the hormonal imbalances and still-developing brain of an adolescent. I acknowledge two of the issues raised in Demessieux's self-writings to be open-ended: how she succeeded in carrying on in Riera's class, and what became of her plans for developing a career as a concert pianist.

In contrast, Demessieux's next diary—which covers the six years from December 1940 to December 1946—charts a very detailed career path, and largely refrains from recording personal feelings. It also differs from the earlier diary by devoting many pages to the actions and words of another person, Marcel Dupré. To provide a context for these, Chapter 6 will sketch the life of Demessieux's teacher and mentor, and Chapter 7 will describe the historical conflict between Dupré and an opposing faction in the Paris organ world.

NOTES:

1 Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary*, ed. Jeremy D. Popkin and Julie Rak, trans. Katherine Durnin (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 23–26.

2 Julie Rak, ed., in Lejeune 2009, xxxiii.

3 Lejeune 2009, 27.

4 Jeremy D. Popkin, ed., in Lejeune 2009, xii.

5 Lejeune 2009, 5. Notable exceptions include diaries kept by wives and sisters of famous nineteenth-century composers, as described in Nancy B. Reich, "The Diaries of Fanny Hensel and Clara Schumann: A Study in Contrasts," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 4/2 (2007): 21–36 <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nineteenth-century-music-review/article/abs/diaries-of-fanny-hensel-and-clara-schumann-a-study-in-contrasts/6ED68F60D556B0EC9163240AA5AD7FFE>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

6 Rita Felski, "On Confession," in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 83, uses the word *confession* to describe "a type of autobiographical writing which signals its intention to foreground the most personal and intimate details of the author's life."

7 Lejeune 2009, 28–29.

8 Popkin, ed., in Lejeune 2009, xv.

9 See Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 73: "The narrated 'I' is the object 'I,' the protagonist of the narrative, the version of the self that the narrating 'I' chooses to constitute through recollection for the reader."

10 Lejeune 2009, 15, describes the slow process of deciphering the handwriting of a diary as follows: "little by little one assimilates the non-said, one picks up the code, one notices the gaps, one begins to read between the lines."

11 As a consequence of Riera's intractability, in a letter-card of Nov. 24, [1933] Lazare-Lévy wrote to Demessieux's father that, thenceforth, he could only meet with her at his home, not at the Salle Érard, and that they were to describe their relationship as "purely friendly."

12 As is evident from Trieu-Colleney's typewritten notes for the writing of *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire*, AM 4S40.

13 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 12–13.

14 See the website <<https://www.stonewaterrecovery.com/adolescent-treatment-blog/3-ways-hormones-impact->

teen-mental-health/>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, under the heading “Sex Hormones Influence Mood and Behavior.”

15 Nikhil Swaminathan, “Whatever!: Hormonal Reversal During Puberty Keeps Teens Totally Anxious” <<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/hormone-reverses-in-puberty-causing-anxiety/>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. “Scientists Find Hormone Activity Explains Adolescent Mood Swings,” <<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/03/070311202019.htm>> accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

16 Present-day psychologists agree that adolescents go through a re-structuring of the prefrontal cortex of the brain. “Brain Development during Adolescence” <<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-lifespandevelopment/chapter/brain-development-during-adolescence/>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. Adriana Caballero, et al., “Mechanisms contributing to prefrontal cortex maturation during adolescence,” *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 70 (Nov. 2016): 4–12, <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27235076/>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

17 Barbara Natterson-Horowitz and Kathryn Bowers, *Wildhood: The Astounding Connections between Human and Animal Adolescents* (New York: Scribner, 2019), 231. Virginia L. Schiefelbein and Elizabeth Susman, Abstract for “Cortisol Levels and Longitudinal Cortisol Change as Predictors of Anxiety in Adolescents” <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0272431606291943>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, describes a study in which greater increase in cortisol predicted higher general and social anxiety in girls ages 9 through 14.

18 Natterson-Horowitz 2019, 204–05.

19 Kathleen B. McElhaney et al., “‘They like me, they like me not’: popularity and adolescents’ perceptions of acceptance predicting social functioning over time,” *Child Development* 79/3 (2008): 720 <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18489423/>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

20 Natterson-Horowitz 2019, 194–206.

21 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 20–21. Riera was born in Spain. In a letter of Nov. 17, 1935, Demessieux characterized herself by writing: “When I am in class, and another student is playing, I suffer from a violent desire to push him out of the way and take his place to play ‘with fire.’ You see, I’m from the land of the sun.”

22 Timbrell 1999, 208, quotes brief reminiscences of former Riera student Germaine Mounier, ending with, “I must say that I didn’t feel much rapport with Riera.”

23 Underlining, here and in the next paragraph, is from the manuscript.

24 Timbrell 1999, 261–74, and referenced chapters, together provide short biographies of 60 concert pianists who studied in Paris.

25 Timbrell 1999, 273, notes that following her First Prize “[s]he then performed in Alfred Cortot’s master classes and often worked privately with him.” Asako Tamura, *The Pianistic Art of Magda Tagliaferro*, trans. from the Portuguese edition by Jacqueline Louise Hefti Caramurú (Sao Paulo: Fundação Magda 1997), 30, refers to “three or four years of lessons with Cortot.”

26 Timbrell 1999, 265.

27 Ibid., 166; “Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen,” <<https://www.oliviermessiaen.org/yvonne-loriod#:~:text=Yvonne%20Loriod%20was%20one%20of,on%20the%207th%20May%201941>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

28 Tamura 1997, 30: “Although recommended as a teacher for the [C]onservatory in 1937, she couldn’t cope with giving lessons, because of the enormous amount of concerts already agreed on.”

29 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 22.

30 Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 169 and 171, notes that Dupré departed Paris in June of 1939 on a voyage to the south seas, then, in July and August, played recitals in Australia.

31 The close friendship between the Demessieux and Dupré families that developed in the 1940s is one of the subjects of the diary of 1940–1946.

32 She could perhaps have been a Gallon family member.

33 *Demeucien*, by being a compounding of her surname *Demessieux* and the word *musicienne*, was likely concocted by the teenage Jeanne to describe herself. It also reflects the relaxed, flexible speech pattern she associated with women speaking the Provençal language. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this observation.)

6. Introduction to the Diary and Letters of 1940-1946 and the Imposing Figure of Marcel Dupré

“[W]hat a beautiful improvisation; I am very pleased.

*It’s decided. Widor sat me at this organ
when I was only twenty; that will bring you luck.”*

—Marcel Dupré, quoted in the diary entry of December 8, 1940

As recounted in the first entry of the diary of 1940–1946, on December 8, 1940 Marcel Dupré gave his student Jeanne Demessieux the privilege of sitting near him in the St-Sulpice organ gallery as he played a Sunday Vespers service. Moreover, her diary indicates that he had her perform part of the organist’s duties by improvising the entrance music for the companion rite to Vespers, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Demessieux arguably knew that the organ and organ gallery of St-Sulpice were legendary; to be invited to play this organ for a service was a tremendous honour for that reason alone. But the occasion went beyond this: Demessieux also records Dupré remarking on a parallel. For Widor to have allowed him to perform on the St-Sulpice organ for the first time at age twenty, and for him to now do the same for Demessieux—just a couple of months short of her twentieth birthday—foretold good fortune for her.

The event and prophecy that Sunday afternoon in early December 1940 were the impetus for Demessieux to begin a new diary, one very different from the diary of 1934–1938. On the first page of the notebook in which she began to write, she made an important resolution, namely, to describe events and conversations exactly as they took place, without commentary, and without benefit of hindsight. Even though Demessieux does not entirely refrain from commentary through the diary’s nearly 600 handwritten pages, it is (especially in comparison to the diary of 1934–1938) striking how few reactions to incidents or even personal feelings she expresses. Conspicuously rare as well are the instances when she adds a comment on something said or done by Marcel Dupré, unless it was part of the actual conversation.

The opening pages already present two themes that turn out to be characteristic of this diary as a whole. First, most events narrated, and conversations quoted, involve Marcel Dupré. The importance to the diary of describing all personal interactions with Dupré is confirmed by the fact that, after two more entries in December, Demessieux backtracked to describe an event of November 30, 1940 that resulted from her being known as having the “ear” of Marcel Dupré. Second, many events and conversations concern Demessieux’s gradual rise in status, as a musician and socially, which comes about by means of her association with Dupré.

Thus, Marcel Dupré (1886–1971) must be viewed as the principal “other” of the diary of 1940–1946. Also significant is his wife, Jeanne Dupré-Pascouau (1883–1978), who is a strong supporting character in Demessieux’s narrative. This chapter, by describing Dupré’s personality and career in general terms, will establish the context of many events and conversations in this diary. It will also sketch the social and educational backgrounds of the couple as detailed in the Marcel Dupré biography by one of his American students, Michael Murray, and as shared in Dupré’s own published reminiscences.¹

Where Demessieux’s diary corroborates a detail of his life, I will refer to this, but most of Chapter 6 is devoted to Dupré’s life prior to the period of the diary. I will conclude by outlining the many ways that, as told in the diary, members of the Demessieux family would be drawn into the social orbit of the Duprés.

Dupré’s lineage and upbringing

Marcel Dupré was proud of having been born in Rouen, about 111 kilometers by train northeast of Paris, in the Normandy region. Three out of four of his grandparents, and both his parents, held prominent positions in the musical life of Rouen, placing them in the upper middleclass.² Their social status extended at least as far back as the father of Dupré’s paternal grandmother, Théodore Visinet—a Parisian lawyer, who became editor-in-chief of a respected newspaper in Rouen. Théodore’s daughter Marie taught piano and married the musician Aimable Dupré in 1859. Dupré’s paternal grandfather, Aimable served as an organist in Rouen churches at a time when one could rise to social

prominence and earn a living by combining a church music post with private teaching. Highly professional, Aimable took an interest in organ building and was a friend of the famous French organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811–1899).

Dupré's maternal grandfather, Étienne Chauvière, was also a professional musician. An operatic bass, he retired from the stage to serve as a church choirmaster in Rouen for thirty years.³ He and his wife Julia-Anaïs (née Saffrey) had two musically gifted daughters: Alice, a cellist, and Jeanne, a contralto.⁴ Both also played the piano, and taught cello and voice, respectively, as well as piano.⁵ According to Michael Murray, Étienne and Julia-Anaïs Chauvière distinguished themselves in that they “maintained an open table at which any musician, artist, or scholar was welcome.”⁶ Their daughters would have heard sparkling conversation over dinner and joined the parents' and guests' musical performances after the meal. Whether frequently or occasionally, the Aimable Dupré family were among the guests who socialized and made music in the rarified atmosphere of the Chauvière home.⁷

The sons of Marie and Aimable Dupré were academically brilliant. Henri, who had studied at Oxford, became a teacher of English, first in Bordeaux and then in secondary schools in Rouen and Paris.⁸ The older son, Albert (b. 1860), Marcel's father, was meant to be a Latin teacher; an outstanding student at a prestigious Rouen lycée, he went on to win two baccalaureates.⁹ Nevertheless, Albert chose next to train as a music teacher and organist, including with the internationally celebrated concert organist Alexandre Guilmant.¹⁰ At age 24 Albert began teaching music. Two years later he was appointed titular organist of a Cavaillé-Coll organ in a city near Rouen.¹¹ Then, at age 29, he was engaged to teach music at the same prestigious Rouen school where he had received his secondary education—a plum of a well-paid position.¹²

In 1884, Albert Dupré had married Alice Chauvière and Marcel, their only child, was born in 1886. Guilmant, the organist and a witness at his parents' wedding, became an important part of Marcel's childhood.¹³ Guilmant was a frequent guest as Albert and Alice continued the Chauvière tradition of entertaining persons of musical and intellectual prominence, with music-making following the meal. As a result of that practice, Marcel grew up in an atmosphere saturated with music and with the witty and intelligent conversation of the upper middleclass.

Social music-making at the Dupré home grew to a larger scale in the 1890s when Albert had additions built to the house that was shared by Chauvière and Dupré families to create an ever-larger music room.¹⁴ There, he had a Cavaillé-Coll organ installed, and a choral society and orchestra that he founded rehearsed and performed in that room.¹⁵ Marcel Dupré credited the wide range of musical genres and masterworks—chamber, piano, vocal, choral, orchestral, operatic, and organ—performed with guests and by the students of his parents and aunt, as one of the bases of his musicianship.¹⁶

Reminiscing about his childhood in his *Recollections*, Dupré also proudly told stories of how, through his parents, he made the acquaintance of more luminaries of the French organ world. He first met Widor when he was three years old, and Cavaillé-Coll when he was eight.¹⁷ The latter spoke to him about Lemmens whom he had known personally.¹⁸ Moreover, one summer when Marcel was eleven and had just played for a service in the local church at the seaside resort St-Valéry-en-Caux, he was introduced to none other than Louis Vierne (1870–1937), Guilmant's assistant as instructor of the Conservatory organ class and the soon-to-be organist of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.¹⁹ The same year as his first Communion, Marcel first visited Widor at St-Sulpice, sat beside him on the organ bench, and received an explanation of the plan of the organ.²⁰

Dupré's Education

Marcel Dupré's formal musical training began at age seven with Albert Dupré giving him daily piano instruction.²¹ He had inherited a prodigious memory from his mother, and from the model of both his parents he had developed a strong work ethic as well. Directed by his father, the young child diligently practised piano, Lemmens' *École d'Orgue et d'Harmonium*, and pedal exercises devised by Albert Dupré.²² Only three months after his first keyboard lessons, at age seven, the young Marcel Dupré played a short harmonium piece at a wedding service.²³ At age eight, on the occasion of the inauguration of a new choir organ at his father's church, he performed on the gallery organ for the entrance of the clergy.²⁴

Judging by Murray's account of Marcel Dupré's childhood, there seems never to have been a period during which he was not destined to a musical career. By the time Marcel was eleven, he held a church position of his own in Rouen, and time was also being taken for commuting with his father to take lessons in Paris. There, a very strict and

demanding Guilmant taught Marcel all that he would need to become a professional organist, including piano, organ, harmony, counterpoint, and improvisation.²⁵

In 1901, when Dupré was fifteen, Guilmant secured an audition with Paris Conservatory piano instructor Louis Diémer for him.²⁶ From there on Dupré's piano studies were supervised by Diémer's assistant at the time, Lazare-Lévy. This led to entrance as an auditor, then a full student, in Diémer's class in 1902, followed by a First Prize in piano at age 19 in 1905. Concerning these four years of concentration on piano study, Dupré later said,

I learned all of the sonatas by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and much of Schubert, Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin. In fact[,] I learned by heart about three-fourths of the works of Chopin.²⁷

Evidently, Dupré had taken seriously his father's and Guilmant's dictate that he needed to be a first-class pianist in order to become a professional organist.

In 1906, a year after his First Prize in piano, at age twenty, Dupré became a full-fledged member of Guilmant's organ class. Already his mastery of improvisation, firmly based on principles of harmony and counterpoint, was prodigious. That same year, Widor engaged Dupré to play for a marriage service at St-Sulpice and asked him to improvise all the service music. Widor then secretly listened and thought to himself that the improvisations were so polished, they sounded written. On the basis of this audition, Dupré garnered the assistant organist's position at St-Sulpice.²⁸ His First Prize in organ followed the year after, in July 1907. According to Vierne, Dupré's performances for the competition in organ and improvisation were the most outstanding he had ever heard at the Conservatory.²⁹

Dupré then continued his musical education by entering Widor's fugue and composition class in the autumn of 1907. He needed only two years in the class before winning his third First Prize.³⁰

More than his musical ability was cultivated during the years Dupré spent at the Paris Conservatory (1902–1909). According to Dupré, during those seven years, Widor took him to lunch twice a week, and the restaurant they visited was frequented by “senators, writers, painters, the entire Parisian artistic elite” of Widor's acquaintance, to many of whom he introduced the young man.³¹ Over the meal, Widor was an enthusiastic raconteur of stories about musicians he had known, a characteristic Dupré would emulate;³² this is evident from his *Recollections*, and will be borne out by some of Demessieux's diary entries.

Dupré's hard work and early fame

It was at Widor's urging—for the sake of becoming a “complete musician”—that Dupré, following his First Prize in fugue and composition in 1909, worked towards winning a prize in the Rome competition. After more than one attempt, he succeeded in winning the First Prize at age twenty-eight.³³ However, as the year was 1914, that is, the beginning of the First World War, Dupré did not then have opportunity to live and work in Rome. Exempted from military duty during the war due to having had childhood bone surgery, he saw something of the war's horrors by working in a hospital dispensary instead.³⁴ Beginning in 1916, while serving as Widor's assistant at St-Sulpice, Dupré filled in for an ailing Louis Vierne at Notre-Dame in Paris for four years.³⁵ As a result, it was he who had the privilege in November 1918 of playing the celebratory “Te Deum” at Notre-Dame Cathedral. According to Murray, seven thousand worshippers were present for the occasion, and the cathedral was “blazing with light and pomp.”³⁶

Widor would remain Dupré's mentor in all things professional, presumably until Widor's death in 1937. When the Italian residence of Rome Prize winners re-opened after the war had ended, Dupré consulted Widor before declining the opportunity to live and work in the capital of Italy, in favour of his career as a concert organist.³⁷ To that end, Dupré had already decided in 1917 to memorize the entire Bach canon of organ music, some two hundred pieces in total. According to Murray, he went about this in a strict and methodical way, involving repetition and, above all, concentration. It took Dupré three years to complete the entire project.³⁸

Afterwards, in 1920, he attracted attention for being the first to perform Bach's œuvre for organ from memory, doing so in a series of ten recitals over a period of two months on the Paris Conservatory organ.³⁹ Reviewers' admiration for this amazing feat, specifically for the precision and clarity of his playing and the restraint of his registrations, helped established Dupré's reputation as an organist in both Paris, and—as suggested by a 1921 review in *The Musical Times*—in England.⁴⁰

Dupré's London debut, in December 1920, came about because of a wealthy English industrialist, Claude Johnson. He had admired a set of improvisations he heard Dupré play at Notre-Dame in Paris, and then devised the plan

of presenting them in concert at the Albert Hall.⁴¹ Three months before that event, Dupré was politic enough to perform privately for the Royal College of Organists in London, where he made a fine impression for “his simplicity and tact.”⁴²

According to Murray, Dupré’s next season included recitals in France, England, and Switzerland.⁴³ Meanwhile, his reputation had spread to North America, and Dupré debuted there to great acclaim in November of 1921.⁴⁴ The first and second of his eventual nine cross-continent concert tours of North America, both well received, followed in 1922–1923 and 1923–1924.⁴⁵

Dupré’s strong-willed personality

Aspects of Dupré’s character revealed in Jeanne Demessieux’s diary of 1940–1946 will be discussed as part of Chapter 9’s commentary on the diary. Nevertheless, one prominent trait, his strong will, deserves mention in advance because it is relevant to Dupré’s relationship with Louis Vierne and to his choice of wife.

Dupré and the older organist Vierne enjoyed a close friendship until a falling out occurred in early 1924.⁴⁶ Ill feelings seem to have begun that year when Vierne, who perceived Dupré’s use of the phrase “Organist at Notre Dame Cathedral” in his American and English publicity as a challenge to Vierne’s position as titular organist of Notre-Dame, publicly lashed out at Dupré. Their relationship, as a result, was shattered, far out of proportion to the original misunderstanding. While Vierne would later (that is, in 1936) write favourably of Dupré in his memoirs, Dupré, on the other hand, would forever after hold a grudge against Vierne, one that developed into expressions of deep animosity.⁴⁷ An example of his malice towards Vierne is cited by Ann Labounsky in her biography of organist Jean Langlais.⁴⁸

That Dupré was innately strong-willed—born with a tendency to stubbornly maintain his own thinking—is already suggested by three stories of his childhood in which he went against his father’s wishes.⁴⁹ When he became a young adult, the most striking example of this willfulness is the story told by Murray of how Dupré came to be married in 1924.⁵⁰ At age twenty-two (1908), he was a boarder in Paris at the home of his uncle Henri Dupré, who had recently married young Jeanne Pascouau. Soon, Marcel and Jeanne fell in love, and in 1909, they even produced a child, Marguerite.

Albert Dupré (who had recently risen in social status by becoming titular organist of the large church of St-Ouen in Rouen) was greatly displeased with his son’s embarrassing conduct. But he failed in persuading Marcel to give up the relationship: it endured through the years leading up to the divorce of Henri and Jeanne Dupré in 1921.

A civil marriage between Marcel and Jeannette (as Marcel Dupré preferred to call her) followed three years later.⁵¹ After the death of Henri in 1929, they were married in a ceremony at St-Sulpice. That union, over twenty years in the making, would prove to be one of the foundations of Dupré’s career success.

The collaborator: Dupré’s wife, Jeannette Dupré-Pascouau

The woman that Marcel Dupré married was intellectually brilliant in her own right. Murray’s sketch of her life up until her marriage, summarized below, indicates that she rose to the peak of qualifications as a teacher.⁵²

Jeannette Pascouau was born in 1883 in the elegant resort town of Biarritz on the Basque coast of southwestern France. Her parents could afford to place her in an elite secondary school in the larger city of Bordeaux. There she boarded with a family related to the Dupré-Visinets; Henri Dupré was one of her teachers. Gifted in languages, Jeannette also excelled far beyond the typical young woman of her time by enrolling in the Sorbonne University in Paris. She majored in English and alternated periods of study in the French capital and at Oxford University in England.

Having received the first of her degrees from the Sorbonne in 1903, Jeannette was, by chance, first assigned by the Ministry of Education to a teaching post in Rouen.⁵³ Thanks to the family with which Jeannette had boarded in Bordeaux, she was naturally absorbed into the social milieu of the Albert Dupré family and thereby met Marcel Dupré.

Not long after Jeannette married Henri Dupré in 1908 (and was soon estranged from her husband), she took a teaching post in Paris and returned to further study at the Sorbonne.⁵⁴ There, in 1914, Jeannette earned the highest of teaching degrees, the *agrégation*. She was, thereby, qualified to instruct senior classes in a secondary school or lecture at a university. As a result, and due to the war, during the period 1914–1918 she was assigned to teach in prestigious boys’ secondary schools in the French capital while male teachers were away fighting. After the war had ended, Jeannette took a position at an upper-level girls’ secondary school in Paris.

However, despite her decades of hard work and career success, when Jeannette married Marcel Dupré in 1924, she gave up her profession to devote herself to managing the affairs of her husband’s extremely busy career.⁵⁵ To that

end, Jeanette began to accompany her husband on his overseas concert tours, beginning with his third transcontinental tour in 1924–1925.⁵⁶ Arguably, she bore for him the burden of last-minute logistics during this and subsequent overseas tours so that he could concentrate on his performances.⁵⁷

By the time Jeanne Demessieux met Marcel Dupré over a decade later, in 1936, he had visited North America six times and made five transcontinental tours. His glowing press reviews in France applauded not only his recitals at home and in Europe, but his successful concert tours of North America as well, making him doubly famous at home. That Dupré would complete altogether nine transcontinental tours of North America was due equally to his capacity for hard work and the assistance of his intellectually sharp wife.

Dupré as private and Conservatory teacher of organ and improvisation

Alongside being a successful concert organist, Dupré found he enjoyed teaching and spent considerable time writing textbooks.⁵⁸ As a pedagogue, he was extremely systematic. At some point during his teaching career, Dupré wrote down a detailed, five-year curriculum for organ study. It took an accomplished pianist—who was ideally old enough also to begin study of harmony—from the beginning of Dupré's *Méthode d'Orgue* through progressively more difficult repertoire by Bach and Franck, as well as progressively more difficult improvisational forms.⁵⁹

As Dupré put much effort into his teaching, it is not surprising that after the death of Eugène Gigout (Guilmant's successor at the Conservatory) in December 1925, he applied for the position of Conservatory organ instructor. Both Dupré and his rival for the position, Charles Tournemire (1870–1939), received strong support from opposing factions inside and outside the Conservatory.⁶⁰ Demessieux records Dupré as saying, many years later, "I was a candidate for something once in my life, for the organ class: I swore that I would never do that again; the lobbying one must do!" (August 10, 1941).

Arguably, Tournemire and Dupré were very different musicians. Ann Labounsky, in her biography of Tournemire disciple Jean Langlais (1907–1991), has described them as follows:

[Langlais] saw in Charles Tournemire the best of what a church musician could be. He represented the antithesis of the technical austerity of Widor and Dupré; in him Langlais found a teacher with a sense of poetry and lyricism that recalled the qualities of his [Langlais'] other Franck-trained teachers at the Institute. He also found himself drawn to Tournemire's unique style of improvisation and composition based on Gregorian chant.⁶¹

I imagine that in 1926 Paris organists such as Louis Vierne, André Marchal, and their friends supported Tournemire as the worthiest candidate for the Conservatory teaching position. However, according to Murray, Dupré enjoyed the support of a group of composers on the selection committee—Paul Dukas, Gabriel Pierné, Alfred Bruneau, and Maurice Ravel (not to mention Widor).⁶² As a result, Dupré was elected to fill the position of organ instructor at the Conservatory in January 1926. After an interval waiting for the French government to make the appointment official, he took over the class on March 1.⁶³ This, *de facto*, made Dupré the dean of organ playing in Paris and, arguably, all of France.

If Dupré's success as a teacher could be measured by his students' accomplishments, this became evident over time: when he had been in the post for ten years, eleven organists had earned First Prizes in organ and improvisation under him.⁶⁴ Moreover, the majority of these were, by 1936, incumbents at Paris churches, including André Fleury, Noëlie Pierront, Olivier Messiaen, Joseph Gilles, Jean Langlais, Henriette Roget, Gaston Litaize, and Jean-Jacques Grunenwald.⁶⁵

Dupré achieved this success by paying attention to detail and wielding firm control over his students. He was infamous for laying down lists of strict rules, not only regarding organ playing but also as to how class members should govern their lives and spend their practice hours.⁶⁶ Yet, for the performance of repertoire, Dupré rarely gave advice on interpretative matters. The execution of ornaments in Bach's music was already laid down in his *Méthode d'Orgue*; it also contained seventeen rules concerning the lengths of notes (in cases of repeated notes, chords played with full organ, and manual changes) that Conservatory students were expected to follow.⁶⁷ All other essential interpretive matters were, to Dupré's mind, common-sense practices, such as allowing a breath before the entrance of a new stop and slowing at major cadences without exaggeration.⁶⁸ In all other situations, he forbade rubato in organ playing.

Except for the results of the annual organ competition, which depended on a jury, Dupré's power over his

students was generally seen as autocratic. The narrowness of every aspect of his approach to organ pedagogy caused some students to grumble, although they rarely dared to go against his dictates in class. According to Labounsky, Langlais, a member of the organ class from 1927 to 1930, was resentful that during the period his status was that of auditor he was required to attend sessions at Dupré's home in Meudon, which was a train trip away from Paris.⁶⁹ Moreover, Labounsky reports that when Langlais made the mistake of playing the same piece for the Conservatory class twice in a row (having misunderstood what he was told about it the first time), Dupré crushed him with sarcasm.⁷⁰

Though scathing towards those who defied his rules, Dupré was, overall, generous in his warm regard for his students. He charmingly addressed each as *vous* rather than the less formal *tu*. At the same time, Dupré was also inclined to call every pupil "*mon petit*" ("my little one"), as if their parent.⁷¹ In fact, accordingly to Labounsky, "Langlais regarded Dupré as a father: 'He was very paternal, very kind, very gentle; and he found almost everything good—almost, not always everything.'"⁷²

Dupré, internal Conservatory politics, and Marguerite Dupré

Weathering internal politics was one of the downsides of teaching at France's most prestigious music school. Murray's Dupré biography, in its chapter describing the Paris Conservatory, gives brief examples of the types of internal disagreements that existed at different times between the institution's teachers: Franck put up with colleagues' ill feeling towards him for teaching composition in his organ class; Guilmant dared to praise Debussy's genius while others railed against the latter's musical anarchy, and so on.⁷³

In Dupré's case, I suspect that as a composer uninterested in opera and ballet, he did not always feel respected by his colleagues who wrote and conducted stage music. According to Demessieux's diary of 1940–1946, he said to her after serving on the composition examination jury at which her violin sonata was rejected,

My poor dear, I was not able to rescue you: they are all against me. They have been very harsh today: I have suffered for it (January 30, 1941).

It has been hypothesized that, when Dupré's daughter Marguerite competed for a Prize in piano in 1932 and was awarded only a Mention, the jury had been wary of awarding a prize to the offspring of a Paris Conservatory instructor—because it could suggest favouritism (be "politically incorrect").⁷⁴ Murray, however, attributes this downgrading more specifically to the jealousy of some of Dupré's colleagues, presumably making them loath to bestow further honour on the Dupré name by awarding First Prizes in piano on two generations of the family.⁷⁵

Indicative of Marguerite Dupré's ability, she went on to a successful career as a solo pianist in France, Europe, and abroad.⁷⁶ To that end, she made her Paris debut in October 1932 performing with her father his *Ballade* for piano and organ at the Théâtre Pigalle. Her American debut followed in 1937 when she joined her parents on Dupré's seventh trip to North America. In some concerts of that tour, they even played his newly composed *Variations on Two Themes*, Op. 35 for piano and organ together.

Dupré's wealth, public recognition, and the German Occupation

During his career, Dupré accumulated a minor fortune from his repeated concert tours of Europe and North America. According to Murray, "[m]ost of Dupré's early tours took place in countries whose currencies were strong in relation to the French franc"; between 1922 and 1925 alone he earned an estimated \$30,000 U.S. dollars from recitals.⁷⁷ In the autumn of 1925, Dupré was able to purchase a villa in the Paris suburb of Meudon. He also bought a piece of property beside the villa so that a new wing, a recital hall, could be attached to it.⁷⁸ For this large music room, he purchased the organ that belonged to the estate of Guilmant as well as two grand pianos.⁷⁹ Beginning in 1934, Dupré also financed a larger console for the organ, additional stops, and, over the years, numerous technical innovations of his own devising.⁸⁰

One measure of the public success of Dupré's career is that he received high honours from the French government. In 1935, in recognition of his meritorious contributions to musical life in France and to the glory of France in the world, the rank of Officer of the Legion of Honour was awarded to Dupré; in 1948, this would be superseded by the rank of Commander of the Legion of Honour.⁸¹

In January of 1940, despite declarations of war in Europe, Dupré returned home with his wife and daughter from an overseas tour to take up again the two prestigious positions he held in Paris: instructor of organ at the Conservatory, and titular organist of the church of St-Sulpice (Widor had retired in 1934).⁸² When the Nazis invaded from the northwest and closed in on Paris five months later, in June of 1940, Dupré was, according to his *Recollections*,

one of only seven Conservatory teachers and about twenty-five students who had not fled to southern France. Instead, he remained in the French capital and helped reorganize the Conservatory: by running it over the summer with a reduced staff and student body, it was protected from the threat of its building being requisitioned by the occupiers.

On July 18, Dupré was one of the instructors who performed in a concert held in the Conservatory's organ hall to raise money "for students who were without financial resources."⁸³ According to musician and journalist Louis Vuillermoz, this was "the first artistic event presented in Paris during this time of upheaval."⁸⁴ Also that summer, the director of the Academy of Fine Arts singled out Dupré by asking him to give an organ recital at St-Sulpice to raise money for pupils of the Conservatory and France's national schools of Fine Arts and because "[i]t is necessary to re-establish intellectual and artistic life in Paris, whatever the cost." Presided over by His Eminence the Cardinal Suhard, archbishop of Paris, the recital was given on August 4, 1940.⁸⁵ Thus, early on, it may be argued, keeping France's artistic life alive was established as one of Dupré's Occupation-period values.

In the autumn of 1940, Henri Rabaud announced his retirement as director of the Conservatory. As Demessieux notes in her diary entry of November 30, Dupré was mooted by some of his colleagues and the Conservatory administration as a candidate for the directorship. Seven more diary entries, from December 1940 through mid-March 1941, refer to the competition for the position, with the composers Marcel Samuel-Rousseau and Claude Delvincourt mentioned as serious contenders. Unbeknownst to Demessieux and those with whom she discussed the directorship, on February 22, 1941, Jacques Chevalier, the outgoing Minister of National Education (and Secretary of State for Public Instruction) in the Vichy government, signed an order making Claude Delvincourt director of the Conservatory.⁸⁶

Demessieux would also not have been aware of what happened on February 28, 1941, when a new Secretary of State for Public Instruction, Jérôme Carcopino, arrived in Vichy. According to Carcopino's memoirs, the day after he took office he received a telephone call from the Vichy government's ambassador to the German military command in Paris, Fernand de Brinon.⁸⁷ He informed Carcopino that the Germans refused to ratify the choice of new director for the Paris Conservatory. Upon probing further, Carcopino was given the name of another candidate whom Brinon thought deserved more consideration. (Carcopino, who refers to this candidate only as a "composer and undisputed virtuoso," refrains from identifying him by name in his memoirs, saying he could not imagine that this person would have gone to the German ambassador to push his case.)

Replying to Brinon, Carcopino countered with two arguments. First, Delvincourt as a war hero should naturally be the preferred choice of the German military commanders. Second, it was a matter of principle that he, Carcopino, not agree to rescind his predecessor's decision for no better reason than an apparent whim of the German military command in Paris. To Carcopino's relief, his bravado had the desired effect—the matter must have seemed too trivial to pursue any longer. On March 2 or 3, 1941, Brinon telephoned Carcopino again. Evidently, the Germans did not want to make difficulties for him during his first week in office and had agreed to the official publication of Delvincourt's appointment.

There is no doubt that Dupré was among the short-listed candidates for Conservatory director: a German military command document, written while the decision was still pending, reports that another candidate, Marcel Samuel-Rousseau, was regarded as being of the wrong political bent, given his association with the former minister. In contrast, Delvincourt and Dupré both possessed the right political leanings and attitudes towards German art, with Delvincourt being younger and more dynamic, and Dupré's appointment being of more prestige value.⁸⁸

Did Dupré contribute to the artistic life of France in other ways during the Occupation (1940–1944)? He did, indeed. The Vichy government, as part of its oversight of all aspects of France's musical life, formed committees made up of selected French citizens.⁸⁹ One of these was the Committee for the professional organization of music; it was formed in March 1942 and got underway in October of 1943, charged with ensuring musical taste in France. Of its 59 members, Dupré was chosen to chair the seven-member subcommittee for organ and church music.⁹⁰ He also participated in a Vichy government-financed project aimed at producing recordings of contemporary French music, to be distributed to other countries' ambassadors and cultural organizations. Specifically, works representing forty composers were chosen to be recorded, among them selected movements of Dupré's Concerto in E Minor for organ and orchestra.⁹¹ In fact, Demessieux describes one of the recording sessions, with Dupré at the organ and Eugène Bigot conducting, in her diary entry of October 20, 1943.

Dupré remained active as a concert organist during the Occupation.⁹² Demessieux's diary mentions some of his Paris radio broadcasts and periods during which he gave recitals away from home.⁹³ As I have argued elsewhere, Dupré continued "business as usual" not because he wanted to assist the German occupiers in normalizing life under their rule, but because he wished to use the celebrated tradition of French organ playing—which he represented—to draw attention to the glory of French culture.⁹⁴ To that end, Demessieux commented in her diary on August 13, 1944 that at the close of Dupré's recital at Paris's Notre-Dame Cathedral—the last in a series featuring both German and French organists—he was hailed as a French hero for this performance by the thousands in attendance.⁹⁵

The Duprés' relationship with the Demessieux family

The Marcel Dupré who figures throughout the diary of 1940–1946 had been a celebrity in France since the 1920s. Indeed, his upper middleclass status was not merely inherited from his parents, but also highly merited. In the eyes of young Jeanne Demessieux, Dupré and his family (wife Jeannette and daughter Marguerite) belonged to a social and musical milieu that was the epitome of what this teenager from Montpellier could aspire to. By describing in her diary multiple occasions when she was invited to sit near the Duprés at concerts, the times when she was kept in conversation with the Duprés between services at St-Sulpice, and the meals she took with them at their Meudon villa, Demessieux illustrates that she became increasingly intimate with the family.

The diary entries also provide insights into how her own parents and sister Yolande, too, were drawn into the Duprés' social orbit. Specifically, Jeanne describes Marcel and Jeannette Dupré's visits to the Demessieux family apartment, details how the Duprés received Jeanne's parents and sister in the St-Sulpice organ gallery, and refers to concerts that the two families were seen as attending together. These associations raised the social status of the Demessieux family as a whole.

NOTES:

1 Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985); Marcel Dupré, *Recollections*, trans. Ralph Kneerman (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp., 1975).

2 The remainder of this paragraph is based on Murray 1985, 5–6.

3 Dupré 1975, 3–4, does not specify the exact thirty-year period.

4 Murray 1985, 7, and Dupré 1975, 4–5.

5 Murray 1985, 10.

6 Murray 1985, 7–8. See also Dupré 1975, 4–5.

7 Murray 1985, 8.

8 Ibid., 97–98.

9 Ibid., 6.

10 Ibid., 7.

11 Ibid., 9.

12 Ibid., 10–11.

13 Ibid., 9, 10, 44–45.

14 Ibid., 11, 22.

15 Ibid., 22–24.

16 Dupré 1975, 4–5, and Murray 1985, 10.

17 Dupré 1975, 8 and 22.

18 "Marcel Dupré: Interview and Improvisations," radio interview with Michael Murray, Meudon, 1969 and phono-disk Advent [Telarc] 5011, quoted in Murray 1985, 18–19.

19 Murray 1985, 21–22. Later, in 1905–06, Vierne would be one of Marcel's coaches in improvisation and a friendship developed between them (Murray 1985, 40).

20 Dupré 1975, 31 and 33. The year of events described on these pages is not specified.

21 This paragraph is based on Dupré 1975, 13, and Murray 1985, 15–18.

22 The cover of an edition of Lemmens' *École d'Orgue et d'Harmonium Basée sur le Plain-Chant Romain*, with prefaces by Charles Marie Widor, may be viewed at <https://harmonium.fandom.com/fr/wiki/Lemmens_Nicolas-Jacques?file=M%25C3%25A9thode_Lemmens.jpg>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. John Henderson, *A Directory of Composers for Organ*, 2nd ed. (Swindon, Wiltshire: John Henderson Ltd., 1999), s.v. Lemmens, J. N., notes that the first edition of *École d'Orgue* was published in 1862.

23 Murray 1985, 17.

24 Dupré 1975, 22–23, and Murray 1985, 19.

25 Marcel Dupré, “Alexandre Guilmant: 1837–1911,” *La Revue Musicale* 172 (Feb.–Mar. 1937): 8, quoted in Murray 1985, 26.

26 This paragraph is based on Murray 1985, 34–36, and Dupré 1975, 41.

27 Marcel Dupré, “Interview and Improvisations,” radio interview with Michael Murray, Meudon, 1969 and phono-disk Advent [Telarc] 5011, quoted in Murray 1985, 36.

28 Dupré 1975, 45, and Murray 1985, 41.

29 “Reminiscences of Louis Vierne,” trans. Esther Jones Barrow, *The Diapason* (April 1, 1939), 8, quoted in Murray 1985, 42.

30 Murray 1985, 43–44, and Dupré 1975, 135.

31 Dupré 1975, 46.

32 Murray 1985, 52.

33 Ibid., 56–57.

34 Ibid., 59.

35 Ibid., 60.

36 Ibid., 63.

37 Ibid., 64.

38 Ibid., 61–63.

39 Ibid., 64–65.

40 *The Musical Times* (Jul. 1, 1921): 508, cited in Murray 1985, 65.

41 Murray 1985, 68. The improvisations were turned into a composed work and published as *Fifteen pieces founded on antiphons (Vêpres du Commun de la Sainte-Vierge)*, Op. 18 (New York: H. W. Gray, 1919).

42 Murray 1985, 68–69.

43 Ibid., 72.

44 Ibid., 77.

45 Ibid., 89–93 and 93–96.

46 This paragraph is based on Murray 1985, 108–110.

47 Murray 1985, 110–111.

48 Ann Labounsky, *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2000), 79, in describing Langlais' organization of an inaugural concert for a newly restored organ, quotes a conversation between Langlais and Dupré in which the latter mounted a cruelly worded objection to Langlais' plan to ask Vierne to play for the inauguration.

49 The three stories are from Dupré 1975: how he met Widor at age 3 (8–9); at age 8 his first public performance (22–23); how at age 11 he became organist of Rouen's St-Vivien and began study with Guilmant (33–34).

50 Murray 1985, 96–99, is the source of the remainder of this paragraph and events recounted in the next two.

51 Murray 1985, 96. As is also noted on this page, Marcel Dupré liked the diminutive of his wife's name, Jeannette. In the remainder of this chapter, I will use it to help distinguish her from Jeanne Demessieux and Jeanne Chauvière.

52 Murray 1985, 96–97 and 98.

53 Ibid., 96–97. Murray does not name Jeannette Pascouau's first degree or specify its exact date.

54 This paragraph is based on Murray 1985, 98.

55 Murray 1985, 99.

56 Ibid., 101–102.

57 Murray 1985, 96, notes that Jeannette acted as Dupré's secretary, translator, and collaborator.

58 Murray 1985, 125, notes that Dupré published textbooks on harmony, counterpoint, fugue, plainchant accompaniment, organ, improvisation, and acoustics. Others of his textbooks (another on harmony and one each on orchestration and composition) remained unpublished.

59 Marcel Dupré, *Méthode d'Orgue* (Paris: Leduc, 1927). Dupré's detailed, five-year organ pedagogy plan (undated) is published in the *Bulletin of the Association des Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré*, No. 16 (1997): 26–35. It begins by suggesting that the student be a pianist around 12 years old able to perform a study by Cramer, a 3-part invention by Bach, and an Allegro from a Mozart sonata. Even though Dupré himself was only 7 when he began work on Lemmens's *École d'Orgue et d'Harmonium* (Murray 1985, 17), he was 11 when he began studying organ, harmony, and counterpoint with Guilmant (Murray 1985, 26).

60 Pascale Mélis, "La Pédagogie de Marcel Dupré dans les années 1930," *L'Orgue*, Nos. 295–296 (2011): 156.

61 Labounsky 2000, 67. On p. 129 Labounsky notes that Franck organ pupils (Jean-Baptiste-Albert) Mahaut and (Eugène-Georges) Marty, were Langlais' teachers at the National Institute for the Young Blind.

62 Murray 1985, 115.

63 Ibid., 115–116. According to p. 200, Dupré held the post until 1954, when he accepted the position of director of the Paris Conservatory.

64 AN AJ37, 578, 31–32. For comparison, according to the same list, during the fifteen years (1911–1925) that Gigout was instructor of the Conservatory organ class, six organists won a First Prize.

65 Pierre Guillot, *Dictionnaire des organistes français des XIXe et XXe siècles* (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 2003).

66 François Sabatier, "Entretien avec Odile Pierre," *L'Orgue*, No. 295–296 (2011): 339; Mélis 2011, 160.

67 Dupré 1927, 58–74.

68 Mélis 2011, 160.

69 Labounsky 2000, 52.

70 Ibid., 53–54. Labounsky (54) also reports that by locking the classroom door at one minute after the class start time, Dupré refused to admit any student who was more than a minute late for the two-hour session.

71 Murray 1985, 118.

72 Labounsky 2000, 55.

73 Murray 1985, 32.

74 Georg Predota, "Daughterly Music: Marcel and Marguerite Tollet-Dupré," August 12, 2019 <<https://interlude.hk/daughterly-muse-marcel-marguerite-tollet-dupre/>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

75 Or, as Murray 1985, 152, puts it, "the jury awarded her merely an *accessit* [i.e., Mention], out of spite, it was said, for her father."

76 The remainder of this paragraph is based on Murray 1985, 164–66.

77 Murray 1985, 115 n.3.

78 Ibid., 111–112.

79 Ibid., 134 and 137.

80 Ibid., 138.

81 Ibid., 158 and 192 n.25.

82 The remainder of this paragraph is based on Dupré 1975, 109–10.

83 The quotation is from Dupré 1975, 109. The concert date is from BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, Marcel Dupré concert programs, boîte 6, 1303. Program number 1304 is virtually the same concert, repeated on Jul. 25, 1940.

84 Louis Vuillermoz, "Les heures de juin-juillet 1940 au Conservatoire national de Paris," *L'Illustration*, 5086 (Aug. 31, 1940), quoted in Yannick Simon, *Composer sous Vichy* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 54–55.

- 85 The quotation is from Dupré 1975, 110. The concert date is from BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, Marcel Dupré concert programs, boîte 6, 1305.
- 86 Simon 2009, 94.
- 87 This and the following paragraph are based on Jérôme Carcopino, *Souvenirs de sept ans* (Paris: Flammarion, 1953), 446.
- 88 “La France et la Belgique sous l’occupation allemande. Les fonds allemands conservés aux Archives nationales,” AJ40, 1001, “Groupe culture/théâtre de la Propaganda-Abteilung: rapports d’activité, 1940–1944.”
- 89 Described in Simon 2009, 70–85.
- 90 Ibid., 79.
- 91 Philippe Morin, “Une nouvelle politique discographique pour la France,” in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 268; Simon 2009, 190–92.
- 92 Vma 2803, Marcel Dupré concert programs, boîte 6, preserves 137 programs that Dupré performed from June 1940 to August 1944.
- 93 Examples are in the diary entries of May 19, 1942 (concert tour of France), Aug. 31, 1942 (music festival in Switzerland), and Dec. 3, 1943 (radio broadcast).
- 94 Lynn Cavanagh, “Marcel Dupré’s ‘Dark Years’: Unveiling his Occupation-Period Concertizing,” *Intersections* 34 (2014): 46–50.
- 95 Recital program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1439. According to a handbill preserved with the recital program, other organists in the recital series were Joseph Tönnies, Léonce de Saint-Martin (titular of Notre-Dame), Fritz Werner, and Joseph Ahrens.

7. Controversy in the Paris Organ World, 1927-ca. 1960

*“No one believed in the electrified organ
(we had only junk as electric organs). Only the Barker lever was known.
On my first trip to England, I understood and, when I returned,
I said that we know nothing in France. It was then that
Les Amis de l’Orgue was formed, in opposition to me.”*
—Marcel Dupré, quoted in the diary entry of April 16, 1943

*“. . . it cannot be said that Dupré has done anything for the organ!
He has been under American influence, and his music, in general, is rubbish!”*
—Charles Provost, quoted in the diary entry of November 11, 1945

One of the themes throughout much of Jeanne Demessieux’s diary of 1940–1946 is the animosity that existed between leaders of the Paris organization Les Amis de l’Orgue on the one hand, and Marcel Dupré and his supporters on the other.¹ The ill will between the two sides stemmed from multiple issues related to organ building, performance practice, and repertoire. As readers of the diary will discover, conversations quoted make it clear that Demessieux was as strongly opinionated on these matters as were Dupré and his opponents. To provide context for these conversations, this chapter will sketch the origins of the dispute that seethed through much of the twentieth century, and the specific concerns upon which the two sides differed.²

Since the hey-day of the 1890s, when attendance at organ recitals in Paris’s Trocadéro concert hall was at its height, the role of organ music in the city’s musical life had gradually waned. By the 1920s, it was increasingly evident that though organ playing was still one of France’s greatest exports, it had lost its former prestige at home. Meanwhile, the organs of France were the victims of disrepair and damage caused by the First World War.

From the late 1920s and for approximately the next thirty years, two contrasting viewpoints existed among Paris organists as to where the future of the organ and organ playing lay. One position, which clung strongly to nineteenth-century tradition, was held by Marcel Dupré—heir to the performance practice of the organist Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens and a devotee of the organs of the distinguished builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Specifically, Dupré believed he had demonstrated, in his successful domestic and international careers, how to renew and maintain the glory of the French organ school. It involved continuing the interdependent evolutions of organ technique, compositional style for the organ, and organ design in the same directions as had led French organists such as Alexandre Guilmant to their original world acclaim. For Dupré this meant two things: grooming organists who could rival the great pianists in technical brilliance and interpretive charisma, as well as encouraging virtuosic composition for the organ that transferred piano technique to organ manuals and pedalboard. In Dupré’s mind, revitalization of the French organ school called for studying the principles of Cavaillé-Coll in order that nineteenth-century organs could be restored in Cavaillé-Coll’s style. In the design of new organs, from Dupré’s point of view, revitalization depended upon making up for having fallen behind British builders (principally Willis) and American builders (principally E. M. Skinner) in pursuit of technology—and for good reason. Their innovations increased the organ’s dynamic and timbral flexibility, inspired new compositional techniques, and allowed organists to increase their virtuosity.³

Another viewpoint lay with the founders of the Paris Association des Amis de l’Orgue. These were organist

1. Sections of this chapter were first published in Lynn Cavanagh, “The Rise and Fall of a Famous Collaboration: Marcel Dupré and Jeanne Demessieux,” *The Diapason*, whole no. 1148 (Jul. 2005): 18–22.

André Marchal (1894–1980), musicologist and organist Norbert Dufourcq (1904–1990), and their wealthy patron Bérenger de Miramon Fitz-James (1875–1952). They had founded the association in 1927 with the aim of promoting the organ in France. To that end, its members arranged and publicized concerts of organ music and, like Dupré, encouraged young performers and composition of new organ music by young composers. In other respects, Marchal, Dufourcq, and Miramon Fitz-James had quite an opposite set of goals to Dupré's. Among them were cultivation of early, that is, pre-Bach music (despite its lack of virtuosity) and championing new approaches to performing the music of Bach, as well as making organ playing more expressive and poetic in general.

Moreover, Les Amis de l'Orgue promoted a new style of organ design in France as a reaction against the symphonic style of organ, a style that had first been practised by Cavaillé-Coll, had evolved following his death in 1899, and been further developed by builders in other countries. From the perspective of leaders of the Association, just as Romanticism in music composition had been superseded by the styles of Debussy and Ravel, organ building now needed a new aesthetic, producing a sound of "greater clarity, colour, and etherealness."⁴

This new aesthetic promoted by Les Amis de l'Orgue was largely in reaction to a style of organ design prevalent in the early twentieth century. It involved a considerable percentage of 8-foot (unison) stops, few stops above the 2-foot level, and inclusion of mutations and mixtures only in the main division.⁵ From Dupré's perspective, however, association of this development with Cavaillé-Coll fostered misunderstanding of the nineteenth-century builder's design principles, particularly a false belief that Cavaillé-Coll neglected mutation and mixture stops altogether.⁶ In short, as Dupré saw it, the term "symphonic," when applied to organs in a pejorative way, was misunderstood. According to Murray,

[a]lthough "symphonic" . . . had principally meant to Cavaillé-Coll and his generation an organ whose dynamic range approached that of the orchestra but whose tones still echoed certain qualities of the Classical past, the term had by now [the twentieth century] come to designate much more and much less: images of monstrous electrical organs that imitated orchestral colors exclusively and offered from cramped chambers and ill-chosen locales nothing but eight-foot tone.⁷

Such organs arguably existed because some organ builders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had put more emphasis on immediate commercial success than craftsmanship; in Germany this practice had sparked the organ reform movement in the early twentieth century.⁸ But these instruments—suited to movie theatres, perhaps, but not churches and concert halls—represented neither Cavaillé-Coll's style nor Dupré's ideal.

Nevertheless, the leaders of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue, in their viewpoints, were able to wield great influence upon their students and organ aficionados. André Marchal, like Dupré, enjoyed an international concert and recording career. The organ students he taught at Paris's National Institute for the Young Blind remained loyal to him even after they earned a Conservatory organ prize under Dupré. As a private teacher, Marchal was also sought-after by students from France, other parts of Europe, and North America.⁹

For the performance of early music, Marchal rejected Lemmens' all-legato style that Dupré adhered to. Marchal's specific style of playing is described as follows by a friend of his, the British music critic Felix Aprahamian:

Having rejected an untraditional Romantic approach to Bach early in his career, his [Marchal's] later resistance to the equally false aesthetic of metronomic intransigence and excessive staccato made him a sometimes wayward but always sensitive Bach player.¹⁰

Marchal's repertoire ranged from the Medieval era to Messiaen, but omitted the big organ works, particularly those of Liszt and Widor and Dupré's large-scale compositions. Moreover, unlike other famous French organists born prior to 1925, Marchal was not a composer, something Dupré considered essential to an organist who was a complete musician.

Norbert Dufourcq, a Marchal student and close friend, was foremost a highly knowledgeable historian of French music and early organ building in France, and a scholarly editor of early organ music.¹¹ He shone as an engaging, if also polemical, writer and speaker. Dufourcq's visibility rose further when he collaborated with Marchal in several famous series of lecture-recitals that occurred in Paris, elsewhere in France, and beyond between 1941 and 1969.¹²

Marchal and Dufourcq had spearheaded their new style of organ design in France in collaboration with the French organ builder Victor Gonzalez in the 1920s. Beginning with organs the Gonzalez company built from about 1930, they attempted to unite in one instrument the tonal requirements of diverse styles of composition for the

organ—French- and German-Baroque organ music, Romantic-era organ music of Franck and Vierne, and modern organ music. To that end, Marchal, Dufourcq, and Gonzalez embraced principles of organ design that they termed *néo-classique*.¹³

Overall, the neoclassic organ had only one principle in common with Dupré's ideal organ design: it incorporated technologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Among these were the use of electro-pneumatic action to transmit the commands of the organist's fingers to pipes and adjustable combination systems powered by electricity for the sake of timbral and dynamic flexibility.¹⁴ The neoclassic organ completely distinguished itself from nineteenth-century organs, however, in its tonal design by, for example, making plentiful use of mutation stops (especially third-sounding stops, but also fifth-sounding stops) and mixture stops on as many divisions as the size of instrument permitted. It also differed from the Classical French organ of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in that it included a *Récit* division that was under expression and incorporated string stops and undulating stops such as the *voix céleste*.¹⁵ Voicings of pipes in a neoclassic organ did not match Dupré's vision of an organ's tonal design: they were neither those of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century builders nor Cavaille-Coll's, but individual to the instrument and experimental. As a result, in sound each neoclassic organ adhered to its own individual aesthetic.¹⁶

As was to be expected, these two streams of thinking on organ design in France did not coexist peacefully. In 1933, the French government had formed, as part of its Commission on Historic Monuments, a Commission on Historic Organs. Its task was to evaluate French organs in need of restoration and assign contracts to organ builders. Dupré and Marchal were both original members of the Commission on Historic Organs; Dufourcq, too, served for a long time on the Commission.¹⁷ Dupré, for his part, stood for organs being restored to their tonal designs as originally conceived or as adapted in the nineteenth century. Marchal and Dufourcq, in contrast, pushed for altering instruments according to neoclassical principles, resulting in some controversial re-buildings of existing organs.¹⁸

A controversial rebuild mentioned in Demessieux's diary is the organ created by Gonzalez for the concert hall of Paris's Palais de Chaillot (February 9, 1941 and November 11, 1945).¹⁹ This organ was built between 1936 and 1938 to replace the Cavaillé-Coll organ that had served so well in the concert hall of the recently demolished Palais du Trocadéro. In executing his neoclassic design Gonzalez incorporated little more than the pipework and windchests of the Cavaillé-Coll instrument.²⁰ Dupré would arguably have agreed to the plan of electrifying the action, extending the range of manuals and pedalboard, and building a mobile console, all of which required massive changes. He was evidently less pleased with the addition of newly designed mutation and mixture stops, the re-voicing of pipes, and the overall sound. In the words of Michael Murray:

Dupré was to see the traditional casework, which had given focus to sound and grace to physical appearance, abandoned at the Trocadéro and elsewhere in favor of exposed pipes, even exposed divisions. He was to see the brilliant yet mellow Cavaillé-Coll upperwork [stops at the 2-foot pitch level and higher] give way to clangorous mixtures incapable of blending, and the warm Cavaillé-Coll foundations and reeds give way to harsh choruses and rasping half- and quarter-length resonators. Worst of all, he was to see Cavaillé-Coll's achievements misinterpreted by a new generation eager to renounce the virtues as well as the excesses of Romantic organ-building.²¹

In other words, to Dupré and his supporters, the neoclassic organ rendered an equal disservice to performance of music of Bach, the Romantic era, and the modern era. Conversely, to the supporters of the neoclassical organ Dupré was, in effect, defending "*technologie passéiste*"²² and degenerate practices of foreign builders of symphonic organs.²³

As mentioned earlier, differing ideals of organ design were not the only grounds upon which the two sides criticized each other—they also argued about repertoire and performance practice. Specifically, a general anti-Romantic sentiment derided nineteenth-century organ repertoire (apart from Franck) and included Dupré's large-scale organ works in this censure. Dupré's detractors also accused him of metronomic playing of an unmusical sort as compared to Marchal's flexible performance style.²⁴ Moreover, they liked neither Dupré's fast tempi nor his articulation, and claimed his registrations flawed by heaviness. According to Dufourcq, when teaching,

[Dupré] showed himself to be fiercely opposed to certain interpretations, to certain aesthetics; this attitude could not but irritate those who were warm-blooded.²⁵

In turn, Marchal and his students came under criticism from Dupré's supporters for neglecting the cultivation

of virtuosity and ignoring most of the big Romanic-era organ works in existence.²⁶ From the point of view of Marchal's detractors, when playing Bach, he and organists influenced by him employed inappropriate rubato and an idiosyncratic melange of different sorts of detached articulation.

Dupré's viewpoint in Demessieux's diaries

Ideological differences between Paris organists, outlined above, resulted in acrimonious disputes, both in writing and in meetings of the Commission on Historic Organs. When combined with the baser human emotions such as egotism and envy, these differences arguably caused unconscious, and not-so-unconscious, forming of cliques of loyalty—for example, when church positions and teaching posts came open.²⁷ As a result, competition in the Paris organ world was strong and ruthless.²⁸

Demessieux's diary of 1940–1946 shines light on Dupré's point of view: that a major cause of enmity toward him and his goals was not merely his traditionalist stance, but, more importantly, his colleagues' jealousy of his abilities and achievements. Dupré believed that their resentment began in earnest following his pioneering 1920 series of Bach recitals. In the following quotation from 1946, he warns Demessieux about what to expect after her own debut as a concert organist:

“... At your age I too saw that the old could be jealous of the young. I am jealous of no one, as you know. Later I knew the jealousy of colleagues, and now, as you well know, I know the jealousy of the young. It doesn't bother me. You'll see!” (April 16, 1946).

But three years earlier, Dupré had, in fact, acknowledged that he felt keenly the malice of others which he attributed to jealousy:

“I've reached the age of fifty-seven without having yet attained my goal, which is rest. I have accomplished so much; and all I get are insults, insults” (April 16, 1943).

These comments, albeit made in private conversations, emphasize that Dupré frequently felt not just disappointed by others' criticisms, but embittered. Being human, he sometimes had unkind things to say of some colleagues and former students that he would not have wanted to be published. However, thanks to Demessieux's decision to commit them to paper, they reveal to the modern reader Dupré's emotional state of mind during the 1940s.

The text of Demessieux's diary of 1940–1946 follows this chapter. The first 49 manuscript pages cover her last months of study at the Paris Conservatory. The next 500 or so describe the period of her post-graduate organ study under Dupré as well as her 1946 Paris recital series. In these diary entries Demessieux frequently quotes Marcel Dupré at great length, indicating an ability to recall details of what was said that equalled her capacity for quickly committing music to memory. Selected letters written by Demessieux—and a few by Dupré to his close friend Jean Guerner—are inserted where they supplement the information in the diary. The diary's final 20 or so manuscript pages concern the last seven months of 1946, during which the Duprés were overseas. Here I have supplemented the diary text with letters written from North America by the Duprés to Jean Guerner.

NOTES:

2 Cf. François Sabatier's summary of these differences in “Avant-propos,” in *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal* (1934–1946), *L'Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009/III–IV): 5–7.

3 Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 91–92, 130–33, 133 n.24.

4 François Sabatier, “Victor Gonzalez et la facture d'orgues néoclassique en France (1926–1956),” *L'Orgue*, No. 276 (2006c/IV): 80.

5 Regarding mutation and mixture stops, it is important to remember that their use contributes to the clarity of lower voices in a polyphonic texture and that polyphonic texture, which is characteristic of the music of Bach and early music generally, is much less found in 19th-century organ repertoire.

6 See Daniel Roth and Pierre-François Dub-Attenti, “L'Orgue néo-classique et le grand orgue Aristide Cavaillé-Coll de Saint-Sulpice,” *L'Orgue: L'Orgue à Paris dans les années 1930*, Nos. 295–296 (2011/III–IV): 228–33. The authors justify, for Cavaillé-Coll organs of the late 1850s through the 1890s, the proportions devoted to mixture and mutation stops as compared to foundation

and reed stops.

7 Murray 1985, 196.

8 See Lawrence I. Phelps, “A Short History of the Organ Revival,” *Church Music* 67.1 (1967): 13–30. The organ reform movement (or organ revival) in Germany had its first stirrings at the end of the nineteenth century when Albert Schweitzer heard a new organ in Stuttgart and was aghast at how badly it sounded in a Bach fugue, perceiving a “chaos of sounds” in which he “could not distinguish the separate voices” (13). As the organ reform movement gained momentum, Schweitzer was eventually sidelined from it because he considered Cavaillé-Coll’s organs as “the ideal so far as tone is concerned” (14).

9 Ann Labounsky, “Remembering André Marchal, 1894–1980,” *The Diapason* (Dec. 2010): 20–23, lists many of Marchal’s students. Two organists who studied with him at Paris’s National Institute for the Young Blind were Jean Langlais (1907–1991) and Antoine Reboulot (1914–2002; naturalized Canadian). His American students include Philip Gehring (1925–2020) and Ann Labounsky (b. 1939). An example of a U.K.-born Marchal student is Philip Crozier.

10 Felix Aprahamian, “Marchal, André” in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.17721>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

11 See Christiane Spieth-Weissenbacher, “Dufourcq, Norbert” in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08274>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022. Among his other qualifications, Dufourcq took a degree in history from the Sorbonne (1923). He studied organ with Marchal between 1920 and 1940 and served as principal organist of St-Merry in Paris from 1923 until his death in 1990. Dufourcq taught at the Collège Stanislas (Paris) from 1935 to 1946 and was professor of music history and musicology at the Paris Conservatory from 1941 to 1975.

12 Norbert Dufourcq, “En guise d’exorde,” *L’Orgue: cahiers et mémoires*, No. 38 (1987/II): 8–10. See also “Éléments Biographiques” in Norbert Dufourcq, ed., *L’Orgue, Dossier 1, Hommage à André Marchal, numéro spécial de la Revue trimestrielle L’Orgue publié par L’Association des Amis de l’Orgue* (1981): 5, under the dates 1941–1969 and 1945–1946.

13 J. L. Coignet, “Is the French Neo-classic Organ a Failure?” *The Organ Yearbook* 4 (1973): 52–54; Pierre Chéron, “Autour de l’orgue néo-classique: de Cavaillé-Coll à Gonzalez,” *L’Orgue francophone*, Nos. 20–21 (Dec. 1996): 24; François Sabatier, “Réflexions sur le principe néoclassique appliqué aux arts et à la facture instrumentale de l’entre-deux-guerres,” *L’Orgue*, No. 276 (2006b/IV): 51–52. Sabatier praises the neoclassic organ as representing a renewal of organ building following the era of the symphonic organ. Some scholars of the French neoclassic organ, however, point to flaws in aspects of the original design concept (Chéron 1996, 26–27; Roth 2011, 217–19). Coignet 1973, 54–56, 62–65, believes that some such instruments were defective but that the idea was workable when carried out correctly.

14 Marc Hedelin, “La Facture d’Orgues à Paris au tournant des années 1930,” *L’Orgue: L’Orgue à Paris dans les années 1930*, Nos. 295–296 (2011/III–IV): 195–96.

15 Sabatier 2006b, 51.

16 Ibid., 51–52.

17 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norbert_Dufourcq>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, notes that Dufourcq’s archives of the organ Commission, held by the archives of the city of Paris, encompass the years 1933–1984.

18 Murray 1985, 153, 197.

19 The Palais de Chaillot, during the period covered by Demessieux’s 1940–1946 diary, was an important venue for organ recitals. The Association des Amis de l’Orgue promoted concerts there; Marchal was resident organist of the Chaillot organ and Dufourcq its curator.

20 The rebuilding of the organ and its new features are described at <<https://www.auditorium-lyon.com/en/1939-palais-chaillot#:~:text=THE%20INSTRUMENT,-%E2%80%93%20x%2061&text=Built%20for%20the%201878%20World,time%2C%20Aristide%20Cavaill%C3%A9%2DColl.>>, accessed Sept. 14, 2022, under the main heading “Reinstallation of the Organ.”

21 Murray 1985, 159–60.

22 Dufourcq 1987, 10.

23 As previously noted, Dupré was an admirer of the instruments of the British builder Willis and the U.S. builder E. M. Skinner.

24 In Louis Thiry, “Hommage,” *L’Orgue*, Dossier 1, *Hommage à André Marchal*, ed. Norbert Dufourcq, numéro spécial de la Revue trimestrielle *L’Orgue* publié par l’Association des Amis de l’Orgue (1981): 96, I sense that the contrast with Dupré’s prohibition against rubato in organ playing was in the back of the author’s mind when he wrote, “Marchal was one of the first to reveal that timing is the principal means of interpretation at the organ. In his interpretations, as in his teaching, he knew to clearly demonstrate at what point a minuscule extra duration given to a note creates the dynamism essential to a musical phrase. So much for the metronomic time practised by some . . .”

25 Norbert Dufourcq, “Hommage à Marcel Dupré,” *L’Orgue: Revue trimestrielle*, No. 140 (1971/IV): 111.

26 On the abandonment of late-nineteenth-century repertoire by young French organists of the 1940s, see Henriette Roget’s comments in Pierre Denis, “Les Organistes français d’aujourd’hui, V. Henriette Roget,” *L’Orgue*, No. 255 (2001/III): 42, reprinted from *L’Orgue: Bulletin de l’Association des Amis de L’Orgue*, No. 53 (1949/IV).

27 In a letter to her sister Yolande of Oct. 8, 1954, AM 4S15, Jeanne Demessieux wrote, “For the [position of teacher of the] Conservatory organ class, it’s all-out fighting, like a basket of crabs engaged in their inevitable dueling.”

28 Conversation with Rolande Falcinelli in Pau, France, Jun. 25, 2003.

8. Jeanne Demessieux's Diary and Selected Letters of 1940-1946 in Translation

I¹

This notebook is strictly confined to precise events or conversations, not a word of which has been altered, relating all without commentary and without hindsight, for my personal recollection.

[signed] Jeanne Demessieux

[1] Sunday 8 December 1940

Vespers at St-Sulpice at 3:30 PM. For the first time, Marcel Dupré asked me to play his organ; he had me improvise the entrance music for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament² (in the style of a procession) for a good length of time. In the middle of the improvisation he exclaimed,

“That’s beautiful, my little one!” and at the end, “what a beautiful improvisation; I am very pleased. It’s decided. Widor sat me at this organ when I was only twenty; that will bring you luck.”

Improvisation in E-flat minor on the hymn “Ave maris stella.”³

Monday 9 December 1940

Dupré announced in [the organ] class that I had played at St-Sulpice and asked me if I had ever dreamed of this.

Jean Gallon, when I told him this news, was very moved and said to me, “This is a great honour that Dupré has bestowed on you, an honour that you deserve. Here is my heart’s secret desire: once Dupré is named director [of the Paris Conservatory], he will not leave St-Sulpice, but will likely appoint a substitute; you will have your [Conservatory] prize and become substitute at St-Sulpice straight away, having, then, an advantage before becoming more. My feeling of friendship for you is as deep as for Marcel Dupré.”

Dupré made a point of [2] telling Busser that he had me improvise on Sunday. They spoke of my symphony; Busser said,

1. AM 4S2.

2. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is a short rite beloved of the laity. It venerates the stored eucharistic elements and, depending upon the parish, is celebrated either on an occasional basis or regularly on late Sunday afternoons, paired with an office such as Vespers. In French referred to as *Salut du Saint-Sacrement* (or simply *Salut*), it has its own, prescribed cycle of plainchant antiphons and hymns. Regarding Demessieux’s familiarity with this rite as an occasion for organ music, see Lynn Cavanagh, “Introducing the French Post-Romantic Style of Organ Music to Students: Demessieux’s *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*,” *College Music Symposium* 42 (2002): 37–59.

3. Description of the piece Demessieux improvised for the entrance.

"She is writing me a symphony that is quite interesting but is not for the old fogies at the January exam; for that she will write a sonata for piano and violin."

Wednesday 11 December 1940

Since I was speaking to the master about a feeling of fear towards art that I am presently experiencing, he said to me, "That is a good problem to have; don't worry." He confessed to me that he has never played or improvised in a concert, or in a service, and been completely satisfied with himself. He wanted to see my symphony. Recalling the day when I was introduced to him [in 1936]:

"I can tell you now: when I asked you how many little preludes and nocturnes you had composed in the style of the one in G-sharp minor that you had just played for me, and you responded, modestly, 'Twenty-five... thirty...' I thought to myself, 'Here is a kid [*petite gosse*] with a brain. It is the only time in my career I encountered such a case.'"⁴

[3] Saturday 30 November 1940⁵

I learned, confidentially, through the Conservatory administration, that the position of director will be open either very soon, or in a year.⁶ They are pleading with me, as Dupré's student and someone able to approach him, to let him know how much all the civil servants in the administration, as well as the entire musical milieu, wish to see Dupré named as Rabaud's successor. I was warned that Marcel Samuel-Rousseau is seeking to make himself a definite threat.

On the advice of those close to me, following my own impulse, and out of loyalty to the Dupré family, I rushed to Meudon in the afternoon, aiming to impart this. Profoundly touched, they admitted to me that Jean Gallon had already spoken of it to M^{me} [Jeanne] Dupré and Marguerite [Dupré] two years ago. Dupré said to me, "Since then, a few of my dearest friends have spoken of it to me. I have never wanted to accept, because I am not a man of the theatre like Rabaud and because I do not wish to sit on the throne of Fauré, who (I dare say) was a genius." But, at M^{me} Dupré's insistence, I left feeling certain that they would accept, if the offer were made to them by the state. They both kissed my cheeks [in parting] after having kept me for an hour.⁷

[4] Sunday 15 December 1940

At my 11:30 AM Mass at St-Esprit,⁸ I played the opening movement of the *Symphonie-Passion* by Marcel

4. AM 4S12, preserves manuscripts of a small number of these short piano pieces composed prior to 1936, along with some of Demessieux's later student work.

5. Judging from the entry date in late November, this diary entry was, apparently, added retrospectively.

6. The director at that time, Henri Rabaud, reached the mandatory retirement age of 67 for Paris Conservatory directors in November 1940.

7. The customary greeting or parting gesture between friends in France is to kiss both cheeks in the manner of "mwaa-mwaa" air kisses.

8. The 11:30 AM Mass, the second of two masses each Sunday, was the "low" mass at which the liturgy was spoken, not

Dupré (at the Offertory) for the first time, then the chorale prelude with ornamented melody in G “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland.”⁹ The first part of the Mass, improvised on the hymn “Creator alme siderum” (chorals [i.e., variations]). Postlude: improvised on a theme by Yvette Grimaud—beautiful (modulation and recapitulation in the subdominant, canons). Nine people in my gallery.

Sadly, I learned that M^r le Curé is in the hospital, where they had to perform emergency surgery.

Wednesday 18 December 1940

At the organ class, [we were given] a subject for a fugue and a symphony. The master found my symphony, “remarkable, individual, with attention to timbre and form.” He called my fugue one of the most beautiful that I have improvised in class.

He spoke to me about my sonata for piano and violin for which I have just finished an Adagio, and wants me to carry on immediately after with my symphony, which he wishes to get to know.

Dupré gave us a very profound definition of the artist (impossible to reproduce).

Friday 20 December 1940

After class, I accompanied Dupré as far as the [5] library, to speak to him and ask him to listen to my sonata and the fragment of my symphony as soon as I was ready.

He mentioned that he was very happy to chat with me to bring me up to date on the position of director of the Conservatory. Candidates' applications are pouring in: Noël Gallon, for one, [and] the director of the Versailles Conservatory¹⁰—strongly backed by Busser—for another. Dupré does not want to get anyone to help him, and told me that the most worthy candidate would be named, even if it were not him (!)

Tuesday 24 December 1940

At 5:30 PM Mass at St-Sulpice (Midnight Mass). The master began playing at 5:15: Widor's *Symphonie-Gothique* (I turned pages for him, though he played from memory), Sinfonia from the Cantata No. 29 by Bach, from memory. He improvised the Offertory (a Noël); during the Communion: some extraordinary

sung. It permitted extensive periods of continuous organ music, including performance of a set of lengthy composed organ pieces—sometimes called a “mass-recital.”

9. This was arguably Bach's “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,” BWV 659, from the set of chorale preludes known as the “Eighteen.” Even though, as was the practice in France, Demessieux always referred to Bach's chorale preludes by French translations of their titles, for this translation their original German titles, being more commonly recognized in the English-speaking world, are substituted.
10. The unnamed director of the Versailles Conservatory was composer and pianist Claude Delvincourt. According to the Wikipedia entry for Claude Delvincourt <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Delvincourt>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Delvincourt grew up in an upper middleclass family, and his music instructors included family friend Henri Busser. Amongst the arguments Busser would have made to recommend Delvincourt for the post could have been that he was a veteran of World War I who had sacrificed an eye.

variations with hugely imaginative timbres; for the postlude, based on two noëls, a symphony in three movements—Allegro, Scherzo, Finale (in the style of a fugue).

Yolande was in the gallery and was magnificently received.¹¹

Wednesday 25 December 1940

At High Mass [at St-Esprit], improvisations on noëls; d'Argœuvres congratulated me. At 11:30 AM, I played the "Nativité" [movement] from [Dupré's] [6] *Symphonie-Passion* for the Offertory. The rest of the time, I improvised on some noëls. Four people in my gallery.

At 3:30 PM, [attended Vespers at] St-Sulpice: Dupré improvised some magnificent versets that were profound, and a little melancholy. He had me sit on his left.

At 5:00 PM, my Vespers, which went very well; I created some versets, responding to the hymn. This evening and this morning, I was in brilliant form.

Sunday 19 January 1941

Feast of St-Sulpice. I asked for leave from St-Esprit so that I could spend the entire morning at St-Sulpice. High Mass: Dupré played an excerpt from Widor's Sixth [Symphony] and improvised a symphony at the end. 11:15 Mass: Liszt's great Fantasia [on "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam"].

Between the two masses, the master and Madame Dupré kept me for three-quarters of an hour in private conversation.

MD: "The more I think about it [*Plus je vais*], the less I understand what Busser said to you, in front of me, about your symphony. He finds it confusing, I find it very clear. I do not understand how he understands music. The same with Rabaud. I believe Rabaud has many young artists' failed careers on his conscience. He is not my enemy, but he is the enemy of my success, even though I was his student."¹²

"As for the directorship of the Conservatory (this will [7] sadden you): Delvincourt will have it. It's only a matter of forty-eight hours before it will be official; I can't imagine any other outcome: Busser took care of everything."¹³ I would have preferred to stay in my own little corner, to not have my name create such a fuss in this matter. I asked for nothing. I am sorry, to tell the truth, partly for 'the family business,' mostly for you."

Dupré introduced me to Duruflé who said he remembered the last time I competed, having been on the

11. Living in southern France, in what was then the unoccupied zone, Demessieux's sister Yolande had more freedom to travel than had residents of the north and west of France.

12. According to Anne Girardot, rev. Richard Langham Smith, "Rabaud, Henri" in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.22766>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Rabaud's watchword was "modernism is the enemy."

13. In fact, the Vichy government had not yet chosen between the applicants. It is unclear why Dupré expected announcement of the government's appointment to the Paris Conservatory directorship within the next 48 hours. Perhaps he knew that the next issue of the periodical in which such appointments were published, *Le journal officiel*, was due soon.

jury, and judged my fugue as the best; Dupré responded [to Duruflé], “You are going to think I’m exaggerating... I set you apart because you are an artist; and I maintain that, of all those present, no one is capable of competing with a fugue improvised by Jeanne Demessieux.”

Before I left, my dear teacher made some humble remarks to me, which I will not reproduce, lest a false interpretation tarnish the genius of Marcel Dupré for the reader of these pages. These words suffice to summarize his meaning:

“I have always asked affection of my students, not admiration.”

[8] Sunday 26 January 1941

I’m reporting here [about] Wednesday, January 15th, when Dupré had me come to the Conservatory to tell me about some recent impressions of events concerning “the family business,” and entrust me with the copy of his work for the next Bornemann edition of Liszt. He asked me to look at the metronome speeds, the fingering, and made me promise to tell him whether my musical sense agreed with his or not.¹⁴ He again wanted to see my symphony that I’d sketched out for him at Meudon two days before.

As we were leaving, we ran into Jean Gallon; they spoke about my sonata, the finale of which Dupré has urged me to develop further. He said he’s enthusiastic about my symphony and declared to Jean Gallon that if I do not receive my organ prize this year, he will resign.

I left with Jean Gallon, who said to me that he had never seen Dupré so very enthusiastic about one of his students. He [Gallon] was very happy about this. We chatted privately. Jean Gallon: “I know a little Jeanne Demessieux who will one day be a professor at the Conservatory. Oh, not tomorrow, but... soon! When that day comes, old Gallon [9] will be happy, and if Dupré were to be director... ah, well!...”

Wednesday the 22nd [of January 1941], Dupré had me come to Meudon an hour before class. I returned the score and played the Liszt for him by heart. Only one point on which I am not of the same mind as he: for the passage in G minor (arpeggios) the master has indicated 72 = quarter note; I find this too slow. We worked on it, then, MD: “You are right,” and he made a note. He was uncertain about the Andante, which he believed to be too slow, and asked my opinion; he decided to review the movement. I switched one of his pedaling indications. MD: “You really think that this is better? I’m asking in the interest of pedagogy; as a virtuoso, I can stray in a personal direction; but the moment you tell me that there is a better way of doing it, I believe you.”

Sunday the 26th, I played Liszt’s great Fantasia on “Ad nos” at St-Esprit.

Thursday the 23rd, Busser announced his official retirement.¹⁵ As director, he named Paray, Delvincourt, Dupré.

Busser: “What would you say, Demessieux, if Dupré were no longer an organ professor? Would you cry?...”

Monday 27 January 1941

14. Dupré’s edition, *Trois œuvres pour orgue de Franz Liszt*, was published by Bornemann that same year, 1941.

15. This is a curious statement because according to Henri Busser, *De Pelléas aux Indes Galantes* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1955), location 3589 of 3621, Busser did not actually retire from the Conservatory until Jan. 1948.

Rabaud will finish out the academic year.

[10] Tuesday 28 January 1941

For Noël Gallon, I played my sonata (with my violinist). He liked it better on the second hearing.

NG: "I'm somewhat afraid that the harmonies are too aggressive for the jury. It is aggressive as a whole, not in the detail, which is preferable. It's well constructed; there are some imaginative timbres. Do you remember the first thing that you played for me; you were only thirteen! It was some Chopin. Up until then I had judged you to be an exceptionally gifted student, like Jean Hubeau. You have thrown me off course; I had said to myself, this child will never be a composer; she will always gravitate around some kind of influence. [But] now, do show me what you've written over the past three years, as I would like to take stock of the situation."

Wednesday, 29 January 1941

Organ class; fine fugue. Piece on two themes.

MD: "That's a beautiful [organ] symphony, a lovely piece; you made me wait for the theme. I did not notice you had it written out: careful! Be sure to tell me what Jean Gallon has to say about the sonata; I'll see you tomorrow."

I played for J. Gallon. I tried to find out if he considered my sonata aggressive.

JG: You are twenty years old and speak the language of your century. I'm with you. Your sonata is dissonant [*âpre*] and individual to you; [11] it's rich. Don't seek to please everyone! There will always be some who are crabby; old Georges Hüe will make a fuss. You have only to answer to yourself and to those in whom you have confidence and who love you, which is to say, Marcel Dupré."

In response, I added that I also value his personal judgment.

Thursday 30 January 1941

Composition exam. My violinist, Micheline Bauzet (student of Bouillon and J. Gallon) played magnificently.

The atmosphere created by the jury was horrible. Dupré was beside Philippe Gaubert, Rabaud presided, and Busser was standing—agitated, and talking. First movement of my sonata: I heard Marcel Samuel-Rousseau say out loud, "What's that supposed to be? A funeral march? [Something] in church for the entrance of the officiating minister!" Second movement: Busser was talking very loudly to [Samuel-Rousseau; I heard [the word] "sad." Third movement: Georges Hüe was furious, got up and exclaimed, "Just look at Dupré! Look! He's listening to that! He thinks it's beautiful! It's scandalous, hideous!" At the very end, Rabaud said, "That's fine," without raising his eyes. I departed, crushed.

The next instant, I saw Busser, who in front of thirty people, reprimanded me in the [12] following way.

B: "Oh, it's you! Yes, you! They found it hideous, horrible! They're all wound up arguing about it."¹⁶ Too bad

16. As noted in AN, AJ37, 535, "Études Musicales, Exams semestriels, années 1936 à —", 341, other examiners present for this

for you: all you wrote were wrong notes. But, during the first years, it's always that way; you have replaced Falcinelli."¹⁷

I told Busser that I did not think this judgment was worth much because no one had actually listened to my sonata.

He left, repeating, "It was hideous."

Dupré came out, saying, "My poor dear, I was not able to rescue you: they are all against me. They have been very harsh today: I have suffered for it. Tomorrow we will chat, and I will tell you what Rabaud said. Bye for now; I'm going to see Marguerite!"

I spotted my teacher again in the subway, looking for the right direction; I retreated. [But] seeing me, he took me by the arm [and said]:

"Come with me." I remember this much [of what else Dupré said]: "I believe I finally understand what they are asking of composition students: a [style of] writing that stems directly from a given melody and figured bass, with no attempt to seek out imaginative harmonies, in a form that we could call, in a word, eighteenth-century *pastiche*. There is a class missing at the Conservatory, a [13] class for teaching these stylistic imitations, making the connection between the harmony-fugue [classes] and the composition [class]."

I asked, "What name would you give to this class?"

"Neither composition, nor study of forms, not even an introduction."

Me: "This class would then be based on a misunderstanding."

MD: "You've said it. And now, my little one, remember this: all the great musicians were misunderstood, derided, starting in their youth: you can't be a great musician without going through this. I am telling you this from experience, and I'll share this much: I myself have known grave insults. Today I was once again subjected to direct attacks on my artistry. For you it will be the same."

Marcel Dupré left, telling me again not to forget this.

Friday 31 January 1941

I went to see Noël Gallon at his morning class to ask him for a meeting. He wanted to chat and kept me for a half hour. I told him I'm discouraged and shared my impressions with him. He told me that my sonata was much too advanced for the jury and asked me what music I like. He was stunned when I told him that I particularly like Beethoven, Chopin, [14] Wagner and the romantics generally; that I like, but less passionately, Fauré, Debussy, Ravel, and that I find myself attracted more and more to the great classics.

NG: "Then, I don't understand anymore, I do not understand." And because he wanted to encourage me, I

session were Gabriel Grovlez, Jules Mazzelier, and Jacques Chailley (secretary). The grade recorded for Jeanne Demessieux: "Très Méd[iocre]"—Very mediocre.

17. Demessieux's classmate Rolande Falcinelli had been in Busser's composition class since autumn 1938. According to AN, AJ35, 502, "Classe de Composition Musicale. M^r Henri Busser," in the 1939 composition competition, she had won a Second Prize. Then, as noted in AN, AJ37, 503, "Classe de Composition Musicale, M^r Henri Busser," in the 1940 competition she attained no further award.

told him that I am at the point of asking someone I can trust whether I should continue to write or not. Noël Gallon was startled, began to stutter; then,

NG: “You believe, then, that I who started you on harmony, on fugue, who has seen you take your first steps, I am going to pronounce such a halt? This is serious: I cannot and do not wish to; and if I were wrong? An opinion more authoritative than mine is needed. Perhaps it would be good if you went to see Rabaud to present your case to him. Do you compose with difficulty or because you want to write?”

I responded, “I’ve been drawn to composition practically since my earliest years [*depuis mon âge de bébé*], but there’s a difference between childish [*enfantin*] enthusiasm and grand artistic aim. That’s what troubles me, because yesterday it became clear to me that I must choose.”

NG: “If you are writing from a desire [to compose], you must become a composer; I’ll ponder this; it’s a serious matter.” [15] He advised me to speak to Dupré.

In the afternoon, I waited for Dupré before the start of the class. He was worried: “Are you feeling better?” After a moment, we chatted. MD: “After leaving you yesterday, I spent twenty minutes with Marguerite (at the clinic);¹⁸ out of twenty minutes, we spent fifteen talking about you. At lunch with my wife, we spoke only of you—and the same all evening. Last night I did not sleep, and this morning my mind is made up. Don’t listen to anyone! Do not believe what they are telling you! Right now, you are searching for yourself. Stay true to yourself! [*Restez-vous même!*] If you wouldn’t mind, I wish to speak to you in front of your classmates. First, though, have you something confidential you want to say to me?” With the master, I went back through my conversation with N. Gallon and, trembling, I asked him the same question that I told him I had posed to Noël Gallon: should I continue to write or not?

MD: “So that’s it... it has come to this... beautiful!” A pause. MD: “Remember the story of Glazunov asking Liszt this question? Do you remember Liszt’s response? [16] Well, my little one, here is mine: taking upon myself—accepting—paternal responsibility, I’ll permit myself to say to you, on my honour as an artist: you have been born to a career as a composer just as to a career as an organist and improviser; your life must be spent pursuing this aim. [Believe me when] I tell you, a child who, at nine years of age, wrote thirty nocturnes for piano is a born composer. Now, come.”

In class, Dupré asked my classmates for permission to speak with me at length in front of them. Publicly, he repeated the same words to me. Here is what Henri Rabaud said to him: “Among these young people [*enfants*], there are those who are in ensemble classes. I listen to them interpret Beethoven, Schumann, Mozart, sometimes in an admirable way; I am persuaded that they like this [music]. The same young people write ugly things, enough to make you believe they are not musicians. Others are in a harmony or fugue class; they know how to create something charming out of a given melody, or write a correct fugue; [yet] when they compose, they make ugly music. I [17] end up believing that they are not musicians. I am nearly convinced that I see them in their compositions, and that where I am mistaken is in believing them to be musicians based on a beautiful performance or a good bass [realization].”

The master spoke for an hour and a half, so magnificently that I dare not report, not being certain of every word.

18. The diary entry for Feb. 5, 1941 (ms. p. 20) will clarify that Marguerite had an infection.

I played two stations from [Dupré's] *Chemin de la Croix* (fifth and ninth) for him.¹⁹ When I had finished, he said to me,

"You certainly are taking this to heart [*vous êtes bien touchée*]! Rest assured, my little one; there will be [other setbacks] (I have had them), but of all the blows ones receives in life, the first is the hardest."

As he was leaving us, this is what the master said to me:

MD: "Lastly, my little one, I say to you again: you are a composer! Don't worry; go in peace."

Concerning the fifth station from the *Chemin de la Croix*, I am reporting Marcel Dupré's idea: a man, a labourer, is returning from work and meets the procession of the tortured Christ [*Supplicié*]; he retreats to the edge of the road to watch it pass, "the way one watches an accident." A soldier orders him to help Jesus carry his cross; he obeys, without enthusiasm, but, touched by [18] divine grace, he adjusts his steps little by little to those of Jesus and, having achieved this, tries to carry the heavier weight.

Sunday 2 February 1941

Mass at 10:00 AM: [Yvette] Grimaud brought me a theme on which I improvised a symphony (not so beautiful). 11:30: I played "Choral mystique de l'Eucharistie,"²⁰ the Toccata and Fugue in D minor by Bach, improvisation[s] in the forms of chorale variations, a symphony.

I saw Father de la Motte, who said to me, "I have unlimited confidence in my little Jeanne. She can do whatever she wants in her art; I have confidence in her, and nothing will make me change. She can count on my support."

Monday 3 February 1941

Marcel Dupré: "Would you believe that this child, who looks like an angel from heaven landing in our world of misery, would be capable of making a jury so angry, and that she could scandalize them so much that they find her language 'too advanced'" ([said] in the organ class).

Wednesday 5 February 1941

19. According to Marcel Dupré, *Recollections*, trans. and ed. Ralph Kneeream (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1975), 97, Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix*, Op. 29 was based on a set of organ pieces he improvised in a 1931 Brussels concert. They had occurred as commentary on, and in alternation with, readings aloud of sections of Paul Claudel's poem *Chemin de la Croix* (descriptive of the 14 stations of the cross). According to Graham Steed, *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré* (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1999), 58–59, in preparation for the Brussels concert, Dupré researched the musical motifs upon which he would improvise so they would incorporate musical symbolism associated with the Christ's passion that he had found in a "vast volume of sacred music from the Renaissance to the twentieth century."

20. AM 4S13, "Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées," Demessieux's notebook listing music played at St-Esprit, specifies that the composer is Bach. "Mystic Chorale for the Eucharist" presumably refers to a communion hymn, suggesting, possibly, one of Bach's settings of "Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele"—either BWV 759 (no longer attributed to Bach), or BWV 654 from the set of chorale preludes known as the "Eighteen."

M. Dupré had Jean Gallon come by the class, having said to me: "Here is a great artist who wishes to speak to you. You are going to end up smiling!"

JG: "What is Marcel talking about? What's going [19] on?"

I said, among other things, that they have labelled my music "music of the mad."

JG: "It certainly makes you wonder who it is that is mad!" He openly blamed Busser. He vigorously encouraged me.

JG: "Don't listen to any of them; ignore that ridiculous old man (Georges Hüe). Only one person is worthy of your confidence: Dupré; my brother, and myself for advice and support. You will play your sonata for me again, and we will see, fairly, between the two of us, if—in view of the opinion here—there are things to be scratched out and tried again or if the whole thing is unredeemable. We're going to try to find the definitive plan that will allow you to receive the prize in composition as quickly as possible, and then, 'Bye-bye.' In three or four years, people around you will be saying, Jeanne Demessieux has a personality [that is her own]. And later, you will be a professor here; that's how it goes!"

I mentioned to him that Dupré had been attacked strongly at the jury.

JG: "Nothing surprising there; he's starting to bother them a bit!" He laughed. "Things are going fine for him. Take heart, my little Jeanne, take heart."

I returned to the class where Dupré exclaimed, [20] "She is smiling! For your sonata as for everything, you must tell Jean that I insist he promise to tell you everything he really thinks, as I can say he always did for me. He, with Augustin Barié, was supportive of my three Preludes and Fugues [Op. 7] two years before I won the Rome Prize.²¹ Théodore Dubois, a member of the Institute, spoke of me to Widor, saying: 'this little Dupré is very nice, a good musician; he'll have a fine career as an organist, but he will never be a composer.' Widor repeated this to me after my Rome Prize..."

I was improvising very badly and stopped in the middle of a symphony, disgusted. MD: "It is that unfair reproach that has upset you so much [*fait tant de mal*]! ..." I told him I'd had a fever for several days. MD: "Tell me about it! Just ask my wife and Marguerite; for eight days we've talked of nothing but you at the table, and I dare say that you have preoccupied us as much as Marguerite's infection [*panaris*]. Don't worry; remember what Liszt said to Glazunov!"

I left with Jean Gallon; we chatted for three-quarters of an hour. He got me wound up, and [21] insisted I go to concerts as often as possible, especially to the Opéra. He has boundless enthusiasm.

I went to visit Noël Gallon, who kept me for two hours to have me play my works composed since 1935. Like me, he considers my suite and my sonata, written under the same conditions—for the jury and very quickly—to not truly be expressions of myself. He was reassured by hearing the sketch of my symphony and said that I am on the right track. He focused great attention on my preludes for piano. He told me he is still puzzled by my musical taste, though he recognizes a hint of classicism in my symphony.

21. According to Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 56–57, and Steed 1999, 2, Dupré's *Trois Préludes et Fugues*, Op. 7 (Paris: Leduc, 1920) were composed ca. 1911–1912. During that period, Dupré made the first of three attempts at the Rome Prize competition, which he would eventually win in 1914.

Sunday 9 February 1941

11:30 Mass: Chorale (Bach) No. 50;²² ninth and fifth of *Le Chemin de la Croix* by Dupré. Improvisations: chorale variations, symphony (on the Communion [chant] for Septuagesima Sunday).

At 5:30, a concert by Maurice Duruflé at the Trocadéro;²³ Dupré had insisted that I attend. I was able to observe the console in detail. Moving the organ case forward has had an enormous effect. Many [22] people present. Duruflé fell short of a huge success by not responding to the call for an encore and improvisation while enthusiasm was building.²⁴ I encountered Dupré and his wife. I spotted Grunenwald [as well as] Marchal, who attracted such a fuss that one could not get near him. Duruflé welcomed me kindly: “Ah! You’ve come!” I introduced my sister to him. The organ is interesting, but the foundation stops are weak, the mixtures a bit acidic, and the overall effect somewhat hard, lacking support. A mishap during the concert: a cipher on the *Récit* that they did not manage to fix.

Monday 10 February 1941

Organ class; I improvised a lovely fugue; Dupré found it interesting and “alive” (I did a rare stretto of the countersubject in class, my third experiment). Lovely free theme (by mistake, a discord at the reprise).

Dupré: “I can’t wait to hear what Jean (Gallon) will have said about the [violin] sonata! I’m very interested. I can’t get over Busser’s volte-face Thursday: ‘You could have a [First] Prize, or a Second Prize, in two or [23] three years, with the same jury, by presenting the same sonata; they would not remember and might [simply] be better disposed toward it.’”

Regarding the Duruflé concert: MD: “An artist must seize the moment when, there on the stage, he senses a growing fever of excitement in his audience. In several instances, this has launched a career.”

I played my sonata again for Jean Gallon. He devoted an hour to me after his class, just the two of us with my violinist.

JG: “The more I hear this sonata, the more I like it; that’s significant: it proves how good it is. First, I’ll say what I think. With all due respect, I do not agree with the jury. There is, here, a single idea, worked through;

22. In AM 4S13, “Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées,” Demessieux’s more detailed written record of music performed Feb. 9, 1941 names the piece as “Je veux te dire adieu” and specifies it is from the Peters edition, vol. VII, no. 50. This is Bach’s “Valet will ich dir geben,” BWV 735.
23. Trocadéro, in this context, is an anachronistic reference to the concert hall in the Palais de Chaillot, the building erected in 1935 for the 1937 World Exposition on the site of the demolished Palais du Trocadéro (16th arrondissement, Place du Trocadéro, situated directly across the Seine River from the Eiffel Tower). The concert hall of the Trocadéro, according to Orpha Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 94, seated 5,000. It contained a large Cavaillé-Coll organ that was Paris’s first concert organ, i.e., the first large organ in Paris not installed in a church. The rebuilding of this Cavaillé-Coll instrument for the concert hall in the Palais de Chaillot was carried out by Victor Gonzalez in keeping with “neoclassic” organ-building principles of the day.
24. According to Norbert Dufourcq, “Un Concert d’Orgue au Palais de Chaillot,” *L’Illustration* (Feb. 22, 1941): 196, Duruflé’s program consisted of Bach (Toccata and Fugue in D minor), Brahms, Handel, and Daquin, followed by Franck, Dupré, Vierne, Widor (Toccata from the Symphony No. 5), and Duruflé.

it is admirably written. Evidently, there is a conflict between your music and your person: you are angelic, delicate; one expects you to write berceuses, romances, and [instead] you write this music, which I like, and which is proud (in a noble way) and masculine, rough. For the jury, this is disconcerting. If I were a critic, I would not dare write anything after a first hearing of this sonata; I would ask to borrow the [24] score for a week. With these things, it's necessary to reserve judgment at first: 'I don't like that,' right off the bat, is a ridiculous statement. You have undeniable character. You can believe in this [sonata], as can we, because it is built on your past and backed up by prizes in harmony, fugue, organ, and piano, of which it is the fulfilment. You are a profound and erudite musician, a thinker."

Jean Gallon sought to identify the "spots" that would have bothered the jury. After skimming through the score, he thought he could find none; he hesitated, afraid of making a mistake, then made up his mind.

JG: "If I were called Jeanne Demessieux, I would take up this sonata again during the next vacation and, without touching anything, I would try to present the same ideas in a language accessible to the man in the street; one has to treat the jury like a man in the street." As an example, he gave the last measures of the Adagio (which he found well thought-out). I tried playing them for him with a simple harmonization.

JG: "That would work for the jury, though the audience would remain cool, in need of what you actually wrote." And again: "What always works, regardless of the language, is rhythm. We experience rhythm, but it not so with harmony, which we analyze with the heart, the head, or the ear. This is why an Adagio is the most difficult to impose on a general audience. Remember this: you always need the 'man in the street'; it is he who is right when he has the majority. The moral of the story for you, as the fable says, is that a mouse may sometimes help a lion [*on a souvent besoin d'un plus petit que soi*]."

J. Gallon promised to bring me the orchestral score of [Ravel's] *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, as a gift.

Wednesday 12 February 1941

Jean Gallon had me call in at the Conservatory to collect the Ravel score.

Organ class: I improvised one of the most beautiful fugues (Dupré found it admirable) and a symphony that he called "a lovely bit of symphonic work"; he remarked on the beauty of both pieces.

Dupré's definitive version regarding the composition class: "The professors' misunderstanding is in failing to realize that a student needs to like what they have written, even if it pleases no one else. For students, the misunderstanding is not having the courage to do simple composition exercises [26] that permit them to study form."

After class, I chatted with Dupré, who brought me up to date on his application. We chatted with Jean Gallon.

During class, Dupré said to me, "You've got all your sparkle back. That pleases me greatly." I repeated what J. Gallon had said to me.

Thursday 13 February 1941

My birthday. My parents presented me with the Dubois's *Treatise on Counterpoint and Fugue*,²⁵ knowing

25. Théodore Dubois, *Traité de contrepoint et de fugue* (Paris: Heugel, 1901; Menestrel, 1928).

my desire to do a thorough review of counterpoint as soon as possible. They have also ordered many works by Marcel Dupré for me. My joy overflows.

Friday 14 February 1941

Yesterday, I met M^r Mazellier who spoke to me about the exam in these terms: "Don't be discouraged. But still, what music! You could do much better with what you have learned. Do you think it is harder to write the way you write? Come now, give in to your impulses, write what you think; ah! Well, if this is your music! Then..." (It felt like the walls of the Conservatory were caving in on me.)

Today, the organ class: the master liked the [27] way in which I interpreted [Franck's] *Grande Pièce symphonique*. [Improvisation on a] free theme (nice arrangement at the reprise) of which Dupré said, as soon as it ended:

"I can say it no other way: I liked that, my little one! Perhaps I am not a good teacher; perhaps I am wrong, but I prefer simply telling you what I think. There are some people who do not understand that no artist, of any age, can write without emotion."

Monday 17 February 1941

Organ class: MD: "Good fugue; nice beginning to the free theme" (I didn't continue).

Dupré gave me excellent advice on composition; he again advised me to write a fantasy for piano and orchestra (with winds in threes) for the competition.

MD: "They cannot reproach you for writing badly for piano, since they recognize that you play it magnificently. Write for winds in threes: don't forget that you are in Paris. Allow your ideas to mature over time before writing: gather phrases, harmonies, orchestral arrangements, the way one cultivates flowers; it doesn't matter if, for one drop of essence, it takes hundreds of flowers! Even so, there will be [28] people who do not like that particular scent."

Speaking of my symphony, which I am orchestrating as I compose,

MD: "I admire people who compose directly for orchestra; I have known three: Paray, Litaize, and you."

Wednesday 19 February 1941

Organ class. MD: "A magnificent fugue; there is nothing to say." The symphony movement was a scherzo on two themes. MD: "That's remarkably beautiful."

I went to Jean Gallon's, where I listened to Beethoven's Mass.

Friday 28 February 1941

I was the only student at the organ class until 3:00. Dupré arrived with Duruflé; they chatted about the organ at St-Étienne-du-Mont, which is going to be renovated. When Duruflé left, I played the *Grande Pièce symphonique*, in its entirety, from memory. Afterwards, I noticed that Dupré's eyes were moist; after a moment,

MD: "Now listen to me: when you give an organ concert, the audience will go to it just as one goes to take

a lesson. Don't worry about your future. You will have [29] a magnificent career as organist and composer... When Busoni played, one had the feeling of being at a lesson. That's the ultimate mark of a great artist. I like the way you play the *Pièce symphonique*; it's profound."

On the subject of the directorship, MD: "I don't know if I really have any chance. The freemasons tend to have it all wrapped up. Yet, I cannot make myself into a freemason.²⁶ There are two things in life I fervently hoped for: St-Sulpice and the organ class. If I were given a choice between St-Sulpice and the directorship, do you think I could renounce St-Sulpice? To you I can make my profession of faith: I have never degraded myself to seek an honour; I have the Legion of Honour because it was offered to me, and as soon as I cross the border, I stop wearing it. I can be reproached for nothing in my public life, nor in my private life. I know that there are those who have tried to turn my friends against me. If I were a freemason, I would never want to enter a church, take the holy water, [30] make the sign of the cross, kneel down, because therein lies the Phariseism Jesus pointed to."

I improvised on a free theme. MD: "A jewel."

I left with Jean Gallon.

Monday 3 March 1941

Dupré, having learned that Busser does not want me to write a fantasy for piano and orchestra (there being another student working on a similar work), strongly encouraged me to write a large-scale organ piece.

MD: "One knows neither who will enter the competition nor who the judges will be." He does not want me to ask for a leave from the composition class this year.

Wednesday 5 March 1941

MD: "An artist-composer has made his contribution to art when he is convinced of having created a useful work."

I showed Dupré an Adagio theme that had come to me. He whistled it, stopped: "it seems beautiful to me..." studied it, then:

"What you have here is the Adagio of the symphony!"

I asked him if I could use it for a fantasy for organ.

MD: "I'll have to think about it... I promise to think about it between now and Friday, and let you know."

26. According to Jean-André Faucher, *Les Francs-Maçons et le Pouvoir de la Révolution à nos jours*, Vérités et Légendes (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1986), 167–68, up until 1939 French freemasons were able to ensure that one of its adherents was placed in certain sectors of French government administration, one of which was Public Instruction. Nevertheless, that in 1941 Dupré believed the current government would favor a freemason to head the Paris Conservatory is ironic. According to Richard Vinen, *France, 1934–1970* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 64–65, the Vichy government, like the occupying Nazis, blamed freemasons (as well as Jews) for much of what was "wrong" with France and had put in place an injunction prohibiting freemasons from holding public office.

[31] Friday 7 March 1941

Before the organ class, Duruflé, Perroux, and Beuchet were there waiting for the master to talk about St-Étienne-du-Mont.²⁷ Duruflé drew me into the conversation and introduced Beuchet to me; we spoke about my organ and about St-Esprit.

In class, as soon as Dupré arrived:

“I’ve thought about your theme; it is the Adagio of your symphony. You resist because you were obliged to abandon your symphony several times. (Busser did not encourage you, and you listened to him out of mere obedience.) But the symphony is close to your heart and won’t go away... Whether you like it or not, you are writing your symphony, you are hearing your Adagio (he sang it from memory), isn’t that so?... Keep this beautiful theme for the symphony but think of something for organ.”

Saturday 8 March 1941

Composition class. H. Busser: “Be so kind as to tell Dupré for me that he is invited to my students’ concert, or rather, his wife and daughter, too, for he may not come.... Ah! In fact, he would not come for me; but for you—yes.”

B. to M^{lle} Deschamps: “In your first year [as a composition student] [32], you are playing it safe, unlike M^{lle} Demessieux, for example. She [Demessieux] has to have a Second or First Prize—Second at least.”

Me: “I will have nothing.”

B: “In composition one can remain five years without getting anything.”

Me: “This is what will save me!”²⁸

B: “I telephoned Vichy yesterday evening and was told that the director has been named. Tell me his name, I asked. ‘Oh, we can’t tell you.’ All they would say is that the new director is a war veteran...”

Me: “So, it’s not [Marcel Samuel-]Rousseau any more than Dupré... it’s Delvincourt...”

B: “Tell your pianist that she must not be late (for the recital).”

Me: “Thank you for reminding me, Master. That often happens with her.”

B: “You won’t let me down, will you?”²⁹

27. Maurice Duruflé had held the post of titular organist of St-Étienne-du-Mont since 1930. According to the web page <<https://www.organsparisaz4.vhhl.nl/St%20Etienne%20Mont.htm>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, its instrument, which originated in the 17th century, had last been rebuilt and refurbished by Cavaillé-Coll in 1863. The organ’s next major transformation, by the organ building firm Beuchet-Debierre, did not actually occur until 1956.

28. Putting this discussion into perspective, following her first year in Busser’s composition class, 1939–1940, Demessieux had achieved in that year’s composition competition (postponed from Jun. 10 to Sept. 23, 1940) a First Mention. It was customary to hope to better one’s achievement in the annual competition from one year to the next as Demessieux did in piano and counterpoint. Busser, here, warned her against counting on bettering her standing in the 1941 composition competition.

29. At the upcoming concert of works by Busser’s students, Demessieux herself would have intended to perform the piano

Sunday 9 March 1941

Concert given by André Fleury at the Palais de Chaillot. Beautiful concert, good response from the audience. A fine success. An encore: the Prelude in B major by Dupré. I was with Papa.

In the foyer, Papa introduced me to Fleury, who had the kindness to welcome me in these words: “M^{lle} Demessieux? You’re the one who improvises such fine fugues! I didn’t [33] recognize you for a moment, I’m so used to seeing you in the competition, without a hat! My father often spoke of you; he very much enjoyed going to St-Esprit. I am very pleased to meet you.”

We spoke to Monsieur and Madame Dupré, and Marguerite; M^r and M^{me} Touche and their charming [son] Jean-Claude; Thibaud, the singer;³⁰ some classmates. We noticed Marchal, who spoke briefly to Dupré. Same people I see at St-Sulpice.

Monday 10 March 1941

Extraordinary organ class. (I improvised first.) Dupré revealed something that my six classmates claimed to not understand but that profoundly touched [*émeut*] my artistic sensibility.

MD: “Since Saturday evening, I have been extremely troubled. Since the construction of my extraordinary organ, with which you are familiar, I have done, for friends and for others, some experiments in registration, experiments that I have never dared do just for myself, being hugely apprehensive about that [sort of thing]. Saturday, I was drawn, as though someone had me by the collar of my jacket, to do this experiment. I improvised, and at the end of the day I wrote six measures. Ideally, in my [34] opinion, one would superimpose timbres, to amalgamate them according to the colour, their intensity, vertically, instead of in succession. Discovering that encouraged me to write using a particular harmonic language that resembles one of my latest Preludes and Fugues, the one in E; one cannot write on only 4 or 5 staves; one must use an alto-C-clef. I believe I’m on the verge of discovering a scientific fact that will allow for the teaching of ‘orchestration’ in a reliable manner. Therein are the laws of nature concerning the relationships and intensities of timbres. It is trivial to compare timbres to colours or to vowels; but there are a few things that can be compared to consonants. A trumpet pronounces on its attack P, a violin V, a flute T, etc. Perhaps I am the victim of a mirage... Soon I will know if this mirage is reality. I believe that the ideal I seek will appear to me. I think only of that; I will share my impressions with you. If I am wrong, my children, you will indulge me...”

[35] Tuesday 11 March 1941

I chatted at length with Jean Gallon.

Wednesday 12 March 1941

part of her Sonata for violin and piano. Therefore, in the preceding three lines, she and Busser are engaging in some mocking repartee.

30. Though Demessieux calls him a singer, this was likely the prominent French violinist Jacques Thibault (1880–1953).

Monday, March 10th, Busser spoke with Dupré in the foyer of the Conservatory. In the subway, I saw Dupré, who said to me, “Life is funny...” He then said to me, “... But... nothing has been done; you can still hope...”, and he led me to a coffee shop.

Today, Dupré spoke briefly to me:

“You must have been surprised the day before yesterday to see me with our associate!... The reason is that one should never forget: ‘Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.’”

In class, fugue and symphony. On hearing my countersubject, Dupré exclaimed,

“There is the right countersubject. I am erasing mine and putting yours in its place; I am a bit of a thief, don’t you know?...” For the symphony,

MD: “You have treated the theme just as I hear it. Nice colour, well constructed.” Fugue: “A beautiful competition fugue.” Verset (I did polyphony in 6 voices):

MD: “That’s very nice, admirably presented, very interesting; for the competition, this [36] would be interesting, except we mustn’t forget our great invertible [counterpoint], and the effect that it has.”

Friday 14 March 1941

Organ class. I was alone when the master arrived. A moment later Jean Gallon entered.

JG: “Are you alone, Marcel, my lad?” Seeing me: “I believe we can speak in front of Jeanne Demessieux...What’s new? I’ve been told that Busser announced in his composition class that Delvincourt’s nomination will occur any time now...” (It was I who apprised J. Gallon of this without having spoken of it to Dupré.)

MD: “I know nothing of it.”³¹

During the conversation, which, I recall, was very private:

MD: “I always told you that Delvincourt had the best chance, being severely disfigured... That’s why I did not want to run against him. In [the] Vichy [government], Delvincourt and Jacques Ibert were the preferred candidates;³² [Samuel-]Rousseau was not, nor was I...”

JG: “Delvincourt is clearly an honest man, but I can tell you that the general consensus is for you: [37] everyone wants you... I wish to believe this right to the end.” Dupré tried to dissuade J. Gallon.

31. According to Yannick Simon, *Composer sous Vichy* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 94, a printed notice of Delvincourt’s appointment did not appear in the *Journal officiel* until Mar. 31, 1941.

32. According to Alexandra Laederich, “Ibert, Jacques” in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13675>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the prolific and widely successful French composer Jacques Ibert (1890–1962) served in World War I, first as a nurse and stretcher-bearer, then a naval officer stationed at Dunkirk. Though a parallel with Delvincourt’s war record can be drawn, the connection Dupré makes here between Ibert and the government in Vichy is false. In the back of Dupré’s mind may have been Ibert’s appointment in 1937, by the French government of the Third Republic, to the prestigious post of director of the French Academy at the Villa Medici in Italy—a huge honour, given that the holder of the post was, traditionally, an august member of the French Institute, to which Ibert would not ascend until 1956. The Vichy government, on the other hand, far from favouring Ibert, banned his music in 1940.

MD: "I believe that our youngster here is saddened not to see this realized... They are both taken aback!"

JG: "What's certain is that in 5 years, all will have changed here, the people—even the people!... What will be the new trends? Busser has said to his students: 'You could "go there" now.'"

MD: "Do you, yourself, consider Delvincourt's music to be so modern?"

JG: "No."

MD: "It's not as easy as that to write 'modern' music! I confess to you, Jean, that I would like this child to graduate from here..."

JG: "Ah, yes; of course." Then, "Her graduation from the organ class being such a long time in coming, she is bored!"

MD: "I believe we will see each other again, even afterwards."

JG: "It's obvious that you will have gone to Vichy..."

MD: "To take the waters? I did that once in 1936."

JG: "No, you would have to cross the line... [into the unoccupied zone]. But you would not because you are Dupré, while for others, it is not so..."

MD: "If only you knew, Jean, what this school is like [*ce qu'est la boîte, ici*]:³³ it's sheer hell [*c'est infernal*]!! I believe that my destiny is gradually to return [38] to private life..."³⁴

Jean Gallon left, and Dupré confided his private thoughts to me.

MD: "Delvincourt needs to be director: it will be a joy for him. I myself have joy at home!... I have fully done my duty; I did my duty by applying for the directorship, by not withdrawing my candidacy... As far as I'm concerned, since last Saturday I have prospects [*j'ai un horizon*]..."

I pointed out to the master that since the appointment of a director lasted for some twenty years, in theory, a lot of music could be expected to pass "like water under a bridge" during this time, with very important consequences for young people. Dupré was thoughtful for a while, then: "That's true; you're right."

Dupré spoke again to Jean Gallon:

"Now I'll tell you again what I've said to the rare friends who could comprehend it; I have not yet begun to

33. *Boîte* here is slang for school.

34. Here is my interpretation of remarks, as quoted by Demessieux, that begin back with Dupré's "I believe we will see each other again, even afterwards": Dupré and Gallon imagine where they might be after they retire from the Paris Conservatory. Gallon believes Dupré "will have gone to Vichy." Dupré assumes that by Vichy, Gallon is referring to the thermal baths. (The thermal baths of the city of Vichy in central France were publicized for their purported curative powers as early as the 17th century; during the 1930s the popularity of taking the waters at Vichy reached its height.) Gallon's reference turns out to be to Vichy as the city in which French government employees had been stationed since the German Occupation began. At first, Gallon predicts Dupré will be there in a French government post, then implies (without saying why) that this would be inconsistent with Dupré's character. Paralleling that remark, Dupré denies interest in any government position, of which the directorship of the Conservatory is an example.

compose. I now have the feeling that I am going to compose. This may be only an illusion, but I don't think so."

Thursday 18 March 1941

I chatted for twenty minutes with Jean Gallon. His first words:

"No news?..."

"No, Master."

[39] "Well, I've had some. For our great man, it's not going as badly as he likes to believe."

As I was leaving, he said to me, "I have hopes for our 'saint.' In this affair, only one student and two professors have been in on the secret. We form a little Trinity."

Wednesday 19 March 1941

I informed Dupré that my sonata for violin and piano had been a success at Busser's recital.* (I had telephoned Busser the day before to ask him to let me play my sonata despite the scandal at the January exam.) Dupré was bursting with joy.

MD: "There you have it: 'they' were obliged to listen to the sonata! (Rabaud, Mazellier, Georges Hüe, etc....). It took guts for you to insist; it was a stroke of genius. Bravo!"

Jean Gallon attended the recital.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] I was called back to the stage three times with very insistent applause. Marcel Delannoy, in *Les Nouveaux Temps*, demolished me, ferociously.³⁵

Sunday 23 March 1941

Concert given by Noëlie Pierront at St-Germain-des-Prés; works by Jehan Alain.³⁶ I noticed Rolland, Duruflé, Fleury, Marchal, Lazare-Lévy. Dupré attended the first part with his wife. I climbed to the gallery where Noëlie Pierront received me with kindness that was very touching.

[40] Wednesday 2 April 1941

After class, Dupré led all his students to the Palais de la découverte,³⁷ the music section. A two-hour

35. Marcel Delannoy, "La Musique : Quelques 'Jeunes,'" *Les Nouveaux Temps* (Mar. 23, 1941), 2. *Les Nouveaux Temps* was a daily newspaper that began publication in Nov. 1940 (with the financial help of the German Reich's ambassador to Paris, Otto Abetz, a friend of the publisher, Jean Luchaire). It upheld the politics of German National Socialism (Nazism) for four years.

36. According to Pierre Denis, "Les Organistes français d'aujourd'hui, III. Noëlle Pierront," *L'Orgue: Bulletin de l'Association des Amis de L'Orgue*, No. 51 (1949/II), the program was entitled "Recital dedicated to the works of Jehan Alain (1911-1940), [who] died for France." It included the première of *Aria* (1938), which Alain had dedicated to Pierront.

37. The Palais de la découverte, Paris's Science Centre, opened in 1937. According to my May 27, 2015 email exchange with

lecture-demonstration. I saw, for the first time, sounds visualized on a lit screen. [Also saw] a working model of windchests and pipes built by Cavaillé-Coll.³⁸

Sunday 20 April 1941

St-Sulpice. At 11:15 AM Dupré played Widor's Fifth Symphony (movements I, II, III, V), from memory.

Tuesday 13 May 1941

In Meudon, for Dupré, I played the first movement of my symphony, for which I just completed the [piano] reduction.

Wednesday 14 May 1941

Organ exam. Jean Gallon was on the jury, as were Norbert Dufourcq, Cellier, Marchal, Messiaen,³⁹ Panel, Mazellier, etc. Themes by Marchal. Delvincourt presided. The overall grades: Me, Very good [T.B., for *très bien*] (nice remarks on my technique); Marie-Louise Girod, Good [B., for *bien*]; Denise Raffy, Pretty good [A.B., for *assez bien*].⁴⁰ Messiaen personally congratulated me!

present-day staff at the Palais de la découverte—specifically, Kamil Fadel, head of the physics dept., assisted by physicist Alain de Botton—the 1941 demonstration that allowed visitors to visualize sounds was likely conducted using the physics department's Helmholtz-Koenig sound analyzer. This machine is still displayed (though no longer used) right next to the Cavaillé-Coll model of a windchest. The sound analyzer is named for two inventors. Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894) invented a device that allowed him to listen to the exact overtone composition of sounds of different timbres, devices he called resonators. Later in the 19th century, Rudolph Koenig (1832–1901) invented the method by which the Helmholtz-Koenig apparatus makes sounds visible. To demonstrate the multiple pitches that make up one complex sound, one sounded a low C in front of the apparatus's eight open resonators, which would then sound, successively, a fundamental C and its first seven overtones. Air waves produced by each of the sound's partials caused flames produced from gas under pressure to vibrate sympathetically. Four oscillating mirrors (which could be mistaken for a "lit screen") reflected (rather like a stroboscope) the set of moving flames, making the composition of a sound into different frequencies easier to see than by observing flames.

38. The present-day, restored model is approx. 4' by 2½' by 3' high and labeled Aristide Cavaillé-Coll's *soufflerie d'essais* [n.d.]. It is believed to have been used by the builder as a portable tuning reference. It consists of bellows, windchest, electric motor (hidden in a nearby cubby hole), sliders, toe pieces, and about fifty pipes sounding A or select overtones of A (A4 set to 435 Hz), any of which can be made to sound by pulling a small draw knob. Flue pipes are arranged along one long side and mutations and reed pipes on the opposite side. A photograph in the archive of the Palais de la découvert shows the Cavaillé-Coll device and the Helmholtz-Koenig device sitting side-by-side, symbolizing the high regard in which Cavaillé-Coll as an inventor of new technologies was held in the 19th century.
39. According to the web page <<https://www.oliviermessiaen.org/biography>> © 2019 Malcolm Ball, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, composer and organist Olivier Messiaen had escaped from the German prisoner-of-war camp, Stalag 8A, Gorlitz, Poland in Mar. 1941, and had become a teacher at the Paris Conservatory by May of that year.
40. Marie-Louise Girod and Denise Raffy entered the Conservatory organ class in the fall of 1937, a year prior to Jeanne Demessieux.

Friday 16 May 1941

Upon my arrival at class, Dupré said to me, “For two days, I’ve been thinking about symphonies... much more [41] about yours than mine.” He appeared troubled and told me he had discovered, as if through a prism, the fundamentally nostalgic character of my music. He compared [my symphony] with some of my other works and found this characteristic to be subtly present, veiled yet still a part of the vital essence of my symphony. Such deep study astonished me.

MD: “I do not intend this as a reproach: Chopin, too, was nostalgic. I like your music. But for the ‘establishment’ [at the Conservatory] the contrast is so striking between what you write and you, yourself! Physically!... Your playing, as much on the organ as on the piano, is sunny. So, too, are your improvisations; your compositions are sunny to anyone who beholds them. [But] over these there is a veil and, deeper down, this indefinable nostalgia. I am convinced that you are searching for yourself.”

Sunday 18 May 1941

Concert by Marcel Dupré at the Church of St-Pierre-de-Charenton. Before the concert, the master invited me to come up to the gallery. Once seated at the organ, he asked Édouard Monet, sitting on his right, to give me his seat, and I witnessed the concert from this place of honour. Dupré played from [42] memory; the two of us pulled stops.

Two details to remember: I got an unforgettable lesson on mastery and humility that came directly from ideas of the master; secondly, I heard Bach’s Magnificat in its entirety for the first time with orchestra and chorus.⁴¹

Thursday 22 May 1941

On the radio, I heard part of [Wagner’s] *Tristan* (half of the second act and the third).⁴²

Sunday 1 June 1941

Pentecost. Cardinal Suhard came to St-Esprit for the first time. Full church. Maman and Yoyo [Yolande]

41. According to the printed program preserved in the BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1307, this concert was scheduled for 5:30 PM and followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The whole evening was presided over by canon Leclerc, vicar-general of the Archdiocese of Sceaux. The participating choirs and orchestra were directed by Lucien Chabro, choirmaster of Saint-Pierre de Charenton. Proceeds were to go towards national relief.
42. Judging from “La Radio,” *Les Nouveaux Temps* (May 22, 1940), 2, Demessieux may have heard the excerpt from Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* on the 8:30–10:00 AM Radio-Paris program “Ce disque est pour vous.” Radio-Paris returned to the airwaves in September 1940, now controlled by occupying German authorities. According to Cécile Méadal, “Pauses musicales ou les éclatants silences de Radio-Paris,” in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 236–38 and 250, Radio-Paris’s programming aimed, unsuccessfully, at convincing the French population of the superiority of German culture. In its spoken segments and information services it tried to impose a sense of normality.

attended the Mass, sitting downstairs. I played the Allegro from Widor's Sixth [Symphony], Prelude in B major by Marcel Dupré, Toccata from Widor's Fifth Symphony; and I improvised. My gallery was full of people.

Friday 6 June 1941

Organ competition. Jury: Jean Gallon, Duruflé, Fleury, Panel, Marchal, Litaize, Cellier, Noëlie Pierront, Marthe Bracquemond, Mignan. Delvincourt presided. Themes by Cellier.

My emotions ran high; I felt as if I were staking my future on my playing; I redoubled my efforts.

Delvincourt announced: "M^{lle} Demessieux?... Mademoiselle, the jury and I award [43] your First Prize unanimously. M^{lle} Girod, the jury awards you also a First Prize." Raffy [received a] Second Prize.

I met up with Dupré, who was waiting for us in the café at the ~~Montparnasse~~ St-Lazare train station.⁴³ With him were M^{me} Dupré, M^{lle} Chauvière, Marguerite, and her friend M^{lle} Fernande Vignard. The master greeted me with open arms upon learning the results.

MD: "This is the first time in sixteen years that the results are exactly what I wanted: I'm so happy!" He couldn't stop repeating this sentence. Speaking to me of my three [organ] competitions: "For three years I've been scared stiff that I might see you fall to pieces in my class! The first year I believed that you would bring down Jehan Alain and Segond; last year, I feared the enormous difference between you and your classmates, and this year, the same."

Girod and Raffy arrived. The master embraced them.

He said again, speaking to M^{lle} Chauvière: "In sixteen years, two of my students should have had their First Prize in the first year: Messiaen and that one," pointing to me.

Amusing detail: while leaving we passed a group of Germans, who were quite intrigued.

MD (aside): "Now that you have been triumphant, would you like me [44] to introduce you to our guests?" A charming witticism.

We accompanied them [the Dupré family] as far as the train for Rouen in high spirits. Everyone embraced everyone else. I have never seen the master so happy.

Jean Gallon had required that his entire class attend the [organ] competition. Since he had gathered his students in his classroom after the adjudication, I rushed over to throw myself into his arms before going to Dupré. He was rather gruff; no one moved a muscle.

JG: "That makes how many for you?... Four?... Ah well... keep it up!!"

At home, it was sheer madness. I have a strong impression that this day is like a milestone between my past and my future.

43. Not only is St-Lazare train station close to 8 rue de Madrid where the Conservatory was then located, it is also the station from which trains depart for Rouen. During the first six years he was a student at the Paris Conservatory, Dupré commuted by train between Rouen and Paris, making this station very familiar to him. Cf. the diary entry of Aug. 27, 1943 (under the heading "Trip to Rouen") in which Dupré says to Demessieux, "I know this line. I did all my harmony and counterpoint while travelling it."

I humbly took news of my triumphs to Father de la Motte, who embraced me with tears of joy.
I went to bed [feeling] totally intoxicated.

Monday 9 June 1941

With Jacqueline Pangnier, I played the first movement of my symphony for Jean Gallon. "That's beautiful," he said. He did not elaborate and wants to hear it again in a few days.

Friday 13 June 1941

I played the Allegro for Jean Gallon again, with the Adagio [45] that follows and that I've just finished. Henri Challan was present at the request of J. G. When the performance ended, J. Gallon turned toward Challan:

"This symphony is polished... polished... is it not, my little one? What beautiful orchestration, rich. It's great. Ah! it's carefully crafted..."

Challan, with a hostile air: "She must have had a terrible job writing this orchestration with winds in fours... It's uncommon."

JG: "And you wrote it all directly for orchestra?"

"Yes, Master."

Challan shook his head: "That must have caused you some trouble? It's very difficult."

J. Gallon asked to see the melody; he appeared to be "making up his mind," but said nothing. We stayed to work.

Sunday 15 June 1941

Jean Langlais concert at Chaillot. More beautiful technique than Marchal, heard previously. A problem with the [stop] combinations.

After the concert, I went with Papa into the foyer. Langlais was quite curt. I was surprised because it was he, himself, who had invited me. We saw M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite and spoke to them for a long time; the master is playing in Besançon today.⁴⁴ Marchal received me graciously, inviting me to go see his gallery.

44. Besançon is in the extreme east of France, near the Swiss border. According to the program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1310, Dupré was the featured guest-artist in a 4:00 PM organ and choral concert at the Basilica of St-Ferjeux in Besançon. It was presided over by S. E. Mg. Maurice Dubourg, Archbishop of Besançon and followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Among the works Dupré performed was *Litanies* by Jehan Alain and the 8th Station from his *Le Chemin de la Croix*. Besançon was a site of Nazi strength during World War II. According to the Wikipedia entry <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citadel_of_Besan%C3%A7on>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, its citadel was captured by the Germans in 1940, and here Germans executed some one hundred French resistance fighters during the war. As recounted in Nicholas Shakespeare, *Priscilla: The Hidden Life of an Englishwoman in Wartime France* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013), chap. 17, particularly pp. 177–81, Besançon was also the location of an internment camp that held passport-carrying British citizens from 1940 to 1941.

Duruflé and Litaize were cordial. [46] Langlais's only words, to be remembered and savoured: "So, you have come here to recover from [cuver] your First Prize?"

Tuesday 17 June 1941

Composition competition. In the morning, I played the Adagio [of my symphony] for Noël Gallon (who is already familiar with the first movement).

At the competition in the afternoon, four of us played my symphony. I was at the first piano with Yvette Grimaud (who had just been awarded her First Prizes in harmony and accompanying), who played the treble part. At the second piano, Jacqueline Pagnier with Rolande Falcinelli taking the bass. Irène Joachim sang my song, practiced that very morning. My performers displayed great skill, considering that they received the scores very late.

Ten jury members were in attendance. I saw Honegger, Georges Hüe, Kœchlin, Tony Aubin, Messiaen, Delannoy, Maurice Yvain, Grovley, Max d'Ollone. The entire jury gathered around Delvincourt to follow the orchestral score; but it wasn't long before Tony Aubin went and sat down again. A deathly silence during the Allegro. The Adagio began auspiciously; but Busser, having taken an adjudicator aside, talked nonstop in a loud voice, from the first note [47] until the last, without any response from the other. The same during the song. A sense of failure was in the air. I was very nervous having had to defend my 4th place ranking against my classmates.⁴⁵

The result is that, out of eleven participants, the six male students received recognition, the five female students did not. A First Prize: Gallois-Montbrun; a Second Prize: Desenclos, Landowski, Sautereau [class of Roger-Ducasse];⁴⁶ a First Mention: Pascal; a Second Mention: Martinet [class of Roger-Ducasse]. Fallen: [Tombées:] R. Falcinelli, Eliane Pradelle, Simone Féjard [class of Roger-Ducasse], Demessieux, Deschamps.⁴⁷

I don't know anyone's opinion; Busser was paying me no attention.⁴⁸

45. In the previous year's composition competition (1940), Demessieux's First Mention placed her fourth in her mind among that year's six competitors; they had been few in number because many regular class members had been on leave due to the war. The difficulty of maintaining her fourth-place position in 1941 lay in that year's larger pool of candidates, many of whom were older and more experienced. According to the record preserved in AN, AJ37, 535, "Concours de 1941, Séance du Mardi 17 juin, Composition Musicale," for the 1940-1941 academic year the following rejoined the class: 22-year-old Raymond Gallois-Montbrun (in his 3rd year); 27-year-old César Sautereau (in his 4th year); 28-year-old Jean-Louis Martinet (in his 2nd year); 26-year-old Marcel Landowski (in his 4th year); and 29-year-old Alfred Desenclos (in his 4th year). The other 1941 competitors who had not participated in 1940 were 30-year-old M^{lle} Pradelle (in her 3rd year) and 28-year old M^{lle} Deschamps (in her 1st year).
46. According to Simon 2009, 118, César Sautereau's entry to the competition, a String Quartet, won the Commanville Prize for best Quartet that year. See also 113-14: the Quartet would be performed on Feb. 16, 1942 in the Salle Chopin as part of a series of concerts *franco-allemands*. The series was organized by the *section musicale de Collaboration* and the German Institute in Paris and consisted of music by young French and German composers.
47. "Fallen" alludes to those who died in the war; here, it laments those who received no prize or mention in that year's composition competition—the five females who presented their work.
48. Demessieux was likely unaware that Busser, director of the Opéra-Comique since 1939, was fighting his own battle that spring and summer. As recounted in Simon 2009, 95, and noted in Barbara L. Kelly, "Büsser [Busser], (Paul-)Henri" in

Friday 20 June 1941

Dupré (whom I had not seen [since the organ competition]), gathered us together in Meudon: Marie-Louise Girod, Françoise Aubut and her sister, recently returned from internment.⁴⁹ We arrived at 2:45 PM and left at 7:15. A warm and intimate reception. Marguerite was there; M^{me} Dupré served us a sumptuous feast.

From 5:00 to 6:30, the master played his organ for us (*Litanies* by Jehan Alain, the anniversary of whose death it is). A brand-new, full demonstration [of the organ]; improvisation.

The master pulled a manuscript of a few lines from the [48] back of a drawer: it was the sketch Dupré spoke of in class on March 10th: six measures, in pencil, very neat. (In playing them, use of *sostenuto*,⁵⁰ inversion at the octave, and divided stops. The master played the sketch twice, with different timbres. I had time to read it several times. I felt it was the sketch of a master; those few measures were of a beauty, a richness, a completeness in all details, truly a solution to Marcel Dupré's anxiety. To me, they appeared to be not so much the impetus for an entire piece, but an already developed idea, just one, taking shape all at once, because his [musical] language is found. The fundamental discovery is, then, this amalgam of timbres and possibilities. The result: an unedited and already perfect concept and, with a little probing, sensitive harmony without harshness—a perfect balance.)

A walk in the garden. Dupré took me aside. MD: "Tell me, my little Jeanne, what are you going to do?"* (There had occurred, just a moment before, a dramatic incident—the Duprés having heard from M^r [Louis] Laloy that I had a Second Prize in composition [49]—huge disappointment.) With Marcel Dupré, I broached the idea of my taking a break [from my studies], which my family has proposed. He shut this idea down immediately. I felt inspired to speak of my career aspirations. Dupré responded with some of his

Grove Music Online, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.04443>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, on May 17, 1941, Busser was summoned before German Lieutenant Baumann in Paris for criticism of his programming. He was also to answer charges that his comments in an interview published a year ago in *Les Échos de Paris/Paris Soir* (particularly remarks on Wagner) were harmful to "National Socialism." Moreover, according to Simon 2009, 95, because of one of many errors in the 1941 edition of Gerick and Stengel's *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*, Busser was thought to be a Jew and, therefore, ineligible to hold a directorship. Busser would continue to dodge the cry of German authorities for his resignation but was forced to step down from the Opéra-Comique on Sept. 21, 1941.

49. Aubut, a Canadian organist and pianist, joined the organ class in the fall of 1939. According to Hélène Plouffe and Andrew McIntosh, "Aubut, Françoise" in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, July 17, 2015

<<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/francoise-aubut>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, she and her sister, as British Commonwealth citizens living in France while Germany and Britain were at war, were interned at Besançon from Oct. 1940 to Jun. 1941. As recounted in Shakespeare 2013, chap. 17, carriers of British passports on French soil were arrested by French police on German orders; they were shipped to an internment camp at Besançon called *Frontstalag* 142 (also known as the Vauban barracks and built during the Napoleonic wars). From 1940 to 1941, the Germans held 3,000 to 4,000 individuals, nearly all women and children, in *Frontstalag* 142. The conditions were so inhuman that hundreds died of disease and cold.

50. This was a feature of the organ in the hall attached to Dupré's home and available on each manual individually. When engaged, it caused keys to remain down after depressing.

observations about America. He wants to take a few days to reflect: "Come, Sunday, to St-Sulpice; I will be playing Vespers."

* [Squeezed into the bottom of page:] A matter of principle (Dupré having the greatest respect for the freedom of others). But there is no doubt that he had made up his mind.

Sunday 22 June 1941

St-Sulpice, at Vespers.

MD: "You and your parents must have such confidence in me to literally throw you into my arms! I am touched."

I said that my parents would like to see him.

MD: "I would think so! Ah, it is I who wish to see them. This is the first time in my career that I shall make such a decision, and I make this decision for you in whom I have as much confidence as in myself: in your technique, as in my own. This is also the first time that one of my students, one who is precious in all ways, has said to me: I want to follow your footsteps: that is the pinnacle I aim for. Here is a glimpse of the past that is well for you to know."

Marcel Dupré told me of his longstanding desire [50] to mold his own equal [*former un émule*], a peer capable of having a brilliant career. He believed he had found this in Marcel Lanctuis,** and procured an engagement in America for him; but despite a good start, Lanctuis gave up on his career. He [then] found rich skill and promise [*riche nature*] in Messiaen and procured an engagement in Brussels for him; Messiaen refused, wishing to make his career as a composer and only wanting to be an organist to play his own works, in the way he wanted.

The master asked me to keep his intentions absolutely secret. These pages are being written to establish the authenticity of these few memories.

** [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Lanquetuit of Rouen.

Wednesday 25 June 1941

Papa, Maman, and I visited Marcel Dupré in Meudon (the master having wanted me to be present). The master had a long conversation with my parents, impossible to reproduce in detail. My future, if God so wills it, is laid out, from this moment. An artistic pact is established between Dupré and me. The conversation lasted for two-and-a-half hours.

Sunday 6 July 1941

Present at my 11:30 AM Mass were: M^r and M^{me} [51] Descombes, M^r d'Argœuves, M^r G. Fleury, M^r Provost from Les Amis de l'Orgue. Symphony on a theme by G. Fleury .

At 9:00 AM I briefly visited St-Sulpice.

Monday 7 July 1941

I went to J. Gallon's (at the Conservatory). He played Beethoven's Mass on the piano. His entire class was there. A beautiful atmosphere.

Tuesday 8 July 1941

I went to Marcel Dupré's in Meudon. He had me play Bach's Fugue in D⁵¹ while he listened from the back of the room "to hear the effect one more time."

I brought him some documents, which he placed in my portfolio.

He revealed to me the secret of his technique, which I do not dare put into words.⁵² MD: "I would like to teach it, were it not impossible. It's a matter of initiation,⁵³ of instinct. What's needed is to collaborate; I could only do it with you. I was only a child when my father discovered, seeing me play, this curious innovation, which he hastened to cultivate. He revealed this to me when the time [52] was right. I have never spoken of it to anyone but him. I would not have spoken of it to anyone had not Providence led you to me, to consider as my dear daughter to whom I will confide everything I know."

Dupré drew a parallel between his childhood musical evolution and mine; he pointed out similarities. At the point where the comparison brought us to the discovery of "the artist," I halted it. The master, believing he saw a lack of faith in me, said, "You have what I have, in your art and in your soul. What's more, you bring your personal contribution, just as I made a contribution beyond Widor's."

He retraced the lineage of our tradition of the organ, naming, "Lemmens, Guilmant, Widor, myself, and you." Marcel Dupré said again, in all respects, "I am doing for you what Widor did for me."*

* I quickly acknowledge the fact that he did much more, and said this to him, one day, in front of M^{me} Dupré, who agreed.

[53] Wednesday 9 July 1941 [sic]

I took Mireille Auxière to visit Yves Nat, with whom I was not acquainted, but who welcomed us cordially, having received a letter of recommendation from Noël Gallon. He found Mireille to be gifted, playing very intelligently; he wants to have her apply to the Conservatory, but left no hope for her entry into his class. He wants to see her again in September, not before. I feel that this would be moving too slowly, so I ran over to

51. Demessieux frequently refers in her diary to a Bach Fugue in D without further identification. This may have been the independent Fugue in D major, BWV 580, published in vol. 5 of the Dupré edition of Bach's organ works (Bornemann). It is no longer attributed to Bach.

52. On the same day, July 8, 1941, Demessieux began a small notebook to detail her progress through Dupré's plan for her career as a virtuoso organist (GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage"). The first entry reads "Revelation of Dupré's principles. [P]erfected [*mise au point*]," beneath which she drew a horizontal line and wrote nothing more until her July 23 lesson.

53. Although the French word *initiation* is clearly written, in this context the word *imitation* may have been intended.

N. Gallon's, then to l'École supérieure, where I spoke to him at the end of a competition.⁵⁴ Mireille needs to feel totally supported by a teacher, beginning now, to give her the courage to take the entrance examination. Noël will put some pressure on Nat, we agreed.

Thursday 10 July 1941

I have learned of the unexpected death of Philippe Gaubert.⁵⁵

Saturday 12 July 1941

I went to the Opéra, where a Philippe Gaubert festival is taking place. Germaine Lubin sang several songs (she had a terrible cold, to judge by the tissue she held to her face between phrases). Evening of ballet: [Gaubert's] *Alexandre le Grand* and [54] *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle* danced by Serge Lifar and Solange Schwartz. The first time that I have seen Serge Lifar dance: very impressive, and the same for the general choreography. Lifar's technique is a revelation to me: strength and balance, expression.

Sunday 13 July 1941

Father [Marie Joseph] Rouët de Journal came to my 10:00 AM Mass; we set a meeting to introduce me to L[éonce] de Saint-Martin at 2:30 PM Vespers at Notre-Dame.⁵⁶

De Saint-Martin, who was expecting me, welcomed me cordially, saying, straight away, that the door of his gallery was "wide open" to me. Those present: three men, three women, the priest. Petty expressions. He speaks easily, has natural poise, makes judgments casually. He breathes heavily while playing, nervously racing through the notes [*courant après ses notes*]. Plays the pedal with one foot; Swell box; arpeggiates the chords. Much use of solos when improvising; all outward appearances; rubato, pretty things, banalities, overlong passages, octaves. He played his Passacaglia [published as his Op. 28] for the postlude. I remained standing behind the bench the entire time. A certain [55] M^r René Blin opened fire on Messiaen; this reeked of pettiness.

I had time to observe the specification and layout of the instrument. I am drawn to the Contra Bombarde

54. By l'École supérieur, Demessieux may have meant Paris's École normale de musique.

55. René Dumesnil, *La Musique en France entre les deux guerres 1919–1939* (Geneva: Milieu du Monde, 1946), 156, suggests that Gaubert's premature death, on July 8, 1941, though preceded by a decline in health, was precipitated by the calamitous events of June 1940. His death was, indeed, unexpected: according to Dumesnil, the evening prior to his death, the Opéra (Palais Garnier) presented to an invited audience the dress rehearsal of Gaubert's most recent work, a two-act ballet *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle*, which was warmly received. According to Simon 2009, 219, though, *Le Chevalier et la Damoiselle* premièred somewhat earlier, on July 2, 1941. Among Gaubert's works performed during the Occupation, this ballet received forty-two performances.

56. According to Philip Andrew Smith, "Léonce de Saint-Martin: Organist and composer" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2018), 107 <<https://hdl.handle.net/10289/12116>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, upon Vienne's death, controversially, Count Léonce de Saint-Martin was appointed titular organist of Paris's Notre-Dame Cathedral by the clergy, without competition for the post. John Henderson, in *A Directory of Composers for Organ*, 2nd ed. (Swindon: John Henderson Ltd., 1999), 518, describes Saint-Martin as "an aristocratic amateur."

32'. Splendid instrument. I think of [Louis] Vierne. Meditative thoughts about this milieu on the one hand and thirteen-year-old memories on the other.*

* I was seven years old when I visited Paris for the first time. Upon hearing the organ of Notre-Dame one Sunday, I was so well and truly taken by it that Maman prayed for me to become an organist, though at the time I seemed destined by my milieu for the piano.

Sunday 20 July 1941

In my gallery at 11:30 AM, M^r Bruel, secretary of the Conservatory; M^r Provost of Les Amis de l'Orgue; Yvette Grimaud (beautiful theme: variations, finale); Weissère.

At 3:00, pilgrimage from St-Esprit to Sacré-Cœur. I went along and played the little [choir] organ; below, Papa, Maman, and Yolande.

At 5:10 I met up with Dupré and M^{me} Dupré at the Chaillot Theatre for Litaize's concert; Marie-Louise Girod and I were among the guests who had been invited to sit in their box: a remarkable honour. Beautiful concert. Litaize played [Dupré's] "Fileuse" [from *Suite Bretonne*] magnificently. Franck's *Choral* No. 3, full of painful rubatos. Alain's *Litanies*. Improvisation [on a] theme by Busser: burlesque.

In the foyer, I shook hands and chatted with Fleury, Duruflé, Panel, Edouard Monet, Provost, Beuchet the [organ] builder, Rolland, [Antoine] Reboulot; I caught sight of Marchal, [56] Busser, Langlais, Messiaen, Norbert Dufourcq. Litaize was charming with me and my family. Dupré advised me to write to Busser to pave the way regarding the leave of absence. They chatted with my parents; the master had a touching word for my sister. We took our leave of them.

In the morning, 9:00 at St-Sulpice, Dupré, speaking to me about our collaboration: "You cannot imagine how important this new thing has become in my life. I believed I would never have a successor. I have found a successor capable of equaling and surpassing me. It is the duty of every artist of integrity to search for the one who will go farther than him." The master improvised sublimely; the organ has just been tuned by Pérroux. Dupré introduced me to Jules Isambart, the builder of his organ in Meudon.

My sister's thoughts after Litaize's concert: "There are three organists in Paris who play the organ well: Dupré, you, and Duruflé."

Tuesday 22 July 1941

Maman's name day;⁵⁷ Papa presented her with her portrait [57] done in pastels: magnificent.

Upon entering my studio yesterday, I found my organ diploma, framed.

Wednesday 23 July 1941

Lesson at Dupré's from 9:45 to 11:45. I played all the major and minor scales and [Bach's] Fugue in D. For

57. July 22 is the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene; Demessieux's mother's name is Madeleine.

the first time in front of Dupré, I wore Louis XV heels.⁵⁸ My emotions are running high: I have never played his organ so well. After fifteen days of trial and error I sense that my technique has taken off. The master encouraged me, and said, “in a year, we will see clearly.”

He gave me a book of Alkan’s pedal *Études* in an out-of-print edition.⁵⁹ MD: “I’ve worked on these a lot. Here is what I still remember.”

MD: “I am going to write a series of twelve études for you, the manuscripts of which I will pass on to you as I go along; you will copy them. I will publish them. But if you don’t mind, I will not dedicate them to you. Do you understand why? That would bring you harm; the easiest weapon is the tongue.”

Dupré gave me much advice. He ran through an overview of contemporary French female organists [58]; none appear to be a threat (I listened to Dupré’s opinions in silence).⁶⁰ Three foreign artists, one of whom is of interest: he gave me their names. Two Italians, prodigious in acrobatics. No threat from male organists in France, but Dupré omitted mention of Duruflé...

MD: “I want to write a symphony for orchestra; I have my themes. I’m caught between two desires: to write it immediately, because I’m obsessed with it, and to wait yet so that it will be all the more beautiful, more mature. So, for the time being, I am writing an organ symphony in memory of Papa: the inauguration [of the organ] in St-Ouen is set for October 28; I want you to be there, incognito; I’ll pay for your trip; I’m pleased to do that.”

We looked for exercises in virtuosity; Dupré recommended pedal staccato.⁶¹ For my next lesson, a heavy assignment in technique [and] the Prelude in A-flat [Dupré’s Op. 36, No. 2].

Saturday 26 July 1941

58. According to the web site “All About Shoes: the Bata Shoe Museum” <http://www.allaboutshoes.ca/en/heights_of_fashion/high_court/index_2.php>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, “[d]uring the reign of Louis XV, fashionable heels for women were curved through the waist and splayed at the base to increase stability . . . This combination of graceful shape and sturdy construction was revived and revamped in the 1860s . . . [the] later heel featured a much more dramatic curve where the heel met the shoe.”

59. Charles-Valentin Alkan’s *Douze Études pour les pieds seulement* (*Twelve Studies for the Pedals Alone*) (Paris: Simon Richault, ca. 1860) were composed for pedal piano or organ. Most are multi-voiced, in a variety of textures. Some require thirds played by one foot, to achieve three- and four-note solid chords played on the pedals.

60. Among French women of the time, established concert organists were: Marthe Henriod Bracquemond (1898–1973); Noëlie Pierront (1899–1988); Line Zilgien (1906–1954); Henriette Puig-Roget (1910–1992); Christiane de Lisle (née Frommer) (1913–2009); Renée Nizan (1913–1945). Dupré’s rationale for dismissing these successful concert organists may have been that Bracquemond, Pierront, and Puig-Roget did not meet his technical standards, while Zilgien, de Lisle, and Nizan, aside from their technical prowess, had not composed for the organ.

61. According to her notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 — Minutage,” on July 23 Demessieux was asked by Dupré to practice staccato scales in octaves on the pedalboard so as to be “precise and regular; comparable with the action of the wrist playing octaves on the piano; knees tightly together, ankles close, to finally acquire maximum flexibility and lightness; to be adopted in general technique as much as possible.”

I received a message from Dupré by pneumatic dispatch.⁶² He asked me to play Vespers at St-Sulpice and summoned me to Meudon to get my instructions; I went immediately.

He was giving a lesson [59] to Jeanne Marguillard and introduced me. The master explained the rite to me in detail. Made a plan for me, spoke to me again of his études: “This is just between us” (concerning the lending of manuscripts). I copied down the layout of the organ.

M^{me} Dupré welcomed me fondly. A meeting before High Mass [is planned].

Sunday 27 July 1941

8:45 AM, St-Sulpice. Detailed explanation of the instrument; advice. MD: “Take off your gloves: you are going to play the entrance music.” Dupré spoke some more about our projects, like yesterday: “I can think of nothing else.”

At 3:30, Vespers. I was quite frightened but itching to play. The organ sound was magnificent; I was transported. Entrance music. Hymn: first [verset] in plainchant tutti, second: canon at the fourth between soprano and bass, in four voices. Magnificat versets: foundation stops G.O.-flutes-mixtures-reeds. R[écit] *pp*—and the last [verset], Cornet with Bourdon 8’, but... the Cornet did not sound: I had forgotten to set the piston; I salvaged the situation; Papa, who never suspected a thing, told me he liked this verset the best...! The bell rang at the last verset, which seemed likely to go on, and with good reason: I [60] never wanted to stop.

That very evening, I wrote to Dupré.

Sunday 10 August 1941

8:45 AM, St-Sulpice. I made the illustrious acquaintance of Madame Dominique Juvet-Magron, to whom Dupré introduced me. In speaking of M^{me} Juvet-Magron, he told me, “... the greatest painter of our time.” She is currently working on an important realist composition that Dupré saw yesterday, and that he considers splendid. The conversation began in the parlour and continued around the console: M^{me} Juvet-Magron sat to the master’s left and I to the right. The person accompanying Juvet-Magron seemed excluded from the very friendly conversation. Dupré, as is his wont, did “lay some groundwork” by talking a lot about me. I honestly remember: MD: “When you become a member of the [French] Institute, Magron, you must not forget to vote for Jeanne Demessieux for the Rome Prize! It would be amusing to see the two of you there! I would give anything to spy through the keyhole to see Magron on the committee.”

Me: “You would be much better off seeing it from the inside, [61] Master.”

MD: Oh, no! You will never see me in the Institute. What a life! I was a candidate for something once in my life, for the organ class: I swore that I would never do that again; the lobbying one must do!... (abruptly). I’d like you to play the Adagio for me, from your symphony that I have not heard. You will come to Meudon. I think you must finish the symphony before anything else.”

62. As described in the Wikipedia entry <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_pneumatic_post>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Paris’s pneumatic post, a communications system used from 1866 to 1984, was a network of tubes of compressed air through which messages were carried.

Me: "Yes, I cannot get it out of my mind."

MD: "It is well within your power, so write it; I can also tell you not to hurry."

Jouvet-Magron: "A symphony? For orchestra?..."

MD: "Yes, written directly for orchestra, just like that."

Me: "It's just a sketch, the first one I am writing."

Jouvet-Magron: "My child, I would think so, to see you, that this would be the first!..."

MD: "This little one is going to be a great artist; I have great hopes for her future. You will bear that in mind?" During the sprinkling of holy water [*Asperges*]:

MD: "Jeanne, look, the officiant is going into the congregation; he is not going around the church; a verset must be played; when he gets to the foot of the altar, you stop. I have the wrong book; bring me the Parisian Propers." [62]

To M^{me} Jouvet-Magron, MD: "This child can stay no longer at the Conservatory, where she isn't happy, except in Jean Gallon's class, and in mine, perhaps. Her downfall was the class of that Spaniard Riera, who is so irascible; she worked one year with Magda Tagliaferro, who fell in love with her, of course! She left for America, sorry to say. She [Demessieux] did not loiter in Jean Gallon's class; with Noël she was not unhappy; with me..." I tried to interject, but I was cut off. Dupré continued: "In composition, she is like you and me: she has a personality, and for that reason, she suffers. It's not right when a little child of 19 is already being insulted for her music!"⁶³ "They' did not like her music!"

Jouvet-Magron: "My child, if they say bad things about your music, it's because you are beginning to make them feel uncomfortable... and you certainly have talent."

MD: "Ah, you see. I wish to make her an artist and a virtuoso. Ever since I relieved her of all these concerns, I have seen her develop, blossom: she has more colour."

Jouvet-Magron: "There are not enough [63] virtuoso artists in our era."

MD: "What we especially lack is artists who create."

Dupré took me aside: "How is the technique coming? Tell me about your work, your impressions." I recounted these in detail and said that I had written exercises for my personal difficulties: the heels. MD: "Ah, that's very interesting; don't forget to bring them to me. Difficult, huh, that old Alkan? The little fugue in A minor [No. 3]... it will do you good. Have you seen Busser?* What has he said to you?"

"Nothing, Master."

MD: "Nothing?"

"Yes. He was astonished to see me and said to me 'but... you have gotten fatter.'" Hilarious laughter from Jouvet-Magron; Dupré was furious:

"Can you believe it! I'll be taking a little trip in ten days or so; that's why I am obliged to put you on

63. Regarding the phrase "little child of 19," in Chapter 6, citing Murray 1985, 118, I pointed out that Dupré was generally known for addressing students as "my little one" in a kindly way. That he refers to Demessieux here as a "little child" suggests he is further prompted by the fact that she is not just much younger than he but small of stature. I imagine that Demessieux regarded this description of her as affectionate, and not an affront to her dignity as a young woman.

Tuesday the 26th [of August]; you've taken note of it? Bring me the Adagio, your technical exercises, and the A minor."

Jouvet-Magron has a rather elderly appearance and walks with a cane. A pale blonde, she dresses in light colours, wears her hair down with a tousel of curls at the front. She observes a lot, speaks [64] little and gently; her face is delicate. She lives in Meudon.

* Classes continued in the summer during the war.

Wednesday 20 August 1941

This morning, a three-hour lesson at Meudon (9:30 to 12:30). From the garden, I could hear the organ: Dupré was working on his Prelude in A-flat.⁶⁴ From these three hours of work and conversation, here is exactly what I've retained:

MD: "I am working on my technique again now, because of you. It's very interesting. I am afraid that you will catch up with me! No. On the contrary, I want you to match me and surpass me.

"What should we begin with today? To be completely honest: I am longing to hear the second movement of the symphony." The Adagio, presented to the jury two months ago, was yet unknown to Dupré. The master followed along with the score. I was very moved.

MD: "I like that, deeply. You have made huge progress in composition, my little Jeanne. In terms of musical emotion, you have developed greatly. It's much less harsh than what you have written at other times. One senses that, at last, you are pouring your heart out. [65] It's grand, it's profound; and the chords that begin each measure—expansive, well thought out—are like a conversation in which each word counts. I am very happy.

"In terms of form, however, perhaps the ending is a bit truncated; when one arrives here (the re-entry), one thinks: well now, it's soon going to be over... For a symphony, you can allow yourself to go with more lyricism in the conclusion. And here, your orchestration will not give you the effect of alternation that you want: these contrabasses are not doubled at the octave. You can look at that again if you want."

I showed him the letter in which [Maurice] Le Boucher proposes that I give three concerts in Montpellier in 1942. As soon as he read it, Dupré said excitedly: "That's decent of him! You must say yes."

We worked on pedal technique. From the first scales, Dupré has his eyes glued to the pedalboard; then: "That's great; continue; I'll go look." And, returning from the back of the room: "You cannot imagine how pretty it is to see, so flexible, with your little heels. No woman organist [66] has ever played the pedals as you do, my little one; you have understood so very well." And again: MD: "Since the last lesson, I have discussed technique a lot with Marguerite; I've worked and researched for you. She told me that [Nicolai] Medtner made her work on scales slowly at first, then doubled (by 2 and 4) a single time. To avoid tension when practising, try it. It's something that only a great artist could have discovered."

Speaking to me of his symphony "Évocation," written for the inauguration of [the rebuilding of the organ

64. The Prelude in A-flat is No. 2 of Dupré's Three Preludes and Fugues, Op. 36 (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1938).

of] St-Ouen in Rouen,⁶⁵ Dupré announced to me that he had finished the sketch of the three movements the evening before last. MD: “When the music is written, I’ll be able to breathe once more. Before looking at the last two movements again, I’m going to return to the first; there is an important inversion to make.” He feels he is ahead of schedule. In the Adagio, there are, he says, some curious timbral effects, resembling, to the ear, the use of *sostenuto*, an unintended parallel, but about which Dupré said to me: “I’m happy if this is the influence of my organ.”

Concerning the Prelude in A-flat, he thinks that the tempo, as published, is perhaps a bit excessive, but [67] that, even at a more moderate tempo one must understand it as agitated, tumultuous (crescendo by means of the Swell box). I played the Prelude twice.

Parting words: MD: “At present, you play the organ just as well as I. Now you have all you need: you have me, your little organ, all of Bach, the environment that you need in order to work. I want you to work happily and without pushing. For children, one uses an allegory to explain that we are tied to our planet so long as we live: a path filled with stones, thorns, and, above it all, sky. By the time of your triumph, you must have traveled a path filled with joy where people will say to you, ‘along your way, smell this flower, look at that butterfly, see this beautiful view.’

“The cultivation of your talent and the work that we will do together are just as important to me, from a pedagogical perspective, as all my students and my teaching combined. When I am gone (because I will expire like everyone else), you will be there; I am counting on you.

“I will tell you what Widor said to me, while [68] accompanying us to the train, for my first trip to America: ‘Think about what you represent.’ The prestige of France in foreign countries has been completely destroyed. We need virtuosos; everything must be rebuilt. If necessary, I will once again cross the border and play all of Bach, even in Germany!”

Thursday 21 August 1941

My little organ was installed in my studio.⁶⁶ It’s a day for celebrating an anniversary.* Yolande inaugurated the organ. Very impressive. I sent a note to M. Dupré who wanted to be notified immediately of this big event. My studio has become a temple for work.

* August 21 has become the anniversary of my collaboration with Marcel Dupré, a date that he himself proclaimed and never forgets.

65. The 64-stop organ of the abbey church of St-Ouen in Rouen was built by Cavaillé-Coll in 1890. Marcel Dupré’s father Albert Dupré was its titular organist from 1911 to 1939. According to Murray 1985, 183, the St-Ouen organ was dismantled early in 1939 for a planned *relevage* (overhaul), and the pipework was still stored in a tower when the war erupted. As a result, the organ was silent for the September 1940 memorial service for Albert Dupré. Marcel Dupré was likely involved in the decision to reassemble the organ in 1941 and to make its reinauguration a further memorial to his father.

66. According to the diary entry for Sept. 7, 1941, this instrument was actually a harmonium. As noted by Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 46, much later, when Demessieux lived in her own apartment in Paris, she had a Roethinger organ installed there.

Sunday 24 August 1941

At St-Sulpice, 9:00 AM. The master gave me three major organ works by Liszt, promised since January, which have just appeared in his edition. He had these kind words: "This is a little souvenir of something huge," the dedication having been made in remembrance of my First Prize in organ.

At 4:00 PM, I took the train from St-Lazare station in the direction of Évreux where I was met by [69] Mireille Auxiètre, who had invited me to spend a week at her mother's place in the country, nine kilometres from Évreux. I crossed Évreux, a city destroyed; the cathedral has a damaged tower.⁶⁷ Terrible feelings. We covered the nine kilometres by bicycle.

Saturday 30 August 1941

Back in Paris now. [While] with Mireille, I visited Évreux Cathedral under reconstruction. Unforgettable memory.

Sunday 31 August 1941

St-Sulpice in the morning. It should be noted that this is just an amusing detail I wish to remember. Upon arriving at the church, I hit upon a 4-measure-long motif that I've been trying to find for a week, perhaps for my scherzo. Dupré arrived; we chatted in the gallery before High Mass. I brought up the subject of the motif.

"Have you written it down?" he asked.

"No, but I have it memorized."

Immediately, I saw Dupré start to rummage intently; he took a tiny sheet of music paper out of his notebook and divided it in two. "I have kept half of it. Write."

I jotted it down. The idea for the orchestration clarified itself at the same [70] time. I was absorbed. The master sat in a corner, silent, until the moment when we heard the clock chime 9:00. He jumped up: "Come only when you have finished," and I heard him quickly draw the stops and immediately start to improvise. I showed him the motif; he understood that it was an episodic fragment and said, "It's good."

Regarding his organ symphony "Évocation," Dupré explained the plan of the finale to me, a rondo: first theme in A minor; couplet (first theme of the opening Allegro); refrain in [C] minor; second couplet (second theme of the opening Allegro); refrain in [C-sharp] minor; third couplet (theme of the slow movement); refrain in [C] minor.⁶⁸ Two details: first, the form of the finale suggesting the idea of a cyclical symphony by

67. Évreux, variously described as a city or town, is in Normandy, west-northwest of Paris. According to Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "Évreux," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Jun. 9, 2017, <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Evreux>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Évreux was bombed by German aircraft in 1940, "and the centre of the town burned for nearly a week." Following that, in 1944, Allied bombs wrecked the district around the railway station.

68. Demessieux's diary entry leaves spaces where she intended to fill in the names of keys of the second, third, and fourth statements of the refrain. Here is a more complete thematic analysis of the finale of *Évocation*, based in part on Graham Steed, *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré* (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1999), 94–99: first theme, in A minor,

the restatement of principal themes [from previous movements], all the while retaining its own form; second, the insistence on the key of C minor, which seems to draw together the three couplets that were each presented in remote keys.

Friday 5 September 1941

I saw Jean and Noël Gallon at the Conservatory and attended their class.

Jean Gallon told me a touching anecdote concerning [71] César Franck. At Ste-Clothilde, while Franck was organist, the choirmaster was Samuel Rousseau, Franck's student. On New Year's Day, they went together to the parish priest to present their good wishes. Here is the scene: Franck sitting modestly in a corner, Samuel Rousseau self-conscious. After exchanging courtesies, the priest launched into the question of craft [*métier*] and began by complimenting Samuel Rousseau at length on his service. Then, turning towards Franck:

"And with you, Monsieur, I am not happy. The parishioners are complaining about your 11:15 masses: you hinder them from praying. You do not know your craft, Monsieur." And Franck, instead of slamming the door, kept repeating,

"I assure you, Father, that I know my job!" Apparently, he was banned from his 11:15 masses.

Saturday 6 September 1941

My student Marthe Dramez, a qualified teacher [*agrégée*] of history, asked me to help her with the research for a series of ten lectures* on music (music history), of which she had been put in charge by M^r Carcopino and which will be broadcast by Vichy.⁶⁹ I wrote a little text for her [72] about the library at the Conservatory.

* These lectures did not take place.

Sunday 7 September 1941

9:00, St-Sulpice. Conversation with Dupré, during which the master shared with me how much he wished to see my harmonium. I told him how we would never have dared to invite him to come to our home; he seemed touched. We set September 24th because he will be away until then.

MD: "Your parents should not trouble themselves. We will spend the time working. I will give you your lesson on the little harmonium, and you will show me the scherzo, if it is sufficiently advanced. I will be there around 4:00, or a little before." [Then] the master said this to me:

occurs in mm. 1–19; the first couplet (derived from the first theme of the first movement) in mm. 19–32; refrain in C minor (the key of the first movement) in mm. 33–51; the second couplet (derived from the second theme of the first movement) in mm. 52–77; refrain beginning in C-sharp minor in mm. 78–116; the third couplet (derived from the theme of the slow movement) in mm. 117–30; mm. 131–43 serve as a transition passage; refrain in C minor elided to a short transition passage in mm. 144–175; m. 176 is the start of a coda, which begins in C minor and concludes in C major.

69. According to Méadal 2001, 236, during the Occupation, Radiodiffusion nationale of the Vichy government controlled independent transmitting stations in cities of the unoccupied zone at Toulouse, Lyon, Montpellier, Agen, Nîmes, and Nice.

“Soon, when I am old, you will be the interpreter of my works. You alone, because you are the only one who has the necessary technique to master them.

“I went to Rouen this week; I saw [the organ at] St-Ouen. It’s magnificent what Pérroux has done! I tried ‘Évocation’ on the organ. It’s beautiful; that organ is splendid. I cleaned up a few things after rehearsing: [made] some small cuts.” Dupré told me how very difficult the symphony is to play. He went so far as to say these words, which are enough to make [73] a young neophyte like me tremble:

“If I have definitively finished at the end of the month, I hope that by working hard, I will manage to play it.” Speaking of the composition of his piece:

“I worked like a martyr yesterday.”

MD, concerning my work: “You have everything it takes to be a great artist.”

Me: “I have courage.”

MD: “I know. Above all, do not write hurriedly!... You must feel pleasure in your work.”

Me: “I have the feeling that one day, perhaps, I will find myself.”

MD: “But, of course!”

Next Sunday, Dupré is to inaugurate a little organ built by Perroux, in a village in Normandy.⁷⁰

Friday 12 September 1941

Yesterday evening, I went to hear [Mozart’s] *Les Noces de Figaro* at the Opéra-Comique for the first time.

Wednesday 24 September 1941

For the very first time, Marcel Dupré came to our house on rue du Docteur Goujon, to see my little organ and work with me. He was expected around 5:00 PM and arrived with Papa, who had gone to meet him. His introduction was very courteous, but modest, and extraordinarily sensitive. [74] He appeared happy, relaxed within our family circle, and did not hide his pleasure. We showed him around the little apartment; he looked at everything very candidly, and asked questions in front of certain portraits. From the time he entered, he kept repeating, “That’s charming! How well she looks, the little one!” He tried my little organ (improvised some pedal lines, did some exercises on the manuals, was visibly left-handed); the instrument pleased him.

We offered him coffee, which, to my surprise, he honoured us by accepting. We then engaged in a long conversation, quite comfortably.

The master recounted for us the childhood of his mother who, at thirteen, went every day to give lessons to two young girls, two sisters, who lived on a hill near Rouen. (She left on foot at 11:00, lunched up there and, after having given the lessons, returned with two two-franc coins, always new, that she put in a piggy bank.)

70. According to a printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1312, on Sept. 14, 1941 Dupré performed at the Église Saint-Samson in Aunay-sur-Odon in Normandy. The program, which featured choral as well as organ music, was for the inauguration of the restoration of the great organ.

When Dupré was composing his *Fantasia* for piano and orchestra,⁷¹ an unhappy Widor said to him: “Don’t keep that, don’t throw it out: tear it up. But remember the second theme of the Allegro; you may be able to make use of it.” One day after having done this, Dupré [75] found the score in his mother’s closet, carefully pasted together; his mother begged him not take it away from her. Speaking of her, Dupré turned to me:

“I dare say that she was as gifted as you.” Then he retraced the story of his own artistic life, from the beginning of his career. My sister noticed from the way he spoke, how often he appears to have suffered.

He retraced the musical temperament of his best students in an immensely loyal critique; he said he had not found his desired successor among them. He spoke of Duruflé with frank approval, but complained of his modesty.

MD: “People walk all over him. I said to him, ‘When you know yourself, you will be redeemed; look at yourself in the mirror.’” Yet overall, he gets by [*Mais pour la grande question, il passe*].

“But when I happened upon this child here, and Jean Gallon said to me, ‘remember well what I am telling you, Marcel: that little Jeanne Demessieux is an angel [from heaven]’... I told myself, ‘There she is, my little one!’ I am well aware that some things are meant to be.”

Concerning my career, he confided to Papa his decisions about a plan for the future, naming two people, whom I will not name.

[76] At 7:10, the master asked me to play the organ for him: time had passed very quickly. Prelude and Fugue in A-flat major [Dupré’s Op. 36, No. 2]; despite the natural excitement of the situation, I never played so well. Dupré exclaimed, “This confirms what I said to you (to my parents)! That’s tenfold what I said a moment ago.”

I told Dupré about Father de la Motte’s invitation to come see him, himself not being able to pay a visit to the master. But we ran out of time, which Dupré appeared to regret. Seeing me beside my sister, Dupré exclaimed, “These two young ones truly do look alike!” On the topic of careers,

MD: “One’s native region [*contrée natale*], France, and foreign lands are three very distinct things.”

Dupré just made the last train for Meudon.

Sunday 28 September 1941

St-Sulpice: the master and Madame Dupré brought me three beautiful, signed photos, just as Dupré himself had promised.

[79]⁷² Today, I had in my gallery the distinguished Gérard Hekking, violoncello professor at the Conservatory, accompanied by Yvette Grimaud and some students. He gave me a theme to treat as I wished. I improvised from the Elevation to the end (variations, intermezzo, leading to a free fugue and toccata finale). Hekking was very kind and spoke of coming again.

71. Dupré’s *Fantasia* in B minor, Op. 8 for piano and orchestra was composed in 1912, while he was in Widor’s composition class and about the same time as the *Trois Préludes et Fugues*, Op. 7 for organ.

72. In the diary ms., the entry for Sept. 28, 1941, begun on ms. p. 76, is continued on p. 79, following entries for Oct. 3 and Oct. 9. In this translation, the two parts of the entry for Sept. 28 are placed one after the other, interrupting the content of ms. p. 76.

Friday 3 October 1941

[76, resumed] Conversation with Noël-Gallon who told me that, as of today, Busser is no longer director of the Opéra-Comique.⁷³ He [77] says that for the composition class there is talk of... Marcel Delannoy, Francis Poulenc, and that people such as himself are not in the running.

NG: "I don't know where we are going!... Now, you are grown up enough that I can say this to you: well, I never thought that M^r Busser could teach you anything about composition; but, in the present state of things, I ask myself whether the lesser of two evils would not be for Busser to remain a professor."⁷⁴

Thursday 9 October 1941

In accordance with Marcel Dupré's desire to meet Father de la Motte, we got the master to agree to come to our home again, with M^{me} and M^{lle} Dupré. At 3:30 I met them at the subway, and as agreed upon, we went directly to the church [St-Esprit]. (I should say here that this second visit Dupré paid us, with his family, was a true joy for him and for us.)

We entered by no. 1 rue Cannebière. Immediately upon entering, Dupré stopped to look at the dome: "It certainly is stylish!..." We entered [78] the centre of the nave. Seeing the organ gallery and its narrow dimensions, they unanimously deplored these conditions. Dupré visited alone for a half-hour with Father de la Motte, after which we went up to my gallery. The master tried my instrument in a long improvisation, then asked me, in turn, to improvise so they could hear the sound from the back of the nave. The master was enthusiastic about the acoustics, and the richness of the little organ. As was his intention, he spoke to the priest about the future great organ; he foresees an organ of sixty stops, with beautiful detailing.

After that, illumination [of the interior] of the church, study of the paintings. Father de la Motte was very much at ease.

At home, a charming reception, an atmosphere of simplicity and trust. Dupré said to me, speaking of the paintings: "The huge number of allegories ends up obscuring... For children they provide an explanation, yes; but for art..."⁷⁵ When Papa asked him for his assessment of the *Chemin de Croix* by **Desvallières**, he told

73. Simon 2009, 95, notes that in the German-controlled press Busser was said to have left the directorship of the Opéra Comique for "personal reasons." In actuality, he had, for several months, been under pressure from German cultural authorities to resign. Busser capitulated in Sept. 1941 when he was barred from his office and threatened with imprisonment. According to Sandrine Grandgambe, "Le Réunion des Théâtres Lyriques," in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 116, Busser was replaced at the Opéra Comique by composer Max d'Ollone, one of the more willing of French musicians during the Occupation to cooperate with German authorities.

74. In fact, according to Busser 1955, location 3589 of 3621, Busser remained an instructor of composition at the Conservatory until he was retired from the post in January 1948.

75. Dupré is arguably not attuned to modern visual art, with which St-Esprit (built 1928–1935) is richly endowed. According to the Wikipedia entry <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ateliers_d%27Art_Sacré>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, among the painters, sculptors, and other artists whom architect Paul Tournon called upon to execute work for St-Esprit were members of the Ateliers d'art sacré. This group, founded shortly after World War I by Maurice Denis (1870–1943) and

us he only imagines Christ's suffering in the original setting and, it being the "universal drama" that subsumes all others, there is no need of allegorical commentary; [79] there's no reason, he says, to present a comparison of this drama with a human drama, one of thousands; all or none.⁷⁶ The same ideas concerning *Chemin de la Croix* by Paul Claudel, which is a transposition to socialism.⁷⁷

Dupré asked me to play the Prelude and Fugue in-A flat [his Op. 36, No. 2]. When I had finished, Madame Dupré rose and embraced me effusively. MD: "That is becoming transcendent. Before playing the organ, one has to play the bass drum, [but] not you!"⁷⁸ Marguerite: "We will play it for you!"

Georges Desvallières (1861–1950), was devoted to renewal of religious art so as to reflect modern civilization, and to replacement of art in churches devastated by the war. The three-story-high walls of the nave of St-Esprit are covered with colourful murals (frescoes), pictured at <[76. In a different style from the murals of St-Esprit, and arranged at eye-level around the perimeter of the nave, is a series of paintings \(oil on canvas, set into the reddish stone walls\). They depict successive events in the crucifixion of Jesus that were created for of St-Esprit in 1934–1935 by George Desvallières. The series of paintings may be seen on the web page <<http://www.museedeseineport.info/MuseeVirtuel/Salles/DesvalleresG/EgliseStEsprit/EgliseStEsprit.htm>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022. In the painting for the eighth station, "Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem," the dominant figure, balanced on a forward-leaning cross, is dramatically robed in long strokes of black, grey, rust, and orange, while the foregrounded figures from the crowd beneath him are dressed in the sedate fashion of bourgeois women from the first half of the 20th century. Dupré \(likely unaware of the honours Desvallières achieved\) in his comment on this series of paintings, covers for his lack of informed perception by implying that he feels talked down to by the artist. According to the Wikipedia entry <\[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Desvalli%C3%A8res\]\(https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Desvalli%C3%A8res\)>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, in 1930 Desvallières was elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and in 1940 he became president of the umbrella organization, the Institut de France.
77. The reference is to Paul Claudel's set of poems *Chemin de la Croix*, which inspired one of Dupré's most famous organ improvisations and his published *Le Chemin de la Croix*, Op. 29 for organ. Whereas George Desvallières had Christian socialist leanings, Paul Claudel, a devout Catholic, was right-wing in his political leanings. Demessieux may have misunderstood the context in which Dupré spoke of a "transposition to socialism." Steed 1999, 59, remarks that Dupré's attitude towards Claudel "remains something of a mystery."
78. By saying, *Avant de joué de l'orgue, il faudra jouer de la grosse caisse!* Dupré is likely using a variation of the expression *battre la grosse caisse*. According to Alain Rey and Sophie Chantreau, *Le Robert Dictionnaire d'Expressions et locutions*](https://www.google.com/search?q=St-Esprit,+frescoes&sxsrf=ALiCzsYHgMxOcpRE_0Uz694pd8rHma9-mg:1657298033543&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&vet=1&fir=wtt0PnooyCEF7M%252CIdKSZPbbN1xzMM%252C_%253B24DYIWFcfNYfKM%252COKV0rIq1Yj-lgM%252C_%253BQFF-XE_mUu6iAM%252CIncPYIa5K711EM%252C_%253BI0jbmmXXaY1BiM%252CkSNAMWEQ45xInM%252C_%253BxZ0TWClgYK-VSM%252Ct3TO-pGcB4DukM%252C_%253BhoKJtAshlsKT1M%252CIncPYIa5K711EM%252C_%253BIkMbHXr7Jk9SaM%252CThmfIjls7WCFM%252C_%253BR1uvjbquJ5N06M%252CEfBjTkBkijC56M%252C_%253BIfPmMkLspz8jEM%252CNEMPdpe6NrmbNM%252C_%253BPwKq_2lh1s8rUM%252C6JzuxVj0kX3O0M%252C_%253BUsq=AI4_-kSXwxQQLqKwMRZ4DxF6RhxeT68zqQ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj7us2k3On4AhWgl4kEHQZRCKcQ9QF6BAGHEAE#imgre=wtt0PnooyCEF7M>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022. They were painted by 40 artists, including Denis and Desvallières, and represent, in overwhelming detail, events and persons from the New Testament and from the history of Christianity. During the Dupré family's visit to St-Esprit, Father de la Motte likely pointed out some of the symbolic details and their meanings for the Christian life.</p>
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We parted around 7:15 PM.

Wednesday 15 October 1941

Organ lesson at Meudon.⁷⁹

[80] Friday 17 October 1941

I finalized, with Dupré, the programs for my tour.⁸⁰ MD: “We must talk. Meet me at my class Monday, if you possibly can. You will accompany me to Montparnasse [train station].⁸¹

You must also come to Meudon one day; I’ll show you how to turn on the wind [supply]; you can copy the organ [specification] and what is on the pistons. It’s a concert organ: you’ll want to be comfortable at it. You must be able to play it as well as I.”⁸²

Monday 20 October 1941

I went to meet Marcel Dupré at his class at 3:30 PM, and we remained together until 6:30.

First, a visit to a photo print shop in Montmartre. From there we went into Sacré-Cœur to perform our devotions, as the master wished. A very moving moment.

Upon leaving, we gazed upon Paris, then made our way to Montparnasse, to the Dupont terrace,⁸³ where we had a long conversation of supreme importance. Dupré’s aim is to reveal me to myself, to have me know my own artistry (impossible to retrace all the details). All this while defining the characteristics of a complete artist, and drawing [81] a comparison with me.

I accompanied the master to his train. The question of the concert in Rouen remains [to be decided].

(Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2007), 131, under the word *caisse*, *battre la grosse caisse* means, “to clamor, to declare loudly,” as when assembling soldiers. Dupré seems to be saying that Demessieux’s playing is, in itself, announcement enough. If this is so, according to Marguerite’s rejoinder, she did not understand in what way her father was speaking figuratively.

79. In her notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” Demessieux recorded for Oct. 15, 1941, Lesson 4, that she played the first and second movements of Bach’s Trio Sonata No. 5 (declared perfected); melodic- and harmonic-minor scales (no criticism); and Nos. 4 and 5 of Alkan’s *Études* for the feet only, about which her only recorded comment is that her question regarding thirds in a pedal part was answered: they are to be played by one foot only.

80. This is, possibly, a reference to plans for Demessieux to tour and play Rouen organs, which would not be fulfilled until Sept. 1943.

81. Montparnasse, as well as having a subway station, has the train station where Dupré would board for his trip home to Meudon.

82. These sentences suggest that Demessieux’s prior lessons at Dupré’s Meudon home were on a smaller organ. This may have been the 2-manual, mechanical-action Cavaillé-Coll organ that, according to Murray 1985, 192 n.23, Dupré used for teaching and practice when he first moved to Meudon in 1925.

83. Dupont was a café in the Montparnasse district boasting a beautiful view from a terrace.

Sunday 26 October 1941

I cannot go to Rouen:⁸⁴ Father de la Motte prefers that I take the services.

Friday 31 October 1941

I was at M^r and M^{me} Dupré's home in Meudon from 1:30 to 8:00 PM to copy out the plan of the organ, practice, and play Liszt's ["Weinen, Klagen"] Variations for the master. Dupré was performing a radio concert in the afternoon; I ran into Marguerite and him catching the train to Paris. M^{me} Dupré greeted me affectionately, as always.

They had heated the room. Dupré had written some instructions for me; the motor was already on. I set to work. I am passionate about this organ, and I did my utmost to draw inspiring results.⁸⁵

At 5:00 M^{me} Dupré came and fetched me for tea. (By the way, I was totally stunned by the results of my work). The master had returned, tired but happy. We took a half-hour break, then returned to work. Detailed explanations. I played the Variations (for the first time on an organ) during which Dupré heard his registration for the first time. Notes, papers. I took away with me Dupré's unpublished version [82] of the ["Weinen, Klagen"] Variations,⁸⁶ as well as Liszt's version for piano.

Saturday 1 November 1941

Concert by Noëlie Pierront at Chaillot. Terrible, no technique, nothing by memory, no style. When I went to greet her, she exclaimed,

"Goodness! What a distinguished critic I had in the hall!"

Me: "I beg you, there were many more distinguished than I." It's bittersweet. I saw there, among others, Messiaen, his wife, and his adorable child.

Sunday 2 November 1941

Day off from St-Esprit. I spent the morning at St-Sulpice. M^r and M^{me} Dupré kept me in the gallery between the two masses; the three of us chatted. Dupré introduced me to [Stéphane] Bornemann, the

84. As noted in Murray 1985, 183, Dupré performed the re-inaugural recital of Rouen's St-Ouen organ on Oct. 26, 1941.

85. In her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 — Minutage," for Oct. 31, 1941, Lesson 5, Demessieux wrote, "Liszt's Variations. Introduction to the modern, electric organ."

86. Dupré made an organ transcription of one of Liszt's two piano works that employ the "Weinen, Klagen" ground bass borrowed from Bach. (The theme's title derives from one composition in which Bach employed the descending, chromatic ground bass, that is, the first movement of his Cantata BWV 12, setting the words "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen . . .") Dupré appears to have perfected his organ transcription of Liszt's piano composition over several years; this explains why, as noted in Steed 1999, 227, the extant manuscript is dated Apr. 9, 1948. According to Steed, Dupré chose to transcribe for his own use one of Liszt's piano versions of his "Weinen, Klagen" variations, despite the existence of Liszt's own organ version, because the Liszt piano version is more virtuosic than the organ version. Regarding ms. scores of Dupré's "Weinen, Klagen" transcription, see the diary entry for Nov. 7, 1941 as well. Also noted by Steed 1999, 227, and confirmed by Murray 1985, 241–42, is a ms. of a 1948 "Weinen, Klagen" transcription for organ and orchestra by Dupré.

editor. With great enthusiasm, I spoke to Dupré of the unpublished Liszt version [Variations on “Weinen, Klagen”], and we decided that I would work on it, despite his misgivings. M^{me} Dupré pushed for my idea.

Brilliant improvisations. [I also met] a fine [female] pianist, [a] student of Busoni for seven years.

Friday 7 November 1941

At the Conservatory, Dupré presented me with the handwritten score of the Liszt Variations (transcription based on the original version for piano): a priceless gift [83] that I was not expecting. The score had been newly annotated for the occasion, and I found, upon opening it, a [personal] dedication and an explanatory message.

Saturday 22 November 1941

Feast of Saint Cecilia. An important and instructive day. At Marcel Dupré’s home in Meudon, I gave my first trial concert before the master, M^{me} Dupré, M^{lle} Dupré, Papa, and Maman. The program consisted of Liszt’s three major pieces, which I played from memory, without stopping. For the Variations, I played Marcel Dupré’s transcription, which he heard me play for the first time. Order of the program: Variations [on “Weinen, Klagen”]; [Prelude and Fugue on] B-A-C-H; Fantasia [and Fugue on “Ad nos, ad salutarem undam”].

I arrived at Meudon at 2:30 PM for the only rehearsal. My parents [arrived] at 4:30. Discussion between the master and me, with Dupré wishing me to set the organ according to my needs, and I, having decided in advance that, on principle, I would change none of the pistons set for *Évocation*. The master was unhappy: “With you I should have known better!” In the end, I changed everything [and] only practiced the Variations. The concert would go ahead without being fully rehearsed.

At the appointed hour, my audience took their seats at the back of the hall, then in the gallery. Dupré had said to me: “It’s time to get on with it; [84] once the first act begins, it must be finished. No stopping.”

The master was astounded by the outcome; he kept repeating, “It’s a miracle...” No one other than the two of us knew how much of a *tour de force* this was. For my part, I had several slips, but was able to recover so that the music did not suffer too much. I maintained my equilibrium from beginning to end, despite serious stage fright beforehand.

When the recital ended, Dupré kissed my cheeks, saying, “You have more than doubled all expectations: that was wonderful.” Then, turning to his wife, “Can you have any doubt that this child will climb even higher!... I see that I was not mistaken. I have gotten hold of a first-rate thoroughbred.” Marguerite remarked on the inspiration in my interpretations.

They had fun making me pretend to bow under the spotlights, then we moved to the parlour where we chatted for another hour. There, the master raised a question that is becoming important to me. A favour to do for him (supposedly). He has decided with Claude Delvincourt to prepare an anthology of organ music, the most important works, for the purpose of expanding the repertoire of the students in the organ class.⁸⁷ The anthology will be published by Bornemann. But the master, who simply does not have enough time [85]

87. This was to be a compilation of selected pieces from largely pre-Bach, that is early, organ music.

to do all the work involved in preparing the edition, asked me if I would agree to help him with this 117-page work, of which twenty pages are already completed. I have accepted and am very moved.

MD: "As I was sure that you would accept, I have everything nicely arranged with Bornemann; we have decided that you will receive 3,500 francs for this work, as well as a copy of the anthology when it appears. But... only under the condition that you do not work on this more than one-and-a-half hours a day: no saying to me, 'I just wanted to finish...' Bornemann is a fine, honest man. He knows you already, will regard you as a friend, and when we think of publishing..." It is agreed, so I don't have to interrupt my work, that on Friday Marcel Dupré himself will come to our house to bring me all the material and explain it to me.⁸⁸

Dupré, who had already taken the trouble of going to meet my parents at the station, insisted on accompanying us back, embraced each of us, and waited until we could feel the rumble of the approaching train.

Noteworthy: the warm welcome, so full of affection, received from Madame Dupré and Marguerite.

Saturday 29 November 1941

Around 5:30 PM, Dupré arrived at the house, [86] bringing me the work for the Anthology. We had coffee (despite the master's polite refusals), then we moved to the studio where we worked together on the editing.

MD: "You mark the fingering and phrasing (according to convention). Also, analyze the fugue by Beethoven. Perhaps you will find it worthwhile to transcribe certain things on three staves. I will mark in the registration and the tempos. Do all this as you best see fit and promise me that you will not let your fascination with this work draw you in for more than 1, 1 ½ hours a day."

From our overall conversation, I remember:

MD: "My wife and Marguerite loved the Liszt. To have managed that when the Variations hadn't even been registered yet!... It bowls me over. In the great Fantasia (on "Ad nos"), there is mastery..."

Me: "One feels transported, drawn in while playing it."

MD: "Of course! The performer is the first to sense it. I believe that it is the greatest piece to have been written for organ since Bach. I even dare to liken it to Bach's major works, perhaps even placing it above Franck's *Chorals*. This afternoon, Jean Gallon came to [87] Meudon, and I played *Évocation* for him. He had asked me to, on Monday. He wanted me to play it for him at the Conservatory. He stayed two hours. I showed him inside the organ, showed him my *registreur*,⁸⁹ and insisted that he improvise. He wanted me to play the Adagio [of *Évocation*] again. I believe—I got the impression—that he considers it to be my best work, that I have made progress. He is a magnificent improviser. I remember when I was preparing for the

88. In 1942, Bornemann issued the *Anthologie des maîtres classiques de l'orgue*, ed. Dupré, as a series of 36 separate pieces, available by subscription. It consists of works by W. F. Bach, Beethoven, Böhm, Buxtehude, Jeremiah Clarke (attributed to Henry Purcell), Clérambault, Couperin, Daquin, Dandrieu, Frescobaldi, Gabrieli, de Grigny, Handel, Mozart, Muffat, Pachelbel, Palestrina, Pérotin, Scheidt, Schumann, Titelouze, and J. G. Walther. Demessieux's work editing any of the pieces was not acknowledged in the publication.

89. One of Dupré's additions to Guilmant's organ, the "*registreur*," as he named it, is a type of combination action: an electro-pneumatic system for changing stops and accessories during performance of a piece, but without the need for an individual piston for each change.

Rome [Prize] he said to me, 'No, no, let's see, not like that. Here's how this should be treated...', and he improvised a choral passage on the piano, a whole scene for a cantata. Another time, when he sat at the St-Ouen organ (in Rouen), he improvised for an hour-and-a-half, always so interesting... with a few pauses during which he slid over on the bench saying, 'your turn, Marcel...' I had to keep up with him, come hell or high water. I don't think we are going to be able to hide our projects from him for long, you know... certainly not for four years! When he questions me, I deliberately change the subject. Here's what I think: I hope [88] to begin [composing] the twelve études this very month. You will work on them as I go along (I'll hand them over to you; there will be a few things crossed out; you will copy each, leaving you a duplicate in your own script). The best-case scenario is that I will be finished after the vacation, in October. Then, I could ask Jean Gallon if he would like to hear my études. I'll bring him to Meudon; he will be astonished to find you here. And then, when the time came to play, it would be little Jeanne who sits at the organ." We both laughed heartily.

Me: "Master, it can't be me who performs them for the first time."

MD: "Why not?"

Me: "Because you will be there."

MD: "I'll be there! I am writing them for you. You work for me, and I work for you!" Then:

MD: "Before your debut, I will take you to Rouen and have you practice at St-Ouen with the doors closed to the public. The same at St-Sulpice—with me, or alone if you prefer. You must feel that your sound carries; you must work at the site. There's a reason that I have had you play at St-Sulpice." [89]

My parents said they didn't know how to thank him, to which Dupré responded with these magnificent words:

"Seeing her talent develop is what truly brings me joy. When a child wants to give his grandfather something for his birthday and, being but a child, he has no money, he tells a story."

When speaking of *Évocation*, the master told me, "One day I will play it just for you." And then, regarding the études project: "I don't talk about it, because I'm afraid that someone will steal my idea."

We spoke of my sister.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] The most recent of several models that Dupré had tried before his definitive registrar.

[Appendix]

"Form is the destiny of expression."—Yves Nat, 1941.

"When composing, one wants to love all the notes."—Marcel Dupré, 1940.

"Bach is so rich, we could very well borrow a train ticket from him!"—Marcel Dupré, 1940.

“It is not as interesting to learn as it is to know. What’s important is not the searching but the finding.”—Marcel Dupré, 1940.

Regarding the minimum of science one must learn: “Even a genius cannot write without a pencil.”—Marcel Dupré, 1940.

“One cannot be a great artist without having studied with a great artist: of this, I am sure.”—Marcel Dupré, St-Sulpice, 1940.

“To write one’s own music, one must know the music of others.”—Noël Gallon [no date].

“The secret of technique lies in the order of movements [the order you do things].”—Medtner. Quoted by Marcel Dupré, 1941.

“When Cavaillé-Coll died, people said, ‘He has gone to voice the trumpet for the Last Judgment.’”—Dupré, 1941.

[End of notebook I]

II⁹⁰

This notebook is the continuation of No. I.

[signed] Jeanne Demessieux

[90] Friday 5 December 1941

I heard Mozart’s Requiem for the first time.

Saturday 6 December 1941

Marcel Dupré concert at Notre-Dame.⁹¹ The Prelude and Fugue in G major [BWV 541] made a strong impression on me. I was with Papa.

Saturday 13 December 1941

Lesson at Meudon. First contact with a radiating pedalboard.⁹²

Monday 22 December 1941

Marcel Dupré had me call in at Meudon to make corrections to the Anthology pages. I arrived around 1:30 PM and left on the 7:15 train.

Marguerite greeted me and settled me in the parlour, where everything was prepared for my work. She told me the master would like me to wait for him. I worked quickly, aware that I was, for a time, the only person in the house! Then Madame Dupré, back from Paris, offered me tea.

The master arrived late, having come from Perroux's. He gave a lesson while I returned to work; then we chatted. He brought me up to date on the question of Ste-Clothilde: the competition to succeed [Charles] Tournemire was to have taken place on the 20th, [91] but with the candidates having dropped out one-by-one, only Jean Langlais was left. The competition has been postponed to a future date (Dupré was to have been a member of the jury). Dupré revealed an intriguing detail of this situation to me:

MD: "You received nothing? No one asked you to present your candidacy?" I was very astonished at this question, having never thought about Ste-Clothilde.

MD: "Yesterday, I saw Grunenwald, who said to me: 'Do you know that Busser wants to make that little Jeanne Demessieux put forth her candidacy... to be a "filler" during the competition?' and he added: 'a child like that!'" He expanded upon what had happened and told me to be forewarned. Quite a plot has been hatched for the benefit of Langlais.

Dupré also said to me: "I will soon be giving you my first étude to copy and work on: it's almost finished. I believe it will do you good."

Thursday 25 December 1941

Christmas. I went to hear Vespers at St-Sulpice with Papa and Maman. Marcel Dupré had me play the entrance piece. There were people present in the gallery.

91. According to the printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1319, also participating in this 6:00 PM event was the Bremen Cathedral choir of Bremen, Germany. The concert repertoire consisted of three pairings of organ and choral works by Austrian and German composers. For a perspective on why Dupré would participate in a concert apparently organized in cooperation with the German occupiers, see Lynn Cavanagh, "Marcel Dupré's 'Dark Years': Unveiling His Occupation-Period Concertizing," *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 33/2 (2013): 46–50.

92. Radiating pedalboards—in which pedals are arranged in a broad, fan-like shape to lessen the distance from the centre to the extremes of the pedalboard—were then rare in France. They were common in North America, however, where Dupré expected Demessieux to concertize after her Paris debut.

[92] Thursday 1 January 1942

11:15 AM Mass at St-Sulpice.⁹³ A number of people present, including Michel Boulnois.

Dupré asked me to play Vespers. At 3:30, my parents arrived, and everything in the order of worship went very well. As for me, I had an indefinable feeling of having mastery of this instrument, so much more so than on my first try. Processional; five versets; hymn using tutti, canon, etc.; [for the] Magnificat, five versets; an improvised recessional. I telephoned Dupré this evening.

Friday 6 February 1942

Marcel Dupré did us the honor of spending a short time at our home* after his class. We visited for an hour-and-a-half, after which I accompanied the master as far as Montparnasse for the 8:00 PM train. We discussed our work on the Anthology and talked about the project. Dupré asked me to play for High Mass at St-Sulpice on Sunday, up until he arrives.

* After a period during which I was quarantined for chicken pox.

Saturday 7 February 1942

Impossible to play at St-Sulpice on Sunday, as I'm the only one available for the service at St-Esprit.

[93] Tuesday 17 February 1942

Lesson at Meudon from 8:45 AM to 12:30 PM.

I presented a set of scales, three of Alkan's *Études* [nos. 6, 7 and 8] and the six [Bach] trio sonatas to Marcel Dupré, complete, from memory. Dupré highlighted the significance of this accomplishment with these words: "Colossal progress on the pedals. This time you've got it. Ah, you have nothing to worry about—not in the least!"⁹⁴

I had the run of the organ, as always, having made a permanent arrangement with him. The master said to me, "Register things however you like this morning; you can change the pistons: my organ is yours." Then he listened to the sonatas from the back of the hall, seated on the stairs, from where he exclaimed from time to time, "Ah! That's magnificent, you know!" He had me try some acrobatics on the pedal and, appearing delighted, said to me:

93. In her notebook, AM 4S13, "Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées" (on a page prior to the main, chronological list), for Jan. 1, 1942 at St-Sulpice, Demessieux noted the feast day—Circumcision of Our Lord—and at least some of the music Dupré performed: at High Mass: Bach, [Trio] Sonata No. 6, 1st movement; at 11:15: "Veni creator" by Titelouze; "In dir ist Freude" and "Das alte Jahr vergangen ist" by Bach; an improvised recessional piece.

94. In her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage," under Feb. 17, 1942, Demessieux noted the next scales assignment: "Ped. 8, 16; strict tempo; accompanied in the hands by the chord on the 1st degree, voix céleste. One after the other, without break, once each. (=Speed [*Rapidité*])."

MD: "All told, to achieve first-class virtuoso technique, it suffices to have the three sets of scales, Alkan's *Études*, and the études that I am in the process of writing." And again:

MD: "I am no longer wondering whether I am capable of creating a virtuoso; I have done it."

[94] During a minute of rest, I recall the master saying: "A very great artist is unmistakable; one senses it. They are like a breed apart. We sense this especially when we are of the same breed! Those who are not like others. Wouldn't you agree?"

Dupré seemed not to notice that I mumbled my response. I shall make it a point of honour to reply to him, in a few years' time.

After the lesson, we chatted one-to-one. Concerning the edition of the Anthology, we decided to visit Bornemann tomorrow. On the subject of *Évocation*, which is in press, he said he had reserved a copy for me, and added, "You can begin practising it immediately, if you like."

As for the future, my first concerts in Paris, he gave me yet more advice, preparing me, little by little, for the recital platform. He told me that for a concert "one must arrive very early, see no one and, while waiting, chat only with a very good friend. During the intermission one must see no one; the door must be kept shut. Anyway, when you play, I will be there, in the wings, the entire time, and I will guard the door."

"Master, your place is not there!" I [95] exclaimed.

MD: "Yes: I will lead you from the green room to the stage and from the stage to the green room to make sure that no one speaks to you."

Wednesday 18 February 1942

First visit to the publisher Bornemann, with Dupré. We brought our work with us. Dupré provided the proofs of the preface, and I another twenty-three pages of proofs. Bornemann is very classy. We chatted. We decided to go ahead and publish the edition. An interesting technical discussion.

Speaking of me, Dupré said, "You see, all of this has taught her the craft of being a composer..." and to me as we were leaving,

"You see? That's how one goes about telling people things."⁹⁵

He asked me to stay with him until the train had left. We chatted for an hour. Since yesterday, we've been thinking about the question of the hall and the organ in Paris, and we continued this conversation. Dupré is strongly in favour of a moveable console. Apart from that, a wide-ranging conversation, full of interest for both of us.

Wednesday 4 March 1942

After an anxious night, we learned [96] by telephone that Dupré's house and organ hall had been wrecked

95. Without saying to Bornemann outright that Demessieux herself had potential to be a published composer, Dupré arguably laid the groundwork for future publication by Bornemann of a composition by Demessieux.

in the bombing.⁹⁶ My father decided to go to Meudon tomorrow morning. Madame Dupré's face has been wounded; the master is ill.

Thursday 5 March 1942

Papa went to Marcel Dupré's.* Marguerite, the only uninjured member of the family, greeted him upon his arrival, but the master, upon hearing his voice, came down from his bedroom, where he'd been resting. All three of them welcomed Papa in a way that left him shaken. "You are the first!..." cried Madame Dupré. They were dreadfully upset; the master could not bear to look at his organ hall. A panel of the organ is torn off, but none of the pipes have suffered; the little organ and the three pianos are intact, as are the library and the archives. They [the Duprés] must protect themselves from the cold with tarpaulins stretched across the openings.

(They owe their life to Marguerite, who convinced them to go to the basement.)

After a conversation with Papa concerning practical matters, all three felt able to speak to him about me and, it appears, did so in [97] the most affectionate terms. "Tell Jeanne not to worry," the master kept saying; the concert is pushed back to a later date.⁹⁷ The Anthology was discussed. Dupré spoke a lot about my technique, and said (in essence), "No woman nor man has played the pedals with such virtuosity."

* I had to play for a service at St-Esprit.

96. Online sources describe the March 1942 bombing of Paris suburbs to have taken place over the night of Mar. 2-3, 1942; it has been impossible to reconcile this with the Mar. 4 date of Demessieux's diary entry. The web page "La France bombardée," <<http://us.army.39.45.xooit.com/t384-La-France-Bombard%C3%A9.htm>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, describes an RAF bombing aimed at the Renault factory—known by British intelligence to be manufacturing tanks for the German army—near the Paris suburb of St-Cloud. In the leadup, on March 1, British planes dropped pamphlets above the Paris suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt explaining that the British air force had sophisticated means of taking precise aim at the Renault factory. They also warned that some bombs would miss and that residents should, therefore, take shelter in advance of the air raid to come. In the actual event, which lasted an hour during the night of March 2-3, bombs rained down heavily, not only on the Renault Factory but also on the nearby communities of Boulogne-Billancourt, Clamart, Montrouge, Bougival, and Le Pecq. Dupré described the relatively small damage to his home in nearby Meudon in his *Recollections*, trans. and ed. Ralph Kneeream (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1975), 108: in his organ hall, windows were shattered and furniture was left in shambles, but the organ was "miraculously intact" (on the same page, the caption for a photo of the music room taken that night erroneously says, "German bomb exploded nearby"). According to the website cited above, the next day, Monsignor Suhard presided at a mass at Notre-Dame Cathedral for the families of the missing, after which a crowd filled Place de la Concorde in observance of those killed. Rescue workers are said to have assisted 1,500 injured people and recovered 633 bodies. In an outburst of propaganda, the Vichy government, the Nazi press in France, and Nazi-controlled Radio-Paris proclaimed their curses of revenge upon the enemy. As a result, anti-British sentiment in France ran high.

97. Dupré was referring to the second in Demessieux's series of twelve trial concerts held between Nov. 21, 1941 and June 17, 1944 in his recital hall. The Demessieux and Dupré families, and sometimes invited guests, were members of the audience.

Wednesday 18 March 1942

The concert is set for the 19th. Rehearsal today at Meudon. Arrival at 1:30 PM. I set my combinations myself and worked until 5:00.

We had tea in Marguerite's quarters and waited for Marcel Dupré.

When he arrived, I chatted with him for a moment; he advised me to go hear Grunenwald's upcoming concert at Chaillot, but to keep myself hidden!

We put off until tomorrow the rehearsal for the concert that was to have taken place this evening. MD: "I'm going to play the organ for you." For the first time, I heard the *étude* (no. 1 of the twelve) and *Évocation*, complete, both played by the master. An unforgettable memory. I took the manuscript of the *étude* for copying.

MD: "I am playing in Lyon on Sunday, and I haven't begun to prepare."⁹⁸ But I tell people that I'm always working."

Me: "What is the best policy?"

MD: "Say, like Busoni: 'Do you think this repertoire just learns itself?'"

[98] Thursday 19 March 1942

At 1:30 PM, as I was taking the train for Meudon, I ran into Marcel Dupré and Marguerite. Dupré had bandaged hands and moved with difficulty: yesterday evening, he fell down a flight of stairs. Miraculously, nothing [was] broken.

MD: "Marguerite doesn't want to leave me alone anymore... I have indigestion!... and I'm leaving tomorrow at 6:00 AM..." I wanted to withdraw [from playing my recital].

MD: "So, that's it! You've decided 'it doesn't matter'? You have your whole future before you, and I am only a dusty old virtuoso. On the contrary, today is when I need to hear you." Speaking of the Lyon concert:

MD: "Another one that I can give without preparation."

At Meudon, I played Bach's Six [Trio] Sonatas for Dupré, who was settled into his armchair. Here are his words:

"What a future! What execution and what a brain! You give me very great pleasure. (Concerning the sonatas:) "Your future is secure, my little one. The virtuoso life will not be a hardship for you; you will live it with ease! I am convinced that no one [99] since me has played the organ like that. How strange it is to see beneath a sweet little powdered face the brain of a man."

A few moments' rest. Dupré gave me a copy of *Évocation*, with a [personal] dedication.

Around 5:00 PM, Papa and Maman arrived, and my audience, consisting of my parents, Madame Dupré, Marguerite, and the master, seated themselves in the gallery. I replayed the Six Trio Sonatas [by Bach], in order. (M^{me} Dupré left before the end to go to Paris. She had listened to the rehearsal from the study.)

98. According to the program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1335, on March 22, 1942, in Lyon's Salle Rameau, Dupré performed a concert of standard organ works, including a Noël setting by Daquin.

The afternoon ended cozily in the parlour. It was decided that I would work on *Évocation* and on the étude. We left at 7:30.

I have just remembered a bit of a conversation between Dupré and me yesterday: I realized how fortunate I am, and said this to the master in parting.

"Wait a bit and you'll see," he replied.

I also note, concerning *Évocation*,

MD: "My idea is to trace the three aspects of my father's character: he was a worrier, like me; he was loving; and he had pride, in the sense of dignity."

Today, Thursday, we talked composition.

MD: "Now I write for myself, what I [100] want, without concerning myself with trends or schools." I said I could not understand how a composer of sincerity could voluntarily attach himself to a school or party, instead of searching to develop a personal art.

MD: "They do not consider themselves to be plagiarists, seeing that they all want to be leaders of schools. Consider how Beethoven depended upon Mozart, Schubert on Beethoven, Wagner on Liszt and Chopin, Debussy on Mussorgsky, how Ravel depended upon Debussy. Only one amongst these did not depend upon anyone: he, Chopin, was a sort of miracle. Transposed into art, it was like an incarnation of the divine."

Sunday 29 March 1942

Grunenwald's concert at Chaillot. Considered as a whole, there was great virtuosity, but the execution was ragged. He plays too quickly, resulting, on both manuals and pedal, in a cumbersome, thick legato. In the Bach, numerous errors in the traditional articulations and in the text. Detailed registrations. Skipped a measure. The Franck was interesting, distinctive. His own works, colourful. The interpretation of Liszt's great Fantasia appeared confused to me and [101] uncertain. I could not make out the basic idea. Memory gap of a page and a half (after the exposition of the fugue until the 2nd-inversion F-sharp-minor chord). He improvised for a long time to get himself back on track.

Huge success. Three encores: improvisation on a theme by Marcel Dupré (Prelude and Fugue), Franck's *Final*, Toccata and Fugue in D minor [by Bach], with another memory gap.

He is the first, other than blind musicians, to play from memory at the Trocadéro. His bearing is quite spectacular. I am troubled by the way he orients his success, playing only to the crowd [*le gros public*]. Dupré was not at the concert.

Tuesday 31 March 1942

I went to Meudon toward the end of the afternoon to show Dupré the errors I believed I'd found in the text of *Évocation* and in the manuscript of the étude.

MD: "You were at Grunenwald's concert?"

"Yes"

"Be honest with me; tell me what you thought of it. This will be just between the two of us, as always. Afterwards, I'll tell you what M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite said to me." I went into detail concerning an idea I

had, in which Dupré took great interest. He gave me his opinion (which I will not share here) and seemed [102] to trust me very much.

Regarding *Évocation*, I asked him if he would permit me to play it for him initially without aiming to interpret it, out of respect for him, or, instead, according to my own sensibilities.

MD: “Play it as you feel it; I would prefer that. Play with your heart. To relieve your scruples, I’ll assure you that if there is the slightest thing that I would prefer to see us drop, I will tell you, very gently: of that you may be sure.”

And, speaking generally: “While working, be careful not to live in a world of fantasy. Just as one keeps one’s body clean, one must keep one’s heart pure and one’s intellect clear.”

Good Friday 3 April 1942

A Padeloup concert⁹⁹ in which Marcel Dupré played, with orchestra, Liszt’s *Fantasia* (“Ad nos”) in his own transcription.¹⁰⁰ He asked us to see him home.

Sunday 12 April 1942

A visit to Jean Gallon at Vespers at St-Philippe-du-Roule. He had me play the little organ (Cavaillé-Coll—beautiful flute).¹⁰¹

Wednesday 15 April 1942

Rehearsed Liszt’s “Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen Zagen” Variations on the St-Sulpice organ [103], it being arranged with Dupré that I will replace him on Sunday morning.

I had an appointment with the master at 4:15 PM. We worked for two hours (up until Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament). Dupré was happy. He asked me, “Do you have Widor’s Sixth [Organ Symphony] under your fingers? During the Offertory at 10:00 AM, that’s what I would like you to play for them. For the Communion, would you try Franck’s *Prière*? For the entrance, you’ll improvise a march;* for the recession, a toccata. At 11:30, a fugue in five voices on the chorale theme, as I generally do.” He had me try the Widor, stopped me, played. “Hold on; here is what I do.” It was an admirable lesson in interpretation. In our enthusiasm, we traded places on the bench, and I felt as if I were being propelled forward, playing with greater scope than I could have imagined of myself. Concerning the recitative, page 2, of Widor’s Sixth Symphony,

99. According to BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1338, this concert was conducted by Gustave Cloez. Other works on the program were either by Wagner or Bach.

100. Dupré 1975, 146, and Murray 1985, 242, both note that Dupré’s transcription for organ and orchestra of Liszt’s organ work entitled *Fantasia and Fugue* on “Ad nos, ad salutarem undam” dates from 1930. According to <<http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/liszt-ad-nos-ad-salutarem-undam>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the transcription was commissioned by the Wanamaker Foundation for a performance on the Philadelphia Wanamaker organ.

101. Jean Gallon was choirmaster at St-Philippe-du-Roule. The “little organ” would have been the choir organ.

MD: “This is Wotan in the third act of *Die Walküre*, in a rage, commanding that they lead the culprit to him. Widor had just heard the cycle of four operas, and he wrote this under its influence. Moreover, Cavaillé-Coll’s conception is the Wagnerian conception, as difficult as it is to admit it.”

Dupré has notified no one of his planned absence on Sunday; even so, he has [104] invited Bornemann and other very important people. He’s beginning to think about “propaganda [...] for overseas” and insists that the clergy will think they are hearing “a man’s playing.” He drew parallels between Grunenwald, Geneviève Poirier-Denis (who usually replaces him) and me, and gave me my instructions. He introduced me to the priest who is the treasurer, and “prepared the way.”

We left together.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Dupré gave me a sample and improvised sixteen measures of a particularly striking march; then he asked me to improvise in the same manner. “What can I do, after you?” I said. “Whatever you want.” I replayed his sixteen measures and added the theme in canon for the elaboration. Dupré, full of joy.

Letter from Dupré to his friend Jean Guerner¹⁰²

16 April 1942

My dear friend,

A few words to tell you that I will not be at St-Sulpice on Sunday: I’m playing in Caen.¹⁰³ But if you can be there, my amazing little student Jeanne Demessieux, 1st Prize in organ just this year, will play [Liszt’s Variations on] “Weinen, Klagen” in the version I transcribed [for organ] from the version for piano, and which, you may recall, I decided, in the end, not to publish...¹⁰⁴

No need to tell you that she will be most pleased to welcome you [to the St-Sulpice organ gallery].

A thousand best wishes. Your friend,

Marcel Dupré

102. Marcel Dupré, “Correspondance de Marcel Dupré et de Jean Guerner,” *Bulletin of the Association des Amis de l’Art de Marcel Dupré*, No. 20 (2002a): 19–20.

103. According to printed programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1340–1341, on Sunday, April 19 Dupré performed as featured artist in a “Audition Religieuse” with other instrumental and vocal participants at Église St-Pierre in Caen. He opened the program with his second public performance of *Évocation*. The next afternoon he performed in Cahagnes at Église Notre-Dame for the inauguration of the great organ that had been restored by Maison Jacquot-Lavergne.

104. Regarding Jean Guerner’s interest in Liszt’s Variations on “Weinen, Klagen,” see the diary entry for Aug. 2, 1942.

Sunday 19 April 1942

I played the masses in Dupré's place for the first time.

10:00 AM, Pontifical High Mass: Mgr. Suhard presided. (Plainchant by the seminarians of St-Sulpice.)¹⁰⁵ I improvised the entrance music, a march. I played the entire Allegro from Widor's Sixth Symphony at the Offertory; improvised from the Elevation to the Agnus Dei (flutes, Prestant, and Quintaton [16'] on the *Récit*, box closed; foundations on the *Positif*; 16' then flute 4' on the pedal); Franck's *Prière* at the Communion, where I was stopped in the middle. Recessional: a toccata improvised on a theme by M^r Jean Laurent* (engineer), a friend of Dupré.

At 11:30: [Bach's] chorale "Gloria Mystique"¹⁰⁶ in its entirety; Liszt's Variations ["Weinen, Klagen"] transcribed by M. Dupré. I had the manuscript on the stand but played from memory. [105] Everything sounds magnificent on this organ; nothing is ever boring. I spent two- and-a-half hours in a state of exultation.

[There was] a crush of people in the gallery who had expected to find Dupré. Some would have gone back down, but curiosity held them. I met Amable Massis, director of the Troyes Conservatory, and Laurent, the engineer, whom I mentioned above. A group of dignified looking Germans tried to start up a conversation. Beuchet, the builder, full of enthusiasm, talked to me about St-Esprit and claimed he wanted to put a 60-stop organ in the main organ gallery. E. Monet, the usual people, plus others, friends. Massis uttered the word "moving" after the toccata.

After the mass, Papa met M^r le Curé, who, it seems, was endless in his praise. The Germans asked me for my impression of the Chaillot organ.

I'm absolutely thrilled to have publicly ministered in this celebrated position. [Squeezed between lines:] My parents were with me.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] From 1943: "When he speaks of you, it is with tears in his eyes," Marguerite Dupré told me.

Saturday 25 April 1942

After several meetings, I had a short telephone conversation with Dupré. I am noting this because of the development it represents in the course of our collaboration:

MD: "I've been hearing feedback since Sunday.

"Ah! Well...?"

105. The year 1942 was the tri-centenary of the founding of the Seminary of St-Sulpice.

106. The entry in Demessieux's notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage" for Aug. 18, 1943 indicates that the "Gloria Mystique" was one of Bach's "Leipzig" chorale preludes (also known as the "Eighteen" chorales). Therefore, it is one of the set's three settings of "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr." Two of these settings are in A major (BWV 662 and 664) and one is in G major (BWV 663)."

“Well?... All right: simply put, you were a sensation... [106]

“No!”

“Yes! You know, people were bowled over! To the point that... but I see the need to be careful as to what we do next; the project...”

I said nothing.

“Yes, but I don’t want them to figure it out too soon... We’ll consider this together. I’m happy: this allowed us to take the temperature of our audience, and I have the thermometer well in hand! So, there’s what I wanted to say to you; and tell your parents; it will please them.”

Friday 1 May 1942

Organ lesson at Meudon. I played *Évocation* and the *Étude* (1st) from memory for Dupré, for the first time. The master was filled with enthusiasm. After *Évocation*, he was so moved that he could not hold back his tears, and was speechless for a moment. Then:

“What a thrill... If [your] Papa and Maman had heard you, they would have said only that I was not mistaken.”

Advice to remember for *Évocation*: the beginning should be slower than is indicated by the metronome mark in the published version, more “philosophical.” The Adagio:

MD: “This passage (pages 4 and 5) must be played almost rubato; it must pour out its feelings even more. That tosses [107] out my whole theory against the use of rubato on the organ... and proves that no law governs feelings. If I had dared, I would have written (at the top), Rubato.”

Regarding the *Più mosso* [mm. 60-73 of the Adagio]:

MD: “[This is] a kind of short ecstasy; magical, saturated, watery; the effect of the pedal on the piano.”

Dupré played. I tried it. Left hand: semi-staccato in the fingers; the right hand a light legato (perhaps a bit faster than eighth note = 104). Similar passage in the Finale: the same; the staccato in the right hand “weighted,” quite expressive.¹⁰⁷ In the first movement, after the restatement, the *Allegro con moto*, “less brisk”;¹⁰⁸ exactly the same tempo at the conclusion of the Finale.¹⁰⁹

As for the *Étude*, nothing to say.

Dupré talked about the impression I had made at St-Sulpice on the 19th. He showed me a letter about me, addressed to him from the engineer Laurent. Massis, the director of the Troyes Conservatory, was impressed by my improvisations. E. Monet remembered Widor’s Sixth [Organ Symphony]. The priest in charge of taking care of the organ said to Dupré, “Everyone thought it was you.” The master reported these details to me faithfully, as well as the rumors going around.

MD: “Let’s be careful. When you do ‘debut,’ [108] your enemies will split into two factions: those looking to find you in the wrong, and those who will say ‘the student has surpassed the master; Dupré must give way.’ Let’s maintain our lead, which is becoming enormous.

107. In the published score, this passage of the Finale, which begins at m. 117, is headed by *Meno mosso*.

108. First movement, mm. 138 ff., headed by *All^o con moto*.

109. Finale, mm. 173 ff., headed by *Allegro con moto*.

“As for me, I’ve entered the stage where I get more pleasure watching you play than from playing myself. I’ve experienced true pleasure in playing; now I am a bit jaded, you know. Therefore, it’s all the same to me.

“In Paris, you already have the reputation of a first-rate organist and as an improviser of high calibre. We must influence opinion.

“I don’t mean that I won’t invite you to St-Sulpice again: far from it.

“I’m certain of public reception now. This will create an undisputed sensation.”

When I played *Évocation*, Dupré also said:

“What an artist I will give to the world.” And again, MD: “It’s staggering how rapidly your gifts have developed. At home, your studio, nurtured by your parents, with me at the other end of the line.”

Me: “Yes, it’s like being raised in a hothouse.”

MD: “Exactly.”

Me: “Also, whatever sort of artist I become [109] someday, it will never be enough to pay you back for all you’ve given me, you and my parents: you’ve given me everything. I don’t think anything [I do] could ever be too much.”

MD: “It’s not quite as easy as that: with hindsight, you’ll learn that you can’t make it up to those who gave to you, not in this life, it would be a step backwards. You will pay it back to your audiences. You will give back to France as I have given. For the time being, we are at the virtuoso stage. As far as improvisation and composition go, you have nothing to worry about for the future.”

And, bringing up a topic we frequently discuss, Dupré said to me,

“Don’t worry that you’ll turn out to be a mere copy of me. You will always have your own sensibilities.”

We also had a philosophical conversation in which, speaking of perfection, Dupré said that “the splendor of cathedrals is nothing compared to the universe. There, truly, is the temple raised to God’s glory.”

The master asked me to work on his Prelude and Fugue in E minor [Op. 36, No. 1], among other pieces.

Madame Dupré, who [110] from her study had heard me play, kissed me effusively on both cheeks.

There was mention of a very important concert on May 7.

Sunday 3 May 1942

Gaëtan Fleury (André Fleury’s father) visited my gallery. He gave me a theme for the 10:00 AM Offertory and another theme on which I improvised at 11:30, beginning with the Elevation. The latter I treated in two different styles: pastoral (Andante and Variations) and rhythmic (symphonic Allegro); broken into its component parts, it also served as the 2nd, lyrical theme of the Allegro. Interesting; canons of all sorts, contrary motion, augmentations.

Fleury spoke to me about St-Sulpice and about Chaillot; I steered the conversation elsewhere. Spirited throughout, he said to me: “One gives you a tea towel, and you turn it into a hat from the rue de la

Paix.”¹¹⁰ After the symphony: “From a stone you make a cathedral.” In between, he talked to me about his son [André Fleury], and then departed quite suddenly.

Tuesday 5 May 1942

I attended a rehearsal for a concert by Dupré and heard him practice Bach and *Évocation*.

[111] Thursday 7 May 1942

Marcel Dupré concert at St-Sulpice. Prelude and Fugue in E-flat, Trio Sonata No. 6, Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, [all] by Bach; the Paris première of *Évocation*; improvisation on an antiphon submitted by the clergy; Widor’s Toccata after Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.¹¹¹

A concert of overwhelming excellence. The audience was extremely receptive, particularly during *Évocation*.

After the concert, the master and M^{me} Dupré conversed with us for a long time on the square. Dupré said, “Is my star satisfied?”

Thursday 8 May 1942

The morning at Meudon. I brought flowers to M^{me} Dupré to commemorate *Évocation*. They welcomed me *en famille*. The master was a little sad. Audiences no longer satisfy him.

Accompanying me back, he spoke to me about composition. I suggested to him the idea of a second concert for *Évocation*.

He was bitter to have found “a Borchard”¹¹² in the audience.

My visit brightened the day. Germaine Lubin, among others, was at the concert.

110. Since its construction on the orders of Napoléon I, rue de la Paix (as it was eventually named), its nearby avenues, and the Place Vendôme at its southern extreme, have been synonymous with the finest in *haute couture* and luxury items. A pantheon of famed milliners (hatmakers) of 19th- and 20th-century Paris ran their businesses on rue de la Paix <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rue_de_la_Paix%2C_Paris>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, and <<http://www.ruedelapaixhats.com>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022.

111. According to the printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1343, the other featured artist on the program was the baritone Pierre Bernac. As part of the rite of Benediction, he sang Dupré’s *Tantum ergo* setting. The printed program also indicates that the concert was arranged by the Association Artistique M. Dandelot, Ch. Kiesgen, M. de Valmalète, 252 Faubourg Saint-Honoré. It includes two advertisements: one for Éditions Bornemann drawing attention to Dupré’s most recent publications (*Évocation*, Preludes and Fugues, Op. 36; editions of Bach and Handel; *Anthologie des maîtres classiques de l’orgue*—“36 separately published pieces, available or in preparation”), and another for La Voix de son Maître, featuring two recordings by Dupré (no. W1165, Franck; no. W1146, Bach).

112. The reference is, perhaps, to Adolphe Borchard (1882–1967), a French composer of film music and a pianist noted for being a flashy performer. Alternatively, the reference may be to a Borchard enthusiast.

Sunday 10 May 1942

Yves Nat concert at the Châtelet.¹¹³ Schumann [piano] concerto; première of Yves Nat's *L'Enfer*.¹¹⁴ [112] Nat had not played in eight years. Magnificent artist at the piano; he received an ovation.

His own piece surprised the audience; next, one sensed tension rising and factions forming. A boo and bursts of laughter and comments were heard. A full house. Most of the audience was against the piece. In retaliation, the minority was enthusiastic.

After the concert, in the foyer, police guarded the entrance; one could sense the riot. When the way was clear, Nat came out. He was surrounded by fans.

The piece was tremendous. At first hearing, its colours, its "atmosphere" created a staggering effect in my mind. The principal idea did not seem to evolve: it simply turned back on itself. The opening recitative in the soprano appeared to me like an allegorical symbol of the subject, more so than the actual theme. Its [the recitative's] return punctuated the work, like an obsession. Without calling for contrasts or incongruence, I would have liked the different passages to emphasize their distinct characters more.

I am surprised that a man who has devoted eight years to the elaboration of his work [113] wrote it on such a dark subject. Why is art becoming so philosophically abstract? The spirits ask for something new and the response is: Heaven. Hell. Antithesis.

Tuesday 19 May 1942

Organ lesson at Marcel Dupré's. I played Dupré's Prelude and Fugue in E minor [Op. 36, No. 1], Franck's *Final* [Op. 21], and two Alkan études. The master was very happy. His extraordinary confidence in me grows every day. I arrived at 5:15 PM and left around 8:00. The time was divided between the organ and conversation.

MD: "Speaking of Cavaillé-Coll, here's what I've decided. You know that I plan to offer the city of Montpellier a commemorative plaque (with a reproduction of his portrait) that could be placed in the entrance of the organ hall. We will do this at the time of your career launch: we'll each give a concert, a few days apart, in Montpellier. I knew Cavaillé-Coll. You didn't, but your name should be attached to his: you and he were born in the same region. I gave [114] a concert with Widor at Baden [in northwestern France]. I didn't want to; he said to me, 'Dupré, do as I say: it's in your interest.'"

The master also said, straight off, that he wants to get to know Aigues-Mortes, and we finalized a project that has been dear to my parents for a long time.

Without naming any names, we talked about trends in composition.

113. According to Nigel Simeone, *Paris: A Musical Gazetteer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 201, the 19th-century Théâtre du Châtelet, located in Place de Châtelet in the 1st arrondissement of Paris, became famous for its early 20th-century opera and ballet productions. The latter included four seasons of Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* from 1909 to 1917 and Stravinsky's *Petrushka* in 1911.

114. According to a review by Arthur Honegger, "L'Enfer, Corps symphonique d'Yves Nat," *Comœdia* 48 (May 23, 1942), *L'Enfer* is a symphonic poem for soloists, choir, and large orchestra. In his review, Honegger accused it of being too obviously under the influence of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

MD: "They're just birdsongs [*turlutaines*]. No structure."

Me: "I loathe the abstraction of this suspended music that doesn't give of itself, that seems to float above humanity as if detached from it."

MD: "I don't like it either. I'm certain that they are not sincere, that they don't hear. For them, the notes don't matter."

Me: "These philosophical ideas scare me: art is only a means."

MD: "Yes!"

Me: "But, isn't this its disintegration?"...

MD: "I cannot conceive of writing whatever one wants instead of writing what one is able to."

Me: "I'm glad to hear it, I was afraid of being wrong."

MD: "I like lush harmonies, I adore them; but I don't like harshness. For me, music must caress the ear."

Dupré asked me if I had been at [115] Yves Nat's concert. No comment.

Speaking of [Wagner's] *Parsifal*, we debated Magre's theories, purely for the love of discussion.

MD: "I consider August 21, the day you got your harmonium, the anniversary of the start of our project. In two months, we must be finished Franck. Marguerite says that you are ahead of schedule. In one year, you will have performed four recitals and my works." Again, the question of the hall in Paris.

MD: "You won't be surprised when I tell you that we think about you constantly. My wife has an idea." I shall not write it down.

MD: "I would give you Meudon, but that's not Paris, and you will have three hundred people [attending]. St-Sulpice, one cannot be seen when playing there: impossible. A church: impossible. We could try Chaillot. Pleyel is in the running too. Or Cavaillé-Coll. Fifty stops. All that would be needed is to turn the console around.¹¹⁵ No reason to hesitate: better to invest 6,000 francs there than in posters."

The master leaves tomorrow morning on a tour; he returns on the 30th [of May].¹¹⁶

MD: "I'm playing [116] *Évocation*. It feels lucky, so I'm urging it on!"

Dupré asked my opinion of his May 7 concert, again, unbelievable as that seemed to me. Thumbing through the score of his Prelude and Fugue in E [minor]:¹¹⁷

MD: "How can this be! You don't have even a small dedication at the top?" And he said to me again: "My blessings on your work."

I saw M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite, who were very friendly.

115. The references to 50 stops (an approximation) and a need to spend money to have the console turned (so that the performer may be seen by the audience) describes the Cavaillé-Coll organ in the Salle Pleyel.

116. According to programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1344-1352, between May 20 and May 27, 1942 Dupré would perform recitals in Le Mans, Nantes, Rennes, Cognac, La Rochelle, Angoulême, Bordeaux, Tours and, perhaps, Nancy; some of these recitals were sponsored by the publisher Bornemann and La Voix de son Maître.

117. No. 1 of Dupré's Three Preludes and Fugues, Op. 36, composed in 1938 and first published by H. W. Gray.

Sunday 7 June 1942

I'm jotting down a simple reflection. In the short time since April 19th at St-Sulpice, three pieces of gossip have reached me that have an air of being attacks on goodwill. Two of these bits of gossip reached me indirectly, the other directly. Jean-Jacques Grunenwald's name was spoken with force, ensuring that I knew that "the student is every bit as good as the master," and that "it's he who is the assistant organist at St-Sulpice." I am certain (as certain as one can be after weighing everything) that my first foe has thus been identified.

[117] Tuesday 9 June 1942

News came to me yesterday of the death of [the violoncellist] Gérard Hekking. Today I attended the service at St-Pierre-de-Monceau. I was at his last concert this season and will never forget this illustrious yet humble artist's visit to my gallery.

Sunday 14 June 1942

Marcel Dupré played at the Palais de Chaillot: Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue [as well as] the Intermezzo and Toccata from his [Dupré's] Second Symphony.¹¹⁸ Improvisation. A mixed audience, owing, in part, to the popular character of the concert (choral). The hall was packed. We noticed that the organ, usually so dry in effect, sounded rich for the first time, with the usual exception of the tutti. T[hat was t]he general opinion. Of note: Dupré had the moveable console three-quarters turned, and [positioned] on the right side, for the first time. It was a trial for the sake of our project; he asked my opinion. One gets a much livelier view of the performer and misses nothing of his technique. [When it came time to leave,] they asked us to accompany them.¹¹⁹

Friday 19 June 1942

Lesson at Marcel Dupré's.¹²⁰ I completed all of Franck and the Alkan études today; two sets of scales at maximum speed, after which Dupré said: "That's unrivalled." Having not been entirely [118] satisfied with the first playing (learned too quickly), I played the [Dupré] Prelude and Fugue in E minor again for the master, who was very enthusiastic.

MD: "What a joy for me to see you ascend! No one has ever seen something like this. Audiences will be

118. BnF Music Dept., Vma 1830, boîte 6, 1353, preserves a handwritten record of this program.

119. Demessieux originally began this sentence with the beginning of the word for "we," as if she first intended to write, "We accompanied them." She struck out the beginning of the word for "we" when she decided to put the emphasis on the fact that the Duprés *asked* the Demessieuxs to accompany them as they began their homeward journey.

120. In GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage," under June 19, 1942, Demessieux listed Dupré's Prelude and Fugue in E minor, works by Franck (*Cantabile*, *Chorals* Nos. 1 and 2), and Alkan's *Études* nos. 9, 11 and 12, as all perfected. Among technical exercises to be tackled next, she listed Chopin's études in F minor [Op. 10/9; and Op. 25/2]. She also noted directions that the broken chord accompaniment be divided between left and right hands on manuals I and II, respectively, with 8-foot stops. The continuously moving and wide-ranging melody of each étude was to be played on the pedals with a 2-foot stop.

floored. I haven't the time, and I'm too old, to push my technique any further. It's a piece of Life Eternal to launch a person's future: you are my continuation. You have already begun the ascent that will surpass me. I'm telling you. It's a pleasure to be surpassed by those you are fond of.

"Should it be my destiny that a part of my material work be destroyed... that's something heaven will decide." (This for fear of bombings.) Speaking again of my future:

"Succession is a matter of natural order; you will surpass me. Only a man of integrity, one without any low or evil thoughts, can speak this way. A mean-spirited man decides to keep his secrets. I have no frantic yearning to rework my virtuosity. I am philosophical enough to be content with what I still have."

I'd like to have the honour and joy of repeating such words, later, [119] to a successor.

I had just finished playing the Prelude and Fugue in E [minor] when M^{me} Dupré came to tell us of an inspection by the occupying authorities. I remained for the visit: it involved a practical matter that I needn't mention. The lesson having been interrupted, Dupré wanted to reserve another morning for me. I left, feeling uncertain.

To be noted: concerning my pedal technique, Dupré says that ideal pedaling must be done with absolute precision and accuracy, to within a half millimeter.

Monday 22 June 1942

Morning spent at Meudon to continue the lesson interrupted on Friday. Franck's 1st and 2nd Chorals. (Luckily, Friday's difficult situation has been favourably worked out.) Here is what Dupré said to me today:

"Last Friday was staggering for me. You know, I can say that at present, no one in the world is our equal, nor even comparable to us."

"Master, no one can compare to you."

"I've told you this a hundred times..."

I played Franck.

MD: "Ah! That's grand, noble; it's wonderful." (I am reporting these words and others for honesty's sake; they [120] will, perhaps, be instructive for my personal memoirs.)

MD: "Your interpretation is equal to that of a man in full maturity. The purity of your soul, I tell you, is the reason. (It's generally admitted that angels, who are pure spirits, are more intelligent than men.) You will always be striking in this respect, in life and in art."

Turning toward this subject, I asked the master whether he conceives the opposition between a feminine mentality and a masculine one as absolute, in all that relates to intellect [*dans tout ce qui tient de l'intellect*]; or, whether he sees equality as possible.

MD: "The higher one rises in the spiritual domain, the more the difference disappears. There, innocence and knowledge merge."

I had spoken to Dupré about my limited knowledge of organ building; today he said to me:

"As for organ building, don't worry: I will not leave you uncertain. We will work on it in due time. I will tell you everything I know."

The question of the Conservatory arose and Dupré told me again:

"I believe that it was time for you to leave."¹²¹ [121] And, knowing life as I do, I believe that you are in the happiest time of your life."

Busser visited Dupré recently and told him his plan of asking me to take part in the playing of Rolande Falcinelli's work for organ and orchestra at the composition competition.

MD: "Don't ask that of Jeanne Demessieux; she will categorically refuse."

B: "Why?"

MD: "She appears to be very busy."

B: "With what?"

MD: "I don't know. All I can tell you is that she has several activities."

B: "Ask her."

MD: "No thank you; I'm not looking for a terse refusal."

We corrected the printing errors that I had noticed in the Prelude and Fugue in E [minor]. We debated the printed text of Franck's *Trois Chorals*. Dupré has no confidence in the expression marks indicated. He has seen, at Durand, the copies marked "Ready to print," signed, not in Franck's hand, but Gigout's. The manuscripts are lost.¹²²

[On] Friday, Dupré said to me: "The organ class is weighing heavily on me..." Jean Gallon despairs over the way things are going.

[In parting,] I kissed M^{me} Dupré on both cheeks. The master [122] walked me back to the train. Dupré also said:

"Interpretation can be summed up in two words: respect and sincerity."

Monday 29 June 1942¹²³

I attended the organ competition. Rolande Falcinelli received her First Prize in her first year [in the organ class], after an external competition, aiming, as she is, for the same goal as Grunenwald in his last concert.¹²⁴ She has fine technique.

121. Demessieux took a one-year leave of absence from the Paris Conservatory following the 1940–1941 academic year. Dupré was advising her not to return at the end of this year.

122. Manuscript versions of Franck's *Trois Chorals* have since been rediscovered. Marie-Louise Jaquet-Langlais, "The Organ Works of Franck," trans. Matthew Dirst and Kimberly Marshall, in Lawrence Archbold and William J. Peterson, eds., *French Organ Music from the Revolution to Franck and Widor* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1999), 143–88, provides a detailed discussion of discrepancies between various editions and mss., and of the performance tradition handed down by Franck's students. Dupré's four-volume edition of the complete organ works of Franck was published by Bornemann in 1955.

123. According to BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1355–1358, on June 29, 30, July 2, and July 3, 1942, in Rouen, Dupré spoke and performed as the featured artist for the Cathedral choir's "Organ Week: Public Lectures on Organ Interpretation."

124. The reference to an "external competition" suggests that the organ competition this year was held not in the

Jean Gallon conversed with me for a long time; he was asking about Mireille Auxière. He has noticed her in his harmony class and said to me:

“That child has a fine future ahead of her! Do you want me to accept her into my class in October?”¹²⁵

Me: “Master, I would never have hoped...”

JG: “Yes, it’s not what I usually do... If you say yes, I’ll take her. She has your support, I know. She’ll follow in your footsteps. For that matter, I am counting on you! You know the class’s teaching assistants, but she will be all yours. She is so intelligent, so enthusiastic. She’s always ready to give ‘whatever it takes!’ and even when she doesn’t, it’s still good.”

Me: “She is worried about her piano class for next year and is thinking of not doing [123] two classes. I will speak to her. As for me, I leave the matter in your hands.”

JG: “Persuade her. We’ll make a special plan for her. My compliments to your sister for having taught both of you. What a credit to your family.”

Monday 13 July 1942

Rehearsal at Marcel Dupré’s for two trial concerts devoted to Franck. I was in Meudon from 2:30 to 7:30 PM. After having set up the organ registrations, I played all of César Franck, from memory, for the master.¹²⁶

Apart from work, we chatted. Dupré talked about his compositional œuvre as a whole, by which he is more and more preoccupied. With respect to organ building, his advanced ideas are making him enemies.

MD: “Everything falls on the shoulders, if not the head, of the one who leads the way” he said to me. “I dearly hope I shall see built, one day, somewhere, the organ I’m dreaming of; just a small instrument with octave transpositions.”

Me: “An organ that will go beyond this one?”

“Yes, for the breaks [that allow a keyboard to be divided between two stops]. A break at three octaves on the keyboard itself. It needs two rows of tablets for each keyboard (superimposed tablets). If you need the entire stop, you [124] use both your tablets. I’m also thinking of individual boxes: one for each stop. The piston system: you register from your control boxes (*planchettes*).”

“From that point on, it’s a matter of orchestration?”

“Of course; that’s my idea. It’s the future of the organ.”

When I had played all of César Franck, Dupré said to me:

Conservatory organ hall but elsewhere. If the public were allowed to attend, “the same goal as Grunenwald in his last concert” may be a reference to one of Demessieux’s impressions of a recent concert given by Grunenwald: “His bearing is quite spectacular. I am troubled by the way he orients his success, playing only to the crowd” (diary entry of Mar. 29, 1942).

125. Apparently, Mireille Auxière was not already a full member of Jean Gallon’s Harmony class, but he had noticed her as an auditor.

126. “All of César Franck” refers to Franck’s twelve major works for organ.

"My little one, we alone know all of Franck by heart, all of Liszt, and the Six [Trio] Sonatas [of Bach]." And he added: "How could all of this be in the mind of a woman, with a child's face; my God, is it possible?"

As I was leaving, Dupré said to Madame Dupré:

"She is like [Pablo] Casals, who plays the [Cello] Suites [by Bach] as if there's nothing to them. One gets the feeling, watching her play Franck, that this isn't even difficult for her. One forgets her technique: it disappears."

The master accompanied me back to the station and stayed, speaking to me of his projects, until my train left.

Wednesday 15 July 1942

Third and fourth trial concerts at Dupré's home in Meudon, for my usual audience. We arrived by road at 3:00 PM. (M^{me} Dupré watched out for us and alerted the [125] master, who came to meet us.)

First recital: [César Franck's] *Six Pièces*. Second recital: [Franck's] *Trois Pièces* and *Trois Chorals*.

I experimented joyfully with the richness and flexibility of the organ. I was in good form and only felt tired after the second recital.

We took a break after the *Six Pièces* and had tea. Dupré said, to my embarrassment, "My friends, this child is a master of the organ." We spoke of the *Études*, whose composition Dupré has not yet been able to pursue, because he is so inundated with other work.

MD: "I hope to be able to return to them soon. I'll have finished with my textbooks and my editions by the beginning of August, I think." To me:

"We will have finished these together. If I had told you one year ago that you would play me all of Franck; all of Liszt; Bach's [Trio] Sonatas; Alkan's *Douze Études*; my *Évocation*, two [of my] preludes and fugues and the *Étude*; as well as technical exercises, along with, for amusement, the *Anthology* [of early organ works] and the Handel [edition]...! You would have thought 'Marcel Dupré has gone mad.'"

After the second recital, we chatted for a long time in the parlour again.

MD: "The very great geniuses were carried to glory by snobs...[126] Continuing on this subject, "Just perform the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Greek, and they'll attend."

We decided that the next trial concert would be devoted to Dupré's works. The master is thinking that the ideal program includes *Le Chemin de la Croix* followed by the *Symphonie-Passion* (to conclude with "Resurrection"); [I] must remember this.

MD: "For the time being, it's important to do standard repertoire. We must be ready."

About composing, Dupré exhorted me to be patient since I cannot get to work on this before having finished the repertoire.

MD: "I make no secret of the fact that you, above all, have the best chance of following in my footsteps in the succession of composers for the organ... think about it."

We brought the conversation around to [Dupré's] five years of teaching at Troyes.¹²⁷ Dupré, seeing the interest that I was taking, showed me his entire cycle of [text]books, including those that have not yet been published. We itemized them.¹²⁸ I took with me, for consultation, the orchestration text and the analysis text.

The master spontaneously accepted my parents' invitation for the 21st of August, [127] the anniversary of our collaboration, or for soon after, as the dates of his tour in Switzerland are still uncertain. Dupré also said: "I hope that the good Lord will forget about me for some time yet: I've not finished my work..."

He passed the last proofs of the Handel concertos on to me, saying, "It's a bit of a chore, but it's the last! Is it even worth the trouble of my leaving you the manuscript? I would ask you not to look at it and trust your instincts; that's what I prefer. You will pick up any errors."

These are some fragments related to our collaboration, taken from the general conversation. At the close of this instructive day, further enriched by this extraordinary friendship, the master and Madame Dupré accompanied us as far as the station, at around 8:00 PM.

Saturday 18 July 1942

Today I finished correcting the last proofs of Handel's posthumous concertos, a final reading. Since Marcel Dupré entrusted me with the preparation of the *Anthology*, he has [also] accepted my help with Handel, and all my work has been wrapped up today.¹²⁹ [128]

Today, also, the finishing touches have been added to the last proofs of Marcel Dupré's textbooks.¹³⁰

Sunday 26 July 1942

At his request, I replaced Marcel Dupré at St-Sulpice for High Mass and the 11:15 AM Mass.

127. According to Dupré 1975, 102, the idea of a five-year course of study in music theory arose in discussion with Dupré's friend Amable Massis because the Troyes Conservatory, where Massis was director, was lacking classes in some subjects. Dupré himself, during 1935–1940, taught one class every two weeks, with Massis taking the class in alternate weeks.

128. According to Murray 1985, 123–25, textbooks by Dupré devised specifically for the Conservatory at Troyes and published in the 1930s were: *Cours d'harmonie analytique*, 2 vols. (Leduc, 1936); *Exercices préparatoires à l'improvisation libre* (Leduc, 1937); *Données élémentaires d'acoustique* (Hérelle, 1937); *Cours de contrepoint*, with a dedication to Joseph Gilles for his collaboration (Leduc, 1938); and *Cours complet de fugue* (Leduc, 1938). Texts Dupré used for classes at Troyes that were never published include: *Cours élémentaire d'harmonie en vingt leçons*, preserved in BnF Music Dept., ms., (undated); *Cours de composition: orchestration*, preserved in BnF Music Dept., partially typewritten, partially ms. (1937–38); *Cours d'composition: II année*, 1937–38, preserved in BnF Music Dept., which contains, despite the title, the course for year 1 (pp. 1–37), mimeographed, and the course for year 2 (pp. 38–41), typewritten carbon copy.

129. According to Murray 1985, 163, Dupré's arrangements for organ alone of Handel's 16 concertos for organ and strings were first published by Bornemann between 1937 and 1942.

130. It is not clear which textbooks by Dupré could have been at the stage of proofs in 1942, unless these were revised editions, as published titles all have an earliest publication date prior to 1939.

At High Mass, the usual liturgy. Offertory: Liszt's B-A-C-H (cut at the Fugue just before the pedal trill).
Recessional: a toccata improvised on the Introit.

11:15, anniversary of Bach's death:¹³¹ four chorales, including the magnificent six-voice *De Profundis* [BWV 686]. As Dupré wished, beginning with the Communion, I improvised a five-voice fugue on [the notes] B-A-C-H. In very good form.

Many people in the gallery, where my presence was not expected. It was there that I made the acquaintance of M^{me} S[imone] Plé-Caussade, professor of fugue at the Conservatory. She herself came to find me in the library, apologizing for asking my name:

"I thought so..." she said to me. "My warmest wishes to you; I'm so happy to have made your acquaintance. My young student Yvette Grimaud has been ardently singing your praises; but you are greater still than this flattery."

I was asked to demonstrate the organ. [129] In my fugue, I experimented with huge crescendos and diminuendos using combination pistons and couplers. My student, Marthe Dramez, had been eager to be there.

The master was playing in Rouen today.¹³²

Sunday 2 August 1942

My parents spent the morning at St-Sulpice, and I myself also attended High Mass. When it was over, I chatted with Dupré, who said to me: "St-Esprit needs a supply organist; your parish priest finally understands this."

J. [Jean] Guerner, an engineer (who procured for Dupré a copy of Liszt's own piano arrangement of the "Weinen, Klagen" Variations) approached us, [saying]:

"This young lady, master, improvises admirably."

MD: "I told you so..."

G: "Yes. Her modesty is disconcerting. She improvised a free fugue on B-A-C-H of such richness and scope!... That's not at a woman's level, you know; it's the brain of a man, of more than a man."

MD: "You think so?..."

G: "It's very strange..."

MD: "Tell me more about her fugue!" Dupré was not doing a good job of hiding his elation.

Me: "One feels carried by the instrument..."

MD: "It's true that it carries you along."

G: "It doesn't carry all your supply organists. I've never heard [130] Lanquetuit say to me that 'it' carried him."

131. July 26 that year was the closest Sunday to the actual anniversary of Bach's death, July 28.

132. According to the program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1359, this recital, for the inauguration of an organ restored by Jean Perroux, took place at Rouen's Église Ste-Madeleine, at 5:00 PM.

I wanted to take my leave, but the master intervened. “Stay here, Jeannette.”

M^r [Jean] Berveiller asked M^{me} Dupré to introduce me to [Maurice] Robineau (the choir organist). M^{me} Dupré took me aside:

“You see, everyone thinks it was splendid. Robineau came to tell me that the clergy are enthused. Grunenwald, too, thinks it was great...”

Me: “Grunenwald heard me?”

“Yes. He didn’t come up? Well, he heard everything from below. That’s very good.” (I felt as though I’d fallen to the ground.)

Before I left, Dupré asked to speak to me in the lounge. An important conversation that, as always, I am chronicling here, simply word-by-word, as well as I can recall it.

MD: “Rolande Falcinelli and her parents paid me a visit in Meudon. They are disgusted with Busser. Rolande wants to drop everything; she asked me to work with her, saying to me that only the organ interests her.”

Me: “I was sure of it... Master, there is one thing that occurred to me when we began working together a year ago. I said to myself: your teacher has chosen you as his only disciple, capable of following him. You are the only one. If, one day, someone more gifted or just as gifted as you appears, [131] this would be terrible for your teacher, or for you.”

MD: “What you have just said to me is sublime. Here is how I responded. I said to Rolande that she should first wait and see how her interests develop; I advised her to continue pursuing Rome. That gives us more time. And I will have even less hesitation, less of a weight on my conscience, to find that she has gained a certain dramatic sense, that she has made progress in [artistic] sensibility. At the organ, she is capable of becoming a fine artist, if she perseveres. For the time being, I have steered her toward the Rome Prize.

Me: “Master, I am very touched. But I beg you, consider Rolande and me according to what is in your best interest. She is talented. If you believe...”

MD: “She has not given me the proof that you have given me.”

Me: “You haven’t known her for as long as you have known me. She stayed one year in the class, whereas I was there three.”

MD: “All the more reason. No. It’s you I have chosen; that is where my work lies. My feelings are not even those of a father towards his daughter: we are two collaborators. I have put my faith in you; I have not given it to anyone else. And in all this, my wife agrees with me; I must act according to my conscience.”

M^r and M^{me} Dupré [132] spoke with my parents concerning the same question after my departure; my parents shared with them their fear that they would see, underneath it all, one of Busser’s machinations.

Monday 3 August 1942

I was delegated to go to Meudon with flowers to express again to M^r and M^{me} Dupré my parents’ confidence in them. I was expected around 5:30 PM. M^{me} Dupré had prepared the *Anthology*, which we wished to bind. She welcomed me; “Your teacher is in the organ room: he is working on his *Études*! Go on up: I’ve prepared everything.”

Some words [of] M^{me} D: “M^r Dupré knows Busser, and we know what dark deeds he is capable of.”

Me: "I admit I am very astonished that Rolande has taken so long to get to know him. Everyone knows what he's like."

Mme D: "You know M^r Dupré, his uprightness. He will not give up without a fight. You won't see him pitting you one against the other: that would be foolish; it would be the undoing of both of you. And anyway, she plays like a student. Her improvisation at the competition was empty, just effects. She does not have what you have. Come, child, it is you and always you."

I wanted to leave without disturbing the master.

Mme D: "No, no! He would not be happy; he is waiting for you."

We found Dupré deep in work, tired.

MD: "This is my second Étude: thirds in the pedals." From the [133] conversation, I recall:

"My parents fear they did not express themselves very well yesterday; they wish to restate their unshakeable confidence in you."

MD: "I know. I well saw that they were moved. Tell them that they should be fully reassured. This is between friends."

Dupré told me that he was aware of Rolande F.'s wishes three months ago, and that his decision dated back to that moment.

MD: "I want to make one star, not two. Of all my students, you are the only one that I have trained who has worked only with me. Yolande started you off (she had certain rights over you, I think!). For art's sake, it must be you. For France, it must be you. You alone. Has your mother fully understood that we will consider composition when it is time? Just for peace of mind, we must take another year to finish up here. Anyway, the organ is still the more difficult of the two."

Me: "Yes... And above all, it's the more responsible choice."

I changed the subject to one that M^{me} Dupré has sometimes discussed with me: Dupré's having been asked to accept a composition class. "He has never wished to accept!" said M^{me} Dupré.

MD: "I see nothing there to interest me, apart from having two morning classes."

Me: "And the teaching?"

MD: "I have my ideas on teaching; [134] I would not teach composition as it has been taught."

Me: "Exactly: we're talking about reform; you are needed."

MD: "Busser talked to me about it. I told him, no. Delvincourt said to me: 'It's Stravinsky or you.' No; [teaching a Conservatory composition class] is the last step before the Institute and that shall never be! I've been backstage at the Institute...!"¹³³ I know all the caretakers. [Teaching] organ, when I make a remark to a

133. According to the Wikipedia entries "Institut de France" <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institut_de_France>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022 and "Académie des Beaux-Arts" <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acad%C3%A9mie_des_Beaux-Arts>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the French Institute, founded in the late 18th century, is a learned society that acts as custodian of the arts and sciences in France. As in Dupré's time, it consists of five academies, one of which continues to be the Académie des Beaux-Arts (Academy of Fine Arts). The Académie des Beaux-Arts originated in 1816 as the union of three smaller academies dating from the 17th century: music (i.e., music composition), architecture, and painting and

student, he has nothing to say and has only to remember it. With composition, I would be asked, where are my ballets, my most recent operetta? Widor left the organ class for composition, where he followed Lenepveu.¹³⁴

Me: “Master, I’ve taken the liberty of speaking to you about composition because I know your teaching: I’ve read your Troyes [text]books...”

MD: “That’s true: I’ve been talking to you for 20 minutes without it occurring to me that you have those... And what do you think of them?”

Me: “For analysis, I have never seen so many things in so short a space. As for orchestration, I freely admit I’ve learned a whole lot of things that I never knew. In fact, it’s the first time that I’ve had a composition course to follow...”

MD: “So, it really interests you? But no; I’d rather someone offered me a job as pencil pusher for the Mayor of Meudon.” Speaking of Rolande Falcinelli,

MD: “I heard her play the piano (her parents had invited us); she plays in a dry manner, [135] like a blind organist.”¹³⁵

Dupré told me again the details of his Paris debut.

At the end of the conversation, we returned to the parlour to rejoin Marguerite, who had just come from visiting someone who was ill.

The master decided to accompany me back and waited until my train left. He said to me on the platform:

sculpture. In Dupré’s time, new appointees were elected by current members to a limited number of seats in the Académie—forty, of which six were in music, as noted in Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years: Music in Paris 1917–1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 177. According to John R. Near, *Widor: A Life beyond the Toccata* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015), 261, 284, Widor (Dupré’s mentor) was elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1910 and had the distinction of being its “perpetual secretary” from 1914 until his death in 1937. Therefore, Dupré’s purported inside knowledge of the Institute likely derived from Widor. Dupré also alluded in this conversation to the fact that, in his day, musicians elected to the Institut de France tended to have certain accomplishments under their belts: a Rome Prize, composition of acclaimed operas, and a Paris Conservatory post teaching composition. The Académie des Beaux-Arts was responsible for the terms and judging of the Rome Prize for each of the arts. Moreover, as described in François Lesure et al., “France (Fr. République Française)” in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40051>> under the heading “4. The 19th century,” accessed Nov. 27, 2022, beginning in the 19th century, the music division of the Académie also exercised power over what new operas would be performed in Paris. The process of electing musicians and overseeing musical standards was, therefore, circular and self-serving.

134. According to Near 2015, 216, Widor succeeded Théodore Dubois, not Charles Lenepveu, as teacher of a composition class when Dubois became director of the Conservatory in 1896.

135. Dupré’s disparaging remark, “she plays [the piano] in a dry manner, like a blind organist,” could be a reference to the blind organist with whom Falcinelli studied organ for a year prior admission to the Conservatory organ class, Gaston Litaize. But it is more likely a jibe at the blind organist André Marchal—whose articulation at the organ sometimes consisted of unrelenting detached notes.

“When you have a dilemma weighing on your conscience, always choose according to the better side of your conscience.” The master also said to me:

“When you played [Franck’s] *Pièce symphonique* (and some big Bach works) in class, I said to my wife and to Marguerite, if Jeanne Demessieux wishes to ‘get cracking,’ she will be an artist such as has never before been seen.”

Tuesday 11 August 1942

Organ lesson at Marcel Dupré’s. Preludes and Fugues in F minor, G minor and C major by Dupré.¹³⁶

The master played his completed *Étude* for me and, as he had not practiced it, he said,

“I practiced the first [*Étude*] to see for myself how much work it is. The other eleven, I am not going to practice: I’ll pass them on to you.

“When I play in public, I practice things to show the best of myself. For you, well, you know me; between those who are fond of each other, there is no fear of the other’s judgment. But don’t you worry: in Switzerland, I will have three days to do some good practicing.” Such modesty is astounding.

For the first time Dupré has encouraged me to hasten the pace of my work. [136] He wants me to have finished the repertoire by December [1942], at the same time as he will have finished his *Études*. In a flash, he made me realize why it is important that I do in a year and a half “what he did in thirty years,” given the height of the springboard from which I am being launched. He talked of composition.

MD: “You have three fields to exploit: orchestra and organ, organ (meaning free composition), and that which we’re calling the organ of the future.”

Dupré wants me to practice on his organ at least once during his absence.

He entrusted me with the manuscript of the *Étude* that does not carry a number. MD: “I do not yet know in what order I will publish them. The third will be in octaves: octaves in the hands, octaves in the feet. I’ve nothing to complain about: I can see them all... When I arrive home, I will drop everything, and I will write. I will spend the rest of my life here, in my laboratory, sounding out the future.”

To recall: the Prelude and Fugue in F minor should be understood as contemplative, expressive; the tempos indicated ([in the edition by] Leduc) are faster than Dupré’s interpretation. Prelude and Fugue in G minor: brilliant (heavy legato for the fugue, light for the prelude). Prelude in C major (Bornemann): slower than the indicated tempo.¹³⁷

Arrived at 9:30 AM and left around 1:00 PM.

[137] Sunday 16 August 1942

Visit to Jean Gallon at St-Philippe-du-Roule. We chatted about Mireille.

136. Op. 7/2 in F minor, Op. 7/3 in G minor, and Op. 36/3 in C major.

137. Demessieux recorded other details of Dupré’s advice to her in GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” under Aug. 11, 1942: the F minor [Op. 7/2] is “perfected” (*au point*); in the G minor [Op. 7/3], her legato was “too rigorous,” the prelude needs a “light legato,” and the fugue a “weighted legato”; the C major fugue [Op. 36/3] needs stabilizing.

JG: "It's agreed: you will take her in hand? I'm counting on it. Don't worry: my brother has always mentioned her when talking about you. I will tell him. I will take little Auxiette only on this condition."

We chatted for half an hour in the library of St-Philippe-du-Roule.

Tuesday 18 August 1942¹³⁸

I was affectionately welcomed at Marcel Dupré's by M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite, and I practiced from 2:00 to 7:00 PM on the great organ. During breaks we ate together in the garden. Gorgeous weather.

Sunday 23 August 1942

I replaced Marcel Dupré at St-Sulpice for the 9:00 and 11:15 AM Masses.

At 9:00, Dupré's Prelude in F minor, [Widor's] Toccata as the Recessional.

[At] 11:15, Bach's 5th Trio Sonata, [an improvised] Adagio (introduction) and Allegro in symphonic form on a single theme, perfect pacing, well developed, and expanding near the end (based on the Introit). In very good form. Friends of Dupré in the gallery.

Upon descending after the 11:15 Mass, we found to our surprise Madame Dupré and Marguerite, who were waiting for us and embraced me [138] several times. "You were there!" I stammered.

Mme D: "We were late arriving, so we didn't want to go up. We didn't want to bother you. It was a magnificent mass. The improvisation had such force! The beginning was very striking. The sonata: beautiful sonority; it was very clear. Are you happy? It was masterful!"

Me: "And the tempo?"

[Mme D:] "The finale was a bit fast for St-Sulpice." Marguerite, who generally has little to say, appeared enthusiastic.

At the High Mass, Papa saw Grunenwald among those in attendance, in the church.

Monday, 24 August 1942

At M^{me} Dupré's insistence, I spent another entire afternoon practicing on Dupré's Meudon organ. During breaks, we took refreshments in Marguerite's studio.

Mme D: "Do you enjoy playing at St-Sulpice?"

Me: "Oh...I cannot tell you how much. I consider myself fortunate... unworthy, even."

Mme D: "How so? I was sure you were about to say something silly."

Sunday 31 August 1942

138. According to the program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1360, Dupré was then in Lucerne, Switzerland for the Internationale Musikalische Festwochen/Semaines musicales internationales/Settimane musicali internazionali (German-French-Italian). He performed at the Hofkirche on Monday, Aug. 17, 1942, at 5:30 PM.

At St-Sulpice at 11:15 AM, my parents were in the gallery. Maman turned pages for Dupré, who is back from his trip to Switzerland (International Music Week at Lucerne, concerts in Zürich and area).¹³⁹

[139] Saturday 5 September 1942

My parents had Marcel Dupré, M^{me} Dupré, and Marguerite over (anniversary of the harmonium). Not the least bit formal.

It would be impossible for me to reproduce the conversation, which was very lively and carried on from 3:30 until 9:00 PM. But I've retained the essentials of what was discussed:

Dupré recounted his trip to Switzerland and his impressions (he met Gieseeking, Cortot, Backhaus, and others there). E. R. Blanchet, away on an excursion, sent him a message and the manuscript of a piano prelude written in a contrapuntal system that Dupré explained to me.

Extraordinary anecdotes from his American tours.

Literature: 18th century (which I've worked on a lot). I also mentioned my interest in Montaigne, of whom Dupré and I have the same opinion.

We returned to our discussion of organ building, going back over a 1914 book I'd been given.

Then the atmosphere turned to all-out gaiety; conversation ensued and, returning to art, we edged towards the discussion to which they appeared to be leading me: piano technique. I let loose, assessing Lazare-Lévy, then Philipp, culminating in Magda Tagliaferro's ease of execution.¹⁴⁰ Having been asked my opinion, I chose these three. Dupré spoke of Diémer and of Busoni. [140] Marguerite asked me a lot of questions. Intellectual interest rose at this point. I asked the master his opinion of the musical cultures of certain countries in terms of their composers and their virtuosi.

MD: "My generation produced a lot of virtuosi; composition here has been sterile: the past 45 years have yielded nothing. In Russia, for composers, you have [Alexander] Glazunov and a very promising composer who has toured, [Igor] Stravinsky. In Germany: R. Strauss; [but] after *Salambo*,¹⁴¹ *Salomé*, *Tod und Verklärung*... he too has been unfruitful. In France, we're certainly not interested in Schmitt, Darius [Milhaud], Poulenc or Honegger, nor 'La Jeune France': we're speaking about composition, not public opinion."¹⁴² I don't know what your generation will yield.

139. According to programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1361–1362, Dupré performed at the Kirche in Wädenswil on Wed., Aug. 26, at 8:15 PM, and at the Grossmünster in Zürich on Thurs., Aug. 27, at 8:00 PM.

140. As described in Asako Tamura, *The Pianistic Art of Magda Tagliaferro*, trans. Jacqueline Louise Hefti Caramurú from the Japanese-Portuguese translation by Dirce Kimyo Miyamura (São Paulo: Magda Tagliaferro Foundation, 1997), 37–65, Magda Tagliaferro's ease of execution, consisted of "flexibility and lightness of movement in the arms and in the hands." These, in turn, can be attributed to exercises for breathing, and for hands, fingers, arms, and the entire upper body that she practiced daily, combined with the natural posture that she taught.

141. *Salambo*: Demessieux may have misheard *Zarathustra* as in Richard Strauss's 1896 tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra*. According to <<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/schmitt-salammbô-orchestral-suites>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, *Salammbô* is the name of a 1925 film (dir., Pierre Marodon), based on a historical novel by Flaubert, for which French composer Florent Schmitt wrote the music and from which were drawn three symphonic suites.

142. In an article by Henri Collet, "La Musique chez soi (XII): Un livre de Rimsky et un livre de Cocteau—Les Cinq russes, les

“As for virtuosi, France has produced the greatest number, especially at the organ, where we both hold first place... of course. The city where you can meet more of them than anywhere in the world is New York, where in the street one can run across Horowitz, Toscanini, Kreisler (who died recently in an accident), and so on.”

We speculated as to why composition is sterile. Dupré sees as the cause “amateurism,” which continues to spread. M^{me} Dupré [141] thinks it’s a lack of faith, a coldness of the heart; she made a comparison to Berlioz, who rose above his ignorance by means of his ardor. Dupré said of Berlioz: “He was a great musician who did not know music.” Marguerite, speaking of our time: “One would be hard pressed to attain any greater degree of foolishness.”

Dupré was induced to talk about himself: “I don’t consider myself a composer...(!) I have specialized in the organ, and so I don’t have the reputation of a composer.”

Me: “Master, a moment ago you said that public opinion is not what we’re interested in... Right now, we are speaking, absolutely, on the level of composition.”

Mme Dupré: “When your works become better known...”

MD: “Yes, Jeanne will play them.”

Mme D: “... People will realize that the *Symphonie-Passion* revolutionized organ technique, for example.”

MD: “Yes, but I sense that I have not yet even begun to be a composer.”

M^{me} Dupré said to us, with an air of resignation, “He really means it; that’s what he’s always saying to me.”

So, I mentioned *Évocation*, of which Dupré is still, unwittingly, sensitive. We were unanimous, and Marguerite said to me: “I believe that I have a weakness for *Évocation*.”

My parents praised Dupré’s work as a composer, and [142] he, then, spoke of his *Études*.

MD: “I know that what I say to you will not leave this room.” He explained to me his overall plan for the twelve [*Études*] (he had made, right from the start, a classification, in order, of the difficulties in the études of Chopin, Liszt, and Blanchet, which served as his point of departure, from a theoretical point of view). Then we ended up talking about his free time, so rare.

MD: “I can admit to you, all three of you, that since I started helping Jeanne in her work, I have become

Six français, et Erik Satie,” *Comœdia* (Jan. 16, 1920), 2, the names Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Arthur Honegger (together with the names Georges Auric, Louis Durey, and Germaine Tailleferre) were brought to public attention—an example of fame resulting from “media coverage.” As emphasized in Nichols 2002, 265, what “Les Six” had in common was their deliberateness in shaking off German influence; this is something that, to the extent it was achieved, a Germanophile such as Dupré would not have appreciated. According to Nigel Simeone, “*La Spirale and La Jeune France: Group Identities*,” *The Musical Times* 143 (Autumn 2002): 10–36, “La Jeune France” was created in 1936 by French composers Yves Baudrier, Olivier Messiaen, André Jolivet, and Daniel-Lesure as a sort of brand name for a concert series organized by the four composers. Following its first annual concert in June 1936, La Jeune France enjoyed both an immediate “chorus of approval” in the press, led by critic André Cœuroy, and the approbation of Milhaud, Poulenc, and Honegger. After their next annual concert, the press coverage extended to the *New York Times*. During the Occupation and after the Liberation, though the four friends had ceased to plan concerts as a group, one or the other Paris concert series found opportunity to group together works under such a title as “Les Quatre Jeune France.”

weary of the rest of my teaching. I've tried everything, teaching two three-hour classes... It does nothing more for me. I like these youngsters a lot, but I have six of them... really!... Duruflé would do as well with them as I do; he knows them.¹⁴³ But I'm obliged to keep my class until the end of the war. Fortunately, Delvincourt is good to me: he always says to me, 'My little Marcel, I don't want you to be unhappy.'"

Dupré talked about our future tour to Montpellier.

He denounced Berlioz for not having understood Cavaillé-Coll and for having rejected mixtures. He forgave him for not having believed in the fusion of organ and orchestra, given what was being written during his time.

Dupré will play in the south of France in October and looks forward to meeting Yolande by making a [143] detour, if necessary.¹⁴⁴

Friendly conversation after that. Maman recounted my performance as a toddler of Eurydice's death scene from Gluck's *Orpheus*,¹⁴⁵ and I played on the piano the song "J'ai perdu mon Eurydice," which I used to sing, around seventeen years ago, for Papa as he lounged on the parlour carpet. Dupré asked ([but] I've neither heard nor read [the score of] *Orpheus* since that time.)

At intervals, I chatted mostly with the master, who asked my opinion of the technical side of the *Étude* in F; manuscript and copy in hand, we studied it together. Bornemann is having trouble getting paper; will he be able to print the *Études*? He must first put out the Handel edition, the transcription of Dupré's concerto, and the out-of-print Bach [works].¹⁴⁶

Without prompting, Dupré said to me: "I've full confidence in you as a composer." And also:

"I wasted time in Switzerland. [Rather than composing,] I was only able to work on a little technique. Anyway, when I have finished the *Études*, I will practice them because that will do some good for my technical progress."

Dupré said to me that in order to do the composing and the scientific experiments in organ building that he has planned as he wished, "it will be necessary to decline everything and make everyone unhappy. Only at this price will I be able to work. I must stay put in Meudon."

[144] Tuesday 8 September 1942

I paid a visit to Bornemann, upon agreement with M^{me} Dupré, so that he could return the [copy of the] *Anthology* destined for the master, which my parents want to have bound.

143. According to Pierre Guillot, *Dictionnaire des organistes français des XIXe et XXe siècles* (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 2003), s.v. "Duruflé," Maurice Duruflé substituted for Dupré by taking the Conservatory organ class when the latter was away from Paris.

144. Reference to a detour to Aigues-Mortes, where Yolande, Demessieux's older sister, lived and taught piano.

145. This story is told in Trieu-Colleney 1977, 13–14.

146. The references are to one or more volumes of Dupré's arrangements for organ alone of Handel's organ concertos; Dupré's arrangement for organ and piano of his 1934 Concerto in E minor for organ and orchestra, Op. 31; and to his 12-volume Bach edition (cf. Demessieux's footnote to her diary entry of Nov. 8, 1945).

Thursday 17 September 1942

Organ lesson at Marcel Dupré's. By heart: Chopin's Étude in F minor;¹⁴⁷ Dupré's second Étude (in F major), [Dupré's] six Preludes and Fugues, and [his] *Variations on a Noël* [Op. 20]. The Chopin Étude, which I hadn't worked on since the two afternoons spent in Meudon, went well, to be honest. Dupré's brilliant Étude: playing it gives me a feeling of security, of pleasure.

Dupré was moved and ran to find M^{me} Dupré, who listened to me play it again and exclaimed, "That's dazzling." During the morning, I saw a very animated Marguerite, who kissed me on both cheeks.

Dupré adjusted the tempos of all his pieces. The establishment of each of their characters is perfected. Dupré says, "I believe that in order to have them... accepted by people in general, it will be necessary to present them at somewhat more moderate tempos, so that one doesn't get the impression of a jumble of notes." For the Prelude in G minor, the one in E minor, and the *Variations on a Noël*, we'll keep the fast tempos (the same for the Étude).

Dupré made me play his entire Étude five times, then in sections, in order [145] to experiment with registral timbres. I asked the master to register the *Variations* himself.

Dupré once more spoke to me about his enemies; me: "They don't grow weary [of it]?"

MD: "They are worse than ever. There is an organization that's against me, just as there was one against Liszt, against Chopin and Busoni. I only have half-students; they are being set up against me. In the Chaillot [series of] organ concerts, only the simplest of my works are tolerated: an *Élévation*... Young colleagues who want to surpass me say: 'Dupré wrote his best works thirty years ago.' It's easy to find among the number and variety of my works something that lowers my status. Here's how they defend their territory: after an *Élévation*, they program a young "modern [work]," which leads people to say: 'that pretentious old warhorse.'"¹⁴⁸

(No doubt, I will inherit this noble army; Dupré seemed to be preparing me for it; he said to me one day: "The day after your success, your best friends will turn their backs on you; I alone will remain with you.")

Important fact: Dupré announced to me: "I am going to tell you, unofficially, what you will be told 'officially' the day you perform here: beginning in October, M^{me} Dupré will give you a [146] one-hour English lesson per week. She is a very good teacher, you will see! Before or after the lesson you will take advantage of the opportunity to practice on the American pedalboard."¹⁴⁹ But I have told you nothing; leave to her the pleasure of announcing this to you." I had not at all expected this decision, so touching.

147. This would have been either Chopin's Op. 10/9 or Op. 25/2. Both are in F minor and Demessieux had been assigned both, on June 19, 1942, as pedal studies for the organ.

148. The reference is most likely to Dupré's *Élévation*, Op. 2, composed in 1909. Pieces of the same title that also arguably represent his œuvre poorly are his *Trois Élévations*, Op. 32. Clearly composed and published with liturgical use in mind, all four pieces are slow and meditative, technically very easy, and call for voix céleste to direct worshippers' minds upwards to sublime thoughts at the moment the priest raises the host. To add insult to injury, it appears that the only existing edition of Dupré's Opus 2 is not a free-standing publication but, rather, *Les Maîtres Contemporains de l'Orgue*, Vol. 1, collected by Abbé Joseph Joubert (Paris: M. Senart, 1912), 98—a compilation of technically easy pieces for liturgical use in which Dupré's piece is printed with errors. See Rollin Smith, "Dupré, Vierne and *Élévation*, Op. 2," *The American Organist* 20 (May 1986): 67–69 for a facsimile of the published score and a list of corrections to be made to it.

149. That is, a radiating pedalboard. Cf. the diary entry for Dec. 13, 1941.

Dupré showed me some work he did during the holidays: some chorale preludes on liturgical themes and a short toccata entitled “Le Tombeau de Titelouze.”¹⁵⁰ I immediately said to Dupré: “This is in the spirit of the Seventy-nine Chorales for teaching, is it not?”¹⁵¹ Very interesting. It will teach people to write.”

MD: “Well, having seen only the cover, you already understand that. Keep this to yourself until we have the first proofs. I would like to be sure that Bornemann has the paper. It wouldn’t bother you to help me with this?...”

At the end of the morning, Dupré said to me: “Another marvellous lesson today. A lesson! It was not so much you as I who had the lesson!”

MD: “It would give me great pleasure to be able to see Yolande there (in the south of France)! I would have so many things to tell her.” We tried to come to an arrangement.

After three good hours of work and conversation, the master accompanied me back to catch my train. Also of note,

MD: “Mutual help [147] between individuals is always the best. People must cooperate.”

Saturday 3 October 1942

Fifth trial concert at the home of Marcel Dupré in Meudon; my usual audience. All-Dupré program, in order: the three new Preludes and Fugues [Op. 36], *Évocation*, the first three Preludes and Fugues [Op. 7], the *Variations on a Noël*. Emotions ran high.

My parents arrived at 5:00 PM, I at 1:45. Dupré devoted his entire afternoon to me: I rehearsed *Évocation* and the *Variations* in his presence; then we chatted while walking in the garden.

MD: “You play my music with such depth! You are a child, yet it is as if you have known suffering as well as joy, like the saints who guard themselves from everything, yet understand everything profoundly. I, too, was like you. I have seen only two children so predestined: myself and you.

“You came into the world at the moment you were needed: my Bach edition, the ‘airplane,’ and nothing on your path.”¹⁵²

“We will have finished the entire repertoire by the end of the academic year. Oh! I’m thinking about your composing. I have as much confidence in that as in your technique! At that time, we’ll start up again [148]

150. These are pieces published as *Sixteen Chorales (Le Tombeau de Titelouze)* for organ based on liturgical hymns, Op. 38 (Paris: Bornemann, 1942).

151. Marcel Dupré, *Seventy-nine Chorales for the organ*, Op. 28, preparatory to the study of the Bach chorale-preludes and based on the melodies of old chorales used by J. S. Bach (New York: H. W. Gray, 1932).

152. Dupré was, apparently, listing three serendipitous occurrences, but it is not clear in all three cases how they related to Demessieux. Publication of Dupré’s time-consuming Bach edition, which began in 1938, was completed in 1941, after which he was able to turn to other editing projects, with which Demessieux was available to assist. “[N]othing on your path” signaled Demessieux’s availability in June 1941 to begin working closely with him. It has been impossible to determine what the word for “airplane” refers to.

This notebook is the continuation of no. II.

[signed] Jeanne Demessieux

the conversation we had one day, near the Montparnasse station (October 20, 1941). Be patient; the hardest part is done.”

During the recital, after the three new Preludes and Fugues, Marguerite said to her father: “I am convinced that no one but you and she could play those.” My parents remonstrated.

MD: “I agree with Marguerite; it’s true.”

Marguerite also said, after the Adagio of *Évocation*: “The nobility of it... what an interpretation!”

Dupré had chosen to stay on the platform, to the right, during the recital, in order to help me, in case the instrument gave any trouble, because its [electrical] contacts are tremendously uncooperative. His eyes frequently teared up, especially during *Évocation*, and he talked to himself.

M^{me} Dupré “announced” to me, with remarkable sensitivity and generosity, her decision that I should work on languages.

The master had gone to collect my parents at the station; [after my recital] he had to leave before we did. We left around 8:00 PM.

Wednesday 7 October 1942

Death of my grandmother.¹⁵⁴ No comment.

[149] Friday 9 October 1942

A day of mourning. Grandmother’s burial. No comment.

Of note: Dupré insisted on playing during the [funeral] Mass (at St-Esprit) and, knowing my wishes, played his works (*Chemin de la Croix* IV and VIII, *Lamento* [Op. 24]), and improvised. M^{me} Dupré stayed near Maman. They accompanied us back to the house. Jean Gallon, too, was present at the church. Lots of people: friends, some classmates. D’Argœuves played before and after the Mass.

Monday 12 October 1942

153. AM 4S4.

154. Demessieux’s maternal grandmother, Adelaïde Mézy, née Guinoir, born in 1858, was living with the Demessieux family in Paris.

Yolande has been with us since Saturday. We hadn't seen her in a year.

[Scrawled in the margin, different colour of ink, different style of handwriting:] German occupation; demonstration lines.

Dupré asked us to come and get him at the Conservatory at 3:30 PM; we remained together until his 5:20 train to Meudon.

Tuesday 13 October 1942

Dupré called all four of us together at Meudon to decide, collectively, about the Rome Prize. I neither want to sacrifice anything in my preparation as a virtuoso, nor in my ideas or compositional style. [150] Dupré and M^{me} Dupré, having foreseen the problem, have considered it carefully. We decided on my subtle withdrawal from the composition class at the Conservatory. The primary goal stands above all; we are in agreement.

For Yolande, I played the Finale of *Évocation* on the great organ.

Tomorrow, Dupré leaves on a tour of the south of France.¹⁵⁵

Monday 19 October 1942

Finished reading the first proofs of Dupré's *Le Tombeau de Titelouze*. I took them to Bornemann.

Friday 16 October 1942

Visited Jean Gallon, at his class. He introduced me to Paul Tortelier, who is currently [a] candidate for [teaching] the violoncello class, to replace G. Hekking.

Saturday 24 October 1942

My sister's departure.

Friday 30 October 1942

First lesson with Madame Dupré. I gave her the bound *Anthology*. Worked with her for an hour and three quarters. Half an hour on the radiating pedal board. We left together for Paris.

[151] Friday 6 November 1942

155. According to programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1364–1375, Dupré performed in Albi, Oct. 16; Castres, Oct. 17; Montauban, Oct. 18; Toulouse, Oct. 19; [Carcassonne,] St-Vincent, Oct. 21; Montpellier, Oct. 23; Marseille, Oct. 24; [St-Étienne,] Grand' Église, Oct. 27; [Grenoble,] Collégiale St-André, Oct. 28; Salle Rameau, Lyon, Oct. 29; Primatiale St-Maurice de Vienne, Oct. 30; and Bourgoin, Nov. 1.

A short explanatory progress report: three weeks ago, I wrote a letter to Busser to ask him to accept my withdrawal from composition, giving as pretext my financial situation, which obliges me to work. No response, but a week ago, I received a note from Beaux-Arts declaring me withdrawn if I do not resume the course on November 3rd. I immediately consulted M^{me} Dupré, who brought Dupré up to date upon his return.

Wednesday the 4th, Dupré paid a visit to J. Chailley, secretary-general of the Conservatory, on this subject. Today, I accompanied the master from Montparnasse to the Conservatory; he recounted the meeting to me. He had proposed my withdrawal on the same pretext, saying that he had taken upon himself the right to act on my behalf, since Busser, in response to my letter, had had an administrative memo sent to me that was not the least bit instructive. (M^{me} Dupré then told me that he got angry and asked Chailley whether such a distinguished student should be treated in this manner—someone who already has four first prizes, etc.). Chailley, very confused, blamed it on an administrative error. Dupré asked him to allow me the right to later return and try for Rome, to which Chailley responded that it is possible for me to withdraw [152] and to enroll again before age 28. Satisfied, Dupré said to him, to conclude (speaking of me): “You don’t know her? Well, I do. You too will know her in a few years.” And regarding Busser [MD said], “She will return to the composition class, should she want to, only when Busser picks up and leaves.”

“If I had known,” he told me, “we would have done this last year.” But here is the most important thing that Dupré said to me: in Toulouse, during his tour, he met someone (whom I shall not name) with whom he has been connected for 20 years. During their conversation, Dupré was led to speak about his ideas on organ design. Enthused, this person offered to build the ideal organ, and to make it available to him, near Paris. This would be the realization of the hopes that Dupré confided to me on July 13, ’42.

MD: “See how Providence works for you. It gives us what we need when we need it. (This person) knows nothing of our projects, nothing about the role they will play for you.”

On his ideas for design: “it’s [153] a seed that I’ve planted in certain minds.” This project is of huge importance for Dupré and for me.

Friday 13 November 1942

At Meudon all afternoon. Towards the evening, Marguerite Dupré played for me the two recital programs that she will give in Nancy and Nantes. Warm, goal-directed playing, and beautiful technique.

Dupré came back, and we chatted. He accompanied me to the train. I took with me the manuscript of the 3rd Étude (in octaves).

Sunday 22 November 1942

I played at St-Sulpice for High Mass and the Mass at 11:15 AM (4th time), replacing Dupré.¹⁵⁶ One hitch: there was no one to turn on the motor. Papa approached someone, and it wasn’t until the beginning of the Gospel reading at the 11:15 Mass that I was finally able to play.

156. According to the program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1376, on the evening of Nov. 22, 1942, Marcel Dupré and Marguerite Dupré were the featured artists in the third concert of the 1942–1943 season of the Concerts du Conservatoire, City of Nancy, Salle Poirel.

Second incident: Someone closed the door to the gallery, keeping all of Dupré's friends down in the church except for those who came very early. A situation to be cleared up.

Played a part of the chorale "Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele" [BWV 759] and Franck's *Choral* No. 1. In very good form for improvisation; very secure in registration. Improvised a symphonic poem on the Gospel text. [My student] Marthe Dramez was very impressed.

[154] Friday 27 November 1942

In Meudon from 2:30 to 7:30 PM. M^{me} Dupré set me up at the organ first, before putting me to work; but then, seeing how caught up I'd become, she decided to leave me at the great organ until Dupré's arrival, who was to hear me at around 5:00. Ate with Marguerite.

When the master arrived home, I played the entire *Chemin de la Croix* for him, from memory. Dupré explained to me in detail his concept of the work. Here I will note the changes he made to the indicated metronome marks of the movements: Station II, slower (almost breaking up). Stn. V, slower. Stn. XIII, slower; with a persistent sort of legato. I spent a moment analyzing the work. The master found in my interpretation "profound emotion" and, catching himself liking his own music, he kept repeating: "That's beautiful." Some textual errors that we corrected. (In the *Chemin de la Croix*, as in all of Dupré's works, I have been intuitively able to detect errors and correct them by means of analysis, which is good for the works and for me.) [155] Dupré judged me to have made progress in my technique and appeared astonished at Station X.

In discussion, the master told me: "The man who is most intelligent is the one who can see the farthest into the future. The higher you rise on the social ladder, the more you will come across this."

M^{me} Dupré spoke with the master concerning some irritations [*tracasseries*] that I'd had with Yves Nat over my students.

MD: "You should not have to put up with the stupidities of some Conservatory professors, with having your students filched: your time is your own."

"My consolation for not being able to practise is that you are practising, and Marguerite is practising. At 21 you are like an industrialist, like a chief executive officer, who works just as hard, sitting in his armchair, as his men do."

The master accompanied me back to the train station.

Friday 4 December 1942

New work at the organ: [Dupré's] *Symphonie-Passion* and *Deuxième Symphonie*.

After my work with M^{me} Dupré, I rehearsed.

The master arrived home. Tea in the organ hall.

Back to work. I registered the organ, and Dupré pronounced the timbres "perfect." He was enthused with [156] my technique and said to me:

"Never have I heard the organ played like that! What is so astounding is the grandeur that is neither of your age nor of your sex. It makes one wonder just how high you will rise..."

I shifted the conversation toward the difference between the Chaillot organ played by Marcel Dupré and

played by others, and from there towards technique. Me: "Seeing you play, Master, one realizes that, without a doubt, there's a secret to your technique."

MD: "You believe, do you, that I have a secret?"

Me: "It's no longer a secret for me, seeing that you have passed it on to me."

MD: ... In fact, it's no secret to pianists."

Me: Begging your pardon, but there is one thing of which pianists have no idea: that's the 'extent' to which a sound can be long. And the secret of your technique, it seems to me, is, fundamentally, to do with the length of each sound."

MD: "Yes, exactly!" And again, MD: "I find myself (one might say) more than halfway through my life with projects and experiments still before me. It is time I passed on to others what I have not yet [157] done."

Accompanying me back to the train, MD: "I am writing the fourth Étude, involving thirds and sixths. I'm in a hurry to finish these, my Études, and that we both should know them. I'm in less of a hurry to publish them."

Me: "Why?"

MD: "Because [other] people don't need to know them so soon. You must be left in peace."

Me: But will Bornemann still have paper?"

MD: "Yes, I think so. We don't need to worry about Bornemann."

Sunday 6 December 1942

Last Sunday [November 29], I went to a Lamoureux concert at the Salle Pleyel:¹⁵⁷ a huge program. A première by Paule Maurice: Symphony in four parts, which I played in public with Valérie Hamilton 4 years ago.¹⁵⁸

I made an aesthetic remark about composition: in general, the moderns do not push an idea to its extreme point; they don't make use of development [techniques] to arrive at the "synthesis" inherent in the idea. Without this, it is impossible for the idea to triumph; we are not "persuaded." This explains how I regard these developments involving several tormented-sounding crescendos [158] that, at the moment of arrival, seem to lack the strength to do anything other than uselessly repeat. Could Debussy, the impressionist, have been the illustrious model for this sort of emphasis? In contrast, I notice how among the classical-era composers the musical idea is investigated; and how the romantics developed it, by degrees of emotion. To me, an idea, in itself, represents an edifice. By its very substance, it necessitates development. By this, I do

157. According to Alexandre Laederich, "Les Associations symphoniques parisiennes," in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 217-18, the Orchestre Lamoureux was one of four orchestras regularly performing in Paris during the Occupation. The others were the Société des concerts du Conservatoire, the Association des concerts Padeloup, and the Association des concerts Colonne (with change of name to Concerts Pierné).

158. According to Simon 2009, 169, this 1942 work by Paule Maurice was a symphonic poem. It was completed and premiered as the result of the Vichy government's conferral on Maurice of one of its 67 commissions for new works of music.

not mean that every idea should be submitted to systematic development, but that, by means of amplification and by means of contraction, it must be brought to a logical point of arrival.

This remark seems to me to be the most well-founded that can be used to criticize a composer. He is not entitled to wish to “prove” himself if he is “proving” nothing. Paule Maurice’s symphony lacks interest. The finale is odiously vulgar, the scherzo fairly well done.

A second remark of a personal nature, concerning this concert: the impact of the percussion instruments, especially the timpani, became nearly unbearable to my ears. Third fact: the variety of the [159] program bothered my musical sensibilities. Have I been influenced by the repertoire of the six composers I’ve been working on for nearly a year?¹⁵⁹ I feel pleasure when I hear a complete work by Wagner.

Friday 11 December 1942

Yesterday, Papa fainted, leaving us in anguish for 20 minutes. Saw the doctor.

Monday 14 December 1942

M^r Marcel Dupré, whom I saw yesterday at St-Sulpice, came to our home to get news of Papa. He found him well and us relieved; but he made him promise, insistently, to take it easy and be careful, because of me. He asked them both to watch over their health, “so that,” he said, “my Jeannette can live in peace while she has an enormous amount to accomplish. Yes, she has already done a mountain of work; but another mountain of work remains to be done. If it gratifies her for you to take medicine, you must take it. Mentally, she is in no state to play Friday (at Meudon). I don’t want her to play: she must play in a state of [160] joy.”

We chatted, then worked for a long time. I showed Dupré some registration effects for Meudon that I worked out to replace the mass of strings called for in the *Symphonie-Passion* and the *Deuxième [Symphonie]*. Very interested, the master said to me: “I’m going to try that.”

Some days ago, I lamented to the master about being continuously deprived of hearing him. Today, he seemed to respond, by saying to me abruptly, “I must make up my mind to play the organ for you, even without more practice. I wouldn’t do it in front of others; in front of you, I don’t mind.”

I accompanied the master back.¹⁶⁰

Tuesday 15 December 1942

I no longer have any working affiliation with Yves Nat as [a] coach. It’s been a week now since I managed to rid myself of my second student who worked with him and who created problems for me.

Friday 18 December 1942

At Meudon. Lesson with M^{me} Dupré. Worked on the organ for half an hour. Encountered the master and Marguerite.

159. Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Franck, and Dupré.

160. Demessieux may have accompanied Dupré back to the subway station near her home (Daumesnil), or all the way to the station where he would get his train for Meudon (Montparnasse).

Christmas [Day] 1942

All three of us at Vespers at St-Sulpice. Chatted in a very [161] friendly manner with M^r and M^{me} Dupré, their aunt M^{lle} Chauvière, and Marguerite.

In a hurry to get to my Vespers, I was drawn aside by M^{lle} Chauvière: “My child, I must thank you. I have not forgotten *Évocation*, and I know all the satisfaction that your talent has given your teacher! He adores you; you are his joy and his happiness. It is you who will perpetuate his works, by your magnificent talent. I would like to say thank you, on behalf of my Marcel; you are his guardian angel. I know that you have much affection for him and that he is counting on you. You will help him too, you will watch over him. Goodbye, my child.”

M. Dupré asked me to play Vespers quite regularly at St-Sulpice in January [1943]; he said to me: “Jean-Jacques [Grunenwald] is leaving us, taking a break.”

Saturday 2 January 1943

Sixth concert in Meudon at Marcel Dupré’s home, for my usual audience. Program: *Chemin de la Croix*, *Symphonie-Passion*, *Deuxième Symphonie* by Marcel Dupré. I was in marvelous form and, in my interpretations and technique, seemed to approach a high point. Mild stage fright [162] before the performance. During the concert, perfect equilibrium. No fatigue. Played the concert without pause.

Arrived at 2:30 PM, my parents at 4:30. The master devoted his time to me, despite my objections. I registered the organ and rehearsed some passages in front of him. After the *Allegro* of the *Deuxième Symphonie*, Dupré said to me: “It’s interesting that you have my sound...”

Me: “Your sound...? I have your sound, Master?...”

MD: “Yes. I have Father Guilmant’s sound, and you have mine. It was Guilmant’s sound that made his reputation in America. I came to understand that when he rehearsed at the Trocadéro for the inauguration at the Exposition (I was 14 then).¹⁶¹ Since then, I’ve sought to acquire it. My father was beside me and indicated it to me. He [Guilmant] was playing his Sonata in C minor. I’ll play the beginning for you.”

The master added: “It is nevertheless impressive, at your age, to have the authority, the ‘signature’ [sound] of a man! My dream for you is that at 25 you will have nothing left to learn from the repertoire.”

Not wanting me to tire myself playing, the master suggested a moment of rest, and we chatted for a long time. Dupré shared his thoughts randomly, as he is wont to do with me.

MD: “When one gives a [163] series of concerts, one must think only of the first of the series, as if there were no others. Similarly, you must think only of the piece you are playing, from the beginning of a recital. You must always play a piece as if it were the last.

161. The information provided by Dupré, as recorded by Demessieux, could not be verified. According to Ochse 1994, 94, Guilmant’s inauguration of the organ of the Trocadéro occurred as part of the 1878 Paris World Exhibition, prior to Dupré’s birth. A Paris World Exhibition also occurred in 1900 (when Dupré was 14) and would have featured a series of Trocadéro organ recitals in which Guilmant participated. It did not, as the sentence implies, include a recital that inaugurated the organ.

“You are not concerned about feeling fatigued if, before you play, we make an inventory of our repertoire, through to the end? What still remains?”

My portfolio in hand, we studied; Dupré wrote. He spoke of more than 10 recitals (in all), being taken by the idea of my presenting the entire repertoire, with some exceptions from the works of Bach; he envisioned a concert for organ and orchestra for which he wants me to compose a work.

MD: “I think it is good that on New Year’s Day, a year and a half after you began, we have a shared plan for the conclusion of this stage [of your career].”

The 4th Étude is finished.¹⁶²

When my parents arrived, we had tea.

Then the concert [took place], with my audience grouped on the stage, around the stove. Mama insisted that the master stay in his favorite spot beside the instrument.

When I had finished, there was huge emotion. Dupré said “What profundity...” and was at a loss for words.

MD: “As God is my witness, though, I truly do know you!...” [164].

We moved back to the parlour, with a feeling of familiar closeness and enthusiasm.

We departed around 8:00 PM. The master accompanied us back as far as the train station and, filled with emotion, said to me, “I am in a state of infinite joy.” M^r and M^{me} Dupré want me to have a lesson with the master every two weeks from now on. Returning to his idea, Dupré also said to me,

“It will be best to wait until the very last moment before letting Jean Gallon in on the secret; we don’t want to take any risks.” And this amusing comment, when I spoke to the master about Bach’s daring: “Ah! Yes, he certainly was a fearless type!”

Yesterday Marcel Dupré said to me: “From the intellectual perspective as from the religious perspective, one must have faith. Faith in friendship, faith in art.”

Friday 8 January 1943

M^{me} Dupré handed to me the manuscripts of Études 4 and 5 (the 5th newly completed). She also gave me the second proofs of M. Dupré’s concerto to correct.¹⁶³

Sunday 10 January 1943

Epiphany. I played Vespers at St-Sulpice. Very happy. [165]

Friday 15 January 1943

162. The fourth in the series of organ études Dupré composed specifically to further Demessieux’s technique, which she was learning as he finished them. Dupré’s start on the fourth étude, involving thirds and sixths, was noted in the entry for Dec. 4, 1942.

163. This is a reference to Dupré’s arrangement for organ and piano (Bornemann, 1943) of his Concerto in E minor for organ and orchestra, Op. 31, originally published in 1934.

Organ lesson (no lesson with M^{me} Dupré, not having been able to work). For Dupré, I played four preludes and fugues by Bach, learned since the last concert, and the third Étude (B-flat minor); (I've also worked again on the preludes and fugues in G major and A minor, which I did not play for the master). Dupré said to me:

"What an effort you have put in again in so little time! You worry me. Are you not fatigued? This was so fantastic that it made me dizzy. You are faster than I am in learning Bach by heart; I allow three days for a big prelude or a fugue; you toss it off in two days. Slow and steady wins the race, Jeannette..."

When I had played the third Étude, the master, making a gesture of violently pushing an object away, said to me: "I am writing the Études for you so you will do [precisely] 'that' with all the 'others' when we come to hear you play them."

After various tries, Dupré decided on the tutti for the entire Étude, thus finding the colour necessary for its stormy character. He asked my opinion concerning the [166] composition of the Étude.

The master escorted me back.

Sunday 17 January 1943

I played Vespers at St-Sulpice.

The clergy called on me to organize the ceremony for next Sunday, and I consulted with three priests. The other priests waited for me at the foot of the gallery and asked me whether it was I who would command the organ; one of them:

"Yes, this young lady is M^r Marcel Dupré's supply organist, if one can put it that way." Received, on the whole, with great courtesy.

Friday 23 January 1943

After my language lesson and upon his return from his class, M^r Dupré played the organ for me, just as M^{me} Dupré had said he would. A very striking impression. Dupré asked me what I would like. My having left the choice to him, he played from memory the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor and the Prelude and Fugue in A minor [by Bach]. Seated on the bench, I observed his technique very closely, studying the secret of the clarity of the master's playing.

MD: "I don't really see how. But if you tell me that it can be useful to you for me to play the organ for you, I will play [167] you everything. I play for you as I do for my wife and Marguerite; it stays between us." And also,

MD: "One cannot discover anything except if one has faith. Faith is confidence. You have discovered my playing because you have faith in me. In ourselves, we see only what is lacking." Speaking of me, the master also said some words that I consider tremendous:

"It is not humanly possible to hope to go technically any farther."

[Squeezed between this last line and the next date heading:] I took the manuscript of the 6th Étude away with me.

Sunday 25 January 1943

I was to have played Vespers at St-Sulpice today, but just before my departure, Marguerite Dupré came to announce that an accident had occurred with the [organ's] motor, through the fault of the technician, that very morning. She did not want me to bother [coming out]. The master was not able to play [that morning].

[In the] afternoon and evening I worked on the proofs of Marcel Dupré's concerto, which I finished.

Friday 29 January 1943

Organ lesson at Meudon after my language lesson. I practiced for an hour on the great organ, then, the master having arrived, I played for him, from memory, the 4th [168] Étude and the Preludes and Fugues in E-flat [major, BWV 552], G [major, BWV 541], and A minor [BWV 543] by Bach.

Dupré played for me, from memory, those in C [major, BWV 547], C minor [BWV 546], and B minor [BWV 544], which I had requested. The master's playing has an incomparable flexibility; its automatic precision is not apparent to the eye. He plays serenely, calmly, searching for his sonorities. It is as if he is constructing something. His rhythm is absolute. I remarked that, like me, he senses the work's hold over him, always with a point of culmination where one forgets technique and self.

Immediately after the Étude, Dupré said to me: "There's no doubt that there has been a change in your playing. I wonder how you managed to get something out of what I played for you the other day. The way you play is unbelievable." Dupré asked me to replay the Étude. "I'm going to figure it out." He listened from the back of the hall.

MD: "Yes, it's even more spiritual. I believe I'm right; I know you so very well!" I tried to express some reservations about my performance, but the master exclaimed: "Don't even think of it! And besides, you mustn't forget that I am not even aware of them. You are the only person in the whole world [169] to notice these things.

"I've written the 7th [Étude]; it is calm and requires evenness in the pedal, with the subbass. I have only two months before my trip and cannot even hope to have finished the twelve by then... especially as I do not want to hurry. They will be finished for autumn." Dupré told me again that he expects to modify some details, or make some cuts, when he comes to re-read and practice his Études. I had agreed in advance that I would learn the definitive version [of each] after having learned the first.

As for the Bach, in the E-flat Dupré found "a grandeur," and he found the connections between the three parts of the fugue "admirable." After the G major and A minor, he said to me: "What do you want me to say to you? That was perfect. Surely you sensed this yourself? If I did not know you, and I heard you, I would say that you are a master. When I hear you play my music, it seems to me as if it is someone else's music; I find it more beautiful." After the master had played some Bach for me, we chatted.

MD: "Would you mind playing [170] Vespers for me once in February? I want to make it up to you for not having been able to play [last] Sunday. It was planned that next Sunday Jean-Jacques would play Vespers." I objected, not wanting to create friction with Grunenwald.

MD: "No, no. Grunenwald suits us because he keeps his distance. This allows you to quietly take his place. And once there..."

Madame Dupré had heard my program from the office and came to give me a hug.

Accompanying me back, the master spoke to me about the importance of a theme, taking the example of

the “little themes” of his Études. I seized the opportunity to speak to him of my thoughts on this topic, without having time to go into depth. We will pursue this further.

The master also confided in me: “I certainly don’t believe I have anything to complain about. My memory has not altered much; my body has aged, but intellectually, I am the same as always.” I also recall:

“After the Paris concerts, it won’t be necessary for you to accept such chores as playing the concerto by P... or others.”¹⁶⁴ It all depends on how one ‘debuts.’ Anyway, we’ll do [171] everything necessary for that. Not that, in your case, ‘they’ would even dare.”¹⁶⁵

Sunday 7 February 1943

I played Vespers at St-Sulpice. As usual, during the sermon, Robineau appeared in the gallery to chat, telling me the whole time,

“Your versets are magnificent!”

Me: “They sounded good?”

MR: “Oh, very good. You draw such timbres...! You really have Dupré’s colours; really, just like Dupré.” These are dear Robineau’s words, not my own, that I am relating.

Sunday 14 February 1943

I played Vespers at St-Sulpice. In the gallery were those who came to St-Esprit this morning.

At 11:30 AM at St-Esprit: M^r and M^{me} Meunier, who were accompanied by quite a few people. I played *Le Signe de la Croix* by Neuville for them. Many questions.

Monday 15 February 1943

Concert by Marcel Dupré at the Salle Gaveau. Program: *Cortège et Litanie*, 1st movement of the *Symphonie-Passion*, “Berceuse” [and] “Fileuse” [from *Suite Bretonne*], the Finale of *Évocation*. In the second half, improvisations: variations on a Noël, a symphony in 4 movements: Allegro, Andante, Scherzo, and Finale on seven themes (Durufié, Litaize, [172] Fleury, Boulnois, Langlais, Grunenwald, Messiaen). As encores: improvisation on a children’s song [*un chant d’école*] (fugue), Prelude in G minor, Prelude in B major. (Concert organized by the students of the *grandes écoles*;¹⁶⁶ private, by invitation only.)

164. It could not be determined whose concerto Dupré was speaking of.

165. They” were arguably the Paris organists and their supporters who Dupré believed had aligned themselves against many of his ideals of organ design, repertoire, and performance practice, i.e., members of the Association des Amis de l’Orgue. It is not clear what they would or would not dare to do.

166. The *grandes écoles* are France’s elite educational institutions with highly competitive entrance requirements. According to the printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1378, this recital was given for the [National] School of Mining Engineering. A review of the event by Bernard Gavoty (loose newspaper clipping from an unidentified newspaper, dated 1943, in one of Goosen Van Tuijl’s Demessieux files), under the headline “Marcel DUPRÉ, ce magicien!”

Unforgettable. Dupré drew such unexpected sonorities from such an ordinary organ, pulling, for the *Symphonie-Passion*, the foundation stops through soft mixtures, and sometimes using the tutti with box closed, a powerful effect. Brilliant technique. In very good form; the same for the improvisations.

In the improvised symphony, an orchestral spirit dominated, as much in the pace of the Allegros as in the details of the Andante. A very symphonic scherzo. Overall character that was quite lively, lyrical. Andante: solemn poetry, scarcely melancholy.

I. Sonata form.

II. On two themes; combined.

III. Classical form. Extended coda.

IV. Cyclic: theme A (1st mvt.) presented as the second theme. Development. Recapitulation: [theme] A (2nd mvt.) presented as the second theme. Combined in the final development.

Tonalities related by thirds.

[Improvisation on] the Noël in the form of a huge variations set.

Audience was very knowledgeable, intellectual. [173] Each of the two parts of the concert was preceded by a lecture, on a lofty and appropriate concept, given by Pierre Gavoty.¹⁶⁷ Our seats were on the stage, as per M^{me} Dupré's wishes.

In the foyer, lots of people. The master had an air of satisfaction about him, I thought. He asked me, "You're happy?... We shall talk about this later."

Friday 19 February 1943

At Meudon all afternoon. In the evening, I played the 5th and 6th Études for the master (D-flat major, F minor) and Bach Preludes and Fugues in C major, C minor and B minor, from memory. The master played for me, all from memory, the great E minor [BWV 548], G minor [BWV 542], and A major [BWV 536], which I had asked for.

At teatime we spoke about the concert again.

MD: "Were you just being kind to me?... Seriously, now: you did find it instructive in terms of giving a public concert? Good. I was thinking of you the entire time; I was saying to myself: Jeannette is out there, she sees, she understands."

We talked about improvisation. From there, on to form. I asked Dupré if he doesn't blame Debussy for having contributed to the destruction of form.

MD: "In part, yes. He created delicious successions [174] of chords, but he caused a musical decline with parallelism. After the great period of Wagner, Liszt, Franck, there have been, reportedly, men who were

refers to 800 members of the Paris *grandes écoles* being in attendance and describes the audience as "filled with wonder, yet merciless."

167. Demessieux here misremembered the lecturer's first name. According to the printed program, he was the Paris music critic and Dupré disciple Bernard Gavoty. The lecture-recital format parallels rival organist André Marchal's recitals in tandem with lectures by Norbert Dufourcq.

builders while others were demolishers. Mussorgsky, who found some very moving inflections, degraded music in his desire to imitate common speech. Strauss was the first to deliberately write ugly things to generate a feeling of horror. Fine and well, but no. Music is music. I cannot conceive of music without form.”

Dupré said to me that, nowadays, there are composers who write orchestrally in an approximate way, without concern for the harmonic result. To the instruments, they assign random notes, whose colour becomes the “core of the orchestra.” Having sometimes thought of doing exactly this for a joke, I was scandalized to hear this revelation.

Here are some of the master’s reflections that I noted while we worked. He followed the text of his *Études* avidly; “I can no longer remember...” he said to me. And, after the 5th: “There, you’ve played it! Ah, it’s been [175] played very well.” After the 6th, he had moist eyes; “... that lightness... I have never heard playing like that.” I played the 6th several times, on the tutti.

MD: “Do they still please you? Do you believe we can leave them as is? You don’t find them muddled or needing cuts?” I’m beginning to get used to this confiding in me and to this unjustified anxiety. As for Bach, Dupré said to me:

“You have incomparable rhythmic authority and fullness. Hearing you, one would never believe that it is a woman who is playing. That’s a man’s brain, a colossal brain. Your technique is colossal, too; and the level of your improvisations and compositions will be equal to your technique.” Dupré’s words were emphatic. I asked him:

“You really have confidence in me as a composer?”

MD: “Yes, I have the greatest confidence.”

On the subject of my technique, I told the master that I am no longer aware of what it is that I’ve attained.

MD: “It is as though it is me playing when I’m in very good form. It’s vibrant.”

We went into raptures [176] over the Prelude and Fugue in B minor; then the master played.

In the afternoon, working on the great organ, I had been able to delve into the beauties of the *Études* by “orchestrating” them in all manners.

Dupré remarked that it has been exactly eighteen months since we began.

Sunday 28 February 1943

X

Friday 12 March 1943

Seventh recital at M^r Marcel Dupré’s. My program consisted of ten Preludes and Fugues by Bach: C major (3rd) [i.e., BWV 547], C minor, D major, E-flat [major], E minor (Great), G major, G minor, A major, A minor (Great), B minor. Perfect balance. I reached my fullest potential in technique and interpretation. I was asked if I wanted to rest, but I preferred to play straight through the entire program, which lasted an hour and fifty minutes. Dupré and Marguerite, from time to time, exchanged brief appraisals.

At the end of the concert, the master said to me: “Come embrace me: I am proud of you!” M^{me} Dupré, who stands fiercely by her opinion that I play Bach in an inimitable way, said to me: “That was superb! Grand, [177] in such a pure and noble style, filled with simplicity. And what ease...” Marguerite: “I was bowled over

by such a feat of memory. I know how much it takes to learn a page of Bach by heart. She played with serenity.”

Noteworthy: the tender charm of the Fugue in A major played on the 8’ flutes, very characteristic of Dupré’s organ. The Fugue in D at a fast tempo, in relation to the acoustic and the lightness of the keyboards (according to Dupré, who pointed out to me, when comparing performance of the Fugue in D on [the organs of] St-Sulpice and Meudon: “Here it’s another thing entirely.”)

A major event also underscored this day. Marcel Dupré now owns a registration system that ought to revolutionize the organ. Over the past ten years, he has had several devices constructed based on his concept, but has never been satisfied with any of them. This one seems perfect to him. He led us to his office to see this “news” that he had been mysteriously hinting at to me for several days. Without having time to explain his [178] plans to us at length, he said to me: “This gives you something to dream about, right?” He mentioned the names of those who had helped him in various important ways over the course of his life (I can only remember their nationalities: an Englishman, an American, a German and, lastly, a Frenchman).

The master gave me the manuscript of his 7th and 8th Études (the 8th finished just the day before). Concerning the 7th, MD: “I’m not sure if this one is worth much...” (However, M^{me} Dupré had said to me, over the course of the afternoon: “M^r Dupré finished the 8th Étude yesterday evening; he played both of them for us this morning. The end of the 7th is very moving; I believe it’s the most beautiful of all the Études...” In reference to the 8th, Dupré spoke of “a wild ride.”

MD: “If something doesn’t please you, just tell me, and I’ll remove it. They’ve caused me a lot of trouble, these two!”

At the beginning of the afternoon, I studied the Philadelphia Wanamaker organ with M^{me} Dupré.¹⁶⁸

The master accompanied us back to the train and embraced us. Chatting with him, I was again struck by the seemingly unlimited confidence he has in me.

[179] Friday 26 March 1943

At Meudon. (Lesson with M^{me} Dupré. Practiced on the organ. Ate.)

168. Madame Dupré was likely coaching Demessieux in deciphering an English-language document giving the organ’s specification. According to Craig R. Whitney, *All the Stops: The Glorious Pipe Organ and Its American Masters* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 22, this American symphonic-style organ, originally boasting 138 stops and about 10,000 pipes, was originally built for the 1904 World Exposition in St. Louis by Murray M. Harris of Los Angeles, after a design by George Ashdown Audsley, and made famous at the Exposition by Guilmant. As Whitney also notes (38), the organ was later purchased for the Grand Court of Wanamaker’s Department Store (now Macy’s) in Philadelphia and inaugurated there in 1911. In that setting, it was gradually enlarged to six manuals, 461 ranks, and 28,482 pipes by 1930 (Whitney 2003, 46; the number of ranks is from <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wanamaker_Grand_Court_Organ_\(3437327309\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wanamaker_Grand_Court_Organ_(3437327309).jpg)>, accessed Jun. 25, 2022). Dupré, one of the organists who advised on the organ’s expansion (Whitney 2003, 45–46), played the Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia many times. As described in Steed 1999, 31, the first occasion was in 1921 when Dupré improvised his *Symphonie-Passion* on this instrument.

Lesson with the master. I played for him, from memory, the 8th Étude (C minor), Fantasia and Fugue in A minor [BWV 561], Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C [major, BWV 564], Toccata in F [major, from BWV 540], learned in 7 days.

At the beginning of our conversation, Dupré told me precisely this: "I am announcing to you that you have a new friend in Paris; not someone insignificant, but a man under whose moral protection I have placed you. I have told him everything you are. You'll never guess; he has something to do with St-Esprit." Very intrigued, I asked him to give me a hint.

MD: "... he is clothed in red, but he is not the devil... ... The Cardinal."

When my astonishment had passed, the master continued: "I had a meeting with the Cardinal the other day at 5:00 PM. He kept me for three-quarters of an hour. After we'd discussed the main issue,* we chatted about various things. He asked me to tell him what I thought of plainchant; I [180] responded: "setting aside the spiritual, and looking at it the way an artist does: from the point of view of form, some anonymous melodies from the Middle Ages ("Salve Regina," "Ave maris stella," "Te Deum") are as beautiful as the most beautiful melodies of Bach or Beethoven. From a religious point of view, there is no doubt that plainchant is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

"As I have pronounced the Name of the Holy Spirit, permit me, Your Eminence, to shift to another question and draw your paternal attention to a church, of your diocese, that I love because it is the most beautiful of all the churches in which we labour: the church of St-Esprit." And Marcel Dupré faithfully retraced his appeal for me, which I note here exactly:

MD: "I will tell you about this church's organist, Your Eminence. A young girl from Montpellier. When she was eleven years old, her parents, witnessing the extraordinary development of this child's gifts, made the sacrifice of selling everything so they could take their child to Paris. At thirteen years of age, the parish priest of St-Esprit gave her a three-month trial. At the end of the three [181] months, he said to her: 'I will keep you on, but you are going to accept a salary.' The little one replied: 'No, I want to play for the Church.' Six months later, the priest insisted once again on raising the issue: 'Your parents are making sacrifices; you are doing a job, I order you to accept...' This young girl is now twenty-one; I have known her for the eight years she has been my student. She possesses the gifts of the Holy Spirit, even the greatest of these: Intelligence. Knowledge? There is nothing more to teach her; she improvises... like me, Your Eminence. It would seem that in this sanctuary, she is filled with the Holy Spirit. Every Sunday, she receives the breath of inspiration. She is steady, poised, and has self-control...! She has the gift of judgment. As for her as a person, she's a saint. She practices organ six hours a day; she has an enormous memory. When she is forty (who knows how far she'll go, Your Eminence?), she will doubtless be a great artist... alone among women, like Schumann's wife, [182] Clara Schumann. I thought that I, an *artiste* speaking to my Cardinal, could be allowed to bring up a subject point touching upon the Church." His Eminence, Cardinal Suhard replied: "Because you have told me this, I will take it into account."

The master, feeling poorly, asked that I accept that he play the organ for me next Friday only. MD: "In any case, I intend to play for you and, if you are ready, you will play for me."

He was astonished at the announcement of today's program, and very happy with the results.

He gave me the dates of all his trips and such up until July [1943], saying, "This way, you know when I am free, so that you can organize your work."

On the subject of the concert with orchestra on May 28 at Chaillot:** “You must attend; it will be of interest to you.”

After having heard Étude 8, Dupré, as always, asked my opinion, and said to me: “It’s curious; my impression of that composition is quite good; I don’t believe there is much that needs revising.” (A few days ago, the master hastily asked me to return the manuscript of Étude 7 to him, telling me that he had had [183] some new ideas and wanted to change everything.) I left with the manuscript of the 9th Étude, which, the master told me, is “amusing.”

* Concerning the situation of organists and choirmasters in the diocese of Paris, the Cardinal is disposed to provide help.¹⁶⁹

** This concert did not take place.

Sunday, 28 March 1943

Monsieur le Curé of St-Esprit welcomed Thérèse Vigot, whom, upon the suggestion and recommendation of Marcel Dupré, he has come to accept as my official substitute.

Friday 2 April 1943

Afternoon at Meudon. In the evening, for Dupré, I played the Toccata and Fugue in E major and the Fugue of the Toccata in F [major], from memory. For me, the master played the Dorian Toccata and Fugue [BWV 538], Toccata and Fugue in D minor, the Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C [major], Toccata and Fugue in F [major], Fantasia and Fugue in C minor. One work followed another as if by magic. MD: “I’ll play one more for you: what would you like? Come now, tell me...” Here was the enthusiasm of that unforgettable organ lesson at St-Sulpice.¹⁷⁰

MD: “I have finished the 10th Étude, but it is in draft form: it’s still rough and only I can make sense of it. I’m going to stop there, for the moment... I must, until July 14th.”

The master entrusted me with the third proof of [184] his concerto (orchestral score), asking me to make corrections based upon intuition, with the help of the reduction if need be.

The immense scale of these grand works by Bach notwithstanding, Dupré’s own sound is rich in detail, from his legato, heavy or light, to his staccato.

Sunday 4 April 1943

Bombing of Paris and the suburbs. No news from Meudon.

169. According to Guillot 2003, 19, in 1943 Cardinal Suhard brought down a ruling that would thereafter govern the procedure for recruiting and hiring church organists in Paris, and that would remain in place until 1968.

170. Cf. the diary entry for Apr. 15, 1942.

Friday 9 April 1943

After the bits of convoluted, second-hand information that we managed to get during the week, I went to Meudon today. I found M^{me} Dupré very depressed. She was expecting me. In a mood to share her thoughts, she recounted the anguish they experienced last Sunday. They were not wounded, but were even more afraid than at the last bombing, taking shelter in the basement, scarcely shielded from debris. With tears in her eyes, M^{me} Dupré said to me: "I held them close to me so that if anyone was killed it would be all three of us..." Despite her energetic temperament, she is feeling the effects [of the attack]. She kept me longer than usual. I did not see [185] the master, who was to return very late.

For the last three days (oh, my word!), an electrician has been secretly working to install the registration system. M^{me} Dupré had him show me the work. "You can discuss it with Mademoiselle without any misgivings: she is a great artist, a star. She is in on the secret, she alone." I went inside the organ and asked questions.

I handed in the Étude and proofs for the concerto. (I had noted some troubling differences in harmonies between the reduction and the orchestra, the correction of which I did not want to take upon myself to make. I pointed them out to M^{me} Dupré who will pass them on to the master.)

Sunday 11 April 1943

At St-Sulpice, where Maman was welcomed with sincere affection at 11:15 AM. M^r and M^{me} Dupré introduced Grunenwald to her. The master said to Grunenwald that I know "the entire" repertoire and told him to contact me during his absence, if needed for St-Sulpice.

Tuesday 13 April 1943

Concert by Gieseeking at the Opéra, to which I was invited by my student M^{lle} Marthe Dramez. True enjoyment of perfection. An orchestral authority, so rare among [186] pianists. Poetry. Superior style. Unforgettable shadings.

Beethoven's Sonata in D minor ["Tempest", Op. 31, No. 2]. Schumann's Sonata in F-sharp minor [Op. 11]. Twelve preludes (Book 1) by Debussy. 4 encores.

Friday 16 April 1943

At Meudon the entire afternoon. I practiced. At 5:00 PM, a lesson with the master. His first words concerned the registration system. "What do you think of it?..." I asked questions about it and shared my enthusiasm with him. "This time, I am on the first rung of a new ladder," he told me. "And when I say that I have not even begun my life as an artist, it's true. Will 'it' work? Despite the assurances of the engineers, I am waiting to see. It has been my practice in life never to let hope seep in until the moment when I have a *fait accompli* before me. If it works, I will write for it the two works that I have envisioned... whether I go on to publish them or not is unimportant. I will be torn to shreds by my enemies; I don't care if, after I go, these works remain. If I don't pull it off... I'll fall back in line, without revealing a thing. I am within a few days of knowing."

I detected in Dupré a bitterness that he did not try to hide from me.

MD: "I was eight years old when I took the stage, [187] the age when a kid plays marbles. I've reached the

age of 57 without having yet attained my goal, which is rest. I have accomplished so much; and all I get are insults, insults. When I was twenty, I discovered a list of Bach's chorales, annotated by Widor, in the library of St-Sulpice. The subject of the chorales was all around us (in those days); no one could get anything out of Guilmant. Two years later, I managed to procure the texts (Peters was the only edition, flawed); some questions put to a Swiss man, and, with that, I reconstituted the tradition.¹⁷¹ No one believed in the electrified organ (we had only junk as electric organs). Only the Barker lever was known. On my first trip to England, I understood and, when I returned, I said that we know nothing in France. It was then that the Association des Amis de l'Orgue was formed, to oppose me.¹⁷² That has only continued to grow and improve. [*Ça ne fait que croître et embellir.*] I worked for the benefit of others by updating the tradition, by seeking to make it understood.¹⁷³ My editions, my pedagogical works (I have no misgivings about those from Troyes; Massis was pleased and as a friend, blessed me in [188] his heart for having done that for him). And I would have said I'd wasted 17 years teaching if I had not met you. I forgive the Conservatory because, without it, I would never have known you."

Me: "Not so, Master. What I wanted, and my parents too, was that I should become your student. I must appear to say that so easily now! I never did join Marchal's class, for example, or any of the others. Anyway, you have trained students other than me: Litaize, Langlais, Messiaen..."

MD: "I've taught a few capable of managing at Paris's grand churches, nothing more. No, I'm telling you; and I put Messiaen in the same category. He tricks people with false ideas. You and I agree that the fanatics are as dangerous as the puritans. With you, it's not teaching. I've taken you along with me; we walk side by side. In five years (if I'm still alive), we will be coming ashore at the same docks and ports.¹⁷⁴ To have made you [succeed]: that's my revenge. And, as it turns out, you are, at twenty years of age, at the same point as I am at 57: that's how it should be. When you are 28 or 30, [189] and you have already made two grand tours of America or Australia and written your first batch of works that you can live off, you will have made your fortune and can decide to relax or to continue traveling. I would want you to avoid what I did not manage to avoid: teaching."

The master also spoke these inspiring words: "You are like the labourer at the eleventh hour in the Gospel lesson. Imagine if, in place of those who were protesting, the father of this labourer had happened to be there: he would simply have said to his son, between them, 'You are lucky.' My life has been ill-spent; but I could die in peace if I were to write another two first-class works [*encore deux œuvres "premières"*]. I sense

171. It has been impossible to determine the identity of the Swiss man.

172. According to Murray 1985, 68–69, Dupré's very first trip to England was in September 1920, when he performed privately before the Royal College of Organists in London. He made his concert debut on Dec. 9, 1920, at Royal Albert Hall. However, the Association des Amis de l'Orgue, as was noted in Chapter 7, was not formed until 1927, by which time Dupré had toured England more than once.

173. Dupré's meaning in these last two sentences is unclear. Presumably he is referring to the original topic of his speech, which is his life accomplishments. "That has only continued to grow and improve" does not refer to the Association des Amis de l'Orgue, which seems to be mentioned parenthetically.

174. Dupré may have been speaking both figuratively and literally here, referring specifically to a class-structure. At that time ticketholders disembarked from the ship separately (and perhaps on another dock) from second-class and lower-class travelers. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this observation.)

I've come close to this with the Études. And, assuming that the war is over, I will leave the door open for you.

"I don't know how to drop the class. Ah, if only I no longer had this burden to bear! All the same, those kids rouse my pity: they know nothing. After the war, once I am free of the Conservatory, I will be rid of Paris from Monday through Saturday evening: that's what I need in order to work. I can keep St-Sulpice."

Knowing that Cardinal [190] Suhard is to come to St-Esprit for Quasimodo [the Second Sunday of Easter], Dupré advised me to relate to my parish priest the conversation that he had with the Cardinal about me.

For the master, I played the pieces that I was reviewing, ones already learned: Passacaglia and Fugue, Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, Dorian Toccata and Fugue, Toccata and Fugue in D minor. "Tell your parents that I am thrilled," he said to me.

When the last bombing was vaguely referenced, I understood that the master is still very distressed.

Dupré loaned me the manuscript of the 10th Étude, saying to me, "it's tumultuous." He asked me to play at St-Sulpice all day on June 6th.

Friday 23 April 1943

Afternoon at Meudon. The master saw me first (no class today), then M^{me} Dupré took me. The first words we exchanged were about the registrateur.

MD: "They're working on it right now; it's serious today... Ah! I can't wait."

Me: "Neither can I."

Dupré returned to be with his men while we began the language lesson. A moment later, he was back. "Come and see: we're going to do an experiment for [191] the little lady." The master introduced to me the engineers and assistants, who were four in number; he said of me: "... a great artist, my wonderful student who is just as anxious for the registrateur as I am." I saw numbers corresponding to the combinations appear on a lighted dial. It reminded me of my visit to the Palais de la découverte.¹⁷⁵

Then Dupré practiced on the little organ while we continued the [language] lesson in the office.

Around 5:00 PM, there was a lot of movement going on; the work was proceeding by trial and error, and the engineers foresaw leaving very late this evening. They have really taken its final success to heart.

"You think I'm going to succeed?..." Dupré asked me.

Me: "Will you succeed? Of course, Master, as in everything else you construct."

MD: "If I succeed, I believe I'll have taken a step forward for the organ."

Me: "It's the ideal nature of the organ this time; I don't think one could wish for anything else." My enthusiasm did both of them a world of good.

Walking me back, the master said to me: "You will see how the registrateur is going to give you ideas for composing..."

175. Mentioned in the diary entry for Apr. 2, 1941.

29 April 1943

Dear friend,

I've just received my permit for [travel to] Lyon and will not be at St-Sulpice on Sunday, but I wish to thank you for your letter which deeply moved me.

You needn't have thanked me: it was quite natural that you should have this work¹⁷⁷ given to you by me, but what you have told me does me a world of good... if I can allow myself to believe you completely.

In loyal friendship,

Your friend,

Marcel Dupré

[192] Sunday 2 May 1943

At St-Esprit: High Pontifical Mass with Cardinal Suhard assisted by two bishops and around fifty ministers. Broadcast in its entirety. I played the Toccata and Fugue in D minor [by Bach], Dupré's Prelude in B major, Widor's Toccata, and a huge improvisation on *Veni creator*. Magnificent plainchant by the seminarians of the Order of St-Esprit.

At the conclusion of High Mass, because the occasion permitted it, M^r le Curé introduced me to His Eminence, who greeted me with simplicity and great kindness: "We have heard praise for this child... by the great organist of St-Sulpice, Marcel Dupré." M^r le Curé, delighted, hastened to say: "Marcel Dupré is her musical father, Your Eminence." The cardinal continued: "We know that there are the very highest hopes for her. Continue, my child; you glorify God with your talent and for this He will reward you." The Cardinal proffered his hand in the customary way as soon as I was before him, and I hastened to kiss it. After these few words, he remained until I had distanced myself somewhat, [193] regarding me with a little smile and nodding his head.

Monday 3 May 1943

M^r le Curé told me what the Provincial [i.e., Head] of the Fathers of St-Esprit, who was seated beside him at mealtime yesterday, said to him. He said it to me this way:

"That young girl whom you presented to His Eminence: she is your organist? I would never have believed

176. Dupré 2002a: 20.

177. The published source of this letter to Guerner (Dupré 2002a, 20) contains a footnote indicating that "this work" was Dupré's *Le Tombeau de Titelouze*. It was published by Bornemann in 1942 as Dupré's Op. 38.

it. When we entered, I heard a piece I know well start up; I said to myself: 'well, there he is again.' But I was astonished, and then I listened to the end. Never have I heard it played like that."

"What difference did you notice?" asked M^r le Curé. "I don't know. But I certainly was taken by her."

Father de la Motte asked me, in turn, "What do you put into your playing to 'carry' the listener to such a degree? You play the notes like everyone else, but in your playing, there is life."

Tuesday 4 May 1943

Eighth concert, at Meudon. Bach: Passacaglia, Toccatas, and Fantasias. (Papa was with my sister in Aigues-Mortes.) Marcel Dupré was very happy. He said to Maman:

"The farther we go, the more she [194] advances with lightning speed."

MD: "At this rate, we are going to begin improvisation and composition in October. We are ahead of schedule in our five-year plan. But we cannot stage our 'coup' before the war is finished, owing to our plans for foreign countries. For the time being, I wait and watch; I am preparing the way for you. You have no one standing in your way. Rolande (Falcinelli) will turn to the Opéra, where she has a friend. I steered her [in this direction]. As for Grunenwald... he very much wants to become director of a conservatory in one of the provinces. I've already spoken to Cortot about it and told him to pay Cortot a visit; he's done that. If it works out, then he'll be all set."

My performance lasted an hour and three-quarters. "Come, you are a great artist," the master said to me.

Unforgettable demonstration of the registrateur. Moments after our arrival, Dupré led us to the organ: "Come, see the registrateur..." The installation was complete, and the master had waited for us before trying it out for the first time. Technical explanation; then he played us a transcription of [195] [Borodin's] *In the Steppes of Central Asia* that he made with the registrateur in mind. Seeing how I looked, probably stupefied, Dupré said to me:

"You understand what this means, don't you... finally, its inauguration. I have waited thirteen years for this day. In 1930, I spent 27,000 francs and got nowhere. This here is a gift. Bozeau said to me, 'Let me give it to you as a birthday present!' He didn't get it wrong: yesterday, May 3rd, it was here." The registrateur was permanently installed yesterday.

MD: "All that remains, now, is to see whether, with this 'device' I shall open a new path for the organ or be the cause of its downfall." I asked the master to explain what he meant.

MD: "I am forced to create a new style. What will this style be? Will people follow me?..."

Me: "Those who will have understood will follow you; the others will [simply] be incapable of writing [for it]."

MD: "That sketch of a few measures that I made: you were favorably impressed by it?"

Me: "Yes, Master; I remember it: in at least 7 voices, in alto clef, *sostenuto*, *coupures*."¹⁷⁸

178. Among the devices Dupré added to Guilmant's organ, the *sostenuto* control caused a pitch to sustain beyond the point of releasing the key. *Coupures* on every division of the Meudon organ made it possible to divide a manual or the pedalboard so as to have one registration above, and another below, the point of division. According to the diary entry

MD: "That's the style I'm going to write in. I expect to receive a volley of insults! They'll think I'm crazy. [196] Let's keep this to ourselves for a while. It's more peaceful when one does not say anything to anyone, isn't it? That's the only way of accomplishing anything."

Dupré talked a lot about the future, mingling together the projects we have in common. The unveiling of his registration system seems to have increased his own energy. It's always the same confidence in the future. Again, he said to us: "After the war, I must be the first to leave on a grand tour, so that I can get in touch with all my friends who will open doors. What has become of them?..."

I asked the master for the 7th Étude, which he had taken back from me.

"I don't know yet if I will keep it," he told me.

Me: "What do you mean, Master?"

MD: "When you don't want to keep something, you destroy it, or throw it in the waste basket. I'll see if I can keep it." But M^{me} Dupré reassured us.

MD: "I have some ideas for the 11th. I don't have any for the 12th."

Again, Dupré recommended to us that we divert public curiosity away from me.

MD: "... aside from St-Sulpice and St-Esprit. There, the people who listen to her playing a work, or who hear her improvise say to themselves: 'Of course, she's [197] a pianist... she composes... she has all the first prizes. And that's all. They cannot understand, as long as we don't wake them up to the fact, even when they see you play... magnificently."

Between two other bits of conversation, the master said to M^{me} Dupré:

"How well she carries herself, this child! And her technique that takes care of itself! If only Widor heard her..."

On my next program, the orchestral transcriptions, which will have a double ending.¹⁷⁹ Speaking of his concerto, the master said: "We will arrange it so that you have all the material. You'll need it for your travels."

At the end of this memorable day, Dupré accompanied us back to the station [where] he explained to me the organization of one of his tours.¹⁸⁰

for Aug. 18, 1945, Dupré was also interested in a device that would make it possible to vary the point of the break in a division (*coupure mobile*).

179. This is a reference to the program Demessieux would play on July 13, 1943. The "double ending" may refer to the fact that she was to play a set of Handel's concertos in Dupré's arrangements for organ alone, and Dupré's two organ transcriptions of Sinfonias from Bach cantatas.

180. Dupré was about to depart on a month-long concert tour of France in which he would perform in a different city every day. Many of the programs (preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1379-1408) state "in aid of national relief." Cities performed in were Bourg, Lyon, Grenoble (Collégiale Saint-André), Vienne (Primatiale St-Maurice), Valence, Avignon, Cannes, Monte-Carlo (under the high patronage of S. A. S. le Prince Souverain...), Nice (Cathédrale Ste-Réparate), Aix-en-Provence, Narbonne, Perpignan, Béziers, Mazamet, Castres, Pau, Albi, Rodez (Cathedral), Toulouse, Brive, Angoulême, Nevers, Bourges (the first concert: "in aid of national relief"; the second: "recital for German

Sunday 16 May 1943

At St-Philippe-du-Roule with Jean Gallon. We had arranged to meet and chatted for a half hour after Vespers. Always the same in his ideas and in his warm and friendly manner.

He questioned me concerning my inactivity. "You're not giving a concert at St-Esprit one of these days? At Chaillot?"

He talked to me about composition, trying to learn my intentions for the Rome Prize. [198] Knowing nothing, he was, evidently, urging me to get moving, to come out of seclusion. As he is so well acquainted with me, he was astonished.

JG: "You needed a warm atmosphere in the composition class. You were right. Your personality is so strong that it would be better for us if you did not change.

JG: "But ultimately, you're not going to stay at St-Esprit forever?"

Me: "Yes, I am. Why do you ask...?"

JG: "Well, you need, if I may dare say, to advance as an organist! That's what's normally in order when one is a Jeanne Demessieux..."

Me: "The war, you know... and I'm quite attached to St-Esprit."

JG: "That's very touching; you began there when you were very young. How old are you?"

Me: "Twenty-two."

JG: "Yes. Well, I believe that after the war we're going to be brought up to date on all the hidden talent, of church organists and of women artists just as much as men."

Seeing Jean Gallon distraught, I confided in him, without any emphasis, that Marcel Dupré sometimes invites me to play at St-Sulpice, and that this is of huge artistic benefit to me.

JG: "Ah, that's good. Oh, really. Marcel [199] knows what he's doing! He's not mistaken." This, at least, reassured him.

Sunday 23 May 1943

Received, on Tuesday, a letter from Grunenwald asking me to play at St-Sulpice today and suggesting Dupré's program: the [Bach] chorale "Liebster Jesu" [BWV 633], Handel's 3rd concerto, an improvisation. He wondered if I had ever played or even heard this concerto. When I telephoned Grunenwald with my acceptance, he asked, in a sickly, sweet voice, "The program won't bother you too much?" I let him persist in his ignorance while "reassuring" him.

The service: very assured. At 9:00 AM (High Mass), Bach's Fugue in A minor. A handful of people, including an organist from Angoulême, a student of Dupré, who will be meeting him on June 6th. * Postlude: Toccata on the Amen of the 3rd Credo, proposed by him. He said to Papa that my "attack" is the same as Dupré's.

officers"), Orléans (Cathédrale Sainte-Croix), Niort, Angers, Nantes (Église Saint-Clément with Marguerite Dupré, Salle César-Franck with Marguerite Dupré, and Chapelle du Séminaire), and Saint-Brieuc.

At 11:15, M^{me} Dupré came to the gallery (she had promised me this, unsolicited). She was very happy, embraced me, greeted the members of her social circle, and spoke of me, saying, “a very brilliant student of M^r Dupré, who earned her prize two years ago.” [200]

In very good form in the improvisation. The Bach chorale being very short, I improvised, based on it, a few variations (3): 1st, in 5 voices, with a 3-against-2-rhythm between the Cornet on the *Récit* and Pedal; 2nd, trio on soft foundation stops and Nazards; 3rd, ornamented chorale melody, 4 voices, on the mutations and 4th Flutes. As the postlude, a 5-voice fugue on the chorale in a form dear to Marcel Dupré, in which, after *stretti*, the chorale is introduced in apotheosis, leading to the conclusion.

After the service, M^{me} Dupré appeared very solemn. “I’m so proud...,” she said to me. “Thank you for looking after the organ in such splendid fashion.” She also said to me that she is struck by the richness of my “colour.” I withdrew to the parlour, where, after she had greeted everyone else present, she joined me.

Mme D: “Now that we are alone, I want to tell you what the very musical gentleman said to me (this is someone who hadn’t approached me): “That young girl plays and improvises remarkably. One senses the school of M^r Dupré. Her improvisations have an idea, a sense of direction, and a structure!” And he added: “This isn’t like Grunenwald, [201] whose improvisations lack interest and continuity, and which have no structure.”

Such frankness disconcerted me. I’m discovering that M^{me} Dupré, as she gets to know me better and better, eschews all shilly-shallying with me. She left in a rush to catch her train.

At Vespers, I chatted with the always complimentary Robineau. Detail: a vicar wanted to know if it was I who was at the organ. One of the priests with whom I had organized a service turned up in the gallery and asked me to show him the organ, this being the first time he had seen the console. I asked him for a theme. This evening, Marthe Dramez.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Dupré has since recounted this interview many times, amusing himself by parodying the organist in question, who said, to his utter silence, “No, but really, I mean really, what in the world do we have here with this artist?” [*Mais, qu’est-ce que c’est, non mais qu’est-ce donc que cette artiste?*]

Monday 24 May 1943

On the telephone, M^{me} Dupré was of the same mind as yesterday, exuding even more warmth. She said that she had given a long, descriptive letter to Marguerite, who left yesterday to meet her father in Toulouse.

Received a card from the master.

Friday 29 May 1943

Like every Friday, afternoon at Meudon with M^{me} Dupré. In the evening mail, two letters, from the master and from Marguerite. Swearing me to secrecy, [202] M^{me} Dupré read the letter from the master, who said he had played an entire recital on two keyboards due to a cipher that occurred at the start. With touching simplicity, he said that the listeners around him had been stupefied by his “*tour de force*.” M^{me} Dupré is very happy: Marguerite returns tomorrow.

Returning to Paris, I took around to Bornemann's the proofs of the concertos, which he was urgently requesting.¹⁸¹

Sunday 6 June 1943

Played at St-Sulpice. At High Mass, Bach's Fugue in C minor (Fantasia). Postlude: an improvised Toccata. At 11:15 AM, "An Wasserflüssen Babylon" [BWV 653] and Prelude and Fugue in G major [BWV 541] by Bach. Improvised the Adagio and Allegro of a symphony on the hymn and the chorale.¹⁸²

Lots of people, including M^r and M^{me} Descombes, M^r Laurent, M^r Meunier, M^r Guerner, and the engineer M^r [—],¹⁸³ who was passing through Paris and came with M^r Descombes. An unexpected and providential meeting between us. M^r [—], whose name was very familiar to us in Montpellier, was part of a jury for a competition at the [Montpellier] Conservatory, where he adjudicated me. Having since followed me in my studies and having heard my name spoken during his stay in Paris, he wanted [203] to meet me; he chose this day at St-Sulpice. A very distinguished man, on first impression. He asked me some questions and said that he is going to mention me to Le Boucher and in Montpellier (he went down to listen to the organ).

I was very pleased with how the services went and felt in very good form. During the entire recital, everyone around me kept quiet. All the people on chairs around the console had their gaze riveted on me. I managed to remain detached. After the Mass, as I organized the books, M^r Laurent burst out, hardly able to find the words "to express the inexpressible!" Behind him, M^r Guerner was his opposite, gruffer than ever:

"I came expressly to hear you. That was admirable."

Me: "Thank you."

"Why? For what? It is we who should thank you. These were unforgettable moments."

Also present were Marthe Dramez, Mireille Auxietre and, at Vespers, M^{me} Meunier (always with people around her).

Friday 11 June 1943

M^{me} Dupré had forgotten that I was to play at St-Sulpice on the 6th (a date arranged such a long time ago that I hadn't dared to remind her). She told me she was "furious" [204] with herself for having neglected to come. The master returned yesterday.

Sunday 13 June 1943

At Vespers at St-Sulpice. (This morning, my parents beside the master, Maman was received like a

181. The proofs were, presumably, for Dupré's edition for organ alone of Handel's concertos for organ and orchestra.

182. Demessieux used as the bases for improvisations a plainchant hymn from the service and the melody of the Bach chorale prelude that she had performed.

183. Demessieux left a wide blank in the two spots on the page that in the translation are marked with [—], as if planning to fill in each name when it came back to her.

“queen.”) I had planned to meet up with M^r and M^{me} Dupré and, individually, we each made our way on foot to St-Sulpice during an untimely alert.

The master recounted to me his conversation with Casals, who counseled him against accepting any more concert-a-day tours owing to the fatigue caused. Casals heard him play.

Thursday 17 June 1943

Organ lesson. Five Handel concertos, the two sinfonias by Bach,¹⁸⁴ and Dupré’s ninth and tenth Études from memory. Nothing to say about the Études and the [sinfonias from the] cantatas. As for the concertos, he drew out from them the idea of the grandiose, saying to me that “what is written is only a framework.”

MD: “I double, I embellish, I make use of the pedal. As long as one retains the harmonies.”

He spoke to me of a recital of the 10th concerto at the Crystal Palace with 500 strings and a huge brass section.¹⁸⁵ The impression he gave me was gripping. He stopped: [205] “I don’t need to tell you anything more; you’re there.”

Dupré played some passages for me that I immediately replayed. We got down to the nitty-gritty of searching out different touches. All his secrets are up to date.

MD: “Here’s what I do. You understand?” I knew right away. He “pushed” me to the maximum, as if testing my limits.

MD: “Not tired?”

The sense of direction and the suppleness of my playing were absolute; my hands were tired by these movements, but I dare say that we, Dupré and I, sensed that no technical secret separated us anymore. I can do nothing more than await that tremendous moment in which it [the technique] really seems to be exclusively mine. The master attempted to give me his opinion: “I’m always saying the same thing to you...? But I cannot do otherwise.”

“I am going to set myself to practicing the organ. (I’ll put together a file folder for myself.) After the [organ] competition, I’ll be as free as the breeze; I’ll finish the Études, and I’ll be able to practice them.” Concerning Handel, Dupré also said to me: “I quite like Handel. I find that he’s the only one within striking distance of [206] Bach. He didn’t always take the trouble to write as much, but his capabilities were solid!” On performing the concertos: “They must be performed as if they are being improvised.”

MD: “When at the organ, always think of yourself as a preacher in the pulpit, teaching the Word. In foreign countries, one has the role of an ambassador.”

Dupré continued to recommend that I stay in isolation, “although there are some intelligent people who are beginning to worry: Berveiller, Guerner... In response, I only say to them, ‘That’s nice’; if I say nothing more, they will say no more...”

The master told me of his visit to Orléans where he was the guest of the bishop (Joseph Bonnet’s uncle).

184. “Sinfonias by Bach” were Dupré’s arrangements for organ of the Sinfonias from Bach’s Cantatas Nos. 29 and 146, published in vol. 12 of Dupré’s Bach edition (Bornemann).

185. Murray 1985, 137, notes Dupré’s participation in a performance of Handel organ concertos, with Sir Henry Wood conducting, that took place at the Crystal Palace in London, undated.

Monsignor Courcoux presided over his concert and, in private, made Dupré somewhat uncomfortable by speaking very freely about his nephew.

At the beginning of the afternoon, I had taken my lesson with M^{me} Dupré (2 hours), during which the master practiced for the inauguration of the organ at Rouen Cathedral.

In parting, we chatted together: “There are some moments in life that one does not like to recall,” [207] said Dupré.

He also said about me: “You know, when she is 27, she can rest.” M^{me} Dupré “Rest? But do you rest?” MD: “She’s moving forward more quickly than I am.”

Me: “There’s no comparison: you didn’t have as much assistance, and I have been greatly assisted. You didn’t have the editions [of the organ repertoire]; I have an instrument at home and the right atmosphere. You have built the repertoire all the way to the registration system.”

MD: “Yes, there’s something to be said for that.”

Me: “In any case, you still have at least two great works to compose.”

Mme Dupré: “And even then, you will go on to invent something else—what, I don’t know, but you won’t leave it at that.”

Mme Dupré: “It’s [Jeanne’s] first Paris concert that I can hardly wait for!”

MD: “For me, it’s America that is especially important! Paris is just for the publicity.” And further, MD: “Your virtuosity is going to be as much a revelation as that of Kempff when he played the Beethoven concertos in Paris, with this difference: he was 50, and you are 20. As for the trips and the commercial aspects, M^{me} Dupré will take charge of them in due time.”

[208] Tuesday 22 June 1943

Concert of works by Messiaen, Salle Gaveau. The *Poèmes pour Mi*, the grand [Visions de l’] *Amen*, an excerpt from the *Quartet for the End of Time*. An introductory lecture. Commentaries on the works almost as lengthy as the works themselves. I was very tired when I left the concert.

I’ve refrained from taking sides, being disgusted with the polemics. (My non-involvement in the “Messiaen case” scandalizes all the hotheads.) I can’t help doubting the sincerity of this music, which is more philosophy than music. And this [kind of] philosophy irritates me; I have my century’s horror of mysticism, which seems false and smacks of paganism.¹⁸⁶ As I see it, use of an abstract language to preach moral laws or religious dogma is either an outrage or heresy. Anything is possible with abstraction. That’s the totality of Messiaen. As a result, those who would follow him cannot end up with anything other than nothingness. His music? There were two times in this concert in which I thought I perceived musical momentum, beauty,

186. It is likely that Demessieux used the word *paganism* here in the sense of *pantheism*. Definition 1.c. of paganism in the *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uregina.ca/view/Entry/135986?redirectedFrom=Paganism#eid>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, associates paganism with pantheism, that is nature worship, and with “a particular affinity for or sensitivity to the supposed spiritual or mystical aspects of nature.” The likelihood of this being Demessieux’s meaning of paganism is suggested by the context in which she used the word again, in the entry for June 30, 1943, where she mentioned bird song as one of Messiaen’s sources of inspiration.

moderation. The large ensemble seemed all the same to me, formulaic (Messiaen's formulas). [209] The dense, vertical writing absolutely suffocated me; by this, I'm not speaking of his endless melancholy melodies, which have nothing to do anymore with counterpoint. In the last *Amen*, the high-pitched counterpoint was a relief.

Detail: Messiaen appeared on the stage to play (and this was in the evening) in unusually colourful attire, with a blue shirt with turned down collar(!). They gave him sustained applause.

In summary: too many notes; I miss Mozart.

Friday 25 June 1943

At the Trocadéro: Beethoven Festival with Wilhelm Kempff. Polished playing, perfect, full of musicality. Astonishing ease. More "extraordinary" than Gieseking. A show-off personality-wise, but a great virtuoso.

From Marcel Dupré to his friend Jean Guerner¹⁸⁷

[By pneumatic mail:]

26 June 1943

My dear friend,

I'm told, from St-Sulpice, that the motor is completely burnt out. You can understand my chagrin and my emotion. Silence, perhaps for the rest of the war!...

I wanted to warn you immediately.

I know you will share my pain!...

With sincere affection,

Marcel Dupré

Wednesday 30 June 1943

Telegram from Meudon. Dupré asked me to come and play my recital today instead of tomorrow, having explained his important obstacle. They were expecting me as early as possible. I arrived by road without

187. Dupré 2002a, 23. A footnote to the published version of this letter draws attention to an Oct. 26, 1943 letter from Jeanne Dupré to Jean Guerner (Dupré 2002a, 24), according to which the St-Sulpice organ remained silent until the morning of Sunday, Oct. 25, when power was restored to St-Sulpice.

being sure that my parents would be able to come.¹⁸⁸ Papa was in the city. Consternation at Meudon. We deliberated. I wanted to play without waiting, but they [210] wouldn't hear of it. As I was to be at St-Esprit at 8:30 PM, we decided to postpone the recital.

The master said to M^{me} Dupré: "We are going to talk about future programs. And then I can chat with her; it's been a long time since we chatted together. What I want to say to her is now crystal clear." And when I felt some scruples in the face of the many hours the master was planning to devote to me, he said to me: "Talking to you is never a waste of my time." First Dupré planned some programs, then he asked me what modern composers I would like to play. As I only have faith in Dupré's works, I responded:

"I will only play you."

MD: "They all disappoint you that much?"

Me: "Their music all sounds the same..."

MD: "Ah! You think so?... That's interesting."

Me: "One has too many colours, another has too many rhythms... I'm not talking about Messiaen, who has a personal style of his own."

MD: "Have you heard any of his music recently?"

Me: "Yes, I was at the concert eight days ago."

MD: "So, tell me what you thought."

Me: "I couldn't really judge from where I was sitting... I'm critical of his opaque harmonies, his lack of counterpoint, [211] his formulas. His rhythms are obviously creative."

MD: "Yes, although somewhat unstable."

Me: "He's a philosopher, and he uses music like a language to proclaim his theories. That's all fine and well in philosophy, but not in music, because it's simply not musical. Wagner was a philosopher, but he made use of poetry; he was both poet and musician. His music on its own is music."

MD: "His ideas on religion?"

Me: "Mysticism... it's in fashion now. It's all people talk about. In fact, it's all a mask for paganism. Messiaen regards Christ's passion and bird song as two equal sources of inspiration."

MD: "One cannot reproach him as not being sincere in his faith; he's a good fellow."

Me: "He is certainly sincere, but no one can follow. In other words, is it possible to start with his example and go somewhere else? Can one use his style as a jumping off point?"

MD: "No! Exactly. Yet he has a legion of fans around him. Admitting that Messiaen is Messiaen, those who follow him will drag music along with them. He's [212] dangerous. He made the big mistake of building a doctrine around himself and, especially, the mistake of proclaiming it. First, it becomes impossible for him to reinvent himself: he's painted himself into a corner. Second, people who hear him say, 'St. John the Evangelist and me' think 'Here's a man of the stature of St. John the Evangelist'; he treats him as an equal."

188. Subway system and trains must not have been running for the time being. Exactly how Demessieux arrived is not clear; it may have been by bicycle (cf. the diary entry for Sept. 1, 1944).

After we had exchanged viewpoints on various subjects, Dupré brought up the big topic. His plan was to talk to me about composition and to follow up on our conversation of October 20, 1941. I have not been able to retain more than some short, fleeting sentences from this sublime conversation. The master proceeded systematically, searching, every so often, for a sign of agreement. He spurred my intelligence to a higher level than ever before. He chose the strongest figures of speech to convey his emotional meaning.

“Music is a perfume,” he said to me; “To get hold of a perfume, just for a single drop: that’s what composition is like. To discover two beautiful measures is rare; it’s a perfume...” [213] Recalling our discussion of themes, I questioned this with great interest:

“You would find everything of substance in two measures?”

MD: “You’ve said it.” He gave me a dozen, striking examples on the piano.

MD: “There is a mystery in every act of creation that no one truly understands, a mystery as perplexing as the Incarnation and less visible. We are compelled to attribute it to God. Has it happened to you in improvisation that you find under your fingers something ‘different’ than you were intending to play? Something that made you want to write it down?”

Me: “Yes.”

MD: “Me too... This proves that you are a composer.”

As a master and without hesitation, Dupré sketched out the subtleties of [artistic] sensibility. MD: “To write a work, you have to ‘want’ to write it. After some time has passed, sometimes without the least volition, you have the theme. Then there are hesitations and worries, nonstop. The work may present itself in isolated, unconnected fragments. Later you will sense their relationships. It must please you, without you seeking to be pleasing. You must [214] be demanding. As in poetry, there must not be any padding, not even in a hemistich.”¹⁸⁹ He cited Corneille, Racine, Albert Samain.¹⁹⁰

MD: “An emotion can lead you to discovery; [but] it’s no certainty. It is not enough to be in a state of grace; that would be too easy. So, you must ask yourself, ‘What is it?’”

I asked the master permission to pose a question, just between the two of us.

MD: “I’m the one who asks only to enlighten you. [And] you know very well that when we chat it is just between us two.”

Me: “Does it ever happen that you spend hours (or minutes) without finding anything?”

MD: “Not just hours, but entire days! When I’ve written six measures in a day, I am happy. Sometimes I pace around this room!... It is only here that I can write. Here I’m left alone. During these times, I make use of all sorts of stimulants (natural ones!), a book, a score; I take a walk in the garden, or I improvise. You see! The older I get, the more harrowing composition becomes for me (it takes me a fortnight to write one Étude) and the less I [215] feel as if I’m a composer. Perhaps that’s because I am less gifted than others.”

189. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uregina.ca/view/Entry/85850?redirectedFrom=hemistich#eid>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, a hemistich is a “half or section of a line of verse, as divided by the cæsure or the like.”

190. Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine were two great playwrights of 17th-century France. Albert Samain (1858–1900) was a French symbolist poet and writer.

Me: "Master!"

MD: ("It's you who asked me to talk about myself...") That's what they all seem to be saying; perhaps they're right. Let's return to you."

After having explained to me how he worked and having told me that no one had ever seen his manuscripts, Dupré further developed his idea of the aesthetics of composition and affirmed that this aesthetic is the only productive one. As the culmination of our conversation, he summed up his point:

"... The only composition lesson that one can possibly teach is this one: see the world with emotion; love; love your music so that others love it; that's the sum total of it. We are far removed from the composition class..." He gave me some models.

MD: "Here are the composers I love: Handel and Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, I admit, Schumann, Chopin, whom I adore, Liszt, Wagner, whom I adore. These are the ten gods of Olympus!" And Dupré added [216] (I wouldn't dare write these lines were it not for the sake of authenticity and guided by absolute trust): "I'm speaking to the composer: I know you have something to say! I can't wait to see what your approach to composition will be, how you will see the organ..." Dupré seemed moved.

It was 6:30 PM, and I was getting ready to return to Paris, where I had to be at St-Esprit at 8:00. I embraced M^{me} Dupré and, just as I was leaving accompanied by the master, my parents arrived, having wanted, at the very least, to greet the Duprés. I was compelled to remain so that they could talk some more, and M^{me} Dupré made me... a delicious dinner. Dupré said to Maman:

"When we converse, I talk to her as I do to a man. I've planted a seed in her mind that will develop and grow."

They accompanied us back as far as the station, and Dupré said to me again: "When it comes right down to it, composition is a matter of [thought] crystallization."

Tuesday 13 July 1943

Ninth recital at Meudon. Five [217] concertos by Handel: Nos. I, II, III, IV, X;¹⁹¹ sinfonias from Bach's Cantatas Nos. 146 and 29. Perfect equilibrium. The technical progress that I spontaneously achieved in front of Dupré on June 17 has now acquired ease, as has a grandiose conception of the concertos. I, myself, was impressed with the tenth. The Gavotte of the 3rd, transcribed with the counterpoint in the pedal, went just as I wanted (without rehearsal, my having learned it since my last lesson).

Marcel Dupré is infinitely happy. M^{me} Dupré could not stop repeating, "It's unbelievable." "What mastery!" the master said. M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite embraced me.

I was not tired, but we went into the parlour where I relaxed for a good while. Lively conversation, very friendly, during which the master was at his most natural.

MD: "In my opinion, the best performer (and he doesn't come close to her) is Litaize."

"They're not in the same class," said M^{me} Dupré. Dupré spoke again of his friends in foreign countries that

191. This numbering of Handel's concertos is from Dupré's edition of the sixteen. Nos. I-IV correspond to Handel's Op. 4, Nos. 1-4. No. X corresponds to Handel's Op. 7, No. 4.

he is counting on. Then he said in my direction, in a low voice, this sentence that I scarcely dare to jot down: "This time, you have surpassed me." Faced with such generosity, [218] I hardly dared to protest.

I asked about the Études; "He's working on the eleventh," said M^{me} Dupré. The master, apologizing for this, spoke of me with great insistence, saying that he holds dear what we have built together, and uniquely so.

Around 8:00 PM, Dupré accompanied us back as far as the train and embraced all of us. "Ah, I am proud of you!" he said to me.

At the beginning of the afternoon, I had my hour-and-a-half-long lesson with M^{me} Dupré; next we had afternoon tea in the garden, after which I set up my registrations on the organ and chatted with the master. He spoke to me about Rolande Falcinelli, bringing me up to date in his role as "watchman." Dupré said to me,

"We shall organize a little trip to Rouen so that you may play all the beautiful instruments. We'll do it by October [1943]. The matter is already arranged with the abbé Delestre of St-Ouen. The same for the [Rouen] Cathedral. We won't go to St-Godard so as not to raise the alarm with Beaucamp."

Talking about modern organs, Dupré decided: "You know, I'm going to take Perroux into my confidence, and he'll do everything I want: when he tunes [219] the organ of the American Church,¹⁹² I will ask him to take you with him. You will play the instrument for him like any ordinary person, and you can try out the controls, being careful not to improvise anything that would allow someone to recognize you. You'll dress down so as to attract less attention."

And, speaking of [other] organists, Dupré again said: "From a technical point of view, no one has either your hands or your ankles... or your memory."

Friday 23 July 1943

Afternoon at Meudon. All happiness, M^{me} Dupré welcomed me, exclaiming: "All the Études are complete! M^r Dupré finished the 12th before lunch today! He is in the process of copying it." We went up to work in the office without disturbing the master, whom we caught sight of sitting at his organ. But, almost immediately, he burst in. "Ah, so you know!" he said to me when I applauded him for the Études. He was happy, entirely without affectation. The three of us chatted for a moment.

Mme Dupré: "She's done no work for me because she learned 19 [Bach] chorale [prelude]s from memory in seven [220] days... she has done seven hours every day since Monday."

MD: "What!..." Amazement. (Among these chorales are some that I sight-read at St-Esprit on Sunday.) Then Dupré scolded me:

"Aren't you afraid of causing yourself a mental breakdown? ... with such a regime? I forbade you from doing more than six hours. And all these chorales? I know full well that you are capable of it... But, all the same!!" (I hung my head, just as I used to when Jean Gallon gave me a stern assessment [*note carrée*] in class.) Parenthetically, the scene was priceless: M^{me} Dupré, looking delighted, could barely keep from laughing, and the "boss," sitting there on his desk in his little beret and his slippers, gazed at me as if I were

192. This is likely a reference to the American Church in Paris, an interdenominational Protestant church located on the left bank of the Seine, on Quai d'Orsay, in the 7th arrondissement.

the Egyptian sphinx. I was to play for the master that evening. But, for the moment, the conversation was happy and keen. M^{me} Dupré finally had to say to the master:

“So, when are you going to let us get down to work?”

MD: “Fine, fine, I’ll leave you...,” but the master returned several times.

Mme D: “You two haven’t finished yet? You still won’t let her go? You will send her to me.”

I played the chorales for Dupré, who commented on them. From the Ten Commandments, we moved on to Moses.¹⁹³

MD: “Perhaps the greatest man ever to exist. [221]; a legal expert. The king of dictators, in fact!” I cannot reproduce his commentary, on every chorale; it was so full of poetry and truth, and particularly suggestive with regard to the first of the 6 transcriptions.¹⁹⁴

MD: “So, why are you in a hurry? To write?...” This question was a mere beginning and Dupré seized upon it. I know the master’s ideas on teaching composition as they relate to his scholastic endeavors, but I have long wondered why he has not shared his teaching plans with me, particularly those that involve me. Today, I asked him about these, insisting that he be candid.

MD: “I’m going to get you a letter that I wrote yesterday (to a young engineer) who asked me to tell him my thoughts on ‘inspiration.’ There you will find the answer to your question.”

I recognized, in this letter, a summation of Dupré’s teaching. In the manner of an epigraph, he quoted: “The spirit blows where and when it will.” Not the response I had fearfully asked for. I remained silent.

Then, Dupré launched into a conversation that touched, once again, on the sublime and that frightened my musical sensibilities [222], just like every time someone draws attention to my gifts.

MD: “I cannot tell you more. I simply don’t know.” The message was frighteningly high-flown. “Look straight ahead. Search yourself; examine yourself in the mirror, metaphorically speaking; thereby, your music will resemble you. Dream harmonically. Write in the light, through a prism; write in the sun! Listen to me carefully: delicate colours are shimmering to the eye; it’s something else again to see them in a watercolour; it’s even more beautiful to see some sweet peas. So, choose the sweet peas. Rossini gets on my nerves, but Mozart is sublime. And Schumann? Chopin can turn inside out the one who knows how to see it.”

193. In Demessieux’s notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” the entry for July 23, 1943, Demessieux notes that she played 19 chorale preludes by Bach. Reference to the Ten Commandments in her diary entry suggests that one of the chorale preludes Demessieux played at her lesson that day was “Dies sind die heil’gen zehn Gebot”/ “These are the holy Ten Commandments,” BWV 678, from Pt. 3 of Bach’s *Klavierübung*. “We moved on to Moses” means the discussion turned to Moses, who gave the Ten Commandments, and whom Dupré describes as “a legal expert” in the next paragraph.

194. Among the 19 pieces Demessieux performed that day were Bach’s six Schübler chorale preludes, all of which are Bach’s transcriptions of movements from his other works. The first of the six is “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme” (literally “Awake, the voice is calling us,” but often translated as “Wake, awake, for night is flying” or “Sleepers awake”). It derives from the movement of Bach’s Cantata BWV 140 that sets verse 2 of the German hymn tune of the same name by Philipp Nicolai (1599). The text of the hymn tune, in turn, is based on the parable of the ten bridesmaids in Matthew 25:1–13.

The master beckoned to M^{me} Dupré to come embrace me, then, while accompanying me to the station, he continued.

MD: "When they hear your music, they will say, 'What? This frail little girl...? just as they do when they hear you [play]. It will be evident to everyone that you have a robust mind. Do you think that the child Mozart worried about writing explanatory remarks? His father and sister said to him, 'That's very good,' and he walked on, [223] his head held high. Were you like that when you were little? I, myself, was searching. Write the way you want and pay attention to no one!"

We were so immersed in the subject that the train arrived in the station... while, still on our way there, Dupré continued: "(To find)... that's a matter of coincidence. When I speak of drops of condensation falling, one by one, at the moment when one least expects it, that is inspiration." And, suddenly: "Your train! Do you want to run? No, no! No sprain[ed ankles]."

The master wanted me to return to the house. But for 20 minutes?

MD: "I'll stay with you. I deserve a break after finishing the Études! Let's continue."

Leaning on the parapet of the bridge, I sensed that we reached Beethovenian philosophy, higher than Wagnerian ideas on compositional aesthetics. We arrived at this definition: "All is life."

What I have faithfully reproduced here of this conversation, like for the others, is but a tenth of it. We decided that I will show my work to the master, sketches or works in progress, as [224] I wish.

I left with the manuscript of the 11th Étude. Concerning the 12th, so freshly completed, Dupré said to me: "I'm not leaving it with you because I haven't yet played it for M^{me} Dupré. I believe I still write with too much haste." The master also spoke to me about his composition projects, all yet to be defined.

Friday 30 July 1943

At Meudon. Afternoon in the garden with M^{me} Dupré. Intimate and gay; radiant weather. The master was working on the transcription of Balakirev's *Islamey* for piano and organ in the organ room. Visits back and forth, eating in the garden together. I did some composing this week. Both of them impatient, they made me promise to bring my sketches on Thursday. Dupré had me talk about my ideas on composition. Talk of the *registrator* that *Islamey* would perhaps reveal.

MD: "I'm only a third of the way through and I'm already up to the 37th combination!"

As for me, in the Fugue on Bach's name* that I'm writing, it was indispensable to me, quite unintentionally, to have made a cut in the pedal, to produce what I had really been hearing. Dupré is delighted that I have taken flight. His idea is that the huge advances he has brought to the organ will open the door for me [225] to all kinds of compositional daring. Dupré told me that he had heard R[olande] F[alcincelli], and brought me up to date. He passed the manuscript of the 12th and 7th Études on to me and gave me the list of their definitive order.

Did not see Marguerite, who was in Paris.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] This was only a sketch I decided to abandon.

Thursday 5 August 1943

The entire afternoon at Meudon. The Duprés were all together and when, upon my arrival, they gathered before me, I told them my fear of intruding on their privacy: “This is your home,” the master said to me. It was decided that I would work first with Dupré, who was expecting Berveiller at 6:00 PM, and then with M^{me} Dupré. I left at 7:30.

Dupré immediately asked me for my sketch. As I played it, he followed avidly and said to me: “It’s rich. It’s more evolved and full of promise. There are some runs that are very fine; it’s expansive. You wanted to experiment with B-A-C-H and have treated it in an interesting fashion. I find, beginning here, something warmer and that ‘takes off.’” With his luminous insight, [226] Dupré put his finger on the first measure of the fragment written over the last fortnight, all the preceding having been written around 8 months ago. I told him this, and his response was: “I sense that you are in the process of discovering. As for me, all I want is to help you become yourself again.”

I played 4 chorales, to which we decided to add the Gloria in G.¹⁹⁵ Then we chatted. The master opened my portfolio:

“I think very highly of statistics, as I do of everything that is organized. Methods used in industry adapted to artistic concerns give the best results. We must not do ourselves what we can have done for us.” He told me he wanted to complete the documentation that he had jotted down upon questioning me when I was first introduced to him, and he made notes. We scheduled the recital for the 18th [of August].

MD: “After that, here are my plans: we will go to Rouen during the first few days of September. We usually stay one day, but we’ll stay two and take you with us. M^{me} Dupré and I have decided on this little trip. You need not worry about anything: our places are reserved; you will take your meals and sleep at the house, [227] where Aunt Jeanne will welcome you with open arms. The abbé Delestre is looking after the organ issue. I am going to bring him completely into our confidence: I have my reasons for doing that. He will be our foremost ally. He’s a priest, and he has proven to me that he knows how to keep a secret. I want him to hear you and, especially, to see you play. You will play one or more Études for him, though it will suffice to hear you play ‘an’ Étude to know who you are. We’ll wait a while yet before bringing Jean Gallon in on the secret: no one in Paris!” He added: “This isn’t a vacation; this trip will be an experience.”

The transcription of *Islamey* for organ with registrateur and piano is finished. Marcel Dupré has decided to write a work for small orchestra and organ. He is practicing the Études.

Friday 13 August 1943

Afternoon at Meudon. Marguerite greeted me in the garden where we chatted a little. “My father is

195. Two entries in Demessieux’s notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage” provide clues as to the identity of these compositions. The entry for Aug. 5, 1943 lists four of Bach’s chorale preludes, and the one for Aug. 18, 1943 lists them according to which set of chorale preludes each belongs to. Listed for Aug. 5, 1943 are the following four: a “Gloria in A,” which is one of the two A-major settings of “Allein Gott in der Höh’ sie Ehr” from the “Eighteen” (BWV 662 or 664); “Gloria Mystique,” which is any one of the three settings of “Allein Gott in der Höh’ sie Ehr” in the “Eighteen” (two are in A major and one, BWV 663, is in G major); a setting of “Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele” (BWV 654 from the “Eighteen”); and “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam” (BWV 684 from Pt. 3 of the *Klavierübung*). The entry for Aug. 18, 1943 indicates that “Gloria in G” is the G-major setting of “Allein Gott in der Höh’ sie Ehr” in the *Klavierübung*, Pt. 3 (BWV 676).

working; enter this way directly.” The room opens onto the garden. I entered, and the master turned around [228] after a moment. He was at the organ, surrounded by his cushions and playing an Étude.

MD: “Ah, you’re here! I have my hands full with my Études, and I almost regret having written them. In the D minor, have you found the fourths in the pedal difficult?”

Me: “Very difficult, but possible.”

MD: “One has no point of support...”

Me: “What I find the most difficult, and lacking any point of support, is the restatement in the B-flat minor Étude; just starting to conquer this caused me a lot of trouble.”

M^{me} Dupré arrived, and I rushed over to her. They had just received Maman’s invitation to the birthday.¹⁹⁶ They accepted and are quite pleased.

The trip to Rouen is set for Sept. 2. We talked about it, then talked some more. “The old house” is waiting for me,¹⁹⁷ and M^{me} Dupré is planning a tight schedule in order that I might play all the beautiful instruments. Of the abbé Delestre, “It will be a very good thing for him to get to know you.”

I worked with M^{me} Dupré until nearly 5 PM; then she told me to see the master for a moment. He was composing. Manuscripts everywhere (during the afternoon, we heard two repetitions of a long passage, fast, played on piano, whose sound wafted over to us). The master placed one in front of me. I scarcely dared glance at it, and a phrase came to my mind: [229] “I destroy all my manuscripts.”

MD: “When I get to that point... I feel myself beginning to become ‘Bubu’: I’m as broke as he is.”¹⁹⁸ What have you done this week?”

Me: “A lot of work. And I wrote... 4 measures.”

MD: “Ah! You have them here? Quick, show them to me.” I played them on the organ and played them again. Dupré was very “taken.”

MD: “You know... continue: you are on the right track!” He became pensive.

The tea tray awaited us and M^{me} Dupré came to get us. We talked technique.

MD: “I’ve tried the restatement in the B-flat minor (Étude); it doesn’t seem too difficult to me, although I find the D minor dreadful. And for you it’s the opposite; that’s funny.”

Dupré believes that the weight of the individual can hinder or facilitate movements to the left and the right on the pedals. I disagreed and told him so. And so will we likely carry on. Concerning the composition of the Études, this is of interest:

196. It has not been possible to determine whose birthday is referred to, as no member of Demessieux’s immediately family had a birthday in August or September. The closest possibility is Étienne Demessieux’s October 10 birthday.

197. “The old house” is, presumably, Dupré’s childhood home at 12 rue du Vert-Buisson in Rouen, which he and his parents shared with the Chauvière side of the family.

198. This is likely a reference to Charles-Louis Philippe’s novel *Bubu de Montparnasse* in which a character—whose nickname is Bubu—leaves his work as a baker to become a pimp (for his own girlfriend) because he believes there is more money to be made that way. The novel came out in 1901 and was quite popular in France. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this explanation.)

MD: “You will excuse me (!), I’ve cut some measures. I believe this will not be too bothersome to memorize. For the piece, I believe it’s all the better if it is concise. The idea is to omit the unnecessary.” Struck by desire to protest and, simultaneously, to yield, I looked at M^{me} Dupré who, half resigned, said to me:

“What’s essential is that [230] you have the original version.” Before I could speak, the master said to me:

“Do you not find that the other day’s sketch is more flexible? This one is very notated.” He was hesitant. Thinking it best, I asked him to tell me, straight out, what he meant.

MD: “If I appear hesitant to you, lacking in precision, it’s because... I’m hesitating. The only composition lesson that I can give you is to help you search for your own harmony. As for the craft, you know it as well as I.”

I returned to Paris with M^{me} Dupré, who [in conversation] was very expansive. We got off at Montparnasse due to an alert; then, the alert finished, we parted, and I went on foot as far as St-Sulpice.

Wednesday 18 August 1943

My 10th recital at Meudon.¹⁹⁹ The anniversary of my beginning being August 21, I have accomplished the ten steps in two years, exactly, with the following averages: 1st year—4 recitals (1 every three months), 2nd year—6 recitals (1 every two months). According to Marcel Dupré’s wishes, I still have two recitals to go: one recital of his works, including the concerto; one Mendelssohn recital and some miscellaneous works and works from the *Anthology*.

Lesson with M^{me} Dupré; then the master got the [231] organ running, and my parents arrived around 5:00 PM while I was relaxing in the garden chatting with the master and M^{me} Dupré.

During the concert, I had to change my registration several times because of some malfunctions, which gave me [a sense of] calm. Very pleased.

My audience was enthusiastic. After the “Our Father,”²⁰⁰ Dupré said,

“What a mind!” and at the end of the recital: “There: this child’s tenth recital! And what a recital! You played for an hour and 55 minutes without the least difficulty, and with such authority!...” The master embraced me.

MD: “You are an artist—do you believe...?”

Me: “Yes, I believe!... I believe in God, yes.”

M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite were very moved and, for whatever reason, wished me to rest. We moved into the parlour, and Dupré drew from my portfolio the statistics for my ten programs, which he announced

199. In her notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” Demessieux indicated that this recital consisted of Bach’s six “chorale transcriptions” (the Schübler chorales), eight chorales under the heading “Dogme” (*Klavierübung*, Pt. 3), and nine “Leipzig” chorales (the set also known as the “Eighteen”). In a July 23 letter to Yolande, quoted in Trieu-Colleney 1977, 148, Demessieux reported Madame Dupré as having said, “Jeanne hasn’t done any work for me because she learned 19 chorales by memory in seven days; she did seven hours every day since Monday.”

200. A reference to “Vater unser im Himmelreich,” BWV 682, from Pt. 3 of the *Klavierübung*.

proudly (the lesson in which I played *Évocation* was mentioned particularly), and this long list suddenly had a certain effect on me.

We spoke of Rouen. The abbé Delestre is privy to our plans. It has been decided that Dupré would prefer to invite him to Meudon around Sept. 20, [232] to hear me play the *Études*. After the Paris recital series, he plans to organize a series at Rouen, to double the impact.

We parted in joy, and Dupré walked us back to the station and embraced us. He is full of confidence.

Sunday 22 August 1943

In the gallery at St-Esprit, M^r Provost suggested to me that at his house he introduce me to Norbert Dufourcq, asking me to set a day. I accepted in principle, and to buy myself time, I set aside ten days for myself. According to Provost, Norbert Dufourcq is going to invite me to play in Chaillot next year, having already invited Marie-Louise Girod and some others.

Provost is a very enigmatic “man of the world,” who is unable to deliver an outright compliment, and said to me after an improvisation, “What good form you are in, today!”

This afternoon at 3:00, we received M^r and M^{me} Marcel Dupré and Marguerite. The anniversary of the beginning of our collaboration was just yesterday. Unforgettable day in which our confidence in each other was limitless and matched by the most beautiful friendship.

We met them at the subway.²⁰¹ Upon [233] greeting them, we learned that Dupré had not been able to give his recital at Troyes Cathedral on Friday because of the state of the organ. The bishop and the audience were present. It was the first time ever that Dupré had refused to play. We could tell that he was appalled. The master said to me,

“I triumphed over Norbert Dufourcq yesterday at the Commission for Les Invalides:²⁰² it will be Gloton, not Gonzalez. Dufourcq was beside me; he was speechless. It was difficult.”

The general conversation, which lasted until 9:00 PM, was all focused on future projects, which, increasingly, are becoming shared projects for all three of us. No [specific] planning in this conversation; the time flew by. Like my parents, I was struck by Marcel Dupré’s “ferocious” energy concerning tactics and strategies for launching [my career]. He revealed his connections to us, and the reasons for his trust [in them]. He is ready to prevail over every intrigue, to stand up (in a manner of speaking) with all the strength that he didn’t have for himself. “The sleeping lion has awoken,” we said. A few sentences addressed to me:

MD: “There’s the possibility that the first person you will play for will be the . . .”²⁰³ He had already asked me to continue keeping our current collaboration a [234] secret, to avoid fallouts with his students and leave

201. The Demessieux family’s local subway (*métro*) station was Daumesnil.

202. Dupré sat on a French government commission for the restoration of organs where he and Norbert Dufourcq regularly crossed horns due to their opposed views on organ building and rebuilding. In this incident, the organ considered for restoration was that of Saint-Louis-des-Invalides of which Bernard Gavoty (a loyal former student of Dupré) was appointed titular organist in 1942. According to <<https://www.musiqueorguequebec.ca/orgues/france/slouisip.html>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, restoration of this organ in Gavoty’s time did not occur until 1955–1957, and was carried out by the firm Beuchet-Debierre.

203. It is not clear why Demessieux did not complete this sentence.

him free to express his opinion about me—to make it known to them. MD: “I would even ask you to help me get them on my side; they don’t need to know what I’ve done for my favourite student.” And he added, “There is one, who, when you debut, will be the first to turn his back on me, to envy you; that person will have good reason: it’s Jean-Jacques (Grunenwald).

Me: “I would have thought he’d be the last...”

MD: “No. He’ll be the first.” Dupré’s manner was cold, and he stopped there, the way he always does to make me aware of serious matters.

MD: “I ‘debuted’ one year too early; I had to, even though I wasn’t ready. If you debuted at Easter, you would be ready.” He maintained that it’s no longer a question of my working again on improvisation—that in two conversations we’ll do six months of work, that he has nothing more to teach me, etc. I protested, and he appeared to be on the verge of anger.

“Even so, I want you to show her what must be done” said M^{me} Dupré.

I spoke about the morning’s Provost-Dufourcq business, without giving my [235] opinion. Dupré thought for a few seconds and then said to me,

“Maybe it’s time that you openly supported me... You are going to write the following to M^r Provost...” He summarized, but M^{me} Dupré said to us,

“You would do better to write your letter immediately.” They attached some importance to this action. I told them I had the impression that some wanted to force me to reveal myself or to take a stand, for I sense that people are vaguely suspicious of my projects.

From the beginning, the intimacy of this conversation was so intense that my parents undertook to confide in the master the story of our life, our origins, and our rise. This was delicately explained by Maman and solemnly accepted. We talked about the trip to Rouen, which we are looking forward to as a holiday, about Yolande, about the work Dupré is currently writing. In short, we lacked not for subjects of mutual interest, the conversation continuing strong even at 9:00 in the evening. We walked them back.

Monday 23 August 1943

I had M^r and M^{me} Dupré on the telephone. The master was very serious and said to me, “We conversed earnestly yesterday! I was moved. You are going to see [236] what your ‘debut’ will be: just like that, the floodgates will open, unleashing a torrent that submerges everything. Nothing will hold it back.”

Friday 27 August 1943

Afternoon at Meudon. M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite wanted to hear the Études that I was to play for the master. I played five of them, by heart, twice. This was virtually the first time they had heard the Études, the master having only practiced one of the five. They were delighted, and the master surprised even himself by saying, “They aren’t so bad, after all, as compositions.” In a joking mood, he made a pretense of hearing accordion (!!!) [sounds] in his music; in response to the general outcry, he continued his parody of the subject until 7:00 PM.

I feel, more and more, that I am mastering these Études; technique no longer holds me back, and Dupré finds my playing even cleaner. In light of their approval, I became so bold as to reveal some of my poetic impressions of the Études: I find a lively intensity in them, for which the F minor is archetypal. Of this one, I

said to the master that one has to have heard the sound of millions of oscillating molecules in a forest to comprehend the independent nature of this writing.

M^{me} Dupré [237] and Marguerite left us, enthusiastically wishing us a good work session. We remained for two hours, working with fervour. Dupré asked my opinion on everything, [and] noted the tempos that we agreed upon after having experimented. The same for registrations.

Dupré asked me about my working process and confided in me concerning his own: he repeats each measure many times and perfects them one by one, whereas I work the whole with a metronome at a slow tempo.

MD: "From this point forward, our artistic destinies are so closely shared that to work with you or to work alone is the same thing for me. I occasionally find myself in the dark, as much about the organ as about composition."

He was determined to remove some measures from the *Étude* in thirds; I dared to intervene:

"Wait, Master, it's my playing that makes them sound monotonous." And I replayed it in such a way that Dupré, though still indecisive, put off making the cut. This *Étude*, for which we have already tried so many things, became the object of new experiments in timbres, leaving us hesitating between the master's version and mine, which he called a "stroke of inspiration."

After I had replayed [238] the five *Études* many times, without the appearance of any physical weariness, Dupré took pity on me. He was extremely "proud."

Upon my arrival, he'd said, "You are going to have to get used to the idea of being a very great artist."

And now, "As far as initiation is concerned, you realize that what I can tell you, and you alone, about composition or the organ, would be nothing but gibberish for others. One goes about training a leader differently! Only... I believe that one cannot be a great artist unless one has been trained by a great artist." Dupré pronounced this last, significant phrase in an undertone.

Speaking of the *Études*, the master told me, "You have seen the vibrant side of the *Études*. I, too, have wished to see the bustling of life; but I fear that it sounds agitated, that everything moves too much at the same time..." Also, "You know the *Étude* in C?... well, I wanted to tear it up. I said to myself, I must decide. Two days ago, I'd been looking at it, and then, yesterday... I kept it, all the same." Dupré is a very bad judge of his own work. (I know this alternation, in creative work, between wild enthusiasm and discouragement.)

Ate together and [239] [worked] with M^{me} Dupré while the master composed.

Discussed how the *Études* will be received; Dupré very intrigued by my predictions.

The matter of the organ at Les Invalides was definitively settled yesterday.

Trip to Rouen

Thursday 2 September 1943. I met up with M^r and M^{me} Dupré in the café at St-Lazare train station; Marguerite joined us, and we made our way to the platform, where, to our surprise, Papa and Maman were waiting for us. We hugged and exchanged pre-emptive counsel, with recommendations to "Have a safe trip!" and "Take care of yourselves," and then I departed on this great voyage of experience.

I was seated beside the master, and a conversation relaying the details of events of recent days began. They are worried about the Provost-Dufourcq business. I told them that Provost had had the audacity to

come up to my gallery on Sunday, to invite me quite insistently to meet Norbert Dufourcq, which, once again and with the full approval of my parents, I managed to wiggle out of by [sending] a last-minute [message by] pneumatic [mail]. We made plans and Dupré gave me advice. For his part, the master shared with me that Dufourcq had tried to put a halt to the assigning of the Invalides organ to Gloton by launching an appeal to the archbishop.

"I have been played!" is what he [Dufourcq] said. This word sent us into gales of laughter. "He's like a wounded tiger," I said.

MD: "You'll see the expressions on the faces of [240] all those people when we reveal ourselves; they're being 'played,' that's a fact!"

Dupré became my tour guide, detailing the trip to me. "I know this line," he told me; "I did all my harmony and counterpoint while traveling it."²⁰⁴ A delightful trip, during which I was moved by the generosity of all three and the circle of affection they are drawing ever closer around me.

We arrived at the station in Rouen at 7:00 in the evening, just as an alert ended. It was here that I made the acquaintance of Monsieur the abbé Delestre, who had come to meet us. With him were M^{lle} Chauvière and a young friend of theirs, Jean Yon, who is enamored with organs and organ building and has tuned the organs of St-Ouen and the cathedral in my honour. The abbé Delestre, a fine, imposing and determined man, began by making me understand, in a few words, that he knows his role and that Dupré thinks very highly of me.

They led me like a queen to the house,²⁰⁵ on the arm of M^{me} Dupré, while the master took note of the schedule for the next two days, drawn up by the abbé Delestre. We all entered the room. M^r and M^{me} Dupré were visibly moved (moreover, during these two days I have come to know them profoundly).

Me: "So much music made here!... How is it that the walls do not sing by themselves?"

"Improvise for us," the master responded to me. I was [241] in very good form, and could feel the beating of my listeners' hearts.

MD: "That is beautiful!... Beautiful!... Can you believe it, Father [l'Abbé]?"

Marguerite showed me to our adjoining rooms, our little apartment on the 2nd floor; mine was the room looking out onto the street.

Then followed our first evening, where we stayed around the table until 11:30 PM: an intimate evening, during which conversation bounced around among us. The master, who appeared quite tired to me, made

204. While a private student of Paris organist Alexandre Guilmant and during his first years as a Paris Conservatory student, Dupré continued to live in Rouen and commuted by train to Paris's St-Lazare train station.

205. The house at which they arrived was not the smaller residence up the street at no. 16, where Marcel Dupré's parents lived when he was born. Instead, (as recounted in Murray 1985, 9-10 and Dupré 1977, 7) it was likely the house at 12 rue du Vert-Buisson, where Marcel's mother (Alice Chauvière) grew up with her sister Jeanne and their parents. A few years after Marcel's birth, Alice and Albert Dupré purchased, and moved to, no. 12, henceforth residing there with the Chauvières. As described in Dupré, 1985, 22- 24 and Dupré 1977, 26-29, it was here that Marcel's father extended a room so it would be large enough not only for a piano and a small Cavallé-Coll organ, but also for concerts by the choral society Albert Dupré directed. In 1943, Marcel Dupré's parents and grandparents were by then deceased, but it seems that his aunt Jeanne Chauvière was still living at 12 rue du Vert-Buisson.

two or three melancholy statements; but after a signal from M^{me} Dupré, these were quickly brushed away, and we continued in utter cheerfulness. As always, I was seated to the right of the master, opposite M^{me} Dupré; to my right were M^{lle} Chauvière and Marguerite. They showed me photos and all sorts of treasures.

Another air raid alert amounted to nothing.

Friday 3 September 1943

I only slept five hours last night, thinking of the St-Ouen organ, and at daybreak I began studying the layout. Dupré had given me a glimpse of the striking impression I would have.

Around 8:30 AM, M^{me} Dupré popped into my room, gave me a hug, and left us our breakfast; I spent some delicious moments with Marguerite.

Then the master came to wish us a good morning and asked me to play the Études [242] for M^{lle} Chauvière. From memory, I played the 1st, 4th, 6th, 10th, and 12th (referring to their definitive order). Dear Aunt Jeanne wept huge tears:

“Oh! To play Marcel’s music like that! I have never heard playing like that, like your master’s playing... And those little feet, Marcel: it’s as if they don’t even touch the pedals. She uses her ankles as if they were her wrists!” Afterwards, Dupré said to me, “Aunt Jeanne served as the subject of our experiment: you’ve seen the public’s reaction.”

Around 10:00 AM, the abbé Delestre called in for us to go to Saint-Ouen.²⁰⁶ Another air raid alert, which obliged us to take a huge detour to get to the church while steering clear of the police.

206. The magnificent edifice of the abbey church of St-Ouen is not far from Dupré’s childhood home on rue du Vert-Buisson. According to <<https://www.european-traveler.com/france/visit-saint-ouen-huge-gothic-abbey-church-rouen/>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, it is on the site of a former Benedictine monastery and abbey church dedicated to Saint Ouen, bishop of Rouen from 641 to 648. From the 7th through 16th centuries the abbey church was built, destroyed, and re-built on this site, culminating in the late Gothic style building that Demessieux saw that day for the first time. Even though the French revolution put an end to the monastic community, the parish was preserved. At the beginning of World War II, most of the building’s 14th- to 16th-century stained glass windows were removed to a place of safe-keeping, which preserved them during the bombing of Rouen.

[Dupré's student] Jean Yon was waiting for our little procession and had prepared the instrument.²⁰⁷ At the foot of the gallery, Dupré stopped:

"Father, what would be better: to show her right now the full power of the organ, in one fell swoop, or to bring it on gradually, in a long crescendo?... And you?"

Me: "I think I prefer the crescendo."

JY: "Then let's go; the honour is all yours, Mademoiselle!"

Me: "I can't be the first to enter, Master... I am deeply moved."

MD: "I want you to be the first to enter." The master convinced me by giving me a little push; he was at least [243] as moved as I was.

It was a given that I must visit the inside of the organ, which immediately posed a problem: it necessitates climbing a ladder to the level of the next floor, and I suffer from vertigo. "I could never!" I said.

MD: "Then you won't see the organ..." Some moments of inner turmoil, then,

"... All right, I'll go up." We conferred quickly, and Dupré decided he would climb behind me, Jean Yon in front.

The inside of the organ, with its windows, looked like a collection of rare museum items. The master explained everything to me in detail. His technical knowledge, and even his practical knowledge, concerning organ building are unbeatable. (With regard to Les Invalides, he told me, in confidence, of having discovered Beuchet's ignorance. He [Dupré], himself, had to teach him the set-up of a cornet [stop] and dictate the combination to him. This fact had left him unpleasantly surprised.)

Dupré likes the interior arrangement of [the] St-Ouen [organ]. When the visit was over, we did the expedition again, in reverse; I wanted Jean Yon to go first and the master after me.

Then came the solemn moment for which we had been waiting so long; M^{me} Dupré, Marguerite, M^{lle} Chauvière, and the abbé Delestre were all present.

MD: "Take a seat on the bench, that's [244] your place!" He seated himself at my left, the abbé at my right,

207. According to <<https://soarabove.wordpress.com/2011/10/06/1890-cavaill%C3%A9-coll-st-ouen/>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, and <<https://www.musiqueorguequebec.ca/orgues/france/rouenso.html>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, this 4-manual organ, together with its space, continues to be regarded as one of the most beautiful organs in the world. Rebuilt and expanded many times since the 17th century, the St-Ouen organ remains unaltered since its last rebuilding by Cavaillé-Coll in 1888-1890. Of the organ that existed in 1888, Cavaillé-Coll kept 20 stops and added 44 more, producing a symphonic-style organ that proved to be his last masterpiece, comparable to the organ of St-Sulpice. Its *Récit* manual of 20 stops is the largest ever built by Cavaillé-Coll. The impressive case (which dates from before the French Revolution) was given two stops placed *en chamade*. Widor, who inaugurated the instrument in 1890, was so impressed by it that five years later he premièred his Symphony No. 9 for organ (*Gothique*) at St-Ouen. Albert Dupré was the instrument's titular organist from 1911 to his death in 1940. According to Murray 1985, 183, the St-Ouen organ was dismantled early in 1939 for a complete cleaning and overhaul. Still in storage when the war broke out, it was not reassembled until 1941. For the occasion of the organ's re-inauguration on Oct. 26, 1941, Dupré wrote and performed *Évocation*, dedicated to the memory of his father (*Évocation* is associated with the organ of St-Ouen in diary entries of Jul. 23, Aug. 20, Sept. 7, 1941).

and I began to improvise using quiet stops and solo stops (among the latter I found the lower register of the clarinet of the [-] to be particularly beautiful).²⁰⁸ During the dramatic rise of a crescendo, at the moment when I drew the chamades, the master and M^{me} Dupré did not fail to catch the reaction on my face. What Dupré had predicted to me had happened: dominated by the chamades, the tutti struck me; it was most certainly the wash of sonority, the dizzying sensation of which the master had spoken to me. Beneath my fingers, I rediscovered the warm lyricism of St-Sulpice and the fulfilment of the burning desire to sing [along] with full voice, which is, perhaps, [at] the core of my musical being. I concluded the grand final moment quite breathlessly, so to speak. I remember the silence that followed, which I was loathe to interrupt, and the scene around me: M^{me} Dupré, her eyes moist, the master, bowed, an indefinable expression on his face; the abbé Delestre, serene.

"It's beautiful," I said;

MD: "Ah! Yes, it's beautiful!"

Me: "And yet, you told me what to expect."

Dupré wanted me to improvise some more and, with a kind of unwavering joy: "Father, [245] look how flexible and expansive her hands are on the manuals; she has Liszt's hands, don't you think? I'm reminded of a spider with long, fine legs, you know...?"

"There is but one thing I can tell you," said the abbé Delestre to me. "You are a credit to your master."

Improvising anew, I did some technical acrobatics, aiming for dialogue between the manuals, rapid chatter between timbres. I managed to play legato on two distant manuals and produced broken octaves between the *Récit* and the *Bombard* manual over pizzicato in the pedal. Starting with the abbé Delestre, everyone burst into laughter. MD: "Try everything you'd want; we have the time."

I asked for permission to play the last movement of *Évocation*. The three of us registered it. At the first measures, Dupré sat up with a start and, profoundly touched, let slip: "Ah! It's beautiful!" It felt exhilarating to exert power over the organ, at my very first opportunity, with this sublime composition.

MD: "Wonderful, my dear; wonderful... Do you believe [now] that she is my interpreter, Father?"

M^{me} Dupré drew me towards her and embraced me; M^{lle} Chauvière, in tears again, took my hands. These were unforgettable moments.²⁰⁹ I tried also some long

208. Demessieux erased the words naming the division of the organ containing the Clarinette, leaving blanks. As noted on the web page <<https://www.musiqueorguequebec.ca/orgues/france/rouenso.html>>, accessed Jun. 26, 2022, the Clarinette is on the *Récit*. The Grand-Orgue's *Trompette en chamade* and *Clairon en chamade*, referred to next, can be called up with a fixed combination pedal.

209. Pierre Labric (b. Rouen, 1921), at this time a private organ student of Dupré, claims to have been among a dozen or so persons who heard Demessieux's playing of the St-Ouen organ on this occasion in 1943. In CD liner notes for *Jeanne Demessieux aux grandes orgues de l'Église de la Madeleine à Paris*, vol. 1, trans. E. M. van Vliet (Festivo 131, 199-), 8, Labric recounts that Demessieux performed *Évocation* "... with an unequalled fire, liveliness and ease. While the far-reaching echoes were still vibrating through the age-old vaults of the vast nave, Dupré, moved to tears, sitting at her side, said to her: 'My dear Jeanne, I do not recognize my own work.'"

[246] fragments of Liszt's great Fantasia [on "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam"], of Widor's 6th Symphony, of the toccata from Dupré's 2^{ème} *Symphonie*, of Widor's Toccata, in accordance with Dupré's requests.ssssss

MD: "Do you remember that little thing of mine that you had worked on: F-G-A-B-flat-A-D...? Play it." It was the Étude in B-flat [major] of which Dupré made many versions, because of his student Jean Yon.²¹¹ It has a dazzling clarity on the St-Ouen mutation stops. Amazement. The master's student asked him the title, but Dupré kept this a secret from everyone. Before leaving the organ, I played *Évocation* again, then Dupré fulfilled the promise he had made to me that he would improvise. M^{me} Dupré and I positioned ourselves in the nave. It was infinitely moving; Dupré was sublime. So, that was my first contact with the organ of St-Ouen in Rouen.*

* Marcel Dupré speaking of the great organ of St-Ouen in Rouen: "I was a raised on the St-Ouen organ; St-Ouen 'made' me."

We left the church around 1:00. Then a small incident occurred that it amuses me to record here. Our group dispersed, and we noticed that Dupré was hanging back with Jean Yon, as if they were in discussion. He caught up with us.

MD: "There is yet another who is beginning to understand!" and he imitated for us the Normandy dialect of his student, whose astonishment had not dulled his perceptiveness, and who had gone so far as to speak to Dupré about organizing [247] a concert [to be played by Demessieux]. Dupré had stopped him. "Come now! Allow me the pleasure of insisting that you hold your tongue and mind your business... Don't speak too soon! I permitted you to come, you have seen her play, and now keep it to yourself: understood?... I do want her to debut, but she'll debut when I want!" (I should say here that Jean Yon is one of the types of people who are devoted to Dupré, body and soul.) "They are pestering us, all of them!" said the master, secretly pleased; we had fun with this all the way back to the house.

A cheerful time at luncheon. Immediately afterwards, we were back on our way, heading for Bonsecours and calling in [on the way] for the abbé Delestre at the archbishop's palace. They pointed out to me the

210. AM 4S5.

211. This was one of twelve Études Dupré composed for Demessieux between fall 1941 and summer 1943. Apparently, Dupré had earlier told her that he had devised other, likely less virtuosic, versions of this Étude for Yon (who was also among those listening to Demessieux's first playing of the St-Ouen organ). According to BnF Music Dept., Rés. Vmc, ms. 15, Dupré private students of 1924–1946 included Yon during the academic year 1942–1943. The opening pitches Dupré quoted to request the piece of Demessieux on this occasion suggest it was the one he would later revise to become movement III. Scherzando, of his *Suite*, Op. 39 (Bornemann, 1945).

beautiful but dilapidated Gothic [architectural] grouping, the old outer walls, and the archiepiscopal chapel. The abbé proposed that I should have a private tour of this chapel, and that we go on further. MD: “No... no. There’ll be no lack of occasions for her to be presented to the archbishop.”

A tram took us up to Bonsecours.²¹² We spent a moment in contemplation. Then, for more than an hour, I had the time of my life on the beautiful Cavaillé-Coll, setting it topsy-turvy [248], using the special effects of stops in their extreme registers. The master, seated beside me, gave rein to my experiments with paternal understanding. M^{me} Dupré had slipped away for a short time; she returned, placing in my hands a beautiful souvenir of Bonsecours, to my great bewilderment. The master descended with the abbé Delestre at one point, followed by M^{me} Dupré, who joined them. I could see the group of them, on the other side of the façade pipes, in serious conversation, and I decided to disturb them with a little impromptu recital. First, a scherzo of very fleeting character on my own theme. Then the great *De Profundis* so dear to Dupré, and the “Jordan” so dear to M^{me} Dupré.²¹³ They ceased [their conversation], it would seem. Dupré cried, “Bravo,” and M^{me} Dupré, “Thank you.” The abbé Delestre paid me his compliments when I had descended.

After that, we went to the far end of the cemetery, to an escarpment, for which the panorama extends as far as one can see between the valleys; on the right, Rouen.²¹⁴ We remained there in contemplation for a long while. We had forgotten the character of place; it was a part of the countryside. MD: “Don’t sprain [your ankle.]” Me: “No Master, nor you.” The abbé led us to Heredia’s tomb.²¹⁵ Then we met up with dear M^{lle} Chauvière at the church, and Dupré paid a visit to the parish priest.

We got back to Rouen at about 7:00. [249] M^{me} Dupré claimed that my eyelids were drooping [*les yeux au milieu de la figure*], and that I should lie down until dinner. Three-quarters of an hour later, she came to my room to fetch me, embracing me as she said that I was sweet and did a good job of listening to her.

The abbé Delestre dined with us that evening. We learned that Paris had been bombed that morning: great consternation. From afar, this sort of event is doubly frightening. The Duprés were thinking more of me than of themselves and surrounded me with affection. During dinner, the master kept the conversation [focused] on the subject of our collaboration, and M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite maintained this focus. Dupré sang my praises, going so far as to reveal to the abbé my personal qualities and telling everything he thought of me. His favorite anecdote was to repeat what Jean Gallon had said to him: “Marcel, I tell you, she’s an angel!” MD: “In the entire world, there are only two great artists at the organ, her and myself.” He added, “Presently, we are working in collaboration, which is to say that I hold no secrets for her, and she holds none for me. It happens to be the case that she knows the *Études*, and I am working on them.”

The abbé [250] Delestre, dumbfounded, interrupted Dupré. “Master, pardon me... I’m not following you...” MD: “It’s because the *Études* are so difficult. You will understand when she plays them for you. We have

212. The community of Bonsecours is a suburb of Rouen. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilique_Notre-Dame_de_Bonsecours>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the Basilique-de-Notre-Dame of Bonsecours contains a Cavaillé-Coll organ dating from 1857.

213. These refer to Bach’s “Aus tiefer Not schrei’ ich zu dir,” BWV 686, and “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam,” BWV 684, both from the *Klavierübung*, Pt. 3.

214. On a personal visit to the Basilica of Bonsecours in 2012, I noted that adjacent to its grounds is a cemetery on descending levels, cut into a long, steep slope.

215. According to <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jose-Maria-de-Heredia>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, José-Maria de Heredia (1842–1905) was a Cuban-born French poet who excelled in writing sonnets.

worked together to develop the technique that will revolutionize organ[-playing]." The abbé commented that, after Dupré, organ works will of necessity be written according to the modern aesthetic. Dupré replied: "And for that, too, I'm counting on Jeanne Demessieux!" I know that as a composer she will carry the organ forward."

Knowing Dupré, I contented myself with remaining silent when he carried on talking about me in such terms (and this is more difficult than deflecting a compliment). He only speaks in the most elevated way and, knowing myself I'll dare say it, forces me to fully accept these compliments, even in public. The abbé Delestre, despite having been forewarned by Dupré, appeared to be in the surprised state of someone who can't bring himself to believe in [such] a phenomenon.

Around 9:00 [PM], we all departed for [Notre Dame] Cathedral. We entered via the archbishop's palace where the principal of the [choir] school received us.²¹⁶ Introductions, then we found our way to the gallery [in the dark]; upon arriving there, we turned on the light over the console, and, as always, this brightness had me feeling "in fine form." [251] While I was quickly getting my bearings at the organ, Monsieur the archpriest arrived. He and the principal are both very imposing men. Great bowing and scraping. Dupré said of me, "My best first-prize holder in organ." Considering the tone that the meeting was taking, the master whispered to me:

"You must play something..." and, still whispering, the following dialogue was exchanged:

Me: "You told me not to practice, so I have nothing."

MD: "Too bad. Play anyway! Something by Handel or one of the big pieces by Bach."

Me: "So, I should go for it?"

MD: "Yes, I would do it... You can do it: go on."

Me: "Handel's Concerto in D minor, the opening Allegro."

MD: "No! All of it."

Me: "Oh! The Adagio seems so long ago... still, if I make a mistake, you will be there."

Dupré announced the concerto, and no one suspected that for me this was an "experiment." (After Bonsecours, when I told Dupré that I had played the "De Profundis" and the "Jordan" without having reviewed them since August 18 [1943], and that they worked out, Dupré responded, "When I heard you begin the 'De Profundis,' I thought: Jeanne is experimenting. You will see: you'll be doing it as if it were nothing.")

I found the concerto still to be all there, under my fingers, and my sense of equilibrium, my fieriness, filled me with joy. I felt as if I finally understood. My playing really carried. [252] Dupré had helped me with the registration. He appeared extremely satisfied and asked me if I would like to "give them the pleasure of an improvisation."

MD: "With your permission, I would dare to ask you to improvise a fugue."

Me: "Yes, Master and, for my part, you would give me great pleasure by proposing the theme." The master's face lit up: "B-A-C-H!" He played the four notes [B-flat-A-C-B], and the subject pleased me

216. According to <<http://www.saint-evode.com/2c-htm/>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Rouen Cathedral's choir school—the Maîtrise St-Evode—has existed since the 14th century. It provides musical instruction, with emphasis on liturgical music, along with a general education.

infinitely. I immediately conceived my plan for the piece and for my countersubject. I completed the subject exactly like the one I had improvised at St-Sulpice, and so I drew my inspiration from the character of that piece. Plenty of strettis. In very good form.

When I had finished, my listeners were electrified. Eight voices burst out at the same time. Deeply moved, Dupré shook his head, murmuring, "That was splendid... splendid, you know..." The archpriest put it in a way that became immediately famous: "As anyone can see, she works for the Holy Spirit!" Dupré asked me to improvise again, on the "Salve Regina." I drew the *voix célestes* and the flutes, and played a lullaby.

It was 11:30 when I finished playing, and we needed to think of returning before the curfew. The archpriest, as we took leave of him, said to me, "The cathedral [253] is at your disposal, Mademoiselle! If, one day Saint-Esprit should lose you, your place will be here, if you like." Dupré responded that it was not impossible that I would have occasion to return to Rouen and that, if and when that happened, it would be a pleasure to meet the archpriest again.

Detail: we traversed the cathedral in procession, equipped with candles, and M^{lle} Chauvière nearly fainted at the noise of a chair knocked over by Dupré; she cried, "Where is Marcel?" We reassured her, and it was all very funny. We exchanged compliments as far as the street. "Mademoiselle, you have my admiration!" the abbé Delestre said to me.

M^{me} Dupré had thrown a cape over the master's shoulders, insisting that he keep it on. MD: "And the little one? She'll not get cold...?"

Mme D.: "Do not worry; I've taken care of her."

MD: "And Mimi?..."²¹⁷

Mme D.: "Mimi, too." So, we set out into the black night.

In our little apartment, embracing Marguerite, I was very moved:

"How you improvise!" she said to me, "Other than my father, no one can improvise like you. I know what it is to perform, but to create, spontaneously, with such perfection, to have such a brain... Ah! Thank you. If you knew how much you are our joy... My [254] father is so happy! And, on top of that, you are so unpretentious, and so endearing..." She had tears in her eyes, and we embraced lovingly.

Rouen

Saturday 4 September 1943

At 8:30, M^r and M^{me} Dupré came to our apartment to say good morning. They were leaving, as agreed, for the cemetery. I went down to work a little on the organ.

Around 10:00, an alert. Some minutes later, the master and M^{me} Dupré arrived, then the abbé Delestre, then one, then another, of Dupré's students. We heard the cannon, the noise of a raid, and some bombs. The abbé quickly opened the windows while speaking calmly, and M^{me} Dupré pressed me to her while Dupré kept his eyes on us. All this, along with the cries of the poor charwoman, of M^{lle} Chauvière on the first floor with Marguerite, and the blasts of the explosions.

217. "Mimi" is, presumably, a fond nickname, used *en famille*, for Marguerite Dupré.

The storm past, Dupré gave a short lesson to a student who had arrived two hours early out of fear of not arriving at all, and I left with the abbé and Marguerite to play at St-Ouen again. We worked on *Évocation*; I improvised for the abbé, then all the family and students joined us. [With] Marguerite and the abbé doing the manoeuvres I had indicated to them, we managed once again to play the finale without the help of the [255] master—the better for him to enjoy his composition. Again, he was very moved by the impression it created, and I wanted to leave the manuals after that.

At dinner, we were anxious: some deaths in Rouen (twenty already in the first hour), even in the centre of Paris (how many?), and around Meudon. We wanted to telephone, but we were returning that evening. M^{me} Dupré was frightfully worried, the master stoic (perhaps determinedly so). My last visit was to St-Vivien, where Dupré was nominated organist when he was 12.²¹⁸ The whole family set out with the abbé Delestre.

It pleases me to jot down here how we looked: on each foray, M^{me} Dupré took my arm in hers; she did the same on her other side with the master, while M^{lle} Chauvière gave her arm to Marguerite or to Dupré, and the abbé stayed at my side. We took up the whole width of Rouen's narrow streets.

At St-Vivien, I was amazed at the richness of the organ façade, by the roodscreen and stained-glass windows.

The abbé went to fetch the parish priest, who arrived, followed by his curate, greatly disconcerted that Marcel Dupré should be paying him a visit. In the gallery, the master whispered to me, "I'll begin; that's necessary, I think..." ([Previously] he had never agreed to take the bench before [256] me.) He improvised, inspired entirely by his youthful memories.

Then he offered me his place, without helping me with the setup of the organ, while saying to the parish priest: "She doesn't need to look at an organ for any length of time before she knows it." I took Dupré's theme and developed it with the same idea and in the same manner as he had. (This came back to him during the day and, in speaking of it to M^{me} Dupré, he said that I had acted "with intelligence" in front of the priest.)

The abbé spoke with the priest about organizing a concert in five years' time for Dupré's "golden anniversary";²¹⁹ everyone jovially agreed on this. MD: "So you want to see me give a concert on crutches!"

Back home, I was presented with a charming spectacle. Dupré had had Jean Yon set up the miniature theatre housed under the organ. It's impossible to describe, so close to perfection is it: a dream theatre. Albert Dupré built it all by hand for his son, and they "gave" all of Wagner there, with a phonograph. Sometimes, the family sang.²²⁰

MD: "Ah, the dreams I have dreamt in here! Lohengrin, so handsome! And Elsa's dress!" The master, M^{me} Dupré, and M^{lle} Chauvière sang excerpts from Wagner's works. Delightful stage sets. Dupré explained [257]

218. St-Vivien Church in Rouen is near the Dupré family home. The story of how Dupré came to be its organist is told in Murray 1985, 25–26. Dupré was just 11 years old when he got the idea of applying for the position.

219. For a brief description of the city-wide 50th anniversary celebrations in 1948, as recalled by Dupré many years later, see Dupré 1975, 112.

220. For a photograph, and a description of the miniature theatre in Dupré's words, see Dupré 1975, 20–21.

the mechanism to me himself, setting up a great number of scenes before me and having me visit the “*foyer des artistes*,”²²¹ where one sees the heroes.

Packing our suitcases had to be done quickly. We dined early. Before I left, M^{lle} Chauvière bestowed upon me a personal keepsake: a little jeweled object, very old, very beautiful, that was dear to her. She begged me to hold on to her keepsake and to always be my teacher’s joy. She accompanied us to the station, but the abbé was not able to be there. We embraced, and then the four of us were back on the train to Paris.

M^{me} Dupré again had me sit beside the master, and our conversation revolved around organ design. Dupré saw my curiosity and offered to recount the history of the modern organ. Lasting for the greater part of the journey, this was my first major lesson in organ design. An impromptu but brilliant lesson.

MD: “With your love of the subject, two or three discussions will suffice for you to become first-rate on the subject.” Dupré has this curious and interesting idea that the decline of the eighteenth-century organ was the result of the contemporaneous introduction, by Haydn, of the string chamber orchestra—the dryness of the organ of that era [258] having been incapable of contending with the emotional vibrato of the strings.

In discussing the subject of the Philadelphia Wanamaker organ, I asked Dupré about the first movement of the *Symphonie-Passion* that he improvised on it.²²² He told me that although it was certainly there that the improvisation came to be, the composition, in the end, was different. When he came to write down the *Symphonie*, he found the end of the first movement by improvising for himself on the organ of St-Ouen in Rouen; he had been searching greatly, and the solution came to him all at once.

Again, just some bits of the conversation. MD: “While still a kid, I sensed I would have St-Sulpice, and the organ class, and that I would go to America. You know, Jeanne, rightful pride is a necessary factor in accomplishing anything”

I spoke to the master about an idea concerning form that I am currently developing. He fully approved of it; I asked him if he could imagine that one can have a vision of the form of a work, and of its character, without yet having thought of all the themes; he told me, yes, and wanted me to write this form down.

At St-Lazare train station, we were joyfully reunited with my parents. Papa had rushed to Meudon, and he reassured M^{me} Dupré and us all regarding the bombing. M^{me} Dupré said to Maman: [259] “I have two daughters!” and the master said to Papa that I am proof that a young girl can have a male brain and engage with the highest subjects, yet still be an angel. He said that my expertise had created a sensation in Rouen. After embracing everyone in turn, we parted. My parents were very moved to see so much affection showered upon me. The master said to me, “You are happy?... Me too.”

Friday 17 September 1943

In Meudon. The master and M^{me} Dupré were waiting for me at the station.

221. *Foyer des artistes*, which roughly translates as “home of the artists,” is equivalent to green room, the place where performers rest before and after going on stage.

222. Dupré’s *Symphonie-Passion*, Op. 23 (Leduc, 1924) is the published version of a four-movement improvisation on four submitted plainchant themes that Dupré created in concert on the organ of Wanamaker’s department store in Philadelphia in December 1921.

MD: "It's a big day today... The engineers have brought me the perforateur."²²³

They worked on checking the registrateur until 1:30. I played *The Steppes of Central Asia*²²⁴ to thank them. [MD:] "Finally... it's done, and you know how happy I am!" Dupré gave me the builder's name, M^r Solima, whose intelligence he admires. He told me the story behind his [M^r Solima's] registrateur. At the house, he showed me the little apparatus and, wishing to fully satisfy my eagerness, he also showed me the archives he had made and had me closely examine the details of the construction.

Work with M^{me} Dupré. We all ate together.

At 5:00 I played the 12 Études, in order, for the master. He was as moved [260] as he had been when he heard me play *Évocation* for the first time. He was speechless, wiped tears from his eyes several times, and then said to me simply, "No longer do I say that no woman has played the organ like you; I say: no one plays the organ like you." And, escorting me back to the station: "You will remember that it was the day of the registrateur that you played the 12 Études for me."

He told me that tomorrow, September 18, is the anniversary of the day he buried his father in Rouen.²²⁵

23 September 1943

Played the 12 Études at Meudon for the abbé Delestre and my usual audience, except for Maman (who is in Aigues-Mortes). The abbé spoke of revelation, and said he recognizes that there is no comparison between present-day organists and me. "I see only you and her," he said to Dupré. The master, who knows the smallest details of my technique, indicated these in advance to the abbé. The Études strongly impressed the abbé who believes that upon first hearing them audiences will be bowled over by the pieces and by my performance of them. Dupré doesn't know yet [261] whether there would be an advantage to my giving their

223. The perforateur is the basis of the pre-set registration system (registrateur) that Dupré devised for the large organ in his recital hall. This organ still exists in the hall attached to the villa in which the Duprés lived, and the registrateur was explained to me on site by the restorer and curator of the organ, Jean-Claude Merouze, on May 27, 2006. The registrateur made use of spooled tape with tiny holes cut in it (hence the term "perforateur"), that "recorded," so to speak, the chosen sequence of registrations for a particular piece, such as Dupré's transcription of Borodin's *On the Steppes of Central Asia*. The spool is meant to be positioned in the machine in the box in the room just behind the organ. When it is operating, a monitor on the organ console lights up, the purpose of which is to show numbers for manuals, 1 = G.O., 2 = Pos., etc. that control the current combination that the perforateur has brought into effect. To advance the perforateur so that it causes the next desired combination in the piece, one pushes the large foot button positioned to the left of the three expression pedals (the foot button looks like a greatly truncated expression pedal). The next combination is then automatically selected, thanks to the perforated tape having advanced to its new position. (There is also an identical pedal to the right of the crescendo shoe that does the same as the one on the left.) When one has changed to the next combination set up by the perforateur, one sees on the monitor which manual the new combination applies to.

224. Specifically, Dupré's unpublished organ transcription of Borodin's tone poem.

225. As recounted in Murray 1985, 183, Albert Dupré died in Biarritz on July 5, 1940, during the summer of the German invasion of France. It was not until September, however, when travel restrictions had been lifted and the body could be brought north to Rouen, that Marcel Dupré was able to bury his father next to his mother, following a memorial service at St-Ouen.

première, so that I create the surprise effect, or if it would be better that I play them after he has, to prove that I measure up to what he can do. The abbé said that Dupré represents a “turning point” and a further development in the evolution of the organ; but he [the abbé] believes I will have no possible successor for at least the next 30 years, given the originality of my playing. Dupré himself maintains that I, too, in my own right, represent a turning point. He acknowledges that the distance between my generation and me is so great that, for a good while, I will be an isolated case, as was he.

MD: “This may sound conceited... but there’s no doubt that we are, the two of us, in a superior ‘class.’” The abbé said to the master, “... And what a performer you have!” The way in which I get inside the *Études* had won over my audience. Dupré was happy; that says so much.

In the parlour, M^{me} Dupré served wine. “To our ‘class!’...” the master said to me, and I responded, “To your glory.” The abbé continues to grow in awe of Dupré’s attitude toward me. He heard Marguerite yesterday. His trip has a specific aim: [262] organization, plans for the future; he spent nearly the whole week “working” with Dupré on my debut.* We spoke about this.

Finally, as had become customary, Dupré walked us back, inviting the abbé to come too. At the station, he embraced me and said to me, “Thank you... thank you!...” Then he waited on the path with the abbé Delestre to see us leave. When the train was approaching, the master cupped his hands to his mouth, and we distinctly heard: “Queen!... Queen of the organ!...” We waved and waved.

Dupré has said to me that he and the abbé Delestre both have an eye on the young Bernard Flavigny as a pianist. “I would like to help him and want to entrust his gifts to a great pianist.” I have met B. Flavigny through Madga Tagliaferro; he is 12 years old.

* Together they made plans for an organ to be built after the war, in Rouen, in a hall in the archbishop’s palace and according to Dupré’s ideal conception of the organ. The master’s idea is that there, before the archbishop, I should rehearse my entire concert series to be given in Paris.

Saturday 1 October 1943

At Meudon, the afternoon divided in two: first with the master, then with M^{me} Dupré.

For Dupré, I played a sketch [I had] composed this week. He said that it’s the best, full of “lovely things”; the last measures captivated him: “That’s really beautiful.”

MD: “It’s always seemed to me that in composition I have to help you (and I do not mean lead you) in a very different way from others. You need [263] specialized instruction. There are three points to explore: theme, including rhythm and accentuation; harmony, with colour as one of its accessories; form. I believe that, for the moment, you have to explore one or the other of these at a time, exclusively. Continue making sketches: sometimes sketch a harmonic fragment in which you are searching for the emotion in a chord progression; sometimes contemplate form; sometimes think only about searching for a theme. A theme... it’s a world; it’s a people. [Take] the theme of *Cossacks of the Don*: [226]²²⁶ how one can sense that these are men

226. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthem_of_the_Don_Cossacks>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022. “Anthem of the Don Coassacks” is a Russian patriotic song with music by Alexander Listopadov. The lyrics were written by F. I. Anisimov in 1853, during the beginning of the Crimean War.

freezing in the North... It's different from German themes, and one can say that no French or Italian person would ever have thought it up.

"My own theory is to compare music to nature. Like nature, it has the power to disseminate and to grow: a theme contains the seed of an entire work. Nowadays we are asking if a cell and the germ it contains live forever; no one really knows. You remember the grain of wheat found after 6,000 years in the Pyramids: they planted it; it sprouted. [264] Write a theme. Go back to it after twenty years; it will always have a composition inside it."

In seeking to understand my nature, Dupré seemed to respond to every problem with composition I've created for myself.

MD: "One does not search for a theme any more than one can find it: it's a sudden 'light' shone on a detail that has long been maturing."

MD: "You are saturated by our conversations on composition. Have the courage to refrain from beginning any definitive work until March [1944]; promise?"

We decided that I am going to apply myself again to repertoire, but the master didn't want to impose his choices on me: "One can't tell an artist like you: do this, don't do that." I managed to push past these qualms [*j'arrive à forcer de tels scrupules*].²²⁷ Speaking of the Études:

MD: "There're done, you know. My intention was that you have a break, during which you could sometimes amuse yourself with the Études." He suggested that, after Mendelssohn, I work on the *Sept Pièces*, saying that this could be "restful," and that I would know them in a month.²²⁸ He foresees two months for Mendelssohn and two months for the "leftover bits" of the repertoire." Then, at the beginning of March, composition and improvisation while, at the same time, review of one program every two weeks. I told the master that I plan, [265] to carefully rework his three new Preludes and Fugues [Op. 36], which I find comparable to the Études in technique, wanting to get as close as possible to my ideal [interpretation]. Dupré responded, "You are telling me your plans; here are mine." Upon my arrival, he had announced to me that his work for organ and orchestra was complete.* He is beginning to orchestrate it, then he'll make a transcription for organ and registrateur, a reduction for organ and piano, and correct the proofs (where I'll do my part again). That will take him to the end of December. He told me he wants to take a rest from composition for a while. In January, he will begin working on the organ, the Études and *Islamey* (with Marguerite), his new work.²²⁹ He wants to do a program for organ and registrateur and will rework the three last Preludes and Fugues [Op. 36].

MD: "All that will take me, also, to March. As you can see, our plans are merging; it's true the last preludes and fugues are difficult. In the end, we will have finished all our projects at the same time. Composition and improvisation will come after that. Then all that will be left for us is to wait. This year could bring us the end of the [266] war, and we'll both be ready." I replayed four of Dupré's Études, chosen at random. We spoke of Rouen, of the abbé Delestre.

227. This sentence suggests that although Dupré hesitated to make decisions regarding Demessieux's repertoire, she was able to get him to offer his own ideas after all.

228. Dupré, *Sept Pièces*, Op. 27 (Bornemann and H. W. Gray, 1931).

229. Dupré's *Islamey, fantaisie pour piano et orchestra*, based on the tone poem by Balakirev, exists as a manuscript (c. 1943) held by the BnF Music Dept.

Worked with M^{me} Dupré in the office while the master sat there, too, attending to his mail. Orchestral manuscripts everywhere (the master had asked my opinion on a graphic system for transposing instruments on which he is working). Then he left to pay a long visit to [Henri] Etlin.

On his return, he spotted me on the station platform and came over to chat for a moment again, so impressed by my performance of his Études. I give great importance to the following sentence of Marcel Dupré: “As far as I’m concerned, the decadence of twentieth-century music stems from the absence of ‘themes.’”

* Résonances.²³⁰

Monday 19 October 1943

Marcel Dupré took me to Pleyel (at 4:30), where he had to rehearse and to see the organ that he had not played since the [Salle Pleyel] ceiling was opened up.²³¹ I had called in for him at his [organ] class at 3:30. The first time I’ve seen and heard this organ. Taken by the sonority. A clear console layout that Dupré had explained to me in advance in a few words. He rehearsed the second movement of the concerto.²³² Surrounded since [267] our arrival; but the master was prepared with his “plan” and introduced me in different ways, or not at all. He always managed to quietly let me know what he thought of this person or the other. He went up to Kiesgen, his impresario who is very attached to him and, his plan being to introduce me to him, called me over.

230. Unpublished composition by Dupré that exists in three different ms. forms in the BnF Music Dept.: “Résonances, Étude symphonique pour orchestre de solistes et orgue” (1943); “Résonances, pour orgue et orchestra” (c. 1943); “Résonances, réduction pour orgue et piano” (c. 1943).

231. Following the 1927 opening of the celebrated Salle Pleyel on rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré, la maison Cavallé-Coll received the commission to build an organ with a moveable console for the main hall. Dupré inaugurated this 4-manual, 71-stop instrument on March 5, 1930. According to an article published shortly before the inauguration, Louis Schneider, “L’Orgue de la Salle Pleyel,” *L’Illustration*, No. 4539 (Mar. 1, 1930), reprinted in *Bulletin of the Association des Amis de l’Art de Marcel Dupré*, No. 22 (Sept. 2005): 29, this was Paris’s first large organ in a concert hall comparable to such organs constructed by North American, British, and German builders. In an excerpt from an unpublished essay dated 1956, “Marcel Dupré et les orgues de salles de concert,” *Bulletin of the A.A.A.M.D.*, No. 20 (May 2002b): 63, Dupré recalls that prior to the organ’s installation, he saw immediately, from the drawings for the organ in relation to the hall, that the sound of the instrument would be muffled. He explained the problem to the director of the Salle Pleyel, Gustave Lyon, as a result of which the conditions of the pipes’ placement were altered to become “a little less deplorable.” In a detailed description of the instrument by Dupré published in *Le Monde musical* (Mar. 31, 1930), reprinted in *Bulletin of the A.A.A.M.D.*, No. 22 (Sept. 2005): 25–27, he praised its equilibrium of voicing, the precision and lightness of its touch, and the sureness and rapidity of its noise-free combination system. On the regrets side, he explained how the placement of the pipes above a ceiling over the stage, a ceiling having a 15.8- by 2.4-metre opening cut in it, was such that an estimated 33% of the pipes’ sound would be lost to those seated in the hall. This article concludes with Dupré congratulating Gustave Lyon on the overall success of the project, while urging him to take measures needed to correct the acoustical problem.

232. Dupré, *Concerto in E minor, Op. 31 for organ and orchestra* (Paris: Bornemann, 1934).

MD: "I entrust to you that which is still a secret to the entire world: this child is an admirable artist, a major figure, I tell you. She will debut when the right moment comes. Until that time, silence. Do you understand?"

K: "I understand, and you can count on me!"

Also present was the director of the Pleyel. Dupré chatted more than he worked and subtly created an ambiance of respect around me, involving me in all his viewpoints. Taking advantage of the occasion, he asked me to improvise a well-developed toccata. In very good form.

Substantial discussion regarding placement of the organ. MD: "If you were to decide to move your organ down I would support that. There is a group of people associated with me that would support it too." He was standing firm. As soon as we departed, he asked me,

"Would it please you to give your programs here? With the organ lowered?"

Me: "Yes, very much."

MD: "Good."

We stayed until around 7:00 at Place des Ternes²³³ chatting about Pleyel, with which Dupré is completely taken up. [268]

We talked themes: [it was] a composition lesson. I showed the theme that had recently come to me in a spontaneous fashion; the master was struck by it, analyzed it, and we discussed our ideas.

Leaving his class,²³⁴ Dupré had spoken to me about his students, how weak they were and how they had not worked since the competition; it's become intolerable [*la mesure est pleine*]. MD: "They cry before and after the competition! And they don't work. They dishonour me. Ah! Do you realize just how much farther along you are, how much farther ahead you were!"

Speaking of my period of "[thought] crystallization," as he calls it, Dupré said, "What I want is that when you do decide to compose, to write a work, you will have a sufficient harvest to draw upon."

Tuesday 20 October 1943

A recording session for the second movement of Marcel Dupré's Concerto [in E minor, Op. 31, performed] by Dupré and the Orchestre Lamoureux under Eugène Bigot at Pleyel.²³⁵ I met with Dupré and Marguerite

233. As illustrated in *Paris par Arrondissement* (Versailles: Éditions Coutarel, n.d.), 71, Place des Ternes is a city square between Paris's 8th and 17th arrondissements, at the meeting place of rue du Faubourg St-Honoré and avenue des Ternes, not far from the Salle Pleyel.

234. Presumably Dupré's words in this paragraph were spoken earlier in the day, that is, prior to his 4:30 visit with Demessieux to the Salle Pleyel.

235. This recording session was part of a Vichy government-financed project with the aim of producing recordings of contemporary French music to be distributed to other countries' ambassadors and cultural organizations, in an attempt to bolster the declining international image of France. As described in Philippe Morin, "Une nouvelle politique discographique pour la France," in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 253–68, and in Simon 2009, 190–92, the general secretariat of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Association française d'action artistique chose forty French composers (all living, except two killed in action in 1940), music in a

prior to the session; the master's intention was to introduce me to E. Bigot and then invite me to be present during the recording. Many people present again; the same as yesterday with the addition of M^r Florizone and M^r Georges Dandelot. Before playing, [269] Dupré called me over to Bigot.

MD: "Listen well to what I am going to say and remember it: I am trusting you with a secret, do you understand? Here is a child who has all the First Prizes you could want, all of them unanimously. She is preparing for a prominent career. For the moment, and, with her permission, I am intentionally keeping her in the shadows."

EB: "As a pianist?"

MD: "No: as an organist!"

²³⁶

MD: "Don't concern yourself with this and say nothing. But the day she is to debut, I will give you a sign, and you can lend a hand, agreed?"

EB: "Perfect. You can count on me. You've got it under control? You want it to be you alone that launches this child; I understand."

MD: "Yes. Her memory equals mine; she improvises just as well as I do."

Me: "Master..."

MD: "Hush! She is organist at St-Esprit; she practices the organ six hours a day. She's an angel, do you understand?" [He understood] so well that Bigot referred to "your children" when speaking to Dupré about Marguerite and me. All this occurred on the stage, in front of the entire orchestra.

Upon arriving, having encountered M^r Florizone, Dupré introduced me to him as "the pearl" among his students. Over the course of the morning, [270] he discretely drew us aside and said to Florizone: "You have, before you, a very great artist, an immense intelligence, a star of the organ capable of becoming my successor. She will be—I'm sure of this—one of France's greatest glories. She knows all of Bach by heart, all of Mendelssohn, in short, everything... Once the war is finished, nothing will prevent this child from pursuing her marvelous destiny." Florizone said, calmly, "Mademoiselle, we shall send you on a world tour." This reply pleased Dupré, who referred to it again later.

The session lasted over three hours.²³⁷ There was a dramatic turn of events. Dupré had asked in advance that there be a microphone [placed] inside the organ, a condition that he always insists upon, and that had been promised to him. Today, the takes having begun, Marguerite, delegated to her listening post, came to tell us that the organ could barely be heard in comparison to the orchestra. The master called his engineers. "Is there a microphone in the organ?" An embarrassed-sounding reply, to which Dupré responded with such icy anger that everyone trembled: "They promised me a microphone in the organ; I will not record if I don't have my microphone; that's final!" Still, the engineers [271] tried to discuss the matter. Dupré stuck inexorably to what he had been promised. MD: "It's always the same question: if you think that I am going to

conservative style, and the best performers, for a series of forty disks, to be edited and issued by a collaboration of the same two organizations. The recording sessions began on Nov. 1, 1942, and were completed on Nov. 10, 1943.

236. Demessieux possibly meant to indicate with the exclamation mark that Eugène Bigot's face expressed huge surprise at the announcement that she was an organist.

237. According to Murray 1985, 206, n.33, Dupré hated recording and, particularly, retakes.

allow my work to be massacred, think again!" Bigot, who had been leaning on his desk, stood up straight: "I agree with him!" and Kiesgen rushed up from the back of the hall saying, "My poor friend!" He offered to telephone his office. MD: "Yes... you are very kind; thank you, my friend. "I can't bear this," Marguerite said to me. After a long interval, Dupré had his microphone.

He kept me beside him constantly, playing, listening, and saying to Florizone: "I've brought her with me so that she can familiarize herself with things associated with our occupation."

Friday 23 October 1943

Afternoon at Meudon. Played Mendelssohn's three Preludes and Fugues for Dupré.

Chatted for a long time with the master about Aristotle's ideas concerning different forms of government. Concerning the three human ideals: truth, justice, and beauty. Concerning the wars.

After my performance, MD: "You have everything; you have insight, intelligence."

Friday 5 November 1943

At Meudon. Played Mendelssohn's first three Sonatas. Saw all three [Duprés]; friendly intimacy. Left late.

Regarding [272] Mendelssohn, MD observed: "You said to Marguerite, I believe, that you find some of Mendelssohn's 'endings' quite ordinary sounding?" Dupré asked me to elaborate. I told him that I liked Mendelssohn, but I had to fault the man who composed the first phrase of the Adagio of the 2nd Sonata for having written the last measures of the same Sonata. The master simply said, "Yes." I told him how I viewed Mendelssohn: as a first-rank "writer" who treats his subjects with the authority of genius, always effectively leading them to the appropriate climactic moment; yet, once the subject has been exhausted, concluding in a spirit of whatever is easiest, which points to that exhaustion. I confessed to Dupré that my sense of structure is different: the "conclusion" is part of the whole, as necessary as the cascading effect of the development, and can even open up another world after a subject was thought to have been spent. The master allowed me to "let loose" and endorsed my ideas.

Monday 15 November 1943

César Franck Festival at Pleyel: *Les Béatitudes*, the Symphony; the 2nd Choral played by Marcel Dupré.²³⁸ Dupré's playing was breathtaking. Beautiful concert. Spoke to the Duprés.

[273] Saturday 20 November 1943

At Meudon for the afternoon. Played Mendelssohn's three last Sonatas for the master.

M^{me} Dupré fell down a flight of stairs yesterday. Spent a little time with her. She listened to me play as she reclined in the office. She does not seem well.

238. According to the printed program, preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1420, this concert for orchestra, vocal soloists, and organ was presided over by His Eminence Monseigneur le Cardinal, Archbishop of Paris, and given for the benefit of the completion of the Paris church St-Pierre-de-Chaillot.

Monday 22 November 1943

M^{me} Dupré has seen a doctor. She is getting better.

Friday 26 November 1943

With M^{me} Dupré at Meudon, late afternoon. She is doing well. Saw the master; he walked me back to the train.

Wednesday 1 December 1943

Today I record the fact that Mireille Auxière, after having been expelled from the Conservatory (Yves Nat's studio) for lack of prizes, has newly returned to Yves Nat's studio by means of competitive examinations. She had come to beg me to take charge of her progress as a pianist again. She passed the two exams under my supervision; now, finally, I have complete control over the development of her difficult but rich temperament.

Friday 3 December 1943

Yesterday, a concert at Pleyel by the Orchestre national and Marcel Dupré (broadcast), under the direction of [Désiré Émile] Inghelbrecht. Dupré's Concerto [for Organ and Orchestra in E minor, Op. 31]; an improvisation.²³⁹ The organ, [274] due to its ridiculous placement, could barely be heard in comparison to the orchestra. Beautiful, but less so than with Bigot and [the Orchestre] Lamoureux. (By invitation only. A splendid audience.)

We (my parents and I) left with the Duprés. Duruflé walked with them for a while, too. The master chatted with me and asked my opinion on several points. He believes that an organ work (whether solo or with orchestra) cannot be satisfactory on just any instrument but that, rather, the true spirit intended by the creator depends upon writing for a particular type of instrument (*Évocation*: St-Ouen, the chamades; *Symphonie-Passion*: Philadelphia, the strings). I responded that this is Wagner's aesthetic of the theatre and that I, too, can conceive of this notion transferred to the organ. Dupré asked me what I think of Berlioz. I said that Berlioz always surprises me, that he has the breadth of, and is of the same calibre as, Wagner; he is

239. Dupré's handwritten record of this concert, BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1421, indicates that Inghelbrecht chose the theme on which Dupré improvised and that the concert was broadcast by the Vichy government's Radiodiffusion nationale. As described in the Wikipedia article for the Orchestre national <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestre_National_de_France>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, and in Marie-Claire Mussat, "Rennes: capitale musicale de la France pendant la 'drôle de guerre,'" in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *La Vie musicale sous Vichy* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2001), 355, 369, prior to World War II, this ensemble, formed by Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht, was the orchestra of French Radio, stationed in Paris. During the period of World War II prior to the German Occupation, it performed in another broadcast centre, the city of Rennes. Then, with the arrival of the German army in 1940, the Orchestre national was forced to cease broadcasting from Rennes and evacuate to Marseille in the unoccupied zone, before it returned to Paris in 1943.

either sustained by inspiration alone or slips into nothingness, with no middle ground. Dupré agreed with me and said that this is the curious case of a man who “improved” over his entire life.

The concerto performance was very instructive for me. Masterfully played by Dupré. In the foyer, the master introduced me to Inghelbrecht, who was utterly flabbergasted at his use of such laudatory terms.

The broadcast of the concerto by TSF was excellent and balanced.²⁴⁰ Father de la Motte was very [275] enthusiastic about the work.

Friday 10 December 1943

Eleventh recital at Meudon. My usual audience. All of Mendelssohn, in order. Tremendous mastery. I realized that, speaking strictly in artistic terms, no more unknowns lay before me. Conviction that my talent is a reality. This, perhaps, is what explains my desire to stretch myself, for an audience, and the boredom of inaction I’m experiencing now. From the start of our collaboration, Dupré had said to me: “Your talent will weigh on you.”

After the recital everyone embraced me warmly, and we chatted away happily about our mutual interests. Around 8:00, the master walked us back and told me again how proud he is of me.

Thursday 24 December 1943

I attended Midnight Mass at St-Sulpice with my parents. The Duprés had decided that I would be beside the master to turn pages. Dupré had been asked to play the complete *Symphonie-Passion* before the Mass. Very moving.

Marthe Dramez and Mireille Auxière were with us.

Saturday 25 December 1943

Vespers at St-Sulpice. When we arrived M^{me} Dupré was “guarding” my place beside the master.

Dupré had, [276] close by, two seminarians.²⁴¹ He attached great importance to this and passed me his notebook of Noël’s: “Choose from in here; you are going to improvise. I know what I’m doing; leave me to it. I want these two seminarians to hear you.” I took over the manuals from my teacher. Very excited, but in good form. Dupré picked up on my ideas as they went by, [declaring]: “That’s adorable...” I made a few bold choices and, while M^{me} Dupré rushed to embrace me and my little audience was quite moved, the master said,

“What a future this child has!”

“With her ideas, couldn’t she go to Rome?” someone asked.

“She’ll do better than that,” Dupré responded, and this [comment] spread like wildfire.

240. TSF stands for *transmission sans fil*—in English, wireless transmission (or simply “wireless”)—as radio receivers in Europe were called at one time.

241. We are reminded here that the church of St-Sulpice had attached to it a seminary. Cf. the diary entry for Apr. 19, 1942.

Monday 27 December 1943

Wrote the last notes of a “Nativité” for organ,²⁴² my first composition since the Adagio of my symphony.

Friday 31 December 1943

Grief in Paris. Terrible bombing in the region, cannons all day. I had a meeting with the Duprés at Meudon, but M^{me} Dupré had rushed to her sister’s place.

When I arrived in Meudon, English airplanes were sweeping over the hills. No bombs, but [277] deafening gunfire, which did not stop me from heading to the house at a full run, however. Dupré burst out upon hearing the bell, uttering loud cries. He immediately asked me if I had my “Nativité.”

We urged along Perroux who finished adjusting the pedals while chatting with us for a half hour (the old wizard, astonishingly, adjusts a pedalboard with curling tongs). The master asked him to stay and listen to me for a few minutes. Every now and again, the house shook. I played. After having devoured my manuscript, Dupré said,

“It’s extraordinarily interesting. Daring, very daring... but infinitely delightful... and driving, goal oriented.”

Me: “An attempt...”

MD “No... not just an attempt. This is original and personal!” He turned to Perroux. “Her harmonic language is at least as daring as that of Messiaen; but it’s richer and more personal. It’s full of charm. This is music we’ve never heard before.”

I was absolutely appalled that Dupré spoke like this in front of someone else. He was very serious. (Perroux declared, “That is really something,” and that Messiaen “gives him colic.”)

Perroux having left, Dupré [278] asked me to play it again.

MD: “There: your first completed composition for organ... It’s indisputably new, both as writing for the organ and musically speaking.

Me: “One thing is for sure: I could not have written this if it had not been for your Études.

MD: “Ah! You think so!...”

Me: “You told me you were leaving the door open for me; all this so that I might see clearly.”

MD: “You’ve got it. You’ll produce a clean copy—clear, easy to practise from—because, like me, I want you to make a collection of your manuscripts.”

242. Demessieux made more than one fair copy of this manuscript and inscribed at the top of at least two of these a dedication to Marcel Dupré: *Trop faible hommage de reconnaissance infinie et de très profonde affection* [A meager token of my infinite gratitude and deepest affection]. A manuscript copy of “Nativité” is extant in the BnF Music Dept., MS20658, and another in RHCL, 22.012 Demessieux, J., 1. Diverse manuscripten (the dedication on this copy is obliterated). According to Christian Goubault, “Des documents de première main sur Marcel Dupré et l’art de l’orgue,” *Paris-Normandie* (Sept. 23, 1981), there is also a copy in the Dupré-Lafond dossiers donated to Rouen’s Bibliothèque municipale Jacques-Villon. *Nativité* was published posthumously, ed. Maxime Patel, with a preface by Yannick Merlin (Sampzon: Delatour France, 2006).

Me: "But, shouldn't I be doing some polishing?"

MD: "No, no! Don't touch a thing. Leave it as it is. Not a note needs changing. It's catalogued, it's done. It has a very original sound."

I told Dupré that after seeing the shivering, miserable, and tender nativity scene, my idea had been to do something light. The master told me that this is well-realized and "captivating."

I played Mozart's two Fantasias for him. He gave me a score of Mozart's Fugue.²⁴³

I left when the Baroness de Séverac arrived for her lesson. Dupré introduced me to her and spoke to me at length about my "Nativité" in front of her, insisting on the word "personal." MD: "The "Nativité" is difficult. You have written for [279] your own technique, for good reason."

Saturday 1 January 1944

The morning at St-Sulpice. Messieurs Guerner, Berveiller, Perroux, Monet, Matigot, my parents. Boulnois, M^{me} Tallon, among others. A friendly atmosphere. Ten years ago today, Dupré became titular organist of St-Sulpice.

The master seated me on his right. Good wishes were exchanged. Dupré spoke enthusiastically about my "Nativité," described it, emphasized it. All this was very well received, and my parents and I remarked that the master's entourage seems more and more to divine what's in store for me.

Guerner: "My wish for 1944 is to see the end of the war, and your triumph."

Berveiller to M^{me} Dupré: "What more can one wish for her? She has everything before her, and everything within her."

Thursday 5 January 1944

At Meudon. Bénet's [sculpture of] Beethoven, bequeathed by his widow to the Duprés, was installed this afternoon.²⁴⁴ The master loves this work, but fretted because, to him, they were "demolishing" his room.

He, M^{me} Dupré, and I spent the afternoon in the office, after which I played a little from the *Anthology* for the master. We chatted. I asked him if he thinks that there is such a thing as progress in art, over the course of history, from the [280] emotive point of view.

MD: "Progress has been made in art from the technical point of view. But as for inspiration, there has been no progress; there's been a decline. Art comes to us from heaven! It draws its inspiration first from the divine source and it descends towards the abyss. The art of antiquity—it was God. In music, after Bach,

243. Mozart's Fantasia in F minor (also known as the Adagio and Allegro in F minor), K. 594, and Fantasia in F minor, K. 608, were both composed for mechanical clock organ and included by Dupré in his *Anthologie des Maîtres Classiques de l'Orgue* that Demessieux helped edit. The fugue mentioned here by Demessieux is likely Mozart's Fugue in D minor, K. 426 for two pianos in Dupré's arrangement in C minor for organ (Paris: Leduc, 1928), described in Steed 1999, 222.

244. As noted in the Wikipedia entry for this eminent French sculptor <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugène_Bénet#.C5.92uvres>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Eugène Bénet (1863–1942) was born in Dieppe in Normandy, making him hail from the same region of France as Dupré. His works were executed in the academic French style.

Beethoven loved humanity. The Romantics loved the [ideal of the] feminine; someone who understood this with astounding nobility and profundity was Schumann. Wagner, too. Afterwards, with the Impressionists, it was sensualism and then—it gets muddy. The moderns—that's objectivism."

The master brought me his work—still in manuscript form—on organ building and entrusted it to me.

Sunday 9 January 1944

Played my "Nativité" at St-Esprit. I had these specific visitors: M^r and M^{me} Descombes, M^{me} Meunier. The latter invited me to tea on the 29th.

Friday 14 January 1944

At Meudon. Upon arriving at the house, I found M^{me} Dupré with a worried look on her face: "Monsieur Dupré is sick: he's in bed. It's bronchitis; he's coughing a lot. You are to go see him immediately; he requested it." On entering the master's room,

MD: "Ah! You've brought me our girl!" And, almost immediately: "I [281] have called for you to tell you my final wishes." We winced at this serious tone.

Mme D: "What are you talking about?..." And Dupré, calmly exclaimed:

"Surely, she should know how important she is?"

Mme D: "If you summoned her just so you can talk to her like that, I shall take her away with me!"

MD: "No! Widor, too, told me his thoughts before his death."

Mme D: "Oh! Why?"

MD: "Well... one must think of these things." (To me:) "I want to tell you again that you are my successor. After me, I am passing the torch to you! You happen to be a woman instead of being a man. So be it; the world will have to get used to it... Now, tell me about your work. How far along is the copy of the "Nativité"? And how is the practising going?"

M^{me} Dupré held me to her, and I attempted to free us from all this anguish. I recounted how the organizers for the January 21 [Pontifical Mass] at St-Esprit had, with exaggerated insistence, tried to make me play a work by M^r de Saint-Martin and that, after a meeting, I put my refusal in writing.

MD: "You realize that anyone who has written something is looking for a fine virtuoso to show it off. Saint-Martin knew [282] to go to you!"

Me: "There are others in Paris who are as good as I am..."

MD: "Not so!"

Me: "But there are, in the eyes of M^r de Saint-Martin."

MD: "Ah, but that's because you haven't 'debuted' yet. But perhaps it's not wise to become overly exclusive because of my works. Perhaps allow yourself to be championed by others, like... anyone. It wouldn't do if, because of me . . ."²⁴⁵

245. It is not clear whether Dupré had not finished this sentence, or if Demessieux simply did not supply the conclusion.

Me: "I don't need to play anyone else's works. I play what I like. And it's not out of regard for you!... When you decide I should debut—if you give me permission to play your works—it's 'you' that I will play, Master."

MD: "Permission!"

Me: "I did, in fact, want to ask if you would permit me to play the finale of your *Deuxième Symphonie* on the 21st." The faces of the master and M^{me} Dupré lit up.

MD: "Yes, of course, my dear. Whatever you like!"

"You are talking too much!" M^{me} Dupré declared. "We are going now. Jeanne will come back to say goodbye in a while."

MD: "Ah, yes! You'll send her to me."

M^{me} Dupré was insistent that I must get down to work, so we set ourselves up in Marguerite's room, from where the master could hear us. Siren, airplanes, cannons.

Around 4:00 M^{me} Dupré sent me [283] back to the master and went down to prepare something to eat because "I must" eat. Dupré told me that the assistant engineer in charge of construction had come to check the registrateur and had brought him a detailed plan. He was quite happy to show it to me and explain it. We talked about his manuscript on organ design, and he wanted to know what matters I had previously found unclear. I told him and Dupré gave me a very clear explication of the subject. After that, a bite to eat with Marguerite and a look in on the master before leaving. I found him burning [with impatience]. "Till Friday! You will play the organ for me." He asked me to play the High Mass at St-Sulpice on Sunday.

[Squeezed between entries, as if an afterthought:] M^{me} Dupré told me that the master has a touch of congestion. If I understand correctly, he is choosing to ignore this.

Sunday 16 January 1944

Played St-Sulpice at 9:00 AM. Went very well. Fugue in C.²⁴⁶ Since yesterday evening, Dupré has been feeling better. Have been telephoning twice a day. Everyone spent two very worried days.

Friday 21 January 1944

Arrived at Meudon around 4:30 after walking five kilometres during an air raid siren. After this walk, which got me as far as Montparnasse, I reassured the Duprés by telephone.²⁴⁷

[Once I arrived,] M^{me} Dupré told me the master wished to hear me at all costs and ordered me to have a hot drink before my train [back to Paris] left. She [284] served it to me despite my demurral—a small but touching detail.

The master is better. Has been able to get out of bed a bit these last two days and went outside for a few

246. Given that Demessieux performed a Fugue in C by Buxtehude at her next lesson (see endnote 249), the fugue she played on Sunday, Jan. 16, may have been the same.

247. The train from Paris to Meudon leaves from Montparnasse station. Presumably, subway and trains were not operational during the air raid, but were running again after Demessieux reached Montparnasse.

minutes today (Papa paid him a visit on Monday); not very strong. I told them how disappointed I was by the breakdown of my organ during a Pontifical Mass that took place this morning at St-Esprit (X had cut an organ relay). Dupré, like me, suspects someone did it out of spite, but told me not to give it a second thought.

I played eight pieces from the *Anthology* for the master.²⁴⁸ He followed my playing enthusiastically, saying that I play with “automatic and supple precision” and that I play “with spirit.” We chatted.

MD: “You will have “everything” finished by the end of February!...” I tried to convey to the master my gratitude and to tell him how extraordinarily important his support has been to me.

MD: “Without me, you are and remain ‘you.’ But with a nature like yours, someone had to say, lean on me, have no fears, just go forward! Besides, I want to remove from your path every risk that might make you anxious. I don’t yet know where you will give your recital series. I’m waiting. But it is I who will be occupied with organizing everything, taking care of all the steps. [285] During all this, you will remain unencumbered. And, I tell you, there will be ‘surveillance’ on the organ! It’s too easy to cut the power cable to prevent Jeanne Demessieux from playing and anyone from hearing her!”

MD: “I’m going to bring you up to date on an important reversal regarding the *Études*. You would never have suspected it. But I assure you, the harmonies, the music remain unchanged. I have two reasons.” He said that Leduc has exclusive rights to his pedagogical works, which is now against his wishes. With Dupré’s agreement, Bornemann asked Leduc whether he considers the “*Études*” for organ as pedagogical works. Leduc responded yes. Dupré, wanting to give his *Études* to Bornemann, decided to change the title and present them in three sets (with different opus numbers). He is giving them a purely musical slant, and they will become: a “Suite”; two “Tales” [*Contes*]; Dupré did not tell me the other titles. MD: “The second reason has to do with you. The word ‘*Études*’ will prompt others to reform their technique too soon. Rather, the two of us must keep our exclusive command of [286] transcendent pedal technique. That Grunenwald, young [Jean-Claude] Touche, the little Falcinelli are doing what they can—very well, that’s their right. But I will always keep everyone away from having the means of following us. ‘We’ means just us [*Nous, c’est nous*]. With us, no one!”

I spoke with the master concerning his work on organ design, which I’d read, and asked him, discretely, why it is not published.

MD: “It bothers me to give it to Leduc. Moreover, there’s something missing from my treatise that I want to have.

Me: “Well, what, Master?”

MD: “The exact dimensions and proportions of pipes. I will get them.”

Sunday 23 January 1944

Met for an hour with the St-Sulpice clergy to organize the ceremony for next Sunday. I was happy to learn

248. According to Demessieux’s notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” at her Jan. 21, 1944 lesson she performed the following pieces from Dupré’s *Anthologie des Maîtres Classiques de l’Orgue* that she helped edit: Schumann, Fugue on B-A-C-H; Handel, Fugue in E Minor and Fugue in F Major; Beethoven, Fugue in E Minor; Buxtehude, Fugue in C; Frescobaldi, Toccata pour l’Élévation; Palestrina, Ricercare; Purcell (now attributed to Jeremiah Clarke), Trumpet Tune.

that Dupré would be playing for Vespers today at St-Sulpice. Both [Marcel and M^{me} Dupré] were waiting for me, being sure that I would come if I knew they would be present. (Yesterday, the doctor gave permission for the master to play). Splendid improvisations.

Wednesday 26 January 1944

Made a visit to the laboratory of M^r Matigot, upon his invitation. Papa was with me. Matigot kept us [there for] three hours.

He is presently doing experiments with [287] the oscillophone and has managed to convert light, colours, and sounds into light, and to measure the frequency of their vibrations. At the end of February, he is to carry out some definitive experiments at St-Sulpice to measure the purity of sounds. I know that Dupré follows Matigot's research with enthusiasm. M^r Matigot told me of his fear: he doubts that with the oscillophone he can simultaneously capture vibrations that derive from sources other than sound.* He fears not being able to sufficiently detect the difference by ear. I told him that he has in his hands the possibility of capturing everything in the universe that is "rhythm." He agreed. He asked me to think about his research and share my ideas with him. Regarding his worries mentioned above, "Right now, I am afraid," he told me simply. "It's there that I will need your help, if you're willing. The ears of a musician are required. What I'd also like, if I may be so bold, is to notify you shortly when I present my experiments to a small group, without journalists, and when we perform them at St-Sulpice with the master." The idea came to me, which I shared with Matigot, [288] of the importance of being able to measure sounds scientifically in relation to the partials of a series of pipes in organ building. He replied that I am in agreement with Dupré.

* Parasitic vibrations that he named "envelope" when searching to make this comprehensible to me.

Saturday 29 January 1944

Tea at the home of M^{me} Meunier. Around twenty people. Select society. Some young people. I died of boredom chatting about rubbish.

Sunday 30 January 1944

Played Vespers and Procession at St-Sulpice. Perpetual Adoration [of the Blessed Sacrament]. Went very well. Improvised, most notably a toccata on a theme given at the last moment, orally, by an abbé.

In the gallery: Marthe Dramez and her brother, two seminarians, the abbé who is choirmaster of the seminary, M^r Matigot, and a relative of his.

The clergy had anticipated that I would begin playing only at 4:30, a decision that was thwarted by the Duprés. The master, wishing me the pleasure of playing Vespers, had forewarned Robineau a week ago and Matigot this morning. Matigot rearranged his day and was there by 3:30. The astonished clergyman, having enquired and finding everything organized, let me play. He [289] congratulated me after the service.

Monday 31 January 1944

Surprise: an unexpected visit by M^{me} Dupré (in the neighborhood to see a relative of M^{me} Benet). She presented me with a hyacinth and stayed at our house for two hours.

She told us that they think of me constantly and that the master works on his projects incessantly. (He says that “people like Grunenwald” will shut their mouths when I “appear.”) Talked about “Resonances.”

M^{me} Dupré vehemently opened fire against Grunenwald, saying, “he’s like a musical demagogue” and compared him to Borcard. They were not at G[runenwald]’s concert yesterday.

Friday 4 February 1944

At Meudon. Worked and talked until late with the master. Showed them a card received from the abbé Huard.²⁴⁹ M^{me} Dupré was thrilled with the complimentary language; the master was indifferent.

At supper Dupré spoke of Grunenwald:

“That devil is a show-off; I’ve had a number of reports from friends: it was horrible yesterday. The most terrible of all is that he is implicating me. People say, ‘That’s the Dupré tradition, since Grunenwald is [290] his student, and he plays at St-Sulpice.’ And I can’t even get angry with him. If I say nothing, my reputation is tarnished; if I get angry, they’ll say, ‘Dupré is jealous of Grunenwald!’..”

“It’s terrible,” M^{me} Dupré said to me.

MD: “In any case, one thing is certain: my ‘successor’ is you. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for St-Sulpice, despite what I think. They will never accept a woman. It’s idiotic.”

This was the first time that Dupré had spoken to me concerning his successor at St-Sulpice and, as far as I’m concerned, I have never allowed him to suspect that I’m capable of imagining this.

Played three of the *Sept Pièces* for the master: “Souvenir,” “Marche,” “Final.” The published metronome mark for the march is too slow. He played it for me. He remarked that I had understood “Souvenir” very well and played the “Final” “with fire.” Very enthusiastic. Also played Dupré’s version of Daquin’s *noëls* in D minor and G [major]. He told me that I am too strict in these two pieces, which he regards as exceptions in the repertoire. He played them for me and had me play them “as fast as possible” and with panache; trills [291] in the style of Liszt.

MD: “It doesn’t work otherwise; you can have fun with it, do what you want. That’s where I find fault with Jean-Jacques [Grunenwald], trying to make it sound like grand music.

“I can’t wait to see you on a stage, you know. If only this war would finish...” I discretely questioned the master concerning the plan to lower the Pleyel organ.

MD: “It’s become out of the question. There is no money. I felt hopeful on the day when we were both there. Kiesgen told me on the telephone the other day: they’re imbeciles; they’re afraid to do anything.”

Friday 18 February 1944

At Meudon. The master is in Lyon, where he is playing for Widor’s birthday.²⁵⁰

249. This could, perhaps, have been the abbé who was choirmaster for the seminarians of St-Sulpice, mentioned in the diary entry for Jan. 30, 1944.

250. Charles-Marie Widor was born in Lyon on Feb. 21, 1844. According to the concert program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1422, the Lyon concert Demessieux mentioned here was part of the season of the Association

In conversation, M^{me} Dupré spoke to me once again concerning my Paris concerts and told me that it will be necessary to play a little of all the moderns. She applied gentle pressure. I told her that I wish neither to “grovel” nor be like “those who play this to get that.” She said that I will not be playing at their behest, but these [works] must be played “to shut their mouths” and so that no one will say that Dupré stops me from playing them, or that [292] I don’t know all the repertoire (for those who insist that these works are a part of it).

I told her that it’s not for myself that I don’t want to “grovel” and that if I did not have “them” [the Duprés] I would be in the same situation as everyone else.

Me: “I tend to be self-sufficient and to break [with convention] at the risk of breaking myself. You are right to insist. In any case, I will always do what you wish.”

Mme D: “I told M^r Dupré; he did not want to force you. It is necessary, in your own best interest.” She went about it marvellously with me.

And also, M^{me} D: “One more thing needs doing, regarding composition. But Monsieur Dupré will speak to you about that. I know nothing more of it.”

Friday 25 February 1944

Yesterday, an organ recital at St-Sulpice organized by M. Dupré in honor of the centenary of Widor’s birth. He invited five of Widor’s students: Jacob, Cellier, Panel, de Valombrosa, Mignan.²⁵¹ He himself played the Variations from the *Symphonie-Gothique* and the first movement of the Sixth Symphony. In front of everyone, Dupré embraced Maman, and M^{me} Dupré embraced me.

Today at Meudon. A memorable day in which I continued to be astounded at Marcel Dupré’s nobility of spirit [293] and by his attachment to me, shared in all respects by his wife. Here are some precise excerpts from the master’s conversation with me that are so eloquent that I can add nothing:

MD: “I’ve a little story that will amuse you. As you know, I’ve decided to modify the presentation of the

Philharmonique de Lyon, directed by Jean Witkowski and presented in the Salle Rameau. The opening work was Widor’s Third Symphony in E minor for organ and orchestra. Also on the program: Saint-Saens’s *Danse Macabre* (M. J. Mégret, violin), Dupré’s Concerto in E minor for organ and orchestra, an organ improvisation, and the overture to Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*.

251. The five organists were mainly composition students of Widor. All had become titular organists of Paris churches: Edouard Mignan (the Madeleine); Alexandre Cellier (Temple-de l’Étoile); Count Amédée de Vallombrosa (St-Eustache); Georges Jacob (St-Ferdinand-de-Ternes); Ludovic Panel (Sacré-Cœur). The printed program is preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1423, and reproduced in *Bulletin of the Association des Amis de l’Art de Marcel Dupré*, No. 20 (May 2002): 25. Taking turns, the five and Dupré performed eleven movements selected from Widor’s ten organ symphonies and his *Suite Latine*. The recital was scheduled for 4:00 PM and, as had been the custom for a century in France, when a recital took place in a church, it served as pre-service music for a regularly scheduled sacred rite, in this case Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. As is also noted in the printed program, the music for Benediction was under the direction of choirmaster Pinaud, with Maurice Robineau at the choir organ. It included three Latin motets by Widor, based on plainchants appropriate to Benediction, after which Dupré performed the Allegro from Widor’s Sixth Symphony as the postlude.

Études. There are some in which I need make no great change in order to turn them into... what I want. As for the others, I cannot bring myself to transform them in such a way; it must... it must be something else. Ultimately, in this way, Leduc is sidestepped; fine.²⁵² But, as I very much regret that no grand études for organ have been written, it's been decided, with Bornemann, that you are going to write six that he will publish."

Me: "What!..."

MD: "Yes. I had a conversation with Bornemann; we have studied the question thoroughly. I went to see him one Friday and I told him, 'Think about it.' Sunday morning, I found him beneath my gallery; he said to me, 'I'm leaving on a trip, and I wanted to give you my answer [294] beforehand. For the young lady, it's agreed.' M^{me} Dupré had said to me: 'Above all, do not speak to her of this before you are sure, so that she does not get her hopes up for nothing'"

Dupré's plan was so sublime that I did not dare believe it could be true. Me: "Master, it's impossible that I write any études after you!"

"No, it's not. You will search for ideas that are yours. This will reflect your personality. You must do one in thirds, one in sixths..."

Me: "But, Master, I don't want to! The idea of writing a set of études is yours; the idea belongs to you. That is something which should mark this era."

MD: "Exactly. And that's why it needs to be you who writes them. You are young; this will be your point of departure. I would not ask this of anyone else. I tell you, you must write them for art and for France."

Me: "But wait... what about yours?"

MD: "Those that lend themselves to being arranged I will publish with other titles."

Me: "And the others?"

MD: "The others will be written by you. You will do one in thirds, one in sixths, one for alternating toes; one in triplets if you like. Take [295] only the formula and use a different principle."

Me: "Find a title [for yours] and publish them as they are."²⁵³

MD: "No; 'they' will remain unpublished."

Me: "Master, you are not publishing them so as to allow me to write their equivalent..."

MD: "... That's right." I was speechless.

MD: "I wrote them for you. If Bornemann had not held a knife to my throat, I would have published them as late as possible. I'm keeping the manuscript for Marguerite. They will be posthumous. And then... when the time comes, you may, if you wish, give them a kiss before they are locked away where they belong." Tears rose to our eyes; Dupré seemed happy.

252. The fact that Leduc had exclusive rights to publish Dupré's pedagogical works (such as études) was mentioned in the diary entry for Jan. 21, 1944. Here, Dupré considered transforming the Études he had composed for Demessieux into something else, so that he could give them to Bornemann, instead of Leduc, for publication.

253. Demessieux here argued that if Dupré could not see publishing the twelve studies he composed for her with the title "Études," he should still find a way to publish all twelve, without alteration.

Me: "Master... I don't know what to say."

MD: "I know how scrupulous you are. Allow yourself to do this."

Me: "You are advancing my cause with Bornemann?"

MD: "Yes."

Me: "I should throw myself into your arms like the father that you are to me; but... your études, they are so beautiful... Oh, I cannot!"

MD: "This evening, when you've returned home, this will sink in better for you." The master gave me in writing the list of études he is sacrificing.

MD: "Try to forget that these were written; like everything else, they must be kept a strict [296] secret. They no longer exist except for you and for me." I bowed to his wishes and posed one last question to the master:

Me: "Are you sure I can write them?"

MD: "Goodness! When you played your "Nativité" for me I realized this!" A sudden idea came to me:

"Allow me a question, Master: is your contract with Leduc a lengthy one?"

MD: "Forty years."

Me: "And there remain...?"

MD: "Twenty... twenty-five years."

Me: "Well then, wait until then to publish your Études!"

MD: "Well, I never! There's an idea to mull over now! That I publish them! At age 75, when I can no longer play the pieces! What a thought!" An unexpected question.²⁵⁴

Played five of the *Sept Pièces* for the master. He was enthusiastic. I wanted to return his score and the manuscript of his work on organ design to him.

MD: "Why? If you can use them, keep them."

Me: "I dare not."

MD: "I know! What's mine is yours. When my manuscripts are with you, I rest easy. You see, I would never entrust all that to anyone else." And straight away:

MD: "To see Jean Gallon's face when I tell him all about this! I will say to him, you 'gave me an angel,' what can I give you in return? This frail child, a master? A star, a [297] sun? What surpasses a star or a sun?... Don't you think that, from the point of view of the divine, an angel is higher than a star?"

As we chatted, we came upon M^{me} Dupré.

MD: "We are having a major discussion. Can you imagine that she had it in her head that she would be

254. The question that was "unexpected" was Demessieux's regarding the length of Dupré's contract with Leduc that required him to publish all pedagogical works with that firm. Only this question made Dupré suddenly realize that he could submit as such to Bornemann the Études he wrote for Demessieux (rather than transforming them into something else) if he waited for twenty to twenty-five years.

stealing the monopoly on études from me.” M^{me} Dupré laughed. MD: “She wants me to publish them when I’m 75.” I attempted, in vain, to escape from the notion that Dupré had sacrificed his Études.

Mme D: “Say nothing, nothing!”

MD: “She can’t believe it, you know.” I embraced them; they fondly returned the gesture, the master removing his hat. I will never forget their eyes riveted on me, their two loving gazes.

In the afternoon, [I had] worked with M^{me} Dupré, [and I did] radiant pedal work. Listened to the master on the radio for half an hour.²⁵⁵ Splendid. He’d left with Marguerite in the morning and returned, quite tired, at 5:00 PM. A bite to eat together. I left them quite late.

Monday 28 February 1944

Yesterday, Maman paid a visit to Dupré at St-Sulpice to thank him. All three embraced her, gathered around her.

A hundred people in the gallery, including Litaize [298] and his wife. Litaize took a beating in a discussion with M^r Guerner about Widor.

Maman chatted a long time with M^{me} Dupré, then with the master, who came to see her. He said that “we had done battle on Friday, and that my études should be ‘dazzling.’”²⁵⁶ M^{me} Dupré said that “I am worthy of what they are doing.” They were so happy.

After Mass, as Maman was discretely taking her leave, M^{me} Dupré ran to catch her on the square and, in front of Litaize and others, the master then chatted only with her [Maman] until they parted.

Today I went to thank the master at the end of his class; M^{me} Dupré knew about this in advance. The three Duprés were to take a tour and had planned to meet [there, too].²⁵⁷ They welcomed me warmly, their attitude sweeping me along with them. Curious glances. People came over to greet them, kiss a hand. “Let’s go; we are taking this child away,” said Dupré, while M^{me} Dupré ignored all the hangers-on, attending only to me. (It took me back to Rouen.)

Traversing the foyer [of the Conservatory], the master had a piquant word to say about a new statue that the students had defaced. Marguerite, delighted to see her father laugh: “What does it represent?”

MD: “It’s a likeness of Madame [Marguerite] Long. Come and see; it’s from this side that it’s a good representation.”

255. According to Dupré’s handwritten record preserved in BnF Music Dept., 2803, boîte 6, 1424, on Feb. 25, 1944, at 3:30 pm, Dupré gave a talk on Widor and performed three movements from Widor’s organ symphonies for live broadcast from St-Sulpice on Radio Nationale.

256. “[W]e had done battle on Friday” refers to Dupré’s “major discussion” with Demessieux on February 25 in which he pressed upon her his idea that she herself should compose a set of études for organ, to replace his set that he intended to publish in another form. Demessieux protested that she was neither capable nor worthy of doing this, but Dupré was adamant, and finished by implying that she just needed to get used to the idea.

257. The meaning of “take a tour” [*faire une visite*] is vague in this context. As their first stop turned out to be St-Augustin Church in the 8th arrondissement, the plan may have been a tour of church architecture and organs.

"Oh..." went M^{me} Dupré, [299] afraid someone might have overheard. "Let's go; come quickly." Marguerite laughed under her breath, and I was bursting to do the same.

We took the train to St-Augustin and chatted about the "études."

MD: "You alone can write them."

Me: "No, Master. You're the only one."

MD: "It's you, I tell you; or, since it must be so: for you to do it would be the same as if it were I." M^{me} Dupré strongly advised me to make two of them less difficult than the others, so that people will buy them; that way Bornemann will commission from me another six in which I can be freer. The master told me that if he returns to America, he will put my études on his program. He also mentioned that with [H. W.] Gray being the [American] agent for Bornemann, he has only to say the word for their publication to spread across America.

Papa is with Yolande in Aigues-Mortes.

Friday 10 March 1944

Ever since Tuesday, a severe pain in my left hand has prevented me from practising. The Duprés have been alerted. At Meudon, M^{me} Dupré made me wear a bandage that she herself made for me. She told me to wait for the master who wanted to see me when he returned. Very anxious.

[300] Wednesday 15 March 1944

Today I went to see Doctor Dramez, a radiologist, who took a photo of my hands. The X-ray revealed nothing abnormal. The doctor said that, while practicing, I must have used too much "effort," and that it has nothing to do with rheumatism. He advised another week's rest and treatment.

Sunday 19 March 1944

My parish priest having given me a vacation because of my hand, I went to St-Sulpice, where I was expected. Today was the inauguration of the automatic starter that Matigot had installed. The master and Matigot invited me to the "baptism" of the apparatus. Perroux and the abbé Champenois were there, too.²⁵⁸ (I noticed that Dupré invited no one else, although, among others [at St-Sulpice today] were Rolande Falcinelli and Boulnois.) They kept me there to the end.

I must emphasize Dupré's generosity towards the young: two groups of young people had appointments to hear him. They had asked for the Toccata and Fugue in D minor [by Bach] as postlude to High Mass, but he preferred to improvise a fugue. He gave them a quarter-of-an-hour-long introductory course on organ design and came down personally to ask for "permission" to play at the 10:30 Mass [301] (as a bonus). He played the Toccata and Fugue in D minor and his own Fugue in F minor [from Op. 7].

Friday 25 March 1944

258. It has been impossible to identify the abbé Champenois.

At Meudon. Upon my arrival, I met M^r Beuchet in conversation with M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite. M^{me} Dupré, whose manner towards me was especially amicable, came to greet me and drew me into the conversation, which she turned to the subject of my future organ at St-Esprit.²⁵⁹

The master had his class going on in his quarters, so we worked in Marguerite's to prevent the students seeing me. At teatime, free at last, the master joined us. I'm jotting down here some short pieces of dialogue that, like snapshots, can assist in getting to know him.

MD: "I'm disgusted... They play terribly! They stomp their feet on my organ! They make me... absolutely furious. Do you know what Thérèse [Vigot] came out with? She had made a mistake, really botched it, and then she said to me: 'It's your organ's fault.' I said to her, 'That's not fair; how do you expect the poor instrument to respond?'"

Me: "It responds with the wrong notes that she played."

Mme D: "What do you expect when they are so weak?"

MD: "They don't like my organ; I see that very well."

Me: "But they do, Master; they speak very enthusiastically about it to me."

MD: "Ah! ... But they're [302] stuck in their routines: 4' flute in the pedal, etc."

Mme D: "In a moment, when Jeanne has played the organ for you, it will all be better, you'll see."

MD: "You are going to play the organ for me?... This evening?"

Me: "If you wish, Master."

MD: "Oh, yes! You're sure it won't tire your hand?... After a three-hour class, I need to relax. You will soothe me." The master said that he would "relax all the better for listening to me," and we descended immediately.

Prelude and Fugue in B minor and Fugue in G minor by Bach. *Cortège et Litanie* [Op. 19/2], and "Fileuse" [Op. 28/2] by Dupré. Fugue in C minor by Mozart. Concerning the *Cortège et Litanie*, Dupré said to me:

"I'm so tired of this work... just as everyone else is tired of it."²⁶⁰ I may even be tiring of my entire body of work."

Me: "Master..."

MD: "It varies from day to day; tomorrow I may think otherwise."

Me: "Well, look at it this way: if it can be said that I have a particular fondness for any 'one' of your works," then it is for *Cortège et Litanie*." Dupré smiled; then:

"Medtner, too, shared this fondness: he made Glazunov come to Meudon expressly to hear me play that work."²⁶¹

259. The diary entry for October 9, 1941 contained the first mention of Dupré and Demessieux's hope that a great organ would be installed in St-Esprit.

260. Cf. a similar remark in Steed 1999, 23: "Dupré's *Cortège and Litanie* is perhaps the ecclesiastical equivalent of Ravel's *Bolero*."

261. Nicolai Medtner, like Alexander Glazunov, was Russian-born and -trained. The allusion to Russian composers is apt in the light of a suggestion made by Delestre and cited in Steed 1999, 22, that the very constricted and repetitious theme

He gave me his fingering for the “Fileuse.” In [the works by] Bach, he again found the required “grandeur” and said that my playing is “expressive” and flexible. Speaking [303] of the Fugue in E minor [from BWV 533],

MD: “It’s considered easy, but it’s one of his masterpieces. It must be played as if it were night. It’s the nighttime calm, a fugue that one hears at night.”

We were also ecstatic about the Mozart fugue. I said that every entrance of the subject is astonishingly striking.

MD: “Yes.”

Me: “What is so extraordinary in Mozart is the way his pieces and masterpieces are tossed off with seeming casualness: here’s a fugue, there’s a symphony, a quartet... and we come across these pieces the way one finds an eagle’s feather, and we think: could this feather have possibly been part of a living creature?”

MD: “What you say is very true. He and Bach are the two musical Goliaths. The two titans are Beethoven and Wagner.” He thought for a moment and then summed it up this way:

“There are great geniuses, geniuses, men of ingenuity, great musicians and, after that, there’s nothing.” This conclusion pleased me immensely, as Dupré himself sensed. Spying some manuscripts in amongst my music,

MD: “Sketches?”

Me: “Yes, Master.”

MD: “Show me.” These were some sketches for my 1st Étude.” I played [304] them through once, with their timbres.

MD: “That’s interesting... that seems very interesting to me; play it again.” Afterwards, again, MD: “Play this another time... and then here, quickly.” This “quickly” was anxious.

MD: “There’s something here... a certain atmosphere, without doubt.” He repeated it several times.

MD: “It’s something stormy that you want?”

Me: “Yes, and orchestral.”

MD: “I see. With a melody that rises out of the hands and climbs to the end?...”

Me: “Yes.”

MD: “I don’t know... but... something like this...?” Attracted irresistibly to the keys, Dupré improvised a fragment of a gesture that gushed forth, then stopped suddenly.

MD: “Is that what you want?”

Me: “Yes.”

MD: “That, or something like it, naturally, but it captured the spirit, didn’t it?”

of the *Litanie* reflects Dupré’s admiration of Russian composers. A short, melodically conjunct motive, repeated incessantly, describes the type of plainchant to which an ecclesiastical litany is intoned; hence, “Litanie(s)” as the title of compositions by Dupré, Jehan Alain, Falcinelli, and, in her *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes* (Boston: McLaughlin & Reilly, 1950), Demessieux.

Me: “Yes! You’ve found it.” Ever since Dupré put his finger on my nature, it is there that our sensibilities have their closest contact. What a strange phenomenon to be able to share reciprocally with each other both mold and inspiration. Dupré was affirmative and said that I have there the “point of departure” for my *Études*. I told him that I think I’ve caught a glimpse of the six, sometimes even hear them, and that, when I take paper, I cannot write a measure without trouble and without [305] feeling discouraged.

MD: “We’re going to ask M^{me} Dupré to read you a passage about Chopin. This will console you. Come now.”

M^{me} Dupré came down and read, and there followed a broad discussion concerning the physiology of musical creation. I shared with them my idea that composition, properly speaking, would be, above all, a tangible reconstitution of what inspiration leaves behind; and this reconstitution would be the cause of anguish because it would seem to the composer that it would never conform closely enough to the vision. It seems to me that this is what explains the stubbornness of perseverance, diluted by despair. Dupré agreed with me and said to M^{me} Dupré:

“A composition teacher cannot accomplish with a student what the two of us are doing. One must ‘see’ the work before it is written.” To me: “You have to be able to discuss your ideas so that you don’t feel alone.”

Marguerite came down to read me a passage about Wagner. An atmosphere at once invigorating and sweet, intimate.

Good Friday 7 April 1944

At Meudon. I began by working with M^{me} Dupré while the master finished a lesson.

At 3:30, [306] Marguerite, the master, and the student joined us in the dining room where we listened on the radio to Dupré’s concert, recorded last evening: two Bach chorales, four of Dupré’s stations [from *Le Chemin de la Croix*]. Bad recording: the soft stops were “forced” sounding, the loud ones weakened by the sound engineer (this is how it appeared to me from the first notes, and I’m familiar with the “cooking” style of these “sound engineers”—what they call “well-modulated,” according to a colleague). Given how nervous Dupré was, I dared to advise him to assert himself henceforth before recording again.

During this concert, we were all gathered around the table; the master had beckoned me to his right. At the start, Dupré made some odd comments that had the effect of imposing silence. Then, in spite of himself, he listened to his piece, and, in the middle of the 14th station, he distractedly removed his glasses, placed his hands on his eyes, and I clearly heard him stifle some tears he was attempting to hide. My distress communicated itself to Marguerite and M^{me} Dupré, and we sat in anguish, not daring to say anything, while the student, some distance away, noticed nothing. A moment later, in an effort to make a joke, the master said to me, “Did you hear? The second wrong note.” Immediately after the broadcast, [307] MD: “Well, if that’s how I play the organ—drat—I know why my enemies criticize me behind my back. That was a mess.” M^{me} Dupré turned this into banter; the student excused himself, and I went up to Marguerite’s room for a while.

When I quietly came back down, M^{me} Dupré said to me, “You see, he is still angry. It is getting no better” (the student had unwittingly mentioned Busser). Then, as the only remaining way out, M^{me} Dupré sent us to the organ [and said,] “Go, do some work. I’ll see you shortly, my dear.”

MD: “In a little while, Marguerite and I will play *Islamey* for you.” The master calmed down while we worked. I played the *Suite Bretonne* [Op. 21 and the] the *Scherzo* [Op. 16]; I showed him a plan for a [set of]

variations that he had asked me to make. After the *Scherzo*, the master repeated his favorite sentence: "I've never heard such playing." He said that I had again made progress in expertise.

MD: "As a matter of fact, the *Scherzo* was composed for an organ with *registrateur*."

Me: "Seeing that you have been thinking about the *registrateur* for a long time ago, why not transcribe these works? You have the right to, Master."

MD: "Yes, that's true. I could certainly imagine it with *registrateur*."

Dupré gave me [308] a Noël theme on which to improvise variations. We worked together in dogged and relentless fashion, with enthusiasm, relinquishing the manuals, rivaling each other in perfection, seizing upon one another's ideas, treating the theme in a thousand ways; in the end, I dare to say, each searching out our utmost. For me, this was emulation on a glorious scale [*émulation illustre*], of which I, alone, have the privilege. This went on for a good three-quarters of an hour, after which the master spoke to me enthusiastically about improvisation. I spoke to him of the impressionability, the hypersensitivity of the improviser. We are in agreement.

After that, I heard the *Islamey* transcription played by the master and Marguerite. I was moved by their efforts and the "conquest" of the modern organ. I listened from the back of the hall with M^{me} Dupré; then the master came to us, saying to me, "I wanted you to be the first to hear it. Now tell me what you think: you are in the best position of anyone." After *Islamey*, these word[s] on the *registrateur* system, "everything is possible," ignited my imagination.

When I left, the master said of me, "She is full of ideas for improvisation and composition."

[309] Friday 14 April, 1944

Afternoon at Meudon. Saw all three [Duprés], ate with Marguerite.

Spent a half-hour with the master; talked improvisation; religion, also—the latter on a personal level, without debate.

Accompanying me back to the station, Dupré said, "The *registrateur* opens up infinite paths that I cannot explore to the fullest. I am standing at the door, whereas you, who are so closely involved in this birth, will discover everything."

The master is waiting avidly for my *Étude*: our last words were about the *Étude*.

Friday 21 April 1944

A horrible week. Paris was bombed twice—the suburbs several times.²⁶² What is in store for tomorrow? Spent two nights in the cellar hearing bombs whistling and houses collapsing. Not far from us, the neighbourhood of the little Bercy church, where I worked so hard for my organ prize, has been

262. According to a discussion starter posted to the forum "Skyscraper City," under the title "Paris under the Bombs," Mar. 18, 2009 <<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=830546>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, of the several times during the war that Anglo-American forces bombed Paris suburbs (working-class districts, where factories fuelling the Nazi war effort were located), the night of April 20–21, 1944 was the deadliest. In an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the La Chapelle rail yards, the entire La Chapelle neighbourhood in the 18th arrondissement, near Sacré-Cœur, was destroyed; 641 civilian lives were lost, and 377 were wounded.

devastated.²⁶³ Four student victims of fire; one wounded. From my balcony, two fires can be seen, one near Meudon. Impossible in the early hours to reach the Duprés on the telephone.

This afternoon, [310] I went to Meudon. I fell into M^{me} Dupré's arms: "How are the three of you?" She told me that for them, too, last night had been frightening. The fire is smoldering a hundred metres away. Dupré has left to teach his class (!). I saw Marguerite.

M^{me} Dupré and I chatted until 5:00. This dear, energetic woman has a very big heart, which she opens to me more and more, sharing in confidence some of the stories of her life. She told me that she cried all day long yesterday, without showing it; but all the same, she was shaken. Our conversation soothed her, and she became more cheerful. We ate together and welcomed the master, who had returned, sad yet calm. He embraced his wife.

Mme D: "It didn't go well?"

MD: "'They' played like swine."

Mme D: "I can see that instantly; don't worry." Dupré came over to me:

MD: "This child's hands are frozen; you were afraid last night." Dupré asked whether "the little one had eaten," and the three of us chatted for a while. "And Rouen..." Dupré began, without being able to continue. Then, he immediately said that he had just seen Grunenwald and turned towards me.

MD: "Keep this to yourself: I'm trying to send Grunenwald to Toulouse, where the post of director of the conservatory [311] is vacant. St-Sernin, too. I told him, at St-Sernin you will have ten thousand francs. Do you know what he replied to me? 'Per month?' I don't know what that one has in his head." Grunenwald put up some resistance; Dupré became impatient and threatened him [MD to Grunenwald]: "I have put you in Cortot's hands."²⁶⁴ If you refuse, you will end up with nothing."

MD: "I want him gone, you understand?" Dupré said to me. M^{me} Dupré left us and, making our way to the organ, the master continued:

"It would suit us well if Jean-Jacques went away..." I dared not say anything.

For Dupré, I played my Étude, composed as far as the recapitulation. He immediately said to me: "Ah, that pleases me, you know. It has grandeur." I played it again.

MD: "Magnificent; you've got it on the first try. Isn't it strange: you, who are the only one to rely on me, have discovered your own harmonic language. My Études opened the way to you, but they were only the roots; yours will blossom. Ah, when they hear you play that!... Your enemies and mine will say, 'That's not music; it's only technique [312]; it's unplayable.' Were there only one voice to the contrary in the press, this would suffice. But don't think about them when [you are] writing. Moreover, they'll say all kinds of things about you, in any which way. You must simply shrug it off. You will see: it's not so difficult to disregard oneself." Returning to the Étude: "We are closely aligned in everything; from an intellectual point of view,

263. The church where Demessieux worked for her organ prize was, perhaps, Église Notre-Dame-de-la-Nativité de Bercy, located in the 12th arrondissement. According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89glise_Notre-Dame-de-la-Nativit%C3%A9_de_Bercy>, under the heading "Le decor intérieure," accessed Nov. 27, 2022, it has a 2-manual, 13-stop romantic-style organ built by Stolz & Frères, ca. 1880.

264. According to Simon 2009, 77–81, internationally famous pianist Alfred Cortot was a key figure in the Vichy government, with the job of regulating music during the years 1941–1944 (roughly the period of the Occupation).

you issue from me, and [yet] you are different: you are you. I have followed the path; you are ‘discovering’ [it]. I repeat: someone had to surpass me. That’s all I want for you.” And again,

MD: “All my students, I believe, have confidence in me. They all like me, especially the men; the women, not all. But you alone see me and have always seen me in the position you have given me. Even as a child, you knew you were destined for [work with] me. I knew you in the infancy of your career. As for them, they think they will preserve their own personality by distancing themselves from me; they prefer to be independent of Marcel Dupré. They don’t have your courage. Messiaen is an artist, all the same; he refused. I had some hope for Grunenwald: I was very quickly set straight.” [313]

The master said that he could “see” the end of my *Étude* and was considering the details. I explained to him how I compose and what my alternatives had been for the *Étude*. He listened to me with great interest, discussing and, as always, seeking a peer rapport up to his standards, as though to teach me dignity and modesty by example, such as,

MD: “Beethoven said, ‘To retouch the details is to alter the character of the work’...”²⁶⁵ He was right. He could say that. For us, this is somewhat frightening.”

I asked the master for permission not to improvise on some noëls. He didn’t insist, saying, “Don’t worry.”

He questioned me and became terribly pale when I described to him the suffering at the beginning of the week. He said to me, in such a muffled voice that I believe he is seized by a fear that I will falter, “You know... that your work is the most important...” I responded that nothing can deter me, that I hold to this goal above all, and that my determination has not weakened.

The master told me that M^{me} Dupré and he would like to see me more often; speaking of a recent [314] improvisation session given at Meudon, MD: “... M^{me} Dupré told me, ‘You know very well that Saturdays are when she teaches... if you were to say it, she would drop everything for you.’” And speaking of recent events:

MD: “They wearied you, they wore you out, certainly. But this will make you ‘tough as steel.’” That’s his motto. We chatted with friendly intimacy.

MD: “When you need to hear our voices, telephone, often. We would like to have you come to Meudon for everything.” And, finally, MD: “Above all, confide in me. You have a friend in me, you know.” We chatted a moment longer with M^{me} Dupré, who accompanied us as far as the garden gate, whereas the master carried on as far as the station.

Monday 24 April 1944

This evening, finished my *Étude* No. 1 in E minor for organ. Immediately telephoned Meudon. M^{me} Dupré ran to inform the master; both of them congratulated me.

Thursday 27 April 1944

First thing in the morning, received a pneumatic message from Perroux who asked me to see him at the American Church, Quai d’Orsay. He was inside the organ [chamber] when I arrived [315], a young student of Dupré [being] at the manuals. “M’sieur Perroux, it’s Mademoiselle Demessieux!”

265. No source for this quotation has been found. Dupré was probably paraphrasing.

I quickly examined the organ. Perroux came down, and I asked him for the details of the *Écho* [division], because this was my first opportunity to play an organ with an *Écho*. A feeling of “knowing” while on this organ, and I secretly savoured this mastery of an organ [with] electric [action]. Improvised, then played Dupré’s “Final” [from *Sept Pieces*, Op. 27], Widor’s Toccata, thinking myself alone except for the presence of Perroux and his acolyte. Perroux hovered over my playing as he followed it, and I perceived, when I stopped, that five or six other people were listening to me, including Perroux’s daughter. They kept insisting that I play other works. I got out of it by asking Perroux to explain the specification of the organ to me. We went into the nave, but they joined us, still insisting that I play some more, questioning me.

Just then, an alert saved me. I left alone, on foot, though they tried to accompany me. Cannon. Some shrapnel ended up at my feet... how many times before it’s my turn?

Friday 28 April 1944

A concert of works by Jehan Alain at the Salle des [316] Agriculteurs.²⁶⁶ I met M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite (the master is on tour).²⁶⁷ In the intermission, chatted with them for a long time, familiarly, as always. Papa was with me.

Since she had to leave before the end, M^{me} Dupré offered us their seats near Florent Schmitt. Seven years ago, at the Conservatory, I publicly played a work for two pianos by Florent Schmitt. He had been enthused with my talent as a pianist, and I was in a position of favour with this unique character. Today, he recognized me, and we engaged in conversation. We exited together. Questioning me, he was very intrigued by my vague responses. Schmitt: “Come see me in St-Cloud some Thursday.”

[In attendance] at this concert: Serge Lifar, Honegger, etc. From M^{me} Dupré’s seat, I could see Grunenwald, and when our looks crossed, sparks flew.

Friday 12 May 1944

At Meudon. The master was working in his office, M^{me} Dupré and I in the dining room. At 4:00, M^{me} D: “When M^r Dupré has finished the measure he’s working on, he will come eat with you.” So then, I chatted with the master.

MD: “I was copying out the “Suite.”²⁶⁸ I absolutely must make up my mind to give it to Bornemann, or he’ll never stop saying to me, ‘I won’t publish the young lady, if you don’t give me anything.’ Only, first, I want [317] the two of us to be in agreement. You will tell me what you think; I’ll give nothing to Bornemann without having your opinion. We’ll do this together.”

Me: “Master, you know that you could reverse your decision—I beg you—you are free.”

266. This would have been a concert of Alain’s vocal, piano, and chamber works.

267. Dupré’s concert programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1427–1431, indicate that he played concerts in the city of Vichy and in the following departments of France during the period April 26 through May 5, 1944: Morbihan, Finistère, and Loire (two concerts).

268. A reference to the work that would be published as Dupré’s *Suite*, Op. 39 (Bornemann, 1944), based on four of the *Études* he composed for Demessieux.

MD: "That's not the point! The 'Études' are yours. I don't know yet what I'll take from the Adagio: the little six-voice ricercare is not too bad, or even the C major [section], doing away with the triplets, naturally. You have the list of Études I'm abandoning. In terms of what I'm keeping from the others, I want to discuss that with you; I insist on this." And while chatting,

MD: "How strange is this story of the Études... I decided to write twelve, for you, with the idea that you would première them. Later, the Études are refused by Leduc, accepted by Bornemann, and we decide that you instead of I will compose them. If I dare say, Providence has made use of the last of those b— to achieve its ends!" Brusquely,

MD: "That's the Étude in thirds, right?"

Me: "No, it's not written yet."

MD: "Oh! So much the better. I'll let you know."

Me: "You keep yours, Master!"

MD: "But, no. Come now!" [318]

Dupré explained himself by means of a huge digression. He recounted his engagement for eighteen concerts in [blank]²⁶⁹ contracted just before the war (ten Bach recitals and the entire repertoire), and his voluntary return home to France. Ever since, he has thought of going again, has made approaches on his own; but, surmising that he could never return, he abandoned this plan. His contract is still valid.

MD: "In one of these eighteen concerts, I will play two of your Études, certainly your Étude in thirds. Then, I want to ask you to do a technical exercise for me, toes and heels in parallel motion. If it isn't parallel [motion], I can't do it fast enough." As that is, in effect, impossible, I stammered, flabbergasted in the face of this humility, and ended up laughing. Dupré opened his eyes in an honest gesture. Then,

MD: "That way, when I play them, you will become known. People will be astonished." And, simply: "If we see the end of the war, and if we come out alive, the grand tour that I must make before yours will be a tour to promote you." At work,

MD: "Begin with the Étude: I'm looking forward to it." I played it four times, quickly and slowly. Dupré was nearly speechless (occasionally he would remain dumbfounded, [319] as though turned to stone. It was only later that he revealed to me what he was thinking at that moment. And so it goes).

MD: "That's wonderful." He avidly paged through my manuscript: I asked him for criticism, but in vain. MD: "Of course, I'll tell you what I think. When one has an old friend like me, one can rely on him. One cannot see clearly for oneself; I'm certainly like that. I myself was alone at your age. Your colossal 'strength' derives from your confidence in me."

We spoke of personality and, with sensitivity, we were able to profess our faith; we probed the limits of sincerity, of loyalty; we countered each other with conviction. It is I who posed the question, bravely, and Dupré who enthusiastically discussed, proud of me and of himself. Without meaning to compare levels, as

269. The city whose name Demessieux did not catch or could not remember was probably Chicago. According to Murray 1985, 184, n.4, Dupré "had been engaged for a 1941 summer residency at the University of Chicago, where as late as June 1941 it was still hoped he might be permitted to come." His five-week masterclass, lecture, and recital series at the University of Chicago eventually took place in June–July 1946 (Murray 1985, 189).

far as I'm concerned, I maintain that what separates Nietzsche from Wagner, Wagner from Liszt, Brahms from Schumann, will draw together ever more tightly the reciprocal confidence Marcel Dupré and I have in each other. To conclude, the master returned to my Étude: "It's good, my little one, it's good!" and emphasized each word.

Dupré followed this with a strange account. "I have spoken to you of conversations with canon Merret regarding women [320] in official roles?...

Me: "No, Master."

MD: "We discussed whether official posts could be held by women as well as by men or whether, on the contrary, they should be excluded. Fine. He said to me that he didn't see any reasons to disallow these [posts] to equally cultivated women. I said to him, 'Why is the organist post in a church forbidden to them? In my class, I have six women as students as compared to three men. I don't wish to cause your priestly heart pain, but it must be stated that in our time, particularly, women are more religious than men. Why disallow women taking the organist's post in a church when they come there of their own accord to pray?' He responded, 'I think you're right; I think the same way.' I continued, 'I understand that one cannot nominate a woman to a seminary; those young [men] must be left in peace. But do you believe that the Cardinal would oppose naming a woman to Ste-Clotilde, the Madeleine, Sacré-Cœur, the Cathedral, St-Sulpice, if the woman were a universally hallowed artist?' He said to me, [321] 'The Cardinal would not oppose this.' Then I said this to him, 'Suppose there were a competition for the post at St-Sulpice... Just suppose that someone came along, unlike anyone ever seen, who crushed (excuse the term) all other contenders; suppose I put that someone there, and this someone were a woman? Between you and me, what would the Cardinal do? And you—would you accept her?' He responded to me, 'The Cardinal would accept her, and I would support this.' There, my little one." We kept a long silence.

MD: "The more I [think about it], the more convinced I become that my successor is you. My 'scepter' must go only to you; you are the crown prince, and we are collaborators."

Then the master gave me a choice of themes on which to improvise variations or a passacaglia. I chose the variations. In extraordinarily good form. Dupré rose and cried out after each variation. He repeated "That was lovely" or "That was wonderful," over and over. Between two variations, I asked him if I may go right to the limit. MD: "Oh, yes!" When I stopped after a toccata of chords from the wrist, [322] the master had very moist eyes.

MD: "You're going to do for improvisation and composition the same as you've done for performance. Ah! It's no longer a matter of searching for the true stretto, is it now? It was necessary, of course, but now..."

I mentioned the scherzos and symphonies that Dupré asked of us in class.

MD: "I assigned them because of you. Before you, they thought of them as some kind of monstrosity. Since you, I've never assigned them again; they couldn't do them."

We chatted some more. The master pulled some documents from my portfolio. MD: "Here. I worked on

your behalf during my tour.²⁷⁰ You will be amused by this. Also, here is the plan for the variations I improvised for the polytechnical [school]; I thought it would please you.”

He talked to me about his tour and wanted to put me to work again—next Friday. When I protested because of the time involved for him, MD: “I’m working as much for my own sake as for yours.”

M^{me} Dupré welcomed us, beaming, asking, as usual, how the lesson went. But, without swearing to it, I’d say her face seemed to let on that she had heard me play. [323]

Thursday 1 June 1944

All morning spent at Meudon. When, as planned, I telephoned M^r and M^{me} Dupré yesterday (they were back from a trip), the master had asked me to spend this morning at Meudon, working and chatting, “to get in touch again” before the next departure. I found all three very sad. M^{me} Dupré embraced me several times: “You’re not too tired?”

Me: “No... And you?”

Mme D: “The usual” (they had two alerts and bombardments that night). With emotion, M^{me} Dupré said to me, “You know, M^r Dupré is not leaving; the concert at Angers has been cancelled; the cathedral was struck. Oh! I was trembling to see him leave, with all that has happened; you see... I am calmer. Isn’t that better?” The master came down. “You see, Jeanne also thinks it’s better that you don’t go.”

MD: “Yes, but one has to do one’s duty.”

Mme D: “It’s not your fault...” With M^{me} Dupré, I suspected suppressed tears. The master was glum.

They told me about their trip. (They had thought they would never get their train from Paris because of the thousands of panicky people. Eleven and a half hours late, a bombing, four kilometres [324] on foot). For a moment, some sorrowful words concerning Rouen escaped Dupré’s lips. Then, we went to work.

MD: “Well? The Étude ?...” This simple mention had a brightening effect on Dupré, then his mood darkened once again:

MD: “Do you know what Le Boucher’s latest development is?”

Me: “No, Master.”

MD: “He has sold the [Montpellier] Salle de Concerts organ for thirty-three thousand francs.”

I was dumbfounded and sensed Dupré’s anger.

MD: “So that’s it!”

Me: “It was a mediocre organ, but it was better than nothing. Perhaps the intention is to replace it?...”

MD: “No. He sold it, or had it sold. An organist!”

Our project of concerts in honour of Cavaillé-Coll is ruined.²⁷¹ Dupré seems unlikely to forgive Le Boucher

270. According to programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1432–1437, Dupré performed concerts in the city of Toulouse and in following departments during the period May 21–27, 1944: Charente, Haute-Garonne, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Tarn, and Dordogne.

271. Cf. the diary entry for May 19, 1942.

for this incident, just as he does not forgive Le Boucher's lack of understanding about me when Dupré was testing the terrain while considering confiding in him.

Dupré continued in the same way, from memory, filling me in on the detailed specifications of used concert organs sold to new owners, thereby lost from concert halls. Organs in concert halls are [easily] counted, and they are flawed or lamentably deficient. These two facts go against his views and his [325] efforts. He told me that there are good instruments in private households, but that, in France, they invite the artist for no pay, and this fails to achieve the goal since there is no [financial] support.

MD: "To earn a living, an organist is obliged to be employed by funeral directors, or to teach, or to be a virtuoso in foreign countries." Naturally, we came to the point of using ourselves as examples. I spoke of the war, somber reference, in search of something to console him. The master responded indirectly:

MD: "At your current pace, you will have finished the *Études* and learned them for October. We will have covered the big improvisational forms. Therefore, in close to three years and two months, you will have accomplished our five-year plan. You will have finished! As for me, I am committed to inactivity until the end of the war, assuming that afterwards, the borders will be open." Knowing Dupré, this is his way of revealing that more and more courage is needed.

I played the *Étude* in thirds for the master. In sonority, it seems to me to fulfill the ideal I heard when [326] inspired by the Meudon organ. From the beginning, Dupré appeared surprised, then enthused. He found himself liking the theme, savouring it at each appearance; then, not finding it in its entirety in the conclusion (I had hesitated, fearing monotony), he said to me, unaware that he was reintroducing my first idea: "The theme should be here! We need to hear it at the conclusion. Well! You know... take my word for it, you have here the makings of a masterwork. It [the theme] must be heard again. It's not complicated. If you would just take that into account... It's worth it, you know..."

The master asked me to play it again. I drew his attention to a measure in which I was suddenly aware I'd not entirely realized my idea. I played and when I arrived at this passage, Dupré stopped me: "Don't change anything here, I beg you; the phrase is so beautiful; forget the rest. Above all, don't change a thing." Then, the master said, "It's a jewel, a marvel... What's fascinating is that we are working along parallel lines. I did my *Études*, now you are doing yours; mine are as they are, yours reflect your sensibility, your harmonic sense." The master became [327] particularly solemn: "With your musicality, and your soul, I was certain that you would write music to bring people to their knees!"

Me: "You have more confidence in me than I have in myself..."

MD: "Yes. It's a good thing I got you away from a certain Busser. You needed more 'security,' my little one!" Then, a moment later, revisiting the *Étude*,

MD: "You have found that nostalgia... the hands dreaming on the manuals while the pedals whisper." And this restored his smile.

MD: "... Furthermore, it is well-placed for my technique!" When I again thanked the master for wishing to play my *Études*, he responded, "I certainly owe you this. You learned mine before I did, so it follows that I should learn yours." He became interested in trying out the left-hand extensions. "Yes, I can do it."

He spoke to me of Grunenwald, Rolande Falcinelli, Françoise Aubut, J. C. Touche, saying that they are "young upstarts," and that I have nothing to fear from them; anyway, he is watching [them]."

MD: "There is only one child predestined to be what you are."

The master also told me that his friend Pierre Bourdon had invited him to lunch [328], with M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite, too, on the Feast of the Ascension [May 18, 1944].

MD: "He's a long-time friend with whom I can share my most secret thoughts. I've told him your entire story. He said to me, 'That's a fairy tale you've just told me.' I responded, 'When you see this little one and when you hear her, you can tell me whether it's a fairy tale.'" Chatted even longer.

MD: "It's a ray of sunshine, you know..." Dupré is visibly suffering the effects of the war and no longer tries to hide it from me, wanting only to conserve his energy.

Walking me back, the master seemed more and more absorbed in my Études. He spoke of them to Marguerite, whom we saw at the station. In theory, we have set my twelfth recital for the 17th [of June]; the master and Marguerite will play a program of music for the registrateur for my parents.

Upon my return, I finished the Étude in thirds.

Tuesday 6 June 1944

The invasion of Normandy. Rouen has been in flames for some days; the cathedral [is] on fire. General shelling. The war again, cities condemned to destruction. Paris cut off from everything. The end is at hand. Tomorrow...! God save France.

[329] Friday 9 June 1944

Over the past week, numerous telephone calls to the Duprés, all three in agony for Rouen. M^{me} Dupré cried when I told her that we shared their pain and kept repeating, "What you are saying pleases me, we are in the hands of God." The master turned away from his anguish to study my Études. MD: "You are going to do something very beautiful."

Today, since M^{me} Dupré had been determined to receive me, I made my way towards Montparnasse (open only for some suburban lines) and met up with the master, arriving from Meudon. He accompanied me as far as the train, retracing his steps and conversing solemnly. Our first words concerned the war.

MD: "Feeling emotional...?"

Me: "Yes, Master, very emotional."

MD: "Me too." I avoided speaking the name Rouen.

Dupré turned obstinately towards the future, describing it to me in a few words, seemingly unaware of any other objective. He told me that it's the final effort, and the hardest. I divined that in this present world, crashing down around us, Dupré is leaning towards the moral value of his work: the vast progress of the organ, represented by himself and me. [330] Amid this current ordeal, his imposing stance is an example for me. He spoke to me for the first time concerning the approaching horizon that is the end of the war. In a flash, I saw the future was imminent; I was moved.

He asked me for news concerning my third Étude, which was born during the fracas, eight hours ago.

At Meudon, M^{me} Dupré had prepared an enormous bundle of roses and peonies for me. We spent indescribably delightful hours together, imparting mutual confidence, sharing our woes. Chatted with Marguerite.

Saturday 17 June 1944

Twelfth recital at Meudon: *Cortège et Litanie*, *Scherzo*, *Suite Bretonne*, the *Sept Pièces*, all by Dupré. In very good form. Hours of oblivion, of hope; an oasis. The master, as always, very calm, but solemn. A secret sadness is upon all of us.

The master and Marguerite played *Islamey* (transcription with registrateur). My parents were enthused.

They [the Duprés] accompanied us back to the station and saw us on our way.

Monday 19 June 1944

Unexpected visit from M^{me} Dupré. The aim of her visit was [331] significant: to renew my parents' courage and mine. She sensed a shadow of sadness over my parents yesterday at St-Sulpice when we were speaking of Marie-Louise Girod's debut concert. She had advised me, vaguely, to attend; but today she addressed my parents.

"I don't want you to be unhappy. We spoke of it yesterday evening. M^r Dupré wished to write to you. If it troubles you in the least, then don't go. I could see very well that you were upset."

Then it was our turn to reassure her. We know very well that I must wait until the borders are open. We spoke warmly, and then I accompanied M^{me} Dupré back [to the subway], while speaking about my *Études*, a subject she likes and that brings a smile to her face.

Friday 23 June 1944

In Meudon. Upon arriving at the house, I was received by Marguerite, who said to me, tactfully, that her mother had been ill since yesterday evening. She was waiting for me, and I immediately went up to find her weak and tired. Not too feverish, but she felt weak this morning and thought she may have eaten something that made her [332] sick. She embraced me, spoke with difficulty, lamented, very briefly, about not having any strength.

When I spoke of her last visit, she said to me again, "Don't make yourself unhappy; oh! no. You are not obliged to go (to the Girod concert). If you were to go, I would fret the whole time, saying, 'this is upsetting them.'"

Then she sent me to the master, to plan the program of modern repertoire and chat, making me promise to come back up [later]. Dupré was taking advantage of having a little electricity again to practice on his organ.

"How does she seem?" he asked me anxiously.

Me: "Not very well. But it's not serious, is it?..."

MD: "I'm having the doctor come this evening, because... I found out there was typhoid in Paris. I've not told her this, or Marguerite."

Then the master promptly enquired about my work; as I had brought the manuscript of the *Étude* with me, he asked to see it. I played for him what I had written. He was enthused, questioned me, tried some passages. He told me that Bornemann must publish me again, immediately after the *Études*.

Next, he launched into speaking to me, with the greatest candour, about the war, telling me that, henceforth, he will keep me [333] up to date on his thoughts on this matter, as with all others, so that, he said, I rely more and more on him. I sensed a sort of reaction in him, a strength.

He announced to me that he has been named Commissioner General of Radio [systems] and that those around him are [Emmanuel] Bondeville, [Émile] Vuillermoz, and Florizone. For the first time I was aware of, I

saw him accept an honour with pleasure. He explained to me his personal connections to these men and told me,

“They will assist me with your debut.” And another important piece of news:

MD: “I’ve spoken to you of the Sorbonne?...”

Me: “No, Master.”

MD: “Above the Puvis de Chavannes²⁷² fresco, they’re going to put an organ! Of *one hundred* stops... I’m on the Commission; it’s I who drew up the estimate. It will cost two million, three hundred thousand [francs]; this appears to be [getting it] for a song. [Construction] will begin immediately after the war.”

Me: “Finally, a concert organ that could rival English and American organs! And built according to your ideas!”

MD: “Yes!”

Me: “And presented to an intellectual audience!”

MD: “Dufourcq has Chaillot, and we will have the Sorbonne, my little one!” And he added,

“We [334] have Gavoty in our ranks, now. Do you know what Norbert [Dufourcq] said to someone who spoke of Gavoty to him? ‘Gavoty is a b—; he has gone to the enemy’s side.’ The ‘enemy’ is me.” Dupré sees Providence helping him. When I told him that Gavoty was rising in my estimation and that he was, without doubt, intelligent, he responded, “Above all, he’s an opportunist.”

He also told me that they [the Duprés] were obliged to accept an invitation to eat with the Touche family, yesterday, and recounted to me how M^{me} Touche took him aside and asked him to “pull some strings” for Jean-Claude [Touche] so he can play at Chaillot.

MD: “I responded, ‘Madame, if you desire that Jean-Claude play at Chaillot, you mustn’t appeal to me; and, if you want to be certain that he’ll play there, you must declare yourself against me.’ She let it go...!”

I told him that I intend to set fixed repertoire for St-Esprit, and I asked for his advice. The master’s face lit up, and he responded, spontaneously, “All the better. It’s not necessary to redo work already done, but rather to help oneself to it! I’ll pass on to you my lists of repertoire for St-Sulpice.” I protested a little but was touched by this.

Dupré [335] laid out the program of modern repertoire, leaving me a choice, and lent me the scores. He mentioned Le Boucher’s [Organ] Symphony and, when I expressed indifference, said he sees no reason to impose it on me.

MD: “He no longer has an organ to which to invite you; you owe him nothing.” We considered the “Suite” formed from four of the Études, and Dupré decided to use the six-voice *ricercare* as the Adagio.²⁷³ Finally,

272. According to Nicolas Pioch, on the web page <<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/puvis/>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022 (© Jul. 16, 2002 by Nicolas Pioch), Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824–1898) was “[t]he foremost French mural painter of the second half of the nineteenth century. He decorated many public buildings in France (for example, the Panthéon, the Sorbonne, and the Hôtel de Ville, all in Paris) and also [the] Boston Public Library. His paintings were done on canvas and then affixed to the walls (marouflage), but their pale colours imitated the effect of fresco.”

273. This is a reference to the second movement, entitled “Cantabile,” of Dupré’s *Suite pour orgue*, Op. 39 (Paris: Bornemann,

Dupré thought through our entire conversation, which had lasted nearly two hours, and said, “I believe I’ve updated you on everything since our last meeting. I have, once more, gotten everything off my chest with you.”

We went up to M^{me} Dupré, who was still sorrowful. She took my hands, embraced me: “These hands are always cold... I heard the Étude!”

“Ah, that dreadful thing,” I exclaimed; then M^{me} Dupré turned to the master, and I had the pain of hearing her sigh, “You hear what she says...!”

Marguerite settled me beside her mother. I read [aloud] the program [of modern repertoire] Dupré had made. M^{me} Dupré gave her advice, then we chatted.

Dupré had to go to Paris, and M^{me} Dupré decided, “She must simply take your [336] train; you will leave together.” I departed, though it was difficult to leave her.

During our journey, Dupré and I entered into a wide-ranging discussion concerning our technique and, because he insists that I am going to surpass him, and that I am ten years more advanced than he was at my age, I told him that his [technique] is “natural” and mine is “artificial.” This compromise didn’t satisfy him but put us in agreement.

In Paris, the master headed towards St-Sulpice and asked me to accompany him. Relaxed and wide-ranging conversation. Spoke of Rouen and recalled some memories. The abbé Delestre is well.

MD: “I had always searched for a successor, among the men. The first time I had the clear impression that you would be my successor was when you played Franck’s *Prière* in class. I said to myself, ‘Is it possible that this child will rise to such heights...’ And I thought, ‘Why not her...?’” We passed by St-Sulpice, of which I made mention.

“St-Sulpice” said Dupré, pensive. MD: “Let’s continue,” and the master recalled events and repeated to me that I should count on him for encouragement. He showed me the hotel where Widor lived,²⁷⁴ and we parted ways at the doorstep where he entered. I myself was going to St-Sulpice.

[337] Saturday 24 June 1944

I reached M^{me} Dupré on the telephone, up and around and feeling better, and the master, too, delighted and indulging in banter. They kept passing the handset back and forth between them. MD: “Scold her; she has been careless getting up [like this].” We spoke of the Étude, and the master said he never stops thinking about it.

1944). Its counterpoint, dissonant both harmonically and rhythmically, is in six imitative parts—two for each hand and two for the feet—nearly throughout.

274. “Hotel” in this case probably refers to a grand building. According to Near 2015, 111, Widor’s residence from early 1870 to October 1892 was at 8 rue Garancière, described as “a stone’s throw from Saint-Sulpice.” This building was known as the Hôtel de Sourdéac because it had been built in 1646 by the Marquis de Sourdéac, presumably as his residence. Widor’s apartment occupied two floors of this building.

This evening, I completed the third Étude, the one in octaves.²⁷⁵ I wrote twenty-five measures in four hours.

Friday 30 June 1944

At Meudon. Back to work with M^{me} Dupré, [who is] feeling better; the four of us dined.

The master had just spent some time with the sculptor [Mateo] Hernandez for whom he had done a great favour. As soon as he returned, he told me a sentence spoken by Hernandez that had struck him: "We artists must work as if we are never going to die."

Much working and chatting with the master who immediately asked me to play for him the Études in thirds and in octaves, the endings of which he did not yet know. He was immensely moved by the Étude in thirds and said to me, "That's a very beautiful work. It is nostalgic, immensely moving! It's sensitive, pure as an angel. This is the first [338] time you found yourself, my little one. You have found yourself! It's you, right to your core, your portrait, even. Play it for me again."

Me: "Isn't it too 'suspended'?"

MD: "Ah! No! Or rather, yes, it is 'suspended,' ethereal, and that's as it should be. It's what pulls at the heart strings, like poetry." It was in this spirit that the master took in the third [Étude], which left him very pensive. MD: "All the same! When one sees you, such a young girl, write with this virility! For you are virile, without being masculine. Your Études are going to be the equivalent of the Transcendental [Études of Liszt]." The master added, "Your music doesn't resemble mine at all. Your harmonic language is very much you. But you are like me in terms of musical structure, use of themes, and musical effect. We have the same beliefs, yet we are different." He said that his advice is not to revise it.

Dupré, himself, mentioned Jean Gallon and said, "He will be sworn to secrecy, and so, may be told all," except, however, the history of the "Études." [339] Towards September, Dupré will invite him to Meudon.

The serious question of work needed on the [Salle] Pleyel organ came up again.

Worked on improvising a passacaglia.

Finally, walking me back to the station, the master said, with no prompting, that his own composition project is shaping up, becoming clear; he told me about it with the intimate enthusiasm of a creator revealing himself. This work will be for organ with *registre*. It will be in three parts: "Virgo Mater," "Mater Dolorosa," "Mediatrice," in this way taking its inspiration from the Virgin.²⁷⁶ In a sublime fashion, Dupré says that the subject is "unique," more marvellous than the grandest ancient subjects and capable of attracting the soul of even an unbelieving poet. Dupré conceived the germ of the idea during his recent tour of the south of France. They had asked him to improvise on the "Ave Maria de Lourdes," and he suddenly

275. Though composed third, the Étude in octaves became No. 6 of Demessieux's Six Études (Paris: Bornemann, 1946).

276. These three pieces (without, however, mention of *orgue à registre* and specifying only a moderate number of changes of registration) form Dupré's *Offrande à la Vierge pour orgue*, Op. 40 (Bornemann, 1944). As observed in Steed 1999, 117–18, the three movements are reworkings of three of the twelve Études Dupré composed as exercises for Demessieux. In the published versions, each is headed with a memorial dedication to one of Dupré's organ students (themselves published composers for the organ) who died during World War II: Jehan Alain, Jean-Claude Touche, and Joseph Gilles.

envisioned a triptych.²⁷⁷ Upon his return, he spoke of it to me, without seeming to belabour it. While chatting last Friday, he thought of it, and mentioned it to me; I was speaking about the registrateur [in connection with] his next work. He told me that he would “love” writing a work about the Virgin, and that the idea of writing it for registrateur had occurred to him.

Today, [340] we also spoke of the Litany²⁷⁸ (comparing it with Jehan Alain’s *Litanies*, which has an intentionally exaggerated spirit of supplication).

MD: “I like the poetry of the Litany. It’s understandable that on this awful planet we would say ‘pray for us’ and name the Virgin for all that is beautiful. But I understand the Litany as an opium-based relaxant that puts suffering to rest.”

Thursday 13 July 1944

Finished the fourth *Étude*,²⁷⁹ this one in F major.

Friday 14 July 1944

At Meudon. Showed the *Étude* to Dupré, which resulted in a very profound exchange of views. Dupré, with the loyalty of a friend and his wonderful mastery, told me he feared the *Étude* would not come across well to the audience—that it would “go over their heads” because, harmonically, it is even more advanced than the others. I asked him [to explain] the basis of this thought. He told me that he always uses tactful conventions when critiquing a student’s work, except in my case.

MD: “I’ll tell you the basis of my thought: you are too gifted. You have such an exceptional ear that you [341] hear, at the writing desk, the subtlest harmonies as if it were natural. These harmonies would be sublime in a different work. It’s you, and that’s all. The *Études*, though, must display you as a virtuoso and be understandable to an audience at first hearing; they have a double purpose.” I pondered [this] and proposed to the master several solutions for this *Étude*.

MD: “I dare not say anything to you. You’ll get carried away. The idea is moving, the technique very interesting, the design perfect. It’s going to be very beautiful. Do not blame yourself that your excellent ears can hear what to others is inaccessible. I repeat: you are very gifted! Too gifted in aural perception, technique, and reading; too gifted for composition...” I saw quite clearly that Dupré was showing me his deepest feelings. He continued:

“From your earliest days, I was always convinced that you were a composer to your very core. Only the biggest imbecile could fail to perceive this. I dare say you are too scrupulous, you have too great a sense of honour. You will only write what you consider to be the very essence of you. Ah! [342] I know very well that when one composes one has that feeling... of wishing to put a personal touch on every note... I know. On top

277. According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ave_Maria_de_Lourdes>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the “Ave Maria de Lourdes” is a traditional song chanted near the shrine at Lourdes, France, particularly during solemn processions.

278. The reference may be to the plainchant known as the “Litany of Loreto,” a formulaic, chanted prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A version may be found in Benedictines of Solesmes, eds., *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée & Co., 1956), 1857–59.

279. Demessieux’s *Étude* No. 4 in F major features chords for rapidly alternating hands on different manuals.

of all this, we have such a vast age difference that I hardly dare to make these remarks; your conception of music is more advanced than mine." I understood that we were treating the subject on a very high plane and couldn't help showing my perpetual anxiety or, better stated, this confused feeling, mixing enthusiasm, eagerness, and fear. He said to me, sincerely,

"For me, it's the same thing. Of all my compositions, it seems as if I wrote nothing of what I wanted to write. And I still don't know 'what it takes'; if I knew it, I'd have written it." He set me free with the *Étude*, saying simply that we will speak about it again next Friday, because he plans to give me more of his time.

Now I'll summarize, in order, the "progress report" for this afternoon. The master came to meet me when I rang; very cheerful, asking me for my news and news of the "Republic," calling out in the stairwell, "Jeannette! It's the little one!" and, striking up... the Marseillaise!²⁸⁰ Then, suddenly serious:

"There's a question for you that will be raised in two days. You [343] are going to be discussed." M^{me} Dupré joined us, and I learned that Dupré has an appointment with the parish priest of St-Philippe-du-Roule, with Jean Gallon present, to give his opinion concerning a concert series being organized at St-Philippe for which they've requested his help.

MD: "They will mention you, even if I don't... Yes... I believe you could agree to give a concert without any drawbacks." He told me that, after tomorrow, he will reveal everything to Jean Gallon.

The next matter is my debut, which, in principle, Dupré envisions for the winter. Bondeville will be the first to hear me, at the Duprés', and he has been advised that I will be the host at Meudon at that time. M^f and M^{me} Dupré plan primarily to ask Bondeville's advice. After that, others will hear me, separately, and always at the Dupré home. They are thinking more and more of [the Salle] Pleyel.²⁸¹

In the meantime, we ate together and at the end of the afternoon, the master walked me back (while I carried flowers picked by Mammy and tied with a beautiful pink bow).²⁸² As we waited for the train, the conversation turned again to the *Étude*. We were randomly sharing our thoughts when it occurred to me:

"Basically, my piece would be

[signed Jeanne Demessieux]

280. This diary entry, July 14, was made on the French national holiday, a day celebrating nationhood. Citizens' observance of the day during the German Occupation, 1940–1944, would have been private, however, and, as suggested by Dupré's rather forced jolliness here, tinged with irony or sadness.

281. The Salle Pleyel, named for the Paris piano manufacturing company was then (and is now) located at 252 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, in the 8th arrondissement. This was its third location since the days when Chopin gave his first Paris recital at the Salle Pleyel. As noted in Simeone 2000, 195, the present building was inaugurated in 1927 with a concert by luminaries such as Ravel conducting his *La Valse* and Stravinsky his *Firebird Suite*. According to <https://www.eutouring.com/history_of_the_salle_pleyel_concert_hall.html>, Nov. 27, 2022, in the 1940s the main hall seated 2400.

282. Beginning here in the diary, Demessieux refers to M^{me} Dupré as "Mammy." The latter presumably suggested this name in recognition of the fact that she had come to regard Demessieux as one of her daughters (cf. the diary entry for Sept. 4, 1943, ms. p. 259).

[344] balanced if the inspiration were equal to the writing ability and the technical dimension.” The master literally jumped.

MD: “But you are inspired, my dear! You could not have written what you did without inspiration! You are the opposite of Berlioz. For you, desire alone is all you require to write what you think in your language, without being blocked by a harmony. I’m telling you that Providence has given you a gift...!” And he said, “Take Pasteur, that genius of a man: he was inspired for one second of his life—the instant when he found the serum. A child, predestined to be a genius, searches for a lifetime without knowing if, or when, what is sought will be found. Composition is like searching for diamonds.”

Friday 21 July 1944

At Meudon. Dupré was enthusiastic about the Étude, minute details of which I’d revised. Improvised very well (*passacaglia*).

Dupré wanted to apologize to me, having not clearly understood the St-Philippe[-du-Roule] parish priest’s proposal, which turns out to have been ten recitals for him alone. It was on Sunday that he realized his mistake. I quickly reassured the master, who was very sorry. Seeing my relative indifference to the loss of my concert, he said to me, [345]

“Besides, my preference is to hide you entirely from view; that’s what is needed. You have such unshakeable discipline; you coolly observe others perform; this pleases me.” The master told me he consulted M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite concerning these six concerts [that he agreed to play]. He has decided to perform only Bach, something he’s already done. They’re asking him for one concert per month, but he wishes to play two [per month] and told me the reason.

MD: “Unless the war continues through this winter, my plan is for you to debut in October 1945. That way, you’ll be ready for America the following October. I don’t want my series [at St-Phillipe-du-Roule] to overlap with yours. Besides, I know Marchal was going to play a Bach series again and it amuses me to crowd in on his plans [*me mettre dans ses jambes*].”

Categorizing, as always, the things he had to say to me, Dupré broached the subject of his meeting with Jean Gallon that had taken place Wednesday at the Conservatory, “on that awful little bench beside the elevator.” ([Last] Sunday, Dupré had asked for a meeting with Jean Gallon.) The master told me he had been quite touched.

MD: “I told him everything, in order, in detail. When I’d finished speaking, he looked twenty years younger... unrecognizable: he who had been a mere a shadow of Jean Gallon... His poor eyes were [346]

bright; he blushed red. As we parted, I watched him climb the stairs; he stood to his full height and climbed like a young man." He [Jean Gallon] listened to Dupré, himself saying scarcely a word; his first words were,

JG: "And it's Jeanne!"

Dupré responded, "Yes, no one else: it's Jeanne." Dupré told him that he wishes to invite him to Meudon when I'm able to play my six Études. He told me that he had "asked his advice" concerning how to have me work on composition and told him how he goes about it, only with me. Jean Gallon approved of this. In person, Dupré told him that I am "his equal," and that he finally has a "rival" worthy of him (he's very fond of this idea). Finally, they spoke of the future. That meeting [with Jean Gallon] is my joy. Up until that day, nothing has really brought these two human beings together, so superior in heart and intelligence, except their shared attraction for and, perhaps, their conviction about the direction of the Conservatory. I recently had the audacity to tell Dupré my opinion concerning Jean Gallon's affection for him, and he appeared quite struck by this.

Yesterday Dupré "did some reconnaissance" at [the Salle] Pleyel. The renovations required to make [347] the organ [console] visible have been decided upon and they will be finished for October. Dupré is discretely "pushing" them.

Friday 28 July 1944

Exquisite moments at Meudon. When I arrived, I found the master and M^{me} Dupré resting in the garden. We chatted, then Dupré decided to get back to his work, which he had scarcely interrupted (he is preparing for the concert at Notre-Dame). But first, I kept them to show them the lovely letter [I had received] from Jean Gallon in reply to mine. Dupré has not stopped thinking of Jean Gallon, so much that he and Mammy fell over each other to see my copy of my letter and Jean's. Mammy read aloud while Dupré read over her shoulder. We talked and talked again about Father Jean. Dupré said he'd told him "precisely what he wanted, the way he wanted to."

Then we again took up discussion of the projects dear to them and to me, so thoroughly that—[my] lesson at issue—Mammy gave a despairing look, the master teased, and I consoled her. The usual scene! We respectfully dismissed the master, but he returned several times, thoroughly amused by disturbing us, until work finally held sway again on both sides.

No electricity; we waited, hoping I would be able to play my Étude, but we hoped in vain. Dupré was practicing on the mute organ. We [348] rejoined him before my departure.

The master left his work and declared he would walk me back; he made Mammy laugh wholeheartedly by saying, repeatedly, "Goodbye, Madame Dupré. See you soon, Madame Dupré" and so on. After that, we chatted seriously. When pressed, Dupré admitted that he did indeed know his way around "taming an organ" in a specific way.

Jean Gallon had telephoned them when he had received my letter, saying, "I've received a letter from 'our angel'!"

Friday 4 August 1944

Still without electricity. Upon my arrival, Mammy took me to see the master; we chatted. Despite my

protestations, it was planned that the master would devote his time to me, and after my language lesson, I spent an hour with him.

At the piano, I played the *Étude* on repeated notes that I finished yesterday.²⁸⁴ Dupré was keen about the idea and said to me of the *Étude*, “it’s a gem, and equal to the *Étude* in thirds.” The second theme, which came [to me] all at once and sometimes drove me to despair, pleased him infinitely. He wanted me to replay the beginning of the *Étude* in chords and said that he found it “charming.” I shared with him my idea for the sixth. [349]

Moving to other subjects, we chatted for a long time. Dupré talked to me about a sociological work he happened to read and about which he proposed to tell me his thoughts. I did not conceal from him how fascinated I am by these discussions.

MD: “I know. There’s nothing wrong with our exchanging our ideas; it plants notions in your brain. I dare speak to you openly because your faith is secure, and you know what I think; you know me.” And, again, MD: “If the atheist says to the believer, why do you believe?—give me proof, the believer will respond, I can tell you nothing more: I believe. For myself, I have the assurance that what I believe is true.” He reviewed and critiqued with me all the theories of atheism, denouncing them for their slightest weaknesses and seeking to avoid bias. He countered every point, responding to all, be it by turning the question around or drawing on the moral basis or the logic, and this in spite of all the tangents I proposed to him.

Then the master brought me up to date on his activities. Tomorrow he must settle the question of the [350] ten concerts for St-Philippe-du-Roule. He doesn’t want them to dazzle so resoundingly that for the audience my debut becomes a continuation of his series; the audience will be carefully prepared for me. The dear master, in vain, is trying to make himself look small so as to create a space for me.

The master called Mammy in, confiding in her what he thought of the *Étude*. I believe I may say that M^{me} Dupré could not have received Dupré’s own *Études* with more joy.

Finally, the master walked me back; we chatted on the platform while waiting for the train (which I nearly missed, having to push through an enormous crowd). The master waved broadly from the road until the train had passed the viaduct.

Sunday 6 August 1944

A message by pneumatic dispatch from Mammy. Dupré would perhaps play his recital today instead of next Sunday. We went on foot to Notre-Dame. At the last minute, the German organist was able to play after all.²⁸⁵ So be it. Passing in front of Marthe Dramez, I saw the Duprés in attendance. No seats near them, to

284. Published as No. 5 of *Six Études pour orgue* (Bornemann, 1946).

285. As indicated in a handbill preserved alongside Dupré’s recital programs in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6 (unnumbered), Aug. 6 and 13 recitals were conceived as two in a series of organ recitals by Parisian and German organists, under the title “Basilique Métropolitaine Notre-Dame,” planned for five consecutive Sundays: Jul. 16, 23, and 30, and Aug. 6 and 13, 1944. Listed on the handbill are the names and affiliations of three German organists (Joseph Tönnies from Duisburg, Fritz Werner from Potsdam, and Joseph Ahrens from Berlin) and two French organists (the incumbent at Notre-Dame-de-Paris—Léonce de Saint-Martin—and Dupré), but the order of the five is unspecified.

the chagrin of Mammy and Marguerite. The master rose and came over to greet my parents; he kept me chatting in the central aisle.

Terrible concert. Afterwards, [351] we lingered with the Duprés and some close acquaintances in the church square in an atmosphere of charming gaiety. The master introduced me to de Saint-Martin,²⁸⁶ who had come over to greet him and, in a very grand fashion, he introduced him to my parents. De Saint-Martin seemed to think he was obliged to say to me, “Yours is a very great talent, Mademoiselle.”

Friday 11 August 1944

I was invited to Dupré’s rehearsal at Notre-Dame. It was only the four of us, with the addition of M^r de Saint-Martin and one of his students, who joined us in the gallery. De Saint-Martin and the student pulled stops. Dupré displayed an incomparable mastery: interpretations that touched on the sublime; technique displaying ease; seamless, so to speak.

The master drew huge attention to me. While we were exchanging polite remarks with de Saint-Martin, Dupré suddenly became serious and, with clear forethought, turned to him and said, “You know that I never say anything carelessly.”

[de Saint-Martin:] “I certainly do.”

MD: “Well then, Jeanne Demessieux is the greatest organist of all time, of either sex, and from all countries.” [352] This literal phrase, unleashed with the most impassive dignity, stunned de Saint-Martin into amazement. There was a silence, during which I pulled myself together, mirroring Dupré, who had neglected to forewarn me. Mammy and Marguerite [were] visibly complicit. Finally, de Saint-Martin stammered and, forgetting all rules of etiquette, asked me for my age.

Then Dupré beckoned me to join him at the console. After his last note, he asked de Saint-Martin if I might be permitted to “put my hands to the keyboards.” He wanted de Saint-Martin to give me a theme, but the latter appeared so helpless and confused that Dupré himself proposed the “Salve Regina” to me and told me I knew the organ because I knew Saint-Sulpice. I devised the first portion of a symphony, beginning on the foundation stops and finishing with the plenum, for a somewhat agitated passage, well-crafted, adding, like a second theme, a sort of military call. [I was] in very good form. To play the organ of the Paris Cathedral next to the master was very moving for me.

The Duprés, delighted, took their leave of de Saint-Martin and kept me for a moment. Then we departed on foot in opposite directions, turning around three times to wave, [353] until we lost sight of each other.

Sunday 13 August 1944

Dupré’s concert at Notre-Dame. Unforgettable. I knew from Marguerite that the clergy estimated 6,500 in attendance.

According to Simon 2009, 91–92, Fritz Werner was, at the time, employed in Paris in the role of music censor for the Germany military government’s Propaganda-Abteilung (Department of Propaganda).

286. Dupré was, presumably, unaware that Demessieux met Léonce de Saint-Martin at Notre-Dame Cathedral on July 13, 1941.

[Bach's] Fantasia and Fugue in G minor; Mozart's Fantasia No. 2; [Franck's *Grande*] *Pièce symphonique*; "Crucifixion" [movement III of Dupré's *Symphonie-Passion*, Op. 23]; improvisation: prelude and fugue on a subject that Frederic II proposed to Bach.²⁸⁷ We were with M^{me} Dupré and Marguerite in the nave.

Following the last note, the crowd seemed electrified; there was a mad rush, and Mammy ran towards Maman "so as not to lose her." What happened next was a joy to behold. This enormous mass of people, leaving the cathedral as a single block, turned to the left and rushed towards the gate [*grille*] from which Dupré calmly exited. The last [people] (ourselves included) were driven back into the depths of the church square. Police officers pushed their way into the middle of the crowd, then turned a blind eye [to what was happening]. We imagined Dupré solicited from every direction; he was signing programs furiously, while photographers climbed up the streetlamps.

Then an ebb and flow occurred, still without our being able to get to the master. Mammy, whom I was following closely, had [354] red eyes and looked at me without being able to say a word. "It's beautiful—glorious!" I exclaimed, gently shaking her, to which she responded, like a child, "They're not going to harm him?..."

Finally, we drew near the gate and the master, whom we sought to help escape, immediately fell upon us with, "Ah! There you are!" when he saw Mammy. My parents arrived, too: "My charming friend," he exclaimed to Maman; to me, "My dear," and he attempted to keep us near him. But others, less courteous, monopolized him, and he was once again swept away. This insatiable crowd would not give him up!

In the garden behind the gate, [more] people were gathered. They asked me who "this man" was.

Me: "Marcel Dupré."

[They replied,] "Ah! Oh!" with a knowing air.

Eventually, one of the assembly of canons of Notre-Dame [*le Chapitre de Notre-Dame*], having been delegated, pushed through the crowd saying, "That's all. Come with me," so that the poor master, fatigued by all the excitement, could follow him. They had just been invited to dinner by the archpriest. Mammy rushed towards us to say goodbye, then attempted to rejoin Dupré and Marguerite, while the master was nearly carried in triumph by the crowd that [354b] followed. Mammy turned around, and I blew her a kiss, as did she in return. I heard her anxiously ask the master, "Did you see Jeanne Demessieux?"

We waited until the excited crowd had passed, and only a few of the "faithful" remained in the church square, enjoying the scene. M^r and M^{me} Laurent chatted with us for quite a while.

Friday 18 August 1944

Finished the sixth Étude (the one in sixths) today.

Saturday 19 August 1944

Paris uprising. Fighting in the streets. From the first moments, some of the wounded [were] beneath my windows.

287. The theme may well have been given to Dupré by Paris-based German military-government official Fritz Werner. He was the organist of Frederic II Cathedral in Potsdam when at home, and one of the recitalists in the series at Notre-Dame-de-Paris.

Sunday 20 August 1944

Played my Mass. A hail of bullets all day long. Two killed in front of St-Esprit. By telephone, Marcel Dupré implored me not to go out.

Monday 21 August 1944

An anniversary for which we were to have gathered.²⁸⁸ The neighborhood was calm. I revised the six Études and begin to practice them. I telephoned Meudon every day. I reassured Dupré, and then went out and about.

Tuesday 22 August 1944

A hail of bullets. Hope and sadness. It won't be possible [355] to follow through on the master's decision; he had planned to meet me at the home of Hamm for a complete reading of the six Études, for which each of us would have to walk halfway.

Wednesday 23 August 1944

Barricades all around us. Fighting everywhere. There is talk of fires blazing. The battle rages night and day, all around Paris.

Thursday 24 August 1944

6:00 PM. More than ever, there is fighting. Paris is burning, exploding, covered with blood. Hails of bullets and gunfire in the street. The noise of two battles becomes confused ("inside" and "outside"). Indescribable enthusiasm, unity. On the telephone with Mammy and the master; they are well. The master said to me: "Courage, courage! At every moment, I'm thinking of you, of the future!" Everything blowing up around them.

Evening. The French army re-enters Paris, fighting. The police order gas metres to be shut off, for fear, at every instant, that Paris will blow up.

1:00 AM. Everyone ordered to descend into the basements, some tanks having been reported. The German batteries positioned around Paris are shelling them.²⁸⁹

Friday 25 August 1944

The batteries are ceasing fire. The Huns [*les boches*] are being chased down [*sont traqués*]; some of them [356] have been trying to flee by subway. Even so, the electricity has been turned back on. Furious battles in the centre of Paris. Ambushes everywhere. Arrests. (In public places, the hair of women spies is being cut

288. According to Demessieux's footnote to the diary entry for Aug. 21, 1941, Dupré had proclaimed Aug. 21 the official anniversary of their collaboration.

289. Cf. Murray 1985, 185: "On the evening of August 24 [1944], to keep the approaching Allies from capturing its ammunition, a German artillery battery near Meudon blew off hundreds of eighty-eight-millimeter shells, creating waves of light and thunder visible and audible in the farthest corners of Paris—a pandemonium that doubtless shook the very foundations of the Villa Dupré. It was that night, however, that the Paris church bells rang out for the first time since June of 1940, announcing the entry of Allied troops into the city."

off.) In our parish, the crowd is delirious. Some are throwing themselves on cars overloaded with soldiers and embracing them.

By telephone I reached the master. Mammy and Marguerite ran to see American tanks pass by. Dupré is still filled with emotion and enthusiasm. MD: "These events are working towards your future. While 'they' are doing their duty, we are doing ours, at our house, on our organ. This is what I do all day. Think of me while you work; I am constantly thinking of you. In a few days, we'll see each other again. Be happy and light-hearted!" They'd spent half the night in the basement, until three in the morning, when Meudon was liberated.

6:00 PM. People are singing the Marseillaise; young people unfurl the flag overhead. Cries and acclamations without stop. Still, one hears explosions and fusillades. Soldiers pass, saying that the Germans have surrendered. But there are those who are still firing from the rooftops.

Saturday 26 August 1944

The Germans surrendered yesterday. The cannon has grown faint. The Marseillaise is heard continually. It's the parade of the victorious armies, with de Gaulle, from the Étoile to Notre-Dame. Dupré told me he felt intensely emotional all day long yesterday. As for me, I was constantly fighting back tears.

Telephoned Jean Gallon. He told me that on the way to his church he was caught in a scuffle but managed to "pull" himself out of it; they're firing from the roof tops all around his home. He spoke to me about the "great man's" confidences, in words blurring [the line between] enthusiasm and affection. He said he relates current events to my personal life that I am living "in the shadows."

JG: "I consider what you've been doing to be as important as these events."

Sunday 27 August 1944

[I am writing] after a frightening night. At 1:00 AM the Germans began a bombardment. Indescribable, so immense was the horror. Dive bombings. The sinister howl of the bombs. Phosphorus, multicoloured glow. The odour of soot in one's throat. Colossal fires in Bercy and everywhere. Scarcely time to go below. I believed I had been orphaned when a [358] most terrible blast threw me from basement stairs, where I nearly passed out. Around 4:00 AM, I telephoned Meudon; nothing had occurred there, but they were terror-stricken. Mammy and the master again pleaded with me not to go out.

The alert over, we went back up, [only to] hear the whistle of shells firing over Paris; they've fallen in the 12th [arrondissement]. A new alert.

Monday 29 August 1944

They're firing from the roof tops more than ever. Saw someone wounded in our street. At night, it is incessant.

Tuesday 29 August 1944

Night of an alert. Shelling over Paris. Meudon, calm. I learned from Dupré that Jean-Claude Touche was wounded in the Place de la Concorde while working as a nurse. They operated on him; his condition is critical. He was administered to yesterday; no more news. Dupré telephoned Jean Gallon.

Wednesday 30 August 1944

Jean-Claude Touche died yesterday. This death distresses me. We have been friends since he was a child;

an exceptional servant of music, and the organ, has been lost. Mammy and the master went to see him yesterday, by walking 25 kilometres. The master is feeling very low, Mammy told me.

[359] Friday 1 September 1944

I went to St-Augustin with Papa for Jean-Claude's service. I planned to meet the Duprés. A sad reunion mixed, in spite of everything, with joy. The master's feet were injured by the walk, and he was hardly able to bear it. He played [for the service]. Mammy, so loving towards me, insisted that I sit between her and Marguerite; I did not leave her. Dupré's playing was sublime. "How beautiful it is," the dear woman said to me. The church was packed. I've never seen a funeral so beautiful.

I was the only witness of an intimate drama that made me tearful and that I had been expecting. Jean-Claude and Mireille Auxiètre had become very fond of each other, in a way that was so sweet and innocent [*toute ingénue*], but clear to me; unfortunately, it will never have a chance. She learned the news from me and decided to come. All alone, asking me not to leave her, lovely, discrete, and self-effacing. She sat down behind me. When the procession advanced, I turned around, fearing the worst. The poor child [was] in tears, distraught, wringing her hands, stifling sobs, wanting to flee yet willingly glued to the spot, out of a sense of duty, I would say. "I can't take it anymore," she whispered. I took her arm [360] during the recession, saying some discreet words to Mammy. She left me to go to the cemetery.

We saw Jean Gallon and his wife. The first time we've met since the secret was revealed. Father Jean, appearing stiff, looked at me at length, with an indefinable emotion, while taking my hand between his two. He said only, "My little Jeanne." "My dear master," I responded, and everything was expressed in the exchange of these few words. He led me to M^{me} J. Gallon, whose demeanor was similar. I chatted also with M^r and M^{me} Noël Gallon. Noël was agitated, avoiding eye contact, his words trailing off. Jean Gallon then saw Papa and spoke to him about my collaboration with Dupré.

JG: "Tell Jeanne how happy I am because of what was confided to me. I wanted to tell her again but couldn't."

We were waiting for Dupré, who descended, as white as a sheet. We chatted; it was a question of my going to Meudon by road. Dupré would like me to go by bicycle, and Mammy has some recommendations for my [identity] papers. I must telephone to say whether I accept. We parted in confidence and hope, while outdoors the Marseillaise burst forth.

[361] Friday 8 September 1944

A restful day, the first oasis for the spirit. Yesterday, Mammy and the master set the itinerary for today, giving me surprise and joy.

I got myself to St-Lazare (without fatigue, thanks to Papa's devotion). I found the master in the café, where we were to meet, and he and I lunched together. He had suggested I bring the 6th Étude, the one in sixths.²⁹⁰ Soon, we were talking about the Étude.

The conversation became, as usual, a discussion in which each of us analyzed what the other had said. Dupré said to me, "I finished a piece yesterday." He told me it's the one of which he had spoken to me, inspired by the Virgin.

290. Even though this was the last of Demessieux's Six Études to be composed, the Étude in Sixths (F-sharp major) would become No. 3 in the published set.

MD: "I ask myself whether I'm wrong; I have reservations; tell me what you think." He recounted the birth of the piece: he was constantly thinking of the triptych idea when a possible transformation of his *Études* imposed itself. Without his realizing it, the themes were soon haunting him (particularly those of the *Études* in F and in A minor, "so fresh"), to the point where the two ideas fused, despite his resistance. He knew all [362] the alternatives, but couldn't make up his mind; then, wearying of the struggle, he wrote the transformation in one go. He is so righteous that he fears the piece, having come into existence thus, is not respectful enough of the Virgin, yet he is also taken by its truth and sincerity of tone. (It's as if he had created the music twice.) I said that I believe a theme, taken at its conception, has an emotion "expansive" enough to take on diverse forms of thought. This beginning of a justification led him to say, "On the other hand, the *Études* were written for you; as such, they can be neither published nor performed. (They gave rise to yours, which is all that matters.) Can I make of them a sort of mystical offering, so as to say to the Virgin, 'would you like them?'" He explained the construction of the piece. The subject caused us to recall the fourth station in the *Chemin de la Croix* where Dupré depicted the paroxysm of sorrow, the astonishment. Father Samson believed the opposite and saw the Virgin as a heroine. As for me, I see it as Dupré does and told him my personal ideas. He told me that I have contradicted what the archpriest of [363] Rouen said in contradiction of Father Samson. The conversation was very elevated, as is usual with my private conversations with Dupré. This climate seems natural for him and has become normal for me, also.

After eating, we went up to the Conservatory where Dupré requested the organ room. There was no electricity but, on the piano, I played the *Étude* in sixths, which he did not yet know. The master was filled with enthusiasm, taken by the colour, and said to me, "That's certainly your harmonic style." The form pleased him; the ending attracted his special attention. Speaking frankly, he questioned whether the pedal part isn't too active at times.

MD: "I judge your music as I judge my own; I cannot do otherwise. And I always have the same criticism for myself, of 'over-writing.' I don't know if I'm right or wrong. We are improvisers, and for us it's all about polyphony. There's no doubt that this influences us." This simple (and if I dare put it this way, quite fraternal) remark sums up the way in which Dupré teaches me [composition], with the main principle: "keep moving [forward]." The master never permits himself to make a [364] pencil mark in my manuscript because the very thought of doing so is anathema to him.

After the last *Étude*, Dupré asked for the one in thirds, then octaves. At 2:30, his friend Pierre Bourdon, who had an appointment with him, arrived. (Dupré, having told me [about] his schedule for the day, had planned this meeting.) After a cordial greeting, the master beckoned me [saying to Pierre Bourdon],

"I'd like to introduce you to someone I hold in very high regard. Can you guess? You know her; this is Jeanne Demessieux!"

PB: "The organist of St-Esprit of whom you've spoken?"

MD: "Yes."

PB: "Mademoiselle, I am in on the secret. I've known about you. My friend Dupré is very sure of you and... that doesn't happen very often."

MD: "I could not come to lunch with you because we lunched together a short while ago. She just showed me six *Études* for organ that she has just completed.

PB: "Some *études*?... A little girl like this writes *études*, and plays them! Well, you know, that's going to create an explosion... it's huge." None of these reactions was lost on Dupré.

I [began to] take my leave, leaving several items with the master for M^{me} Dupré; he opened his arms to me.

MD: "Again, bravo, my dear. See you soon. [365] I'll embrace Jeannette and Marguerite for you. Telephone tomorrow and embrace your parents [for me]." In this way, Dupré conveyed his respect for me and his friendship.

The master brought me up to date concerning negotiations with St-Philippe[-du-Roule].

He had chatted with Jean Gallon, who spoke of me and of our recent encounter.

Friday 15 September 1944

Spent the entire afternoon at Meudon, in familial closeness. After chatting a bit, the master worked on his soundless organ²⁹¹ while I studied English with Mammy. As I had no work to show him, from 5:00 to 6:00, the three of us chatted and ate.

Meanwhile, a telephone call from Fred Ostemer (?) brought news. Dupré never stops trying to get information concerning his friends in England and America. The master learned that "our impresario Marriott" had still been active in his position a year ago.

Dupré walked me back to the station where we waited a long time for the only train. Spoke to the master about his Triptych.

MD: "You've been thinking again about my regrets?" I responded, no, and that I was [366], relieved by the thought that this music would not be lost. I told Dupré that he still has two Études that are not incorporated into any of the transformations. He responded by saying he would perhaps consider this.

We spoke about my debut. I was worrying about practical questions, but Dupré said to me,

"Don't concern yourself with that; that's my job. All you will do is perform. And, you are going to have to let some students and some services go when the time comes." Then he returned, once more, to a frequent comment of his, concerning his own debut: "When I think of what I had to overcome, what I went through when I did my recitals..."

And, again, MD: "Finally, here you are, back in Meudon. During this war, we slowly descended towards death; now we slowly return to life."

Friday 22 September 1944

At Meudon. Again, I took the footpath from Issy,²⁹² and started out a little later to avoid disturbing the master's work, even though I know full-well that each of them devotes their most valuable time to me. [367]

At 4:30, I walked into the garden and immediately heard Mammy cry out as she rushed to me, upset:

"What happened?... It's late. Something must have happened to you!... Here we've been watching the road for more than an hour; Monsieur Dupré went several times up to Marguerite's room for a better view and was so terribly worried!" Not knowing how to reassure her, I ended up telling the truth. Her arms fell as her anxiety vanished and she brusquely led to me to the organ room.

291. Presumably, the organ was soundless for lack of electricity. Cf. the diary entry for Sept. 8, 1944.

292. Issy-les-Moulineaux is a southwestern suburb of Paris and on the way to Meudon. Subway line 12 ends there.

Presumably, suburban trains were not yet operational.

Mme D: “Mana!... Mana!...”²⁹³

MD: “What?”

Mme D: “Look who’s here.” Dupré, until that moment rather glum, leapt from the midst of his manuscripts and exploded the same way Mammy had.

MD: “I could see you on a stretcher!” They were really shaken and that bewildered me.

“... and she did it intentionally,” Mammy said; “how very like her, don’t you see.”

[MD:] “We will never cure her of her scruples.”²⁹⁴ Gradually, their smiles returned, and Mammy decided:

“It will have to be either you or me that takes her; an hour and a half is too short to do everything.” Dupré reflected and said that it would be more worthwhile if I had “an additional English lesson.” [368]

Yet, the master had prepared some documents concerning organ consoles that he wanted me to study carefully. He took a moment to show them to me, then returned to his composing. Mammy showed me articles about and photos of Australia that she’s lending me.

At 6:00 PM, Marguerite came down and we met in the parlour, where afternoon tea had been all laid out for me since 4:00... Conversation turned to my Études, which I played yesterday for my parents, taking advantage of an hour of electricity (I had practiced them silently), and which utterly amazed them. Dupré, always on the alert, perked up:

“That’s a very interesting reaction,” and he questioned me as I related this.

Yesterday, they received news from Medtner and from Marriott via a soldier: very good news.²⁹⁵

The master was headed to Paris to chat, between two trains, with Berveiller, so we left together. Dupré said to me, “You know the ‘Mater dolorosa?’”²⁹⁶ It has failed as [an expression of] sentiment. I am in the process of redoing it, including, perhaps, as an ‘opening,’ the calls from the end of the Étude in G. I sense that what I’m writing now will be better.” He thinks that the abandoned portion [369], with the two remaining Études, could form three “sketches.”²⁹⁷

He kept talking to me about Marriott, in other words, about a future that was getting close.

MD: “If one were to say to you that you will debut on such-and-such a date... what a relief! It seems to me that the days would then gradually become less stressful. In any case, we know there to be at least one

293. From the context, “Mana” seems to be Jeannette Dupré’s pet name for her husband.

294. The “scruple” in this case was Demessieux’s desire not to impose herself on the Duprés as early as she was expected by them. Cf. her remark at the top of the entry as to why she deliberately started out later than she might have. Presumably, she gave the Duprés her excuse when she arrived.

295. Nicolai Medtner was based in England and Frederick Marriott in the U.S. The “good news” may have concerned international travel facilitated and a renewal of the proposal from the University of Chicago.

296. This is the title of one of Dupré’s three pieces in homage to the Virgin, which were reworkings of three of the Études composed for Demessieux.

297. Two pieces called “sketches” were published during Dupré’s lifetime: *Deux Esquisses*, Op. 41 (Bornemann, 1946). Regarding the third sketch, published posthumously in 1975, see Steed 1999, 123–24 and 127–28.

friend who is waiting for us; I say “us,” because it is as if Marriott already knows you.²⁹⁸ I would also like to get to know more about Lavergne; he is right in the line of fire.”

Berveiller was waiting for Dupré at the station and, after we exchanged a few words, I took my leave of the master.

MD: “I began the evolution of the organ, and you will finish it.”

Friday 29 September 1944

A long afternoon at Meudon. Worked for two hours with the master who brought out a heap of archives and gave me a marvelous lecture on organ consoles. He specially annotated the photos of consoles; then he made a big pile of all these treasures and gave them to me, adding a photo of Busoni. MD: “It’s time you began your [own] collections, don’t you think?” He [370] was keen to tell me everything he knows, and there was something moving about seeing the master rummage so in the inmost depths of his learning, or allowing me to question him with such abandon. Also worked for two hours with Mammy; the rest of the time we chatted and ate together. Dupré practiced with a metronome on his soundless organ.

That evening, on the way to the station, we ran into Mammy returning from her errands; she took the path back to the station with us. Both of them stood on the bridge to watch me leave. Marguerite was at M^{me} Touche’s.

Friday 6 October 1944

The entire afternoon at Meudon. Dupré has finished his Triptych.²⁹⁹ Worked on [the subject of] organ design. He lent me documents and, when I asked, his own work on organ design.³⁰⁰ We chatted for a long time. Saw Marguerite. Discussed technique with Dupré.

For three days now, V-1 flying bombs³⁰¹ have been falling all around Paris. One of them exploded before dropping over Clamart.³⁰² We heard them fall while we worked.

Friday 13 October 1944

Joint work at Meudon. Dupré has just discovered a law governing the execution of [371] pedal scales. MD: “I’ve been searching for twenty years.” [But] he does not wish to contradict his method and will not publish it.³⁰³

298. Frederick Marriott, organist and carillonneur of Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago, was one of Dupré’s contacts in the United States.

299. This is another reference to the three pieces derived from *Études* composed for Demessieux that would be published as *Offrande à la Vierge pour orgue*, Op. 40: I. “Virgo mater”; II. “Mater dolorosa”; III “Virgo mediatrix” (Bornemann, 1945).

300. Published posthumously as Marcel Dupré, *Facture d’Orgues*, ed. Hans Steinhaus and Roger Deleplace, with a preface by Rolande Falcinelli (Paris: Association des Amis de l’Art de Marcel Dupré, 1982).

301. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-1_flying_bomb>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the V-1 was an early type of cruise missile developed in Nazi Germany and—prompted by the Allies’ landings in France—first launched in June 1944 on London.

302. Clamart is one of the southwestern suburbs of Paris, adjacent to the suburb Meudon.

303. Dupré had published his *Gammes de Pédale pour orgue* in 1924 (Paris: Alphonse Leduc).

MD: "In short, only you can get to know them [these patterns]; moreover, I'm giving them to you. You will decide whether you'd like to teach them or not; later, you could publish them, if you like."

Me: "Under your name, you're giving me your authorization?"

D: "No. That would do me harm [to my reputation]; under yours." I refused, vigorously; even so, Dupré left me free [to decide].

In the middle of the afternoon, electricity suddenly returned. All three [of the Duprés] leapt at the question [of what was to be played] and called for my *Études*. I played the six in their order of composition, by heart, knowing them very well, and registering them without hesitation and with extreme audacity. They were understood beyond my wildest hopes. The master, regaining his composure, said, "What a thing of beauty... and originality..." All three were in agreement, and I tried to drag a critique out of them, not daring to believe that my seeming malady of uncertainty surrounding the *Études* could finally be cured. But the master made it his duty to defend them in such terms as to silence me. Mammy, very pensive, hugged me: "That was magnificent, my dear, [372], magnificent..." They said they were amazed—dumbfounded even—by my technique.

Left on our own, Dupré and I got down to work, the master still preoccupied by the *Études*. Point-blank:

MD: "If you know all these alternatives, it's because you are a composer." I gave him my thoughts concerning American consoles; we are of the same mind.

At the station, Dupré, energetically: "Well, now I'm going to tell you my final thoughts [on the matter]: it's a total success. I am very excited."

Friday 20 October 1944

At Meudon. Saw everyone. Chatted for a long time. Worked on technique with Dupré. Mammy has been suffering from conjunctivitis,³⁰⁴ [but is getting] better. Despite the awful weather, the master walked me back. MD: "Students like you are difficult to find. But after all, even Liszt needed a teacher."

Sunday 22 October 1944

At St-Esprit, visited by Provost and Régnier (new friend of Dufourcq). Provost attacked Dupré dreadfully³⁰⁵ and opposed the arguments I'd prepared, expecting his attack. He remained distraught.

[373] Friday 27 October 1944

Chatted until 5:00 PM with Dupré. Worked together. Experimented. The master asked me for the *Études*;

304. That is, pink eye.

305. Consistent with this incident, music critic and member of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue Charles Provost was rightly regarded by Dupré as in opposition to him. Rollin Smith, in a letter to the editor in *The Diapason*, whole no. 1150 (Sept. 2005): 3, emphasized: "The only Dupré recording Provost ever reviewed in *L'Orgue* (October–December 1950, p. 121) was Dupré's 1948 recording of Franck's *Trois Chorals* made at St. Mark's Church, London. He wrote that he was pleased to see the first-ever recording of the *Second Choral*, but that 'If the general effect is respectable, it seems to us to be dull and lifeless[,] and we would not be surprised if the eminent organ professor of our Conservatoire did not set much store by them.' And for Provost this was a good review! Most were negative and, with his pen dipped in venom, he almost always had something nasty to say about any recording that came to him for review."

played two. Saw Madame Dupré's sister. The master [had to go] to Paris. Chatted until late with Mammy. News from England: Henry Willis has been ruined by the bombings.³⁰⁶

Saturday 28 October 1944

My sister has arrived. I haven't seen her for two years.³⁰⁷

Friday 3 October 1944

At Meudon. Work and conversations. As usual, they kept me informed concerning their day-to-day lives, strengthening our closeness and affection. The master was working on his Triptych. I played the three first Études for him and pinned down their Meudon registrations. Agreement; he took notes as we went along. Increasingly struck (if I may say so) by my Études. He told me that my [compositional] personality is very distinctive.

MD: "Take the 'Rhinegold' story; sure, it's a myth. But it's such a metaphor for structure!... You are like Siegfried, who knew how to make use of a sword to find the gold. Again, it's the law of derivation. But you know [374], one can't call you a mere 'imitation' of me, or say that you are my exact copy. You do not resemble me any more than a king resembles his predecessor. You are Jeanne Demessieux just as I am Marcel Dupré. I made you, but I truly believe that without me you would have found yourself anyway, perhaps not so soon, but most certainly. As far as the general public is concerned, our only tie will be that you are the grand interpreter of my works." As for the Études, in which he grasped the slightest [element of] harmonic sensitivity, he said, gravely,

"It is overwhelming to see someone your age write and play such a work. And it's obvious to me that you have always been a composer."

Friday 10 November 1944

At Meudon. Dupré greeted me, still very emotional after [his family's] trip to Rouen. Eleven hours by automobile and a night in a shed [*hangar*] on their return journey.³⁰⁸ They arrived this morning, all three exhausted by fatigue and emotion. Without pause for rest, Mammy and Marguerite went to run errands in Paris, not to return until 5:00 PM. The master recounted the trip in detail and gave me news. He paid a visit to the archbishop, [375] visited the ruins [of Rouen Cathedral] and played at St-Ouen. Tremendous grief at the sight of the rubble.³⁰⁹ MD: "I am like a kid who feels like crying."

306. According to W. L. Sumner, *Father Henry Willis: Organ Builder and his Successors* (London: Musical Opinion Ltd., 1955), 58, the factory of the organ builders Henry Willis & Sons was destroyed by bombing during the London Blitz in 1941.

307. The last time Yolande visited the family in Paris was noted in the diary entries for Oct. 13 and 24, 1942.

308. The French *hangar* may denote a shed, barn, warehouse, or vehicle storage hangar. Presumably this was a roadside building not meant to house people.

309. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen_Cathedral>, under the heading "20th century," accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Rouen Cathedral was bombed by the Allies twice prior to D-Day. In April 1944, seven RAF bombs fell on the building, damaging much of the south aisle and destroying two stained glass windows. In June, prior to the Normandy landings, a U.S. Air Force bombing burned the oldest tower, the Saint-Romain Tower.

I played my last three Études; we worked, the master saying yet again that this is his joy and his relaxation. We chatted.

Chatted in English for quite a while with Mammy and Marguerite; we ate, and the master walked me back.

Friday 17 November 1944

Recital at Meudon: played my six Études, [the] definitive versions, for Dupré, Madame Dupré, Marguerite, my parents, and my sister. What joy to perform! [Felt] extraordinary drive. Dupré proposed two scherzo themes for improvisation. [I was] in very good form. Audience astonishment at each Étude. Dupré totally captivated.

Beforehand, set the organ registrations and practiced slowly, the master, at my request, allowing me to prepare alone while he listened from the study. Then he came to finish his correspondence in the [organ] hall while I rested. In between times,

MD: "You practice superbly. Oh, you are so fortunate to be able to practice... The truth is, I would do better to stop playing and [simply] compose, what with all the busywork I also have to do." Nevertheless, these unfortunate notions passed.

[376] We gathered as one big family to eat, my sister happy as a clam, the master and all of us very cheerful.

While they listened to the Études, I saw how moved my entire audience was. Maman and Yolande were almost at the point of tears. Dupré addressed Yolande: "Pretty innovative, right? And it's beautiful music, rich in harmony, and personal." Yolande said that it changes the aesthetic of the organ, that, in terms of technique, I have become physically one with the instrument, and I have, myself, become "an instrument of precision." Following the improvisation, Dupré questioned her again, and she responded that if one were not informed in advance, it would be impossible to know this was an improvisation. My protestations were in vain. The master had her tour the inside of the organ and gave her a demonstration of the registrateur. They chatted. After these exquisite hours, we took our leave of Mammy and Marguerite, [who were] more enthusiastic than ever.

The master took the train to Paris with us, on his way to dine with Beuchet. Yolande [was] all excited to see him so happy and to hear him talk about me.

Wednesday 29 November 1944

My sister's departure. A sad day, but the future is wide open. Yolande had some long conversations, [377] several with Dupré or Mammy, and one with Father de la Motte.

Friday 1 December 1944

At Meudon, the Duprés received their friends [M^r and M^{me}] Barthélémi. I arrived at five o'clock as usual, at teatime. The master took me aside.

MD: "I have partially confided in these people. They are entirely on our side as concerns the modern organ, and so they understand what you represent. Would you like to play them one of your Études...?" Not having reviewed them for two weeks, I hesitated, but Dupré, sure of me, called for the fifth, in F major.

Then he told me they are going to put together a committee to rebuild organs of Normandy under the

patronage of five bishops, without the [Académie des] Beaux-Arts getting mixed up in it. It's simply to save the organ. After these few words, I entered the parlour, where Mammy welcomed me, exclaiming, "Here is our star!" She rose and hugged me affectionately, then introduced me and made me accept the place of honour. Tea was served. Conversation flowed. Dupré wasted no time; to M^r Barthélémi:

"Tell her your impression of the registration system. She can [378] give you a response because she knows it in detail, as with all my ideas." I noticed again a sort of veiled astonishment in the eyes of the person to whom he spoke. Finally, under the approving eye of Dupré and the inquisitive eye of Barthélémi, I set up two combinations (without reference to notes) and played, my technique and my memorization untroubled. I'll skip over my listeners' impressions. The Duprés, enthused.

The Barthélémis took their leave while I cleared up some issues with the master concerning the publication of his Suite and my Études (Dupré had asked me to look over the final proofs for these). We chatted. Mammy came looking for us to go and listen to Rolande Falcinelli play her Triptych on the radio.³¹⁰ After hearing it, Mammy burst out, "I do not call that music!" And Marguerite, "Notes churned out one after the other [*musique au kilomètre*]." Mammy turned towards the master and me, "Well, I'm not a musician (!), so, tell me, do you like that?" After a pause,

MD: "I dare not say anything... On principle, I do not wish to judge my contemporaries, as you know, Messiaen's tricks... There's nothing I can say; Jeanne knows that I am [being] sincere." Dupré spoke of Rolande's coldness and [379] asked for my opinion; I hesitated.

MD: "Come now, we are among friends here." After that, I returned with the master to sit near the organ, where we finished the evening in a serious discussion of psychology, this being, for Dupré, inseparable from "composition," as it is for me. In the next little while, he wants my utmost in improvisation.

Friday 8 December 1944

A memorable afternoon at Meudon. Mammy told me that the master is at a meeting with the St-Etienne-du-Mont organ commission, and that he would return by four PM for our work. I showed her a lovely letter* received from M^r Régnier, the second friend of Dufourcq to strike up an acquaintance with me.

* Dated 6 Dec. 1944.

Surprise, astonishment on the part of Mammy.

Mme D: "Is he a Pleyel shareholder?"

Me: "I don't know."

Mme D: "Well, really!... I'll have to tell you; we didn't want to, because we always prefer you to know things when they become definite." I listened with rising emotion. Mammy told me that my first recital is scheduled for next October, and that the master strongly desires that I present my series at the Salle Pleyel. And yet, the organ, despite the initial work on the ceiling, does not sound adequate. With Dupré wanting to

310. Rolande Falcinelli's *Triptyque pour orgue*, Op. 11 (I. Litanies, II. Rondel, III. Fugue) was composed in 1941 and published by Bornemann in 1982.

come to a decision, the director, M^r Bénard [379b] suggested that he call a meeting of all members of the association to demonstrate the organ and get them to take action in favor of extensive work.³¹¹ It is to this meeting, set for tomorrow, that Régnier invited me, as he is [also] attending. Mammy told me that, this very morning, Dupré set out for Pleyel, to visit Kiesgen's office, for a secret discussion with M^r Bénard, Kiesgen and his wife, and Gavoty. He revealed all his plans to them, including informing them of our collaboration. He asked Gavoty to have me give my series under the patronage of the Jeunesses Musicales, which he directs, and for Kiesgen and Bénard to give me the hall and convince the association members to alter the organ. He underscored the fact that this enormous advertising for Pleyel, with [the help of] Gavoty, would compete with Chaillot and Dufourcq-Gonzalez. He generated enthusiasm, and they decided, one and all, to stand together; M^{me} Kiesgen exclaimed, "I would like to be so rich that I could finance all the concerts myself." At noon, Dupré had telephoned the result to Mammy, saying to her, "Everything is going marvellously." Tomorrow's meeting of the association members will be secret, with Kiesgen and Gavoty in hiding, positioned so as to be in attendance but not seen. Mammy and I had suspicions concerning Régnier and, for a moment, [380] trembled at what he might be scheming.³¹²

The master returned, moaning, "I am numb with cold and fatigue." Mammy asked him whether he was pleased, and he responded, smiling, "Yes... Kiesgen is going to telephone me this evening."

We had just taken tea, and Mammy went to prepare a hot drink while Dupré fell into an armchair, then, "What's this?" He took the letter, read, and leapt towards the lamp, saying, "Whatever can this be?"

Me: "I don't know; I'm asking you, Master."

MD: "What is this man's name: Riquet?"

311. The association members referred to here and henceforth may be members of the association Les Amis de l'Orgue de la Salle Pleyel (Friends of the Salle Pleyel Organ). According to *Images Musicales: Disques*, No. 43 (Nov. 15, 1946): 3, the association was founded by organist and musicologist Guy Lambert (1906–1971), who will be referred to frequently in diary entries from Mar. 8, 1945 through Apr. 30, 1946.

312. In a retrospective letter to Yolande of Feb. 18, 1945, preserved in AM 4S15, Demessieux summarized the attempts of "two friends of Dufourcq" to lure her into the Dufourcq camp: *N. Dufourcq's two friends, one of whom is a student of mine ([a] 45-year-old man, quite worldly, an engraver, etc.) and the other, a visitor to my [organ] gallery, are each attempting, individually (pretending not to know each other), to lure me into Dufourcq's orbit. Dupré is not fooled. The "student" nearly made the entire plan fail; it was a meeting to decide on the sound of the Pleyel organ. The master had to speak, play—in short, win them over [enlever la partie]... you know why. He [the student] managed to sneak in with Noëlie Pierront (another terrible spy). I knew it by the clumsy way in which (this takes the cake!) he invited me to participate in this meeting that was only for Pleyel-organ-association members. Unaware of this important step, I was taken aback, found it suspicious, and told him so. What a reprieve! They [the Duprés] tell me things only when they are certain, "so as not to arouse false hopes." But they explained to me all the inner workings of this important thing, and we shuddered at the thought of how my presence there would have destroyed everything. Dupré telephoned, paid a visit to the person in charge, with the warning that spies would be at the session, and at the session the following day he won them over. Can you believe it? The "student," returning for another attempt, offered to introduce me to the director [of the Salle Pleyel], to have me play; I refused, categorically. He insisted, claimed that everything was organized—decided. I only had time to dash to the telephone, where Dupré told me that they [Dufourcq's two friends] want to debut me at all costs or, rather, that [my debut should] not be of his [Dupré's] doing. He quickly warned the director not to give permission. I have never seen the "student" again.*

Me: "Régnier." He restrained himself, with an effort, from confiding the enormous import of this intervention to me; he hid his worry and revealed none of what Mammy had explained to me.

MD: "Don't worry... it's providential that you were sent this letter." And to Mammy: "I am going to have a few words with 'Monsieur Riquet!' and before that I will see Bénard."

It was decided that I should refuse the invitation. We spoke of that *bête noire* Dufourcq. Dupré has fiercely vowed to win them over. (Mammy told me that he had refused to give his ten Bach recitals at Pleyel, which could not go ahead at St-Philippe[-de-Roule], so as not to upstage my debut.) All this accompanied and motivated by their immense affection, moves me to no end.

[381] Next, I improvised a symphony in four movements on themes the master had specially prepared. In very good form. Dupré was extremely moved and had tears in his eyes after the Adagio. After the Finale concluded the symphony in a cyclical manner, he said to me, "That is the music of a great musician." We discussed the presentation of themes, each in turn taking the keyboards. Work finished, we chatted for an hour, in front of the fire, Dupré still impressed with my improvisation.

MD: "If you only knew how striking your gifts are when you place your hands on the organ!" He spoke again of his wish to confide everything to Father de la Motte. Concerning Widor,

MD: "Widor always had an irreproachable artistic conscience with me; and I was only a little student, while he was the great Widor." We agree that the artist must always be "receiving vibrations," Dupré said, "in a trance." On improvisation, this profound thought,

MD: "When there is something to be said, and it is said without acknowledging it, it gives you a power known as divination"; between oneself and the audience, there is "a shield" that encourages this abandon to whose influence—even charm—[the audience] is subjected.

The master has undertaken the project of transcribing *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* [by Paul Dukas] for [382] [organ with] registrateur. He lent me the file folders of his St-Sulpice programs.

MD: "I would be lying if I said that everything I do isn't for you; yet, above all, I am doing it for the organ." We continued our conversations on psychological matters. Spoke without reservation. Dupré also said to me,

"When you were but a child, I intuited, already, that your future was predestined." One day, said the master, when the news reached him that I had been named, at thirteen years of age, to St-Esprit, instead of acting against me, he made some inquiries then sat back to wait, thinking "you could be my successor."

The master called out to Mammy to tell her how very pleased he is with me, then walked me back.

Friday 15 December 1944

At Meudon. Mammy has been bedridden with inflamed lymph nodes [*lymphangite*] for a week. I was hoping to find her up. In a very happy mood despite this, she was working non-stop on correspondence. We spent part of the afternoon working on English; the master worked in the same room, alongside us. From time to time, we chatted. Marguerite came and joined us to eat.

Dupré is very pleased with how matters at Pleyel are turning out. Régnier is not [383] part of the association [Les Amis de l'Orgue de la Salle Pleyel], though he "gained entry" as such, as did Noëlie Pierront: "[both] spies," says Mammy. Bénard, Kiesgen, and Gavoty are "working" for the benefit of all. The association members are offering whatever sum it takes to restore the organ.

I improvised, for Dupré, two symphonies in four movements, very different in manner of presentation and

in character, which led Dupré to remark that I have mastered the instrument. He has been telling me that over the last three weeks my improvisations have exuded “ever more intense emotion, as profound and vibrant as if life has matured you, real life, one of purity; yet extremely masculine. You have the brain of a man.” He allowed me free rein in the two symphonies, listening with great insight [*lisant à livre ouvert*], serious, sometimes visibly moved. A harmony, an accent, caused a sort of exclamation to escape from him. He listened, absolutely immobile. Afterwards, I remember [him saying]:

“That was of great beauty. No one other than I can improvise like that (scherzo).” He was astonished to notice no fatigue after my improvisation. He mentioned Jean Gallon and wanted to telephone him this evening.

We went back up to Mammy, who asked us how it went. The master, still solemn, said that it was “admirable.” He walked me back, [384] as usual.

Friday 22 December 1944

A week of anxiety about the war; a terrible German offensive.³¹³

Afternoon at Meudon. We had scarcely gathered when an unexpected visitor, an American soldier, arrived. He arrived in an automobile and introduced himself as a friend of an American student of Dupré.³¹⁴ He was received with great kindness and stayed until 5:00. Introductions and very polite conversation in English.

He said that he would very much like to hear the master improvise on a Noël. Dupré chose “Les anges dans nos campagnes” from the Languedoc and improvised a set of variations of great beauty.³¹⁵ He played the “Fileuse” [from Dupré’s *Suite Bretonne*] requested of him. Then (I had been expecting this), the master asked me to take my turn at improvising a Noël and to play one of my *Études*. I chose (from memory, of course) a Noël from Provence and devised another set of variations. Dupré put great emphasis on me and, in giving some autographs, made me sign my name beside his. MD: “You may as well get used to it.”

The American made an unexpected proposal that amused Mammy enormously, offering to drive me back in the “Jeep.” Despite the fact there were many things [385] for the master, Mammy, and me to talk about, such an interesting diversion could not be passed up; so, after much advice, I was hoisted up on the seat, and the master, from the middle of the road, watched me leave.

Monday 25 December 1944

Christmas. The first after the Liberation, yet angst-ridden for everyone because of the German advance.

I went to St-Sulpice for 3:30. The master, though present, had me play the entire Vespers. Mammy, as well

313. This is likely a reference to the last major German offensive on the Western Front, known as the “Battle of the Bulge” (or the Battle of the Ardennes). According to Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, “Battle of the Bulge summary,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Oct. 14, 2003 <<https://www.britannica.com/summary/Battle-of-the-Bulge>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the battle lasted from December 16, 1944 to January 16, 1945. The Germans battled fiercely, but, in the end, their attempt to divide the Allied forces and prevent an invasion of Germany was unsuccessful.

314. It has been impossible to determine the identity of this individual.

315. “Les anges dans nos campagnes” is an 18th-century French carol. In its most common English version, the tune is set to the words “Angels we have heard on high.” The Languedoc region of southern France is one of the country’s ancient provinces. It encompasses Demessieux’s homeland (cf. the diary entry of Oct. 27, 1935).

as Perroux, sat beside me. I launched myself at the organ with unbelievable passion and sought out its most beautiful effects. In very good form.

P: "Well now... will you look at this! These youngsters... look what they can do now; you would think it was Marcel! [*Ces gosses, si on ne dirait pas Marcel!*] She knows it [the St-Sulpice organ] better than I!"

The master, touched, let me continue and showed his approval [each time] with a nod or a couple of words: "that's beautiful." He spoke about me to a priest with whom he chatted briefly. After Vespers, the master took me aside.

"Happy?... It's been a long time since you played at St-Sulpice. I wanted this to be your Christmas; it gave me pleasure."

I will always remember the expression of indescribable shock on Mammy's face as she watched me set up stops.

[386] Friday 29 December 1944

A day to remember. Marcel Dupré invited Jean Gallon to hear my *Études*. I arrived at 2:30 and spent the afternoon alternating work with rest by the fireside. The master, set up nearby, was punching a registrateur tape for [his transcription of Dukas's] *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Around 4:00, Mammy joined us with a book.

Finally, around 5:00, the master went to meet Jean Gallon and my parents at the station. Seeing him again; exquisite emotions. Dupré is endlessly probing Jean's thoughts. We ate, and Mammy took great care of me.

Finally, we went into the hall where Dupré seated Jean Gallon beside the console, the manuscript in front of him, [yet] urging him, all the same, to miss nothing of my playing. Despite a fever and a sore throat, I gave my all. Jean Gallon enthusiastic and very emotional. Here are some [of their] words, noted at random:

JG: "That was overwhelming, ah, yes... Her playing is rich beyond belief! [*Elle est un millionnaire de l'orgue!*]"

Dupré: "Have you ever seen anyone play the organ like her? She has, in her ankles, what a great pianist has in the wrists. Jean, am I exaggerating when I say that she is a virtuoso [387] in the class of an Ysaÿe, a Sauer, a Busoni?"

Jean Gallon repeated: "She has it all. This music is new and compelling."

Dupré added: "It's true that there's everything in her *Études*: the first so strange and compelling... the one in thirds is charming, the one for alternating toes is spiritual, the last has grandeur." They commented on the originality of my music.

MD: "Knowing what she could be, I advised her to drop the Rome Prize. It is out of the question for one who shines so brightly."

Jean Gallon, the great "conservative" was disarmed: "I understand... I understand." They went back to my technique, and Jean Gallon, without knowing it, was thinking like the abbé Delestre:

"One doesn't come across this more than twice in a century. You, Marcel, were fortunate to have gotten hold of her; and as for her, she could have waited forty years to find someone like you."

Dupré, jokingly: "One could rightly ask if, like Paganini, she has sold her soul to Mephistopheles in exchange for her technical prowess! There's also the version [that credits] the fairies around the cradle. But here's the explanation I lean towards: from her church, she [388] has acquired the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

Next, I improvised a symphony in four movements. Themes [proposed] by Jean Gallon, quite beautiful. In

very good form. The martial style of the first theme gave me the heroic and dramatic tone of the whole symphony. Jean Gallon cried out:

“Ah! It’s all there! [c’est ‘venu’] It’s beautiful, just beautiful! That reprise, from the first movement, in the finale was remarkable. The adagio, astonishing; the scherzo—it was mad... mad! When I see such dexterity... what temerity! It’s orchestral, isn’t it, Marcel? One could believe he was listening to strings, to pizzicato in the low register. And then, she handles your organ like another you; ah, yes, yes.”

“She knows it as well as I,” Dupré added.

Jean Gallon rose and embraced me, while Dupré himself handed me my coat, saying, That was extraordinary, you know.” We chatted for a long time. They kept saying, “our child.”

MD: “She hasn’t changed, huh, Jean?... What did I tell you [*qu’est-ce que je vous rends*]?” I took note, with interest, of some of Jean’s thoughts concerning my organ prize.

[JG:] “That reminded me of the fugue [she improvised] in her competition: it was as if I saw it [389] unfold on a screen, section by section, with imitations, strettis of all sorts. One would have called it a rich, notated fugue, written so clearly one could ‘see it.’ Well (and, no, I don’t mean to flatter myself), I then had the disagreeable impression that no one but I realized this. No one noticed the splendid language; yes, there you have it! Anyway, I don’t remember who was on the jury.”

MD: “I remember well. It was like the one from her first competition.”

Dupré walked us back to the station where Jean Gallon again asked him about “this historic date when you made the ‘decision’”

MD: “It was a fortnight after her prize. I put the question to her: ‘What is your goal in life? What do you want to be?’ She responded, ‘like you, an organist, improviser, composer.’ Then I said, ‘and the Conservatory, Busser?’ ‘I couldn’t care less about them, to tell you the truth.’ I dared to ask her not to think of marriage for at least five years; such a nature must ‘make a vow’ to art.” And finally, Dupré said,

“Jean, now you are going to tell us whether we are [390] on the right path, whether she and I are justified in what we’ve done. You are our judge and arbiter. That’s why you are here today.” Jean Gallon stammered some enthusiastic words and repeated, “I am moved...”

We took our leave of the master with great affection, and Jean Gallon returned with us to Paris.

Friday 5 January 1945

At Meudon the entire afternoon. Chatted with the master for a long time. He’d found in Jean Gallon what he had wanted; this has made him extremely happy.

MD: “He liked your *Études* as compositions: this was obvious to me.”

He told me that, aside from some good memories he has of Marcel Languetuit from so many years ago, he knows no one but himself and me who could keep a listener attentive and interested during a twenty-five-minute-long [improvised] symphony. The master, seeing that I was about to thank him, said to me,

“It’s as if Marguerite were to thank me for what I’ve done for her; no, Marguerite and you are alike for me, as you well know.”

Friday 12 January 1945

Dupré has decided to disclose the grand project to [391] Father de la Motte. He himself went by

appointment to talk to my parish priest at St-Esprit. Father kept him an hour and a half (it was early morning).

The master [then] came to lunch at our home and arrived full of enthusiasm about his meeting. He has once again drawn one of my dearest friends into our camp. He gave us an account of the conversation, impossible to reproduce. A day spent among close friends.

The master left at 6:30, after I had played Widor's *Symphonie-Gothique* for him.

I walked him back. Serious conversation. Snow and a frigid temperature.

Monday 15 January 1945

Due to the extreme cold, my recital for Gavoty was postponed. Restrictions on electricity.

Friday 19 January 1945

Worked at Meudon with Mammy and the master. Chatted. Grunenwald is taking a four-month "break" from St-Sulpice to do supply work. Dupré told him that because my parish priest is very understanding, he can count on me.

Friday 26 January 1945

At Meudon. The master agreed to receive [392] a group of fifteen or so American officers and give a recital for them.³¹⁶

In the afternoon, I worked with Mammy. Several times, the master took a break from his own work to come and chat. We ate together, waiting for the visitors, who arrived around 5:30.

Introductions. The master played his program. Marguerite was asked to play. They were both splendid. (Dupré's improvisation on a theme by the colonel had a virtuosic spirit and was technically astounding.)

After these gentlemen had departed, the master asked me to stay a bit yet, and we spent three-quarters of an hour relaxing and warming up. Poking fun at the theme he had been given, Dupré played a waltz by... Durand; Mammy claimed to have heard it "in her youth." We amused ourselves.

The master walked me back.

Sunday 28 January 1945

[The feast of] Perpetual Adoration at St. Sulpice. I played for the procession (the electricity came on at 5:00).

Friday 2 February 1945

At Meudon. Worked with the master. Played [393] the modern repertoire.³¹⁷ Chatted.

316. Cf. Murray 1985, 186: "Dupré was to give several concerts for American military personnel, including one in January 1945 in Meudon."

317. According to her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage," on Feb. 2, 1945 Demessieux played: Langlais, "Les Rameaux"; Panel, *Canon*; Tournemire, *Communion*; and Duruflé, *Prélude* (likely from Op. 4). During three sessions in

No time to write.

Friday 9 February 1945

Spent the afternoon chatting with Mammy and Marguerite. The master in Paris.

Sunday 11 February 1945

Litaize concert at Chaillot. Bach. Stylistically bad. Brilliant effects.

Encountered Provost and his wife. Provost: "I will have you play at Chaillot."

Friday 16 February 1945

At Meudon. Played, among other pieces, Jehan Alain's *Litanies*, for the master.³¹⁸ He jumped when I played a technically difficult passage of left-hand chords at top speed, and asked me to play it again while he leaned over the keyboard to understand how. My technique, he said, transported him.

Showed two sketches. Dupré liked them.

Marguerite played for me.

Friday 23 February 1945

At Meudon, in the afternoon, an unexpected visit from an American officer. Mammy having drawn a lot of attention to me, the officer took my name.

Waited for the master. Chatted. He [the master] notated, on my score, the cuts in the Finale of Widor's Sixth [Symphony]. Preparation of programs.

[394] Friday 2 March 1945

Meudon. Chatted with Mammy. Waited for the master before eating. Ailing a little, he coughed. I played Widor's [*Symphonie*–]*Romane* from memory. Went very well. Dupré told me that my playing was attaining "supreme grandeur"; he was very moved by the "Cantilena." He presented me with the score that Widor used at St-Sulpice and which contains annotations in his hand, and added a dedication.³¹⁹

MD: "If Widor had heard you, he would have loved you as he loved me." Again: "We are the only organists in the world to have such minds." I felt great joy. Seizing the opportunity, I decided to ask Dupré if he wished to accept the dedication of my six *Études*. Having, for a long time, not dared mention this, I made sure to observe the proprieties in asking him. But I had not even finished when the master opened his arms to me: "if I wish!..." Each of us was as profoundly moved as the other.

MD: "You do not know how important your *Études* are." His words were exquisite: "They will carry my name into posterity."

January, she had already performed for Dupré the following works: Widor, *Symphonie-Gothique* (Jan. 5 and 12); Vierne, *Scherzo*; Grunenwald, *Mélodie intérieure*; and Messiaen, *Banquet céleste* (all on Jan. 19).

318. According to her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage," as well as Alain's *Litanies*, on Feb. 16 Demessieux performed Litaize, *Intermezzo pastorale*.

319. A copy of the dedication, preserved in AM 4S14–15, reads: "To my dear and admirable little Jeanne Demessieux. In grand memory of Widor, [on] the day of her magnificent interpretation of the 'Romane.' Meudon, March 2, 1945. Marcel Dupré."

He announced the news to Mammy, who was delighted and, [395] despite my objections, [he] walked me back. Concerned for his health.

Sunday 4 March 1945

Yesterday evening, at 9:30, Marguerite came from Meudon to tell us that her father was ill; he had spent four hours at St-Sulpice for St. Theresa's feast day and returned with a fever of 39°. He was asking that I play his *Chemin de la Croix* and improvise at St-Sulpice today.

Played [movements] III, X, and IV. Improvisation: adagio, fugue in five voices with an interpolated recitative on the "Miserere." I was in very good form, despite my distress. Full gallery; great enthusiasm; Perroux, Grumbach, Malle, Tallon. Guerner asked me,

"Is your soul inclined towards the tragic? Do not apologize, on the contrary. It's admirable; I will say nothing more." Two people sitting beside me were weeping after my last chord. A vicar, having learned I was playing, climbed to the gallery, where he stayed to talk to Papa.

I was eager to telephone. The doctor has diagnosed bronchitis. Mammy asked me to come again to Meudon tomorrow evening to substitute for the master at his organ. A [396] group of people from outside Paris is coming to see the organ. Mammy thanked me, saying this was the only way to soothe the master, who cannot postpone this event.

Tuesday 6 March 1945

Yesterday evening, from 8:30 to a quarter to eleven at Meudon. The master was [feeling] a little better. Mammy introduced me, upon my arrival, as the "jewel in the master's crown, our star." She asked me to go up to Dupré for a moment while everyone went into the parlour. In peace, confined to bed, the master was rereading Aristotle. He talked about St-Sulpice, the enthusiasm of his friends, my gifts, and appeared immensely happy. After chatting, he gave me instructions for showing the registrateur and said he wished me to include one *Étude* among the pieces to be played.

MD: "I insist! These are some of your future clients. Improvise as if it were me. And be sure to leave my door open so I can hear you! I've many other things to tell you, but you will be back."

After they had seen the organ, I demonstrated what the registrateur can do, then improvised at length on the Kyries for Advent [397] and for Lent, drawing from the organ effects dear to the master and [committing] some audacities with the sostenutos. I was asked to play Bach and chose the Fugue in D. Marguerite, whom I had prompted, asked for an *Étude*. Next, they wanted a work by the master. I proposed *Le Chemin de la Croix*, and they chose the 10th movement, which was still under my fingers, by memory. Among the guests was an organist from Cognac³²⁰ who had heard me at St-Sulpice.

Next, we went upstairs to Marguerite's rooms where she played a major work by Medtner, *Improvisation*. Mammy served a light meal after the gentlemen had greeted Dupré in his room. Very pleasant conversation. I'll omit what was said about me, except for Mammy's beautiful attitude towards me, so full of affection. Marguerite played splendidly.

Finally, when it was time to think of leaving, Mammy sent me to see the master again, who gave his compliments so loudly that everyone in the next room responded like a chorus. Then we chatted. Some time ago, I had spoken to Dupré concerning my idea of one day writing a work about the Holy Spirit; he had

320. Cognac is a town in the Charente Dept. of southwestern France.

seemed taken by the idea [but] kept [398] silent. Then, yesterday evening, in this last meeting, he suddenly said to me,

“Jeanne, you must write a work about the Holy Spirit... a major work.”

Me: “You think I’m capable, Master?”

MD: “Yes. I think you are entirely capable of writing it.”

Shortly afterwards, I left the master, who sought to reassure me about his health. [The] inexpressible beauty of this soul. Heightened confidence.

Mammy and Marguerite escorted us back to the station, Mammy, to one side, taking my arm.

Thursday 8 March 1945

My recital for Gavoty at Meudon. *Litanies* by Jehan Alain (politically a good idea), the first “Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland” by Bach [BWV 659 from the “Eighteen”], Fugue in D, Franck’s *Choral* No. 2, my six *Études*, a symphony in four movements improvised on themes by Gavoty.

He [Gavoty] arrived at 5:00, the same as my parents, I at 2:30. Mammy settled me in, made a fire, and said that the master had decided to come out of his room today.

While I was beginning to load registrations on the organ, Dupré appeared. A pang of anguish that didn’t leave me, seeing his [399] ravaged face. He had trouble sitting upright in his armchair. Though having seen him sick before, and often tired, I’ve never seen him this bad. We spend two-and-a-half hours that afternoon either practising, chatting, or resting. In a passing reference, Dupré told me what attitude I should take towards Gavoty. Then, speaking of Monday evening [March 5, 1945]:

MD: “It would seem they indulged themselves by asking you for [particular] works? In the future, refuse. Don’t give something just because you are asked for it. I wouldn’t say this to just any one of your classmates; they are just commoners; you are of ‘royal blood.’ When Liszt knew that he had been invited only to pay his way by playing, he refused. One does not permit this, one falls silent! When I see him once again, I shall subtly convey this to him.”

Gavoty arrived to find us in front of the fire, the master regaining his strength by relaxing. We had tea. Gavoty [was] sparkling and light-hearted. Both sides [were] being careful.

I played. After Alain’s *Litanies*, Gavoty made a complimentary remark, got up, and asked me to replay several passages. Dupré, displeased by this attitude, could not resist throwing out: [400] “I had promised to say nothing during the program, but I see that I must clarify something.” In a few words, he raised me very high, and I continued. Yet another remark by Gavoty before the Fugue in D. Irritated, I threw it back in his face. For the first time, he yielded. Everyone very self-controlled. After the second *Étude*, Gavoty yielded again and declared, moreover, to have never heard such music: “The novelty of the form creates a new language,” he said. The game was afoot, and a look from Dupré informed me that the most difficult had been accomplished.

I used the remainder of the time to win Gavoty over completely. The temperature was rising. Interesting symphony themes. (I improvised in a way that, for me, was unforgettable: strange superimpositions of form and language. Ideas [coming], perhaps more rapidly than ever, showed me, compellingly, what I must play much farther in advance than usual.)

Surprised, Gavoty said he had expected an imitation of earlier styles or composers, as one usually hears, whereas this was entirely new, upon which [401] Dupré, convinced, was quick to agree. He said,

“What has always struck me about this child is that she has her own attitude, her own [harmonic] colours; she regards the organ through a personality that is her own.” Dupré, very taken by my symphony which, with his prodigious memory, he retraced for Gavoty in its entirety, pensive about “that beautiful, stormy finale” (in which all the themes engaged in a gripping battle). Gavoty exclaimed,

“Mademoiselle, I beg the privilege of being your announcer at your next recital series!” Truly disarmed.

The master then brought up for discussion the number and organization of my performances and the hall. For an hour and a half, he had Gavoty firmly in his grip until Gavoty committed himself on several matters. At a certain point, Dupré revealed his cards: “I appear to be interested in the Pleyel organ, yes. But what I want is that this child debut!” He would like the [Pleyel] director, Bénard, to engage me.

MD: “I’ll see to Bénard; you work on the others (Nicoly, Guy Lambert, etc.)” Concerning this scene, during which we [my parents, Mammy, Marguerite, and I] listened in silence, I will not record the feeling I was left with. As for my teacher, my regard for him could not rise any higher. [402] Around 8:30, Dupré took a deep breath; Gavoty must direct certain individuals to him at St-Sulpice in the near future. We left the master, Mammy, and Marguerite.

Gavoty, apparently struck by the manner in which they bid me goodbye, could not resist, when it was just the two of us, making a remark to me about their kindness towards me, and my teacher’s magnanimity.

On the train, he [Gavoty] spoke a lot about the “deep affection” that at one time united Dupré and Vierre and said that “third parties playing a role in their life” had disrupted it. “These two great men,” he said, which was a shock to me. He also told me that Dupré and Marchal are “enemies for life.”

“Yes,” I said, “but the struggle is unequal: Marchal attacks, [whereas] Dupré doesn’t defend himself and worries little about it. It’s a case of supreme greed and no talent versus nobleness and talent.” Gavoty jumped at such a rejoinder.

“Perhaps I wouldn’t go quite as far as that. Marchal has a certain talent; his angular rhythm and his concept [of the music]... is such that it unsettles him to play legato, what can I say. He has, nevertheless, some very lovely traits. To him, it’s all about interpretation (!). He obviously doesn’t have Dupré’s technique.”

This position-taking between [403] Gavoty and me, on our first encounter, was pointed. He had thought I would grovel at his feet; [but] someone else was big enough to do that for me. If he was awkward, he must have seen that I was annoyed. If he played the sycophant, I was more courageous. It was just that: I wasn’t afraid.

Sunday 11 March 1945

Played at St-Sulpice at 9:00 and 11:15. (Telegram from Dupré yesterday: Papa went to see him; better. He kept him an hour.) Stations VIII, IX, V; improvisation: four movements on “Laetare”:³²¹ adagio, intermezzo, fugal style, finale on two themes.

Guerner: “I’ve something to tell you... You have enemies: those who are jealous, envious, who will ridicule you. Keep calm and don’t change. Ignore the criticism.” He also said that it was “admirable,” and refused to let me thank him.

321. The words “Laetare Jerusalem” are the opening of the Introit for the fourth Sunday of Lent, which fell on March 11 in 1945. See Benedictines of Solesmes, eds. 1956, *Liber Usualis*, 559–60.

Friday 16 March 1945

At Meudon. When the Master returned at 5:00, he rested a while and [then] chatted with me for an hour. He paid me a beautiful honour by saying, “Who was it who had such total confidence in me, blind [confidence] (I should say clairvoyant). Who said to me, ‘I’ll follow in your footsteps,’ who accepted every sacrifice called for; [404] who had absolute faith? You, and you alone.” It was due to Gavoty’s astonishment that he gave me this noble and proud response.

Dupré told me that yesterday (at a concert of Russian music in which Marguerite participated), M^r Guerner had spoken to him about me. He reported it to me thus:

G: “This child poses a problem: whether composition is for women.”

Dupré could not prevent himself from this rejoinder: “Can you hold your tongue? One day, you will be invited to hear her *Études*. You will see her play like she can’t play at St-Sulpice, where she holds back. And you will see that she is a composer.”

To me Dupré said, “Up until now, no woman has yet written a choral symphony or painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Intelligence—yes; creativity—no. Myself, I am close to believing that women are superior to men.” After this awe-inspiring pronouncement, Dupré went on about Guerner, who had asked him, between two pieces [during the concert],

“Moreover, [with] the little one, it’s the same as it is with music, isn’t it?...”

MD: “Yes.”³²²

G: “I knew it.”

Mammy is very worried about my [405] health: (a lump in my breast that, regrettably, caused me to suffer this afternoon, and for which I am being treated, upon advice from a surgeon). She hid it from the master. They’re going to Le Havre tomorrow.[323]³²³

[Thursday] 22 March 1945

Yesterday evening, a big concert at the Salle Pleyel: Bach, Handel, with Marcel Dupré and the Stirn Chamber Orchestra.³²⁴ Excerpts from [Bach] cantatas, the *Water Music* (H[andel]). Dupré played sinfonias [from Bach Cantatas, Nos.] 29 [and] 146 and [Handel] Concertos in G minor and D minor, with improvised cadenzas.³²⁵ For an encore, Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

Big audience, a crowd, despite there having been no publicity. Ovations for the master. An unforgettable evening for us, too.

322. With this comment, Dupré affirmed his commitment to Demessieux’s career, which was as strong as his commitment was to music—something not lost on his close friend Guerner.

323. Le Havre is a port city on the north coast of France. According to a program preserved in BnF, Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6. 1443, on Sunday, March 18, 1945, Dupré performed a recital for the inauguration of the restored organ of the parish of St-Léon in Le Havre.

324. This was an orchestra that, according to <<http://www.musimem.com/Stirn.htm>>, under the heading “Remise de la Croix de Chevalier de l’Ordre National du Mérite,” accessed Nov. 27, 2022, was founded and conducted by Daniel Stirn (1915–2010) and functioned for close to ten years.

325. A copy of the printed program is preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1444.

During the intermission, Papa and I went to the green room, as did a crowd of Dupré's friends. But scarcely had I spotted the master when we were politely asked to leave: "Marcel Dupré won't be receiving until afterwards." Except, Dupré himself reopened the door and, surprise:

MD: "Jeanne Demessieux... Well then? What an idea, to stay at the door[!]" And taking my hand, took me to... Bénard, the [Salle Pleyel] director, who was chatting with Mammy. Formal [406] introduction. Bénard, kindly, extremely surprised, took in the words "star, very great artist, composer," vaguely conscious of the future weight on his shoulders. After that, the friends pushed their way in and took over.

By chance, I came face to face with M^{me} Falcinelli, who was taken aback. An elegant woman who, with her husband, heard me the last two Sundays at St-Sulpice, she cried out with the most devious and sweet intentions, "Ah! we missed you Sunday at St-Sulpice! Really, we missed you."

Me: "Monsieur Dupré was absent, I believe?" and someone put their foot in it:

"Yes. That was M^r Grunenwald."

Mammy, radiant, pushed through the growing crowd: "You heard how the [Salle Pleyel] organ sounded? Here's where you should give your recitals; M^r Dupré is pushing relentlessly; he is doing all this for you." No one heard and, a moment later, the master came to chat with us.

"You saw Bénard's face?... we shall leave together; see you afterwards."

Berveiller talked to me about St-Sulpice: "You improvise magnificently."

Mammy returned to the hall with us. A piece for orchestra, then Dupré entered and concluded the [407] concert. An excellent lesson for me.

In the green room, where they were being assailed, Dupré whispered to me, "Let's go." On foot to the Étoile [where we took] the train together. The master gave an arm to both Mammy and me and [said], immediately,

"After you left the green room, I didn't hold back: I recounted your entire story to Bénard. I'm satisfied that he is won over." I sensed that Dupré was profoundly happy.

MD: "I'm becoming more and more convinced that it's here our little one will play. Do you like this stage? The organ will sound very good." A little later:

MD: "I prefer hearing you to hearing myself," and I didn't even try to hold my own. He chatted with me non-stop. He is looking forward to hearing me Saturday.

Sunday 25 March 1945

Palm Sunday. Yesterday, two telegrams from Dupré got to me too late: I was spending a sorry afternoon at Meudon, wandering around the house. [The Duprés] were urgently called to Rouen regarding the health of M^{lle} Chauvière.

Today played both masses at St-Sulpice. Bach chorales, the two last Stations by Dupré. A long improvisation: variations and fugue in [408] five voices on "Gloria laus." Berveiller turned pages for me and questioned me about my [plans for the] future. [I was] the centre of attention after the last chord. Guerner joined me in the library:

"In your music, one senses that you know what philosophy is."

Me: "Ah... I find that interesting, M^r Guerner. For me, music is a philosophy and a language. Which is not to say... that I believe that we are making use of it as a way of 'philosophizing,' more or less abstractly."

G: "What you've just said is admirable and profound; indeed, it's a matter of 'being' a philosopher, which is to say, a thinker. Bach was a religious philosopher, Beethoven a grand metaphysician. And Marcel Dupré, whose work I've appreciated for three years now, is not accessible on the first hearing—for the masses—because he is a thinker. May I have the honour of accompanying you?" This conversation continued until a transfer point in the subway cut us off. Guerner interested me keenly. He seemed to try hard to comprehend me.

Upon my arrival [that morning], I had found Perroux waiting for me [409] in front of St-Sulpice after repairing a wind trunk; he had been informed by Dupré that I was playing.

P: "I came to work this morning for you; I wouldn't have done this for others," and he made quite a declaration about how talented I am.

Saturday 31 March 1945

The Duprés, having returned yesterday afternoon, called me to Meudon by telegram (M^{lle} Chauvière is better). Mammy, having in mind how close my operation is,³²⁶ had alerted the master, who came to us all upset. When they were persuaded that I was no longer in pain, I was finally able to reassure them.

Played Widor's Sixth for the master.³²⁷ Chatted for a long time. Talking about [organ] design, I told him that my wish for St-Esprit is the ideal organ of his dreams. We were pacing in front of the station when he abruptly stopped.

MD: "You would like this organ?..."

Me: "You are in doubt, Master?"

MD: "No. But I did not dare imagine [it in] a church.

Me: "That wouldn't stop us from building one in a concert hall." Dupré looked at me again, then:

MD: "The parish priest?..."

Me: "He is very 'American' in his tendencies. Definitely an ally to cultivate [*C'est un bon terrain*]; I can lay the groundwork with him, if you wish. [410] I only dare speak of this to you because I'm sure I can't possibly be mistaken."

MD: "We shall talk about it again!"

Sunday 1 April 1945

Easter. At Vespers at St-Sulpice with Papa. The master and Mammy, happy to see me. Also present were Perroux and a friend who heard me at Meudon.

But... following on our heels is a man in an English officer's uniform; Mammy exclaimed loudly, then ran to find the master. I withdrew to a corner. A moment later, Dupré was at my side again:

"Jeannette! It's M^r Van Wyck, who engaged me for a grand tour of Australia, you know. He has dropped in on us today after five years. This is providential for you; quick now, you are going to play a grand entrance piece. It's Providence, I tell you; you've understood, yes?..."

326. Cf. the diary entry for March 16, 1945.

327. According to her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage," on Mar. 31, 1945 Demessieux played selected movements of Widor's Sixth Symphony: II. Adagio, III. Intermezzo, V. Final.

Me: "Yes."

After the entrance, came the first verset. This distinguished person watched me with the greatest intensity, Dupré having said to him, to his surprise, "Don't miss a note."

When the master returned to his [organ] bench, he brought the conversation around to international concerts, made inquiries, and with striking diplomacy brought his interlocutor around to posing to me this question: [411]

"Have you ever played in England, Mademoiselle?"

"Not yet," Dupré responded. Thus begun, Dupré, in a lively manner, revealed the entire secret and placed me on a pedestal, as always, with reinforcement from Mammy. The outcome was forthright: "I shall be there for your recital series, Mademoiselle."

Eventually, Dupré left the conversation to Mammy, and, turning again to me on his right [said]:

"I've thought again about our conversation of yesterday..."

Me: "You spoke, one day, of your idea of an organ in three parts for St-Esprit."

MD: "Yes!"

Me: "The more I think about it, the more ideal it becomes, even from the poetic point of view..."

MD: "The Trinity?"

Me: "Yes."

MD: "It's true... One could do something beautiful and daring."

Me: "Something unique to this church."

MD: "The two of us will fine-tune this [idea]."

Next, the master told me that Rolande Falcinelli will give a recital Thursday at Chaillot (Litaize organized these concerts for public broadcast). He asked me to arrange to be there and invited me to sit in his box. Mammy insisted. I hesitated, sensing how their taking this stance would be remarked upon. Dupré said to me, "Don't worry. It's my right. And it will have [412] a very good effect."

When I left them for my Vespers service, their goodbye was most affectionate, to which was added that of the important Australian.³²⁸

Thursday 5 April 1945

R. Falcinelli's recital. Good memorization. Bach: stylistically bad; and this frightful "mélange," due to Litaize's influence, which I railed against when Dupré and I were alone. Dupré's *Deuxième Symphonie*, with enormous and laudable effort (finally, a major work by Dupré on the Chaillot stage!). Somewhat slow and solemn, but correct. Improvisation: "puerile," the master said to me. Formulaic and without grandeur or inspiration.

Many people came to greet the Duprés in their box. Farther away, one could see the Falcinellis, as well as the Touches (without their poor mother), etc. Busser passed in front of us several times without seeing us.

328. A reference to the visitor Wilfrid Van Wyck, mentioned earlier in this diary entry, who was, in fact, British. Demessieux understood him to be important in his power to promote a musician's career.

The recital over, the Duprés lingered in front of their box, chatting again with numerous people; a steady flow of people in front of our group, the master waited until there was no one left in the hall. Then,

MD: “Well, are you set? Have you gauged the disparity? Isn’t it just what I [413] told you?” Mammy and Marguerite shrugged their shoulders, saying that she [Rolande Falcinelli] isn’t even in the “same league” [*ne m’arrive “pas à la cheville”*] as me, is no better than any other, and spoke warmly of my improvisations. Dupré concluded,

“For a first recital (by Rolande), it was fine. But there’s no comparison with [Jeanne Demessieux], and I wanted her to see this for herself. Take advantage of what you have seen and heard. You on the stage, that would be something else.”

The master and Mammy leading me, each by an arm, we headed for the foyer where they maintained their behavior towards me, which drew looks of all sorts my way. We crossed paths with Busser. “How nice, eh, to see Bubu...,” Dupré whispered to me. Similarly, I landed by chance among a group of colleagues and friends. I hastened to greet Rolande—icy—and returned to my conversations. The Duprés were taking their time, floating from group to group without losing sight of me; the master came over to ask me whether I had seen Rolande, then they went to greet her, quickly, and got ready to leave.

“Come with us; we’re leaving,” Mammy said to me, without failing to notice [414] the impression made. Followed by a small crowd, we broke away in the subway, where Mammy exclaimed, “At last, alone!” On the platform, they were once again assailed, but the master turned his back and spoke with no one but me.

MD: “Let’s talk seriously.” He dreams, as I do, of an organ for St-Esprit and so, we are endlessly making plans.

“I want your [concept of an] organ at St-Esprit,” I said, “and if I can contribute something to its design, I’m at your service.”

MD: “I know what you’re thinking. I want this organ for you, too. Your parish priest must be as caught up in the excitement as we are and be willing to go with Lavergne.³²⁹ Beuchet will make a fuss, and I couldn’t care less. It would be better to enter into the contract without saying anything.”

I asked the master if he would be so kind as to play Bach’s Prelude in E-flat [major] for me on Saturday; he would also like to talk.

Saturday 7 April 1945

At Meudon. The master worked. Shared thoughts about Rolande F. After a meal, Dupré played the Prelude in E-flat. But first:

MD: “Tell me what you were looking for today in my performance, what you were expecting.”

Me: “More and more, I imagine playing everything exactly as you do; the E-flat is the synthesis of [414b] this concept, it seems to me; I needed to review it one more time.”

MD: “Good; I agree with you. Do you know the secret? It takes all six.”³³⁰ This was surprising.

329. Dupré appeared to have settled upon René Lavergne as his choice of builder of a great organ for St-Esprit.

330. “It takes all six” may be a biblical reference to creating the world in six days (followed by a day of rest), to affirm that time and hard work were the answers to Demessieux’s question of how to reproduce Dupré’s playing. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this suggestion.)

Next, we talked for a long time about our organ.* He imagines it as consisting of three equal divisions. He plans to speak to [Paul] Tournon.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] 14.4.45, MD: “With this organ, in your hands, I see you creating modern mysticism.”

Saturday 14 April 1945

I’m writing these lines after a short delay because of a bad headache (nothing more, thankfully). First recital in my review [series of recitals]: ten Preludes and Fugues by Bach.

Finding me fatigued, Dupré (who had come to meet me in Meudon), questioned me; I could not hide from them that I had been suffering for some hours, and I was feverish. Great distress. Since I was insisting on playing at my parents’ arrival an hour from then, they forced me to rest, one preferring the garden, the other the parlour.

For an hour, I stayed in the parlour, stretched out, blinds closed, covered by Dupré’s overcoat! I was able to reflect, in comfort, on their affection when they left me, and I heard the master striding around for a moment in his room while Mammy spoke to him very loudly. After a half-hour of calm, I heard muffled footsteps descending from the office [415] in the room and entering the parlour. It was Dupré, anxious: “You aren’t sleeping? How do you feel?” I reassured him. Next, with the greatest care, he brought out a piece of paper.

MD: “I’ve drawn the plan of your organ...” Excitedly, I insisted on seeing it, and the master parted the curtains, sat down, explained it to me, and copied it in a few minutes. MD: “To represent the doctrine of the Trinity; I’ve also had in mind the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: we would have seven ranks in each organ gallery. What do you think?” I exchanged some enthusiastic words with the master: the symmetry and balance of his conception thrilled me to bits.

MD: “Don’t be afraid to suggest something else if you wish.” Then he closed the curtains again. “Rest, great artist.” Then, as I’d requested that he return to his work when he left, he softly played a few chorales.

For my recital, I was in my best form. Happy. Nevertheless, Dupré insisted that I rest a minute after every other prelude and fugue. They were filled with enthusiasm. Mammy lamented seeing me suffer; “It didn’t cloud her brain,” said the master.

[416] The evening concluded with a long talk in the parlour, where Mammy insisted that I lie down again.

The master walked us back and waited until our departure.

MD: “You will make no further progress, unless you write a work even more difficult than the Études and succeed in playing it. For me, though, your progress [beyond this point] is unimaginable.”

Wednesday 18 April 1945

Yesterday evening, a Bach recital by Dupré at St-Philippe-du-Roule, the first of a series of ten.³³¹ Cipher

331. According to programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1445–48 and 1452–57, Dupré played the ten all-Bach recitals, “for the benefit of parish work” prior to Benediction at St-Philippe-du-Roule on Tuesdays and Fridays on April 17, 20, 24, 27—not May 1, a public holiday—May 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, and 22. His program for April 17 consisted of the Sinfonias and miscellaneous chorale preludes in vols. 11–12 of his own Bach edition.

on ten stops from the beginning; a perpetual struggle. The motor broke down, as did everything else in the end [*enfin: tout*].³³² Nevertheless, [he displayed] his cool self-possession. Dupré gave a splendid concert, worthy of him; but a few of us were conscious of just how many sacrifices he made. Guerner joined us, cursing, swearing damnation. Dupré's friends all grouped around him when he descended.

Suddenly, someone brought Litaize, wanting to speak to me. "Ah! There you are. I'd like to ask you to play on the radio, and once at Chaillot, too, because... you're the only one who hasn't played, you understand."

It was terrible, but I thanked him profusely, which embarrassed him, and [417] I said I would write him with my answer. He was very astonished and insisted on having an idea of my program.

Me: "You're at my throat, M^r Litaize! Really, I am deeply touched." But I did not give him anything definite (he advised a program of old music and appeared embarrassed when I preferred a varied program).

Dupré was watching Litaize and we exchanged knowing looks. He manoeuvred his way over [to us].

MD: "Litaize, eh?..."

L: "Yes. I'd like to tell you something—later."

MD: "Yes." Shortly afterwards, he [Dupré] took me aside.

MD: "I know. He just told me that he'd like to invite you."

Me: "I'm not interested."

MD: "Ah! Nor am I. We agree. We'll go see what Jeannette [M^{me} Dupré] thinks, but she is of the same mind as we are. I said nothing to Litaize in response. Do nothing; I'll take care of it." He grabbed Jean Gallon as he went past.

MD: "Jean, my good man, I'd like to tell you that the little one is doing her review [recitals], one every fortnight; you are invited to come, whenever you wish."³³³ I made a move to slip away unnoticed, but MD [said]: "Stay, my dear! You both know what I have suffered this evening..." Jean spoke of [Dupré's] transcription of [the sinfonia from Bach's] Cantata No. 146, burning with enthusiasm:

"Someone [418] told me that you were in Bach's good graces—that he himself inspired you [in the transcription]. Is it true?" Poor, noble Dupré looked at us each in turn. "Thank you, Jean, my good man."

J. Gallon left us, and Dupré asked me about my health. He asked my parents and me to depart with them, and stayed for a while longer to see his friends while Mammy chatted with us. When we left, the master took Mammy's arm and mine and strode ahead of the crowd of friends who followed on our heels. He exclaimed:

"That was a disastrous recital (!); the organ was s-... I'm disgusted!... And Marchal—Marchal who was grinning ear to ear! He's happy, he is!" He [Dupré] was near tears, and Mammy and I said in chorus:

332. "As did everything else in the end" is, presumably, hyperbole. According to <<https://www.organsparisaz4.vhhl.nl/St%20Philippe%20Roule.htm>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the organ of St-Philippe-du-Roule was built in 1903 by Mutin (successor to Cavaillé-Coll) and renovated in 1922 by Abbey.

333. According to her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage," beginning Apr. 14, 1945 and ending Dec. 19, 1945, Demessieux performed at Meudon fourteen distinct recitals as a review of repertoire that she had already performed there over the previous four years for family members as the audience.

“So what! You are [in the] right, of course!”

Me: “Master, I beg you!... Marchal just learned something; of course, he was smiling...” Dupré calmed down, then:

“Jeanne, you must have the operation.”

Me: “My work, Master...”

Mme D: “Leave her alone; don’t distress her this evening...”

Saturday 21 April 1945

Yesterday evening, St-Philippe, Dupré recital.³³⁴ The organ, better. The church [419] has been full for these recitals. A superior audience. Dupré and Marguerite came down during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; immediately, the master came up behind me: “Happy? It was beautiful today.” He followed the service reverently.

Today, Meudon. Dupré brought up the subject of my health. He does not dare insist but is encouraging me. I would have decided if I had my parents’ assent. I’m unsure.

Wednesday 25 April 1945

Yesterday, recital, St-Philippe.³³⁵ The organ was repeatedly a problem. Upon leaving, Dupré said to me sadly, “I’ll have had my share of humiliations...” The church was full.

Saturday 28 April 1945

Yesterday, I saw Dr. Dramez. The X-ray shows a healthy body [*un organisme intact*], but a large lump in the breast. Dramez is consulting with a surgeon. I confided to him the secret [plan for] my Paris debut.

That evening[’s] recital: magnificent.³³⁶ Brought Dupré up to date on my health. He is uneasy, gloomy.

Sunday 29 April 1945

Asked to speak to Dupré, who received me this morning at St-Sulpice. Mammy; lots of people. [420] Between the Gloria and the Offertory, the master took me aside [saying]: “I need to speak to her right away.” Here is our conversation.

MD: “What do you wish to say to me?”

Me: “Allow me to ask you a question.”

MD: “Certainly.”

Me: Have you an idea of the timeframe in which my recital series will begin?”

MD: “I sensed that was what you wanted to talk about. You’re afraid of not being ready?”

Me: “Yes.”

334. April 20 program: Preludes, Fugues, and Fantasias from vol. 5 of Dupré’s Bach edition.

335. April 24 program: the six Schübler chorales and the Partitas from vol. 10 of Dupré’s Bach edition.

336. April 27 program: Preludes and Fugues in the order of presentation given in vol. 1 of Dupré’s Bach edition.

MD: "I must see Bénard soon to ask for Pleyel. As for the date, that's unclear; it is we who must decide. Why?"

Me: "I have my own idea; I'm looking for a compromise."

MD: "I can see that. Tell me, above all, how are you?..."

Me: "Fine. The other evening, I didn't tell you that I've confided everything to Dr. Dramez."

MD: "Very good! A secret entrusted to a doctor is like a secret entrusted to a priest."

Me: "We'd envisioned waiting [delaying the surgery]. He asked me to give him a date. I mentioned December [1945] or January [1946] for the start of my recitals. That would postpone the operation for a year... He thinks that would be waiting too long."

MD: "It certainly is too long!"

Me: "If we could begin [the recital series] in October [1945], it would work."

MD: "Jeannette! You are wrong, I tell you! Enough of this!"

Me: "It's not for my sake that I'm begging... Allow [421] me to pose the question to the surgeon, Master?"

MD: "I'm cornered; I must tell you what I think. I have not lived since learning you have this, and I will have no peace until it's removed. Were you Marguerite, twenty-four hours after you had spoken to me of this, it [the surgery] would be done. I believe too much in your talent, your fortune, and your future to take such a risk! Listen to me: I am telling you my life is on hold!"

Me: "Master... Gavoty, Bénard: they will lose interest..."

MD: "What? Who do you think they are? I'm using them, but they are nothing but 'objects' in my hand. If I say to Bénard, her debut will take place in your hall—but wait—he'll wait."

Me: "You're building my future day by day, and my parents are sure that your immediate plans have been upset; this is why I'm insisting."

MD: "No. Sometimes in life, one must relax; this changes nothing. When Jean Gallon spoke to me of St-Philippe, I said to him: 'Don't even think of it, so close to the little one's series.' He said to me, 'Marcel, a fortnight after your recitals, they will be in the past.' I do not have the honour of being your father, but if you trust me, do not hesitate [to put the operation before your recital series]."

The end of the Credo cut [422] the conversation short, and the master beckoned me to his side at the console. I don't know if he was influenced by our discussion, but his first improvisation (on the Elevation) was of a character such that I literally felt ransacked, and as though I had been struck. (To describe what I mean, I could perhaps relate it to the former Étude in G major in thirds [or] the 14th Station—yet very new.)

After High Mass, I disclosed our conversation to Mammy.

Mme D: "All he has said to me is that he is not living. The notion won't leave him. What are you going to do?"

The master withdrew from everyone, and we three chatted for a half-hour. I told him I've decided, but that my parents are taking a very dim view of this. I took my leave of Mammy, and Dupré walked me back as far as the gate [*la grille*]. He would like my parents to be convinced and spoke of writing [to them]. I told him that their grief is making them believe that my teacher will lose confidence in me and accept another disciple, and that I can't seem to reassure them. Dupré's eyes were misted over, and he began to stare at me fixedly:

MD: "You believed them; you believed that!..."

Me: "No, I didn't believe them; but I have to reply to them."

MD: "My Jeannette, [423] my angel! I am worried! Relieve me of this right now—right now, I beg you. Imagine that in the organ kingdom a woman may reign, and that you are chosen to reign! Your career is dearer to me than my own, do you hear? You will remain at St-Esprit, but on a throne because a throne is what I want for you, [one that] lives up to your talent. This organ will be controversial, but the entire world will come to hear you. No one but you can ever be at St-Esprit, because it is in you. To me, it's Providence. I beseech you—think about what you are!" After a moment, MD: "Trust in me!"

Me: "Do not doubt [that I do], Master: I swear to you." The expression on Dupré's face cleared, and we gripped hands.

MD: "Have courage. I will write to [your] father this evening."

Saturday 5 May 1945

Various telephone conversations over the last several days. Dupré knows my decision. Saw the surgeon Dramez spoke to, Bénassy. Talked with him. After examining me, he declared that he does not wish to remove this adenoma but to dissolve [*fondre*] it with injections. The tiny cyst [424] can be removed now or just as well at any time in my life. He was very assertive, despite my objections, and said it is something "neither serious nor with the potential to become serious," even if it is painful. He gave me his word, without my asking, that I can wait.

That evening, I telephoned the news to Mammy, who was expecting the master's return at any moment. Delighted, she asked me to telephone at 8:00 in the morning.

Yesterday evening, St-Philippe.³³⁷ The church filled to overflowing. The organ had the worst glitches (the Tierce wouldn't work when it was wanted and came on when it was not wanted). Marthe Dramez was with us for the concert. I exchanged a few words with J. Gallon.

JG: "That had us on edge, didn't it?"

Me: "He's a wizard; no one else could have held on."

These concerts are becoming a sort of road to Calvary for Dupré. As usual, we left together, but with Berveiller, whom the master held back. He enquired, one last time, concerning my parents' opinion of my health, then chatted with Berveiller and me. (I have noticed that he never allows me to withdraw when another is present, and makes me take part in whatever involves him, despite my reserve [*discretion*].) He is sad in a quiet way that is [425] heartrending to see. He would like to drop the concerts, but the loss of money to the parish priest prevents him.

Berveiller: "You should ask Marcel Dupré to lend you his St-Sulpice organ." That relaxed things a bit.³³⁸

337. May 4 program: the Six Trio Sonatas from vol. 4 of Dupré's Bach edition.

338. To lighten the atmosphere, Berveiller here suggested to Dupré that he ask the organist of St-Sulpice about borrowing the St-Sulpice organ to use in place of the unsatisfactory organ he had been using for the recital series. (I grateful to Stacey Brown for this observation).

Dupré told me he was asked to play a concert at the American Church of Alma.³³⁹ He allowed Berveiller and me to suggest the program. Bitterly:

MD: "Oh, they're having a good laugh, Marchal's friends, the ones who don't come to hear me. We have support, which makes them feel threatened." Long pauses. Mammy and Marguerite were talking with my parents. Mammy seemed to me to be in a very reflective mood; Marguerite appeared drawn.

In the subway, jostled by the crowd, we were separated. Maman scolded someone on behalf of Dupré, who was distracted.

MD: "Stay with me," the master said to me. "Watch you don't get hurt! Tell me again what the surgeon said." I had said to them they could telephone him. MD: "I don't need anyone to confirm something you're telling me." Like Mammy, he feels relieved to think that, with Bénassy formally on board, there's no danger in delaying, even for a long time. Dupré exhaled; the nightmare was over, but he made me promise to follow the course of treatment. [426]

After that, we all talked together. Tomorrow Dupré leaves for Amiens.³⁴⁰ It was decided that I shall devote the entire day to my work. Mammy and Marguerite embraced me; "embrace me," the master said, too.

MD: "So, your health situation is agreed upon: you'll do nothing?"*

Me: "Yes. Are you fully reassured, Master?"

MD: "Yes."

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Understood to refer to surgery.

Tuesday 8 May 1945**

END OF THE WAR! Is it even possible? It hasn't sunk in. Victory! We, so miserable, hanging on by just our nails, our ruins, and our blood. Long live Providence. Five years and eight months. I was 18; now I'm 24. Germany's last moments followed day by day... Yesterday and tomorrow. Tomorrow! Let's hope we put this to good use in France. The future is close enough to touch.

This day is unforgettable. The people! Frenzy. Impossible to telephone Meudon. But a concert at St-Philippe this evening.³⁴¹ Awful [conditions] for arriving in one piece! A crowd. The stunning calm of this organ. Saw and embraced the Duprés. Left together, just us. Very emotional. The master hardly spoke at all. He told me to think about those who are crying. An indescribable crowd. Flares [*fusées*], a cannon, bells, airplanes, lights (!), soldiers. The crowd frightened Mammy; they [the Duprés] decided to go as far as Montparnasse [427] on foot. We, having too far to go, decided to attempt the subway, despite their apprehension. We separated.

339. This is a reference to the church officially known as the American Church in Paris. According to <<https://www.acparis.org/welcome-34717/architecture-history-tours-97919>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, it is an interdenominational Protestant church whose origins date to 1814. Since 1931 it has been located on the left bank of the Seine, on Quai d'Orsay, near the Alma Bridge, in the 7th arrondissement.

340. According to the program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1449, on Sunday, May 6, 1945 Dupré played a recital at Amiens Cathedral.

341. May 8 program: chorale preludes known as the "Eighteen," as found in vol. 9 of Dupré's Bach edition.

Few emotions that can be described. They were back at Meudon before we got to Daumesnil [subway station]. For mutual reassurance, I telephoned, although we had a terrible time on the subway.

** [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] The Liberation of Paris occurred on the feast day of St. Louis [Aug. 25]. The Victory [in Europe], on the [same] day Joan of Arc delivered Orléans [May 8].

Saturday 12 May 1945

Yesterday, a concert at St-Philippe that went splendidly.³⁴² The organ held itself together, except for a cipher during the last eight measures, about which Dupré teased Perroux sharply after Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. He called me as witness. Perroux claimed I had heard nothing, [but] received the tongue-lashing.

Papa asked the master whether he was pleased and Dupré, becoming very serious, simply responded, “It’s Jeanne who must say whether she is pleased.” He waited for my response, insisting upon it: “Really?” This caused me to share in the deep feeling of pride that comes over the virtuoso who has given the best of his best—a feeling I know and that Dupré, I’ve sensed, has command of. He told us to wait for him. Mammy and Marguerite, happy to see the master pleased this evening. As usual, chatted with Guerner, Bourdon, etc.

In the subway Dupré said to me, “Maybe I’ll do some composing this summer...Yes. Yesterday I [428] improvised four movements on the “Te Deum.” I think this could turn out like the *Chemin de la Croix*. Jeannette and Marguerite think that I can compose it.”³⁴³ I can’t stop thinking, in parallel fashion, about my preliminary ideas for my work on the Holy Spirit. Coincidence.

The master talked about Pleyel, about Bénard. He’ll see the latter soon and explained to me his “plan of attack” for this decisive visit. I remarked that Bénard most likely hopes he will agree not only to inaugurate the [renovated] organ, but also to giving several recitals. Dupré replied that he will refuse—just as he refused to perform from the entire repertoire at St-Philippe—because of me. He is unwavering. He talked about his recital at the Alma Church, where he wants me to hear him and to get acquainted with the organ. They parted from us very affectionately.

Today, spent the afternoon at Meudon. Conversed in English; Marguerite had me listen to a gifted little girl whom, it is hoped, she will take on, but she doesn’t dare accept. Ate and chatted for a long time in the garden.

Mammy told me that the master requested an appointment with Bénard and showed me the letter received from him. This morning, she received a [429] telephone call in which Bénard confirmed that he will meet with Dupré as requested on the 17th. So then, it’s the 17th of May that will decide my fate.

Sunday 13 May 1945

342. May 11 program: six Preludes and Fugues and the Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor from vol. 2 of Dupré’s Bach edition.

343. “Te Deum laudamus” (“Thee, O God, we praise”) is an ancient, liturgical hymn of thanksgiving set to plainchant. Two variants of the chant are given in Benedictines of Solesmes 1956, *Liber Usualis*, 1832–37. Dupré’s motivation for composing a piece based upon this chant was likely the end of the war: historically in France, given a major cause for national celebration, such as victory in war, it was customary for an organist to perform an improvisation on the “Te Deum” at a public event.

Guerner came to hear me at St-Esprit. I asked him for a theme. Chatted a lot. Alluding to Messiaen, he said to me, "I don't like people who market holy things."

Wednesday 16 May 1945

Yesterday, at St-Philippe. Organ [was] very good. Dufourcq and Marchal [were there] together. A splendid recital.³⁴⁴

When Dupré came down, Dufourcq and Marchal headed for him. We turned our backs on them. Perroux, between Marguerite and me, was threatening to create a scene, shaking his fist[:]"I can't hold myself back when I see that."³⁴⁵

The master was watching me and gestured to me. MD: "My friend Lavergne is here!" I shook Lavergne's hand warmly; [he was] quite friendly. But before getting into conversation Dupré asked me the usual question: "Are you pleased, this evening? Good." He has shown the plan to Lavergne, who is enthusiastic.³⁴⁶ [Dupré] convinced him to come to Vespers on Sunday and wants us to discuss it all together. I am dumbfounded by this spirit of decisiveness. Leaving [430] his friends [behind], Dupré brought Lavergne with us, and we were on our way.

Mammy said, "No one was missing this evening... 'They' planned to meet up."

MD: "Yes, 'they,' the women, were all there, the exception being Noëlie Pierront. You've seen that hypocritical face, that blonde?"

Mme D: "Whom do you mean?"

MD: "Henriette [Roget]. I cannot tolerate her; she is such a phony."

Lavergne parted from us at the subway. Afterwards, we talked about my future organ and my composition for the Holy Spirit.

MD: "It must be ready for the inaugural recital. Speaking of which, it's you who will inaugurate the organ."

Me: "No, Master. It will be you. I've been waiting for this for years now."

MD: "You'll do it, I tell you. An artist such as yourself doesn't invite someone else."

Me: "Granted, not just anyone else, but I'm asking you, Master. Unless you tell me: I have my reasons for refusing." Dupré fell silent and appeared slightly shaken. I told him I envision my composition in three parts, closely linked to [the three parts of] the organ. MD: "You're right: that would be a fine thing to do."

Afterwards, [he said,] "My 'Te Deum' is coming together, you know! I imagine it being very spirited. I don't know when it will come out." On another note, the master was very cheerful.

"Lavergne is timid, Jeanne. We're going to have to teach him a thing or two on Sunday. We'll talk about it. We've advanced again concerning [431] [organ] design in our conversations (with Lavergne)."

He spoke again of a young organ tuner-technician associated with Lavergne, who just built his first organ

344. May 15 program: the chorale preludes and the Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major from Bach's *Klavierübung*, Pt. 3, from vol. 8 of Dupré's Bach edition.

345. Dupré's ally Perroux was arguably angry that these prominent organists, who opposed Dupré's principles of organ design and Bach performance, dared to show themselves at Dupré's Bach-series recitals.

346. The "plan" referred to is the specification for a great organ for St-Esprit that Dupré had devised.

and who, according to Dupré, was working on discovering Cavaillé-Coll's secret [for scaling pipes] by means of ratios he calculated.

Saturday 19 May 1945

Yesterday, at St-Philippe, the Toccatas and Fantasias.³⁴⁷ Dupré's playing was full of life, something that has struck me since the start of this series. He descended, unhappy with the organ, believing the audience was aware of his tribulations. He questioned me and said to Lavergne, "This child cares for me too much; her ears stop working when it comes to hearing my errors(!)"

I don't know why, but I was assailed non-stop this evening by all the Duprés' acquaintances, M^{me} Meunier in the lead. Mammy questioned Papa and had to rescue me from all these people so the master could talk with me about essential things. He wanted to tell me who my audience was to be today [Saturday, at Meudon]. Yet, Mammy, happy, had been unable to hold her tongue five minutes longer with me... and when Dupré had started to speak to me about [432] Bénard with mysterious pride, he stopped... "you already know this!" That meeting made it a red-letter day [*Cette entrevue est à marquer d'une pierre blanche*].

MD: "Bénard is thrilled... beyond anything we could have hoped! You will perform at Pleyel. All that remains is to get organized." The price to construct an openwork wooden panel at the front of the stage is 600,000 francs. Dupré said that the organ will sound just as fine with "a remnant of gauze for 100,000 francs," and there was no further discussion on this. The master kept me a long time, delighting in my elation; MD: "For four years, I've waited for this moment." They [the Duprés] were taken home by automobile.

Today, my second review recital at Meudon: the Bach [Trio] Sonatas. The master gave me the hall to rehearse and rest, while he gathered Lavergne, Pierre Bourdon, and Bourdon's nephew together in his office to discuss organ design. More Bourdon family members arrived and were settled in the garden, then my parents. At 5:00 PM, we had afternoon tea and around 6:00, I played. (My "audience" consisted of twelve people in all.)

[I was] very satisfied; Dupré too. To the general enthusiasm, Dupré replied emphatically, "We can agree without doubt that we are in the presence of a master." [433] Mammy indicated to me that she knew what was going on; she was satisfied. She promoted me at every opportunity. (She had pretended to be looking for me before teatime, when, the master having called me over, I had gone to see the organ with the gentlemen:

Mme D: "So, where were you?"

Me: "In the organ, Madam."

Mme D: "In the organ! She was in the organ!" Everyone laughed at this entrance line, and Mammy was delighted.)

The Bourdons were first to take their leave. Meanwhile, I met with the master alone and we had a serious discussion.

MD: "Fantastic, my little Jeanne. You are reaching the pinnacle of your technique here and now!... You're young; pace yourself! This virtuoso's fervour of yours is peaking!" I will remember these words.

347. May 18 program: Fantasias and Fugues as well as Toccatas and Fugues from vol. 3 of Dupré's Bach edition.

Lavergne left shortly before us; everything is arranged with the master for tomorrow. Dupré walked us back to the train, embraced us, and saw us off.

Sunday 20 May 1945

A memorable day. At 4:00 PM, Lavergne came to [our] house, where we took tea in my studio. At 4:30, we were already on our way to St-Esprit, talking about organ design the entire way. I told him that making the individual boxes seemed to me simple to carry out and questioned him concerning breaks every three octaves,³⁴⁸ which I know Dupré told them [434] about yesterday. He told me that it's more difficult, but he believes that with Dupré's ideas and the technical help of Bourdon it will soon be achieved.

At St-Esprit, I led him [Lavergne] into the galleries. He was delighted with the ones on the sides and thought of putting two ranks in one archway, without any space between (what Dupré was thinking of) [and] in each archway a small façade of non-sounding pipes, as the entire organ will be under expression. For the centre [rear gallery], he's thinking of a corbelled structure on which to place the console,³⁴⁹ and a forward-jutting organ case supported by structural uprights. I like this less and mentioned to him that the back wall is brick, which makes one think of [a] provisional [arrangement]. I told him how ridiculous these little rose windows are, having no reason to be there, given that the church tower will hide the exterior and, inside, we must fill the [centre] gallery with the main division of the organ [*le corps de l'orgue*], 32 feet in all, which we may not be able to curve in the centre. It's not a matter of making a concession for these windows. And I asked him whether it would do him any good to have this wall pushed back. He leapt [at this] and told me that thirty centimetres would save it. I asked him whether he imagines a console of only three manuals. With three separate divisions, [435] I would very much like four manuals on the console and am going to think on this idea.

During Vespers, he listened to my organ carefully, from above and from below. He left, carrying his notes, and is going to prepare the estimate. All that remains is to persuade Father de la Motte—who is unaware of how far we've advanced—on whom I've been “working” while seeming not to.

Monday 21 May 1945

Telephoned Dupré yesterday evening and this morning. Lavergne, for his part, also telephoned. Dupré is satisfied; he reassured me regarding Father de la Motte, and his idea.

Wednesday 23 May 1945

Yesterday, the last recital at St-Philippe.³⁵⁰ Very beautiful. With this series, a great new thing has been given to audiences.

Dupré was mobbed by the crowd at the end. The “faithful” spoke to me of this same series having been

348. As defined in Douglas E. Bush and Richard Kassel, eds., *The Organ: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 354, “[a] mixture stop involves the ‘breaking of ranks’; that is, the pitches sounded by depressing a key in a Mixture are based on more than one fundamental (first partial); only a few pitches from a particular rank are chosen before a different set of pitches is chosen from the next higher rank, and so on.”

349. A corbel is a projection jutting out from a wall to support a weight above it.

350. May 22 program: *Orgelbüchlein* chorale preludes, Dupré's Bach edition vol. 7.

given a long time ago at the Trocadéro.³⁵¹ We could very well come to St-Philippe twice a week forever! Jean Gallon, all happiness, grasped both my hands: “Your turn, now! The big day approaches...” Mammy and Marguerite were both smiling: “My dear! We’re leaving together this evening. This has worked out well.” The master signaled to me that we were to slip away [436] and tapped his friend Bourdon on the arm:

MD: “Have you spoken to Jeanne Demessieux, Pierre?”

B: “Yes, yes! My humble respects, Mademoiselle.”

And we were off. My poor mother, worn out, hasn’t been able to come to the last recitals. It was very late, and we rushed into the subway. Dupré, very weary, unwound by means of a crazy cheerfulness that made us laugh so hard we cried. (I’m reminded of his usual comment after a “chore”: “we made it.”) Sunday’s recital will be for the Americans.³⁵²

Saturday 26 May 1945

Dupré didn’t think twice about diverting me from my work for an afternoon to take me to see the organ at the American Cathedral,³⁵³ it being so instructive for me. He’s never played this organ, so we got to know it together. Dupré was pleased for my sake that the console is very much a Skinner type. A beautiful organ; we recognized its Cavaillé-Coll origins. At the beginning, we were alone and freely shared our thoughts.

Then Pendleton (who recently took up duties here) showed up. Antipathy. Berveiller’s arrival was a more agreeable surprise.

The master rehearsed, and I took [from this], once again, a splendid lesson. The way he masters an organ from very first contact is striking and gives me a tremendous desire to work.

He [437] wanted to turn the manuals over to me, then changed his mind, obviously because of the presence of Pendleton, to whom he would only say that I was an “incomparable artist.” The reaction did not escape him [Dupré]. After that, Dupré’s jaw remained clenched, except with me, during his playing, while P. and B. listened from the sanctuary. The master saw, with a smile of satisfaction, that I had understood the organ; nevertheless, I said that I preferred the stop tablets facing front, not at a 45° angle. Dupré agreed with me and told me that the English and Americans would not dream of having them other than at the 45° angle.

351. As described in Murray 1985, 64, 71, between April 5 and May 6, 1921, on the organ of the Trocadéro concert hall, Dupré repeated the 10-recital presentation of the complete organ works of J. S. Bach that he originally performed at the Paris Conservatory in 1920.

352. The recital Dupré was to give on Sunday, May 27, 1945 took place at the American Cathedral in Paris (Anglican) on avenue George V (not to be confused with the American Church in Paris, mentioned previously). His program, a copy of which is preserved in BnF, Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1458, began with the Trumpet Tune attributed to Purcell and, in recognition of North American organist-composers, included *Toccata [on O filii et filiae]* by Lynnwood Farnam and *Bells of St-Anne de Beaupré* by Alexander Russell.

353. As described by Thierry Correard (trans. Vincent Hildebrandt) on the web page <<https://www.organsparisaz.vhhil.nl/Cathedrale%20Americaine.htm>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the American Cathedral’s organ was built by Cavaillé-Coll in 1887, the year after the Cathedral opened. It then had three manuals and 45 stops. Correard further notes, “On the advice of Marcel Dupré, the instrument was extended (7 new stops) and electrified by Mutin in 1922.” The organ has continued to be enlarged over time.

At the end of the afternoon, Dupré bid goodbye to Pendleton, opted to take the subway with me, and asked Berveiller to accompany us as far as the station. There, we chatted for a good while. The conversation came around to “improvisations for two,” being played on the radio (on piano) by Litaize and Grunenwald, H. Roget and Gallois-Montbrun, and so on. Dupré is deeply hurt that his students (Grunenwald, especially) are abusing the art, and said that he is ashamed of how this reflects upon him (he believes!).

MD: “As this child well knows, that’s not what I taught them.” So, Berveiller and I tried to console him.

[438] During the trip home, Dupré questioned me about Lavergne [and] about my parish priest. He told me that he had talked with canon Merret on this subject, telling him that I required one of two things: either “obtain a high post in Paris or have an imposing organ built at St-Esprit.” He added that canon Merret, without being exactly aware of the important details, knows enough to follow my career, starting immediately.

Paris, 27 May 1945³⁵⁴

[Written vertically in left margin of first page:] Copy of a letter from Jeanne Demessieux to her sister Yolande[,] teacher in Aigues-Mortes (keep).

My dear Yoyo,

Finally, a letter from the little sister. If I could take only my wishes into account, I would write to you often enough to keep you up to date on my life. But it’s exactly this hectic life that prevents me. Today I hope to have enough time to give you everything at once! Apologies if it’s a “report.” I know it’s what you want from your poppet.

Prepare yourself; I’ve been so eager to tell you the news: D. [Dupré] paid a scheduled visit to the director of Pleyel who kept him there for an hour and a half. This was the decisive moment... He won them over, and the director, quite enthused, is going along with him (for me), “beyond my expectations,” D. (who, nonetheless, wanted a lot) said to me. As a result, it’s at the great Salle Pleyel that I will play!!

Work has been carried out on the organ since October [1944]; it’s full speed ahead, and it will be crowned with a complete re-voicing by Perroux. Keep this strictly to yourself, Isabelle,³⁵⁵ too, so that Dupré, especially, knows nothing! It’s very important. I trust you and [can] carry on. The work [on the organ] is being urged on by D., who is totally impartial, as always. People who are shrewd are asking what’s going on at Pleyel. The director himself has only understood in the last few days! And the [Pleyel] shareholders go

354. AM 4S15.

355. Only Demessieux’s letters to her sister contain indications that Yolande had a close companion, Isabelle (“Zab”).

forward mesmerized by D., without knowing they are working for us. “For France,” Dupré would say. You know his thoughts on this matter.

I had reason to believe that at this meeting with the director, M^r Bénard, it would be about him [Dupré], or, better put, that Bénard would have begun before knowing anything about me, by asking him to inaugurate the [restored] organ with a recital series. That would have been normal. I took the initiative, with D., then with Mammy: they were unwavering, and D. said that he had decided to refuse for himself, and ask for everything for me. They would only say, “We’ve been waiting for this moment for four years!” The result: Bénard gave his word, and he insisted with great pomp on coming to hear me Saturday [June 2, 1945] at Meudon.³⁵⁶ I will play the Fugue in D, Franck’s 2nd Choral, three pieces from Dupré’s Suite that is [2] about to appear (formerly Études written for my technique), 3 of my Études, and an improvised symphony in four movements.

Last Saturday [May 19, 1945], I did a review session at Meudon—Bach’s Six [Trio] Sonatas—and on this occasion Dupré had invited his friend Pierre Bourdon (director of Michelin) and his family, as well as the organ builder Lavergne, [who was] passing through Paris. “Nice little contacts for Jeanne.”

That’s not all. I’ll explain. You know that Dupré has very bold, personal ideas on organ building, and tremendous experience (not an exaggeration). He made me work, spared neither his time nor his pen.³⁵⁷ I have seen the birth of the registrateur, as you know. In short, his organ aesthetic already surpasses the Meudon organ. For 2 years now, we have discussed this at length. Moreover, Lavergne is his man, simply because he is honest, a hard worker, and because this “revolution” doesn’t frighten him. When I realized this last point [3] two months ago, I thought [it over], and so as not to disprove Dupré, who says that I am as much a revolutionary as him, I decided in secret to take it upon myself that the great organ of St-Esprit should be the modern organ I want to write for and of which I dream. I said this plainly to Dupré who told me that the audacity of building an organ so daring in a church is an idea that would never have occurred to him. He was taken aback. I said to him that such a modern church, with a similarly modern organist... needed a modern organ, and that I wanted it and would well know [how to] persuade my parish priest, someday, regarding this choice. In turn, he thought [it over]: he found I was right, could not believe his luck, and wanted this throne, which “the entire world” would come to see, to be constructed. When this has been achieved, it will be our laboratory. He made the stop list: 21 ranks, but with these multiplied by borrowings, nearly 200 stops on the console. We imagine the organ divided into three parts: [in] the gallery at the back, and the two galleries surrounding it, which can represent the Trinity; 7 stops in each gallery following the dogma-inspired idea of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Enthralling.

Papa made authentic architectural drawings for the galleries upon the request of D., who [4] left Lavergne

356. In her notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” the entry for June 2, 1945, Demessieux indicated that this session at Meudon was performed for M^r Bénard.

357. Diary entries of June 22 and Sept. 5, 1942, and Jan. 5, 1944 suggest that Dupré supplied Demessieux with readings about principles of organ construction and voicing, and checked her knowledge orally in discussions of these principles. In this letter, “spared neither his time nor his pen” suggests that Dupré also had Demessieux write about the subject, i.e., produce essays on organ building that he read and corrected. Dupré likely considered such work a necessary part of her professional development. Indeed, in Oct. 1951, as part of Demessieux’s application for the organ professorship at the Liège Conservatory, she presented a talk on organ building that discussed classical and modern aesthetics of the organ. It survives in the form of 8½ typed, singled-spaced pages, preserved in AM 4S31.

to stew over [this] for 8 days. He persuaded Lavergne to come to St-Esprit last Sunday. We received him on Pentecost [May 20, 1945]; he saw everything with me and heard the organ. He left enthused and is going to prepare the quote.

All of this is secret; also, my priest is the last to know. D. wishes to prepare everything between the three of us.³⁵⁸ He is going to receive my priest very soon to show him my Études. I advised him to tell [my priest] all about the organ. One fine day [Dupré] is going to don his hat and pay him a further visit to persuade him to build the organ before [building] the bell tower.³⁵⁹ For the capital, he won't hesitate to give a series of concerts, nor will I. He has even spoken of it to a certain canon of the Notre-Dame chapter whom he is keeping up to date concerning me. By the grace of God, Dupré says, it will go one of two ways: either a "big appointment" or an extraordinary organ for me. My teacher has considerable confidence.

Yesterday Dupré took me with him to see a very American-style organ at the American Church of Alma. The St-Phillipe-du-Roule concerts are over. A real triumph, but tiring for D.

Were you to have a moment, how kind it would be if you were to send them a note... You could tell them how moved you are by what the master has done for me at Pleyel; also tell him that I told you about St-Esprit and, finally, that if D. is passing through the Midi you would be happy for him to visit you, according to what works for him. I ask a lot of you, my Yoyo.

Bravo for Puget.³⁶⁰ Think carefully about improvements to your organ—follow my lead!

You promise to keep secret everything I've confided in you, do you not, Yoyo? I trust Zab; I know she understands that everything concerning me is strictly confidential. A warm embrace for her.

And you, I embrace tenderly, telling you again how often I think of you, of all your teaching, of what you also build with all that courage and unimaginable worth.

I have faith in you. Till next time,

Your Nanon

Saturday 2 June 1945

A memorable day: Dupré welcomed Pleyel Director M^r Bénard and his wife to his home. I don't have enough time to recount all the details of this long afternoon. I'll get straight to the point and remark only on their astonishment and the enthusiasm of Bénard (who, in his attitude, was far superior to Gavoty). I was very moved by [the effect upon] the master, Mammy, and Marguerite.

I was well "on form" when improvising a symphony on themes by Dupré, after having played the [Bach] Fugue in

358. That is, Dupré, the organ builder Lavergne, and Demessieux.

359. At this point, the bottom of a page in her copy of the letter, Demessieux later added, in pencil and parenthesized, a postscript that is somewhat illegible. It reads, in part: "the follow-up was a failure—sunk into oblivion. We'll see" [*la suite fut un échec—on tombe dans l'oubli. À chercher*]. The diary entry for June 12, 1945, explains what happened when Dupré visited the parish priest of St-Esprit.

360. Perhaps this is a reference to a teaching or performing opportunity in Puget-sur-Argens. It, too, is on the Mediterranean coast, located to the east of Aigues-Mortes, where Yolande was residing.

D, three [of my] Études and [Dupré's] *Suite*.³⁶¹ M^{me} Bénard found my playing had “no frame of reference” and [439] the master, delighted, explained to her all the features of my technique. They were a bit worried after the improvised symphony and asked me if I was feeling tired. My reassuring response and Dupré's smile left them dumbfounded.

The master walked us back. The Bénards left us at Montparnasse, saying “see you soon at your Pleyel concerts!”

Tuesday 12 June 1945

Between two trips,³⁶² Dupré paid a visit to Father de la Motte, a visit he had been planning for some time. His purpose was to ask that I be given more time off from my service—playing as I near my debut. The master is fatigued from the grueling trips. So, we insisted he relax at home for a while before I escorted him to St-Esprit.

My teacher's presence flooded this day with happiness. But day's end saw us disappointed in a way for which the master and I were not in the least prepared.

On the way to the church, we came around to talking about the “improvisations for two,” and Dupré poured out his heart: “It's a nightmare for me. At night, I think about it again and wake up.” I tried to alleviate his distress, [440] saying that “they” did what they did not out of conviction but, perhaps, because they needed the money.³⁶³

MD: “You wish to excuse them because you have a very big heart. As for me... I was poor, Jeanne, until the age of thirty but, even so, I refused to play the Hammond organ, the same as I refused everything that went beyond my duties. It's a question of honour.”

Me: “Master, when I excuse them, it is only when speaking to you. Speaking to others, I choose to be silent rather than critical.” He told me that Henriette R. is a “renegade.”³⁶⁴ He holds them in contempt, and this costs him dearly.

MD: “Very gifted persons only truly get along with each other.” Upon entering the church, we both instinctively turned towards the missing great organ and exchanged a few words. Then,

MD: “Now, let's ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us! He has watched over you up until now...” A pause and:

MD: “I'm going in.”

Me: “Are you going to talk to him about the organ, Master? I fear he is not ‘ready’ yet.”

MD: “No, not today.” I stayed for a moment alone in the church, then returned home to wait for the master. When he returned, he told us that Father de la Motte had agreed to allow me more time off and that it

[signed] Jeanne Demessieux

[End of notebook V]

VI³⁶⁵

[441] is only a question of organization.

Upon speaking these few words, Dupré turned to me and said firmly, “I have to tell you this: he is not certain that an

361. According to Demessieux's notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” her program for the Bénards on Jun. 2, 1945 consisted of: Bach, Fugue in D; Franck, *Choral* No. 2 in B minor; Dupré, *Suite* (movements I, III, and IV, unspecified as to whether the *Suite Bretonne*, Op. 21 or the *Suite*, Op. 39, but the latter, which is more virtuosic, is likely); and Demessieux, Études II, V, and VI, according to how she then numbered them.

362. According to programs performed in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1460–1461, Dupré had been in Le Mans on Sunday, June 10 to play at Notre-Dame de la Couture. He was in Castres on June 15 to perform for the 9:00 PM inauguration of the great organ of Notre-Dame-de-la-Platé.

363. “They” in this sentence refers to the performers of the improvisations for two, who were listed in the diary entry for May 26, 1945 as “Litaize and Grunenwald, H. Roget and Gallois-Montbrun, and so on.”

364. Cf. diary entries for May 16 and 26, 1945, in which Henriette Roget is mentioned.

365. AM 4S7.

organ in three parts would sound satisfactory; he is also considering adding stops to the small organ so that there need only be one organ. So, it's likely that you will not finish your days at St-Esprit."

In shock, I told him that Father de la Motte had spontaneously approved of our idea when I spoke to him about dividing the great organ into three parts, and that I had believed in all good conscience that he would follow along with us. He had thereby allowed me to remain ignorant of the fact that his mind was already made up. This blow made me pale with various emotions.

MD: "He didn't tell you what he was thinking, or it must be that he has changed his mind. He is not on our side, and he understood nothing. As long as you have him as parish priest, you will remain a choir organist.³⁶⁶ He likes you very much, yet he's sacrificing you to finances. There is but one thing I now look forward to: taking you away from him." Unable to get this ideal organ out of my thoughts, I told him that I would wait ten years, if necessary, but I would remain at St-Esprit.

MD: [442] "You will stay there quietly until your debut or, perhaps, your American tour." Then: "[It's] done. I know you would like to wait for this organ. [But] no! Here are the [organ] galleries in Paris that are open." He cited St-Eustache, Ste-Clothilde, Sacré-Cœur, and others.

MD: "I do not want you to compete; string-pulling is not necessary with your talent (admirable words, given that he has friends in the right places), nor that you take an interim position, like Rolande Falcinelli in Montmartre.³⁶⁷ This is not a slight against Rolande, but for Jeannette, never." He's counting upon my reputation being established and asks me to let him play his part. Unconcerned with being punctual for an appointment, Dupré stayed a while longer, sharing all his thoughts.

I walked him back to his train station, while we talked the whole time.

MD: "He is your confessor, which remains separate. When I am near death and you are organist of St-Sulpice, should you ask him to hear your confession, he wouldn't refuse you." This reference [to St-Sulpice] shows me that Dupré is returning to his first idea, in view of the abandonment of our project. The master hugged me and took his leave from me saying: "The Holy Spirit obviously does not want this organ. This doesn't imply any change to your destiny. You [443] have more important things to do, and we shall adjust our battle plans."

Sunday 17 June 1945

I took Dupré's place at St-Sulpice. The master had asked me to play my *Études* in octaves and thirds at the 11:15 Mass and to improvise at length.

Mammy surprised me by being there and telling me that M^r Bornemann is in the church and will come up at the end. In the gallery, lots of people—Guerner, Monet, M^r and M^{me} Tallon—among other friends of Dupré who have been following me. M^r and M^{me} Bourdon were waiting for me beneath the gallery.

[Achieved] well balanced registrations; played more slowly and clearly.

There was quite a stir, which surprised me. I improvised a fugue in five voices on [the chorale] "Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," led into by an adagio and a scherzo. People were shaken, but with true emotion; I was surrounded as I left the console. They said to me that the *Étude* in octaves was "very moving," "imposing." The *Étude* in thirds was understood in

366. Dupré was referring to the fact that the organ of St-Esprit was designed as a small, secondary organ, such as was played by a lower-ranking organist for choral accompaniment, and that St-Esprit lacked a great organ, characteristic of most Paris churches.

367. Falcinelli's interim position in the Montmartre area of Paris was, in 1945, at Sacré-Cœur Basilica, where she was serving in the subordinate capacity of supply organist to Ludovic Panel. It was likely known by then that Panel had given notice that he would be leaving soon—hence Dupré's classification of Panel's position at Sacré-Cœur as open. (Falcinelli would achieve the position of titular organist of Sacré-Cœur in 1946.) In contrast to Falcinelli's situation, Dupré's ambition for Demessieux was that, when her reputation as a first-rank organist was unequivocally established, she would be in the privileged position of moving from her present position at St-Esprit directly to another titular position in a major Paris church, and doing so without having to compete with other applicants.

a way I had not dared to hope. Concerning the improvisation, I heard it described as “tightly constructed in both formal and harmonic dimensions.” Mammy’s attitude towards me was wonderful. [The Duprés] friend Guerner was moved:

“This young girl is tremendous,” he said to Mammy, who responded:

[444] “No one knows anything yet, though there a few who have understood.”

G: “I’ve understood ever since the second time I heard her.”

M^{me} Tallon threw herself into my arms, tears in her eyes.

At the end, Mammy glowingly pointed out Bornemann. “Go and talk to him; he is excited.” I found him questioning Guerner. He bowed low and said to me,

“That was absolutely magnificent!” He questioned me too, spoke to me about the 4 others,³⁶⁸ and appeared almost intimidated (if I dare say), but was smiling. I walked him back [down], chatting, and returned to Mammy. Everyone was following me, and Mammy spirited [us] away.

We lingered in the square in front of the church. Pierre Bourdon, always confident and serious, told me that he knew I would play my Études and that he is going to talk about them to the master. We left with Guerner, who, taking me aside, gave me his own impressions.

G: “They [the Études] sound so absolutely new. The harmony is new, and there is nothing commonplace. As concerns the adaptation of piano technique to the organ, you are going much farther than Dupré, who went much farther than Liszt. I cannot tell you right this moment what I think: I don’t [445] want to; I’m going to have to hear them again and hear the others. But this much is certain: it’s a very beautiful work.” He asked me some questions, and we discussed the form “étude,” which he envisions in general as a ternary form. He was astonished when I told him that they each use a different form inspired by standard forms.

Sunday 24 June 1945

Replaced Dupré at St-Sulpice. An “accessible” program worked out with him, because of the parish group for which the mass was being said. Widor’s Sixth (first movement); Bach’s Fugue in G [major, BWV 576 or 577]; Franck’s Fantasia in A [major].

Mammy was visiting her sister and could not be there. All Dupré’s friends were here again. Berveiller lamented his absence last Sunday.

Improvised in symphonic form on the “Hymn to St. John the Baptist.”³⁶⁹ Very struck by the physiognomy of the saint.

An extraordinary ambiance around me. This “audience” followed me with a sort of solemn emotion that surrounded and carried me. Berveiller drew me apart and questioned me about my Études. P. Bourdon was waiting for us below, with his family. I am thankful to all my teacher’s faithful followers [446] who have consequently attached themselves to me. We talked with Guerner, always staunch, who would chat with no one but me.

G: “Once again, do not listen to the envious. Even though they will criticize you, don’t change! As if you could change!

368. The “4 others” were likely the other young women, who, at an exceptional rate of frequency for their gender, all achieved France’s highest distinction in organ and improvisation during the early 1940s and who, for the most part, then presided as titular organists over Cavaillé-Coll great organs: Marie-Louise Girod, Oratorio of the Louvre in Paris since 1941; Rolande Falcinelli, recently appointed assistant at Sacré-Cœur in Paris, who would become titular in 1946; Denise Raffy at Immaculée Conception in Elbeuf since ca. 1943; Françoise Aubut, Notre-Dame d’Assomption in the Passy area of Paris from 1938 (but returned to Québec, Canada, in 1945). These four females were also prominent because they had debuted in public recitals in Paris (or in the case of Raffy, in Rouen). With Demessieux, the five made a striking cohort because, since the death of Jehan Alain in June 1940 and Pierre Segond’s return to his native Switzerland ca. 1942, their only male colleague and near-contemporary had been Jean-Claude Touche—killed in Paris in August 1944.

369. This was probably “Ut queant laxis,” the Gregorian hymn appointed for Second Vespers on the feast day Nativity of St. John the Baptist, celebrated on June 24. See Benedictines of Solesmes, eds. 1956, *Liber Usualis*, 1504.

You see, your colleagues don't realize that the only music is that which comes from the depths of a soul. Music must be life-sustaining for those who listen to it."

Friday 29 June 1945

Always in touch by telephone with Meudon. This morning, I joined the master at St-Sulpice for the consecration of Monseigneur Weber. He played a magisterial processional; I played the "Te Deum" and the recessional because the master had a meeting with Delvincourt concerning the Conservatory's organs.

Before the ceremony, Dupré chatted at the foot of the gallery with canon Pelleserf, whom I knew only by name. After a moment, he called me over and introduced me. He talked about St-Esprit and me, always with seriousness. Canon Pelleserf began to listen closely. Dupré continued:

"I love all my students. But recently, [447] faced with such gifts and talent, I've must say that this child will be the heir. She seems designated to succeed me..." Canon Pelleserf, having become solemn as well, yielded, dumbfounded, for the manner in which Dupré went on, he seemed to be alluding to St-Sulpice.

MD: "This seems to be the normal course of action, because for the organ, there is no Salic law."³⁷⁰ And, as usual, even in my presence, going so far as to say, "I must watch over her so she does not tire. Women have more willpower for work than men do. One tends to say to men, 'When are you going to start work?' and to women, 'When are you going to rest?' As for her, I need her to take it easy, sometimes. This child, Father, will soon be one of the greatest glories of France." Canon Pelleserf said, in a moving tone of voice that touched me deeply, "You must be very happy, Master." And Dupré, when he had left us, "Another 'patron' for you, and one of the best."

He had plotted with canon Merret that we should meet in the gallery this morning, and he gave some orders:

"Robineau, my old fellow, you are going to stay [448] with the little one until the end; when canon Merret comes up, you will introduce her to him, saying that I would have liked to have introduced them myself. He's been apprised and knows that I cannot stay." [Meanwhile,] a whole group of young priests, all delighted, were given permission to go on up.

Once he was seated on the bench, the master asked at length about my health. Then,

MD: "So tell me, my little Jeanne, you shook them up, these last two Sundays... Guerner wrote me a letter about you and your Études. Echoes of it return to me every day." Dupré certainly enjoyed talking about this subject.

MD: "Do you know what Madame Tallon said to me yesterday?" and he turned his head towards the keyboard as he continued, "That young lady has it already, and will have it in spades: she's a little genius." At this, I was so shocked I was speechless.

MD: "She can't hold a candle to you, but she's an honest woman, and she knows her stuff. When she says something, it's because she thinks it."

Me: "Master, you have prohibited me from using that word [genius]."

MD: "Yes; but... now you have written the Études. Can one say of a performer that he is a genius, or of an improviser that he is a genius, if he has not composed? Moreover, you yourself [449] raise, for the first time, the question of a creative mind, and the question of genius in women."

Immediately thereafter, the master played the processional, leaving me greatly troubled. I thanked him for entrusting his organ to me as he left, very early, saying again to Robineau, "It's going to be long, this morning. To help the little one pass the time, tell her some stories of Father Guilmant."³⁷¹

Canon Merret came up because, he said, he wanted to see if Marcel Dupré had returned from his trip... Robineau introduced me, stammering a bit, and canon Merret stayed a quarter of an hour, chatting animatedly, giving me sidelong

370. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uregina.ca/view/Entry/169984?rkey=LT2htC&result=1#eid24388432>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Salic law is "in early use, and still in popular language, the alleged fundamental law of the French monarchy, by which females were excluded from succession to the crown; hence, generally, a law excluding females from dynastic succession."

371. Like Dupré, Maurice Robineau, St-Sulpice's choir organist, had been a member of Guilmant's Paris Conservatory class in organ and improvisation.

glances, questioning me face on; a man full of life, capable of taking on challenges. He descended after having, without doubt, attained a sufficient sense of me as a person.

Wednesday 4 July 1945

B. Gavoty sent me a signed copy of his book about Jehan Alain.³⁷²

Saturday 7 July 1945

Afternoon of friendly intimacy at Meudon. A break from travelling for Dupré. Upon my arrival, I found him working on one of his former *Études*. Conversation, then work with Mammy while he continued.

Spent a long time in the garden together. Dupré [450] talked to me about Yolande and said to me that his dream for some future date has been to go and “spend a few days at Aigues-Mortes.” I questioned him. He told me that he cannot manage it this year (but next year?...); it remains among his desired plans.

Played four of Handel's concertos for the master as my review program.³⁷³

Dupré's aim is to avoid wearing me out. Both of us sense that I've reached my own peak of virtuosity. Moreover, I think I've arrived at the last phase of my retreat from public performance prior to my debut. A strong need to turn inward, to be myself, to have free time. (I'm systematically postponing the 25 hours per week of lessons I teach until further notice.) Dupré, having been very worried about my health and having remained up to date on my course of treatment, has decided that the review schedule should be according to my wishes and that during this period of preparation we will again take up our work and conversations that have proven so useful to me. Also, when I took my seat on the bench today, the master said to me,

“It gives me pleasure to see you again in this place and that you will again play for me.” He was filled with [451] enthusiasm. His first reflection: “How your personality stands out...”

I laid claim to choosing a new Handel concerto to replace the 3rd, which I had put aside for having been suggested to me by Grunenwald (I recall the affair; Dupré had said, “Can you believe it? That he should even have the nerve to do that!”). I begged Dupré to suggest another for me; he chose the one in A and played for me a long excerpt, giving it a striking character.³⁷⁴ He finds the second theme charming, and we discussed it.

MD: “Now that's a theme! It fits the definition of timeless because after two centuries, two musicians discussing it are so enthusiastic about it.”

Aside from the theme, we talked a lot [about other matters]. The master showed me the letter from Guerner; he read it slowly, handed it to me without a word, and I, too, said nothing.

Sunday 8 July 1945

Unexpected visit from Régnier to my gallery. [I've been] without news of him since the Pleyel incident. Charming, smooth-tongued. He is pestering me anew, for he wishes to organize meetings and concerts beginning in [452] October. Over the telephone, Dupré told me to tell “them” that they must speak to Marcel Dupré about everything concerning me.

Saturday 14 July 1945

At Meudon. Once again, the master spoke to me in such a way that I can never forget his words. From the start of our meeting:

MD: “You are going to debut soon, so I must speak to you. You are the worthiest, most respectful, most obedient, and most faithful of students. You have scrupulously done all that I've asked of you. Sometimes I fear you try too hard to please me, that you say to yourself: ‘so long as it is what Marcel Dupré wants.’ You are a master. It is not [simply] ‘the

372. Bernard Gavoty, *Jehan Alain: musicien français (1911–40)* (Paris: A. Michel, 1945).

373. According to her notebook GVT, “Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage,” on July 7, 1945 Demessieux performed Handel's concerti that are numbered I, II, IV, and X in Dupré's edition for solo organ.

374. Handel's Concerto in A major could be either of no. VIII or no. XIV in Dupré's edition.

best of Dupré's students' they will hear; it is you. I well know that Jesus's disciples didn't start to speak out until after his death. In your case, from the first you must speak as a master. You must not wait until I've joined Widor to do this...

"Also (you'll be taken aback), from now on I would like you to forget that I am your teacher, that you owe me something. Forget my age, think [453] of me as just six months younger or six months older than you. Say to yourself, Marcel is a very gifted friend. Think only of being lyrical.³⁷⁵ Pretend you are Busoni or Ysaÿe playing Schumann's Sonata in E-flat.³⁷⁶ Or Liszt. Are you there, yet? In your heart, you will need to have 'absorbed' me to the point of forgetting me, so to speak. Over the past four years, our conversations have done you a world of good. I've spoken to you as to a man, and you have understood me well, all the while remaining the pure crystal that you are. Today, you are going to play a grand, lyrical work for me. Go ahead, open your heart, but always 'like this!'" Dupré made his habitual gesture, a sign of authority.

He rose after some measures, murmuring, "That is beautiful." After my Franck program, broken up by some questions that I asked him, Dupré was pensive; he took up [the subject] again, with an edge of emotion:

"When it comes right down to it, you're there. To think that I have before me the greatest virtuoso in the world..."

He said he had chatted with Guerner concerning me, and that Guerner had greatly interested him by posing the problem of his own personality. [454] Dupré had asked him about the characteristics of my technique, about my [artistic] sensibility, about everything to do with emotion in relation to art. On the fact of finding a woman with a masculine brain, on the oddity of my case. To me, he simply said, "He shared my opinion, [and] you know what I think." He told him that he had given me his letter, which made Guerner "turn red."

And, after a moment, with that indescribable expression he had had at St-Sulpice, the master said to me: "You know, Guerner said the same thing to me as Madame Tallon."

Me: "He has it wrong; this is something too serious, Master."

MD: "No; he is intelligent [and] he is right."

Me: "Don't say that to me, Master..."

MD: "Why not?" I felt as though I would collapse onto the sofa beside me.

I had planned to speak to Dupré about my composition on the Holy Spirit, but I put it aside for our next meeting, and told him so.

MD: "I know. I've been thinking about that work."

Sunday 22 July 1945

The master wanted me to play at St-Sulpice during his week-long visit to England. [However] it was impossible to replace me at St-Esprit, and Dupré had to ask Grunenwald, much to [455] our... mutual dismay.³⁷⁷

At St-Esprit this morning, three visits: from Guerner, Berveiller, and Régnier.

Guerner arrived before the sermon at High Mass and left immediately after: "I cannot stay to hear you, because I'm catching a train. (Besides, I prefer to hear you play rather than accompany, though you accompany very well.) But I wanted to come, all the same." During the sermon, I took him aside and asked him about his letter to Dupré, which he knew I have. He denied wanting to further clarify it for me, saying that if he were wrong, I would hold it against him. I insisted: "Nothing obliges me to adhere to your opinion, but give it to me as a friend." He hesitated, then:

G: "What did Dupré tell you?"

Me: "Everything you said to him about him."

375. It is unclear what Dupré means by "Think only of being lyrical."

376. The reference to a Schumann Sonata in E-flat is obscure. Schumann did compose a piano Quintet in E-flat major and a Piano Quartet in E-flat major.

377. According to printed programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1464-1465, Dupré was in London that week. On July 21, he performed Handel's Concerto in D minor, Op. 7/4, with the London Symphony Orchestra at one of that season's Henry Wood Promenade Concerts. On July 24 he performed for a BBC recording session at London's St. Mark's Church. Music recorded there included a prelude and fugue improvised on themes in C minor by Benjamin Britten.

G: "In that case, given that he told you that, I am going to explain myself." And, with piercing intelligence, he spoke for a quarter of an hour, rapidly; I listened, without saying a word. It's a matter of virtuosity. He remarked that I had not known the great era of romantic virtuosi—Liszt, Chopin, Paganini, Rubinstein, Sauer (Dupré excludes Busoni as a reactionary), etc. He has heard [456] many of these. He judges the piano [i.e., piano performance] to be on the decline because my generation hasn't any virtuosi of the same rank.

Moreover, he considers that Dupré, whether consciously or not, belongs to that illustrious pantheon. He is certain that his [Dupré's] nature is the principal link that has allowed him to inherit from this school; but he knows him to be too "lucid" to not know himself in depth and take his side. (This, undoubtedly, is what his conversation with Dupré was about.) He also said to me that it would be puerile—of him and of me—to ask Dupré any questions; but that at my age, despite sure instincts and the gift of observation, it is good to have certainty. Implicit that if Dupré has any "secrets," I must come to know these favourably. Guerner looked for an example and came up with the great [Bach] Prelude in E-flat [major] as illustrating, precisely and strikingly, Dupré's technique. He told me that Dupré has something there "all his own, and mysterious."

Without telling Guerner that I know Dupré's famous secrets, both the "conscious and unconscious," I snatched upon his example and compared it to Handel's Concerto in B-flat [major], equally striking.³⁷⁸ Seeing that we [457] understood each other, I said only, "I know." Guerner looked at me, and at that moment the end of the sermon interrupted us. He left me with a farewell both cordial and gruff.

Around 11:00, the arrival of the "opposition party" [in the person of] the charming Régnier. He chatted, turned around and back, and set about telling me that he worries about my talent, due to my "excessive" modesty, which could even harm my self-confidence. Playing the velvet glove, I allowed him to infer that awareness of myself would reveal itself on stage. He "took the bait," burst out, and said that he has been unceasingly offering me his support. To this I responded:

"I'm going to speak frankly to you. I've thought about your proposal. Yet, you will not be surprised if I tell you I have the very greatest veneration for my teacher, M^r Marcel Dupré. Neither will you be surprised if I tell you that I have total faith in him, and that he is party to everything that concerns me? Therefore, having thought about it, I believe that it would be good if you proposed your [458] plan to him yourself."

R: "By all means! Of course. You are perfectly right! Besides, I dare say that it wouldn't be too much to act as support to us. He could give us a lot of help."

I took this as my paycheck,³⁷⁹ and it was at this moment that the elegant and refined Berveiller made his first appearance in my gallery. A courteous man such as one rarely finds. I planned to make introductions only after the mass. Lively discussions. He asked me if I'm aware of the nomination of Marchal to St-Eustache; I told him that Dupré announced this to me. He talked about "Article 8"; I asked him for clarification on that, and he kindly obliged. Several references, no compliments. As with Guerner, we were inclined to confide the latest news from Meudon to each other. These [Guerner and Berveiller] are the faithful.

Played some chorales for the commemoration of Bach.³⁸⁰ Improvised three symphonic movements on B-A-C-H. In very good form.

Saturday 28 July 1945

At Meudon, where Dupré had just returned from England. Chatted with Mammy, worked for a long time with the master. Dupré is happy with his trip to London. He talked with all his friends and that for him [459] means good work

378. The second half of the next sentence, beginning "I said only," suggests that Demessieux did not voice the comparison of Guerner's example with Handel's Concerto in B-flat, only thought it. As to which of the five Handel concerti in B-flat she had in mind, it may have been no. II in Dupré's edition (based on Handel's op. 4/2), which she had performed at her July 7, 1945 review session with Dupré.

379. Having thought that the insistent gentleman would drop the subject after being referred to Dupré, to Demessieux's chagrin he not only took her up on the suggestion but went one step further by saying that Dupré might assist *his own* plans for presenting her to the public.

380. J. S. Bach is recognized in the liturgical year on July 28, the date of his death in 1750.

because he is always “building something.” The most important: Johnson, Willis, Aubray,³⁸¹ and so on. He has shared my situation with four of them who have promised to him all their support and have taken my name and address. He told me that his friends “remained faithful” to him; nothing out of the ordinary in this, but from his lips the words took on importance.

The master anxiously asked for my sketch before I played some Franck for him. This sketch is a page and a half. He straightened up after the first measures and then didn't miss a note. Right away, he told me that that I must keep this, because it is a very good start. Then he fell into contemplation, as always. I asked him for a critique.

MD: “No, not yet... Before I tell you what I think, explain to me your general idea.” I told him I was inspired by “Veni Sancte Spiritus” and “Veni Creator,” which to me are profoundly different. Next, that I see the work in three parts, like the organ I was dreaming of.

MD: “On liturgical themes?”

Me: “Yes, because without them, it would be a symphonic poem, which I dare not compose on such a subject.” Then, Dupré told me immediately and frankly:

MD: “Don't use liturgical themes! Write using your own themes. When [460] one is the likes of you, one doesn't use themes except one's own. Everyone makes use of plainchant themes; everyone has treated the ‘Veni Creator.’ Write an original work. Do you agree?”

Me: “Yes, Master. But in that case, the three-part form is no longer called for... I so wanted to write this work according to the esthetic of the organ I was hoping for.”

MD: “May I make a suggestion? I know you have confidence in me. What if you wrote seven meditations inspired by the ‘seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?’...”

Me: “That's an enormous subject... a magnificent subject... You think I could handle it?”

MD: “I did the ‘Way of the Cross,’ and you know that I would have wanted to do the ‘Seven Sorrows of Mary.’ Your inspiration is whatever you want, in order or not, or as you wish.” Dupré also said to me on the topic of themes:

“I wanted to compose on the ‘Te Deum,’ as you know. I renounced the project because there's no point in trying to write an important work using a theme that I've forced upon myself. [But] I'd made a plan; perhaps I won't destroy it.³⁸² But now I must make up my mind to think about the registrateur; I've had it before me for too long without launching into it.”

[461] I played [Franck's] *Trois Pièces* and the *Trois Chorals* that Dupré likes so much. We agreed that my concept of each big work has matured, more and more; they've become familiar touchstones for me. We chatted and, with regard to Guerner and Berveiller's visits to St-Esprit, Dupré said:

“They prefer going to hear you over hearing Jean-Jacques...” The work at [the Salle] Pleyel is advancing. The master wants to see Bénard again upon his return from Switzerland.

The arrival of Berveiller, who was obliged to wait in the parlour, didn't interrupt our discussion. The master finished up by saying to me, “You are a very great artist.” And we went back up to the parlour where the conversation continued, since Mammy had descended.

The master announced that I have in progress a big work in seven parts on the Holy Spirit, the sketches for which are “wonderful.” In Berveiller's presence he said to me, “We can certainly tell him, don't you think? I'm sure he'll keep the secret.”

381. Johnson is likely a reference to a descendent of influential British businessman Claude Goodman Johnson (1864–1926), a motor-vehicle manufacturer, organ aficionado, and marvelous friend who, as described in Dupré 1975, 68–70, launched Dupré's career in Britain. Henry Willis III (1889–1966), the current director of organ builders Henry Willis and Sons, was also a close friend who aided Dupré's career (Dupré 1975, 72). The name Aubray, squeezed into the diary ms. above a caret, is obscure and can only be assumed to be another of Dupré's contacts in Britain with the ability to arrange concerts.

382. Cf. references to Dupré composing a “Te Deum” for organ in the diary entries of May 12 and 16, 1945 and April 28, 1946.

Sunday 5 August 1945

Played at St-Sulpice. Many people. The “faithful” were all there, alerted by Dupré.

Today, the grand première of the *Suite*.³⁸³ The score was circulated, and the atmosphere of expectation was electric. Between pieces one could hear only the pulling of stops, attention was so [462] concentrated. Immediately afterwards, I improvised a scherzo in the manner of a fugue, and a fugue with a reprise of the scherzo at the stretto, one of my best improvisations.

The *Suite* drew a big and enthusiastic reaction. Everyone was struck to see how well it “showed off the organ.” Its craftsmanship astonished no one. An American officer asked my name, of which he took note, then introduced himself and asked me some questions concerning what I had played, notably about the Dupré *Suite*. He told me that he has rarely heard such playing and improvising, and that I should go to America.

Martha Dramez, who had heard me on other occasions, told me that she found me in extraordinarily good form and found it very striking.

Upon leaving with her and Guerner, I engaged in lively discussion. Guerner has it in his head that I should improvise an entire mass on Sunday. I refused, saying that is reserved for a god. They insisted so strongly that I gave in. I asked Guerner for the themes. We tenaciously discussed the registrateur that Dupré wants to show him.

Sunday 12 August 1945

Played at St-Sulpice. Notably, improvised a symphony on themes by Guerner: two themes for the allegro, two themes for the adagio, one theme as the basis for a passacaglia. [463] I was at my best in the treatment of every theme and—my imagination running at a fever pitch—I found more than thirty different variations for the passacaglia. I chose stop combinations with a certain audacity, and the timbres of this wonderful organ delighted me above and beyond what I had expected. Having no desire to finish with the passacaglia, I reprised, always over the basso ostinato, all the other themes, and made a finale based on the first theme, [yet] very different from the allegro.

People were transfixed, none more so than Guerner, who could say no more than, “That... that...”; he alone stayed at the console, staring with ire at the manuals.³⁸⁴

Mme Tallon: “Ah! If your master could have heard you!” Everyone spoke at once, and I remember only having my hand shaken effusively.

“And that hasn’t tired you out?” asked Berveiller. Upon his departure, he raised my hand to his lips while saying to me, in a tone of great respect, “[in memory of] Widor.”

Returned with Guerner, [who appeared] awkward and almost apprehensive.

G: “Thank you!... for doing me the honour of asking me for some themes... I only knew Dupré capable of what you have done.”

[464] Wednesday 15 August 1945

I spent some time at Vespers at St-Sulpice where Mammy and the master were surrounded by many of the usual friends and more than one nuisance.

They agreed to come to dinner at our house on Sunday, and the master tasked himself with making it clear to me, by a whole show of gestures and allusions, that they were thrilled, of which M^{me} Falcinelli, next to us, understood nothing. More and more, he’s bringing me into contact with her; his strategy consists of making her a witness to a *fait accompli*,

383. This was Dupré’s *Suite pour orgue*, Op. 39 (Bornemann, 1945), which contains a dedication to the memory of the composer’s mother-in-law, Marguerite Pascouau-LaBorde. Given that these pieces were adaptations of four of the twelve études Dupré composed for Demessieux, the fact that Dupré’s *Suite*, Op. 39 was first performed in public by Demessieux was more appropriate than listeners could have realized. Concerning the Étude upon which movement I, Allegro agitato in F minor, was based, see Demessieux’s journal entry of Aug. 27, 1943.

384. Here, Jean Guerner, rabidly loyal to the notion of Marcel Dupré’s unique genius, was so loath to believe what he had just seen and heard that he appeared angry.

[and] to all the evidence of my talent. And this woman, believing she is seeing the gradual growth of the Duprés' own surprise at and interest in me, is dumbfounded at receiving these confidences.

Saturday 18 August 1945

Spent the entire afternoon with Dupré at Meudon and again played all of Mendelssohn for him. Precious hours, as always, unforgettable. Having been given absolute freedom, I made an effort to give Dupré the impression [through my playing] that he has a rival. This insane belief gave my playing a bit of an extra boost. Dupré, who saw through everything, understood and took secret pleasure from this. More than once, he shared his excitement with me; but he couldn't hear [465] the Sonata No. 3 without erupting. He says that the way I do the accelerando and lead into the climax at the conclusion is "unique." I believe Dupré had a favorable impression of today.

Always keeping me up-to-date on Lavergne's experiments, the master told me that he [Lavergne] is on the cusp of demonstrating that the adjustable break does not need to be altered, it being the beginning of the principle of the melodic coupler of [Hope-]Jones along with the principle of the break.³⁸⁵ Discussing this, the master told me that he'll be going to America, likely in the autumn of '46.

For [my debut at] Pleyel, Dupré suggested that I open my series with an impressive concert in which I would play a major work by Bach, a major work by Franck, a modern [work], my "Six Études," and improvise a symphony, and that this would be the concert to which the press are specially invited. He told me that he is to inaugurate the [Pleyel] organ by the end of October and that he is obliged to ask Guy Lambert to perform at the end of November, after which, in December, I can begin my series. He's hoping Lambert will refuse; I don't think he will. He [Dupré] says that it would be to his [Lambert's] advantage if he did [refuse], as he would be [programmed] between the two of us and, for a moment, we laughed together most uncharitably.

Next, the master recounted the conversation [466] he had with M^{me} Falcinelli after I'd left St-Sulpice, reported with his usual honesty and trust.

MD: "What's your impression of the young Jeanne Demessieux?"

Mme F: "Prettier every time I see her."

MD: "A fine compliment for a woman. I'll tell her that. And in terms of health?"

Mme F: "Rather small, a bit pale. Is she still working all the time?"

MD: "Ah, yes! How she works!... Like mad. I so wish I could get her to rest. But she has unyielding energy."

Mme F: "...Isn't she thinking of marrying?"

MD: "Would you be happy if Rolande married?"

Mme F: "That is my dearest desire."

MD: "Jeannette deserves, more than anyone, to be happy and to love with peace in her heart. Just as you would not wish for Rolande to have a mere amorous liaison, I don't wish for Jeannette a liaison unworthy of her. She does not appear to be suffering—at least, so I believe. In short, I think that with her exceptional gifts this is for the best for everyone concerned."

Mme F: "But you aren't going to prevent this child from marrying?"

MD: "I cannot prevent my Jeannette from marrying; but I don't want [467] her to be prevented from being a very great artist." The master continued with sincerity:

"Sometimes I tell myself that I'm meddling in something that is none of my business. That I am too rigorous and that I demand too much of you. An angel like you, it seems, should have nothing weighing on her. But you are so indispensable to music, to the organ!... This isolation has been necessary; you agree with me?" I reassured this very admirable master, who yet continued: "You are not unhappy?"

Dupré asked me to wait with him for an American naval officer. He has only known him for a few days but, having

385. The "break" in this case is between upper and lower registers of a keyboard when one stop can be made to sound in only the lower or only the upper register and another stop in only the other register. Dupré was looking for a way to make the point of this break adjustable (e.g., beginning at middle C, or beginning at the C-sharp above middle C).

noticed that M^r Blanchard possesses amazing knowledge of technique, he invited him to Meudon for a chat. The master asked me to play my 5th Étude for M^r Blanchard. Also, he said, briefly and solemnly, all that he thinks of me. M^r Blanchard, a very distinguished man, maintained a respectful attitude, even when enthusiastic.

Sunday 19 August 1945

Dupré and Mammy dined with us and stayed for the afternoon. (Marguerite is on vacation.) I can't write everything down.

Briefly: the master gave me a complete [468] account of his meeting yesterday with M^r Blanchard. He was pleased and told me, "All is well with the American firm Möller. Möller is not a high-ranking builder, but they've come up with some good things in mechanics. If only we could put Blanchard in touch with Lavergne!..." He told Blanchard what has happened and what is to come, [and he] was excited.

We spoke again of Pleyel, where all goes well apart from a small delay to do with the material for the much-discussed curtain. The organ cannot be tuned again by Perroux until next year.

In the afternoon, the master and I spoke privately about work. He spoke of my composition glorifying the Holy Spirit and asked questions. I told him that after having studied the "seven gifts," I find that they are pretty much impossible to treat musically. He told me that I'm right. Then, as we were leaving, we discussed it again, putting forth our common ideas concerning the Holy Spirit. Dupré said again that he sees the third person of the Trinity as the universal spirit, universal knowledge, that is, the wisdom of God.

MD: "Isn't that true? You think of it the same way I do?" and I answered,

Me: "Yes."

The master has taken some days off and has counseled me a few times to do the same. Today he told me that he "requests" that I do so, [469] away from Paris, and I promised I will. Dupré is leaving for a tour of Switzerland.

Sunday 26 August 1945

Played at St-Sulpice. [Mendelssohn's] Third Sonata. Took great personal pleasure. Listeners were as usual.

Upon leaving with Guerner, we fell into a vigorous discussion of Messiaen. He wanted to know my opinion, and I confided in him, saying that this matter has troubled me for some time.

G: "Dupré, too, has told me that he was troubled at first; but he thinks the same way we do."

Monday 27 August 1945

I'm leaving for Évreux.

A letter from Jeanne Demessieux to her parents:³⁸⁶

27 August 1945

My dear parents,

First off, a big kiss.

Next, using my knees [as a surface to write upon], I'm writing badly, but so what. That said, on to some news.

I had a very good trip and arrived at precisely 10:00 [AM] in Évreux. On the train, a young girl facing me offered me her newspaper, and we got talking. Destination: Évreux.

What crowds! I lugged my suitcase (no cramps!). Got to the exit where the person sent [to meet me] pounced on me. Suitcase and package went on his bicycle and, chatting along the route, I drew him out.

[It's as if] we'd left Évreux behind us, for where I am now one can hear, without end, [2] roosters, donkeys, goats,³⁸⁷ and crickets and birds and slugs (no, I am joking). Right now, a titmouse goes before me.

The property is fantastic.³⁸⁸ At this moment [of writing], I'm in the smallest area that is... as big as Place Daumesnil! It's only a tiny portion of the whole!

[I have been] welcomed by three lay sisters, including the mother superior of their community.³⁸⁹ The latter met me in the garden and wanted the honour of showing me my room. It's a room of unusual cleanliness, a whiteness that would please Maman. Dressing table with a pitcher of water, linen, closet, several chairs, and [a] *chaise longue*. In the morning, it's filled with sun. I thought I would not be able to open my suitcase; eventually, I managed it using a coin. I settled in nicely. Hair arranged, powdered, hatless, and with my scarf in hand, I made a tour of the property, having been given free rein.

First, a charming church, a little bigger than Bercy. At its far end, an organ façade, into which I squinted to see pipes, but there was nothing behind. The organ [3] is behind the choir [stalls]. Next, I toured the woods. Magnificent as in a dream. Enormous trees of all sorts, "undergrowth," a delightful river,³⁹⁰ fir and pine trees.

I returned for lunch, which was at half-past noon, after having remained seated alone with nothing to see but the wind. At the table, the mother superior had me sit facing her. At my right a charming old sister with a round face; across from [her] the cook, a chubby, baby-faced sister. They had placed little plates inside large ones in a manner all the more touching for being simple. Menu: a sort of julienne³⁹¹ (yes!). Salad of tomatoes and egg. A roast (and what a piece!). Fried potatoes that were swimming in oil (they forced me to eat a portion triple the size of theirs). Marvellous little green beans in... butter. A plum tart that the mother superior had thought she knew how to cut and that she'd hacked to pieces, Maman! They'd saved a huge piece for me to taste. Finally, fruit, which I didn't get down because I... just couldn't go on.

They said prayers with conviction and, after the soup, the [4] mother superior read 20 lines of the

387. The city of Évreux, in Normandy, is built up around an extensive forest. Perhaps there were, at the time, also farms nearby.

388. In the diary entry for Sept. 18, 1945, Demessieux identified the place of her vacation as "Réveilhac's former property." This suggests that her vacation home was the boarding school named l'Immaculé, on a property situated at 56 avenue Aristide Briand in Évreux. According to <<https://immaculee.spip.ac-rouen.fr/spip.php?article1794>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the school was founded in 1938 on the initiative of Marthe Réveilhac (1874–1959). Because of her concern for the poor and zeal for education in the neighborhood, she had donated her home and property for the purpose of starting a school.

389. Referred to by Demessieux as mère supérieure, this was likely M^{lle} Marthe, in her capacity as founder and director of the school. The teaching sisters were all necessarily lay people, to accord with the separation of Church and State in France.

390. The Iton River passes through Évreux.

391. This refers to a dish in which the food is cut into short, thin strips.

Invitation in a way that I found (oh, scandalous) adorably funny. Heavens! Best I stick this letter in my deepest pocket. They are charming. The mother superior is a spirited woman. They announced that they have tasked themselves with fattening me up.

After lunch, a visit to the parish priest to whose house the mother superior wanted to accompany me. She left after having introduced me. The priest (I will tell you his name when my sick head can recall it) kept me for more than a half hour, after which he did me the honour of showing me his organ which was made by Isambar. He called me “my little child,” spoke about Marcel Dupré, which nearly made me jump for joy. He knows M^{me} the Baroness de Séverac to whom the master introduced me one day.³⁹² He also knows... Honneger, Schmitt, Paray’s family. In short, he prevailed upon me to accept his armchair, and he took a chair. He has offered me [the use of] his bicycle as well as his organ.

5:00 [PM]. I’m back from a meal. Phew! So then: they are trying to kill me! I’ve eaten so much, I can no longer bend [at the middle]! These determined women offered me wine and coffee—I [almost] forgot.

Forgive me if this account is terrible. I’m going to take [1] my letter [to the mailbox], if my meal will allow me the great liberty of movement...

I embrace you tenderly. Till tomorrow and, above all, do not worry!

Your Jeanne

Monday 3 September 1945

Recalled [home] from Évreux by my parents: Yolande arrived eight days ago, and I only found this out when I got to Paris. She didn’t want me to know sooner so I could take full advantage of my vacation.

Thursday 6 September 1945

Yolande is leaving tomorrow, and I’ve been pressured to leave again for Évreux this evening. We were inseparable these three days, and Dupré received us at Meudon.

Tuesday 18 September 1945

Returned yesterday evening to Paris after a perfect holiday. [470] Being bathed in solitude, in the refreshing nature of what is [Marthe] Réveilhac’s former property did me a world of intellectual good and, while there, I “cured” a real attack of misanthropy.

The first piece of my work about the Holy Spirit is established, as well as the outline of the seven parts [and] the spirit of the work. I’ve composed for entire days. The strength of my being has been vehemently

392. Cf. the diary entry for Dec. 31, 1943.

liberated, and I have experienced a period of intense emotion that I cannot forget. I hope to finish my first piece any day now.

Saturday 22 September 1945

As M^r Blanchard had indicated that he wished to chat with me and get to know me better, I invited him, through M^{me} Dupré, to visit me at home yesterday. We chatted warmly and compatibly for an hour and three-quarters. He is paying attention to everything concerned with my career, is interested in my debut, and expects me to go to America. He is leaving on Monday.

Today, Meudon, where I arrived very anxious, carrying the completed first piece of my work. Dupré was expecting me and waited impatiently in the garden. Mammy and he congratulated me, and the master led me to the organ hall right away.

MD: "First, some things to tell you. Our friend Guerner [471] is in the process of writing, for us two only, his thoughts on the 'great virtuoso.' I asked him for this. I am sure it will be powerfully interesting. He has had some terrible trials, of late. I saw our friend Bénard yesterday at Pleyel. His health has improved, and he's optimistic. He's working towards one concert a month, and for a second season the following year. I saw Grumbach, who spoke of the Études. He is keen that their fingering be done by you. Bornemann is presently pulling his hair out trying to get paper but said to tell you that you can count on him. I proposed something concerning your Études: that I, myself, write the preface to the published score and, perhaps, give some advice about working on them." This sensitively phrased offer delighted me, and Dupré summarized for me the preface as he was already imagining it.

Then we got to [my] composition. I showed Dupré the general plan in seven parts. He understood the idea before I had even explained it, and he approved it enthusiastically. "Dogma" immediately surprised him. I believed he thought it too abstract, but [472] told me, no. He burst out when I told him that I see it as a consequence of "Pentecost." He considers my plan very personal. I played him the first piece, based on "Veni Sancte." In the middle, I had to stop to modify the registration, and I heard Dupré say in a hushed voice, "It's beautiful, you know..." When I turned around, I saw him looking so pale that I couldn't say a word, and I continued. I take note of these details because of the impression they gave me and am convinced that they best express what can otherwise not be explained. Afterwards, the master said,

"It's wonderful! It's warm, powerful; the conclusion is very moving!... It's concentrated, profound, profound... The continuous plea, how genuine it is: 'I beg you, come; do not leave me; open your eyes!' You are right; this really is the [plainchant] 'Veni Sancte'; I understand now. And this is truly the first piece of the work... What title are you going to give it?" I was hesitating between "Prelude" and "Veni Sancte." Then Dupré said to me, "Put 'Veni,' only. It's more atmospheric." And, with deepening earnestness, he perused my manuscripts and my notes, and told me he is struck by the aptness of my titles in relation to the [473] excerpts from texts that I've written haphazardly, just to help focus my thoughts.

MD: "Why haven't you written these excerpts as epigraphs?"

Me: "No, never."

MD: "You don't want to be like Messiaen?... Do you know why Messiaen is wrong? Because he publishes texts of his own devising, and only priests have the right to do this."

Me: "That's true; but I detest the appearance of mysticism."

MD: "My little Jeanne, we'll see, but this would be helpful to people in general. As for you, you are

Christian. Do you believe in the divinity of Jesus? In the virginity of the Virgin? In the Church? Well, when one believes in all that, and when one has a soul like yours, one has the right to speak.”

Dupré, seeing I was somewhat shaken, confided this in me:

MD: “When I wrote the *Chemin de la Croix*, how many times I felt powerless, puerile, beset by scruples, as if I were stealing something from the Passion of Christ. And now, when I see people crying as they listen to it, and thanking me, I yearn to usher them back to Jesus because I have the impression of having stolen tears meant for Him. Even so... I could say to Him, ‘You well know how I wrote it, that it [474] was not “for me,” but a humble homage to You.’ So, you agree, my little Jeanne? Suppose that Bach or Mozart appeared before me in person. I would feel so small that I would run away. But if Jesus were to appear, I would run towards him, because Bach I would approach as a musician, but Jesus I would approach as a sinner.”

This was the most beautiful lesson in humility and faith that could ever be given. Dupré then returned to my piece and plan, and asked me why I hadn’t envisioned treating “the waters.” Astonished, I told him I didn’t understand. He showed me the beginning of Genesis, with which I was unfamiliar, and insisted that I write on this. He talked about this composition—which he already foresaw from examining my first ideas—until evening.

MD: “Who are you going to dedicate it to?”

Me: “To no one, since I am dedicating the *Études* to you; unless Madame Dupré would accept the dedication.”

MD: “Let’s think about it. Your parish priest... if he’d given you an organ—yes; even so, he’s your friend.”

Me: “Yes. But an egotistical and jealous friend...”

MD: “And Jean Gallon?...”

Like Dupré, I think this [475] would be a beautiful gesture towards Father Jean. He proposed some other ideas to me, including (but without holding to any of them), “splitting up” the work among seven dedicatees.³⁹³ My response was that I don’t have seven friends in the entire world.

MD: “You will have 700, but you will have 700 enemies before you have the friends.”

A new problem arose: doing away with one of my original seven subjects in order to introduce one that I will call “Les Eaux” [The Waters]. After some thought, my first idea was to eliminate “Combats” [Battles]. But Dupré couldn’t make up his mind and became completely befuddled.

Around 5:00, we were interrupted by Mammy’s arrival. “Come help us!” and the master, still bewildered, said to her, “She just played me the first piece of the work that she’s composed. It has such feeling, such power! She writes as if she were a 60-year-old man. I do not understand... I do not understand.”

29 September 1945

At Meudon. I played for Dupré his Preludes and Fugues in B major and G minor again. Very enthusiastic, he said to me that the G minor is stupefying, and that I play it better than he; he purported to say this to me

393. Demessieux’s *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit* (Paris: Durand, 1947) was eventually published with one dedication, to Jean Berveiller.

just as he would to Marguerite. My rejoinder was that it was after I had heard him in a radio broadcast from [476] London that I reached this pinnacle. Right then and there, the master decided I will play this work in the first recital.

Next, we talked again about my composition, and Dupré expounded further, preaching [on the value of] working in fragments, seeking substance. He is working on his first composition for [organ with] registrateur: “Vision.”³⁹⁴ He is [just] getting started. In just a few words, he gave me the equivalent of a lesson:

“Look—see how I compose.” He opened a folder that contained pages of all sizes, especially small ones; so many sketches and notes. He also rummaged in his pocket and drew from it a tiny square of music paper, written upon neatly in ink: “Here, this is my theme.” And in his wallet [were] the latest ideas he had come up with, at any given time.

The master confided in me something I realize is very sad: he has decided to relinquish the organ [at the Chauvière-Dupré home] on rue du Vert-Buisson to Rouen Cathedral. He told me his reasons, and does not (!) want me to see this as a beautiful gesture, since he is selling it; but he told me that because of Marguerite he cannot do otherwise. He will inaugurate it a week from tomorrow.

MD: “When I arrive home and don’t see it...” And, as he [477] walked me back to the station, we talked about the history of that dear organ, built by Cavaillé-Coll for him when he was eight.³⁹⁵

Sunday 30 September 1945

M^r Berveiller in my gallery. Yesterday, Dupré told him the secret surrounding Pleyel. Rather than astonished, he was very happy.

Rouen Cathedral, 7 Oct. 1945: from the back cover of the printed program³⁹⁶

From Vert-Buisson to the Cathedral. Built in 1894 [recte: 1896] by Cavaillé-Coll for Albert Dupré, the instrument that has come to be installed in the cathedral was an organ of 10 stops, later augmented with a 16’ bassoon. For many years it drew together, in the [music] room of Vert-Buisson, all of Rouen’s elite artists, who appreciated its precision and its tonal qualities. Spared during the war that led to the demise of Albert Dupré, what was to become of it, alone? Its

394. Dupré’s large-scale *Vision, poème symphonique*, Op. 44 for organ (Paris: Bornemann, 1948) is described in Steed 1999, 131–35.

395. The organ being discussed was the two-manual Cavaillé-Coll organ, built for the music room of 12 rue du Vert-Buisson in Rouen, as described in Dupré 1975, 26–29. Regarding the importance of this instrument to the family during Dupré’s childhood, see Murray 1985, 22–24. According to Murray’s chronology, the organ was installed in September of 1896, when Dupré was fully ten years old, not eight years old, which Demessieux quoted him as saying.

396. BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1471.

haunting wish to serve the Church began quietly; the cathedral in its distress heard it with joy. Thanks to the spiritual goodness of Marcel Dupré, delighted by the decision to offer his father's organ, [and] thanks to the generosity of the dioceses of Bayeux and Séez, so keenly moved with pity for their metropolitan church, the agreement was closed shortly after April 19, 1944.³⁹⁷ The instrument's path descended rue du Vert-Buisson towards Notre-Dame, somewhat apprehensive about its new functions and the size of the building in which it would henceforth be heard. But fortunately, Jean Perroux was there! For eight days, we saw "Jean Perroux, the magician" lovingly bent over it; when he was done... the salon organ had turned into a great organ for a little cathedral. How is it possible that, under the same fingers, in so short a time, a small organ becomes a cathedral's great organ!

Saturday 14 October 1945

At Meudon, there was talk again of the inauguration at Rouen. Very emotional.

Played for the master his three new Preludes and Fugues [Op. 36] again. Very impressed.

All is going well at Pleyel.

Talked at length. Dupré spoke about Genesis and segued to astronomy. From there, we verged on discussion of theology. What he said about the universe and "universes" was powerfully poetic. He told me that he knows it helps me with my work to discuss these subjects with me. (Unfortunately, not enough time to jot down [these discussions].)

Sunday 21 October 1945

Saw Dupré yesterday at Meudon. There was no time for work, but we chatted.

Today at 3:00 PM he inaugurated the organ of St-Dominique.³⁹⁸ The church was not large enough to hold the crowd. [My parents and I attended] with Mammy, Marguerite, and Guerner.

At the end, the gallery [478] was mobbed, and we all had to wait a long time. From inside the church, we could see a massive crowd outside, and when the master descended, he had a hard time turning his back [on the crowd] to come to us. They were looking for him for a reception given in his honour at the parsonage.

397. According to <<https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/2019/01/20/why-america-participated-in-the-allied-bombing-of-france-in-wwii/>>, under "The Flames Digested the Old Wooden Houses," accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Rouen Cathedral was hit by RAF bombs during the night of April 18–19, 1944.

398. According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_orgue_de_l%27église_Saint-Dominique_de_Paris>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, this organ was originally built by Merklin in 1904 for a private home and transferred to St-Dominique in 1944 by Jules Isambart, organ builder and Jean Perroux, voicer. According to the printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1473, Lily (also known as Louise) Tallon, former Dupré student and titular organist of St-Dominique, also participated in the recital.

MD: "First, I have to pass on some information to Jeanne Demessieux. I have important things I must settle with her right away." They yielded in regret, and directed us towards a writing desk set up in the church, while closing the doors to the public.

Mammy got hold of M^{me} Tallon, who was heading my way, and led away my parents and the little flock. The master gave me the dates of my first two concerts, the plan for the series, and the program of his recital, and we settled on the last details of my programs.³⁹⁹

M^r Laurent came and interrupted us to enthusiastically call for the master, who turned to him with:

MD: "We are not finished, dear friend. In a moment." The master then asked me for my response concerning [repertoire] choices he [479] submitted to me yesterday. Having learned from me lately that I had begun to suffer again from my health problems, he has decided to refer me to his friend, the surgeon Beaussenat.* I told him that my parents and I accept. Dupré, having confided everything concerning my health and my career to the doctor, and the latter having offered to take me on, will make an appointment for me in the next few days. (He told the doctor that I was "his successor," and that he cared for me even more than for his own career.) He is relieved to have this matter settled.

As we moved on, Dupré who is unhappy with this organ, asked my opinion of his recital. He had set out to perform with his usual sincerity; a combination having malfunctioned during *Évocation*, he bemoaned this. But we didn't dwell on that, and I took away an unforgettable lesson; particularly impressed by Widor's Fifth.

At the parsonage, they wanted me, along with my parents, to stay but I asked the master if I could withdraw. He embraced us tenderly.

* The first surgeon to do a heart operation.

Wednesday 24 October 1945

399. Demessieux relayed the dates, repertoire, and other plans for her projected recital series in a letter of Oct. 28, 1945 to Yolande (AM 4S15). According to this letter, following her debut recital, Demessieux would give a sequence of recitals as part of a Pleyel subscription series involving other, established organists, each of her programs devoted to the music of one composer, or to a theme. Recitals were to be on Mondays (usually), in the early evening, at the rate of at least one each fortnight, beginning Jan. 7, 1946. The plan for the recital series was: Dupré to inaugurate the revamped instrument on Dec. 17, 1945; Demessieux's recital no. 1 on Jan. 7; her recital no. 2 on Jan. 21 (the press would be specially invited to her Demessieux's two recitals); Demessieux no. 3 on Feb. 4; Duruflé on Feb. 18; Demessieux No. 4 on Mar. 4; Gavoty on Mar. 11; Demessieux no. 5 on Thurs., Apr. 18; and Demessieux no. 6 on May 6. The large gap planned between Gavoty's recital and Demessieux's next recital was likely due to Dupré having a packed schedule of engagements, most of these outside Paris. By Nov. 1, however, when Demessieux resumed writing her letter to Yolande, the start of the series had been moved to begin with the inaugural recital on Jan. 7 and Demessieux's first recital on Jan. 21 (presumably, all planned recitals were to be moved accordingly). None of this panned out, however. According to the diary entry of Dec. 19, 1945, at Pleyel "restrictions on use of electricity and a prohibition on concerts between 5:00 and 9:00 in the evening" had been imposed, with the result that Demessieux imagined she would not be able to begin her series until March. Renovation of the organ appears also to have been delayed; according to the diary entry of Feb. 6, 1946, this day was the first on which Dupré and Demessieux were able to hear the results of work on the instrument.

As instructed by Mammy, I went to Montparnasse [station] [480] to wait for the master, who wished to escort me himself and introduce me to Doctor Beaussenat. We were united in our anxiety, without letting it show too much. But Dupré comforted me with, “Just think: you have been filled with the Holy Spirit right up to the present; you know what I believe concerning this. The Father is the Creator, thus the ‘ordainer,’ and we are agreed that he acts through the Holy Spirit. Do you think They could betray themselves?”**

At M^r Beaussenat’s, I asked the master, who wanted to withdraw, to stay and hear the outcome from the doctor himself. After examining me, the doctor told us what he thinks with absolute frankness and added, “no operation, above all. She will get better; but it will be a long process, very long. Powerful treatment is necessary because the other side has been afflicted.”⁴⁰⁰ For her career and for her coming recitals, there’s no danger.” After he bid us take tea with M^{me} Beaussenat, Dupré and I left together.

The diagnosis left us very downcast, but the master put into words the relief we both feel: “We won’t have to cancel the series!” He wants [481] to arrange with me how my recital dates and my treatment dates will be coordinated. The master took his leave from me at avenue Wagram to make his way to Pleyel.

** [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] MD: “You, of all people, must have confidence.”

Saturday 27 October 1945

Worked for the entire afternoon with Dupré at Meudon. I played my recital of Bach Fantasias and Toccatas for him. My impression was that this recital was reaching a peak, which was confirmed when I heard Dupré say, after the Fantasia and Fugue in C minor [BWV 537]: “Remarkable perfection and such composure.”

After the G minor [Fantasia and Fugue, BWV 542]: “We agreed with my father in saying that one cannot play the Fugue without there being a void. You, today, are perfection. Never have I heard it played, nor played it myself, like that.”

After the Fugue in C [major, from BWV 564]: “Ah, what splendor; fluid and authoritative at the same time. It had character!”

After the Dorian [BWV 538], F [major, BWV 540], and D minor [BWV 565] (between which he stopped me to share his enthusiasm), Dupré told me that the D minor is “moving” when I play it. When the master returned from the far end of the hall, from where he [482] was listening to me, I saw the depth of his emotion.

MD: “One can well see that you are predestined... It’s supernatural.” And after saying these words solemnly, Dupré continued, his eyes moist: “And to think it is this little girl, this pure angel, who has that brain, that technique!”

Then we moved to the parlour where, together, we had a bite to eat; Dupré then said to me, “Now we are going to talk business,” and we settled down for an hour with all our file folders. Dupré brought me up to

400. In the Nov. 1 portion of a letter to Yolande begun on Oct. 28, 1945 (AM 4S15), Demessieux noted that her right breast was now afflicted as her left had been, and that the doctor (presumably Beaussenat) had prescribed six months of injections at a high dose.

date concerning Pleyel, prompted me for my ideas, my wishes. As soon as I started to worry about material things or finances, he responded, "I'm in charge of 'commercial' matters; to you, I leave the artistic side!" without any attempt to disclose to me the mountain of solicitations he has made and the worries I know he has.

Mammy returned late; all together, we departed for Paris.

Thursday 1 November 1945

Between Mass and Vespers [for the Feast of All Saints], the Duprés came over to our house for lunch and to spend part of the afternoon. No time to write everything down. Friendly intimacy, relaxation, affection.

Spoke of Pleyel; the "Jeunesses Musicales" will not be able to sponsor two of my concerts. But Bénard took the [bad] news in stride and is looking after everything.⁴⁰¹

We talked about Langlais being named to Ste-Clothilde without a competition. Marguerite said that Grunenwald had hoped for years to have Ste-Clothilde; she added with her forthright way of speaking that he considered himself preordained to that post [*qu'il s'est fait baptisé pour cela*].

"Perhaps," said Mammy, "but it appears that he doesn't want to be attached to any permanent place now—why, I don't know."

Dupré added, pensively, "No... What he wants is St-Sulpice. He's waiting impatiently for... the post to be vacated." I restrained myself from saying that he certainly has the soul of a gravedigger, but out loud, we settled for a softer tone.

During the afternoon, discussed [organ] building and all sorts of technique with the master, who talked to me about Busoni and gave me some examples on the piano. He asked me, also, to explain to him what I know, and we took turns at the keyboard.

Wednesday 7 November 1945

Maurice Le Boucher has come to settle in Paris, where several posts have been offered to him. He is still [484] director of the Montpellier Conservatory. Having received a letter from him since his arrival asking that I come to see him, I waited, upon Dupré's advice; then I decided to ask him for a meeting, which he granted me today at 11 rue Christophe Colomb. I hadn't seen him since the exodus.⁴⁰²

He had a very affectionate attitude, which surprised me a little, declared me "splendid," and had a lot of questions for me. He said that Busser regrets losing me. I thought I would burst out laughing and put my

401. First mention of the "Jeunesses Musicales" in connection with Demessieux's Pleyel recital series was in the diary entry of Dec. 8, 1944. Apparently, the plan had been that Gavoty, through his connections with Les Jeunesses Musicales, would arrange for that organization to sponsor Demessieux's first two recitals. However, according to Demessieux's Oct. 28–Nov. 1 letter to Yolande (AM 4S15), this plan was abandoned due to the director of Les Jeunesses Musicales falling gravely ill.

402. That is, since 1940 when the Demessieux family was among those who—in the face of the German invasion that summer—fled from Paris to the south of France, where Le Boucher was living.

foot in my mouth. Aside from that, I followed Dupré's "plan" and managed not to let slip the information that I will be playing in Paris this season.

Thursday 8 November 1945

At Meudon. Mammy is in bed with the flu. Her sister Valéry has become mistress of the house because they have had guests, yesterday and today.

I arrived when coffee was being served; [already] there were the minister and his family, to whom Dupré introduced me with a lot of fanfare. He asked them to listen to me, and I played the finale from *Évocation* and an improvisation on "Salve Regina." Went well. Long conversation in which the master put me front and centre. People were amazed and said, four times over (who knows why), that they can understand why [485] the master chose me as substitute organist at St-Sulpice, with a talent such as mine. Also (like Gavoty) [they commented] that I am very fortunate, to which Dupré solemnly responded, "Fortunate? Make no mistake: it's I who am fortunate." At this point, they were struck by the habitual intimacy between the Duprés and me: the master's paternal attention that "cosseted" me, and a sort of idolization from Marguerite.

These friends reserved a surprise for the end: Bornemann had procured a large amount of paper. Dupré jumped up; it's a simple matter of a few words on the telephone to corroborate this.

The minister and his wife went up to be with Mammy, and I stayed, alone. Dupré didn't take long to find me and lead me to the warmth of the dining room.

MD: "He is saving us! Bornemann will have paper; we can re-publish Bach! The publishers' association had done everything possible to cut off Bornemann's supplies in order to make [the] Bach [edition] disappear."* Then the master explained to me (at which point he was told of the arrival of a student) that he is going to delay his lessons for an hour to listen to me. Despite my protestations, he worked it all out, took me to give Mammy a hug, said goodbye to his friends, and we went back down.

MD: "Finally! To our work! Don't worry: come now, it's important that I hear you!" It was [486] decided.
MD: "You played *Évocation* very well earlier..."

For Dupré, I played [his] *Variations on a Noël*, and the other two movements of *Évocation*, which moved him deeply. He said that I have attained the perfection of his imaginings and that there is nothing left to be desired. He asked me "whether I would mind playing the Finale again, if I'm not tired," for it gives him joy to hear it again and [gives] me [joy] to play it.

We talked after that and settled various matters. I went up to see Mammy before I left. Quickly explained to the master my meeting with Le Boucher.

MD: "You didn't let on about anything? Not even the [Pleyel] sessions?"⁴⁰³

Me: "No."

MD: "Bravo."

As I was leaving, the master embraced me with emotion: "You are a great artist."

403. With "Not even the sessions?" Dupré may have been asking whether Demessieux let slip that she knew there would be an organ recital series at the Salle Pleyel beginning in January 1946.

* For months, one could no longer find a score of Dupré's Bach [edition].

Sunday 11 November 1945

Today, Dupré played at Montpellier Cathedral.⁴⁰⁴ Papa went to join him.

Here, I am playing at St-Sulpice. 11:15: a chorale [prelude]; [Bach's] Toccata and Fugue in F [major]. Improvisation: funeral march in heroic style on the "Sonnerie aux Champs" [field bugle call]; this was the movement "Combat" that I had originally planned for my work on the Holy Spirit. In very good form.

Crowded. All the usual friends, except Guerner. At my right, M^r Hoehn** from Switzerland, who arrived [487] suddenly yesterday, and whom Mammy sent over to me after having informed him of everything. He'll be back for Vespers this evening, and says he's prepared to give me an engagement in Switzerland. Mammy, still under the weather, told me over the telephone that he is very enthusiastic and that it's surely Providence that sent him.

** Paul Hoehn, from Zürich.

M^r Provost had long ago asked me to invite him when I play at St-Sulpice. Having consulted with Dupré, I invited him to come up today at 11:00. A sinister individual who remained silent in the gallery, except when he said, "Here, things are changing, at any rate."†

† And also this odious remark: "This is the first time I've been up here: I am nervous."

He asked us [Maman and me] whether he might join us on our walk home.

It [the conversation] was staggering [*épique*]. First, [he made] a few comments that I pretended not to understand. Then he said that the future of organ is closed off and fought ferociously against my numerous arguments. Guessing that I know something about organ building abroad:

P: "You've read a lot of works about building?"

I cited one by Cavaillé-Coll, Dufourcq's recent work,⁴⁰⁵ and one in English.

P: "That's a little. How do you know that much?"

Me: "Since 1920, it has been common knowledge. That's what I've been telling you."

404. Recital program preserved in the BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1475. In her Oct. 28–Nov. 1 letter (AM 4S15), Demessieux charged Yolande with getting the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 11 off from playing at her own church so she could be in Montpellier that day to hear Dupré play at the Basilique-Cathédrale St-Pierre at 4:30, and because Dupré had already told Demessieux that he would be happy to see Yolande and speak with her.

405. Norbert Dufourcq, *Les Clicquot, facteurs d'orgues du roy* (Paris: Libraire Floury, 1942).

P: "Dufourcq is going to have a 40-stop organ at home. It will undoubtedly be a Gonzalez."⁴⁰⁶

Me: "Of course."

P: "Why, of course?"

Me: "Because he likes Gonzalez organs."

P: "Ah, Gonzalez organs... Let it not be said that the organ [488] attracts the masses. I've only once seen a full house, at Chaillot, for Marchal."

Me: "Well, well... I, too, have only seen a full house once, also at Chaillot, for Dupré."

He went around and around with this, making me wonder what he was trying to get at. Suddenly, victoriously, [he said,]

"... Because!... Because it cannot be said that Dupré has done anything for the organ! He has been under American influence, and his music, in general, is rubbish!" I had promised myself to fight—an eye for an eye—against the next direct attack.

Me: "You appear to be extremely biased, sir!"

P: "Not in the least! And I stand by what I said."

Me: "So do I. Instead of talking about influence, call it research. Dupré is incapable of being 'influenced'! Now I'll tell what you don't like about Dupré: he's an innovator. Everything, including your terms, falls on the shoulders, if not the head, of the one who leads the way."*

* Words that Dupré used one day when speaking of himself.⁴⁰⁷

P: "I criticize him for being 'cold'!"

Me: "You dare to say something like that! Well then, what do you make of *Évocation*? The *Symphonie-Passion*? Admit it, you don't know them."

P: "Yet you denigrate Vierne for being sentimental."

Me: "A cheap sentimentality..."

P: "How so?"

Me: "I'd say he's insignificant [*"greluchet"*].

P: "You are cruel." [489]

Me: "You, sir, dare treat masterworks as rubbish."

P: "If [Dupré's] G-minor Symphony is played, I'm going to boo."

406. According to Bruce Gustafson, "Hommage à Dufourcq," *The Diapason*, whole number 839 (Oct. 1979): 8, Dufourcq's Gonzalez organ, built in 1946–1947 for his Paris apartment, featured 20 stops on three manuals, with electric action. Dufourcq later placed it in an 18th-century case that he had purchased in Lorraine and moved the organ to the chapel of his country home.

407. Demessieux recorded these words in her diary entry of July 13, 1942.

Me: "How petty!" A pause, in which I got hold of myself, determined to go on the offensive.

P: "You say that you've read my friend Dufourcq's book..."

Me: "Yes; very interesting."

P: "Yes, indeed, because Clicquot was the only organ builder."

Me: "I bow down low to Clicquot, very low. But I believe that our era will have its place in history, too."

P: "And who are our French builders?"

Me: "Gonzalez... Gloton..."**

** I purposely left out Jacquot because of Lavergne.⁴⁰⁸

P: "There's no question that Gonzalez rescued the organ from decadence."

Me: "What decadence?"

P: "The nineteenth century!"

Me: "There's where I must make a correction: there was Cavaillé-Coll."

P: "Ah! Cavaillé-Coll had the distinction of taking things in hand, do you understand?"

Me: "You are wrong, sir. He was a 'builder' who invented the forerunner of the symphonic organ."⁴⁰⁹

P: "You *like* Cavaillé-Coll! I see! He's your compatriot."⁴¹⁰

Me: "You mock me, sir."

P: "Gonzalez represents the return of the organ to its great, classic era, the time of Clicquot."

Me: "Yes, what they call the neoclassic organ, the 'pastiche'."

P: "No, no!"

Me: "Exactly. I find it sad that a man who is as knowledgeable and cultured as M^r Norbert Dufourcq [490] also takes such a despicable position in his book. His sole aim in honouring Clicquot is to trounce new developments."

P: "No, come on; let's [try to] understand each other..."

Me: "You don't deny that his book is anti-Cavaillé-Coll?"

408. The tension between René Lavergne and Pierre Jacquot was a delicate matter because Pierre Jacquot was gradually being forced out of the company Jacquot-Lavergne.

409. Demessieux's quotation marks around the word builder suggest that she considered Cavaillé-Coll to be much more than simply a builder of organs—more along the lines of an ingenious designer and inventor.

410. Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811–1899), like Demessieux, was born in Montpellier. Though his reputation as an innovator was made in northern regions of France, his lineage and background were quintessentially Mediterranean. As described in Fenner Douglass, *Cavaillé-Coll and the French Romantic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 8–9, Cavaillé-Coll's first schooling was in Spain; his apprenticeship as an organ builder (under his father) took place in cities of the Midi, specifically in Gaillac (in the Occitan region of France), Lérida (in the Catalan district of Spain), and Toulouse (Occitan region of France).

P: "Not at all."

Me: "Well, I, a young composer (but that's not what's important) will tell you that on a neo-classical organ, I cannot play as I would on another; to give expression to my ideas, it takes the symphonic organ of Cavaillé-Coll, and electricity. Don't you think this is a sign?"

P: "So, you don't play the same way on all organs?"

Me: "No."

P: "Well, you're treating my friend Dufourcq badly."

Me: "What I say is true. I am very individualistic; I cannot put up with others trying to influence me, and because my music is individualistic too, I almost got myself thrown out of the Conservatory. What's more, I'm telling you bluntly what I think."

P: "Gonzalez, nevertheless, has done some good things."

Me: "He's also butchered some organs."

P: "Which ones?"

Me: "Not far from here: Chaillot."

P: "Ah! You're vicious!"

Me: "But, sir, I am just as earnest as you."

P: "I reproach Cavaillé-Coll organs for having too many [ranks of] strings."

Me: "And I, those of Gonzalez, for having too many [491] mixtures."

P: "There you are right, mind you."

Me: "As always."

P: "No! Prove it!"

Me: "I'll prove it: take Chaillot."

P: "You're insistent!"

Me: "It's the ruination of a great past."

P: "I can tell you that the former Trocadéro [organ] wasn't bad."

Me: "My accusations: first, they cut down the pipes; proof: the organ is a semitone too high. Second, they put the ensemble out of balance by adding mixtures without adding foundation stops. Third, anyone and everyone has fiddled with that organ; the result: butchery."

P: "Not everyone shares your opinion."

Me: "But they do. And you know this well."

P: "Gonzalez is faithful (sic). You know that he lost his son in the war..."⁴¹¹

411. Fernand Gonzalez (b. 1904) was killed during an air battle over Épernay on June 8, 1940. According to Norbert Dufourcq, "Un Concert d'Orgue au Palais de Chaillot," *L'illustration* (Feb. 22, 1941): 196, Fernand Gonzalez assisted with the creation of the Chaillot organ, and to him belongs the credit for the design of the organ's spectacular façade.

Me: "I pay tribute, truly. It's terribly sad. But I also regret it because his son would have been able to take advantage of the good things his father did and correct the errors."

Provost, pale with anger, left us at Place Daumesnil after the briefest exchange of courtesies.

Friday 23 November 1945

Worked and chatted all afternoon with Dupré at Meudon. Played the *Symphonie-Passion*, the *Suite*. Of Messiaen, one of the rare pieces that my musical sense has been able to assimilate: *Apparition de l'Église* [491b] *Éternelle*, even if the harmonies do annoy me.

The master just returned this morning from a recital tour of the south of France.⁴¹² The tour also had the purpose of spreading publicity concerning me.* [He was] happy, not in the least gloomy. He has been transfigured by the single thought of my coming debut and my engagements. We chatted. Satisfied with his performances (one can see that just by looking at him). Very satisfied with Bayonne.

In the *Symphonie-Passion*, I plagued him with questions after each bit, wishing to ensure that we agree concerning the smallest details. Nearly pointless "work" anyway, as Dupré is always giving me his utmost. He told me at the end of the *Symphonie-Passion*, "You understand everything. Listening to you play it, one imagines seeing the unfolding drama. It's beautiful, my Jeannette." I know the value of these words from Dupré. I told him, in turn, what I thought of his work.

MD: "You believe so?... You, who know that I am not looking for renown as a composer, you tell me that it's beautiful... Listen: during my tour, I had, for the first time, the impression that people whom I did not know, liked me. I saw good, decent people come to me... as if they liked [492] my music, you see. I'm not used to that in France. So, you like it, too?"

I showed him how I've begun "Les Eaux." He found it compelling and said,

"You've done it"—his customary comment that is my touchstone, my guide.

Chatted. Ate with Marguerite. Mammy in Paris. As I was leaving, Dupré said to me with fervent confidence, "I am very proud of you!"

My technique in the *Suite* left him extremely enthusiastic.

* By chance, he met Casals on the train and had a long chat with him, mostly about me. He was very moved when Casals embraced him "like [he would] his own kid."

Friday 30 November 1945

Played all of Liszt for Dupré. One of my strongest impressions: after the Variations [he said],

MD: "It seems to me that you are becoming, a little more, every day, an even greater artist... Continue."

412. According to BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1475–1480, Dupré played six recitals at two-day intervals: Nov. 11, St-Pierre Cathedral, Montpellier; Nov. 13, St-Nazaire Cathedral, Béziers; Nov. 15, St-Just et St-Pasteur Cathedral, Narbonne; Nov. 17, St-Jean Cathedral, Perpignan; Nov. 19, Collégiale St-Pierre, St-Gaudens; Nov. 21, Ste-Marie de Bayonne Cathedral, Bayonne.

After the *Grande Fantaisie*, the master came towards me, gave me a long kiss on the forehead, then stayed there without speaking. Then he sat down on the bench.

MD: "I was bowled over as though I were hearing it for the first time." I looked at Dupré and saw with amazement that his face was flooded with tears. I stammered,

Me: "To that extent?..." He nodded yes and wept for a moment.

MD: "You have shaken me." Then, "Please excuse me; in front of others, I [493] would restrain myself." I respected these words in silence, being so filled with emotion myself.

MD: "A child... pure! like... a flower, [yet one] who understands such powerful emotions! This brain!" I could not hold back from saying, "Master, I am trying to approach your ability." Dupré replied,

"And I bow with respect before the rising star." He led me nearer to the fire, where we sat lost in our own thoughts. Dupré said only these sublime words:

"What have I done for you? Nothing. Nothing compared to what you are."

Me: "Master..."

MD: "No, it's true. And we love you as if you were Marguerite's little sister."

Mammy returned from her errands and came to us.

MD: "You missed something."

[Mme D:] Oh, really? Isn't she cold?

[MD:] No, I made sure she warmed up. You will hear [it] at Pleyel."

Prior to this, I had worked as usual with Mammy.

As the master was a little under the weather, I insisted that he not walk me back.

Friday 7 December 1945

Long afternoon at Meudon, first with Mammy (in fact, all four members of our "family" were gathered in Marguerite's room, because that is where there was a fire lit).

Next, after eating, [I went] to the organ with Dupré, [and] I replayed four modern works for him.⁴¹³

MD: "Well, I never! You do these a great honour," speaking of Litaize, Langlais, etc. But he is holding fast to a recital of works from the contemporary school ["*Jeune École*"]. He showed me the program of each concert, prepared by Mammy, ready to send to Bénard.

This week I finished the second piece of my composition.⁴¹⁴ Played this for Dupré, who, very struck by it, asked to hear it again, and remained solemn. He remarked on its character of "elemental tumult," its "profundity and power."

413. Demessieux listed the following pieces in GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage" as played on Dec. 7, 1945: Duruflé, Prelude in E-flat minor (*Suite*, Op. 5); Langlais, "Les Rameaux" (*Trois Poèmes évangéliques*); Litaize, "Intermezzo Pastoral" (*Douze Pièces*); Alain, *Litanies*, Op. 119.

414. "Les Eaux" was first mentioned in the diary entry for Nov. 23, 1945.

Next, I showed him the theme from the movement “Consolateur” [Consolation], which I have the weakness of liking, and several [short] ideas, that he understood and found moving.

MD: “You are a great musician.” And because I was eagerly questioning him: “It’s wonderful.” As always, he lapsed into thought and shared this with me sometime later.

Suddenly: “How do you manage to write things of such profundity, with such philosophical impact, with everything else you have to do?” I thought about it, no doubt noticeably:

Me: “I don’t know.”

MD: “Ah! You have a first-class gift.”

We went up Marguerite’s rooms, where Mammy [495] found us reading and meditating upon Guerner’s splendid study of “the virtuoso.” Guerner wrote it “for us,” the master insisted. We spent more than an hour there, seeking to identify ourselves, studying ourselves, elbow to elbow, in total naturalness, and without false modesty. Mammy had set up in a corner and, with a mountain of paperwork before her, was preparing the mail. This dear woman had covered each of us with coats and shawls because of the cold. When I decided to take a break, Dupré offered some final comments:

“[The Book of] Genesis is magnificent, you know...” Me: “Yes.” He added: “That’s the [kind of] guiding idea that Guerner talks about.”

It took a lot of pleading to get him to stay where it’s warm, and it was Mammy who left her work to walk me back.

Wednesday 19 December 1945

At Meudon. The Duprés had their cousins from Rouen visiting.

Marguerite welcomed me and told me her father was feverish for no apparent reason, that he was moving slowly, and was causing them concern. Nevertheless, Dupré devoted his afternoon to me and joined me. I found him very tired. He confessed this, but was much more interested in inquiring about my health.

First, we chatted for quite some time. I asked him if he knows that a [496] newly built organ is being installed in Châtoux.⁴¹⁵ With lively interest, he said yes:

MD: “Tell me what you know; then I’ll tell you what I know.” [I’ve been] well informed by Picaud, and Dupré by Perroux. To summarize, this firm, Bandrieux, in which a wine merchant has invested 17 million [francs], will be launching a new electric motor and an organ with electronics. I mentioned Lavergne to Dupré, who said:

“I was quite astonished; Lavergne seemed very calm, very sure of himself. I had the same thought as you.”

At Pleyel, restrictions on use of electricity and a prohibition on concerts between 5:00 and 9:00 in the evening. Bénard is trying for a special dispensation. Perhaps I’ll [only be able to] begin in March [1946], with a concert every two weeks. I realize that Dupré has major concerns. MD: “Don’t worry; we’ll get there. You are keeping your composure, despite all the changes: that pleases me, my poor dear.”

He asked me to play for his cousin and his wife and called for the pleasure of hearing two [of my] Études. I

415. Perhaps Chatou, located just northwest of Paris, was meant.

asked him which two, and he chose V and VI, some passages of which I quickly played through after having played the last of the modern works for him. He asked me for [497] the copy of the “Six Études” that he, himself, wishes to give to Bornemann.

After spending two wonderful hours together, having chatted about my work, about which Dupré questioned me endlessly, I made the acquaintance of his cousins. Rather worldly. Dupré, though very polite, doesn’t like them, I could tell (especially his cousin’s wife).

I played; we had tea. I played again and improvised a symphonic first movement for which the master gave some beautiful themes. During my Études, Dupré remained standing near me, devouring the sight of my technique. And:

MD: “Tell me whether you consider this to be women’s music!” His cousins were dumbfounded and lost their composure. At the point where, despite their fumbling praise, they appeared to be turning the conversation to another subject, Dupré said coldly, “You can talk about that later; right now, listen to what I’m telling you about Jeanne Demessieux.” When Dupré keeps people under his spell for an hour and a half, it is a spectacle worth contemplating.

I improvised at my best. I’m only writing down the impression Dupré gave me when I turned around, in total [498] silence, to seek his approbation: so still, faraway, moved, that he seemed, like me, to have been transported to a foreign world when he said, “That was fantastic,” in that tone of voice that transfixes people.

His cousin Pierre,⁴¹⁶ having become extremely solemn, said:

“There is something for which we must thank you, thank you immeasurably: it’s the lofty height where you place your art.”⁴¹⁷ Young composers so deceive us. One senses they dare not depart from trends for fear of losing out on success. With you, it seems to me, it’s very audacious, yet very serious, [whereas] that music, I believe, will not last two years.” Dupré looked at me and said to me, “Yes; just like Guerner...”⁴¹⁸

When I wanted to depart, around 6:00, the master kept me there another half hour: “You aren’t in too much of a hurry?” and chatted mainly with me. The rest of the time, his cousin’s wife inundated him so, with the qualities of all kinds that she believed to have discovered in me, and with such attention towards me, that the master quipped at her with a smile that, “Men would not permit themselves what a [499] woman sometimes allows herself.”

416. This was, most probably, Pierre Lafond, son of Marcel Dupré’s uncle Joseph Lafond—the uncle that in Dupré 1975, 48, Dupré described as manager of Rouen’s daily newspaper and a friend of Massenet. Pierre Lafond lived in Rouen his entire life. The Lafond family bequeathed to Rouen’s municipal library documents related to Marcel Dupré (Fonds Marcel Dupré, Bibliothèque municipale Jacques-Villon, Br mm. 2775).

417. As this paragraph continues, it becomes clear that Pierre Lafond was addressing Demessieux, not Dupré. It was Demessieux whose music was described in the fourth sentence as “very audacious.”

418. Dupré’s response indicates that the observation Pierre Lafond had just made, on how Demessieux’s music contrasted favourably with that of many other young contemporary composers, was identical to an opinion held by his close friend Jean Guerner.

He showed “my biography” to his cousin and spoke of the work I’m writing,⁴¹⁹ saying, “She’s a first-rate theologian”; he also said that the Cardinal has struck up a friendship with me.

Finally, I left the master, who accompanied me as far as the door, helping me get ready. He appeared relaxed, but feverish.

Tuesday 25 December 1945

So that Dupré wouldn’t have to lunch at a restaurant between the morning Masses and Vespers, we invited them to share our lunch. All three of them came. Steadfast, unique friends. The master [was] very tired (he had a fainting spell when he arrived at the house). He has seen another doctor. We are convinced that he has enormous worries on my account. Mammy, to whom my parents have been speaking about him, confesses that difficulties, of all types, occur one after another, without end, despite Bénard’s willingness. But she raised everyone’s spirits, and Dupré struggled fiercely in this impasse.

Towards the end of lunch, when the master seemed less weary, with a spark of joy he unfolded a few pages: the preface for the publication [500] of my *Études*. He read it. This essay, so profound, gave me such pleasure as to make me emotional. And it was in vain that I tried to express myself. Dupré simply said to me, “It pleases you? Tell me if we are in complete agreement or whether you want me to change something. I had to silence my heart so as not to go beyond introducing the work.”

When the master left to return to St-Sulpice, seeing that I too was feverish (because I had played my services with a cold and a temperature close to 39°), he asked me to lay down as soon as he had gone, and not to play my Vespers service. “Your health is fundamental, and I would appreciate it if you listened to me. As for your Vespers, you will be taken all the more seriously when you have abandoned your gallery on Christmas Day, Jeannette!” I did as he said.

Tuesday 1 January 1946

This morning I went to St-Sulpice with Papa. Not finding Dupré between the two masses, we went out to search for him, thinking he was in a café warming up.

Scarcely were we in the square when Mammy appeared, calling us; she led us right to Dupré, who was startled by our sudden appearance. [501] His health seemed a bit better, but he was gloomy.

Pleyel, he explained to me, still doesn’t have the notorious curtain, and Bénard wrote to him that he has been obliged to further delay the recital series, though he’s doing everything possible to get the series “off the ground.” The master is still not over the first shock and thinks that I must absolutely finish my series by the end of May, because in June he is leaving for Chicago. He organized his trip so that he could be present at all my recitals. Disappointment. And he’s determined that my debut must be this year so that he can spread my name in America; he said to me, “The aim is to launch your career both as a virtuoso improviser and as a composer. I’m planning to take at least six copies of your *Études* with me to America. I want you to debut.” He’s thinking, as a last resource, of asking Delvincourt to use the organ at the Conservatory. He was

419. Given the quotation marks around “my biography” (and the lack of any other surviving biographical document), this likely refers to one or more volumes of Demessieux’s diary begun in Dec. 1940. The “work I am writing” is her set of seven organ pieces on aspects of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the diary entries for July 28, Nov. 23, and Dec. 7, 1945).

very despondent, and we had to raise his morale. Mammy didn't think things were so bleak and preferred to hope.

We stayed for the 11:00 Mass and departed together, as far as Montparnasse.

Wednesday 2 January 1946

At Meudon. Everyone chatting [together]. Dupré less gloomy. Spent an hour and a half with him. We thought that [502] we could, if absolutely necessary and as a concession to Bénard, begin in mid-March. I had brought a third completed piece from "Holy Spirit,"—"Consolateur." He had only heard the theme. Today, I played the work for him, as he listened anxiously. At measure eight, the master murmured, "That is beautiful" and, afterwards, I found him so moved and lost in his thoughts that he could scarcely talk.

MD: "Consider these three pieces done; there is not one note that needs changing! This is... it's splendid, distinctive, deliberate. You're going to play it for me again."

But first, he mused for a while, and we talked. He told me that one day he asked a Dominican for his definition of a "mystic." To this he replied that he saw the mystic as a "soldier of Christ," braving all. Dupré didn't belabour [the point]. But to me he said, "That is the 'militant,' not the mystic (how audacious of me to question my Dominican! But it's just between us)."

We talked about mystic exaltation: how it is comparable to daring (daring in relation to heroism). MD: "As for me, I am just a poor man. I could only be a realist mystic, like certain painters. For me, a mystic is [503] someone like you. The mysticism I understand is tranquil mysticism."

He told me that during a trip he had occasion to peruse St. Thomas Aquinas. MD: "I was amazed to see the number of theories based on some assumptions. I am too much a researcher, too analytic, to be content with assumptions. I mistrust those who induce themselves to believe in mysticism, like Messiaen. There are no miracles: God cannot contradict himself seeing that he is the creator. What we call a 'miracle' is what is yet unknown in nature and that mankind will discover, little by little. There is where Truth lies! And Truth is God. People want miracles, without realizing that in nature one finds them every step of the way! That's the place to search out God; it's as plain as the nose on your face: just look! Jesus was obliged to work some miracles, because he was the [incarnate] Word, and so that people would understand. For that reason, he also did scandalous things such as the pardoning of the adulterous woman, [how he treated] the merchants in the temple, and why he provoked his own condemnation."

Then we returned to the mystic, and I [504] proposed to Dupré this definition of mysticism: partaking in blessedness.

"Exactly," said Dupré. I told him that my ideas are comparable to his, inasmuch as I have the same mistrust regarding certain types of mystics, and seeing God in creation and in the most infinite mysteries. We remained deep in thought for a moment, then I hazarded,

"It is I who have had the audacity to dare to write on this subject."

The master responded straight away: "My dear, you are as pure of heart, in actions and in intentions, as one can be. You have 'the right' to speak. I would say this to no one else. I say again, I am just a poor man."

I played "Consolateur" again, with Dupré falling prey to great emotion. We talked again, Dupré speaking to me as to an inspiring friend. He, himself, said, "Only to a friend does one speak this way." He gave me [a copy of] *Offrande à la Vierge* that he had prepared in advance.

Concerning “Consolateur,” I asked one last question: “Do you think that I have treated this subject on a sufficiently elevated plane? That I am giving myself enough distance to perceive it? All the [505] pieces might be successful, still...”

And Dupré smiled: “You mean you don’t want to compose a pious, oily salve?” and suddenly serious: “Ah, no, not you! Yes, it’s sufficiently elevated, oh yes! Rest easy; come now...”

Wednesday 9 January 1946

At Meudon. During my conversation with Dupré, he told me that Lavergne arrived in Paris today, and he will go with him to the Conservatory tomorrow to study the possibility of using the theatre’s motor for the great organ, which has broken down. Dupré wants him to regulate and overhaul the pedals in case I’ll be playing there.

Dupré told me that he has learned my 5th Étude; MD: “I work on it for two hours in the morning, then I go back to it for a half-hour in the evening so that it will be in my head overnight, where it can set.”

The master let me know, with some effort, about a future project. MD: “Presently, I am thinking of making a huge decision regarding the future. We are only talking about this: nothing has been done. But it could happen that I look for a position in America.”

Me: “A position... [506] permanent?”

MD: “Yes, and one for you also. In France, one can’t even [put food on the table]... We would leave together. You would bring your parents. We’d keep Meudon, to return to occasionally...”

Me: “You would leave?”

MD: “Yes.”

Twice Dupré had asked me this question: “Would you accept a permanent post overseas, for example, that of municipal organist of a great city, requiring twelve concerts per year?” I had responded, clearly, no, and I would not have wanted to expatriate myself. This was several years ago.

At that time, Dupré had said to me, “I’ve been offered a post. Like you, I don’t wish to leave my country, so I have refused it.” He had remained deep in thought.

I sense that he is overcome with disillusionment and weariness, and ready to make an enormous sacrifice. France has blocked his sole ambition: to take the organ to its pinnacle. This is everything to him. I am also certain he dreads the thought of what life holds for Mammy—an old age filled with burdens, in the midst of such mass misery, six years of it already, and no end in sight. As far as I’m concerned, [507] Dupré and I know for certain we hold a common artistic ideal, and that my destiny is linked with his. I’m not astonished that, should he leave, he wishes to take me away from his enemies—who are my enemies, too—and to share with me the horizons he envisions.

Given my silence, during which I was thinking about the inevitable uprooting that all of us will experience, about the future of the organ, about the strength of Dupré’s attachment to me, about the misery of France, and what Providence might have in store, Dupré, too, kept silent, his mind, no doubt, following the same train of thought as mine. I judged it unnecessary to put into words my spontaneous acceptance, and he knew there was no need to question me.

We talked next about Bornemann, who is waiting for me to make an appointment to sign our contract. The master offered to telephone for me and, letting me listen in, set the meeting for tomorrow.

MD: "When you [one day] sign a contract with an impresario, you'll have to watch out that he doesn't take a percentage [of your fee] like the fifteen percent on your concerts in America. But I'll be there to protect you."

I sat at the organ and played [508] part of "Dogma," written this week. I explained my plan to Dupré, saying that I see it in three parts, like the Trinity, and that I'm again nervous about the subject without wanting to throw it out.

MD: "No, of course not! Write it, continue your idea. Throughout this work, there is a powerful philosophy, your own fine, Christian sensibility." He is struck by the opening; he says I'm on the right track.

MD: "You see the Trinity as the 'foundation' of all dogmatic thought?"

Me: "Yes, [and] as possibly the least discussed."

MD: "Of course. It's the Trinity that establishes the mysteries of the Incarnation and of Redemption." We talked about this for a long time.

Thursday 10 January 1946

Signed, today, my first contract with Bornemann, who is going to publish my *Six Études*. A charming man. He wished "good luck to our child."

Wednesday 16 January 1946

At Meudon. With Mammy, then with the master for a long while. (Don't have time to describe it.) Dupré asked me to replace him at St-Sulpice [507b] during the three months of his absence, sharing the job with Grunenwald, who, I pointed out, will be furious, but he is resolved to do it this way. I played a very much advanced version of "Dogma" for him, and he repeated over and over that it's beautiful and that my work is on a superior level.

MD: "It's the opposite of music written to impress imbeciles, that's what I think."

Wednesday 23 January 1946

Marguerite has the mumps, and when I arrived at Meudon the master told me that, to avoid contagion, I won't be seeing Mammy for three weeks. As for him, he is living in isolation on the second floor and in the music hall. Marguerite's condition is not serious.

Worked for an hour on the little organ while he gave a lesson. I finished "Dogma" yesterday evening. Big news for Dupré, who welcomes each of my works in a way I find unforgettable. I played it for him. He confirmed that I have realized my entire concept, my thinking, that the Trinity is affirmed, and that there's a sense of enormous force. I asked him if he liked the piece. MD: "Oh! Yes, I like it!"

Without asking for my opinion, he told Bénard that [we] must add [508b] four of the pieces from a work that I am currently writing to the contemporary program [of my series]. I told him that I will not be writing any more until summer, and that to compose "Paix" and "Lumière" I'll need to be in a special frame of mind.

To please me, the master played his Prelude and Fugue in G minor [Op. 7/3]; his playing still has something to teach me.

He told me that everything at Pleyel is coming along fine. We finished the evening by preparing and discussing registrations for my recitals, something we pursued, further, aboard the train. We can only draft

plans for [registering] the *Études*, and I reckon we shall have to register these at the organ because we won't know the sound proportions until the renovations are complete.

Upon arriving in Paris, not having finished our planning or conversation, we went and sat with our papers in a Montparnasse café, then took the subway together... after the time that the master should have been at the Cité Universitaire!⁴²⁰ But for him, though innately punctual, nothing outside my career counts anymore.

MD: "What I am doing?... I [509] am launching your career. Ah! This is my revenge! To do everything for you to compensate for having been so alone and unhappy when I launched my own career."

Wednesday 30 January 1946

At Meudon. Not enough time to write everything down. For Dupré, replayed [Bach's] Passacaglia, [Choral No. 2 of] Franck, and [Dupré's] Prelude and Fugue [in G minor, Op. 7/3].⁴²¹ He was extremely enthusiastic. Chatted for a long time. He walked me back.

Tuesday 5 February 1946

Doctor Beaussenat wants to see me again, and Mammy has made the appointment for me. [He was] very paternal, and the wonderful news is that he finds my health improved. I must follow the treatment for three more months. Telephoned Meudon, [where they were full of] joy. Marguerite is feeling better, too.

Wednesday 6 February 1946

With Dupré at Pleyel. First time that we've heard the organ since the work done on it. It sounds very good. Present were Bénard, Kiesgen, Guy Lambert, by chance Pierre Bernac, [and] some engineers. Dupré asked me to play first, then we took turns. Dupré: [Bach's] Prelude and Fugue in E-flat [major], the Communion chorale, his [Dupré's] *Deux Esquisses* [Op. 41]. [510] I played, as he requested, four [of my] *Études*, one of them twice, to which I added his Prelude in G minor.

Dupré surrounded me with such care and respect so that attention was focused on me. Speaking to him in private, I protested. MD: "Don't worry; leave it to me. If you knew the effect you are making, here! The way you play! They're telling me they've never seen anything like it; it's the truth! Kiesgen is hearing you for the first time; he is beside himself. He believed me, but he could never have guessed this..." Each time Dupré turned to the manuals, it was to say, "Jeannette, I'm going to play such and such a thing for you so you can listen to your organ."

The small group in the hall acknowledged me with ovations. Dupré placed himself amongst them to create

420. As described in <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cit%C3%A9_internationale_universitaire_de_Paris>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris is a complex of residence buildings for international students and visiting international researchers, professors, artists, and athletes. It is located on the southern outskirts of Paris on thirty-four hectares of parkland; see also <https://www.tripadvisor.fr/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g187147-d4918663-i302064996-Cite_Universitaire-Paris_Ile_de_France.html>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022.

421. Demessieux listed details of the three works as the last dated entry in her notebook GVT, "Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage."

the desired ambiance, going so far as, without affectation, to warm my hands in his. They discussed the placement of the console, its sole aim being to show off my technique. I chose the stage background and the footlights for the ramp. Finally, when I was finishing an *Étude*, I saw the master [511] approaching the console, beaming, and saying, in a way impossible to describe, “This round is won, my Jeannette! It’s beautiful, you know... I am happy!”

I warmly congratulated Bénard for having had the energy to do so much, and thanked him. We departed to the merriment of “down with Chaillot” and cries of victory to the Pleyel organ. Bénard accompanied us as far as the street.

When Dupré and I were alone again, the master stopped: “If I wasn’t afraid of giving you Marguerite’s bug, I would ask you for permission to embrace you for having played as you did, for having understood the organ from the first moment, with such incomparable mastery!” The master’s voice trembled at bit.

We climbed as far as Place de l’Étoile⁴²² where, faced with a rush of people, we took a bus as far as Montparnasse. From there, Dupré accompanied me to my subway station, Edgard Quinet.⁴²³ Moving and unforgettable memories.

MD: “Two fantastic days: yesterday, good news from Beaussenat, today, the vision of you on stage.” And when I asked him what I should [512] say to my parents:

MD: “Tell them... that I am happy.”

Monday 11 February 1946

The event Dupré had anticipated for so long: my debut recital—the recital to introduce me, prior to my series at the Salle Pleyel. Full house. Impossible to put into words. The self-possession of this titan of a man is comparable only to the greats.

[My program:] Bach, Prelude and Fugue in E-flat [major]; Bach, “Jesus Christus, unser Heiland”,⁴²⁴ Handel, Concerto No. 2; Mozart’s two Fantasias; Franck, *Prière*; Widor, Finale from the *Symphonie-Gothique*; Dupré, *Deux Esquisses* (première); improvisation on a theme by Duruflé.

A triumph. Five encores.

Saw Mammy and Marguerite beforehand. During the intermission, Mammy came over to us. [At the end,] I was mobbed by old friends. Guerner and Gavoty were among us. The *Esquisses* left an enormous impression. Guerner, very impressed. Everyone was squeezed into the foyer. The master was tired. He embraced me and

422. Within close walking distance of the Salle Pleyel, Place de l’Étoile, described in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Place_Charles_de_Gaulle#Description>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, is a Paris square at the conjunction of twelve avenues intersecting each other in a star shape. At its centre is the Arc de Triomphe. Vehicles approaching l’Étoile circle the Arc de Triomphe as many as ten abreast, and pedestrians take an underground passage to visit the Arch. The square has since been renamed Place Charles-de-Gaulle but is most often referred to now as Place Charles-de-Gaulle-Étoile.

423. Edgard Quinet subway station is a short walk from the Montparnasse subway station (where Dupré would get his train for Meudon) and is on the subway line that conveyed Demessieux home to the Daumesnil subway station.

424. Of Bach’s four chorale preludes with this title, the one performed by Demessieux may have been BWV 665 from the set known as the “Eighteen,” or BWV 688 from Pt. 3 of the *Klavierübung*. BWV 666 and 689 of this title are for manual only.

kept me near him for a while. MD: “Satisfied?...” He introduced me to some important people. They [the Duprés] were driven home in an automobile.

Wednesday 13 February 1946

Rehearsal at Pleyel. Dupré devoted all his time to me. Mammy was there, too.

[513] Thursday 14 February 1946

Dupré came over [to our home] to work with me on, and finalize, registrations for [my] Pleyel [series], my *Études* having required some experimentation. Worked together for two-and-a-half hours. Dupré’s devotion was awe-inspiring, [such] intimacy, affection, and trust.

He leaves tomorrow to perform his Symphony in G minor in Lyon.⁴²⁵

Monday 18 February 1946

Rehearsed at Pleyel; [I was] alone [since] Dupré went home early and telephoned this evening. The Symphony in G minor was a triumph.

Wednesday 20 February 1946

Rehearsed at Pleyel; the master [was] with me. [As well:] Mammy, Bénard, Lambert, Gavoty—who is preparing his [review-]article—a photographer,⁴²⁶ a Dupré student, curious [onlookers].

425. According to a printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1485, on Sunday. Feb. 17, 1946, Dupré was featured in a subscription concert of the Lyon Philharmonic Association in Salle Rameau. In addition to his Symphony in G minor for organ and orchestra, Op. 25, he performed his unpublished transcription of Liszt’s piano piece *Saint-François de Paule marchant sur les Flots* for organ and orchestra.

426. Photos were taken for publicity purposes. Feb. 20, 1946 is likely the date of an oft-reproduced photograph (a copy of which is preserved in AM 4S20), showing Demessieux seated at the Salle Pleyel organ console. The photographer’s imprint in the lower left-hand corner is “rosardy, 122 rue la boétie, paris.” The date penciled on the reverse of this copy, “vers 1940,” seems to indicate only the decade of the photo.



Jeanne Demessieux at the Salle Pleyel organ in 1946. Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

Scarcely having arrived, the master took me aside:

MD: "I must apologize to you." I remonstrated in vain. Dupré was aware of Lambert's unpleasant attitude towards me, and said, "I am going to bring Bénard up-to-date and, in your presence, get things back on track." He questioned Lambert, asking whether the pedalboard had been regulated as he wished. Lambert, feeling awkward, said that it is difficult to accommodate my wishes as well as Dupré's. I interjected by repeating that [514] my standard is that of my teacher: adjustment 2 ½ mm., recessed 15 mm. Dupré then said to Lambert words that brought tear to my eyes:

"In the first place, please, for your information, take the following into account: between Jeanne Demessieux and I, there is not, nor will there ever be, any divergence of opinion!... It's strange how people put words in my mouth!" The effect on everyone was enormous.

Dupré then came towards me: "Tomorrow, we practice here. I'll stay with you all day."

He had a long conversation with Bénard, whose attitude towards me is very fatherly. I practiced and improvised for Gavoty. Many photos were taken.

Whenever the master was asked to pose, he only consented on the condition that we be together at the console.⁴²⁷ Left together, late.

Thursday 21 February 1946

Long afternoon at Pleyel. Dupré enthusiastic. He wrote some symphony themes for me, to which he added a half-touching, half-comic dedication. Very beautiful themes. When I had [515] finished the improvisation, he was very emotional because during those thirty minutes I was at my highest level. The themes were magnificent. The master wanted me to rest for half an hour, during which I listened in the hall as he played Bach, Franck, and his own compositions for me with the agreed-upon registrations. We departed, serious-minded and confident.

427. No photographs showing Demessieux and Dupré together are extant.

Tuesday 26 February 1946

Yesterday, my first Salle Pleyel recital.⁴²⁸ I played and improvised marvellously. I can feel it. An unforgettable day. From the very first notes, a feeling that the audience was won over and was “carrying” me. The crowd: Bénard estimated that the hall was three-quarters full—unheard of for a first recital. I was acclaimed, the crowd unanimous. I had to repeat my 5th *Étude*, but declined to play the 6th again. Three encores in the end. Ovations. People on their feet. Non-stop shouting [for encores]. After endless curtain calls, they had to close the curtain. Still, the audience refused to leave, but redoubled its ovation. “Do you hear them? They are calling for you; you have to go back out,” Dupré said to me and he, himself, parted the curtain. I bowed to thunderous applause.⁴²⁹

[I experienced] absolute calm [516]; solemnity. No real stage fright.

I’ll start again, from the very beginning. All day I followed a rest schedule imposed by Mammy: “just like your master” on a recital day. But in the afternoon, Dupré, according to his plan, stormed in at Pleyel, where the pedalboard and certain contacts were supposed to be regulated. He left Meudon at 2:30, “able to take it no longer,” and supervised the smallest details.

We were to meet in the hall at 8:30 [PM]. I arrived alone and was astonished to see people there already. When they started to surround me, Mammy and Marguerite came over at once and took me to Dupré, who cut short his conversation, took my arm, and led me away. (He and Mammy had insisted that I tell them what I desire: I replied, “to see my teacher and no one else before playing.” It was decided that he would not leave me.) He took me to my dressing room, which was heated and delightfully prepared. He also wanted me



Publicity photo, Paris 1946.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20,
Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

428. Distinct from her debut recital on Feb. 11, 1946, this was the first of a series of recitals encompassing the history of organ music from Bach onward. To signal the historical scope of the series, it was presented under the title “Douze Récitals historiques d’orgue.” (My copies of the printed programs are courtesy of Pierre Labric.) Demessieux’s planned twelve programs (six would be presented in 1946), as well as illustrating, chronologically, the development of organ music from Bach to the present, were intended to demonstrate that, despite being only 25 years old, she had at her command every organ masterwork and was, herself, a composer, one whose style built upon and continued the evolution of music for the organ beyond Dupré. The program for the first in Demessieux’s series itself summarized the essential pillars of the history of organ music as she and Dupré understood it. On the first part of the program was one major work by each of three “greats”—J. S. Bach (Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582), César Franck (*Choral* No. 2 in B minor), and Marcel Dupré (Prelude and Fugue in G minor, Op. 7/3)—finally crowned by the première of her own *Six Études* (complete). After the intermission, she would perform music that had yet to be created: a four-movement-long organ symphony, based on themes given to her at the last moment. The message here was that improvisation springs from a practice as pertinent to the history of organ music as any composed work.

429. A short, praise-filled review by Gavoty, above his nom-de-plume Clarendon, appeared two days later in *Le Figaro* (Feb. 27, 1946): 2, and his full review two days after that in *Images Musicales*, no. 19 (Mar. 1, 1946): 16.

to try the pedalboard and stayed with me every step of the way. Two minutes later, we returned [to the dressing room]. Dupré, as calm and solemn as I:

MD: [517] "Consider yourself at home. I am here to do your bidding, and to deal with people; so, pretend you're alone."

I begged the master to sit beside me, and we chatted intermittently.

MD: "Are you all right?"

Me: "Yes."

MD: "You are going to become familiar with this intoxication that one experiences when playing in public... It strikes me that you were made for doing this."

Me: "I think so." There were several knocks on the door; Dupré responded.

Then Kiesgen came to let me know that it was time to go on, and the master escorted me to the stage. While I entered, he quickly went around [to the other side] and sat between two curtains to the right of the stage, just steps away from the console positioned in the manner of a concert piano. A chair had been placed there for him because he had finally managed to get me to tell him what I really desired: to see him, as close to me as possible, during the recital. He, in this way, attached great importance to anything that might allow me to optimize my strength.

Right from the Passacaglia, I was climbing to my highest plane and then maintained it with the greatest authority [518] of which I'm capable. I could feel the audience all aquiver. I thought of the electric exchange of which Dupré once spoke to me, and I abandoned myself completely to this sort of idolatry that was flowing my way. After the 1st Étude, I sensed that the audience was hooked, on the edge of their seats, and with me to the end. [Also] for the 2nd and the 4th, whose impalpable tenderness I doubted would be understood. My unity with the audience was magnificent; the temperature continued to rise. At every moment, Dupré's face mirrored my every feeling. With one gesture, he conveyed to me the supreme emotion that held him in its grip.

When I left the stage for the intermission, I found him there on stage left, and he made me go back out over and over again. When I returned, he silently pulled me close to him while the hall absolutely roared [with cheers]; a few seconds later, he sent me out again, "Go!"

Finally, the curtain was closed, backstage seemed to wake up again, and I heard lots of exclamations; MD: "Leave her be!... Come with me." Dupré led me away, and we found ourselves back in my dressing room, face to face. This was the moment [519] for which we had waited, for which we had been preparing for nearly five years. The master opened his arms to me with his usual tenderness and the respect that is always present. "My Jeannette, what a success!... This is the most wonderful day of your life, my angel!..." After a moment of great emotion, Dupré gave orders that I was not to be disturbed; then he left to go mingle with the audience in the hall, closing the door of the green room behind him. I can't put into words the feeling of absolute joy that filled me.

When Dupré returned, he found me preparing my mind and heart for improvisation. In a few words, he told me that the audience is in the "frenzied" state that he foresaw. A moment later, he led me to the stage and took up his place again. On the platform, I was handed a sealed envelope containing six themes by Jean Gallon. I was in very good form. I imagined an orchestra; the timbres came to me spontaneously, and the entire organ yielded to my every wish. A cyclic symphony, concluding with a fugal finale. I was pleased with the first-movement development section, which turned out as I imagined. I found in the Adagio and

especially [520] in its conclusion, the most beautiful touches I could have wished for. The Scherzo was orchestral, fantasy-like, and dramatic. The Finale, immense. The Symphony lasted for at least half an hour. I had forgotten the audience and submitted only to the obsessive heights of inspiration. Between movements, my eyes connected with Dupré's, which were full of emotion; each time, his face lifted my inspiration even higher.

Here, I return to where I began these pages, where I said the audience burst into applause. Two splendid baskets of flowers were placed on the stage. Dupré returned to the left side of the stage and directed my curtain calls again, and my encores. I played the Gavotte from Handel's 11th Concerto, [Bach's] Fugue in D major, and Dupré's "Carillon."⁴³⁰ In my best form for all of them. [Meanwhile,] Kiesgen, Guy Lambert, and others had assembled around Dupré. As I returned from playing the Fugue in D, Dupré gave me a subtle signal and looked at the impresario:

MD: "Well, Kiesgen, did I speak the truth to you?"

K: "Oh! Yes."

MD: "Did I exaggerate?"

K: "No."

MD: "She is of international class, don't you think?"

K: "Ah! Yes, and how!"

Between two encores, Dupré whispered to me, "Did you notice that Kiesgen had tears in his eyes after the Fugue in D?" [521] Indeed, I had been struck by this. Finally, when the audience understood the curtain had been closed [for good], they bolted (no other way to say it) towards the foyer. The master quickly drew me towards my dressing room because he wanted me to get there before the onrush.

But one person, whom I did not recognize, caught me; the master saved me: "Jeanne, Madame Le Boucher..." I hadn't seen her for thirteen years.⁴³¹ Her voice made me tremble, and for a moment all I could think of was "my Eurydice."⁴³²

[Mme LB:] "This baby that I knew, I meet again as a grand and acclaimed Parisian artist!"

She looked at me at length, silent; [then said,] "I told your parents that you must not be so modest with such exceptional talent," and she dashed away.

Afterwards, not having had time to pull myself together after the huge effort I had expended, I felt as if I were suffocating. Literally, a mob surrounded me. The [organ-]class students, enthusiastic. One after another, strangers were introducing themselves, saying they knew Dupré through such and such. Our mutual friends, not to be forgotten, for whom I waited: Guerner with an extraordinary expression on his

430. From *Sept Pièces*, Op. 27/4.

431. The spouse of Maurice Le Boucher. The Le Bouchers appeared now to be settled in Paris (see the diary entry for Nov. 7, 1945).

432. Reference to an incident from Demessieux's childhood (described in Trieu-Colleney 1977, 13-14 and in the diary entry of Sept. 5, 1942), with which M^{me} Le Boucher must have been familiar. At the age of 3, after returning home with her parents from a performance of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*, Demessieux prevailed upon her father to lay on the floor as, on one knee, she sang from memory the opera's most famous aria, "J'ai perdu mon Eurydice" ("I've lost my Eurydice").

face and as shy as ever: [522] “I knew it in advance; your mind can be at ease. Sleep well tonight!” Berveiller and his wife, both so moved that he was speechless, and yet respectfully, and without ostentation, kissed my hand. Monet shook my hand while tripping over his words, and returned repeatedly to introduce me to his friends. The Bourdons [were there], serene, as always, and nearly silent. The Grumbachs [were there], [and] he was moved to tears. The Laurents, floored. Bornemann, too, and his wife. All our personal friends were there, even those of humble means.⁴³³ My students, Mireille, Daniel, and their parents. The good M^{me} Galanti, whom I know from Magda’s.⁴³⁴ Bernard Flavigny, the little king, in tears: “Jeanne, that’s it. I shall never open my piano again!... out the window!... I’ve understood—oh, yes, I have understood.” Nevertheless (Dupré told me in an aside), he [Bernard Flavigny] had just played for him, in splendid fashion, Opus 106.⁴³⁵ The Meuniers are unfathomable. And then there were my colleagues. Rolande Falcinelli and her mother, whom I thanked for having come. Rolande, very pale, asked a question in a halting voice: “Have the *Études* been published? By whom?” The look on their faces paralyzed me, until I embraced Rolande to bring an end to the awkwardness. Litaize and Langlais together; “Our colleague [523] Grunenwald attended the concert, but he had to leave without acknowledging you; he apologizes.” They gave me the impression of supporting each other: “Very beautiful.” “Yes, truly very beautiful.” Duruflé, excessively loyal: “Magnificent, marvellous. I believe the rest of us are far, far behind you.” His tone was sincere, and I protested in vain. The rumour I heard was that he had said to Dupré, “Compared to Jeanne Demessieux, we all play the pedals like elephants.” Boulnois, very pleasant. Jehan Alain’s wife, who congratulated me “as her husband would have.”

“Father Jean [Gallon],” at long last, glowing, accompanied by his daughter, Janine. He held me long in his arms. It is by chance no doubt that, of my teachers, I had the singular and dear presence of both Marcel Dupré and Jean Gallon at my first recital. I waited a long time for this delight.

Finally, Mammy was able to reach me, then Marguerite (beside herself), Maman in tears, Papa a moment later, radiant and, last of all, begging that she be allowed to pass, unable to hold on any longer, Yolande, up from Aigues-Mortes expressly. I was falling prey to a sort of [524] hallucination. Dupré, two steps away from me, took my arm several times, as if—I understood—evoking some pretext; in reality, I was catching my breath when I turned my back on the crowd. Several Americans greeted me: the colonel... the one we met at Meudon, asked Dupré for permission to photograph me. Delighted, the master led me onto the stage, in half-light, the view from which allowed me to regain my equilibrium. My dear master, as happy as he can possibly be. MD: “The hall that has seen your first success!...” A moment later, the colonel caught up with us, and I insisted authoritatively that my teacher must be in the photo. Marguerite placed flowers.

It was midnight when we left the hall. Gathered together in the foyer, our privacy was restored. After an observation by Maman, Dupré, very solemn: “This day has proven that we are in the presence of a phenomenon like the young Bach or Mozart.” His sense of gravity persisted.

We left together; the Duprés, having missed the last train, overnighted near Montparnasse.

433. The locution “of humble means” [*les humbles*] is used here to refer to friends of Demessieux and her family who did not move in such high circles as those whom she specifically named in this paragraph. The literal meaning of *les humbles* is “those of a lower social class.” (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this explanation.)

434. Magda Tagliaferro, whose piano class Demessieux participated in during the 1937–1938 academic year. It has been impossible to identify M^{me} Galanti.

435. Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat major, Op. 106, the “Hammerklavier.”

[524b] Tuesday 26 February 1946 [continued]

After having slept for three hours last night and meditated (!), I decided to go to the Conservatory, where Dupré was giving his morning class. I waited until the end of class to avoid [a display of] too much emotion. Dupré was leaving the room with a student; he was astonished to see me, came over, removed his big hat, and embraced me with genuine emotion, while repeating, "How nice; how very nice!"

He asked me to accompany him to Montparnasse. MD: "We didn't sleep last night." On the way, I said to him, "Master, I've come to you the day following my first recital to say thank you. I wanted to make a point of it."

MD: "What you're telling me does not surprise me about you. So, you have come to thank me? Then, my response is, 'Thank you: it is I who thank you, because you have avenged me!' And you understand the full meaning of that word."

Me: "Yes, Master."

MD: "I told you that you would avenge me. As of yesterday evening, it is a *fait accompli*."

Me: "It makes me proud, Master." The master took my arm and, after a moment,

MD: "The repercussions of [525] yesterday's recital are equivalent to the first Paris recitals of Menuhin, Gieseking, or Horowitz." I asked him:

"So, you are satisfied, Master?"

MD: "Ah!... this is everything I could ask for." And we continued to talk, rather joyfully.

In the subway, Dupré leaned towards the advertisements, "to see whether the dear little name was there." I paused for a moment, then continued:

"Master, there's a second thing that I've come to say."

MD: "Go on."

Me: "Following my first... success, it's important to me that you know this: in my art, I will remain faithful to you; you may count on me! I swear to you." I knew the import these words carried just as I was taking off with my own wings and, for my own sake, I knew, at this instant, the revenge I was taking upon those "enemies" who had harassed me and would do even worse. An indescribable expression came over Dupré's face: "I know, oh! I know." As we were walking, he stopped:

"Marguerite said to me this morning, 'Jeanne Demessieux will be faithful to you.' I have never doubted this. I know you. You know it, too; I shall be your support and [526] your defence against your enemies." If our fondness of and our confidence in each other could possibly be strengthened, it was after this mutual profession of faith.

We talked about Rolande [Falcinelli], whose attitude yesterday was striking to both of us; of Grunenwald, recalling that he didn't appear in the foyer.

MD: "Fancy that! He didn't have the courage to make an appearance? Ah! Well, good for him." We chuckled over Jean-Jacques [Grunenwald]'s touchiness. We talked about Yolande and my parents, so happy, crying endlessly.

At Montparnasse, where we had to wait twenty minutes for the train, we sat down in the station's refreshment room. The conversation centred around my colleagues, Dupré's students. I remarked that the

Dufourcq party seemed to have made [all] their lives impossible. Dupré thought about this, then shrugged his shoulders:

MD: "In any case, yesterday 'they' got what was coming to them. And they know very well that, with you, there's nothing that can be done about the situation. We both have the strong feeling that our intellectual union is absolute."

I accompanied the master as far as the platform, where we chatted until the train rumbled in. He embraced me and repeated, "I am so proud of you!"

[527] Thursday 7 March 1946

Since the concert, [I've] been in telephone communication with Meudon every day. Mammy came over the day before yesterday and found me feeling quite well. But, today, a fever; this evening 38.4°.

I rehearsed for two hours at Pleyel; a splendid rehearsal; [I was] in top form. [Also present were] Dupré and Mammy, their friends, [some] favoured students. They were shaken when I told them that I had a fever. The master scolded me for having dared to come, and questioned me frantically, wanting to know where I felt ill. After the [Bach's] Fantasia in G minor, I began to shiver so much that Dupré took his scarf and wrapped it around me. Mammy rushed up and fussed just as much. I was able to continue. The master was sometimes in the hall, sometimes at the console, watching out for the slightest movement. Reassured by my playing, he kept repeating, "That's beautiful, my Jeannette." In a low voice, he pointed out, "If we could time someone's playing, we would realize how mathematically precise her articulations and rhythms are."

We split the program in half, [and] I took my break near them, then continued. I played my encores, and Dupré asked me to improvise on Bach's name. He was happy with me, and he could not have imagined how [528] weak a state I was in if he didn't know. To my embarrassment, he said to the few people present:

"This child is a little freak of nature, like Mozart." I put a pleading and comical expression on my face, and Dupré turned towards me:

"I wouldn't presume to say that you are Mozart; but it's certain that you belong to that category of rare exceptions on our planet." Several times I found him looking at me and nodding his head, while murmuring, "Great artist!..."

I had an on-site interview scheduled for five PM with some envoys from the Ministry of Information. Our friends departed, leaving just us three. Dupré looked at Mammy and decided: "We are staying with her." Mme D: "As you wish."

I knew that they should have been on their way by about 4:30 to arrive at the time they were expected; but I protested in vain. I needed to go to Kiesgen's with some information he had requested, when Mammy said [to Dupré], "And if you were to go? It's so far; save her having to do this," and Dupré jumped up. [I] chatted briefly with Bénard.

The interview, with Mammy present as I had requested, and the master too when he returned. Kiesgen came to greet me.

Then, [the three of us were] alone at last! "We shall [529] accompany her as far as her subway station," Dupré again decided. Each took one of my arms, then, after many words of advice, watched me as I set out towards Place de l'Étoile. They went to visit friends in the neighborhood.

Sunday 24 March 1946

I was not able to play my second recital on March 11. Such a sacrifice!

After suffering for three days while the doctor couldn't make a diagnosis, on Monday the 11th I broke out in horrible measles such as my doctor "had never seen." Having not had, to that point, any other symptoms but a fever, I was determined to play anyway.

Dupré, who had been informed on Sunday [March 10], came in the afternoon with Mammy. [I was] confined to my bed with a fever of 39°. I'll skip mention of my state of mind. I was told that Mammy had arrived, and she came straight to my room and gently told me that all would be taken care of. I contained myself and, as soon as I was alone, unaware of the master's presence [in the house], I let my tears flow. Maman asked me if I could receive a second visitor. I understood [whom she meant] and said yes. Dupré came in alone, and we remained for a long time without speaking. I thanked him for coming. MD: "I knew [530] it would please you." He told me that he was going to suggest to Bénard that he give a recital in my place by making an announcement from the stage, and he begged me not to worry.

They spent the whole afternoon chatting with my parents, waiting for the doctor—a second doctor, who understood no more [than the first] and wanted to get me back on my feet within twenty-four hours to play at Pleyel. Dupré took him aside, then returned alone and gently dashed this mad hope, which he opposed.

Around 8:00 PM [March 10], Mammy came in to speak with me for a few minutes, after which the master, in turn, spent a moment beside me, explaining to me that my series was going to be delayed, [then] condensed in time, with the last concert at the start of June. I asked him if he could attend the last few.⁴³⁶ He said yes, chatted some more, then left me. MD: "You are calmer. I did well to come and visit, didn't I? Take heart."

Since then, I have had some dreadful days.

Dupré played for an audience just as large as at the other recital. Papa was there.⁴³⁷

Learning that I was having one fainting spell after another, the Beaussenats urgently ordered some injections for me. [That] night, [531] our doctor had to be summoned.

In the morning, Mammy came over bringing very sad news. That evening, at 10:30, she returned: the master is in a state [of worry about me] that, to hear her tell it, "is even worse than mine." And I had been

436. Due to the succession of delays caused by restrictions on electricity and Demessieux's getting the measles, the beginning and continuation of her series of recitals had repeatedly been postponed. Meanwhile, since the end of the war, Dupré and his wife had been planning his first post-war engagements in North America and were scheduled to depart together in early June 1946. This left time for six of Demessieux's twelve original recitals to occur in 1946. As it turned out, these first six were now designed to complete a more compact survey of the canon of organ music from Bach to the present. Public performance of the omitted works, enough for six more recitals, was projected to follow the Duprés' return to Paris near the end of 1946.

437. From Dupré's handwritten record of his program at Pleyel on Mar. 11, 1946, preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1486: Bach, Prelude and Fugue in A minor; Handel, 10th Concerto; Franck, *Pièce symphonique*, Widor, Variations from Symphony No. 5; Dupré, Prelude and Fugue in B major. Improvisation on a theme by Boulnois. Encore: Clérambault [no title given]; Schumann, Canon.

unaware of any of this. Nevertheless, he could be told that I was breathing better, and she took home this balm.

The next day, she returned; [my temperature] still above 40°; she told my parents that when she had gotten home yesterday evening, Dupré was in terrible shape and, at the news that [my situation] was improved, he had [cried] “like a baby.” Mammy returned twice a day and still comes nearly every day. [She is the] messenger at both ends.

I might rehearse on Thursday.

Thursday 28 March 1946

Rehearsal at Pleyel. Good health. A slight fever and bewildered by the subway. Papa with me.

Going up to the foyer, we found, right there in the stairway, the master, Mammy, and one of our students impatiently waiting. They descended towards me and joyfully embraced me. Dupré was visibly trying to contain his emotions, which we all noticed. A moment later, he confided in me [532] that he had spent some “frightful” days, especially Sunday and Tuesday, knowing as well “just how miserable” I was. He played [the recital on Monday, March 11] “modestly” to save my audience [for me], and asked me if this thought had comforted me a little. He added that he would have come every day had he been able.

Today, he played at the Madeleine at 5:30 PM;⁴³⁸ he left us at Pleyel only as 5:00 approached, holding firmly to devoting his time to me, even right before he was to play. I was not able to rehearse everything while he was there, but after the two Fantasias and Fugues, it was with one voice that we shared our excitement that I had mastered them completely. MD: “It’s more beautiful than ever.”

Saw Lavergne, [who] had come to take Dupré to Pleyel, [and] “to say hello to me.”

We parted affectionately.

Excellent rehearsal. A little tired afterwards. Bénard came to see me on the stage.

Monday 1 April 1946

My second Pleyel recital: Fantasias and Toccatas of Bach.⁴³⁹ As great a success as the first recital. From the moment I stepped out onto the stage, it was clear that the audience wanted to celebrate me. Intoxicating atmosphere. My playing

[signed] Jeanne Demessieux

438. The concert program is preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1487. Along with the titular organist of the Madeleine and choirs from Nevers Cathedral, Dupré participated in a “spiritual concert . . . in aid of the restoration of Nevers Cathedral” and especially “the organs destroyed by the aerial bombardment of July 16, 1944.”

439. From the printed program (courtesy of Pierre Labric): Fantasy and Fugue in C minor; Fantasy and Fugue in G minor; Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C [major]; Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Dorian); Toccata and Fugue in F [major]; Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

[533] [was] in top form. Huge acclamation, particularly for the G minor. After the Toccata in F [major], applause that I tried in vain to stop with a gesture, not wanting to acknowledge applause in the middle of a work. I stopped it abruptly by beginning the Fugue. Gave my all to every work. What a joy to let loose in the Toccata in F [major] and the D minor. Illusions of an organ with orchestra. Enormous success. Ovations just like the first recital. Cries for “an Étude!” From others, “an improvisation!”

I saw someone waving a piece of paper; it was Monet, seated in the front row, whom the master had secretly tasked with proposing B-A-C-H [for an improvisation]. I took it and, in a flash, total silence fell. The fourth time I have improvised on this theme. I fashioned a double fugue in which I introduced the subject in inversion, with a new rhythm and in the relative [key]. Both subjects in stretto; then the two stretti combined; the countersubject in stretto, etc. Different from what I had done before. In extremely good form. Dupré, in the wings, was beside himself with excitement: “How beautiful! How very beautiful!” and he clasped me in his arms. The clamour from the audience was [534] unceasing, and I gave them the finale from Handel’s first concerto, after which the master, finding me feverish, asked me not to play anymore.

A moment later, the curtain was drawn, and the audience was all abuzz heading in the direction of the foyer. M^r Le Boucher was among the first. I noticed a certain reserve on the part of the master, who, nevertheless, made an effort to embrace him [Le Boucher]. The foyer filled up quickly, elbow-to-elbow, just like at Dupré’s recitals. I shall not mention everyone I saw, except a sincerely enthusiastic Pendleton. Marguerite, very moved: “Dearest Jeanne, how wonderful you were!...” Mammy: “My dear, there can be nothing more beautiful to be heard,” and when I shrugged it off, she repeated it. Dupré, always at my side, chatted with his friends, sometimes drawing me into their group, aware of my every move. Since my first recital, he has been extraordinarily rejuvenated. Happiness and serenity shone on his face. When the rush subsided, I saw someone take him aside. A moment later, the master joined me in my dressing room. MD: “That was my friend. Do you know what he said to me? That you were brilliant. I [535] responded, ‘You are clever—[and] you are correct.’” Such a serious tone nearly made me tremble. We left all together. In the lobby, some people were waiting to see me pass. Joy. Marguerite, delighted: “My father is pleased, I can see it; oh! I just know it.” We parted affectionately. I must see the master on Wednesday.

Wednesday 3 April 1946

Went to catch up with Dupré at his class. Not enough time to jot everything down. [I was] received like a “queen”; a great, and mutual, pleasure. [We went] together to Montparnasse. Began to refine some new projects. Dupré wants to ask Kiesgen to arrange a tour for me in the south of France. Chatted for a long time. Parted ways with the master at his train.

Wednesday 10 April 1946

Rehearsal at Pleyel at 5:30 PM. At that same time, I was to be interviewed for the radio (recorded

interview). My *Étude* in thirds was also recorded. Loyal as always, Dupré attended the rehearsal even before taking his train to Metz (he had decided to go from Pleyel straight to the station).⁴⁴¹ [536] (The following amusing incident is noteworthy: Dupré arrived on the stage, which was swarming with stage hands, while I was in the centre of the hall with the [radio] announcers. He searched [for me], then called out, "Good day, great artist!" at the top of his voice, which made me jump up and exclaim, "Oh! Master!" and rush over [to him] at the most important moment of the recording, much to the chagrin of my interviewers.)

Mammy arrived later. My *Étude*, played before a small group including Bénard, again elicited a huge response; MD: "and it's beautiful music." After the Allegro of [Mendelssohn's] 3rd Sonata, MD: "That leaves me dumbfounded."

Very good rehearsal. At 8:00, we left Pleyel together. MD: "One of the things people like about you is your disdain for success."

Tuesday 16 April 1946

Yesterday, third recital at Pleyel. All of Mendelssohn; all played very well.⁴⁴² A big success. Definitely [continued the] good beginning [to my series].

I declined to play any encores, and the curtain was quickly drawn, this because of the evening to follow. (They wouldn't want me [instead] to shorten the program? Lambert's idea, no doubt.* Dupré intervened sternly, and this evening he explained himself to Bénard, who apologized.)

* I received this notice two days ago.

[537] Always so many people in the foyer. The notion of performing *all* of Mendelssohn went over well. Guerner and Monet both shook my hand.

Guerner: "I told this young lady a long time ago that she would make people jealous"; to me: "I warned you that they would do everything to make you lose confidence... They are not to be listened to! Now don't you forget what I'm telling you."

"They" seem to have once again been dealt quite a blow.

Dupré remained on the stage during the performance, despite my having encouraged him, since the first concert, to return to his seat in the hall. Also, before I began to play:

MD: "Tell me what you wish me to do."

Me: "As you wish, Master."

MD: "Ah... that means you would prefer that I stay. As, too, would I; you might need me."

441. According to the printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2802, boîte 6, 1493, Dupré performed in Metz on the evening of April 11 for the benefit of the French Red Cross and the post-war rebuilding of France.

442. The recital featured Mendelssohn's three Preludes and Fugues and his six Sonatas for organ (printed program courtesy of Pierre Labric).

Could he have discovered a hole in the curtain through which to read the faces of all the listeners?... He kept his friend Pierre Bourdon close by.

After the concert, our merry band went up to l'Étoile, as is customary. We entered the subway [station] and, when turning down a corridor, came face to face with Le Boucher. And here, in the [538] most... genuine terms (after an exchange of greetings):

MD: "Well, could you believe how beautiful it was! Recitals of such breadth and calibre..."

Le Boucher: "Yes, yes... I have some reservations." (To me:) "You should come see me, and the two of us will discuss it."

A thunderbolt would not have had a greater effect on us. (Quick as a flash, I thought to search my memory for these so-called "reservations"... without success). But Dupré, jumped up, suddenly icy:

"Let me to tell you something. Whatever reservations you might have, you can take elsewhere! 'Reservations' about an artist of this ilk! No, you really don't give a d- about anyone! [*tu te f... du monde!*]... Shut your trap!" [All this spoken] with a contemptuous smirk and such a vehement tone that I stood rooted to the spot, speechless.

Dupré took my arm and led me away. The scene was witnessed by the Le Boucher family; they had passed us by without stopping. When it was just the six of us again, Marguerite burst out laughing: "His jaw dropped all the way to the ground! Take that!" And there was consensus among us.

MD: "I've known that was coming for a long time. You see? That is how we handle it. To say that about you! In front of me! Ah! Let them try, [539] and they'll see!" And he added: "When I'm not there, will you know how to defend yourself?... They're so furious, you know..."

Maman exclaimed, "And here I was, wanting to make my daughter a woman of the world!"

MD: "Dear friend, as a woman of the world, here is the word to teach her:" Wild laughter.

Mammy, her eyes twinkling, referred again to the scene [with Le Boucher, saying], "Anyway, for once you have said exactly what you think to one of your enemies." I won't add the rest of what was said in the throes of our merry madness. In the subway car, Mammy said to the master:

"Go ahead and sit beside her," and the dear master, taking my hands in his, became serious again.

MD: "What just happened is providential: you will never be obliged to play his works; your mind is made up." I thanked him for having such a resolutely supportive attitude towards me.

MD: "Everyone must see that behind you, there am I."

"But what is the matter with him?" I wondered.

MD: "It's simple: he is jealous of you. Oh, yes... At your age, I too saw that the old could be jealous of the [540] young. I am jealous of no one, as you know. Later, I knew the jealousy of colleagues, and now, as you are well aware, I know the jealousy of the young. It doesn't bother me. You'll see!... Do not hesitate to cut to the chase. You must defend yourself as a man would."

Today, Tuesday, I had a morning appointment with the photographer at St-Sulpice. It was the master and Mammy who wanted me to have complete documentation for America, and arranged this latest extravagance for me. It took over an hour. Despite how busy he is, the master was there giving his advice. When I took my place at the console, his face lit up: "It pleases me so much to see you here."

Saturday 20 April 1946

At Meudon. Worked with the master for two and a half hours to show him my registration for the Liszt. He decided on this meeting because, being in Biarritz, he will not be able to attend my rehearsal.⁴⁴³ He gave me all sorts of recommendations [541] for the week of his absence. Ate together and chatted.

Sunday 21 April 1946

Easter. Went to Vespers at St-Sulpice. Many people present. The master placed me by his side; his attitude towards me was very touching. As I was leaving:

MD: "This week, you promise that you know [how] to defend yourself? To do as I did that time, and not allow yourself to be pestered?... I can leave in peace?"

Thursday 25 April 1946

Rehearsal at Pleyel. Good. Riveting Liszt.

Sunday 28 April 1946

I [with my parents] attended 11:15 AM Mass at St-Sulpice (decided, last minute, to take a little break). I listened to the organ and the master from the choir stalls. He played his *Deuxième Symphonie* and improvised a fugue.⁴⁴⁴

Afterwards, I waited until the gallery was empty to show myself. But Monet saw us. He already knew that I would be replacing the master next Sunday. He told us that everyone is talking about my first recitals as being the equivalent [542] of Dupré's first recitals.

When the master and Mammy descended, they raised their arms to the heavens. We went together cheerfully as far as Montparnasse. Dupré told me that he composed a "Te Deum" in four days while at Biarritz and told me about it.⁴⁴⁵

Tuesday 30 April 1946

Yesterday, my fourth recital at Pleyel: Liszt.⁴⁴⁶ Went really well. No intermission.

As an encore: a Scherzo on two themes of R. Falcinelli,* [for which] I was in top form. Afterwards, Dupré told me he was quite taken by my understanding of the organ as an orchestra, and by the emotion that emanated from it. Second encore: *Étude* in thirds. I nearly had to shake Lambert to let me play this encore.

443. There is no surviving record of Dupré having performed in Biarritz around the time of Demessieux's next Salle Pleyel rehearsal (Apr. 25). This may have been a social visit, Biarritz being the birthplace of Dupré's wife.

444. Marcel Dupré, *Deuxième Symphonie*, Op. 26 (Paris: Salabert, 1929).

445. Cf. the diary entry for July 28, 1945. This piece would be published as Dupré's *Paraphrase on the Te Deum*, Op. 43 (Melville, N.Y.: Belwin Mills, 1946).

446. Variations on "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen"; Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H; Fantasia on "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam" (program courtesy of Pierre Labric).

That terrible man [*terrible bonhomme*] closed the curtain after [the last work by] Liszt. But the audience protested.

Dupré was listening from the hall. For the encores, he wanted to join me on the stage, no doubt anticipating the dispute: [as it happened,] on his way he was intercepted and delayed.

Enormous success, ovations. In the foyer, I was besieged for half an hour. People kept showing up with some project or proposal on their lips. I referred them [543] to Dupré, later telling him that he should refuse everything on my behalf; he approved of this.

It was agreed that Mammy would leave at the last note so she could hear Marguerite on the radio ([from] Zurich). It was also agreed that the master would remain with us, having judged his presence necessary.

When he joined us, I sensed his great emotion. But a moment later, I understood, and it was my turn to be deeply moved (I hardly dare to write down these words, authentic though they are): Dupré turned towards the abbé Delestre:

“Your Grace, look at her!... I say this before witnesses: she is brilliant, as a performer, as an improviser! And she is already a brilliant composer!” (To me:) “I wanted to wait before saying this. And I dare to say it. Your Grace, in all good conscience—I must say—that I bow before her with tenderness and respect.”

In the hallway, where some people were waiting, M^{me} Galanti came to embrace me again. Beside me, the master said to her: “Our little Jeannette is a great genius...” and the dear woman’s eyes filled with tears. Dupré also told me that my playing was “of supreme mastery, that’s the term.” [544]

Finally, the master left with just our party, in that perfect glow of happiness that shone around him.

Saw all the faithful, as always, [including] Gavoty.

* It was my idea to ask her for a theme, again wishing to break the ice. Dupré understood and approved of this.

Tuesday 30 April 1946

A visit from Mammy. The master having left this morning,⁴⁴⁷ she had taken advantage of his absence to request an urgent appointment with Bénard to complain about Lambert’s attitude and continuing blunders at Pleyel. Her words had hit home, and only when everything was said and done, she [would] tell us about it, and the same for Dupré. We convinced her to stay for dinner, despite all excuses. I walked her to her train at 10:30 PM. She was so happy.

Sunday 5 May 1946

Played at St-Sulpice this morning. Mammy was there. Mendelssohn Sonata, Bach Fugue in A minor, “Carillon” by Dupré, improvisation on the Easter Kyrie. Very good. We left with Mammy.

Thursday 9 May 1946

447. According to the printed program preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1496, Dupré performed at Angers Cathedral on the evening of April 30.

Dined this evening with M^r and M^{me} Dupré, M^r Hoehn, and his nephew near the Bourse.** M^r Hoehn is in Paris for a few days. “My grand [545] entrance into society,” said the master, who added, “You looked like a little princess.” I could tell they are very proud of me. Delightful hours. Paul Hoehn is a wonderful friend to Dupré. Took a taxi together to Montparnasse. We said our goodbyes to Hoehn, and the master and Mammy accompanied me, arm-in-arm, to my subway station. Marguerite is in Zurich.

Yesterday morning, met Dupré after his class. For the very first time he has asked me to teach next week’s class, and he gave me his insightful information on each of the students. This led to talking again of the time when I was a student in his class, and we confided to each other the remarks we had made about the other at that time.

Afternoon visit from Mammy who, with tremendous dedication, is taking care of publicity.

** At the [Restaurant] “Caneton.”

Sunday 12 May 1946

Dupré and Mammy had lunch at our place. Went together to R. Falcinelli’s concert at 5:00 PM.

Dupré told me that “Gramophone” has proposed a recording contract for me [546] with Kiesgen as intermediary.⁴⁴⁸ Next, he [Dupré] will go and see my parish priest to take care of everything.

They are leaving on June 8.⁴⁴⁹ Mammy appears happy about this big trip. The master is sad, and I heard him mumble, “It doesn’t exactly thrill me.” This week they informed me that they are leaving Meudon, the organ, and garden at my disposal. I couldn’t stop thanking them... I told the master that I would finish [composing] the “Méditations sur le Saint Esprit” there. He was struck by this. But we’ve been avoiding talk of what’s coming after June 8.

Spent hours of exquisite joy at the house. While we were dining, the master nudged me: “It’s obvious that we are not the ones who must play [games], huh?”

I left with them for St-Dominique;⁴⁵⁰ my parents came later. [The Duprés] decided to keep me with them, giving me the seat of honour to Dupré’s right and to the left of Mammy... in reserved seats. It was a little twist that came as a surprise to some, and that delighted the master. Rolande [Falcinelli] did well, but she

448. “Gramophone” is, perhaps, a reference to the early recording firm The Gramophone Co., based in the U.K. As described in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gramophone_Company>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the firm was founded in 1898 by an agent acting for the inventor of the gramophone record, Emil Berliner, one of the founders of Deutsche Grammophon in Germany. It was the parent organization for the later label HMV (His Master’s Voice) and merged with the Columbia Gramophone Co. in 1931 to form EMI (Electric and Musical Industries Ltd.); however, its name “The Gramophone Company Limited” continued in the U.K. even into the 1970s.

449. The Duprés were set to leave for Dupré’s eighth transcontinental North American tour. As described in Murray 1985, 189, this visit was to begin with a five-week series of masterclasses and recitals at the University of Chicago.

450. The diary entry for Oct. 21, 1945 noted the inaugural recital played by Dupré for the organ of St-Dominique.

played Bach with [547] rubato. Chatted a little with her. We took our leave of the Duprés all too soon: the master was leaving on a trip this evening.⁴⁵¹ Guerner accompanied us, as intellectual and brusque as ever.

Tuesday 14 May 1946

Replaced Dupré at the organ class for the very first time. A resounding success, including a reciprocal kindness with, and influence over, the students—about which I was most apprehensive. I know that Dupré had prepared them with a few well-chosen words. He insisted that I give them my own themes [for improvisation]. [Today it was a] fugue [subject]. They tried to get me to improvise, to play one of the *Études*. I gently held to my resolve that I should refrain from display.

Wednesday 15 May 1946

Took the organ class. Free theme [*thème libre*]. Perfect.

Friday 17 May 1946

Rehearsed at Pleyel from 12:30 to 2:00 PM. Dupré with me. He chatted a long time with Kiesgen on my behalf. Kiesgen is becoming my sole representative, without need of a contract, same as for Dupré. Bénard accompanied us back [to the subway], and Dupré seized the [548] opportunity to suggest some new ideas to him for next year's series, these being okay with Kiesgen. The latter arrived at that moment, and Dupré hastened to leave them together. Outside:

MD: "And there you have it! It worked, as you could imagine, when I left them with each other! Bénard was very disconcerted that I said that to him in front of you. I did it on purpose."

We talked for a long time, as far as Montparnasse, where we continued to linger. The master wants to leave everything at my disposal [during his trip]: organ, bookshelves, archives.

MD: "Do as I, and use Meudon as your laboratory." [Inserted between lines:] Again: "I could not have dreamed of a more ideal performer than you."

Tuesday 21 May 1946

Yesterday, my fifth recital at Pleyel: M. Dupré (*Symphonie-Passion, Variations on a Noël, Suite in F* [Op. 39], *Évocation*). My usual perfectionism. Intense communication with the audience whose emotion and astonishment was at its peak. Ovation. [Encores:] passacaglia theme by Dupré, on which I improvised in top form. * [549] Purcell Trumpet Tune, which revitalized an atmosphere [that had been] awash in lofty emotions.

In the foyer, Dupré at one end and I at the other were surrounded to the point of barely being able to reach each other. Marguerite said to me, "My father was deeply moved during the entire concert. You play his works with such grandeur and emotion; you understand him so very well! I assure you, he is very happy."

451. According to printed programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1498–1500, Dupré performed concerts at three different locations in Brittany on the evenings of May 13 through May 15.

The master was, indeed, very moved, barely managing to contain himself; he appeared aloof. They were to be driven home by automobile, and it perturbed them [to leave on someone else's schedule].

Mammy had a letter concerning a project involving the BBC to show me. Seizing the opportunity, I led her to my dressing room where the master quickly joined us. They embraced me affectionately, and Dupré tried in vain to express himself, which had an even greater effect on me: "You know, it's... I cannot tell you."

In the evening, I telephoned and found them "talking about me," absolutely beside themselves. The master chatted with me for a half hour, finally expressing himself with emotion beyond words. On the improvisation: [550] "I was bowled over. One could have sworn it was a written piece, worked out, developed; and what grandeur!... I'm astonished every single time. You frighten me, my Jeannette."

He leaves for Switzerland today, by airplane.⁴⁵²

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] He had thoughtfully sent it to me two days in advance. I found it beautiful and perfect. It impressed me, and I decided not to try any preliminary experiment on it, to preserve my spontaneity.

Sunday 26 May 1946

The Duprés lunched at our home. Memorable day: the master requested a meeting with Father de la Motte to tell him that he would like me to become the supply organist at St-Sulpice.

I took the master to the church; we knew that this wouldn't be easy. When I returned home, we waited impatiently. Dupré returned, silent.

Me: "Well?..."

MD: "He flat out refused." Consternation.

Dupré continued, "... and he told me that, you being a woman, it is madness to push you into this career that wouldn't last." These last words nearly sparked indignation. Dupré was expressionless and waited for me to speak. I said calmly:

"You have done me the honour of offering St-Sulpice to me. I [551] have accepted this, and my conscience says that I am doing my duty. Father de la Motte doesn't understand that this honour would fall also upon St-Esprit and upon him. I apologize to you on his behalf. For me, the situation is very clear.

MD: "What do you mean?..."

Me: "I'm resigning." Silence.

Dupré looked at my parents. "And you?"

"It's her decision. We will support her."

452. According to programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1501-1502, Dupré performed two concerts during an International Bach Festival in the Germanic town of Schaffhausen, Switzerland: on May 22, in the St. Johann-Kirche, six major works of Bach (part of a program including Heinrich Funk, organ, and Wilhelm Backhaus, piano); on May 23 in the Tonhalle.

The master continued to control his emotions. "You always put me first. My duty to myself is to guard you from your affectionate tendency."

Me: "It's not out of affection."

MD: "For you I'm like a dummy you are trying to inflate; not only is the task never complete—it blocks out your horizon causing you to see nothing beyond it."

Me: "I'm seeing my horizon very clearly, and know who it is who opened it for me. I realize I'll be making a financial sacrifice: I will accept the students I refused. It's a period to be gotten through, after which the touring will come. I wanted reconciliation to originate with my parish priest. It hasn't come. My [552] attitude will not change."

Marguerite said, spontaneously: "I've noticed many times now that Jeanne is very strong. She knows already what she wants; she can look after herself, of that I'm sure."

The master regarded me with pride; then:

MD: "Whatever your decision, it meets with my approval. Wait forty-eight hours. One night is insufficient to determine whether one has made a hasty decision."

Me: "Yes, Master. But I won't have changed my mind."

Dupré talked about Grunenwald with frankness and indifference:

MD: "He has put the title of supply organist to considerable use; you, never. He's known for a year that he must 'share' [it] with you, and that I ask you before him. I don't want to place just anyone on Widor's throne, and that's why I choose you! It's incontestable that we are the two pinnacles of the organ."

"Your resignation will cause quite a stir in Paris; you've been used to that since the age of thirteen, haven't you? This is the end of the era in which you 'do everything' [553] just as your parish priest wants. I have chosen you for your immense talent, because I have total confidence in you, and because I believe this is a step towards your marvelous future."

We talked for a long time. They left around 5:30 PM. The clergy at St-Sulpice were made aware of Dupré's intentions and accepted them without hesitation. The master's serenity was restored. Parting ways with them at the station, I sensed again all the happiness that my standpoint and my destiny were giving them.

Tuesday 28 May 1946

Dupré telephoned. [He is] back from Rouen, but Mammy is still there. They ended up selling the house [there]. We knew about this, and I've been thinking about them. A sad day for Dupré.

Friday 31 May 1946

Rehearsed at Pleyel. Agreed upon that Dupré, who was much too busy, would not come.

Sunday 2 June 1946

Yesterday, Dupré told me that their departure is again delayed (because of strikes in America). [Now] set for Tuesday morning. We were to have spent [554] our last afternoon at Meudon [this past] Tuesday. Sadness.

Today he sent for Papa. So many things to settle! I had told them that my [upcoming] recital obligated me to stay and work. But I immediately threw myself into my organ work so I could finish everything and get over to Meudon. Mammy cried out when she saw me, became teary-eyed, and called the master. When he entered, he pressed me to his heart: "You've come!" It took a long time to settle several questions. We went

all over the house, in every direction, the organ, the bookshelves. Then Dupré turned to Papa and [said], scarcely able to speak:

“Drawing up one’s last will and testament does not cause one to die; [nonetheless,] something awful could happen to us: all three of us made our wills.” Then he got up and gestured to me. Mammy and Papa made an excuse to leave. He led me past each of the bookshelves in turn, gesturing to them...

MD: “All of this... it’s for you. All that represents the moral legacy of our tradition, [555] of the organ, design, teaching. All that I have built with my life, I give to you.” I grasped his dear hand resting on my shoulder and said nothing. Despite our emotions, we were able to contain ourselves and, after a moment, all I said was:

“I’m feeling despondent, Master.”

MD: “I know; me, as well.”

Later on, we heard the doorbell. “No doubt, the Magrons,”⁴⁵³ said Mammy, just when we were content together, just us. The master was exasperated for a moment: “Do we have to open the door?...”

Mammy made up her mind. We all moved into the parlour. I hadn’t seen Brigitte Magron since 1941. After only a few minutes of conversation, Dupré made his excuses, in light of everything still left to settle, and we descended to the [organ] hall. He gave me some volumes that I did not yet possess. MD: “Do me the favour of coming here often. I leave you everything.”

When we parted at the end of the afternoon, I took my leave of Mammy and Marguerite, and the master walked us back, proposing a stop at the Magrons’ home. He wanted [556] me to see the canvases. Our previous conversation had lessened the reality of the departure; here, for a moment, one nearly managed to forget it.

It was just as well that Marguerite ran over [to the Magrons] to announce the arrival—unexpected and... forgotten—of Berveiller. The master left at a run: “Till tomorrow, very early,” he said to me. The Magrons burst into tears: they will not see him for more than seven months. I exchanged a few words with the painter, then, at my request, we returned to the canvases. A strong impression, as Dupré predicted. Almost an hour later, we left the Magrons with strong feelings of friendship. I embraced the painter with the promise of neighbourly visits.

Wednesday 5 June 1946

Despite the sorrow of a huge emptiness, I am writing down the events of the past two days.

Monday [June 3], my sixth and last recital of the Pleyel series: the twentieth century.⁴⁵⁴ A very clear impression that the audience had definitively sized me up and accepted me. The “Méditations [sur le Saint

453. The artist Dominique Jouvét-Magron and daughter Brigitte Magron were friends and neighbors of the Duprés who would have wished to bid them farewell prior to their departure on a lengthy trip. Cf. the diary entry for Aug. 10, 1941, in which Demessieux wrote about being introduced to Madame Jouvét-Magron.

454. Duruflé, *Prelude in E-flat minor (Suite, Op. 5)*; André Fleury, 1st mvt. from *Symphony No. 1*; Messiaen, *Le Banquet Céleste* and *Apparition de l’Église Éternelle*; Langlais, “Les Rameaux” (*Trois Poèmes évangéliques*); Litaize, “Intermezzo Pastoral” (*Douze Pièces*); Grunenwald, “La Mélodie Intérieure” (*Deuxième Suite*); Alain, *Litanies*; Falcinelli, *Épigramme funèbre*; Demessieux, from “Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit”: I. “Veni”; II. “Les Eaux”; IV. “Dogme”; V. “Consolateur” (program courtesy of Pierre Labric).

Esprit]" (I, II, IV, and V) were received just as I had foreseen: with astonishment [and] in a spirit of discernment and trust, demonstrating a superior audience. "Consolateur" [No. V] was the [557] culminating point of the surprise. I expected its explicitly intimate character to quell the audience's desire for outward expressivity at the end of the recital. It worked as intended, and I found this a striking sign.

It was not even 5:30 PM (for the 6:15 recital) when Dupré joined me in the foyer. I must say that given the circumstances and the program, giving this recital weighed heavily on me. The master left me at the last minute, as usual; his trustworthy presence, or his conversation, are the only thing I enjoy before playing.

Again, no intermission. I played my 5th *Étude* as an encore, then found Dupré, very moved, on the stage. Even though I had been planning to give two more encores, I felt unable to return to the console: my courage plummeted suddenly, although the entire recital had been perfect. Only Dupré witnessed this and whispered behind a divider,

"Jeannette, the second encore!"

Gesturing, "No," I returned to the stage. Silence from Dupré. I bowed for a long time and left the stage once again.

MD: "The Watchers' Chorale..."⁴⁵⁵

Me: "No, I don't want to play anymore."

[558] MD: "Why not?..." [As I] returned [backstage] a third time:

MD: "...Why not?"

Me: "I'm not feeling up to it."

MD: "You can't be serious!... Listen to them! Go for it, you can do it!" I thought I was going to pluck up the courage, but I suddenly found it impossible. The "Meditations" had thrown me: I had felt them too viscerally; they left me weakened. Meanwhile, as people stood, literally howling, I walked off again.

Me: "They will forgive me."

Dupré looked at me for a moment, then [said]: "Give me a hug." He turned around and ordered, "Here, lean [on me]," and he escorted me to the edge of the half-drawn curtain, where again I acknowledged the audience several times.

The foyer was overtaken by an enormous crowd exclaiming their enthusiasm and insisting that I sign autographs; a crush of people. In all, I saw only friends: Guerner, Berveiller, Monet, Marguerite. Mammy had left upon the last note. I will never forget that these three [the Duprés] came on the eve of their departure. Dupré whispered to me, "Jeannette, Florent Schmitt." Florent Schmitt, indeed, who said to me, "I think you didn't turn out so badly, despite [your] Nocturne for piano that I [559] remember. I like 'Les Eaux' very much." And the person with him made sure to tell me I should play Schmitt's *Marche nuptiale*⁴⁵⁶ for organ. Such insistence. I understood and, thinking despite myself of Dupré's dignified and proud character, I let it go. Moreover, I heard Dupré say to a group, "The 'Meditations' are very moving." I didn't catch the rest.

455. This is a reference to J. S. Bach, "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme," BWV 645, one of the Schübler chorale preludes, specifically Bach's reworking of a movement from his Cantata BWV 140, in which Philipp Nicolai's famous hymn tune is sung against one of Bach's most well-known countermelodies.

456. Florent Schmitt, *Marche nuptiale*, Op. 108 (Paris: Durand, 1946).

When the crowd had drifted away, the evening took on the tone of a farewell for the master. I slipped into my dressing room, where Dupré joined me after a moment. We were frightfully sad.

Me: "Shall we leave together, Master?"

MD: "No, unfortunately, we are being taken by car..." The master took my arm and everyone filed out slowly.

MD: "You are a great, an immense, artist. This series will make history... And I am proud of you; for you, first, and also for me. Your 'Meditations' had an effect... just as striking for their philosophical value as for the music." And again:

MD: "I told Bénard that you would begin the next year's series [560] upon my return, that this is what you would like."

We left them beside the car, and Maman held back tears; Dupré noticed and turned back, saying, "You are right, you mustn't cry." He embraced us and, to me,

"Are you really going to come tomorrow? I'd rather spare you that..."

Me: "Let me come, Master."

MD: "Till tomorrow."

Straightaway, we took the subway home and Dupré, once home, must have been watching the time because he telephoned me not ten minutes after I got back. It didn't surprise me.

MD: "It pained me not to be able to leave with you earlier; we would have chatted. I wanted to say to you again that the entire series was wonderful, that you are a great, great artist whom I admire. Yes, yes... that's how it is. The public is thrilled; it's unanimous." And we chatted some more. Dupré sounded sad, but full of faith. I told him that I owe everything to him.

MD: "You owe it all to your immense talent, to your giftedness. I was only the instrument chosen by Providence. On the other side of the ocean, I am going to [561] prepare the way for you. I'm thinking of nothing else... Till tomorrow, my dear; goodbye, sleep well. And again, bravo."

Tuesday the 4th: I didn't sleep all night. [On June 5th,] in the morning, I was calm. At 7:30 AM, St-Lazare train station, an hour before the departure. The first to arrive. They arrived. Little by little, [so did] friends, around fifty. Mammy and Marguerite did not seem moved at first. Dupré spoke little; I noticed this inward, oppressed look, constantly straying, like that of a suffering animal. Someone tactless said to him, "America! So, you are happy?" He eyed him scornfully, "Thank you... very happy." He came close to me, or called me over.

MD: "You are going to finish the 'Meditations'?"*

Me: "Yes, Master."

MD: "You will go to Meudon."

Me: "Yes, Master." And suddenly, in [front of] the group:

MD: "From this moment forward, you have such mastery as a composer, you know what you do and do not want, that no one, not even me, has the right to give you advice. You will tell me, 'I would like to do this, try that,' and I will always say yes. You, alone, are your own judge." And, in the others' silence, he added: "I am no longer your 'master'! I am [562] your old friend and that I will remain." And he lapsed into silence.

Berveiller, Guerner, Monet surrounded me. Mammy introduced me to M^{lle} [Hilda] Gélis-Didot, a strong-

willed woman. She announced, "Oh, I know you... You captured my affection long ago, without knowing it." It was with her that Dupré began his goodbyes. I was next to her; she said to him:

"I am taking your little Jeanne Demessieux under my wing."

"Ah, you know..." Dupré began, without being able to continue, and I saw him close his eyes for a long time.

[Mlle G-D:] "Yes, yes, don't worry."

Marguerite embraced me: "My wonderful Jeanne, I am in awe of you; your recitals will remain etched in my memory, I assure you."

Then the master found himself face-to-face with me and, in seconds, I could fathom the depths. Words are completely powerless. I could see him suffering so much that only one sentence came to me: "My great friend!" He embraced me at length, and said that, in a moment, he would embrace me again.

MD: "I want you to be the last one I embrace." I had been feeling a kind of anguish for quite some time, and he understood me fully when I said to him:

Me: "Master, you will return!..."[563]

MD: "Yes, my angel!"

Me: "They can't keep you!..."

MD: "No! my angel. I promise you this! I promise!..."

A moment later, it was Mammy who was saying goodbye to me:

"My dear little daughter..."

Me: "My little Mammy..." Emotion ran so high around me that I thought I might even faint; but I was able to respond and bear this final moment.

Mammy and Marguerite had already boarded. Dupré called out one last time to his sister-in-law, who was sobbing; then he looked [to see] whether he had forgotten anyone, stopping a moment, and turned to me. He held me close to his heart, nearly taking his breath away. I, too, was at the end of my self-control (I might have said, as a great woman [would]: I had not thought one could suffer so much).

MD: "I wanted to hug you last... after you, no one..."

"My adored friend," I whispered.

We did not exchange any more words, but Dupré forced me to look at him, showing me the depths of his soul with a tenderness so absolute that I became the stronger for it. And [I was] understood, as always, by this unwavering friend. When we had enough strength, we parted, and Dupré moved swiftly to the door, where he gave everyone a quick wave. [564] Mammy and he appeared at the window of their compartment. The master had that wandering gaze once again.

Then, very slowly, the train began to pull out of the station, and I could see Dupré turning to look for someone and meeting my gaze with a sadness and fixity that overwhelmed me. As though he had turned to marble and remained riveted thus.

When the distance had become too great, I stepped forward from the group and saw the still-unmoving silhouette, turning away when the train had disappeared. Around me, I saw Hilda Gélis-Didot, Berveiller, Monet, and Guerner, the latter unable to hold back large tears, like those of a faithful dog. I heard one of

them say to me, “We are losing him, but you are staying” I couldn’t respond, and they grasped my hands. The crowd of friends walked on ahead; they too were leaving. M^{lle} Gélis-Didot took my arm and Maman’s. We were the last ones. When she had left us, my parents and I walked all the way to l’Étoile. They had cried until no tears were left.

* He also said to me, “‘Consolateur’ is really something, you know!”

[signed] Jeanne Demessieux

[End of notebook VII]

NOTE: For more than seven weeks following her description of the Dupré family’s departure, Demessieux did not write in her diary.

Jeanne Dupré related overseas events in a letter to Jean Guerner:⁴⁵⁷

Chicago, 18 July 1946

My dear Sir and Friend,

Since our arrival here, my husband has been meaning to write you, but his life is such that he really hasn’t a moment for himself. Seven hours of teaching a day, his lectures, his concerts to prepare, are making his days chock-full. Fortunately, you have had news from J. Demessieux of our safe arrival here because you were so kind as to go and hear her at St-Esprit, and, since then, you have probably crossed paths again at St-Sulpice. Need I say that our thoughts are at St-Sulpice every Sunday!

Our time here [in Chicago] is approaching the end, with courses and concerts set to finish on the 27th. I should add that this has been most pleasant.

The 37 organists who’ve come from all across America to work here are a very interesting and likeable group. Several hold important posts in the nation, and, nevertheless, have not hesitated to become students once again. Their admiration for my dear, great Artist, their veneration for him, does my heart good. As for the concerts, they are stirring! An immense crowd, around 5,000 people, in the street every time (the 4th took place yesterday evening; two remain). 3,000 crammed into the University Chapel, the others remained outside on the lawn. Loudspeakers had to be installed to broadcast the concert to them. And the ovations that burst out at the end each time were deeply moving. I am happy for my husband and... for France, and I know that you are such a marvelous friend to him that you also rejoice to know the huge prestige he enjoys in this country. The press praises him to the skies.

457. Dupré 2002a, 26–27.

Upon leaving Chicago, we are going to seclude ourselves in a beautiful spot in Canada,⁴⁵⁸ where we will spend six weeks of vacation before the grand tour that is shaping up well—more than 60 cities already.

We are getting along wonderfully, all three of us, despite the tropical heat to which we've been subjected to for 4 weeks. But in the evenings the breeze off the lake refreshes us a bit.

Remember us fondly to Madame Guerner and accept, dear Sir and Friend, all my fond regards.

J. Dupré.

VIII⁴⁵⁹

[565] Sunday 28 July 1946

Following Dupré's departure on June 4, a concise summary:



In the fishing village Le Grau du Roi, June 1946.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

Left the day after Pentecost [June 10, 1946] for Aigues-Mortes. I had not returned there since the exodus of '40. Came home for the following Sunday.

My sister, overjoyed. Gave an amazing little organ recital. The church and the gallery were full.⁴⁶⁰ Talked with the parish priest. Upon descending, intrigued by these people of Provence, rustic and salt-of-the-earth, who jostled each other fanatically to get a glimpse of me in the shadows.

"Distinguished" persons (and there were many) greeted me, then fled the cool night air. Moved by the crowd that remained, I offered a handshake to everyone. Indescribable verve and joy from these people, as if I had distributed something with a certain "*je ne sais quoi*." I thought of Dupré's words,

458. According to Murray 1985, 189, the vacation spot in Canada was the Laurentians region of Québec.

459. AM 4S9.

460. According to a scrap of paper she preserved (AM 4S35), Demessieux performed in Aigues-Mortes on June 12, 1946, presumably in the ancient church Notre-Dame-des-Sablons. She described it as an inauguration recital of the little organ, and listed the following organ repertoire and religious elements of the event: Toccata—Boëllmann; Noël—Daquin; Toccata in D minor—Bach; Prayer (M^{me} Moulin); Basse et dessus de trompette—Clérambault; Concerto—Handel; Fugue in C [major]—Buxtehude; an improvisation; Choral—Boëllmann; Sœur Monique—Couperin; Choral—Franck; The Memorare [a prayer] (M^{me} Louet); Toccata—Widor; Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

“Decent people approach me as if they loved me.”⁴⁶¹ Left all the money with the priest, who gave me a touching gift.

A day at the sea. Lunched in a restaurant facing the raging sea. Sun, Mistral winds, incredible.

Back in Paris, Guerner and Berveiller came [566] to St-Esprit. We chatted a lot, growing even closer. Faithful friends. Berveiller dined at our home that evening. Since July, I’ve been playing for my [assigned] mass at St-Sulpice which, like Meudon, has become my “laboratory.”

At Meudon every day except Sunday. These locations and this retreat are important to me. [My] initial bitterness has been replaced by calmness. Alone and free in the house, this is where I work. I’ve written the third “Meditation,” “Pentecôte,” and am working on the sixth, “Paix.” I play the organ. Rummaging one day in Dupré’s manuscripts and file folders, fully aware of fulfilling his innermost wish, I found plans, themes (a hundred), sketches, and, especially, notes. Delving into these for several days gave me a major composition lesson and subject of study.

We are, as Dupré has written, “constantly in contact by airmail,” despite the huge amount of work they have. Their time in Chicago is finished. They’re going to go relax for a month in Canada.⁴⁶²

[567] Meanwhile, we received M^r Hoehn, who was passing through Paris. He is occupied, non-stop, with my Swiss tour. Also received Van Wyck, the English impresario, and his wife; we continue to correspond by letter. On his advice, I made a diplomacy visit to Souchon, the Director of Cultural Affairs. Van Wyck wants the [French] State to fund my trip to England.

Received Marthe Dramez.

Accepted a dinner engagement at M^r Régnier’s ([heard] on a recording: Henri Montréal).⁴⁶³ Met the sister and brother-in-law of [pianist] Nicole Henriot. Invited a second time, I declined; snobbish company, boring.

461. This is a paraphrase of something that Demessieux reported Dupré saying in her diary entry of Nov. 23, 1945.

462. According to records preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, from approximately June 24 to July 27, at the University of Chicago, Dupré performed six Wednesday-evening recitals and gave five Tuesday lectures. Recitals (program nos. 1503–08) consisted of music by Bach (three programs), Franck, and himself; the sixth recital presented improvisations in all forms and genres on submitted themes. According to Dupré’s handwritten records (1509–13), subjects of his five lectures were history, technique, registration, method, and pedagogy. Following his vacation (approximately July 28 through Sept. 16), Dupré performed six recitals in Canada, beginning Sept. 17 (1514–19), at the following locations: Notre-Dame in Montréal, Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire in St-Hyacinthe, l’École Supérieure de Musique d’Outremont, Basilique-cathédrale Notre-Dame in Québec City, Eaton Auditorium in Toronto (assisted by his daughter), and St. Andrews United in London, Ont. Dupré then travelled to New York state to begin touring the U.S. (1520–1582b). From Sept. 17, onward, almost all Dupré’s programs included Demessieux’s Étude No. 5 in E major, “Notes Répétées.”

463. This may actually have been Hector Montréal (1839–1910), songwriter and playwright. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hector_Monr%C3%A9al>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Montréal, though very prolific, was most known for writing (with Henri Blondeau) the lyrics to the song “Frou-frou.” Was this song, perhaps, what Demessieux heard on a recording? As noted in <[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frou-frou_\(chanson\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frou-frou_(chanson))>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, “Frou-frou” was written for the review *Paris qui marche* (1897) and features music by Henri Chatau.

Florent Schmitt redoubled his efforts by writing [to me] regarding his *Marche nuptiale*.⁴⁶⁴ An invitation that I gracefully refused.

Mireille Auxiètre* earned her First Prize in piano, under Nat, with [Beethoven's] "Appassionata" and Chopin's Étude in A minor. Amazing. Yves Nat carried away. He sought me out during the competition, and we chatted about Mireille for quite some time. Nat: "I believe we understand each other." He is struck by my attachment to Mireille. I hadn't seen him [568] in four years. Chatted with Mireille several times. Visited her parents. They told me that she trusts only me on all matters and wants me to decide everything for her. She herself wants to work under the radar [*dans l'ombre*] for five years. Strong personality, ferocious will. Little by little, I want to help her draw closer to Nat. She will always work with me.

* Jankowski.⁴⁶⁵

Wednesday 7 August 1946

I finished the sixth Meditation, "Paix," today at Meudon.

Thursday 22 August 1946

I made a visit to Erlanger (Services for Artistic Expansion to Foreign Countries), to whom Van Wyck had already written. Scarcely any more progress was made. Van Wyck wants the government to cover my travel costs in England.⁴⁶⁶ Followed up in writing with Van Wyck.

Friday 23 August 1946

Finished the seventh Meditation, "Lumière," at Meudon. "Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit" is complete. Berveiller came to spend the evening at our home.

[569] Sunday 25 August 1946

My last Sunday at St-Sulpice until October. The clergy are "happy" with me. The gallery remained filled with faithful friends. St-Sulpice and Meudon have caused me to progress further.

Jeanne Dupré wrote to Jean Guerner a letter that included this paragraph:⁴⁶⁷

Ste-Adèle, Québec, 25 August 1946

As I know you like to keep documents on file, I am sending you the programs from Chicago. You know of

464. First mentioned in the diary entry of June 5, 1946.

465. This was Mireille Auxiètre's married name (not Yvancovitch, as Demessieux wrote in her footnote).

466. In a letter to Yolande of Nov. 8, 1946, reproduced in *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal (1934–1946)*, *L'Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009): 35, Demessieux noted that the French government had granted 15,000 francs to finance her trip to England.

467. Dupré 2002a, 27.

these already from J. Demessieux, but I believe you will enjoy them, all the same. I'm also enclosing an article concerning the improvisation concert that particularly interested you and that was truly "electrifying."

Two excerpts from Marcel Dupré's August 29 letter from Ste-Adèle to Jean Guerner:⁴⁶⁸

We resume the tour on [Sept.] 29 for 62 concerts. We will be home for Christmas. . .
P.S. We frequently have news of you from Jeanne Demessieux. Thank you for being so faithful and helpful to her, like a true friend."

Wednesday 18 September 1946

I've been in Zürich since September 2, staying with wonderful friends of Dupré, M^r [Paul] and M^{me} [Nelly] Hoehn, who are now great friends of mine. I am playing a lot, visiting organs, being welcomed. In Zürich, played several times at St-Pierre, Grossmünster, [and] Fraumünster; once at the Tonhalle. Those who heard me: Funk (organist at Fraumünster), Meyer (St-Pierre*), Schlatter (Grossmünster**), and numerous people who came along with them. Funk showed me plans for the new Fraumünster organ, revised by Dupré. M^r Hoehn is a member of the commission, and we all discussed it together. Am now very familiar with the system of free combinations. Dined at the Webers, [and at] the Steinmanns.

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Played: Handel's 10th Concerto; Dupré's Prelude and Fugue in G minor; [my] 2nd *Étude*; Franck's 2nd *Choral* and 3rd *Choral*; Dupré, *Variations on a Noël*.

** [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Dupré, Prelude and Fugue in G minor; a chorale by Bach; Franck, 3rd *Choral*; *Études* 2, 6; Improvisation: prelude and fugue.

Thursday 19 September 1946

Yesterday evening, concert by Funk and the violinist Stefi Geyer at the Fraumünster. Chatted with Funk before and after. [He] played well, a bit hesitant. Stefi Geyer, very beautiful[ly]. [570]. Many introductions. I met Ziegler, the organ builder, recently established in Geneva. They took me by car to Huguenin⁴⁶⁹ where the Hoehns were waiting for me at a fashion show.

Today, something unexpected. For three days, I've suffered from a lump that appeared on my right hip. It was growing worse, so I decided to tell M^{me} Hoehn about it. Dr. Reckling, whose entire family already knows

468. Ibid., 28.

469. According to <<http://www.huguenin.ch/en/products/fashion-watch>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Huguenin is a Swiss company of engravers of watch parts, jewelry, and other fashion accessories.

me, came this morning. An infected gland. Bed rest, and I'll be fine. Reckling didn't want me to go anywhere tomorrow. I pleaded with him, and he said that in this case, it needed to be opened [lanced and drained] and he would decide after. He's coming again this evening.

Saturday 21 September 1946

All went well. Thursday evening, the little procedure. Very successful, but not fun. Broken sleep. A high temperature yesterday morning. M^{me} Hoehn was my nurse from first light, though I spared her from the most tiresome tasks. I somehow managed to come downstairs and found M^r Hoehn upset, ready to "weep like a child," he told me. A taxi was waiting for us. Then the train as far as Bern, where I was taken by car to the Église française.⁴⁷⁰ I toured the organ, [571] played [Bach's] Dorian Toccata and my *Étude* in octaves, and improvised—to the huge torment of M^{me} Hoehn, who had become my bodyguard, and to the stupefaction of M^r Hoehn. Lunched at the station. Train for Fribourg.⁴⁷¹ Cathedral [St-Nicolas]. Beautiful organ but tonally heavy. No strings (!). Stupidly designed console. Played for two hours.* Was heard.⁴⁷²

Back to Bern where we were awaited and driven to Burgerspital's small organ (17 stops).⁴⁷³ Again, no strings. Dined at the Hôtel de l'Étoile, looking out over the Alps. Ideal weather. The entire evening at the Cathedral organ.⁴⁷⁴ Beautiful and balanced. Very sonorous mixtures. Clear electric console. Was heard. We again took the train and got back at midnight. Throughout the day, I played, always from memory, the Dorian Toccata, 6th *Étude*, 2nd *Étude*, Toccata and Fugue [in] D minor, Handel's 10th Concerto, a Bach chorale, Widor's 6th Symphony, and improvised two preludes and fugues and a *choral varié*. Made the acquaintance of Messieurs Schoerer, Gogniat, Senn.

Today, complete rest: I'm stretched out in the little organ room, pampered in a motherly fashion by Nelly Hoehn, while M^r Hoehn has left his office to play the organ for me and chat. Reckling came, got a little angry. I [572] responded with a lesson on [organ] building. (During my little procedure, he had said to me, "Heroic. What one won't do for art's sake.")

* [Squeezed into the bottom margin:] Toccata and Fugue in D minor and a chorale by Bach; two *Études*; Widor, Toccata; improvisation.

Tuesday 24 September 1946

470. According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89glise_fran%C3%A7aise_de_Berne>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the "French church" in Bern is so-called because in the 17th century it served French-speaking Protestants.

471. Travel time by train between Berne and Fribourg is about 22 minutes in modern times.

472. That is, a significant number of people, or influential people, heard Demessieux play.

473. As described in <<https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burgerspital>> accessed Nov. 27, 2022, and <<https://second.wiki/wiki/burgerspital>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, the Burgerspital (literally, "hospital of the bourgeois") in Bern, which is housed in a beautiful example of Baroque architecture, did originally serve as a hospital. In the 21st century, as well as housing a care facility for the elderly, it functions as an administrative and cultural centre; its chapel is still used for church services as well as other cultural events.

474. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bern_Minster>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Bern's cathedral (Bern Minster) is a Gothic-style building whose construction was begun in 1421 and completed in 1893. As noted under the heading "Organ" in the Wikipedia entry, the cathedral's 1903 organ by Friedrich Groll was rebuilt in 1930.

Funk, the organist of the Fraumünster and the [Zürich] Tonhalle, and organ professor at the Conservatory, asked me to play a short, private recital for his students. There were around thirty of them, plus some friends of Hoehn. This took place today at the Tonhalle, the scene of Dupré's greatest triumphs this year. I played from memory (without rehearsal) the Toccata and Fugue in C [major], the first movement of Widor's Sixth Symphony, Dupré's *Variations on a Noël*, and my 2nd and 6th *Études*, and I improvised a prelude and fugue. Always in good form. Funk spoke before and after the recital, declaring me to be a typical representative of the "great French organ school" and "Marcel Dupré's number-one disciple." An ambience of respect that I found striking, even astonishing. M^{me} Hoehn, beside herself with emotion, forbade me from playing any longer, and only just allowed me to finish the program. After this, we returned home where I played yet again for a friend.

M^r Hoehn again told me he is [573] "proud of me" and that I "am scoring big points." In a show of friendship, we made "a pact": to always be sincere with, and sure of, one another, and to be of service to each other, "as with Marcel," he said.

Friday 27 September 1946

After a few days of rest, we are leaving for Saint Gall. Tomorrow night we will sleep in the Rorschach district, near Lake Constance.⁴⁷⁵

Demessieux wrote to Jean Guerner, 27 Sept. on a postcard showing the organs of Fribourg Cathedral:[476]⁴⁷⁶

Dear Sir,

Again, another great organ for my collection, which is starting to grow! Between Zürich, Bern, Fribourg, and St. Gall, this makes fifteen or so that I've played or replayed. All in all: practical reflections and... a bit of experience that, still, will not be too much. With my best regards, J. D.

Monday 30 September 1946

475. As described in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey_of_Saint_Gall>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, and <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/268>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Saint Gall, located in the town of St. Gallen in northeastern Switzerland, is a former abbey. Dating from the 8th century, it was rebuilt in lavish Baroque style between 1755 and 1768. Following dissolution of the abbey ca. 1800, Saint Gall subsequently became known as the Cathedral (or Abbey Cathedral) of St. Gall (Roman Catholic). The district of Rorschach is on the south side of Lake Constance and about 13 km by road northeast of St. Gallen.

476. Quoted in Dupré 2002a, 28 n.1.

Magnificent car trip. All we did on Saturday was visit Saint Gall in the company of M^{me} Hoehn's sister, M^{me} Petertil, who lives there.⁴⁷⁷

At dusk, we trekked through the mountains and stopped at an inn from which one can see Lake Constance appear and disappear in the valleys. Mist and the last flame of day: wonderful. Traversed fields and woods after having dined in rustic fashion, with much gaiety.

At Rorschach, at the Anker Hotel; I opened my lake-view windows yesterday morning. Mist, a beautiful yacht was moored. Saint Gall at 10:00 AM. Had time to [574] visit a farm and run through fields.

Meeting at the Cathedral [of Saint Gall] with the organist at 11:00 Mass. The sumptuousness of the place was astonishing. The Baroque style most definitely gets on my nerves. Later, I admired the [choir] stalls. I was offered the chance to play the postlude, and I played Bach's Prelude in G [major]; then, after a moment, I improvised, upon general request. It was pointed out to me that the congregation was watching the gallery.

Lunch in a restaurant, where the organist and his wife joined us for coffee, offering us a return to the Cathedral at 3:00. It was then that I was able to admire the stalls, after which I climbed again to the organ with the intention of seeing the stops in detail (this old console amused me, too). Paul Hoehn feared this would be too tiring and did not want me to play. But, to our stupefaction, a whole procession of people flowed into the gallery. Widmer admitted that he had invited them to hear me and introduced me to each in turn, about fifteen. I went to the organ with good grace, despite the agitation of Nelly and Paul Hoehn. They asked me for an *Étude* (on this organ!). I [575] refused to engage in acrobatics on this ancient mechanism and played Handel's 10th Concerto, a Bach chorale, the first bit of Widor's 6th—having taken into account the manuals available—and I improvised a prelude and fugue on a chorale melody, memorized after it was played twice for me. Someone asked for the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, and I had placed myself on the bench, taken by a playing frenzy, when Paul Hoehn rose almost apologetically, saying with his usual courtesy that I must not play another note. As an aside, I said to him: "Let me play, I feel like playing..." [He replied,] "Mademoiselle, you know how much I would like you to continue! But it's enough; I am worried."

Upon leaving, we had tea with several of the Hoehns' friends, then headed home by car. I was invited to a Bach festival, to which I was escorted after dining in one of Zürich's great restaurants.

Today, after writing one last time to Dupré, I packed my bags. I have found in Nelly and Paul Hoehn all the fond regard that Dupré's closest friends could be expected to offer me and, I believe, also the start of true affection.

Letter to Yolande:⁴⁷⁸

477. When referring to Saint Gall in her diary entry for Sept. 30, Demessieux also meant the town of St. Gallen.

478. AM 4S15.

Zürich, 23 September 1946

My dear Yoyo,

Despite the fact I told your good priest that I was going to write to you, I hadn't yet had enough time to do as I wished. But this evening M^r and M^{me} Hoehn were invited out as a family, and for the first time I have an evening all to myself that I am going to spend with you. I think of you a lot and worry about your hand. I can't wait to find out if you are feeling better; but I also believe that this will take some time. I felt a little depressed having to leave you so quickly. When the airplane departed, and I thought to myself that you wouldn't be there upon my return, I could have cried.⁴⁷⁹ We were so rushed that we could not chat as much as I would have liked, nor make plans for this winter. My [second series of] Pleyel concerts will be between January and June [1947]. Can you come to one or more of them? It would be such a joy for me to see you. Anyway, come as you are able.

Now, to my news. The plane trip was as splendid as the "take-off" you described to me in your letter.⁴⁸⁰ [Upon arrival,] I was received in a truly... touching way. You can't begin to imagine how Dupré's friends are lavishing attention on me. They [the Hoehns] are exceptionally well placed in Zürich society and used this to hold receptions in my honour, inviting some musicians and introducing me in milieus where one word suffices to launch someone—so much so that after one week the chatter [échos], so expertly set in motion, had spread through the entire city, you see. And people were sharing them, as if news, with M^r Hoehn in the course of his business [dealings]. Well, he raised his arms to the sky: "Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle! Where are we going!!"

In Zürich, I played several times, on the St-Pierre organ, at the two cathedrals, and in the Tonhalle (the concert hall where Dupré had his most recent triumph in May). These are 60- to 80-stop instruments of a design new to me and to which I am now accustomed. At three of these places, the organists are Dupré's students, and oh so enthusiastic. When I play at one place or another, it is the gathering place for these gentlemen, the organists, and their families, their friends, and friends of M^r Hoehn, etc., etc. The result: I have already performed the major part of my last Pleyel concerts and a portion of the next! Without counting the improvisations. I was dumbfounded to see that right off the bat people declared themselves won over. You know what I mean. They all say that this is exceptional in the same way that Dupré is exceptional. I've committed to memory the traits people say we share: clarity, memory, technique, attack. And they [people] are transfixed because sometimes I play for them what they request, and always by heart.

That's not all. With M^r and M^{me} Hoehn, I also went to Bern where I played at the [2] Cathedral, the Église française, and [on] the organ at a home for the elderly. We also went to Fribourg where I played at the Cathedral. Tomorrow at the [Zürich] Tonhalle, I will play an hour-long recital for the Cathedral organist who is organ professor at the Conservatory and wants to bring his students. And, for Saturday, I have been asked to play at a monastery in the Zürich area.⁴⁸¹ Several official concerts have already been organized, but the

479. Though not corroborated by the diary (which has no entries between Aug. 25 and Sept. 18), it appears from this remark that Yolande Demessieux visited her family in Paris in late August and early September, including the day of Demessieux's departure by air for Switzerland, presumably on Sept. 1 or 2.

480. The "take off" described by Yolande was, presumably, figurative.

481. According to the diary entries of Sept. 27 and 30, the day of Sat., Sept. 28 was spent in St. Gallen, location of the Abbey

Swiss government has invited me for a month's vacation with this proviso: no work or giving concerts during this month. That is what M^r Hoehn explained to me.

In short, [and] to be thoroughly honest, people are saying that I represent the French school at the same level as our Dupré, and that I am his number 1 disciple. Two rumors are also circulating: [concerning] St-Sulpice and my *Études*. This letter is much too immodest. But I like to inform you frankly. All this is what Dupré prepared here, backed by his friends. Their [the Duprés'] news is faithfully conveyed to me. They are so happy for me, it's incredible. And they are doing marvellously. Anyway, time marches on.

I've been "hot" for a week now.⁴⁸² I tell you this in passing; all is well, I assure you: eight days ago today, I noticed I had a boil at the top of my right leg. After 3 days it was no longer a boil at all but a swelling, red and terribly painful. Finally, the evening before the Bern trip (!) I decided to mention it to M^{me} Hoehn. The doctor came right away and said that it was an infected gland. You know what was going on in my head.⁴⁸³ In bed, fever, and so on and so forth. I pleaded with him to let me go to Bern. He said in that case it would have to be opened and that only afterwards would he answer. I agreed, and it happened that evening. All went fine. Drainage tube⁴⁸⁴ all night, dressing [the wound] in the morning and—hobbling—[I went] from one station to another by taxi. Then from Bern to Fribourg, and we returned to Zürich around midnight. During the little procedure, I didn't say "ouch," and the doctor, who is an accomplished musician, exclaimed, "Heroic! What one won't do for art's sake!" M^{me} Hoehn pampered me, as you can well imagine. After that, when, as if nothing had happened, I unleashed upon them the Dorian Toccata—and big works the whole day long—they were astounded, and continuously hovered around me with a thousand thoughtful gestures truly worthy of friends. In Fribourg, in the middle of the Toccata in D minor, "Papa Hoehn" exclaimed, "I am happy! happy! Yesterday I could have cried." To make a long story short, the doctor visited me 4 times and said today that all is going well. Even the fear! I said nothing to Papa and Maman, nor to Dupré. Inasmuch as it was a matter of a gland, the doctor told me that it had nothing to do with my breast.

I return to Paris [on] Thursday the 1st by train. I sent back my return air ticket after the huge fright [fameuses émotions] ...⁴⁸⁵ And there wasn't a seat on Swissair, which was packed—[and] which could become dangerous. I leave at 8:00 in the morning and arrive around 11:00 in the evening.

Cathedral of Saint Gall, which, being a dissolved abbey (and though located a good 85 km by road from Zürich), may be what Demessieux had in mind when she mentioned "a monastery in the Zürich area."

482. The word "hot" in quotation marks may be a reference both to the subject of the previous paragraph—how her playing had been received in Switzerland—and to the malady she described in this paragraph. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this suggestion.)

483. She would have feared that the painful swelling was cancer, as in her breast.

484. Original: "Un drin," which appears to be a misspelling of the French word *drain*.

485. The "huge fright" that caused Demessieux to give up her return flight ticket may have been a reaction to a pair of Air France plane crashes that occurred shortly after she traveled to Switzerland by plane. According to <<http://www.planecrashinfo.com/1946/1946.htm>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Air France planes crashed on Sept. 3 at Holtug, Denmark, and on Sept. 4 at Le Bourget, France. It is conceivable that Demessieux never again travelled by plane. According to Claudine Verchère (Demessieux's secretary in the 1960s), in a personal conversation in June 2004, Demessieux eschewed air travel in reaction to the death in a plane crash of French violin virtuoso Ginette Neveu. According to <<https://www.thirteen.org/publicarts/violin/neveu.html>>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, Neveu died at age 30 on Oct. 28, 1949.

I've truly a thousand things more to tell you. Oh! If only you were here! Anyway, this self-centred life is tiresome. I think of you constantly and kiss you tenderly.

Your Nanon.

[P.S.] Fond kisses to Isabelle.

Wednesday 2 October 1946, Paris

Travelled by train all day yesterday. Left the [576] Hoehns with sincere emotion; M^{me} Hoehn was crying. Reunited with my parents at the [train] station. No time to go into detail. Huge [amount of] mail waiting for me, serious stuff.[486]⁴⁸⁶

Sunday 6 October 1946

Reunited with St-Sulpice and my friends. The warmth of St-Sulpice!

Friday 11 October 1946

Tried out the Sacré-Cœur [organ] renovated by Perroux. Solid; symphonic in both details and the ensemble. Perroux showed me the inside [of the instrument].

Sunday 13 October 1946

Paul Hoehn in Paris. He lunched with us yesterday as if we were old friends. After that, [he] spent an hour at St-Esprit playing the little organ.

This morning, I offered him the keyboards of St-Sulpice at High Mass, having asked Dupré's permission. He lunched with us again, happy and "proud" of his feat. A noble heart. This was "a big day for him," he said.

[577] Saturday 19 October 1946

Received Berveiller at Meudon. He misses the master and wanted to see the dear organ hall again. A true friend. [I] played his Prelude and Fugue, despite his protestations.⁴⁸⁷ Played the "Meditations" 1, 2, 4, and 5.

Thursday 31 October 1946

Rolande Falcinelli recital at Chaillot. On her program, my 5th and 6th *Études* (their first performance in

486. This mail likely included correspondence concerning plans for recitals in the U.K. and elsewhere.

487. Jean Berveiller was a businessman and musician who specialized in jazz piano. According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Berveiller>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, he studied harmony and composition with Dupré for seven years. I find his name in Dupré's list of private students for the academic years 1940–1941, 1942–1943, and 1945–1946 (BnF, Rés. Vmc, ms. 15, Marcel Dupré private students of 1924–1946). Although some of Berveiller's compositions for organ were published, the mentioned Prelude and Fugue does not appear to be extant.

Paris since I played them). Rolande showed off Louis XV heels. Progress in pedaling, but she plays only with effort. Serious work done on the *Études*. Played Dupré's *Suite* in F very badly;⁴⁸⁸ she understood nothing about the Finale and is not a performer. Lively applause after the *Études*. In the foyer, where I was first to arrive, I thanked her warmly for having played my music. She was very cold, and I had to force my way in to say this, rather hurt by her reception of me.

On the other hand, I was experiencing something I had not planned and that filled me with emotion. People who were soon entering the foyer spontaneously came to me. One might have thought there was a misunderstanding. Many were unknown to me, and others were introduced to me. When I realized what was happening and that [578] Rolande was completely isolated, I gathered my parents and Guerner, faithful as always: "Let's go... It's time to leave."

Berveiller had left at the last note, having spent his time smoking in the corridor—except during the *Études*. After the 6th *Étude*, Guerner, sitting behind me, was moved, saying to me, "Now, there's grandeur!" The chance occurrence of this concert has made me see myself more clearly and, without admitting this to anyone, I feel real confidence.

Monday 4 November 1946

Lunched at Claude Cézan's with Fernand Divoire whose opera libretto, proposed through C. Cézan, I decided to refuse. A disgustingly snobbish circle. F. Divoire, speaking of "improvisation," asked me,

"Is there really such a thing as an improvisation?" to which I responded calmly and straight away:

"I can certainly understand what you mean. There is such a thing as an improvisation when there is an improviser, and there is no improvisation when there is no improviser. An improviser cannot not improvise."

"That's obviously the best answer," replied C. Cézan, rather [579] stiffly, while Divoire looked at me with the expression of someone who has let his mask slip.

I left as early as possible and rushed to Meudon to recover!

Excerpts from a letter by Jeanne Dupré to Jean Guerner, from the Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Texas.⁴⁸⁹

12 November 1946

. . . In October, 29 concerts in 27 cities (two in the same city in Philadelphia and Monmouth) . . .

We are overjoyed to be heading for California, such beautiful country! And I'll be so very happy to once again hear *De Profundis* [Dupré's Opus 14 for soloists, choirs, orchestra, and organ] on Sunday [in Hollywood].

488. The *Suite* was likely Dupré's Op. 39, published in 1945, and a reworking of four of the twelve *Études* Dupré originally wrote to advance Demessieux's technique. The key of F minor applies only to the first movement, an *Allegro agitato*.

489. Dupré 2002a, 28–29 and 29 n.2.

Perhaps you already know that, unfortunately, our dream of being back for Midnight Mass has been foiled by maritime strikes. After once again reserving our cabin on the U.S. ocean liner "America" for Dec. 16, in the end we cannot embark before December 27. We are frustrated, but we must simply resign ourselves. We'll meet you, then, at St-Sulpice, on the first Sunday of January...

Wednesday 13 November 1946

Yesterday, went to a recital by Lélia Gousseau. Warmly received. Beautiful pianist.

Friday 22 November 1946

Yesterday, dined at the home of M^r and M^{me} Berveiller, with [pianist] Jean Doyen and his wife, the Durand-Textes, and Félix Raugel and his wife. A long, interesting evening. Doyen and Raugel immediately feeling rapport with me. Doyen was asked to play. Very musical. Agile technique, like a gifted child. Very "childlike," himself.

Around 1:00 AM, Berveiller drove me home after dropping the Doyens at their door. Chatted about plans for concerts.

Saturday 23 November 1946

Chatted for an hour with Van Wyck, who is in Paris for a few days. He wants [English concert organist] Thalben-Ball to hear me, and I've absolutely refused, for all the right reasons. Stubborn, but correct. He was struck by my frankness. For a moment, I [580] thought our discussion would turn angry, but it changed course and he understood. He was very enthusiastic and wants to present me in England in a big way [*par la grande porte*]. He's very proud that permission was granted by Cardinal Griffin for me to play at Westminster Cathedral. For Thalben-Ball's benefit, I compromised by saying I will go with Van Wyck to [meet him at] Notre-Dame tomorrow where he is playing for radio—a simple program.

Friday 29 November 1946

Jean Berveiller spent two hours at our house this evening and, upon my request, showed me his compositions. Chatted at length.

Sunday 1 December 1946

Back at St-Sulpice for all of December. The "last" month...!

Friday 13 December 1946

Yesterday, J. Berveiller was over chatting for two hours, again in genuine friendship. Seriously discussed his compositions. He took with him my Sonata for violin and piano,⁴⁹⁰ which he has wanted to play for a long time.

In the evening, I went to Mireille Auxière's place to hear her play Chopin's 24 Preludes. [581] Outstanding.

490. Mentioned in diary entries for Jan. 30 and Mar. 19, 1941.

She has definitely “matured,” and her personal style has taken shape. If she finally achieves consistency one day, she will be a striking, first-class artist. She made quite an impression.

Today, I had a meeting at Eugène Bigot’s to discuss the possibility of my playing a Lamoureux concert (Berveiller had put all this in motion). I found the door shut and waited for half an hour in the stairwell. At that point, I would have left if Berveiller hadn’t decided to fetch me by car, which he did. Astonishment. We toured Paris while thinking [about what could have happened], and I returned to Bigot’s house where someone finally told me that he was waiting for me at Gaveau.⁴⁹¹ By then, it was 7:00 PM. J. Berveiller suggested driving me there. I refused; he was in agreement, and we returned to my house to finish the evening with my parents.

Sunday 15 December 1946

Yesterday, telephoned Bigot and let him apologize throughout the call. He is overwhelmed with work and said he’ll see me “after the holidays.”

Today I went with J. Berveiller to hear Honegger’s Ninth Symphony and *La Danse des morts*.⁴⁹² The 9th truly has the impact of [582] the Gospels. It is modern, or more precisely it is timeless, like the *Divine Comedy*. Profoundly moved by the philosophical message of this work. From the point of view of musical emotion, the first piece saw straight into the human heart. As for the last [piece], it is a prophecy of the Initiated.⁴⁹³

Excerpts from a letter from Jeanne Dupré to Jean Guerner on a postcard showing Lake Tahoe, California:⁴⁹⁴

19 December 1946

491. According to Simeone 2000, 189, the Salle Gaveau, in the 8th arrondissement, is a 1,000-seat concert hall with studios attached. As noted in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salle_Gaveau>, accessed Nov. 27, 2022, in the 1940s the hall still contained an organ built by the Mutin-Cavaillé-Coll firm.

492. Demessieux was in error as to the numbering of the symphony: Honegger composed only five, the last in 1950. Both Honegger’s third (*Symphonie liturgique*, which was likely the symphony Demessieux heard this day) and his fourth (*Deliciae basiliensis*) symphonies date from 1946. The same composer’s oratorio *La Danse des morts*, text by Paul Claudel, dates from 1938.

493. The “prophecy of the Initiated” is probably a reference to a passage in the apocalyptic writings in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel—these being one of the bases of Claudel’s text for *La Danse des morts*. According to Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 153–61, “the Initiated” as a name for Ezekiel refers to his having endured a long and elaborate initiation experience, described in Ezekiel 1:1–3:27, to become a prophet of Yahweh.

494. Dupré 2002a, 29–30.

. . . Now, at last, this grand tour ended the day before yesterday, with the 70th concert.⁴⁹⁵ To the very end, it will have been a triumphant success.

I'm writing these last words to you on the train taking us from Florida to New York, where we'll be caught up in a multitude of meetings, tasks, and preparations for departure. Our short visit to Florida was delightful. . .

. . . So, we embark on the 27th. See you soon, [Sunday] January 5, for sure. With our fond regards for Madame Guerner. . .

Wednesday 25 December 1946

Christmas. Dupré still not able to return. Played Midnight Mass at St-Sulpice.⁴⁹⁶

[End of notebook VIII]

495. According to Murray 1985, 189, Dupré played 74 concerts on this tour, and the last was on Dec. 16 in Jacksonville, Fla. According to the numbering of Dupré's concert programs preserved in BnF Music Dept., Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1503–1582b, if one includes the six recitals played at the University of Chicago, Dupré played 81 concerts in North America. The last (no. 1582b) was on Dec. 19 at St. John's (Episcopal) in Hagerstown, Md.

496. This is the final entry in the last notebook containing the diary, even though notebook VIII has more, blank pages. A later page of the same notebook lists the specification (incomplete) of the Stiftskirche organ in Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

9. Commentary on the Diary and Letters of 1940-1946 and their Aftermath

*Papa, Maman, and I visited Marcel Dupré in Meudon . . .
The master had a long conversation with my parents,
impossible to reproduce in detail.
My future, if God so wills it, is laid out, from this moment.
An artistic pact is established between Dupré and me.*
—Diary entry of June 25, 1941

As I shall describe below, the narrative of Demessieux's 1940s diary, by eschewing domestic and bodily concerns, has something in common with a coming-of-age story that a man might write to describe his past, youthful experiences leading to his career success. Focusing as it does on the course of events by which Demessieux was transformed from apprentice musician to concert artist and published composer, the diary overlaps in genre with autobiography. It also gives pride of place to a very special relationship, that between herself and Marcel Dupré. Other themes to be examined include creation of her own identity, Dupré as mentor, Dupré's personality, and the aftermath of the diary.

An overview

Demessieux's 1940s diary was composed in a series of eight notebooks. The first establishes, as per its opening epigraph, her motivation for writing—"for my personal recollection"—and the approach to be taken—all to be told "without commentary and without hindsight." Demessieux does, by and large, refrain from reflection upon events and conversations, which is unlike her practice in 1934–1938.¹ As I shall discuss below, this also makes the 1940s diary different from most women's journals.

One of its most salient characteristics is that throughout Demessieux logged the names of Parisian musicians and other highly respected persons with whom she came in contact between 1940 and 1946. In fact, she named distinguished persons encountered so frequently that her text has something in common with a memoir, because as well as being autobiographical it becomes a record of the period in which she lived.

Literary theorists who study autobiographical writing as a genre, including diaries, have identified general ways in which women's writing about themselves tends to differ from men's. For one, women authors are more apt than men to pour out their feelings, that is, be "confessional" in style (as is Demessieux's diary of 1934–1938).² For another, only women are likely to log domestic duties and events. As Valerie Raoul puts it,

Subjects usually considered too trivial for inclusion in "a book" are the mainstay of [women's] diaries, which frequently focus on the domestic scene. What is normally considered marginal in a man's world becomes central.³

Both these characteristics typical of woman's self-writing—confession and domesticity—are absent from Demessieux's 1940s diary.⁴ Instead, she dealt here with the grander themes in her life, to be examined below.

Given how Demessieux opens the diary (the initial entry, for December 8, 1940, records her first time playing the St-Sulpice organ), she apparently conceived it as an account of events relating to her development as a musician. Moreover, following the December 11 entry, Demessieux inserted a description of events that had taken place on November 30, 1940, when she had learned that Dupré was favoured by some as the next director of the Conservatory, and promptly ran to Meudon to convey this to him and his wife. Thus, the diary becomes also an account of her increasing acceptance into the social milieu of the Duprés. In other descriptions of her visits to the Dupré home, the frequency with which she repeats, "We had afternoon tea" or "The master accompanied me back to the station" is consistent with this theme.

Both emphases, career building and social climbing, are maintained throughout the 1940s diary. With respect to her own, immediate family, Demessieux mentions only occasionally a birthday or name day, the death of her grandmother in 1942, or a visit from her sister in 1945. Suggesting that the hours she spent teaching and practising

were peripheral to her career development, she omits all reference to these repetitive tasks. Instead, the reader is provided with lists of organ repertoire she performed, and names of people who heard her perform on Sunday mornings—ostensibly because these describe Demessieux's growth as an organist, or growth of her reputation as an organist.

Even her health, if referred to at all, is brought up only indirectly—as in, “I told him I’d had a fever for several days” (February 5, 1941)—and most likely because it had an impact on Demessieux's career development. For instance, in the context of the Duprés' plans for her debut recital, she describes a health condition, doing so parenthetically:

Mammy [Jeannette Dupré] is very worried about my health: (a lump in my breast that, regrettably, caused me to suffer this afternoon, and for which I am being treated . . .) (March 16, 1945).

Also contributing to the impression that detailing Demessieux's career and social advancement is the main objective of the diary is the paucity of references to the German Occupation of Paris and events of World War II. After all, the first four and a half years (December 1940 to May 1945) overlap with the World-War-II period. In this way, Demessieux's 1940s diary is unlike other published journals of young French women writing during the war:⁵ Demessieux makes scant mention of the German presence and says little about war-time privations.⁶ Granted, there are scattered, brief references to air raid alerts (in 1943 and 1944) and bombardments when they occurred in the Demessieux family's neighbourhood, as well as in the Paris suburbs or Paris generally (April 21, June 1, and August 27, 1944), and when the bombardment involved Dupré's city of birth, Rouen (June 6, 1944). The sustained exception is the series of short, vivid entries dated from August 19 through 29, 1944 that describe horrors of the final days before the liberation of Paris, such as gunfire in the streets. More distant events of the war, however, are captured by Demessieux only in reference to the Allies' invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, and brief mention, on December 22, 1944, of “a terrible German offensive,” referred to again as “the German advance,” three days later.

As identified by literary theorists, it is, nevertheless, typical of autobiographical writing of a woman, more so than that of a man, to devote a large amount of attention to her relationship with another person.⁷ In Demessieux's 1940s diary that individual is Marcel Dupré, to whose family she also gives attention. She not only details Dupré's actions directly related to her career development, but many of his other activities, such as recitals and concert tours, are also communicated. When writing in her diary, Demessieux especially treasured Dupré's words by recording them at length, whenever possible. As if wanting to retain thoughts to live by, on a back page of volume 1, following the entry for November 29, 1941, she even compiled a list of aphorisms, most of which are words of Dupré. Indicative of the importance Demessieux attached to her close relationship with all three members of the Dupré family, many of her entries express deep concern for them, as when one of them was ill (e.g., June 23, 1944), or a bombardment had come close to their Meudon home (e.g., April 21, 1944). In fact, Demessieux acted out this concern in telephone calls and visits, which she considered important enough to be noted in writing.

“I was climbing to my highest plane”—Demessieux and the narrated “I”

Like the letters and diary entries of 1932–1940, Demessieux's 1940s diary has the implicit function of sketching the character of the narrated “I”—that is, fashioning her self-identity. Unlike the earlier writings, however, the 1940s document does not display her love of small jests and touches of sarcasm: it is entirely serious in tone. What remains the same is Demessieux's confidence in her abilities as a performer. Now, that is, between 1940 and 1946, this self-assuredness is always a reaction to her playing in a particular setting, whether a church service, for an audience at Meudon, or in a public recital. Rarely is there mention of something that went wrong. During a Vespers service at St-Sulpice, for the last of the Magnificat versets, “the cornet did not sound: I had forgotten to set the piston.” But she finished the account with a positive spin: “I salvaged the situation; Papa, who never suspected a thing, told me he liked this verset the best...!” (July 27, 1941). On twenty other occasions, beginning with July 15, 1942, Demessieux notes in her diary that she was “in good form,” “in very good form,” or even “in extraordinarily good form”—implying that she was satisfied, or more than satisfied, with her playing.

In fact, over the years of the diary, Demessieux portrays herself as becoming ever more confident as a performer. Summing up of her eleventh trial recital at Meudon, she notes, “Tremendous mastery. . . [I]n artistic terms, no more unknowns lay before me” (December 10, 1943). Or consider this remark about the first recital of her Pleyel series:

Right from the Passacaglia, I was climbing to my highest plane and then maintained it with the greatest authority of which I'm capable (February 26, 1946).

In other words, through the process of writing, Demessieux constructed her magnificent command as an organist to be part of her identity.

Two other important aspects of the narrated "I" in the diary of 1940–1946 are her evolution from insecurity to confidence as a composer, and her fierce loyalty to Marcel Dupré. The first will be examined immediately below.

"She has a personality and, for that reason, she suffers"—Demessieux's early experiences as a composer

During the first six months of the diary (December 1940 to June 1941), Demessieux suffered a crisis of confidence as far as her abilities in composition were concerned. It was only gradually, over the following five years, that she came to terms with her fear of failure in what she, as a professional musician, considered to be an essential skill.

Her lack of confidence was exacerbated in early 1941 by the negative reaction of examination and competition juries to her most recent submissions for her Conservatory class. This was because Demessieux's latest compositions had an experimental sound to them. Her violin sonata, for instance, termed "scandalous, hideous!" by a juror (January 30, 1941), was characterized by angular melodies and unresolved dissonance.⁸ As noted in the same entry, Henri Busser, her composition teacher, said to her after the hearing, "all you wrote were wrong notes. But during the first years, it's always that way."

Receiving no constructive criticism from Busser, Demessieux sought advice from trusted mentors. Specifically, these were the Gallon brothers, with whom she had studied harmony and counterpoint in the 1930s, and Dupré, who would by 1943 take over as her principal mentor in composition.

Asked by Noël Gallon what composers' music she most admired, Demessieux replied, "Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner and the romantics generally" (January 31, 1941). At a subsequent meeting, she agreed with him that compositions such as her violin sonata were not a true expression of herself (paraphrased from February 5, 1941). Yet, Demessieux did not record that she resolved to compose something whose melody and harmony were closer to the styles she had used in her harmony and counterpoint courses.

It was Dupré who told Demessieux that in her recent compositions she was searching for herself; his advice was "be yourself" (January 31 and May 16, 1941). Once again, she did not explore in her diary how she might be truer to herself as a composer. Neither was Jean Gallon's suggestion taken up—that instead of employing a dissonant style, she should try to write for "the man in the street" (February 10, 1941).

At the same time, Jean Gallon complimented her on her distinctive voice as a composer: "Jeanne Demessieux has a personality [that is her own]" (February 5, 1941). Her other mentor, Dupré, concluded, "In composition . . . she has a personality[,] and, for that reason, she suffers" (August 10, 1941).

Demessieux's state of confusion regarding her compositional style is further emphasized by brief mention of a recital of works by Busser's students where her violin sonata was favourably received by an audience (March 19, 1941). To this entry she later added a footnote, writing, "Marcel Delannoy, in *Les Nouveaux Temps*, demolished me, ferociously." Delannoy belonged to a faction of composer-critics championing new compositions that were easy for audiences to understand, a preference of which Demessieux may or may not have been aware, depending upon how closely she followed Delannoy's writing. In his review of the recital, entitled "Quelques 'Jeunes,'" he stated:

As for Mlle Jeanne Demessieux, her Sonata for violin and piano is discouraging. Its incoherence is such that the ear . . . registers no surprises. Intentional nihilism or congenital lack of musicality? With my whole heart I hope that a new work will soon lead me to contradict myself.⁹

According to the diary entry for June 17, 1941, Delannoy subsequently served as a jury member for the composition competition at which Demessieux presented two movements of a symphony (performed by four pianists at two pianos) and a song. She recorded the following about this event:

A deathly silence during the Allegro. The Adagio began auspiciously; but Busser, having taken an adjudicator aside, talked, nonstop, in a loud voice, from the first note until the last, without any response from the other. The same during the song. A sense of failure was in the air.

Of the extant official comments, some appear to have been penned by the Conservatory director, Henri Rabaud,

and are difficult to decipher.¹⁰ The first and last lines are readable, however: “*failli – mal orchestré*” (“failed – poorly orchestrated”) and “OMoi! OMoi!!”

The June 1941 composition competition turned out to be the last such event in which Demessieux participated. Unable to solve the problem of how to succeed as a composer by changing teachers (which was not permitted by the Conservatory), Demessieux decided to take a year’s leave of absence from the class. A year later (1942), and after discussion with Dupré—whose own purpose was served by having her concentrate on her career as a performer—Demessieux decided not to return to the class after all. By doing so, she abandoned her dream of winning the Rome competition.

Demessieux’s next documented attempt at composition came more than a year after that decision. In December 1943 she drafted an organ piece, *Nativité*, and played it for Dupré. He described it as “personal” and “written for your own technique” (December 31, 1943).¹¹ This appears to have spawned an idea: that Demessieux as a composer of organ music could contribute to their collaborative effort to create a new breed of virtuoso organist. To that end, two months later Dupré requested that Demessieux produce a set of six études for organ: “I tell you, you must write them for art and for France” (February 25, 1944). She did, modelling them in part on the études Dupré had recently composed for the development of her virtuosity, and with the aim of giving to the feet the sorts of difficulties that Liszt and Chopin gave to the hands.¹² As Demessieux gradually completed each piece (“one in thirds, one in sixths”), Dupré, sensing that the harmonic style was beyond what an average audience could understand, encouraged her thus, according to the diary entry of July 14, 1944:

“Do not blame yourself that your excellent ears can hear what to others is inaccessible. I repeat, you are very gifted! Too gifted in aural perception, technique, and reading; too gifted for composition...”

Demessieux completed the six études in August 1944. Meanwhile, Dupré had used his influence to get Bornemann’s promise that he would publish the revolutionary set, which he did, though not until 1946.¹³ This success finally established her confidence as a composer for the organ.

Did Demessieux eventually find a way of accepting what had happened to her in the Conservatory organ class in 1941? Almost five years later, November 11, 1945, she echoed a pronouncement of her mentors by declaring in conversation:

“I am very individualistic; I cannot put up with others trying to influence me, and because my music is individualistic too, I almost got myself thrown out of the Conservatory.”

This statement arguably illustrates that at the age of 24 Demessieux not only acknowledged the individualism that described her as a composer, but also applied it to her entire personality. In other words, she had added to her self-identity unwillingness to conform to what most others did and thought.

A further aspect of Demessieux’s self-identity created in the 1940s diary will be discussed later in this chapter under the heading “Reciprocal confidence”—Demessieux’s intense loyalty to Marcel Dupré.

“His own equal”—Dupré, the mentor

As was elaborated on in Chapter 5, in 1938 Demessieux had hoped that Magda Tagliaferro would agree to guide her towards a professional debut and help ensure her career as a concert pianist. However, this never came about, perhaps because Tagliaferro was fully occupied with her own career. In June 1941, Demessieux—having spent the previous three years earning her First Prize in organ, not having advanced in a career as a pianist, and feeling, moreover, discouraged as a composer—was having trouble imagining her future as a musician, particularly during World War II and the German Occupation.

Meanwhile, Marcel Dupré in 1941 was in a very different position from Tagliaferro’s: he had achieved every goal of his career except one, according to the diary entry of June 22, 1941. Specifically, Dupré had told Demessieux of

his longstanding desire to mold his own equal, a peer capable of having a brilliant career. He believed he had found this in Marcel Lanquetuit, and procured an engagement in America for him; but despite a good start, Lanquetuit gave up on his career. He [then] found rich skill and promise [*riche nature*] in [Olivier] Messiaen and procured an engagement in Brussels for him; Messiaen refused, wishing to make his career as a composer and only wanting to be an organist to play his own works, in the way he wanted.

The example of Messiaen, in particular, arguably illustrates that fulfilment of Dupré’s remaining goal required

not only an unusually gifted candidate; it also depended upon that person's willingness to turn away from other goals towards emulating Dupré's career. In other words, Dupré wished to create an organist-composer in his own image.

Unlike Messiaen, who had already achieved success as a composer when he won his First Prize in organ, Demessieux had no obvious career to pursue next. Granted, she could accept more students and thereby, at least, contribute more to the family income. This would, however, put on hold her aspiration for a career as a concert artist. She could also bide her time at St-Esprit in the hope of opportunity for a more prestigious (and better paying) church post, but realization of this would be dependent upon luck. Accepting a concert engagement from the Association des Amis de l'Orgue and hoping that this might lead to other invitations to perform recitals in Paris and France made sense as well. As a concert organist she would undoubtedly have had to be prepared for a lot of competition, including from her female peers.

It was at that point, that is, when Demessieux was feeling at loose ends in 1941, that Dupré proposed to fashion her into his equal. He appears to have had faith in her ability to realize this goal because as a student in his organ class she had accomplished every requirement with seeming ease. According to the diary entry of June 25, 1941, Dupré explained his intentions, and what would be required of Demessieux, in a long conversation with her parents (in Demessieux's presence, though she did not quote from it). Evidently, he did not simply propose setting up a debut recital or professional concert engagement for Demessieux as he had tried for Lanquetuit and Messiaen. Instead, Dupré appears to have intuited that, as a woman in a male-dominated society, Demessieux needed to be better than any of her peers, particularly her peers among men.

To that end, Dupré would likely have explained his master plan: that prior to Demessieux's debut concert, he would first make her a concert organist equivalent to himself. The work would be of the nature of a collaboration, with his teaching fees waved, and involve Demessieux in an enormous amount of effort, such that any other new employment for her would be ruled out over a period of years. Perhaps Dupré had specified, already, something Demessieux noted in the diary on July 23, 1941—that he saw her as potentially superior to every contemporary concert organist he could think of, female and male, French and foreign, thereby giving her an edge.

The diary stops short of detailing precisely what Dupré shared with Demessieux about organ technique that would make her stand out among others. Instead, the entry of July 8, 1941 contains this intriguing paragraph:

He [Dupré] revealed to me the secret of his technique, which I do not dare put into words. MD: "I would like to teach it, were it not impossible. It's a matter of initiation [imitation], of instinct. What's needed is to collaborate; I could only do it with you. I was a child when my father discovered, seeing me play, this curious innovation, which he hastened to cultivate. . . I have never spoken of it to anyone but him. I would not have spoken of it to anyone had not Providence led you to me to consider as my dear daughter to whom I will confide everything I know."

In the last sentence Dupré appears to be saying that Demessieux was chosen as the inheritor of his craft of organ playing. The extent to which he believed that he was passing on a legacy shines through in another of his statements Demessieux shared in the same diary entry: "He retraced the lineage of our tradition of the organ, naming, 'Lemmens, Guilmant, Widor, myself, and you.'" In other words, Dupré wished to form one French concert organist, Jeanne Demessieux, to be his unique successor in an exclusive line of French organists descended from the influential Belgian Lemmens.

It is difficult to imagine that any other holder of a Conservatory First Prize in organ who had a healthy self-confidence in their present abilities, and parents who were worldly wise, would have submitted so whole-heartedly to Dupré's plan. Yet, the Demessieux family did so by accepting his offer and agreeing to the regimen of work Dupré had laid out for their daughter; Demessieux would later compare it to being "raised in a hothouse" (May 1, 1942). Clearly, Étienne and Madeleine Demessieux also shared their daughter's ambition and, like her, were completely trusting of someone from Dupré's social class.

According to the diary, the aim seems to have been to enhance Demessieux's organ technique and command of the repertoire to the point that they were equivalent to Dupré's. On August 11, 1942 she wrote:

For the first time Dupré has encouraged me to hasten the pace of my work. He wants me to have finished the repertoire by December, at the same time as he will have finished his études. In a flash, he made me realize why

it is important that I do in a year and half “what he did in thirty years,” given the height of the springboard from which I am being launched.

However, nowhere in the diary does Demessieux shed light on contextual questions to which modern readers, especially, would have appreciated answers. It seems to me highly unlikely that she was asked what additional training she felt she needed at that time, or whether she would like to compete for one of the Paris organists’ posts that was available during the early 1940s. Demessieux does not comment on the fact that she was not free to decide when she felt ready to give her first public recital either. Anyone less tenacious, loyal, and obedient than Demessieux would probably not have followed every single one of Dupré’s directives as closely as she did.

At the end of almost five years of hard work, Demessieux’s diary entry of February 26, 1946 records that she made a point of going to see Dupré at the Conservatory the day after one of her public recitals to thank him for all he had done for her. She clearly attributed her extraordinary success to his generosity. Dupré replied to her thanks by saying what her triumph meant to him: “it is I who thank you, because you have avenged me! And you understand the full meaning of that word.” In other words, by creating a sensational new virtuoso organist—one who was not simply a young duplicate of himself but displayed a distinctive personality as a composer for the organ—Dupré arguably felt he had answered his critics who accused him of being stuck in the past. I wonder if vengeance was a goal Dupré had been working towards ever since June of 1941.

Though his motive may have been self-serving, by 1946 Dupré had certainly fulfilled his side of the agreement made with the Demessieux family. He had not only coached Demessieux to her superlative technical capability, her Paris debut, and her first publication; he had also given her a ready-made international career by speaking of her to his patrons in the U.S. (Frederick Marriott, mentioned September 22, 1944) and Switzerland (Paul Hoehn, November 11, 1945 and July 28, 1946), as well as to his concert agent in the U.K., Wilfrid Van Wyck (August 22, 1946). Meanwhile, representation of Demessieux was taken on by Dupré’s Paris concert agent, Charles Kiesgen, who explored the possibility of a recording contract with a U.K. company (May 12 and 17, 1946). As a result, while Dupré was touring North America in the summer and autumn of 1946—and introducing Demessieux to audiences by playing one of her *Études*—she became known in Switzerland by means of informal recitals arranged by Paul Hoehn (entries of September 18–30 and letter of September 23, 1946). Also that autumn, Van Wyck met with Demessieux personally in Paris to discuss her debut in England; Van Wyck would remain Demessieux’s U.K. agent until her death in 1968, making him the enduring result of Dupré’s work in promoting Demessieux’s career.¹⁴

“The brain of a man”—Dupré and Demessieux as collaborators

The notion that Dupré and Demessieux were collaborators rather than teacher and student beginning in the summer of 1941 is first hinted at in the diary entry of July 8, 1941 (quoted above) and confirmed regularly thereafter, beginning with July 20, 1941, and extending to December 1944.

In this spirit, Dupré entrusted to Demessieux, between October 1942 and December 1944, the correction of proofs for his new compositions and his editions. He also shared with her the gradual progress made on the installation of the registration system for his organ in his Meudon recital hall. Moreover, Dupré began to speak of their shared project of composing music that took organ technique forward in virtuosity and was meant for what he called “the organ of the future” (August 11, 1942). Eventually, they played each other’s newly composed virtuosic pieces: Dupré learned some of Demessieux’s *Études* and Demessieux learned Dupré’s *Opuses* 39–41.¹⁵

Modern readers should keep in mind that both lived at a time when professional collaboration between a woman and a man was almost unheard of.¹⁶ Perhaps, it was the unparalleled nature of what Dupré and Demessieux were doing together in the field of organ playing which caused him to say repeatedly that Demessieux’s thinking process reminded him of a male, not a female. Beset by gender stereotypes, sometimes Dupré contrasted her girlish appearance with her excellent mind, as in “How strange it is to see beneath a sweet little powdered face the brain of a man” (March 19, 1942). The four-movement organ symphonies she improvised two years later led Dupré to declare that Demessieux’s improvisations have exuded “ever more intense emotion, as profound and vibrant as if life has matured you, real life, one of purity; yet extremely masculine. You have the brain of a man” (December 15, 1944).

One wonders why Dupré felt compelled to make statements of this kind in the first place. The answer is clear: in his day and age, the scientific community still assumed that women’s intellects were inferior to men’s, if only because

their brains weighed less on average. Thus, Dupré could have meant to pay her a compliment when he said of her Bach playing,

“You have incomparable rhythmic authority and fullness. Hearing you, one would never believe that it is a woman who is playing. That’s a man’s brain, a colossal brain” (February 19, 1943).¹⁷

Here, Dupré vaguely defined the attributes of her playing that he identified as masculine. Nevertheless, it is arguably difficult to imagine that it occurred to any other listener who heard Demessieux play a church service or recital that there was something inherently masculine about her performances. Interestingly, in the diary Demessieux never reacted to Dupré’s statements about her brain; perhaps she took them as the accolades they were probably intended to be.

“Reciprocal confidence”—Demessieux’s loyalty to Marcel Dupré

Jeanne Demessieux’s intense loyalty towards Dupré is another aspect of her identity, as created in the diary. She began to describe this allegiance by writing of her hope during the fall and winter of 1940–1941 that Dupré would receive the honour of being chosen as the next director of the Paris Conservatory. She further expressed it by her readiness to follow every aspect of Dupré’s course of study for a virtuoso concert organist—in total, far beyond what he had ever required of any student except himself. According to the diary, in three years—July 1941 to June 1944—Demessieux accomplished the following, as prescribed by Dupré:

•July 1941 to June 1942:

Remade her pedal technique by learning to play Alkan’s twelve études for pedal alone (diary entries from July 23, 1941 to June 19, 1942).

•March 1942 to September 1943:

Perfected twelve études that Dupré composed especially for her (diary entries from March 18, 1942 to September 17, 1943).

•November 1941 to June 1944:

Before an audience of Demessieux and Dupré family members, played from memory 12 recitals, covering the major works of Liszt, Bach, Franck, Dupré (11 opuses composed to 1941), Handel, and Mendelssohn (diary entries of Nov. 22, 1941; Mar. 19, Jul. 15–2 programs—and Oct. 3, 1942; Jan. 2, Mar. 12, May 4, Jul. 13, Aug. 18, and Dec. 10, 1943; Jun. 17, 1944).

Most markedly, Demessieux was passionate in her defense of Dupré in the face of his ideological opponents. For example, when Les Amis de l’Orgue member Charles Provost said to her in 1945 that Dupré’s music was rubbish, that he had done nothing for French organ building, and was under American influence, she apparently retorted:

“Dupré is incapable of being ‘influenced’! Now I’ll tell what you don’t like about Dupré: he’s an innovator. Everything, including your terms, falls on the shoulders, if not the head, of the one who leads the way” (November 11, 1945).

Six months earlier, after Dupré and Demessieux had encountered Marchal and Dufourcq at a recital given by Dupré, Demessieux had not been ashamed to write in her diary, “We turned our backs on them,” simply because she understood them to be Dupré’s “enemies” (May 16, 1945).

Overall, the diary of 1940–1946 arguably gives the impression that Demessieux’s aesthetic preferences at this time correlated precisely to Dupré’s. In one of the rare places where she indulged in a confessional style, she maintained that,

what separates Nietzsche from Wagner, Wagner from Liszt, Brahms from Schumann, will draw together ever more tightly the reciprocal confidence Marcel Dupré and I have in each other (May 12, 1944).

Dupré’s side of this reciprocity is attested to in the diary entry of February 20, 1946. The scene was the Salle Pleyel, in preparation for Demessieux’s recital series. In the presence of Demessieux and onlookers, Dupré questioned Guy Lambert (member of Les Amis de l’Orgue de Salle Pleyel) as to whether the organ’s pedalboard had been regulated as he requested. When Lambert replied that it was difficult to reconcile Demessieux’s wishes on this matter with Dupré’s,

Demessieux voiced her insistence that her standard for the pedalboard was the same as Dupré's. For his part, Dupré became indignant. As quoted by Demessieux, he said:

"In the first place, please, for your information, take the following into account: between Jeanne Demessieux and I, there is not, nor will there ever be, any divergence of opinion! It's strange how people put words in my mouth."

Demessieux's description of this incident concludes with, "The effect on everyone was enormous." This implies to me it was apparent to Demessieux that Dupré made his declaration for the benefit of not just Lambert but everyone within earshot.

The above two statements also establish that Demessieux believed she and Dupré were not merely collaborators in a great endeavor: they were two musicians with a deep and natural affinity—artistic soul mates, even. In entries describing Demessieux's 1946 Pleyel recital series, their "reciprocal confidence," and the happiness each gave the other, is enormous:

•Before recital number 1:

[J]ust steps away from the console . . . [a] chair had been placed . . . for him [Dupré] because he had finally managed to get me to tell him what I really desired: to see him, as close to me as possible, during the recital (written February 26, 1946, the day after the recital).

•After recital number 2:

Dupré, always at my side, chatted with his friends, sometimes drawing me into their group, aware of my every move. Since my first recital, he has been extraordinarily rejuvenated. Happiness and serenity shone on his face (April 1, 1946).

•After recital number 4:

When he [Dupré] joined us, I sensed his great emotion. But a moment later, I understood, and it was my turn to be deeply moved . . . Dupré turned towards the abbé Delestre: "Your Grace, look at her! I say this before witnesses: she is brilliant, as a performer, as an improviser! . . ." (written April 30, 1946, the day after the recital).

•After recital number 5 (program of works by Dupré):

Marguerite said to me, "My father was deeply moved during the entire concert. You play his works with such grandeur and emotion; you understand him so very well! I assure you, he is very happy." The master was, indeed, very moved, barely managing to contain himself (written May 21, 1946, the day after the recital).

•Before recital number 6:

The master left me at the last minute, as usual; his trustworthy presence, or his conversation are the only thing I enjoy before playing (written June 5, 1946, the day after the recital).

Furthermore, Demessieux's account of the Duprés' departure for North America (written June 5, 1946) suggests that neither wished their parting to take place:

Then the master found himself face-to-face with me and, in seconds, I could fathom the depths. Words are completely powerless. I could see him suffering so much that only one sentence came to me: "My great friend!" He embraced me at length, and said that, in a moment, he would embrace me again. MD: "I want you to be the last one I embrace." I had been feeling a kind of anguish for some time, and he understood me fully when I said to him: "Master, you will return!" "Yes, my angel."

And after the last hug:

"My adored friend," I whispered. We did not exchange any more words, but Dupré forced me to look at him, showing me the depths of his soul with a tenderness so absolute that I became the stronger for it. And [I was] understood, as always, by this unwavering friend.

These passages convey how fervently invested Demessieux and Dupré were in their—clearly platonic—relationship.

“Dupré seems unlikely to forgive”—Creating the personality of Marcel Dupré

Implicit in the 1940–1946 diary is Demessieux’s creation of a complex personality for her teacher and mentor Dupré, with both positive and negative attributes. Some revealed by Demessieux corroborate other sources (Dupré’s *Recollections*, Murray’s Dupré biography, and Labounsky’s Langlais biography), while others are unique to the diary.

In Chapter 6, I pointed out that Dupré was inclined to call each of his students “*mon petit*” (“my little one”) in a paternal fashion.¹⁸ This friendly disposition on his part is borne out by the frequency with which Dupré is quoted by Demessieux as addressing her with “*mon petite*” as well.¹⁹ Consistent with Dupré’s *Recollections*, Demessieux also names many of his numerous faithful friends—other musicians, highly placed music-lovers, artists, clergy, and former students—and dozens of distinguished acquaintances in the diary.²⁰ This gives the impression that Dupré was an extremely outgoing and sociable individual.

Certain diary entries expose the dark side of Dupré’s personality. As is evident from other sources (discussed in Chapter 6), he took offence easily, and was fiercely unwilling to forgive.²¹ In the entry for June 1, 1944, Demessieux illustrated this by first quoting Dupré’s angry remarks about Maurice Le Boucher having sold Montpellier’s Salle de Concerts organ on which Dupré and Demessieux had planned to give a recital. Then Demessieux immediately compared these remarks to how Le Boucher had previously irritated Dupré by failing to understand the importance of Dupré’s plans for his protégée:

Dupré seems unlikely to forgive Le Boucher for this incident, just as he does not forgive Le Boucher’s lack of understanding about me when Dupré was testing the terrain while considering confiding in him.

Also documented in the diary and other sources are Dupré’s frequent, mean remarks about someone he felt had betrayed him or with whom he simply disagreed.²² For example, according to Demessieux, Dupré referred to his former student Henriette Roget as “that hypocritical face, that blonde . . . she is such a phony” (May 16, 1945). Nor was Dupré above making cruel comments to the very person with whom he clashed. A striking example is part of the diary entry of April 16, 1946, concerning the evening of Demessieux’s third Pleyel recital. When it was over, Le Boucher, in conversation with Demessieux and Dupré, expressed “reservations” concerning Demessieux’s performance. Dupré promptly exploded with insulting words spoken, “with a contemptuous smirk and such a vehement tone,” she writes, “that I stood rooted to the spot, speechless.”

Other diary entries indicate clearly how Demessieux learned that Dupré did not suffer fools, for example, when detailing a 1945 visit to Meudon by Pierre Lafond (Dupré’s cousin) and wife. Demessieux was present to perform for the visitors, and reported the following in her diary about how Dupré reacted to Madame Lafond’s comments on her playing:

[H]is cousin’s wife inundated him so, with the qualities of all kinds that she believed to have discovered in me, and with such attention towards me, that the master quipped at her with a smile that, “Men would not permit themselves what a woman sometimes allows herself” (December 19, 1945).

Demessieux also disclosed facets of Dupré’s character not revealed in other sources. To that end, I have already alluded, in Chapter 7, to his tendency towards self-pity as regards others’ enmity towards him, as when he said, “I have accomplished so much; and yet all I get are insults, insults” (April 16, 1943).

A year later, in early April 1944, Dupré combined this tendency with self-deprecation in Demessieux’s report of listening with him to a radio broadcast of one of his performances:

[H]e distractedly removed his glasses, placed his hands on his eyes and I clearly heard him stifle some tears he was attempting to hide. . . . A moment later, with an effort to make a joke, the master said to me, “Did you hear? The second wrong note.” Immediately after the broadcast, MD: “Well, if that’s how I play the organ—drat—I know why my enemies criticize me behind my back. That was a mess” (April 7, 1944).

Furthermore, diary entries by Demessieux let slip that Dupré, in his second decade as instructor of the Conservatory organ class, had begun to feel jaded with teaching. Weary that students’ failings seem to stand out more than their successes, he made the type of comment that any teacher might privately share with a confidant:

Leaving his class, Dupré had spoken to me about his students, how weak they were and how they had not worked since the competition . . . MD: “They cry before and after the competition! And they don’t work. They dishonour me” (October 19, 1943).

In another moment of bitterness, Dupré had also downplayed his accomplishment as an organ teacher with understatement: “I’ve taught a few capable of managing at Paris’s grand churches, nothing more” (April 16, 1943).

More than other sources, Demessieux’s diary reveals the Marcel Dupré who in his words and actions was cunning—as the person who masterminded Demessieux’s presentation as a spectacular new concert organist.²³ As readers of the diary will have noticed, he aimed that her Paris debut would take place when she had reached the pinnacle of her virtuosity, timing this to occur after the war had ended. Furthermore, his plan was that Demessieux would burst upon the Paris organ world with the maximum possible effect by leaving no preparatory element to chance.

To this end, the diary highlights Dupré’s tactics that were calculated to create growing suspense surrounding Demessieux in the minds of Paris organ aficionados—and secrecy was part of the plan. While all her colleagues who recently earned their First Prize in organ had played debut recitals, Dupré prohibited Demessieux from accepting any invitation to perform a public concert. In the ears of influential persons, he subtly (or not so subtly) planted verbal suggestions of her exceptional virtuosity. To the conductor Eugène Bigot, Dupré said the following:

“She is preparing for a career that will be first-rank. For the moment, and with her permission, I am intentionally keeping her in the shadows” (October 20, 1943).

Dupré also inserted Demessieux as supply organist at St-Sulpice, performing innovative repertoire, to make the maximum impression upon people who attended and would report to others. To stoke anticipation, Dupré used his friends as well as acquaintances. For example, by inviting Jean Gallon and the critic Bernard Gavoty to attend one of Demessieux’s practice recitals at Meudon, Dupré gave his trusted friends a foretaste of the strength of her musicianship without tasting its full extent. Meanwhile, Dupré groomed his favourite student to think of herself as “a great artist, a star” (April 9, 1943). Dupré’s final agenda item was to carefully manipulate the director of the Salle Pleyel and the friends of the Pleyel organ to have the organ refurbished, and its pedalboard regulated so that it could handle even Demessieux’s *Six Études*.²⁴

To drive home the notion that Demessieux’s brilliance surpassed any other debuting organist that Paris had ever seen, Dupré arranged that following her initial, triumphal recital at the Salle Pleyel (which eventually took place February 11, 1946), Demessieux would perform six more solo concerts. They would be mingled with recitals by established organists over the remaining three and a half months of the current concert season.²⁵

In summary, the entire undertaking, which Demessieux called in her diary entry of March 8, 1945 a sort of game (“The game was afoot”), arguably attests to Dupré’s calculating mind.

“This wound has never healed”—The termination of a special relationship

Demessieux’s diary breaks off abruptly on December 25, 1946 because something career-, and in her case, life-changing occurred shortly thereafter. As eventually became well known in the Paris organ world, upon the Dupré family’s return from their North American tour, near the end of 1946 or start of 1947, Dupré refused to have anything ever again to do with Jeanne Demessieux and her family members, without a word of explanation to any of them. Even his written justifications to others were vague. In a letter to Bernard Gavoty from October 14, 1948, Dupré stated:

As regards Jeanne Demessieux, it is with great regret that I must inform you in the strictest confidence that we have fallen out irreconcilably. The word “snub” is not too strong to describe what I have put up with for nine months.²⁶

A note in Dupré’s handwriting quoted by British-Canadian organist Graham Steed includes the following:

M^{lle} Demessieux—Although during the years after her prize I worked with her for nothing, she was unworthy of me and Madame Dupré. This wound has never healed. I don’t need to say more. You can guess...²⁷

What could have happened to offend Dupré so deeply and so irrevocably? Two hypotheses that have been aired since the “rupture,” as Trieu-Colleney referred to it, are unsupported by Demessieux’s diary.²⁸ One is that Dupré and Demessieux disagreed on plans for her American debut: Trieu-Colleney suggested that perhaps Dupré wanted to promote Demessieux in the United States in the manner of a Hollywood star—and that Demessieux, being unpretentious and strong in her opinions, would have roundly rejected such a plan.²⁹

Karen Ford, in a 1992 biographical article on Demessieux, put forward a similar notion: that Dupré and Demessieux

had differences of opinion regarding the organization of Jeanne’s concerts and upcoming tours in North

America, where she refused, in spite of Dupré's insistence, to venture alone without having prior assurance of specified conditions.³⁰

I would argue that strong disagreement between Dupré and Demessieux on any such issue could only have taken place over the summer or autumn of 1946 by correspondence.³¹ If there had been an exchange between Dupré and Demessieux concerning plans for her North American debut, it is logical that Demessieux would have written about it in her diary, just as she noted other arrangements in progress for her career.³² Given the lack of discussion, it is safe to assume that this did not take place in 1946.

The second hypothesis centres around the closeness of the bond between Dupré and Demessieux. Without naming her sources, Ford wrote:

Still others talk of a close and endearing relationship between master and pupil which ultimately threatened to disrupt Dupré's family life, suggesting that the rupture was more the result of insistence on the part of Mme Dupré.³³

However, in my May 2003 conversation with Pierre Labric—who knew the Duprés and Demessieux personally—he was adamant that Madame Dupré had nothing to do with the rupture in the relationship.³⁴ Moreover, according to the diary, Jeannette Dupré was as fond of Demessieux as was her husband: Demessieux was permitted to refer to Jeannette Dupré as “Mammy,” and both Duprés treated Demessieux like an adopted daughter.³⁵

A third hypothesis is hinted at by other diary entries from the 1940s. As Trieu-Colleney first pointed out, Demessieux was warned by friends, and sensed for herself, that she had “enemies,” just as Dupré did (entries of May 1, 1942; June 7, 1942; April 21, 1944; March 11, 1945; January 9, 1946; February 26, 1946).³⁶ On this basis, I have argued elsewhere that following Demessieux's 1946 debut and recital series, those among Dupré or Demessieux's opponents who were resentful of the public success of the Dupré-Demessieux collaboration may have used the period in which Dupré was out of the country to undermine their oneness.³⁷

This raises the question of what weakness in their unity could have been exploited. Based on diary entries, there is no doubt that the egocentrism which had motivated Dupré to create his equal caused him to tie the unanimity of his and Demessieux's opinions and preferences to his personal pride. Above, I cited Dupré's angry outburst during a dispute about regulating the pedalboard of the Salle Pleyel organ: “between Jeanne Demessieux and I, there is not, nor will there ever be, any divergence of opinion!” (February 20, 1946). It seems to me that, having tied his self-worth to Demessieux's solidarity with him, Dupré was vulnerable to assault on his self-respect. In 2005, I argued that sensing this, an unknown person—an “enemy”—conveyed to Dupré words, or an action of Demessieux, that appeared disrespectful of him; this could have been “an out-of-context (or fictitious) remark attributed to Jeanne Demessieux, or perhaps one of her actions, slanderously reinterpreted.”³⁸

But I realize now that the bearer of the poisonous information need not have been someone from among Dupré's ideological opponents. One of his own followers, aiming to serve personal ends, would be especially capable of manipulating Dupré. The American organist and teacher Jesse Eschbach, in an article describing a 2018 interview with Pierre Labric, posited that it was a jealous member of Dupré's own “entourage” who did the deed of conveying a remark, purportedly by Demessieux, that was disrespectful of Dupré.³⁹ Eschbach based this on circumstantial evidence shared with him by Marie-Madeleine Chevalier-Duruflé in conversation many years ago, that was seemingly confirmed in his conversation with Labric.⁴⁰ Admittedly, Eschbach refrains from naming in his article the person Chevalier-Duruflé believed was responsible because “direct descendants of the principal parties are still with us.”⁴¹

When Eschbach shared with me the name of this person in 2020, it was in confidence. Therefore, I will only add that an attentive reader of Demessieux's diary may notice a particular pair of persons, one or the other of whom interacted with Demessieux awkwardly between spring 1945 and autumn 1946, in ways that suggest their jealousy and resentment of her. This much of a clue, I believe, is fair.

If one of Dupré's own followers had indeed caused the irreconcilable falling out between the former close friends, Bernard Gavoty's remark reported in the diary about the rift between Vierne and Dupré may be viewed as a parallel:

[Gavoty] spoke a lot about the “deep affection” that at one time united Dupré and Vierne and said that “third persons playing a role in their life” had disrupted it (March 8, 1945).

Extending the analogy, in both cases the fault lay arguably as much with Dupré's reaction as with the "third person": only someone radically unable to forgive would have doggedly refused, as Dupré did, to discuss with Demessieux her reported action or remark.

Dupré's rejection of Demessieux from 1947 onward also meant that he no longer supported her career. Specifically, he refused to write her letters of recommendation or give any sponsorship that a former student of her calibre could have expected of him to help further her career in France.⁴²

Lack of Dupré's endorsement, however, did not prevent Demessieux from being engaged to present a second series of recitals at the Salle Pleyel. These six took place during the period October 28, 1947 through January 20, 1948. They consisted largely of pieces from her vast repertoire that she had not played in the 1946 series, with an emphasis on Bach and Franck.⁴³ Two recitals included Demessieux's own, most recent compositions: the December 12, 1947 recital featured the first complete presentation of *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit*, and the January 20, 1948 recital the premiere of her *Triptyque*.⁴⁴

Emotionally, though, Demessieux suffered greatly because of Dupré's rejection of her, meanwhile never knowing the reason for it. Presumably based on letters to which Trieu-Colleney had access, Demessieux's biographer concluded concerning their falling out,

It was not only the loss of her best friend: an entire world of trust had collapsed. A great man had fallen from his pedestal, though she continued to admire him musically, and she remained conscious of all that she owed to him.⁴⁵

As evidence that Demessieux continued to venerate and defend Dupré, she published an article, "The Art of Marcel Dupré," in 1950.⁴⁶ She began with a detailed biography, then described Dupré in glowing terms as recitalist, improviser, composer, and teacher, while emphasizing ways in which he was an originator and an innovator. Demessieux's statement "Let us make no mistake about it: Dupré is not a purist chained to unchangeable norms," describing him as a composer, was clearly aimed at those critical of him.⁴⁷

Then again, as Trieu-Colleney points out in her chapter "Jeanne and Organ Building," Demessieux did not remain entirely of one mind with Dupré as regards organ design. The example used is the gigantic organ in the Philadelphia Wanamaker's store that Dupré praised.⁴⁸ When Demessieux got to play the famous instrument during her 1953 North American tour, she found it disappointing.⁴⁹ Corroborating this difference of opinion, Demessieux described, in the February 2 entry of her diary from her 1958 North American tour, a 1930 Austin organ as being "horrible, heavy, [a] theatre organ. It's what Dupré liked, unfortunately."



At the organ of St-Nicaise in Reims, France, May 1947.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

Diary-keeping as an ongoing activity ended for Demessieux on Christmas Day, 1946. Apparently, she did not keep any sort of diary again until January 28, 1955, the day she departed Paris for her second North American concert tour. Beneath the title “Second Tour of America,” she subtitled this notebook “*Journal de route*”—Travel Diary. Three years later, she recorded day-to-day details of her 1958 North American tour in the same notebook. Trieu-Colleney, in her Demessieux biography, included the text of these two travel diaries, somewhat abbreviated, and interwove it with snippets of Demessieux’s 1953 and 1955 letters from the United States to her parents and sister. The next chapter of this present book presents a translation of these excerpts from letters quoted by Trieu-Colleney, interleaved with the entire text of the 1955 and 1958 travel diaries in translation. Where other sources give further evidence of recitals Demessieux played on her three North American tours, I have inserted this information between the textboxes for letters and diary entries.

NOTES:

1 An exception (quoted later in this chapter) is in the diary entry of Jun. 1, 1944, where she draws a comparison between two issues upon which Dupré was at loggerheads with Maurice Le Boucher.

2 See Rita Felski, “On Confession,” in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 83. The “confessional” style of diary writing was defined in Chapter 5, endnote 6.

3 Valerie Raoul, “Women and Diaries: Gender and Genre,” *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 22/3 (Summer 1989): 61. See also Judy Long, *Telling Women’s Lives: Subject/Narrator/Reader/Text* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 46. Long differentiates female autobiographical writing, including diaries, from male autobiography by noting that only the former tends to include the repetitive daily tasks that are thought of as “women’s work.”

4 I do not mean to suggest that Demessieux’s 1940s diary is unique in countering some of the prevailing characteristics of women’s autobiographical writing, only that it is exceptional within the broader picture.

5 *The Journal of Hélène Berr*, trans. David Bellos (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2009); Liliane Schroeder, *Journal d’Occupation, Paris 1940–1944: Chronique au jour le jour d’une époque oubliée* (Paris: François-Xavier de Guibert, 2000); and Geneviève Gennari, *J’avais vingt ans: Journal 1940–1945* (Paris: Grasset, 1961), are three published journals written by young French women during World War II, that equally concern both current events and their personal lives.

6 Recorded as an aside in the diary entry of Jun. 6, 1941: “Amusing detail: while leaving we passed a group of Germans, who were quite intrigued.” On Oct. 12, 1942, scrawled in the margin, in a different color of ink: “German occupation; demonstration lines.” Occasionally mentioned is lack, or restriction, of electricity to power an organ (e.g., Sept. 15, 1944 and Dec. 19, 1945). References to a fire being lit in one or the other room of the Duprés’ villa suggest that heating fuel was being rationed (e.g., Oct. 31, 1941; Mar. 8 and Dec. 7, 1945). There is no hint of food rationing in the diary, though

this would have been the case.

7 Susan Stanford Friedman, "Women's Autobiographical Selves: Theory and Practice," in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 77, writes that in women's texts the individual does not "feel herself to exist outside of others, but very much with others in an interdependent existence." Long 1999, 19, identifies "the solitary subject" as an attribute of male autobiographical writing: "paradigmatic [i.e., male] autobiographies minimize connectedness between the hero and others, hewing to a fiction of individualism." Later (49–50), Long develops the notion that a female autobiographical subject "often situates herself in a web of relationships, or tells her history in terms of relationships. Relationships are important in women's developmental trajectories, as well as at the point of self-writing."

8 Demessieux, *Sonate pour violon et piano*, ed. Maxime Patel and d'Alexis Galpérine (Delatour France, DLT2079, 2013).

9 Marcel Delannoy, "La Musique: Quelques 'Jeunes,'" *Les Nouveaux Temps* 23 (March 1941): 2. *Les Nouveaux Temps* was a recently founded right-wing publication with ties to the Nazi occupiers. Yannick Simon, *Composer sous Vichy* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 183, notes that Delannoy became a member of an organization known as the Groupe Collaboration which, during the German occupation, worked to establish close cultural ties between France and Nazi Germany.

10 "Concours de 1941, Séance du mardi 17 juin, Composition Musicale," AN AJ37, 535, labelled at the top in pen with "Monsieur le Directeur."

11 A fair copy preserved in RHCL, 22.012 Demessieux, J., is dated Jan. 6, 1944. Published posthumously as Jeanne Demessieux, *Nativité*, Op. 4, ed. Maxime Patel (Delatour France, DLT0932, 2006).

12 The comparison with Chopin's and Liszt's études for piano is noted in Dupré's Preface to the published score (Paris: Bornemann, 1946) and discussed in Domitila Ballesteros, *Jeanne Demessieux's Six Études and the Piano Technique* (Rio de Janeiro, 2004), chap. 5, "Piano Elements and the Six Études," 89–132.

13 The publisher Bornemann's involvement in the project is mentioned or implied in diary entries of Feb. 25 and 28, 1944; May 12, 1944; and Jun. 17, 1945. According to the Sept. 22, 1945 entry, Bornemann was experiencing a shortage of paper. Perhaps that is why it was 1946 before Demessieux's *Six Études pour Orgue* were actually published.

14 Van Wyck as Demessieux's agent is mentioned in the diary from Demessieux's 1955 North American concert tour (entries of Feb. 7 and Feb. 8). Demessieux's file of correspondence "Projets enregistrements (Messiaen)," in the GVT collection, shows that Van Wyck was still her U.K. agent in 1967–1968.

15 In 1944–1945 Dupré transformed nine of the twelve études he composed for Demessieux into the movements of his *Suite*, Op. 39; *Offrande à la Vierge*, Op. 40; and *Deux Esquisses*, Op. 41.

16 One example that comes to mind is the collaboration in France between physicist Pierre Curie and chemist-physicist Marie Skłodowska Curie, who together were pioneers in the study of radioactivity at the turn of the 20th century. Circumstances surrounding their joint Nobel Prize awarded in 1903 are described in Susan Quinn, *Marie Curie: A Life* (Reading, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1995), 186–201.

17 See Lydia Denworth, "Is There a 'Female' Brain?" *Scientific American* 317/3 (Sept. 2017): 40–43. Modern-day researchers who believe that, given enough information about the "topography and molecular landscape" of a brain, there are recognizable differences between the average female and male brains, disagree as to how "subtle or significant" these differences are. Some research results suggest that every brain is a "mosaic" of typically feminine and typically masculine features (Denworth, 40).

18 Murray 1985, 118. In Chapter 6, I also cited the statement in Labounsky 2000, 55, that "Langlais regarded Dupré as a father."

19 Diary entries of Dec. 8, 1940; Jan. 30 and 31, Feb. 14, Jun. 13, Aug. 20, and Sept. 24, 1941; Mar. 19 and Jul. 13, 1942; and May 12 and Jun. 1, 23, and 30, 1944.

20 Marcel Dupré, *Recollections*, trans. and ed. Ralph Kneeream (Melville N.Y.: Belwin-Mills, 1975) contains chapters and subsections that describe his friendship or acquaintanceship with eighteen other famous musicians.

21 According to Murray 1985, 109–10, Dupré took offense when Vierne publicly attacked him for using the title "Organist at Notre Dame Cathedral." There was, moreover, the possibility that "one of Vierne's paramours offended Jeannette one day in the [Notre Dame] cathedral organ loft" (110). Whereas Vierne eventually forgot his quarrel with Dupré, Dupré never forgave Vierne (110–11).

22 In Chapter 6, I note that according to Labounsky 2000, 79, Dupré voiced a cruelly worded objection to Langlais' plan to ask Vierne to play for an organ inauguration.

23 Lynn Cavanagh, "Organ Performance as a Trade Commodity of France: The Shaping of Concert Organist Jeanne Demessieux," *Context: Journal of Music Research*, Nos. 27–28 (2004): 5–30, examines in more detail the steps Dupré took from 1941 to 1946 to develop Demessieux's brilliance and launch her career.

24 The exact timing of the work that was carried out on this instrument is uncertain. The diary entry of Jul. 21, 1944 notes that "[t]he renovations required to make the organ [console] visible have been decided upon and they will be finished for October." In a May 27, 1945 letter to her sister Yolande, Demessieux wrote, "Work has been carried out on the organ since October," perhaps referring to the fact that work was done on the ceiling above the stage. Mention that, despite work on the ceiling, the organ still did not sound adequate, and of a plan to convince members of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue de Salle Pleyel to do "extensive work" on the organ, is made in the diary entry of Dec. 8, 1944. Completion of work is referred to on Feb. 6, 1946. Regulation of the organ's pedalboard is specifically alluded to in the entry for Feb. 20, 1946—probably because Feb. 25, 1946 was when Demessieux was to première her *Six Études*—and again in the Feb. 26 entry, which describes the day of that particular recital.

25 According to Demessieux's letter to Yolande of Oct. 28, 1945 (AM 4S15), other organists who were to perform in the 1946 Salle Pleyel organ recital series were Maurice Duruflé and Bernard Gavoty. A handbill advertising the portion of the series from March 18 through April 29, under the heading "Amis de L'Orgue de la Salle Pleyel" (photocopy courtesy of Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux), notes that Jean Pergola (1890–1951, organist of Paris's St-Germain de L'Auxerrois), was scheduled for March 18, and Guy Lambert (1906–1971, producer of Salle Pleyel organ concerts), was scheduled to accompany tenor Henri Daguier on April 8. Moreover (and as is confirmed by BnF Music Dept. Vma 2803, boîte 6, 1486), when Demessieux was not able to play on March 11 due to illness, Dupré himself played a recital at the Salle Pleyel that day (diary entry of Mar. 24, 1946).

26 From a letter by Marcel Dupré reproduced in Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré*, trans. Marie-Claire Cournand (Paris: Association des Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré, 2001), 81. English translation by François Sabatier in CD liner notes for Stephen Tharp, *Jeanne Demessieux, Complete Organ Works* (Aeolus AE-10561 2008).

27 Quoted in French and in English translation by Graham Steed in *The Organ Works of Marcel Dupré* (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1999), 128–29. According to Bruno Chaumet, president of the Association des Amis de l'Art de Marcel Dupré (in his letters to me of Aug. 4, 2005 and Jan. 27, 2006), the original addressee of this note was the choral director Jean-Philippe Sisung, grandson of Dupré's friend Jean Guerner. Dupré was responding to the grandson's request in 1964 for permission to publish Dupré's letters to Guerner (their eventual publication was by the A.A.A.M.D. in 2002). In his note, Dupré explained to Sisung which few of his letters he did not wish to see published and why, mentioning Messiaen as well as Demessieux. Steed possessed a photocopy of this note, which he apparently acquired from the A.A.A.M.D.

28 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 29.

29 Ibid., 30. This echoes a statement in a letter of Jun. 8, 1949 from Demessieux's friend (and Dupré student) Jean Berveiller to Yolande Demessieux. Berveiller, who I believe is speculating rather than citing facts, wrote that Dupré's attitude towards promoting Demessieux's career was tantamount to maximally "americanizing" her with "platinum-blond hair, silver shoes, [and] virtuoso effects, ending in Hollywood." Berveiller goes on to say that this ran counter to Jeanne's nature and that she was of too strong a personality to submit to such treatment.

30 Karen E. Ford, "Jeanne Demessieux," *The American Organist* 26 (April 1992): 62. The hypothesis—that Dupré may have wanted Demessieux to rely on a limited number of pre-arranged recitals in North America, in expectation of garnering more engagements as she went—could derive from Dupré's experience (described in Murray 1985, 82) of picking up additional engagements during a tour.

31 According to the diary entry of Jul. 28, 1946, during this period the Duprés and Demessieux were constantly in touch with each other by airmail. None of this correspondence survives, however.

32 One example is the diary entry of November 23, 1946, in which she wrote that she had refused Van Wyck's proposal that she play for English organist Thalben-Ball before her U.K. debut.

33 Ford 1992, 62. Similarly, in Paul Janssen, “Relaties en restauraties: De organist Jean Wolfs,” *Mens en Melodie* 52 (Jul.-Aug. 1997): 312–13, Jean Wolfs, one of Demessieux’s Liège Conservatory students and her teaching assistant, asserts that Dupré’s feelings for Demessieux “raised the ire of Mme Dupré,” leading to Dupré and Demessieux’s estrangement (article translated from the Dutch for Lynn Cavanagh by Wilhelm de Bakker).

34 BnF Music Dept., Rés. Vmc, ms. 15, Marcel Dupré private students of 1924–1946; conversation with Pierre Labric, May 2003. Labric went from private organ study with Dupré in the early-to-mid 1940s to the Conservatory organ class (First Prize, 1948), and later furthered his organ technique as a student of Demessieux. He also became her close friend, her supply organist, and interpreter of her organ compositions.

35 Demessieux refers to Jeannette Dupré frequently as “Mammy” in diary entries of Jul. 14, 1944 through Jun. 5, 1946 (the entry describing the departure of the Duprés for their 1946 North American tour).

36 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 31. Demessieux’s opponents are not named, though the entry of Jun. 7, 1942 suggests that Demessieux had identified the official assistant organist of St-Sulpice, Jean-Jacques Grunenwald, as her “first enemy.” The diary names just a few persons that Dupré regarded as foes—most notably André Marchal and Norbert Dufourcq. It is also apparent from the diary that Charles Provost and the mysterious “Régner,” too, belonged to the faction opposing Dupré, and, by implication, Demessieux. In the diary entry of Mar. 11, 1945, Jean Guerner tells Demessieux that she had enemies who were “jealous, envious, who will ridicule you,” but does not name these people.

37 Lynn Cavanagh, “The Rise and Fall of a Famous Collaboration: Marcel Dupré and Jeanne Demessieux,” *The Diapason*, whole no. 1148 (Jul. 2005): 18–22, specifically 21.

38 Ibid., 21.

39 Jesse Eschbach, “An interview with Pierre Labric,” *The Diapason*, whole no. 1323 (Feb. 2020): 14, states: “I can only repeat what others have said: Jeanne Demessieux was utterly blameless, and Dupré was foolishly victimized and manipulated by individuals in his entourage who intended to overthrow Demessieux to suit their own agenda.”

40 Marie-Madeleine Chevalier-Durufié was, during 1945–1947, a student of Jeanne Demessieux, supplementing her study in the Conservatory organ class (First Prize, 1949) with private lessons in counterpoint, fugue, organ, and improvisation (conversation with Frédéric Blanc, then president of the Association Maurice & Marie-Madeleine Durufié, May 2003). According to my May 2020 telephone conversation with Jesse Eschbach, Chevalier-Durufié was among the followers who frequented the St-Sulpice organ gallery during services played by Dupré, and there observed interactions between Dupré and his followers who were in attendance.

41 Eschbach 2020, 14.

42 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 31, points out that Dupré refused to sponsor Demessieux’s application to join S.A.C.E.M. (the Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique), which is a French body responsible for collecting and distributing music royalties. At some point, however, Demessieux did become a member: her unpublished manuscripts preserved in RHCL are stamped *Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique*.

43 Copies of programs courtesy of Pierre Labric, May 2003.

44 *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit* (Paris: Durand, 1947); *Triptyque* (Paris: Durand, 1949).

45 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 31.

46 See Jeanne Demessieux, trans. T. Marier, “The Art of Marcel Dupré,” *Caecilia: A Catholic Review of Musical Art* 79 (1952): 6–14. First published in French in the Paris publication *Études* (April 1950).

47 Ibid., 9.

48 According to the diary entry of Mar. 12, 1943, Demessieux studied the stop list of the Philadelphia Wanamaker organ at Dupré’s home.

49 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 42. The source of this statement is not given, but it may have been a letter Demessieux sent during the 1953 tour to one of her family members. The only letter mentioning the Wanamaker organ that Trieu-Colleney cites in her Demessieux biography (Feb. 5, 1953 from New York to her parents, quoted in Trieu-Colleney 1977, 195) does not give Demessieux’s reaction to the organ.

10. Introduction to the Diaries and Letters of the North American Recital Tours (1953, 1955, and 1958)

Colbert-LaBerge Concert Management
announces first American Tour,
February–March 1953, of Jeanne Demessieux.
Brilliant French Organist
—Advertisement, probably autumn 1952¹

Jeanne Demessieux's 1950s visits to North America occurred amidst a hectic schedule of recitals played all over France and in many other European countries, during a career that extended from 1947 to 1967. Therefore, before launching into a description of her tours on the other side of the Atlantic, I will provide a sampling of her activity closer to home.²

With Paris as her home base, Demessieux travelled widely over the course of two decades. She played in French cities from Marseille in the southeast to Lorient in the northwest, and from Bayonne in the southwest to Colmar in the northeast.³ Across the English Channel, she collected recital engagements in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.



Following a May 1958 concert at the Drijtstraatkerk in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.
Montpellier Municipal Archives, 4S20, Fonds Jeanne Demessieux.

Principal locations were St. Mark's, North Audley Street, London in 1947, 1949, and 1950; Victoria Hall, Geneva in 1952, 1953, and 1955; and the Paris Church of the Madeleine in 1958 and 1959.⁶ Between 1958 and 1962, a German radio station, *Norddeutscher Rundfunk*, recorded her playing on three Hamburg organs.⁷

Demessieux's travel for recitals and recording sessions alternated with teaching. In 1950 she garnered the position of organ teacher at the Nancy Conservatory in northeastern France, travelling there two days a week.⁸ Then, in 1952, continuing to commute from Paris, she accepted the organ-teaching post at the Royal Conservatory of Liège in Belgium. A series of recitals Demessieux gave at the Liège Conservatory in April of 1952 were the first of her many performances there in the 1950s and 1960s.

Between 1948 and 1958 alone, Demessieux visited the Netherlands more than a dozen times, on some of these trips playing in multiple cities. In August 1949 she appeared for the first time at the Salzburg Festival, and in October and November of the same year in Lisbon. One of Demessieux's first engagements in Switzerland took place in April 1950 when she performed in Geneva. February and March 1952 included appearances in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and the year 1956 saw her perform again in Switzerland, as well as in Germany and Italy. According to Trieu-Colleney, Demessieux also played in Spain, though the year is not specified.⁴

Meanwhile, Demessieux recorded music for Decca, becoming the first female organist to sign a contract for recording of solo music on pipe organ.⁵



Jeanne Demessieux at a London organ in 1947.
Goosen van Tuijl collection.



Publicity photo, 1953.
Goosen van Tuijl collection.

Organization of Demessieux's North American tours

Jeanne Demessieux made recital tours of North America in 1953, 1955, and 1958.⁹ Each time, she departed by ocean liner from the French port of Le Havre, arrived in New York at the end of January, and toured the continent in February and March. As readers will discover, the letters she wrote to her parents while overseas in 1953 and 1955 are colourful in description and enthusiastic in tone. The travel diaries, which she kept during the 1955 and 1958 tours only, detail her more mundane experiences, the difficulties of the touring life, and the strangeness of some of the people and customs she encountered.

According to the diaries, one of the trials of touring was dealing with the management company that organized all three of her tours. Colbert-LaBerge Concert Management (originally LaBerge) had a lengthy history of touring European concert organists in North America.¹⁰ In addition to bringing European composers—including Milhaud, Prokofiev, Ravel, and Respighi—as well as pianists and chamber groups across the Atlantic Ocean, the company had organized the North American recital tours of selected European organists, most notably Joseph Bonnet, Marcel Dupré, Louis Vierne, André Marchal, and Jean Langlais, all from France.¹¹ To be represented by this management company certainly placed Demessieux in a distinguished line of touring French organists.

Lilian Murtagh, who had been working for LaBerge since 1930, came to be in charge of the organ

division.¹² When Laberge died in 1951, his business was acquired by the U.S. impresario Henry Colbert, who continued the company under the name Colbert-LaBerge. Meanwhile, Murtagh continued to handle organists' tours and was likely responsible for the organization of all three of Demessieux's North American tours; this is borne out by letters concerning the 1958 tour retained by her travel assistant Claudine Verchère.¹³

Publicity for each of Demessieux's 1953, 1955, and 1958 tours began the previous year with announcements placed by Colbert-LaBerge in U.S. organ magazines *The Diapason* and *The American Organist*. These advertisements featured the phrase "brilliant French organist" and laudatory excerpts from newspaper reviews. To announce the 1958 tour, quotations from newspapers were organized under the headings "Press Acclaim in America" and "Press Acclaim Abroad," assuring potential recital sponsors that Demessieux belonged to the first rank of international organists.¹⁴

Having secured recital engagements, Lilian Murtagh and her staff were responsible for arranging Demessieux's visa, travel overseas, itinerary, train tickets from one city to another, and hotel accommodation. They also negotiated program details between the recital sponsors and Demessieux and forwarded organ specifications prior to her leaving France.

Demessieux typically travelled alone; only during the 1958 tour did her student Claudine Verchère join her as an assistant, and would have helped deal with common distractions such as last-minute changes to train tickets and payment of expenses during the tour. Local organizers looked after meeting Demessieux at the train station and transportation between hotel and recital venue, leaving room for mishap. For example, according to the diary entry for

February 17, 1958, when Demessieux arrived by train in Sacramento that day, there was no one to meet her, which meant that she had not only to find for herself the church where she was to practise but someone to open the organ.

A church was the venue for most of Demessieux's North American recitals, though a few recitals took place in university halls. The sponsor was, most often, the local American Guild of Organists (AGO) chapter and, less often, the church where the event was held.

Repertoire performed

During each of the three tours of the 1950s, Demessieux was prepared to perform two set programs, making six in total. As will be noted within the translation of the travel diaries and letters, on occasion, a local circumstance caused a variation, e.g., a work from one program was inserted into the other. By and large, though, Demessieux alternated what will be referred to as "Program No. 1" and "Program No. 2" as she went from place to place. Her principal aim in her programs was to celebrate standard organ repertoire as taught by Dupré, and a sampling of contemporary organ music.¹⁵ For Dupré and Demessieux, the basic canon included pieces he had edited for his *Anthologie des maîtres classiques de l'orgue* (Bornemann, 1942); works from the latter occurred on half of the six set programs.¹⁶

Each of Demessieux's programs progressed historically, and was built around a framework of music by Bach (usually a free piece paired with a chorale prelude), by Franck (or sometimes Liszt), and from the twentieth century. To illustrate this approach, the program that Demessieux played at First Presbyterian Church in Glens Falls, New York on February 6, 1955, is reproduced below:¹⁷

Toccata in F major —Bach
"Come now, Saviour of the Heathen" —Bach
Second Concerto in B-Flat major —Handel
Maestoso
Allegro
Andante
Second Chorale in B Minor —César Franck
Allegro (from Sixth Symphony) —Ch. M. Widor
Intermezzo (from Suite) —Jean Berauiller
Triptyque —Jeanne Demessieux
Prélude
Adagio
Fugue
Improvisation on a submitted theme

The above is representative of the set programs for the 1953 and 1955 tours, when one of Handel's concertos, as arranged for organ solo by Dupré, appeared regularly in the first half. Also during the first two tours, one of Demessieux's two programs always included a movement from a Widor symphony. Occasionally she included a transcription. In 1955, "Program No. 2" featured Franck's *Rédemption: Interlude symphonique*, arranged for organ by Demessieux's friend Jean Berauiller. In 1958, "Program No. 1" opened with Dupré's arrangement of the Overture to Bach's Cantata No. 29, and "Program No. 2" contained a Vivaldi-Bach Concerto.

The second half of every program contained one or two of Demessieux's own compositions: one of the *Études*, a movement from the *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit*, one of the *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*, or, as illustrated above, her entire *Triptyque*. The other twentieth-century composers most often represented, though only by a single movement, were Olivier Messiaen and Jean Berauiller. Exceptionally, one of her set programs from the 1953 tour included a movement by Dupré ("The World Awaiting the Savior" from *Symphonie-Passion*) and a movement by Langlais ("Les Rameaux" from *Trois Poèmes évangéliques*).

Reception of Demessieux's North American Recitals

The vast majority of reviews that Demessieux received in North America appeared in local newspapers, courtesy of local music critics who had been impressed by Demessieux's credentials as a Parisian organist, and amazed by all that they heard. Thus, she was able to write to her sister Yolande and parents of how very good her reviews were (letter of

February 5, 1953 to her parents; 1955 letter to her sister after her return to France, undated). For example, Fred Lissfelt of the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, reviewing her February 10, 1953, recital at Pennsylvania College for Women, wrote,

Jeanne Demessieux, organist of the Church of the Saint-Esprit in Paris . . . represents not only an important church but a great tradition in French organ playing, avoiding the many sensational effects that other nations attain through brilliant registration, and holding firm to clarity of technique and a suave assurance in the art of improvisation, all of which she demonstrated well in her program.

Her playing of the baroque style of Bach and Handel is brilliant but also intensely musical in her sincere attention to details of contrast.¹⁸

Some reviewers admired her handling of melodic line, phrase, and nuance, and the clearness of her counterpoint. Richard Montague wrote in April 1953,

Demessieux's playing . . . is accurate, rhythmic, sensitive, dramatic, clear, chaste, vigorous and intelligent. . . Her nuances seem always inevitable and affectation is unknown to her.¹⁹

In March 1955, Theodolinda Boris commented,

Everything under Mlle Demessieux's fingers was crisp, so that even involved contrapuntal threads sounded with a truly admirable clearness. Demessieux's rhythm had a wonderful vitality[,] and her handling of melodic line and phrase was like that of a master violinist or sensitive singer.²⁰

Others commented on how "in control" she was, including Charles van Bronkhorst, who observed in April 1958 that

Mlle Demessieux was in perfect control at all times: registration, dynamics[,] and technique were combined to yield maximum results.²¹

Writing in *The American Organist*, Scott Buhrman, editor of the magazine and an organist himself, had praised Demessieux's staccato in a review of her 1953 debut recital at Central Presbyterian Church in New York:

If we have ears to hear with, a close scrutiny of how Miss Demessieux uses staccato, only rarely perverting the organ to its mud-thick legatos, will do much to revolutionize the funereal organ recital.²²

Scott Buhrman also voiced criticisms, though, particularly in March 1955, such as,

The first half of the program was played on hard and loud Diapason and mixture combinations; even the [chorale prelude] Blessed Jesus was done that way, devoid of any touch of tenderness.²³

In April 1958 the organist Frank Cunkle, editor of *The Diapason*, heard

thick, heavy registration . . . mechanically perfect meter . . . too often absence of a flowing line and remarkably little feeling of artistic communication.²⁴

As Ellis points out, a recital could invite criticism of Demessieux's registration choices by one reviewer and approval by another.²⁵ Concerning the February 2, 1953 debut concert at Central Presbyterian Church in New York, organist Searle Wright voiced the following complaint:

Demessieux, like many of her many French compatriots, seems to be satisfied only with the most sharply contrasting stops available, regardless of the timbre of individual voices and their blend or lack of blend in combination or opposition. The result is the use, both for ensemble or solo playing, of the biggest, hootiest flutes, the edgiest reeds, etc.²⁶

Reviewing the same recital, Scott Buhrman praised Demessieux's registration of Franck's *Pastorale*, by emphasizing that here she

[taught] Americans another lesson they've tried to forget, namely that a mess of colors is not nearly so good as clear-cut pure colors. She contrasted reeds against flutes . . . the flutes were unmuddied by the addition of unnecessary supplementary voices, the reeds were ditto.²⁷

Demessieux's choices of repertoire generally drew no criticism. One reviewer, however, Ray Berry, complained in June 1958 that the program was "not sufficiently relieved by music of a lighter character."²⁸

Critics who remarked on Demessieux's improvisations frequently applauded their complexity. For example, Theo Powell Smith closed his review of a February 1953 recital with:

And for an encore an elaborately wrought prelude and fugue on Bach's "O Sacred Head Now Wounded," with its intricate brilliance.²⁹

Rudolph Elie, writing in March 1953, went into more detail:

The theme, a harmonically and rhythmically bold one in two parts with endless enharmonic values, emerged in a three-part fantasy culminating in a full-blown fugue of exceeding complexity combining, at the end, both themes, the whole ending in a charming coda to achieve an ovation for the organist.³⁰

Occasionally, a writer was dismissive of Demessieux's improvisation. Barbara Owen commented in June 1958,

The improvisation was, as it often unhappily is, the dullest spot on the program. The theme submitted was a Gregorian chant[,] Adoro te devote, which would seem an excellent vehicle. However, she did little with it, beginning with the usual meanderings over a solo melody, and building up to the inevitable climax replete with 64-foot stop and blazing reeds.³¹

At the same time, Owen, like many other reviewers of Demessieux's North American recitals, was as much struck by what she saw as heard, describing Demessieux as

an organist who could tear flawlessly through the most difficult manual and pedal passages almost literally without batting an eyelash, and wearing high-heeled shoes at that . . . sitting still and upright in the midst of a tumult of sound."³²

Others noted Demessieux's slight build and described her as being "like a timid child," "frail," a "petite but astounding young lady," or a "young girl"—as if her personal appearance belied her ability to control an organ.³³

Incidentally, the early music movement was fully under way in North America as well as in Europe in the 1950s when Demessieux concertized in North America. Performers of music from the Baroque and earlier periods increasingly advocated that, technically and stylistically, this music be played in the manner of the period in which it originated.³⁴ They also promoted use of musical instruments constructed in, or modelled after those of, the era.³⁵

Demessieux never delved into these concepts. As taught by Dupré, she continued legato playing of Bach and other early organ music, and she performed her repertoire on every organ she encountered, whatever its mechanism or tonal design.³⁶ For Demessieux's North American recitals, which as noted above, all began with music by Bach, the organs available to her were largely romantic- and symphonic-style instruments. For example, the organ that Owen heard her play in June 1958 at Woolsey Hall was by E. M. Skinner. This, in turn, would explain why a historian of the organ and its performance practice such as Owen would make only passing reference in her review to authenticity:

With the Vivaldi[-Bach] Concerto . . . she [Demessieux] was back on solid ground and though her interpretation was again not the Baroque one it was nonetheless exciting."³⁷

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that Demessieux performed in the style of an illustrious but, by the 1950s, bygone age. Writing in the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1953, composer Virgil Thomson (1896–1989), who had lived and studied in Paris, commented,

All evening long your reviewer, who has known most of the great organ playing of our time, from that of Widor and Bonnet and Vierne through Dupré to Messiaen, could only think of those masters as company for this extraordinary musician and virtuoso.³⁸

On the other hand, in *The American Organist* in 1955, Scott Buhrman diagnosed his own lack of enjoyment in Demessieux's playing when pointing out that

[s]he has everything in the world she needs excepting enough conceit to break away from the binding traditions of the organ world.³⁹

In other words, Demessieux was both praised and disparaged for performing in the style of a previous generation of French organists.

Translators' Note Concerning Demessieux's Language describing People of Colour

Judging from Demessieux's diary entry of February 12, 1955—evidently written in a hotel lounge in Syracuse—which mentions briefly, "Some splendid jazz heard in the hotel," she appears to have had an appreciation for jazz. Therefore, she may have been aware, if only through her friend Jean Berveiller, that there was a community of African Americans in Paris, many employed as jazz musicians.⁴⁰ That said, to my knowledge, nothing Demessieux wrote in Paris ever refers to Black people as such.

It is striking, therefore, that in her writings from North America, she pointedly draws the reader's attention to people of colour in several places. In a passage from a letter penned on her first tour, Demessieux treats Black people as an exotic part of the landscape:

In Louisiana, it was hot and humid, with such a scent of magnolias and flowers as to make one queasy. And the endless forests conceal cabins on stilts where one sees Black women surrounded by a flock of kids [*volée de mioches*], all splashing around in the water (February 25, 1953).

In her diaries, Demessieux also draws attention to people of colour encountered in service roles like taxi driver, train steward, or server (e.g., February 6 and 14, 1955; March 6 and 8, 1958). She occasionally describes African Americans as *noirs*, other times as [n*****].⁴¹

To mitigate the appearance of racism, Trieu-Colleney, in her transcription of the diaries, omitted all passages referring to [n*****] or *jaunes*, retaining only mention of *noirs*. In the present translation, all references have been retained, and we have translated [n*****] (as well as *noir*) as Black and *jaune* as Asian.

While the outdated and offensive terms have been replaced in translation, mention of race by its mere presence will still arguably sound bigoted to modern readers, particularly due to the condescension of tone and context frequently accompanying these mentions. Demessieux described in her 1958 diary, for example, one evening when, having found the hotel restaurant closed, she and Claudine Verchère went in search of a place for supper. They ended up “in a café filled with Black and Asian men, with two women of the same type” (February 2, 1958). Demessieux made a point of noting that they had been served very graciously, as if this were not necessarily to be expected in such an establishment. She then remarked concerning the experience as follows:

I was on the verge of depression... and C. V. could not believe her eyes at this Bohemian [life] consisting of climbing and descending the entire social ladder in one fell swoop.

In other words, Demessieux seems to refer to people of colour as being of a lower social order than (white) Americans with whom they ordinarily mingled.

In another diary description, her words come across as casually patronizing. At a train station in El Paso, Demessieux observed,

Once again, the noble Black man [*le bon* [n*****]] is all devotion, keeps watch from afar, and laughs like a child (February 26, 1958).

Buried in this statement is the notion of a centuries-old archetype. According to literary critic Tomaz Cunningham, in eighteenth-century French literature,

le bon [n*****], the good or noble [n*****] . . . took the form of the exceptional slave who was devoted to his master, even going so far as to acknowledge the benefit of his own enslavement. . . *Le bon* [n*****] was the black male who knew his place in the racial hierarchy and lived in stoic acceptance of his servile position.⁴²

By adopting the clichéd phrase, Demessieux failed to observe the individual person but drew upon a deep-seated stereotype. She then unpacked it by describing the man as knowing his place and being as simple as a child. While racial prejudice may not have been Demessieux’s conscious intention, the unconscious racism of her spontaneous comments demonstrates that she was indeed a product of her time in terms of her condescending views toward people of colour.

Readers are now invited to turn to the actual letters and diaries from Demessieux’s North American recital tours in the 1950s.

NOTES:

1 Copy of ad, source unnamed, preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 341.

2 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 48–53 and 57–68, describes Demessieux’s career as a travelling organ recitalist, and quotes excerpts from her letters and reviews of recitals.

3 Unless otherwise noted, information in this and the following two paragraphs is based on GVT, “Presse II” and research that I conducted in libraries in London, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Austria in 2003.

4 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 48.

5 Decca’s Adam Freeman, the executive producer of *Jeanne Demessieux: The Decca Legacy* (Decca 484 1424, 2021), shared with me, that, according to his research, Demessieux’s only female predecessors as recording artists were, first, the French organist Marthe Bracquemond, who, playing pipe organ was part of a vocal and instrumental ensemble that recorded François Couperin, *Troisième Leçon de Ténèbres pour le Mercredi*, released by HMV/VSM in 1937 (email of May

10, 2022), and, second, the American organist Ethel Smith, who recorded in pop and Latin styles on the Hammond organ for Decca Records in the U.S., beginning in 1944 (email of Mar. 3, 2022).

6 Demessieux's last recording session for Decca was on the organ of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral in 1967. Dates of Demessieux's Decca recording sessions are from liner notes for the CD set *Jeanne Demessieux: The Decca Legacy* (Decca 484 1424, 2021).

7 Johan H. den Otter, CD liner notes for *The Legendary Jeanne Demessieux* (Festivo 6961862, 2003), 6.

8 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 72–73.

9 The first comprehensive description of these recital tours was Laura Ellis, “The American Recital Tours of Jeanne Demessieux: A Documentation of her Performances” (D.M.A. document, University of Kansas, 1991), to which I am indebted. Demessieux was not the first female French organist to perform in North America, though she was the first to tour transcontinentally. According to <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9_Nizan>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Renée Nizan played organ recitals in the U.S. and Canada three times, the dates including 1931 and 1938. The web page for Line Zilgien at <<http://www.musimem.com/orgue.html>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, reproduces an article by Zilgien describing her 1937 recital tour that encompassed eastern U.S. cities, Chicago, and Montréal. According to the website of the Rolande Falcinelli Archive of the Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music <<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/sibley/specialcollections/findingaids/falcinelli>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Falcinelli made a North American tour in 1950, during which she performed in “some dozen or more cities in Canada and the USA.”

10 *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, s.v. Bernard R. Laberge, updated Dec. 16, 2013

<<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bernard-r-laberge-emc/>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. The artists management company was originally founded by Canadian-born impresario, organist, pianist, and critic Bernard R. Laberge in Montréal in 1921. By 1926 the company also had an office in New York.

11 Ibid. and Ann Labounsky, *Jean Langlais: The Man and His Music* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2000), 149, 201. Other European organists brought to North America by Laberge were Belgian-American Charles Courboin, Belgian Flor Peeters, Italian Fernando Germani, and German Günther Ramin.

12 “Lilian Murtagh, 69, dead; aided concert organists” <<http://www.nytimes.com/1976/10/23/archives/lilian-murtagh-69-dead-aided-concert-organists.html>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. It has not been possible to determine exactly when Murtagh was given responsibility for the organ division. However, according to the same newspaper article, upon Colbert's death in 1962, Murtagh purchased the organ division and continued to set up tours for European organists until her death in 1976. At that time, as noted in Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc. <<http://www.concertorganists.com/about/>>, accessed Sept. 29, 2022, McFarlane took over the management company.

13 I examined them at the home of Claudine Verchère in Annoire, France, in 2006. Verchère, a former student of Demessieux, became her secretary in the 1960s.

14 Handbill preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” unnumbered.

15 The only exception is that after her Salle Pleyel recital of Apr. 15, 1946, when Demessieux played Felix Mendelssohn's complete works for organ, she appears to have decided that Mendelssohn was no longer to her taste.

16 Across the six set programs, works selected from Dupré's *Anthologie* were: Purcell (actually Jeremiah Clarke), Trumpet Tune; Buxtehude, Fugue in C; R. Schumann, Canon in B minor; Mozart, Second Fantasia; Clérambault, Basse et dessus.

17 For this program I am indebted to Laura Ellis 1991, 32–33.

18 J. Fred Lissfelt, “Organist's Recital at PCW Brilliant,” *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph* (Feb. 11, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 344.

19 Richard Montague, “News of the American Guild of Organists—Northern California,” *The Diapason* 44 (Apr. 1953): 14, quoted in Ellis 1991, 26.

20 Theodolinda Boris, “Jeanne Demessieux Displays Artistry in Organ Recital,” *Buffalo Evening News* (Mar. 22, 1955), 26, quoted in Ellis 1991, 43.

21 Charles van Bronkhorst, “Jeanne Demessieux, Bidwell Memorial Presbyterian Church,” *The American Organist* 41 (Apr. 1958): 148, quoted in Ellis 1991, 56.

- 22 T. Scott Buhrman, "Jeanne Demessieux Recital," *The American Organist* 36 (Feb. 1953): 59, quoted in Ellis 1991, 18.
- 23 T. Scott Buhrman, "Jeanne Demessieux Recital," *The American Organist* 38 (Mar. 1955): 85, quoted in Ellis 1991, 34.
- 24 Frank Cunkle, "Demessieux in Chicago," *The Diapason* 49 (Apr. 1958): 16, quoted in Ellis 1991, 62.
- 25 Ellis 1991, 19.
- 26 M. Searle Wright, "Jeanne Demessieux in American Debut at New York Recital," *The Diapason* 44 (Mar. 1953): 38, quoted in Ellis, 19–20.
- 27 T. Scott Buhrman, "Jeanne Demessieux Recital," *The American Organist* 36 (Feb. 1953): 59, quoted in Ellis 1991, 20.
- 28 Ray Berry, "Jeanne Demessieux. Central Presbyterian Church," *The American Organist* 41 (Jun. 1958), 225, quoted in Ellis 1991, 66.
- 29 Theo Powell Smith, "A Critic's Viewpoint," *Peoria Journal* (Feb. 16, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 355.
- 30 Rudolph Elie, "Jeanne Demessieux," *The Boston Herald* (Mar. 24, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 349.
- 31 Barbara Owen, "Jeanne Demessieux, Woolsey Hall," *The American Organist* 41 (June 1958): 223–24, quoted in Ellis 1991, 64.
- 32 Ibid., quoted in Ellis 1991, 65.
- 33 Evabeth Miller, "Immense Organ Court Is Played by Small Parisienne," *Peoria Journal Star* (Feb. 16, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 342; Frank Cunkle, "Demessieux in Chicago," *The Diapason* 49 (Apr. 1958): 16, quoted in Ellis 1991, 62; Charles van Bronkhorst, "Jeanne Demessieux, Bidwell Memorial Presbyterian Church, Chico, CA, February 14," *The American Organist* 41 (Apr. 1958): 148, quoted in Ellis 1991, 55; Ray Berry, "Jeanne Demessieux. Central Presbyterian Church, New York, March 25," *The American Organist* 41 (Jun. 1958): 225, quoted in Ellis 1991, 67.
- 34 An example of 1950s thinking on articulation appropriate to Bach's organ music is Arthur Howes, "Bas Relief," *Organ Institute Quarterly* 2/3 (1952): 21, <https://archive.org/details/sim_organ-institute-quarterly_summer-1952_2_3/page/18/mode/2up>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. He argues that for the playing of polyphonic organ music, "constant legato playing not only is monotonous but also deprives melodies and phrases of the character and vitality that can be given to them by accents of duration and by punctuating each voice with slight breaks in the legato to indicate sentences, phrases and lesser significant note groups." The author then goes on to detail types of short melodic figures that benefit from non-legato touch (22–23).
- 35 Nicholas Kenyon, "Bach to the future: how period performers revolutionised classical music" *The Guardian* (Nov. 1, 2019), <<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/nov/01/nicholas-kenyon-early-music-revival-period-instruments-classical-music-baroque-authentic>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. He notes that "In place of the sustained, rich, legato sounds of modern chamber orchestras performing Bach and Vivaldi, period instrument bands brought transparency, short-breathed phrasing and sharp articulation."
- 36 Pierre Froidebise, *Encyclopédie de la musique* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1961), s.v. *Sacrée*, makes the point that Dupré's universal legato in Bach playing (a "Bach pseudo-tradition"), which was in direct contradiction to the findings of twentieth-century musicologists, continued to be taught by Dupré's disciples Jeanne Demessieux and Rolande Falcinelli; Antoine Bouchard, *Quelques réflexions sur le jeu de l'orgue* (Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003), 8, quotes Froidebise as regards Demessieux's, and Falcinelli's perpetuation of universal legato.
- 37 Owen 1958, quoted in Ellis 1991, 64. For an example of Owen's scholarship on early organ music, see Barbara Owen, *The Registration of Baroque Organ Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).
- 38 Virgil Thomson, "Jeanne Demessieux," *New York Herald Tribune* (Mar. 23, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 350.
- 39 T. Scott Buhrman, 1955, quoted in Ellis 1991, 34.
- 40 Though primarily a businessman, Berveiller also played jazz piano, and composed jazz-inspired organ pieces that Demessieux played.
- 41 This word, referred to in French as "le mot en « n »" (the 'n' word), is spelled out in full in Demessieux's travel diaries. The word is now considered derogatory and will not be spelled out in full here.

42 Huie Tomaz Cunningham, “Bridging the Gap in French Romantic Representations of Blackness 1750–1880: The Male Mulatto in French Literature” (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., 2014), 56.

II. Jeanne Demessieux's Diaries and Letters from the North American Recital Tours (1953, 1955, and 1958) in Translation

Jeanne Demessieux's North American recital tours are chronicled below by multiple materials. The 1953 tour is not described in a diary but in letters from which Trieu-Colleney quoted excerpts. These are framed by my own narrative derived from other sources—principally a Doctor of Musical Arts thesis by American organist Laura Ellis, and a scrapbook of Demessieux's press cuttings that I inherited from Goosen Van Tuijl.¹

These same sources, cited in endnotes, supplement the travel diary Demessieux kept during her 1955 tour. Beginning February 15, 1955, diary entries reproduced below are interspersed with excerpts from letters quoted by Trieu-Colleney to further portray Demessieux's second visit to North America.

Finally, Demessieux's third North American tour is the subject of her 1958 travel diary, again supplemented by other sources, which include the tour itinerary that specifies cities and venues.²

Each of the records mentioned above is incomplete. As a result, for some recitals known to have been performed the venue and the program content are unknown.

As much as possible, primary source materials are arranged in chronological order. Each piece of correspondence is headed by its date at the left margin and is in a shaded textbox. Centred dates signal diary entries, which are in unshaded textboxes. Explanatory comments on the content of letters and diaries occur in endnotes, as does information from other sources that is supplementary to a diary or letter.

First Transcontinental Tour of North America: February–March 1953

Travelling alone by ocean liner, Demessieux arrived in New York City shortly before January 31, 1953. The first evidence of this arrival is a February 1 *New York Herald Tribune* headline:

Organist Plays 1,000 to 2,000 Works by Heart: Frenchwoman, Here for a 25-Recital Tour, Left All of Her Scores at Home³

The accompanying write-up is based on an interview with Demessieux. The organist of New York's Central Presbyterian Church—Hugh Giles—served as interpreter and was himself drawn out to talk about Demessieux's extraordinary memory and pedal virtuosity.⁴ The rest of the newspaper article is devoted to Demessieux's credentials. It also mentions that the day before she had performed a radio recital, heard over WQXR, New York's Classical Music Station, on the organ of Temple Emanu-El, Fifth Avenue and 65th Street.

The recital tour officially opened on Monday, February 2, at New York's Central Presbyterian Church, with the following program (hereafter called "Program No. 1"):

- Purcell, *Trumpet Tune*⁵
- Bach, Prelude and Fugue in A minor [BWV 543], "Das alte Jahr vergangen ist" [*Orgelbüchlein*], and Fugue in G major ("Gigue")
- Franck, *Pastorale*
- Widor, *Variations (Symphonie-Gothique)*
- Messiaen, *La Banquet céleste*
- Demessieux, "Notes répétées" [*Six Études*] and "Dogme" [*Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit*]
- Jean Berveiller, *Cadence*⁶
- Improvisations on submitted themes⁷

Demessieux described the recital at Central Presbyterian Church, and some of her other experiences in Philadelphia and New York City, in a letter to her parents:⁸

New York, 5 February 1953

The recital created a huge effect. Given in a central location, at the Presbyterian Church on a beautiful organ.⁹ At the intermission, extraordinary, bubbling excitement. The two journals that publish reviews appear monthly; without waiting, one of them, *The American Organist*, sent me a letter terrible for my modesty...¹⁰

Yesterday [Wed., Feb. 4], played the Philadelphia Wanamaker organ (six manuals), was hosted, for the entire day, by the publishers Elkan and Vogel, distributors for Durand (my works in the display window).¹¹

Welcomed in charming fashion by Patelson and Gray¹² and especially by the executives at Decca.¹³ They [Pateson's] have all my recordings, up to the most recent... This establishment compares very well with those of London, and Olof spoke of me to them, notably telling them how I had had the blowers [*turbineset port-vents*] of the Victoria Hall organ in Geneva swaddled... and saved the day...¹⁴

My train tickets are a curiosity. They are connected to each other like the perforated rolls of carousel music; the result: [they are] two metres long...¹⁵

The visit to Philadelphia, where Demessieux had opportunity to play the organ in the Wanamaker Department store, did not include a recital, as far as can be determined. Neither is there readily available evidence of concerts performed in the days immediately following February 4, 1953. According to a retrospective article published in a Belgian newspaper, Demessieux's initial New York recital was followed by recitals in Baltimore; Exeter, N.H.; and Pittsburgh, each city reached by train.¹⁶ Ellis documents the Pittsburgh event as a February 10 recital at Pittsburgh's Pennsylvania College for Women sponsored by the Möller Organ Company. The program (hereafter called "Program No. 2") consisted of:

- Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor and a chorale prelude that was likely "Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein" [*Orgelbüchlein*]
- Handel, Concerto No. 1 in G minor¹⁷
- Franck, *Pastorale*
- Dupré, *Symphonie-Passion*: ["The World Awaiting the Savior"]
- Berveiller, *Épithaphe*
- Langlais, "Les Rameaux" [*Trois poèmes évangéliques*, Op. 7]
- Demessieux, "Ubi caritas" [*Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*] and "Octaves" [*Six Études*]
- An improvisation on a given theme¹⁸

Following Pittsburgh, the Belgian newspaper article lists Canton, Ohio and Peoria, Illinois as cities in which Demessieux performed.¹⁹ According to Demessieux's scrapbook of press cuttings, the Peoria recital occurred on the afternoon of Sunday, February 15, 1953 at First Methodist Church, where she repeated her "Program No. 1," but with Franck's *Choral* No. 3 in place of his *Pastorale*. As the last item on the program—an improvisation on a submitted theme—Demessieux extemporized a prelude and fugue based on the Lutheran chorale melody that sets "O Sacred Head Now Wounded."²⁰

Then there is another gap in records of Demessieux's 1953 tour. But according to a letter to her parents,

sometime shortly before February 19, 1953, Demessieux played the organ at the University of Chicago. From that primary source it is not clear whether the visit included a recital or simply a promise of a recital engagement.

From a letter not quoted by Trieu-Colleney²¹

Chicago, 19 February 1953

A few words before leaving Chicago. . . It's here that I played the organ of the much-vaunted university where Dupré was so triumphant²² and where Rolande [Falcinelli] gave classes [*faire des cours*].²³ Dupré's friend Marriott didn't want to be compromised, but he assigned someone else to me who, after hearing me, wants to arrange a recital. It's all a struggle of conflicting sympathies, but I have the impression that people [here] feel that D[upré] was exaggerating about me.¹

I'm writing hurriedly at the station. I leave at 5:00 PM for New Orleans, where I'll arrive tomorrow morning at 9:30. First class, sleeping car.

On February 22, 1953, Demessieux could be found in New Orleans where the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) presented her at St. Louis Cathedral. There she performed her "Program No. 2" again, concluding with an improvisation, this time on themes submitted by Ferdinand Dunkley, Henry S. Jacobs, and Walter Jenkins.²⁴

Next it was on to Texas where, on February 24, 1953, Demessieux performed for the Texas chapter of the AGO at University Park Methodist Church in Dallas. Her repertoire was that of "Program No. 2" with inclusion of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in A minor instead of the Toccata and Fugue in D minor, and omission of Berveiller's *Építaphe*. She concluded with an improvisation on a theme submitted by Henry Sanderson and then played two encores: Clérambault, "Basse et dessus de trompette" and Purcell, *Trumpet Tune*.²⁵ According to the Belgian newspaper article, Demessieux also played a recital in Austin.²⁶

From a letter to her parents:²⁷

25 February 1953

. . . Yes, I have passed through some magnificent regions. In Louisiana, it was hot and humid, with such a scent of magnolias and flowers as to make one queasy. And the endless forests conceal cabins on stilts where one sees Black women surrounded by a flock of kids [*volée de mioches*], all splashing around in the water.²⁸

In Texas it's wilder, drier, with livestock farms for horses and little steers (cows, too, of course); people there are called "Marseillais" because they are braggarts,²⁹ but they say they have "a drop of oil" when referring to their oil wells.

From a subsequent letter to her parents, undated:³⁰

1. The phrase "conflicting sympathies" suggests that following Dupré's break with Demessieux he spoke negatively of her to concert organizers at the University of Chicago. That Dupré had at one time highly recommended Demessieux to his friend Frederick Marriott is alluded to in diary entries for Sept. 15 and 23, 1944.

I look forward to California, which should be a bit like Provence. As far as comfort goes, I lack nothing. I have managed to buy myself such a variety of things that are comfortable and... synthetic... For my meals, I choose a lot of fruit juice and, often, grilled steak (so much for Lent!), which I sometimes have served in my room to avoid the racket [of restaurants].

I have one reception after another [to attend]; it's hard for anyone to imagine. But, when I tell them I am doing a complete tour of the United States, alone, you could knock them over with a feather.

In California, according to the Belgian newspaper article, Demessieux performed in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.³¹ Undated reviews preserved in her scrapbook indicate she performed in San Diego at First Presbyterian Church, this time her "Program No. 1" (with the piece by Franck being his *Choral No. 3*).³² Ellis gives March 8, 1953, as the date of a recital at Oakland's First Methodist Church; this suggests that "San Francisco" of the Belgian article was really the nearby city of Oakland.³³

That same publication chronicles what happened after California: Demessieux performed in Bloomington, Indiana, followed by Brantford, Ontario, Canada. The latter recital, according to a review preserved in Demessieux's scrapbook, occurred on March 17, 1953, and was sponsored by the Brantford branch of the Royal Canadian College of Organists at Brant Avenue United Church.³⁴ There she performed her "Program No. 2."

From Brantford, Demessieux returned to the U.S. east coast where she had begun her tour. A letter to her parents notes two extra-itinerary recitals performed prior to March 21, 1953, one in Rochester, N.Y. on an unspecified date, and another in Glens Falls, N.Y. on March 20. A third "extra" recital to come is also mentioned in the letter: this must have been her March 22 return engagement at Central Presbyterian Church in New York City.

Glens Falls, New York, 21 March 1953³⁵

I have given two extra recitals: an inauguration in Rochester, with the Bishop presiding; yesterday evening's in Glens Falls on an [organ of] "more than 100 stops";³⁶ a third extra will be in New York tomorrow under the auspices of the [French] Ambassador. [Playing] three different programs.

Of course, I spend my nights in sleeping cars [on the train]; fortunately, very comfortably. But this is a minor part of the process... [In general,] I am so exasperated by material things...

I wrote a long letter to Father de la Motte, which gave me more pleasure than those I have still to do.

The program for Demessieux's March 22, 1953 return to New York's Central Presbyterian Church included not only three works from her "Program No. 2" (Handel's G-minor Concerto, Dupré's "The World Awaiting the Savior," and her own chorale prelude on "Ubi caritas"); it also introduced works not previously played on the tour. These were Dupré's arrangement of the Overture from Bach's Cantata No. 29, the Fantasia on "Ad nos, ad salutarem" by Liszt, and her own "Étude in Thirds" from *Six Études*.³⁷ Virgil Thomson wrote of this recital:

. . . Accustomed, no doubt, to compensating for the acoustical lags and other echoing characteristics of

France's vast cruciform churches, all stone and glass, she employed to great advantage in the smaller but similarly reverberant walls of the Central Presbyterian a staccato touch for all rapid passage work involving bright or loud registration. This device kept the brilliance clean, and its contrast with the more sustained utterance of broader themes gave a welcome variety, a contrapuntal dimension. We are not used here to so dry an articulation, to so striking a clarity in organ playing. I must say that the fine brightness in the organ she was playing on aided the artist, as a good French organ also does, to avoid the muddy noises that so often pass for serious organ execution.³⁸

From a letter to her parents:³⁹

23 March 1953

Recital number 2 in New York yesterday evening was truly a consecration. Standing-room only was allowed for some while others had to be turned away. The feverish atmosphere of grand evenings.

Ellis describes the March 22 concert at New York's Central Presbyterian Church as the final recital of Demessieux's 1953 tour.⁴⁰ However, Boston newspaper reviews preserved in Demessieux's scrapbook document that on the evening of March 23 she performed at the invitation of the Boston chapter of the AGO. The venue was Boston's Symphony Hall, and her repertoire consisted of "Program No. 1," including Franck's *Choral* No. 3 and an improvisation on a theme submitted by Carl McKinley.⁴¹

The *New York Herald Tribune* article of February 1, 1953 had reported that the tour was to consist of 25 concerts; of these I have given details concerning 19, three of which were extra to the original itinerary. The high number of concerts scheduled for the period February 2 through March 23, 1953 would suggest an average of one recital every two days. In that case, it is no wonder that Demessieux spent many of her nights sleeping on trains.

After Demessieux's return home to France, to her sister Yolande:⁴²

8 May 1953

After the U.S., I had to leave almost immediately again for Ireland and England, not without having rushed to Liège between times for my classes.⁴³

Second Transcontinental Tour of North America: February–March 1955

From Demessieux's travel diary:⁴⁴

Friday 28 January 1955

Left Paris this morning; [then] Le Havre at 2:00 PM on the [ocean liner] *Liberté*, just like two years ago. Beautiful weather.

Life on board is getting organized: they're opening the library, posting activities, etc. I've taken a deckchair near the bridge, reserved a table for one from where I can see people without suffering their

conversation. Even my cabin is private: exclusively for me. In this way, I will manage to lead, for five days, an untamed (or vegetative!) life during which I expect a good rest. Posted two letters and a postcard from Southampton. [Here] I'm intentionally avoiding commentary on my "departure" so as not to mix meaningful things into the "chronicle" that I will compile quickly each day as a travel diary.

[2] Saturday 29 January 1955

Seasick. Wild sea, portholes closed with shutters. The second sea sickness of my career! Skipped the captain's cocktail party; did manage to eat a little this evening.

Sunday 30 January 1955

A very sick abbé on board was nevertheless able to say Mass. [I] was able to go down to the dining room. This evening, the sea raged anew. I exhausted myself by reading, to forget where I've come from, where I'm going. I was introduced to a composer: Devèze (?) Varèse (?).⁴⁵

Wednesday 2 February 1955

After two stormy days. I was able to overcome sea sickness but could scarcely stay standing. Yesterday, though, I was allowed free access to the rear bridge, twice; I was able to see at close range a sea that had become green, foamy, and huge; heard the wind in the ropes, like an enormous *plein jeu*,⁴⁶ helping the boat battle the waves. A marvel of the elements equal (at last!) to the human soul. Consolation, peace, amidst the raging.

Thursday 3 February 1955

Difficult landing in New York: the port frozen. 17 degrees below zero. Saw [the impresario Henry] Colbert at the harbour. Good hotel on 57th Street (Great [3] Northern). Considerable delay.

Thursday 4 February 1955

Day of paperwork with Colbert and [Liliane] Murtagh.⁴⁷ Papers, schedules, tickets, reservations, contracts, programs to modify, last-minute engagements to discuss, finances. Launch of a grand tour: head = power station. They put everything in your hands; everything is ready, except what is to follow. Up to you to organize yourself, know how to file the smallest piece of paper, to forget nothing. You are responsible for trains missed, schedules changed. You must not get the wires of your "station" crossed. You can leave. Bon voyage.

Play well? That's up to you.

Worked for two hours at the organ.

Saturday 5 February 1955

Left this morning for Glens Falls, [a] small city, charmingly situated. White houses in the forest I was acquainted with.⁴⁸ Deep cold. The Hudson completely frozen over, with no puddles. I was tired, but rediscovered [4] how comfortable the trains are: remarkable.

Brought by car from Fort Edward, I [then] had to wait until 7:00 in the evening to work, due to the organizers. A long walk relaxed me. I was late to bed.

Huge, ugly organ. "A lemon" ["*Un fromage*"]! the resident organist said to me.⁴⁹

Sunday 6 February 1955

First recital. A large crowd.

I had arisen rested; but... snow! Obviously milder weather. No desire to go out, slip, [or] catch a cold; I reluctantly forsook Sunday Mass. Also [forsook] the Lake George waterfalls, where they were to take me.⁵⁰ Worked again before the recital, this one at 4 PM.

Demessieux's 1955 Glens Falls program (hereafter called "Program No. 1") consisted of:⁵¹

- Bach, Toccata in F major and "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" [probably from the *Orgelbüchlein*]
- Handel Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major
- Franck, *Choral* No. 2 in B minor
- Widor, *Allegro* (Sixth Symphony)
- Berveiller, *Intermezzo (Suite)*
- Demessieux, *Triptyque*
- improvisation on a submitted theme

Sunday 6 February 1955, continued:

This evening [after the recital,] I left the hotel with a Black man by taxi as far as the busses, where I took one that got me to Albany at about 11:00 PM. There, I got on a Pullman [sleeping car on a train] and went to bed, not without having guzzled a barrel of ice water at the train's fountain: salvation for recital artists who are dying from thirst after playing!

The snow is melting. The roads looked like streams, or nearly so!... cesspools at any rate. Enormous geysers dousing the bus, whose back end was swerving so strongly at one point [5] that I shouted out to the conductor.

Monday 7 February 1955

Arrived in New York at 7:30 AM (the train had been in the station since 4:00 AM [*le train était en gare depuis 4h.*]). Groggy after a heavy sleep, it was hard to pull myself from my lower [bunk], only to find a deserted, damp platform.

But I was able to check in to my hotel room that morning. Bath, rest. Dropped by C[olbert's] in the late morning. A little tour of 5th Avenue; beautifully sunny. I asked for directions at Cook's [travel agency], went into the cathedral. I would have liked to push on to the Empire State [Building] and go up; no time; this was not yet the day.

Worked after lunch.

Received a telephone call from Van Wyck, [who is] in N.Y. for a few days.

In the evening, recital. A crowd.

Demessieux's 1955 recital at Central Presbyterian Church (hereafter called "Program No. 2") consisted of:⁵²

- Bach, Fantasia and Fugue in G minor and "Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier" [probably from the *Orgelbüchlein*]
- Buxtehude, Fugue in C

- Handel, Concerto No. 10 in D minor
- Schumann, Canon in B minor
- Franck-Berveiller, *Rédemption: Interlude symphonique*
- Vierne, Scherzo (Sonata No. 2)
- Demessieux, “Paix” [*Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit*]
- Messiaen, “Dieu parmi nous” [*La Nativité du Seigneur*]

Monday 7 February 1955 [continued]

Afterward, I was treated as an exotic animal [*bête curieuse*]. Men look at you a certain way, women in another. A disreputable looking group of the latter offered me a handful of flowers, taking me by the waist. No one was likeable. The Colberts did not even come! I returned alone, driven back by [6] Giles⁵³ and, for obvious reasons, I brooded and read until quite late.

Thursday 8 February 1955

Drudgery in Philadelphia. Dinner with Mr. Kohn of Vogel Associates (Elkan-Vogel),⁵⁴ 20 minutes away by train. They kept me on to meet “some friends” who arrived late; they took me back to the station and I returned alone at 11:00 PM.

Saw Van Wyck this morning, cordial, gentlemanly. Next, spent time at Colbert’s where they strongly insinuated that V. W. would lay claim to a stake concerning my two tours of [North] America. They insisted [even] when I responded that V. W. has always declared himself to be disinterested in this subject. I left, disgusted, all my joy at running into a friend dampened.

Saw the organ for a half hour.

Wednesday 9 February 1955

Lunched with Mrs. Vogel and Mrs. Kohn. Positively influenced by the house of Durand regarding me.

Worked. Good recital, a crowd, organ of several divisions according to the American formula.⁵⁵ After the recital, [the] usual, interminable parade of audience members, [7] small, fancy cakes, etc.

Thursday 10 February 1955

Harrisburg. Arrived at lunch time and played in the evening; had to use subterfuge to avoid a “lunch,” a “dinner,” a stupid television “appearance” placed during the only time I could rehearse, a visit to the city, etc. By these means, I was able to work for three hours, the organ being, moreover, in a bad state, the combinations refusing to function.

Finally, the recital,⁵⁶ where my relationship with the audience was particularly good.* Afterward: an interminable and uninteresting [receiving] line: introduced, one by one, to each person, who knows only to say to you, “I enjoyed your recital very much.” Thank you.⁵⁷ You could play like a nitwit—it would be worth the same.

* While playing, I suddenly thought to myself: “If it were necessary to give this up, I could never.”

Friday 11 February 1955

Left at 7:00 in the morning [only] to learn at the station that the train for New York was two hours late—and [I had] a connection to make! I took a train for Philadelphia where I barely caught another train for

[8] New York where, finally, I again found one for Syracuse after having telephoned Colbert. Sudden, extremely violent, snowstorm. Having sent word by telegram, [I] was met at the station in the evening.

Saturday 12 February 1955

Recital at Syracuse University; excellent organ: only three manuals [and] in classic style (1950), the new trend.⁵⁸ Success, but a small crowd due to the weather. Tremendous snow, tremendous wind whose torrential noise dominated everything.

The university (the charm of American universities) being situated on a hill, the car that drove me declined the challenge, started to go adrift, and stopped sideways in a snowdrift. They led me on foot, strongly supported amidst eddies of powdered snow and wind that took one's breath away. In boots and a suit, I changed in the dressing room.

Presently I am waiting, in the hotel lounge, for my train to Texas (on time); [the trip will take] one night, one day, [9] another night, and another morning.

Kind people who are respectful of my rest and my work.

There is smallpox in this city; entire sections of the university as well as the schools are closed.

Some splendid jazz heard in the hotel.

Monday 14 February 1955

Arrived in Houston, the "richest city in Texas," after two days on the train. Here, marvels: balmy air, sun, bird calls, green trees. An abrupt, but happy, transition. Breathe! Breathe!

Saturday evening, having been driven to the station for the expected hour, I noticed that the train was to be an hour and a half late. Nighttime wait in the lounge among some dirty and tired travellers—the same kind of people who get food hampers—while the floors were given over to the cleaners. Difficult struggle against sleep! A "cafeteria" [was] open, [so] I went to have a piping hot coffee among workmen on their break. Finally, [walked] the length of the deserted platform, thick with ice, before being welcomed by a Black steward at the [10] carriage door.

On Sunday: physically and somewhat mentally exhausted! My birthday [February 13]—down in the dumps. Frightful weather. Changed trains in St. Louis: 3½ hours late. Again, a comfortable roomette, a restaurant.

This afternoon [Monday in Houston], things are going better. A woman came to meet me at the station. I shut myself away for an hour in the hotel, read the mail, tried to find myself again. Then I went out to get some air and walked straight ahead for another hour. Returned by taxi. I rang the church in vain, tried without success to telephone the organizer.

Evening, at 7:30, I ordered my dinner in the room; right then, it was proposed I see the organ. I was trying to beg off, but at their insistence, I put up with eating my soup and beefsteak cold two hours later.

Tuesday 15 February 1955

Quiet day. Declined lunch. Work, rest, recital, reception.⁵⁹ Cold people. Good audience.

Two excerpts from a letter to Yolande:⁶⁰

15 February 1955

This tour is going along the best it possibly can, which is to say, exactly like last time, with added experience...

...

What they call “little indulgences” (invitations, dinners, receptions) are not really offered for my pleasure, but only because they have to be done, without taking into account... my fatigue. As for smiling, this is the most tiring thing: it is required constantly, so I do... It is “the others” who benefit from my smiling, [and] I have nothing left for myself, for one cannot remain constantly over-extended... It is “the others” who are indulged... and I earn my money by a thousand efforts beyond those of playing...

Wednesday 16 February 1955

Morning train. Houston. Fort Worth. I was met at the station and invited to lunch.

[11] Marvelous sun. Alas, American women only like the shade; dubious atmospheres. Also, I once again take note of the blinds, the completely opaque curtains on the windows, the indirect electric light, the colours saffron, old red, and dark green, the “dance music” of a theatre organ: it’s enough to make you sick.

[Texas Christian] University is miles away; my very small hotel, on a road between the city and the university. Impossible to go out walking. Saw the organ.⁶¹

Dined at [the hotel] (no restaurant, but a cafeteria that could be charming with a companion...). The men brazenly peer at you!

Thursday 17 February 1955

Worked for three hours in the morning. Afternoon, mail. I am pooped! [*Je suis poupée!*] Dined at the home of the organist and his wife. Young married couple living in a single-storey, wooden house: a single room, kitchenette, bathroom. No car. Poor people, for this place! Infinitely kind. The husband, who has secured a grant, wants to come work in Liège next year.⁶² I helped make [12] supper, wearing an apron.

From a letter to her parents:⁶³

17 February 1955

It’s pleasant to find a letter upon arriving in each city. Do you know that my recordings are known everywhere?... I am delighted... I always had the notion of the importance of [making] recordings.

Leaving here, I’m going to be on one heck of a journey, a heck of a journey, again!⁶⁴ The [Pullman] roomette is terrific because one can closet oneself for the entire journey if one wishes, in front of loads of

buttons for automation: air conditioning, ventilation, lights, hot and cold water, ice (for drinks), paper cups, napkins, soap...

Friday 18 February 1955

Morning in bed; aching all over! Afternoon, the usual work.

Recital* in the evening, lots of people, success, two encores.⁶⁵ Reception. Suitcases. As usual, got to bed around one o'clock, not without having drunk two cups of coffee, a glass of beer, and two glasses of water one after the other!

*Again while playing [it occurred to me that I could never give up performing]: "Of course, I am alone in realizing this."

Saturday 19 February 1955

Breakfast at the home of the organist, with a loaned car.⁶⁶

Train at 9:30 AM for California. Roomette, restaurant. Slept the entire morning. No more feeling down in the dumps! Will arrive tomorrow, late afternoon.

[Saw] Texan deserts, dotted with [oil] wells. Chasing the sun setting slowly in front of the train. Sky without a shadow, linear horizon. No more roads. A path [*Une piste*].

From an undated letter to her parents:⁶⁷

Pasadena

... I have finally reached the Pacific coast. We are, thus, separated by 12,000 kilometres or, at any rate, an interval of 9 hours . . .

There were lots of people at the recital in Fort Worth. Very good reviews.

Left Texas Saturday morning... Crossed two deserts: that of Texas—flat, very "burned ground"; that of Arizona—rockier, with gigantic, barbarous prickly pear [cacti] sticking up every now and then like ghosts.

Finally! California: very *Provence exagérée*, with its extraordinary sunsets, violet mountains, orange trees, flowering mimosas, camellias, palms, and fountains. The air is fresh despite the heat . . .

On a slant, on the next diary page:

... The second tour's travel diary ends here, for lack of time. Will the third "diary" [for the next tour] make it to the end?...

Though Demessieux spent time in California, there is no record of her formal engagements there during the 1955 tour, or of any recitals played between February 18 in Fort Worth and February 28 in Seattle. This suggests that the time in California was vacation. During that time, Demessieux nonetheless showed off her skills as an organist, albeit in an academic setting.

From a letter to her parents:⁶⁸

2 March 1955

Guess what! I spent a day with Darius Milhaud and his wife at Mills College (San Francisco) where I played for the students and professors. Milhaud having asked for one of my works, I played my fugue, which pleased him very much. Then he gave me a "learned" theme on which I improvised another fugue: he was amazed, saying that he has never seen improvising equal to it...

He and his wife [were] so kind, wanting me to rest, to unwind. They live on the grounds of the college, which is like a little city, in a single-storey house that resembles ours in Aigues-Mortes, isolated on a hilltop, surrounded by woods and flowers. D. Milhaud gets around in a wheelchair... It was he who welcomed me, asking me right away if I knew that [Paul] Claudel had died.⁶⁹

For dinner, they had invited an excellent organist, a student of Jean Langlais. There was also a composer.⁷⁰ Unaffectedness, spontaneous affinity, [and] at last, wit...

I left them early the next morning, not without regret. They made me promise to visit them again, in Paris, where they will be in September.

Having left California, on February 28, 1955 Demessieux performed at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington, where her recital was similar to "Program No. 2," but with Bach's Toccata in F major in place of the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, exclusion of that program's piece by Schumann, and addition of Berveiller's "Intermezzo" (from *Suite*).⁷¹

According to Laura Ellis's research, following Seattle on February 28, Demessieux's 1955 concert tour continued with recitals in the American Midwest, including one at Milwaukee's Ascension Lutheran Church (date unknown).⁷² Then, in Chicago on March 7, she performed at St. Peter's Catholic Church, at the invitation of the Chicago Club of Women Organists, a recital that was essentially her "Program No. 2."⁷³

According to a press clipping preserved in her scrapbook, on the afternoon of Saturday, March 12, 1955 Demessieux performed in Boston's Symphony Hall. This was a recital sponsored by the Music Commission of the Archdiocese of Boston, in collaboration with the Diocesan Seminary Choir under the direction of the Rev. Russell H. Davis. For this occasion, Demessieux combined the pre-twentieth-century repertoire from her "Program No. 1" with four of her *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes* appropriate to Holy Week and Easter—"Stabat Mater," "Vexilla Regis," "Hosanna filio David," and "O Filii et Filiae"—the themes of which were intoned by the choir. Her improvisation was based on the familiar "Tantum ergo" chant, and she played as an encore her "Étude in Thirds" (Six *Études*).⁷⁴

Then on March 15, 1955 Demessieux performed at a cathedral in Washington, D.C. her “Program No. 1” with Liszt’s Fantasia on “Ad nos, ad salutarem” in place of the Widor and the twentieth-century repertoire.⁷⁵

While touring the midwestern and eastern U.S., Demessieux brought her parents up to date concerning her time spent in California back in February.

From a letter to her parents:⁷⁶

17 March 1955

I’ve seen some marvellous things in California. By car, I traveled through forests of sequoias and redwoods—giant trees, 2,000 to 4,000 years old! I saw real blue birds, [and] parrots. Then, along the Pacific coast, I saw, on the rocks, a colony of elephant seals, barking almost like dogs. Finally, in the four seasons chapel, I played among the enormous banana trees and orchids of all kinds.⁷⁷

... Travelling so far away, one is led to reflect deeply and to appreciate all, whatever it may be, for its true value...

It’s this collection of hidden virtues in which I was raised that saves me from frightful banality and pettiness... This also makes me judgemental... and it’s not always amusing!...

Returning to the Midwest, Demessieux performed three recitals in short order. On March 18, 1955, she played on the 1927 Skinner organ at the Toledo Museum of Art a program that again included the Liszt Fantasia on “Ad nos, ad salutarem.”⁷⁸ According to a review preserved in her scrapbook, on Sunday, March 20 she performed her “Program No. 1” at First Evangelical United Brethren Church in the vicinity of the cities of Westerville and Columbus, Ohio.⁷⁹ Ellis also notes that on March 21 Demessieux played in Buffalo, N.Y. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.⁸⁰

Demessieux’s 1955 tour concluded with a recital at St. John the Divine in New York City for which no program seems to have been preserved.⁸¹

Finally, Demessieux took the time to reflect briefly on her overall travel experience as an international organ recitalist in an undated letter to her sister.

To Yolande, after Demessieux’s return to France:⁸²

I will send my reviews from the United States... They are very good.

Extremely tiring journey—as hard for the morale as for the body in a country so different from Europe. The life of an artist is hard, too, because it’s necessary not only to work but also to “represent,” endure interviews, constantly share general ideas about French art, be hosted...

I encountered Charles Munch in Boston...⁸³

Amidst so many things, my health has held up!

Third Transcontinental Tour of North America: January 31–March 1958

According to a letter dated November 15, 1957, written in Paris to Yolande, that autumn Demessieux dealt with a constant stream of files and long letters to and from the U.S.; she was set to leave on January 22, 1958, not to return until

Easter.⁸⁴ Her third tour would be different in that one of her students, Claudine Verchère, accompanied her to assist in handling mundane aspects of the tour.

Demessieux began her 1958 travel diary, writing in the same notebook as she had used in 1955, after arriving in New York City. Beneath the heading “Troisième Tournée aux États-Unis (Janvier-Mars 1958)” she added a subheading, “Concise summary of daily life on tour.”

[1] Concise summary of daily life on tour

Arrived in New York January 27 by the Queen Elizabeth [ocean liner], accompanied by my student Claudine Verchère [C. V.] as secretary. Colbert was waiting for me on the quay.

Very good hotel, the New Western, on the corner of Madison and 50th Street. [We] have 8 large suitcases.

28–29 January 1958

In touch with the office of Colbert-Laberge; [am] breaking in C. V. I worked at the Presbyterian Church on Park Avenue;⁸⁵ took a walk, [then] rested. It is beautiful and mild outdoors.

The idea of being assisted in the myriad of practical details of a tour is seems to me of amazing benefit.

[Squeezed between lines:] I bought myself a camera and played around with it.

Thursday 30 January 1958

Sitting for a photographer at the organ of St. John the Divine. In between, I tried out my *Te Deum*, inspired by this organ, and to my relief, it's what I'd imagined.⁸⁶

[Squeezed between lines:] With sorrow, learned of the death of [G. Donald] Harrison of Skinner [Organs].⁸⁷

The same day, arrived at Glens Falls. Astonishing weather conditions: the Hudson [River] is as frozen as an [2] ice floe. Heavy snow in Glens Falls, but sunny. Hotel exquisitely decorated. Ate at drugstores [lunch counters].

31 January 1958

Rehearsed peacefully [at First Presbyterian Church in Glens Falls]. [The] organist [is] a Dupré student, very nice.⁸⁸ He is working on my *Six Études* [and] J. B[erveiller]'s *Cadence*.

Dined at the hotel [in] very stylish, calm surroundings. The manager greeted me at my table; [as did] several people who will be at the recital. My portrait in the hall.

Good recital. My interpretation commanded respect. The audience, extremely taken, its silence “impressive” (as Claudine V. would say). Personal satisfaction. 900 people. Five-manual organ, lacking mixtures. Beautiful foundation stops. Reeds imported from Cavaillé-Coll.⁸⁹ Tuned by the [church] organist. The ensemble sounded quite good. One horror: the GO [Great manual] coupler coupled to itself at the fifth!

Demessieux's Glens Falls program (hereafter, “Program No. 1”) consisted of:⁹⁰

- Bach, Overture (Cantata No. 29), and Fantasy in G major [BWV 571]

- Mozart, Fantasy No. 2 in F minor
- Clérambault, “Basse et Dessus de Trompette” [*Suite du premier ton*]
- Liszt, Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H
- Demessieux, “Attende Domine” [*Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes*]
- Messiaen, “Transports de joie d’une âme devant la gloire du Christ qui est la sienne” (*L’Ascension*)
- Improvisation on a submitted theme

Saturday 1 February 1958

Took a taxi back to Fort Edward [N.Y.]; snow and sun. Train halted on its route. [We were the] only passengers. They thought I was Canadian. Transferred again in Albany, sandwiches [eaten] on the dirty station benches. Returned to New York.

Sunday 2 February 1958

Viewed photo proofs. Heard Mass [3] at St. Patrick’s. Instead of leaving for Newark at 5:00 [PM], proposed 6:00. Visited the Empire State [Building] for the second time in order to take photos. Quick lunch at a restaurant. No one in New York on Sunday except on the 102nd floor of the Empire [State Building].

Arrived in Newark to repeated and panic-stricken telephone calls from Miss Murtagh, who had been informed that I was not there “in time.”⁹¹ She scolded me like a little girl at the other end of the phone. Very self-possessed, I calmed her down and made it clear to her that I always do what I want. By the way, C. V. could hardly believe all this, as usual. Fortunately, she has a lot of backbone, good character, and withstands misadventures well.

Worked until 9:00 PM (the time suggested by the organist). Upon my return to the hotel, the restaurant was closed. They vaguely indicated which way to go, and we ended up in a café filled with Blacks and Asians, with two women of the same type. They served us very graciously. I was on the verge of depression... and C. V. could not believe her eyes [4] at this Bohemian [life] consisting of climbing and descending the entire social ladder in one fell swoop. It’s the touring life. ~~Murtagh~~ Colbert said of virtuosos: “surrounded by too many, or too much alone.” This evening, I clearly heard gunshots more than once, from somewhere about 200 metres away. Brr...

C. V. is using the typewriter in the neighbouring [hotel] room.

The [church] organ, a 1930 Austin, is horrible, heavy, [a] theatre [organ].⁹² It’s what Dupré liked, unfortunately.

Monday 3 February 1958

In very good form [for the] recital.⁹³ Audience very enthusiastic, keyed-up. Applause. Photos. Never-ending reception [line]: the entire hall paraded by. C. V. made me sit down; but it’s unbearable to see people leaning over you as they parade by! I rejected my chair, asked for a cup of coffee. After an hour, managed to slip away [filer à l’anglaise]⁹⁴ with the organist’s help.

[Earlier] in the day, had lunch, then slept two hours. Worked three hours.

At the hotel [after the recital], unwound. It was snowing and there was an even icier wind. C. V.’s big suitcase would not shut; we bound it with straps.

[5] Tuesday 4 February 1958

Morning departure. The agency made a mistake: the Newark-Philadelphia ticket missing. Murtagh informed of this 2 days ago. They came too late to get us, in a scramble. Snow, wind. But in perfect health! Fell asleep at 3:30 [AM] (9:30 in Paris...).

In Philadelphia, lunched with Vogel, Kohn (his associate), Dr. McCurdy,⁹⁵ etc. Worked. Two hours' rest in a room at the Warwick Hotel.

Very good recital [this evening], church full.⁹⁶ Extraordinary silence. Improvised a chorale-paraphrase and fugue on a theme by McCurdy... dark and quite beautiful. The audience followed ~~extraordi~~ perfectly, [with] extreme intensity, and I did whatever I wanted. All very impressed. Unlike the two preceding tours, it seemed that my... persona is now (how to say it?) ranked here.

Rested at the hotel, in the lounges, where [overly] friendly Americans accosted us no fewer than five times!... Since there were two of us, this was more amusing, although the Yankee clumsiness was less so...

Train at half-past midnight. C. V. mislaid the tickets; we had [6] to arrange with the ticket collector to make a call to Colbert. At 2:30 in the morning the tickets were found! C. V. was on the verge of tears, and I had the giggles. This time, she understood "everything." A sleeping-car to Chicago.

Wednesday 5 February 1958

Arrived in Chicago at 3:00 PM. Change of station, checked luggage. A quick ride, then dinner in the "Prudential Insurance" building with the organizer of the March 10 recital. Having gone up to the 40th floor, saw a very beautiful Chicago at night. Sleeping-car at 10:00 PM to Nashville.

This push to Chicago was originally intended for a rehearsal; but the organ wasn't available!...

Thursday 6 February 1958

Arrived in Nashville around 10:30 in the morning. Found the organist wandering in the station, luggage arriving generally on the other side: basic logistics always difficult!

Rehearsed for one hour. University a long way out.⁹⁷ Organ in a bad state: one octave of the Pedal gives you the choice of a trumpet on the C-sharp, the flute on D, the principal chorus of the Positif on D-sharp!! But by simply grazing the [7] keys, you have some chance of only getting various foundation stops. Lunched [at a] drugstore. Rehearsed again. But I was so sleepy that I went back [to the hotel] at 3:00. Very good hotel. I wrote a letter... then set about some urgent sewing. At 6:00 PM, tea, toast, sandwiches.

Finally, the recital. Audience of Black students, very distinguished.⁹⁸ Applause; they cheered and stood. The required reception, the quasi-obligatory speech and response. Very impressed by my improvised prelude and fugue. They insisted upon my speaking about my European tours...

In the evening, noticed that the typewriter is no longer working. Must get it repaired!

Friday 7 February 1958



Ready to depart for St. Louis, Missouri, February 1958.

Got up late. Rested while C. V. got the typewriter and the suitcase repaired.

Two hours of shopping. Found a Horowitz record. Suitcases [packed], dined at the hotel where we were given a room with television for the evening. [At] midnight, departed [this time with] lower [bunks], [and an] arrangement of curtains;⁹⁹ suitcases everywhere. Mad giggles of C. V. whom I left to her own devices; [8] I withdrew into my tent and “buttoned” my door. Heading for St. Louis.

Saturday 8 February 1958

Arrived in St. Louis at 8:00 in the morning. The organizer was at the train station and immediately whisked me away to record an interview that would air on the radio at 4:00 PM. No time to stop at the hotel. Not having foreseen this, I did not get breakfast, nor did C. V.

The interview was fine, but I categorically refused [to sit for] the usual journalistic-style photo, and referred them to the “official” photos, which I’d already had enough trouble posing for!

Back at the hotel at 11:00 AM, I passed on breakfast and had lunch at noon. Impossible to get time to work [on the organ] today.

The weather is nice, very cold (10 centigrade), with ice and frozen snow. Good long walk in “winter sports” gear; [took some] photos, incognito. It was good! Piping hot coffee upon [our] return. Mail. Dictated letters.

Sunday 9 February 1958

Low Mass at St. Louis Cathedral. Lunch at the home of the organizer, nice. At the University, worked for 2 hours without [9] power due to a short-circuit.

Returned by tram. Terribly cold. Dined in the room. Feeling rested.

Monday 10 February 1958

The day began with a half-dramatic, half-comic incident. During my silent practising yesterday, and as I listened, I was disturbed by another organ sound coming from the basement that kept me from concentrating. So, I thought to stuff my ears with... cotton balls because I did not have ear plugs [*boules Quiès*]! Then I removed them gently. This morning while showering, I went completely deaf in my right ear, a fleck of paper, swollen with water, at the far end [of the ear canal]. I imagined the recital! Finally, the two [of us], and by means of all sorts of tools, managed to rectify the situation.

Claudine did the shopping, the cooking (a fridge-stove set-up, supplies in the rooms, quite contemporary!). Three-hour practice. Rest.



In St. Louis, Missouri, February 1958

Recital at Washington University.¹⁰⁰ Again, audience very taken. I played J. B[erveiller]'s *Mouvement*¹⁰¹ for the first time. This was also the first public hearing of my *Te Deum*.

Demessieux's program at Washington University (hereafter, Program No. 2) consisted of:¹⁰²

- Bach, Prelude and Fugue in D major [BWV 532] and "De profundis," ["Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir," BWV 686]
- Vivaldi-Bach, Concerto No. 2 in A minor [BWV 593]
- Franck, *Pièce héroïque*
- Berveiller, *Mouvement*
- Demessieux, "Rorate cœli" [Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes] and *Te Deum*
- Improvisation on a submitted theme

[10] Tuesday 11 February 1958

Day without incident. Late morning afternoon train for ~~St. Louis~~ Denver. [Had] lower bunks in the train, always fitted out with little curtains and partitions [*mâchicoulis*]; ladders of all kinds! [We are] at the very rear of the train, where one can see the countryside pass from the rear balcony, as from a "presidential" train. As a result, one cannot keep a standing position and it's quite a sport to retrieve one's slippers amid the curtains.

Wednesday 12 February 1958

Arrived in Denver this morning at 8:00. On the platform, the porters were looking for the "French organist."¹⁰³ I encountered a reporter, a photographer (again!), the cathedral priest, the organist, then a former Liberation officer and his wife whom I had "married" at St-Esprit in 1945. They piled 6 people and 8 suitcases into an enormous car going to the hotel. The French living abroad, what snobs they are!

Rehearsal, lunch. I returned to put final touches on the *Te Deum*. Rested, but sleep was impossible. Still, delightful rooms.

Recital from the gallery with cathedral ambience and acoustics. 1,200 people.¹⁰⁴

[11] Comic incident: during the "intermission," the priest climbed to the pulpit to say, "my brothers, so that you can rest for five minutes, you may stand up." And standing up in their places, people turned to give me polite little smiles; then they sat back down again, and I continued. [Afterwards, an] invasion, downstairs, towards the gallery—very genuine. I asked to stop by my lodgings, then was taken to celebrate at the French consulate (consul: Baron Louis de Cabrol), where snobbism is fierce, but where I found the consul very friendly, especially as he had made the crepes himself. Got back at midnight.

Thursday 13 February 1958

Left Denver at 8:30 AM for the magnificent trip to California.¹⁰⁵ Took numerous photos. 27 hours on the train.

Friday 14 February 1958

Arrived in Chico, California under torrential rain! Still, I disembarked from the train in Oroville directly opposite an orange tree and a lemon tree in fruit. Thirty kilometres by car, which seemed to transport us more by air than road; [spent] 10 minutes at the hotel; then [12] rehearsal, rest, and recital in the evening. I note, in passing: little organ with 12 stops!¹⁰⁶

Saturday 15 February 1958

Returned to Oroville by car, the roadway surrounded by mimosas, "oaks,"¹⁰⁷ olive trees, birds, clearer weather. Arrived at 3rd Street in Oakland. Two delegated young people bravely took on 8 suitcases—and incidentals, because these are increasing, little by little—and shoved these, with difficulty, into an enormous car. Hotel perfectly situated, beside a lake. [Took a] little stroll, the air very mild, the climate refreshing. I rehearsed. C. V. took care of the shopping and the cooking.

Sunday 16 February 1958

Mass in Oakland.* Rehearsal. Recital.¹⁰⁸ Unforgettable evening: perfect, intelligent audience, so much so that I dared give my *Te Deum* as an encore, simply because the organ suited it perfectly, and I so wished to hear it. And I thought, also, that Darius Milhaud might hear about it.¹⁰⁹

*[Heard] Gounod's *Ave Maria* on the organ, with tremolo and expression box on every 1st and 3rd beat.

Monday 17 February 1958

Left Oakland for Sacramento. The weather was nice. No one met me. [13] Had to find the church, get the doors and the organ opened for me. But, in a ray of sunshine, made it to a particularly beautiful park and played for a long time with the squirrels.

Tuesday 18 February 1958

Rest. Work. Recital in Sacramento.¹¹⁰ Obligated to wear an enormous bunch of white flowers trimmed with ribbon on my dress. I know, I'm having a sulk. Bland audience.*

In the afternoon, bought a little sky-blue rabbit for my godson.¹¹¹ C. V. thought it so pretty that she went back and bought similar ones, one for her and one for me!

*Dreadful occurrence: the reception after the recital was 25 miles away. Beautiful house and furniture.

Wednesday 19 February 1958

From now on, I travel with 8 suitcases and C., along with three little sky-blue rabbits. Returned to Oakland, beside the lake. Again, damage to the typewriter.

Thursday 20 February 1958

Daytrip to San Francisco before taking the evening train. Glorious weather. Several hours on the beach and the pier. The Pacific [was] full of foam. This evening, San Jose.

Friday 21 February 1958

[In] San Jose, rest, rehearsal. Recital.¹¹² The console is situated [14] in a pit such that the audience can see only my head. This time I did not have a moment of vertigo!



On a tram in San Francisco.

But I did find myself trapped in the “ladies” thanks to a sophisticated door system!

Saturday 22 February 1958



Near the Pacific coast, Pasadena, California, February 1958.

Took the train along the Pacific coast, north to south. Splendid weather, the views likewise. [Took] photos. A few kilometres by car to Pasadena. A rather unexceptional cicerone!¹¹³ First-class hotel amid forest and gardens. Very Californian. Mild and refreshing climate.

Sunday 23 February 1958

chaise-longue in the garden. Rehearsed.

Mass in Pasadena, three kilometres by foot amid palm trees and flowers. Took a taxi back. Lounged about in [casual wear] during the afternoon, on a

Monday 24 February 1958

Rest, rehearsal, recital.¹¹⁴ For three days, the delegated cicerone had to be put in his place—not, for all that, that he would stay there! I am angry and appalled that the organizers would choose such a person. Following the recital, a senseless [receiving] line of Guild “members,” real numbskulls! The “queue” kept stopping for chatter, and then suddenly realized that [15] I was there as they passed in front of me.

There had been a lunch, organized by the Guild, I believe. Hardly any members, even though a rich industrialist was covering the expense. ~~Without~~ Don’t understand.

Tuesday 25 February 1958

Lounged again at the Sheraton, did some shopping in Pasadena. Then, big evening departure from Los Angeles for Fort Worth, in other words, a night, a day, and another night on the train.

Wednesday 26 February 1958

Day of comfort and staying in one place (if, at 90 kilometres per hour, I can express it this way). Spectacular desert panoramas in New Mexico. Sandstorm.

Disembarked at the El Paso platform, tremendous wind, radiant sun. Train shunting. We were eating sand! The Texan desert. The air conditioning had to be shut off and the ventilation system activated [due to] sand getting everywhere and making it impossible to breathe. I took some photos (7). Once again, the noble Black man is all devotion, keeps watch from afar, and laughs like a child.



Relaxing in Pasadena, California, February 1958.

[16] Thursday 27 February 1958

Arrived in Fort Worth this morning at 6:00 AM; the time having changed in Texas, that was 4:00 AM in California, 1:00 PM in Paris... On the platform, I realized that my trunk gaped open on one side! We were driven to the hotel, C. V. and me. Water, water!

A good breakfast. Rest. Rehearsal. The weather is very fine, and quite windy. The university is very far away.¹¹⁵ I recognized the hall, which reminds me of Pleyel.¹¹⁶

Friday 28 February 1958

Got up late. Another rehearsal at the university where I had the console positioned, lighting adjusted (since there is some!). Very calm for rehearsing. I was sleepy.

Returning to the hotel, I stretched out, went to sleep, and woke up three times with a start. I frantically got ready.

Grand, evening recital. In the audience, 200 organists from four ~~distant~~ different cities. [Receiving] line in the foyer; no ridiculous reception. A serious-minded milieu—finally!

A crazy old lady apparently telephoned [17] this morning insisting on speaking to me. [She] showed up this evening. I had a narrow escape! Emmet Smith, the organist, was very angry at this.¹¹⁷

Saturday 1 March 1958

Left Fort Worth at 5:00 PM, for two more nights and one day [by train], but with two transfers at Memphis and Atlanta. It was raining and quite cold. I was aching! No matter.

In the evening, in her upper bunk, C. V. grumbled while doing “her” accounts because she “had lost her California.” In return, from below, I tossed her slippers and mine at her, but instead of getting her silence, I got her pillows. So, I ended up bombarding her with everything I could find below. Finally, she shut up, and I could dream in peace...

Sunday 2 March 1958

After this first night, first “unloading” at 7:00 AM on the Memphis platform, [went] in search of a Mass because it is Sunday. Found a church near the station in a... shocking neighbourhood. The priest captured people by swinging around his microphone; people laughed; they were shabby and unclean; [18] chatter between pastor and flock before and after the Mass. Lunched in a little bar.

Departed again. Changed trains again in the evening in Atlanta where the wait was two hours. Left finally for Charlotte, in “lowers” where I managed more than once to fall, seated, into the neighbouring curtains; meanwhile, C. tried to identify the sleepers by the shoes tucked under the beds.

Monday 3 March 1958

Arrived in Charlotte ([North] Carolina) in the morning, much too early. On the platform, a big, strapping fellow in a yellow hat, loud tie, hands in his pockets, bellowed straight away, “Hello!!... How are you?!...” I paused momentarily but—no introductions following—decided to assume that this was the organizer, or a delegate.

I locked myself away until 2:00. Lunch in the room. Rehearsal. I returned and slept. Upon

awakening, migraine and dark spots [in my vision]. C. V. had sought in vain to get the typewriter repaired for a third time; [19] she was furious with the hotel [customer] service for giving her false information, furious (suddenly...) with Americans. This gave me so much pleasure that I felt better!

Good concert.¹¹⁸ Noticed once again how this audience can be magnificent at a recital so that everything “works” perfectly [*“marche” à fond*] and stupid as individuals. Always a receiving line; people burst out laughing, pause, and suddenly realize they are in front of you; then they say a couple of stock phrases to you. To teach them a lesson, I pointedly turned my back. But no one got the message...

In the car that drove me to the recital I was asked what I thought of the “shirtwaist dresses” launched in France!¹¹⁹ Replied that I didn’t yet have an opinion.

Tuesday 4 March 1958

Typewriter finally repaired. Comfortable at the hotel. Woke up at 11:45 AM, feeling completely groggy! [To think that] the organist was vexed yesterday because I refused his lunch [invitation for] today! Took a walk. Rested. Departure at midnight in lower bunks.

[20] (Saw in a hosiery shop a sign indicating a sale in the following manner: “lingerie sale”!!!! And again: “Dresses negligee”!! Clearly, “they” do not have a way with words.)¹²⁰

Wednesday 5 March 1958

Arrived very early in the morning in Macon, Georgia; the weather sultry and damp but, a little later, very fine. The organist had a lavish white car—seen before—and he is well mannered!

Rested until 5:00 PM, then rehearsed. Interview by a reporter at the hotel, to which I delegated C. V., while I continued to sleep. At the end of the day the carillon of a nearby church ding-donged (no pun intended...) ¹²¹ ... Schubert’s *Ave Maria* with the accompaniment rendered suavely by a Hammond organ and tremolo, all of it gushing over the city with a meticulously thought-out intensity.

Ate in the room. Found flowers and fruit, [sent] anonymously.

Thursday 6 March 1958

Got up late. Extremely ostentatious American-style lunch at someone’s home. The house: new-look-cinéma.¹²² A dozen people, [21] three tables in a winter garden. The serving was done by four Black men and four Black women. Swimming pool with warm water nearby. Soft music (!) The last to arrive, I found everyone tipsy with drink. They wanted to hear me on the Hammond organ! When I declined this privilege, the head of the house sat and played a fashionable song. From among all these people, on the evening of the recital I saw no one.

At the recital, a wonderful audience.¹²³ My console being in a pit, they had specially installed a huge, rear-view mirror to allow for following along with my playing. Again, a reception afterwards.

I had to refuse a “midnight supper.” The [host] organist was so intimidated that it became increasingly comic. Before the recital, he was wringing his hands saying, in the manner of Dussurget, “I am so nervous...”¹²⁴

Friday 7 March 1958

Got up at 11:00 AM, lunched, departed immediately, heading north (on the map) with the most unbelievable transfers [22], including a bus. This evening, lower bunks.

Saturday 8 March 1958

Arrived in Cincinnati this morning, three hours late! The train seemed to be deliberately waiting for the ten bags and two ladies on the neighbouring platform, and it left immediately for Indianapolis where it arrived at 1:00 PM.* Meanwhile, another one-hour difference, necessitating turning back our watches...

Taxi to the central bus station; [a] Black man ran in vain to stop the Bloomington bus, which was pulling away. We had to wait three hours for the next one. Telegraphed the organizer at [Indiana] University, Bloomington. Shopping spree. Hamburger at a drugstore [lunch counter].

Two hours by bus; Bloomington at last. And there... the organizer, Professor of Sociology(!), made a face at me [*me fait une tête*]!!... A little later, the organist, too, made a nasty face at me [*me refait une sale tête*] too! I didn't address another word to them.

Rehearsed in a very "Pleyel-like" hall where I [23] could not hear the organ.¹²⁵ I'm being lodged at the university, and it's my turn to make a "face."

*Black humour: a casket was being driven down the platform, equipped with its baggage tag floating in the breeze, its faded, wilted flowers, the whole [kit] shoved into a postal wagon.

Sunday 9 March 1958

Worked this morning. So tired that I had to forego attending Mass so I could rest—twenty minutes on my bed—before the recital at 3:00.

They refused to move the console, [which is] too close to the edge of the stage. Vertigo! But [I] improvised a symphony (good themes) in 4 movements, one of my better ones.

Next, Claudine V. decided to ask, in retribution, that we be driven by car back in the direction of Indianapolis, where we had a hotel expecting us. They brought to me people who claimed they would take the eight suitcases and all, and the departure was set for 7:00 PM. In the end, the suitcases refused to be easily stowed (we would have had to compromise)... and the female driver returned everything to the sidewalk. The last bus had left. No train to Indianapolis. C. V. fumed at the "boorishness" of Americans, she who liked them so well... [24] Splendid conclusion: it was the nasty little organist with the look of a scoundrel who drove us, with his wife and mother-in-law, in his enormous car which swallowed up the luggage. There was no conversation between the front and back seats.

No dinner. Arrived at 10:30 PM. Impossible to have a sandwich in the room; we had to go back down and find a decent bar near the hotel.

Monday 10 March 1958

Morning departure for Chicago. Re-encountered the charming woman who had been the delegate on February 5. Above all, rediscovered the cathedral [and] the very kind Franciscan Fathers.¹²⁶ Rested.

At the recital, [there were] people in the gallery, having gotten up there by elevators on both sides of the organ! And again, the Fathers made a racket [with their] whispering (in this English language, in which it is impossible to "whisper"!), standing yet fidgeting incessantly like children, [and] making a huge amount of noise with their big, wooden rosary beads. Obvious inconsistency: I was, still, very happy.¹²⁷

Tuesday 11 March 1958

Especially happy to arrive in Fort Wayne [Indiana]... the most beautiful organ of the tour, one of the most

beautiful that I have [ever] played.¹²⁸ Very distinguished organizers! Kind and discreet!! A rare marvel. That's good timing; I was [still] very tired. Stumbling over my notes at the rehearsal, I decided to go and sleep.

Nauseous before the recital.

Claudine V. wanted to bring her syringe: oops, it's broken[!]¹²⁹

... There are still four recitals to go before "freedom": Pittsburgh, New Haven, Ottawa [Canada], New York. But the... machine writing this little diary is, in turn, no longer working.¹³⁰

Printed recital programs preserved by Claudine Verchère give details of three of these last four recitals.¹³¹ The Pittsburgh recital took place on March 16, 1958, where Demessieux performed at Sixth United Presbyterian Church as part of a "Musical Vesper Service." The recital was preceded by an Invocation and the Lord's Prayer and followed with an Offertory Prayer and an Offering (towards the funding of the musical vesper services). Demessieux then performed her *Te Deum*, which was followed by the Benediction.

On March 17, 1958, sponsored by the New Haven chapter of the AGO under the auspices of the Yale School of Music, Demessieux played her "Program No. 2" in Woolsey Hall. A review by Barbara Owen tactfully criticized many of the same aspects of her playing as Frank Cunkle had attacked in Chicago.¹³² She lauded (faintly) the performance of Franck's *Pièce heroïque*: "this frankly romantic war-horse . . . unabashedly performed for what it is and on an ideally suited instrument."¹³³

Following Claudine Verchère's scheduled, March 22 departure for France, Demessieux performed an extra-iterinary recital in Ottawa for which no details survive. Then, on March 25, 1958 she concluded her tour by performing at Central Presbyterian Church in New York City as part of their "Evenings of Music Series." The repertoire was that of "Program No. 1," to which was added Demessieux's *Te Deum* and (the only time on this tour) one of her *Six Études*, "Study in Thirds" ("Tierces").¹³⁴ The printed program did not include an improvisation. However, according to the mixed review by Ray Berry, an improvisation based on themes by Searle Wright was "tacked on to its end," much to Berry's annoyance.¹³⁵

All told, the 1958 tour consisted of 21 recitals given over a period of 54 days. At the end of Demessieux's return voyage (with the Cunard Steamship Co.), she debarked in Southampton, possibly to fulfill some engagements in England.

Readers who wish to compare their reactions to the diaries and letters from Jeanne's Demessieux's North American recital tours to my own are invited to turn now to the next and final chapter. Following that chapter's commentary, it continues with a summary of Demessieux's life after 1958, and concludes with an account of her reputation today.

NOTES:

1 Laura Ellis, "The American Recital Tours of Jeanne Demessieux: A Documentation of her Performances" (D.M.A. document, University of Kansas, 1991); GVT, "Presse II (212 à 486)."

2 Photocopy of "3^{ème} Tournée Transcontinentale de Jeanne Demessieux, U.S.A., 1958," courtesy of Claudine Verchère.

3 Paul V. Beckley, "Organist Plays 1,000 to 2,000 Works by Heart," *New York Herald Tribune* (Feb. 1, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 340.

4 According to the Wikipedia entry on Central Presbyterian Church in New York, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Presbyterian_Church_\(New_York_City\)#Organ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Presbyterian_Church_(New_York_City)#Organ)>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, under the heading "Organ," Hugh Giles had been a student of Charles Tournemire.

- 5 This piece, long attributed to Henry Purcell, was actually Dupré's arrangement of Jeremiah Clarke's famous *Trumpet Voluntary* in D major, published in *Anthologie des maîtres classiques de l'orgue* (Paris: Bornemann, 1942).
- 6 Jean Berveiller, *Cadence: Étude de concert* (Paris: Durand, 1953).
- 7 Program from a Feb. 1, 1953 *New York Times* article quoted in Ellis 1991, 17–18.
- 8 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 195.
- 9 The Wikipedia entry on Central Presbyterian Church in New York, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Presbyterian_Church_\(New_York_City\)#Organ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Presbyterian_Church_(New_York_City)#Organ)>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, notes that the organ of Central Presbyterian Church was a 79-rank Möller organ built in 1950.
- 10 T. Scott Buhrman "Jeanne Demessieux Recital," *The American Organist* 36 (Feb. 1953): 59, quoted in Ellis 1991, 18–19, praises the "finest staccato to come out of Europe since Joseph Bonnet." It also draws attention to Demessieux's legs ("they're shapely, and they dance around the pedalboard with never a miss"). (I wonder if the content of the letter from *The American Organist* that Demessieux found "terrible for [her] modesty" was Buhrman's reference to shapely legs.) The other monthly journal Demessieux had in mind here would have been *The Diapason*.
- 11 According to the web page <<http://imslp.org/wiki/Elkan-Vogel>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, this music publishing company was founded in Philadelphia in 1928 by Henri Elkan and Adolph Vogel. It remained known as Elkan-Vogel even when Vogel left in 1952 and Vincent Persichetti joined as publications director; it was acquired by Theodore Presser in 1970. The Paris publisher Durand issued all Demessieux's published compositions that followed the *Six Études*, except the *Twelve Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes* (Summy Birchard, 1950) and her works published posthumously.
- 12 The web page <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/13/arts/music/13pate.html>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, notes that Joseph Patelson (d. 1992) acquired his retail music store in New York City when it was bequeathed to him by the founder in 1939, and that Patelson's Music House closed in 2009. According to the web page <<https://jubilatemusic.com/collections/h-w-gray>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, and <https://imslp.org/wiki/H.W._Gray>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, H. W. Gray Publications, originally founded as the New York branch of Novello and Co., began publishing its own works in 1906. It published, for example, Dupré's *Fifteen Pieces founded on Antiphons* (*Vêpres du Commun*), Op. 18 (1919).
- 13 Beginning in 1947, Decca-London or Decca released all Demessieux's commercially available recordings.
- 14 According to the web page <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Olof>, accessed Sept. 18, 2022, Victor Olof (1898–1974) was an English musician of Swedish descent, known first as a violinist and conductor, and then as a record producer for Decca Records (later for HMV Records). Artists whose recordings Olof supervised included Thomas Beecham, Victoria de los Ángeles, Wilhelm Backhaus, and Yehudi Menuhin. As noted in liner notes for *Jeanne Demessieux: The Decca Legacy* (Decca 484 1424, 2021), 3, 9, 10, 13, Victor Olof was the producer for one of Demessieux's recording sessions at St. Mark's North Audley Street, London (May 7, 1947) and each of her three recording sessions at Victoria Hall, Geneva (the first in Oct. 1952). This lends veracity to his recounting of the incident, at what must have been the Oct. 1952 session, of a problem with the organ blowers.
- 15 As arranged by Colbert-Laberge, from one city to another, Demessieux travelled alone by train.
- 16 Anon., "Jeanne Demessieux a fait la conquête des States en proclamant son titre de professeur au Conservatoire de Liège," *La Meuse* (Apr. 18, 1953): 5.
- 17 No. 1 in Dupré's edition for organ alone (Bornemann, 1937), corresponding to Handel's Op. 4, No. 1.
- 18 Program from Fred Lissfelt, "Organist's Recital Lauded," *Pittsburgh Press* (Feb. 10, 1953), reproduced in Ellis 1991, 23.
- 19 *La Meuse* (Apr. 18, 1953): 5. Ellis 1991, 26, however, implies that the Canton recital occurred later, that is, after a Mar. 8 recital in Oakland, Calif.
- 20 Evabeth Miller, "Immense Organ Court Is Played by Small Parisienne," *Peoria Journal Star* (Feb. 16, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 342, and Theo Powell Smith, "A Critic's Viewpoint," *Peoria Journal* (Feb. 16, 1953), preserved in GVT, "Presse II," 355.
- 21 AM 4S15.
- 22 According to Michael Murray, *Marcel Dupré: The Work of a Master Organist* (Boston: Northeastern University Press,

1985), 189 and 192, Dupré played recitals and gave masterclasses at the University of Chicago in 1946 and 1948.

23 According to the web page <<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/sibley/specialcollections/findingaids/falcinelli/>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Rolande Falcinelli visited North America in 1950 as a concert organist. The French *faire des cours* is slightly ambiguous here. It could also mean that Falcinelli used this visit as an opportunity to take classes at the University of Chicago. However, it is much more likely that she was recommended by Dupré to give masterclasses while in Chicago.

24 Anon., “The Critic’s Corner,” *New Orleans Item* (Feb. 23, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 345.

25 F. G., “Sensitive Recital by Organist,” *Dallas Morning News* (Feb. 25, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 343.

26 *La Meuse* (Apr. 18, 1953): 5.

27 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 195–96.

28 Though it will sound bigoted to today’s readers, it is consistent with Demessieux’s upbringing in France in the first half of the 20th century that she would occasionally, in the letters and diaries from the United States, single out a person’s colour, sometimes in a condescending tone or with addition of a patronizing comment, yet not meaning to sound bigoted. See the discussion of this issue in Chapter 10.

29 “Marseillais” means people of Marseille, France. The obvious comparison to be drawn between Texans and Marseillais (whether, or not, both are “braggarts”) is that in the region surrounding Marseille, as in Texas, a close working relationship between people and horses is a cultural icon. As described in Trieu-Colleney 1977, 222–24, Demessieux was herself very familiar with horses cooperating with humans from her summer vacations. They included riding the semi-wild horses of her native region of Provence, particularly the white horses of the Camargue Natural Park.

30 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 196–97.

31 Anon., “Jeanne Demessieux a fait la conquête des States en proclamant son titre de professeur au Conservatoire de Liège,” *La Meuse* (Apr. 18, 1953): 5.

32 Bruno Ussher, “A Vision Touches Organ And the Angels Sing,” *San Diego Tribune* (n.d.) preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 352, and Constance Herrreshoff, *San Diego Union* (n.d.) preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 354.

33 Ellis 1991, 26. No program available.

34 Frank Scholes, “Jeanne’s Console Classics Oust Wearing of the Green,” *Brantford Exposition* (Mar. 18, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 353, notes that this was her only concert in Canada during the 1953 tour.

35 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 196.

36 This may have been the organ of First Presbyterian Church in Glens Falls. Its specification is given in Ellis 1991, 96–97.

37 Program from Ellis 1991, 27.

38 Virgil Thompson, “Jeanne Demessieux,” *New York Herald Tribune* (Mar. 23, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 350, and quoted in Ellis 1991, 27–28. A week later, in Virgil Thompson, “Improvising in Public: The Most Rigid of All Composing Methods,” *New York Herald-Tribune* (Mar. 29, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 358, Thompson used this recital as springboard for a lengthy, comprehensive explanation of organ improvisation in the French tradition.

39 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 196.

40 Ellis 1991, 26.

41 Harold Rogers, “Boston Debut By Organist From France,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Mar. 24, 1953), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 346.

42 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 197.

43 In 1952, Demessieux left her position as organ professor at the Nancy Conservatory to take up the post of professor of organ at the Royal Conservatory of Liège in Belgium.

44 “Deuxième tournée d’Amérique (1955) (journal de route) et Troisième tourné, 1958,” AM 4S11.

45 The avant-garde composer Edgard Varèse (1883–1965) was born in France but spent most of his career in the United States.

46 *Plein jeu*, literally “full play”: French term for a mixture stop on the organ, consisting of octave-sounding and fifth-sounding ranks of Principals used to create a complete chorus of Foundation tone.

47 Regarding Henry Colbert and Liliane Murtagh, see Chapter 10 under the heading “Organization of Demessieux’s North American Tours.”

48 “I was acquainted with” is, perhaps, a reference to the fact that she had visited Glens Falls, N.Y. to perform a recital towards the end of her 1953 North American tour.

49 As noted in Ellis 1991, 32 n. 4 and 96, this was the organ of First Presbyterian Church, a 1928 Casavant organ renovated and enlarged by E. M. Skinner in 1950. Writing concerning Demessieux’s 1958 recital at the same church, Ellis 1991, 47, states that the resident organist at the time of Demessieux’s 1955 and 1958 recitals was Hugh Allen Wilson (1925–2010).

50 The prime tourist attraction of the region is its many waterfalls. Demessieux wrote *chutes de St. Georges* (St. George Falls) but only the lake is known as George Lake; the nearby falls she was to see may have been the Shelving Rock Falls.

51 Program reproduced in Ellis 1991, 32–33. Ellis also notes that the encore for the Glens Falls recital was Berveiller’s *Cadence (Étude de concert)*.

52 Program from T. Scott Buhrman, “Jeanne Demessieux Recital,” *The American Organist* 38 (Mar. 1955): 85, quoted in Ellis 1991, 33.

53 Hugh Giles was the organist of Central Presbyterian Church.

54 The web page <<http://imslp.org/wiki/Elkan-Vogel>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, notes that Bernhard Kohn joined the partnership Elkan and Vogel a year after the publishing house’s founding in 1928; Elkan left the company in 1952.

55 No program appears to have been preserved for this recital. An “organ of several divisions according to the American formula” may indicate that Demessieux played (as she would in 1958) on the organ of First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia (Hutchings 1901, Austin 1927, Möller 1953). According to the web page <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/595d65a4ff7c50d877d0c81e/t/595d672a176dc409cbf0b30a/1530843328623/Organ_Specification.pdf>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, it has nine divisions divided between gallery and chancel.

56 The venue was Grace Methodist Church in Harrisburg. Quoting from a review, Irene Bressler, “News of the American Guild of Organists—Harrisburg, PA,” *The Diapason* 46 (Apr. 1955): 15, Ellis 1991, 35–36, lists the recital repertoire, which was that of “Program No. 1.” Bressler also notes that Demessieux concluded with an improvisation on three themes by Donald Clapper.

57 The statement “I enjoyed your recital very much,” at best damns with faint praise; it was, apparently, indicative to Demessieux of some American concertgoers’ lack of insight into organ playing compared to that of the typical European audience member that she knew. By recording her formulaic response, “Thank you,” in the original English in her diary, Demessieux conveyed a note of sarcasm.

58 Syracuse University’s Setnor Auditorium acquired a new organ in 1950 built by Walter Holtkamp, one of the pioneers of neo-Baroque organ building in the United States. The “new trend” could not only be heard, but was visible in the organ’s open pipework, pictured on the web page <<https://www.pipedreams.org/profile/syracuse-crouse-college-holtkamp>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. The unaltered 1950 instrument is described in the OHS Pipe Organ Database, ID 2564. According to William Fleming, “Miss Demessieux Displays Astonishing Organ Virtuosity,” *Syracuse-Post Standard* (Feb. 13, 1955), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 465, her repertoire for this recital was that of “Program No. 1.” It concluded with a four-movement improvisation on themes submitted by Joseph McGrath and Franklin Morris of the Syracuse University theory department. Demessieux performed at the invitation of the Syracuse Chapter of the AGO.

59 No details for the recital in Houston seem to have been preserved.

60 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 202–03.

61 This is a reference to the organ in Ed Landreth Auditorium at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

62 Demessieux was then teaching organ and improvisation at the Liège Conservatory in Belgium and commuting from Paris.

63 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 203.

64 By “a heck of a journey, again,” Demessieux means, presumably, the long train trip from Texas to the northern Pacific coast, whereas her first long journey took her, in stages, from the northern east coast to Texas.

65 According to E. Clyde Whitlock, “Jeanne Demessieux Presented In Concert by Organist Guild,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (Feb. 19, 1955), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 467, at Texas Christian University Demessieux played the

Baroque repertoire and the Schumann from her “Program No. 2” to which she added Liszt’s Fantasia on “Ad nos, ad salutarem” in place of the Franck and the 20th-century repertoire. She concluded by improvising a four-movement work on themes submitted by TCU faculty members Michael Winesanker, Ralph Guenther, David Graham, and E. Clyde Whitlock. Encores were Clérambault, “Dialogue” and Purcell, Trumpet Tune (recognized by the reviewer as actually by Jeremiah Clarke).

66 Cf. mention, in the entry for Feb. 17, 1955, that the young, host organist in Fort Worth, who had her over for dinner that Thursday evening, did not own a car.

67 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 204.

68 Ibid., 205.

69 Distinguished French poet, playwright, and diplomat Paul Claudel died in Paris on Feb. 23, 1955. As noted in the Milhaud biography by Jeremy Drake, “Milhaud, Darius” in *Grove Music Online*, 2001 <<https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18674>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Milhaud first met Claudel in 1912. They became close friends and Claudel’s writings were “a frequent source of texts” for Milhaud.

70 Unfortunately, Demessieux did not record the names of the Langlais organ student and the composer.

71 Ellis 1991, 38–39. The anonymous author of a newspaper review, “Delightful Demessieux,” [*Seattle*] *Post-Intelligencer* (Mar. 1, 1955), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 468, noted that this recital concluded with an improvisation on a theme submitted by George McKay.

72 Ellis 1991, 39.

73 Ellis 1991, 40, quotes the program performed in Chicago from an article in *The Diapason* 46 (Apr. 1955): 42 (author’s name and title of article not recorded). It included the Allegro from Widor’s Symphony No. 6 in place of the canon by Schumann of “Program No. 2.”

74 Paul St. George, “Music,” *The Pilot*, Boston (Mar. 19, 1955), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 470.

75 Program from an article in the *Washington Post* (Mar. 13, 1955): H10, quoted in Ellis 1991, 40–41. Ellis does not specify whether the venue was St. Matthew’s Cathedral (Roman Catholic) or the National Cathedral (Episcopal).

76 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 205.

77 There is, on Lake Tahoe in California, a “4 Seasons Wedding Chapel,” but given Demessieux’s fanciful imagination, her words “four seasons chapel” are more likely a figurative description of California’s great outdoors. “I played among the enormous banana trees and orchids” arguably means she frolicked in the open air.

78 According to Ellis 1991, 41, in Toledo Demessieux played the Baroque repertoire and the Schumann from her “Program No. 2” and replaced that program’s Franck and 20th-century repertoire with Liszt’s Fantasia on “Ad nos, ad salutarem.”

79 Anon., “Nearly Five Hundred Hear World Renown[ed] Organists In Concert Last Sun.,” unspecified Westerville, Ohio publication, (Mar. 21, 1955), preserved in GVT, “Presse II,” 472. According to this review, themes submitted by L. Lee Shackson, Paul Frank, W. S. Bailey, and Richard Neikirk were the basis of Demessieux’s concluding improvisation.

80 Ellis 1991, 41–42, lists the repertoire for this recital—that of “Program No. 2,” to which Demessieux added an additional movement from her *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit*, “Dogme.” According to a review quoted in Ellis 1991, 43, by Theodolinda Boris, entitled “Jeanne Demessieux Displays Artistry in Organ Recital,” *Buffalo Evening News* (Mar. 22, 1955), 26, Demessieux concluded the Buffalo recital by improvising on themes submitted by Eric Dowling of St. George’s Anglican Church in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

81 Ellis 1991, 43.

82 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 205–06.

83 According to the Wikipedia entry for Charles Munch <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Munch_\(conductor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Munch_(conductor))>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Munch was a French conductor and violinist, born in Strasbourg, Alsace, who was music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1949 to 1962.

84 AM 4S15.

85 New York City's Central Presbyterian Church.

86 Demessieux's *Te Deum*, Op. 11 for organ would be published in Paris by Durand in 1959.

87 Donald Harrison (b. 1889) joined the Skinner Organ Co. in 1927. According to the web page

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G._Donald_Harrison>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Harrison died of a heart attack on June 14, 1956, during the rebuilding of the E. M. Skinner organ at St. Thomas Church-Fifth Ave., New York City for that year's AGO national convention.

88 According to Ellis 1991, 47, the organist was Hugh Allen Wilson (1925–2010). Wilson shared with Ellis some of his memories of Demessieux's 1955 and 1958 recitals in Glens Falls. She quotes him as having written of Demessieux: "She was an angelic creature in her personality and played as few of her contemporaries could or did. She was a pupil of Dupré at the same time that I was working with him in Paris—1947."

89 The specification of the organ of First Presbyterian Church, Glens Falls, as reproduced in Ellis 1991, 96–97, indicates that as well as Great, Swell, Choir, Solo, and Antiphonal divisions, there was also an Echo Organ, and each division had one or two mixture stops, except Solo and Echo.

90 Ellis 1991, 46.

91 Demessieux wrote here the English phrase "in time" though Demessieux and Verchère were likely reproved for not being "on time." In a June 2004 conversation with Verchère, she remarked to me that in spoken communication in English Demessieux often did the speaking because her accent was better than Verchère's. Meanwhile, Demessieux relied on Verchère's larger English vocabulary.

92 The venue for this recital may have been Newark's Old First Presbyterian Church. According to the web page <<https://pipeorgandatabase.org/organ/12431>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, it has a 1930 instrument built by the Austin Organ Co.

93 No program is available for the recital in Newark.

94 *Filer à l'anglais* literally means "dashing off like the English." It is a figurative way of indicating taking leave from a social event without a proper goodbye, i.e., without alerting anyone to your departure. It parallels an obsolete English phrase "making a French exit" (or "taking French leave"). Whereas today, in either language, this somewhat ethnophobic phrase is considered inappropriate, in Demessieux's time it would have been used without a thought. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for these observations.)

95 According to the web page <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_McCurdy>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, Alexander McCurdy (1905–1983) was organist of Philadelphia's Second Presbyterian Church (became First Presbyterian Church after a merger) from 1927 to 1971. Born in California, he moved east to study organ with Lynnwood Farnam, first in New York, then at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music. Following his professional debut at New York's Town Hall in 1926, he toured as an organ recitalist. He headed the organ departments of Curtis (1935–1972) and Westminster Choir College (1940–1965). He taught hundreds of students who became prominent recitalists, composers, and educators. His proclivity for the symphonic style organ is said to have helped preserve many such instruments in Philadelphia, including its Wanamaker organ.

96 The Philadelphia venue was the First Presbyterian Church where the recital was presented under the honorary auspices of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the AGO and its sponsorship was assisted by Elkan-Vogel Co. Music Publishers. The repertoire was that of "Program No. 1," and an offering was collected between pieces by Mozart and Clérambault (copy of the printed program courtesy Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux).

97 As noted in the tour itinerary, the Nashville venue was Fisk University Memorial Chapel. No program is available.

98 Fisk University is a historically Black university; see the web page <<https://www.fisk.edu/about/history/>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. In this sentence Demessieux is likely betraying her preconceived notions about Black people by remarking on, i.e., appearing surprised at, how distinguished the audience was (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this observation).

99 Apparently for this journey Demessieux and Verchère did not have the comfort of a roomette.

100 As noted in the tour itinerary, the venue was Washington University's Graham Memorial Chapel where the recital was presented by the St. Louis Chapter of the AGO. A review of this recital by Ronald Arnatt, "Jeanne Demessieux, Graham Memorial Chapel," *The American Organist* 41 (Apr. 1958): 149, is quoted in Ellis 1991, 50–54, and notes that

Arnatt himself wrote the themes presented for the improvisation.

101 Composed for Demessieux by Jean Berveiller in 1957.

102 Copy of program courtesy of Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux.

103 Demessieux's choice to use the English-language phrase that she heard arguably adds a somewhat belittling tone.

104 As noted in the tour itinerary, the venue was the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver. No program is available.

105 They would have taken the California Zephyr train in a Vista-Dome car.

106 According to Ellis 1991, 54–57, the recital took place at Bidwell Memorial Presbyterian Church in Chico and the repertoire was that of “Program No. 1.” Ellis also quotes from a review of the recital (55–56): Charles van Bronkhorst, “Jeanne Demessieux, Bidwell Memorial Presbyterian Church,” *The American Organist* 41 (Apr. 1958): 148, praises, among other aspects of the performance, Demessieux's handling of timbres in playing the Mozart and the Liszt. He also notes that Demessieux received two four-measure themes from Chico State College music faculty member James Kinne for the improvisation, and mentions that she did not play an encore despite “excellent audience reaction and applause.”

107 Instead of the French word, Demessieux wrote the English *oaks* in quotation marks.

108 Ellis 1991, 57, notes that the venue in Oakland was the First Presbyterian Church. No program is available.

109 Cf. Demessieux's letter to her parents of Mar. 2, 1955, above, in which she recounted her visit with Darius Milhaud and his wife, who lived in Oakland for part of every year. Perhaps Demessieux thought of Milhaud in connection with her *Te Deum* because it contains passages of bitonality, reminding her of Milhaud's use of bitonality in some of his works.

110 The venue was First Baptist Church where Demessieux was presented by the Sacramento Chapter of the AGO at First Baptist Church. The repertoire was that of “Program No. 1” (copy of program courtesy Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux).

111 The godson has not been identified. Demessieux also had a goddaughter, Marie-Jeanne Drauth, daughter of the Luxembourg organist Pierre Drauth, who was one of Demessieux's Liège students. The goddaughter, who has told me she was 10 years old when Jeanne Demessieux died, would have been born in 1958 (email from Marie-Jeanne Fondeur-Drauth, Dec. 5, 2003).

112 As noted in the tour itinerary, on Feb. 21, 1958 the San Jose Chapter of the AGO presented Demessieux at First Methodist Church. Repertoire was that of “Program No. 1” (copy of program courtesy Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux).

113 According to the online *Oxford English Dictionary*

<<https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uregina.ca/view/Entry/32959?rskey=jfu8Qx&result=1#eid>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, a cicerone is “[a] guide who shows and explains the antiquities or curiosities of a place to strangers.”

114 As noted in the tour itinerary, in Pasadena on Feb. 24 Demessieux played on the Skinner organ of First Methodist Church. She was presented jointly by the Los Angeles and Pasadena chapters of the AGO and Occidental College. Repertoire was that of “Program No. 1” (copy of Pasadena program courtesy Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux).

115 According to the tour itinerary, this was Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

116 The hall was Texas Christian University's Ed Landreth Auditorium, where Demessieux had previously performed on Feb. 18, 1955. No program is available.

117 According to the web page at <www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/73R/billtext/doc/SR01210F.doc>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022 (type url into a Web browser), Emmet G. Smith (b. 1927) began teaching organ at Texas Christian University in 1951. Following his master's degree at Texas Christian University in 1954, he continued his music studies at the Paris Conservatory as a Fulbright Scholar, then attended Union Theological Seminary in New York. During over forty years as an organ professor at Texas Christian University, his numerous students included thirteen honoured as Fulbright Scholars. As an organist, he concertized throughout the United States and Europe.

118 Ellis 1991, 59, notes that this recital took place at Myers Park Methodist Church in Charlotte, and the repertoire was that of “Program No. 1.”

119 According to the online *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uregina.ca/view/Entry/8741602?redirectedFrom=shirtwaist+dress#eid1302319870>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, a shirtwaist dress is “a woman's dress with a buttoned bodice or upper part designed to resemble a shirt.”

120 Demessieux is referring to the sign-creators' lack of awareness of how their notice reads if the words "lingerie" and "negligee" are considered in their original language, and "sale" is thought of as a French word. In French, *lingerie* (when not referring to a linen room) means simply "underwear," and *lingerie sale* means "dirty underwear." As for "dresses negligee," *negligée* in French may mean "undressed," "shabby," or (at best) "casual."

121 The original reads: *le carillon d'une église voisin joue... l'Ave Maria de Schubert, en cloches (sans jeu de mots...)*. The expression *en cloches* means "stupidly," "like idiots," or "idiotically." By adding "no pun intended..." Demessieux highlighted her pun, emphasizing what an awful rendition the sound of the bells produced. (I am grateful to Stacey Brown for this observation.)

122 According to the web page <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Dior_\(fashion_house\)#.22New_Look.22](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Dior_(fashion_house)#.22New_Look.22)>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, the phrase "New Look" most famously applied to Christian Dior's spring-summer 1947 women's clothing designs, which eschewed wartime men's influences for more stereotypical female touches. Demessieux's pejorative use of "new-look" paired with *cinéma* may mean that the home's décor had an artificiality that reminded her of scenes in recent films.

123 As noted in the tour itinerary, the venue was Mulberry Street Methodist Church in Macon. No program is available.

124 Perhaps a reference to the French opera-founder, director, impresario, and actor Gabriel Dussurget (1904-1996). The host organist's words are quoted in English in the diary entry, but with "nervous" misspelled as "nervers."

125 According to the tour itinerary, the hall for the recital in Bloomington was Indiana University Auditorium. No program is available.

126 According to the tour itinerary, this was at St. Peter's Catholic Church in downtown Chicago, where Demessieux had previously played a recital in 1955. Though not, as Demessieux thought, a cathedral, the interior of its 1950s building, pictured on the web page <<https://www.yelp.ca/biz/st-peters-church-chicago-3>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, is as imposing as that of a cathedral. St. Peter's is still the home of a group of Franciscan fathers. As in 1955, Demessieux's 1958 recital there was sponsored by the Chicago Club of Women Organists. The repertoire was similar to that of "Program No. 1," but differed by omitting the Liszt and the improvisation; it concluded with Demessieux's *Te Deum* (copy of the program courtesy Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux).

127 Frank Cunkle, "Demessieux in Chicago," *The Diapason* 49 (Apr. 1958): 16, quoted in Ellis 1991, 62. Cunkle found every possible fault with Demessieux's performance, acknowledging only her ability to play a large number of correct notes very fast. Specifically, he criticized her "thick, heavy" registrations and her "mechanically perfect meter" that "sometimes has the effect of making her rubato and ritenuto sound forced and out of place." This resulted in "too often absence of a flowing line and remarkably little feeling of artistic communication."

128 According to Claudine Verchère's personal scrapbook of mementos from the 1958 tour, which I examined at her home in 2006, Demessieux performed in Fort Wayne as part of the First Presbyterian Church music series. The organ, an Aeolian-Skinner, is described on the web page <<https://firstpresfortwayne.org/music/>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, under the heading "Sanctuary Organ."

129 The mention of Verchère's "syringe" is obscure.

130 This time, the machine that is no longer working is not the frequently malfunctioning typewriter, but the author herself: Demessieux had become too weary to continue her handwritten diary.

131 Programs examined at Verchère's home, 2006.

132 Quoted in endnote 127.

133 Barbara Owen, "Jeanne Demessieux: Woolsey Hall," *The American Organist* 41 (Jun. 1958): 223-24, quoted in Ellis 1991, 63-65.

134 Ray Berry, "Jeanne Demessieux: Central Presbyterian Church," *The American Organist* 41 (Jun. 1958): 225, quoted in Ellis 1991, 65-66.

135 Ibid., quoted in Ellis 1991, 66-67.

12. Commentary on the Diaries and Letters of the North American Recital Tours (1953, 1955, and 1958) and their Aftermath

*Travelling so far away, one is led to reflect deeply and to appreciate all,
whatever it may be, for its true value...
It's this collection of hidden virtues in which I was raised
that saves me from frightful banality and pettiness...
This also makes me judgemental... and it's not always amusing!...*
—Letter of March 17, 1955 to Étienne and Madeleine Demessieux
*Extremely tiring journey—as hard for the morale
as for the body in a country so different from Europe.
The life of an artist is hard, too,
because it's necessary not only to work but also to “represent,”
endure interviews, constantly supply ideas concerning French art generally, be hosted...*
—1955 letter (undated) to Yolande

Like these quotations from letters, the entries in Demessieux's diaries from her North American recital tours are peppered with more complaints than praise. They are typically about her travelling conditions, the casual manners of many of the people she met, and the extra functions her hosts pressed upon her. As Demessieux wrote to her sister in the second excerpt quoted above, it was tiring being “in a country so different from Europe.” Consequently, to a reader of her travel diaries, especially a modern one, she frequently appears to be not only judgemental but haughty and condescending. For example, in her 1955 diary, Demessieux recorded her reactions to people she met following a New York recital in these unflattering terms:

Afterward, I was treated as an exotic animal [*bête curieuse*]. Men look at you a certain way, women in another. A disreputable looking group of the latter offered me a handful of flowers, taking me by the waist. No one was likeable. The Colberts did not even come! I returned alone, driven back by Giles¹ and, for obvious reasons, I brooded and read until quite late (February 7, 1955).

My reading of Demessieux's travel diaries maintains the understanding that she wrote at the end of long, arduous days. I believe it is also important to keep in mind that she did not expect these diaries to be read by others, or at least not outside her family.²

Compared to how Demessieux comes across in some of her diary entries, how would she have appeared to others? Judging from my conversations with Pierre Labric and Madeleine Chacun in 2003, in social relationships Demessieux was always as benevolent and gracious as her musicianship was brilliant.³ This is also attested to by those individuals who contributed essays to *Jeanne Demessieux: Témoignages de ses Élèves et Amis*, published by Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux in 1998 for the thirtieth anniversary of Demessieux's death.⁴ In his contribution to the collection, Labric (b. 1921) noted,

Jeanne Demessieux, in the midst of her most brilliant triumphs, never lost this natural simplicity that presented such charm to any with whom she came in contact.⁵

A testimonial by the French composer Jean Aubain (1928–2015) is similarly appreciative.⁶ As a young musician growing up in Bordeaux, he had pulled stops during Demessieux's recitals at Bordeaux Cathedral and was impressed by her calm comportment, even under pressure. After he moved to Paris in 1950, Aubain frequently visited her in the organ gallery of St-Esprit and recalls that Demessieux was always kind and welcoming towards him—even willing to answer his questions about music composition. Aubain contrasts these experiences with having heard people say that Demessieux was “distant and cold,” affirming that she was, rather, “serious and focused.”

In conversation with Labric, I asked him why some might have regarded her manner as distant and cold. He replied that Demessieux, having dedicated her life to her art, always thought on a higher plane than did the average person: “Jeanne Demessieux did not live on earth but on another planet.”⁷

This is not surprising: the Jeanne Demessieux who thought on a higher plane was accustomed to conversing on elevated topics with Marcel Dupré (as mentioned in the diary of 1940–1946) and, consequently, wearied by discussions that involved uninteresting people on petty topics. In her 1940s diary she had written:

Tea party at the home of M^{me} Meunier. Around twenty people. Select society. Some young people. I died of boredom chatting about rubbish (January 29, 1944).

However, chances are that despite the feelings to which she gave vent in her diary, she maintained a polite manner at that tea party.

In 1950s North America, too, Demessieux encountered levels of conversation that were poles apart. In California, of time spent with Darius Milhaud and his wife, she reported to her parents,

For dinner, they [the Milhauds] had invited an excellent organist, [a] student of Langlais. There was also a composer. Unaffectedness, spontaneous affinity [and] at last wit... (March 2, 1955).⁸

In contrast, on the way to a recital, when someone tried to engage her in conversation on a banal topic such as “shirtwaist dresses’ launched in France,” Demessieux tactfully responded that she “didn’t yet have an opinion” (March 3, 1958). Arguably, what would have mattered here was her tone of voice: amicable or cold?

Both good and bad judgements—of people’s conduct as well as organs—abound in the travel diaries. The customary after-concert receptions in North America, with their “interminable parade of audience members, small, fancy cakes, etc.” (February 19, 1955) were the most trying for Demessieux. As was mentioned above, during these she was repeatedly astonished at people’s casual behaviour, which seemed boorish to her. Even French people living abroad came in for criticism, in their case for being “snobs” (February 12, 1958). Audiences, on the other hand, she frequently praised, as in,

Unforgettable evening: perfect, intelligent audience, so much so that I dared give my *Te Deum* as an encore . . . (February 16, 1958).

Organs Demessieux played ranged from “huge and ugly” at First Presbyterian Church, Glens Falls (February 5, 1955) to “one of the most beautiful that I have [ever] played” at First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne (March 11, 1958).

Though diary entries are frequently critical of North Americans and their customs, some of the letters, particularly those to her parents, describe the many things that pleased Demessieux. According to a letter of February 5, 1953 from New York City, she was happy with her reception there, not only by the audience for her recital but by the music store Patelson’s, the publisher Gray, and U.S. representatives of Decca. In particular, she was gratified to see that Patelson’s carried every one of her recordings, including the latest.⁹ Similarly, in a letter of February 17, 1955, Demessieux delighted in the discovery that her recordings are “known everywhere.” Even though when travelling, she generally found herself “exasperated by material things,” she also found positive features of train travel in North America: “I spend my nights in sleeping cars—fortunately, very comfortably” (March 21, 1953). She also valued privacy:

[t]he roomette is terrific because one can closet oneself for the entire journey if one wishes, in front of loads of buttons for automation: air conditioning, ventilation, lights, hot water and cold water, ice (for drinks), paper cups, napkins, soap” (February 17, 1955).

Moreover, when travelling by train, Demessieux could enjoy the scenery. According to a letter to her parents of February 25, 1953, she had “crossed some magnificent regions” while journeying between Chicago and New Orleans and then on to Austin.

During all three transcontinental tours, Demessieux especially enjoyed visiting California. For example, in an undated letter from 1955 she described the state as,

very *Provence exagérée* with its extraordinary sunsets, violet mountains, orange trees, flowering mimosas, camellias, palms, and fountains.

Unlike in her earlier diaries, Demessieux’s self-identity is always eminently self-assured in her travel diaries. For instance, when her assistant Claudine Verchère became tearful or frustrated in a difficult situation, Demessieux remained unflappable (February 4 and March 3, 1958). And when Liliane Murtagh of Colbert-Laberge chided her for

taking a later train from New York to Newark than was down on her itinerary, Demessieux's response was the opposite of apologizing:

Very self-possessed, I calmed her down and made it clear to her that I always do what I want (February 2, 1958).

Given that the travel diaries report many irksome incidents, it must arguably have come as a relief to Demessieux when she was, occasionally, able to write about something she found humorous, such as,

Comic incident: during the "intermission," the priest climbed to the pulpit to say, "my brothers, so that you can rest for five minutes, you may stand up." And standing up in their places, people turned to give me polite little smiles; then they sat back down again[,] and I continued (February 12, 1958).

Her entertaining description of the "big, strapping fellow in a yellow hat, loud tie, hands in his pockets, [who] bellowed straight away [with no introductions] "Hello!!... How are you?!..." from March 3, 1958 was likely intended to make her chuckle upon re-reading the diary, as was Demessieux's recounting of a host organist who before the recital kept "wringing his hands saying . . . 'I am so nervous...'" (March 6, 1958). Other times, irony shines through, as when, having been invited to dinner at the home of people of modest means, Demessieux stated, in a matter-of-fact way, "I helped in the preparation of the meal, covered by an apron" (February 17, 1955).

The Aftermath of the North American tours

The letters and diaries related to Demessieux's North American tours contain a single reference to her physical well-being. In an undated letter to her sister Yolande (cited in the second quotation at the head of this chapter), written after her return from the 1955 tour, she goes on to state, "Amidst so many things, my health has held up!" This hints at Trieu-Colleney's observations concerning Demessieux's frequent infirmities during her career as a concert organist:

Jeanne sought always to overcome her illnesses that sometimes hindered her tours. She underwent numerous operations, minor, it is true, but often painful; this did not prevent her from giving recitals [just] hours afterward.¹⁰

These remarks continue with the example of Demessieux performing on an unspecified day in Brussels for the Belgian queen, Elisabeth, shortly after having had an abscess in her throat lanced. Trieu-Colleney then adds that such incidents occurred frequently: engagements in California, at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, in Switzerland, and in the Netherlands were fulfilled despite recent operations.¹¹

Describing Demessieux's activity as a recitalist, Trieu-Colleney notes that, upon her return home from each of the three North American tours in the 1950s, Demessieux was immediately plunged back into teaching and a gruelling schedule of performances.¹² By 1961, that is, three years after her last North American tour and in consequence of her continuously taxing schedule, Demessieux was greatly fatigued. She never again travelled overseas, but continued to play in France and Europe, at a less exhausting pace.¹³

A landmark in Demessieux's career occurred in 1962, when she was named titular organist of the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, with its beautiful Cavaillé-Coll instrument. According to Trieu-Colleney, this at long last elevated Demessieux's stature in Paris to the same height as she enjoyed in foreign countries.¹⁴

Demessieux played her last recitals in 1967. According to Trieu-Colleney, by July 1968 her health had declined to the point that, amidst protestations that she felt perfectly well, she agreed to spend two days in a private clinic.¹⁵ It is not clear that Demessieux knew she had terminal cancer.¹⁶ In October she was hospitalized again, still thinking that she would soon return to work, though she never did.

Demessieux died on November 11, 1968. The next day, an anonymous writer summarized her achievements for readers of *The Times* of London in an obituary:

Jeanne Demessieux, the distinguished French organist, has died at the age of 47. For many years she was a brilliant virtuoso, a thoughtful, intelligent musician: and she was certainly the first woman ever to attain such eminence among the French organists who have dominated the world of organ playing since the time of César Franck.¹⁷

Some of the highlights of Demessieux's career are then given, including her frequent performances at the Royal Festival Hall in London. The author continues:

But aside from the depth and breadth of her career, Madame Demessieux was particularly remarkable for her

success as a woman recitalist in what was previously a man's world. Naturally she became notorious as the first famous organist to play the pedals with high heeled shoes: but her playing also had a feminine sensitivity and feeling that was rare in the 1940s, and especially valuable as an influence on the following generation.

She was the first woman ever invited to play at both Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral, and it is poignant that her death should have occurred just after arrangements had been completed for her to play at the cathedral next year.

Also uncompleted at Demessieux's death in November 1968 was a plan for her to record the complete organ works of Olivier Messiaen. Existence of such a scheme is attested to by correspondence between Van Wyck and Demessieux that stretches from September 1967 to April 1968, though this discussion probably began much earlier.¹⁸ The Messiaen project, which Van Wyck refers to as his "brainchild" in a letter of November 9, 1967, had by the autumn of 1967 received the approval of Messiaen himself (letter of October 2, 1967 from Olivier Messiaen to Jeanne Demessieux).

In correspondence with Van Wyck, even in early stages of negotiations with proposed record companies, Demessieux was very particular about details of the Messiaen venture. Her carbon copy of a letter of November 27, 1967 thanks Van Wyck for securing a promise from EMI Records that the recording would be distributed internationally. It then goes on to request additional stipulations: that the recording be in stereo; that Sceptre Records contact Messiaen concerning his honorarium for writing analytic notes on the music; that the fee paid to her by Sceptre Records be net of taxes and adjusted according to the current exchange rate between currencies; that she receive worldwide [underlined in the original] royalties of 7½ %.

Demessieux's meticulousness also shines through in a draft of a contract between herself and Transcontinental Recordings Ltd.¹⁹ It contains numerous revisions in red pen, which, apparently, she also wrote into a copy returned to Van Wyck on April 9, 1968. For example, to a clause specifying that the artist would not, for seven years, perform the organ works of Messiaen for any other recording company, Demessieux added, "The artist will be free to record the works of all other composers for other companies." She also deleted a clause stating that the artist, "for the purpose of these recordings . . . will carry out such direction during the performance thereof as thought fit by the company and by M. Olivier Messiaen, and substituted, "The recordings shall be made in stereophonic and be given worldwide distribution." Moreover, Demessieux added three additional riders to the document. These concerned the exchange rate for paying her fee, payment of an organ technician to be present during the recording sessions, and her right to approve any newspaper articles and photographs to be used for publicity purposes. Judging from her dealings with Van Wyck and recording companies, Demessieux appears to have been a very astute businesswoman.

Whether a contract concerning the Messiaen recording project was ever signed, remains unclear, because surviving documents end with the revised draft dated April 9, 1968.

Demessieux's reputation today

Though she did not record the organ works of Messiaen, Demessieux is remembered today for her splendid performances to be heard in the many recordings she did make. These include the complete organ works of Franck, selected works of Bach, Handel, and Liszt, and movements from larger compositions by Widor and Messiaen. In 2021 Decca reissued her recordings in a boxed set of eight CDs to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Demessieux's birth.²⁰

Demessieux also lives on today through her published compositions and performances of these, in recital and recorded. Immediately following her death, Demessieux's principal interpreter was her faithful disciple, Pierre Labric. In 1974, he recorded Demessieux's complete published works for solo organ for the Musical Heritage Society, and in 2017 the set was reissued on CD by Solstice.²¹

A renewal of Demessieux's reputation began in the 1990s, around the time that the Dutch record company Festivo released five CD albums compiling a selection of Demessieux's recorded performances, some made by Decca and some by Dutch and German radio stations.²² Also since the 1990s, many organists following in Pierre Labric's footsteps have drawn inspiration from Demessieux and gone on to perform and record her organ music. In 1994, U.K. organist D'Arcy Trinkwon gave a complete performance of Demessieux's *Six Études* in concert, the first to do so since Demessieux herself and Labric.²³ Organists from many countries have produced CDs entirely devoted to organ works of Demessieux: Michelle Leclerc (French), Maurizio Ciampi (Italian), Laura Ellis (American), Maxime Patel (French), Stephen

Tharp (American), and Hampus Lindwall (Swedish-born, living in Paris).²⁴ Incidentally, Patel's and Tharp's recordings comprise her complete œuvre for organ solo, including works that had not been published yet when Labric performed her works for LP.²⁵

Demessieux's most recorded piece of all is her *Te Deum* for organ.²⁶ A 2021 essay by Trinkwon surveys Demessieux's organ compositions, going all the way back to her earliest piece for organ, *Nativité*, which the diary mentions was composed in December 1943.²⁷ Trinkwon does not mention Demessieux's *Poème* for organ and orchestra, Op. 9 of 1952, which, admittedly, has been least performed and recorded.²⁸

Occasional attention has also been paid to Demessieux's compositions involving instruments other than organ. One is her large-scale choral work for sopranos, tenors, mezzo-soprano soloist, and orchestra, *La Chanson de Roland*, a *poème lyrique en vingt chants* (lyric poem in twenty songs). It was composed between 1951 and 1956, and remained in manuscript form until, in the 1990s, Demessieux's former Dutch organ student Jean Wolfs prepared a performing edition. Published in 2000 by Alphonse Leduc as Demessieux's Op. 10, this 45-minute work received its first performance in September 2000 at Aachen Cathedral in Germany. It was presented during an annual music festival and organ competition, L'Europe & l'Orgue, which that year was a joint project of the cities of Liège, Maastricht, and Aachen, overseen by Wolfs.²⁹ Another is Demessieux's three-movement *Sonata* for violin and piano, mentioned in her diary as composed in December-January, 1940–1941; it existed only in manuscript until it was published in 2013.³⁰ Finally, there is Demessieux's *Ballade* for horn and piano, Op. 12, published by Durand in 1962, and originally composed for that year's Paris Conservatory horn competition. It was recorded in 2018.³¹

In closing, if Yolande Demessieux could have time-travelled and seen the attention being paid to her sister's legacy in the twenty-first century, I believe she would have felt gratified. My hope is that this present study will inspire another scholar to undertake a comprehensive English-language biography that draws upon Demessieux's diaries, all her correspondence held by the Montpellier Archives, and all secondary sources, to weave together a chronological account of Jeanne Demessieux's life and career. This will help us understand more fully the impact of women like her on French society, musical life, and, specifically, liturgical music, in twentieth-century France.³²

NOTES:

1 Hugh Giles, the organist of Central Presbyterian Church, New York City.

2 I imagine that Demessieux wrote and retained her travel diaries for her "personal recollection," just as she noted in the epigraph to volume 1 of her diary of 1940–1946.

3 Conversations with Pierre Labric (Demessieux's student, friend, and interpreter of her organ compositions) in May 2003, and Madeleine Chacun, a parishioner of St-Esprit and a friend, in June 2003.

4 In addition to containing contributions by Labric and Chacun, *Jeanne Demessieux: Témoignages de ses Élèves et Amis* (Versailles: Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux [1998]) features essays by Jean Aubain, who pulled stops for her in Bordeaux recitals; René Brethone, a student; and Claudine Verchère, a student and her secretary. Readers interested in this publication should first approach Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux; a limited number of copies are available from Lynn Cavanagh (lcavanagh@sasktel.net).

5 Pierre Labric, essay in *Jeanne Demessieux: Témoignages de ses Élèves et Amis* (Versailles: Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux [1998]), 8–9.

6 This paragraph is based on Jean Aubain, essay in *Jeanne Demessieux: Témoignages de ses Élèves et Amis* (Versailles: Les Amis de Jeanne Demessieux [1998]), 11–13. The quotations are on p. 13.

7 Conversation with Pierre Labric, May 2003.

8 The diary entry does not identify the student of Langlais, or the composer, invited to dinner by the Milhards.

9 Demessieux did not specify which of her LPs was her latest released. According to liner notes for *Jeanne Demessieux: The Decca Legacy* (Decca 484 1424, 2021), 12–13, a recording of Handel's Organ Concertos, Op. 4, No. 1 and Op. 4, No. 2, made with l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Ernest Ansermet, at Victoria Hall Geneva in October 1952, was originally released in the month prior to her letter, i.e., January 1953, on Decca LXT 2759.

10 Christiane Trieu-Colleney, *Jeanne Demessieux: Une vie de lutttes et de gloire* (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1977), 34–35.

11 Trieu-Colleney would have based these observations on Demessieux's letters preserved in AM 4S15 and 4S18. She does not cite specific letters or give dates.

12 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 64, 66, 67, and 197.

13 Ibid., 67–68.

14 Ibid., 38. Belgium thought so highly of Demessieux that in 1964 she was decorated as a Knight of the Order of the Crown for meritorious service to the Belgian state (ibid., 233).

15 Ibid., 228.

16 Conversation with Madeleine Chacun, June 2003. Chacun, then an elderly woman, did not specify the type of cancer. This was probably because, as D'Arcy Trinkwon puts it in "The Legend of Jeanne Demessieux: A Study," *The Diapason*, whole number 1188 (Nov. 2008): 33, ". . . until only recent generations, the discussion of illness—particularly serious illness—was an absolute social taboo; knowledge of any serious illness could often leave a person socially outcast, even professionally ruined."

17 Anon., "Jeanne Demessieux: A brilliant musician," *The Times* (Nov. 12, 1968): 10. An official obituary published by Demessieux's family has not come to light.

18 GVT, "Projets enregistrements (Messiaen), Paris et Londres" (file of correspondence, 1967–1968, mainly with Wilfrid Van Wyck). All remarks concerning the recording project are based on documents in this file.

19 Not necessarily the present-day company of that name. The paper trail possessed by the author does not reveal how this recording company was eventually agreed upon, or whether it was the holding company for Sceptre Records.

20 *Jeanne Demessieux: The Decca Legacy* (Decca 484 1424, 2021).

21 Pierre Labric, *Jeanne Demessieux: Organ Works* (New York: Musical Heritage Society, 3042–3044, 1975) and Pierre Labric, *Jeanne Demessieux: L'œuvre pour orgue* (Solstice, 2017).

22 *Jeanne Demessieux aux grandes orgues de l'Église de la Madeleine à Paris* (Festivo, 131, 132, 199–); *The Legendary Jeanne Demessieux* (Festivo, 141, 1996); *Jeanne Demessieux, César Franck, intégrale de l'œuvre pour orgue* (Festivo, 155, 156, 199–); *The Legendary Jeanne Demessieux: Hamburger Orgeln* (Festivo, 6961 862, 2003). The initiator of this project was the Dutch organist Herman van Vliet (1941–2018), a Demessieux admirer who had heard her perform many times, according to <<https://hermanvanvliet.com/dossiers/jeannedemessieux/en/>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. This web page also contains links to dozens of photos and documents (mostly in Dutch) related to Demessieux.

23 Website of D'Arcy Trinkwon, <<http://www.darcytrinkwon.com/>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022. Performances of some of Demessieux's organ music by Trinkwon may be heard on YouTube.

24 Michelle Leclerc, *Jeanne Demessieux Orgelwerke* (Motette CD 11671, 1992); Maurizio Ciampi, *Jeanne Demessieux: Six Études, Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit* (Stradivarius, STR 33384, 1994); Laura Ellis, *Legacy: Laura Ellis Plays Organ Works of Jeanne Demessieux* (Pro Organo CD 7083, 1996); Maxime Patel, *Intégrale des œuvres pour orgue de Jeanne Demessieux* (DVD, Fugatto, Fug 025, 2008); Stephen Tharp, *Jeanne Demessieux, Complete Organ Works* (Aeolus AE 10561, 2008); Hampus Lindwall, *A Tribute to Jeanne Demessieux* (Ligia 107523, 2011). A list of recordings that include one or more works of Demessieux is at <<https://www.prestomusic.com/classical/composers/3378/browse?size=10&view=large>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022.

25 Jeanne Demessieux, *Nativité*, Op. 4 and *Répons pour les temps liturgiques*, ed. Maxime Patel (Delatour France, 2006).

26 Jeanne Demessieux, *Te Deum pour orgue*, Op. 11 (Paris: Durand, 1959).

27 D'Arcy Trinkwon, "A true individualist," *Choir & Organ* (Oct. 2021): 44–48.

28 Jeanne Demessieux, *Poème pour orgue et orchestre*, Op. 9, réduction pour orgue et piano (Paris: Durand, 1952); Jeremy Filsell, *Masterworks II for Organ and Orchestra* (GMCD 7136, 1997), includes Demessieux's *Poème*, performed with orchestra.

29 According to the Festival-Competition program, "L'Europe & L'Orgue 2000," 35, performers were the Orchestre Philharmonique of Liège under Pierre Cao; Christine Sollhosse, mezzo-soprano; the boys' choir of the Aachen Cathedral choir; and the Studium Chorale prepared by J. G. Leenders. The web page <<https://www.studiumchorale.nl/algemeen/concerten/demessieux-la-chanson-de-roland>>, accessed Sept. 22, 2022, announces in Dutch that in March 2023 the Studium Chorale directed by Hans Leenders will premiere a new version of *La Chanson de Roland*, created by Leenders, for choir, soloist, piano, and harmonium.

30 Demessieux, *Sonate pour violon et piano*, ed. Maxime Patel and d'Alexis Galpérine (Delatour France, DLT2079, 2013). To my knowledge, it has not yet been recorded.

31 Douglas Lundeen (horn), Barbara González-Palmer (piano), *Le cor français authentique* (Affetto, AF1803, 2018).

32 Trieu-Colleney 1977, 39–41, summarizes Demessieux's involvement in debates concerning liturgical reforms of the 1960s, and how these affected the work of church musicians. As Trieu-Colleney notes (40), in 1965 Demessieux was active as a vice-president of the Union des Maîtres de chapelle et organistes de France.

Register of Persons Mentioned in Jeanne Demessieux's Diaries and Letters

Most often, the source of information on these persons is the Internet. Information on organists and choirmasters is also from Pierre Guillot, *Dictionnaire des organistes français des XIX^e et XX^e siècles* (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 2003). Tenures of Paris Conservatory piano instructors are from Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus Press, 1999), 275–277. Indication that a composer or performer was active during France's Vichy era (the German Occupation period) is from Yannick Simon, *Composer sous Vichy* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009). Some lesser-known persons have been identified with the assistance of François Sabatier, "Avant-propos," in *Jeanne Demessieux: Journal (1934–1946)*, *L'Orgue*, Nos. 287–288 (2009/III–IV): 3–27.

Page numbers correspond to those in the diary manuscripts, which are shown in square brackets in the translations.

A

Alain, Jehan (1911–1940).

French organist and composer. Son of Albert Alain who designed the organ of St-Esprit. Winner of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue 1936 composition prize. Demessieux's classmate during her first year in Dupré's Conservatory class (1938–1939) and winner of a First Prize in organ at the end of that academic year. Prolific composer of music for voices, chamber ensembles, and organ, including the famous *Litanies* for organ. Killed in action June 20, 1940.

Diary of 1940–46: 39, 43, 47, 315, 393, 398, 399, 449, 523.

Alkan, Charles Valentin (1813–1888).

Virtuoso pianist, composer, and recipient of a First Prize in organ in the class of François Benoist in 1834. Composed piano works equaling and surpassing Liszt's in technical difficulty. Demessieux studied his *Twelve Studies for the Pedals Alone* (c. 1865) composed for pedal piano or organ.

Diary of 1940–46: 57, 63, 93, 113, 117, 125.

d'Argœuves, Michel (1882–1966).

Long-time choirmaster at St-Esprit (beginning 1936) and friend of Demessieux. Studied at the Schola Cantorum, including organ with Guilmant. Organ teacher at the Schola Cantorum, 1920–1934, then at the École César Franck.

Letter of Aug. 1, 1938. Diary of 1940–46: 5, 51, 149.

Aubin, Tony (1907–1981).

Composer and conductor who studied at the Paris Conservatory. Served on the jury for the 1941 Conservatory composition competition that heard Demessieux's last submissions to a Conservatory competition. Regarded by the Vichy government as one of the most important of France's younger generation of composers, his name figures frequently on Vichy-era cultural committees and among composers who received commissions, including those whose works received a recording and performances.

Diary of 1940–46: 46.

Aubut (-Pratte), Françoise (1922–1984)

French-Canadian organist. After study at the Montreal Conservatory and the New England Conservatory, moved to Paris in 1938 to study at the École normale de musique and privately with Dupré. Organist of Notre-Dame d'Assomption in the Passy area of Paris from 1938. Joined Dupré's Conservatory class during the 1939–1940 academic year, but absent during 1940–1941 because as a British Commonwealth citizen she was interned at Besançon from October to June by the German occupiers. Earned a Paris Conservatory First Prize in organ in 1944, and returned to Québec in 1945.

Diary of 1940–46: 47, 327.

Auxiette, Mireille (d. 1983).

Pianist and close friend of Demessieux (who sometimes referred to Mireille as "Mimi"). Born in Montpellier, she studied with Yolande Demessieux and graduated from the Montpellier Conservatory at age 11. First Prize in piano in 1946 in the

class of Yves Nat. Married the Polish film maker Wojciech Jankowski.

Diary of 1940–46: 53, 69, 122–23, 137, 203, 273, 359, 522, 567.

B

Backhaus, Wilhelm (1884–1969).

Distinguished German pianist active internationally from 1900 until his death and one of the world's first recording artists. Known particularly for his playing of Beethoven and Brahms. Tainted by Naziism during the 1930s he may have renounced his affiliations and, in any case, concealed them after World War II.

Diary of 1940–46: 139.

Barié, Augustin (1883–1915).

Paris organist. Student of Adolphe Marty at the National Institute for the Young Blind, then of Vierne and, at the Paris Conservatory, of Guilmant. From 1906 organ instructor at the Institute for the Young Blind and titular of St-Germain-des-Prés.

Diary of 1940–46: 20.

Barthélémi, M^r & M^{me} (?–?).

Friends of the Dupré family who planned, with Dupré, the rebuilding of Normandy organs destroyed in World War II.

Diary of 1940–46: 377–78.

Bauzet, Micheline (?–?)

French violinist who was a student of Gabriel Bouillon at the Paris Conservatory. As a performer, she would go on to be featured in recordings of violin concertos performed with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Herbert von Karajan.

Diary of 1940–46: 11.

Bazelaire, Paul (1886–1958).

Celebrated French cellist, teacher, and composer of chamber works. Earned a First Prize in cello at the Paris Conservatory at age 11, and a First Prize in counterpoint and fugue at age 19. Also a keyboard player, he studied organ with Guilmant and Vierne. Taught cello at the Conservatory from 1918 to 1956.

Beaucamp, Albert (1921–1967).

Rouen organist and music educator. Studied organ at the Rouen Maîtrise St-Evode and earned First Prizes in harmony and in counterpoint and fugue at the Paris Conservatory. Titular of St-Godard, 1938–c.1950. Named director of the Rouen Conservatory in 1949.

Diary of 1940–46: 218.

Beausseant, Dr Maurice (?–?).

French surgeon who in 1915 performed an unprecedented operation on the heart of a young sergeant, successfully removing from the right vesicle a splinter of a hand grenade that had been lodged there for four and a half months.

Diary of 1940–46: 479–80, 509, 530.

Bénassy, Dr (?–?)

Surgeon recommended to Demessieux by Dr Dramez.

Diary of 1940–46: 423, 425.

Bénet, Eugène Paul (1863–1942) & **M^{me}**.

French sculptor in the academic style, born in Dieppe.

Diary of 1940–46: 279, 289.

Bernac, Pierre (1899–1979).

French baritone particularly associated with the composer and pianist Poulenc. In his *Recollections* (Dupré 1975, 106) Dupré mentions a 1940 encounter with Poulenc and Bernac while travelling.

Diary of 1940–46: 509.

Bénard, M^r & M^{me} (?–?).

Director of Paris's Salle Pleyel during the 1940s.

Diary of 1940–46: 379, 379 bis–380, 383, 401, 405–07, 420–21, 428–29, 432, 438–39, 461, 483, 494, 496, 499, 501–02, 509, 511, 513–14, 528, 530, 532, 536, 544, 548, 559.

Berveiller, Jean Marie (1904–1976).

Paris businessman who in his spare time was a jazz pianist, organist, and composer for various media. Private composition student of Dupré in the early to mid 1940s. Close friend of the Demessieux family and supporter of Demessieux from the 1940s until her death. Her *Sept Méditations sur le Saint-Esprit* is dedicated to him. Demessieux played his organ works in recital and recorded his organ piece *Mouvement*.

Diary of 1940–46: 130, 206, 225, 279, 368, 369, 406, 408, 424–25, 436–37, 445, 455, 458, 461, 463, 477, 556, 558, 562, 564, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581.

Beuchet, Joseph (1904–1970)

Grandson of Louis Debierre, an influential French organ builder trained by Debierre's successor Georges Gloton. Became one of the directors of the House Cavaillé-Coll in 1931. In 1934, took the lead when the Gloton-Le Mintier company opened a Paris branch. In 1947 he became head of the company, re-named Beuchet-Debierre.

Diary of 1940–46: 31, 55, 105, 243, 301, 376, 414.

Bigot, Eugène (1888–1965).

French orchestral conductor; director of Paris's Concerts Lamoureux, 1935–1950. Served on many committees overseeing music in France during the Vichy regime.

Diary of 1940–46: 268–69, 271, 274.

Blanchard (?–?).

U.S. marines/naval officer and organ enthusiast.

Diary of 1940–46: 467–68, 470.

Blanchet, Emile Robert (1877–1943).

Swiss pianist (student of Busoni) and composer. Among his works are 64 *Preludes for Pianoforte in Contrapuntal Style*.

Diary of 1940–46: 139, 142.

Blin, René (1884–1951).

Organist and composer who studied with Guilmant and d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum. Organist and choirmaster of Ste-Élisabeth in Paris, 1910–1939.

Diary of 1940–46: 55.

Bondeville, Emmanuel (1898–1987).

Rouen-born and -educated composer and organist. Music director for Radiodiffusion française from 1935, then director of opera in Marseille and Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 333, 343.

Bonnet, Joseph (1884–1944).

Internationally celebrated French organist who made his first concert tour of the U.S. in 1917. Was exiled in the U.S. during World War II and then held various organ and teaching posts in North America.

Diary of 1940–46: 206.

Borchard, Adolphe (1882–1967).

French pianist and composer who studied at the Paris Conservatory. Became popular with audiences and noted for his flashiness as a performer. Remembered as the composer of music for eighteen French films between 1931 and 1943.

Diary of 1940–46: 111, 289.

Bornemann, Stéphane (d. 1956).

Paris music publisher who issued Dupré's editions of the complete organ works of Bach, Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Schumann, the Handel organ concertos, and many of Dupré's compositions, beginning with *Évocation*, Op. 37 in 1941.

Diary of 1940–46: 82, 84, 85, 95, 104, 143, 144, 146, 149, 157, 202, 285, 293, 295, 299, 316, 317, 221, 443, 485, 497, 508, 522.

Bouillon, Gabriel (1898–1984).

Montpellier-born and -trained violinist who also studied with Jacques Thibaut in Paris and became a violin teacher at the Paris Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 6, 11.

Boulnois, Michel (1907–2008).

Paris-born organist, composer, and educator who studied organ with Dupré and composition with Busser at the Paris Conservatory. Organist of St-Philippe-du-Roule in Paris from 1937 to 1990 and inspector of music instruction for the city of Paris from 1946 to his retirement.

Diary of 1940–46: 92, 279, 300, 523.

Bourdon, Pierre (?–?).

Industrialist. Director and chief of engineering for Michelin factories for a time.

Diary of 1940–46: 327–28, 364, 425, 432–34, 436, 443–45, 522, 537.

Bracquemond, Marthe Henriod (1898–1973).

Paris organist-composer who studied privately with both Vierne and Dupré.

Diary of 1940–46: 42.

Brailowsky, Alexander (1896–1976).

Naturalized French pianist born in Kiev. Studied with Leschetizky, Busoni, and Planté, and made his career on both sides of the Atlantic. Specialized in playing Chopin, including presenting the complete piano works in recital series.

Letters of Feb. 1, 1934 and Apr. 18, 1937.

Busoni, Ferruccio (1866–1924).

Italian-born pianist, composer, conductor, and writer who made an international career. As a teacher in the German Lisztian style, he taught at conservatories in Helsinki, Moscow, Boston, and Bologna and, also living in Berlin and Zürich, was a direct influence upon generations of European pianists. In his *Recollections* (Dupré 1975, 124–35), Dupré claims to have been present during one of Busoni's lunches with Widor on Busoni's visits to Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 29, 82, 139, 145, 369, 387, 453, 455, 483.

Busser, Henri (1872–1974).

Prolific French composer in all genres, including stage music, as well as being an arranger, organist, conductor, opera director, and teacher. Studied organ at the École Niedermeyer and with Franck and Widor at the Paris Conservatory. A composition student of Ernest Guiraud at the Conservatory, he won second First Prize in the Rome competition of 1893. Instructor of composition at the Paris Conservatory, 1930–1948 and Demessieux's composition teacher, 1939–1941.

Diary of 1940–46: 2, 6–7, 9, 19, 22, 30, 31–32, 35–37, 39, 46–47, 56, 63, 76–77, 91, 121, 130, 132, 134, 151–52, 327, 412–13. 484.

C

Carcopino Jérôme (1881–1970).

French historian and author who was a professor at the Sorbonne, 1920–1937, then director of the French School at Rome and (from Feb. 25, 1941 to Apr. 18, 1942) Minister of National Education (and Secretary of State for Public Instruction) in the government of Vichy France.

Diary of 1940–46: 71.

Casals, Pablo (1976–1973).

Spanish-born cellist, composer, teacher, and conductor who between 1939 and 1942 appeared occasionally as a cellist in the unoccupied zone of France, and in Switzerland. Before and after the war he appeared throughout Europe and in the U.S.

Diary of 1940–46: 124, 204 491b.

Cavaillé-Coll, Aristide (1811–1899).

French organ builder born in Montpellier and based in Paris from 1833. Responsible for many innovations that revolutionized French organ building, performance, and composition for the instrument in ways that were consistent with mainstream Romantic-era developments.

Diary of 1940–46: 113, 489, 490.

Cellier, Alexandre (1883–1968).

Paris organist and composer who studied at the Conservatory with Guilmant (organ) and Widor (composition). Titular organist of the Temple de l'Étoile, 1910–1917 and principal inspector of music instruction in schools, 1943–1953. Author of an introduction to how organs work that in 1940 was in its 10th edition.

Diary of 1940–46: 40, 42, 292.

Chailley, Jacques (1910–1999).

Paris musicologist, administrator, and choral director who held the post of secretary-general of the Paris Conservatory from 1937.

Diary of 1940–46: 151.

Challan, Henri (1910–1977).

Paris composer and teacher who studied with Jean Gallon and Henri Busser at the Paris Conservatory and taught harmony at the Conservatory from 1936.

Diary of 1940–46: 45.

Chauvière, Jeanne (?–?).

Younger sister of Dupré's mother, contralto soloist, and teacher of voice and piano. During the period of Demessieux diaries she continued to live in the house in Rouen where she grew up, which had also become the home of Dupré and his parents while he was growing up.

Diary of 1940–46: 43, 161, 240–43, 245, 253–57, 407, 409.

Claudel, Paul (1868–1955).

French poet, dramatist, and diplomat most known for his poetic dramas that convey his devout Catholicism. Author of the poetry that inspired Dupré's *Le Chemin de la Croix*, Op. 29.

Diary of 1940–46: 79. Letter of March 2, 1955.

Cliquot, François-Henry (1732–1790).

One member of four generations of celebrated eighteenth-century French organ builders and the individual with whom Cliquot organs reached their perfection. Among François-Henry's instruments was that of St-Sulpice in Paris, built 1781 and restored over time in the 1830s–1850s by the firms Callinet and Ducroquet before it was completely reconstructed and enlarged by Cavaillé-Coll in the late 1850s to early 1860s. Only a very few Cliquot organs have survived in a state close to their original.

Diary of 1940–46: 489–90.

Cortot, Alfred (1877–1962).

Legendary Swiss-French concert pianist, chamber musician, conductor, and recording artist. Piano student of Chopin disciple Émile Descombes and a Paris Conservatory first-prize winner in the class of Louis Diémer. His exposure to German pianos and pianists distinguished his playing and teaching from that of most of his French contemporaries, consisting, in part, of greater use of arms and shoulders. Conservatory piano instructor, 1907–1923, and a founder of Paris's École normale de musique. A key figure in the Vichy government with the role of regulating music during the Occupation years, he was known to have presented recitals to visiting German officials during the Occupation.

Letters of Dec. 11, 1933 and Feb. 1, 1934. Diary of 1940–46: 139, 311.

D

Dandelot, Georges (1895–1975).

French composer of instrumental music, ballet, and opera, and graduate of the Paris Conservatory. From 1942 he taught harmony at the Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 268.

Delannoy, Marcel (1898–1962).

Composer of theatre music, and a music critic who belonged to a faction of composer-critics championing new compositions that are easy to understand. Now frequently cited as a “soft collaborator” with German authorities in charge of artistic matters in Paris during the Occupation. Began writing weekly articles reviewing Paris musical events for *Les Nouveaux Temps* soon after the paper began publication in November 1940.

Diary of 1940–46: 39, 46, 77.

Delestre, abbé Robert (1901–1993).

Began music study in Rouen, then studied with d'Indy, Dukas, Jean Gallon, Noël Gallon, and Dupré. Choirmaster and choir organist of Rouen's Notre-Dame Cathedral. Director of the Maîtrise St-Evode in Rouen. A close friend of Dupré, he would write the first study of Dupré's organ works, *L'Œuvre de Marcel Dupré* (Paris: Éditions Musique sacrée, 1952).

Diary of 1940–46: 218, 227, 228, 231, 239–45, 247–50, 253–55, 260, 262, 266, 336, 387, 218, 227, 228, 231, 239–45, 247–50, 254–56, 260–62, 266, 336, 387, 543.

Delvincourt, Claude (1888–1954).

Pianist and a composer in all genres. Studied at the Paris Conservatory. Director of the Versailles Conservatory, 1931–1941, and of the Paris Conservatory, 1941–1954. Credited with significant administrative reforms at the Paris Conservatory and for taking an active role in the French Resistance.

Diary of 1940–46: 7, 9, 36–38, 40, 42, 46, 84, 134, 446, 501.

Deschamps, M^{lle} (?–?).

Classmate of Demessieux in Busser's Paris Conservatory composition class. An Anne-Marie Deschamps composed the music for the 1985 film *Le Mystère Alexina* by René Féret.

Diary of 1940–46: 31, 47.

Desenclos, Alfred (1912–1971).

French composer of mostly instrumental music. Entered the Paris Conservatory class of Busser in 1936. Instructor of a Conservatory harmony class, 1967–1971.

Diary of 1940–46: 47.

Desvallières, Georges (1861–1950).

French painter who became interested in religious art after losing a son in World War I. Elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1930, he contributed to the art work of the Church of St-Esprit in Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 78.

Diémer, Louis (1843–1919).

French concert pianist and influential piano instructor at the Conservatory under whom Dupré won his First Prize in piano in 1905. Represented the old style of French pianist. One of the first nineteenth-century pianists to include Baroque keyboard music in his piano recital programs and to give harpsichord recitals in series.

Diary of 1940–46: 139.

Divoire, Fernand (1883–1951).

Belgian-born French essayist, poet, dramatist, novelist, and editor of a literary journal.

Diary of 1940–46: 578–79.

Doyen, Jean (1907–1982).

Paris-born pianist and recording artist who studied at the Paris Conservatory, made his professional debut in 1925, enjoyed an international career, and became a Conservatory piano teacher in 1940. Also, a composer who published some of his compositions.

Letter of Oct. 22, 1938. Diary of 1940–46: 579.

Dramez, Dr (?–?).

Radiologist; father of Marthe Dramez.

Diary of 1940–46: 300, 419–20, 423.

Dramez, Marthe (?–?).

Qualified history teacher. Student of Demessieux.

Diary of 1940–46: 71, 129, 153, 185, 201, 203, 350, 424, 462.

Dubois, Théodore (1837–1924).

Paris organist, choirmaster, and prolific composer who studied at the Paris Conservatory, became a teacher there, and was director of the Conservatory, 1896–1905. Held various church posts, including choirmaster at the Madeleine, 1869–1877, and became Saint-Saëns' successor as organist of the Madeleine, 1877–1896.

Diary of 1940–46: 20.

Dufourcq, Norbert (1904–1990).

Paris organist, historian, and author. Studied organ with Marchal, 1920–1940; organist of St-Merry, 1923–90. Taught music history at the Paris Conservatory. One of the founders of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue. In 1939 appointed artistic director for the organ of the Palais de Chaillot. For more than forty years, sat on the French Minister of Culture's

Commission on Historic Organs.

Diary of 1940–46: 40, 56, 232, 233–34, 239, 333–34, 372, 380, 429, 487, 489–90, 526.

Dupré, Jeanne, née Pascouau (1883–1978).

Born in Biarritz. Studied at the Sorbonne and at Oxford, qualifying as a teacher of English at the baccalaureate level. Upon her marriage to Marcel Dupré, gave up her teaching career to concentrate on assisting her husband in his career.

Diary of 1940–46: 3 and passim.

Dupré, Marguerite (1909–1963).

Daughter of Marcel and Jeanne Dupré. Married Emmanuel Tollet in 1948. French pianist who was a student of Lazare-Lévy at the Paris Conservatory and Nicolai Medtner in Paris. Debuted performing Dupré's *Ballade* for piano and organ on the occasion of the inauguration of the organ of the Théâtre Pigalle in Paris, 1932. Performed in major cities in France (including with orchestra), London, Brussels, and Zürich, and with her father throughout North America.

Diary of 1940–46: 3 and passim.

Durand, Auguste (1830–1909).

Harmonium player, organist (studied at the Paris Conservatory), and composer of choral, vocal solo, and piano pieces, as well as pieces for harmonium and harmonium with piano. Founder in 1869, with six others, of the music publishing firm that would become Durand & Cie.

Diary of 1940–46: 392.

Duruflé, Maurice (1902–1986).

Celebrated French organist, recording artist, and composer. Studied at the Maîtrise St-Evode of Rouen, then in Paris with Tournemire and Vierne, and at the Paris Conservatory with Gigout. Prizes won include the composition prize of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue. Titular organist of St-Étienne-du-Mont, 1929–1975 (with Marie-Madeleine Duruflé-Chevalier from 1946). Served as “member rapporteur” on the French Minister of Culture's Commission on Historic Organs. A Conservatory harmony instructor, he also substituted for Dupré as instructor of the organ class.

Diary of 1940–46: 7, 21–22, 31, 39, 42, 45, 55–56, 58, 75, 512, 523.

E

Etlin, Henri (1886–1951).

Concert pianist and teacher. A fellow student of Dupré in the Paris Conservatory class of Diémer and, c. 1930, the artist of a small portrait of Dupré in India ink.

Diary of 1940–46: 266.

F

Falcinelli, Nina (?–?).

Mother of Rolande Falcinelli.

Diary of 1940–46: 406, 412, 464, 466, 522, 526.

Falcinelli, Rolande (born Rolande Ginabat) (1920–2006).

Paris-born pianist, composer, international concert organist, and teacher. First studied organ with Gaston Litaize. At the Paris Conservatory, studied piano with Philipp, organ with Dupré (First Prize, 1942), and composition with Busser, in which class she was a fellow student of Demessieux. Awarded second Second Prize in the Rome competition of 1942. Titular organist at Sacré-Cœur from 1946. Would succeed Dupré as instructor of the Conservatory organ and improvisation class in 1955.

Diary of 1940–46: 12, 46–47, 121–122, 130–33, 134–35, 194, 218, 225, 286, 327, 378, 411–413, 414, 442, 466, 522, 542, 545, 546.

Flavigny, Bernard (b. 1931)

At the time of the diary of 1940–1946, a gifted teenage pianist whom Demessieux first met through Magda Tagliaferro. At age 15 won his Conservatory First Prize in piano, prelude to other prizes and to an international concert, recording, and teaching career.

Diary of 1940–46: 262, 522.

Fleury, André (1903–1995).

Paris organist and composer. Studied organ with Marchal and Vierne, then at the Paris Conservatory with Gigout and Dupré. Studied composition with Paul Vidal and Vincent d'Indy. Titular organist of St-Augustin, 1930–1948, and organ

instructor at the École normale de music, 1941–1948.

Diary of 1940–46: 32, 39, 42, 55, 110.

Fleury, Gaëtan (?–?).

Father of André Fleury. Studied composition with Vincent d'Indy and Paul Vidal.

Diary of 1940–46: 51, 110.

Fontino, Maria (1913–1996).

Distinguished Romanian pianist and teacher. After graduating from the Bucharest Conservatory in 1929, studied with Edwin Fischer in Berlin, then with Santiago Riera at the Paris Conservatory.

Letter of Jan. 21, 1934.

Funk, Heinrich (1904–1978).

Swiss organist and conductor who studied at the Zürich Conservatory, then privately with Dupré in Paris. Principal organ instructor at the Zürich Conservatory from 1942, organist of the Fraumünster in Zürich from 1943, and conductor of the orchestra and choir of the Zürich Tonhalle.

Diary of 1940–46: 569, 572.

G

Gallois-Montbrun, Raymond (1918–1994).

French violinist and composer who won First Prize in the Rome competition of 1944. Would become director of the Versailles Conservatory, 1957–1962 and of the Paris Conservatory, 1962–1983.

Letter of Jul. 2, 1939. Diary of 1940–46: 47, 437.

Gallon, Jean (1878–1959).

Paris choirmaster and composer who studied at the Paris Conservatory. Instructor of a Conservatory harmony class, 1919–1949, in which Demessieux participated, 1936–1937. Choirmaster of St-Philippe-du-Roule from 1903 and at the Paris opera, 1909–1914. Older brother of Noël Gallon.

Diary of 1940–46: 8, 19, 20, 22–26, 30, 35–38, 40, 42, 44, 45, 51, 62, 70, 75, 86, 102, 121, 122, 137, 149–50, 164, 197–99, 227, 296, 343, 360, 365, 383, 386–90, 417–18, 421, 424, 435, 519, 523.

Gallon, Noël (1891–1966).

Paris composer of stage and orchestral works. Studied harmony at the Paris Conservatory with his brother Jean Gallon. Instructor of a Paris Conservatory class in counterpoint and fugue from 1926.

Letters of Oct. 20, 1935; Jul. 19, 1938; Sept. 24, 1938; Oct. 15, 1938; Nov. 5, 1939. Diary of 1934–38: 25, 30.

Gaubert, Philippe (1879–1941).

Paris flutist, conductor, and composer of stage, orchestral, and chamber music. Taught flute and then orchestral conducting at the Paris Conservatory. From 1931, director of the Paris Opera.

Diary of 1940–46: 11, 52–53.

Gavoty, Bernard (1908–1981).

Paris music critic, writer on music, musical biographer, and organist. From 1945, music critic for *Figaro* under the pseudonym “Clarendon.” Lectured frequently at concerts of Jeunesses Musicales de France. Studied organ with Dupré both privately and in the Paris Conservatory class, and in 1942 was appointed titular organist of St-Louis-des-Invalides.

Diary of 1940–46: 173, 334, 379b, 391, 398–403, 404, 421, 449, 485, 512, 514, 544.

Gentil, Jules (1898–1985).

Paris pianist and teacher. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with Santiago Riera, then with Lazare-Lévy. Taught at the Schola Cantorum and (from the 1920s until 1985) at the École normale de musique. Taught a preparatory class at the Conservatory from 1941 and an advanced class, 1947–1969.

Letter of Feb. 21, 1934.

Geyer, Stefi (1888–1956).

Hungarian-born violinist for whom Bartók wrote violin concertos. Married Swiss composer Walter Schulthess and moved to Zürich where she gave concerts, founded the Collegium Musicum Zürich, and taught at the Zürich Conservatory, 1934–1953.

Diary of 1940–46: 569.

Giesecking, Walter (1895–1956).

German pianist born in France of German parents. Made extensive tours of Europe and the U.S.

Diary of 1940–46: 139, 185, 209, 525.

Gigout, Eugène (1844–1925).

Paris organist and composer of organ music. Organ student of Clément Loret at the École Niedermeyer. Premiered Franck's *Choral* No. 3. Succeeded Guilmant as organ teacher at the Paris Conservatory, 1911–1925. Titular of St-Augustine from 1863 to his death.

Diary of 1940–46: 121.

Gilles, Joseph (1903–1942).

Paris organist and composer who earned a First Prize in Dupré's Conservatory class in 1929. Organist of St-Pierre-de-Chaillot. Killed in action in 1942.

Letter of Nov. 5, 1939.

Giraud-Latarse, M^{me} (fl. 1920).

Paris piano instructor. Studied with Paris Conservatory preparatory class instructor Émilie Réty, likely in the 1880s. Served as assistant to Lazare-Lévy and to Alfred Cortot. Her students included Lélia Gousseau and Canadian pianist-composer André Mathieu.

Letter of Jun. 23, 1933.

Girod, Marie-Louise (1915–2014).

French organist. Student of Henriette Puig-Roget and, at the Paris Conservatory, of Dupré. Titular organist of the Protestant Temple de l'Oratoire du Louvre from 1941 (co-titular with Henriette Roget, 1941–1979). Would remain a life-long friend of Demessieux.

Diary of 1940–46: 40, 43, 47, 55, 232, 331.

Glazunov, Alexander (1865–1936).

St. Petersburg-born composer who studied with Rimsky-Korsakov, wrote in a romantic style (principally prior to 1906), and became director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Left Russia in 1928, appeared as a conductor in the U.S. in 1929 and, some time after 1929 (as an exile from post-Revolution Russia), moved to the Paris region, where he died. Mentor of Russian pianist Nicolai Medtner through whom Dupré met Glazunov. A frequent visitor to Meudon and the organ gallery of St-Sulpice.

Diary of 1940–46: 140, 302.

Gloton, Georges (1876–1955).

French organ builder who studied organ building in Dijon and in the workshop of Cavaillé-Coll. In 1919 took over the organ-building company of Louis Debierre. Trained Joseph Beuchet, Louis Debierre's grandson. In 1934, Gloton and his associate Le Mintier opened a Paris branch of what became Gloton-Debierre (the firm that built the organ of St-Esprit). The firm passed to Joseph Beuchet in 1947, becoming Beuchet-Debierre.

Diary of 1940–46: 239, 489.

Gogniat, Joseph (1881–1954).

In 1946, organist of St-Nicolas Cathedral, Fribourg, Switzerland.

Diary of 1940–46: 571.

Gonzalez, Victor (1877–1956) and **Fernand Gonzalez** (1904–1940).

Spanish-born organ builder and his son. Victor trained with Cavaillé-Coll in France. Then working in Germany (while a prisoner of war there), became familiar with principles of the organ reform movement that were meant to serve polyphony better than romantic-style organs did. In 1921 Victor established the French firm of organ builders Gonzalez, which his son Fernand joined in 1929. Influenced by Dufourcq and Marchal, built eclectic (neoclassic) organs aiming to serve both Baroque and Romantic organ music such as Franck. Also did restorations and rebuilds; these included restorations of eighteenth-century French organs that had been rebuilt by Cavaillé-Coll, and a rebuilding of the Cavaillé-Coll Palais du Trocadéro organ for the Palais de Chaillot as a neoclassic-style organ.

Diary of 1940–46: 487, 489–91.

Gousseau, Lélia (1909–1997).

Pianist and teacher who won a Paris Conservatory First Prize under Lazare-Lévy in 1925 and then served as his teaching assistant. As Lazare-Lévy's assistant, in 1932–1933 helped prepare Demessieux for entrance to a Conservatory piano class. In 1937, won a prize (twelfth) in the Warsaw Chopin Competition. Would have a career that extended to performances with major U.S. orchestras, and was instructor of a Conservatory piano class, 1961–1978.

Letters of Nov. 5, 1932; Dec. 1, 1932; Jan. 23, 1933; May 21, 1935; Oct. 20, 1935. Diary of 1934–38: 7. Diary of 1940–46: 579.

Grimaud, Yvette (1920–2012).

Fellow student of Demessieux at the Paris Conservatory. A pianist and composer, she would be noteworthy for performing the works of twentieth-century French composers such as André Jolivet and Pierre Boulez. Would later abandon her career as a pianist for research and teaching in ethnomusicology.

Diary of 1940–46: 4, 46, 55, 79, 128.

Grovez, Gabriel (1879–1944).

French pianist, conductor, composer, and opera producer. Educated at the Paris Conservatory and professor of chamber music there from 1939.

Diary of 1940–46: 46.

Grunenwald, Jean-Jacques (1911–1982).

Paris organist, composer, and teacher. Trained as an architect and at the Paris Conservatory. Organist of Christ Church (Anglican) in the Paris suburb Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1935–1939 and assistant organist to Dupré at St-Sulpice following his 1935 First Prize in organ. In the mid- 1950s to mid-1960s, would hold various posts as titular organist at St-Pierre-de-Montrouge in Paris and teacher of organ at the Schola Cantorum, then the Geneva Conservatory. Would serve as titular organist of St-Sulpice, 1973–1982, and enjoy a career as an international concert organist.

Letter of Jul. 2, 1939. Diary of 1940–46: 22, 91, 100–101, 104, 116, 130, 138, 185, 194, 199, 200–01, 234, 286, 289–91, 310–312, 316, 327, 391, 406, 437, 451, 461, 483, 522, 526, 552.

Guerner, Jean (?–?)

Engineer, music aficionado, and long-time friend of the Dupré family. Assisted Dupré professionally by editing the prefaces to Dupré's Bornemann editions and (being fluent in German) doing research for Dupré during frequent visits to Berlin.

Diary of 1940–46: 129–30, 202, 206, 279, 298, 395, 403, 404, 408, 425, 429, 443–44, 446, 448, 451, 453–58, 461–63, 469, 470, 477, 486, 495, 498, 512, 521, 537, 558, 562, 564.

Guilmant, Alexandre (1937–1911).

Paris organist, teacher, and composer who was a student of Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens and titular organist of La Trinité in Paris from 1871. Enjoyed tremendous success as a concert organist in France and overseas during the 1880s–1890s. A pioneering editor of French Baroque organ music, he was one of the founding teachers of the Schola Cantorum in Paris. Also taught a generation of French organists, including Dupré, while instructor of the Paris Conservatory organ class 1896–1911.

Diary of 1940–46: 52, 162, 449.

H

Hamilton, Valérie (1914–1995).

French pianist. Daughter of George Hamilton Briggs, an English architect working in Paris. Classmate of Demessieux in Santiago Riera's piano class and in Henri Busser's composition class.

Diary of 1934–38: 6. Diary of 1940–46: 157.

Hekking, Gérard (1879–1942).

Cello teacher at the Paris Conservatory and a teacher of cellist Pierre Fournier.

Diary of 1940–46: 79, 117.

Henriot, Nicole (1925–2001).

French pianist who won a First Prize in piano at age 13 in the class of Marguerite Long and third prize in the Gabriel Fauré International Piano Competition at age 14. During the war, worked in connection with the French Resistance. After the war, made an international career as a pianist.

Diary of 1940–46: 567.

Hernández, Mateo (1884–1949).

Famed Spanish-born sculptor who resided in France after 1909, and from 1928 in Meudon.

Diary of 1940–46: 337.

Hoehn, Paul (?–?).

Zürich organ enthusiast and part-time organist. Close friend of Dupré whom Dupré credited with developing his career in Switzerland, including help with travel arrangements and providing accommodation in Zürich. Dedicatée of Dupré's *Deuxième Symphonie* for organ (1929).

Diary of 1940–46: 486, 544–45, 569–76.

Hubeau, Jean (1917–1992).

Paris pianist, chamber musician, and composer who trained at the Paris Conservatory. Extremely active as a pianist and in having his compositions performed during the German Occupation.

Diary of 1940–46: 10.

Hüe, Georges (1858–1948).

Paris composer in a variety of genres, but known particularly for opera, choral works, and pieces for flute. Studied composition with Gounod and at the Paris Conservatory, where he was also an organ student of Franck. Succeeded Saint-Saëns as a member of the Académie des Beaux Arts in 1922.

Diary of 1940–46: 11, 19, 39, 46.

I

Ibert, Jacques (1890–1962).

French composer and administrator. Veteran of World War I and winner of a second First Prize in the Rome competition of 1919. Director of the Académie de France in Rome, 1937–1940 and 1946–1960. Elected to the Académie des Beaux Arts in 1956.

Diary of 1940–46: 36.

Inghelbrecht, Désiré Émile (1880–1965).

French violinist and conductor who trained at the Paris Conservatory. Music director of the Opéra-Comique, 1924–1925 and conductor of the Concerts Pasdeloup, 1938–1932. Upon request in 1934 formed the Orchestre national de la Radiodiffusion française. Lost his position with that orchestra when, during World War II, he refused to conduct a program devoted to German music.

Diary of 1940–46: 273, 274.

Isambart, Jules (?–?).

Organ builder and one of the last artisans of the house of Cavaillé-Coll. Started his own firm in 1936 restoring organs and building new instruments.

Diary of 1940–46: 56.

J

Jacob, Georges (1877–1951).

Paris organist and editor of editions of early organ music. Studied at the École Niedermeyer, then with Widor and Guilmant at the Paris Conservatory. Organist and choirmaster of St-Ferdinand-des-Terns, 1907–1951.

Diary of 1940–46: 292.

Jacquot, Pierre (1901–1981).

Organ builder. The organ company Jacquot & Fils was the 1918 successor of a distinguished tradition of builders dating from the nineteenth century. In 1936 Jaquot [sic] the father, and his son Pierre Jacquot, took René Lavergne as partner in their company, the name of which became Jacquot-Lavergne. Following the death of the father and Pierre's return from captivity as a prisoner of war, Pierre Jacquot was gradually forced out of the running of the company by Lavergne.

Diary of 1940–46: 489n.

Joachim, Irène (1913–2001).

Paris opera singer. Born in Germany, her mother was a French violinist and her father the son of the great violinist Joseph Joachim. After early violin and piano study in France, began singing lessons in 1933 and entered the Paris Conservatory, where she frequently made herself available to sing works by the Conservatory's composition students.

After a First Prize in the 1937 voice competition, she made recordings and played roles at the Opéra-Comique. During the German Occupation, she refused an invitation from the Nazi Propaganda Department in Paris to sing in Berlin and refused subsequent invitations to perform with German musicians in Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 46.

Johnson, Claude Goodman (1864–1926).

A wealthy, globe-trotting businessman and English patron of Dupré. His patronage began in 1919 when he commissioned written versions (published as *Fifteen Pieces*, Op. 18) of Dupré's improvisations that Johnson had heard at Vespers at Notre-Dame in Paris on Assumption Day. He also arranged for Dupré to perform them in alternation with a choir at a gala concert at Royal Albert Hall in 1920. Dupré and Johnson henceforth corresponded and made many return visits across the Channel to each other.

Diary of 1940–46: 459.

Jouvet-Magron, Dominique (fl. 1930s).

Paris artist who is best known for her etchings. Friend and Meudon neighbour of Dupré.

Diary of 1940–46: 60–63, 555–55.

K

Kempff, Wilhelm (1895–1991).

Great German pianist and one of the twentieth century's principal exponents of the German musical tradition. Toured widely, including many visits to Japan. The first to record the sonatas of Schubert, he recorded the complete Beethoven sonatas twice. His teaching including masterclasses in Beethoven interpretation.

Diary of 1940–46: 207, 209.

Kiesgen, Charles (?–?).

Paris-based artists representative (impresario). Head of Kiesgen International Concert Bureau, he began representing Dupré in Paris and Europe shortly after Dupré's 1920 Bach series of concerts at the Paris Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 267, 271, 379b, 383, 509–10, 517, 520, 528, 535, 546, 547–48.

Kœchlin, Charles (1867–1950).

French composer, teacher, and writer on music. Studied at the Paris Conservatory and was greatly influenced by Fauré, whose biography he wrote. Undertook many advocacy activities, particularly on behalf of music and musicians. Unsuccessful in his application to teach counterpoint and fugue at the Paris Conservatory, he taught fugue and modal counterpoint at the Schola Cantorum, 1935–1939.

Diary of 1940–46: 46.

L

Laloy, Louis (1874–1944).

French musicologist, music critic, and writer who held teaching posts at the Sorbonne and the Paris Conservatory, and held the post of secretary-general of the Paris Opera. As well as writing on his contemporaries Ravel, Stravinsky, Satie, and Dukas, he wrote the first biography of Debussy and a book on Rameau.

Diary of 1940–46: 48.

Lambert, Guy (1906–1971).

French organist and musicologist. After work in Lyon as a journalist, writer, and church organist he moved to Paris in 1938 where he was co-supply organist to Léonce de Saint-Martin at Notre-Dame, and titular organist and choirmaster at St-Laurent, 1938–1971. Founder of the association Les Amis de l'Orgue de la Salle Pleyel, he produced and did commentary for organ recitals held at the Salle Pleyel.

Diary of 1940–46: 401, 465, 509, 513–14, 520, 536, 542, 544.

Landowski, Marcel (1915–1999).

French composer who beginning in 1935 trained at the Paris Conservatory where he composed his first pieces. He also studied orchestral conducting in Paris with Pierre Monteux. In the 1960s and 1970s he would pursue a career as an administrator.

Diary of 1940–46: 47.

Langlais, Jean (1907–1991).

Virtuoso French organist and prolific composer who was one of the most distinguished of a long line of blind French organists. Studied organ with Marchal at the National Institute for the Young Blind and at the Paris Conservatory with Dupré (First Prize, 1930). Winner of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue prize for excellence in performance and improvisation in 1931. Taught at the National Institute for the Young Blind. His church organ positions began with serving as supply organist to Marchal at St-Germain-des-Prés and climaxed with becoming titular organist of Ste-Clothilde in 1945, succeeding Ermenod Bonnal. Would enjoy an international career as a concert organist.

Diary of 1940–46: 45–46, 56, 91, 188, 483, 494, 522.

Lanquetuit, Marcel (1894–1985).

Rouen organist who became Dupré's first student when Dupré was 15 years old. Also studied at the Paris Conservatory with Gigout (First Prize, 1914). For a time, Dupré's substitute at St-Sulpice and as instructor of the Conservatory organ class. Organist of Rouen Cathedral from 1937. Taught organ at the Rouen Conservatory beginning 1946.

Diary of 1940–46: 50, 130.

Lavergne, René (1900–1975).

French organ builder who was employed in 1931 by Cavaillé-Coll-Converts to take charge of organs with electric action. In 1936 he joined Pierre Jacquot and Jacquot's father to form the company Jacquot-Lavergne, of which he took total control after World War II. An organ builder favoured by Dupré during the period of the diary of 1940–1946, he would be responsible for the 1956 renovations to the organ of Rouen Cathedral.

Diary of 1940–46: 369, 414, 429–33, 438, 465, 498, 496, 505, 532.

Lazare-Lévy (1882–1964).

French pianist who studied at the Paris Conservatory in the class of Diémer (First Prize, 1898) but went on to become an exponent of the new school of French piano playing. Was one of the piano coaches of Dupré and later of Marguerite Dupré, and had occasion to perform in a piano duo with Dupré. Adopted the hyphenated form of his name in the 1920s. First a temporary Conservatory piano instructor (1914–1916 and 1918–1923), in 1923 he succeeded to the class of Alfred Cortot. Was dismissed from the post in 1941 due to Vichy government anti-Semitism but hired back immediately upon the end of the Vichy government and German Occupation in 1944.

Diary of 1934–38: 3, 5, 6. Letters of Oct. 2, 1932; Jan. 1, Mar. 16, Mar. 22, and Jun. 23, 1933; Jan. 21, Feb. 21, and Nov. 24, 1934; May 21, 1935; May 29, 1936; Feb. 14, 1937; Jul. 2, 1939. Diary of 1940–46: 39, 139.

Le Boucher, Maurice (1882–1964).

Organist, composer, and educator, born in the Normandy region. At the Paris Conservatory studied composition with Fauré and won First Prize in the Rome Competition of 1907. Dupré premiered his Symphony in E for organ in Rouen in 1916. Director of the Montpellier Conservatory, 1920–1942.

Letters of Oct. 20, 1935 and Jul. 21, 1938. Diary of 1940–46: 65, 203, 324, 335, 483–84, 486, 521, 534, 537–38.

Leduc, Alphonse (1878–1951).

Grandson of the founder of a publishing company that moved to Paris in 1841 and became Éditions Alphonse Leduc. Publisher of some of Dupré's first organ works and many of his theoretical treatises.

Diary of 1940–46: 136, 285–86, 293, 296, 317.

Lemmens, Jacques-Nicolas (1823–1881).

Belgian organist, composer, and teacher. Studied at the Brussels Conservatory, then taught organ there. Introduced the playing of Bach's organ works to Paris in the 1850s and became known for the virtuosity of his pedal playing, his legato, and his use of finger substitution. Had his major influence on French organ playing through his student Widor in the 1890s.

Diary of 1940–46: 52.

Lenepveu, Charles (1840–1910).

French composer and teacher who studied composition at the Paris Conservatory in the class of Ambroise Thomas and eventually succeeded to Thomas's chair at the Académie des Beaux Arts. Had only minor success as a composer. Taught harmony at the Conservatory from 1880 and composition there from 1894. Expecting to be named director of the Conservatory in 1905, he lost the opportunity for having been involved in favoritism towards his own students in that

year's Rome competition.

Diary of 1940–46: 134.

Lifar, Serge (1905–1986).

French ballet dancer and choreographer born in Kiev and famous as one of the greatest male dancers of the twentieth century. After being noticed by Sergei Diaghilev, he made his debut with the Paris-based Ballets Russes in 1923. Upon Diaghilev's death, took over the directorship of the Paris Opéra Ballet; during his tenure (1930–1944 and 1947–1953) he reinvigorated the company and created many new ballets for it.

Diary of 1940–46: 54, 316.

Litaize, Gaston (1909–1991).

Among the most distinguished of blind French organists in the twentieth century and composer of organ, choral, piano, and chamber music. Studied organ with Adolphe Marty at the National Institute for the Young Blind and at the Paris Conservatory with Dupré (First Prize, 1931). Studied composition under Busser and achieved a second Second Prize in the 1938 Rome competition. Winner of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue 1935 prize for organ performance and improvisation and its 1936 composition prize. From 1938, teacher of piano, organ, and harmony at the National Institute for the Young Blind. Long-time member of the Minister of Culture's Commission on Historic Organs. Succeeded Busser as organist of St-Cloud in a Paris suburb in 1934, and Adolphe Marty as organist of St-François-Xavier in Paris in 1946.

Diary of 1940–46: 28, 42, 45, 55–56, 188, 217, 297–98, 393, 411–12, 416–17, 437, 494, 522.

Long, Marguerite (1874–1966).

Paris pianist and influential teacher, born in Nîmes in the south of France. As a performer, a proponent of the music of Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel. An exponent of the old style of French piano playing, she taught a women's preparatory class at the Paris Conservatory from 1906, then a mixed men and women advanced class, 1920–1940. During World War II taught and performed in Paris and France, often in collaboration with violinist Jacques Thibaud, with whom she opened a school in 1941.

Diary of 1940–46: 298.

Lubin, Germaine (1890–1979).

French operatic soprano who was a friend of Dupré and the German pianist Wilhelm Kempff. Studied at the Paris Conservatory beginning 1905, debuted at the Opéra-Comique in 1912, and sang with the Paris Opéra, 1914–1944. Sang in Salzburg, Covent Garden, Berlin, and Bayreuth, and became known for her Wagnerian roles. Active as a performer during the German Occupation, she was the brunt of false accusations of collaborative activities with the occupiers that would cause her to be imprisoned, interrogated, brought to trial, and sentenced. Eventually exonerated, she was still banned thenceforth from singing opera or teaching at a conservatory in France.

Diary of 1940–46: 53, 111.

M

Magre, Maurice (1877–1941).

Novelist, poet, and playwright known for having been a defender of the Occitan language and for using legends and the romantic epic for his historical novels.

Diary of 1940–46: 115.

Magron, Brigitte (?–?).

Daughter of the artist Dominique Juvet-Magron and a Meudon neighbour of the Duprés.

Diary of 555–556.

Maillard-Verger, Pierre (1910–1968).

French pianist and composer who studied composition at the Paris Conservatory in the class of Paul Dukas and won First Prize in the Rome competition of 1939. He would make his career as a pianist and recording artist, and a composer of music for piano, voice, films, and monologues.

Letter of Jul. 2, 1939.

Marchal, André (1894–1980).

Among the most distinguished of blind French organists in the twentieth century, a pioneer in performance practice

of early organ music and a founding member of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue. At the National Institute for the Young Blind, studied organ with Adolphe Marty and harmony with Albert Mahaut (both students of Franck). A member of Gigout's Paris Conservatory organ class (First Prize, 1913), he then began to teach organ at the Institute for the Young Blind. Titular organist of St-Germain-des-Prés, 1915–1945, then of St-Eustache. An internationally known concert organist. Musicologist Dufourcq delivered commentary for his many recitals in France. Like Dupré, an inaugural member of the French Minister of Culture's Commission on Historic Organs. With Dufourcq and organ builder Victor Gonzalez, promoted the neoclassic style of organ building. In 1939, appointed titular of the organ of the Palais de Chaillot in Paris.
Diary of 1940–46: 22, 33, 39, 40, 42, 45, 55, 188, 345, 402, 418, 429, 458, 488.

Marguillard, Jeanne (1916–1993).

Besançon organist. In Paris studied piano with Isidor Philipp and Yves Nat and organ privately with Vierne, Dupré, and Duruflé.

Diary of 1940–46: 59.

Marriott, Frederick L. (1901–1989).

American organist and carillonneur of Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago who, on more than one occasion, engaged Dupré to teach and perform either at the University or his church. Studied organ privately with Dupré in Paris, 1938–1939.

Diary of 1940–46: 365, 368, 369. Letter of Feb. 19, 1953.

Martinet, Jean-Louis (1912–2010).

French composer who studied at the Schola Cantorum with Charles Kœchlin and at the Paris Conservatory with Jean Roger-Ducasse. A member of Olivier Messiaen's analysis class at the Conservatory, he also studied twelve-tone serialism privately with René Leibowitz. From 1971 would teach at the Montreal Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 47.

Massis, Amable (1893–1980).

French viola player, composer, educator, and conductor. Born in Cambrai in northern France and trained at the Cambrai Conservatory and the Paris Conservatory, he was a close friend of Dupré. Founder of the Troyes Conservatory in 1920 for which, in the 1930s, he collaborated with Dupré in teaching a five-year program of music theory and composition with textbooks written by Dupré.

Diary of 1940–46: 105, 107, 187.

Matigot, ? (?–?).

Scientist and friend of Dupré.

Diary of 1940–46: 279, 286–88, 300.

Maurice, Paule (M^{me} Lantier) (1910–1967).

French composer and teacher. Studied in the Paris Conservatory classes of Jean Gallon, Noël Gallon, and Henri Busser (First Prize in composition, 1939). Served as Jean Gallon's teaching assistant for his harmony class, 1933–1947, and in 1942 was appointed instructor of sight-reading at the Conservatory. Would go on to teach harmonic analysis at the École normale de musique.

Letters of Jul. 19 and Oct. 15, 1938. Diary of 1940–46: 157, 158.

Mazellier, Jules (1879–1959).

French composer of operas, chamber music, songs, and piano pieces. Studied at the Paris Conservatory and won First Prize in the Rome competition of 1909.

Diary of 1940–46: 26, 40.

Messiaen, Olivier (1908–1992).

French organist who invented highly personal styles of pitch and rhythmic organization and became one of the major composers of the twentieth century. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with Paul Dukas and Dupré, among others (First Prize in organ, 1929). Titular organist of Ste-Trinité from 1931. A prisoner of war during World War II, soon

after his release in 1941 he was appointed instructor of a harmony class at the Conservatory where he influenced a new generation of composers through his teaching of analysis of twentieth-century music and his own compositions. Composed piano, orchestral, and chamber music, often using mystical and religious themes, and a distinctive body of organ music to which he frequently appended biblical quotations as epigraphs.

Diary of 1940–46: 40, 46, 50, 55, 56, 82, 172, 188, 188, 208–09, 210–12, 277, 312, 378, 429, 469, 491–491b, 503.

Medtner, Nicolai (1880–1951).

Russian-born pianist, composer, and teacher. Made a successful tour of European capitals in 1900–1902, of North America for the first time in 1924–1925. He moved to Paris in 1925 (where one of his students was Marguerite Dupré), and settled in England in 1935, where he died.

Diary of 1940–46: 66, 302, 368.

Menuhin, Yehudi (1916–1999).

American-born violinist and conductor who spent most of his career in Britain. Made his first appearance as a solo violinist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra at the age of 7. His first concerto recording was made in 1931. During World War II he performed for Allied soldiers. The Demessieux biography by Trieu-Colleney includes a photo of Demessieux at a piano keyboard with Menuhin holding his violin, taken in 1953 aboard a ship.

Diary of 1940–46: 525.

Merret, Canon (?–?).

Choirmaster at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 319, 438, 448–49.

Meunier, M^r & M^{me} (?–?).

Members of a fashionable social set who cultivated Demessieux's acquaintance; frequently appeared in organ galleries when she played for a service.

Diary of 1940–46: 171, 202, 203, 280, 288.

Mignan, Edouard (1884–1969).

Paris organist and composer who studied with Vierne then with Guilmant at the Paris Conservatory (Second Prize, 1904). Won Second Prize in the 1912 Rome competition. Titular of La Madeleine, 1935–1962 where he would be succeeded by Demessieux.

Diary of 1940–46: 42, 292.

Möller, M. P., Jr. (1902–1961).

Son of the founder in the 19th century of the prolific American organ-building firm Möller. After 1923 built organs with electro-pneumatic action. Prior to World War II Möller was considered a low-cost builder, but after the war the firm went into competition with Aeolian-Skinner for higher-end organs.

Diary of 1940–46: 468.

Monet, Edouard (?–?).

A second cousin of Claude Monet, Edouard Monet was devoted to Dupré and followed his career closely. A pilot during World War I, he subsequently made his career as a journalist.

Diary of 1940–46: 41, 55, 105, 107, 279, 443, 537, 541, 558, 562, 564.

de Montaigne, Michel (1533–1592).

French statesman, courtier, and essayist. Remembered for his *Essais* (the first use of this word as a literary genre), which were a major influence upon subsequent writers.

Diary of 1940–46: 139.

de la Motte, Father (?–?).

Parish priest of St-Esprit and Demessieux's confessor.

Letter of Aug. 1, 1938. Diary of 1934–38: 29. Diary of 1940–46: 76, 77–78, 81, 192–93, 274–75, 381, 391, 435, 439–41, 550–51.

N

Nat, Yves (1890–1956).

French pianist and composer who earned his First Prize in piano in 1907 in the Paris Conservatory class of Louis Diémer. Toured internationally then, in 1937, took a break from the concert stage to devote himself to teaching piano at the

Conservatory and composing. He would play his final concerts in 1953–1954, including the première in Paris of his own piano concerto.

Diary of 1940–46: 53, 111–12, 115, 273.

Neuville, Valentin (1863–1941).

French composer, organist, and teacher who studied organ with Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens in Mechelen, Belgium, then with Alphonse Maillly at the Brussels Conservatory. His operas were largely unacknowledged in France because they contained Wagnerisms. Filled titular organist positions in Lyon and taught organ at the Lyon Conservatory, 1915–1933.

Diary of 1940–46: 171.

O

d'Ollone, Max (1875–1959).

French composer of works for stage, orchestra, chamber ensemble, piano, and voice. Studied at the Paris Conservatory and won First Prize in the Rome Competition of 1897. Taught an instrumental ensemble class at the Conservatory. Considered a collaborator with the occupying Germans during World War II because of the positions he held in music administration for the Groupe Collaboration and the Vichy government.

Letter of Oct. 23, 1935. Diary of 1940–46: 46.

P

Panel, Ludovic (1887–1952).

Born in Rouen, he studied organ at the Maîtrise St-Evode, then at the Paris Conservatory with Guilmant and Gigout (First Prize, 1913). Titular organist of Sacré-Cœur, 1926–1946, then organist and choirmaster at the monastery St-Martin-des-Champs to 1952.

Diary of 1940–46: 40, 42, 55, 292.

Pascal, Claude (1921–2017).

Paris composer of all musical genres who studied at the Paris Conservatory and won second First Prize in the Rome competition of 1945. Would gain a Conservatory teaching post in 1952.

Diary of 1940–46: 47.

Pangnier, Jacqueline (1917–2007).

French pianist trained at the Paris Conservatory where she was a piano student of Victor Staub, winning First Prize in 1936. After the war would enjoy a career as both a solo and a duo pianist. From 1968 would teach sight-reading at the Conservatory. Also performed under the names Jacqueline Bonneau and Jacqueline Robin.

Letter of Jul. 2, 1939. Diary of 1940–46: 44, 46.

Paray, Paul (1886–1979).

French orchestral conductor, organist, and composer who studied in Rouen, was a childhood friend of Dupré, and with whom Dupré enjoyed a lifelong friendship. Conducted orchestras in Paris, Monte Carlo, and Marseille, and would become conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, 1952–1963. A soldier and prisoner of war during World War I, he spent World War II in Monaco.

Letter of Dec. 16, 1936. Diary of 1940–46: 9, 28.

Picaud, Eugène (1896–?).

Paris organ builder who, with Jean Perroux, became employed by the firm Beuchet-Debierre, headed by Joseph Beuchet and founded in 1947.

Diary of 1940–46: 496.

Plé-Caussade, Simone (1897–1986).

French pianist (student of Alfred Cortot at the Paris Conservatory), composer, and teacher. As a composer, most noted for her piano music for children. Succeeded her husband Georges Caussade as teacher of fugue at the Paris Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 128.

Pendleton, Edmund (1899–1987).

U.S.-born musician, conductor, and composer who settled in Paris. In the U.S. studied at Columbia University and in Paris studied composition with Paul Dukas and conducting with Charles Munch, Pierre Monteux, and Igor Markevitch.

Also making a living as a pianist and a saxophonist, he was organist and choirmaster of the American Cathedral in Paris (avenue George V) beginning 1934 (though he fled Paris during World War II, returning in 1945).

Diary of 1940–46: 436–37, 534.

Perroux, Jean (1874–?)

Paris organ technician who as an adolescent apprenticed in all aspects of organ building with craftsmen trained by Cavaillé-Coll and who became a master at voicing organs. According to his longtime acquaintance Dupré, organs whose creation or refurbishment he contributed to were (to 1953): in Paris, 63 church organs and 64 organs in concert halls, theatres, and private homes; elsewhere in France and North Africa, 117 organs; in foreign countries, 15. Was Dupré's choice to maintain the organ of St-Sulpice and the hall organ of his Meudon home. With Eugène Picaud, became employed by the firm Beuchet-Debierre, headed by Joseph Beuchet and founded in 1947.

Diary of 1940–46: 31, 56, 72–73, 90, 218, 277, 279, 300 314–15, 385, 395, 408, 410, 427, 429, 496.

Philip, Achille (1878–1959).

Organist and composer; at the Paris Conservatory he studied organ with Guilmant and composition with Lenepveu and won a first prize in counterpoint and fugue in 1904. Choir organist at the Madeleine in Paris, 1904–1913 and, subsequently, titular organist of various organs outside Paris.

Philipp, Isidor (1863–1958).

Eminent French pianist and teacher associated with the old French school, and piano instructor at the Paris Conservatory, 1903–1934.

Diary of 1940–46: 139.

Pierront, Noëlie (1899–1988).

Paris organist, teacher, and composer who studied organ with Vierne, Gigout, Dupré (First Prize, 1928), and Marchal. Taught for a time at the Schola Cantorum, where also she published editions of early organ music. A close friend of Jehan Alain who premiered many of his organ works and whose interpretations were greatly admired by him. Titular organist at St-Pierre-du-Gros-Caillo, 1929–1970.

Diary of 1940–46: 39, 42, 82, 383, 430.

Poirier-Denis, Geneviève (1912–?).

Organ student in Dupré's Conservatory class, 1935–1940, and a supply organist for Dupré at St-Sulpice.

Diary of 1940–46: 104.

Provost, Charles (1901–1953).

Music critic. Member and staunch supporter of the Association des Amis de l'Orgue who wrote record reviews for the association's journal *L'Orgue*. A friend of Norbert Dufourcq and regular Sunday visitor to his organ gallery at St-Merry.

Diary of 1940–46: 51, 55, 232, 234–35, 239, 372, 393, 487–91.

Q

R

Rabaud, Henri (1873–1949).

Paris conductor and composer of stage music in a conservative style. Trained at the Paris Conservatory, he won First Prize in the Rome competition of 1894. Director of the Paris Opera, 1914–1918, and elected to the Académie des Beaux Arts in 1918. In 1920 succeeded Fauré as director of the Paris Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 16.

Raffy, Denise (1916–c. 1971).

French organist who studied in Rouen with Marcel Lanquetuit and in Dupré's Conservatory class (First Prize, 1942). In 1943 was organist of Immaculate Conception in Elbeuf. After a short career as an organist, entered *la vie religieuse*.

Diary of 1940–46: 40, 43.

Raugel, Félix (1881–1975).

French choral conductor and musicologist who played an important role in the restoration of traditional sacred music and who as a historian specialized in the organ and its repertoire. Studied organ at the Schola Cantorum with Abel Decaux and served on the French Minister of Culture's Commission on Historic Organs. Among other choral positions,

was director of choirs for Radiodiffusion française, 1934–1947.

Diary of 1940–46: 579.

Reboulot, Antoine (1914–2002).

French organist who studied at the National Institute for the Young Blind with Marchal, then in Dupré's Conservatory class (First Prize, 1936). Titular organist of the cathedral St-Jean in Perpignan, 1937–1942. Taught at the National Institute for the Young Blind, 1941–1967, then held posts in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, and Montreal, becoming a Canadian citizen.

Diary of 1940–46: 55.

Régulier, Gaston (1896–1989).

Possible identity of the **Régnier** mentioned in the diary of 1940–1946. A blind pianist who taught at the National Institute for the Young Blind, 1917–1962, and was a friend of Marchal.

Diary of 1940–46: 372, 379, 379b–380, 451, 455, 457–58, 567.

Riera, Santiago (1867–1959).

Barcelona-born pianist and teacher who adopted French citizenship. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with Georges Mathias and Charles de Bériot and enjoyed a successful career as a concert pianist. Taught piano at the Conservatory, 1913–1937.

Diary of 1934–38: 3, 6, 7–9, 14, 15. Letters of Nov. 24, 1933 and Feb. 21, 1934. Diary of 1940–46: 62.

Robineau, Maurice (1873–1954).

Choir organist at St-Sulpice, 1930–1954. Studied at the École Neidermeyer then in the organ class of Guilmant at the Paris Conservatory, earning a Second Mention in the organ competition of 1900.

Diary of 1940–46: 130, 171, 201, 288, 449.

(Puig-) Roget, Henriette (1910–1992).

Paris organist, pianist, accompanist, and composer. Studied organ with Tournemire, then in Dupré's Conservatory class (First Prize, 1930). Awarded first Second Prize in the Rome Competition of 1933. Titular organist of the Protestant Temple de l'Oratoire du Louvre, 1934–1979 (co-titular with Marie-Louise Girod, 1941–1979) and of the Grand Synagogue of Paris, 1930–1951. Premiered many contemporary works as an accompanist and soloist. Composed for orchestra, piano, organ, and voice.

Diary of 1940–46: 430, 437, 440.

Rolland, Ernest (1913–?).

Organ student of Jean Langlais at the National Institute for the Young Blind, then of Dupré at the Paris Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 39, 55.

Rouët de Journal, Father Marie Joseph (?–?).

Historian and writer in French and Latin on Roman Catholic Church history.

Diary of 1940–46: 54.

Rousseau, Samuel (1853–1904).

French composer of music for choir, voice, organ, piano, and other instruments. Choirmaster at Ste-Clothilde when Franck was organist there. Father of the composer Marcel Samuel-Rousseau.

Diary of 1940–46: 71.

S

de Saint-Martin, Léonce, comte de Pailhas (1886–1954).

French organist and composer. Studied organ privately with Adolphe Marty and Vierne. Assistant organist to Vierne at Notre-Dame in Paris unofficially, 1923–1930, and officially, 1932–1937, before succeeding Vierne as titular organist, 1937–1954.

Diary of 1940–46: 54, 281–82, 351–52.

Samuel-Rousseau, Marcel (1882–1955).

French composer of operas, ballets, and other vocal and instrumental music in a conservative style. Won second First Prize in the Rome competition of 1905. Harmony instructor at the Paris Conservatory, 1919–1952. President of the Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique, 1935–1953. Director of the Paris Opera, 1941–1944.

Diary of 1940–46: 3, 11, 36.

Sancan, Pierre (1916–2008).

French pianist who studied at the Paris Conservatory: piano with Yves Nat (First Prize, 1937); composition with Henri Busser (First Prize in the Rome competition, 1943). Would become a piano instructor at the Paris Conservatory.

Letter of Jul. 2, 1939.

von Sauer, Emil (1862–1942).

German pianist and composer who studied piano with Arthur Rubinstein in Moscow and Liszt in Weimar. Toured Europe many times and the U.S. twice. Retired to Vienna in 1936.

Diary of 1940–46: 387, 455.

Sautereau, César (1913–?).

French composer who was a great-grandson of Guilmant. At the Paris Conservatory studied organ with Dupré and composition with Jean Roger-Ducasse. Very active as a composer during the Occupation. Wrote articles for the newsletter of Jeunesses Musicales de France.

Diary of 1940–46: 47.

Schwartz, Solange (1910–2000).

French dancer who studied at the Paris Opera Ballet School, joined the company in 1930, and became a star dancer.

Diary of 1940–46: 54.

Schmitt, Florent (1870–1958).

Prolific French composer of vocal and instrumental music, including a small number of organ compositions. Studied at the Paris Conservatory with Jules Massenet and Fauré. During the Occupation, said to have been notorious as a supporter of the Nazi presence.

Letter of Jul. 2, 1939. Diary of 1940–46: 140, 316, 558–59.

Segond, Pierre (1913–2000).

Swiss organist who studied with Dupré at the Conservatory (First Prize, 1939). In 1942 became organist of St-Pierre Cathedral in Geneva.

Diary of 1940–46: 43.

Skinner, Ernest M. (1866–1960)

U.S. organ builder of among the finest of American symphonic-style instruments between 1900 and 1940. He excelled as an inventor and mechanical engineer, using these skills to perfect pneumatic and electrical methods of transmitting commands of the organist's fingers to the pipes with less human effort than mechanical trackers require. Tonally, he was after subtlety and smoothness of sound. Struck by the sound of Willis instruments in England, he developed his own orchestrally imitative flue and reed voices, constantly striving to give the organ the beauty and gamut of color of an orchestra. His organs were known for their concave, radiating pedalboards before this became standard among American builders, and his consoles in their time were famous for their sophistication and ease of playing.

Diary of 1940–46: 436.

T

Tagliaferro, Magda (1893–1986).

Brazilian pianist who studied at the Paris Conservatory (First Prize, 1907), then studied with Alfred Cortot, and subsequently made a brilliant career on both sides of the Atlantic. Succeeded Santiago Riera as a Conservatory instructor in 1937 but only taught there for two academic years.

Letters of Jun. 22, 1937; Jul. 21–22, Aug. 11, Sept. 24, Oct. 11, 1938. Diary of 1934–38: 26. Diary of 1940–46: 62, 139, 262.

Tallon, M^r, M^{me}, & Lily (?–?).

Paris family of organ music aficionados. Daughter Lily (sometimes referred to as Louise) was a private organ student of Dupré, 1937–1946, and became titular organist of St-Dominique.

Diary of 1940–46: 279, 395, 443, 448, 454, 463, 478.

Thalben-Ball, George (1896–1987).

British organist known for his virtuosity and his flamboyant style of playing Baroque music using all the resources of the modern organ. Organist and choirmaster of London's Temple Church for over 30 years. Curator and organist at Royal

Albert Hall, 1934–1984. Frequently heard on radio. In 1948 became president of the Royal College of Organists.

Diary of 1940–46: 579–80.

Thibaud, Jacques (1880–1953).

French violinist, famous as a soloist and as part of a piano trio with Alfred Cortot and Pablo Casals. During the Occupation continued his career in Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 33.

Tortelier, Paul (1914–1990).

French cellist and composer who studied at the Paris Conservatory with Gérard Hekking. First cellist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1937–1940; of the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire (Paris), 1946–1947. Would later become instructor of cello at the Paris Conservatory.

Diary of 1940–46: 150.

Touche, Jean-Claude (1926–1944).

Paris organist, composer of organ music, and long-time friend of Demessieux. Son of Firmin Touche. Studied with André Fleury, Marcel Lanquetuit, and in Dupré's Conservatory class (First Prize, 1944). Titular of St-Louis-d'Antin, 1942–1944. While serving as a stretcher bearer during the final liberation of Paris, was fatally wounded by a German bullet.

Diary of 1940–46: 33, 286, 327, 334, 358–59.

Touche, M^r Firmin (1875–1957) & M^{me}.

Paris violinist (solo, chamber, and orchestral) who studied at the Paris Conservatory and later taught a violin class there. For a time, principal violinist of the Paris Opera and the Orchestre Colonne. As a chamber musician, founded the Touche Quartet and worked with Debussy, Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Gaubert, D'Indy, and Ravel.

Diary of 1940–46: 33, 334, 412.

Tournemire, Charles (1870–1939).

Paris organist, composer, and teacher who studied organ with Franck, then Widor, at the Paris Conservatory (First Prize, 1891). Studied composition with d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum. Succeeded Gabriel Pierné as titular of Franck's church, Ste-Clotilde, 1898–1939. His organ works, most notably the 51 sets of five liturgical pieces published as *L'Orgue mystique*, like his recorded improvisations, often incorporate Gregorian chant and are said to be reminiscent of the style of Debussy. Taught chamber music at the Conservatory, 1920–1935, and in 1925–1926 was a candidate in a contentious competition for organ instructor there.

Diary of 1940–46: 90.

Tournon, Paul (1881–1964).

French architect who designed the church of St-Esprit in the 12th arrondissement of Paris in a neo-Byzantine style. Elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1942.

Diary of 1940–46: 414b.

U

V

de Vallambrosa, Amédée Mancat Amat, comte (1880–1968).

Paris organist, choirmaster, and composer who studied organ with Franck student Henri Dallier and Vierne, and composition with Widor. Choirmaster and choir organist at St-Sulpice, 1921–1925, then at St-Eustache, 1928–1968, both while teaching at the Gregorian Institute in Paris.

Diary of 1940–46: 292.

Van Wyck, Wilfrid (1904–1983).

British music artists representative (impresario) and manager through his agency Wilfrid Van Wyck Ltd., based in London. Among the many artists (as well as ensembles) he represented were Arthur Rubenstein, Marcel Dupré, Robert Casadeus, and Kirsten Flagstad. His agency would manage Demessieux's concerts in the U.K.

Diary of 1940–46: 410, 567–68, 579–80. Diary of 1955 Recital Tour: 5, 6.

Vierne, Louis (1870–1937).

Distinguished Paris organist and prolific composer of organ music in a harmonically rich style. Studied organ at the National Institute for the Young Blind with Adolphe Marty, harmony privately with Franck, and organ at the Paris

Conservatory with Franck and Widor (First Prize, 1894), after which he became, for nineteen years, assistant instructor to the Conservatory organ class where his students included Dupré. He was substitute organist for Widor at St-Sulpice, 1892–1900, and titular organist at Notre-Dame from 1900 to his death. Taught at the Schola Cantorum from 1912, and as a concert organist toured internationally.

Diary of 1940–46: 55, 402, 488.

Vigot, Thérèse (1913–?).

Paris organist who studied organ privately with Dupré, 1937–1940, then in his Paris Conservatory organ class.

Diary of 1940–46: 183, 301.

Vuillermoz, Émile (1878–1960).

Writer and influential critic of music, literature, and film. Studied composition with Jules Massenet and Fauré at the Paris Conservatory, but gave up composing in favour of criticism.

Diary of 1940–46: 333.

W

Widor, Charles-Marie (1844–1937).

Legendary Paris composer, organist, and teacher. Composer in all genres, instrumental and vocal. Mentor to the Dupré. Organist of St-Sulpice, 1870–1933. Leading organ recitalist, particularly associated with builder Cavaillé-Coll. Succeeded Franck as instructor of the Paris Conservatory organ class, 1890–1896, then Théodore Dubois as instructor of a Conservatory composition class, 1896–1927. Named to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1910 and elected perpetual secretary of the Académie in 1914.

Diary of 1940–46: 1, 20, 52, 67, 74, 103, 114, 134, 187, 281 291–292, 336, 381, 394.

Willis & Sons, Henry.

British firm of organ builders founded in 1845 by “Father Willis” who in the Victorian era established the firm as the leading builder of well-made organs suited to large performance spaces and large churches. The firm, overseen by five generations of the Willis family, continued to make innovations to the symphonic style of organ even as the organ reform movement took root in Britain in the twentieth century.

Diary of 1940–46: 373, 459.

Y

Yon, Jean (?–?).

Private organ student of Dupré who grew up on a farm about 12 miles northwest of Rouen and whose family was close to the Dupré family. The name Yon occurs on Dupré’s list of private students for the academic year 1942–1943.

Diary of 1940–46: 240, 242–43, 246.

Ysaÿe, Eugène (1858–1931).

Celebrated Belgian violin virtuoso of international acclaim who was also a conductor, teacher, and composer. Franck’s Violin Sonata was dedicated to him, as was Debussy’s String Quartet, premiered by the Ysaÿe Quartet. Among the orchestras he conducted was the Cincinnati Symphony, 1918–1922.

Diary of 1940–46: 387, 453.

Yvain, Maurice (1891–1965).

Paris composer of light music noted for his songs, operettas, and film scores. His operettas were successful elsewhere in Europe and in the U.S.

Diary of 1940–46: 46.

Z

Ziegler, Rudolf (?–?).

Swiss organ builder who in 1949 built a neoclassic-style organ for Victoria Hall, Geneva on which Demessieux recorded music of Bach, Handel, Liszt, Franck, and Widor during the period 1952–1955.

Diary of 1940–46: 570.

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AM Archives municipales de Montpellier, 4S series: Demessieux:

4S1–4S9, 4S11 Journal intime.

4S13 Almanach et listes des œuvres jouées.

4S14–4S15 Correspondence.

4S20 Photographies personnelles

4S23 Sclolarité au Conservatoire national de Paris.

4S40 Documentation pour “Jeanne Demessieux, une vie de lutttes et de gloire.”

AN Archives nationales de France:

AJ37 500 Tableau de classes, 1936–37.

AJ37 501 Tableau de classes, 1937–38.

AJ37 502 Tableau de classes, 1938–39.

AJ37 503 Tableau de classes, 1939–40.

AJ37 504 Tableau de classes, 1940–41.

AJ37 521 3. Textes, listes ou notes de séance.

AJ37 535 Études Musicales, Exams semestriels, déc. 1935–mai 1941.

AJ37 537 Exams semestriels et concours pour les récompenses, listes des candidates, rapports des professeurs, 1926–1942.

AJ37 557 Concours pour les récompenses: procès-verbaux de séances, études musicales et dramatiques, 1938–1940.

AJ37 578 Comité Examen: Récompenses décernées aux concours annuels.

AJ40 1001 Les fonds allemands conservés aux Archives nationales. Groupe culture/théâtre de la Propaganda-Abteilung: rapports d'activité, 1940–1944.

AP Archives de Paris: D96Z-5 Album “L’Orgue.”

AS Archives SNCF Béziers:

Dossier de pension éteinte, microfiche, Extinction 1970 CP 7873249E.

BnF Bibliothèque national de France, Music Department:

Rés. Vm. dos. 56 (1–3), Notes de concours et examens d’orgue au Conservatoire national supérieur de musique: 1922–1956.

Rés. Vmc, ms. 15, Marcel Dupré private students of 1924–1946.

Vma 2803, Marcel Dupré concert programs.

GVT Goosen van Tuijl collection of Demessieux souvenirs in the author’s possession:

“Travail 1941 à 1946 – Minutage” (spiral-bound notebook).

“Presse II (212 à 486)” (Demessieux’s second scrapbook in a series of scrapbooks containing press cuttings).

“Projets enregistrements (Messiaen), Paris et Londres” (file of correspondence, 1967–1968, mainly with Wilfrid Van Wyck).

RHCL Regionaal Historisch Centrum Limburg:

22.012 Demessieux, J. 1. Diverse manuscripten.

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