

Sainte-Odile: the revival of Mrs. Dujarric's chamber organ

Mrs. Dujarric's chamber organ, designed in 1930 by organ builder Louis Eugène-Rochesson, is at the heart of an ambitious restoration project. This instrument, unanimously admired by the musicians of its time, represents a masterpiece of organ art. Equipped with three manuals, 2000 pipes, and a revolutionary electric transmission for the time, the organ was capable of producing orchestral nuances of exceptional sound richness. After the death of Mrs. Dujarric in 1982, the organ was dismantled and partially reassembled at the Sainte-Odile church in Paris, where it has been waiting for a complete restoration ever since.

Today, the Sainte-Odile church, itself an important Art Deco building, wishes to bring this exceptional instrument back to life. The restoration project, led by the consulting technician Christian Lutz, has already shown its technical feasibility. Estimated at around 1.1 million euros, this ambitious project aims to resurrect a major witness to the artistic life of the twentieth century. Thanks to patronage and donations, this organ could soon regain all its former splendour, resonating again in a setting worthy of its history. This project is not limited to a simple restoration, but to the rebirth of a place of memory and creation, perpetuating the musical legacy of Marcelle Dujarric and her illustrious guests.

The history of the organ and the Sainte-Odile Church: a musical heritage to be preserved
Mrs. Dujarric de la Rivière's chamber organ is much more than a simple instrument; it is a true witness to the artistic life of Paris in the twentieth century. Built in 1930 by the young and talented organ builder Louis Eugène-Rochesson, this organ was designed for the sumptuous music room of the Dujarric mansion in Boulogne-Billancourt. Its exceptional acoustics and technical innovations, such as electric transmission and quasi-orchestral expressive possibilities, made it a state-of-the-art instrument for the time.

For more than fifty years, this organ has resonated in this living room, hosting the musical creations of great composers and organists such as Darius Milhaud, Marcel Dupré, and Olivier Messiaen. After the death of Mrs. Dujarric in 1982, the mansion was sold and the organ dismantled. In 1988, the instrument found refuge in the church of Sainte-Odile, a remarkable Art Deco building, where it was partially reassembled in 1995.

The Sainte-Odile church, listed as a Historic Monument in 2001, is a major monument of Art Deco, designed by the architect Jacques Barge. Located in the 17th arrondissement of Paris, it is a notable example of the Art Deco style with its mosaics, colorful stained glass windows and period furniture. The arrival of Mrs. Dujarric's organ in Sainte-Odile represented a unique opportunity to preserve an important musical heritage in a setting that shares the same aesthetic values.

However, the organ was never reassembled in its entirety, due to a lack of sufficient financial means. Only a part of the instrument could be integrated into the existing organ, thus reducing its ability to regain its original splendour. Today, the parish of Sainte-Odile is embarking on an ambitious project to restore this unique organ, aiming to bring this twentieth-century musical heritage back to life and to revive the artistic soul of the Sainte-Odile church, while respecting the visionary spirit of its creators.

The restoration of Mrs. Dujarric's organ at the Sainte-Odile church brought together many music and heritage enthusiasts. The parishioners, as well as experts in historic organs, have been actively involved in reviving this unique instrument. Through donation campaigns and cultural events, this collective mobilization aims to preserve and enhance a precious musical heritage.

Source: <https://www.fondation-patrimoine.org/les-projets/eglise-sainte-odile-a-paris/101272#>