



**Eduard Franck: String Quartets**

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[American Record Guide 2/2002](#) (Carl Bauman - 2002.03.01)



These recordings of Eduard Franck's (1817-93) string quartets are proudly labeled premiere recordings. I have no reason to disagree with that statement. In fact the only other recordings of Franck listed in my most recent Schwann are on Audite. Who was Eduard Franck? He was a student of Felix Mendelssohn, who had nothing but praise for his early works. Born into a wealthy Breslau banking family, the four sons pursued entirely different career paths. Eduard was the youngest and pursued a musical career wholeheartedly, settling in Cologne, where he taught at the Rheinische Music School. Unfortunately, his teaching and solo performances came first, and few of his compositions were ever published, perhaps owing to his ambition for absolute perfection. Also, he tended to move from place to place every few years and thus didn't establish a lasting reputation anywhere. It is only now, more than 100 years after his death, that an exhaustive biography jointly written by his grandson and great-grandson has begun to open modern eyes to his works.

The Quartet in E-flat, Op. 54, was evidently written in Berlin in 1847; its companion, the Quartet in C minor, Op. 55, was not published until after his death, and its date of composition is uncertain. It appears first here and is an exceptionally fine quartet. The recording is ideal. Microphone placement is fairly close, yet the instruments sound in their individual places. This is important, because each instrument has a remarkable number of solos. He clearly was in full command of the quartet form, for the whole work is delectable. Themes are well and fully developed. Each of the four movements is well developed, and the quartet is unusual in that all four are marked allegro, allegro vivace, or allegretto. Both quartets are substantial, lasting 34 and 35 minutes.

The E-flat work begins with two adagio movements and concludes with two allegro movements. It is reminiscent of both the late Beethoven quartets and certain aspects of Haydn but with distinctly romantic influences as well. It is interesting for its similarities to great funeral music. Remarkable virtuoso turns are given to the first violin. III is a classically oriented minuet with a hunting trio. The finale is a series of variations.

Both quartets are well worth knowing, but Op. 55 is especially impressive. I would very much like to hear the other Franck works on at least five Audite releases, including two violin concertos and two symphonies as well as his Third Quartet and his piano quintet. Everything about this issue speaks of careful preparation and loving work.

Bayernkurier Nr. 36 (Wolfgang Johannes Müller - 2001.09.06)

**NEUER ROMANTIKER**

*Ein Meister namens Eduard Franck*

NEUER ROMANTIKER

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**CD Compact Num. 170, novembre 2003 (Josep Pascual - 2003.11.01)**

Hace pocos meses, empezó a distribuirse entre nosotros un compacto del sello...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Diapason Janvier 2005 (Jean-Claude Hulot - 2005.01.01)**

La firme Audite a entrepris de réhabiliter la musique d'Eduard Franck, romantique allemand qui fut l'élève particulier de Mendelssohn et qui jouissait de l'estime de Schumann. Son œuvre, très abondante mais en partie perdue, manifeste l'influence de son maître, illustrant l'esthétique de l'école de Leipzig. La violoniste Christiane Edinger figure parmi les maîtres d'œuvre de ces très généreux ensemble ; après le vaste Concerto n° 1 (cf n° 474, avec une autre symphonie), elle propose le second, marqué jusqu'au pastiche par celui de Beethoven, couplé avec une symphonie inspirée par Mendelssohn, notamment par l'« Italienne » ; belle lecture, malgré un orchestre sans brillant particulier, mais qui mérite la découverte. Franck a écrit un très vaste corpus de musique de chambre ; le Quatuor Edinger a gravé trois des quatre quatuors et le Quintette avec piano ; tout comme dans les deux sextuors, on trouve dans ces pages de coupe immuablement classique un style proche de la musique de chambre de Mendelssohn, ou fugitivement de Beethoven, plus que des partitions contemporaines de Brahms, Dvorak et Tchaikovski. Sans prétention novatrice, un bonheur mélodique incontestable, doublé d'une réelle élégance d'écriture innove ces partitions. Le Quatuor Edinger, renforcé selon les œuvres, propose une lecture satisfaisante de ces premières mondiales, même si certains traits « mendelssohniens » de virtuosité apparaissent mal contrôlés, et si l'ensemble aurait gagné à plus de flamme – en particulier de dans les mouvements lents, parfois bien ternes ; néanmoins, il faut saluer une découverte intéressante, en conseillant de commencer par le disque qui réunit le Quatuor n°1 et le Quintette, à mon sens les deux partitions les plus convaincantes.

Les deux sonates pour violoncelle et piano sont de réelles réussites qui mettent en valeur le lyrisme flatteur de l'instrument, et qui mériteraient de revenir au répertoire ; l'éditeur leur associe celles de Richard Franck, fils d'Eduard et élève de Reinecke (lui-même successeur de Mendelssohn à Leipzig), également pianiste, compositeur et chef d'orchestre. Moins inspirées que celles de son père, elles n'en témoignent pas moins de la qualité « artisanale » du travail du fils Franck ; bonne idée d'avoir fait le lien par les Trois pièces, charmeuses et un peu salonnardes de Reinecke. Enfin, les deux trios avec piano de Richard sont également marqués par les influences de Mendelssohn, Schubert et Schumann, avec les mêmes écriture

et invention mélodique que son père, quoique encore plus anachronique (1893 et 1900) ; les deux sonates pour violon et piano (1890 et 1903) sont tout autant charmeuses, illustrant avec bonheur la facture de cette « musique de salon » comme la baptisait avec condescendance Max Reger. Au demeurant, bien défendues par les musiciens réunis pour ces disques, ces pages inédites ne manquent pas d'attrait et justifient qu'on sorte des sentiers battus pour aller à leur rencontre.

[Fanfare](#) Issue 25:3 (Jan/Feb 2002) (Martin Anderson - 2002.01.01)

fanfare

Eduard Franck was born in Breslau in 1817, studied with Mendelssohn in Leipzig between 1834 and 1838, moved from Berlin to Cologne, from there to Bern, and on to Berlin in 1867 as head of piano at the Stern Conservatoire. His last post was as professor in his hometown, and he died in Berlin in 1893. He was the father of the pianist and composer Richard Franck. Even in his lifetime, Eduard Franck's music hardly made an impact: Six symphonies, three quartets, two concertos each for piano and violin, much chamber music, and works for piano—all largely forgotten by the time he died.

The music of these two quartets is confidently and expertly crafted—and just a tad anonymous at times. But Franck has a ready stream of melody into which he taps for some gorgeous tunes, and even if he doesn't readily establish a harmonic identity, he is always resourceful and inventive. The op. 54 quartet, probably the second of the three he produced, was written in 1847, when Brahms was 14—and again and again it's Brahms whom the music prefigures. Take the second subject of the first movement—who but Brahms could have written that melody? The same with the exquisite second movement, though here there's an admixture of Schubert, too. The lusty scherzo looks even further into the future: It directly pre-echoes the scherzo of Franz Schmidt's A-Major String Quartet of 1925. Michael Struck-Schloen's notes call on Beethoven and Haydn as influences on the E♭ Quartet, op. 55 (date unknown—it was published only in 1899): a slow introduction, in the late Beethoven's searching manner, and a concertante role for the first violin à la Haydn. The deeply expressive slow movement evokes Bach, both in manner and with a direct quote from the St. John Passion. This is something special: It brought tears to my ears when I first heard it. A buoyant minuet brushes such cares aside. And for the finale—11 variations on a monophonic song—he takes Beethoven's op. 74, the "Harp" Quartet, as his model, as Struck-Schloen points out. And now the pre-echoes are more surprising still: There are passages here that point forward to Robert Simpson's Ninth Quartet of 1982.

The Edinger Quartet performs both works with passion and commitment—not always perfectly in tune (the leader, Christiane Edinger, in particular), but not so far out that it mars your enjoyment. Good sound from Audite, and a helpful essay from Struck-Schloen.

This is, in fact, the sixth CD that the Detmold label Audite has dedicated to Eduard and Richard Franck. A cello sonata from each gentleman appears on Audite 20021, as does more music for cello and piano on 20.031 ; each of two Eduard Franck symphonies shares its disc with one of his violin concertos on 20.025 and 20.034; and his op. 49 String Quartet and Piano Quintet, op. 45, can be found on 20.033. I haven't had a chance to hear these discs yet, but you can be sure I am going to chase them down. In the meantime, this one is strongly recommended—here's another Franck you really ought to know.

Fono Forum 7/2001 (M.S. - 2001.07.01)

**FONO FORUM**  
KLASSIK JAZZ HIFI

**Vorhalte**

In seinen beiden hier eingespielten Streichquartetten hat Eduard Franck (1817-1893) Einflüsse Beethovens und seines Lehrers Mendelssohn mit Vorhalt-reichen romantischen Klängen zu einem neuen und originellen Ganzen verwoben. Das Ergebnis mag gestrengen Verfechtern einer linearen Geschichtsschreibung als anachronistisch missfallen. Wer die Werke jedoch unvoreingenommen hört, entdeckt eine in sich stimmige, atmosphärisch dichte Musik, die mitunter zu wahrhaft großen Momenten findet, etwa in der langsamen Einleitung zum Kopfsatz des Es-Dur-Quartetts mit ebenso unerwarteten wie aufregenden harmonischen Rückungen. Den Interpreten ist eine beseelte Darstellung gelungen.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 17.08.2001 (Werner M. Grimmel - 2001.08.17)

Frankfurter Allgemeine  
ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND

**Pflicht zur Romantik**

*Da ist Platz neben den Gipsbüsten: Eduard Franck hat ihn verdient*

Pflicht zur Romantik

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Klassik heute 08/2001 (Peter T. Köster - 2001.08.01)

KLASSIK  
HEUTE  
[www.klassik-heute.de](http://www.klassik-heute.de)

Daß das Label audite mit der Wiederentdeckung des Mendelssohn-Schülers Eduard...

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Neue Musikzeitung Juli/August 2004 (Hanspeter Krellmann - 2004.07.01)

**nmz**  
neue musikzeitung

**Schatten-Dasein – Komponisten, die aus dem Raster fallen**

Schatten-Dasein – Komponisten, die aus dem Raster fallen

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Pizzicato 09/2001 (Rémy Franck - 2001.09.01)

**pizzicato**  
Rémy Franck's Journal about Classical Music

Ein seltener Melodienreichtum prägt die beiden Streichquartette des Mendelssohn-Schülers Eduard Franck (1817-1893), die das Edinger-Quartett auf dieser Audite-CD spielt. Dabei hinterlässt vor allem das dramatische, in seinen volksliedhaften Klängen slawisch angehauchte c-moll-Quartett einen nachhaltigen Eindruck. Das klassischer wirkende Opus 54 überrascht mit stilistisch und formal sehr überzeugender Musik, die weitaus expressiver ist als jene des c-moll-Quartetts. Zentralstück ist hier das 'Adagio molto espressivo', das durch seinen Charakter und das Zitat aus der Bach-Arie 'Es ist vollbracht' als Trauermusik gekennzeichnet wird. Beide Quartette entpuppen sich in der lebendigen, imaginativen und wirklich zu unsprechenden Interpretation des Edinger Quartetts als originelle und eminent musikalische Kompositionen, die auszugraben sich wirklich lohnte. Ich will nicht sagen, dass man - bei allem Lob, den die vier Musiker für ihr Engagement verdienen - diese Musik nicht noch etwas souveräner, klangschöner und im Sound etwas ausgeglichener gestalten könnte, aber wegen ihres Repertoire-Werts verdient diese CD allemal die Supersonic-Auszeichnung!

www.amazon.co.uk 26 Jul 2009 (J. A. Peacock - 2009.07.26)

**amazon**

**Another fine issue in Audite's Eduard Franck edition**

As I have noted in other reviews of Franck's chamber music, works in the minor keys do not figure prominently in his compositional oeuvre; this perhaps reflects an essentially genial and optimistic musical disposition, though listeners familiar with the works recorded so far by Audite will know that he is capable of passages and movements of heartfelt expression too.

The C minor quartet, op 55, recorded here sounds a more Romantic strain than his F minor quartet had done - reviewed here, Franck E - String Quartet in F minor Op.49/Piano Quartet in D major Op.45 (Edinger Quartett). That earlier work seemed to strive for a more elevated mode of expression: its musical argument is constructed through motive work that was perhaps derived ultimately from Beethoven's quartets, albeit transmuted through Mendelssohn. The opening movement in the C minor quarter shares the same sense of driving rhythm that had dominated the finale of his quartet in F minor; in this piece, however, it is allied with more full-bloodedly melodic mode of expression. If there is still a 'tragic' tone to this music, it is a personal rather than a universal one. The 'allegretto' that follows offers a consolatory and contrastingly tender sound world, before the vigorous scherzo introduces some wildly dancing music; the finale is something of a tour-de-force in its energy and changes of mood. It certainly rounds off the work in style.

The quartet in E flat major is expansively conceived and opens with a touching, almost hymn-like 'adagio molto' introduction; you might perhaps expect the main body of this sonata form movement to be somewhat mellow, but the 'allegro' that follows is a high-spirited piece, rich in detail and displaying the composer's customary sure handling of form. The long 'adagio molto espressivo' is an eloquent and touching piece - one of those movements of 'heartfelt expression' I referred to in the opening paragraph. The scherzo and finale seem somewhat short compared to the earlier movements, both of which are individually longer than scherzo and finale combined. There is certainly no lack of energy or incident in them, though, with the last movement displaying an engaging and imaginative mastery of melodic variation.

This is another successful disc in Audite's ongoing series of recordings devoted to Eduard Franck. On the basis of the issues we have heard so far, long may Audite's advocacy of this fine composer continue. Highly recommended.

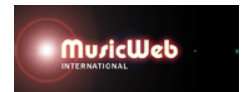
**www.ClassicsToday.com 1/2000 (Victor Carr Jr - 2000.01.01)**



The Edinger Quartet's secure and enthusiastic playing communicates the love these players must feel for this music [...] Audite's warm, close recording puts you right in front of the players, making this disc a real treat for quartet lovers.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**www.musicweb-international.com 01.11.2003 (Rob Barnett - 2003.11.01)**



Here are two of the three surviving string quartets of Eduard Franck. All three have been recorded by Audite. Franck was a pupil of Mendelssohn who rated Franck's work very highly. Franck was the son of a family deeply rooted in the banking activity of Breslau.

The C minor quartet (Op.55) has a pattering, purposeful and almost ruthless Allegro. It is startling and really catches the imagination. The Allegretto makes for a rest after such unrelenting activity offering 'stillness and the night' from another age. The vivace third movement has a Hungarian restlessness of mood. In the mercurial finale the moods melt and move but the music is nowhere near as dark as that of the first movement. The Op.54 Quartet starts with a reverent Adagio of the same mien as the Adagietto of the Op. 55 work. The Olympian calm continues into the powerfully sustained second movement (Adagio molto espressivo). After two Adagios come two Allegros in which quicksilver restlessness and contentment are the order of the day.

In common with the other three Audite Francks the detailed booklet notes are by Franck scholar, Michael Struck-Schloen. The excellent audio qualities of the recording add lustre to these world premiere recordings.

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