

Nationalism and Early Music at the French *Fin de Siècle*

Three Case Studies

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Abstract

The evidence of more than three hundred concerts of early music given by the Parisian Schola Cantorum and its sister association, the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais, as well as more than four hundred performances of this repertoire outside the Schola shows that the most consistently performed composer in Paris at the French *fin de siècle* was the German Johann Sebastian Bach. This is coupled with a shift at the Schola, from a preponderance of works by Palestrina in the 1890s to a new emphasis on Rameau operas in the early 1900s. This article is an attempt to understand these repertorial preferences as manifestations of at least two types of nationalism: first as a mass movement to attain ethnic-linguistic homogenization and second as a movement by the social elite as a means of establishing its difference. All three composers examined in the case studies emerge as vehicles for both types of nationalism, though there is more evidence of the second type than there is of the first. This article also shows that there is a distinction between the ways in which these repertoires were either co-opted or received by the social elite and the intelligentsia, the latter using early music as a metaphor for the 'serious'.

By 1907, public performances led by Charles Bordes, one of the youngest composers of the Franck circle and founder of the Parisian Schola Cantorum, had become a rare occasion in Paris. But despite infrequent appearances in the capital, Bordes had lost none of his appeal with Parisian audiences. We learn from Pierre Lalo that 'it [had] been possible to hear, in a variety of historical concerts, works that have little to recommend them other than their date of composition, and which were thoroughly boring and absolutely insignificant'. At the same time, he tells us that Bordes's repertoire was always sure to please,

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guided as it was by 'his delightful, his unfailingly sure choices and sense of taste'.¹

On this same occasion, Lalo singled out Clérambault's *Héro et Léandre* for special praise, drawing the reader's attention to its 'charm' and 'delicious tenderness', in a review that bears quoting:

Each instrument is deployed to exploit its best and most exquisite expressive qualities, individual voices intertwine with such grace and precision, the ideas are so pure, so beautiful, so nobly affected. All is perfection, composed with such order and harmony, felt with great intensity, expressed with great discretion, that it becomes impossible not to think of Racine: it is the same sound and delicate art, firm but flexible, refined and profound. It is an admirable example of the power of taste and the French wit.²

Individual nouns, adjectives and catch-phrases leap from this excerpt, words with a history in early music criticism, words that evoke a very specific vision of the French wit: grace and precision; ideas so pure and nobly affected; great discretion; sound and delicate; and of course, the power of taste. The *agrèments* of grace and precision [*grâce et justesse*], both pleasing mannerisms, coupled with a physically delicate, flexible and refined state may mark the music in part as feminine in a pejorative sense, from a nineteenth-century French point of view, that would have women essentialized as irrational, childlike, and lacking in the profundity necessary for true genius. Hence delicacy and flexibility coupled with superficial behaviour, exterior effects or ornaments.³ Yet here Lalo clearly intends these 'feminine metaphors' to convey a high form of praise.

This strongly positive use of words that might otherwise have negative connotations is something that is actually fairly common, as we shall see in the section devoted to the reception of works by Jean-Philippe Rameau. It may be that they have more than one layer of meaning for Lalo's readers, that they also refer in a positive way to the intangible, elusive *je ne sais quoi* of the French

¹ Pierre Lalo, *Le Temps*, 2 Apr. 1907: 'on a vu récemment, dans maints concerts historiques, des ouvrages qui n'avaient d'autre titre à cet honneur que la date de leur naissance, dont l'ennui était accablant et l'insignifiance absolue ... c'est l'heureuse, c'est l'infailible sûreté de son choix et de son goût.'

² Ibid. 'Mais dès que commence le prélude, on trouve que c'est assez et qu'il n'est besoin de rien de plus pour tout dire. Chaque instrument est employé avec un sens si juste et si exquis de sa vertu expressive, leurs chants s'entrelacent avec tant de grâce et de justesse, les idées sont si pures, si belles, si noblement émues, tout cela est d'une perfection si achevée, composé avec tant d'ordre et d'harmonie, senti avec tant d'intensité, exprimé avec tant de discrétion, qu'il est impossible de ne point songer à Racine: c'est le même art ferme et délicat, le même art serré et souple, fin et profond; c'est un exemple admirable du pouvoir du goût et de l'esprit français.'

³ For a discussion of late nineteenth-century French images of women in the context of musical endeavour, and particularly the construct of the *femme fragile*, see Annegret Fauser, 'La Guerre en dentelles: Women and the Prix de Rome in French Cultural Politics', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51 (1998): 83–129. For pejorative implications of 'precision' in musical performances by women and the imposition of the *jeu lié* which precluded robust or 'ungraceful' gestures in performances by women pianists, see Katharine Ellis, 'Female Pianists and their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 50/2–3 (Summer/Fall 1997): 353–85.

nobility. This segment of the French population shared an appreciation of understatement, ceremony, and politeness (all irrational qualities associated with outward conduct), even as they prized reason (a quality viewed as a quintessentially 'masculine' trait during the period under discussion) as an eminently noble characteristic.⁴ Moreover, one of the chief concerns of this social elite was the upholding of their status as 'different'.⁵ This latter point will become increasingly relevant in the course of this article, but what matters here is that 'irrational' virtues such as taste and charm can be regarded as desirable markers of nobility just as much as they can be seen as devaluing feminine metaphors in nineteenth-century France. Furthermore, for critics addressing a noble sensibility, this 'irrationalism' does not necessarily exclude reasoned reflection.

But we will continue with Lalo and his praise of Clérambault's *Orphée*, where the polarization of the essentially 'French' and the 'German' also comes to the critical fore. Clérambault's piece is hailed as a 'marvellous perfection of taste and choice', in direct contrast to the German Gluck's work, which is dismissed as 'something thick, confusing and barbarous by comparison'. Moreover, in Lalo's view, Gluck is invariably overshadowed by eighteenth-century French works: German music conveys 'an admirably strong expression of a common sensibility', while the French lyric art exudes 'a profound and choice expression of an exquisite sensibility'. Thus is one of music history's most important figures reduced to an admirable but fumbling clod, and a common or vulgar one at that, in a review that provides a very clear example of a complex French nationalist conscience at work in the reception of early music during the later years of the *belle époque*. Lalo's partisan view is blatant; his transfer of German stereotypical and essential physical qualities to musical works of art positively reeks of what political theorists such as Liah Greenfeld and Eric Hobsbawm call 'ethnic-linguistic' nationalism.⁶ But Lalo's nationalism is not really that simple: his Frenchmen are defined by mannerisms, by noble qualities of grace, purity, discretion, and an all-important sense of taste. These things are difficult to define in absolute terms: for lack of physical substance they elude empirical measurement and analysis. That these attributes are connected with Clérambault is not surprising, but that they are viewed as quintessential markers of the French wit and intelligence *in general*, and almost as racial characteristics, is more curious.

Understanding the nationalist implications of criticism such as Lalo's is a complicated process. If situated in the context of broader trends in early music programming, by both the Schola and the larger musical community, they might well appear as some form of defensive cultural chauvinism, for the evidence of more than three hundred Schola and Schola-related concerts of early music given between 1891 and 1914, and roughly four hundred performances of this same repertoire in mainstream societies at the turn of the century, makes it clear that the single most-performed early music composer in Paris

⁴ For the gendering of reason as male during the nineteenth-century, see Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York, 1994); and Kate Flint, 'New Woman Fiction', in *The Woman Reader 1837–1914* (New York, 1993).

⁵ David Higgs, *Nobles in Nineteenth-Century France: The Practice of Inegalitarianism* (Baltimore, 1987).

⁶ Liah Greenfeld and Eric Hobsbawm in *Nationalism*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford and New York, 1994), 165–70 and 76–82.

was actually the German Johann Sebastian Bach. Against this consistency, there is a noticeable repertorial shift at the Schola from the Vatican-endorsed Palestrina in the 1890s to the French father of harmony, Rameau, in the early 1900s. This second trend may be conceived of as a simple means of canonizing a French national icon, yet how is it possible to reconcile the overwhelming popularity of the non-French Bach with the racially exclusive implications of some forms of nationalism, and, specifically, the ethnic-linguistic nationalist stance that has been associated with the Schola?

The first step is to reconsider the meaning of 'nationalism' in connection with the early music revival at the French *fin de siècle*. It is possible to view French nationalism during this period as 'ethnic-linguistic', or, as a mass movement towards social homogenization, rooted in ideal visions of race, manifested in language.⁷ But it may also be thought of as a movement spearheaded by a deposed social elite, as a means of establishing its uniqueness or difference.⁸ In the case studies of Rameau, Palestrina and Bach that follow, it is clear that much of the early music performed during this period was received as the expression of a nationalistic conscience of the second kind, as service to a social elite, as a very small arena for the communing of a select few. And an impulse towards exclusivity is something that this class of individuals appears to share with the small community of musicians, critics, publishers and concert organizers – an 'imagined community' (à la Benedict Anderson). The co-opting of this repertoire in this imagined community may be interpreted as part of a movement to establish music as something other than social service, as the kind of 'serious' enterprise envisioned decades earlier by Camille Saint-Saëns and other early members of the Société nationale de musique.⁹ It was an impulse shared with a previous, German, generation of composers, often resulting in literary discourse about music that may appear nationalistic in the ethnic-linguistic sense. Yet Celia Applegate has explained that the drive for 'seriousness' in early German romantics, and the incipient nationalist undertones of the criticism they produced, were more a means of binding the musical community to the intelligentsia in order to secure both the respect of newly formed political bodies and the regular and assured pecuniary support they could offer.¹⁰ This desire for seriousness marks the reception of all three composers, though it may be at its clearest in the criticism surrounding the Rameau revival.

⁷ Richard Taruskin, 'Nationalism', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, rev. edn, 2001): 689–706. For France in particular, see Anya Catherine Suschitzky, 'The Nation on Stage: Wagner and French Opera at the End of the Nineteenth Century', Ph.D. diss. (University of California, Berkeley, 1999), 153. For a general survey of various constructions of nationalism, though many ethnic-linguistic, see *Nationalism*, ed. Hutchinson and Smith.

⁸ Charles Taylor, 'Nationalism and Modernity', in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany, NY, 1999), 227–48.

⁹ Michael Strasser, 'The Société Nationale and its Adversaries: The Musical Politics of L'invasion germanique in the 1870s', *19th-Century Music*, 24/3 (spring 2001): 225–51.

¹⁰ Celia Applegate, 'How German Is It? Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century', *19th-Century Music*, 21/3 (spring 1998): 274–96.

Exclusivity, Artistic Integrity and the Works of Jean-Philippe Rameau

In reviews for the *Journal des débats* dating from the mid-1890s until 1910, Adolphe Jullien regularly drew attention to performances and editions of the works of Jean-Philippe Rameau. His writings serve as strong basis for comparison, because he addresses almost every major issue affecting the reception of Rameau's works during the period in question. He also displays an uncommon level of critical awareness of the repertoire and its audiences, stemming perhaps from his own extensive knowledge of eighteenth-century theatre and opera, evidenced in publications that date back to the early 1870s. A recurring theme in his writing, and obvious source of irritation for him, is a public failure to recognize what he views as Rameau's inconsistency as a composer, even though he holds the composer in great esteem. He attributes this to ignorance fuelled by the overly developed *snobisme* of the late nineteenth century, which he equates with fashion.¹¹ Jullien's contempt for socially elite audiences of early music in general is particularly marked, for example, in his condemnation of those in attendance for the four-concert series of the Société des instruments anciens at the Salle Erard in 1896, who are harshly taken to task for their unmitigated zeal for mediocre works and performances – enthusiasm that renders them, in his view, not unlike a paid *claque*. They are mocked as '*amateurs* who wagged their heads to and fro yet never once appeared to sleep, for they did not let a single work pass without a burst of applause. This at least shows that Bach and Rameau – old as they may be – are now the latest thing.'¹²

The turn of the century brought no moderation to Jullien's contempt for what he viewed as frivolous concerts and recitals of works by Rameau and his contemporaries. He concludes his review of a performance by the Société Rameau in the winter of 1902, dripping with sarcasm, by referring to the champagne lunch that followed the event, and suggesting that a fireworks display and boat cruise were all that were lacking to complete the whole.¹³ The publication of *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* by Durand in 1904 drew only acid remarks from Jullien about the public's uncritical and 'fashionable' appreciation of Rameau's music, while in the following year, two recitals of excerpts from the operas of Rameau and Lully, organized by the widely admired singer and composer Reynaldo Hahn, elicited only accusations of pandering to public whimsy.¹⁴ The alfresco

¹¹ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 5 July 1903, for a review of the Schola Cantorum's *Fêtes vénitiennes* concert. 'Ah! qui nous délivrera jamais de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui le "snobisme" et de ce qu'on appelait autrefois la mode, du snobisme ou de la mode en n'importe quel sens?'

¹² Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 24 May 1896: 'amateurs qui dodelinaient de la tête et ne dormaient cependant pas, car ils n'ont pas laissé passer un seul morceau sans fort applaudir. Ce qui prouve au moins que Bach et Rameau pourieux qu'ils soient, sont aujourd'hui "du dernier bateau".'

¹³ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 2 Feb. 1902: 'il nous manque encore un feu d'artifice avec la promenade en bateaux.'

¹⁴ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 4 June 1905, for a concert of excerpts from operas by Lully and Rameau, organized by Reynaldo Hahn. 'M. Reynaldo Hahn, mis en goût par le succès que sa restitution minutieusement exacte de Don Giovanni eut l'année dernière et sentant que la mode aujourd'hui tourne du côté des vieux maîtres de l'opéra français, vient de donner à l'Athénée deux séances où il faisait entendre diverses pages empruntées aux plus beaux opéras de Lully et Rameau, et cette curieuse tentative, qui arrivait bien à son heure, a été couronnée du plus vif succès.'

staging of *La Guirlande* at the Schola Cantorum alongside works by Campra and Duni in June 1903 was a unique event in its history to that date, and one undertaken specifically for fund-raising. But these exceptional circumstances have little mitigating effect on Jullien, who condemns *La Guirlande* as so much *bergerie*, and the Schola as so many dilettantes for performing it. He goes on further to mock the audience as a body that has been repeatedly coached to reinforce current trends. They are written off as hypocritical, prepared to mask boredom for the sake of fashion.¹⁵

La Guirlande is not the only Rameau piece to fall short of Jullien's favour: despite an obvious admiration for the works he considers worthy, the mediocre rarely escapes his unfettered scorn, couched in terms and phrases such as 'full of grace', 'noble', or any other description evoking either feminine charm or the irrational noble character. In this Jullien is drawing on a common turn-of-the-century French literary practice in which words appear encoded as feminine and concomitantly depreciatory. This is most vividly brought to life in Romain Rolland's *Jean-Christophe*, where the music of Claude Debussy and his imitators is summarily dismissed as unapproachable, unintelligent, vapid, and generally lacking in genius. This circle of composers is also strongly associated with the domestic, prone to 'simpering parlour tricks' and vulnerable in the sense that they require the protection of a critic or father figure: 'visitors were requested not to touch' in the house of the Debussyst. Likewise Camille Mauclair describes this group as emotionally unstable and insular. He discards them as a bevy of sonorous flirts and teases, avoiding all eloquence in music as though it were 'an intruder in the house', and further informs readers that the Debussyst is the musical equivalent of a neo-impressionist, who is unable to distinguish between a carpet and a canvas.¹⁶ Thus through allusions to the domestic sphere, these writers establish a clear connection between the feminine and the irrational, the childlike and the artistically superficial that is sometimes more subtle in other critics.

Jullien invokes this same type of negative critical discourse in passages relating to keyboard and dance works, reserving praise for major vocal and operatic pieces, and the powerful effects they produce. Operatic and large vocal works are regularly gendered male, for example, as in his assessment of excerpts of *Hippolyte et Aricie* performed at the Société des concerts in April 1902. Here we find references both to the 'vigorous' declamation of the choir and to the music of the dances and rigaudons described as 'solidly written

¹⁵ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 5 July 1903, for the Schola Cantorum's *Fêtes vénitienes* concert: 'vous méritiez dix fois qu'on vous signifiât à l'avance, en suivant l'engouement du jour, à quels airs vous deviez vous pâmer. N'était-il pas entendu que, s'il convenait de se risquer certains soirs en ces parages lointaines, c'était pour applaudir Rameau, Rameau tout seul, et non pas Duni?'

¹⁶ Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe*, vol. 3, trans. Gilbert Cannan (New York, 1913), 60–67; and Camille Mauclair, 'La Jeune Musique française', *La Revue*, 89 (1910): 319. For further reading on gendered discourse in the reception of music and other forms of art in late nineteenth-century France, see Annegret Fauser, 'Gendering the Nations: The Ideologies of French Discourse on Music (1870–1914)', in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork, 2001), 72–104. Fauser also refers to the well-established work of Marcia Citron, Katharine Ellis, Jeffrey Kallberg, Jann Pasler, Deborah L. Silverman, and Tamar Garb.

and orchestrated' but qualified by genre, as bearing either great 'force' (for the choral numbers) or 'grace' (for the dance pieces). Here it is clear that even while he considers all of *Hippolyte et Aricie* as issuing from the 'powerful genius' of its composer, there is a hierarchy of genres at play in Jullien's critical outlook. The choral appears as masculine, the instrumental as feminine. The latter is thus somewhat devalued, drawing as it does on feminine metaphors considered depreciative at the *fin de siècle*, the kind invoked to describe works of poor quality, such as 'Les Sauvages' from *Les Indes galantes*, which Jullien refers to as a 'type of galant *bergerie*, trussed up in foreign garments', the main attraction of which is the 'grace and charm of its orchestration'.¹⁷

Jullien's hierarchy of genres and contempt for audiences is integral to his conception of musical value, and a belief that works that immediately captivate a large following have less value than those that must be studied and allowed to ripen over time in the public conscience. While writing in 1903 on the strengths of *Castor et Pollux*, Jullien makes deliberate mention of *La Guirlande*, 'this mediocre and lifeless score', and in the same breath reminds audiences that it is one of the few works by the composer to be regularly performed.¹⁸ This contempt for immediate appeal as a manifestation of artistic degeneration emanates clearly from a review of the new Durand edition of *Hippolyte et Aricie* in 1901. Care is taken to point out that Rameau was a late bloomer, and an individual who had to overcome a number of obstacles placed in his way by others. As a composer whose success was in no way easy, 'he was shunned and ignored by many of his contemporaries who judged him without even listening to [his works]'.¹⁹ Jullien projects this historical attitude into his own century with something of a twist. He accuses audiences of the *belle époque* of judging without putting in the effort to study and understand the work. But to return to Jullien's contempt for Rameau mania, it is implicit that his censure applies not only to the ignorant *negative* critic, but to the *overenthusiastic* irrational snob as well. He gives full vent to his opinions in an article that appeared at the same time as the new edition of *Les Fêtes d'Hébé*, a work he clearly classes as secondary, 'charming' excerpts of which, he reminds the readers, have long been celebrated, particularly the *musette* and *tambourin*. We learn that

There is nothing that should surprise us in the revival of public taste [for Rameau], since we know full well – as countless examples throughout history attest – that frivolous works and pieces in mixed genres invariably please a mass audience more quickly than compositions of a higher order. Moreover, it is the natural order of things, and what was true for Rameau has become subsequently true for all great musicians, that works destined to stand the test of

¹⁷ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 15 Jan. 1905, for a performance of excerpts from *Les Indes galantes* given by the Concerts Colonne. 'C'est la fin de cette entrée, de cette sorte de "bergerie" galante affublée d'oripeaux étrangers ... Par l'audition de ces deux scènes des Sauvages, c'est surtout de la grâce et du charme de son instrumentation que nous avons pris connaissance.'

¹⁸ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 11 Oct. 1903, a review of the Durand edition of *Castor et Pollux*.

¹⁹ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 26 May 1901. 'Il fut nié et bafoué par beaucoup de ses contemporains qui le condamne sans l'écouter.'

time, to survive the ages, were initially much less well received than the slightest of pieces that were more pleasing, less demanding, easier to appreciate, and applauded in their day.²⁰

The kind of artistic conception revealed in Jullien's criticism puts quite a bit of distance between composer and audience, and considerable tension as well. For to have artistic integrity, an artist must sacrifice public opinion. And what of the performers who mediate between the two? At least for Jullien, they too often emerge as irrationally exclusive or artistically compromised: the convenient butt of his sarcasm. Mme Ribeyre's performance of the solo cantata *Le Berger fidèle* is 'clean and tidy' but fails to deliver the text with any variety.²¹ Colonne's presentation of excerpts from *Les Indes galantes* included 'a lengthy aria where the voice of Zima conquers all with trills and strident trumpet calls' and a performance by 'Mlle Lindsay, whose crystalline voice, so inclined to trills, was well suited to this prickly music, and tenor Maugière, who also benefited from our current sympathy towards Rameau'.²²

Of course Jullien is only one voice in the critical reception of Rameau at the turn of the century. His views require context to be fully appreciated. For instance, as we shall see, *snobisme* was also a factor in the reception of Bach during the 1890s, and is referred to in connection with French works of the eighteenth century throughout the early 1900s.²³ But something more fundamental to Jullien's critical outlook, his contempt for public opinion and 'popularity' in general, and his invocation of a hierarchy of genres privileging major vocal and operatic works, is part of a larger tradition in the reception of Rameau that would have the composer viewed as an autodidactic genius, whose hard work was little recognized in his day: a vision that is clear in Fétis, in Pougin's biography of 1876, and by Marmontel, Malherbe and Brenet.²⁴

²⁰ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 3 July 1904, for the publication of the Durand edition of *Les Fêtes d'Hébé*. 'Il n'y a rien qui nous doive étonner dans ces revivements du goût public, car nous savons fort bien – combien d'exemples ne le prouvent-ils pas dans l'histoire – que les ouvrages légers et de demi-caractère plaisent toujours plus vite à la masse des auditeurs que des œuvres d'un ordre plus relevé; bien mieux, il est tout à fait dans l'ordre naturel des choses – et ce qui s'est passé pour Rameau s'est reproduit par la suite pour tous les grands musiciens – que les créations destinées à braver le temps, à subjuguier la postérité aient tout d'abord des destinées moins brillantes que les maintes œuvres plus plaisantes, moins sévères, plus faciles à comprendre et dont les années ont aussi plus rapidement raison.'

²¹ Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 2 Feb. 1902.

²² Adolphe Jullien, *Le Journal des débats*, 15 Jan. 1905, for a performance of excerpts of *Les Indes galantes* at the Concerts Colonne: 'un grand air où la voix de Zima lutte par ses trilles avec les stridents appels de trompette ... Mlle Lindsay, dont la voix cristalline et propre aux trilles convenait fort bien à cette musique épineuse, et le ténor Maugière ont également bénéficié de nos bonnes dispositions à l'égard de Rameau.'

²³ See e.g. G.R., *Le Guide musical*, 6 Dec. 1908, for a performance of Destouches's *Issée* at the Schola. 'Toute snobisme mis à part trop de choses s'opposent à ce que l'intérêt ne faiblisse pas durant toute l'audition. C'est d'abord la sonorité déconcertante ... En second lieu, de trop fréquentes analogies de procédés.'

²⁴ Arthur Pougin, *Rameau: Essai sur sa vie et ses œuvres* (Paris, 1876), 141–5; see also A. Marmontel, *Symphonistes et virtuoses* (Paris, 1880); Charles Malherbe, 'Notice biographique', in Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Pièces de clavecin* ed. Camille Saint-Saëns (Paris, 1895); Michel Brenet, *La Jeunesse de Rameau* (Paris, [1902]).

Other critics display an awareness of Rameau's popularity with turn-of-the-century audiences. Writing in 1896, Arthur Pougin states very clearly that Rameau has become 'bon marché', though this is not to imply any deficiency in the composer.²⁵ Charles Malherbe, who had a major hand in the Rameau edition, diffused his opinions in notes to accompany various volumes of the edition and in a multi-part article on Rameau's religious music in *Le Monde musical*, in which he appears to share Jullien's contempt for easy success. He points out that the motet *In Convertendo* was poorly received in Rameau's day, but that only time reveals genius; 'the joke is on those who were not able to appreciate the magnitude of their contemporaries'.²⁶ This is not the kind of *snobisme* of fashion, but rather a form of intellectual elitism.

The critic P. V. Baycard appears to share the same values, reminding readers that *Hippolyte et Aricie* was poorly received in its time, and implying that the work has great artistic merit and integrity. But Baycard is not willing to alienate the social elite, for his point of view also appeals to an irrational, noble sensibility of music, *without* feminizing the work. He says, 'we quickly grasp the beauty of this music, the sentiment of which is ever noble, the tone always sound and true.'²⁷ Michel Brenet's (pseudonym for Marie Bobillier) comments on *Castor et Pollux* in the following year appeal to a similarly noble and unfeminized conception of Rameau's opera, which exhibits 'the degree of nobility, of grandeur, and intensity in the expression of tragic sadness, achieved by the elder Rameau in these pages of noble splendour'. And this is not to be confused with the kind of aesthetic appreciation she shows for the performance of an ariette from *Les Fêtes d'Hébé*: 'There is nothing more eighteenth-century, more Watteau, more Marivaux than the ariette ... sung with all the delicate and pretty elegance in Mlle Legrand's possession'.²⁸ The discourse that Brenet applies to *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* appears to draw on writing styles established by such critics as Arthur Dandelot, whose invocation of the feminine seems in no way a deliberate attempt to depreciate. In reviewing performances of *Le Berger fidèle* in concerts organized around the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais in 1896, Dandelot describes the work as a 'ravishing intermezzo' and the second and third sections as 'possessing a charm that has not diminished over the years'.²⁹ Three years later, in his review of a recital given by the Société des instruments anciens, he again invokes the 'charming' metaphor in reference to this cantata,

²⁵ Arthur Pougin, *Le Ménestrel*, 24 May 1896, a review of a recital by the Société des instruments anciens. 'L'une des gloires les plus éclatantes et les plus solides de cette noble école musicale française, dont certains font bon marché aujourd'hui et qui n'en reste pas moins l'honneur de ce pays.'

²⁶ Charles Malherbe, *Le Monde musical*, 30 Oct. 1899: 'on rit plus tard de ceux qui n'ont pas su mesurer la taille de leurs contemporains.'

²⁷ P. V. Baycard, *Le Courrier musical*, 1 Jan. 1902: 'l'on saisit bientôt la beauté de cette musique dont le sentiment est si noble, l'accent toujours juste et vrai.'

²⁸ Michel Brenet, *Le Guide musical*, 6 Mar. 1903, for *Castor et Pollux*: 'le degré de noblesse, de grandeur et d'intensité dans l'expression d'une tragique douleur, atteint par le vieux Rameau dans ces pages d'une souveraine splendeur ... Rien de plus XVIIIe siècle, de plus Watteau, de plus Marivaux, que l'ariette d'une suivante d'Hébé, chantée avec toute l'élégance mièvre et jolie qu'elle comporte par Mlle Marthe Legrand.'

²⁹ Arthur Dandelot, *Le Monde musical*, 15 June 1895; and Arthur Dandelot, *Le Monde musical*, 30 Mar. 1896. 'Ravissant intermède ... ont un charme que les années n'ont pu amoindrir.'

and refers to Rameau's *Diane et Actéon* as 'a lovely work; *l'air gai* ... is absolutely delicious; *l'air vif* ... is very pleasant'. He praises the singer Marcella Pregi as having very likely surpassed a celebrated performance of the work at the *concert spirituel* of 1828, and tells us that she was 'deliciously' accompanied by Boucherit, Delsart and Diémer.³⁰ There is no sarcasm here.

It is no coincidence that the works glossed by critics as positively feminine are for the most part shorter, smaller works intended for smaller, exclusive audiences, at smaller, sometimes private venues. Dandelot, Bouyer, and de Curzon are not writing for a mass readership, the likes of which Jullien would have reached in the *Journal des débats*, or for the mass audiences of the Trocadéro, the Concerts d'Harcourt, or events at other large venues. These writers are directing their criticism to an elite subsection of society – musicians, composers, and above all, *amateurs* from the notable classes of society – who by and large attended the select events at venues such as the Salle Erard.³¹ Katharine Ellis has observed similar rhetoric surrounding the recitals of Louis Diémer and the Société des instruments anciens, and convincingly argues that these events provided escapism for the upper classes, and the opportunity to insulate themselves from changing forms of musical production. Moreover, in Ellis's interpretation, the music at these events was in no way received as an expression of the essentially French, but rather as purely pleasurable.³²

The behaviour of socially elite audiences and the rhetoric emanating from them might be described as conservative, and apolitical. But it may also be viewed as an impulse towards seclusion, towards preserving its identity as an elite minority, marking itself as different. And while there is indeed an absence of essentializing discourse – a tendency not to describe the music as typically 'French' – one could assert that the reception of these events by the press nonetheless betrays a subtle form of politics. Music for critics such as Arthur Dandelot is represented as an irrational form of art, as the manifestation of *mœurs* or modes of conduct that reflect the moral values of a society, in this case grace, elegance and tastefulness. Moreover, music appears as socially subordinate or servile, the musician silenced: the criticism appears arbitrary, subject to the indefinable taste of the chosen few. And when music appears 'spontaneous', when performance seems effortless, the individuals who deliver it may also appear devoid of humanity. They act as automatons, as organic instruments who are present but need not actually be an integral part of an event. They are like discreet servants who make pleasure appear unobtrusively, as though by magic. A portrayal of music and musicians as such may be viewed as an expression of a political ideal, a hierarchical arrangement of society in which the upper stratum cannot be reached by reason – the *ancien régime*. The essentially 'French' has no place in this subculture, for that would be far too inclusive. What matters here are ingrained modes of conduct, mannerisms that cannot be learned, which spring from the moral substance of the person, or the ineffable style that underscores elite difference.

³⁰ Arthur Dandelot, *Le Monde musical*, 30 May 1899: 'œuvre aimable; *l'air gai* ... est la plus délicieuse; *l'air vif* ... très plaisant.'

³¹ It is important to note that even the mainstream concert societies had limited seating capacity. Subscriptions to the Société des concerts were difficult to obtain and the smallness of the hall is a source of frequent complaint in the press.

³² Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (forthcoming).

Concerts given at the small auditorium of the Schola Cantorum after 1900 may have provided a venue for this type of audience. For it is clear that the institution was strongly supported by the social elite of its time, and counted a titled aristocrat as one of its directors. After 1900, there was also an increase in the number of performances of music by Rameau and other eighteenth-century French composers, repertoire that effectively took the place previously held by Renaissance sacred polyphony. But I would argue that there is a different kind of exclusivity at work at the Schola, not social but intellectual, and by the same token, not irrational in its appreciation of music, but rational. Vincent d'Indy is clear in stating that the aim of Schola concerts is not to realize financial gain through the performance of popular works, but to provide a forum for rarely heard music, and, moreover, to educate. He has a simple principal argument – the hall is too small to render a profit.³³ D'Indy's hall is a small room for a small audience, for individuals desirous of avoiding a large, possibly ignorant crowd. These audience members are clearly in search of works that are relatively obscure, an eclectic repertoire that will mark them as intellectually superior. This group favours the operatic in Rameau because the operas are large-scale works and have text, which meant that, in late nineteenth-century France, they would be automatically placed in a higher category of 'authored' work.³⁴ Moreover, there is less reference to the dance or any other genre that could easily be labelled 'charming', like the keyboard or small ensemble music co-opted by the social elite.

Of course there are overlapping audiences for Rameau, and the Schola is one such case where the intellectual and social elite could meet, at least for concerts given in the very early 1900s. Yet since the hall could seat no more than five hundred, and on benches at that, it is possible that any notables in attendance might have identified themselves more strongly with the intelligentsia. There was a strong bond of reverence that brought various social strata together at the Schola, at least as far as Debussy was able to observe.³⁵ The situation may have changed in the next few years, for at least as early as 1908 the Schola moved its concerts to the Salle Gaveau. Outside this institution, however, there is a clear division that can be attributed to differences in visions of the ideal French nation. As a servile and irrational composer of keyboard works and dance music, Rameau fulfilled the needs of the socially elite, a class that clearly would not wish for a mass movement of Rameau appreciation. At the same time, the very irrational qualities of, for instance, grace and elegance that this segment of the population valued in Rameau could be invoked as an indication of artistic

³³ Vincent d'Indy, 'Une lettre de M. Vincent d'Indy', *Le Guide musical*, 3 Jan. 1904.

³⁴ Further discussion of this kind of position is discussed in Anya Suschitzky's 'The Nation on Stage', pp. 151–74. Suschitzky devotes much space to figures associated with the *Œuvres complètes*, including Debussy. However, she interprets their 'classicizing' of Rameau as part of an ethnic-linguistic nationalizing tendency, not as part of an elite movement to establish its difference.

³⁵ Claude Debussy, 'At the Schola Cantorum', in *Debussy on Music*, ed. François Lesure, trans. Richard Langham Smith (London, 1977), 111. 'It's a strange thing, but at the Schola, side by side, you will find the aristocracy, the most left wing of the bourgeoisie, refined artists, and coarse artisans. But there is little of that empty space too often found at the more famous establishments. One feels they understand. ... I don't know if it is because of the smallness of the room, or because of some mysterious influence of the divine but there is a real communion between those who play and those who listen.'

weakness by critics using these same qualifiers as depreciative, 'feminine' metaphors rooted in French nineteenth-century perceptions of women. Finally, cast as a composer of 'serious' music, written in operatic or vocal genres that could more readily be viewed as a 'language', Rameau provided the intelligentsia with a model for the place of music in French society. This place was a very high pedestal that allowed the composer much distance from his or her audience, and even interpreters. And while they positioned themselves as a small, elite community, they might conceivably have wished for a mass movement in favour of this idea.

Secular Communing and a 'Harmonic' Palestrina

Charles Bordes is often credited with the rediscovery of sixteenth-century polyphonists such as Palestrina.³⁶ But in fact, performances of Palestrina's music can be traced back to concerts directed at socially elite audiences, given by the Prince de la Moskowa's society and the Choron school in the early nineteenth century. Performances of sixteenth-century polyphony continued through the mid-century, at a reincarnation of Choron's school overseen by Louis Niedermeyer – an institution well known to musicologists as the place where Gabriel Fauré received his musical education. As early as the late 1860s, bourgeois amateur groups such as the Bourgault-Ducoudray and later the Concordia societies presented motets and isolated movements from the Pope Marcellus Mass in periodic concerts. By 1880, the Société des concerts had given its first performance of the Gloria Patri from the same work. Nonetheless, this movement would become one of the few works of Renaissance polyphony performed by the Société in the ensuing 25-year period.

The difference between these performances and the masses and other events that Charles Bordes organized at the Church of Saint-Gervais in the 1890s is really one of audience demographic. The masses and most of the concerts at Saint-Gervais were open to the general public and, by all accounts, brought together music lovers from almost every social class.³⁷ The result was an erosion in the composer's exclusive cachet, the kind that marked events such as a projected series of three concerts planned by the choir of the Sistine Chapel for the winter of 1888. The price of admission to the first was advertised at a staggering 50 francs, the second still rather hefty at 20, and only the third touted as 'affordable' – though given the other prices, it is difficult to imagine what the organizers believed to be economical.³⁸ And prior to Bordes's first major performance of the Pope Marcellus Mass in 1893, Vincent d'Indy had led a choir of 40 voices through the work on three occasions in the spring of 1892 for a limited audience of 300, paying 20 francs each, at the Salon de la Rose-Croix.³⁹ Through events such as this, and performances given by the *beau monde*

³⁶ Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London, 1988); Philip Dowd, 'Charles Bordes and the Schola Cantorum: Their Influence on the Liturgical Music of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries', Ph.D. diss. (Catholic University of America, 1969).

³⁷ Gustave Robert, *La Musique à Paris 1895–96: Etudes critiques sur les concerts, programmes, index de noms cités* (Paris, 1896), 202–5.

³⁸ Unsigned, *Le Ménestrel*, 15 Apr. 1888.

³⁹ Original notice for the 1892 season (Bibliothèque nationale, Opéra), and *Le Ménestrel*, 13 Mar. 1892.

of the Société des amateurs and other once-a-year polyphonists, Palestrina came to the 1890s as an early music composer for the limited few. But this limitation could be as intellectual as social. For through Wagner's edition of the *Stabat Mater* and published admiration for the composer, a link had been established between the two at a time when Wagner's music was only just making its way into mainstream programmes.

Katharine Ellis has recently shown how pre-1890 performances of Palestrina by musicians such as Joseph Régnier, Louis Niedermeyer, and Charles Vervoitte, with singers occasionally hidden from the audience, performed in extremely slow tempi, with pianissimo dynamics, staggered breathing within parts, and massed choral forces would have appealed to a Wagnerian aesthetic. This produced a sense of monumentality remarked upon by critics as early as 1868 by Paul Lacombe (*L'Art musical*), and later in 1875 by Maurice Cristal. Closer to Bordes's time, in 1894, both these aspects of Palestrina's music as well as the immateriality and mystery of hidden voices would appear as striking to Camille Bellaigue.⁴⁰ Clothed in the nineteenth-century excess of the massed choir, Palestrina may have appealed to audiences of the 1890s as a Romantic in Renaissance clothing. But while Bordes hid his singers from view, his performances differed from those of the previous decade in several ways. Except for special occasions, and more consistently as the decade progressed, his choral resources were normally reduced to no more than 24 singers. Moreover, the evidence of breath marks indicated in Bordes's published versions of this repertoire precludes staggering within parts. Indeed, these breath marks were religiously adhered to as a means of highlighting the text, as were a variety of expressive nuances, including *rf* (*rinforzando*).⁴¹ This makes it unlikely that Bordes's performances produced the massive hushed sounds reminiscent of, perhaps, *Parsifal*, or the continuous melodic flow associated with Wagner's music in general. Audience members who came to Bordes's concerts with expectations shaped by Wagnerian-style performances of Palestrina's music – either by Bordes on more momentous occasions, or by other societies – may have found something other than what they had anticipated.

Aside from his positioning as a composer for the socially elite, and possibly Wagnerian-minded, Palestrina would also be strongly associated with sacred music reform. Indeed, his name had been raised throughout the nineteenth century in the context of discussions and debates over the ideal nature of religious music, though these discussions failed to produce a consensus on the suitability of his music for sacred rites and ceremonies. For Félix Clément, writing in 1860, Palestrina represented the sum of humanistic decadence and elitism. He admired the music, but he considered its complexities wholly unsuited to mass worship. Still, the highly linear, contrapuntal style of much of his music fitted in well with Clément's definition of the ideally religious. It was 'melodic' in orientation, unlike the secular, which he describes as 'harmonic'

⁴⁰ Katharine Ellis, 'Palestrina et la musique dite "Palestrinienne" en France au XIXe siècle: Questions d'exécution et de réception', in *La Renaissance et sa musique au XIXe siècle*, ed. Philippe Vendrix (Paris, 2000), 169–70.

⁴¹ There is a commonality between Bordes's dependence on the text for interpretive guidance, and use of varying dynamics and earlier established South German practices. The latter conventions have been discussed by James Garratt, 'Performing Renaissance Church Music in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Issues and Challenges in the Study of Performative Reception', *Music & Letters*, 83/2 (May 2002): 187–236.

and rhythmically unsuited to texted works.⁴² This distinction between the harmonic and melodic is important, because it will be raised by at least two critics commenting on Bordes's earliest concerts of Renaissance masters, and Palestrina in particular.

The characterization of Palestrina's music as 'harmonic' is an idea that can be found as early as 1879, in Camille Saint-Saëns's article 'Harmonie et mélodie', which was widely diffused in a collection of writings bearing the same title in multiple editions dating well into the 1890s.⁴³ While it is impossible to ascertain the actual readership for this article with absolute certainty, we can assume that since the book was reissued at least six times it was in demand, and that a substantial number of music lovers read it. We can also be confident that Parisians took Saint-Saëns very seriously, for his position as a long-standing virtuoso brought him public favour and press attention that was accorded to few other French composers of the time. 'Melody' for Saint-Saëns takes on highly negative qualities – it is a part of music that appeals to the flesh and not to the intellect or soul, prized only by primitive cultures, while more civilized nations base their works on 'harmony'. He writes that those who are seduced by melody

consist mainly of peoples who, by their inferior organization, are not able to elevate themselves to the conceptual level of harmony. ... Such were the ancient societies, such are the orientals and the blacks from Africa. The latter's music is infantile and without interest. Orientals have pushed melodic and rhythmic experiments to the limit, but know nothing of harmony.⁴⁴

This racist artistic stance can be clearly interpreted as an expression of French ethnic-linguistic nationalism. But there is also a musico-political idea behind Saint-Saëns's racism, one that has more relevance for the smaller community of musicians and composers in search of 'seriousness' than for the larger French nation. The idea here is that through style, either harmonic or melodic, music betrays a moral quality. It is the musical style that seduces certain individuals and societies, and not the person who performs it, which is significant because it means that the work of art is a self-sufficient participant that has a role in culture. Thus there are two conceptual strands at work in 'Harmonie et mélodie': first, moral value, as embedded in a musical work, manifests itself as musical style, and second, it is the style of the work itself, not the performer, that acts on society.⁴⁵

⁴² Félix Clément, *Histoire générale de la musique religieuse* (Paris, 1860), 323; 331; 324–6. For a fuller discussion of the Palestrina revival in nineteenth-century France, see Ellis, 'Palestrina et la musique dite "Palestrinienne"', 155–90.

⁴³ Camille Saint-Saëns, *Harmonie et mélodie* (Paris, 1885). A fourth edition dates from 1890. The sixth edition bears no date.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 13–14. 'Il se compose d'abord de tous les peuples qui, par leur organisation inférieure, ne peuvent s'élever jusqu'à la conception de l'harmonie; cela est une évidence incontestable. Tels étaient les peuples antiques, tels sont les Orientaux et les nègres de l'Afrique. Ces derniers ont une musique enfantine et sans intérêt. Les Orientaux ont poussé très loin la recherche de la mélodie et du rythme, mais l'harmonie leur est inconnue.'

⁴⁵ See James Garratt, 'Performing Renaissance Church Music', for the root of similar ideas in North German musical culture.

Given Saint-Saëns's position as a founder of the Société nationale, it should come as no surprise that in 'Harmonie et mélodie' we also learn that music should be serious. This opinion is echoed by the composer-critic Paul Dukas, who in his review of Bordes's performances of Palestrina for Holy Week in 1892 describes the composer's music as 'serious'. He is also concerned with style, telling us that while modern music may have developed from harmonic research and orchestral colouring, it is very far behind Palestrina and Bach in terms of counterpoint. He believes that composers would benefit from studying this technique as well, since one of the virtues of counterpoint in Palestrina's music is that it allows smaller groups to have a distinctive melodic contour, and, moreover, to emerge from the choral mass in harmonic autonomy.⁴⁶ Still, Dukas's real interest in this repertoire appears to be its value as self-sustaining, 'serious' music. In a world of decadent music, he calls for a revival of works of the past, works that 'welled up spontaneously', as opposed to lyric pieces written to order. The national extraction and even the historical period appear to be of lesser importance for Dukas, for we learn that both Palestrina and Bach can teach the same lesson: that music should be viewed as a serious enterprise. He insists that

what we must take away from this journey into the past is the sense of monumentality with which the ancient masters practised an art that has been too often degraded since; it is the faith in the higher ideal held by these composers in the breadth of music; it is, in a word, the respect for a tradition made so greatly manifest in these composers from the earliest history of music, which we can, in turn, continue to uphold.⁴⁷

Camille Bellaigue appears more directly influenced by Saint-Saëns. In a lengthy article on Palestrina for the *Revue des deux mondes* in 1894 he clearly states that Palestrina is a 'harmonic' composer, and reiterates Saint-Saëns's argument that harmonic music is an indication of intellectually superior cultures, including the non-populist or the subculture of the social elite. He writes that

it is almost exclusively harmony that makes up Palestrina's music. It is extremely rare that we are able to detach anything from this polyphony where the parts gain meaning above all through their reciprocal relationships, by contrast and by symmetry, by imitations, responses, and intertwining of counterpoint. The music of Palestrina knows nothing of solos. The melody is constantly enveloped, involved in the harmony. Never is any one voice accompanied by the others, rather all the voices sing together and accompany each other ... Melody undoubtedly belongs to the realm of primitive music, as it is the element most accessible to the ignorant, to children, and the general population. There are popular melodies, but popular harmonies do not exist. Melody is the aspect of the music which is most sensitive, sometimes sensual, being in some ways external to art; harmony is the

⁴⁶ Paul Dukas, 'Les Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais – Saint-Saëns', *La Revue hebdomadaire* (June 1896), in *Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique* (Paris, 1948), 332: 'et l'effet de ces masses vocales dialoguant par groupes ayant chacun leur autonomie harmonique et leurs mouvements mélodiques particuliers'.

⁴⁷ Paul Dukas, 'Les Auditions de Saint-Gervais', in *Les Ecrits*, 23–4. Originally published in *La Revue hebdomadaire* (June 1892).

part of music that is more internal and rational, and if it is not true that all melodies are light and frivolous, it is most certainly true that most frivolous and light music is melodic.⁴⁸

The harmonic nature of Palestrina's music, a characteristic that marks it as non-populist as it does serious, makes it ideal for the communal expression of a chosen few. Bellaigue's reasoning is that since the polyphonic is necessarily collective and the vocal human, 'Palestrina's music is not the music of one of us but of all of us ... no voice dominates or imposes on the others, pride and the sense of self are eradicated here. None says, "My Father, who art in heaven." All say together, Our Father.' The operative word here is 'us', since Bellaigue's earlier scorn for 'the ignorant, children and the general population' clearly implies a necessary 'other' for his communal but elite group of music lovers, composers, and musicians.⁴⁹

While Dukas saw little difference in the message and value of the music of Bach and Palestrina, it is clear that the conceptual complex of music as serious, autonomous in being, and highly suited to the communal experience of elite individuals is particular to the music of Palestrina. More than Bach and even Rameau, Palestrina provided elite communities with the opportunity to express their difference, and to come together in shared appreciation, as they would, for instance, at private airings of Wagner's music, or in the course of pilgrimages to Bayreuth undertaken by only the few and enlightened. For the musically elite, Palestrina also came to represent the ideal composer of self-sufficient musical works, independent of the performer.

If performances of Palestrina's works were sharply curtailed after 1900, it may be because the success of Bordes's campaign to bring this music to the masses – though it remained beyond the performance means of most of the population – made the repertoire appear overly populist, and, as such, an unsuitable vehicle for the expression of elite difference at the Schola. That being said, the reception of this composer at the *fin de siècle* includes interpretations of

⁴⁸ Camille Bellaigue, 'Trois maîtres d'Italie', *La Revue des deux mondes*, 15 Oct. 1894. 'Eh bien, c'est presque uniquement d'harmonie qu'est faite la musique de Palestrina. Il est extrêmement rare qu'on puisse rien détacher de cette polyphonie où les parties valent surtout par leurs relations réciproques, par l'opposition et la symétrie, par les imitations, les réponses et l'entrelacement du contrepoint. La musique de Palestrina ne connaît pas le solo. La mélodie y est constamment enveloppée, impliquée dans l'harmonie. Jamais une seule voix n'y chante accompagnée par les autres; mais toutes les voix y chantent ensemble et s'accompagnent entre elles ... La mélodie est à coup sûr l'élément primitif de la musique, le plus aisément accessible aux simples aux ignorants, aux enfants et au peuple. Il y a des mélodies populaires, mais des harmonies populaires, cela n'existe pas. La mélodie est la forme la plus sensible, parfois sensuelle, la forme en quelque sorte extérieure de l'art; l'harmonie en est la forme plutôt intérieure et rationnelle, et s'il n'est pas vrai que toute mélodie soit légère et frivole, il est en revanche certain que toute musique frivole et légère est mélodie.'

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 'Polyphonique et par conséquent collective, vocale et par là foncièrement humaine, la musique de Palestrina n'est pas la musique d'un de nous, mais de nous tous ... Dans le fraternel concert dont elle est faite, aucune voix ne domine ou ne méprise les autres; l'orgueil et le sens propre s'effacent ici. Nul ne dit: Mon Père, qui êtes aux cieux; tous disent ensemble: Notre Père, et voilà comment la polyphonie palestrinienne est l'une des plus admirables expressions par la musique, non seulement de la foi, mais de la charité.'

his music as essentially 'French'. The same Bellaigue who wished to distance himself from the general population is also quick to point out that Palestrina is more French than Italian, since he studied with Goudimel from 1540 to 1544, at a time when Italy was dominated by 'gallo-belge' influences. As such, Palestrina is said to have been in conflict with the innately Italian: 'In Palestrina's music one observes less concord and more conflict amongst the three primordial forces that Taine considered essential to the generation of a work of art: race, place, and time.'⁵⁰ The Goudimel connection to Palestrina was only one means of reinterpreting this Italian composer as French. Another popular tactic involved highlighting the roots of the composition in *cantus prius factus*, mainly Gregorian chant, which the Benedictine monks of Solesmes would soon reclaim as a principally French body of works.⁵¹

Johann Sebastian and Jean-Sébastien

By the winter of 1895, it had become clear to at least one critical observer that performances of music by the German baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach were attracting a larger public than in previous years. In writing for the *Revue illustrée*, Gustave Robert commented at length on this phenomenon, pointing to the popularity of Eugène d'Harcourt's series of historical concerts (instituted in the autumn of 1893) and also singling out the performances of Bach cantatas given at the same venue by Charles Bordes and the Chanteurs de Saint-Gervais. Robert considers several explanations for Bach's success with Parisian audiences, reasoning that public musical taste could hardly have become more 'purified', and that the increase in 'enlightened' amateurs must only be slight.⁵² Here he may be reacting to the ideas of Paul Dukas, who, in his review of the same Chanteurs performances of Bach cantatas, suggests that audiences have grown more enlightened over the past ten years, and now recognize that 'science in art comes not at the expense of inspiration, but rather infuses the work with life'.⁵³ Nonetheless, as Robert interprets it, the craze has arisen more as a reactionary movement against the 'demands' of the music of Richard Wagner and other 'descriptive' composers.

⁵⁰ Ibid.: 'le contrepoint vocal n'est pas un produit du sol latin, et s'il fleurit à Rome on sait avec quel éclat, il n'y avait point germé. L'intériorité, l'austérité, la piété profonde et pour ainsi dire canonique, tous ces caractères de la musique de Palestrina ne sont pas les caractères essentiels et éternels du génie italien; celui-ci ne les possède pas habituellement et ne les rencontre guère que par aventure. Au siècle de Palestrina comme au siècle de Dante, et par une aventure également glorieuse, il les a rencontrés. On peut étudier chez Palestrina moins le concours que le conflit des trois forces primordiales que Taine regardait comme génératrices de l'œuvre d'art: la race, le milieu et le moment.'

⁵¹ See for instance, Vincent d'Indy, 'L'Art en place et à sa place', *La Tribune de Saint-Gervais* (1901).

⁵² Gustave Robert, *La Musique à Paris 1894–95: Etudes critiques sur les concerts, programmes, index de noms cités* (Paris, 1895), 131–2.

⁵³ Paul Dukas, 'Les Cantates d'église de J.-S. Bach', *La Revue hebdomadaire* (Feb. 1894), in *Les Ecrits*, 163: 'la science dans l'art ne tue pas l'inspiration, mais qu'elle la vivifie au contraire au point de la soulever en prodigieux essors, en envolées d'autant plus larges et plus sûres.'

A second explanation offered by Robert is that the 'snobs' of his time currently feel pressured to acquire knowledge of more obscure historical figures. He tells us that

true snobs must now be possessed of a well-rounded education, drawing on the knowledge of specialists in any given field. We all know young persons who have no clearly defined career goal, but who are able to astound with the abundance of detailed knowledge they possess of this or that eminently unknown literary figure or painter of a far-flung nationality, or of composers or even performers. Obviously, for persons of this ilk, admiring Bach, which also passes for being a learned musician, must be the surest sign of a being a highly cultured individual.⁵⁴

There is no particular reason why both of these explanations should not hold true. The first would be symptomatic of a more reasoned view of the composition. Emotional distance, as proposed by Robert, delivers the work from the realm of the subjective, allowing for a more intellectual discourse to grow up around it. Subjective taste counts for very little when music can be explained on its own terms, and, moreover, by individuals other than elite arbiters of taste. But learnedness can also be a source of irritation to audiences, who in previous years had condemned much of Bach's work as boring and overly erudite.⁵⁵

This is evident in a critical squabble dating from around 1888 over the merits of Bach. Although Julien Tiersot was very active in promoting the virtues of a learned Bach, the target in the press was more often Victor Wilder, who championed the composer as an 'austere genius', in the face of some dismissive critical yawning by Camille Bellaigue. Bach received more waspish treatment from Théophile Gautier and Julien Torchet, the latter bringing all the aversion of the tired listener to the fore in his ridiculing of the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto:

Thus Bach is an austere genius, this is well understood, but he is also mighty boring as well, if I dare to express myself in this way, notably in his fifth concerto. Oh! my friend, what heavy work it is to listen to his endless counterpoint exercises! It makes me yawn just to think of it. It is strong, very intelligent ... I would add my voice to Théophile Gautier's in saying it is better to deify some composers than to listen to them.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Robert, *La Musique à Paris 1894–95*, 129. 'Les vrais snobs doivent maintenant avoir une culture un peu générale et qui affecte en chaque partie des connaissances de spécialistes. Nous connaissons tous des jeunes gens qui se destinent indifféremment à telle ou telle carrière et qui surprennent par l'abondance de détails qu'ils possèdent sur tels ou tels des plus inconnus des lettres et sur des peintres de nationalités très différentes et encore sur des musiciens et même sur des exécutants. Evidemment, pour des gens de cet esprit, admirer Bach, qui passe pour un musicien savant, doit être la haute preuve d'une très rare culture.'

⁵⁵ Joël-Marie Fauquet and Antoine Hennion have erroneously argued that Bach's popularity was sealed as early as 1885. See Fauquet and Hennion's *La Grandeur de Bach: L'Amour de la musique en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris, 2000).

⁵⁶ Julien Torchet, *Le Monde artiste* (10 Feb. 1889). Also cited in Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*. 'Donc Bach est un génie austère c'est entendu, mais bien ennuyeux aussi, si j'ose m'exprimer ainsi, notamment dans son cinquième Concerto. Ah! mon ami, quel

Biliousness for the music aside, Torchet is not prepared to denigrate the performers, lauding the pianist Louis Diémer as 'beyond all praise', possessed of the 'abnegation, conscientiousness, and respect that are found only in the true artist'. His defence of the virtuoso, even as he derides the music, is no anomaly. The same holds true for other critics, including Arthur Landeley, who in his review of the Concordia Society's performance of the Saint Matthew Passion in 1888 set aside special praise for Henrietta Fuchs, as well as Alexandre Guilmant and Paul Vidal, even though it is clear in the passage that follows that he found the work somewhat trying:

For a long time, this idea of reviving Bach haunted the enterprising mind of [the society's] president, Madame Fuchs. Success has crowned her efforts ... Let us not forget Monsieur Guilmant to whom was entrusted the care of realizing, at his own risk, the pipe organ part which was indicated only by a figured bass, and Monsieur Paul Vidal who was charged with rendering the accompaniment on the portable organ. Solemn events such as these, with three hours given over to pure art, deliver the performer to a place of honour, not to mention ... the audience.⁵⁷

Four years later in 1892, a performance of the B minor Mass elicited a similar response from Amadée Boutarel, who assures readers that, 'It is certain that the orchestra and choir did some courageous homework, and it is only proper to acknowledge it ... All merit praise, but it is especially due to Monsieur Warmbrodt, whose pure voice and polished style delivered a true sense of wonder in music of a formidable language that is very difficult to grasp.'⁵⁸ The idea that the performer has rendered the music palatable returns in a review written by Léon Schlesinger two years later. He brands Diémer's performance of the F major Harpsichord Concerto as the linchpin of a concert given by Eugène d'Harcourt in late January 1894. And this success results from the fact that 'Monsieur Diémer is a magician; under his nimble fingers, the most forbidding of compositions acquires an inviting, seductive aspect.'⁵⁹

The reception of Bach as a learned composer whose music may be rescued only by an excellent performer has political implications. For the upper social classes, it is clear that the objection to Bach is not his nationality – although at

rude travail d'écouter ces exercices de contre-point qui ne s'arrêtent jamais! J'en bâille encore en y pensant. C'est très fort, très savant ... je répéterai avec Théophile Gautier qu'il est de certains auteurs qu'on a mieux déifier qu'entendre.'

⁵⁷ A. Landely, *L'Art musical*, 31 May 1888. 'Depuis longtemps cette idée de ressusciter Bach hantait l'esprit entreprenant de sa présidente, Mme Fuchs. La réussite a couronné ses efforts ... N'oublions pas M. Guilmant à qui incombait le soin de réaliser à ses risques la partie de grand orgue indiquée par une simple basse chiffrée et M. Paul Vidal chargé de l'accompagnement au petit orgue. Des solennités comme celle-là, trois heures consacrées à l'art pur, honorent exécutants et ... auditeurs.'

⁵⁸ Amadée Boutarel, *Le Ménestrel*, 28 Feb. 1892. 'Il est certain que l'orchestre et les choeurs ont fait vaillamment leur devoir, et il n'est que juste de le constater ... Tous méritent des éloges, mais ces éloges sont dus surtout à M. Warmbrodt, dont la voix si pure et le style si châtié ont véritablement fait merveille dans une œuvre d'une langue si sévère et d'une compréhension si difficile.'

⁵⁹ Léon Schlesinger, *Le Ménestrel*, 4 Feb. 1894: 'le grand succès de la séance a été pour M. Louis Diémer, qui a joué le concerto en fa de Bach. M. Diémer est un magicien; sous ses doigts habiles, les compositions les plus austères ont des sourires et des séductions.'

this point it could be argued that German art had acquired connotations of learnedness. It means that the 'work' of the composer is incomplete without the performers, and given that access to most performances of Bach's music prior to the founding of d'Harcourt's concerts in 1893 was fairly restricted, it is possible to view these events as rituals that could reinforce the identity of the socially elite as different. It is this same class of individuals, with their tendency to view music as a service, that would have welcomed Bach – even a grossly imperfect Bach – as a respite from the more demanding Wagner. Even when a work by Bach is positively received, it is common for critics to assign irrational characteristics to it that, in the end, are somewhat demeaning for the composer. This is the case for Henry Eymieu, who tells us only that the B minor orchestral suite appeared 'very tasteful', in its performance by Colonne and the flautist Cantié in 1891. Arthur Pougin summarized the work in 1894 as 'charming in its apparent naïveté', while in the same year Amédée Boutarel consigned the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto to a similar aesthetic category as 'all charm, grace, and delicacy, with an ingenuity, a richness of technical resources to which masters such as Beethoven, Schumann, and Mendelssohn paid great tribute'.⁶⁰ Moreover, both Pougin and Boutarel make reference to the idea that part of the value of Bach's music derives from the fact that its learnedness is hidden. Thus the function of this work is to serve, discreetly, and without exacting too much effort from the audience. Henri Barbedette makes this very clear in his comments on the concerto for three harpsichords, following a performance by Diémer and two of his students (on pianos) at the Concerts Colonne in 1893. The work is to be praised because it does not tire the listener, which arises from the fact that 'Bach knew how to make the fugal form enjoyable and, in his most learned combinations, method is never obvious'.⁶¹

As we saw in the reception of Rameau, the social elite must not be confused with the intelligentsia, even though there was some overlap (for example, the more well-heeled artists of the Petit Bayreuth, and Winaretta Singer, who financed the second of Bordes's series of Bach cantatas at the Concert d'Harcourt). As we saw earlier, Gustave Robert identifies those with pretensions to intellectual pursuits as separate from the social elite, and appears to hold them in some contempt, and he is not alone in identifying them as supporters of Bach. When the Concordia society presented the Saint Matthew Passion in 1888, Landely made it clear that the work could only be appreciated by specialists:

⁶⁰ [Henry Eymieu], *Le Monde musical*, 15 Mar. 1891; Arthur Pougin, *Le Ménestrel*, 29 Apr. 1894: 'd'une des quatre suites de Jean-sébastien Bach, suite en si mineur, pour quatuor d'instruments à cordes et une flûte; cette composition, charmante en son apparente naïveté, a valu un succès personnel très flatteur à M. Hennebains, le successeur de M. Taffanel comme flûte-solo de la Société'; Amédée Boutarel, *Le Ménestrel*, 18 Nov. 1894: 'La perle de ce programme, étincillante et discrète, était le 5e concerto de Bach pour piano, flûte et violon, exécuté par MM. Diémer, Cantié et Remy. Là, tout est charme, grâce, délicatesse, avec une ingéniosité, une fécondité de ressources techniques auxquelles des maîtres comme Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, ont rendu un magnifique hommage. L'œuvre et ses interprètes ont obtenu un beau succès.'

⁶¹ Henri Barbedette, *Le Ménestrel*, 19 Mar. 1893. 'Le concerto pour trois pianos, de Sébastien Bach, si admirablement dit par M. Diémer et ses deux élèves, MM. Risler et Pierret, est une véritable merveille. C'est un morceau amplement développé et que l'on écoute d'un bout à l'autre sans fatigue. Bach savait rendre la forme fuguée aimable et, dans ses plus savantes combinaisons, la méthode ne fait jamais défaut.'

The work of Bach, admirable or immensely interesting to the musician, will satisfy purely human interests only on the rare occasion. Chaste, the music has no effect upon the senses; long, and repetitive in terms of its procedures, it tires the spirit; rarely gaining favour in the austerity of its counterpoint, too rigorously Protestant in its numerous chorales, it barely touches the heart eager for intimate emotions.⁶²

Tiersot's presentation of excerpts from the same work at the Cercle Saint-Simon in December 1888 drew little comment from the reviewer for *L'Art musical*, who nonetheless made it clear that the success of the event resulted from the 'foule lettrées' in attendance, describing the society as 'the enlightened protector of all of these interesting attempts to present retrospectives of art'.⁶³ And the situation continued at least until the first performance of the B minor Mass by the Conservatoire in 1891. The *Monde musical* was quick to underline the drawing power of the work, manifested in the presence of a number of notables. But we also learn that it was the 'scholastics' who gave it a demonstrative reception.⁶⁴ The *Monde artiste* was more blunt in its criticism of this concert: 'as for the mass itself, it is long, too long, and musicologists can speak of it at length: an opportunity that our colleague Monsieur Julien Tiersot was careful not to miss.' We also learn that the audience for the performance was not composed of regular Société members, but that 'a good quarter of subscribers sold their tickets, through aversion or fear, and, thanks to this opportunity, a veritable gang of rabid *amateurs* was able to enter the sacrosanct venue. The result was a divided audience, the effect of which can be summed up in two phrases: there was absolute boredom, and there was unbridled applause.'⁶⁵

As a musician, music historian, and *habitué* of the Société nationale and the circle of Franck's students, Tiersot responded to the performance of the B minor Mass in 1891 with a predictably positive, five-part article for the *Ménestrel*. He viewed the occasion as a great moment in the history of the society, and for all engaged in the noble combat for the appreciation of 'elevated' or serious art,

⁶² A. Landely, *L'Art musical*, 31 May 1888. 'L'œuvre de Bach, admirable ou prodigieusement intéressante pour le musicien, ne satisfera qu'à de rares intervalles l'attention purement humaine. Chaste, elle ne saurait impressionner les sens; longue, uniforme dans ses procédés, elle fatigue l'esprit; rarement insinuante dans l'austérité de son contrepoint, trop rigoureusement protestante dans ses nombreux chorals, elle touche à peine le cœur avide d'émotions intimes.'

⁶³ Ch. G., *L'Art musical*, 31 Dec. 1889.

⁶⁴ E.M., *Le Monde musical*, 28 Feb. 1891.

⁶⁵ 'Judex', *Le Monde artiste* (15 Mar. 1891): 'Quant à la messe elle-même, elle est longue, très longue, et les musicologues peuvent en parler longuement: ce que n'a pas manqué de faire d'ailleurs notre confrère M. Julien Tiersot. Mettant à profit les travaux de M. Spitta, un de ces Allemands érudits qui s'identifient en quelque sorte avec l'idole de leur choix, dissertent gravement sur la couleur de ses bas, vérifient les comptes de sa cuisinière et se garderaient de croire à l'inutilité d'un infime détail, M. Julien Tiersot a publié dans le *Ménestrel* une suite d'articles où l'histoire de la Messe en si mineur est racontée avec la précision la plus complète. Avis aux curieux que ce genre d'études intéresse ... un bon quart d'abonnés avait vendu ses places, par aversion ou par crainte, et, grâce à cette porte ouverte, tout un groupe d'amateurs convaincus a pénétré dans le temple. De là deux courants franchement opposés; l'effet produit peut donc se résumer en deux propositions: on s'est ennuyé ferme, mais on a fort applaudi.'

'works that are great, noble, and advanced in style'.⁶⁶ In Tiersot's mind, the greatness of Bach's music stems from the fact that it possesses a soul, 'it hides a soul ... and a soul that vibrates with a rare power: it is Bach's very own soul.'⁶⁷ The implications of this are fairly weighty. First it engages the idea that the work exists as an entity separate from performance. Dukas would later echo this idea in his review of the Chanteurs' 1894 performances of the Bach cantatas. He seems almost proud of the fact that this 'living' music is so difficult as to defy performance, and is quick to point out that the inspiration for this 'indestructible' work is rooted in science.⁶⁸ In this he may be relying on Tiersot, who also tells us in 1891 that Bach's 'science' or intelligence was his only compositional guide, likely because, if the work is to be considered serious, then it becomes imperative to establish the composer as a 'serious' individual. Since it is the composer's soul that is contained within the work, it is the composer's morality that will be expressed on the surface of the music as style. This is why Tiersot is careful to portray Bach as a 'disinterested' composer, whose works were not written to please a public but rather as a means of expressing personal feelings.⁶⁹ His portrayal of Bach is part and parcel of a critical tendency to compare Bach with Handel, to describe Bach as a lonely and hard-working hermit in direct opposition to Handel as a fashionable composer catering to English notables. The view of Bach that we find expressed by this scholar continues in writings on music throughout the decade.⁷⁰

It is fairly significant that Tiersot devotes a major portion of the second instalment of his article to portraying Bach as a militant individual, who was often in conflict with his employers. It is a biographical trope shared with Rameau, who was invariably described as an ill-tempered individual, a fre-

⁶⁶ Julien Tiersot, *Le Ménestrel*, 8 Mar. 1891: 'triomphe éclatant pour le Société des concerts, particulièrement pour ceux qui combattent le bon combat en l'honneur de l'art élevé, des œuvres nobles et grandes et des tendances avancées.'

⁶⁷ Julien Tiersot, *Le Ménestrel*, 15 Mar. 1891. 'Cependant, si admirable que soit l'œuvre de Bach au point de vue de la beauté plastique, elle n'exercerait pas entièrement sur nous son invincible attraction si elle ne valait que par les formes extérieures. Mais sous l'appât des combinaisons infinies, elle cache une âme, et une âme qui vibre avec une rare puissance: c'est l'âme même de Bach, qui fut bien, certes, une des plus grandes qui aient existé sur notre monde terrestre; c'est celle de toute une race et de tout un siècle, qui trouvèrent en lui, sans s'en douter, l'interprète de ce qu'ils ressentaient de plus grand et de plus fort.'

⁶⁸ Paul Dukas, 'Les Cantates d'église de J.-S. Bach', *La Revue hebdomadaire* (Feb. 1894), in *Les Ecrits*, 163–4.

⁶⁹ Julien Tiersot, *Le Ménestrel*, 15 Mar. 1891. 'Ne cherchant pas à plaire au public, Bach se bornait donc à exprimer ce qu'il sentait, et il le faisait d'autant plus spontanément et naturellement que lui non plus n'a point "légiféré" et qu'il semble, en écrivant, n'avoir obéi qu'à des principes vagues et obscurs de son génie, bien plutôt que sa volonté a puissamment illuminés.'

⁷⁰ See e.g. Gustave Robert, *La Musique à Paris 1895–96*, 185. 'Ne pourrait-on pas ... se demander si cette différence de vie et de caractère n'expliquerait pas l'absence de ce je ne sois [*sic*] quoi qui fait que cette fleur de vie qui nous enchante dans beaucoup, sinon dans toutes les œuvres de Bach, fit défaut bien souvent dans les œuvres d'Haendel?' For more reviews in this vein, see A. Landely in *L'Art musical*, 31 May 1888; Auguste Mercadier, *Le Monde musical*, 30 Jan. 1899; Henri Barbedette, *Le Ménestrel*, 15 Jan. 1899; Amédée Boutarel, *Le Ménestrel*, 22 Jan. 1899; Arthur Dandelot, *Le Monde musical*, 15 Mar. 1898; Arthur Dandelot, *Le Monde musical*, 15 Apr. 1899.

quent polemicist, and not in the least disposed to pander to public favour. Though it is never directly expressed in the press of the 1880s and 1890s, today we would probably say that this kind of personal behaviour comes out of a need to preserve artistic integrity. And so part of Tiersot's article is really speaking to a smaller community of musicians, whose concern is more for its own identity as a minority, and for establishing the place of music in French society. That being said, there are other arguments in his article that speak directly to a larger French ethnic-linguistic conceit of nationalism. Bach's art is said to be rooted in the French musical past: it reflects the values associated with the traditions of the French Middle Ages, and remains 'the supreme manifestation of music as it was conceived by the old masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: the likes of Josquin des Prés, Palestrina, and Roland de Lassus'. The only difference between these fifteenth- and sixteenth-century contrapuntalists and Bach is that the latter transformed their work into an instrumental genre. Like Dukas, Tiersot has invoked the idea that by looking to the past, an artist is able to survive into the future.⁷¹ And so Bach, as an artist who has survived into the late nineteenth century, becomes more than acceptable to ethnic-linguistic French nationalists because his survival is the result of his respect for mainly French musical traditions. His identity is transformed from the German Johann Sebastian to the French Jean-Sébastien.

Conclusion

I began this article by placing a review written by Pierre Lalo under the microscope, a process which revealed a twofold nationalist conceit, embedded in a single critic's point of view, a sort of political schizophrenia that allows nationalism to be at once an elite drive to establish its difference and a conception of nationhood as a racially and linguistically homogenous whole. This same critical tendency reappeared in Bellaigue's elitist conception of a nonetheless Gallicized Palestrina. With Tiersot's multivalent conception of Bach we have returned to this complex conceit: for his Bach appears both as a composer of 'serious' music for the smaller musical community and the intelligentsia, and as an assimilated Frenchman, whose genius is rooted in French musical traditions. And I believe it is no accident that these complex expressions of nationalism should be found in critics who had ties to the Schola Cantorum, since, as we saw in the Rameau and Palestrina case studies, concerts associated with the institution served as a meeting ground for individuals from a great variety of social backgrounds and political persuasions.

If Bach and Palestrina could be subject to more than one type of nationalism, and successfully co-opted by the larger nation as well as smaller, more insular groups, the same was not true for Rameau – which is ironic given his place in

⁷¹ Julien Tiersot, *Le Ménestrel*, 15 Mar. 1891. 'Il demeure, l'on peut dire que son œuvre est l'expression dernière, la suprême manifestation de la musique comme l'avait conçue les vieux maîtres du XV^e et du XVI^e siècle, les Josquin des Prés, les Palestrina, les Roland de Lassus. Seulement, de son temps, l'instrument s'est perfectionné et enrichi; à la polyphonie vocale qui seule était pratiquée dans les temps antérieurs vient se joindre un élément instrumental qui en double la richesse et la puissance ... Et, tout en s'appuyant sur le passé, l'œuvre de Bach rayonne sur l'avenir, et avec quelle intensité, nous le savons.'

the history of French music. Writing in 1914, the general editor of the Rameau *Œuvres complètes*, Camille Saint-Saëns, admitted that the attempt to revive the composer's staged works had not been nearly as successful as he had anticipated, though he had reason to hope the music would someday reach beyond the *cercle des érudits* to engage a broader public.⁷² Thus the split along lines of genre, between smaller and large-scale works that divided audiences of the 1890s and early 1900s, and between those who co-opted Rameau as an ideal composer for socially elite escapist rituals and those who viewed his works as models of musical 'seriousness', appears to have held right up to 1914. But more important, even though Rameau's work may appear essentialized in the ethnic-linguistic sense – consistently marked as either 'charming' and 'graceful' or purposefully 'vigorous' and 'serious' – this 'Frenchness' is clearly meant to remain beyond the grasp of the average member of the nation.

⁷² Camille Saint-Saëns, *Au courant de la vie* (Paris, 1914), 14–19.