

In the month of July the service music in worship will come from the French Romantic repertoire. Composers such as Franck, Saint-Saens, Guilmant, Widor, and Gigliotti wrote chorales, preludes and fugues, sonatas and organ symphonies. Most of these works are too long for worship in their entirety, so I will likely excerpt a movement or two from the larger whole to function as a prelude, offertory, or postlude. Also, it bears mentioning that France, being a principally Catholic country, does not have the large corpus of protestant chorale preludes as had been found in the North German Baroque repertoire, which supplied the service music in the month of June. The French Romantic repertoire is characterized by extended chromaticism, rapid dynamic changes (which are facilitated by the swell box), and regular use of extended tertian harmonies (9th, 11th, and 13th chords). Cesar Franck, a Belgian born composer, who took his position at the church of St. Clothilde in Paris, is one of the first composers of this repertoire, and therefore had a tremendous influence on the others through his position at the Paris Conservatory where many of the above either studied or taught. Franck's E Major Chorale is a personal favorite of mine. A link to a youtube video follows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxxPPbgLuh8>

The many chromatic sequences in this piece heighten the drama. The many beautiful solo lines are expressed wonderfully by the well-voiced organ ranks. I hope you enjoy the work. You are in my prayers. Jonathan