# César Franck

# 1822 – 1890

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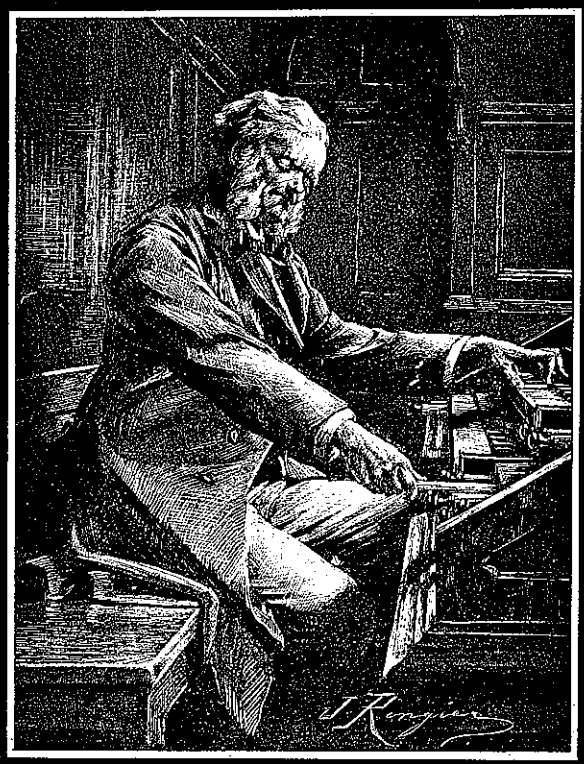

# CÉSAR FRANCK 1822-1890

## Special Supplement Part I

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# CÉSAR FRANCK AND THE ORGAN

Rollin Smith

César Franck's student and biographer, Vincent d'Indy, heralded his maître's greatness by noting the coincidence of Franck's birth in Liège on December 10, 1822, with the very day that Beethoven completed his *Missa Solemnis*—the significance of these two occurrences being that Franck was destined to succeed the German master in the realm of sacred and symphonic music. D'Indy's opinion, far from being that of an overzealous disciple, has proven historically accurate, for Franck was one of the very few Parisian composers during the Second Empire and Third Republic whose fame lies on his instrumental music: indeed, Franck's organ, chamber, and symphonic music has always been an integral part of the repertoire.

Franck was a Parisian musician in that he lived, from the age of 16, in Paris. But, he was not a *French* musician and this has always been a source of embarrassment for French music. Franck's father was from Völkerich, the son of a burgomaster, and spoke in a Germanic dialect—"something between Low German and Netherlandish, but spiced with French words."[1] His wife, six years older than he, was the daughter of a cloth merchant whom he had met when he was a student in Germany. So their son César, Belgium and France's most illustrious organ composer, was Austro-Netherlandish on his father's side and pure German on his mother's. César Franck spoke German with his mother and to the end of his life always said his prayers in German!

Father Franck held a menial position in a bank in Liège at the time of his first son's birth. He was an arrogant, pretentious egotist and a harsh authoritarian who, as much to satisfy his sordid avarice as to live vicariously through his artistic children, determined on careers in music for César and his brother Joseph, born three years later. To that end both boys were enrolled in the Liège Conservatoire. From the age of eight, César Franck studied solfège, harmony, piano, and organ (his first organ teacher was Duguet, the blind organist of the Church of Saint-Denis). So remarkable was his progress in all subjects that by the age of eleven and a half, he was a student-teacher of solfège and piano.

His father arranged a short recital tour in 1834 and César appeared as pianist and composer in several Belgian cities, including a performance in Brussels before King Leopold I at the Royal Palace. The next year his brother Joseph joined him in concerts as a violinist. Now began a period of child exploitation when, like Mozart, Beethoven, and his contemporary Franz Liszt, Franck published some piano fantaisies on popular airs, and performed them in recitals as a prodigy.

Father Nicolas-Joseph decided the time was ripe to conquer Paris and in the spring of 1836 moved his family to the French capital and secured two of the leading musicians as teachers: Pierre Zimmermann for piano and Anton Reicha for counterpoint. By November a debut recital was arranged and, although well publicized, it went unnoticed by the press and did nothing to establish a virtuoso career. Franck made no public appearances for the next year. While he studied, his father waited to recoup his financial loss and applied for French citizenship to the end that his sons might be admitted to the Paris Conservatoire.

In the interim, César published a Sonata and Fantaisie for piano, two Concertos for piano and orchestra, two Trios and a Symphony! In March, April, and May 1837 he was heard, as was the custom, at concerts in which several artists performed. On April 30, for instance, he appeared with Johann Pixis (a greatly esteemed pianist and teacher who, with Liszt, Chopin, Thalberg, Czerny, and Herz, had written the *Hexaméron*), Charles-Valentin Alkan (whom he would later refer to as "The Poet of the Piano" and to whom he would dedicate his *Grande Pièce symphonique*), and Franz Liszt. The press notices foretold a future as a major pianist and referred to his "ease . . . self-possession . . . intelligence . . . passionate energy . . . expressiveness and musical feeling."

By September the Franck family's naturalization papers had arrived and César was enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire, entering Zimmermann's piano class and Simon Leborne's counterpoint class. Lest the question arise: what would an already prodigious (if not famous) virtuoso expect to obtain from the Conservatoire? Merely the prestige of having won a first prize from Europe's most esteemed musical institution. Franz Liszt had been refused entry a few years previously because of his Hungarian nationality.

Franck competed for the first prize in August 1838. Alkan was among the eight jurors. Franck played Hummel's Concerto in B Minor brilliantly, and in a brazen exhibition of skill and confidence transposed the sight-reading piece down a minor third. This feat was viewed as not being within the regulations. The decision reached was indeed amicable and casts light on just how well Franck was regarded by the Conservatoire faculty. Having unanimously awarded him first prize, the jury decided that he stood "so incomparably far ahead of his fellow competitors that it is impossible to nominate another to share the prize with him." So to set him apart he was given, in addition, a Grand Prix d'Honneur.

After three years in the counterpoint class Franck won a first prize in July 1840. In the fall he entered François Benoist's organ class—undoubtedly to improve his improvisational and compositional skills, enabling him to compete for the Prix de Rome and, perhaps, to better equip him for a church position. After a year in the organ class he appeared before the jury and performed another musically audacious feat, but one with less than the desired consequences of the piano jury of three years before. Noticing that the subjects given for two separate improvisations—that for the fugue and that for the piece in sonata form lent themselves to superimposition, Franck treated them simultaneously. As he related the affair, he was "very successful in combining the two subjects,"

> . . . but the developments which grew out of this unusual method of treating the free composition ran to such unaccustomed lengths that the examiners, bewildered by such a technical feat, awarded nothing.[2]

The jury did not understand what had been done, only that the improvisation had gone on too long. In spite of Benoist's enthusiasm and intervention, Franck was only awarded the second prize. There is no doubt that, had he performed the examination as expected, he would have won the first prize. His playing ability was not in question—only his adherence to the rules.

Franck was enrolled in the composition class the following year, but in April he withdrew from the Conservatoire. No plausible explanation has ever been advanced for this sudden retirement in the middle of his fifth academic year and with the Prix de Rome unattained. The family returned to Belgium and, for about five months, visited relatives.

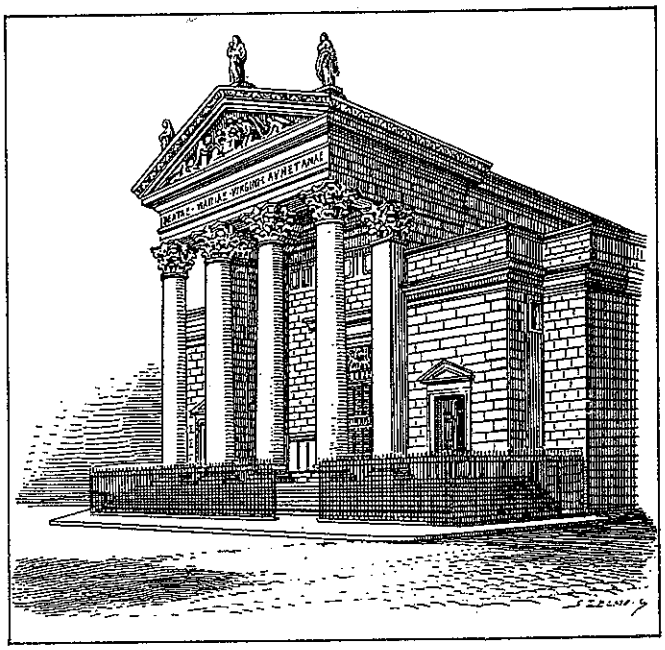
They returned to their apartment at 42, rue Lafitte in Paris, and by October the 19-year-old Franck was announcing private classes in piano, harmony, counterpoint, and fugue. He had been giving these classes since the fall of 1838—right after he won the first prize in piano at the Conservatoire—and they were organized according to the Conservatoire curriculum: three lessons a week of two hours each and limited to five pupils (if that many ever applied). Since this was the family's sole means of support it was necessary for him to supplement these lessons given at home by traveling about Paris teaching to various institutions: a pensionnat, or girl's boarding school in the rue des Martyrs, near his home; another at Auteuil; a public school, Collège Rollin (42, rue des Postes); the Augustine College of the Assumption (234 Faubourg Saint-Honoré); and the Jesuit school for advanced ecclesiastical studies, Immaculée Conception (26, rue de Vaugirard).

His life was miserable and if, as mentioned previously, Franck was to be Beethoven's musical successor, the two also shared a brutal, tyrannical father.

> It was a hard life for him . . . not made easier by the ill-tempered and vindictive behavior of his father, who in his egotism continually wielded a grim and sometimes brutal authoritarianism that indelibly scarred his children's memories . . . It was forced labor indeed; the last ounce of pianistic energy was squeezed out of him daily, and in the matter of out-of-pocket expenses he was treated like a common thief. His itinerary was settled before he started, and the journeys between two lessons timed in advance with exactitude. Outside his professional calls he had no acquaintances. His day ended as early as possible after sundown so as to avoid unnecessary expenditure on candles.[3]

To his teaching, composing, and concertizing, Franck added another musical responsibility which began his career as a professional organist: not as *organiste titulaire* but at the most menial of church music posts, as *organiste accompagnateur*, or choir accompanist, at the church at the end of the street on which he lived, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette.

Built in the style of a Roman basilica—indeed, in imitation of Sancta Maria Maggiore in Rome—Notre-Dame-de-Lorette is the most elaborately decorated church in Paris, its painting and gilding giving it anything but a devotional character. It was then a new church, having been completed in 1836, and it soon became known as the Church of the Demi-monde, or of the "Lorettes" (as the local *fille de joie* were known), for whom its marble, stucco, and gold would seem to have been intended. The parish church of the Conservatoire, then in the rue Bergère, it was attended by many student and professional musicians. It also had the distinction of housing the first organ Aristide Cavaillé-Coll built in Paris, a 47-rank, four-manual instrument inaugurated in 1838. While it is not unlikely that Franck would have played this instrument from time to time, substituting for Alphonse Gilbert, the titular organist, his own organ, behind the high altar, was an old two-manual Somer which had been brought from the former church, Saint-Jean-Porte-Latine. As choir accompanist Franck was subordinate to both organist Gilbert and Girac, the *maître-de-chapelle*, so he derived little professional esteem from the post, but, as the parish comprised 48,000, he received considerable income from funeral and, perhaps, wedding stipends. The music program was of the highest order, thanks to a sympathetic pastor, Abbé de Rollot, and a number of famous musicians had been in the choir and orchestra of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette early in their careers. Franck, in a not unpolitical gesture, dedicated an *Ave Maria* to the pastor in 1845, perhaps in the hope of one day obtaining the post of maître-de-chapelle.



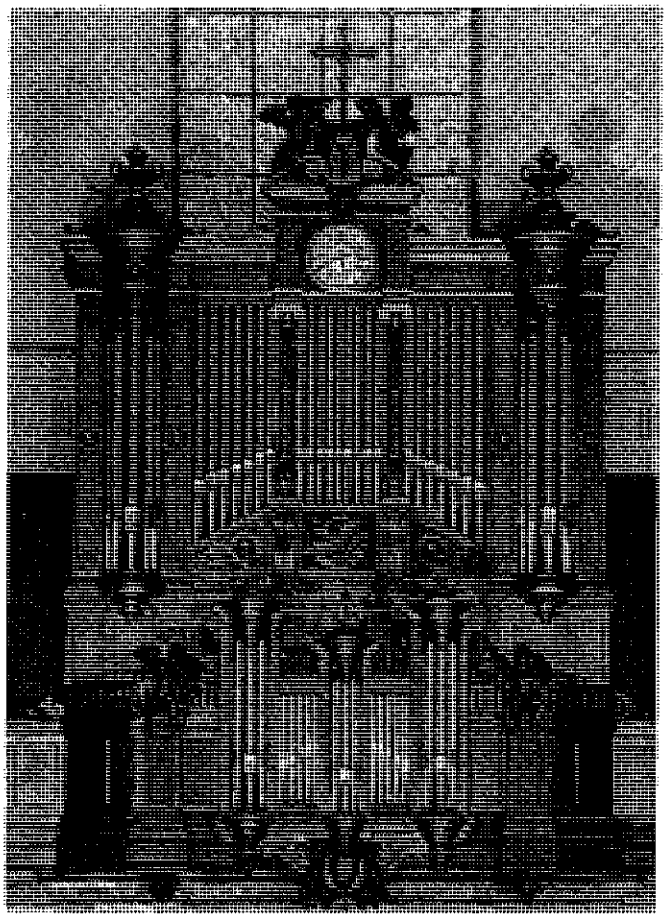
**Facade of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette**

As a composer Franck was industrious and produced an oratorio, or biblical eclogue in three parts for soli, chorus, and orchestra, entitled *Ruth*. Its first performance on January 4, 1846, caused little excitement, but the previous November at a run-through of the work at Erard's *salon* with Franck playing the orchestral parts on the piano, Spontini, Halévy, Meyerbeer, Adolphe Adam, Moscheles, Pixies, Stephen Heller, Alkan, and Liszt were to be seen in the invited audience. On October 27 he completed his first organ work, *Pièce en mi bémol*. An experimental, multisectional Grand Choeur work, it remained unpublished until 1973 (when Norbert Dufourcq edited it for *Les Éditions Musicales de la Schola Cantorum et de la Procure Générale de Musique*); that the composer did not regard it highly enough to publish it is sufficient reason to reserve judgment.

Among Franck's many pupils was a girl at the boarding school in the rue des Martyrs (the street which ran behind and north of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette). The daughter of actors at the Comédie-Française (her mother was a tragedienne of some reputation), Félicité Desmousseaux was two years younger than her piano teacher. Franck became a frequent visitor to the Desmousseaux household which provided a pleasant haven from his own tempestuous home life. In time the teacher-pupil relationship deepened and the two were married at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette on February 22, 1848. Of their four children, two sons survived infancy. Georges became a history professor, and Germain, a senior clerk of the P.L.M. railroad.

One of the curates of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Abbé Dancel, was named pastor of Saint-Jean-Saint-François in 1851, a small church in the Marais district, and took Franck with him as his organist.

The church (now renamed Sainte-Croix-Saint-Jean and serving an Armenian congregation) stands on the corner of rue Charlot and rue de Perche. It was built in 1623 as the chapel of a Capuchin monastery and dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Mme de Sévigné, whose *hôtel* was near by, frequently attended mass here.



**Organ case of Saint-Jean-Saint-François**

In 1790 the monastery was nationalized and the following year, with the constitutional schism, the order's chapel was made a parish church dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi. The organ was destroyed during the Revolution. The church's communion vessels, borrowed to use at the last mass celebrated in the Temple for Louis XVI the morning of his execution, are on display in the sacristy. When the church was reopened after the Concordat its pastor had previously been at Saint-Jean-en-Grève. That church having been demolished, he brought numerous furnishings from it and added the appellation of Saint-Jean to that of Saint-François.

Somer installed a two-manual, 13-stop organ in 1818 and Gervais-François Couperin was appointed organist, holding this post simultaneously with that of Saint-Gervais. On his death in 1826 he was succeeded by his unmarried daughter, Céleste, the last descendant of the illustrious family. She resigned the last day of 1829 and nothing is known of her successors until the appointment of César Franck in 1851.

A contract for a new organ was given to Dominique and Aristide Cavaillé-Coll in 1844. An 18-stop organ then being exhibited at the Paris Exposition was later installed in the church aud received on December 29, 1846. Franck was so enchanted with the fine tone of this modest two-manual instrument that, when asked about it, he exclaimed, "My new organ? It is an orchestra!"

Franck was in the audience with Gounod, Boëly, Alkan, and his old teacher Benoist at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in January 1852 when Jacques Lemmens, the Belgian virtuoso, inaugurated Cavaillé-Coll's new organ. He must have been well acquainted with the already established organbuilder, for he and Mme Franck were among the dinner guests following Cavaillé-Coll's wedding in 1854. It is all the more remarkable, then, that his first concert appearance as an organist should be on an instrument by a rival organbuilder, Ducroquet, at the church of Saint-Eustache. Franck was one of four organists who inaugurated this organ on May 24, 1854. He played a "fantaisie carefully composed and energetically performed."[4]

His next two performances were not in church but in Cavaillé-Coll's organ factory. An organ built for Saint-Michel's Cathedral at Carcassonne had been set up in the erecting room and for a year was demonstrated at innumerable soirées by various noted organists. Franck was heard twice. On August 30, 1856, he played what was undoubtedly the first version of his *Fantaisie in C* and what were described in the musical press as "brilliant improvisations." On Saturday, April 25, 1857, he shared a program with students from the École Niedermeyer, Franck "demonstrating the resources of the fine instrument." Balthasar Waitzennecker played a fugue on the *Laudate Dominum* by Lemmens and other students were heard in various pieces of sacred music. One of the pieces which Franck may have played on this occasion was his *Andantino [in G Minor]*, published this same year by Richault. The manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale (No. 8564) bears Franck's registration for this four-manual instrument.

Sometime in the fall of 1857 Franck was appointed organist of a new church still under construction in the fashionable Faubourg Saint-Germain. The Church of Sainte-Clotilde, the first neo-Gothic church in France, was built over the course of eleven years, from 1846 to 1857, under the direction of two successive architects. The contract for a new organ had been awarded to Cavaillé-Coll in 1854, but work did not begin for more than a year, being delayed by the architect's final plans for the case. Franck began his duties inauspiciously by directing the choir and playing a harmonium in a temporary chapel, Sainte-Valère.

By the end of September 1857 the case pipes were in place and the wind system installed but, while the action and console had been built, they still had not been delivered in time for the dedication of the church on November 30, 1857. Franck conducted the choir and orchestra for the elaborate ceremony; the music included a Marche by Adolphe Adam, a Prelude by Bach, *O salutaris* by François Auber, *Ave Verum* by Palestrina, a Dominum salvum with quartet, choir, and orchestra, and, finally, the "Laudate" from a Mass by Ambroise Thomas.

Sainte-Clotilde is unusual in that it has two rear galleries, one above the other. The lower is for the choir; the upper, mucb smaller, holds the organ console. For two years Franck, an organist without an organ, directed his choir from the lower gallery. By 1858 he had induced 20-year-old Conservatoire student Théodore Dubois to give up his post as organist of the Chapelle des Invalides, just a few blocks away, and come to Sainte-Clotilde as his *organiste accompagnateur*. The only instrument for accompanying the choir was a harmonium which was used until Joseph Merklin installed an electropneumatic orgue-de-choeur in the front of the church in 1888.

Franck took his church duties seriously. Knowing he would soon have a new organ, he equipped himself with the organist's most up-to-date practice instrument, a pédalier. Auguste Wolff, a partner in the Pleyel piano firm, bad designed and built, in 1857, a two-and-one-half octave pédalier (or piano pedalboard) which, instead of merely coupling the piano keys to a pedalboard, was completely independent, having its own strings, hammers, and mechanism. A set of thinner 8′ strings playing simultaneously with the 16′ strings produced a remarkably full sound.

It did not take Franck long to order one. Louis Niedermeyer wrote enthusiastically about the new instrument in *La Maîtrise* in December and Franck's was delivered on February 28, 1858. Franck's initiative in improving himself is all the more remarkable because Félix Danjou, writing in May 1859, "could not name ten organists who had a pedal piano on which they could practice daily and familiarize themselves with the beautiful fugues and pedal parts of Bach, Mendelssohn, and Lemmens."

Franck's *Andantino in G Minor* for organ dates from this year, as do the *Cinq Pièces pour Harmonium*, but the rest of his output was for voice and included a *Messe solennelle* for bass solo and organ, Op. 1; *Trois Motets*, Op. 4 (*O salutaris*, *Ave Maria*, and *Tantum ergo*); and a third setting of *O salutaris*, Op. 5, for soprano and tenor duet.

Among Franck's acquaintances at the Jesuit College of the Immaculate Conception where he taught piano was a Jesuit priest, Louis Lambillotte. The good father, aptly described by Saint-Saëns as a "ridiculous composer" of "dreadful music," who left an indelible impression on Catholic church music with such hymns as "Come, Holy Ghost" and "On This Day, O Beautiful Mother," also pursued a reputable scholarly interest in Gregorian chant, publishing chant collections, articles on the restoration of plainchant, and even a facsimile of the Saint-Gall manuscript. He died in 1855 but over the next few years Franck completed for publication their collaboration, a five-part *Chant Grégorien: restauré par le R.P. Lambillotte; accompagnement d'orgue par César Franck*. The work is Franck's note-for-note accompaniment of Lambillotte's modern notation transcriptions of plainsong then being reintroduced into the churches of France. Issued in three parts, it consisted of five sections:

I. Ordinary of the Masses for the church year;
II. and III. Roman Hymnal with each hymn harmonized for organ in a comfortable key for the (unison men's) choir and in a higher key for three or four voices;
IV. and V. 1. Proses and Sequences; 2. Antiphons for the major feasts of the Blessed Virgin; 3. Various hymns for Benediction; and 4. Fauxbourdons.

The theory behind this note-for-note harmonization of Gregorian chant has long been outdated and the practice of plainchant accompaniment has gone through several stages of theoretical development. The Preface to this Chant Grégorien is the only prose that César Franck ever published, sufficient reason to include it here in its entirety.

CF

PREFACE

It is generally agreed that the correct accompaniment of plainchant is difficult. Most of the melodies used in church have such a special character, so far removed from present-day musical thought, that in order to harmonize them it is necessary to isolate them as much as possible from our leanings toward modern tonality. This is to impart to Gregorian chant its own tonality and, consequently, preserve its character. This difficulty has been serious enough to cause many otherwise capable musicians to donbt their ability to accompany plainchant and despair of attaining agreement between two seemingly noncomplementary elements. We admit that restoring the use of snch pristine melodies was not intended to make the role of the organist easier and that, even momentarily giving up the sonority of unaccompanied chant, we must relinquish recently developed musical skills, including counterpoint. However, the organ is so universally used as an accompanying instrument today that there is a pressing need to provide some written accompaniment for those who must accompany choirs in Gregorian chant, lest the organ become an obstacle rather than a help at the hands of the less skilled.

However, it is necessary to guard against systematization and archaism. It is also necessary to have a clear idea of the musical resources of a parish, so as to provide solutions at the level of the least trained organists. We have tried to adhere to these two points, since there is not space in this short foreword to give a treatise on accompaniment, which will be the subject of another paper. Leaving the appreciation of this offering to the more knowledgeable, we are content to give some practical observations.

1. In three-part writing, it is easiest if only one voice is given to the left hand, so that the organist can play it at the octave in the same hand or double it in the pedal. This way of writing leaves the bottom line of the accompaniment—the contrabass or ophicleide part—perfectly clear, restoring instruments which are not playing the chant melody in unison to the correct place, in accordance with the deplorable practice found almost everywhere.

2. Everyone agrees that having the text written above the accompaniment is a great help to the organist.

3. The pitch range chosen enables male voices to reach the notes of each piece. We strongly urge choir directors to adhere to the written key unless there is a particular difficulty. Everyone knows the practice of certain singers who do not want to go beyond A of the middle octave and thus produce a cavernous tone unsuitable for the ordinary bass part of even the most correctly written music.

4. As a general rule, the organ should not sound passing notes or the small notes; however, a tasteful organist may sometimes accompany melismas.

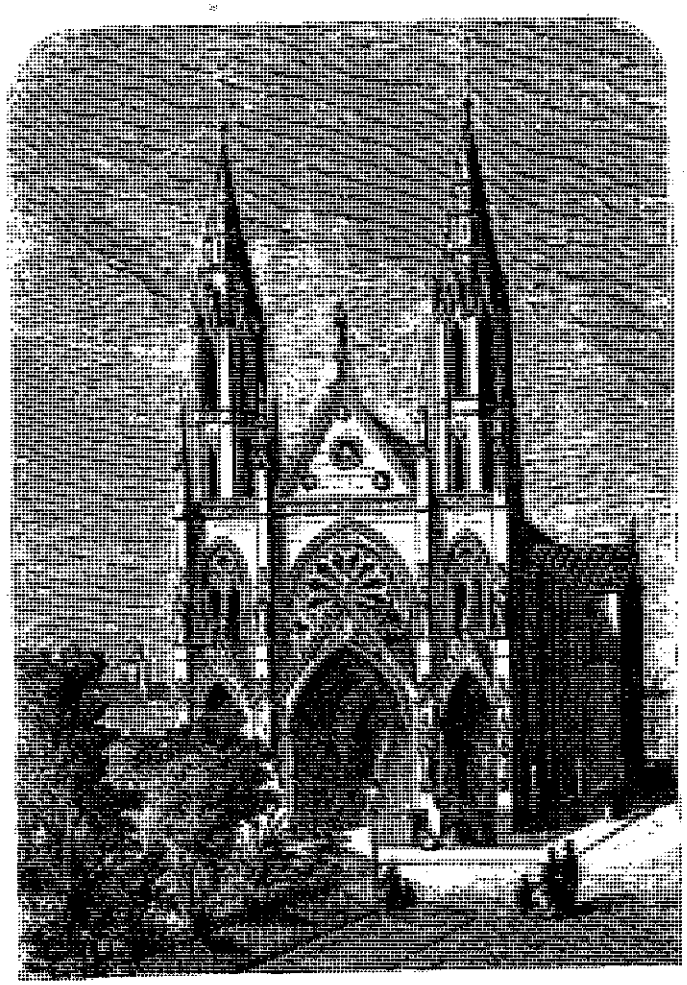
5. We have written all chords individually, but when a note is common to several consecutive chords, it must be tied as long as it is present in the harmony. This is too basic for any organist to ignore.

Our project is to publish successively, in separate volumes, a complete organ book which will include all liturgical chants. We offer first to organists this volume which contains the chants for the ordinary of the masses, as well as the Benedicamus and the Te Deum.

The second volume, now in preparation, will contain the Hymnal. In it will be found not only the accompaniment to the hymns in the choir's range, but the same hymns written in three voices in a higher key, so that, where resources and abilities allow, these same hymns can be sung in parts at Vespers and at Benediction.

Subsequent volumes will contain the series of offices, beginning with the Common of Saints.

The reference sections and tables of contents will facilitate exhaustive research.



Sainte-Clotilde

The numbering system at the top of the pieces refers to the Graduale. The first number is for the edition in modern (round) notation, the second, for the edition in Gregorian (square) notation.

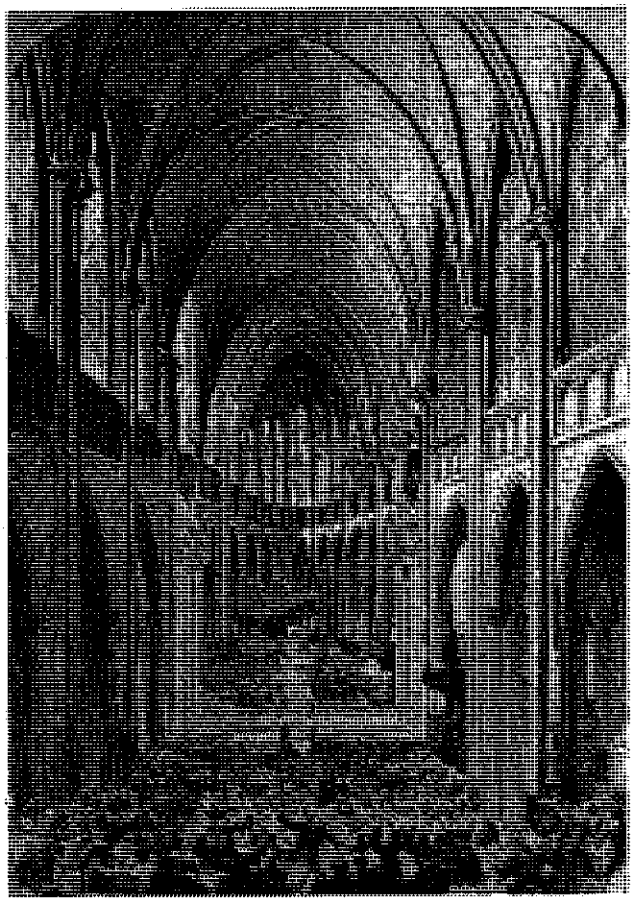
It was during his vacation in August and September 1859 that Franck began composing small organ pieces which were published after his death as the second volume of *L'Organiste*. The Franck family, now consisting of two sons and a daughter, spent their vacation with the family of Auguste Sanches, a wine merchant in Azille. He was the amateur organist of the local church and asked Franck for some easy organ pieces he could play. From time to time Franck obliged.

This same year Louis Niedermeyer published *Trois Antiennes* in the music supplement of his journal, *La Maîtrise*. Brief pieces which could be played as versets by organists who could not improvise, the *Quasi lento*, *Allegretto*, and *Lent et très soutenu* appeared as numbers 10, 11, and 17 of *L'Organiste*, Vol. 2.

On August 14 Franck completed his Seven *Words of Christ*, undoubtedly for performance at Sainte-Clotilde during Holy Week the next year.

The new organ at Sainte-Clotilde was finished and playing in August; Cavaillé-Coll sent his final statement to the architect on August 29, 1859, and the inauguration was set for December 5. It was decided that Lefébure-Wély would share the dedicatory recital with Franck who now set himself to arranging his part of the program. On September 13 he completed a *Pièce symphonique* (*L'Organiste*, Vol. 2, No. 26) and may have considered playing it. He almost certainly composed his *Final in B-flat* at this time, or earlier, as it was mentioned in reviews of the recital and dedicated to Lefébure-Wély.

The first two performances on the organ of Sainte-Clotilde were not by the titulaire but by Lefébure-Wély. The first was a private demonstration for the Empress Eugénie's sister, the Duchess of Alba, and other ladies of the imperial court, and the second, on September 29, was a society wedding performed by the Bishop of Carcassonne.



**César Franck directing music at dedication of Sainte-Clotilde**

Plans for the inauguration went according to schedule right up until December 2 when it was discovered that careless workmen who had installed the cornice at the top of the organ case had let sawdust and wood chips fall into the organ chamber, creating such a mess that the recital had to be postponed two weeks until it could be cleaned up.

The inauguration of what was to be one of Cavaillé-Coll's more significant organs, due not only to its being an acknowledged masterpiece but also its connection with and influence upon the greatest organ composer of the second half of the 19th century, was held on Monday evening, December 12, 1859. A freezing temperature of 6° and heavy fog did not prevent the Parisian public from filling the church and even overflowing into the organ loft itself. Scheduled for 7:30 o'clock, the concert was delayed 45 minutes, leaving many of those invited sitting in an unheated church until 8:15. church until 8:15.

The program[6] can be reconstructed as follows:

Improvisation
Lefébure-Wély

Mater amabilis — Mozart
Choir of Sainte-Clotilde

Improvisation
César Franck

Sancta Maria — Haydn
Choir

Improvisation
Lefébure-Wély

Prelude and Fugue in E Minor — Bach
César Franck

Symphonic Improvisation
Lefébure-Wély

Improvisation-Final
César Franck

Lefébure-Wély began the *séance* with a long improvisation—"a remarkable demonstration of the 46 stops, going through them successively by means of a brilliant crescendo followed by an impressive diminuendo." The choir sang Mozart's *Mater amabilis* with good ensemble and precision. Franck then played a brilliant improvisation in which he spent too much time demonstrating "particular stops" and not enough time devoted to "the organ's true character." The choir's performance of the second motet was not as successful as the first. They did not know their parts very well and it was marred by hesitations at entrances and poor intonation. In his second improvisation Lefébure-Wély demonstrated the solo stops in an extremely remarkable way.

Two very different reports appeared in the musical journals describing Franck's performance of Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in E Minor*. Adrien de la Fage wrote that Franck succeeded in giving "color and character to express the soul of the music. He revealed a perseverance which gave him a place among organists of the first order."[7] However, an unsigned reviewer for *La Maîtrise* gave a conflicting account:

> I awaited the performance of S. Bach's *Fugue in E Minor*, announced on the program but, in place of that beautiful piece, I heard only some detached musical phrases which sounded nothing like a fugue. Perhaps I was too distracted or was not paying attention just then. If that were so, I beg M. Franck's pardon and retract my assertion.[8]

In spite of the dissimilarity of these reviews there is no doubt that the Bach work in question was the "Cathedral" or "Nightwatchman" Fugue, BWV 533.

Lefébure-Wély then returned for a symphonic improvisation. Taking the hymn *Adeste fideles*, "he treated it with all the studied refinements of counterpoint" and produced "the sweetest sensation" by playing it on the Voix humaine. Continuing his scenic tableau of the birth of Jesus, he closed with *Il est né, le divin enfant* on the full organ.

The concert ran so late that many of the audience left before it was over and the pastor even canceled Benediction—with which organ dedications traditionally ended. The evening concluded with what was probably a Sortie played by Franck. The Improvisation-Final was almost certainly the *Final*, Op. 22, in which "he showed himself at his best . . . in this Final the conception and execution of a true master was recognized."

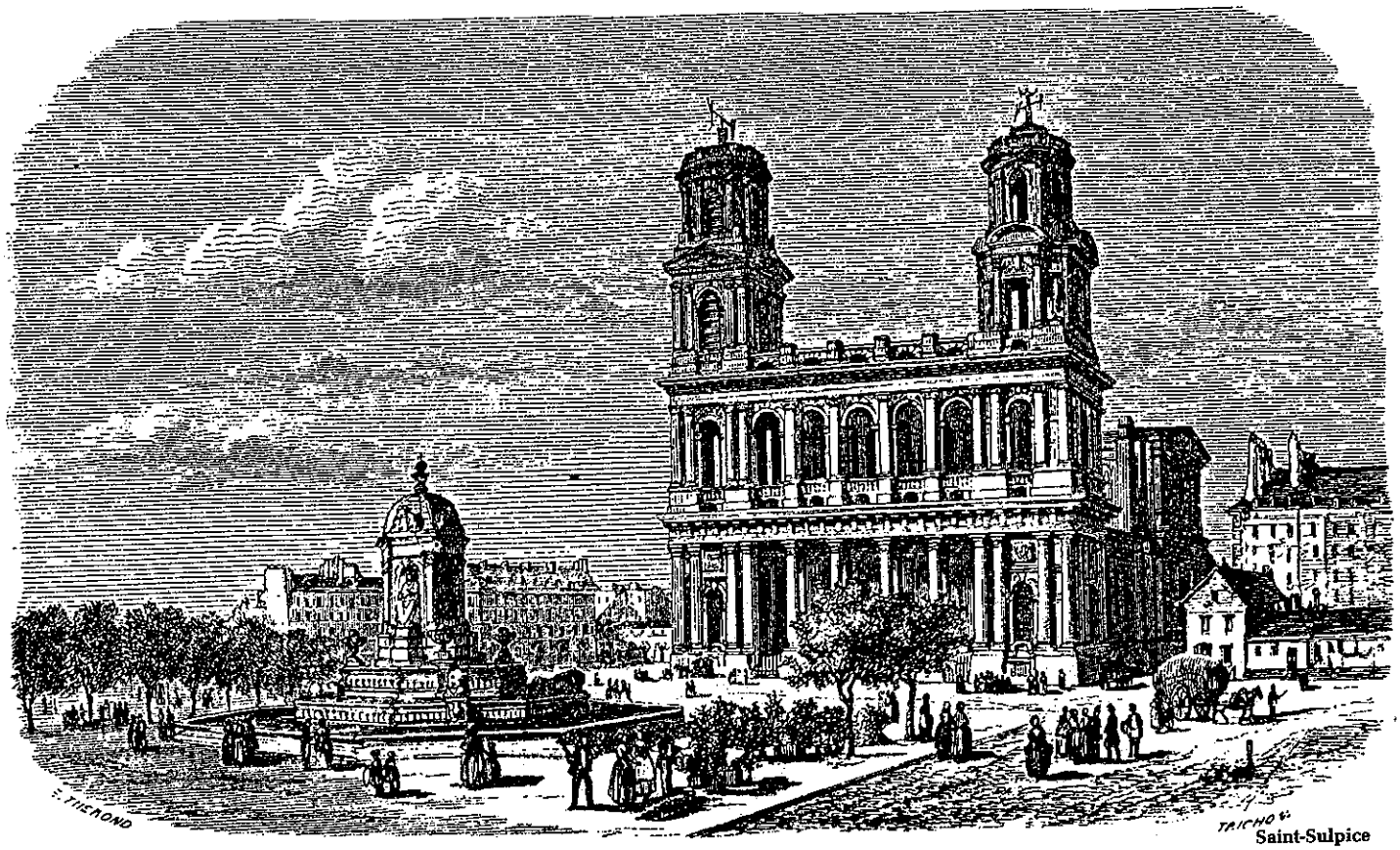
Franck's *Mass in A Major*, Op. 12, for three voices (soprano, tenor, and bass), harp, cello, bass, and organ, was premiered at Sainte-Clotilde not on Sunday, but on Easter Tuesday, April 2, 1861. Two months later Théodore Dubois was awarded the Premier Grand Prix de Rome and left for Italy where he was to stay for the next five years.

With Dubois's departure Franck again assumed the responsibility of the choir at Sainte-Clotilde and his name appeared frequently in published lists of church musicians as "maître-de-chapelle et organiste de Sainte-Clotilde." Because of the unique arrangement in this church of having both the choir loft and organ loft in the rear of the church, Franck was the only organist of a major church who was able to go up and down between the two galleries and alternately conduct the choir and play the organ. The parish had little success in acquiring or retaining choirmasters. The former maître-de-chapelle of Saint-Pierre-de-Chaillot, Delort, was appointed to Sainte-Clotilde early in 1863 and conducted Loisel's *Seven Last Words* on March 27, 1863, but "some days later was forced to give his resignation!"[9]

Franck dispatched his duties as well as other choirmasters and his selections were no better or worse than those of his contemporaries. For instance, on All Saints' Day, 1862, he conducted a Mass by Dumont, a motet of his own at the offertory, and an *O salutaris* by Haydn at the elevation.[10]

On April 29, 1862, Franck, together with four other organists, took part in the inauguration of Cavaillé-Coll's largest instrument, that in the church of Saint-Sulpice. One critic dismissed Franck's playing as "severe without pedantry,"[11] and another mistook his performance of his *Fantaisie in C* for an "improvisation which left the audience with the impression that he had played a well worked-out piece!"[12] (Had he but known that Franck had been "working it out" for the last six years!) "Its opening had the fullness of those powerful harmonies reminiscent of *Fingal's Cave* and the foundation stops bad as much poetry as could be given them. The improviser had only one shortcoming: he did not end soon enough." *L'Univers musical* completely ignored the inauguration of the organ but devoted an entire page to its "Deuxième audition" by the 25-year-old Alexandre Guilmant and mentioned Franck among the artists in the audience.

Franck was probably instrumental in securing two contracts for a fellow Belgian émigré, the organbuilder Hippolyte Loret, who had just relocated his business in Paris. He built two organs for the Jesuits: one in 1860 for the Church at the Collège de Vaugirard, where


Saint-Sulpice

Franck was on the faculty, and another in 1862 for a recently completed little 13th-century-style Gothic chapel at 35, rue de Sèvres. For the inauguration of the modest two-manual organ, Franck joined the chapel's organist, M. Scola, and his friend, Alexis Chauvet, then organist of Saint-Bernard-de-la-Chapelle. "These three artists pitted their talents against one another to demonstrate the qualities of the instrument."[13]

Franck's second published organ work, *Offertoire sur un Nöel Breton*, appeared on October 15, 1867, in the first issue of a new monthly journal of sacred music, *L'Athénée Musical*. Written on two staves, it has registration for both grand-orgue and harmonium.

On October 10, 1867, Franck, Alexis Chauvet, Auguste Durand, and the organist of the church, P. Serrier, inaugurated Cavaillé-Coll's organ at Saint-Denis-du-Saint-Sacrament.

The year 1868 was significant for the French organ world: it saw the completion of the organ of Notre-Dame-de-Paris and the publication of César Franck's *Six Pièces*. Over its 700 year existence the great 12th-century Gothic Cathedral of Paris had suffered a multitude of indignities, outside as well as in. With the Romantic movement sweeping over Europe, a new respect was growing for medieval architecture. Victor Hugo greatly influenced this neo-Gothic appreciation and in his book, *Notre-Dame-de-Paris*, listed the alterations to which the building had been constantly subjected under the guise of changing taste and fashion: the highly colored stained glass was gone, the interior had been whitewashed, its chapels over-decorated in contemporary fashion, the choir floor marbled, the sanctuary filled with academic statuary, the flèche removed, and the central portal mutilated. It was the young architect, Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, who was entrusted with the restoration, and for 20 years, from 1845 to 1864, the Cathedral of Paris was repaired from its foundation to the tiling of the roof.

François Thierry's 1733 organ, which had been rebuilt by François-Henri Clicquot in 1784, was rebuilt and enlarged between 1863 and 1868 by Cavaillé-Coll. The organbuilder was responsible for assembling for the inauguration on Friday, March 6, 1868, the greatest organists in France: César Franck, Camille Saint-Saëns, Alexandre Guilmant, Charles-Marie Widor, Alexis Chauvet, Clément Loret, and Auguste Durand. Franck played his *Fantaisie in C*.

Franck played the organ three more times: on March 22 at a 1:30 Mass before a lecture given by Father Félix; at a demonstration of the organ with Auguste Durand on April 24; and with Eugène Sergent, the organiste titulaire, on July 8 in a demonstration for the Société Scientifique.

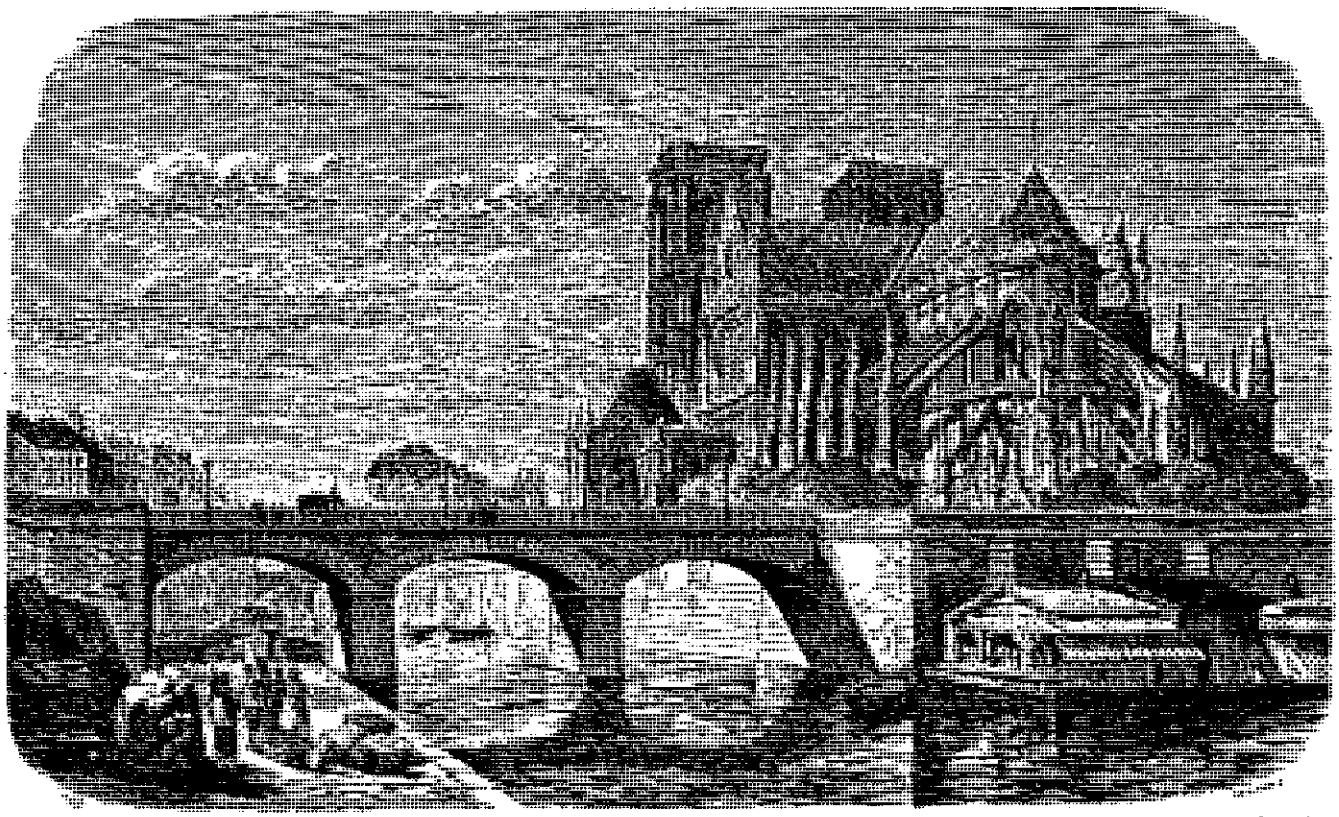
Later that year Maeyens-Couvreur published Franck's *Six Pièces*. Over an hour and 20 minutes worth of music which has remained in the repertoire for over a century, this was the first major contribution to French organ literature in over a century, and the most important organ music since Mendelssohn. No one up until Franck, and few after, understood the organ's serious capabilities, and he was the first to realize the potential of the symphonic organ and to have the talent, originality, and imagination to utilize it for his own ends. This collection, in the words of Félix Raugel, constitutes "a monument to the resurrection in France of the great art of the organ."[14]

In November Théodore Dubois left Sainte-Clotilde to take up a similar post as maître-de-chapelle at the Madeleine; Franck again assumed the double title of organist and choirmaster.

The Church of La Trinité was designed by the same architect as Sainte-Clotilde and its new organ was but one stop smaller. The Cavaillé-Coll organ was inaugurated on March 16, 1869, by Franck, Saint-Saëns, Durand, Widor, Henri Fissot, and the first organist of La Trinité, Alexis Chauvet. Franck, the first to be heard, "played a vigorous well-developed improvisation in which he sought to display the greatest possible number of sonorities."[15] Widor recalled long after that "the themes, their development, and execution were equally admirable: he never wrote better."[16]

Musical education in France came to an abrupt standstill during the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune. The Conservatoire was closed for the 1870–71 school year. When it reopened in February 1872, François Benoist retired as professor of organ (he lived on until 1878 and served on the examination juries) and César Franck was appointed to succeed him.

Chroniclers have been unwilling to admit that Franck was the best man for the job and insisted on surrounding his appointment with an air of mystery. Vincent d'Indy concluded that no one knew how he was appointed and that Franck, "a stranger to all intrigue, understood it less than the rest . . . the mystery has never been elucidated."[17] Several people advanced a solution to the mystery, however; Saint-Saëns twice stated that he had recommended Franck to the Minister of Education "so that . . . he would no longer be compelled to waste time in giving piano lessons that could more profitably be devoted to composition," and Cavaillé-Coll's biographers claimed his responsibility—as an attempt to appease Franck for Cavaillé-Coll's having recommended Widor over him as organist of Saint-Sulpice. The most credible source, however, is Théodore Dubois, who, as Franck's longtime confrère at Sainte-Clotilde, was in the best position to know what Franck could do on the organ and who, in 1904, in a speech at the unveiling of the Franck monument in the park in front of Sainte-Clotilde (a speech heard by d'Indy but ignored in his book published two years later), recounted that he had recommended Franck to the director, Ambroise Thomas, saying, "There is at the moment one man only



Apse of Notre-Dame from the Seine

who is fit for the post, and that is César Franck." Thomas's reply is verified by history: "That is correct." And he was appointed.

The curriculum for the organ class at the Paris Conservatoire was the same as it had been when Franck was a student 30 years before. Franck describes it in a letter written in 1883 to an unnamed correspondent: "A piece to be played from memory—which is but a sort of ornament to the examination; to accompany a piece of plainchant in strict counterpoint (first the chant is in the bass part, then in the upper part); to improvise a fugue; to improvise a piece the equivalent of the first movement of a sonata." Three quarters of the class time was devoted to improvisation. The class served not for the study of organ literature but to sharpen improvisational skills useful to stimulate a composer's musical creativity. Submitting to the strict rules for the end-of-term examinations, it is all the more surprising that Franck was able to cover as much repertoire as he did.

Three classes a week, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings from eight to ten o'clock, were taught on a dreadful organ put together by Cavaillé-Coll from remnants of Pierre Érard's organ in the Tuileries chapel which burned in May 1871 and the old organ upon which Franck had played as a student. Its specification was as follows:

| GRAND-ORGUE (54 Notes) | | RÉCIT (54 Notes) | | PÉDALE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Bourdon | 8 | Flûte | 16 | Soubasse |
| 8 | Flûte | 8 | Gambe | 8 | Flûte |
| 8 | Dessus de Montre | 8 | Voix céleste | 4 | Flûte |
| 4 | Prestant | 4 | Flûte | 8 | Basson |
| 8 | Trompette | 8 | Hautbois | | |
| | | 8 | Trompette | | |

During Franck's first ten years of teaching at the Conservatoire five of his students won first prize in organ. The first, Paul Wachs (1851–1915) had won a second prize while in Benoist's class but had to wait until July of 1872 to compete for his first prize—which he won after only a few months study with Franck. Wachs, organist of Saint-Merry from 1874 to 1896, was a composer of salon piano pieces, and the author of several educational works on harmony, counterpoint, and fugue.

Vincent d'Indy (1851–1931) was in the organ class for two years, but won only a first accessit, or honorable mention, in 1875. He was one of the more famous Franck students—as his biographer, in particular—a noted composer and founder and director of the Schola Cantorum.

Samuel Rousseau (1853–1904) was in the class for over five years, finally winning a first prize in 1877. The same year he became maître-de-chapelle at Sainte-Clotilde, holding the post for the rest of his life. He taught harmony at the Conservatoire and, from 1892, was conductor of the Théâtre-Lyrique.

Henri Dallier (1849–1934) won first prize in 1878 and the next year succeeded Édouard Batiste as organist of Sainte-Eustache. He succeeded Gabriel Fauré as organist of the Madeleine in 1905.

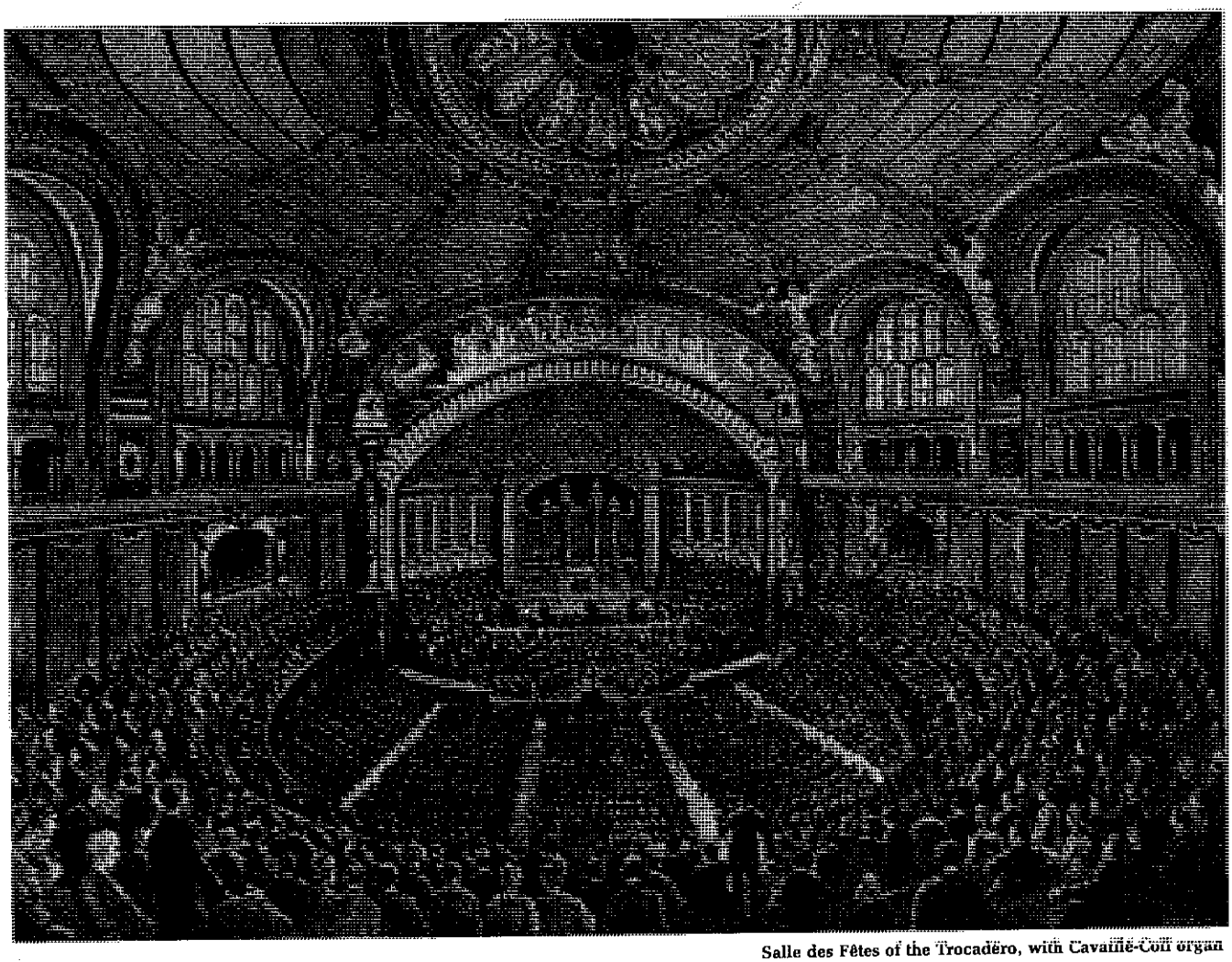
Auguste Chapuis (1858–1933) won first prize in 1881 and was later inspector of music teaching in the Paris city schools, a harmony professor at the Conservatoire, and organist of Saint-Roch from 1888 to 1906.

Franck played infrequently in public after his Conservatoire appointment. At the third program of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, in January 1873, which featured the first performance in France of Schumann's *Manfred Overture*, and with the president of the Republic in attendance, Franck "was applanded for the severe beauties of a Bach *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor*" (or E Minor; accounts differ.) In May he played the new organ set up in Cavaillé-Coll's erecting room destined for the Albert Hall, Sheffield, England. It was to be the largest organ he would ever build for Great Britain and his first with 61-note manuals.

Two ensemble appearances followed in quick succession. Franck played the harmonium, and Vincent d'Indy the piano, in Franck's new duo arrangement of the *Prélude, Fugue et Variation* at a Société Nationale concert in February 1874. In March, at a Concert Danbé performance of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* with chorus and orchestra, Franck played the organ and Saint-Saëns the piano, the two accompanists "vigorously sustained the voices."

In 1876 Guillaume Couture, a Canadian, was appointed maître-de-chapelle at Sainte-Clotilde and for the first time in eight years, Franck had only the duties of the *organiste du grand orgue*. Couture remained only a year and was succeeded by Samuel Rousseau. Then in 1878 a situation identical to that of Dubois's arose: Rousseau won the Premier Grand Prix de Rome and left for Italy for five years. What happened in the interim is unknown. Perhaps Franck again conducted the choir; perhaps the choir organist filled in—his nephew, Clotaire-Joseph Franck (son of his brother Joseph), and a former student, Georges Verschneider (1854–95), both served as *organiste de l'orgue de choeur*. Rousseau returned to Sainte-Clotilde in 1883 and served until his death in 1904. So distinguished was his career that the charming little park in front of Sainte-Clotilde was named Square Samuel Rousseau. It is on the east side of this square that the sculptor Lenoir's famous monument depicting César Franck improvising at the organ was dedicated in 1904.

The 1878 Universal Exposition held in Paris was the setting for what was the most important organ recital of Franck's career. The



Salle des Fêtes of the Trocadëro, with Cavaillé-Coll organ

new building which was to serve as the permanent headquarters for the expositions, then being held every eleven years, was the gigantic Moorish-psendo-Byzantine Palais du Trocadéro, named for a small fort on the Bay of Cadiz captured by the French in 1823. Within the palace was the Salle des Fêtes, or Festival Hall, a 5,000-seat circular auditorium and, across the stage stood a 66-stop Cavaillé-Coll organ—the first large organ in a concert hall in France. It was featured in a series of 15 hour-long recitals played by prominent organists. For two months these programs were presented twice a week at 3 P.M. on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Admission was free and since this was the only time the general public could get in to see the celebrated hall without having to pay to attend a concert, the organ recitals drew larger audiences than any other event at the Trocadéro. The sightseers stayed for one or two pieces and then left, but an audience estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000 persons stayed for each recital. During these recitals Charles-Marie Widor premiered his *Sixth Symphony* and Camille Saint-Saëns played the first performance outside Germany of Liszt's *Fantasia on Ad nos*.

César Franck, then 55 years old and, as professor at the Paris Conservatoire, at the height of the organ profession in France, played the 13th recital on October 1. For his program he composed three new organ works, completed within seven days, two weeks before the recital. These were the *Trois Pièces* and they were interspersed throughout the program:

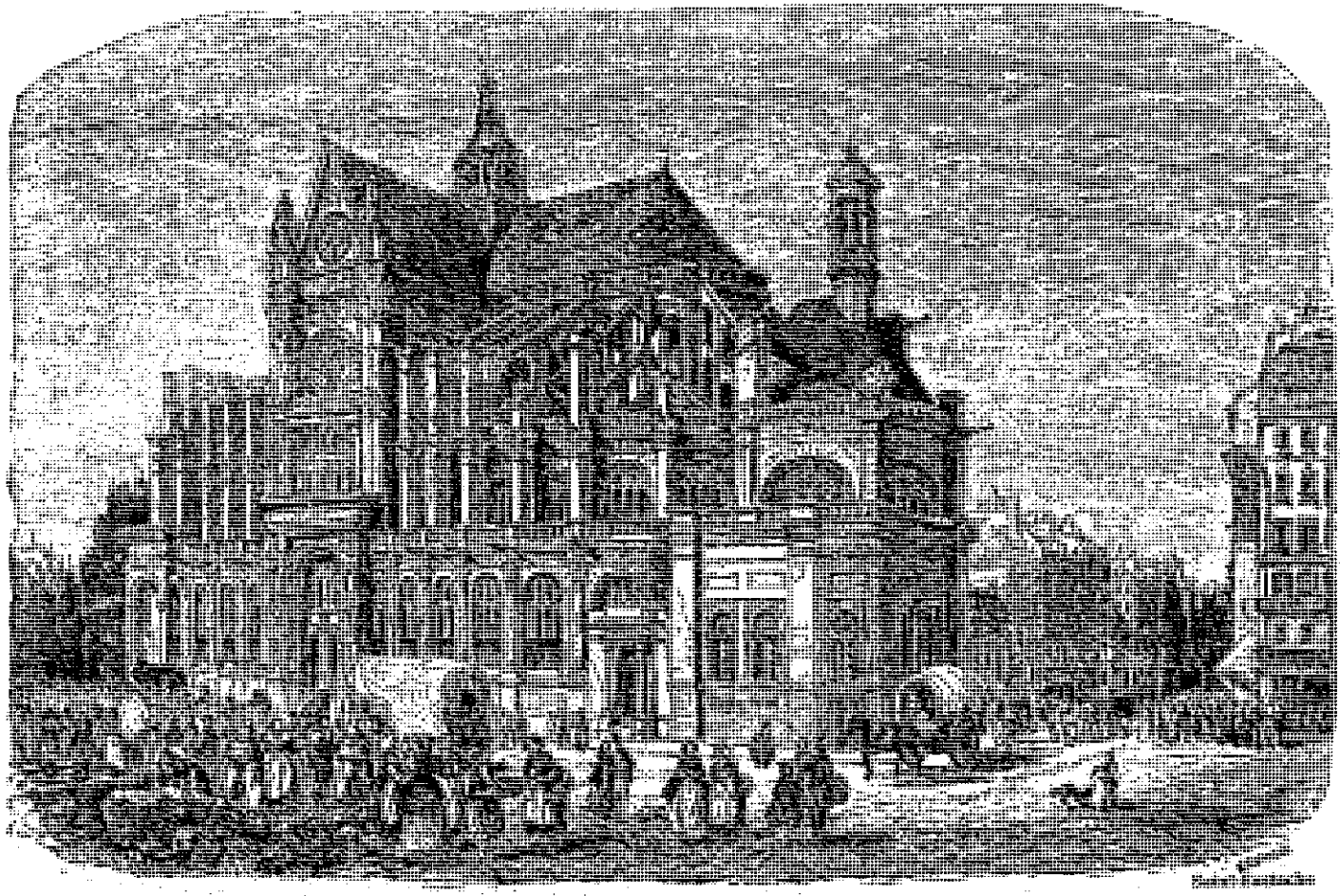
Fantaisie
Grande Pièce symphonique
Cantabile
Improvisation
Pièce héroïque
Improvisation

Of the new *Trois Pièces*, the critic for the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* found the *Fantaisie* en *la* a beautiful, very skillfully wrought piece, "but all the details were not well brought out: the soft stops lacking presence and distinctness in the hall. The *Cantabile* in B major, an impressive melody of noble character, was more effective thanks to the telling Récit stop employed. The *Pièce héroïque*, although containing some excellent things, seemed less interesting than the two other works. As for the *Grande Pièce symphonique* in F-sharp minor it has long been known and justly appreciated. The Andante, as always, was warmly welcomed." Perhaps because of the negative criticism, Franck never played the *Pièce héroïque* again.

Franck's first improvisation was based on themes by French masters: the first chorus of Félicien David's *Le Désert*, two themes from Hector Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, and two themes from Georges Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*. "He brought out charming details in his free-style treatment of these themes, especially those of Berlioz." Franck concluded his recital with another lengthy improvisation on Russian themes (two popular motifs), first treated separately, and then superimposed upon Swedish, Hungarian, and English themes. "The themes were too numerous and it would not have been possible to take advantage of each one sufficiently without fatiguing the audience. With this slight reservation, we happily pay homage to the most elevated and complete talent known. Once again we are to be congratulated that so peerless an artist is at the forefront of organ teachers in France."

At the end of the month, on October 29, Franck, Gigout, and Paul Wachs, the organiste titulaire, "played some beautiful pages by Bach, Mendelssohn, and Boëly"[21] in a recital at Saint-Merry to inaugurate the organ which had just been restored and renovated by Cavaillé-Coll. He had rebuilt the original Clicquot organ in 1857 when Saint-Saëns was organist and had made several changes over the following 20 years. This was to be the organbuilder's last association with Saint-Merry, as it proved to be Franck's last professional association with Cavaillé-Coll.

For the inauguration of the tubular-pneumatic organ built by Fer-



mis & Persil for the new church of Saint-François-Xavier, Franck again played his *Cantabile*. The other organists, Widor, Gigout, and Albert Renaud, the church's organist, each played their own works on the recital. The organ was unique: in addition to its "modern" action, it had a 61-note manual compass, five of its *pédales de combinaison* were duplicated by pistons, couplers enabled the anches and fonds of the Positif and Récit to be operated independently, and there was a sub-octave coupler for the Anches Pédale, as well as a crescendo pedal and chimes (Cloches) on the Positif. Franck's solo took advantage of none of these state-of-the-art appliances, but they certainly would not have escaped his notice.

On March 21, 1879, the last convocation of important organists in which César Franck would be included was held for the inauguration of the new Merklin organ in Saint-Eustache. Franck's latest first-prize winner, Henri Dallier, had recently been appointed organist. Franck had played at the inauguration of the former organ in 1854; it had been severely damaged by shells in a bombardment during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 and had remained in disrepair ever since. Franck was a member of the organ commission along with Guilmant, Dubois, and Gigout, and all four, with Dallier, played on the inaugural recital.

> M. Franck, the senior artist, magisterially played his beautiful *Fantaisie en la*, where inspiration and technique, like two estranged sisters, entwine and complement each other on billowing waves of rich harmony rushing at random from modulation to modulation.[22]

The *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* mentioned that the *Fantaisie* was incorrectly designated *Cantabile* on the printed program;[23] from these two reviews it is apparent that only the one piece was played.

The publisher Durand took over the rights to Franck's *Six Pièces* and, using Maeyens-Couvreur's original plates, brought out their own edition in 1880—in a very conservative printing of 25 copies! They were somewhat more optimistic with the *Trois Pièces*, which they published in 1883 in a run of 150 copies.

During the last decade of his life Franck's activities were divided primarily between teaching and composing and playing the organ at Sainte-Clotilde. His income came almost exclusively from teaching, both at the Conservatoire and through his private organ and composition students. He maintained connections with several schools in Paris, notably the National Institute for Blind Youths where he was one of the examiners; several graduates entered his organ class at the Conservatoire and left with the first prize.

Whether there was an improvement in the talent of students who entered Franck's organ class, or whether Franck gradually came to understand just what was expected of his students by the end-of-term juries, is unclear, but throughout the 1880s more students won first prize—at least one a year:

Gabriel Pierné (1863–1937) won first prize in 1882 and succeeded Franck as organist of Sainte-Clotilde—a position he held for eight years. He was an unsuccessful contender for the post at Notre-Dame in 1900, but went on to become a noted composer and conductor of the Orchestra Colonne from 1910 to 1932.

Anatole-Léon Grand-Jany (1862–91) competed successfully for the first prize in organ in 1883 and was, for a time, choir organist at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.

Henri Kaiser (b. 1861) won first prize in 1884 and was appointed professor of solfège at the Paris Conservatoire in 1891.

François Pinot (b. 1865) won first prize in 1885. He was appointed organiste d'accompagnment at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in 1887.

Adolphe Marty (1865–1942) was Franck's first student from the Institute for Blind Youths to win first prize in organ at the Conservatoire (1886). He succeeded Louis Lebel in 1888 as professor of organ at the Institute and also tanght composition, directed the choir, and conducted the orchestra. Among his students there were Louis Vierne, André Marchal, Jean Langlais, and Gaston Litaize. Marty was organist of Saint-François-Xavier for half a century until his death.

Cesare Galeotti (1872–1929) won first prize in 1887 at the age of 15! He was later a noted composer of symphonic works and operas.

Joséphine Boulay (1869–1925) was blind and had the distinction of being the first woman to win a first prize in organ at the Conservatoire (1888). She taught piano and organ at the Institute for Blind Youths for 37 years.

There were two first-prize winners in 1889: Georges-Paul Bondon (b. 1867), who later taught solfège at the Conservatoire and was organiste-de-choeur at Saint-Philippe-du-Roule, and Albert Mahaut (1867–1943). Franck described Mahaut as the "perfect student"; he played the *Prière* on his final examination. The first organist to play an all-Franck recital—at the Trocadéro on April 28, 1898—Mahaut was professor of harmony at the National Institute for Blind Youths from 1889 to 1924, concertized into his 70s, and was an indefatigable spokesman for the cause of blind musicians.

Marie Prestat was in Franck's class for three years. A brilliant student ("no lesson interests me more than yours," Franck wrote

her), she was the first woman to have won a first prize in counterpoint and fugue, and for many years was the only woman ever to have won five first prizes at the Paris Conservatoire. She taught piano at the Schola Cantorum from 1901 to 1922.

Franck's two most famous students, Charles Tournemire and Louis Vierne, did not win their first prizes until after his death.

The list of first-prize winners, augmented by all of those awarded lesser prizes and those who did not compete, gives an idea of the number of Franck students who were active in the first decades of the 20th century.

In spite of Vincent d'Indy's morose picture of Franck's unappreciated and ignoble life, a certain degree of recognition did come to Franck. It came slowly and late in his life, but it did come. As an organist and teacher, he could hardly have achieved more than to teach at the national Conservatoire. His music was published and, at least the organ music, was performed by not just a handful of organists. He was awarded the Prix Chartier for chamber music by the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1881, and the cross of the Légion d'Honneur in 1885. He was elected president of the Société Nationale in 1886—the musical society of which he himself had been a founding member in 1871. The aim of the society was "to favor the production and diffusion of all serious works, published or not, of French composers." He attended a Franck festival organized by his students at the Cirque d'Hiver in 1887. He even had his portrait painted by Jeanne Rongier showing him seated at the console of the organ of Sainte-Clotilde, and witnessed its exhibition at the Palais des Champs-Élysées in May of 1888.

César Franck, the composer, came into his own only in the last ten years or so of his life. The list of works from this period is impressive not only because of the number of masterpieces which follow in succession, but because the composer was older than most other creative artists when he produced them: 1879, *Quintet in F Minor*, and the oratorio, *Les Béatitudes*; 1880, the biblical scene for solo voices, chorus and orchestra, *Rébecca*; 1882, the symphonic poem, *Le Chasseur maudit*; 1884, the symphonic poem, *Les Djinns*, and the *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* for piano solo; 1885, the opera *Hulda*, and *Variations symphoniques* for piano and orchestra; 1886, the *Sonata* for violin and piano and the symphonic poem, *Psyché*; 1887, *Prélude, Aria et Final* for piano solo; 1888 *Symphony in D Minor*; 1889, the opera *Ghisèlle* and the *String Quartet in D Major*. Organ works included a *Petit Offertoire* which appeared in an 1885 collection, *L'Orgue de l'Église*, an arrangement for organ of ten excerpts from Charles-Valentin Alkan's *Préludes et Prières*, published in 1889, and, in the last summer of his life, *L'Organiste* (Volume I) and the immortal *Trois Chorals*.

César Franck the organist was never far from the teacher or the composer and in the midst of Conservatoire classes and juries, the composition of operas, sonatas, symphonic poems, and symphonies, there was always Sainte-Clotilde—and its duties. Around 1885 Franck recommended and was instrumental in the parish's purchase of a Mustel Modèle K harmonium for choir accompaniment. This was a 19-stop stock model which in addition to the standard four free-reed ranks included an 8′ Voix céleste and an 8′ Harpe éolienne, as well as the special Mustel features which included Métaphones, Prolongement, and Double-Expression. We do not know if this harmonium was used in the rear choir gallery or in the chancel. There was a movement afoot to relocate the choir to the front of the church, its traditional place in France, and an instrument in the chancel had been considered at different times, but the proposal was always rejected for lack of space.

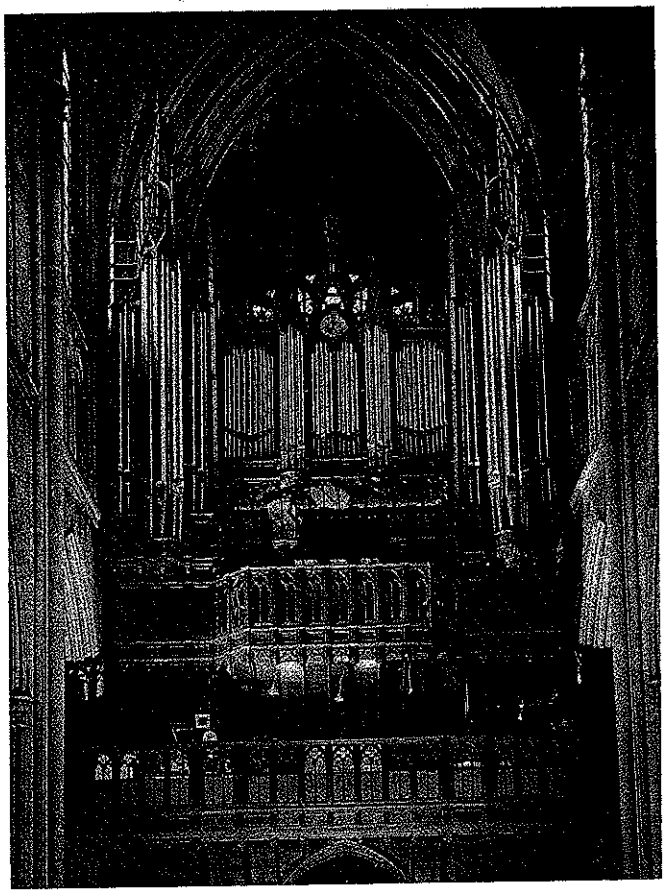
Then, in 1887, Joseph Merklin was given the contract for an orgue-de-choeur to be installed in the chancel of Sainte-Clotilde. In a letter to the organbuilder dated August 8, Franck wrote:

> I am pleased to learn from your good letter that all is now ready regarding the choir organ for Sainte-Clotilde. So we are finally going to have this organ so desired and so long awaited, thanks to your electropneumatic action which I find simply marvelous.

Such a testimonial from the professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire was not long in finding its way into the firm's advertisements.

The installation of an organ in the front of the church had posed a physical problem in that, until the advent of electric action, there was no way an organ could be installed in the sanctuary without taking up too much room and covering up architectural detail. Merklin solved it by dividing it

> into two sections of equal size and placed in elevated positions, in the side arches of the apsidal sanctuary, in line with the steps of the high altar. [The Grand-Orgue on the left side with the console, the Récit opposite, on the right.] The console is located at the end of the stalls on the left as one faces the altar . . . and the bellows are placed immediately behind the high altar.[24]



**Organ case of Sainte-Clotilde**

The organ was playing by March of 1888 and the commission which approved it consisted of a close Franckian family circle: Théodore Dubois, the former maître-de-chapelle, now organist of the Madeleine, Samuel Rousseau, the maître-de-chapelle, and Georges Verschneider, a Conservatoire student of Franck's who won first accessit in 1875 and was then organiste de l'orgue de choeur, and, of course, the organiste titulaire, César Franck.

SAINTE-CLOTILDE
Orgue de Choeur

| GRAND-ORGUE (expressif) | | RÉCIT (expressif) | | PÉDALE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Bourdon | 8 | Flûte harmonique | 16 | Soubasse |
| 8 | Montre | 8 | Gambe | 8 | Bourdon |
| 8 | Bourdon | 8 | Voix céleste | 8 | Violoncelle |
| 8 | Salicional | 4 | Flûte octaviante | | |
| 4 | Prestant | | Blank (prepared for) | | |
| 8 | Trompette | 8 | Basson-hautbois | | |

The manual compass was 56 notes (C–G); the Pédale, 30 notes (C–F). Each manual division was separately enclosed and the three pedal stops were borrowed from the Grand-Orgue. In addition to the usual pédales de combinaison there were four "boutons électrique de combinaisons"—preset pistons which added stops: Pianissimo, Mezzo forte, Forte, Fortissimo.[25] This Merklin organ never worked very well and in 1934 was replaced by a poor-quality, two-manual instrument built by the successors of Cavaillé-Coll and installed in the choir tribune.[26]

On May 27, 1889, Franck inaugurated the new organ in the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, an interestingly designed rebuild by Merklin et Cie. A new four-manual console situated behind the high altar controlled the two existing orgues-de-choeur, which retained their original mechanical action, as well as the Grand-Orgue in the rear gallery, which was fitted with electropneumatic action. At the inauguration Franck played two improvisations

> utilizing one after the other the resources of the new system with infinite artistry. All the stops were heard in pleasing solos and melodious dialogues. First the orgue-de-tribune accompanied the song, then it was followed by the orgue-de-choeur and the finest chiseled phrases reached us from the uppermost vaults so that the whole church was filled with a new

harmony coming simultaneously or alternately from opposite ends of the building. The demonstration was conclusive and very acceptable: the organ affords new means which can be put to the best use. Franck played a beautiful fantaisie of his own composition on the orgue-de-tribune division only, and demonstrated thereby that the action everywhere yielded to the same submissiveness and the same ease.[27]

Early in January 1890 Franck went to Lyon for a performance of his *Mass* at the Church of Saint-Bonaventure. The organ had been rebuilt, enlarged with partial electropneumatic action by Merklin three years before. Franck improvised an Offertoire and a Sortie which "confirmed the great reputation which he enjoys in Paris as virtuoso and composer."[28]

In early May of 1890, while on the way to a rehearsal at a student's home, the cab in which Franck was riding was hit in the right side by the carriage pole of a passing horse-drawn omnibus. William Ober, a New York City pathologist, conjectured that "The chest injury was probably more severe than he first realized, and he *may* have cracked a rib and had a pleural reaction."[29]

Although Franck was forced to cancel numerous eugagements, including the last concert of the Société Nationale, its end-of-the-year banquet, and had to be excused from serving on the piano jury at the Conservatoire at the end of July, he was, nevertheless, able to join four other organists for a reception of the orgue-de-choeur at Notre-Dame Cathedral. Merklin had restored the 1863 organ and converted it to electropneumatic action, and Franck played a Méditation and a Caprice to demonstrate the advantages of the new changes.[30]

Franck's health was improved enough for him to enjoy a leisurely and productive summer vacation and be was able to begin classes at the Conservatoire at the beginning of October,

but on October 17 he developed a respiratory infection which turned into pneumonia. As was uot uncommon in the pre-antibiotic era, the lung infection spread and Franck developed pleurisy and pericarditis . . . and died on November 8. Though he may have been in good health until the time of his accident in May, his terminal illness in October-November 1890 could not be considered an unusual pattern for pneumonia in a man in his seventh decade. Franck's case raises the question of proximate cause, and it is somewhat difficult to indict the bus injury when its effects seem to have disappeared in a reasonable time.[31]

Although we are marking the centenary of his death in 1890, it is, of course, Franck's life that we celebrate—a life bound inextricably to the organ. Whether as a student, recitalist, composer, teacher, or sacred musician, Franck brought a seriousness of purpose and dedication to his chosen instrument. By creating masterpieces in the genres of symphony, song, chamber music, and oratorio as well, César Franck ensured a respect for the organ and its music of all musicians familiar with his name.

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27. "L'Orgue de Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas," *Le Monde Musical* (June 15, 1889), p. 8.
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29. William B. Ober, "De Mortibus Musicorum," *Stereo Review* (Nov. 1970), p. 83.
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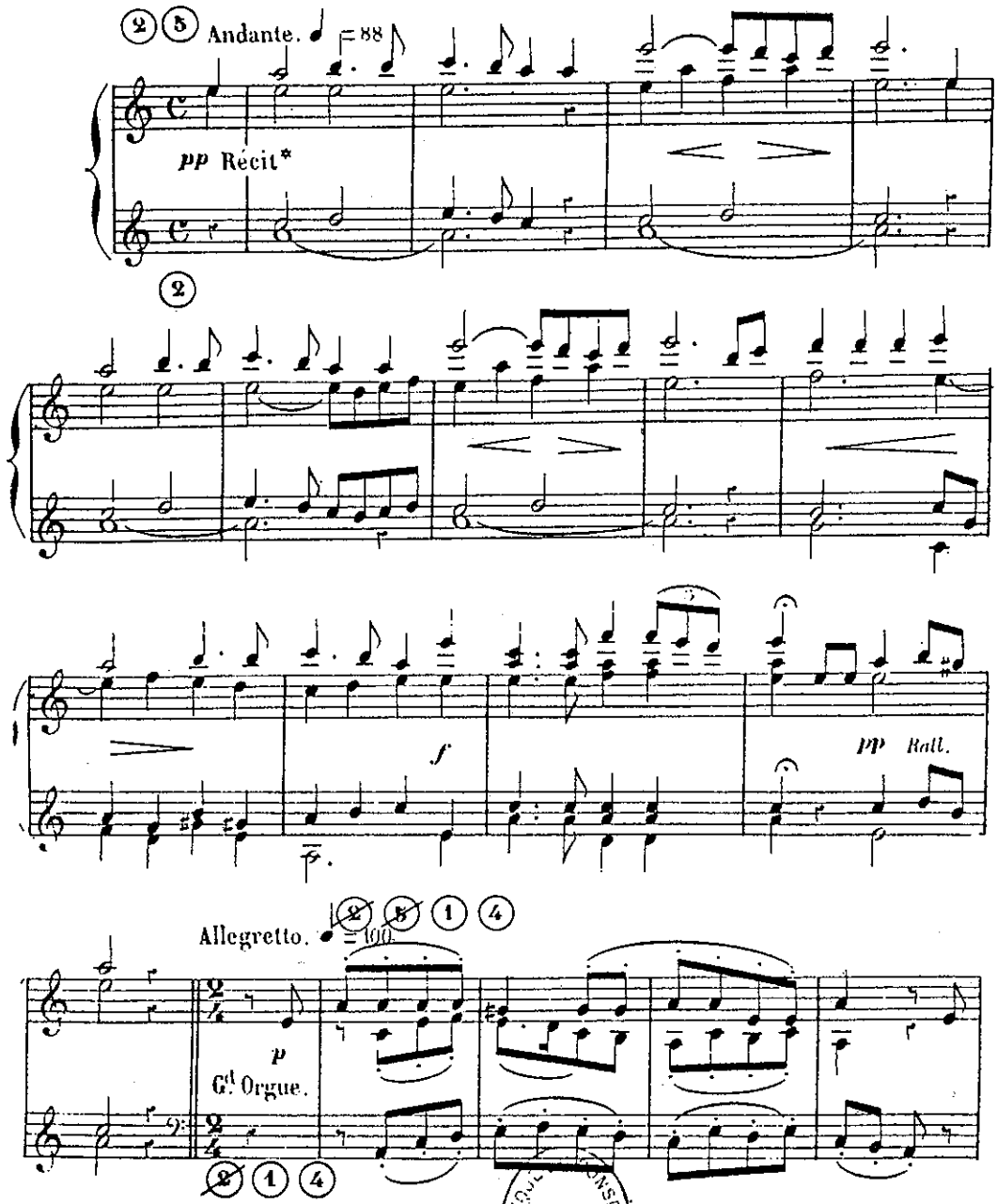
31. Ober, loc. cit.

# OFFERTOIRE.

## SUR UN NOËL BRETON.

par CÉSAR FRANCK.
*Organiste du Grand Orgue de Ste CLOTILDE.*

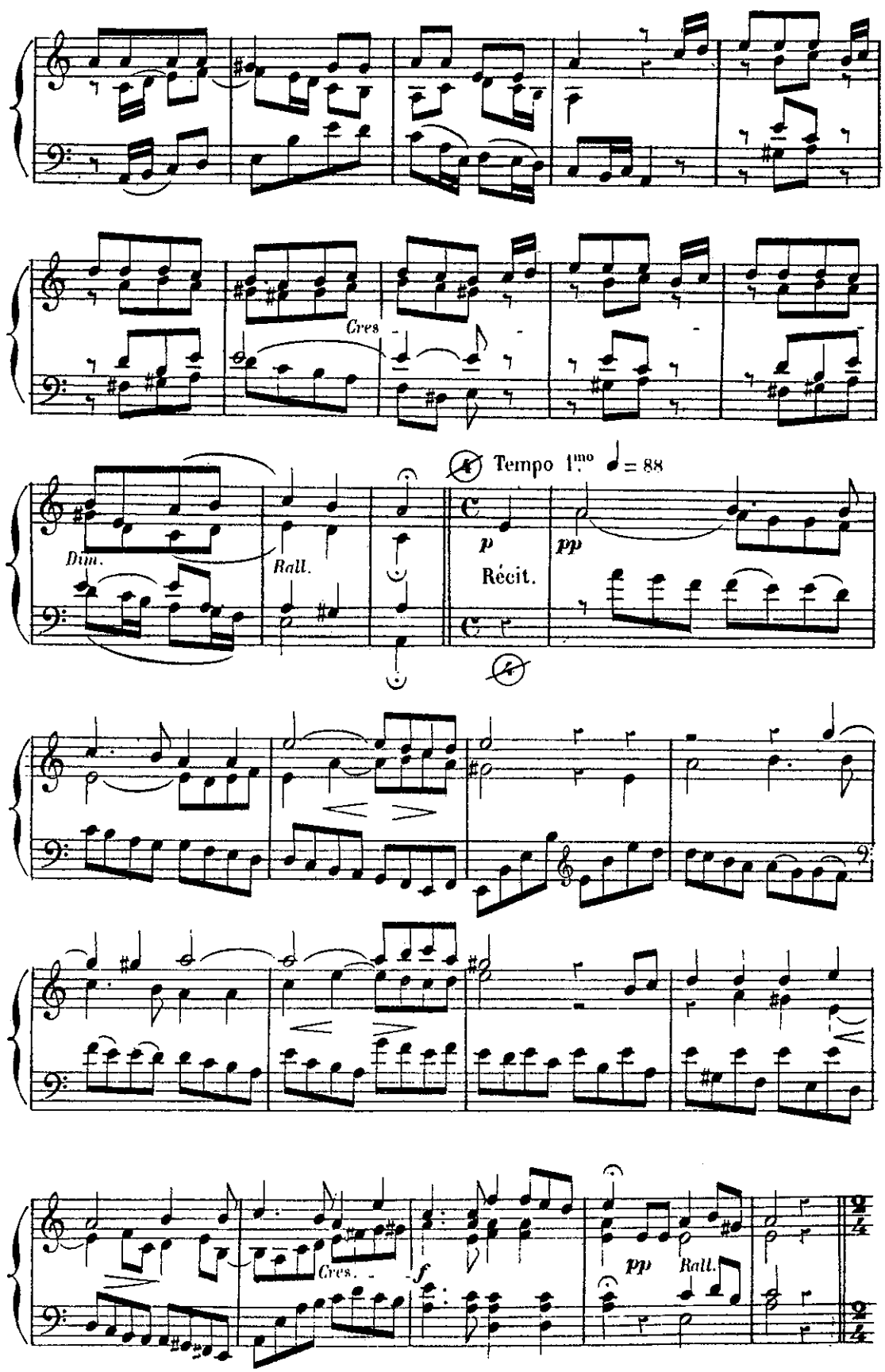
* Indication des Jeux pour le Grand Orgue.
RÉCIT, Fonds de 8 et Hauth. de 8.
GRAND-ORGUE, Fonds de 8.
Claviers accouplés.

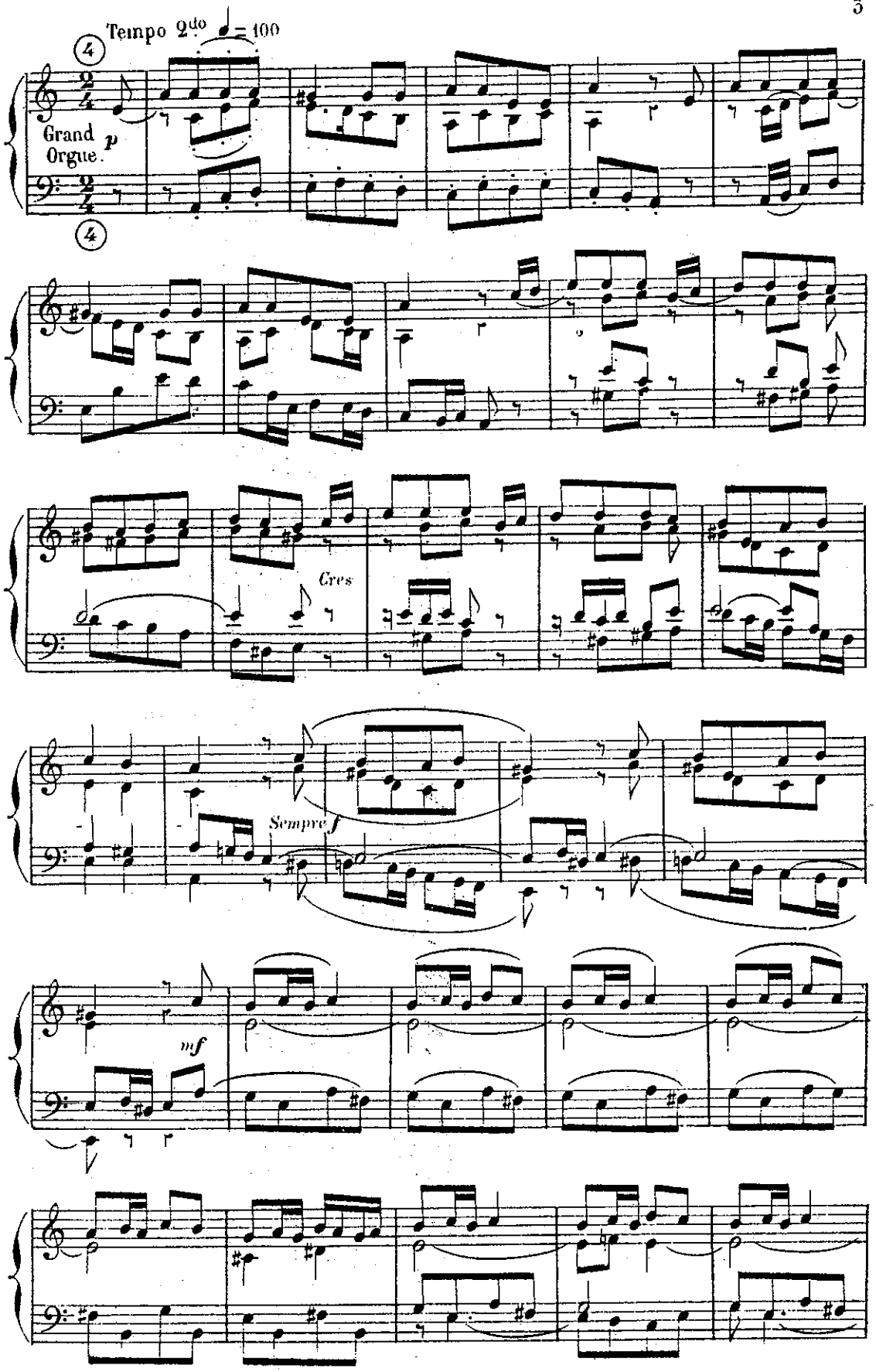



* Lorsqu'on exécutera ce morceau sur un orgue à tuyaux, il faudra jouer ces 14 premières mesures une octave plus bas qu'elles ne sont écrites.



Me V. SUL ZER Editeur, rue de BABYLONE 53.


Cres.
Tempo 1.mo ♩= 88
Dim.
Rall.
p
pp
Récit.
Cres.
f
pp
Rall.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Grand Orgue. p
Cres
Sempre f
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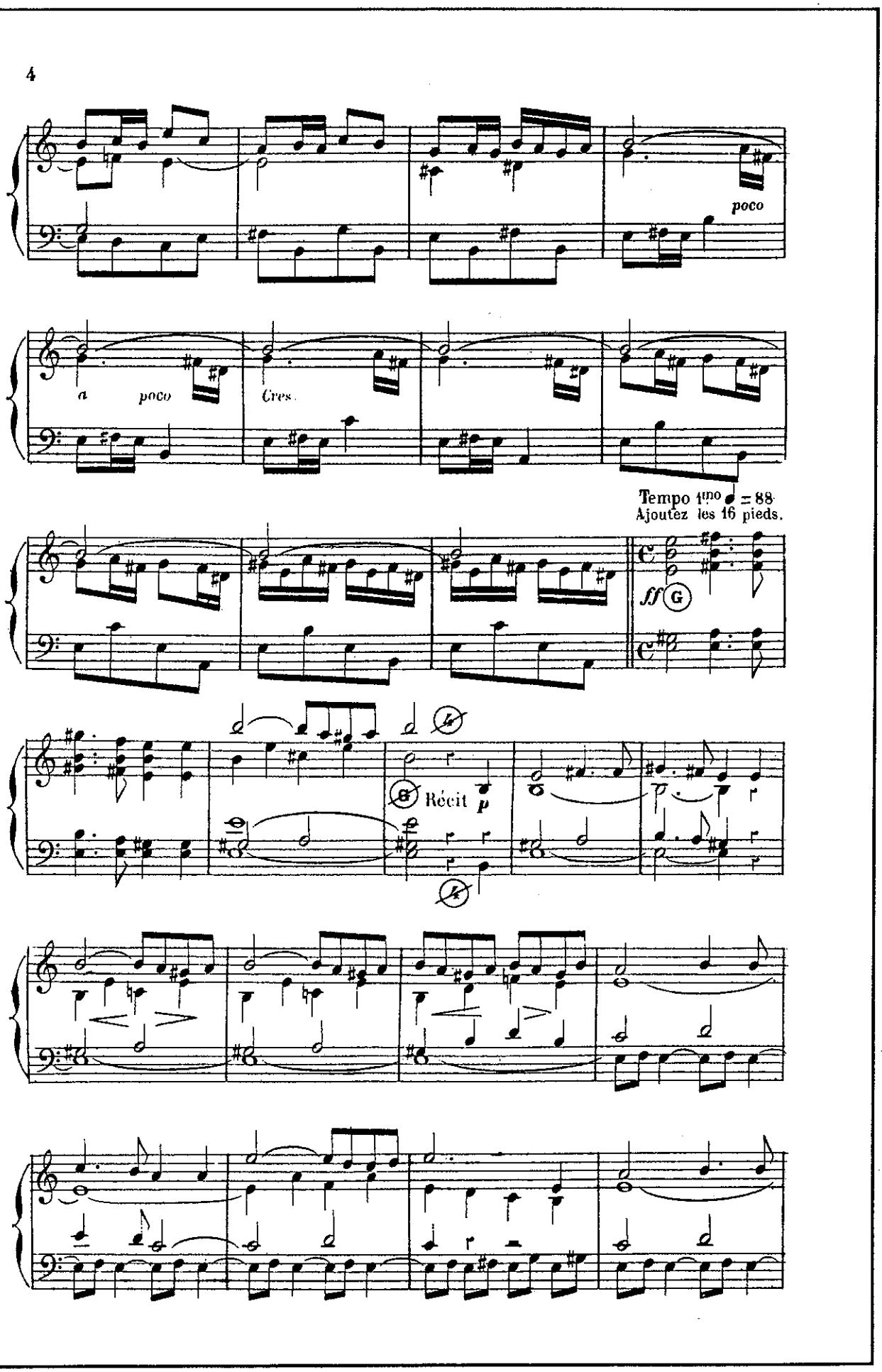
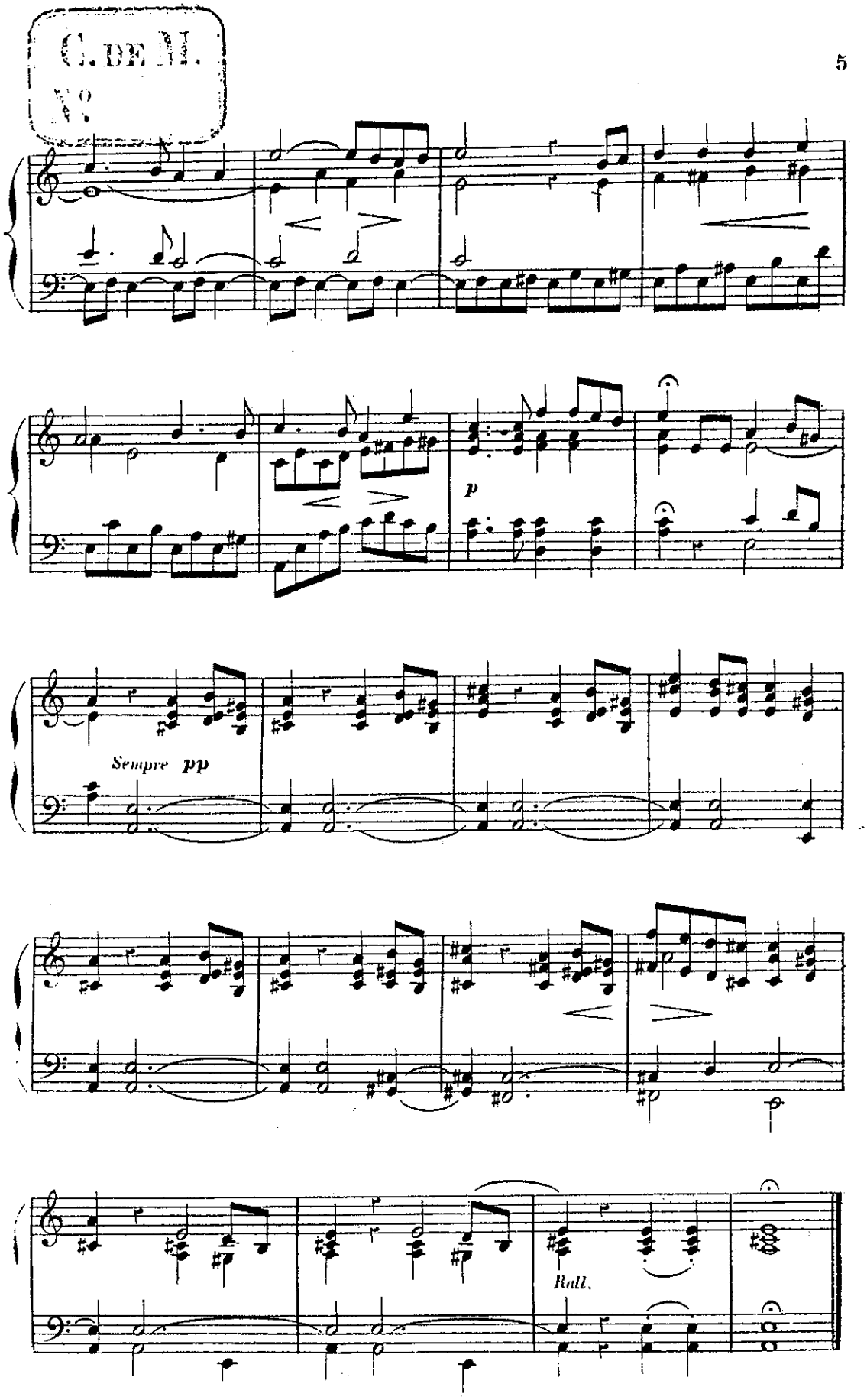
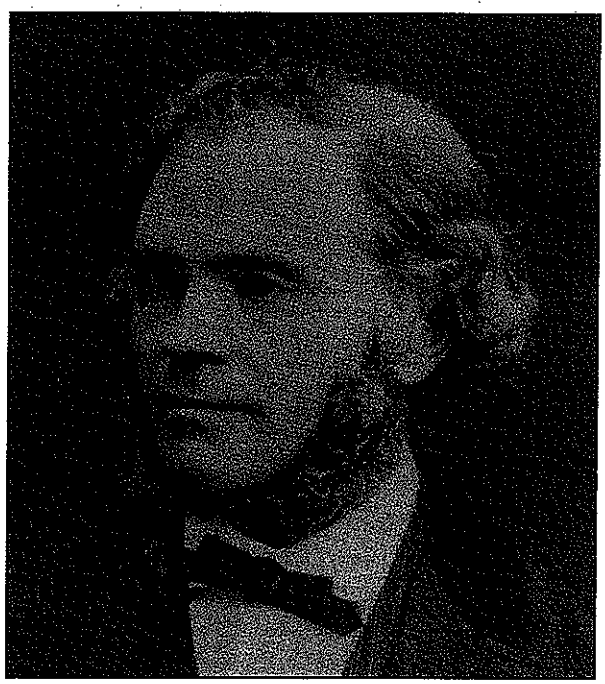

4
poco
a poco
Cres.
Tempo 1mo ♩ = 88
Ajoutez les 16 pieds.
ff G
F
Récit p
E


p
Sempre pp
Rall.



Franck at 35 in 1857

# CÉSAR FRANCK'S CHORAL MUSIC

James McCray

Although César Franck holds a place of importance for organists, his choral music has remained relatively unknown. Except for his setting of *Psalm 150* which has enjoyed a populist nostalgia with church choirs, his choral music is rarely performed. In this year marking the centenary of his death, it seems appropriate to examine his corpus of choral works.

One major contributor to the neglect of Franck's choral music is that the scores are not very accessible in America. Many of his works have been out of print for years, and securing original, scholarly editions from France can be difficult and expensive.

Another factor that has reduced interest in Franck's choral music is that there is no complete edition of his music; however, Wilhelm Mohr has produced a thematic catalog.[1] Many relatively obscure works of such composers as Liszt and Schumann have been resurrected and published in useful editions in America because of the accessibility of the collected works. Without these authentic, primary sources, editors have a considerably more difficult time making practical editions for mass consumption. Finally, there is the realization that much of Franck's choral music is too tiresome for current tastes, so his music is neglected in favor of other more substantial 19th-century choral composers. Whereas the choral music of Mozart or Brahms transcends time and still communicates to our generation in much the same way as it did during the composers' lives, Franck's music will probably be seen as historical rather than intrinsically communicative. In short, time has not assuaged our attitude toward Franck's choral music. Some of the disregard it experienced during his lifetime is still being felt today, even though for different reasons.

Generally, Franck's choral music may be divided into three basic areas: (1) large sacred oratorios and cantatas; (2) sacred motets and masses; and (3) secular vocal works. The last category is quite small and not very significant in terms of his entire output and lifetime involvement in church music. The commentary below focuses primarily on the sacred motets and masses. A companion article by Lee Egbert on Franck's oratorios and cantatas is also published in this issue of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST.

Not all of Franck's music, vocal or instrumental, has been assigned opus numbers. In fact, a review of his music reveals that a large portion has no number or, in some instances, has two numbers relating to his somewhat casual first series and a more authoritative organization by Wilhelm Mohr in his thematic catalog. Clearly, the majority of Franck's works were first performed and published in Paris. In the motet-mass category, they span the years 1835–84; a few works in the secular genre were written later, with the last choral work completed in 1888, two years before his death.

Today, as in his lifetime, Franck's reputation remains linked to the organ. According to Robert Cavarra,

> César Franck's contribution to the Art of the Organ cannot be overstated. His earlier works bordered on banality. Undaunted, he spent a lifetime searching for a style which suited the new sounds generated by the organs of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. But in the end his goal was achieved. A complete musician, he had created, evolved, and perfected a new idiomatic language which resonated with the age. He had invented the timbres, the harmonies, the melodies, the nuances, and the inflections that came to characterize the organ music of France for the next hundred years; the Grand Symphonic style.[2]

Certainly his appointment in 1857 as organist of the newly completed church of Sainte-Clotilde was a major turning point in his career, and it was for a short period at this time that Franck had experience in choral conducting.

Influences on his church music may be traced to his somewhat modified Catholic beliefs. Joel-Marie Fauquet points out:

> Franck did not consider Catholicism a disincarnate religion. Christ became man and this chance of salvation was the price of the dualism over which conscience must triumph in favor of Justice and Goodness.
>
> Not only does this principle constitute the explicit or underlying reason for most of Franck's compositions, it even goes so far as to regulate, symbolically, the pure musical forms.[3]

Rey M. Longyear speaks of Franck's church music being influenced by

> a kind of feminized Christianity, different from the sturdy piety of Bruckner, Brahms, and Dvořák or the rugged self-taugbt American "Sacred Harp" composers.[4]

Nevertheless, even though his approach and style may be different from others of his time, it does represent a sincere gesture, and underlying it all is his fervent link to the organ which often added to the improvisatory spirit of his music. Regarding his personal observations on composition, Franck said,

**James McCray**, professor of music at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, holds degrees from Illinois Wesleyan University, Southern Illinois University, and the University of Iowa. In addition to serving as department chairman at Colorado State from 1978 to 1988, he previously held similar positions at Longwood College and St. Mary's College. The composer of one hundred works currently in print, Dr. McCray is also the author of the forthcoming *American Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*. He has written a number of articles for this and other journals and has served as editor of *The Choral Journal*.

It is a matter of little importance whether the music is descriptive—that is to say, sets out to awaken ideas about a given external subject—or whether it limits its intentions to the expression of a state of mind that is purely internal and exclusively psychological. What is of the first importance is that a composition should be musical and emotional as well.[5]

* * *

It is not the intention of this article to examine every choral work by Franck but rather to discuss selected works and provide representative observations. His last church work, *Psalm 150*, is probably his most frequently performed choral composition. Available in numerous versions, it has enjoyed a wide popularity, particularly with church choirs. Originally, the work was scored for chorus, organ, and orchestra, and was written in 1884 for the Institute of Young Blind People in Paris to introduce its new organ to the public.

There have been numerous publications of this work over the years. In comparing three recent editions (Roger Dean Publishers of Illinois; Hinshaw Music of North Carolina; M. Combre of Paris), some differences can be found. The William Osborn edition for Roger Dean Publishing company is practical, inexpensive, and easy to read; it does not include the original French text as do the other two. This is not significant to most conductors; however, the work was originally publisbed in 1896, five years after Franck's death, by Breitkopf & Härtel, with French and German texts. The older French edition, published by M. Combre, is certainly the most expensive one, but does include a Latin version which has appeal for some situations.

Possibly the most authoritative edition that is easily available is the one by Walter S. Collins, published by Hinshaw Music Corporation. He has meticulously restored the original organ transcription that had been made by the German composer Solomon Jadassohn (1831–1902) and published by Breitkopf at the same time as the full score was made available. Specific organ registrations are provided in both the Hinshaw and Combre editions, and all three seem to follow the same general dynamic patterns.

It is in this setting that Franck's symphonic approach to composition may be seen. Even though this is a transcription of the orchestral version, his discernable symphonic style that often permeates his organ writing is well defined. The work begins with a majestic organ opening in half-note pulsations that contrapuntally interlace lines into chromatic chords which epitomize the late-Romantic style. From this texture that rhythmically moves at a slower pace comes the quarter-note marcbing idea in staccato chords; they serve as the backdrop for the opening "Hallelujahs" that alternate with a rising organ line growing from the harmonic palette of the instrumental opening.

Later, after this long section, the music finally moves in an even greater celebrative spirit as the text sings of praising on trumpets, timbrels, and other instruments. The vertical organ chords erupt into a flourishing sixteenth-note patter and lead to the organ interlude material that had been heard with the "Hallelujahs." The remainder of the work intertwines these ideas (symphonically) as the music drives toward the final, glorious "Hallelujahs" that draw on the chromatic chords of the instrumental opening.

This setting, while somewhat of a "chestnut," is still one that will thrill both singers and listeners. It is one of Franck's few choral works remaining in the active repertoire, and is certain to have an emotional impact on everyone. This is oue of those compositions possibly forgotten by some conductors because of its overuse two and three decades ago, but it just may be one to bring out of retirement to help commemorate this Franck year.

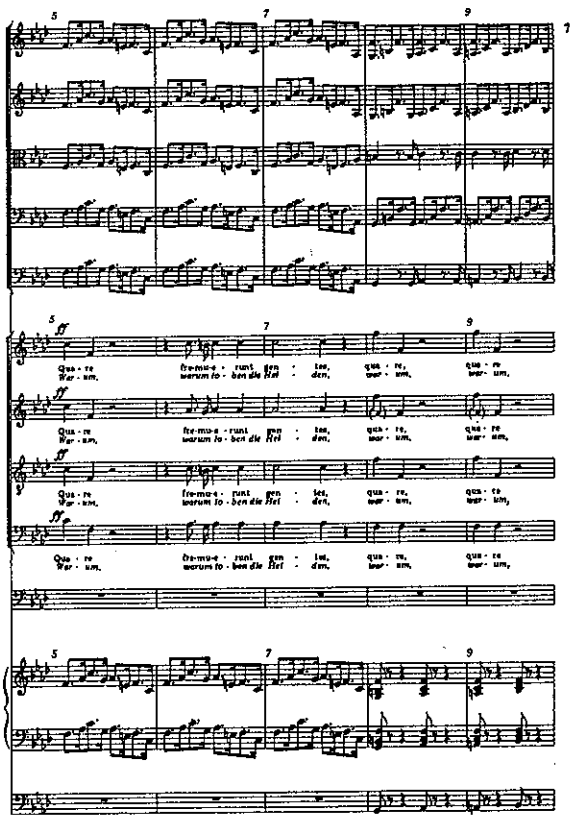
Two of Franck's last motets were offertories that date from 1871. They serve as excellent examples of bis church music and the French tradition of the time. Both employ his curious style of three-part writing (STB) with organ and string bass.

*Quare fremuerunt gentes* is a work that has received numerous performances and has been recorded on the Musical Heritage Society label. Because some additional parts were also found in his handwriting, the work has been recently published in an SATB, bass solo, strings, and organ edition. Tbis Carus-Verlag edition by Armin Landgraf has, in addition to the changes just mentioned, also substituted a few brief Latin phrases for the original text that had been written specifically for the Feast of St. Clotilde. Franck compiled this text from a variety of sources including the first book of the Maccabees, St. Paul's second letter to Timothy, the books of Job and Judith, and an antiphon for the Vespers for Assumption. The Landgraf substitutions are not extensive, yet alter the meaning to place the motet in a Christological environment, making it more useful for most services.

The motet is in three parts. Fauquet observes that the text in the opening section alludes to the battle of Tolbïac which Clovis waged against the Alamans, during which it is said he made the vow to convert himself to the "God of Clotilda" if the latter brought him victory.[6]

The music is dominated by dotted rhythms that dauce bebind syllabic choral statements and questions.

**Ex. 1, Quare fremuerunt gentes, mm. 5–9**



The opening F-minor section connects directly to a slow A-flat major middle section that alternates the bass solo with the choir; here the accompaniment is less involved. The last section, where the text substitution occurs, has flowing instrumental lines that chromatically weave around the choral lines. The harsh, demanding mood of the opening has changed to a more peaceful character. The closing has pleas for mercy (now to Christ rather than St. Clotilde), and after one final outburst, quietly fades into a gentle ending.

In the Carus-Verlag edition, the role of the organ is reduced more to that of accompaniment than the soloistic style of the original. The string writing is in five parts and is relatively easy. Although the tessitura for the soprano tends to be high, the choral writing is not difficult and is well within the ability of most church choirs. There is no Englisb translation provided in this edition. Even with the changes, Landgraf's edition does provide a useful selection for church or concert performances.

The other 1871 offertory, *Domine non secundum*, follows the same orchestration. It is available in a Huguenin edition that has Latin and French texts. Designed for the time of penitence, it has texts from the tract for Ash Wednesday consisting of verses from Psalms 102 and 78.

As in the *Quare fremuerunt gentes* setting, Franck divided the music into three parts, but here in an ABA format. It opens in B minor with a tenor and soprano choral duet that establishes a quiet, ethereal mood. The middle section changes to B major and moves through a series of modulations that eventually return to the opening idea. *Domine non secundum* is briefer than the other motet and, although also recorded on the Musical Heritage Society label, it is less accessible to conductors; its publication remains unchanged from the original version. These two offertories provide a good insight into Franck's church music.

Franck made three different settings of the text *O salutaris*. The first, in 1835, for chorus and organ, is not available in a performing edition. A different version for soprano, chorus, and organ was written in 1858 as part of *Trois Motets*, which also included an *Ave Maria* for soprano, bass, and organ, and a *Tantum ergo* for bass,

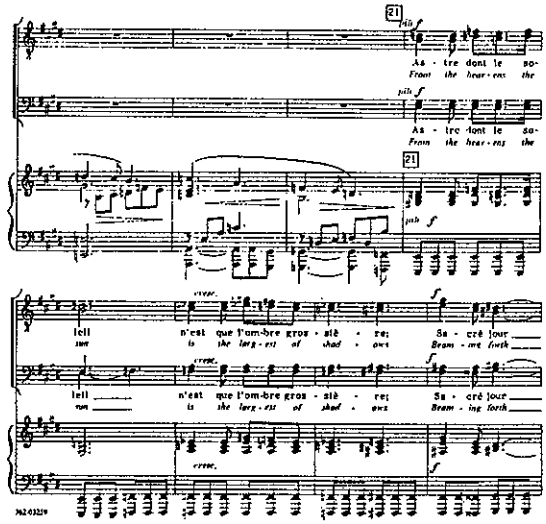
chorus, and organ. The setting that originally was for soprano, tenor, and organ, also in 1858, is currently available in an edition by Kenneth Saslaw for two equal voices and organ. In this edition, the voices are solos, although Saslaw indicates that the motet could be performed by a female choir by assigning a few exposed areas to soloists and the remainder to the choir. The organ part, on three staves, has registration suggestions. The music is perhaps a bit saccharine, but would be useful in many church situations.

In 1871, Franck wrote three more offertories. *Quae est ista* is scored for chorus, organ, harp, and double bass. *Domine Deus in simplicitate*, for SATB, organ, and double bass, has been published in two separate versions by the FitzSimons Company. Both have Latin and English versions. The one by Florence Calahan uses a soprano solo and is titled "Merciful Father"; the other by Leo Sowerby uses a tenor solo with choir and organ and is called "Bow Down Thine Ear." The third offertory, *Dextera Domini*, which is for Easter Sunday, also uses a soloist with STB chorus, organ, and double bass. As with the first motet, it is believed that an orchestral version was made by the composer.

The *Six Duos* of 1888 for soprano, alto, and piano were conceived for solo voices; however, one of them, "La Vierge à la creche," has been arranged for SATB choir and piano by Van A. Christy. His version has divisi choral parts and various added choral effects which remove it from Franck's style.

One of Franck's last choral works was written for men's choir (TTBB) and piano. *Hymn*, based on a text by Jean Racine, was written in 1888 and published in 1890. The edition by Philip Brunelle places all the tenors and basses on two staves, and has both a French and English version for performance. The spirit of this work will remind many of Franck's organ music with its advanced, chromatic harmony, mood shifts, and rhythms.

**Ex. 2, Hymn, mm. 18–25**



The men generally move in homophonic patterns; wide dynamic ranges are employed to help underline the drama of the words. The keyboard has tremolos, pulsating chords, and a section of busy arpeggios. Most of the choral ranges are comfortable for a men's choir. The Racine text has religious overtones, but is not a sacred text in the more traditional manner; it is, however, appropriate for use in church.

*Die sieben Worte Jesu am Kreutz* is an extended multi-movement work that merits serious performance consideration. This "Passion" setting has only recently become known and available. It does not, for example, appear in *The New Grove* listing of Franck's works, and according to the editor, Wolfgang Hochstein, has been lost for almost a century.

> What has been said concerning the neglect of Franck's church music in general is especially true of his setting of *The Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross*. Even during the composer's lifetime this work vanished without a trace. (We do not know whether it was ever performed, and if so, when.) Franck's biographers have had no knowledge of this work, because the original manuscript disappeared for nearly a century, until it was purchased by Liège University Library from a private owner in 1954.[7]

Hochstein's new 1989 edition has just been published by Carus-Verlag and is a scholarly and handsome publication. The original manuscript is dated August 1859, and the composition was probably intended for Passiontide performance in 1860, but that did not happen. A work of 40 minutes duration, it may well appeal to church choir directors seeking attractive, relatively easy music for use during Holy Week.

The edition is for SATB choir, STTB soli, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, harp, timpani, and strings. The original setting was for STTB (omitting alto in both soli and choir), and follows the pattern of the *Mass*, Op. 12, which is discussed below.

The work is designed in eight movements organized around the various "Words," and begins with a Prologue for soprano solo and orchestra on the Old Testament text, *O vos omnes*. Unlike many of his predecessors who set the words of Jesus on the cross, Franck gave a new structure to the texts used. The words of Jesus have been framed by additional texts taken from both Old and New Testaments, from the Improperia, and from the sequence *Stabat Mater*, putting the Crucifixion story into a fresh setting that gives the listener a new perspective on the events. It clearly demonstrates Franck's creativity in approaching the stories of the church.

All texts are in Latin, and this fine edition explains the sources of all text statements used by Franck. The editor also provides suggestions for alternative ways of performing certain areas of the work. For example, in the second word, the tessitura is such that a second tenor could be omitted with the music reassigned to the bass soloist. These recommendations and editing the work for mixed choir greatly increase its potential for use by contemporary choirs.

Franck's setting is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prologue | Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? | S solo and orch. |
| First Word | Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. | SATB and orch. |
| Second Word | Today you shall be with me in paradise. | 2 T soli and orch. |
| Third Word | Woman, behold thy son! | SATB, STB soli, and orch. |
| Fourth Word | My God, why hast thou forsaken me. | SATB and orch. |
| Fifth Word | I thirst! | SATB, B solo, and orch. |
| Sixth Word | It is finished. | SATB, T solo, and orch. |
| Seventh Word | Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. | SATB, T solo, and orch. |

Most of the choral writing is in a homophonic style, and the ranges are comfortable. Usually, the choral music moves in a hymn-like fashion and the orchestral parts provide interest around it. Franck, obviously, kept the choral writing limited, which made it accessible to whatever sources he thought he would have available. Also, the vocal solos are relatively easy and undemanding.

The instrumental writing is more fascinating. Each movement has its own special orchestration. The brass and harp, for example, are used only with certain texts, which adds musical variety not found in the basic choral or solo setting of the words. Most of the movements are in the minor mode. The drama is heightened by the slow tempos and the dark mood created by the chords.

A keyboard version is being made by the editor and should be available by the time this article is printed. For those directors searching for a work that will not be overly difficult but will provide a fresh approach to commemorating the Crucifixion, this newly found choral work should be investigated. The full score is expensive, but is a beautiful publication bound in a cloth hardcover edition that will make an excellent addition to one's library. The orchestral version has all of the parts for sale rather than for rental, which means that its purchase can result in repeated Lenten performances.

Franck's *Mass In A Major*, Op. 12, is possibly his most significant choral work. It is a setting of the Ordinary of the Mass with the inclusion of an additional movement, the famous "Panis angelicus," which is placed just before the Agnus Dei. While this popular melody has been arranged and edited into many different versions, it should be noted that it was intended as a tenor solo and was written in 1871 and interpolated into the Mass with an accompaniment of organ, harp, cello, and double bass. The entire Mass has a duration of about 46 minutes, and is now available in a recent edition published by Carus-Verlag.

Several different versions of this Mass were composed by Franck. The original was for chorus and orchestra, but this was not published until after his death. It was first published in an organ version, but possibly the most popular version is the one for organ, harp, cello, and string bass, instruments frequently employed by Franck as the orchestration for many of his choral settings. This format offers a dramatic, colorful version of the work.

In the foreword to his new edition, the editor, Armin Landgraf, discusses the Mass and provides valuable background.

> The first printing of the mass appeared in 1872, as an arrangement "pour soprano, tenor, et basses avec accompagnement d'orgue, harpe,

violoncelle et contrebasse" . . . Franck's transcription for the organ score, which retains separate harp, cello, and double-bass parts, differs from the original scoring in several essential points.

The harp part in the organ transcription represents a merging of the two harps required in the orchestral version. The cello and the double bass have completely different functions, the cello being required solely for two solo passages while the double bass, on the other hand, fortifies the fundamental of the ensemble and, unlike in the orchestral version, is usually employed only in sections with the full choir or for strengthening the tonal substance when this is demanded by the nature of the musical passage. The composer did not work out a pedal line for the organ. The few indications to use the pedals could not be avoided anyway . . .

The vocal parts . . . are identical in both versions. The scoring for three voices is surprising, but it is not an isolated case, either in Franck's works or in those of other French composers of the period. In the end it proved insufficient in the musically more developed sections and where greater sound is required; the mass, consequently, contains many passages with part divisions either in the tenor or in the bass.

The score indicates minimal employment of solo voices . . . Beyond Franck's indications, it is nonetheless quite possible and appropriate to have other passages sung by soloists.[8]

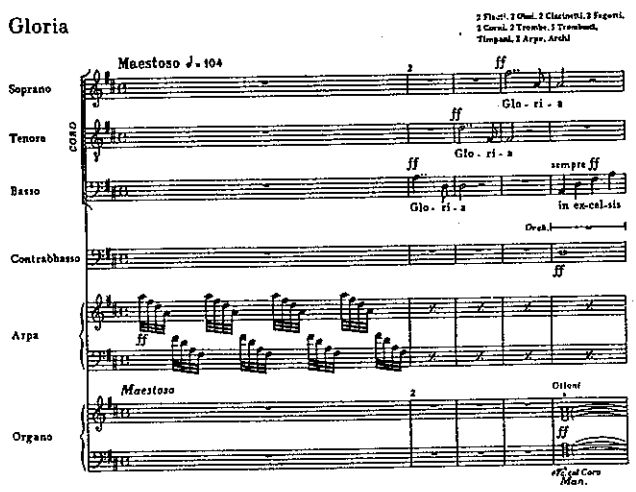
The editor has provided an alternative version for SATB, making limited changes so that altos may be used. He offers detailed, scholarly explanations of the conversion to four parts, and while this is different from the common practice in Franck's church during that period, conductors should not hesitate to use this transcription which is published with the organ score. The comments below describing the music have been observed in conjunction with the three-part (STB) version.

Although the first performance took place in 1861 in the orchestral version, the Kyrie, Gloria, and Sanctus movements remained virtually the same throughout the Mass's evolution. The Credo possibly was added later and finally in 1871, Franck added the "Panis angelicus."

The Kyrie follows the typical Viennese pattern of an ABA musical setting of the text. The thematic ideas are first presented in an instrumental introduction in which the phrases are heard in sequence with a fermata at the end on the ultimate chord. The text is heralded by a tenor soloist, and then that musical idea is sung by the choir. The B section (Christe eleison) is more energetic and chromatically moves to other tonal areas before quietly returning to A major for the return of the Kyrie material. Often the double bass plays the bass line of the chorus, but in some places it plays the lower organ line. This movement is gentle and one of the easiest in the Mass.

There is no intonation at the beginning of the Gloria. After one measure of harp arpeggios on the new D-major tonic (the Kyrie had ended in A major, this movement's dominant), the full choir enters with imitative statements of the text.

**Ex. 3, Mass in A Major, Gloria, mm. 1–5**




The harp arpeggios remain throughout the first three pages of the movement and the static D-major area is heard consistently for 15 measures before Franck finally changed the chord and moved to the dominant. Extended, unmoving harmonic patterns are a prominent feature of this movement. Later in this opening section, the harp arpeggios condense into pulsating chords that respond to the downbeat of each measure on the organ. A particularly poignant moment occurs on the text "Jesu Christe" when the unrelenting accompaniment abruptly stops for a pianissimo choral statement; this opening section unwinds quietly to an F-sharp-minor closing.

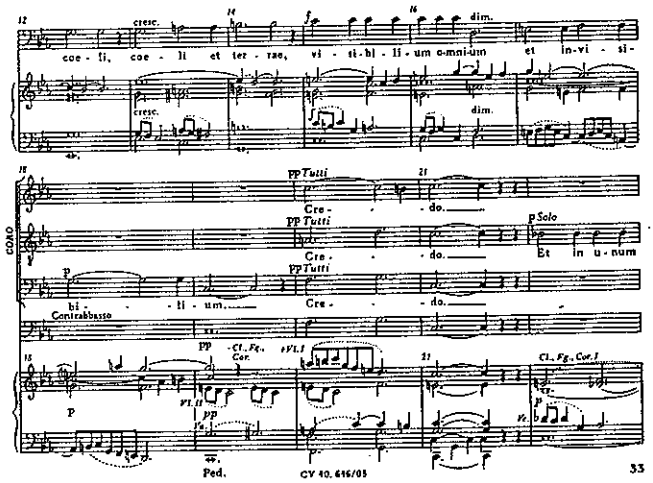
The next section is slower and has several subsections, each with its own tonal area. It is here that the cello has a solo. With each new key change, Franck also changed the orchestration so that the color is altered. The sudden shift from B major to a series of modulations in flat keys reveals the full harmonic power of the chromaticism of this period. This coloration is further enhanced by the return of the harp arpeggios which sustain each chord. A unison entrance on the text "miserere" above two sets of tritones in the organ softly returns the music to B major for the next mini-section that is dominated by triplets.

The last section of the Gloria is much faster with a more march-like character that drives toward a contrapuntal choral setting of "cum Sancto Spiritu." Eventually this return of D major explodes into an augmented version of the movement's opening when the text "Gloria in excelsis" returns; the static harp arpeggios from the beginning also reappear and the movement builds to loud, climactic outbursts of "Amen" at the end.

As in most Mass settings, the Credo is the longest movement; in actual pages it is shorter, but the combination of slower tempos and the prolonged text with some repetitions extend the time of the movement. After ending the Gloria in D major, the Credo begins in the distantly related key of C minor. Just as Beethoven had done, Franck used the interval of a third to connect tonal relationships of movements.

The unimpressive theme is sung by soloists while the accompaniment progresses through a series of chromatic chords; yet these chordal circumlocutions breathe life into the torpid melody, and at the end of each statement, the chorus responds with a quiet "Credo."

**Ex. 4, Mass in A Major, Credo, mm. 12–22**



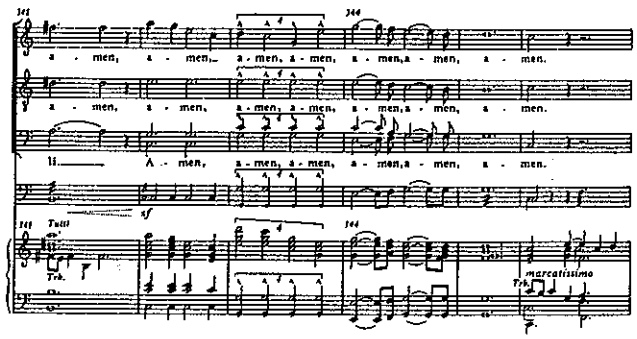

The dull vocal lines continue as the music accompaniment changes to a flowing background that also introduces chromatic alterations.

The second section, which is still slow but seems faster because there is a busier accompaniment, begins in G major with a soprano solo that also ends with a choral "Credo" statement. This dissolves into an ethereal opening of tremolos that lead to the "Crucifixus." The thematic material here is also relatively unimaginative with numerous repeated notes; there are dynamic contrasts and explosions, but, unlike many masses, the tempo does not increase or the harmony change to major at the "Resurrexit," and the intensity of the music comes from the chord progressions which do not seem to be carefully aligned with the text.

The next section moves in cut time at a faster tempo, and begins in C major on the text "Et in Spiritum Sanctum." The broad, symphonic sentience returns as solos alternate with chorus, and homophonic with polyphonic textures, as the music drives forward. The closing, which is loud and forceful, changes to a 6/4 duple feeling in a slow tempo on the text "Et exspecto resurrectionem." An unusual rhythmic device occurs in the brief "Amen" ending when the forward motion is contracted.

The Sanctus movement contains the Hosanna and the Benedictus without any significant change in the rhythmic motion. The movement begins and ends in D major, and solos are interspersed throughout. Some thematic link may be seen between this opening and that of the Gloria. The double bass is used in the Sanctus and doubles the organ manual line down an octave.

**Ex. 5, Mass in A Major, Credo, mm. 341–46**




The insertion of "Panis angelicus" as a tenor solo in A major also allows for some harmonic shifts in the music because it permits a different key to open the last movement, Agnus Dei, and saves the final A major for the gentle "Dona nobis pacem." The melody of "Panis angelicus" has become an ignoble parody of what many consider to be the over-Romanticized style of French church music of this period. It begins with the organ as a background for a sentimental cello statement of the theme, and when the tenor enters with the familiar melody, the harp adds to the emotive personality of the music. Eventually the tenor and cello perform the tune in a modified canon that ends the movement.

The Agnus Dei is in two main sections with a coda area. Interestingly, the text "Dona nobis pacem," which is the last part of the movement, is sung as the closing of the first half in conjunction with the first statement (Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi). Then, the "Dona nobis pacem" text becomes the only text used in the final section and the coda. The first section begins in A minor and then moves toward A major for the last section. The gentleness of the movement is enhanced through the harp arpeggios. The coda is primarily unaccompanied singing with harp passages between the choral phrases.

Although Franck's choral music has not been performed with much regularity, there are many works which deserve to be heard. Clearly, Franck focused on music for the church and most of his choral music is in that genre. Some of the stylistic characteristics associated with his choral music are:

1. Frequent use of three-part choral texture, especially in STB format.
2. Use of string bass with the organ and choir, giving a somber oppressive feeling to much of the music.
3. Thematic phrases in symphonic form (proportions) or with motifs that serve as small germs which interact within broader phrase ideas.
4. Harmony imbued with chromaticism, and while less adventuresome than some of his organ or orchestra works, still a dominant feature in his choral music.
5. Fully developed 19th-century chordal progressions and some surprising key relationships for sections and/or movements.
6. Predominance of syllabic setting with some melismatic moments.
7. Simplistic rhythmic involvements, and an enduring pulse.
8. Genuine textual concern, with texts often evolving from several sources.
9. Organ plays significant role in the choral music.
10. Mixture of texts conceived in Latin or French.
11. Thematic material passes between soloists and choir and sometimes into other movements.
12. Very little secular music.

For those directors who are considering performances of Franck's church music, perhaps the comments of French composer-journalist Gabriel Fauré (1845–1914), published in *La Revue Musicale*, can provide insight into the dilemma of Franck's choral music:

> The music heard daily in churches often invites severe criticism. On the other hand, some Parisian and provincial choirmasters distinguish themselves in the choice and execution of works truly worthy of their purpose. There is, however, no conclusive standard of excellence. Such and such a composition, nobly conceived and purely written, might seem overadorned or wanting in religious character to some minds. What music is religious? What music is not? To try to resolve the question is quite hazardous, since no matter how deeply sincere a musician's religious feeling may be, it is through his personal taste that he expresses it and not according to rules one can fix. Every classification in this field of ideas has always seemed arbitrary to me. Can one maintain, for example, that among those religious compositions of César Franck which reach the loftiest heights (up to the very quiver of angels' wings), there might not be a few which, because of their very smoothness, are not absolutely free of sensuality? . . . I am trying to show that in the realm of truly musical and beautiful works, it is almost impossible to draw a line of demarcation between those which are religious and those that "savor of heresy."[9]

FRANCK'S MASS, MOTET, PASSION, AND SECULAR CHORAL MUSIC

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1835 | *O salutaris* | Mixed choir and organ | La Revue Musicale |
| 1840 | *Justus ut palma florebit* | Mixed choir, B, and organ | ? |
| 1840 | *Gratias super gratiam* | Mixed choir (organ ?) | ? |
| 1840 | *Tunc oblati sunt* | Mixed choir (organ ?) | ? |
| 1840 | *Laudate pueri* | Mixed choir (organ ?) | ? |
| ? | *Plainte des Israélites* | Mixed choir and orchestra | ? |
| ? | *Cantique de Moïse* | Mixed choir and orcbestra | ? |
| ? | *Marlborough* | Mixed choir and mirlitons | ? |
| 1845 | *Ave Maria* | Mixed choir (organ?) | |
| 1849 | *Sub tuum* | Choir (2 parts ?) | |
| 1850 | *O gloriosa* | Choir (3 parts ?) | |
| 1858 | *O salutaris* | S, T/Mez, and organ | Randall Egan Pub. |
| 1858 | *Three Motets* | | |
| | 1. *O salutaris* | Mixed choir, S | Noel |
| | 2. *Ave Maria* | S, B, and organ | Noel |
| | 3. *Tantum ergo* | Choir, B (organ ?) | Noel |
| 1860 | *Mass in A Major* | STB choir, STB, organ, cello, double hass, and harp | Carus-Verlag[10] |
| 1883 | *Ave Maria* | S, T, and B | Bornemann |
| 1871 | *Three Offertories* | | |
| | 1. *Quae est ista* | Mixed choir, SATB, organ, harp, and douhle hass | Bornemann |
| | 2. *Domine Deus in simplicitate* | STB choir, organ, and douhle hass | Bornemann |
| | 3. *Dextera Domini* | STB choir, organ, and double bass | Bornemann |
| 1871 | *Quare fremuerunt gentes* | STB choir, organ, and double bass | Carus-Verlag |
| 1871 | *Domine non secundum* | STB choir and organ | Bornemann |
| 1872 | *Veni Creotor* | T, B, and organ | Hamelle Publishers |
| 1888 | *Hymn* | TTBB and organ | Theodore Presser |
| 1888 | *Psalm 150* | SATB and organ/orchestra | Hinshaw Music or M. Combre or Roger Dean Music |
| 1888 | *Six Duos for Equal Voices* | Equal voices and organ | Enoch Publishers |
| 1888 | *Le Premier Sourire de Mai* | SSA (and keyboard?) | Hamelle Publishers |

Also note arrangements mentioned in article:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Merciful Father* (Domine Deus) | H.T. FitzSimons Co. |
| *Bow Down Thine Ear* (Domine Deus) | H.T. FitzSimons Co. |
| *The Virgin by the Manger* (La Vierge à la creche) | Belwin |
| *O Lord Most Holy* (Panis angelicus) | Frederick Harris Co. |
| *Kyrie Eleison* (Mass in A Major) | E.C. Schirmer Co. |

NOTES

1. See Wilhelm Mohr, *César Franck* (Munich: Hans Schneider, 1969) for a revised and more complete thematic catalog of Franck's published works.
2. Robert Cavarra, March 1990. Personal correspondence to the author.
3. Joel-Marie Fauquet, album notes on a Musical Heritage Society recording (MHS 4884L) entitled *Charles Gounod and César Franck: Sacred Music.*
4. Rey M. Longyear, *Nineteenth-century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969), p. 150.
5. César Franck, quoted in Valssa, *César Franck* (1951); taken from Ian Crofton and Donald Fraser, *A Dictionary of Musical Quotations* (New York: Schirmer Books), p. 67.
6. Fauquet.
7. Wolfgang Hochstein, "Preface," Franck, *Die sieben Worte Jesu an Kreutz*, Carus-Verlag 40.095/01, pp. vi–vii.
8. Armin Landgraf, "Preface," Franck, *Messe A-Dur*, Op. 12, Carus-Verlag 40.646/03, back cover.
9. Gabriel Fauré, "What Is Religious Music—Franck and Gounod," *Composers on Music*, ed. Sam Morgenstern (New York: Pantheon Books), p. 282.
10. In the United States, Carus-Verlag publications may be purchased through Mark Foster Music Corporation in Champaign, Ill.

# CÉSAR FRANCK'S ORATORIOS AND CANTATAS

Lee Egbert

During the centennial of the death of César Franck, it is appropriate to recognize and celebrate the contribution of this kindly and caring "Pater seraphicus," as his devoted students would later dub him. The impact of Franck's career had varying and, some say, far-reaching consequences on the direction and future of French music. Among those composers who formed "*la bande à Franck*" (perhaps here in pecking order) were d'Indy, Duparc, and Chausson, to mention a few. And in spite of the reputation in their day of those listed above, none were more significantly involved in promoting the Franckian philosophy than Ropartz and Bréville. Both aggressively disseminated the music of Franck and both were important teachers of the following generation. Franck's oft-quoted words, "of the first importance is that a composition should be musical, and emotional as well," complement his working tenet of form and content as related by Vincent d'Indy, his closest student and friend, who said:

> Far from regarding form as an end in itself . . . (Franck) never considered that manifestation of a work which we call *form* as anything but the corporeal part of the entity of an art work, destined to serve as the visible outer covering of the *idea*, which he called "the soul of the music."[1]

The relationship of form to his own chromaticism would later form the basis of his style and unintentionally found a school of French style at a time when all of Europe was being assaulted by Wagner.

The pursuit of a performance career during Franck's early years was the result of an ambitious and abusive father. Truly a prodigy, César's first efforts at performance and composition were linked to the pianoforte. In the shadow of and lacking the fire and verve of Liszt, Franck's first pieces were trivial and short, desigued for a public impact never achieved. Laurence Davies's description of Franck's career as "a struggle for recognition" was corroborated by his friends and students, an impasse which dogged him until his last years in Paris.

Franck's larger choral works fall into the category of oratorio-cantata if one generally considers the forces of singers with orchestra jointly attempting to advance a text of epic proportions. Only *Rebecca* featured a scaled-down design. His larger works differ significantly from his shorter choral works, most of the latter dating from his years at Sainte-Clotilde, in that they appeared during his later years in a more mature style. Utilizing texts and poems which had concerned Franck most of his spiritual life, they represent a length and genre of work he was unable to control in view of his own original trends of tonal architecture and theme transformation. Franck's lack of choral "taste" is irrevocably linked to French choral history but, more importantly, his sense of texture is dependent upon the organ. Most of his larger choral works are compromised by his rich chromatic harmonies, because in spite of their formal design, form and text suffer from an undisciplined improvisational style. Thus, choral settings per se fall victim to a chromatic style which weakens the vocal line and fails to feature the nobler aspects of choral singing. That is to say even his most ingenious instrumental works which feature contrapuntal textures were ultimately dependent upon a harmonic style where chromatic alterations negated the aspect of the power of imitation.

A survey of Franck's choral music must observe those significant developments in his career, such as his becoming organist at Sainte-Clotilde (1857), from which poured several shorter works for service use (covered elsewhere in this issue). His oratorios mostly came after this appointment. His career-long failure to break successfully into the field of opera, the observation that he was not truly an "ecclesiastical" composer, that his oratorios and cantatas were not intended to fit into a specific liturgy—all contributed to his devotion to producing a category of works which was part oratorio, part cantata, and often termed by the composer himself as "biblical scenes." They form a genre all their own, more of symphonic poem design than even the most altered traditional oratorio current during the last decades of the 19th century.

Some other observations on his larger choral works:

1. Franck's lack of experience (and inability) in the theater was apparent in his oratorios where his choral writing advanced the text sufficiently but failed to *dramatize* it.
2. Three- and four-part settings of women's and men's choruses were common enough, but he often set three-part mixed voices of unison women and men's voices.
3. Chorus numbers in his oratorios are overwhelmingly homophonic, and even brief forays into imitative textures are timid and short-lived.
4. Franck seems afraid to write voices in the upper reaches of their range thereby losing the potential for that human expression he so fervently sought.
5. When a text is repeated it often occurs without an attempt to dramatize its central mood or idea further.

**Lee Egbert**, director of choral activities at Colorado State University, earned the BME degree at Murray State University, the MME degree at the University of Illinois, and the DMA degree at the University of Kentucky. He is a frequent guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator, and has published several critical editions of the motets of Jacob Handl.

## FRANCK'S LIFE

The periodization of Franck's life by d'Indy is valuable because it constitutes that contemporary source which subjectively looks into the composer's life. D'Indy's account of Franck's successes and failures is remarkable because he is able to praise a work which he and others of his ilk thought significant, and at the same time indicate the "master's" weaknesses of design, substance, and intention. One senses that the disciples of Franck appreciated him as much as anything for his sincere efforts at originality, his well-known personal dispute with the forces of good and evil in his life, and, not really being French, for his unerring maintenance of French ideals of style and culture. His chromaticism was his own and, in spite of the debatable elements of Wagner, Liszt, and Berlioz in his works from time to time, he was able to write in a post-Wagnerian chromaticism which seemed to foster yet keep French development in check. I like Ronald Pearsall's remarks in this connection when he says that Franck's music is characterized by a "sliding chromaticism that is his distinctive contribution to (French) art."[2] Often described as sincere and naive, Franck was appreciated by Parisian musicians and audiences only in his last years, but once the Franckian school was established, his influence was pervasive and significant. As will be seen, Franck's most obvious contributions involved his French-styled chromaticism and the formation of a group of Franck-French disciples responsible for shaping the future of French music.

### FIRST PERIOD (1841–58)

Franck's earliest triumphs must be recounted here since they involve his early performances as arranged by his father. His *Trios*, Op. 1, forecast both a creative potential and unrealized expectations for the composer when Liszt, Chopin, Meyerbeer, Auber, and Thomas, among others, subscribed to them. This recognition revealed a rather shallow portent, however, as the works which followed did not achieve similar attention. Between 1841 and 1846, the first six years of his compositional activity, we find little but piano works which he then suddenly stopped writing until 1884.

By this time his father had once again imposed himself upon the composer's career and urged César to produce "salable pieces," to which he soon responded with the biblical ecologue, *Ruth*, written in 1843. In spite of the fact that Franck's reputation both then and now remains dependent upon his works for organ, a few chamber works, and the *Symphony in D Minor*, his love for the scriptures was a lifelong devotion resulting in sacred works whose texts served to occupy him for many years. About *Ruth*, d'Indy said:

> In the score of *Ruth* Franck has summed up the fullest capacity of his first stage of development, as much by the musical importance of this work as by its dramatic tendency, which was quite a new feature in his work.[3]

A fairly poor reception to *Ruth*'s first performance, combined with Franck's obvious declining future as a virtuoso performer and strained relations with his father, launched his career as a teacher in Paris necessary to support himself—*sans père*—and, heaven forbid, a fiancée whose parents were actors at the Comédie-Française.

### SECOND PERIOD (1858–72)

Franck's second period was marked by his appointment as organist at Sainte-Clotilde, where he was able to continue to develop his improvisational technique. It is from this period, too, that the bulk of his shorter choral works derive, as he was chiefly concerned with providing suitable service music. He quickly became noted for his improvisations and attracted audiences to hear these displays of genius. As a matter of public record, Franck was championed by

Liszt who never stopped supporting him. Coupled with this initial recognition plus the composition of a number of works which saw regular performance, Franck's reputation grew. Favorable performances of revised sections of *Ruth* (1871) began to signal the end of his obscurity, and greater recognition was accorded him when he was chosen to succeed Benoist as professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire.

In 1872 d'Indy joined Franck's organ class, a thinly disguised composition class in full bloom (about which less popular faculty at the Conservatoire became irked), and soon thereafter a new oratorio, *Rédemption*, was completed.

Shades of Franck's more mature style are apparent in this work although inept conducting and incorrect parts contributed to bitter disappointment at the work's premiere (1873). It should be noted that the 1874 revised version of *Rédemption* achieved wide but posthumous acceptance in 1896. The revision aside, this is probably Franck's most important work of his middle period. Both its deficiencies and qualities are linked with the composer's attempt to expand harmonically and thematically. The work, neither symphony nor symphonic poem, was called a "cantata" by his students, yet it possesses characteristics of all three.

For the sake of clarity and accuracy where numbering and chronological incongruities abound, note that there are two versions of *Rédemption*, each quite different from the other. The first is known for its superior design while the second contains an oft-programmed chorus and symphonic interlude. Hearing portions of this work goes far in corroborating Franck's claim that his mature harmonic style is here taking form.

## THIRD PERIOD (1872–90)

Most likely in mid-1874, Franck heard a public performance of the Prelude to *Tristan*. Other than the critics' consideration of whether Franck's later works were really "sublime" (d'Indy) or just "maudlin" (Davies), the question of Wagner's direct influence upon Franck's later years is an interesting one. Romain Rolland said:

> He stood outside the Wagnerian movement, in a serene and fecund solitude. To the attraction which he exercised by his genius, his personality, and his moral greatness upon the little circle of friends who knew and respected him must be added the authority of his scientific knowledge.[4]
>
> In the face of the Wagnerian art, he unconsciously resuscitated the spirit of Johann Sebastian Bach, the infinitely rich and profound spirit of the past. In this way he found himself unintentionally the heed of a school and the greatest force in contemporary French music.[5]

To this Laurence Davies added:

> The work (*Les Béotitudes*) took Franck the entire decade from 1869 to 1879 to complete . . . the work is not liturgical as the Mass was. It rather belongs to a genre not unlike that of Brahms's *Requiem*, to which it is very near in date. Critics have also compared it with works as far apart as Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts* and Wagner's *Porsifal*. Yet it is not conceivable that Franck was influenced by any of these compositions.[6]

The years from the commencement of his work on *Les Béatitudes* until his death were intensely creative. The completion of *Les Béatitudes*, with its many difficulties in performance, and the resumption of composing for the piano left him primed for a final choral work. Called a "Scène biblique" by Franck, this short oratorio, *Rebecca* (1881), is a five-part cantata-like work for soprano, chorus, and orchestra. Following an unexpected posthumous success, the work is essentially forgotten today.

## FRENCH ORATORIO

The lineage of oratorio, as derived and defined first by Handel, then Haydn, the works of Mendelssohn, and, finally, the biblical works of Gounod and especially Franck, never really flourished in France as in other countries. Combining a peculiar vocal lyricism which might flow uninterrupted beyond traditional and predictable forms, and a long history of music for the court rather than musical events democratized by communal singing, the French oratorio seems to defy normal definition and description. Percy Young described the second 50 years of the 19th century as overwhelmingly mediocre, with composers such as Wagner, Liszt, Grieg, Smetana, and others, including Franck, as being imaginatively indifferent to the idiomatic potential of writing for chorus; they were reluctant to forsake the profitable enchantments of symphony and symphonic poem, opera, ballet, and chamber music.[7] Though a bit fervent, this criticism does represent the attitude of many critics at the time who sought a greater focus on choral singing and a far greater sensitivity to the religious themes and texts that were set.

In Franck's case, his ability to choose a text with dramatic potential seemed always in question. In both *Rédemption* and *Les Béatitudes* the texts suffer from a lack of clarity and dramatic variety, as well as from an ambiguity when ecclesiastical sentiment is sought. In Franck's defense it must be said that his oratorios were intended for performance without cuts. Their connective and through-composed nature is necessary to capture the central emotion and story line. The extraction and/or elimination of numbers in performance can only have a negative impact.

Without question César Franck was much more revered in the years following his death in 1890, when the number of performances of his music nearly doubled. At the unveiling of the monument to Franck in 1904, Henri Marcel, director of the Beaux-Arts, said:

> Now he is in his own place, among the choir of immortal geniuses who will be our bostages through the future ages, and who constitute, perhaps, the reason of our existence and justification of humanity in this world.[8]

For us, in the examination of Franck's choral music, the characteristics of inconsistency, inaccessibility, and Romantic servitude may discourage the performance of these works. Yet, together with Saint-Saëns and Lalo, Franck asserted an originality and a Romantic posture while retaining Classical sincerity.

Franck's choral works, for whatever reasons, suffer from an unpopularity not likely to be overcome in the near future. The absence of a complete edition of his works has no doubt delayed the intense scrutiny and subsequent accessibility accorded many other composers. During the past several decades, however, selected choral works have been published; his oratorios, however, have seen very little revival of interest. Difficult keys, uninteresting and oftentimes unison and/or homophonic textures with a dearth of contrapuntal writing, and the lack of an English translation are among the reasons for this neglect.

## *RUTH* (1848)

Franck's first major choral work appeared at the time when recognition for his teaching and composition first became apparent. The work was ambitious and explicit with some obvious influences from the works of Schubert and Berlioz. Scored for an orchestra of 48 and a chorus of 70, there is here a clearer differentiation between chorus and orchestra than is found in his later works. The orchestration is clear and not overly dependent upon subconscious organ registration. Perhaps one of the chief reasons the choral works of Gounod achieved greater popularity is the independence of his choral settings within the overall texture. And in spite of Franck's well-documented and lifelong desire to set scripture of great significance, it remains likely that the very text inhibited his creativity. The criticism that his larger choral works do little more than render text, however, is somewhat accurate. Norman Demuth's analysis that *Ruth* was "a simple-minded effusion which binds all the weaknesses of the period in one cover" ignores a number of Franckian characteristics of writing inherent in the score. Abrupt modulations, which forecast late-century trends, show an original harmonic conception, and the solo and duet numbers are well designed and pleasing to sing.

Knowing the extent of Franck's improvisational skills in both homophonic and contrapuntal textures and the large amount of contrapuntal writing in his instrumental works, the lack of imitative textures found in his choral settings is curious. In *Ruth*, 15 numbers frame the work's design, and, while the work quickly fell into oblivion soon after its premiere, two choruses have seen separate publication: the "Marche des Moabites" and the "Choeur des Moissoneurs." These two choruses are of average length and are very singable. A general lack of originality and adventure, puerile harmony, and aimless choral writing describe the work in general, yet the "Reaper's Song" at the end is noteworthy.

## *RÉDEMPTION* (1871–72)

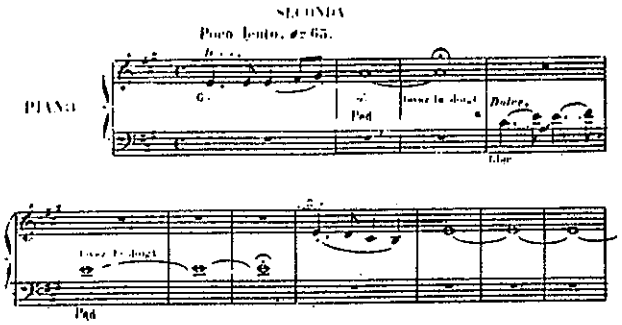
*Rédemption* was composed, according to Franck's son, "in a single breath," and interrupted work already begun on *Les Béatitudes*. This symphonic poem for mezzo-soprano, chorus, and orchestra was set to a poem by Édouard Blau which immediately caught Franck's attention. The theme of the poem portrays the gradual emergence of Man from a state of savagery and dark paganism (Part I), to the triumphs of Faith later eroded by the return of Man's cruel lust for enjoyment (Part II). In Part III, Man, through prayer, unites heart and soul in a hymn of brotherly love. It should be noted that the definitive version is set in two equal parts based on Blau's

poem. Following the work's first performance at which miscopied and incomplete parts and insufficient rehearsals with a disinterested conductor contributed significantly to an embarrassing performance, d'Indy and Duparc convinced Franck to revise the work. The revision was extensive and later d'Indy came to regret his concerned insistence that his master alter the work. The revision upon which this discussion is based included modification of the tonal structure to produce a greater harmonic continuity, the deletion of passages set in excessively sharped keys, and a rewriting of the "symphony of religious elation," i.e., the midwork's symphonic interlude. About its key structure, Franck said: "In this score, I have used only sharp keys, in order to render the luminous idea of *Redemption*." Some observations follow:

1. The majority of choral settings are homophonic. Variations to this seldom venture beyond short sequences in unison or paired women's versus men's unison voices.
2. There is considerable but well-hidden relationship of symphonic themes to those in the choral settings. Often they appear modulated or chromatically altered rendering the choral lines connected thematically but without character or identity.
3. While Franck seems able to express sentiment, joy, and love, those sections whose text suggests the depravity and cruelty of man are limpid and without real fire. I think an excessive use of 6/8 meter in this and other works is partly responsible for a courtly feel incapable of expressing the passion inherent in the text.
5. Voicings are set often for first and second sopranos, tenors, and basses. Fuller settings are then juxtaposed with voices of angels or the Archangel.

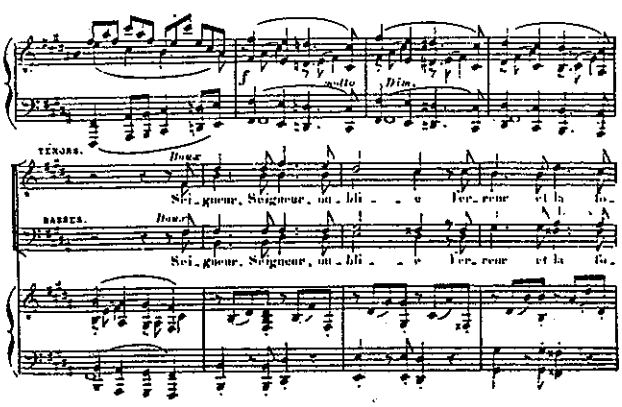
While the Introduction's initial phrase (Ex. 1) recurs in cyclic fashion throughout the work, its real value comes as fulfillment of prophesy in its transformation.

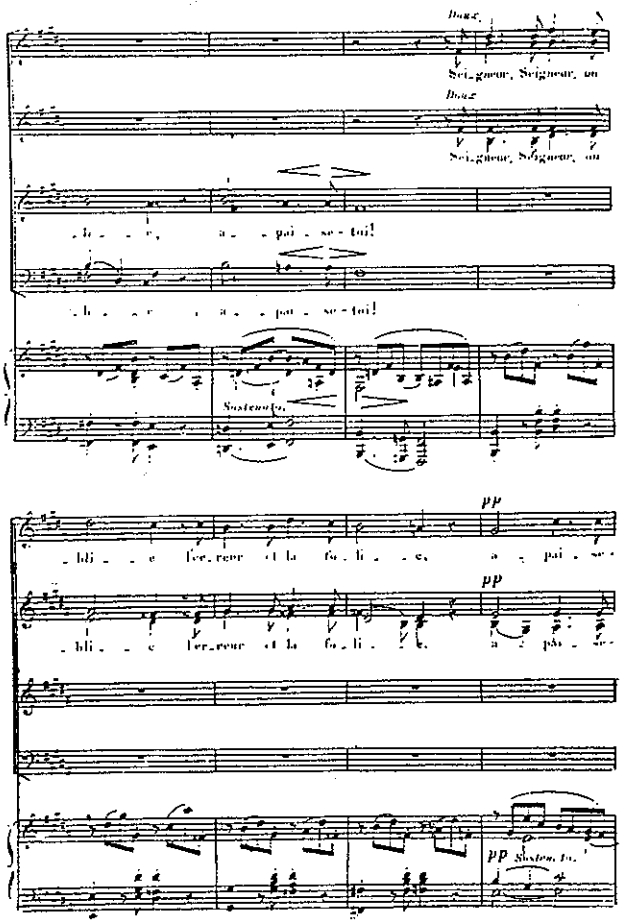
**Ex. 1, Rédemption, mm. 1–11**




The journey from A minor to its dominant, E major, to A major, and then F-sharp major confirms Franck's style of "tonal architecture" and makes the end of Part II quite exciting when taken as a work of symphonic poem dimensions. While the entry of the Archangel provides more melodic writing, it also serves to reduce the importance of the chorus accompanying it. The work's final chorus, "Seigneur, Seigneur," begins with a relatively difficult passage for the orchestra before introducing the men's voices. This number features six- and eight-part writing (Ex. 2) for both men's and women's voices in a dramatic 4/4 meter.

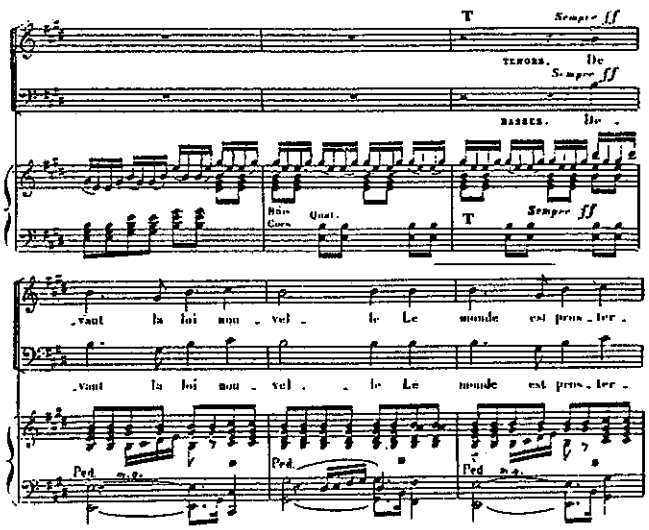
**Ex. 2, Rédemption, final chorus, mm. 34–49**

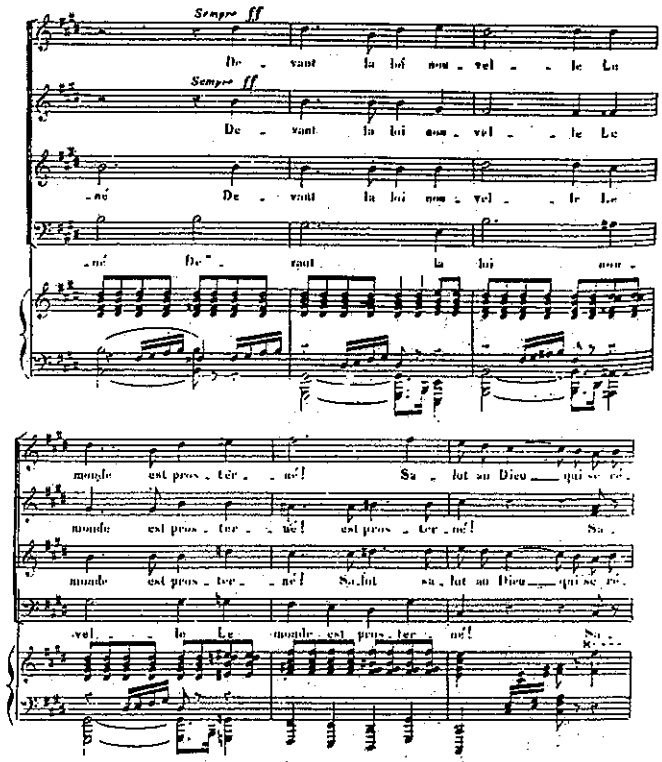



Perhaps the best chorus of *Rédemption* occurs at the end of Part I and features what Rey Longyear described as a chromatic motion centered about the third degree of the scale.[10] The modal undercurrents found in Franck's choral music are only partly disguised by enharmonic modulation, and the sequences of succeeding phrases raised by a third are tonal rather than real in their imitation. It is a chorus of more variety than is found elsewhere in this work (Ex. 3).

**Ex. 3, Rédemption, Choeur Général, mm. 1–12**






At the completion of this work, Franck sent scores with d'Indy to present to Brahms and Liszt. Only the latter was pleased, and the former indicated no interest whatsoever after quickly thumbing through its initial pages. *Rédemption* was revived with considerable interest in 1896 and later most favorably compared with Gounod's work of the same name.

### *LES BÉATITUDES* (1869–79)

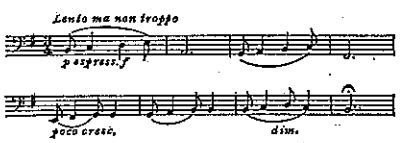
Soon after Franck abandoned his concert career, he entertained notions of setting the Sermon on the Mount. It was a scripture which held significance for him for many years. His vision of setting this "epic" was shared often with his students. The project took real form when he sought and received help from Mme. Colomb in the versification of the Beatitudes into poetic form.

*Les Béatitudes* is set in eight basic parts, and consists of lengthy sections of chromatically involved and difficult choral writing. Criticisms of the entire work mention the monotony of setting eight blessings of similar mood and character, although short sections of considerable interest can be found. Extracting these sections for present-day performance, however, is another matter. Like his other oratorios, the work cannot be fairly judged when performed in bits and pieces.

Falling naturally into eight cantos, preceded by a prologue, each of these cantos is in itself a short poem consisting of three elements: first, a particular evil is denoted; second, comes a celestial prophesy of the expiation of the vice; last, the voice of Christ appears to proclaim the words of the Beatitude to those receptive to its message. The plan of each canto resembles that of a triptych, with the voice of Christ, most often in declamation, balancing the parts with familiar thematic material.

In much of Franck's choral music opening themes are often more than just prophetic. In the Prologue (Ex. 4) the theme of Christ's spirit is soothing yet halting, and will appear in various guises in later movements.

**Ex. 4, Les Béatitudes, Prologue, mm. 1–8**

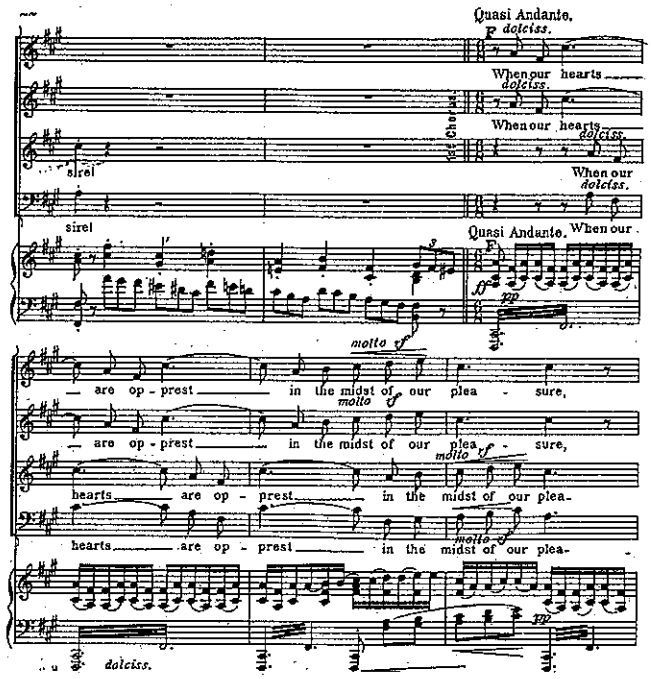



Musical examples from *Les Beatitudes* reproduced with the permission of G. Schirmer, Inc.

The First Beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," seems weak compared to later sections:

1. The chorus describes the pleasure-seekers in a haughty dotted figure opera-chorus style, concluded imitatively (Ex. 5).

**Ex. 5, Les Béatitudes, mm. 220–26**




2. The voice of Christ contains too many repeated notes of narrow melodic ambitus.
3. The choral melodic figure is triadic (3-1-5) which later appears sequentially in major and minor modes depending upon the modulation.
4. Performances of the work often cut the return of original material because of repetitiveness without advancing the text.

The Second Beatitude features the text, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." For chorus, soli, and baritone solo, the second theme is more narrow and sinuous as it ascends chromatically. The chorus theme, comprised of an ascending diminished-seventh chord providing both direction and instability, fails to arouse real passion except when treated in a short fugal section:

1. The Celestial Chorus and Soli Chorus are set simultaneously as well as successively; the latter achieves a greater textual clarity in its chordal settings while the SATB Celestial Chorus features some imitative writing of mild tension.
2. The voice of Christ features excellent writing, and concludes the section in D major.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" is a persistent knell in the Third Beatitude of an expressive theme which reaches up the interval of a sixth before falling down a minor triad. The line is expressive instrumentally with thematic potential but Franck seemed afraid to entrust such kaleidoscopic lines, found, say, in the choral works of Brahms, to his chorus. The choral settings of *Les Béatitudes* seldom develop beyond short chromatically altered sequences, usually from one sub-phrase to another, and the lack of tonal stability deprives the choral line(s) of a climax.

1. It is clear now that the choral settings in these larger works are two-tiered, i.e., the unison to four-part settings are always contained within the orchestral texture, seldom above or below it, and basically advance the text while leaving musical interest to the instrumental texture.
2. The abrupt key changes are exciting, however.
3. The writing for soli at this section's conclusion is quite dramatic and is Franck's best textual representation.

The Fourth Beatitude is the most chromatic and contains theme-intervals of falling sixths and sevenths. "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" finds expression in a tenor solo and the voice of Christ. Both are short. The Fifth Beatitude contains solos for tenor, baritone, and soprano, with a chorus setting. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" is expressed with the entrance of the Celestial Chorus, but is incidentally interspersed to a fault between the solo sections. The chorus returns with similar thematic material to conclude on a note of calm with the text, "O blessed are they."

1. The chorus sections are shorter here, interspersed, and similar in nature to the much stronger "Baal" choruses of *Elijah* where

textual punctuation and the establishment of mood is their role.
2. Sopranos and tenors finally have the authority to sing in the extended portions of their ranges.

The Sixth Beatitude is strong ("Blessed are the pure in heart") for melodically it contains greater range and movement, and concludes with an unusually powerful contrapuntal setting.

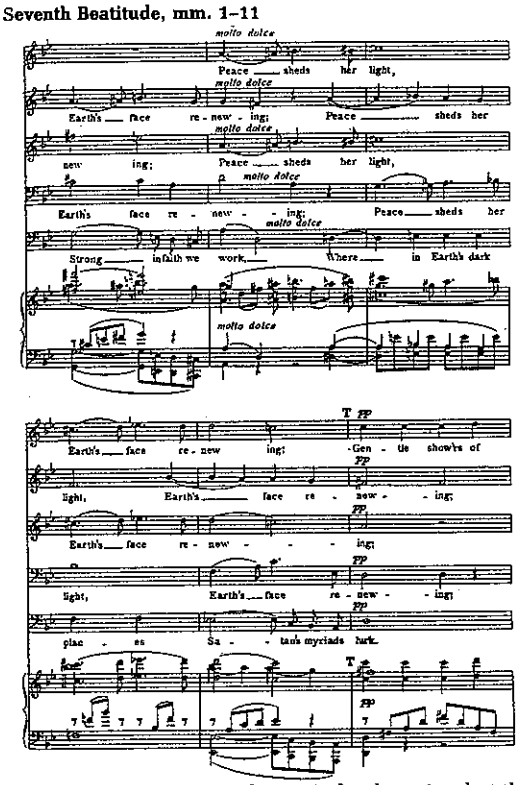
1. Opening with Heathen Women, the sopranos and altos move in thirds, happily avoiding unison writing.
2. The key of D-flat is somber and knelling, and emerges into a four-part texture adding to it Jewish Women: the writing is imitative here, one chorus setting against the other in a dialogue of longer than usual themes.
3. The dialogue of the Four Pharisees achieves an uncommon textual expression. Double-dotted rhythms and improved syllabification provide dramatic answer to the women's choruses.
4. Without question, it is the best choral writing to this point.

The Seventh Beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers," has unmistakable modal undercurrents perhaps because of setting texts for the Chorus of Tyrants and Pagan Priests. The introduction of Satan fails to chill the blood and, in the key of C minor, contrasts only gently with that of Christ, in B-flat.

1. There is a tonal scheme of particular keys for particular characters with an overall design in force. It is complicated, however, and amounts to an enharmonic maze.
2. Finally a 6/8 meter to good effect resembles a Mendelssohnian texture here of alternating homophonic with imitative sections, and varying the distance of entrances of voices.
3. This choral section is powerful and ends in Franck's favorite key, B major, and the chorus concludes in a dux-comes texture with the character of Satan.

Notable in this seventh section is the quintet (subtitled "Peacemakers"), for it contains Franck's best choral writing (Ex. 6).

**Ex. 6, Seventh Beatitude, mm. 1–11**




Not only are the settings more idiomatic for the voice, but the music is finer. Recalling d'Indy's observation that Franck was truly incapable of recognizing real evil, much less setting it with effectiveness, it could be said here that this text encouraged and inspired Franck's own sense of hope, peace, and renewal. The counterpoint consists of the usual shorter fragments treated sequentially but here, like Berlioz, he was able to bring the work to a conclusion, with a fuller and more explicit expression of the text.

The concluding section, the Eighth Beatitude ("Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven") is masterful when considered in its entirety. Some of Franck's most dramatic writing occurs between Satan and Christ, and perhaps the finest achievement of this number is the consistent balance of orchestra and chorus. Both work in complementary fashion, with the music of Christ achieving the sublimity d'Indy insisted Franck managed in the entire work.

1. Franck has returned to many themes and fragments. Without overstating the trait, transformation of line does occur in an ingenious manner, often enharmonically, slightly altered, but seldom redefined rhythmically.
2. Massed Hosannahs with Terrestrial and Celestial Choirs, the conflict of Christ and Satan conclude the full work with a variety uncommon in earlier sections.
3. The melody of the *Mater Dolorosa* is lovely and Fauré-like.

Franck's *Les Béatitudes* received his most careful attention, and he considered it one of his finest works. Again, the sameness of the initial text must dull the intended drama of these verses. The lack of climactic phrases for chorus, inner-part movement with, say, a Brahms-like fan or stacking technique, too many repeated notes in too narrow a range, and a lack of metrical variety or syncopated writing—all produce an inconsistency in the choral writing.

### *RÉBECCA* (1880–81)

The cantata *Rébecca* appeared on the heels of the completion of *Les Béatitudes* and provides sufficient contrast to be discussed here. Subtitled a *Scène biblique*, the story is based on the Old Testament saga of Rebecca, chosen as the future wife of Isaac. Set in six cantata-like numbers, the chorus carries major responsibility for advancing the story. The sweetest music may be found in Rebecca's first aria and duet with Eliezer; the chorus numbers, save for the Camel Drivers' Men's Chorus, are perfunctory.

During Franck's lifetime the work was of no significance, although like Debussy's *l'Enfant prodigue*, *Rébecca* posthumously was turned into a "sacred drama" in two acts and produced by the Paris Opéra in 1904, with repeat performances in 1920 and 1921.

It is a work of smaller dimensions and ambitions than *Les Béatitudes*. Were it not for the *Chorals* written in the year of Franck's death, one might assume that Franck had decided to simplify his style, for *Rébecca* is economical at best and abbreviated at worst. Paul Collin's text is far more scenic than any setting in *Les Béatitudes*, providing the composer with greater variety.

In closing, Franck's contribution to French music and post-Wagnerian chromaticism is considerable. His choral writing, naive and subservient to an overriding interest in cyclic form, never seriously unified both instrumental and choral textures in a convincing whole. Sometimes sentimental, sometimes aggressively chromatic, his choral works must be seen in the light of 19th-century France where, until Fauré, choral music seldom achieved the depth of expression of Franck's contemporaries.

While Franck cannot be considered a church musician in the creative sense, his penchant for neo-Classic forms makes him very important to the concluding years of his century. Without him the line of French lyricism might well have fallen to Germany, and there may have never been the likes of Dukas or Roussel. With Liszt, Franck is regarded as a pioneer of the symphonic poem, an original late-Romantic, the inspiration of Chausson, and the household name of which Paris finally became proud.

### NOTES

1. Vincent d'Indy, *César Franck* (New York: Dover Publications, 1910, 1965), p. 75.
2. Ronald Pearsall, "The 'Serene Anxiety' of César Franck," *Music Review*, XXVII, p. 99.
3. d'Indy, p. 124.
4. Ibid., p. 213.
5. Ibid., p. 214.
6. Laurence Davies, *Franck* (New York: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1973), p. 108.
7. Percy Young, *The Choral Tradition* (London: Hutchison, 1962), p. 236.
8. d'Indy, p. 215.
9. Norman Demuth, *César Franck* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1946), p. 156.
10. Rey Longyear, *Nineteenth Century Romanticism in Music* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 149.

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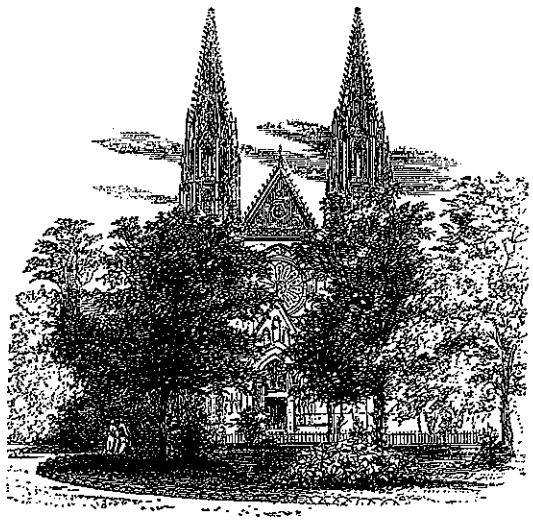
# PLAYING THE ORGAN WORKS OF CÉSAR FRANCK

## XI—*CHORAL II IN B MINOR*

Rollin Smith



**The Square and Church of Sainte-Clotilde, 1869**

Those who play all three Chorals know the difficulty of choosing a favorite. Usually it is the one they are working on at the time. The first may be the most "masterful" owing to its length, number of themes, variety of invention, skillful use of invertible counterpoint, and the surging buildup to the magnificent climax. The third, shorter than the first two, is technically less difficult and especially remembered for its beautiful Adagio. The second Choral is the most severe. Its initial passacaglia with three complete variations gives it a magisterial stateliness, and the two Voix humaine sections evoke the essence of the composer Tournemire called the "Fra Angelico of Sound." The opening fugue of the second section could only have been written by the "French Bach" (Busoni's appellation), and the solemn peroration leaves no doubt that this great work is all seriousness, and, as Daniel Gregory Mason described Franck's music, "it sings constantly; it almost never dances."

*CHORAL II IN B MINOR*

Completed: September 14, 1890.
Published: 1891.
Publisher: 1. A. Durand & Fils,
Plate No: D.S. 4415.
2. Durand & Cie., 1959,
Plate No: D. & F. 13.794.
Dedication: à Monsieur Auguste Durand, or Théodore Dubois, or Augusta Holmès.
Manuscript: in the possession of Emory Fanning, Middlebury, Vermont.
Bibliography: *Facsimile of the Autograph Manuscript* with Introduction and Annotations by Emory Fanning. Privately printed, 1981 (available from Emory Fanning, 46 High St., Middlebury, VT 05753).
Emory Fanning, "Chorals II and III: Two Franck Autographs," *The American Organist* (Nov. 1990).
Amy Dommel-Diény, *L'Analyse harmonique en exemples de J.-S. Bach à Debussy, Fascicle 11: César Franck* (Paris: Éditions A. Dommel-Diény, 1973). Pages 56–75 contain an extended analysis of Choral II.

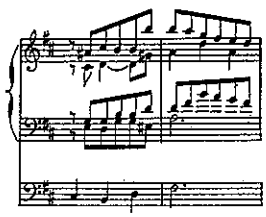
*Maestoso.*
Tournemire ♩ = 76
Bonnet ♩ = 72
(He indicated a tempo of ♩ = 66–69 to his students during the 1920s and 1930s.)
Marchal ♩ = 60
Langlais ♩ = 72
Dupré ♩ = 76
Duruflé ♩ = 76

Five of the organists cited are in accord on the initial tempo. But, because of the inherent forward movement, by m. 17 at the second statement of the theme, Langlais has accelerated to ♩ = 80 and Marchal to ♩ = 69. At the beginning of the third statement, m. 33, Marchal's tempo has increased to ♩ = 76 and Duruflé's to ♩ = 80.

Franck was uncompromising in his part writing, giving no consideration to players with hands smaller than his own. However, he was not adverse to rearranging the harmony for students who had difficulty with wide stretches. Robert Baker, a former pupil and assistant of R. Huntington Woodman (who studied with Franck in the 1880s), said that numerous passages in Woodman's scores were rewritten by Franck himself to accommodate Woodman's small hands.

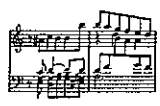
Joseph Bonnet, who had small hands, was particularly sensitive to the difficulties faced by students unable to reach all the notes in Franck's organ music. For instance, in Example 1 the hands span two and one-half octaves.

**Ex. 1, mm. 35–36**



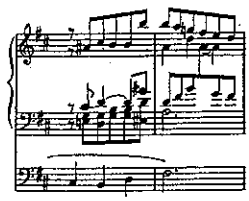
Bonnet has redistributed the parts (Example 2) so that, while the voice leading is not what Franck desired, the harmonies are complete and the outer voices remain intact.

**Ex. 2, mm. 35–36**



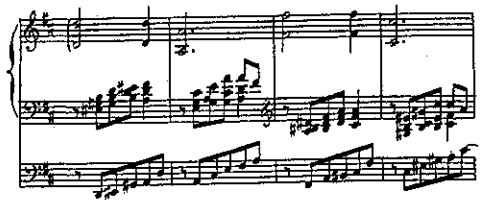
For players with Franckian hands, Example 3 provides an excellent solution to this technical problem.

**Ex. 3, mm. 35–36**



From m. 41 through m. 44, the second half of the third statement, Tournemire said to play the pedal legato, detach the left-hand chords, and play the octaves in the right hand as cantabile as possible (Example 4). Dupré and Duruflé indicated this in their editions; Bonnet did not.

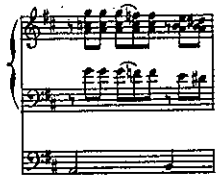
**Ex. 4, mm. 41–44**



Bonnet added pedal octaves from m. 49 through m. 55, suggesting them "in view of a better balance with the manuals and of more effectiveness" (César Franck, *Three Chorals for Organ*, arranged, edited, and annotated by Joseph Bonnet. Glen Rock, N.J.: J. Fischer & Bro., 1948, p. 19). It must be borne in mind that Bonnet's edition was intended for American organists playing instruments of the 1920s and 1930s; octaves would not have been necessary on a French organ with the Positif reeds coupled to the Pédale.

Organists playing this Choral for the first time are cautioned about one of the more frequently misread chords in organ literature: in the third beat of Example 5 the right hand plays B—not C♮.

**Ex. 5, m. 54**



The fourth and last statement of the passacaglia is in the subdominant, and the accompanimental figuration of triplets phrases itself: Franck has slurred the chords which fall on the beat—the other chords are detached. Although Franck did not indicate it, many players take the left-hand triplets from m. 57 through m. 64 on a secondary manual. The overlapping of the parts is less confusing and if the right-hand octaves are not played absolutely legato, it can be pointed out that Franck did not include them under a phrase mark. Dupré played the left hand on the Récit; Bonnet and Duruflé played both hands on the Grand-Orgue.

*Cantabile*, m. 65.
Marchal ♩ = 76
Langlais ♩ = 80
Dupré ♩ = 72
Duruflé ♩ = 76

A smooth transition into the cantabile at m. 65 was impossible for Franck. Even with a lift at the end of m. 64, he still had to release two pédales de combinaison (Anches Grand-Orgue and Anches Positif) and push in the 16′ Montre and Bourdon of the Grand-Orgue. Except for the first two measures, where it plays an octave lower, the Pédale duplicates the left-hand bass voice until m. 80. The Tirasses have not been removed and players can simplify the manual part considerably by eliminating the lowest voice and dividing the alto part between the hands.

The right-hand F♯ on the third beat of m. 72 should not be tied (it is in the Dupré edition). It is not tied in either the manuscript or the Durand edition. Ties do occur at a similar passage on the third beats of mm. 218, 220, and 222.

Tournemire considered the "little divertissement" beginning at m. 80 to be in the spirit of Buxtehude, and wrote that it was to be executed very freely, "*légèrement rubato*—a slight rubato imposes itself. Such was the interpretation of the composer." Dupré indicated that the left-hand C♯ is to be repeated when the bass voice enters on the same note on the third beat.

*Measure* 115.
Bonnet Cantabile sostenuto
Marchal ♩ = 50
Langlais ♩ = 50
Dupré ♩ = 60
Duruflé ♩ = 58

In preparation for this, one of the most sublime passages in all organ music, the Tirasses are removed during the second "petite divertissement" beginning at m. 105. The player could conceivably add the Pédale 32′ Bourdon at the eighth rest which precedes this. Nothing else can be done before the first beat of m. 115, however, and it is the many passages like this which refute the oft-made accusation that the lengthy pauses throughout Franck's music were influenced by his having to change registrations. In reality, he infrequently changed stops at a fermata and usually did not leave enough time to change stops conveniently. Here, Franck did not write rallentando, although players will surely make one in m. 114, and yet he had to make the following registration changes:

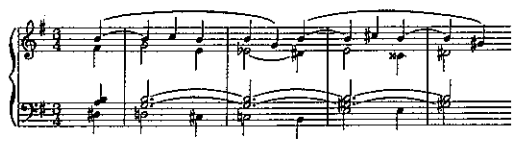
Retire: Récit 8′ Hauthois and 8′ Gambe
Draw: Récit 8′ Voix humaine
Depress: Tremblant Récit with the right foot.

Lacking a Récit au Pédale coupler at Sainte-Clotilde and to ensure his music against such a deficiency (which by then was extremely rare) in other instruments, Franck doubled the bass part in the left hand and Pédale. With a Tirasse Récit (Récit to Pédale) it is possible to eliminate the left hand's duplication of the bass part, thus reducing the manual voices to four parts.

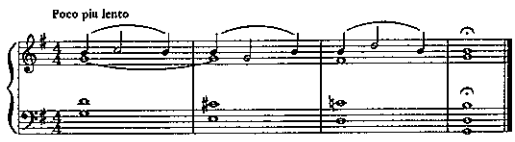
On the other hand, if there is no soft 32′ pedal stop, the manual parts might be played as written with the pedal part played an octave lower. Of course, the low B must be played an octave higher (or as written) but the effect is justified.

Measures 118–22 contain a reference to a similar melodic phrase in Franck's *Symphony in D Minor*, completed in 1888. A comparison of Franck's use of the two motifs is interesting because, in spite of what we remember of the Symphony each time we hear the Choral, more differences than similarities are revealed: time signature, rhythm, harmony, and even melody (Examples 6 and 7).

**Ex. 6, *Symphony in D Minor*, mm. 365–68 (transposed)**



**Ex. 7, *Choral II in B Minor*, mm. 118–22**




These twelve measures are divided into four phrases of varying length. A slight lift of the soprano voice before each phrase is sufficient to define the beginning of the next. Before the last phrase, however, all voices are repeated, thus creating a natural space. There is an apparent error in the Durand edition: the dot following the right hand's lowest voice, middle B, in m. 122 (and also in m. 281) does not appear in the manuscript.

*Largamente con fantasia*, mm. 127 and 136.
Bonnet ♩ = 66
Marchal ♩ = 76
Langlais ♩ = 88
Dupré ♩ = 84
Duruflé ♩ = 66

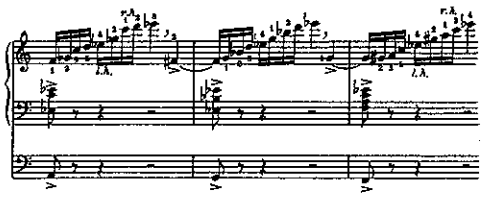
At any time after m. 106 the requisite registrational changes on the Grand-Orgue and Positif can be made: 16′ Fonds added and the

jeux d'anches introduced. Before m. 127 the Voix humaine and Tremblant are taken off and the Anches Récit added. Franck did not say to redraw the Hautbois and Gambe: it must be understood to do so.

We cannot fail to note that for this *tutti* section Franck removed the 32′ stop in the Pédale!

Joseph Bonnet has provided the following fingering solution for the ascending figurations in Example 8.

**Ex. 8, mm. 139–41**



When the hands move to the Récit on the fourth beat on m. 141 the swell box remains open—then closes for tbe indicated diminuendo.

*I° Tempo ma un poco meno lento.*

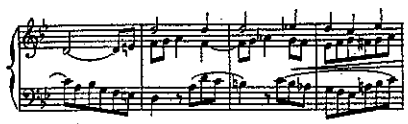
| | |
|---|---|
| Marchal | ♩ = 88 |
| Dupré | ♩ = 80 |
| Langlais | ♩ = 88 |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 88 |

The short fugue begins "Tempo I but a little less slowly." All the jeux d'anches and 16′ manual stops are retired; the Récit Hautbois remains on, as do the manual and pedal couplers. Knowing that Franck "heightened the tempo in episodes of Bach fugues" (Rowland W. Dunham, "From Yesterday No. 2: Franck, Libert, Widor," *The American Organist* [Dec. 1954], p. 403), it is idiomatic to increase the tempo a bit more for the fugal section of this *Choral*.

Charles Tournemire spoke of this fugue's "rarely surpassed elegance worthy of J.S. Bach." It is based on two subjects: the first eight measures of the passacaglia and a countersubject which is later extensively developed.

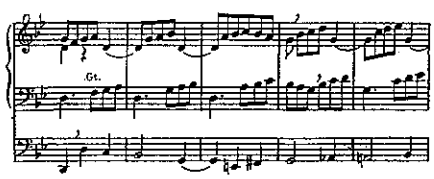
There is no accidental before the B in m. 157, beat 3 (Example 9), in either the manuscript or the Durand edition. Dupré and Duruflé added a B♭.

**Ex. 9, mm. 155–58**



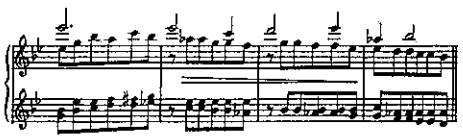
In mm. 170–74 Bonnet suggested playing the left-hand voice (Example 10) on the Great (Grand-Orgue) to bring out the canonic imitations.

**Ex. 10, mm. 170–74**



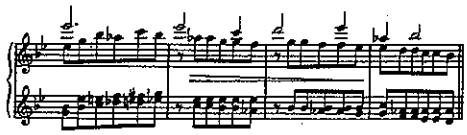
Emory Fanning points out in his facsimile edition of this *Choral* that m. 191 was originally written as in Example 11.

**Ex. 11, mm. 191–94**



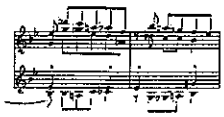
Franck later added the first three accidentals in the left hand and the A♭ in the right in pencil, thus altering the harmony to what we read in the Durand edition (Example 12).

**Ex. 12, mm. 191–94**



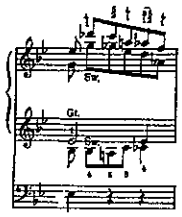
Tournemire recommended playing on two manuals the passage in which the theme appears in E-flat (Example 13) in the upper left-hand voice. "A complex arrangement, obviously, but the clever organist with a sure technique ought to be able to overcome this great difficulty. The result will be an extraordinary illumination of the melody" (Smith, p. 90). Just how much emphasis is required on a theme which is so familiar and which has been stated so often is a decision only the player can make.

**Ex. 13, mm. 180–81**

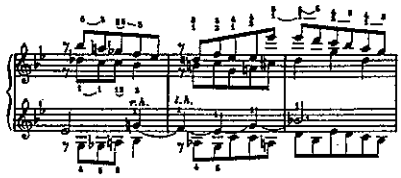


Joseph Bonnet has provided precise indications for thumbing the theme on a lower manual (Example 14). Those who wish to experiment with Tournemire's suggestion may follow Bonnet's elaborate, but feasible, scheme.

**Ex. 14, m. 180**



**Ex. 14 cont., mm. 181–83**



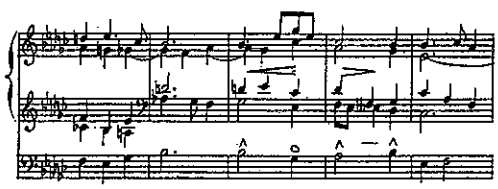
*Measure 195.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Bonnet | sostenuto |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 76 |

The tempo may well slacken a bit and, as Tournemire suggested, "the playing ought to be penetrating and profound."

Observing the crescendo-diminuendo in Example 15 would have been almost impossible for Franck with the pedal part written nearly beyond the reach of the left foot—expecially on a flat pedalboard. Today, with the centrally positioned swell pedal, it is possible to move the swell pedal with the left foot and play mm. 198–200.

**Ex. 15, mm. 197–201**



The unconventional pedaling in m. 199, the heel playing a black key, is identical to that suggested by Marcel Dupré in the Grand-Choeur of the *Grande Pièce symphonique*, m. 21. It maintains the legato of the main theme and at the same time imbues it with expression.

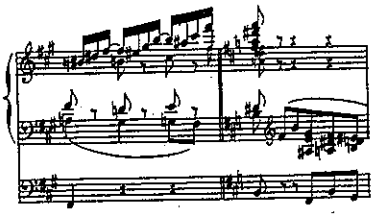
*Measure 226.*

From m. 226, Tournemire wrote, "the buildup must be played freely. Let's throw the metronome away . . ." (Smith, p. 91).

| | |
|---|---|
| Bonnet | un poco più mosso ed agitato |
| Dupré | ♩ = 80 più animato |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 92 poco animato |
| Langlais | ♩ = 100 |
| Marchal | ♩ = 96 |

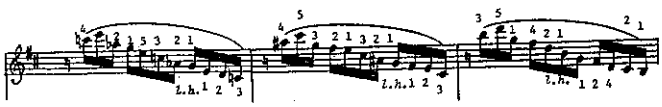
All of the organs Franck is known to have played during the decade leading up to the composition of the *Trois Chorals* had a manual compass of 56 notes (C–G). So it is noteworthy that he was still publishing ossias for instruments with, by then, an antiquated compass of 54 notes (C–F). His own organ at Sainte-Clotilde had such a compass and this obviously influenced his scoring of the passage in Example 16.

**Ex. 16, mm. 233–34**

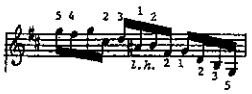


Many players will find the descending figurations in Examples 17 and 18 easier to play if divided between the hands. Here the wide leaps are eliminated and the hand is able to position itself for the following measure.

**Ex. 17, mm. 239–41**

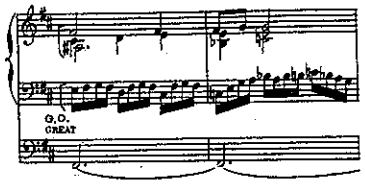


**Ex. 18, m. 245**



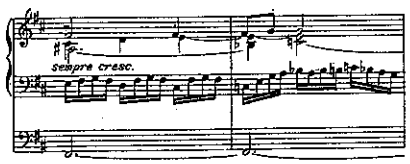
In the reverberant buildings for which this music was conceived, the many repeated notes in the right hand of Example 19 add considerable rhythmic vitality to the texture—especially since the left hand is playing on a louder manual.

**Ex. 19, mm. 246–47**




In an acoustically dry setting the effect is extremely choppy. Dupré has added numerous ties connecting notes within the same voice, rather than common notes between voice parts (Example 19).

**Ex. 20, mm. 246–47**




While the effect is not what Franck wrote in the manuscript and which was published in the Durand edition, in a dead room it in no way interferes with the composer's intentions.

Duruflé began a ritard in m. 256; Bonnet and Dupré in m. 257.

*Measure 258.*

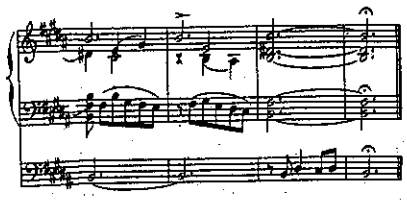
| | |
|---|---|
| Bonnet | a Tempo, Maestoso |
| Marchal | ♩ = 72 |
| Langlais | ♩ = 80 |
| Dupré | ♩ = 76 Tempo I° |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 80 a Tempo |

Bonnet had his students make a decided break in the Pédale after the first eighth note in m. 258, ostensibly to add the pedal reeds.

Beginning at the *molto rall.* in m. 270 Franck was specific about how to reduce the organ. The Récit Hautbois and Gambe must be taken off by an assistant; likewise the Pédale reduced to "very soft stops." Franck did not say to add the 32′ again. A fastidious editor has followed the manuscript to the letter and omitted the Voix humaine from the Récit, as did Franck, leaving but one direction: Tremblant! The Voix humaine should of course be included.

Organists have always found it irresistable to solo the left-hand eighth notes in mm. 285–86 (Example 21). Duruflé played them on the Positif and Bonnet on the Great or Solo.

**Ex. 21, mm. 285–88**

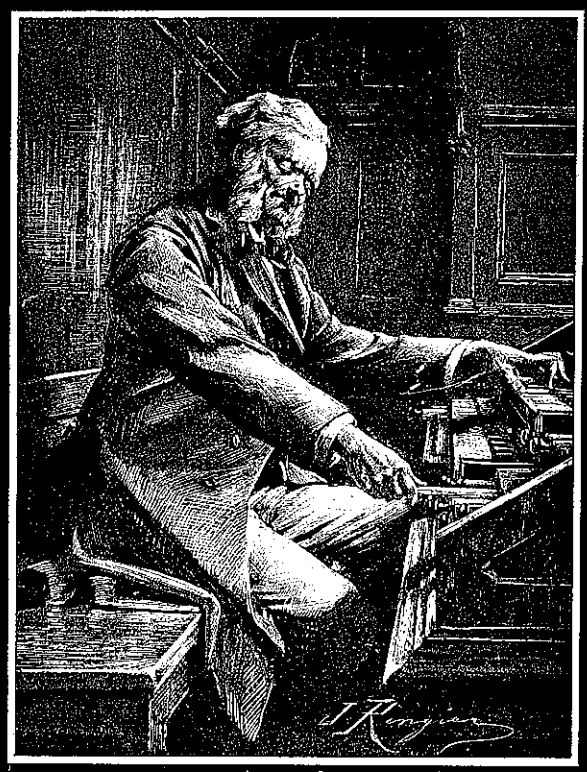


It is certain that all who have heard or played this second Choral will agree with Albert Schweitzer that it is "the most unpretentious and most deeply felt of the three." It likewise distills the essence of Franck, "composed idiomatically, in a style that seems to spring from the true, fundamental character of the organ itself. Like Bach, he knows intuitively the most natural and effective musical line for the organ; his is always simple and at the same time wonderfully plastic. And the structure of his works is amazingly natural. They give the impression of improvisations which he decided to copy down. The riches of such a natural inventiveness are inexhaustible: hardly any other modern master has succeeded, by meaus of completely simple registration, in making the tonal riches of the modern organ so effective."

### Choral II in B Minor

**Durand Edition Corrections**
**Compiled by David Craighead and Antone Godding**

| Page | Score | Measure | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | 2 | 6 | first chord is F♯, A, D, F♯ |
| 18 | 2 | 7–8 | l.h. bass line should have two-note slurring, as in tenor |
| 19 | 1 | 1–3 | l.h. bass line should have two-note slurring, as in tenor |
| 20 | 2 | 4 | r.h. beat 2 tie first two G♯s in alto |
| 20 | 3 | 1 | original omits slurs over chords on beat 3 |
| 21 | 1 | 3–4 | r.h. slurs not in original |
| 21 | 3 | 3 | l.h. add dot to tenor F♯ |
| 21 | 3 | 4 | remove dot from alto C♯ |
| 24 | 3 | 1 | r.h. dotted half note B is tied from previous score in manuscript |
| 24 | 3 | 2 | r.h. half note B is not dotted in manuscript |
| 25 | 2 | 1 | r.h. add quarter rest to march that in bass clef |
| 26 | 1 | 4 | l.h. original contains slur mark up to tied D in m. 5 |
| 26 | 3 | 4 | r.h. add dot to half note G |
| 29 | 1 | 7 | l.h. F♯ half note should be A |
| 29 | 3 | 1 | alto add B 8th note on beat 2, add C♯ 8th note on beat 3—each followed by an 8th rest |
| 29 | 3 | 2 | r.h. chord is F♯, A, D♯, F♯ |
| 30 | 2 | 1 | no diminuendo in original |
| 32 | 2 | 3 | *l.h. B not tied to B in m. 4 in original edition, but it is tied in manuscript |
| 32 | 2 | 6 | l.h. D♮ (not D♯) |
| 32 | 3 | 1 | r.h. half note B is not dotted in manuscript |



# CÉSAR FRANCK 1822-1890

## Special Supplement Part II

**This special supplement has been made possible in part by a generous gift from Casavant Frères Limitée, St. Hyacinthe, Québec, Canada.**

# NEW FRANCK FINGERINGS BROUGHT TO LIGHT

Karen Hastings

Thousands of Franck fingerings and pedalings which have existed only in Braille since 1887 have just been transcribed by the present author for the benefit of sighted musicians. The administration of the National Institute for Blind Youths (Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles) asked César Franck to edit and finger 31 pieces for a Braille publication of organ works by J.S. Bach. At the time, Franck was superintendent of studies at the Institute, in addition to being organist at Sainte-Clotilde and professor of organ at the Paris Conservatory. At both schools, he served as a judge at the annual organ examinations. Franck had composed Psaume CL for the dedication of the Institute's new Cavaillé-Coll organ in 1884.

The five-volume Braille edition is entitled *Choix de pièces pour orgue* (*Selected Pieces for Organ*). It includes the following works:

| Braille | Title | BWV |
|---|---|---|
| Vol. 1 | Passacaglia et fugue en ut mineur (C moll) [C minor] | 582 |
| | Prélude et fugue en ut majeur (C dur) [C major] | 545 |
| | Prélude et fugue en sol majeur (G dur) ["Great" G Major] | 541 |
| | Prélude et fugue en la majeur (A dur) [A major] | 536 |
| | Fantasia et fugue en sol mineur (G moll) [G minor] | 542 |
| | Prélude et fugue en ut majeur (C dur) [C major, 9/8] | 547 |
| Vol. 2 | Prélude et fugue en fa mineur [F minor] | 534 |
| | Prélude et fugue en ut mineur ["Great" C minor] | 546 |
| | Prélude et fugue en la mineur ["Great" A minor] | 543 |
| | Prélude et fugue en mi mineur [E minor, "Wedge"] | 548 |
| | Prélude et fugue en si mineur ["Great" B minor] | 544 |
| Vol. 3 | Prélude et fugue en mi bémol [E-flat major] | 552 |
| | Toccata et fugue en fa [F major] | 540 |
| | Prélude et fugue en ré mineur [D minor, "Fiddle"] | 539 |
| | Fantasia et fugue en ut mineur [C minor] | 537 |
| | Prélude et fugue en mi mineur [E minor, "Night watchman" or "Cathedral"] | 533 |
| Vol. 4 | Toccata et fugue en ut [Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue] | 564 |
| | Prélude et fugue en ut [C major variant of the E-major Toccata] | (566) |
| | Prélude et fugue en sol [G major, 3/2] | 550 |
| | Prélude et fugue en ré [D major] | 532 |
| | Toccata et fugue en ré mineur [D minor] | 565 |
| Vol. 5 | Prélude et fugue en ré mineur [D minor, from the Eight Little Preludes and Fugues] | 554 |
| | Fugue en ut mineur [C minor, on a theme by Legrenzi] | 574 |
| | Fugue en sol mineur ["Little" G minor] | 578 |
| | Fugue en si mineur [B minor, on a theme by Corelli] | 579 |
| | Canzona en ré mineur [D minor] | 588 |
| | Choral en mi bémol ["O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross"] | 622 |
| | Choral en la ["O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig"] | 656 |
| | Choral en sol ["An Wasserflüssen Babylon"] | 653 |
| | Choral en fa [Wir glauben all' an einen Gott, Vater"] | 740 |
| | Concerto en la mineur [A minor, after Vivaldi] | 593 |

The purposes of this article are to analyze the characteristic qualities of the fingerings and pedalings in these works, including the probable effect upon articulation, to provide sample fingerings, and to discuss ways in which information gleaned from this edition might be applied to the performance of Franck's own organ compositions.

In late 19th-century Paris, two principal Bach editions would have been available: The Breitkopf (Bach-Gesellschaft) and the French version of the Peters edition. Although the title page of the first volume of Franck's edition names "Edition Breitkopf" as the source, an examination of the Braille music itself reveals that Peters was used instead for most pieces. The C-major variant of the E-major toccata was not even included in the Gesellschaft publication.

The most crucial aspect of Franck's editorial work was to decide which notes should be assigned to which hand. In the French

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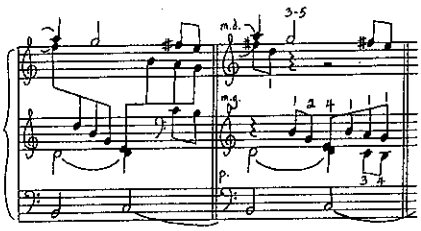
Braille system of notating organ music, each composition was divided into sections. Within each section, the complete right-hand part was presented first, followed by the left-hand part, and finally the pedal line.

It is extremely doubtful that Franck knew the Braille system; therefore, an anonymous transcriber probably prepared the master copy, which could then be mass-produced. The inkprint scores in which Franck would have marked his fingerings have apparently not survived the passage of time. Even if Franck himself did the transcribing, it would have been impractical for him to attempt it without first making notations in a printed score. To support this assertion, a comparison of two versions of the same measure will be provided: the Bach-Gesellschaft's (Example 1a) and Franck's (Example 1b, retranscribed from Braille into notation for the sighted).

Example 1. Prelude and Fugue in C major (BWV 545), Fugue, m. 46.

a) Bach-Gesellschaft edition b) Braille edition edited by Franck



Most of the 31 pieces contain numerous fingerings but leave other fingering decisions to the discretion of the performer. This combination was highly appropriate to the pedagogical atmosphere in which the edition was certain to be used. Oftentimes, Franck would provide a few guideposts only, not mentioning obvious fingerings in between.

Before beginning to analyze the many fingerings and pedalings, it would be worthwhile to examine Franck's approach to other aspects of editing: dynamics, registrations, tempo markings, phrasing, articulation, and ornamentation. This aspect of our study will provide insight into the degree of Franck's faithfulness to Bach's text and (to some extent) into his understanding of Baroque interpretation. Did Franck understand and appreciate authentic Baroque performance practices or did he prefer to mold his interpretations to the tastes of his own time? One would almost hope to find an unauthentic, Romantic approach to Bach, which would increase the relevance of the Braille edition to the performance of Franck's own music.

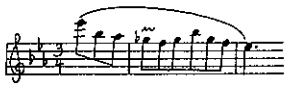
Franck included only those dynamics which had been specified in the printed Bach publications. He added registration indications to the manual parts in four of the works. Franck's registrations were composed in terms of the French Romantic organ rather than the German Baroque. The "Cathedral" Prelude in *E Minor* sports the general direction "Grand-choeur." In the middle movement of *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue*, the melody unfolds on a trompette or hautbois, and the accompaniment sounds on a bourdon (stopped flute) or flûte (open flute). *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* is assigned the same registration, except that the flûte is specifically requested in the accompaniment. The first movement of the Concerto *in A Minor* has the general suggestion "jeux de fond." Here and elsewhere in the concerto, the word "fond" replaces Bach's references to the Oberwerk manual. "Rückpositif" and "Organo pleno" are transformed into "réc" and "gr-org," respectively. In meas. 90, Bach's "O" is interpreted as an abbreviation for "Organo pleno," although Bach probably intended the left hand to join the right on the Oberwerk instead. Franck employed the same system of manual indications in the third movement of the concerto, and, again, deviated once from Bach's layout. In the B-minor Prelude, the "pro organo pleno" which is present in the printed score is missing from the Braille. A couple of appropriate pieces specify "deux claviers" (two manuals). By extension, we could assume that both hands would play on the same manual in the remainder of the works. In meas. 88–96 of the *Passacaglia*, Franck's fingering hints at transferring the right hand to another manual to perform the theme.

When the tempo "Adagissimo" appears in the printed edition, it is transcribed as "adagiosissimo" in the Braille, presumably without altering the meaning. Franck's only extra tempo marking is "Très largement" ("Very broadly," implying a slow tempo). This indication is found in the "Cathedral" Prelude, BWV 533. A fascinating addition is made to the two fugues which have the greatest number of repeated notes in their subjects: the word, "soutenu." This recommendation of a "sustained" (legato) style occurs at the outset of the fugue which belongs to the C-major version of the E-major Toccata, and also at the beginning of both manual parts in the "Great" *Fugue in G Major*.

Among the miscellaneous changes which are probably due to the transcriber are the omissions of several grace-note slurs and two caesuras. (The caesuras are found in the Peters edition of the *Prelude in D Major*, meas. 16, and just after the Grave in the *Fugue in G Major* which accompanies the 3/2 prelude.) Curiously, two staccato dots are missing in the B-minor Prelude, and the eighth-note grace notes (appoggiaturas) are grace-note sixteenths instead.

The issue of ornamentation would make a lengthy study in itself, but only the information concerning trills would be applicable within Franck's twelve principal pieces. In music composed during Franck's lifetime, it was assumed that trills would begin on the main or written note (not on the upper auxiliary, as in German music of Bach's time). It is interesting to note that the fingerings for trills in the Bach edition show that Franck intended them to begin on the main note, in 19th-century style. Similarly, he viewed Bach's ∿ as an inverted mordent (a 19th-century interpretation) rather than as a short trill which begins on the upper note. This information can be applied within a certain Franckian melody from *L'Organiste* (Example 2).

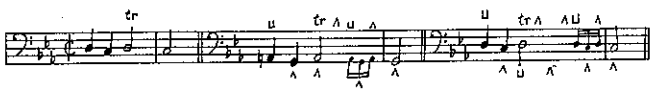
Example 2. "Offertoire" in E-flat major, L'Organiste, vol. 1 (1890), mm. 70-72, right hand.



Franck added closing notes to two pedal trills (see Examples 3b and c). Presumably, the performer would decide upon the actual number of repercussions. For the first trill, Franck implied that most of these *battements* should be performed by alternating left and right toes. It will be noticed that both trills begin on the main note and end with an identical pedaling. The right foot changes from heel to toe for its quick "repeated notes." What is truly strange is that the articulation which leads into the trill varies, even though these examples originate from entrances of the same fugal subject. In several other fugues as well, separate statements of the subject appear to have differing articulations. In the lengthy process of deciding upon fingerings and pedalings for 31 pieces, Franck might simply have overlooked a few important details.

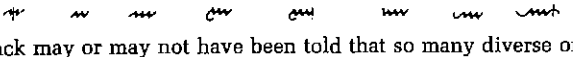
Example 3. Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Fugue.

a) mm. 5-6, left hand b) mm. 44-45, pedal c) mm. 56-57, pedal



Trills with closing notes are reminiscent of the theme of *Pièce héroïque* and the prolonged trill in the fugue of *Grande Pièce symphonique*. All of these trills should begin with the main note.

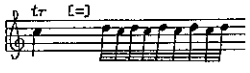
Volumes 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Braille edition use the same symbol (dots 6, 2-5-6) for all of the following ornaments:



Franck may or may not have been told that so many diverse ornaments would be transcribed in the same manner. He did not finger all or even most of the examples of these embellishments. Mordents were most frequently chosen as fingering recipients. Most of the other fingered ornaments have an inverted mordent configuration ( ∿ ), regardless of whether the inkprint version is ∿ or ∿ . Trills which were abbreviated *tr* in the printed publication were expressed by a different Braille symbol. Partial fingerings such as 2-3 were assigned to some trills. A few miscellaneous ornament signs make isolated appearances in the Braille scores.

Volume 1 uses a greater variety of ornament symbols and provides an interpretative table. The table is not comprehensive; several additional ornaments are found in the music itself. Furthermore, two of the symbols which are listed in the table are not explained. Someone other than Franck evidently devised this table. Within it, the *tr* symbol is realized in this manner: (Example 4). However, all of Franck's numerous fingered examples clearly imply beginning with the main note, as mentioned above.[1] In matters of ornamentation, Franck did not reveal much knowledge of Baroque performance practices.

Example 4.

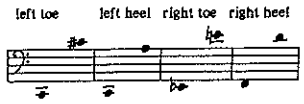


Franck's phrasings occasionally differ from those of the printed editions. One of these phrasing variants joins two notes that were already isolated by rests, another connects an appoggiatura and its resolution, another might be a transcriber's mistake, and two are difficult to fathom. The other eight discrepancies occur in the E-flat-major Prelude. The two-note groups in the top part of meas. 180 are continued by Franck in meas. 181–83, forming a brief but perfect ostinato. In contrast, Franck eliminated the pedal phrasings in meas. 20 and 193. (In the printed publication, these phrasings imitate those of meas. 18 and 191, respectively.) The phrasing variations in this prelude produce articulations before the beat and, with one exception, are actually more consistent than the printed edition's with respect to the rest of Bach's phrasing.[2]

## PEDALING

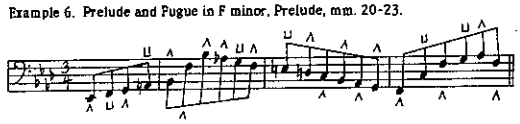
The pedalings in the Braille edition show that Franck made liberal use of his heels, a practice which allies him with Lemmens, Widor, and the later French mainstream. Almost every pedaling can be performed legato. The feet cross each other freely, sometimes using the toe, sometimes employing the heel. A few passages begin with the heel. The pedalings cover the following range of pitches: (Example 5).

Example 5.




A passage from the *Prelude in F Minor* serves as a sampler of many of Franck's pedaling techniques (Example 6).

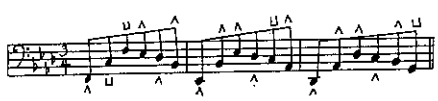
Example 6. Prelude and Fugue in F minor, Prelude, mm. 20-23.



This mélange includes two sets of stepwise notes played by alternating the toe and heel of the same foot; some alternate toe pedaling; using the same toe to play two successive, adjacent black keys; and a variety of foot crossings. Crossing the left foot behind the right to reach a fifth above looks quite spectacular but carries no guarantee of accuracy. In the Braille edition as a whole, alternate toe pedalings are found less often than pedalings which involve the heel.

Franck also used pedal substitutions, but rather infrequently. He seemed to prefer alternative techniques, especially crossing one foot over or behind the other. Three of the possible varieties of pedal substitutions are not represented in these works: right toe to left heel, right heel to left heel, and left heel to right heel. When a long note was struck with the heel, Franck seldom requested a substitution to the toe. Surprisingly, not one example of pedal substitution on a black key was found. Judging from this edition, Franck did not employ this technique, even if the only alternative was to perform a substantial leap with one foot, as in Example 7 below.

Example 7. Prelude and Fugue in F minor, Prelude, mm. 64-66.

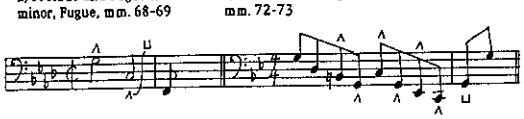


Franck employed three different methods of executing two or more successive leaps in the same direction: substitution (Example 8a), performing one of the leaps with the same foot, either heel to toe or toe to heel (Example 8b), and crossing one foot behind or in front of the other to reach an interval as large as a fifth (Example 6 above).

Example 8.

a) Prelude and Fugue in F minor, Fugue, mm. 68-69

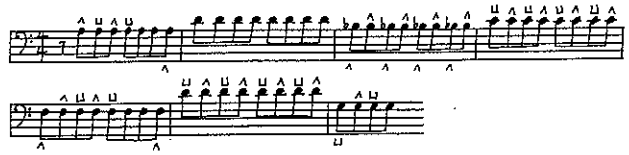
b) Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, Fugue, mm. 72-73



The most unusual pedalings in the Braille collection are shown in Example 9. Franck's pupil, Tournemire, disliked beginning a passage with the heel, because he considered the effect to be heavy and lacking in elegance.[3] However, the heaviness of the heel finds a useful role here, striking the strong part of the beat. Franck's annotation, "changing between the toe and heel *ad libitum*," may suggest that he was fully aware that these pedalings were unconventional. The final details are left to the discretion of the performer. The "ad libitum" instruction will no doubt be recalled when the performer reaches the similar passage in meas. 71–78 (for which no pedalings were provided).

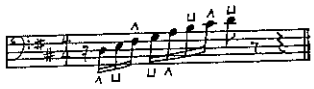
Example 9. Concerto in A minor, first movement, mm. 55-61.

changement de la pointe et du talon ad libitum.



Franck's pedaling of the famous scale that opens the D-major Prelude is as follows (Example 10). Dupré's pedaling differs only in that the left heel and toe are reversed for the G and the A.[4] Franck's pedalings for F-major scales and for the chromatic scale vary only slightly from Lemmens's.[5] All extended scale-like pedal passages in the Bach edition can be performed legato.

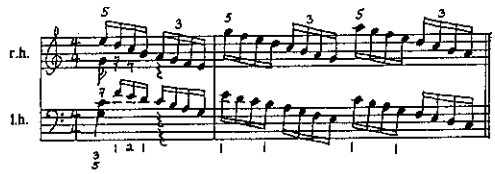
Example 10. Prelude and Fugue in D major, Prelude, m. 1.



## FINGERING

It is not surprising to find Franck, the concert pianist and organist, using traditional scale fingerings in the manual parts (see Example 11). It will be noticed that "modal scales" such as the Phrygian phrase in meas. 42 adapt their fingerings from traditional major and minor scales.

Example 11. Concerto in A minor, first movement, mm. 42-43, manuals.



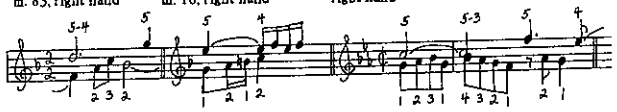

Franck's fingerings include a multitude of substitutions. The notational forms of these substitutions fall into three basic categories, whicb are illustrated in Example 12.

Example 12.

a) Toccata and Fugue in F major, Fugue, m. 83, right hand

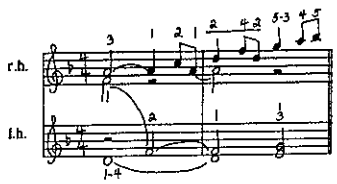
b) "Little" Prelude and Fugue in D minor, Fugue, m. 16, right hand

c) Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Fugue, mm. 48-49, right hand



In the course of these works, the first type of notation is frequently encountered, the second variety is found somewhat less often, and the third type is seldom used. Although the second style of notation seems to specify that the substitution be performed directly on the downbeat (see Example 12b), plenty of examples exist in which the substitution must be delayed until after the beat (as in Example 13, meas. 67, soprano voice).

Example 13. Canzona, mm. 67-68, manuals.



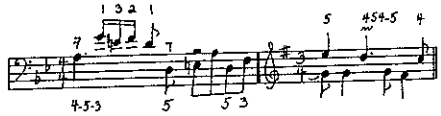

Example 13 portrays an extremely rare case of substituting from one hand to the other (a technique which is very useful in performing Franck's own compositions). In the inkprint publication, the six-beat F was expressed as a whole note tied to a half note, all on the

upper staff. On the downbeat of meas. 68, Franck's substitution to the thumb seems unnecessary, unless it is meant to imply a non-legato connection to the next chord. Example 14a illustrates two successive substitutions on a relatively short note. The first change can be performed immediately, and the second is most comfortable during the eighth-note D. Franck occasionally specified a substitution after the quick portion of an inverted mordent (see Example 14b).

Example 14.

a) Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, Fugue, m. 25, left hand

b) An Wasserflüssen Babylon, m. 13, right hand

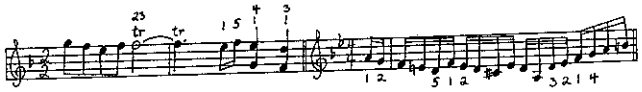


The works contain copious examples of contractions which achieve a convenient hand position for the next series of notes. Some of the more interesting uses of this technique are illustrated below in Example 15. A few of Franck's contractions are unnecessary, such as the 5-2 fingering in Example 15e; in this case, 5-4 would have served equally well.

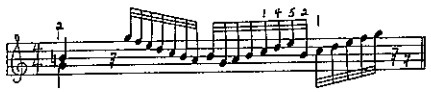
Example 15.

a) Toccata and Fugue in F, Fugue, m. 44, right hand

b) Fugue in G minor ("Little"), m. 10, left hand

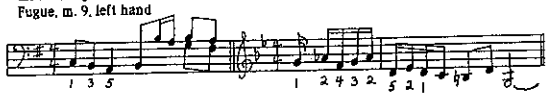


c) Prelude and Fugue in C major (variant of BWV 566), Fugue, m. 97, right hand



d) Prelude and Fugue in E minor ("Night watchman"), Fugue, m. 9, left hand

e) Fugue in G minor ("Little"), mm. 51-52, left hand

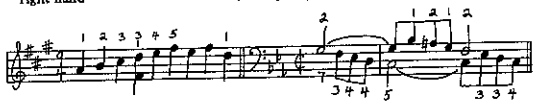


The Braille volumes contain a huge quantity of fingerings which imply finger glissandi from black keys to white. Samples are given in Example 16.

Example 16.

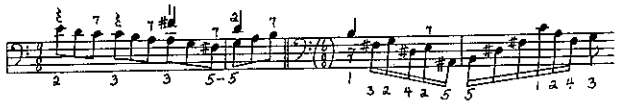
a) "O Lamm Gottes," m. 79, right hand

b) Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Fugue, mm. 45-46, left hand



c) Prelude and Fugue in C major (9/8), Prelude, mm. 12-13, left hand

d) Prelude and Fugue in A minor, mm. 51-52, left hand



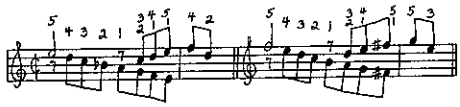
The vast majority of such fingerings lack the hyphen or tiny slur which would clearly indicate legato performance. However, the *Prelude and Fugue in C Major* (9/8) does include such signs in almost all the relevant places in both manual and pedal parts. There is a bit of mystery surrounding Vol. 1, from which this piece came. In the copy owned by the Association Valentin Haüy in Paris, the date on the title page is obscured by clusters of superfluous dots. Separate examinations by a blind person (Georgette Lano) and a sighted person (myself) led to the affirmation of 1909 as the most likely date. The other Braille volumes specify 1887 as the year of publication. Between these two years, the system of Braille music notation underwent several changes, the result of an international Braille music congress which met in Cologne in 1888. The "1909" volume actually does use the more recent system for some details of its notation. For instance, the symbols for ties, pedal substitutions, and repeats of tied measures are different from those used in the other volumes. (In the old system, ties and slurs were notated identically, which occasionally gave rise to confusion.) The "1909" volume is the one which employs different ornament symbols and includes an explanatory table, which is generally applicable only to that first volume. Evidently, the first volume was remastered after Franck's death. The last piece in this volume is the prelude and fugue which contains the hyphens. It is disconcerting that this piece is absent from Bernd Scherers's list of the works in Franck's Braille edition, as if Scherers had been looking at a different version of the first volume.[6] It is comforting that the fingerings and pedalings exhibit the same characteristics as those in the other pieces, and that the title page of Vol. 1 names Franck as the editor and originator of the fingerings. (Curiously, the title pages of Vols. 2, 3, and 5 do not mention Franck at all.) There are many plausible theories which might explain why the hyphens are present only in the one piece, but at this time, it is unfortunately impossible to determine which explanation, if any, is correct.

In view of the above-mentioned situation, it would be helpful to find further evidence for finger glissando. Example 17 provides additional support. The second passage is a sequential-type repetition of the first. The arrangement of black and white keys apparently determined Franck's selection of fingering technique when moving from one measure to the next. Both types of transitions can be performed smoothly by organists with average-sized hands.

Example 17. Prelude and Fugue in C major (BWV 545), Fugue

a) mm. 21-22, right hand

b) mm. 25-26, right hand

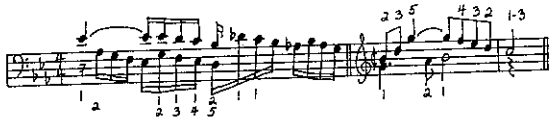


Lemmens stated in his organ method, "Sometimes, in order to play all the parts smoothly, it is indispensable to glide with the same finger from one key to another, but in such manner that the continuation of sound is unbroken. . . . Gliding [with the thumb or other fingers] is easy from a black to a white key, ascending or descending a semitone, but it requires great dexterity when done by the thumb from one white key to another."[7] Some samples of potential thumb glissandi are shown in Example 18. The last of these examples strongly suggests legato because of the imitation. Most of the thumb work throughout the Braille edition can be performed legato. In the 9/8 prelude and its fugue, hyphens are used to indicate thumb glissando between two white keys and from black keys to white keys.

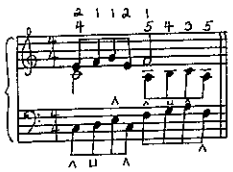
Example 18.

a) "O Mensch, bewein'," m. 10, left hand

b) Prelude and Fugue in C major (BWV 545), Fugue, mm. 105-06, right hand



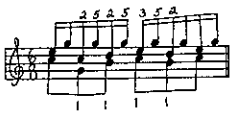
c) Concerto in A minor, first movement, m. 37, left hand and pedal



A passage from the last movement of the *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue* contains a leap from G to B with the thumb, followed by two consecutive seconds which are also played with the thumb (see Example 19). The initial leap suggests that the other intervals will be non-legato as well. Within the context of a rollicking fugue with broken figurations, it is quite possible that Franck conceived of the whole phrase as non-legato. A 1-1 fingering within stepwise motion, then, might not always mean legato.

Lemmens continued his instructions regarding thumb glissando by discussing the example of a chromatic scale: "When moving from a white to a black key it is necessary to advance the thumb more [than when moving between two white keys] . . . . This fingering is also practicable the reverse way [descending instead of ascending]."[8] Franck's Bach fingerings contain plenteous examples of moving from a white to a black key by means of the thumb.

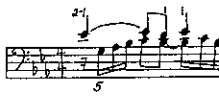
Example 19. Fugue from Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, m. 69, right hand



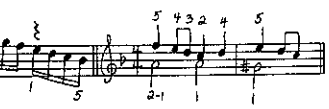
A few of these fingerings are illustrated in Example 20. The first two can be played legato; the third example cannot. When this type of thumb glissando is combined with finger crossing, legato can be rendered quite difficult. Even without finger crossing, legato will be unattainable for many people if the intervals are large, as in Example 20c.

Example 20.

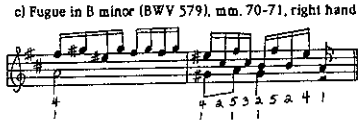
a) "O Mensch, bewein'," m. 7, left hand



b) Canzona, mm. 24-25, right hand



c) Fugue in B minor (BWV 579), mm. 70-71, right hand

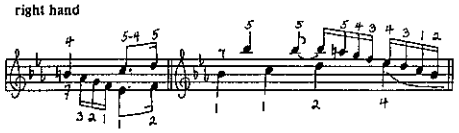


The Franck fingerings also include a number of examples of thumb-to-thumb fingerings between a white and black key which have a white key in between them. Depending upon the tempo, note values, and other notes assigned to the same hand, some of these fingerings can be played smoothly (as in Example 21a), while others must be performed non-legato (e.g., Example 21b).

Example 21.

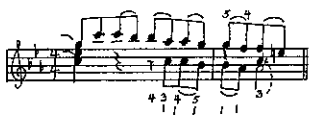
a) Fugue in C minor (BWV 574), m. 63, right hand

b) Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Prelude, m. 88, right hand



Lemmens did not discuss this variety of thumb glissando, although it is very useful. Actually, the strongest evidence for thumb glissando in Franck's entire edition is a passage which includes an example of this type (see Example 22). Naturally, the slurs imply legato, and it is possible to honor all of these phrasings despite the crossunder in meas. 8. Within the Braille edition, all of the other, numerous examples of a thumb playing two consecutive notes are unphrased, and their interpretation is more speculative.

Example 22. Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Prelude, mm. 8-9, right hand



It has been seen that a great many of Franck's "thumb fingerings" can be performed legato. The question now becomes, "Did he want them legato?" Naturally, it is impossible to say for certain, but Examples 18c and 22 do emphatically recommend an affirmative reply. Example 19 could supply a rebuttal.

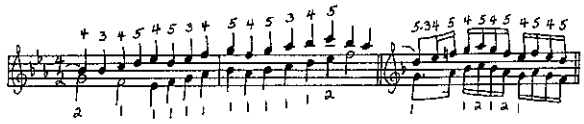
Passages in parallel intervals are plentiful and provide further examples of consecutive uses of the thumb. For the performance of parallel sixths, Franck seemed to consider quick double substitutions too problematic and usually opted for strings of thumb work in the "inner" voice part (lower right-hand part or upper left-hand part) and occasional finger crossings in the outer voice. The lengthiest occurrence of this procedure is shown in Example 23a. With effort, partial legato is possible. In Example 23b, the organist attempts to cross the fifth finger of the right hand under the fourth finger and the second finger over the thumb simultaneously. Example 23c, due to its use of substitution, has the smoothest and most comfortable fingerings of the three samples. Perfect legato is impossible in most of the parallel sixth passages in this edition, particularly within the inner voice part. When feasible, Franck usually divided parallel sixths between the hands.

Legato articulation fared better among the parallel thirds and fourths; Franck evidently considered them less awkward than the sixths. Representative fingerings are illustrated in Example 24. The fingering for Example 24e implies detached articulation; an alternative would be "cross phrasing" in groups of three. Within this edition, all of the fingered parallel fourths and most of the thirds can be played legato. With thirds and fourths as well as with sixths, Franck preferred finger crossing to substitution.

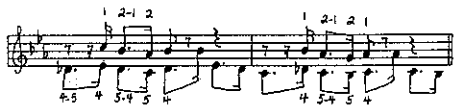
Example 23.

a) Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Fugue, mm. 31-32, right hand

b) Concerto in A minor, second movement, m. 30, right hand



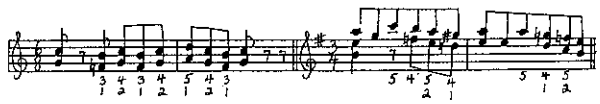
c) Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Prelude, mm. 104-05



Example 24.

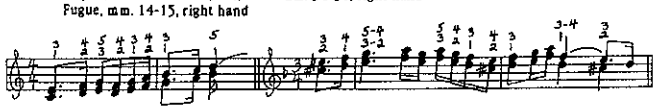
a) Fugue from Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, mm. 129-30, right hand

Prelude and Fugue in E minor ("Wedge"), Prelude, mm. 132-33, right hand

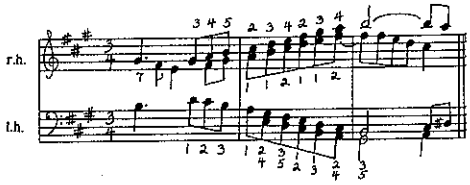


c) Prelude and Fugue in C major (variant of BWV 566), Fugue, mm. 14-15, right hand

d) Concerto in A minor, second movement, mm. 34-36, right hand

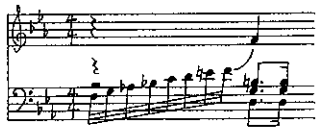


e) Prelude and Fugue in A major, Fugue, mm. 171-73, manuals



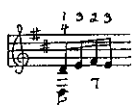

Franck had exceptionally large hands, each capable of spanning a twelfth.[9] Therefore, the large stretches in his compositions were not problematic for him, although organists with significantly smaller hands occasionally have to alter his text. Franck's fingerings in the Bach works sometimes include large reaches as well. Some of these stretches are absolutely necessary because of Bach's text; a greater number of them can be attributed to Franck alone. This edition assumes the ability to reach a fourth between any two adjacent fingers and a harmonic seventh between the second and fifth fingers. Franck apparently also expected the organist to be able to reach a tenth with one hand, as reflected in Example 25.

Example 25. Fugue in C minor (BWV 574), m. 117, manuals.



More people would have been able to follow his fingering had he assigned the thirty-second-note F to the right hand. In the most extreme example of a large reach which is not required by Bach's text, the third finger of the left hand attempts to play a ninth above the fourth finger's tenor D, with the obvious result of a severely clipped D (see Example 26). Throughout the works, there are many examples of fingerings which cause notes before rests to be shortened. Almost all of these incidents involve a large stretch.

Example 26. Prelude and Fugue in D major, Fugue, m. 30, left hand.

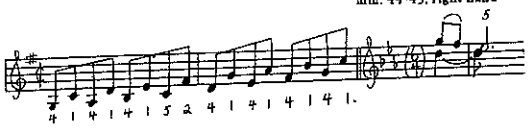


Franck did not consider it obligatory to change fingers for repeated notes, nor did he avoid changing fingers. His most common approach was to change the fingering only if the ensuing passage required it. He frequently employed patterned fingerings for sequences. Sometimes, he altered the fingering pattern to avoid having the thumb fall on a black key (see Example 27a). In contrast, he frequently assigned the fifth finger to a black key and only rarely altered a pattern to avoid such a situation. A particularly spectacular case of using the fifth finger on $E^{\flat}$ is found in the *Fantasia in C Minor* (Example 27b).

Example 27.

a) Prelude and Fugue in G major (3/2), Fugue, mm. 144-45, left hand

b) Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, Fantasia, mm. 44-45, right hand



Finger crossing was clearly one of Franck's favorite techniques. (Finger crossings have appeared in Examples 17, 21b, 22, 23, and 24. A few additional samples are given in Example 28.) Franck showed great imagination in the immense variety of types of finger crossing that he employed. These different types include, for the right hand, crossing 5 under 2, and passing 4 and 1 under 2; for the left hand, crossing 5 over the thumb, and ascending by crossing 4 under 2 and 3 (Example 28d); and, for either hand, playing passagework with the thumb crossed under, combining finger crossing with thumb glissando or finger glissando, twisting the elbow outward to cross over to a black key (Example 28e), and "double crossing" (Example 28f). Example 28g illustrates a common situation which Franck usually remedied by means of finger crossing rather than substitution. Reaching the last finger but finding it necessary to continue moving in the same direction, he would choose to cross with the finger that would supply the exact number of fingers needed.

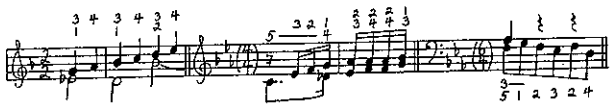
Lemmens and Dupré considered finger crossing to be one of the most useful tools in legato playing.[10] In general, Franck's finger crossings greatly facilitate legato performance. Even many fingerings which look forbidding are quite manageable and sound perfectly smooth (see Example 28d). Others are genuinely awkward (such as Example 28c).

Example 28.

a) Toccata and Fugue in F major, Fugue, mm. 31-32, right hand

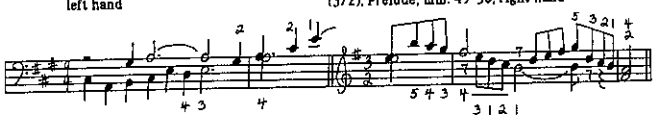
b) "O Mensch, bewein'," mm. 11-12, left hand

c) Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Fugue, m. 51, left hand



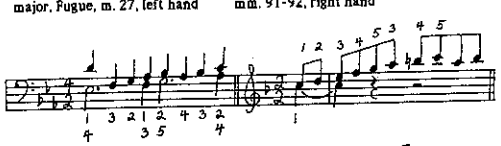
d) "O Lamm Gottes," mm. 95-96, left hand

e) Prelude and Fugue in G major (3/2), Prelude, mm. 49-50, right hand



f) Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Fugue, m. 27, left hand

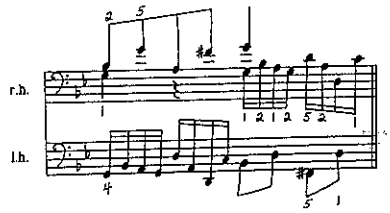
g) Toccata and Fugue in F major, Fugue, mm. 91-92, right hand



Franck's distribution of notes between the hands is generally helpful to the performer. A few examples of awkward distribution can be found. In a monophonic, fantasy flourish such as the opening passage of either *Toccata in C Major*, Franck would follow the printed arrangement in almost every detail, even if the hands crossed.

The 31 pieces contain several baffling examples of both hands simultaneously performing the same pitch on the same manual. Usually, only one or two notes are duplicated. The one case that involves more than a full measure is almost certainly an error. If both hands play the same note in Example 29, the right thumb will have to make a quick leap of a seventh. This feat does not appear to be expected, since only the left-hand D is fingered. The right-hand note is probably included out of respect for the original text and to clarify the imitations in this section. The passage offers hope that, in such a situation, Franck did not actually expect both hands to bother with pressing the same key. Nevertheless, this method of notation is problematic for the blind organist, who would either memorize the leap before discovering the left-hand fingering or would go to the extra trouble of locating and reading the left-hand counterpart.

Example 29. Fugue in G minor ("Little"), m. 58, manuals.




In addition to the non-legato thumb fingerings that have been mentioned, the Bach edition contains approximately 125 fingerings which cannot be performed smoothly. One could identify several subcategories within these fingerings: those which produce a desired phrasing, those found in thick-textured passages in which perfect legato is not possible, those for which the legato alternatives would have been very awkward or even uncomfortable, and some miscellaneous, inexplicable fingerings.

Although Franck added very few actual phrase marks to Bach's text, he occasionally designed a fingering that would ensure a particular phrasing. Many of these phrases end in logical places, such as before an imitation, a recapitulation, or the entrance of a fugal subject; others (the inexplicable examples) betray no logic. In fine Baroque style, Franck detached a number of perfect fourths which leap from weak to strong beats. Like other composers, Franck clearly valued legato more in some passages than in others. He was too respectful of Bach's text to add his own articulation marks, but he occasionally used fingerings to indicate his preference for non-legato within a particular passage.

## RELATIONSHIP TO PERFORMANCE PRACTICES OF THE LATE 19TH-CENTURY FRENCH SCHOOL

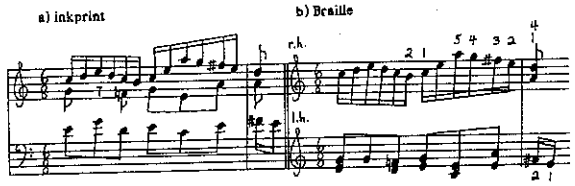
Having described the principal characteristics of Franck's Bach edition, it would be desirable to explore whether the information in this edition is consistent with performance practices of the later French school and how one might apply it to Franck's own organ compositions. Such applications are the goal of this study, rather than discovering anything new about Bach interpretation. (Franck's edition reveals a practical rather than scholarly approach, and, since it arrived 137 years after Bach's death, one could easily find more authentic sources for Bach interpretation.)

Information which supports or refutes 19th-century French performance practices is rare, difficult to ferret out, and necessarily speculative, since the purposes of the Bach edition were entirely different. Such an analysis is also complicated by the Braille notation itself, which wreaks havoc with the composer's voice leading—eliminating doublings, making common notes out of repeated notes and false common notes out of true ones—in order to satisfy the demands of the Braille system, which absolutely separates the left- and right-hand parts and requires arithmetically perfect measures. When several notes are played by one hand, every voice part that contains even one different rhythm must be notated separately, and the value of the notes and rests must always exactly equal the number of beats in the measure. Example 30 shows a repeated note which appears as a common note in the Braille.

Example 30. Fugue from Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, mm. 112-13, manuals.

a) inkprint

b) Braille

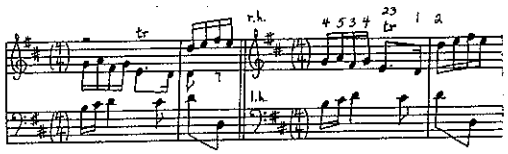



Since there is nothing to warn the blind organist to shorten the left-hand A, he would probably practice and memorize holding it full

value before realizing the composer's intent when putting the manual parts together. Example 31 illustrates a more serious change which is likely never to be discovered hy the blind organist because it totally eliminates one of the voices on the downbeat of meas. 14. (Situations such as these probably explain why, nowadays, many new Braille transcriptions are facsimiles of inkprint scores.) Franck may or may not have been aware of all of the problems posed by Braille notation.

Example 31. Prelude and Fugue in D major, Fugue, mm. 13-14, manuals.

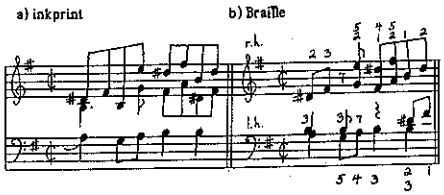
a) inkprint b) Braille




Individual composers of the French school have disagreed concerning whether to interrupt a sustained note when a shorter note of the same pitch reaches a unison with it. Widor[11] and Tournemire[12] spoke against breaking before the short note, while Guilmant, Vierne,[13] and Dupré were in favor of articulating before such a note, as is Langlais.[14] The Braille edition provides strong testimony that Franck believed in releasing the sustained note to accommodate the new, shorter note. The following example is offered as proof: (Example 32).

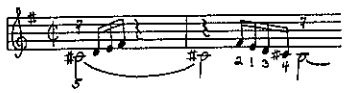
Example 32. Prelude and Fugue in G major (3/2), Fugue, m. 68, manuals.

a) inkprint b) Braille



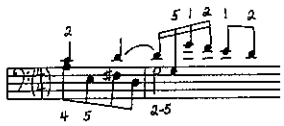

Numerous times, Franck provided fingering only for the interrupting note (see Example 33).

Example 33. Prelude and Fugue in E minor ("Wedge"), Fugue, mm. 94-95, left hand.



In many other cases, the fingering changes when the shorter note enters. When a pitch was interrupted after only a sixteenth note, Franck sometimes used a confusing notation that resembled substitution (see Example 34, which is one of four such cases). In each instance, the interrupting voice carries the same fingering as the end result of the substitution, whicb leads one to suspect that this notation is meant to indicate which finger will sustain the remaiuder of the long note after it has been restruck.

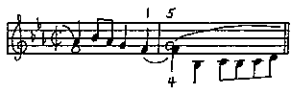
Example 34. Prelude and Fugue in C major (variant of BWV 566), Fugue, mm. 32-33, left hand.



No evidence was found either to confirm or to contradict the measuring of repeated notes, an important concept in the French school of organ performance. With regard to the tying of common notes, this collection of Franck fingerings is filled with conflicting implications. Although these differences cannot be resolved definitively, it will be worthwhile to provide sample fingerings, enahling the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. Common notes can be defined as two consecutive notes of the same pitch in adjacent voices. In order for these two notes to be considered true common notes, the first note must move to another pitch rather than to a rest.

Franck used unnecesary finger changes for so many common notes that it is tempting to believe that he was hinting that they should not be tied. However, Franck did indicate a change of fingering in one pair of common notes that Bach himself had tied (Example 35).

Example 35. Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Fugue, mm. 33-34, right hand.

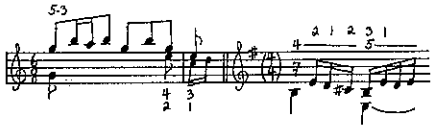


Most of Franck's unnecessary finger changes become slightly clumsy (but still perfectly feasible) if the common notes are tied. Example 36a reflects the level of awkwardness typically found in these fingerings. Certain instances are very unwieldy (see Example 36b).

Example 36.

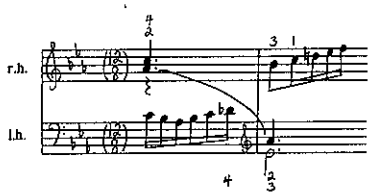
a) Fugue from Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, mm. 21-22, right hand

b) Prelude and Fugue in G major ("Great"), Fugue, m. 22, left hand



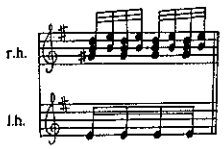
Many potential tied common notes change from one hand to the other. Franck's treatment of one of Bach's tied notes demonstrates a note smoothly changing hands on a black key (Example 37).

Example 37. Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Fugue, mm. 99-100, manuals.




Given Franck's distribution of notes between the hands, the passage shown in Example 38 is nightmarish unless the common notes are tied.

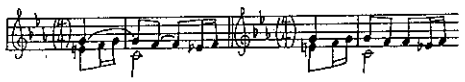
Example 38. Prelude and Fugue in E minor ("Night watchman"), Prelude, m. 10, fourth beat, manuals.




In Example 39, the tie that is present in both Breitkopf and Peters is absent from the Braille. Franck might have crossed it out in his score, figuring that the performer would automatically tie the alto to the soprano and that the effect would be the same without the tie. Since, in similar situations, Franck retained the tie, it seems equally likely that the transcriber accidentally omitted the tie.

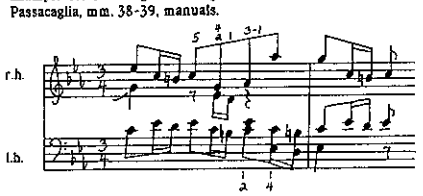
Example 39. Fugue in C minor (BWV 574), mm. 34-35, right hand.

a) inkprint b) Braille



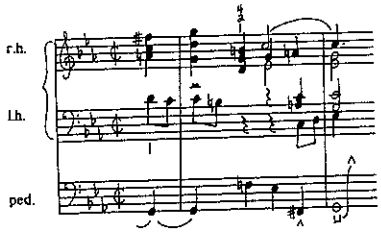
The two previous examples strongly support the tying of common notes, but three other examples provide evidence against tying common notes. Separating the common notes in Example 40 permits a consistent phrasing of the parallel voices, which is certainly musically more effective than the alternative of tying the lower note and considerably shortening the upper.

Example 40. Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, Passacaglia, mm. 38-39, manuals.



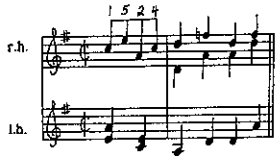
In Example 41 as well, it is physically possible either to tie or to articulate the common notes, but the fingering emphatically indicates separating them.

Example 41. Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Fugue, mm. 156-58.




Consider how awkward and musically ineffective the second chord change would be if the common Gs were tied. In the late 19th- and early 20th-century French tradition, this passage would be a likely candidate for detached articulation because of its thick texture and probable use of a full registration. Franck's distribution in Example 42 makes tying the common notes impossible for many organists. Assigning the middle D on beat 1 to the left hand would easily have conquered these problems. One wonders if Franck chose the unusual distribution precisely because it does imply detachment. Although he used the Peters edition for this piece, it is interesting to note that the Breitkopf marks this fugue "staccato."

Example 42. Prelude and Fugue in G major (3/2), Fugue, mm. 120-21, manuals.



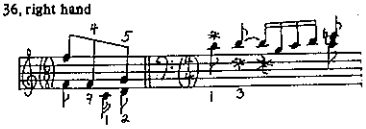

As Rollin Smith discussed in his recent TAO article about Franck's *Prière*, Franck left some verbal instructions concerning common notes: "When a note is common to several consecutive chords, it must be tied as long as it is part of the harmony."[15] Assuming that Franck would have applied this principle to the organ works of Bach as well as to the accompaniment of Gregorian chant, the series of common notes pictured in Example 38 should be tied. If by "several" Franck meant "two or more," then many of the common notes in his edition of Bach works would be tied, but if he meant "three or more," most of the common notes would remain untied.

Another aspect of French performance practice is the treatment of "false common notes," which resemble common notes in every respect except that the first note leads to a rest instead of to a different pitch. Dupré instructs that such notes are not to be tied; the first of them should be released a unit of value before the unison.[16] This rule is in accord with Franck's editing of meas. 36 of the Fugue from *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue* (Example 43a). His fingering makes tying the false common notes impractical and inelegant.

Example 43.

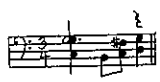
a) Fugue from Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue, m. 36, right hand

b) Prelude and Fugue in C major (9/8), Fugue, m. 60, left hand



Example 43b and one other passage from the Braille edition confirm that Franck intended false common notes to be separated, while the passage shown in Example 44 contradicts this concept, but only if one considers that true common notes should be tied.

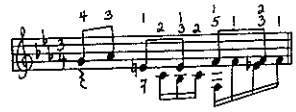
Example 44. Prelude and Fugue in C major (variant of BWV 566), Fugue, m. 181, left hand.



The half note is an extra note not found in the printed edition. In Example 43b, the rests which are crossed out represent rests which are found in the print but not in the Braille. Throughout Franck's edition, most of the occurrences of false common notes either have no fingering or one which provides no insight into this aspect of interpretation. The evidence in favor of separating false common notes certainly outweighs any information that implies tying them.

A single pitch which constitutes a common note in relation to one voice and a repeated note with respect to another should be detached, according to Dupré.[17] The repeated notes override the common notes. This situation is very rare, as one might imagine, but it does appear in one fingered passage of the Braille edition (Example 45). Franck's fingering agrees with the principle stated later by Dupré. The change from 1 to 2 during the third beat serves no useful purpose unless the note is restruck.

Example 45. Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, Fugue, m. 88, left hand.



## CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS WITHIN FRANCK'S OWN COMPOSITIONS

The Braille edition demonstrates Franck's concern for legato in Bach's music. Franck made prominent use of techniques traditionally associated with legato—substitution, finger crossing, and thumb, finger, and foot glissando—and he frequently devised elaborate fingerings which combined several of these elements. Legato playing is facilitated by most of Franck's fingerings, pedalings, and distributions of notes between the hands. One could argue that some of the finger crossings resemble early fingering, or that most of the fingerings such as 1-1 or 3-3 could be played either detached or smoothly, but it is questionable whether one could refute the testimony of those quantities of substitutions. Substitutions would be exercises in futility and wasted motion if they were not intended to produce legato. Additionally, it seems particularly significant that Franck wrote "soutenu" next to two fugue subjects which had many repeated notes, as if to counteract any temptation to continue the choppy articulation when the repeated notes ceased.

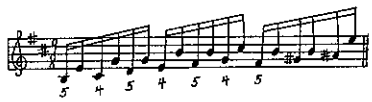
Naturally, those Franck fingerings which cannot be played legato provide some evidence against the claim of Franck's interest in legato articulation. Although such examples are relatively few in number compared to the ones which can be performed legato, they might conjure up echoes of Vierne discussing the technical reforms that Widor brought to the Conservatory organ class following the death of César Franck.[18] Franck had believed that it was more important to use class time for improvisation than for the playing of literature. Vierne reported that five of the six class bours per week were devoted to the study and practice of improvisation.[19] This decision was partly a practical one, for three fourths of the annual examinations involved improvisation. The remaining hour per week could not have been sufficient to perfect the details of technique and style in the organ playing of an entire group of students.

Surviving accounts of Franck's playing do not reveal whether he used the same style of fingering and articulation when performing his own works as he did when playing Bach.[20] However, the few fingerings and pedalings that exist among Franck's own compositions and in his edition of Alkan works do exhibit characteristics found in his Bach fingerings and pedalings. Legato had been increasing in favor since the beginning of the 19th century, and it is extremely unlikely that Franck would have wanted his own works to be played less legato than Bach's. Compared with Bach, Franck took much greater care to notate his intentions concerning articulation. Phrase marks abound in Franck's organ works. For example, almost every measure of *Choral I* inclndes all or part of a phrase mark in at least one of the voices. The thick-textured, exquisitely beautiful *Prière* has the indication "sostenuto." In the Allegro of *Grande Pièce symphonique*, one might be tempted to play the figuration lightly detached, in the manner of some French toccatas, but it bears the emphatic marking *très lié* (very legato). Franck also indicated staccato more often than Bach did, and even enjoyed superimposing staccato and legato phrases. Legato playing seems completely justified within each of Franck's phrase marks. To achieve a smooth effect, it is often necessary to employ the fingering techniques used in the Bach edition: substitution, finger glissando, passing fingers over or under each other, and "crawling" with the thumb.

The following fingered passage from *Prélude, Fugue et Variation* recalls two trends in the Bach edition, the use of a fingering pattern for sequential material and the policy of including a few reference

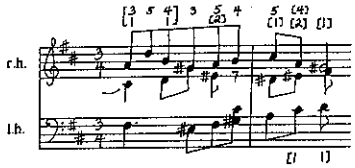
points and not cluttering the score with their obvious continuations (Example 46).

Example 46. Franck, Prélude, fugue et variation, Variation, m. 28, left hand.



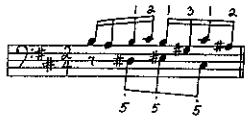
Example 47 demonstrates a contraction and a finger crossing. The notes in brackets complete the fingering in a way which would be typical of Franck's Bach edition.

Example 47. Prélude, fugue et variation, Fugue, mm. 58-59, manuals.



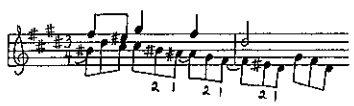

An excerpt from *Grande Pièce symphonique* gives an illustration of playing several notes non-legato with the fifth finger (Example 48).

Example 48. Grande Pièce symphonique, m. 390, left hand.



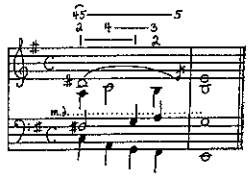
Three familiar components of the Bach edition are encountered in a fingered passage from *Prière* (Example 49): the thumb and second finger alternating under a slower-moving part, use of the thumb on a black key, and some rather awkward finger crossings. Substitutions would be appropriate in the upper part.

Example 49. Prière, mm. 189-90, right hand.



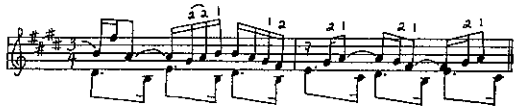
Thumb glissando, finger glissando, and substitution are demonstrated in an excerpt from a different *Prière*, from the first volume of *L'Organiste* (Example 50).[21]

Example 50. "Prière" in E minor from L'Organiste, vol. 1, mm. 23-24.



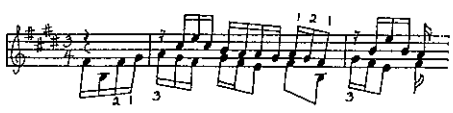
A fingered excerpt from *Pastorale* (Example 51) displays four of the characteristics observed in the Bach edition: a large reach, a finger glissando, the thumb crossing under to a black key, and the inclusion of fingerings for just one of the parts played by a particular hand.

Example 51. Pastorale, mm. 152-53, left hand.



Another passage from *Pastorale* provides additional examples of finger crossings, including two which supply the exact number of fingers needed (Example 52).

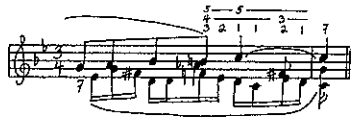
Example 52. Pastorale (Maeyens-Couvreur edition, 1868), mm. 173-75, left hand.



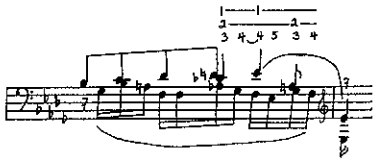
It is interesting to compare the right-hand part of meas. 174 of *Choral I* with its transposed left-hand version in meas. 186 (Example 53). One potential thumb glissando appears in each of these measures. The left-hand thumb fingering moves from a white key to a black key (a situation frequently found in the Bach works). Although it could be played smoothly, it probably should be phrased to match the earlier measure. A bona fide finger glissando from 4 to 4 takes place in meas. 186. It is marked with a small curved line in the original Durand edition (1892) and with a hyphen in the modern Durand score (1959). The 4-3 fingering between the $A^{\flat}$ and $F^{\#}$ in meas. 174 facilitates legato, but the analogous place in the later measure has a fingering of 2-2, which renders a legato connection impossible. The presence of an occasional inconsistency is another characteristic which is shared by the Braille edition. Like the fingerings in the Bach edition, Franck's fingerings for his own works show that he was concerned about legato playing without being fanatical about it.

Example 53.

a) Choral Nº 1, mm. 174-75, right hand



b) Choral Nº 1, mm. 186-87, left hand



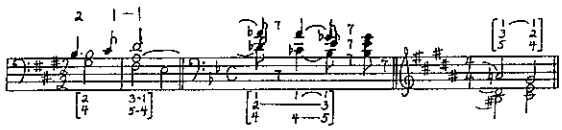
The concluding examples illustrate ways of applying information from the Bach edition to Franck's own compositions. Useful places for the four possible varieties of thumb glissando are shown in Example 54. In the last of these passages (Example 54d), the second D constitutes a common note in relation to the upper voice and a repeated note with respect to the lower. This D should be released early since, in such situations, repeated notes should predominate over common notes.

Example 54.

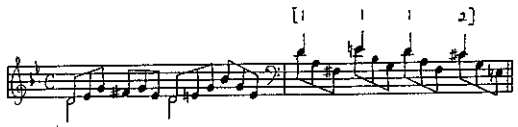
a) black key to white key, Grande Pièce symphonique, mm. 141-42, left hand

b) black key to black key, Final, m. 268, left hand

c) white key to black key, Cantabile, m. 10, left hand

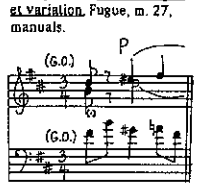


d) white key to white key, Final, mm. 74-75, left hand



The false common notes in the Fugue of *Prélude, Fugue et Variation* should be separated (Example 55).

Example 55. Prélude, fugue et variation, Fugue, m. 27, manuals.

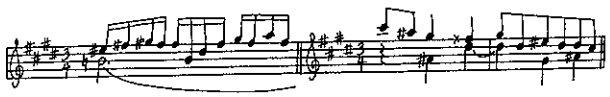


According to the evidence in Franck's Bach edition, the organist should release the sustained note shortly before the unison is reached in the following examples: (Examples 56a and 56b). French tradition teaches that a note before a rest must be held full value even if it closes a phrase mark. This belief is called into ques-

tion by the many fingerings in the Braille edition which cause notes before rests to be shortened.

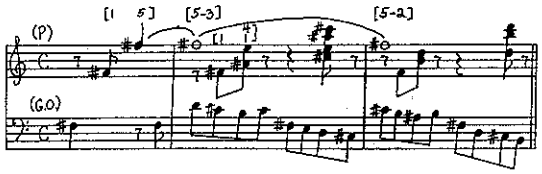
Example 56.

a) Choral Nº I, m. 78, right hand b) Prière, mm. 72-73, right hand



Multiple substitutions on a single note are mandatory in Example 57.

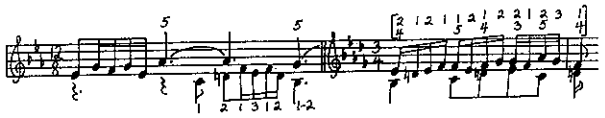
Example 57. Final, mm. 230-32, manuals.



Franck's fingering for meas. 86 of Bach's E-flat-major Fugue demonstrates passagework with the thumb crossed under (Example 58a). This technique is effective in meas. 189–90 of Franck's E-major *Choral* (Example 58b).

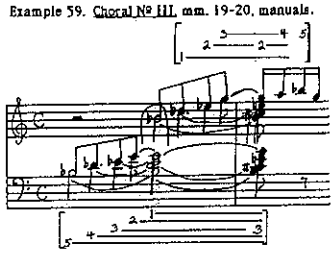
Example 58.

a) Bach, Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, Fugue, m. 86, right hand b) Franck, Choral Nº I, mm. 189-90, left hand



One finger glissando in each hand facilitates the performance of a phrase from the A-minor *Choral* (Example 59).

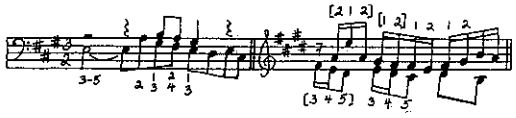
Example 59. Choral Nº III, mm. 19-20, manuals.



In "O Lamm Gottes" (Example 60a), the left thumb moves to G♯ by crossing under the second finger. This fingering could be applied to a similar example from *Pastorale* (Example 60b; the fingerings not enclosed by brackets are actually Franck's).

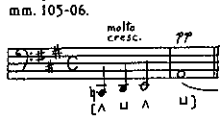
Example 60.

a) Bach, "O Lamm Gottes," m. 25, left hand b) Franck, Pastorale, m. 176, left hand



On the Sainte-Clotilde organ, the swell shutters were activated by a hitch-down pedal located far toward the right end of the console.[22] Clearly, many pedal intervals would have to have been relegated to the left foot alone. Franck's technique of performing melodic fourths and fifths with the same foot would have been particularly useful in such instances (see Example 61).

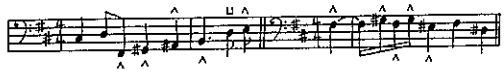
Example 61. Choral Nº III, mm. 105-06.



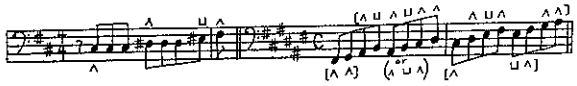
The Braille edition provides some ideas for pedaling the beginning of the F-sharp-major section of *Grande Pièce symphonique* (see Example 62). Although, in the Bach works, Franck studiously avoided pedal substitution on black keys, there seems to be no way to circumvent it in the concluding run of *Grande Pièce symphonique*.

Example 62.

a) Fugue in B minor (BWV 579), mm. 9-10 b) Prelude and Fugue in D major, Fugue, mm. 72-73

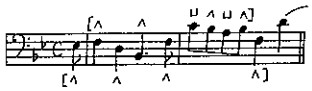


c) Fugue in B minor, mm. 13-14 d) Grande Pièce symphonique, mm. 473-74



The final example suggests an appropriate place for the left foot to cross behind the right in a wide leap upward (Example 63). The organist will be able to devise additional ways of applying fingering and pedaling techniques from the Bach edition to Franck's own organ music.

Example 63. Final, mm. 14-16.



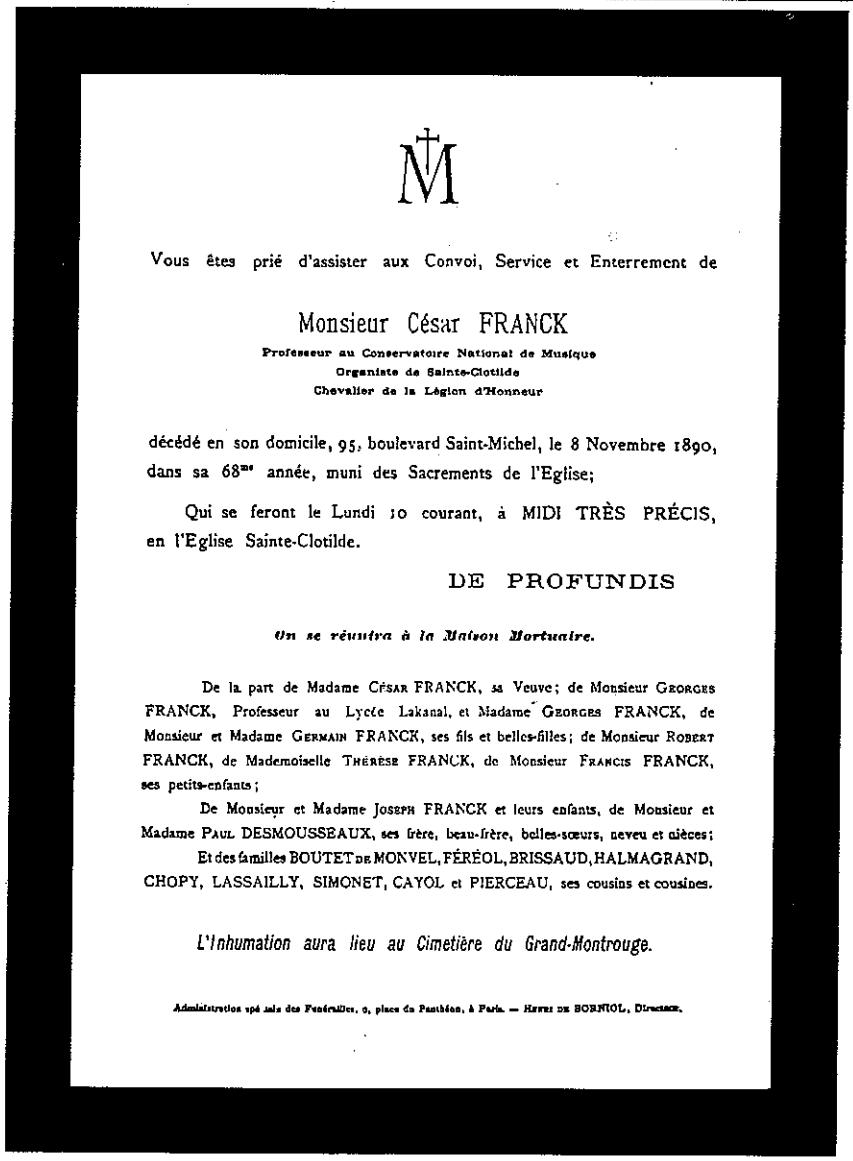
In a time and place far distant from ours, Franck's Braille edition brought Bach masterpieces to blind organists such as Louis Vierne and Albert Mahaut. Reaching into our own time, this edition provides fresh insights into Franck as a teacher and organist.

NOTES

1. See pp. 11–13 for a discussion of other mysterious aspects of the first volume of the Braille edition.
2. The present author was unable to examine the French Peters edition and wonders if it might differ slightly from the German edition and actually contain these phrasings. Franck was generally very faithful to Bach's text.
3. Charles Tournemire, *Précis d'éxécution, de registration et d'improvisation à l'orgue* (Paris: Max Eschig, 1936), p. 33.
4. J.S. Bach, ed. Marcel Dupré, *Oeuvres Complètes* pour Orgue, Vol. 1 (Paris: Bornemann, 1938), p. 41.
5. Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens, *École d'orgue* (Mayence: B. Schott & Söhne, 1862), revised by Eugène Cigout (Paris: Durand, 1920), pp. 45, 48.
6. Bernd Scherers, *Studien zur Orgelmusik der Schüler César Francks*, Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung, Vol. 138 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1984), pp. 75–76.
7. Lemmens, p. III.
8. Ibid.
9. Rollin Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, The Juilliard Performance Guides, No. 1 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), p. 35, n. 68; citing Norbert Dufourcq, *La musique d'orgue française de Jehan Titelouze à Jehan Alain*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librairie Floury, 1949), p. 151.
10. See Lemmens, p. III; Marcel Dupré, *Méthode d'Orgue* (Paris: Leduc, 1927), pp. 5 and 8.
11. Charles-Marie Widor, "Preface," *Jean-Sébastien Bach—Oeuvres complètes pour orgue*, Vol. I (New York: G. Schirmer, 1914), pp. v–vi; cited by Rollin Smith, "Playing the Organ Works of César Franck, I—Introduction and *Fantaisie* in C," *The American Organist*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan. 1990), p. 57.
12. Tournemire, *Précis*, p. 18.
13. Alexandre Guilmant, "La Musique d'Orgue," *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, Deuxième Partie (Paris: Delagrave, 1926), p. 1157; Louis Vierne, "Renseignements Généraux pour l'Interprétation de l'Oeuvre d'Orgue de J.-S. Bach" (Paris: Sénart, 1923), p. v; both cited by Smith, "Playing the Organ Works of César Franck, I," p. 57.
14. Dupré, *Méthode*, p. 64; Jean Langlais and Marie-Louise Jaquet-Langlais, *Méthode d'Orgue* (Paris: Combre, 1984), p. 1.
15. César Franck, preface to his organ accompaniment of Louis Lambillotte's *Chant grégorien* (1858); cited by Rollin Smith, "Playing the Organ Works of César Franck, V—Prière," *The American Organist*, Vol. 24, No. 5 (May 1990), p. 296.
16. See Dupré, *Méthode*, p. 65, rule XI, third example. Dupré's organ method is enormously useful in studying the interpretation of French music. With his characteristic attention to detail, he codified performance practices that had been in use for decades.
17. Dupré, *Méthode*, p. 67.
18. See Louis Vierne, *Mes Souvenirs*, Cahiers et mémoires de l'orgue, No. 134 bis (1970), pp. 28–30, 33–37.
19. Vierne, *Mes Souvenirs*, p. 23.
20. Actually, Franck is only known to have performed one Bach work in public, an E-minor Prelude and Fugue (Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation*, p. 26).
21. This example is taken from the original edition (Paris: Enoch, 1896). Presumably, the fingerings are Franck's.
22. Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation*, p. 50.

# APPROACHING FRANCK'S ORGAN WORKS FROM WITHIN
## CONSIDERATIONS ON INTERPRETATION

Kurt Lueders



M

Vous êtes prié d'assister aux Convoi, Service et Enterrement de

Monsieur César FRANCK

Professeur au Conservatoire National de Musique
Organiste de Sainte-Clotilde
Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur

décédé en son domicile, 95, boulevard Saint-Michel, le 8 Novembre 1890, dans sa 68me année, muni des Sacrements de l'Eglise;

Qui se feront le Lundi 10 courant, à MIDI TRÈS PRÉCIS, en l'Eglise Sainte-Clotilde.

DE PROFUNDIS

*On se réunira à la Maison Mortuaire.*

De la part de Madame César FRANCK, sa Veuve; de Monsieur Georges FRANCK, Professeur au Lycée Lakanal, et Madame Georges FRANCK, de Monsieur et Madame Germain FRANCK, ses fils et belles-filles; de Monsieur Robert FRANCK, de Mademoiselle Thérèse FRANCK, de Monsieur Francis FRANCK, ses petits-enfants;

De Monsieur et Madame Joseph FRANCK et leurs enfants, de Monsieur et Madame Paul DESMOUSSEAUX, ses frère, beau-frère, belles-sœurs, neveu et nièces;

Et des familles BOUTET DE MONVEL, FÉRÉOL, BRISSAUD, HALMAGRAND, CHOPY, LASSAILLY, SIMONET, CAYOL et PIERCEAU, ses cousins et cousines.

*L'Inhumation aura lieu au Cimetière du Grand-Montrouge.*

Administration spéciale des Funérailles, 9, place du Panthéon, à Paris. — Henri de BORNIOL, Directeur.

**Funeral notice for César Franck**

*There is nothing arbitrary about expression; its phenomena recur under the dominion of a law as do all natural phenomena.*
Mathis Lussy, 1874[1]

Like Bach before him and Messiaen after him, César Franck crystallized the potential of an entire century in organ music while transcending that very century's conventions. He is rightfully the most popular and universally performed 19th-century organ composer, and many listeners know every note of his great twelve pieces by heart. This familiarity, added to Franck's belonging to the "Romantics," leads performers to seek ways of avoiding "straight" performance of his music, even more than with the music of Bach, and therein lies a danger. Our era particularly associates the idea of romanticism with that of sentimentality, to the detriment of other, ultimately more potent but perhaps less palpable spiritual currents that the term implies. It is precisely because Franck's music is so powerful that it has no need of external "sentiment."

I will never forget some years ago hearing a well-known teacher counsel a pupil—of some accomplishment—to "just let himself go." The memory of those words (and of their predictably inconclusive results) has been intensified as I became increasingly convinced that this approach is contrary to the nature of the material. The "loosening up" teachers naturally and rightfully attempt to achieve in their pupils must come from within the music. If it is imposed from the outside, a certain degree of novelty may indeed be attained, and a totally static rendition avoided. But it will not yield an organically sound performance, gripping from beginning to end and—as with any great work of art—reflecting ultimately the totality of life.

We must proceed as if every measure of Franck concealed enough potency, enough musical DNA so to speak, to power the entire piece. Hence, we can only interpret Franck once we have painstakingly unlocked the innumerable elements his genius offers us. What a contrast with "letting oneself go!"

As a paradigm of the process, no image could be more telling than the description we have of Franck himself at the organ: not the passionate *enfant terrible* launching headlong into rhapsodic effu-

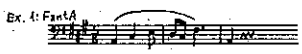
sion, nor the solitary rêveur immersing himself in some languorous idyll, but the serenely intense, decades-mature master, elbow resting in one hand while the fingers of the other pensively tap the forehead, all in silent preconstruction of the edifice shortly to rise up. We, as his musical advocates, may spend years figuratively "tapping our foreheads," but the profits will more than repay the investment.

Once the internal riches have been made accessible, the essential difficulty of Franck interpretation comes to the fore: how, out of so very many precious stones, can we build up a noble monument whose whole is yet greater than the sum of its parts? If any building block is too prominent, or not cut exactly to shape, the coherence and equilibrium of the structure will suffer. Here, musicality—which cannot really be described or quantified or even conveniently taught—will play its full role: not as inventor but at once as catalyst and as governor.

No utterance from the past concerning Franck's conception of organ playing so stimulates the imagination as does Adolph Marty's assertion about the difficulty of imagining how very freely Franck played. To draw any direct conclusions from this statement, we would need to be familiar with the way performances both by Marty and by the musicians he was addressing normally sounded. In any case, having an idea of "how freely Franck played" does not automatically help us to know "how Franck played freely." We would surely be wrong to interpret the liberties taken by Franck exclusively as arbitrary, spontaneous, "Romantic" deviations from norms. The power with which he kept his listeners and disciples in his sway more strongly suggests an uncanny ability to invent or emphasize tensions and novel combinations within the music without overstepping the bounds of taste. Need today's organist look any further?

The range of conceptions in the interpretation of Franck's music may be illustrated by recorded performances by Marcel Dupré and Jean Guillou. To most listeners Dupré projects a primary goal of playing the notes and adhering to a strict tempo. His edition of Franck codifies these priorities, twisting the notation and registrations into an ostensibly rational mold, perhaps as a reaction against the rhapsodic, mystical-oriented "Tournemire tradition."

Although Guillou stops short of changing the order and pitches of the notes, his conception emphasizes the irrational in tempo, dynamics, and registration. If Dupré seems at first hearing to have no interpretation in mind, Guillou goes well beyond interpretation into the realm of improvisation and transcription. The grandiose opening of the A-major Fantasy, evoking a broad unison of orchestral strings to which the woodwinds reply, is "metronomized" by one player into a mathematical sequence and "fantasized" by the other into an irrational one:

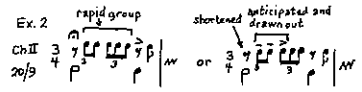



Dupré's results tend toward and perhaps strive for the totally predictable; Guillou's vision of Franck thrives on the totally unpredictable.

It will be easy to deduce this writer's feeling as to how much these conceptions are appropriate to Franck's style; the purpose of describing them briefly is not to imply a "right" or a "wrong" way to play Franck, but to suggest the extreme approaches that highly respected organists of the past and present have taken. My personal conviction is that Franck is inherently a perennially modern genius; as such, he does not need avant-garde, expressionistic "replenishment" but does deserve more than an objective "execution," as the French say. Every performer must face the corresponding choices.

The exterior elements which Franck's organ music needs to be most effective are timbre and acoustics. Without these, it can still be eloquent, but will necessarily speak with an accent. Also, having the feel of playing action similar to those Franck knew is a considerable advantage. The rest is in the scores themselves and, to a lesser extent, in the performance style of the day. This article will describe some of these interior elements and thereby suggest alternatives to "tradition" or "sentiment" in achieving effectiveness. While there is no single ideal performance of Franck's works, there are performance ideals, and the principles set forth below are intended to further those ideals. Rollin Smith in his ongoing series on the individual works has amply provided the appropriate historical and technical insights into the twelve standard masterpieces taken individually. Here we will be dealing with traits occurring throughout Franck's production, present not only in the era of the Three Chorals but already in that of the "Fourth Choral" (as the *Fantasy in A* is sometimes referred to) and reaching back even to the time of what I like to call the "Fifth Choral" (the *Prière*).[2]

To emphasize the non-dogmatic nature of the observations below, one could point to countless passages that offer two diametrically opposite, yet equally plausible if not equally convincing realizations. (The analogy of a single genotype versus varied phenotypes is appropriate here.) Take the first impassioned chords of the B-minor Choral: they obviously may not be played flatly, lest the effect be pedestrian (the passacaglia form notwithstanding) instead of breathtaking. Their dramatization may be conveyed in at least two ways:



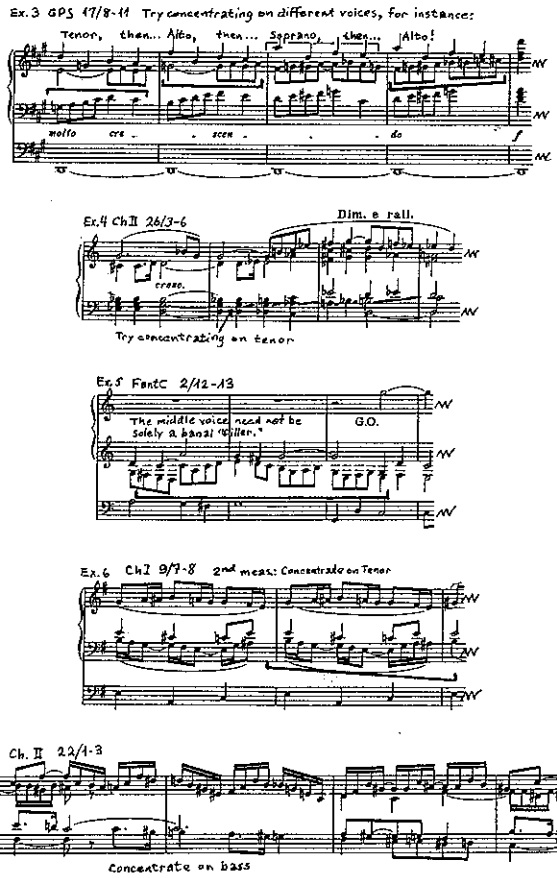

What is crucial is not exactly how the chords are declaimed but whether the player succeeds in disassociating them from the unwavering theme in the bass.

In the *Pièce héroïque* a transition must be effected between the serene middle section and the return to the agitated, heroic theme (26/14–17). Many players convincingly apply a rallentando; but an intense stringendo has just as many advantages. To others still, Franck has written in enough coutrast to make any further intensifying superfluous.

The point is that there is no single "correct interpretation." However, the player must be able to recognize and feel those components of the music which need his services as a translator.

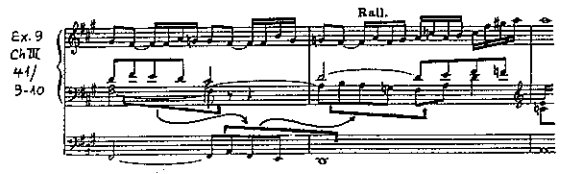
* * * *

Like all great Romantic masters Franck was an expert polyphonist. (The fact that his polyphony is not Bachian only underlines the achievement.) Hence, the most ubiquitous and accessible source of life in Franck's organ music—and the most regularly neglected—emanates from the inner voices. They are usually hidden to the listener until the performer brings them out, somewhat in the same way a fine museum guide brings to life a painting by discreetly calling attention to certain details. Most problems of timing and proportion in the shaping of solo lines can be resolved by concentrating on the inner voices or the bass and suspending the foreground line on their rhythmic impetus.

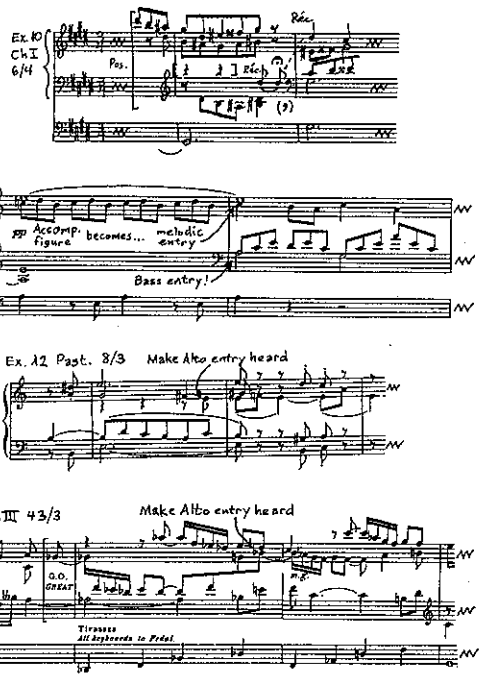



*Ex. 8 PH 24/20 ff. listen to tenor; 25/14–17 alto line*

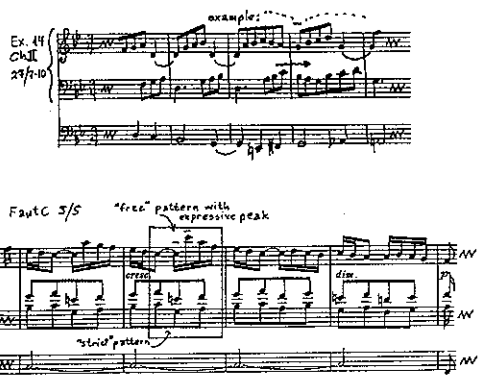
In the otherwise neutral-appearing accompaniment Franck hides countermotifs and imitations that can give great additional enjoyment, provided the performer is aware of them and provides just a nudge of emphasis.

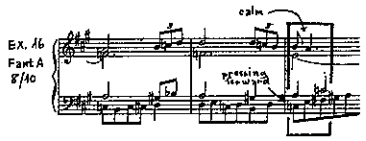



Since we too often hear Franck's textures chordally, many eloquent entrances are lost, swallowed up in the richness of the harmonies. Treating these entries polyphonically means signaling them to the listener as separate voices; ideally, the player should revel in essentially the same satisfaction as the choral or orchestral conductor giving cues to each part after sharing its rest counting. Indeed, the conductor's subtle gestures can be translated directly into gestures of rhythmic elasticity at the organ. One of the ways to bring out the best in Franck is to imagine oneself before a symphony orchestra.



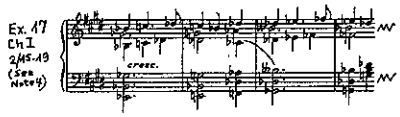

Franck's polyphony usually transcends note-against-note counterpoint and juxtaposes various rhythmic characters. An accomplished pianist more than a trained organist,[3] Franck cannot have failed to treat the polyphonic lines in a pianistic way, with independent declamation rather than perfect vertical rigidity. The acoustical "reservoir" of the French churches and the liquid feel of Barker-lever action favored this. Search for passages with at least two simultaneous melodic phrase structures (especially irregular vs. regular rhythms), and you will likely discover as many occasions for delicate give-and-take.



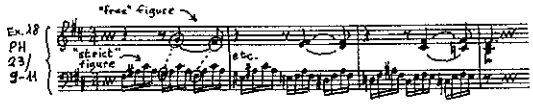




The key here—and only thus may the Pandora's box of poor taste be held shut—is once again the injunction that such freedom must come from within the music. Never "Where can I apply rubato," but rather "What do these lines want to say individually, and how can I translate each optimally?" If the answer to the first part of the question yields an apparent conflict of interests, the "interpreter" may either force one or both lines to conform to the beat, or let them unfold naturally, each scanning in its own way. Because of the number of subtle ways each phrase may be declaimed, not to mention the infinite combinations possible among lines thus juxtaposed, this is perhaps the richest source of individuality in Franck performance. It goes without saying that the borderline between natural elasticity and mere sloppy ensemble playing must always be skewed in favor of the former: if the listener has even a half-conscious inkling of "what is going on," then of course all is lost and translation becomes parody. A useful rule of thumb, then: rubato is not a matter of premeditated rhythmic modification, but the unforced, indeed almost unconscious result of deep polyphonic comprehension on the part of the player.

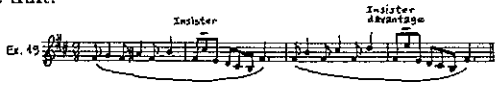
One of Franck's most extraordinary polyphonic "finds" might be termed false parallel octaves: are there two voices or really just one?




The principle of deceptive parallelism can sometimes be extended to other passages that, although not melodically contrapuntal on paper, present rhythmic or character contrasts suggesting freedom of delivery impossible to notate. It is usually a "simple" matter of not automatically tying down a melody to its accompaniment.




The melodic structure in Franck will often provide the point of departure for generating naturally expressive playing. Tournemire has given the seminal example of the composer's quintessential melodic trait:[5]




The same principle governs numerous other motifs:

***Ex. 20 Past 6/7–9***

***Ex. 21 PFV 53/15–18***

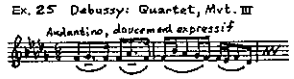
***Ex. 22 FantA 14/4–7***

***Ex. 23 ChII 23/7–8***

The process can be inverted as well:

***Ex. 24 Final 33/19–24/1***

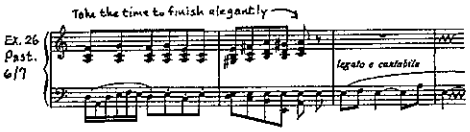
The Tournemire expression "*insister*" better captures the gesture than the idea of accent or prolongation. Note quality, not note quantity, is the key word, and the best model to aim for may be the vibrant intensity in singing or string playing.




As Maurice Duruflé in particular was fond of pointing out, the intense quality of the peak note never comes from leaning on it once played but from giving it a firm pedestal in the preceding note ("breath support" in vocal terms). This means actually taking a little time before the leap, which in turn seems to soar effortlessly.

Another area in which rhythm must not be rigid is at phrase endings. Metrically on the page, the notes advance inexorably, but musically it is surprising how much objective leeway is given to the player. It takes almost caricatured lengthening of the final note of a

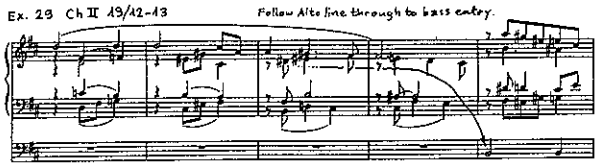
phrase before the listener perceives any unnatural exaggeration. And conceivably even that is not musically as distasteful as a chopped phrase ending. (Choir directors know this phenomenon well.)

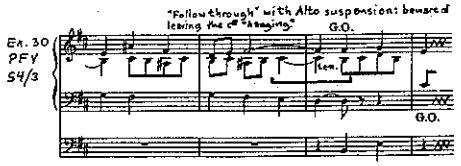


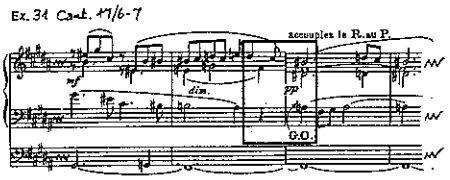

*Ex. 27 ChII 29/8*

*Ex. 28 FantA 8/2*

The player should also be aware of subtle elisions and hidden carryovers at phrase junctions, in order not to truncate a larger phrase just because its continuity doesn't meet the eye or lie automatically under the fingers.



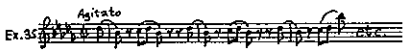




*Ex. 32 ChI 15/17 ff*

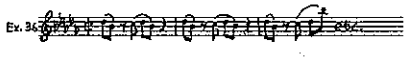
*Ex. 33 GPS 30/1–2, 34/7–8*

*Ex. 34 FantA 11/16–17, 12/4–5*

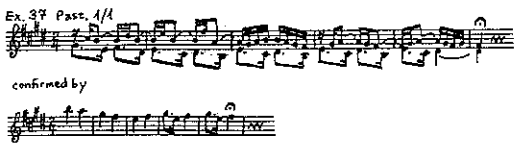
Rhythm and meter obviously fascinated Franck, and they ought to fascinate the player of his organ music. Seldom is he plain and straightforward in this realm, although it is easy to make him seem so. I am reminded of Nadia Boulanger's story of hearing for years what she felt to be a somewhat banal theme by Chopin:




until the day an exceptional pianist revealed its true passionate visage:

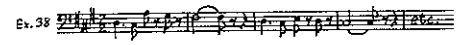



Similarly, how many listeners must find the Franck *Pastorale* theme pretty, perhaps, but rhythmically bland, inert? Try the blindfold dictation test on your non-organist listeners: you will invariably get



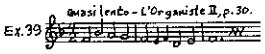

Yet the notation clearly gives a different configuration of stress which, when respected and "catalyzed" by the player, automatically breathes life into the melody and facilitates carrying out the Franckian principle of expanding intervals.

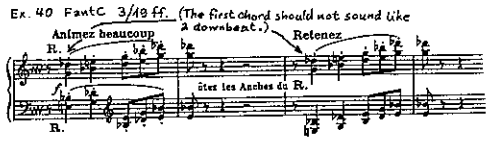
Rare as well is the organist who succeeds in serving up the allegro from the *Grande Pièce symphonique* otherwise than




Not that rhythmic ambiguity cannot be a productive tool, used appropriately, but there had better be a good reason for letting the listener perceive a different basic stress pattern than the one chosen and notated with care by the composer.

Other Franck passages pose this same problem of translating the metric structure and intonation unambiguously.[6]



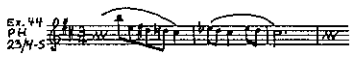

Franck makes frequent use of hemiolas, sometimes veiled, such that the player is given the option of unveiling them partially or fully, or not at all.

*Ex. 41 PFV 2: interpretations of 47/3–4, 48/1–2, etc.; end of fugue (traditional cadential formula)*

*Ex. 42 Pr. 20/2–3*

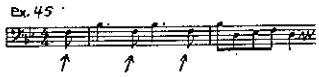
*Ex. 43 PH 29/16–17*

"Thinking hemiola" can cure one of the most redoubtable afflictions to plague dull Franck performances: the senseless repeating of identically recurring motifs or rhythms. A passage such as

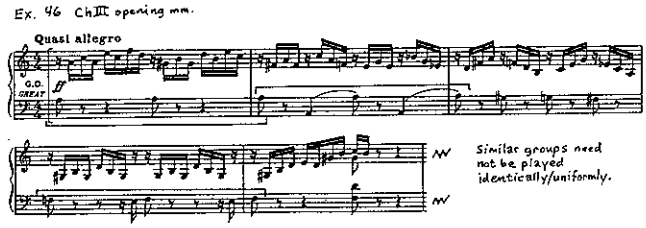



sounds, let's face it, just plain boring as notated. Applying the hemiola, however, provides the player with any number of plausible emphasis sequences that can turn the passage into a poignant one. A similar situation arises in the A-major Fantasy (8/12–15). Let us stress that the "veiled hemiola option" is anything but a rule, the example of the *Pastorale* showing how it can be counterproductive if wrongly used. Rhythmic variety must admittedly be generated by the player. It does not result as directly from comprehension of the score as do the other aspects of Franck's organistic language discussed here, but may be inferred from those very aspects.

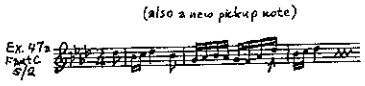
Rhetorical differentiation of dotted rhythms in particular is a limitless tool. For example, without it the first theme of the *Final* can come across as pedantic and unimaginative.




The eighth-note pickups, though, are subject to an infinite variety ranging from double-dotted/heroic through metronomic to vibrantly singing. Only the notes on the page try to convince us that they must all be identical.




A similar case of identical-looking notes hiding dissimilar functions/intentions occurs in melismatic lines whose internal structure is lost to the listener if the performer lets them spin forth without punctuation.



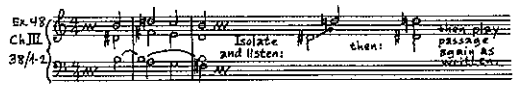

A minimal *tenuto*—the contrary of an interruption—suffices to point out the junction.


Repetition, whether within the *grandes lignes* or of small motifs, clearly constitutes a major problem in transmitting Franck's message, because the inner strivings of the music do not show themselves readily. Once, while conversing with one of the major French interpreters of 19th-century music, I mentioned how much pleasure I had recently had in working on and working out the *Final*. How taken aback I was at his reply: "Oh, I'm not interested in playing that piece, there's too much redundancy [*redites*]." True enough, if we let the objective score rule the day. The words of Vladimir de Pachmann, although applying to chordal passages in Chopin, extend fully to the characteristics of Franck's organ music that we have been considering:

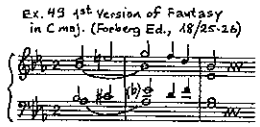
> Often the same passage . . . is repeated several times in a given piece. Such passages should never be rendered in exactly the same way each time . . . Such effects . . . are arrived at by careful thought and study, but they often transform passages that would otherwise be comparatively uninteresting into bars of great beauty and attractiveness.[7]

After the melodic, polyphonic, and rhythmic elements of Franck's *écriture* we may turn to the most obvious of all, the harmony. To be sure, the harmonic richness suffices to make the music impressive, without enhancement by the player; but by the same token, what a wealth of possibilities for tasteful, organic, and stylistically consistent individualization. Each performer will be sensitive to this or that harmonic hue, flavor, or turn, perhaps even from performance to performance. Yet how often do we hear uniform, even routine renditions, as if taking for granted the stunning combinations Franck has engendered. Another valuable precept of Maurice Duruflé is pertinent here: If the player listens intently to the aspect he wants to bring out while he is performing, the audience will perceive it as well. This is one of those self-evident truths that one can spend a lifetime learning to penetrate in practice.

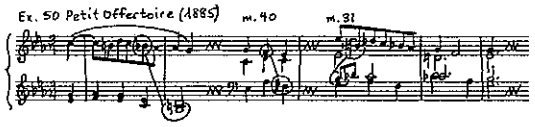
Consider the passages in which Franck goes against the classical rules of harmony. There is perhaps little of note to be drawn out of the parallel fifths, except that they must not sound matter-of-fact and thereby "wrong." Cross relationships, on the other hand, harbor ample potential for intensification. If you have never felt the harmonic daring of the A-minor Choral theme, begin by isolating the exquisite cross relationship in the middle:

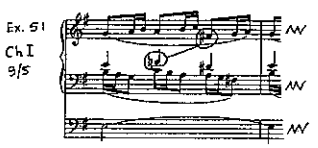


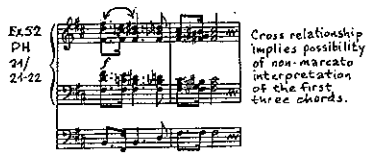

then reintegrate it into the progression: the entire character of the passage may seem transformed, in which case you will never again be able just to glide over the spot. Incidentally, Franck had "discovered" the basic procedure more than 30 years before:

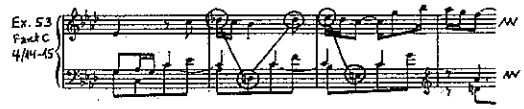


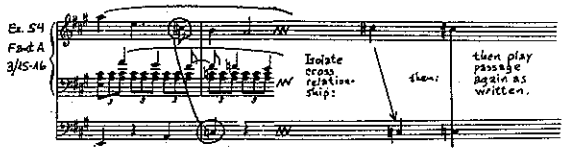

Some of the many other passages that demand the performer's sensitivity to cross relationships (perhaps after isolating them in the way illustrated above):



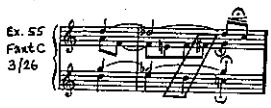




Franck revels in the "*frottement*" or grating of chromatic pairs sounded together, in the manner of Schumann. The listener, however, will not revel in anything in particular if not led to do so by the player. (Dwell heavily on these when learning or practicing the piece, in order to be able to do it imperceptibly in performance.)



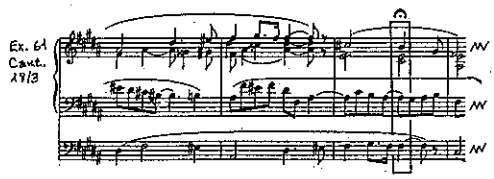

***Ex. 56 FantA 2/9, isolate 6/8–9***

***Ex. 57, 58 FantA 10/2!!, 10/8–10***

***Ex. 59 Cant. 16/2 as opposed to 16/4; 17/12–15***

***Ex. 60 PH 26/11, 13***

The *Cantabile* is a study in this technique and poses a great challenge indeed to the player's sense of taste, so laden is the texture with intense dissonances. Pause from time to time at the most poignant spots to admire Franck's daring:




***Ex. 62 ChI 15/10–11***

Franck makes use of major-minor contrasts in a Schubertian way. Some are passing variations and call only for slight intensification or drawing out.

***Ex. 63 FantC 1/9–12***

***Ex. 64 Pr. 19/4–5 etc. (modulatory function)***

***Ex. 65 PFV 49/9–10***

Others set off major structural articulations and can transform the entire composition. The most obvious case—and one further example of Franck's bold originality—is the A-major Fantasy which reverses the usual minor-major progression and ends in minor. The performer who keeps this stunning innovation in his ear from the start of the piece on enjoys a much better chance of captivating the listener than the performer who "just lets it happen." The major-minor ambiguity is set up from the beginning (1/5–8) and incarnated in the daring A–C–E–G configuration of the second theme (3/3 ff.), superimposing major chords on a minor accompaniment.

Every turn from minor to major, and all the more from major to minor, should take on added significance and enjoy added attention in this piece, because it reflects the larger structure.

Elsewhere sudden, unexpected shifts from major to minor may—or should—have the effect of flying into a storm front, or out of one.

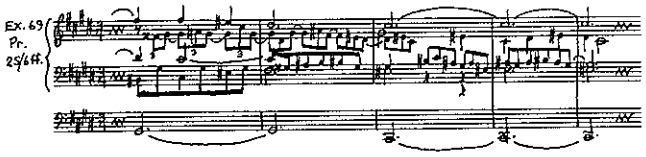
***Ex. 66 PII 26/2***

In Franck's most telling passage of this type he adds the reed tone at the same time as the shift in mode; if the player furthermore "shifts gears" in tempo and legato, brusquely intensifying the mood, the effect can be overwhelming.

***Ex. 68 ChII 28/1***

In the *Prière*, a passage of sheer exaltation, carrying the main theme in triumphant major mode, is brutally broken off by a minor-mode "return to reality" (25/6–7). The similarity to the end of Act

II, Scene 2, of *Tristan und Isolde* is uncanny to say the least when one considers that the two compositions are nearly exact contemporaries and that Wagner and Franck could hardly have been aware of each other's work. Imagine for a moment the *Prière* with a "conventional" ending, say:




Conceivably the listener may be led to think this is the course the piece will take, and in fact, this expectation will enhance the abrupt swerve into the minor: the "exalted" section, comparable to the gradual buildup behind a dam, yields to a surprise release of tension like the breaking of the dam—or like Brangaene's scream. Of course, it is possible to run through the passage with no element of surprise, and it will not sound wrong. But Franck in fact *makes* something go wrong, as it were, and the listener should know it.

At times one has no advance idea whether a passage is going to wind up in major or in minor; it is then within the domain of the player to maintain the suspense by slight but intentional rhythmic wavering.

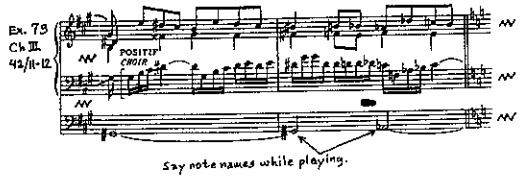
***Ex. 70 ChIII 41/11–42/1; 43/11–44/1***

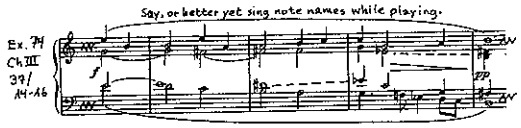
Of course, the unexpected turn can be in the direction of the major mode, which can have a delightful effect, either whimsical or suddenly radiant.

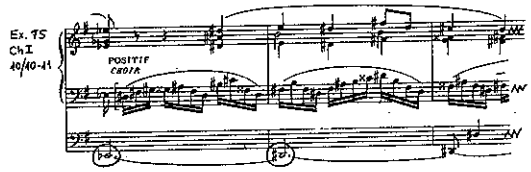
***Ex. 71 Past. 10/3–4***

***Ex. 72 ChI 9/5–8***

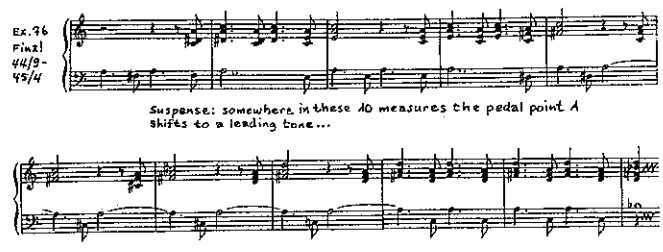
Enharmonic changes—except for simple respelling of sharp key/flat key shifts (PH 27/2–3; GPS 45/3–4; FantC 7/3–4; ChI 10/10–11)—must not be overlooked or taken for granted in Franck. They are a prime internal motor of the music and thus energize many an otherwise staid progression; but the player has to make them felt. Remember that the French musician, having been trained from childhood to say the note names of anything he plays, actually hears two different note identities while pressing the same key. Optimally the listener should hear them, too.




A shift in function is not always accompanied by an enharmonic change and is then not visible at all.




Depending on how the passage is played, it can come across as highly suspenseful—or as mere thumb twiddling. But if the latter happens it shouldn't be chalked up to the composer's lack of imagination.

It would be as pretentious as it would be futile to attempt to enumerate all the brilliant modulations and harmonic combinations in Franck that merit the player's special attention. It is, however, rewarding to seek out those chord types and progressions that run throughout his production and constitute the strokes of his musical signature. Being moved by these because they are Franck hallmarks and "*enfants chéris*" will better carry their beauty across to the listener. An example is the dominant seventh chord with raised fifth or anticipating sixth: regardless of function the sound is very Franckian:

***Ex. 77 PFV 53/19–20, 55/16***

***Ex. 78 Final 39/1***

***Ex. 79 FantA 4/2***

***Ex. 80 GPS 35/22–23***

***Ex. 81 FantC 13/5***

***Ex. 82 ChII 24/9***

***Ex. 83 Andantino mm. 56 ff.***

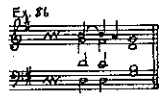
A special variant:

***Ex. 84 Cant. 15/5***

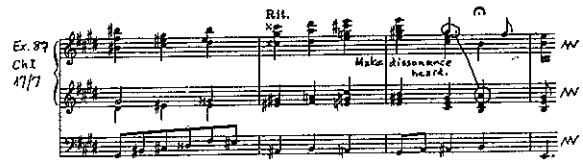
. . . and the most breathtaking example:

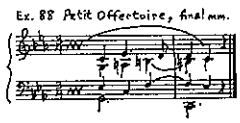
***Ex. 85 Pr. 22/10***

Franck's frequent use of the standard cadential formula

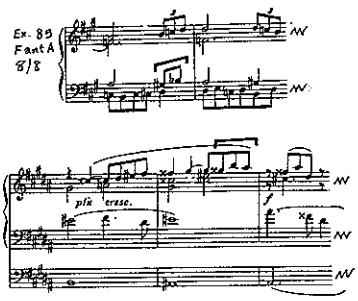


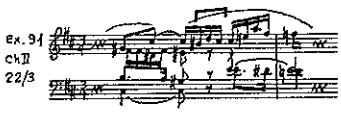

or its variants, should not be taken as license to gloss over it as routine and therefore negligible: it deserves to be accorded all the honors of its *bel canto* pedigree. Thus, taking a little extra time with these progressions can only be in the Franck spirit.



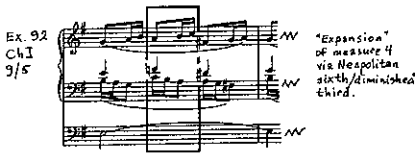




Straddling the categories of harmony and of melodic ornamentation we find the diminished third, usually with something more than a supporting role to play. Emphasizing all these intervals, attractive as they may be, would be overbearing, but the player can often use them to add buoyancy to a passage that needs unobtrusive broadening.

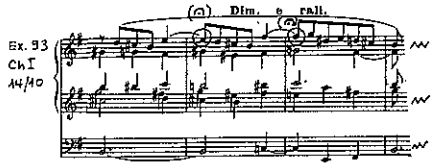





Neapolitan sixth harmonies, a corollary of diminished thirds, play a constant role. Just labeling them in the score will increase the player's sensitivity and awareness concerning them.

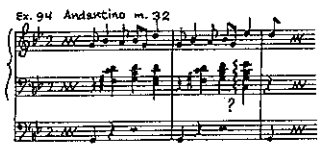



And what to say about the composer's supple use of suspensions—especially lower suspensions—most of whose import is usually lost to the audience?

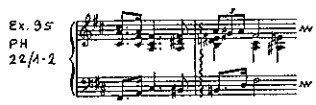



Each player will make personal discoveries, emphasizing one aspect or the other of Franck's harmonic style. Common to all players should be the isolating of passages they find gripping, enabling them to penetrate and then to bring out their secret poignancy. The organist does not have expressive means such as differentiated intensity among the voices, momentary tone color nuances, and vibrato at his disposal. Swell box dynamics are an indispensable aid, but when used alone for emphasis they tend to be too crass for the effect desired.[8] Here again, the expression does not come from within the music but is imposed from outside. More promising are the possibilities of differentiated articulation,[9] but most of Franck's lines call for legato touch. Articulation tends more to produce accent than vibrancy. The answer, then, lies in rhythm and timing, in intensifying, *en insistant*, by giving extra weight in time to the crucial harmonic syllables, so to speak. This does emerge from the very heart of the music, and the ear can readily absorb the resulting freedom.

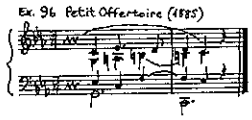
From time to time knowledge of certain elements of period performance style can aid in finding an appropriate expression for recalcitrant passages. For example, we know from Maurice Emmanuel[10] that Franck used pianistic arpeggiations in organ playing, as did surely many of his contemporaries. Provided it remains both extremely sparing and subtle, the technique can aid in stretching difficult chords,



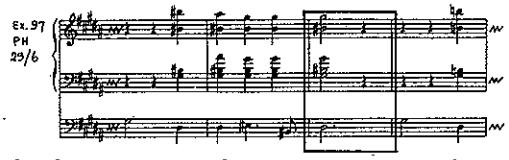

or even in realizing otherwise difficult emphasis in vertical textures, a kind of "chordal rubato."




Similarly, we know that 19th-century organists had a habit of holding the bass note of a final chord beyond the cutoff,[11] sometimes writing it into the score.




This is not to say by any means that adopting the same practice is appropriate today, let alone essential to the musical effectiveness of the repertoire, but knowing about it we may be less prone to read an "illogical" notational error into a passage such as




This brief incursion into the vast territory of performance practice shows that Franck interpretation at the organ is a many-sided affair. The serious performer may not neglect any of its facets. Nevertheless, the deciding factor between a good performance and an outstanding one—and this is no different with Hofhaimer, Bach, or Ligeti—will always remain that undefinable quality, musicianship, and its corollary, good taste. The principles touched on in this article should be seen as incentives and catalysts for the sensitive player, not as an exposé of methods. The recommendation for isolating exceptional moments when preparing the performance should help to get a grip on the material, but does not directly imply what to do with it. "When?" and "why?" are the questions asked here, rather than "how?," which cannot be adequately rendered in words anyway. What has been suggested remains in the realm of objectivity; the subjective intuition and personality of each player is only a further source of richness. Mathis Lussy's assertion that expression is subject to a law will be disconcerting to some. But he is only trying to increase the effectiveness of interpretation by circumventing counterproductive arbitrariness. In our world there cannot be freedom without laws; by the same token laws without freedom are fruitless constraint. So it is with playing Franck. There is no exhausting the expressive potential of Franck's organ music, and many further principles and refinements could be set forth.

Indeed, having gone through the necessarily limited examples presented here, every reader who exclaims, "Didn't he even think of . . . ?," already means another victory for the most profound organ composer of the 19th century.

NOTES

1. Mathis Lussy: *Traité de l'Expression Musicale* (Paris, Heugel, 1874), p. 2, quoted from the third revised edition (1877) and translated by the present author.
2. In this article the Twelve Pieces will be referred to in the musical examples by the following abbreviations: FantC, GPS, PFV, Past., Pr., Final, FantA, Cant., PH, ChI, ChII, and ChIII. Indications of measure numbers in any given piece refer to the present-day, oblong Durand edition (which of course holds for any of the available reprints): for example, 27/4–9 means measures 4 through 9 on page 27 of that edition. The *Andantino* is published by Billaudot of Paris: the *Petit Offertoire* in C minor is included in Vol. I of *Les Maîtres Parisiens de l'Orgue au XIXe Siècle*, published by Rob. Forberg, Bonn. Forberg also publishes three versions of the C-major Fantasy other than the Op. 16 form generally known.
3. While *Français* Benoist surely had a favorable influence on Franck from the standpoint of general musical taste and style, he does not seem to have come from any organistic tradition, and had little to pass on in this specific discipline. Franck himself did not really teach an organ class in the sense that we know it, but rather a course in improvisation/composition centered on the actual practical needs of the church musician of his time: harmonization of the melodies occurring in the liturgy, musical commentary on them, and free extemporization. Perhaps the course description today would bear the title "Advanced Service Playing for Pianists"; his class owed its popularity much more to his abilities as a nonacademic composer than to those as an organist, and that is the situation Widor wished to "set right."
4. It is interesting to compare the texture of this opening section with a piece that may have unconsciously inspired it, the *Prélude à 5 Parties* by Lemmens.
5. Given in Rollin Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), p. 83.
6. The problem is often linked with the dominant-tonic feeling in the rising fourth (cf., for instance, Vierne, *Andantino* from Op. 51, mm. 10 ff. and 22 f., and Duruflé, first fugue subject from Op. 7).
7. Quoted from Vladimir de Pachmann., "Chopin, the Poet of the Piano," printed in *The Music Lovers' Portfolio*, ed. by Landon Ronald (London: The Waverly Book Co., n. d.), p. XVIII.
8. This holds for passages Franck himself has marked with brief swelling < >; on the other hand, it pertains less to the old Cavaillé-Coll *cuiller* mechanism. Not only is this swell control more sensitive to slight movements than the balanced pedal, but the player really has to make only one movement, not two, the spring taking care of pulling the box closed again.
9. Both the Barblan and Duruflé editions at times propose musically viable, if "arbitrary" articulations.
10. Maurice Emmanuel, *César Franck. Etude critique* (Paris: Laurens, 1930), pp. 50, 102, 107, 108.
11. Cf., for example, Widor's preface to the First Organ Symphony. This must have been one of Widor's main points of dissatisfaction with Franck's imprecise, "unorganistic" playing.

# THE ORGAN MANUSCRIPTS OF CÉSAR FRANCK

Wayne Leupold

A number of manuscripts of Franck's organ compositions still exist and are available for inspection. Under close examination they offer insights about the man: how he worked and how he wanted his music performed. Most of the manuscripts known to exist are in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. Many of the manuscripts discussed in this article are from that library, with their respective catalog numbers listed, unless otherwise stated.

## EARLY MANUSCRIPTS

The earliest complete manuscript still in existence appears to be the [Pièce en *mi bémol*] (*Piece in E-flat Major*), Ms. 8571, a complete but very rough draft appearing to have been written hurriedly. It is in ink with many changes in ink and some in pencil, notated on three staves of 14 numbered pages, 16 staves per page. It bears no title but is signed and dated "27 8bre 1846." Registration and manual indications in ink for a two-manual organ (G, R) appear throughout. An unusual feature is that the pedal often goes down to low $B^{\flat}$, A, and G below the compass of our present-day pedalboard, while the manual notes go up to a high A. Many of these very low notes were actually later revisions in ink of pedal lines that originally had been written an octave higher but were later scratched out in favor of the lower notes. Possibly these changes indicate a young composer seeking to expand the effect of his musical ideas.

The [Pièce pour Grand Orgue en *la*] (*Piece for Grand Organ in A*) is contained in a collection of six sheaves of manuscript sketches, Ms. 8620. It is in sheaf number 1, beginning on the fifth page that is numbered 11. It is a complete but very hurriedly written rough draft, untitled, in ink with many changes in ink and some in pencil, notated on three staves of ten numbered pages (11–13, 15–21)—page 14 being blank—with 22 staves per page. It bears no title but is signed and dated "le 19 Mai 54." Manual indications for a three-manual organ ($1^{er}$, $2^{e}$, $3^{e}$ clav.) and some registration directions in ink appear throughout, but there is no registration at the beginning. Here the pedal goes down only to low $B^{\flat}$, while the highest note in the manuals is F. It is presumed that Franck played this at the inauguration of the Grand Orgue in Saint-Eustache in Paris on May 24, 1854.

The *Andantino* is contained in Ms. 8564, the first sheaf, pages 16 through 22. A complete finished copy in ink, it lies on seven numbered pages, notated on three staves with 18 staves per page. The manuscript bears no title, signature, date, or engraving directions, but has the initial tempo marking *Andantino*. There is an ink registration at the very beginning for a four-manual organ using both terms and numbers, which has been crossed out in pencil. A different registration using only terms in pencil was added later for a three-manual organ. The pencil registration is similar to what is in the first published edition (Richanlt, 1857). Original ink manual designations and registrations in numbers, which are not in the first published edition, also appear throughout the work. All of these were for a four-manual Cavaillé-Coll organ originally intended for the Cathedral in Carcassonne, which had two manuals under expression (Petit Récit, Grand Récit). Very few of the slurs and phrase markings of the published edition appear in this manuscript.

## SIX PIÈCES

The *Fantaisie* [in *Ut*] (*Fantaisie* [in C]), Op. 16, is contained in two different sheaves of Ms. 8564. The first sheaf begins with two blank pages which are unnumbered, except for some library labeling. Then follow 22 numbered pages on three staves with 18 staves per page. The first section of the final published version is contained on the numbered pages one through three (C major, Poco *lento*) of this first sheaf. It is untitled, in ink, and neither signed nor dated. At the beginning there is a registration indication in ink for a four-manual organ of which two of the divisions were under expression (Petit Récit, Grand Récit), similar to the *Andantino* discussed above. An earlier registration in numbers, in ink, has been erased. Some additional registration directions appear at the top of numbered page three as well as pencil directions for the engraver throughout. Thus, this was the manuscript (of the first section in C major, Poco *lento*) that the first printing (Maeyens-Couvreur, 1868) was based on. The title, dedication (a son ami Mr. Chauvet), and registration for a three-manual organ that appears in the printed version can be found on a small piece of paper in the folder Ms. 20151. This small piece of paper has two holes in the upper left corner, obviously made by a straight pin. These two holes match two holes at the upper left corner of the first page of the first section of the first sheaf. Obviously Franck simply pinned this small sheet of paper onto the top of the first page of the music, thus covering up the older registration for a four-manual organ, when it was sent to the publisher. At the end of this section there is a large sign in pencil (𝄋) indicating to skip the next two sections in this sheaf (numbered pages three at the bottom, through 15) and go to the second sheaf beginning on page five at the middle, through page 12 for the second (F minor, *Allegretto cantando*) and third (C major, *Quasi lento*) sections discussed below. The next numbered pages of the first sheaf (3–15) contain a second section (E-flat major, *très lié*) and a third section (C major—varied, Poco *lento*) in ink, each page of which has been crossed out in pencil. Obviously these pages were all rejected by Franck and were never intended for publication. The registrations in ink at the beginning of these sections are for a four-manual organ. Additional registration changes are given throughout, some with terms and some with numbers. At the end there is a "Fine." In all probability numbered pages three through 15 were the second and third sections, along with numbered pages one through three, of an early version of the *Fantaisie*, later rejected by Franck. Numbered pages 16 through 32 contain the manuscript of the *Andantino*. Thus, probably the date of this first version of the *Fantaisie* is around 1857 since that is the date of publication of the *Andantino*, which follows it in the same sheaf of manuscript pages.

The second sheaf of Ms. 8564, containing 12 numbered pages, 16 staves per page, begins with a section (pages 1–4) in C major (*Quasi lento*) in ink. Indications for manual changes in ink are for a three-manual organ. All four pages are crossed out in pencil or in ink—obviously another rejected section. Page five begins with the same large sign in pencil ( ) that appears at the end of the first section (C major, Poco *lento*) of the first sheaf, followed by the eight-measure "bridge" at the end of the first section of the printed edition. Next follows the second section (F minor, *Allegretto cantando*) and the third section (C major, *Quasi lento*) of the first printed version (pages 5–12). At the end of the third section is the date "Octobre 1863" and Franck's signature. In these two sections the registrations are in ink with engraving directions in pencil for a three-manual organ.

In a printed copy of the *Fantaisie*, Op. 16, published by Maeyens-Couvreur, at the Bibliothèque nationale (Rés. F 1418), between pages four and five, there is inserted a seven-page manuscript in ink in Franck's handwriting (*Allegretto non troppo*, in F minor and C major). It is a finished neat copy, but with few registration indications and no pencil engraving directions. It appears that after the first published edition (Maeyens-Couvreur, 1868) but before the second edition (Durand, 1880), Franck wrote this additional section to substitute for the second and third sections of the published version. Thus, there are a total of four versions of the *Fantaisie*, Op. 16: (1) the first sheaf complete (C major, E-flat major, C major-varied), c.1857; (2) the second sheaf complete (C major, F minor, C major), 1863; (3) the first C major of the first sheaf and the F minor and last C major of the second sheaf (the first published version, 1868); and (4) the first C major of the first sheaf with the seven-page manuscript in Rés. F 1418 (F minor and C major), between 1868 and 1880. The first two were rejected by Franck during his lifetime, the third was published during his lifetime. In total, the four versions encompass a span of at least 22 years of Franck's life. Examining all the versions that this *Fantaisie* went through gives insight into Franck's creative process, a process of many changes. From these documents one can only speculate as to the processes that were involved when Franck composed his other organ compositions.

A manuscript of the *Grande Pièce symphonique*, Op. 17, is in the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Främjande, Stockholm, Sweden. It consists of 27 pages, three staves, 16 staves per page; it is signed, dated "16 9bre 1863," and dedicated ("à Monsieur Ch. $V^{tin}$ Alkan"). Under the title is "op. 17" in pencil. Originally at the beginning of the composition there was a registration in ink that has been erased and

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replaced by a second registration (the same as in the first published edition) also in ink. A few fingerings appear in the manuscript. Some dynamic markings are in pencil as well as engraving directions. Obviously, Franck played from this copy, and this was the copy sent to the publisher. Slight differences are present between this manuscript and the first published edition (Maeyens-Couvreur, 1868) and the second edition (Durand, 1880).

The *Pastorale*, Op. 19, is contained in Ms. 8562, eight numbered pages, three staves, 16 staves per page, a complete finished copy in ink with engraving numbers throughout in pencil. At the beginning there is a dedication ("à mon ami Mr. Aristide Cavaillé Coll"); at the end it is dated "29, 9bre 1863," but not signed. Under the title is "op. 18" in pencil. Originally at the beginning of the composition there was a registration in ink that has been erased and replaced by a second registration (the same as is in the first published edition) also in ink. The four-measure introduction to the second section (measures 41–44) were added at the bottom of the second pages with a sign and directions for it to be inserted after the fermata. In the printed edition there is a two-measure phrase mark over the first entrance of the fugue (measures 82 and 83) that is absent from the manuscript. Obviously, Franck felt a need to add the phrase mark during the proof stage, in addition to the directions "*Legato e cantabile*" that already were in the manuscript.

The *Prière*, Op. 20, is contained in Ms. 8563, eleven numbered pages, three staves, 15 staves per page, a complete finished copy in ink with engraving numbers throughout in pencil. At the beginning there is a dedication (à son Maitre Monsieur Benoist). It is neither signed nor dated. Originally at the beginning of the composition there was a registration in ink that has been erased and replaced by a second registration (the same as is in the first published edition) also in ink. Some of the manual indications and dynamic and registration directions have been added in pencil. Of interest are the last two measures where the manuscript has only one pp in ink under the left-hand staff to which Franck added in pencil a third p and also ppp under the pedal staff.

## TROIS PIÈCES

The *Fantaisie [en la]* (*Fantaisie [in A]*), entitled *Fantaisie idylle pour Orgue* in the manuscript, Ms. 2015 (1), has 16 numbered pages, three staves, twelve staves per page, and is a finished copy in ink, signed, and dated "Paris 10, 9bre 1878." There is no dedication on the first page and no engraving directions anywhere. At the top of the first page are symbols in ink for a four-manual organ (S, R, P, G.O., Ped.) followed on each line with stop registrations in black pencil. Manual changes throughout the composition are given in black pencil, not all of which appear in the first printed edition. Additional manual and registration directions appear throughout in blue pencil, also not in the printed edition. There are many erasures of manual and registration changes originally written in pencil. Very few of the phrase markings that are in the printed edition are in this manuscript. Dynamic markings are in pencil. Obviously, this was a copy that Franck used when he performed the composition, but was not the copy sent to the engraver. After the 16 pages of music there are four additional blank pages. On two of these are beginning registrations in pencil for different organs. Below are listed the three different beginning registrations found in the manuscript.

At the beginning of the manuscript [page one]:

S. tous les jeux
R. fonds 8. Anches 8 et 4,
P. fonds 8. Anches 8. principal?
G.O. fonds 8 et 16 sauf violoncelle Anches 4. 8. 16
Ped. fonds 8. 16. 32 A[nches]. 4. 8. 16
Claviers accoup.
R au P.
tirasses

At the end of the manuscript [page 17]

St. Eustache
B. les 8 pieds fonds—(Anches)
R fonds 8 pieds et Hautb (Trompette. Cornet.)
P fonds 8 pieds.—(Anches)
Gd. Orgue—fonds 8 et 16 (Anches)
tous le claviers accouplés sur le grand orgue

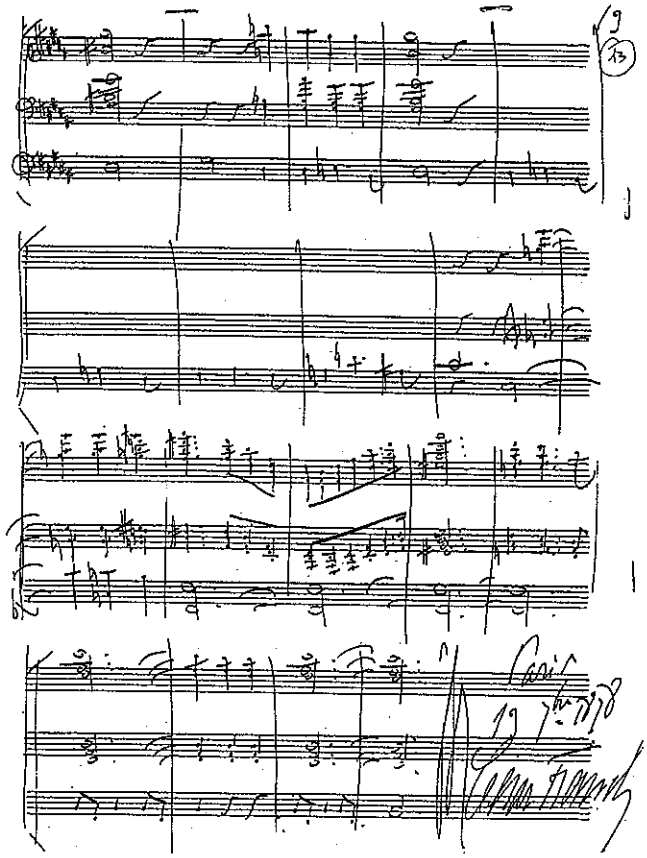
At the end of the manuscript [page 19]

B. Salicional et Gambe
R fonds 8 Hautb 8 trump 8
P bourdon 16 et 8 flûte harmonique, Keraulephone
G.O. fonds, gemshorn, flûte harmonique, f1 pavillon
Montre 16 Bourdon 8

It is interesting to observe how Franck registered the beginning of this composition on different organs. The different colored pencil markings in this manuscript and the three different beginning registrations imply that there is a consistency of always using the same basic color for each respective theme, texture, or section. Thus, he had a basic concept of how he wanted to "orchestrate" this composition and used different specific stops when playing different organs to accomplish this. But he always kept the same basic "orchestration" of colors.

The *Cantabile*, untitled in Ms. 20151 (2), is on six numbered pages, three staves, twelve staves per page, in ink, dated "17 9bre 1878," but not signed. There is no dedication on the first page and no engraving directions anywhere. At the top of the first page, in black pencil, is the registration for a four-manual organ (S, R, P, G.O., Ped.). Manual changes throughout the composition are given in black pencil, not all of which appear in the first edition. Additional registration directions appear throughout in blue pencil, also not in the printed edition. There are many erasures of manual and registration changes. Very few phrase markings are in the manuscript. One dynamic marking is in both black and green pencil (m. 27). Obviously, this also was a copy that Franck used when he performed the composition on various organs, but was not the copy sent to the engraver.

The *Pièce héroïque*, Ms. 20151 (3), is on 13 numbered pages, three staves, twelve staves per page, a finished copy, in ink, signed, and dated: "Paris 13 9bre 1878." There is no dedication on the first page and no engraving directions anywhere. At the top of the first page, in ink, is a registration for a four-manual organ (S, R, P, G.O., Ped.). Manual changes throughout the composition are given in black and blue pencil. And again there are many erasures of manual and registration changes originally written in pencil. Only some of the slur and phrase markings in the printed edition are present in the manuscript. Obviously, this was a copy that Franck used when he performed the composition on various organs, but was not the copy sent to the engraver. On the last page of the manuscript (page 13) the last eight measures of the composition are different than the last six measures of the printed edition. The manuscript version is more bravura and is reproduced below. Franck performed all three of the *Trois Pièces* at a recital on the four-manual Cavaillé-Coll organ in the Palais du Trocadéro in Paris, October 1, 1878. Possibly he intended this earlier ending more for a concert situation such as the Trocadéro performance but replaced it with a more restrained and refined ending for church use when it was published.



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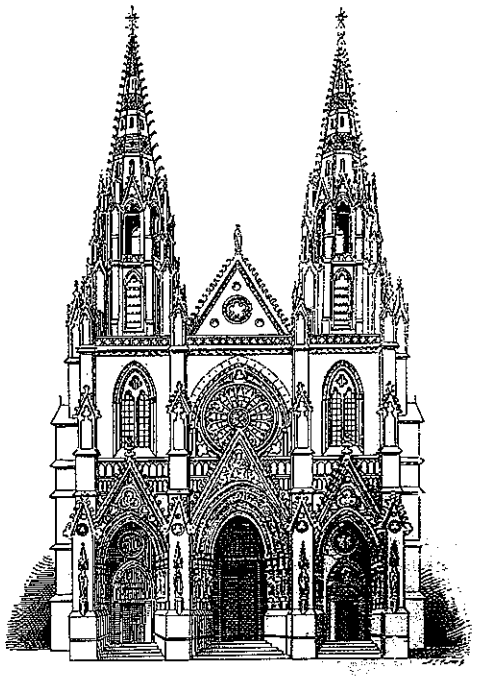


Fig. 48. — La Basilique de Sainte-Clotilde.

## TROIS CHORALS

Evidence suggests that originally there were two manuscript drafts and a final manuscript copy of each of the chorals.

The only manuscript currently available of *Choral I* is in the Morgan Library in New York City. Probably this is the second of the three manuscripts of this choral. It consists of 14 pages (13 numbered pages, two pages are numbered eleven), three staves, 18 staves per page, in pencil, dated "le 7 Août 1890," with a dedication (à ma chère élève et petite amie Mlle Clotilde Bréal), but it is not signed. No registrations are given anywhere. Only one manual designation and one tempo marking appear, but the manuscript has some dynamic markings. Some slurs and phrase markings are also present. There is a crossed-out measure and many passages were erased and written over. It appears to have been written down hurriedly. Most of the accidentals are in various colors of ink, implying that they were added at different times. Many ties are omitted, but a number of cautionary accidentals are present that do not appear in the first printed edition. No engraving directions are present. This was only a working draft.

Two manuscripts of *Choral II* are available. A fragment of the last 39 measures (missing nine measures, on one and one-half pages) is owned by Emory Fanning. This was part of the very first draft of this choral. It is notated on three staves, 16 staves per page, in pencil, hurriedly written, untitled, with no clefs, key signatures, engraving directions, phrase markings, tempo indications, or dynamic indications. A few measures are incomplete in the lower parts and some have erasures.

The final draft of *Choral II*, titled *Choral II* pour orgue, is owned by Emory Fanning. It consists of a total of 19 pages, 17 numbered pages plus two unnumbered pages at the beginning (a title page and a page with the beginning registration). It is dated "14 9bre," but is not signed, and has no dedication. The notation is in ink, on three staves, with 18 staves per page. Originally there appears to have been a registration in ink on the upper left corner of the first page of music, which has been erased. The beginning registration in ink (different or the same?) now is on the second unnumbered page, to the left of the first numbered page of music. This registration both in French and English is not in Franck's handwriting. All the registration directions throughout the manuscript similarly have been erased and redone in ink in both English and French by someone other than Franck. Engraving marks appear throughout the manuscript in both black and blue pencil. The tempo indications, dynamic indications, and some accidentals also are in pencil, implying that they were added later to the manuscript. Manual indications, originally in black pencil and red ink, have been redone in black ink. These also are not in Franck's handwriting.

This copy was used by Franck when he performed the work, and for the engraving of the first edition, which was done after his death. As stated above, Franck's own registrations and manual indications all have been erased. This in itself is not unusual, as this was his own procedure in many of the earlier manuscripts. What is unusual is that the new directions are not in his own handwriting, as all of the earlier manuscripts are. Probably he died before he could do the final recopying of them before they were sent to the publisher. What is also unusual is that there are errors in French grammar in the beginning registration: Preparés should be spelled Preparées. This occurs four times in the beginning registration. This would imply that someone other than a native French person might have done the recopying of Franck's original directions when this manuscript was sent to the publisher. Two questions arise: Who did the recopying, and was this also done on the final manuscript copies of *Choral I* and *Choral III*, which are not currently available for examination?

A first rough draft of *Choral III*, untitled, lacking a total of 30 measures also is owned by Emory Fanning. It is uine and one-half pages in length on pages numbered two through eleven. The first one and a half pages contain the *Choral II* fragment discussed above. It is hurriedly written in pencil, on two staves, and three staves (beginning with the slow middle section), 16 staves per page. It is dated "30 September." Some measures are crossed out. There are no clef signs, key signatures, dynamic iudications, or engraving directions, and only one tempo indication. However, some erasures are present. A few measures do not have all the notes in them, and there are some changes from the final published version.

## CONCLUSIONS

Evidence exists from Franck's organ manuscripts in all periods of his life that he continually reworked and revised his compositions. Initially he worked quickly, with a rapid hand jotting down the ideas. But thereafter there was often a long process of reworking, changing his mind, adding new ideas, and rejecting old ones that even continued into the very final stages of publishing, and with the *Fantaisie*, Op. 16, even after the first publication. This long process seems often to have been accomplished through the following process. First, there was a very rough draft, just ideas, not even with all the notes filled in. At least with some of the compositions, there was a second-stage manuscript where all the basic chords and notes are in place, but not totally refined and not with any registrations present. Finally, there was always a complete final manuscript, which Franck actually used whenever he performed the composition. Before he sent this manuscript to the puhlisher, he recopied the registrations, usually simplifying them slightly, and added final dynamic marks in pencil.

Franck did not just conceive of one organ in Paris as his ideal. The early manuscripts show him thinking in terms of very different types of instruments. Whenever he adapted his compositions to different organs, he retained an underlying concept of how he wanted each composition registered or "orchestrated" colorwise. Comparing the specifications on various manuscripts with the final versions in the printed editions shows that he always preserved the same basic musical result. When he came to publishing his organ compositions he tended to simplify the registrations to basically a three-manual organ concept, thus making them suitable for a wide variety of French organs. He had more of a "generic" French organ in mind rather than always the exact specifications of Sainte-Clotilde. From a practical and marketing standpoint, this made a lot of sense.

Throughout his life Franck was exposed to various organs that had two enclosed divisions, and not just one, as at Sainte-Clotilde. When such instruments were available, he used this added feature and, with his registrations, thoughlt creatively in terms of their possibilities.

Listed below are all the available organ manuscripts in the chronological order of their dating by Franck.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Pièce en mi bémol* | August 27, 1846 |
| Pièce pour *Grand Orgue en la* | May 19, 1854 |
| *Andantino* | published 1857 |
| *Fantaisie*, Op. 16, first version | circa 1857 |
| *Grand Pièce symphonique*, Op. 17 | September 16, 1863 |
| *Fantaisie*, Op. 16, second version | October, 1863 |
| *Fantaisie*, Op. 16, third version | published 1868 |
| *Fantaisie*, Op. 16, fourth version | circa 1868–1880 |
| *Pastorale*, Op. 19 | September 29, 1863 |
| *Fantaisie idylle* [in A] | September 10, 1878 |
| *Pièce héroïque* | September 13, 1878 |
| *Cantabile* | September 17, 1878 |
| *Choral I*, second draft | August 7, 1890 |
| *Choral II*, first draft | ? |
| *Choral II*, third draft (final copy) | September 14, 1890 |
| *Choral III*, first draft | September 30, 1890 |

A special word of appreciation goes to the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, Emory Fanning, Marie-Louise Jaquet-Langlais, and Ann Ker for the assistance they provided in the preparation of this article.

# CHORALS II AND III: TWO FRANCK AUTOGRAPHS

Emory Fanning

*The present collection of manuscripts by César Franck is the most important to come to light in recent years. These manuscripts have received little or no attention from commentators on the composer and the collection as a whole has remained largely unknown to the musical world. None of the manuscripts, the property of Franck's descendants, is mentioned in Mohr's thematic catalogue of the composer's works.*

*The manuscripts are all in Franck's hand and include several newly discovered works, as well as full scores, preliminary drafts and sketches of well-known compositions. All the genres to which Franck made a significant contribution are represented with the single exception of music for the solo piano. In addition to the orchestral, organ, and chamber music, for which Franck is chiefly known, there are examples of his songs, motets, and part-songs, an excerpt from his opera* Hulda, *and an incomplete set of parts for the "Biblical Eclogue,"* Ruth. *The collection extends from juvenile works written during his late teens, to sketches for his last completed compositions, the Second and Third Chorals for Organ, dated September 30, 1890, drafted about six weeks before his death. The collection therefore provides a conspectus of Fronck's work and a record of the development of his handwriting throughout his life.*

*Intending purchasers should note that this collection has recently been consigned from outside the United Kingdom and is therefore not subject to the usual export restrictions.*

This provocative description introduced the listing of autograph manuscripts, "the property of descendants of César Franck," to be auctioned by Sotheby's in London on November 27, 1980. Included were early cantatas, motets, solo vocal works, chamber music, the symphonic poem *Les Éolides*, the *Variations symphoniques* (90 pages), the orchestral parts in Franck's hand for the oratorio *Ruth* (279 pages), and Lots 266 and 267:

266 FRANCK (CÉSAR) Autograph manuscript of the Choral No. 2 for organ in B minor, with a few autograph corrections and additions including tempo marks and dynamics, organ registration inserted in French and English in a different hand, presumably in preparation for publication, *17 pages, folio, wrapper with autograph titles. 14 September [1890]*

FRANCK'S "TROIS CHORALS" are among the most enduringly popular works in the organ repertoire and, according to Norman Demuth, "are of a substance and inspiration which place them amongst the greatest music. They represent the acme of Franck's creative effort and they closed his life" (*César Franck*, 1949, page 112). They were, in fact, Franck's last works, finished shortly before his last illness. Vincent d'Indy, in his biography of his teacher, described Franck's eagerness to prepare the *Chorals* for performance and publication: "Shortly before his death he wished to drag himself once more to his organ at Sainte-Clotilde in order to write down the proper combination of stops for the three beautiful Chorals . . ." In the present manuscript, dated less than two months before Franck's death, the registration appears in both French and English and was clearly inserted after his death in preparation for the publication of the work.

267 FRANCK (CÉSAR) Autograph sketches for the Second and Third Chorals for organ comprising 31 bars from the finale of *Choral No. 2* in B minor and an almost complete draft (lacking only 28 bars) of the *Choral No. 3* in A minor, including passages in piano score and in full organ score, with numerous deletions and alterations, dated at the end, *in pencil, 11 pages, folio, with an additional sheet bearing a 24 bar sketch for an unidentified work. 30 September [1890]*

These pages appear to contain Franck's first ideas for the finale of the Second and for the Third Choral and were possibly originally preceded by the remainder of the Second Choral. The Third Choral follows on directly from the Second and there is no indication that there was any break between the composition of the two works. We know that Franck had produced a revised version of the Second by September 14 (see previous lot) and it is probable that he had already started work on the Third by that date. After he had completed the draft for the Third Choral on September 30 he must have quickly produced a revised manuscript since on October 18 his health broke down and he was no longer able to work, and before that date he had played the three chorals on the piano to some of his pupils. No subsequent manuscript, however, appears to have survived and this is the only known autograph manuscript of his last work.

From Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co. catalog advertising auction of Franck manuscripts in November 1980, pp. 112 and 114.

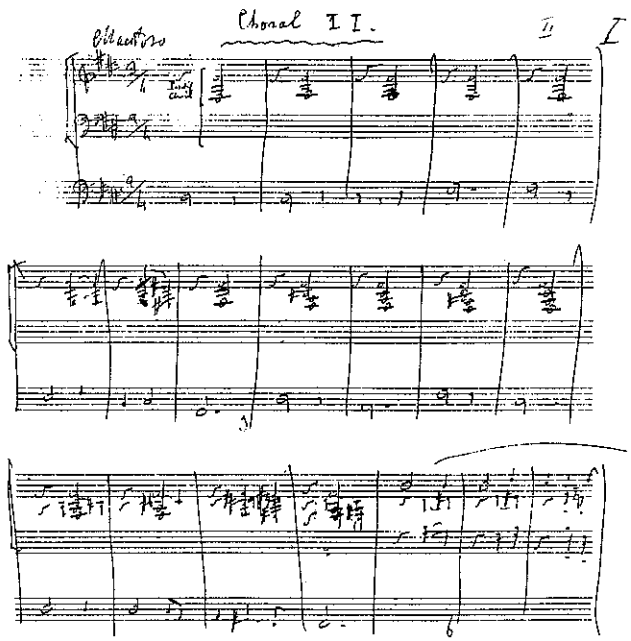
During the fall of 1980, H.C. Robbins Landon, the renowned American musicologist, was the visiting professor of music at Middlebury College, Vermont, where I am on the music faculty. He was presenting his immensely popular lectures, "Music in Europe, 1776," which he had originally prepared for the 1976 bicentennial celebration in the U.S. It was during this time that his friend, the noted musicologist Albi Rosenthal, sent him the Sotheby catalog, which he passed along to me. Since I am an organist and had written my doctoral thesis on "The Organ Music of César Franck and the Organs of Cavaillé-Coll" (Boston University, 1964), I became quite excited about the possibility of acquiring the autograph of *Choral II*.

The odds against such a private purchase were obviously formidable. It was assumed that the French or Belgian governments would attempt to purchase the entire collection for their national libraries; that other libraries, music schools, and universities would surely send representatives to the auction. Realizing the utter folly of the fantasy of owning the precious score, I nonetheless asked Dr. Rosenthal to represent me at the auction.

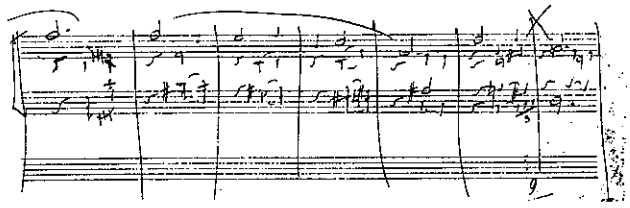
Very early on Thursday, November 27, 1980, I received a cheerful call from Dr. Rosenthal in London. Not only had he been able to purchase the autograph of *Choral II*, but, feeling that "the two should be kept together," he bid for and acquired *Choral III* which he would let me purchase "if I was at all interested!"

In 1981, I published privately a facsimile with annotations of the *Choral II* autograph. It is an exquisite ink manuscript which Franck prepared for Durand with the collaboration of an unidentified editor. Excerpts from the pencil autograph of *Choral III* are presented here for the first time. Due to space and format limitations, I have chosen two pages from *Choral II*, and page one plus two selected pages from *Choral III*. These examples clearly illustrate the composer's creative process: from the initial burst of insight, to the discarding of unworkable material; from the perfunctory, rational task of copying, to the final miracle of refinement and completion.

**César Franck's ink manuscript of Choral II, page one. Original size 11" x 14".**




**Emory Fanning** is professor of music at Middlebury College, Vt. He played and lectured at the International Summer Organ Academy at the American Church in Paris, July 15–29, 1990. Facsimiles of Franck's *Choral II* (20 pages, original size) with annotations by Prof. Fanning can be obtained by sending a check for $28 to Franck Facsimile, 46 High St., Middlebury, VT 05753.

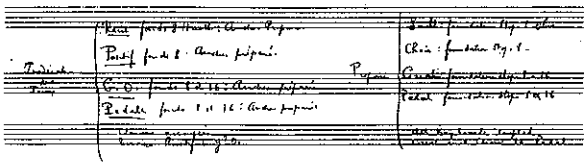


## CHORAL II

The 18-page manuscript (dated 14 7bre) abounds with interesting changes, corrections, and additions. Pages one (above) and seven are reproduced here.

On page one the erasnres in the upper-left corner margin contained Franck's registration instructions in pencil, which were copied on the facing page in the precise editorial hand which is seen throughout the manuscript:

**Choral II, registration instructions (editor unknown) replace Franck's penciled indications (erasures beneath).**



Page One, m. 1: The vertical bracket, which indicates Positif or Choir, has been extended downward to embrace both staves. It supersedes erased instructions (not visihle in this copy) in m. 17.

m. 7: A monumental change is made in the octave appoggiatura. One wonders whether it is a corrected mistake in copying or a substantial last-minute reworking.

m. 8: The number "3" (in pencil) denotes a new system of staves for the 1892 Durand edition.

mm. 13–16: Franck often drafted the intended harmony in large note values and later added non-harmonic material to provide movement, interest, and unity. It is possible that all quarter notes in this passage were afterthoughts. In m. 16 the harmonic movement would have been $D_6$ to F-sharp minor in root position; the seventh (E) and major third ($A^{\#}$) change the final chord in m. 16 to a dominant seventh. Note too the change (erasure) in the voicing of the last chord (m. 16).

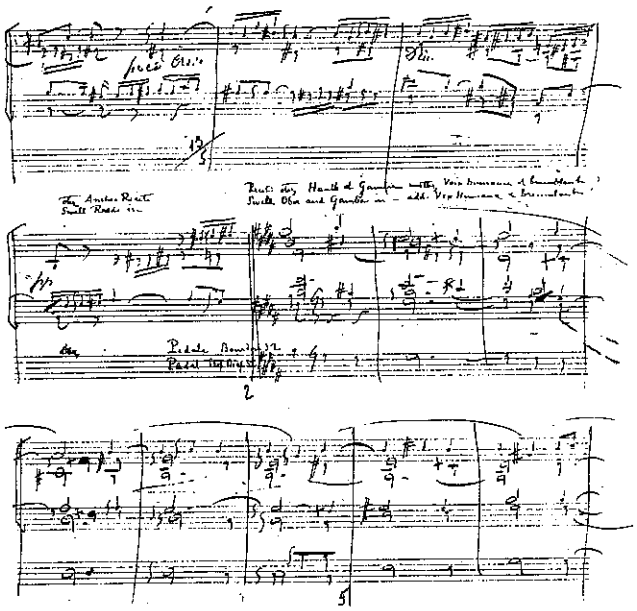
m. 20: The slurs are crossed out to correspond with the preceding measure; the voice leading is altered slightly.

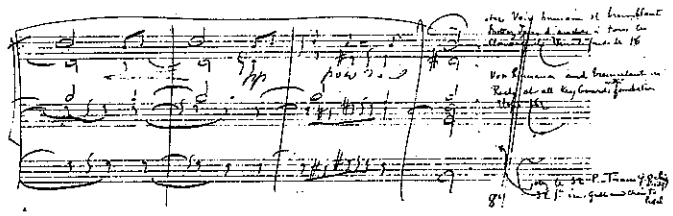
m. 21: There is a violent erasure before the last beat in the bass. It is difficult to account for this repetition of the $A^{\#}$, which is corrected in all published editions as if by unspoken agreement.

m. 24: Could the ambiguity of the dot/slur here indicate Franck's apprehension about repeating the $F^{\#}$?

m. 25: 9/1 indicates the end of page one in the 1892 edition (3 x 3 systems). X (in blue pencil) also denotes the end of the first page.

**Choral II, page 7**





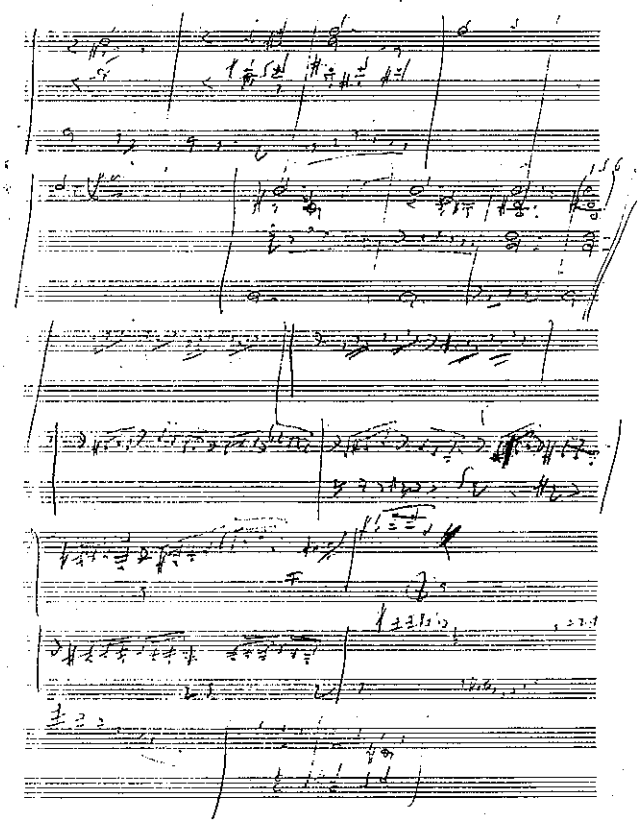
Page Seven. All of the dynamic markings on this page are the composer's and are in pencil. As before, the registration indications in ink by the editor overlay erasures of Franck's penciled instructions. Some editorial thought was given to compacting mm. 5–16 to two lines; the erased number "10" in m. 9 confirms this. Numerous interesting and very important changes evolve in this exquisite passage. Most of the changes have to do with chord texture, the insertion of passing notes, and the rethinking of note lengths in some moving voices.

m. 10: Franck reconsiders placing the bass line above the left hand.

m. 12: A long pedal point (manual, tenor B) binds this entire passage together, from the augmented sixth chord in m. 8 to the final tonic resolution in m. 16. The manuscript indicates conclusively just where and when that B should be articulated. There are two errors in the 1892 edition, however; one is an error of omission, and the other, aṅ error of inclusion. Omission: Though a tie is present in m. 10, it fails to carry over into the next measure, as is clearly the intent in the manuscript. Inclusion: Whereas a dot exists in the 1892 edition in m. 12, it does not occur in the manuscript. *A break in all voices after the second beat in m. 12 is Franck's intent.* It is edited correctly by Joseph Bonnet in his 1943 edition (J. Fischer).

m. 16: Again, Franck's measure number is erased. The thin arrow is in red ink.

**Page one of the autograph manuscript of Franck's Choral III (in pencil). Final measures of Choral II can be seen in the first two systems. The composer's wild creative outburst does not adapt well to careful transcription.**



## CHORAL III

This ten-page manuscript, entirely in pencil, is probably a first draft. Approximately 28 bars are lacking: restatements of the opening material in the subdominant and dominant minor; and the first five measures of the E-minor repeat of the sustained "choral"

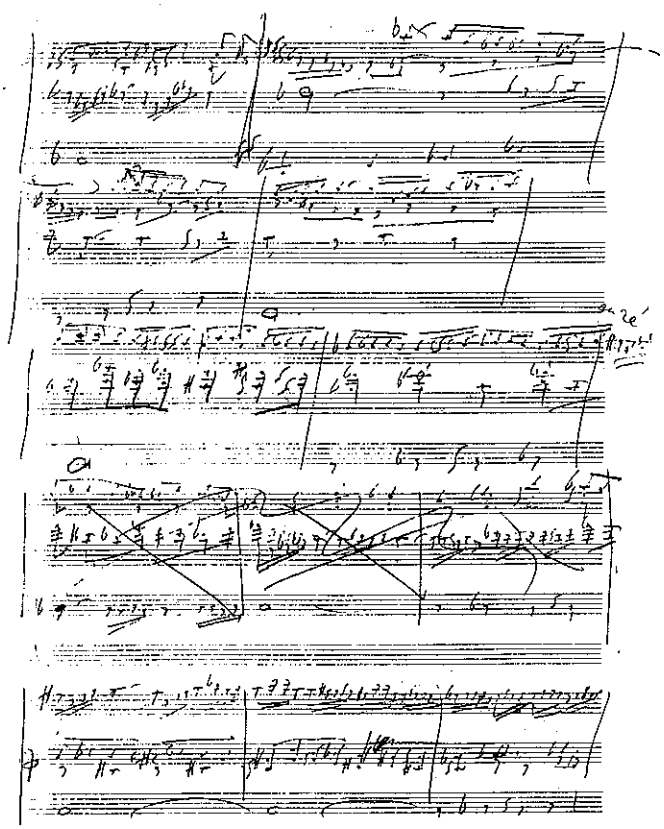
theme. After the first page (shown here) the text is remarkably faithful to the published edition. There are many deletions and alterations; it is dated "30 September" at the end (page 10).

As can be seen, composition of Choral III follows directly from the end of Choral II (pencil draft), the closing section of which is partially omitted to save time (m. 5). The number "156" at the end of system two is a mystery having to do, no doubt, with the pencil draft which precedes this fragment of Choral II.

System three begins the initial working-out of the suspension idea; m. 2 introduces the powerful rhythmic paraphrase of Bach's melody from the A-minor Prelude (BWV 543), the inspiration which permeates Franck's composition of his Choral in the same key. Much that follows foreshadows the daring, virtuoso passage-work which expands the range of manual technique as the piece unfolds. The final two measures could relate to the middle section, the composer's exquisite slow movement.

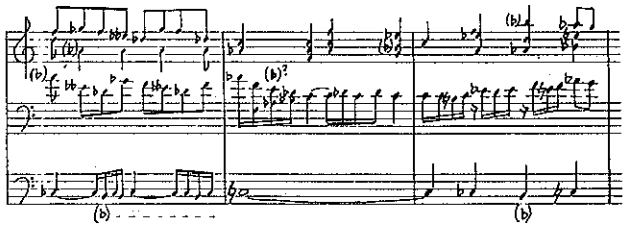
A very interesting passage is found on page seven of the manuscript.

**Choral III, page seven. Franck begins the close-out section prematurely; his decision to continue "en ré" solves the problem.**



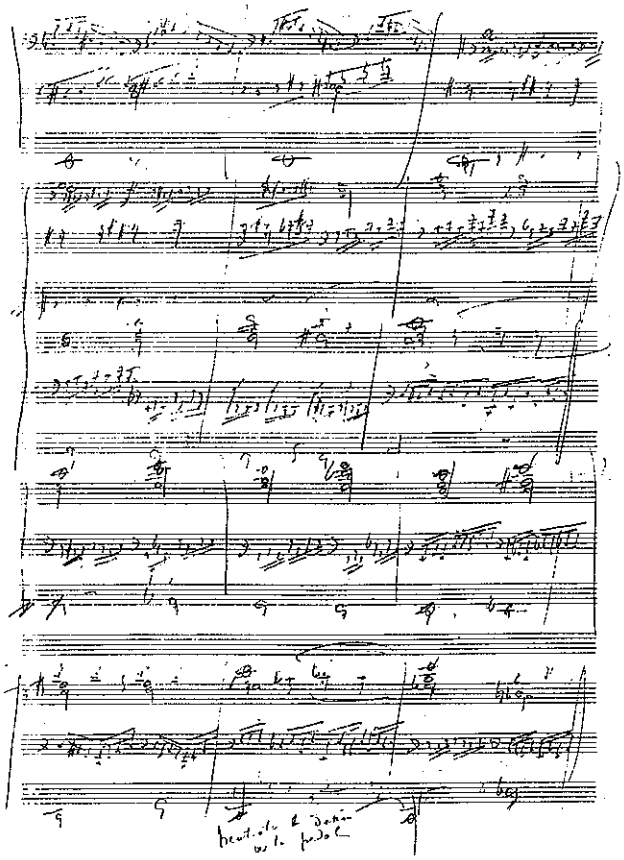
The sequential transition beginning in m. 2 is truncated prematurely in system 4; realizing his error, Franck vigorously crossed out the three offending measures and with the indication "en ré" signaled the restatement of the three previous measures up a whole step (see the last system in this example). I include here an attempt to decipher this hastily composed passage which would have brought cosmic changes to our beloved Choral III. Note the thematic combination above the pedal point C in m. 2.

**Attempt by Franck to transcribe three discarded measures (see page one autograph above) from Choral III, page seven.**



I conclude this brief look at these manuscripts with the ninth page of *Choral III*. Here, in the brilliant closing toccata, Franck explores a remarkable virtuosic effect in the pedal:

**Page from the closing toccata of Choral III. The instruction by the composer, unique in this manuscript, attests to his technical and emotional vigor just five weeks before his death.**

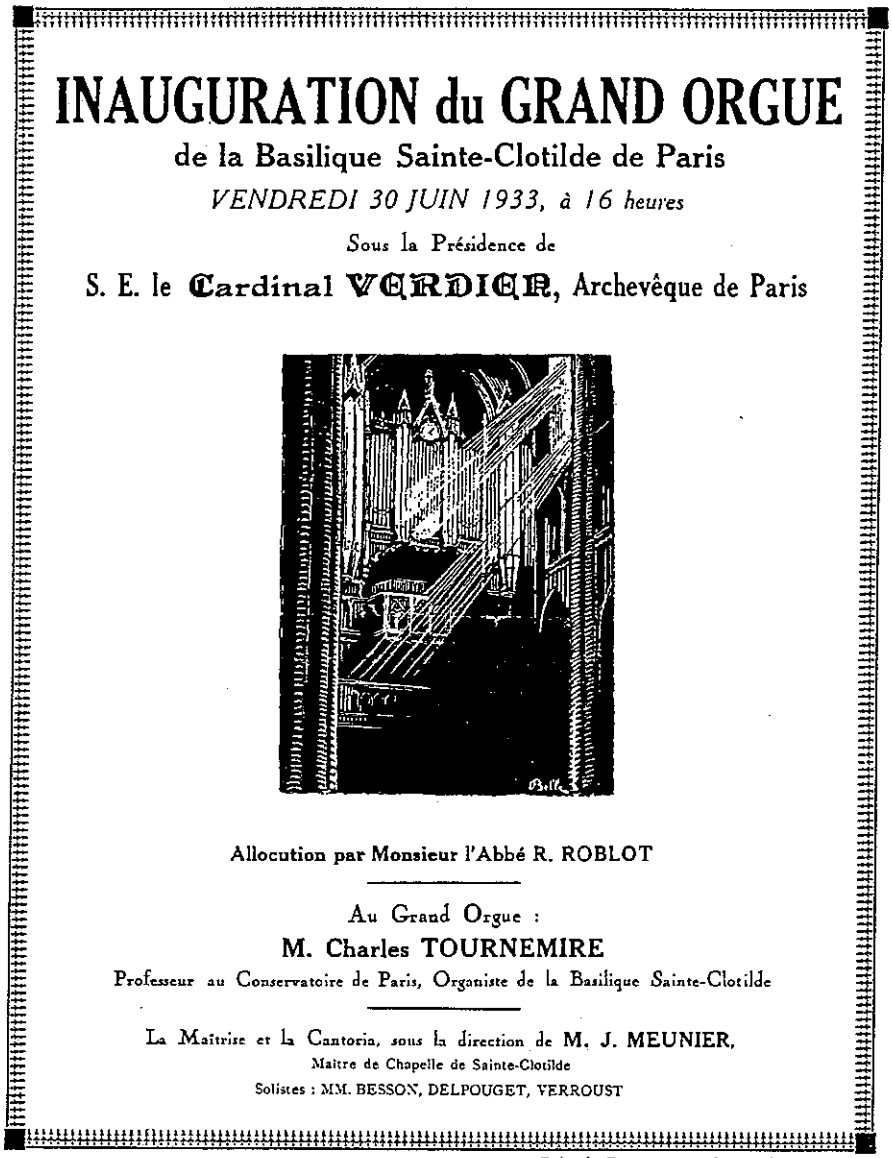


Though this pedal doubling was not retained in the final version, it nonetheless reveals to us the youthful energy which still flowed from the composer just five weeks before his death (November 8).

Vincent d'Indy, his pupil and friend, has this final word in the biography: "The Chorals, the last prayer of this sincere believer, were lying on his deathbed when the priest of the church, which had so often echoed to his serene improvisations, came at his express desire, to bring him the last rites of the Church."

# FRANCK, CAVAILLÉ-COLL, AND THE ORGAN OF SAINTE-CLOTILDE

Kurt Lueders and Ton van Eck



INAUGURATION du GRAND ORGUE

de la Basilique Sainte-Clotilde de Paris

*VENDREDI 30 JUIN 1933, à 16 heures*

Sous la Présidence de

S. E. le Cardinal VERDIER, Archevêque de Paris

Allocution par Monsieur l'Abbé R. ROBLOT

Au Grand Orgue :

M. Charles TOURNEMIRE

Professeur au Conservatoire de Paris, Organiste de la Basilique Sainte-Clotilde

La Maîtrise et la Cantoria, sous la direction de M. J. MEUNIER,

Maître de Chapelle de Sainte-Clotilde

Solistes : MM. BESSON, DELPOUGET, VERROUST

Prix du Programme : DEUX francs.

**Reinauguration program cover following 1933 rebuild of Sainte-Clotilde organ**

To me there is an enormous difference between the organs of Saint-Denis and of Sainte-Clotilde, between those of the Madeleine and of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. This fact is based partly on the more or less favorable configuration of the nave[s] and, in addition, on the work and the improvements of a man of genius who joins to noble ambition that insatiable desire to attain an ever greater degree of perfection. The Sainte-Clotilde organ is to me a striking example of this continuous progress.

Georges Schmitt[1]

**Ton van Eck** studied organ with Bernard Bartelink at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam and with Marie-Claire Alain in Paris. He has been organist of St. Jacques Church in The Hague since 1969, where he pursues an active career as a recitalist, composer, consultant to the Netherlands Organ Commission, and author of articles on various organistic subjects.

Masterworks of human endeavor can be divided into any number of sets of categories. One possible distinction is between those creations that rise up spontaneously and in one prodigious thrust, and those whose gestation is a drawn-out and painstaking if not painful struggle against every sort of obstacle, interior as well as exterior. The genial, "natural" Schubert contrasts with Beethoven as the "titanic" conqueror of adversity. Within César Franck's oeuvre, what a difference between the serene, flowing assurance of a piece like the *Pastorale* and his wrestling with the noble but recalcitrant material of four versions of the C-major Fantasy.[2]

Among Cavaillé-Coll's masterworks, few correspond better to the latter type than the great organ at the Church of Sainte-Clotilde. Physically, spiritually, and historically, it is an exceptionally fate-laden being. As with all those whose personalities are rich because

they are complex, fully understanding Franck's organ is virtually beyond reach today. The descriptions that follow propose to resume the knowledge we do have about the prestigious instrument and to distinguish certainties from speculations.[3]

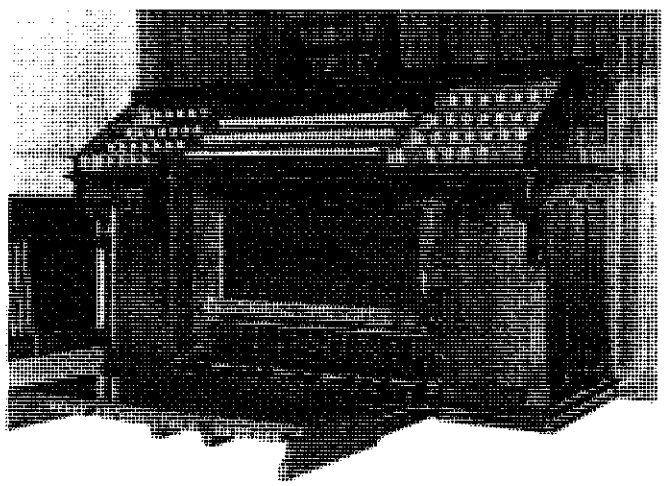
* * * *

Both the origins of and the public reaction to the Church of Sainte-Clotilde are checkered stories.

In the early years of the 19th century, the Greco-Roman temple style which had spawned the Madeleine, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Nouvelle, and so many other churches, was still holding forth as the academic and thereby as the administrative norm. Even organ cases followed suit. What could better counter this "pagan" ethos than the symbol of that homogeneously ideal Christian society, the Gothic style? So thought the newly appointed Prefect Rambuteau in the 1830s, and he found his architectural advocate in the person of François-Christian Gau, a native of Cologne hoping to make his mark on the Paris scene. His name, pronounced "go" in French, inevitably lent itself to the whimsical popular christening of a new ecclesiastical look, the "*style gautique.*"

A superficial reading of the neo-Gothic style has always equated it with a century's supposed artistic impotency. However, this point of view unfairly ignores the era's context of religious revival and fervor, characterized not only by prestigions projects such as Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecorns near Rouen (whose Cavaillé-Coll organ was a contemporary of Sainte-Clotilde's) but by any number of lesser-known edifices like Saint-Denys-de-l'Estrée, the parish church designed by Viollet le Duc for the town of Saint Denis. One of the Romantic era's numerous paradoxes is the simultaneons looking back in time and to the future, and images of former glory evoked much more than mere nostalgia or artistic pleasure.[4]

So it was that the Church of Sainte-Clotilde incarnated many of the spiritual aspirations of its era. To the extent Cavaillé-Coll was instrumental in having precisely the most spiritual of organists appointed here, we can only marvel once more at his uncanny insight. In any case, he obviously spared no effort in creating an organ that would be the most perfect aural reflection possible of this edifice, ancient in inspiration and modern in execution. Standing in his way were obstacles of both technical and administrative nature. The architect Gau passed away at the end of 1853, leaving the unfinished project to be taken over by his young assistant, Théodore Ballu, who was later to construct the church of the Trinity and lend his name to a street whose most illustrious resident would eventually be Nadia Boulanger. Ballu undertook not only to carry forth Gau's project but also to set aright its weaker points; one of these was the front of the church. Obviously, this was the most sensitive possible area of the building with respect to the Grand-Orgue, and it is no wonder that several years passed between Cavaillé-Coll's receiving the contract and his completion of the instrument. From an almost routine expression of late-1840s design the organ metamorphosed into a highly progressive personality partaking of the *Seconde Empire* spirit. During that time the builder's artistic acquaintance with César Franck grew. Let us resume chronologically the events that are of most significance to the history of the Sainte-Clotilde organ and to what we know of Franck's early relationship to it.



**Original Sainte-Clotilde console, now in Antwerp's Royal Conservatory** (photo: Kurt Lueders)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1846 | September | Construction begins on Sainte-Clotilde Church |
| 1849 | April 20 | Cost estimate and specification proposal by Cavaillé-Coll for Cathedral of Bayonne (the model for several subsequent documents) |
| 1852 | January 26 | Grand-orgue of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul dedicated |
| | May 3 | Cavaillé-Coll submits a cost estimate for the Cathedral of Carcassonne (organ dedicated only at Christmas 1860!) |
| 1853 | January 21 | Cost estimate submitted for the Sainte-Clotilde organ (a virtual copy of the 1849 Bayonne project) |
| | [date?] | Franck appointed organist at Saint-Jean-Saint-François |
| | December 31 | François Gau, first architect of Sainte-Clotilde, dies |
| 1854 | January | Towers partially demolished because of faulty design |
| | June 22 | Official order placed for the Sainte-Clotilde organ (N° 88 in Cavaillé-Coll's books) |
| | end of year | The new church steeples are standing |
| 1855 | April 20 | Cavaillé-Coll asserts he has not yet received plans for the case |
| | | Work on the church facade |
| 1856 | June-July | Carcassonne organ sessions in Cavaillé-Coll's shop (Franck, Cavallo) |
| 1857 | April 27 | Franck and the Luçon organist Waitzennecker play the organ—henceforth headed for Luçon Cathedral—in Cavaillé-Coll's shop |
| | June-July | Luçon organ and case shipped |
| | June 27 | Cavaillé-Coll asserts the Sainte-Clotilde case is not yet in place |
| | August 7 | The case is set up in the church |
| | September 29 | The 70 facade pipes have been put in place |
| | November 30 | Dedication of the parish church of Sainte-Clotilde |
| | December | Work on the organ continues in the church |
| | December 15 | Essential mechanical parts of the organ built but not yet installed |
| | December 23 | Dedication of Luçon Cathedral organ |
| | [exact date?] | Franck named first organist of Sainte-Clotilde |
| 1858 | [month?] | Shop drawings (action diagrams Nos. 21 and 22) made |
| | July 12 | Only the bellows are so far installed in Sainte-Clotilde |
| | end of year | Installation and regulation |
| 1859 | August 29 | Organ completed; final statement sent to the architect Ballu |
| | end September | Lefébure-Wély plays the organ for the Duchess of Albe |
| | December 5 | Inauguration planned but must be postponed |
| | December 19 | Inauguration of the Grand-Orgue by Lefébure-Wély and Franck |
| 1890 | November 8 | Death of Franck |
| 1891 | June 10 | Examination of the Sainte-Clotilde organ following overhaul by Cavaillé-Coll |
| 1897 | April 19 | Sainte-Clotilde proclaimed a Basilica by Pope Leo XIII |
| Early 1900s | | Overhaul of the organ |
| 1930–1931 | | Tournemire recordings |
| 1933 | June 30 | Dedication of Beuchet/Cavaillé-Coll rebuild |
| 1962 | | Beuchet-Debierre rebuild and electrification |

It should be remarked that the 1850s were a period of unprecedented expansion in Cavaillé-Coll's career, and doubtless for organ-

building in general. Entering his 40s, the master had just taken over sole control of the firm. In mid-decade the inauguration of the Saint-Eustache organ and Merklin's buying out the Ducroquet firm that built it meant the most serious competitive challenge he was to face. Given such expansion and its cash flow exigencies it was not convenient, to be sure, for a contracted instrument to lie fallow for several years—at least on the drawing boards—but this seems to have happened precisely in this period. Indeed, from 1853 through the end of 1857, the organs Cavaillé-Coll was planning and/or building for Sainte-Clotilde and for the cathedrals of Carcassonne to the far south and of Luçon to the west seemed to be locked in a bizarre game of musical chairs. Just when some architectural delay was finally over, an administrative roadblock would be thrown up. The unique four-manual organ that Franck played in Cavaillé-Coll's shop in mid-1856 was made for Carcassonne and ultimately reduced in size to be fitted to the organ loft in Luçon; but it is not unreasonable to imagine that during 1855 and 1856 Cavaillé-Coll had the dormant Sainte-Clotilde contract in the back of his mind as well. The definitive Luçon specification was as good as identical with the 1849 Bayonne/1853 Sainte-Clotilde project. Therefore, it would theoretically have been possible for Cavaillé-Coll to send the organ to Sainte-Clotilde at any moment.

Knowing that sooner or later three very similar organs would be made, the builder could legitimately make pipes and other crucial parts and send in official progress reports while knowing full well that actual installation of those parts was still far off. These progress reports were first and foremost an administrative prerequisite to receiving a payment of any kind and need not necessarily be taken at face value as to the precise, one-to-one state of development of an instrument at a given moment. It will be noticed that, in this tug-of-war between the financially beleaguered contractor and the government's representatives, the sums paid out rarely equal those requested, which further suggests that the procedure concentrated more on form than on exact content. (The Frenchman traditionally lives in constant dread of—and constant dependence on—such "paperasserie.") In any case the watershed event in the Sainte-Clotilde story was clearly the dedication ceremony of the building in November 1857. Since the stage upon which the conductor Pasdeloup was to lead a sizable orchestra was placed at the rear of the church, it was imperative that the organ case including its facade pipes be in place before the eyes of the prestigious, impressionable, and, above all, influential audience.[5] The appointment of César Franck as main organist followed shortly.[6]

"Progress reports," church inauguration, and the appointment of a *titulaire* notwithstanding, by all appearances the real creation of the Sainte-Clotilde organ began in 1858. No significant mention of installation comes until then (parts enough were always on hand in the shop to justify the phrase ". . . have been built"!) and two crucial cross-section shop drawings date from this year (or at the very least were later attributed to it by the shop personnel). One could point to several details showing that active conception began largely after the "progress reports." For instance, the original plan called for all Récit reeds to be on the ventil. Ultimately, the builder opted for a Récit division with reed ranks on both sides of the chest, only one side being operated by the ventil.[7] A detailed study of the various porcelain stopknob faces—most of which, it is true, are of the pre-1859 style—goes beyond the scope of this article,[8] but the "*A. Cavaillé-Coll & Cie.*" nameplate unequivocally points toward the 1860s (the previous label having been "*A. Cavaillé-Coll fils*"). Knowing that Cavaillé-Coll's men had a very challenging installation on their hands, and remembering that as early as 1855 he had given 18 months as a minimum completion time, we can hardly be surprised that the organ was fully installed and tonally finished only in mid-1859, even if preliminary work had indeed been accomplished in 1857. Contracted at 50.960 F, its final cost was evaluated by Cavaillé-Coll at 74.610 F; according to his shop records, he was ultimately paid 65.741 F.

We will probably never know exactly what active part Franck played in drawing up the Sainte-Clotilde specification. The decision to install 46 stops instead of the contracted 40 was surely Cavaillé-Coll's, a function of the final physical layout of the organ loft and of the acoustical properties of the church once completed. The organ at which Franck conceived a good portion of his organ music was a far cry from some last-minnte enlarged version of what had been a "place-holder" proposal for an unfinished church in 1853.[9] In fact, Sainte-Clotilde's novel and highly coherent conception meant the turning point of a new era in Cavaillé-Coll's career. Placing the Grand-Orgue manual instead of the Positif manual lowest for the first time, and building up the manual divisions as blocks to be superimposed, he took the last subtle but crucial step


**Detail of pedalboard (composition pedal labels are not from 1859, when Cavaillé-Coll still used individual oval plaques); note short pedal keys built as two-armed levers with action at rear**
(photo: Kurt Lueders)

toward the potent translation of the symphonic gesture into organ-building terms. It was a long way from Franck's exclaiming, "My organ? It's an orchestra!" at the modest, refined Saint-Jean-Saint-François instrument, to the actual creating of an organistic orchestra at Sainte-Clotilde.

Of course, Lefébure-Wély's treatment of the organ, picturesque and anecdotal rather than symphonic, was still the public's ideal in the late 1850s. One of the reasons he became free lance in 1858, ceding his post to Saint-Saëns at the Madeleine, must have been Cavaillé-Coll's upswing in turnover and the consequent abundance of lucrative inauguration concerts to be played, in addition to the even more burgeoning and competitive piano and harmonium markets, for which he was a sought-after musical advocate. Surely Lefébure-Wély would have been more at ease than Franck playing before the Empress's sister, and we should not be indignant, much less surprised, that he was given precedence over the *titulaire* for demonstrating the organ to visiting nobility or playing for a high-class wedding.[10] For all we know, Franck may have preferred it that way. In any case, it was not his style to dedicate a piece (here, the *Final*, Op. 21) to someone for any other than the most sincere of motives.

When it came to dedicating the organ, though, Franck already could hold his own before connoisseurs. *La Maîtrise* recounted the program, noting irately that it started three quarters of an hour behind schedule due to latecomers continuously straggling in from the –14° C. cold.

Improvisation by Lefébure-Wély showing crescendo and diminuendo
*Mater amabilis* of Mozart
Improvisation by Franck using the solo stops
*Sancta Maria* by Haydn
Improvisation by Lefébure-Wély using the solo stops
Bach's E-minor Fugue [BWV 533 or 548?] played by Franck
"Symphonic" improvisation by Lefébure-Wély on *Venite adoremus*

(NB. Adrien de la Fage in *La Revue et Gazette Musicale* speaks of a Final played by Franck and adds "*Il est né le divin Enfant*" to the themes of Lefébure-Wély's last improvisation.)

There was no Benediction of the Holy Sacrament (*salut*), and indeed the reporter from *La Maîtrise* again underlined the ceremony's secular tone, taking a passing dig at Franck for playing "disjointed musical phrases" in the place of the fugal piece announced![11] As for Lefébure-Wély, he knew as no other how to make the Cavaillé-Coll organs of his time come to life, and before we scoff at his *mondain* style it would be well to ascertain once and for all that his unquestionable talent had no latent, positive influence on Franck.

Be that as it may, Sainte-Clotilde as it was revealed to the Parisian musical public that freezing December night in 1859 remained unique as a turning point, but a point nevertheless. Cavaillé-Coll's organs of the 1860s emphasize the coloristic elements and—through the introduction of slotting—intensity of tone. The so-called progressive mixture was adopted exclusively for new organs, the crowning touch of the famous Cavaillé-Coll "ascending voicing."[12] Sainte-Clotilde, on the other hand, showed both the traditional *plein jeu* as well as the progressive mixture, and its beauty of tone colors came not from novel registers but from extraordinary refinement of voicing. In a word, the organ's tone quality was as indefinably poignant as the music it inspired. Perhaps never again was Cavaillé-Coll to reach this degree of potency-through-subtlety.

Such unity of conception had a fateful corollary: any attempt at "improving" or "completing" so homogeneous and characteristic a tonal edifice could only be a most perilous undertaking. The addition of a Récit to Pedal coupler by shifting the *Tirasse Grand-Orgue* onto the former thunder pedal, or the installing of a balanced swell pedal (both carried out after 1890) were minor—and reversible—changes. Then, over 40 years after Franck's death, but fortunately after having made a series of recordings, Charles Tournemire had the organ rebuilt and extended both in compass and in specification. At this time the 1859 console was removed. Whether we are to believe the written expression of satisfaction or the oral tradition of disappointment over this work, the fact remains that Franck's organ was heavily changed. In 1962 Beuchet-Debierre electrified the action, supplied yet a new console in the Anglo-American style and made tonal changes. Any discussion as to whether Franck's organ still exists is futile, if only because some organists have very narrow criteria and others very loose ones. The instrument should be judged today on its own merits as a 1960s French eclectic design, despite reusing of Cavaillé-Coll pipework.

The performer, short of having the opportunity to become directly acquainted with Franck's organ, should keep in mind the following characteristics that set it apart from the organs we know today and even from other organs of its time.

1. In terms of physical layout the Positif occupied the traditional location of the Grand-Orgue, in the central forward position. The Grand-Orgue was set up in sides behind the lateral towers and had its Barker levers not in the usual centralized block but placed directly under the chests. Hence, the Positif division was given an exceptionally full specification based on its having facade pipes and a position implying the centralizing or cumulative effect of its set of Barker levers and the corresponding coupling mechanisms. (With the Grand-Orgue mechanism divided up off to the sides, there was no way of having a Récit/Grand-Orgue coupler without completely losing the advantages of the Barker lever action.) We could almost conceive of this disposition as a variant of the *Rückpositiv* concept as a reduced replica of the Great division. Space was extremely limited in the organ loft per se and the only couplers at "ground level"—in the console itself—were the Positif/Grand-Orgue and the *Tirasses* for Positif and Grand-Orgue. The rest of the mechanism was at windchest level, between the Récit and Positif divisions. We can perceive, then, the inner logic of placing this imposing, centrally located Positif division on the middle manual heretofore corresponding to the Grand-Orgue, and of relegating the Grand-Orgue division with its "subordinate" chest layout to the former Positif manual position. To characterize the situation more accurately, it would be appropriate to speak of the three manual divisions as Grand-Orgue I, Grand-Orgue II, and Récit expressif. There is no underestimating the implications of this design:

- The Positif Clarinette, for instance, was in an optimum location to hold its own against a strong Récit accompaniment;
- When specifying the Positif foundation stops for a given passage, Franck could count on intensity virtually comparable to that of the Grand-Orgue division;
- Bringing on the Positif reeds and mutations had an even more telling effect than on most of Cavaillé-Coll's other instruments, let alone on modern, almost reedless Choir/Positiv divisions.

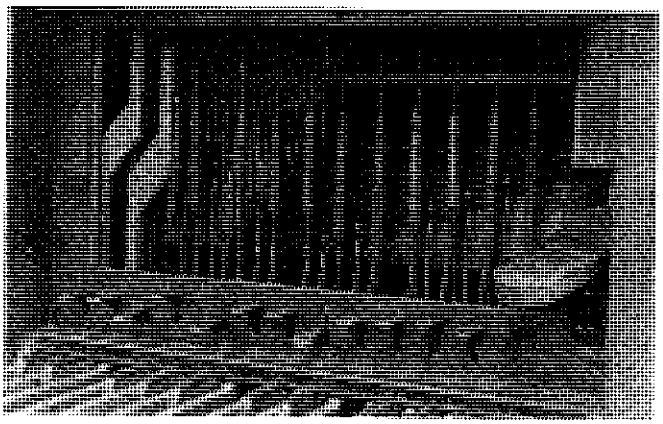
2. There is no doubt that Franck's organ had no Récit to Pedal coupler, nor an *Introduction Grand-Orgue* (or *Grand-Orgue sur machine*, coupling the Great stops to the Barker lever mechanism). These mechanisms were either not feasible or not necessary due to the unique layout of the instrument.

3. We know the organ had a spoon-shaped ("*cuiller*") Swell pedal to the far right, rather than the balanced, centered pedal we know today. There is no direct evidence that it had one or more intermediate positions besides fully open or closed; most of Cavaillé-Coll's pedals had no such extra notches, and we still need serious study to determine whether those existing today with intermediate positions were originally constructed that way. For the moment it is safest not to assume automatically that Franck could have sustained a *mezzo forte* without keeping his foot on the Swell mechanism. Logically, the musical necessity of being able to do so would for him have been a result of the later introduction of the balanced pedal in Cavaillé-Coll's work (c. 1870). The few times Franck played a balanced pedal, such as at the Trocadéro, the disadvantages may have outweighed the advantages of habit, so that no simple assumptions may be made about his preferences.

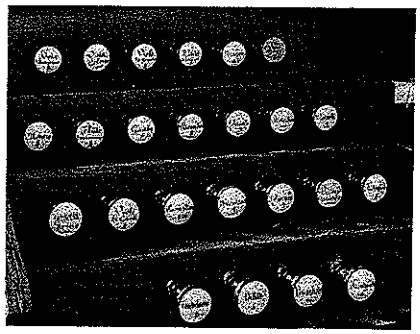
4. Commentators are unanimous about the uniquely poetic quality of the original Récit division at Sainte-Clotilde. Compared to the imminence of the Positif and Grand-Orgue stops, the Récit division was particularly distant and mysterious when closed. The Trompette 8′ seems to have had the suave character of a very full oboe, yet powerful enough to effect an impressive crescendo when mixed with the foundation stops and Clairon. The Basson-Hautbois was congruently subtle and gentle in tone. Many gambas, even by Cavaillé-Coll, were surely more cutting than the Sainte-Clotilde oboe. Performers today should keep these descriptions in mind when registering, especially before diligently following Franck's instructions to the letter in mixing the oboe with the coupled foundation stops. As often as not on modern organs, the oboe lends an unpleasant, cutting, nasal sound to the *fonds 8′* ensemble, and is hopelessly predominant when the player passes onto the Swell alone. To simulate the Sainte-Clotilde effect, it is often preferable to use the 4′ flute instead in ensembles. If we cannot get an "authentic" sound, we can at least aim at the "least unauthentic" solution for obtaining the tonal ambience Franck had in mind. If we know about these subtleties of the Saint-Clotilde solo reeds, we will be less surprised at ostensibly problematic passages like the end of the *Cantabile*. Recalling that the combinations with oboe, even used as a solo stop, had, in Maurice Duruflé's words, "an extremely soft and velvety timbre," we can imagine that a solo voice breaking into two, then three voices was not disturbing to the ear at all. Sure enough, when Franck played on other organs he removed the oboe entirely, well before the close of the piece, in order to leave the foundation stops alone at the end.[13]

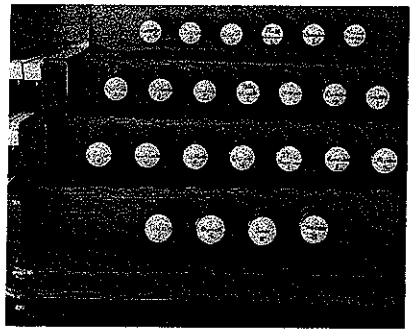
5. During Franck's lifetime, the compasses at Sainte-Clotilde were 54 notes in the manuals and 27 in the Pedal. Three cases, therefore, present themselves when Franck's musical ideas go beyond these compasses:

a. Franck wrote the passage as he heard it (or as he had played it somewhere else) and paid no heed to its being unplayable on his own organ (example: *Final*).



**Action of *Pédales de combinaison* with front board removed; clearly visible are the balanced swell shoe installed in place of the old spoon-shaped pedal after Franck's time, and the transfer of the G.-O./Péd. and Pos./Péd. couplers onto the *Orage* and G.-O./Péd. pedals, respectively, in order to free a pedal for the new Réc./Péd. action**
(photo: Kurt Lueders)





b. Franck wrote the passage as he wished it but provided an alternative version for organs with 54-note manual compasses (example: *Choral in B Minor*).
c. Franck modified the music in order to take the reduced compass into account (hypothetical example: *Prière*, p. 27, m. 2, of Durand ed.).

Prudent reinstating of "missing" notes (case C) is as risky and conjectural as it is tempting whenever the melodic line appears emasculated. The possibility must always be weighed that Franck sought melodic variety (counterexample: *Fantasy in C Major*, Durand ed., p. 6, mm. 3-4, and p. 7, mm. 2-3, etc.).

Collating all the evidence available today, it is possible to give the precise specification of the Sainte-Clotilde organ during César Franck's tenure.

| **Grand-Orgue (54 notes, CC-f$^3$)** | |
|---|---|
| Montre | 16 |
| Bourdon | 16 |
| Montre | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Viole de Gambe | 8 |
| Flûte harmonique | 8 |
| Prestant | 4 |
| *Octave* | 4 |
| *Quinte* | 3 [2$^2$/$_3$] |
| *Doublette* | 2 |
| *Plein jeu* | [VII] |
| *Bombarde* | 16 |
| *Trompette* | 8 |
| *Clairon* | 4 |

| **Récit expressif (54 notes, CC-f$^3$)** | |
|---|---|
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Flûte harmonique | 8 |
| Viole de gambe | 8 |
| Voix céleste | 8 |
| *Flûte octaviante* | 4 |
| *Octavin* | 2 |
| *Trompette* | 8 |
| *Clairon* | 4 |
| Basson-Hautbois | 8 |
| Voix humaine | 8 |

| **Positif (54 notes, CC-f$^3$)** | |
|---|---|
| Bourdon | 16 |
| Montre | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Viole de Gambe | 8 |
| Flûte harmonique | 8 |
| Unda maris | 8 |
| Prestant | 4 |
| *Flûte octaviante* | 4 |
| *Quinte* | 3 [2$^2$/$_3$] |
| *Doublette* | 2 |
| *Plein jeu harmonique* | [III-VI] |
| *Trompette* | 8 |
| *Clairon* | 4 |
| *Clarinette* | 8 |

| **Pédale (27 notes, CC-d$^1$)** | |
|---|---|
| Sousbasse | 32 |
| Contrebasse | 16 |
| Basse | 8 |
| Octave | 4 |
| *Bombarde* | 16 |
| *Basson* | 16 |
| *Trompette* | 8 |
| *Clairon* | 4 |

**Composition Pedals (left to right)**
Pédale d'orage
Tirasse Grand-Orgue
Tirasse Positif
Appel Anches Pédale (stops in italics)
Octaves graves Grand-Orgue
Octaves graves Positif
Octaves graves Récit/Positif
Appel Anches Grand-Orgue (stops in italics)
Appel Anches Positif (stops in italics)
Appel Anches Récit (stops in italics)
Copula Positif/Grand-Orgue
Copula Récit/Positif
Trémolo Récit
Expression Récit

Everyone knows that the finer an organ is, the less its beauty can be conveyed by a specification on paper. The best evidence we have for this exceptional quality at Sainte-Clotilde is the music of César Franck, through which the instrument, after its eventful creation and prestigious life, and despite an at least partial demise, has gained a kind of immortality. *L'orgue de Sainte-Clotilde est entré dans la légende.*

NOTES

1. Georges Schmitt, "Inauguration du Grand Orgue de Sainte-Clotilde" in *L'Espérance. Courrier de Nancy* (Dec. 31, 1859), p. 15.
2. The Op. 16 is widely considered the weakest of Franck's output for the organ, yet it would be the supreme masterpiece in the hands of oearly any of his contemporaries. We should also remember that it is, for Franck's standards, a youthful work, corresponding aesthetically to the pre-Saiute-Clotilde organ type.
3. This article is a résumé of the material presented in a monograph on the organ of Sainte-Clotilde soon to be published by the Association Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, 5 rue Roquépine, 75008 Paris, France. The monograph contains extensive bibliographical and source references. Therefore footnote references are kept to a minimum here. The principal sources of information used were *Le Ménestrel, Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, and *La Maîtrise*; Fenner Douglass's *Cavaillé-Coll and the Musicians* (Raleigh, 1980); Gilbert Huybens's *Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. Liste des Travaux Exécutes* (Lauffen, 1985); and the various biographies of César Franck, principally Vallas and Kunel.
4. Still better than old monuments were the ruins of old monuments (Cf. Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du Christianisme*, Book III, Livre V, Chapters III–V).
5. Cf. *La Maîtrise* I/9 (Dec. 15, 1857), col. 144, in which an anonymous commentator—probably D'Ortigue—laments about the secular character of the ceremony, more the showing off of a civil edifice than the dedication of a bouse of worship.
6. His using the title "Premier Organiste de Sainte-Clotilde" on January 22, 1858, shows that the appointment came earlier. The published score of the Andantino, registered at the National Library in the lattar part of 1857, gives only the composer's name, while subsequent printings carry his title "Organiste du Gd. Orgue de Ste. Clotilde" as well. Hence, it seems likely that Franck received the "promotion" at the end of 1857, perhaps between the dedication ceremony and Christmas, to be effective January 1.
7. To this circumstance we owe the two-stage reed gradation so characteristic of Franck's music: the oboe, if drawn, remains on when the *Anches Récit* ventil is retired. The oboe in turn must be retired by hand. Thus, along with the voix humaine it cleverly belongs at once to the reed family by structure and to the flue section by layout.
8. Three basic types of lettering on the hand-painted porcelain discs will be noticed. Most date from the mid-1850s; the second style is from the early 1860s; and the style used solely for the Positif Prestant 4′ is from the mid-1860s to the mid-1870s. Cavaillé-Coll surely kept stocks of the then very expensive discs on hand, and many of the stylistic divergences can be attributed to changing habits of nomenclature. Since names such as Clarinette, Unda maris, Contrebasse, and Basse were new terms in the late 1850s, it is no surprise that they have later scripts, which does not rule out the corresponding modifications of the actual pipework concerned. The Positif pair Prestant/Flûte octaviante, on the other hand, is a mystery (cf. the Récit Flûte octaviante). The history of the stops and pipework at Sainte-Clotilde is particularly complex.
9. It is quite possible that Franck and Cavaillé-Coll agreed on minor chenges in individual stops in the early 1860s. The Positif Unda maris is ostensibly a retuned Salicioual, the pipes being marked "S"; the identity and pedigree of the Cromorne/Clarinette has never been fully elucidated. Note the stopknob inscriptions for these two registers, and their relative prominence in the Grande Pièce symphonique, the manuscript of which carries the rather advanced date of September 16, 1863.
10. Around this time Lefébure-Wély also played at Sainte-Clotilde for a society wedding whicb, ironically, was presided over by the Bishop of Carcassonne and amounted to an unofficial public reception of the organ by virtue of all the personalities Cavaillé-Coll had invited.
11. This curious reaction suggests that Franck played not the little "Cathedral" Fugue but the great BWV 548; the expression "*phrases musicales détachées*" applies equally well to both pieces, but the smaller one should not have been any surprise to the *La Maîtrise* reviewer, since the magazine itself had, as its very first organ publication, printed this Prelude and Fugue witb commentary and some expression marks by Niedermeyer.
12. The mixture was also referred to as "*plein-jeu harmonique*." The terminology "harmonic" as applied by Cavaillé-Coll to flutes and reeds refers to double- or multiple-length, overblowing pipes, as is well known. Calling a mixture "harmonic" was in this respect even more "*fantaisiste*," but perhaps the builder had in mind the principle of keeping the basses calm while giving the trebles more carrying power, in which case the expression could logically be applied to compound stops as well.
13. Cf. the "Trocadéro ms." of the *Cantabile* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Music Dept. Ms. 20151 [2], p. 6), in wbich Franck retired the Récit reed ventil (i.e., the Trompette) 16 measures and the oboe 12 measures before the end. Even on many Cavaillé-Coll organs, especially smaller ones, the oboe is too strong to be convincingly used with the foundation stops. With sporadic exceptions, this registration was by no means standard in the 19th-ceutury French repertoire and can be considered a Saiute-Clotilde specialty. Remember that the oboe was "diluted" in an ensemble of no less than eleven fouudation stops.

# PLAYING THE ORGAN WORKS OF CÉSAR FRANCK

## XII—*CHORAL III IN A MINOR*

Rollin Smith

**Sainte-Clotilde, 1874**

This organ *Choral* is really a toccata, both in the brilliant virtuosity which dominates the work and in its form, which freely alternates the brilliant sections with more pensive ones. It is these latter sections which present the chorale melody in various guises and combinations. Even more than the two preceding *Chorals pour Orgue*, this has the aspect of improvisation.

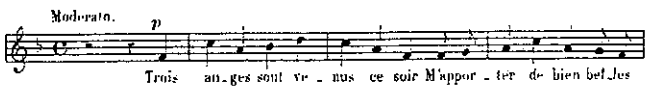
*Albert Schweitzer*

*CHORAL III IN A MINOR*

| | |
|---|---|
| Completed: | September 20, 1890. |
| Published: | 1891. |
| Publisher: | 1. A. Durand & Fils., Plate No: D.S. 4416.<br>2. Durand & Cie., 1959, Plate No: D. & F. 13.794. |
| Dedication: | à mon élève Augusta Holmès (or Eugène Gigout). |
| Manuscript: | First draft in the possession of Emory Fanning, Middlebury, Vermont. |
| Performance: | Played by Eugène Gigout, March 12 and 13, 1898, at the inauguration of the Cavaillé-Coll organ in the Salle Poirel of the Nancy Conservatoire. |
| Bibliography: | César Franck, *Three Chorals*, arranged, edited, and annotated by Joseph Bonnet (Glen Rock: J. Fischer & Bro., 1948).<br>Emory Fanning, "Choral II and III: Two Franck Autographs," *The American Organist* (Dec. 1990).<br>Amy Dommel-Diény, *L'Analyse harmonique en examples de J.-S. Bach à Debussy, Fascicle 11: César Franck* (Paris: Éditions A Dommel-Diény, 1973). Pages 67–91 contain an extended analysis of *Choral III*. |

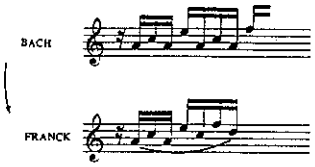
The dissimilarity between the A-minor theme of Franck's *Choral III* and the melody of a once-popular *Noël* by his student, Augusta Holmès (1847–1903), hardly warrants Rollo Myers's assertion ("Augusta Holmès: a Meteoric Career," *The Musical Quarterly*, July 1967, p. 373) that Franck "incorporated one of her best known songs" into this work (Example 1).

**Ex. 1, *Noël* by Augusta Holmès**




The fact is that the Noël was not even composed until after Franck's death! There is, likewise, little to support Charles Tournemire's feeling that *Choral III* was influenced by Bach's *Prelude in A Minor*, BWV 543—a feeling based on the rhythm and the first four notes being identical (Example 2).

**Ex. 2**




*Quasi allegro.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Tournemire | ♩ = 100 (Recording, Polydor 566957: 1930, ♩ = 112) |
| Bonnet | ♩ = 96 (1920–40: 88–92) |
| Marchal | ♩ = 108 (Recording, Lumen 32078: 1948, ♩ = 108) |
| Langlais | ♩ = 108 |
| Dupré | ♩ = 100 |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 108 |

Franck's last *Choral* begins with the following registration: Jeux de fonds et jeux d'anches de 8 p. à tous les claviers (8' foundation and reed stops on all manuals), 8' and 16' foundation and reed stops in the Pédale, Claviers accouplés (manuals coupled: i.e., Récit au Positif and Positif au Grand-Orgue) and Tirasse Grand-Orgue. Lacking at present a final manuscript version and with only the 1891 Durand edition as reference, it has long been conjectured that this registration is incomplete—perhaps not originating with Franck at all, but with an editor—and should, at least, be augmented with more upperwork. Such an argument is substantiated by the fact that, save for the addition of 16' foundation stops, it is this registration with which the piece concludes. Jean Langlais, nevertheless, insists that this registration is correct and that it is quite right for the organ at Sainte-Clotilde, though conceding that its effect is less than desirable anywhere else.

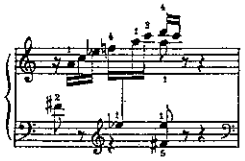
Joseph Bonnet (p. 31) placed great stress on the precise observance of all note values throughout this work:

> It is important to give the left-hand notes and all rests their exact values and to play these opening measures in strict and very firm time. The entire effect depends on this.

The Largement passages, Tournemire informed us, are to be played with *grandeur*. Bonnet, Dupré, and Duruflé added 16' tone for these sections, though there is no indication to do so. Dupré, ever the pedant, marked these passages *Doppio lento* (half tempo), or ♪ = 100.

The ascending figuration in mm. 5 and 14 is facilitated if the second sixteenth note of the second beat is taken with the left hand (Example 3).

**Ex. 3, m. 4**

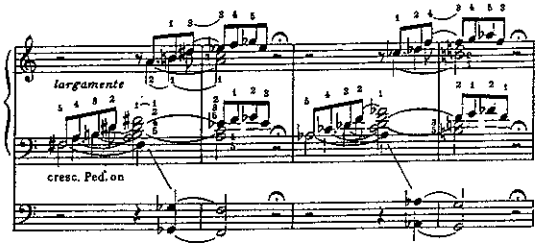


To observe Franck's very precise notation, observe the sixteenth notes of the third beats of mm. 5, 14, and 52.

In mm. 7, 16 and 18, the fermata is over the rest. To emphasize this, do not elongate the eighth notes which precede it. At mm. 16 and 18 Jean Langlais advises counting 3-4-5 to complete the measure and take the fermata into account.

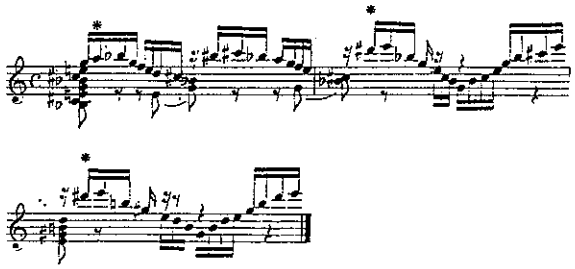
Bonnet solved the difficulty of the Largamente, mm. 15–18, by taking the first note of the third beat with the left hand, and playing the pedal in octaves (Example 4).

**Ex. 4, mm. 15–18**




On his recording of *Choral III*, one can hear Charles Tournemire's frequent practice of stressing non-chord tones. In the Quasi allegro passage (Example 5) following the Più largamente (m. 19) he singled out unaccented passing tones (marked with asterisks) and played them tenuto:

**Ex. 5, mm. 20–22**



In his book he referred to this as a "cadenza" and said to play it animatedly.

It is imperative to sustain the entire chord of the fourth beat of mm. 23, 24, and 25 until the first note of the right hand of each succeeding measure is played.

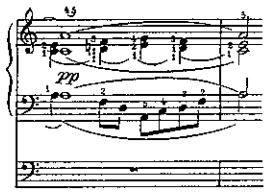
*Measure 30.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Tournemire | "Place a fermata over the A-minor chord on the first beat. Generally, one goes on—and it is a grave error." ♩ = 92 (recording) |
| Bonnet | a tempo (♩=96) |
| Dupré | ♩ = 92 Cantabile |
| Marchal | ♩ = 100–104 (1948 Recording: ♩=84) |
| Langlais | ♩ = 96–100 |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 92 |

Tournemire insisted that the exposition of the *Choral* (m. 30) is to be played in the original tempo. However, on his recording he, like the other organists cited, slackened the tempo. In mm. 33, 43, and 59 prolong the first two quarter notes of the inner voices to emphasize the soprano note. Likewise, make the soprano third beat of mm. 61, 62, 74, and 75 tenuto.

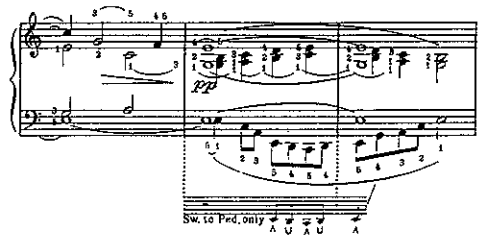
The only way to make mm. 34, 46–47, 60, 78–79, 177, and 189 absolutely legato is to play the lower note of the right hand's quarter note thirds also with the thumb. The thumb is sustaining the lower whole note as well (Example 6).

**Ex. 6, mm. 34–35**




The execution of the left-hand eighth notes in mm. 46 and 78 is impossible for players with small hands. Bonnet (p. 34) suggested playing the five lower notes in the pedal with the Swell to Pedal coupler and no stops drawn (Example 7).

Ex. 7, mm. 45–47




A tempo qualification for mm. 53–56 and 91–96 has been omitted—if one were intended. Should these broken arpeggios be *Largamente*, as in all similar passages, or are they to be played in the same tempo as the sixteenth-note toccata figuration which they follow?

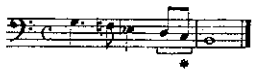
Bonnet and Langlais said, "same Tempo."

Tournemire said, "sempre largamente"; Dupré, "doppio lento."

Duruflé indicated them at ♩= 80—midway between his tempo for the Quasi allegro and Largamente sections.

A consistent feature of Charles Tournemire's recorded performance is his habit of rhythmically prolonging notes of shorter duration in phrases with notes of mixed time values. In Example 8 the passing notes in the fourth beat are considerably lengthened, although the rest of the measure is played in tempo.

Ex. 8, m. 64



There is no reason to play the left-hand passages between mm. 80 and 86 on another manual, except that it is possible to do so. An elegant effect is obtained if the swell box makes a decrescendo to *mf* through mm. 87–88 and then closes abruptly for a *subito pp* at m. 89, echoing the preceding measure.

The right hand crosses *under* the left on beat 3 of m. 90, allowing the left hand freedom of motion to pass *over* and strike low A at m. 91.

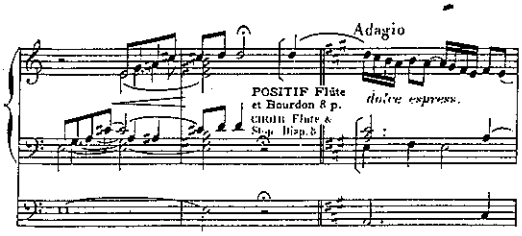
*Adagio.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Tournemire | ♪ = 76, very freely (Recording: ♪ = 80) |
| Bonnet | ♪ = 60 |
| Dupré | ♪ = 84 |
| Marchal | ♪ = 84–92 (1948 Recording: ♪ = 72) |
| Langlais | ♪ = 84 |
| Duruflé | ♪ = 84 |

Tournemire gave sound advice for interpreting this, the most iridescent and tranquil slow movement in all of Franck's organ music: it is to be played "without ever hurrying and with great freedom. This is a solo (*récit*). César Franck played this section *rubato* and to play it metronomically would be heresy and absolutely contrary to his intentions."

The soprano D on the second beat of m. 96 is often questioned (Example 9).

Ex. 9, mm. 95–97




The absence of a rest in the treble clef further clouds the composer's intent. It is possible that this note might be a quarter note which would then cut off with the chords underneath—as does the left hand. This is how Tournemire and Dupré interpreted it. The right hand differs from the left in two respects: the fact that the note is both a half note *and* carries a fermata suggests that this is what Franck wanted and that is how Bonnet, Marchal, and Langlais played it—i.e., sustaining the soprano D alone for a beat, then restriking it on the Récit on the fourth beat.

The registration of the Récit is unchanged and the Positif is reduced to Flûte and Bourdon 8 and the Pédale to soft stops (jeux doux). The Tirasse Grand-Orgue must be taken off—an obvious editorial omission.

The key to the tempo of the Adagio may, perhaps, be found at its conclusion as the initial theme of the *Choral* returns (m. 146) with the indication "Le double plus vite (movement du commencement)." This indicates that the Adagio should be played twice as slowly as the tempo of the Quasi allegro. According to Bernard Gavoty, Louis Vierne played *Choral III* at a very rapid tempo and felt that the majority of organists played the Adagio much too slowly, being led astray by the word "Adagio." He always insisted that his students calculate the tempo of the Adagio in proportion to that of the Allegro.

The six organists whose tempos we have compared all began the Adagio considerably slower than half the tempo they adopted at the outset, but they all picked up the tempo from m. 131, and so, by m. 142, achieved a tempo very nearly half as fast as they began. Duruflé, for instance increased the tempo at which he began the Adagio, ♪ = 84 to ♪ = 108 at mm. 140 and 144, with the result that he concluded the Adagio at exactly one half the tempo of the beginning of the *Choral*.

The interpretive elements discussed previously, in particular tempo alteration in all of its guises (melodic, polyphonic, rhythmic, and harmonic), can be applied to the first 18 measures of this cantilena as a case study in Franck style. Recall Tournemire's remark, "C'est un récit" (*César Franck*, p. 35), and that he actually meant *more* than just a solo melody—one which combined the declamatory as well as the lyrical, and certainly one in which the melody is preeminent (in a sung recitative the rhythm would freely follow the accentuation of the words) and the accompaniment is completely subordinate to it. The following interpretive suggestions are based on Tournemire's recorded performances, not only of this *Choral* but also of the *Pastorale* and the *Cantabile*.

m. 97 The tempo is established in this measure, so except for a slight tenuto on the suspensions of the first, second, and fourth beats, the rhythm must be steady.

m. 98 Slightly prolong the first sixteenth note or slightly delay the second sixteenth note of beats 1, 2, and 3. Make a slight tenuto on the third and fourth sixteenth notes of beat 3. Slightly delay the tenor B in beat 4, and hold the soprano's last G♯.

m. 99 There is a slight accelerando in the accompaniment from the second half of beat 1 through beat 3 with an *a Tempo* as the solo enters on beat 4. The swell box must open on beat 3 for the *più f*.

m. 100 Prolong the first sixteenth note of beats 1 and 3—the rest in tempo.

m. 101 Make a slight accelerando to beat 3 and then stress the high A♭. The *a Tempo* returns during beat 4.

m. 102 There can be an accelerando through beat 3 and a slight ritard in beat 4 leading to an *a Tempo* in the following measure.

m. 103 Slightly prolong the first eighth notes of beats 1 and 3 and stretch the arpeggios of the last three sixteenth notes of beats 2 and 4.

Make a slight tenuto on the last sixteenth note (high F♯) as it moves into the molto espressivo e dolce.

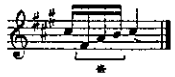
m. 104 Make a slight tenuto on the third sixteenth notes of beats 2 and 4 (B♭ and G♯).

m. 105 An accelerando throughout this measure as the crescendo increases and the pitch rises; then, an abrupt *a Tempo* at

m. 106 beat 1 on the *subito pp*. Stretch beat 3 slightly and rubato on beat 4.

m. 107 Slightly prolong beats 1 and 2 so the repeated notes do not sound measured. Throughout this section Tournemire (on his recording) consistently stretched the rising figuration which begins on the second of a group of four sixteenth notes (Example 10).

Ex. 10, m. 107

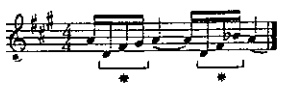


The accompaniment, however, plays in tempo.

m. 108 Use tempo rubato in the right hand while maintaining the pulse with the left. Make a slight tenuto on the high F♯ of beat 3.

m. 109 While maintaining the tempo with the left hand, make a slight tenuto on the last three sixteenth notes of beats 1 and 3 (as did Tournemire in Example 11).

Ex. 11, m. 109



Duruflé moved the decrescendo from the previous measure to beat 2 so that beat 3 is an echo of beat 1.

m. 110 Accelerando through this measure with slight tenutos on the first sixteenth notes of beats 2, 3, and 4 and a slight ritard leading into

m. 111 Following Tournemire's example (Example 12), slightly emphasize the two high As in beats 1 and 3; ritard during beats 3 and 4 to prepare for the return of the theme.

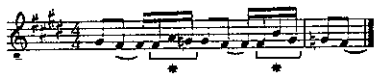
Ex. 12

m. 112 *a Tempo.*

m. 113 During the diminuendo make a slight tenuto on the high notes of each beat with the most prolonged holds on the last two sixteenth notes of beat 3. Stretch beat 4.

m. 114 Begin with the first of three eighth-note Gs which fall to F♯. Two options might be: (1) slightly emphasize the first of each group of eighth notes (the G♯ and the two G♮s), returning to strict tempo afterwards, or (2) as Tournemire did (Example 13), keep the eighth notes in strict time, slightly lengthening the sixteenth notes.

Ex. 13, m. 114



m. 115 Make a slight tenuto on beat 1 but *a Tempo* on the second eighth note through beat 2 so that the rallentando can be effected through beats 3 and 4 and the next measure. This must be a barely perceptible rallentando initially, or the tempo will die by the end of m. 116.

On the second beat of m. 117 the Récit Trompette is taken off by the Anches Récit pédale de combinaison and, with the Fonds et Hautbois, this manual now becomes the accompaniment to the theme played in the tenor on the Positif. During mm. 17 and 18 an assistant adds some stops to the Positif (ajoutez q.q. jeux de fonds de 8 au Positif) which, on the organ of Sainte-Clotilde, would have included the Montre, Gambe, and probably the Salicional. The Récit is again coupled to the Positif. The Positif could have remained coupled to the Grand-Orgue and the Grand-Orgue registration remained unchanged since the Quasi allegro.

From m. 119 to m. 146 Tournemire advised "let yourself go and allow the theme to expand." Bonnet (p. 39) suggested that mm. 118–24 are easier for small hands if the order of manuals is reversed so that the solo is played above, rather than below, the accompaniment. His edition offers several clever thumbing solutions to difficult passages.

The Pédale in m. 119 is marked "moins douce" (less softly). On Franck's organ at Sainte-Clotilde nothing could be done because the only 16' and 8' stops of that division were already drawn; if the Positif were coupled to the Pédale, the left-hand solo line would he less prominent. Still, it was the composer's intent that the pedal phrases in mm. 119–20 and 122–23 should stand out and not overpower the manuals with the sustained notes in mm. 127–30. When both hands move to the Grand-Orgue with the last eighth note, m. 130, all manuals are again coupled to the Pédale.

Bonnet, however, cautioned against adding the Tirasse Grand-Orgue (Great to Pedal) until the climax at m. 142, beat 2. "Indeed, the effect . . . is quite unsatisfactory even when the full Great comes in at m. 140, beat 2." The Tirasse Positif (which would couple both the Récit and Positif to Pédale) would be sufficient for the bass line of this section and would prevent the long pedal points from covering up the manual passages.

From m. 131 Bonnet also suggested a poco a poco animando which increases the excitement of the build-up. There is a ritard at the end of m. 139 to point up the entrance of the *Choral* theme in the minor.

Tournemire directed in m. 142 to "play the pedal theme very pronounced (très marqué), non-legato: orchestrally, very Trombone-like. This is how the composer himself played: the great chords daringly, obtaining a great sonority from the instrument." Dupré, Langlais, and Duruflé detached each of the manual chords in mm. 144–45.

*Le double plus vite (Mouvement du commencement). Twice as fast (same tempo as the beginning).*

| | |
|---|---|
| Tournemire | ♩ = 100 (Recording ♩ = 116–120) |
| Bonnet | ♩ = 96 |
| Dupré | ♩ = 108 |
| Marchal | ♩ = 112 (1948 Recording ♩ = 116) |
| Langlais | ♩ = 104 |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 108 |

At m. 147 both hands play on the Positif, to which, Tournemire reminded us, the Récit is coupled. Durnflé suggested removing the Tirasse Grand-Orgue, while Dupré took off all the pedal couplers.

Tournemire suggested that at mm. 157 and 164 the swell box should be three quarters open as the choral enters on the third beat. Duruflé marked this *mf subito.*

From m. 168 Tournemire interpreted agitatedly, "*con fuoco.*" Ritard the first two beats of m. 173 to prepare for the final statement of the choral, which Tournemire said to play "majestically: *fff, largemente.* Detach the melody and do not connect the inner parts—shorten them a little."

*Measure 192.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Tournemire | très largement, più largo |
| Dupré | ♩ = 88, Largamente |
| Langlais | ♩ = 84 |
| Duruflé | ♩ = 92 |

Bonnet marked the left-hand octaves *marcato molto* (mm. 190–92); Langlais gives students the option of detaching them or not, as they wish, but Dupré, Langlais, and Dupré all detached the open-fifth chords in mm. 190–92.

There are differing opinions about the interpretation of the last two measures. Bonnet connected the pedal line from m. 197 through the last measure and added a fermata to each of the penultimate notes.

Dupré, while connecting the manual parts of the last two measures, marked the last two pedal notes with left toe signs, thus detaching the hass part before the last chord. Langlais is very insistent about connecting all parts of the last two measures. Yet, Tournemire, while connecting the pedal D to the A in the last measure, made a distinct break in the manual parts before the final chord.

Felix Aprahamian has written that "in the *Trois Chorals* is found the purest and most complete expression of Franck's genius as a composer: they take their place beside the organ works of Bach among the masterpieces written for the instrument. Deriving more from the later Beethoven quartets than from the chorale-preludes of Bach, they are, in a sense, variations on a chorale-like theme, but welded into wholes unimagined by the earlier composers of *partite.*"

**Choral III in A Minor**

**1959 Durand Edition Corrections**
**Compiled by David Craighead and Antone Godding**

| Page | Score | Measure | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 2 | 2 | first l.h. note is a 16th |
| 34 | 3 | 1 | first l.h. A add dot |
| 34 | 3 | 2 | l.h. should duplicate soprano (E♭, F, G♭, E♭) an octave lower as in m. 4 |
| 35 | 2 | 3 | r.h. ties not in original; l.h. no quarter note stem on F, no upper 8th note stem on E in original |
| 36 | 2 | 5 | extend slurs to m. 6, beat 1 |
| 37 | 1 | 2 | l.h. first B should be a 16th |
| 37 | 2 | 1 | l.h. add dot to second 8th note G♭ |
| 42 | 1 | 2 | r.h. A tied from beat 2 to 3 not in original |
| 42 | 2 | 1 | l.h. tie A♯ to B♭ (beat 1 to 2); l.h. last D♯ tied to m. 2 |
| 42 | 2 | 3 | beat 4 r.h. D♯ belongs on common stem with alto F♯ |
| 42 | 3 | 3 | r.h. beat 1 all three notes are 8ths |
| 45 | 2 | 3 | l.h. should have slurs for all three voices |
| 45 | 3 | 1 | l.h. should have slurs for all three voices |
| 46 | 3 | 3 | l.h. should have a slur between quarters E and E♭ |
| 49 | 3 | 4 | r.h. add dot to second 8th note F |