

## **F**FRANCK: Organ Pieces, all

Bjorn Boysen

LAWO 1147 [2CD] 159 minutes

The 12 major works Franck wrote for the organ, along with the symphonies of Widor and Vierne, constitute the core of the French romantic organ repertoire. They have been recorded dozens if not hundreds of times and rightly so, as they are some of the most beautiful music ever written for the organ. Is another recording of them really needed?

What justifies this recording is the organ used and the playing by Boysen, who has obviously lived with this music for a long time. He first studied it in the 1960s with the famous Danish organist Finn Videro and has played it dozens of times in an active concert career in Europe. He taught at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo from 1973 until 2016 and was organist for the Oslo Concert Hall from 1978 to 2016.

He plays on a beautiful 3-manual, 53-stop 1883 August Nilsen organ (restored by Kuhn in 2009) in the Uranienborg Church in Oslo. The foundations, flutes, solo stops, and reeds are in the French symphonic style and perfect for Franck's music. Boysen's playing is sensitive, musical, and wholly attuned to the style. Some might quibble with his quicker tempos in some of the pieces, but he keeps things moving in a way that allows the music to unfold in an organic, improvisatory way. I found this some of the best recorded Franck playing I've heard.

Perceptive and informed notes by Boysen on the composer, the music, and the organ. A recording I intend to revisit many times.

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*American Record Guide*