

The *Dictionnaire de Musique* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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ROUSSEAU'S *Dictionnaire de Musique* (1767) contains, besides customary lexicon entries, an outline of his own improved (?) system of notation, an extended exposition of the systems of harmony of Rameau and Tartini, and, most important, the expression of his convictions as to the nature and scope of music as an art.

These conclusions are based on the premise which underlies all of Rousseau's thinking—that nature is good and that man-made products are bad. Vocal melody is found to be the only "natural" element of music, so instrumental and contrapuntal forms are dismissed as secondary in importance and effect, while French music is excoriated *in toto* (except *Le Devin du Village*).

The highly personal tone of the whole dictionary and its obviously biased point of view make it a valuable document of eighteenth-century aesthetics of music, as expressed by one of the most influential figures of the time.

The Violin Concertos of Louis Spohr

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LOUIS SPOHR, with his fifteen violin concertos, won for himself a conspicuous place in the musical literature of the nineteenth century. He endeavored to make the concerto a substantial and superior composition free from the artificial bravura practices of the time. He achieved a new romantic mode of expression.

Although Spohr favored the "*milde, liebliche, und schwermütige*", his temperament was essentially dramatic. He adopted the recitative; he inclined toward the programmatic; he utilized foreign dance-rhythms and folk-tunes; and he emphasized specific harmonic idioms such as modulations to the mediant and sub-mediant keys (in some instances prior to Beethoven and Schubert), varied pedal effects, enharmony, and chromaticism.

The weaker sides of Spohr's violin compositions are observed in his somewhat monotonous rhythmic structures; in his rejection of certain piquant bowing styles, and artificial harmonics; and in the deficiency of contrapuntal textures.