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DICTIONNAIRE *BERLIOZ*
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“I would have to live 200 years to become famous in France”. These ironic words of Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) that befit his relentless criticism of Parisian music life and particularly the fossilized music institutions acquired new meaning and a prophetic implication during the monumental celebration of the bicentennial of his birth.

Namely, although it would be untrue to say that the “under-rehearsed” performances of Berlioz’s complete work considerably changed the previous perception of his music, at least in France, a collective enterprise of musicologists and publishers who managed after years of preparation to publish within a short period of time his correspondence (*Correspondence générale*), memoirs (*Mémoires*), five out of ten planned volumes of critical writings (*Critique musicale*), books published by himself (*Les soirées de l’orchestre*, *Les grotesques de la musique*, *A travers chants*), several new biographies, principally those by David Cairns and Rémy Stricker, as well as the complete sound archive with 4,000 units (*H. Berlioz, Phonographie*), opens a new chapter in understanding the “phenomenon called Berlioz”.

Appending thousands of Berlioz’s pages (*Critique musicale* alone has over 2,000) and pages on Berlioz is the *Dictionnaire (Dictionary)*, an international project of some eighty authors headed by “Berliozologists” Pierre Citron, professor at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Cécile Reynaud, custodian of the Music Department of the French National Library, Pierre Bartoli, musicology professor at the Sorbonne, and Peter Bloom, professor of music and musicology at Smith College, Massachusetts.

An abundance and diversity of the often controversial aspects of Berlioz’s life and work, his ambiguous poetry in music history and performing practice and the need to bring order into that disarray, dictated the form of the dictionary intended for both a professional and a wider audience. When critically reading this book, particularly with reference to objections, one should bear in mind three general facts that can be easily overseen in the forest of processed data. While the first refers to the positively great traditional French experience in the domain of lexicography, which has been experiencing a new renaissance in the last decade, the second points to a renewed interest in the 19th century, notable in the past few years, whereas the third fact arises from the perceived eclectic state of post-modern musicology (post-modern musicologies) that vacillates between opposing approaches and methods, without consensus in opting for one possible synthesis (F. B. Mache, *Ecléctisme et synthèse: les conditions d’une nouvelle musicologie générale*, ICMS, Paris, 1994).

Through some 600 user-friendly entries of uneven length, the *Dictionnaire* deals with Berlioz’s biography in great detail, starting from the family genealogy (*Berlioz-famille*, pp. 69-72), his emotional

attachment to his birthplace and the family home (*La Côte-Saint-André*, pp. 293-4), all the Parisian addresses and various stopovers of this great traveller, to sometimes too elaborate an account of his intimate life (*Smithson, Harriet*, pp. 515-18), the medical and psychosomatic problems he had or might have had (*Maladie*, p. 325), to an “archeologically” intoned article about his style in clothing (*Vetements*, 574-5) and extensive descriptions of his relationships with numerous colleagues, musicians, painters, writers and politicians, including his friends and enemies from the world of art and politics. Regardless of the degree of a reader’s affinity for the overstressed biographical dimension of the *Dictionnaire*, which at times acquires a “novelistic” undertone, one must admit that it enables a gradual familiarizing with the epoch and the European context in which this exuberant Romantic was creating, it facilitates the understanding of and communication with his work and elucidates many pages of his writings, some of which became obscure in the meantime.

The *Dictionnaire* functions very effectively and, one might say, interactively, especially in entries concerning Berlioz’s countless travels and contacts with the musical milieus of Italy and Germany, where he was better accepted during his lifetime than in France (*Italie*, pp. 281-3; *Allemagne et Europe centrale*, pp. 20-26), his frequent sojourns in England (*Angleterre*, pp. 32-3) and Russia (*Russie*, pp. 487-9), as well as his guest performances in Prague, Vienna and Budapest. Although the authors of these writings were given the freedom of individual approach, the inconsistency was compensated by a comprehensive elaboration of the subject from different angles, which for example, with regard to Italy, in addition to such musical centres as Rome, Florence and Naples, also covers Berlioz’s fascination with the landscapes of Umbria and Tuscany.

His journeys to England are surely most exhaustively and competently depicted because, along with a record of his actual performances and encounters with musicians, this extensive entry by D. Cairns also describes the evolution of Great Britain’s fascinating reception of the composer’s work, both in the past and nowadays, with special regard to conductors who have specialized on the French author.

In his *Memoires* Berlioz expresses his gratitude to Germany, England and Russia for their good reception. Unfortunately, two of his sojourns in Russia were given inadequate space in the *Dictionnaire*, in which there was no room for a more inclusive description of a network of influences of *programmatic music* and the principles of orchestration on Russian national composers. A disproportionately short entry *Programmatic music* (*Programme, musique de*, pp. 441-2) also remains inaccessible to Russian authors, so that it is only by referring to Balakirev (*Balakirev, Mily*, p. 52) and Rimsky-Korsakov (*Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai*, p. 471), and not the disregarded Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky, that we can gain a slightly better insight into the marks Berlioz’s music left in Russia.

In any case, what remains after cross-reading this collective work is a vibrating impression of a unique musical and cultural Europe, considerably expanded compared to that of Mozart, in the defining of which Berlioz participated on an equal footing with Liszt.

Surely the editorial team of the *Dictionnaire* put greatest effort into a critical presentation of Berlioz’s still insufficiently explored complete work. Scrupulously, with occasional exaggeration, each

individual work is discussed at length: its genesis, musical and aesthetical characteristics, possible versions and arrangements, its reception at the premiere and subsequent performances... The authors sought to eliminate indeterminate and at times contrasting data, but did not disregard the numerous adaptations and arrangements of other people's compositions.

A place of honour, judging by its volume and room for analysis, is given to the *Symphonie Fantastique* (*Symphonie fantastique*, pp. 537-41), particularly examined from the viewpoint of innovation and proclaimed the watershed of Romanticism by the author of this section, J. P. Bartoli. Pointing to the context in which this work was created, namely when interest in large instrumental forms diminished, the author accentuates the musical, literary and philosophical inspiration leading to the synthetic realization of the work. He mentions Beethoven's last period including his Ninth Symphony, Mendelssohn's orchestral "brio" meeting with hinted programmatic-ness, the French pre-Romantic opera of Grétry and Méhul who used "reminiscences of subjects" and atypical instruments for characterization, as well as dramatized marches and waltzes, theatrical aesthetics, notably Diderot's writings on instrumental music as "drama without words"... all this in the function of Berlioz's inner need to "go further towards narrative principles". The author particularly points out the "symphonic dramatization and poeticizing" unpretentiously designated by Berlioz as an "expressive instrumental genre", and insists on the composer's diverging from classical symphonic rhetoric, which the pair "development - re-exposition" particularly let down to the benefit of a continual development through successive climaxes.

However, even less familiar and marginal works, such as the orchestration of the *Hymne des Marseillaise* (*Hymne des Marseillaise*, pp. 265-7) in two versions, are also treated exploratively and incorporated into the political and cultural context of the European music scene of the time, as well as into the context of Berlioz's production. Numerous pages are dedicated to incomplete and missing works, as well as to unaccomplished plans (*Oeuvres inachevées et projetées*, pp. 395-400), with very useful enclosed tables referring to some thirty missing, eight planned and only seven incomplete works.

Elaborated details on Berlioz's works and their place within individual genres at the time of their creation can be found in erudite writings chiefly dedicated to vocal-instrumental genres which Berlioz addressed during his entire career, considering them "superior". These included choirs, divided into those accompanied by the piano and orchestra (*Oeuvres chorales*, pp. 392-5), opera (*Opéra genre*, pp. 399-403), oratorio (*Oratorio*, pp. 404-5) and libretto (*Livret d'opéra*, pp. 312-15).

The confines of the *Dictionnaire* did not permit music examples accompanying entries dedicated to certain works. They appear only sporadically with terms that additionally elucidate Berlioz's style and compositional technique; for instance, the particularly interesting *Counterpoint* (*Contrepoint*, pp. 120-2) and *Modality* (*Modalité*, pp. 353-4), substantiated by a series of examples.

The confines of this paper, on the other hand, do not permit an imaginary journey through the labyrinths of not only Berlioz's epoch, but also of the fragmentary history of European culture, which is otherwise the most appealing level of this eclectic and rich book. The *Dictionnaire* features characters brought to life by Berlioz's exceptional energy and power of communication, those famous and those by

now forgotten, from Virgil, Shakespeare, Goethe, Delacroix, Balzac, Hugo, Liszt and Wagner, to Berlioz's friend, publisher and composer Henry Litolf, to versatile German musician Berthold Damcke, to the influential French family Bertin that controlled the Paris Opera and whose member, Louise, was one of the rare women composers in France, to another forgotten woman composer Jeanne-Louise Farrenc...

Many other entries show that this ambitious book contains little known or completely unknown data on the prolific music scene of the 19th century. Unfortunately, this additional explorative dimension remains unrevealed because it is not accompanied by adequate indexes of names. This way, featuring only a thematic index at the end of the book without reference to corresponding pages, *Dictionnaire Berlioz* appears to be incomplete and calls for a new and updated edition.

Despite this (in)significant deficiency, the *Dictionnaire* is considered one of the most provocative publications in the year of Berlioz. On interactive reading, it quickly imposes the conclusion that Berlioz was even during his lifetime a European cultural actor *par excellence*, transcending the boundaries of France and shifting the boundaries of music in general. As he himself predicted, the composer waited a full 200 years for such a change of expert opinion in France.

Translated by Dušan Zabrdac