

About Franck's interpretation

Usually, when I hear a performance of Franck's organ music, I feel some strong subjection to what has been indicated on the sheet, more specifically about tempi and registrations. Tempi often lack of vivacity, feeling and liveliness. As for the indicated registrations, they are applicable only on the specific organ of Ste Clotilde church, where Franck was the *titulaire*. This instrument does not exist any more in its original disposition, as it has been deeply altered by Tournemire in 1933, Langlais in 1962, and again very recently. Therefore, organists should continuously adapt registrations to the organ that they are playing, in order to produce a sound environment very close to the one at Ste Clotilde (there are many statements about it, Duruflé's among others).

Whereas Franck's organ works should, of course, be respected literally, it must, above all, be understood in the spirit, rather than the letter. Contrary to almost all of his contemporaries, Franck was a composer who happened to play the organ ... and not an « organist-composer » : he left a considerable number of compositions for other instruments (such as piano, orchestra, chamber music ...). This means that to have a lively and consistent vision of his organ works, one must be a musician before being an organist.

In addition, the choice of the great organ of St. Sernin (in Toulouse) - one of the most beautiful Cavaillé-Coll organ that is left - will demonstrate that this music can be even enriched with sound elements that Franck did not benefit from at Ste Clotilde : Bombarde 32, chamades, complete great symphonic récit, which too many overzealous organists chose not to use. (Besides, the « Three Pieces » of 1878 were composed for the inauguration of the old *Salle du Trocadéro* organ, and not for the instrument at Ste Clotilde.)