

**IN SEARCH OF THE REMAINING ELEMENTS OF SÉBASTIEN ÉRARD AND
GABRIEL JOSEPH GRENIÉ'S ORGANS, FIRST EXPRESSIVE ORGANS BUILT IN
FRANCE**

Thierry Maniguet

Musée de la musique Philharmonie de Paris, France

tmaniguet@cite-musique.fr

ABSTRACT

Well known for his piano and harp actions, Sébastien Érard (1752-1831) also worked more than thirty years on the development of a new pipe organ on which it was possible to express musical dynamics. Achieved shortly before Érard's death, this ingenious mechanism never really had the chance to be used. The most important instrument of the kind was built in Paris in 1829 for the King's chapel but was badly damaged during the revolutionary events of July 1830. Rebuilt in 1854 in the Castel of Tuileries, it was destroyed when the building was set on fire in May 1871. Apart this organ, it was commonly believed that two other instruments were built during Érard's life but their becoming was not clearly established until today. The orgue expressif of Gabriel Joseph Grenié (1756-1837) is also mainly known from literature. Pioneer in the use of free reed, Grenié patented in 1810 an expressive instrument in which reeds were laid out in resonators. His system would be developed by his apprentice Théodore Achille Müller (1801-1871) until the 1860's, supplanted by Debain's and Alexandre's harmoniums in the mid-19th century. As well as Érard's organs, none instrument from Grenié seemed to have survived. This paper will examine Erard and Grenié's systems, very different in their approach of the same purpose. The story of the built organs by these makers will be retraced up to the present day.