César Franck (1822–1890)

Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano (1886)

César Franck composed the Sonata in A Major in 1886 as a wedding gift for the Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. It is one of Franck's most famous chamber works, combining beautiful melodies with rich harmonies. The sonata consists of four movements and uses a cyclic structure, in which themes from earlier movements return in the later movements.

I. Allegretto ben moderato

The first movement opens with a gentle and lyrical melody, introduced by the violin after a short piano introduction. Its flowing character and reflective mood establish the main thematic material of the sonata.

II. Allegro

The second movement contrasts strongly with the first, featuring dramatic energy, turbulent rhythms and powerful musical exchanges between the two instruments.

III. Recitativo-Fantasia: Ben moderato

The third movement has a free and improvisatory character, with expressive melodies and changing moods. Its flexible structure gives the music a more intimate and reflective quality.

IV. Allegretto poco mosso

The final movement features a lyrical melody shared between the two instruments in a canonic style. Themes from earlier movements return, bringing the sonata together in a unified musical journey and leading to a triumphant conclusion.