

The Memorial Church of Harvard University
Music Notes for April 30, 2022

Marcel Dupré studied with Charles-Marie Widor at the Paris Conservatory, and in 1934 succeeded Widor as titular organist of St. Sulpice. The last of the *Four Motets*, “Laudate” is originally scored for choir and two organs (this morning we use just one!), and is a jubilant setting of Psalm 117.

William Levi Dawson was born in Alabama in 1899 but ran away from home at the age of 13 to study music at the Tuskegee Institute. Ten years later, he returned to Tuskegee to launch its music school, while making its choir internationally famous through the singing of his arrangements of spirituals: “Every Time I Feel the Spirit” is one of the most celebrated of these.

In December 1957, Dupré played for the dedication of the newly rebuilt organ in Les Invalides, Paris: this morning’s prelude features reconstructed selections from those improvisations. The postlude is the thrilling final movement of the composer’s *Evocation*. Dedicated to the memory of Dupré’s father (who had been organist at Saint-Ouen, Rouen, with its famous Cavallé-Coll instrument), it is one of the composer’s finest toccata-style pieces, filled with mighty chords and dazzling technical devices.