

André Jolivet, *Écrits [Writings]* (2006)

André Jolivet's writings, published by his daughter Christine, fill two volumes (of 437 and 319 pages, respectively), divided into five parts. The first, "Une vie musicale" ["A Musical Life"], occupies the entire first volume, while the second volume comprises "Modes opératoires" ["Modus operandi"], "Figures and Analyses," "Ludwig van Beethoven," and the Appendices. Internally, each section is organized chronologically; "Ludwig van Beethoven" is a special case, as it is a reedition of a work by Jolivet published in 1955. The nature of the writings gives rise to its own sort of typology: personal notes, articles, lectures, interviews, radio broadcasts, and reviews written for *L'Actualité musicale* during the Occupation. The case of the "Twelve Interviews with Goléa" ["Douze entretiens avec Goléa"], recorded between 24 and 30 April 1960 and broadcast from 27 March to 12 June 1961, requires some clarification, inasmuch as the style is much more written than an interview today. On several occasions, cuts made for broadcast are visible on the original typescripts, showing that a language that was too technical was not considered suitable for radio.

"Modes opératoires" (in which Jolivet presents his compositional works) gathers texts concerning forty of his compositions, from the *Suite for string trio* (1930) to *Yin-Yang* (1973)—even as his output includes over two hundred and seventy compositions in total. Some of these are proper notes written to accompany works (e.g., *Andante pour cordes*), while others are written to serve as program notes; sometimes, they are even radio broadcasts centered on a particular work (*Concertino for trumpet*).

The second section, "Figures and Analyses," contains Jolivet's writings about other composers—ranging from Lully to Ibert by way of Bach, Berlioz, Debussy, Berg, and Bartók—as well as about two other writers: Malraux (on *La Condition humaine*) and Martin du Gard (on *Les Thibaut*), about which Jolivet also wrote in the 1930s. This panorama sheds light on Jolivet's teachers, Le Flem and Varèse, and his other sources of inspiration, including Berg, Bartók, and a certain lineage of French composers extending back to Rameau. A number of texts, all dating from 1952, were written specifically to accompany pocket music editions published by Heugel. These cover romantic and post-romantic repertoires: Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3, Wagner's "Ride of the Walkyries" and *Parsifal*, and Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1.

Here, Jolivet's approach is more analytical, typically garnered with musical examples. His selections were guided by financial considerations rather than by his own tastes. The section ends with two texts devoted to Beethoven; these serve as a transition to the following section, a re-edition of the monograph Jolivet devoted to Beethoven, written in 1941 and first published in 1955. If Jolivet seems at first not to distinguish between the man and his work, he then goes on to construct his

portrait in three parts—"Biography", "Beethoven and his time", and "The work"—abandoning the traditional division of Beethoven's production into three styles. His work owes much to prior studies by Prod'homme, d'Indy, Chantavoine, Romain Rolland, and Schindler, whom he quotes extensively. His most original contribution is undoubtedly his use of the Golden Section in the discussion of the Finale of the Sonata for piano, op. 106. Jolivet sometimes projects his own concerns onto his subject, as when he develops the notion of sound projection, or his more socially oriented concept of writing for the people or the masses.

The first volume of *Écrits* is complemented by full-color plates reproducing over thirty of the composer's drawings. The first ten are schoolboy drawings dating from World War One, which have been preserved by the city of Paris. The twenty-two others, in ink or colored pencil, all date from prior to 1940, and illustrate Jolivet's tastes and practices in visual arts during this first stage of his career.

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