20 May 1971

M. René Leibowitz
14 Rue Hautefeuille
Paris VIe, France

Dear Mr. Leibowitz:

Thank you so much for your prompt reply to my inquiry about Ricardo Viñes. I am glad to know that you are enthusiastic about my project. The information that you have provided is exceedingly welcome. If at any time you have additional information, I should be very happy to receive it. I will certainly acknowledge your assistance when my study is published.

I am currently applying for a Senior Fellowship to be used at the time of my sabbatical next year. At that time I will be in Paris sorting and reading letters, memorabilia, etc., owned by the Viñes family. I would enjoy meeting you personally at that time, if it is convenient for you.

A few years ago when I published my research on Déodat de Séverac, Vladimir Jankelevitch was most helpful to me. He was among the first to suggest that I prepare a monograph on Viñes.

With many thanks, E Brody

Dr. Elaine Brody
Department of Music
Chairman

Rene Leibowitz 1913-72

By JOAN PEYSER

COMPOSER and conductor René Leibowitz, who died in Paris on August 28 at the age of 59, remained virtually unknown to all but a small circle of now middle-aged composers. Yet he left an indelible mark on 20th-century music: Leibowitz is the man who revived 12-tone writing in post-war Europe, where it had gone underground during Hitler's war on "decadent" art.

When World War II broke out, Leibowitz went into hiding in Vichy, France, then in an apartment in Paris, where he taught dodecaphony to Pierre Boulez and five fellow students from the Paris Conservatoire. In 1947, he wrote "Schoenberg et Son Ecole," probably the first book on 12-tone music not written in German, and, in 1948, spent four months with Schoenberg in California. Schoenberg, who was then teaching at U.C.L.A., told Leibowitz of his great disappointment that, though the war was over, the Germans were still not performing his work.

On his return to Paris in 1948, Leibowitz was invited to conduct and teach at the festival in Darmstadt, Germany, which had been founded the year before and had focused on Stravinsky, Hindemith and Prokofiev. Leibowitz accepted, but only on the condition that he could conduct a whole Schoenberg program: the Piano Concerto, the Chamber Symphony No. 2 and the Five Orchestral Pieces. He had 20 students that first summer at Darmstadt—among them Hans Werner Henze—and all presented blank faces to him. None had ever heard this music before, but, by the following summer, all of them knew the new literature better than he. Leibowitz had successfully opened the road to European adoption of dodecaphony.

Thus René Leibowitz had one long splendid moment in his life, stretching from Paris in 1944 through Darmstadt in 1948, devoted to the promulgation of Schoenberg's idea. When, in the late 40's and early 50's, Webern displaced Schoenberg as the venerated man and composers applied the serial idea beyond pitch, Leibowitz's time had passed. He refused to follow that path.