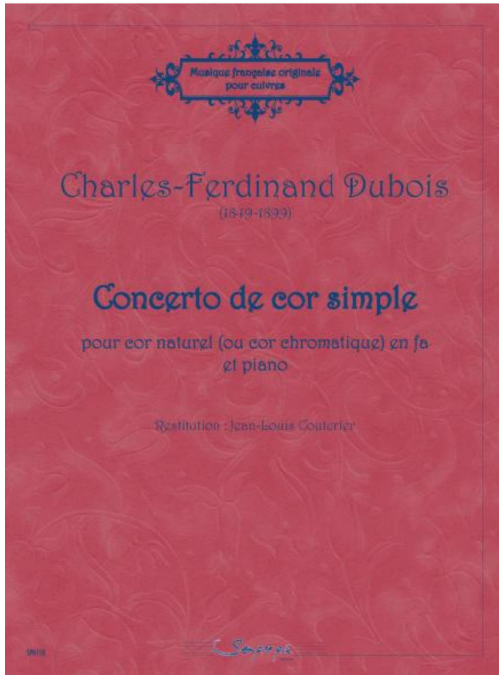


## C.F. Dubois : Concerto in F for Horn

### Music Reviews



**Charles-Ferdinand Dubois.** *Concerto de cor simple pour cor naturel (oucorchromatique) en fa et piano.* Edited by **Jean-Louis Couturier** (Paris: Semprepium Editions, 2014). [www.semprepium-editions.com](http://www.semprepium-editions.com)

In June 2014 *Semprepium Editions* published a new edition of Charles-Ferdinand Dubois's *Concerto de cor simple pour cor naturel (oucorchromatique) en fa et piano*. This edition is edited by Jean-Louis Couturier and like the other *Semprepium Editions* I have had the pleasure of seeing, this publication is very nicely packaged. It is based on a score published in 1889 by *H.A. Simon Editeur* of Paris which is currently in the collection of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* (call number K.38505). That original score is dedicated to Jean Pénable of the Concerts Society of the Paris Conservatoire.

Charles-Ferdinand Dubois lived from 1849 to 1899, so his experience with the horn in Paris would have placed him in the same position of such figures as Camille Saint-Saens and Paul Dukas. It would be right to view this piece, like Saint-Saens and Dukas's works for the horn, as part of the transitional period in which Parisian horn players were still clinging to the natural horn even though much of Europe had adopted the valve horn. It makes perfect sense in this context, that Dubois would indicate that his piece is for either the natural horn or the chromatic horn. The piece is entirely playable on the natural horn, but there are some challenging passages that would be much easier to play on the valve horn.

Jean-Louis Couturier has taken the time carefully to set the score to ensure that it is easy to read. Accordingly, the horn part is laid out to provide logical and practical page turns. Even the piano score is made easier to read (at the beginning of the third movement, for example) by eliminating the rests in the horn part from the score to avoid unnecessary visual clutter and page turns. From a player's perspective, I found the metronome markings to be very helpful since this is not a piece I had encountered previously. Also, the publisher's website offers brief midi recordings that provide a nice basic example of the sound of this music.

The piece itself is approximately seven minutes long. The opening *Allegro* movement is interrupted by a brief *Andante non troppo* before returning to a quick *Animato*. The first movement is easily playable on natural horn, containing several arpeggio passages and melodic lines reminiscent of Beethoven or Mozart. The middle *Andante* movement is loaded with trills, a cadenza section, and some of the most challenging chromatic passages of the piece. The final 6/8 *Allegro*, comprised mainly of arpeggios in the tonic key, seems inspired by the calls of hunting horns. It is interrupted by an *Appassionato* section using long lyrical lines before finishing with a return to the *allegro* horn calls. The last movement and the piece are rounded out by a lively *Poco animato* that contains fast 6/8 figures with enough chromaticism to challenge even accomplished natural horn players.

-- Eric Brummit