

A STUDY OF THE CRITICAL RECEPTION AND THE DISSEMINATION OF LUCIANO BERIO'S WORKS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the critical reception and the dissemination of Luciano Berio's works in North America, the United Kingdom and Australia. The ongoing performances and recordings of Berio's music rely on public interest. This study investigates the critical reception of Berio's music in order to differentiate the composer's accessible works from those that the public and music promoters shun. I evaluate the critical reception of Berio's music within the parameters of psychological, cultural and sociological theories to provide an insight as to why some works will have continuing performances within the commercial arena.

Conversely, I examine Berio's and other modernist composers' attitudes towards their listening and purchasing audiences. I also discuss Berio's perceptions of the press and whether the composer felt misrepresented or misunderstood by critics. Audiences attuned to tonal classical repertoire describe modernist music as 'complex' and 'difficult' for the listener. In turn, this becomes a major impediment to the promotion of modernist music via concert halls and recordings, as music promoters and entrepreneurs are unwilling to back performances that are unlikely to be financially viable. Yet some modernist works have secured enduring popularity. This thesis addresses that divergence.

The longevity of Berio's music within the public domain is also dependent on future musicians who continue to perform and record his works. Focusing on the composer's fourteen virtuosic *Sequenzas*, I examine the players' reception of these solo works. Another area of study in this thesis concerns the role of Cathy Berberian in enhancing the critical reception and the general reception of Berio's work in collaboration with the vocalist.

CANDIDATE'S CERTIFICATION

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work, except where otherwise acknowledged.

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.

19/5/15

Signature of Candidate

Date

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