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Pauline Pocknell is currently editing the complete letters of Liszt to Street-Klindworth for Pendragon Press, but those selected for this volume offer a small sampling of their valuable content. They are generally shorter than the letters to d'Agoult and Sayn-Wittgenstein, but they provide a great deal of information on Liszt's family, children, and health.

The letters reveal Liszt's enthusiasm in displaying his love for d'Agoult and for the literature and ideas they shared; on 1 May 1836, he writes, "Our bodies are still young; love can glorify them! And *our* soul (for we have only one between us) is predestined to great and magnificent joys" (p. 62). On 2 April 1848, he writes to Sayn-Wittgenstein, "Oh! May I see you again soon, for all that I possess in heart and soul, in faith and hope, is only in you, through you and for you. May God's angel guide you, O my radiant morning star!" (p. 267). This burst of emotion cools as their relationship develops, but from the first, Liszt writes to the princess of his compositions, his conducting, and his innermost thoughts on Wagner, his daughter Cosima, and various individuals with whom he came in contact. He naturally discusses literature, religion, and politics with her and keeps her abreast of his many duties and performances.

Other letters included in this volume are to writers (e.g., George Sand, Friedrich Nietzsche, Victor Hugo), pupils (e.g., Sophie Menter, Dionys Pruckner, and Walter Bache), and family members, especially Liszt's mother Anna and oldest daughter Blandine. Liszt also wrote several letters to his relative Eduard von Liszt and his son-in-law Emile Ollivier.

Williams includes 23 of Liszt's letters to his daughter Blandine, from 5 March 1845 to 19 July 1862, shortly before she died from complications stemming from childbirth. These show the composer's sternness in dealing with his children from afar and his interest in their education; after Blandine's marriage, Liszt increasingly expresses his love and respect for her.

Liszt's 43 letters in this volume written to his mother between 1832 and her death in 1866 often describe his whereabouts and future travel plans and include requests for her to run errands, send books and manuscripts he left with her, or, in one instance, buy "a bonnet for a very distinguished lady" (p. 257). In later letters, he outlines in detail how he wants her to raise his children —he had entrusted them to her care after breaking with their mother—even though he is rarely there to assist in any way. More than his letters to any other recipient, those to his mother illustrate his occasional arrogance and lack of consideration; for example, he writes on 21 February 1851, "I also ask you, dear Mother, to spare me correspondence as much as possible. I really lack the time for it, and pointless letters make me still more impatient than pointless conversations, which, as you know, often provoke me to undisguised impatience" (p. 304). On 2 April 1856, he writes about his son Daniel, "It would have been disagreeable to me to see him just now; for with the best intentions the good boy is naïve enough to burden his heart with all manner of nonsense, which exhausts my patience" (p. 404). On the other hand, he also indicates his love at times, as in his letter of 27 April 1857: "I want to say to you . . . that I love you with a childlike love and that your letters always give me great joy" (p. 429).

We find in these letters a Liszt who, though inconsistent, is a thoroughly human and personable man of tireless energy and devotion to his art. The vast number of newly translated items will indeed be of great interest to readers of English. While I have pointed out a few weaknesses of the book, I must state emphatically that Williams has rendered a valuable service in producing this important document. The book is a welcome addition to the Liszt literature and fills an immense gap in the epistolary record of the composer's life. Until scholars produce a collected edition of the letters, this is likely to be the starting point for the English-reading scholar.

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French Opera at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style. By Steven Huebner. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN 0-18-816280-4. [xvii, 526 p. $125.]

Steven Huebner loves opera, French opera. And probably no other North American knows as much about it as he does. Besides his book *The Operas of Charles*

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Gounod (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), he has written about Georges Bizet's *Carmen,* Alfred Bruneau's *Le rêve,* Reynaldo Hahn's and Léo Delibes's adaptations of Pierre Loti's *Le mariage de Loti* and *Madame Chrysanthème,* Italian influences on Jules Massenet's grand operas, and opera audiences. In his new book, an elegantly written, in-depth study of thirteen other important French operas, he challenges critics who have long privileged Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* as first in its Wagnerisms. In *French Opera at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style,* Huebner traces "*le spectre wagnérien*" (p. vii) in works by nine other French composers. From *Lohengrin* in *Esclarmonde, Thaïs,* and *Le roi d'Ys* to *Tristan und Isolde* in *Le roi Arthus* and *Parsifal* in *Fervaal,* he shows that Wagner haunts these operas as "critical prop" (p. 87), leitmotivic structure, or idealist vision, never reducible to "stylistic pastiche" (p. vii). The result is a penetrating portrait of French operatic culture amidst vigorous self-examination, struggling above all with questions of national identity.

In part 1 (140 pages or one-third of the book), Huebner focuses on Massenet, from his "ascent" to his subsequent "emasculation" by Wagnerian critics. Four operas receive individual chapters: *Manon, Esclarmonde, Werther,* and *Thaïs.* Why so much attention to Massenet, since most of his operas portray a "bourgeois domestic environment appropriate to comedy" (p. 133), not Wagnerian epic? Not only was Massenet the most popular opera composer of his time, he was a major influence on young composers at the Paris Conservatory. From 1883, when Wagner died, to 1894—the decade during which the operas discussed in this book were conceived or first performed—all but two Prix de Rome winners in composition were Massenet's students. Debussy, a student of Ernest Guiraud who won in 1884, knew he had to write like Massenet to get the prize. Building on his "Massenet and Wagner: Bridling the Influence" (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 5 [1993]: 223–38), Huebner investigates how Massenet integrated elements of Wagner's *drame lyrique* in a way "consonant with his own tradition" (p. 134), that is, "to suit an agenda built on the manifestly non-Wagnerian premiss that local level musical reprise did not necessarily need to be sacrificed in order to achieve musical cohesion across acts and even entire works" (p. 101). That this left both conservatives and Wagnerian progressives unimpressed, however, does not fully explain Massenet's successes.

Part 2, "Ambivalent Wagnerians and Conservative Renewal" (80 pages) examines composers who initially were attracted to Wagner's music. As the chapter titles suggest, Ernest Reyer was really a "Berliozian," Camille Saint-Saëns waffled "on the cusp," and Edouard Lalo embraced Wagnerism only "in spite of himself." Huebner shows that despite their leitmotivs and Wagnerian allusions, Reyer's *Sigurd,* Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII,* and Lalo's *Le roi d'Ys* embraced renewal within the French tradition of grand opera. Gounod's understated melodic style returns as an important influence. Sensitive to nuance, Huebner explores not only why Wagnerian critics attacked Saint-Saëns, but also why *Le roi d'Ys* pleased Wagnerians and conservatives.

Part 3, "Wagnerian Renewal," another third of the book, reads as an arrival at an apex with Emmanuel Chabrier in his *Gwendoline* and *Le roi malgré lui,* Vincent d'Indy in *Fervaal,* and Ernest Chausson in *Le roi Arthus.* Huebner ties their ways of "abutting the fresh against the traditional" (p. 283) to their enthusiastic embrace of Wagner. The opening anecdote sets the tone: Chabrier's crying at "hearing d'Indy play through a new composition" is described as "one of the happiest moments in [d'Indy's] early career" (p. 255).

This sense of climax contrasts with d'Indy's earlier dismissal of other composers, especially if this younger, less experienced composer, admittedly "outside the official circuit in the 1880s" (p. 28), is read as an authority. Chapter 1 begins with Massenet and d'Indy's chance meeting in 1873. According to d'Indy's unpublished diary, Massenet bowed before d'Indy's "high ideals," telling d'Indy to "ignore" his own "trifles for the public" (p. 25). Throughout these chapters, we get Massenet through d'Indy; the latter considered Massenet a "venal musician who produced cultural commodities for a rapaciously materialistic society" (p. 27). *Hérodiade*'s theatrical effectiveness, for example, is "[c]rass theological implication accompanied by crass music, [as] a Vincent d'Indy might have remarked" (p. 42).

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Although this ties Massenet to the overarching theme, it predisposes the reader to negative criticism rather than empathy. Other responses are also invoked, including the recognition that *Esclarmonde* resembles *Tristan und Isolde,* "on the cutting edge within their respective musical cultures" (p. 97). But in calling Massenet's early works "career advancements" (p. 45) rather than achievements, Huebner colludes with the Wagnerians.

D'Indy's perspective permeates other chapters as well. Although *Sigurd,* the first French opera to reflect Wagnerian influence, caused him to "abandon law studies to embrace a career in music," we are told d'Indy "severely criticize[d] Reyer's putative lack of compositional technique later in life" (pp. 191–92, 194). Saint-Saëns's rejection of foreign works at the Société nationale, according to d'Indy, "stemmed from [his] self-centered desire to protect his own career in the opera house" (p. 200). Noting that "materialism, eclecticism, and cosmopolitanism" were "related vices in d'Indy's right-wing ideology," Huebner admits this explanation is "unconvincing"; "[p]rotectionism and validation of national heritage did not necessarily mean exclusionism" for Saint-Saëns (ibid.). Still, d'Indy's opinions are ever-present. This may give a skewed idea of his importance in French musical culture before 1900, especially as his critical writing deserves a chapter, while that of other composer-critics in this group (Reyer at *Journal des débats,* Bruneau at *Le Figaro,* Saint-Saëns at *Le Voltaire*) does not. This sympathetic reflection on d'Indy's contributions, however, offers welcome relief from the shrill response he has often received in recent decades.

Part 4, "Realist Opera" (the book's shortest section), addresses an alternative form of musical progress together with the influence of Émile Zola on Bruneau and bohemian anarchism on Gustave Charpentier. Bruneau "enthusiastically absorbed Wagner's music" in his youth, turning his Prix de Rome cantata into a "mini-*drame lyrique*" (p. 395) before embracing Zola's naturalist ideas, here examined through *L'attaque du moulin.* Charpentier used "virtuosic leitmotivic marquetry" (p. 441) and had "Wagnerian ambitions of scale and monumentality for his working-class characters" (p. 444) in *Louise.* But both sought to develop "*drame lyrique après Wagner* (after Wagner)" rather than, as Debussy once put it, "*d'après Wagner* (in imitation of Wagner)" (pp. 395–96, 441). For Bruneau and Zola, this meant moving beyond "Schopenhauerian pessimism and Parsifalian asceticism" to a more "healthy French order" that was "grounded in the everyday" (p. 411). Charpentier also took inspiration from Massenet's vocal style. Huebner negotiates these complexities bravely and convincingly. By ending the book with two Massenet students (and an epilogue on *Pelléas et Mélisande*), he frames Wagner's influence within French traditions old and new.

Many of the questions Huebner poses are straight from traditional opera scholarship. He has carefully and thoroughly researched the genesis of these operas as well as composers' working relationships with singers (i.e., Sibyl Sanderson in *Manon,* Gabrielle Krauss in *Henry VIII*) and librettists. He has reflected on librettists' ideologies, genre in the wake of Wagner's *drame lyrique* (i.e., *mélodrame* [*Manon*], *opérette* [*Le roi malgré lui*], *légende* [*Fervaal*], *roman* [*Louise*]), and dramaturgy. His main interests, however, are critical reception and musical style. With numerous clearly reproduced music examples—some several pages long—he shows, for example, how the prose libretto of *Thaïs* encouraged Massenet "to explore the more asymmetrical side of his melodic style" (p. 143), how Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* combines leitmotivs with a melodic style indebted to Gounod, and how Chabrier instilled playfulness in his scores. While Verdi and Wagner have received such attention, these French composers, for the most part, have not.

The book also explores newer questions concerning gender and race. Huebner queries what "the feminine" may have meant to Massenet and his listeners, suggesting that Massenet's enemies often projected perceptions of his music and operatic characters onto his personality ("Manon as flirt, Massenet as flirt" [p. 163]). He concludes that gender associations "played a substantial role in [Massenet's] demotion" (p. 166). In his fascinating study of *Fervaal*—perhaps the most compelling part of the book—Huebner uncovers the "racial inflections" in d'Indy's nationalism and shows how, in *Fervaal,*

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"race, nationalism, and Christian faith combine in an allegory about the founding of France out of the Celtic spirit" (p. 326).

The book, then, focuses on what French composers took from Wagner to further their own musical goals, not why Wagner became "the most frequently performed composer at the Opéra after 1890" (p. 21) nor the extent to which Wagnerian influences determined success or failure in the complex world of musical reception. In provocative and important ways, Huebner rectifies the imbalance in our understanding of late-nineteenth-century French opera, and his book will serve as a dependable reference tool for years to come. My only regret is that it was not more beautifully produced, better marketed, and made available at a more reasonable price so that it might reach the wide audience it deserves.

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Tosca's Rome: The Play and the Opera in Historical Perspective. By Susan Vandiver Nicassio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. [xix, 335 p. ISBN 0-226-57971-9. $45.]

There is apparently an addiction to Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* that can lure a career in its wake after even a brief exposure to the opera. The author of *Tosca's Rome,* historian Susan Vandiver Nicassio, was a fellow at the American Academy in Rome when, with the help of a broken leg, she dropped a "normal" academic inquiry and began to research the historical background of this opera and the play by Victorien Sardou on which it is based. This engrossing book is the result of that work.

Tosca dependence has a peculiar side effect: the desire to make the opera "realer" than realistic, more *vera* than veristic. Nicassio's opus accomplishes this by tracking down the facts behind every detail of the plot. But she is not alone in this endeavor. Take the case of Tito Schipa Jr. (son of the famous tenor), who advocated only rock opera until the Callas–Gobbi–Di Stefano recording of *Tosca* (Angel 3508 BL, 1953) crossed his path: since then, he has dedicated years of his life to recreating that historic performance in computer-generated virtual reality. Witness, too, Susan Sontag's historical novel *The Volcano Lover: A Romance* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1992), in which the *Tosca* character Scarpia interacts with the real Lady Emma Hamilton. And a recent Italian book, *La Tosca: Resoconto attorno a quei famosi fatti,* by Giorgio Bosello (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1997; 2d ed., 1999) out-Sardoodles Sardou (*pace* G. B. Shaw) by tying up every loose end left by the author. (If you ever wondered what happened to Tosca's jewels, Bosello will tell you.) Bosello's work is a fantasy, but his copious historical notes, time-lines, and contemporary maps bring his book into the same territory as Nicassio's.

What if *Tosca* were rewritten to be historically accurate? Nicassio informs us that the escaped prisoner Angelotti would have had the right of sanctuary in the church of Sant'Andrea and so would not have needed to flee (p. 131), and that, since there was no pope in Rome at the time, the Te Deum spectacle held there could not have included a papal procession (p. 166). Further, Cavaradossi would not have died "disperato" on top of the Castel Sant'Angelo facing a firing squad, but instead would probably have won his legal case against the state (p. 199). But even if the opera's hero had received capital punishment, he would have been hanged, and every effort would have been made to reconcile his immortal soul to the church's teachings. Certainly the condemned man would not have heard a mournfully sweet shepherd song at dawn; according to Nicassio's research, the shepherd tunes of the time were "deafening and disagreeable," ending in a "screaming monotone" (p. 226). So much for atmospheric scene setting.

There is a lot of material to deal with here: information about the opera, the play, and all the historical items. The question is how to organize it all. Nicassio's solution was to devote the first chapter to revealing how Sardou's late-nineteenth-century viewpoint colored his historical vision, and here the author's historical sophistication shines, immediately distinguishing her book from other similar attempts. The following four chapters describe the real Rome from the perspectives of the church and the city's artists, singers,

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