

Messiaen and the Organ



(cover artwork by Fugue State Films designer and illustrator Martin Cottam)

Messiaen and the Organ

Filmed Performances and Documentary for DVD Boxset, Streaming and Educational Release

Olivier Messiaen's complete organ works have not yet been professionally filmed, and his musical language has not been explored in a documentary centered on his organ works. Therefore the award-winning production company Fugue State Films will:

1) film benchmark performances of half of Messiaen's organ music, including great cycles of works representing his early, middle and late periods. These will be filmed at the finest organ in the UK for this repertoire, that of Blackburn Cathedral, performed by Tom Bell, the UK's leading Messiaen organist.

Repertoire for Volume 1 (212 minutes) will be:

Le Banquet Céleste [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 7 minutes – early

Apparition de l'église éternelle [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 10 minutes – prewar

La Nativité du Seigneur 65 minutes – prewar

Messe de la Pentecôte [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 30 minutes – postwar experimental

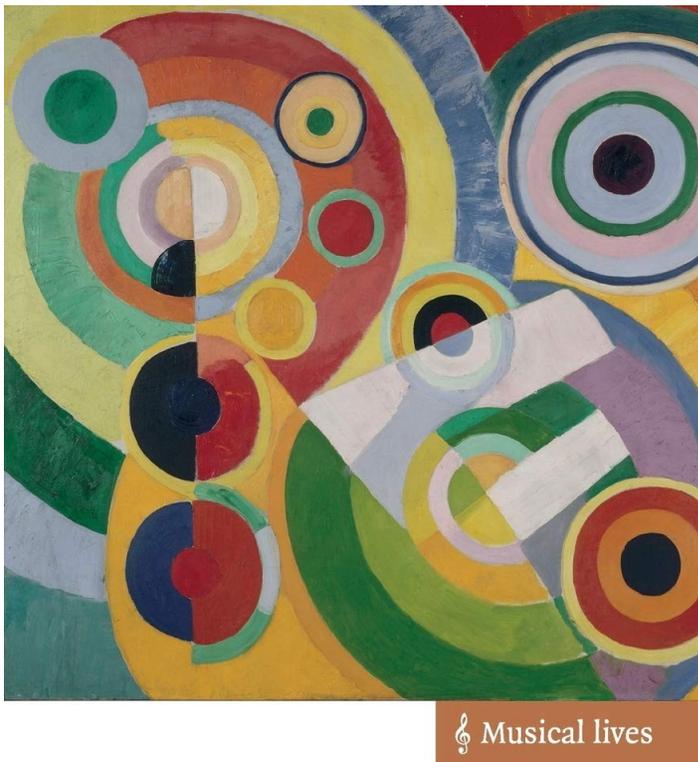
Livre du Saint-Sacrement [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 100 minutes – late



(Messiaen organist Tom Bell with the organ of Blackburn Cathedral)

2) produce a documentary (52 minutes), presented and written by Messiaen-biographer Christopher Dingle, that explores the evolution of Messiaen's musical language across his life, as represented in his organ music. In addition, Thomas Lacôte will explore how Messiaen devoted much of his work to improvisation at the organ, and how this both reflected and influenced his composition. We will also explore how contemporary composers such as Lacôte have developed the tradition of Messiaen.

For the documentary we also plan to film at Messiaen's own organ at Sainte Trinité in Paris. Organists there will include Carolyn Shuster-Fournier, Thomas Lacôte, Loïc Mallié and Tom Bell. The organ at Sainte Trinité is not at this time in good enough condition for us to do all our recordings on, but is in good enough condition for filming documentary elements.



The life of
Messiaen

CHRISTOPHER DINGLE

(Messiaen scholar and biographer Christopher Dingle will be the lead presenter of our documentary)

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Budget, Funding and Support

Through our own crowdfunding, Fugue State Films has already raised £20,000.

We are also receiving a grant of £3,500 from the Royal College of Organists, and will do further crowdfunding. We also expect educational subscriptions from universities.

Creating this set of films, and releasing them, will cost £50,000, as per the following budget:

Filming in Blackburn Cathedral for up to a week, with camera crew and equipment, tonmeister, including travel, accommodation and living expenses:

£15,000

Editing both video and audio of performances, creating audio and video masters:

£7,500

Filming documentary sections in Paris for up to a week, with additional filming at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (where Christopher Dingle is a professor) with camera crew and equipment, presenter and interviewees, including travel, accommodation and living expenses:

£12,500

Editing documentary and creating video master:

£7,500

Design and manufacture of boxsets; preparation of digital release:

£7,500

Grand total:

£50,000

We are confident that DVD sales and grants will bring in the remaining £26,500 or so needed to make up this budget. In the meantime Fugue State Films is putting this into the production as producer investment. The production is therefore ready to commence and filming will start in January 2024.

Further Work – Volume 2

If this boxset successfully achieves its goals, we can create a second boxset. The two releases will be the first ever film of Messiaen's complete organ works. Each will include works from the beginning, middle and end of his career. Volume 2 would include *L'Ascension*, *Les Corps glorieux*, *Livre d'orgue*, *Méditations sur le Mystère du Saint Trinité*, and other stand-alone works such as *Diptyque*.

Fugue State Films

Fugue State Films is the world's leading creator of documentaries about the pipe organ and its music. Titles include *The Genius of Cavallé-Coll*, *Franck: Father of the Organ Symphony*, *Widor: Master of the Organ Symphony*, *Maximum Reger*, *The English Organ*, *Bach and Expression*, *Bach's Missing Pages*. Here is a clip from our latest film, *Bach's Missing Pages*, in which Sietze de Vries performs Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* and improvises 45 of the missing chorale preludes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spdEpT7yc2s>

Our work combines filming performances of great musical works played by the best artists, with documentaries in which leading experts discuss the music and its associated culture and history. We have won the BBC Music Magazine Award twice, and the Deutschenschallplattenkritikpreis three times. Our work is consistently given glowing reviews in Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, and other publications across the world.

These films, taken together, are part of what in a few years will become a ***Filmed Encyclopedia of the Organ and its Repertoire***. Films will be made about every important composer, region or period of organ music. This filmed encyclopedia will be a unique resource for culture and education for decades. The Messiaen films will take pride of place within this encyclopedia.

Fugue State has a great deal of experience filming in historic locations, especially in France. Locations we have filmed in include, in Paris: Notre Dame, St Sulpice, Ste Clotilde, St Denis, St Louis d'Antin, St Antoine des Quinze-Vingts, and across France: St Ouen, Rouen, St Sernin, Toulouse, Royaumont Abbey, and many other places. We have filmed historic organs across the world we have filmed in the USA, Mexico, across the UK, and in the Netherlands, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. Foundations we have worked with include the Max Reger Institut, Karlsruhe and the Bach Archiv, Leipzig.

Our beautifully created DVD boxsets are in demand across the world, and our films are also available on our own streaming site. Furthermore, we have just launched a streaming system designed for universities and libraries, to bring our work to the next generation of students. In addition, part of what we film will be made available on iRCO, the streaming platform of the Royal College of Organists, where it will be a much-used educational resource.

We have also created a new educational streaming platform: <https://organcinema.com/>

Organ Cinema will reach students of the organ in major educational institutions around the world. Thus far subscribers include American universities such as Yale, Cornell, Syracuse, Brigham Young, Southern Methodist, Appalachian State and SUNY. Many universities in other countries are expected to subscribe.

Messiaen and the Organ will therefore be successful within the classical music world, and also will become an essential educational tool both for organists and for other musicians all over the world for decades to come.

Repertoire for Volume 1 (212 minutes) will be:

Le Banquet Céleste [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 7 minutes – early
Apparition de l'église éternelle [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 10 minutes – prewar
La Nativité du Seigneur 65 minutes – prewar
Messe de la Pentecôte [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 30 minutes – postwar experimental
Livre du Saint-Sacrement [Tom Bell at Blackburn Cathedral] 100 minutes – late

Repertoire for Volume 2 (205 minutes) will be:

L'Ascension 30 minutes – prewar
Les Corps glorieux 55 minutes – prewar
Livre d'orgue 45 minutes – postwar experimental
Méditations sur le Mystère du Saint Trinité 75 minutes – late

Organists and Locations for Volume 2 to be decided, hopefully to include the organists of Sainte Trinité.

Bonus Tracks:

Monodie [posthumous] 3 minutes – 1960s late
Other stand-alone works such as *Diptyque* 12 minutes – early
Verset pour la fete de la Dedicatice 8 minutes – 1960s late
Offende de Saint Sacrement – 5 minutes
Prelude – 9 minutes
Combat de mort et de la vie (from *Les Corps glorieux*) [Loïc Mallié] 19 minutes