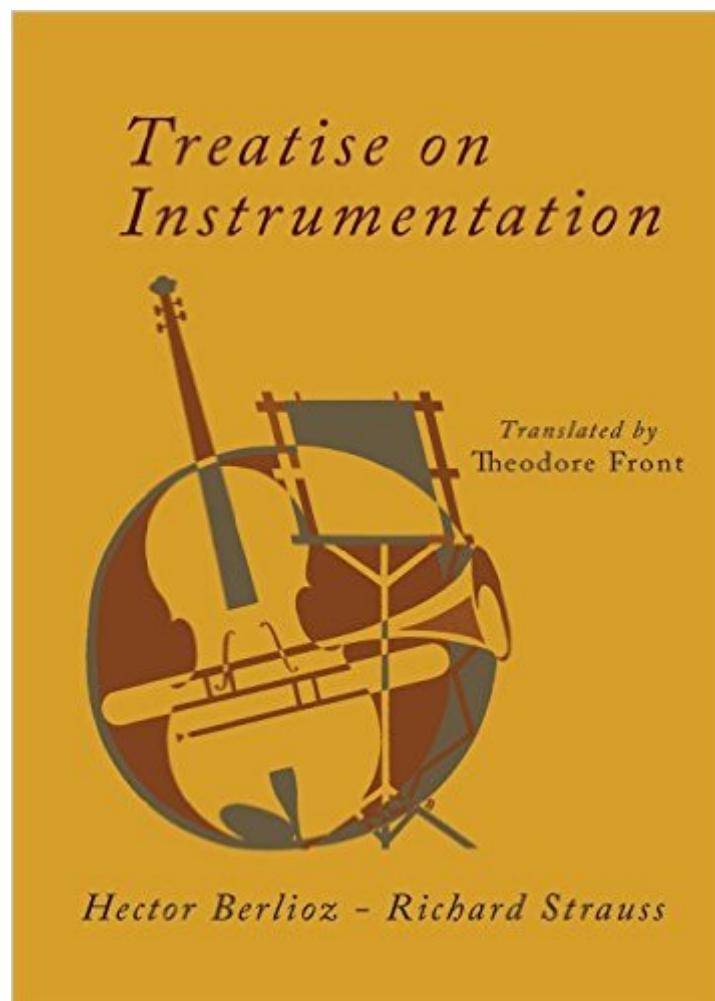


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Treatise On Instrumentation



Synopsis

2016 Reprint of 1948 Edition. Full facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. Berlioz's work was first published in 1843/4 in French, then reissued in 1855 in a revised and enlarged edition. It remains a landmark in the history of the symphony orchestra, and though there have been numerous technical improvements in the manufacture and playing of instruments since the composer's time, especially concerning wind and brass instruments, the work still retains much of its value. In 1904 Richard Strauss was asked to update the text to include some modern instruments and included musical examples from Wagner, and in 1905 the updated Treatise with a new preface by Strauss was published in German. The 1905 edition was first translated into English in 1948 and is reprinted herein. The book discusses the various technical aspects of instruments, such as chromatic range, tone quality, and limitations. An explanation of the role of particular instruments within the orchestra is also provided. The book also provides orchestral excerpts from classical scores to give examples of techniques discussed. These examples are sometimes of works by Berlioz himself, while Mozart, Wagner, Beethoven, and Gluck are also frequently cited.

Book Information

Paperback: 436 pages

Publisher: Martino Fine Books (July 12, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1684220041

ISBN-13: 978-1684220045

Product Dimensions: 8.3 x 0.9 x 11.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (11 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Two hundred years ago this week, Louis-Hector Berlioz was born. This, then, is a time for me to comment on a few of his works, some of them "favorites by acclamation" and others simply those in which I find special merit. When Berlioz died, in April, 1869, an obituary in the Musical Times read, in

part, "...there can be little doubt that he will be remembered by his able and acute contributions to musical criticism than by any of the compositions with which he hoped to revolutionize the world." These words by the *Musical Times* were addressed to Berlioz's *feuilletons* (musical criticisms in a largely satirical style). Berlioz captured many of his best *feuilletons* in his anthology *Soirées de l'Orchestre* ("Evenings in the Orchestra"), and his trenchant wit is also evident in his *Memoirs*. But Berlioz did leave behind one work for which musical education for generations of composers to come had been the purpose: his "Treatise on Instrumentation," or, if one likes, "the art of writing for musical instruments of the orchestra to achieve maximum effect." The Treatise was the very first serious effort to fully describe these matters of instrumentation and orchestration, instrument-by-instrument and orchestral-choir-by-orchestral-choir. Paraphrasing a portion of a recent Berlioz Bicentennial article by none less than Norman Lebrecht, the Treatise was closely studied by Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss (who themselves were masterly orchestrators), Modest Mussorgsky had died with a copy of the Treatise on his bed, and, as a result of wildly successful concerts led by Berlioz in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov was motivated to write his own equivalent, "Principles of Orchestration," which would serve as a model for his Russian school of composers.

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