8 · Useful Distractions and Economic Liberalism in the Belle Epoque

To prepare for a concert its employees offered to friends, family, and customers on 28 November 1885, the Bon Marché department store cleared out the merchandise on its main floor and installed a platform for 400 performers in the middle (fig. 55). To give the illusion of a huge luxurious salon—a "bewitching palace"—they covered the floor with magnificent Oriental rugs, hung opulent draperies, and set out massive exotic plants.[1] The date was chosen to coincide with the exhibition of new coats just before the end-of-year sale. Six thousand invitations were sent out to customers, including Baroness de Rothschild. Employees were also invited, although the store made a conscious effort to control where they would sit. Two thousand green tickets were distributed to male employees for seats behind the platform, including over eight hundred for inspectors, wives of the musicians, and their guests; two to three hundred pink tickets went to female employees for seats on the upper floors, which functioned as balconies. Four thousand free programs were printed. Advertisements appeared in over twenty newspapers, ranging from *L'Orphéon* and *L'Echo des orphéons*, which reported on the activities of amateur music societies, to the mass-circulation *Petit Journal;* to *Gil Blas*, *Le Temps*, and *Figaro*, papers aimed at the middle and upper classes; and to *Le Gaulois*, newspaper of the aristocracy. If one is to judge by over fifteen reviews of this concert, Parisians took such events seriously.

The concert itself was the fruit of music courses the Bon Marché provided for its employees, showing them what could be gained from hard work and discipline. For this occasion, the organizers invited stars from the Opéra and the most popular *café-concerts* to perform between their choruses and wind-band fantasies,

1. Henri Bourgeois, "Nouvelles: Concert au Bon Marché," *L'Orphéon*, 5 January 1886, cited in part in Michael B. Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869–1920* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 172–73. I am indebted to Miller most especially for the clue, offered in his appendix, that the store's archives included a trunk with concert programs and related materials, which I was subsequently able to consult.

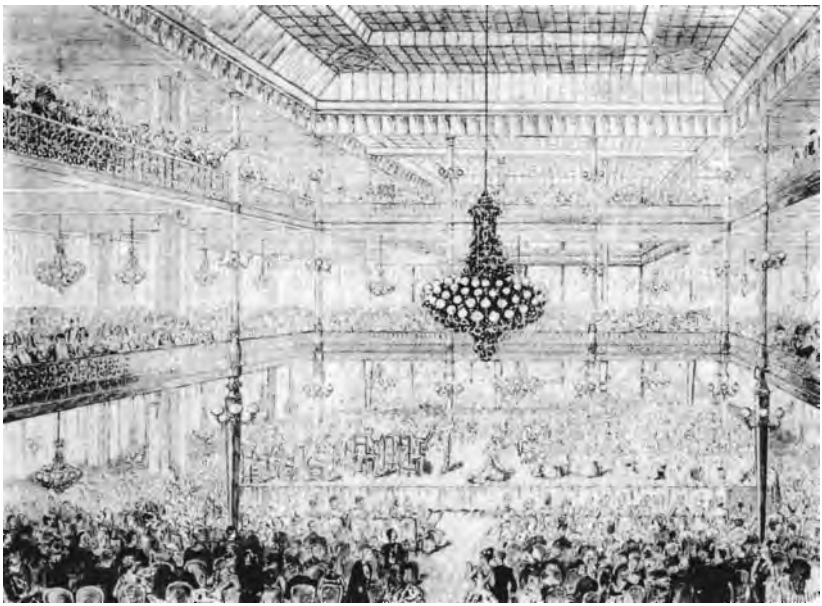
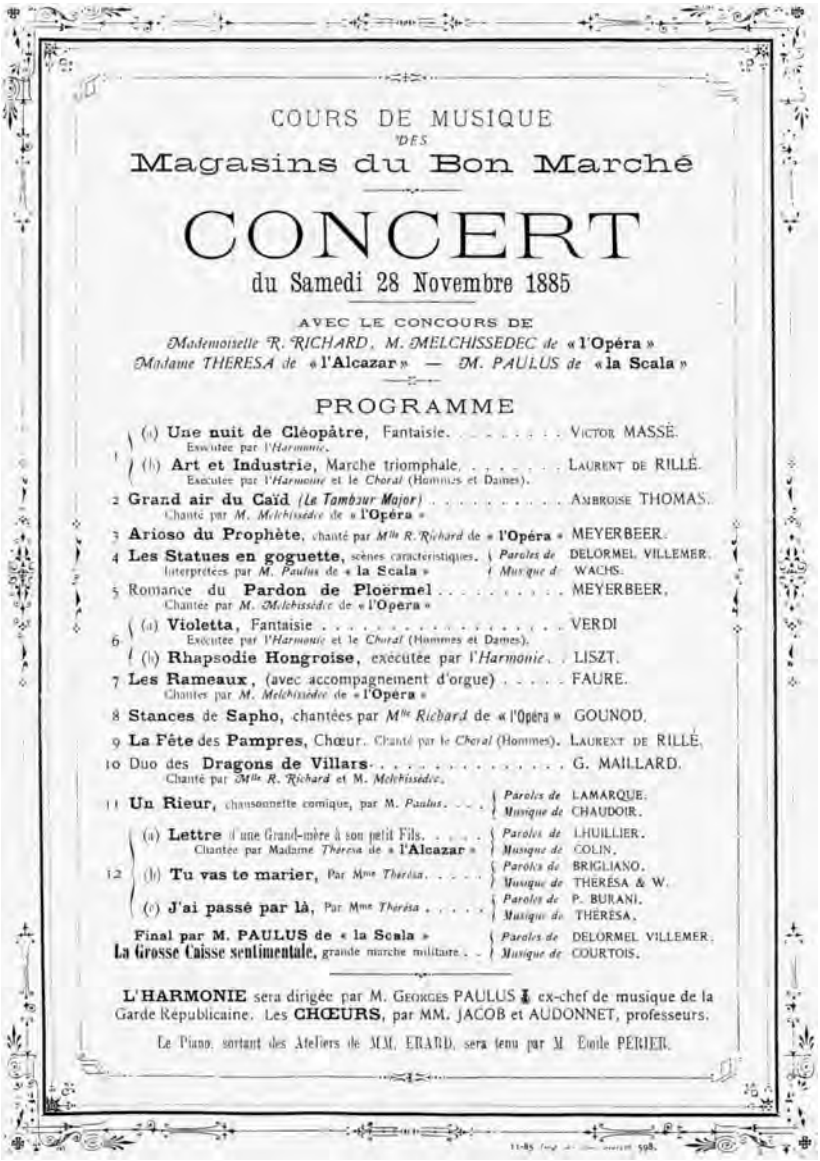


FIG. 55 Winter concert in the Bon Marché department store, 1887.

Concerts were held in the main hall of the store, with the merchandise cleared out and Oriental rugs and palm trees brought in to decorate a makeshift stage. The upper floors functioned as balconies.

a practice begun in 1883. With art songs and operatic excerpts juxtaposed with comic ditties, and marches placed alongside romances, the result was eclectic in the extreme (fig. 56). Both in theaters and concert halls and in private salons, performances in the 1880s frequently mixed the serious and the popular. In this sense, they resembled the experience of the city and its department stores. Since Bon Marché employees typically performed in at least half the works put on in the store's concerts, performance was a way of mediating class and cultural differences among professionals and amateurs and among rich and poor on stage and in the audience. Through musical performance, republican values could permeate, not just commerce, but also the private domain, as suggested by the concert's salon décor. On summer Saturday evenings, the store's wind band, the Harmonie du Bon Marché, gave performances, resembling military-band concerts in length and repertoire, in the square outside. These, too, attracted a mixed crowd of bourgeois and working-class listeners, young and old (fig. 57). Concerts drawing people to commercial venues thus made art music—even operas and symphonic poems by living French composers—available to the masses as well as the elites. Just as



COURS DE MUSIQUE
DES
Magasins du Bon Marché

CONCERT
du Samedi 28 Novembre 1885

AVEC LE CONCOURS DE
Mademoiselle R. RICHARD, M. MELCHISSEDEC de « l'Opéra »
Madame THERESA de « l'Alcazar » — *M. PAULUS de* « la Scala »

PROGRAMME

1 (a) **Une nuit de Cléopâtre**, Fantaisie. . . . . VICTOR MASSÉ.
Exécutée par l'*Harmonie*.
(b) **Art et Industrie**, Marche triomphale. . . . . LAURENT DE RILLÉ.
Exécutée par l'*Harmonie* et le *Choral* (Hommes et Dames).
2 **Grand air du Caïd** *(Le Tambour Major)* . . . . . AMBROISE THOMAS.
Chanté par *M. Melchissédec* de « l'Opéra »
3 **Arioso du Prophète**, chanté par *Mlle R. Richard* de « l'Opéra » MEYERBEER.
4 **Les Statues en goguette**, scènes caractéristiques. *Paroles de* DELORMEL VILLEMER.
Interprétées par *M. Paulus* de « la Scala » *Musique de* WACHS.
5 Romance du **Pardon de Ploërmel** . . . . . MEYERBEER.
Chantée par *M. Melchissédec* de « l'Opéra »
6 (a) **Violetta**, Fantaisie . . . . . VERDI
Exécutée par l'*Harmonie* et le *Choral* (Hommes et Dames).
(b) **Rhapsodie Hongroise**, exécutée par l'*Harmonie*. . LISZT.
7 **Les Rameaux**, (avec accompagnement d'orgue) . . . . . FAURE.
Chantés par *M. Melchissédec* de « l'Opéra »
8 **Stances de Sapho**, chantées par *Mlle Richard* de « l'Opéra » GOUNOD.
9 **La Fête des Pampres**, Chœur. Chanté par le *Choral* (Hommes). LAURENT DE RILLÉ.
10 Duo des **Dragons de Villars** . . . . . G. MAILLARD.
Chanté par *Mlle R. Richard* et M. *Melchissédec*.
11 **Un Rieur**, chansonnette comique, par M. *Paulus*. . . . *Paroles de* LAMARQUE.
Musique de CHAUDOIR.
12 (a) **Lettre** d'une Grand-mère à son petit Fils. . . . . *Paroles de* L'HUILLIER.
Chantée par Madame *Théresa* de « l'Alcazar » *Musique de* COLIN.
(b) **Tu vas te marier**, Par Mme *Théresa*. . . . . *Paroles de* BRIGLIANO.
Musique de THÉRÉSA & W.
(c) **J'ai passé par là**, Par Mme *Théresa* . . . . . *Paroles de* P. BURANI.
Musique de THÉRÉSA.
Final par M. PAULUS de « la Scala »
La Grosse Caisse sentimentale, grande marche militaire. . *Paroles de* DELORMEL VILLEMER.
Musique de COURTOIS.

L'**HARMONIE** sera dirigée par M. GEORGES PAULUS ‖ ex-chef de musique de la Garde Républicaine. Les **CHŒURS**, par MM. JACOB et AUDONNET, professeurs.

Le Piano, sortant des Ateliers de MM. ERARD, sera tenu par M. Emile PÉRIER.

FIG. 56 Bon Marché concert, 28 November 1885.

The performance mixed amateurs and professionals, classical and *café-concert* fare, serious and humorous music.

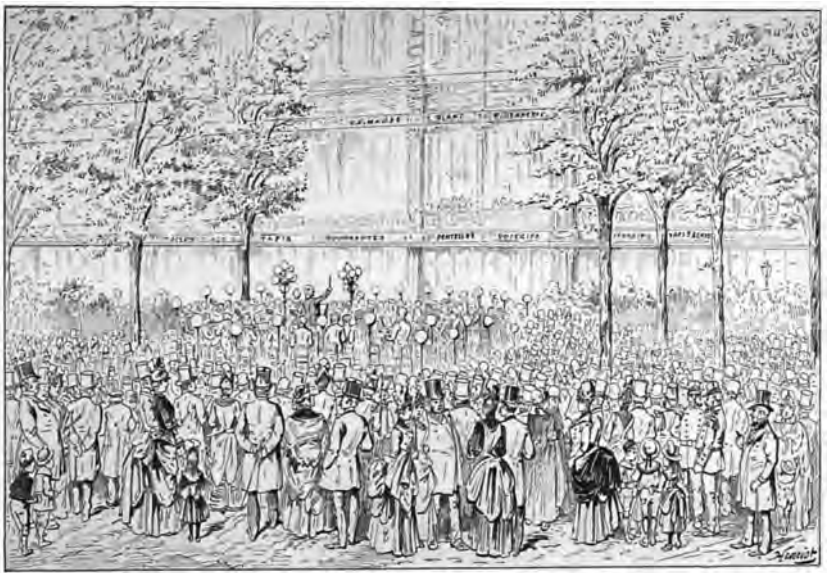


FIG. 57 Wind band concert in the square outside the Bon Marché, where up to six thousand people attended.

The goods sold at the Bon Marché as advertised on the storefront behind the musicians (rugs, lace, silk) and the numbers of top hats, fashionable women, and well-dressed children attending suggest that the concerts attracted the middle and upper classes, but round hats and simply dressed women suggest that some in the audience were workers.

consumer goods in department stores became "instruments of instruction and politics," such concerts could play a role in promoting more understanding among the classes and, ultimately, social change.[2] French attitudes to the commercial were distinctly different from those of German musicians, who largely rejected the public utility of the light and the frivolous.

The marketplace was ideal for blurring the boundaries between the useful and the frivolous, the needs and desires of elites and ordinary people. Whereas earlier theorists like A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy, secretary of the Académie des beaux-arts, had advocated clear distinctions between the artistic and the commercial—in part to protect a connection between art and the moral ideas underlying its purpose—republicans of the 1880s did not find it degrading to esteem art for its commercial value. Their beliefs in the merits of competition and the marketplace were based on the belief that every individual was equal in some sense, regardless

2. Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 28.

of class or status. This reinforced republicans' desire to democratize pleasures. Although conservative politicians continued to prefer "noble" pleasures and railed against the nefarious influence on *mœurs* of popular genres, such as the *café-concert*, they were not averse to allowing market forces to operate. Whether it was indirect encouragement or, more likely, an increasing taste for art music among city-dwellers, circuses, cabarets, skating rinks, and the zoo began to include this music. The zoo saw its revenues rise when it added low-cost concerts. For some, this was an explicit ploy to provide an element of education attractive to families. From a republican perspective, it lent an air of public utility to these performances, whether the music was listened to attentively or not. Because much of this commerce was concentrated in the middle of cities and improvements in transportation networks made it available to much of the urban population, this was the beginning of a period of greater consumption, entertainment, and gaiety—the *belle époque*.[3] In bringing people together and encouraging sociability among the classes, commercial culture had important public utility, even if its pleasures and distractions defined the limits of that concept.

DEPARTMENT STORES

The rise of department stores during the 1880s exemplifies the impact of this new focus on economic growth. Other scholars have examined the operation of these stores and the shopkeeper movement that sprang up in reaction to them.[4] What interests me is how they bring into relief both the strengths and weaknesses of the republican ideology, and in a way resembling concerts at the time.

Although the *grands magasins* started during the Second Empire, they did not grow into the massive structures they subsequently became until the 1880s. Aristide Boucicaut took over Au Bon Marché (meaning good, or cheap, prices) in 1852. The Magasins du Louvre followed in 1855, and the Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville, Au Printemps, and La Samaritaine in the 1860s. Whereas prices in shops typically reflected what storeowners could get, and commissions were paid rarely and only on faulty or older merchandise, Boucicaut initiated fixed pricing marked directly on the objects, was able to accept small profit margins, because he purchased directly from manufacturers, and paid virtually all sales employees commissions to encourage competition and productivity. Other stores followed suit. As Philip

3. See Charles Rearick, *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), and Louis Chevalier, *Montmartre du plaisir et du crime* (Paris: Laffont, 1980).

4. Miller, *Bon Marché*, and Philip Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

Nord explains, "economies of scale, rational bureaucratic organization, [and] a symbiotic relationship with industry and innovative merchandising" accounted for their success.[5] Needing to expand in the 1880s, Boucicaut acquired virtually an entire city block and hired Gustave Eiffel to build a large complex of new buildings that, besides the massive new space for the store itself (built of iron and glass), included facilities for employees as well as its delivery horses. This opened in 1887. Similar structures, also occupying a city block, were built for the other department stores Le Louvre (1879) and Au Printemps (1889). As Nord puts it, their elaborate façades "dazzled the stroller, the potential shopper, with an opulence and grandeur which the new Opéra house itself could scarcely match."[6]

Whereas in the 1870s, turning away from Orléanist commercial interests, republicans looked to small shopkeepers to build the nation, in the 1880s, they embraced department stores as partners in promoting the growth of the economy. These played an important role in increasing demand for French goods. Also, like concerts, they were expected to help democratize access to many things previously considered luxury goods. The stores' shelves displayed the widest possible range of items for the lowest possible price. Everyone could browse free of charge. In the beginning, the idea was to tempt women of the petite bourgeoisie into buying quasi-luxury items that previously they might not have been able to afford. (This group was not that socially distant from the employees themselves; certainly the wives of the store's managers would have qualified.) In the 1860s, Boucicaut added ready-to-wear clothing; with his larger store in 1872, perfume, Oriental rugs, deluxe furniture, a travel-goods counter, and the beginning of a long line of trademark items such as gloves. By the 1880s, the Bon Marché's target was the bourgeoisie. Understanding that the *grande bourgeoisie* rarely set foot in stores, Boucicaut published catalogues and began to do home deliveries. His goal was "to facilitate the possession of all that can be useful and agreeable at the most attractive price, without leaving aside good taste and true elegance."[7]

In providing the lower as well as middle classes with some experience of luxury, if only in cheap imitations, these stores helped break down the association of luxury with the upper class, and in this they were perhaps more effective than

5. Nord, *Shopkeepers*, 61. Emile Zola immortalized life at the Bon Marché in his novel *Au bonheur des dames* (1883). See also his *Carnets d'enquête: Une Ethnographie inédite de la France*, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Plon, 1987). A dossier of Zola's notes is in the Bibliothèque nationale, Département des Manuscrits, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, ms. 10278, folios 1 to 64; folios 175 to 210 on the salespeople. These notes are based on sixty-four visits to the store and an array of insider interviews. Other notes contain similar study of the Magasins du Louvre.

6. Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers*, 71.

7. Baillé, "Le Bon Marché," *Moniteur de l'Exposition de 1889*, 3 March 1889.

the few low-cost tickets to opera productions. After all, if France was the world leader in the production of such goods, then why should only its elites benefit from the gracious and elegant designs of French industry? Experiencing these objects, even without purchasing them, had the potential to elevate one's taste, just like the classical music at the *concerts populaires*. In this sense, the traditional meaning of *consommer* as achieving or accomplishing something came together with a meaning added in the nineteenth century, purchasing something for one's use. Through their consumption of leisure goods, individuals achieved an identity with a certain class or lifestyle. Contemporary theorists, such as Gabriel Tarde, credited imitative consumer behavior with the democratization of taste. The Bon Marché's sponsorship of concerts should be understood as another context in which to promote consumption associated with upper-class lifestyle, especially when the store brought in Opéra stars to perform with their employees.

Like these concerts, department stores offered pleasure to all classes. Women could engage in escape-filled *flânerie* just like the bohemian men immortalized in Baudelaire's poems. Safe within the confines of the store, they could experience the city in miniature, almost like a universal exhibition, large and well-organized, with merchandise set in rows on shelves precisely positioned and in perfect order.[8] Shopping became a kind of self-indulgent private entertainment. There it cost nothing to experience the *jouissance* of touching and looking, though, as one reviewer put it, "one might leave as exhausted as after having heard a long symphony by Berlioz." An aesthetic of charm, sensuous fabrics, delightful designs, and objects eliciting desire encouraged purchases, not just for the utility they might serve, but also because they were satisfying in and of themselves. People ridiculed such stores for being "full of temptations," but by 1881, they attracted over 90,000 visitors annually and, like the Opéra, were a magnet for foreigners, as well as the residents of fancy suburbs.[9]

Moreover, in antithesis to the specialization of smaller shops, the enormous eclecticism and diversity of merchandise in these stores continually confronted the shopper with the new and the unfamiliar. Just like at concerts, this variety

8. Moreover in her *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), Vanessa R. Schwartz notes that one of the pleasures of modern life was participation in a culture in which representations became interchangeable with reality (10–11).

9. Ignotus, "Les Grands Bazars," *Figaro*, 23 March 1881. In his *Paris Shopkeepers*, Nord points out that while the economic downturn of the early 1880s affected sales of luxury items, it had no impact on the sale of French ready-made clothes. Between 1878 and 1894, these rose from 10.4 million francs to 74.5 million (154). At the Bon Marché, total sales rose from 47 million francs in 1877 to 150 million in 1893 (159).

broadened the interests and the tastes of the expanding middle class but also risked overwhelming them. The huge number of objects for possible purchase also put to work the most casual *flâneur* or *flâneuse*'s sense of judgment. To purchase, they had to evaluate and compare. They had to choose whether to indulge their nostalgia for older styles or take a risk on the newest fashion. With their exhibits of goods from abroad, including the Far East, these stores served as places to encounter foreign cultures, albeit in the form of fabrics and trinkets.

Department stores also contributed to serious problems at the heart of the emerging consumerism. Store browsing offered the lower and middle classes both a temporary escape from reality and a new kind of freedom. Yet they encouraged the vanity and self-obsession that characterize Manon in Massenet's opera, the exact opposite of a concern for the public good. If contemplating gracious designs elevates one's taste, playing with trinkets encourages banality and the collection of objects without any utility whatsoever. It would be interesting to know if other forms of collecting also reflected the desire to possess something more than to use it, such as the cumbersome monthly or bimonthly volumes of musical scores to which music amateurs subscribed (such as *Mélomane*, *Paris-Piano*, and *Album musical*) or those run by serious music professionals (such as *Le Journal de musique* and *La Musique des familles*) (fig. 58). Certainly, most bourgeois and aristocratic women were expected to play the piano, but how much of this music they actually played is unclear. Consumption, therefore, was complex.

The high value large stores ascribed to competition also had its downside. Through his paternalism and support for such benefits as the employee music societies and, beginning in 1876, an employee contingency fund, Boucicaut was able to balance any rivalries among his employees caused by his use of sales commissions. But at the Magasins du Louvre, where, according to Zola, everyone only thought about money, life was more cut-throat. Those who suffered most from this atmosphere were the shopkeepers put out of business by the big stores. Competition did not benefit small and medium-sized businesses. The shops that survived served the upper classes, offering exclusivity and high quality more than bargain prices. Those who sold textiles, clothing, and accessories such as perfumes, shoes, and flowers, as Zola tells it, were driven to bankruptcies, deaths, and suicides. The struggles of the *petits commerçants* versus the department stores turned into the shopkeeper movement in the 1880s, with small business owners espousing radical republicanism and later the nationalist campaigns led by Paul Déroulède.[10]

10. Nord discusses this nationalism, "plebeian, violent, and antiliberal," as foreshadowing the fascist movements of the 1930s. *Paris Shopkeepers*, 433–43.

FIG. 58 *Paris-Piano*, 1 January 1892.

This chic woman carrying a musical score in an elegant rolled case seems to suggest that music is something she treats herself to when she's not with her children. Each issue of *Paris-Piano* included previously unpublished studies, opera fantasies, dances, and operettas, all of "average difficulty." Each was also accompanied by an autograph letter by a composer and a chronicle of theater, concert life, and fashion.

They demonized as reactionary monopolists those running the department stores, including Boucicaut and others who practiced profit- and power-sharing and espoused republican ideas.[11] As Nord points out, the Haussmannization of Paris created the conditions for this emerging political conflict. It transformed Paris from a city of autonomous, picturesque neighborhoods with arcades and shop-lined streets serving local clientele into a centralized metropolis organized by boulevards facilitating easy movement throughout much of the city.[12]

When the government began to support big business, not only Paris, but also the regions and the colonies saw a boom in the numbers of theaters and *cafés-concerts*, as well as private orchestras, all competing like department stores to serve the public. This further democratized access to music of all kinds, facilitated its assimilation by all classes, and increased the demand for more performers, including women, many of whom were able to make a living from music for the first time. However, as with department stores, prosperity was not without its costs. If competition encouraged good quality, it also caused smaller or less robust businesses, including orchestras, to fold. Republican leaders were aware that if competition was "the soul of commerce and industry," it could also weaken them.[13] Competition additionally gave rise to increasing consumerism that risked pandering to the lowest common denominator, compromising the artistic product, and lowering quality. The political and economic liberalism that led to more economic growth thus inevitably planted the seeds of reaction.

COMPETITION IN THE MUSICAL WORLD

With the shift from education to commerce and finance as the primary focus of government policy came a decline in support for traditional opportunist values with significant impact on the arts. This also blurred the differences between national and commercial interests. The radical minister of commerce from January 1886 through May 1887, Edouard Lockroy, was chosen as minister of education and fine arts from April 1888 to February 1889.[14] He chose as his director of fine arts, Gustave Larroumet, a conservative from the university who had written on

11. Madame Boucicaut came from the working class—she was a laundress—and when her husband died in 1882, instead of hoarding the profits of the store, she shared governance as well as profits and created a retirement fund for her employees.

12. Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers*, 32, 97–98, and chap. 3.

13. Eugène Spuller, from a 1881 speech, published in *Education de la démocratie* (Paris: Félix Alban, 1892), 257.

14. Lockroy had been deputy from the eleventh arrondissement from 1881 to 1885, and thereafter deputy from the Seine.

Molière and Marivaux. In his first speech at the Conservatoire in August 1888, Larroumet explained that the government intended to maintain France's "national superiority" in the arts. With theater (especially opera) a state institution in France, its leaders would never put into jeopardy "the charm, elegance, and preeminence of the French spirit" for the sake of a "barbaric economy." The French could be "Athenians and Spartans" but they'd never be *Béotiens* (Boetians, i.e., hicks). However, his speech began with a focus on commerce. Asserting that theaters abroad were "tributaries" of French theater "making business with our dramatic genius," he said that public powers had a responsibility to make sure that foreigners not forget "the first law of commerce, that is, to pay for what one takes."[15]

With commerce and export a major public concern in the mid-1880s, the state was determined to encourage the creation of more inventions and innovations for which the French could collect royalties. This meant they had to improve protection of trademarks, patents, and copyright. To the extent that music was treated like an industrial commodity, these laws had significant implications for composers and music publishers. The revolutionaries had passed laws in 1791 to protect French authors and composers from having their works stolen, used, or reproduced, without payment of royalties. But the history of trying to enforce them, particularly in the provinces and abroad, was complicated and uneven. And certain debates continued for decades, such as whether music was like personal property that belonged to one's family in perpetuity. After a congress on the subject during the 1878 Universal Exhibition, a committee convened to study the problem anew. Bardoux presented the committee's recommendations to the Senate in 1884 and more debate ensued—would this encourage an artist to try to get rich instead of pursue the cult of beauty? In fall 1885, *Ménestrel* published ten articles on the history of intellectual property rights in France.[16] New laws were passed in 1883 and 1886, but their enforcement in distant places like Australia remained a challenge.

Larroumet recognized that another significant engine of economic growth was imitation. Whereas Ferry had earlier stressed the importance of artistic individuality, and this had led to the flourishing of diverse talents and eclectic perspectives, he told Conservatoire students to focus on learning skills, beginning with imita-

15. Gustave Larroumet, *Discours prononcé par M. le Ministre des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle du samedi 4 août 1888* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1888); reproduced in *Ménestrel*, 12 August 1888, 258–60.

16. Amédée Boutarel, "La Propriété intellectuelle," *Ménestrel*, 16 August 1885, 292–95, through 25 October 1885, 372. Boutarel notes that the Jules Simon contributed a preface to a volume on this subject.

tion. From his perspective, originality, especially in the arts, could not be taught. Students should look to the classical tradition for their models. Some composers teaching at the Conservatoire had made successful careers by imitating their predecessors. Charles Lenepveu most likely would not have gotten his job without his debt to Ambroise Thomas. In particular, Larroumet pointed to imitators of Pasdeloup's *concerts populaires* in regional France. Since the early 1870s, beginning with Toulouse and Bordeaux, more than a dozen regional *concerts populaires*, sometimes performing in circuses, had offered inexpensive concerts to thousands of people, helping them develop the taste for "true music"—both the classics and the music of living French composers. As Pougin remarked, "The movement [Pasdeloup's concerts] started in Paris soon spread, not only throughout France, but also abroad, not just to Europe, but also to the New World, and it can be said that it has now taken over the entire universe."[17]

As in the 1870s, the government wanted to promote competition. But instead of serving as sites of public education and national glory, art exhibitions became opportunities for artists to show off their work and find buyers. State support was reduced to sponsoring the venues and acquiring the best work. Free competition was considered a way to raise standards, and the state's role to be that of protecting national interests and individual rights. This did not mean that the government was happy with all that was being produced. When the Salon des indépendants opened on 1 May 1884, President Grévy refused to inaugurate it because, among the 400 artists who exhibited there, too many were intent on "dishonoring French art." Without juries or prizes, it quickly became a place for the avant-garde. Since the government did not purchase avant-garde works, the interest of capitalists who became major collectors, such as Albert Chauchard, owner of the Grands Magasins du Louvre, was important.[18] Impressionists began to make a living from their art in the 1880s, although they did not yet earn as much as official painters. By the 1880s, the idea of buying and trading art, of viewing art as a commodity and an investment of fluctuating value, was becoming part of the republican ideology.[19]

Competition among orchestral concerts and quality of performances increased in the 1880s, attracting all classes as well as provincials and foreigners.[20] In 1881,

17. Arthur Pougin, "M. Pasdeloup et les Concerts populaires," *Ménestrel*, 11 May 1884, 188–89.

18. Christophe Prochasson, *Les Années électriques (1880–1910)* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991), 75, 94, 101.

19. Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women's Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 23–26.

20. In 1880, state subsidies for concert organizations became a question of their "degree of perfection." The Senate and Chambre des députés refused a request to subsidize the Concerts

modeling on the orchestras of Pasdeloup and Colonne, both Edouard Broustet and Charles Lamoureux created new ensembles of ninety musicians. Whereas Broustet's orchestra performed off-season (May to December) on Sunday evenings, Lamoureux competed directly with Pasdeloup and Colonne on Sunday afternoons. All three orchestras provided alternatives to those unable to afford or obtain tickets to the prestigious concerts of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire. Programs were listed a week in advance in all the major music publications and reviewed regularly, giving audiences a chance to make informed choices, compare their experiences with those of the critics, and hear about what they missed.

The recession that began in January 1882, however, had a significant impact on this growth, for when people had less money, they became more careful about how they spent it. Commenting on the 1884–85 orchestral concert season, the music critic Charles Darcours lamented the decrease in overall concert attendance, at first blaming it on people's "political, military, and financial" preoccupations and on competition with popular theaters giving daily performances, as if in troubled times, audiences felt they needed the diversion of the latter. He wondered if part of the problem in attracting audiences was that, unlike the regular subscribers of the concerts of the Société des concerts, who "applauded Beethoven, Haydn, and Mendelssohn with more enthusiasm than ever," the audiences of the other orchestras were unhappy that their conductors were slow to renew their repertoires. Parisians were "more eager for new things than able to appreciate them," he admitted, but they wanted to hear more new works.[21] The drop in attendance also led to a rumor that Lamoureux might have to let his musicians go, which he later denied.

Yet there was a risk in overstimulating audiences. Too much novelty not only led to too little coherence, but also made it hard to maintain quality performances. New works required more rehearsal time than was often possible. In contrast, multiple performances of the same works gave musicians opportunities to know and play them better and facilitated the orchestra's development of a distinct interpretation. Building and keeping an audience while negotiating a balance between familiar and unfamiliar works was challenging.

Besselièvre because they were not good enough, preferring to give more to the Concerts Colonne for new music. *Revue et gazette musicale*, 5 December 1880, 389, and Charles Darcours [Charles Réty], "Notes de musique," *Figaro*, 24 November 1886.

21. Charles Darcours, "Notes de musique," *Figaro*, 8 April 1885. On 23 February 1887, Darcours observed likewise, "people are becoming enamored with new works by our composers more easily today than earlier and welcoming them without prejudice."

In many ways, competition between the Paris orchestras played out as it did in the retail market for clothes and other items. The Société des concerts functioned like other providers of luxury to those of means. Like the shops in the best neighborhoods, they had nothing to fear from competition because they had a loyal constituency. Subscribers purchased virtually all their tickets in advance and, many of them were aging and had inherited their seats from their families. Attendance at these concerts, like wearing expensive clothes, had a social cachet. Although the organization was known for its conservative repertoire, when Jules Garcin took over as principal conductor in 1885, this audience was willing to support more premieres each season in part because the Société maintained its commitment to big works with text, most new works were by established composers such as Gounod, Franck, Lalo, and Saint-Saëns, and it put on French premieres of older masterpieces, such as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in 1888.[22]

When the Concerts Pasdeloup was started in 1861, its orchestra performed some of the same music as the Société des concerts, but in a functioning circus on an eastern boulevard (see fig. 19). Only half the performers had prizes from the Conservatoire, but they were good—Colonne played violin there in the 1860s. Like the early department stores, Pasdeloup aimed to attract a large and socially diverse public, his target audience at first also being the petite bourgeoisie, many of whom had never heard such music before and would never have been able to afford the Société des concerts (fig. 59). The cost of most seats made them accessible to workers, with the better ones priced to attract members of the bourgeoisie unable to obtain tickets to the Société des concerts. Pasdeloup's success was such that "before the war people had to get their ticket by Wednesday; if they wanted premieres or good seats, they needed to subscribe a year in advance."[23] After 1872, influenced by nationalism and the competition offered by the Concerts Colonne, founded in 1874, Pasdeloup increased the number of premieres by French composers. His organization was a tremendous success, winning a hefty subsidy from the government (20,000 francs) in 1878 to support a chorus, and earning Pasdeloup enough money to purchase a mansion in the countryside.

Sadly, however, increased competition in the early 1880s forced Pasdeloup to fold his orchestra in 1884. Unlike Boucicaut, who eventually moved the Bon

22. D. Kern Holoman, *The Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, 1828–1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 278. Garcin had been the principal second violinist there and a second conductor since 1881. He also taught violin at the Conservatoire.

23. Adolphe Jullien, "La Retraite de M. Pasdeloup," *Le Français,* 3 June 1884.

FIG. 59 Jules Pasdeloup on the cover of *La Musique des familles*, 12 November 1885.

Marché into new, large, and luxurious quarters, he was unable to grow or leave the Cirque d'hiver in its working-class milieu and suffered like the shopkeepers who went bankrupt, abandoning the same class of clientele. He had been able to hold his own throughout the 1870s, sometimes performing the same repertoire as his competitors on the same days or the following week, but the opportunity to compare two performances of the same work eventually worked to his disadvantage. As the quality of Pasdeloup's conducting came under scrutiny, the reputation of the Concerts Colonne grew. Colonne's multiple performances of Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust* in 1877 demonstrated his orchestra's incontestable technical and musical superiority. By 1882, Colonne was making more money than Pasdeloup, though Pasdeloup did better than Lamoureux his first season and also better than Broustet at the Cirque des Champs-Elysées.[24] In January 1883, Colonne turned away people at the door, while Pasdeloup played for a partially empty hall. That fall, Pasdeloup was forced to sell his organization to stockholders. His orchestra's short-lived revival in 1886 failed, obliging some listeners to return to the *cafés-concerts* for their diversion.[25]

Ironically, everyone from critics in *Ménestrel* to his program annotator Charles Malherbe thought that although Colonne "continued the work of Pasdeloup," he gave it "more importance and more *éclat*."[26] Colonne played much of the same repertoire, also presented eclectic programs, and drew some of the same public. However, like the Bon Marché in its new premises, Colonne's orchestra played in a large theater in a good neighborhood with far fewer low-priced seats. And like Boucicaut, he understood how to market his product to the growing bourgeois market, especially to women. He tracked and responded to his public's tastes like an expert in sales, forging a succession of strategies—some borrowed from predecessors, some novel—that ensured the orchestra's growth and survival.[27] While continuing to draw audiences through large works with chorus and super-star

24. *Figaro*, 3 May 1882, noted that of the approximately 500,000 francs spent on Sunday concerts during the 1881–82 season, the Société des concerts earned the most, averaging 8,000 francs per concert and an estimated 140,000–150,000 francs; in twenty-two concerts, the Concerts Colonne averaged 6,060 per concert, earning 133,000 francs; in twenty-four concerts, the Concerts Pasdeloup averaged 4,765 francs, earning 114,461 francs; in twenty-three concerts, the Concerts Lamoureux averaged only 2,700 francs, earning 62,000; and in twenty concerts, the Concerts Broustet averaged 1,700 francs per concert, earning 30,000–35,000 francs.

25. Eva M., "Les Concerts populaires à Paris," *Musique des familles*, 25 March 1886, 180.

26. Charles Malherbe, "Edouard Colonne," *Revue musicale S.I.M.*, 15 April 1910, 219.

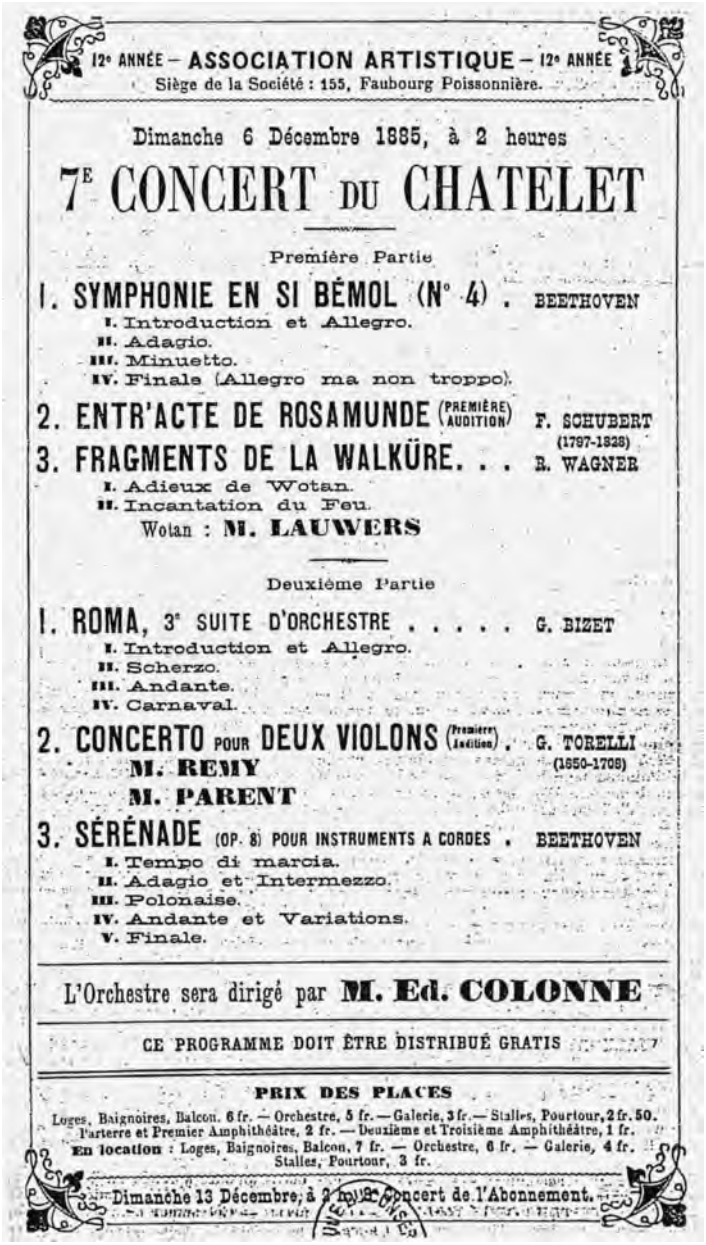
27. See Jann Pasler, "Building a Public for Orchestral Music: Les Concerts Colonne," in *Le Concert et son public: Mutations de la vie musicale en Europe de 1780 à 1914*, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrice Veit, and Michael Werner (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002), 209–40.

soloists, Colonne also took advantage of the growing interest in music and education, especially among women, and in fall 1885, he announced a new approach to concert programming. That season he would offer music from all periods and schools to "form a complete summary of the history of music" (fig. 60).[28] Program notes began to grow lengthy, providing information one might find in a music history textbook. Women rewarded Colonne with their support. By 1884–85, the number of women who were honorary members (donors with the right to attend dress rehearsals) had grown to almost equal that of men (364 vs. 388). Perhaps in response to this concert season, these numbers increased in October 1885 to 470 women and 435 men.

Lamoureux took note of how Colonne's orchestra was thriving, while Pasdeloup's had collapsed. Unlike Colonne, whose orchestra was an association with members sharing the risks and benefits, he ran his orchestra as an entrepreneur. Like Pasdeloup, he bore all the responsibility. In his first season, 1881–82, Lamoureux had earned half what his competitors made that year and lost 100,000 francs of his own money. Eventually, he knew that his orchestra's survival depended on leaving the Château d'Eau theater in the Place de la République and moving to a better neighborhood. Like the shopkeepers who sold to the wealthiest Parisians, he also saw a niche in attracting elites who preferred to mingle predominantly with members of their own class. He understood these audiences, having conducted at both the Société des concerts and the Opéra. In 1885, this led him to negotiate with the recently built, vast and sumptuous Eden-Théâtre for his performances, right next to the Paris Opéra. Before this could begin, he had the *promenoir* (standing area behind the seats) and upper balcony removed and made adjustments to improve the acoustics. When his fall season opened, the theater was left with virtually no cheap seats. The public responded so enthusiastically to this change of venue that people purchased some tickets in advance, an uncommon practice at the time. In the mid 1880s, Lamoureux also added a "Petit Bulletin" to his programs for additional information from the conductor, especially when it came to Wagner or his plans to perform him. In the critic Hugues Imbert's words, while "Pasdeloup worked for the musical education of the poor, Lamoureux worked for that of the rich."[29]

As with the department stores, the challenge of competing increasingly encouraged distinction, or what retailers called specialization. Venue and neighborhood were important in attracting a public, but not alone, since the urban geography

28. Program notes for the Concerts Colonne, 1 November 1885.
29. Hugues Imbert, "Charles Lamoureux," *Portraits et études* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1894), 76.



12e ANNÉE – ASSOCIATION ARTISTIQUE – 12e ANNÉE

Siège de la Société : 155, Faubourg Poissonnière.

Dimanche 6 Décembre 1885, à 2 heures

7E CONCERT DU CHATELET

Première Partie

1. SYMPHONIE EN SI BÉMOL (N° 4) . BEETHOVEN
   - I. Introduction et Allegro.
   - II. Adagio.
   - III. Minuetto.
   - IV. Finale (Allegro ma non troppo).
2. ENTR'ACTE DE ROSAMUNDE (PREMIÈRE AUDITION) F. SCHUBERT (1797-1828)
3. FRAGMENTS DE LA WALKÜRE. . . R. WAGNER
   - I. Adieux de Wotan.
   - II. Incantation du Feu.

   Wotan : **M. LAUWERS**

Deuxième Partie

1. ROMA, 3e SUITE D'ORCHESTRE . . . . . G. BIZET
   - I. Introduction et Allegro.
   - II. Scherzo.
   - III. Andante.
   - IV. Carnaval.
2. CONCERTO POUR DEUX VIOLONS (Première Audition) . G. TORELLI (1650-1708)

   M. REMY

   M. PARENT
3. SÉRÉNADE (OP. 8) POUR INSTRUMENTS A CORDES . BEETHOVEN
   - I. Tempo di marcia.
   - II. Adagio et Intermezzo.
   - III. Polonaise.
   - IV. Andante et Variations.
   - V. Finale.

L'Orchestre sera dirigé par **M. Ed. COLONNE**

CE PROGRAMME DOIT ÊTRE DISTRIBUÉ GRATIS

PRIX DES PLACES

Loges, Baignoires, Balcon. 6 fr. — Orchestre, 5 fr. — Galerie, 3 fr. — Stalles, Pourtour, 2 fr. 50.
Parterre et Premier Amphithéâtre, 2 fr. — Deuxième et Troisième Amphithéâtre, 1 fr.
En location : Loges, Baignoires, Balcon, 7 fr. — Orchestre, 6 fr. — Galerie, 4 fr.
Stalles, Pourtour, 3 fr.

Dimanche 13 Décembre, à 2 h. 1/2, Concert de l'Abonnement.

FIG. 60 Concerts Colonne program, 6 December 1885.

In this year, the first in which Edouard Colonne explicitly organized his concerts as a "form of music history," both his season and his first concerts began with Beethoven symphonies (some also ended with Beethoven). In addition, in fall 1885, program notes grew very lengthy, running to more than 1,200 words. Most of this space was dedicated to the Beethoven symphony, highlighting that composer's central position in the mission of the concerts.

permitted easy movement in the city. In 1885, high-quality performances could be expected of all the top Paris orchestras. That left programming and other issues. Although Colonne and Lamoureux performed much of the same repertoire, sometimes during the same season, there were subtle, significant differences. As Colonne was starting his orchestral history of music, Lamoureux boldly performed entire Wagnerian acts despite knowing this would require an effort of the imagination in the absence of the stage. After giving four performances of act 1 of *Lohengrin* in February and March 1882, he presented a work little known to Parisians, act 1 of *Tristan und Isolde* in March 1884 and February 1885, then act 2 (incomplete) in March 1885, with act 1 again in 1887. In 1886 and 1887, his orchestra performed act 1 (incomplete) of *Die Walküre*.[30] Certainly, Colonne also performed Wagner regularly in his concerts beginning in 1880: he helped popularized the "Ride of the Valkyries" through fifteen performances from 1881 through 1885.[31] Ironically, although a Jew, his premiere of the religious scene from *Parsifal,* with two performances in 1884, predates by two years that of Lamoureux. However, Colonne did not perform entire acts until the mid 1890s. He made his reputation performing difficult large works, but those of Berlioz. Lamoureux made it (and his fortune) with Wagner. Moreover, when conducting other works, critics often felt he did not bring the same conviction to them as he did to Wagner's music.[32]

Colonne and Lamoureux also had different styles and expectations of the concert behavior expected of listeners (fig. 61). Lamoureux was known as an authoritarian conductor who demanded military-like discipline and obedience from his "instrumental army" and respect from his audience. Long Wagnerian acts required audiences to sit still in their seats for long periods, much more than any symphonic work. For Lamoureux's target audience of elites, this was not a problem. Opéra attendance may have accustomed some of them to this kind of restraint. The silence in the hall and the reverence of the listeners led to the perception that these concerts were like a "Wagnerian rite," with Lamoureux "officiating" for "the faithful" who had a "beatific and bored air about them." Moreover, to avoid clashes between those with conflicting tastes, particularly with Wagner, and keep concerts from becoming too long, he made it a policy of not honoring requests for encores. Meanwhile, Colonne conducted with "persuasion" more than authority, and his concerts "never fatigued the listener,"

30. Wagnerians criticized Lamoureux in 1885 when he performed excerpts but not the entire act 2 of *Tristan*. Charles Darcours, "Notes de musique," *Figaro,* 11 March 1885.

31. For other examples, see chap. 6, n. 47.

32. This was even true of Mendelssohn, for whom he also professed great admiration. See Amédée Boutarel in *Ménestrel,* 19 December 1886, 22.

FIG. 61 Edouard Colonne and Charles Lamoureux, from photographs, ca. 1890. Charles Simond, *Paris de 1800 à 1900 d'après les estampes et les mémoires du temps* (Paris, 1900).

Both conductors had begun as violinists and had played for the Conservatoire orchestra. Critics often commented on their different temperaments. Colonne "leads the artists" while Lamoureux "directs" them, one wrote. Colonne's repertoire remained eclectic, like that of Pasdeloup; that of Lamoureux became increasingly "exclusive." H. Barbedette, *Ménestrel*, 3 and 17 April 1892.

although some were lengthy. Colonne's programs constantly varied with " a little 'Ride of the Valkyries' here, a little *Rapsodie* there, as contrasts." His public was more "democratic" with "the impetuous fits of crowds, but also their generous instincts." As one critic explained, "don't expect this public to give a great show of dignity and reverence appropriate to listening to Wagnerian preludes; it applauds what amuses it, it yawns at what bores it, and it is right to do so.[33] In contrast to Lamoureux, he also tended to honor audience requests for encores, which helped determine future programming. Not surprisingly, Colonne's concerts were more of a hit with families. In 1891–92, the magazine *La Vie de famille* produced their programs (fig. 62).

The distinction required by the market thus had costs as well as benefits. Whereas Pasdeloup had reached out to a wide diversity of listeners as an alternative to the small and narrowly defined public of the Société des concerts, and whereas Colonne had built on Pasdeloup's formula for success for more bourgeois

33. H. Barbedette, *Ménestrel*, 19 December 1886, 22, and 4 March 1888, 79.

FIG. 62 Hector Berlioz on the cover of a Concert Colonne program (1892).

The magazine *Le Vie de famille* published the programs of the Concerts Colonne in 1891–92. Berlioz was a favorite composer of Colonne's, whose orchestra did more to popularize his music than any other musical ensemble during the fin-de-siècle.

concertgoers, Lamoureux wished to attract the rich and those with increasingly sophisticated tastes. Like art exhibitions after 1880, some organized for elites by new circles and artists' societies, and open only to members and their guests, the Concerts Lamoureux built an audience by restricting access rather than making his concerts available to the masses. As in elegant gallery and society shows, as Patricia Mainardi points out, "aesthetic and social protectionism often operated together."[34] While Colonne's concerts embraced the republican value of eclecticism and, without sacrificing quality or programming, succeeded in attracting increasing numbers of women and their families, Lamoureux's concerts helped build a constituency for alternatives to the ideals of the *opportunistes* and radical republicans, and contributed to the development of an aesthetic counterculture.

EXPANDED PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING FOR WOMEN

As people acquired a taste for orchestral music, one could find it in more and more places, from hotels, gardens, and circuses to theaters and exhibition halls to brasseries. In summer 1887, for example, *grands concerts* of orchestral music were presented in Paris every Thursday evening in the courtyard of the Palais Royal, *concerts-promenades* of somewhat lighter fare the other evenings for a mere 50 centimes. During the annual exhibition of the Union centrale des arts décoratifs from 12 August to 6 December 1887, Jules Danbé, the conductor of the Opéra-Comique orchestra, organized and conducted 100 consecutive daily concerts of orchestral music. These concerts took place in the middle of the Palais de l'industrie, where people could hear the music as they strolled through the show. What is surprising is that the programs, offered free of charge, had almost no repetition, unless audiences asked for a work to be done again. The orchestra performed little-known works, including the occasional premiere, along with masterpieces. Three days a week it presented *grands concerts,* some featuring distinguished soloists. In 1889, a brasserie in the Latin Quarter (rue de Tournon) began a nightly series of classical music, the Concerts Rouge. A handful of Conservatory graduates presented transcriptions of symphonies as people sipped their drinks. The repertoire changed nightly. In addition, there were the Sociétés philharmoniques, with amateur performers and sometimes professional conductors. These continued to spring up, such as in Lyon in 1884 and in Hanoi in 1889. By 1893, there was one subtitled

34. Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 142.

"Progress" in the city of Boufarik, Algeria. And by 1889, critics also noted that "music has never occupied such an extensive place" in private salons. "Even an entire opera does not frighten them."[35]

The extraordinarily large number of performance opportunities interested more people in becoming professionals and helped build careers. As Tamar Garb puts it, "the modernist construction of the true artist as disinterested and disenfranchised marginal figure, unconcerned with the vulgar operations of the market" is inaccurate, as is the "cliché of the bohemian artistic identity." In 1888, a female artist explained, "the legend of the down-at-heel artist with a threadbare cardigan and smashed up hat is a good story which doesn't hold true anymore. . . . In our society, artists are spoiled, honored, and for the most part rewarded. . . . Between Meissonnier who sells his pictures for 100,000 francs and a poor painter who makes paintings in standard measurements, there is the same difference that we find between the bird-seller and the rich cloth merchant," referring to Mme Boucicaut, the owner of the Bon Marché after her husband died in 1878.[36] Obviously, the market rewarded some more than others.

Among musicians, opera singers had the highest incomes. They were the most mobile emblems of musical luxury, and anyone who wanted to give the allure of luxury had to feature them and bear the cost. Comtesse Elisabeth Greffulhe paid 5,000 francs to three of the city's top singers—Jean-Baptiste Faure, Jean-Alexandre Talazac, and Marie-Hélène Brunet-Lafleur—to perform with her and her friends at a salon concert on 8 May 1881, with 4,000 francs going to Faure alone.[37] Faure's fee was enormous—the equivalent of one-third of the Conservatoire director's annual salary. Singers were also the most apt to migrate between diverse venues. Faure, who received 2,000 francs for each appearance at the Concerts Colonne that year, was Colonne's highest paid soloist for the decade.[38] Mme Brunet-Lafleur also had a second career singing at orchestral concerts in the 1880s and later married the conductor Lamoureux. In 1883, the Bon Marché hired her to sing for more than two thousand people at a concert with its employees within the store. In 1885 the Bon Marché engaged, among others, the most famous and best-paid opera singer of his generation, Jean-Baptiste Faure, to sing, as well as the very popular *café-concert* performers Paulus (Jean-Paul Habens) and Thérésa (Emma Valladon) (see fig. 56). In her salon from 1886 through 1889, Comtesse

35. *Ménestrel*, 15 April 1889, 54.
36. Garb, *Sisters of the Brush*, 25.
37. Archives of Comtesse Greffulhe, Archives privées, Archives nationales, Paris.
38. Archives of the Concerts Colonne, Paris.

Greffulhe, too, juxtaposed popular and serious genres, such as string quartet movements and an air from *Parsifal* with humorous monologues, especially by Coquelin Cadet.

A career as an instrumentalist was also becoming increasingly viable, not only for men but for women. The number of violin candidates applying to the Paris Conservatoire soared, rising 50 percent from 1878 to 1882, perhaps in response to the increasing taste for orchestral music and the growth in orchestra positions. The Conservatoire responded by accepting 64 percent more violinists. And whereas no female violinists won Conservatoire prizes from 1876 to 1878, after the republicans came to power in 1879, females began to win, taking from 25 to 37 percent of these prizes between 1879 and 1885.[39] Women increasingly also earned prizes in cello, organ, harp, and piano. Some thought women would also sign up for woodwind instruments if they were allowed to do so, noting that this was already done in England and that the French were behind the times.[40]

Darcours was particularly taken with the growing number of women who wanted to study piano at the Conservatoire. Whereas in the 1870s, 160 to 170 women, on average, competed for these positions, this number jumped to 223 in 1881. The critic wished to draw national attention to this phenomenon. In his regular column in *Figaro* in fall 1886, he pointed out that while 1,200 young musicians competed for only 200 places at the Paris Conservatoire and the largest applicant pool in one area were singers—255 for 43 places, evenly divided among females and males—the largest single category of *aspirants* were the 200 female pianists. Only 30 of them were accepted, as compared 13 of the 37 male contenders. Women thus represented 84 percent of the pianists competing to enter the Conservatoire. The admittance statistics also suggest that while women and men were being equally prepared for vocal careers, the Conservatoire was willing to train more female pianists than males by a factor of almost two to one.[41] Furthermore, as Darcours observed, for the past few years, female pianists at the Conservatoire had shown "more developed aptitudes than their male competi-

39. The number of violinists competing for entrance to the Conservatoire rose from 57 in 1878 to 88 in 1882, and the number accepted grew from 17 to 28 during this period. By 1885, there were 106 violinists competing and 37 accepted. In 1879, female violinists took 3 of the 8 prizes awarded, the number rising to 7 out of 23 in 1880, and 9 out of 34 in 1885.

40. Charles Darcours, "Notes de musique," *Figaro,* 17 November 1886.

41. While the number of male pianists seeking entrance to the Conservatoire also rose slightly in the early 1880s (from 46 in 1878 to 51 in 1881), it declined steadily thereafter, reaching 36 male piano candidates in 1886. It is possible that males felt discouraged at the growing acceptance of women as pianists and the competition they may have provided. Additionally, while half as many young women as men were accepted to study harmony—a stepping-stone

tors" and this may have been due to the fact that "a lot more work" was demanded of them than of the young men, and they took it seriously.[42] This is interesting because everyone has assumed that the Conservatoire's intent was to prepare virtuosos for performing careers, whereas many of these women probably ended up teaching piano.

At Darcours's prompting on 29 July 1885, during the slow summer when there were no important premieres to publicize, *Figaro* reproduced what music female pianists and harpists had sight-read in their end-of-the year exams at the Conservatoire.[43] The next year on 4 August 1886, it published Massenet's "exercise" that male pianists had sight-read, juxtaposed with Delibes's exercise for female pianists (ex. 18). This gave readers a chance to compare the standards used to judge the two sexes. Although both exercises are in D-flat major (5 flats), the differences are stunning and would have been obvious without performing them. Massenet's work for the young men consists of a series of chords, to be played *très modéré, soutenu*, repeated throughout the piece at various dynamic levels and interspersed by expressive descending passages. The tone is ponderous and the dynamic and registral changes frequent. At the work's climax, the chords move to the outer registers of the piano and build from *ppp* to *fff,* demanding strength and assertiveness from the performer. Delibes's work for the young women, a quick allegretto, consists mostly of a single line that begins in the bass and rises in arpeggios divided between the two hands before making its descent and beginning again. This lilting quality calls for a delicate touch and use of the pedals to render the sound fluid. In the middle, the piece modulates briefly, as it does in the Massenet, but here the pianist must follow the changes at a much more rapid pace. Other than a brief crescendo at the climax, the work is to be played softly (*p*) throughout. The contrasts between these two exercises suggest that the composers believed in gender differences and wished to test these: in male pianists strength and expressive flexibility, in female pianists dexterity and gracefulness. Broadening the base of musicians receiving state-subsidized musical training and thereby increasing the competition

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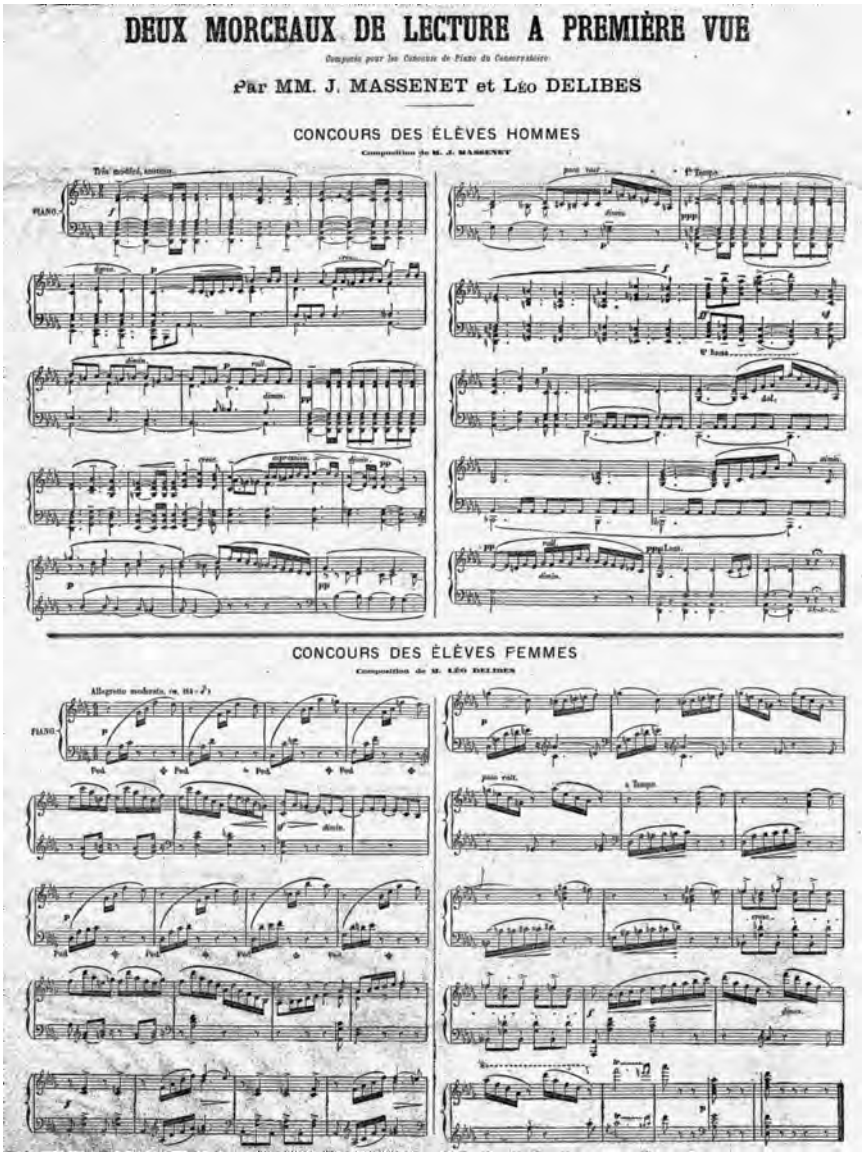
to composition and a life as a composer—almost double the number of young women were accepted to study solfège, preparation for becoming music teachers. These figures come from Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900), 874–75, 878, 884.

42. Charles Darcours, "Notes de musique," *Figaro,* 17 November 1886. He also points out that this disparity in workload also characterized other advanced classes, including those teaching harmony, and that Théodore Dubois was the only professor to "maintain an equilibrium between the two sexes."

43. Given the date of publication, I am assuming these were the pieces used in students' final exams, rather than those similar to what would be used in the fall entrance exams.

EX. 18 Massenet and Delibes, "Deux morceaux de lecture à première vue," *Figaro*, 4 August 1886.

Here *Figaro* provides an unusually direct demonstration of the differing qualities expected of performers depending on their sex.


DEUX MORCEAUX DE LECTURE A PREMIÈRE VUE

Par MM. J. MASSENET et Léo DELIBES

CONCOURS DES ÉLÈVES HOMMES

CONCOURS DES ÉLÈVES FEMMES

thus may have raised standards and encouraged more diversity of participation, but was not without problems.

THEATER AND POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

Despite resistance from some composers and playwrights, the world of theater and popular music thrived under the government's economic liberalism. Many were happy to offer the public all the novelty and stimulation they could possibly desire. More and more theaters began to stay open over the summer and profited handsomely for it, with receipts rising 84 percent from August 1884 to August 1886.[44] The press tracked how much each theater earned each year, who was doing well, and who was not. From the lists published annually, one could see that while receipts were up with *Lakmé* at the Opéra-Comique and at eight other Paris theaters in 1883, they were down at the Opéra, the Théâtre-Français (the Comédie-Française), and at nine others. Theaters on the Right Bank boulevards continued to do well, but their profits fluctuated, sometimes by as much as 50 to 200 percent. After a dip in annual receipts at the top twenty-four Paris theaters in 1884 and 1885, the major theaters' receipts rose by 10 percent in 1886–87 and continued to grow in the 1890s.[45] By making audiences aware of these fluctuations, administrators were held accountable to their investors, and audiences could compare their own individual tastes—what they were willing to pay for—with the preferences of others. Given the interest in regularly publishing these figures, one wonders if watching who and what were successful may have tantalized people into venturing beyond their normal haunts. In the case of readers outside Paris, this information helped them keep abreast of current fashions in the capital and may have encouraged the progressive among them to put pressure on local theaters and concert organizers.

Popular entertainment also contributed to the democratization of demand. This did not just mean that the lower classes got into establishments previously reserved for the bourgeoisie, albeit in the upper seats, but also that the appeal of "democratized theater," or "theaters of the poor"—the *cafés-concerts*—was spreading to all social classes.[46] They charged no admission fee, making their money on drinks. "Family cards" provided discounts to encourage people to bring their children to

44. *Ménestrel*, 12 September 1886, 330.

45. Total receipts for Paris theaters in 1883 were 18,903,430 francs; in 1884–85, 17,335,330; in 1885–86, 17,471,502; and in 1886–87, 19,234,798. *Ménestrel*, 4 November 1883, 389; 12 July 1885, 254; and 31 July 1887, 279.

46. Rearick, *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque*, 83.

Sunday afternoon *matinées-spectacles*. With 400 to 500 seats on average at *cafés-concerts*, and bigger ones holding 1,500, these establishments often earned over 100,000 francs per month.[47]

This was possible because the status of cafés had changed. In the 1870s, like earlier in the century, the government had feared such places as breeding grounds for political dissent, protest, and subversion. In setting curfews on drinking, making drunkenness a crime, and closely surveying such establishments, the Moral Order government attempted to "enforce total control over one's public behavior." This got worse after 16 May 1877, which gave new life to political songs and increased censorship. Susanna Barrows suggests, however, that when the republicans took over government, surveillance was reduced to practical matters, and the focus of police records shifted from politics to *mœurs*, specifically "Eros."[48] If political songs thrived at *cafés-concerts*—and the numbers of songs collected at the Bibliothèque nationale testify to their continuing popularity—it is perhaps because these songs helped to educate the lower classes about politics and engage them in it, providing an expressive outlet even when critical of the government. Popular songs such as "Au Tonkin" (June 1887), for example, questioned whether cholera should be risked and French blood shed to make money for the *opportunistes* and to demonstrate French courage.[49] Still, as others have shown, fear of critique continued to play a role in what lyrics were approved, and a good number of them were expected to support the republican ideology. Songs that begin like "Je ne suis qu'un simple ouvrier / Qui ne demande qu'à s'instruire; / Lorsque j'ai quitté l'atelier / Mon plus grand bonheur c'est de lire," elevated republican virtues and the lower classes' need to celebrate their respectability;[50] others glorified the nation and national memory. If the genre had begun as a means of resistance and helped keep alive the desire to take back Alsace and Lorraine, it also became part of republicans' project to shape morals and behavior.[51]

47. Caradec and Weill, *Café-concert*, 68, 82–85, 94, 102–4, and Concetta Condemi, *Les Cafés-concerts* (Paris: Quai Voltaire, 1992), 68, 83–84.

48. Susanna Barrows, "'Parliaments of the People': The Political Culture of Cafés in the Early Third Republic," in *Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History*, ed. id. and Robin Room (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 89, 95. Condemi notes that in 1887 one song, "Professeur de piano," was forbidden to be sung because of its obscenity (*Cafés-concerts*, 49).

49. "Si vous avez lancé la France / Dans c' pays, c'est pour fair' vot' sac / . . . / Pour montrer qu' vous n'avez pas l'trac." Jules Jouy, *Chansons de l'année* (Paris: Bourbier & Lamoureux, 1888), reproduced in Pierre Barbier and France Vernillat, *Histoire de France par les chansons: La IIIe République de 1871 à 1918* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), 65–68.

50. Another example is "Les Bienfaits de l'instruction," reproduced in Barbier and Vernillat, *Histoire de France par les chansons*, 56–58.

51. Condemi, *Cafés-concerts*, 50–57, 176.

Scholars have also pointed to the fact that *cafés-concerts* rationalized leisure, contributing to social control, and, especially for women, provided the social mobility that the republicans favored. Classes mixed in these places. Despite this, in the Chambre's annual discussions about the Opéra's subsidy, politicians often referred to the increasing appeal of the *cafés-concerts* as something that the state must endeavor to counteract. As under the Moral Order, they continued to fear that those raised on "porno art" would become "degenerate citizens."[52] This led conservatives to support the Opéra populaire and the Sunday orchestral concerts as a way to attract families to art music—"the great popularizer of healthy and fruitful emotions."

In the mid 1880s, the government grew more tolerant. Since the person responsible for censoring songs and theater was the minister himself, and since the radical ministers who came to power beginning in 1886, such as Edouard Lockroy, were sympathetic to the working people and espoused freedom of expression, tolerance encouraged the growth of such businesses.[53] In Paris, Montmartre became a center of nightlife with the opening of Rudolphe Salis's Le Chat Noir (1881–85), Aristide Bruant's Le Mirliton (1885), Le Divan Japonais (1886), frequented by the famous singer Yvette Guilbert, and La Cigale (1887). The artistic cabaret Chat Noir, known for the artists and writers who frequented it and the small literary journal they published, attracted well-off snobs and foreign aristocrats on the "chic day," Friday evening, the bourgeoisie and working class on other days.[54] It offered theatrical sketches, songs, and, between 1886 and 1896, nightly shadow-puppet shows. The latter could be quite complex, involving dozens of tableaux and musical accompaniment. First performed on 28 December 1887, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, for example, incorporated citations from Gounod's *Faust*, Delibes's *Sylvia* and *Le Roi s'amuse*, Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries," and Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers*.[55] This suggests that the audience was familiar enough with this music to understand its appropriateness in the narrative. While some attacked such venues for their politically satirical songs and "vulgar" entertainment, others

52. *Figaro*, 15 March 1882.

53. From 1881 to 1897, censors did not bother most poet-singers in cabarets. In 1888, a small majority in the Chambre des députés even voted to stop funding the censors. In vetoing this, Minister Lockroy explained that he would not enforce censors' recommendations except in extreme cases. *Ménestrel*, 7 October 1888, 327.

54. Sarah Bernhardt, Coquelin Cadet, François Coppée, and Jean Moréas were among those who came on Fridays. Some of the most distinguished writers of the time contributed to the *Chat Noir*'s publication, including Verlaine, Mallarmé, and Moréas.

55. Steven Whiting, "Music on Montmartre," in *The Spirit of Montmartre*, ed. Phillip Dennis Cate and Mary Shaw (New Brunswick, N.J.: Zimmerli Art Museum, 1996), 184–85.

praised them for liberating both composers and the public from narrow views about music. In this sense, they were useful to musical progress.

According to guides at the time, by 1890, there were around 200 *cafés-concerts* in Paris. A hierarchy dependent on their location was implicit, with the most luxurious ones situated in the best neighborhoods. The best-known were L'Alcazar d'hiver, L'Eldorado, and La Scala, all close together in the tenth arrondissement. Performances in cafés, cabarets, and music halls also spread to working-class neighborhoods, such as the Ba-Ta-Clan in the eleventh arrondissement and the Pépinière near the Gare Saint-Lazare, where they became more sensationalist. The success of a star such as Paulus, who mimed his songs, was such that in 1883, he was able to afford a house in Neuilly, complete with servants and a chauffeur.

Other French cities, not only in the regions but also the colonies, enjoyed similar institutions. In 1880, Marseille acquired its own Alcazar, where Yvette Guilbert debuted in 1885. Algiers had a café-concert called Eldorado-concert. In the 1880s, musical revues were also being produced at the Café-concert de la Rotonde in Saigon, the Hôtel des colonies in Haiphong, and the Café de Paris in Hanoi. Beginning in 1888, Hanoi started its own Eldorado-Parisien (alias the Café du Commerce), replete with fourteen loges and 150 orchestra seats. It featured two performers reputedly from the Alcazar in Paris and other traveling troupes. Although the former borrowed their repertoire from Paulus, adding the occasional operatic air (e.g., from *Lucia di Lammermoor*), they also wrote their own comic scenes and songs, such as the famous "La Tonkinoise." They also did benefit performances for those wounded in military conflict. As a local critic put it in 1885, with so many people dying of cholera and in other epidemics, laughing could be useful for one's health.[56]

Most performances started out with some "curiosity"—a magic act, an acrobat, and occasionally regional songs and dances. An orchestra of typically thirty musicians then performed popular classics and favorite selections from the Opéra before turning to the newest waltzes, polkas, and mazurkas. Chansons, often new ones, dominated the second part of their programs and the occasional operetta or vaudeville the third part. This succession of genres led to the designation *spectacle de curiosité*.[57]

Playing on the public's taste for eclecticism and different varieties of pleasure, theaters too functioned as variable-use spaces, perhaps to maximize their clienteles and interest them in having new experiences. Possibly following the example of the

56. From *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, cited in Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin*, 132, 148.
57. Condemi, *Cafés-concerts*, 68, 84–85.

festival of French music at the Hippodrome in 1878–79, in 1881, the Folies-Bergère hired an orchestra with prizewinners from the Conservatoire and put on a series of classical music concerts. Gounod, Saint-Saëns, and Delibes chose the programs, which featured German classics as well French contemporary music. Surprisingly, the audience at these was quiet, understanding what this music expected of them.

From 1883 to 1893, the Eden-Théâtre, decorated in an ornately "Hindu" style, also presented concerts, opera, and operetta, along with ballets and variety shows (figs. 63–64). Lamoureux's orchestra performed there on Sunday afternoons, and in March 1886, it put on Gounod's most recent religious works, *La Rédemption* and *Mors et Vita*. On other days, the public was more likely to hear exotic spectacles such as the pantomime-ballet *Un Théâtre au Japon*, with music by Mariotti, in December 1885, and the ballet-fantasy *Brahma* by Costantino dall'Argine, in summer 1886. In fall 1886, as audiences entered the "Eden chapel" and prepared themselves for the "Wagnerian service" officiated over by Lamoureux[58]—note that Wagner was on every program until January—they had to walk through an exhibition by "Les Incohérents," a group of caricaturists, writers, musicians, and actors formed in 1882, most of them regulars at Le Chat Noir (fig. 65). Championing "French gaiety threatened by the pessimism invading the end of the century,"[59] this show made fun of contemporary politics, society, symbolism, and art of all kinds. They ridiculed General Boulanger for another proposed reform, asking that all cavalry remove their hair, and took aim at the war in Tonkin with an image of a drunken Frenchman, his bottle of rum raised as he patted a large pig. Other images made biting reference to the seventy Ceylonese just exhibited at the Jardin d'Acclimatation, and to the Hottentot Venus, here portrayed with her curvaceous behind covered in black chocolate. Exhibitors also parodied paintings that aspired to the sublime, such as a recently prize-winning *Passage de Vénus devant le soleil* transformed into a worldly Parisian "eclipsing the sun" of a gold coin.[60] The point was to make people laugh. This exhibition was up for two months daily, beginning on 17 October, and open until midnight, with other ones there in 1889 and 1891. The satires, parodies, and critique of all forms of solemnity, aesthetic and otherwise, must have provided concertgoers with quite a contrast from their experience of Lamoureux's self-consciously serious programs. Audiences clearly enjoyed these juxtapositions, for the theater's earnings in 1886–87 made it

58. *Ménestrel*, 7 March 1886, 111.

59. Anatole France, cited in *Arts incohérents, académie du dérisoire*, ed. Luce Abélès and Catherine Charpin (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), 8. See also the discussion in chapter 9.

60. *Arts incohérents*, ed. Abélès and Charpin, 8, 58, 61, 68.

FIG. 63 The Eden-Théâtre, Paris, ca. 1886.

FIG. 64 Eden-Théâtre interior.

The Eden Théâtre, with its Hindu-inspired décor, presented an alternative to traditional Paris theaters during the 1880s. Located near the Opéra, it catered to the same elite audiences, but it was later less successful financially and survived only until the early 1890s.

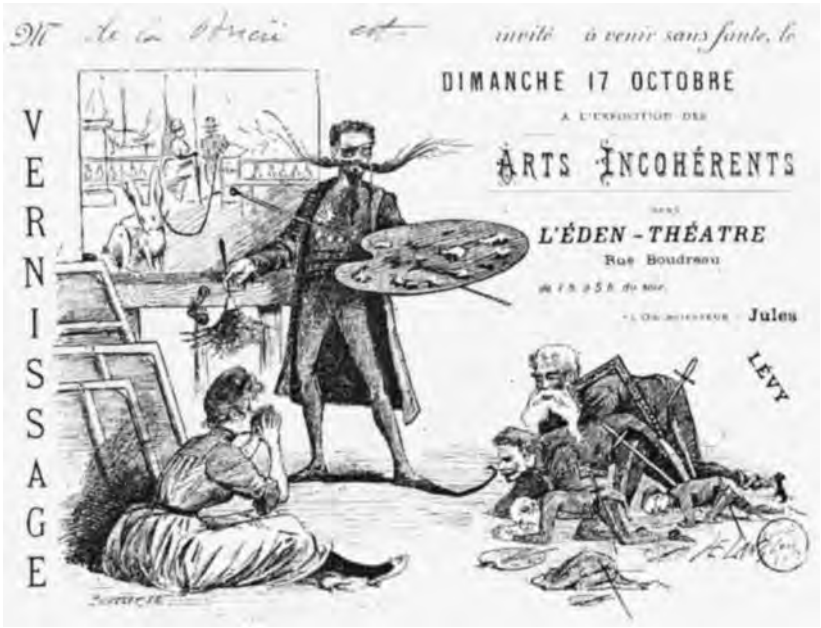


FIG. 65 Exhibition of the Incoherent Arts at the Eden-Théâtre, 17 October 1886. Invitation drawn by Henri and Edme Langlois. Musée national des arts et traditions populaires, Paris.

the fourth largest-grossing theater in Paris, just after the Opéra-Comique, and it remained among Paris's most successful theaters for the next few years.

In the late 1880s, *cafés-concerts* and music halls began to call their performances *pièces à grand spectacle* (Chat Noir), *concerts-spectacles* (e.g., Thérésa at the Alcazar d'hiver), *spectacles-concerts*, *spectacles variés* (e.g., the Folies-Bergère), or *concerts-spectacles variés* (e.g., Paulus at La Scala). The idea was to attract by an art of "infinite contrasts," reflecting recent hits with English-style music hall at the Alcazar beginning in March 1886 and later with the new genre of *revues à grand spectacle*[61] at the Folies-Bergère, taken over that November by the brothers Isola, both magicians and also owners of La Scala. Their revue, *Place au jeûne*, which mixed ballet with "girls" from central Europe, music, comic interludes, and commentary on current politics, succeeded beyond all expectations. For many years thereafter, a typical performance at the Folies-Bergère involved a large, motley array of acts, including performers from foreign countries (figs. 66 and 67). Usually, this

61. The term *revue à grand spectacle* was not used until 1893, when Joseph Oller opened the Olympia and some *cafés-concerts* began to convert into music halls.

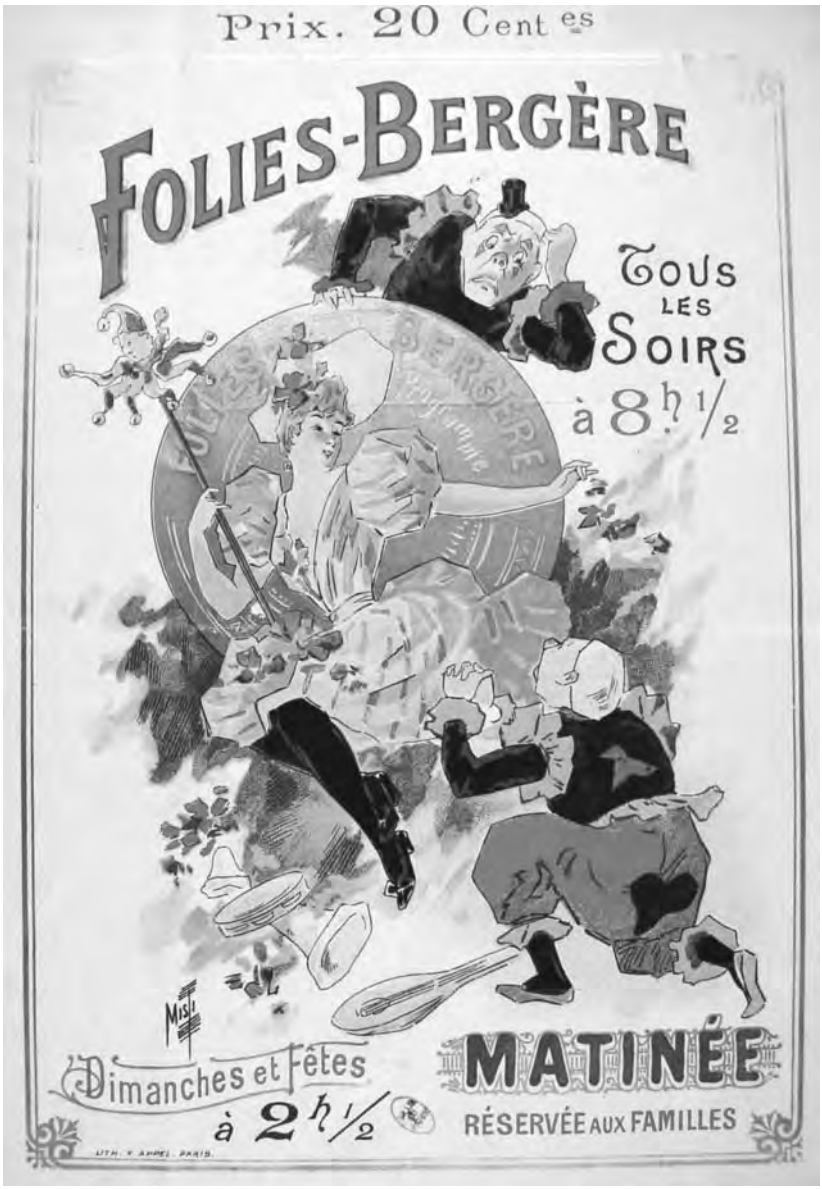


FIG. 66 Folies-Bergère program cover, 1894.

FIG. 67 Folies-Bergère program, 3 December 1888.

The Folies-Bergère often featured ballets with music by its conductor L. C. Desormes and acts of various sorts, including here Japanese acrobats.

meant one or two large works (ballets or pantomime-ballets) and from three to eight short acts before and after these, such as dancing soloists, jugglers, acrobats, clowns, comics, trained dogs, trapeze artists, ventriloquists, wrestlers, bicyclists, foreign and exotic performers, and the occasional dancing elephants, every night at 8:30, with Sunday matinées for families! As one reviewer explained it, the secret to this theater's success was its "preoccupation with the new," changing programs before they "cease to please." In 1891, Jules Bois put it another way, "One has to be protean, take on all forms and persist in none," otherwise audiences felt "fatigue, ennui, and aversion."[62]

Part of the Folies-Bergère's mystique may have come from the vast circular ambulatory area directly behind the boxes and the main seating area with its bar painted by Manet in 1881–82. There, as people continued to watch the performances, they could circulate, smoke, and, after a certain period, pick up prostitutes. The garden, too, with its boxes and elegant galleries conducive to moments of isolation, had its appeal in winter as well as summer. Although some of the seats

62. Rearick cites Bois in *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque*, 78.

cost as much as those at orchestral concerts (5 francs), most were unreserved and cost only 2 francs. Those of modest means could attend and the bourgeoisie could afford to come often, the result being that almost 500,000 people enjoyed the Folies-Bergère in 1879. Much of the hall was well-lit, facilitating people-gazing among the wide mix of classes.[63] In 1888, a music critic credited its success with a new form of attendance it encouraged:

> What pleases is that nowhere else is one so flattered in one's instincts as a free man. It is the sum of all one's freedoms: freedom of looks [*d'allures*], smoking, drinking, and conversation without fear of bothering one's neighbors or the spectacle; freedom to sit down when you are tired of walking around and to walk around when you are tired of sitting; freedom to leave boring shows and to pay attention only to interesting ones; freedom to flee *à l'anglaise* [without being noticed] at the first symptom of yawning. . . . In short, all this constitutes the most democratic and at the same time the most elegant of pleasures.[64]

Whereas in 1887, when it first appeared among the top twenty-four theaters, the Folies-Bergère had receipts of only 216,000 francs, by 1889, it was earning over a million. For most of the 1890s, it was among the top eight Paris theaters; after 1896, it climbed to the top four, after the Opéra-Comique.[65] Loïe Fuller thrilled audiences there, and gypsy orchestras played in the interior garden during intermissions. Even the well-known and respected Wagnerian music critic Catulle Mendès wrote a four-act pantomime for the Folies-Bergère, *Chand d'habits* (1896). Since its inauguration in 1893, the Eldorado-concert in Algiers, holding 800, had aimed similarly to attract families and, whenever possible, brought in visiting acts from the Folies-Bergère in Paris.

Other attractions with music also drew crowds. While most French towns, including Algiers, had circuses, Paris had three and a hippodrome (racecourse), all of which had house orchestras. While the Cirque d'hiver in eastern Paris was for ordinary people with less refined tastes—the target public of the Concerts

63. In *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque*, chap. 4, Rearick discusses the social constituency of this theater as well as other popular venues of the time. He also clarifies that "though music halls drew much larger and more socially diverse audiences than the cabarets or classic theaters, they were not yet forums of mass culture. . . . Within the urban population itself, social barriers and privilege remained strong and poverty widespread" (84, 94–95).

64. Un Monsieur de l'orchestre [Arnold Mortier], "Aux Folies-Bergère," *Figaro*, 19 October 1888. Note this is apparently the same person who, for years, wrote society-oriented reviews of opera premieres for the same newspaper.

65. The Folies-Bergère had also earned over a million francs in ticket sales in 1878, the year of the Universal Exhibition, but averaged 580,000 francs per year from 1875 to 1877.

Pasdeloup, which performed there on Sunday afternoons (1861–84)—the Nouveau Cirque (founded in 1886 on the centrally located rue Saint-Honoré) attracted the chic, especially on Friday nights. It was a favorite rendezvous for elegantly dressed young men, as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec suggests in his painting *At the Nouveau Cirque: The Dancer and Five Stuffed Shirts* (1892). This circus was the most comfortable and presented less predictable fare than other circuses, such as starting out with orchestral selections by composers such as Delibes. Like certain theaters, it also sought to make money through multiple uses, charging people admission to swim in its enclosed pool when the circus was not playing. By the early 1890s, its earnings put it among the top eight Paris theaters. The Hippodrome (which opened in 1877 on the Place de l'Alma, in the elegant eighth arrondissement) could house the largest crowds, 8,000 seated and 15,000 total, which made the mixing of the classes inevitable. In the 1880s, its earnings from equestrian spectacles, clowns, and African fantasies were modest, but by 1891, after successful performances of works by composers of art music, Lalo's *Néron* and Widor's *Jeanne d'Arc*, it rose to be the fourth most popular "theater" in Paris. No one seemed bothered by the size of such crowds, for when seated at performances, they became a public.

Of these popular venues, the zoo (Jardin zoologique d'Acclimatation) was the most serious about offering a consistent mixture of light and serious music to its public. Each year on Thursday and Sunday afternoons from April through September in the 1870s and 1880s, it presented fifty concerts in its outdoor kiosk. Besides the price of entry to the zoo (1 franc), concert admission cost only from 20 centimes to 1.5 francs. Louis Mayeur, director (1872–93) and a clarinetist and saxophonist at the Opéra, brought the prestige of the Opéra and the assurance of quality performances. Because the zoo's administration demanded that performers be selected from members of the Société des concerts, the Opéra, and Opéra-Comique, anyone who could afford the price of admission to the zoo could thus hear some of the city's finest musicians. The Sunday concerts presented eight to ten works, starting with a march, ending with a light work such as a dance, and including opera fantasies and overtures. In the early 1880s, the most frequently performed were by Mayeur, Auber, Sellenick, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Donizetti, Verdi, and Strauss, with some Massenet and others. They also produced spectacular free color programs suggesting human interactions with the elephants, camels, and exotic birds there, or stories in which they are featured. For the concert of 30 September 1886 featuring two explicitly Orientalist compositions (a fantasy from Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore* and Bazille's "Marche turque"), the illustrator depicted a range of Orientalist scenarios one might imagine while hearing the music (fig. 68). In the context of the foreign animals, plants, and exotic people

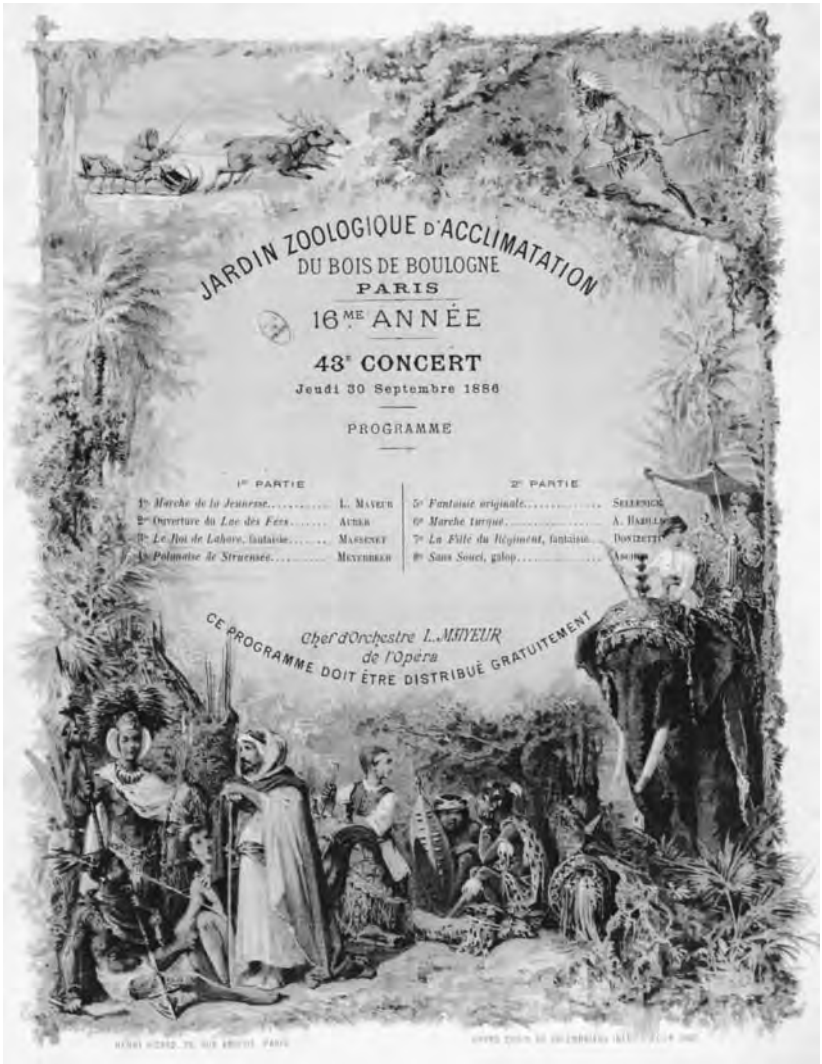


FIG. 68 Program for the forty-third concert of the Jardin zoologique d'Acclimatation in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris, 30 September 1886.

This full-color program for a concert at the Jardin zoologique includes depictions of exotic flora, fauna, and inhabitants, reflecting the Orientalistic subject material of the day's concert. Many of these same animals and peoples could have been seen at the zoo, suggesting a close connection between the music and its environment.

audiences might be encountering at the zoo, these concerts functioned, then, not only as light entertainment, but also as another form of discovery, although premieres were rare.

Urban culture, whether banal or stimulating, thus had significant utility for republicans. Entertainment at concerts, cafés, theaters, and parks brought people together in nonpolitical ways. This elicited a new form of sociability. When large and socially diverse crowds gathered as spectators, "the pleasures of looking" involved performing a new collective identity. As Vanessa Schwartz eloquently puts it, looking (and listening) together, "in, and thus as, the audience, they became 'Parisians.'"[66] One could say the same for audiences in other French cities and towns, including, as noted earlier, in the colonies: performances reinforced their identity as French.

For the most part, this culture also helped cities prosper, and the recession that had begun in 1882 began to subside in 1886. It had other consequences as well. Competition spurred higher standards, variety, and distinction, as well as broader access to experiences of which some people had previously been deprived. Competition also rewarded experimentation and innovation, encouraging a taste for the new and a tolerance for diverse perspectives—valuable in a country that idealized progress. These made it easier for the public to acquire a taste for art music by living French composers. The immense appeal to French of all classes, not just of popular songs and music accompanying boulevard entertainment, but also of art music made organizers want to include it in virtually every venue from the theater and racetrack to the Folies-Bergère. Art music was used to introduce circus acts, to animate cabaret shadow plays, and to attract people to department stores and the zoo. For republicans who wanted this music's influence to reach a broad swathe of the population, this was heartening.

Yet capitalism and market forces led to excesses and raised troubling concerns. In 1886, Edmond Drumont published *La France juive*. Playing on anxieties caused by the bankruptcy of the Union générale in 1882 and the risk-averse behavior of French banks since then, he denounced Jewish bankers and encouraged anti-Semitism among the workers and petit bourgeoisie, who suffered from international capitalism and its monopolistic practices.[67] In 1887, there was government corruption. When his son-in-law was accused of selling Légion d'honneur titles, President Grévy was forced to step down. In the theatrical world, intense com-

66. Rearick, *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque;* Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, 39, 44.

67. Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Braziller, 1986), 28.

petition for a public resulted in similar kinds of entertainment all over the city, each using the latest craze to vie for clientele. With more and more spectacles conceived to seduce public taste and feed the whims of fashion, the public was in a position to tyrannize over directors, authors, and composers. Moreover, the meaning of art music performed and experienced in such a variety of contexts and surrounded by such different genres was not evident. When music functioned as background or accompaniment to entertainment, some of it very banal, could its elegance and grace still elevate people? Did such contexts affect the way people heard and understood the music? Did they induce a hybridity of perception, demanding something different from the listener from one presentation to the next, or encourage partial rather than focused attention? Did these issues, together with the commodification of music and the musical experience that resulted from incorporating music in such places, influence composers' approach to how or what they wrote? This widespread embrace of art music, unprecedented in French history, demonstrates the importance of music in French culture. But it was not long before the broad accessibility and desirability of this music contributed to a reaction against the idea that music should be useful in the ways envisaged by the *républicains opportunistes*.