

## Radio France

Maison de la Radio is the headquarters of Radio France. It is located in the 16th arrondissement of Paris near the Eiffel Tower. Built in the shape of huge ring 500 metres in circumference, with a central utility tower, the building houses the administrative



offices, broadcasting studios, and performance spaces for all of Radio France's national stations and its four permanent ensembles—Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre national de France, Chœur de Radio France and Maîtrise de Radio France. The building was designed by Henry Bernard and completed in 1963. It underwent a major renovation beginning in 2005 and began reopening to the public in 2014 with the inauguration of its new auditorium.

The building was re-opened to the public in November 2014 with a gala concert by Radio France's two orchestras, the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France and the Orchestre national de France, in the Maison's newly constructed Grand Auditorium. In 2016, the renovated Studio 104 reopened with a concert featuring both classical music and performances by Eddy Mitchell and Agnes Obel. However, final touches to the building and its landscaping would

continue into 2017.

The Grand Auditorium, inaugurated in 2014, is now the main concert space for Radio France's permanent ensembles—Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre national de France, Chœur de Radio France and Maîtrise de Radio France. Created out of the old Studios 102 and 103 during the renovation, it has a seating capacity of 1462. The walls and balcony facades are covered in faceted panels of birch, beech and cherry wood.

Studio 104, also known as the Salle Olivier Messiaen, was originally the main performance and broadcasting hall for the Radio France orchestras and choruses but was also used for concerts of contemporary and popular music. It seats 852 people and has been known since the Maison's construction in 1963 for its superior acoustics. The hall was closed for renovation from 2010 to 2016. During that time the seating was completely renovated, a choir stall was

constructed to replace the organ which had been returned to Notre-Dame de la Treille, and the original bas-relief sculptures by Louis Leygue which decorate its interior walls were cleaned and restored.

It is now used both for public concerts and as rehearsal space for the Radio France orchestras and choruses.

France has nearly 12,000 pipe organs, but only three in concert halls: the Maurice Ravel Auditorium in Lyon (since 1977), Radio France and the Philharmonie de Paris. The creation of these two new instruments in Paris is therefore a major event in their musical life.

As Radio France wanted its new Auditorium to have a new organ, a call for tenders was launched in 2008 and in June 2009, Barcelona-based German organ builder Gerhard Grenzing's project was chosen. A committee of prestigious French organists was then formed around Michel Bouvard, François



Espinasse, Thierry Escaich, Bernard Foccroulle, Olivier Latry and Jean-Pierre Leguay to follow the progress of work step by step with the architects and builders of this imposing hall.

Gerhard Grenzing has constructed new instruments in Japan, Korea, Russia, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Portugal, and a large number of instruments in Spain and France.

The organ has been imagined taking into account the volumetrics of the Auditorium. In this room, the acoustics were designed so that the sound circulates and reflects through wood panelling on the balconies and poly

cylinders located at the back of the stands. The ceiling, meanwhile, has been equipped with a reflective lens canopy, to optimize acoustic propagation and reflection. At the end of 2011, the organ was completely defined and, at the end of 2012, the plans necessary for its integration into this



amazing hall were drawn up and the manufacture of the instrument began.

Radio France has a goal to make this instrument fully alive. A patronage campaign with the support of the Music and Radio Foundation has just been launched with the aim of creating a circle of patrons of the organ and to involve the donors in future activities that the instrument will generate. This includes the organization of workshops and educational visits, public masterclasses, residencies of young organists, cinema, radio drama with France Culture, a composition contest, and many more activities to bring the instrument into the public arena.

No small instrument, this organ has two four-manual consoles: a fixed mechanical console in the lower case; and a mobile electric action console placed on stage with proportional sensitive touch.

There are 87 registers comprising 5,320 pipes ranging from 1 foot to 32 foot pitch.

The physical dimensions of the organ are 12 metres high by 12 metres wide and it weighs about 30 tonnes.

The consoles have 61 note keyboards of bone and ebony and the pedal of 32 notes is of oak. The two consoles can be played together, providing exciting opportunities for two organists.

The seven divisions of the organ are described in the stoplist on the next page. The organ is tuned to equal temperament with the Montre (Diapason) A = 442 at 22° C.

*Bruce Duncan*

Information including the stoplist and photographs have been sourced from a number of internet sites, including:  
[organsparisaz2.orguesdeparis.fr](http://organsparisaz2.orguesdeparis.fr)  
[maisondelaradio.fr](http://maisondelaradio.fr)  
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Maison\\_de\\_la\\_Radio](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Maison_de_la_Radio)  
[grenzing.com](http://grenzing.com)  
[hiveminer.com](http://hiveminer.com)



Mechanical (above) and electric (below) consoles





### Stoplist of the Radio France Organ

Grand Orgue	Positiv Expressif	Récit Expressif	Solo Expressif	Pedale					
Montre	16	Quintaton	16	Bourdon	8	Bourdon	32		
Bourdon	16	Principal	8	Principal	16	Principal	16		
Montre	8	Salicional	8	Gambe	16	Flûte Traversière	8	Soubasse	16
Suavial	8	Méditation	8	Principal	8	Choeur de cordes	4	Contrebasse	16
Flûte harmonique	8	Bourdon	8	Gambe	8	Flûte Traversière	4	Principal	16
Bourdon à chém.	8	Prestant	4	Voix Céleste	8	Flûte	2	Bourdon	16
Grosse Quinte	5 1/3	Flûte douce	4	Cor de nuit	8	Cor Anglais	8	Quinte	10 2/3
Prestant	4	Nasard	2 2/3	Flûte harmonique	8			Principal	8
Flute Conique	4	Doublette	2	Octave	4	<b>Solo</b>		Bourdon	8
Grosse Tierce	3 1/5	Tierce	1 3/5	Flûte Octavante	4	<b>Haute Pression</b>		Violoncelle	8
Quinte	2 2/3	Septime	1 1/7	Nazard	2 2/3			Flûte	8
Doublette	2	Larigot	1 1/3	Octavin	2	Flûte	8	Tierce Imperial	6 2/5
Sesquialtera	II	Sifflet	1	Plein jeu	IV	Flûte	4	Quinte	5 1/3
Octaves	III-IV	Mixture	IV	Tierce	1 3/5	Tuba	16	Octave	4
Quintes	II-III	Basson	18	Bombarde	16	Tuba	8	Grosse Tierce	3 1/5
Cymbale	III-IV	Trompette	8	Hautbois	8	Tuba	4	Posaune	32
Grand Cornet	II-V	Clarinette	8	Tr. Harmonique	8			Posaune	16
Trompette	16	Tremblant		Voix humaine	8	Tuba-G.O.		Basson	16
Trompette	8			Clairon	4	Tuba-Pos.		Basson	8
		Solo-Pos.		Tremblant		Tuba-Récit		Trompette	8
Pedal-G.O		Récit-Pos.				Tuba-Solo		Clairon	4
Pos.-G.O.		Récit 16'-Pos.		Solo-Récit		Tuba-Pedale		Chamade	8
Récit-G.O.		Pos. 16'-Pos.		Récit 16'-Récit				Chamade	4
Solo-G.O.						<b>Chamade</b>			
G.O.16'-G.O								G.O.-Ped	
Pos. 16'-G.O						Chamade	16	Pos.-Ped	
Récit 16'-G.O.						Chamade	8 B	Récit-Ped	
Solo 16'-G.O.						Chamade	8 T	G.O.4'-Ped	
								Pos.4'-Ped	
								Récit 4'-Ped	
						Chamade-G.O.		Solo 4' Ped	
						Chamade-Pos.			
						Chamade-Récit			
						Chamade-Solo			