



## BOOK REVIEW

**Jacek Blaszkiewicz**, *Fanfare for a City: Music and the Urban Imagination in Haussmann's Paris*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2024. xi + 250pp. 11 illustrations. 12 musical examples. Bibliography. £55.00/\$65.00 hbk.  
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The redevelopment of Paris under Napoleon III and his prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, has long fascinated urban historians. The historical musicologist Jacek Blaszkiewicz does more than offer a mere recital of this well-known topic. Instead, by drawing on the burgeoning field of sound studies, his work ably shifts between a sweeping and lively history of the Second Empire on the one hand and a close reading of specific musical scores, spaces and practices on the other. Uniting these scales of analysis is the city of Paris as a sensory environment in the throes of Haussmann's development. Through a series of five thematic chapters that approach the intersection of music and urban history in different ways, Blaszkiewicz repeatedly finds symphonic harmony between these disciplines and offers new insights on the exercise of power during this crucial moment in the history of urban planning.

Blaszkiewicz opens the book with the fanfare surrounding the inauguration of the Boulevard du Prince-Eugène in 1862. He uses this opening vignette to reconstruct the soundscapes of Haussmann's Paris and to make his distinctive argument that 'urban planning decisions shaped, and were shaped by...musical spaces, institutions, and communities' (p. 7). Although well written and replete with many intriguing sketches about Haussmann, chapter 1 is less grounded in the urban environment than the rest of the book and instead owes more to Blaszkiewicz's background in musicology. This chapter focuses on Haussmann's youthful musical practice at the Conservatoire, his hosting of musical parties in the Second Empire and his parallels to contemporary composers Berlioz and Wagner. There are moments of slightly stretched metaphors and conclusions here – such as Haussmann's approach to music being more 'like an engineer and not like a poet' (p. 28) – that seek to establish the musical aesthetic of Haussmannization.

It is from chapter 2 that Blaszkiewicz engages more productively with the intersection of Haussmann's public works and the musical soundscapes of Paris itself by exploring the 'fanfare cit[ies]' as created for the Universal Exhibitions of 1855 and 1867. Here, Blaszkiewicz argues convincingly for a reading of the ceremonial sounds of these fairs as reflecting planning policies that focused on manipulating the sensory experience of the urban visitor. While this has been well studied through focusing on the visual aesthetic monumentality of exhibitions, the shift to exploring the musical programmes of these events help further show the regulatory micromanagement of Haussmann's urban policy and the role of sensory experience within this.

Blaszkiwicz then takes a more socio-spatial approach to the final three chapters of the book. These three chapters will appeal most to social and cultural urban historians and demonstrate Blaszkiwicz is at his virtuoso best when combining close readings of specific musical scores and their reception with the wider urban and political history of Second Empire Paris. In chapter 3, Blaszkiwicz explores the spaces of Paris's café-concerts as well as their patrons. The chapter uses these inherently musical spaces with their 'omnidirectional and unpredictable' (p. 80) sounds to challenge how far Haussmannization succeeded in touching every aspect of Parisian life. Chapter 4's amusing microhistorical study of the hit song 'Hé Lambert' which swept through the streets of Paris in the summer of 1864 continues this focus on subversive sound to demonstrate how Parisians could dictate the festivity of urban soundscapes in a way that proved an 'anti-fanfare' (p. 120) to imperial monumentality. Finally, the discussion of street hawkers in chapter 5 allows Blaszkiwicz to engage with Haussmann's 'creative destruction', in David Harvey's memorable term, that marked a symbolic break between old Paris and new Paris. While he tackles the question of urban policing and regulation elsewhere in the book, Blaszkiwicz focuses here on the impact of trying to repress 'unregulated noise' (pp. 160–1) by cracking down on street vendors. In response to these urban policies, however, the composer Jean-Georges Kastner embarked on a musical invention of tradition focused on transforming these lost 'street cries' into a symphonic leitmotif for rejecting modernity. As elsewhere in the book, Blaszkiwicz navigates the porous intersection of 'noise', 'sound' and 'music' in the streets of Haussmann's Paris with nuanced and convincing conclusions.

At times, when Blaszkiwicz extends the chronological scope beyond the Second Empire, there are a few instances of narrative compression. There is a throwaway suggestion in chapter 3 that Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was prince-president of the Second Republic from its establishment in February 1848; the future emperor was actually in London for most of the early stages of the Second Republic and would only be elected president in December 1848. It is unclear, then, whether this section on censorship refers more to Second Republic policies from early 1848 or the later rule of Louis-Napoléon from December.

Nevertheless, this is a hugely successful contribution to the urban and sensory history of Second Empire Paris. The appeal of this book will extend far beyond musicologists and historians of music: *Fanfare for a City* complements other recent works – such as Esther da Costa Meyer's compelling 2022 work *Dividing Paris*, focused on people's experience of Haussmannization and which is cited frequently by Blaszkiwicz to good effect – to show the continued vibrancy and importance of Haussmann's redevelopment of Paris to the field of urban history.

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