

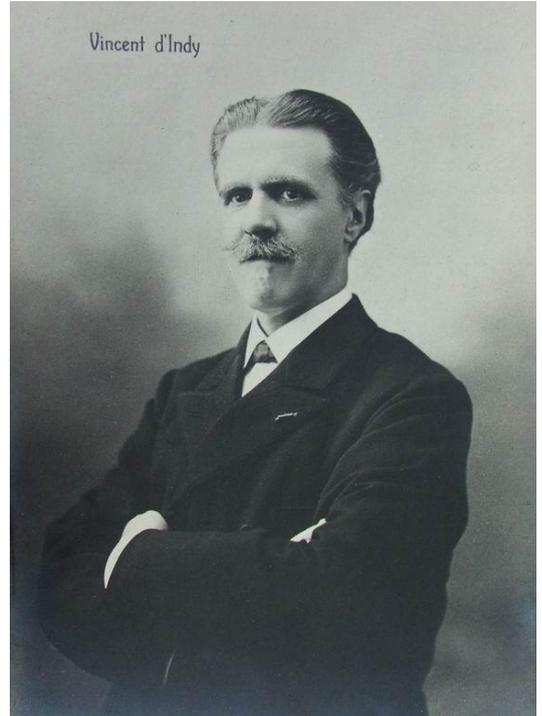
VINCENT D'INDY

David C F Wright PhD

Paul Marie Théodore Vincent d'Indy was born in Paris on 27 March 1851 into an aristocratic family of royalist and Catholic persuasion. He had piano lessons from an early age from his paternal grandmother, who then introduced him to Antoine François Marmontel and Louis Diémer to continue his studies.

From the age of 14, he studied harmony with Albert Lavignac. During the Franco-Prussian War, when he was 19, he enlisted in the National Guard, but returned to musical life as soon as the conflict was over.

The first of his works heard was a *Symphonie Italienne*, at an orchestral rehearsal under Jules Padeloup. The work was admired by both Georges Bizet and Jules Massenet, with whom he had already become acquainted. On the advice of Henri Duparc, he became a student of César Franck at the Conservatoire de Paris. As a follower of Franck, d'Indy came to admire what he considered the standards of German symphonies.



In the summer of 1873, he visited Germany, where he met both Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms. On 25 January 1874 his overture *Les Piccolomini* was performed at a Padeloup concert which included works by Bach and Beethoven. Around this time he married one of his cousins.

In 1875, his symphony dedicated to János Hunyadi was performed. That same year he played a minor role as prompter at the premiere of Bizet's opera *Carmen*. In 1876 he attended the first production of Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle at Bayreuth which made a great impression on him and he became a fervent Wagnerite.

In 1878 d'Indy's symphonic ballad *La Forêt enchantée* was performed. In 1882, he heard Wagner's *Parsifal*. In 1883, his choral work *Le Chant de la cloche* appeared, and in 1884 his symphonic poem *Saugefleurie* was premiered. His piano suite ("symphonic poem for piano") called *Poème des montagnes* came from around this time. In 1887, there appeared his *Suite in D* for trumpet, 2 flutes and string quartet. That same year he was involved in Lamoureux's production of Wagner's *Lohengrin* as choirmaster. His music drama *Fervaal* occupied him between 1889 and 1895.

Inspired by his own studies with Franck and dissatisfied with the standard of teaching at the Conservatoire de Paris, d'Indy, together with Charles Bordes and Alexandre Guilmant, founded the Schola Cantorum de Paris in 1894. D'Indy taught there and later at the Paris Conservatoire until his death. Among his many students were Isaac Albéniz, Leo Arnaud, Joseph Canteloube (who later wrote d'Indy's biography), Pierre Capdevielle, Jean Daetwyler, Arthur Honegger, Eugène Lapierre, Leevi Madetoja, Albéric Magnard, Rodolphe Mathieu, Darius Milhaud, Cole Porter, Albert Roussel, Erik Satie, Georges-Émile Tanguay, Otto Albert Tichý, Emiliana de Zubeldia and Xian Xinghai. Xian was one of the earliest Chinese composers of western classical music.

Few of d'Indy's works are performed regularly today. His music seems at times to be expansive and inactive and rather leisurely which may mean it lacks drama and interest. An example is the

Symphony no 2 but many like it and there are moments of great beauty..His Quartet n° 2 in E has been described as one of the finest French string quartets.His best known pieces are probably the Symphony on a French Mountain Air (*Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français*, also known as *Symphonie cévenole*) for piano and orchestra (1886), and *Istar* (1896), a symphonic poem in the form of a set of variations in which the theme appears only at the end.

Among d'Indy's other works are other orchestral music (including the aforementioned Symphony in B \flat , a vast symphonic poem, *Jour d'été à la montagne*, and another, *Souvenirs*, written on the death of his first wife;(he later remarried), chamber music, including two of the finest string quartets of the latter 19th century including the third quartet which is also highly regarded by some, piano music including a Sonata in E minor and a difficult Nocturne Op 26, songs and a number of operas, including *Fervaal* (1897) and *L'Étranger* (1902). His music drama *Le Légende de Saint Christophe*, based on themes from Gregorian chant, was performed for the first, and possibly last, time, on 6 June 1920. His *comédie musicale* had its premiere in Paris on 10 June 1927. As well as Franck, d'Indy's works show the influence of Berlioz and especially of Wagner.

D'Indy helped revive a number of then largely forgotten early works, for example, making his own edition of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

His musical writings include the co-written three-volume *Cours de composition musicale* (1903–1905), as well as studies of Franck and Beethoven.

D'Indy died, in Paris on 2 December 1931.

D'Indy was a committed monarchist, joining the League of la Patrie française during the Dreyfus affair. He was anti-Semitic, but did not extend this bias to his Jewish colleagues.

The private music college *École de musique Vincent-d'Indy* in Montreal, Canada is named after the composer.

Compositions by Vincent d'Indy.

Works with opus number

- Op. 1, Piano Sonata in C minor (1869)
- Op. 2, *La chanson des aventuriers de la mer* for male voices, piano, and string quintet after Victor Hugo (1872)
- Op. 3, *Attente*, song for voice and piano after Hugo (1871)
- Op. 4, *Madrigal*, song for voice and piano after Robert de Bonnières (1872)
- Op. 5, *Jean Hundaye*, symphony (1874-5) [cf. John Hunyadi]
- Op. 6, *Antoine et Cléopâtre*, overture after William Shakespeare (1876)
- Op. 7, Piano Quartet in A minor (1878–88)
- Op. 8, *La forêt enchantée* (Harald), symphonic legend after Uhland (1878)
- Op. 9, *Petite sonate dans la forme classique* for piano (1880)
- Op. 10, *Plainte de Thécla*, song after de Bonnières and Friedrich Schiller (1880)
- Op. 11, *Au galop* (*Melodie espagnole*), song after de Bonnières (1876-9)
- Op. 12, *Wallenstein*, three symphonic overtures after Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1870–81)
 - No. 1 *Le camp*
 - No. 2 *Les piccolomini*
 - No. 3 *La mort de Wallenstein*
- Op. 13, *Clair de lune*, song for soprano and piano after Victor Hugo (1872), orch. (1881)
- Op. 14, *Attendez-moi sous l'orme*, opéra-comique in one act after J. Prével (1876–82)
- Op. 15, *Poème des montagnes*, symphonic poem for piano (1881)

- Op. 16, Quatre pièces for piano (1882)
- Op. 17, Helvétia, three waltzes for piano (1882)
- Op. 18, Le chant de la cloche, legend dramatique with prologue and seven scenes, text by d'Indy after Schiller, for solo voices, double chorus, and orchestra (1879–83), also adapted for stage
- Op. 19, Lied for cello/viola and orchestra (1884)
- Op. 20, L'amour et la crane, song for voice and piano after Charles Baudelaire (1884)
- Op. 21, Saugefleurie, legend for orchestra after de Bonnières (1884)
- Op. 22, Cantate Domino, canticle for three voices and organ (1885)
- Op. 23, Sainte Marie-Madeleine, cantata for soprano, female voices, piano, and harmonium (1885)
- Op. 24, Suite dans le style ancien in D for trumpet, two flutes, and string quartet with Bass ad libitum (1886)
- Op. 25, Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français (Symphonie cévenole) for piano and orchestra (1886)
- Op. 26, Nocturne for piano (1886)
- Op. 27, Promenade for piano (1887)
- Op. 28, Sérénade et valse for orchestra (1885)
- Op. 29, Trio in B flat for clarinet/violin, cello, and piano (1887)
- Op. 30, Schumanniana, three songs without words for piano (1887)
- Op. 31, Fantaisie sur des thèmes populaires français for oboe and orchestra (1888)
- Op. 32, Sur la mer, for female voices (1888)
- Op. 33, Tableaux de voyage, thirteen pieces for piano (1889)
- Op. 34, Karadec, incidental music after A. Alexandre (1890)
- Op. 35, String Quartet No. 1 in D (1890)
- Op. 36, Tableaux de voyage (orch. 1892 after piano works Op. 33/1. 2. 5. 4, 6, 13)
- Op. 37, Cantate de fête pour l'inauguration d'une statue for baritone, voices, and orchestra after E. Augier (1893)
- Op. 38, Prélude et petit canon à trois parties for organ (1893)
- Op. 39, L'art et le peuple, for four male voices after Hugo (1894), orch. (1918)
- Op. 40, Fervaal, action musicale with prologue and three acts (1889–93)
- Op. 41, Deus Israel conjungat vos, motet for four to six voices (1896)
- Op. 42, Istar, symphonic variations (1896)
- Op. 43, Lied maritime, song for voice and piano (1896)
- Op. 44, Ode à Valence, for soprano, male voices, and orchestra after Genest (1897)
- Op. 45, String Quartet No. 2 in E (1897)
- Op. 46, Les noces d'or du sacerdoce, canticle for voice and harmonium after P. Delaporte (1898)
- Op. 47, Médée, incidental music after C. Mendès (1898)
- Op. 48, La première dent, song for voice and piano after J. de La Laurencie (1898)
- Op. 49, Sancta Maria, succure miseris, motet for two equal voices and organ (1898)
- Op. 50, Chansons et danses for wind instruments (1898)
- Op. 51, Vêpres du commun des martyrs for organ (1899)
- Op. 52, Quatre-vingts huit chansons populaires du Vivarais (1900)
- Op. 53, L'étranger, action musicale in two acts (1898–1901)
- Op. 54, Marche du 76ème régiment d'infanterie for military band (1903)
- Op. 55, Choral varié, for saxophone/viola and orchestra (1903)
- Op. 56, Mirage, song for voice and piano after P. Grivollet (1903)
- Op. 57, Symphony No. 2 in B flat (1902-3)
- Op. 58, Les yeux de l'aimée, song for voice and piano (1904)
- Op. 59, Violin Sonata in C (1903-4)
- Op. 60, Petite chanson grégorienne for piano four hands (1904)
- Op. 61, Jour d'été à la montagne, symphonic triptych (1905)
- Op. 62, Souvenirs, poem for orchestra (1906)
- Op. 63, Piano Sonata in E (1907)
- Op. 64, Vocalise, song for voice and piano (1907)

- Op. 65, Menuet sur le nom de Haydn for piano (1909)
- Op. 66, Pièce in E flat for harmonium (1911), pub. for organ (1912) and as Prélude (1913)
- Op. 67, La légende de Saint Christophe, drame sacré in three acts (1908–15), libretto by d'Indy after J. de Voragine's *Legende aurea*
- Op. 68, Treize pièces brèves for piano (1908–15)
- Op. 69, Douze pièces brèves faciles dans le style classique de la fin du XVIIIe siècle for piano (1908–15)
- Op. 70, Symphony No. 3 *Sinfonia brevis de bello gallico* (1916–18)
- Op. 71, Cent thèmes d'harmonie et réalisations (1907–18)
- Op. 72, Sarabande et menuet for wind quintet and piano (1918), arr. from Op. 24
- Op. 73, Sept chants de terroir for piano four hands (1918)
- Op. 74, Pour les enfants de tous les âges, twenty-four pieces for piano (1919)
- Op. 75, Pentecosten, twenty-four popular Gregorian canticles, for voice, union voices, and organ (1919)
- Op. 76, Veronica, incidental music after C. Gos (1919–20)
- Op. 77, Poèmes des rivages, symphonic suite (1919–21)
- Op. 78, Two Scholars' Songs for two voices after anon. (1921)
- Op. 79, Ave, regina coelorum, motet for four voices (1922)
- Op. 80, Le rêve de Cinyras, comédie musicale in three acts after X. de Courville (1922)
- Op. 81, Piano Quintet in G minor (1924)
- Op. 82, Trois chansons populaires françaises for four voices (1924)
- Op. 83, Deux motets en l'honneur de la canonisation de Saint Jean Eudes for four voices (1925)
- Op. 84, Cello Sonata in D (1924-5)
- Op. 85, Thème varié, fugue and chorale for piano (1925)
- Op. 86, Contes de fées, five pieces for piano (1925)
- Op. 87, Diptyque méditerranéen for orchestra (1925-6)
- Op. 88, O dominea mea', motet for two equal voices and organ (1926)
- Op. 89, Concert for piano, flute and cello with string orchestra (1926)
- Op. 90, Six chants populaires français (1927)
- Op. 91, Suite for flute, string trio, and harp (1927)
- Op. 92, Sextet in B flat for two violins, two violas, and two cellos (1927)
- Op. 93, Le bouquet de printemps for three female voices after anon. (1928)
- Op. 94, Madrigal à deux voix, song for soprano and cello after Charles d'Orléans (1928)
- Op. 95, Six paraphrases sur des chansons enfantines de France (1928)
- Op. 96, String Quartet No. 3 in D flat (1928-9)
- Op. 97, Les trois fileuses, for three equal voices after M. Chevais (1929)
- Op. 98, Piano Trio in G (1929)
- Op. 99, Fantaisie sur un viel air de ronde française for piano (1930)
- Op. 100, Six chants populaires français for four voices (1930)
- Op. 101, Cinquante chansons populaires du Vivarais (1930)
- Op. 102, Chanson en forme de canon à l'octave for soprano and baritone (1931)
- Op. 103, Chant de nourrice for three equal voices after J. Aicard (1931)
- Op. 104, Le forgeron for three voices and string quartet after Aicard (1931)
- Op. 105, La vengeance du mari for soprano and two tenors, four voices, and small wind band/piano (1931), pub. as Op. 104

Works without opus number

Orchestral

- Symphony No. 1 in A, *Symphonie italienne* (1870–72)
- La divine comédie, symphonic poem after Dante (1871)

Chamber

Scherzo in D for piano quartet (1871)
Mosaïque sur Fervaal for military band (1897)
Trois petites pièces (1907–15)
 No. 1 in D for flute and piano
 No. 2 in B flat for clarinet and piano
 No. 3 in F for horn and piano
Rondino for four trumpets (1911)
String Quartet No.4 (1931, incomplete)

Piano

Quatre romances sans paroles (1870)

Secular vocal

O gai soleil for two voices (1909)
Vive Henry quatre for four voices and wind band/piano (1909), harmonization of song by anon.

Songs for voice and piano

L'Académie Française nous a nommés tous trois, authorship of lyrics doubtful, possibly d'Indy (1888)
Vingt-neuf chansons populaires du Vivarais et du Vercors (1892)
Deux chansons enfantines (1896)
Six chansons anciennes du Vivarais (1926)
Ariette pour Tina (1927)
Cinq chansons folkloriques et deux rigaudons à une voix (c. 1931)

Someone has said that his music is well-written but somewhat academic and solid.

[Score: Nocturn for Piano, op. 26](#)

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