

SIMROCK

Luigi Cherubini **Critical edition of works**

By Helen Geyer, Weimar–Jena (editor in chief)

The academic and critical edition of Cherubini's works includes the great composer's early Italian operas, as well as prominent works from his French period – operas, chamber and church music.

The new edition has been made possible thanks to the new-found scholarly access (since the late 1970's) to the numerous manuscripts that had once belonged to the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin but are at present kept in the Biblioteka Jagellonska in Cracow. These manuscripts constitute an important basis for the edition because they conserve and transmit the young composer's oeuvre, which was believed to be lost after World War II.

Now it is also possible to meticulously discern and follow the experimental course that Cherubini tracked from the 1780s onwards. With each composition, he offered a new, often unconventional contribution to the history of the operatic genre. The new ground he broke with his experiments embraced ideas, forms and the realisation of his chosen subjects. It is not surprising that his colleagues such as Méhul, Lesueur, Spontini, Grétry, Beethoven, Donizetti and not least Carl Maria von Weber composed under his influence and aimed to emulate his achievements or compete with him.

The great works, like *Lodoïska*, *Médée*, *Eliza*, etc., point ahead to the grand opera, merging the techniques of symphonic writing with audacious instrumentation and profound depth of characterisation, as well as pursuing the modern currents of 'romantic' sentiment which incorporated local colour and nature imagery into the work as 'acting' entities, reflecting the most recent philosophical ideas.

In the operas he composed during his adolescence Cherubini experimented with dramatic structure and ensemble treatment, reflecting (as it used to be the custom in that period) his great contemporaries and their works. The French operas show a holistic theatrical spectrum by integrating ballets and unusual scene designs. This involves a singular complexity of the compositional texture, being recharged harmonically and also semantically, with a delicate feeling for tone colours.

Cherubini's contributions to church music are similarly innovative, on the one hand refining the Chapelle Royale's tradition, on the other defining measures for his contemporaries in his representational compositions of the largest scale. This resulted from experiences in the composition of church music in the Italian tradition. Up to the present rarely surveyed are Cherubini's chamber music (highly esteemed at its time) respectively his song writing and his piano works.

The Edition of Cherubini's Works regards itself as of academic and critical nature, equally providing performance material. It is supported by the International Cherubini Society.

The following works are presently scheduled for publication:

Operas

Adriano in Siria (1782)
Mesenzio Re d'Etruria (1782)
Quinto Fabio (1783)
Lo sposo di tre e marito di nessuna (1783)
L'Idalide (1784)
Alessandro nell'Indie (1784)
La finta principessa (1785)
Giulio Sabino (1786)
Ifigenia in Aulide (1788)

Démophon (1788)
Lodoïska (1791)
Koukourgi (1793)
Eliza, ou Le voyage au Mont St. Bernard (1794)
Médée (1797)
Les deux journées (1800)
Anacréon (1803)
Faniska (1806)
Pimmalione (1809)
Les Abencérages (1813)
Ali-Baba (1833)

Insert arias and scenes

Church music

Early masses
Masses of the Chapelle Royale
St. Cecilia's Mass (1808/9)
Missa solemnis (1811)
Coronation Mass in G Major (1819)
Coronation Mass in A Major (1825)
Requiem in C Minor (1816/17)
Requiem in D Minor (1836)
Single movements
Other works

Chamber music

String quartets
Songs and canons
Harmony music

Piano works

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