

# Pachyderms and Prosceniums: Musico-Dramatic Tradition and Aesthetic Innovation During The French Revolution

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Radical though it may have been, the Revolution made far fewer changes than is generally supposed.<sup>1</sup>

**D**e Toqueville's study of France at the end of the eighteenth century continues to provide us with a thoughtful reminder of the large degree of continuity that existed between the ancien régime and the revolutionary state despite their apparent differences. Indeed, the French Revolution represented both continuity with and rejection of the past, an inherently paradoxical position. Although the rhetoric and policies of revolutionaries often reflected the desire to distinguish themselves from their ancien régime counterparts, many of the political achievements of the Revolution completed or clarified developments already begun under the monarchy. Ultimately, the contradictory nature of revolutionary ideology infected all of French society and became characteristic of revolutionary culture in general.

The tension between revolutionary continuity and change was nowhere more evident than in the musico-dramatic culture of the late eighteenth century. Opera, in particular, embodied the conflicting ideological forces at work within the Revolution. Throughout the 1790s composers and librettists received critical encouragement to transform this genre into a rhetorical tool of the revolutionary state. This article examines the elements of tradition and innovation that consti-

tuted revolutionary operatic aesthetics and explores three areas in which they feature prominently. First I briefly review the relationship between revolutionary government and theatrical enterprises. This section is followed by a consideration of the role of music within revolutionary aesthetics and a summarization of the attitude of revolutionary critics toward music and its rhetorical power. In conclusion, I analyze an engraving from the title page of an operatic score that depicts the conflicting elements that constituted musico-dramatic aesthetics during the Revolution.

### *Revolution and Theatrical Liberty*

Throughout the Revolution one aspect of theatrical representation was never questioned by the government, critics, or entrepreneurs, namely, theater's educational function. The concept of theater as a means of instructing the public, of course, had its roots deeply imbedded in the ancien régime. The revolutionaries, however, substantially altered the content of that education by substituting revolutionary values for the norms of the monarchy. In this way, they hoped to rejuvenate the old notion of theater as a pedagogical tool and to make it serve a politically progressive agenda. Curiously, despite its identification of theatrical representation with political rhetoric and power, the revolutionary government renounced, at least initially, any supervisory role over the administrative operations of theaters.<sup>2</sup> In order to understand this contradictory position it is first necessary to discuss theatrical organization during the ancien régime.

Prior to the Revolution, the monarchy had maintained control over Parisian theaters through an elaborate system of patronage that limited the number of spectacles and the genres that could be performed at each establishment. The officially sanctioned theaters (Académie de Musique or Opéra, Comédie Française, and Comédie Italienne) jealously guarded their elite status and required other, unofficial theaters to pay them for the right to mount vaudevilles, farces, and plays. The privileged theaters carefully monitored the repertoire of their competitors and used their ties to the crown to keep these rival establishments in check. In this way the state indirectly regulated dramatic performances through privileged theaters, which eagerly and effectively policed all subordinate establishments.

With the weakening of the monarchy, however, the system of privilege fell into political disrepute. In 1790 and 1791, a coalition of playwrights and composers challenged the monopolies granted to the Opéra, Comédie Française, and Comédie Italienne and argued that revolutionary France should no longer tolerate an antiquated system based on royal patronage. As a result of this and other lobbying efforts, the National Assembly passed a law on 13 January 1791 that transformed the theatrical culture of France.<sup>3</sup> The law allowed any individual with sufficient means to open a theater and to perform works of any genre.

This same legislation abolished censorship, thereby liberating theaters from any direct governmental supervision. In short, this law treated theatrical enterprises like any other entrepreneurial endeavor and permitted theater directors complete freedom in choosing and managing their repertoires.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the government willingly relinquished control over theaters in an attempt to rid the French stage of the taint of privilege; it refrained from instituting political restraints to control theatrical enterprises owing to the association of such limitations with presumed monarchical abuses.

The *laissez-faire* economic policy toward entrepreneurs combined with high expectations for some form of cultural renewal through drama made theaters a constant source of political anxiety for the government over the course of the next decade. Although public officials believed that dramas contributed fundamentally to the sociopolitical outlook of their audiences, the control of dramatic ideas and images proved difficult, if not impossible, in the absence of censorship and bureaucratic oversight of the theaters, measures abhorrent to principled revolutionaries. The government of the Terror, however, gradually began to erode the independence guaranteed to theatrical administrations and instituted new mechanisms of state control. This process accelerated during the Thermidorian Reaction and the Directory in response to the political upheaval generated by the Terror's collapse. It continued until Napoleon established strict regulations that limited the number of theatrical enterprises and defined each theater's artistic genre precisely. Napoleonic censors, ultimately, managed a more rigidly organized theatrical world than had any of their royal counterparts.<sup>5</sup> Ironically, the 1791 legislation had merely prepared the way for the institution of a more stringent and effective set of theatrical regulations than the monarchy had designed.

The relaxation of state controls over theaters in 1791, however, was not an aberration in the history of French theatrical history. The freedom offered to entrepreneurs and the debate that accompanied that declaration of freedom represented the process by which revolutionaries were able to strip all stain of royal privilege from the mechanisms of censorship. In this sense the reimposition of state authority over theaters did not dilute the liberty of the theaters because the arbitrary system of privilege had been struck down. After 1791 the state reestablished its control, no longer in the name of the king, but now in the best interests of the commonweal.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Problem of Musical Meaning*

During the Thermidorian Reaction and the first years of the Directory, theaters became the site of angry and often violent displays of anti-revolutionary fervor. Politically motivated audiences transformed the city's auditoriums into

forums for ideological debate that demanded a governmental response.<sup>7</sup> In what became known as the *guerre des chansons*, many of these acts of cultural contestation involved ideological interpretations of music and the politically charged reception of musical performances.

The Revolution witnessed the production of an enormous number of popular songs, and some of them, such as "La Carmagnole" and the "Marseillaise," were closely associated with the Terror. As an act of musical opposition, conservatives adopted "Réveil du peuple" as their own anthem.<sup>8</sup> The lyrics of this song aimed at inflaming the passions of its listeners and unifying them against Jacobins, who were described in the second verse as "those drinkers of human blood."<sup>9</sup> Throughout the spring of 1795, conservative audiences at several Parisian theaters demanded that the pit orchestras play the melody of "Réveil du peuple" or that one of the soloists sing it on stage. Meanwhile republican factions within the audience insisted just as vehemently that the "Marseillaise" be performed.<sup>10</sup> The situation became violent on a number of occasions thereby forcing the government to intervene and to ban "Réveil du peuple."<sup>11</sup>

In its denunciation of "Réveil du peuple," the Directory implicitly acknowledged the ability of music to function politically, in this instance, to convey a specific, counterrevolutionary message. The prominent politician Jean-Baptiste Leclerc concurred with the government's estimation of the rhetorical power of music, and he forcefully advanced the cause of state censorship of music and musical performance. Leclerc, who was a member of the legislative Council of Five Hundred, based his aesthetic outlook on the relationship of the political sphere to the world of music:

La musique perfectionna, ou corrompit les nations, selon que les gouvernans se proposèrent leur liberté ou leur asservissement. Sous le règne des tyrans, elle énerma et fit des esclaves; sous l'empire des moeurs, elle trempa l'âme et fortifia l'amour des vertus et de la patrie. (7)<sup>12</sup>

This essay presented the history of music as a history of the political use and abuse of music. The enormous emotional power that Leclerc attributed to music provided any government that intelligently manipulated the rhetorical force of musical performance with invaluable influence over listeners. Most governments, in Leclerc's opinion, used music in order to amuse their subjects and thereby distract them from seeking political power. What had freed France from the servile mentality that afflicted the subjects of other European states, he proposed, was the introduction and enthusiastic reception of Gluck's operas at the end of the eighteenth century:

Ce n'est point une erreur de dire que la révolution opérée par Gluck dans la musique aurait dû faire trembler le gouverne-

ment: ses accords vigoureux réveillèrent la générosité française; l'âmes se retremperont, et firent voir une énergie que éclata bientôt après: le trone fut ébraulé." (10)<sup>13</sup>

Leclerc theorized a surprisingly direct connection between music and the political sphere; he argued that a musical event, Gluck's operatic debut in Paris, triggered the events of 1789. Although Leclerc did not claim that music itself caused the Revolution, his essay described music, potentially, as an agent of political power. To realize revolutionary political change, he asserted, the force inherent within music had to be controlled by the revolutionaries.

Music, in Leclerc's view, did not merely reflect the spirit of the day, but rather it informed that spirit. Musical styles and forms influenced the political disposition of listeners. Therefore, all successful political ideologies entailed a coherent system of aesthetics; revolutionary music would therefore create revolutionary audiences. In contrast, if the state ignored the necessity of this aesthetic support, music and other arts could develop in a manner that would be detrimental to the future of the young Republic.<sup>14</sup>

The creation of a revolutionary aesthetics of music, however, was not a simple matter. While playwrights and librettists found a wealth of topics appropriate to the creation of a revolutionary drama, composers confronted a more formidable task. Unlike plays and librettos, which could be easily designed to incorporate favorable references to the Revolution, music posed a problem for revolutionaries who were eager to convey unambiguous messages to the public. They respected music's influence over the emotional response of an audience and wanted to command that power to their own end. The difficulty they faced, however, was the mutability of musical meaning. The linguistic model of music that Rousseau had outlined earlier in the century persisted, but it had become increasingly clear that musical language lacked semantic stability.<sup>15</sup>

Theater critics attempted to fix musical expression by harnessing music's rhetorical force to politically unambiguous texts. For that reason, these same critics placed the highest value on vocal music. Moreover, they insisted on maintaining the integrity of this musico-textual bond by denigrating pastiches and the practice of retexting popular melodies.<sup>16</sup> The text of a song, therefore, imparted the desired, patriotic sense while the music moved the audience and produced a suitable emotional response. In this way, the French aesthetic tradition that privileged text over music was maintained albeit in support of new revolutionary meaning.<sup>17</sup>

The privileging of text in opera by revolutionaries, however, differed from the preference for text exhibited by critics during the ancien régime. Whereas the aesthetic position of music earlier in the eighteenth century had centered around questions of imitation and expressivity, the revolutionary critics focused more closely on the response of listeners to musical stimulus.<sup>18</sup> By iso-

lating the effect of specific musical parameters on an audience, they intended to fix musical meaning and avoid miscommunication through music.<sup>19</sup>

This fascination with the problem of musical meaning provoked a number of attempts to identify the specific emotional responses that different musical parameters generated. One of the more unusual attempts to analyze music reception occurred on 29 May 1798 when a small group of musicians performed a concert in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.<sup>20</sup> The performance of music at a park was not in itself an unusual event. Pleasure gardens such as the Tivoli and the Jardin Marboeuf frequently offered musical concerts for the general public.<sup>21</sup> Parisians who relaxed in the botanical garden that day, however, remained unaware of this performance. Scientists from the neighboring Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle had arranged this concert for a select audience of two, Hans and Marguerite, a pair of Indian elephants living in the Jardin's recently established menagerie.<sup>22</sup>

The museum naturalists carefully monitored the elephants' reactions to the musical program, detailing each response in order to measure exactly the power of music over these animals. As an indication of the serious nature of their endeavor, the organizers employed some of the finest performers in Paris for the concert. Indeed, almost all the performers held a position either with the Opéra or with the recently established Conservatoire National de Musique.<sup>23</sup> The expertise of these musicians assured Hans and Marguerite of an entertainment with an unusually high level of performance.

The first printed reports of this concert were written by Georges Toscan, the librarian of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, and appeared in the *Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique*, a journal that appealed to a general readership with wide-ranging interests in the arts and sciences.<sup>24</sup> In these articles Toscan not only recorded the details of the concert, but he also revealed the cultural assumptions that informed the performance. He and fellow naturalists from the museum, who managed both the Jardin and its menagerie, showed a tendency to anthropomorphize the animals in their charge. They interpreted the reactions of animals to music and other stimuli in terms of human emotion.<sup>25</sup> They believed that the results of this musical experiment with elephants would offer insight into the human response to music as well. The reaction of the elephants, in their estimation, would differ in degree and subtlety but not in kind from that of men and women. In addition to the presumed equivalence of human emotions and those of animals, the scientists also assumed that music in and of itself would produce a measurable influence on the emotions of animals. By using elephants as the subjects of the experiment, the scientists intended to study the effect of music, free from any textual meaning. Although vocal music was performed for the elephants, Toscan clearly did not expect the animals to understand the text. On the contrary, the music's meaning was conveyed to the ele-

phants through melody, harmony, rhythm, color, and other purely musical elements. The organizers consciously intended to strip away the semantic content from songs in order to reveal the expressive significance of the accompanying music.<sup>26</sup>

According to Toscan, the elephants lacked the intellectual power to resist the emotional dictates of the music. Therefore he was not surprised that the two animals marched in time to dance music composed by Gluck or that the female was passionately aroused by the strains of "O ma tendre musette."<sup>27</sup> The concert unequivocally demonstrated to Toscan and his fellow scientists that music possessed the power to address the emotional faculties without intellectual mediation. The political importance of this interpretation of the animals' response was not lost on Toscan and his fellow naturalists. In his article describing the concert Toscan characterized music as an instrument of which "les hommes s'en sont servis [...] pour civiliser eux-mêmes et régler leurs propres moeurs" (323). In this context the concert for the elephants represented an attempt to determine the strength of this musical force and to measure its effects systematically. Toscan expected that his observations of the concert would advance scientific understanding of music's power and possibly suggest the means to control it. In this way, the naturalists from the Museum supported the efforts of composers to manipulate public opinion through music and to develop an appropriately revolutionary culture.<sup>28</sup>

In the opinion of the organizers of the concert, music possessed an independent power that directly influenced animal passions. As we have seen, this assumption formed a basic premise of the experiment.<sup>29</sup> Composers and performers, they thought, could channel this influence and control its application, but the music itself enjoyed an independent existence that knew no barriers, apparently not even species-related barriers. Invoking their scientific findings, the naturalists bestowed a universality on music that enabled Toscan to make his observations and to interpret the concert as if the performance was merely the vehicle for some immutable substance that affected all animals alike.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the effort to demonstrate musical power helped to free music from its traditional, subservient position with respect to text.

The experiment, which may seem hopelessly naive by our standards, illustrates the belief of the concert organizers in music's ability to convey meaning independently of text. These naturalists did not expect the elephants to comprehend the texts of the songs that were sung to them, but they did expect Hans and Marguerite to understand the meaning of the music. The experiment convinced them that music possessed the power to influence animal passions independently of verbal communication.

The experiment helped to heighten the impression of music's command over human emotions by suggesting that music itself was completely free from

any and all cultural constraint. The political ramifications of this aesthetic position were far reaching. By recognizing music as a powerful force over human emotion, the organizers of the concert for the elephants implicitly agreed with Leclerc, who had argued that the music could be used to sway audiences in a politically expedient manner if proper controls over the music were established. As a result, it is not surprising that revolutionary critics concerned themselves with containing music and its power.

### *Classical Borders and Revolutionary Content*

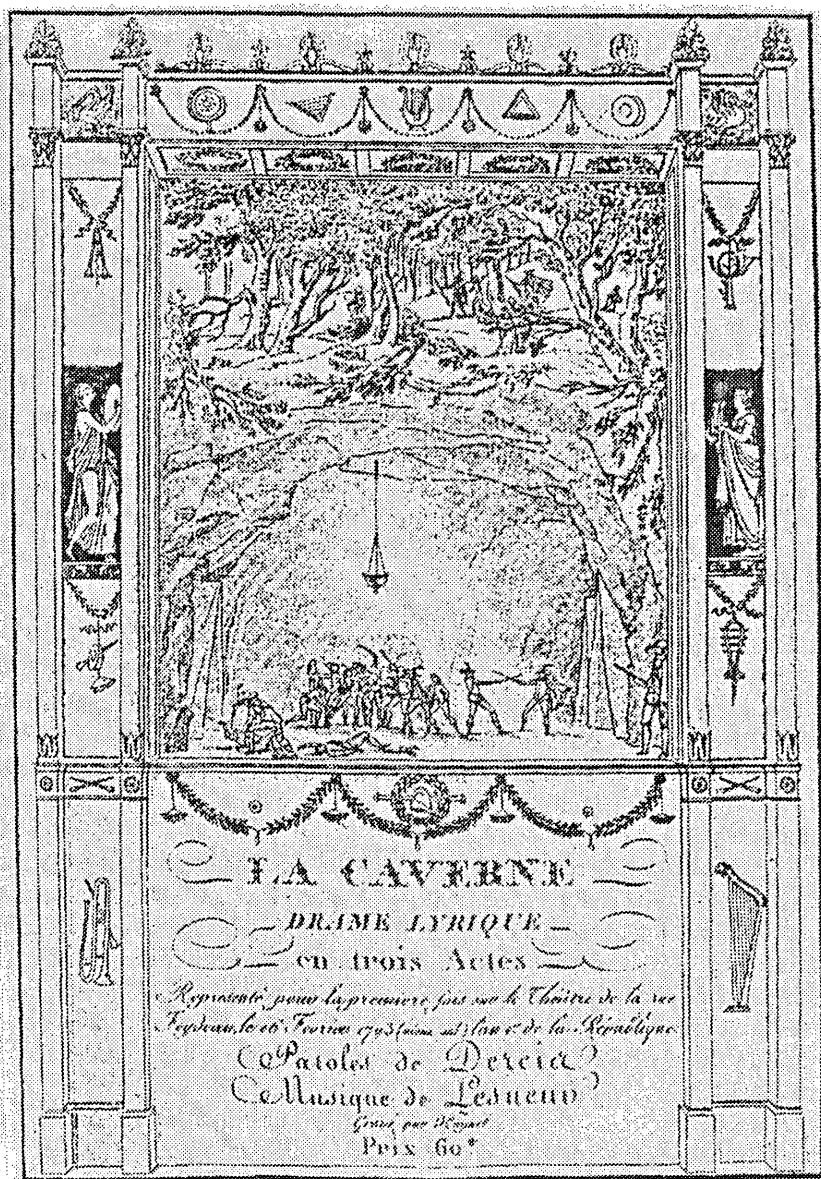
A curious engraving from the early 1790s reflects the political concern over containing the rhetorical force of music. The engraving embodies the tension between continuity and change that constituted revolutionary aesthetics. The image in question comes from the title page to the Nadermann edition of the full score to Le Sueur's *La Caverne* [See Illustration]. This opera premiered on 16 February 1793, shortly after the execution of Louis XVI but prior to the declaration of the Terror. The opera was a major financial and critical success, and it continued to be performed throughout the 1790s.

The illustration is exceptional for a number of reasons. Few operatic scores published during the 1790s include such detailed engravings on their title pages. The engraving depicts a scene from *La Caverne*, highlighting one of the most celebrated features of the opera's *mise en scène*, its split stage.<sup>31</sup> At performances of *La Caverne* the audience watched the opera unfold on a horizontally divided field of action. Events occurred simultaneously in the cave below and on the forest floor above.<sup>32</sup> What is most fascinating about this engraving, however, is not the depiction of this uncommon *mise en scène* but rather the combination of a naturalistic scene with the geometrically balanced, neo-classical border that envelops it.

The border's design suggests a proscenium, giving one the impression of viewing the scene from the parterre of a theater. The artist used the simple effect of linear perspective to extend the border toward the viewer, an effect which appears to place the forest/cave in a recess. The perception of depth transforms the border into a physical barrier that separates the scene within it from the person looking at the engraving. In this way the border simulates the function of a proscenium, which distinguishes an auditorium and audience from a stage and performers. The border itself deserves detailed description since it freely mixes the symbols of some vaguely antique past with easily identifiable images of the Revolution.

The left and right sides of the border are created by pairs of Corinthian columns placed on top of piers that lend the border architectural weight. Between each pair of columns various instruments are depicted: a natural horn, a harp, an aulos, and other less easily identifiable instruments. Also pictured





Illustration

J.-F. Le Sueur, La Caverne (Paris: Naderman, 1796)

between the pairs of columns are two women covered in classical drapery. The one on the left strikes what appears to be a tambourine or a type of shallow drum, while the other plucks a lyre. The artist clearly intended the figures to suggest two of the Greek Muses. Eighteenth-century critics often referred to Euterpe, Melpomene, and Thalia in their reviews of opera, and the engraving reflects this practice of invoking classical imagery in connection with lyric theater.<sup>33</sup> The reference to Greek mythology not only reinforces the border's neo-classical style but also emphasizes the connection of this border to a theatrical space.

Across the top of the border are more musical instruments as well as two swans, in the extreme right and left hand corners. The entire order is topped by further architectural details abounding with classical associations. By way of contrast, in the lower portion of the border, immediately above the title of the work, is a Phrygian cap encircled with a wreath of laurel leaves. The Phrygian cap, albeit a symbol with a classical past, had become a totem of liberty during the Revolution and bestows revolutionary legitimacy upon the entire border.<sup>34</sup> As a whole this combination of details offers a visual representation of classically sanctioned revolutionary order and organization.

The border contrasts starkly with the image presented within it. The scene depicted is of a dark, mysterious, Gothic setting. Above we see a forest in which some soldiers wander amid brush and fallen branches, presumably looking for an entrance to the subterranean hideout of the bandits. Beneath them is the cave in which the bandits have concealed themselves. The light of a single lamp suspended from the ceiling penetrates the murky darkness. Amid the shadows we observe a group of armed men skirmishing while some wounded men lie on the cave floor in the foreground. The image accurately depicts the dramatic action at the end of the third act of *La Caverne* when the bandits are discovered in their cave and finally are defeated.

The engraving reflects the preference for more naturalistic stagings that many operas exhibited during the 1790s.<sup>35</sup> This emphasis on naturalism had the effect of distancing the audience further from the staged event. The use of realistic set designs made the audience's suspension of disbelief easier and helped to distinguish the drama unfolding on stage from the auditorium. Such stagings realized the demands of critics for maintaining the dramatic integrity of an opera throughout the entire performance.<sup>36</sup> The separation of stage and audience therefore forced the audience to observe without any interruption of, or interaction with, the singers or the actors that might disrupt the performance. Theatrical illusion, therefore, was a commodity that not only heightened the pleasure of the audience but also kept the audience passively engrossed in the work they watched. In short, it helped to contain and direct audience response to the works performed.

The border, like a proscenium, encompasses the violence that we see

unfolding on the stage and distances the viewer from it. The turbulence we observe within the cave is contained between solid classical architecture that is supported by a cultural tradition as venerable as that of the ancients. There is no danger of the stage action spilling beyond this clearly delineated boundary.

The contrast between the two parts of the engraving generates a visual tension that parallels the contradictions inherent in revolutionary aesthetics.<sup>37</sup> As I have discussed above, most critics in the 1790s believed music possessed enormous emotional power. Music, they thought, appealed directly to the listener's passions. The traditional forms and genres in conjunction with a suitable text channeled this musical power in an appropriate and predictable fashion; the libretto acted as a border that kept the rhetorically persuasive power of music under control.

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In conclusion, the revolutionaries retained the essential aesthetic values of the *ancien régime* but reinterpreted this cultural legacy in accordance with their political goals. Consequently, the critical interest in preserving the traditions and institutions of the French theatrical and musical past involved an aesthetic shift that represented a break with the *ancien régime*. In this regard, the critical emphasis on the protection of specifically French artistic values that was widespread during the 1790s did not necessarily reflect a politically conservative outlook. On the contrary, one of the curious features of the Revolution was the ultimate separation of France's cultural legacy, particularly its literary and musical traditions, from direct association with the monarchy and the society of the *ancien régime*. Thus the government could invoke the literary, artistic, and musical traditions of the past without compromising its revolutionary ideals. Indeed, the emphasis on an aesthetic continuity actually benefited the revolutionary project; appeals to this tradition created a common national heritage that the state used to unify its citizens under a new political order.

Traditional aesthetic values also served the important purpose of prescribing forms and genres in such a manner that their content and meaning could be more easily controlled. Critics, for example, recognized the expressive power of music during the 1790s but persisted in privileging text in their analyses. The power of music to express was thereby restricted by a text which had explicit and therefore less ambiguous meaning. The potential of instrumental music to express meaning independent of a text—although implicitly acknowledged by critics and demonstrated by the experiment that Toscan recorded—received no encouragement since such meaning would remain inexact and indeterminate.<sup>38</sup> The concern for specificity and the need to avoid ambiguity in any aesthetic enterprise led critics to advocate more traditional and convention-bound compositional approaches. Oftentimes, critics all but ignored the increased popular interest in purely instrumental music and indications that instrumental genres represented an equally valuable avenue of expression.<sup>39</sup> Music, in the eyes of

revolutionary critics, needed to be contained. To achieve this end, they resorted to aesthetic tradition, secured musical meaning with text, and restrained the emotional force of music within balanced formal boundaries.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1955) 20.

<sup>2</sup> James A. Leith, *The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France, 1750-1799: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 98-124; Leith, "Music as an Ideological Weapon in the French Revolution," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1966): 126-40; Noel Parker, *Portrayals of Revolution: Images, Debates and Patterns of Thought on the French Revolution* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990) 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac-René-Guy Le Chapelier, *Rapport fait par M. Le Chapelier au nom du Comité de constitution, sur la pétition des auteurs dramatiques, dans la séance du jeudi 13 janvier 1791 avec le décret rendu dans cette séance* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, n.d.)

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this process see Michael E. McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse: Expressions of Revolution and Counterrevolution at the Théâtre Feydeau, 1789-1801," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1994) 39-78. See also Michèle Root-Bernstein, *Boulevard Theater and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984) 178-202.

<sup>5</sup> For information on theaters during the Napoleonic era see Louis-Henry Lecomte, *Napoléon et le monde dramatique: Etude nouvelle d'après des documents inédits* (Paris: Daragon, 1912) 36-39, 106-12; Marvin Carlson, *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966) 285-287; and Elouin, A Trébuchet, and E. Labat, *Nouveau Dictionnaire de police* (Paris: Béchét Jeune, 1835) 2:752-760.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre-Jean Audouin, *Observations faites sur les théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, germinal VI [1798]); Audouin, *Rapport sur les théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale VI [1798]); Pierre-Charles-Louis Baudin, *Opinion de P.C.L. Baudin (des Ardennes) sur la résolution du 8 floréal relative aux théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, messidor VI [1798]); Antoine-Georges-François Chabaud-Latour, *Opinion de Chabaud (député du Gard) sur le projet de résolution relatif aux théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, germinal VI [1798]); Jacques Antoine Creuzé-Latouche, *Rapport sur la résolution du 8 floréal relative aux théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, prairial VI [1798]); P.C. Laussat, *Opinion de P.C. Laussat (des Basses-Pyrénées) sur la résolution du 8 floréal VI relative aux théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, prairial VI [1798]); François Lemarque, *Opinion sur les théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie, germinal VI [1798]); Portiez, *Opinion de Portiez (de l'Oise) sur les théâtres* (Paris:

Imprimerie nationale an VI [1798]); Gabriel-Opportune Rampillon, *Opinion de G.O. Rampillon sur les théâtres* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, germinal VI [1798]).

<sup>7</sup> McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse" 161-196; and Laura Mason, "Singing the French Revolution: Popular Songs and Revolutionary Politics, 1787-1799" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1990) 215-57.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Marie Souriguère de Saint-Marc, a young playwright, wrote the text of this song. The music was by Pierre Gaveaux.

<sup>9</sup> For the full text of the song see J.-B. Weckerlin, *Chansons populaires du pays de France* (Paris: Heugel, 1903) 2:148-49.

<sup>10</sup> Alphonse Aulard, ed., *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne* (Paris: L. Cerf, 1899-1902), *Report of 11 nivôse III* (31 December 1794) 1:351-52; *Report of 4 pluviôse III* (23 January 1795) 1: 416; *Report of 15 pluviôse III* (3 February 1795) 1:446; *Report of 16 pluviôse III* (4 February 1795) 1:449; and *Annales patriotiques 18 pluviôse III* (6 February 1795) 217.

<sup>11</sup> Antonin Debidour, ed., *Recueil des actes du Directoire exécutif* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1910-1917) 1:390-95.

<sup>12</sup> "Music perfected or corrupted nations in accordance with that which governments proposed for their liberty or debasement. Under the rule of tyrants [music] enervated and made [the nations] slaves. Under moral authority, it permeated the soul and strengthened the people's love of virtue and patriotism." For contemporary reviews of Leclerc's essay see *Censeur des journaux* No. 298, 19 June 1796, 2-3; No. 299, 19 June 1796, 1-2; *Esprit des journaux* November 1796, 96-104; *Magasin encyclopédique* 8 (1796): 363-65.

<sup>13</sup> "It is not at all a mistake to say that the revolution carried out by Gluck in music ought to have made the government [of the king] tremble. His vigorous harmonies reawakened the magnanimity of the French; their souls were renewed and were made to see an energy which was acclaimed soon after. The throne was shaken."

<sup>14</sup> For this reason, Leclerc ardently supported the development of national schools of music. For a discussion of Leclerc's model of music education and its influence see Cynthia M. Gessele, "The Conservatoire de Musique and National Music Education in France, 1795-1801," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 201-204.

<sup>15</sup> For Rousseau's linguistic model of music see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (Paris: Gallimard/Folio, 1990) 114-25.

<sup>16</sup> For example, *Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique* 30 frimaire IX (21 December 1800) 553. See also Hinrich Hudde "Le jour de boire

est arrivée: Parodies burlesques de 'La Marseillaise,'" 1792-1799, *Dix-Huitième Siècle* 17 (1985): 377-95.

<sup>17</sup> Ora Frishberg Saloman, "French Revolutionary Perspectives on Chabanon's *De la musique* of 1785," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. M. Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 219-20.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the state of music aesthetic at the end of ancien régime see Ora F. Saloman, "Aspects of Gluckian Operatic Thought and Practice in France: The Musico-Dramatic Vision of *Le Sueur* and *La Cépède* (1785-1809) in Relation to the Aesthetic and Critical Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970) 96-112; and Saloman, "La Cépède's *La poétique de la musique* and *Le Sueur*," *Acta Musicologica* 47 (1975): 144-54. See also James H. Johnson, "The French Musical Experience from the Old Regime to Romanticism" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1988) 225-29. Johnson argues that the focus of revolutionary musical criticism on audience response reflected the politicization of French culture during the Revolution.

<sup>19</sup> No less a figure than the composer Grétry had exhorted the government to take an active role in producing a musical aesthetic suitable for the French. In his *De la vérité* he writes extensively on the effects of climate on human mores and then explains how these effects can be complemented or countered through musical means. See A.-E.-M. Grétry, *De la vérité: Ce que nous fumés, ce que nous sommes, ce que nous devrions être* (Paris: Pougens, prairial IX [1801]) 2:218-28.

<sup>20</sup> For recent interpretations of this event, see James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1995) 129-32. Johnson offers a clear discussion of the scientific context in which this concert was performed. See also Michael E. McClellan "If We Could Talk with the Animals," in *Unnatural Acts: Theorizing the Performative*, ed. S.-E. Case et al. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1995) 237-48.

<sup>21</sup> Pleasure gardens became something of a fad in Paris during the Directory. Their displays of fireworks, musical concerts, and dances seriously rivaled theaters as a popular form of entertainment. Claude Ruggieri, *Précis historique sur les fêtes, les spectacles et les réjouissances publiques* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1830) 84-107; and Marvin Carlson, *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) 266-67.

<sup>22</sup> The best history of the zoo at the Jardin de plantes remains Gustave Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries de l'antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Doin et fils, 1912) 2:158-83. See also Loisel, "Histoire de la ménagerie du Muséum." *Revue scientifique* 49 (1911): 262-63; and Paul-Antoine Cap, *Le Muséum d'histoire naturelle* (Paris: L. Curmer, 1854).

<sup>23</sup> Performers known to have participated in the concert were Martin-

Joseph Adrien (singer), François Devienne (flute), Frédéric Duvernoy (horn), Louis-Joseph Guichard (singer), Xavier Lefèvre (clarinet), and Gaspard Veillard (bassoon).

<sup>24</sup> Georges Toscan, "Du pouvoir de la musique sur les animaux, et du concert donné aux éléphants," *Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique* 20 thermidor VI (7 August 1798) 257-64; and 30 thermidor VI (17 August 1798) 321-29.

<sup>25</sup> Toscan 323-29. There was a long European tradition of attributing human characteristics to animals and to elephants in particular. See Donald Lach, "Asian Elephants in Renaissance Europe," *Journal of Asian History* 1 (1967): 133-76.

<sup>26</sup> Toscan and a number of his associates at the Museum of Natural History had a strong interest in music. In his memoirs Louis-Marie Larévellière de Lépeaux described soirées musicales at which Georges Toscan and scientists from the Museum performed alongside musicians such as the prominent composer Etienne-Nicolas Méhul. Larévellière de Lépeaux, one of France's five Executive Directors from 1795 to 1799, was a trained botanist and frequently socialized with the Museum's naturalists. Louis-Marie Larévellière de Lépeaux, *Mémoires de Larévellière-Lépeaux, membre du Directoire exécutif de la République française et de l'Institut national* (Paris: E. Plon, 1895) 2:412-13.

<sup>27</sup> *Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique* 20 thermidor an VI (7 August 1798) 262.

<sup>28</sup> See Johnson, "The French Musical Experience," 226-29.

<sup>29</sup> This premise had its basis in Michel-Paul-Gui de Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole, les langues, la poésie et le théâtre* (Paris: Pissot, 1785; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine, 1969) 62-68. The organizers of the concert were aware of Chabanon's writings. See *Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique* 30 thermidor VI (17 August 1798) 326.

<sup>30</sup> In the early nineteenth century this aesthetic resulted in the privileging of music as an elemental force that produced scientifically measurable effects while retaining an elusive and somewhat mystical identity. This concept of music is evident in the work of Saint-Simon and his disciples. See Ralph P. Locke, *Music, Musicians, and the Saint-Simonians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 53-67.

<sup>31</sup> Divided stages had been used prior to La Caverne, but the separation had always been a wall or fence that split the scene vertically. For example, see the review of Beffroy de Reigny's *Le club des bonnes gens* in *Journal de Paris* 26 September 1791, 1098.



32 *Journal des spectacles* 29 frimaire II (19 December 1793) 1354-55.

33 Euterpe, Melpomene, and Thalia are the Muses of music and lyric poetry, tragedy, and comedy respectively.

34 See Jennifer Harris, "The Red Cap of Liberty: A Study of Dress Worn by French Revolutionary Partisans, 1789-94," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 14 (1981): 283-312; and Neil Hertz, "Medusa's Head: Male Hysteria under Political Pressure," *Representations* 4 (1983): 40-50. Also see James A. Leith, "Symbols of the French Revolution: The Strange Metamorphoses of the Triangle," in *Symbols in Life and Art: The Royal Society of Canada Symposium in Memory of George Whalley*, ed. J.A. Leith (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987) 105-117.

35 Pierre Frantz, "Pas d'entracte pour la Révolution," in *La carmagnole des muses*, ed. J.-C. Bonnet (Paris: Colin, 1988) 396-97. See also Anjelica Gooden, *Actio and Persuasion: Dramatic Performance in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

36 Concern for sustaining theatrical illusion led theater critics to complain about female chorus members who socialized with members of audience during the intermissions. The sight of performers outside of the proscenium destroyed the audiences ability to suspend their disbelief and diminished the work's dramatic integrity. See *Magasin encyclopédique* 12 (1797): 418-19. See also Jean-Baptiste Pujoux, *Paris à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Mathé, 1801) chapter 13; and Aubin-Louis Millin, *Observations sur le costume théâtral* (N.p., n.d.).

37 One reviewer directly applied this architectural metaphor to La Caverne. He compared the overture of Le Sueur's opera to a peristyle through which the listener passes as he enters the opera: "cette ouverture est le péristyle par lequel on passe pour entrer dans l'édifice." *Journal des spectacles* 26 frimaire II (16 December 1793) 1325-29.

38 See Ora Frishberg Saloman, "Chabanon and Chastellux on music and Language, 1764-1773," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 20 (1989): 109-20; Saloman, "French Revolutionary Perspectives" 211-13; and Maria Rika Maniates, "Sonate, que me veux-tu?: The Enigma of French Musical Aesthetics in the 18th Century," *Current Musicology* 9 (1969): 117-40.

39 Saloman, "French Revolutionary Perspectives" 217-20. See also Barry S. Brook, *La Symphonie française dans la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Institut de musicologie de l'Université de Paris, 1962). The success of symphonies concertantes during the 1790s attests to the popularity of instrumental genres at that time.

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