MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS AT THE 1889 PARIS WORLD'S FAIR

Annegret Fauser

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Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair



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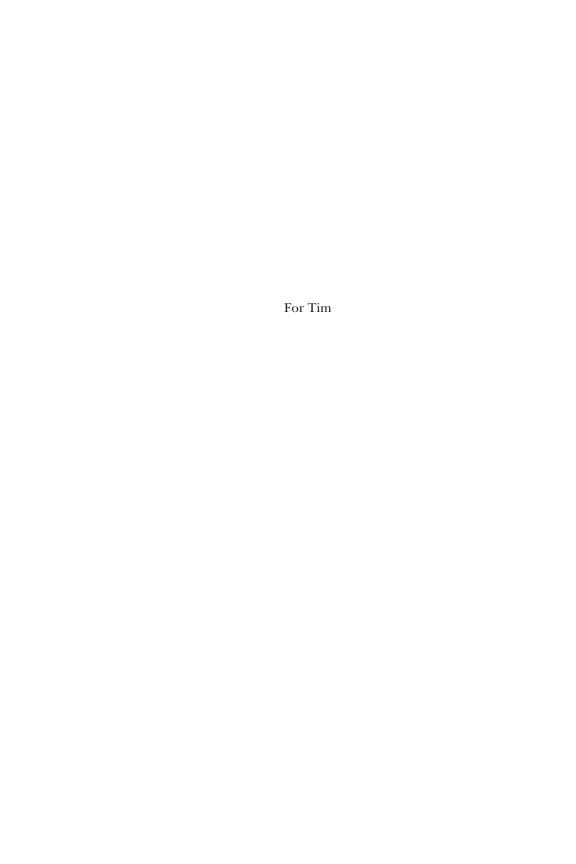
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A.F. April 2005

Abbreviations

B.H.V.P Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris

DE Annegret Fauser, ed., Dossier de presse parisienne: Jules Massenet, "Esclar-

monde."

F-Pn Bibliothèque Nationale de France

F-Po Bibliothèque de l'Opéra

NGr2 Grove Music Online, ed. Laura Macy, http://www.grovemusic.com. All

articles were accessed before 31 August 2004.

Introduction

The Soundscape of the 1889 Exposition Universelle

The Exposition Universelle, which took place in the six months between 6 May and 6 November 1889 in Paris, was one of the major political, economic, and cultural events of the late nineteenth century in France. It attracted more than thirty million people to its wonders, and 61,722 exhibitors, as the government of France invited the world to come to Paris to show samples of its industrial products, natural resources, and cultural achievements. The Exposition was located at the Champ de Mars, on the banks of the Seine, right in the center of the French capital. A spectacle to end all spectacles, the 1889 Exposition Universelle was an event of superlatives: the highest iron tower (figure I.1), the latest technology, the most exotic people, a maximum number of historic reconstructions, and the most diverse music ever heard. Surrounding the Eiffel Tower, an impressive array of buildings showcased the industries and crafts from countries as diverse as Bolivia and China; exhibitions in the Palais des Beaux-Arts presented paintings and sculptures from France and abroad; the Galerie des Machines was a temple to industrial progress, "a masterpiece of modern mechanics" containing "all the wonders of human activity."² Artists from all over the world came to Paris to perform at this event, whether inside the Exposition Universelle like the dancers and musicians from Java, or in other Parisian locations but loosely connected to the World's Fair, like Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which was

^{1.} Data taken from Dominique Brisson, La Tour Eiffel: Tours et détours, CD-Rom (Paris: arte Editions, 1997). For a short survey and evaluation of the 1889 World's Fair, see Pascal Ory, L'Expo Universelle (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1989). The event is set in its historical context in Linda Aimone and Carlo Olmo, Les Expositions universelles, 1851–1900, trans. Philippe Olivier (Paris: Belin, 1993); and Winfried Kretschmer, Geschichte der Weltausstellungen (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 1999), 121–31.

^{2.} Exposition de 1889: Guide Bleu du "Figaro" et du "Petit Journal" avec 5 plans et 31 dessins (Paris: Le Figaro, 1889), 118: "un chef-d'œuvre de l'art mécanique moderne"; "toutes les merveilles de l'activité humaine."

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But the fair was also designed to celebrate the centenary of the French Revolution of 1789. As a result, many a European monarch frowned upon the occasion. But while nations such as Britain, Italy, and Germany withheld official support, their governments encouraged private enterprise to represent their nations appropriately. For republics such as the United States, Argentina, and Brazil, however, the fair offered an perfect window to celebrate the republican ideal. But 1889 was also a crucial year for other reasons. Not only was it the centenary of the Revolution, but it also brought the Third Republic to the brink of collapse through a threatened coup d'état by the popular former Minister of War, General Boulanger, in January; the resulting political shifts over the year led to a major political realignment in 1890 that would finally stabilize the political and social landscape of France, both nationally and internationally, until it was again destabilized by the Dreyfus Affair. The Exposition Universelle became a major theater for these issues, reflecting and shaping a range of political and cultural concerns.

The Third Republic, although almost twenty years old in 1889, had been in crisis since the election in 1885, which shifted the majorities of moderate and conservative republicans in Parliament in favor of the radicals. For the first time since 1870, the radicals had enough political weight to be included in government, and one of the ministerial posts given them was the Ministry of War, allocated to the *revanchiste* General Georges Boulanger (1837–91). Boulanger's strident, anti-German rhetoric was taken seriously enough by the German chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, to call up the reserves and enlarge the German army. This had French moderates sufficiently worried to get rid of the minister who, in turn, began a political campaign against the government. Starting out as a radical republican, Boulanger entered into secret negotiations with both the Bonapartists and the Royalists, and he also received support from the *Ligue des Patriotes*, a radical, right-wing organization. Throughout 1888, Boulanger

^{3.} On William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody's linking of the Wild West Show to world's fairs, see Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 71–75, 83–87.

^{4.} Eric J. Hobsbawm, Echoes of the Marseillaise: Two Centuries Look Back on the French Revolution (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 69–70.

^{5.} Marc Angenot, 1889: Un état du discours social (Longeuil, Quebec: Éditions du Préambule, 1989).

^{6.} Robert Gildea, *The Third Republic from 1870 to 1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1988), 16–23; Maurice Agulhon, *La République: L'élan fondateur et la grande blessure* (1880–1932) (Paris: Hachette, 1990), 64–78.

^{7.} Zeev Sternhell, La Droite révolutionnaire, 1885–1914 (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 105–16.

toured France from one by-election to the next, winning seat after seat, only to resign and stand for election again. His association with the right became known but did little to diminish his popular appeal, and his support increased still further after he challenged the prime minister, Charles Floquet, to a duel and, to everybody's surprise, was wounded. On 27 January 1889, Boulanger won a by-election in Paris. On the night of his victory, a crowd "gathered at the Place de la Madeleine outside a restaurant where Boulanger met with political advisers in one room and with his mistress in another. 'To the Élysée! To the Élysée,' cried supporters, encouraging their hero to stage a coup d'état and march to the presidential palace a few streets away. But the general hesitated, the moment passed, and the republic survived."8 Not only did it survive, but it went on the offensive. Under the leadership of the Minister of the Interior, Ernest Constans, the government developed enough evidence to accuse Boulanger of treason, but he made a dramatic escape to Brussels on 1 April 1889. Because Boulanger was an elected member of Parliament, his trial was for treason took place at the High Court of the Senate. It started on 8 August, and on 14 August he was found guilty and sentenced to deportation. By the end of 1889, Boulanger's support had fizzled out almost completely. He died two years later, committing suicide on the grave of his recently deceased mistress, Madame de Bonnemains (née Marguerite Crouzet).

Boulanger's base was distributed throughout France and her provinces, but the final act of the drama unfolded in the capital. In political terms, Paris was (and still is) a schizophrenic city, both the seat of government of France and its foremost and most populated metropolis. These two sides were not always in political alignment, and in 1889 the moderate national government was faced with a radical municipality: Parisians had, after all, voted Boulanger into the government at the beginning of 1889. During the Exposition Universelle, a third layer was added, with the fair constituted as a global village in the city. Both the nation and the city had designs on the Exposition Universelle, and while it served as a "garden" of the Republic, it was also a (temporary) district of Paris. For both the city and the nation, however, it was a major event drawing national and international attention. The Exposition Universelle was touted—in the words of the *Guide bleu*—as a "gigantic encyclopedia, in which nothing was forgotten."

^{8.} Michael Burns, *Dreyfus: A Family Affair, 1789–1945* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992), 77.

^{9.} On the notion of the Exposition as a garden of the Republic, see Ory, *L'Expo Universelle*, 65.

^{10.} Exposition de 1889: Guide Bleu du "Figaro" et du "Petit Journal," 12: "une encyclopédie gigantesque, où rien n'a été oublié."

[This fair] shows us how, in 1889, man nourishes himself, dresses, furnishes, and speaks; through which scientific procedures he works to the satisfaction of his needs; it shows us the past history and the present state of the arts which ornament his life and of the sciences destined to make man happier, more intelligent, and better. . . . It shows, and it explains everything. Following the example of manufacturers who, every year, take stock in order to evaluate to the penny yesterday's returns and tomorrow's resources, one might say that all humanity has come in 1889 to take stock in Paris, between the Esplanade des Invalides and the Trocadéro.

... nous montre comment, à la date de 1889, l'être humain se nourrit, s'habille, se meuble et se parle; par quels procédés scientifiques il travaille à la satisfaction de ses besoins; elle nous montre l'histoire passé et l'état présent des arts qui ornent sa vie, et des sciences destinées à rendre l'homme plus heureux, plus intelligent et meilleur. . . . Elle montre et elle explique tout. A l'exemple des industriels qui font leur inventaire chaque année afin d'évaluer à un sou près leurs bénéfices d'hier et leurs ressources de demain, on peut dire que l'humanité toute entière est venue, en 1889, faire son inventaire à Paris, entre l'esplanade des Invalides et le Trocadéro. ¹¹

Humanity's current achievement was thus shown and celebrated in glorious detail at the Exposition Universelle. The fair also offered a significant retrospective of past developments, and even more than in the case of the previous Parisian world's fairs of 1855, 1867, and 1878. Indeed, retrospectives formed an important part of the Exposition's displays, whether related to France's past like the successful reconstructions of the Bastille or the medieval Tour de Nesle (built in 1190 by Philippe Auguste), or to human civilization in more general terms, most prominently in Charles Garnier's installation, History of Human Habitation, which was placed in close vicinity to the Eiffel Tower: "Was it chance, or was it premeditation? I do not know the answer, but the coincidence is piquant; given that the History of Human Habitation is right at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, a visitor can embrace with one glance the distance traveled by mankind." 12

Furthermore, this microcosm in the heart of Paris offered not only an education in world achievements to its guests, but also the illusion of "authentic" encounters with other cultures, both historical and geographical.

^{11.} Ibid., 12.

^{12.} Ibid., 92: "Est-ce hasard, est-ce préméditation? Je l'ignore, mais la coïncidence est piquante; car, l'Histoire de l'habitation humaine se trouvant aux pieds de la Tour Eiffel, le promeneur peut embrasser, d'un coup d'œil, le chemin parcouru par l'homme...."

Whether a visitor wandered into the History of Human Habitation to marvel at Charles Garnier's reconstruction of an Etruscan villa, or climbed the Eiffel Tower, the Champ de Mars represented a vast stage set to act out discovery and exploration. Indeed, the 1889 Exposition Universelle perfectly exemplifies Vanessa Schwartz's notion of the spectacle as a mass-performed reality show, where the audience participates in the creation of the display. The Exposition Universelle represented a walled city within the city to be visited at leisure by both Parisians and travelers from the French provinces and from abroad. For some precious hours or even days, one could travel through worlds otherwise known only through books or journals. Guidebooks such as the *Guide Bleu du "Figaro" et du "Petit Journal"* or *Cook's Guide to Paris and the Universal Exhibition* facilitated the journey and directed visitors to those sections that were either particularly spectacular and thus a "must-see" (the Eiffel Tower, the reconstruction of the Bastille, the Galerie des Machines), or closest to the sightseer's interest. 14

For those six months, Paris became truly the "capital of the nineteenth century," as Walter Benjamin so famously characterized her, embracing the entire world within her center. According to Henry Fouquier, "for many people, the Exposition was a veritable voyage around the world, only faster, less tiring, and cheaper than the one *Around the World in 80 Days* told by Jules Verne. . . . How many evenings have I spent like that, far from Paris but within Paris!" This was a safe form of tourism except for blisters on tired feet, pickpockets, and in some rare cases, food poisoning. But contrary to the one-dimensional experience of reading travel literature and reports about famous explorers such as Stanley or Savorgnan de Brazza in newspapers, a visit to the Exposition was an experience that engaged all the senses. When walking along the rue du Caire, for example, with its donkeys, street vendors, and cafés, one could see, hear, touch, smell, and feel for oneself a small piece of Egypt. On the way to attractions such as the Galerie des Machines, *flâneur* Émile Goudeau was assailed by the music

- 13. Vanessa R. Schwartz, Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998), 10.
- 14. Exposition de 1889: Guide Bleu du "Figaro" et du "Petit Journal", Cook's Guide to Paris and the Universal Exhibition. Special Edition... Compiled under the Personal Superintendence of Thomas Cook & Son (London: Thomas Cook & Son, 1889).
- 15. Henry Fouquier, "Autour de l'Exposition," in L'Exposition universelle de 1889: Grand ouvrage illustré historique, encyclopédique, descriptif publié sous le patronage de M. le Ministre du Commerce, de l'Industrie et des Colonies, ed. Émile Monod, 3 vols., 1:279–84 (Paris: E. Dentu, 1890), 280: "L'Exposition était pour bien des gens un véritable voyage autour du monde, plus rapide, moins fatigant et moins coûteux que le Voyage en quatre-vingts jours raconté par M. Verne. . . . Que de soirées j'ai passées ainsi, loin de Paris et à Paris même!" Similar remarks can be found in a variety of journal articles and books, such as Eugène-Melchior de Vogüe: "A travers l'Exposition," Revue des deux mondes, 1 July 1889, 186.

emanating from the Romanian cabaret. 16 Even inside the Galerie des Machines, where industrial products such as weaving-machines or pianos were shown, sound proved to be an overwhelming stimulus: "If you add to this the never-ending ticking, jingling, whirring, a hundredfold chatter in different languages, here the sound of an organ, there a piano chord, military music from the outside, the noise of the machinery from inside, then you have some slight impression of the first visit to the fair." Indeed, sound counted among the most intriguing experiences of the 1889 Exposition Universelle, whether the uncanny sonorities of Thomas Alva Edison's gramophone in the Galerie des Machines, the intriguing music that the "exotic" people brought with them to the colonial exhibition of the Esplanade des Invalides, or for that matter, the more "classical" works performed at the Palais du Trocadéro and in the Opéra and the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique. Such was the uniqueness of the soundscape of the Exposition Universelle that writers and illustrators left a wide trail of documents chronicling both their sonic encounters and others' reaction to these sounds. 18 Music was so pervasive and inescapable that, as we read in a report from May 1889, it was perceived as being "everywhere, raging with equal violence at the bandstand of the gypsies, under the tents of the Arabs, in the picturesque shacks of Morocco and Egypt."¹⁹

The soundscape of the Exposition Universelle was woven from environmental noises and French bandstand music, from the musics of different

16. Émile Goudeau, "Une journée d'Exposition," *La Revue illustrée* 4 (1889): 211–16, 240–44, at 241: "Sur ma route, le Cabaret Roumain, d'où sortaient les sons exaspérés du *nainou* dans un accompagnement de lyre et de violons. C'est fini! je m'arrête là, dévoré par l'appétit de la musique."

17. B. Schulte-Smidt, Bleistift-Skizzen: Erinnerungen an die Pariser Weltausstellung (Bremen: Johann Kühtmann's Buchhandlung, 1890), 35: "Nimmt man dazu ein nie endendes rastendes Ticken, Klingen, Surren, ein hundertzüngiges Plaudern in verschiedenen Mundarten, hier Orgelton, dort Clavieraccorde, Militärmusik von draußen, Maschinengetöse von drinnen, so hat man einen schwachen Begriff vom Eindrucke des ersten Austellungsbesuches."

18. I borrowed the term "soundscape" from Reinhard Strohm's path-breaking battle cry to move beyond the silent historic document—whether written or iconographic—toward a historical ethnomusicology which assumes a sonic history incompletely reflected in our texts. See Reinhard Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1–9; see also Fiona Kisby, "Introduction: Urban History, Musicology and Cities and Towns in Renaissance Europe," in *Music and Musicians in Renaissance Cities and Towns*, ed. Fiona Kisby, 1–13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Tim Carter, "The Sound of Silence: Models for an Urban Musicology," *Urban History* 29 (2002): 8–18.

19. Ch. G., "La Musique à l'Exposition," *L'Art musical* 28 (1889): 75: "Elle est partout, sévissant avec une violence égale, au kiosque des Tsiganes, sous la tente des Arabes, dans les baraques pittoresques du Maroc et de l'Égypte."

people-whether Romanian or Javanese-and the sounds of theater performances, from ceremonial music and dance music. Some of the sounds pervaded the open space; some were enclosed in theaters, concert halls, cafés; others became solitary experiences at the end of earphones. Many of these sonic events were left to chance, but others were carefully orchestrated to maximize impact and to further the goals of the fair. Listening to these sounds was an inescapable experience that characterized everyone's visit to the Exposition Universelle. The result comprised both sound-as-noise and sound-as-music. 20 Sound-as-noise at the Exposition Universelle was present at every moment: the voices of visitors, the sounds of the cafés and restaurants, shouts from street vendors, the neighing of horses and donkeys, machine noises, and snatches of music from various—and often simultaneous—sources. What startled visitors was not the presence of environmental sound as such, but its density and unique composition. This sonic phenomenon was not just an acoustic backdrop in the manner in which our habitual sonic environment recedes in our awareness. Through its disturbing concentration of unfamiliar sound objects, the underlying soundscape of the Exposition became an acoustic signifier of the event's specificity.

But when does noise become music? In the context of the soundscape of the Exposition Universelle, this was more than just a rhetorical or philosophical question. It was a concrete problem that pervaded much of the discussion heard at the fair, especially of non-Western music. The comment cited above that music was "raging with equal violence" all over the fair-ground indicates to what extent commentators responded to the incessant sonorous stimulus. Thus, the various musics at the Exposition Universelle brought to the fore aesthetic, psychological, and cultural concerns related to music, its meaning, and its consumption. The Exposition Universelle

20. My use of "noise" (as opposed to "music") is influenced by the concepts developed by Pierre Schaeffer and Jean-Jacques Nattiez rather than the economic model proposed by Jacques Attali. In this context, I take "noise" as a phenomenon of reception of sound objects (Nattiez's esthesic level), which is determined by the listening experience. Whether or not it is "noise," sound has to be identified and therefore presents a fascinating moment of perception where listening modes shift from objective hearing to subjective listening (Schaeffer's modes one and two). See Jean-Jacques Nattiez, Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 45-48; Pierre Schaeffer, Traité des objets musicaux: Essai interdisciplines (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966). For a critique and further development of Schaeffer's listening modes, see Denis Smalley, "The Listening Imagination: Listening in the Electroacoustic Era," in Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought, ed. John Paynter et al., 2 vols., 1:514-54 (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 515-20. Nicholas Cook's use of "listening" remains one-dimensional as one of "musical listening" (Schaeffer's mode three)—whether supported by musical knowledge or not—and is thus too limited for the present discussion. See Nicholas Cook, Music, Imagination & Culture (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 10-22.

became a laboratory both of musical perception and of modes of musical usage in late-nineteenth-century France. Aesthetic debates turned political at a very fundamental level; indeed, the politics of sound became tangible in presentation and reception within the townscape of the fair. Comparable to the body politic of societies, the "sound politic" of music at the Exposition Universelle was represented according to its place within late-nineteenth-century aesthetics and politics of music. Music's physical location within the fair became one form in which the sound politic could be seen embodied, not only with respect to the place as such, but also in the way in which listening modes were shaped through location. Townscape and soundscape were inextricably intertwined.

The grounds of the 1889 Exposition Universelle were in the heart of Paris—or at least, of bourgeois Paris, as situated in the western part of the city—and their location around the Champ de Mars inscribed the Exposition in the long tradition of Republican and Imperial celebrations and earlier fairs of the nineteenth century.²¹ Like previous world's fairs, the 1889 Exposition represented a unique complex of buildings, streets, bridges, and other installations. One of its more prominent buildings, the Palais du Trocadéro, had already been built for the previous Exposition Universelle in 1878, but the majority of the buildings, including the Eiffel Tower, were erected specifically for the event. While almost all of the architecture was temporary, the most controversial structure, the Eiffel Tower, was to remain, both as a symbol of the fair and, increasingly, as a symbol of (modern) France.²² Reading the physical appearance of the 1889 Exposition Universelle has therefore led to the use of various urban and architectural metaphors (for example that of a cathedral) to describe the underlying structure of the locality.²³ Yet such deep structures are too abstract in their immediate impact—in order to read the cathedral metaphor, a bird's-eye view or a map of the Exposition is necessary—to be a useful analytical tool in the quest for relating musical consumption at the Exposition (both individual and by groups) to its physical and cultural contexts. What had

^{21.} Maurice Agulhon, "Paris: La traversée d'est en ouest," in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora, vol. 6: *Les France III: De l'archive à l'emblême*, 868–909 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 872.

^{22.} Two fascinating readings of the Eiffel Tower and its structural and symbolic layers are Roland Barthes, "The Eiffel Tower," in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach, 171–80 (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); and Henri Loyrette, "La Tour Eiffel," in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. Nora, 6:474–503.

^{23.} Debora L. Silverman, "The 1889 Exhibition: The Crisis of Bourgeois Individualism," *Oppositions: A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, Special Issue: "City and Ideology: Paris under the Academy" (Spring 1977): 71–91; Michael Adcock, "The 1889 Paris *Exposition*: Mapping the Colonial Mind," *Context: A Journal of Music Research*, no. 21 (Spring 2001): 31–40.

far more influence on the presentation and reception of sound and music were the location and outfitting of various structures either fully or partially dedicated to music. The "palace of music," as the writer in L'Art musical called it, was the Trocadéro, which contained a very large and lavishly decorated concert hall, the location of official concerts and major musical competitions. Musical instruments were exhibited in a dedicated gallery, the Galerie Desaix, as part of an exhibition of manufacturing. The various cafés and restaurants had musical entertainments just as they did in Paris as a whole. In some cases, as in the Javanese village, the unusual aspect of performance transformed the space from a place of gastronomic enjoyment to one of cultural consumption. In others, the music and performances were perceived as part and parcel of the entertainment in a café-concert setting, for example in the Romanian or the Egyptian cafés. In other cases, again, theatrical settings-for example in the Théâtre Annamite-brought a transfer of the horizons of expectation from the Parisian stages to those of the Exposition. The Opéra and the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique also participated in the display, even though they were physically distant from the location of the fair. Special events, such as the performance of Augusta Holmès's Ode triomphale en l'honneur du Centenaire de 1789 in the Palais de l'Industrie, added further layers to the dense web of musical contexts. All these performance contexts influenced the reception, even if—as the cases of the Romanian musicians and Javanese dancers reveal-the performances could also transgress the limitations of their institutional framing.

The sounds of the fair, however, vanished forever the moment they had died away. This is all the more ironic since the 1889 Exposition Universelle represented the moment when the existence of sound recording entered the mass consciousness in Europe. Edison's new gramophone was one of the most admired exhibits of the Exposition, surpassed in terms of number of visitors only by the Eiffel Tower. Yet all we are left with is distorted reflections of these sonic events in texts—scores included—and images. This gap between historic sound and documentary trace leads directly into the heart of one of the most fascinating issues of historiography: the dichotomy of sensual immediacy and, more specifically, of our listening imagination on the one hand, and of the silence of historical documents and scholarly discourse on the other. The same transfer of the silence of historical documents and scholarly discourse on the other.

^{24.} Although early sound-recording devices were shown both in the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle and the 1881 Exposition Internationale de l'Électricité, neither had a comparable impact on wider crowds of visitors. The problems related to the mediality of recorded sound have been addressed in recent scholarly work and form part of my discussion in chapter 6.

^{25.} I am borrowing the term "listening imagination" with its various methodological implications from Smalley, "The Listening Imagination."

All too rarely do we question the business of history as one that engages generally only with silent traces of historic events (even most texts on twentieth-century issues focus on text and image alone), unless sound becomes specifically the topic of study. 26 So much have we embodied collectively the mediality of written and printed transmission that scholars are able to reduce such complex issues as private or public "spectacle" to the visual and written alone. In fact, Vanessa Schwartz never once hints at the sonic side of the various cultural practices of the "newly forming Parisian mass culture," which, for her, is characterized solely "by a shared visual experience of seeing reality represented."27 However, even a cursory glance at newspapers, memoirs, or advertising posters from the late nineteenth century reveals sound as constituting an integral part of the consumption of Parisian spectacle.²⁸ In the case of the 1889 Exposition Universelle, silence might well have been the rarest commodity anyone but a deaf visitor could enjoy.²⁹ Oscar Comettant made this point in his report of a "concert as one has never had before," organized by Gustave Eiffel in his private apartment up on the third platform of the Eiffel Tower:

From the moment that Miss Jenny Lefébure, one of our most brilliant, talented, and accomplished young pianists, sat down at the piano, there was a silence which was not one that simple mortals can obtain on earth. On the ground, in Paris, there is always a fog of noise which makes silence more or less sonorous. At the tip of the tower, when one is quiet, there is absolute silence. The doors had been closed to avoid drafts, and Miss Lefébure played this delicate and too-little-known inspiration by Liszt, which is called *Soupir*.

Dès que Mlle Jenny Lefébure, une de nos jeunes pianistes les plus brillantes, les mieux douées, les plus instruites dans leur art, se fut assisse au

- 26. See, for example, Alain Corbin, Les Cloches de la terre: Paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1994); James Johnson, Listening in Paris: A Cultural History (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995). As Jonathan Sterne has observed, there "is a vast literature on the history and philosophy of sound; yet it remains conceptually fragmented" (The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproductions [Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2003], 4).
- 27. Schwartz: *Spectacular Realities*, 12. Similar problems are apparent in Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1999).
- 28. Ironically, Schwartz reproduces such documents as illustrations in her book. See, for example, the poster advertising the "dances and songs performed by the Japanese, Chinese and Javanese troupes" (*Spectacular Realities*, 175).
- 29. See, for example, the collection of comments about music's continuous presence at the Exposition Universelle reproduced in E. Douglas Bomberger, "A Tidal Wave of Encouragement": American Composers' Concerts in the Gilded Age (Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 2002), 46.

piano, il se fit un silence qui n'était pas celui que peuvent obtenir à terre les simples mortels. A terre, dans Paris, il règne toujours comme un brouillard de son qui rend le silence plus ou moins sonore. A l'extrémité de la tour, quand on se tait, c'est le silence absolu. On ferma les portes pour éviter les courants d'air, et Mlle Lefébure joue cette délicieuse inspiration de Liszt, trop peu connue, qui s'appelle le *Soupir*.³⁰

Indeed, the ear "is the most vulnerable sense organ. It cannot be closed or used selectively," and while "in Western culture . . . the visual and verbal are privileged as sources of knowledge, sound and music tend to slip around and surprise us." Given that the soundscape of the Exposition Universelle was one that every visitor shared, its study thus offers a unique approach to a more complex understanding of the experience of spectacle in late-nineteenth-century France.

The presentation and reception of music at and around the Exposition Universelle mirrored, focused, and amplified cultural concerns in France in the late 1880s and contributed to the shaping of the performance of, and critical debate about, music in the subsequent decade. Several themes ran through the way in which music was presented and consumed in Paris in the context of the Exposition Universelle, whether it was music from the past—as in the case of the historical concerts organized by Louis Diémer or the performance of Arab belly dancing. At the Exposition, almost all music was presented within a nationalist framework. In the concert series at the Trocadéro, programs reflected the countries of origin of the musicians: Russian music performed by Russians, French music by French, American music by Americans. Music from all corners of the world-whether Romania, Morocco, or Java—became acoustic representations of the performers' descent. The resulting tension between the notion of music as national and racial signifier on the one hand, and the ideal of musical universalism on the other were among the issues that influenced both the critical reception of music at the Exposition Universelle and subsequent debate about the place of music in changing worlds. The density of multiple performances within a square mile of each other, crammed into just half a year, provided a fertile laboratory setting for professional critics and lay writers alike to explore these issues in their reviews.

This subject was closely related to another key topic that came into focus during the Exposition: the concept of authenticity. Which cultural

^{30.} Oscar Comettant, "Un Concert comme il n'y en a jamais eu," *Le Ménestrel* 55 (1889): 237.

^{31.} Susan McClary, "The Blasphemy of Talking Politics during Bach Year," in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, 13–62 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 16.

artifacts were authentic (in the sense of genuine) and why? These questions were discussed with respect to both contemporary music and sounds of the past, not to mention those sonorities perceived as exotic. Beyond the matter of whether a piece or a performance was genuinely the music of a specific culture or era and thus neither imitation nor fake, critics also posed the question of whether the rendition of various sounds was "authentic" in the more narrow sense of performance practice, with respect not only to early music but also to folk music.³² A third aspect of authenticity discussed in the French press related to the issue of fidelity and character of sound reproduction, triggered by the exhibition of Edison's gramophone and the transmission of operas through telephone lines.

Production and reception of sound at the Exposition Universelle also brought into relief the fundamental question of Self and Other, whether internally in terms of the juxtaposition of urban and pastoral spaces, or externally in the relationship between France, her colonies, and the rest of the world. Indeed, the Exposition was a space that could represent various aspects of a pastoral world. 33 The Exposition as a whole was understood by many French critics as an Arcadia within the confines of the most self-consciously urban environment of the time, the city of Paris. This utopian space, with its palaces for progress, its various national exhibits, and its retrospective exhibitions was more complete (because it was synthetic) than the world at large, creating a parallel world that represented the blueprint of a golden age of a future both technological and humanistic. At the same time, specific features of the Exposition—such as the kampong javanais with its straw huts, traditional crafts, and ostensibly happy and innocent people—re-created a natural and preindustrial paradise on the Esplanade des Invalides, where urbanites could observe innocence lost and dwell in an Arcadian stage set for a short moment in time. In both contexts music played an important role: sonic trace of past innocence and primitivisme on the one hand, sonic symbol of the music of the future on the other.

Thus the study of music at the Exposition Universelle allows a unique glimpse into the representation of, and discourses about, culture, and more specifically music, in late-nineteenth-century France. Because of its character as a centennial event, the fair merged ongoing cultural developments into a static representation during six months of dense cultural activity in the capital of France. But while it is a seductive subject of study, it also

^{32.} David Lowenthal, "Authenticity? The Dogma of Self-Delusion," in *Why Fakes Matter: Essays on Problems of Authenticity*, ed. Mark Jones, 184–92 (London: British Museum Press, 1992).

^{33.} On the heterogeneous definitions of "pastoral," see Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral*? (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10–13; and Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 1–12.

presents significant problems for the music historian. Exceptional events such as the Exposition bring general trends into sharper relief, but they also distort more fluid and complex developments because of their need to fix cultural production in a single moment, whether an exhibition of paintings or a series of national concerts. Thus, while a "thick" description of 1889 Exposition can help uncover the complexities of cultural production and reception in late-nineteenth-century Paris, its narrow, rather than broad, focus denies access to the longue durée characteristic of institutionalized culture in any time or place. This project also raises questions about the materiality of musical, and music-historical, discourses: indeed a study of the music at the Exposition Universelle has to engage with the ephemeral character of its own object within a context that seeks to freeze its representation in exhibition form. Nevertheless, the 1889 Exposition Universelle represents a unique microcosm of the aesthetics, practice, and politics of music in late-nineteenth-century France. Whether opera or gamelan performance, whether gramophone or musique d'occasion, the sounds of the Exposition constituted a rich and varied counterpoint of the traditional and the unexpected, fitting for such a signal event.

Chapter 1

Exhibiting Music at the Exposition Universelle

How to exhibit the music of France and abroad at the 1889 Exposition Universelle was a question that occupied the organizers of the fair very early on in its preparation, and it led to a variety of solutions, both in the official program and through private enterprise. From the outset, musicians had lobbied that a share larger than in any of the previous fairs should be reserved for music in 1889. With rising numbers of concerts in Paris, with new private music schools to cater to the greater need for teachers and performers, and with the increased manufacture of musical instruments, music was a growing field in 1880s France, both culturally and economically, echoing urban and industrial development. The government responded, in 1887, with the creation of a music commission for the Exposition, the Commission des Auditions Musicales, led by the director of the Conservatoire, Ambroise Thomas. Beside Ambroise Thomas as president, the Commission consisted of Léo Delibes as vice president and the pianist André Wurmser as secretary. Its sixteen members comprised, among others, Théodore Dubois, César Franck, Benjamin Godard, Charles Gounod, Jules Massenet, Ernest Reyer, and Camille Saint-Saëns. The Commission was to ensure that music was "represented in the double aspect of composition and performance."² In addition, in the general categories of the fair's exhibits, "Class 13" was dedicated to musical instruments, sandwiched between Classes 12 (photography) and 14 (medicine and surgery), and grouped into the section "Education and Teaching—Materials and Processes of the Liberal Arts." Within

^{1.} See Elaine Brody, *Paris: The Musical Kaleidoscope, 1870–1925* (New York: George Braziller, 1987), 87, n. 35.

^{2.} Alfred Picard, *Rapport général sur l'Exposition universelle internationale de 1889*, 10 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1890–91), 1:329: "que des auditions musicales seront organisées pendant la durée de l'exposition de 1889, et que l'art y serait représenté au double point de vue de la composition et de l'exécution."

^{3.} Exposition de 1889: Guide bleu du "Figaro" et du "Petit Journal" avec 5 plans et 31 dessins (Paris: Le Figaro, 1889), 9: "Groupe II / Éducation et enseignement.—Matériel et procédés des arts libéraux."

the official structure of the Exposition Universelle, music was thus represented both aurally and visually, as an art and as a craft, and as belonging to the past and to the future.

The Commission des Auditions Musicales comprised four subcommittees: "musical composition" (which dealt with all art music); *orphéons* and choral societies; brass and other bands; military music. It organized a variety of performances and competitions to showcase French music and its performance, and to engage in friendly rivalry with other nations. In particular, the five official orchestra concerts at the Trocadéro were meant to display "the immense superiority" of France's composers. Indeed, these concerts "were going to correspond to a real exhibition of this art. Other official concerts included the performances by French municipal bands, by children's choirs, and by *orphéon* societies. Foreign organizations were invited to submit a bid for concert space to the Commission, and in the end, orchestras, ensembles, and choirs from Belgium, Finland, Italy, Norway, Russia, Spain, and the United States were scheduled to perform at the Trocadéro. A series of organ concerts by both French and international organists rounded off the musical program there.

In keeping with the double axis of modern production and historical retrospective at the Exposition Universelle, musical instruments were displayed in two locations. One was as part of the industrial exhibition in the Palais des Arts Libéraux, where various manufacturers showed their latest pianos, flutes, or harps in a gallery specifically dedicated to musical instruments. The other was an exhibition of historical instruments and instrument-makers' workshops in the Histoire du Travail. (Also, musical artifacts such as the autograph for Mozart's *Don Giovanni* appeared in the exhibition on the history of opera as part of a display of the history of theater in France.) But musical performances, too, were part of the retrospective effort. These included several "historic concerts" of early music, the centennial perspective of the five orchestra concerts, and a projected retrospective of six *opéras comiques* from the years of the First Republic. Also part of the Exposition, at least in the broader sense, were the premières of new works at the Opéra and Opéra-Comique, discussed in chapter 2.

The Palais du Trocadéo represented the official exhibition space for music performance at the Exposition (figure 1.1). Built for the 1878 World

^{4.} Charles Darcours [Charles Réty], "La Musique à l'Exposition de 1889," Le Ménestrel 55 (1889): 140–41, at 140.

^{5.} Alfred Bruneau: "Musique," *La Revue indépendante*, August 1889, 203–11, at 204: "ils affirment hautement l'immense supériorité de nos compositeurs."

^{6. &}quot;L'Exposition Universelle," *La Justice*, 28 May 1889, 3: "ce qui équivaudra à une exposition réelle de cet art."

^{7.} The retrospective of revolutionary *opéras comiques* is discussed in chapter 2.

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Fair and seating an audience of approximately 4,000 people, its Salle des Fêtes was the largest concert hall available in Paris and was proclaimed the "palace"—or even "official temple"—in which music would reside for the duration of the fair.⁸ But despite its splendid decoration, it was an acoustic nightmare—"decidedly awful," according to Julien Tiersot.⁹ His colleague Alfred Bruneau described the effect as sounds bouncing off the walls of an immense vessel, "thus producing innumerable echoes" which resulted in "dislocated harmonies" and "a disappearing melodic line." The instrument best suited for the space, however, was the large Cavaillé-Coll organ whose sounds and repertoire were better adapted to the cavernous space of the hall than those of violins or voices. ¹¹ Nevertheless, after a slow start in

^{8.} Ch. G., "La Musique à l'Exposition," *L'Art musical* 28 (1889): 75; Bruneau, "Musique," 203.

^{9.} Julien Tiersot, "Promenades musicales à l'Exposition," *Le Ménestrel* 55 (1889): 165–66, at 165: "Le Trocadéro est décidément mauvais!"

^{10.} Bruneau, "Musique," 203: "En cet immense vaisseau . . . les sons se heurtent, s'embrouillent, s'aplatissent contre les murs et, produisant ainsi d'innombrables échos, apportent aux oreilles des harmonies disloquée au milieu desquelles s'estompe une ligne mélodique flottante et indécise."

^{11.} Ernest Reyer, "Revue musicale," *Le Journal des débats*, 2 June 1889, 1–2, at 1; "Les Orgues," *Le Petit Parisien*, 20 June 1889, 3.

May, almost all of the concerts were packed—often sold out—and they were well received by their audience.

Musique française

The five Auditions officielles de Musique française had two aims. The first was to present a centennial selection of French music akin to the retrospective of one hundred years of French art exhibited in the Palais des Beaux-Arts. The music was exclusively selected from works that had already been performed: there were no premières. The second objective behind the concerts was to feature the five major Parisian orchestras in a "performance exhibition." Appendix 1A (p. 313) gives the dates and programs of these five concerts, whose music was selected in consultation between the Commission and the concert organizations. Three of the concerts—performed by the Concerts Lamoureux, the Concerts Colonne and the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire—were dedicated to symphonic and vocal concert repertoire; the other two—by performers from the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique—had extracts from operas from the previous hundred years on their programs.

The confinement to existing repertoire instead of new compositions shows a clear attempt to present a canon of selected works considered "French masterpieces." Some composers appeared on more than one program: Auber and Bizet—both dead composers with republican credentials—were present in no fewer than three of the five concerts. Even more to the point, the Société des Concerts and the Opéra each programmed extracts from Auber's La Muette de Portici, an opera on the subject of the Neapolitan rebellion against the Spanish Viceroy in 1647 whose revolutionary potential had become part of the work's republican appropriation during the nineteenth century. 13 The selection from La Muette comprised not only the overture, but also the patriotic duet "Amour sacré de la patrie." ¹⁴ In addition, the first concert of the series opened with Bizet's Patrie!, a concert-overture composed in 1874 which was inspired by the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and which had become a patriotic staple of Third-Republic concert life. 15 Indeed, the program note for the concert referred specifically to Bizet's inspiration by "the misfortunes of the conquered and

^{12.} Darcours, "La Musique à l'Exposition de 1889," 140.

^{13.} Jane Fulcher shows that the opera's political impact as an agent in the July Revolution of 1830 should not be dismissed as a legend but taken seriously both as a historical account of the events in 1828–30 and an important case of reception history (*The Nation's Image: French Grand Opéra as Politics and Politicized Art* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 11–46).

^{14.} Johannès Weber, "Critique musicale," Le Temps, 23 Sep 1889, 3.

^{15.} Winton Dean, Bizet (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1948), 112–14.

surrendered Fatherland, the anguish of the année terrible." All the other composers whose works were performed on two occasions—in one of the orchestral concerts and in one of the operatic ones—were members of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, an institution founded by Cardinal Richelieu in 1635 to defend the values of French art and appropriated in this function by the Third Republic.¹⁷ As for the rest of the programs, they included works created in a patriotic, republican spirit such as Charles Lenepveu's Velleda or Augusta Holmès's Ludus pro patria. Extracts from Paul and Lucien Hillemacher's Loreley, which won first prize in a competition organized by the city of Paris in 1882, represented a patriotic claim for those parts of the Rhineland lost to Germany in the Franco-Prussian War. Other composers with republican leanings included Reyer and Saint-Saëns. Whereas the majority of pieces stemmed from the second half of the nineteenth century, several were written earlier. One link with the First Republic, Cherubini's 1797 overture for *Médée*, was planned for performance by the Société des Concerts. It was replaced, however, with the overture for Les Abencérages, which dates from 1813, the end of the reign of Napoléon I. Other composers whose allegiances were not so clear-cut (Adam and Gounod, for example) were included in these programs due to their central place in the history of French music.

Few examples of concert programming in France in the late nine-teenth century showed such obvious concern with the issue of creating a French canon of masterpieces. This becomes particularly clear with respect to the symphonic repertoire. All the selected pieces—apart from an extract from Félicien David's *Le Désert*—stemmed from the period after 1870, when French composers made a conscious effort to revive symphonic music as a matter of essential Frenchness, in contrast to the earlier periods, when making visible German influence (especially Beethoven's) would act as a mark of quality.¹⁸ In particular, the concert by Colonne emphasized the

^{16.} Program for the concert on 23 May 1889 by the Concerts Lamoureux, B.H.V.P., dossier "Actualités": "les malheurs de la Patrie vaincue et livrée, les angoisses de l'année terrible."

^{17.} On the Académie des Beaux-Arts, see my "La Guerre en dentelles: Women and the Prix de Rome in French Cultural Politics," Journal of the American Musicological Society 51 (1998): 83–129.

^{18.} On the revival of French symphonic music after 1870, see Angelus Seipt, *César Francks symphonische Dichtungen*, Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung, 116 (Regensburg, Bosse Verlag, 1981); Annegret Fauser, *Der Orchestergesang in Frankreich zwischen 1870 und 1920*, Freiburger Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, 2 (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1994), 50–58 and 111–39; Brian Hart, "The Symphony in Theory and Practice in France, 1900–1914" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1994); 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. Michael Murphy and Harry

decade prior to 1889, with only his trademark composer Hector Berlioz from the earlier part of the nineteenth century. In contrast, music from operas and *opéras comiques* could draw upon a long tradition of French successes, which allowed for a broader selection. Indeed, the majority of operatic extracts predated 1870 and thus presented a sonic testimony to France's musical vitality during the whole nineteenth century—a true centennial exhibition. The ideological slant of this choice of program becomes particularly obvious through the exclusion of one of the most important composers of French nineteenth-century opera: Giacomo Meyerbeer. Whereas the Belgian César Franck lived in Paris for most of his life and the Italian Luigi Cherubini became a French citizen, and both could thus be appropriated as French composers, the German Meyerbeer, by the late 1880s, was perceived as essentially non-French and therefore unsuitable for the project of creating a canon of French music.²⁰

While these five programs tell a story of their own, their reception among Parisian musicians and journalists was quite mixed. Indeed, any selection process for such a "veritable exhibition of our composers" was as much about exclusion as inclusion. ²¹ That the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire had restricted its program to composers who were members of the Académie des Beaux-Arts at the Institut de France was pointed out in several reviews as a method that favored established composers. ²² Similarly, the program for the Opéra concert favored composers who had been

White, 72–103 (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001); Ralph P. Locke, "The French Symphony: David, Gounod, and Bizet to Saint-Saëns, Franck, and Their Followers," in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. Kern D. Holoman, 163–94 (New York, Schirmer Books, 1997).

- 19. On Édouard Colonne and his programming strategies, see Jann Pasler, "Building a Public for Orchestral Music: Les Concerts Colonne," in *Le Concert et son public: Mutations de la vie musicale en Europe de 1780 à 1914 (France, Allemagne, Angleterre)*, ed. Hans Erich Bödecker, Patrice Veit, and Michael Werner, 209–38 (Paris: Éditions de la Maison de l'Homme, 2002).
- 20. Although Meyerbeer's Jewishness would soon become a further trait to be denounced negatively by nationalist rhetoric—turning him into a doubly suspicious composer in that context—anti-Semitic reasoning was not yet the issue that it would become during the Dreyfus affair, and the program did indeed contain works by Jewish composers such as Halévy. For the anti-Semitic rhetoric in late-nineteenth-century Meyerbeer reception, see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics & Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 32; and Kerry Murphy, "Race and Identity: Appraisals in France of Meyerbeer on his 1891 Centenary," *Nine-teenth-Century Music Review* 1, no. 2 (2004): 27–42.
- 21. "Les Théâtres," $Le\,Rappel,\,23$ May 1889 / 6 Prairial an $97,\,3:$ "une véritable exposition de nos compositeurs."
- 22. See, for example, Johannès Weber, "Critique musicale," *Le Temps*, 27 May 1889, 3; Charles Darcours [Charles Réty], "Notes de musique," *Le Figaro*, 26 June 1889, 6.

elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts, save for extracts from Émile Paladilhe's opera, Patrie! The well-respected music critic Johannès Weber dedicated an entire column in *Le Temps* to the programs of the concerts, criticizing the whole enterprise as flawed. For him the exclusions were shocking: Henri Reber, although a member of the Institut de France, was represented by only one symphonic movement (rather than the two he deserved); the composer Louis Théodore Gouvy, whose symphonies Weber preferred to those of Saint-Saëns, was entirely absent. As for women composers, he reported that "only one was successful in conquering a place on the program, and that is Mlle Holmès, by whom one will hear a piece from Ludus pro patria next week."23 Few other journalists were as outspoken as Weber, but the concerts did generate a discussion about who should or should not have been included, and furthermore, whether the pieces selected were the right ones to represent their creators. Journalists tallied the numbers of dead composers (twelve) versus living ones (twenty-eight), and scrutinized how much time each received.²⁴ Indeed, the reception of the concerts ranged from unmitigated praise—by the unnamed critic of Le Rappel and Charles Darcours, for example—to angry rejection.

The disagreement in the press over the five official concerts was certainly symptomatic of the aesthetic debates in late-nineteenth-century France. Only four years previously, Vincent d'Indy had ousted Camille Saint-Saëns as the president of the Société Nationale de la Musique. The fault lines between the Republican aesthetic of eclecticism on the one hand, and the Wagnerian nationalists on the other, were still visible in 1889, even though the Commission did include both César Franck and the young Vincent d'Indy on the programs. 25 But the weight clearly leaned toward the official line as represented by the state institutions of the Conservatoire and the Académie des Beaux-Arts. The critics exposed these fault lines, and, depending on their aesthetic position, either praised a well-chosen, canonic repertoire of French music or sharply criticized the selection for its lack of contemporary relevance. Canonicity was certainly more important for an eclectic aesthetic that defined progress as building on the past than for a self-consciously modernist one whose rhetoric of rupture emphasized presentism over historic legitimization. At least for some

^{23.} Weber, "Critique musicale" (27 May): "Parmi les femmes compositeurs, une seule a réussi à conquérir une place sur un programme, c'est Mlle Holmès, dont on entendra, la semaine prochaine, un morceau de *Ludus pro patria*."

^{24.} For example, Edmond Stoullig, "Musique," Le National, 28 May 1889, 2.

^{25.} For an excellent summary of the aesthetic conflict, see Jann Pasler, "Paris: Conflicting Notions of Progress," in *Man and Music: The Late Romantic Era from the Mid-19th Century to World War I*, ed. Jim Samson, 389–416 (London: Macmillan, 1991).