



# Evenings with the Orchestra

By Hector Berlioz

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## Evenings with the Orchestra By Hector Berlioz

During the performances of fashionable operas in an unidentified but "civilized" town in northern Europe, the musicians (with the exception of the conscientious bass drummer) tell tales, read stories, and exchange gossip to relieve the tedium of the bad music they are paid to perform. In this delightful and now classic narrative written by the brilliant composer and critic Hector Berlioz, we are privy to twenty-five highly entertaining evenings with a fascinating group of distracted performers. As we near the two-hundredth anniversary of Berlioz's birth, Jacques Barzun's pitch-perfect translation of *Evenings with the Orchestra* —with a new foreword by Berlioz scholar Peter Bloom—testifies to the enduring pleasure found in this most witty and amusing book.

"[F]ull of knowledge, penetration, good sense, individual wit, stock humor, justifiable exasperation, understanding exaggeration, emotion and rhetoric of every kind."—Randall Jarrell, *New York Times Book Review*

"To succeed in [writing these tales], as Berlioz most brilliantly does, requires a combination of qualities which is very rare, the many-faceted curiosity of the dramatist with the aggressively personal vision of the lyric poet."—W. H. Auden, *The Griffin*

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