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LOUIS-CLAUDE DAQIN
NOUVEAU LIVRE DE NOËLS
POUR L'ORGUE ET LE CLAVECIN
DONT LA PLUPART S'ÉXÉCUTER SUR LES
VIOLONS, FLUTES, HAUTBOIS, & c.

Edited by

Jon Baxendale



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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	i
2. The music	ii
3. Registration and problems of tessitura	iii
4. Ornamentation	v
5. Notes inégales	vi
Ornament table	vii
1. Noël, sur les jeux d'Anches sans tremblant	2
2. Noël, en dialogue, Duo, Trio, sur le cornet de récit, la tierce du positif et la pédalle de Flûte	8
3. Noël, en Musette, en Dialogue, et en Duo	14
4. Noël, en Duo, sur les jeux d'Anches, sans tremblant	26
5. Noël, en duo	34
6. Noël, sur les jeux d'Anches, sans tremblant, et en duo	41
7. Noël, en trio et en dialogue, le Cornet de Récit de la main droite, la Tierce du Positif de la main gauche	48
8. Noël Étranger, sur les jeux d'anches, sans tremblant et en duo	54
9. Noël, sur les flûtes	58
10. Noël, Grand Jeu et duo	65
11. Noël, en récit en taille, sur la tierce du Positif, avec la Pédalle de flûte, et en duo	73
12. Noël Suisse, Grand Jeu et duo	82
Bibliography	88

1. INTRODUCTION

While there are accounts of infant prodigies from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, Louis-Claude Daquin's is one of some interest. He descended from a family of Jewish intellectuals: one was Professor of Hebrew at the Collège de France; another, his great uncle, was 'Conseiller d'État, premier Médecin de Louis XIV'; and a second cousin was the priest and author François Rabelais (La Boarde, 1780, 375). Daquin was born in Paris on 4 July 1694 to Claude Daquin and Anne Treisant. He took harpsichord lessons from his godmother, Élizabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre, and studied composition with Nicolas Bernier. In a series of letters published in 1752, his son, Pierre-Louis d'Aquin de Chateau-Lyon (1752, 114), reports that his father played before the royal court at the age of six, drawing compliments from the Dauphin.¹ Two years later, Daquin conducted his setting of *Beatus Vir* for *grand chœur avec symphonie*, though Fontenai (1776, 80) relates that, to be seen giving the beat, it was necessary to stand the boy on a table.

At the age of twelve, Daquin became apprenticed to the organist Martin de la Guerre at Saint-Chapelle and, in the same year, was appointed organist at Église Petit Saint-Antoine.² Daquin married Denise-Thérèse Quirot in 1722. Their marriage contract tells us that, at the time, he was *ordinaire de la musique* to Louis-Armand, Prince de Conti (Montagnier, *New Grove Online*). He probably held this post until 1727 when, in competition with a Couperin (Hogwood suggests Nicolas), Vaudry (possibly Edme, brother of the harpsichord builder, Jean Antoine Vaudry) and Jean-Philippe Rameau, he was appointed as the organist at Saint-Paul. Five years later, he succeeded his former teacher, Louis Marchand, at the Cordeliers. In 1739, after Jean-François Dandrieu died, Daquin was given the vacant position as one of the four *organistes du roi* at Versailles without contest.³ In 1755, he succeeded Antoine Calvière as one of the four organists at Notre Dame. He resigned his position at the Chapelle Royale in 1770 in favour of Armand-Louis Couperin. Although no reason is known for this decision, it was possibly the result of ill health, which began to afflict him severely in the last years of his life (Fontenai, 1776, 83). Despite this, La Borde (1780, 377) tells us that he continued to delight the congregation of Sainte-Chapelle: 'although almost an octogenarian, he played in a sublime manner [...] It was his last triumph'.⁴ Daquin died three months later, on 15 June 1772.

Accounts of Daquin's personality indicate he was a man with simple tastes, integrity and piety; he was disinterested in commercial gain and sought no fame. Above all, he loved art for its own sake. According to his son (D'Aquin de Chateau-Lyon, 1752, 115), Daquin's style was formed at the Cordeliers and that he 'possessed all the talents one admired in Marchand'.⁵ These were abundant: 'Handsome genius, brilliant hands, pure harmony, strength, precision, touch, and speed'.⁶ From Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Tableau de Paris* (1783, 49–51), the following biography provides us with one of the more colourful accounts of Daquin and his skills as an organist. It also paints a grim picture of the state of organ playing during the closing years of the *Ancien Régime*.

Everything has changed on the day I write. While raising the host and chalice, we hear ariettas and sarabandes; and at the Te Deum and Vespers, hunts, minuets, romances, rigadons. Where is this admirable Daquin who delighted me so many times? He died in

1772, and the organ with him. Sometimes, his shadow seems to flutter above Couperin's head.

It is a widespread abuse to have only passagework under the fingers and, because of a lack of genius and application—which is so evident—ditties now prevail on the organ to the extent that there is nothing suitable or majestic enough to grace a temple. Even the noëls Daquin performed so flawlessly are now corrupt to the point that they only make rude *Ponts-neufs*; we just do not recognise the song.⁷

The organ is the king of instruments; it contains everything. Clicquot, the only excellent builder in existence, has perfected this astonishing machine considerably. The opening of his organ in Saint-Sulpice, which occurred this year, 1781, reminds us of what happened at Sainte-Chapelle in Paris on a parallel occasion. Daquin performed; this seventy-five-year-old musician worked miracles. All the listeners shouted: 'His genius is stronger than ever, and he has the fingers of a twenty-year-old'. It was a melodious swan that sang so well before dying. Daquin was in the tomb three months later.

We know three aspects of this great artist's life, which seem very extraordinary, but which are, nonetheless, true. A born musician, he composed a motet for grand choir and symphony at the age of eight. There were crowds, and with the performance finished, it was thought they would suffocate this rare child with their caresses.

At the Christmas midnight mass, Daquin imitated the song of the nightingale perfectly on the organ. The effect was so surprising and magical because of being completely natural—as if the bird was actually there—that the parish treasurer sent the verger and ushers to explore the vaults at the top of the church. No nightingale. It was Daquin.

When the organ of Saint-Paul was being restored, the builder left only the Positif, that is to say, a very small organ, for use during offices. There were no trumpets or pedals: just a single keyboard remained, and the carcass of the great organ was completely void. However, Daquin played his Te Deum on the Eve of St. Peter, and we listeners were more numerous than usual because of the event's rarity. We did not realize that so many registers had been removed: they seemed to be in place, and the pedal flute could be heard roaring, even though it no longer existed. A great discussion broke out between the builders present.

'But you removed the pedal,' we said to Clicquot.

'No, I swear [I did].'

'But that is impossible.' Then a wager: when the Te Deum finished, we went up to the organ, we examined, we sought, we found nothing but a single man who had just so victoriously deceived even those who made the instrument.

Once the organ had been repaired and enlarged with Bombards, the Feast of Saint Paul was announced in the public papers, and we were there in prodigious crowds. Here you need some detail: everything was so packed that we couldn't move: choir, nave, aisles, side chapels, distant chapels, the two sacristies, the galleries above, the organ staircase, the

¹ Fontenai's account (1776, 80) replaces the dauphin with Louis XIV.

² The term 'assistant' is repeated in nearly all contemporary accounts of Daquin's life. It is unlikely, though, that this was the case; he was probably a *survivant*, a term used for apprentice organists who would play for certain offices when the *titulaire* was absent. This was often the case since most *organistes de Paris* served several churches. Both Marchand and François Couperin were *survivants*: Marchand under his father and Couperin under Michel-Richard Delalande at Saint-Gervais; Couperin had been left the position on the death of his father in 1679, and Delalande, who also served several churches, became the organist for the interregnum.

³ This was unusual; François Couperin was reported to have been appointed to the Chapelle Royale without competition, though usually a strict protocol was enforced to find the most suitable candidate.

⁴ 'Le jour de la réception de l'orgue de la Ste. Chapelle, d'Aquin, quoiqu'alors presque octogénaire joua d'une manière sublime; sa tête et ces mains n'avaient que vingt ans ce fut son dernier triomphe'.

⁵ '...puisqu'il possède tous les talents qu'on admiroit dans Marchand'.

⁶ 'Beau génie, mains brillantes, harmonie pure, de la force, de la précision, du touchant, de la rapidité'.

⁷ 'Pont-neuf' refers to a now-forgotten expression which designated a well known tune to which different lyrics might be set. The etymology of the expression comes from the singing that was frequently heard on the bridge.

passages, the front of the gate. The coaches held the entire rue Saint-Antoine up to the Célestins. On that day, Daquin, more sublime than ever, thundered in the *Judex Crederis*, which brought to hearts impressions so vivid and deep that everyone turned pale and shuddered.

Mr Dauvergne, now at the head of the Opera,⁸ was so profoundly struck that he quickly left to entrust to paper the sublime sounds he had just heard. He placed them all in his beautiful *Te Deum* for *grand chœur*.

There are organists, but Daquin is Daquin! We pay this tribute to this famous artist to better encourage his successors. He left a son who cultivates the *Letters* honourably.^{9 10}

2. THE MUSIC

*Noëls should have a rustic and pastoral character so that they match the simplicity of the words of the shepherds who were supposed to have sung them when paying homage to Christ in the crib.*¹¹

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1768, 323)

Unlike liturgical organ music, which was written solely for church offices, the French Noël had a distinct role. Although we now associate the genre with Christmas festivities, l'Abbé Arnaud indicates that it was used as a hymn of praise for both secular and religious occasions and that these fall into four distinct species (Pérenès, 1876, IV):

1. The *noël religieux* in celebration of the birth of Jesus.
2. The *noël royal*, composed for sovereigns to mark births, marriages, victories and other significant events of their reigns; and to celebrate their Christmas festivities.
3. The *noël politique*, in praise of a great person or public official in the service of the state or the church.
4. The *noël badin* (light-hearted) that praised private persons or popular subjects.

⁸ Antoine Dauvergne, a composer and three-times director of the Paris Opéra between 1769 and 1790.

⁹ A reference to D'Aquin Chateau-Lyon's *Lettres*.

¹⁰ 'Tout a changé au jour que j'écris. On joue, *durant l'élévation de l'hostie & du calice, des ariettes & des sarabandes*; & au *Te Deum* & aux vêpres, des *chasses*, des *menuets*, des *romances*, des *rigodons*. Où est donc cet admirable Daquin qui m'a ravi tant de fois! Il est mort en 1772, & l'orgue avec lui. Son ombre semble pourtant voltiger quelquefois sur la tête de Couperin.

L'abus presque général de n'avoir que des passages sous les doigts, & cela par défaut de génie & d'application, cet abus est devenu si criant, que les chansons ont prévalu sur l'orgue, de manière qu'il n'a plus rien de cette majesté convenable à un temple. Les noëls même que Daquin varioit parfaitement, on les défigure à présent au point que ce ne sont plus que des *Ponts-neufs* grossiers; on n'y reconnoît seulement pas le chant.

L'orgue est le roi des instruments; il les contient tous. Cliquot, le seul excellent facteur qui existe, a beaucoup perfectionné cette étonnante machine. La réception de son orgue de Saint-Sulpice, faite cette année 1781, nous rappelle ce qui s'est passé à la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris en pareille occasion. Daquin sur arbitre; ce musicien âgé de soixante & quinze ans fit des miracles. Tous les auditeurs crioient: *Son génie est plus fort que jamais, & il a ses doigts de vingt ans*. C'étoit le cygne mélodieux qui chantoit si bien avant de mourir. Daquin fut au tombeau trois mois après.

Nous connoissons trois traits de la vie de ce grand artiste, qui paroissent fort l'extraordinaires, & qui n'en font pas moins vrais. Musicien né, il composa à huit ans un motet à grand chœur & symphonie. On fut obligé de le mettre sur une table, pour en battre la mesure. Il y avoit foule; & l'exécution finie, on pensa étouffer de caresses un enfant si rare.

A la messe de minuit de Noël, Daquin imita si parfaitement sur l'orgue le chant du rossignol, sans que le couplet dans lequel il le faisoit entrer parue gêné en rien de cette addition, que l'extrême surprise fût universelle. Le trésorier de la Paroisse envoya le Suisse & les bedeaux à la découverte dans les voûtes & sur le faite de l'Eglise. Point de rossignol; c'étoit Daquin qui l'étoit.

Les accompagnements paroissoient y être, & l'on entendit ronfler la pédale de flûte, quoiqu'elle n'existoit plus. Grand bruit entre les facteurs qui étoient présents. — Mais vous avez laissé la pédale, disoit on à Cliquot. — Non, je vous jure.

The first genre existed outside the austere sphere of hymns, canticles and mass offices. These were governed by strict ordinances that decided every aspect of liturgical life in parish churches and monastic institutions. Such regulations were laid out in a series of ceremonials that stipulated which services the organist played and how the organ should sound, and from these developed a standard rhetorical aesthetic from which organists rarely strayed. They were required to play in *alternatim* with a cantor or choir by performing a short organ verset in place of every second verse of the text celebrated. Congregational participation was kept to a minimum, though several accounts, including one grim description by Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers (1683, 111–113), indicates that the religious fervour among congregants was such that they shouted 'with all their might' the text the organist replaced.¹² However, this was the limit of the congregation's involvement: daily offices were the domain of the church and its officiants, with the people their onlookers. Conversely, the Noël belonged to the folk: texts, usually in the vernacular or patois, were simplified Biblical themes that emphasised the humanity of Jesus and Mary. Their popularity is demonstrated by the large number of printed collections—'Bibles de noëls'—that began appearing in the sixteenth century, as well as the number of composers who appropriated their melodies for Christmas masses.

The *Messe de minuit* seems not to have followed the strictures of the ceremonials. It marked the beginning of a night of festivities that would not end until the following day's first Christmas mass. The German writer Joachim Christophe Nemeitz (1727, 230–231) reported it as a vulgar affair in which the

music made at these churches is not particularly devout since minuets, and secular songs are played on the organ: it is a time of much impudence, foolishness and impropriety.¹³

Nemeitz might have been discussing composed Noël settings, though we should also consider that much of the musical liturgy from the mid-seventeenth century was based on popular dance genres such as the *bourrée*, *menuet and gigue*, and it might have been these pieces to which he referred. He does not mention congregational participation in the occasion. Few French sources do, though one

— Mais cela est impossible. — Puis un gros pari. Le *Te Deum* fini, on monte à l'orgue, on examine, on cherche, on ne trouve rien que l'homme singulier, qui venoit de tromper si victorieusement ceux même qui fabriquent l'instrument.

L'orgue une fois réparé & augmenté de *bombardes*, on annonce dans les papiers publics la fête de Saint Paul: nous y étions; prodigieuse affluence! Il faut ici du détail: tout étoit plein à ne pouvoir se remuer: chœur, nef, bas-côtés, chapelles latérales, chapelles éloignées, les deux sacristies, les galeries d'en haut, l'escalier de l'orgue, les passages, le devant du portail. Les carrosses tenoient toute la rue Saint-Antoine jusqu'aux Célestins. Ce fut ce jour-là que Daquin, plus sublime que jamais, tonna dans le *Judex crederis*, qui porta dans les cœurs des impressions si vives & si profondes, que tout le monde pâlit & frissonna.

M. Dauvergne, actuellement à la tête de l'Opéra, fut si vivement frappé, qu'il sortit des premiers, & courut vite confier au papier les traits sublimes qu'il venoit d'entendre. Il les a tous placés dans son beau *Te Deum* à grand chœur.

Il y a eu des organistes; mais Daquin est Daquin. Nous rendons cet hommage à ce célèbre artiste, pour mieux encourager ses successeurs. Il a laissé un fils qui cultive les Lettres honorablement.

L'orgue, a dit Gresset, *attire l'impie étonné dans nos temples*. L'Archevêque de Paris a défendu les *Te Deum* du soir & les *messes de minuit* en musique, dans deux Eglises de Paris, Saint-Roch & l'Abbaye Saint-Germain, à cause de la multitude qui venoit pour entendre l'organiste, & qui ne conservoit pas le respect dû à la sainteté du lieu.¹¹

¹¹ 'Les *Airs de Noëls* doivent avoir une caractère champêtre & pastoral convenable à la simplicité des paroles, & à celle des Bergers qu'on suppose les avoir chanté en allant rendre hommage à l'Enfant Jésus dans la Crèche'.

¹² Nivers, Guillaume-Gabriel, *Dissertation sur le chant grégorien* (Paris, 1683).

¹³ 'La Musique qui se fait aux Eglises, n'est pas trop devote, puisque les orgues jouent des menuets & toute sort d'airs modains. C'est alors qu'il se passe beaucoup d'impudicité, de sottises, & d'impietez'. Joachim Christoph Nemeitz, *Séjour de Paris, c'est-à-dire, Instructions fidèles, pour les voyageurs de condition... durant leur séjour à Paris...; comme aussi une description... de la Cour de France, du Parlement.. Par le Sr J. C. Nemeitz* (Leide, 1727).

LOUIS-CLAUDE DAQUIN
NOUVEAU LIVRE DE NOËLS

I. NOËL, SUR LES JEUX D'ANCHES SANS TREMBLANT

[A LA VENUE DE NOËL]

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-8. The score is in 2/4 time and features a treble clef for the upper staff and a bass clef for the lower staff. The upper staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments (trills, mordents) and dynamic markings (m). The lower staff contains a bass line with a similar melodic character. The instrument is identified as 'Cromhorne'.

Musical score for the second system, measures 9-14. The score continues from the first system. The upper staff features a melodic line with ornaments and dynamic markings. The lower staff continues the bass line. The instrument is identified as 'Cornet de récit'.

Musical score for the third system, measures 15-20. The score continues from the second system. The upper staff features a melodic line with ornaments and dynamic markings. The lower staff continues the bass line.

20 *La main droite sur le grand jeu.*

28

Grand jeu. *Positif.* *Grand jeu.*

Positif. *Grand jeu.*

* An unusual termination, given the leading note in bar 32. It might have been placed down an octave to spare an out-of-tune unison from sounding too harsh. However, d² might be preferred.

44 *Cornet de récit.*
I^{re}. Double.
Cromhorne.

48

52

57

61

2^{d.} Double

66

69

XII. NOËL SUISSE, GRAND JEU, ET DUO.

[Ô DIEU DE CLÉMANCE]

The first system of the musical score is in 2/4 time. It features a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano part is divided into two staves. The upper staff of the piano part is marked *Pésamant* and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a trill. The lower staff is marked *Positif.* and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The system concludes with a fermata over the final note of the vocal line.

The second system of the musical score begins at measure 11. It continues the vocal and piano parts from the first system. The piano accompaniment features a consistent eighth-note pattern in the lower staff and a more active melodic line in the upper staff. The system ends with a fermata over the final note of the vocal line.

The third system of the musical score begins at measure 21. It continues the vocal and piano parts. The piano accompaniment maintains its rhythmic and melodic patterns. The system concludes with a fermata over the final note of the vocal line.

32 *Main droite sur le grand jeu.*

42 *Grand jeu.*

52 *Main droite sur le grand jeu.*
Positif.

63 *Grand jeu.*

73

Positif.

Cornet de récit.

85

Grand jeu.

Pédalle de Tromp.

96

Cornet de récit.

[Reprise 2 fois.]
Cromhorne.

106

115

Musical score for measures 115-123. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with several trills (marked with a 'm' above the note) and eighth-note patterns. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line with eighth-note patterns and some accidentals.

124

Musical score for measures 124-132. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line with trills and eighth-note patterns. The lower staff continues the bass line with eighth-note patterns and some accidentals.

133

Musical score for measures 133-140. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line with trills and eighth-note patterns. The lower staff continues the bass line with eighth-note patterns and some accidentals.

141

Musical score for measures 141-148. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melodic line with trills and eighth-note patterns. The lower staff continues the bass line with eighth-note patterns and some accidentals. In the final measure (148), the right hand part is empty, and the text "Main droite sur le Gr^d. jeu." is written in the right margin.

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