

Aubert, Louis (1877-1968): Overview of Writings

Louis Aubert's writings amount to several hundred pages: a few private writings, a very large number of articles for the press, contributions to collective volumes and a co-authored book. With that volume (*L'orchestre*, co-written with Marcel Landowski), Aubert, often thought of as a master orchestrator, left a particularly valuable testimony to his knowledge of the orchestra, even though it is impossible to say which author is responsible for which part of the co-written document.

The largest part of Aubert's literary output comes from his many years of work as a critic and remains largely unstudied. Two articles from before 1925 can be found in the *Courrier musical* ([no. 1, 21 January 1921, p. 6](#) and [no. 18, 15 november 1921, p. 297](#)). Similarly, three articles can be found from the period after 1940, [the first in *L'Information musicale* \(22 October 1943, no. 129\)](#), [a second, is found in the 23 February 1949 issue of *Opéra*](#), and a third in the form of [an homage to Florent Schmitt in the *Journal des J.M.F.* of 4 October 1950](#) (these isolated examples suggest that Aubert was able to regularly pursue his work after the Second World War).

However, more than 700 articles published between 1925 and 1939 have now been inventoried and others are still being identified. In 1925 and 1926, Aubert wrote for the magazine *Musique et Théâtre* as well as for the *Revue Pleyel*. From 1926 to 1930, he published with *Paris-Soir* and the *Courrier musical*. Finally, beginning in 1930, he joined the staff of the daily *Le Journal* for which he would write uninterruptedly until 1 August 1939, while also writing occasional pieces for *L'Art musical*. His collaboration with *Le Journal* was his longest and richest, with no fewer than 630 articles. In these pieces, Louis Aubert chronicled the musical life of Parisian symphonic societies and theatres. He offered critical analyses of the works heard, but also took interest in orchestral direction, in the activity of provincial orphéons, in the concours of the Conservatoire, in new technologies, and in café-concerts, among other subjects. Aubert also wrote homage-necrologies upon the deaths of his contemporaries: Alfred Bruneau, Paul Dukas, Henri Duparc, Maurice Emmanuel, Vincent d'Indy, Gabriel Pierné, Maurice Ravel, and Albert Roussel. Referring to Aubert's articles for *Le Journal*, Henri Barraud wrote that, "It is a great pity that the postwar press has not been able to draw on experience. One could write critical articles like those [Aubert] wrote for *Le Journal* between the wars, an anthology of musical life with the clairvoyance, sagacity, and honesty that are so lacking today. Be that as it may, that activity, now relegated to pre-war history, once completed the profile of the complete artist." (Henri Barraud, Fonds Louis Aubert, département musique, BnF, no place or date of publication is indicated). In his articles, Louis Aubert took the position of a guide, helping the reader better understand the aesthetic, stylistic, and educational issues of the interwar years

while also revealing his own eclectic sensibility. Analysis of these sources also reveals a new facet of Aubert's personality, that of the "author"; in doing so, it sheds light on his career as an artist.

Louis Aubert also contributed to several collective volumes. He offered his "[Souvenirs](#)" (memories) to *Cinquante ans de musique française*, published in 1925, as well as those relating to his teacher, [Gabriel Fauré](#) in *Les Musiciens célèbres* in 1946. Aubert also paid homage to his editor, Jacques Durand, in a small volume called *Jacques Durand - In Memoriam* (1938). He published "[Quelques réflexions sur la musique française contemporaine](#)" in the *Almanach de la musique*, published by Éric Sarnette in 1951, and contributed to *Prestige de la danse* (Charles Portal, 1953).

On the occasion of his election to an empty seat in the musical composition section of the Académie des Beaux-Arts following the death of Gustave Charpentier, Louis Aubert wrote a piece in praise of his predecessor that was published by the Institute as [Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Gustave Charpentier \(1860-1956\)](#).

In terms of private writings, however, Aubert left relatively little correspondence. Only a few letters are found in the Aubert collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and in his family's archives, as well as in a few private collections. They are generally very brief, even expeditious, as seen in the six letters from Aubert held in the family archives of Maurice Emmanuel's descendants ("[Louis Aubert : Six lettres inédites à Maurice Emmanuel](#)", presentation and annotations by Ludovic Florin, *Euterpe*, Les Amis de la Musique Française, 2014).

Ludovic FLORIN and Jessie GERBAUD

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