

OLIVIER LATRY Biography

Olivier Latry, titular organist of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, is one of the world's most distinguished organists. He was born in 1962 in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, and began his study of piano at age 7 and his study of the organ at age 12; he later attended the Academy of Music at St. Maur-des-Fossés, studying organ with Gaston Litaize. From 1981 until 1985 Olivier Latry was titular organist of Meaux Cathedral, and at age 23 he won a competition to become one of the three titular organists of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. From 1990 until 1995 he taught organ at the Academy of Music at St. Maur-des-Fossés, where he succeeded his teacher, Gaston Litaize. Since 1995 he has taught at the Paris Conservatory, where he has succeeded Michel Chapuis.

In addition to concerts and teaching, Mr. Latry has made his mark through recordings on the BNL label in France, which include music of Bach, the complete organ works of Maurice Duruflé, Louis Vierne's Symphonies 2 and 3, Widor's Symphonies 5 and 6, and a recording of works by Litaize. With Deutsche Grammophon he has recorded "In Spiritum," a recording devoted to the organ works of César Franck, "Midnight at Notre-Dame," a recording of transcriptions for the organ, and the complete organ works of Olivier Messiaen. Recent releases include a recording of works by Alkan, Boëly, Brahms, Liszt, and Schumann played on the pedal piano, and a recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra and conductor Christoph Eschenbach on the Ondine label featuring the Saint-Saëns *Symphony No. 3 "Organ"*, the *Toccata Festiva* by Samuel Barber, and the *Concerto for Organ and Orchestra* by Francis Poulenc. He is also featured on a recording of the Jongen *Symphonie Concertante* and the Saint-Saëns *Symphony No. 3 "Organ"* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège released on the Cypres label.

A recipient of numerous awards and honors, Olivier Latry received the Prix Del Duca (Institut de France – Académie des Beaux-Arts) in 2000, the 2006 Honorary Fellowship from the North and Midlands School of Music (UK), and the 2007 Honorary Fellowship from the Royal College of Organists (UK). In April of 2009 he was named International Performer of the Year by the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and in June 2010 he received an honorary Doctor of Music degree from McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Not wishing to specialize in a particular repertoire, Olivier Latry would like to be an ambassador of seventeenth to twenty-first century French organ music, hence his equal devotion to the art of improvisation. Today he is counted among the most noted “improvisateurs” in the exceptional French tradition from Charles Tournemire to Pierre Cochereau. He has performed in more than forty countries on five continents, appearing most often in the United States. He made his first American tour during the fall of 1986, and has subsequently made annual tours to the U. S., playing recitals in major cities coast to coast as well as throughout Canada. In addition, he has made special trips to appear for regional and national conventions of the American Guild of Organists as well as for inaugural recitals of new instruments and for major music festivals and summer schools (Westminster Choir College, McGill University and the San Anselmo Organ Festival). In one major project Mr. Latry performed three complete cycles (six recitals each) of the organ music of Olivier Messiaen to great acclaim in Paris, New York City and London, to celebrate Messiaen as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century. He then went on to record Messiaen’s complete organ works for Deutsche Grammophon. In 2006 he was the featured soloist for the opening of the new Dobson organ at Verizon Hall in Philadelphia where he performed

for three sold-out audiences in gala concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Christoph Eschenbach.

Mr. Latry has a particular interest in contemporary music and has premiered works of Xavier Darasse, Claude Ballif, Thierry Pecout, Vincent Paulet, Thierry Escaich, and Jean-Louis Florentz. He has also co-authored a book on Olivier Messiaen: *L'oeuvre d'orgue d'Olivier Messiaen*, Olivier Latry and Loïc Mallié (Carus-Verlag 2008).

During the fall of 2010 Mr. Latry was based in the United States serving as Visiting Professor of Organ at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music; a result of a unique teaching exchange between the Paris Conservatory of Music and Oberlin College.

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