

The organ of the church Notre-Dame de Lorette in Paris (75009) Opus 1 (?)

Begun in 1836, after a proposal dating from 1833, this instrument is the work of the entire Cavallé-Coll family: Dominique, Vincent and Aristide. The pipework was made in the workshop of the Saint-Denis basilica and there is an obvious kinship between the two instruments: tulip-shaped reeds, Bourdons with a "bottle" chimney for example.

The instrument, which was received on October 22, 1838 for 32,000 Francs (about 77,000 €), has three manuals (two 54-note manuals, a 37-note Swell and a 21-note pedalboard in a recessed console). The innovations are quite important for the time: pedalboard in the German style (with a small ravalement, thus Fa-la), two expressive stops by variable wind, an expressive box and unusual stops: conical flute, flute with pavillon, Cor anglais. But contrary to Saint-Denis, there is no pneumatic machine discovered after the organ of Notre-Dame de Lorette had been completed. The mechanism is hard and relatively unreliable.

Aristide Cavallé-Coll thought of its evolution in a project of 1868 (see composition) but it was his competitors Debain (1872) and Stotz frères (1881) who were chosen without their work resulting in an improved classical organ, let alone a convincing romantic organ.

The Schwenkedel firm was to restore an organ that was almost abandoned (the Abbey choir organ was used for services) in the 1960s, but its bankruptcy led to the decision to turn to the organ builder Haerpfer-Erman, who decided to completely rebuild the organ without consultation. The windchests were judged to be unsalvageable, which triggered considerable work (layout inside the case with chromatic and no longer diatonic windchests, etc.).

Most of the ACC pipes have been preserved, which still allows us to enjoy the typical sounds of Cavallé's first period.

Frédéric Thibault:

Contrary to what is written, the pipes had also been retouched in harmony in the 60s. I maintained it in the 80s. The mouths, bevels, and other parts had been much modified to be in keeping with what were believed at the time to be ancient sounds. The respect for the ACC organs was not what fortunately exists today and many of the works were done according to "I think it has to sound like this". As you rightly point out in your article, many things were done without consultation, without exchanges.