Operatic Futures in Second Empire Paris

Willson, Flora

Awarding institution:
King's College London

Operatic Futures in Second Empire Paris

Flora Natalie Willson

PhD
King's College London, 2013

What word have you, interpreters, of men
Who in the tomb of heaven walk by night,
The darkened ghosts of our old comedy?

Wallace Stevens, Harmonium

Contents

Abstract

My dissertation focuses on Paris during the latter decade of Napoleon III's Second Empire (1852-1870). It concentrates particularly on the status of opera in the period, placing contemporary operatic discourse and practice within a cultural and political landscape marked by both identification with the past and fascination with the future. While opera continued to be a central part of Paris's social life and its self-image as the pre-eminent modern metropolis, the period offers the first sustained evidence of operatic canon-formation, with increasing numbers of old works revived. In part because such revivals were often believed to be replacing new commissions, the emerging canon provoked much discussion. Responding to this debate, I ask how opera's turns to the past in the 1860s related to the period's preoccupation with the idea of 'progress': my enquiry thus aims to contribute to existing scholarship on mid-century musical historicism while also tracing how operatic practices related to contemporary cultural and technological change.

After a brief introduction, the dissertation focuses on four moments: the 1859 revival of Gluck's *Orphée*, a significant step in the transition towards the operatic 'imaginary museum' of the future; three concerts conducted by Richard Wagner in 1860 to showcase his 'musique de l'avenir', heard as an explicit instance of operatic soothsaying; the 1867 premiere of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, a work whose mixed reception bears witness to changing modes of operatic listening; and commentary surrounding the Parisian funeral celebrations of Meyerbeer in May 1864 and Rossini in November 1868, occasions that foregrounded numerous anxieties about what was to come after the demise of two deeply symbolic figures – one embodying opera's glorious past, the other believed to have held the key to its future.

List of Figures

Note on the text

As a historical study with a focus on the critical discourse surrounding opera during the Second Empire, this dissertation necessarily refers frequently to nineteenth-century sources, the majority of which are in French. I present my historical and foreign-language sources as follows: longer quotations are indented in the main text, with the English translation following immediately after the original; quotations of individual words and short phrases appear in the original language only; all other embedded quotations are English translations, with the originals provided in footnotes. The exceptions to this system are my epigraphs, which I have left in the original language and for which I do not provide translations. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. Dealing with nineteenth-century sources inevitably uncovers occasional discrepancies between nineteenth- and twenty-first-century French spelling as well as more frequent ones in the typographical presentation of critics' names ('de Lagenevais' vs. 'de la Genevais', for instance) and in the capitalisation and punctuation of article titles. In general I have reproduced exactly what appears in the printed source. Exceptions come in a very few cases where I have modernised obsolete nineteenth-century spellings.

INTRODUCTION

Second Empire (Hi)stories

> Let the visitor make his first walk in New Paris from the Northern Station, straight as an arrow to the New Opera which faces the rue de la Paix and the Great Boulevards, and he will get almost at every step astonishing glimpses of the capital of the Second Empire.

Such was the advice issued to those visiting Paris in 1867 by one popular English-language guide.[1] The tourist is assumed to have arrived by rail (guidebook in hand), delivered into the heart of the city by that recent and fastest mode of long-distance travel. His journey will now, it seems, retain its momentum as he leaves the Gare du Nord on foot: this ideal pedestrian is no ambling, idling flâneur – Walter Benjamin's characteristic figure of the nineteenth-century city – but is instead efficient, purposeful.[2] His path is 'straight as an arrow', an expression echoing the language of missiles used frequently in contemporary descriptions of trains. Yet that path is also enabled by the topography of the 'New Paris', a city increasingly connected by long, straight, wide boulevards. What is more, this entire sentence-length journey is imagined in specifically modern terms: so rapid is his traversal of the city that the traveller moves as if still on board his train. He is afforded only fleeting glimpses of the renovated urban environment through which he passes. His destination is the Opéra: not the current home of the Académie Impériale de Musique in the rue Le Peletier, but the 'New Opera' designed by Charles Garnier and still under construction at the end of the similarly rubble-strewn Avenue de l'Opéra.[3] In this

[1] W. Blanchard Jerrold, *Paris for the English* [2nd Ed.] (London: Bradbury, Evans & Co., 1867), 64.
[2] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 416-55.
[3] For more on the construction of what would eventually be known as the Palais Garnier, see Michael Forsyth, 'Garnier vs. Wagner', in *Buildings for Music: the Architect, the Musician and the Listener from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 163-95.

description, the opera house is no venue for performance; it is as much a symbol of modern Paris as are the railways or the boulevards – and it is located absolutely at city centre.

This thesis also seeks to locate opera in Second Empire Paris: to explore its place within the city's practices of everyday life;[4] to uncover traces of its complex status in the vast body of critical writing, images and what might broadly be called 'urban discourse' now available to the twenty-first century visitor to the nineteenth-century city. My route through Paris in search of opera is obviously one less literal, less bound up in urban topography than the journey urged above.[5] Like that journey, however, this thesis is anything but comprehensive in its purview: the perspectives it offers are indeed 'glimpses' of a much larger social, political and cultural landscape; insofar as its case studies present 'conclusions', they are often self-consciously contingent. My desire is not, as the cliché goes, to redraw the map of nineteenth-century operatic Paris – or even that of the relatively bounded Second Empire city. Rather it is to open up some of its once-resonant connections; to place operatic practices and discourses in productive dialogue with aspects of urban culture more generally and with its contemporary debates and developments.

The Second Empire has not always been well treated by the writers of music history: it was a period once regularly overlooked as frivolous, mediocre and conservative – much the same attitude, in fact, that was long accorded the

[4] The phrase is Michel de Certeau's. I echo him here above all because of his interest in the intersection of writing about and walking in the city, between topography and epistemology; see *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), especially 91-110.

[5] The principal resource for information about the geography of operatic Paris during the nineteenth century remains Nicole Wild, *Dictionnaire des théâtres parisiens au XIXe siècle: les théâtres et la musique* (Paris: Aux Amateurs de livres, 1989).

political regime.[6] The problem (fittingly enough in the context of this dissertation) is one largely bound up in our own operatic repertory and the precarious position within it of most nineteenth-century French operas, with only a handful of very high-profile exceptions. This has often been pointed out: as Mark Everist has written recently, 'It is difficult to overestimate the change in the fortunes of French nineteenth-century opera between, say, 1850 and 1950'.[7] Things have nonetheless improved somewhat since 1925, when Reynaldo Hahn could describe the Second Empire as 'an essentially anti-musical period. Its music resembled its furniture: it was ill-assorted, mediocre, and heavy, comprising elements of every genre and every period; its style consisted of a total lack of style'.[8] Yet even more recent, positive accounts have struggled to find Second Empire works of 'importance', still less those able to boast lasting success to the present day. There are very few full-length published studies dedicated to opera during the period: T.J. Walsh's *Second Empire Opera: The Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, 1851-1870* provides a still much-cited chronicle of performances and institutional changes of personnel, but little in the way of contextualisation in a broader or indeed more theorised historical landscape; Hervé Lacombe's *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* makes more wide-ranging historical and thematic claims but is nonetheless structured around the case study of Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (premiered at the

[6] Indeed, traces of this approach still persist, above all in popular-historical accounts by writers keen to convey the champagne-and-operettas image of the Second Empire – an image served up most memorably by Siegfried Kracauer in *Offenbach and the Paris of His Time*, trans. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (London: Constable, 1937).
[7] Everist, *Giacomo Meyerbeer and Music Drama in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), xvi.
[8] Quoted in Vincent Giroud, *French Opera: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 161.

Théâtre Lyrique on 30 September 1863).[9] In general, musicological scholarship on the period has tended to follow suit in shifting its focus away from Paris's three main operatic establishments to the less prestigious but obviously more innovative Théâtre Lyrique, which did at least produce Gounod's *Faust* (1859) and Berlioz's *Les Troyens à Carthage* (1863). To make sense of the period's operatic practices while also operating within our own scholarly concerns and apparatuses, however, requires an approach to Second Empire operatic culture that does more than simply chart the premieres of now-forgotten works.

A recent turn in the historiography of technology offers a productive if perhaps unlikely comparison here. In a long manifesto for what he calls a 'use-centred history' of technology, David Edgerton argues for the need to engage not only with new inventions, but with old ones still in use, even once superseded. 'In use-centred history', he writes, 'technologies do not only appear, they also disappear and reappear, and mix and match across the centuries'.[10] Such a flexible historiography seems to me a valuable framework in which to write opera history of this period: a time when two systems of operatic culture – one characterised principally by the continual production of new works, the other based on sustained revivals of particular operas held up as 'masterpieces' of greater and more lasting value than any others – can be found operating simultaneously and in sometimes problematic proximity. Thus calls for the Paris Opéra to be reincarnated as a 'Louvre lyrique', for example, seemed to some extent at odds with its imperative to provide a symbolic showcase for the city's

[9] Walsh, *Second Empire Opera: The Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, 1851-1870* (London: John Calder, 1981); Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Edward Schneider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[10] David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History Since 1900* (London: Profile Books, 2006), xii.

most impressive new productions;[11] yet the widespread metaphor of the museum in nineteenth-century France also had an overtly modern, even commercial aspect.[12] In such a context it is perhaps altogether in keeping with the historiographical status of the Théâtre Lyrique as the most innovative of Paris's opera houses that it is the theatre argued by Katharine Ellis to be especially and actively engaged in operatic canon-building under the Second Empire directorship of Léon Carvalho.[13] Building on Ellis's research in particular and bearing in mind Edgerton's plea to look beyond histories solely of the new, this dissertation aims to examine how these most explicit signs of early operatic canon-formation at the Lyrique interacted with various facets of operatic culture – both complementary and contradictory – elsewhere in the city.

---

[11] 'Notre première scène [ie. Opéra] doit être un Louvre lyrique, où les ouvrages classiques, alternant avec nos grandes productions contemporaines, soient la sève fortifiante propre à former une nouvelle génération de compositeurs et d'artistes'; A. Thurner, *La France musicale* (27 October 1861), 337; quoted by William Gibbons, 'Music of the Future, Music of the Past: *Tannhäuser* and *Alceste* at the Paris Opéra', *19th-Century Music*, 33/3 (March 2010), 243.

[12] See Chantal Georgel, 'The Museum as Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century France', in Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (London: Routledge, 1994), 119.

[13] Two recent studies by Ellis are particularly important in the present context. Her *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) traces the rise of early music across the entire nineteenth century in France, but does so with a focus largely on the concert hall rather than the opera house. In a recent, shorter study, though, Ellis asks why, at Paris's Théâtre Lyrique, 'Classic museum pieces were always intended to be mixed with new works, but in fact they came to predominate'; Ellis, 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris: The Acid Test of the Théâtre Lyrique', in Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 50. Ellis's answer is closely bound up with systems of production and, in particular, the consequences of Napoleon III's 1864 declaration of the *liberté des théâtres*; in exploring the wider implications of Ellis's valuable research, I am concerned above all with the reception of such a nascent operatic canon – with its production and dissemination in discourse as much as on the city's operatic stages. William Weber has also done much useful work on the nineteenth-century development of musical canons, most recently in *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Most significant for my project here, Weber identifies the emergence around 1850 of 'a new kind of listener [...], a listener whose interests lay primarily in musical classics'; and, what is more, he isolates Paris as 'the most impressive site of classical music orchestral concerts from the early 1860s onwards'; *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 243 and 259. He nonetheless explicitly restricts his claims to practices surrounding the performance of instrumental music and is willing to acknowledge a comparable operatic canon only at the end of the nineteenth century (although he does concede, following Ellis, that the Théâtre Lyrique may present a localised exception to his rule). Ellis's own review of Weber's study appears in *Music and Letters*, 91/3 (August 2010), 426-9.

My first chapter concerns attitudes to these developments at the Théâtre Lyrique itself, exploring the 1859 revival of Gluck's *Orphée*, which was one of the most successful of the series of operatic *résurrections* staged at the theatre during the Second Empire. Starring Pauline Viardot in the title role, it was the first major revival of Gluck's opera since the 1820s and attracted considerable attention in the press and elsewhere. Critics and others were fascinated by Viardot's dramatic presence on stage, producing images (both in pictures and words) of her Orpheus that are often striking in their awareness of time past. Indeed, ambivalence about the past and its artefacts haunt the reception of a work – and performer – many designated as the epitome of the *classique*. By contextualising this *Orphée* within the changing meanings of the term 'classique' in the mid-nineteenth century, the chapter focuses on a particularly revealing moment in the shifting status of such old, acknowledged masterpieces and examines the anxieties that emerged as revivals began to dominate a Parisian operatic culture previously driven largely by the production of new works.

The second chapter takes as its starting point another trope of contemporary critical rhetoric, one in some sense directly opposed to that of 'classique'. The phase 'la musique de l'avenir' seemed ubiquitous in the Second Empire press, above all – although not exclusively – in connection with Richard Wagner. The composer had established a formidable reputation in the French capital, thanks particularly to a series of extended articles written about him by François-Joseph Fétis in 1852; but there had been only a handful of high-profile performances of his music and, famously, no stagings of his operas. The Parisian image of him as a self-proclaimed musical messiah was thus formed at some distance from first-hand experience. That changed abruptly soon after he arrived

for his second lengthy sojourn there in September 1859: determined once again to conquer the French capital, Wagner organised three concerts of excerpts from his operas in early 1860 at the Théâtre Italien. The concerts were a financial disaster but proved excellent publicity, eventually resulting in the now-canonical Paris *Tannhäuser* (1861) and, in the meantime, gaining unusually wide press coverage. Examining this first encounter between critics and what they had been primed to hear as no less than a forecast of the musical future, I place these concerts in dialogue with two further instances of musical futurology: first with a contemporary science-fiction novel by Jules Verne; and, at greater length, with a Wagner satire by Offenbach, included in *Le Carnaval des revues*, which opened at his Bouffes-Parisiens only days after Wagner's third concert. Exploring the temporal complexities of 'la musique de l'avenir' as it appeared in each of these venues, I suggest that Wagner's music in 1860 Paris was found problematic above all because it cast doubt on the possibility of the operatic future it was believed to foretell.

My third chapter turns to a major Second Empire premiere: that of Giuseppe Verdi's much-awaited *Don Carlos*, which took place at the Paris Opéra in March 1867. There was considerable expectation among critics about this new work from one of Europe's most famous and popular living composers; yet, in the event, its reception was tepid. The fundamental problem was the work's ambivalent position: as a new grand opera at a time when operatic culture was centred ever more on old masterpieces. *Don Carlos* was explicitly commissioned as a prospective addition to this emerging canon of 'classics;' but its generous length in particular seemed ill suited to Second Empire Paris, the pace of which was felt to be constantly accelerating. In this chapter I ask how and why *Don*

Carlos – a work judged to be the epitome of 'modern' Verdi – was at odds with broader conceptions of Parisian modernity. Focussing particularly on the Act 4 duo between Philip II and the Grand Inquisitor, I argue that the opera's reception was saturated with concerns about an emerging phenomenon that we might call 'canonic listening': an ideal encounter with music extending over countless repeated hearings and predicated on the value of sustained, concentrated engagement with a complex musical surface.

In my fourth chapter I am concerned not with a particular operatic work or performance, but with the deaths in Paris of two central figures within the city's operatic landscape: Meyerbeer (d. 1864) and Rossini (d. 1868). Although these two composers were almost exact contemporaries, and although both died in relative old age, their relationships to contemporary operatic production at their times of death were poles apart. Meyerbeer left his latest work in rehearsal at the Opéra, and was commonly seen as the figurehead of France's musical future; Rossini, although with claims to be the world's most distinguished living composer, had not written a new opera since 1829. Drawing on the extensive critical response to this duet of operatic fatalities, this chapter presents a reception study of two separate but productively linked events. In particular I focus on how, in the wake of Meyerbeer's and Rossini's physical demises, contemporary commentators positioned them and their works in relation to the nascent operatic canon – an institution whose complex links to death I explored from another perspective in my opening chapter. I now revisit and recontextualise contemporary notions of an operatic canon as bound up with the works of the great and (more problematically) the dead. Interrogating the complex, contrasting relationships revealed by these two operatic deaths –

between the fate of the man, and that of his music – I examine how the persistence of their works was understood precisely in terms of immortality. Indeed, I take this rhetoric seriously – perhaps even literally – to argue for a repositioning of our understanding of operatic canon formation in the wider context of changing attitudes towards death during the nineteenth century.

At their most ambitious, the four case studies in this thesis seek to enrich and extend existing operatic scholarship about this time and place; but they also attempt to give voice to opera's particularity, to make use of its capacity to provide alternative perspectives on the broader cultural history of Second Empire Paris.[14] Given that both cultural histories and standard musicological accounts of the period that have emerged over the past half-century and more are characterised by a particular array of protagonists, narratives and critical tropes, I should begin by sketching some important features of this established historical and disciplinary background.

Paris, Capital

The French Second Empire was declared on 2 December 1852 by Napoleon III (previously Louis-Napoleon, elected president of the Second Republic) following his initial coup d'état exactly a year earlier. The regime eventually fell on 4 September 1870, when news of the Emperor's military surrender at Sedan reached Paris. The intervening two decades were among the most politically stable that France had seen since the French Revolution; at least in its early

[14] An important if unfortunately unreliable precedent in this regard is provided by Jane F. Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicised Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Fulcher launches her study with repeated assertions of its status as a work of cultural history – presumably as distinct from musicology and all that it might entail in the 1980s – since it concerns a 'set of interacting theatrical, political, and aesthetic phenomena'; more pertinent here, however, is her ambitious identification of grand opera as 'a challenge that forces us to see the cultural landscape anew'; *Ibid.*, 1 and 9.

stages, the regime was also broadly popular. Even prior to his appointment as president, Louis-Napoleon had stressed the need to introduce universal (male) suffrage; once elected, he had done just that – thus translating his popularity among peasants and the working classes into increasingly unassailable political dominance. As the political order shifted again after his coup d'état, Louis-Napoleon quickly sought to legitimise his position: a plebiscite held on 20 December 1851 found that around 7.5 million voters were in favour of his move against the Second Republic versus a mere 640,000 against (1.5 million abstained). In November 1852 a further plebiscite was called, this time about whether the Empire should be restored; almost eight million voted in favour of the proposal that Louis-Napoleon should be proclaimed Napoleon III, 'Emperor of the French'.[15]

The new Emperor's popularity rested prominently on two factors: the Bonapartist legend that Napoleon III – as Bonaparte's nephew – could both exploit and develop into a full-blown 'cult of the First Emperor' during his own imperial regime;[16] and the fact that the Emperor's apparently progressive attitudes to social and political reform appealed to a mid-century nation which was above all a 'transition society', split between a continuing economic reliance on the agrarian sector and new signs of industrialisation.[17] To quote the Emperor himself: 'March at the head of the ideas of your century, and those ideas will

[15] The results of the second plebiscite were 7,824,000 in favour and 253,000 against, albeit with nearly two million abstentions; I take these figures from Roger Price, *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 35 and 43. For more on the transition from Second Republic to Second Empire, see *Ibid.*, 27-48; Robert Tombs, *France 1814-1914* (London: Longman, 1996), 397; W.H.C. Smith, *Second Empire and Commune: France 1848-1871* (London: Longman, 1985), 7-13.
[16] Matthew Truesdell, *Spectacular Politics: Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte and the* fête impériale*, 1849-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 74. For more on Napoleon III's use and reshaping of the Bonapartist myth during his rule, see *Ibid.*, 55-80; and Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 62-111.
[17] Price, *The French Second Empire*, 9.

strengthen and sustain you; march behind them and they will drag you after them; march against them and they will overthrow you'.[18] Thus for all that the Second Empire court was modelled explicitly on that of the First Empire, with Napoleon III making much of his status as legitimate heir to the Bonaparte legacy, the early years of the Second Empire also witnessed a period of marked industrial expansion and economic growth. In other words, the regime from the outset relied both on the rhetorical power gained from links with the past, and on support mobilised by promising a better future – by calling on the notion of progress.

A crucial figure in this shifting dynamic between conservative and progressive impulses was Napoleon III's prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann.[19] Indeed, his plans for the transformation and modernisation of Paris, devised and carried out between 1853 and 1870, have since provided historians with the most clearly visible and attention-grabbing manifestation of the regime's twin obsessions: with safeguarding and driving a path into the future; and with preserving (perhaps even reviving) the past. The process of 'Haussmannisation' saw the demolition of much of medieval Paris and the construction of a new network of wide boulevards linking the city centre to its ever-expanding outskirts.[20] The biggest single factor informing the project was to

[18] Napoleon III; quoted in Tombs, *France 1814-1914*, 396.
[19] Haussmann was sworn in on 29 June 1853, having previously occupied a series of administrative posts in the French provinces (most recently as the prefect of Bordeaux); for more on the circumstances of his Parisian appointment by Napoleon III, see Michel Carmona, *Haussmann: His Life and Times, and the Making of Modern Paris*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 169-91.
[20] For a visual summary of Haussmann's transformation of the city on the largest scale, see David Harvey's map of 'Haussmann's "three routes"' in *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 112. Although it was undoubtedly under Haussmann that the project of Parisian renovation featured most prominently in the city's collective consciousness, Carmona emphasises that the modernisation of Paris had already begun by the time that Haussmann was appointed in 1853. What is more, even the system of works to which he would later lend his name began in 1849, spearheaded by Louis-Napoleon himself; and it did so in the wake of plans

ensure that modern Paris would facilitate the rapid mobilisation of troops and thus be to some extent revolution-proof – an aim in which the extension of the rue de Rivoli, running from the centre to the traditionally unruly *quartiers* of the Marais and Saint-Antoine, played a crucial role. But, as Jeanne Gaillard has pointed out, such radical reorganisation of urban space also presented an opportunity to showcase the new regime, embedding Napoleon III's Empire in spatial allegory: 'The grandeur of the capital must bear witness to that of the regime, its modernism must demonstrate the spirit of progress of a sovereign who may well reign through the peasants but who triumphs through industry and scientific progress'.[21] Thus Haussmann's new Parisian boulevards might best be understood as a particularly visible representation of a still larger process of modernisation at work in Paris, indeed in France as a whole. This process saw the country seized by what Alain Plessis has termed a 'railway revolution' as networks spread and passenger figures increased fourfold.[22] It brought about the creation not only of new streets but of parks and squares, as well as the spread of street lighting and the construction of new water supplies and sewers to improve urban sanitation on both cosmetic and infrastructural levels.[23] It also produced a near-doubling of industrial production during the 1850s, following the example

---

laid still earlier in the century; see Carmona, *Haussmann*, 113-66. Harvey poses the question of 'Modernity before Haussmann?' along similar lines; see *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 80-5. David H. Pinkney's now-venerable study actually places Napoleon III – who apparently 'fancied himself something of an architect' – rather than Haussmann, at the helm of the city's Second Empire renovation: *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 25.

[21] 'La grandeur de la capitale doit témoigner de celle du régime, son modernisme prouver l'esprit de progrès d'un souverain qui règne peut-être par les paysans mais qui triomphe par l'industrie et les progrès de la science'; Jeanne Gaillard, *Paris, la ville (1852-1870)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 30. The dichotomy here between urban and rural existence in France during the Second Empire is important: just as Haussmannisation was a fundamentally urban phenomenon, so were the technological and scientific developments that fuelled the Empire's image of its own progress in other spheres.

[22] Alain Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 83-8.

[23] Price, *The French Second Empire*, 223.

provided by Great Britain (a country particularly admired by Napoleon III),[24] and was underpinned by a Europe-wide period of comparative prosperity and, more locally, by a complete overhaul of the country's financial system as the old banks evolved and new ones focused on investment were brought into being.[25]

Such drastic, future-facing changes did, though, have further consequences that were clearly visible in Haussmann's endlessly metonymic Paris. In an evident corollary to his programme of modernising initiatives, the prefect attempted to catalogue what was being lost of the old city: 'Vieux Paris' came into being at the very moment of its destruction with the founding of heritage-focused institutions such as the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris; meanwhile the renowned photographer Charles Marville was employed expressly to record the changes in the urban landscape.[26] Thus while Haussmann's workmen demolished and rebuilt in the name of progress, a second level of construction work – one more subterranean than even the deepest of new sewers – was also under way: that of history itself. As Svetlana Boym points out, it was at this time that the past gradually changed from being something unknown to the phenomenon we call 'heritage', viewed in a glass case; nostalgia for what was destroyed in the name of progress became quite literally institutionalised.[27] Similarly, in his major structuralist study of nineteenth-century historiography, Hayden White names the years 1830-1870 as the 'second, "mature" or "classic" phase' of historical thinking: the earlier part of

[24] Tombs, *France 1814-1914*, 401; Price, *The French Second Empire*, 210.
[25] It is no coincidence, of course, that Karl Marx published the first volume of his *Capital* at precisely this time, in 1867. Although Marx's analysis was largely based on the British economy, the transformations wrought by the Second Empire also called for a new relationship to credit and the mobility of financial capital; the period witnessed nothing less than the rise of modern capitalism in France. One now-classic study of the rise of economic modernity alongside and in dialogue with artistic modernism (with a particular focus on Second Empire Paris) is Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983).
[26] See Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 152.
[27] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 15.

this phase was characterised by the huge narrative accounts of historians such as Michelet and Tocqueville; its later years by the writings of Marx, who produced 'the most consistent effort of the nineteenth century to transform historical study into a science'.[28]

These were far-reaching cultural-historical shifts, ones that cannot fully be explained or understood in isolation from similar, parallel changes elsewhere in Europe. More pressing in the present context, however, is the historiographical figuring of the relationship between Paris and France: the question of how best to place each of these broad developments within the necessarily more restricted thematic context of this dissertation. The Paris that Haussmann managed and surveyed was, after all, not only the urban heart of a powerfully centralised nation; it was the capital of the Second Empire and perhaps even – to use one of the most pervasive critical tropes later applied to the period – 'Capital of the Nineteenth Century'.[29] My focus on Paris to an extent simply reflects its importance in discourse and in practice; yet it also places my project in a long genealogy of studies of nineteenth-century French musical culture that rarely

[28] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 39-40.

[29] The phrase is, of course, Walter Benjamin's and is taken from the titles of his two 'exposés' of 1935 and 1939, in which he laid out plans for a huge study of nineteenth-century Paris. Benjamin did not live to complete the project but his vast collection of notes were ordered and published posthumously as *The Arcades Project*,. The phrase, meanwhile, has enjoyed a rich and varied afterlife in writing about nineteenth-century Paris; one instance of particularly extensive troping is Patrice Higonnet's *Paris: Capital of the World*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). Benjamin's own geographical focus notwithstanding, only London could compete with Paris at mid-century in terms of sheer scale as a modern metropolis, political headquarters and cultural centre. For vigorous, explicitly anti-Benjaminian claims about London's cultural pre-eminence, see James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, eds., *Romantic London: Urban Scenes of British Culture, 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially the editors' 'Introduction', 2-41. It is significant in this context of cross-channel rivalry that the Goncourt brothers, despairing on 18 November 1860 that 'our Paris, the Paris in which we were born' was disappearing, went on to complain: 'these new boulevards [...] have nothing of Balzac's world about them but make one think of London or some Babylon of the future'; Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Pages From the Goncourt Journals*, ed. and trans. Robert Baldick (New York: New York Review Books, 2007), 53. The more advanced state of London's industrialisation and its embrace of modernity in general could thus evidently be seen by the French in negative terms, even while providing Napoleon III with a model to which his own capital might aspire.

look beyond the modern city's twenty *arrondissements*. Indeed, the mostly tacit notion that in musical as well as political terms Paris was nineteenth-century France's only city, with the provinces a mere periphery, has long pervaded musicology. Such a trend has self-evidently been to the detriment of our understanding of the place of music in the cultural life of the nation as a whole and in the musical experiences of the majority, who did not live in or around Paris and whose sense of nineteenth-century musical culture may have been quite different.[30] There are nonetheless important reasons for restricting the present study to the French capital; not least that such an explicit focus takes its cue from many involved in the city's operatic culture, whose determined sense of Parisian centrality informed and reinforced their anxieties about changes to operatic practice.[31] Thus the critic Pier-Angelo Fiorentino (writing under the pseudonym A. de Rovray) could bemoan in 1863 the especially unfortunate fate of the aspiring French composer: 'If a composer cannot get performed in Rome or Naples, he can take his work to Florence, Genoa, Venice or Milan; if a musician does not succeed in Vienna, he can redeem himself in Prague or Dresden or Weimar or Berlin. A French composer can bank only on Paris.'[32]

Still more significant for my project, though, is Paris's particular symbolic function, both during the Second Empire itself and in more recent scholarship on the period: the ways in which its symbolism interacted with

[30] The one major exception to this tendency in musicology is Katharine Ellis's recent work on regional French opera houses; see her 'Funding Grand Opera in Regional France: Ideologies of the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper and Clive Brown, eds., *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 67-84; and 'Mireille's Homecoming? Gounod, Mistral, and the Midi', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65/2 (September 2012), 463-509.

[31] I have marked this restriction consistently in references to specifically Parisian audiences, Parisian critics and newspapers and Parisian operatic experience in order to avoid the otherwise inevitable but problematic conflation of nation and capital.

[32] A. de Rovray [pseud.: P.-A. Fiorentino], 'Revue musicale', *Le Moniteur universel* (7 October 1863); quoted in Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, 218.

systems of operatic production and reception.[33] I have already mentioned the tendency of Haussmannised Paris to be held up as an icon of a broadly modernising regime. Yet we might productively push this notion of Paris-as-symbol still further: Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson states explicitly what many others have simply assumed when she reads Haussmann's Paris as embodying a 'Revolution of Representation', seeing the visible process of Haussmannisation as 'a recognisable metaphor for the Second Empire itself'.[34] To put this another way, and one more obviously relevant to the case at hand: Haussmann's city – part-building site, part-ruin – looked both forwards and backwards.[35] As did Napoleon III's regime itself, Paris faced its suddenly fragile and easily demolished past in one direction and, in the other, the potential, glorious future promised by progress and modernity. Not only, then, would the suitably informed and directed visitor to Second Empire Paris be afforded 'astonishing glimpses' of the city; he would be confronted by a series of carefully constructed images of the regime as urban allegory – an allegory to which Paris itself could be nothing but essential.

---

[33] One recent precedent for such a study, albeit with an emphasis placed more firmly on modes of representation in particular operas rather than on the workings of operatic culture as a whole, is Sarah Hibberd, *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Anselm Gerhard's now-classic *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) also sets its narrative of a gradual 'privatisation' of opera during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century – charted in readings of works from *Le Siège de Corinthe* to *Un ballo in maschera* – against a backdrop of Parisian urbanisation. Gerhard's book was, I should add, influential in forming the initial conception of this project.

[34] Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 124.

[35] My language here is shamelessly Benjaminian and significantly so: the paradigmatic modern Janus-image is his reading of Paul Klee's 1920 painting, 'Angelus Novus', which he compares to 'the angel of history', who faces the past, watching the accumulation of historical catastrophe, but who is propelled forever into the future 'to which his back is turned' by a storm 'blowing from Paradise': Benjamin identifies that storm as 'progress' itself; see 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), 259-60.

***

These 'astonishing glimpses' of Second Empire Paris against which my dissertation unfolds might thus illustrate art historian T.J. Clark's conception of Haussmannised Paris as a city existing 'simply *as an image*'.[36] Such an image – like the tourist glimpses with which we began – can be fleeting and equivocal, even inscrutable. The Second Empire was, after all, the era whose everyday experience was encapsulated by Charles Baudelaire in what must surely be one of the best known of all glances. This comes in the form of a poem returned to time and again by literary scholars in search of historical significance, and historians in search of literary representation:

> Un éclair… puis la nuit! – Fugitive beauté
> Dont le regard m'a fait soudainement renaître,
> Ne te verrai-je plus que dans l'éternité?[37]
>
> A flash... then darkness! – Fugitive beauty
> Whose glance has brought me suddenly back to life,
> Will I see you again only in eternity?

Here, indeed, is the classic literary image of 'modernité', the last word in the equivocal and inscrutable: the notion was coined, famously, by Baudelaire himself in 1863 to encompass 'le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent', the reverse side of what is eternal in art.[38] In this context, though, I bring up Baudelaire's notion of *modernité* and the encounter that might be read as its poetic allegory, primarily for what they might suggest about the local historical frame of my four case studies. My broad historical backdrop is the Second Empire; but, more

[36] T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 36.
[37] Charles Baudelaire, 'À une passante' from the 'Tableaux Parisiens' (added to the *Fleurs de mal* for the second edition in 1861) in *Complete Poems*, trans. Walter Martin (New York: Routledge, 2002), 242.
[38] Baudelaire, 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne', in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Claude Pichois, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), II, 695.

specifically, it is the regime's second decade. Each case study is thus located at what has been seen as an important 'moment' in the transformation of nineteenth-century Paris. More significant to my project than the historiographical claims for a political 'watershed' around 1860 (following French military intervention in Rome), or than the weight frequently accorded the 1860s in histories of art and science, is the fact that, at this mid-point of the Second Empire, the city was felt by many to be in a state of flux.[39] As Richard Terdiman writes of Paris at the end of the 1850s: '"change" itself still *seemed* like change, it had not yet become routinised or transparent. [...] the remaking of the city had not yet demolished the memory of the city it remade. It still figured a dialectic, not an ontology.'[40]

To put this another way, the Paris of this dissertation is one in which the city's past and future are simultaneously present. Figure 1 makes this immediately clear: taken at some point towards the end of the 1860s, the photograph shows Charles Garnier's nearly completed new Opéra. The edifice itself appears oddly sunken, lurking in the image's background; given the ongoing construction work, one might better see it as not yet risen to its full height. Framing the theatre, appearing almost as if scenic flats, stand part-demolished buildings, the remnants of what had to be cleared to make space for the Second Empire's crowning architectural glory; and buildings that will remain once the rubble is cleared, once the doors of the new house have been thrown

[39] For more on the political importance of the events of 1860, see Tombs, *France 1814-1914*, 407-9; for one important art-historical treatment of the 1860s as witnessing the birth of representational modernity, see Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*. The historian of perception Jonathan Crary identifies an 'epistemological crisis' in the 1860s, by which perceptual experience ceased to be understood as providing an automatic guarantee of truth; Crary's classic exploration of this putative crisis is in his *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992).
[40] Terdiman, 'The Mnemonics of Dispossession: "Le Cygne" in 1859', in Suzanne Nash, ed., *Home and its Dislocations in Nineteenth-Century France* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 176.

open and the business of opera set to work. Yet the most striking feature of the photograph – taken at a time long preceding the instant exposure of the snapshot

Figure 1: photograph of the new Opéra under construction (1866-9) by Louis-Émile Durandelle. Institut national d'histoire de l'art: bibliothèque numérique (NUM PH 140); held in the collection of the École Nationale Supérieur des Beaux-Arts (accessed via Gallica, 4 December 2012).

and thus technologically ill-equipped to render Baudelaire's vanishing split-second – are ghostly figures in the foreground: one workman is bent over; another surveys the scene; a partially visible horse is apparently still coupled to its cart of rubble.

Had the Parisian visitor with which we began made his way through the boulevards, as instructed, to the New Opera, this is the scene he might have found. It is not the magnificent vista he had been led to expect, its arrow-straight lines still to be made fully legible, the ruins of the past still to be carted away. The image nonetheless presents a spectacle of a different sort: it bears witness not only to a metropolis under construction, but to the building site of urban

modernity itself; centre stage in this fleeting, half-captured present of Second Empire Paris, surrounded by ghosts, is the opera house of the city's future.

CHAPTER ONE

Classic staging: Pauline Viardot and the 1859 *Orphée* revival

> le fantôme de pierre s'empare de vous pendant quelques minutes, et vous commande, au nom du passé, de penser aux choses qui ne sont pas de la terre.
>
> Tel est le rôle divin de la sculpture.
>
> *Charles Baudelaire*

On 18 November 1859 a new production of Gluck's *Orphée* opened at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris; the abbreviated title was one of many changes made in a new version of the opera by Hector Berlioz.[1] The work had not had a major Parisian outing since the Opéra's revival with the tenor Adolphe Nourrit in February 1824. Since that time, taste and vocal technique had changed: the star of the Lyrique's revival was the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot (1821-1910), who performed the title role *en travesti*. Viardot was a singer who had always attracted attention; her 1839 debut (in London, as Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello*) had taken place under scrutiny intensified by the notoriety of her late, great older sister, Maria Malibran. By 1859, however, Viardot had achieved celebrity in her own right, having created Fidès in Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* (1849) and the eponymous protagonist in Gounod's *Sapho* (1851), as well as singing a variety of other roles to great acclaim.[2] Orpheus, as it turned out, only

[1] For a detailed study of the modifications Berlioz made in creating an amalgam of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Vienna, 1762) and *Orphée et Eurydice* (Paris, 1774), with the role of Orpheus adapted for female contralto, see Joël-Marie Fauquet, 'Berlioz's version of Gluck's *Orphée*', in Peter Bloom, ed., *Berlioz Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 189-253. Viardot's voice had a huge range (three octaves by some accounts): a result of its artificial extension in youth. I follow April Fitzlyon in her designation of the singer as a mezzo-soprano; see April Fitzlyon, 'Viardot [née García], (Michelle Ferdinande) Pauline', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (*Oxford Music Online*, accessed 11/07/10).

[2] The standard and most reliable English-language biography of Viardot remains April Fitzlyon's *The Price of Genius: A Life of Pauline Viardot* (London: John Calder, 1964).

briefly preceded her official retirement from the stage in 1863.[3] It was declared one of her finest roles and has continued to be described as the culmination of a distinguished career – the moment at which her reputation and public image were sealed for posterity.[4]

Such is one, often-repeated story about a night at the theatre in 1859 Paris, and in facts as bare as the writing of history allows. But there is another with a longer reach: for all the biographical import attributed to Viardot's *Orphée* the production was one of a series of revivals of older operatic works that gathered pace during the 'good years' of the Second Empire.[5] At the same time (and in obvious symbiosis) a gradual change was taking place in Paris's operatic culture, from an industry based on the manufacture of new works to one centred on established masterpieces, revivals of which were increasingly understood as part of a 'canon'. The Théâtre Lyrique's *Orphée* was neither the first of these revivals nor the final marker *en route* to our operatic present.

---

[3] Her final performance was at the Théâtre Lyrique on 24 April 1863, as Orpheus. According to Fitzlyon, Gluck's opera was staged for Viardot's farewell 'by general request' and was received so enthusiastically that it had to be repeated (Fitzlyon, *The Price of Genius*, 371). Following official retirement she continued to perform on minor European stages, and in concert; among other significant appearances, she gave the first public performance of Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* on 3 March 1870 in Jena. Nonetheless, the vocal problems that had led to her early retirement worsened; she never publicly performed either Saint-Saëns's Dalila or Berlioz's Cassandre or Didon in *Les Troyens* – roles originally conceived with her in mind. For more on Viardot's retirement, see Fitzlyon, *The Price of Genius*, 371ff.

[4] The most recent biography, Patrice Barbier's *Pauline Viardot* (Paris: Grasset, 2009), dedicates an entire chapter to her 1859 Orpheus; Barbier describes the Gluck revival as one of the 'plus grandes triomphes du siècle' (219); and one of his chapter's sections is entitled, 'Orphée ou l'apothéose d'une carrière' (213). Simon Goldhill also briefly discusses Viardot's success in the role within the context of a nineteenth-century 'will to see antiquity on the modern stage'; *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), especially 106-10 (here 106). Goldhill is concerned throughout his book with a changing 'image of Greece' and traces it here in Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* from the opera's first, 'revolutionary' performances to its revival in 1859 as 'a classic, something to be appreciated through a constant historical self-consciousness, part of an established tradition, a revolution recollected in tranquility'; *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*, 111.

[5] Alain Plessis uses the phrase to refer to the period from 1852 to 1861, during which Napoleon III's regime was at its most stable and popular; see Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 132-51.

Indeed, it is fascinating precisely because it is located within a transitional grey area – an obscure midpoint on the path trodden by operatic history. Far from an instance of absolute novelty to be scrutinised for unique historical agency or impact, the Gluck revival (at least as read along and between the lines of its enthusiastic reception) was heard by many as a premiere, yet was characterised by its pastness, even datedness. Nonetheless, with critical attention trained particularly on Viardot's performance, her Orpheus emerges as a fixed point in an operatic landscape on the move; as a discursive nexus in a shifting configuration of old and new; as resonant, legible, worthy of preservation.

When she performed Orpheus in 1859, Viardot thus gestured into the operatic future – a future that is largely our own present. This is not to make a claim for a previously unnoticed prophetic quality in the singer's performance. Nor do I want to assert that operatic modernity began at the Théâtre Lyrique one night in November 1859. What concerns me here is how and why a revival of an ancien-régime opera at the height of the Second Empire was seen both as a sign of progress and of decline, ill-omen and artefact.[6] To put this another way, I want to ask to what extent this Gluck revival – and Viardot's performance within it – was experienced as old or new at a time when the relative values attached to those historical terms were in flux: when their material manifestations in Paris seemed to be simultaneously under threat and under construction.

[6] I use the term here with all three elements of its modern primary sense in mind: '1a. An object made or modified by human workmanship, as opposed to one formed by natural processes. b. *Archeol.* An excavated object that shows characteristic signs of human workmanship or use. c. In fantasy role-playing games, computer games etc.: an object which may be found or collected by a player, typically conferring an advantage in the game.' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed 13 June 2011). The less common sense of c. particularly interests me in the context of a gradual redistribution of cultural or historical value in mid-nineteenth-century operatic practices.

Ancient histories

It goes almost without saying that in the three decades since 1824, when Nourrit, lyre in hand, had paced the boards of the Opéra, much else besides vocal practice had changed. Indeed, in a political climate that continued to experience severe revolutionary aftershocks, it is not surprising that an isolated revival of *Orphée* in July 1848 went more or less unnoticed, obscured by other events of that notorious year. By 1859, though, the context was more peaceful: Napoleon III was at the head of a comparatively stable Second Empire, his 1851 coup d'état having marked the start of a period of cooperation with the relatively enfranchised (if carefully manipulated and, of course, censored) populace. The prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, was in the midst of creating a new, modernised urban order, his first wave of public works already complete and his second under way. Bourgeois Paris, at least according to Siegfried Kracauer's still influential account, could now dedicate itself – in the absence of imminent revolution and the vacuum created by political censorship – to hedonistic delights.[7] For Kracauer, the epitome of Second Empire culture was another, rather more famous late-1850s Orpheus: that created by Jacques Offenbach. Gluck's ancien-régime *Orphée* had, after all, remained for the most part disengaged from the political and social upheavals of the mid-nineteenth century, surviving only within the confines of the Paris Conservatoire.[8] Even there, it was an opera known principally through the handful of excerpts performed in concert – public airings that Berlioz (ever the champion of Gluck's cause) thought did more harm than good to the composer's reputation,

[7] Siegfried Kracauer, *Offenbach and the Paris of His Time* (London: Constable, 1937), especially 190-216.
[8] For more on early nineteenth-century revivals of *Orphée* in Paris, see Fauquet, 'Berlioz's version of Gluck's *Orphée*', 191-3.

reinforcing his image as of primarily academic interest, preventing his work from gaining wider popularity and, more to the point, discouraging complete staged performances.[9]

In 1859 at the Théâtre Lyrique Berlioz (and Gluck) of course got just such a performance – one generally considered a huge critical success, laying the foundations for the later nineteenth-century revival of Gluck's operas in France.[10] Viardot predictably enjoyed the lion's share of the critical attention. Clichés flourished in all quarters as writers scrambled for suitably Orphic metaphors with which to express enthusiasm for the production; barely a review was without some reference to immortality or to *résurrection*.[11] Even the Lyrique's director, Léon Carvalho, was celebrated in one bizarre turn of critical phrase as a 'Nouvel Orphée', bringing Gluck's work back from the dead.[12] If further confirmation of Carvalho's inspired speculation were required, Paul Scudo wrote that this staging of such an unlikely commercial proposition, one that placed the demands of great art above those of financial success, made the Lyrique 'le seul théâtre musical de Paris qui mérite qu'on se dérange'.[13] The

[9] See Katharine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: 'La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris', 1834-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 83.
[10] The nineteenth-century reception of Gluck in German-speaking countries was another matter; see, for instance, Alexander Rehding's *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), especially 109-40.
[11] Peculiar as it may now seem, and despite the widespread use of other Orphic tropes, very few critics mentioned Offenbach's work; the majority either preferred to avoid such musical disrespect or ignored the comparison entirely, so wide was the chasm of taste thought to separate the Bouffes-Parisiens from true *opéra*.
[12] De Charbales, 'Théâtre Lyrique. – *Orphée* de Gluck', *La Vie moderne* (23 November 1859). Precisely how Gluck's opera came to be revived in relatively unpromising circumstances remains unclear: the initial impulse has been attributed variously to Berlioz, Carvalho (director of the Théâtre Lyrique 1855-1860 and again 1862-1868) and even to Meyerbeer. Fitzlyon's suggestion of Carvalho seems the most convincing (*The Price of Genius*, 345); Fauquet attributes more agency to Berlioz himself ('Berlioz's Version of Gluck's *Orphée*', 195); D. Kern Holoman reports that Meyerbeer suggested a revival of *Orphée* to Viardot; see his *Berlioz* (London: Faber, 1989), 494.
[13] Paul Scudo, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck', *Revue des deux mondes* (November-December 1859), 726.

Opéra, with its ponderous succession of *grands opéras*, was – at least according to Scudo – no longer worth the effort of waking the coachman.

Over-determined metaphors aside, the fact that such a performance was mounted at the Théâtre Lyrique rather than the Opéra is significant. In a city whose dramatic endeavours continued to be regulated by Imperial decree, the Lyrique had been intended as a preparatory stage for composers before they approached the Opéra. It was, in other words, an institution with strong educational imperatives, albeit one set up to run (in principle at least) at no cost to the state.[14] Thus while the director's official responsibility was to composers whose careers his theatre had the potential to launch, the Lyrique's finances demanded particular attention. Indeed, from its earliest incarnation in 1847, some commentators recognised that revivals of established repertoire, rather than new works by unknown composers, were likely to keep the theatre solvent.[15] The fact that such revivals were also instructive – not only in their edification of a listening public but also in presenting old masterpieces as models from which the inexperienced composer could (and should) learn – created a succession of administrative regimes that juggled past and future repertoires with varying degrees of panache. This cultivation of the Lyrique as a 'neo-classical finishing school' (Katharine Ellis's phrase) was epitomised by Carvalho, whose 'système d'exhumations' attracted widespread attention.[16]

Orphée was, in this context, merely the latest in a series of revivals, following Weber's *Obéron* and *Euryanthe* (both 1857) and Mozart's *Les Noces*

[14] See Katharine Ellis, 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris: The Acid Test of the Théâtre Lyrique', in Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 58.
[15] See Ellis, 'Systems Failure', 58.
[16] The exact phrase is Charles Desolmes's – 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck au Théâtre Lyrique', *L'Europe artiste* (27 November 1859) – but similar ideas appear elsewhere.

de Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*; 1858) and *L'Enlèvement au sérail* (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*; 1859).[17] But its sweeping success (despite its potentially unprofitable step further back into the musical past, beyond the relatively assured popularity of Mozart) brought into tighter focus the critical schism over old works versus new. Some praised the archaeological endeavour, the unearthing of past treasures and their subsequent display for public edification and Imperial glory; many, though, took issue with the fact that, in his increasing preoccupation with music of earlier periods, Carvalho was promoting composers long dead and buried. These old works, however illustrious, were staged at the expense of living composers, who were – so it was thought – being squeezed out of the Théâtre Lyrique's programming. Thus although the Lyrique was Paris's newest opera house (a modern and modernising alternative to the Opéra), it was also, as one critic described it in the wake of the *Orphée* revival, a 'musée des anciens compositeurs'.[18]

The Théâtre Lyrique, in other words, staged precisely the sort of incursions of the distant (often pre-revolutionary) past that have been seen as one of the hallmarks of the Second Empire's particular modernity.[19] Haussmann's contribution to the creation of modern Paris was not limited to monumental boulevards and decorative public toilets; he also strove to assemble and catalogue what was being lost of the old city. Indexes of renamed streets and

[17] For a table of the most frequently performed operas at the Théâtre Lyrique during the Second Empire (including *Orphée*) see Ellis, 'Systems Failure', 55. As Ellis has shown elsewhere, the vogue for early music in nineteenth-century France began in the first half of the century with instrumental and choral music, in particular with Choron's choir school and the *concerts historiques* devised by Fétis. See her *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43-80.

[18] Desolme, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck au Théâtre Lyrique'. The seminal modern text about this 'museum' is, of course, Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[19] See, for example, Matei Calinescu, *The Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1987) and David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

guides to the new urban environment – for the disorientated inhabitant as well as the visitor – abounded during the Second Empire. Some, such as Emile de Labédollière's 1860 *Le Nouveau Paris*, saw the widespread destruction as a necessary step in the name of progress (although its ghoulish frontispiece by Gustave Doré, showing old Paris being dismantled as the devil looks on from above, seems to suggest otherwise). For many others, though, the erasure of 'Vieux Paris' represented a great loss, if not a downright – in some cases, personal – tragedy. But while traces of the city's past were banished unceremoniously from Haussmann's new architectural regime of straight lines, building regulations and sanitised covered sewers, its history was simultaneously reinvented under the glass cases of institutions such as the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, or fixed by chemical process in the photographs of Charles Marville, who was employed officially to record changes in the city's landscape.[20] The gradual institutionalisation of the Parisian past at this time was, of course, not only a local symptom of Haussmannisation: it coincided directly with the increasingly professionalised status of history as a discipline. The Second Empire fell, after all, across the middle of what Hayden White called the 'second, "mature" or "classic" phase' of historical thinking – a period characterised by a widespread preoccupation with historical theory and manifested in the production of ambitiously vast narrative histories, not least of

[20] For more on the rise of heritage culture in Second Empire Paris, see Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, 152. The standard text on the modernisation of the capital under Haussmann remains David H. Pinkney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958). For more recent accounts, see David P. Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (New York: Free Press, 1995) and Michel Carmona, *Haussmann: His Life and Times, and the Making of Modern Paris*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002). Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson has observed a 'revolution of representation' during the Second Empire, one directly connected to Haussmannisation. She notes that, as one of his first acts after being appointed Prefect of the Seine in 1853, Haussmann assigned the city a new seal drawing on a conspicuously older iconographic tradition; as Ferguson suggests, 'Urban renewal at midcentury began […] with a deliberate link to the old'; Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 117.

France.[21] Paradoxically, then, at the same time that Napoleon and Haussmann proclaimed the progress embodied in the newly modernised centre of Paris, history itself was becoming an increasingly visible and valued part of the present.

Timing is everything

In this context of ever-growing consciousness of the past, it is hardly surprising that Carvalho's *Orphée* produced a journalistic flurry of historical articles. A multi-part study of the genesis and reception of Gluck's opera appeared in *La France musicale*,[22] while in *Le Constitutionnel*, a 'Dialogue des morts et des vivants' was offered in place of a conventional review, with Gluckistes and Piccinnistes (and even a cameo by Gluck himself) transported to the Paris of 1859 to find themselves in conversation with the director of the Théâtre Lyrique.[23] Most ambitious of all, a series of fourteen articles on the history of French opera was published in *Le Ménestrel*, tracing shared cultural origins in Italy, through the various *querelles* between national and aesthetic factions, to a climax in the French works of Gluck – a composer touted in the editorial introduction as 'l'illustre créateur de la musique française dramatique'.[24] The author (named only as K***) attempted a slightly more nuanced reading of French opera's multi-nationalism, insisting that there *was* such a thing as French music, but that it had generally been written by Italians or Germans. The all-

[21] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 39.
[22] The author was Aristide Farrenc, who went on to edit one of the first major collections of early keyboard music, *Le Trésor des pianistes* (Paris: Aristide Farrenc, 1861). For more on Farrenc, see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 61. For Farrenc's historical series, see 'Le Chevalier Gluck et la partition d'*Orphée*', *La France musicale* (27 November 1859; 4 December 1859; 18 December 1859; 25 December 1859; 1 January 1860; 8 January 1860; 15 January 1860).
[23] P.-A. Fiorentino, 'Dialogue des morts et des vivants', *Le Constitutionnel* (21 November 1859).
[24] 'Opéra – Lulli – Rameau – J.J. Rousseau – Gluck', *Le Ménestrel* (in fourteen instalments from 11 December 1859 to 29 April 1860).

important rabbit pulled from the rhetorical hat was the uniquely French *esprit* guiding such foreigners in the creation of their Gallic masterpieces.

It was as such a *chef d'œuvre* that critics felt *Orphée* should be welcomed back to the stage. Writing in *La Presse*, Paul de Saint-Victor exhorted his readers to

> Imaginez un chef-d'œuvre de Corneille sortant, à la Comédie Française, d'un demi-siècle d'oubli, reprenant la vie et souffle par la voix d'une admirable interprète; c'est l'effet qui vient de produire au Théâtre Lyrique la reprise de l'*Orphée* de Gluck.[25]
>
> Imagine a masterpiece by Corneille being put on at the Comédie Française, having been forgotten for half a century, and being brought back to life through the voice of an admirable interpreter; that is the effect currently produced by the revival of Gluck's *Orphée* at the Théâtre Lyrique.

In language that figures the revival once more in Orphic terms, of a literal return to life from beyond the grave, Saint-Victor's insistence on *Orphée*'s status as a specifically French masterpiece is striking: the Lyrique was, after all, no Comédie Française. But the direct comparison to Corneille – a by-word for France's most prestigious art form – rendered Gluck's inconvenient national origins irrelevant in light of the revival's implied significance for French culture. Scudo, writing along similar lines, brought to a close his review in the *Revue des deux mondes* with an even bolder claim. Gluck's opera combined the 'vigueur héroïque' of Corneille, the grace and melancholy of Virgil and the 'calme philosophique' of Poussin: a triumvirate that Scudo described as 'proud and sober geniuses fully worthy of representing the ideal of French art'.[26] Gluck is

[25] Paul de Saint-Victor, 'Théâtre Lyrique: *Orphée*', *La Presse* (27 November 1859).
[26] 'fiers et sobres génies bien dignes de représenter l'idéal de l'art de la France'; Scudo, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck', 729. For more on the nineteenth-century reception of Virgil in France, see Kenneth Haynes, 'Classic Vergil', in Joseph Farrell and Michael C.J. Putnam, eds., *A Companion to Vergil's* Aeneid *and its Tradition* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 421-34.

not only the equal of such luminaries, but surpasses them in his synthesis of their individual styles and qualities.[27]

The belief that Gluck and his *Orphée* should be admitted to this French pantheon – indeed, the fact that such a pantheon, spanning so many centuries, was felt to exist – requires further investigation. The Second Empire is, as already mentioned, an era often characterised by a heightened interest in its own relationship to the past and future. An important element of this trope in the present context is the widespread perception of an acceleration of urban life, which Napoleon III and Haussmann were keen to attribute to Empire-driven 'progress'. This notion is tackled head-on, and with some concern, in several reviews of *Orphée*: as Philippe Martin wrote in *L'Univers musical*, 'the question arises of whether, since Gluck, music […] has actually made any progress. I beg to doubt that it has'.[28] Such worries only added to anxieties about the role of the Théâtre Lyrique and, in particular, its perceived abandonment of living composers in favour of past works. This question of progress was obviously not peculiar to musical criticism: in his report on the 1859 salon, art critic Louis Jourdan noted with frustration that his colleagues were fixated on whether modern art was making progress or about to fall off its increasingly splintered perch. He paraphrased the debate by asking: 'Is modern art genuinely drained of power and inspiration, and must it cover its head and prepare to die; or does it

[27] Léon Escudier makes a similar rhetorical move in his review, divining in Gluck's music 'le charme de Raphaël, uni à la grandeur et à l'énergie de Corneille'; Escudier, 'Théâtre Lyrique. *Orphée* de Gluck', *La France musicale* (20 November 1859), 462.

[28] 'nous nous demandions si, depuis Gluck, la musique [...] avait réellement fait de progrès. Je crois qu'il est permis d'en douter'; Philippe Martin, 'Revue des Théâtres Lyriques', *L'Univers musical* (20 November 1859), 171. For other reviews of *Orphée* that address the question of its relationship to cultural or historical progress, see, for instance: *Le Constitutionnel* (21 November 1859), which emphasises the technical progress made in musical instruments since Gluck's lifetime; *Le Siècle* (22 November 1859), which notes the progress made in modern music as part of an argument against Carvalho's privileging of the music of dead composers at the Lyrique; *Revue des deux mondes* (November-December 1859), which contrasts the technological progress made in recent times with the timeless beauty of great art.

still have enough youth and energy to hope for new triumphs?'[29] The notion of progress is fundamental here; a lack of it would lead to nothing less than the death of art.

But traces of an alternative configuration of the work of art's relationship to time can also be found in reactions to *Orphée*. Léon Escudier, for instance, reacted to the revival's success with palpable surprise, asking (as did others), 'Who could have predicted that after eighty-six years, the music of *Orphée* would produce a deep impression on the current generation?'[30] Berlioz himself – albeit with an air of self-satisfaction rather than shock – noted from the pulpit of his feuilleton in the *Journal des débats* that

> *Orphée* est presque centenaire, et après un siècle d'évolutions, de révolutions, d'agitations diverses, dans l'art et dans tout, cette œuvre a profondément attendri et charmé l'assemblée choisie […].[31]
>
> *Orphée* is almost a hundred years old, and after a century of evolutions, of revolutions, of various disturbances in art and in everything, this work profoundly moved and charmed the select assembly […].

Both Escudier and Berlioz were preoccupied with the distance between the composition and revival of Gluck's opera, or, rather, between the original audience and the contemporary one. What made this distance significant, though, was not simply the sheer length of time; it was, as Berlioz suggested, that the intervening period encompassed a series of regime-changing revolutions, which had – famously – wrought their own temporal havoc. That *Orphée* was thought capable of communication across the various revolutionary caesurae is clearly

[29] 'L'art moderne est-il réellement à bout de force et d'inspiration, et doit-il voiler sa tête pour se préparer à mourir, ou bien a-t-il encore en lui assez de jeunesse et de vigueur pour espérer de nouveaux triomphes?' Louis Jourdan; quoted in Anon., 'Exposition de peinture et de sculpture. 1859', *Almanach de la littérature, du théâtre et des beaux-arts*, 8 (1860), 55.
[30] 'Qui aurait pu affirmer qu'après quatre-vingt-six ans, la musique d'*Orphée* produirait, sur la génération actuelle, une impression profonde?' Escudier, 'Théâtre Lyrique. *Orphée* de Gluck', 461. Escudier's mathematics lagged behind his critical acuity: the French version of Gluck's opera was eighty-five years old in 1859.
[31] Hector Berlioz, 'Théâtre Lyrique. Première représentation d'*Orphée*', *Journal des débats* (22 November 1859).

related to the rhetorical gestures made by Scudo and Saint-Victor, their positioning of Gluck as the latest in a long genealogy of 'French' artistic geniuses. These moves presuppose an understanding of the work of art, and of time itself, that could allow an opera to communicate in a period far removed from that of its creation. As Escudier's surprise indicates, though, such a conception could not be taken for granted in 1859. Underlying this ambiguous situation – in which apparently contradictory beliefs in both progress and timeless masterpieces co-exist – is, of course, an ideological divide. We are returned yet again to the question of the past's place in the present; or, more broadly, of how the relationship of the present, past and future ought to be configured.

Occupying a central position in these debates is the term *classique*. The word surfaces repeatedly in reviews of *Orphée*, both as a means of categorising Gluck's opera (under the assorted taxonomic umbrellas of 'œuvres classiques', 'créations classiques' or 'art classique'[32]) and of describing the cultural work done in its revival by the Théâtre Lyrique, which Philippe Martin (the same critic who had worried over the lack of tangible progress in music) named the 'théâtre classique par excellence'.[33] The term's power in this context is rooted in a fundamental and persistent tension between its two principal etymological derivations: as an evaluation of rank (social or artistic); and as a classification according to historical origin, whether in Greek or Roman antiquity or (later) of the French *Grand Siècle*.[34] That Scudo could give Virgil a place in his pantheon

[32] Desolme, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck au Théâtre Lyrique'; Escudier, 'Théâtre Lyrique. *Orphée* de Gluck', 463; Émile Perrin, 'Chronique musicale: Gluck au Théâtre Lyrique', *Revue européenne*, 6 (1859), 208.
[33] Martin, 'Revue des Théâtres Lyriques', 172.
[34] The Larousse *Dictionnaire étymologique* dates 'classique' (meaning a first-class writer) to 1548. *Le Grand Robert de la langue française* traces its additional implication of paradigmatic

of geniuses representing 'l'idéal de l'art de la France' is entirely symptomatic of the complex semantics of *le classique* in mid-nineteenth-century France: critics increasingly drew together both senses of the term in conceiving of a French literary tradition in which Latinity (and, above all, Virgil) was central. For all that Virgil might have stood for Roman antiquity, however, it was as an embodiment of tradition – of the timelessness of genius – that he was seized upon; in this French mid-century discourse, tradition was understood as a 'continuous past'.[35]

Such shifting hierarchies of meaning did not go unremarked. The famous 1850 essay, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un classique?', by eminent literary critic Charles Sainte-Beuve was a result of the same preoccupations and provided a benchmark ruling: 'A classic, according to the ordinary definition, is an author of the past with an already established reputation, who is accepted as an authority in his genre'.[36] Any primary, literal reference to works of antique or Enlightenment pedigree has been overwritten here by value judgement; the classic is defined by prior critical opinion, by merit perceived by scholars past. The exact historical location of that past is of little consequence – and it is clearly this sense of *le classique*'s ability to transcend historical boundaries (or even render them irrelevant) that underpins the reactions of Escudier and Berlioz to *Orphée*'s success, almost a century and several revolutions after its premiere.[37] These

---

status to 1611, with specific reference to the works or authors of antiquity particularly common during the eighteenth century; Voltaire is credited as the first to use the term in relation to the *Grand Siècle*.

[35] See Haynes, 'Classic Vergil', 429.

[36] 'Un classique, d'après la définition ordinaire, c'est un auteur ancien, déjà consacré dans l'admiration, et qui fait autorité en son genre'. *Le Constitutionnel* (21 October 1850); quoted in Christopher Prendergast, *The Classic: Sainte-Beuve and the Nineteenth-Century Culture Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21.

[37] The apparent timelessness of the Sainte-Beuvian classic is obviously linked to the new meaning of *modernité* identified in Baudelaire's 1863 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne' by Calinescu, who notes that the term lost its descriptive function and thus 'can no longer serve as a

claims for timelessness were nonetheless products of a particular cultural milieu: adding to the pre-existing complexities of the term *classique*, the neologism *classicisme* spread during the century's early decades as an antonym for Romanticism, rendering interest in the cultural past at once politically and ideologically charged. If, as Christopher Prendergast has proposed, the Romantic/classic debates of the early-nineteenth century are understood in terms of the previous century's *querelle* between the Anciens and the Modernes, with Romantic as the new Moderne and the nationalist Anciens reborn as defenders of *le classique*, then the Lyrique's *Orphée* strongly suggests a public staging of operatic conservatism. Such conservatism is obviously connected intimately with the use of *classique* by music critics (as well as their literary counterparts): to bestow – in the absence of our modern term or indeed modern conception of 'canon' – precisely the canonic status central to Sainte-Beuve's characterisation.[38]

A temporal kink nonetheless emerges here: while Carvalho's staging of *Orphée* and other such *anciens chefs-d'œuvre* at the Théâtre Lyrique was undoubtedly a classicising (and, by implication, conservative) turn to the past, that turn itself represented a glance to the operatic future. As Émile Perrin wrote pithily in response to the *Orphée* revival, 'to familiarise [the public] with the great works of times past is to reinforce its movement towards the future, to open its eyes to the present'.[39] For Perrin, the music of the past unleashed the power of

---

criterion for cutting out from the historical process a segment that might be convincingly designated as *the present* and, in that capacity, be compared to *the past* either wholly or in certain specific respects'; Calinescu, *The Five Faces of Modernity*, 49.

[38] See Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 5. For more on the idea of the canon in nineteenth-century opera, see Ellis, 'Systems Failure' and William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[39] 'le familiariser aux belles œuvres des temps passés, c'est affermir son pas vers l'avenir, c'est ouvrir ses yeux sur le présent'; Perrin, 'Chronique musicale: Gluck au Théâtre Lyrique', 208. The

history itself, allowing access to that 'continuous past' of tradition. But, as mentioned earlier, when *Orphée* was performed at the Théâtre Lyrique on 18 November 1859, it was heard by many for the first time – as a premiere. The music of the past had become, in performance, the music of the present: a resonant conflation embodied, at the centre of the discursive short-circuit, in the figure of Pauline Viardot.

Visualising Viardot

'To be a singer it is not enough merely to sing; one must express emotion in visible form […]. An opera is not a concert'. Louis Ulbach, writing in response to Viardot's Orpheus, intended this a compliment to an artist already famed for her acting skills.[40] In a vein of critical ecstasy mined by many others, he continued by observing that Viardot 'has applied herself to putting as much truth into the plastic side of her role as she put of the ideal into her musical interpretation'.[41] Ulbach here was part of a critical faction for whom Viardot's dramatic talents were an ideally realised element of the array of skills required of any true *prima donna*. His colleague G.W. Barry enthused along similar lines: 'Mme. Viardot has proven herself as great an actress as she is a singer. Poses [*attitudes*], movements [*gestes*], diction, singing: all are truly admirable in her'.[42] Her acting impressed, reaching beyond the level necessary for a singer and into a realm traditionally inhabited by famous actresses of the day. Rachel herself is

---

fact that Perrin was the director responsible for the revival of *Alceste* at the Opéra in 1861 makes this statement more significant still (if a little self-serving).

[40] 'Il ne suffit pas de chanter, pour être une cantatrice; il faut avoir le sentiment de la forme visible [...]. Un opéra n'est pas un concert'; Louis Ulbach, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck. – Madame Viardot', *Gazette des beaux-arts* (January-March 1860), 100.

[41] 's'est étudié à mettre dans le côté plastique de son rôle autant de vérité qu'elle mettait d'idéal dans l'interprétation de la musique'; Ulbach, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck. – Madame Viardot', 100.

[42] 'Mme. Viardot s'est montrée aussi grande tragédienne que grande cantatrice. Attitudes, gestes, diction, chant, tout est vraiment admirable en elle'; G.W. Barry, 'Théâtre Lyrique. L'*Orphée* de Gluck et ses interprètes', *Le Monde dramatique* (8 December 1859).

mentioned by many as a suitably eminent (recently deceased) *tragédienne* with whom to compare Viardot.[43] For others, the singer's movements, gestures and *attitudes* were sufficiently absorbing as almost to overtake her singing in importance and column-inches.

Writing about the Lyrique's *Orphée* in her journal, Marie d'Agoult exclaimed:

> Le chant et le jeu de Mme. Viardot ont dépassé pour moi toute attente. Je n'ai jamais rien vu, pas même Rachel, qui approchât de cette beauté plastique, et de cette liberté, dans le sentiment de l'antique. On ne sent là rien de voulu, rien de cherché, rien qui rappelle l'école. Elle m'a fait constamment penser aux plus beaux bas-reliefs et vases grecs.[44]
>
> The singing and the acting of Mme. Viardot surpassed all my expectations. I have seen nothing, not even Rachel, that came close to this plastic beauty, and to this freedom, in feeling for the antique. You feel there is nothing planned, nothing contrived, nothing that recalls the classroom. She made me think constantly of the most beautiful bas-reliefs and Greek vases.

The English critic Henry Chorley, who saw Viardot as Orpheus in July 1860 at a private performance in London, was similarly moved: he marvelled that 'the supple and statuesque grace of her figure gave interest and meaning to every step and attitude. Yet, after the first scene […], there was not a single effect that might be called a pose or a prepared gesture.'[45] Back in Paris, Viardot inspired more florid description still from Saint-Victor: her pantomime in the Elysian Fields 'has the beauty of a statue that has been moved with emotion, of a

[43] For more on Rachel and French tragedy in the mid-nineteenth century, see Rachel M. Brownstein, *The Tragic Muse: Rachel of the Comédie-Française* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995) and Michael R. Booth, John Stokes and Susan Bassnett, *Three Tragic Actresses: Siddons, Rachel, Ristori* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[44] Diary entry dated 25 April 1861; quoted in Charles Dupêchez, *Marie d'Agoult, 1805-1876* [2nd Ed.] (Paris: Plon, 1994), 264.
[45] Henry Chorley, *Thirty Years' Musical Recollections*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), II, 58. A 'Correspondance d'Angleterre' reporting on this private performance at Dudley House was published in *La France musicale* (29 July 1860), dated 25 July. For more on this performance see Barbara Kendall-Davies, *The Life and Work of Pauline Viardot-García. Vol. I: The Years of Fame, 1836-1863* (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2003), 417-18.

sculpture that started to come to life'.[46] Viardot was not seen as simply, *classically*, statuesque. For Chorley, she was so in a manner that seemed to resist stasis. For Saint-Victor, she stretched the notion of the statuesque even further, recalling statuary and sculpture of a kind that promised at any moment to step from its plinth, to become animated flesh and blood.[47]

These images, however widespread or heartfelt, were not new. On the contrary, to describe a female singer in 1859 as in some way statuesque was a cliché on either side of the Channel, the metaphor having been liberally applied to great sopranos in the generation preceding Viardot – perhaps especially to Giuditta Pasta.[48] In literature, too, reference to similar instances of metamorphosis in female statuary was at least as established in 1859 as was the idea of women as statuesque: the poetry of Gautier and Baudelaire, for instance, is populated by women who actively blur the boundary between flesh and marble.[49] Whether in poetry or criticism, these images call into question the phenomenological status of the female figures they describe, raising the question of who is animating what. Maribeth Clark's comments on Gautier's dance

[46] 'Sa pantomime [...] a la beauté d'un marbre ému, d'une sculpture qui se mettrait à vivre'; Saint-Victor, 'Théâtre Lyrique: *Orphée*'.

[47] The proximity of this image to Ovid's Pygmalion – the love-struck sculptor who caressed his statue only to find, 'beneath his touch the flesh / Grew soft, its ivory hardness vanishing' – is interesting, given how widely reproduced that myth was by the mid-nineteenth century; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 233. David Scott has observed that at this time those writing about art and sculpture saw their work in the same mythological terms as Ovid's famous creator: their vocation was 'to breathe life through their poetry into the perfect but mute images'. Conceived thus, as a metaphor for critical ventriloquism of a silent artwork, the awakening of Pygmalion's sculpture no longer pivots on the divine intervention of a compassionate Venus, but on the sculptor's own inspiration. See Scott, 'Matter for Reflection: Nineteenth-Century French Art Critics' Quest for Modernity in Sculpture', in Richard Hobbs, ed., *Impressions of French Modernity: Art and Literature in France 1850-1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 104.

[48] For more on Pasta and the statuesque, see Susan Rutherford, '"La cantante delle passioni": Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 19/2 (July 2007), 107-38.

[49] Gautier's 'Contralto', with its 'statue énigmatique', is an obvious example of this tendency, one all the more significant here following the suggestion of Felicia Miller Frank that Gautier may have had Viardot in mind as the eponymous 'Contralto, bizarre mélange, / Hermaphrodite de la voix!'; see Frank, *The Mechanical Song: Women, Voice, and the Artificial in Nineteenth-Century French Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 109.

criticism are particularly suggestive here. She traces how his use of the statuesque trope when writing about dance acts as a distancing (and, by implication, dehumanising) technique, one that replaces direct enjoyment of a dancer's sensuality with the morally more defensible appreciation of a work of art. Yet, as Clark writes, Gautier 'held dancers responsible for being beautiful, as well as creating the effect of beauty. A female dancer was at once art and artist, object and agent.'[50] Essential to such aesthetic multitasking was genius – if sufficiently great, it was no less than a revivifying force.[51]

The question of stage genius (and agency in exercising it) is similarly at stake in the case of Viardot's Orpheus. The repeated references to her statuesque qualities – even her ability to keep static gesture and fluid movement in constant flux – further emphasised those famous dramatic talents by binding her into the explicitly Orphic and mythological rhetoric that pervaded so much writing on the 1859 revival. In this myth-inflected discourse, though, Viardot's particular skills endow her with the power to re-animate: as Orpheus, she could bring not only Eurydice but also Gluck's opera back from the dead; as one critic put it, 'À ses accents, l'antiquité sort de l'oubli'.[52] Figuring Viardot as controlling time itself, this last is an outrageously daring claim. No longer simply straddling the divide

[50] Maribeth Clark, 'Bodies at the Opéra: Art and the Hermaphrodite in the Dance Criticism of Théophile Gautier', in Roger Parker and Mary Ann Smart, eds., *Reading Critics Reading: Opera and Ballet Criticism in France from the Revolution to 1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 238.
[51] For more on the discursive relationship between genius and animation, see Lynda Nead, *The Haunted Gallery: Painting, Photography, Film c. 1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 46. This modified version of the statuesque trope (particularly as phrased by Saint-Victor) recalls very closely a report of Rachel's performance of 'La Marseillaise' as a Republican live allegory in 1849, which makes clear the symbolic association of the actor's statuesque qualities and her interpretative genius in an overtly political context. An article in *L'Artiste* (9 April 1849) refers to 'the altogether sculptural poses of Mademoiselle Rachel when she sings the *Marseillaise*. What an eloquent symbol of pride, audacity and verve! It is so noble that it could be marble, but this is marble palpitating with life'; quoted in Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 90.
[52] Martin, 'Revue des Théâtres Lyriques', 71.

between past and present as she participates in the *résurrection* of *Orphée*, Viardot is imagined here to possess the power to reconfigure that relationship. She calls history – whether ancient or operatic – into full-bodied presence, while simultaneously envoicing a continuation of the past.

Viardot had not always been thought to wield such extraordinarily hyperbolic and wide-reaching agency. Indeed, up to *Le Prophète* (even, arguably, up to *Orphée*), her performances tended to receive a more enthusiastic reception abroad than in Paris. Her creation of Fidès in 1849 seems to have been a turning point in her Paris reception: Berlioz observed that, although 'the extreme skill of her vocalisation, […] her musical assurance […] are things known and valued by everyone, even in Paris', Viardot 'has displayed a dramatic talent with which no one (in France) believed her to be so highly endowed'.[53] That Fidès epitomised Viardot's dramatic coming-of-age for Berlioz is interesting, given that it was in this role (albeit as performed in the sunnier critical climate of London in 1854) that the singer attracted one of the most immediately striking of any responses to her stage presence. The self-styled 'London Playgoer' Henry Morley wrote:

> Daguerreotype Madame Viardot suddenly at any moment […] and though she may be only passing at that moment from one gesture to another, you will fix upon the plate a picturesque and expressive figure, which is moreover a figure indicating in its face and in its attitude that precise feeling which belonged to the story at the moment chosen.[54]

Here, Morley betrays the same fixation on the visual that is apparent elsewhere, but with one essential modification: he engages with the act of seeing itself. To

[53] In full, the passage reads: Viardot, 'dans le rôle de Fidès, a déployé un talent dramatique dont on ne la croyait pas (en France) douée si éminemment. Toutes ses attitudes, ses gestes, sa physionomie, son costume même sont étudiés avec un art profond. Quant à la perfection de son chant, à l'extrême habileté de sa vocalisation, à son assurance musicale, ce sont choses connues et appréciées de tout le monde, même à Paris'; Hector Berlioz, 'Théâtre de l'Opéra. Première représentation de *Prophète*', *Journal des débats* (20 April 1849).
[54] Henry Morley, *The Journal of a London Playgoer From 1851 to 1866* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1866), 90-1.

capture an image of Viardot 'suddenly' during her performance was beyond current technology in 1854; but Morley's idea of an instant daguerreotype is eye-catching precisely because it is impossible. His fantasy of producing a snapshot of Viardot implies an understanding of movement as reducible to an infinite number of static gestures. The same blurring of movement and stasis that Saint-Victor and others invoked in the Pygmalion image of Viardot as a moving statue is, in other words, formulated by Morley in reverse. In his imagining, human movement can be returned suddenly to stasis by the visual technology of the near future.[55] However, to interpret Morley's comment about Viardot as evidence of an explicitly modern form of seeing would be to overlook traces of the opposite tendency. His invocation of a picturesque portrait of the singer is, daguerreotype notwithstanding, firmly anchored in the visual protocols of the past. The entire passage might in fact be most productively read as praise for Viardot, clothed (fashionably) in language inspired by recent technological developments. Understood thus, the focus is thrown back onto the animated grey area between individual gestures (a potential blurring that Viardot's skills rendered legible, and meaningful, to the almost-naked eye) and to the temporal machinations behind the singer's re-presentation of the operatic past. For just as a determinedly non-futuristic reading of Morley's fantasy uncovers the unsurprising, the conventional and, ultimately, the old-fashioned, at its core, a further possibility arises: that both the critics and Viardot herself – perhaps even Second Empire operatic production as a whole – were engaging more or less self-consciously not only with the past, but with their own future pastness.

[55] The now-canonical account of nineteenth-century changes and developments in visual culture in general is Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1990).

Old ways of seeing

Where Morley reached for the daguerreotype to express admiration for Viardot's performance, others enlisted the assistance of much more venerable representational means. Berlioz, for example, observed that 'Painters and sculptors admire her no less than critics and musicians. On one of the previous nights, next to certain spectators who were reading Gluck's score, I noticed artists busy copying down the poses, the sculptural *attitudes* of the actress.'[56] The idea that Viardot's Orpheus appealed specifically to visual artists is yet another trope of the revival's reception. It was an easy way, once again, to emphasise her dramatic talents and thus place her performance within the long and illustrious history of star singers deemed worthy of pictorial representation, supposedly *in medias res*. It is significant, though, that Berlioz's artists, copying down Viardot's 'attitudes sculpturales', are placed alongside other opera aficionados buried in their scores: the visual artists adhere, fundamentally, to the same processes of textualisation and canonisation – of Gluck's work, of its performance at the Théâtre Lyrique, of Viardot herself – manifested in and around those listeners and their heavy musical tomes.[57] More to the point, just as we still have access to those musical texts, bound in leather and board and deposited in the library for safekeeping, the images we have of Viardot are not only discursive but in some cases materialised in pencil, ink, paint or

[56] 'Les peintres et les statuaires ne l'admirent pas moins que les littérateurs et les musiciens. A l'une des dernières soirées, à côté de certains spectateurs qui lisaient la partition de Gluck, on remarquait des dessinateurs occupés à copier les poses, les attitudes sculpturales de l'actrice'; Hector Berlioz, 'Théâtre Lyrique. *Orphée*, Guignol, Mme. Viardot, Gluck, un plagiat de Philidor. *Fidelio*', *Journal des débats* (9 December 1859).

[57] In the context of the dynamics of the singer portrait as outlined here it is useful to recall Richard Dyer's work on stars; although his focus is on the film stars of the mid twentieth century, his conceptualisation of the production of the 'star image' of the performer is nonetheless suggestive for Viardot a century earlier. Stars, Dyer writes, 'are involved in making themselves into commodities; they are both labour and the thing that labour produces. They do not produce themselves alone'; see Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5.

photographic chemicals. Various depictions of her as Orpheus circulated during the revival: the products, one might imagine, of 'live' artistic endeavour such as that described by Berlioz.

The Bibliothéque nationale de France holds a small gallery of Viardot in the role of Orpheus: two sketches of her on stage at the Théâtre Lyrique, complete with scenic environs; a photographic reproduction of a painted portrait by D. Philippe; a decorative cameo portrait of her head and shoulders; and a full-length sketched portrait.[58] In each, and in a sketch printed alongside Ulbach's review in the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, Viardot is depicted with the same attributes: the crown of laurels, the white tunic and cape and the inevitable lyre. This is no coincidence. Not only were such features absolutely standard in portrayals of Orpheus, but each image shows Viardot attired exactly as she described her costume in the revival.[59] In Figure 2, Viardot – fingers poised to pluck the lyre – steps forward, her cloak flying behind her. Indeed the responsibility for conveying movement is carried almost entirely by the fabric of her skirt and cloak; her limbs have an unforgiving solidity that makes the 'statuesque grace' described by Chorley hard to imagine. The sketch's perspective, too, is slightly odd: the singer's head is improbably small for such a frame – and yet, read as the product of exaggerated perspective rather than

[58] These images may be viewed using Gallica, the BnF's digital library, and are located in the collection, 'Pauline Viardot (1821-1910): [portraits et documents]'. See http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77224694.r=Pauline+Viardot.langEN (accessed 9 August 2010).

[59] In a letter to Julius Rietz (dated 21 November 1859), Viardot described her costume for the revival in some detail: **'**My costume was thought to be very handsome – a white tunic falling to the knees – a white mantle caught up at both shoulders *à l'Apollon*. Flowing tresses, curled, with the crown of laurel. A chain of gold to support the sword, whose sheath is red, a red cord around the waist – buskins white, laced with red'; translated and printed in Pauline Viardot-García and Theodore Baker, 'Pauline Viardot-García to Julius Rietz (Letters of Friendship) [Concluded]', *The Musical Quarterly*, 2/1 (January 1916), 46.

mediocrity, the effect is to bring Viardot's moving body parts (her left leg and right arm) even further out of the image, towards the viewer.

Figure 2: Sketch from an unidentified periodical of Pauline Viardot as Orpheus, dated 22 December 1859. Fonds du Conservatoire, Bibliothèque nationale de France (accessed via Gallica, 9 August 2010).

This portrait and others seem to foreground a sense of movement largely absent from the more conventional, static images of her other roles. Such movement also runs counter to a trend in academic portraiture of the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries – a gradual shift away from the depiction of the meaningful gestures that a model, idealised according to the artist's proper training, might embody. Thus, as the nineteenth century progressed, the active, significant poses adopted by models were replaced by an increased attentiveness to the idiosyncrasies of a particular physique; as the body itself came under closer scrutiny, the portrait necessarily became more static.[60] However, the visual terrain of Viardot's Orpheus, emerging not only from the responses already discussed but also from this pictorial image, does not insert neatly into such a schema: the sketch in Figure 2, a distinctly 'lively' depiction, seems indeed to be the product of an older, eighteenth-century visual economy. Furthermore, the mid-nineteenth-century Pygmalion trope mentioned earlier, in which animation was seen as a function of genius, is explicitly complicated here by two competing sources of animating agency – portrait artist and singer. Like the mobile subjects of Gautier's dance criticism, Viardot was not a model, paid by the hour to provide an anonymous body from which the artist might draw inspiration; she was an artist in her own right, and would always already have sung prior to being portrayed. Two related tensions emerge, then, from portraits of Viardot as Orpheus: one is between competing expressive agencies at work in their production; the other is between the particular, apparently dated mode in which she was represented and the visual regime predominant in contemporary portraiture. The notion of technique may be helpful in dealing with these tensions, while in addition resonating productively with *classique* in all its evaluative force. What is more, technique – not least in its etymological and

[60] For more on this trend and on the training of artists, see Susan S. Waller, *The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris, 1830-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 4-5.

associative proximity to technology, another nascent concept at this time – leads me to some final, quite different images of the singer.

Technique was a critical pedagogical element at the École des Beaux-arts, as it was at the Paris Conservatoire; it was, arguably, what separated the professional from the amateur; and it was therefore crucial to any assessment of aesthetic worth, any distinction between the boulevard and the Salon. But even with such positive connotations, the notion remained ambiguous in the hands of the critics. Its association with the mechanical and the inhuman meant that, in mid-nineteenth-century writing on both music and art, too much technical prowess attracted the charge of academicism or lack of inspiration. Recall that Marie d'Agoult praised Viardot explicitly for the fact that 'there is nothing planned, nothing contrived, nothing that recalls the classroom' in her performance. Precisely because technique was thought essential to great art, it was to be kept well concealed, sublimated deep within the masterpiece.[61] When concealment failed – when technique was seen to overwhelm art – the resulting displays of mechanical prowess attracted harsh condemnation. Yet for all their long history in art and music, such old arguments about the proper role of technique in artistic creation came into sharper focus at mid-century. Indeed, they had gained a new focal point: the developing, contested field of photography. As its acolytes sought to have it recognised as an artistic medium, its products as worthy of critical attention alongside painting and sculpture,

[61] The underlying division here between the functionality of the so-called 'useful arts' and the ideal qualities of the fine arts has, of course, a long and distinguished history. A pertinent footnote to this history has recently been provided by Leo Marx, who has traced the emergence of the concept of 'technology' alongside and within such a division: Marx suggests that the term enabled and embodied a further separation between 'dirty' industrial processes and 'clean' modern science, with 'technology' accruing for the latter the 'elevated status long ago accorded the fine arts'; see Marx, 'Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept', *Technology and Culture*, 51/3 (July 2010), 573-4.

photography became a prime site for airing broader anxieties. These were about the place of technique in art and the relationship between artistic and technological endeavour in general; but also (albeit more implicitly) about the status of reproduction and preservation as artistic or technological acts.

The art critic Philippe Burty, writing about an exhibition held by the Société française de photographie in 1859, is typical in his stance. He bemoaned the fact that

> La photographie est impersonnelle; elle n'interprète pas, elle copie; là est sa faiblesse comme sa force, car elle rend avec la même indifférence le détail oiseux et ce rien à peine visible, à peine sensible, qui donne l'âme et fait la ressemblance.[62]
>
> Photography is impersonal; it doesn't interpret, it copies; therein lies its weakness as well as its power, since it captures with the same indifference the meaningless detail and the slightest thing, barely visible, barely noticeable, that endows soul and completes the likeness.

Photography is seen here to afford an entirely mechanical visual experience, seeing everything yet discerning nothing. For Burty and others, the photographer's gaze was scientific and analytical, producing autopsies rather than works of art. Such arguments continued when the 1859 Salon included a selection of photographic portraits – a development that prompted Baudelaire's notorious diatribe against the medium. Responding to the same apparently unseeing objectivity of the photograph that Burty had perceived, Baudelaire fumed that 'the exclusive taste for the True […] oppresses and stifles the taste of the Beautiful'; 'Poetry and progress', he reminded his reader, 'are like two ambitious men who hate one another with an instinctive hatred, and when their paths cross, one of them must be slave to the other.'[63] Baudelaire thus depicted

[62] Philippe Burty, 'Exposition de la Société française de photographie', *Gazette des beaux-arts* (April-June 1859), 211.
[63] 'La poésie et le progrès sont deux ambitieux qui se haïssent d'une haine instinctive, et, quand ils se rencontrent dans le même chemin, il faut que l'un des deux serve l'autre'; Baudelaire, 'Salon de 1859' in *Critique d'art*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 278.

photography as a crass manifestation of the industrial and technological progress of which Napoleon III was so proud; and, more to the point, he saw such progress as fundamentally antithetical to the (implicitly timeless) work of art.[64] The medium of Morley's fantasy image of Viardot resurfaces here in less benign form: no longer imaginatively impossible, no longer safely metaphorical, photography is a dangerous mingling of high-art aspirations and modern technology. As a material, visible incarnation of technological progress, the photograph was for Baudelaire a means of preserving 'the languishing ruins, the books, prints and manuscripts which time is devouring'.[65] It was an archival tool, not an art form. But while such refusal to engage with photography as art has long since become obsolete, the material products of the medium's preservational capacities are with us today: still tangible and, most importantly here, still visible.

The four photographs in Figure 3 are from a selection of *cartes de visite* images of Viardot as Orpheus taken, so far as I can tell, at the same studio session by the great nineteenth-century portrait photographer André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri. They share many features with Figure 2. It would not, in fact, be difficult to imagine the sketch being taken from such photographs, rather than created 'live' by one of Berlioz's artists in the theatre audience. Here, finally, we see the 'real' Viardot: limbs barely more delicate than those in the sketch; facial expression shifting between blank, pained and poised; feet always balletic when

[64] Odd as it may seem, given that Baudelaire was an arch-modernist, responsible for formulating part of our notion of 'modernity', his position here seems to recall that of conservative music critic François-Joseph Fétis, who had insisted in an article published in 1850 that 'The object of science is reality; that of art, is the ideal. This simple distinction suffices to demonstrate that art cannot progress, and that its products cannot perish'; Fétis*, Revue et Gazette musicale* (2 June 1850), 181; quoted and translated by Ellis in *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 58.
[65] 'les ruines pendantes, les livres, les estampes et les manuscrits que le temps dévore'; Baudelaire, 'Salon de 1859', 278.

body, perhaps, is not. Arranged thus in sequence, it is hard to resist supplying the four photographs with a connecting narrative, joining up a few long moments of an otherwise vanished past. In Figure 3a, Viardot first strikes a pose that one could certainly term 'statuesque', lyre raised but balanced by the position of her left foot and the baroque folds of her cloak at her right-hand side: the photograph gives every impression of stasis. In Figure 3b, Viardot steps directly towards the camera, right foot first and with her knee slightly bent, a position that perhaps explains the pained concentration on her face; the lyre, now held lower, is also proffered to the viewer, while her fingers are in mid-pluck. By contrast, in Figure 3c she appears to have *just* moved: the lyre is now thrown out behind her right-hand side and compositionally balanced, once again, by the mass of elaborate pleats at the base of her cloak on the opposite side of her body. Finally, in Figure 3d, Viardot is static once more, a strong diagonal emerging across her body to join her carefully positioned right elbow to the strings of the lyre.

Of these images, Figure 3b is the most immediately striking: Viardot seems to lunge towards the viewer, her movement captured in a focus sufficiently clear that one might imagine Morley's envy.[66] The photograph certainly seems to encapsulate – or at least gesture at – the dynamics of stillness set into motion, that idea explored in many responses to Viardot's Orpheus. But in the end it is the resolutely static final pose (Figure 3d) that remains in the memory. Viardot, in presumably much greater comfort, leans gently on the marble lectern or column that appears in so many Disdéri portraits: its dual

[66] The step forward may itself be significant as a highly specific statuesque trope: following the unveiling in 1845 of the Bonn Beethoven monument, which portrayed the composer in mid-stride, various commentators described the statue as portraying Beethoven stepping into the future. For more on the Beethoven monument and its reception, see Ingrid Bodsch, ed., *Monument für Beethoven: Zur Geschichte des Beethoven-Denkmals* (Bonn: Bonner Stadtmuseum, 1995).

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b

Fig. 3c

Fig. 3d

Figure 3: *Cartes de visite* photographs of Pauline Viardot as Orpheus by André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri. Uncatalogued, Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

function was as a prop for the weary subject and a means by which to hold her exactly in position for long enough to take a clear exposure. As an object, then, it is entirely proper to the photograph – generic, mundane, an expected element of the apparatus. Yet it becomes a symbol of the very stasis it works to produce. To borrow Barthes' famous terms, Disdéri's column is a *punctum*, a 'blind field' signalling to external life while nonetheless participating in the formal construction or *studium*.[67] What is more, placed alongside this photographic Viardot, equipped with Orpheus's white tunic and lyre, the benign column that appears on so many of Disdéri's *cartes de visite* is cast in a different, darker light; it is out of place in the myth gestured at in this photograph and elsewhere. The central, catalytic object in that narrative is instead a tombstone: an image of ultimate stasis – of death itself.

Colloque sentimentale: the scriptural tomb

In the same review of the 1859 Salon in which he condemned photography as an overtly technologised medium, fit only for preserving and recording 'true' art works, Baudelaire extolled the virtues of sculpture. A brief rhapsodic quotation from his review features as my epigraph. The poet reports that, when contemplating a statue,

> le fantôme de pierre s'empare de vous pendant quelques minutes, et vous commande, au nom du passé, de penser aux choses qui ne sont pas de la terre.
> Tel est le rôle divin de la sculpture.[68]

> the stone phantom possesses you for several minutes, and orders you, in the name of the past, to think of things which are not of this earth.
> Such is the divine role of sculpture.

[67] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 2000), 26-7 and throughout.
[68] Baudelaire, 'Salon de 1859', 330.

In Baudelaire's dense formulation, we are haunted by stone touched and worked by human hands: stone figured not as inanimate, but as (un)dead – even divine; stone that transports its present addressee, via the past, towards some sort of transcendence.[69] The uncanny image might be pressed into service here as a spirit medium in its own right, gathering the threads of my discussion in terms that once again echo those of the Orpheus myth.

I have thus far taken for granted the fleshy, bodily nature of Pauline Viardot's performances on stage. I have assumed that, in any discursive tussle between present and past, performance and representation, real and imagined, living and inanimate, Viardot's resonant body at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1859 must have remained rooted in the present, the real, the living. Yet reading between the lines of the response to Viardot's performances – and against the grain of much critical pedestrianism – repeatedly suggests an experience that was altogether less mundane. Like Baudelaire's stone phantom, a statuesque Viardot also seems to have called forth something more unsettling – in the poet's words, 'not of this earth'. This uncanny effect surfaces in what Henri Blaze de Bury (under the pseudonym F. de la Genevais) described as 'la côté *antique* du talent de Mme Viardot', identified as though an accepted trait years before *Orphée*, in response to her turn as Sapho in 1851.[70] Not only, then, was Gluck's work embedded and implicated within the complex and shifting meanings of *le classique* outlined above; Viardot herself was already seen as an embodiment of classical values.

[69] The notion of possession is, of course, a rich one in the history of visuality; see in particular Stefan Andriopoulos's cult-gathering *Possessed: Hypnotic Crimes, Corporate Fiction, and the Invention of Cinema*, trans. Peter Jansen and Stefan Andriopoulos (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[70] F. de la Genevais [pseud.: Blaze de Bury], 'Théâtres. – Opéra – La corbeille d'oranges', *Revue des deux mondes* (1 April 1851), 981.

One might argue that this is simply evidence of an association between a singer and the repertoire for which she was known. Indeed, following *Orphée*, Viardot was asked to edit an *École classique du chant* – a collection of 'morceaux choisis dans les chefs d'œuvre des plus grands maîtres classiques'. The preface describes how Viardot, 'commissioned to rediscover and to indicate the thinking of these masters, […] felt herself borne towards this task by her entire life's work, by her daily practice of the art of singing, whether on stage or in teaching'.[71] But while Viardot was undoubtedly considered one of the great exponents of *la musique classique*, the idea that she was herself classical is more fundamental than such a rhetorical collapse of repertoire and person suggests. Émile Perrin described Viardot as 'the artist who best represents the tradition of the grand style'; 'the daughter of García, the sister of Malibran, the last descendent of this noble family of artists'.[72] Here, Viardot's own classicism emerges in a slightly different sense: from the idea that she belongs to a particular vocal tradition, the acknowledged status of which she embodies and – as the last in the dynasty – preserves. Similarly, Scudo's review of Viardot's performance recalled previous great renditions of 'J'ai perdu mon Eurydice' (by Garat and Duprez in French, by Pasta in Italian) before concluding that 'Le talent de Mme Viardot a réveillé en moi ces beaux souvenirs'.[73] The singer is

[71] 'Chargée de retrouver et d'indiquer la pensée de ces maîtres, elle se sentait portée vers ce travail par les études de toute sa vie, par ses réflexions et ses goûts, par sa pratique journalière de l'art du chant, soit sur la scène, soit dans l'enseignement.' 'Préface des éditeurs' in Pauline Viardot-García, ed., *École classique du chant* (Paris: E. Gérard & Cie, 1861). A copy is held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BN Mus. Vma 489). The *École classique* includes 'J'ai perdu mon Eurydice' from *Orphée*, complete with performance markings and comments on vocal control by Viardot; these directions match reports of her own famous rendition of the aria.
[72] 'l'artiste qui représente le mieux la tradition du grand style'; 'la fille de García, la sœur de Malibran, le dernier rejeton de cette noble famille d'artistes'; Perrin, 'Chronique musicale: Gluck au Théâtre-Lyrique', 205.
[73] Scudo, 'L'*Orphée* de Gluck', 727. It is worth noting that Alfred de Musset, reviewing Viardot's début (as Pauline García) in 1839, reported that the resemblance to Malibran's voice 'is so striking that it would appear supernatural, were it not completely straightforward that two

understood as a resonant tomb (to borrow Jonathan Sterne's phrase) *avant la lettre*: at once an open channel to voices from the past, and the only surviving remains of a dying vocal tradition.[74] In this context, the desire to keep and maintain becomes essential. Baudelaire's suggestion that photography ought to be used to safeguard great art works for posterity is symptomatic of a situation in which 'classic' might simply mean 'worthy of being preserved'.[75]

In order to require such preservation, one must of course be on the brink of extinction, or at least tinged with mortality. Embodying *le classique* – whether in this sense of providing a direct conduit to an already-interred past or, allegorically, as a statuesque figure treading the line between flesh and marble – could be dangerous. The perils are fully manifest in the *Literary Gazette*'s review of Viardot's performance in *Fidélio*, staged at the Théâtre Lyrique one year after *Orphée*:

> [Viardot] has, perhaps, a finer, truer conceptive faculty of really classical art than any artist, male or female, now in existence, and this makes her 'Orphée' one of the most perfect performances ever seen on any stage, or at any time […]. But this will not help her when she has to render such a truly living character as 'Fidelio'.[76]

In being so perfectly 'classical', then, Viardot surrendered her ability to be 'truly living'. Just as the positive associations of *le classique* could migrate from the singer's repertoire to personal worth as a performer, so could its negative side-

---

sisters are alike' ('est tellement frappante qu'elle paraîtrait surnaturelle, si n'était pas tout simple que deux sœurs se ressemblent'); 'Concert de Mademoiselle García', *Revue des deux mondes* (1 January 1839), 111.

[74] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003). Sterne uses the phrase in relation to early sound recording, which emerged two decades after the *Orphée* revival.

[75] It is no coincidence, as Sterne has noted, that these middle decades of the nineteenth century, in which sound recording (and, I would add, an operatic canon predicated on the idea of 'the classic') came gradually into being, was also the period in which the chemical embalming of corpses became more widespread. Each was part of the same fundamental impulse to *preserve*. According to Sterne, eleven major patents for 'fluids, processes and media for chemical embalming' were granted in America between 1856 and 1869; Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 295.

[76] Anon. ('From our own correspondent'), 'Foreign Intelligence', *The Literary Gazette*, 4/98 (12 May 1860), 589.

effects. Gautier, moreover, had famously criticised the wave of revivals of such 'classic' composers as Gluck in his 1859 *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France*:

> Quelque admirateur que l'on soit du passé, on éprouve une espèce de froid à voir représenter un chef-d'œuvre ancien; on sent que ce sont des paroles mortes, des mélodies mortes. L'âme est partie: il n'y a plus cette animation que communique à une pièce un public en communion avec l'auteur.[77]
>
> However great an admirer of the past one might be, one is left somewhat cold by the performance of an ancient masterpiece; one feels that these are dead words, dead melodies. Their soul has fled; they no longer have the sense of life that an audience in communion with the author imparts to a piece.

The classic may be great, and even timeless; but nothing can remain both timeless and alive. Perhaps the ultimate 'stone phantom', the classic is also haunted: by its own pastness and, by extension, by the fact that it is always-already dead. Pauline Viardot, a singer at once imagined (in an ancient trope) as a statue coming to life, as the embodiment of a tradition receding into the past, appears as a figure of ambivalence and connection, a figure similarly haunting and haunted. Perhaps this is only to be expected. There is, as Barbara Johnson suggests, a 'latent threat in any animation of the inanimate': the process may be reversed and the living turned to stone.[78]

To put this one final way: on 18 November 1859 at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris, Gluck's opera met its match. The *œuvre classique*, which fitted so neatly into Gautier's description of such pieces as the dead shell of a once-vital composition,

---

[77] Théophile Gautier, article dated 5 July 1843, reprinted in *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans*, 6 vols. (Paris: Hetzel, 1858-9), III, 72. Translation from Hervé Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Edward Schneider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 31.

[78] Barbara Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 39. It is of course no coincidence that this threat was precisely what haunted commodity fetishism as theorised by Karl Marx: a concept that not only involved the 'solidifying of human relations into intimacy with things', as Johnson observes (*Persons and Things*, 20), but that was predicated on workers themselves becoming commodities or – to borrow a phrase from the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* – 'an appendage of the machine'; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9-10. For more on commodity fetishism, see Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume I*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), particularly 'Commodities', 125-77.

was brought back to life by a star performer herself seen as classic, as commanding an authority originating in and bestowed by the past. Viardot as Orpheus possessed the power of animation: to repeat Philippe Martin's comment, 'À ses accents, l'antiquité sort de l'oubli'; she descended into the underworld and returned to tell the tale. But she did so with one foot already in the grave. What is strange is that such essential mortality did not, in the end, prove fatal. Neither Viardot nor Gluck's *Orphée* are in urgent need of a scriptural tomb; my 'dead who still haunt the present', to speak in Certeauvian terms, are rather the operatic works that now comprise 'the canon' – a repertory still in the process of solidifying, of turning to stone, when Viardot created her Orpheus.[79] The 'système d'exhumations' for which Carvalho was famed is now effectively the system in which opera houses function and in which performances are produced. His 1859 *Orphée* provided a discursive battleground on which the relative values of the past, present and future, the notion of the classic and, finally, the question of opera's vitality were fought out.

There is little question that, as perceived in 1859, Viardot epitomised the Sainte-Beuvian classic – 'of the past, with an already established reputation, […] accepted as an authority in his genre'. Imaged in *Orphée*'s reception as a nexus of stillness and movement, past and future, life and death, the power of her talent for the 'classical' was located precisely in its *a priori* pastness. More surprising than the fact that she was perceived to have something dead about her is that she was alive at all: she channelled the authority of the long-dead while still sonorously extant, figured as the final trace of a receding past. Accorded such a

[79] See Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Certeau describes the writing of history as an act that 'aims at calming the dead who still haunt the present, and at offering them scriptural tombs'; *The Writing of History*, 2.

status, Viardot had exceeded the bounds of the living. While her Orpheus was declared immortal, her own reputation was couched in the terms of the already-dead, as though her performances at the Lyrique were addressed to a future from which the revival would itself be preserved as a memory of the distant past. And, of course, despite her own apparent powers of animation and vocal enchantment, the singer's mythological incarnation was indeed finite. However statuesque, classic or temporally complex Viardot's discursive existence in the wake of the 1859 *Orphée*, she remained, inevitably, mortal. She retired from the stage shortly after the revival, but survived it by over half a century; by the time she died in 1910, Viardot's Orpheus was indeed ancient history.

On 18 July 1901, on the occasion of her eightieth birthday, Viardot's friends and pupils presented her with a commemorative medal (Figure 4). On one side is a relief profile of the famous singer, unmistakeably an *éminence grise*, framed by a crown of laurels. On the reverse, aside from the inscription, is a portrait (again, in relief) of her younger shade. She reclines in a significantly more fluid position – her right foot dipping slightly below the clean horizontal line of the plank on which she is seated, the fabric of her garment almost exceeding the medal's rim – holding an olive branch, a lyre and a mask. It is hard to resist seeing the image as in some sense Orphic and thus related specifically to Viardot's role in the 1859 revival. Although the ensemble clearly implies that this is an allegorical figure symbolising opera or dramatic art, the soft jaw-line and general likeness to photographs and portraits of the singer earlier in life suggest a figure indeed modelled on Viardot herself. More eye-catching, though, is the mask: a standard signifier of Greek tragedy (and thus of drama in general) but also redolent of the death mask, that ancient ritual object phased out during

Figure 4: Commemorative medal (1901) by H. B. Kautsch, presented to Pauline Viardot on her eightieth birthday. Pauline Viardot-García Papers, 1836-1905 (bMS Mus 232 [87]), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

the nineteenth century, gradually replaced by the deathbed photograph. Death once again seems to haunt the image; the object itself is sombre and weighty, to be handled only in the reverential quiet of the archive.

Its form – essentially that of a large metal coin – gestures unequivocally towards the currency (both literal and historic-cultural) that the object continues to wield. The medal's value is tied not only to its materiality (what its particular mass of metal is worth) but also to its commemorative qualities and, above all, to its association with Viardot, on whose prestige the object's existence relies. In the end, what is striking is the fact that it was presented to Viardot during her lifetime – indeed, in celebration of its continuation – but nonetheless materially embodies the threat of 'the living turned to stone'. While the visual language of its memorialisation seems recognisable from the reception of Viardot's Orpheus half a century earlier, the medal's particular immortalisation of the singer is captured in metal. It is an artefact cold to the touch: as cold as Gautier had found Gluck's music. Yet, like Baudelaire's stone phantom, it acts in the name of the past; it continues to speak, addressing us still from an undiscovered country.

CHAPTER TWO

Future history: Wagner, Offenbach and 'la musique de l'avenir' in Paris, 1860

Pense beaucoup à l'avenir,
peu au passé et oublie le présent.
Champfleury

In his early novel *Paris au XX^e^ siècle*, soon-to-be-famous Jules Verne imagined urban life as it might be a century later.[1] Conceived in 1863, his futuristic city is a dystopia driven by money-making, technological progress and mechanical efficiency. What cultural production remains bears the imprint of an exclusively industrial age. Verne's protagonist, Michel Dufrénoy, is an aspiring poet (resolutely in the antiquated mould) and embattled reader of literary classics: thanks to him, the text is littered with references to historical figures, from Rabelais and Montaigne to Balzac and Victor Hugo. Like them, Michel is patently a remnant of an earlier age. In a brief episode towards the middle of the novel, Michel spends an evening with two similarly anachronistic figures: Jacques, who harbours military ambitions of an ancient, chivalric bent; and Quinsonnas, a frustrated composer, who expounds on the problems of modern music. Today's harmony, the latter says, may be difficult to understand but can be produced all too easily. Simply sitting on the piano keyboard will result in 'a perfect chord for our times':

> nous en sommes arrivés là par la force des choses; au siècle dernier, un certain Richard Wagner, une sorte de messie qu'on n'a pas assez crucifié, fonda la musique de l'avenir, et nous la subissons.[2]

[1] Jules Verne, *Paris au XX^e^ siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1994).
[2] Verne, *Paris au XX^e^ siècle*, 84; translation adapted from Jules Verne, *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Richard Howarth (New York: Random House, 1996), 87.

> we've reached this point by the force of events; in the last century, one Richard Wagner, a sort of messiah who has been insufficiently crucified, invented the music of the future, and we're enduring it.

Wagner's appearance stages a brief encounter between Verne's imagined future and the reality – now rendered historical – of his present day. We might read this collision of fact and fiction, past and future, in two different ways. In a literal sense, the persistence of the 'music of the future' functions naively as proof of the novel's futurity. Wagner's compositional soothsaying of a century earlier has, we understand, come all too true, taking its place alongside the skyscrapers, high-speed global communication and fast food of Verne's future. On the other hand, though, the sitting-on-the-piano joke might well have been familiar to Verne's opera-going contemporaries, returning his time-travelling readers directly to their own Parisian present. A similar gag was reported almost verbatim, for instance, by Pauline Viardot's daughter, for whose benefit Rossini – ever *méchant* in his public treatment of Wagner – apparently illustrated the younger man's music by gracing the keyboard with his own, famously ample nether regions.[3]

As it turned out, Verne's readership had no opportunity to recognise such echoes: *Paris au XX^e siècle* remained unpublished during its author's lifetime and was only rediscovered in the late twentieth century.[4] The novel's only readers have thus been located in the future of its future, a time in which Verne's present is a distant past. This means that reading it now can be an unsettling experience – one whose uncanniness derives both from its unexpected

[3] Louise Héritte-Viardot's memories of Rossini are cited in Mina Curtiss, 'Bizet, Offenbach and Rossini', *Musical Quarterly*, 40/3 (July 1954), 356.
[4] *Paris au XX^e siècle* was Verne's second novel, written shortly after his debut with *Cinq semaines en ballon* (Paris: Hetzel, 1863). The manuscript was discovered in 1994 in one of cultural history's proverbial attics – according to Verne scholar Timothy Unwin, 'in an old safe believed to be empty'; Unwin, *Jules Verne: Journeys in Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 33.

resonances with our own present and, more significant in this context, from the continued presence of a distinctly non-fictional past. Yet that non-fictional past is bound up not only in Wagner (and the other historical figures who inhabit Verne's text) but in the very concept of 'la musique de l'avenir' – the music of the future – on which the scene pivots. In the early-1860s Paris in which Verne was working, the phrase enjoyed high-profile exposure across a broad cross-section of the press, almost invariably in connection with Richard Wagner. Treated with varying degrees of earnestness and humour, the notion was both welcomed and abhorred; its discourse reinforced partisan lines among critics and generated, in due course, its own historiographical category: the *Wagnérisme* now so fundamental to accounts of later nineteenth-century French music.[5]

In this article, I am principally concerned with Parisian discourse about the composer in early 1860: more than a year before the first generally recognised stopping point in the progress of French Wagnerism – the 'Paris' *Tannhäuser* and its 'débâcle' – and at a time when the majority of Parisian critics could not claim first-hand experience of a staged Wagner opera. More specifically, I am interested in the concept of 'la musique de l'avenir' as it was used and understood by these critics. The composer himself famously disliked the phrase and made repeated attempts – in French – to distance himself from it, attributing its invention to a 'M. Bischoff, professeur à Cologne'. My aim, then, is not only to emphasise the importance of the concept in 1860s Paris, but also to stress the fact that it needs to be understood quite apart from the writings of its

[5] The classic recent account of Wagnerian influence in later-nineteenth-century French music is Steven Heubner's *French Opera at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For a collection of essays with a somewhat broader thematic remit, see Annegret Fauser and Manuela Schwartz, eds., *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme: Musik, Literatur, Kunst, Politik* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1999).

supposed inventor.[6] My focus, to put this another way, is on the complex, multiple meanings of 'la musique de l'avenir' at a moment when the concept could be taken literally – referring to music not yet experienced, perhaps even out of reach of the present – but at the same time, in its manifestation as Wagner's music, could be heard right there in the auditorium. Finally, and above all, this article is concerned with listening: it explores how this much-discussed 'music of the future', which emerged from such blurred temporal and epistemological categories, was imagined to sound in Paris in 1860.

Prehistories

Verne's usage notwithstanding, even in early 1860s Paris 'la musique de l'avenir' was already a concept with a history. As Herbert Schneider has shown, the phrase had been in use at least since the 1840s and initially had no Wagnerian associations. The earliest appearance of its German equivalent – 'die Musik der Zukunft' – seems to be from Schumann, writing in 1841 about Berlioz and Chopin.[7] Other German critics followed in the later 1840s, with Berlioz again their subject. In French, 'l'art de l'avenir' had first been used in 1833 by the critic Joseph d'Ortigue, whose forays into cultural futurology were encouraged by the Neo-Catholic movement with which he was involved and which would

[6] See Wagner, 'À M. Berlioz', *Journal des débats* (22 February 1860). He similarly closed his 1860 'Lettre sur la musique' with the claim that the intention behind his innovations was 'anything but the tendency to be governed by absolute musical considerations of which people have taken upon themselves to accuse me with their "Music of the Future"'; see Wagner, 'Music of the Future', in *Three Wagner Essays*, trans. Robert L. Jacobs (London: Eulenberg, 1979), 44. Significantly, the essay was published first in French as the preface to the first translations of four of his dramas, *Quatre poèmes d'opéras traduits en prose française, précédes d'une Lettre sur la musique [à Frédéric Villot, Paris, 15 septembre 1860] par Richard Wagner. Le Vaisseau fantôme, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Tristan et Iseult* (Paris: A. Bourdillat, 1861); only later did it appear in German, retitled 'Zukunftsmusik'.

[7] Schneider's unearthing of the various permutations of 'la musique de l'avenir' as the notion appeared in mid-nineteenth-century French and German music criticism is summarised in his 'Wagner, Berlioz, und die Zukunftsmusik', in Detlef Altenburg, ed., *Liszt und die neudeutsche Schule* (Laaber: Laaber, 2006), 80-81. See also Christa Jost and Peter Jost, '*Zukunftsmusik*: Zur Geschichte eines Begriffs', *Musiktheorie*, 10 (1995), 119-35.

later merge with the Saint-Simonians.[8] As discussed in detail by Ralph Locke, music was accorded considerable importance in Saint-Simonian thought: musicians were to join other artistic geniuses in leading the way to the future and, more specifically, were to play a central role in the new religious ceremonies on arrival.[9] Nonetheless, despite the association of many prominent French musical figures with the movement and the high-ranking status of music in its future-orientated doctrine, the first iterations of the precise phrase 'musique de l'avenir' did not appear in the French press until the end of the 1840s.

Schneider identifies an 'anonymous' 1849 article in *La France Musicale*, 'L'Avenir de la musique et la musique de l'avenir', as the term's first outing – a claim which is incorrect on two counts.[10] The article contrasts the current state of music in France with a future in which its social and industrial applications will be greatly expanded, with the art once again – as for the Saint-Simonians – in the vanguard of social reform. Similarly redolent of Saint-Simonian thought is the article's emphasis – clear from its title, in which 'L'Avenir de la musique' is printed much larger than 'et la musique de l'avenir' – on potential developments in music's status rather than on what form that music might take. However, these are not (as Schneider suggests) the comments of an anonymous music critic: the article is clearly signed by Wladimir Gagneur, a Fourierist writer, agricultural

[8] D'Ortigue was one of the founding editors (and music critic) of *L'Avenir*, the short-lived messianic newspaper founded in 1830 as the main organ of the Neo-Catholic movement. For an alternative account of the pre-Wagnerian history of the concept 'la musique de l'avenir', which focuses more on the term's political usage and subtext in 1830s and 1840s France than Schneider's broader excavation, see Matthias Brzoska, 'Richard Wagners französische Wurzeln ossia Warum Wagner kein Zukunftsmusiker sein wollte', in Fauser and Schwartz, eds., *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme*, 39-49.

[9] Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians, and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), especially 15-63. Locke (60) notes the lack of prescriptive detail provided by Saint-Simonians as to the form of 'the hymn of the future'.

[10] See Schneider, 'Wagner, Berlioz und die Zukunftsmusik', 80.

reformer and politician.[11] Small surprise, given its author's interests, that the piece has a strong utopian subtext.

More broadly significant, though, is the fact that the phrase 'musique de l'avenir' was undoubtedly in use at least a year earlier than Schneider suggests, spreading during and in the immediate wake of the revolutionary events of 1848, as Matthias Brzoska has observed.[12] The earliest usage I have been able to locate appears in an open letter – in French – to the editor of *The Musical World* in July 1848 by Hector Berlioz, a figure himself identified elsewhere as a musician of the future. Written immediately after his return to Paris after a six-month visit to London, Berlioz congratulates the city's musical public and performers on their taste and intelligence, thanks the press for its support and expresses his relief in discovering in London (if not, he implies, in France) the artistic conditions necessary for the 'entire development of the music of the future'.[13] What is clear from Berlioz's letter as from Gagneur's article of the following year is that 'la musique de l'avenir' signifies music *in* the future rather than 'of' it: something still undecided rather than already available in the present.

Such general, literal applications of the phrase seem largely to have disappeared following the publication in late 1849 of Wagner's *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. This essay (or at least its title) gradually gained music-critical currency in France as elsewhere, the musical future thereafter being associated above all with its iconoclastic author.[14] This was not an instant development:

---

[11] W. Gagneur, 'L'Avenir de la musique et la musique de l'avenir', *La France musicale* (27 May 1849), 1-3. Gagneur (1807-1889) spent most of the Second Empire in exile in Belgium as a result of his central role in opposition to Napoleon III's 1851 coup d'État in the Jura region; in 1869 he returned to France and was elected *député* of the Jura, a post which he occupied until his death.
[12] Brzoska, 'Richard Wagners französische Wurzeln', 42.
[13] 'l'entière développement de la musique de l'avenir'; *The Musical World* (8 July 1848), 1.
[14] Writing in 1861, the avid Wagnerian Champfleury (the pen-name of Jules Fleury-Husson) took his cue from the composer in crediting a Cologne-based journalist, Ludwig Bischoff ('une sorte de Fétis allemand') with having derived the phrase from the title of the Wagner's essay; *Grandes*

other composers – most often Berlioz and Liszt – remained significant to Parisian notions of 'la musique de l'avenir' during the 1850s; indeed, Berlioz further encouraged a personal connection by publishing his *Euphonia ou la ville musicale* as a 'nouvelle de l'avenir' in 1852.[15] But as the notoriety of Wagner's Zürich writings continued to spread as the decade progressed, these other 'musicians of the future' increasingly played cameo roles, eclipsed by the composer understood by many to be proclaiming himself nothing less than a 'Prophète sonore'.[16]

Crucial to the establishment of Wagner as the paragon of Parisian musical futurism was a series of long articles devoted to him by the distinguished critic François-Joseph Fétis. These appeared in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* in the summer of 1852.[17] Fétis's aim, as stated in his third article, was to chart the direction Wagner was taking 'as a man and as an innovator'.[18] He rooted his quest in an exposition and discussion of Wagner's recently published theories – albeit, as Katharine Ellis has observed, deriving his summary and interpretation of those theories largely from his 1851 publications *Eine Mitteilung an meine*

---

figures d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: Balzac, Gérard de Nerval, Wagner, Courbet (Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1861), 129.

[15] Berlioz's novella was initially serialised in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* in 1844 before being included in his *Soirées de l'orchestre* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1852) as the twenty-fifth and final evening. For more on *Euphonia* and a Berliozian music of the future, see Inge van Rij, 'Back to (the Music of) the Future: Aesthetics of Technology in Berlioz's *Euphonia* and *Damnation de Faust*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 22/3 (November 2010), 257-300; and Katherine Kolb, 'Plots and Politics: Berlioz's Tales of Sound and Fury', in Peter Bloom, ed., *Berlioz: Past, Present, Future* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 76-89 (especially 79-80).

[16] Paul Bernard, 'Théâtre Impérial Italien: Richard Wagner et La musique de l'avenir', *Le Ménestrel* (29 January 1860), 66.

[17] Some sense of the breadth of Fétis's remit may be gleaned from his full title: 'Richard Wagner. Sa vie. – Son système de rénovation de l'opéra. – Ses œuvres comme poëte et comme musicien. – Son parti en Allemagne. – Appréciation de la valeur de ses idées.' The articles, each around three full pages in length, were published in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* on 6, 13, 20, 27 June, 11 and 25 July and 8 August 1852. With one exception they appeared on the *Revue*'s front page: the penultimate instalment of the series (25 July) lost top billing to Henri Blanchard's review of Aimé Maillart's *La Croix de Marie*, which premiered at the Opéra-Comique on 19 July 1852.

[18] 'comme homme et comme novateur'; Fétis, *Revue et Gazette musicale* (20 June 1852), 1.

Freunde and *Oper und Drama*.[19] According to Fétis, Wagner's errors were legion. Presenting the composer above all as a revolutionary pretender, fixated on the future since he was spurned by the present, Fétis objected to the very idea of musical progress – regardless of whether Wagner specifically was up to the task. Positioning himself as an historian vis-à-vis Wagner's wrongheaded musical rebel, Fétis asserted that 'ideal beauty does not age [...] only material beauty fades in the hands of time'.[20] Indeed, for Fétis, Wagner's musical future was both materialist and destructive – a sacrilegious threat to the relics of the past.[21] In his final article, he concluded

> au risque de ne pouvoir reconstruire, il fallait que d'abord il démolit; enfin, l'espoir bien ou mal fondé de la création de l'art de l'avenir ne pouvait se réaliser, si préalablement le créateur en expectative ne faisait disparaître l'art du présent.[22]
>
> running the risk of being unable to rebuild, he [Wagner] first had to demolish; in short, the hope of creating the art of the future – whether in good or bad faith – could not be carried out if the creator-in-waiting had not beforehand done away with the art of the present.

By no means all mid-century Parisian critics shared Fétis's cultural politics – attitudes that, suffused as they were with the philosophies of Auguste Comte and Victor Cousin, produced his delineation of a Wagner *matérialiste*.[23] His 1852 articles nevertheless set the tone of much subsequent French commentary and – given the continued absence of French translations of the composer's writings –

---

[19] See Ellis, 'Wagnerism and Anti-Wagnerism in the Paris Periodical Press, 1852-1870', in Fauser and Schwartz, eds., *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme*, 51-83.
[20] 'le beau idéal ne vieillit pas[...] la beauté matérielle seule disparaît sous la main du temps'; Fétis, 'Richard Wagner (troisième article)', *Revue et Gazette musicale* (20 June 1852), 203.
[21] As Ellis has discussed, Fétis found Wagner's theories dangerously systematic (a 'système' rather than the milder 'procédé'); this enabled him to make the 'wild gesture of dubbing Wagner a Comtian positivist'; see Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: 'La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris', 1834-80* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 208.
[22] Fétis, 'Richard Wagner (septième et dernier article)', *Revue et Gazette musicale* (8 August 1852), 257.
[23] For more on the relationship between Fétis's conception of musical ontology and broader currents in nineteenth-century philosophy and intellectual history, see Rosalie Schellhous, 'Fétis's "Tonality" as a Metaphysical Principle: Hypothesis for a New Science', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 13/2 (Autumn, 1991), 219-40; especially 221-3 and Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 33-45.

did much to popularise the notion of Wagner as self-appointed gatekeeper of the musical future. Indeed, what must constantly be borne in mind is that the majority of mid-century Parisian critics discussing Wagner's ideas had little or no personal experience of his writings. As Louis Lacombe complained in 1860:

> On connaît vaguement en France les doctrines de Richard Wagner. A la vérité, il est assez difficile de s'en rendre compte sans avoir lu ses livres. Mais bien de gens ne jugent pas ce préambule nécessaire, et ils tapent d'abord, quitte à raisonner après.[24]
>
> In France we're only vaguely familiar with Richard Wagner's doctrines. The truth is, it's quite difficult to get to grips with them without having read his books. But plenty of people don't consider this preamble necessary, and they strike first, even if they have to think later.

Lacombe's comment usefully draws attention to a strange dynamic that emerged between Wagner and his Parisian public in this context of theories so often discussed but so little known. To sum up: the notion of the 'music of the future' evidently exercised considerable imaginative sway over the city's listeners and critics at mid-century; but it did so at least in part because it was liberated from the hermeneutic constraints and demands occasioned by detailed acquaintance. As Gillian Beer has observed in dealing with another osmotically absorbed nineteenth-century discourse (that of evolutionary theory), 'Ideas pass more quickly into the state of assumptions when they are unread'.[25]

At least as significant in the present context, however, is that Wagner was not only unread but unheard: discourse about his 'musique de l'avenir' continued to accumulate alarmingly in 1850s Paris, but it did so almost entirely without

[24] Louis Lacombe, *Revue germanique*, 9 (31 January 1860), 437. As its name suggests, the *Revue germanique* was a journal largely supportive of Wagner as of German culture more generally, in France and across the Rhine.

[25] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4. It is interesting that, alongside the more obviously dated understanding of biology that enabled him to cast dramatic poetry as the 'fertilising seed' ('befruchtenden Samen') of musical drama, Wagner himself also made use of various popular elements of evolutionary theory, particularly in his conceptualisation of the ideal relationship between poetry and music; see Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 147-51.

musical accompaniment. The only high-profile Wagner performances in the city before 1860 were: his 1835 overture *Christophe Colomb* at a concert hosted by the *Gazette musicale* on 4 February 1841; a single airing of the *Tannhäuser* overture by the Société Sainte-Cécile on 24 November 1850; and another of the same piece by Le Concert de Paris at the Hôtel Osmond in February 1858.[26] Small surprise that musical discussion was largely absent from Fétis's study, or that it was from those that followed. In this near-absence of Wagnerian experience – whether of his music or his theoretical writings – the composer's notoriety in mid-century Paris necessarily rested on a few oft-repeated catchphrases, of which the 'music of the future' was easily the most widespread. Some critics showed considerable sensitivity to their reliance on the slogan. Lacombe, once again pragmatic, asked explicitly whether, 'Without the *music of the future*, would Wagner's reputation have grown so rapidly here?'[27] As Lacombe's question implies, the term's importance in musical discourse in mid-century Paris is unequivocal. But what is particularly significant about it in the context of this article is not that it functioned as a heuristic device or even as a promotional tool. Rather it is that the phrase – present in virtually all writing on the composer, generating its own lexical field and hermeneutic debates – was raised to the power of an epistemological concept; that 'la musique de l'avenir' itself constituted the central object of Wagnerian debate in mid-century Paris.

[26] For a brief account of pre-1860 performances of Wagner's music in Paris, see Gerald D. Turbow, 'Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France', in David C. Large and William Weber, eds., *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 136-8. The 1858 performance of the *Tannhäuser* overture is omitted by Turbow but mentioned in Georges Servières' sprawling late nineteenth-century study of Wagner's reception in France, *Richard Wagner jugé en France* (Paris: Librairie illustrée, 1887), 35.

[27] 'Sans *musique de l'avenir*, la réputation de Wagner aurait-elle si promptement grandi parmi nous?'; *Revue germanique*, 9 (31 January 1860), 443.

This is not to say that, in the years before public performances of Wagner's works gained momentum in Paris, reports of the divided reception of his works did not reach the French capital from elsewhere. But such arm's-length reportage seems largely to have bolstered, rather than dismantled, the critical edifice accumulating around 'the music of the future'. In February 1858, for instance, Gustave Chadeuil used his regular musical *feuilleton* in *Le Siècle* to offer an analysis of Wagner's current status in Germany:

> en Allemagne, M. Wagner a ses fanatiques et ses détracteurs. Ses fanatiques prétendent que sa musique est une révélation de l'avenir. [...] M. Wagner est arrivé, nouveau Colomb, qui, lui, a découvert d'emblée un nouveau monde.
>
> Ses détracteurs, non moins passionnés, affirment qu'il est au contraire le compositeur du passé, refaisant ce qui a été fait, découvrant ce qui était découvert, marchant à reculons comme l'écrevisse.[28]

> in Germany, Wagner has his fanatics and his detractors. His fanatics claim that his music is a revelation of the future. [...] Wagner has appeared, a new Columbus who has himself discovered at first hand a new world.
>
> His detractors, no less impassioned, maintain that he is on the contrary the composer of the past, redoing what has been done, discovering what has been discovered, walking backwards like a crab.

Juxtaposing the twin claims of prophetic revelation and reinvention of the wheel, Chadeuil's rhetoric is that of the disinterested correspondent relaying news from elsewhere. His figurative language, though, is that of Verne's science fiction: of voyages of discovery and time travel in either direction. Wagner emerges as a fantastical, anthropomorphised figure – as much a fictional hero or villain as a flesh-and-blood nineteenth-century composer. Just as significant, if less immediately striking, is the particular alignment of praise and criticism. Wagner's supporters, according to Chadeuil, express their approbation by locating the composer quite literally ahead of his time: so progressive are his ideas that his music brings the future into the present. Those who criticise Wagner, on the other hand, do so by insisting on his roots in the past, on his

[28] Gustave Chadeuil, *Le Siècle* (19 February 1858), 2.

retreading of old ground: by recasting his 'progress' as movement in the wrong direction.[29]

Such an unquestioned elision of future-good vs. past-bad is underpinned by what we might call a 'revolutionary' conceptualisation of time: an altered configuration of the relationship between the past and the future, which Reinhard Koselleck, the pre-eminent theorist of historical time, has identified as gradually emergent during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before being given new force by the French Revolution. This modified understanding of temporal categories was reliant on the increasing intellectual and cultural weight accorded to 'history' –comprising a past now quite distinct from the present – but nonetheless looked to the potential for change held by an unknowable posterity. To use Koselleck's words: 'Progress opened up a future that transcended the hitherto predictable, natural space of time and experience, and thence – propelled by its own dynamic – provoked new, transnatural, long-term, prognoses'.[30] It was in precisely this context of the much-vaunted social and technological 'progress' proclaimed by the Second Empire regime, and of the apparent acceleration of French society towards a future endlessly subject to prophecy but as unpredictable as ever, that 'la musique de l'avenir' first came to such prominence. Yet its utopian – even futuristic – shades also drew on a further, specifically French corollary of the epistemological shift identified by Koselleck: one by which the term 'avenir' itself gained a new sense around 1800, one that

[29] In his article on Wagner's relationship to 'la musique de l'avenir', Brzoska briefly outlines the tendency – demonstrated by Chadeuil but shared by other mid-century Parisian critics – to consider the composer in terms not only of the musical future but also of the past; see 'Richard Wagners französische Wurzeln', 47. This tendency will become increasingly central to my project here; and, although Brzoska's summary is helpful, I question his dismissal of this tension between past and future contexts as mere word-play. As I will argue, more was at stake than rhetorical niceties.

[30] Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 22.

became widespread in subsequent decades. The word had long incorporated the idea of 'posterity' alongside its literal meaning of 'future'; from the start of the nineteenth century, however, *avenir* gained the connotation of 'prosperity' and 'future success', and a person began to be spoken of as having (or lacking) a future, according to their predicted chances of achievement. The future thus gained an explicitly positive valence: one which evidently underpins Chadeuil's description of Wagner's critical reception in Germany – and which would continue to inform Parisian reactions to the composer and his music as he strove for local success.

A German in Paris

In September 1859 the pseudo-messiah of so much critical hearsay arrived in the French capital, moved into temporary (and unsustainably deluxe) accommodation on the rue Matignon and set about cultivating sources of institutional leverage.[31] Twenty years after his first, famously frustrated sojourn in the city from 1838 to 1840, Wagner was once more determined to bring about stagings of his operas. This time, as is well known, his exertions would result in the three riotous (not to mention reputation-sealing) performances of *Tannhäuser* at the Opéra. Indeed, and as mentioned earlier, the 'Paris *Tannhäuser*' has been raised to canonic status in the annals of operatic history, positioned as the foundational moment of late nineteenth-century French *Wagnérisme*.[32] It is of

[31] In late October 1859, Wagner moved to what he evidently hoped would be more permanent accommodation on rue Newton: less sumptuous than his house on rue Matignon and thus requiring considerable expenditure on decoration and restoration. In one of the many financial crises to befall the composer during this trip, he later discovered that the house was due to be demolished as part of Haussmann's works; see Martin Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner: sein Leben, sein Werk, sein Jahrhundert* (Munich: R. Piper, 1980), 455.

[32] One influential, near-contemporary source for the historiographical overemphasis on *Tannhäuser*'s Paris premiere was Charles Baudelaire's long, ecstatic article 'Richard Wagner et *Tannhäuser* à Paris', first published in the *Revue européenne* (1 April 1861). For three important

course true that the 1861 Imperial-command production was highly significant in providing the city's self-consciously modern operatic public with its first staged experience of Wagner's music and – thanks to the Jockey Club's interventions – in giving further exposure to his artistic theories. Yet, as should now be clear, much Wagnerian groundwork had been laid during the previous decade. Indeed, the terms of the debate following *Tannhäuser*'s local premiere had already been established by the time Wagner arrived in 1859. What is more, this Opéra-concentrated view obscures an important event that gave that discourse its first musical focus. This was a series of Wagner performances that took place more than a year before *Tannhäuser*. Early in 1860 the composer conducted three concerts of his music in the Salle Ventadour of the Théâtre Italien. Intended to drum up support for his main goal of a staged premiere, these events have not attracted anything like the scholarly attention accorded the Paris *Tannhäuser*.[33]

The concerts took place on successive Wednesday evenings – 25 January, 1 and 8 February – with the same programme repeated on each occasion (see Figure 1).[34] It was for the most part a predictable selection of extracts from Wagner's principal works then performable: *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, of which the last was generally reported as the

studies of the 'Paris *Tannhäuser*' itself, focused respectively on Wagner's alterations to the score, its press reception, and its relationship to the contemporary trend for revivals of old operatic works, see Annegret Fauser, '*Cette musique sans tradition*: Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and its French Critics', in Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 228-55; Carolyn Abbate, 'The Parisian "Vénus" and the "Paris" *Tannhäuser*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 36/1 (Spring 1983), 73-123; William Gibbons, 'Music of the Future, Music of the Past: *Tannhäuser* and *Alceste* at the Paris Opéra', *19th-Century Music*, 33/3 (2010), 232-46.

[33] Wagner's skills as a self-publicist were, of course, formidable; see Nicholas Vazsonyi, *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Neither the sprawling Wagner literature nor the large number of writings dedicated to his Paris reception offer detailed discussions of the 1860 concerts. The most useful discussions *en passant* appear in Turbow, 'Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France', 140-45; and Katherine Kolb, 'Flying Leaves: Between Berlioz and Wagner', *19th-Century Music*, 33/1 (Summer 2009), 25-61; especially 36-43.

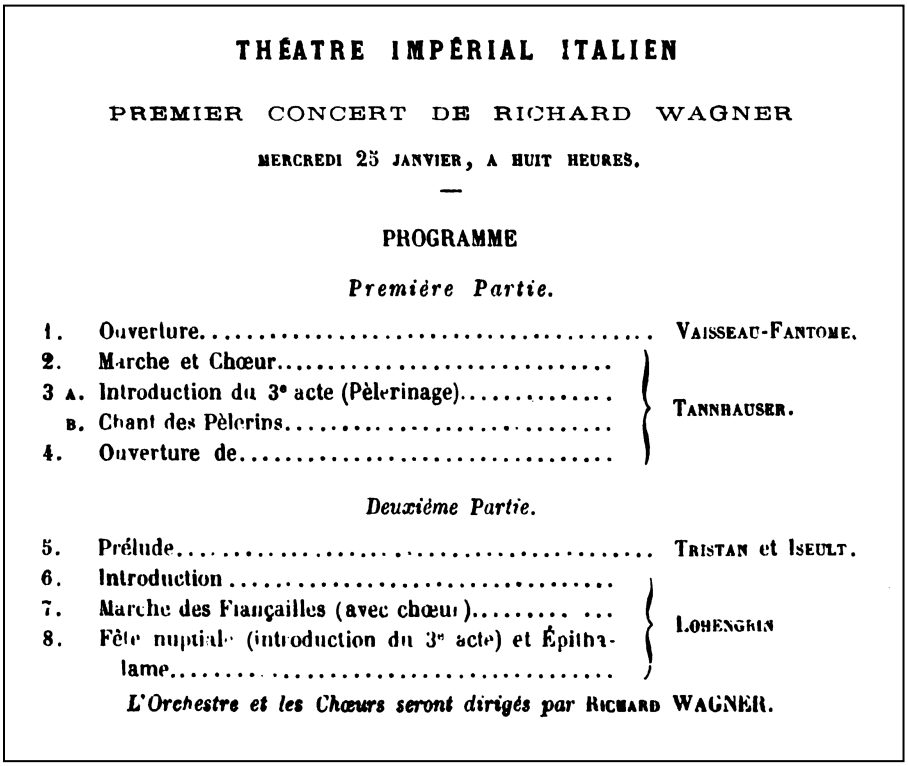
[34] In the second and third concerts the 'Song to the Evening Star' from *Tannhäuser*, sung by baritone Jules Lefort, was added at the end of the first half.

most obvious manifestation of Wagner's theories and thus (for better or worse) the most explicit example of the 'music of the future'. In each case the extracts were those most easily isolated from their theatrical context and enjoying a secondary existence in concert or sheet music arrangements for domestic consumption.[35] The exception was the prelude to *Tristan*, an opera only recently finished, whose premiere remained five years away. Writing to Mathilde Wesendonck, Wagner himself couched his account of the *Tristan* prelude's earliest Parisian rehearsal in futuristic (not to mention biblical) terms: hearing the new work for the first time had allowed him to see 'how immeasurably far I have travelled from the world during the last 8 years. This short Prelude was so incomprehensibly new to the musicians that I had to guide my people through the piece note by note, as if to discover precious stones in a mine'.[36] It is hardly surprising that not even Wagner's personal guidance was enough to counter the view of the prelude as incomprehensible, which was widespread among his supporters as well as pronounced emphatically by his critics. No less predictable is the fact that the extracts from *Tannhäuser* – by far the most internationally popular work of those performed, and the one with which Parisians were most likely to be already familiar – received the most favourable reception. Yet even the accessibility of those excerpts was on occasion turned against Wagner. Like the German detractors earlier reported by Chadeuil, some Parisian critics

[35] John Deathridge has noted the irony of the massive commercial success of an album of set pieces from *Lohengrin* (compiled by Wagner himself in 1854), given that the opera was the first that the composer wrote from beginning to end (prelude excepted) 'without regard for a conventional sequence of operatic "numbers"'; *Wagner Beyond Good and Evil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 43.

[36] Letter from Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck (28 January 1860); Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington, eds. and trans., *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), 484.

took the opportunity to complain that Wagner's musical future borrowed generously from older (often French) models; as Paul Bernard asked of the *Tannhäuser* march, 'is this really the music of the future? [...] I found [...] all the allure of our poor music of the present'.[37] In *L'Univers musical*, meanwhile, a satirical missive from beyond the grave penned by one Ludwig van Beethoven went further still, informing Wagner that 'your Music of the Future is entirely that of the present and even a little of the past'.[38] For some in Paris in 1860, Wagner's works were no more acceptable when they resembled existing music than when they were judged unintelligibly innovative.



THÉATRE IMPÉRIAL ITALIEN

PREMIER CONCERT DE RICHARD WAGNER

MERCREDI 25 JANVIER, A HUIT HEURES.

—

PROGRAMME

Première Partie.

1. Ouverture..... VAISSEAU-FANTOME.
2. Marche et Chœur.....
3 A. Introduction du 3e acte (Pèlerinage)..... } TANNHAUSER.
B. Chant des Pèlerins.....
4. Ouverture de.....

Deuxième Partie.

5. Prélude..... TRISTAN et ISEULT.
6. Introduction.....
7. Marche des Fiançailles (avec chœur)..... ... } LOHENGRIN
8. Fête nuptiale (introduction du 3e acte) et Épithalame.....

L'Orchestre et les Chœurs seront dirigés par RICHARD WAGNER.

Figure 5: Programme of Wagner's first Paris concert, 25 January 1860; reproduced from Auguste de Gasperini, *Richard Wagner* (Paris: Heugel, 1865), 55.

[37] 'est-ce bien là la musique de l'avenir? Pour ma part j'ai trouvé dans ce morceau toutes les allures de notre pauvre musique d'aujourd'hui'; Paul Bernard, *Le Ménestrel* (29 January 1860).
[38] 'il [Beethoven's informer: a Théâtre Italien subscriber who died after attending Wagner's first concert] ajoute que votre *Musique de l'Avenir* est tout à fait du présent et même un peu du passé'; A. Elwart, *L'Univers musical* (5 February 1860).

In financial terms the concerts were an unequivocal disaster, making a loss of over 10,000 francs according to one report.[39] Minna Wagner's own breakdown of their associated costs listed 8000 francs for the rent of the Théâtre Italien (not including staffing or lighting); the same sum for the orchestra's salaries; 3000 francs for the chorus; plus advertising costs and rental of the Salle Herz for rehearsals.[40] Pecuniary failings aside, however, the concerts could hardly have been bettered as publicity material, particularly given the attendance of many of the city's musical luminaries, including Auber, Meyerbeer, Berlioz and Gounod.[41] What is more, and despite the fact that the press had not been issued with official invitations, almost all of Paris's high-profile critics contributed lengthy responses;[42] the most famous was Berlioz's passionate intervention in the *Journal des débats* – which Wagner considered sufficiently damning (and prominent) to merit a published response.[43] Indeed, given that these were emphatically concerts of orchestral excerpts rather than a front-page-worthy stage premiere, their contemporary critical reception was unusually extensive. The first concert was understood by many – whether pro or contra Wagner – to mark the final arrival of 'la musique de l'avenir'. Writing in *Le Ménestrel*, Paul Bernard called the event 'ce 93 musical' – he meant 1793 –

[39] See Servières, *Richard Wagner jugé en France*, 65.
[40] Letter from Minna Wagner to Emma Herwegh (n.d.); cited in Ernest Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner, Vol. III: 1859-1866* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1941), 29. Newman estimated the total deficit as 'in the neighbourhood of 11,000 francs'.
[41] According to Curt von Westernhagen, 'The court was represented by Marshal Magnan, the Académie by Auber. Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Gounod, Reyer, the Belgian composer Gevaert were all to be seen in the front few rows'; Westernhagen, *Wagner: A Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 273. The same list appears almost verbatim in Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner, Vol. III*, 6.
[42] The one major exception was Paul de Saint-Victor, the distinguished music critic for *La Presse*, whom Servières names as 'l'un des plus hostiles au *Tannhäuser* en 1861, [qui] ne daigna pas dire un mot des concerts de Wagner'; *Richard Wagner jugé en France*, 49.
[43] See 'À M. Berlioz', *Journal des débats* (22 February 1860). The British Wagnerian Francis Hueffer described the press reception of these concerts (with characteristically shameless bias) as 'a violent paper war between the daily press and a few writers who discovered the genius of the German master through the cloud of national and artistic prejudice'; Hueffer, *Richard Wagner and the Music of the Future* (1881; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 70-1.

claiming that 'only the tower of Babel or meetings of the Convention nationale can give a vague idea of the feverish excitement that reigned in the auditorium, even before the first note'.[44] Such hype was symptomatic of the intensification of Wagnerian discourse in early 1860, as established opinions and battle lines were adjusted or strengthened to accommodate actual musical experience. Insofar as the verdict of individual contributions can be neatly summarised, the majority weighed in against Wagner. Indeed, as Ellis has made clear, the majority of established French periodicals (not to mention of high-profile critics – Fétis above all) were anti-Wagnerian during the 1860s; the composer's supporters, on the other hand, largely published in less prestigious, less long-lasting or simply less specialist venues.[45] Those writing in Wagner's favour nonetheless tended to do so with considerable enthusiasm. In short, rhetorical extravagance quickly emerged as the critical stance *à la mode* on both sides of the divide.

Exaggeration and caricature proved particularly valuable to those in the anti-Wagner camp. *Le Constitutionnel*'s P.-A. Fiorentino, for instance, described the music as 'a series of piercing chords, of high-pitched whistling, of the screeching of enraged brass', adding, in case anyone missed the point: 'If the author wanted to depict a storm, he has at least conveyed its most horrible effect: it makes one seasick'.[46] Yet on the other side, wild hyperbole also had its uses: newly ardent Wagnerian Champfleury was eager to revise his past misapprehensions, having now heard Wagner's music for himself. He had

[44] 'Je ne connais que la tour de Babel ou les séances de la Convention nationale qui puissent leur donner une faible idée de l'agitation fébrile qui régnait dans l'auditoire, même avant la première note'; Bernard, *Le Ménestrel* (29 January 1860), 65.
[45] See Ellis, 'Wagnerism and Anti-Wagnerism in the Paris Periodical Press', especially 51-3. The main exception to this wide scattering of Wagnerian sentiment was Adolphe Giacomelli's *La Presse théâtrale et musicale* (1854-92), which Ellis (68) describes as 'the only thoroughly Wagnerian music periodical of the 1860s'.
[46] 'C'est une série d'accords stridents, de sifflements aigus, de grincements de cuivres enragés'; 'Si l'auteur a voulu peindre une tempête, il en a, au moins, rendu l'effet le plus pénible: cela donne le mal de mer'; P.-A. Fiorentino, *Le Constitutionnel* (30 January 1860), 2.

previously been put off, he confessed, by claims that such works were characterised by

> Des orchestrations étranges, des accouplements bizarres d'instruments à timbres ennemis, des mélodies singulières rompues tout à coup comme par un méchant gnome, des armées formidables d'instrumentalistes et de choristes, des télégraphes portant le commandement du chef d'orchestre à d'autres sous-chefs dans d'autres salles.[47]
>
> Strange orchestration, bizarre couplings of instruments with conflicting timbres, peculiar melodies broken suddenly as if by an evil goblin, formidable armies of instrumentalists and choristers, [and] telegraphs carrying the orders of the conductor to other sub-conductors in other rooms.

Champfleury's description is revealing: the 'music of the future' outlined here belongs as much to Verne's fictional world as to anything deriving from Wagner's own theoretical writings. More specifically, Champfleury's (presumably tongue-in-cheek) sketch of supposedly futuristic performances so massive that telegraph relays were required seems indebted to Berlioz's *Euphonia*, above all to its vast orchestra and system of visual 'télégraphie' by which instructions are issued by the conductor.[48] The critic then quickly steps back from his caricature, assuring his readers that, while Wagner's music may well transport one to 'unknown worlds', the Théâtre Italien concert had left him 'unfatigued, happy and full of enthusiasm'.[49] Yet even in this positive, more

[47] Champfleury, *Richard Wagner* (Paris: Bourdilliat, 1860), 7.
[48] Berlioz gestures towards a communication system by which 'les directeurs des répétitions n'ont à faire qu'un simple signe avec une ou deux mains et le bâton conducteur, pour indiquer aux exécutants qu'il s'agit de faire entendre'; *Soirées de l'orchestre*, 324. The irony here is that when Champfleury revised the original text of his 1860 pamphlet for inclusion in his longer 1861 study, he appended a line to the end of his musical description: 'comme nous en avons pu voir dans certains concerts de M. Berlioz' (*Grandes figures d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, 116). For Champfleury, then, if for few others by the early 1860s, Berlioz represented an alternative route to a (dystopian) musical future, which could be compared to Wagner's reforms to the German's advantage. As van Rij has observed, however, Berlioz's futuristic visions in *Euphonia* and elsewhere function above all as exotic *couleur locale*: as a distraction from and comment on tendencies he disliked in his own time, as distinct from the literal futurism he claimed to detect in Wagner's music in 1860. Van Rij's gloss (*pace* Berlioz) that *Euphonia* and his review of Wagner's concerts actually share similar concerns is salient here but is, I would argue, more broadly applicable to the reception of the concerts as a whole. See van Rij, 'Back to (the Music of) the Future', 260-1 and 296.
[49] 'mondes inconnus'; 'sans fatigue, heureux et plein d'enthousiasme'; Champfleury, *Richard Wagner*, 12.

sincere verdict, the science-fiction rhetoric persists. It is as though, following the sudden shrinking of its temporal distance from the Parisian present, Wagner's musical future was refigured in spatial terms – relocated at a great geographical remove from its listeners.

What is more, such a mapping of the future as unknown territory ripe for exploration was a rhetorical device used by other Parisian critics, recalling Chadeuil's description of German Wagner supporters in 1858 envisioning the composer as a 'nouveau Colomb' – with the undertones of both individual heroism and world-changing discovery that such a comparison entailed. That the composer in his own writings refers to Christopher Columbus makes this new-world metaphor all the more intriguing. For Wagner, the Columbus of music was none other than Beethoven, described in *The Artwork of the Future* as 'the hero who explored the broad and seeming shoreless sea of absolute music to its very bounds'.[50] Revisiting the metaphor in *Opera and Drama*, however, Wagner expands on it to suggest that 'The error of Beethoven was that of Columbus, who merely meant to seek out a new way to the old known land of India, and discovered a new world instead'.[51] Beethoven's mistake, that is, was to continue writing instrumental music; but in his idiosyncratic exploration of its limits, he nevertheless revealed the new horizons to be traversed by Wagner himself. Striking here is the fact that, whether sketched by the German composer or by his French critics, this Beethoven-Columbus-Wagner convergence draws on the symbolic status of Columbus during the nineteenth century as a figure who came increasingly to encapsulate what has been called the '"warfare" model of

[50] Wagner, *The Artwork of the Future*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (1895; rpt. Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 115.
[51] Wagner, *Opera and Drama*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (1893; rpt. Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 70-71.

history', based on the collision of science and religion – or, by extension, of established doctrine and heretical new discoveries.[52] Columbus was seen to embody, in other words, an epistemological break of precisely the sort celebrated under the 'revolutionary' conception of time already mentioned. We might even see Columbus's Atlantic voyage as one imagined in the nineteenth century to reach across times as well as space, as a utopian journey into the future; to do so is clearly to reverse the terms of the Wagnerian new-world metaphor, in which the composer was understood by some Parisian critics to render his forays into the future in terms of topographical adventure.

As should by now be clear, the reception of Wagner's Paris concerts in 1860 produced a critical mêlée characterised above all by flamboyancy. Yet among those who subjected the musical world the performances presented (whether new or old) to more specialist scrutiny, certain shared preoccupations emerged. In particular, Wagner's distribution of programme notes detailing the plots of his operas led some to ponder the extent to which his music was supposed to depict (still unseen) staged events. In obvious continuity with Fétis's earlier description of Wagner as a materialist, the idea of the composer as realist became widespread: the specific accusation that the composer was the 'Courbet de la musique' attracted significant attention after the comparison was first made by Paul Scudo, one of the most aggressive of Wagner's Parisian detractors, in an article immediately following Fétis's series in 1852.[53] Taking Scudo's cue, many

[52] See, for instance, Jonathan Taylor, *Science and Omniscience in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2007), 71.

[53] The apparently double insult of linking Wagner with Courbet was publicised by Champfleury, who attributed the label (incorrectly) to Fétis and rushed to the defence of both composer and painter: 'Que pouvait être un Courbet en musique?' he asked, observing that 'Le grand peintre [...] est un artiste remarquable avant tout par la puissance de son pinceau'; he then went on to identify the accusation of 'réalisme', along with 'Musique de l'avenir', as an insult used of Wagner by 'des jaloux pour empêcher le développement du maître'; *Richard Wagner*, 4. Scudo's

mocked Wagner for trying to depict in music absurd narrative details, even material objects; the prominent anti-Wagnerian (and self-anointed expert on the New World) Oscar Comettant ridiculed Wagner for writing 'allegedly imitative music, which indeed imitated everything – with one thing excepted, however: music itself'.[54] The composer's *réalisme* was even seen to reach beyond the confines of his scores to encroach on their human performers. In the wake of the 1861 *Tannhäuser*, Comettant returned to the problem, now from the perspective of staged drama. He identified a two-step process in Wagner's music: by making impossibly exigent expressive demands on his (famously absolute) music, the composer required the hermeneutic assistance of his operatic characters; the characters were, by this means, reduced to ciphers. What is more,

> Vouloir réduire les personnages lyriques à l'état d'abstraction [...] et l'état de clarinette, de flûte ou de basson ambulants et parlants [...], c'est tout bonnement anéantir l'opéra au lieu de le régénérer, et faire passer les artistes à l'état de machines, ou si vous aimez mieux, de programmes vivants.[55]
>
> Wanting to reduce lyric characters to a state of abstraction [...] and to a state of walking, speaking clarinets, flutes or bassoons [...] is quite simply to destroy opera rather than regenerate it; it is to make the singers into machines or, if you will, living programme notes.

Comettant's description of musical imitation pushed to its furthest limits presents an alternative musical future altogether more sinister than the vistas unveiled elsewhere. Music that could portray anything and everything demanded that its performers become mere exegetical vessels; the threat of dehumanisation loomed.[56] Reading this diatribe in its broadest sense, we are returned to the

---

original comparison appears in 'Littérature musicale. Publications recentes en France, en Russie et en Allemagne', *Revue des deux mondes*, 6/15 (1 July 1852), 815-24; especially 821.

[54] 'une musique prétendue imitative, qui imitait tout en effet, une chose exceptée pourtant: la musique même'; Comettant, 'Richard Wagner: La musique de l'avenir et l'avenir de la musique', 43.

[55] Comettant, *Musique et musiciens*, 384.

[56] Note the striking similarities between Comettant's machine-like Wagnerian performers and Adorno's description of the relationship of singers and music in Wagner's music dramas, in which the stage is (wrongly) compelled to follow the orchestra: 'The infantile actions of the

notion of Wagner-as-destroyer, familiar from Fétis. But while in 1852 Fétis was principally concerned with Wagner's devaluation and desecration of the musical past, some critics in 1860 considered nothing less than the very stuff of music to be in peril.

Melody was thought particularly endangered if not wholly banished from his works; harmony was extended and forced almost beyond recognition.[57] For many, though, the entire compositional fabric was shot through with what the critic Léon Escudier called 'difformités musicales'.[58] There was little pleasure to be gained from listening to such mutant works; as Berlioz put it, in one of many laboured gestures towards balanced argument in his *feuilleton*:

> La musique, sans doute, n'a pas pour objet exclusif d'être agréable à l'oreille, mais elle a mille fois moins encore pour objet de lui être désagréable, de la torturer, de l'assassiner.[59]

---

singers – the opera often seems like a museum of long-forgotten gestures – are caused by their adaptation to the flow of the music. They resemble the music, but falsely; they become caricatures, because each set of gestures effectively mimics those of the conductor'; *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1981), 104.

[57] In addition to his pre-eminent position as a music critic, Fétis was also, of course, one of the great nineteenth-century music theorists. His theory of harmony – expounded most fully in his *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1844) – provides several interesting *points d'appui* in the context of the Parisian discussion of Wagner's supposed harmonic deformations. Fétis's conceptualisation of tonality saw its development in distinct phases, each more complex than the last: his treatise plots a progression from the 'ordre unitonique' (in non-modulatory plainchant) to the 'ordre transitonique' (in music ca. 1600, as basic modulation becomes possible) and the 'ordre pluritonique' (which he identifies, in Brian Hyer's words, as the 'culmination and perfection of *tonalité moderne*') before finally reaching a final 'ordre omnitonique' characterised by 'l'universalité des relations tonales de la mélodie, par la réunion de la simple transition à l'enharmonie simple, et à l'enharmonie transcendante des altérations d'intervalles des accords'; Hyer, 'Tonality', in Thomas Christensen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 748; Fétis, *Traité complet*, 184. What is particularly interesting about Fétis's putative evolution of tonality is his equivocation as to whether its final, omnitonic phase has already begun; and whether the arrival of that phase will mark the summation of the evolutionary process or its ultimate collapse. Indeed, as Schellhous observes, the fact that Fétis both describes the *omnitonique* as the state of fulfilment of tonality and also (particularly in terms of modulatory technique) as found in the music of his own time means that 'his teleology annihilates itself'; as in the temporal complications with which this article began, Fétis's projected future slides, perhaps unintentionally, into his own present: his prophecy contains its own undoing; see Schellhous, 'Fétis's "Tonality" as a Metaphysical Principle', 239. It should be noted, however, that for obvious historical reasons Wagner's music is not mentioned in the *Traité complet*; and neither Fétis nor any other critic I have come across refers directly to the *omnitonique* in their comments about Wagner in early 1860s Paris.

[58] Léon Escudier, *La France musicale* (29 January 1860).

[59] Hector Berlioz, *Journal des débats* (9 February 1860), 2.

> Music, without a doubt, does not have as its exclusive object to be pleasant to the ear; but a thousand times less is its object to be unpleasant, to torture it [the ear], to assassinate it.

For critics with a penchant for hyperbole, then, attending Wagner's concerts in 1860 threatened physical harm. Yet more pressing even than this were Wagner's effects on the long-term survival of music. The tidy chiasmus of the formula 'la musique de l'avenir et l'avenir de la musique' – its component parts reversed since Gagneur's 1849 article cited earlier – was exploited by several in the wake of the Théâtre Italien concerts.[60] Countless others took literally the idea of soothsaying implicit in the 'music of the future', whether in earnest or for satirical effect; in all cases, the stakes were unmistakeably high. As Bernard put it in *Le Ménestrel*, '50 years on this path and music will be dead, because we will have killed melody, and melody is music's soul'.[61]

Offenbach contra Wagner

In this context – of a 'music of the future' understood to call into question the entire future of the art form – one reaction to Wagner's concerts stands out by offering an immediate, direct riposte: one couched, what is more, in musical terms. Jacques Offenbach's *Le Carnaval des revues* opened at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens on 10 February 1860, two days after and a few metres away from Wagner's final appearance at the Salle Ventadour.[62] A satirical take on the traditional new-year revue format, *Le Carnaval*'s prologue and nine tableaux

[60] The most famous example was Comettant's essay, 'Richard Wagner. La musique de l'avenir et l'avenir de la musique', *Almanach musical*, 8 (1860), 43-6.
[61] 'Cinquante ans sur cette voie et la musique serait morte, car on aurait tué la mélodie, et la mélodie c'est l'âme de la musique'; Bernard, *Le Ménestrel* (29 January 1860), 66.
[62] *Le Carnaval des revues, revue de carnaval en deux actes et neuf tableaux par MM. Eugène Grangé et Ph. Gilles, musique de Jacques Offenbach* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1860). Ludovic Halévy also contributed to the libretto, but declined to be credited when it was published; see Jean-Claude Yon, *Jacques Offenbach* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 228.

lampooned various aspects of Parisian theatrical life, in the process creating plentiful opportunities for interpolated hits from Offenbach's own recent works at the Bouffes.[63] This canny recycling fits comfortably into Mark Everist's recent contextualisation of *Le Carnaval* as part of Offenbach's long-term effort to embed operetta within the more august generic institution of *opéra comique*.[64] Yet Offenbach's engagement with existing and emerging repertoires extends beyond *opéra comique* (important as that genre undoubtedly was to him in 1860), including the satirical treatment of *grand opéra* in a skater's waltz on a 'motif du *Prophète*' (tableau 2, scene 1) and bathetically placed airs borrowed from *La Juive* and *Robert le Diable* (tableau 5, scene 5). What is most significant in the present context, however, is the tension in Offenbach's revue between such dominant repertoires and new works – a tension that formed the subject of the sixth tableau and provided the occasion for two especially composed numbers.[65]

The scene in question involves a chance meeting on the Champs Elysées between four now-canonic composers of the past, Grétry, Gluck, Mozart and Weber. These immortal masters congregate over a game of dominos: they appear to the sound of their own hit melodies and congratulate each other on the continuing success of their works – an obvious gesture to recent revivals at the Théâtre Lyrique: Grétry's *Richard, Cœur-de-lion* (1856); Gluck's *Orphée* (1859); Mozart's *Les Noces de Figaro* (*Le nozze di Figaro*; 1858) and

[63] Benoît Jouvin described how 'le spectateur assiste au défilé complet du répertoire des Bouffes-Parisiens (répertoire de Jacques Offenbach, s'entend)'; *Le Figaro* (16 February 1860), 3.
[64] See Mark Everist, 'Jacques Offenbach: the Music of the Past and the Image of the Present', in Fauser and Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer*, 76-7.
[65] In addition to a new 'Polka des timbres', which attracted little critical attention (although it was published in piano arrangement), two further numbers marked 'air nouveau de J. Offenbach' appear in the libretto. One is on the subject of the Bouffes-Parisiens (prologue, scene 6); and one (tableau 5, scene 2) about *La Pénélope normande*, a play in five acts by Alphonse Karr which had opened shortly before Offenbach's revue, at the Théâtre du Vaudeville on 13 January 1860.

L'Enlèvement au sérail (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*; 1859); and Weber's *Robin des bois* (*Der Freischütz*; 1855), *Obéron* and *Euryanthe* (both 1857).[66] This happy scene is subject to a series of comic intrusions: first, a 'Jeune Homme' – an aspiring composer – complains that, with all the ancient works now staged in the city, he can't get his operas performed; then, a comically-accented German extolling Meyerbeer's virtues, who triggers two further grand-operatic appropriations;[67] then a scantily clad diapason-in-distress, reeling from the pitch reforms of February 1859 and delivering a *double sens* punchline: 'quel abaissement!'. Finally, and making the noisiest entrance of all, 'Le Compositeur de l'avenir' appears, grandly heralding his revolutionary presence and the destruction of the musical past. He conducts an impromptu performance of one of his compositions: a 'Marche des fiancés' that he advertises as 'une musique étrange, inouïe, indéfinissable, indescriptible!' (tableau 6, scene 6). Having appalled his venerable audience, he rattles off a 'tyrolienne de l'avenir' before being chased from the scene.

A role apparently sustained with some verve by company tenor Bonnet, this composer of the future was immediately identified. As *Le Figaro*'s ever-present Benoît Jouvin put it, 'If parody had the power to kill in France, Richard Wagner would at this very moment be a dead man'.[68] *Le Ménestrel* went further, making a direct connection to Wagner's concerts: 'the music of the future [at the Bouffes] has won a victory that will make the fanatics of the Salle Ventadour

[66] Everist identifies these 'calling card' quotations as 'Et zig et zog' (*Richard, Cœur-de-lion*), 'J'ai perdu mon Eurydice' (*Orphée*), 'Mon cœur soupire' (*Les noces de Figaro*) and 'Chasseur diligent' (*Robin des bois*); 'Jacques Offenbach', 76-7.
[67] The march from *Le Prophète* is heard off-stage (tableau 6, scene 3); and a scrap of *Les Huguenots* is gifted with new words making reference to its composer's apparently weakening powers and inability to finish his latest work: 'En Meyerbeer j'ai confiance;/*L'Africaine* enfin paraîtra,/Et le succès lui reviendra!...' (tableau 6, scene 4).
[68] 'Si la parodie [...] avait le pouvoir de tuer en France, Richard Wagner serait un homme mort à l'heure qu'il est'; B. Jouvin, *Le Figaro* (16 February 1860), 3.

blanch'.[69] Notwithstanding the scene's multiple parodic targets, it was clearly Bonnet's composer of the future who caught the imagination of the work's handful of critics, while Offenbach's mock-futuristic music enjoyed an afterlife beyond the *Revue*'s otherwise moderate success of 46 performances: both the march and the *tyrolienne* were later excerpted and repackaged for domestic use, the former renamed 'La Symphonie de l'avenir' and sold in four-hand piano arrangement.

Highly episodic in structure, this march-cum-*symphonie* follows the progress of a couple's wedding day, the incidents of which are shouted out by its composer to mark their representation in music. As in the visual caricatures so typical of the time and place, exaggeration is all: following grand opening gestures, there is a chromatic pile-up in the strings; over the resulting cluster chord, flute and piccolo play an absurdly chromatic dotted motif and trumpets herald wildly. Gentle *opéra-comique* diatonicism then takes over, serving as a bland, march-like backdrop against which interruptions by incongruous timbres and dynamic shifts, unprepared diminished chords and occasional gestures towards bitonality are all the more out of place. A chromatically tangled melody, comically constricted in pitch, emerges on clarinet and oboe over tremolo upper strings as the bride's mother weeps; it evaporates into diatonic *politesse* when the soup arrives. The gift of riding boots to the groom invites further disruptive trumpet fanfares and precipitates a final galop based on the mid-century dance tune 'Quadrille des lanciers'.[70] The piece threatens to unravel once again into the

[69] 'La *musique de l'avenir* a remporté là une victoire à faire pâlir les fanatiques de la salle Ventadour'; [Anon.], *Le Ménestrel* (12 February 1860), 86.
[70] This almost exact quotation, indicated by the composer's words 'N'entendez-vous pas les lanciers?', is identified by Fauser; '*Tannhäuser* and its French Critics', 235.

chaos whence it emerged, but at the last resolves into a formulaic, double-speed, *opéra-comique* coda.

Offenbach's satire is by any measure a piece of musical ephemera; but it is nevertheless striking in the ambiguity of its relationship to its musical target. Indeed, to hear it today (particularly with the comments of contemporary Parisian critics in one's mind) raises important questions about how Wagner's 'music of the future' might have been perceived in 1860 – whether by those who attended the Théâtre Italien concerts, or those whose Wagnerian experience was gained entirely through critical commentary. There are, admittedly, serious theoretical and practical obstacles to any attempt to reconstruct how a piece of music might have been heard in the historical past. Even the most sensitive efforts to cultivate a 'period ear' will inevitably miss the referential scope of a work such as Offenbach's *Symphonie*. For one thing, and as many literary scholars have emphasised, the rooting of satire in a particular community – one sharing a corpus of values and experiences – is essential to its success.[71] Yet, significant as these difficulties may be, Offenbach's *Symphonie* is nevertheless differentiated from the critical discourse of which it was simultaneously a part in early 1860, as not simply a response but also a contribution – however parodic in intent – to an imagined corpus of 'music of the future'. As such, we might productively listen to the *Symphonie* as itself a written trace of a past listening experience, taking a cue from Peter Szendy's recent paean to the authors of musical arrangements, transcriptions, translations and travesties of all kinds as

[71] See, for instance, Jonathan Greenberg, *Modernism, Satire and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7. In a similar vein, Henri Bergson's seminal study of laughter (the starting point for most later theories of comedy) bases its entire argument on the didactic and disciplinary functions fulfilled by comedy in society – a logic once more implicitly reliant on the notion of a collective consciousness or mentality shared between the satirist or comedian and his [sic] audience; Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911).

'the only listeners in history to *write down* their listenings, rather than describe them (as critics do)'.[72] We might, that is, scrutinise the *Symphonie* for hints about how its putative musical subject was not only understood but also heard by Offenbach and his contemporaries.

Listening to the *Symphonie* today makes it clear that Offenbach made no attempt to quote literally from any of Wagner's compositions, whether those performed at the Théâtre Italien or any others.[73] Significantly less clear, unfortunately, is the question of whether Offenbach had heard any of Wagner's music before penning his sketch (although it seems very likely that he would have enjoyed some prior exposure). It would certainly be misleading to suggest that the *Symphonie* is entirely divorced from the sound of Wagner's compositions, however Offenbachian its musical material. Rather than direct quotation, the satirical mode employed here is a broad, gestural one: a tracing (albeit exaggerated) of the constantly shifting surface of Wagner's scores and of their sudden changes of timbre and dynamic level. The resulting interaction between Offenbach's material and his treatment of it – in a satirical mode that approximates elements of its object in important, revealing ways – is both complex and crucial to my project.

As literary scholar Charles A. Knight has written, 'Satire straddles the historical world of experience and the imaginative world of ideas and insists on

[72] Peter Szendy, *Listen: A History of Our Ears*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 36.

[73] This observation is enabled precisely by the repertorial continuity – by Wagner's continuing presence in the operatic canon – from the 1860s to the present. While it lacks literal quotations from the Wagnerian corpus, the *Symphonie de l'avenir* does appropriate the melody of a French lullaby – at least according to Grétry's response to the piece in the libretto: 'Ah ça! mais, on dirait l'enterrement de Bastien... c'est l'air des *Bottes de Bastien*!...' (tableau 6, scene 6). The lullaby had recently been given theatrical exposure by a one-act vaudeville by Charles Blondelet and Michel Bordet, *Ah! Il y a des Bottes, Bastien*, premiered at the Théâtre Beaumarchais on 5 March 1859; unfortunately, only its refrain (and not the melody of the verses) seems to have survived in twenty-first-century France's cultural memory, and it does not bear any resemblance to the material in Offenbach's *Symphonie*.

the presence of both'.[74] The very process of satire, in other words, is one that seeks to engage with past experience, re-presenting it via the mediation of an imagined, abstracted future: its comedy is always of the moment, but draws equally on historical knowledge – on what might be extracted and projected, even prophesied, from that knowledge.[75] Seen in this light, the fundamental doubleness of Offenbach's *Symphonie de l'avenir* – its distanced, mediating caricature and simultaneous reproduction of Wagnerian gesture – has much to add to an exploration of 'la musique de l'avenir' in the Paris of 1860. The satire, rooted so firmly in the present by its own ephemerality, provides us with one particular snapshot of Wagner's critical reception, frequently mirroring the specific rhetoric accruing around him in the city in ways that might in turn stimulate further, alternative readings of it. Still more valuable, though, is that the sheer ambiguity of Offenbach's satire suggests that searching for traces of Wagnerian inspirations secreted within it may even be to miss the point, to overlook the real joke. What the *Symphonie de l'avenir* reveals most usefully is that, in the wake of Wagner's Paris concerts as in the decade before them, 'la musique de l'avenir' was above all a discursive concept spanning past and future – both what was known and audible, and what was to come in operatic posterity.

Back to the future

As treated by Offenbach and by so many music critics in 1860, 'la musique de l'avenir' was a fundamentally satirical concept: one which was no more solely

[74] Knight, *The Literature of Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45.
[75] In another literary exploration of satire with productive implications for my project here, Ruben Quintero suggests that 'Not only concerned with what has happened but also with what may happen, the satirist, through an historical logic of inference and extrapolation into the future, may also serve as a cautionary prophet or an idealistic visionary'; Quintero, 'Introduction: Understanding Satire', in Quintero, ed., *A Companion to Satire Ancient and Modern* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 2.

concerned with the future than it was derived purely from Wagner's own compositions or writings. The audiences at Wagner's concerts and at Offenbach's revue, so proximate in topographical and historical terms, were thus alike in another important way. In both cases, listeners were confronted by their own past experiences – whether of reading press reports of 'la musique de l'avenir' or of listening to Wagner's music – in a context understood fundamentally to be projecting forwards; that is to say, in which all ears were apparently listening for traces of things to come. In Offenbach's *Symphonie* as at Wagner's Théâtre Italien concerts, listeners were presented with their own capacity to hear both forwards and backwards, to the past and to the future.

My earlier description of the *Symphonie* organised the piece into two contrasting types of musical material. Hyperbolic discords and musical shocks seem to present a direct mirroring of critics' similarly exaggerated complaints about 'la musique de l'avenir': Figure 6 shows the *Symphonie*'s opening, its attention-grabbing cluster chord built on Eb in bars 5 to 8 and subsequently adorned with a similarly chromatic 'melodic' figure in the high woodwind from bar 9 complete with its own bass-drum punctuation from across the registral gamut. Notwithstanding its four-square phrase structure, Offenbach's opening material seems to delight in its apparent abandonment of convention in favour of on-the-spot destruction of any sense of tonal centre or melody.

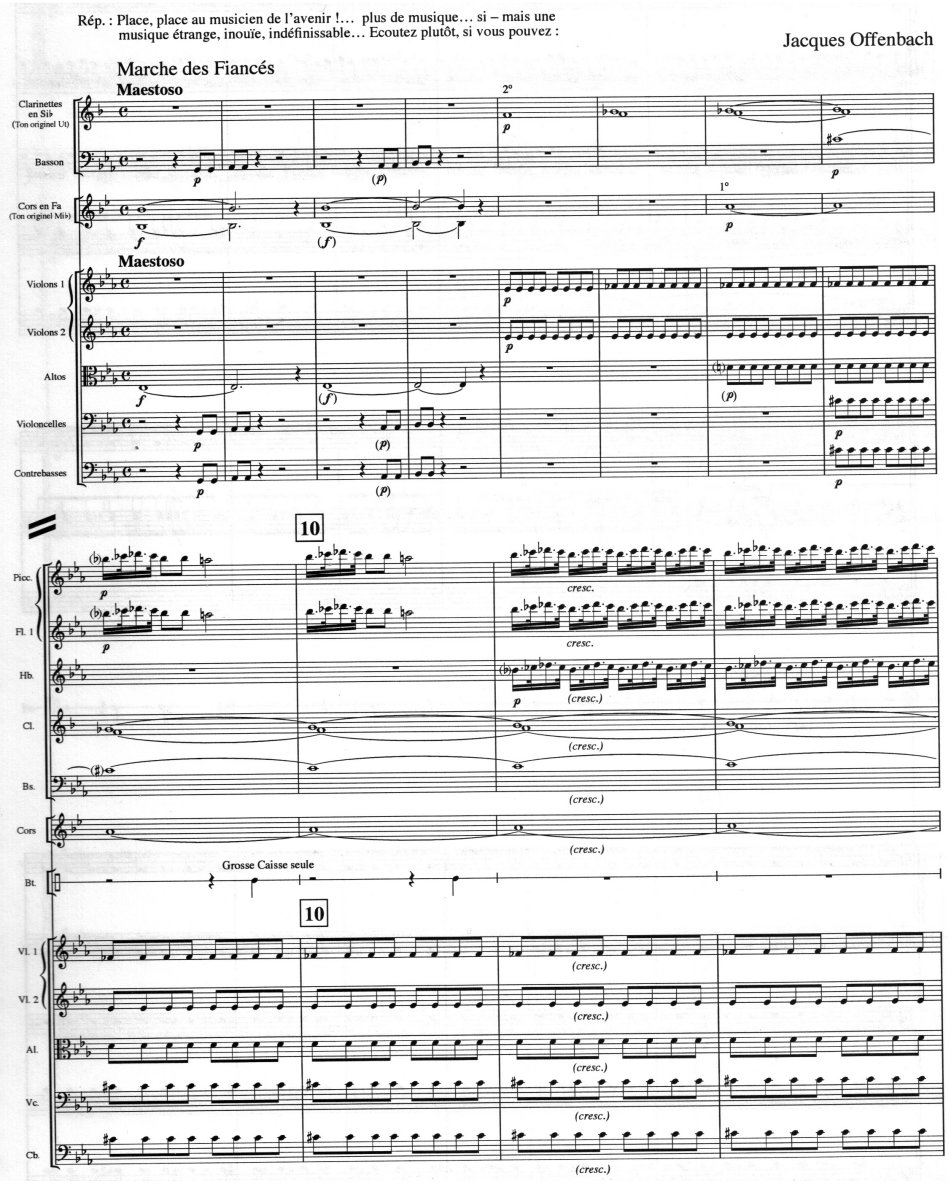


Figure 6: Offenbach, *Le Carnaval des revues*, 'No. 8 Symphonie de l'Avenir', bb. 1-12. Reproduced from Jacques Offenbach, *Carnaval des Revues: Le Compositeur de l'Avenir aux Champs-Elysées* [orchestral score], ed. Jean-Christophe Keck (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 2007).

On the other hand, the more familiar (diatonic) language of *opéra comique* that appears in Figure 7, for instance, provides occasional bland respite from the

chromaticism and prevents the *Symphonie* from collapsing into unnavigable chaos. This melody, recognisable to Offenbach's audiences as the mid-century Parisian hit 'Quadrille des lanciers', is now homophonically scored and slowed to a comically grandiose *Largo moderato*, its progress unperturbed by the brief outbreak of (bitonal) trumpet fanfare in bar 48. I suggested that we might hear these latter elements of *opéra comique* as the conventional background against which Offenbach paints his caricature: as, if you will, a semantically neutral constant against which his 'music of the future' sounds all the more absurd.

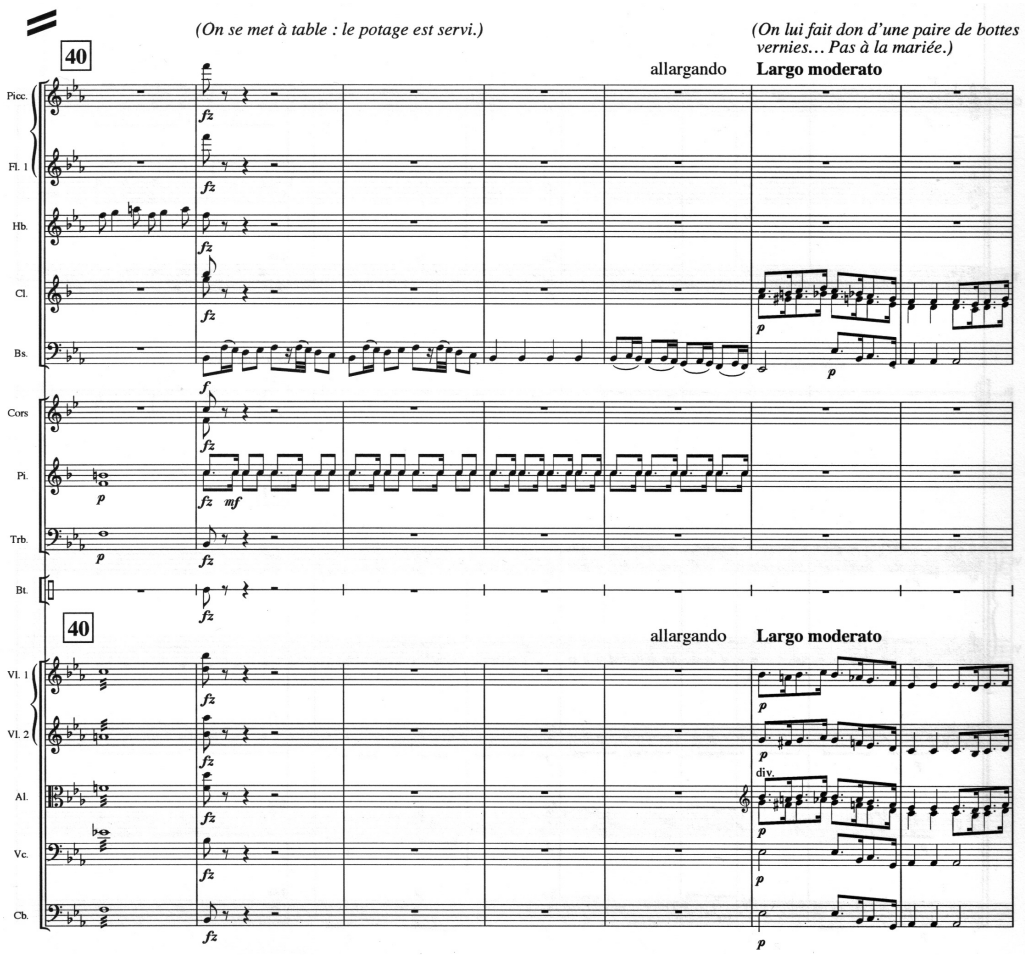


Figure 7: Offenbach, *Le Carnaval des revues*, 'No. 8 Symphonie de l'Avenir', bb. 45-52. Reproduced from Jacques Offenbach, *Carnaval des Revues: Le Compositeur de l'Avenir aux Champs-Elysées* [orchestral score], ed. Jean-Christophe Keck (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 2007)

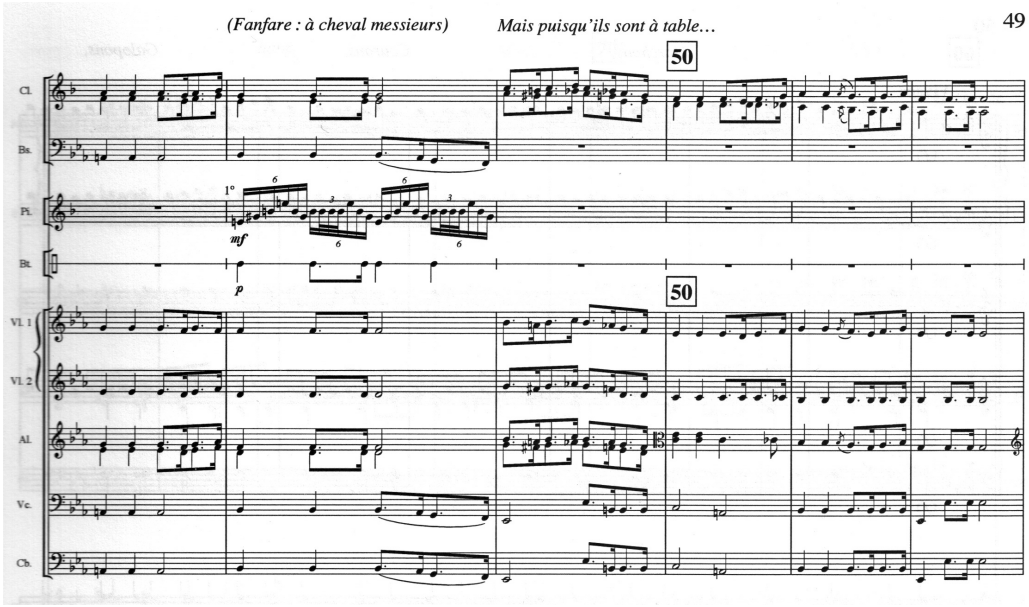


Figure 7: Offenbach, *Le Carnaval des revues*, 'No. 8 Symphonie de l'Avenir', bb. 45-52. Reproduced from Jacques Offenbach, *Carnaval des Revues: Le Compositeur de l'Avenir aux Champs-Elysées* [orchestral score], ed. Jean-Christophe Keck (Berlin: Bote & Bock, 2007) *continued*.

In the context of the particular workings of the *Symphonie* as satire – as a piece spanning experience and imagination, past and future – we might thus be tempted to map these twin elements (background and caricature) onto the temporal relationship fundamental to satire itself. We might, in other words, hear in its traces of *opéra comique* the sound of the musical past and of assimilated experience; and in its moments of brash chromaticism and abrupt contrasts a comic projection of musical things to come.

In examining Offenbach's musical prophesy against its Wagnerian model, I previously mentioned that although the caricature does not resemble Wagner's own 'musique de l'avenir' in specific detail, it does approach its satirical object in broader gestural terms. There is little doubt that Offenbach's *Symphonie* took seriously – in the name of comedy – the claims that Wagner's works were musically nonsensical, full of incomprehensible chromaticism, devoid of melodic beauty and far too concerned with orchestral effect. In this

sense, his parody composes out impressions of the Théâtre Italien concerts written by critics such as Fiorentino, whose review had characterised the Wagnerian musical future as one of dissonance, whistling and screeching. Yet there is an alternative way – and perhaps a more stimulating one – in which we might listen to Offenbach today. Rather than locating the piece's satirical force solely in its most obviously cartoonish features, we might hear the *Symphonie*'s most interesting comment on 'the music of the future' in precisely those elements of its construction that seem most conventional – those most rooted in the musical past.

Indeed, in the context of this article, we may find the most far-reaching comedy in Offenbach's satire centred on his bland *opéra-comique* undercoat. Partially obscured beneath more explicit gestures towards musical futurism, this conventional backdrop is not far removed from moments of the *Tannhäuser* overture or march, or, especially, to parts of the *Dutchman* overture. The audible musical connection to Wagnerian works absent from the *Symphonie*'s attention-grabbing caricature might thus be unearthed instead in its apparently backward-facing element. Such links between the *Symphonie* as a scrap of musical ephemera on the fringes of an established repertoire and Wagner's 'music of the future' are, I would argue, at least as convincing as those gestural similarities between Offenbach's parody and its target outlined earlier. Yet most significant for my purposes is the resonance that such a reading of Offenbach's parody might find in the contemporary discourse around 'la musique de l'avenir'.

For many in 1860, Wagner's 'music of the future', with its pseudo-prophetic paraphernalia and vistas of unknown worlds, above all marked a decisive rupture with the musical past and its conventions and constraints.

According to Taxile Delord, musicians of the future 'consider rules to be worthless, hold the ear in disdain and speak only to the soul'.[76] Once again, Wagner is figured as a destructive force; the irony is that – having broken free (for better or worse) from the restrictions supposedly placed on composers of the past and present – this 'music of the future' was feared to be every bit as rigid as what it set out to replace. The lawyer and prolific journalist Édouard Monnais, writing in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* under his pseudonym 'Paul Smith', was typical in his complaint that, 'Wagner is not only a composer, but an entire system',[77] while the ever-acerbic Scudo observed that 'Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, didn't make such a fuss, they didn't invent misleading systems [...]; they simply created masterpieces, allowing time to do the rest'.[78] Note that the critique is cast in explicitly temporal terms: Wagner's 'music of the future' is problematic precisely because he refused simply to write music and allow posterity to take its course.

Berlioz addressed these difficulties head on as he measured the extent of his own Wagnerian allegiance. On the one hand he detected – like Fétis before him and others later – something potentially destructive, even inhuman at the core of the 'music of the future'. If, he said with elaborately feigned nonchalance, it involved abandonment of the previous structures of musical composition and necessitated a complete disregard for the ear, or for the

[76] 'tiennent les règles pour fort peu de chose, dédaignent l'oreille, et ne s'adressent qu'à l'esprit'; Delord, 'L'Année littéraire' (25 February 1860); *Le Magasin de librairie*, 8 (1859 [sic]), 637. Delord wrote frequently for Paris's satirical press, having edited *Le Charivari* from 1842 to 1858; he then worked for the republican daily *Le Siècle*, initially as a literary critic and subsequently as its political editor. He was elected *député* of the Vaucluse (1871-76) after several failed attempts to launch his political career during the Second Empire.

[77] 'Richard Wagner n'est seulement pas un compositeur, c'est tout un système'; Paul Smith [pseud.: Édouard Monnais], *Revue et Gazette musicale* (29 January 1860), 33.

[78] 'Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, n'ont fait tant de bruit, ils n'ont point inventé des systèmes fallacieux [...]; ils ont créé tout simplement des chefs-d'œuvre en laissant au temps à faire le reste'; Scudo, *L'Année musicale*, 149.

listener's enjoyment, then it was not to his taste. 'I am made of flesh and blood just like everyone else' he pronounced; 'I want my physical sensations to be taken into account, and my ear to be treated with care'.[79] Yet, unlike many other critics in 1860, Berlioz admitted to a contradictory definition. The characteristic trait of the 'school of the future', as he called it, might alternatively be music 'emancipated, free, may do as it wishes'; music that would remain flexible and open to the communicative demands of a new age, driven by the expression of dramatic sentiment rather than the requirements of singers.

Notwithstanding his tentative approach towards Wagner's own theories, Berlioz was quick to observe that a 'music of the future' thus formulated was almost synonymous with that of the present. As he mused, doubtless thinking (as so often) of his own position, is there a great composer who does not write what he wishes? What is more, such ideas had been advanced before, and famously; both Berlioz and Scudo drew direct comparison with Gluck's operatic reforms of a century earlier.[80] Elsewhere in the press, with music history realigned about a resolutely French axis, Wagner was even described as 'the Rameau of the nineteenth century'.[81] Nor was this determined, deflationary historicisation limited to discussion of Wagner's theoretical manoeuvres. As in the verdicts of Bernard and 'Beethoven' mentioned earlier, many critics detected traces of the musical past in Wagner's 'music of the future'; some even pointed to specific operatic models in his concert programme: Meyerbeer is mentioned several times, as are Gluck and Grétry, in each case representing an operatic past deemed

[79] 'Je suis de chair comme tout le monde; je veux qu'on tienne compte de mes sensations, qu'on traite avec ménagement mon oreille'; Berlioz, *Journal des débats* (9 February 1860), 2.
[80] 'la théorie de M. Wagner, qui n'est autre que la vieille théorie de Gluck'; Scudo, *L'Année musicale*, 132.
[81] 'M. Richard Wagner, le musicien de l'avenir, est le Rameau du dix-neuvième siècle'; Anon., *L'Artiste* (1861), 141.

emphatically French. Ultimately, and with Parisian critics scrambling to assess the relationship between the 'music of the future' and their own musical present, what emerges is the same cast of characters who populate Offenbach's sketch – an ensemble of composers past *and* future, vying for attention on the Parisian stage of the present.

This last collision of future and past – one also crucial to Verne's futuristic novel with which we began but ever in danger, perhaps, of blurring into generality – calls, finally, for a more specific historical and geographical grounding. It calls, that is, for a more explicit contextualisation in the particular urban milieu of Second Empire Paris, the time and place in which Wagner, Offenbach and Verne were working. Indeed, these three figures might even be seen variously to epitomise aspects of life in the city that would be celebrated, in hindsight, as 'Capital of the Nineteenth Century'.[82] Napoleon III's regime has often been hurried over in our histories of music as in accounts of French nineteenth-century politics: it was long dismissed as frivolous, mediocre and conservative – an age marked by degeneracy and ruled by degenerates, who courted political disaster while tipping glasses to the dance tunes of Offenbach's latest *opérette*. Of the many alternative narratives of the period one might offer, one is especially salient to the temporal complexities addressed in this article. Second Empire Paris was, perhaps above all, a city quite self-consciously undergoing enormous topographical change. Both native inhabitants and visitors to the city reported a sense of disorientation as parts of the city were apparently transformed from one day to the next; as one 1867 English guidebook to that

[82] The phrase is, of course, Walter Benjamin's. It is taken from the titles of his two 'exposés' in which he laid out plans for the huge study of nineteenth-century Paris published posthumously as *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1999).

year's *Exposition universelle* advised: 'The Paris of today is so different from the city bearing the same name and existing a quarter of a century ago, that those who have not visited it for some time have literally no idea of the appearance of the city'.[83] Overseeing these radical alterations was the Prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann, whose programme of urban renovations aimed to create a suitably modern, sanitised capital city to match the Empire's insistence on social and technological progress. Just as important, if less explicitly advertised, the renovations were also intended to prevent those harbouring revolutionary ambitions exploiting the chaotic layout of the medieval *quartiers*. Yet, as the old city was cleared to make way for the new, monumental *grands boulevards*, inhabitants seemed to become suddenly aware of the 'vieux Paris' they were losing. The birth of modern Paris was thus accompanied by an upsurge in interest in the city's past, manifested in the opening of new museums and archives and in an urgent sense that what was being destroyed must somehow be recorded.

Still more important in the present context is that in the more rarefied climate of the city's opera houses, too, this was the era in which revivals of past masterpieces were increasingly widespread; in which sustained popularity for new works seemed ever more difficult to achieve; and in which the focus of operatic culture gradually shifted, with ever more weight, towards its own past. It was clearly this retrograde movement in Second Empire operatic production that Offenbach was lampooning in his revue with his self-satisfied, domino-playing immortals, whose recent (posthumous) revivals at the Théâtre Lyrique had attracted significant attention. What is more, in this situation, so easily

[83] *Black's Guide to Paris, and the Exhibition of 1867* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867), 17-18.

characterised by its historicist tendencies, Wagner appears – all too literally – as the 'musician of the future': as a composer offering an alternative route to the period's increasingly well-trodden path into the musical past.

As already discussed, both Offenbach's sketch and the critical responses to the Théâtre Italien concerts gesture at times towards a much less easily compartmentalised understanding of Wagner's place in the musical present in Paris, whereby even this 'musician of the future' could be seen to hark back to operatic times past. But, as this article draws to a close, there is one remaining figure in Offenbach's parody whose presence may shed new light on the Parisian musical future in 1860. So insignificant as not to merit a name, Offenbach's 'Jeune Homme' is the first of the scene's characters to interrupt the undead composers in their game of dominos. It is this Young Man who lists the recent revivals of their various operas, only to be interrupted in each case by exclamations of pleasure from the author in question:

LE JEUNE HOMME	On a repris *Richard Cœur de lion*.
GRÉTRY	Mon enfant bien aimé!
LE JEUNE HOMME	On a repris *Robin des Bois* et *Obéron*...
WEBER	Les deux plus belles perles de mon écrin!
LE JEUNE HOMME	On a repris *le Mariage de Figaro*...
MOZART	Un diamant!..
LE JEUNE HOMME	On a repris *Orphée*, on va reprendre *Don Juan*...
MOZART	Où est le mal?..
GLUCK	Je suis joué les lundis, mercredis et vendredis...
MOZART	Moi, les mardis, jeudis et samedis...
WEBER	Grétry et moi, nous sommes joués les dimanches...
LE JEUNE HOMME	Eh bien! et moi, Messieurs, quand me jouera-t-on?[84]
YOUNG MAN	They've revived *Richard Cœur de lion*.
GRÉTRY	My dear boy!
YOUNG MAN	They've revived *Robin des Bois* and *Oberon*...
WEBER	The two brightest jewels in my crown!
YOUNG MAN	They've revived *le Mariage de Figaro*...
MOZART	A gem!...
YOUNG MAN	They've revived *Orphée*, they're going to revive *Don Juan*...
MOZART	Where's the harm in that?..

[84] Grangé and Gilles, *Le Carnaval des revues* (tableau 6, scene 3), 15.

GLUCK	I'm played on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays...
MOZART	I've got Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays...
WEBER	Grétry and I, we're played on Sundays...
YOUNG MAN	But what about me? When will my music be played?

The final blow comes with Grétry's advice that the Young Man should find some money ('seven or eight thousand francs... a trifling sum!') and set up his own theatre – only for each of the composers to suggest the work from their corpus that might best be revived on this new stage.[85]

This 'Jeune Homme' is clearly a vehicle for some of Offenbach's own frustrations as a composer: he made headway in Paris only once he had set up the Bouffes-Parisiens in 1855. What is more, the increasing prominence of revivals of *anciens chefs-d'œuvre* during the period raised serious concerns about the institutional precariousness of younger composers – those thought quite literally to embody the future. Yet at the same time, as canon formation akin to that in instrumental music half a century earlier gathered momentum in Parisian operatic culture, new operas were added to the canon precisely with an eye on what was to come: on a work's potential, its capacity to win over posterity. At this transitional moment in Paris's operatic practices, there were, in consequence, multiple incompatible visions of the musical future on offer. On the one hand was Offenbach's earnest 'Jeune Homme', writing new operas but unable to get them performed on stages now occupied by revivals of revered old masterpieces; on the other, the quartet of domino-playing immortals and their fellow-travellers, encased for posterity in a developing, backward-reaching canon.

Finally, though, and most famously, there was Wagner and his 'music of the future'. In 1860 Paris, whether reported by critics after direct encounters with his music at the Théâtre Italien or as refracted through Offenbach's *Symphonie*,

[85] 'sept ou huit cent mille francs... une bagatelle!'; *Ibid.*, 15.

'la musique de l'avenir' was – in spite of its explicit engagement with the future – an idea in ever more complex relation to, even symbiosis with, the musical past. Traces of venerable predecessors were detected in Wagner's music at the same time as he came under fire for having laid waste much that had been sacrosanct. Many feared that he risked destroying music as a whole – that music *in* the future was endangered by 'the music *of* the future'. Wagner himself would, of course, go on to ensure his position in operatic posterity by taking the fictionalised Grétry's advice and building his own opera house: one where, true to Offenbach's parody, revivals would instantly take over once more. Indeed, Wagner's own future would encompass elements of all three compositional stances parodied in Offenbach's *Le Carnaval des revues*. Verne's projection of Wagner's presence into his sci-fi future while damning him in his own present was, as elsewhere in his novel, strikingly prescient: we are, after all, still 'enduring' Wagner's music even as we speed ever further beyond his musical future. Yet the greatest concern in Paris in 1860 was that 'la musique de l'avenir' might not exist. How justified those fears were would become fully evident only a century later, as the future foretold by Verne gradually approached and then slipped into history. In a final twist of comedy, the dystopian fear behind so much satire was deadly accurate: with the slow, inexorable shift away from the production of new works to the revival of the old, the music of the future would indeed prove to be none other than the music of the past.

CHAPTER THREE

Of time and the city: listening to *Don Carlos* in 1867 Paris

> Le plaisir que donne la musique est la fête de la mémoire.
>
> *Benoît Jouvin*

> PHILIPPE II – Que le passé soit oublié!
> LE GRAND INQUISITEUR – Peut-être!
>
> *Don Carlos, Act 4 scene 2*

The summer months of 1900 saw Paris flooded with visitors to the city's latest *Exposition universelle*. As at previous international exhibitions, innovation (above all, technological innovation) was centre stage, the march of progress materialised for all to see. But far from the star attractions – the moving pavement or Rudolph Diesel's new engine design – and aloof from the gaudy spectacle of belly dancers, foreign dignitaries and armies of uniformed workers, was a more sober gathering: the International Congress on Music History, held at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra.[1] To coincide with the congress, Charles Malherbe, the Opéra's archivist, had decided to mount an *exposition* of his own. His idea was to assemble a collection of musical autographs to be exhibited as a survey of the masterpieces, compositional practices and great men of music past and present. The historical section comprised around 500 sketches and finished works drawn from the Opéra's library; displayed alongside them were around 500 musical manuscripts (both excerpts and vignettes written for the occasion) solicited from living composers. About half were by Frenchmen, ranked according to institutional status. The rest, as *Le Monde artiste* boasted, were by the finest composers 'de tous les pays'.[2]

[1] The event was one of many conferences held under the auspices of the *Exposition*, dedicated to particular specialisms and professions, from comparative history to the medical press.
[2] 'Une exposition d'autographes musicaux à l'Opéra', *Le Monde artiste* (29 July 1900), 477.

Such claims of universality must be read in light of the geographical biases of those imperial times – as a musical analogue, perhaps, to the stylised national pavilions then lining the banks of the Seine. But among manuscripts sent from the farthest reaches of northern and eastern Europe was one that had originated much closer to home. Giuseppe Verdi, in the final months of his life as the century turned, responded to Malherbe's request with a brief excerpt from his 1867 Parisian grand opera, *Don Carlos*.[3] Framed by the Art Nouveau laurels and roses common to all the manuscripts displayed, and headed by a miniature sketch of the *Exposition* as seen from the Seine, Verdi's album leaf consists of the first fourteen bars (in French, and in vocal score) of the Act 4 Duo between Philip II of Spain and his blind, ninety-year old Grand Inquisitor (see Figure 8). The bottom right-hand side of the page, marked 'S. Agata giugno 1900', bears the composer's signature – the distinctive flourish now crabbed with age.[4] There are oddities in the notation, strongly suggesting that Verdi wrote from memory. In the most striking, Philip's 'Eclairez-moi' in bar 9 is intoned on a single G, rather than falling to C on its final syllable.[5] Equally obvious are various details omitted by the composer. Although Philip and the Inquisitor are marked by individual labels, the opening announcement of 'Le Grand Inquisiteur' is not identified as the Count of Lerma, while at the change of system the off-beat chords providing the *tinta* of the Duo's first section vanish prematurely, leaving blank staves in their place.

[3] This album leaf is reproduced and briefly discussed in Martin Chusid, 'The Inquisitor's Scene in Verdi's *Don Carlos*: Thoughts on the Drama, Libretto, and Music', in Eugene K. Wolf and Edward H. Roesner, eds., *Studies in Musical Sources and Style: Essays in Honor of Jan LaRue* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1990), 528-9.
[4] Although his musical hand remained clear, Verdi's frailty was detected by some: *Le Monde artiste* wondered at his 'petite écriture fine et très hésitante, où les notes sont des point à peine visibles'; 'Une exposition d'autographes musicaux à l'Opéra', 477.
[5] Other, minor discrepancies are noted by Chusid in 'The Inquisitor's Scene', 528.

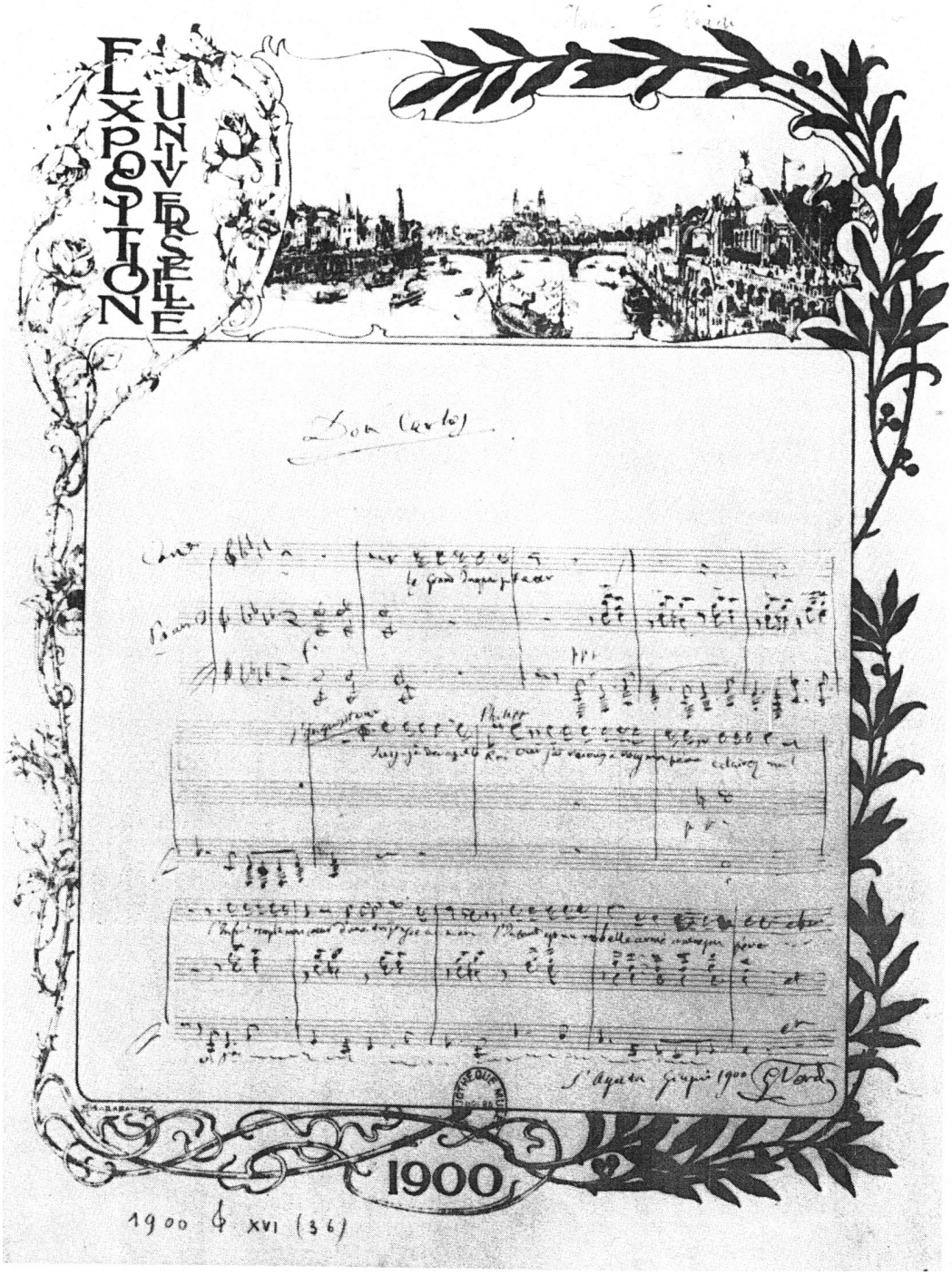


Figure 8: Giuseppe Verdi, *Don Carlos*, Act 4, scene 2; album leaf for the *Exposition universelle*, Paris, 1900 (Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Paris).

Both its decorative presentation and these inconsistencies underline the fact that the album leaf is best seen as a symbolic image of the opera from which it was drawn. By July 1900, *Don Carlos* had not been staged in Paris for over thirty

years; nor had the opera's Italian variants in four and five acts fared much better on the international stage, at least since the mid-1880s.[6] Verdi's 14-bar *carte de visite* thus aspired to iconic status while referring to an opera that was barely known, either in Paris or elsewhere. As exhibited in 1900, the document is thus likely to have found few echoes of recognition. It presented above all an image of operatic remembrance, the trace of a work recalled from another era. The sight that Verdi's manuscript afforded is, in this sense, what Richard Terdiman has called 'the present past' – memory as a past always re-presented, always mediated by the twin mechanisms of remembering and forgetting. In his formulation, 'Memory is the modality of our relation to the past'.[7]

The present article focuses on opera's own 'present past': on the ways in which a sense of collective memory and an increasing valorisation of the operatic past played out in the later 1860s. More specifically, it is about listening to a new grand opera, Giuseppe Verdi's *Don Carlos*, at its premiere in Paris in 1867; about the ways in which that experience of listening might be understood in the

[6] The original, five-act *Don Carlos* received 43 performances at the Opéra between 11 March and 11 November 1867 but did not enter the repertory there or in other operatic centres. Apart from two gala performances, staged principally as a vehicle for Feodor Chaliapin at Paris's Gaîté Lyrique in May 1911, *Don Carlos* was not heard again in Paris until a major revival in 1963. Giorgio Gualerzi identifies a quarter century, from the premiere of the four-act Italian version in 1884 to a spate of revivals in the 1910s, during which the opera was barely performed in any version, either in Italy or elsewhere. Its most recent appearance at the time Verdi dispatched his album leaf to Paris in June 1900 had been a single outing at La Scala on 6 February 1897: Milan's *Rivista teatrale melodrammatica* (8 February 1897, 2) condemned it as an 'inaudito fiasco', albeit mostly because of the poor quality of its performance. See Gualerzi, 'Un secolo di "Don Carlos"', in *Atti del IIo congresso internazionale di studi verdiani* (Parma: Istituto di studi verdiani, 1971), 497-8. There is little evidence that the Philip-Grand Inquisitor Duo outlived the opera in Paris as an excerpt (as had several solo numbers, notably Eboli's 'Chanson du voile'); two singers competing in the Paris Conservatoire's annual competition in July 1900 did, however, choose to perform Philip's Act 4 aria 'Elle me n'aime pas', which immediately precedes the Duo.

[7] Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 7.

context of broader changes to operatic practice.[8] It also seeks to excavate further the scenic moment encapsulated in Verdi's *carte de visite* and to pursue its particular configurations of presents, pasts and present pasts – to trace the relationship between listening and memory manifest in *Don Carlos* and its critical reception. I begin, however, with the work's much-awaited first performance at the Opéra, on 11 March 1867.

Listening in Paris

As the institution's latest premiere, and especially as a commission from Europe's most popular opera composer, *Don Carlos* was greeted by a capacity audience in the Salle Le Peletier. Many prospective attendees (some of them critics) were turned away; stories circulated of outrageous sums paid even for makeshift folding seats. Expectations had been heightened by *Don Carlos*'s painfully slow progress towards the stage. Delays were often a feature of new productions in a genre defined by its scale and complexity, but those to *Don Carlos* accumulated almost from the outset of the commission. Verdi signed the contract in July 1865; the subject, based principally on Friedrich Schiller's 1787 drama, was agreed as early as November of that year; by March 1866 the libretto was finished and composition had begun. Rehearsals started in August, but a

[8] James H. Johnson's groundbreaking *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) has little to say about operatic listening practices: his tendency is to focus on the concert hall and its predominantly German canon as his narrative of increasingly silent, attentive listening unfolds. Within Johnson's epistemological framework, opera is positioned largely as the 'other' (and a bad one at that) of a canon of instrumental works, with grand opera in particular understood as a genre in which stage spectacle was essential but distracting. When he does identify opera audiences listening attentively, the experience is couched in terms of a similarity to the primary repertoire of 'absolute' music. Thus Rossini's works apparently occasioned a 'silent revolution' – but did so because they 'made audiences listen to music, not as imitation or image or emotion, but as sheer music'; *Listening in Paris*, 225-7. For a trenchant critique of Johnson's study, see Mary Ann Smart's review in *19th-Century Music*, 20/3 (Spring 1997), 291-97. The book is nonetheless an important early contribution to its field and has informed much of my basic conception of changes in nineteenth-century listening habits, just as it has influenced many who have recently sought to explore the overlap between reception history and a more explicitly embodied history of listening.

month later Verdi was already complaining that 'We progress but, as always at the Opéra, at a snail's pace',[9] and he admitted that the opera probably wouldn't make its scheduled December premiere. Three months later *Don Carlos* was complete and fully orchestrated (except the ballet), and Verdi predicted that it might reach the stage in mid-January. But rehearsals continued, eventually numbering over two hundred (with no less than eight general rehearsals), as the Opéra's famously resistant 'machinery of marble and lead' ground on.[10]

Yet even once the doors of the Salle Le Peletier were finally opened to those lucky enough to possess a ticket, hearing Verdi's new opera in its entirety was by no means assured. As Nestor Roqueplan – one-time director of both the Opéra and Opéra-Comique and, more successfully, editor-in-chief of the high-circulating daily *Le Figaro* – confessed, apparently without remorse:

> Nous ne rendons pas compte du premier acte de *Don Carlos*, par cette raison que nous ne l'avons pas vu. L'affiche indiquait le début du spectacle pour sept heures et demie, ce qui, suivant les habitudes connues, semblait donner au public une demi-heure de latitude pour arriver. Cette fois seulement l'administration n'a pas pu accorder de grâce à ses invités. La toile s'est levée et le spectacle a commencé à l'heure fixe, malgré le bruit des portes de loge, malgré le langage muet des stalles inoccupées dont les bras de velours semblaient mimer une protestation.[11]

---

[9] Letter to Opprandino Arrivabene (28 September 1866); quoted in Julian Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, 3 vols. (London: Cassell, 1973-81), III, 22.

[10] 'macchine di marmo e di piombo'; the phrase is Giuseppina Strepponi's, from a letter written on 7 December 1866 to Mauro Corticelli, quoted in Marcello Conati, ed., *Interviste e incontri con Verdi* (Milan: Formichiere, 1980), 56. The opera's genesis and early production history have generated a small Verdian industry. The work exists, famously, in several versions; in this instance, and for obvious reasons, I refer throughout to the five-act French-language Paris version of 1867. For one summary of the different versions, see Harold S. Powers, 'Verdi's *Don Carlos*: An Overview of the Operas', in Scott Balthazar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 209-36. Much ground-breaking work on the work's genesis appeared during the 1970s: Andrew Porter, 'A Sketch for *Don Carlos*', *The Musical Times*, 111 (1970), 882-85; Andrew Porter, 'The Making of *Don Carlos*', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 98 (1971-2), 73-88; Ursula Günther, 'La Genèse de *Don Carlos*', *Revue de musicologie*, 58 (1972), 16-64; 60 (1974), 87-158; Ursula Günther and Gabriella Carrara-Verdi, 'Der Briefwechsel Verdi-Nuitter-Du Locle zur Revision des *Don Carlos*', *Analecta Musicologica*, 14 (1974), 1-31; 15 (1975), 334-401. See also Ursula Günther, 'La Genèse du *Don Carlos* de Verdi: nouveaux documents', *Revue de musicologie*, 72 (1986), 104-77. The complexities of the opera's long genesis are admirably summarised in Budden's chapter on *Don Carlos* in his *The Operas of Verdi*, III, 3-157.

[11] Nestor Roqueplan, *Le Constitutionnel* (18 March 1867). In common with all the reviews of the *Don Carlos* premiere to which I refer in this article, Roqueplan's appears among the vast

> We do not report on the first act of *Don Carlos* for the very simple reason that we haven't seen it. The poster gave the starting time of the show as 7:30 pm, which, in keeping with standard practice, seemed to give the audience half an hour's grace in which to arrive. But on this one occasion the management didn't indulge its attendees. The curtain rose and the show began at the precise time given, despite the noise from the doors of the boxes and despite the deafening silence from the empty stalls, whose velvet-covered arms seemed to be raised in protest.

For all that its genesis had been dogged by lateness, *Don Carlos* thus made its debut unexpectedly early – a practical measure necessitated by its formidable length. Michel Savigny reported in *L'Illustration* that the premiere, despite having begun with uncommon precision, nevertheless finished at half-past midnight. Since its establishment as a genre in the 1830s, grand opera had been famous for its hyperbolic proportions, with performances regularly continuing into the early hours. Even recent additions were generally cast in the same mould: Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, premiered posthumously at the Opéra in April 1865, ended (not without critical grumblings) at nearly 1:00 am.[12] It goes almost without saying that an attendant feature of the genre was the need for revisions and cuts, both before and after the premiere. The fact that Verdi's new work proved at least as expansive as its predecessors was thus, in one sense, a matter of a composer fulfilling the obligations of his contract: the grand-opera template of five acts plus ballet remained modifiable only at some risk, as Wagner had

---

collection of critical responses edited by Hervé Gartioux in *Giuseppe Verdi, Don Carlos: Dossier de presse parisienne (1867)* (Heilbronn: Lucie Galland, 1997), 95 [hereafter: *DdP*]. Gartioux's *dossier de presse* is not completely inclusive: other reviews of *Don Carlos* appear, for instance, in *L'Indépendance dramatique* (16 March 1867), 1-2; *La Comédie* (17 March 1867), 1-2; *L'Orchestre* (19 March 1867), 2; *Le Courrier musical de Paris* (21 March 1867), 3-4; *Le Foyer* (23 March 1867), 4-5; *Le Progrès musical* (1 April 1867), 1; *Revue artistique et littéraire* (1867), 156-7. Nonetheless, *Don Carlos* divided its critics to such an extent (but often along predictable, partisan lines) that these additional reviews add little beyond further weight of numbers to the picture that emerges from the critical responses selected by Gartioux.

[12] Nearing the close of his almost forty-year career, critic Joseph d'Ortigue declared of *L'Africaine* that 'La musique [...] est en général admirable. Le spectacle est admirable aussi; mais un opéra qui commence à sept heures un quart et qui s'achève à une heure moins un quart après minuit, un tel opéra défie la mesure de l'attention et des forces humaines'; *Journal des débats* (6 May 1865), 1.

discovered in 1861.[13] Yet *Don Carlos*'s length nevertheless elicited countless column inches – far more than any other recent premiere, *L'Africaine* included. Indeed, what had been a common but peripheral theme in the reception of Meyerbeer's work became almost the only aspect of *Don Carlos* on which critics proved unanimous. Henri Rochefort flippantly asked in *Le Figaro*, 'Can a Frenchman safely withstand five hours of music?'[14] Eugène Tarbé self-diagnosed acute boredom during the course of his multiple review articles;[15] Gustave Chadeuil, music critic for the republican *Le Siècle*, was adamant that 'five hours of music exceed human strength for listeners-turned-martyrs'.[16]

For all this attention to the length of Verdi's new opera, there were wild discrepancies between press reports: from the five hours cited by many, to six hours reported by Roqueplan, to four hours counted by Hippolyte Prévost and Achille Denis.[17] The official log for the opera's last general rehearsal on 9 March records that it lasted from 7.18pm until 12.20am, which makes clear that the

[13] I refer here to the notorious Parisian premiere (and two subsequent performances) of Tannhäuser in March 1861. For two important accounts of the 'Paris' Tannhäuser see Carolyn Abbate, 'The Parisian "Vénus" and the "Paris" *Tannhäuser*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 36/1 (Spring 1983), 73-123 and Annegret Fauser, '"Cette musique sans tradition": Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and its French Critics', in Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 228-55. For a reading of the *Tannhäuser débâcle* unusual for its focus on the event's immediate repercussions for the Opéra and its repertoire, see William Gibbons, 'Music of the Past, Music of the Future: *Tannhäuser* and *Alceste* at the Paris Opéra', *19th-Century Music*, 33/3 (2010), 228-42. My project here shares Gibbons's broad concern with investigating the complex relationship between forward- and backward-facing impulses in Second Empire operatic culture. Gibbons reads the critical discourses surrounding *Tannhäuser* and *Alceste* in 1861 as explicitly intertwined and thus takes a centripetal, chronologically narrow approach; my aim is to position the reception of *Don Carlos* in 1867 as a moment within a much longer historical span – in particular against a backdrop of several mid-nineteenth-century epistemological shifts in musical culture and beyond.

[14] 'Un Français peut-il, sans danger, supporter cinq heures de musique?' *Le Figaro* (13 March 1867); *DdP*, 21.

[15] In one particularly damning line, Tarbé asserted that: '*Don Carlos* est profondément ennuyeux. Voilà le cri général'; *Le Figaro* (14 March 1867); *DdP*, 27. See also *Le Figaro* (13 March 1867); *DdP*, 23-6.

[16] 'Il faut avouer aussi que cinq heures de musique dépassent les forces humaines pour les auditeurs devenues martyrs'; *Le Siècle* (19 March 1867); *DdP*, 125.

[17] Roqueplan, *Le Constitutionnel* (18 March 1867); *DdP*, 95; Prévost, *La France* (n.d.); reproduced by Léon Escudier in *L'Art musical* (28 March 1867); *DdP*, 213; Gérome [pseud.: Achille Denis], *L'Univers illustré* (23 March 1867); *DdP*, 181.

most widely reported length was indeed accurate, albeit with reference to the entire evening, intervals included, rather than to Verdi's score alone.[18] Nonetheless, the frequent complaints suggest that *Don Carlos*'s length was as much symbolic as actual: that its precise duration (around three and a half hours of playing time after the final, large-scale cuts made before the premiere) was less important than the perception of its *longueurs*. This situation arose against a two-fold operatic backdrop: on the one hand, the audience's prior experience and knowledge of Verdi's Italian operas; on the other – and what we must address first – the particular (and changing) status of grand opera itself.

Long operas

It was not only grand opera's vast scale that had persisted as the century wore on. The genre's prestige – another central characteristic – had also remained largely constant; its official residence, the Opéra, was still recognised as the premier stage in Second Empire France, perhaps even in Europe as a whole. Nonetheless, for all that grand opera's claim to occupy the top of the Parisian operatic order endured through the 1860s, seemingly oblivious to any potential for theatrical regime-change enabled by the 1864 Liberté des Théâtres bill, other important developments were in train both at the Opéra and elsewhere in the city.[19]

[18] Two of the Opéra's official reports of general rehearsal timings are reproduced in Ursula Günther's introduction to *The Complete Edition of* Don Carlos *by Giuseppe Verdi* (Milan: Ricordi, 1974), 4.

[19] The impact (or indeed lack of impact) of Napoleon III's theatrical deregulation both in Paris and elsewhere in France has been pursued in detail by a recent series of essays by Katharine Ellis: 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris', in Fauser and Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer*, 49-71; 'Funding Grand Opera in Regional France: Ideologies of the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper and Clive Brown, eds., *Art and Ideology in European Opera* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 67-84; and 'Unintended Consequences: Theatre Deregulation and Opera in France, 1864-1878', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 22/3 (November 2010), 327-52.

From the mid-1850s onward, the number of performances staged annually by the Opéra increased significantly, from around 130 to between 170 and 194 for the remainder of the Second Empire (and indeed of the century).[20] The great majority were evening-length single works – which is to say, grand operas – rather than the mixed programs of shorter operas and ballets that had once predominated;[21] and, of those grand operas staged, the majority were works written some decades previously. To put this another way, by the late 1860s, the Opéra had a fully fledged *répertoire* of largely homegrown classics.[22] New works continued to be produced, generally appearing at the steady, one-a-year rate sustained for the most part since the early 1830s; but few of these recent additions enjoyed a prolonged afterlife. Even a cursory glance at the works staged during the 1860s makes it clear that, with the partial exception of *Le Prophète* (Meyerbeer, 1849), the cornerstones of the Opéra's repertoire were by this time distinctly weather-beaten: *La Muette de Portici* (Auber, 1828); *Guillaume Tell* (Rossini, 1829); *Robert le Diable* (Meyerbeer, 1831); *La Juive* (Halévy, 1835); *Les Huguenots* (Meyerbeer, 1836); *La Favourite* (Donizetti, 1840).[23]

Alongside these monuments of several decades' standing, three other operas were performed frequently during the 1860s. The first was Verdi's *Le*

[20] I take these figures from Hervé Lacombe, 'L'Opéra sous le Second Empire', in Jean-Claude Yon, ed., *Spectacles sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 162.
[21] For more on the generic aspects of this gradual change in programming at the Opéra and, in particular, on the simultaneous emergence of a new genre – 'petit opéra' – tailored for performance alongside ballet, see Mark Everist, '*Grand Opéra – Petit Opéra:* Parisian Opera and Ballet from the Restoration to the Second Empire', *19th-Century Music*, 33/3 (Spring 2010), 195-231.
[22] I have already discussed in Chapter One the ways in which, as another symptom of broader changes in Parisian operatic culture, the notion of the 'classic' was in transition in the mid-nineteenth century.
[23] The dominance of these grand operatic monuments during the 1860s has been commented on by Lacombe in 'L'Opéra sous le Second Empire' and is also evident from the sheer number of performances listed in the online database Chronopéra: http://chronopera.free.fr/ (accessed 15 April 2013).

Trouvère, a French adaptation of *Il trovatore* (1851), which was first staged at the Opéra on 12 January 1857, following the success of the Italian original at the Théâtre Italien in December 1854. This transfer to the Opéra marked the popularity of Verdi's Italian works – the middle-period ones above all – in Second Empire Paris,[24] a point to which I shall return. The second addition to the Opéra's repertoire in the 1860s was Meyerbeer's final work, *L'Africaine*, premiered on 28 April 1865. Such posthumous timing – just under a year after the composer's death on 2 May 1864 – lent the production an unmistakable *in memorium* quality, which surely accounted in part for its extraordinary domination of the stage for the rest of the year and its continued (if increasingly sporadic) reappearances in subsequent decades. Yet almost more significant in this context was the apparent ill-omen of Meyerbeer's demise, which seemed to leave the genre without an obvious figurehead – and without an immediate source of new masterpieces to add to the repertoire.

It is in this light that we can most productively see the third of these 'other' 1860s repertory works: Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which had been staged as *Don Juan* at the Opéra several times – and in several versions – since 1834. The major revival in 1866, however, was particularly high-profile (it appeared in place of a new commission that year), and has attracted significant scholarly attention; not least in relation to its near-coincidence with two other stagings of the work elsewhere in the city.[25] In this Mozart revival, then, as in its 1861 production of Gluck's *Alceste*, the Opéra seemed to be extending its repertoire by

[24] *Le Trouvère*, initially programmed on its own, was from 1861 onwards most often performed alongside a ballet; popular pairings including Adam's *Giselle*, Pugni's *Diavolina* and Délibes' *La Source*.

[25] In 1866 *Don Giovanni* was performed in Paris in three almost simultaneous, high-profile productions: at the Théâtre Italien (from 2 March), the Opéra (from 2 April) and the Théâtre Lyrique (from 9 May). For a recent reflection on this operatic convergence, see Ellis, 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris', 62-4.

looking backwards, across the revolutionary caesura, as an alternative to the continued production of new works that tended to sink all too quickly from view.[26] Yet, as Hervé Lacombe has recently observed, at the same time that the Opéra was suffering a 'displacement' from its old position at the innovative centre of operatic Paris, two recently opened theatres were much more successful in their continued provision of novelty.[27] Jacques Offenbach's Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens (established in 1855) became the generic headquarters of the *opérette*. More serious as competition, however, was the Théâtre Lyrique, which opened in 1847 (initially as the Opéra National) and enjoyed a significant rise in prestige under the leadership of Léon Carvalho between 1856 and 1860. Carvalho produced successful new works such as Gounod's *Faust* (whose revival at the Opéra in 1869 was met, tellingly, with considerable anxiety about the relative status of the two theatres and of grand opera as a genre) and also a series of major revivals of *anciens chefs-d'œuvre*. Retrieved from the distant musical past, these works – by Mozart and Gluck, Rameau and Grétry – gained the Lyrique a reputation, for better or worse, as an operatic museum. More recently, scholars have demonstrated that Carvalho's pantheon might indeed be understood as an early canon, akin to the canonic impulses recognised in German instrumental music from around 1800.[28]

---

[26] Gibbons's discussion of *Alceste*'s reception in 1861 places the revival on both sides of this temporal divide: he sees the production as a tentative step towards the conversion of the Opéra into a 'Louvre lyrique' as called for by certain critics; but also as providing the discursive battleground for a critical confrontation with Wagner's 'musique de l'avenir' immediately following the troubled staging of *Tannhäuser*; 'Music of the Past, Music of the Future', especially 239-44.

[27] Lacombe, 'L'Opéra sous le Second Empire', 159-61.

[28] The nineteenth-century rise of historicism and the musical canon as manifest in instrumental music has long been a subject of musicological interest. The foundational theoretical text is Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), while William Weber's work on changing trends in concert programming complements this with more strongly archive-driven investigations; see his *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*

The Parisian operatic scene in which Verdi found himself in the mid-1860s was, then, one in the midst of gradual but significant change. The Opéra remained – for now, and for a few decades to come – at the top of the theatrical hierarchy; but that hierarchy was itself shifting as the focus in operatic culture came to rest ever more emphatically on established masterpieces, rather than the continual production of new works. What is more, and institutionally more specific to the Opéra, from around the death in 1864 of Meyerbeer, grand opera's cosmopolitan *éminence grise*, the internationalism that had once characterised the genre gradually ceased to be cultivated.[29] This was clearly in line with the growing chauvinism of France's cultural climate – an atmosphere that would persist well into the next century, sustained by the increasingly nationalist imperatives of political strife and international conflict.[30]

Don Carlos and 'le Verdi nouveau'

It is in these two contexts – of growing institutional preferences for established works on the one hand, and for French works on the other – particularly significant that *Don Carlos* was the last nineteenth-century Opéra commission

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Much less attention has been focused on operatic culture's turn to its past from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. One of the few book-length examinations of such themes in nineteenth-century France (albeit one encompassing concert life as well as operatic production) is Katharine Ellis's *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). The strongest case thus far for the cultivation of an operatic canon in mid-nineteenth century Paris is made by Ellis, 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris'.

[29] Anselm Gerhard makes the important point that although internationalism characterised the Opéra in the mid-nineteenth century, it was not typical of the Parisian cultural milieu. He suggests, following Arno J. Mayer, that such operatic internationalism was 'an attitude surviving from the ancien régime among the privileged social classes who could afford the luxury'; Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 392.

[30] For more on French musical nationalism in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, see Steven Huebner, *French Music at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

awarded to a composer of foreign origin.[31] When approached by Emile Perrin for a new work during the summer of 1865, Verdi had already produced two grand operas for Paris: *Jérusalem*, a four-act revision of his 1843 opera *I Lombardi alla prima crociata*, premiered in November 1847; and *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, to a libretto by Eugène Scribe, relatively well received in June 1855. But it was as the most famous living composer of *Italian* opera that Verdi was commissioned to provide a grand opera for the *Exposition universelle* year of 1867.[32] As Perrin wrote in his initial expression of interest, what he sought was 'a new work by the author of so many *chefs d'œuvre*'.[33] It can safely be assumed that those masterpieces Perrin invoked were not Verdi's French operas, but the Italian ones then so popular with Parisian audiences. Yet for all Perrin's hopes, a commission from the Opéra remained just that: an invitation to supply a *grand opéra*. Small wonder, then, that the critical response to *Don Carlos* was marked by sustained debate over Verdi's national allegiances.

Almost every Parisian critic identified the new opera as an important stylistic shift away from the masterpieces of Verdi's (Italian) back catalogue. Wagner was, perhaps inevitably, cited by many as the modernising impetus;[34] but almost as ubiquitous was Meyerbeer – half Frenchman, half Wagner's

[31] Verdi aside, Offenbach was the only major non-French figure still composing original works for Paris at this time; see Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera*, 394.
[32] Perrin's initial letter, dated 11 July 1865, suggests a commission directly in relation to the forthcoming *Exposition universelle*: see Günther, 'La Genèse de *Don Carlos*' (1972), 23. I have come across no official links between Verdi's commission and the *Exposition*, although the composer was presented with a commemorative exhibition medal on the occasion of *Don Carlos*'s premiere; see Franco Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi*, 4 vols. (Milan: Ricordi, 1959), IV, facing 592. Had Verdi's opera reached the stage as early as he had hoped, the two events would have been separated by several months; in the event, the delays at the Opéra resulted in a premiere only a fortnight before the *Exposition*'s official opening.
[33] 'une œuvre nouvelle de l'auteur de tant de chefs d'œuvre'; letter from Perrin to Verdi (11 July 1865); quoted by Günther, 'La Genèse de *Don Carlos*' (1972), 24.
[34] Théophile Gautier – Romantic-by-association and, of necessity, a prolific hack – was for once typical in his assessment that 'Verdi a modifié complètement ses procédés premiers pour adopter des principes analogues à ceux du maître allemand'; Théophile Gautier, *Le Moniteur universel* (18 March 1867); *DdP*, 104.

compatriot – who was imagined by Max Berthaud to 'pass before [Verdi] as though haunting him like a ghost'.[35] There was, however, widespread disagreement about whether Verdi should be encouraged in this 'voyage d'Allemagne'.[36] Although some argued that *Don Carlos* showed increased sensitivity to orchestral colour, the work's supposed *wagnérisation* was in general much maligned. Even Escudier's *L'Art musical*, despite remaining supportive of its house composer, admitted that the new work represented 'an unexpected step into the uncharted territory of the future'.[37] Less personally invested critics voiced a widespread feeling that *Don Carlos*, however progressive in musical language, lacked the life-force of 'le Verdi italien, le vrai Verdi'.[38] Roqueplan went so far as to address the composer directly:

> prenez bien garde de faire des progrès; on vous accuse de chercher à être moins italien pour devenir un peu allemand. Si, en quittant l'Italie, des Allemands y ont laissé leur musique, il faut la leur réexpédier.[39]

---

[35] 'passe devant lui [Verdi] comme un spectre qui le hante'; Max Berthaud, *Revue contemporaine* (March-April 1867); *DdP*, 192. In an interesting twist on this mortuary theme, Tarbé complained that Verdi 'a tenté de se faire une place entre Meyerbeer et Wagner; [...] en employant des rythmes, des tonalités, des coupes, dont Meyerbeer tirait un admirable parti, il ne s'est pas aperçu qu'il prenait seulement un corps inanimé; ce qui n'était pour Meyerbeer qu'une façon, qu'un moyen, qu'un cadre, Verdi en a fait le but et le tableau lui-même'; *Le Figaro* (17 March 1867); *DdP*, 27-8.

[36] B. [Benoît] Jouvin, *Paris-Magazine* (17 March 1867); *DdP*, 79. Verdi himself had little patience with such accusations of *wagnérisation*: 'I am an almost perfect Wagnerian. But if the critics had paid a bit more attention, they would have noticed that the same kind of ideas are present in the *terzetto* from *Ernani*, in the sleepwalking scene from *Macbeth* and in so many other pieces'; letter to Léon Escudier (1 April 1867), quoted in Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, III, 26. Verdi's own claims notwithstanding, the relationship between him and Wagner has enjoyed a long and richly contested afterlife in opera studies. One often-cited volume is Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, eds., *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). For a more recent take on Verdi's *wagnerismo*, see Roger Parker, 'In Search of Verdi', in *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 67-89.

[37] Escudier, *L'Art musical* (28 March 1867); *DdP*, 213.

[38] Berthaud, *Revue contemporaine* (March-April 1867); *DdP*, 192.

[39] Roqueplan, *Le Constitutionnel* (18 March 1867); *DdP*, 100. More aggressively xenophobic (complete with characteristic elision of the national and universal), Edmond Rack observed that, 'Quand un compositeur nous apporte *les Huguenots* ou *Guillaume Tell*, nous ne nous informons pas de sa nationalité: il est de tous les pays, il est Français; mais quand il n'a à nous offrir que *Don Carlos* ou *les Vêpres siciliennes*, on peut, sans mettre à ces questions la moitié seulement du patriotisme usité dans les questions militaires, désirer que ce compositeur reste chez lui et ne vienne pas s'adjuger le peu de place qu'aurait occupé tout aussi bien, si ce n'est mieux, tel ou tel de nos déshérités compatriotes'; *La Gazette de France* (19 March 1867); *DdP*, 135.

> be wary of making progress; they accuse you of trying to be less Italian in order to become a bit German. If, when departing from Italy, some Germans left their music behind, it must be returned to them.

With its less than subtle reference to Italian unification, the subtext of this and similar comments is easily discerned. In accordance with an old stereotype, Italians should get on with what they do best (being 'natural' and, in musical terms, pleasantly melodic), leaving to the French and Germans the harmonic mastery needed to forge their parallel routes into the future.

Yet even though *Don Carlos* was often heard as the product of 'un Verdi nouveau, réformé',[40] the opera was rarely perceived to demonstrate a thoroughgoing compositional overhaul. Indeed, many complained that the work was stylistically disparate. Moments of unadulterated Italian melody were heard to emerge from a complex mass of German and French forms, harmonies and dramatic situations; Verdian manners old and new jostled uncomfortably for space.[41] Calculating that fully three of Verdi's Italian operas would fit into the duration of the new work, *L'Illustration* opined that, 'The piece lacks unity, concision; it doesn't hang together, it's too dense'.[42] This judgement is revealing in several ways. Although it gestures once more towards *Don Carlos*'s length, it shifts to the realm of perception: the new opera is not only three times as long as one by the old, Italian Verdi, but also three times as complex. The emphasis is less on the work's duration than on how much is packed into it – on how long it *felt* to its first audience.

---

[40] Gustave Bertrand, *Le Ménestrel* (17 March 1867); *DdP*, 237.
[41] For a recent study of *Don Carlos* along such national lines – in this case focused on Verdi's skilful approach to French versification in his treatment of Méry's and Du Locle's libretto – see Andreas Giger, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic: Verse, Stanza, and Melody in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), especially 182-207.
[42] 'La pièce manque d'unité, de concision, d'effet d'ensemble; elle est trop touffue'; Savigny, *L'Illustration* (16 March 1867); *DdP*, 49.

Needless to say, the fact that the work was entirely unknown was probably crucial to such judgements. As Chadeuil put it, such was the novelty of Verdi's opera that any attempt to take in the gamut at a single sitting was enough 'to make you feel almost dizzy, to make you fear apoplexy'.[43] As the Opéra's procession of new works was gradually overtaken by those already established, audiences became increasingly accustomed to music they knew well: to acknowledged masterpieces. That several of these were by Verdi is likely to have had a significant impact on the reception of his new work. Indeed, for all that *Don Carlos* was felt to be too long, it was also heard as part of a still more extended process: one that reached further back into the past than his own most popular works while at the same time projecting into an imagined operatic future. With *Don Carlos*, the author of so many existing classics was understood (and understood himself to be) composing for posterity – and was listened to accordingly.

Reporting to his friend Opprandino Arrivabene on the morning after the premiere, Verdi admitted that his new work had not been a success; but he also added, 'I don't know what the future may hold, and I shouldn't be surprised if things were to change'.[44] It was in the same spirit that the usually pro-Italian music critic Alexis Azevedo closed his damning review with a question echoed by many others: 'What will be the fate of *Don Carlos*?'[45] Yet such looking ahead came under direct fire from reactionary quarters. *La Semaine musicale*'s Louis

[43] 'c'est de se sentir près de vertige, c'est à redouter l'apoplexie'; Chadeuil, *Le Siècle* (19 March 1867); *DdP*, 125. Such difficulties were in part caused by *Don Carlos* being even more unknown than previous grand operas at their premieres: Verdi had objected to the Opéra's custom of allowing the press to attend general rehearsals.
[44] Letter from Verdi to Arrivabene (12 March 1867): 'Non so cosa sarà in seguito, e non mi sorprenderei se le cose cangiassero'; Annibale Alberti, *Verdi intimo: Carteggio di Giuseppe Verdi con il conte Opprandino Arrivabene (1861-1886)* (Verona: Mondadori, 1931), 75.
[45] 'Quel sera le destin de *Don Carlos*?' Azevedo, *L'Opinion nationale* (19 March 1867); *DdP*, 149.

Roger insisted that he felt no need to appeal to the future for a verdict on Verdi's new opera: 'It was written for us, I assume, and so we are within our rights to judge it. With this approach, no fourth-rate composer can claim also for himself the right to call on the judgement of posterity. This significantly simplifies the task of the critic'.[46]

As Roger hints, the critic's responsibilities in assessing a new grand opera had begun to seem ever more unwieldy. The inclination towards provisional judgements, with appeals for more time and further hearings, had been building for decades. And this trend cannot be explained simply by the increasing complexity of new works, or even by changing attitudes to music criticism, important as these were. Rather, critics' growing anxiety was symptomatic of a larger epistemological shift: a growing belief in the value of sustained concentration when confronted with a difficult new work; an acknowledgement of longevity as a sign of a work's true greatness; and a realisation that all critical assessments must inevitably remain subject to revision. This may first have occurred in German instrumental music during the early years of the nineteenth century, but it gradually spread to opera, with the career of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* (1829) as one milestone.[47] Yet beyond this gathering absorption of operatic works into 'serious' musical discourse, and even in comparison to the most recent high-profile premieres of other grand operas, *Don*

[46] 'Elle a été écrite pour nous, je suppose, et nous avons bien le droit de la juger. Avec ce système, il n'est pas un musicien de quatrième ordre qui ne se crût en droit d'en appeler aussi à la postérité. Ce serait simplifier singulièrement la mission de la critique'; *La Semaine musicale* (28 March 1867); *DdP*, 205-6.

[47] For more on changing listening practices in late-eighteenth-century German instrumental music, see Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Although opera goes virtually unmentioned in her groundbreaking study, Goehr later explores how her notion of the work-concept might apply to that area in '"On the Problems of Dating" or "Looking Backward and Forward with Strohm"', in Michael Talbot, ed., *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2000), 231-46; esp. 241.

Carlos seemed to give rise to an epidemic of critical insecurity.[48] *La Liberté* exemplified the tone: 'We have only seen *Don Carlos* once, and we can only discuss with extreme caution a major work in five acts, which was until this evening entirely unknown to us'.[49] The demand for rapidly produced copy and up-to-date reports in daily newspaper publishing was at odds with the imperatives of musical criticism as practised by the late 1860s.[50] Those writing feuilletons, longer series of articles or in weekly or monthly papers, and thus able to make repeat trips to the Opéra, congratulated themselves on the advantage won. Jacques Sincère, for instance, writing a month after the premiere, boasted that 'Four hearings and a detailed reading have familiarised us with the score's intricacies'.[51]

Sincère's confidence was nonetheless highly unusual among *Don Carlos*'s critics, even those writing at some temporal distance from the first performance. As the anxieties of his less self-assured colleagues betray, there was a bigger underlying problem with writing about *Don Carlos* in 1867. Each of the interlinking factors that loomed large in the new work's reception – that it was extremely long and complex, all the more so compared to its author's

[48] The most recent comparable premieres at the Opéra were those of *Tannhäuser* (1861), August Mermet's *Roland à Roncevaux* (1864) and *L'Africaine* (1865). Although each premiered in different circumstances and with differing sets of expectations, their reception makes clear that critics were significantly less concerned about delivering verdicts on these new works than they were in the case of *Don Carlos*.

[49] 'Nous n'avons vu *Don Carlos* qu'une fois, et nous ne pouvons parler qu'avec une extrême réserve d'un grand ouvrage en cinq actes qui nous était, ce soir encore, parfaitement inconnu'; A. de Gasperini, *La Liberté* (13 March 1867); *DdP*, 31. *L'Entr'acte*'s review, published within twenty-four hours of the premiere, entered a further plea: 'L'heure est avancée, et nous ne pouvons, au pied levé, entrer dans les mille détails de cette œuvre considérable. On ne saurait apprécier convenablement un opéra de cette taille après une seule audition'; Achille Denis, *L'Entr'acte* (12 March 1867); *DdP*, 250.

[50] The growing consumption of such newspapers was characterised by a similar rapidity, as demonstrated by *L'Opinion nationale*, whose review begins with a summary of its conclusions, 'à l'usage des gens pressés, qui trouvent tout trop lent, même la vapeur et l'électricité'; Azevedo, *L'Opinion nationale* (19 March 1867); *DdP*, 143.

[51] 'Quatre auditions, une lecture approfondie nous ont familiarisés avec les détails de la partition'; *L'Art musical* (11 April 1867); *DdP*, 216.

already-established classics – were ultimately symptoms of a broader shift in operatic culture. As already mentioned, *Don Carlos* had from the very start been treated as a potentially canonical opera. Once this putative masterpiece reached the stage, it seemed to demand an altogether different mode of listening: one that both acknowledged and enabled the new work's altered relationship to time. Within this mode, Sincère's four proudly boasted hearings were merely the beginning of a much longer process. In the words of the prominent Parisian critic Benoît Jouvin,

> On ne met pas cinq heures à entendre une partition: – suivant que cette partition est plus ou moins remplie de beautés neuves auxquelles l'oreille doit se familiariser, on met cinq ans, dix ans, trente ans à l'écouter. Voilà dix-huit ans passés que, l'oreille tendue, nous écoutons *Le Prophète*; trente-deux ans, *Les Huguenots*; trente-neuf ans, *Guillaume Tell*; quatre-vingts ans, *Don Juan*... [...] Le plaisir que donne la musique est la fête de la mémoire [...]. Tout ce qui est imprévu en musique, tout ce qui, pour triompher de notre satiété, en renouvelle, en révolutionne les formes, est un obstacle placé devant une des portes de la mémoire.[52]
>
> It doesn't take five hours to hear [*entendre*, so also 'understand'] a piece: depending on how many new delights are contained within a score to which the ear must acclimatise, it takes five years, ten years, thirty years to listen to it. We've been striving to listen properly to *Le Prophète* for the past 18 years; 32 years for *Les Huguenots*; 39 years for *Guillaume Tell*; 80 years for *Don Giovanni*... [...] Music's pleasure lies in the triumph of memory [...]. Everything that is unexpected in music, everything which, to fulfil our desires, renews it, revolutionises its forms, is an obstacle placed before the floodgates of memory.

In contrast to those critics who reached for other operas against which to measure *Don Carlos*'s length, Jouvin's model conceptualises modern operatic listening as a process far removed from the duration of individual performances. Concerned principally with operas already consecrated in a still-forming canon (Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was the timeless masterpiece par excellence, however prone to modification it proved on the nineteenth-century Parisian stage), Jouvin preaches effortful, committed listening to works that will give up their secrets with time alone. He describes a hyper-extended experience of what we might call

[52] Jouvin, *Paris-Magazine* (17 March 1867); *DdP*, 74.

'canonic' listening: an experience only afforded by truly great works, but redeemed by 'the triumph of memory'. Jouvin's paradigmatic listener, and the many critics who in 1867 adhered to similar principles of prolonged, slow judgement, aspired to cultivate, even embody, the collective memory of the operatic canon. To listen in this way was to be part of an imagined continuum of experience joining the operatic past and future; above all, though, it was to feel oneself divorced from an increasingly maligned part of the here and now: from the clock time of the urban present.

Listening at railway speed

Writing in 1859, John William Cole suggested that, 'Now we are all alike; ever in a hurry, on the one high road of utilitarianism, thinking, travelling, and sleeping at railway speed'.[53] Cole's diagnosis of an era obsessed with its own speed was widespread at the time and has since become a trope of nineteenth-century cultural and urban history. Second Empire Paris, a metropolis rivalled in size and embrace of modernity only by Cole's London, styled itself as a city in which 'living quickly is a way of living life to the full'; as Alfred Delvau proclaimed in 1866, 'Better to die at 30 in Paris than in a village at 100'.[54] But such accelerated living had its unpleasant side effects. The second half of the century witnessed a torrent of medical accounts detailing the various consequences of high-speed urban existence. It also invented the idea of

[53] John William Cole, *The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), II, 336; quoted in Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 147.
[54] 'vivre vite [...] est une façon de vivre beaucoup [...]. Il vaut mieux mourir à trente ans à Paris qu'à cent ans au village'; Alfred Delvau, *Les Heures parisiennes* (Paris: Librairie centrale, 1866), 5.

'fatigue',[55] and gave rise to Charles Baudelaire's notion of 'spleen', which coloured the city's sense of its own *ennui* in the face of such relentless activity. Parisian modernity was, in other words, imagined from its inception as an era in which the gathering pace of industrial production and the so-called 'railway revolution' overwhelmed the city's fragile boundaries of class, gender, politics and topography to saturate all aspects of urban existence.[56]

In view of this high-speed mentality, one oft-repeated story about the *Don Carlos* premiere becomes significant. On 24 February 1867, over a fortnight before the opening night, the first general rehearsal took place. According to the Opéra's official report, proceedings began at 7:11 pm, and the curtain fell five hours and twelve minutes later, at 12:23 am.[57] As a result, Verdi made several ruthless cuts to his score, deleting the introduction to Act 1 and also shortening two duets in Act 2. Achille de Lauzières, Paris correspondent of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, reported the sequence of events as follows:

> A Parigi la durata delle opera è stabilita, e non potrebbe infrangersi la regola. Lo spettacolo non può andare oltre la mezzanotte, perché l'ultima partenza delle ferrovia suburbane e quella pei dipartimenti limitrofi è a mezzanotte e trentacinque minuti. Per comodo di coloro che abitano i sobborghi o i dintorni di Parigi, bisogna dunque raccorciar lo spettacolo, tanto da non fargli oltrepassar la mezzanotte. Né può anticiparsi l'ora dell'alzata del sipario, perché non si vuol precipitar il desinare della gente che va all'*Opéra*! Tutte queste considerazioni, o piuttosto tutte queste servitù, per non dir *schiavitù*, han suggerito al compositore, gli hanno anzi imposto, di raccorciar d'un quarto d'ora la durata della sua musica.
>
> Il più malagevole era di trovare il modo di raccorciarla. Tutto è calcolato per la disposizione degli effetti e per le esigenze del dramma lirico. [...] Trista necessità che sacrifica l'integrità d'un lavoro a così puerili considerazioni! Come si fa a tagliar via un quarto d'ora di musica, soprattutto in un opera, il cui pregio tra i mille che ne vanta, è quello della rapidità dell'azione? Verdi non si è mica divertito a ripetere le stesse frasi, secondo l'uso degli antichi – e di molti tra i moderni. Avendo innanzi tutto in vista l'azione drammatica, a questa principalmente è attento e non la fa languir coi consueti

[55] See Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
[56] See, for instance, Alain Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 83ff.
[57] The rehearsal report for 24 February is also reproduced in Günther, *The Complete Edition of* Don Carlos, 4.

> *mezzucci*, che tanti e tanti compositori impiegano sacrificando la verità drammatica ad effimeri a facili ma illogici effetti musicali.[58]
>
> In Paris the duration of operas is fixed, and this rule cannot be broken. The show cannot go on beyond midnight because the last train for the suburbs and the outlying districts leaves at 12:35. For the convenience of those who live in the suburbs or the environs of Paris the show must be shortened so as not to go on past midnight. The curtain cannot go up any earlier, either, since no one wants to make opera-goers hurry their supper! All these considerations of rather menial, not to say downright *slavish* factors have induced, or rather forced [Verdi] to shorten the music by a quarter of an hour.
>
> The hardest thing [for Verdi] was to find a way of shortening [the opera]. Everything is designed for the placing of effects and for the requirements of the lyric drama. [...] A sad necessity that sacrifices a work's integrity to such puerile considerations! How can one cut out a quarter of an hour of music, above all from an opera whose merit – out of the thousands that it can boast – lies in the speed of its action? Verdi did not take any pleasure in repeating the same phrases, as was the custom with older writers – and with many of the modern ones. As he had in view the dramatic action above all, he gave this his chief attention, and does not let it drag by the common devices which so many composers employ, sacrificing dramatic truth to ephemeral and facile, but illogical, musical effects.

Lauzières' much-quoted first paragraph thus imagines *Don Carlos* – the product of a genre defined by its length and a work being auditioned for canonic status – precisely as one might expect: in uneasy relation to the temporal frameworks and pressures of everyday life in 1867 Paris. Or indeed as nobly at odds with the petty, mundane concerns of the Parisian opera-going public. It is clear that in Lauzières' explanation the tensions between Verdi's work and its urban milieu are re-inflected through political and personal sympathies: the young nation's favourite composer struggles under the excessive, inflexible demands of the French (and this at a time when Napoleon III's armies were still stationed in Rome to protect the Pope, thus preventing the final stages of Italian unification).

[58] A. A. [pseud.: Achille de Lauzières], *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* (3 March 1867), 69-70. Lauzières was a journalist, friend of Verdi and translator of *Don Carlos* for the work's Italian premiere in Bologna on 27 October 1867. He was the Paris correspondent of Ricordi's *Gazzetta* from 1866 to 1893, and also wrote in the Parisian press under various other pseudonyms, including 'M. de Thémines'. In the latter guise he signed two lengthy (and notably positive) reviews of *Don Carlos*, published in *La Patrie* on 12 and 18 March 1867; *DdP*, 87-9 and 89-94. That Lauzières was allowed to attend one of the general rehearsals, otherwise closed to critics, is explained by his involvement in the opera's production.

This fantasy of suburban *gourmands* refusing to change their supper habits and similarly unwilling to make alternative arrangements for their journey home from the Opéra has proved seductive. So much so that those repeating Lauzières' story have overlooked its political subtext, passing on its details as unquestioned 'fact'.[59] More interesting in this context, however, is Lauzières' second paragraph, which is often omitted in modern retellings. Here he places Verdi's new work in much more complex dialogue with what we might call operatic modernity: the modernity that gave birth to the new mode of canonic listening discussed above. Particularly striking in this context is Lauzières' idiosyncratic insistence on the opera's pace – the 'rapidità dell'azione'.[60] Not content simply to figure it as the victim of a temporal regime governed by Gallic whim, he imagines *Don Carlos* as having achieved in its own right that true marker of Parisian urban modernity: speed. In so doing, Lauzières clearly seeks to strengthen his defence of Verdi's long opera, perhaps gesturing negatively towards the bloated, unwieldy form of the five-act *spécialité du pays*. Yet, more importantly, his argument rests on the idea that what might appear long (and thus ripe for cutting) to the uninitiated will be revealed as both concise and rapidly paced to those who really listen.

Lauzières' second paragraph thus marks a productive encounter between the established lexicon of grand opera and that other great marker of operatic modernity: its still-developing notions of an operatic work-concept. Crossing this

[59] I have found no corroboration for Lauzières' version of events in the voluminous contemporary sources, although the cuts made in Verdi's score in the wake of that rehearsal remain unequivocal. For uninflected narrations of the story, see: Budden, *The Operas of Verdi*, III, 25; Günther, *The Complete Edition of* Don Carlos, 5-6; David Kimbell, '*Don Carlos*/*Don Carlo*', in Amanda Holden, ed., *The Viking Opera Guide* (London: Viking, 1993), 1153; David Lawton, review of 'Giuseppe Verdi, "Don Carlos"', *Studi verdiani*, 2 (1983), 212.

[60] Although Lauzières' explicit reference to speed is extremely unusual, it is not unique in the opera's reception; E. Villiers in *Le Charivari* (14 March 1867) writes that 'L'action est en effet très vive et ne se ralentit pas un instant'; *DdP*, 47.

discursive divide, the idea of 'effects' [*effetti*] does double duty. It is both a compliment to Verdi and a swipe at composers who fall prey to 'illogical' effects rendered in music. The latter is a failing cast into relief by *Don Carlos*'s concision – a further marker of its status as an hermetically sealed *chef d'œuvre*. As heard by Lauzières, then, Verdi's opera foregrounds dramatic imperatives and becomes a work in the strong, instrumental-music sense: founded on conceptual unity, built to last and under no circumstances be modified for trivial reasons. What is more, the Opéra's reliance on enforced cuts (however problematic in the new order) was clearly necessitated by its continued adherence to the status quo: the weighty four- and five-act forms; the integral ballet; the refusal either to begin performances earlier or to reduce the number of intervals. The institutional 'machinery of marble and lead' was once more proving resistant: on this occasion resistant to conceptual change wrought by the more progressive elements of its own audiences. Understood in this way, the staging of *Don Carlos* marked a moment of significant friction at the Opéra: between long-established practices of production and new frameworks for reception.

Once again, therefore, in Lauzières' diatribe as in Jouvin's model of canonic listening, it was not exactly Verdi's grand opera that was incompatible with the timetables of modern Parisian existence. The greater difficulty originated in how the new work was conceived by forward-thinking commentators. For supporters of a recently established operatic order, *Don Carlos* was a prospective masterpiece demanding both concentrated attention from its listeners, and respectful, minimally intrusive treatment from its business-minded, clock-watching midwives. Yet the sustained auditory attention required by the new operatic regime was by definition out of step with the prevailing

tempo of the mid-nineteenth-century city in which it was forming. At least as they were exposed in Lauzières' and Jouvin's accounts, two symptoms of modernity – timetabled circulation and the operatic canon – reached deadlock. Of course, in a city ever more preoccupied with its supposed acceleration into the future, the lengthy process of canonic listening (afforded by an operatic culture increasingly dominated by its own past) was almost bound to be problematic. What is more elusive, and yet may bring us closer to what it meant to listen to *Don Carlos* in 1867 Paris, is how these tensions – between the demands of the present and those of posterity, between an increasing engagement with the past and a desire to see (or hear) into the future – are manifest in Verdi's music.

Listening and remembering (1)

This article began with an artefact dating from a particular moment in the afterlife of *Don Carlos*. In 1900, the opera was over thirty years old; its composer, approaching ninety, was a living witness to precisely the operatic posterity that had been the object of such attention in 1867. The pool of classics that had been accumulating in the late 1860s was, by the turn of the century, a more-or-less stable reservoir. It was, moreover, a resource in which Verdi was relatively well represented; but *Don Carlos*, premiered as a potential masterpiece, was entirely absent. Thus when Verdi sent his contribution to Malherbe's 1900 *Exposition*, selecting an excerpt from his forgotten grand opera to represent his contribution to music history, he left an operatic calling card that few would have recognised. His album leaf – an icon of operatic remembrance – presented, above all, the sight of memory. As such, the less sentimental Verdian might also look on it as a mildly aggressive memorandum addressed to the

forgetful audiences of operatic Paris. Yet there is more we might now glean from Verdi's *carte de visite*: as an object embodying a meeting of memory and experience, past and present; as a symbolic mediation between the various pasts and potential futures of *Don Carlos* itself; and, above all, as a written trace of particular meanings potentially accumulating around the musical passage that the elderly composer had chosen.

In his response to Malherbe's request, as to Emile Perrin's commission decades earlier, Verdi seems once more to have defied expectations. He could, after all, have responded with an excerpt from one of his ever-popular, middle-period Italian works, perhaps 'La donna è mobile' or 'Amami Alfredo'. Alternatively, had he deemed a passage from his most high-profile Parisian assignment more suitable, he could have chosen one of the few numbers from *Don Carlos* still circulating. Instead, however, Verdi sent the opening of his Act 4 bass Duo between Philip and his Grand Inquisitor. Immediately arresting here is the fact that although by 1900 the Duo had disappeared from popular view along with its operatic vessel, Verdi had emphasised the number's significance from the opera's earliest stages. Not only was it was one of two scenes that he had requested be imported from Schiller at the start of negotiations with the Opéra in July 1865;[61] fully fifteen years earlier, in a letter to Salvadore Cammarano, Verdi named the encounter as one of the greatest attractions of Schiller's play as a potential subject.[62] Even after *Don Carlos*'s premiere (and

[61] Verdi quoted by Günther, 'La Genèse de *Don Carlos*' (1972), 30. (For Escudier's report to Perrin, which is slightly more detailed than Verdi's letter, see Ibid., 25.) The other scene specifically requested by Verdi was the Act 2 duet between Philip and Posa.

[62] The likelihood of difficulties with the censor warded Verdi off the subject for the time being, with *Re Lear* yet again an alternative – one never to be realised, of course: 'Il *Don Carlos* mi piacerebbe lasciando in tut[t]a la sua integrità e sublimità il carattere del Posa, e la scena dell'Inquisitore con Filippo. Tutto ciò è impossibile per la censura, poi è soggetto troppo vecchio'; unpublished letter from Verdi to Cammarano (6 May 1850); listed in Sotheby's Sale Catalogue for 6 June 2013 (London, 2013), item 138.

despite a distinctly mixed reception), the composer continued to see his 'Inquisitor's scene' as a crucial moment, insisting in a letter to Giulio Ricordi in 1869 that it was 'elevated somewhat above the other pieces [in *Don Carlos*]'.[63] Well over a decade later, preparations for the premiere of the Milan version saw him repeatedly highlighting the importance of the bass roles:

> Voi mi parlate solo di Filippo, ma badate bene che se volete che quell'opera abbia un'esecuzione come si dovrebbe, e che non ha mai avuto in Italia, ci vogliono buonissimi l'Inquisitore ed il Frate. Guardate bene il poema e lo spartito e vedrete che sono quei tre gli attori ed i motori dell'opera. Tutto il resto è cornice... [64]
>
> you've only told me about the Philip, but watch out: if you want this opera to have the performance it deserves, and which it has never had in Italy, the Inquisitor and the Monk must also be excellent. Look closely at the libretto and the score, and you'll see that those three are the actors and the motors of the opera. All the rest is framing...

According to Verdi's own reading, then, the struggle for supremacy waged by two of his three 'motors' in the Inquisitor's scene is crucial to the entire opera's dramatic effect.

More telling than the composer's repeated avowals of the scene's importance, though, is the fact that the Duo was one of the very few pieces to remain entirely unaltered during his later revisions of *Don Carlos*. Keen not to become outmoded even in his increasingly conservative old age, Verdi took the opportunity of preparing the four-act Milan (1884) version to make both large- and small-scale modifications: most often to update numbers that he judged old fashioned. Yet the Grand Inquisitor, it seems, was already – was still – quite modern enough: he had already beaten his path towards the *musica dell'avvenire* in 1867. In short, the image of memory encapsulated in Verdi's 1900 album leaf

[63] Letter from Verdi to Giulio Ricordi (7 August 1869); quoted by Chusid, 'The Inquisitor's Scene', 505.
[64] letter from Verdi to Giulio Ricordi (18 May 1883); Franca Cella, Madina Ricordi and Marisa Di Gregorio Casati, eds., *Carteggio Verdi-Ricordi 1882-1885* (Parma: Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani, 1994), 109.

was a double one: it re-presented not only a forgotten moment from the composer's own musical past, but also a particular incarnation of Verdian modernity.

What becomes significant in this context is that, even at the opera's premiere, the scene was heard as semantically complex, its symbolism multiple and contradictory. Given that it was a single short number during a long evening at the Opéra, Verdi's Duo attracted far more attention than one might expect: the vast majority of critics mentioned the scene, even in relatively short reviews. More striking in the context of a reception marked by disagreement on virtually every aspect, it was greeted with almost universal approval. There was, however, little consensus on precisely what made it good; still less did verdicts connect to the broader critical stance of individual reviews. Paul de Saint-Victor judged the opera's fourth act to be sustained by inspiration, opining that Verdi had 'translated superbly [Schiller's] sombre dialogue'; and yet he also complained of the similar political themes of Philip and Posa's Act 2 duet, that 'This speechifying music is ultimately wearisome: I'd give [Posa's] best rhetorical discourse for a second of melody'.[65] Saint-Victor's views seem only more peculiar because his accusation of tedium is levelled not at one of the opera's more obviously 'Teutonic' moments (the usual cause of critical *ennui*), but at the Philip-Posa duet – a piece significantly more Italianate, in this first version at least. No less odd is that, while the fundamentally unconventional Act 4 Duo was either praised or criticised for its revolutionary, modern qualities (Jouvin welcomed it as 'a revelation in Verdi's manner', and Johannès Weber

[65] 'L'inspiration du maître [...] se soutient au quatrième acte. [...] Le Duo du compositeur traduit admirablement ce sombre dialogue;" "Cette musique oratoire fatigue à la longue: on donnerait pour un mot de mélodie ses plus beaux discours'; Saint-Victor, *La Presse* (18 March 1867); *DdP*, 110.

complained that 'it isn't a duet, but a long dialogue between basses, over symphonic workings in the orchestra'), in some cases it was extolled by the same critics who elsewhere denounced the 'Verdi nouveau'.[66] Hans Deb, for instance, roundly condemned the second act as chilly, northern monotony and yet named the bass Duo as 'the best piece in the score'.[67] Ever Verdi's champion, Lauzières went so far as to proclaim the Duo – despite its formal irregularities – a 'modèle du genre'.[68] Other critics heard the passage not as a product of the latest compositional style but conversely as a 'historical scene';[69] even, along with Philip's aria that precedes it, as 'a piece of history'.[70]

This wide spectrum of critical reception in 1867 might be read in two closely connected ways. On the one hand, it could simply be a further symptom of the changing demands on music critics: a product of the increasingly problematic meeting of high-speed publishing and slow, canonic listening already discussed. On the other hand, however, the striking array of contradictory descriptions and assessments points towards the Duo's ambiguous status; towards the fact that, even before Verdi's bold dramatic dialogue had existed for long enough to be forgotten, the piece was the site of significant hermeneutic confusion for its Parisian audience. Here, then, we might usefully turn to the Duo's musical surface; and, above all, to its iconic, *tinta*-establishing opening section: the very material by which the composer chose to be represented and displayed to visitors to the Opéra, just months before his death.

---

[66] 'une révélation dans la manière de Verdi'; Jouvin, *Paris-Magazine* (17 March 1867); *DdP*, 79; 'Ce n'est pas un Duo, mais un long dialogue entre voix de basses, sur un travail symphonique de l'orchestre'; Weber, *Le Temps* (19 March 1867); *DdP*, 141.
[67] 'le meilleur morceau de cette partition'; Hans Deb, *Le Masque* (21 March 1867); *DdP*, 172.
[68] Thémines [pseud.: Lauzières], *La Patrie* (18 March 1867); *DdP*, 93.
[69] 'La scène historique du roi et de l'inquisiteur'; Bertrand, *Le Ménestrel* (17 March 1867); *DdP*, 237.
[70] 'Le monologue de Philippe II [...]: c'est mieux qu'un morceau de musique, c'est un morceau d'histoire. J'en dirai autant du dialogue avec l'inquisiteur'; Gérome, *L'Univers illustré* (23 March 1867); *DdP*, 183.

Listening to the Grand Inquisitor

In its action and libretto the Duo follows closely the equivalent scene in Schiller's play.[71] It takes place in Philip's study, directly after the dawn monologue in which the King despairs that his wife Elisabeth does not love him. Exhausted by this interior drama, Philip is roused by the announcement of a visitor. The ninety-year old, blind Grand Inquisitor enters, having been summoned to give him counsel. Philip explains that his son, Don Carlos, is a political rebel; can his murder be justified? Would the Church absolve Philip of sin, were he to commit filicide? The Inquisitor reassures the King, reminding him that God sacrificed his own son, but then shifts the dialogue towards his own agenda: the true threat, he says, is Posa, the freedom fighter with whom the King has recently formed an unlikely friendship. Philip, angered, attempts in vain to deflect the accusations; the Inquisitor reminds him that even kings are subject to divine law. Philip proposes a reconciliation, but the Inquisitor remains noncommittal. The scene ends with Philip, left alone, protesting that even royalty must bend to the wishes of the Church.

Musically the number unfolds in three large sections: an ABA form in which the second A is much curtailed, with clear framing gestures at the start and finish (see Example 1, which contains the opening 30 measure of the first A section). The Duo begins with three portentous Cs. Forte, accented and delivered in unison across the middle register of the winds and brass, they announce the

[71] Act 4, scene 2 of the opera corresponds with Act 5, scene 10 of Schiller's 1787 play. Despite the widespread alterations and simplifications made by Verdi's librettists elsewhere in the opera, many of Schiller's lines in this particular scene appear almost entirely unmodified in the libretto. For a detailed study of the relationship between the opera's libretto and Schiller's play, see Jennifer Jackson, Don Carlos*: Narrative Transformation in the Works of Abbé de Saint-Réal, Friedrich Schiller and Giuseppe Verdi* (Weinsberg: Lucie Galland, 2008).

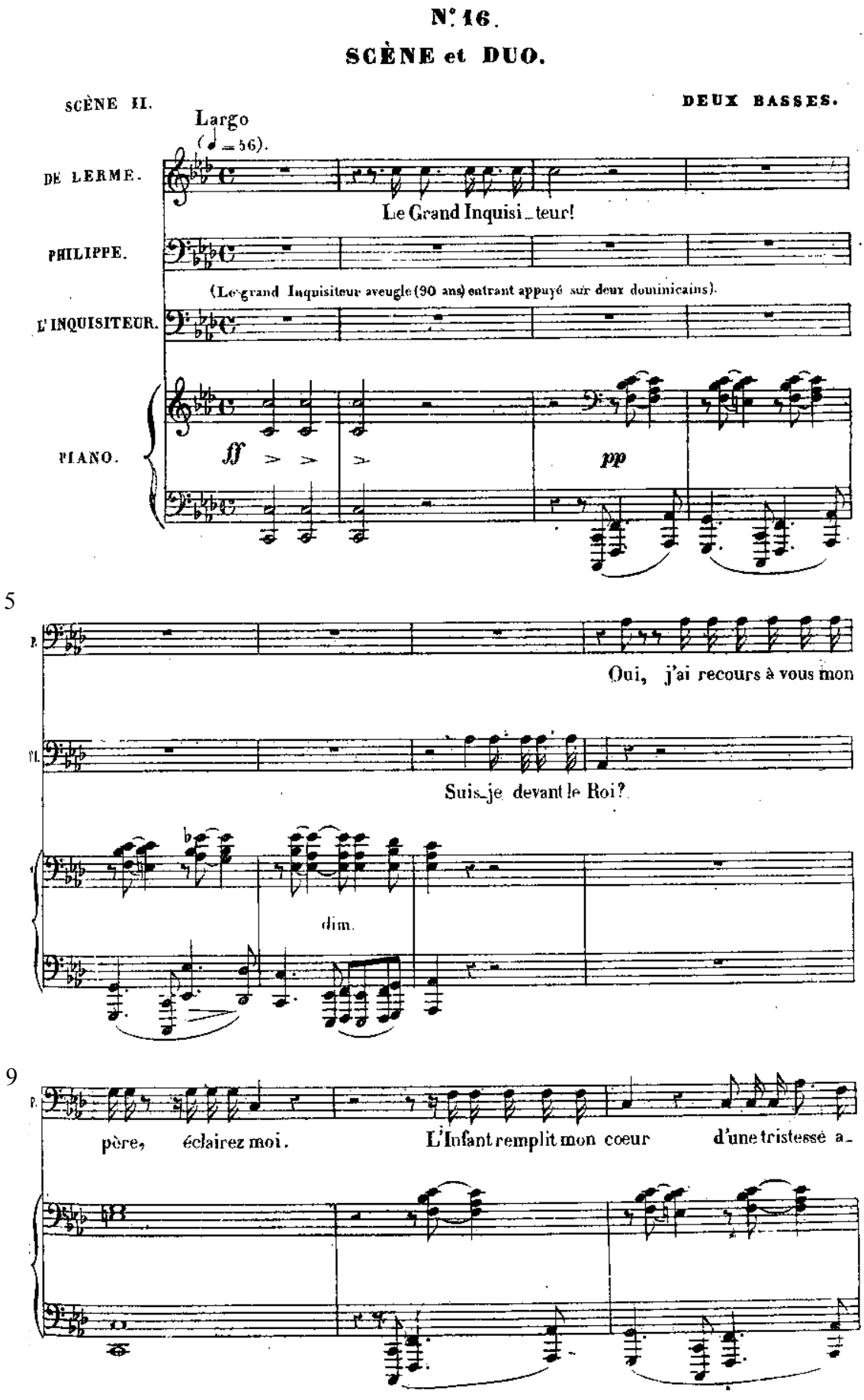


Figure 9: *Don Carlos* Act 4 scene 2 (bb. 1-34) from the original piano-vocal score (Paris: Léon Escudier, 1867).

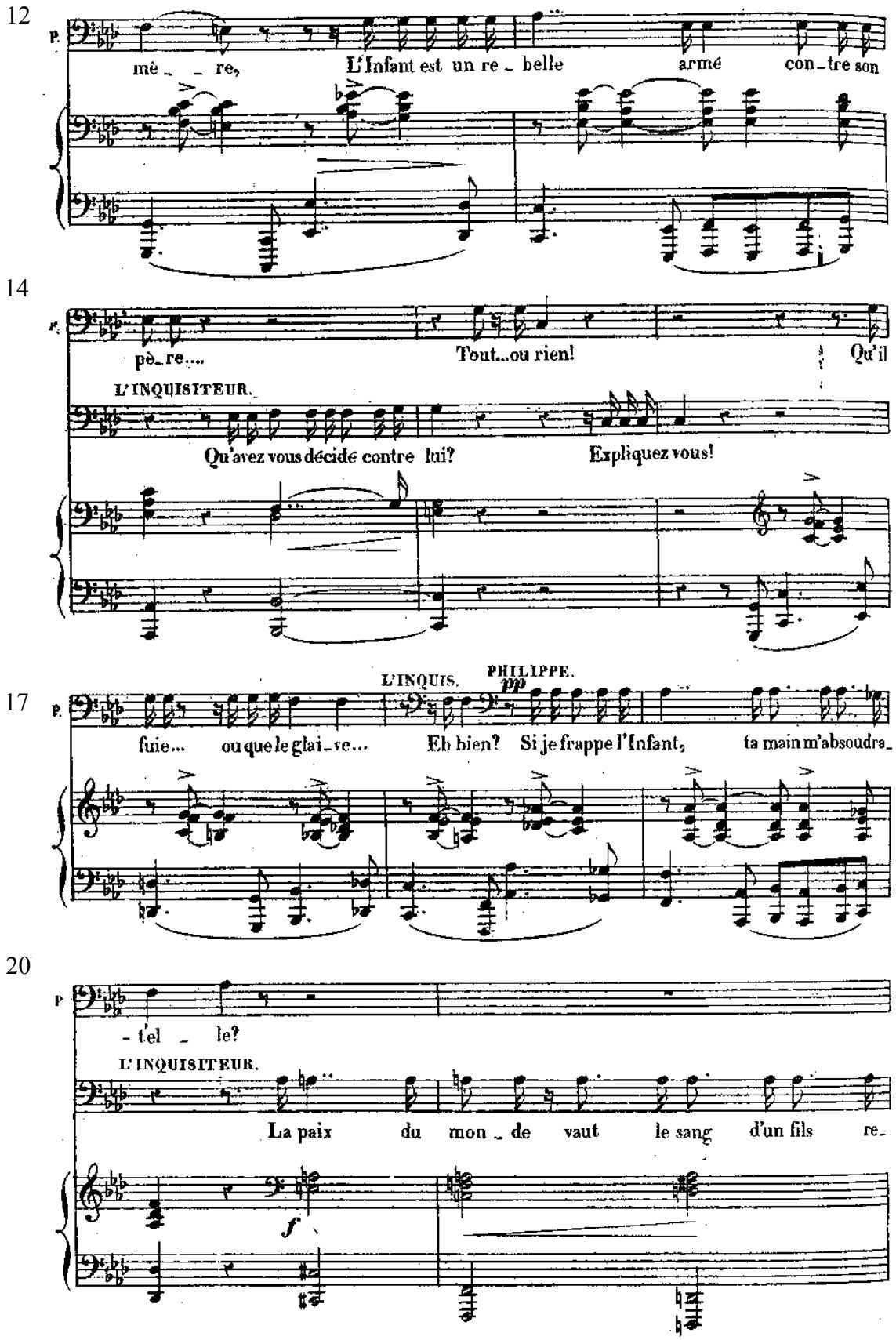


Figure 9: *Don Carlos* Act 4 scene 2 (bb. 1-34) *continued...*

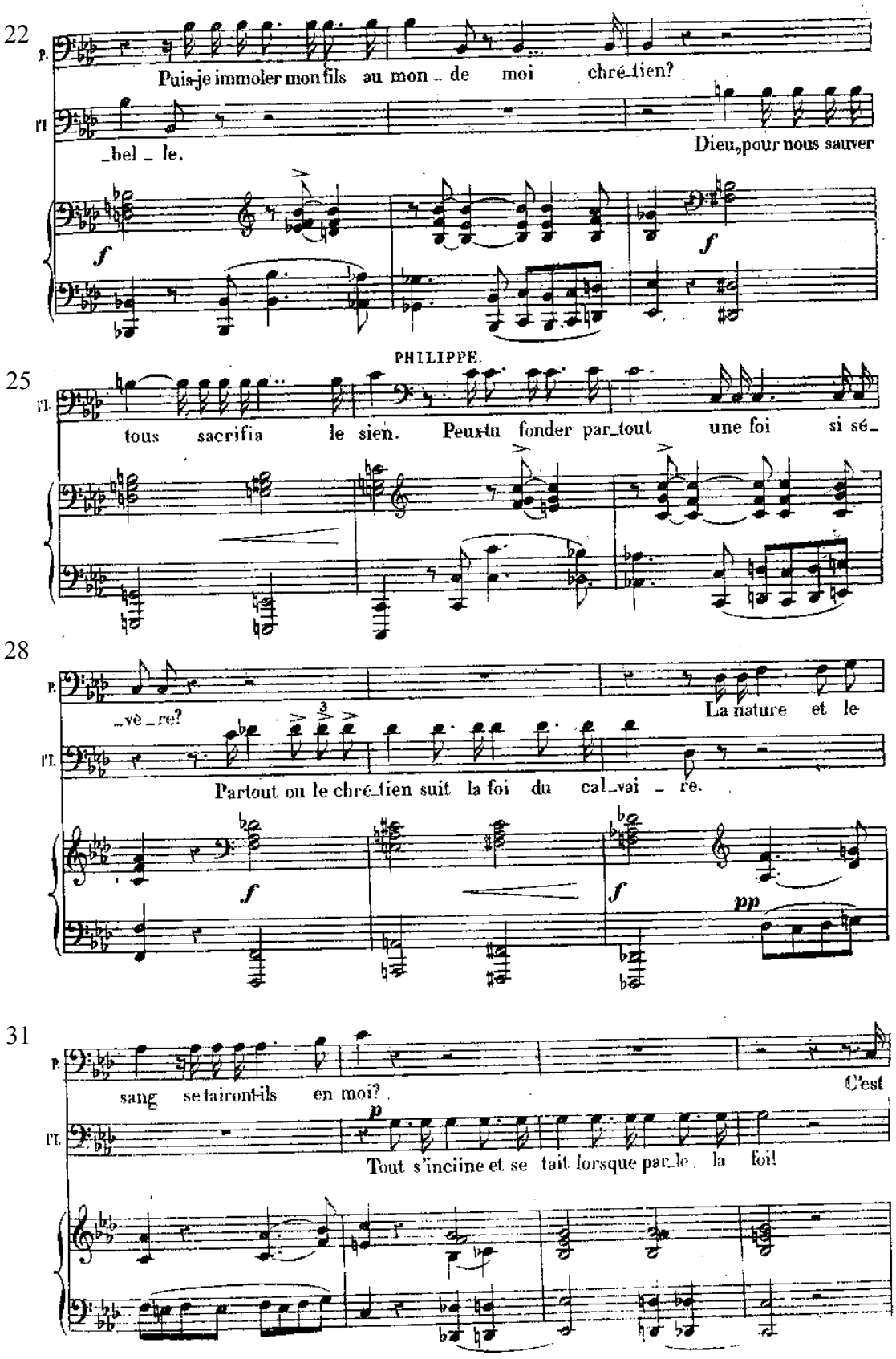


Figure 9: *Don Carlos* Act 4 scene 2 (bb. 1-34) *continued.*

Count of Lerma (who in turn heralds the entrance of the Inquisitor). It closes in similar fashion, with three tonic (F minor) chords, now pianissimo and in the bass tessitura. The two outer sections are dominated in the libretto by Philip: he applies to the priest for licence to kill his son in the first; and he attempts reconciliation and cries out in defeat in the second. The middle section is given over almost exclusively to the Inquisitor, and comprises a series of short, musically discrete segments. Each is precipitated by an attempted interruption from Philip and is differentiated by key, tempo and musical material, describing a large-scale crescendo and accelerando as the priest becomes increasingly irate.

In comparison to the through-composed narrative progress of the B section, the outer sections are remarkably static, based around repetitions of sparse musical material and returning at their close to the tonality of F minor in

Figure 7: *Don Carlos* Act 4 scene 2 (bb. 1-41) *continued*...

which they began. Musical interest is located primarily in the play of low-lying pianissimo orchestral sonorities. The main thematic material is a four-bar, legato melody in bassoon, contrabassoon, cellos and basses, the circling movement of which characterises the section as a whole. Set against this are chains of off-beat suspensions in the trombones, themselves punctuated by what Frits Noske famously termed 'musical figures of death' in the timpani and bass drum.[72] This thematic complex is repeated (complete or in part) five times, in each case accompanying utterances by Philip and in each case modulating – first to the tonic major, then to more distant keys. As the tessitura rises, the suspensions shift from trombones to horns, cornets and trumpets (b. 16). This modified

[72] See Frits Noske, 'The Musical Figure of Death', in *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi* (1977; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 171-214.

instrumentation serves to emphasise an opposition between the opening material and a new, contrasting, chordal figure (first heard in b. 20) in which trombones are especially prominent: a sequence of four closely spaced half-note triads, which progress by thirds-relation from the tonal area reached by the principal thematic complex. Always underpinning statements by the Inquisitor, the sequence appears three times in full (b. 20; b. 24; b. 28), each time with a crescendo to forte on its final chord; but it is obviously prepared in some sense by the similarly orchestrated interrupted cadence onto C major at bb. 14-15. Setting into relief the shifting orchestral colours of the Duo's opening section come the vocal lines of the antagonists. Bare and syllabically declaimed on repeated notes, the pitches of which pass, ever higher, between the voices, the dialogue lacks any sense of vocal lyricism or even character differentiation. Instead, the melodic shapes recall psalm intonation; the cadences in particular are overtly so, rising or static for questions, falling for statements issued.

The reminiscences of an ancient liturgical style (in the trombone suspensions, in the vocal declamation) point towards the most obvious interpretation of the contrasts of instrumental sonority in this first section. The opening thematic complex is not simply diatonic and quasi-contrapuntal, but ecclesiastically so: it exhibits a collection of relics from the distant musical past. Spliced into and working against this representation of the old is the sequence of thirds-related triads, their elliptical harmonic movement above all a sign of musical modernity. One might push this interpretation further, mapping onto the juxtaposition of stylistic manners, of the musical old and new, the clash of patriarchal forces – Church and State – enacted on stage. Heard in this way, the ancient, blind Inquisitor enters to the accompaniment of an opening theme whose

dark *tinta* and slow progress are comfortably at one with his own, its clear traces of the musical past indicative of his stubborn adherence to tradition. He is, quite literally, a figure embodying the old. Reading further between the section's thematic oppositions, one might see Philip pitted against him, the King inhabiting a more recently-discovered harmonic universe, the one containing those chromatic, thirds-related chordal progressions. This interpretation makes attractively transparent an opening sequence that generated particular critical ambivalence at the opera's premiere, and indeed has continued to do so.[73] It engages with a play of contrasts that is not only crucial to the Duo's opening section, but that characterises the number as a whole; and it explains those musical juxtapositions in terms resonant with the opera's contemporary reception and broader Parisian context.

Yet, however persuasive, it is a solution that ignores several important details of the scene's construction. One element potentially resistant to the labelling of the main thematic material as symbolic of 'the old' is the centrality within it of the contrabassoon sonority, an obvious recent addition to the orchestra that – in true grand-opera style – epitomised the progress of instrumental technology. Similarly complicating is the prominence of the trombones in those modern-sounding, thirds-related triads: few instruments were marked more consistently by semantic affiliation with the sublime, the supernatural and the ancient.[74] More problematic still, though, is any sustained

[73] The scene has been subject to considerable attention from modern Verdi scholars, with conclusions generally as varied as those of critics in 1867. The most recent series of excavations was carried out in four papers presented as a roundtable at the 'Verdi 2001' conference by Peter Brooks, Joseph Kerman, Harold S. Powers and David Rosen; these are published in Fabrizio Della Seta, et al, eds., *Verdi 2001: Atti del convegno internazionale*, 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 2003), II, 613-62.

[74] Indeed, in this minor-mode, bass-saturated context, with its frequent melodic leaps over an octave, it is tempting to hear echoes – unremarked by the opera's first audience – of the most famous bass role then in the repertoire, the voice of the past par excellence: Mozart's

attempt to read the rival figures on stage in conjunction with the oppositions of this orchestral backdrop. For all that the Inquisitor's entrance coincides exactly with the first statement of the main thematic complex, and that its marked hieratic qualities seem inevitably to illustrate the old priest, his voice is almost never heard alongside it. Instead, this material repeatedly accompanies Philip. Furthermore, the Inquisitor is audibly central to – even the harmonic linchpin of – the sequence of chromatic triads that punctuate and contrast with it, rotating as they do around the pitch of the priest's monotonous declamation. In place of an easy equivalence between the individual characters and 'their' opposing musical material, then, we find apparent misalignment.

The question raised by the colliding semantics of the Duo's opening is, however, not so much that of which material is proper to the Inquisitor, but of what place is left for Philip in a resonant landscape inhabited almost exclusively by his antagonist. The musical interactions between the two characters in this opening section are thus both complex and unstable. This is not an operatic duet in any conventional sense, any sense with which the 'Verdi italien, le vrai Verdi' had so often worked. Its musical material, so imbued by contrast, cannot be divided neatly into two semantic portions, nor even be equally shared out between performers. Resisting any attempt at fixed, linear interpretation, Verdi's music instead seems marked by the ambiguities inherent in operatic modernity

---

Commendatore. The resonance is made more appealing by the fact that the four-act French version of Mozart's opera by Deschamps and Castil-Blaze produced by the Opéra in 1866 saw the role of 'Le Commandeur' taken by Joseph David, the singer who would create Verdi's Inquisitor a year later. *Don Giovanni* was a significant work for Verdi throughout his career, starting with intense exposure to it during his composition lessons with Vincenzo Lavigna in the 1830s; see Arthur Pougin, *Verdi: An Anecdotic History of his Life and Works*, trans. James E. Matthew (London: H. Grevel, 1887), 216. For more on the significance of Mozart's opera to Verdi, see Pierluigi Petrobelli, 'Verdi e il *Don Giovanni*. Osservazioni sulla scena iniziale del *Rigoletto*', in *Atti del Io congresso internazionale di studi verdiani* (Parma: Istituto di studi verdiani, 1969), 232-46; published in translation as 'Verdi and *Don Giovanni*: On the Opening Scene of *Rigoletto*', in *Music in the Theater. Essays on Verdi and Other Composers*, trans. Roger Parker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 34-47.

itself. It is a piece at once concerned with the past and the future – and one that brings together musical signifiers of both in the fleeting sounds of the present.

Listening and remembering (2)

As already discussed, the Act 4 Duo was greeted at the premiere with a peculiar mixture of individual confidence and collective confusion.[75] It was described as both a 'model of the genre' and 'a long dialogue between basses, over symphonic workings in the orchestra'; it was heard as perfectly Schillerian, yet escaped the charge of being 'germanisé'.[76] To recall a phrase cited much earlier, it was precisely the Inquisitor's scene that Jouvin termed Verdi's 'German adventure'; but it was as frequently heard as a journey into the musical past as into the (Wagnerian) future. It was a piece understood to encompass both a 'revelation in Verdi's manner' and 'a piece of history'. What seems to have caused such difficulties in 1867 was how to deal hermeneutically with the simultaneous presence of the musical past and future; and how to sort the new from the old. Perhaps significantly, it was in attending to the same problematic meeting of musical tenses that, only a few years later, Verdi himself would trumpet forth his famous exhortation: 'Let's return to the ancient: that will be an advance'.[77] In short, the challenge presented by *Don Carlos* lay in listening to

[75] In this context, the reception of *Don Carlos* places the opera in interesting dialogue with Verdi's final work, *Falstaff*, which was similarly marked by bafflement – albeit a lack of understanding that in the Italian, fin-de-siècle context, was a cause of significantly more embarrassment than had been the case in 1867 Paris. See Emanuele Senici, 'Verdi's *Falstaff* at Italy's Fin de Siècle', *Musical Quarterly*, 85/2 (Summer 2001), 274-310.

[76] The neologism appears frequently in the *Don Carlos* reception. Its use by G. de Saint-Valry is typical: Verdi had tried to make himself 'moins le Verdi purement italien que nous connaissons qu'un Verdi germanisé'; *Le Pays* (20 March 1867); *DdP*, 167.

[77] 'Torniamo all'antico, e sarà un progresso'. Verdi used the phrase to sign off a letter dated 5 January 1871, in which he turned down Francesco Florimo's invitation to become director of the Naples Conservatoire. Ambivalent about modernity in all its guises, Verdi expressed in this letter the particularly complex relationship that it wrought between the musical past and future. Laying out his vision for modern musical education, he insisted, 'Avrei voluto, per così dire, porre un

such a semantically multivalent, unconventional iteration of an established form, encased within a work that itself emerged, problematically, from the frontier of operatic modernity.

What complicates and clarifies this situation in equal measure is the fact that the act of listening to *Don Carlos* in 1867 was both produced and marked by the same array of ambivalences and concerns that characterised the opera itself. One listener who recorded his experience of the Inquisitor's scene in striking terms – terms that betray the influence of the same operatic modernity so central to Verdi's Duo – was Théophile Gautier. He was, like the majority of his colleagues, much taken with the scene: his review pointed out that setting such political and religious dialogue to music was no mean feat, and that Verdi had done so in a masterly manner; and he was impressed in particular by the 'profonde sonorité' of the contrabassoon. But he also made a more unusual observation, one extremely telling in this context, reporting that 'the duet between Philip II and the Grand Inquisitor [...] fills almost the whole fourth act'.[78] Gautier's statement is, of course, very wide of the mark, managing as it does to consign to oblivion the greater part of the opera's penultimate act. Yet we might read the error as a sign of Gautier's personal struggle with the piece: a sign that his sense of its duration, like the wildly differing estimates of the opera's length discussed earlier, was ultimately symbolic, born of its complexity. Furthermore, and however accidental, his mistake resonates productively with

piede sul passato e l'altro sul presente e sull'avvenire, che a me non fa paura la *musica dell'avvenire*'. The letter was published in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* (22 January 1871), 35.

[78] Gautier's comment on the Duo reads in full: 'Le Duo de Philippe II et du grand inquisiteur, qui occupe presque tout le quatrième acte, est d'une grande hardiesse; cette conversation politique et religieuse n'était pas aisée à mettre en musique, mais Verdi s'en est tiré magistralement: il y a des détails fort intéressants dans l'accompagnement, où domine la profonde sonorité du contre-basson'; *Le Moniteur universel* (18 March 1867); *DdP*, 105.

the lengthy process of canonic listening (of the multiple decades required to grapple with true masterpieces) advocated by Benoît Jouvin; one might even read Gautier's comment as evidence of his absorption in the piece. Indeed, looked at thus, his mistake suggests one further way in which to understand the widespread confusion over Verdi's Grand Inquisitor: perhaps Gautier and his colleagues were concentrating so determinedly on the new, unexpectedly difficult opera – were listening as slowly as they could to the premiere's all-too-fleeting progress – that they missed much of what was happening. The crucial encounter in the Act 4 bass Duo is not, in the final reckoning, that between Church and State; rather, it is the same awkward meeting of past and future, of operatic practices old and new, that saturates the opera, worried its critics and preoccupied its composer. In a final twist of the collision of old institutional pressures and new modes of reception, Verdi's grand opera was a work at once too modern and too old-fashioned. Turned simultaneously towards the past and the future, in 1867 *Don Carlos* had only the weakest of footholds in the present.

Here we can turn back one last time to the temporal workings of Jouvin's model of canonic listening – of a process taking years rather than hours. To follow its precepts required those attending *Don Carlos* either to listen through an imagined, projected musical future or to renounce the notion of critical judgement in the present. As so many critics admitted in 1867, only time would tell. In one sense, such impatience to reach the insights of a future age might constitute a further symptom of Parisian 'railway speed': in an era of increasingly commodified time, it was hardly practical to wait eighty years to file a review of the next theatrical masterpiece. Operatic and urban modernity are once again at loggerheads. One might, though, reverse the terms here, extending

the logic of progress not forwards into a much-awaited future, but backwards into the receding past. There was, in the end, an important obverse effect of 'railway speed' in the 1860s. Not only did the pace of present existence appear to be accelerating; just as important was the fact that the past was becoming characterised by sluggishness.[79] History itself – that recently discovered archive from which would be forged the operatic future – was gradually slowing down.[80]

In my earlier discussion of Lauzières' idiosyncratic suggestion that *Don Carlos* was an opera defined by its speed, I read his description as a product of his political sympathies, as a rhetorical move never intended to be taken literally. Read backwards, however, his observation of the work's 'rapidity' might usefully gesture not so much towards a sense of acceleration endemic to Verdi's new work as to a new capacity – perhaps even a *need* – to slow down one's experience of the opera in order truly to hear it, to grasp its future import. The alternative method to Jouvin's process of canonic listening, extending constantly, ever further into the future, was to remain resolutely in the present: to slow one's experience of the work itself – to bring it, ultimately, to a standstill. Imagined thus, listening becomes suddenly, impossibly visualised. Encapsulated in Walter Benjamin's catastrophic image of history and in Charles Baudelaire's no-less terrifying flash of recognition, of 'love at last glance', slow, canonic listening is

[79] This is an idea implied in Lewis Mumford's conception of the 'doctrine of progress' (by which, if progress is assumed to exist, 'if the cities of the nineteenth century were dirty, the cities of the thirteenth century must have been six centuries dirtier') and stated explicitly by Stephen Kern, who suggests that 'accelerating technology' both 'speeded up the tempo of current existence and transformed the memory of years past, the stuff of everyone's identity, into something slow'; see Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* [with new preface by Langdon Winner] (1934; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 183 and Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* [with new preface] (1983; rpt. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 129.

[80] In this regard it is significant that John Deathridge has described *Don Carlos* as a 'sprawling melancholic drama of the baroque [...], which explores the human soul in slow motion and at the same time allows for sudden and swift changes of direction in the action'; *Wagner Beyond Good and Evil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 86.

an experience paradoxically born of and rooted in true Baudelairean *modernité*; in the poet's litany of 'the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent'.[81] The slowness of the operatic listening experience is produced, in this case, not by its particular temporal duration, but by the ongoing expanse of musical memory.[82]

For all that it was a work either praised or denigrated by so many critics because of its apparently 'modern' qualities, then, *Don Carlos* had a far more persuasive claim to a place in operatic modernity: as a work whose reception was saturated with concerns born of canonic listening. Grand opera, a genre born around the same time that operas first began to be thought of consistently as musical works, died out as that epistemological shift reached its final destination: in the twentieth century's solidified canon of works preserved from an ever more distant operatic past. But unlike those other behemothic, now largely forgotten works with which it shared the Parisian stage in 1867, *Don Carlos* is a work still known – still regularly performed – today. In Second Empire Paris, Verdi's final grand opera was a work that afforded an experience seemingly irreconcilable with the practices of everyday life in modern Paris; it demanded an altogether slower mode of consumption just as urban life seemed to be accelerating wildly. Yet the very notion that listening might be brought to a standstill – a notion that reached its own zenith in the analytical zeal and operatic edition-making of the late-twentieth century – is only possible under the particular imperatives of a specifically operatic modernity: of a cultural climate founded on the vast collective memory known as the canon; of an operatic system of production

[81] 'le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent'; Baudelaire, 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne', in *Œuvres complètes*, texte établi, présenté et annoté par Claude Pichois, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), II, 695.

[82] See also Jacques Derrida's gloss, that, 'for Baudelaire, it is the order of memory that precipitates, beyond present perception, the absolute speed of the instant'; *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 48.

concerned above all with the preservation of its own glorious past. That system of production was becoming ever more entrenched as Verdi arrived in Paris in the mid-1860s with his new work, commissioned under the old rules but heard according to the new. Decades later, at the turn of the century and the end of his long life (this final return to Paris made in thought rather than deed), he sent the opening bars of *Don Carlos*'s bass Duo as an *aide-mémoire* for a forgotten opera: bars which introduce that ancient, circling melody played by bassoons, contrabassoon and trombones. That melody is revealed at last not only as an instant from the musical past, a moment of listening brought to a standstill; above all, it is an act of memory.

CHAPTER FOUR

The sound of death: mourning and canonising in 1860s Paris

The living night is dissipated in the brightness of death.
Michel Foucault

Shortly after midday on 8 March 1869, Hector Berlioz – composer, long-serving *Débats* columnist and, latterly, eminent institutional functionary – died in his home at 4, rue de Calais in Paris. He was sixty-six. This relatively youthful demise was not unexpected: he had endured health problems for decades, most frequently in the form of an affliction that he called *névralgie* and that we would probably diagnose as nervous exhaustion.[1] More recently, the composer had suffered two bad falls while recuperating in Nice after a final, draining trip abroad to conduct concerts in St Petersburg and Moscow during the winter of 1867-8. These accidents left him bed-ridden for over a week before he was able to make the journey by train back to Paris. The story of his subsequent, fateful meeting with his physician, Dr Nélaton – in which the latter announced that Berlioz would never fully recover – was recounted by the composer himself and is repeated by several modern biographers.[2] Henry Blaze de Bury, son of his old

[1] Peter Bloom, *The Life of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 170.
[2] D. Kern Holoman, *Berlioz* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 589. The business of writing Berlioz biographies (and indeed of studying his music) has long been dominated by English-language scholars. The most important biography for much of the twentieth century was Jacques Barzun's two-volume *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950), a work whose pioneering status resulted in an elaborate, colourful account which at times sacrificed factual precision on the altar of the composer's (previously much-derided) genius. More recently, David Cairns' still more monumental study, *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness, 1832-1869* (London: Allen Lane, 1999) has appeared, ending an understandable decade-long hiatus since his first volume, *Berlioz: the Making of an Artist, 1803-1832* (London: Deutsch, 1989). Cairns also writes in technicolor detail, with evident sympathy for his subject sometimes filling in where historical evidence is lacking. Among other English-language accounts, Kern Holoman's *Berlioz* is lively but contains major inaccuracies; Hugh Macdonald's *Berlioz* (London: Dent, 1982) and Bloom's *The Life of Berlioz*, although significantly shorter, are also more rigorous. Adolphe Boschot's *L'Histoire d'un romantique: Hector Berlioz*, 3 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1906-13) long remained the major French-language biography; more recent contributions include Claude Ballif, *Berlioz* (Paris: Seuil, 1968); Henry Barraud, *Hector Berlioz* (Paris: Costard

critical sparring partner, reported his last sighting of the composer, now in terminal decline:

> c'était un soir d'automne, sur le quai; il revenait de l'Institut. Pâle, amaigri, voûté, morne et fébrile, on l'eût pris pour une ombre; son œil même, son grand œil fauve et rond, avait éteint sa flamme.[3]
>
> it was an autumn evening, on the riverbank; he was returning from the Institute. Pale, thin, bent over, gloomy and listless, he might have been taken for a shadow; even his eyes, his big, round, tawny eyes, had lost their fire.

Few details were known about a final illness that rendered Berlioz gradually more ghost than human. It seems likely that his falls in Nice were caused by two minor strokes; David Cairns suggests that a later, larger stroke may have left him more seriously paralysed.[4] Berlioz himself was apparently in no doubt that he was dying. In another much-repeated episode, the composer ventured out for the last time on 25 November 1868: to vote for his friend Charles Blanc, who was standing for election at the Institut de France.[5] Berlioz confided to Blanc, 'My days are numbered – the doctor has even stated the number'.[6] In his final months, ever-larger doses of laudanum administered as pain relief left Berlioz increasingly confused and sometimes unable to speak. According to the standard account, he spent several days in a coma before dying in the presence of his mother-in-law and of Anne-Arsène Charton-Demeur, the soprano who had created the roles of Béatrice and Didon.

Berlioz's funeral took place at 11am on 11 March, at the Eglise de la Trinité. Fellow composers, cultural grandees and figureheads of Paris's musical

---

et Cie., 1955); and Alban Ramaut, *Hector Berlioz: compositeur romantique français* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1993). In all cases, Berlioz's death and funeral are dealt with relatively briefly.

[3] Henry Blaze de Bury, 'Hector Berlioz', *Revue des deux mondes* (1 March 1869).

[4] Holoman describes how Berlioz initially fell while clambering over rocks to reach the sea, 'almost surely as a consequence of the first of a pair of strokes'; *Berlioz*, 589. Cairns suggests more tentatively that Berlioz experienced periodic aphasia and difficulties with writing in his final months because he was 'partially paralysed, perhaps by another, bigger stroke'; *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness*, 773.

[5] Cairns, *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness*, 773.

[6] Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, 296.

institutions duly turned out for the service, which involved the band of the National Guard; the orchestra and a handful of male soloists from the Opéra, conducted by Georges Hainl; the choir and organist, Charles-Alexis Chauvet, of La Trinité; and the band of Adolphe Sax. Given Berlioz's enthusiasms, the music performed was a fitting – perhaps even predictable – miscellany: the 'Introit' from Cherubini's *Requiem*; the march from Gluck's *Alceste*; the 'Lacrymosa' from Mozart's *Requiem*; the Allegretto from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony; the 'Hostias' and 'Preces' from Berlioz's own *Grande Messe des Morts*; a *Marche funèbre* composed by Henry Litolff for the funeral of Meyerbeer in 1864 (which in its new context was reported to have produced 'un effet magistral'[7]); and the 'Chœur des pèlerins' from Berlioz's *Harold en Italie*. At midday the coffin was placed on a funeral cortège drawn by two horses; the pallbearers were Charles Gounod, Emile Reyer, M. Nogent Saint-Laurent (the lawyer of the deceased) and Ambroise Thomas. Led by Berlioz's nephew and Edouard Alexandre, a friend of the composer and executor of his estate, and ushered along by an assortment of funeral marches played by the band of the National Guard, the procession made its way to Montmartre cemetery. At the graveside, orations were made by the sculptor Eugène Guillaume (representing the Académie des Beaux-Arts), by Frédéric Thomas (on behalf of the Société des gens de lettres), and by former friends Gounod and Antoine Elwart.

In sum, the funeral was, as Berlioz's great mid-twentieth-century biographer Jacques Barzun observed, 'of the conventional sort for a member of the Institute, Librarian of the Conservatoire, and Officer of the Legion of

[7] Hippolyte Nazet, 'Obsèques de Berlioz', *Le Figaro* (13 March 1869).

Honor'.[8] The many obituaries and funeral notices in Parisian newspapers and journals pursued, for the most part, a similarly standard form: many claimed – unbelievably, in the circumstances – that Berlioz died 'doucement, sans souffrances',[9] and he was praised for an apparently unflinching attitude to his own mortality.[10] Some offered Romantic embellishments to their accounts, often factually suspect (but nevertheless reproduced with enthusiasm by modern biographers) and improvised along familiar lines: the ever-flamboyant Oscar Comettant, for instance, described how Charton-Demeur had visited Berlioz on a day of particularly acute paralysis. Finding the composer unable even to smile, never mind speak, she sat at the piano and sang a few phrases from Gluck's *Armide* (the score was of course lying open):

> A ces accents de Gluck, Berlioz sort de sa torpeur; il reconnaît la cantatrice, il lui serre la main, il la remercie, il se lève, il parle. Et le voilà revenu pour l'art et par l'art, battant la mesure, applaudissant, faisant des observations sur la tradition perdue de cette musique, pleurant de joie.[11]
>
> At these strains of Gluck, Berlioz woke from his torpor; he recognised the singer, he shook her hand, he thanked her, he got up, he spoke. And there he was, brought back for art and by art, beating time, clapping, making observations on the lost tradition of this music, weeping with joy.

Such clichéd, Orphic accounts of the healing powers of music notwithstanding, Berlioz's relationship to his art – and specifically to its Parisian reception – was most often described in terms of struggle. As several repeated, echoing Thomas's

[8] Barzun, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, 296.
[9] *La Presse* (11 March 1869).
[10] M. Escudier, 'Hector Berlioz', *La France musicale* (14 March 1869); E. Reyer, *Journal des débats* (10 March 1869). Reyer was a largely unsuccessful composer twenty years Berlioz's junior; the two men were friends and (according to some accounts) Reyer was also present at the composer's deathbed. The hagiographic tone of Reyer's postmortem article must also be read in light of the fact that he was considered in some sense to be Berlioz's protégé and successor, having inherited his position as music critic for the *Journal des débats* as well as his post as Conservatoire librarian. Although Reyer was listed by the *Moniteur des pianistes* (20 March 1869) as under consideration for Berlioz's seat at the Institut de France, this enviable cachet would be awarded instead to Félicien David. Needless to say, subsequent reports on Berlioz's death published in the *Journal des débats* – a long editorial on 12 March and a feuilleton by Jules Janin on 15 March dedicated entirely to his 'ingénieux camarade' – are as eulogistic as Reyer's.
[11] Oscar Comettant, 'Hector Berlioz', *Le Ménestrel* (14 March 1869).

funeral oration, Berlioz died 'un confesseur et un martyr de sa foi musicale'.[12] Death was imagined to provide welcome respite for this 'infatigable lutteur'.[13] As Emile Mathieu de Monter put it in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*:

> La tombe seule pouvait, en effet, mettre un terme au combat de cet infatigable champion de sa propre poétique musicale qui se plaisait, – ses *Mémoires* l'avouent, – 'à faire craquer les barrières en les brisant au lieu de les franchir'; la tombe seule pouvait arrêter l'élan de cet intrépide pionnier d'avant-garde, ouvrant à l'Art les voies de l'avenir.[14]
>
> Only the grave could, in effect, put an end to the fight of this tireless champion of his own musical poetics, which tempted him – as his *Memoirs* attest – 'to cross barriers by breaking them down instead of hurdling them'; only the grave could still the momentum of this intrepid pioneer of the avant-garde, opening up for Art the avenues of the future.

Monter's remarks clearly turn on Berlioz's early reputation as a 'musician of the future' (discussed in Chapter Two) – a reputation that was barely mentioned in 1869, having been largely overshadowed by Parisian debates about a specifically Wagnerian 'musique de l'avenir'. Instead Berlioz was above all characterised in relation to the venerable 'Romantic generation' of the 1820s and 30s; writing in the high-circulation daily *Le Petit Journal*, Timothée Trimm was typical in describing how Berlioz 'managed to approach music in the same wave of ideas through which Victor Hugo approached poetry or Paul Delacroix approached painting'.[15] The fact that Monter's 'pionnier d'avant garde' was now inexorably part of the past nonetheless placed the composer in still more complex relation to the Parisian musical landscape from which he had just departed. Indeed, we might even understand the death of a composer at this time

[12] Thomas's oration was printed in full in 'Funérailles de Berlioz', *Journal des débats* (12 March 1869), 2.
[13] Gustave Chadeuil, 'Revue musicale', *Le Siècle* (16 March 1869), 1.
[14] Em. Mathieu de Monter, 'Mort et obsèques d'Hector Berlioz', *Revue et Gazette musicale* (14 March 1869), 85.
[15] 'Berlioz est arrivé à aborder la musique dans le même courant d'idées où Victor Hugo abordait la poésie, où Paul Delacroix abordait la peinture'; Timothée Trimm, 'Mort d'Hector Berlioz', *Petit Journal* (10 March 1869). The *Petit Journal*'s establishment in 1863 by Polydore Millaud as a reduced-format daily on sale for 5 centimes has been described as a revolution in the creation of a genuinely popular press in France; see Claude Bellanger, *Histoire générale de la presse française, Tome 2: de 1815 à 1871* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969), 327-8.

as an event that inevitably precipitated reassessments of the relationship between the deceased and the audience that has survived him. To borrow from the sentimental musings on Berlioz's demise presented by the *Musée des familles*, death 'elicits justice and public respect at the same time that it reveals a man's true worth'; thus even a long-forgotten figure might, in death, be lauded as *un grand homme*.[16] But in reality Berlioz was hardly forgotten when he died; nor, for the most part, was he now suddenly acclaimed a great composer. As Barzun's litany quoted above suggests, he was respected above all as an institutional figure, a critic and a musical bureaucrat. His posthumous status as a composer was much more problematic, continuing to provoke polemical responses – in certain cases couched in terms whose brutality is surprising in articles appearing a matter of days after his death. At least as borne out by the critical discourse published in its immediate aftermath, Berlioz's struggles were not, *pace* Monter, over as he breathed his last. His widely reported *envoi*, 'Enfin, on va jouer ma musique', places his career in complex relation to an operatic culture based predominantly on a canon of regularly performed, established works; but its full ironic significance will emerge only at the end of this chapter.

Death has, at least by means of metaphor, haunted each of my previous chapters. It is present most obviously in Chapter One, in which revived operatic 'classics' were felt by many Second Empire critics to be marked by the chill of the grave – and in which Pauline Viardot, by association, appeared at fatal risk of catching cold. More broadly, amid the ubiquitous discussion of resurrections and miraculous returns to life, the performance of old operatic masterpieces such as

[16] 'elle attire à soi la justice et les respects publics, en même temps qu'elle donne à l'homme sa valeur véritable'; 'Chronique du mois', *Musée des familles*, 36 (1868-9), 220.

Orphée were felt to signal death for the continuing production of new works by living composers. Chapter Two saw Richard Wagner – another threat posed to those living (French) composers – labelled not only the progenitor of 'la musique de l'avenir' but also its coldblooded murderer; worse still, the music of the future was feared to be found only by looking to the past, to what was already dead. Chapter Three dealt with the troubled relationship between Verdi's *Don Carlos* and the 'immortal' status it had been hoped to achieve – and with a mode of operatic listening increasingly detached from the duration of the individual human life. Indeed, the notion of immortality (more or less explicitly stated) has surfaced time and again in my discussions of operatic canon formation in Paris during the Second Empire. In this chapter, however, I want to shift from this purely metaphorical vein to taking literally the implications of such mortuary rhetoric.

What concerns me here are the same epistemological shifts discussed elsewhere in this dissertation: the tendency in Parisian operatic culture of the 1860s to assess new works according to a critical framework conditioned by increasingly widespread revivals of old masterpieces; the gradual shifting of emphasis from the production of new works to revivals, so often couched in the language of resurrection; the fact, ultimately, that the future of opera seemed to be ever more bound up in its past. But in this final chapter I want to re-contextualise these developments by placing them in the broader contemporary context of changing attitudes towards death. My principal subjects are Meyerbeer and Rossini, two key figures in Paris's operatic life during the 1860s, who died

in 1864 and 1868 respectively.[17] While their deaths, funerals and mortuary discourses share marked generic features with that of Berlioz, both their complex national identities and their closer associations with (not to mention greater success on) the operatic stage produce markedly different and more strikingly characterised responses in each case. These free-standing but productively interlinked 'case studies' will foreground above all the shifting relationship between the fate of the man and that of his music. Rooted in an era when attitudes to and the treatment of death itself were developing in significant ways, they seek to juxtapose aspects of a composer's inevitable physical frailty with anxieties about operatic posterity, anxieties that caused the success of new works to be measured ever more in terms of their putative immortality.

Haussmannising death

On Wednesday 21 August 1867 *Le Figaro* published a letter from a woman named Olympe Audouard, addressed to Baron Haussmann. It appeared on the second page, alongside news of Haussmann's latest building works and following a report entitled 'Une Odeur de Paris', which called on the city's butchers to sanitise their handling of animal carcasses. In both cases, the juxtaposition was horribly apt. Audouard's letter concerned a plan she had read about in a recent edition of the newspaper: Haussmann was proposing to build a

[17] One important (and unusual) precedent for such a reception history centred on a composer's death in nineteenth-century France is Delphine Mordey, 'Auber's Horses: *L'Année térrible* and Apocalyptic Narratives', *19th-Century Music* 30/3 (Spring 2007), 213-29. Mordey places Auber's death in 1871 in the context of 'a list of obituaries between 1868 and 1872 that reads like a who's who of French Romanticism' as central figures such as Berlioz (1869), Sainte-Beuve (1869) and Fétis (1871) of the 'generation of 1820' were lost to Parisian cultural life (214). Her study links the 'apocalyptic narrative' of a musical regime-change across the caesura of the Paris Commune to discourse surrounding Auber's (conveniently symbolic) demise, arguing for hitherto ignored continuities in musical culture as the Second Empire was replaced by the Third Republic. Mordey's subtle mode of historical excavation was influential in the conception of my own project in this chapter.

new boulevard cutting through the cemetery of Montmartre, in which her son was buried. She was, she explained, too sickened by the idea to give a full account of her objections, but she went on:

> je vous jure, monsieur le préfet de la Seine, que moi vivante, on ne violera pas la tombe de mon enfant, vos démolisseurs auront à passer sur mon corps pour porter une main sacrilège sur le monument qui recouvre les restes de mon fils bien-aimé.[18]
>
> I swear, Monsieur Prefect of the Seine, that, so long as I live, you will not desecrate my child's tomb; your demolition men will have to walk over my dead body to lay a sacrilegious finger on the monument that shelters the remains of my beloved son.

Asking whether he thought that nothing – not even death – remained sacred to the French people, Audouard assured Haussmann that he would have to defeat all 'pauvres mères' such as herself before carrying out his proposal. She signed off with a sober reminder: 'great men, kings of the earth, have always bowed respectfully before places of rest; act like them'.[19]

According to Audouard's later published gloss on the incident, Haussmann never replied.[20] Nor did Paris's grieving mothers succeed in preventing his boulevard. A petition signed by families whose permanent concessions in the cemetery were under threat was overruled by the Conseil d'état; it was then carried to the Senate, where it precipitated a debate as to whether, in the words of *Le Temps*, 'respect pour le culte des morts' would be violated if the Senate voted to uphold the earlier ruling in Haussmann's favour. Following a discussion apparently characterised by 'une animation assez peu

[18] 'Correspondance', *Le Figaro* (21 August 1867), 2. Officially a non-political paper, *Le Figaro* was founded in 1826 and relaunched by Hippolyte de Villemessant and Benoît Jouvin in 1854, initially as a weekly publication. Its first daily edition appeared on 16 November 1866 and by October 1867 its circulation was greater than that of any other newspaper bar the regime's own organ, *Le Moniteur universel du soir*; see Pierre Albert, Gilles Feyel and Jean-François Picard, *Documents pour l'histoire de la presse nationale au XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Sciences Humaines, [1977]), 31-3.
[19] 'Les grands, les rois de la terre, devant le champ du repos, se sont toujours inclinés respectueusement, faites comme eux'; 'Correspondance', *Le Figaro* (21 August 1867), 2.
[20] Audouard, *Lettre à M. Haussmann, Préfet de la Seine* (Paris: Balitout, 1868), 8.

habituelle au Palais de Luxembourg', the petition was defeated by fifty votes to thirty-eight. Even the 'cult of the dead', it seems, was powerless to halt the modernisation of Paris.[21]

It would be all too easy to figure this encounter between Haussmann and Audouard as one driven by the ever-more-rapacious demands of what we might term 'urban modernity': as a casual, exigency-driven imposition made on ancient practices surrounding the dead, their physical remains and their places of rest. But, as Philippe Ariès reminds us in his now-canonical study of attitudes towards mortality in the West, death itself is historically contingent.[22] More importantly in the present context, Ariès locates in the nineteenth century some of the most radical shifts of his vast, millennium-long narrative. Indeed, the implicitly venerable 'culte des morts' evoked in protest against Haussmann's plans in the late 1860s was itself, Ariès suggests, a relatively recent innovation, and one characteristic of what he calls the age of the 'beautiful death'.[23] According to this sequence of events, death was redefined during the nineteenth century, under the changing influences and competencies of medicine on the one hand and religion on the other. It became simultaneously understood both as 'pure negativity' – as a basic absence of physical life – and as an opportunity for spectacle, even for explicit aestheticisation. The latter, the 'beautiful death', nonetheless and paradoxically also marked the beginnings of what Ariès calls 'the invisible death': the gradual removal of death from the public sphere to the private,

[21] *Le Temps* (12 January 1868), 1.
[22] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981).
[23] Ariès locates the beginnings of a 'cult of the dead' in the late eighteenth century; it was nonetheless a phenomenon at its height in the mid-nineteenth century, epitomised by monumental tombs and funeral ceremonies and elaborate mourning practices. Ariès even goes so far as to call it 'the great popular religion of France' during the nineteenth century; see *The Hour of Our Death*, 508-20 and 542.

individual spaces of the bedroom and, in time, the hospital.[24] As he observes, 'this [beautiful] death is no longer death, it is an illusion of art. Death has started to hide'.[25]

Such broad narratives are undoubtedly one context for this chapter; that Berlioz's final hours were described as painless despite the composer's own emphasis on the physical agony he suffered throughout his lifetime is symptomatic of the 'beautiful death' and enabled by the spatial separation between Berlioz's deathbed and those reporting and reading about his demise. More significant still, however, were concomitant shifts in attitude and practice to what might follow the moment when life departed, hidden and clinically defined as it increasingly was by the mid century. These shifts concerned at once the physical afterlife of the corpse – the question of its most fitting treatment both for the deceased and for the community of the living – and the still more difficult matter of the immortality (or not) of the soul. And while certainty in the ancient comfort that 'One short sleep past, we wake eternally' was gradually eroded by the changing roles and forms of religion in urban society, further challenges to the established topographies and epistemologies of the dead were posed by broader social and political developments.

Of prime importance here, once again, was Haussmann: his controversial plans affecting the Montmartre cemetery was not his only high-profile brush with mortality during his term as Prefect. More broadly, his project of urban renovation coincided with a serious crisis in Parisian management of its dead. The problem had been developing for some time: as the city's population grew,

[24] This gradual privatisation of death traced by Ariès during the nineteenth century clearly relates to similar social developments explored by Michel Foucault in *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2003) and, with more immediate historical purchase, Richard Sennett in *The Fall of Public Man* (1977; rpt. London: Penguin, 2002).
[25] Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 473.

the sheer number of corpses inevitably rose. Simply finding space to bury so many became ever more problematic – particularly given that a law passed in 1804 had prohibited burials within the city boundaries for sanitary reasons. The situation became unsustainable following the 'loi d'annexion' of 16 June 1859. This new legislation not only brought a further eleven communes (and smaller parts of others) into Parisian jurisdiction; it also meant that several major cemeteries were suddenly located within the city limit – the situation explicitly proscribed in 1804. Although, in the event, the Conseil d'état decided that these cemeteries could continue to operate, further problems remained: many of these inner-city burial grounds were already at capacity or would soon become so. Haussmann's solution was, as usual, on a monumental scale. He suggested the replacement of Paris's old cemeteries with a single, 800-hectare site at Méry-sur-Oise, some distance away from Paris to the northwest.[26]

A pamphlet by Parisian funeral director Léon Vafflard, published in support of Haussmann's plan, explained that funeral ceremonies would continue to be conducted within the city; the corpse and attendees would then be transported by a special train to the cemetery, which would be serviced by multiple stations, each equipped with several chapels. The journey, Vafflard assured readers, would take no more than 25 minutes, and the trains would run between eight and ten times per day, ensuring that

> Ces trains pourront donc emmener, au fur et à mesure de leur arrivée, les corps ainsi que les parents ou amis qui voudront les accompagner jusqu'à destination, sans leur faire subir aucun retard fâcheux.[27]

[26] See Michel Ragon, *L'Espace de la mort: Essai sur l'architecture, la décoration et l'urbanisme funéraires* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981), especially 277-86.
[27] Léon Vafflard, *Notice sur les champs de sépultures anciens et moderns de la ville de Paris* (Paris: Charles de Mourges Frères, 1867), 30-1.

> These trains will thus transport – as and when they arrive – both the corpses and the relatives or friends who wish to accompany them to their destination, without making them endure any unpleasant delay.

In an age so famously in thrall to 'railway time', the dead could, it seems, observe timetables as efficient as those ruling over the living.[28] Haussmann's entire scheme was, in other words, symptomatic of a particular, utopian attitude towards the treatment of the dead at mid-century. As Vafflard expressed it, 'Let's hope that, in a future that scientific progress allows us to glimpse, the current system of burials will be replaced by a method both more rational and more suited to perpetuating the memory of those who were dear to us'.[29] Or, to put such rationalisation in still more historically resonant terms, it was not only Paris and its living inhabitants that were taken in hand by the Prefect's blueprints and 'démolisseurs': the city's dead and their spaces were also subject to Haussmannisation.[30]

As is clear from Vafflard's hopes for the future as much as from Audouard's attempt to protect her son's tomb, Haussmann's radical interventions in the city's burial practices also had to accommodate an imperative of

[28] Haussmann's huge, rail-linked cemetery at Méry-sur-Oise was never built; but similar plans had already come to fruition outside London. Indeed, the so-called 'London Necropolis' – which opened in 1854 and remained operational until the Second World War, reached by direct train from Waterloo Station – was a point of reference and xenophobically-tinged comparison for many in France who were horrified by Haussmann's proposal. For more on the Brookwood Necropolis (as it was more officially called), see James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 142-5. There was a certain grim irony in such uses (either proposed or actual) of the railway: train travel was itself, according to one line of popular medical thought, believed directly to reduce one's life expectancy by subjecting passengers to constant hurrying (or, to use more modern terminology, 'stress'); see, for instance, Alfred Haviland, *'Hurried to Death', or A Few Words of Advice on the Danger of Hurry and Excitement Especially Addressed to Railway Travellers* (London: Henry Renshaw, 1868), especially 9-15 and 22-6. For a modern analysis of such anxieties, see Nicholas Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42-6.

[29] 'Espérons que, dans un avenir que le progrès de la science nous permettent d'entrevoir, le système actuel des inhumations sera remplacé par un mode plus rational et plus propre à perpétuer le souvenir de ceux qui nous furent chers'; Vafflard, *Notice sur les champs de sépultures*, 2.

[30] Ragon puts this idea of a Haussmannisation of the dead in stronger, more critical terms: 'En même temps qu'il détruit le Paris médiéval, et du même coup le Paris populaire [...], en même temps qu'il expulse la classe laborieuse qui s'identifiait à "classe dangereuse" [...], Haussmann médite une autre déportation: celle des morts'; Ragon, *L'espace de la mort*, 277.

remembrance. Indeed, as with the destruction and renovation of the city as a whole, the putative Haussmannisation of death in 1860s Paris was counterbalanced by an attendant turn to the past: a newly urgent need to preserve memories for posterity, whether through the conservation of particular *lieux de mémoire* or some other, more self-consciously modern process or ritual. Haussmann's dealings with the physical remains of the dead in living Paris was thus accompanied by widespread attempts to define the place of the dead in posterity. With the old Catholic doctrine of the afterlife irrevocably shaken if not yet dismantled, nineteenth-century France witnessed the rise of what Thomas A. Kselman has called 'alternative afterlives'.[31] Pointing to a new 'politicisation of the afterlife' during the French Revolution (above all to Robespierre's declaration on the day before his execution that 'death is not an eternal sleep! [...] *Death is the beginning of immortality*'), Kselman names spiritualism, positivism and spiritism as the principal alternatives to a traditional Catholic conception of life after death.[32] To these I would like to add a further, operatically specific form of immortality: one located in the rhetoric surrounding canon formation in Second Empire operatic culture.

Exit Meyerbeer: 'A posterity of works conceived or as yet undreamt'[33]

Giacomo Meyerbeer died in Paris, aged 72, on 2 May 1864. The German-born composer had dominated the city's operatic scene from the 1830s to the 1850s,

[31] Thomas A. Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife in Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 8.
[32] Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife in Modern France*, 125-6. For more on the emergence of 'alternative afterlives' generally, as a corollary of shifting attitudes to death during the nineteenth century as well as a consequence of the rise of the secular society and increased weight accorded scientific epistemologies, see *Ibid*., 125-62.
[33] 'une postérité d'œuvres nées ou à naître'; F. de Lagenevais [Pseud. Henry Blaze de Bury], *Revue des deux mondes* (November 1868), 766.

becoming virtually synonymous with its most prestigious genre, grand opera. His was a long sojourn on the Parisian stage – after a brief Italian career, and before that a still briefer German one – which began emphatically with the acclaimed premiere of *Robert le Diable* in 1831. At the time of his death, he was still professionally active and expected to remain so for some time: his latest work, *L'Africaine*, was finally in rehearsal after a prolonged, critic-bemoaned gestation. Its route towards the stage had been tortuous even by Meyerbeer's patiently exacting standards. Having first conceived of the opera as early as 1837, he returned to it sporadically over the decades that followed. By the end of 1863 *L'Africaine* was finally complete, including orchestration (although he made one final addition – an introduction – which was finished on 7 April 1864): the score was sent off to the copyists; suitable singers were located; rehearsals began.[34]

Rumours nonetheless continued to circulate wildly as operatic Paris lay in wait. The generally prosaic Gustave Bertrand entered a critical fray that had begun to question the score's very existence when he referred in September 1863 to 'la trop fantastique *Africaine*', a work whose 'deceptive outline ha[ving] appeared for a moment on the horizon, has once again disappeared – for how long? we don't know – into the most distant haze of the desert'.[35] The following month, on the front page of his own *La France musicale*, Marie Escudier set about some musical detective work: Meyerbeer, he observed, was remaining in Paris for the winter – despite the 'fonctions importantes' that usually bound him to the Prussian court in Berlin. Why else would he remain, Escudier observed, if not in preparation for an anticipated production of *L'Africaine* at the Opéra?

[34] For a clear summary of the long, complex genesis of *L'Africaine*, see Reiner Zimmermann, *Giacomo Meyerbeer: eine Biographie nach Dokumenten* (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1991), 400-7.
[35] 'la trop fantastique *Africaine*, dont la fallacieuse silhouette avait reparu pour un moment à l'horizon, a, de nouveau, disparu, et pour combien de temps? on l'ignore, dans les brumes les plus lointaines du désert'; Bertrand, *Le Ménestrel* (6 September 1863).

What is more, he wrote, the composer 'has never seemed to us more energetic, and – to be blunt – more youthful than at present'.[36] Meyerbeer himself, it seems, embodied the future potential of his new, still unknown work, the hopes for which, in the words of Bertrand, 'dominent tout';[37] already in August *L'Univers musical* had gone so far as to claim pre-emptively (and on what must assume was zero authority) that '*L'Africaine* est un chef-d'œuvre' – albeit one yet to be prised from its composer's protective grasp.[38] Such media interest in Meyerbeer's new work during the final six months of his life was sustained by the fact that many hoped *L'Africaine* would prove a masterwork to rival the unassailable peaks of his earlier triumphs in the genre, *Robert le Diable* and *Les Huguenots*, not to mention Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*; and that it would thus fill what was felt to be a void in the succession of new works presented by the Opéra.

In the event, *L'Africaine* made a swift transition from hotly-anticipated masterpiece to precarious posthumous monument. On 22 April 1864, Meyerbeer took to his bed; his doctor diagnosed intestinal invagination, the consequences of which are potentially dire even today. In the hair-raising context of nineteenth-century medicine, the prognosis was almost always fatal.[39] In Meyerbeer's case, his doctor called in the assistance of no less an authority than the physician of Emperor Napoleon III, but to no avail. The composer died just over a week later. In the circumstances, the widespread newspaper reports of Meyerbeer dying both 'sans douleur' and conscious to the last seem unlikely: as in the case of Berlioz

[36] 'Jamais Meyerbeer ne nous a paru plus vigoureux, et disons le mot, plus jeune qu'à présent'; M. Escudier, *La France musicale* (18 October 1863).
[37] Bertrand, *Le Ménestrel* (15 November 1863).
[38] S.M., *L'Univers musical* (27 August 1863).
[39] See, for instance, Austin Flint M.D., *Treatise on the Principles and Practice of Medicine Designed for the Use of Practitioners and Students of Medicine* (Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea, 1866), 355.

five years later, the insistence on such an improbably 'good' ending says more about the ways in which death was being idealised in the 1860s than it does about the details of Meyerbeer's particular mortal struggle.[40]

The great man's death, and the elaborate funeral ceremony mounted in Paris before his coffin was sent by train back to Berlin, received wide coverage in both the musical and general press. Much of the writing was highly repetitive. A standard Francophile version of Meyerbeerian biography emerged: one that cast his early compositional adventures in Germany and Italy as the necessarily pedestrian foundations for spectacular transcendence in his true, adopted *patrie*; as *L'Univers musical* had observed even before Meyerbeer's death, 'how many are there, among foreign composers, who are more French than the Prussian Meyerbeer?'[41] Discussion of his works concentrated on the grand operas now routinely referred to as his masterpieces – *Robert le Diable* (1831), *Les Huguenots* (1836) and, perhaps more surprisingly, *Le Prophète* (1849). His later

[40] Meyerbeer's biographers have not, in general, shown much interest in the details of his death; Henry Blaze de Bury's early contribution, *Meyerbeer: ses œuvres, sa vie et son temps* (Paris: Heugel, 1865), is typical in positioning it as an unfortunate interruption in the production of his final work. Two other 1860s biographies that provide fuller accounts of Meyerbeer's final hours are Arthur Pougin's rapidly published *Meyerbeer: Notes biographiques* (Paris: Tresse, 1864), 37-9 and Hermann Mendel's *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Eine Biographie* (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1868), 96-8. Among the composer's modern biographies, Jennifer Jackson provides a brief overview of the reception of his death in her *Reputation without Cause? A Composer and his Critics* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 171-2, albeit one in which the date of his death is incorrectly given as 4 May; and Heinz and Gudrun Becker's *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Ein Leben in Briefen* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1983) provides a short account of his demise as background to his final letter (to his daughter Cäcilie, on 8 March 1864). More detailed descriptions appear in Berndt W. Wessling's colourful *Meyerbeer: Wagners Beute – Heines Geisel* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1984), 272 and Zimmermann's *Giacomo Meyerbeer*, 407-8.

[41] 'parmi les compositeurs étrangers combien en est-il qui soient plus français que le prussien Meyerbeer'; Van Elpen, *L'Univers musical* (1 October 1863). It is hardly surprising that the length of reports and obituaries increased as time passed. Short news bulletins appeared on 3 May 1864, only hours after the composer's death, in the *Journal des débats*, *La Presse* and *Le Temps*; further articles subsequently appeared in all three newspapers, providing additional details and setting to a considerable extent the tone and content of reports that followed: see *La Presse* (4 May 1865); *Le Temps* (4 May 1864) and the *Journal des débats* (5 May 1864). Longer reports emerged over the next week, particularly in the wake of the composer's funeral on 6 May; see, for instance, Paul Ferry, 'Meyerbeer', *La Comédie* (8 May 1864); Charles Desolme, 'Mort de Giacomo Meyerbeer', *L'Europe artiste* (8 May 1864); Marie Escudier, 'Giacomo Meyerbeer', *La France musicale* (8 May 1864), 141-3. Fully half of the 8 May edition of *Le Ménestrel* was taken up by articles about the composer and the ceremony held at the Gare du Nord.

opéras comiques, *L'Etoile du Nord* (1854) and *Le Pardon de Ploërmel* (1859, better known as *Dinorah*), occupied supporting roles, while the as-yet unheard *L'Africaine* lurked uncertainly in the background.

Beyond the biographical survey and compositional round-up common to even the shortest reports, several important themes emerge. It is immediately clear that, unlike Berlioz (whose famous physical frailty had long contributed to his Romantic struggles), Meyerbeer's death was unexpected. In some cases, this was couched as common-sense observation, reports noting that he had shown few previous signs of ill-health and certainly no indication of imminent demise.[42] Elsewhere, though, there were bolder leaps of the imagination: Paul Ferry, writing in *La Comédie*, suggested that Meyerbeer 'had such immortality ahead of him that his sudden loss was in the realm of the unforeseen'.[43] It was as though the boundary between life and death had accidently been overlooked, with its unexpected crossing then intruding as an inconvenient practicality. Meyerbeer's death marked an interruption of the composer's ongoing production of the raw material of artistic immortality; by dying, he had in some sense failed to vindicate those critics who had earmarked him for timeless greatness.

The one person who *had* seen the moment of his greatness flicker, and had made arrangements accordingly, was the composer himself. As ghoulishly recounted in the press, Meyerbeer had left a sealed envelope, labelled, *To be opened after my death*. This document contained detailed instructions (in German) as to what should be done before returning the author's corpse to

[42] A. Nefetzer, for instance, remarked that Meyerbeer's 'tempérament robuste, sous des apparences délicates, semblait encore lui promettre un long avenir'; *Le Temps* (3 May 1864).
[43] 'Il avait devant lui tant d'immortalité que sa perte foudroyante était dans les contingents de l'imprévu'; Paul Ferry, *La Comédie* (8 May 1864). Ferry was co-founder and editor-in-chief of the bi-weekly paper (which ran from 1863 to 1884), and was considered one of the most promising young writers in the Parisian *petite presse* during the 1860s; see Léon Rossignol, *Nos petits journalistes* (Paris: Librairie Gosselin, 1865), 160-1.

Berlin, where he wished to be buried in the family tomb.[44] A French translation appeared in several newspapers. To summarise: Meyerbeer was to be left uncovered on his death bed for four days; on the fifth day, incisions were to be made on his wrists and ankles; in the meantime, he was to be watched over by two guards, day and night, for any signs of life; if he had to be moved to a mortuary, bells were to be attached to his hands and feet, enabling an alarm to sound should he wake up.[45] Meyerbeer was, it seems, terrified of being buried alive. In life, the idea that his death was an impossibility had been used by Ferry as a sign of artistic worth. Here, though, the terms of the compliment return in altogether nastier ways, becoming entangled in a nightmare scenario that must be prevented at all costs.[46]

---

[44] 'Pour être ouvert après ma mort'; J.L. Heugel, *Le Ménestrel* (15 May 1864). A slightly different account appears in the *Journal des débats* (5 May 1864), 2.

[45] The full text, originally translated in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* and reproduced in *Le Ménestrel* (15 May 1864), reads as follows: 'Je veux que les points suivants soient observés après mon décès:

On doit me laisser couché sur mon lit la figure découverte, tel que j'était avant de mourir, pendant quatre jours, et le cinquième jour on pratiquera des incisions sur l'artère brachiale ainsi qu'au pied. Après quoi on conduira mon corps à Berlin, où je veux être enterré dans la tombe de ma bien-aimée mère. Si la place y manquait, je prie de me coucher à côté de mes deux chers enfants, morts à un âge peu avancé.

Si je devais mourir éloigné des miens, les mêmes dispositions doivent / être observées, et deux gardiens veilleront mon corps jour et nuit afin d'observer si je ne donne aucun signe de vie. Si, par effet des circonstances, je dois être transporté dans une maison d'observation (*Leichenhaus*), on me mettre, comme c'est l'habitude, de petites sonnettes aux mains et aux pieds, afin de tenir les gardiens en éveil. Ayant toujours redouté d'être enterré vivant, j'ai voulu par les dispositions qui précèdent empêcher tout retour à la vie. Que la volonté de Dieu soit faite et que son nom soit sanctifié et béni dans le ciel et sur terre. Amen.'

[46] Nor was the composer alone in his fears about premature burial at this time: in 1866, the Senate debated a petition to extend the legal minimum time that must elapse between legally declared death and burial from 24 to 48 hours, in order to reduce the possibility of accidental live burial. The petition was unsuccessful; but, writing one year later, Léon Vafflard – the same Vafflard who had supported Haussmann's necropolis – continued the cause, insisting that 'il est incontestable, avère, que *la cessation du bruit de cœur* n'est pas *un signe certain de la mort*, et que, en définitive, *il n'y a qu'un signe constant*, c'est *la décomposition cadavérique*. *Il n'y a qu'un moyen toujours sûr de prévenir l'inhumation précipitée, c'est d'en différer l'accomplissement jusqu'à ce que les signes de décomposition se soient manifestés*' [original italics]; see Vafflard, *Notice sur les champs de sépultures*, 79. Meyerbeer's instructions would, naturally, have led to the appearance of precisely such irrefutable evidence of death: *Le Temps* reports on 7 May that, the composer's wishes having been followed to the letter, it was only the previous evening that his corpse had finally been embalmed by the well known doctor Félix Gannal. Once again, a strongly idealised vision of death seems to inform the account, which insisted that, 'L'injection opérée par son nouveau procédé a fait disparaître instantanément toute trace de corruption'; *Le Temps* (7 May 1864).

In dealing with Meyerbeer's particular fears, as in so many peculiarities of the morbid past, Ariès has much to tell us. There were, he writes, two particular historical peaks in concern about mistakenly diagnosed death. Both occurred during the eighteenth century: one was spearheaded by doctors in the 1740s; another was provoked by an early campaign to move cemeteries out of town centres in the 1770s. Stories of live burials circulated freely at these times, and various practices evolved in order to tackle the problem. Perhaps the most effective was a new legal obligation in late-eighteenth-century France: from 1792 death had to be verified by two witnesses. That at least one of these ought to be a doctor was an idea increasingly supported from the early nineteenth century.[47] All this meant that, by the 1860s, Meyerbeer's fears were distinctly old-fashioned: doctors denounced the whole notion as alarmist and born of an earlier, superstitious, medically ineffectual age. Although the exact moment of death often remained uncertain, listening for a heartbeat was now recognised as essential. Partly as a result, public interest in reported cases of live burial seemed to wane. By the second half of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, attitudes towards mortality had changed: as death became ever more medicalised – and ever more hidden from view – this particular fantasy of living death lost its popular capacity to fascinate.[48]

Aside from the lurid fascination of the composer's extreme pre-mortem instructions, Meyerbeer's sudden absence from the Parisian operatic scene gave rise to significant critical anxiety. His death was seen not only as the irreversible loss of an individual, but as a potentially fatal blow to operatic culture in general. The announcement in the *Revue de Paris* was especially doom-laden: 'Europe

[47] Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 396-401.
[48] Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 403.

has lost a great composer; there are only three living ones left: Rossini, who doesn't write anymore; Auber, who doesn't want to write any more; and Verdi, who seems to me to be having a short rest.'[49] Part of the problem was Meyerbeer's special status as a purveyor of what one critic called 'polyglot' music;[50] as Albert de Lasalle put it, the composer 'wanted and was able to marry German science to Italian grace and French good sense'.[51] With the partial exception of his compatriot Richard Wagner, no other living composer could claim such consummately mixed national affiliations. Following Meyerbeer's exit, the pressure was on to locate the next great figure on the international stage. But, of course, 'international' here must be understood in a cosmopolitan but thoroughly Parisian context, as Charles Desolme made clear in *L'Europe artiste*: 'The death of Meyerbeer increases the artistic influence of Verdi and Gounod. We must hope that these two composers, whose merit is assured, will push themselves to fulfil their talents and to raise themselves to the rank they can aspire to occupy on the stage of our Académie impériale de musique'.[52]

Such comments addressed nothing less than the future of opera; yet, in the immediate aftermath of Meyerbeer's death, his fabled internationalism caused more pressing and practical concerns. As mentioned earlier, the composer had requested the return of his corpse to his native Prussia, for burial in Berlin.

---

[49] 'l'Europe a perdu un grand compositeur; il n'en reste que trois vivants: Rossini, qui n'écrit plus; Auber, qui ne veut plus écrire, et Verdi, qui m'a tout l'air de se reposer un peu'; *Revue de Paris* (May-June 1864), 387.

[50] 'sa musique est polyglotte'; *Nouveaux samedis* (1865), 212.

[51] 'Il a voulu et il a pu marier la science des Allemands à la grâce italienne et au bon sens français'; Albert de Lasalle, *Revue de Paris* (May-June 1864), 187. Alongside his career as a journalist, Lasalle (1833-1886) authored several books about French music history and opera in contemporary Paris.

[52] 'La mort de Meyerbeer élargit l'influence artistique des noms de MM. Verdi et Ch. Gounod. Il faut espérer que ces deux compositeurs dont le mérite n'est point contesté, tiendront à compléter leur talent et à s'élever au rang qu'ils peuvent ambitionner d'occuper sur la scène de notre Académie impériale de musique'; Charles Desolme, *L'Europe artiste* (8 May 1864). Desolme (1817-1877), who also wrote under the pseudonym 'Minimus', was the paper's founder and editor-in-chief as well as a contributor to *L'Orchestre* and the author of several vaudevilles.

What is more, his will was not to be opened until his body was safely back on Teutonic soil: the fate of his works – most pressingly for Parisians, of *L'Africaine* – was unknown. Such circumstances presented major obstacles to operatic Paris's collective assertion that Meyerbeer was one of its own. Critics, meanwhile, clamoured to assert his ultimate, essential Frenchness. Joseph d'Ortigue reasoned thus in *Le Ménestrel*:

> Meyerbeer n'est pas seulement Français parce que ses principaux opéras sont Français, mais parce qu'ils sont écrits dans le goût et l'esprit français, parce qu'il s'est fait lui-même Français [...]. Il s'est fait Français par les mœurs, les habitudes, par son commerce si bienveillant, si plein d'élégance et d'urbanité, sa conversation si fine, si déliée, si façonnée aux surprises, aux nuances du langage des salons [...].[53]

> Meyerbeer isn't French merely because his principal operas are French, but because they're written according to French taste and in the French *esprit*; because he made himself French [...], by his customs, his habits, by his dealings – so kind, so full of elegance and politeness – his conversation, so sharp and subtle, so well-shaped to the surprises and nuances of salon language [...]

Similar sentiments abound elsewhere. The debate over which country had the greater claim to Meyerbeer's physical and compositional remains nonetheless found its focal point in the funeral ceremony held in the French capital before the composer's coffin was sent on its way across the Rhine.

The ceremony was a far grander affair than Berlioz's funeral, and one complicated by the need subsequently to dispatch the coffin not to a Parisian burial ground but onwards to Berlin. It was organised by a committee that included the operatic *éminence grise* Daniel Auber, Emile Perrin (director of the Opéra) and the composer's nephew Jules Beer, as well as a group representing the ample reach of Second Empire theatrical bureaucracy. Taking place on Friday 6 May, it began officially around 1pm: the cortège left the Meyerbeer residence on rue de Montaigne, pulled by six horses and accompanied by

[53] Joseph D'Ortigue, 'Giacomo Meyerbeer', *Le Ménestrel* (8 May 1864). D'Ortigue (1802-1866) was a prolific, widely respected critic (and one frequently at odds with Fétis, the other *grand homme* of Parisian musical criticism); he had taken over the editorship of *Le Ménestrel* in 1863.

military bands playing hits from his operas. Rossini, as the most distinguished member of Second Empire Paris's operatic nobility, had been offered a place as a pallbearer but turned it down, remaining indoors as the cortège passed his house. The procession took in the Champs Elysées as well as the Opéra-Comique and Opéra on its route through the newly rearranged boulevards of modern Paris; at around 3pm, after almost two hours of mournfully slow progress, it arrived at the Gare du Nord.[54] *La Presse* offered the following description of the mise-en-scène within:

> Le cortège funèbre de Meyerbeer est arrivé à trois heures dans l'ancienne gare du Nord, dont les murs étaient tendus de draperies funèbres ornées du chiffre du défunt et de cartouches où on lisait les titres de ses œuvres. A l'entrée, un orgue élevé sur une tribune dominait le quai de départ. Enfin, et sur la voie, était établi un magnifique cénotaphe étage entouré de sept lampadaires d'argent. Derrière le cénotaphe et à une certaine distance, on voyait le wagon funèbre, tout tondu de draperies noires, qui emporte ce soir le corps de l'illustre maître. Entre ce wagon et le cénotaphe on avait dressé une tribune destinée aux orateurs. Enfin, à l'entrée du quai et longeant le trottoir, se tenaient les orchestres et chœurs de l'Opéra, de l'Opéra-Comique et du Théâtre Lyrique, la musique de M. A. Sax, la société chorale Teutonia et les musiques militaires de la garde nationale, des voltigeurs de la garde de la gendarmerie impériale, et de la garde de Paris.[55]
>
> Meyerbeer's funeral procession arrived at three o'clock at the old Gare du Nord, the walls of which were hung with funeral drapes decorated with the coat of arms of the deceased and with placards bearing the titles of his works. At the entrance, an organ, elevated on risers, dominated the platform. On the track itself, a magnificent cenotaph had been erected, flanked by seven silver street lamps. Some distance away behind the cenotaph, and completely covered in black drapes, you could see the funeral carriage, which was to transport the body of the illustrious composer this very evening. Between the carriage and the cenotaph there was a stand intended for the speakers. Finally, at the platform entrance and running the length of the station corridor, were positioned the orchestras and choruses of the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique, and the Théâtre Lyrique, Adolphe Sax's band, the Teutonia choral society and the military musicians of the National Guard, of the Light Infantry of the Imperial Police Guard, and of the Paris Guard.

The ceremony was not, strictly speaking, a state funeral: its costs were met by Meyerbeer's estate rather than by the Imperial purse. It nonetheless demonstrated

[54] In symbolism perfectly fitting the occasion, with its dual perspective on the past and the future, the Gare du chemin de fer du Nord (as it was officially known) was in the process of being demolished and rebuilt. By the mid-1860s, the original 1846 structure had already become too small for the vast numbers of trains and passengers passing through.
[55] *La Presse* (8 May 1864).

traces of precisely the discursive complex – 'the cult of great men, the cult of the dead, the French festive tradition, and the changing political issues that engaged the nation' – described by Avner Ben-Amos as characterising true state funerals in France during the following decades.[56] Indeed it gave every appearance of a major state occasion – and one rarely equalled for a nineteenth-century composer, least of all one not by birth a Frenchman. In the words of *La Comédie*, Meyerbeer's Paris funeral was 'almost royal. It lacked nothing except a temple'.[57]

Such was the sobriety of this semi-official occasion that little was said (even in the musical press) about the choral performances that opened proceedings. No details were given beyond the fact that two (unnamed) choruses were sung – one from *Le Prophète*, one from *Le Pardon de Ploërmel* – followed by *Le Prophète*'s Coronation March. Perhaps inevitably, journalistic attention focused on the funeral orations at the core of the ceremony. Each orator represented his own institution, but the speeches all carried much the same message: to borrow the words of Camille Doucet, addressing the deceased on behalf of the Ministry for the Imperial Household, 'Your ashes [sic] have been taken from us; but we retain your works'.[58] The crowds had gathered to send Meyerbeer's strictly mortal remains back to his birthplace, but the Parisian

[56] Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9.
[57] 'Meyerbeer a eu vendredi dans Paris des funérailles presque royales. Il n'y a manquait qu'un temple'; *La Comédie* (8 May 1864), 1. The continuation of the report is striking, going on to note that, 'La gare du Nord, transformée en chapelle ardente, a troublé, par le bruit des sifflets de locomotive et des marteaux, la voix des orateurs et du choral qui s'est fait entendre'. It is not difficult to link anxieties here about industrial noise intruding on a solemn artistic commemoration with broader worries about the relationship between France and Prussia at this time, whether in musical or other terms.
[58] 'Vos cendres nous sont enlevées; mais nous gardons vos œuvres'; quoted by J.L. Heugel in *Le Ménestrel* (15 May 1864), 188. Doucet (1812-1895) was a poet, playwright and, from 1863, Napoleon III's director of theatrical administration.

mourners were convinced that they'd had the better half of the bargain. As Emile Perrin, impresario of the Opéra (and ever the businessman), put it:

> Vivantes dans toutes les mémoires, nous vivons par elles, elles sont l'essence même de notre existence: *Robert*, *les Huguenots* et le *Prophète*. Sur ces trois points d'appui, solides comme des colonnes d'airain, l'Opéra a fondé les bases d'une prospérité jusqu'alors sans exemple. Et le succès de ces œuvres grandit chaque jour. Il ira, grandissant dans l'avenir, se renouvelant sans l'épuiser, trouvant dans une admiration incessante une inépuisable vitalité.[59]
>
> *Robert*, *Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète*: these works are alive in all our memories, we live by them; they are the very essence of our existence. The hitherto incomparable prosperity of the Opéra is founded on these three *points d'appui*, as solid as bronze columns. And the success of these works increases every day. It will continue, even, becoming greater in the future, renewing itself tirelessly, finding in such perpetual admiration an inexhaustible life force.

Clearly, possessing the rights to Meyerbeer's French works not only represented significant financial gain for the Parisian operatic stage, but also wielded enormous cultural capital. Perrin's eulogy was built on the idea that Meyerbeer's works had lasting artistic value, and that it was this *cultural* worth that would enable them to keep replenishing the Opéra's coffers. More telling still, though, is the detail of Perrin's rhetoric: at the ceremony marking their composer's death, he talks of *Robert*, *Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète* as works that are, and will remain, immortal.

In this context, the *Revue contemporaine* merely stated the obvious when it announced that 'Meyerbeer is dead, but his works live on'.[60] Such a contrast between the composer's fate and that of his operas appeared again and again: Doucet declared that while Meyerbeer had only just achieved immortality, his greatest works had long enjoyed that status.[61] One comment nonetheless stands out. J.L. Heugel imagined Meyerbeer's coffin reaching its final destination thus:

---

[59] Quoted in *La Comédie* (8 May 1864), 2.
[60] 'Meyerbeer est mort, mais son œuvre demeure bien vivante'; Bon. Ernouf, *Revue contemporaine* (15 May 1864), 176.
[61] 'L'immortalité, qui commence aujourd'hui pour vous, a depuis longtemps commencé pour elles'; quoted by J.L. Heugel in *Le Ménestrel* (15 May 1864), 188.

'arriving in Berlin, these inanimate remains, cold and icy – will they not announce to a perplexed Germany: my body to native soil, my genius to my adopted homeland!'[62] The message is familiar – that France had ultimately been bequeathed the greater gift – and yet Heugel's terms are striking. In his ghostly image, Meyerbeer's remains might be chilled to the bone; but they are also capable of speech. His corpse, not his corpus, addresses its audience of mourning Germans. To put this another way, both the physical and compositional bodies left in the wake of Meyerbeer's demise were seen to blur the boundary between the living and the dead. His corpse was imagined to speak in an act of *prosopopeia* – what Barbara Johnson calls 'the voice from beyond the grave'.[63] Such addresses are more usually made by tombstones and other commemorative monuments: by 'things' rather than by 'persons' (to borrow Johnson again). Heugel's image might, in this context, thus be read as a mixed message: not only could intimations of immortality pass back and forth between composer and work; the figure of the deceased composer could also become, quite literally, monumental, even as his works conversely took on vital signs of life.

These migrations across the great mortal divide return us once more to the composer's extensively publicised horror of being buried alive. On the night of Meyerbeer's Parisian funeral, as the train bearing his coffin sped across rural France towards the Belgian border, the Opéra mounted its 398th performance of *Les Huguenots*. The work was played in honour of its composer, since official permission had not been granted to close the theatre for the evening as a mark of

[62] 'en arrivant à Berlin, ces restes inanimés, froids et glacés, ne diront-ils pas à l'Allemagne consternée: Mon corps au sol natal, mon génie à ma patrie adoptive!'; J.L. Heugel, 'Cérémonie de la translation du corps de Meyerbeer', *Le Ménestrel* (8 May 1864). Heugel's own stake in the question of Meyerbeer's French legacy is plain to see*: Le Ménestrel*, of which he was the director, was not only one of the most important specialist music journals in nineteenth-century Paris, but also the house organ for the long-running Heugel music publishing company.
[63] Barbara Johnson, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 13.

respect. After the fourth act, the curtain rose to reveal his bust, which was then ceremonially crowned with laurels by members of the cast. The commemorative hiatus made explicit the fact that this umpteenth performance was also an act of reception; that what was being staged (that night at least) was not so much Meyerbeer's 1836 opera as his own, newly cemented status as immortal genius. As the Man joined the established reputation of his works by becoming Great, he also, like them, became a text to be reproduced. When his new, now-posthumous opera, *L'Africaine*, was finally premiered at the Opéra on 27 April 1865, the evening was brought to a close by what became a ritual, repeated after each performance: lit by a ray of electric light, Meyerbeer's bust was once again revealed and ceremonially crowned.[64] The visual symbolism was clear. The composer's body had avoided the fate that he had dreaded: his unequivocally mortal remains were buried, according to his wishes, in his family tomb in Berlin's Jüdischer Friedhof; no bells were heard, ringing with muffled urgency from within the coffin. But what sounded in their place – and would continue to sound in Paris for decades to come – were his operas. Through them Meyerbeer could be brought back to life, night after night.

Exit Rossini: 'in flesh, in blood, in marble and in spirit'[65]

Four and a half years later, on the evening of Friday, 13 November 1868, *Les Huguenots* was once again in progress at the Opéra. It began as an altogether less symbolic performance than that given in Meyerbeer's honour on 6 May 1864.

[64] For more on the broader significance of this moment in the premiere of *L'Africaine*, see Gabriela Cruz, 'Meyerbeer's Music of the Future', *The Opera Quarterly*, 25/3-4 (Summer-Autumn 2009), 198; and Karen Henson, 'La dernière pensée musicale de Meyerbeer', in Jean-Christophe Branger and Vincent Giroud, eds., *Aspects de l'opéra français de Meyerbeer à Honegger* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 15-34.
[65] 'Le Rossini en chair, en os, en marbre et en esprit'; B. Jouvin, *Le Figaro* (21 November 1868).

But the work was lifted from mundane repertorial outing to momentous backdrop when breaking news spread through the audience: Gioachino Rossini, the Passy-based 'cygne de Pesaro', had just died.[66] This was no great shock to those abreast of the torrent of Parisian cultural *nouvelles*. The first reports of crisis had appeared in newspapers in the last days of October: the great man had an inflammation of the lungs, complicated by an underlying condition referred to only as 'une autre maladie fort douloureuse'.[67] According to recent, less euphemistic diagnoses, Rossini was suffering from both chronic lung disease and colorectal cancer.[68] Yet while contemporary bulletins omitted the harrowing

[66] According to *Le Figaro*, the news originated with the Marquise de Caux, who had requested regular updates from Passy (sometimes even going in person to Rossini's villa) and who attended the Opéra that night with her husband. The Marquis apparently remained in his box throughout the performance in an attempt to minimise the story's circulation before the end of the performance, but to no avail; see *Le Figaro* (15 November 1868).

[67] *L'Art musical* (29 October 1868), 383.

[68] Research on the medical misfortunes of Great Composers has produced a small, rather lurid (not to mention contested) literature in recent years. See, for instance, John O'Shea, *Music and Medicine: Medical Profiles of Great Composers* (London: J.M. Dent, 1990) and Joseph W. Lewis, Jr., M.D., *What Killed the Great and Not So Great Composers?* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2010). For a less sensational account of Rossini's health problems during his final months, see Peter Volk, 'Der Krankheitsverlauf bei Rossini', in Bernd-Rüdiger Kern and Reto Müller, eds., *Rossini in Paris* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2002), 35-49 (especially 44-7). Much of the modern biographical literature about Rossini passes rapidly over the latter part of the composer's life; Gino Roncaglia is typical in his *Rossini l'olimpico* [2nd Ed.] (Milan: Fratelli Bocca, 1953) in dealing with the final 38 years of the composer's life in two compressed chapters tellingly entitled 'Il grande silenzio e la malattia nervosa' and 'Gli ultimi anni e la morte'. A standard version of Rossini's demise nonetheless emerges: it begins with the composer probably suffering a stroke in December 1866, and is thereafter a story of recurrent bronchial problems, a cancerous rectal fistula removed during a high-speed operation (the doctor in question – Berlioz's own Dr Nélaton – was unwilling to have Rossini under chloroform for more than five minutes because of his other health problems), which in turn precipitated blood poisoning. A second operation two days later initially seemed more successful, but Rossini's condition again worsened. He suffered extreme thirst and was in excruciating pain before finally agreeing to receive the last rites, which he is reported to have found soothing. The same priest later returned, with the singers Alboni, Tamburini and Patti now also in attendance; Rossini was heard to call out his wife Olympe's name, and also 'Santa Maria and Sant'Anna' (many consider the latter a reference to his mother) before slipping into a coma; he died shortly after 11pm, at which point the doctor is reported to have told Olympe, 'Madame, Rossini has stopped suffering.' Francis Toye's *Rossini: A Study in Tragi-Comedy* (London: William Heinemann, 1934) remains a useful source and has evidently influenced later accounts, despite its biases. The most reliable English-language biographies are Richard Osborne's *Rossini* [2nd ed.] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Herbert Weinstock's *Rossini: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); the account of Rossini's death in Alan Kendall's more recent *Gioacchino Rossini: The Reluctant Hero* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1992) is clearly derived directly from Weinstock (while Weinstock's text is itself heavily indebted to Toye). The most important Italian biographies remain Roncaglia's study and Giuseppe Radiciotti's indispensable *Gioacchino Rossini: Vita*

details of these diseases – whether to spare the sensibilities of readers or simply from lack of information – for the next three weeks the progress of Rossini's decline, above all the sheer intensity of pain through which he was struggling, was exhaustively reported.[69] *Le Constitutionnel*'s post-mortem description of the composer's final hours was particularly vivid:

> Depuis deux jours, c'était une agonie lente, il souffrait un véritable martyre. Il avait littéralement le corps en feu, l'inflammation le consumait. A chaque instant il s'écriait. Je brûle, de la glace! de la glace! Et l'on s'empressait de lui offrir ce dernier soulagement.[70]
>
> For two days, it was slow agony; he was suffering a real martyrdom. His body was literally on fire, the inflammation consuming him. He cried out constantly, 'I'm burning, bring ice! bring ice!' And everyone rushed to offer him this final relief.

Reports of such agony are a far cry from the almost beatifically peaceful deaths accorded Meyerbeer and Berlioz, improbable as those remain. In this context, however, it is hardly surprising that accounts of how the inevitable dénouement was at last announced betray a similar dramatic flair. Prominent critic (and famous Italian opera-lover) Benoît Jouvin volunteered an eminently theatrical adjustment to the earlier time of death that had spread rapidly through the Opéra's foyer, suggesting that

> A l'heure où le rideau tombait pour la cinquième fois sur *les Huguenots*, mourait, torturé par une épouvantable agonie, le génie qui a marqué d'une griffe léonine la musique de son temps et les musiciens ses contemporains.[71]
>
> The genius who left such a colossal mark on the music of his time and on his musical contemporaries, died, tortured by appalling pain, at the moment the curtain fell for the fifth time on *Les Huguenots*.

---

documentata, opere ed influenza su l'arte, 3 vols (Tivoli: Arti Grafiche Majella di Aldo Chicca, 1927-9). The most famous biography of the composer (indeed perhaps of any composer) is Stendhal's *La Vie de Rossini* (Paris: Auguste Boulland, 1824), the early appearance of which means that Stendhal's account obviously contains no information about Rossini's later years.

[69] A similarly media-saturated progress towards final demise awaited Giuseppe Verdi in 1901; see Gavin Williams, 'Orating Verdi: Death and the Media, *c*. 1901', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 23/3 (November 2011), 119-43.

[70] *Le Constitutionnel* (15 November 1868).

[71] Jouvin, *La Presse* (16 November 1868).

Not content that the maestro should expire during a performance of one of the great monuments of *grand opéra* (a genre Rossini had, after all, helped to launch with *Guillaume Tell*, his final operatic work of so many years past), Jouvin has his moment of demise coincide exactly with the final curtain of Meyerbeer's now canonic work. Rossini's death is thus brought into direct contact with the opera's bloody finale – his last battle staged (in true *grand opéra* fashion) against a backdrop of religious and political high drama.

Whether Rossini actually managed to synchronise so perfectly with the Opéra's curtain is impossible to say.[72] One could argue that the grey area between life and death occupied by Rossini in critical discourse that evening is simply symptomatic of the fact that dying is a process rather than an event.[73] But what is more (and as discussed in connection with Meyerbeer), in the context of nineteenth-century medicine even at this comparatively advanced stage of the century, the status of corpse was granted only cautiously in the first instance. As *Le Figaro* reported, in an apparently eye-witness account that is the most detailed of any published, Rossini lost consciousness at 2:30pm; at 10pm he called out his wife's name; at 11pm he appeared to be dead – until a candle passed before his eyes apparently revealed pupils still reacting.[74] There is no doubt that Rossini

[72] The statements of 15 November 1868 in *Le Temps*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Constitutionnel* (whose report was largely borrowed verbatim from *Le Figaro*) cite Rossini's time of death as midnight and 12:15am respectively. *Le Figaro* also points out with some disdain that the news of his death had been spread 'prématurément, avant-hier, à l'Opéra, dès neuf heures du soir'. Elsewhere, Rossini's death was fixed somewhat later, at 2am; see, for instance, *La Comédie* (15 November 1868).

[73] There is an ample sociological literature on the structure of dying as a specifically social process. See, for instance, S.C. Humphreys, 'Death and Time', in Humphreys and Helen King, eds., *Mortality and Immortality: the Anthropology and Archaeology of Death* (London; New York: Academic Press, 1981), 261-83; and, with a strong emphasis on the temporal cycles at work in such a process, Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[74] 'A deux heures et demie, Rossini a perdu connaissance. Les cris de douleurs ont cessé. Un fort sifflement, provoqué par la respiration, indiquait seul un souffle de vie. A dix heures il prononça un nom: celui de sa femme. Ce fut la dernière fois qu'il parla. A onze heures, on le crut mort, et

was dying as Meyerbeer's tragedy unfolded; but more important than any precise moment on that especially fateful Friday 13th is the fact that Rossini had been on his final journey at the very least since those first reports of illness were published in late October. What is more, in the weeks that followed his death, the most prominent, significant question in critical responses to the event was concerned not with the basic facts of his mortality – of his death as a man – but with when Rossini had begun to die *as a composer*.

At stake was the fact that (to borrow some blunt terms from the satirical journal *Le Lapin indépendant*), 'The man died a week ago; the artist has been dead for ages'.[75] Such a parting of ways was fundamentally concerned with Rossini's notoriously long musical retirement. Following *Guillaume Tell* in 1829, he had written no further operas and only two large-scale works in any other genre: the *Stabat Mater* (1841-2) and the *Petite messe solennelle* (1863; orchestrated 1867).[76] In addition to miscellaneous songs, instrumental works and occasional compositions produced sporadically in the years after *Tell*'s premiere, Rossini wrote twelve vocal pieces (eight chamber arias and four chamber duets), which were collected as *Soirées musicales* (1830-5). In his final decade, having returned to Paris and dividing the year between his apartment on the Chaussée d'Antin and his villa at Passy, Rossini produced his so-called *Péchés de vieillesse*: around 150 individual pieces, many with comic or ironic titles and

---

l'on passa une bougie devant ses yeux, mais la paupière se souleva'; *Le Figaro* (15 November 1868).

[75] 'C'est l'homme qui est mort il y a huit jours, l'artiste était mort depuis longtemps'; *Le Lapin indépendant* (21 November 1868).

[76] The latter was not publicly performed during Rossini's lifetime, but was played for select audiences at the home of Countess Pillet-Will on two consecutive afternoons on 14 and 15 March 1864. Meyerbeer was present on both occasions, and wrote afterwards to congratulate Rossini, in terms now laden with irony: 'may heaven preserve you to a hundred, so that you may procreate again some other, similar masterpiece, and may God grant me a similar age so as to hear and admire those new aspects of your immortal genius'. Meyerbeer would himself die less than two months later. The letter is quoted by several modern biographies; see, for instance, Kendall, *Gioacchino Rossini*, 209.

largely in the form of songs and piano miniatures. The collection even includes 'Quelques mesures de chant funèbre: à mon pauvre ami Meyerbeer'.

Rossini's withdrawal from composition was thus by no means absolute; yet, at least in Parisian musical circles, the contribution of his later works was overshadowed by his high-profile abandonment of operatic composition in 1829 – and this despite promises made to the French government in exchange for a guaranteed lifetime annuity. As a result, a peculiar (and utterly new) situation arose: one in which certain of his operas – *Il barbiere di Siviglia* above all – continued to enjoy regular performances, with their popularity, indeed their canonicity, only more entrenched as time went on, while their composer's absence from the stage became ever longer. In the dawning age of the operatic repertoire, Rossini's most famous operas took on, quite literally, a life of their own.[77] The composer, meanwhile, and long before his own painful last act, suffered the opposite fate: his retirement was seen as nothing less than premature (artistic) death, as was much remarked when man and artist were, at last, reunited in November 1868.

Less severe than *Le Lapin indépendant*'s ruling on Rossini's shadowy professional existence after 1829, Albert Wolff suggested in *Le Figaro* that

> De son vivant, il a voulu connaître les joies de l'immortalité. Voici quarante ans qu'il est immortel. Nous nous étions tellement habitués à nous incliner devant son buste en pensant au grand maître qui n'était plus de ce monde, que la nouvelle de sa mort nous a paru tout d'abord une amère mystification. Il ne faut pas troubler les vivants dans leur culte pour les défunts; si Mozart revenait aujourd'hui pour se faire enterrer de nouveau à la Trinité, nous irions certainement, mais comme on se rend au Conservatoire un jour de concert, pour écouter sa musique.[78]

[77] Benjamin Walton has also commented on the canonisation (including self-canonisation) of Rossini while he was still alive in the brief account of the composer's final years that ends his useful overview, 'Rossini in France', in Emanuele Senici, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rossini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25-36 (especially 35-6).

[78] Albert Wolff, *Le Figaro* (22 November 1868). Wolff's comments, with their insinuation of Rossini's stereotypically Italian laziness, may to an extent be explained by his own position as a German émigré: Wolff (1835-1891) arrived in Paris in 1857, initially working as a foreign

> He [Rossini] wanted to know the joys of immortality in his own lifetime. He has been immortal for these last forty years. We had got so used to bowing down before his bust, thinking the great man no longer of this world, that the news of his death seemed above all a vicious hoax. You mustn't disturb the living in their cult of the dead; if Mozart returned today to have himself buried in La Trinité, we would go without a doubt – but as one goes to the Conservatoire for a concert: to listen to his music.

The judgement is provocative: Wolff recasts this Death of the Author in terms of immortality, with Rossini by-passing physical death to enjoy a period of eternal life – one cut off by an incursion of mortality so unexpected as to be presumed untrue. For Wolff, Rossini's death did not remove the maestro from quotidian existence and raise him to an appropriately immortal state. On the contrary – and in direct contrast to Meyerbeer, whom death had stopped in mid-flow, a circumstance that briefly appeared to endanger his chances of artistic immortality – physical demise dislodged Rossini from his already established position on high, bringing him crashing back to earth. The comparison with Mozart is crucial: he was the paradigmatic composer feted with the epithet 'classic' by the 1860s and one of the cornerstones of the operatic repertoire. Wolff therefore imagines a resurrection and reburial for him not as a solemn ecclesiastical rite or an occasion for mourning, but as a concert attended by music-lovers. Indeed his fantasy comes full circle as such a musical performance not only contributes to but fully constitutes his Mozartian resurrection, while simultaneously marking the demise of the composer whose existence must perforce continue in his works alone.

Like Wolff's Mozart and his imaginary reburial – but in distinct contrast to Meyerbeer's – Rossini's Parisian funeral was conditioned by the complex

---

correspondent, before becoming a contributor to *Le Charivari* and *Le Figaro*. Various others nonetheless shared Wolff's views: A. Thurner, for instance, suggested that Rossini 'voulait assister de son vivant à son immortalité; pour lui la postérité datait de *Guillaume Tell* et du *Stabat*'; *La France musicale* (22 November 1868), 366.

discursive status, suspended between life and death, apparently held by its protagonist. In certain of its details (the number and variety of musical performances above all) his funeral would find similarities in that of Berlioz, held in the same church – La Trinité – a year later; yet in other, more important ways, Rossini's commemoration in 1868 was unique. The rhetoric of G. Stradina's description in *Le Moniteur des pianistes* is telling: 'the concert was magnificent, the ceremony really impressive. [...] Rossini had for so long been immortal... which is to say, dead. This great genius was no longer at work. At his funeral, no one cried; they had come along to look!'[79] Rossini's own *Stabat Mater* had been adapted for the occasion (the original text replaced by the Mass of the Dead) as well as his 'Prière de Moïse' (adapted to the words of the 'Agnus Dei') and works by Jommelli, Mozart, Pergolesi and Beethoven.[80] Such sacred works were at least nominally appropriate for the solemnity of the funeral ceremony. The operatic celebrities involved in the performances, though, generated a more explicit tension at the heart of proceedings: the highlight – one that threatened to produce an outbreak of applause unacceptable in the consecrated surroundings – was identified by many as Adelina Patti's and Marietta Alboni's performance of Rossini's 'Quis est homo' from the *Stabat*, adapted here to become a 'Liber scriptus'.[81] Alongside them, many other stars of

[79] 'le concert a été magnifique, le cérémonie très-imposante. [...] Rossini était depuis longtemps immortel... autant dire mort. Ce grand génie ne produisait plus. A ses obsèques on n'a pas pleuré; on est venu pour voir!..'; G. Stradina, *Le Moniteur des pianistes* (20 November 1868), 46.
[80] For a full account of the music performed, see Albert Vizentini, 'Obsèques de Rossini', *L'Art musical* (26 November 1868), 410. *La France musicale* (22 November 1868) similarly dedicated almost an entire issue to Rossini, with its coverage including a report by Marie Escudier himself on the maestro's funeral. The other main long accounts of the funeral were published in the *Journal des débats* (22 November 1868); *Le Ménestrel* (22 November 1868); *Le Moniteur des pianistes* (20 [sic] November 1868); and *La Presse* (22 November 1868).
[81] As A. Andréi observed in *La Comédie*, 'Plusieurs fois, ce frisson discret qui est l'applaudissement du temple, et ce murmure contenu qui est le bravo religieux, se firent entendre, principalement au duo du *Stabat*, chanté par Alboni et Patti; au *Pro peccati*, chanté par Faure, au

Paris's operatic stage, including Christine Nilsson, Antonio Tamburini and Jean-Baptiste Faure, joined to honour their operatic patriarch. Indeed, such was the demand to witness this spectacular musical send-off that attendance at the ceremony on 21 November was by ticket only. Even administratively, then, the event was managed as if a concert: it was treated above all as a celebration of the (long-dead) artist and his ever more vital works, rather than as an occasion for mourning the recently departed.[82] At the time of his death in November 1868, Rossini – to repeat Jouvin's words from my subtitle – was at once a human 'en chair, en os' and a cultural edifice 'en marbre et en esprit'.[83] Four years earlier, the deceased Meyerbeer had been immortalised in stone, his bust symbolically crowned on stage and his Parisian afterlife assured on the stage of the Opéra even as his mortal remains were en route to Berlin. When Rossini died, however, he underwent no such ritual: he was already, while still alive, seen as both man and monument.

What struck many of those reporting Rossini's death was that his funeral had an air of celebration that would have been inappropriate had his departure from the operatic stage not already been mourned for so long. In these circumstances his much-delayed physical removal was less than overwhelming. Almost without exception, such writers went on to offer the same case-study comparison. As Blaze de Bury (writing under his pseudonym F. de Lagenevais) wrote in the *Revue des deux mondes*,

> La mort de Rossini n'aura pas causé la moitié seulement de l'impression qui suivit on s'en souvient, la mort de Meyerbeer. C'est que Meyerbeer fut enlevé

Stabat de Pergolèse; à l'*Agnus* adapté à la *Prière de Moïse* et au *Pie Jesus* chanté par Mlles Krauss, Grossi, Nicolini et Agnesi'; *La Comédie* (22 November 1868).

[82] The tension between the dual imperatives of the nineteenth-century Great Man's funeral – of the desire both to mourn and to celebrate – is explored at length, predominantly in the context of state funerals staged in the French Third Republic, in Ben-Amos, *Funerals, Politics and Memory*.

[83] B. Jouvin, *Le Figaro* (21 November 1868).

> debout, en plein combat [...]. La fin de Rossini n'a rien eu de ce prestige militant.[84]
>
> The death of Rossini hasn't caused half the fuss that, as you will remember, followed the death of Meyerbeer. The thing is that Meyerbeer was carried off while still in active service [...]. Rossini's death had none of that glory of battle.

It is, in the circumstances, hardly surprising that Meyerbeer's death was revisited as the standard point of reference in the wake of Rossini's. This was the case particularly among those who (even in the immediate aftermath of his final struggle) remained critical of the excessive length of Rossini's self-imposed retirement; such a symptom of Italian *dolce far niente* provided an all-too-stark contrast against the heroic military rhetoric Blaze de Bury used about Meyerbeer, fighting to the bitter end. Yet the most striking of these explicitly critical voices is again Albert Wolff, who followed his fantasy of Mozart's resurrection and Parisian burial with the observation that,

> Quand mourut Meyerbeer, au moment où, avec l'ardeur du jeune âge, il faisait répéter *L'Africaine* à l'Opéra, ce fut un deuil profond pour tous ceux qui, espérant en l'énergie du vieux maître, songeaient avec émotion aux œuvres que son cerveau, toujours en ébullition, eût pu enfanter encore. [...] c'est ainsi que meurent les grands hommes... sur la brèche. [...] Pour moi, partitions à part, le vrai artiste était celui-là, inquiet, tourmenté, passionné, en un mot, vivant. [...] Celui-ci était une âme; l'autre n'était plus qu'un corps. On se rechauffait au contact de Meyerbeer; l'aspect de Rossini vous faisait froid dans le dos, comme on dit vulgairement; ce n'était plus un homme vivant de notre vie, de nos passions, de nos aspirations; c'étaient en quelque sort les restes mortels d'un homme de génie qui circulaient sur le trottoir.[85]
>
> When Meyerbeer died, just as he was rehearsing *L'Africaine* at the Opéra with youthful enthusiasm, it was a period of deep mourning for all those who, pinning their hopes on the energy of the ageing composer, dreamed sorrowfully of the works that his mind, always boiling away, might yet have produced. [...] that's how great men die... in the breach. [...] For me, scores aside, the true artist was the one like him: troubled, tormented, passionate – in a word, alive. [...] This one had a soul; the other was nothing more than a body. It used to be heart-warming to meet Meyerbeer; but the sight of Rossini gave me the creeps, as the vulgar have it; he was no longer a man living amongst us, with our passions, our aspirations; he was in some way the mortal remains of a genius roaming the streets.

[84] F. de Lagenevais [pseud.: Blaze de Bury], *Revue des deux mondes* (November 1868), 766.
[85] Wolff, *Le Figaro* (22 November 1868).

In this macabre turn of phrase, Rossini's premature immortality is turned on its head: the genius has, in retirement, become a dead man walking. Meanwhile Meyerbeer's immortality is guaranteed by his productivity to the last – by the fact, Wolff seems to imply, that the soul exhausted the body, rather than vice versa.

Bodies of work

When Hector Berlioz died in 1869 – the latest ageing Romantic to succumb to what Gustave Flaubert called 'a frightful lot of dying'[86] – few suggested that he would be joining Meyerbeer and Rossini in the ranks of the immortal. For all that Berlioz's struggles as a composer were recognised and even admired in many quarters, those wishing to eulogise him generally remained on the less contested ground of his personal stoicism and his activities as a critic and an institutional figure. Those writing from further afield were, perhaps predictably, more openly scathing about his musical legacy. An unsigned article in London's *All The Year Round* (probably written by the prominent music critic Henry Chorley) was particularly blunt:

> It may be doubted, without any undue scepticism, whether works, so slender in idea, so elaborately and awkwardly overwrought as his, will be long thought worth the trouble of reproduction, now that the personality of their author as a superintendent, the sarcasms of his tongue, and the severities of his pen, are no more.[87]

Here, death is imagined less as a release for the suffering composer – the 'martyr de sa foi musicale' (to reuse the phrase from Frédéric Thomas's oration) – than for an audience no longer obliged to listen to his works. Barely two weeks after

[86] Letter to George Sand (13 March 1869); quoted in Bloom, *The Life of Berlioz*, 4.
[87] 'Hector Berlioz', *All The Year Round* (24 April 1869), 498. Although the attribution to Chorley is not certain, he is the most likely author, as he was the journal's regular music contributor; see Ella Ann Oppenlander, *Dickens' "All the Year Round": Descriptive Index and Contributor List* (Troy NY: Whitston, 1984).

his death, *L'Illustration*'s Berlioz obituary stated baldly that he 'remained an incomplete talent, similar to a painter who had unfurled before our eyes the greatest historical and fictional events in a fresco, but who was incapable of arranging those characters within a frame and reducing them to the scale of a canvas'.[88] What is more, even the Parisian critics who attempted to address Berlioz's status as a composer in more positive terms did so within the context of anxieties about pernicious critical tendencies and hopes for a more open-minded future. Thus the prolific author of nineteenth-century composer biographies Arthur Pougin wrote that 'We have to hope that posterity will be fairer to the author of *Harold en Italie*, *La Fuite en Egypte* and *La Damnation de Faust* than his contemporaries have been',[89] while Reyer, ever-faithful, could clear the path to future success for the composer only via defensiveness: 'If the name of Berlioz is not one of those whom the masses have learned to appreciate, it is no less illustrious for it, and posterity will inscribe it among the names of the greatest masters'.[90]

There was, in other words, little sense in 1869 that Berlioz, like Meyerbeer, had been rendered immortal in death. On the contrary: as already mentioned, many reported Berlioz's final words as predicting that 'Finally! they will play my music', a sentiment obviously born of the same association between mortal demise and musical immortality demonstrated in the deaths of Meyerbeer

[88] 'Berlioz reste un talent incomplet, semblable à un peintre qui aurait déroulé sous nos yeux, dans une fresque, les plus grands épisodes de l'histoire et de l'épopée, mais qui serait incapable de disposer des personnages dans un cadre et de les réduire aux proportions d'une toile'; H. Lavoix fils, 'Hector Berlioz', *L'Illustration* (20 March 1869), 188.
[89] 'La postérité, il faut espérer, rendra plus de justice à l'auteur d'*Harold en Italie*, de *la Fuite en Egypte* et de *la Damnation de Faust* que ne l'ont fait ses contemporains'; Arthur Pougin, *Le National* (n.d.), reproduced in 'Hector Berlioz. Notes et Remarques', *La France musicale* (14 March 1869), 78.
[90] 'Si le nom de Berlioz n'était pas de ceux que la foule a appris à saluer, il n'en est pas moins illustre, et la postérité l'inscrira parmi les noms des plus grands maîtres'; E. Reyer, *Journal des débats* (10 March 1869) 2.

and Rossini. In the case of Berlioz, however (and notwithstanding his own deathbed remarks), that association was reversed. The cause of his death was, at least in artistic terms, plain to see: Pougin was one of many commentators who described how 'the near-failure of *Les Troyens* [...], a failure that led him to resign from his column at the *Journal des débats* and to live in almost total retirement, had broken his heart'.[91] Comettant used still stronger terms, describing Berlioz as 'a man killed by the systematic contempt of his compatriots; since he died of this contempt, a disease foreign to the common man'.[92] Unlike Meyerbeer, whose physical mortality was to a certain extent overridden at the moment of his death, or Rossini, whose demise almost seemed to return him to life as a composer, suturing over his problematic intervening position as ex-genius, Berlioz was understood to have died precisely because his music was not considered immortal. This one-time musician of the future died, that is, because his music was out of place in the present, never mind in posterity.

***

In 1868, the same doctor Gannal who had embalmed Meyerbeer four years earlier described in gruesome detail the process undergone by any body just become corpse:

> Who has not seen a beloved person that, but a few moments earlier, was still alive, now laid out in dreadful immobility upon a bed? They are no longer anything more than a corpse... Later the members regain their suppleness and the temperature rises once more, but it is not life that is returning, it is decomposition that has begun. Fetid gases escape from the mouth, the belly distends, the chest swells, and the face, which until then had kept an expression of calm, alters in its turn: the eyes bulge, the eyelids puff out, as do the cheeks.

[91] 'le quasi insuccès des *Troyens* [...], insuccès qui l'avait amené à résigner son feuilleton du *Journal des débats* et à vivre dans une retraite presque absolu, l'avait frappé au cœur'; Pougin, *Le National* (n.d.), reproduced in 'Hector Berlioz. Notes et Remarques', *La France musicale* (14 March 1869), 78.
[92] 'celui que le dédain systématique de ses compatriotes a tué; car il est mort de ce dédain, maladie inconnues des âmes vulgaires'; Comettant, 'Hector Berlioz', *Le Ménestrel* (14 March 1869), 113.

> Family and friends withdraw so as to avoid seeing more of the horrible spectacle that *putrefaction* will present in its rapid progress.[93]

Decomposition – neither 'beautiful' nor 'invisible', to re-use Ariès's terms – remained the single unequivocal sign of death in the mid-nineteenth century; and it was a process against which the growing numbers of embalmers and funeral directors pitted themselves in order to preserve corpses at their most visually acceptable. Putrefaction was nonetheless the peculiar comfort sought by Meyerbeer. His request to be left for so long on his deathbed rested on the notion that there would, in the end, be no mistaking the difference between life and death. Yet this vivid description gestures towards just such a grey area. As Jonathan Strauss points out in his reading of Gannal's text, the very fact that the author saw fit to clarify that 'it is not life returning' suggests that precisely that misrecognition might occur.[94] What is more, each physical detail is expressed in terms of bodily agency: however emphatically this process is not that of any *living* organism, it reveals death as an unexpectedly animated state. It is in this context – of a physical demise marked by continuing (even new) signs of life – that we might best, and most sympathetically, make sense of Meyerbeer's anxieties about mistaken symptoms and live burial. More significantly, though, we might also take this post-mortem equivocation as a background against which to read the pervasive but ever-shifting rhetoric of immortality in discussions of mid-century composers and their works in the Parisian press.

Meyerbeer did not, as we know, live to suffer the untimely burial he so dreaded. But he was nonetheless obliged to endure an alternative mode of living death: an epistemological state described by one critic as 'music embodied, his

[93] Félix Gannal, *Moyens de distinguer la mort réelle de la mort apparente* (Paris: Jules-Juteau et Fils, 1868), 11; translated and cited by Jonathan Strauss, *Human Remains: Medicine, Death, and Desire in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 118.
[94] Strauss, *Human Remains*, 118.

heart and soul living perpetually in the midst of a chorus of heavenly sounds';[95] or hinted at by another, who counted him among that exclusive club of *grandes hommes* whose names, 'many years after their death, are ever-present in the thoughts of those who love their art, [while] every day their works bring to the generations that follow them pure joy and endless admiration'.[96] There was little question in 1864 that his greatest works were immortal, would live on long beyond their creator. What seemed to mark out Meyerbeer as a human candidate for admission to that exclusive club just mentioned was not only the staying power of his *œuvre*. It was also – as the comparisons with Rossini's death in 1868 make clear – the fact that he had died in harness, as a productive composer, perhaps even as martyr to the operatic cause, worn out by his constant exertions.[97] Indeed, to return to Heugel's image of the composer's icy remains addressing its compatriots in Berlin in an uncanny blurring of person and thing, we might refigure Meyerbeer's demise as one that saw his continuing stores of energy for work displaced onto and borne forth by his operatic corpus.

The same could not be said – nor was it said – of Rossini. He, too, unfailingly attracted the epithet of 'immortal'; but the implications of half-satirical comments such as that of Albert Wolff, describing how Parisian audiences had got so used to Rossini's absence from the opera house that they had assumed he was long dead, were both serious and far-reaching. A striking resonance in Rossini's case is provided by one of several medical studies on the

[95] 'la musique incarnée, l'âme et le cœur vivant sans cesse au milieu d'un concert de sons divins'; *Journal-programme des théâtres de Paris* (12 May 1864).
[96] 'Bien des années après leur mort, leur nom est sans cesse présent à la pensée de ceux qui aiment leur art; chaque jour leurs œuvres apportent aux générations qui les suivent une jouissance pure et une admiration constante'; Jules D'Aoust, 'À la mémoire de Meyerbeer', *Annales de la Société libre des beaux-arts* (June 1864-March 1865), 11.
[97] On the medical literature about fatigue, which began around this time following (and in connection with) the establishment of the first two laws of thermodynamics, see Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

effects of laziness and inactivity published in the 1860s. In *Die deutsche Arbeit* (1861), Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl explored the potentially meaningful similarity of the German words 'Faulheit' (laziness) and 'Fäulnis' (putrefaction).[98] Once again, as in Gannal's probing of the decomposing body, the corpse is reconceived as disturbingly animate; and here, too, the 'living corpse' is a cause of revulsion. Yet what has turned the body into a corpse is, in this case, a fatal lack of work. Seen in this light, Rossini's assumption of the status of immortality while still alive appears suddenly less than complimentary.

To borrow Blaze de Bury's phrase, Berlioz had died – as had Meyerbeer – 'en plein combat'; but his struggles, so widely emphasised following his death, had been fought on the battlefield where his funeral was now being reported, his final hours described. Yet the fact that his compositional strife was seen to be one waged against other critics – in this case acting as a corporate body policing the limits of the Parisian operatic canon – had one final ramification for the discourse surrounding his death, and for this chapter as a whole. As Frédéric Thomas put it in the rousing close of his funeral oration: 'May Berlioz serve as an example to us, since if, instead of being forced to spend most of his energy struggling, he had been able to use it in composition, who knows whether he might have produced more masterpieces!'[99] Like Meyerbeer, then, Berlioz was imagined in death to embody the potential (now expired) to generate future

[98] My brief discussion of Riehl is indebted to Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 30. Rabinbach also quotes at length from an encyclopedia entry on 'paresse', dating from 1835, which identifies laziness as the cause of multiple medical complaints, arguing that 'Nothing is more pernicious for those flabby and slow people, for those delicate women who lounge ceaselessly on their comfortable divans, on their feathered beds, than this languorous state we call idleness'; *The Human Motor*, 31. The parallels here with Rossini's parade of physical infirmities, or with what was by the late 1860s his notorious obesity, are obvious.

[99] 'Que Berlioz nous serve d'exemple, car si, au lieu d'être obligé de dépenser la plus grande partie de ses forces dans la lutte, il eut peut les employer au travail, qui sait s'il n'eût pas produit plus de chefs-d'œuvre!'; quoted in Hippolyte Nazet, 'Obsèques de Berlioz', *Le Figaro* (13 March 1869).

masterpieces. For the Frenchman, however, such potential itself proved terminal, unanswered as it was by critical acclaim in the present: the promise of posterity alone could not guarantee immortality for either a work or its composer. Hence the failure of *Les Troyens* had, according to many critics in 1869, sounded the death knell for Berlioz himself. Yet those famous last words – 'Enfin, on va jouer ma musique' – which have hung in the air in so many biographical retellings from 1869 onwards, suggest a final reconfiguration of the relationship between the man and the music, the corpse and the corpus; one also significant for Meyerbeer, for Rossini, and for Second Empire operatic culture as a whole.

I have described how Berlioz's death was attributed to the failure of his works (*Les Troyens* above all) to demonstrate the capacity to endure for posterity; and I have already observed that his deathbed pronouncement pivots on the same elision of physical demise and lasting, musical survival so widespread in the mortuary discourses on Meyerbeer and Rossini earlier in the decade. What is peculiar about Berlioz's comment – and significantly so – is that it appears to suggest a direct causal relationship: that his music will be performed because he, the composer, will have died; that his own mortality will enable his musical afterlife; perhaps even that, by extension, being still alive as a composer in the 1860s in Paris complicated or prevented the performance of one's music. Indeed, despite his famous love of Gluck, Berlioz appears to have taken literally those routine warnings issued in relation to the Théâtre Lyrique's revivals during the 1860s: he thought his own continued survival was the major impediment to performance of his music in an operatic culture increasingly dominated by the old works of largely dead composers.

If Berlioz ever uttered such words, they were presumably intended as a self-deprecating joke of sorts. It is surely more likely that they were attributed to him posthumously, as a mark of a status to which he was felt to be entitled: as another hope for the future. But 'Berlioz's last words' may nonetheless have gestured towards a much more serious point, one whose implications only became clear during the century following these 1860s operatic deaths. Of the three composers I have discussed in this chapter, only Rossini retained a place in the operatic canon beyond the first half of the twentieth century, and that was a precarious one, largely restricted to his most famous *opera buffa*. Meyerbeer's immortality turned out to have an endpoint – one that had certainly passed by the end of the 1930s; Berlioz, meanwhile, continues to occupy an idiosyncratic position on the fringes of the nineteenth-century repertoire, his large-scale orchestral works and songs canonic to varying degrees, his operas rarely performed. The passage to posterity on which so much of Second Empire operatic culture was turned has, in the end, come full circle in much present-day writing about the period: the fates of man and music are once again separated into, on the one hand, an operatic canon of still-performed, still-immortal masterpieces; and, on the other, a critical, historiographical canon of once-great composers. In 1860s Paris, the long-term fates of each of these operatic figures could not be known; yet the death of the author was undoubtedly understood as a crucial moment in preparing his works for the future – indeed for paving the way towards the future of opera itself. For just as the Second Empire operatic stage seemed to foreground the immortality of the revived masterpieces in which it revelled, it also emphasised to an ever greater extent the fundamental mortality of their composers. Following the demise of the latter, operatic works might be

literally re-vitalised by their continuing performances. Understood to address their audience anew with each and every curtain-up, they spoke even when their creators could not. So death was partial after all: the great composer's fate was to be buried alive not within a soundproof plush-lined casket, but in the altogether noisier tomb of a nascent operatic canon.

CONCLUSION

Operatic futures past and present

> It suddenly occurred to this man – who had travelled widely in the Orient, who was acquainted with the desert sands made of the dust of the dead – that this city, too, the city bustling all around him, would have to die someday, the way so many capitals had died. [...] He resolved to write the kind of book about Paris that the historians of antiquity had failed to write about their cities...
>
> *Paul Bourget*

This dissertation began with a journey through Second Empire Paris. The newly arrived English tourist was to walk from the Gare du Nord, across the boulevards, to the site of Charles Garnier's new Opéra. It was a route that promised to afford 'astonishing glimpses' of the city – a selection of images carefully composed by Baron Haussmann (his canvas was the urban fabric itself) and preserved in those photographic *clichés* now widely reproduced. Yet the Second Empire capital also offered alternative perspectives: of a city still under construction, in ruins, in-between-times. In the dissertation's four chapters I have returned again and again to these twin images of 1860s Paris: the city past and the city future. What is more, having begun with an imagined arrival at the Palais Garnier, a building still awaiting its historical moment but located at the centre of Haussmann's modernised, visually commodified metropolis, I have gone on to gesture repeatedly towards opera's crucial position in the discourses of the city in flux.

In so doing, I have pressed Haussmann's Parisian renovations into repeated service: not only as a spatial metaphor for historical change (so many Second Empire commentators saw them thus), but also as a way of viewing shifts in an operatic culture firmly rooted in its urban environment. Such ways of seeing are, of course, relatively common in studies of nineteenth-century opera

since musicology's cultural turn: the urban environment has provided another important contextual element alongside the august, once 'extra-musical' frames of 'society' and 'politics'. Jane Fulcher's *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (1987) – as its subtitle makes clear – draws causal links between operatic works on the one hand and their context on the other, with the latter always conditioning the former; more recently, Sarah Hibberd's *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination* (2009), although more ambitious in its theoretical purview, takes a similar approach, mining its operatic objects for their reflections of broader contemporary change in intellectual history and historiographical mode. Closer to my project (and the single greatest musicological influence on this dissertation) is Anselm Gerhard's *The Urbanization of Opera* (1992; trans. 1998), in which those same developments in nineteenth-century Paris are brought into complex, productive dialogue with operatic works produced in and for the city, as part of an overarching narrative of 'interiorisation' – an idea drawn largely from Richard Sennett. Gerhard not only sees opera as a mirror for the social and cultural life of the city as a whole, contextualising it within a wider-ranging urban discourse than do either Fulcher or Hibberd, for instance; he also understands opera simultaneously as an active force within that discourse, one that might shape as well as reproduce it. However, and notwithstanding the sophistication of his study, Gerhard's conclusions are persuasive only when applied to certain parts of the operatic repertoire performed in later nineteenth-century Paris: to French works, for the most part, and to *grands opéras* above all. A criticism still more important for my own project is that, even though Gerhard embeds grand opera so persuasively in its changing urban landscape, he never strays far from the

opera house, never looks back on a building lost among its surroundings. The question that remains is what (if anything) a consideration of operatic culture might add to our understanding of Parisian urbanisation.

As I have emphasised from the start, my dissertation does not seek to unfold a single narrative, let alone offer a single answer to the question just posed. Neither does it, nor could it, culminate in a single, paradigm-shattering conclusion. My historiographical method – centred as it is on the 'thick' description of historical snapshots, with the individual rhetorical detail constantly challenging the claims and pretensions of the large-scale survey – might even be seen as a mode of resistance to grander concluding gestures. What I have sought instead is to complicate our existing images of operatic life in Paris during the Second Empire. These images have a long lineage: from Reynaldo Hahn's 1925 dismissal of the period as 'essentially anti-musical'; to sensationalised accounts of all-pervading debauchery; to earnest attempts to resuscitate the reputations of once-popular, now-forgotten composers; to the most thorough, recent studies of the period by Katharine Ellis, Mark Everist, Annegret Fauser and William Gibbons (to list those cited most often in this dissertation), whose research into aspects of operatic production and reception in the period has uncovered fascinating material, long overlooked. This last category has on the whole been focused on the unearthing of archival and other forgotten documents and, from the basis of that foundation, has generated a Second Empire history of opera understood on its own internal, specialist terms. There is much to be said for such endeavours, and I have drawn on the results throughout this project; but my dissertation ultimately has other aims. I have sought not only to place the historical material in a wider context than is often the case in French opera

studies, but also to engage actively with ideas beyond those particular to musicology. Following in Gerhard's footsteps, I have explored a variety of historical discourses outside the discipline's immediate reach – the contested status of photography, the timetabling of modern life, changes in nineteenth-century cultures of death, and so on – as a way of casting new light on aspects of operatic culture during the 1860s.

My dissertation is, as a result, concerned at least as much with discourse as it is with events, musical or otherwise. As a reception study reliant above all on the evidence provided by printed criticism (biased, partial and literally mediated as it is), it necessarily calls into question any attempt to uncover an historical reality external to the details of those texts. In the same way, my periodic return to Haussmann's urban building site, as a metaphor for the epistemological shifts with which I am principally concerned, also serves to dismantle any stable distinction between the literal and the metaphorical. A city that its inhabitants could claim had become unrecognisable from one night to the next, whose buildings were understood (even constructed) as monuments, and whose images persist as icons in our own cultural mythology, is inevitably at once imagined and real.

What I have sought to do in my dissertation is to locate opera within such a city. More specifically, I have explored opera's contribution to one particular discourse widespread during the 1860s and influential in much non-musicological writing since: that of a changing dynamic between the past and the future, materialised for all to see in the shifting Parisian topography. What is more, the operatic culture with which I am concerned is one where the increasing dominance of older works raised important questions about the art form's

continuity and ultimate fate. Each of the four chapters focuses on an operatic production or event that took place in Paris between 1859 and 1869, and takes that moment's critical reception as an entry point into larger issues. Their cumulative effect is to examine the discourse of early operatic canon formation from a series of related angles. Chapter One deals with Pauline Viardot's role in the major 1859 revival of Gluck's *Orphée* at the Théâtre Lyrique in relation to the general phenomenon of the operatic revival on the one hand and the particular development of the term 'classique' on the other; Chapter Two considers Richard Wagner's three orchestral concerts in 1860 (and Offenbach's musical response to them) as crucial encounters between an already well-established Parisian discourse of 'la musique de l'avenir' and its putative musical object heard in the present; Chapter Three – in some ways the most traditionally musicological in ambit – presents a reception study of the premiere of Verdi's *Don Carlos* (1867) at the Opéra, but embeds this in a larger argument about changing modes of operatic listening as an essential element of the operatic canon; and, finally, Chapter Four examines the post-mortem discussions of three composers – Berlioz (d. 1869), Meyerbeer (d. 1864) and Rossini (d. 1868) – for traces of mortal and musical canonicity, in the process calling for a repositioning of Second Empire operatic culture within the period's broader, mortuary discourses.

Various other thematic and material overlaps generate further productive connections: Chapters One and Four both deal (in quite different ways) with the apparent fatality central to an operatic culture ever more fixated on old masterpieces; Chapters Two and Three concern the often problematic position of new works in such a culture, in the process juxtaposing two composers too often

placed in opposition to each other but here refigured as similarly precarious, even peripheral. Questions of national (musical) identity arise time and again: of my cast of operatic composers, only Berlioz is unequivocally French (an advantage immediately lost through the ambiguity of his relationship with the operatic stage); and anxieties about the position of Paris itself – as a European centre founded on a cosmopolitanism increasingly out of favour as the 1860s progressed – surface in each chapter alongside shifts in the operatic city's institutional hierarchies.

My conclusions to these chapters have sought to draw wide-ranging discussion inwards once more: to address my central concern with opera's contribution to the complex temporal dynamics of the Second Empire capital. Viardot is in mortal danger through her close association with operatic 'classics'; Wagner's 'music of the future' is not only as a threat to music *in* the future but lays bare the fact that, in the 1860s, the musical future increasingly concerned music of the past; the premiere of Verdi's self-consciously 'modern' *Don Carlos* is treated like the revival of an established masterpiece – as a commission immediately subject to historical, canonic listening; and the mortal rites of passage undergone by Berlioz, Meyerbeer and Rossini ultimately foreground the alternative afterlives accorded their works (or not) in the new mortuary institution – both funeral parlour and pantheon – represented by the Second Empire opera house. Taken as a whole, these individual studies make an ambitious claim: a claim for the need to acknowledge sustained operatic canon-formation at work in Paris at this time, a process not only manifest in the array of works programmed but in operatic discourse taken as a whole. To trace canon formation through production statistics alone must always constitute an

incomplete account: critical attitudes to operas both old and new, and the modes of listening accorded those operatic works, were not only symptoms of an emerging canon but also, and crucially, constitutive of it.

The Second Empire operatic landscape is captured in this dissertation via fleeting glimpses. Certain landmarks are recognisable from previous, more or less recent, accounts: Carvalho's revivals at the Théâtre Lyrique; the beginnings of *Wagnérisme*; anxieties about the Frenchness of Parisian musical culture; old stories about trains, statues, musicians of the future and premature retirement. In some sense my Second Empire Paris is that of Hahn – a city whose 'music resembled its furniture' – or, certainly, of those before and since who have dismissed the period as 'conservative'. Operatic culture in Second Empire Paris was indeed, as this dissertation makes clear, in some ways an obsessively conservative affair. However, and unlike those musicological visitors who have previously stepped from the train to make a beeline for the opera house, I do not see in such conservatism grounds for dismissal. On the contrary, the conservatism of Second Empire operatic culture is above all remarkable for its endurance. The growing preoccupation with the resuscitation and preservation of the operatically old during the 1860s may have provided little of interest to those focused purely on the first steps – whether glorious or faltering – of works now acclaimed as masterpieces and of composers now seen as great; but in another sense it nonetheless embodies what is most modern, most forward-looking, about the period. At least in hindsight, the lingering backwards glances of Parisian operatic culture of the 1860s were a potent progenitor of our own operatic landscape: the anxieties attendant on such retrospective tendencies have, after all, an even stronger hold in today's critical discourse. But we might surely take

comfort from the sheer longevity of such fears: fears about an art-form whose days are numbered, which apparently promises little for posterity. While the embrace of the operatic past explored in this dissertation has persisted, has even become the norm, its very durability constitutes vital signs of life under a system of production – an operatic museum culture – that was only coming into force during the 1860s. As it turned out, the multiple turns to the past in Second Empire opera did not, despite widespread concerns, precipitate the art-form's demise; quite the contrary, they were the beginning of the – of our – operatic future.

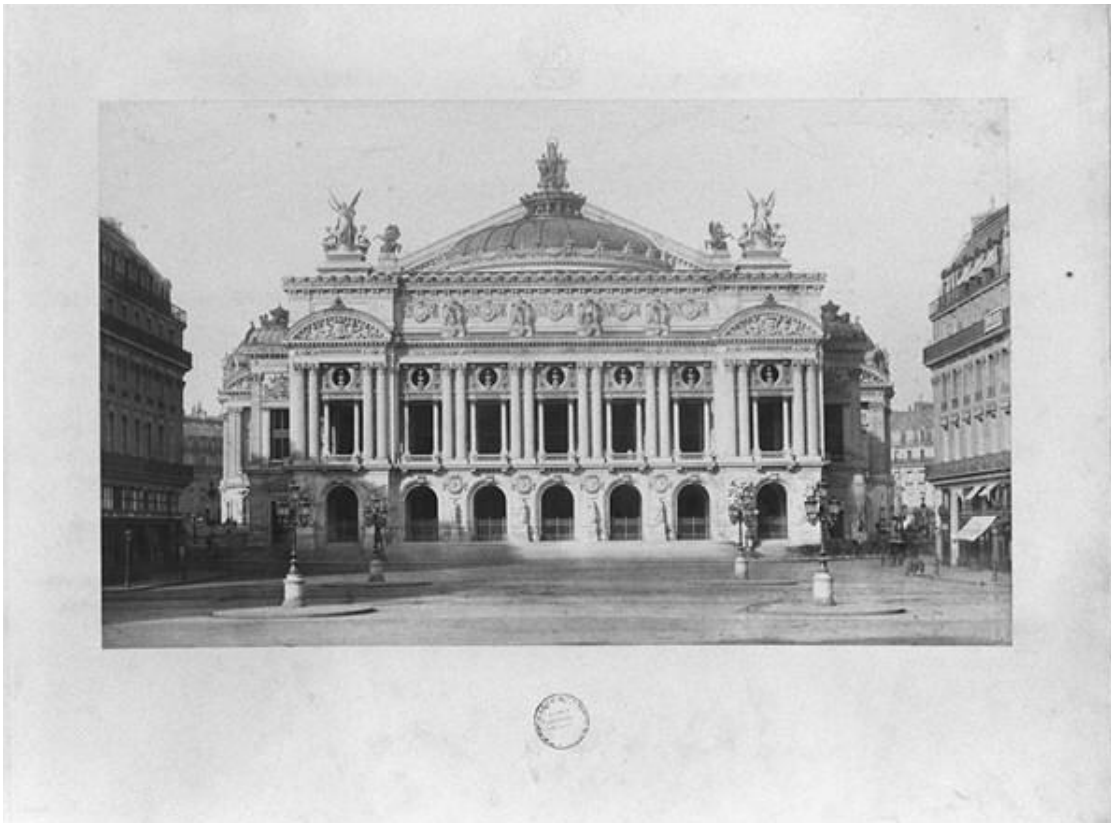


Figure 10: Photograph of the Palais Garnier in 1876 by Charles Marville. PH127A in Ministère des Travaux Publics collection 'Opéra de Paris: bâtiments civils / Charles Marville photographe', Bibliothèque nationale de France (accessed via Gallica, 15 November 2012).

Standing on the finished Place de l'Opéra, the centrepiece of Haussmann's Paris was finally inaugurated on 5 January 1875. It was five years to the day since the prefect had been dismissed from his post; the Second Empire was long gone. Now a monumental relic of another era's dreams of the future, the opera house opened in the Third Republic with a gala performance of excerpts from the ancient pillars of the grand operatic repertoire: *La Muette de Portici*, *Guillaume Tell*, *La Juive* and *Les Huguenots*. The 'Louvre lyrique' was open for business.

Acknowledgements

I have been working on this dissertation for almost three and a half years: for better or worse, over an eighth of my life has been spent doing a PhD. It is hardly surprising that much has changed during that time. The project, begun in a disorientating Cambridge autumn, travelled with me to Harvard for a semester; it continued to evolve as I moved back to the UK, to London, where much of the writing was first bashed out; and, most recently, it was still with me, developing into its final form, as I returned to Cambridge and was spurred on towards submission by the promise of new, postdoctoral adventures.

There is something of each of these distinct phases in my thesis, which has been an invigorating and sometimes steep learning curve. Yet I have been supported and assisted at every stage, in many different ways and by many different people. Indeed, after receiving so much help over a long period, I'm all too aware of the irony in approaching such an important piece of writing (and such a cliché-prone genre) inevitably unaided. But to have reached my first official opportunity to say 'thank you' is not only a great responsibility: it is also, and above all, an enormous pleasure.

Most pleasurable and urgent of all my acknowledgements owed here are those to Roger Parker, who has helped me more than anyone since we first met (one of us with purple hair) in oak-panelled circumstances over six years ago. He has curbed my sentences, boosted my confidence, advised on marathon training – and has read virtually everything I've written, providing constant intellectual stimulation and companionship. Like so many others (and I feel honoured to find myself in such company), I'd like to thank him for his generosity, patience, honesty, passion and care, both as a supervisor and as a friend. These

acknowledgements will be even less adequate without the kindly interventions of his CAPITALS; but I can, at least, look forward to continuing to thank him in the next stage and beyond. And for that I am seriously grateful.

This dissertation has been sustained in other ways by the financial and administrative support of several institutions. I am pleased to acknowledge the AHRC for funding my PhD at KCL, and would like to thank the administrative staff there – above all, Rob Witts, for his ever-smiling assistance in encounters with the 'admin maw'. I'm also delighted to have the opportunity to be grateful to the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, who have provided me with a stipend, home and encouragement as I spent a term negotiating simultaneous existence at two King's Colleges.

At each of its geographical and intellectual stopping points my project has benefited hugely from conversations with a network of scholars, colleagues and friends in musicology and beyond. For assorted combinations of stimulating questions, feedback, encouragement, ideas and general disciplinary friendship, I'd like to thank: Davinia Caddy, Will Cheng, James Davies, John Deathridge, Katharine Ellis, Annegret Fauser, Will Gibbons, Anne Green, Sarah Hibberd, Jo Hicks, Axel Körner, Gundula Kreuzer, Ellen Lockhart, Delphine Mordey, Cormac Newark, Clare Pettitt, Laura Protano-Biggs, Alex Rehding, Susan Rutherford, Arman Schwartz, Emanuele Senici, Laura Tunbridge, Ben Walton and Bill Weber. For throwing down gauntlets they probably don't remember (and perhaps didn't even consider as such at the time) which have nonetheless made all the difference to the way I think and write, I should like additionally to thank Andy Fry, Matthew Head and Mary Ann Smart.

I am lucky enough to have shared my time at KCL with a wonderful group of talented and sociable postgraduate students. For their friendship in London and beyond – in several cases, now quite distantly so – and for conversations about shared interests, difficulties and other matters, I'd like to thank Emma Adlard, Harriet Boyd, Delia Casadei, Tom Fogg, Melanie Gudesblatt, Kate Guthrie, Marina Romani and Francesca Vella.

For providing more local contexts in which to write a dissertation, I'm grateful to the original inhabitants of 32 Hardwick St.; Amanda Keeling; Jamie Blasina, for allowing me to make 13A Ware St. an unofficial home from home; Ken and Steve, who mercifully never asked me what I did all day; the residents of Garden Hostel (2012-13); and Jim in Maintenance, for finding bookcases where no one else could.

My parents, Judith and Paul Willson, have earned (but, perhaps inevitably, have not always received) endless thanks, and over a longer period than anyone else. Aside from the prize-winning vegetables and baked goods – for which appreciation is, of course, easily given – I'm grateful to them that I grew up both surrounded by books and also with my own toolkit, pair of walking boots and access to a digging pit. I'd like to thank Ed Willson for (among other things) sharing the digging pit, lending me *his* music and reminding me that there is life outside the academy. The value of the perspective on life offered by my two nonagenarian grandmas, Beryl and Joyce, cannot be overestimated; I am grateful to them for their love and encouragement.

Finally, the experience of writing this PhD has been infinitely improved by a number of valuable friendships. I'd like to thank: Ned Allen for his enthusiasm, passion for writing and grimace-ridden, tea-soaked companionship

over the years; Catherine Bailey-Gluckman, who was there when it all began and who now knows more about Pauline Viardot than most Germanists; Carlo Cenciarelli for many trips to Pret and for his fearless combination of wisdom, calm and silliness; Richard Dawson for enduring more lycra-clad meals than anyone should ever have to; Katherine Hambridge for being unfazed by unpronounceable – and occasionally unidentifiable – ingredients and so much else besides; Sarah Johnson for loving cheese and wine and also being willing to pedal for miles (and miles) to get them; Sarah Knight for always being there when it really matters; and Gavin Williams, who has read and energised (not to mention improved) so much of this dissertation, for the endless brain-sharing, co-conspiring and free-flowing intellectual whimsy.

Bibliography of works cited

Archival material
Archives Nationales, Paris:
Series AJ[13]: 484; 1162, III.
Series F[21]: 1303; 1059.

Bibliothèque nationale de France:
Arts du spectacle: 8 – RO – 6262, I [Recueil factice d'articles de presse et programmes concernant *Orphée et Eurydice* de Gluck].
Musique: BN. Mus. D. 4702 (1); BN. Mus, D.4582; BN Mus. L. 16.380.

Houghton Library, Harvard University:
Pauline Viardot-García papers, 1836-1905 (MS Mus 232).
Harvard Theatre Collection (uncatalogued): TCS 19; TCS 22; TCS 25; TCS 28; TCS 29; TCS 70.

Nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals consulted
Almanach de la littérature, du théâtre et des beaux-arts
Almanach musical
Almanach parisien pour l'année
Annales de la Société libre des beaux-arts
L'Artiste
Les Beaux-arts. Revue nouvelle
Bulletin bibliographique de la Revue européenne
La Comédie
Le Constitutionnel
Le Courrier musical de Paris
L'Europe artiste
Le Figaro
Le Foyer
La France musicale
Gazette des beaux-arts
Gazzetta musicale di Milano
L'Indépendance dramatique
Le Journal amusant
Journal des arts, des sciences et des lettres
Journal des débats
Journal-programme des théâtres de Paris
Le Lapin indépendant
The Literary Gazette
Le Magasin de librairie
Le Ménestrel
Le Monde artiste
Le Monde dramatique
Le Moniteur des pianistes
Le Moniteur universel
Nouveaux samedis

L'Orchestre
La Presse
La Presse littéraire
Le Progrès musical
Revue artistique et littéraire
Revue contemporaine
Revue des deux mondes
Revue de Paris
Revue et gazette musicale
Revue européenne
Revue germanique
Revue universelle des arts
Rivista teatrale melodrammatica
La Semaine des familles
La Semaine illustré
Le Siècle
Le Temps
Le Tintemarre
L'Univers musical
La Vie moderne

Historical texts

Alberti, Annibale, *Verdi intimo: Carteggio di Giuseppe Verdi con il conte Opprandino Arrivabene (1861-1886)* (Verona: Mondadori, 1931).
Audouard, Olympe, *Lettre à M. Haussmann, Préfet de la Seine* (Paris: Balitout, 1868).

Baudelaire, Charles, 'Salon de 1859' [1859], in *Critique d'art*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 268-342.
—, 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne' [1863], in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Claude Pichois, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), II, 683-724.
—, *Complete Poems*, trans. Walter Martin (New York: Routledge, 2002).
Bergson, Henri, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911).
Berlioz, Hector, *Soirées de l'orchestre* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1852).
—, *Euphonia ou la ville musicale* (Toulouse: Editions Ombres, 1992).
Black's Guide to Paris, and the Exhibition of 1867 (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867).
Blaze de Bury, Henry, *Meyerbeer: ses œuvres, sa vie et son temps* (Paris: Heugel, 1865).
Brisson, Jules and Félix Ribeyre, *Les Grands journaux de France* (Paris: n.p., 1862).

Le Carnaval des revues, revue de carnaval en deux actes et neuf tableaux par MM. Eugène Grangé et Ph. Gilles, musique de Jacques Offenbach (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1860).
Cella, Franca, Madina Ricordi and Marisa Di Gregorio Casati, eds., *Carteggio Verdi-Ricordi 1882-1885* (Parma: Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani, 1994).
Champfleury, *Richard Wagner* (Paris: Bourdilliat, 1860).

—, *Grandes figures d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: Balzac, Gérard de Nerval, Wagner, Courbet* (Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1861).
Chorley, Henry, *Thirty Years' Musical Recollections*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862).
Cole, John William, *The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1859).
Comettant, Oscar, *Musique et musiciens* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1862).

Delvau, Alfred, *Les Heures parisiennes* (Paris: Librairie centrale, 1866).
D'Indy, Vincent, *Richard Wagner et son influence sur l'art musical français* (Paris: Delagrave, 1930).

Fétis, François-Joseph, *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1844).
Flint, Austin, M.D., *Treatise on the Principles and Practice of Medicine Designed for the Use of Practitioners and Students of Medicine* (Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea, 1866).

Gartioux, Hervé, ed., *Giuseppe Verdi, Don Carlos: Dossier de presse parisienne (1867)* (Heilbronn: Lucie Galland, 1997).
Gasperini, Auguste de, *Richard Wagner* (Paris: Heugel, 1865).
Gautier, Théophile, *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans*, 6 vols. (Paris: Hetzel, 1858-9).
Goncourt, Edmond and Jules de, *Pages From the Goncourt Journals*, ed. and trans. Robert Baldick (New York: New York Review Books, 2007).
Günther, Ursula, *The Complete Edition of* Don Carlos *by Giuseppe Verdi* (Milan: Ricordi, 1974).

Haviland, Alfred, *'Hurried to Death', or A Few Words of Advice on the Danger of Hurry and Excitement Especially Addressed to Railway Travellers* (London: Henry Renshaw, 1868).
Hueffer, Francis, *Richard Wagner and the Music of the Future* (1881; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Jerrold, W. Blanchard, *Paris for the English* [2nd Ed.] (Bradbury, Evans & Co., 1867).

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. David McLellan (1848; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
—, *Capital: Volume I*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977).
Mendel, Hermann, *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Eine Biographie* (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1868).
Morley, Henry, *The Journal of a London Playgoer From 1851 to 1866* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1866).

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Pougin, Arthur, *Meyerbeer: Notes biographiques* (Paris: Tresse, 1864).

—, *Verdi: An Anecdotic History of his Life and Works*, trans. James E. Matthew (London: H. Grevel, 1887).

Rossignol, Léon, *Nos Petits journalistes* (Paris: Gosselin, 1865).

Scudo, Paul, *L'Année musicale* (Paris: Hachette, 1861).
Servières, Georges, *Richard Wagner jugé en France* (Paris: Librairie illustrée, 1887).
Spencer, Stewart and Barry Millington, eds. and trans., *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988).
Stendhal, *La Vie de Rossini* (Paris: Auguste Boulland, 1824).

Vafflard, Léon, *Notice sur les champs de sépultures anciens et modernes de la ville de Paris* (Paris: Charles de Mourges Frères, 1867).
Verne, Jules, *Paris au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1994).
—, *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Richard Howarth (New York: Random House, 1996).
Viardot-García, Pauline, ed., *École classique du chant* (Paris: E. Gérard & Cie, 1861)
— and Theodore Baker, 'Pauline Viardot-García to Julius Rietz (Letters of Friendship) [Concluded]', *The Musical Quarterly*, 2/1 (January 1916), 32-60.

Richard Wagner, *Quatre poèmes d'opéras traduits en prose française, précédes d'une Lettre sur la musique [à Frédéric Villot, Paris, 15 septembre 1860]. Le Vaisseau fantôme, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Tristan et Iseult* (Paris: A. Bourdillat, 1861).
—, 'Music of the Future' [1860], in *Three Wagner Essays*, trans. Robert L. Jacobs (London: Eulenberg, 1979), 13-44.

Later Texts

Abbate, Carolyn and Roger Parker, eds., *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
—, 'The Parisian "Vénus" and the "Paris" *Tannhäuser*', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 36/1 (Spring 1983), 73-123.
Abbiati, Franco, *Giuseppe Verdi*, 4 vols. (Milan: Ricordi, 1959).
Adorno, Theodor, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (1952; London: Verso, 1981).
Agulhon, Maurice, *Marianne into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
Albert, Pierre, Gilles Feyel and Jean-François Picard, *Documents pour l'histoire de la presse nationale au XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Sciences Humaines, [1977]).
Andriopoulos, Stefan, *Possessed: Hypnotic Crimes, Corporate Fiction, and the Invention of Cinema*, trans. Peter Jansen and Stefan Andriopoulos (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
Ariès, Philippe, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981).

Ballif, Claude, *Berlioz* (Paris: Seuil, 1968).
Barbier, Patrice, *Pauline Viardot* (Paris: Grasset, 2009).
Barraud, Henry, *Hector Berlioz* (Paris: Costard et Cie., 1955).
Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 2000).
Barzun, Jacques, *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950).
Becker, Heinz and Gudrun, *Giacomo Meyerbeer: Ein Leben in Briefen* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichshofen, 1983).
Beckett, Lucy, 'Wagner and his Critics', in Peter Burbidge and Richard Sutton, eds., *The Wagner Companion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 365-88.
Beer, Gillian, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* [3rd Ed.] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
Bellanger, Claude, *Histoire générale de la presse française, Tome 2: de 1815 à 1871* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969).
Ben-Amos, Avner, *Funerals, Politics, and Memory in Modern France, 1789-1996* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
Benjamin, Walter, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), 255-66.
—, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1999).
Berman, Marshall, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 1983).
Bloch, Maurice and Jonathan Parry, eds., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
Bloom, Peter, *The Life of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
Bodsch, Ingrid, ed., *Monument für Beethoven: Zur Geschichte des Beethoven-Denkmals* (Bonn: Bonner Stadtmuseum, 1995).
Booth, Michael R., *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
—, John Stokes and Susan Bassnett, *Three Tragic Actresses: Siddons, Rachel, Ristori* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
Boschot, Adolphe, *L'Histoire d'un romantique: Hector Berlioz*, 3 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1906-13).
Boym, Svetlana, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
Brooks, Peter, Joseph Kerman, Harold S. Powers and David Rosen, 'The Grand Inquisitor', in Fabrizio Della Seta, et al, eds., *Verdi 2001: Atti del convegno internazionale*, 2 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 2003), II, 613-62.
Brownstein, Rachel M., *The Tragic Muse: Rachel of the Comédie-Française* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995).
Brzoska, Matthias, 'Richard Wagners französische Wurzeln ossia Warum Wagner kein Zukunftsmusiker sein wollte', in Annegret Fauser and Manuela Schwartz, eds., *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme: Musik, Literatur, Kunst, Politik* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1999).
Budden, Julian, *The Operas of Verdi*, 3 vols. (London: Cassell, 1973-81).

Cairns, David, *Berlioz: the Making of an Artist, 1803-1832* (London: Deutsch, 1989).
—, *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness, 1832-1869* (London: Allen Lane, 1999).

Calinescu, Matei, *The Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1987).
Carmona, Michel, *Haussmann: His Life and Times, and the Making of Modern Paris*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002).
Certeau, Michel de, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
—, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
Chandler, James and Kevin Gilmartin, eds., *Romantic London: Urban Scenes of British Culture, 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
Chusid, Martin, 'The Inquisitor's Scene in Verdi's *Don Carlos*: Thoughts on the Drama, Libretto, and Music', in Eugene K. Wolf and Edward H. Roesner, eds., *Studies in Musical Sources and Style: Essays in Honor of Jan LaRue* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1990), 505-34.
Clark, Maribeth, 'Bodies at the Opéra: Art and the Hermaphrodite in the Dance Criticism of Théophile Gautier', in Roger Parker and Mary Ann Smart, eds., *Reading Critics Reading: Opera and Ballet Criticism in France from the Revolution to 1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 237-53.
Clark, T.J., *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
Cohen, H. Robert, 'The Nineteenth-Century French Press and the Music Historian: Archival Sources and Bibliographical Resources', *19th-Century Music*, 7/2 (Autumn, 1983), 136-42.
Conati, Marcello, ed., *Interviste e incontri con Verdi* (Milan: Formichiere, 1980).
Connor, Steven, 'Disasters Galore', *London Review of Books*, 34/18 (27 September 2012), 15-16.
Crary, Jonathan, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992).
Cruz, Gabriela, 'Meyerbeer's Music of the Future', *The Opera Quarterly*, 25/3-4 (Summer-Autumn 2009), 169-202.
Curl, James Stevens, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000).
Curtiss, Mina, 'Bizet, Offenbach and Rossini', *Musical Quarterly*, 40/3 (July 1954), 350-59.

Daly, Nicholas, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
Deathridge, John, *Wagner Beyond Good and Evil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
Derrida, Jacques, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
Dupêchez, Charles, *Marie d'Agoult, 1805-1876* [2nd Ed.] (Paris: Plon, 1994).
Dyer, Richard, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Routledge, 2005).

Edgerton, David, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History Since 1900* (London: Profile Books, 2006).
Ellis, Katharine, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: 'La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris', 1834-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

—, 'Wagnerism and Anti-Wagnerism in the Paris Periodical Press, 1852-1870', in Annegret Fauser and Manuela Schwartz, eds., *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme: Musik, Literatur, Kunst, Politik* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1999).
—, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
—, 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris: The Acid Test of the Théâtre Lyrique', in Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 49-71.
—, 'Funding Grand Opera in Regional France: Ideologies of the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper and Clive Brown, eds., *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 67-84.
—, 'Book Review: William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (2008)', *Music and Letters*, 91/3 (August 2010), 426-9.
—, 'Unintended Consequences: Theatre Deregulation and Opera in France, 1864-1878', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 22/3 (November 2010), 327-52.
—, 'Mireille's Homecoming? Gounod, Mistral, and the Midi', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 65/2 (September 2012), 463-509.
Everist, Mark, *Giacomo Meyerbeer and Music Drama in Nineteenth-Century Paris* **(**Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
—, 'Jacques Offenbach: the Music of the Past and the Image of the Present', in Annegret Fauser and Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 72-98.
—, '*Grand Opéra – Petit Opéra:* Parisian Opera and Ballet from the Restoration to the Second Empire', *19th-Century Music*, 33/3 (Spring 2010), 195-231.

Fauquet, Joël-Marie, 'Berlioz's Version of Gluck's *Orphée*', in Peter Bloom, ed., *Berlioz Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 189-253.
Fauser, Annegret, '*Cette musique sans tradition*: Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and its French Critics', in Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 228-55.
— and Manuela Schwartz, eds., *Von Wagner zum Wagnérisme: Musik, Literatur, Kunst, Politik* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1999).
Ferguson, Priscilla Parkhurst, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
Fitzlyon, April, *The Price of Genius: A Life of Pauline Viardot* (London: John Calder, 1964).
—, 'Viardot [née García], (Michelle Ferdinande) Pauline', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (*Oxford Music Online*, accessed 11/07/10).
Forsyth, Michael, *Buildings for Music: the Architect, the Musician and the Listener from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
Foucault, Michel, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2003).
Frank, Felicia Miller, *The Mechanical Song: Women, Voice, and the Artificial in Nineteenth-Century French Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
Fulcher, Jane F., *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicised Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Gaillard, Jeanne, *Paris, la ville (1852-1870)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).
Georgel, Chantal, 'The Museum as Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century France', in Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (London: Routledge, 1994), 113-22.
Gerhard, Anselm, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
Gibbons, William, 'Music of the Future, Music of the Past: *Tannhäuser* and *Alceste* at the Paris Opéra', *19th-Century Music*, 33/3 (Spring 2010), 232-46.
Giger, Andreas, *Verdi and the French Aesthetic: Verse, Stanza, and Melody in Nineteenth-Century Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
Gildea, Robert, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
Giroud, Vincent, *French Opera: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
Goehr, Lydia, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
—, '"On the Problems of Dating" or "Looking Backward and Forward with Strohm"', in Michael Talbot, ed., *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2000), 231-46.
Goldhill, Simon, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).
Greenberg, Jonathan, *Modernism, Satire and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
Gregor-Dellin, Martin, *Richard Wagner: sein Leben, sein Werk, sein Jahrhundert* (Munich: R. Piper, 1980).
Grey, Thomas S., *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
Gualerzi, Giorgio, 'Un secolo di "Don Carlos"', in *Atti del IIo congresso internazionale di studi verdiani* (Parma: Istituto di studi verdiani, 1971), 494-504.
Günther, Ursula, 'La Genèse de *Don Carlos*', *Revue de musicologie*, 58 (1972), 16-64; 60 (1974), 87-158.
— and Gabriella Carrara-Verdi, 'Der Briefwechsel Verdi-Nuitter-Du Locle zur Revision des *Don Carlos*', *Analecta Musicologica*, 14 (1974), 1-31; 15 (1975), 334-401.
—, 'La Genèse du *Don Carlos* de Verdi: nouveaux documents', *Revue de musicologie*, 72 (1986), 104-77.

Harvey, David, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
Haynes, Kenneth, 'Classic Vergil', in Joseph Farrell and Michael C.J. Putnam, eds., *A Companion to Vergil's* Aeneid *and its Tradition* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 421-34.
Henson, Karen, 'La dernière pensée musicale de Meyerbeer', in Jean-Christophe Branger and Vincent Giroud, eds., *Aspects de l'opéra français de Meyerbeer à Honegger* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 15-34.
Hibberd, Sarah, *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Higonnet, Patrice, *Paris: Capital of the World*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
Holoman, D. Kern, *Berlioz* (London: Faber, 1989).
Huebner, Steven, *French Music at the Fin de Siècle: Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
Humphreys, S.C., 'Death and Time', in Humphreys and Helen King, eds., *Mortality and Immortality: the Anthropology and Archaeology of Death* (London; New York: Academic Press, 1981), 261-83
Hyer, Brian, 'Tonality', in Thomas Christensen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 726-52.

Jackson, Jennifer, Don Carlos*: Narrative Transformation in the Works of Abbé de Saint-Réal, Friedrich Schiller and Giuseppe Verdi* (Weinsberg: Lucie Galland, 2008).
—, *Reputation without Cause? A Composer and his Critics* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).
Johnson, Barbara, *Persons and Things* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
Johnson, James H., *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
Jordan, David P., *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (New York: Free Press, 1995).
Jost, Christa and Peter Jost, '*Zukunftsmusik*: Zur Geschichte eines Begriffs', *Musiktheorie*, 10 (1995), 119-35.

Kendall, Alan, *Gioacchino Rossini: The Reluctant Hero* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1992).
Kendall-Davies, Barbara, *The Life and Work of Pauline Viardot-García. Vol. I: The Years of Fame, 1836-1863* (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2003).
Kermode, Frank, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).
Kern, Stephen, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* [with new preface] (1983; rpt. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).
Kimbell, David, '*Don Carlos*/*Don Carlo*', in Amanda Holden, ed., *The Viking Opera Guide* (London: Viking, 1993), 1152-5.
Kolb, Katherine, 'Plots and Politics: Berlioz's Tales of Sound and Fury', in Peter Bloom, ed., *Berlioz: Past, Present, Future* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 76-89.
—, 'Flying Leaves: Between Berlioz and Wagner', *19th-Century Music*, 33/1 (Summer 2009), 25-61.
Koselleck, Reinhard, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
Kracauer, Siegfried, *Offenbach and the Paris of His Time*, trans. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (London: Constable, 1937).
Kramer, Lawrence, 'Chopin at the Funeral: Episodes in the History of Modern Death', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 54/1 (Spring 2001), 97-125.
Kselman, Thomas A., *Death and the Afterlife in Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Lacombe, Hervé, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Edward Schneider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
—, 'L'Opéra sous le Second Empire', in Jean-Claude Yon, ed., *Spectacles sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 159-72.
Lawton, David, review of 'Giuseppe Verdi, "Don Carlos"', *Studi verdiani*, 2 (1983), 209-24.
Lewis Jr, Joseph W., M.D., *What Killed the Great and Not So Great Composers?* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2010).
Locke, Ralph P., *Music, Musicians, and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Macdonald, Hugh, *Berlioz* (London: Dent, 1982).
Marx, Leo, 'Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept', *Technology and Culture*, 51/3 (July 2010), 561-77.
Mordey, Delphine, 'Auber's Horses: *L'Année térrible* and Apocalyptic Narratives', *19th-Century Music* 30/3 (Spring 2007), 213-29.
Mumford, Lewis, *Technics and Civilisation* [with new preface by Langdon Winner] (1934; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010)

Nead, Lynda, *The Haunted Gallery: Painting, Photography, Film c. 1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
Newman, Ernest, *The Life of Richard Wagner, Vol. III: 1859-1866* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1941).
Noske, Frits, *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi* (1977; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Oppenlander, Ella Ann, *Dickens' "All the Year Round": Descriptive Index and Contributor List* (Troy NY: Whitston, 1984).
Osborne, Richard, *Rossini* [2nd ed.] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
O'Shea, John, *Music and Medicine: Medical Profiles of Great Composers* (London: J.M. Dent, 1990).

Parker, Roger, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
Petrobelli, Pierluigi, 'Verdi e il *Don Giovanni*. Osservazioni sulla scena iniziale del *Rigoletto*', in *Atti del Io congresso internazionale di studi verdiani* (Parma: Istituto di studi verdiani, 1969), 232-46.
—, 'Verdi and "Don Giovanni": On the Opening Scene of "Rigoletto"', in *Music in the Theater. Essays on Verdi and Other Composers*, trans. Roger Parker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 34-47.
Pinkney, David H., *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).
Platten, David, 'A Hitchhiker's Guide to Paris: *Paris au XX^e siècle*', in Edmund Smyth, ed., *Jules Verne: Narratives of Modernity* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 78-93.
Plessis, Alain, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*, trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
Porter, Andrew, 'A Sketch for *Don Carlos*', *The Musical Times*, 111 (1970), 882-85.

—, 'The Making of *Don Carlos*', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 98 (1971-2), 73-88.
Powers, Harold S., 'Verdi's *Don Carlos*: An Overview of the Operas', in Scott Balthazar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 209-36.
Prendergast, Christopher, *The Classic: Sainte-Beuve and the Nineteenth-Century Culture Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
Price, Roger, *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Quénoy, Paul du, *Wagner and the French Muse: Music, Society, and Nation in Modern France* (Bethesda: Academica Press, 2011).
Quintero, Ruben, 'Introduction: Understanding Satire', in Quintero, ed., *A Companion to Satire Ancient and Modern* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 1-11.

Rabinbach, Anson, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
Radiciotti, Giuseppe, *Gioacchino Rossini: Vita documentata, opere ed influenza su l'arte*, 3 vols. (Tivoli: Arti Grafiche Majella di Aldo Chicca, 1927-9).
Ragon, Michel, *L'Espace de la mort: Essai sur l'architecture, la décoration et l'urbanisme funéraires* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981).
Ramaut, Alban, *Hector Berlioz: compositeur romantique français* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1993).
Rather, L.J., *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).
Rehding, Alexander, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
Rij, Inge van, 'Back to (the Music of) the Future: Aesthetics of Technology in Berlioz's *Euphonia* and *Damnation de Faust*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 22/3 (November 2010), 257-300.
Riley, Matthew, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
Riva, Piero Gondolo della, 'Préface', in Jules Verne, *Paris au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1994), 11-21.
Roncaglia, Gino, *Rossini l'olimpico* [2nd Ed.] (Milan: Fratelli Bocca, 1953).
Rutherford, Susan, '"La cantante delle passioni": Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 19/2 (July 2007), 107-38.

Scott, David, 'Matter for Reflection: Nineteenth-Century French Art Critics' Quest for Modernity in Sculpture', in Richard Hobbs, ed., *Impressions of French Modernity: Art and Literature in France 1850-1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 99-117.
Schellhous, Rosalie, 'Fétis's "Tonality" as a Metaphysical Principle: Hypothesis for a New Science', *Music Theory Spectrum*, 13/2 (Autumn, 1991), 219-40.
Schmid, Marion, 'À bas Wagner! The French Press Campaign against Wagner during World War I', in Barbara L. Kelly, ed., *French Music, Culture, and National Identity, 1870-1939* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 77-92

Schneider, Herbert, 'Wagner, Berlioz, und die Zukunftsmusik', in Detlef Altenburg, ed., *Liszt und die neudeutsche Schule* (Laaber: Laaber, 2006), 77-96.
Senici, Emanuele, 'Verdi's *Falstaff* at Italy's Fin de Siècle', *Musical Quarterly*, 85/2 (Summer 2001), 274-310.
Sennett, Richard, *The Fall of Public Man* (1977; rpt. London: Penguin, 2002).
Smart, Mary Ann, 'Review: *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* by James H. Johnson', in *19th-Century Music*, 20/3 (Spring 1997), 291-97.
Smith, W.H.C., *Second Empire and Commune: France 1848-1871* (London: Longman, 1985).
Sterne, Jonathan, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
Strauss, Jonathan, *Human Remains: Medicine, Death, and Desire in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).
Szendy, Peter, *Listen: A History of Our Ears*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

Taylor, Jonathan, *Science and Omniscience in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2007).
Terdiman, Richard, 'The Mnemonics of Dispossession: "Le Cygne" in 1859', in Suzanne Nash, ed., *Home and its Dislocations in Nineteenth-Century France* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 169-89.
—, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
Tombs, Robert, *France 1814-1914* (London: Longman, 1996).
Toye, Francis, *Rossini: A Study in Tragi-Comedy* (London: William Heinemann, 1934).
Truesdell, Matthew, *Spectacular Politics: Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte and the* fête impériale*, 1849-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
Turbow, Gerald D., 'Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France', in David C. Large and William Weber, eds., *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 134-66.

Unwin, Timothy, *Jules Verne: Journeys in Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005).

Vazsonyi, Nicholas, *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
Volk, Peter, 'Der Krankheitsverlauf bei Rossini', in Bernd-Rüdiger Kern and Reto Müller, eds., *Rossini in Paris* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2002), 35-49.

Waller, Susan S., *The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris, 1830-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).
Walsh, T.J., *Second Empire Opera: The Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, 1851-1870* (London: John Calder, 1981).
Wapnewski, Peter, 'The Operas as Literary Works', in Ulrich Müller and Wapnewski, eds., *Wagner Handbook*, trans. and ed. John Deathridge (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 3-95.
Watson, Derek, *Richard Wagner: A Biography* (London: J.M. Dent, 1979).

Weber, Eugen, 'Introduction', in Jules Verne, *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Richard Howarth (New York: Random House, 1996), xi-xxvii.
Weber, William, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
Weinstock, Herbert, *Rossini: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).
Wessling, Berndt W., *Meyerbeer: Wagners Beute – Heines Geisel* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1984).
Westernhagen, Curt, *Wagner: A Biography*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
White, Hayden, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
Wild, Nicole, *Dictionnaire des théâtres parisiens au XIXe siècle: les théâtres et la musique* (Paris: Aux Amateurs de livres, 1989).
Williams, Gavin, 'Orating Verdi: Death and the Media, *c*. 1901', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 23/3 (November 2011), 119-43.

Yon, Jean-Claude, *Jacques Offenbach* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

Zimmermann, Reiner, *Giacomo Meyerbeer: eine Biographie nach Dokumenten* (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1991).