

The **Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano** by [César Franck](#) is one of his best-known compositions, and is considered one of the finest sonatas for violin and piano ever written. It is an amalgam of his rich native harmonic language with the Classical traditions he valued highly, held together in a cyclic framework.

The Violin Sonata in A was written in 1886, when [César Franck](#) was 63, as a wedding present for the 28-year-old violinist [Eugène Ysaÿe](#).

Franck was not present when Ysaÿe married, but on the morning of the wedding, on 26 September 1886 in [Arlon](#), their mutual friend [Charles Bordes](#) presented the work as Franck's gift to Ysaÿe and his bride Louise Bourdeau de Courtrai. After a hurried rehearsal, Ysaÿe and Bordes' sister-in-law, the pianist [Marie-Léontine Bordes-Pène](#), played the Sonata to the other wedding guests.

The movements alternate between slow and fast.

- *Allegretto ben moderato*, **9**  
**8** This gentle and sweetly reflective rocking theme, introduced by the violin after a short introduction by the piano, is the thematic core of the entire work. Franck originally intended it as a slow movement, but Ysaÿe preferred a slightly quicker tempo, and convinced Franck to mark it *Allegretto*.
- *Allegro* This turbulent movement is sometimes considered the real opening movement, with the *Allegretto ben moderato* serving as a long introduction.
- *Ben moderato: Recitativo-Fantasia* This is improvisatory in nature, and free in both structure and expression.
- *Allegretto poco mosso* The main melody is heard in [canonic imitation](#) between the instruments, and recurs in a rondo-like manner to a triumphant and soaring conclusion. James Harding described the movement as "a magnificent example of canonic writing, simple, majestic and irresistible in its ample, beautifully wrought proportions".