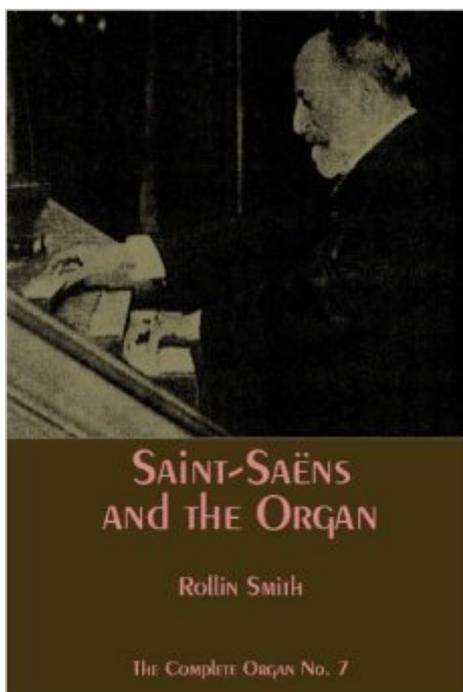


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Saint-Saens And The Organ (The Complete Organ No.7)



Synopsis

Hailed by Franz Liszt as the world's greatest organist, Camille Saint-Saëns was revered by his contemporaries for his ingenious improvisations, his mastery of the art of registration, his virtuosity, and his eclectic organ compositions. Saint-Saëns's technique and style developed out of what remained of the French classic tradition that survived into the 19th century. He bridged the entire career of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, and continued well into the 20th century. Rollin Smith, author of *The Organ Works of César Franck*, provides an insightful biographical view of Saint-Saëns as organist and composer, including detailed chapters on the construction and settings of instruments he played (the harmonium, the Aeolian organ, and the Cavaillé-Coll organs, among others). Within the eleven appendices are essays by and about Saint-Saëns; recordings of his performances; specifications of selected organs that he played; and a thematic catalogue of his works for harmonium and organ.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had a wonderful experience reading this book. Rollin Smith offers it as a supplement to the standard biographies of Saint-Saëns. These books do not treat the composer's work as an organist or his compositions for the instrument deeply enough. I was enthralled by the book not only because of what it told me directly about the subject, but because of the way it opened up my understanding of what French sacred music making was like during the second half of the 19th Century and how organs were built, installed, and used during those decades. Smith also

introduced me to a variety of others instruments. We learn the relationship between what was called the Harmonium and the Reed Organ, the Pleyel Pédalier, and an amazing thing called the Harmonicorde. Have you ever heard of it? I had not. It is essentially a combination reed organ combined with an upright piano that had only a single string per note. The player could play just the organ or the piano or both together. People said it sounded like a wind instrument accompanied by a harp. Fascinating. The book's seven chapters take us from his early training and how it was conducted, to his career at the Church of Saint-Merry, then to his work at the more prestigious church Madeleine from 1858-1877. He left that post to devote himself full time to concertizing and composing. We then get a discussion of his late compositions for organ, and his final years. The last chapter evaluates what we know about Saint-Saëns as an organist including a description of his technique and how his style compared to the other big name organists of his day.

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