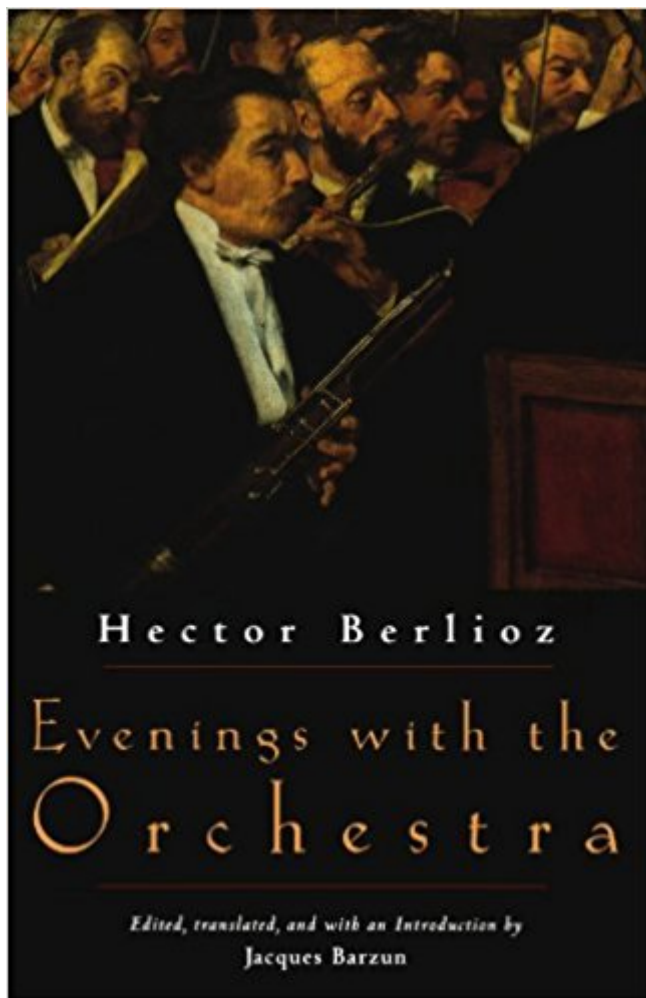


The book was found

Evenings With The Orchestra



Synopsis

During the performances of fashionable operas in an unidentified but "civilized" town in northern Europe, the musicians (with the exception of the conscientious bass drummer) tell tales, read stories, and exchange gossip to relieve the tedium of the bad music they are paid to perform. In this delightful and now classic narrative written by the brilliant composer and critic Hector Berlioz, we are privy to twenty-five highly entertaining evenings with a fascinating group of distracted performers. As we near the two-hundredth anniversary of Berlioz's birth, Jacques Barzun's pitch-perfect translation of *Evenings with the Orchestra* "with a new foreword by Berlioz scholar Peter Bloom" testifies to the enduring pleasure found in this most witty and amusing book. "[F]ull of knowledge, penetration, good sense, individual wit, stock humor, justifiable exasperation, understanding exaggeration, emotion and rhetoric of every kind." "Randall Jarrell, *New York Times Book Review*" To succeed in [writing these tales], as Berlioz most brilliantly does, requires a combination of qualities which is very rare, the many-faceted curiosity of the dramatist with the aggressively personal vision of the lyric poet." "W. H. Auden, *The Griffin*

Book Information

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Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Instrumentation > Orchestra

Customer Reviews

This is easily one of the best and funniest books I've ever read...I was not expecting it to be this good by any means. Berlioz must have been absolutely hilarious to be around, his wit and sarcasm are unrivaled. I found myself retelling the stories of each evening to my friends and coworkers each day after, who always enjoyed them and couldn't believe such humor came from a mid-1800's book.

This would be a fantastic Wes Anderson film as well. I will definitely be reading more Berlioz after getting so much enjoyment from *Evenings With The Orchestra*.

Our son first introduced this book to us when he began taking his musical training seriously in high school. He loved the subversive humor! When he moved on to his fine college's music conservatory, and gained more insight into the works and personalities of the classical music world, Berlioz's tales grew all the more hilarious! The disdain his orchestra characters have for the conductors and vocalists of the various operas being performed, and the lack of concentration given to their craft while they instead regale each other with stories, is such a riot! And Berlioz's critique of the political maneuvering amongst "the clique" are a real education! Not much has changed over the centuries. This is a must-read for any serious musician. I highly recommend it for students because it adds so many historical elements (Hey! We've got to sneak it in as much as possible!).

More than just a collection of "what went wrong during the opera," we are treated to lessons in music history, arts management history, and social history. The situations themselves are quite funny - orchestra players asleep in the pit, talking in the pit, bass drums drowning out bad singing, etc.... The real treat, though, lies in the stories themselves and the lesser known composers to whom we are introduced. If you are a musician (singer or instrumentalist), you must give this a careful read. This isn't the casual "quick read," but one that takes a bit of concentration. The writings are as relevant today as ever!

The quirky, comic inner life of the orchestra/band/any sizable collective organization with a "concerted" purpose--- all deliciously delineated by the great composer (and great writer) Berlioz. This book is so tasty, I have consumed it in little snippets so I wouldn't consume it too quickly.

This is a classic for music lovers - a rare insight into the genius of this great and revolutionary composer but also more than a glimpse into the kind of gossip that surrounded nineteenth century music circles. There are some wonderful touches of humour and marvellous characterisations - some of which are based on historical fact.

Philip Glass recommended this book in a recent interview. Delighted to be able to get a copy.

To understand how an orchestra performs brilliantly, poorly, or everything in between, this book is

excellent. Well written by a great composer who earned money while studying composition by being a music critic.

Hector Berlioz was one of the finest composers and writers of his day, and so when one reads "the rise and fall of a tenor," the biographical sketch of Spontini, or some of the other pieces here, one understands and sympathizes with him. The only real problem is that so much of this describes a musical world now long dead and gone, whose heroes and villains no longer matter in the realm of history, so that there are some pages one skims through. But if you are musical in your blood and soul, by all means get it...."Suicide by Enthusiasm" alone will put you right in the thick of the Romantic era!!

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