

**JULIUS REUBKE**  
**1834-1858**

**Sonata on Ninety-Fourth Psalm**

Reubke was the most promising of Franz Liszt's pupils and up until his untimely death at twenty-four was already composing for the organ in the grand style of the elder master. The twenty-minute *Sonata*, Reubke's only substantial work for organ, is organized in three parts played without pause (Grave/Allegro, Adagio, Fugue) and is based on a single theme stated very quietly in the pedal at the outset. The theme is constructed around a fully diminished seventh chord, which allows it to "travel" easily in many different harmonic and motivic directions. This monothematic style is a hallmark of the organ works of Liszt, and convincing argument is often made that pieces such as this served as the prototypes for the later French Symphonic organ style generally credited to César Franck. As for the biblical reference, Psalm 94 is an appeal to God to right the wrongs perpetrated by the arrogant and wicked against the weak. Although dark and brooding in its C-minor tonality, the *Sonata* appears to make no deliberate attempt to illustrate the Psalm on a verse-by-verse basis, and the theological implications therefore tend to take a secondary position against the musical and historical interest of the piece. Some organists even omit the Psalm reference from the title, calling it by the German *Grosse Sonate*.