

# Livre d'orgue de Montréal

With Canada Day coming up on Friday, I thought it appropriate to tell you about the Montreal Organ Book or Livre d'Orgue de Montreal as it is known in French. By the way, for those of you who speak French but with a Parisian accent, you will notice that my French has a French-Canadian accent. That's because I was born and raised in Montreal.

In any case, Élisabeth Gallat-Morin discovered this remarkable collection in 1978. It had been brought over from Old France to New France in 1724 by the Reverend Jean Girard, a Sulpician priest. The Montreal Organ Book consists of 398 pieces for organ composed between 1675 and 1724. The volume consists of 540 pages of ruled paper, with six or eight staves per page. It is a collection of about 40 separate quires or gatherings of leaves, which were bound together after the music was written.

Scholars have not been able to identify who composed most of the works. However, they are certain that sixteen pieces were written by French Baroque composer organist Nicolas Lebègue (1630-1702). He was the King of France's organist. The music was written for use in the liturgies of the church. There are Masses, Magnificats, and Te Deums in the collection. The music was intended to alternate with sung verses of the various parts of the liturgy.

You and I are going to hear the late Kenneth Gilbert (1931-2020) play an anonymous *Tierce en Taille*. Kenneth Gilbert was one of the scholars who together with Mlle. Gallat-Morin edited the Montreal Organ Book. Gilbert is playing the 1981 Helmut Wolff organ in Redpath Hall at McGill University. This is an organ which was designed to faithfully replicate a 17th-century French organ.

Robert Kennedy  
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Source: [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)