



Cathedral Music in Montreal: Historical Precedents

Part I

ANY ADEQUATE TRIBUTE to the musical level currently maintained in Montreal's two cathedrals—Marie-Reine-du-Monde and Christ Church—presumes at least a preliminary digest of Montreal cathedral music precedents, a topic not specifically broached as such in either the English- or French-language editions of the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*.¹ True, the second English-language edition

¹ Sponsored by the Chalmers Foundation established in 1963 by the retired Toronto publisher Floyd S(herman) Chalmers (*b* Chicago, September 14, 1890) the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (EMC) edited by Helmut Kallmann (*b* Berlin, August 7, 1922, naturalized Canadian in 1946) with the assistance of Gilles Potvin (*b* Montreal, October 23, 1923) and Kenneth Winters (*b* Dauphin, Manitoba, November 28, 1929) debuted in its first edition, October 1981. Eighteen months later appeared a translated *Encyclopédie de la musique au Canada* (April 1983). These gave way in turn to an English-language second edition in 1992 (Winters no longer listed as a participating editor). All editions were handsomely published by the University of Toronto Press (Toronto, Buffalo, London).

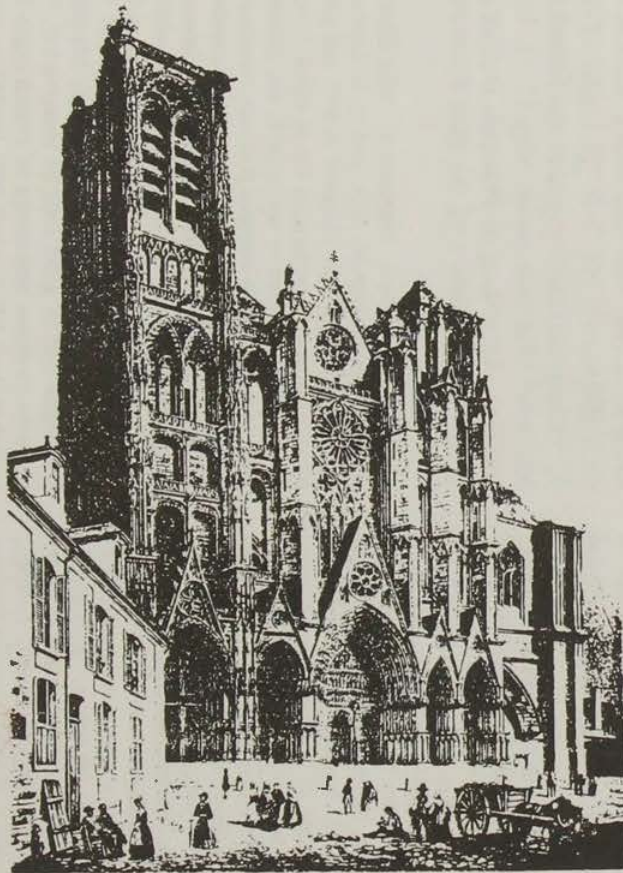
Easily outranking in accuracy, comprehensiveness and dispassionateness all other Western Hemisphere national music lexicons, EMC came to birth as Chalmers' reply to John Beckwith's article, "About Canadian music: the PR failure," published in *Musicanada*, 21 (Toronto: Canadian Music Centre), July-August 1969. Chalmers' wife (*b* Jean A. Boxall, Toronto, August 18, 1899; *d* there October 8, 1990) through a \$1 million bequest established the Jean A. Chalmers chair in Canadian Music at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. The first professor supported by this donation 1984-1990 was Beckwith, who in 1984 became also founding director of the newly established Institute for Canadian Music (Institut de musique canadienne).

does include Élisabeth Gallat-Morin's² authoritative articles on Jean Girard, the first fully professional musician dispatched to Montreal and on the so-called *Livre d'orgue de Montréal*³ that Girard brought with him in 1724.

Certain evidences of musical life preceding Girard's arrival bear mentioning. Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve (1612-1676), leader of the band of 57 settlers who participated in the founding of Ville-Marie on Montreal island, May 17/18, 1642, played the lute. According to François Dollier de Casson (1636-1701), author of the first *Histoire de Mon-*

² Born Gallat (Paris, February 9, 1932) Élisabeth (Anne) Gallat-Morin obtained her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in musicology at the Université de Montréal in 1977 and 1986. Her doctoral dissertation dealing with the so-called *Livre d'orgue de Montréal* encountered by her in 1978, was published with the title *Un manuscrit de musique française classique—Étude critique et historique—Le Livre d'orgue de Montréal* (Paris: Aux amateurs de livres; Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1988; 459 pp., bibliography, analytic index).

³ Property since 1950 of the Fondation Lionel-Groulx (261, Avenue Bloomfield Outremont, Montréal H2V 3R6), Fonds Girouard, the 539-page *Livre d'orgue de Montréal* bound in parchment and in good state of preservation, "is the most voluminous extant manuscript of French organ music of the period of Louis XIV" (EMC, 767). In 1847 the manuscript was acquired by Jean-Joseph Girouard (1795-1855), notary, bibliophile, and music lover. According to Gallat-Morin, the ruled paper, six or eight staves to the page, gathered in some 40 quires, was bound together sometime between approximately 1676 and 1714—but without an index, table of contents, or any composer attributions.



Bourges Cathedral entrance.



Interior of Bourges Cathedral (1783).

tréal, Maisonneuve while still a young soldier in Holland felt

such a lively fear of the Day of Judgment that in order not to be driven to seek the company of the wicked for recreation, he learned to play the lute, to be able to pass his time alone when he had no companions.⁴

But whether he accompanied with his lute the masses celebrated by the Jesuit superior Barthélemy Vimont (1594–1667) on May 17 and 18, at the latter of which was chanted *Veni Creator*, remains speculative. In 1663 the entire Montreal island became a seigneurie of the Saint-Sulpice secular priests' society (founded at Paris in 1642 by Jean-Jacques Olier, 1608–1657).

From 1701 to his death at Montreal May 22, 1732, Dollier de Casson's successor as superior of the seminary and seigneur of Montreal was François Vachon de Belmont (born in Dauphiné province, France, April 12, 1645). Having joined the Sulpicians October 18, 1672, he was still a deacon in 1680 upon arriving in Canada (but priested the next year). Highly trained musically and a proficient lute player he

translated the Latin ritual texts into Iroquois and taught his converts how to sing these, accompanying the chants on his lute.⁵

In 1707 he began receiving an annual income of 1200 livres bequeathed him by his brother Jean-François. Between 1701 and 1705 the Notre-Dame parish

⁴François Dollier de Casson, *Histoire de Montréal*, ed. Marcel Trud and Marie Baboyant (Québec: Éditions Hurtubise HMH Ltée, 1992), p. 54: Elle le retint toujours dans une telle crainte des redoutables jugements derniers que, pour n'être pas obligé d'aller dans la compagnie des méchants se divertir, il apprit à pincer le luth, afin de pouvoir passer son temps tout seul, lorsqu'il ne trouverait pas d'autres camarades.

⁵Jacques Mathieu, "Vachon de Belmont, François," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, II 1701 to 1740, p. 641. Fired with zeal for Indian souls he quit the Sorbonne and "joyously sacrifices himself for their sakes" (*Correspondance de M. Louis Tronson Troisième Supérieur de la Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice*, tome deuxième [Paris: Libraire Victor Lecoffre, 1904]), p. 192 (letter to Dollier de Casson dated March 29, 1680). On April 7, 1694, despite Belmont's time spent mastering the language of the Iroquois and the conversion of large numbers, Tronson urged Dollier de Casson to recall him to Montreal, and start grooming him to be his successor. In April 1698 Tronson offered to send an act appointing Belmont to a one-year trial period after Dollier's decease (*ibid.*, pp. 372–73). In a letter dated March 1692, Tronson had highly approved of Belmont's musical inclination and had urged him to continue his musical exercise, even though the *orgues et votre clavecin* that Belmont had requested still awaited transport (*ibid.*, p. 319).

church at Montreal acquired a seven-stop, possibly divided single-manual organ. However, even before its acquisition (presumably it was the gift of Vachon de Belmont) the roll of Notre Dame organists can be traced. Their names collected by Ovide Lapalice in "Les organistes et maîtres de musique à Notre-Dame de Montréal," *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, 25 (August 1919) begin surfacing with Jean-Baptiste Poitiers du Buisson (*b* Amiens diocese, France, 1645; merchant in New England 1670–1698; Notre-Dame organist, 1705–1718; *d* Montreal, 1727).

Quebec City, founded by Samuel de Champlain July 3, 1608, and New France's seat of government from 1663, had led the way, so far as organs are concerned. The parish church, rebuilt in 1650 after having burned a decade earlier, had one in 1657, the Jesuit chapel had one before 1661, and in September 1663 François de Montmorency Laval (1623–1708)—vicar apostolic who reached Quebec City on June 16, 1659, and in 1674, when Quebec diocese was erected, became Canada's first bishop—brought back from France an organ inaugurated in 1664 (EMC, 994b).

Nonetheless, it was not Quebec City but rather Montreal that attracted Jean Girard (*b* Bourges, France, August 8, 1696; *d* Montreal, February 23, 1765), Canada's most significant eighteenth-century church musician. Son of a master baker, he was on May 5, 1704, enrolled as a choirboy in Saint-Étienne Cathedral at Bourges.⁶ The choirmaster from 1696 to 1714 was the priest Louis Le Batteux, a native of Mans, who in 1695 had composed for carnival an allegorical ballet performed at Saint-Malo where he was then cathedral *maître de musique*.⁷ At Bourges, choirmasters spent the bulk of their time teaching plainchant, rehearsing the music, giving composition instruction, and also themselves or by deputy teaching instruments such as the serpent, bassoon, bass viol, and the *violon*.⁸ The Bourges cathedral organist in 1693 was Sébastien Burat.⁹ Apart from teaching their instrument, the organists also taught the *épinette* (spinnet).

⁶Marie-Reine Renon, *La maîtrise de la Cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Bourges du xvi^e siècle à la Révolution* (Saint-Amand [Cher]: Imprimerie Bussière, 1982), p. 43 (J.-Baptiste Girard)

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 99, citing *Mercure de France*, March 1695, p. 68.

⁸Renon, pp. 71, 83–87. Plainchant, the bedrock of all ceremonies, was mollified by *déchant* and *faux-bourdon* (pp. 75–79).

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 83.



Among choristers at Saint-Étienne Nicolas Gau-may was active from 1694 to 1708. On February 3, 1716, now a priest, he inherited the *maîtrise*, serving as chapelmaster until February 1, 1725. Next, he occupied the *maîtrise* at Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris. On August 15, 1737, a motet by him was sung at a Tuileries concert. Jean-Joseph Mouret conducted various motets by him in the Concerts spirituels.

Apart from musical instruction received at Saint-Étienne, Girard during his eight years there joined the other choirboys in studying penmanship, arithmetic, French history, and Latin grammar, with teachers whose names have been recovered.¹⁰ Choir-boy Jean Serre purchased a serpent in 1712 and began lessons on October 23 with a residential vicar named Picard, probably the same vicar who taught Girard, who bought or was given a serpent that same year.¹¹

Having received minor clerical orders in 1710, Girard a decade later entered the Sulpician seminary at Bourges and was in 1724 singing master at the Sulpician seminary in Paris.¹² His interest in emigrating to Montréal was doubtless sparked by his cousin, a Montreal priest from Bourges, who died at Montreal in 1742. On January 2, 1724

[Girard] sought a special permission, to be allowed to have a spinet in his room to practise—to be ready to play in Montreal where he proposed to go (*Registre des Assemblées des consultants* II, 2 Jan. 1724, Sulpician Archives, Paris). In July of the same year he sailed from Rochefort on the boat *Le Chameau* (EMC, 530a).

His most voluminous possession was the above-cited *Livre d'orgue*. After examining the whole corpus of Baroque French organ literature, Gallat-Morin identified sixteen pieces as versets by Nicolas-Antoine Le Bègue (1631–1702), all but one of which were published at Paris, usually with slight variants, in his *Les pièces d'orgue* (1676), *Second livre d'or-*

gue (1678), or *Troisième livre d'orgue* (1685). According to her, the 1676 book afforded all but one of the *Tierces ou cromhornes* and the 1678 book was the source for five of the eight verses of the *Magnificat du 2me ton* and of an *Offertoire*. The 1685 book provided an *Élevation*. Also,

The *Offertoire en F ut fa* is almost identical, in its first half, to the *Offertoire dialogue de Monsieur le Beigue du 8e ton*, found in a contemporary manuscript at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (EMC, 767b)

Magnificat versets occupy pages 2–123 of Girard's *Livre d'orgue*, Te Deums, 125–45 and 523–39, Fugues 403–15, Masses 419–522. Pange lingua interrupts at 396. Only the latter and various verses of the *Messe double*, among the organ pieces, are based on plainchants. However, scattered fragments of plainchant turn up throughout the manuscript (not all the sources of the plainchants have been tracked down).

The other organ pieces, although they remain within the confines of the eight church modes, find their inspiration in dance movements and vocal forms.

In addition to the *Livre d'orgue*, copied by at least five different scribes, Girard brought with him two publications, both issued at Paris in 1667. Their author, born in about 1632 at Paris, Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers, became organist at Saint-Sulpice church when nineteen years of age, and held the post until 1702. He died at Paris November 13, 1714, then possessed of a fortune of 20,000 livres and real estate.¹³ His *Livre d'Orgue Contenant Cent Pièces de tous les Tons de l'Église* (104 pages of music preceded by five pages of valuable information on fingering, ornamentation, tempi, organ registration, and copyright privilege), immediately proved its popularity by going into a reissue by "R[obert] Ballard seul Imp. du Roy p.^r la musique" two years

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–68.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 84. Renon lists four other choirboys who from 1703 to 1747 bought a serpent, the bass wind instrument in demand by church choirs.

¹² All biographical details in this paragraph derive from Gallat-Morin's *Un manuscrit de musique* (note 2 above) and her definitive chapter "La vie musicale à Montréal sous la régime française," included in Jean-Rémi Brault, compiler, *Actes du colloque organisé par la Société historique de Montréal (Mai 1992)* (Ottawa: Leméac, 1993), pp. 161–71.

¹³ Holder of a *maître ès arts* degree awarded by the Université de Paris June 27, 1661, Nivers deferred marriage until September 21, 1668, by which date he had already published both first and second *livres d'orgue* and his *Traité de la composition de musique* (Paris, 1667)—a copy of which treatise Girard took to Montreal. He was named *organiste du Roi* June 19, 1678, the queen's *maître de musique* in 1681, head organist and *maître de chant* at the Maison Royale de Saint-Louis de Saint-Cyr in 1686. He left his Saint-Sulpice organ post to his nephew Jean-Baptiste Totin July 31, 1702; Louis Marchand succeeded him as king's organist June 28, 1708. Liberal pensions adorned his later years, 600 livres in 1693, another 300 in 1708.



later. The 1667 copy brought to Montreal by Girard now resides there at the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice.

The *fac-similé* Jean-Marc Fuzeau (79440 Courlay, France, 1987) opens with a chronology of Nivers' life and intense publication schedule. The eight suites in the Nivers *Livre d'orgue* carried to Montreal by Girard contain variously titled versets. However, in this particular collection, as opposed to his others, all versets replace successive odd verses of a Magnificat.¹⁴ The *Anima mea* verset (in five suites a *plein jeu*), gives way to a *Quia respexit* (usually a *duo*), *Et misericordia* (often a *récit tendre*), *Deposuit potentes* (often a *basses de trompette*), *Suscepit Israel*, and a concluding short *Amen* (*plein jeu*).

Always functional rather than concert music, the organ versets in the *livres* of Nivers, Le Bègue (organist at Saint-Merry, Paris, 1664; royal organist fall quarters, Versailles chapel, 1678), and in the manuscript *Livre d'orgue* brought to Montreal by Girard, must necessarily be understood in the context adumbrated by Benjamin Van Wye in his "Ritual Use of the Organ in France," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 33 (Summer 1980), 287-325. As one reason why the alternation performance practice persisted longer in France than elsewhere, Martin Sonnet's *Ceremoniale parisiense* (1662) won the Archbishop of Paris's approval. At his pages 318-19 Van Wye provides an invaluable table of all the liturgically designated versets in organ collections of Louis XIV's reign.

In 1961 Albert Cohen translated into English Nivers' *Traité de composition*,¹⁵ prefacing it with a historical aperçu (Brooklyn, NY: Institute of Mediaeval Music). As Cohen remarked in his introduction (page 7) the *Traité* first published in 1667 was reissued in 1688, 1694, and 1712 "in almost identical format."

In 1697 Étienne Roger published a Flemish translation at Amsterdam. Johann Gottfried Walter in his *Musicalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1732), page 443, devoted a large space to a listing of the French chapters in the *Traité*. Sébastien de Brossard wrote in 1724: "J'appelle ce livre mon rudiment pour la composition, et je conseille à tous

¹⁴Almonte Howell discoursed on Nivers' "practices and theories in relating the eight tones to organ music" in his "French Baroque Organ Music and the Eight Church Tones," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XI/2-3 (Summer-Fall 1958), pp. 108-13.

¹⁵Girard's copy of the 1667 *Traité* survives at the Université Laval, Livres rares (Québec, Qué GIK 7P4, Cité Universitaire).

qui commencent de s'en servir; les règles sont seures, claires et forts intelligibles, même aux esprits médiocres."

I call this book my rudiment of composition, and I advise all those beginning to compose to avail themselves of it. The rules are unfailing, clear and very comprehensible even to mediocre souls.

Vachon de Belmont, still Sulpician superior when Girard reached Montreal, immediately took advantage of Girard's exquisite handwriting by engaging him as his secretary. As evidence of his continuing lifetime musical enthusiasms, Vachon had already acquired Christophe Ballard's or Henri de Baussen's publication of six of Lully's operas: *Thésée*, *Atys*, and *Proserpine* (produced successively at Saint-Germain in 1675, 1676, 1680; published 1688, 1689, 1690). *Phaéton*, *Roland*, and *Armide* (Versailles and Opéra, 1683; 1685; 1686; published in 1683, 1685, 1686). Not mentioned in *RISM (Einzeldrucke vor 1800*, v, 1975), Vachon de Belmont's exemplars nonetheless now reside in Collections spéciales at the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec in Montreal.

As concessions to seminarian propriety, some lines in Quinault's librettos have been inked out, others altered. The line in *Phaéton*'s prologue:

Dans ces lieux tout rié sans cesse

after excision is replaced with the decorous

Admirons la providence du suprême Rey des Cieux.¹⁶

Who was responsible for the tidying up of Quinault's texts may not even have been Vachon de Belmont. James R. Anthony, in his *New Grove* article (xi, 317) recalls "the enmity of the clergy and of conservative professors at the Sorbonne, who attacked what Bossuet called the 'corruption reduced to maxims' displayed in such passages as 'Mais rien n'est si charmant qu'une inconstance mutuelle' (*Thésée*, Act 2, scene ii)."

The French-language forty-page tune anthology housed in the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, Collections spéciales, with the old call-number ANQ-M, fonds privés, P 233/1, when Gallat-Morin prepared her article, "Un manuscrit de cantiques à Montréal (XVIII^e siècle)," *Canadian University Music Review*, 11/2 (1991), 68-93, contains 51 tunes copied on four-line staves by Jean Girard, probably

¹⁶"La vie musicale à Montréal sous la régime française," p. 161, note 16.



in time for the jubilee celebrated at Montréal in 1729. Cantiques nos. 28 and 36 are contrafacta of airs from Lully's *Atys* and *Amadis*. As she remarks, page 81, Vachon de Belmont's copy of *Atys* (second edition, engraved by Henri de Baussen, 1708), underwent numerous moral improvements. "Quand le profil est agréable" emerges in Girard's *Cantiques* with "Bénissez le Seigneur Suprême"—as versified by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin in his *Cantiques spirituels* (Paris, 1720). "Suivons l'amour, c'est lui qui nous mène" from *Amadis* becomes "Suivons Jésus, c'est lui que nous mène." Two airs from André Campra's operas also suffer a sea-change. "Pêcheur obstiné" acknowledges "Aimable vainquer" from Campra's *Hésione* (1700) as its source; "Vous qui voyez couler mes larmes" is a contrafaction of "Vous brillez seule en ces retraites" in Campra's opéra-ballet, *L'Europe galante* (1697).

As epigraph for her article, Gallat-Morin quotes a remark in a *Recueil des usages de la paroisse de Montréal concernant l'office divin* that she found in the Archives du Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice de Montréal, section C, rayon 2-198:

Il y eut quantité de Demoiselles de la ville à qui on apprenoit des Cantiques spirituels et des Motets et qui les chantoient soit au sermon, soit au salut.

There were a number of young ladies of the Ville [Montreal] who learned [various] spiritual songs and motets, and who sang them at sermons or at services.

Jean Girard, who taught them the songs copied by him, never during his more than forty years in Montréal received an organist's salary. Instead, his designated role from his arrival September 20, 1724, was that of school teacher.

Il s'en acquitta avec zèle et succès pendant plus de quarante ans. L'esprit du Religion, qu'on remarque encore dans un très grand nombre de bourgeois de cette ville et des campagnes, formés à son école, font assez son éloge. Il est aussi musicien et organiste, et a exercé cet art dans la paroisse tout le temps qu'il a vécu. Les archives ne mentionnent pas qu'il reçût jamais de salaire; seulement en 1730 à 1760, il est remboursé de quelques factures de musique. L'inventaire des biens de l'église fait en 1737, mentionne qu'il y avait deux graduels, un grand y un petit, et deux antiphonaires.¹⁷

He acquitted himself [as a teacher] with zeal and success during more than forty years. The religious spirit which

is yet remarked on, among a very large number of the ordinary people of this Ville [Marie] and the countryside, who were brought up in his school amply redounds to his praise. He was also a musician and an organist, and exercised that art in the parish during his whole lifetime. The [parish] archives do not mention his having ever received a salary, only that from 1730 to 1760 he was reimbursed for various music bills. The church's inventory of possessions in 1737 mentions two graduels, one large, one small, and two antiphoners.

Gallat-Morin adds these further biographical details: in 1730 Girard visited Quebec City; in 1737 he testified at a trial in Montreal; in 1763 he still held paper money issued during the French régime.

Lapalice identifies the first documented Notre-Dame organist, J.-B. Poitiers du Buisson's having received "gifts" in 1715 and 1718 in recompense *pour avoir joué les orgues pendant plusieurs années* ("for having played the organs many years"). Charles-François Caron (*b* Saint-François-de-Sales, Île Jésus, near Montreal, December 21, 1704; burial there February 13, 1767) was very probably the master tailor that served as Notre-Dame organist 1722-1734. In 1723 the Saint-Sulpice authorities paid him 83 livres 15 sols, for twenty months' organ playing. In 1725 and 1726 he received "as his annual salary" a hooded coat and a leather vest valued at 45 livres. In 1727 he was allotted 45 livres cash and merchandise worth 50 livres. His receipt tendered the churchwarden-treasurer January 7, 1739, for 45 livres survives to prove him an execrable spender. He married Angelique Roland at Montreal January 1731.

Even less gratification, although in cash rather than kind, reached Perineau dit Lamarche, organist 1739-1740, and Perthuis, organist five months in 1741—30 livres and 12 livres 10 sols. Better fortune attended Louis Lefoureur dit Champagne (*b* Montreal, June 2, 1720). A carpenter by trade, he served as organ repairer from 1760 to 1792, and as organist (paid 100 livres in 1774, 200 in 1775, 300 in 1776). Complaining of frigid discomfort, he was provided with an iron stove in 1787. In 1789 he and Guillaume Mechtler were named co-organists. As early as 1765 he sold Notre-Dame two chant books for 100 livres. Married from November 9, 1744, to Catherine Guertin, he disappears from Notre-Dame records after 1792. During one quarter beginning December 10, 1783, Jean Artog received an advance of 75 livres for substituting at the organ.

¹⁷ Lapalice, "Les organistes et maîtres de musique," p. 244.



Guillaume-Joseph Mechtler (baptized at Brussels July 24, 1764; *d* Montreal February 13, 1833) arrived at Montreal via Quebec City, where at age 23 he had advertised himself, after quitting the theatre, as teacher of both violin and harpsichord. Two years later he announced in Montreal that he would also teach forte piano, in addition to violin and harpsichord. In 1791 Christ Church parish engaged him as organist, but from 1792 to 1814 he served Notre-Dame, with a beginning annual salary of 20 louis. In 1792 Notre-Dame paid 200 louis for an organ built by Henry Holland of London (active as organ builder from 1788). Whether he himself composed the piano concerto performed by him in a concert announced for September 14, 1796 has not been certified, but in 1811 "for compositions" he did receive £48.¹⁸ After a hiatus during 1814 and part of 1815 he returned to Notre-Dame in July 1815 with an annual salary of £60, on condition that he himself pay the bellows-worker and continue until decease. His obituary signaling his death aged 70, February 15, 1833, identifies his ancillary occupations as hay market inspector and stamper of weights and measures.

Three temporaries gave way at the close of 1833 to Jean-Chrysostome Brauneis (*b* Quebec City, January 26, 1814; *d* Montreal August 11, 1871), like-named son of a German immigrant bandmaster active 1813–1818 with the 70th Foot Regiment British army band at Quebec City. Hired at a yearly £50, he composed an orchestral mass performed with five instruments July 12, 1835,¹⁹ and in 1837 inaugurated a Nicolet organ costing 400 louis. Among the remaining Notre-Dame organists profiled in Lapalice's "Les organistes et maîtres de musique à Notre-Dame de Montréal," Jean-Baptiste Labelle (*b* Burlington, Vermont, September, 1825, baptized at Montreal November 13, 1825; *d* Montreal September 9, 1898) served the longest. Appointed in September 1849, he served until retirement in 1891. His compilation of chants provided with his own accompaniments, *Le Répertoire de l'organiste*, went through at least ten editions after first publication in 1851. Charles Girard translated French critic Oscar Commetant's review of Labelle's choral pieces titled *Échos de Notre-Dame* (published in 1887) thus (EMC, 704a).

¹⁸ According to Helmut Kallmann, EMC, 839c, Mechtler may have been the first musician in Canada to have been paid for his compositions.

¹⁹ Kallmann, EMC, 158b, cites an "admiring review" in *La Minerve*.

In these unpretentious pieces, written in an out-and-out polyphonic style, I find a very fine religious sentiment and much melodic charm. . . . I will just mention *O Gloria Virginum*, which is truly inspired, perfectly developed, skilful in its modulation and piercing in its grace (Paris: *Le Siècle*, February 20, 1888).

Alcibiade Bélique (*b* St-Jean-Baptiste-de Rouville, nr Montreal, October 20, 1856; *d* Montreal June 20, 1896), Labelle's successor, secured his official appointment January 24, 1891, the day that Frederick Archer inaugurated the Casavant-organ that was the firm's "first with adjustable-combination pedals operated by electricity."²⁰

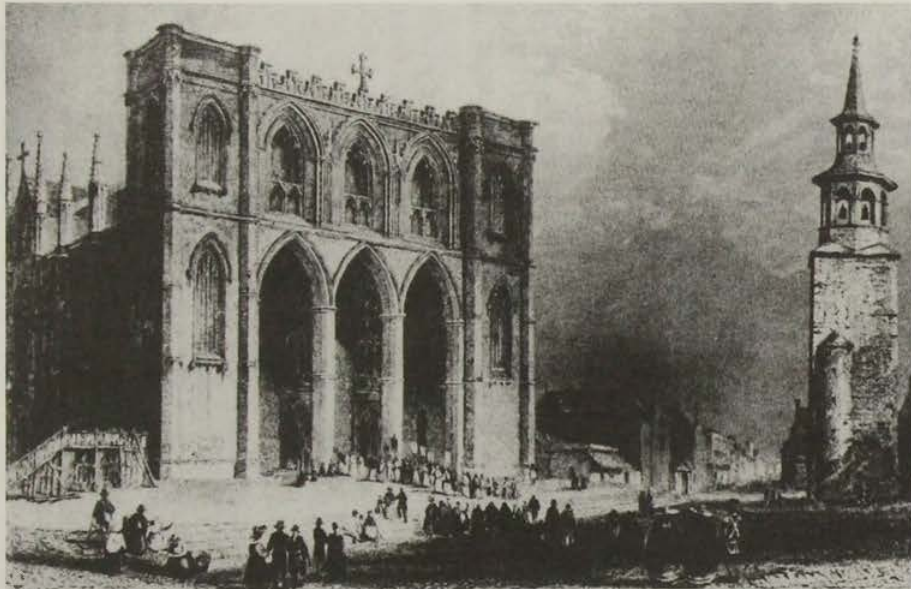
This instrument offered Bélique a vast opportunity to display all his powers. He acquitted himself brilliantly throughout the five years preceding his untimely decease.²¹

So far as choirmasters are concerned, Lazare-Arsène Barbarin (*b* Marseilles November 6, 1812; *d* there March 14, 1875) was Notre-Dame's first officially appointed maître de chapelle, serving 1854–1861 and 1866–1874. Ordained a priest in 1841 he adapted liturgical texts to portions of Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* and Félicien David's *Le Désert*.²² His successor Joseph-Julien Perrault (*b* Montreal May 8 or 18, 1826; *d* Varennes nr Montreal August 22, 1866; ordained priest in 1849), Notre-Dame maître de chapelle 1859–1861, 1863–1866, "composed a number of motets, psalms, and choruses with accompaniments for organ and orchestra" (EMC, 1045a). Ten other choirmasters intervened before Lapalice closed his Notre-Dame maître de chapelle list with Guillaume Dupuis (*b* Montreal May 3, 1887, *d* there April 25, 1954), who continued from appointment in September 1918 to 1949.

²⁰ EMC, 225c; the column is headed by a photograph of the "Casavant organ installed at Notre-Dame Church, Montreal, in 1890."

²¹ Lapalice, p. 248.

²² David's ode-symphony in three parts, *Le Désert* (text by Auguste Colin), was premiered with huge success at the Paris Conservatoire December 8, 1844. See Dorothy V. Hagen, *Félicien David 1810–1876 A Composer and a cause* (Syracuse University Press, 1985), pages 67–86 and 230. In 1832 David joined the Saint-Simonians "a messianic cult built on technocratic doctrines developed by Claude-Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825)." Throughout life David continued strongly opposed to institutional Roman Catholicism. See also *IAMR*, xi/2 (Summer–Fall 1996), 1.



Montreal's Pro-Cathedral

Mass was first celebrated in the present Notre-Dame church edifice facing the Place d'Armes on July 15, 1829, by Monseigneur Jean-Jacques Lartigue (1777-1840). A native of Montreal, he had been consecrated bishop of Telmesse (not of Montreal) in Notre-Dame church on January 21, 1821.

Not until 1836 was Montreal created a diocese. Previously subject to the ordinary at Quebec, 164 miles downstream, it counted as local governors a succession of Sulpician vicars-apostolic. The island, which is situated at the confluence of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers, is 32 miles long and 7 to 10 miles wide, was ceded to the Sulpicians in 1663.

The present imposing Notre-Dame church (basilica), 255 by 134 ft., was planned by New York City architect James O'Connell (1774-1830). The two towers, Temperance on the gospel side, Perseverance on the epistle side, rise 227 ft. above the street. Largest of the bells, 6-ft. *Le Gros Bourdon*, in the west tower, weighs 24,780 pounds. Ten other large bells hang in the other tower. Seating capacity of 10,000 was the architect's target.

The previous Notre-Dame parish churches serving the whole island were built on the same Place d'Armes site in 1672 and 1757. Part of the structure of the adjoining St. Sulpice seminary (established in 1657) dates from 1680. Even after Pope Gregory XVI erected the diocese of Montreal February 13, 1836, Notre-Dame continued until 1864 serving as the parish church for the entire island. St. Jacques interim cathedral located at the corner of St. Denis and St. Catherine streets burned in 1852. Thereafter Archbishop Ignace Bourget (1799-1885), Lartigue's successor, decided to build the present cathedral, modeled on St. Peter's, Rome. However at his death his funeral June 8, 1885, was held in Notre-Dame church, not in the unfinished St. Jacques le Majeur cathedral.

In every sense, Notre-Dame remains still today a monument that structurally, in its appointments and organ, and in its services, vies with archdiocesan Marie Reine du Monde cathedral. Franklin Toker, *The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1970) not only documents all aspects of its history, but establishes it as the supreme 19th-century Canadian tourist attraction. Not until the completion of St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, 1879, did any church structure in English- or French-speaking America even begin to compete with it in size and grandeur.

