



piece that the publishers at Carus, and others like them, produce. It is important work they accomplish; music scholars whose work is rooted in this repertoire should be grateful.

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HENRI-JOSEPH RIGEL (1741–1799)

SYMPHONIES NOS 4, 7, 8, 10 AND 14

Concerto Köln / Barry Sargent, Martin Sandhoff and Hannes Rux

Berlin Classics, 0016432BC, 2008; one disc, 70 minutes

When in 1784 or 1785 the directors of the Concerts de la Loge Olympique commissioned a set of symphonies from Haydn, whose music was so popular in Paris, they scarcely foresaw that these new works would deal a near-fatal blow to the French symphony. For many years French composers would avoid the genre, discouraged by Haydn's pre-eminence. As late as 1809 Méhul recounted his trepidation, as an admirer of Haydn, on re-entering the arena of the symphony after his brief attempt in 1797; of Gossec's forty-six extant symphonies, only one was definitely composed after 1788, remaining unfinished till 1809; and Ragué failed to follow up his Op. 10 symphonies (1786). Guénin published his last eighteenth-century symphonies in 1788, works which were premiered alongside Haydn's Paris series, and garnered praise for their independence from Haydn's manner; Rigel, more prolific than Guénin and Ragué, wrote no symphonies after 1785. Thus Concerto Köln fills a gaping lacuna in the catalogue with a recording of these works written prior to the performance of Haydn's Paris symphonies.

The neglect of a composer as impressive as Rigel is puzzling. Born Heinrich Joseph Riegel in Wertheim in 1741, he settled in Paris in the 1760s as Henri-Joseph Rigel. This move perhaps explains his neglect in modern times, since expatriate composers are often ignored in their native land or overlooked in their adopted home, or both. For example, Madrid seems oblivious of the highly original Gaetano Brunetti, while France, home to countless Pleyel manuscripts, has only ever produced one (mediocre) recording of his music. Rigel's fortunes are changing: there have recently been recordings of his oratorios and Op. 10 string quartets, and this is the first disc devoted to his symphonies.

Between approximately 1765 and 1785 Rigel wrote eighteen symphonies, of which four are lost, their incipits known from Breitkopf. All but one of the symphonies are in the three-movement form favoured in France and described by the composer and naturalist Lacépède in his 1785 study *La poétique de la musique* as corresponding to three acts of a drama, an aesthetic examined in Barry S. Brook's *La symphonie française dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* ((Paris: Institut de musicologie de l'Université de Paris, 1962), volume 1, 334–335). The exception is a four-movement pastoral symphony (Op. 21 No. 4), which has not yet been recorded. Rigel published two sets of six symphonies: Op. 12 from 1774 contained a work offered by Breitkopf in 1767; Op. 21 from 1786 curiously also included two works appearing in Breitkopf in 1767. However, telling differences from the Breitkopf incipits led Brook to speculate that these early works were later extensively reworked (Brook, *La symphonie française*, volume 1, 364). Two other symphonies appeared in conjunction with works by Gossec (No. 7 in D major, 1780), and by Rosetti and Dittersdorf (No. 8 in G minor, 1783). Richard J. Viano adopted Brook's numbering of Rigel's symphonies, implausibly allocating twelve symphonies to 1767 (*Foreign Composers in France, 1750–1790* (New York: Garland, 1984), xliii–xliv). It is likely that the fourteen extant symphonies date from 1770–1785. Brook contested the claim of the early Rigel enthusiast Robert Sondheimer that Rigel had written his most significant symphonies by 1770 (Sondheimer, 'Henri Joseph Rigel', *The Music Review* 17 (1956), 221–228), and this disc clearly vindicates Brook's view that the works postdating 1780 are finer.



Of the five symphonies on this disc, one is from Op. 12 (in C minor, c1773), two are from Op. 21 (in F major and D minor, both c1785); the symphony in D major dates from the late 1770s and the symphony in G minor was probably written for performance alongside Rosetti at the Tuileries in December 1781. The order of the works on the disc is broadly chronological. The liner notes give no information about the symphonies' numbering (4, 7, 8, 10, 14); it is different from the order established by Brook and Viano, who number them 5, 1, 14, 9 and 13. The new numbering makes more sense, placing the two individual works between the two sets with opus numbers. All three of Rigel's minor-key works are here, and reflect the fact that symphonists in France produced rather more minor-mode works than elsewhere in Europe, as noted by Brook (*La symphonie française*, volume 1, 281).

Concerto Köln's playing style is well known from their discs of Kraus, Vanhal, Rosetti and others – vigorous, abrasive, almost violent performances, with rasping horns and a percussive continuo. Rigel's symphonies duly get this treatment, except that the earliest work here, the Symphony in C minor, is puzzlingly played without a keyboard continuo. If a keyboard continuo must be present, as it is elsewhere, then surely this is the work where we should expect it. One wonders what justification there is for a noisy keyboard in performances like these of symphonies from the 1780s, where rhythm and harmony scarcely need reinforcing. Indeed, it is a pleasant surprise to hear the powerful C minor work without keyboard continuo. The sweep of its monothematic opening *Allegro assai* is most impressively conveyed by Concerto Köln, as is the exciting finale.

Curiously, the opening bar of Rigel's G minor symphony, published with a work by Dittersdorf, is identical to that of Dittersdorf's own G minor symphony from the 1760s, perhaps suggesting some acknowledgment of the older composer. However, the homage shows most clearly in the recollection of Dittersdorf's development section in Rigel's D minor symphony, rather than his G minor symphony. Yet Rigel's superb G minor work is a model of drama and concision compared with Dittersdorf's protracted piece, in which almost every turn of phrase is immediately repeated. Rigel's development begins with new material in the major but soon shudders into sinister syncopations. The slow movement is marked 'Pastorale' and has a delightful limping gait, while the finale is an imposing sonata rondo. The D minor symphony, edited by Brook in 1962, illustrates the familiar London bus joke (you wait forever and then two come at once), since Jérémie Rhorer and Le Cercle de l'Harmonie pipped Concerto Köln to the post with a stunning live performance of the symphony, as part of a twenty-CD box set (*200 Ans de Musique à Versailles*, Naïve MBF1107, 2007). Called 'The Rise of the Symphony', this short disc of thirty minutes couples Rigel's work with Leduc's third symphony, together with – strangely – an extract from a Gossec symphonie concertante. Timings are virtually identical to Concerto Köln's, with both repeats given in the outer movements, but Rhorer's performance without keyboard continuo appeals more, especially in the B flat *Adagio* for strings alone. In the opening *Allegro maestoso* Rhorer's soft horns are more effective in the diminutive and perfunctory second subject in F major, which typically occurs late in the exposition. Extraordinarily, the main theme does not actually recur in the recapitulation, a measure of Rigel's confidence in this mature work. Surely Mendelssohn recalled this work's stunning tarantella finale when planning his 'Italian' Symphony. This magnificent D minor work easily eclipses Ragué's contemporary symphony in the same key (Op. 10 No. 1), with its feeble first-movement development closely imitating that of Dittersdorf's G minor symphony.

The two major-key symphonies are briefer. In the oddly proportioned D major work the finale is longer than the tiny opening *Allegro* (four minutes), which bustles along like an opera overture. This is one of only three Rigel symphonies with bassoons, and here – uniquely – trumpets and timpani are added to the usual strings, oboes and horns. Despite Sondheimer's advocacy, it is hard to see this as Rigel's finest symphony (Sondheimer, 'Henri Joseph Rigel', 222). The F major's opening movement is even shorter than that of the D major. Second groups are not a prerequisite for Rigel and, when they occur, tend to be scrappy. Succinct developments usually introduce new material, a procedure favoured in France. The main and considerable deficiency is the paucity of melodic invention in fast movements, a feature shared by Leduc, and probably the legacy of Gossec. However, slow movements can be delightful, the charming pizzicato of the F major, with its whiff of *Les petits riens*, managing to banish the eager continuo for a whole movement.



This welcome and important disc contains some superb and largely unknown music, but it does not preclude some reservations. The liner notes could have said more about the symphonies that were recorded, and avoided characterizing them vacuously and falsely as ‘transitional works between the “Sturm und Drang” of Haydn and Mozart and the pre-Beethovenian style of Méhul’. Despite this disc’s being a first outing for Rigel as a symphonist, the notes confidently assert his pre-eminence over Gossec and Leduc (who, unlike Rigel, have not languished in obscurity). The final symphonies of Gossec and Leduc should not be underestimated. Fortunately, the performances themselves have the great strengths familiar from previous discs; the driving energy is matched by impeccable precision, and the performers are well served by the excellent quality of the recording. Tempos are predictably fast in outer movements while the ensemble is unhurried in the appealing slower music. The oboists are especially deserving of praise but the relentless keyboard continuo remains frankly a wearisome presence in the four later works.

Sondheimer claimed that Mozart lifted material from Rigel’s symphony Op.12 No. 5 (Sondheimer, ‘Henri Joseph Rigel’, 221) for his Fantasy K475. That work would be worth hearing, and also Op. 12 No. 3 in C major, whose incipit in Garland foretells – startlingly – the opening of Mozart’s ‘Jupiter’ symphony. One assumes that the two composers met in 1778, some years before Rigel produced his masterpieces in G minor and D minor. It is a pity that Haydn’s Paris symphonies, glorious though they are, dealt Rigel the symphonist the *coup de grâce*, but Concerto Köln have demonstrated resoundingly how fine a composer he could be.

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GIUSEPPE TARTINI (1692–1770)

SONATE A VIOLINO SOLO; ARIA DEL TASSO

Chiara Banchini (violin), Patrizia Bovi (soprano)

Zig-Zag Territoires, ZZTo80502, 2006/2007; one disc, 69 minutes

GIUSEPPE TARTINI (1692–1770), FRANCESCO MARIA VERACINI (1690–1768)

THE DEVIL’S TRILL: SONATAS BY GIUSEPPE TARTINI [AND FRANCESCO MARIA VERACINI]

Rodolfo Richter (violin), Susanne Heinrich (viola da gamba), Silas Standage (harpsichord), William Carter (archlute, baroque guitar) / Palladians

Linn, CKD 292, 2008; one disc, 61 minutes

The engraving of Giuseppe Tartini by Carlo Calcinotti (dating from the early 1760s) depicts the composer in an oval frame beneath which there is a violin, some music clearly labelled ‘Corelli’, and books by Plato and Zarlino. These accessories are all apposite. Tartini began as a disciple of Corelli, but as he grew older he became increasingly preoccupied with music theory (hence Zarlino) and with one of the philosophies underpinning it (Plato). These interests are reflected in a quite distinctive and personalized late style. The two recordings considered here – both characterized by beautifully polished performances – illustrate this shift in stylistic orientation. The Palladians offer a selection of Tartini’s Op. 1 sonatas which, generally speaking, have a recognizably Corellian cast. Chiara Banchini, on the other hand, plays some of the later *piccole sonate* found in an autograph manuscript in the Biblioteca Antoniana of the Basilica del Santo (MS I-Pca 1888), where Tartini had held the position of *primo violino e capo di concerto*.

The manuscript is notable for the fact that, alongside the sonatas, Tartini has included transcriptions of folksongs from his native Istria (now part of Slovenia) and of the melodies used by Venetian gondoliers to