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POULENC

CONCERTO FOR ORGAN, STRINGS,
AND TIMPANI IN G-MINOR

JONGEN

SYMPHONIE CONCERTANTE, OP. 81

BACRI

SYMPHONY NO. 6
FOR LARGE ORCHESTRA, OP. 60
KRIS CHAPMAN, CONDUCTOR

PAUL DUKAS FANFARE TO LA PÉRI

The University of Houston Moores School Symphony Orchestra

Franz Anton Krager, music director

Robert Bates, organist

Recorded in public concert 29 April 2017 in the
Church of St. John the Divine (Episcopal), Houston
Producer & Recording Engineer – John Gladney Proffitt

Blu-ray Mastering – Robert Witrak



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Poulenc - Jongen - Bacri - Krager



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Marie-Alphonse-Nicolas-Joseph Jongen (1873 – 1953) was a Belgian organist, composer, and music educator, considered by many to be the most important Belgian composer after César Franck. Jongen was born in Liège on 14 December 1873 and had early exposure to music through his father, a cabinet-maker who specialized in church furnishings but was also a keen amateur musician familiar with the contemporary French and Belgian musical scene. Jongen began to study the piano when he was seven years old and at this precocious early age began formal studies at the Conservatoire in Liège, where he remained for the next sixteen years. His first compositions date from age thirteen (1886), and in a short time he would have dozens of works to his credit.



Winning the Belgian Prix de Rome in 1897 gave him the opportunity to study in Italy and to travel, which included Berlin in 1898, where the concerts conducted by Arthur Nikisch and Felix Weingartner made a lasting impression, as did performances of Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, conducted by the composer. Jongen met Strauss, to whom he showed some of his orchestral and chamber music scores, and was delighted to be welcomed warmly and taken seriously – a singular moment of encouragement in his musical career. In addition to the influence of Strauss, other musical influences found in Jongen's oeuvre include César Franck, Louis Vierne, Claude Debussy, Gabriel Fauré, and Max Reger.

His monumental *Symphonie Concertante*, op. 81, of 1926 is considered to be among the most important, and imposing, works ever written for organ and orchestra. It was commissioned by Rodman Wanamaker for performance on the "world's largest pipe organ" in the Grand Court of his famous Philadelphia department store, Wanamaker's. Its first performance was intended for Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. However, Wanamaker's death in 1928 interrupted plans for the premiere, but it was finally performed with the Wanamaker Organ and the Philadelphia Orchestra for the first time decades later on 27 September 2008.

The *Symphonie Concertante* calls for a full-sized Romantic orchestra and an organist with the fortitude -- stamina -- to play its virtuoso organ part almost without pause for about 35 minutes: a challenge that is both musical and physical. As Jongen's colleague and friend, violinist Eugene Ysaÿe, described it, "...the role you assign to the King of Instruments and its abundant resources is not limited or restricted; it is clearly a second orchestra that enriches the first." Jongen deploys the full forces of the Romantic symphony orchestra against its co-equal partner, the pipe organ, creating a tour de force for the organist.

Jongen described the first movement (*Allegro, molto moderato*), writing, "Unlike many composers who have recourse to fugues at the end of their work, the present composer has introduced a fugue at the very beginning." The sonata-form movement is in effect a conversation between two equals, the organ and orchestra, with the fugally developed themes heard both separately and combined.

The second movement *Divertimento (Molto vivo)* opens with a sprightly solo organ, soon joined by the orchestra, with passages in 7/4 time that give a sense of a delightfully clumsy, off-center waltz. As the movement progresses, the many sections and colors of the orchestra are given their chance to shine.

For the third, and longest, movement (*Molto lento, misterioso*), Jongen wrote that he wanted the "organ and orchestra to realize the best union possible..." through an intricate interplay of instrumental and organ colors. The mood is that of a sultry summer day with sunrise, opening with limpid woodwind solos soon underpinned by shimmering,



cantata *Alexander Nevsky* by Sergei Prokofiev. Franz Anton Krager is Professor of Conducting and the Director of Orchestras for the University of Houston, as well as music director of the Moores School Symphony Orchestra and Chief Conductor for the Immanuel and Helen Olshan Texas Music Festival. American born and trained, Krager has made his artistic presence felt both at home and abroad with performance engagements in some of the world's most celebrated concert halls and musical centers. Since making his prize-winning European conducting debut in Copenhagen's Tivoli Koncertsalen in 1978, Krager has led orchestras in the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Moscow's State Kremlin Palace, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, Birmingham England's Adrian Boult Hall, Guangzhou China's Xinghai Music Center, the Sydney Opera House, The Hague's Congresgebouw, Kazan's State Philharmonic Hall in Russia, Guadalajara's Degollado Theater, and Sarasota's Van Wezel

Performing Arts Hall. His affiliations with leading music festivals include the Lancaster International Concert Series and Lichfield and Aberystwyth International Arts Festivals in the UK; the Festival Internacional de Santa Lucia in Mexico; and the Texas Music Festival and Interlochen National Music Camp in the US. Maestro Krager has led the Houston, Russian State, Traverse City Michigan and Florida West Coast symphonies, Romanian and Kazan State philharmonics, and orchestras in Berlin, London, Chicago, Paris, Singapore, Leipzig, Bratislava, Monterrey, Pordenone, Ingolstadt, Neuss, and Honolulu. In 2015, he was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the North Shore Chamber Arts Ensemble in Chicago. Krager is Founding Co-Artistic Director for the Virtuosi of Houston, Artist-in-Residence at The Kinkaid School and Evaluator/Clinician for the Orchestra America National Festival. He is also the Hourani Endowed Professor of Music, Director of Orchestras, and Chair of the Conducting Department at the University of Houston Moores School of Music, where he has brought the orchestra and orchestral conducting program into international prominence. His recordings include music of Thomas Fortmann, Percy Grainger, Michael Horvit, Peter Lieuwen, Robert Nelson, and Stephen Shewan for the *Divine Art (Métier)*, Albany, MSR Classics, and Newport Classic record labels. For HDTT (High Definition Tape Transfers) he has recorded surround-sound Blu-ray Discs, and digital downloads, of the Roman Trilogy of Respighi; the Resurrection Symphony of Mahler; and two works of Anton Bruckner, *Symphony 7* and the *Great Mass No. 3 in F-Minor*.



In 2017 **Robert Bates** retired as Professor of Organ at the University of Houston Moores School of Music, and this concert and recording is a tribute to his distinguished career. Before coming to the University of Houston, he served as University Organist at Stanford University, where he also received his Ph.D. in Musicology. His teachers of performance include Marie-Claire Alain, Robert Anderson, Daniel Roth, and Ray Ferguson. He is an internationally known recording artist and composer, and a specialist in early French and Spanish Organ Music, the history of music theory, and early tuning systems. He is

frequently invited to appear at national conferences sponsored by organizations such as the American Guild of Organists, the Organ Historical Society, the American Organ Academy, the American Musicological Society, the Westfield Center, and the American Institute of Organ Builders. In recent years, he has performed solo recitals at Stanford University, Cornell University, Arizona State University, the University of North Texas, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Michigan, Westminster Choir College, the New England Conservatory of Music, the Eastman School of Music, Duke University and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

He has recorded the complete organ works of Brahms (Pro Organo), Daquin (Loft Recordings) and Correa de Arauxo (Loft Recordings). His three-CD set, Viaticum (Loft Recordings), contains eight of his own compositions. His live performance for the National Convention of the American Guild of Organists in 2000 is now available on CD (ReZound Recordings). According to The Organ (UK), his most recent CD ("...in Dialogue, Vol. 1," Loft Recordings), is "an unusual and utterly brilliant release." His music is published by Wayne Leupold Editions (ECS Publishing, Boston), and he is represented by WindWerk Artists under the management of Penny Lorenz.

At the time of this performance, conductor Kris Chapman was in his third year at the UH Moores School of Music, pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree in orchestral conducting under Franz Krager. In addition to working with the Symphony, Opera, and Ballet Orchestras, Chapman is assistant conductor of the Moores Opera Center, working with Music Director Raymond Harvey. He currently serves as New Music Conductor and Program Director for the Zodiac Musical Festival and Academy, held each summer in the south of France. Past appointments include five years as Artistic Director of the Houston Heights Orchestra and two years as Artistic Director of the Kingwood (TX) Pops Orchestra.



Recorded in 24/192 High Resolution 5.0 Surround Sound. Producer & Engineer: John Gladney Proffitt
 Blu-ray Mastering: Robert Witrak. Recorded in public concert 29 April 2017 in the Episcopal Church of St. John the Divine, Houston Létourneau Pipe Organ, op. 97.

About the recording: The technique used to record the massive sound of pipe organ and symphony orchestra in the Church of St. John the Divine is simple and direct. Simple, in that just five Neumann condenser microphones are carefully placed to capture the total soundstage from the point of view of the conductor on the podium. Direct, in that each microphone feeds into a single channel of the high-resolution digital recorder with no mixing, equalization, or other manipulation of the pure sound coming from each Neumann mic. The result, when heard in five-channel surround sound reproduction (in a home theater system, for instance) places the listener on the podium with the conductor – in effect, "immersed" in the sound.

Notes by John Gladney Proffitt
 Member, Board of Directors, Bruckner Society of America



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24/192 High Resolution
 Stereo & Surround



closing movements are loud and quite violent, with substantial organ chords; and the following middle movements are much calmer, softer and transparent in instrumentation.

Nicolas Bacri (b. 1961) is a prolific French composer of seven symphonies, two operas, nine string quartets, cantatas, and violin concertos, among other musical works in diverse media. A graduate of the Paris Conservatory, he studied with such composers as Claude Ballif, Marius Constant, Serge Nigg, and Michel Philippot and worked for Radio France for four years as its head of chamber music. Symphony No. 6, op. 60, for large orchestra (1998) is in one movement, but has four sections played without pause: (1) Largo raccolto - allegro colerico; (2) Scherzo - vivace misterioso, Adagio, Vivace delicatissimo e poco a poco agitato; and (4) Allegro entusiastico.

Bacri has written about his work, "Conscientious of the fact that this work was going to be my last symphony written in the 20th century, I somewhat amused myself by sprinkling the score with a couple of metaphorical winks: on the one hand, to a last symphony written by a composer at the end of the 19th century, there is a very fleeting allusion to Antonin Dvorak's New World Symphony (1893); and on the other hand, there is a reference to the first symphony written by a composer in the middle of the 20th century, the Symphony No. 1 by Henri Dutilleul (1951), whose scherzo atmosphere is found - even somewhat heckled elsewhere! - in my own scherzo. In this way, if my wish to write twelve symphonies (six in the 20th and six in the 21st century) is realized, I will have connected the heart of my cycle - symbolically and at an equidistance, the motivation for the choice to include my two references - to two of the pinnacle works of the universal symphonic tradition."

This performance of Bacri's Symphony 6 by the MSSO was its American premiere. The 110+ member **Moore School Symphony Orchestra (MSSO)** is conducted by UH Director of Orchestras **Franz Anton Krager**. As the largest ensemble of the Moore School of Music

(MSM), the MSSO performs as a musical partner with many of the MSM's departments and studios, including opera, ballet, oratorio, and chamber orchestra. It is a leading ensemble in the area of new music as well as being an important repository for the standard orchestral literature. The high artistic level of its performances has been hailed by international artists and critics alike as a student ensemble of professional quality and versatility. Membership in the MSSO is open, by audition, to all graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Houston. During a typical year, the orchestra performs an average of twice monthly. Many MSSO graduates have gone on to become professional-level orchestral musicians, conductors, and leading music educators in the field.

The MSSO is heard in broadcasts over NPR and American Public Media, and has released compact discs on the Métier, Albany, and Newport Classic CD labels. For the HDTT (High Definition Tape Transfers) label, the MSSO has recorded high-resolution, multichannel Surround Sound Blu-ray discs, and digital downloads, of Symphony 7 and the Mass No. 3 in F-Minor of Anton Bruckner, and the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini of Sergei Rachmaninoff with pianist Kenneth Broberg. Forthcoming releases on HDTT include the



impressionistic string tremolos. The organ stops join the orchestra, painting a luminous calm, building slowly to a passionate climax with full organ and orchestral brass. The movement ends quietly.

The fourth movement Toccata (moto perpetuo, allegro moderato) shatters the tranquil ending of the slow movement with a brilliant outburst of energy in a virtuoso showpiece for both organist and orchestra. Written in the style of the great French organ toccatas of Widor and Vierne, the "perpetual motion" organ part presents the highest challenge to the organist's technique. Orchestra and organ present an increasingly intense series of brass-driven climaxes, which lead to the forceful C-major coda, fortissimo, with the full orchestra underpinned by the thunderous 32' low C pipe of the organ's Bombarde stop, bringing the Symphonie Concertante to a triumphant conclusion.



Francis Jean Marcel Poulenc (1899 - 1963) was a French composer, pianist, and one of the great melodists of the 20th Century. As a largely self-taught composer, he came under the influence of Eric Satie in the early 1920s and thereafter affiliated himself with the Paris-based group of like-minded composers, Les Six, who favored the neo-classic style while eschewing traditional 19th Century Romanticism. Following the unexpected death of a close friend in 1936, Poulenc rediscovered his Roman Catholic faith and saw his music evolve from its then Satie-esque high spirits and irreverence to take a more serious, spiritual depth. The first work emanating from this "change of heart" was the Litanies a la Vierge Noir, for female choir and organ, later orchestrated with strings and timpani - not coincidentally the same orchestration as the contemporary Organ Concerto. This enrichment of his style produced such other masterpieces as the opera Dialogue of the Carmelites (1957), and one of his most well-known works, the choral/orchestral Gloria (1959), all of which would be created alongside of his lighter, less serious compositions.

The Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Timpani in G minor was composed between 1934 and 1938. It is one of the most frequently performed concertos for organ and ensemble not written in the Baroque period. Commissioned by Princess Edmond de Polignac in 1934, the work features the pipe organ - originally to be de Polignac's house organ by the esteemed firm Cavaillé-Coll - accompanied by a chamber orchestra of strings and timpani. Poulenc's earlier harpsichord concerto and two-piano concerto were simple, even light-hearted pieces. But as the composer wrote, "The organ concerto...is not the amusing Poulenc of the concerto for two pianos, but more like a Poulenc en route for the cloister." Indeed, Poulenc referred to it as being on the fringe of his religious works. Poulenc had never actually composed for the organ prior to this, so he studied great baroque masterpieces for the instrument by J. S. Bach and Dietrich Buxtehude: the work's neo-baroque feel reflects this. The composer was well aware that his melding of sacred and secular influences in the score would make the Organ Concerto appropriate to either church or concert hall. Poulenc was also advised about the instrument's registration and other aspects by the organist Maurice Durufé, who gave the work its public premiere in 1939.

In performance, the Organ Concerto lasts about twenty minutes and consists of a single continuous movement with seven tempo marks. Respectively, these are: Andante; Allegro giocoso, subito andante moderato; Tempo allegro; Molto agitato; Très calme; Lent; Tempo de l'allegro initial; and Tempo d'introduction: Largo. Each section of the Concerto differs substantially in style, tone and texture from the others. For example, the opening and

