

Bleu-horizon Politics and Music for Radio Listeners: *L'Initiation à la musique* (1935)

c Jann Pasler

This essay is about memory and amnesia between the two world wars.¹ What does one choose to remember and why? What does one forget in presenting "what an honest man must know" about music to radio listeners, many with little previous exposure to art music? Is history really just the story of the winners?

The collective volume *L'Initiation à la musique à l'usage des amateurs de musique et de radio* (1935) illustrates how authority is claimed, how writing constructs reality, and how canons are made and unmade according to some underlying purpose. My attention was drawn to this book when I found it in a friend's library in Paris, the only music book my friend had in his otherwise extensive library. It belonged to his father, born in 1872. Forty-thousand copies were printed, twelve hundred in a luxury edition, each with ten full-page illustrations (six in color) and elegant medieval/renaissance lithographies.² I marveled that some of the country's finest music historians and critics, representing a wide variety of political orientations, had agreed to collaborate and on something so clearly intended for the mass public.³ Yet, when I dipped into it, I was taken aback by what I read. Not only do the contributors here come together in unpredictable ways, given some diametrically opposed opinions and judgments expressed elsewhere,⁴ they manipulate history to bolster national pride. Above all, they use the book to denigrate some reputations and elevate others, although not in ways or for reasons scholars have heretofore recognized or understood. The result, defying popular resistance, is a new canon of French music--the musical trinity of Fauré/Debussy/Ravel.

Bleu-horizon ideology

¹ An earlier version of this paper was first presented at the conference, "Nation, Myth, and Reality in the 1930s," organized by Erik Levi at Royal Holloway University, London, October 24, 1998.

² My friend's copy was no. 102, apparently a gift from the book's sponsors. The copy at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Département de musique, is no. 28, "specially printed" for Paul Landormy. No. 102's cover is cloth, no. 28's is leather in a deeper blue.

³ Its authors claimed there was no other such guide; indeed there was no French equivalent to Percy Scholes's *Everybody's guide to radio music* (London: OUP 1926) nor the brochures accompanying BBC broadcasts. However, its low cost aside, other books on French music, particularly contemporary music, could have served as references for connoisseurs in France, e.g. G. Jean-Aubry, *La Musique française d'aujourd'hui* (1916), Emile Vuillermoz, *Musiques d'aujourd'hui* (1923), André Coeuroy, *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* (1928), and especially Coeuroy's book with Robert Jardillier, *Histoire de la musique avec l'aide du disque* (1931).

⁴ My article provides further evidence for the existence of "continuities between apparently opposed groups," as pointed out by Coeuroy in *La Musique française moderne* (Paris: Delgrave, 1922), and developed by Kelly in *Music and Ultra-Modernism*, 172-173.

The book's cover prepares one for the political implications underlying the story inside. Its color, *bleu-horizon* [horizon blue], harks back to the color French military uniforms changed to during World War I. During the first years of the war, these still resembled the very bright and showy ones of Napoleon's army. They made sitting targets of French soldiers. With *bleu-horizon* as a kind of camouflage, it was hoped the enemy would confuse French soldiers with the sky-blue horizon.⁵

After the war, the color became a concept. The Chambre des députés elected in 1919 was nicknamed *bleu-horizon* as a sign of the *Union-sacrée*, the political coalition achieved during the war.⁶ This involved everyone except the far Left and royalists hoping to overthrow the Republic. As a result of this coalition, never since 1871 did so many conservatives win positions: 437 nationalists as opposed to 86 radicals and 104 socialists. Later *bleu-horizon* became associated with the *Bloc national*, the post-war coalition of various nationalists allied in their fight against bolshevism. From 1919 on, *bleu-horizon* was associated with nationalism, one tainted with nostalgia for the Belle Epoque. Some have even called the period between the wars *l'epoque bleu-horizon*.⁷

The 1932 elections brought back memory of the war, but this time it was the peace agreement of 1919 rather than the war of 1914 that was evoked as a "conquest to defend." When Hitler came to power in 1933, politicians began to fear the possibility of renewed conflict and looked again to forging alliances. The article, "Pour la paix," appearing in the conservative newspaper *Le Temps* on 11 November 1934, noted that the "French must unite," that union was rewarded on 11 November 1918, and that forgetting this would be "embarrassing." Many desired another *Union sacrée*, an alliance between the dozen Right-wing political groups and the center Right that included disenchanted radicals, but not socialists. As the historian Jean-Jacques Becker explains it, the memory of the war in 1934 was an ideological support for the Right that looked back to the alliance of the post-war period. The concept of *bleu horizon* was a flag under which they could reunite.

This return to a *bleu horizon* ideology also had another pragmatic purpose. When *Le Temps* advocated the "union of all French," including workers and peasants, they were simultaneously condemning "those who preached class struggle," that is, political opponents who were beginning to rise in power. After the government shot at 30,000 demonstrators on the Place de la Concorde in February 1934, socialists and communists began their own alliance and in October 1934 the communist party opened to radical republicans. The Left's threat was such that they gained seats in the Chambre in 1932 and

⁵ The same year as *L'Initiation à la musique* was published, other books involving memories also recalled the *bleu horizon*: André Charpentier, *Le Livre d'or des journaux du front. Feuilles bleu horizon, 1914-1918. Souvenirs, récits et documents* (Paris: Imprimerie de Vaugirard, 1935) and then François du Ronchey, *Mon escadron en bleu horizon* (Paris: L. Fournier, 1936).

⁶ René Rémond, *The Right Wing in France from 1815 to de Gaulle*, trans. James Laux (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 255.

⁷ See Philippe Bernard, *La Fin d'un monde 1914-1919* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 124.

won a majority in municipal elections in 1935. Then in the 1936 spring elections, they took control of the government as the Popular Front.⁸

Published between the 1934 riots and the 1936 Popular Front victory, *L'Initiation à la musique* sits on the threshold between two opposed political ideologies and the cultures needed to support them. Ironically, one can interpret it either as embodying the union desired by those on the Right, or as appropriating this emblem for alliance by those anticipating the *réintégration patrimoniale* sought by the emerging Popular Front.

The title page also suggests a complex political reading. The luxury edition features a pasted-in full-color image of an elegant woman playing a lute. But the inside title page returns to the simple brown lithograph of a young man or boy playing a drum on the cover, suggesting an equally coded, but more whimsical story (see Illustration 1). Smiling, he looks at us with a playful gaze. The *tambourinaire*, or drummer after which the publisher is named (Editions du tambourinaire), is playing a provençal tambourine, an elongated *tambour* or drum, popular in medieval times and called for in Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*. The publishers may have hoped such an image would attract the attention of people in the provinces, major supporters of the political Right since the nineteenth century. However, the instrument is not accurately represented. Normally it is played with one hand, the other remaining free to play a *galoubet*, or recorder. That the boy is playing with sticks in two hands and with the drum strap draped over his shoulder makes reference to military drums, though not the typical smaller side drum usually referred to as a *tambour*. His dress has still another message. The hat-like object over his head may be a mask he has just pushed away, that of a commedia dell'arte character. The meaning of the verb *tambouriner*--to announce some news--makes the boy into a town-crier, someone with a message to deliver. Combining elements from various contexts and periods to suggest multiple meanings, the boy thus suggests that, while references to the past are significant, historical rigor or exactitude is not. What is important is merely that one listen.

<insert Illustration 1 near here>

Radio, Radio Listeners, and *L'Initiation à la musique*

Listening was exactly the point of those who sponsored the book--two companies representing the radio industry, Ducretet and Thomson, which merged in 1930. In return for underwriting the book, they asked for something very unusual, if not unprecedented, in French publishing: twelve glossy pages of ads at the back of the book. Five pages have long texts about the companies' histories; others feature evocative photographs (see Illustration 2). The ads explain that the Maison Ducretet, founded in 1864 to make laboratory instruments, attempted the first radio transmission in 1898. Thomson-Houston, one of the oldest French makers of electrical materials, began to make *machines parlantes* [record players] in 1928 and somewhat later a *résonateur dynharmonique*

⁸ Jean-Jacques Becker, "La Première Guerre mondiale dans la mémoire des droites," in *Histoire des droites en France*, 2. *Cultures*, ed. Jean-François Sirinelli (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 509-32.

[amplifying speaker]. Both companies believed in the value of collaboration between technicians and musicians. Their administrative director, the great nephew of Gounod, formed a musical committee of professionals who "produce, interpret, and listen to music." This included the conductor/composers Gabriel Pierné, D.-E. Inghelbrecht, and Walter Straram; the composers Maurice Ravel, Arthur Honegger, and Reynaldo Hahn; and the critics Emile Vuillermoz and Dominique Sordet. These musicians were expected to "follow the work of the engineers and help them with their criticism and suggestions" so that "close cooperation" could help the company innovate in response to "new needs."⁹ By 1935, the companies had sponsored several musical events proposed by committee members, including a ballet by Pierné accompanied only by *machine parlante*. In 1939, they also sponsored a collection of memoirs by friends of Ravel,¹⁰ produced by the same publisher in over seven thousand *de luxe* copies.¹¹ They also sponsored a collection of recordings to "illustrate" *L'Initiation à la musique*.

<insert Illustration 2 near here>

Beginning in 1923, after the first radio transmission of a concert on 26 November 1921, there were regular music broadcasts in France. In 1929 a Commission on Radio Programming was formed with Paul Valéry—enthusiastic about the medium as embodying a new kind of time and space—the senator Jouvenel, Henri Rabaud as director of the Conservatoire, and the composers Ravel and Aubert. In 1933 a tax was instituted to support improvements and radio became a public service. At that point, fourteen State and ten private stations were on the air in France. These broadcast to over a million radios (five million by 1939) mostly owned in the cities. In 1934 the Orchestre national de la Radiodiffusion was created, giving its 500th concert in March 1938. Radio programming included from 53 to 81% music—although the part serious music played in that ranged from 12 to 82 %, and most stations had their own small orchestras.¹²

Radio listeners were an increasingly important part of the musical public in France in the 1930s, especially as, with the growing popularity of cinema and sports, the public of live concerts was decreasing.¹³ Some documented a 50% decrease in

⁹ "La Compagnie française Thomson-Houston," the text accompanying an ad in the back of *L'Initiation à la musique*, 5-6.

¹⁰ *Maurice Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers* (Paris: Edition du tambourinaire, 1939). The publisher's director, Roger Wild, an artist, illustrated both this book and *L'Initiation à la musique*. He also published his illustrations in radio magazines of the time.

¹¹ After *L'Initiation à la musique*, four publications followed: *Giration*, a luxury edition with text and illustrations of Pierné's choreographic divertissement, 35 fr; *De la musique avant toute chose*, with unpublished texts by Valéry, Cocteau, Bellaigue, Klingsor, and others, 60 fr; and the book of memoirs of Maurice Ravel, printed in 7275 copies.

¹² On early radio in France, see Christian Brochand, *Histoire générale de la radio et de la télévision*, vol. 1 (Paris: La documentation, 1994) and Christophe Bennet, *La Musique à la radio dans les années trente* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010).

¹³ Dumésnil notes a 40% decrease between the mid-1920s and the late 1930s. René Dumésnil, *La musique en France entre les deux guerres, 1919-1939* (Geneva, Paris, Montréal: Editions du milieu du monde), 75. He notes a decrease of 1810 in 1824-25 to 1025 in 1938-39. Moreover in 1934 Jacques Ibert saw a change

attendance at the Opéra-Comique between 1929-30 and 1935-36.¹⁴ In his *Panorama de la Radio* (1930), André Coeuroy examined differences between listeners at concerts, those whose experience of the music was shared and potentially bonding, and radio listeners who tended to listen alone. This posed a real challenge, for radio listeners could turn the button at any moment. At the same time, radio suggested new educational opportunities. Since 80% of radio listeners were new to art music, their tastes were not yet fixed. Arguments from the early Third Republic returned to stress the potential of art music to form and elevate public taste and the extraordinary capacity of radio to reach all classes. If it could penetrate daily life, Vuillermoz saw radio as a kind of “unconscious education of the ear.”¹⁵

Three of same people who served on Ducretet Thomson’s advisory committee wrote regular columns for *Radio-Magazine* in the 1930s and collaborated on *L’Initiation à la musique*: Emile Vuillermoz, Reynaldo Hahn, and Dominique Sordet.¹⁶ Vuillermoz also served as president of the music section of the Central Committee for Broadcasting of the French Radio Service. Although they did not sign their contributions to *L’Initiation à la musique*, the preface informs us that three historian-critics did most of the writing: Vuillermoz, Paul Landormy, and Maurice Emmanuel. The first two wrote the history sections in part inspired by their previous music histories, with Landormy covering the “classics,” Vuillermoz the modern and contemporary composers, and Emmanuel the lexicography of terms. Emmanuel and Vuillermoz wrote the 164-page Dictionary of individual works, the latter responsible for works by living composers.¹⁷ Reynaldo Hahn, who taught song interpretation at the Ecole Normale, contributed a chapter on singing, Georges Chepfer one on song, and Maurice Yvain another on instruments. Hugues Panassié, a jazz critic, wrote the short jazz section and explained jazz terms. All collaborators’ names are on the title page, with Sordet, a critic interested in recordings, noted as general editor only in the book’s introduction.¹⁸ The co-authors were expected to “sacrifice any nuance of their personal opinion” for the sake of “the success of a communal work” and indeed its authors here tempered some conflicting opinions

in audience taste during this period, with neither snobs nor young enthusiasts drawn to Opéra or Opéra-Comique premieres.

¹⁴ Cited in Pascal Ory, *La belle illusion. Culture et politique sous le signe du Front populaire, 1935-1939* (Paris: Plon, 1994), 10.

¹⁵ Emile Vuillermoz, “La musique mécanique et la culture musicale,” in *Atti del primo congresso internazinoale di musica*, Firenze 30 aprile-4 maggio 1933 (Firenze: Felice le Monnier, 1935), 93-100.

¹⁶ Beginning in 1928, one of the most important ways to educate new listeners was with the weekly *Radio-Magazine*, the “grand illustré of T.S.F.” (wireless radio). In almost fifty pages, it reviewed concerts and especially recordings and printed daily radio programs for not only French and French colonial stations, but also those from all over Europe. See my analysis of radio and the music criticism in *Radio-Magazine*, especially by the collaborators of *Initiation à la musique*, in “Writing for Radio Listeners in the 1930s: Nationalism and Musical Canonization from New York to Paris,” forthcoming in the *Musical Quarterly*.

¹⁷ In his review of this book in *Ouest-Eclair* (4 October 1935), Vuillermoz clarifies that they chose as Dictionary entries “the most often performed” music.

¹⁸ *L’Initiation à la musique*, v.

expressed elsewhere.¹⁹ If we can detect more restraint than might have characterized their newspaper reviews, there was also more at stake, a far larger audience, and history in the process of being written.

The co-authors' backgrounds suggest that, like the *bleu-horizon* coalition, they embraced a wide spectrum of political orientations. What they shared was a commitment to contemporary music, especially French composers. Most had grown up disenchanted with their predecessors and were open to the latest modern technologies. Four had a history of fighting for new perspectives, voices, and musical paths, including jazz, though not always on the same sides of the issues. Even if they promoted their opinions with zeal, nothing in this book suggests that it had fascist undertones or agendas, as Jane Fulcher has implied in situating it within her discussion of the "pro-Fascist" press.²⁰ Writing for the huge and diverse public of radio listeners challenged such critics to conceive of Frenchness in broader terms that we've heretofore understood.

Emmanuel (1862-1938), professor of music history at the Conservatoire, 1909-1936, was forbidden to compete for the Prix de Rome by his teacher Delibes because of modality in his music. Not that he was an old royalist challenging republican traditions in embracing older scales associated with the church as well as medieval and renaissance music; Emmanuel despised the "tyranny" of tonality. As Robert Orledge put it, Emmanuel was "one of the few genuine independents in French music."²¹ In the 1920s and 30s, he was close to Charles Koechlin who later became associated with the socialist-leaning Popular Front.²² In 1935 Emmanuel was president of the National Orphéon Confederation dedicated to encouraging popular music in the provinces, as performed by the lower classes.²³

Landormy (1869-1943) was educated in philosophy as well as music. He studied at the Ecole Normale, helped Romain Rolland prepare the first music history course at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, and taught courses on Debussy, Ravel, and Schmitt at the Sorbonne in 1920. His collaborator, Romain Rolland, became a communist. Roland's theatrical works were revived during the Popular Front. Landormy was a critic for *La Victoire* and had written a *Histoire de la musique* (1923) and biographies of Brahms (1921), Bizet (1924), and Schubert (1928).

¹⁹ "Cet ouvrage est né d'une collaboration; et ses divers rédacteurs ... ont consenti, chaque fois qu'il fallait le sacrifice de telle ou telle nuance de leur opinion personnelle, pour ne songer qu'à la réussite d'une œuvre commune dont ils espèrent qu'elle servira utilement la cause de la musique" (vi).

²⁰ Jane Fulcher, "Musical style, Meaning, and Politics in France on the Eve of the Second World War," *Journal of Musicology* (Fall 1995): 447, 447 n58, and *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 256-57.

²¹ *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, ed. Roman d'Amat (Paris, 1970) 1257; Robert Orledge, "Maurice Emmanuel," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 6, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 155.

²² Frank Emmanuel, "Maurice Emmanuel et son temps (1862-1938). Lettres inédites," *RIMF* 11 (June 1983), 63, 66-68,76: letters from 1921 to 1934. The two shared an interest in modal diatonicism.

²³ *Ibid.*, 80, letter of 17 June 1936.

Vuillermoz (1878-1960), a student of Fauré at the Conservatoire and perhaps the most strident of the collaborators, began his criticism in small journals and ghostwriting for the ascerbic Willy (Henri Gauthiers-Villar).²⁴ When Ravel did not win the Prix de Rome in 1905, he was instrumental in creating the press scandal that gave Ravel public notoriety. While, in some ways, he was committed to promoting the reputations and legacy of the composers he was closest to, Vuillermoz passionately defended jazz against those who only heard in it “the triumph of disorder.” He saw it as the natural evolution of sound and a physicality that goes beyond need for an orchestra.²⁵ From 1927 to 1934, he published reviews in the monthly journal of recorded music, *L’Edition Musicale Vivante*, which he directed, including on jazz.

Panassié (1912-1974), the book’s young, internationally-known jazz specialist, was a producer and critic who had written on jazz in *L’Edition Musicale Vivante* (1930), founded the Hot Club de France (1932), and published a book, *Le Jazz Hot* (1934) for which Sordet had written a very enthusiastic review.²⁶ Bringing his knowledge of popular music, Yvain (1891-1965), a composer of songs and operetta, had studied with Xavier Leroux at the Conservatoire and later performed with La Jeune France composers during the 1937 Exhibition. Chepfer (1870-1945) was a well-known humorist, actor, and popular singer who also performed in films. Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947), an opera composer, conductor, and critic born in Venezuela, had studied composition with Massenet, Gounod, and Saint-Saëns. He brought the perspective of a son of a German-Jewish businessman, a French citizen only after 1909, and closeted homosexual who maintained an interest in salon music. He had published a book on song (1920) and his own *Journal d’un musicien* (1933).

The book’s editor, Sordet (c. 1890-1945), who had studied counterpoint with Gédalge, most likely played a strong role in the choice of contributors. His essays in *Radio-Magazine* and on Ravel recordings in *Maurice Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers* (1939) suggest that Sordet shared musical tastes with these colleagues, including those with leftist associations. While he contributed concert and record reviews to the conservative *Action française* since 1929, it is difficult to detect political agendas in these essays. When it came to jazz, Sordet understood his readers and how to win them over.

As with radio programmers at the time, when it came to making their selections, *L’Initiation à la musique*’s contributors believed that priority had to be given to modern music. This was what music listeners would most likely hear on the radio and was long considered essential for understanding how French identity had evolved. Consequently,

²⁴ The first essay of his that I located was “L’Impressionisme en musique,” *La Revue jeune* (10-25 July 1899): 1-6. Here he defined the refinement of our nerves as the direction musical progress should take (“L’affinement progressif de nos nerfs nous permet de penser que c’est bien dans cette voie que le progrès de la musique nous engage”) (5). By 1902, he was writing music reviews for *Revue dorée*.

²⁵ Vuillermoz, *Musiques d’aujourd’hui*, 209-213. This book has a chapter on jazz and rag-time.

²⁶ Dominique Sordet, “Chronique musicale: Le Jazz hot,” *L’Action française* (18 January 1935).

they devote only four pages to anything before the eighteenth century, despite the attention Prunières, Princesse de Polignac, Nadia Boulanger, Landowska, and others were giving to early music at the time. Only fifteen pages cover the eighteenth century; twenty-three pages concern the early-to-mid nineteenth century. Most of the historical section—54 pages--addresses the “European schools” of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As one might imagine, French composers dominate, with 60% of the book devoted to them.²⁷

A common tactic used to assert authority is unconditional assertion. This begins in the opening section, "What is music?" To help listeners encountering unknown works, they give the following “general advice”: don’t assume that music is just a question of taste and all tastes are good—in music, as in wine, there is good and bad. Connoisseurs like us can tell the difference, so let us decide such things for you. Music that bores you or seems incomprehensible today you may later like.²⁸ This authoritative, paternalist style continues in the historical section, based in part on Landormy's *Histoire de la musique* (1910).

Music is as old as humanity.... Man sang perhaps even before he spoke.... In all of antiquity, one sang solo or in choruses at the *unison* (or, when children's voices were added to men's voices, at the *octave*.)²⁹

Emmanuel, who had written his dissertation on ancient Greek music and dance, strangely has no voice here. And Landormy makes no mention of his own work on Greek philosophers that may have led him to mention of Greek modes or Greek music's effect on listeners' character or behavior.³⁰ He continues:

²⁷ The space in the Dictionary of works is perhaps more representative of the music played on the radio at the time: 10% of the works are from before the eighteenth century, 50% from the eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century, and 40% from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Bennet’s study, 47% of the composers performed on Radio-Paris in the 1930s were French (*La Musique à la radio*, 43).

²⁸ "Qu'est-ce que la musique?," *L'Initiation à la musique*, 6-8:

1. “Gardez-vous de croire que toutes les musiques valent, que c'est simplement ‘affaire de goût’ et que tous les goûts sont bons puisqu'ils sont dans la nature.”

2. La bonne musique se distingue aisément de la mauvaise et les vrais connaisseurs ne s'y trompent pas..... la bonne musique demande généralement un effort de compréhension ... ne livre pas tout de suite son secret.

3. Il n'y a aucune raison de vous décourager si l'auditeur d'une oeuvre célèbre vous laisse insensible. La sagesse est de laisser à de mieux informés le soin d'en décider.

Une page qui vous ennue aujourd'hui ... un morceau qui vous paraît incompréhensible parce qu'il change le cours de vos habitudes, vous surprendra moins dans six mois, lorsque vous le connaîtrez mieux, lorsque vous aurez un meilleur entraînement de l'esprit et de l'oreille. Et rien ne dit qu'un jour vous ne le prendrez pas en affection.”

²⁹ "La musique est aussi vieille que l'humanité. L'homme chanta peut-être avant même de parler.[...] Dans toute l'antiquité, on chanta en solo et on chanta en chœur, mais à une seule partie, à *l'unisson* (ou, quand les voix d'enfants se mêlaient aux voix d'hommes, à *l'octave*)" (11-12)

³⁰ Cf. Paul Landormy, *Histoire de la musique* (Paris: Delaplane, 1910), 7.

Song in several parts, or *polyphony*, dates from the nineteenth century and was born in church. In the thirteenth century, it was an organized art coming from Notre Dame de Paris that spread across all of Europe. This is the origin of our western modern art.[...] Until the sixteenth century, the *Franco-Belgian school* was the most important in the world. Many French and Flemish musicians worked for wealthy patrons in Italy.³¹

Landormy then lists a number of sixteenth-century composers--Josquin, Jannequin, Palestrina. That's it: six centuries of music history condensed into less than a page.

To emphasize France's role in music history, the authors use consciously reductive vocabulary that implies colonialist expansion of French ideas to the rest of the west and admits no French debt to ideas from abroad. Missing is Gregorian chant, early Spanish polyphony, thirteenth-century English rondo, and Italian Arts nova. Landormy seems not to have learned anything more about chant or the Middle Ages since his *Histoire*, which suffers some of the same blind spots and proceeds similarly.

On page 2, Landormy leaps to the invention of opera. Here he admits that the French owe something to the Italians. But after a short paragraph on Monteverdi, he writes one of the most stunning assertions in the book:

Soon came its decadence. Little by little, opera became an interminable concert ... music killed the drama.... Italian opera invaded all of Europe. Alone, France resisted.³²

Such a statement--turning music into the material for invasions, battles, and triumphs--dictates the book's tone and vocabulary. Emmanuel too, in the book's Dictionary entry on opera, describes the genre as a "reaction" against polyphony and the wide-spread "invasion" of choral music. Every change in style, every transnational movement, the authors see as the occasion for confrontation--choral music vs. operatic solo song, Lully vs. Cavalli, Rameau vs. opera-bouffe, French opera vs. Italian opera, Gluck vs. Piccinni. It also characterizes the way they discuss "conquests of thought, writing, and style."³³ Works that had a hard time getting heard or winning public

³¹ "Le chant à plusieurs parties ou *polyphonie* date du IXe siècle après J.-C. et naquit à l'Eglise. Au XIIIe siècle, c'était un art organisé qui, de Notre-Dame de Paris, rayonna sur toute l'Europe. Telle est l'origine de notre musique occidentale moderne.... Jusqu'au XVIe siècle, *l'Ecole franco-belge* fut la première du monde. Les musiciens français et flamands peuplent les chapelles d'Italie" (12). In the book's Dictionary, "chapelle" is defined as "compagnie de musiciens au service d'un souverain, d'un prince ou d'un riche personnage" (339). In his *Histoire*, Landormy he likewise notes that Italians in turn "owe their early education to the Flemish and the French." (33)

³² "Mais c'est bientôt la décadence. Peu à peu, l'opéra devient une sorte d'interminable concert [...] La musique a tué le drame [...] L'opéra italien envahit toute l'Europe. Seule, la France résiste." (13)

³³ "Il y eut une opposition constant entre l'opéra français et l'opéra italien: Lulli en face de Cavalli, Rameau contre les Bouffons, les ouvrages français de Gluck opposés à ceux de Piccinni ..." (357-58). Referring to Delibes, "C'est encore au théâtre que nous enregistrons un certain nombre de conquêtes précieuses de pensée, d'écriture et de style" (79).

approval, such as those of Bizet, Bruneau, Charpentier, and Roussel, were “battles.”³⁴ This attitude does not characterize Landormy's earlier *Histoire de la musique*, but it does permeate most of Vuillermoz' critical writing since the sacred battalion he helped organize for the premiere of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*.³⁵ In his *Histoire de la musique* (1949), Vuillermoz explains:

All music history is only a series of canvassing, probing, discovering, emancipating, freeing, annexing, enlarging frontiers, enriching, perfecting ... in short, perpetual conquests.³⁶

Such a way of thinking could reflect growing French anxiety in 1935 about another potential war on the horizon.

In the rest of the eighteenth-century section, Landormy examines a series of composers, mostly German, beginning with J.S. Bach. Thereafter, a succession of biographies replaces history. This marks a significant difference with Emmanuel's two-volume *Histoire de la langue musicale* (1911) on the evolution of music theory from antiquity to contemporary times. Perhaps because of the intended radio audience, Landormy stresses composers' personalities and affairs with women (especially non-French composers), their productivity, and their strategies for success. Handel was “an impetuous man, with terrible anger ... violently passionate; Beethoven's father was a drunk; the composer's passions made him “always unhappy,” and so on... (25, 30-31).

The nineteenth-century history focuses on German and Italian music—Beethoven through Schumann (10 pages), Wagner (4 pages), and Italian opera (4 pages)--with more limited discussions of composers in France--Chopin and Berlioz (two pages each) and Meyerbeer (1 page). In what follows—“the European schools”—considerable space is again given to the Germans (Humperdinck, Brahms, Mahler [sic], Richard Strauss, to Hindemith, 3 pages) and the Italians (Puccini, Léoncavallo, to Rieti, 2 pages), but *even more* to the Russians (Russian Five to Prokofiev, 4+ pages). Each part ends with how the younger generation is reacting to its predecessors³⁷--in Russia those influenced by bolshevism, in Germany those trying to get beyond Wagner, and in Italy those opposed to realism. Interestingly the descriptions are neutral to positive in tone rather than critical. Young Russians seem to be inspired by themes arising from the mysticism of collective work and are having brilliant success depicting the life of factories and the lyricism of

³⁴ “C'est au théâtre que Georges Bizet (1838-1875) livra ses principaux combats et remporta ses plus brillantes victoires” (78).

³⁵ Jann Pasler, “A Sociology of les Apaches: Sacred Battalion for *Pelléas*,” *Berlioz and Debussy: Sources, contexts and legacies*, ed. Barbara Kelly and Kerry Murphy (London: Ashgate, 2007), 148-166.

³⁶ “Toute l'histoire de la Musique n'est donc qu'une suite de prospections, de sondages, de découvertes, d'affranchissements, de libérations, d'annexions, d'élargissements de frontières, d'enrichissements successifs, de perfectionnements [...] bref de perpétuelles conquêtes.” Emile Vuillermoz, *Histoire de la musique*, ed. Jacques Lonchamp (1949; Paris: Fayard, 1973), vi.

³⁷ Barbara Kelly points out that this was also a preoccupation in Landormy's “Le Déclin de l'impressionisme,” *La Revue musicale* 2/4 (February 1921): 99-113.

machines. Kurt Weil, who pursued an ideal of simplicity and "put his art at the service of political and pedagogical ideas" had to stop working when "Hitler abruptly interrupted compositional activity by Jewish composers" (55). Nonetheless, some of his works seem to "conform to the orthodoxy of the regime" (55). Hindemith is respected among the younger Germans, stimulating interest from musicians in "all countries" (56).

A wide range of foreign music was important to include in the book, as it occupied up to 40% of radio programs. It is not obvious who determined what to include here, but clearly the co-authors have their preferences. Both major and minor composers from Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia get remarkably serious treatment, followed by Rumania and Poland, whereas those in Austria, England, and Hungary get very little. The book omits Bruckner and describes the influence of the Second Viennese School as "limited," its promise yet to be demonstrated. With only two sentences for Schoenberg, they note that few of his works were known to the French public. Stravinsky gets a page and a half, his three ballets praised for their "legendary" innovations and, using military metaphors, for their "stunning victories" and "bold conquests" whose "significance was considerable." However, a certain reserve is implied in references to Stravinsky's "aggressive and violent temperament" and to the "submissive/obedient" nature of the French response to this inspiration (60).³⁸ Some of his neoclassical works are dismissed as contradictory and "disappointing" to his early admirers (61), reflecting some resistance to the composer's aesthetic evolution in the 1930s.³⁹

When discussing modern French composers, the sheer number discussed or listed here seems to support the book's contention that "no other country can boast such a number of creators bringing new and exciting elements to the international art."⁴⁰ Vuillermoz focuses on what they contributed to a French national sensibility. He begins with those touched by German romanticism and associated with César Franck and his circle--Duparc, Chausson, Pierné, Dukas, Bordes, d'Indy, and his followers. Fulcher sees the book itself as characterized by "overt adulation of the ideals of the Schola Cantorum."⁴¹ A close study does not support this hypothesis. Emmanuel had written a book on Franck, but both Vuillermoz and Landomy were vigorously opposed to the Schola earlier in their careers. Not surprisingly, of the eight pages for this discussion (one-quarter of the French section), less than three pages concern d'Indy's music,

³⁸ "Notre jeune école française en particulier s'est inspirée docilement de ces trouvailles" (60).

³⁹ In the 1930s, Stravinsky embraced Catholicism, wrote *Perséphone*, an icon of both pederast desire and Christian redemption, and increasingly thought of composition as what his friend Pierre Souvtchinsky later called "musical speculation," devoid of psychological meaning. See his "Igor Stravinsky," *Contrepoints 2* (February 1946): 19-31. As Barbara Kelly points out in *Music and Ultra-modernism in France: A fragile consensus, 1913-1939* (Suffolk: Boydell, 2013), Debussy's late Etudes and Sonatas too, in their embrace of "formal over extra-musical meanings," were marginalized after his death, in preference for his middle-period works (139).

⁴⁰ "En France, on peut observer, depuis la fin du siècle dernier, un foisonnement de talents absolument prodigieux. Aucun autre pays ne peut mettre en ligne une telle quantité de créateurs apportant tous à l'art international des éléments d'expression nouveaux et saisissants." (69)

⁴¹ Jane Fulcher, in *The Composer as Intellectual*, writes that "d'Indy is lauded most extensively" in this book where there is also "overt adulation of the ideals of the Schola Cantorum" (256).

pedagogy, and students. Vuillermoz's tone is respectful, but not enthusiastic, **though elsewhere he remained anti-Indy into the 1950s.**⁴² D'Indy is hardly "lauded most extensively," as Fulcher contends.⁴³ Vuillermoz criticizes the composer's dogmatism, pointing to how much stricter and more formalized it was than the "pedagogical ideals" of Franck (74).⁴⁴ Here Vuillermoz recognizes a certain irony in the double nature of the composer and his career, full of paradox.⁴⁵ D'Indy's best students were "not the most docile." His only students here discussed are Sévérac and Roussel, both of whom "clearly separated themselves from his influence" (76). Even d'Indy did not strictly apply his "intransigent dogmas" in his own music (75). To Vuillermoz, d'Indy's music was much "less austere and rigorous than his pedagogy;" indeed, it could have "pastoral poetry and a certain orchestral voluptuousness which is quite distant from the ascetic spirituality so fundamental in his doctrine" (75).⁴⁶ *Initiation's* Dictionary includes analyses of d'Indy's *Symphonie cévénole* and *Wallenstein*, both early-career works written before the composer became controversial, but no music by other Scholists. Vuillermoz's highest praise for the composer comes as a "passionate defender of the most affirmative musical nationalism;" however, he criticizes d'Indy for never freeing himself from the influence of Wagner.⁴⁷ Overall, d'Indy's music comes off as less interesting and important than that of Pierné and Dukas, other Franck students each given almost as much or more space here than d'Indy and praised in far stronger terms.⁴⁸ And as for the ongoing influence of the Schola, the world of radio was beginning to reach a far larger network of listeners than those who attended Schola concerts across the country.

Vuillermoz's second category of composers comprises those with "essentially French musicalities" (70), as if those in the first category were not essentially French.

⁴² Barbara Kelly points to this in Vuillermoz's biography of Debussy (Geneva: Kister, 1957).

⁴³ See n. 41.

⁴⁴ What Fulcher, in "Musical style, Meaning, and Politics," reads as praise for d'Indy in this book—"his elevation, his respect for the great classics, and his disdain for fashion" (447 n. 58), *L'Initiation à la musique* explains as what the Schola claimed to be borrowing from Franck: "l'idéale pédagogique de la Schola se réclamait de la même elevation morale, du même respect des grands classiques religieux et profanes et du même dédain des engouements passagers de la mode" (74).

⁴⁵ "Etrange dualité d'une destinée d'artiste qui s'emprisonna lui-même dans un système dont son tempérament le portrait peut-être secrètement à s'évader" (75).

⁴⁶ "Sa composition est beaucoup moins austère et rigoureuse que sa pédagogie. Elle est accessible à la poésie pastorale et à une certaine voluté orchestrale assez éloignée de l'ascétique spiritualité qui formait la base de sa doctrine"(75).

⁴⁷ Fulcher's take on "the key point here" is, instead, "d'Indy's reconciliation of his nationalism with his love of Wagner by means of anti-Semitism" (*The Composer as Intellectual*, 257). I find no support for this contention. There is no mention or hint of anti-Semitism in *L'Initiation à la musique* and Vuillermoz is critical of the fact that d'Indy "ne put jamais s'affranchir de l'influence de Bayreuth."

⁴⁸ Pierné wrote in every genre with "une personnalité très marquée ... his exceptionally fruitful career "placée sous le signe du goût le plus pur et de l'élégance la plus raffinée," and the composer enjoying "partout de l'admiration et du respect de tous les musiciens" (72-73). Dukas's writing was "aussi raffinée dans les détails et aussi sensualiste que celle d'un Debussy ou d'un Ravel;" the virtuosity of his instrumental writing was "légendaire," his lyricism "puissant et tendu," and, "avec une supériorité de pensée indiscutable, sa maîtrise orchestrale, et l'ampleur de ses edifices sonores," he is a French Richard Strauss.

This includes Gounod, Delibes, Bizet, Lalo, Chabrier, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Bruneau, Charpentier, Fauré, Messager, Debussy, Ravel, Schmitt, and others up through Jacques Ibert and Honegger. Such a list represents a wide variety of “means,” “objectives,” and political orientations: opportunist republicans like Saint-Saëns and Fauré as well as socialists like Bruneau, Charpentier, Ravel, and Ibert. What this group shares is their link to the “pure sap of our secular tradition that no foreign grafting will change.”⁴⁹ Each has made a unique contribution to French music. Gounod's melodies contain “the seeds of an entire national style that remains secretly faithful to this origin” (77). Ambroise Thomas' numerous works, especially *Mignon*, “represent a minute characteristic of our national sensibility that has left its mark on popular sentiment” (78). Bizet's “lively colors, nervous, personal rhythms, and surprising vitality” and Lalo's “discreet feelings, poetic atmosphere, and delicate fantasies” represent other aspects of the “French genius” (78-9). Delibes and Chabrier are valued as precursors for what they taught to others.

The treatment of Saint-Saëns is the most complex in the book, fraught with contradictions. In their introduction to music, the authors reproduce a theme from his Third Symphony--the only musical example in *L'Initiation à la musique*--to illustrate a musical “thought” and their third definition of music as “the art of thinking with sounds” (3). Yet in the history section, the text about Saint-Saëns is full of pejorative implications. Even if he “defended the rights of pure reason, lucidity, and logic” and “his perfect writing will always inspire admiration from technicians,” Vuillermoz finds his “mathematical spirit” troubling, his intelligence one that “paralyzes somewhat his feelings.”⁵⁰ Particularly unfair is the depiction of his career. Deprived of any real struggles to succeed, Saint-Saëns is little more than a “superior dilettante,” despite having written in every genre and achieved the “most difficult *tours de force*.”⁵¹ Perhaps the composer’s “sarcastic and ironic” behavior with his peers motivated such derision. In any

⁴⁹ “Ici, nous retrouvons, dans toutes les fibres, la sève pure de notre tradition séculaire qui n’altéra aucune greffe étrangère” (77).

⁵⁰ Saint-Saëns “a défendu, dans son art, les droits de la raison pure, de la lucidité et de la logique. [...] L’intelligence paralysait un peu en lui la sensibilité, mais la perfection d’écriture [...] fera toujours l’admiration des techniciens. [...] Jamais on ne vit l’esprit mathématique triompher avec autant d’infallibilité dans le domaine de la création artistique” (81, 82).

Earlier, in his *Musiciens d’aujourd’hui* (1923), Vuillermoz promotes the very traits he here criticizes, finding in Saint-Saëns’s fugues, one of his last works, “la ‘défense et illustration’ de la langue musicale française,” even if such a form requires training to understand it (101-110). Later in his *Histoire de la musique* (1949), Vuillermoz refers to the same traits as mentioned in *L’Initiation à la musique* while portraying the composer in a positive light: “Saint-Saëns résume en lui quelques’unes des particularités caractéristiques du génie de notre race: le goût de la netteté, de la clarté et de la logique, l’amour de la pureté néo-classique, l’intellectualisme raisonneur et l’intransigeance nationaliste.” [...] Il est certain que, dans la plus grande partie de sa production, son intelligence aiguë a joué un rôle plus actif que sa sensibilité. On ne saurait s’en plaindre en présence d’un chef-d’oeuvre aussi accompli que sa *Symphonie avec orgue* où rien n’est laissé au hasard...” (308, 310).

For Ravel’s and other colleagues’s views on Saint-Saëns, see Michel Duchesneau, “The Fox in the Henhouse, or Saint-Saëns at the SMI,” in *Camille Saint-Saëns and his World*, ed. Jann Pasler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 324-311.

⁵¹ “Camille Saint-Saëns, qui n’eut pas à connaître les luttes difficiles de la plupart des musiciens de carrière, traversa l’histoire de notre art en dilettante supérieur, exécutant les tours de force les plus difficiles avec une déconcertante aisance” (82).

case, such a representation of his life and works makes it clear that the authors of *L'Initiation à la musique* respect the composer, but wish to revise his reputation, demoting him from the quintessential French musician, still performed frequently on the radio, perhaps to make more room for their musical heroes, discussed below, who needed more air time for their music. Ironically, that same year the French government encouraged numerous countries to celebrate the centennial of Saint-Saëns' birth (1835) and contribute toward a Saint-Saëns monument, thus testifying to the esteem in which many held the composer and his music.⁵²

The book also takes aim at Massenet: he was as excessively sentimental as Saint-Saëns was "glacially distant."⁵³ Although Vuillermoz acknowledges the importance of his class at the Conservatoire and finds the composer "profoundly musical" and "so talented," he faults Massenet for bending to the capricious desires of his all-too-numerous public (82-83). This treatment also seems to be an attempt to dethrone one of the most popular French composers on French radio and in the radio press up through this period.⁵⁴ André Messager, a pupil of Fauré and Saint-Saëns at the Ecole Niedermeyer who could be described in similar terms, gets more credit as "among the most remarkable artists of our time" and someone who "ennobled the genre" of comic opera perhaps in part because of his role as a conductor of Debussy's *Faune* and *Pelléas*. He receives credit for his influence on the "musique légère" of the 1930s (88). Messager had also been director of artistic programming at Radio-Paris, 1924-29.

Bruneau and Charpentier reap particular praise. Described as an independent among his contemporaries, Bruneau "ennobled French lyric art without ever seeking easy success" (84). His "sincere and ample landscapes" had no rivals. What Vuillermoz admires in Bruneau--his courage, honesty, and vigorous lyricism--is quite different than Fulcher's assessment of him as a promoter of "rational values."⁵⁵ Vuillermoz clearly esteems the socialist ideals and the musical depiction of contemporary society expressed by Bruneau and Charpentier.⁵⁶ Unlike the egoism or "*esprit de petite chapelle*" that motivated many of their contemporaries, Charpentier's generosity stands out. Vuillermoz

⁵² See the letters from Pierre Laval, the Ministre d'Affaires Etrangères, and Robert Brussel, director of the Association française d'Expansion et d'Echanges Artistiques, and the many concerts in 1935 organized in Saint-Saëns's honor in Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chili, Denmark, Great Britain, Hungary, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Poland, Rumania Switzerland, USA, and Yugoslavia. Archives of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, La Courneuve, France.

⁵³ "L'un incarnait l'impassibilité glaciale et l'autre la sentimentalité poussée jusqu'à la sensiblerie" (82).

⁵⁴ See my discussion of these composers on French radio in "Writing for Radio Listeners in the 1930s."

⁵⁵ The book's extended praise for Charpentier and Bruneau, whom Fulcher considers d'Indy's "anti-Dreyfusard nemesis," also defies her own contention that the book's authors were promoting d'Indy's ideals. Fulcher, "Musical style, Meaning, and Politics," 437.

⁵⁶ "[Bruneau's works] perpétueront le nom de ce musicien honnête et fort, dont le lyrisme vigoureux avait un accent très personnel et qui nous a laissé des notations musicales de paysages d'une sincérité et d'une ampleur dont on ne retrouve aucun exemple parmi ses plus illustres rivaux.... La carrière de Charpentier fut également un généreux combat contre certains préjugés. Préoccupé de la mission sociale de la musique, il voulut, lui aussi, consacrer dans ses oeuvres le lyrisme de la société et de la civilisation de son temps" (84-5). Vuillermoz also writes of music's "important democratic mission" in his *Musiciens d'aujourd'hui*, 196.

praises him for losing no opportunity to bring his art “to the poorest listeners,” “himself conducting outdoors for crowds of workers”--something “exceptional and instructive” in modern history.⁵⁷ Two Charpentier pieces are analyzed in the book’s Dictionary of works. The book also acknowledges the debt of those who followed in this tradition, such as Francis Casadesus whose music also sings of the “beauty of the earth and the lyricism of modern life” (97).

Vuillermoz’s treatment of Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel is the book's most salient attribute. Calling these composers the three brightest “stars” of French music⁵⁸ represents a significant departure from Landormy's *Histoire* which gives far less importance to Fauré and Ravel than to Debussy. Vuillermoz here brings the missionary zeal and critical strategies that characterize his other writing. His vocabulary is imperialist and promises secrets, magic, and miracles to the adventurous listener. “We have not yet discovered all the treasures in Fauré's music.... In the realm of harmony, Fauré has opened extraordinarily fertile paths” (90). Debussy too, moving in unpopular directions, “courageously cleared [*défricha*] the virgin forest.” Appropriating an expression previously used for Saint-Saëns, Vuillermoz praises him for writing with great mastery in all genres. Debussy's accomplishments seem almost miraculous and the extent of his influence “universal” and “unforgettable.” Of course, as Vuillermoz acknowledges, Debussy continued the tradition of Rameau and returned to “the pure tradition of clarity, measure, and elegance that he admired in our national classical art.” But, equally significant, many sentences are peppered with “new” or “novelty,” albeit without the aggressivity associated with Stravinsky. His “refined and powerful language” allowed him to express “the most secret movements of our soul, the most mysterious aspects of nature, and the most hidden secrets of the elements.”⁵⁹ Vuillermoz also praises Ravel’s “truly magical writing” which “conquered” the public of the concert hall and theater (94).⁶⁰ Although after Ravel he gives as much space to Florent Schmitt, another student

⁵⁷ “Doué d’un grand esprit de prosélytisme, Gustave Charpentier n’a négligé pratiquement aucune occasion de rapprocher son art des plus humbles de ses auditeurs. La foundation de son Conservatoire de *Mimi Pinson* et les nombreuses auditions de son *Couronnement de la Muse* qu’il organise et dirige lui-même en plein air devant des foules d’ouvriers, représentent, dans l’histoire de la musique de ce temps, des tentatives tout à fait exceptionnelles et instructives, dont la générosité contraste avec l’égoïsme et l’esprit de petit chapelle qui semblent de plus en plus orienter les créateurs d’aujourd’hui vers le suffrage des minorités” (85). Fulcher, in *The Composer as Intellectual*, depicts this section as “adulation of Charpentier’s ability to evoke ‘mass ecstasy’” and an emphasis “not on social reality and justice but rather on exaltation of the ‘crowd’” (257).

⁵⁸ “Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy et Maurice Ravel sont trois astres qui ont brillé d’un si vif éclat au ciel de la musique française que les nouvelles étoiles découvertes chaque jour par nos astronomes, en voient leurs reflets atténués.” (95)

⁵⁹ Ce langage raffiné et puissant lui a permis de tout exprimer, le conscient et l’inconscient, les mouvements les plus secrets de notre âme, les aspects les plus mystérieux de la nature et les confidences les plus cachés des éléments” (92-93).

⁶⁰ Sordet writes similarly of Ravel: “C’est étrange petit sorcier, ce paradoxal alchimiste, qui ne se contente pas d’être maître de tous les secrets de l’univers des sons, mais se crée à lui-même de nouvelles difficultés pour le seul plaisir de les vaincre, nous inspire une admiration aussi vive que sincère” (*L’Action française* [16 January 1931]). Such an explanation tying difficulty to secrecy in Ravel’s music is not one Fulcher entertains in her contention that references in *l’Initiation à la musique* to Ravel’s “magiques sortilèges” are

of Fauré seeking to discover “the mysteries of sound” (95), it is Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel, he proposes, who not only deserve special admiration for opposing the academic aesthetic of the time and for asserting their individuality, but also “see their reflections” in the “new stars discovered each day” (93).

Of the three, Vuillermoz holds his own teacher, Fauré, as “the most French of the musicians of France.”⁶¹ “Everything in him is music and nothing but music.... No elements are borrowed from the other arts or scholastics” (90). Sweetness, delicacy, sensibility, charm, tact, and nonchalance as embodied in Fauré’s music here define the quintessentially French. And yet, as he admits, the composer, even by 1935, was “little known by the masses and almost entirely unknown abroad” (90). Vuillermoz points to the “great duty” French radio had “to remove this still confidential art of Gabriel Fauré from its aristocratic reserve” and give it the popularity it deserves.⁶²

To understand why Vuillermoz elevates Fauré above Debussy and Ravel, one must consider the context. Fauré was a figure of alliance. While among the most active members of the Société Nationale in the 1870s and 1880s, respecting and being respected by the compositional leaders of his generation, such as Saint-Saëns and d’Indy, Fauré also gave his support to the young composers who went off in new directions. Of symbolic importance, he agreed to be honorary president of the Société Musicale Indépendante, which Ravel and his friends founded in 1909. Fauré was known as a composer “without dogmatism” and aloof vis-à-vis politics. From his class came “the best composers of the time--Ravel, Schmitt,” and many others “whose personality he knew how to develop without imposing his own on them” (90). In this, he differed from Debussy, whom Vuillermoz later describes as not only good at playing “games” in his career, but also “serenely egocentric.”⁶³

Such canonization was an attempt to establish a new trinity of French music.⁶⁴ *Initiation à la musique* contributed to this agenda in significant ways. First, Debussy and Ravel dominate the musical references in the book’s introduction, used to illustrate many aspects of music. Second, when it comes to the number of indexed appearances, after Beethoven, Wagner, and Mozart, each with over thirty, Debussy and Ravel emerge as the most mentioned in the book and in a wide variety of contexts. Moreover, with Debussy referred to as often as Berlioz (19 times) and Ravel as often as Lully, Rameau, and Saint-Saëns (18 times), the co-authors establish these composers’ historical stature and

part of the “pro-Fascist” elevation of the “enchanted,” which she sees as an “aestheticizing of the political” (*The Composer as Intellectual*, 257).

⁶¹ In his *Histoire*, Landormy also calls Fauré “very French” and compares his music with that of Claude LeJeune (321).

⁶² “Peu connu de la grande foule et presque entièrement méconnu à l’étranger, ce créateur essentiellement français, parle un langage d’une délicatesse et d’une sensibilité qui n’ont pas encore triomphé de l’indifférence publique.... On n’a pas encore découvert tous les trésors que contient son oeuvre.... Tout en lui est musique et rien que musique... La radiophonie française a un grand devoir à remplir: tirer de l’aristocratique réserve ... l’art en qui on peut saluer le plus français des musiciens de France” (90).

⁶³ Vuillermoz, *Histoire de la musique*, 377.

⁶⁴ Vuillermoz later baptized them as such in his *Histoire de la musique* (1949).

significance. Fauré, with 14 appearances, comes just after Haydn with 15. With only eight appearances of d'Indy's name, and only in conjunction with his own or Frank's music, the book suggests that d'Indy's ongoing importance is modest.

Third, Vuillermoz points out that no one of this new trinity had easy or immediate success--each had to work for years to win public renown. As is frequently the case when arguing for artistic genius, such difficulties provide a certain proof of greatness. In this, Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré resembled Beethoven and Wagner who receive the largest sections in the Dictionary of works (see Figure 1). Beethoven's symphonies, concertos, overtures, last quartet, Missa Solemnis, Kreutzer sonata, piano sonatas, and Diabelli variations are described, movement by movement, as to compositional context, form, and effect. Alongside plot summaries, some rooted in French tales, Dictionary entries on Wagner's operas also address the form and "message" of each work (e.g., *Parsifal* suggests that all revolutions are in vain if each man does not seek his own regeneration through renunciation [329]). However, the historical section focuses on the struggles that underlie their music. With his "detestable" father and poor health, as Landormy sees it, "all the drama" of Beethoven's internal life "passed into his work" (30-33), the "most extraordinary, moving, and grandiose ever conceived by the human genius" (32). Likewise, Wagner was "devoured by melancholy, ravaged by despair, and torturing himself and others around him," and yet he attempted to "create the most grandiose, powerful, and rich works that Germany would produce in the nineteenth century" (52).

Fourth and most important, while major composers are represented in the Dictionary by only work—e.g. Lully by an air from *Amadis*, Rossini by *Le Barbier de Séville*, and Offenbach by *La Belle Hélène*—the new trinity benefits from analyses of many works, disproportionate to both their historical importance and their popularity on the radio. After Beethoven's sixteen entries (13 pages) and Wagner's ten (12 pages), seven works by Mozart take up the next largest space in the dictionary (8 pages). Compare the data on Figure 1 to analyses of nine works by Fauré (4.7 pages), eight by Debussy (3.6 pages) and eight by Ravel (2.6 pages). The space given to Fauré's works is somewhat more than that of J.S. Bach as well as Saint-Saëns, the latter with fewer analyses. The preponderance of works by the trinity in the book's Dictionary exaggerates the significance of Fauré's, Debussy's, and Ravel's relative output to argue for their place in the canon of great composers.

Figure 1. *L'Initiation à la musique*, Dictionary: number of works, length of entry in pages (selected)

Beethoven	16 (13)	Gluck	3 (3 p)
Wagner	10 (12 p)	Liszt	3 (3 p)
Fauré	9 (4.7 p)	Chopin	3 (2 p)
Debussy	8 (3.6 p)	Brahms	3 (2 p)
Mozart	7 (8 p)	Stravinsky	3 (1.8 p)
Ravel	7 (2.6 p)	Lalo	3 (1.7 p)
Saint-Saëns	6 (4.5 p)	Franck	2 (2.3 p)
J. S. Bach	6 (4.3 p)	Massenet	2 (2 p)
Schumann	6 (4 p)	d'Indy	2 (1.6 p)
Schubert	6 (3 p)	Rameau	2 (1.3 p)
Fl. Schmitt	6 (2.4 p)	Dukas	2 (1.3 p)
R. Strauss	5 (2 p)	Pierné	2 (1.3 p)
Berlioz	4 (5 p)	Rabaud	2 (1.3 p)
Mendelssohn	4 (3 p)	Bizet	1 (2 p)
		Gounod	1 (2 p)
		Honegger	1 (1 p)

In addition to this tactic for elevating certain reputations, the book gives less attention than might be deserved to predecessors previously thought of as quintessentially French, especially Berlioz. In the historical section, Landormy writes pejoratively: of harmony and composition, Berlioz knew very little; his works were not well-received and he lost faith; "his love life was as pathetic as his artistic life;" "his work was not better organized than his life;" his music impresses the listener and speaks to the imagination, but has no heart (40).⁶⁵ In the Dictionary, the authors analyze four of his works, but in each case point to their failure with the public and the "pitiful character" that was Berlioz (193).

There are other dismissive entries and notable omissions as well. The composition teacher and Conservatoire director from 1896 to 1905, Theodore Dubois, is nowhere mentioned, though the composer with whom he shared the City of Paris prize in 1878, Benjamin Godard, gets a paragraph as a "musician of charm and seduction" (83). So do his lesser-known contemporaries, the Hillemacher brothers and Xavier Leroux, "a slave to easy eloquence and therefore immediate success" (86). Also absent is Charles Lenepveu, composition teacher at the Conservatoire at the turn of the century, perhaps because he prevented Ravel from winning the Prix de Rome. This suggests that the

⁶⁵ "De l'harmonie et de la composition, il ne savait pas grand'chose. Il suivait son instinct.... La vie sentimentale de Berlioz est aussi lamentable que sa vie artistique.... Son oeuvre n'est pas mieux organisée que sa vie.... Berlioz ne s'adresse qu'à notre imagination. Il ne touche pas profondément notre sensibilité. Il nous éblouit, nous éblouit, nous entraîne, nous étourdit. Cette musique, qui a tant de flammes, n'a pas de coeur." (48-9)

authors, several of whom studied in the Conservatoire at the time, wished to remove Dubois and Lenepveu from history. Today's reader might also object to the Dictionary's inclusion of only one or two works by otherwise famous composers. Among them, at least the entries on Costeley, Couperin, Hérold, Jannequin, Josquin, Lassus, Méhul, Mussorgsky, Palestrina, Pergolese, Puccini, Scarlatti, Smetana, Johann Strauss, Vittoria and Vivaldi begin with short biographies.

Particularly distressing, women composers are totally missing from this volume, with one exception. And yet, when Emmanuel was photographed with his recent composition students at the Conservatoire, three-quarters were women.⁶⁶ Augusta Holmès appears nowhere, and her late nineteenth-century career and renown far exceeded that of many composers here discussed. Moreover, her music was occasionally broadcast on the radio. Especially surprisingly, given its frequent presence on radio programs from Paris to Rabat, the authors ignore Chaminade. Also striking is the absence of Nadia and Lili Boulanger, for the book includes other composers whose careers consisted as much in their teaching as their composition (e.g. Fauré, Delibes, d'Indy, Leroux). The sole reference to a female is Germaine Tailleferre, her name only appearing in a list of weak composers "without a pronounced personality" (100).

At the same time, the book offers a seemingly exhaustive review of minor male contemporaries (over fifty composers, most of them given a few lines). To suggest the strength of the trinity's lineage, Vuillermoz draws special attention to composers who worked with them or continued in their paths, some, such as Louis Beydts, now forgotten.⁶⁷ Others, such as Maurice Delage, Jean Cras, and Alexandre Tansman, appear only by name. Then comes Satie and les Six, their importance long the subject of debate, especially between Landormy and Vuillermoz. By 1935, in Vuillermoz's opinion, the former's charm had definitely faded. Satie, an "inventor of chords who seemed incapable of exploiting his discoveries," comes across as a bit of a charlatan." Vuillermoz claims he only became head of a new aesthetic by accident (99-100), his influence being contradictory and exaggerated.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the composer gets a whole page here and, from the long list of his works up through *Relâche* and *Socrate*--perhaps a compromise made with Landormy who earlier had promoted him--Satie at least appears prolific.

Les Six too get a mixed review. Rejected is any new style associated with the name, its composers instead examined individually. Despite Landormy's earlier promotion of the group, here dismissals abound, covering those representing both ends of

⁶⁶ In this photo, 15 students are females, 6 males. See Emmanuel, "Lettres inédites," 75.

⁶⁷ Louis Beydts, "distinguished and elegant musician" and operetta composer, here receives seven lines of text, the longest in a list that includes Widor, Ropartz, Février, Migot, and many others, perhaps because he orchestrated some of Debussy's music. In comparison, the operetta composer Offenbach only receives eight lines, Lecocq seven lines (102-103). Sordet, a fan of Beydts's music, had written on it in *Radio-Magazine* (3 January 1932). Reviewing his songs at the Concerts Colonne in 1935, he found them as "knowledgable" and "ingenious" as Ibert's Concerto, but "touching the spirit and enchanting the ear" far more ("La Musique, les concerts," *L'Action française* [25 January 1935]).

⁶⁸ "Les jeux de la politique musicale avaient transformé d'une façon arbitraire, Erik Satie en chef d'école" (99).

the political spectrum.⁶⁹ Among "musicians without a pronounced personality," the politically conservative Francis Poulenc, a Debussyste acknowledged for his "gracious and elegant" works, gets less than three lines; so does the future Popular Front sympathizer, Georges Auric, described summarily as a child prodigy who wrote for theater and film (100). Other composers, also described in three or four lines of text, come across more positively. Jacques Ibert, recognized for his "originality and mastery," is someone "from whom one can expect a lot" (95). Charles Koechlin, with his "prodigious culture," receives praise for his "prophetic lyrical works," perhaps in reference to their polytonality (95-96). Also in three lines, Georges Migot, given more attention than Milhaud in Vuillermoz's earlier book (1923),⁷⁰ is here acknowledged for his "constructive research." In contrast, and unlike what he had written earlier, Vuillermoz expresses his admiration in long paragraphs for Milhaud and Honegger, "two musicians with vigorous temperament, albeit pursuing very different goals." Milhaud, who had been championed by Landormy and would later thrive under the Popular Front, is "the only artist of the group with a clearly revolutionary spirit," his technique and style falsely associated with colleagues pursuing other paths. His "aggressive style," with "extreme dissonance, violent timbres, massive, brutal orchestration, and polytonality," are evidence of a musician whose "generosity is not in doubt," although, as least for Vuillermoz, it does not seem to have found its "definitive expression" (101). Milhaud's substantial and "very diverse" list of works here ends with *Poèmes juifs* and *Méodies hébraïques*, drawing attention to his religious affiliation. Honegger's vigorous works, with ties to German aesthetics, have a "warm and direct eloquence." Vuillermoz singles out his most popular and accessible work, *Le Roi David*, for embodying orchestral polyphony (101).⁷¹ The work is also analyzed in the Dictionary, along with *Pacific 231*. The book's history ends with short, distinct sections on operetta, "an essentially French genre," and jazz. After noting the "French origin" of its saxophones, Panassié points to jazz's "profound influence on all music today."⁷²

For all their openness to contemporary composers, ironically after this hundred-page discussion of "music's evolution," the co-authors end with a latent anxiety about the future and point to the "troubling crossroads of tendencies, tastes, and ideas before which music today has ground to a halt."⁷³ "Young composers of today" have "unstable ideals," "often miss something in their technique," and sometimes overuse the

⁶⁹ On Vuillermoz's earlier objections to les Six and Landormy's support of them, see Kelly, *Music and Ultra-modernism*, 76-80.

⁷⁰ Kelly compares the critical reception of the two composers and suggests that in the 1920s Vuillermoz felt that Milhaud was "insufficiently revolutionary or original" (Ibid., 79, 175-79).

⁷¹ As Kelly points out, this work reflected Honegger's break with Satie. Ibid., 203.

⁷² Panassié mentions George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, and a number of jazz performers such as Duke Ellington and Ray Ventura, but ignores all other composers of American music, including Chadwick, Cowell, and Ives, though his *Three Places in New England* had its Paris premiere in 1931. For a more complete and compelling essay on jazz by Panassié, see his "Le Jazz 'hot'," *Revue musicale* no. 105 (June 1930): 481-494 and his book, *Le Jazz Hot* (1934).

⁷³ "Ce rapide tableau de l'évolution musicale à travers les ages nous a conduits au troublant carrefour de tendances, de goûts et d'idées où se trouve immobilisée la musique d'aujourd'hui" (106).

“revolutionary practices” of atonality or polytonality—all this “the inevitable reflection of the troubled times in which we live” (107). While interesting, so far their techniques have resulted in little more than experimentation “of which nothing seems definitive” (107). With no further clarification, the reader is left wondering if the reference includes those unmentioned in the book, such as Varèse who had left for New York, Aaron Copland and Elliott Carter who had studied in Paris, or la Jeune France (Messiaen, Jolivet, and Lesur), which formed as a group the next year.⁷⁴ If the public is not yet accustomed to “such boldness,” they suggest, it’s understandable. Putting aside their role as musical advisors, here perhaps in the words of the editor, Sordet, the writers admit that no one can predict what will come or can know which of today’s tendencies will become genuinely important in the future.

Between this history and the analyses of works, terms, and instruments that follow come two chapters on the history of song, the only genre here singled out for in-depth examination. Perhaps in response to this emerging taste on the radio, *L’Initiation à la musique*, Hahn explains the nature of singing, its study and practice over the centuries. Unlike Landormy, who writes of early opera’s eventual “decadence,” Hahn here waxes enthusiastic about the advent of castrati at the Sistine Chapel, “incomparable singers” who created the art of “bel canto” that flourished until the eighteenth century. Under their influence, priority shifted to the “music itself” and listeners’ interest to “soloists and their vocal prowess” (115-16). Hahn describes the talents of the most famous castrati, including Farinelli, and then opera stars from the Napoleonic era through the present, without ignoring the role played by local churches as incubators for singers. He ends with an outline of vocal types.

Chepfer, in contrast, analyzes a series of popular songs and focuses on the importance of the radio in raising song’s status and popularity. Patently prescriptive, as if addressing composers, he advises that “the public likes and will always like simple, melodic, and direct songs.... Pleasing, that’s the secret of songs.”⁷⁵ The charm and gaiety songs bring cannot demand any “mental work” in the listener. Chepfer also addresses singers as if their teacher, going over the interpretation necessary for each kind of song. In performing on the radio, singers’ diction “must be impeccable” and “the listener must have the impression of sharing something confidential.”⁷⁶ Such a section thus builds explicitly on the writer’s personal opinion, though the fundamental point is the same as that made in the book’s historical section: love music, regardless of how it is

⁷⁴ Messiaen’s exclusion is particularly puzzling, given his interest in the music of Debussy and Ravel, his first prize in music history (1929) coming out of Emmanuel’s class at the Conservatoire, their respect for his composition teacher Dukas, and his organ music on the radio in the early 1930s. Perhaps he was just too young, his public debut with *Les Offrandes oubliées* coming only in 1931.

⁷⁵ “Le public aime et aimera toujours les chansons simples mélodiques, directes.... Plaire, voilà le secret en matière chansonnière” (143).

⁷⁶ “Que cet artiste chante une chanson ... celui qui l’écoute doit avoir l’impression de recevoir une confiance. Avec la radio, l’attention de cet auditoire privé de vision est tout entière concentrée sur le son, la diction de l’artiste devra donc être impeccable” (146).

defined and performed, listen with one's heart, submit to music's charm, and allow it to make us better.⁷⁷

Conclusions

L'Initiation à la musique is thus a fascinating window onto the intersection of nationalism and musical canonization in the 1930s and demonstrates that one could be nationalist without being fascist. Unlike in Scholastic documents, one finds no reference to social, moral, religious, or even political motivations underlying their story. The co-authors write with the appearance of authority and a sense of hierarchy in what they present, but they also preach tolerance for a wide range of styles and aesthetic perspectives. Their sense of tradition is neither reactionary, nor royalist--hoping for music to return to the aesthetics of a previous era, nor strictly populist--elevating the needs and desires of the masses over those of elites. Indeed, the book suggests how ambiguous were divisions between the Right and the Left during this period and how intertwined their values.

When it comes to French music, the book devotes equal space to those with opposed points of view, Saint-Saëns then Massenet, d'Indy then Bruneau and Charpentier. Moreover, they sympathetically support the latter's reaching out to the people, perhaps reflecting long-term friendships that several of the book's authors had with musicians associated with the far Left, Romain Rolland and Charles Koechlin. They value refined connoisseurship and are quick to recognize individual achievement. Anything that seems like a "gospel" repels them, from the dogma associated with d'Indy to the "tyrannical influence" of Wagner on the aesthetics of his successors (53). Academicism, such as in the music of Conservatoire director Henri Rabaud, receives its due (two works in the Dictionary, and appreciation of its "technical elegance" [87]), although elsewhere Sordet notes that it was "not our role" to promote such an "outdated aesthetic."⁷⁸ What excites them are strong musical personalities and revolutionary contributions to the progress of music, even as they maintain some reserve as to the ultimate value of Schoenberg and Stravinsky's radical innovations. At the same time, they embrace the idea of music as accessible, expressing contemporary life. They appreciate simplicity and, like Koechlin, an absence of pretention in music, discussing popular genres non-pejoratively and jazz enthusiastically. From their perspective, one of the "pleasures of the cultivated listener" is to notice, for example, that a composer as "reputedly difficult" as Ravel in his *Ma mère l'Oye* "owes a great deal to his first teacher, the popular and charming Massenet" (5).

⁷⁷ "Chacun aime la musique à sa manière. L'essentiel est de l'aimer.... La musique, la bonne musique, est aussi un charme, un enchantement. Elle touche, elle ravit, elle enivre, elle exalte. Elle nous élève au-dessus de notre misérable condition humaine. Elle nous rend meilleurs. Il est permis, certes, d'en raisonner. Mais il faut savoir s'abandonner sans résistance au flot des émotions qu'elle éveille en nous. Il faut savoir l'écouter avec son coeur" (6, 8-9).

⁷⁸ Sordet writes of Rabaud's new opera *Rolande* that it "nous ramène a un passé qui ne revivra plus," with music that "veut tout ignorer des révolutions que la langue musicale a subie depuis vingt ans" ("La Musique," *L'Action française* [26 May 1934]).

Advocating the value of music from throughout Europe, the book's authors are also strong European internationalists. On what was to become among the most divisive issue of the day, Judaism, they keep their distance, promoting the music of Hahn, Milhaud, and Kurt Weil and excluding from their collaboration Lucien Rebatet, an anti-Semitic writer whose columns appeared next to those of Sordet in *L'Action française* from 1929 through the 1930s. This book represents an example of how to use nationalism to build a *bleu horizon*-like alliance amid differences.

As much as the *Union-Sacrée*, in some ways *L'Initiation à la musique* harks back to the idealist ambitions of the early Third Republic radicals. First, they were a group of republicans that formed alliances with both the Left and the Right.⁷⁹ Leftist Radicals like Clemenceau and Gambetta shared with the Right opposition to colonialism and focus on retrieving the French provinces lost to Prussia. They were among the first members of the nationalist organization, Ligue des patriotes, “an unprecedented alliance of conservatives and radicals, royalists and Bonapartists, wealthy and ordinary folk ... women and petit bourgeois Parisians.”⁸⁰ To make such a consortium possible and accomplish their goals, the group promised to avoid politics and religion. A similar attitude bonded the contributors to *L'Initiation à la musique*. Moreover, Radical republicanism, before Boulangism and the protectionist nationalism of Déroulède, was known for its tolerance for diversity. In music, this took the form of attempting to balance the domination of the Académie des beaux-arts over educational policy and public awards and institutionalize greater democracy by forming committees and juries representing a multitude of aesthetic positions.⁸¹ In *L'Initiation à la musique* too, its authors recognize that Frenchness comes in many forms and shapes. Rather than reducing French music to some kind of core attributes—whether melodicism, clarity, and simplicity; grace, elegance, and charm; or vigor and directness--Vuillermoz, Landormy, Emmanuel, and the others focus on what each composer contributed.

Second, *L'Initiation à la musique* espouses notions of progress promoted by Radicals in the 1870s and 1880s. These republicans embraced the contemporary world and wished to replace the Académie's standards with those of contemporary artists. And in 1879, Antonin Proust, friend and advocate of Manet, called for the Opéra to produce at

⁷⁹ Later, Sordet wrote the preface to a new book on the Third Republic. Its author, Léon Emery, a leftist professor, member of the Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Anti-fascistes and a militant trade unionist, was also a pacifist and anti-communist. Sordet saw him as representative of an “underground evolution” in France, the disintegration of old parties under the influence of new forces. (Sordet, “Avant-propos” to Léon Emery, *La Troisième République* [Paris: Centre d'études de l'Agence Inter-France, 1943], 6-7). Emery's book starts out in 1870, with “the internal contradictions from which civil war could have emerged.” He then recounts the hope that the new regime in 1879 would bring “civil peace and international peace.” The “radical republic” that emerged embraced “scientism and faith in progress” (35, 52, 87). During World War I, a reconfigured Radical party was crucial to the *Union-sacrée*.

⁸⁰ On radical republicanism, see Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 439-50, 495-96.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 269-70. For more on how radicals shaped the Conseil Supérieur des Beaux-Arts, see Marie-Claude Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat sous la IIIe République. Le Système des Beaux-Arts 1870-1940* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1992).

least two new works per year. Radicals also believed that artistic and technological progress contribute to national progress, particularly the economic progress of the country. Despite their *mystique de gauche*, they were committed to political and economic liberalism. The capitalist economy flourished when their power increased in the early 1880s. For them, the future of French industry was dependent on the interaction between the fine arts and applied arts.⁸² This philosophy led to the ever-expanding Exhibitions of 1878, 1889, and 1900 and to appreciating and rewarding innovation in industry. *L'Initiation à la musique*'s attention to living composers and its authors' collaboration with the radio industry should be understood similarly.

Third, the underlying purpose of the book and its radio industry subsidy echo Radicals' belief in the need to serve the needs of both elites and ordinary people. Antonin Proust, minister of the arts under Gambetta, pushed for opening the Opéra to "those who don't have the privilege of wealth."⁸³ In the 1930s, as Brian Jenkins has pointed out, Radicals saw themselves as guardians of the republican tradition. Some have argued that they joined the Popular Front "to conserve rather than transform" and had a "tendency to cling to the life-raft of the 1875 Constitution every time a new wind began to blow."⁸⁴ When it came to culture, although socialists dominated the Popular Front, its ideology was consciously republican. In his 1937 address to the Chambre des députés about the national budget, harking back to the early 1880s when education of the masses became a national priority, Joanny Berlioz argued for returning to the "republican" notion of culture, one that made it "an integral part of the public domain [*la chose publique*]." *L'Initiation à la musique* anticipates this deputy's desire to "return art to the people" and "elevate their artistic education."⁸⁵ If its authors occasionally use expressions and values that seem elitist, it is not the old aristocratic elite of inherited privilege or money that they are calling for, but an elite based on the ear, *une élite de l'oreille*, those who have learned how to listen.

Like their political counterparts, the authors of *L'Initiation à la musique* recognized radio's immense potential for reaching the masses. As early as 1933, Vuillermoz had been arguing for the power of recordings, radio, and sound films to build their musical taste:

Mechanical music can fulfill a higher scholarly mission. With a well-composed recording collection, one can organize a history of music course.... With good records, ... we will usefully defend the forgotten rights of one of the most eloquent and perfect modes of expression of thought and civilization.⁸⁶

⁸² Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 330-331.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Brian Jenkins, *Nationalism in France, Class and Nation since 1789* (London: Routledge, 1990), 139, 140.

⁸⁵ The text of this address, transcribed in the *Journal officiel*, no. 12850, pp. 2982 ff, is reproduced in Genet-Delacroix, *Art et Etat* as Appendix 49, 421-424.

⁸⁶ Vuillermoz, "La Musique mécanique et la culture musicale," 98-100.

With the impending end of the Third Republic, what was at stake was nothing less than their view of history and the values of their generation. The alliances underlying *L'Initiation à la musique* enabled its authors to come to an agreement on the past, shape perception of the present, and articulate their own canon of French music. As I have here shown, this meant promoting especially Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel. The time was right. D'Indy had died in 1931 and no disciple could replace him. Ravel would go in 1937, Maurice Emmanuel in 1938. Age too may have been a factor in the push for a new canon. Most of these authors had already fought their major battles. Their best hope was to look back to the *bleu-horizon*, the values they espoused early in their own careers, and to use the position of age and experience to inscribe their vision on collective memory before it was too late.

Coda

In a review of this book, Vuillermoz called it “the first time that musical science has been made available to the large public in a form as little intimidating and as easily assimilated as possible. It should be required in all our schools by our university authorities.”⁸⁷ Soon thereafter, the book inspired new ways to continue its work. In 1936 Radio-Scolaire began broadcasts, which included singing lessons, and in 1935-36, Radio-Paris broadcast a series of lectures that they published in book form. The first year, once per week for thirty weeks, Vuillermoz, Landormy, Emmanuel, and Hahn, as well as Prunières, Expert, Lalo, Curzon, Gastoué, Mauclair, Boschot, Prod’homme, and others spoke on the early history of French lyric theater, from the troubadours to the Revolution. Vuillermoz wrote a conclusion in the publication. Two more lecture series and volumes followed.⁸⁸ Vuillermoz summed up their philosophy,

Modern music needs to be "explained".... The innumerable army of music-lovers need sergeant-instructors... enlightened and disinterested guides who try to hold in their hands Ariana's thread.⁸⁹

The inter-war political ambiguities that found expression in alliances between the Left and the Right in *L'Initiation à la musique* collapsed with the war, and what followed reminds us that one should resist writing history retroactively, despite any apparent

⁸⁷ E. Vuillermoz, “L’Initiation à la musique,” *Ouest-Éclair* (4 October 1935). This appeared directly under a long article on the Saint-Saëns centennial and the programs dedicated to it that week on Radio-Paris.

⁸⁸ Ministère des P.T.T. Direction de la Radiodiffusion. Poste national Radio-Paris, *Conférences sur la musique. Histoire du théâtre lyrique en France. I. Des Origines à la Révolution* (Paris: Radio-Paris, s.d.). Volume 2 took the genre up to 1900 (with, additionally, Koechlin, Roland-Manuel, Masson, and Mme Dussane), volume 3, from 1900 until the present (adding Dukas, Casadesus, Le Flem, Dumesnil, Beydts, Laloy, and others). As Bennet points out, earlier there were other non-published lectures on music at Radio-Paris, also with Emmanuel, Vuillermoz, and others, 150 of them between 1929 and 1934. (*La Musique à la radio*, 176-78).

⁸⁹ Emile Vuillermoz, “Les Responsabilités de la critique,” *Atti del secondo congresso internazionale di musica*, Firenze-Cremona 11-20 maggio 1937 (Firenze: Felice le Monnier, 1940), 181-184.

continuities. Whereas Vuillermoz had written in January 1935 on the formidable dangers of Nazism and its use of radio,⁹⁰ under the Vichy regime he and Sordet abandoned the nationalism characterizing *L'Initiation à la musique*. Increasingly worried about communism and French sovereignty, Sordet turned sharply to the right. At the same time, in a lecture he delivered in March 1944, despairing the collapse of his country and looking for something to blame other than the nation, Sordet damned all authoritarian regimes, including that of the Action française, the Catholic church, the army, the terrorist La Cagoule, and fanatical bolshevism, as well as the opportunism of most French functionaries and those who caved in to Vichy.⁹¹ Meanwhile, Vuillermoz took a job at the Vichy-controlled Radio Nationale, Marseille and there continued his work educating radio listeners. In 1941-42, believing that music could be a “great consolation” during the war, Vuillermoz there created a new radio genre for children, calling it “L’Initiation à la musique.” This series of weekly radio programs on Sunday mornings took the form of a dialogue between a twelve-year-old boy, Georges, who loves music so much that he hides out at orchestral rehearsals, and a percussionist who takes him under his wings, responds to his questions, and tries to initiate him to the “mysteries of music, technical details, and notions of history.” Ironically, of the eight texts that remain in the critic’s archives, none are on the new trinity of music. Four address Saint-Saëns’s music, beginning with the *Suite algérienne*; the others--Schumann’s *Scenes from Childhood*, Johann Strauss’s waltzes, Richard Strauss’s *Till Eulenspiegel*, and Schmitt’s *Reflets d’Allemagne*-- suggest the influence of the pro-German Vichy government, which paid him well for the programs.⁹² In October 1943, the same month he began writing music criticism for the collaborationist publication *Je suis partout*, Vuillermoz brought this genre to Radio Nationale, Paris, continuing the program through May 1944. Here the boy is the son of the theater’s electrician; he never studied music, but loves it. Sunday morning rehearsals at the Salle Gaveau were open to the youth organization, Jeunesses musicales de France. Soon Vuillermoz began to work for them, writing analytical notes for concerts in its weekly bulletin, printed in ten thousand copies. In 1944, Jeunesses musicales published his *Les Cahiers de l’initiation à la musique*, accompanied by a Pathé-Marconi recording of the musical examples.

This suggests that Vuillermoz’s politics, language, and even musical preferences may have changed in response to the war and the Vichy regime, but never his underlying purpose. While a collaborationist, he was also still republican: “I have always believed that one of the essential missions of radio has been to enrich the spiritual, intellectual, and moral baggage of the most modest of listeners. We have great artists, but not an enlightened public.”⁹³ Reiterating to the Jeunesses musicales what he and his

⁹⁰ Emile Vuillermoz, “Pour le plébiscite de la Sarre: La propagande du Reich par TSF,” *L’Excelsior* (5 January 1935).

⁹¹ This was published as *Les Derniers Jours de la démocratie* (Paris: Inter-France, 1944).

⁹² According to contracts signed in Vichy on 25 August 1941 and 30 March 1942, Vuillermoz was paid from 6000 to 10,000 francs per month for one program each week, plus an hour of rehearsal. Fonds Vuillermoz, Médiathèque Musicale Mahler, Paris (MMM).

⁹³ Cited in a review of Vuillermoz’s radio lectures in *Comoedia* (9 October 1943). Fonds Vuillermoz, MMM.

collaborators had written in *L'Initiation à la musique*, he explained, “There’s not one art for the people and another for the bourgeoisie... Everyone has the right to good music.”⁹⁴

Illustration 1. *L'Initiation à la musique*, inside title page

Illustration 2. Ducretet-Thomson, ad in *L'Initiation à la musique*

⁹⁴ Vuillermoz, “Promenade autour de la musique” (c. 1943). Fonds Vuillermoz, MMM.