

## From Berlioz to Boulez

by Roger Nichols, foreword by Jeremy Sams

### DESCRIPTION:

Awarded the légion d'Honneur by the French government in 2006 for his services to French culture, acclaimed writer and broadcaster Roger Nichols invites the reader to accompany him on his journey through the century-and-a-half turbulent and fertile period in the history of French music from Berlioz to Boulez.

In compiling his collection of articles, interviews, radio plays and talks, Nichols begins with Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and ends with his obituary of Pierre Boulez. Along the way, he includes in-depth studies of Debussy and Ravel, connecting the two by a comparison of their operatic masterpieces, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*. Twenty other significant composers from this fascinating period come in for Nichols' hallmark combination of erudition and wit.

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After studying music at Oxford with Edmund Rubbra and Frederick Sternfeld, Roger Nichols taught in schools and universities until 1980, when he became a freelance author, reviewer, translator, editor, lecturer, broadcaster and pianist. He began broadcasting for BBC Radio 3 in 1976, mainly on French music since 1820, his documentary subjects including Alfred Cortot, Arthur Honegger and Maggie Teyte. His radio series *The Harlequin Years*, on music in Paris from 1917 to 1929, formed the basis of a book of the same title, published in 2002. Other publications include biographies of Debussy, Ravel and Poulenc. His editions of French music with Peters Edition of London include most of Ravel's piano music and the complete Duparc songs using previously unknown material. In 2006 he was appointed chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur for services to French culture. Since 2007 he has contributed articles and reviews to BBC Music magazine. He and his wife Sarah have lived in Herefordshire since 1974.