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**Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). xv + 363pp. £50 (hb) £21.99 (pb)**

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matter might the critics, since the book is so much grounded in their reactions. The introduction lists several authors who were also composers or literary figures such as Stendhal, but the text, rightly, has recourse to more obscure hacks. More information is needed to evaluate the remarks of such people as Scudo, Fiorentino, Escudier. Who was Xavier Aubryet, cited on p. 274, whose refreshing desire to get rid of tedious musical symmetry echoes Schumann: 'Is it not true that, three-quarters of the time, a composer's phrases complete themselves automatically as you hear them?'<sup>6</sup> It is good to find Berlioz, too often quoted as if he were the only authority, among his fellow toilers in journalism; we also get quite a bit of Wagner. Indeed, a handsome review of this book in *19th-Century Music* by Annegret Fauser suggests that Wagner's ghost stalks through these pages (challenging us 'on how to read operas created during Wagner's lifetime and after his death') and so partially qualifies Lacombe's achievement in trying to take a Franco-centric view of French phenomena.<sup>7</sup> She is of course right and yet, since Wagner and his potent influence cannot be undone, it might equally have falsified the enterprise had Lacombe suppressed his role of critic or his musical and dramatic influence, perceptible if not overwhelming, on 'opéra lyrique'. Unexpectedly, it could emerge that the critics who found Wagnerism in *Carmen*, Nietzsche notwithstanding, and however much they disliked it, may have been the perceptive ones.

These, however, are but small carp in a large pond, and they do not undermine the foundations of Lacombe's enterprise, which are essentially concerned with imaginative empathy, achieved with a mixture of fact and evocative writing which is refreshing and frequently entertaining.

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Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). xv + 363pp. £50 (hb) £21.99 (pb)

In his preface, Julian Rushton expresses his love for the music of Berlioz (or nearly all of it). Following my performance of much of his music involving choral forces (*Les Francs-Juges*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Lélio*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, *Scène héroïque*, the Requiem, the Te Deum, and even Berlioz's 1841 French version with recitatives of Weber's *Der Freischütz*) as a member of the Chœur de l'Orchestre de Paris in their three-year Berlioz bicentenary cycle culminating in 2003, my own appreciation of Berlioz has become increasingly emotional, visceral (and so some would argue, unintellectual). And Rushton's book is about 'music first, including associated texts and, I hope, "meanings"; it is not a biography, nor is it a work of musical

<sup>6</sup> Schumann went further, in his review of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*: 'Italian melody – the sort that we know perfectly even before it starts'. Cited from Ian Bent, ed., *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2: *Hermeneutic Approaches* (Cambridge, 1994), 187. Laconically, Lacombe tells us that Aubryet's outburst was published on 7 October 1863, and we are left to assume that it was inspired by Bizet's opera, which by then had been performed three times.

<sup>7</sup> Annegret Fauser, Review (also of Huebner, *French Opera*), *19th-Century Music*, 26/3 (Spring 2003): 278–85.

philosophy' (p. v). Rushton's monograph comes almost 20 years after his *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (which I admit to not having read), and whilst complementary to his earlier opus, the new book often directs the reader to the former one in order to avoid repetition. This practice forms part of a broad and detailed set of references to all the major Berlioz criticism that has been published in recent decades, and through which Rushton displays as masterly a command of secondary texts as of the sources, musical and literary, that form the basis of his erudite study. The book is divided into three parts: chapters 1–3 form a biography of Berlioz's music (not life); chapters 4–6 present an interpretation of the musical data; chapters 7–10 deal in more detail with the major works. The first section is well written, thick with detail which is not always easy to follow but which is, on the whole, thoroughly readable. Only the musical detail of the smaller, lesser-known works sometimes encumbers the biographical text, but then I suppose Rushton wanted to include this detail somewhere and, without recourse to appendices and such like (he aims not to write a series of handbooks with this monograph), this section was the most satisfactory, if not entirely satisfying, place to include it.

In Parts II and III, which together make up 280 pages on 'The Music of Berlioz', Rushton shows his true vocation as pedagogue, for the musical detail contained within these sections forms a fine analytical study of Berlioz's major works which every university library should have on its shelves. But the book is frighteningly scholastic and musicologically narrow. Rushton sets everything in a context of how Berlioz would be expected to write, considering his musical predecessors, his heroes, his contemporaries and his teachers. Indeed, the emphasis put on the teachings of Lesueur and how Berlioz's composition relates to that of his mentor, although indubitably important, casts a heavy shadow over the text, adding extra academicism to the already doggedly studious approach. 'Part II: Techniques and Meanings' abandons whole works to address such issues as compositional techniques, hermeneutics, word-setting, programmes and different themes which span various works such as 'heaven and hell', 'exoticism, eroticism and love'. Rushton raises many questions regarding intertextuality in the music of Berlioz, providing us with a helpful table of Berlioz's principal self-borrowings on p. 74 which, in spite of Rushton's aim for Part I (not always attained) not to look forward in Berlioz's *œuvre*, would have been useful from the start of the book. However, he invariably leaves his own questions unanswered and, in his discussion of the reintegration of themes from *Cléopâtre* in *Benvvenuto Cellini* and *Sardanapale* in *Les Troyens*, offers no solution to how the 'potentially trickier problems of interpretation' (which he does not elucidate) might be surmounted. The partitioning of works contained within this section of the book could reveal interesting and novel patterns and provide new insights into a composer's way of thinking and writing. However, for me, this section is the least successful. In dealing with certain, very precise aspects of different works, the interpretation of the musical material can provide only a very partial, truncated and, at worst, misleading reading of the 'text'. Perhaps the best (or worst) example of this kind is Rushton's discussion of word-setting in relation to Antoine Reicha's 1833 treatise on the rules of French prosody *L'Art du compositeur dramatique* (pp. 95–7), and in the context of Méphistophélès's call to salaciousness 'Voici les roses'. Whilst Rushton's insistent restitution of contemporary technical theory is valid as a means of interpretation of Berlioz's procedures, this technique tells us little about what Berlioz's music actually

means. 'Voici les roses' sees Méphistophélès as *entremetteur*, as a corrupting influence on Faust, whose sole purpose is to plunge Faust into a context of erotic contemplation. A discussion of the voluptuous and, in places, melismatic melodic line cannot exclude this context. Hence, Rushton's discussion of the eroticism evoked by the melody is cringingly gauche and includes such aberrations as 'the syllable "sur" is peculiarly suited, in French, to erotic invitation' (p. 96), and, in the context of an extended note to set 'leurs' in the phrase 'Où des fleurs pour ta couche ouvriront leurs corolles', 'the expansion of "leurs" may seem strange – what else but a flower has a corolla?' (p. 97). Either this last sentence is tongue in cheek or Rushton seriously lacks imagination. What he is trying to say, I believe, in this passage is that Berlioz stresses, through interval and note value, certain less important words in the sentence to give an overall impression of *volupté* evoked by the text, without actually stressing the words which contain erotic connotation. But his blinkered theoretical approach to the word-setting opens him to embarrassing and downright strange affirmations. That said, Rushton's later discussion of love scenes in *Roméo et Juliette* and *Les Troyens* (chapter 6), in which he is careful to differentiate love from eroticism and during which he closely considers the specific dramatic situations and proposes subtle readings of the musical material, is particularly fine.

'Part III: The Works' provides analytical commentary on selected aspects of Berlioz's major compositions. This discussion of the works, even if not the whole work is addressed, functions more conventionally and better than Part II. But Rushton is still hell bent on analysing Berlioz's music in terms of how it 'should behave' and focuses on typical Berliozian topics such as generic 'difficulties' throughout his *œuvre*. In his discussion of the tomb scene from *Roméo et Juliette* he even tries, in a Schenkerian reduction (the musical examples are, on the whole, very well done and helpful, despite a lot of dotting back and forth throughout the book to find the appropriate passage), to fit this scene into a theoretical framework 'widely accepted for nineteenth-century music'. One has to demand the point of this exercise, to which the pedagogical Rushton replies, as might a well-schooled undergraduate in the introduction to his/her dissertation:

My use of a Schenkerian paradigm in this context is partly intended to reveal precisely those qualities in the music which cannot be circumscribed by it. But confinement to one paradigm produces an inadequate analysis of any composition. The music deserves the theoretical risk of involving ourselves in a combination of approaches to music that may do justice to its actual complexity – or its messiness. (p. 273)

Of course, I am in total agreement with him, but does the reader really need this sort of lesson? Indeed, his discussion of this complex scene – complex in terms of programme, musical gesture, pace and rhythm – which derives much from the French tradition of ballet pantomime (mentioned extremely briefly by Rushton) could have been greatly enhanced by reference to the ground-breaking research of Marian Smith.<sup>1</sup> But, as Rushton points out, this sort of analysis

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<sup>1</sup> See, in particular, her *Ballet and Opera in the Age of 'Giselle'* (Princeton and Oxford, 2000).

comports too many 'risks' for him, and his substitution of the word 'messiness' for 'complexity' belies his true goal, which is to 'tidy up' even that music which he claims to love. Chapter 10 deals with 'Berlioz Dramatist'. Despite several *lieux communs* such as 'Berlioz is most dramatic when his musical invention is at its highest intensity' (p. 281) (is that not true of all successful operatic composers?), this chapter contains some interesting material, and Rushton's stylish discussion of the relationship between Cassandre and Choroebus in Act I of *Les Troyens*, providing fascinating insights – through traditional analysis of musical elements such as formal structure, motivic and harmonic patterns – into the characterization achieved by Berlioz, leaves us wondering why Rushton's whole text is not as engaging as this.

On the whole, Rushton's book is an excellent, if conventional, manual, complementary to his own earlier publications as well as those by other Berlioz scholars (to which his notes are extremely useful), for those seeking an analytical guide through the musical language of Berlioz. But it lacks imagination and creativity, particularly in terms of theoretical procedures and a style of language capable of gripping the reader in the same way as Berlioz's music intrigues and enchants the listener.

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Simon Trezise, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). xix + 326pp. £18.99

Reading *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, it is startling how much of our scholarly work on Debussy reflects the historical practice of the French Enlightenment *philosophes*. The volume contains no French contributions, but is dominated by a 'modern-day' (Anglo-American) representation of two Enlightenment approaches to history: (1) the Emotive Response, and (2) the Mechanical Response. There are both positive and negative consequences for our subject: positive, because of the Emotional and Mechanical aspects in Debussy's music and its cultural context, and negative, because as historical models they ultimately undermine our aim to discover more about Debussy at the current time.

Here Debussy is often discussed in an emotive language that demands deconstruction by the reader, as if we are reading a 'great' historical document ourselves. The emotive tone is evident as early as the introduction, through an acknowledgement of Debussy's 'sheer quality and originality' (p. 1), his 'highly attractive music' (p. 1), and his 'unique' position 'in the great canon of Western music' (p. 2). This merges later in the introduction and chapter 1 ('Debussy the Man' by Robert Orledge) with sympathetic interpretations of Debussy's own musing: 'I feel the difference there is in me between Debussy the composer and Debussy the man' (p. 24). As modern readers we are invited to share the 'mysteries of Debussy the man and Debussy the musician' (p. 3), or to realize that 'if many people during his life wanted Debussy the man to be different there are few who would now seek any changes in Debussy the composer' (p. 24). One example of a successful emotional literary style is seen in the descriptions of the influence of Debussy's Parisian community, particularly Mallarmé and Baudelaire, which manage to synthesize and present objective material while maintaining an 'authentic'