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## Review

### Reviewed Work(s):

Jeux d'eau; Sonatine für Klavier

by Maurice Ravel and Günter Philipp:

Miroirs für Klavier

by Maurice Ravel and Günter Philipp: Jeux d'eau [for] Solo Piano by Maurice Ravel and Roger Nichols:

Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn; Prélude; A la manière de... [For] Solo Piano

by Maurice Ravel and Roger Nichols

Review by: David Grayson

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traditional role of the organ as a symbol of devotional glory, so easily accepted by Janáček in his student works and so ably exploited for dramatic effect in *Taras Bulba* and *Brouček*, is turned against itself. The raw, elemental writing for organ, and its

association with the Crucifixion, is a fitting timbral irony in a piece deeply ambivalent about the possibility of redemption through faith.

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## INSTRUMENTAL SOLO & ENSEMBLE MUSIC

**Maurice Ravel.** *Jeux d'eau*; Sonatine für Klavier. Nach den Quellen herausgegeben von Günter Philipp. Leipzig: Peters, 1988. [Intro. material in Ger., Fr., Eng., pp. 3–4; score, pp. 6–35; Tempo- und Vortragsbezeichnungen, p. 36. Edition Peters Nr. 10602. \$15.00.]

**Maurice Ravel.** *Miroirs* für Klavier. Nach den Quellen herausgegeben von Günter Philipp. Leipzig: Peters, 1988. [Intro. material in Ger., Fr., Eng., pp. 3–5; score, pp. 6–54; Tempo- und Vortragsbezeichnungen, p. 55. Edition Peters Nr. 10603. \$25.00.]

**Maurice Ravel.** *Jeux d'eau* [for] solo piano. Urtext edition by Roger Nichols. London: Peters, 1994. [Intro. material, pp. 4–6; score, pp. 7–19; critical commentary, p. 20. Edition Peters No. 7373. \$7.50.]

**Maurice Ravel.** *Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn*; *Prélude*; *A la manière de . . .* [for] solo piano. Urtext edition by Roger Nichols. London: Peters, 1994. [Intro. material, pp. 3–5; score, pp. 6–14; critical commentary, pp. 15–16. Edition Peters No. 7372. \$7.50.]

Shortly after the start of the First World War the French publisher Durand initiated its "Édition Classique," a series of affordable editions of popular "classical" works. For this repertory the firm had previously relied on Peters, the German publisher, which it represented, but the outbreak of war forced a reevaluation of this arrangement. According to Jacques Durand (*Quelques souvenirs d'un éditeur de musique* [Paris: Durand, 1924–25], 2: 59–65), wartime gloom had left French composers

in no mood to compose, so they gladly signed on as editors for the series, in part as a political act or even a form of national service: to liberate French commerce from any dependence on foreign, and more specifically, enemy, goods. Thus came into being editions of (mostly Austro-German) eighteenth- and nineteenth-century piano works, some prepared by leading French composers, among them, Camille Saint-Saëns's Mozart edition, Paul Dukas's Beethoven and Domenico Scarlatti sonata editions, Gabriel Fauré's Schumann edition, Claude Debussy's Chopin edition, and Maurice Ravel's Mendelssohn edition.

"Turnabout is fair play," they say, and we have before us not one but two competing—and very different—editions of Ravel piano works from Edition Peters, one from Leipzig and the other from the London branch. The title pages of Günter Philipp's Leipzig editions of *Jeux d'eau*, *Sonatine*, and *Miroirs* indicate that the works were edited from the sources ("nach den Quellen herausgegeben"), but the short forewords are quite vague about what sources were actually consulted. In fact, the two volumes have virtually the same, rather "generic" paragraph stating simply that the editions are "based on the first editions and later printings, which display only marginal variations, and, wherever possible, on photocopies of the manuscripts." This declaration is an inadequate substitute for a list of sources, and the phrase "wherever possible" is especially troubling. Does the contingency depend on the existence of autographs or merely on their availability? From three footnotes in *Miroirs* it is apparent that its autograph (or rather, a photocopy thereof) was consulted, but for the other two works one is left guessing. The forewords go on to state that, aside from adding fingerings, editorial intervention took two forms: "corrections of obvious errors and improvements in graphic presen-

tation," both tacitly introduced. This policy could well produce scores superior to the original editions, but there is a large gap between intention and achievement.

Philipp has indeed succeeded in correcting many errors in the original French editions, but he has not caught them all. Some irrational rhythms remain (e.g., *Noctuelles*, m. 7 and *Une barque sur l'océan*, m. 125), some needed accidentals have not been supplied (e.g., *Noctuelles*, m. 39; *Oiseaux tristes* mm. 8–9 and 25; *Alborada del gracioso*, mm. 2 and 4; and *Jeux d'eau*, mm. 33, 41, and 69), and certain inconsistencies have been allowed to remain, even when they might have been resolved by consulting the autograph (e.g., a missing note in m. 118 of *Une barque sur l'océan*, present in the autograph and in the parallel m. 117). Indeed, the editor's use of the autograph is sometimes inconsistent: in m. 224 of *Alborada del gracioso* printed accents were omitted, presumably because they were absent in the autograph, but in m. 110 of *Une barque sur l'océan*, an autograph accent was not reinstated, presumably because it was lacking in the first edition. The rationale for such decisions can only be conjectured on account of the scant documentation, creating the false impression that editorial problems were either nonexistent or easily solved. Nevertheless, despite generally careful editing, a few errors managed to slip in, as, for example, with a wrong pitch in the melody of the *Sonatine* (Animé, m. 145), a melody note lacking a stem also in the *Sonatine* (Modéré, m. 34), and a misplaced slur in *Alborada del gracioso* (m. 106). On the whole, however, even despite these lapses, the Leipzig editions are more accurate than reprints of the original editions, and their alleged "improvements in graphic presentation," mostly innocuous. Whether their small advantages justify the exorbitant prices (in comparison with, say, Dover's *Piano Masterpieces of Maurice Ravel*, a 1986 reprint, with tacit corrections, of the French editions of these three works, plus four others, currently selling for \$7.95) is a decision that individual purchasers will need to make for themselves.

Far more valuable, stimulating, and illuminating are Roger Nichols's "urtext editions" for the London Peters. In a sensible, well-reasoned introduction Nichols articulates his editorial method, which takes as

the "main primary source" for each work the copy of the first edition owned and annotated by Ravel. (In recognizing that the composer not only supervised the publication of his works but had the occasion to correct or revise them after publication, Nichols takes a position similar to the one espoused by Ravel in his preface to the Durand edition of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words*.) Other primary sources considered are the autographs, first editions, and (most controversially) the printed editions with autograph annotations owned by the pianist Vlado Perlemuter, who studied the works with Ravel in 1927. (Do the mood descriptions that Ravel wrote in Perlemuter's scores belong to the musical text, or were they merely responsive to deficiencies in Perlemuter's performance?) Discrepancies among these sources are reported in the critical commentary. Also consulted and cited, but granted secondary status, are printed editions with corrections by Lucien Garban, a Durand employee and friend of the composer, Ravel's orchestrations of the piano works, piano roll recordings made by Ravel, recordings made by pianists associated with the composer (Perlemuter, Robert Casadesus, and Jacques Février), and reminiscences of Ravel as a coach—in short, a wealth of information, fully documented. The backgrounds of the works and information relevant to their performance are detailed in the lively and highly literate prefaces to the volumes.

If Nichols errs it is in the direction of excessive editorial intervention, not in the musical content (where he is reliable), but in the appearance of the notation. In the interest of clarity and evidently desirous of imposing a uniform "house" style, the notation is standardized (sometimes even with anachronistic representations of irregular divisions of beats), and at points material is redistributed between staves or expanded to three staves, the operative clefs are altered, vertical adjustments are made in the placement of slurs, accents, and dynamics, and beaming is changed and durational values, reconfigured better to reflect the underlying meter. Inevitably, while some relationships are thereby clarified, others are obscured. Most of these notational adjustments are not described in the critical commentary (How could they be?), nor is there full documentation of

the changes in slurring imposed to achieve uniformity in parallel passages. The latter omission, while regrettable, was no doubt also a practical concession. One puzzling detail in *Jeux d'eau*: Nichols takes Ravel's "2 Ped." to mean, not "two pedals" (i.e., both damper and soft pedals), but "soft pedal," and he thus replaces it with "1 Corde," which Ravel used for that purpose elsewhere in the same work.

It is perhaps churlish to carp on these relatively minor points. The Nichols editions cannot be said to replace the original editions. First of all, nothing can, and furthermore, that is not (and should not be) their goal. But for their scrupulous editorial method and rich documentation they are indispensable to any serious study of these works, and both performers and scholars will learn a great deal from them.

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**Approche de la musique contemporaine au violon.** Edited by Jacques Ghestem. (Collection l'École du violon oeuvres contemporaines originales.) Paris: Billaudot (Presser), 1992. [Théorie et exercices, 23 p.; oeuvres et commentaires, pp. 26–78. G 4897 B. \$40.25.] Contains works by Marc Bleuse, Marc-André Dalbavie, Jocelyne Dubois, Gérard Gastinel, Karen Gorden, Ichiro Nodaïra, Robert Pascal, Yves-Marie Pasquet, Michèle Reverdy, Michel Zbar.

Jacques Ghestem's introduction to contemporary violin music aims both to familiarize students with common notations and to afford them practice in the new and often daunting physical demands made by music of the last several decades. The publication is in two separately bound sections, both attractively presented and typeset clearly and legibly. The first section, "*théorie et exercices*," consists of a brief synopsis of the techniques and symbols to be learned, along with very short exercises. The larger section is a collection of ten composers' pieces, pedagogical in intent, but more musically ambitious than mere technical études.

The two complement each other: the commentary serves as a thorough introduction to the pieces, rendering individual performance notes almost unnecessary, and the pieces are effective demonstrations of the techniques discussed in the commentary. Yet in this pairing each of the parts contains at the same time too much and too little. The first section is neither a notational manual nor an instructional method for players, but it ventures beyond what would be required of a set of performance notes. It includes notations that are barely used (or not used at all) in the pieces, and it supplies alternate notations for the same effects rather than enforcing editorial consistency. The compositions, written for the most part expressly for this publication, vary in their technical approach. Some systematically drill just a few techniques, while others are less single-minded. Many of the pieces are simply vehicles for various extended techniques. Overall the collection exhibits less variety than one would expect from an anthology of contemporary violin music, but it raises more problems of expression and interpretation than would a group of studies.

The most useful feature of the technical synopsis is a three-page "inventory" at the start that explains the symbols and abbreviations to be encountered, including proportional notation and other durational considerations and common bowing and fingering techniques. Ghestem's commentary expands upon some of the contents of his initial list, supplying much information, albeit with an apparently arbitrary emphasis. In a discussion of the right (bowing) hand, he covers variants of *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, and *col legno* playing and devotes far more consideration to transitions from one special effect to another and to *jeu normal* than would seem warranted, given that such indications are common neither in this collection nor in violin repertory generally. On the other hand, apart from two symbols briefly defined in the inventory, the varieties of *tremolando* playing receive short shrift despite their frequent occurrence in the literature. The commentary on the left (fingering) hand is similarly uneven, covering microtones, vibrato, and glissandos but not harmonics. Ghestem defines two different notational systems for quarter tones where one could have sufficed for