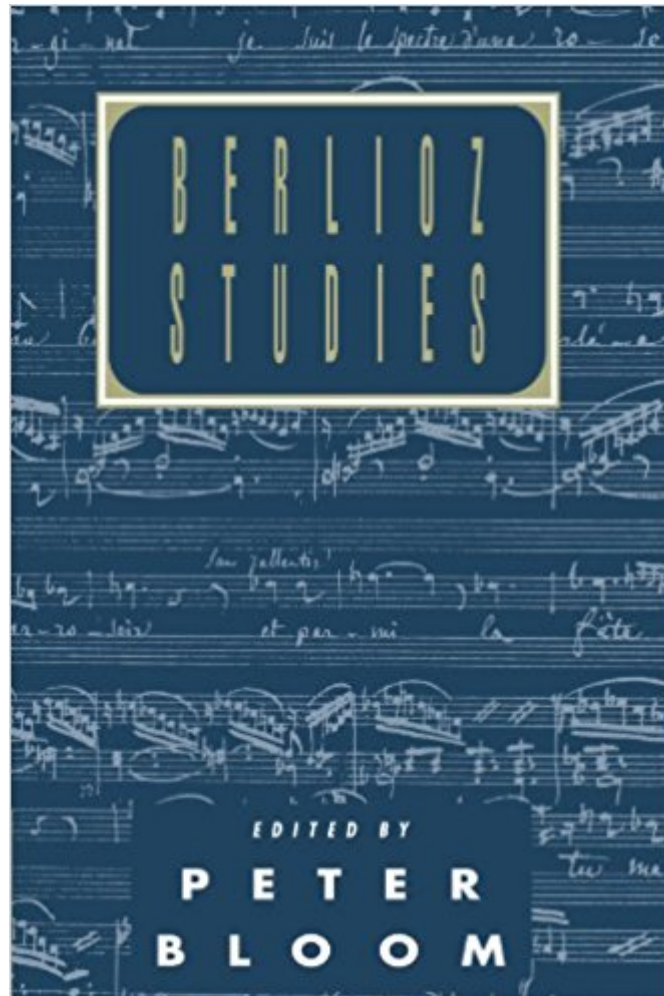




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Berlioz Studies (Cambridge Composer Studies)



Synopsis

This book contains nine essays by leading Berlioz scholars on various aspects of the great nineteenth-century musician's life and work. Among the pieces studied closely are *Romeo et Juliette*, *La Damnation de Faust* and *Les Nuits d'Étée*. An essay on newly discovered documents gives us a revealing portrait of the artist as a young man; another essay which examines little studied manuscripts shows us how precisely Berlioz arranged Gluck's celebrated opera *Orphée*. The practical question of Berlioz's metronome marks are studied thoroughly for the first time, and the volume closes with a novel piece in dialogue form by the elder statesman of Berlioz scholars, Jacques Barzun, who treats with exceptional grace the profound issues raised by Berlioz the man and the musician.

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"...may be the calmest, most thoughtful assessment of the composer that has yet appeared." *The World & I*

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I found myself skipping page after page of over self-indulgent stuffy analysis. One example is

Rushton's chapter, "Les Nuits d'été: cycle or collection?" First of all, who cares? This is achingly beautiful music based on beautiful French poetry. In discussing movement number one, "Villanelle" the author completely overlooks a charming added four bar orchestral phrase in c-minor (measures 83-86) which interestingly breaks up the strophic form we found up to that point.. Did he not see that the following text, "far, very far, wandering from our path..." was a short, clever musical insertion by the composer to heighten the text setting? Further, the inclusion of the Schenkerian attempts at analysis makes this chapter a yawner for those interested in learning more about the beauty in the music rather than the erudition of the author.

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