

Auber, Daniel-François-Esprit (1782-1871): Summary of Writings

As with Bizet, Auber's public writings are almost non-existent, limited to a few didactic works in which he played a limited role as an editor: *Règles de contrepoint* (1808), *Quelques sujets de fugues* (1843), *Fugues et contrepoints pour les concours, datés de 1833 à 1870, esquisses et réalisations* (1833-1870), *Leçons de solfèges à changement de clef* (1842-1869), *Leçons pour la lecture à première vue* (1844-1870), *Recueil des leçons de solfège à changements de clef* (1842- 1869). He also contributed to two collective texts. For the first, entitled "Rapport adressé au comité central d'instruction primaire, au nom de la commission spéciale de l'enseignement du chant, le 9 avril 1850, et approuvé le 14 août suivant par le comité central" ("Report sent to the central committee on primary instruction in the name of the special commission for the teaching of singing, 9 April 1850, and approved 14 August by the central committee") Auber but one among fifteen signatories including Adam, Barbereau, Boulet, Carafa, Clapisson, Ermel, Victor Foucher, Casimir Gide, Halévy, Gustave Héquet, Jomard, Édouard Rodrigues, Zimmermann, and Moyencourt. This report was published ten years later under the title [*Observations de quelques musiciens et de quelques amateurs sur la méthode de musique de M. le docteur Emile Chev *](#). The second collective text was initially published in [*Le Moniteur universel*](#), was co-signed by Jules Pelletier, Halévy, Berlioz, Despretz, Camille Doucet, Lissajous, Mellinet, Meyerbeer, Édouard Monnais, Rossini, and Ambroise Thomas. It was entitled [*Rapport et arrêtés pour l'établissement en France d'un diapason musical uniforme*](#) (1859).

To this day, there is still no collection of Auber's general correspondence, with the exception of Herbert Schneider's collection of correspondence between the composer and the librettist Eugène Scribe which contains "81 letters written between 1828 and 1860 with 54 from Scribe and 27 from Auber, with one addressed to Mrs Scribe." Schneider noted that Auber and Scribe's letters most often speak of artistic and practical problems, such as "corrections to be made to a libretto already given to the composer or considerations about the date of creation of a work or the choice of performers," and that they avoid discussing questions of aesthetics and "refrained from any judgment on their fellow composers and librettists or on their predecessors." On Auber, he added, "Considering correspondence a chore, he wrote as little as possible and, if it was absolutely necessary to communicate in writing, he wrote his message in very few words." These observations can also be made by reading the hundreds of autograph letters signed by or addressed to the composer that are kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, several dozen of which are available online at the Gallica Digital Library. Many of these letters are related to Auber's official duties as a member of the Institut de France from 1829 and especially as director of the Conservatoire de Paris between 1842 and 1871.

In contrary to [Berlioz](#)'s aesthetics and unlike his colleague [Adam](#), who published more than three hundred articles of music criticism in some fifteen magazines and newspapers of the Parisian press between 1833 and 1856, and who can be considered in retrospect as the spokesman of the French school of opéra-comique, Auber sought to avoid this activity throughout his career.

Matthieu CAILLIEZ

12/09/2017

Trans. K. Oakley / C. Murray

Further Reading

SCHNEIDER, Herbert, « Auber, Daniel-François-Esprit », in : FINSCHER, Ludwig (éd.), *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Kassel/Stuttgart, Bärenreiter/Metzler, 2^e éd., 1999, *Personenteil* : vol. 1, p. 1130-1142. Voir en particulier : « E. Lehrwerke », in : *Ibid.*, p. 1138.

SCHNEIDER, Herbert, *Chronologisch-thematisches Verzeichnis sämtlicher Werke von Daniel François Esprit Auber (AWV)*, Zürich/Hildelsheim/New York, Georg Olms, 1994, 2 vol., 1708 p. Voir en particulier : « Didaktische Werke und Schriften Aubers », in : *AWV*, vol. 2, p. 1570.

SCHNEIDER, Herbert (éd.), *Correspondance d'Eugène Scribe et de Daniel-François-Esprit Auber*, Sprimont, Mardaga, 1998, 151 p.

VITTU, Mathilde, « Introduction », in : BIZET, Georges, *Études de composition*, Sprimont, Mardaga, 2005, p. 21 [= « AUBER (Daniel-François-Esprit), *Leçons de contrepoint*, 1808, ms. autographe, Paris (BnF, Ms. 2774) »].

To quote this article: Matthieu Cailliez, "Auber, Daniel-François-Esprit (1782-1871): Summary of Writings", Dictionary of Composer's Writings, Dicterco [online], ed. E. Reibel, last edited: 22/01/2024, <https://dicteco.huma-num.fr/person/24550>.