

EUGÈNE GIGOUT

*1844 Mar 23 Nancy

- attended the choir school of Nancy Cathedral

1857 (aged 13) studied at the *École Niedermeyer* in Paris with Gustave Lefèvre, Clément Loret and Camille Saint-Saëns

- marriage with Caroline-Mathilde Niedermeyer; taught counterpoint, plainsong fugue and organ at his father-in-law's school

1863-† appointed organist at Paris, St. Augustin (the organ was unfinished until 1866)

1868 beginning of an increasingly prestigious international concert career

1885 founded a school of organ and improvisation

1897 gave the only solo organ recital in Victoria Hall Geneva between 1894-1946 (on the original Kuhn organ)

1911 succeeded Guilmant as professor of organ at Paris Conservatoire

1913-1922 and 1926 released rolls for Welte. Gigout's recording session in for Welte in Freiburg began on 26th November 1912 and lasted for about a week

†1925 Dec 9 Paris

Félix Raugel, presents Gigout as a nice personality admired by all about him, including Franck. He was not in the same teacher-pupil line descending from Lemmens, but of Benoist (through Saint-Saëns) and thus represented an alternative to the Guilmant and Widor faction with whom he nevertheless got on well. He was included in the opening concert series for the Paris, Trocadéro 1878 organ.

Gigout's students included Léon Boëllmann (his adopted son and



Gigout at his house organ (63bis rue Jouffroy) with some students c1880



“SI PETIT ET SI GRAND”
Gigout at the organ of Saint Augustin, Paris



Gigout at the console of Saint-Augustin c1885

nephew by marriage), Gabriel Fauré, Paul Messager, André Roussel and André Marchal.

He wrote music for voices, piano and harmonium:

His organ works include:

- 1872-6 3 pièces d'orgue
- 1881 6 pièces d'orgue (including Grand Chœur dialogué)
- 1885-6 Pièces diverses en deux suites
- 1887 Andante symphonique (piano, harmonium)
- 1887 Marche funèbre (piano, harmonium)
- 1888 100 pièces brèves dans la tonalité du plain-chant
- c1889 Suite de 3 morceaux
- 1890 10 pièces
- 1891 Pièces diverses
- 1893 Le prêtre sur un poème d'Henry B (soloist, harp, organ)
- 1895 Album grégorien
- 1896 3 pièces
- 1897 Prélude et fugue en mi majeur
- 1897 Rhapsodie sur des airs catalans
- 1898 Rhapsodie sur des airs populaires du Canada
- 1900 2 motets (womens voices and organ)
- 1900 2 pièces
- 1900 Tota pulchra (solo voice and organ)
- 1901 Alleluia de Pâques (4 voices and organ)
- 1903 Poèmes mystiques
- 1904 L'orgue d'église
- 1911 70 pieces in the most common church modes
- 1913 12 pièces
- 1918 Pièce jubilaire en forme de prélude et fugue
- 1922 100 pièces nouvelles
- 1923 10 pièces

Marie-Joseph Erb relates an interesting story from his days at the Niedermeyer School. It concerns some first encounters with Gigout, when Erb was publicly interrogated by their teacher, Casimar Baille, about Paris' best-known musicians at the time:

"Did you know of Saint-Saëns?" "Yes," Erb replied. "I have heard his *Danse macabre* in Strasbourg."

"Why yes!" said another student (certainly a favourite of Baille, seeing that he was allowed to speak). "You say yes, how so? Do you not know that Saint-Saëns is a second father Bach?" (He pronounced it 'Back,' which seemed humorous to me at that time [Erb being Alsatian would have known German]).

All of the students laughed at my ignorance.

"Do you know Gigout?" questioned the same.



Gigout and Marie-Louise Boëllmann in
May 1922

Timidly I said, "No."

"You do not know Gigout? But then you do not know that Gigout is a second father Bach also."

The entire group of students was going to poke fun at me when Casimar's voice boomed: "Enough of your blundering. Gigout is very good, Saint-Saëns better again. Father Bach is above us."

Erb goes on to relate that Gigout's supporters at the Niedermeyer School considered him a contrapuntist, whereas, for example, they considered Guilmant a melodist.

Detailed in Mark Baile's 1988 doctoral thesis on Gigout
"Eugène Gigout (1844-1925): Performer and Pedagogue"
<http://www.davidrumsey.ch/GigoutBaileyThesis.pdf>