

Cesar Franck – In Spiritum (2005)

Wpisany przez bluesever

Czwartek, 10 Marzec 2011 19:29 - Zmieniony Piątek, 15 Listopad 2013 15:53

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1. *Piece Heroique* [play](#)
2. *Prelude Fugue ET Variation Op 18*
3. *Trois Chorals Pour Grand Orgue 1*
4. *Trois Chorals Pour Grand Orgue 2*
5. *Trois Chorals Pour Grand Orgue 3*

Olivier Latry – organ

None of this I am about to write is new. Indeed, César Franck's organ music characteristics are a well known quantity. It is mentioned on the reverse of this SACD that it was Liszt's educated opinion that (Franck's) "These poetic pieces have a clearly marked place alongside the masterpieces of J.S.Bach." There is no doubt that Franck was heavily influenced by Bach's music as well as Liszt himself and Wagner by way of Mendelssohn and Beethoven. This shows in his chromatic writing and in the development of thematic cells and the use of successive thematic modifications.

We should note that Franck wished his organ pieces to be played according to the registrations he had specified; clearly, the authenticity of any performance depends upon strict respect for these directions. We should also be reminded that these compositions were written at and for a very special Cavaillé-Coll organ at the Église de Sainte-Clotilde. This Cavaillé-Coll has important differences in its disposition compared to the normative organs by the same builder; the location and physical confines of the nave where the organ was placed in the late 1850's determined this. Thus, other performing solutions are necessary when performing Franck's music on other organs.

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While all the pieces in this SACD were written "in" and "for" this organ, the only exception is the "Pièce heroique" that was composed to be played initially at the then new organ of the Trocaderó and that is a conundrum that has never been resolved satisfactorily ever since...so it seems. Latry's performance is no exception to the rule; he had to find a compromise solution for his own organ at Notre-Dame Cathedral. His organ is quite capable for the task but some questions remain which are in themselves very important indeed, and they refer to the artistic and psycho-acoustic merits of this recording. From the artistic point of view these are throughly "modern" performances when we consider the style of execution; Latry's chosen tempi are rather modern and fast and as a consequence his execution loses clarity in the lines and the exposition.

These are "normal" interpretations for our time: less lyricism, less romanticism, less mystery...clearly a sign of our times. In Latry's hands there is very little left of Bach influence on Franck, however, these "influences" can be found in a handful of other recordings specially one that dates to 1976 which was reissued in CD format recently. From the psycho-acoustic perspective the sound of this SACD is remarkable as it captures the grandeur of the ambience of Notre-Dame, although at the expenses of the low bass and high notes which are also a known quantity in this marvelous organ. The producers of this recording obviously opted for a very unusual placement for their microphones (at least that's the way it sounds) within the confines of the large cathedral; not even the mechanical actions of this organ are heard as we should...the sound is begging for clarity. ---John Nematic

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