



Eduard Franck: Orchestral Works I

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Eduard is the brother of Hermann (1802-1855) who, as a writer on music, had contact with Wagner, Goethe and Heine. The other brother, Albert, had a bookshop in Paris and kept company with Chopin, Charles Hallé and Stephen Heller.

The E minor Violin Concerto was composed in Cologne to which Franck had moved at the request of Ferdinand Hiller. It was premiered by another Hiller invitee, Theodor Pixis. It is a work of streaming intensity deliciously prone to lyrical flights akin to the Mendelssohn concerto (in the same key) but without the ineffable surge of smiling quicksilver. The last movement recalls a village fiddler and rustic dance floors across the continent.

The Symphony in B flat major represents a crossroads between early Schumann and Mendelssohn. The horn solos are very colourful and make a memorable effect although the execution is not ideally polished or rounded. There are some Schumann-like accelerandi like those that inject the drama into the Fourth Symphony. You will find yourself easily hooked whether by the fluttery athleticism of the second movement, the winsome flute-playing of the Adagio with its momentous atmosphere or the Mendelssohnian chasseur-style allegro writing. This is a strong mood invoker, relaxed and Beethovenian (Symphonies 4 and 8).

Ludger Böckenhoff and Audite should take a curtain call for their valiant advocacy of this otherwise disgracefully disregarded figure. Meritorious and highly attractive music at last out into the light of common day.