

*Richard Strauss: Arabella* by Kenneth Birkin. Cambridge Opera Handbooks, C.U.P., £9.95 (paperback).

*The Music of Lennox Berkeley* by Peter Dickinson. Thames Publishing, £19.95.

*Musical Analysis and the Listener* by Nicholas Cook. Garland Publishing Inc. (Outstanding Dissertations from British Universities), \$40.00.

*Béla Bartók: The Man and his Work* by Tibor Tallian. Corvina Press, Budapest, no price quoted.

*My Musical Life* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, translated by Judah A. Joffe, with an introduction by Carl van Vechten. Faber & Faber £7.99 (paperback). Reprint of the Eulenberg reprint (1974) of the original Knopf edition (1923).

*Opera in Crisis: Tradition, Present, Future* by Henry Pleasants. Thames and Hudson, £11.95.

*'Friedenstag' and 'Daphne': An Interpretive Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of the Two Operas* by Richard Strauss by Kenneth Birkin. Garland Publishing, Inc. (Outstanding Dissertations from British Universities), no price quoted.

*Structure and Sorcery: The Aesthetics of Post-War Serial Composition and Indeterminacy* by Roger W.H. Savage. Garland Publishing Inc. (Outstanding Dissertations from British Universities), no price quoted.

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## Letters to the Editor

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From David L. Montgomery

Reinhard Kapp's recent account of the dispute between Leibowitz and Boulez, in 'Shades of the Double's Original' (*Tempo* 165), was well researched and fairly presented. Yes, there is reason to reappraise Leibowitz's contributions to music – not only as a 'musicologist' (a term he would not have used to describe himself), but as a conductor, composer, theorist, and especially as a teacher.

As a composition and conducting pupil of René Leibowitz, I greatly prized his direct approach to musical problems – typified by the Editions Dynamo prospectus and, in fact, by his entire stance in the rift with Boulez. However, his constant battle against the 'prétexte à érudition' must not be taken as a quest for simplicity as much as an unyielding insistence upon comprehensibility – a quality he demanded of himself as well as of his students.

Having had the opportunity of working with both Leibowitz and Boulez, I can say with certainty that, were it not for the lamentable but irreconcilable differences over prescriptions for the present and future of serious music (exacerbated by differences in personality and public conduct), they might have agreed upon a number of other issues. To cite only one: in their attitudes towards conducting they showed remarkable similarities. Neither man was taken in by the noxious directorial preening so carefully cultivated by other professional conductors. I have questioned both of them on

the issue of baton technique: Leibowitz declared it to be worth maybe a week of study, and advised me simply to be clear; Boulez probably doesn't even own a baton. Both were profoundly disinterested in issues that distracted from the pursuit of real musical understanding. And yet both caused things to happen in concert that excited one beyond imagination – Boulez by way of accurately underplaying complexity to great satisfaction, and Leibowitz by way of his great structural understanding and insight into classical performance practice.

Sadly, the great dispute between them led to nothing. Neither man realized that the extension of Schoenberg's position (taken by Leibowitz) and the extension of Webern's position (taken by Boulez and promoted to an effete *lingua franca* by the Princetonians) were to lead, eventually, to such complete and silly reactions. For who could have foreseen neo-romanticism's ostrich-like dive into the sand, or minimalism's eternal one-note samba? And the dizzying descent has only begun. Where composition is still practised in the academic community, it has often been reduced to mere lip-puttering. Clever composers, nowadays, spend most of their time on calligraphy and the invention of new notation.

A single critical note: Kapp states (p.2) that almost all the compositions of Leibowitz have been published. This cannot be true. The temporary catalogue lists 92 completed works, and even that is incomplete. (For example, his revision of *Oberon* is missing, and I think that the cabaret songs are missing also.) Nevertheless,

as an ardent admirer of Leibowitz and what he has left us, I congratulate Kapp for the sensitivity and insight of the article.

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*From Alan Poulton*

I was delighted to receive several offers of assistance in my compilation of a Dictionary of Modern British Composers 1893-1923 and I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the following who have agreed to complete the entries on:

- a) Walter Leigh (Ken Dance)
- b) Stanley Bate\* (Michael Barlow)
- c) Herbert Murrill\* (Michael Barlow)
- d) Peter Wishart\* (Don Roberts)

and for much needed supplementary information on:

- e) Humphrey Searle (David Wright)
- f) Denis ApIvor (David Wright)
- g) William Wordsworth (David Wright)
- h) Arthur Benjamin (Rob Barnett)
- i) George Lloyd (Lewis Foreman)

\* The original list of 40 composers has now been extended to a maximum of 50 with the

addition of such names as Gerald Finzi, Peter Wishart, Herbert Murrill, Stanley Bate, Patrick Hadley and E.J. Moeran. Though already well documented in many other publications, several people have suggested that such eminent composers as Britten, Tippett, Walton and Arnold should be included so that basic information can be researched from one source book. It may well be necessary, therefore, to further refine or, indeed, completely re-define the final list of names and I'd welcome the views of your readers as to their own 'special' composers for inclusion within the defined time span of the birthdates, 1893 to 1923.

Finally may I ask if one of your readers would be prepared to help research the composer Christian Darnton? I have already compiled a provisional listing together with details of the MS holdings in the British Library. I understand that there is a great deal of information on Darnton first performances at the British Library and the research will probably involve a couple of visits to study the material. It would certainly spread the work-load and you will be contributing towards a greater understanding of a unique period in British musical history.

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