12 • The Dynamics of Identity and the Struggle for Distinction

Despite what musical juxtapositions of the old and the new might imply about common values in France, the notion of a common Self at the end of the nineteenth century remained painfully elusive. The republican project of composing citizens was an attempt to give people the desire and the mechanisms to "find the same self in myself and in others . . . to encounter myself as what I share with others." The "common will" as the "expression of my common self"—Rousseau's definition of political society[1]—implies the unity and coherence of a common identity. Such a concept was crucial in a society whose people thought of the Self in terms of its distinction from the Other. I have shown how music contributed to a common Self through stimulating shared physical and imaginary experiences, how changes in musical tastes and practices expressed the dynamic nature of national identity under democracy. However, French identity was more complex than so far addressed, and not entirely resolvable through idealistic ambitions, education, new histories, or music and performances reconciling the Ancien Régime and the Revolution, the old and the new. Moreover, as monarchist political power receded and the empire expanded, the national self-imagining took on new forms.

To rise to the challenge of world leadership and aspire to new levels of national glory, the French had to come to agreement on who they were as a nation. Not only did fierce competition with their imperialist neighbors call for it, so did rancorous divisions within French society. The Dreyfus Affair was tearing apart families and long-term friendships divided over anti-Semitism, traditional France versus progressive secularism, and, for some, the needs of the state versus the rights of the individual. Was France a collective community whose needs and desires were addressed through various forms of public utility that spoke to the common interest? Or was it fast becoming a nation of individuals pursuing their

1. See chapter 1, n. 56, above, and Tracy Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Politics of the Ordinary* (1994), 2nd ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

own interests?[2] On what basis could a people so diverse think of themselves as sharing any identity? Radicals like Léon Bourgeois called out for solidarity. But on what basis could this be experienced? What bridged the public and the private in ways that brought people together? Those still focused on retrieving the lost provinces put their faith in militarism, as they would need consensus to return to war. The theme of *revanche*, promoted in everything from children's books and salon songs to public monuments and opera, continually reminded citizens of an unresolved wound to every French man and woman's pride.[3] Catholicism still linked a majority of the population, but its utility in the secular world remained widely questioned. After anarchist attacks, ordinary people who would normally have experienced their commonality in everyday life became fearful, especially of crowds. Intellectuals did little to help. Fanning this angst, many decried the general decadence of French society.

Music played a significant role both in engaging people in the debates and in giving them a medium in which to enact their connections dynamically. As the French increasingly looked to the origin of their nation for the foundation of what they shared as a people—racial and cultural origins that long predated the eighteenth century—music helped them come to grips with a history characterized, not by homogeneous coherence, but by invasions, conflict, and accommodation. Were they only the product of assimilation, their music the *juste milieu* between Italian and German music, or was there something distinct that could be heard in their music, traces of predecessors who resisted assimilation? If gender differences and female allegories continued to help clarify what the people valued as a nation, what happened in music when extraordinary resistance to the French in West Africa by the Dahomean amazons and the emergence of the "new woman" threw into question traditional gender hierarchies? And what impact did elites' need

2. The reactionary Academician Ferdinand Brunetière complained in *Education et Instruction* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1895) that instruction was increasingly becoming the "contradiction" of education, devolving into something for "the sole utility of the person studying." Competitions were partly to blame in that they encouraged individualism, the "victory of individual trajectories over social trajectories." To solve this problem, he recommended teaching God again in schools as among those ideas that "bring us together and unite us" (20, 25, 29, 34, 51, 59). Calling on reform of pedagogical methods, Léon Bourgeois reiterated that the goal of instruction should not be to fill the mind with knowledge, but to make it capable of acquiring knowledge and judgment, and that the "effect of education should be to give men the habit of thinking about humanity" (*L'Education de la démocratie française: Discours prononcés de 1890 à 1896* [Paris: Edouard Cornély, 1897], 118, 163, 171).

3. Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France, 1889–1900* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 223.

for distinction from the masses have on their musical tastes, their relationship to music, and the meanings they heard in it? Such questions lead us to examine how, through their music, the French, particularly at the end of the century, engaged with identity from the perspective of race, gender, and class. Given the complexity of these issues and how they changed over time, my analyses here are intended to be suggestive more than definitive—windows onto huge fields—serving to introduce my next books, wherein I take up these subjects in more depth.

RACE AND FRENCH HISTORY

In chapter 7 and elsewhere, I have argued that music, musical instruments, performing situations, and images of these—often associated with race, ethnicity, class, gender, and culture—helped people become aware of their positions in the debates about identity and nation. In the 1890s, as the French were attempting to expand their empire in West Africa and Madagascar, musical images in magazines such as *L'Illustration* reinforced a sense of superiority in their readers. Western instruments undergoing innovations—such as Pleyel's double piano (1898) and the gramophone (1898)—were juxtaposed with African drums and woodwinds that seemed primitive by comparison and unchanging over generations.[4] All French could be proud of such advances and the civilization that made them possible. So, too, of French music. In Conservatoire speeches in the 1890s, Georges Berger saw French music as deriving its verve from the "genius" of the French "race," just as French wines derived their vigor from the French earth. Georges Leygues later told students to "do battle for the glory of the race."[5]

An imperialist construct and product of colonial consciousness, race was understood to signify culture, people, or nation as well as connection to one's ancestors. While abroad it could be used to denigrate peoples perceived as inferior, at home, it meant something to protect. When used in conjunction with language, customs, morals, and artistic practices, race suggested the existence of national characteris-

4. Jann Pasler, "The Utility of Musical Instruments in the Racial and Colonial Agendas of Late Nineteenth-Century France," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 129, 1 (Spring 2004): 24–76, esp. 72–73.

5. Georges Berger, *Discours prononcé par M. le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle du samedi 6 août 1897* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1897); Georges Leygues, *Discours prononcé par M. le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle du samedi 4 août 1894* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1894), and *Discours prononcé par M. le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle du samedi 1 août 1901* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1901).

tics. It engendered self-esteem. As such, race was useful not just in distinguishing the Self from the Other, but also in understanding if there was anything unified or coherent in the nation.

Debates were complicated and contradictory then as today. Both Renan and Taine saw an aptitude for philosophy and science, a love of the beautiful and the sublime, and a capacity for political and military organization as distinctive of the French race. In the 1890s, Gustave Le Bon popularized the idea that the soul of a race is reflected in its beliefs and traditions—"the inheritance of all its ancestors"—and that the arts manifest the soul of a civilization, which, as a polygenist, he construed as fixed.[6] The question of the soul functioned as a synonym of race, particularly when comparing the French soul with the German one. However, not everyone agreed. Saint-Saëns considered the soul an invention, and thinking, something that could be influenced by nature and such things as alcohol.[7] For the sociologist Gabriel Tarde, race connoted the collective consciousness of a people, dependent on their past memories, but the "daughter, not the mother, of its acquired characteristics." Disciples of Frédéric Le Play likewise saw race not as "a cause, but a consequence": "the roads that peoples have followed" created their diversity.[8] Underlying all this were fierce disagreements between monogenists and polygenists, republicans and monarchists, over the merits of assimilation at home and abroad. Who were the French, and could they, through their laws and customs, "elevate" their colonized peoples? Or did inherent racial differences prevent the impact of democracy? History taught that resistance is always a part of the story, that if assimilation promotes growth, resistance is necessary to protect identity.[9]

If most French agreed that race differentiated them as a nation, they struggled with what constituted their "distinguishing features." Artistic practices had enormous utility in defining these, in part because the instincts of a race were thought to affect the nation's artistic progress.[10] Yet what constituted national style depended on how these attributes were interpreted and the purposes to which they were

6. Ernest Renan, in *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1863), 502–3, Hippolyte Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine* (Paris: Hachette, 1876–96), and Gustave Le Bon, *The Psychology of Peoples* (1894; New York: Stechert, 1924), 37, 126.

7. Camille Saint-Saëns, *Problèmes et mystères* (Paris: Flammarion, 1894).

8. Gabriel Tarde, *Les Lois d'imitation* (Paris: Alcan, 1890), 211. See also Tarde and Edmund Demolins, cited in Pierre-André Taguieff, *The Force of Prejudice: Racism and Its Doubles*, trans. Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 75.

9. For an extended study of these issues, see Jann Pasler, "Theorizing Race in 19th-Century France: Music as Emblem of Identity," *Musical Quarterly* 89, 4 (Winter 2006): 459–504.

10. Antoine Marmontel, *Eléments d'esthétique musicale et considérations sur le beau dans les arts* (Paris: Heugel, 1884), 418.

put. Class played an important role. In the 1880s, as we have seen, members of the social and political elite in the Union centrale des arts décoratifs, in looking to the aristocratic French past, considered elegance and grace as quintessentially French. Similarly, folklorists, studying old poetry and indigenous popular songs for clues about the common people and the taste and customs of earlier times, also encountered lightness, charm, and grace, albeit in naïve forms. They saw in these songs models of "simplicity and clarity" as well as "moral values" of continuing relevance: "gaiety for those living in constant misery, idealism for those overcome by reality."[11] In the 1890s, the fashion for Wagner and Ibsen led to the use of vague, but starkly opposed notions: south versus north, sun versus fog, clarity versus mystery. To combat the powerful influence of Wagner's music—what Debussy called "an unacceptable formula for our race," musicians were encouraged to cultivate "clarity, elegance, and sincerity of expression" in French music as qualities "inherent in the race."[12] Calling on the language of colonialism, Bruneau both assumes a consensus and allows for foreign influence: "Our music must change just like the rest, provided it remains French and applies to the particular genius of our race the international conquests from which it has both the right and the duty to benefit."[13]

Preoccupation with race had an important impact on French perception of their past and made the very notion of identity complex and troubling. In his 1892 essay on the origins of the "Marseillaise," Julien Tiersot describes the war between "revolutionary France" and "monarchical Europe" as a "war of races."[14] Here the music scholar's focus on the conflict between other Europeans and the

11. Gabriel Vicaire, "Nos idées sur le traditionnisme," *Revue des traditions populaires*, 25 July 1886, 189; "Les Chansons populaires au Cercle Saint-Simon," ibid., 26 February 1887, 138.

12. Albert Lavignac, *La Musique et les musiciens français* (Paris: Delagrave, 1895), 432; Debussy, *Revue musicale S.I.M.*, 1 November 1913, reproduced in Claude Debussy, *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, ed. François Lesure (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 241. Likewise, in order for French composers not to be "taken over" by German influences, the music critic Jean d'Udine advised, "We must reconcile the qualities of the Latin races and those of the North" ("Les Grands Concerts," *Courrier musical*, 1 January 1902). See also Annegret Fauser, "Gendering the Nations: The Ideologies of French Discourse on Music (1870–1914)," in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture, 1800–1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2001), 80.

13. Alfred Bruneau encouraged French composers to do lyric drama *à la française*, that is, with clarity and logic ("La Jeune Musique française," *Figaro musical*, January 1892, 5). As Steven Huebner points out in "Naturalism and Supernaturalism in Alfred Bruneau's *Le Rêve*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 11, 1 (March 1999), Bruneau called his own collaboration with Zola a *drame lyrique*, but depicting "lived experience and celebrating its 'real life' and 'humanity'" (81). See also Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

14. Julien Tiersot, "Rouget de Lisle, Chapter II, La Marseillaise (suite)," *Ménestrel*, 17 April 1892, 121.

French, joined in their singing of the "Marseillaise," deflects attention away from France's internal war between the monarchy and the people. But if race could help the French think of themselves as a people, it also meant they had to come to grips with being a "mixed" race. Celts, Gauls, Romans, and Franks, southerners and northerners, the people and the nobility, colonized peoples and émigrés, each formed part of the fabric of identity developed over the centuries. Some French, particularly republicans, saw these cultural collisions as nourishing, inducing progress; others, especially those nostalgic for the Ancien Régime, insisted on certain continuities as responsible for "the genius of the race." In this context, music, in its ability to embody and recall the past, was understood as particularly useful. It could shed light on various racial myths embedded in French identity.

Henry Lavoix *fils* opens his 1891 history of French music with the assertion, "Each people has the music associated with its genius." Borrowing from foreign schools can "enrich" its artistic heritage or have negative effects, but music "always keeps the mark of [a people's] taste, tendencies, and, in a word, race." Already in his first chapter, however, the notion of race is hardly simple. Pointing to the "successive upheavals endured by populations living between the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the ocean" and undoubtedly aware of histories by Amédée Thierry, Henri Martin, and Jules Michelet on the contributions of various groups to French identity,[15] he notes, "Each people who lived in Gaul . . . left traces of their passage in the music as in the language." Because the Gauls were "crushed by their conquerors and then became Romans," leaving little behind of their art and music, Lavoix looks first to the Celts. Although they practiced the oral tradition, Druid bards left some "primitive music," including the "oldest melody of Gallic or Celtic origin." As for other groups, Lavoix points to musical instruments. From the Greeks and Romans came lyres, cithares, flutes, trumpets, drums, and organs; from the Celts and Gauls, harps and the crowth, a predecessor of the violin; from the Gallo-Romans, the pipe organ.[16] They document layers of assimilation, supporting the notion that France, the "fruit of conquest," emerged from the successful integration of outsiders and their various influences.[17]

15. Amédée Thierry, *Histoire des Gaulois* (Paris: Didier, 1859); Henri Martin, *Histoire de France* (1844; Paris: Furne, Jouvet, 1874); Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France* (Paris: Lacroix, 1876).

16. Henri Lavoix *fils*, *La Musique française* (Paris: Picard, 1891), 6, 15–16, 30–33.

17. Eugen Weber, "Gauls versus Franks: Conflict and Nationalism," in *Nationhood and Nationalism in France*, ed. Robert Tombs (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 15. An excellent summary of the debates over when and with which people the history of France began can be found in Krzysztof Pomian, "Francs et Gaulois," in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, III: *Les France*, vol. 1: *Conflits et partages*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 41–105.

If France was the product of assimilation, of ancient Greek and Roman traditions through the Gauls, then of German traditions through the Franks, some saw this as part of their strength as a people. Paul Broca, a polygenist and the founder of French anthropology, considered France an example of "eugenesic hybridity," the result of mixing that did not lead to degeneration or lack of vigor and virility, but instead was "indefinitely prolific."[18] Republicans looked to the ancient republics of Greece and Rome as predecessors of their republic, Greco-Roman ideas as the source of all enlightened thought. Fustel de Coulanges, historian at the Sorbonne, began his six volumes on the history of French political institutions with the Roman conquest. He, like Martin, saw the French as sons of the Gauls by their birth and character, of the Romans by their education. In addition to the notion of the public interest, Romans had brought national unity and centralized government, order and discipline, to a diverse people of various origins and languages who lived in constant instability.[19] Important from the perspective of the model this suggested for French colonialism, Coulanges argued that it was not that the Romans demanded submission and obedience, but that the Gauls were smart enough to recognize that civilization was "better than barbarism." If they became Romans "not by blood, but by institutions, customs, language, arts, beliefs, and all ways of thinking," it was because these allowed for more freedom and more progress. In any case, since the Gauls "belonged to the same great race as the Greeks and Romans . . . Roman civilization was not foreign, it was that of their race."[20] Such ideas helped shape the thinking of republicans in the early Third Republic and returned, in an 1890 edition, to remind the French of what they owed to these predecessors. French archaeological expeditions at the time, particularly at Delphi, the discovery of an ancient Greek "Hymn to Apollo" in 1893, and French support for reviving the first modern Olympics in 1896 brought renewed public attention to the connections between France and ancient Greece.

While Puvis de Chavannes painted images recalling the classical beauty of the Greeks, Saint-Saëns's music in the 1890s echoed the concern that embracing classical traditions could help counteract decadence.[21] The fiercely independent Saint-Saëns believed that artists should look for nourishment, not only in their

18. Paul Broca, *Recherches sur l'hybridité animale en général et sur l'hybridité humaine en particulier* (Paris: Claye, 1860), 609–17.

19. Martin, *Histoire de France*, 203; Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France*, vol. 1 (Paris: Hachette, 1875), 3.

20. Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions*, 1: 137–38.

21. Saint-Saëns's interest in ancient Greece and Rome might have been encouraged by his regular *séjours* in North Africa, which some settlers saw as originally part of a Latin Mediterranean diaspora. See chapter 7, n. 5, above.

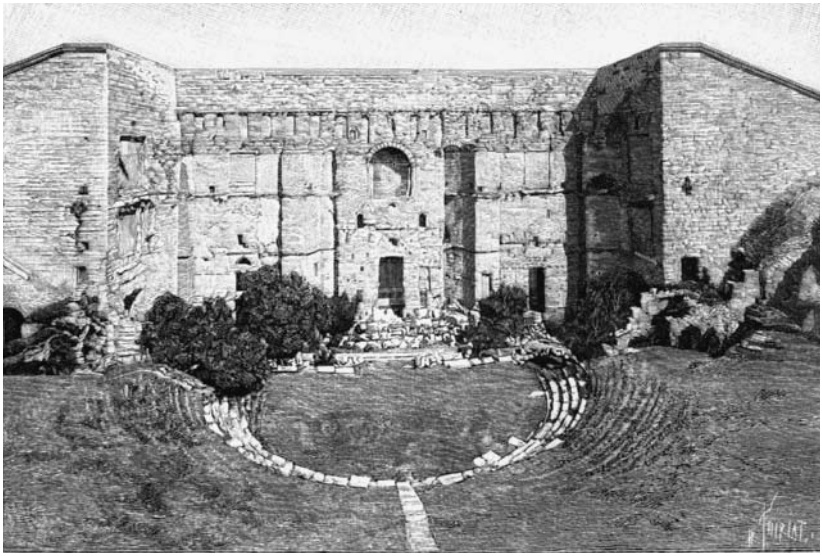


FIG. 97 The Théâtre antique in Orange, *L'Illustration*, 11 August 1894.

The Théâtre antique d'Orange in southern France, the best-preserved ancient Roman theater in Europe, was restored in the nineteenth century. Its over 100-meter façade contributes to the theater's excellent acoustics, and it can hold as many as 10,000 spectators. In 1894, Saint-Saëns contributed a "Hymne à Pallas Athénée" to the festival there, and in 1901, he conceived his opera *Les Barbares* for it. Today the theater hosts an opera season each July called Les Chorégies.

dreams, but also in "the living record of the past."[22] He composed work after work based on ancient Greek tragedies or Greek myths—*Phryné*, a comedy from fourth-century B.C.E. Athens, performed at the Opéra-Comique in 1893, incidental music for Sophocles' *Antigone* at the Comédie-Française in 1893 and later at the ancient Roman theater in Orange, and "Hymne à Pallas Athénée" written for the festival at Orange in 1894 (fig. 97). Through simplicity of means and the beauty of forms, he suggested the importance of Greek culture and its ongoing relevance to contemporary French society. Chant-like declamation and choral unison singing embodied his understanding of Greek *mousikē*, words whose rhythms implied dance steps as well as musical declamation. On the front page of *Figaro*, the composer explained how the producers of *Antigone* had rejected Mendelssohn's incidental music as being "too modern." He saw the play as an occasion to write

22. Emile Baumann, *Camille Saint-Saëns et "Déjanire"* (brochure extracted from the *Nouvelle Revue;* Paris: Durand, 1900), 7.

music that did not depend on the "seductive resources" to which listeners were accustomed. If the choruses "slowed down or dampened the action," this was to be expected.[23]

After seeing how *Le Rouet d'Omphale*, frequently performed, was praised in the 1890s for its "clarity and simplicity that constitute the Greek genius,"[24] in 1898, Saint-Saëns composed a third work about Hercules, *Déjanire* (1898), music for a tragedy by Louis Gallet based on Sophocles and Seneca. Emile Baumann, in an extensive review, compared its melodies to "the anonymous songs coming from the beginning of the race," the music "pure and wise," although he does not accept the idea that Greek music could interject "new blood," being too tied to "the soul of the old Orient." Saint-Saëns uses the Aeolian mode in the first act and borrows popular tunes from contemporary Greece for Hercules' wedding; however, with his "incorruptible blood" complementing simplicity of means, other themes are "so nobly balanced that they become the image of order and strength" (ex. 27a and b). As Bauman sees it, Saint-Saëns is thoroughly "Gallo-Roman." The composer aimed, not to "revive antique art" or express nostalgia for ancient times, but to create an "ideal, symbolic, and spontaneous adaptation."[25] This is a kind of "thirdness," beyond past and present, suggestive of Homi Bhabha's attitude to the past. Gustave Larroumet, critic and member of the Académie des beaux-arts who had attended the first Olympics and toured Greece, commented likewise. While he acknowledged how *Déjanire* surpassed ancient art, he found the work infused with "Greco-Roman spirit" and praised it as "without precedent." In uniting "Greek sobriety with Latin splendor," the work resembled the region where it was premiered, "Narbonnaise Gaule, where the civilizations of Athens and Rome were united."[26]

In the 1890s, the Gauls also captured the imagination of French composers, particularly republicans. Historians associated the Gauls with the third estate, the people, and the Franks, who had brought monarchy to France, with the aristocracy.[27] As Martin and Thierry put it, "their spirit is always in us, their vices and

23. C. Saint-Saëns, "Les Chœurs d'Antigone," *Figaro*, 28 November 1893. In his *C. Saint-Saëns: Sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Durand, 1922), Jean Bonnerot notes that in *Antigone*, the composer also adapted a popular melody collected by Bourgault-Ducoudray in Greece, imitated a final chorus from a Pindar hymn, and borrowed a section from Euripides' *The Trojan Women* (150).

24. Review of a Concert Lamoureux performance, *Ménestrel*, 21 February 1892, 62. The Concerts Colonne also performed *Le Rouet d'Omphale* five times from 1890 to 1892.

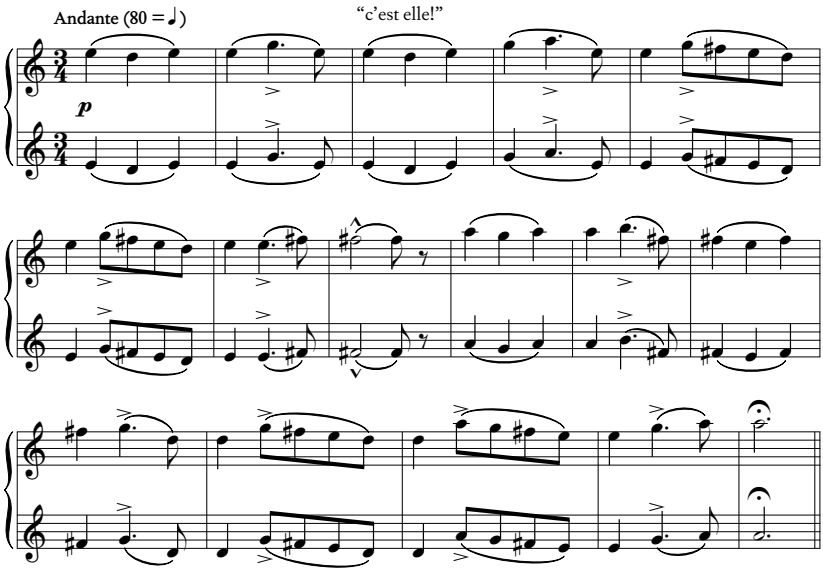
25. Baumann, *Camille Saint-Saëns et "Déjanire,"* 2–4, 7, 11, 18.

26. Gustave Larroumet, "Chronique théatrale," *Temps*, 4 September 1899.

27. On differences between the Gauls and the Franks, see Martin, *Histoire de France*, 133–35, 208–11.

EX. 27 Saint-Saëns, *Déjanire*.

a. Act 1: Violins in unison accompany the entrance of Iole in Aeolian mode.



virtues preserved in the heart of the French people."[28] Renowned for their taste for adventure, their bravery, and their impetuous, intelligent spirit, the ancient Gauls were celebrated as conquerors who had dominated Europe as far as Greece. Their warrior spirit allowed them to maintain their identity despite invasion and later occupation by the Romans and the Franks. This ability to resist complete domination, in spite of defeat, was crucial to those who wished to revive French pride after 1871 and kindle the desire to return to war. The Gallic myth served to unify the French people and justify their imperialism.

Saint-Saëns wrote incidental music for *Vercingétorix* (1893), about the Gallic leader who stood up to Caesar, as did the choral conductor Duteil d'Ozanne in 1892.[29] Bruneau began an opera about him, but left only a fragment. Republicans considered Vercingetorix, a Gallic warrior of the people, as the first hero in French history, not Clovis, the king who united the Frankish tribes and converted himself and the country to Catholicism. In 1879 Vercingetorix was added to school history books as a way to assert a French past before Clovis and to encourage resistance to

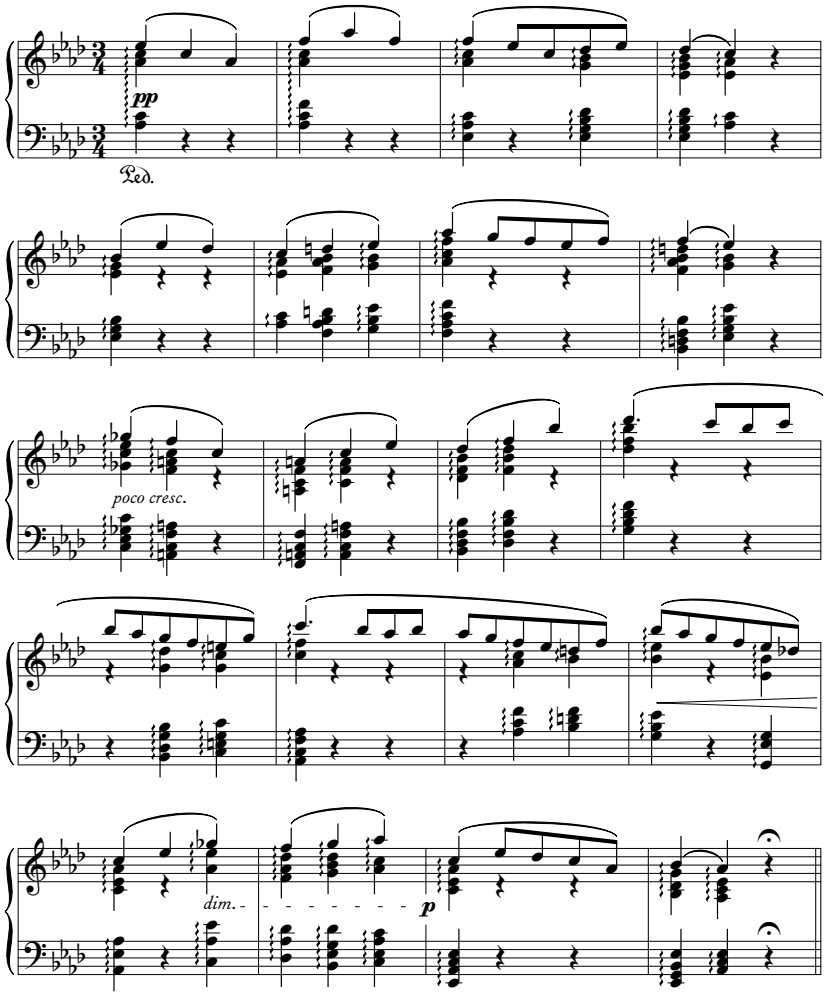
28. Ibid., 1; Amédée Thierry, *Histoire des Gaulois*, vol. 2 (Paris: Didier, 1859), 551–52.

29. *Vercingétorix*, a play by Edouard Schuré with music by Duteil d'Ozanne, conductor of the choral society Euterpe, was performed at the Théâtre d'Application (*Ménestrel*, 27 March 1892, 103).

EX. 27 *(continued)*

b. Act 4: Just before Hercules dies, this music for orchestra suggests his "heroic destiny."

Déjanire: "Ces larges fleurs de sang s'ouvrent sur sa poitrine, — l'heure vient!" etc.



Hercule: "Ô Jupiter, Dieu, père souverain…" etc.

the new Caesar, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm.[30] Earlier in 1882, Charles Lenepveu, a Conservatoire professor, had written *Velléda*, an opera about war between the Gauls and the Romans. Through the voice of the Gauls, it expresses French desire for revenge against the Prussians. Similar themes developed in Augusta Holmès's *Lutèce* (1878), also set during Gallo-Roman wars, recur in many of her songs in the 1890s, including "La Guerrière" (a woman warrior with blond hair) (fig. 98), "Ne nous oubliez pas" (as if sung by the dead), and "Marche gauloise." As with *Lutèce*, their message is clear: the "sons of the Gauls" must march again, taking up arms, this time against the Germans. Music should infuse virility and "hatred in their hearts." Interest in another Gallic hero, Amadis de Gaule, fellow chevalier and purportedly friend of Parceval, revolved more around chivalry and love. In 1892, perhaps inspired by Gobineau's a 20,000-verse poem about the famous Gallic knight,[31] the Académie des beaux-arts chose *Amadis* as the libretto for the Prix de Rome competition; circa 1895 Massenet wrote a "legendary opera" on Amadis.[32] These works, set in Brittany with its Druid monuments, also speak to fascination with the Celts and the French racial past; for Gobineau, this included an idealism associated with the last white hero.

Other musical works fed French fascination with Frankish rulers before Clovis, not to glorify heroes but to dwell critically on their barbarism, as if an implicit critique of early German culture. After the Nouveau Cirque presented a show in 1892 about *Le Roi Dagobert*, a nautical pantomime with clowns that reached two hundred performances that year, in 1895 came Hervé's *Chilpéric*, an *opérette-bouffe* on the Frankish king who murdered his first wife to marry Frédégonde,[33] and Saint-Saëns's and Dukas's completion of *Frédégonde* (1895), an opera begun by Guiraud before he died. If schoolchildren were taught that the Romans had civilized the "rude Gauls" and the Franks had rejuvenated the "decadent Gallo-Romans," Saint-Saëns/Dukas/Guiraud take a more critical perspective in their *Frédégonde* (originally called *Brunhilda*). Focusing on the ferocity of rival Frankish aristocrats, locked in power struggles, they concentrate on the theme of hatred. Civil

30. Christian Amalvi, "Vercingétorix dans l'enseignement primaire, 1830–1940," in *Nos ancêtres les Gaulois*, ed. Paul Viallaneix and Jean Ehrard (Clermont-Ferrand: Université de Clermont-Ferrand II, 1982), 352.

31. Comte Arthur de Gobineau, *Amadis: Poème* (Paris: Plon, Nourrit, 1887). Lully (in 1683) and Handel (in 1715) also wrote music based on *Amadis de Gaule*.

32. From 1885 to 1895, Chausson worked on *Le Roi Arthus*, an opera that claims the Arthurian legends as distinctly French, even as it borrows much from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

33. *Chilpéric*, at the Théâtre des Variétés, featured a Wagnerian overture, operatic parody, and a Merovingen ballet (*Petit Journal*, 6 February 1895).

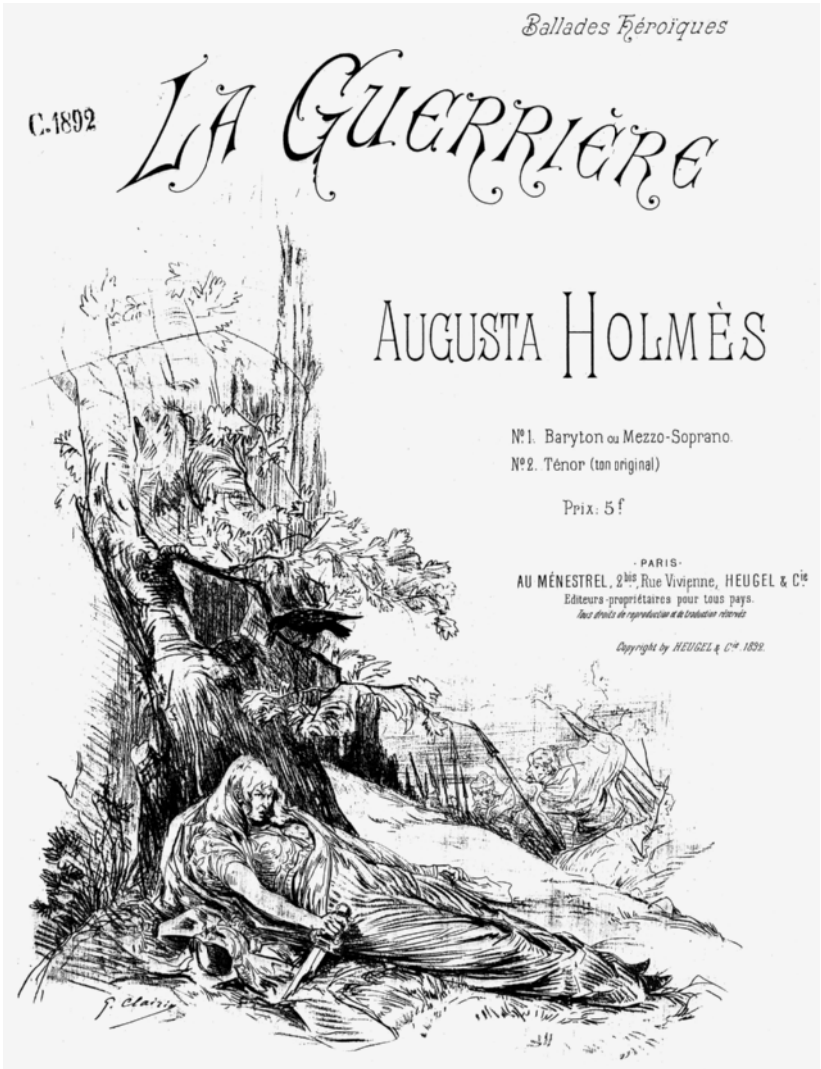


FIG. 98 Augusta Holmès, "La Guerrière" (1892).

This image of a female warrior, resting, but with her sword ready to strike, expressed Holmès's *revanchiste* sentiments, calling on women to take part in the return to war.

war between eastern and western France had erupted because of mutual aversion between two queens.[34] Henri Martin referred to Frédégonde as a Frankish Medea, beautiful but atrocious. Perhaps alluding to contemporary France, with staunch assertiveness and four-square chordal harmonies, one of the kings in *Frédégonde* sings, "Austrasie needs a king who will give it back its old force."[35]

With France torn by the Dreyfus Affair, Saint-Saëns returned to the Gauls and the Romans in *Les Barbares* (1901), set in first-century Orange and originally intended for the ancient Roman theater there. This time, however, he sought to portray how a people can rise above conflict associated with invasions.[36] Unlike in *Frédégonde*, where he uses tritones and tonal ambiguity to express hatred, there is "no trace of barbarism" in the music of *Les Barbares*. Instead, listeners found it "noble and pure," transparent "like crystal," and serene as the composer concentrates on the human aspects of the drama and endeavors to create "simple and classic beauty," resembling that of Gluck.[37] After the Gallo-Romans repel 300,000 northern barbarians and free the city, thanks to the love of a Gallo-Roman woman for a German commander, a provençal farandole follows. To reinforce the connection to contemporary France, although the Gallo-Roman ballet begins in the Lydian mode, it continues in ways that the public recognized as "French, and even Parisian."[38] Brian Rees sees the work as about both social solidarity among the Gauls, united "against northern German threats," and "civic reconciliation," as if it aimed to bring "Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards, republicans and reactionaries together under the banner of art."[39] Social and political elites, including the

34. Much of Martin's *Histoire de France*, vol. 2, concerns civil war between the Franks. Brunhilde is "from the most barbarous part of Gaul," but possesses "all tastes and opinions of Roman civilization," while Frédégonde, queen of the most civilized region, "draws her force from the depths of her barbarism . . . joining the absence of all moral feeling to a frightful energy" (51).

35. Frédégonde was also the subject of Samuel Rousseau's *Merowig* (1892), a *drame lyrique* about the son of Frédégonde and lover of Brunhilde, a play by Alfred Dubout at the Théâtre-Français in 1893, and the Prix de Rome libretto in 1897. In 1898, the Opéra produced Paul Vidal's opera *La Burgonde*, about Attila the Hun's attraction to a Burgundian woman, who, taken by force as his wife, later assassinates him. In 1911, Lili Boulanger returned to Frédégonde, but her cantata has been lost or was destroyed.

36. Thierry, in *Histoire des Gaulois*, points out that the Gauls were among many peoples the Greeks referred to as "barbarians" (1).

37. André Corneau, "Les Barbares," *Matin*, 24 October 1901, and Camille Bellaigue, "Revue musicale," *Revue des deux mondes* 6 (15 November 1901): 467.

38. Bellaigue, "Revue musicale," 468.

39. Brian Rees, in *Camille Saint-Saëns: A Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), points out that Maurice Barrès also called Communards and socialists "barbarians" (347).

French president, attended the premiere en masse and critics, whether reactionary, conservative, bourgeois, or socialist, embraced it wholeheartedly.[40]

Some French refused to see Gallo-Romans as the original French race, especially those who opposed democracy and the Republic as not indigenous to France. Those who looked instead to the Celts sought to forget a past characterized by assimilating various invader cultures. Under Roman rule, the Celts had withdrawn to the northwest coast (Brittany) and the mountainous center of the country (Auvergne). Since the Romans focused on urban centers, the Celts were able to resist the Romans and later the Germans. Celtic language, culture, and music remained distinct, some of it up to the nineteenth century.[41] Some saw the Celtic tradition, that which resisted assimilation, as responsible for the French character. As Edouard Schuré put it, "the Celtic soul is the deep interior soul of France." A similar sentiment may have motivated the composer Vincent d'Indy to write his opera *Fervaal*. A contemporary reviewer saw the main character as "a Celtic hero glorifying the French race" and Steven Huebner calls it "an allegory about the founding of France out of the Celtic spirit."[42] Perhaps reflecting interest in French racial origins in Brittany, in the 1890s the region attracted many musicians as well as painters like Sérusier and Gauguin, who was from Brittany. When the Loti character in André Messager's *opéra-comique Madame Chrysanthème* (1893) dreams of home, he sings a song about Brittany. The newspaper *Figaro* chose this excerpt to reproduce, so as to attract audiences, although the work is set in Japan. The same year, Cécile Chaminade wrote a "Chanson bretonne" as part of her *Romances sans paroles*, suggesting that the topic had become fashionable.

In the 1890s, French musicians also looked to the *chanson populaire* for what it could teach them about their racial origins.[43] Carried over time through the oral tradition, the notes of a folk song were thought to be remnants of resistance to outside influences and the impact of urban civilization, pointing to a time

40. Camille de Sainte-Croix, "Les Barbares," *Petite République socialiste*, 25 October 1901; Catulle Mendès, "Les Barbares," *Journal*, 24 October 1901; Louis de Fourcaud, "Musique," *Gaulois*, 24 October 1901.

41. See Bourgault-Ducoudray, "La Musique primitive conservée par les montagnes," *Annuaire du Club alpine française* (1884): 4–5, 9; Julien Tiersot, *Histoire de la chanson populaire en France* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1889), 187; and Gaston Paris, *La Poésie au Moyen Age* (Paris: Hachette, 1885), 48.

42. Huebner, *French Opera*, 324–26.

43. For a more extended discussion, see Jann Pasler "Race and Nation: Musical Acclimatisation and the *Chansons Populaires* in Third Republic France," in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 147–67.

before assimilation and hybridization. In the mountainous center of the country, Bourgault-Ducoudray, Tiersot, and d'Indy found music of a "more primitive and less civilized character," as well as the "pure and most complete" version of certain French *chansons populaires*.[44] Tiersot saw a version of "La Pernette" from the Ardèche, thought to be one of the country's oldest songs, as representing "the force of tradition" that "imposes itself so imperiously on the people's spirit that, despite any disdain the inhabitants of a region might feel toward this old thing, they could never forget it completely. . . . It alone survives to teach successive generations what the ancestors sang." Such songs were in the blood of the race, and numerous generations would keep on repeating them.[45] From the persistence in such music of not only certain melodic modes, but also distinct rhythms resembling those of ancient Greece, Bourgault-Ducoudray argued that Greek influence on this repertoire was greater than that of the Catholic Church. Liturgical modes, after all, had lost their rhythmic character. From this, he concluded that the origins of French music were secular (ex. 28).[46] To the extent that "La Pernette" resembled a Gregorian alleluia, d'Indy, however, argued that the origins of French music lay in religious rather than secular music.[47]

To trace the emergence of a distinctly French music, Lavoix, too, in his history of French music, looked to chant, but he had a different interpretation of the relationship of chant to such songs. He argues that, although Roman chant, the "foreign chant" of "conquest," dominated Gaul after the Roman invasion, and Charlemagne had subsequently tried to prohibit any other kind from being sung, Gallican chant remained alive through hymns. What distinguished this chant was its suppleness, which Lavoix attributed to the influence of French popular music. Disagreeing with Fustel de Coulanges who saw the founding of France in the synthesis of the Gallic and Roman spirits, Lavoix claimed, "our nationality began to form" only after Gaul "ceased being Roman or German." This music historian thus considered the French troubadour as the "father of our composers" and his secular songs as the beginning of "French music." By the twelfth century, Lavoix found in them aspects he identified as quintessentially French: "grace" in melodic phrases and an instinct for "appropriateness *[justesse]* in expression."[48]

44. Tiersot, "Préface," in Vincent d'Indy, *Chansons populaires recueillies dans le Vivarais et le Vercors*, ed. Julien Tiersot (Paris: Fischbacher, 1892), 2.

45. Ibid., 2, 29, 32, 39.

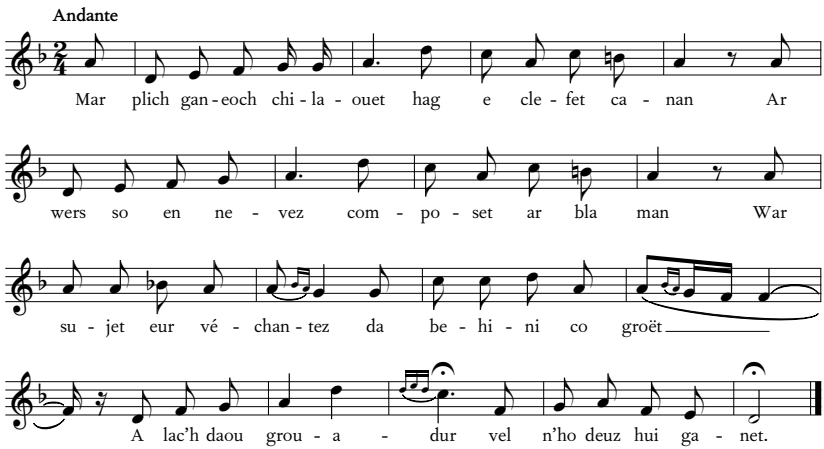
46. Bourgault-Ducoudray, "La Musique primitive," 5, 8; Julien Tiersot, *Chansons populaires recueillies dans les Alpes françaises (Savoie et Dauphiné)* (Grenoble: Falque & Perrin, 1903), 500–501.

47. Pasler, "Race and Nation," 160–67.

48. Lavoix, *Musique française*, 16–17, 34–39.

EX. 28 Bourgault-Ducoudray, "Gwer ar véchantez," *Trente mélodies populaires de la Basse-Bretagne* (Paris: Lemoine, 1885).

Bourgault-Ducoudray found Greek modes and rhythms in the *chansons populaires* of Brittany. In northern Brittany, where the "race is more serious and more reflective," many songs used the Hypodorian mode, associated with the "serene virility and nobility" of Apollo. In adding chordal harmonies to his transcriptions, based on the melody's mode, he aimed to show that the Greek modes were compatible with modern music and could be explored and incorporated for the sake of French musical progress, a kind of musical colonization. After the harmonizations of each song, Bourgault-Ducoudray reproduced the original, giving a short analysis and notating who sang it for him and where.



Implicitly racial arguments were brought in to underline the unforeseen consequences of hybridity, in the sense of a "mixing" or "fusion" of unlikes, and to promote the preservation of a certain essence in French music. Debussy criticized the influence of the Belgian Franck's "sentimental rigor" on Ernest Chausson's "natural talents of elegance and clarity": "To think that the particular qualities of a race's genius can be transmitted to another race without harm is an error that has often perverted our music because, with unsuspecting enthusiasm, we adopt formulas in which nothing French can appear. It would be better to confront these [qualities] with our own, to see what we lack, and to try to recover this without changing anything in the rhythm of our thought. In this way, we shall enrich our patrimony."[49] In his review of the Opéra's controversial decision to produce

49. Claude Debussy, *S.I.M.*, 15 January 1913, reproduced in id., *Monsieur Croche*, 220. Questions of racial mixing arose amid French anxiety about the impact of an increase in European immigrants on social stability. For many, including Alfred Fouillé in "Dégénérescence? Le passé et le présent de notre race," *Revue des deux mondes* 131 (1895), the "question of race was intimately

Wagner's *Lohengrin* in 1891, Jules Ruelle, a critic and translator of operatic libretti, went further. He asserted that humanity has nothing to gain from a "universal mixture. . . . The conquest of which we dream—absolute fusion—will be the ruin or the impoverishment of one of the great forces of humanity."[50] Sounding like Gobineau, who had claimed that "fusions" necessarily corrupt and degrade the qualities of pure races, and that people "degenerate in proportion to the mixtures they submit to and the quality of these mixtures,"[51] Ruelle was trying to undermine republican universalist claims as well as the appeal of Wagner.

In 1898, Saint-Saëns's views on the evolution of contemporary music suggest similar preoccupation with racial thinking, along with imperialist power relations and hostility toward Germany. In describing as "hybrid genres" recent concert and theatrical music, the composer expresses anxieties similar to those who attributed decadence in French society to racial hybridity. Previously in the "musical empire," he writes, two "kingdoms"—concert halls and theaters—functioned as if two nations with different "climates" and "customs [*mœurs*]." Music was "often the vassal, sometimes the slave" in theatrical productions. It took "vengeance for these humiliations through the overture, an intrusion of concert music in the world of the theater." In more recent years, the symphony had become the rival of the genre that previously dominated it. Having been "invaded" by symphonic music, the theater was now taking its "vengeance." What remained after combat and "defections" was a "compromise that leaves nothing as it used to be," a "mixing" that had led to "confusion," "crisis," and "chaos," out of which would emerge a "new order." Although Saint-Saëns admits that the "new forms" forged by Liszt and Berlioz and French "ode-symphonies" influenced by Handelian oratorios produced some "curious, interesting" works, he worries about "precious energies wasted" by those who follow only their own inclinations and "get lost in potholes

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tied to that of the population" (816). No mention of Jews or Jewish immigrants in Fouillé's article suggests that they did not dominate discussions about race, as musicologists such as Jane Fulcher have recently inferred. Instead, Fouillé was disturbed above all by the influx of Belgians, who constituted more than half of all immigrants, followed by Italians (813, 813n1). Debussy reputedly criticized Zola (of Italian descent) as non-French (Rees, *Saint-Saëns*, 329). This was very ironic, because Belgians, such as César Franck, assimilated well into French culture, and Brussels's Théâtre de la Monnaie premiered many French operas at the fin de siècle.

50. Jules Ruelle, "*Lohengrin*," *Art musical*, 30 September 1891.

51. Comte Arthur de Gobineau, in his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, in *Œuvres*, vol. 1 (1853; Paris: Gallimard, 1983), too, wrote about the "antagonisms and mixtures of hybrid forces" in various races. He concluded that the white race was a "crossbred conglomeration" with, nevertheless, "specific distinctive traits." But "successive invasions, commerce, colonies, peace and war" had led to "disorder" (281–84, 345, 813).

from which they can never get out." He predicts "anarchy" ahead. Imagining a critique "the Orient" might have of "the Occident," Saint-Saëns chides the West for its "instability, impossibility of conserving a form, a style, for any length of time, and obsession with seeking the new at all cost, without aim or reason." Coming from a composer known for eclecticism in his artistic production, his capacity to assimilate various styles, and his talent for "harmonizing" Italian and German tendencies and creating dramatic "hybrids" such as *Ascanio* that borrow from both Wagner and traditional operatic forms,[52] such an attitude is highly ironic. It does, however, point to increasing conservatism among older republicans, especially those apprehensive about change, whether political or musical.[53] That Saint-Saëns's career continued to thrive—in 1901, the composer was elected president of the Académie des beaux-arts—suggests that the intellectual elite supported the retrenchment in art music to classical values and "noble pursuits" such as "pure beauty," perhaps because they were associated with the white race.[54]

During the 1890s, in particular, ideological struggles within France were fought, not only through diametrically opposed notions of monogenism and polygenism, but also through complex, contradictory, and sometimes arbitrary interpretations of their own ancient history. Musicians took part in the dialogue and debates through the subjects they set to music, as well as the manner in which their music took on the question of "distinctive characteristics."

LISTENING THROUGH WOMEN

Nowhere is the comparison between the 1870s Moral Order and the 1890s *ralliement* more suggestive than in the female allegories embraced by composers and musical institutions. Unlike in art nouveau, which elevated "female interiority" and the rococo style as the "national patrimony,"[55] these were not about women who developed private worlds of leisure, but those who listened to the public call

52. C. Saint-Saëns, "Le Mouvement musical," *Monde musical* (30 June 1898), 73–74; Baumann, *Camille Saint-Saëns et "Déjanire,"* 10; Georges Servières, *Saint-Saëns* (Paris: Alcan, 1923), 180.

53. In the elections of the 1890s, socialists picked up increasing numbers of seats.

54. Renan, in his *Histoire générale des langues sémitiques,* distinguished the Aryan and Semitic races from the "inferior" ones by their ability strive for an ideal, their "transcendental capacities signifying the nobility of man" (504). He associated the urge for noble elevation, a yearning to go beyond material reality, with advanced civilization, its abstraction distinguishing it from "primitive" musics.

55. Debora Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), chap. 8, 293, 296.

of duty and could inspire national sacrifice. Foremost were Joan of Arc and the biblical Judith.[56] In the early 1890s, theaters revived works from the 1870s on these subjects and premiered major operas written during that period. The context for understanding them, however, changed significantly.

Renewed interest in Joan of Arc anticipates the *ralliement*, in that she represented concerns the conservative establishment shared with Catholic monarchists and republican moderates as well as musicians' desire to reach out to these constituencies. This time there were no immanent invader/occupiers to fear or bemoan, and Joan was not the mystic represented in Gounod's *Jeanne d'Arc*, although Sarah Bernhardt's revival of it in Paris on 18 May 1890 had far greater success than Gounod's opera had had in 1873.[57] Anticlerical rejection of religious hysterics forced reconsideration of the Joan of Arc mythology; so did medical preoccupation with hallucinating ecstatic states as a form of hysteria and a sign of nervous degeneration. With less emphasis on her possession by religious ecstasy or her function as "patron saint" of the invaded, she became a symbol of national reconciliation. During a period of increasing conflict between Catholics and anticlericals, monarchists and socialists, various incarnations of the Right and the Left, Joan of Arc shared something with them all.

Major composers, including those teaching at the Conservatoire, dedicated works to the heroine.[58] In 1886, Charles Lenepveu wrote a three-part "lyrical drama," in 1887, Gounod composed a mass honoring her for Reims Cathedral, and in 1888, Théodore Dubois did an orchestral march, commissioned for the erection of a statue of Joan in Reims. Lenepveu preaches a return to old values, the utter predictability of both text and music suggesting his disdain for originality in contemporary culture. Joan of Arc helps him to take such a stand. In a musical pantomime at the Hippodrome in 1890, Charles-Marie Widor likewise drew attention to Joan's peasant background and religious faith. Repeated references in music and text recall France's past, particularly the "Rondel de Charles d'Orléans" and "Pavane guerrière," reproduced in *Figaro* that July. The work also suggests the depopulation problem—fewer births than deaths. A mixed chorus sings simultaneously and in counterpoint: "War is a little expensive to the world, but it is love that will pay the bill. When one has depopulated the earth, then one must repopulate it." That summer the Musée Grévin mounted wax reenactments of the *Vision de*

56. See also the return of Hercules in *Déjanire*, discussed above.

57. The Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin performed Gounod's *Jeanne d'Arc* 136 times in 1890.

58. In his extensive study of musical settings of the Joan of Arc story, *Jeanne d'Arc et la musique* (Orléans: Herluison, 1894), Emile Huet documents thirteen such works from between 1886 and 1893, not counting five "patriotic songs" for *cafés-concerts*.

FIG. 99 Henri Callot, color lithograph for *Jeanne d'Arc* (1900), shadow puppet theater, with music and text by Georges Fragerolle.

Jeanne d'Arc and in January 1891, the Théâtre du Châtelet premiered Joseph Fabre's five-act *Jeanne d'Arc* with incidental music by Benjamin Godard.

In many ways, Joan of Arc served to keep alive the spirit of *revanche*. Libretti set to music by Gounod, Lenepveu, Widor, and Godard all drive home the need for sacrifice to return to war. "Arm your hearts and enflame them with hatred for the foreigner," Gounod's chorus sings as the dotted rhythms of the accompaniment drive the momentum relentlessly forward. "The country is beautiful! I must live and die for her," Joan exclaims in Lenepveu's drama; "See the great pity that is the kingdom of France. Go offer yourself to the king and deliver the country," the voices tell her in Godard's *drame historique*. At the Chat Noir, Fragerolle's *Jeanne d'Arc* (1900), for puppet theater, also promoted Joan's utility in inspiring future soldiers. Recalling Mermet's 1876 opera, figure 99 depicts Joan in the sky burning at the stake before a marching army.

Widespread interest in Joan of Arc in the late 1880s and early 1890s, especially at the Conservatoire, suggests a change in aesthetics there. Such a boy-woman, a *garçon* in pants—with nothing resembling female sexuality or gender, least of all a body—was a far cry from the alluring females of Massenet and Delibes or reputed softness in the music of Guiraud, composers who began teaching there a decade

earlier. In the hands of the new generation, their female subject of preference, Joan of Arc, delivers a message about authority. The integration of marches in this music contributes to the masculinization of her image and the force associated with her.[59]

Another female image popular in the 1870s, Judith, was also embraced in the early 1890s. She too was a woman willing to put duty to country over personal interests, but did this through her seductive charms. Between 1889 and 1891, Dubois and Bourgault-Ducoudray composed operas based on the Judith story. Frédérique Patureau suggests that the Opéra chose to produce Bourgault-Ducoudray's *Thamara* in December 1891, not just to fulfill its requirement to perform a certain number of works by Prix de Rome winners, but also as a counterbalance to *Lohengrin*, first performed there in September 1891.[60] But with Wagner's opera entering the Opéra's repertoire soon thereafter, this was even more true of two other new productions, also Judith narratives: Ernest Reyer's *Salammbô*, based on Flaubert's novel, and Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*. By the time the Opéra produced them, *Salammbô* in May and *Samson et Dalila* in November 1892, they were already widely known. French musical institutions were not receptive in the 1870s—the latter premiered in Weimar in 1877—although excerpts for voice, piano, and orchestra were popular in salons and concert halls. But, beginning in 1890, successes elsewhere put pressure on the Opéra.[61] Still, one might ask, why three works on Judith in 1892, and in repertoire with *Aida* and *L'Africaine* with which they were sometimes compared?[62]

The reception of these operas in the 1890s sheds light on this question. Earlier transcribers, concert organizers, and critics focused on *Samson et Dalila* excerpts characterized by their charm—the famous duo, the bacchanale, and the dance of the priestesses. With their exotic timbres and rhythms, these were often performed in contexts foregrounding charm as crucial to French musical distinction. In the 1890s, this changed. One critic praised *Thamara* for its "vigor" and "very noble style," its

59. I analyze these works on Joan of Arc more fully in my next book, *Useful Music*.

60. Bourgault-Ducoudray had waited for such an opportunity since winning the Prix in 1862. Although this was his first grand opera, it earned more that *Faust* and *Aida* in its first performances. Frédérique Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier dans la société parisienne, 1875–1914* (Liège: Mardaga, 1991), 251.

61. *Salammbô* was premiered on 10 February 1890 at Brussels's Théâtre de la Monnaie and *Samson et Dalila* had its French premiere on 3 March at Rouen's Théâtre des Arts and on 31 October 1890 at Paris's Eden-Théâtre. Before its premiere at the Opéra, regional theaters in Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes, Dijon, Montpellier, and Monte Carlo staged *Samson et Dalila* and military bands played transcriptions in Paris gardens all summer into late fall. See also chapter 4 above.

62. Victor Wilder, "Premières représentations," *Gil Blas*, 2 November 1890.

"power, "large line," and "search for strength of expression."[63] Another admired "grandeur" and "nobility" in *Salammbô* and *Samson et Dalila*.[64] Whereas in the 1870s its oratorio-like elements led to rejection by the Opéra director, in the 1890s many preferred the severe style of act 1 of *Samson et Dalila*, with its four-square choruses, inspired by Bach and Handel. Reviewers praised "the purity of its lines" and compared the choruses "of grand allure" to those of ancient Greece.[65] Barbadette's language recalls the republican values stressed by Minister Léon Bourgeois, the "admirable purity and extraordinary simplicity of the language" that seemed to arise "spontaneously." With its "archaic and simplistic forms," *Samson et Dalila* was hailed as a defense of French tradition, a bearer of "the real truth." *Salammbô*, likewise, was "inspired by the true, healthy national traditions of our clear, pure genius."[66]

Critical attention also shifted to these works' masculine aspects, sometimes suggesting an incipient misogyny. Pougin calls *Salammbô* "male." Bellaigue emphasizes the "virile poetry" and "male severity" of *Samson et Dalila*. He sees "trouble" already in the first act appearance of Dalila.[67] Reyer explains that *Samson et Dalila* is not just about an exotic seductress, it overflows with choruses and music for men. As in *Antigone*, the vigorous male choruses may have functioned to subdue, "cut off the emotionally moving effects" of the drama, counterbalancing Dalila's seductive appeal and the love tragedy.[68] Reyer focuses entirely on the "Jewish Hercules" and how he resists Dalila's charms, "always master of his secret."[69] Perhaps in response to such interest, excerpts transcribed for piano or military band turned to more scenes with Samson and male choruses.[70]

The shift to perceiving these operas as representations of strength and masculine virility is reinforced by the focus on Judith characters as executors of social or

63. Jules Ruelle, "Thamara," *Art musical*, 31 December 1891, 185–86.

64. Arthur Pougin, "Semaine théâtrale: *Samson*," *Ménestrel*, 9 November 1890, 354–56, and 27 November 1892, 379–80; Pougin, "Semaine théâtrale: *Salammbô*," *Ménestrel*, 22 May 1892, 164.

65. Léon Kerst, "Samson et Dalila," *Petit Journal*, 4 March 1890; H.B. [Henri Bauër], "Premières représentations," *Echo de Paris*, 2 November 1890, and 25 November 1892; Ernest Reyer, "*Samson et Dalila*," *Journal des débats*, 9 November 1890; Pougin, "Semaine théâtrale: *Samson*" (1892).

66. Bauër, "Premières représentations"; H. Barbedette, "Revue des grands concerts," *Ménestrel*, 3 April 1892, 109; Pougin, "Semaine théâtrale: *Salammbô*," 164.

67. Camille Bellaigue, in a review of Saint-Saëns's oeuvre, *Figaro*, 26 January 1889.

68. Gabriel Lefeuve, "Les Chœurs d'Antigone" (unidentified press clipping, ca. 25 November 1893, Bibliothèque nationale, Musique, Fonds Montpensier).

69. Reyer, "*Samson et Dalila*."

70. 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, 2006), 170–213.

divine will. Thamara, Salammbô, and Dalila are strong in part because, like Joan of Arc, they listen to the voice of authority—high priests, their fathers, their country's elders, or the gods themselves—and because they embody beliefs, especially belief in God (gods) whose voices they "obey" without question. Pougin considers Dalila "a ferocious fanatic" who stands for religion, not women. Salammbô is more complicated because when she kills herself at the end, one wonders whether this is the price of not only love, but also racial mixture, she being white and her lover a "young barbarian." In spite of their courage and singular role in liberating or saving their countries, the dependence of these women on others underlines the role of patriarchy in these operas. At the same time, as these women's actions may have elicited an admiration for their personal strength, albeit an ambiguous one if the women die, the female figures also teach self-sacrifice for the greater order, one of the principal values of the Republic. But if, with the new attention to Samson and the male choruses, the Hebrews could be viewed and thus identified with as proto-Christians, as Ralph Locke suggests, then Samson's God-ordained destruction of the temple after Dalila's betrayal "would have been understood as an act of liberation" especially if Dalila, as a Jewish Judith, may have evoked anti-Semitic sentiments.[71] By the work's one-hundredth performance at the Opéra in 1897, one critic could only write of Dalila as "treacherous," her voice, "hypocritically affectionate, adding charm to the troubling song of the seductive courtesan."[72]

The context in which Judith enacts her charms—political conflict threatening war—was particularly relevant in the early 1890s. Three political forces may have motivated new critical perspectives on her. Each would have entailed rethinking the utility of the feminine as an allegory for the nation.

First was the Franco-Russian alliance, needed to strengthen the French and eventually help them recover their land lost to Germany. In August 1891, French and Russian diplomats agreed to consult one another if peace was endangered. To commemorate the occasion, French artists allegorized their nation as female, but this time her strength came from her partnership with a man. Gustave David's "Franco-Russian hymn" "Salut à la Russie" (1891), dedicated to Alexander III, uses visual design, lyrics, and music to signal the budding friendship between the partners (fig. 100).

71. Ralph Locke, "Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (November 1991): 263, 282. Locke also addresses the problem of whether to read the Philistines and Dalila as "Other" or "us" (285–93) and suggests that the music sometimes subverts these binary paradigms.

72. Victorin Joncières, "Revue musicale," *Liberté*, 21 June 1897.

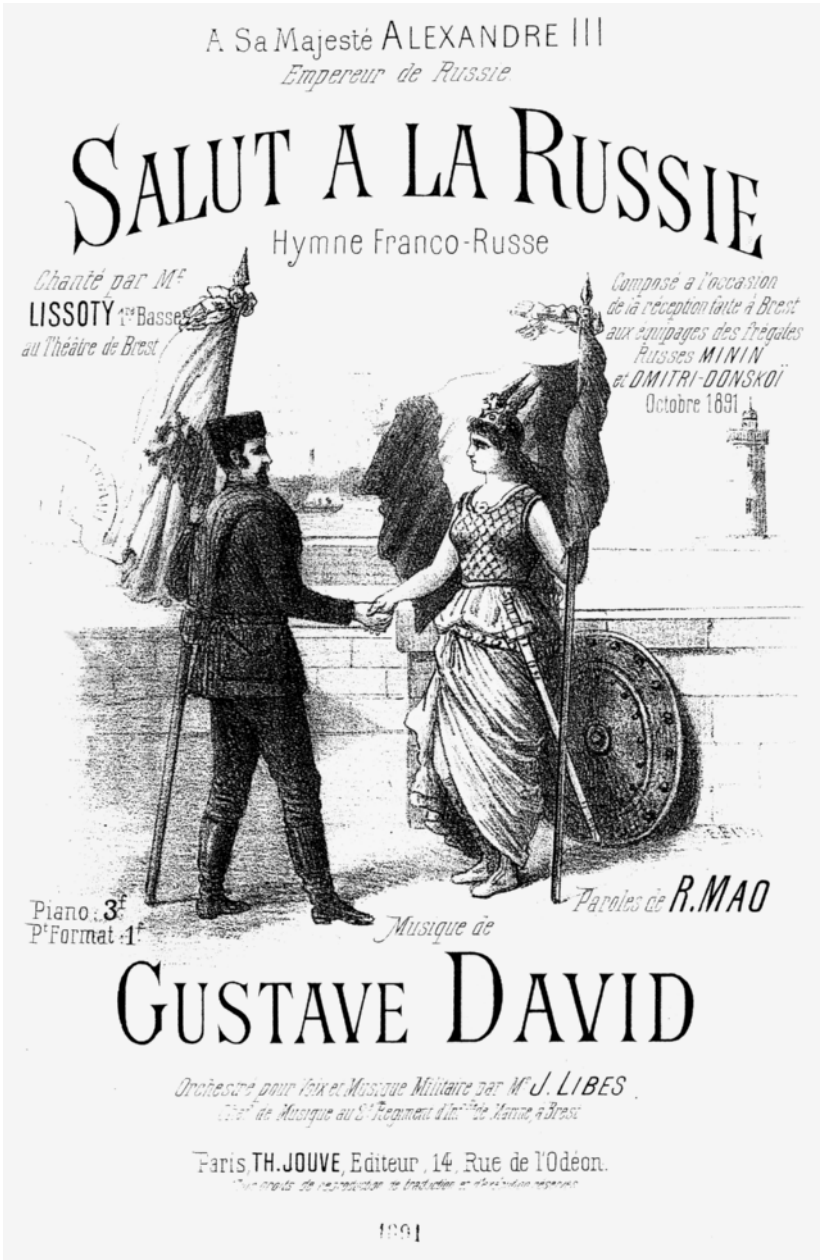


FIG. 100 Gustave David, "Salut à la Russie" (1891).

This "Franco-Russian hymn," for voice and military band, was performed in Brest on the occasion of a Russian Navy visit in October 1891. It begins with the "Marseillaise" and ends by saluting the Russians in the name of fraternity.

The sheet music cover depicts an unarmed Russian male shaking hands with an armed French female, quite different from the country as traditionally represented by statues of La Liberté or Marianne. Here she has a shield at her back and sword at her side, her flag unfurled and blowing in the wind. Their expressions are stern and their flags off to the side reveal a scene with battleships in the distance. A text explains that this song was composed for the Russian Navy's visit to Brest in October 1891. Arms, dynamism, and symbolic strength appear on the side of France, and the association of masculinity with Russia is an apt counterbalance. Text and music complement and extend these ideas. The piano introduction in G major starts with the first phrase of the "Marseillaise," allegro, followed by the last three measures of the Russian hymn, andante. When the words begin, the music shares many rhythmic and melodic aspects with the "Marseillaise," but in G minor. Both music and the three stanzas of text suggest that the antecedent, the context of the issue, is French but troubled. In the refrain, the music shifts to G major and the context turns to resolution as the singer acclaims, "holy Russia, our France, and the future!" The melodic goal of the song and its most powerful moment comes on "Russia." Gender and music are thus used to suggest complementarity between the two countries, but only because the female figure is heavily armed. France is still female, but a female warrior.

French theaters gave audiences many ways to reflect on Russian strength and celebrate this alliance, which served as a cause around which to rally. Narratives enhanced Russia's image as an emblem of power, or brute force, embraced as if a newfound extension of French strength. Beginning in May 1891, the Hippodrome put on *Skobeleff,* a *grande pantomime* with 250 singers and wind-band players, elevating a Russian general who made a name in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–78. The popular military play *Michel Strogoff* (1880) reached its one-hundreth performance at the Théâtre du Châtelet by February 1892, and remained there all summer. Its Kronstadt scene was particularly appreciated—Kronstadt being where alliance papers were first signed. A wax exhibit on Kronstadt mounted at the Musée Grévin in spring 1892 was up for more than a year. In December 1892, the Théâtre Montparnasse put on *Russes et Français*.

Concerts provided contexts for both mutual learning and collaboration. Russians performed French music for the French Navy in Kronstadt—including Saint-Saëns's march from his *Suite algérienne* and Berlioz's *Marche troyenne*—while military bands across France played the Russian hymn. In spring 1892, besides the Société des grandes auditions' concert of Russian music, even the Eldorado featured a Russian chorus. Exchanges intensified in 1893 during negotiations for the formal political agreement. When the Russian Navy visited Toulon and

Paris and diplomats signed a military convention to cover aggression by one of the Triple Alliance, the Opéra hosted a gala and Colonne put on a Russian music festival. In January 1894, when French politicians ratified the alliance, state funds at the Opéra-Comique produced the Russian composer Cui's *Le Flibustier*.[73] In November 1896, even though attendance was poor and they lost a good deal of money, Colonne sponsored two more concerts with premieres of Russian music, this time with help from the Russian conductor Winogradsky. To the extent that these performances encouraged mutual respect, they helped France feel like one of the great powers again.

With this, the country became preoccupied with recovering an image of itself as virile, which we have seen in the revival of revolutionary music, interest in the Gauls, and even perceptions of Rameau during this same period.[74] Annegret Fauser suggests how this preoccupation with virility makes its way into *opéra-comique*, where, in his *Phryné* (1893), Saint-Saëns attempts to "masculinize" the genre through the use of twelve-syllable alexandrines, the "noble" verse of classical French tragedy.[75] It also permeates his incidental music for *Antigone* (1893), with its declamatory choruses for fourteen old men. Musicians thus responded in various ways to the challenge offered by the alliance to develop French virility as preparation for possible return to war.[76]

The second factor encouraging reconsideration of female allegories of France, particularly strong females representing North Africa and the Orient, were military defeats in Africa from 1890 to 1893. These preoccupied many French just as they were getting to know *Salammbô* and *Samson et Dalila* on stage or in public parks. The premiere of *Samson et Dalila* started thirty minutes late because there was so much talk in the corridors, specifically about news of Dahomey dominating the press.[77] Dahomey (renamed Benin in 1975) was important to the French because it

73. I shall examine the musical implications of the Franco-Russian alliance more fully in my book *Music, Race, and Colonialism in Fin-de-siècle France*.

74. Lavoix, *Musique française*, points out that within the grace of Rameau's music is "always something of the virility of the strong" (116). Fauser, in "Gendering the Nations," notes that Renaissance music was also praised at the time for its "virile qualities" (85). She links this interest in virility with the perception of France as the "new Rome" (80).

75. Fauser, "Gendering the Nations," 87.

76. On the crisis in French masculinity in the 1890s, see Annelise Maugue, *L'Identité masculine en crise au tournant du siècle* (Paris: Rivages, 1987), and Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

77. Bicoquet, "La Soirée parisienne: *Samson et Dalila*," *Echo de Paris*, 25 November 1892.

provided access from the Gold Coast to the lower Niger River, an area that they, in competition with the British, were determined to control. However, sub-Saharan West Africa proved more challenging than anticipated. Particularly humiliating were the Dahomean warriors, many of them female "amazons" reminiscent of their ferocious counterparts in ancient Greece. Along with scenes of human sacrifice in Dahomey, these women with beaded chest-plates, sometimes raising the heads they had cut off, dominated magazines and the mass illustrated newspapers during French attacks there. In 1892, *L'Illustration* reported that this enemy was ten times more numerous than the French, more fearsome, and better organized than predicted.

Perhaps in an effort to diffuse French fear, in March 1891, just a year after the first Dahomean war,[78] the Jardin zoologique d'Acclimatation presented twenty-four Dahomean female warriors, sixteen males, and two musicians. Parisians were reportedly stunned that the women, aged 15 to 23, were much taller than the men and seemed unpredictable, capable of both sleepy nonchalance and warrior excitement.[79] *Figaro illustré,* which featured them on its cover that month, photographed their "warrior exercises" in the greenhouse among tropical plants. The press was captivated, all the more so because of the amazons' successful resistance to the French military. Critics found their drum music powerful, controlling their movements and encouraging their extraordinary animation. In fall 1892, when, using new rifles and 20-inch bayonets, the French stepped up their efforts to force the Dahomeans into submission, the amazons were reported to have fought the hardest and, until the end, constituted a significant force.[80]

In mid-November 1892, only ten days before the Opéra's premiere of *Samson et Dalila*, the French marched successfully on Abomey, and the Dahomean leader fled. The director of the Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin knew that the Paris public wanted to celebrate this victory at the theater. Upon hearing the news, he telegrammed from London that his company should immediately begin rehearsals of a new production, *La Prise d'Abomey*, written earlier anticipating its capitulation and later titled *Au Dahomey*.[81] This *pantomime à grand spectacle*, which opened in December, featured ten tableaux, including warrior dances by the amazons, who

78. See the press coverage discussed in William H. Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses: The French Popular Image of Africa, 1870–1900* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982). In reality, the greatest losses on the French side were Senegalese *tirailleurs*.

79. "Les Dahoméens au Jardin d'Acclimatation," *Figaro illustré*, March 1891, xi.

80. See Stanley Alpern, *Amazons of Black Sparta: The Women Warriors of Dahomey* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

81. Pédrille, "Foyers et coulisses," *Petit Journal*, 17 November 1892.

drew large audiences. *Ménestrel*'s reviewer found the work, with its constant bugle music and gunfire meant to elicit patriotism in the spectators, only a pretext to "bring before our eyes the black troops of King Béhanzin and our brave soldiers going from one victory to the next."[82] It attracted everyone from the marquis de Breteuil, Baron de Rothschild, and the Russian Prince Orloff to the minister of the Navy, and was soon performed in Lyon, Bordeaux, Marseille, Nancy, and Reims.[83] When the Théâtre du Châtelet decided to revive *La Prise de Pékin* (1861), its author altered the play so that the two final tableaux would focus on the conquest of Dahomey.[84] By the end of 1892, while Dalila and Salammbô entertained audiences at the Opéra, *grands spectacles* on the Dahomey conquest dominated two major theaters. As real battles continued in Africa, Parisians continued to watch plays on Dahomey and more Dahomean amazons were brought in for mock battles, perhaps an attempt to build good will toward establishing a colony there.[85] Writing on Saint-Saëns's *Antigone* in November 1893, a reviewer noted that Sophocles' success with the play had led to being named general of the Samos expedition; he then asks readers to imagine the minister of war dispatching Saint-Saëns to Dahomey and telling him to "bring back Béhanzin."[86]

Concerts also expressed this fascination. On 20 November 1892, only three days after French soldiers entered Abomey, Colonne's orchestra presented a musical portrait of Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons of antiquity. This "queen with the virile heart," best known for her role in the Trojan war, led her troops on the Trojans' side in the last years of their doomed struggle. Because the Amazons represented the inversion of Greek civilization, they were treated ambivalently by Greek writers as desirable while threatening. They later came to be associated

82. *Ménestrel*, 18 December 1892, 403.

83. Pédrille, "Foyers et coulisses," *Petit Journal*, 15 November 1892, 25 and 28 December 1892.

84. Pédrille, "Foyers et coulisses," *Petit Journal*, 10 December 1892.

85. French fascination with the Dahomean Amazons continued for another year. On 1 February 1893, a spectacle entitled *Les Français au Dahomey* premiered at the Cirque d'hiver. At the Casino in April, Dahomeans performed battles and sacrificial ceremonies to an admiring public, who found "their songs, dances, and hand-made objects so original and interesting"(*Petit Journal*, 16 April 1893). The Palais des arts presented their sacrificial ceremonies twice daily. In May, on the Champ de Mars, the Amazons held war games with one another, giving Parisians the opportunity to study how they fought and might have engaged French soldiers. In June, there was a "whites versus blacks" footrace, in which Parisians could attempt to beat the Dahomeans in a fifty-meter dash, with five winners earning substantial cash rewards. In August, the Musée Grévin mounted an exhibition on General Dodd at Kana, which remained on view all fall.

86. Léo Claretie, "La Première d'Antigone" (unidentified press clipping, ca. 25 November 1893, Bibliothèque nationale, Musique, Fonds Montpensier).

with barbarism and bestiality.[87] Bruneau's symphonic poem begins with a march punctuated "with savage accents" and features a theme with three tritones, musically suggesting a character tainted with dissonances. In the poem inspiring the work, Catulle Mendès inverts the Orientalist paradigm. After she succumbs to her passion for Achilles, Penthesilea seems to have lost her strength and stature, if not also her Amazonian dignity. Achilles spears her and, in the end, it is he, far more than she, who represents beauty and strength. Some critics were distressed at Bruneau's "disdain for the rules of musical grammar" and pointed out that audiences at the premiere preferred the simplicity of *Le Rouet d'Omphale* to the "complication" of *Penthésilée*.[88]

When the realities of real amazons threatened France's strength and virility, allegories that upset traditional Western binaries of strong versus weak in gender roles became highly problematic. Composers began exploring women motivated by resentment or hate. Composition students practicing for the Prix de Rome competition set *Medée* to music in 1891 and 1893, and Academicians chose libretti on *Frédégonde* (1897) and *Sémiramis* (1900), the latter, legendary queen of Assyria, here deprived of her heroic stature through banal domestication. D'Indy too wrote incidental music for Mendès's *Médée* (1898). In a way, these are not women at all, but repressed aspects of society, those that risk being out of control, beyond language and rationality.[89]

The third force most likely affecting this poetic and musical treatment of strong female characters was the new status of independent women with priorities other than those of the home. Discussions of the *femme nouvelle* pervaded the Paris press in the 1890s, depicting her as a woman in pants (*culottes*), smoking, sometimes riding a bicycle (her "technological partner"), and always commanding others. For some, she was a *hommesse*, a female-man, "rigid, austere, and riddled with the appetitive combativeness of professional mobility."[90] For others, she represented

87. In the Amadis de Gaule stories, however, the woman warrior, often portrayed as the barbarian Other, evolves into a female knight, characterized by the pursuit of chivalric glory. Alison Taufer, "From Amazon Queen to Female Knight: The Development of the Woman Warrior in the 'Amadis Cycle,'" (PhD diss., UCLA, 1988), 8, 58–81.

88. Henry Eymieu, *Monde musical*, 20 November 1892, 232, and Amédée Boutarel, "Paris et départements," *Ménestrel*, 20 November 1892, 375.

89. I develop these themes more fully in *Useful Music*.

90. Silverman devotes chapter 4 of her *Art Nouveau* to this idea, 63–74, and gives an excellent bibliography. See also Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

the new technology, with its similar capacity for inverting roles and ignoring gender differences. After the first international congresses on women's rights and feminine institutions in 1889, this "army of Amazons" grew in number.[91] New groups formed and, by the Congrès général des sociétés féministes in May 1892, aristocratic and bourgeois women alike were involved. This included arch-conservatives such as the duchesse d'Uzès and wives of prominent republicans. They shared belief in women's increasing access to higher education and professional careers. Perhaps to get people thinking about the movement's implications, in December 1892, the Eldorado music-hall produced a *fantaisie-revue* called "Dans 100 ans" (In one hundred years), with the first tableau, set in 1992, "the century of women."

With women increasingly in the labor force, however, public alarm mounted that women were taking over "men's jobs" and not staying home to have children. In 1892 and 1895, the government stepped in to pass a law limiting women's work to twelve hours per day and forbidding their employment after 9 P.M. Although a protective measure, it kept women from better paid work and, in music, restricted participation in evening concerts. When it came to women singing Gregorian chant, in fall 1895, the Rodez Congrès de musique religieuse ruled that men and children should always be given preference."[92]

Despite this resistance, women's involvement in the musical world grew, but not without difficulty. After extended discussion in the Chambre des députés, female artists won entry into the Académie des beaux-arts in 1896, but not the ability to compete for the Prix de Rome until 1902. Female composers had to wait until 1903. Still, women began earning first prizes in counterpoint and fugue in 1889, 1891, 1892, and 1897, preparing them to become composers. Grandval, Chaminade, and Holmès had vigorous compositional careers in the 1890s. The Concerts Colonne featured women's music in fifteen concerts in 1889–92. Holmès had sixteen performances there in the 1890s, more than Charpentier, d'Indy, Fauré, Widor, and Dubois. Elsewhere I have shown how Holmès achieved her success by engaging the social and musical stereotypes of her day and negotiating the complexities and ironies of gender.[93] With so many works on heroic tales of war, she was a patriot, like Joan of Arc, although she did not look to others' voices for her inspiration. Critics praised her music's vigor and virility. Yet, after the Opéra's production

91. Gaston Choisy, "Le Féminisme en Europe," *Revue bleue*, January–June 1900, 271.

92. "Vœux rélatifs au chant grégorien," *Petit Piano*, 15 September 1895, 4.

93. 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* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

of *La Montagne noire* (1895),[94] Holmès's virile patriotism and musical boldness came under attack. Bauër said that the "struggle of femininity and brute force, of Mars and Venus" was an allegory they had "simply seen too much."[95] With virility taking on new meaning in the 1890s, Holmès was put down for wanting to act, write, and be respected like a man. By the end of the century, she was told to "renounce any more attempts to venture into such high places." Gender panic underlies the critic's tone: "This music give me the impression of being transvestite. She is woman and wants to wear the pants of man. Oh, ladies, be mothers, be lovers, be virgins. . . . But don't try to be like men. . . . You will not succeed in replacing us, not entirely."[96]

As scholars have recently noted, many women composers preferred to adapt rather than confront societal norms, writing more music for salon entertainment than for large public performances.[97] Chaminade's *Les Amazones* (1888), a dramatic symphony full of battle music with warring male and female choruses, was ignored after one performance. Critics remarked about her music's vigor, but it was Chaminade's charm and grace that assured her reputation. In the increasingly misogynist 1890s, she retreated to writing almost exclusively small forms, including sixty-four melodies, while concertizing as a pianist.[98]

As the number of French women in feminist organizations rose from fewer than 1,000 in 1896 to somewhere between 20,000 to 25,000 in 1901, women began to be associated with the demise of French society, and it became increasingly difficult to consider feminine strength as something positive, even as a metaphor. As Bram Dykstra suggests, women came to be seen as "the monstrous goddess of degeneration."[99] With the country in the grips of depopulation—France's growth rate from 1872 to 1911 was a mere 10 percent, as compared with European Russia's 78 percent, Germany's 58 percent, Great Britain's 43 percent, the Austro-Hungarian empire's 38 percent, Italy's 30 percent, and Spain's 20 percent—women were called

94. For an analysis of this opera, see Karen Henson, "In the House of Disillusion: Augusta Holmès and *La Montagne noire*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9 (November 1997): 233–62, and Pasler, "Ironies of Gender."

95. Henri Bauër, "Premières représentations," *Echo de Paris*, 10 February 1895.

96. Boîte à musique, "Mlle Augusta Holmès," *Courrier musical*, 10 March 1900, 4.

97. Florence Launay, *Les Compositrices en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), and Annegret Fauser, "*La Guerre en dentelles*: Four Women, the Prix de Rome and French Cultural Politics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998): 83–129.

98. Lélio, "Mlle Cécile Chaminade," *Musique populaire*, 23 August 1890, 358; Marcia Citron, *Cécile Chaminade, a Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood, 1988), 10; and see also id., *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 144–59.

99. Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 324–25.

upon to be fertile mothers.[100] Females thus could no longer function as allegories for the nation in the same way.

At the end of the century, the Opéra-Comique took the lead in presenting new kinds of female figures, albeit those with deep musical connections to French tradition. As in Greek tragedy, the characters in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1893–95) are haunted by destiny. However, rather than fight against fate, they submit to it. Love here is neither a counterpart to power and grandeur nor what women can use to enable their social mobility. Through Mélisande, Maeterlinck and Debussy explore the exhaustion of the seductive female's utility, depicting instead a fragile woman without will or agency, such as in Pre-Raphaelite paintings.[101] When they first meet, we hear Mélisande's crying and Golaud's cough, punctuated by pizzicato strings, Debussy here refusing musical expressivity. In some ways, Mélisande is like Mignon, a "poor child" of unclear origins who comes by boat from a foreign land, innocent and fearful. As in example 4a from *Mignon*, Mélisande's vocal lines remain as close as possible to actual speech, following the flux of feelings, and keep any lyricism to a minimum. When confessing her love in act 4, she whispers, barely audible. Outer stillness hides inner drama, more often expressed in the orchestra than by the singers. Danger in the opera, unlike in those with the strong women discussed above, does not come from Mélisande's voice or actions, but from the sounds of nature heralding the arrival of Golaud and the fate of the lovers.

In her long unaccompanied solo on her hair at the beginning of act 3, Maeterlinck and Debussy give us a rare window onto Mélisande as she contemplates her own beauty without benefit of orchestral commentary or enhancement (ex. 29).[102] In some ways, this dreamy oscillating lullaby recalls Ophelia's mad song in Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet*. Both women, blond and fragile like tender flowers, celebrate their voices with music unlike elsewhere in the operas. Both do this at moments of discontinuity, as they look back over their lives, feeling strangely free. Both use music to enter a dreamlike state, its instability suggested in the unsettlingly way

100. For a study of the preoccupation with depopulation and fertility in the Bruneau-Zola collaboration *Messidor* (1897), see Steven Huebner, "Zola the Sower," *Music and Letters* 83, 1 (February 2002): 75–105.

101. Richard Langham Smith, "Debussy and the Pre-Raphaelites," *19th-Century Music* 5, 2 (Autumn 1981): 95–109.

102. Because Melisande's "alien birdsong" is unaccompanied, Carolyn Abbate, "Debussy's Phantom Sounds," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10, 1 (March 1998), sees it as "hyper-realistic beyond any operatic norm," yet shocking, defamiliarizing the "orchestral continuum" that precedes and follows it (89–90).

Debussy sets "mes cheveux" both on and off the beat of the repeating folklike melody. The off-stage chorus in *Hamlet* suggests the presence of divine voices, as if Ophelia thinks she is going to heaven. After a pause, marked by a fermata (a kind of halo), Mélisande, sounding almost like a clarion call with her dotted rhythms, directly invokes her patron saints, three archangels—Saints Daniel, Michael, and Raphael. These recall the angelic voices heard by Joan of Arc, a reference to the French medieval past. The solo culminates in the strangest and most useless of revelations: "I was born on a Sunday, Sunday at noon." As Catherine Clément points out, this was not just the Lord's day, but also the hour of pagan madness in southern Italy.[103] If Ophelia was mad and Mélisande a witch, as Clément suggests, it is perhaps because they are women who evoke questions more than answers. Debussy did not care if the *intellect moyen* could not understand a thing, as Léon Kerst warned his populist readers.[104] He was looking to create a new ideal, one that used women and their charms, not as a metaphor for the social order or French identity, but as a conduit to a new kind of music. Debussy's great innovation was to conceive of all the elements of music—the textures, rhythms, and harmonies—as melody, an arabesque in constant metamorphosis, like Bergson's time of the unconscious, synonymous with the beauty of nature and the human soul.[105] In his "Sirènes," from *Nocturnes* (1897–99), Debussy left words behind altogether, treating the female voices as disembodied, pure musical timbre (see ex. 26).

Of course, audiences continued to enjoy *Mignon*, *Manon*, *Carmen*, and *Lakmé*, which remained on stage throughout the 1890s. As Kerst remarked to explain the choice of *Manon* to open the Opéra-Comique's 1892 fall season, "people go to what charms them."[106] When Loïe Fuller, an American pioneer of modern dance, first presented her "serpentine dances" at the Folies-Bergère in November 1892, the press admitted they had never seen such enthusiasm in the Parisian public. Yvette Guilbert, at the Concert-Parisien throughout 1892, also inevitably received multiple curtain calls from a "charmed public." And for years the wax Javanese dancers attracted visitors to the Musée Grévin. But with misogynist sentiment growing, this was mostly diversion and bourgeois entertainment. In works that elevate workers to the status of the republican Marianne, Cléo de Mérode pre-

103. Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 113–14.

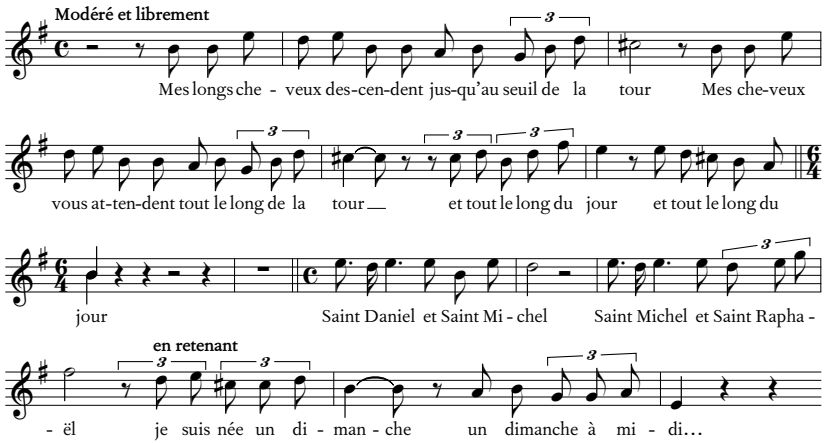
104. Jann Pasler, "Pelléas and Power: Forces behind the Reception of Debussy's Opera," *19th-Century Music* 10, 3 (Spring 1987), 250, and in id., *Writing through Music*, 192.

105. For fuller discussion, see Jann Pasler, "Mélisande's Charm and the Truth of Her Music," in *Debussy Perspectives*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz and Marianne Wheeldon (forthcoming).

106. Léon Kerst, "Paris au théâtre," *Petit Journal*, 2 September 1892.

EX. 29 Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, act 3, Mélisande's solo.

In this strangely haunting scene, Mélisande sings to herself, without orchestral accompaniment, as she combs her long hair in front of the window below which Pelléas will soon appear.



sented a different kind of feminine ideal as the Muse in Charpentier's *Couronnement de la Muse* (1897), and as did Mary Garden in his *Louise* (1900).[107] Although few middle-class spectators at the Opéra-Comique would have identified with Louise—whose revolt against her parents has been read as anarchist rejection of family and state control[108]—the success of these works persuaded Charpentier to found a Conservatoire populaire de Mimi Pinson in 1902. There working women could study music and dance. Charpentier aimed to "raise the prestige of the working woman, bring her out of the shadow and silence where some have wished to relegate her . . . allow her to participate in all the joys and all the enchantments of life."[109] If some critics worried that these Mimi Pinsons would lose their freshness and naïveté to professionalism, or their exposure to grandiose ideas might make them unfit for marriage,[110] such institutions, part of the *université populaire* move-

107. The socialist writer Camille Mauclair celebrated the opera for "bringing the battles and desires of the 'humble' onto the prestigious operatic stage" (Mauclair, *Grande Revue*, April 1902, 141). Cited in Jane Fulcher, "Charpentier's Operatic 'Roman Musical' as Read in the Wake of the Dreyfus Affair," *19th-Century Music* 16, 2 (Fall 1992): 176.

108. James Parakilas, "Political Representation and the Chorus in Nineteenth-Century Opera," *19th-Century Music* 16, 2 (Fall 1992): 191.

109. Charpentier, cited in Mary Ellen Poole, "Gustave Charpentier and the Conservatoire Populaire de Mimi Pinson," *19th-Century Music* 20, 3 (Spring 1997): 241.

110. Ibid., 248–50.

ment, offered the possibility of self-improvement, self-realization, and possibly social mobility. Charpentier thus engaged the French in contemplating the utility of a working-class woman to what has been called "village nationalism."[111]

FUSION VERSUS DISTINCTION

Within the nation, the product of lived and imagined experiences, class remained the deepest fault line at the fin de siècle. If the French had similar ancestors and were of the same race (in the sense of sharing inbred cultural values), if they studied the same school manuals and served in the same military, and if they attended the same concerts, albeit in different seats, nothing could take away from the fact that they lived different lives, determined perhaps above all by their class. The Dreyfus Affair may have raised serious questions about who and what was French.[112] But the divisions emerging from it were unpredictable, rendering imperceptible any coherence in the responses. Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards came from all classes. Robert Kaplan has argued that the Affair separated people within, not between, class lines, with the most important division coming between two prestigious salons run by women.[113] Other ways of thinking about identity at the time, however, reinforced class differences. As noted above, the debates about race—the Gauls versus the Franks—associated the former with the people and the latter with the aristocracy. While sweetly innocent girls or playfully seductive courtesans performed for the Opéra-Comique's largely bourgeois audience, in opera, strong female figures, sometimes queens, played for the Opéra's aristocratic patrons.

By class here, I mean not only the differentiations of social status, but also the tastes, values, and *mœurs* associated with them. The upper class included the rich and the famous, capitalists and landowners, those who were born into it, purchased a title (a rampant practice in the 1890s), or were associated with high intellectual or artistic achievement.[114] Classes were not fixed. A composer from the working class, like Debussy, might identify with the aristocracy and promote its interests.

111. Parakilas, "Political Representation in Opera," 191.

112. Jane Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics & Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

113. Robert Kaplan, *Forgotten Crisis: The Fin de siècle Crisis of Democracy in France* (Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1995), 163. See chapter 11, n. 70, above, on why he believed the progressive income tax debate fell along class lines much more than the Dreyfus Affair. Income tax was not law until 1914.

114. Christophe Charle, in his *A Social History of France in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994), and id., *Les Elites de la République, 1880–1900* (Paris: Fayard, 2006).

As we have seen, the musical world could be used to reinforce the permeability and fluidity of class. But, while republicans continued to argue for reducing class differences through broad accessibility to art music, increasingly in the 1890s, elites wished to see the musical world more divided along class lines.

Fear of crowds stirred up widespread anxiety about class differences and threw into question the notion of the country as a collective community. General Boulanger's rise to power had unveiled the dangers of mass culture. Socialist demonstrations, union strikes, and erratic anarchist attacks led many, including republicans in government, to think of large groups of people as "instinctive, fierce, and dark"—potentially dangerous to the public order.[115] Conservatives worried about the "moral contagion" of crowds, their capacity to hypnotize people. Gustave Le Bon felt that crowds de-civilized people, rendering them primitive, barbaric, like drunks, and feminine in their contradictions and fickleness. He attacked not just "criminal crowds" but also "electoral crowds," noting their credulity and lack of critical spirit. Giving the vote to the masses, who were driven by sentiment more than reason, he argued, risked great harm to society.[116] Like Robespierre, Le Bon thought the only good crowd was controlled, thinking as one, like people watching military parades (as in Alfred Roll's *Le 14 Juillet 1880* [fig. 42]) or the faithful at church.

With the Boulanger affair posing a threat to democracy, both conservatives and liberals saw ignorance as the "worst social danger" facing the country. The best defense against the power of demagogues was an educated populace.[117] The Société nationale des conférences populaires was founded and public lectures emerged as a popular form of leisure among all social classes. By the end of the century, there were "popular universities" for adults in every neighborhood in Paris, various Sociétés d'instructions populaires, and an expansion of public libraries. In the schools, republican educators focused on unity through shared morals. *La morale* became synonymous for solidarity, or a commitment to the social whole, as well as civilization, implying the beliefs, values, and standards worthy of emulation. *La morale* was what united all good citizens and suggested ways to assimilate the lowly and the foreign.

115. Gustave Geffroy, *La Vie artistique* (1895), cited in Thomson, *Troubled Republic*, 97. Charle, *Social History*, implies an anxiety about crowds among the middle class, which he defines as "everyone who tried to escape from the masses (workers or peasants), without being sure that they would attain undisputed bourgeois status" (178).

116. Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (French original, 1895; London: Benn, 1896).

117. Sanford Elwitt, *The Third Republic Defended: Bourgeois Reform in France, 1880–1914* (Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University Press, 1986), 257.

FIG. 101 Concert at the Café Rouge. Photograph in F. Berkeley Smith, *How Paris Amuses Itself* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1903).

Audiences sat at tables drinking wine and other spirits during performances by a small orchestra, who played on an elevated platform at the back of this brasserie. Hats were permitted, unlike on the main floor in theaters.

Across the country, many composers, patrons, and state officials continued to believe that music should support this educational agenda. Art should not be a luxury inaccessible to the poor. Some saw them as a potentially fresh audience.[118] Recognizing that while up to 120,000 male workers sang with *orphéons* in regular competitions, few working-class women had such opportunities, free music classes were increasingly offered to females between the ages of 15 and 25.[119] Orchestras also began to perform for a wider range of audiences. Beginning in 1889, a five-musician orchestra played nightly for students and locals at the Left Bank Café Rouge (fig. 101). In 1893, the government required the Opéra to offer low-cost Saturday performances for families (fig. 102). Other new low-cost concerts for the masses included Eugène d'Harcourt's Concerts populaires eclectiques, beginning in 1892, the Concerts Lamoureux's Festival populaire in 1895, and their Concerts populaires beginning in 1898. All over France, people recognized that "concerts have a mission to accomplish . . . they are educators and it is they who have the honor of forming *musical taste*."[120] More and more, concerts were explicitly orga-

118. Poole, "Gustave Charpentier and the Conservatoire Populaire de Mimi Pinson," 251.

119. *Ménestrel,* 20 November 1892, 375. For example, beginning in 1897, Edmond Bailly's Œuvre d'éducation musicale de la femme.

120. Fernand Drogoul, "Lettre de Marseille," *Courrier musical,* 26 November 1899, 7.

FIG. 102 Working-class music lovers at the Opéra during a free performance, *L'Illustration*, 15 July 1899.

nized as a form of popular education. In 1896, Catulle Mendès lectured on works by Berlioz and Wagner at a Colonne concert.[121] In 1897–98, Colonne programmed an entire season in a "rational and instructive way." In performing overtures, symphonies, and concertos by Schumann, Beethoven, and Wagner at each concert, he hoped that "the transformation of material, the progress of style, the influence of a period, and the action of time would give attentive listeners opportunities for comparison and study."[122]

Concerts also had another important utility: ideally, they transformed the heterogeneous crowd into a peaceful, disciplined public. Associating the "crowd" at concerts with their revolutionary predecessors, some still saw it as "authentic," driven by "generous instincts" and clear judgments that, if sometimes erroneous, were at least "sincere."[123] In his 1894 speech at the Conservatoire, Minister Leygues reiterated the revolutionaries' association of power with music, saying that "nothing acts so powerfully on the crowd and makes its heart beat more quickly" than music. He told Conservatoire students that their "role" was to bring "the crowd in direct communication with both old and new composers." Through identification with the "strong moral emotions, generous passions, lofty thoughts, and heroic gestures" expressed therein, the crowd could be transformed, its dreams realized in sound.[124] The sociologist Gabriel Tarde called the resulting entity a public, a "purely spiritual collectivity, of which the cohesion is entirely mental." To the extent that music expressed "spiritual desires," at concerts it made us "touch each other at our highest points, like the trees of the forests." Music's "moral effect" promoted "moral unity" among its listeners. When music reflected tastes and these tastes expressed inner desires, people listening to or performing it came to resemble one another internally. If Tarde was right in believing that "unseen and mental imitation lessens psychological distance between superior and inferior," then shared musical experiences contributed to the democratic process.[125]

Of course, publics were not all the same. At concerts, they could have distinct needs and desires. Some resembled crowds. For audiences who went to purchase

121. See the program of 3 April 1896 reproduced in 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: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002), 233.

122. Charles Malsherbe, "Les Concerts de L'Association artistique" (Concerts Colonne program notes), 17 October 1897.

123. H. Barbedette, *Ménestrel*, 19 December 1886, 22; Paul Delsemme, *Un Théoricien du symbolisme: Charles Morice* (Paris: Nizet, 1958), 174.

124. Leygues, *Discours . . . 4 Août 1894*, and Roujon, *Discours . . . 3 Août 1895*.

125. Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 356.

sensations, as Léon-Paul Fargue once put it, music resembled alcohol or drugs, ensuring escape and stimulating exaggerated enthusiasm. After the construction of its Palais d'hiver in 1893, the Jardin zoologique, explicitly addressing the diversity of its potential publics, organized three distinct concert series. On Sundays, its Concerts populaires, performed in the main hall, presented "easy and likeable music" by well-known masters. Four afternoons a week, zoo patrons were invited to promenade concerts in the Palmarium, a huge greenhouse, where they could "relax in the shade of the trees with their children while they conversed with their friends or did some work." For its Wednesday evening series of newer music for a more "initiated" public, the zoo increased the size of its orchestra to ninety musicians, invited guest soloists, including opera singers, and raised ticket prices. The organizers hoped that this public would "take pleasure in the historical part of their programs," as well as works by young composers.

After 1889, believing the future of their world to be threatened, aristocrats and those of all classes with aristocratic pretensions grew weary of public taste, some seeing it as tyrannical and inevitably mediocre.[126] For them, the issue was not dissension but "distinction," that is, from the crowd,[127] a way to escape that most despicable of bourgeois sins, mediocrity. Tarde explained this impetus as "a need for individual divergence, for *de-assimilation*," that arises after the "demands of the envious" have led to "more equality." At that point, he predicted, "society is ever more 'parceled out' in small pieces rather than stratified in large layers."[128] Aristocrats have historically used musical taste and patronage to differentiate themselves from their peers. At the turn of the century, "distinction" was not merely a personal issue for patrons nor the composers in their midst. Many were preoccupied with glory and the survival of prerevolutionary values. At stake was the national cultural identity through which their international peers and future generations would judge and remember them. Their positions and actions in the musical world were of critical importance in challenging bourgeois culture and in stimulating musical change.

126. Delsemme, *Théoricien du symbolisme: Charles Morice*, 174.

127. The republican Félix Pécaut, in his *Quinze ans d'éducation* (Paris: Delagrave, 1902), disagreed with those who conceived of distinction as having "a certain elevation in ideas or feelings," which he calls an effect rather than a cause. "To distinguish oneself," he writes, "is the fact of detaching oneself from the *anonymous* crowd with one's own idea, feeling, language, or physiognomy." Anyone can claim such distinction, the "flower" of which would be the kindness with which one gives of oneself voluntarily to others (168–69). See also Pierre Bourdieu in his *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

128. Gabriel Tarde, *Les Lois d'imitation* (1890), cited and discussed in Williams, *Dream Worlds*, 357.

We have seen how the Concerts Lamoureux and Comtesse Greffulhe's Société des grandes auditions made their concerts an exclusive affair through ticket pricing and, to some extent, repertoire, how they brought together the haute bourgeoisie and aristocratic elites through shared tastes. The Schola Cantorum of Bordes, Guilmant, and d'Indy, too, wished to be associated with exclusivity. In its small hall, after 1900 it attracted intellectual and social elites to hear rarely performed music in an atmosphere of almost religious reverence.[129] In the 1890s, all kinds of cults and secret societies were formed in response to this need for detachment from the masses, including private music societies.[130] Inspired in part by the rituals in *Parsifal*, some engaged in practices replicating its initiation, quest, and redemption myths, resulting in alternative kinds of mysticism, medievalism, and even churches. Seeing art as satisfying needs previously served by religion, Sâr Joséphin Péladan, founder of his own Rosicrucian sect, recast aspects of religion as art. People actively realizing idealism in their everyday lives he considered aristocrats by reason of the nobility of their souls. Ironically, given his quasi-aristocratic values, Péladan's aim was in fact not that dissimilar from that of populists like Charpentier or Zola, who also made myths out of everyday life. Like them, he believed art and music could redeem decadent society.[131] Not surprisingly, however, those who could embrace life as art were those of means. Rosicrucians had to pay 20 francs—four times the cost of the most expensive ticket at the Concerts Colonne—to hear Palestrina, Satie, and Franck at the soirées of the Ordre de la Rose † Croix (fig. 103). Such exclusivity gave rise to *snobisme* and snobs practicing an "art of personality."[132] In his 1897 novel *Maîtresse d'esthètes*, the Wagnerian music critic Willy (Henri Gauthier-Villars), Colette's husband, explored the ambitions of a young female snob, "Ysolde," who wanted to be "beautiful and useless." Snobs enthusiastic about Debussy's opera became known as "Pelléastres," also parodied in a novel.[133]

Distinction, whether tentatively real or merely imagined, was far more important among elites than identity, which implied more homogeneity than they were willing to admit. Some sought in their musical practices to reinstate the social and political differences the republicans had struggled to break down through

129. Catrina Flint de Médicis, "Nationalism and Early Music at the French *Fin de Siècle:* Three Case Studies," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 1, 2 (2004): 53.

130. See Jules Bois, *Les Petites Religions de Paris* (Paris: Chailley, 1894).

131. Frantisek Deak, *Symbolist Theater: The Formation of an Avant-garde* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 121–31.

132. Ibid., last chapter.

133. Jean Lorrain, *Pelléastres* (Paris: Méricant, 1910). Excerpts first appeared in *Le Journal*, 22 January 1904.

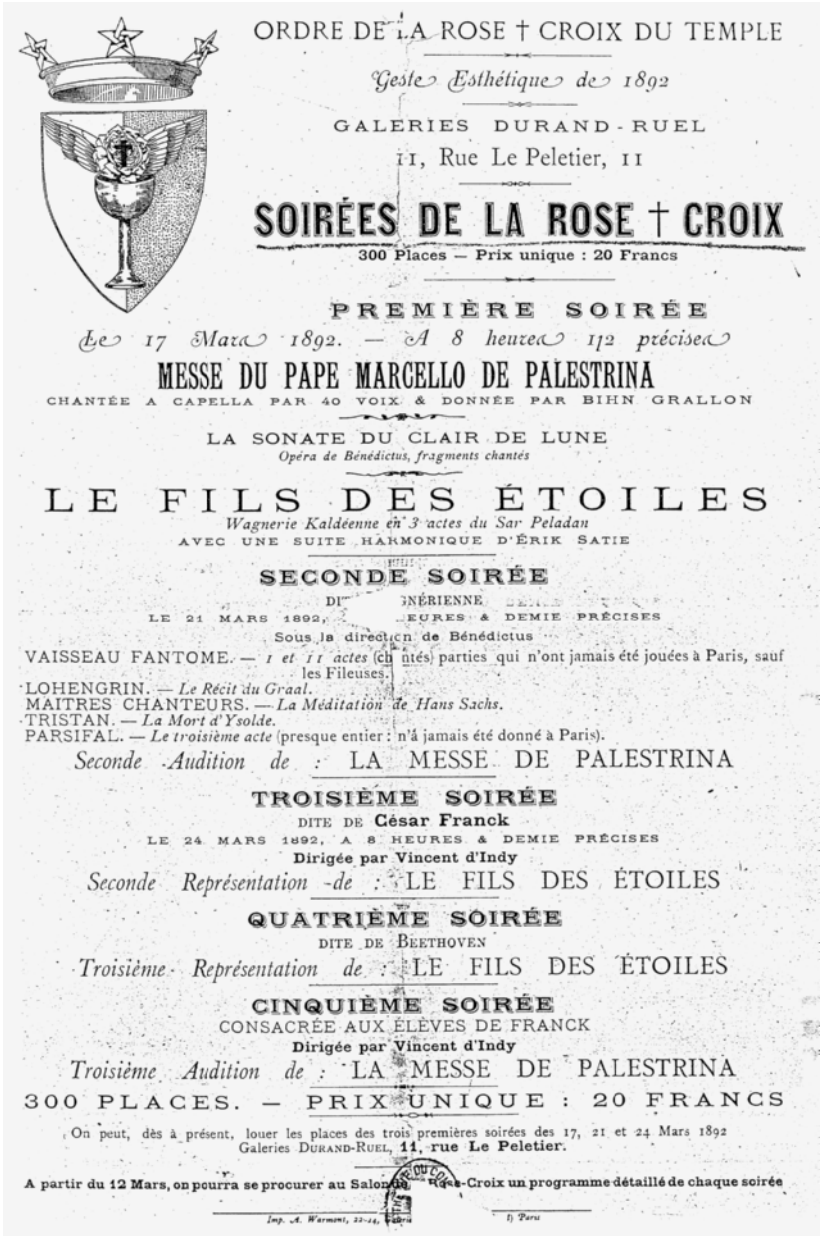


FIG. 103 Flyer advertising five Soirées de la Rose † Croix concerts, beginning on 17 March 1892.

The Ordre de la Rose † Croix put on concerts of works by Palestrina, Wagner, Satie, Franck, and Franck's students, among others. The narrative of Satie's *Le Fils des étoiles*, premiered here, is one of initiation.

education and the promotion of patriotism as "the spirit of the national family."[134] Distinction reinforced the comparative status inherent in class constructs and a certain hierarchy. The preoccupation of elites with distinction affected how and to what they listened. In the late 1880s and 1890s, elegance became increasingly valued, associated with the quality and desirability of French luxury items.[135] Fine Arts Minister Gustave Larroumet promoted elegance in both music and the visual arts. He praised Ambroise Thomas for his "sense of measure, clarity, and elegance, without which nothing, not even music, would be French."[136] As we have seen, Debussy, too, considered elegance to be quintessentially French. According to the *Petit Robert* dictionary, it is not only defined by "harmony" and an "ease" of expression, but is also tied to fashion, what is "chic" and "distinctive." As such, elegance is generally associated with the upper classes, people who have a life of "ease" and can afford to keep up with the new. Associated with "good taste and distinction, accompanied by ease and style in moral or intellectual matters," the word stands for not just "good taste" in art and fashion, but also quality in breeding and life.

Perhaps the most significant impact of this concern with distinction was the relationship some elites, especially intellectuals, sought with music. In the 1880s, the aura of "great solemnity" associated with Good Friday performances began to extend to other concerts. Wagnerians, in particular, compared the concert experience to rituals in part because Wagner's music encouraged audiences to listen in silence, "as if to the word of God . . . abandoning will and reason."[137] Silence would distinguish such listeners from the natural spontaneity associated with ordinary people, as well as from passionate outbursts increasingly troublesome for their resemblance to crowd behavior. Increasingly in the 1890s, critics, composers, and patrons also began to encourage contemplative listening, resembling what Rose Subotnik has called structural listening.[138] Looking to the music of César Franck, J. S. Bach, and Palestrina—composers whose reputations greatly expanded among French listeners in the 1890s—listeners were told to concentrate

134. Félix Pécaut, *L'Education publique et la vie nationale* (Paris: Hachette, 1897), 362.

135. As Debora Silverman writes in *Art Nouveau*, "With its national resources of elegance and its reputation as the mecca of taste, fashion, and luxury, France would compensate for industrial deceleration with civilizing graces" (52–53, 111–118, 186–89).

136. Gustave Larroumet, *Discours prononcé par M. le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle du samedi 4 août 1888* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1888), *Discours prononcé par M. le Ministre de l'Instruction publique et des beaux-arts: Séance publique annuelle du samedi 3 août 1889* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1889), and "Le XVIIIe siècle et la critique contemporaine," *Revue des arts décoratifs* 17 (1897): 128.

137. Saint-Saëns cited by A. Hélier, *Art musical*, 31 January 1890, 10.

138. Rose Subotnik, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 277–83.

on the formal ideas and the perception of certain laws in such music, not their own personal responses to it, be they emotional or imaginative. "Elegant dilettantes," music lovers, and professionals thus began to see music as something, above all, to admire. As such, it was not reducible either to the banal concerns of everyday life or the aspirations of the country, but construed as a superior kind of experience, the result of the mind in possession of itself. As one might imagine, most people had a hard time replacing sentimental or imaginative listening with this kind of aesthetic perception. Like religious practice, it depended on removing the self as the center of one's practice, and focusing on something absent, the composer's concerns. For those capable of doing this, listening based on reflection constituted an ascetic practice and implied a new morale resembling that espoused by the Stoics, whose ideas came back into fashion at the end of the nineteenth century.

A hierarchy in listening styles emerged and was assumed to map onto class.[139] For those who "love music without trying to understand it," Albert Lavignac proposes, music is "simply a sensual pleasure, a fashionable diversion . . . essentially frivolous and superficial."[140] But those who see it as "an analysis of emotions and procedures through which emotions are produced" can experience music as "pure and infinite," eliciting an "intellectual *jouissance*" (substituting mental for sexual pleasure).[141] As discussed in chapter 4, "pure" in such contexts connotes not only elevated ideas and music without story or program, but also extreme refinement, such as associated with the upper classes. Increasing interest in musical abstractions appeared even in musical manuals for young children. In his *Deuxième Année de musique* (1891), Antoine Marmontel deleted "for the pleasure of the ear" from his 1885 definition of music, leaving only "the art of producing and combining sounds . . . beautiful and pure sonorities."[142] This notion of music as intellectual and "pure" inevitably encouraged distinctions among listeners. "Easy music, operettas and [the] *café-concert*," as Lavignac put it, is for "the others," those who "cannot understand anything." In contrast, "performances of elevated art" should be for "the enlightened public, those who have acquired a special intelligence through a certain amount of study and can take full advantage of it."[143]

139. I discuss these listening styles more fully in *Useful Performance* (forthcoming).

140. Lavignac, *Musique et les musiciens français*, 441.

141. Ibid.

142. Antoine Marmontel, *La Deuxième Année de musique, solfège, et chants* (Paris: Colin, 1891), 20; cf. chapter 6 above, p. 392. This resembles Maurice Denis's definition of art as a plane surface covered with colors assembled in a certain order. Quite possibly in shifting critical attention away from sound qualities to structural ones, various kinds of exotic music at the 1889 Exhibition contributed to this new orientation.

143. Lavignac, *Musique et les musiciens français*, 438, 441.

Alfred Fouillé, a theoretician of French secondary education, saw social implications in this approach to beauty, "almost the only cult" that could replace religion, which was "daily losing its power." In calling the "cult of the beautiful," "the disinterested love of what is great, the habit of thinking and acting for the community, and not only for ourselves—a habit that was considered as the greatest of the virtues by the ancients," Fouillé sounds republican. However, the beautiful for him was distinct from the useful, and he saw utilitarian education, which he associated with the lower classes, as threatening to replace "moral instruction of the good and the beautiful." The consequences of this position were significant. Fouillé considered study of "the good from the point of view of beauty, and no longer that of utility or social necessity" as what was needed to create "enlightened minds" and an "enlightened class worthy to be the directing class." There could be no "national evolution," Fouillé asserted, without such elites.[144] In other words, beauty has social value, particularly since he attributes France's greatness to its "artistic sense and superiority of taste." However, the benefits of its study should accrue to elites and future elites, not all French men and women.

Such attitudes evolved hand in hand with some composers' increasing desire to rid themselves of constraints tied to writing for the general public. Critics like Jullien pointed out that works that had stood the test of time had often been initially rejected. Program notes at concerts pointed to examples of this. Some composers understood that to have artistic integrity, they needed to sacrifice public opinion. Debussy, among the most vocal on this, went further. Although he knew that "true glory can come only from the masses," in 1903, he opposed the Republic's efforts to increase the artistic education of the public at large: "the most useless thing in the world. . . . How, indeed, can anyone claiming to have some degree of artistic education be prevented from thinking himself at once able to take up art? This is what makes me think that too great a diffusion of art will only lead to greater mediocrity." Unlike d'Indy, who wanted to convert as many as possible to his aesthetic values, Debussy, resembling Mallarmé, felt that "the masses can no more be ordered to love beauty than they can be persuaded to walk around on their hands."[145] To follow the implications of Debussy's preferences would mean to deny art music to all but connoisseurs.

144. Alfred Fouillé, *Education from a National Standpoint*, trans. W. J. Greenstreet (New York: Appleton, 1892), 105–7, 116, 119, 207. In an 1895 speech, Bourgeois, *L'Education de la démocratie française*, countered that moral instruction was at the heart of civic education in France. Recalling the importance revolutionaries had given to feeling, he noted the importance of "developing not only the *idea*, but also the *feeling* of good and evil." The "cultivation of feeling" should be pursued patiently and methodically (165, 172).

145. *Debussy on Music*, trans. and ed. Richard Langham Smith (New York: Knopf, 1977), 141, 165.

Not only fear of mediocrity, but also aspirations to superiority underlay the pursuit of distinction. Michel Faure sees such elitism as a product of Debussy's social ambitions (Debussy left his humble background and his first wife after the success of *Pelléas* to marry a wealthy banker's wife).[146] Yet the composer claimed he had "little desire to be enormously successful or tumultuously famous." From another perspective, one could argue that elitism served his need for independence and helped him to resist compromising his artistic ideals. If he once remarked to an interviewer that "in art there is an aristocracy that one should not compromise," most likely he did not mean art in the service of some "gilded segment"—"it has gone wrong when it becomes a Luxury-Religion that excludes those with more goodwill than cash"—but rather art at its best, embodying its highest ideals. Like d'Indy, to whom he ascribed "high ideals and an individual approach," Debussy esteemed most "the power of beauty itself." In defining music as "a mysterious mathematical process whose elements are a part of Infinity," he elevates music to the status of the sublime and implies that the composer has access to what no ordinary mortals know. Later, he advocates preserving this state: "The beauty of a work of art is something that will always remain mysterious; that is to say one can never find out exactly 'how it is done.' At all costs let us preserve this element of magic peculiar to music."[147] Debussy's ultimate independence came in the way he posed his music as quintessentially French, detached from the limitations of his own society because part of the current of history.

Those reacting against the accessibility of art music gravitated to the "pure" and an intellectual experience of beauty that anticipated modernist attitudes. They bemoaned the domestication of music by new media and the ease with which so much could be transcribed and performed in diverse contexts, such as opera excerpts performed by military bands or reproduced mechanically by music boxes. Music foregrounding timbral distinction and timbral purity, such as Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, seemed to address these concerns in that it discouraged transcriptions for other instruments. Such music widened the gap between listeners who could hear this music in its intended form and those who could not. Contempt for music with immediate appeal, when perceived as a manifestation of artistic degeneration, encouraged that which took more effort to understand—an attitude espoused by the symbolists.[148]

This raised troubling questions about whether French music should embrace

146. Michel Faure, *Musique et société du Second Empire aux années vingt* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), 82.

147. *Debussy on Music,* 111, 165, 199, 224, 279.

148. Flint de Médicis, "Nationalism and Early Music," 49. See also chapter 9 above.

simplicity or complexity. If part of *Lakmé*'s appeal was its music's "simplicity" and "frankness," if Saint-Saëns chose to "dominate" his strength and "control" his technique to produce the "strange simplicity" associated with the ancient Greeks, if Charpentier preferred simple songs for his Mimi Pinsons, if critics praised Palestrina's music for its "primitive simplicity," and if Satie and later Cocteau preferred the simple to the highly refined, it was partly because simplicity was understood as an "essential quality of the French genius."[149] Tiersot and others connected this to the origins of French music and the *chanson populaire*. Yet those such as Fétis and Renan saw the capacity for complexity as distinctive of the Aryan race. And French composers as diverse as Bruneau and d'Indy preferred musical complexity, although this was not well received by audiences. Music of extreme virtuosity, difficulty, complexity, and dissonance created vastly different experiences for connoisseurs and untrained listeners, but also allowed composers to foreground their mastery. Perhaps frustrated with listeners' interpretive freedom, such composers wished to regain control of the musical experience and musical meaning. To the extent that their music challenged listeners' expectations, it encouraged new forms of listening.[150] Sometimes, the demands of surface could replace those of form. Values perceived as anarchic—immediacy, spontaneity, discontinuity—enabled composers to capture the present.

In the context of the Universal Exhibitions, all this was very ironic. Despite their purported primitiveness, at least as music from the pre-industrial age, and his own interest in the origins of music, we've seen that what impressed Tiersot most about Javanese court music and Vietnamese popular theater was, not their simplicity, but their rhythmic complexity. And some, such as Debussy, looked not only to the timbres and modes of non-Western musics for inspiration, but also to their complex musical processes. Cracks in Western power structures, with both the failure of assimilation in the colonies and the rise of the modern independent woman, might have made it important for composers to flaunt their capacity to

149. Henri Bauër, "Premières représentations" (2 November 1890); Emile Baumann, *Les Grandes Formes de la musique: L'Œuvre de Saint-Saëns* (Paris: Editions littéraires et artistiques, 1905); Poole, "Gustave Charpentier and the Conservatoire Populaire de Mimi Pinson," 246.

150. In Jann Pasler, "Debussy, Stravinsky, and the Ballets Russes: The Emergence of a New Musical Logic" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1981), I discuss how Stravinsky's early ballets, written for the Parisian public, create moments of disjunction that superimpose an imaginative expectation of more of the same, with the brutal physical reality of hearing something different, that is, the clash of expected continuity with perceived discontinuity. Stravinsky takes charge of our experience in a way that is arguably more invasive and far more controlling than any music of *unendliche Melodie*. In Germany, as Walter Frisch points out in his *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), Nietzsche developed a related concept of double consciousness.

control complex musical materials. As composers began to make recordings of their own music, fixing their interpretations for posterity, such practices also affected concepts of authority in music. Eventually, desire for permanence, as opposed to sensation and imaginative projections, prepared the way for a return to classical values, albeit in modern clothes.

At the end of the century, focus on distinction also played out ironically when associated with national differences. As foreign conductors began to perform in concert halls as well as theaters, pitting French music against an increasingly wide array of foreign music, performances encouraged respect for differences. The Concerts Colonne hired Richard Strauss, from the Munich Opera, on 28 November 1897; Felix Mottl, who conducted all Wagner, on 13 February 1898 and 26 February 1899; Hans Richter, conductor of the Viennese Imperial Opera, on 3 April 1898; Siegfried Wagner on 25 March 1900; and Oskar Nedbal, principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, who introduced French audiences to Czech music, on 26 March 1901. In 1899, Colonne traveled to conduct French music in Russia, Barcelona, and Milan. By juxtaposing a concert of music by twelve French composers with one featuring music by fourteen foreign composers, seven of them premieres, Colonne wanted his listeners to understand both the "international, cosmopolitan" context for music as well as what made French music distinct within it.

In the years that followed, the Société des grandes auditions, too, presented concerts to build bridges between nations, sometimes explicitly as a form of cultural diplomacy. Comtesse Greffuhle's belief in "the fraternity of nations and people" and in "all men as brothers of the same blood,"[151] as well as her desire to enhance mutual understanding, resulted in her sponsoring concerts of music by composers her foreign peers thought were the most representative of their countries. This not only brought the aristocracy's concern with distinction into the international realm, it also led to performing difficult foreign music, including that of Mahler and Schoenberg.[152] Such musical practices suggest that amid the emergence of nation-states was a deepening awareness of a culture Europeans shared. This may have relied on old aristocratic networks, rooted in monarchies, but was increasingly based on social and aesthetic values, as well as on race. Focus on national distinction in music, then, contributed to the growing internationalism of the emerging modernism.

151. Notes for an international conference hall in Paris, 30 March 1907 (Comtesse Greffulhe Archives, Archives nationales, Paris).

152. I discuss this in more detail in Jann Pasler, "Countess Greffulhe as Entrepreneur: Negotiating Class, Gender, and Nation," in *Writing through Music*.

FROM THE USEFUL TO THE HEALTHY

As public taste, when tied to mass culture, became suspect, some began to reevaluate the social function of art, calling into question the culture of utility, and utility as a central value in French culture. Fouillé worried about education becoming too utilitarian to form future elites. In 1902, concern about the "too modest" pieces composed by winners of the Prix de Rome even led to questioning "the utility" of the French Academy's Villa Medici in Rome, where composers could write full time for several years funded by the French government.[153] Other concerns also challenged the preeminence of public utility as a way to think about the common good. Gobineau had associated the useful with white people "in a larger, more elevated, more courageous, more ideal sense" than with others, and as his reputation soared in the first decade of the new century, his racist anxieties about racial mixing fueled widespread anxiety about depopulation, racial degeneration, and the demise of civilization.[154]

In this context, intense debate about the responsibility of the republican state to its citizens led to a new criterion of social value: hygiene, or what would contribute to the health of mind, body, and society. Pasteur's research, the seven Instituts he founded overseas between 1891 and 1914, and regular reporting on cholera deaths in the press raised awareness of the importance of hygiene and hygienic practices at home and abroad.[155] Le Bon kindled fear of crowds by referring to their power of contagion.[156] The critic and historian Hippolyte Taine, who saw the pathology of society in medical terms and reconceived the idea of the body politic along the model of medical science, depicted the press as equally capable of spreading epidemics of the mind.[157] Besides these proto-monarchist thinkers, republican reformers such as Léon Bourgeois recognized that class privileges were no defense against contagious disease, and that "epidemics of social hatred" were as dangerous as those of tuberculosis or typhoid fever. In 1894, he told the Ligue française de l'enseignement that "minds need hygienists and doctors as much as bodies do."[158] Félix Pécaut agreed, redefining education as the "health of the spirit" and calling on the government to form "healthy and perceptive minds," and for

153. *Mercure de France*, May 1902, 536.

154. Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, in *Œuvres*, 1: 341, 347–48.

155. For example, in the populist newspaper *Le Petit Journal*, the reporting on deaths by cholera appeared on almost every page throughout 1893, sometimes next to music news and reviews.

156. Le Bon, *Crowd*, 124.

157. Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), 81.

158. Eugen Weber, *France, Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1986), 26.

"hygiene for the mind as well as the body." In 1902 he compared the "feeling of the beautiful" to a "nice climate that favors the growth of good germs."[159] If improving hygiene came to be seen as integral to the civilizing process, the goal was not just to preserve the French race, but also to perfect it.[160]

Conservatives and republicans alike looked to music to contribute to physical and psychic healing. As concerts came to be considered a form of "nutrition," food metaphors began to permeate musical discourse, articulating taste and used to evaluate works for their contributions to one's health. Whereas the "German pasta" of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* was "without shape or flavor, unfolding like an eternal macaroni, heavy and indigestible for the stomach of the drowsy listener," Saint-Saëns's music offered "artistic nutrition" that was "simultaneously substantial and light."[161] In promoting one kind of new music over another, one reviewer criticized Debussy's *Faune* for being "enervating, almost unhealthy music, although delicious, like rare game [*gibier*] a little tainted [*faisandé*]" (the adjective *faisandé* was also used in literature and society to mean something corrupt, decadent). In contrast, the Fantasy by Guy Ropartz, one of Franck's students, seemed "more pure, a healthier beauty."[162] Claiming healthy benefits was a way to promote certain kinds of music. "Christian chant is the healthy body in service of a healthy soul," writes the Solesmes monk Dom Mocquereau; "The musical bread of the Church . . . is the nutrition of the most elevated minds as well as the least cultivated souls."[163] To attack music they did not like, critics called it "antihygienic"[164] Possibly in an attempt to scare people away, some referred to the rising popularity of Debussy's opera as an "epidemic," as if like cholera and other diseases.

While at first hygiene was construed as a way to ensure better living conditions for the lower classes, Janet Home observes, "questions of public hygiene challenged and ultimately altered the relationship between the individual and the government by slowly discrediting the liberal notion of the 'night watchman state,'" charged only with surveillance.[165] Moving beyond conflicts within the

159. Pécaut, *Education nationale et la vie nationale*, 64; id., *Quinze ans d'éducation*, 139.

160. Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 61, 146.

161. Barbedette, *Ménestrel*, 12 March 1893, 81.

162. Marcel Boulestin, "Correspondance de Bordeaux," *Courrier musical*, 31 December 1899, 7.

163. Dom Mocquerau, "L'Art grégorien," *Revue du chant grégorien*, 15 April 1897, 159–61. Such reasoning was applied later even to the dancing of Irene and Vernon Castle and Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye.

164. Eugène d'Harcourt, "La Reprise de *Pelléas*," *Figaro*, 31 October 1902.

165. Janet R. Home, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France: The Musée social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press 2002), chap. 6.

medical community over the vast sewage project in Paris begun by Haussmann, Léon Bourgeois looked to prevention, which he called the "directing principle of social hygiene."[166] With prevention in mind, in 1902, the government passed public health legislation, setting uniform standards throughout the country. In 1904, a veritable "social hygiene movement" emerged, promoted by government-recognized associations. Such interest led to free medical care for the poor, pension subsidies, and ultimately a complex welfare system. Prevention, however, was a far different process than debating the relative public utility of goods and services and negotiating people's conflicting needs and desires. The focus was more narrow, less flexible, more top-down. And it encouraged an increasing gap between experts and those they were engaged to protect.

If we are composed of what we consume, the focus on healthy nutrition built on the notion of "composing" the citizen. But in addressing the nation's vitality, the discourse of health, which concerned control as well as nutrition, put emphasis on protection rather than empowerment. Such a position turned the state into a protective patriarch. When this idea was extended to moral hygiene, as in the debates over prostitution or even the effect of certain music, it had the potential for repression. To the extent that this discourse, permeating popular as well as scientific thinking, associated deviance with criminality and, inspired by Pasteur's germ theory of disease, suggested that aspects of the environment could contribute to national weakness and degeneracy,[167] the focus on hygiene not only led to an increase in sports associations, possibly contributing to the eventual decrease in the number of *orphéons* and other amateur music societies after 1900.[168] It also forced reevaluation of music and what it contributed to the decline as well as the health of the nation.

166. Ibid., 249.

167. See esp. Robert Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

168. Henri Maréchal and Gabriel Parès, *Monographie universelle de l'orphéon* (Paris: Delagrave, 1910), 310, and Philippe Gumplowicz, *Les Travaux d'Orphée: Deux siècles de pratique musicale amateur en France (1820–2000)*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Aubier, 2001), 209.