

Preface

César-Auguste Franck was born in Liège in 1822. Several years later his family moved to Paris. In Paris César Franck studied first with Anton Reicha (1770–1837), whose pupils also included Franz Liszt, Charles Gounod and Hector Berlioz. From 1837–1842 Franck studied at the Paris Conservatory, subsequently serving as organist at various Paris churches, his final position at Ste-Clotilde on the church's important Cavaillé-Coll organ (his successors included Charles Tournemire and Jean Langlais). César-Auguste Franck died in 1890 and was buried near his apartment at the Montparnasse cemetery in Paris.

As co-founder of the French Romantic School of composition, César Franck was one of nineteenth century Europe's most important composers, teachers and organists. His compositions feature trademark elements of classical form while also having an unmistakable tonal dramaturgy consisting of Romantic harmonic and melodic writing and creative modulations combined with a subtle and warm handling of voicing in various registers.

Ever since the 1970s, César-Auguste Franck's works have occupied a more and more prominent place in organ recital programs, primarily focusing on the *Six Pièces* (1860–1863), the *Trois Pièces* of 1878 and the *Trois Chorals* (composed in his final year of life).

This edition features lesser known works from César Franck's œuvre. These pieces were probably composed before 1860, but already bear the composer's distinctive musical signature. The work renamed by Charles Tournemire as *Pièce Symphonique* was originally entitled *Offertoire en sol mineur*.

Interpreting the organ works by Franck requires a thorough study of the musical text, unhurried tempi, a balanced tempo rubato, as well as a highly sensitive stop selection taking the diapason stops and tonal colors of the compositions into mind.

The musical timbres of César Franck's organ compositions are closely tied to the impressive instruments built by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Suggestions for registration may have formed the following disposition of a special Cavaillé-Coll organ, for this organ from 1877 was used as an exhibition and demonstration instrument at Aristide Cavaillé-Coll Paris organ building workshop. After a thorough restoration, it serves as the church organ at the Catholic Church of St. Bernhard in Mainz-Bretzenheim.

Disposition:

<i>Grand orgue</i>		<i>Récit expressive</i>		<i>Pédalier</i>	
Bourdon	16'	Viole de Gambe	8'	Soubasse	16'
Montre	8'	Cor de nuit	8'	Bourdon	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'	Voix céleste	8'	Basse	8'
Prestant	4'	Flûte octaviante	4'	Violoncelle	8'
Nasard	2 2/3'	Plein jeu	4 rangs	Flûte	4'
Octavin	2'	Trompette harmonique	8'	Bombarde	16'
Bombarde	16'	Basson hautbois	8'	Trompette	8'
		Tremolo			

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