

Chaussier, H: Elégy

Edited by Daniel Bourgue

Hommage à Madame Anna Galliné

(Piano can be substituted for the Harp)

Henri CHAUSSIER: ELEGY FOR HORN AND HARP OR PIANO

PREFACE

Henri CHAUSSIER, born in 1854, prior to being a player of the "cor à pistons" was an expert of the "cor simple" who acquired a fairly good reputation as a soloist. He was solo horn of the Orchestra of the Society of Concerts at the Conservatory (which has today become the Orchestra of Paris), at Cologne, and at Padeloup.

He was also engaged as solo horn at the BILSE concerts in Berlin and there, wanting (like his German colleagues), to play the orchestral repertoire for the Horn in F, he was confronted with the problems of transposing (new to him) and of the problems inherent in the high range of the instrument (the closeness of the harmonics). This led him, upon his return to France, to create a new instrument with 4 valves, (3 pistons and a rotary valve for the thumb). This new horn, called the Chaussier omnitonic horn, made possible the playing of the 13 tones of the "cor simple": from Bb alto to Bb basse. It had the peculiarity of incorporating two ascending valves: the second raised the pitch 1/2 tone, the third 2 tones (while the first lowered the pitch 1 tone). It was with this type instrument that Henri Chaussier played *Morceau de Concert* by Saint Saens as a first audition at the National Music Society of Paris. In Paris, on April 11, 1891, where the newspaper *L'Orpheon* was located, an experiment was held comparing the "cor à pistons" in F and the Chaussier omnitonic horn. This experiment took place in the presence of the outstanding music personalities of the day, i.e. Théodore Dubois, Ernest Chausson, and Vincent D'Indy. At the conclusion of this confrontation, the listeners, considering the horn in F to be incomplete, almost unanimously preferred the Chaussier omnitonic horn. This ingenious system has since then, been almost totally forgotten.

The author of a variety of theoretical works on the horn, Henri Chaussier composed works for fanfares and for harmonies, various pieces for horn and piano, voice, horn and organ, and this *Elegy* for horn and harp.

Daniel BOURGUE