Scientific-critical complete works edition

In collaboration with the international Simon Mayr society, G. Ricordi and Co. Bühnen- und Musikverlag (Munich) will release the first historical-critical edition of his complete works. Piece by piece, the works of Simon Mayr will be edited, and depending upon the available source material, this will be a painstaking and complicated undertaking.

Preliminary edition plan:

The first work that will appear in 2011 is the opera
Medea in Corinto

and afterwards in a loose chronical order following operas will be published:

Demetrio
Fedra
La Lodoiska
La rosa bianca e la rosa rossa
Il ritorno d’Ulisse

First intended works from his church music:
Samuele (oratorio)
Einsiedeln mass in C minor.

Invitation to subscribe

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Paper: Bio-Offset

The subscription to the complete works of Mayr includes all score volumes and critical reviews. It is available at the subscription price. All the volumes are also available outside the subscription at the recommended retail price. Piano scores are not included in the subscription; they can be ordered separately.

The subscription price per printing sheet (16 pages) is 14,00 €

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“Everyone bows when they hear Mayr’s name”
Gaetano Donizetti
in a letter to
Giovanni Simone Mayr

Giovanni Simone Mayr – born Johann Simon Mayr on 14th June 1763 in Mendorf, Markt Altmannstein (southern Germany, commune Eichstätt). He received music tutelage at an early age from his father. Due to his extraordinary musical talent he received a free scholarship to the Jesuit college in nearby Ingolstadt. From 1777 whilst studying law, theology, medicine and philosophy, he started working as an organist, and engaged himself in the study of musical composition.

From 1787 he worked, at the request of Baron Thomas von Bassus – a founder of the Illuminati Order – as the music teacher at Schloss Sandesdorf. When the Order was banned, Mayr fled together with his master to Poschiavo in Switzerland, before he finished his musical studies in Bergamo and Venice, under the tutelage of Ferdinando Bertoni. What followed was a composer career, which produced approximately 60 operas as well as oratorian and sacral works. The resounding successes of these works throughout the great European Opera houses (Milan, London, Paris, Vienna, Lisbon amongst others) ensured that in 1800, he was one of the most famous opera composers of his time.

Opera houses throughout Europe offered him one lucrative offer after another as they competed for his services. Napoleon Bonaparte, who was enraptured by the performance of “Lodoiska” in Milan 1805, on the occasion of the Italian King’s coronation, offered him the position of the Paris Opera director. However Mayr remained in his adopted home town of Bergamo where he settled, and from 1802 through to his death in 1845, he held the position of house conductor for the Santa Maria Maggioe. When the highly respected and affectionately called ‘compá Simone’ (Papa Simon) died, he was given a municipal funeral which was attended by Giuseppe Verdi and Gioacchino Rossini amongst others.

Mayr’s composition style stems from the influence of the Gluck Opere serie as he internalized the Mozart melody. This further development led to a new style of Italian opera which anticipated and built upon the fruits of works such as Rossinis’s Belcanto and the composers Bellini and Donizetti. Due to these new sounds and his extensive teaching – his most famous scholar was Gaetano Donizetti – he was revered by his peers and future generations as being “the father of Italian opera”. Although he developed a strong, original and extraordinary musically dramatical personal style, the historical retrospect often only recognizes his preparatory position. For continued recognition of his works, this is fatal: many of his works over the decades after his death, have disappeared from theatre programs, and consequently his fame has dwindled.

With the foundation of the international Simon Mayr society in Ingolstadt in 1995, a major step forwards was made in supporting the revival of this important local talent and asset. Since 1995 and together with Mayr’s first publisher, G. Ricordi, there has been a splendid Mayr renaissance which continues to gain pace: the success of reintroducing the Bavarian-Italian composer back into the cultural landscape has resulted in the performances of several of his operas – “Fedra” (Staatstheater Braunschweig), “Medea in Corinto” (Theater St. Gallen and Staatsoper München) and “Il ritorno d’Ulisse” (Theater Regensburg) – returning to the stage, as well as having had some of the first recordings being made over the last few years.