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Musical Progress and International Glory

In March 1878, Viennese newspapers published a caricature of Jean-Baptiste Faure, France's greatest baritone, dressed as Hamlet, holding the reins of a vigorous horse and dragging sacks overflowing with florins, piled high on a cart. He and Christine Nilsson, a lovely Swedish soprano who made her career with French opera, had just earned 122,000 francs in a month, ten times the annual salary of the Paris Conservatoire director.¹ That spring the Imperial Opéra's "Italian season" introduced Faure to the Viennese public in *La Favorite*, *Don Giovanni*, and, with Nilsson, in Gounod's *Faust* and Thomas's *Hamlet* in Italian translation. Over twenty Austrian newspapers "sang the glory" of these stars. One observed, "with such a Mephisto and Marguerite, the role of Faust became entirely secondary." *Hamlet* was most appreciated (fig. 27). Eduard Hanslick, Vienna's infamously conservative music critic, managed to get his review on the front page of the *Neue Freie Presse*. He lauded the transparency of Faure's acting and singing, how he brought the text to life and how these talents made audiences forget his presence on stage. Never had the Viennese public seen such a "perfect identification of text and song, music and dramatic action."² Acknowledging the baritone as "the most substantial representative of the beautiful French lyric school," the emperor Franz Joseph himself decorated Faure and made him a singer of the imperial court—an honor for France as well as the performer.³

1. Since the 1860s, these two had been known all over Europe for their roles in French and Italian opera. In Paris, they had premiered Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet* (1868), and Faure sang *Don Giovanni* in the first season of the new Palais Garnier (1875). In January 1878, between doing *Hamlet* in Bordeaux and Marseille, Faure also made 40,000 francs for four performances to celebrate the king of Spain's wedding. *Ménestrel*, 13 January 1878, 54.

2. Eduard Hanslick, "Feuilleton," *Neue Freie Presse*, 28 March 1878. Hanslick (1825–1904), also a professor at the University of Vienna and advisor to the government, was known internationally for his *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: Ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik in der Tonkunst* (The Beautiful in Music) (Leipzig, 1854).

3. *Ménestrel*, 5 May 1878, 181. Hanslick's reviews and others cited here are also summarized in *Ménestrel*, 7 April 1878, 149, through 30 June 1878, 246, and 25 August 1878, 313.



FIG. 27 Edouard Manet, *Faure in the Role of Hamlet* (1877), Museum Folkwang Essen.

Jean-Baptiste Faure was one of the leading French opera singers of the nineteenth century. After studying at the Conservatoire, he made his début in 1852 at the Opéra-Comique, but spent the next decade in London at Covent Garden, to which he would return throughout his career. In Paris, he created numerous roles, but became most associated with the title role of Thomas's *Hamlet*. Though he undoubtedly possessed an excellent voice, many critics were most impressed with his abilities as an actor; he could convey any sentiment with ease.

For those resistant to change, the clarity, grace, and traditional forms of French music counterbalanced and perhaps neutralized the increasing importance of Wagner. Hanslick could not tolerate Wagnerian notions of musical progress and two months later would have to contend with the Viennese premiere of *Siegfried*. He preferred new French music. The *Neue Freie Presse* published a review of an Offenbach premiere in Paris. And in another front-page review, Hanslick heaped praise on other French genres performed in Vienna that month. Significantly, this music was not marginalized in a concert of French works, but rather performed in contexts that tested new French music against Germanic musical giants: Saint-Saëns's cello concerto (1873) in an orchestral concert with Beethoven's *Prometheus*, Saint-Saëns's C minor piano concerto (1877) paired by a pianist with Mozart's C major piano concerto, and male choruses by Léo Delibes juxtaposed with choruses by Mendelssohn and Brahms. Hanslick even gave attention to Bourgault-Ducoudray's little gavotte, which harkened back to the French rococo.⁴ The critic's enthusiasm for French music made him ideal to organize Austria's musical contributions to the 1878 Universal Exhibition in Paris, where he would have worked on committees with these same composers.⁵

Claiming that Faure and Nilsson had "revolutionized" the city despite the "sensitive political preoccupations of the moment," reviewers alluded to another possible reason for this receptivity to French music: international politics. European objections to the treaty Russia signed at San Stefano (near Istanbul) on 3 March 1878 dominated the news throughout spring 1878. The major European powers, especially the Austro-Hungarians, heatedly debated the separation of the Balkan states from the Ottoman Empire, refusing to accept this extension of Russian power. Every day discussions, reports from abroad, and last-minute telegrams from European capitals took up pages of the *Neue Freie Presse*. What were Europe's interests? What were the French thinking? the English? To enlist support for their perspective and come to agreement on what could be done, Austro-Hungarians needed to reach out to their neighbors and offer evidence of friendship, shared interests, and common values. The French back home, cognizant of the need for good diplomatic relationships if they were to expand abroad,⁶ called it a "gracious reply" when, after they honored Johann Strauss with the Légion d'honneur,

4. Eduard Hanslick, "Feuilleton," *Neue Freie Presse*, 23 March 1878.

5. Saint-Saëns, Delibes, and Bourgault-Ducoudray served on the supervising committee for music, Delibes also on the committee for foreign concerts, and Bourgault-Ducoudray on that for folk music from all countries.

6. For this reason, Gambetta supported France's participation in the Congress of Berlin (1878). Jean Meyer et al., eds. *Histoire de la France coloniale*, vol. 1 (Paris: Colin, 1991), 577–78.

Delibes received the cross of the Order of Franz Joseph. The extraordinary reception of Faure and *Hamlet*, whether motivated by escape from political concerns or not, validated French taste and, by analogy, the French nation, even if the growth of republicanism in France may have troubled the Habsburgs. Through the neutral sphere of music, diplomacy had a place to begin.

In the context of close relationships with the rest of Europe, reinventing themselves as a nation entailed not only looking back to past glories, whether under kings, emperors, or revolutionaries, but also taking stock of present accomplishments and promoting hope in the future. With defeat to Prussia, French conservatives and progressives alike looked to the arts rather than the military to revive national pride and respect from their neighbors. In 1872, Camille Doucet, president of the Institut de France, explained, “The glory of our arts will avenge the mourning of our arms. When the canon is reduced to silence, better voices are heard; when the bloody battle has ceased, noble struggles begin. . . . Let’s be even prouder of those who remain.”⁷ During his visit to America, Offenbach made a similar point, noting that great nations needed, not only industrial force, but also “the brilliance and glory that alone the arts are capable of proving.”⁸ The arts in France had long elicited glory, renown, and admiration from many near and far. Associated with heroic achievements, glory was an idea around which all French could rally, as well as a technology with which to unify and rebuild the nation.⁹

The task ahead was to get people to identify with the nation’s artistic achievements. This included opera. Although *les classes populaires* might never have the opportunity to enjoy it in all its splendor, opera had enormous utility in bolstering French pride.¹⁰ France had long attracted major foreign composers—such as Lully, Gluck, Cherubini, Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Verdi—to write for French lyric theaters, and they typically modified their styles to suit French taste. Opera also reflected and promoted France’s glory abroad. The popularity of French dramatic music beyond Paris and all over the world during this period was taken as evidence of the strength and distinction of French culture, if not also its superiority.

7. Cited in *Ménestrel*, 27 October 1972, 389.

8. “Notes d’un musicien en voyage,” *Ménestrel*, 4 March 1877, 109.

9. I use technology here to mean stabilized procedures that generate representations and sustain traditions. See Mi Gyung Kim, *Affinity, That Elusive Dream: A Genealogy of the Chemical Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 8–9.

10. Economists call this nonuse value, in that opera had value for those who would never experience it, except perhaps in transcriptions, but derived benefits from the knowledge that it existed. See Ismail Serageldin, “Cultural Heritage as Public Good: Economic Analysis Applied to Historic Cities,” in *Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century*, ed. Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg, and Marc A. Stern (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 246.

Part of this resulted from works such as *Mignon* and *Hamlet*, which successfully articulated French taste as universal, that is, an embodiment of shared values in western European culture.

Having to negotiate old and new, real and ideal, Italian and German influences, and, in opera, vocal and dramatic priorities, attracted foreigners to French music. It seemed like an aesthetic analogue of France itself, geographically situated between north and south and, under the Moral Order, politically perched between monarchy and republic. As earlier, some called this the *juste milieu* and saw the role of French music, and of France itself, as one of “alliance and reconciliation.”¹¹ French composers’ desire to please and their inclination to appropriate what they admired in others facilitated this, particularly valuable for the young Republic on a continent still full of monarchies. To the extent that French music represented the country abroad, as a form of cultural diplomacy, it could strengthen ties, particularly important during times of conflict, and lay the foundation for future political relationships. In this sense, staying aware of music as a transnational force and maintaining France’s reputation in the arts were in the national interest. With music, politics, and markets intertwined, French production and its influence abroad also supported France’s economic prosperity. The music press thus devoted substantial space to regular reports of foreign as well as provincial performances of French music and its international as well as national reception. Like their neighbors, the French recognized that the perceptions of others could both reinforce and shape their understanding of themselves and their music.

Central to the country’s regeneration and its future glory, progress in French music—particularly new orchestral sounds reinforcing its sensual immediacy—served as a metaphor for French aspirations and an emblem of French pride both at home and abroad. For the government, encouraging artistic progress meant investing in infrastructure and helping artists. Republicans, particularly those dominating the Paris municipal council, supported competitions that increased access to a wide variety of artists and ensured broad participation in the public sphere; they also backed more democratic arts policies. But musical progress could be particularly challenging. Premiered in March 1875, only two months after the passing of the republican constitution, Bizet’s *Carmen* put forth a new vision of musical theater, as well as a daring portrait of the appeal and dangers of freedom, mapped onto an exuberant, seductive woman. Yet after forty-eight performances of it that year, the Opéra-Comique dropped *Carmen* from its repertoire for seven

11. For an extended discussion of the *juste milieu* in French music of the Second Empire, see Hervé Lacombe, *Les Voies de l’opéra français* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 282–84.

years. Judged too realistic, its message of personal liberty conflicted with the Moral Order, especially threatening when President Mac-Mahon's government was beginning to lose its conservative majority. The official world could accept the titillations of Massenet's pornographic *dramas sacrés*, but not the audacities of Carmen. That foreigners produced *Carmen* and premiered *Samson et Dalila* but not the state-subsidized Paris theaters inspired bitterness and disenchantment.

Under the Moral Order, certain compromises had to be made, particularly by republicans. Despite the wounded pride of the French, many looked to German music for compelling models of strength, and a good number of composers took inspiration from Handel and Wagner. And even with their vigorous anticlerical and nationalist agenda, republicans had to tolerate the Catholic Church, still closely tied to the monarchists, which employed many musicians. Republicans continued to write music for Church services. Just as they had to work with monarchies in Europe, republicans also had to accept the association of opera with traditional elites and to focus on the economic advantages it brought to the nation. In this spirit, acknowledging a shared respect for classical aesthetic values and lofty, inspiring ideas, they chose to integrate rather than reject less progressive aesthetic tendencies. Composers such as Saint-Saëns and Massenet sought ways to incorporate traditional aspects of grand opera into their music, regardless of its associations with luxury, while borrowing innovative structures from Wagner. They wrote music as a form of *entente cordiale*, whether for kings and queens or the masses. Such attitudes to music and its public utility both within France and beyond not only characterized the Moral Order but also became integral to the republicans' notions of music, suggesting more complexity than their politics might imply.

MORAL AND MUSICAL PROGRESS

For many republicans, progress, a linear force, resulted from human creativity and intervention in the material world. Condorcet had promoted progress in knowledge as essential;¹² Comte and the positivists saw it as the key to advancing from superstition to reason. As Public Instruction Minister Jules Ferry conceived it, progress was a "slow development, an evolution, a phenomenon of social growth, of transformation, that first affects ideas, then spreads to *mœurs*, and finally becomes expressed in laws."¹³ In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the

12. Condorcet, *Outline of the Intellectual Progress of Mankind* (1795).

13. Ferry, speech in Le Havre, 14 October 1883, cited in Claude Nicolet, *L'Idée républicaine en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 256n1.

bourgeoisie used the term “progress” to validate and contextualize its successes in industrial development, such as electricity, the telephone, and the telegraph, some of which improved the living conditions of the poorer and less privileged. New forms of transport also helped link people together, especially in the cities. The seemingly unlimited capacity for technical improvements and the growth of France’s gross national product into one of the highest in Europe bolstered the idea of progress as a potent material and economic force.

Like their revolutionary predecessors, late nineteenth-century republicans believed that the concept also operated in the psychic world of people. That is, moral improvements could be encouraged and would be cumulative, like those of industry. Of course, there was dissent over whether such progress could be induced by “great art” as taught at the Académie or by a liberalism permitting a wider range of aesthetic attitudes. In the 1870s, especially during the Moral Order, government officials promoted the former, the artistic merits of great masterpieces of the past. Certainly, they appreciated art as an object of contemplation or knowledge, but for republicans, as Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix explains, it was also an object of perception representing the sociopolitical reality of humanity. In addition, she argues, because conservative as well as liberal republicans understood aesthetic taste and style as potentially shared, a product of education and experience, they saw art as “a means of cultural action oriented to social and economic progress.” Art was thus placed squarely in the public domain and expected to serve the general interest of the people.¹⁴

The first principle republicans advocated in art was beauty. They saw beauty as the sensation of natural order, harmony, and measure, which, together with clarity, were assumed to have characterized French art and culture since classicism. There was thus nothing original in their concept. However, just as they wished to do away with the opposition between liberal and utilitarian education, republicans were intent on transforming the eighteenth-century opposition between beauty and utility. For them, beauty was not a luxury, the domain of the privileged. Rather, like truth and other “noble and pure ideas such as duty, justice and progress,”¹⁵ beauty had social value and could have a direct impact on society’s *mœurs*. Agreeing with Cousin, Jules Simon understood the beautiful as distinct from the pleasurable, an ideal independent of the self and all human intelligence, something

14. Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat sous la IIIe République: Le Système des beaux-arts, 1870–1940* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1992), 77–79. She notes that many ministers—Ferry, Gambetta, Proust, Lockroy, Clemenceau, Dujardin-Beaumetz, Bourgeois, and others—subscribed to this notion of progress in art.

15. Eugène Spuller, *Education de la démocratie* (Paris: Alcan, 1892), ix.

that took one beyond the present.¹⁶ In 1875, Simon's friend Deputy Edouard Charton, a Saint-Simonian Freemason, explained republicans' attitude to the arts in a much-cited speech to the Assemblée nationale, saying, "We recognize the arts' right to the state's concern, not only because they are a source of exquisite and rare pleasure for a few delicate souls, but also because they respond to a general need [*besoin général*]. They develop a feeling of love for the beautiful in the entire country—something the nation cannot distance itself from with impunity, be it for the progress of its civilization or its glory."¹⁷ Art, republicans believed, could not only help people imagine an ideal social order; through its beauty, it could give them a sense of what it felt like to inhabit an orderly, well-proportioned space—a just world—if only in their imaginations. This was not Kantian transcendence, but an embodied ideal capable of a stimulating a taste for order and new ways of being. Art could influence one's perception of the world and shape one's behavior. This went for both creators and consumers of art.¹⁸ In this sense, music was not just a potential reflection of society, but an agent with the capacity to affect it.¹⁹

Republicans distrusted unstructured, formless works as expressions of uncontrolled emotions. They considered the excesses of romantic individualism elitist and antidemocratic.²⁰ At the same time, as in the words "transform," "reform," "perform," and the notion of "forming" citizens, form for them was neither static nor merely a geometric abstraction. Like my notion of "composing" the citizen, it translated concepts into reality. If, as they believed, a work should give rational shape to reality, its form should reflect the conscious reconciliation and equilibrium of apparently disordered material realities. Inhabiting a form could then have a certain power over one's sensibility. The unity and coherence of form, in this sense, was what the government hoped to inspire in society, the result of balance and interlocking connections.

From this perspective, on 5 August 1872, Simon told Conservatoire students

16. Jules Simon, *Victor Cousin* (Paris, 1887), 48.

17. Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, 140–41 and app. 16, 354–56. Charton, elected *député* in 1871, was concerned about the pedagogical and social role of art. He started *Magasin pittoresque*, an illustrated magazine for children and working-class families. According to Antonin Proust in *L'Art sous la République* (Paris: Charpentier, 1892), this attitude was largely absent during the Second Empire whose government "took only a mediocre interest in anything that could spread a feeling for art" (7).

18. This idea of music as a means of encouraging inner harmony recalls that of the utopian socialists before 1848, such as Charles Fourier.

19. Tia DeNora, "The Musical Composition of Social Reality: Music, Action, and Reflexivity," *Sociological Review* 43 (May 1995): 306–11, calls art a referent for action.

20. Miriam R. Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1986), 227n11.

that art should “touch us, console us, strengthen us” with its visions of order and make us feel the splendor of beauty. Students should use their imaginations “to create a new world around us.”²¹ To the extent that clarity of thought went along with clarity of message, clear language and form were foremost.²² Other principles, too, were valued: in the visual arts, Charles Blanc pointed to repetition as a form of consonance and to contrast and symmetry, and Antonin Proust, to measure and proportion.²³ If art was to exemplify a dynamic process in motion toward a stable resolution, closure was also crucial. Republicans hoped that acquiring a taste for the beauty of clear form, measured proportions, and formal closure would help people to understand the basis for a harmonious, ordered life.²⁴ In this use of music to contribute to the “improvement of the human species,”²⁵ moderates and conservatives of the Moral Order reached another consensus.

In the 1870s, as throughout most of the nineteenth century in France, many composers and music critics agreed about the importance of formal clarity, balance between contrasting forces, and closure in music. This has led historians to refer to a certain classicism during this period, but perhaps not entirely for the right reasons. The Viennese classics did interest them. Beethoven was a staple of orchestral concerts, and Ambroise Thomas loved Mozart. *Ménestrel* published forty-seven lead articles on Mozart in 1873–74, seventeen on Gluck in 1874–75, and twenty-six on the young Beethoven in 1877. But when the term was coined in 1863, “classicism” referred to music composed during the reign of Louis XIV—not what republicans were promoting. More than with seventeenth- or eighteenth-century classical models, the principles that Simon valued found resonance in the romantic/classic antithesis as one of tension/relaxation, in the association of the classical with art involving reflection, and in the idea of serious music as having moral value.²⁶

21. Jules Simon, *Discours prononcé par le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1872).

22. “Ce qui se pense bien s’énonce clairement,” Boileau observed in his *L’Art poétique* (1674).

23. See Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des arts décoratifs: Décoration intérieure de la maison* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, H. Loones, 1882), and Proust, *Art sous la République*, 276.

24. Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology*, 10–16, 177–79, 216–17. Levin notes that republicans considered art a model for the kind of socialization they wished to support, not only because it involved work and was a product of human labor, but also because it often involved collaboration (in music, for example, between a composer, patron, editor, performer, public and sometimes critic).

25. Agénor Bardoux, *Discours prononcé par le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1878).

26. Joël-Marie Fauquet, “Classicisme,” in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France au XIX siècle*, ed. id. (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 283–84.

Such principles can be found in many genres of French music. For example, military marches, which were often on late nineteenth-century concert programs, embraced clear ternary forms, ABA, with middle B sections that presented maximum contrast with the framing A sections. In most of them, balance comes from opposing aggressive outer sections with lyrical inner ones. French orchestral marches, in contrast, were usually rondos, ABACA. In them, the initial A material tends to grow increasingly strong as it confronts and eventually incorporates the contrasting material in B and C, such as in Berlioz's very popular "Marche hongroise," often excerpted from the *Damnation de Faust*. In his concertos, symphonies, and symphonic tone poems, Saint-Saëns created coherent, balanced forms that renewed the genres and embraced clarity as a way to insulate French music from the influence of Wagner.

Saint-Saëns's oratorio *Le Déluge* (1876), setting a text by Louis Gallet, exemplifies Simon's principles in a large work for two soloists, chorus, and orchestra. Not only is it Protestant in attitude, suggesting direct contact between God and Noah, but it uses clear contrasts of an original nature. In its prelude, as if depicting the first days of mankind, Saint-Saëns reduces the orchestra to the strings only and, in a musical emblem of Western civilization, contrasts four-part counterpoint, a Bach-like theme treated in fugue, with a lyrical violin solo, accompanied by strings playing pizzicato. In part 1, he adds the harp to accompany a narrator as he then recounts the degeneration of man's soul. Two soloists and the chorus then take on God's voice, reiterating over and over in furious fugal imitation, "I will exterminate this race." In part 2, he expands the orchestra to include a gong, timpani, and huge brass section (including five trombones and four low saxhorns) to portray the rising waters of the flood—what one critic called "a symphonic description of Niagara"—and the cries of people being engulfed in it. Waves of repeating scalar and arpeggiated ostinati patterns, a gradual thickening in the upper register, and a very slow crescendo builds as the waves and the "furious winds" crash against one another, then subside into "an eternal night" (ex. 6).

In part 3, an orchestra classical in nature returns to accompany the rebirth of the earth and human feeling. Was Saint-Saëns here implying that the natural sublime evoked in music must be framed and controlled by the beautiful—so far from German, especially Wagnerian, notions of music?²⁷ After the luminous appearance of a rainbow in the clouds, a "symbol of peace," counterpoint also returns, however here to drive home God's exuberant call for people to "multiply." The audience at its premiere by the Concerts Colonne on 5 March 1876 was fiercely

27. I'm grateful to Mitchell Morris for this insight.

EX. 6 Saint-Saëns, *Le Déluge* (1876), part 2.

Here the strings and upper woodwinds, representing the waves, collide against the brass, the “furious winds.”

The musical score is divided into three main sections. The top section consists of multiple staves for woodwinds and strings, featuring complex, rapid passages. The middle section contains vocal parts with lyrics in French and German. The bottom section features brass instruments with powerful, sustained notes.

French Lyrics:
 Se heurte - rent les flots et les vents fu - ri - eux.
 Es ex - bran - tait der Sturm und durchheu - tet die Nacht.
 Se heurte - rent les flots et les vents fu - ri - eux.
 Es ex - bran - tait der Sturm und durchheu - tet die Nacht.

German Lyrics:
 Es ex - bran - tait der Sturm und durchheu - tet die Nacht.
 Es ex - bran - tait der Sturm und durchheu - tet die Nacht.

divided. Some critics bemoaned the composer's use of descriptive music, a genre they found inferior, and thought he was "going astray" in this "complicated and difficult" work, preferring the "simple and sweet" soprano air in part 3. However, they admitted that he had achieved "the effect he sought with mathematical precision." Counting on the "clear-cut contrast" of its "violent effects" with the "adorable simplicity of *L'Enfance du Christ* and the sober instrumentation of Méhul's *Joseph*," Edouard Colonne repeated part 2 on his popular Good Friday concert.²⁸

French music could also serve as an abstract model for society's morals and *mœurs*, and vice versa, because it could embody progress. While formal clarity encouraged the experience of musical order, ironically, it provided a framework for exploring new freedoms. Typical of French music from this period is the combination of relatively simple forms with inventive uses of the orchestra and creation of new sound colors. One wonders if this was heard as a metaphor for the kind of liberty republicans envisaged for individuals who could live in harmony within the structure of an ordered society. Occasionally, composers sought to use new resources, such as when Meyerbeer asked Adolphe Sax to create special instruments to help situate act 4 of *L'Africaine* in an unknown country, or when Gounod commissioned a pyrophone, an instrument producing sound from gas in crystal tubes, to accompany the divine voices heard by Joan of Arc.²⁹ But for the most part, as in *Le Déluge*, composers used standard instruments in new ways, combinations, or contexts.

Progress in this sense meant extending the limits of preexisting materials, building on previous accomplishments, and making these achievements readily graspable. Coloristic orchestration earlier in the century resulted in part from operatic practices (by Meyerbeer and others) as well as the influence of Berlioz. Thomas and Gounod incorporated harp, percussion, and, in *Hamlet*, saxophones, to produce unusual effects and enhance the expressivity of their operas. The press considered the orchestra responsible for the poetic atmosphere in their music.³⁰ This interest in sound led Thomas in 1873 to institute an acoustics course at the Conservatoire, initiating study of the scientific basis for sound. Some theorized the sound palette,

28. A.-M., "Concerts et soirées," *Ménestrel*, 23 April 1876, 167. See also Brian Rees, *Camille Saint-Saëns: A Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), 193–97.

29. P. Lacome, "Les Voix de l'orchestre," *Ménestrel*, 30 June 1872, 254, 24 August 1873, 311, and 23 November 1873, 414. Unfortunately, Meyerbeer died before this collaboration bore fruit, and Frédéric Kastner's pyrophone could not be made in time for the premiere of *Jeanne d'Arc*. See also the report on this instrument at the Universal Exhibition in Vienna, *Revue et gazette musicale*, 21 September 1873, 301, and the inventor's commentary in *ibid.*, 20 December 1874, 465–66.

30. Marie-Hélène Coudroy-Saghai and Hervé Lacombe, "*Faust et Mignon* face à la presse," in *Sillages musicologiques*, ed. Philippe Blay and Raphaëlle Legrand (Paris: Conservatoire national de Paris, 1997), 103.

seeking to understand relationships between the natural phenomena of sound and human sensibility. These were concerns shared with impressionist painters.³¹ Saint-Saëns also experimented with sound colors, especially in his tone poems and the two ballets in *Samson et Dalila* (1868–77).³² In his *Danse macabre*, for example, he incorporates a xylophone, which some heard as the sound of bones clanking against one another.³³ Critics applauded him for using the orchestra as one might a keyboard. It gratified audiences' taste for the new and different, offering a kind of "mysterious color" and "brilliant orchestration" that made for instructive comparisons, especially when next to Mozart and Beethoven.³⁴ The combination of ordered forms and progressive sounds was also one the government rewarded. After the premiere of *Marie-Magdeleine* (1873), Thomas lauded Massenet for proving that "one can proceed in the path of progress while remaining clear, sober, and measured"—an accomplishment that helped earn him the Légion d'honneur in 1876.³⁵

Many republicans also associated progress with achievement reached through conquering adversity. In his history of French music, Chouquet had shown that "artists of genius had to struggle against public opinion and withstand scorn and injustices before they could get accepted innovations on which the progress of music depended."³⁶ In the 1870s, the composer most associated with such struggle was Berlioz, whom the press regularly portrayed as "a hero by the force of his will," whose works were "echoes of his suffering and his joys." This view of him derived from three aspects of his career. First, there was his own existential condition, his loneliness and melancholy expressed in his memoirs and the characters he set to music. Critics pointed to his possible identification with Herod's sleepless nights in *L'Enfance du Christ*, Faust's soliloquy, and the burial of Julie to depict a life filled with tragic emotion. Second, French audiences during the Second Empire had shown indifference to his greatest works. Although he was elected to

31. In "Voix de l'orchestre," Lacombe proposes a study of orchestral voices as one might study human voices, classifying them according to the effect that various registers make, whether natural or artificial, in the hope that this might help composers "in their preparation of their sonorous palette, their *palette impressionnelle*" (255). This is contemporaneous with Monet's painting *Impression, Sunrise* (1872), shown at the first Impressionist Exhibition in 1874, although impressionists' interest in color was not necessarily accompanied by a concern for clear form.

32. By 1880, reviewers were ready in advance to praise this aspect of his new works. See the review of his *Suite algérienne* in *Ménestrel*, 26 December 1880, 31.

33. *Revue et gazette musicale*, 31 January 1875, 37. Jean Bonnerot, in *C. Saint-Saëns, sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Durand, 1922), notes that the tone poem is a "transformation of a melody written in 1873, setting a Jean Lahor poem, 'Égalité, Fraternité'" (70).

34. *Ménestrel*, 13 February 1876, 86, and 4 April 1880, 143.

35. Cited in Elisabeth Rogeboz-Malfroy, *Ambroise Thomas ou la tentation du lyrique* (Besançon: Cêtre, 1994), 92.

36. Adrien Desprez, "Bibliographie musicale," *Revue et gazette musicale*, 1 June 1873, 172.

the Institut at thirty-five, and Paganini had proclaimed him Beethoven's successor, Berlioz complained endlessly of lack of money and failures, especially the cool reception given his *Damnation de Faust*. That some of his works were performed in Germany while being rejected in his own country irked not just Berlioz but later nationalist-minded republicans. Third, his music presented substantial difficulty to orchestras, performers, and listeners. It required artists of the first order, lots of rehearsals, and money for extra performers. It challenged listeners, not only with extreme states of ecstasy and despair, but also with musical complexities. To grasp it fully required multiple performances and repeated hearing.

A year after the composer died, on 23 March 1870, the Concerts Padeloup presented a Berlioz Festival, and a "campaign of public reparation of his memory" began. Thereafter excerpts of his major pieces appeared regularly on concert programs. At first, it was the sophisticated subscribers of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire who applauded them. Then Colonne's efforts to perform these works complete—two performances of *Enfance du Christ* on consecutive Sundays in January 1875, then two of *Roméo et Juliette* in November—paid off in interest among new audiences and significant critical attention. The eminent composer and critic Ernest Reyer noted that although serious musicians knew the scores, few had heard them in their entirety. In the months and years that followed, Colonne reprogrammed these and other works by Berlioz so that audiences could get to know the music and engage in comparisons. That Colonne's public made Berlioz popular is significant. Most listeners bought their tickets at the last minute, rather than in annual subscriptions, and thus were particularly sensitive to the vagaries of Parisian tastes and fashions. Presented as the French heir to Beethoven, but not overly dependent on music of the past, Berlioz soon took on the mantle of musician of the future. With his passionate love of liberty, genius for orchestration, "colossal style," invention of the dramatic symphony, and theatrical music filled with riotous crowds, people saw him as a "musician of revolutions." With works such as his *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, he was understood as the musician most influenced by the traditions of the French Revolution.

As Romain Rolland saw it, Berlioz's greatest originality was the creation of music "that suited the spirit of the common people, recently raised to sovereignty, and the young democracy." He showed "the music of France the way in which her genius should tread . . . the possibilities she had never before dreamed of," laying the "strong foundation of a national and popular music in the greatest republic in Europe."³⁷ To

37. The quotations in these two paragraphs come from Romain Rolland, *Musicians of Today*, trans. Mary Blaiklock (New York: Books for Libraries, 1915), 15, 23–24, 46, 51, 58–59,

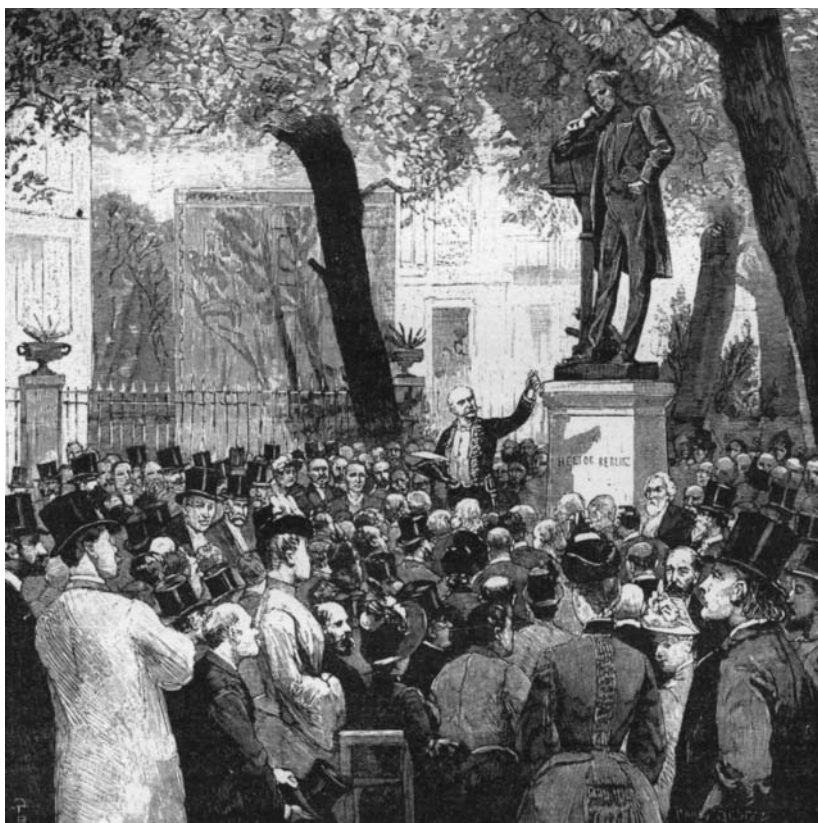


FIG. 28 Engraving of the inauguration of the statue of Berlioz, 1886. From Adolphe Jullien, *Hector Berlioz: Sa Vie et ses œuvres* (Paris: La Librairie de l'Art, 1888).

A stone statue of Berlioz now stands in Paris in a garden at the end of the rue de Calais. The original bronze statue (destroyed in 1942) was inaugurated on 17 October 1886, with the address given by Berlioz's friend and supporter Ernest Reyer.

the extent that his music inspired audiences to expand their listening skills and face up to adversities and struggles in their own lives, and that it encouraged composers to explore the dramatic symphony and plumb the depths of the orchestra for new musical resources, Berlioz became an emblem of French progress embraced by both republicans and progressives on the right (fig. 28).³⁸

63, 251. As Steven Huebner remarked to me, Rolland's championing of Berlioz should be understood in the context of his admiration for Beethoven, and Berlioz's own efforts to position himself in Beethoven's lineage.

38. Adolphe Jullien wrote books on Berlioz in 1882 and 1888.

EXPORTING FRENCH MUSIC AND FRENCH VALUES

To heal France's wounded pride after the loss to Prussia required not only symbols and an imagination of social progress in French society, but also economic prosperity. Monarchists and republicans alike considered the arts as capable of contributing to the country's economic progress, a function of its exports and international reputation, as well as of French productivity. In the visual arts, good design and fashion were considered indispensable to certain French industries, particularly those related to luxury goods.³⁹ The republicans thought that art education would help future industrialists maintain French superiority in this domain, to the extent that taste was teachable and not just intuitive. In his address to art students on 11 August 1875, Fine Arts Director Philippe de Chennevières, asked them to be the "instructors of French industry" and "officers in the future struggle of French against foreign industry." Through teaching drawing in elementary schools, he hoped "to create an army of innumerable soldiers, as many soldiers as there are schoolchildren in France."⁴⁰ In their speeches of 1876 through 1879 at the Conservatoire, the ministers of public instruction and fine arts used similar language calling its students a "brave and peaceful army of artists," "soldiers" whose "peaceful struggles bring the most brilliant successes," whose "triumphs make France proud," and who "merit admirers and friends." Politicians expected these young musicians to "remember [their] duties" in return for the privilege of a free education. This meant not only joining others in the "march" toward progress in the arts but, above all, defending and helping maintain French artistic supremacy.

Concerts and especially theater contributed to this effort. At home during the first half of 1872, for example, the French spent an unprecedented eight million francs on them.⁴¹ In addition to various *cercles artistiques* and *sociétés philharmoniques* that performed largely for local elites, the musical life of French cities grew with the advent of popular orchestras modeled on Padeloup's *concerts populaires*

39. This idea dates back to M. de Laborde who, in a report on the 1867 Universal Exhibition, pointed back to a conviction that emerged from the 1851 Exhibition: "the arts are the most powerful machine of industry." He noted that at this point each country had resolved "to conquer this motor of success at all cost." This meant "organizing this machine," i.e., creating museums and schools of the industrial arts. Proust, *Art sous la République*, 7–8.

40. Philippe de Chennevières, "Supplément au Rapport du août 1878: Discours prononcé à la distribution des prix, 11 août 1875," in Ministère de l'instruction publique, des cultes, et des beaux-arts, *Bulletin*, 1877–78 (Paris: Société anonyme de publications périodiques, 1878), 365.

41. "Revue de 1872," *Revue et gazette musicale*, 5 January 1873, 1.

FIG. 29 Célestine Galli-Marié as Mignon (1866).

This portrait of Galli-Marié shows the 25-year-old singer as Mignon, one of the roles with which she was most closely associated. She achieved such fame that many composers wrote leading roles for her, including Massenet and Offenbach, and she became one of the most celebrated Carmens of her day. She frequently toured outside Paris, bringing major operatic works both to the provinces and abroad.



in Marseille and Brest (1872), Versailles (1872), Lyon (1874), Angers and Lille (1876).⁴² Paris-based music journals, particularly the *Revue et gazette musicale*, reported regularly on operas and operettas produced in the *départements*, sometimes by singers associated with Paris productions, such as Célestine Galli-Marié (fig. 29), who took *Mignon* to Bordeaux in 1873, and Jean-Baptiste Faure (fig. 27), who did *Hamlet* in Lyon in 1877. Sometimes, other French cities took the lead. For example, in 1877, Lyon produced the premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Etienne Marcel*; in 1883, Nantes did the same for Massenet's *Hérodiade*; and in 1886, Aix-les-Bains put on the first French production since 1863 of Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. After it had left Paris, Angers produced *Carmen* in 1878. French operas by the major composers also had a tradition of quickly making their way across Europe soon

42. See Jann Pasler, "Democracy, Ethics, and Commerce: The *Concerts Populaires* Movement in the Late 19th-Century France," in *Les Sociétés de musique en Europe, 1700–1920: Structures, pratiques musicales et sociabilités*, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrice Veit, and Michael Werner (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2007), 333–57.

after their French premieres and revivals, eventually being heard in the Americas and Australia.⁴³ In London, the director of the Royal Italian Opera had made his reputation and the theater's with French repertoire.⁴⁴ The omnipresence of French opera abroad—which French readers kept up with through the music press—was a particular source of pride, helping to promote a certain image of France in Europe.

For these reasons, despite the huge reparations promised to Prussia, Jules Simon argued for continuing support of the Opéra, Comédie Française, Opéra-Comique, and Odéon (traditionally funded in that order of importance) during the state's review of their annual budgets in spring 1872. He pleaded passionately that France should not “abdicate” its “moral and intellectual influence on the world” and “the idea of being one of the great peoples of the world.” From this perspective, theatrical art was “the most essential and goes the furthest the quickest”:

Go anywhere, in the great cities or the small towns, you will find a French play in our language or translated; you will find French music, French artists. Well, it's part of our influence, it's part of our glory, it's part of our soul, it's something that should not be abandoned. . . . I don't think I'm wrong about this Assemblée. Its instinct is not to abandon France in its suffering or to let the ruins accumulate, but to show it living, powerful, active, ready to come back and to fight in the world of ideas and the world of the arts.⁴⁵

Concurring with the comte d'Osmoy, who considered the arts “the only national glory left for us,” the Orléanist minister of the interior Charles Beulé likewise saw the Opéra as one of France's “greatest glories,” not a “place of pleasure and frivolous *dissipations*.”⁴⁶ Republicans and monarchists thus agreed on a substantial subsidy for the Opéra for a number of reasons. It supported the theatrical life in the *départements* and to some extent abroad. Paris theaters helped connect the social and intellectual life of Paris with those of elites around the country and abroad. The disproportionate amount of state funding going to the capital reinforced the

43. For an overview of these performances, see the essays in *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera*, ed. David Charlton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

44. Gabriella Dideriksen, “Mener Paris à Londres: L'Utilisation du répertoire français par le Royal Italian Opera dans sa lutte pour la survie artistique,” *Histoire, économie, société*, April–June 2003, 217–38.

45. Simon, during annual budget discussions at the Assemblée nationale, March–April 1872, reproduced in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, app. 44, 408.

46. See the comte d'Osmoy cited in *ibid.*, 276, and Charles Beulé, also *secrétaire perpétuel* of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, cited in “Semaine théâtrale,” *Ménestrel*, 24 March 1872, 131.

centrality of Paris in French culture, as well as its hierarchical relationship with the *départements*.

Most important, republicans and monarchists concurred because the Opéra assured “the supremacy of France over other nations from an artistic perspective.” It had provided “new horizons” for some of Europe’s finest musical geniuses and helped them become greater artists.⁴⁷ Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell* (1829), Halévy’s *La Juive* (1835), and Meyerbeer’s *Robert le Diable* (1831), *Les Huguenots* (1836), *Le Prophète* (1849), and *L’Africaine* (1865) made republicans and monarchists alike feel pride in a French institution that had turned foreign musicians into French men and women. This was also true of foreign singers who made their reputations in Paris with French works, such as Gabrielle Krauss (Viennese), Mlle de Reské (Polish), Christine Nilsson (Swedish), and Marie Van Zandt (American) (figs. 30–32).⁴⁸

Simon and Beulé also realized that they should help the next generation. Enthusiastic applause followed Beulé’s description of young French composers as “our hope, our vengeance, our future,” and of the Opéra as their “pedestal,” although everyone was aware of how few new works the theater produced. Some conservatives, however, preferred that the Opéra be a museum, “the Louvre of music,” producing only established, “truly glorious” works. Since many opera lovers came to Paris to see the sumptuous sets and hear the refined performances of works they already knew from simpler local productions or instrumental fantasies, it was vital for Paris theaters to keep older masterpieces in their repertoire so that audiences could “judge them by comparison.” With much of the opera audiences made up of either conservative subscribers or these outsiders from the *départements* and abroad, it should be no surprise that the Opéra produced only one new opera and one new ballet annually after the Palais Garnier opened in 1875. New works,

47. Ibid. From the perspective of Charles Beulé in his *L’Opéra et le drame lyrique* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1872), “France created his talent and revealed Meyerbeer to himself. . . . He was, despite himself, subject, vassal, tributary, something conquered, but calling himself a French genius” (12–13). Cited in Kerry Murphy, “Race and Identity: Appraisals in France of Meyerbeer on His 1891 Centenary,” *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 1, 2 (2004): 33.

48. Krauss sang for the Théâtre-Italien (1859–70), then Rachel in *La Juive* at the Opéra in 1875. Through 1888, she was a member of the Opéra’s company, where she sang Meyerbeer’s heroines, as well as Pauline in Gounod’s *Polyeucte* (1878), Hermosa in Gounod’s *Le Tribut de Zamora* (1881), and Catherine of Aragon in Saint-Saëns’s *Henry VIII* (1883). Nilsson created Ophelia in Thomas’s *Hamlet* (1868) and sang in the Opéra’s first performance of *Faust* (1869). Mlle de Reské did *Hamlet* at the Opéra in the 1870s. Van Zandt did *Mignon* at the Opéra-Comique in March 1880 and created the title role of *Lakmé* (1883). See the entries for Krauss and Van Zandt in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie et al. (New York: Grove, 2001).



FIG. 30 Christine Nilsson, from an engraving. In Charles Simond, *Paris de 1800 à 1900 d'après les estampes et les mémoires du temps* (Paris, 1900).

Nilsson, born in Sweden, had an active career in Paris and London. In 1868, she created the role of Ophelia in Thomas's *Hamlet*, and later played the title character in the London and New York premieres of *Mignon* (in 1870 and 1871, respectively). The flowers in her hair and the word "Hamlet" written on the paper beneath her frame, indicate that Nilsson is depicted here as Ophelia, demonstrating her close association with that role.



FIG. 31 Gabrielle Krauss, from an engraving. In Charles Simond, *Paris de 1800 à 1900 d'après les estampes et les mémoires du temps* (Paris, 1900).

The Austrian Krauss was a favorite at the Opéra during her lengthy time there (1875–88), creating major roles for Gounod and Saint-Saëns and garnering acclaim for her performances in Meyerbeer's works. She is pictured here in the title character in Rossini's *Semiramide*.

FIG. 32 Marie Van Zandt as Lakmé. The American Van Zandt spent only five years in Paris (1880–85), but she made a lasting impact there. Her portrayals of Mignon, among other roles, were so impressive that Delibes composed the title role in *Lakmé* for her. The setting of this image of her in that role, as well as her costume, highlight the exoticism of Lakmé's character.



it was argued, put the institution at risk financially and so should have their own theater.⁴⁹

Older French grand opera not only dominated the Opéra in the 1870s, it also had perhaps the largest presence outside Paris, representing the conservative tastes of a relatively homogeneous elite audience.⁵⁰ In 1873, besides the new production in Paris, Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* was especially popular in French cities and abroad. In 1874, Ricordi produced an Italian edition of *Robert le Diable* that cost less than one franc, and singers at the Moscow Conservatory performed *Robert le Diable* and *Dame*

49. Pierre du Croisy, writing in *La France*, 17 June 1872, used these arguments to propose that the government subtract from the Opéra the money it was using to put on the occasional new work and use it to fund a separate Théâtre-Lyrique. That December, the minister did include a small subsidy for this theater, which was increased to 100,000 francs in 1874.

50. Performances at Berlin's Imperial Theater in 1873–74, for example, included Meyerbeer's *Prophète* (7 times) and *Robert le Diable* (4), Halévy's *La Juive* (6), Boieldieu's *Dame blanche* (6), Auber's *Muette de portici* (2), Gounod's *Faust* (8) and *Roméo et Juliette* (4), and Thomas's *Hamlet* (5). See *Ménestrel*, 5 July 1874, 247.

blanche in their 1878 public exercises.⁵¹ There was also interest in postrevolutionary French music. Along with nine other French operas, Berlin's Imperial Theater kept Méhul's *Joseph* in its repertoire in the 1870s, and an opera by Cherubini.⁵² But since the late 1860s, not only Parisians but also foreigners and provincials alike heard a lot of French operetta, especially by Jacques Offenbach.⁵³ This was not unproblematic. Encouraging a reputation for frivolity in French music, operetta did not present the image that politicians wanted foreigners to associate with French taste and French glory. Most republicans, as well as conservative Catholics, wished to distance themselves from Second Empire decadence. Moreover, in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, many French were disturbed that, although Offenbach had been a Paris resident since 1833 and a French citizen since 1860, he had been born in Cologne. Republicans bemoaned his close relationship with his "protector" and collaborator the duc de Morny, half-brother of Napoléon III. After 1871, they forbade *La Grande Duchesse* to be performed in Paris because it satirized the military.⁵⁴ In part to show his patriotism, when Offenbach took over the Théâtre de la Gaîté in 1873, he spent considerable money producing the premiere of the Barbier-Gounod collaboration *Jeanne d'Arc*, for which he was widely appreciated.

Some reviewers referred to the "invasion" of operettas abroad, praising towns that "resisted."⁵⁵ Still, Offenbach's well-known competitors, such as Charles Lecocq, Robert Planquette, and Hervé, were French and their operettas and *opéras-comiques* also had great success.⁵⁶ For example, after Lecocq's *La Fille de Madame Angot* was premiered in Brussels, it played to a hundred packed houses

51. *Ménestrel*, 13 September 1874, 326, and 5 May 1878, 182.

52. See *Journal de musique*, 21 July 1877. *Joseph* was also in Vienna's repertoire.

53. For example, *La Vie parisienne* (1866) had had eleven foreign premieres by 1871 and seven more by 1880; *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* (1867) had been given on 117 foreign stages by 1873. *Orphée aux Enfers* (1874) and *Madame l'Archiduc* (1874) were also popular abroad. See Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1943), 989.

54. Offenbach took two of his world premieres to Vienna in 1872 and London in 1874. See Jean-Claude Yon, *Jacques Offenbach* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 469–78.

55. *Ménestrel*, 9 November 1873, 399, and Charles Bannelier, "Revue de l'année 1874," *Revue et gazette musicale*, 3 January 1875, 3.

56. Charles Lecocq's *Fleurs de thé* (1868) was done in at least fifteen European capitals through 1872 and in eight languages, *La Petite Mariée* (1875) in sixteen foreign theaters by 1877 and in eight languages, and *Le Petit Duc* (1878) in eighteen of them through 1880 and seven languages. Robert Planquette's operetta *Les Cloches de Corneville* (1877), which had over 400 consecutive performances in Paris its first season, also played in sixteen foreign theaters through 1880 and eight languages. According to "Foyers et coulisses," *Petit Journal*, 16 November 1892, by 1892, the work had been done 1,111 times in Paris, 677 times in the Parisian suburbs, 5,510 times in the French *départements*, and 9,100 times abroad, for a total of 16,790 times in fifteen years. The burlesques and *comédie-opérettes* of Hervé (Florimond Ronger), founder of French operetta, were also popular

in Paris between February and June 1873, its “gay” melodies a perfect distraction from political anxieties over the country’s future. Although the genre tended to attract mostly the middle class, in Paris, the comte and comtesse de Paris, the queen of Spain, visiting princes, Ambroise Thomas, and Christine Nilsson attended. The work was also performed repeatedly in ten French cities and nine foreign ones that year, including Cairo, and in eleven French cities and twelve foreign ones in 1874.⁵⁷ By 1875, Italian critics considered French *opera buffa* as popular as Cimarosa and Rossini in Rome.⁵⁸

If theaters were to “repay the state in glory what had been given them in money,” as one politician put it,⁵⁹ they needed positive reception of music written by France’s officially consecrated living composers. (Indicating the substantial attention the music press regularly gave to French repertoire in foreign theaters, Appendix B documents how often *Ménestrel* mentioned certain French operas in its “foreign news.”)⁶⁰ In 1872, two works in particular, *Faust* and *Mignon*, were said to “proclaim our superiority in musical lyricism today.”⁶¹ By then, Gounod’s *Faust* (1859), always popular in Paris, had already been performed in thirty-nine foreign cities and had entered the repertoire of major houses in Berlin, Brussels, London, St. Petersburg, and Vienna, where it remained throughout the 1870s and 1880s (see table B-1). Significantly, as Steven Huebner has pointed out, early reviewers abroad as well as at home considered *Faust* “learned and serious,” even “too lofty,” and demanded repeat performances to understand it.⁶² In the 1870s and 1880s, other works by Gounod, especially *Mireille* (1864) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867), although with many fewer performances, contributed to his reputation outside France as a composer of noble grandeur and high ideals (see table B-2).

all over Europe, and performances of his *Chilpéric* (1868) and *Le Petit Faust* (1869) later influenced British musical theater. See Kurt Gänzl, “Hervé,” www.grovemusic.com.

57. Not surprisingly since Brandus, its director, published *La Fille de Madame Angot*, the *Revue et gazette musicale* kept careful track of who attended in Paris and productions elsewhere, particularly in Brussels, where *La Fille de Madame Angot* was performed 100 times between December 1872 and April 1873, a local record, and went on to 500 consecutive performances there. By June 1874, it had been done over 400 times in Paris, and from 1873 to 1879, it could be heard in twenty-three cities.

58. *Ménestrel*, 4 April 1875, 141.

59. M. de Tillancourt at the Assemblée nationale, cited in Henri Moreno [Henri Heugel], “Semaine théâtrale et musicale,” *Ménestrel*, 2 August 1874, 275.

60. A similar project, which I have not pursued, would be to trace performances of French operas in the *départements*, also regularly reported in the musical press, especially the *Revue et gazette musicale*.

61. *Ménestrel*, 17 March 1872, 123.

62. Steven Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 56–57.

In part because Heugel published them, *Ménestrel* was particularly assiduous in reporting on performances of Thomas's operas. By 1878, *Mignon* had broken all records in Paris; it seems to have been the French music most frequently performed abroad in the 1870s and 1880s.⁶³ Whereas Gounod's *Faust* is reported in an average of six countries and nine foreign cities annually in the 1870s and 1880s, *Mignon* is discussed in an average of eight countries and fifteen foreign cities annually (see tables B-1 and B-3).⁶⁴ In over 450 references to *Mignon* abroad (as opposed to 220 to *Faust* during this same period), French readers could follow when and where the opera was performed, in what languages (eventually Czech, Hungarian, Swedish, Polish, and English as well as French, German, and Italian), and in what genres.⁶⁵ Such presence in the repertoire of more than a dozen foreign theaters and through touring groups that continually reached new audiences meant not only steady, substantial income for the publisher and composer, but also evidence of broad sympathy for France and French values.

To the extent that *Ménestrel*'s reporting is representative, comparing the entries in tables B-1 and B-3 suggests heterogeneity in the foreign taste for French operas. *Mignon* appeared more often and in more places, but also was embraced by Italians more than Germans, perhaps in part because there were more theaters in Italy. That is, from 1872 to 1880, *Mignon* was most often reported in Italy (22 percent of citations), followed by England, the Austro-Hungarian empire, Russia, Germany, Belgium, and the United States (see table B-3b). In contrast, Germans preferred *Faust*, which was most performed in Germany and Russia (10 percent each of citations), followed by Belgium and England, Austria, and finally Italy, Spain, and the United States. This implies that although both operas were performed in the major European capitals, Italy and Germany in general had inversely related tastes in the 1870s, perhaps related to the stereotypes associated with their preferences for light or serious music.⁶⁶ *Mignon* too appeared in many more cities in these countries, in

63. *Mignon* took only twelve years to reach 500 performances in Paris (as compared with twenty-one years for *Manon* and twenty-eight years for *Faust*) and twenty-eight years for the 1000th performance in 1894 (twenty-nine years for *Carmen*, thirty-five for *Faust*, and sixty-seven for *Les Huguenots*). Rogeboz-Malfroy, *Ambroise Thomas*, 12.

64. In neither decade is there a substantial difference in the presence of these two operas abroad, as reported in *Ménestrel*, except for a slight increase in Gounod performances in the 1880s.

65. It was also popular in "pot-pourris" done by military bands in such places as Vienna. *Ménestrel*, 13 July 1873, 262.

66. This was balanced somewhat in early 1882 when *Mignon* was performed in seven German cities and *Faust* in six Italian cities.

ten Italian cities, ten English, and nine German cities from 1872 to 1880, as compared with *Faust*, which was heard in five German, four Italian, and three English cities. Differences within the countries also existed. Although Russians welcomed both operas, they were performed three times more often in St. Petersburg than in Moscow. In the 1880s, Italian theaters performed *Mignon* most often (38 percent of the citations in *Ménestrel*). German performances increased, in part from tours, in 1882 and 1888 (now 21 percent of citations), but those in other countries dropped off somewhat that decade.

Mignon's success came in part from its malleability and how singers used their voices to embody the characters. Given its tragic ending, grand opera houses could perform it. And because people perceived it as "clear, simple, and melodious without being trivial," *Mignon* allowed for a certain transparency between music and character, a product of the composer's *science rentrée*—the considerable knowledge and skill he used to produce the appearance of simple grace.⁶⁷ References in *Ménestrel* to *Mignon*'s success note how great singers who knew how to act used the "grace and tenderness" of their voices to suggest those qualities in *Mignon*. Célestine Galli-Marié's "sweet and supple" voice, for example, translated *Mignon*'s character perfectly (fig. 29). In Christine Nilsson's rendition of the role in London, audiences could not tell where she left off and *Mignon* began.⁶⁸ Critics abroad also emphasized the "purity" with which the roles were sung.⁶⁹ In Emma Albani's Covent Garden performance, the reviewer had heard "nothing more pure nor more perfect"; her "Connais-tu le pays" performed with a "concentrated emotion immediately communicated to the audience."⁷⁰ This kind of close identification of singer and subject drew listeners into the work, encouraging empathy with its characters. With its bourgeois notions of womanhood and its implicit comment on the rewards of docile modesty and innocent sincerity in a paternal society, the work offered an idealized notion of French *mœurs*.

Besides stimulating widespread appreciation and recognition of French music and French values, *Mignon*'s enormous popularity abroad intimated something universally appealing about this music in the Western world. With melodies inspired by Italian music and a story from Goethe, Thomas reinforced the notion of France as the "cosmopolitan school of *absolute beauty*," which, by virtue of its

67. Review of the Rome premiere in *Ménestrel*, 3 November 1872, 397. The notion of *science rentrée* comes from Ernest Reyer, cited in Coudroy-Saghai and Lacombe, "Faust et Mignon face à la presse," 103.

68. *Ménestrel*, 14 April 1872, 123; De Retz, "Saison de Londres," *Ménestrel*, 11 July 1875, 252.

69. See, e.g., *Ménestrel*, 5 October 1873, 358, and 8 August 1880, 287.

70. De Retz, "Saison de Londres," *Ménestrel*, 5 July 1874, 244.

geography and spirit, “combines opposite qualities.” From the beginning, reviewers used the work to comment on the nature of French music in comparison with German and Italian music. French melody, as exemplified in *Mignon*, was “less lyrical” than Italian melody and “less elevated and penetrating” than German melody, but “more human,” a quality important to republicans, the perfect example of the French *juste milieu* that “assimilates the progress of all countries.”⁷¹

Also significant, the clear and simple melodies of *Mignon* could be performed in many Western languages and by singers with diverse accents and from widely varying backgrounds. Not only the Swede Christine Nilsson and the American Marie Van Zandt, but also the Canadian Emma Albani and the Viennese Pauline Lucca popularized the work abroad. The clear simplicity of the melodies, such as in the repeated notes of ex. 4a, and the purity of timbre reportedly achieved by these singers embodied an ideal beyond nation and national differences within the West, beyond the particularities as expressed in Western languages, as if a musical analogue of the white race. Occasionally, the reviews imply this universality when they point out the performance of *Mignon* in political contexts abroad. In 1873, for example, the Viennese put on *Mignon* and *Faust* for a visit of the Russian czar, and Liège chose *Mignon* when the Belgian king and queen came to town. These choices suggest that the opera served, not only to articulate a certain kind of music as French, but also to promote French taste as universal taste, the ultimate mark of its legitimacy.

Hamlet, a grand opera, had similar success, aided perhaps in being performed for many of the same publics by singers associated with *Mignon* and *Faust*. By 1874, when it reached its hundredth performance in Paris, the opera had been performed all over Europe and as far as New York and Algiers. Table B-4b documents that, just as with *Mignon*, performances in Italy and the Austro-Hungarian empire were mentioned most often (19 percent each), followed by Russia. The Belgians performed *Hamlet* more than the English, despite the Shakespearean subject, and even Belgian Wagnerians embraced the work.⁷² The Germans again trailed, despite *Hamlet*’s being performed often in Berlin.

Whereas *Ménestrel* cites *Mignon* most often in Rome and London in the 1870s, *Hamlet* captured interest above all in Brussels and in Vienna where it inaugurated Vienna’s 1873 Universal Exhibition, with German singers. Although they featured French singers, performances at Vienna’s Imperial Opéra and Budapest’s Royal Opéra in 1878 were such a hit that Hungarians treated *Hamlet* as though it were one of their own national operas.⁷³ With *Hamlet* as with *Mignon*, the singers’

71. Lacombe, citing reviews in the 1860s, in his *Voies de l’opéra français*, 282–84.

72. *Ménestrel*, 7 January 1872, 46.

73. *Ménestrel*, 28 April 1873, 173, and 28 April 1878, 173.

capacity to merge with the characters drew audiences powerfully into the work. While some singers emphasized Ophelia's "strange charm," especially in the mad scene of act 4, an audience favorite, others portrayed her as an "ideal beauty," like Mignon, communicating her truth with simplicity, sincerity, and "moving expressiveness," rather than "tormented passion" or "convulsing sobs."⁷⁴ Her birdlike melismas, echoed by the flutes and harp, called on the singer to celebrate her voice and its sensibility. Faure's renditions of Hamlet also drew praise across the continent, particularly in Vienna, as noted earlier.⁷⁵ Its success in 1878 led the Viennese to program other French music that fall, including Gounod's *Philémon et Baucis*, Thomas's newly revised *Psyché*, and Delibes's ballet *La Source* (just written for them), as well as, in 1881, the latter's new opera *Jean de Nivelle*.

MONEY AND INFLUENCE

In the eighteenth century, the upper classes all over Europe shared a taste for opera. This provided a cultural component to their class coherence and a link between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Operas moved about, along with composers and their wealthy patrons, thanks in part to impresarios.⁷⁶ It is not my intention here to review the meaning of this relationship between opera and society, other than to point out that throughout the nineteenth century, the upper classes, especially aristocrats, continued to maintain a network of personal, political, commercial, and cultural connections across the continent.⁷⁷ The rationale for such practices, however, evolved under the Third Republic as French political economists came to define wealth in terms of utility.⁷⁸ Because commerce satisfied a need and a desire of the state as well as individuals, in this sense, it could have public utility.

Opera remained the biggest music industry in the late nineteenth century, its

74. *Ménestrel*, 7 January 1872, 25 January 1874, 62, and Don Alberto, reporting on the Barcelona production of *Hamlet*, *Ménestrel*, 22 October 1882, 373.

75. See a similar response from the Belgians in *Ménestrel*, 26 January 1879, 71.

76. In his *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003), Daniel Hertz examines operatic culture in cities, some of whose musical organizations were controlled by courts.

77. For an example of close relations among aristocrats all over Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, see Jann Pasler, "Countess Greffulhe as Entrepreneur: Negotiating Class, Gender, and Nation," in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), and id., *Writing through Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

78. Joseph Chailley and Léon Say, minister of finance in the mid 1870s, considered utility "one of the necessary conditions for wealth [*richesse*]." See their *Nouveau dictionnaire d'économie politique* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1892), 2: 1140.

performances providing substantial income for everyone involved. With over 1,400 theaters in Europe by 1882, the possibilities for making money were almost unlimited.⁷⁹ Thanks to international trade agreements over property rights, “authors” (composers and librettists) could expect 5 percent of the proceeds in major theaters and 10 percent in secondary ones, both at home and abroad.⁸⁰ A work in a theater’s repertoire could make a composer wealthy. Singers associated with an opera in Paris, like Faure and Nilsson, got paid still more handsomely when taking it on the road, whether they were French or not.⁸¹ After these operas became audience favorites worldwide, foreign impresarios considered them a “gold mine.” French publishers were furious when traveling troupes did well but failed to pay rights for performances of *Mignon* with reduced musical forces in Havana, Cuba, and Melbourne, Australia, in 1882.⁸² Charities back home benefited from these successes, thanks to the “rights of the poor,” an additional 5 percent tax on all theatrical performances, concerts, *cafés-concerts*, balls, and various festivals. In 1874, this totaled over 2 million francs.⁸³

French opera and ballet abroad thrived. In the 1870s, Berlin’s Imperial Theater put on over two hundred French productions annually of some forty or fifty French operas. So, too, in Vienna and Russia. After they left the repertoire of Paris theaters, French ballets also continued to be performed abroad. In Russia, Petipa choreographed new versions of Adam’s *Le Corsaire* (1856) and *Giselle* (1841) in the 1880s and 1890s. Delibes’s ballets received the same kind of attention as French opera during this period. In October 1876, only months after its Opéra premiere, the three-act ballet *Sylvia* was performed at the Imperial Opera of Vienna, together

79. According to *Ménestrel*, 3 December 1882, 6, in Italy, there were 348 theaters; in France, 337; in Germany, 194; in England, 150; in Spain, 160; in the Austro-Hungarian empire, 132; in Russia, 41; in Belgium, 34; in Holland, 22; in Switzerland, 20; in Portugal, 16; in Sweden 10; in Denmark, 10; in Norway, 8; in Greece, 4; in Turkey, 4; in Romania, 3; and in Serbia, 1.

80. This meant, for example, the authors earned 1,400 francs for three performances of *Mignon* in Vienna in 1872 (i.e., more than Thomas’s monthly salary of 1,200 francs as director of the Conservatoire), and over 4,000 for *Hamlet* there in 1873. At the time, there were approximately 5 francs to the dollar, and the best seats at the Opéra cost 15 francs (also the price of full board at a good hotel on the rue de Rivoli, Place Vendôme, or rue de la Paix).

81. For example, Nilsson received 7,000 francs per performance in *Hamlet* and *Faust* in Russia in 1874, 112,000 francs for sixteen performances. *Ménestrel*, 5 July 1874, 247, 2 June 1878, 213, 14 April 1878, 157.

82. Foreign impresarios also organized performances of *Hamlet*. Edouard Sonzogno produced it at La Fenice in Venice in 1876.

83. *Ménestrel*, 11 July 1875, 254. In 1878, a proposed law would impose this tax only on profits but increase to 15 percent of the gross revenues of *cafés-concerts*. *Ménestrel*, 17 March 1878, 126.

with *Coppélia* (1870), for an enthusiastic crowd. Hanslick praised Delibes for his “graceful” music and pointed out how ballets offered composers musical contexts in which to write “with the freedom of a pure symphonist.” But he also used it as an opportunity to berate German composers for being “too stingy with their melodies to waste them on ballets.”⁸⁴ Berlin put on *Sylvia* the following year, and in 1878, it was conducted in Budapest as though it were a symphony by Schumann or Mendelssohn. An orchestral suite based on it did so well at Covent Garden that it subsequently toured the English provinces. That year in Vienna, Delibes was commissioned to write a ballet expressly for the Imperial Opera.⁸⁵ In 1884, a one-act version of Delibes’s *Coppélia* (1870) was staged in London. Seeing it for the first time in St. Petersburg, and finding it “penetrated with the essence of poetry,” and “one of the most charming” in all of ballet, the future Ballets Russes designer Alexandre Benois declared Delibes a genius. “*Coppélia* played a decisive part in my musical development and led me to demand from the ballet a high standard of music,” he wrote.⁸⁶ Delibes’s symphonic approach to the genre also influenced Tchaikovsky.

Fame translated into money, especially to the extent that French music served as a model for foreign music and influenced taste and fashion. Simon connected the health of French theater and music with the growth of French industry. As he pointed out in an 1872 speech to the Assemblée nationale:

We have a commercial and industrial interest in not losing our theatrical influence in Europe. Our great French industry is not a cheap industry: it’s an industry of taste and luxury. It’s especially through artistic matters, matters of taste and luxury that we have a large turnover—I’m speaking commercially—in our merchandise. Fashion makes turnover in matters of luxury. And what makes fashion, what spreads fashion in this country? It’s material success and it’s also the influence of artworks. Every time a people has dominated in war in Europe, it has set the tone in Europe. France imitated Spain at one time, then Italy, then Germany. At the present, the world is used to imitating France; it will no longer imitate her if we don’t have precursor ideas and French *mœurs* in our theatrical works. And rest assured that you will not refuse this subsidy for local theater without our industries of luxury, our makers of luxury silk, for example, feeling it. So, there is in this a general

84. Eduard Hanslick, writing in the *Neue Freie Presse*, cited in *Ménestrel*, 15 October 1876, 366.

85. *Ménestrel*, 6 January 1878, 46, and 17 November 1878, 412.

86. Alexandre Benois, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* (1941; New York: Da Capo, 1977), 64–72.

interest, and it's not just art I am defending. It's the money of France. . . . It's in the national interest, and not just Parisian interest.⁸⁷

These arguments harked back to the discourse used to support luxury since the eighteenth century—that the state should use luxury to its advantage, that the production of luxury goods was an important part of the French economy, and that prosperity was manifested by such luxury.⁸⁸ Minister Beulé again concurred with Simon, noting that for every million francs spent on music by the government, eighty million came into the country—an “inestimable conquest” of money and people from the *départements* and abroad.⁸⁹ Everyone hoped that the Palais Garnier, the Paris Opéra's new home, would attract audiences from throughout Europe and confirm Paris's role as an important musical center. If one judges by the receipts during its first four years, the Palais Garnier was a huge success.⁹⁰

The war had raised people's consciousness about their own products, and from 1872 to 1875 the country succeeded in exporting more than it imported. This included more than opera. The Commerce Ministry kept track of annual imports and exports of musical instruments, especially pianos and church organs, with each of France's major trading partners.⁹¹ *Ménestrel*, which cited a Dutch critic who put France in the first ranks of organ builders,⁹² reported with pride when a Cavaillé-Coll organ was purchased abroad. The French organist Alexandre Guilmant was brought in to inaugurate those in Amsterdam in 1875 and at the Crystal Palace in London in 1880, inevitably performing French music, his own and that of his

87. Simon is here referring to the fact that Paris theaters would not be the only ones to benefit from such subsidies, because work presented there involved a large number of industries. Annual budget discussions in the Assemblée nationale, March–April 1872, reproduced in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, app. 44, 408–9.

88. See Jean-François Melon, *Essai politique sur le commerce* (1734), Renouvier's *Manuel républicain de l'homme et du citoyen* (1848; Paris: Colin, 1904), and Ernest Feydeau, *Du luxe, des femmes, des mœurs, de la littérature et de la vertu* (1866). In his *Histoire du luxe privé et public* (Paris: Hachette, 1880), Henri Baudrillart argued that the arts of *dessin* likewise had a “prodigious influence on national wealth” (4: 714).

89. Beulé cited in “Semaine théâtrale,” *Ménestrel*, 24 March 1872, 131.

90. These receipts averaged 3,410,000 francs a year. The Comédie-Française made roughly half this, the Opéra-Comique one-third, the Odéon one-eighth. See the income of the other Paris theaters in *Ménestrel*, 2 June 1878, 214, and 27 July 1879, 279.

91. Even though the country exported more instruments than it imported in the early 1870s, this reversed in the late 1870s and fluctuated thereafter. See *Tableau décennal du commerce de la France avec ses colonies et les puissances étrangères, 1877–1886*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1888). See also “Le Commerce extérieur,” *Le Monde musical*, 30 September 1898, 195–96, which reprints a rather humorous article from the *Moniteur officiel de commerce* with advice on how to sell more French musical instruments abroad.

92. C.-M. Philbert, cited in *Ménestrel*, 17 September 1876, 332.

contemporaries. He repeated this music in his tours afterwards. Dutch reviewers, overwhelmed with the instrument's "perfection that has surpassed everything in our country, otherwise known for its grand organs," called it "proof of the progress accomplished in France."⁹³

Music journals followed the performance of French music and performers around Europe and the United States, since they made valuable contributions to the understanding of French music and the expansion of French prestige. This, too, was not limited to opera and opera singers. Just as Faure took *Hamlet* abroad, and Galli-Marié, *Carmen*, Alfred and Marie Jaëll brought foreign audiences Saint-Saëns's music, including four-hand piano transcriptions of his symphonic tone poems and his "Variations for Two Pianos on a Theme of Beethoven," dedicated to them. When Saint-Saëns himself traveled, he performed, conducted, and attended rehearsals of his own music. Along with other soloists, such as Francis Planté and Caroline Montigny-Rémaury, French conductors also brought a French perspective to the performance of French music abroad. In spring 1881, Charles Lamoureux impressed the English by covering all the expenses to perform a new suite by Massenet, fragments of *Sylvia*, and *Danse macabre*, giving the profits to a local charity.⁹⁴ Not only did reviews describe these tours as "victories" in "conquering" new audiences, they also mirrored back to French readers the values associated with French music. Pointing to a French choral symphony performed by a group of English amateurs in 1879, an English critic noted that his countrymen were increasingly attracted by the lightness and grace of French music, seen as a necessary counterweight to the heaviness and density of German music, a tradition with long-standing authority in England. This critic believed the English could benefit from the influence of French clarity on their way of thinking and French elegance on their mode of expression.⁹⁵

The French also celebrated their theory and method books respected abroad, adopted, and recognized for their innovations. Louis Mayeur's saxophone method, for example, was used in the Conservatoire of Brussels in 1878 before there was a class for such instruments at the Paris Conservatoire. In London, in 1880, a singing teacher used Pauline Viardot's *Heures d'étude* with her students. And in 1882, *Ménestrel* claimed that Germans were paying more and more attention to French music theory texts and cited several reviews that had recently appeared in the

93. *Ménestrel*, 6 November 1875, 75.

94. *Ménestrel*, 27 March 1881, 132.

95. The context is a *Daily Telegraph* review of a choral symphony by Bourgault-Ducoudray, performed by an English amateur choral society, the Leslie Society, in a concert of all French music. "Un Concert international à Londres," *Ménestrel*, 9 March 1879, 116–17.

German press. The famous Bach scholar Philipp Spitta, professor of music history at the University of Berlin, and one of the greatest musicologists in Europe at the time, praised a new French *Histoire de la notation musicale* as “excellent because it was not only accurate and complete, but also full of new perspectives.”⁹⁶

THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCCESS ABROAD

Music publishers and critics sometimes used performances in other countries to put pressure on decision-makers within France, particularly when it came to opera. Earlier, when the Théâtre-Lyrique eliminated Gounod's *Faust* (1859) from its repertoire, the publisher Choudens kept it before the public by arranging for performances in the French *départements* and major German cities.⁹⁷ Similarly for *Carmen*, also published by Choudens, when the Opéra-Comique dropped it. Some have asserted that Choudens “imposed” this work on foreign directors.⁹⁸ Three days after Bizet died on 3 June 1875, Vienna had announced that *Carmen* would be its first French work that fall, not the original *opéra-comique* with spoken dialogues, but a version as *grand opéra*, with recitatives written by Ernest Guiraud and a ballet from Bizet's *La Jolie Fille de Perth* inserted in act 4. Between 1875 and its Paris revival in 1883, *Carmen* was performed in twenty-three foreign cities (see table B-5) from Brussels and Budapest (1876) to Buenos Aires (1881) and in six languages. Until 1882, after the Austro-Hungarian empire, references to the foreign performances of the opera averaged the same number between England, Germany, Russia, and Italy. But in the 1880s, it was in Germany and Italy that the work took root above all, *Ménestrel* citing an equal number of references to performances in twelve Italian and twelve German cities.

Despite what this international presence might imply, reviews of *Carmen* cited in *Ménestrel* were mixed. With her dance tunes and unstable chromaticism, the main character seemed a “disordering force” in society,⁹⁹ not someone bourgeois audi-

96. Ernest David and Mathis Lussy, *Histoire de la notation musicale* (Paris: Heugel, 1882), reviewed in “Bibliographie musicale,” *Ménestrel*, 16 July 1882, 260; see also *ibid.*, 6 December 1878, 14, and 24 October 1880, 373.

97. Huebner, *Operas of Charles Gounod*, 53–54.

98. A critic of the 1879 Italian premiere in Naples suggested this. See *Nuova antologia*, 15 April 1880. In a letter of 22 September 1886, Edouard Lalo implied this tactic as typical of Choudens. See Hervé Lacombe, “La Réception de l'œuvre dramatique de Bizet en Italie,” *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 108, 1 (1996): 174–75, 184.

99. In her *Georges Bizet: Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Susan McClary discusses the reception of the opera abroad. See also DeNora's interpretation of McClary's reading in her “Musical Composition of Social Reality,” 307.

ences could take as a role model. In addition, *Carmen* was often paired with *Mignon* and certain singers, such as Galli-Marié, were known for their interpretation of both characters. This juxtaposition would have highlighted similar binary oppositions and homologies between music and character as in *Mignon* (Mignon/Micaela vs. Philine/Carmen), however with attention focused on the dangerous seducer rather than the sweet innocent girl. *Ménestrel* mentioned the major premieres to make the French aware of them, but discussed none. Its only extended review through 1880 concerned the 1876 Brussels premiere. Its audiences found the work “frank and spontaneous,” but also “too personal and too original.” The singer of *Carmen* in Vienna, Mlle Ehn, however, purportedly considered it among her “favorites” and in 1877 proposed to perform it, along with *Mignon*, *Faust*, and *Roméo et Juliette*, during her six weeks in St. Petersburg.¹⁰⁰ Other singers, too, made possible premieres in Europe and America, suggesting that they had the power to impose their tastes.

Besides *Carmen*, foreign theaters picked up certain new operas by younger respected French composers, such as Delibes’s *Le Roi l’a dit* (1873) and Massenet’s *Le Roi de Lahore* (1877), soon after the French premieres (see tables B-6 and B-7). In Vienna, Delibes’s opera had successes in 1874, 1877, and 1882. Besides Belgium, the work caught on in eleven cities of northern and eastern Europe, performed mostly in German. *Ménestrel* first discusses the work in Italy (Rome) in 1888. In contrast, *Ménestrel* followed closely the 1878 tour of Massenet’s opera from Turin that February through Rome, Milan, Vicenza, Bologna, and Naples to Venice in December. In Rome, with Italian singers, Massenet received twenty-two curtain calls at *Le Roi*’s premiere, thirty at its second performance, and three excerpts encored at each performance. The queen of Italy, who knew his music well, congratulated the composer personally.¹⁰¹ In 1879, the opera was performed in various languages in ten cities, attracting large crowds in London. However, faulting it for an “absence of melodies,” the *Times* reviewer predicted only a “temporary success,” preferring *Carmen*.¹⁰² Thereafter, performed mostly in Italian, *Le Roi de Lahore* continued to be produced in new places, although less so by the late 1880s.

Foreign impresarios took heed of other successes in Paris as well. Their appreciation of Massenet’s orchestral music persuaded organizers in Buenos Aires to produce *Le Roi de Lahore* in September 1879. The reputation of Saint-Saëns’s oratorio *Le Déluge* led the Vienna Opéra to perform it in March 1879. And after seeing how popular it was becoming with Parisian audiences, Brussels’s orchestral

100. *Ménestrel*, 13 February 1876, 85, and 1 July 1877, 246.

101. *Ménestrel*, 31 March 1878, 140.

102. “Saison de Londres,” *Ménestrel*, 6 July 1879, 253.

society performed Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* that April, achieving its greatest success to date.

Some French works, such as Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*, were performed abroad *before* they were put on in France, although French critics argued for producing them at home. The *Journal de musique*'s review of *Samson et Dalila*'s premiere in Weimar in 1877, for example, opens by exclaiming, "Saint-Saëns has just victoriously planted the flag of the French school in the middle of Germany. If our war prestige has faded for a moment, our artistic and literary prestige still shines gloriously. . . . The other day, it was Vienna that gave a big welcome to Delibes's *Sylvia*; this time, it is Weimar that salutes the author of *Samson et Dalila* and triumphantly celebrates his work. He is to be praised for having upheld the honor of French art."¹⁰³ *Ménestrel* reported that in 1878, the opera was performed in a concert version before the Belgian monarchs. Unfortunately, for reasons I analyze elsewhere, it took the French until 1890 to produce *Samson et Dalila*, and two more years before it reached the Opéra.¹⁰⁴

Some blamed the Opéra, with its practice of producing only one new work annually in the 1870s and early 1880s, for French composers leaving France to premiere their new works. After the Opéra's director turned down his *Hérodiade*, Massenet discussed it with producers in Rome, Naples, and Turin. Brussels, however, premiered it on 19 December 1881, after which Massenet dined at court and received a Belgian title. In 1882 and 1883, it was produced in Milan, Budapest, Hamburg, and Prague. The French premiere took place in Nantes in March 1883 and finally Paris's Théâtre-Italien did it in 1884 in Italian. Gaston Salvayre had to go to St. Petersburg for the premiere of his *Richard III* in 1883. And whereas provincial French theaters depended on opera repertoire created in Paris, many newer French works were first performed in other French cities. If France had "artistic supremacy over other nations," as politicians claimed, it was not always because of the luxuries of the Paris Opéra, but sometimes through new French works, such as *Carmen*, that ironically were more recognized abroad than at home.

By the early 1880s, major foreign theaters confirmed this conclusion, performing as much recent French music as established masterpieces. In 1882–83, for example, St. Petersburg's Imperial Italian Opera produced as many works by living French composers (Thomas, Gounod, Bizet, and Massenet) as by dead ones (Meyerbeer, Halévy, and Hérold). In 1885, from half to the majority of operas put

103. "Samson et Dalila," *Journal de musique*, 15 December 1877, 1.

104. See chapter 10 below and Jann Pasler, "Contingencies of Meaning in Transcriptions and Excerpts: Popularizing *Samson et Dalila*," in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 170–213.

on in Italian theaters were French, again about half by living French composers. For example, in Naples, three of five operas were French (*Hamlet*, *Les Huguenots*, and *Carmen*); in Rome, three of six, (*L'Etoile du nord*, *Hamlet*, and *Lakmé*, as well as Delibes's two ballets).¹⁰⁵ An Italian critic pointed out, "There is no theater whose repertoire is not sustained in great part by French works." To counteract this "invasion of French musical products," he noted, Germany had only Mozart, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and Wagner. Thanks to Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, Italian music thrived abroad, but of the modern school, Italy exported only five or six operas by Verdi and four other works. By 1884, Italian theaters had become "tributaries" of French theater, "dependent on French masters." Some were willing to acknowledge that France, among all the nations, had made "the most sacrifices to maintain the musical art at its summit."¹⁰⁶

Italians considered France their "Latin sister" in upholding clarity, simplicity, and pleasure. They appreciated Gounod, Thomas, and Bizet for maintaining a lyric tradition "put into place by Italians." For these reasons, in 1881, Italian critics could show openness to French innovations and encourage young Italian composers to take inspiration from *Carmen*.¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere, too, one suspects French influence, such as in the Belgian composer Alexandre Stadfeldt's *Hamlet*, performed in Weimar in June 1882, and the Czech Antonín Dvořák's *Dimirij*, premiered in Prague that October, possibly following the example of Victorin Joncières's *Dimitri* (1876).

Performances and prestige outside France presented the French with hard-core facts and tangible francs as well as symbolic successes, particularly important since some sectors of production—silks, porcelain, mirrors, and crystal—experienced a notable decline in exports during this period.¹⁰⁸ Performances abroad reinforced the legitimacy of French musical production, rewarded French composers and performers, and suggested potential French influence on the taste and *mœurs* of foreigners. Opera reached foreign aristocrats and foreign royalty, giving them experiences in the language of luxury they understood and appreciated. Although some resisted transformations of the originals, hearing a German story in German (*Faust*), an English masterpiece in English (*Hamlet*), and a beauty pine for "the land of orange trees" in Italian (*Mignon*) provided appealing experiences for foreigners, whether in Paris or abroad. Such works encouraged receptivity to French

105. *Ménestrel*, 4 January 1885, 38.

106. *Nuova antologia* (Rome), 1 January 1884, cited in Lacombe, "Réception de l'œuvre dramatique de Bizet en Italie," 197.

107. *Ibid.*, 198–200.

108. Marius Vachon, *Decorative Arts Exports from France, 1873–81* (Paris, 1882), cited in Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 65.

music and sensitivity to nuances in the French interpretations. French orchestral music also attracted a public beyond French borders, especially Saint-Saëns's tone poems. The success of such music with foreign audiences told the French back home that French musical values (such as clarity, grace, and melodiousness; a close relationship between music and character, song and text; elegance of expression; and orchestral color) had broad appeal. Performances abroad engendered respect, earning France "admirers and friends" who could turn into political allies. Carrying French values across national borders, music served public as well as individual interests. What others appreciated encouraged the French to come to agreement on what they shared, as well as pride in French taste.

INTERNATIONAL CULTURE

It escaped no one that foreigners appreciated French music enough to spend considerable money on it. Indeed, some Italian critics noted that French operas suited Italian taste more than Italian operas. What then does this imply about the French listener back home? How could music be understood as a locus of collective identity, implying something inherently French about its listeners and their tastes when non-French audiences also embraced it?¹⁰⁹ How could it serve a political function, representing France abroad, while at the same time being used both by foreign monarchs to signal their own distinction and by foreign critics as an aesthetic weapon with which to support or resist change at home?

An answer to these paradoxes can be found in thinking of these operas, not just as money machines, but also as participants in an international culture. Consider the recurring use of the word "pure." Politicians often called for increasingly "pure" taste, critics for "pure" dramatic sentiment, "pure and noble" musical lines, and singers who could produce a "pure" timbre. "Pure" often refers to the need for more refinement or true expression of precise situations and feelings. Sometimes it connotes an absence of self-interest. In this sense, the word does not call for eliminating foreign influences on musical style, invoke national origins, or instantiate an essentialist perspective. French music, after all, was generally recognized as the product of assimilating German and Italian elements. Because French critics used the word to refer to Mendelssohn as well as Thomas, German as well as French music, "pure" seems to refer to a quality that rose above nation and national differences. Saint-Saëns's *Symphony No. 2 in A Minor* (1878), known in Germany and Italy long before it was performed in France, was praised for its "altogether

109. I'm grateful to Damien Mahiet for this question.

classical purity.”¹¹⁰ When it came to singers, a pure timbre, a common compliment at the time, meant sound devoid of the distinctions of an individual voice and the language in which a composer set a text to music. In some ways, what was at stake was a kind of refined sound equally valued across Europe and definitive of Western music at its finest, for “very irregular intonations” were associated with “the most uneducated */inculte/* and savage nations.”¹¹¹ Racial purity at the time also meant a quality shared by white Europeans, although, as Ernest Renan pointed out, racial purity did not exist in Europe—everyone was mixed.¹¹² Successfully producing such sound would not only earn wide recognition from France’s neighbors but also be evidence of the superiority that its leaders wanted to associate with French culture. When joined to “noble,” the term “pure” also connoted transcendence of material and mundane concerns, a taste for elevated ideas, or the refined world of the upper classes. To the extent that “pure” also conveyed a value judgment—something necessarily better, more perfect—ordinary people normally had access to this domain only through their imaginations.

This leaves us with a question: to what extent was opera an international public good, or merely what economists call a club good, something that benefits a limited group of people, even when consumption among them is nonrival.¹¹³ We know that opera had large externalities and diffuse benefits, confined neither to its creators nor to the nation first producing it. Opera reached across borders, generations, and population groups, involving international cooperation. It also functioned as an international commodity, increasingly regulated by property laws (copyright). But was the international culture in which opera moved largely of and for elites, whether bourgeois or aristocratic? In Third Republic France, some form of opera was available to all classes, whether as vocal and instrumental excerpts or transcriptions for piano, chorus, or wind band. Neighborhood ensembles, department store societies, and military bands often performed fantasies, concoctions assembled from operatic fragments and tunes, and, in the case of new operas, soon after their premieres.¹¹⁴ Republicans did their best to provide periodic free perfor-

110. Edouard Noël and Edmond Stoullig, *Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique* (1880) (Paris: Ollendorff, 1881), 706.

111. Johannes Weber, “Ethnographie des instruments de musique,” *Revue et gazette musicale*, 29 February 1880, 65–66.

112. Ernest Renan, *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale*, ed. P.E. Charvet (New York: Greenwood, 1968), 124.

113. Serageldin, “Cultural Heritage as Public Good,” 254–55.

114. I discuss specific cases of this in “Material Culture and Postmodern Positivism: Rethinking the ‘Popular’ in Late 19th-Century French Music,” in *Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods, Interpretations*, ed. Roberta Marvin, Michael Marissen, and Stephen Crist (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 356–87, and in my *Writing through Music*.

mances at the Palais Garnier and low-cost productions at an alternative institution, the Opéra populaire. Yet it is not clear that this “trickle down” took place outside France. Virtually all reporting on French opera abroad focuses on major theater productions in various languages, sometimes noting the presence or patronage of foreign royalty. Without more data on musical life in other European capitals, we cannot know whether the repertoire of opera theaters “trickled down” under other political systems. While republicans endeavored to build democracy at home, the prosperity of France thus grew by accepting its limited presence elsewhere.

ARTS POLICY AND THE UTILITY OF COMPETITION

French politicians realized that musical progress and the evolution of taste also depended on other genres and the efforts of young French musicians. To encourage these, the government gave subsidies.¹¹⁵ The attempted use of the arts for political ends after 1875 was marked more by innovative approaches to arts administration and arts policy, however, than by increased intervention in the creation of art. Republicans wished to do away with the Ancien Régime concept of artistic production, when “general interest” connoted “royal interest.” Annexing the fine arts to the Ministry of Public Instruction (rather than, as had been the case, Commerce or Public Works) was a crucial first step. Since republicans and much of French society believed that society and the state were one and the same, to change the structure of society, it was essential to change the structure of the state. In 1872, a law was passed that made administrative power distinct from political power, and administrative law autonomous. This had significant implications for the arts. Henceforth, the administration of the arts as a public service would be the “personification of the *patrie* and supreme arbiter of interests, representing all the general needs of society.”¹¹⁶

One of the most important administrative innovations, modeled on the Conseil

115. The government awarded 3,000 francs to Danbé’s concerts in the Grand Hôtel in 1872 and 1873, 500 francs to young composers running the Société nationale in 1873, and 2,000 francs to the Concerts Colonne in 1875. It also supported the amateur choral society founded by Bourgault-Ducoudray, the publication of orchestral suites by Massenet and Guiraud, and the quartet competition sponsored by the Société des compositeurs. See *Ménestrel*, 14 April 1872, 159, 5 January 1873, 47, and 24 January 1875, 62.

116. Nicolas Noussu, *L’Administration des beaux-arts* (Paris, 1877), 1–7, cited in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, 161. See also her chap. 4 and app. 16; Albert Duruy, *L’Instruction publique et la démocratie, 1877–1886* (Paris: Hachette, 1886), 312; and Gustave Larroumet, *L’Art et l’Etat en France* (Paris: Hachette, 1895).

supérieur de l'instruction publique, was the Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts. Facing up to the frequent changes in the ministry, this organization was conceived to give more stability to arts administration. Created in 1875 by the center-right republican minister of public instruction, religion, and fine arts Henri-Alexandre Wallon to replace a commission organized by his Legitimist director of fine arts, the marquis de Chennevières,¹¹⁷ the Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts had three purposes. First, it would give advice to the state, aid the minister in encouraging, guiding, and controlling artistic production of all kinds, in the industrial or applied as well as fine arts. To accomplish this, it could appoint its own subcommittees, and it did so frequently. Second, it would coordinate artistic intervention with the pedagogical or conservation needs of the country. And, third, it would institutionalize greater democracy—a kind of fraternity—in arts administration. By including a broad range of artists and distinguished art connoisseurs, along with selected politicians and arts administrators—with those in the first two categories far outnumbering those in the second two—it sought to break the monopolies held by the Institut over educational policy and by artist juries over public awards. As many artists later insisted, its job was not to control artists, but to support them in their contributions to the national interest. More than the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, the Conseil functioned as a “laboratory” for the minister’s politics and as “a supreme parliament” for the artistic and cultural elite of the country. For years, members of the Conseil led the discussion about arts support during debates over the national budget in the Chambre des députés.¹¹⁸

The Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts believed that involving those espousing aesthetic tendencies *not* represented at the Institut, and encouraging the confrontation of diverse opinions, would democratize discussion of arts funding at the highest level. Practicing a form of rational judgment that took into account diverse perspectives constituted a new mode of aesthetic judgment that was both formal

117. As director of fine arts under the Moral Order in 1874, the marquis de Chennevières created an advisory commission consisting mostly of Academicians to promote the revival of history and religious painting. See Mainardi, *End of the Salon*, 48–49.

118. Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, esp. 50, 69, 81, 140, 161, and 403. From its inception until 1905, there were only two musicians on this committee, the director of the Conservatoire, and one independent artist. (Bazin served in 1875, Gounod in 1878–1880, Massenet in 1885–1909 and, after 1905, Saint-Saëns and Paladilhe; see 34–35.) In the beginning, the “distinguished personalities” were deputies or senators; later they included ministers or ex-ministers (Proust and Turquet in 1875, Ferry in 1895, Poincaré and Leygues in 1898), and beginning in 1880, writers like Alexandre Dumas *fils* and the art collector Cernuschi, and in 1890 the art critic Louis de Fourcaud. This was the group responsible for discussing whether women should study at the Ecole des beaux-arts. They appointed a subcommittee to study the issues in 1889 and discussed it in full session twice in March 1891.

and objective.¹¹⁹ Classification and comparison helped the Conseil make collective judgments based on something other than personal intuitions. It hoped in this way to master both the inevitable ideological contradictions within the Republic and the social antagonisms between its conservative and progressive forces.

This attention to aesthetics led to conscious investment in the arts and a redefinition of art in the public domain. In the visual arts, republicans focused on education, conservation, construction, and decoration. Like their predecessors, they commissioned buildings, paintings, and sculpture. They also acquired tapestries and porcelain, the latter costing them almost a million francs annually. And because the state considered itself responsible for protecting the national heritage in the broadest sense of the term, in 1877, it created a decorative arts museum. In 1887, it also made the conservation of historical monuments a national priority, resulting in a museum of “scale models” at the Trocadéro. Yet whereas earlier administrations had focused almost exclusively on commissioning, acquiring, and conserving art, republicans looked also at human development and influence on the public’s historical and cultural perception of the arts. They wished to subsidize individual initiative and whatever would lead to “symbolic profits” supporting the republican agenda.¹²⁰ As Simon explains, they considered helping artists to be one of the country’s “great duties” in the “national interest.”¹²¹ In this spirit, upon the advice of the Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts, the government began to train more workers in the industrial arts and created more professional schools. Besides the Ecole nationale des arts décoratifs, in 1882, it opened the Ecole du Louvre to train specialized curators and librarians in rational methods for running the country’s collections.¹²²

The government’s faith in comparative judgment and its new investment strategy resulted in a change in arts funding. Whereas in the early 1870s, the ministry subsidized artists and arts organizations directly, this kind of support declined constantly after 1874. In its place, to “affirm the responsibility and assure the utility of its intervention” as well as “reward the art forms most necessary for the maintenance of national traditions,”¹²³ the republican government created new

119. Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, 125.

120. Ibid., 303–4.

121. From the 21 March 1872 session of the Assemblée nationale. Reproduced in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, app. 21, 365.

122. This led to numerous important catalogues such as those of the Bibliothèque nationale and the Conservatoire’s Musical Instrument Museum.

123. Minister of Public Instruction Jules Ferry, speech to French artists on 24 June 1881. Reproduced in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, app. 14, 353–54.

prizes, some of which still exist today. This entailed competitions for building designs, public monuments, paintings, and music.

Competitions brought the art of comparison into the public domain. In his 1791 speech on public instruction, Talleyrand had included the right to compete among the principles of instruction out of which the greatest good would arise.¹²⁴ In 1875, de Chennevières agreed, telling art students to seek “victory” in competitions, not only for themselves, but also their teachers (and implicitly their country): “You must take part, my children. Our time is a time of competitions, our time is an era of struggle, and competitions are struggle. It is the teaching of each artist by his rivals. Competitions alone provide social equity, [determining] the strict worth of each person. The career of the artist is only a series of competitions . . . the efforts you will make to acquire just renown among your colleagues. . . . It’s the perpetual daily struggle. In a word, competitions are life, the essence of the life of artists, because competitions, my children, are honor.”¹²⁵

In the arts, competitions preserved, rationalized, and domesticated the Greek model of competition as struggle.¹²⁶ They allowed artists and musicians of all kinds to be judged (*se faire juger*) and encouraged participation in musical activities by all kinds of people, not just members of the elites. Each summer, around the country, children, amateur choruses, and wind bands received awards for their hard work in competitions. Such events served as a catalyst for cooperation and an impetus for new compositions. They attracted participation by amateurs as well as professionals. A guide to music societies notes: “To take part in a competition is always a serious affair for a society . . . an occasion to learn and progress.” Competition results could either maintain the reputation of a society, “affirming its value and vitality,” or cause it to fold.¹²⁷ Sponsoring cities considered them a source of civic pride and revenue.

Composition competitions in music magazines might imply class tastes, but not necessarily in predictable ways. In the 1880s, *Le Mélomane*, a good source for studying the tastes of music lovers without professional sophistication, initiated an annual “International Composition Competition” for the best (1) prelude, fugue, or minuet, (2) romance without words, and (3) dance music, all for piano. Contestants were exhorted to seek “grace, elegance and originality, but not dif-

124. Talleyrand, “Rapport sur l’instruction publique,” in *Orateurs de la Révolution française*, ed. François Furet and Ran Halévi, vol. 1: *Les Constituants* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 1073.

125. De Chennevières, “Discours prononcé à la distribution des prix, 11 août 1875” (cited n. 41 above), 365.

126. Charlie Kronengold offered this insight.

127. E. Guilbert, *Guide pratique des sociétés musicales et des chefs de musique* (Paris: n.d.), 20.

ficulty.” Winning this meant publication in the magazine and publicity, especially valuable for those without easy access to these. In contrast, while one might have expected an interest in something similar or perhaps in chamber music, in 1892, the elite-oriented *Figaro musical* announced that it would award 500 francs for the best 100-measure “Allegro militaire” for fanfare or wind band. It is not clear why a magazine for upper-class readers, including those in the colonies, would call for a genre normally performed by workers or soldiers.

The most consequential from an aspiring professional’s perspective were competitions to enter and graduate from the Paris Conservatoire. To encourage applicants, the press reported entrance exam pieces for instrumentalists and singers. *Figaro* published piano exercises composed for such occasions by Conservatoire professors.¹²⁸ Competitions intended for adult professionals suggest how some hoped taste would evolve. For example, the Société des compositeurs, a composer’s organization, established a prize for the best quartet in 1873.¹²⁹ However, in 1875, 1878, and 1880, as part of an interest in stimulating more French contributions to the genre, it added a prize for a symphony, and in 1880, one for a historical work on the symphony. In 1877, it also sponsored a prize for a madrigal. And, through the generosity of the Cressent Foundation, every three years, beginning in 1873, it sponsored a competition for an opera or *opéra-comique*, preceded by a competition for an opera libretto. The winner received 2,500 francs, with 10,000 allotted for five performances of the work in a theater of the composer’s choice.¹³⁰ This prize gave composers access to the public without their having to address the increasingly commercial interests of Paris theaters. Since usually one had to be French, such competitions helped support local composers. They also led to recognition, not just of Conservatoire graduates, but also of women, music teachers, and those living in the *départements* or the colonies.

When the government created prizes, it hoped to stimulate activity. During the Moral Order, this included music in private as well as public schools, and in those teaching religious as well as secular music. At the Ecole Niedermeyer, which trained Church musicians, and whose concerts were patronized by the comtesse de Paris and other aristocrats, the minister of public instruction, religion, and fine arts founded annual prizes for composition, organ, and notated, accompanied plainchant—music that would have been performed in church. In 1875,

128. See chapter 6 below.

129. In 1877, they awarded prizes for a piano quartet and a woodwind quintet.

130. A lawyer, Anatole Cressent (1824–70), gave 120,000 francs to establish this prize. See the rules of this competition in *Ménestrel*, 9 February 1873, 83–84.

the Conseil municipal de Paris, strongly republican, set aside 10,000 francs to “encourage music” in various other ways. Of this, two small cash prizes went for teachers in local elementary schools who presented the best music students; three to reward excellent private schools of music; and one to fund examination expenses for women who wanted to become music teachers. Two prizes went to choral societies who presented the best female choruses, with the reasoning that the country needed amateur women’s ensembles to make performing the masterpieces of Bach and Handel affordable. And two prizes of 1,000 francs were destined for the best songs chosen in a competition, one “to be sung in unison by the people” and the other for four voices destined for the (male) *orphéon* choruses of the city of Paris. As it was explained, “These pieces should have as their object the grandeur and love of the *Patrie*. They should not be war songs, but patriotic songs, abstracting from politics and war. Their goal is to make one love France by singing of its virtues and genius.” The librettists, also chosen in a competition, would likewise receive cash. Finally, the Paris municipal council established a 3,000-franc prize for the best nontheatrical musical work of the year (symphony, oratorio, etc.).¹³¹ In the provinces, there were similar prizes, albeit for genres that could be easily performed there. For example, in 1874, there was a prize in Béziers for a cantata for male chorus and wind band.

Arguably, the most important, government-sponsored competitions, as Jules Ferry put it, “indicated to young artists and the public which tendencies the state approved of and wished to encourage” and which provided “a truly advanced education in art.”¹³² In the visual arts, the most significant were the annual salons exhibiting paintings by living artists. (The Salon des refusés was instituted in 1863 by Napoléon III to accommodate works rejected by the Academicians.) “When a government wants to develop a great national art, the best means available are exhibitions,” the undersecretary of state explained to his colleagues in the Chambre. “For an exhibition to be useful, according to us, it must have three aspects: it must first be a competition loyally organized by all who take part, it must then be a place of instruction for the visitor, and third, it must be a sure means of educating the minister of fine arts, who has commissions and purchases to make.”¹³³

In the 1870s, the government recognized the need in music for something like the annual salon for painters, that is, a prize to compete with the Prix de Rome

131. “Paris et départements,” *Ménestrel*, 22 August 1875, 302.

132. Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, 130–31.

133. Sous-Secrétaire d’Etat, discussion in the Chambre des députés, *Journal officiel*, 19 May 1880, 5391.

in stature and importance, but one not determined by the Academicians.¹³⁴ Since 1874, the Conseil municipal de Paris had been studying a proposal by Ernest L'Épine (originally made in the 1850s) for a government-sponsored series of concerts featuring works by living composers.¹³⁵ L'Épine suggested a jury modeled on the Conseil supérieur with half its members named by the government, half by musicians themselves. There would be six categories of work—Church music, symphonies, dramatic scenes, chamber works, choruses, and military music—performed in fourteen concerts, with the last one free and for prizewinners. This idea, though never entirely embraced, resulted in a biannual prize finally agreed to by the Conseil municipal de Paris on 9 August 1875. At first, the idea was to encourage “symphonic and popular works,” leaving the composer to choose the subject. The only constraints were that the work not be for the theater or church, nor its subject be political. The Conseil wanted “music in the most elevated and most absolute sense.” When the prize was finally funded on October 1876, offering the winning composer 10,000 francs and a state-funded performance in a major venue, politicians decided the work should be a “symphony with soloists and chorus.” Just as Saint-Saëns that year had called the symphony “the musical art in all its glory, strength, and liberty” and the “equal to painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature,”¹³⁶ the Conseil considered it “the purest and most abstract form” of music. In the tradition of Berlioz, however, there could be a program or story, and competitors could choose their own libretti, unlike with the Prix de Rome. It was to address “feelings of the highest order” (*sentiments de l'ordre le plus élevé*). Among the eight on the jury making the decision, half would be chosen by the *préfet*, half by the competitors themselves. Fifty scores were submitted, and the first such prize was awarded on 7 December 1878.¹³⁷

In six separate votes, two composers tied for first prize: Théodore Dubois and Benjamin Godard. Although many complained that the jury could not agree, and that Gounod and Massenet exhibited too much enthusiasm for their respective pro-

134. By 1895, as Larroumet presents it, both the Prix de Rome and the Prix du Salon, also called the Prix de Paris, had their own purposes, but whereas the former rewarded “Italian imitation,” the latter recognized “French originality.” *Art et l'Etat en France*, 52–53.

135. The public could follow this debate in the press, which published L'Épine's letter to the minister of public instruction and fine arts.

136. Saint-Saëns writing in his first theatrical *feuilleton*, published in *Le Bon Sens* and reproduced in Henri Moreno, “Semaine théâtrale,” *Ménestrel*, 2 July 1876, 243.

137. See “Nouvelles de partout,” *Journal de musique*, 4 November 1876, 4; “Le Prix de 10,000 francs,” *ibid.*, 11 November 1876, 1; and “Un Rapport de M. de Chennevières,” *ibid.*, 25 January 1879, 3–4, as well as the discussion of Holmès's works for the 1878 and 1880 competitions in Jann Pasler, “The Ironies of Gender, or Virility and Politics in the Music of Augusta Holmès,” *Women and Music* 2 (Fall 1998): 1–25, and in *id.*, *Writing through Music*.

tégés, this decision to reward two contrasting aesthetics and compositional styles did reflect the manner in which these committees were constituted, that is, on the model of the Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts. Ironically, neither was a symphony or a “purely contemplative” work—Godard’s *Le Tasse* was sometimes called an opera and Dubois’s *Le Paradis perdu*, based on Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, was clearly an oratorio. The latter, with its lofty subject, was more classical, praised for its “pure” style, vast proportions, and the clarity of its musical construction; it was a work “the mind admires more than the ear.”¹³⁸ By contrast, the former had a very “thin” story but lively orchestration, “picturesque” symphonic writing, and effective choruses, as well as a form and certain passages based on Berlioz’s *Damnation de Faust*, a hit in concert halls beginning in spring 1877. Godard appealed to Wagnerians as well as to fans of Berlioz, though some thought his unusual harmonies “curious” if not “bizarre,” his instrumentation sometimes overdone, and his ideas too conventional.¹³⁹ That the jury awarded prizes to both works suggests that music could embody French values in quite different ways, and that the battle over which direction French music should take was at a standstill.

UTILITY ON A GRAND SCALE

The Universal Exhibition from 1 May to 10 November 1878 proved the utility of competition on a grand scale and, in the context of a popular national festival with international implications, exposed sixteen million people to extraordinary occasions for making comparisons and exercising value judgments.¹⁴⁰ It was not the first such event. Major exhibitions of France’s industrial and artistic products had begun in 1798 on the site of the country’s most important revolutionary festivals, the Champ de Mars. Minister of the Interior François de Neufchâteau considered exhibitions a “means of surpassing our rivals and conquering our enemies.” He advocated having one every year, and indeed small ones were held every few years throughout the early years of the century.¹⁴¹ Organizers of the 1878 Exhibition,

138. Reviews cited in Georges Favre, *Compositeurs français méconnus* (Paris: Pensée universelle, 1983), 122–23.

139. Adolphe Jullien, review, December 1878, reprinted in his *Musiciens d’aujourd’hui* (Paris: Librairie de l’art, 1894), 2: 427–34.

140. Over 500,000 free tickets were provided for Parisian workers, as well as a good number to provincials and foreigners. Total attendance far exceeded that of the 1867 Universal Exhibition in Paris. Although the government lost money because of the building projects, local theaters and businesses prospered.

141. Jules Simon, “Introduction,” in *Rapports du jury international* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1880).

also on the Champ de Mars and, across the Seine, up to the Trocadéro, intended to surpass all others, demonstrating the nation's recovery after the war and its strength and vitality under republican leadership. The Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Exhibition's organizer, Jules Simon, wished to show France as a center of invention and arbiter of taste and fashion.¹⁴²

The Exhibition educated the public in a variety of ways. Its physical layout, as Miriam Levin explains, made the values of utilitarianism palpable and the opportunities for self-instruction numerous. The sequence of displays suggested interconnections between related human activities, gave primary place to *les forces productives*, and reflected the dynamism and systematic energy flow of republican social order.¹⁴³ The public could evaluate the usefulness of inventions and the desirability of consumer goods, as well as the attraction of national styles. Various products represented national identity, including music and musical instruments (259 instrument producers and music publishers participated). Japan received the most press attention, along with India, thanks to gifts from the Prince of Wales in 1875–76.¹⁴⁴ Nations, too, were emblemized, however artificially, in the buildings representing various countries on the “street of nations,” Georges Berger's innovative idea, inspired by the 1872 London Exhibition. It featured façades as “specimens of national architecture” (e.g., the Chinese pagoda, Swiss chalet, Turkish kiosk, and Japanese village). “To accentuate more forcefully the character distinguishing their art,” the styles of peoples who resembled one another the least were juxtaposed in near proximity to encourage comparison. After Italy came Japan, after Denmark, Greece, and after Central America, Morocco. Reportedly, this was the public's favorite place to linger.¹⁴⁵

Comparative thinking helped people sort through anything from abroad—“new inventions, literary works, scientific discoveries, artistic masterpieces”—a reason not to reject them for purely political reasons. It gave people a means of digesting the huge flow of information unleashed by the relative liberty of expression, widespread industrial development, and international trade. This process gave authority to the public, its judgment being “the reward of any true progress.”

142. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, *The Expanding World of Art, 1874–1902* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988), 14–15.

143. Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology*, 31–33. Levin understands utility in aesthetic terms as “limited to the Republicans' understanding of functional design” or the use of design to “make manifest the character of social relationships.”

144. Germany had declined the invitation to participate and so, except for a few paintings sent at the last moment, was excluded from the publicity the exhibition provided.

145. Adolphe Démy, *Essai historique sur les expositions universelles* (Paris: Picard, 1907), 237–41.

Explicitly comparing the music with the industrial products at the 1878 Exhibition, Simon explained,

The best judge is the consumer, the clientele is the reward of all progress that is accomplished. The great service that exhibitions render is precisely to give publicity to all the products and to render comparisons easy. Publicity replaces authority or, what is the same, the authority of science replaces the authority of government. Is it the role of government to tell us Rossini is better than Meyerbeer? [That] Delacroix is better than d'Elbeuf? No, government has nothing to do with that. But great artists or great industrial producers can make us discover the merits that without them would escape us, correct our taste if it goes astray, and indicate new goals to follow, more powerful and surer methods.¹⁴⁶

Comparison thus provided a way to determine the state of a country's progress. Of course, it also had risks. Gambetta found from the Exhibition that those who had been imitators of French goods were becoming rivals. More reforms were necessary. Still, organizers hoped it would encourage pride in French products and the French way of doing things. This included music and the other arts. Once they decided to treat music "just like any other product of thought," government officials decided to present a far more serious exhibition of music than they had ever produced before.¹⁴⁷ Exhibitions in 1798 and 1867 had set precedents, but neither was as significant.¹⁴⁸ Although in 1867, the government had sponsored a cantata competition, to which over a hundred cantatas were submitted, many of its plans for music fell through. Very little music was performed during the 1867 Exhibition other than by wind bands and choruses. And efforts to organize historical concerts were not funded.

To celebrate the nation at the 1878 Exhibition, President Mac-Mahon needed

146. Simon, *Rapport du jury international*, 149, 151.

147. "Règlement de l'Exposition," *Journal de musique*, 23 February 1878, 1–2, and 2 March 1878, 2–3.

148. Documents concerning the 1798 exhibition indicate that "a large orchestra played the most beautiful symphonies by our living composers every evening for an hour." Moreover, the prizes awarded in 1798 (also determined by juries) recognized not only the best "industrial arts" cited as "models for French industry" and the best works of science and books about morality published that year, but also the authors of the best tragedies or comedies and the best opera. See *Ordre, marche, et détail exact des cérémonies qui auront lieu les 5 jours complémentaires et le premier vendémiaire au Champ de Mars, an VII* (1798–99). This exhibition was to precede the Festival of Foundation of the Republic. The visual arts—painting, sculpture, architecture, statues, drawing, and prints—came only afterwards, implying a hierarchy among the arts that was soon to change.

an official song. With the “Marseillaise,” associated with revolutionaries and republicans, a controversial choice, he commissioned Gounod to write a new one. The composer had previously composed several patriotic songs expressing Bonapartist sympathies. For his text, Gounod looked to Paul Déroulède, whose *Chants du soldat* he had set to music two years earlier.¹⁴⁹ His choice, “Vive la France,” however, stimulated controversy, especially with its last stanza calling for *revanche* (fig. 33). At the premiere on 30 June 1878, audiences far preferred the *orphéon* director François Bazin’s rendition of Victor Hugo’s “Gloire à notre France éternelle,” performed by 500 singers.¹⁵⁰

Beginning in 1877, a committee chaired by de Chennevières and Thomas devoted a year to conceiving concerts for the 1878 Exhibition, appointing six sub-committees, as with painting juries.¹⁵¹ At first, the government budgeted 250,000 francs to be divided equally among twenty-six concerts of new art music, wind band music, and military music.¹⁵² All composers had to be French, most of them living, and each granted performance of only one work. By February 1878, there were exceptions, including Palestrina, and the committee proposed spending the most on classical music concerts: 181,000 francs on ten concerts of French symphonic and lyrical music, 10,000 for chamber music, 30,500 on *orphéons*, 4,800 on organ concerts, and 3,000 on *musique pittoresque et populaire* (i.e., folk music). They expressly forbade lyrics “contrary to morals or having any political character,” probably to avoid airing internal political differences before an international audience. Performers (*interprètes*) would receive as much attention as composers. Concerts were to serve as useful occasions for appreciating innovation, not only “initiate [listeners] to the most recent progress in the art form,” but also “provide artistically beneficial means of comparing works of the same genre, regardless of their origins.”¹⁵³ Foreign musical societies could participate if “officially accredited” by their countries, expecting no French subsidy, and presenting “no works of a political character.” Some countries sent popular musicians—gypsies from Hungary and Bohemian singers from Moscow were two French favorites. French

149. For discussion of this man and his work, see chapter 7.

150. Frédéric Robert, *La Marseillaise* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1989), 91–92.

151. This committee also included the marquis d’Aoust, Beauplan, Bourgault-Ducoudray, Jules Cohen, Cornu, Deldevez, Delibes, Dubois, Gounod, Guilman, Guiraud, Halanzier, Joncières, Lascoux, Laurent de Rillé, L’Epine, Massenet, Membree, the comte d’Osmoy, Saint-Saëns, Vaucorbeil, and Weckerlin, with Des Chaleppes and Gouzien as secretaries.

152. Philippe de Chennevières, “Section des théâtres,” in Ministère de l’Instruction publique, des cultes, et des beaux-arts, *Bulletin*, 1877–78, 415–17; “Les Expositions musicales,” *Journal de musique*, 18 August 1877, 1–2. See the “Rapport de la Commission des auditions musicales de l’Exposition universelle de 1878,” *Ménestrel*, 24 February 1878, 97–102.

153. “Rapport de la Commission des auditions musicales,” 98.



FIG. 33 Gounod, “Vive la France” (1878), with lyrics by Paul Déroulède.

“Gounod makes patriotic songs a bit the way the dentist Capron, of whom Voltaire speaks, forged *Pensées* by La Rochefoucauld—noisily orchestrating an already used ‘Vive la France!’ that he will later put in some *Polyeucte* [one of his operas]” (Henri Blaze de Bury, *Revue des deux mondes* 28 [1 August 1878]: 678).



FIG. 34 The Palais du Trocadéro.

The Palais du Trocadéro, built for the 1878 Universal Exhibition, was received with mixed enthusiasm. It was criticized for having no single unifying architectural style, but rather combining elements from a variety of influences, including French Romanesque, neoclassical, and North African. Today we would think of such a building as postmodern *avant la lettre*. The Palais was torn down in 1937 and replaced by the new Palais de Chaillot.

organizers were proud that “never had such a beautiful, large, and generous place been given to music in an exhibition of this nature.”

The hall built for these concerts, the Palais du Trocadéro, reflects other effects leaders sought with the Exhibition (figs. 34–35). This site of various royal châteaux and, in the seventeenth century, a female monastery would have pleased monarchists and Catholics. Its semi-circular shape, facing the Seine, harked back to a prototype designed for the Festival of the Nation in November 1798, reminding attendees of its revolutionary origins. The building’s name, borrowed from a Spanish fort the French had captured in 1823, its crescent shape, and its tall towers resembling Egyptian minarets, pointed to French fascination with their Oriental “other,” the Islamic traditions of North Africa. Set on a hill overlooking the entire Exhibition, surrounded by “vast spaces, cascades, sweet-scented gardens, chalets, and statues,” as Simon describes it, and “dominating a magnificent view over the city,”¹⁵⁴ it

154. Cited in Levin, *Republican Art and Ideology*, 180–81.



FIG. 35 The Salle des Fêtes, Palais du Trocadéro.

The Salle des Fêtes, with an organ, was a large concert hall within the Palais du Trocadéro that could seat nearly 5,000 people. Unfortunately, the same grand dimensions that lent themselves to grandiose music requiring a large number of performers also created an enormous echo in the hall, leading critics to denounce its acoustical flaws.

symbolically embodied the social order republicans envisaged for their nation. Providing a contained, ordered, and open sense of space, it offered both a fixed point of view and an occasion for interactive participation.

Inside, as if there might be an aural equivalent to this visual spectacle, the main hall could seat 5,000 listeners, surrounded by scenes of workers. Conceived to showcase works for huge instrumental and choral forces, the hall's enormous size indicated republicans' intent, not only to make music available to the greatest number of "the people," but also to harness music's capacity to express grandeur with the sheer volume of sound. The first official concert featured Félicien David's magnificent *Le Désert*.

While the 1878 Universal Exhibition advanced republican agendas in compelling ways, the official French concerts, sadly, had little success.¹⁵⁵ The limitation of one

155. Henri Blaze de Bury, "Les Concerts du Trocadéro," *Revue des deux mondes* 28 (1 August 1878): 680, bemoans the "sad role that our French music plays at the Trocadéro," its symphonic

work per composer (the vast majority of them still living) ensured a broad representation of perspectives and styles, but also suggested the weight of the Moral Order. Audiences could again hear Gounod's *Gallia* and remember how far the country had come since the tragedies of 1871. Religious music, such as Mass movements by Thomas, a Requiem by Lenepveu, and other works by Dubois, Lefebvre, and the aristocratic amateur René de Boisdeffre, appeared in almost every concert. The final awards ceremony featured 1,700 people singing Thomas's *Laudate Dominum*. Some new works, such as Delibes's *La Mort d'Orphée*—written for and recently premiered by the amateur choral society directed by Guillot de Sainbris—and Godard's programmatic *Symphonie gothique*, suggested new directions in French music. However, this array also entailed mediocrity and the fact that the sonorous acoustics of the huge hall, resonating like a cathedral, only worked for grand music meant that most composers submitted fragments of large works. One after another, these made for a disjointed listening experience.¹⁵⁶ In contrast was the unforeseen popularity of an equal number of organ concerts featuring the new Cavaillé-Coll instrument. These seemed more appropriate to the space and featured a coherent repertoire drawn from or inspired by baroque masterpieces. They often attracted a full house, creating a craze for organ music that lasted for decades.

Significantly, the Exhibition offered a temporary respite from conflicts near and far. Although its banners read “Peace and Work,” it opened and closed amid precarious stability at home and abroad. Political chaos had erupted in May 1877 when Gambetta's attack on clericalism led to the president dissolving the government and later appointing Simon, the Exhibition organizer, as prime minister. In September 1878, Gambetta gave another speech calling the “clerical spirit” a “social threat,” in response to which the royalist and clerical press called for “counterrevolution.”¹⁵⁷ In addition, if the Exhibition drew attention to previous French national festivals, not everyone saw them as a revolutionary invention. Edouard Drumont pointed to older fairs, such as the Foire Saint-Germain, dating from 1176, where, among other things, Europeans gathered to admire products from China.¹⁵⁸ If the imperial festivals of the Restoration, July Monarchy, and Second

concerts eliciting “no interest” and the hall often deserted, with whatever public left listening only out of respect for the artists. De Bury preferred the concerts given by foreign orchestras.

156. Blaze de Bury objected that while various European orchestras had to perform in this space, the premiere French orchestra, the Société des concerts du Conservatoire, remained in its regular home on the rue Bergère, thereby making comparison impossible (*ibid.*, 686).

157. This was led by Comte Albert de Mun. See Eugène Spuller, *Hommes et choses de la Révolution* (Paris: Alcan, 1896), chap. 16.

158. Edouard Drumont, *Mon vieux Paris* (Paris: Flammarion, 1878).

Empire seemed “banal and boring,” certain large gatherings under the Ancien Régime—the Procession of Saint Geneviève, royal *entrées*, and the wedding of Louis XIII in the Place des Vosges—had exhibited the character and mass enthusiasm of national festivals.¹⁵⁹ Arguments in France over the relationship between the present and the past thus remained as heated as national politics.

Internationally, too, the Exhibition began and ended amid conflict. All spring, as countries were preparing their contributions to the Exhibition, the major European powers were preoccupied with the Treaty of San Stefano. Great Britain, the Austro-Hungarian empire, Italy, Russia, and France argued for renegotiation. During the Exhibition that summer, they convened the Congress of Berlin to broker another treaty. Meanwhile, personal threats against European monarchs rocked the continent. Between May and November 1878, the leaders of Germany, Spain, and Naples suffered attempts on their lives.¹⁶⁰

In such a context, the 1878 Exhibition had to demonstrate a widespread will for peace and cooperation. Within France some considered the whole idea of universal exhibitions “useless,” since their products already served as “lessons and models” all over Europe. With its museums, annual painting salons, sumptuous stores, and thousands of boutiques, Paris was “a permanent exhibition.” Others saw France as “calling other nations to these peaceful battles . . . to declare their triumph,” their superiority, even if “victories in work never erase defeats in war.”¹⁶¹ However, this exhibition, the largest that France had ever mounted, gave locals and visitors alike opportunities to recognize a culture extending beyond national borders, its competitions making of modern Europe a kind of “expanded Greece.”¹⁶² The Exhibition’s juries, which awarded 30,000 medals, consisted of foreigners as well as French jurors, in proportion to their nations’ participation, sharing in the distribution of pride and prestige. When it came to celebrating the Third Republic’s first national festival on 30 June, the organizers invited friends and adversaries alike to participate in the festivities and hoped that old disagreements would “melt into joy and pride.” With songs, fireworks, and the flags of all nations flying high throughout Paris, the *Journal officiel* reported, “For this beautiful day, Parisians, provincials, and foreigners seem to form one great family.”¹⁶³

159. Edouard Drumont, *Les Fêtes nationales de la France* (Paris: Baschet, 1879), iv. This large-format volume features elegant lithographs.

160. Démy, *Essai historique sur les expositions universelles*, 225–26, 284–85.

161. Henry Houssaye, “Voyage autour du monde à L’Exposition universelle,” *Revue des deux mondes* 28 (15 August 1878): 801–2.

162. Henri Baudrillart, *Les Fêtes publiques* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1873), 16.

163. Démy, *Essai historique*, 271.

CONTRADICTIONS AND PARADOXES

Simon, Ferry, and the others recognized that these values were not universally compelling. Beneath their apparently coherent moral, pedagogical, and aesthetic agendas lay contradictions. These undermined republicans' efforts in the 1870s at achieving unity, coherent national identity, and renewed pride in French traditions, putting off their realization until the 1880s. At the same time, they suggest the compromises and cooperation a country needs when it sees itself as integral to a larger entity, Western culture.

GERMANY

France's relationship with Germany was fraught with contradictions during the 1870s. Prussia, as Renan pointed out, functioned like a society under the Ancien Régime, and so losing the war meant defeat, not only by a stronger neighbor, but also by a system of values that republicans detested.¹⁶⁴ And yet, as Allan Mitchell has shown, Bismarck did everything he could to reconcile with the French after taking two of their provinces. He contributed to Gambetta's election campaign in 1877 and, after the republicans took control, sought détente in a variety of ways.¹⁶⁵ As we have seen, Germans were receptive to French music, and not only to the operas of Gounod and Thomas, which were applauded all over Europe during this period. Germans also performed the more progressive composers influenced by German aesthetics, Berlioz and Saint-Saëns, and major works of theirs shunned in France. In 1876, for example, the court theater of Weimar gave the world premiere of Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict*, which was followed by the premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila* the next year. (The Imperial Opera of Berlin planned doing *Dalila* in 1877 and taking it to Vienna.) As the Berlin opera was preparing its premiere of *Tristan* in 1876, performers there also presented Saint-Saëns's *Le Rouet d'Omphale*, two weeks before the Société des concerts did it in Paris on 27 February 1876. Critical opinion of French music similarly had positive moments. In 1876, the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* published a series of articles about Saint-Saëns, praising his symphonic poems in part because of their resemblance to "tendencies" among young German composers. The *Deutsche Rundschau* printed an article by Ferdinand Hiller, the director of the Cologne Conservatory, full of envy for French musical institutions, French talent, and French hospitality to foreigners. Hiller

164. Renan, *Réforme intellectuelle et morale*, 38, 74–75.

165. Allan Mitchell, *The German Influence in France after 1870: The Formation of the French Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), esp. 177–85.

noted that French performers knew and played Beethoven and Mendelssohn much better than their German counterparts, and that Germany had no match for the Paris Conservatoire.¹⁶⁶ Some Germans apparently had no problem recognizing and supporting the most progressive aspects of France and Germany simultaneously.

Likewise, while holding up Auber as a quintessentially French composer, in part because he never looked to the Germans for inspiration,¹⁶⁷ many French envied Germany and wanted to emulate things German, especially German strength, discipline, and education. Some saw these as responsible for the powerful German military and its dominance over the French in 1870. France also bought many German goods, importing more from than it exported to Germany in 1876, with this ratio peaking from 1879 to 1883. Claude Digeon argues that such envy contributed to the educational reforms of the late 1870s, specifically to the orientation toward moral and civic education, both liberal and Protestant, to replace Catholic education. For the majority of intellectuals, it was “imperial and Catholic France” that had been defeated in 1870.¹⁶⁸

In the musical world too, it escaped no one that Goethe, whom Renan considered “the most complete personification of Germany,”¹⁶⁹ had inspired the most popular French operas, *Faust* and *Mignon*. These works posed the problem of acclimatizing German authors in France. Critics appreciated how they accomplished a synthesis between the stereotypical oppositions serious/light and deep/superficial associated with German versus French culture, although focusing on the charming rather than on the fantastic, dreamlike qualities of the original novels.¹⁷⁰ In bringing together German and Italian influences in *Mignon*—or what a Milanese reviewer called “Italian facility, French grace, and German severity”¹⁷¹—Thomas incorporated the best in each school.

In classical music concerts, despite the nationalist spirit that led to a renaissance of French music after the war, few would take aim at the German masters, who continued to be performed, particularly Beethoven. Critics praised the orchestras of Padeloup and Colonne for performing Berlioz and living French compos-

166. Parts of these articles, translated into French, were reprinted in “Nouvelles diverses,” *Ménestrel*, 5 March 1876, 109–10, and “Camille Saint-Saëns jugé par la presse allemande,” *Ménestrel*, 12 March 1876, 116–17.

167. Th. De Lajarte, “Société des compositeurs de musique,” *Ménestrel*, 7 January 1872, 45.

168. Claude Digeon, *La Crise allemande de la pensée française (1870–1914)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959), 333–34. See also Fritz Ringer, *Fields of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

169. Renan, *Réforme intellectuelle et morale*, 101.

170. See discussion of the early reviews in Coudroy-Saghai and Lacombe, “*Faust et Mignon* face à la presse,” 104–8.

171. Filippo Filippi writing in *Perseveranza*, cited in *Ménestrel*, 14 May 1876, 190.

ers on their orchestral concerts. However, both, for the most part, performed more German music than French on their programs in the early 1870s. For his first *concert national* in 1873, Colonne framed Berlioz and Bizet with Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Max Bruch, the old and the new in French and German orchestral music. Showing how an active listener might compare them, Arthur Pougin was quick to point to how “elevated” and “very serious” the Bruch violin concerto seemed following the “refined qualities, elegance, and incomparable delicacy” of Bizet’s “charming” *L’Arlésienne*. Mendelssohn’s *Athalie* overture elicited praise for “such a pure design and noble character.”¹⁷² Other concerts gave listeners opportunities to hear Massenet’s *Scènes pittoresques* after Beethoven’s *Pastoral* Symphony (particularly interesting inasmuch as Massenet incorporated tunes he had collected in Germany), premieres of Saint-Saëns’s *Rouet d’Omphale* and Guiraud after Mendelssohn, Dubois after Handel.

Although some critics urged composers to “free themselves from foreign influences as soon as possible, to be *themselves* and not the reflection of anyone else,”¹⁷³ others, along with Hippolyte Taine and Renan, considered the emulation of German “virtues” indispensable in helping French musicians and listeners become more serious about their art.¹⁷⁴ These included the notion of using culture to elevate humanity, as well as a healthy respect for German “science” or structure, the “power” of German harmonies, and new forms of music drama. Michael Strasser has argued that the young composers’ new music society, the Société nationale, was intended, not only as a forum in which to premiere new French work, but also an “instrument for the moral and intellectual renewal of French society along the German model.”¹⁷⁵ For his part, Bourgault-Ducoudray looked to Luther for his role in promoting the merits of choral music and “rendering the utility of music clear as an elevating and civilizing force,” not a luxury but a “sun of truth.”¹⁷⁶

Because Bach seemed “too difficult, too Protestant, too chromatic, and ultimately too German to be pressed into service as a popular nationwide repertory,” as Katharine Ellis explains, Handel was the German composer the French most

172. A. P. [Arthur Pougin], in *Ménestrel*, 16 November 1873, 407.

173. Ed. Mathieu de Monter, “Revue de 1872,” *Revue et gazette musicale*, 5 January 1873, 4.

174. Michael Strasser, “Virtue, Reform, and ‘Pure Music’ in Second Empire Paris” (paper delivered to the 16th Congress of the International Musicological Society, London, 16 August 1997).

175. Ibid. See also Michael Strasser, “The Société nationale and l’Invasion germanique” (paper presented to the National Meeting of the American Musicological Society, Phoenix, Arizona, 2 November 1997).

176. “Rapport de M. Bourgault-Ducoudray” (6 November 1880), in *Rapports sur l’enseignement du chant dans les écoles primaires* (Paris: Ministre de l’instruction publique, 1881), 23–25.

successfully assimilated during the 1870s.¹⁷⁷ Handel, a cosmopolitan and himself an assimilator, had worked in three countries.¹⁷⁸ In the period immediately following the Franco-Prussian War, his clear diatonic harmonies, direct language, and “grandiose majesty” comforted a society suffering a crisis of self-confidence and anxiety over its virility. As Bourgault-Ducoudray observed listening to his *Acis and Galatea*, “the ear never experiences indecision or doubt.” Some saw Handel’s music as a symbol of “determination, personal and collective resistance in the face of attack, and permanence.”¹⁷⁹ Republicans like Pougin as well as clerical monarchists like the archbishop of Paris embraced Handel. In December 1874, the president’s wife patronized an additional performance of Handel’s *Judas Maccabaeus*. Partly to dissociate him from Germany, reviewers portrayed Handel as beyond time and nation, a composer who expressed “immutable feelings, who speaks not to the men of an era, but to humanity.” Beethoven, they noted, called him “the master of masters.”¹⁸⁰ They praised *Acis and Galatea* as a model of grace and charm, while finding strength and grandeur in *Judas Maccabaeus* and the *Messiah*. *Ménestrel* was reporting on Handel performances all over Europe (e.g., *Hercules*, *Samson*, and *Israel in Egypt* in Berlin and Leipzig; *Judas Maccabaeus* in Brussels; *Samson* in London), and Lamoureux hoped that his concert society, L’Harmonie sacrée, would be a serious competitor to similar organizations in Germany and England for international prestige. He told the minister of public instruction, religion, and fine arts that in putting on oratorio concerts, a genre in which the French had long been inferior, his ambition had been “national as well as artistic.” Using discourse that drew heavily on values central to moderate republicans as well as conservatives of the Moral Order, he argued that Handel’s music could “transform public taste, raise its ideal, and use the pure and noble pleasures of this great art to exercise a decisive influence on our intellectual and moral development.”¹⁸¹ Handel’s music could purify taste, wean people off light music, with

177. Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 213, 239.

178. Handel’s music was particularly popular in English festivals at the Crystal Palace beginning in 1857. See Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

179. Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 214, 218–19, cites and discusses Bourgault-Ducoudray (1872) and Germa (1866).

180. Lucien Augé, “La Fête d’Alexandre,” *Ménestrel*, 23 March 1873, 133, and 2 February 1873, 80. In his “Le *Judas Macchabée* de Handel,” *Ménestrel*, 4 October 1874, Arthur Pougin calls Handel’s musical beauties “the newest, the most powerful, and the most varied” and this work “one of the most perfect and most admirable” of its kind (348–49).

181. Lamoureux, letter of 19 November 1875 asking the Minister for use of the Opéra to put on further oratorio concerts, published in *Ménestrel*, 28 November 1875, 413.

its decadent tendencies, and encourage a taste for serious music. Critics pointed to the enthusiastic reception of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* by "virgin" audiences two years earlier as evidence that French taste was "becoming more refined and ennobled."

In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, many French looked to Handel's music to revive French spirit, especially his popular chorus "See, the conqu'ring hero comes" ("Chantons victoire") from *Judas Maccabaeus*. On 18 November 1870, Bourgault-Ducoudray included it in his concert for the wounded; in 1875, Lamoureux juxtaposed it with Gounod's *Gallia* to celebrate French glory and promote French patriotism. Collections such as Henri Gautier's *Manuel musical des écoles* (1877) and *Le Trésor musical des écoles* (1877) reproduced it for schoolchildren. In April 1874, Paris *orphéon* singers performed it.¹⁸² When this chorus was included on an otherwise all-French program for the final awards ceremony of the 1878 Exhibition, and the "Hallelujah" chorus from Handel's *Messiah* in a festival of French music on 9 January 1879, the assimilation was complete.¹⁸³

French composers sympathetic with this agenda took note of French receptivity to Handel and incorporated Handel-like choruses in their music, including opera (e.g., Delibes's *Le Roi l'a dit* and Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*). Composers also wrote new oratorios, such as Théodore Dubois's *Le Paradis perdu*, and hybrid works such as Massenet's *drame sacré Marie-Magdeleine*. Handel's oratorios also spawned interest in German approaches to music and drama. Preparing his readers for Wagner, Adolphe Jullien published multiple long installments in *La Revue et gazette musicale* on Goethe and music in 1873, and Schiller and music in 1874. In the early 1870s, major composers began to write *mélodrames*, music for plays, a genre popular in Germany (e.g., Mendelssohn and Schumann), but previously embraced only by minor composers in France. As Jullien pointed out, although he had little taste for "constant battle" between the two genres, works such as Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*, Massenet's *Les Erinnyes*, and Gounod's *Jeanne d'Arc* represented "serious efforts to acclimatize a genre that mixes drama with music."¹⁸⁴

When it came to Wagner, however, Franco-German relations continued to be

182. *Revue et gazette musicale*, 26 April 1874, 134.

183. Excerpts from Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* were the only other non-French music at the 1879 concert. In her *Interpreting the Musical Past*, Ellis points out that provincial choral societies also performed Handel's works, such as in Dijon (1874 and 1876) and Aix-en-Provence (1877 and 1879) (69–70). She attributes his subsiding popularity at the end of the 1870s to less need "to fight hard for Republican causes" after republicans came into power (247).

184. Adolphe Jullien, "Théâtre de la Gaîté," *Revue et gazette musicale*, 16 November 1873, 363–64. See also Jacqueline Waeber, *En musique dans le texte: Le Mélodrame, de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren, 2005), and Peter Lamothe, "Incidental Music in France, 1864–1914" (PhD

strained.¹⁸⁵ How to reconcile the desire for musical progress, which many French writers and musicians associated with Wagner, with lingering hatred of contemporary Germany and desire for *revanche*? Few French could forget the hateful stance Wagner had taken toward the French in his farce *Eine Kapitulation* (1870; 1873) satirizing the besieged Paris of 1870. In it, Wagner takes aim at Victor Hugo, Jules Simon, Gambetta, and Offenbach by name, although in the end, from his perspective, his own compatriots appear still more ridiculous.¹⁸⁶ Successes in 1875 for *Lohengrin* in London and in 1876 for both *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* in London and the *Ring* in Bayreuth turned the tide temporarily. But with Wagner perceived as in fashion, old anxieties returned. At orchestral concerts in 1876, his music, which had been forbidden in state-supported theaters in France but generally well received in concert halls, aroused audience resistance and political demonstrations (fig. 36). Efforts to depoliticize Wagner failed.¹⁸⁷ This forced Padeloup to stop playing Wagner at the Concerts populaires from 1877 to 1879. Between 1877 and 1878, the public also reacted in their consumer purchases, and German imports dropped 74 percent.¹⁸⁸ Receptivity to Wagner's music in France only returned after President Mac-Mahon resigned in January 1879 and the strength of the Republic was assured.

diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2007). The verb *acclimater* was also used in conjunction with French incorporation of Handel and Bach's music into French concerts. *Ménestrel*, 5 May 1872, 191, 23 March 1873, 135, 20 October 1878, 380, and 12 January 1879, 51. In chapter 7, I discuss this concept further.

185. Wagner's music also met with hostility in Germany during this period. In 1876, German reception of *Tristan* in Berlin was mixed, with the "old quarrels" between Wagnerians and anti-Wagnerians rearing in all their intensity. Some compared their "battle" to that with which *Tannhäuser* was received in Paris in 1861. See "Nouvelles diverses," *Ménestrel*, 2 and 9 April 1876, 141, 149.

186. Wagner's comments and the full text translated into French were later published in *Revue wagnérienne*, 8 October 1885.

187. As in a review of the first performance of the Funeral March from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, critics often pleaded with the public to use purely artistic criteria in evaluating "anything that came from the human brain" and to "let art that brings us closer to divinity rise above the bloody quarrels that tear humanity apart." See "Un Scandale," *Journal de musique*, 4 November 1876, 1–2.

188. According to the *Tableau décennal du commerce de la France avec ses colonies et les puissances étrangères, 1877–1886*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1888), the value of German imports declined significantly from 72 million francs in 1877 to 19 million in 1878, averaging 27 million from 1877 to 1886. These figures contradict those of the German scholar Walther Hoffman, cited in Allan Mitchell, *The German Influence in France*, 193, who sees far less of a decline as a result of protectionist tariffs, that is, a constant import rate of 30 million during 1877–78 and a drop from 34.5 million in 1879 and to 25.5 million in 1880.



FIG. 36 “M. Pasdeloup not being careful enough on Wagner’s *marches* [steps, marches].” Caricature by Cham, *Charivari*, 12 November 1876, reproduced in Adolphe Jullien, *Richard Wagner* (Paris, 1886).

Most French audiences were introduced to Wagner’s music through orchestral fragments. His marches from *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* were particularly popular beginning in the late 1860s. However, after the Franco-Prussian war, when Wagner became politicized for satirizing the French, Pasdeloup was caught in the middle between those who admired his music and those who vehemently protested its performance. This humorous image captures the surprise and dismay of Pasdeloup, whose defense of the German’s music led to political demonstrations and Wagner being removed from his orchestra’s programs.

While republicans continued to band together around the unifying theme of anticlericalism, some of them blaming the Prussian defeat on the country's religion, the Catholic Church remained an influential force in France, even in the public domain. According to the 1872 census, 98 percent of all French were Catholic, 1.6 percent Protestant, .14 percent Jewish, and .23 percent other, and Paris remained the "greatest Catholic center" in the world in terms of its Catholic population, the Church's wealth, and its influence. Between 1872 and 1880, the country's annual budget for religion remained at more than 50 million francs.¹⁸⁹ Missionaries in the colonies were partners in France's project to civilize the heathen.¹⁹⁰ Religious orders taught in more than two-fifths of public elementary schools and Catholic bishops sat on the Conseil supérieur and academic committees of the universities. A law of 1875 permitted the creation of free Catholic universities.¹⁹¹ Perhaps most disturbing to republicans, many children continued to attend Church schools.

The musical world largely did not support republican anticlericalism. Gounod continued to write religiously inspired music, including a new opera, *Polyeucte* (1878), which celebrates the triumph of faith and charity over paganism. The biggest grossing orchestral concerts fell on Good Friday each year. Every major orchestra presented a program that evening. Such concerts created the impetus for new religiously inspired works that would automatically receive wide public attention and demonstrated the continued significance of music with religious or quasi-religious texts for the French public, a conclusion in harmony with the Moral Order. On Good Friday 1872, for example, the Société des concerts performed the republican Lenepveu's new *Requiem*. In 1874, alongside fragments of Rossini's *Stabat mater*, the Concerts Padeloup premiered part 1 of a *Stabat mater* by the republican historian and composer Bourgault-Ducoudray.¹⁹²

The popularity of Handel's oratorios suggests that we distinguish the sacred

189. For more on the influence of the Church, see Gabriel Hanotaux, *Contemporary France, France* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), 2: 669–86, and Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Reberiou, *The Third Republic from Its Origins to the Great War, 1871–1914*, trans. J. R. Foster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 78, 356.

190. Many considered missionary action a prelude to colonial possession or vice versa. From 1816 to 1870 twenty-two new missionary orders were founded in France, and two more between 1871 and 1877. Moreover, from 1872 to 1882, offerings collected in church for the missionaries rose to more than 40 million francs. Raoul Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris: Table ronde, 1972), 13–16, 35–37.

191. Mayeur and Reberiou, *The Third Republic from Its Origins to the Great War*, 78, 79.

192. Bourgault-Ducoudray's entire *Stabat mater* was performed earlier that day at the La Trinité church and Rossini's complete work at Saint-Eustache.

of French Catholics from that of German and English Protestants. While some listeners had trouble with Bach's Protestantism, Katharine Ellis argues that Handel's music "was received in largely non-Christian terms," some works being described as having the grandeur of a Greek temple and others embraced as militaristic allegories.¹⁹³ When it came to French musicians, however, although some espoused anticlerical ideas, virtually none have been documented as Freemasons.¹⁹⁴ Bizet was a confirmed anticlerical, but Thomas wrote motets as well as two Masses, and Gounod not only twenty-one Masses, twelve of them after 1870, but also numerous Latin liturgical works. In his *Marie-Magdeleine* (1872) and *Eve* (1875), Massenet, a republican, played with the interest in religion under the Moral Order by exploring voluptuous eroticism in a biblical context. This shows the extent to which official composers were willing to blur the boundaries between the secular and the sacred.¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Saint-Saëns, a composer perhaps most associated with combative republicanism, and who rose to power at the beginning of the Third Republic,¹⁹⁶ composed over twenty motets, taught at the Ecole Niedermeyer, and participated in concerts organized there under the patronage of the comtesse de Paris (the wife of the Orléanist pretender to the French throne), the archbishop of Paris, and other royalist aristocrats. Moreover, both Saint-Saëns and Gabriel Fauré, his student there, held the post of organist at the Madeleine, one of Paris's most prestigious churches. Delibes held a church organ job in the 1860s. In the 1860s through the 1880s, so did Théodore Dubois, who became the Conservatoire's director in 1896 and wrote a great deal of religious music. Most of the staunch republicans who won prominent positions in state schools and sat on the juries of prestigious competitions played the organ and wrote at least some Church music. The reality of republican anticlericalism was thus full of paradox.

In describing Fauré, one of his students, Emile Vuillermoz, sheds light on how republicans may have adapted to a world still attached to the Catholic Church. For both Vuillermoz and later Michel Faure, Fauré represented opportunist republi-

193. Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 214–17.

194. According to Jean André Faucher's *Dictionnaire historique des francs-maçons* (Paris: Perrin, 1988), the youngest French composers who were Freemasons—Spontini (d. 1851) and Meyerbeer (d. 1864)—died before 1870. Other than Liszt (d. 1886), there were no late nineteenth-century composers in this group, only a few songwriters, such as Aristide Bruant (d. 1925).

195. In 1880, Massenet also wrote a large "sacred legend" on the Virgin Mary, *La Vierge*.

196. Michel Faure, *Musique et société, du Second Empire aux années vingt: Autour de Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Debussy et Ravel* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), 60.

canism. Like those who founded the Conseil supérieur des beaux-arts, he was opposed to aesthetic dogmaticism, open to a range of aesthetic perspectives, and willing to contest the authority of the Academicians who sat on the jury of the Prix de Rome (as he did in 1905 when it came to his student Ravel). Fauré's music, full of harmonic "conquests" contributing to the "progress" of Western harmony, was "the perfect incarnation of measure, tact, and the refinement of French taste," Vuillermoz wrote.¹⁹⁷ While Fauré composed many religious works, including the beautiful *Requiem*, on which he worked for decades (1877, 1887–93, 1900–1901), he often changed the liturgical texts to emphasize human feelings. In the *Requiem*, for example, by replacing the "Dies Irae" with "In paradisum," he deleted references to the terror of death, presenting it instead as "a happy release, an aspiration to the happiness of [the] beyond." Fauré could thus express religious sentiment while challenging conventional Christian orthodoxy.¹⁹⁸ With a "likeable skeptic's nonchalant flexibility masking the secret obstinacy of an Ariégeois from the mountains," Vuillermoz suggests, "this nonbeliever, without any sectarianism or intolerance, made it through a great religious school with the most affable serenity and professionally frequented the most varied ecclesiastical places without losing any of his independent spirit. . . . The requirements of his profession led the eminent organist to compose religious music. He did it with tact and discretion. . . . Gabriel Fauré knew how to find a Church language with an elevated spirituality, calm nobility, and confident abandon that, without needing faith, gives us a perfectly theological expression of hope and charity."¹⁹⁹

This distanced attitude toward religion may very well have been appropriate. As his biographer Jean-Michel Nectoux has observed, music and religion at the Madeleine were hardly very spiritual. Both could function as the context for the social occasions of the aristocratic faubourg Saint-Honoré—receptions for heads of state, funerals of well-known people, and grand weddings, some of them subsidized by the government. Moreover, when the tastes of the clergy so dictated, secular music predominated there and Latin texts were superimposed on excerpts from operas such as Gounod's *Faust* and later Massenet's *Thaïs*. Fauré referred to his job there as "the work of a mercenary."²⁰⁰

197. Emile Vuillermoz, *Histoire de la musique* (Paris: Fayard, 1973), 366, 373.

198. Carlo Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 185–92, 196. Caballero suggests that Fauré's beliefs evolved toward atheism at the end of his life (196). On Fauré's religious doubts, see also Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: Les Voix du clair-obscur* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990).

199. Vuillermoz, *Histoire de la musique*, 362, 370–71.

200. Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré*, 45–47.

As political sentiment, even among republicans, remained divided in the late 1870s, support for music remained complicated. Reactionary conservatives believed in authority and coercion. In the arts, they usually supported the Académie, its traditional values, and the example of the Italian masters represented by the Italian-influenced work of Bouguereau in painting and Thomas in music. Moderate conservatives had more faith in an individual's conscience in the pursuit of social and political order. On the Left, radicals and radical-socialists privileged individual freedom with some protectionist intervention from the state in pedagogical, artistic, and cultural affairs. More extreme leftists considered state intervention a necessary condition for free expression and industrial growth.²⁰¹

Each year during the annual budget discussions in the Chambre des députés, debates raged particularly when it came to subsidizing the Opéra and Opéra-Comique. Some saw them as the country's pride and glory, and the two subsidies as "given for the purpose of public utility" (*dans le but d'utilité publique*). As Deputy de Tillancourt put it, no one wanted to take away people's freedom to hear "light works, operettas shown on secondary stages, *chansonnettes* produced in *cafés-concerts* that have the privilege of attracting the greatest number of spectators." But, he added, "more than ever it is up to the state to react against these aberrations of national taste in placing next to these light and trivial works examples of high literature and music that are much more elevated."²⁰² Other deputies objected to the huge expense, which ultimately benefited few, considering it "absolutely useless" and "contrary to the rules of a healthy political economy."²⁰³ As republicans came to dominate politics in the late 1870s, some of the more socialist-minded advocated a separate and more accessible Opéra populaire, a municipal theater presenting opera almost everyone could afford.

Political conflict affected private music societies as well. On 30 July 1879, hoping to persuade it to renew its annual subsidy of 40,000 francs to these societies, Emile Beaussire reminded the Chambre that they contributed significantly to the "morality" and "public education" of listeners, especially in the *départements*,

201. These characterizations come from René Rémond, *La Droite en France* (Paris: Aubier, 1963), and Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Moment Guizot* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), as discussed in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat*, 281–82. For a more recent perspective on these differences, see Jean-François Sirinelli, ed., *Histoire des droites en France*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1992).

202. M. de Tillancourt, discussion in the Chambre des députés concerning the fine-arts budget, *Journal officiel*, 15 February 1878, 1577.

203. Jean David, discussion in the Chambre des députés concerning the fine-arts budget, *Journal officiel*, 30 July 1879, 7752.

where there were few opportunities to hear music. But because of recent “political disagreements,” “rich people who used to be honored to encourage music have not blushed in retracting their help to avoid being in contact with adversaries of their opinions and objects of their spite.” Contributions to these organizations had decreased dramatically. Likewise “for certain political reasons,” including merely playing the “Marseillaise,” some local governments had stopped their subsidies to music societies.²⁰⁴ Thus when it came to small private organizations as well, many felt the need for state intervention to affirm the general interest of the people.

Contradictions also permeated republicans’ notions about the public utility of music. They ardently wished to counteract both the popularity of *cafés-concerts* and the decadence and indifference to the arts under the Second Empire. They understood that music could shape *mœurs*, just as *mœurs* inevitably shaped music. Ironically, however, while they appreciated music for its moral value, its abstract and acoustic qualities captured their interest far more than its capacity for semantic meaning or explicit signification. With society in flux and yearning for regeneration, they recognized in music a form of order and harmony. Along with understanding musical form as capable of helping people imagine an ideal society, they focused on classical principles—clarity, balance among contrasting forces, and closure. When it came to encouraging experimentation, they turned to timbres, not forms, unlike in the visual arts. Considering clear form and unusual timbres as quintessentially French, more than any particular kind of moral expression, suggests a subtle paradox in their values.

There were others too. While the 1878 Exhibition wanted to foreground French progress, national theaters during those months programmed no new works. The Opéra held back its only new work of the year, Gounod’s *Polyeucte*, until 4 October.²⁰⁵ Free performances at the Opéra featured Rossini’s popular *Guillaume Tell*. As much as republican leaders recognized and attempted to regulate the arts’ contributions to education and the country’s social and economic progress, they also accepted the arts as a form of escape. Thomas and Massenet aimed to find the *juste milieu* between distracting and expressing elevated ideas perhaps, as Hervé Lacombe suggests, because some of the public sought no change, demanding to be entertained, while others would follow composers into unknown territory. Jullien reproached Thomas for compromising too much with his *Mignon* to win public approval, for rendering characters too charming and not ideal enough to last.²⁰⁶ Also, paradoxically, as much as republican composers like Saint-Saëns, Massenet,

204. *Journal officiel*, 30 July 1879, 7754.

205. Given its poor reception, this turned out to be a good decision.

206. Adolphe Jullien, *Goethe et la musique* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1880), 267–69.

and Delibes wanted to democratize the taste for music, they had no problem with accepting recognition by aristocrats and royalty, sometimes even titles.

Some feared music's power of influence. As Maxime du Camp put it in 1879, the government believed that "theatrical works listened to by a large crowd, subject to a sort of electrifying movement [*commotions électriques*], exercise a quick and communicative influence a lot more profound than that of a book or a newspaper, which only ever affects isolated individuals." Recognizing this, politicians wished to exercise surveillance. Although the government abolished censorship in 1870, under pressure from Mac-Mahon's Moral Order administration, it reinstated some control over popular entertainment.²⁰⁷ The committee controlling the city of Paris prize also had strong opinions. It would only support the symphony, perceived as the most abstract of musical genres, and disallowed any explicitly political character in the lyrics or program. Likewise, concert organizers at the 1878 Exhibition forbade any political lyrics, probably trying to avoid confronting France's internal political conflicts on the international stage. Thus, while music was expected to transcend politics, its inherent abstraction and potential to influence people could be bent to the needs of politics. Part of this paradox lay in the gap between republican ideals and political reality.

FRANCE IN THE WORLD

In some ways, these contradictions expressed France's strength. French music's distinction embodied and expressed France's distinction, which had long been understood as a product of geography and history. With Thomas seeking the *juste milieu* between pleasing and elevating, and Massenet the "harmonious fusion" of Italian and German influences,²⁰⁸ many French felt they assimilated the best qualities in others. From Victor Hugo's perspective, the 1867 Exhibition challenged France to be more than a country: "As Athens became Greece and Rome Christendom, you France become the world."²⁰⁹ Yet music, together with the exhibitions, also helped the French to understand the compromises required for European prosperity. If, for some, identity coalesced in music and musical practices could be used to assert superiority over one's neighbors, for others, music's

207. See the minister's limitations on the number of works that could be performed in *cafés-concerts* and the necessity of having an author's permission to perform theatrical works there, published in "Paris et départements," *Ménestrel*, 8 December 1872, 14–15, and François Caradec and Alain Weill, *Le Café-concert* (Paris: Hachette, 1980), 63–64.

208. Lacombe, citing an interview with Massenet (1884), in *Voies de l'opéra français*, 284.

209. Cited in Robert Brain, *Going to the Fair: Readings in the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Exhibitions* (Cambridge, UK: Whipple Museum of the History of Science, 1993), 152.

malleability, the ability to perform it in various languages and adapt it to various contexts, ideally fitted it for a role in exchange, commerce, and diplomacy. Music, then, functioned as both a form of identity and a form of difference.

Free trade and open communication made this possible, encouraging the export and import of goods, including artworks. Commodification neutralized politics, while competition leveled traditional hierarchies and stimulated progress. From a republican perspective, competition also clarified the benefits of democracy. Constant press reporting, not only on French music abroad, but also on Handel, Wagner, and other foreigners at home knitted together European cultures despite their differences, reminding them of tastes they shared. Admiration of French music and cultural expressions of friendship laid a foundation for mutual recognition and mutual trust. This was important, as Renan pointed out, for 1871 reminded the French that “the goal of humanity is more than the triumph of one race or another. All the races are useful. All in their own way have a mission to accomplish. The disappearance of France among the great powers would be the end of European equilibrium.”²¹⁰ French politicians were aware that her allies needed a strong France, and that the success of French music in foreign theaters contributed to their neighbors’ prosperity as well as that of France. Through culture, nations were interdependent.

This study of music suggests that the dynamics of nation building in France involved, not only articulation of a national identity in music, but also participation in a global culture. The massive investment in universal exhibitions and the extensive exporting and importing of music supported Renan’s notion of Europe as a “confederation of states linked by a common idea about civilization.”²¹¹ While Western culture per se was not yet theorized in music, French politicians and the public ascribed great importance to the reception of French music abroad. In this sense, they perceived the strength of the nation as the result, not only of the strength and distinction of its national culture and its capacity to compete successfully in the marketplace of commodities and ideas, but also of its value abroad. The French desire to feel superior probably masked the desire to have France’s art, science, and industry serve as models for others, just as foreigners’ creativity had been for the French. Along with shared preoccupations with refined, “pure” sound and musical progress, this circle of mutual influences, particularly in opera,

210. Renan, *Réforme intellectuelle et morale*, 96–98.

211. Ibid., 123. Whereas in his *Music in European Capitals*, Heartz finds a shared taste for the *style galant* among eighteenth-century Europeans, a result of the Enlightenment’s “quest for knowledge and openness to the world at large” (xxii), here I am referring to something more general, that which distinguishes the art music of western Europe from that of Asia or Africa.

reinforced a certain coherence in western European art music and contributed to its presence beyond the continent, for example, in Odessa, Cairo, and Australia. Through music, one came to understand Western culture as the dynamic product of national distinctions and international competition, national pride and international cooperation.

Under the Moral Order, the French had seen how music could help them contemplate their complex past, come to grips with their differences, and rebuild their status abroad. However, in 1880, Minister of Fine Arts Antonin Proust admitted that “the arts are still considered more ornament [*agrément*] than utility.”²¹² With the country behind them and Europe’s prosperity linked to that of France, the time had come for republicans, now less focused on compromise, to turn their ideals into laws, look beyond Europe for new relationships, and pursue forms of glory reflective of the emerging nation. Not surprisingly, they expected music to embody its hopes and dreams, expressing as well as transcending the nation’s new distinction.

212. Proust, *Art sous la République*, 26.