



Eduard Franck: The Sonatas for Violin and Piano

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EAN: 4022143915535



[American Record Guide](#) (Magil - 2009.05.01)

This is Eduard Franck (1817-93) of Breslau, not Cesar Franck of Liège, and there are four violin sonatas here. Sonata 1, composed in 1853, is not a worthwhile work. Sonata 2 of 1859 shows considerable improvement and is engaging. Sonata 3 (no date) is even better, and the posthumous sonata without opus from 1861 is the best of the bunch.

It's good to see that Franck improved. He chose good models too; I of the 1861 sonata owe a debt to I of Beethoven's Violin Sonata 10. In fact, Franck's violin sonatas occupy a special niche, according to the booklet notes. The only major composer in the mid-19th Century to compose violin sonatas was Schumann. While I don't think these works are quite as good as Schumann's first two violin sonatas, they are good nonetheless and have a true romantic spirit combined with classical form.

The performances are adequate. Christiane Edinger has a wobbly vibrato that sometimes knocks the notes out of tune and sounds a bit frumpy. She is at her best in the slow movement of the 1861 sonata, which is lovely. James Tocco is a musical, equal partner and more of a pleasure to listen to. Good sound.