

Charles-Marie

# WIDOR

International symposium



MUSICIAN,  
CULTURAL  
AMBASSADOR  
{1844-1937}

*Colloque  
Widor*

SEE YOU  
IN JULY  
**2027**  
IN PARIS

ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS,  
LECTURES,  
SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS,  
GUIDED TOURS,  
MUSICAL INTERLUDES AND  
CONCERTS AT SAINT-SULPICE

A composer, pianist, virtuoso organist, and a leading figure of musical life under the Third Republic, Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937) epitomises a French art whose influence shone far beyond national borders. The symposium aims to explore his legacy, his cultural significance, and his impact in France, across Europe, and throughout the world.



It has now been nearly ninety years since I left this world-old Paris, its musical circles, and the great institutions where I once wielded an important influence.

What remains of me today, apart from my *Organ Symphonies* and especially my famous *Toccata*? Who still remembers my chamber music, piano music, choral music, songs, concertos, orchestral symphonies, operas, or ballet music?

I invite scholars, musicologists, archivists, musicians, and my successors in the various institutions where I played a role to gather in Paris in July 2027, so that they can discuss my many activities as a musician, composer, teacher, writer, and man of international and domestic influence.

Together, we will also recall some of my contemporaries, my social and personal relationships, and my disciples: Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, Camille Saint-Saëns, Alexandre Guilmant, Emmanuella Potocka, Ignacy Paderewski, the Countess Greffulhe, Isidor Philipp, Martine de Béhague, Albert Schweitzer, Gustave Bret, and others too numerous to name. This is not to forget that my lifelong passion for Bach brought about a revival of the master's music in my homeland.

I have been recognized as a "cultural ambassador" for France; this is an often-overlooked aspect of my life. As permanent secretary of the

French Institute's Academy of Fine-Arts, I helped foster closer

ties between France and other countries through the creation of arts institutions in Spain (the *Casa de Velázquez*) and in England (the *Maison de l'Institut de France* in London), modeled on the Villa Medici in Rome, without forgetting, in France itself, the Conservatory of Fontainebleau, established for the benefit of American students.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Charles-Marie Widor". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned at the bottom right of the text area. Below the signature are three horizontal bars: a teal one, a red one, and another teal one.



*first symposium*  
dedicated to Widor in France



"He was first and foremost a colorist, a seeker of new timbres. He was by no means closed to progress..."

... he was also remarkably open to the younger generation. He was a great artist, a man of great intelligence"  
Olivier Messiaen

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
8:30 - 9:00		Morning coffee	Morning coffee	Morning coffee
9:00 - 12:00		Conferences	Conferences	Conferences
12:00 - 13:00		Musical interlude	Musical interlude	Musical interlude
13:00 - 15:00	Participant WELCOME	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
15:00 - 16:00	Conferences	Conferences	Conferences	END of the symposium
16:00 - 17:30	Commented tour of St. Sulpice	Commented tour in Paris	Musical interlude	
17:30 - 20:00	Free time	Free time	Free time	
20:00 - 22:00	Concert at St. Sulpice	Concert at St. Sulpice	Concert at St. Ouen, Rouen	

Call for abstracts (selection by a scientific committee), simultaneous French–English interpretation of the conferences, and publication of the conference proceedings.

Live online streaming of the lectures, musical interludes, and concerts.

## Association for the prestige and promotion of the Cavallé-Coll organs of St. Sulpice, Paris (AROSS)

AROSS is dedicated to introducing the wider public to the organs of St. Sulpice, enhancing their reputation, and promoting the musical heritage of this church.

### Charles-Marie Widor, an eminent figure

Among the distinguished lineage of organists at St. Sulpice, Charles-Marie Widor holds a singular place. Serving for sixty-four years (January 1870 - December 1933), Widor profoundly transformed organ virtuosity. His *Symphonies*, which he continually revised and refined throughout his life, are intimately linked to the sonorities of the historic Cavallé-Coll grand organ (1862).

In 2019, AROSS organised a series of recitals devoted to his works and produced a recording of his *Motets*. In 2025, together with the vocal ensemble Sequenza 9.3 and 200 amateur singers, we presented his *Messe à deux chœurs et deux orgues*, op. 36, before an audience of 2,500 people.

The Widor Symposium will offer an exceptional opportunity to highlight this remarkable figure beyond the world of the organ.

#### This symposium project is supported by:

- Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin, titular organist at St. Sulpice church, Paris
- Pr. Peter Frisé, organist and music radio host (Austria)
- Vincent Genvrin, organist, France
- Olivier Latry, titular organist at Notre-Dame cathedral, Paris
- Jean-Baptiste Monnot, titular organist at St. Ouen church, Rouen
- Karol Mossakowski, titular organist at St. Sulpice church, Paris
- Dr. John R. Near, Professor Emeritus of Music (United States)
- Ben van Oosten, Professor Emeritus of Organ at *Codarts University for the Arts*, Rotterdam (Netherlands)
  - Louis Robilliard, titular organist at St. François de Sales church, Lyon
  - Daniel Roth, titular emeritus organist at St. Sulpice church, Paris
  - Dr. François Sabatier, musicologist, director of *L'Orgue*, former professor of art, civilisation and music history at the CNSM in Lyon
- Denis Tchorek, titular organist at St. Pierre church, Douai, and musicologist (IReMus)



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#### Join this project

Pierre-François Dub-Attenti  
President of AROSS  
widor@aross.fr  
06 84 21 16 86

