GUILMANT’S “CREDO”: A CATHOLIC PIPE ORGANIST’S THEOLOGY OF MUSIC AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the theology of music of Alexandre Guilmant, a French pipe organist active in Parisian sacred music from 1871-1911, and its impact on Catholic organ music in the first few decades of the twentieth century. As the titular organist of La Trinité church, the Professor of Organ at the Conservatoire de Paris, and the President of Paris’ Schola Cantorum (1894), Guilmant contributed to the music Parisians heard during Mass, the techniques organists used to illuminate parts of the rite, and the philosophies his students held regarding their profession as liturgical organists. How, then, did he influence to Catholic organ music? What is his liturgical legacy?

For this study, Guilmant’s theology of music is first framed within the musical reforms of the Roman Catholic Church, culminating in 1903 with the publication of Pius X’s motu proprio on sacred music, Tra Le Sollecituni. Then, issues specific to French organists are addressed: the restoration of chant completed by the monks of Solesmes, the unification of France under the Roman Rite, and the redefinition of the French organ by organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Next, primary sources from
Guilmant himself (including his compositions, letters, and journal articles) and from his contemporaries reveal the many aspects of Guilmant’s approach to his work as a liturgical organist. By putting these works in conversation with contemporaneous papal and popular opinions on liturgical music, this study arrives at the conclusion that Guilmant’s theology of music married traditional papal approaches to liturgical music with the possibilities of modern technologies, fresh approaches to composition, and an appreciation for the needs of a contemporary parish. Guilmant used all resources open to him to balance the historic with the modern in an attempt to create the most liturgically appropriate and engaging experience for the listener.

Finally, the reactions of his colleagues and the work of his students confirm that Guilmant’s approaches were appreciated and promulgated in the French Catholic and global Christian approaches to music. Whether through the chant-based compositions of his French student Marcel Dupré or the creation of America’s Guilmant Organ School, Guilmant continued to impact organists long after his death. His legacy exemplifies one method of response to significant Roman Catholic musical reform and invites liturgical musicians today to reconsider their approaches to their own roles in worship.

Note: In this thesis, I have translated many quotes from French primary sources and have provided the original French in a corresponding footnote. I have decided to include all citations in a “Notes” chapter in order to separate them from the original French text.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ....................................................................................................................... v

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................ 1

CHAPTER TWO: VATICAN OPINION ON NINETEENTH CENTURY CATHOLIC LITURGICAL MUSIC ............................................ 6
  _The Council of Trent and the Renaissance_ ......................................................................................... 6
  _The Baroque and Classic Eras_ ........................................................................................................... 7
  _The Romantic Era_ ............................................................................................................................ 8
  _Tral le sollecitudini and Beyond_ ...................................................................................................... 14

CHAPTER THREE: CATHOLIC MUSIC AND THE PIPE ORGAN IN FRANCE .................................... 19
  _Revolution and Rebirth_ .................................................................................................................. 19
  _Guilmant’s Career_ .......................................................................................................................... 23

CHAPTER FOUR: GUILMANT’S THEOLOGY OF MUSIC .......................................................... 28
  _Plainchant Accompaniment and Incorporation_ .......................................................................... 28
  _Selection of Liturgical Repertoire_ .................................................................................................. 35
  _Interpretation_ ................................................................................................................................. 41
  _Space_ ............................................................................................................................................ 45
  _Accessibility_ .................................................................................................................................... 46
  _Attitude_ ........................................................................................................................................... 48
CHAPTER FIVE: GUILMANT’S RECEPTION AND “DISCIPLES” .................. 51

RECEPTION .................................................................................................................. 51

STUDENTS .................................................................................................................... 53

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ....................... 58

CONCLUSIONS .............................................................................................................. 58

REFLECTIONS ............................................................................................................. 61

NOTES .............................................................................................................................. 63

CHAPTER ONE ............................................................................................................... 63

CHAPTER TWO ............................................................................................................... 64

CHAPTER THREE ......................................................................................................... 69

CHAPTER FOUR ............................................................................................................. 72

CHAPTER FIVE ............................................................................................................... 78

CHAPTER SIX ............................................................................................................... 81

WORKS CITED .............................................................................................................. 83
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

French Romantic organist Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911) does not hold a primary place in the current literature. Though “he was perhaps the best-known organist in the world”\(^1\) in the late nineteenth century, musicologists today focus more on his contemporaries. Murray’s *French Masters of the Organ*, for example, discusses Guilmant intermittently within full chapters dedicated to eight of his colleagues, including Camille Saint-Saëns, César Franck, and Charles-Marie Widor.\(^2\) *French Organ Music*, Archbold and Peterson’s collection of essays on French Romantic organists, includes only one essay dedicated to Guilmant while four focus on Franck.\(^3\) Further, *French Organ Music*’s introduction calls to attention at least eight scholarly publications that are part of a recent increase in musicological activity surrounding the French Romantic organist; none focus on Guilmant.\(^4\) This is not to say that greats such as Franck are not worthy of study, but merely to observe a gap in the French Romantic organ canon.

When he does appear in the literature, Guilmant is remembered primarily as a concert performer and teacher. Ochse dedicates a brief chapter to Guilmant’s accomplishments in France and abroad, including his appointment at the Conservatoire de Paris, his commitment to teaching his students about a variety of organ traditions, and his popular concert tours at home and abroad.\(^5\) In Smith’s article on Paris’ grand municipal organ at the Trocadéro Palace within *French Organ Music*, Guilmant
receives special attention for his work inaugurating the organ and the eight-year concert series he performed there,\(^6\) which introduced the public to many schools and styles of organ works.\(^7\) And although Murray does not have a chapter specifically on Guilmant, a glance at his index shows Guilmant mentioned in relation to other organists.\(^8\) Specifically, Murray draws attention to his deliberate stylistic choices,\(^9\) his communication of these choices to his students at the Conservatoire de Paris and elsewhere,\(^10\) and his interest in plainchant as expressed by his participation in the founding of the Schola Cantorum.\(^11\) With studies such as these, readers gain a cursory understanding of Guilmant’s place within the nineteenth century music community.

Another side of Guilmant remains unstudied in great depth: his philosophies and work as a liturgical organist. Little time is spent in the literature on his liturgical compositions or opinions;\(^a\) remarks from his contemporaries, however, indicate that this was a significant if not primary part of his identity. French music critic Pierre Lalo (1866-1943),\(^12\) for example, observed that, “Guilmant…was equal to the best [of his contemporaries] in terms of his profound understanding of the resources of his instrument and the ease with which he knew to use them; he was superior to them in terms of the quality of his taste and his interpretation, [and] in terms of his respect for the organ, the church, and music.”\(^b\)\(^\text{13}\) Similarly, Gregorian chant expert and Schola Archbold and Peterson.

\(^a\) The welcome exception being Zimmerman’s essay on Guilmant’s *L’Organiste liturgiste* in Archbold and Peterson.

\(^b\) “Guilmant…était égal aux meilleurs par sa connaissance profonde des ressources de son instrument et par l’habileté avec laquelle il en savait user; il leur était supérieur par la qualité de son goût
Cantorum professor Amédée Gastoué (1873-1943)\textsuperscript{14} noted that Guilmant “knew, incredibly, how to move sacred fire into the soul of others, without noise, without apparent effort…Guilmant appeared, above all, as the major \textit{liturgical} organist of his time.”\textsuperscript{c}\textsuperscript{15}

Further, Guilmant didn’t just practice these philosophies within his parish and his classroom; he shared them with the world. As a teacher of other organists throughout his career and a popular concert musician, Guilmant had the reputation and resources to pass on his ideas on liturgical music. According to Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), renowned French Romantic composer and director of the Paris Conservatoire,\textsuperscript{16} “Guilmant dedicated himself [to sharing liturgical and historic organ music] with his long trips to England, Russia, the United States, [and] Canada, where he had innumerable admirers…disciples, [and] continuators.\textsuperscript{d}\textsuperscript{17} Here Fauré hints at two ideas: first, that Guilmant possessed a seriousness of purpose, not only as a concert organist but also as a developer and advocate of new liturgical ideas; and second, that his ideas were shared and promoted by others. This becomes even more interesting when considered against Guilmant’s influence in America; his numerous concert tours

\text{et de son interprétation, par son respect de l’orgue, de l’église et de la musique,” my emphasis. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.}

\textsuperscript{c} “sut merveilleusement faire passer dans l’âme des autres, sans bruit, sans effort apparent, le feu sacré…Guimant apparait-il bien, avant tout, comme le grand organiste \textit{liturgique} de son temps.”

\textsuperscript{d} “A cette propagande, Guilmant se consacra aussi par de longs voyages en Angleterre, en Russie, aux Etats-Unis, au Canada, où il comptait d’innombrables admirateurs…des disciples, des continuateurs”

3
resulted in a popularization of the French Romantic style and even a school founded in his name.\textsuperscript{18}

Given all this, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of Guilmant’s philosophy and work on the organ within a liturgical context. What was Guilmant’s particular understanding of the organ’s place within Roman Catholic worship? How did his views fit into the broader liturgical and musical ideas of the day? What impact did Guilmant’s ideas have on his community, not only on his congregants in France but on his students and their work? By studying these questions, a more nuanced and detailed idea of Guilmant’s contributions to the liturgical community will emerge.

First, the study will survey Roman Catholic liturgical music since the Council of Trent, with a specific focus on its influences and its legislation. This survey will culminate with a detailed look at developments in Catholic liturgical music during the mid to late 1800s, ending with a discussion of \textit{Tra le sollecitudini} (1903), “the first papal document entirely devoted to church music ever to be addressed to the universal Church.”\textsuperscript{19} Then, the study will examine the French pipe organ traditions during the nineteenth century, with special attention to Guilmant’s place within this tradition. After this, it will turn to sources written by Guilmant himself to define the characteristics of his own liturgical ideas, followed by an examination of how those ideas were shared with his American audience. Finally, it will identify what, if any, difference these ideas made for the American Catholic community.
An essential concept for this study is that of a **theology of music**: the understanding of what makes music sacred, how music is used within worship, and how music deepens a connection to the Divine. Modern Catholic theologians have explored this concept in several ways. Kathleen Harmon studies the connection of singing to the Catholic liturgy in *The Mystery We Celebrate, the Song We Sing*\(^{20}\)

Similarly, Maeve Louise Heaney’s *Music As Theology* looks at the traditional liturgy to ask, “Why is [contemporary] music so important in people’s faith lives? Can it help mediate the Christian Word to us and if so, why and how?”\(^{21}\) These concepts of a theology of music provide the modern scholar with a lens through which Guilmant’s ideas, choices, and impact may be explored.

Upon Guilmant’s death, a contemporary remarked, “undoubtedly, musicologists will give us precious details of his career as an organist, as a professor, and as a virtuoso; they will assign him a place in the history of music.”\(^{22}\) As a student of music, culture, and religion, as well as an organist myself, I hope to tease out some of these “precious details” and to contribute them to an ongoing conversation on this extraordinary man’s liturgical and musical legacy. To begin, let us observe the developments in Catholic liturgical music since the Council of Trent.

\(^{20}\) “Les musicologues nous donneront sans doute de précieux détails sur sa carrière d’organiste, de professeur et de virtuose; ils lui assigneront une place dans l’histoire de la Musique.”
CHAPTER TWO

VATICAN OPINION ON NINETEENTH CENTURY
CATHOLIC LITURGICAL MUSIC

Alexandre Guilmant’s ideas on liturgical music and pipe organ practice must be understood within the framework of Catholic ideas on the same topics. To provide this context, this chapter will examine the major ideas on liturgical music in the Catholic Church from the mid-fourteenth to early twentieth centuries. It will consider official Vatican documents and notable musical movements across Catholic Europe, and will pay particular attention to liturgical music during Guilmant’s lifetime. Common themes of this timeframe set the stage for many of Guilmant’s recommendations for the church organist.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT AND THE RENAISSANCE

Prior to the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Gregorian chant set the standard for Catholic liturgical music. Its monophonic, modal presentation of the Mass’ Latin text suited the needs of the Mass perfectly.\(^1\) The Vatican used these characteristics to define its expectations for the use of music in the Mass. Tridentine degrees emphasized the importance of presenting the Latin chants of the Mass in an easily intelligible way, prioritizing the textual articulation over the beauty or complexity of the musical elements, and maintaining the strict ban on secular influences of sacred music.\(^2\) Pipe organ accompaniment was similar; it should be simple and minimalist, serving to enhance and not detract from the singers.\(^3\)
In the century following the Council of Trent, the Vatican’s emphasis on simple vocal music were challenged somewhat by composers such as Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestina. These Renaissance composers wove the chant together with two or more modal melodies to create unaccompanied polyphonic mass settings. After expressing initial reservations, the Vatican endorsed the music of Palestrina and other composers of Renaissance polyphony as another appropriate genre of sacred music, second only to plainchant. These musical expressions remained a papal favorite for the next four centuries.

**THE BAROQUE AND CLASSIC ERAS**

Despite the Vatican’s insistence on the primacy of chant and vocal polyphony, composers of the seventeenth and eighteen centuries continued to experiment with new styles and structures of sacred music. G. F. Handel’s *Vespers* (1710), for instance, “show[ed] an operatic musical style [and] also require[d] a trained chorus and professional soloists.” Handel employed an aesthetic far removed from the austerity of plainchant. Rather, he selected musical elements that would have been familiar to and readily available in Rome, the city for which he composed the Vespers. Similarly, Mozart and Haydn utilized the growing orchestra in addition to the human voice and the organ in their sacred compositions of the Classic era. Such use of modern approaches and regional resources resulted in a renewed tension between the sacred chant that inspired them and the Tridentine command to “keep out of…churches the kind of music in which a base and suggestive element is introduced.”

7
THE ROMANTIC ERA

New approaches to music furthered these tensions in the 1800s. Romanticism, a philosophical and artistic movement spanning the nineteenth century, spurred the creation of music that “vibrated between two poles of expression. At one end of its sphere were mysticism and sentimentality, and at the other violence and passion.” Composers infused their music with a greater range of expression, using the expanding orchestra’s new tones and textures to conjure specific images and portray intense emotions. They experimented with much louder, more powerful dynamics and with nontraditional chord progressions. Technological advancements provided composers with instruments of greater capacity for expression than ever before. The touch-sensitive piano, for instance, overtook the comparatively static harpsichord.

In addition to its aesthetic qualities, the Romantic era also changed the power dynamic within the music industry. The establishment of the concert hall, a venue accessible to anyone with the money and inclination to purchase a ticket, created a performance space outside of direct ecclesiastical or aristocratic control. As a result, composers no longer had to write exclusively for their patrons; their compositions could also be performed in a “neutral” space for a wider audience. Concert proceeds gave composers the possibility of making a living independently, furthering their distance from particular patrons. The concert hall also encouraged music appreciation among a wider public. By attending concerts and perusing program notes, audience members grew familiar with a variety of styles and individual performers.
In terms of sacred music, the tension between the sacred and secular realms increased. Some Romantic composers wrote for a sacred space but completely ignored the needs and resources of the average church. Giovanni Aldega, for example, wrote a setting of the psalm *Laudate Pueri Dominum* that took nearly an hour to perform and required two sets of vocalists (the second stepped in when the first, inevitably, reached a point of exhaustion).\(^{18}\) Others made use of sacred elements in their secular compositions. Giacamo Meyerbeer was the first composer to use both the orchestra and the pipe organ, an instrument associated nearly exclusively with the church, in an opera (*Robert le Diable*, 1831).\(^ {19}\) Similarly, the fifth movement of Hector Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* used the sacred chant *Dies Irae* to symbolize the death of a man at an opiate-induced Witches’ Sabbath.\(^ {20}\)

Church musicians also began to incorporate secular melodies into the Mass. Across Europe, church musicians used tunes from Mozart and Rossini operas for the Latin text of the Mass rather than the original plainchant melodies.\(^ {21}\) In his report on music in Roman churches for Pope Gregory XVI,\(^ {\ast}\) composer Gaspare Spontini found that music in the Mass frequently drew thematic material from the opera or theater and that little collaboration or cooperation occurred between church musicians and the Vatican.\(^ {22}\)

\(^{\ast}\) No specific date is given for Spontini’s report; however, it was prepared during Gregory XVI’s reign and so must have occurred between 1831 and 1846 (Hayburn 124, “Gregory XVI”).
Spontini urged that his colleagues take seriously the responsibility of illuminating the Latin text and furthering the seriousness of the Mass:

I do not mean to tell these organists and composers, cease to profane the Church by bringing into it the impure melodies of the theatre or the ballroom, and give us an insignificant, trivial, or monotonous music instead; no: select, invent (if you have ability) themes and melodies that will be beautiful, consoling, noble, grandiose, and full of religious feeling; let them be expressive of the sacred words…which are words of joy, of devotion, of recollection, or of compunction, respectively; and avoid an exaggerated style, sentimental signings, staccato surprises, and all those bizarre and ridiculous ornamentations and flourishes…with which our ears are so constantly tormented in church.\textsuperscript{23}

The Vatican responded to situations such as this by increasing legislation on appropriate liturgical music, especially for parishes within Italy. Papal decrees from 1835, 1842, and 1856 addressed increasing secularization of music within Italian churches. They continually emphasized that all works inspired by theatrical melodies, styles, and structures should be removed from the Mass; instead, the music of the Mass should reflect devotion, inspire reflection, and consist only of Gregorian chant and polyphonic vocal works in the style of Palestrina.\textsuperscript{24} The organ was permitted, especially as an accompaniment to the human voice, but should serve only to promote choral participation and should not use any secular melodies or brash registrations.\textsuperscript{25} These decrees met with little success; the continuation of similar decrees into the later half of the nineteenth century demonstrated the lack of compliance of Italian churches.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition to legislation from the Vatican, papal endorsement of two initiatives within the global Catholic community demonstrated the Church’s developing position on sacred music. First, the Cecilian Society “hoped to prune away distracting musical
excess and return Catholic liturgical music to the pure wellspring of musical devotion”
that existed in times past. Begun by a small group of Italians in 1830, the society gained the approval of Pope Pius VIII and began enforcing rules for a more tempered, traditional Catholic music. Cecilian ideas gradually gathered momentum across Europe; by the 1860s, societies were active in many European countries.

Though the groups’ rules for liturgical music varied from country to country, Cecilian Societies generally called for the primacy of Renaissance polyphony and Gregorian chant, the sparse use of musical instruments, and no secular music.

In the mid-1800s, Cecilian ideas and the accompanying papal attention cumulated in Germany. German musicologists published historic Masses in the periodical *Music Divina* beginning in 1853. Germany’s Society of St. Cecilia, founded in 1868 by Franz Witt, earned the blessing of Pope Pius IX in 1870 with the decree *Multim ad commovendos animos*. In this document, the pope explained the structure and purpose of the Society of St. Cecilia. He called its goal of eliminating the global increase in secular influences on sacred music “excellent and beneficial,” clearly supporting a society “whose one object is to lead back sacred song to simple ecclesiastical form.” While the Society’s influence among individual parishes was mixed (for example, by the 1890s, only a third of the Catholic parishes in the Styrian diocese of Austria had adopted the Society’s recommendations), its continued support by the Vatican demonstrated the society’s alignment with papal ideals of the time.
The Ratisbon chant edition of 1868 was the second German Catholic Church initiative endorsed by papal authority. Crafted by Cecilians Franz Xaver Haberl and Franz Witt, the edition drew from several sources to make a complete publication suitable for a nineteenth century Mass. Harberl and Witt began with a partial early seventeenth century Medicean Gradual (mistaken for a possession of Palestrina), then added chants from Masses of the same time. When no historic sources were available for newer rites, they composed new music in a similar style. This edition quickly surpassed over 25 other nineteenth century chant publications as having a stronger faithfulness to the original chant and a higher standard of research. It became very popular among German Catholics, both in Germany and in other nations, and was strongly recommended (though not required) to Catholic parishes worldwide.

The Vatican quickly adopted the Ratisbon edition as its official version of Gregorian chant, despite the edition’s elaborate ornamentation, steady rhythms, and modern rather than ancient style characteristic. The Vatican promised to maintain its endorsement through the beginning of the twentieth century. By supporting the Ratisbon chant edition and the Cecilian Society, the Vatican demonstrated its continued belief in the primacy of Gregorian chant, the importance of Renaissance polyphony, and the significance of a well-researched chant edition with limited updates throughout the nineteenth century.

\[b\] Listener Olivier Rousseau noted that, with the Ratisbon chants, “the concert hall had invaded the sanctuary and had given its character to the sacred ceremonies” (Pecklers 155-156).
The only chant edition to rival the Ratisbon was prepared by the monks of Solesmes. Reopened in 1833 by Dom Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875), Solesmes was the first monastery to resume its function after the secularization and political upheaval of the French Revolution. From these new beginnings, Solesmes became “the most significant force in Church music between [the Council of Trent and Vatican II].”

Dom Guéranger had a significant interest in the Catholic liturgy and Gregorian chant. He called the liturgy, “the ensemble of the symbols, chants, and acts by means of which the Church expresses and manifests her religion to God” and praised Gregorian chant for its deep connection to the words, action, and devotional spirit of the Mass.

Under Guéranger’s leadership, the monks of Solesmes strove to provide the most historically accurate versions of Gregorian chants. Using two newly discovered tenth century codices (the St. Gall Codex 359, discovered in 1830, and the Montpellier School of Medicine Codex 159, discovered in 1847), they peeled back the layers of alterations over the centuries to arrive at the most genuine expression possible of these chants. Their work had three purposes: to study different versions of Gregorian chant in order to find the original compositions; to share their findings with the Catholic Church at large in a published volume; and, to make sound recordings of the chants. They emphasized the primacy of text over melody by basing the chant rhythms on the syllabic values of the Latin text, and prioritized the preservation of the original composition over alterations intended to serve nineteenth century musical tastes.
Their first publications, *Les Mélodies grégoriennes d’après la tradition* (1880)⁴⁹ and *Liber Gradualis* (1883), reflected these ideals.⁵⁰

With these publications, a tension grew between the monks of Solesmes and the Vatican-endorsed German Ratisbon edition. Whereas the Ratisbon edition drew from a few sources, employed a more modern aesthetic, and prioritized melodic shape over syllabic value, the Solesmes edition analyzed a great number of sources, maintained the chants’ modal tonality, and based note value on the syllables of the Latin text.⁵¹ These differences, and their relation to the Vatican priorities of the time, motivated the monks of Solesmes to promote their chant edition over that of Ratisbon.⁵² They published copies of their research materials in a multivolume *Paleographie musicale* throughout the late decades of the 1800s, demonstrating their close adherence to the original Gregorian chant. However, despite Solesmes’ strong defense and the papal praise it earned, Ratisbon remained the favored chant edition through the end of the nineteenth century.⁵³

**TRA LE SOLLECITUDINI AND BEYOND**

Issued by Pope Pius X on November 22, 1903, *Tra le sollecitudini* (TLS) articulated musical reforms envisioned during the Pope’s previous positions in Mantua and Venice and maintained the ideals of both the Council of Trent and the Cecilian movement.⁵⁴ The *motu proprio* responded to “the abuse affecting sacred chant and

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⁵ For example, a “Pastoral Letter of His Eminence Cardinal Sarto, Patriarch of Venice,” printed in *La Tribune de Saint Gervais* in July 1895, explains the same ideas and rules that became the foundation of TLS.
music,” including the use of secular material and the lack of support for reform among a portion of church leadership, by setting forth precise rules on liturgical music so that “all vagueness may be eliminated.”

TLS states that sacred music exists to support the purpose of the liturgy, “which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.” To encourage the proper use of music within the Mass, TLS defines three characteristics present in all sacred music. First, music “must be holy;” it cannot demonstrate any secular influence, either in its composition or in its performance. For Pius X, this included the attitude of the composers and musicians in the church. Second, music “must be true art;” it had to be the result of serious work on the part of the composer or interpreter, and had to represent the best artistry that music could offer. Third, sacred music must be “universal.” TLS allowed Catholic communities to incorporate local styles into sacred compositions, but insisted that Vatican standards come before any other quality. In this way, “nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing [sacred music].”

In addition to these three characteristics, Pius X also reminded readers that music, as a support of the liturgy, was secondary to the Latin text of the rite. He explained that music served to illuminate the text, “without alteration or inversion of the words, without undue repetition, without breaking syllables, and always in a manner intelligible to the faithful who listen.” To do this, music had to take into account the meaning and structure of the text. It could not, for example, draw out the Sanctus so that it prevented the timely completion of the elevation. Similarly, the
music used for the five chants of the Ordinary\textsuperscript{d} should emphasize the unity of the Ordinary. Composers should style and structure to link the chants together musically, not to create five distinct works.\textsuperscript{56} By setting forth these examples, Pius X clarified not only the philosophical characteristics sacred music should embody, but also the practical purposes it served.

Pius X recognized Gregorian chant as the best use of music in the liturgy, not only for its ability to declaim text but also for its ability to promote congregants’ participation in the Mass. “Special efforts are to be made to restore the use of the Gregorian Chant (sic) by the people,” he wrote, “so that the faithful may again take a more active part in the ecclesiastical offices, as was the case in ancient times.”\textsuperscript{67} This “ground-breaking”\textsuperscript{68} focus on the participation of the congregation as a whole set TLS off from previous reform attempts.\textsuperscript{69} Given this, the closer a piece of music was to Gregorian chant, the holier and more liturgically appropriate it was.\textsuperscript{70}

This is not to say, however, that Pius X only supported Gregorian chant. He agreed with his predecessors that the compositions of Palestrina were excellent for church choirs, but did not limit choirs to the performance of Renaissance polyphony. Rather, he encouraged the use of “modern music”\textsuperscript{71} in churches, so long as the composers and performers were extremely careful not to incorporate secular influences into their work or their performance style.\textsuperscript{72} Additionally, “although the music proper

\textsuperscript{d} The Ordinary refers to the five “prayers that occur at every mass regardless of the feast day.” (Swain 120). They are the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei (Swain 120).
to the Church is purely vocal music;”

he allowed for the use of the pipe organ as an accompaniment to plainchant. He explained that the organ “should merely sustain and never oppress” vocal music; any preludes or interludes, therefore, must be brief and must adhere strictly to the same qualities present in sacred vocal music.

The Vatican worked hard to continue the work of TLS after its publication. At the instruction of Pius X, many dioceses founded commissions on sacred music to promote TLS at a local level. The Vatican centralized sacred music instruction by creating the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in 1910, supported by Pius X’s successors Benedict XV and Pius XI. Chant still reigned supreme, but its sources changed; following the expiration of the Vatican’s thirty-year endorsement of Ratisbon, Pius X recognized the superior scholarship of the monks of Solesmes by asking them to create the first official Editio Vaticana of chant. Since 1913, they have produced the Vatican’s official chant editions.

Divini Cultus Sanctitatem, issued by Pius XI in 1928, commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of TLS by reaffirming its ideals and expanding on the importance of the congregants’ active participation.

Nearly four hundred years of Catholic liturgical music reflected common themes. From the Council of Trent to TLS, Catholic music struggled with many tensions: the sacred/secular, the ancient/modern, and the vocal/instrumental. In the nineteenth century, the Vatican addressed these tensions first at a local level. It observed and criticized Italian churches, supported Cecilian Societies, and endorsed the Ratisbon chant edition over that of Solesmes. The Vatican’s support of chant and its disapproval of secular influences culminated in Pius X’s motu proprio. With TLS,
the universal Catholic Church gained a framework for discussing sacred music in a local, regional, and global context. TLS brought together musicians interested in developing Catholic music to seek music that was holy, quality, and universal.

As a Catholic liturgical musician, Guilmant participated in this tradition. At the same time, he faced questions particular to his instrument and his country within his work as a French organist. The next chapter will describe issues within the French organ community to complete the context for Guilmant’s ideas on sacred music.
CHAPTER THREE
CATHOLIC MUSIC AND THE PIPE ORGAN IN FRANCE

As secular style and Cecilian Societies fought for influence over Catholic liturgical music, the French Catholic community struggled to regain its previous strength. The political destabilization of 1789-1814 decreased the power of the Church significantly. Mid-century changes, however, paved the way for France to participate in Catholic liturgical music reform. This chapter will trace this regrowth and will explore Guilmant’s development within the world of the French Catholic organist.

REVOLUTION AND REBIRTH

In the decades leading up to Guilmant’s birth, French musical and ecclesiastical communities were just beginning to rebuild after the secularization and destruction of the French Revolution of 1789. Following the destruction of church property by Revolutionaries, including the conversion of many organ pipes to bullets, few French Classic organs were left in good repair. Those instruments whose pipes were still intact had fallen into disrepair; Felix Mendelssohn, for example, called the once-prestigious organ at Saint Sulpice “a full chorus of old women’s voices.” This damage, in addition to the deaths of the great French Classic organ builders (and, with them, the possibility of speedy restoration), caused a severe decline in the possibilities for a nineteenth century French organ tradition.

Similarly, organists struggled to find a suitably sacred repertoire. The typical French Catholic organist at this time was responsible for versets (short pieces played
“in alternation with portions of chants sung by the choir” and also for longer solo works during the Offertory, Elevation, and Postlude (or, Sortie). The secularization of the Revolution and the many changes in state leadership that followed resulted in organ music that ranged from liturgically inappropriate to artistically displeasing.

Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, Parisian organists continued the French Classic Era (1600-1800) practice of the omitting plainchant motifs and instead taking inspiration from dance rhythms and other stylistic elements of popular secular instrumental music. This is not to say that plainchant was never used as melodic material; indeed, a few parts of the Parisian Rite stipulated that the chant had to be used within the organ verset. On the whole, however, it was not surprising to hear alternatim material completely unrelated to the chant in structure or style. Visitors to French Masses at Notre-Dame de Paris in 1814, for example, recalled the “bad effect…produced by the lightness of the airs which were occasionally played on the organ.” Without functional instruments, supportive leadership, and a new generation of trained liturgical musicians, French liturgical organ music floundered.

The end of Napoleon’s reign in 1814 and renewal of the Bourbon monarchy in opened new possibilities for French sacred music. Upon their return to power, the Bourbons appointed Alexandre Choron, French composer and author of articles on Catholic sacred music, to lead the “task of reorganizing music in French cathedrals and in the royal chapel.” As a part of this work, Choron founded the Institution Royale de Musique Classique et Religieuse (circa 1817) in Paris. This school “sought to improve the caliber of church music in France and to emphasize its spiritual
To that end, Choron focused the school’s attention on Renaissance and Baroque vocal works, such as those of Palestrina and Bach, and produced semiweekly concerts of old and new sacred vocal compositions by serious classical composers for the public. By promoting Renaissance polyphony alongside the music of Haydn and Bach, Choron validated many serious music traditions as valid for worship.

Concurrent with Guilmant’s birth in Bologne-sur-mer in 1837, the French Romantic organ and its sacred repertoire received renewed attention. From 1834 to 1841, a young organ builder named Aristide Cavaillé-Coll constructed his first major organ at the Royal Church of Saint-Denis. He would go on to define the French Romantic organ style as Paris’ premier organ builder. At Saint-Denis, Cavaillé-Coll incorporated a number of technological and stylistic changes that would become characteristic of the French Romantic style. First, he incorporated the newly created Barker machine (a mechanism by which pneumatic action facilitated the mechanical action of the organ) to ease the strain on the organist’s fingers when many stops were coupled onto one manual. This technological advancement allowed for bigger, more complex registrations to be played easily in a legato style. A second mechanical change, the addition of Venetian swells surrounding certain stops, permitted the organist to change the organ’s volume but maintain the same tonal color simply by moving one control pedal.

Cavaillé-Coll also developed the organ’s sound using new stops; he increased the number of ranks on the Positiv, a secondary manual with previously few tonal options, enhanced the sounds possible on the pedalboard, and created stops that
simulated instruments of the Romantic orchestra. This change corresponded to the increased interest in theater, opera, and orchestral concerts in the Romantic period. Initially suspicious of Cavaillé-Coll’s untested abilities, the *Revue Musicale* was extremely impressed by his new instrument. Cavaillé-Coll went on to define the French Romantic style in both liturgical and secular settings for the rest of the nineteenth century.

As Cavaillé-Coll began to rebuild the instrument, attention to the question of sacred music also increased. A growing interest in a wide variety of musical genres, combined with expanding opportunities for music training and appreciation, sparked a renewal of liturgical organ music. The question, then, was the shape that this liturgical organ music would take. Some organists were convinced that organ versets should contain the chant that they replaced – an opinion grounded in the use of plainchant in organ versets of the 1300s-1500s. Organist Félix Danjou (1812-1866), for example, wrote about the uses of plainchant within liturgical organ music in the periodical *Revue de la musique religieuse populaire et classique* (1845 – 1849). Similarly, Alexandre Pierre Francois Boëly, an organist known for increasing the use and complexity of the pedal part in the French organ repertoire, took a special interest in the incorporation of plainchant into French organ compositions. Many of his compositions from the 1840s feature a plainchant melody in the soprano line with harmonic support beneath it reminiscent of Bach’s compositional style.

In 1853, Louis Alfred Niedermeyer (1802 – 1861) reopened Choron’s *Institute* as the *Ecole de Musique Religieuse et Classique*. Also known as the *Ecole*
Niedermeyer, this school served as a training ground for liturgical musicians. Here, students learned Niedermeyer’s particular philosophy on plainchant accompaniment. The accompaniment should place the full chant in the top voice and support it with chords in the chant’s mode. It should avoid all complex chord inversions and progressions. Later, Niedermeyer’s ideas would influence the use of plainchant in organ versets; at the time, his school kept the conversation of plainchant and instrumental accompaniment alive.

There is evidence that many organists, however, were not interested in incorporating plainchant material. César Franck (1822-1890), for example, wrote a single piece that incorporated plainchant, was unfamiliar with the Solesmes chant reform, and “was not at all interested in developing a style of liturgical organ music based on restored plainchant.” This disparity was furthered by the kinds of education a nineteenth century organist might receive. The top organists studied at the Conservatoire de Paris, the only school for aspiring organists before Niedermeyer’s reopening of Choron’s school, focused on producing first-rate concert organists and so gave liturgical training little attention. Liturgical training standards rose when Franck became the Conservatoire de Paris’ organ professor in 1872; however, his focus was not on plainchant. Apart from the Conservatoire de Paris, an aspiring church organist could apprentice with and subsequently succeed the local titular organist. This insular training prevented uniformity in training styles and theories among the French Catholic organ community.

**Guilmant’s Career**
Guilmant grew up in Bologne-sur-Mer during this evolution. He began substituting for his father, a local church organist, in his early teenage years and held his own organist position by the age of twenty – just a few years after the founding of the Niedermeyer School. Shortly thereafter, he attended a concert given by Belgian organist Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens and, at the encouragement of Cavaillé-Coll himself, accepted a place in Lemmens’ studio. This was a relatively new opportunity for organists of Guilmant’s generation; in the late nineteenth century, talented young organists began to travel to train with experts and then compete for available jobs. Under this style of training, Guilmant gained many of the skills, styles, and philosophies that would later contribute to his understanding of sacred music.

As a musician and teacher, Lemmens focused on “purity, elegance, and clarity” of technique. He was known as “the apotheosis of sovereign control,” avoiding the lavish style popular among Romantic organists and instead choosing a more restrained aesthetic. Lemmens also created a new method of fingering that made legato passages even smoother; without traveling to study with Lemmens, Guilmant may never have learned this approach. In terms of repertoire, Lemmens was particularly interested in the sacred and the historic. He wrote *Ecole d’orgue, basée sur le plain-chant romain* (1862) to fill a void in resources specific to Catholic organists, and published articles about his approach to organ playing in the *Nouveau Journal d’orgue à l’usage des organists du culte catholique*. Student Charles-Marie Widor and other contemporaries attributed nineteenth century knowledge of Bach’s style and compositions to Lemmens. He was by no means old-fashioned, however; Joseph
d’Ortigue remarked that, “Lemmens knew how, without relinquishing anything of what constitutes classical style, to wrap modern genius in ancient garb…wonderfully uniting severity and grace.”

After training with Lemmens, Guilmant went on to serve as the titular organist of La Trinité in Paris from 1871-1901. In this role, Guilmant provided solo organ music at appropriate moments in the Mass, including “the prelude, offertory, postlude” and smaller works “such as elevations and prayers” at both Sunday morning Mass and Sunday afternoon vespers. He shared responsibility for the music of the Mass with Theodore Salomé, La Trinité’s chancel organist, and Emile Bouichere, La Trinité’s choir director. As was customary in large Parisian churches, La Trinité possessed two organs: a large organ, located in a loft at the rear of the nave, and a secondary organ of smaller size, located in the chancel with the choir. This setup made it easier to accompany the choir as they led the musical portions of the Mass, since churches at that time did not possess the technology necessary to play a single organ from multiple consoles.

France was now ready to increase its participation in Catholic music field. Initiatives such as Solesmes chant reform, Cecilian Societies, music schools, and the spread of knowledge on music history in the concert hall contributed to an active conversation on Catholic music throughout Europe. Restored French churches now had the means to play a more active part in the Catholic community. Abbé Perruchot wrote that most late-nineteenth century French churches were equipped with either an organ or a harmonium (pump organ) – an “immense progress” from the earlier state of
affairs. However, these resources did not necessarily translate into improved liturgical music. Perruchot explained that many factors – popular taste and pressure to conform to it, lack of trained musicians, and lack of attention to detail – contributed to a continuation of banal and secularized church music.\(^{59}\)

An outcome of this work, and a culmination of French conversation on liturgical music, was the founding of the Schola Cantorum in Paris in 1894.\(^{60}\) This school came out of the work of Charles Bordes, a French musician who put on concerts of Renaissance polyphony in the church of St. Gervais in 1891-1892 with great success and also published the first *Anthologies des maîtres Religieux Primitifs* in 1892. Bordes, in collaboration with Guilmant and Vincent d’Indy, founded the Schola Cantorum to promote:

- The execution of plainchant according to the Gregorian tradition
- The placing of honor once again of Palestrina-style music
- The creation of modern religious music
- The improvement of the repertoire of organists\(^{61}\)

These intentions, stated on the first page of *La Tribune de Saint Gervais*, the Schola Cantorum’s monthly journal, differed from those of Cecilian Societies in two ways. First, the Schola Cantorum desired not only to reinvigorate chant and polyphony, but also to foster a genre of music suitable for the Mass and for modern taste and style. This difference is significant in a time when churches either adopted more traditional music or maintained secular inspiration, but did not mix the two. Second, the Schola Cantorum specifically mentioned the desire to develop and present a varied and appropriate set of works for organists to play during the Mass. At a time when both the
Vatican and many Cecilian Societies were wary of giving much power to organists and placed their music secondary to vocal works, the French were boldly addressing the power of the organist as a liturgical musician in his own right. As President of the Schola Cantorum, Guilmant was instrumental in developing this new sound and in empowering young liturgical organists.

Outside his leadership role, Guilmant also had the opportunity to teach amateur organists in a more formal setting. Whereas he had previously given lessons in his home on an organ built by his father and in a rented studio close to La Trinité, he now taught an advanced class on liturgical organ performance to 7-11 students one day each week at the Schola Cantorum. In 1896, he replaced Franck as professor of organ at the Conservatoire de Paris, where he taught organ students two days each week until his death. Until his death in 1911, he shared the skills he developed as a liturgical and concert organist with the next generation.

Growing up within the evolving liturgical, musical, and technological fields of the French Romantic era, Guilmant was uniquely positioned to contribute to the development of a new French liturgical organ genre. His exposure to many schools of organ composition, his awareness of changing ideas in the French Catholic community on plainchant, and his participation in the pivotal Schola Cantorum set him up to create and share new ideas on liturgical music with his contemporaries. What these contributions were, and their reception by the larger community, will be revealed in a thorough exploration of Guilmant’s theology of music.
CHAPTER FOUR
GUILMANT’S THEOLOGY OF MUSIC

Having studied nineteenth century beliefs and practices regarding Catholic liturgical music and Guilmant’s work therein, Guilmant’s theology of liturgical organ may now be examined. This theology, or his particular understanding of the ways in which organ music furthered Catholic worship, fueled his actions as a professional liturgical organist and played a significant role in the development of his legacy. A close analysis of his work as an organist, composer, teacher, and advocate of liturgical music reform will illuminate a theology of music that promulgated papal ideas on music and, simultaneously, encouraged liturgical organists to draw on resources outside of Vatican rule in order to create the most effective worship experience for the turn-of-the-century French Catholic listener.

PLAINCHANT ACCOMPANIMENT AND INCORPORATION

First, Guilmant’s theology included specific ideas on the relationship between the organ and plainchant. He believed, in accordance with sacred music legislations and Cecilia Societies, that plainchant held a primary role in worship. His instructions for plainchant accompaniment and his incorporation of plainchant into sacred instrumental works both demonstrate this belief.
Guilmant’s contemporaries considered him “an authority in the matter”\(^1\) of plainchant accompaniment. He built upon the teachings of the Niedermeyer School, practicing accompaniments that were “always dictated by good taste and an accurate impression of the true character that accompanied plainchant must have.”\(^2\) His views on this point may be understood through the practices he taught his students. Evidence suggests that Guilmant believed firmly in the primacy of the text and the vocalist/s over the organ. When he replaced Franck as Professor of Organ at the Conservatoire de Paris, he changed the plainchant accompaniment standards for organ students from a note-to-note accompaniment to a much freer, tone-driven accompaniment.\(^3\) By not playing each note of the chant in an accompaniment, organists placed the articulation of the text firmly in the hands of the singers and merely served to keep them on pitch. With this change, Guilmant encouraged his students to support, rather than overwhelm or lead, the choir. The choir, not the organ, was in charge.

Guilmant’s recommendations for plainchant accompaniment registration also point toward a focus on the primacy of vocals over the organ. In his article on plainchant accompaniment practices, the Abbé Antonin Lhoumeau\(^c\) remarked that Guilmant “does not stop teaching organists the dominance of accompaniment on the

\(^a\) “une autorité en la matière”

\(^b\) “sont toujours dictées par le bon goût et le sentiment juste du véritable caractère que doit avoir le plain chant accompagné”

\(^c\) Lhoumeau published a book on Gregorian chant and its harmonization (*De l’Harmonisation des mélodies grégoriennes et du plain-chant en général*) in Niort and Paris in 1884.
Reeds were particularly important to Guilmant, who had grown up in a country and culture where reed pipes in an order were “a necessity.” When asked about American organs, for example, he complimented the quality and technological advancements of their construction; his only criticism was that they did not have enough reeds for his taste.

Reed stops on an organ were particularly difficult to predict. Whereas late nineteenth century listeners remembered the reeds of La Trinité to be “very soft and sweet,” others noted that certain reed stops (such as serpents, ophicléides, and those mimicking brass instruments) on organs of poorer quality or lesser upkeep were glaringly loud and brash. “Nothing makes a church lectern more like a fairground orchestra than the aforementioned instruments,” stated a particularly strong critic, who advocated for the use of the violin and other string sounds produced by the more reliable flute pipes. Given Guilmant’s positive reputation in this area, however, it seems unlikely that he would advocate for the use of potentially harsh sounds as plainchant accompaniment. Why, then, would he recommend that these temperamental stops be used for this purpose?

Music journalist Fannie Edgar Thomas offers a possible explanation. She explains that, “the reeds…are a combination of oboe and clarinet stops, producing a particular resonance, similar to that of the throat.” Indeed, reed stops work in the

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d “ne cesse d’enseigner aux organistes la prédominance des fonds sur les anches”

e “Rien ne rapproche autant un lutrin d’église d’un orchestre forain que lesdits instruments”
same way that the human throat does; as air moves through a pipe’s opening and vibrates a metal reed to produce a note,¹² so does breath vibrate the vocal chords to create speech.¹³ By advising that reeds be used to accompany plainchant, then, Guilmant was recommending the use of stops and sounds most closely related to that of the human voice. Continuing a tradition upheld by Catholics for centuries and cemented by Pius X, Guilmant believed in the primacy of the human voice and used his knowledge of the organ to acknowledge that primacy within instrumental music.

Alongside teachings on plainchant accompaniment, Guilmant believed strongly in the incorporation of plainchant into instrumental works. His letter written for the Congrès de Rodez, a conference on sacred music organized by the Schola Cantorum and led by Rodez’ cardinal Joseph-Christian-Ernest Bourret,¹⁴ explained Guilmant’s point of view on this subject. Guilmant wrote that the organ versets of the Mass Ordinary tended to be completely different from the corresponding plainchant versets. He disagreed with this practice; instead, he believed, organ versets should use thematic material from the chant they replaced. He compared this need for congruency to the use of a common theme or tone in a symphony; the lack of common material among Mass versets, for Guilmant, was just as inappropriate as the replacement of a Mozart symphony movement with that of a Beethoven work.¹⁵

To facilitate this thematic incorporation, Guilmant recommended taking inspiration from the German Baroque – a subject in which he was a leading expert.¹⁶ “German organists have composed pieces based on choral tunes, forming a particularly
rich body of organ literature\textsuperscript{f} he said. “Why won’t we do the same with our Catholic melodies?\textsuperscript{g} This passage shows the many facets of Guilmant’s ideas on plainchant incorporation. As Bach would build an organ chorale around a hymn melody, so Guilmant encouraged his peers to build an organ verset around the corresponding chant melody. Further, this passage reveals Guilmant’s support of multiple traditions; he cited a longstanding Protestant tradition as the model for thematic incorporation into organ music.\textsuperscript{18}

In 1904, Guilmant affirmed the importance of plainchant with a letter to the periodical \textit{Le Monde Musical} in reaction to the newly-announced \textit{Tra le sollecitudini} (TLS). He commended the legislation as “filled with a very high level of religious musical art”\textsuperscript{h} and was optimistic that “it will stop the musical abuses being committed in many churches.”\textsuperscript{i} According to Guilmant, one of the ways in which the document facilitated this correction was by promoting plainchant – specifically, the Solesmes edition. With this strong papal emphasis on plainchant, Guilmant believed, composers and interpreters of liturgical music would be more likely to take inspiration from it and create “music \textit{completely different} from that which is performed in theaters

\textsuperscript{f}“Les organistes allemands ont composé des morceaux basés sur le chant des chorals, formant une littérature d’orgue particulièrement-riche.”

\textsuperscript{g}“Que ne faisons-nous de même avec nos mélodies catholiques?”

\textsuperscript{h}“rempli d’un sentiment très élevé de l’art musical religieux”

\textsuperscript{i}“il fera cesser les abus musicaux qui se commettent dans beaucoup d’églises.”
and concerts. By stating his support of Pius X’s emphasis on plainchant first and foremost in his letter, Guilmant reaffirmed his own belief in plainchant’s primacy in liturgical music.

Guilmant promoted the incorporation of plainchant into the liturgical pipe organ repertoire not only in words but also in actions. In addition to his impressive output of concert pieces (such as his five organ sonatas) and generic liturgical works, at least 130 of his compositions were based on plainchant and thus intended for specific Masses within the liturgical year. His first collection to contain only compositions based on plainchant was *L’Organiste liturgiste* (Op. 65), a ten-volume set of sixty plainchant-based pieces composed during the 1860s-1890s. By using the up-and-coming Solesmes versions of chant, *L’Organiste liturgiste* helps to clarify the ways in which Guilmant desired to incorporate plainchant into the Mass of a modern parish.

Guilmant used *L’Organiste liturgiste* to experiment with a wide variety of applications of plainchant within the solo organ repertoire. The collection’s earliest pieces were mostly organ versets, a logical point of departure given the call-and-response nature of these pieces with a chanting choir. However, later works in the collection include offertories and other larger solo organ works for which the incorporation of plainchant would be less expected. By using chant in organ works...

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1 “une musique toute différente de celle qui s’exécute dans les théâtres et les concerts,” original emphasis
that did not replace singers, Guilmant reminded both organists and parishioners that their focus should remain on the sacred topics of the service and not on the music alone.

In these compositions, Guilmant drew on his knowledge of Roman Catholicism, musicology, and the modern organ to create what he believed to be the most effective incorporation of plainchant into the solo organ repertoire. Inspired by German Baroque works, he used text painting, cantus firmus chant treatment, and Baroque ornamentation to highlight the chant melody. The meter and tonality of these compositions reflected plainchant aesthetics; works from the 1880s and 1890s were especially modal and nonmetrical. These compositional choices reflected the Church’s support of plainchant and of a return to older styles, while also drawing from a varied musical texture than only Renaissance polyphony.

However, Guilmant did not abandon modern styles or ideas; in fact, he combined them with his interest in older schools to create innovative liturgical compositions. For example, a Communion in his *L’Organiste pratique* (a contemporary of *L’Organiste litugiste*) used a modern compositional structure but also incorporated plainchant in an effective and appropriate way. He also took innovative steps such as combining two chant melodies into one piece, a practice exemplified in his 1874 work *Sortie pour les fêtes de la Ste Vierge* which contained two different *Ave maris stella* chants. With such a decision, Guilmant exemplified a respect for the meaning of plainchant – he did not pick two chants that sounded nice together, but instead picked two chants used for the same liturgical purpose – while also showing a
daring to try new things. With these examples, Guilmant showed his colleagues how plainchant might be used successfully in an instrumental repertoire.

**SELECTION OF LITURGICAL REPERTOIRE**

Even with his commitment to the primacy of chant and vocals in liturgical music, Guilmant did not limit himself to these forms exclusively. Instead, plainchant was, for Guilmant, one of two appropriate sources of inspiration. The other source came from a wide variety of Renaissance and Baroque composers. In his 1904 reaction to TLS, Guilmant explained alongside his discussion of plainchant the importance of taking inspiration from past composers. To write “truly religious” music, Guilmant wrote, “inspiration must be taken from Gregorian chant and the works of the 16th and 17th century masters.” By putting these two sources of inspiration side by side, Guilmant affirmed that one source did not eclipse the other.

Following this affirmation, Guilmant offered two qualifications. First, he believed that composers should use the ideas of their predecessors as inspiration, “*without copying [them]*, of course.” Guilmant did not require contemporary liturgical organists to repeat the past. Instead, he hoped for the creation of a new, modern liturgical repertoire grounded in ancient.

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k “*il n’y a qu’à s’inspirer du chant grégorien et des œuvres des grands maîtres des XVIe et XVIIe siècles*”

1 “*sans le copier, bien entendu,*” original emphasis
Second, he warned that the time period of a composition did not make it instantly appropriate for worship. Many historic pieces based on liturgical material, such as Haydn’s Masses, did not bring the listener closer to God; instead, they distracted the listener from true worship with their musical grandeur.39 “[These works] appear to command God to give us peace,” Guilmant explained, “rather than asking Him humbly for it, as would be suitable.” In this way, Guilmant helped the reader to understand his conception of the difference between a work that facilitated worship and a work that took inspiration from liturgical sources but was ultimately more appropriate for a concert setting.42 By qualifying the work of Choron and others who had been more accepting of such historic but concert-oriented works, Guilmant helped the reader to understand how to approach selecting a historic work for inclusion in the Mass.

Unsurprisingly, Guilmant insisted that all music of secular origin or inspiration be banned from the church. He described the popular practice of incorporating opera music into the liturgy as a tune to support chant and as transcription for solo organ.43 Both of these uses, he wrote, were liturgically inappropriate – not only because of the material’s secular origin but also because transcripts of orchestral works made the organ sound like “a carnival organ.”

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m “On a plutôt l’air de sommer Dieu de nous donner la paix”

a “que de la lui demander humblement, comme il convient”

o “un orgue de foire”
the menuet from *L’Arlésienne* at a wedding!" he exclaimed. “I refused, as you would imagine, but the simple fact of asking for such a thing testifies to the bad taste that prevails in churches.” Guilmant’s letter demonstrates his belief that organists should not give in to the pressure of popular opinion; rather, they should steadfastly avoid all secular works.

In addition to these more general guidelines, Guilmant provided several more practical resources to assist his peers and his students in selecting appropriate historic works to play during the Mass. First, he incorporated teachable moments into his own work at La Trinité by explaining his piece selections to the small subset of students who joined him in the organ loft to turn pages and assist with registration changes. A student recalled that, during Mass, Guilmant “would call attention to the music before him and say: “See how beautifully it is written, contrary motion always, and the inner parts musical? Write your exercises in the same way.”” By taking time to explain to his students what elements led to his selection of a piece (here, the polyphonic texture supported by Rome, which he called “true music”), Guilmant clarified his expectations of liturgical instrumental pieces and helped his students to achieve that same ideal.

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9 *The Maid of Arles* (1872), a play by Daudet including music by George Bizet (“*L’Arlésienne*”).

9 “Croirez-vous qu’une fois on m’a demandé de faire entendre le menuet de l’*Arlésienne* dans un mariage!”

7 “J’ai refusé, comme vous le pensez bien, mais, le seul fait de demander de pareilles choses, témoigne du mauvais goût qui règne dans les églises.”
Outside the organ loft, Guilmant used his relationship with the Schola Cantorum to share his recommendations with a larger audience. His four articles, “Advice for Performance (organ pieces)” in *La Tribune de Saint Gervais* shared his opinions on the proper selection of works for the Mass. Each article introduced the reader to a liturgically appropriate organ work by providing its score and offering recommendations for its performance. The four articles offer comments on these five works:

- Verset pour l’Hymne *Exsultet coelum*, Jean Titelouze (1563-1633, French)\(^49\)
- Versets pour l’Hymne *Ave Maris Stella*, Girolamo Frescobaldi (@1587-late 1650s, Italian)\(^50\)
- Musette pour orgue, Jean-Francois Dandrieu (1684-1740, French)\(^51\)
- Trois Pièces Pour Orgue:\(^52\)
  - Trio en Passacaille, André Raison (published in 1688, French), and
  - Intonations du 6e mode, Sebastiano-Antonio Scherer (published in 1664)

Commonalities among these pieces hint at Guilmant’s approach to selecting historic compositions for liturgical use, and the ways that an organist might take inspiration from historic works. First, the collective works offer insight into Guilmant’s views on appropriate time period and geographic regions of organ music. Preceding and predicting his letter to *Le Monde Musical*, all of the selections were from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\(^53\)

\(^{5\text{“Conseils d’exécution (pièces pour orgue)”}}\)
Second, Guilmant’s selections were grounded in some aspect of the Mass. The Titelouze and the Frescobaldi used specific plainchants as motifs (Exsultet coelum and Ave Maris Stella, respectively). Guilmant explained to the reader that these pieces are thus appropriate for certain days of the liturgical year. The chant of the Titelouze, for example, corresponded to the Commun des Vierges and, in the Diocese of Paris, to the Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene. Likewise, the Frescobaldi’s chant matched Vespers and Saturday Offices of the Blessed Virgin in France. A third, the Scherer, is written using a modal harmonic structure shared by plainchant. These musical elements bind the selections, if not to the particular chants used in a given French parish during Guilmant’s time, to the aesthetics and musical traditions particular to the Catholic Church.

For other pieces, Guilmant found a connection to the Mass not through musical material but through the composer’s intent. In his commentary on Dandrieu’s Musette, he included a passage from the preface of Dandrieu’s Premier Livre de Pièces d’Orgue (from which the Musette was taken) that explained Dandrieu’s motivation for writing Premier Livre. Dandrieu wrote that these compositions should “sing God’s praises” and would be suitable music for those individuals “particularly dedicated to the service of the altars.” In each instance, Guilmant found a connection between the work and the Mass and articulated that connection to his readership.

\footnote{“chanter les louanges de Dieu”}

\footnote{“particulièrement consacrées au service des Autels”}
Finally, the articles suggest that Guilmant had the needs of particular moments of the Mass in mind when he selected a piece of music. With the Titelouze, for example, he provided instructions for altering its structure depending on when it would be played. He maintained the verset’s original purpose – to alternate with the choir – by marking the points of alternation with asterisks so that it could still be used in that way. However, he also supported the use of this piece as an Offertory or postlude; in those cases, the organist should play directly through the piece, disregarding the asterisks. For the Scherer, he described how the two pieces might be combined to result in one postlude. By presenting these pieces in this way, Guilmant demonstrated how a liturgical organist should consider the needs of the Mass and adapt his selections appropriately.

Apart from these articles, Guilmant shared these same ideas in his publication *Archives des Maîtres de l’Orgue des seizeième, dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles*. Published in a total of ten volumes over thirteen years, this set was made up of annotated selections from pipe organ literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In each volume, Guilmant includes an article of historical information, his updates to modern notation, and suggestions for liturgical use. In articles and publications, Guilmant demonstrated how historic literature could be used in contemporary Catholic worship.
**INTERPRETATION**

“To be expressive while remaining simple, [Guilmant] would say, that’s the real difficulty.” This statement, remembered by French musicologist Jean de la Laurencie (1861-1933) following Guilmant’s death, testifies that Guilmant was concerned not only with what pieces were performed during Mass, but also in what way they were performed. These include his registration selections, his phrasing choices, and articulation techniques.

As with repertoire, Guilmant’s letter for the Rodez conference can again be used as a starting point to examine his ideas on interpretation, particularly registration choices. Here, he recommended ways to use registration to tailor the style of organ playing to particular moments in the Mass. Usually the alternatim verses of the Mass ordinary were all played with the same loud registration choices (*grand jeu*). Guilmant suggested playing the two more solemn chants, the *Kyrie* and the *Agnus Dei*, on quieter stops. By doing this, the organist could employ the most appropriate sounds on the diverse French Romantic organ to represent in tonal color the choir’s pleas: “Lord, have mercy on us,” and “Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.”

Guilmant cautioned against excessive changes in registration choices. His hesitancy regarding this can be seen in his views on the organist’s participation in the Offertory, a portion of the rite during which the priest performs several rituals to

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* “Être expressif tout en restant simple, disait-il, voilà la vraie difficulté.”
prepare himself and the elements (bread and wine) for the moment of consecration. Historically, this intensely sacred moment had been accompanied by an ornate chant setting performed by a choir and soloist; following the Renaissance, the complex chant was often replaced by a vocal or instrumental work corresponding to modern taste. For Guilmant’s colleagues, the Offertory was the moment during the Mass when they could exercise the most freedom. They often accompanied this crucial rite with loud, complex works.

For Guilmant, this practice of drawing attention to oneself during the Offertory was a serious mistake. It would be much better to play “a prayer with the organ’s most beautiful flutes and a few solo stops.” In this way, the organist would further inspire devotion at this important moment in the Mass by providing an aural space of prayer for the listener. Guilmant didn’t mean to diminish the importance of a well-built organ or a practiced organist; he simply encouraged the organist to take full advantage of the organ’s abilities and tonal ranges only insofar as they served the composition being played and the needs of the listener at that moment in the Mass. “These sonorities,” he explained, “must not be the end but the means of affecting thought.” When selecting stops, Guilmant used tonal color to further worship, and not to draw attention to himself or his instrument.

w “une prière avec les jeux de fond qui sont les plus beaux de l’orgue, et quelques jeux de solo.”

x “il faut que ces sonorités…ne soient pas le but mais le moyen de colorer la pensée.”
Guilmant’s work with other organists demonstrated this balance between the desire to make the most of the French Romantic organ’s color palate and the conviction that this same palate should serve a liturgical function. Student Louis Vierne observed that “the greatest thing [Guilmant] did for us was to draw our attention to the study and rational use of the different timbres.” Outside of the classroom, Guilmant encouraged organists to choose registrations wisely in his publications. His published registration choices in *L’Organiste liturgiste* used the wide color palate of the French Romantic organ to even more effectively illustrate the meaning of the text. In all four “Advice for Performance” articles, Guilmant did not require particular stops but instead commented on the overall affect the organist should give to the piece. Three out of the four articles use the phrase “jeu lié” to describe the sound of the piece. The continued use of “lié” emphasizes how important that adjective is for Guilmant in liturgical music; indeed, it is what he “recommend[s] for organ music in general.” The fourth article, on Dandrieu, omitted “lié” itself but called for the same kind of registration; according to Guilmant, “it is important that the two stops be of equal force and of a delicate timbre, in accordonce with the feeling of the piece.” Guilmant consistently emphasized the importance of balanced sound in worship.

Guilmant also understood the importance of deliberate touch and phrasing when playing a piece of music. He was known for a particularly smooth style of playing that he had learned from Lemmens, and took care to pass these same skills along to his students. One of these students, the anonymous author of *The Organ’s*
recurring “Our Paris Letter,” described Guilmant’s approach to articulation. If a readers wished to incorporate Guilmant’s teachings into their practice, the author wrote, he must learn two crucial principles: “the necessity of phrasing in all the voices with both hands and feet, and the equal necessity of cultivating a good organ touch in full chords.” This emphasis on even and deliberate phrasing and articulation in all voices of the organ resembled Guilmant’s belief in the importance of balanced sound. By seeking balance in all aspects of interpretation, the organist enhanced rather than distracted from worship.

During lessons, Guilmant offered practical advice for how to achieve this effect. The author of “Our Paris Letter” explained that, for Guilmant, a good touch required two things: first, precision of attack and release of the chord; second, patience in letting the chord sound for the appropriate length of time. With this deliberate approach, the organist could successfully produce even the most complex polyphonic works. “In the polyphonic style,” Guilmant reminded, “each part forms a melody; you must apply yourself to make them each sing. The four parts must be begun and ended precisely together.” By instructing his students to “sing with your keyboard,” Guilmant demonstrated support for the primacy of vocals, even in the approach of the instrumentalist, in liturgical music.

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Y “Dans le style polyphonique, chaque partie formant une mélodie, on devra s’attacher à les faire chanter toutes. Les quatre parties devront être attaquées et quittées bien ensemble.”

Z “Chantez avec votre clavier.”
Additionally, Guilmant recommended that an organist achieve a smooth pedal line by “preserv[ing] as far as possible the natural position of the feet.”

He was not concerned with contemporary conventions such as keeping the toes turned slightly in and following particular rules for heel-to-toe sequencing; instead he taught students to keep the toes turned slightly out (as they would be naturally) and determine the heel-to-toe sequencing based on the needs of the passage and its relation to the abilities of one’s feet. With these principles, Guilmant reminded his students that strict adherence to conventional organ practice was not most important; rather, they should be most concerned with the final sound they achieved and use a combination of their skills and natural abilities to achieve that sound.

**SPACE**

Live sacred music’s impact on the listener is not only dependent on its composition, interpretation, and instrumentation. The performance space affects the congregation’s visual and aural experience. Guilmant’s ideas on sacred space, therefore, can also offer insight into his theology of music. He had a special fondness for Gothic architecture, especially Notre Dame de Paris and its “dim religious light.”

More broadly, he encouraged organists to have “no carpets and less drapery” in the organ loft. This would ensure minimal sound absorption and maximum resonance of music in the space.

In accordance with his Catholic faith, Guilmant also forbade his students from practicing on church organs so as not to disturb the space with their “experiments.” Instead, he held his lessons at a rented studio down the street from La Trinité. These
considerations demonstrate that Guilmant practiced a holistic approach to the instrumental music experience. As a properly articulated and sustained chord would successfully support singing or reflection, so a resonant space would surround the congregation with sound. Similarly, secular music or repeated mistakes could distract from devotion within a sacred space.

Guilmant’s understanding of the interaction of space and music was not lost on his contemporaries. Jean de Muris, a contributor to La Tribune de Saint Gervais, remarked that Guilmant “still believes in the line, in the union of architecture and sounds.” He noted Guilmant’s ability to “consider that the organ in the back of the church must bring together all of the lines, as does the rose window which sits atop it.” This understanding contributed Guilmant’s ability to help organists and organ builders avoid the secular pitfalls of the late nineteenth century: “the artificial, the awkward complexity, and the poorly understood virtuosity.”

ACCESSIBILITY

Guilmant was committed to balancing his musicological and technical expertise with the practical needs of an average parish. One way in which he did this was by understanding the skillset of the average organist. His L’Organiste liturgiste, for example, did not require the skill of a concert-level musician; a parish organist of

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aa “croit encore à la ligne, à l’union de l’architecture avec les sons”

bb “considère que l’orgue qui est au fond de l’église doit en résumer toutes les lignes, comme la rosacea elle-même qui le surmonte”

cc “l’artificiel, la complexité maladroite et la virtuosité mal comprise”
competent but not extraordinary talent could play these pieces successfully. He also suggested ways in which historic pieces could be updated to suit contemporary listeners and resources in his series of “Advice for Performance” articles. For the Titelouze, he provided several updates to make the piece more accessible to nineteenth century audiences and instruments. Since the piece was originally written for manuals only (the French organ school began to develop more robust pedal lines in the mid nineteenth century), Guilmant marked passages where the lowest voice should be played in the pedal so as to “reinforce the affect of the piece.” He suggested modern stops corresponding to Titelouze’s original registration, and encouraged the use of Cavaillé-Coll’s new swell mechanics to harness “all the power of the instrument” in an interpretation of this piece.

Guilmant treated the Frescobaldi in a very similar way, noting both appropriate French Romantic organ registration choices and pedal line updates. In the Dandrieu, he allowed for the use of the Clarinette stop (new to the nineteenth century organ) in place of the more historically appropriate Cromhorne. He also modified the Scherer to confirm to modern notation standards. With these updates, Guilmant affirmed that liturgical organ performance was not wed to historic performance practice or possible only after years of advanced study. Rather, liturgical music should be accessible to the

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"rehausse l’effect du morceau"
"toute la puissance de l’instrument"
listener and playable by the organist. To help achieve this, he used his knowledge of historic and contemporary practices to modernize works in an appropriate way.

**ATTITUDE**

Finally, statements from Guilmant and others suggest that this theology was not only expressed in his music and teachings, but also in his attitude. This idea is reflective of Pius X’s observation in TLS that the church musician must not only adhere to certain rules and principles, but must also be “of know piety and probity of life.” According to his contemporaries, Guilmant fulfilled this requirement completely. Former student Frederick B. Stiven called Guilmant, “our beloved master, admired as a musician, and revered as a friend.” At the Conservatoire de Paris, Fauré noticed that Guilmant “was an incomparable teacher, good, patient, with an infectious enthusiasm and an authority which came just as much from the prestige of his worthy personality as from his talent.” Fannie Edgar Thomas, observing Guilmant’s willingness to turn pages for a student during a performance, remembered, “he is always doing kind things like this for people, and he does them in such a wholesouled way that everybody is made big and generous by it.” Such memories testify to Guilmant’s impression on others; not only was he a talented musician, but an individual motivated by a greater good.

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* “il fut un maître incomparable, bon, patient, d’une communicative ardeur et d’une autorité d’autant plus grande qu’elle lui venait du prestige de sa personnalité si digne autant que de son talent.”
Remarks from Guilmant suggest that this attitude was motivated by spiritual beliefs. In a speech opening the Schola Cantorum’s 1898-1899 academic year, Guilmant explained that, “For me, as an organist, I have had for my entire life an artistic Credo…I never departed from it and I did not wait for the creation of the Schola Cantorum to proclaim it." The word choice of credo is significant; in the Catholic tradition, the Credo is one of the five parts of the Mass Ordinary, meaning that it occurs in each Mass regardless of the specific time in the liturgical year. The text of the Credo is a statement of faith; it articulates the identity of and relationship among the Trinity, the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection, and the authority of the Church. It is also the longest portion of the Ordinary, nearly twice the length of the Gloria. By choosing the word credo rather than more common words like viewpoint, philosophy, or even belief, Guilmant aligned his ideas on organ music and teaching with the theological and historical gravity of the Creed. For him, these were not just artistic ideas; these were the essential foundation to his identity as a liturgical organist, just as the Creed is the essential foundation to a Catholic’s faith identity.

Guilmant then defined his Credo as “the faith in truly religious and artistic art, based on the immortal works of the grand masters from all of time." He explained that he had taught according to his Credo at both the Conservatoire de Paris and

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8g “Pour ma part, en tant qu’organiste, j’ai eu ma vie entière un Credo artistique…je ne m’en suis jamais departi et je n’ai pas attendu la création de la Schola Cantorum pour le proclamer.”

hh “Ce Credo, c’est la foi dans l’art vraiment religieux et artistique, appuyé sur les œuvres immortelles des grands maîtres de tous les temps.”
through the Schola Cantorum,\textsuperscript{110} and that he aspired to this \textit{Credo} with others. As he and his colleagues shared their ideas on sacred music, “the more people will at the lectern, and the more beautiful the ceremony will be. My dream, and the dream of us all, is that the lectern will one day be universal, without forcing it of course.\textsuperscript{ii}\textsuperscript{111}"

With this statement, Guilmant expressed the seriousness with which he approached his work. His endorsement of Baroque organ works, his incorporation of plainchant into new compositions, and his style of interpretation are not merely his personal preferences or a professional decision to support the popular Catholic ideas of the time. Instead, these are all ways in which he seriously and deliberately expressed the relationship of music to God and to worship. He also affirmed his motivation to make liturgically appropriate organ music accessible to other organists and to the congregation. His work to update Baroque pieces, to educate others on historic literature, and to use the most appropriate parts of the French Romantic organ for Mass were all attempts to widen the musical liturgical community. Looking forward to the reception of his ideas and the work of his students, Guilmant successfully encouraged the deliberate participation of other liturgical musicians at the universal lectern.

\textsuperscript{ii} Original quote – “…et plus il y aura du monde au lutrin et plus la cérémonie sera belle. Mon rêve, notre rêve à tous, c’est que le lutrin soit universel un jour, sans l’imposer bien entendu.”
Upon Guilmant’s death, Auguste Sérieyx (a composition professor at the Schola Cantorum from 1910 to 1914)\(^1\) echoed the ideas expressed by Guilmant and his *Credo*. Sérieyx called him a “tireless and eloquent missionary, preaching for nearly twenty years, from his organ loft, respect and love for the old masters of the organ.”\(^2\) With this in mind, this chapter will close this study with an examination of Guilmant’s reception by the Catholic community and his continued contribution to the liturgical organ discipline through those whom Fauré termed his “disciples” – his students. In both of these areas, Guilmant and his ideas succeeded in impressing and impacting the French Catholic and global liturgical communities.

**Reception**

Members of the French Catholic music community praised Guilmant’s focus on liturgical repertoire and aesthetics. *L’Organiste liturgique* was hailed as “pius, liturgical, always musical, perfect in its inspiration and composition...fulfill[ing] all of the required conditions for compositions for the church organ.”\(^3\) Similarly, two volumes of his *Archives des Maîtres* received particular attention for their liturgical suitability. Volume I, comprised of organ versets based on plainchant by Titelouze,

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\(^1\) “inlassable et eloquen (sic) missioniare, prêchant depuis tantôt vingt ans, du haut de sa tribune, le respect et l’amour des vieux maîtres de l’orgue”

\(^2\) “Pieuse, liturgique, toujours musicale, parfaite dans l’inspiration et l’écriture…remplit toutes les conditions exigées des compositions pour l’orgue de l’église”
was praised for its ability to “satisfy…a desire often expressed by numerous organists to possess a liturgical repertoire sufficient for the variety of the offices.”\(^c\)\(^d\) Another volume, reviewed by Charles Bordes, was highly respected for its “carefully chosen registration and useful annotations.”\(^e\)\(^f\) With this volume and the work as a whole, Bordes says, “Guilmant made [these compositions] accessible to all.”\(^g\) His compositions, and many of the composers whom he endorsed for liturgical use, went on to be endorsed by Catholic groups such as the Society of St. Gregory of America.\(^h\)

With this continued encouragement, future liturgically-minded Catholic musicians could continue to benefit from his compositions and recommendations.

Similarly, Guilmant’s Catholic colleagues remarked on the effectiveness of his interpretation style. Amédée Gastoué remembered:

Guilmant did not seek, as so many of his colleagues did, to transport the style of the orchestra into the registration of the organ; if he was less dazzling in his compositions than Franck and Widor, he was also more liturgical. Above all, he saw the organ as the immediate assistant of the Mass, and tried hard to instill in his students the sentiment that must animate them.\(^i\)

For Gastoué, Guilmant’s emphasis on balance and restraint helped the congregation to focus on the Mass rather than the music in and of itself. Bordes

\(^c\) “satisfaire…à un désir souvent formulé par maints organistes, de posséder un répertoire liturgique, souffissant à la variété des offices,” emphasis original.

\(^d\) “registration très soignée [et] des annotations heureuses”

\(^e\) “a mis [ces compositions] à la portée de tous”

\(^f\) “Guilmant ne cherchait pas, comme tel autre de ses confrères, à transporter le style de l’orchestre dans le jeu de l’orgue; s’il fut moins brillant en ses compositions, que Franck et Widor, il fut plus liturgiste aussi. Il voyait avant tout dans l’orgue l’auxiliaire immédiat du culte, et s’efforçait d’inculquer à ses élèves le sentiment qui les devait animer.”
showed his agreement with Gastoué when mentioning Guilmant’s style in a book review. After reminding the reader that an appropriate selection of sacred music may be ruined by poor interpretation,\(^9\) he wrote:

\[
\text{We do not ask that you } \text{emphasize} \text{ everything, good God! It’s so good to forget oneself when listening and to go within oneself. This is why I so love to hear Guilmant interpret Bach on the organ…it’s simple, calm, expressive and often very fine, which is enough for me.}^{10}
\]

Bordes was interested primarily in the development of sacred vocal music.\(^{11}\)

Here, however, he acknowledged the sacred power of purely instrumental music interpreted by Guilmant. He did not find it boring or distracting; instead, the music promoted self-reflection, meditation, and a focus on something greater than itself.

Descriptions of Guilmant’s playing technique, published as late as 1935 in Catholic music periodicals,\(^{12}\) suggest a continued interest in his interpretation and execution of liturgical works.

**STUDENTS**

Guilmant’s work in his private studio, the Conservatoire de Paris, and the Schola Cantorum ensured that he worked with a very large number of French and foreign students during his lifetime. According to one source, over 150 organists studied with him from around the world.\(^{13}\) Regardless of the precise number, it is certain that Guilmant’s gathering of disciples was vast.

\(^{8}\) “On ne demande pas de vous tout souligner, grand Dieu! Il est si bon de s’oublier quand on écoute et s’enferme en soi. C’est pourquoi j’aime tant entendre Guilmant à l’orgue interpréter Bach…c’est simple, calme, expressif et souvent très grand, cela me suffit.”
In France, many of Guilmant’s students became leaders in the field of sacred music. Some led through teaching careers. Two of Guilmant’s students from the Conservatoire de Paris, Abel Decaux\textsuperscript{14} and Henri Mulet\textsuperscript{15}, taught at the Schola Cantorum. Decaux led the free beginning organ class of 8-30 students at the same time of Guilmant’s taught there.\textsuperscript{16} In the latter half of the 1920s, Mulet took over the Schola Cantorum’s organ classes.\textsuperscript{17} With his students at the helm of his beloved Schola Cantorum, Guilmant’s legacy continued to play an integral role in the education of the French liturgical organist.

Other students led by example. The internationally-renown Marcel Dupré, one of Guilmant’s Conservatoire students,\textsuperscript{18} continued Guilmant’s interest in the liturgical organ. As the head organist at Saint Sulpice for over 35 years, Dupré demonstrated a serious interest in the continued development of the organ’s liturgical repertoire. He showcased plainchant in his liturgical organ compositions, such as Versets des Vêpres du Commun des fêtes de la Sainte Vierge (op. 18, 1920), through the inclusions of chant motifs and the use of modal harmonies.\textsuperscript{19} Following Guilmant’s desire to reduce bombastic music in the Mass, Dupré avoided the larger compositional styles of Wider and Vierne and instead pursued simpler works on liturgical and spiritual themes.\textsuperscript{20} He even incorporated musical depictions of Biblical stories into organ improvisations at Brussels Conservatoire and Philadelphia’s Wanamaker Department Store.\textsuperscript{21} Outside Saint Sulpice, he taught courses at the Conservatoire where he met and trained Jean Demessieux, another major twentieth century organist. Demessieux went on to publish many works using plainchant as a thematic point of departure, including 12 Choral
Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes (op. 8, 1950) and Sept Méditations sur le Saint-Esprit (1947).\textsuperscript{22} Here, the compositional work of one of Guilmant’s students ensured that his ideas on plainchant incorporation would continue well into the twentieth century.

While many of Guilmant’s organ students were French, a large number came from the global community, especially the United States. An estimated 114 American organists came to study with Guilmant.\textsuperscript{23} This influx of American organ students to France occurred for many reasons. First, Paris at the turn of the twentieth century was a mecca for artistic study of all kinds. American artists, musicians, and other creative types looked to Paris as the best place to find inspiration for and training in their art form.\textsuperscript{24} Second, training for church musicians was not nearly as robust in the United States as it was in Europe.\textsuperscript{25} The diversity of faith traditions, lack of national interest in liturgical music as a composition style and profession, and relatively new development of the pipe organ resulted in a lack of training opportunities for aspiring liturgical musicians.\textsuperscript{26} Third, Guilmant’s concert tours of the 1890s\textsuperscript{27} and participation in the Universal Expositions of 1893\textsuperscript{28} and 1904\textsuperscript{29} sparked a significant American public interest.\textsuperscript{30} With this “widespread agitation in organ and organist circles”\textsuperscript{31} in response to his tours, many organists were interested in studying with him.

As his students returned to the United States following study, they recognized their appreciation for Guilmant publically. Banning together to form The Guilmant Club, they continued to celebrate their teacher’s legacy within their own culture.\textsuperscript{32} Students William C. Carl and Charlotte Welles held a reception in his honor during one
of his visits; Guilmant responded that he “felt very grateful that they should manifest to him so much admiration for his work.”\(^{33}\) Carl continued to demonstrate this admiration by founding and directing the Guilmant Organ School, where he taught American organists in a two-year degree program.\(^{34}\) Using the “Guilmant method”\(^{35}\) and keeping in close contact with Guilmant, Carl produced a generation of extremely well-trained organists – “The playing of the graduates and the post-graduates was of a high order of excellence.”\(^{36}\) So successful was the school that Carl was able to raise the admissions requirements during its first few years; in 1907, he added an entrance exam and mandatory courses in organ building and tuning for all students, in order to enhance their overall knowledge of the instrument.\(^{37}\)

Many of Guilmant’s American students went on to have teaching careers in organ at the nation’s most prestigious schools, including:

- Clarence Dickinson, founder of Union Theological Seminary’s School of Sacred Music (1928), New York\(^{38}\)
- Palmer Christian, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor\(^{39}\)
- George Whitefield Andrews, Oberlin, Ohio\(^{40}\)
- Edwin Arthur Kraft, Cleveland Institute of Music\(^{41}\)
- Frederic B. Stiven, University of Illinois’s School of Music\(^{42}\)

Guilmant’s French student Joseph Bonnet\(^{43}\) became a colleague of these students when he created the organ department within the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music.\(^{44}\) With this work, Guilmant’s students responded to his
assessment that “America needs a helm to guide to Art perfection through the changing seas of Art experiment.”

The American Guild of Organists (AGO), the first professional association for organists in the United States, also included students of Guilmant. The AGO was founded in 1896 by a group of 145 dedicated organists, including Andrews, Carl, and Dickinson. It provided professional certification exams and a formal network for professional organists with the goal of “raising the standard of efficiency among these organists.” Members of the AGO organized free organ recitals and church services for the purpose of teaching their communities about the organ and its repertoire. These efforts met with great success; in 1920, the AGO boasted 1890 members. Again, Guilmant’s students demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the organ and to the education of others.

Finally, Guilmant’s students shared stories from their training in publications. Stiven’s memoire In the Organ Lofts of Paris shared his experiences training and traveling in Parisian churches with an American audience. Everett E. Truette, a student of Guilmant and the organist at Eliot Congregational Church from 1897-1933, edited The Organ, an American periodical on organ music and performance from which many of Guilmant’s teaching techniques are known. In 1937, William Carl remembered Guilmant with a series of articles describing his teaching methods, performance philosophies, and personality in The Diapason, a publication for organists. With these, Guilmant’s legacy was remembered in the United States long after his death.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Alexandre Guilmant’s theology of music made the ideas expressed in *Tra Le Sollecitudini* real for turn-of-the-twentieth-century organists. With the longstanding tension between sacred and secular music exacerbated by nineteenth century musical styles and cultural developments, the task of creating and performing truly sacred organ music was even more difficult than before. On one side, insistence from the Vatican and from Cecilian Societies on the primacy on vocal music, specifically plainchant and Renaissance polyphony, restricted the breadth of the organist’s purview significantly. Organists committed to following Vatican rule to the letter found themselves providing minimal, if any, accompaniment to the choir. On the other hand, the tastes of a concertgoing public, the lack of appreciation for traditional Catholic music among the clergy, and the common practice of setting plainchant text to tunes from the opera or theater discouraged organists from implementing the changes hoped for by the Vatican. With these many difficulties, even the most liturgically minded organist struggled to find the best way to interpret music within the Mass.

French organists found themselves in an even more difficult position. The political turmoil of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries resulted in a distancing from the country’s diverse Catholic heritage and the destruction of many of its pipe organs. Recovery in both of these areas introduced many new elements into the
French Catholic music field. On the one hand, liturgical reform was a significant part of the conversation. With the work of Dom Guéranger and his monks, France became known for the publication of the most accurate plainchant versions in existence. On the other hand, Cavallé-Coll’s innovative French Romantic organ set the new standard for organ construction and made possible a highly expressive symphonic sound in church. The introduction of the pipe organ into the concert setting at the Trocadéro further blurred the lines between its sacred and secular identity. Here again, organists experienced a pull between a renewed focus and set of resources on sacred vocal music and secular instrumental music.

Guilmant’s theology of music demonstrates an attempt to bridge this gap and to exemplify for his fellow organists and students the application of Pius X’s proscription that sacred music be “holy…true art…and universal.”¹ By grounding many of his liturgical compositions in the melodies and aesthetics of Solesmes plainchant, Guilmant demonstrated that plainchant’s primacy could be preserved in a purely instrumental work. He prioritized the human voice and vocal music with deliberate choices regarding all aspects of sound production. The use of voicelike stops for plainchant accompaniment, an accompaniment structure that followed rather than led the vocalists, and an acoustically live worship space resulted in a proper balance of the human and the instrumental elements of the Mass.

Guilmant was also intentional about using music to create a space for devotion for the contemporary worshipper. He used registration selections to illuminate the spiritual qualities of different portions of the Mass, thereby encouraging the listener to
repent or pray. His emphasis on properly sustained chords, a smooth fingering and pedal technique, and other articulation practices resulted in a continuous, steady backdrop of sound for worship. This allowed his listeners to focus on devotion rather than his playing. Guilmant’s commitment to accessibility helped to bring listeners closer to the Mass through sound. His detailed knowledge of both contemporary and older composition and performance styles empowered him to suggest appropriate updates to make a nineteenth century listener more likely to appreciate an older work. Further, his publications of the works of past composers, laced with meaningful annotations, empowered the average church organist to play something liturgically appropriate yet attractive to his parishioners.

Finally, Guilmant’s personal deportment set an example for other church organists. He had extreme respect for his colleagues and students, assisting them in their work and sharing his ideas with them. He approached his profession with a determination to call attention to the Mass, not to the organ or to himself. In this way, he earned the respect and approval of his colleagues and of Catholics from around the world. The endorsement of his repertoire selections and the continued interest in his stylistic approaches suggest that Guilmant had more than a passing presence in the Catholic community.

By understanding Guilmant’s ideas, a greater appreciation can be had for the work of Guilmant’s students. Many of his French students continued his work in the classroom and the church. Dozens of American students played instrumental roles in the founding of that country’s pipe organ training and tradition. American organists
founded a school in Guilmant’s name, taught at a number of significant music
programs, and began the first professional organization for organists. In these ways,
Guilmant’s students applied the knowledge shared with them by Guilmant to
contribute to a more robust American pipe organ tradition.

REFLECTIONS

Why should we study the ideas and impact of a single organist who lived over
one hundred years ago, in a time before the radical liturgical and musical changes of
Vatican II? Is there practical value in looking back on Guilmant’s approach to his role
as a liturgical organist? Yes, absolutely.

Liturgical musicians face questions regarding music selection, interpretation,
and participation today. Catholic music styles have changed; the Vatican now supports
the use of traditionally Protestant hymns, new compositions with vernacular lyrics,²
and a wide variety of musical instruments³ within the Mass. However, the Vatican
maintains that the human voice is still the most pleasing form of music to God and that
secular influences (though defined differently) must be avoided at all costs.⁴ How,
then, should the modern Catholic musician approach the Mass?

More broadly, musicians from a variety of Christian faith traditions struggle to
balance musical excellence, popular taste, and divine praise in their practice. Whether
an organist in a liturgically traditional church, a drummer in an ecumenical praise
band, or a soloist in a Protestant Gospel choir, church musicians still ask (or, perhaps
more accurately, still should ask) themselves questions relating to their participation in
worship. What musical elements will, in their particular situation, further “the glory of
God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful”\textsuperscript{5}? What techniques can they use not to showcase their talents, but to enhance the worship experience for their congregations? What, in short, are their theologies of music?

As a starting point, I offer the following questions to all liturgical musicians:

- What \textbf{sacred material} is present in your music? In what ways can you make the primacy of this material clear to your listeners? How do you balance the secular with the sacred?

- How do you \textbf{interpret} your music? What sounds, phrasing, and articulation do you use? How does your interpretation encourage devotion and participation in worship?

- What \textbf{styles of music} do you select for worship? In what ways do these works enhance the service? How do these works relate to the liturgical needs of your religion?

- How does your \textbf{worship space} impact your music? Do the acoustics bring the music to life? What attracts the congregation’s attention; does that focus support worship?

- What are the \textbf{needs of your parish}? How does your congregation relate to various sacred music styles? What repertoire will challenge but not overwhelm your fellow musicians?

- How do you \textbf{behave} in your role as a worship leader? In what ways do you handle frustration and offer encouragement? How can you lead by example?

May these questions remind all liturgical musicians of the timeless importance of their ministry.
NOTES

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10. Ibid., 49 and 129-130.

11. Ibid., 129-130.


20. Kathleen Harmon, *The Mystery We Celebrate, the Song We Sing* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), vii-xii.


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2. Ibid., 137-138.
3. Ibid., 140.
4. Ibid., 142.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 144.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 144-145.
13. Ibid., 9-11.
16. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 76-77.


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 137-143.


32. Ogasapian, *Church Music in America*, 220.


37. Ibid., 117-118.

39. Ibid., 148.

40. Ibid., 148-151.


42. Boyce, “Singing a New Song,” 147.


51. Ibid., 110-111.


53. Ibid., 177-181.


57. Ibid., I: 1.

58. Ibid., I: 2.

59. Ibid., I: 2.

60. Ibid., I: 2.
61. Ibid., I: 2.
62. Ibid., I: 2.
63. Ibid., I: 2.
64. Ibid., III: 9.
65. Ibid., VII: 22.
66. Ibid., IV: 11.
67. Ibid., II: 3.
69. Ibid., 116.
71. Ibid., II: 4-6.
72. Ibid., II: 5-6.
73. Ibid., VI: 15.
74. Ibid., VI: 16.
75. Ibid., VI: 16-18.
77. Pecklers, ”The Evolution of Liturgical Music,” 117.
79. Ibid., 286-288.
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3. Félix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Letters from Italy and Switzerland, translated by Lady Wallace (Boston: Oliver Ditson Co., n.d.), p. 335, quoted in Ochse, France and Belgium, 122.


5. Ochse, France and Belgium, 127.

6. Ibid., 127-128.

7. Ibid., 121-123.

8. Ibid., 127-128.


10. Ochse, France and Belgium, 128.


13. Ochse, France and Belgium, 121-123.


15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.


19. Edward Zimmerman and Lawrence Archbold, “‘Why Should We Not Do the Same with Our Catholic Melodies?’: Guilmant’s *L’Organiste liturgiste*, op. 65,” in Archbold and Peterson, 201.


21. Ibid., 7.

22. Ibid., 17-18.

23. Ibid., 37-38.


29. Ibid., 124-125.


35. Ibid., 9.
36. Ibid., 7-8.
37. Ibid., 8.
38. Ibid., 7-8.
41. Ibid., viii.
46. Ibid., 95-96.
49. Ochse, *France and Belgium*, 179; Murray, 93.
50. Quoted in Murray, *French Organ Masters*, 94.
52. William C. Carl, “Alexandre Guilmant: Noted Figure Viewed 25 Years After Death,” *The Diapason* July 1 1936, 4.
54. George Pearce, “Throughout Canada with Alexandre Guilmant,” *The Organ* 2 no. 9 (January 1894), 212.
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26. Ibid., 204, 212.

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28. Ibid., 204.


31. Ibid., 209-216.

32. Ibid., 215-217, 222.

33. Ibid., 209-212.

34. Ibid., 211.

35. Ibid., 210-211.


37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

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48. Ibid., 4.

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58. Ibid.


66. Swain, 237.


68. Ibid.


70. Ibid.

71. Ibid., 12.


73. Ibid., 219.


75. Guilmant, “*Verset de Titelouze,*” 12.

76. Ibid.


78. “Our Paris Letter,” *The Organ* 2 no. 2 (June 1893), 3.


80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., 283-4.
84. “Our Paris Letter,” The Organ 2 no. 3 (July 1893), 66.
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86. Thomas and Armstrong, Organ Loft Whisperings, 32.
87. Ibid., 30.
88. Ibid.
92. Ibid., 22.
93. Zimmerman, “Guilmant’s L’Organiste liturgiste, op. 65,” 204.
94. Ochse, 30-31.
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103. Fauré, 19.


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20. Ibid., 142.

21. Ibid.

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31. Ibid., 21.


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