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The Composer as Intellectual: Ideological Inscriptions in French Interwar Neoclassicism

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On December 16, 1915, the director of the recently reopened Paris Opéra displayed his political acumen to a government still skeptical of opera's relevance in wartime. Drawing on innovations in his own private theater, Jacques Rouché mounted a seemingly anodyne work, resembling classic "opéra-ballet" and bearing the pallid title of *Mademoiselle de Nantes*.[1] The production, in reality, was ingenious—a brilliant departure in wartime propaganda—not through blatant brainwashing but through means far more powerful for being so insidiously indirect.

Central to the work's scenario is a concert, with musicians and audience dressed in period costume; the former are presenting a performance of French music before the grandchildren of Madame de Montespan. More specifically, the eighteenth-century progeny of this famous mistress of Louis XIV are listening to selections of Lully and Charpentier that illustrate the birth and growth of opera in France.

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[1] Before taking over the Opéra, Rouché had been director of his own Théâtre des Arts, where he had introduced a series of "concerts illustrés," featuring musicians in period costumes acting out concerts from the historical past. On the success of such concerts, see the praise by the Socialist *L'Humanité*, on January 16, 1913. On the re-opening of the Opéra, despite the opposition of the theater's subscribers as well as the "Conseil des Ministres," see the anonymous article, "Les Théâtres subventionés pendant la guerre," preserved at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, Fonds Rouché, pièce 96. And on related productions at the Opéra, in addition to this one, see Charles Dupêchez, *Histoire de l'Opéra de Paris: un siècle au Palais Garnier* (Paris, 1984).

The homology between performances here occurring was charged: the audience that was present in the Opéra was being manipulated astutely toward identification with that represented on the stage. The concert depicted historically was instilling national memory as well as cultural identity, creating a sense of its unity and continuity as the patrimony of all future generations. So too was the performance at the Opéra; the audience in the theater was witnessing its own past on the stage, and in identifying with the historical audience, imbibing the same lesson of French identity and tradition. Its heritage, it learned, was classic; in addition, since the illustrious days of Louis XIV it had been bound instrumentally to state power, had defined the community, and ensured its prestige.

Rouché, in this and similar productions, was inserting the Opéra into a network of wartime propaganda through clever mediation, or the attempted control of the production of meaning. Like other institutions, the Opéra was to serve as a realm of national memory and myth to instill a unified wartime identity in politically and culturally fractured France.[2] The myth was that of French classicism: France was "Latin" and thus classic in culture, but according to a circumscribed notion of the style that was rooted in the ideology of the monarchist Right. The goal of this study is thus, first, to examine this myth as it was propagated in music, and then to trace its impact in the twenties, when contestation again was possible, and intellectuals confronted it. As it will seek to demonstrate, neoclassicism in wartime and the twenties was no "Zeitgeist," it was the 'national style,' synonymous with patriotism, which made it a matrix for political dissension.[3] An integral part of national symbolism, deployed in political communication, "official classicism" provoked adversaries of the government to respond with contestatory articulations of "the classic."

[2] On the larger issue of national memory in this period, see Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire* Vol. II *La Nation* (Paris, 1986). On the political and cultural divisions within France on the eve of the war, see Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music from the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York, 1999), 216–19. In the months preceding the war, the military authorities had squared off against the Socialists and Syndicalists. On this and the subsequent "Union Sacrée," or the forced conciliation of political factions in the interest of national solidarity (declared by Poincaré at the start of the war), see Maurice Agulhon, *La République (1880–1932)* Vol. I (Paris, 1990), 260–62.

[3] This is not to say that there were not common stylistic tendencies in Europe as a response to the war, in particular a tendency toward simplicity and austerity. Their cultural construal and connotations, however, were substantially different, as seen in the diverging rhetorics associated with French Classicism and German "Neue Sachlichkeit." On the latter, see Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), 474–76. Also see Pascal Huynh, *La Musique sous la République de Weimar* (Paris, 1999).

French composers, considered intellectuals, were necessarily implicated in this dialogue, for their public choice of classic values was rife with connotations within this system of political representation. Contemporaries indeed interpreted and commented on their political "message" by reading their conceptions of the classic, rightly or wrongly, within the framework of current concepts and meanings. Rather than considering one case in depth I have thus chosen to examine several composers who publicly responded to different "constructions" of the classic, some of which included prescriptions for music. Yet, as we shall see, it was they who ultimately made the creative leap from these conceptions, as articulated discursively, to the realm of style, or to musical models of the classic. The space covered in this leap is my interest, or that eloquent gap that Roger Chartier has described between the "registers" of discursive articulation and artistic "representation."[4] But, again, it was not only 'translation' of current conceptions or models they sought: some, as we shall see, inflected or reacted to key values and concepts in specific constructions of the classic.

Controlling the Classic Image

Throughout French cultural institutions in wartime the goal of propaganda was the same: to effect consensus concerning identity and arrive at a unified core of national beliefs.[5] This was crucial in the wake of the "cultural war" that had followed the Dreyfus Affair, when the defeated French nationalist Right belligerently posed the question of "essential French values." It was then that the monarchist "Ligue de l'Action Française" reasserted true French culture as "classic," however not without strenuous opposition concerning its significance from the French Left. With the nationalists's triumph by wartime, and the concomitant credibility of the Action Française, the task of French cultural institutions was to impose the league's interpretation of French "Latin" and classic culture. For the combat was to be "referenced" in myth in order to galvanize energies, and to create a common

[4] See Roger Chartier's discussion of the work of Louis Marin in Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore, 1997), 90–91. On the conditions under which French composers came to be considered intellectuals at the time of the Dreyfus Affair and thereafter, see Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music*, 15–20.

[5] On the war as a battle to impose "cultural representations" and as (according to wartime propaganda) a "war of cultures," see Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen, *Au nom de la patrie. Les intellectuels et la première guerre mondiale (1910–1919)* (Paris, 1996), 280. On the collaboration of leaders in education, religion, and the arts in wartime propaganda efforts, see Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring. The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto, 1989), 223–36.

emotional bond in a still politically divided nation. To achieve this, the myth had to have a foundation in national history, since in France, as in Great Britain, history became the very core of national identity.[6]

The prestige of nationalist writers like Barrès and Maurras now reached its height, and their ideas concerning the "national genius" were widely accepted and deftly vulgarized. For both thinkers, politics and art were necessarily imbued with the same "national spirit" from which each was supposedly born, and which united them in content and essence. "The French" comprised not only a language, but a mode of thought and feeling, common values and traits that bound the community in a political and aesthetic whole. Indeed, literature and art, for French nationalists, became "the principal model and support of politics," expressive of "the ideal form and fundamental nature of the national community and the people."[7] Now generally diffused was the dogma that there was not only a French 'style' of thought or philosophy, based on classical lucidity and precision, but also of expression, which followed similar principles. As a result of such reasoning, by wartime the highest forms of culture were no longer considered universal, but rather national: art, like intellect, had a "patrie."[8]

French classicism carried distinctive connotations within this ideological context. It was not associated with Greek universalism or the critical principles of ancient Greek philosophy. Rather, being tied to "Latinity," in contrast to the "nordic" romanticism and irrationalism of the "Huns," it stood for the purportedly endemic Latin virtues of purity, proportion, and order. Abjuring the egalitarian universalism of Repub-

[6] Classicism was already considered the "true" French style until the late Restoration; Romanticism won a temporary victory in 1830, but was again displaced by 1840. As Martha Hanna has observed, after 1870 "modernist intellectuals attempted again to make classicism compatible with the most progressive ideals of the Third Republic." Their Republican definition of classicism (recalling that of the French Revolution) stressed Greek and Roman "rationalism, the rule of law, and the autonomy of the individual" as "the classical precursors of liberty, progress, and international peace." See Martha Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect. French Scholars and Writers during the Great War* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 9–10. But the classic dominance was challenged again at the end of the century in literature not only by Naturalism, but by Symbolism, and then by modernist currents. Now, Maurras sought to counter this challenge by reasserting a conservative classic doctrine (associated with monarchism), proclaiming classicism as "the natural order," as opposed to "sickness" and degeneration, which he associated with both Romanticism and more progressive currents. On Maurras, see Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect,* 11.

On the way in which the war was "referenced in myth," see Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring,* 179ff. As Erik Hobsbawm has aptly observed, it is especially in times of crisis that history becomes a legitimator of action and a cement of group cohesion. See Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), 12. On the war as an impetus to the return to the past, see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory. Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995).

[7] See David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism. Anti-Semitism and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), 16 and 40.

[8] Prochasson and Rasmussen, *Au nom de la patrie,* 218.

lican classicism for the orderly, hierarchical model of Catholicism, this conservative classicism emphasized "balance." Hence it was welded to yet another tenet of wartime dogma—anti-individualism, the "individual" here implying not only egotism and chaos, but German romanticism. Classicism thus became synonymous with discipline, obedience, and self-abnegation, or a "regulated moral and aesthetic order" that was essential to the nation's survival.[9] As a result of all these conceptions, classicism was linked to the "defense" of French culture, including protection against contamination from elements outside of "the national organism." Purity was considered essential, and demanded the immediate extirpation of all foreign traits that could be identified as "polluting" any component of the mythic "génie nationale."[10]

These orthodoxies were promptly institutionalized. Theaters and concerts were charged with the task of national and historical education, or with the construction of national memory via a canon. The national community, as Rouché affirmed, could indeed be "imagined" through music, which was to enunciate distinctly, if here, ineffably, the principles that underpinned France's ethos. Rouché perceived that to assume this new role institutions must mediate in the formation of taste, controlling the modes of transmission of art and thus shaping both the experience and the meaning of it.[11]

The Opéra assumed a leading role, as we have seen: *Mademoiselle de Nantes* was one of a series of "matinées" it developed for the audience left in Paris, and drawn by lower ticket prices and a more informal dress

[9] Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect,* 9–10. And see her discussion of conservative classicism and "Latinity," as well as of d'Indy's publications in wartime journals such as *L'Opinion,* 166–68. On opposition to the narrow moralism of this position, see Jean Lacouture, *Une Adolescence du siècle. Jacques Rivière et la Nouvelle revue française* (Paris, 1994), 567. Also see Christopher Green, *Cubism and its Enemies. Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916–1928* (New Haven, 1987), 14, 153, and 190. For an example of the stress of the Action Française on the fact that great artists do not reject but harmoniously incorporate the influence of their predecessors, see Jean Darnaudet's article, "Grétry," *Action française,* 1 January 1917.

[10] For the Action Française, the most consistent danger in the past came from "Jewish art," which, even if the artist were a French citizen, introduced "foreign elements." See, for example, Pierre Lasserre, *L'Esprit de la musique française* (Paris, 1917), 236.

[11] On "imagining communities," see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983). On precedents in controlling conditions of access to music through experimenting with forms of performance, or the shaping of "performative context," see Jane F. Fulcher, "The Concert as Political Propaganda in France and the Control of 'Performative Context'," *The Musical Quarterly* LXXXII/1 (Spring 1998), 41–67. As it points out, the prewar Left and Right had sought to create a political "utterance" through music by 'framing' concerts with appropriate discourses or 'keying' the experience through various signs to impart to it a distinctly political significance. The Right, through such practices, had already helped to make music an agent of collective myth, emblematic of national identity and embodying a conception of the national past. It had also helped to inscribe political meanings in genres, works, and style, a practice that was subsequently appropriated by the French state.

code. Each performance was to comprise varied selections from opera, including "divertissements de danse," and employing period costumes. As Rouché put it: "the audience will witness the history of opera; it will be convinced that the French tradition is refined today, stronger and richer than ever."[12] Hence the performances were, according to Rouché, to "teach" the public through representing what he considered to be "significant moments" in the genre's artistic evolution. The programs thus traced the evolution of the French operatic repertoire across the centuries, stressing collective effort, "official" classic values, and the historical emergence of the canon.[13]

French concert societies, like the Opéra, were expected to propagate the dominant myth of a pure, collective, and unified tradition that had its basis in a hierarchical, orderly classicism. One apt example, among many, is the first of the Sunday "Matinées Nationales," held on November 29, 1914, in the large amphitheater of the Sorbonne. Organized by Henri Rabaud (who would become the Conservatoire's director upon the retirement of Fauré), the concerts were conducted by Messager and Rabaud, both dressed in patriotic blue.[14] The first of the concerts set the pattern for the rest: a performance of national hymns was followed by a speech by the Dean of the Faculty of Letters, and then by a series of patriotic readings from such nationalist figures as Déroulède and Péguy (as well as the more moderate Alphonse Daudet, Hugo, and Banville). These literary readings were then followed by the performance of works by French composers, including the so-called "modern classics" (those using classic forms), particularly Franck, Magnard, and Saint-Saëns. Despite the virulent aesthetic disagreements between the followers of Franck (such as d'Indy) and Saint-Saëns, both composers were here framed and consecrated as part of France's "Latin" and collective culture.[15]

[12] On the previous restrictive dress code, see Frédérique Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier dans la société parisienne 1875–1914* (Liège, 1991), 458.

[13] See Dupêchez, *Histoire de l'Opéra de Paris,* 150. And see the anonymous article, "Les theatres subventiones pendant la guerre," in the Fonds Rouché, pièce 96, Bibliothèque de l'Opéra. In the Opéra's regular performances Rouché also recognized the need to balance the performance of modern French works (which his contract required) with those of France's wartime allies. And he astutely revived several great French classic operas which, juxtaposed with works of the present, imparted the same lesson of French tradition and its continuity. There were, of course, some "pièces de circonstances," but these were primarily the province of the Opéra Comique. On the latter, see P. B. Gheusi, *L'Opera-Comique pendant la guerre* (Paris, 1919).

[14] Prochasson and Rasmussen, 177–78. Also see D.-E. Inghelbrecht, *Mouvement contraire. Souvenirs d'un musicien* (Paris, 1947), 133, and Albert Roussel, *Lettres et écrits,* ed. Nicole Labelle (Paris, 1987), 248. Because museums were closed in wartime, while artworks were stored safely outside Paris, and since the definition of French (as opposed to German) music was so crucial to national pride, "patriotic concerts" now flourished.

[15] Prochasson and Rasmussen, 177–78.

But dissension inevitably remained, as evidenced in the large concert societies such as Colonne and Lamoureux, which were forced to fuse because of shortage of funds, physical facilities, and personnel.[16] The combined concert series now had to face the delicate question, confronted by all, of what to exclude from the repertoire, and specifically whether all German music should be banned. In spite of initial attempts to avoid all things German in public, German music did indeed reappear by the Fall of 1915 in the Salle Gaveau and the Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux. For it did not take long to see that despite the exigencies of ideological orthodoxy, the French repertoire alone was not sufficient and the public indeed wanted German music. But the concept of "musique défaitiste," or music that compromised French patriotism remained, causing censors to examine programs for the menacing presence of composers considered "Boche," or Germanic and "modernist."[17]

Despite the disagreement over which Germans to exclude (most prominent among whom was Wagner), even the contentious d'Indy and Saint-Saëns joined together in a common effort of exclusion.[18] This effort, which involved the formation of a "league," aptly illustrates how wartime pressures to arrive at a classic orthodoxy were implemented within the musical world. The goal of the league was resolutely to prohibit the performance of any contemporary German or Austrian musical work not yet in the public domain, and which could thus "pollute" French music. Entitled the "Ligue pour la Défense de la Musique Française," it was formed by the critic, Charles Tenroc, with the support of Albert Dalamier in the Sous-secrétariat des Beaux-Arts, in 1916. The formation of the league and its subsequent activities were regularly reported in the propagandistic journal, *La Musique et la guerre,* which had been founded the previous year.

The stated goal of the league was to safeguard the (implicitly classic) "patrimoine artistique nationale," and to foster its development and diffusion, without respect to any one 'school': but its central purpose was to oust the German enemy culturally, and thereafter prevent the return of any so-called "infiltrations funestes" (baleful infiltrations)

[16] Ibid., and see Jacques Durand, *Quelques souvenirs d'un editeur de musique (1910–1924)* (Paris, 1925), 100–01. Previously, the Concerts Colonne had favored the more traditional, Conservatoire-trained French composers, while the Concerts Lamoureux concentrated on those who had been influenced by Wagner.

[17] Prochasson and Rasmussen, 178, and Inghelbrecht, *Mouvement contraire,* 154. At first, there was dissension over whether the rubric "Boche" included composers of the past such as Bach, Handel, Haydn, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Weber, and Wagner. Beethoven was soon exempted, seen as "Belgian" because of his supposed Flemish ancestry, which permitted the programming of his widely loved symphonies on concert programs.

[18] On the debate between Saint-Saëns and d'Indy concerning German music (and especially that of Wagner) see Camille Saint-Saëns, *Germanophilie* (Paris, 1916).

within French style.[19] The league's immediate aim was thus, first, to implement its prohibition of public performance in France of contemporary German and Austrian works not yet in the public domain. But beyond this, it presumed to pronounce on all questions concerning the still central issue of the future of French music, not only inside but as represented outside France. Its xenophobic intentions were boldly emblazoned on its brochure, and would continue to resonate after the war: "La Musique de France aux Français."

The president of the league, Charles Tenroc, was clearly positioning himself for leadership in the postwar musical world, and would succeed, as influential editor of the *Courrier musical.* However, there were several other "Présidents d'honneurs," which included most of the prominent figures of the prewar French musical world with, as we shall see, the exception of Ravel. The group, according to the statement of the league, intended to act simultaneously on both the musical and political worlds through the following means of action: propaganda, intervention with those in power, demands for reform in specific "Cahiers des Charges" (or contracts) and rules of the schools, as well as through imposing interdictions on or influencing French editors.

French Composers and the Symbolic Domination

Such a network impinged directly on composers, just as it did on intellectuals and artists, all faced with interdictions on "representations" of the national culture. But the choice for musicians, unlike artists and writers, was not that of clear conformity or dissent through words or images; rather, through style, they could equivocate more subtly. Hence composers were in tense dialogue with the press, for most critics, as we shall see, buttressed pressures to conform to a Baroque or (ironically) a Viennese classic model, which d'Indy's Schola Cantorum had long propagated as paradigms. For d'Indy and the Schola, true classicism had passed from France to Austria and Germany at the time of the French Revolution, but had subsequently been betrayed by the "Prussians," and was now to be "reclaimed" by France. Largely owing to the influence of d'Indy, Viennese classicism, but filled

[19] On the league's journal and associated concerts, see Michel Duchesneau, "La Musique française pendant la Guerre 1914–1918. Autour de la tentative de fusion de la Société Nationale de Musique et de la Société Musicale Indépendante," *Revue de musicologie* LXXXI/1 (1996), 123–53. Also see the brochure and statutes of the "Ligue pour la Défense de la Musique Française," 10 mars, 1916, preserved in Maurice Ravel, Lettres Autographes, Bibliothèque National Département de la Musique.

with French material, now best embodied the classic ideal of a regulated moral and aesthetic order.[20]

In illuminating contrast to d'Indy, Debussy promoted "classic purity" in his prose, but his creative interpretation of it was unorthodox, although critics projected the 'dogma' onto his works. This we may perceive by first examining Debussy's preface to the volume edited by the "femme de lettres," Mme J. Bach-Sisley, *Pour la musique française. Douze causeries,* published in 1917. Typical of wartime publications on music, the book was originally a series of public lectures that were delivered in Lyon for the group entitled the "Amies de la Musique Française" (Friends of French music).[21]

Debussy's preface begins by remarking compliantly that for some time now it has been all too clear that French music has suffered from "importations singulières." He proceeds with an arresting violence of imagery to observe that "it is a matter of pulling out the weeds without pity, just as a surgeon cuts off a gangrened leg." Debussy then addresses the complex and delicate question of just how to do this, and with d'Indy undoubtedly in mind, he turns to the key issue of form: "Let us recover our liberty, our forms: having invented them for the most part, it is right that we conserve them; there are none more beautiful. Let us no longer exert ourselves in writing symphonies, for which we stretch our muscles without an appreciable result . . . let us prefer the operetta."[22]

Long a critic of the symphony as a form that was not endemically French, Debussy was again positioning himself against both d'Indy and the Schola Cantorum. While the latter institution continued to promote and to teach the symphony, Debussy now too was turning to traditional form, but rather to the sonata, as he construed it. In opposition to Germanic conceptions, he advocated reappropriating the genre as "French," or the use of French material that would itself determine the form. As many scholars have observed, this conception of the sonata in its earliest free or amorphous state emerges in all Debussy's wartime

[20] Among the powerful "Présidents d'honneurs" of the "Ligue pour la Défense de la Musique Française" were Vincent d'Indy, Camille Saint-Saëns, Theodore Dubois, Gustave Charpentier, Xavier Leroux, and Charles Lecoq. In addition, it included two politicians, both deputies and co-presidents of the "Groupe Parliamentaire de l'Art," Paul Meunier and Lucien Mellerange. Besides a president, the league had an official secretary—a critic of music and composer, Jean Poueigh, who would have Satie sent to jail for libelling him on a postcard after his review of *Parade.* The league's list of adherents, probably actively recruited, relates closely to the tactics it proposed, for it includes the directors of the Opéra Comique, the Odéon, the Trianon Lyrique, and the Maison Pleyel, among others.

On the Schola's Germanic (Viennese) conception of classicism in the eighteenth century, see Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music,* esp. 32–35. .

[21] Mme J. Bach-Sisley, ed., *Pour la musique française. Douze causeries* (Paris, 1917).

[22] Claude Debussy, "Préface," in Bach-Sisley, *Pour la musique française,* 5.

sonatas, particularly in those for violin and cello. In them he thus inflects the dominant classic model stylistically, and more effectively than contesting it in prose, for the creative force of his conception of "true" French content is manifest. A nationalist, sympathetic to the Action Française, Debussy critically examined and here resisted all orthodoxies, just as he had done throughout his entire career.[23]

The distance between Debussy's conception of French "purity" and classicism and that of the dominant "formalist" aesthetic emerges clearly in two prominent articles about his work. These appeared in the now influential newspaper, *L'Action française;* written by its critic, Jean Darnaudet, both were entitled "La Musique française: Claude Debussy."[24] Authentic classicism, Darnaudet insists, stresses the "collective," the formal element, or "the whole," as well as a guiding idea throughout—one that is necessarily firm and precise. For the critic, as for d'Indy and the Schola (now frequently cited), form and unity depend upon a precisely defined melody and rhythm, which facilitates the development of themes and the "economy" of tonalities. This model Darnaudet, like other conservative critics by the time of the war, thus projects onto Debussy's later works, seeing them as the fruit of his return to tradition. Although Debussy, discreetly, did not object to such interpretations of his music in wartime, as we have noted, most of his compositions in these years flout precisely this dogma. For as Debussy, who emulated Rameau, had already noted with reference to the Schola, its model, now ironically the paradigm of French classicism in wartime, was essentially Germanic.[25]

Satie was initially less subtle. Tersely put, in *Parade,* formally, he satirized this model, implicitly ridiculing the dominant myth regarding classical hierarchy, proportions, and "order." In the strict formal plan, the score would seem to support the wartime ideal: first, it is balanced by means of tonality, beginning and ending implacably (if abruptly) in the traditionally affirmative key of C major. Moreover, in each of the numbers the formal construction is rigidly symmetrical, but through

[23] On Debussy's attitude toward the more conservative teaching of the Schola, and particularly its Germanic approach to form, as well as on his consistent refusal of "orthodoxies," see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music,* 184ff.

[24] Darnaudet's articles appeared in *L'Action française* on August 1 and 15, 1915.

[25] See Jean Darnaudet, "Pour la Musique française: Claude Debussy, *L'Action française,* 15 August 1915. On Debussy's writings, as well as those of conservative critics before the war, see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music,* 184–86 and 190–94. A letter from Jacques Durand to Charles Koechlin, of May 19, 1917, would seem to bear out Debussy's claim, for it rejects Koechlin's *Sonate pour violon et piano* on the basis of its "plan très special," which Durand believed would hinder a wide diffusion. Koechlin's response, of May 20, 1917, points out that while the expected number of movements are there, the "language" employed is original, and the feelings expressed highly personal. See Charles Koechlin, *Correspondance 1867–1950* (Paris, 1982), 30–31.

the application of a mechanical mirror-like procedure: after the allotted amount of time for a given section has passed, the primary thematic material is presented, but precisely in reverse order.[26]

In addition to his ridicule of "balance," Satie turns to "order" and "logic" as well, thus further rendering the dominant classical ideal of wartime absurd. Most notably, throughout the work there is no real thematic "development," which would have implied purposive movement in a logical direction—precisely what Satie avoids. Once he has exposed the motivic units, they undergo no appreciable change; he rather resorts to juxtaposition and layering, as in Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*. But Satie's satire of wartime pieties emerges through other aspects of style as well, including those that d'Indy himself continued to promote at the Schola. The work opens, as it closes, with a mock solemn chorale, and then proceeds with a perfunctory fugue, which soon runs out of energy, dissipating into a series of descending chords. This shift of rhetorical registers stylistically immediately renders the work ironic, or "brackets" it as a discourse intended to mock classical grammar, proportions, and themes.

The tumult over *Parade* resulted not only from the public's perception of Satie's impieties but, of course, from Picasso's modernist decor and costumes and Cocteau's unorthodox staging. Attacked as "Boche" —Germanic, modernist, and unpatriotic—the furor it elicited reveals the consequences of transgressing classic strictures at a moment of insecurity, of strikes and mutinies, as in the Spring of 1917.[27]

The Postwar Conservative "Defense" of French Culture

Little changed after the war, when France was weakened and classicism still connoted "defense," although now political contestation could openly return, and did so with redoubled force. The

[26] Although many historians have noted the peculiar formal symmetries of *Parade*, it was Cocteau who first observed the "metronomical unity" that governs each of the dances of the work. See Martin Cooper, *French Music from the Death of Berlioz to the Death of Fauré* (Oxford, 1951), 199. The best and most extensive analysis of *Parade* may be found in Alan M. Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (Boston, 1988). As he points out, on p. 207, "*Parade* is an elegant structure of mirrors within mirrors. Not only is the ballet framed by the music of the "Prélude du Rideau Rouge," and the Manager's theme, which functions like a frame within a frame, each of the central episodes—the "Prestidigitateur chinois," the "Petite fille américaine," the "Acrobates"—is itself a mirror form, a series of ternary structures whose recapitulations reflect the opening episodes in reverse order."

[27] On Picasso's contribution, see Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps. The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War 1914–1925* (Princeton, NJ, 1989), 119. And also see Douglas Cooper, *Picasso Theater* (New York, 1987), 24. On the disillusionment with the war by 1917 and the subsequent mutinies and strikes, see Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 175–79.

country faced devastating problems in the realms of both manpower and public finance, and in painful contrast to the myth of French leadership in Europe, its international position was decidedly in decline. Added to this were pressing internal political and social problems, and particularly the questioning and discontent on the part of both workers and youth. The Left now responded to the growing desire of these groups for radical change, especially after their social expectations were not met by the conservative coalition, the "Bloc National."[28]

This, moreover, was the moment of the birth of the Communist Party in France, precipitated initially by a split within the Socialist Party in 1920. But the gains of the Left were to lead to even further polarization, or to more extreme positions on the Right, and the re-emergence of rival groupings within it. The tensions became most acute during the two-year period of the "Cartel des Gauches" (1924–1926), when the political, cultural, and symbolic chasm between Right and Left began to grow.[29]

During most of the decade, then, apart from the hiatus of the Leftist coalition, the official mentality was defensive, conservative, and protectionist throughout institutions of culture. The power of reactionary forces increased with the return of Poincaré under the government of "National Union," which was founded in 1926. After the war, Poincaré was known to be highly sympathetic to the Action Française, which further contributed to the league's ever-rising influence in France.[30]

During the conservative hegemony, throughout most of the twenties, officials sought to combat "dangerous" currents, both internal and external, through concerted inculcation of French classic values. Just as during the war, these were considered essential to maintaining the spiritual unity of the nation, which was to affirm itself once more through its culturally distinctive traits. Such cultural "particulism," as opposed to universalism, thus found its expression in all cultural fields, as during the war, and even included the French university system. Throughout the twenties, Germany was pointedly excluded from all intellectual exchange, and in most of the disciplines the accent remained on national character and the "ancestral soul" of a race. It was indeed this situation

[28] See Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times* (New York, 1974), 314, 316, and 349 and see Eksteins, 255–57.

[29] Particularly menacing now was the renewed formation of political leagues that were not only conservative but even reactionary and counter-revolutionary in spirit. Joel Blatt, "Relatives and Rivals: the Response of the Action Française to Italian Fascism, 1919–26," *European Studies Review* II/3 (July 1981), 274–75 and 283.

[30] Poincaré's political tendencies were not only nationalistic, but domestically conservative as well as, on occasion, socially repressive. He was President of the Republic until 1920, and later prime minister from 1926–29. See Wright, *France in Modern Times,* 336. On the political situation, see Blatt, "Relatives and Rivals," 264 and Yves Simon, *The Road to Vichy 1918–1938,* trans. James A. Corbett and George J. McMorrow (New York, 1942), 40.

that Julien Benda decried in *La Trahison des clercs* (*The Treason of the Intellectuals*)—the invasion of the intellectual realm by the political, by national as opposed to universal values.[31]

Benda's indictment was particularly apt with regard to the official French musical world, which presents a picture substantially different from the standard image of the modernist "années folles." Given the stress on the national and classical, the emphasis remained on "high" art, as opposed to the popular, and on the past, as opposed to new music or to radical change. The wartime emphasis on French music history and on national public pedagogy through concerts, often in association with lectures, thus extended well into the postwar era. The state-subventioned Pasdeloup Concerts, which specialized in the more recent repertoire, presented a series of "historical concerts," accompanied by scholarly lectures in 1920 and 1921.[32] Although the concerts were historical, they centered on French music of the recent past, with d'Indy, for example, speaking on Chabrier and Dukas, and Vuillermoz on Debussy. The older generation of French composers now found itself in a privileged position—presented as the most recent manifestations of traditional French classicism in music.

For this very reason French youth would face increasing resistance in the press, their music attacked not only as dangerously "modernist," but concomitantly unclassical and "un-French." The official conception of the classic remained embedded in conceptions of a "holistic" community, as opposed to anarchy, a socially critical spirit, or any sudden break from the past. Unlike the contemporary Weimar Republic, the goal was not to employ the arts to foster social innovation and progress, but rather to consolidate, mourn, and protect.[33] And if classicism in a domestic context was to foster consensus and bestow civic virtues, in

[31] On postwar neoclassicism as an "authentically 'Latin' aesthetic movement for a resurrected France," see Stephen Schloesser, *Mystic Realists: Sacramental Modernism in French Catholic Revival, 1918–1928* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1998), 278. Concerning the exclusion of all things German, see Prochasson and Rasmussen, 256. Benda's book, written while the Action Française was at the height of its power and influence, initially appeared in four issues of *La Nouvelle revue française* in 1927. On Benda, see Michel Winock, *Le Siècle des intellectuels* (Paris, 1997), 195–97. For Benda, the "clerc," who could include artists as well as intellectuals, was the champion of universal truths, untainted by the passions of race, class, or nation, or unconcerned with purely "practical" ends. See Julien Benda, *La Trahison des clercs* (Paris, 1927), 131.

[32] Marti Stavronela, "Les Grandes concerts parisiens au seuil des années 20," *Revue internationale de musique française* (June 1989), 21.

[33] There were those, like Jacques Rouché, at the Opéra, who knew how to mediate the old and the seemingly new, presenting the works of a now "consecrated" French generation (to balance Wagner) as well as newer ballets. As Inghelbrecht astutely notes, Rouché, while introducing apparently "modern" ballets of the Ballets Russes into the Palais Garnier in 1926, did so with beguiling splendor. See Inghelbrecht, *Mouvement contraire*, 83. On the presentation now of Stravinsky's earlier works, see Pierro Coppola, *Dix-sept ans de musique à Paris 1922–1939* (Geneva, 1982. Original edition Lausanne, 1944), 21.

foreign relations it was to project an unequivocal image of order and strength.

French music would henceforth become an agent, a 'weapon,' to establish a strong French presence, and thus a political influence abroad in the uncertain postwar era. Just as during the war, the "myth" to be exported was that of a "pure" French classicism, as manifest in a canon of great artistic works that embodied the "national genius." Again, the model was based upon not only the purported absence of all foreign traits, but on the dominance of proportion and order, the paradigm being the Viennese classic style. Such was the rationale behind programs such as the "Action Artistique à l'Etranger" and French participation in the "Conservatoire Américain," in which Nadia Boulanger was involved.[34]

Postwar Cultural Ideology and the Left

Culturally, the Left was in a weakened position in the immediate wake of the war: ideologically less unified than the Right, it splintered over Communism, among other issues. However, it did band together to confront not only the rightist governmental coalition, but, concomitantly, the cultural order that was associated closely with the conservative hegemony. Most important, the Left now espoused a substantially different view from that of the Right with regard not only to Franco-German reconciliation, but, in general, to modern German culture. For the Left, in the wake of the war, the rightist bellicosity and xenophobia that had been responsible for its eruption and its duration was an object of vociferous contestation. Indeed, it was generally happier that the butchery was finally over than (as opposed to the Right) that the Germans (or "Boches") had, in the end, been beaten. Hence the Left was now, in various degrees of intransigence, inclined toward pacifism and open to all that could avert further war, including Franco-German cultural exchanges.[35]

On the new cultural goals and the plight of the Weimar Republic, see Peter Fritzsche, "Did Weimar Fail?," *The Journal of Modern History* LXVIII (Sept. 1996), 629–56. On the Weimar Republic's new musical goals, see Bryan Gilliam, ed., *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge, 1994) as well as Pascal Huynh, *La Musique sous la République de Weimar.*

[34] On Boulanger's participation in such programs, especially the Conservatoire Américain, see Leonie Rosentiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music* (New York, 1982), 220–22 and 280–81.

[35] Agulhon, *La Republique* I, 323–25 and 356. In addition, while the Right was generally favorable to the authoritarian regime of Mussolini (the Action Française openly praising him), the Left remained firmly opposed, perceiving the implications of the fascist threat. See Wright, *France in Modern Times,* 351 and 387 and Winock, *Le Siècle des intellectuels,* 144. When Eduard Herriot assumed power, in May 1924, with the advent of the

Accordingly, the Left confronted the Rightist dogma concerning "national intellect," arguing that "intelligence" was neither racial nor national, but must be construed as universal. And thus to nationalist "brainwashing," it firmly opposed the "critical spirit," as seen in the stirring manifesto published in *L'Humanité* on June 26, 1919, the "Déclaration de l'indépendance de l'esprit."[36] The opposite position—that of the Action Française—was promptly articulated in the "Manifeste du parti de l'intelligence," by Henri Massis, in *Le Figaro* on July 19, 1919. In it, the implicit enemy was the non-Christian, supra-national, or so-called "Bolshevist Left," as opposed to both Occidental Christianity and to French national values.[37] The assertion of universalist, as versus "particularist" or narrowly national values, was thus to become the "cause célèbre" among both intellectuals and artists of the Left.[38]

The Left and "Universalist Classicism"

Integrally related to these issues was that of classicism, now taken up perhaps most prominently by the journal around which the postwar Left was to band, *La Nouvelle revue française.* Founded in 1909 by Gide and Copeau, it began again after the war under the direction of Jacques Rivière, and significantly, took over the direction of the relaunched *Revue musicale.* Rivière laid out the goals for the journal on June 1, 1919, the first of which was to end the constraints that the war had exercised on "intelligence." Moreover, in direct confrontation with the Action Française and its construal of the classic, he argued (as had the prewar Left) that the classic was rooted in autonomy and critical intelligence.[39]

"Cartel des Gauches," relations with Germany briefly became more congenial. See Martyn Cornick, *Intellectuals in History. The* Nouvelle revue française *Under Jean Paulhan 1925–1940* (Atlanta, 1995), 103.

[36] On the question of whether the intellectual realm should still be subordinated to both national and political interests, see Prochasson and Rasmussen, 269.

[37] See Jean-François Sirinelli, ed., *Histoire des droites en France* Vol. II *Cultures* (Paris, 1992), 179–80.

[38] Hence the Left now defined "intelligence" in accordance with its own universalist, anti-racist perspective, thus subverting the Right's conception of it, and making it synonymous with the "truly human." Again, this was part of the continuing rejection of still virulent wartime rhetoric or nationalist indoctrination, to which the Left now adamantly opposed an "esprit critique." Agulhon, 345.

[39] On the way in which different classicisms were read into *Pelléas et Mélisande* before the war, see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music,* 178–84. On the different models of the classic before the war, see 128ff. Before the war, Lionel de la Laurencie, who was close to the Schola, already equated "le classicism français" with the constructive and economical and with solid and logical orchestration. See Fulcher, 140.

Paulhan now welcomed the "claims of intelligence," which were searching to "resume their rights" in art, again contrasting the Left's conception of "intelligence" with that which was held by the Right. He took over the editorship of the journal in 1925,

Thus claiming the autonomy of the artistic realm, the *Nouvelle revue française* openly opposed the Maurrassian conception of the classic as tied endemically to national values. Its version of the classic was henceforth diametrically opposed to the theories of the classic that were reappearing in the Action Française's affiliated journals, such as the *Revue critique des idées et des livres.* Rivière foresaw a "classical renaissance," but one that was not retrogressive, "literal," or purely imitative, as that promoted by figures like Moréas, and now in the *Revue critique.* His "renaissance" was more profound—rooted in the "aesthetic claims of intelligence" or the authentic "classic spirit," with its abiding universal aspirations. It espoused no "model," but rather values, primary among which were not only the simple and essential, but the universal, the critical spirit, and independence. This "revolutionary classicism," as Rivière called it, was associated with a revolt (as in 1789) for human unity, progress, and the universal—"le vrai classicisme."[40] The journal thus insisted upon both a cultural and political rapprochement with Germany, at a time when "germanophobia" was still dominant in intellectual circles.

French Composers and the Classic Options

Such confrontation over conceptions of the classic was soon refracted in the musical world through figures on the Left, like Romain Rolland, on the "classic Right," like Pierre Lasserre, and on the "Liberal Right," like Jean Cocteau. Moreover, since the return of open political opposition (despite continuing censorship) was followed by polarization, the options of French composers were now far more pronounced. Although they were still expected to espouse the classical aesthetic, they could choose to ally themselves with contestatory interpretations, thus ostensibly resisting the conservative hegemony. Such composers thus faced a choice between concepts and values that were freighted with ideological meaning, and it would be their challenge to

during the Cartel des Gauches, which meant that the journal could exert influence on Franco-German relations. See Martyn Cornick, *Intellectuals in History,* 102–03. On criticism of the journal by the Action Française and its organs, see Jean Lacouture, *Une Adolescence du siècle,* 564–65. *La Nouvelle revue française* was accused of leading French literature to its 'perdition' through its immoralism and neglect of the great lessons of French tradition as well as through its indulgent subjectivism. On "intelligence" and universalism, see Jacques Rivière's opening article in *La Nouvelle revue française,* June 1, 1919, p. 4.

[40] Prochasson and Rasmussen, 212, 256, and 270. Also see Cornick, 98, as well as Rivière's article in the *Nouvelle revue française,* 1 June 1919, p. 8. On Gide and Claudel's promotion of this conception of classicism, see Winock, *Le Siècle des intellectuels,* 169. As he points out, in addition to such "critical classicism," the journal also promoted Dada, which it perceived as another mode of confronting or criticizing the postwar order and its artistic and nationalist pieties. See Winock, 160.

translate these creatively to the realm of style. Concomitantly, it implied a decision to eschew alliance with state musical institutions and thus a search for independent patronage and involvement with non-official institutions.

The dominant or orthodox position, closely allied to the aesthetic of the Action Française, was articulated most fully in 1922 in Pierre Lasserre's *Philosophie du goût musicale.* Here Lasserre again defines the classic in music as perfect equilibrium and moderation in the means employed, both of which ensure that the work will withstand the test of time. His model is, implicitly, still that of d'Indy and the Schola—the Viennese classic style—as well as French classicism of the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century. Accordingly, Lasserre contests the statement that was made by (the leftist) Anatole France, in the *Revue de Paris* in 1920, that music is the art which is most vulnerable to revolutions in taste and the vicissitudes of feeling. He retorts that those who do not recognize the superiority of epochs of civilization that are capable of making a "general style" reign in the arts are, quite simply, "barbarians." These epochs are quintessentially "classic," and they alone can give birth to lasting works, for the "divine harmony" in great epochs exercises a controlling force on individual inspiration, so necessary to a great culture.[41]

Such ideas, of course, continued to be disseminated at d'Indy's Schola Cantorum, which had been championed by the Action Française since the time of the Dreyfus Affair. D'Indy still rooted his teaching in the works of the Ancien Regime and in the Germanic classic model, distinguishing (like the Action Française) between "good," or classical Germans like Beethoven, and the modern "Prussian" composers. For d'Indy, the parameters of individual innovation within the classic model were thus circumscribed, and the transgressing of these limits by youth provoked his immediate condemnation. Firmly defined form, clear tonality, and the traditions of the craft remained essential to his conception, and he perceived all these traits as absent in young composers such as "Les Six."[42]

[41] Pierre Lasserre, *Philosophie du goût musical* (Paris, 1922), 61–62. Lasserre, a literary critic and "homme de lettres," once close to the Action Française, eventually distanced himself from the movement, but remained imbued with many of its ideas.

[42] On d'Indy's complex relation to the league, see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics,* 24–35 and 120–26. While the Action Française peremptorily condemned Wagner as both German and Romantic, d'Indy continued to construe him as essentially a "classic," thus causing evident tension with the league. On d'Indy's conception of "the classic model," as applied in his own *Third Symphony,* see his letter to Guy Ropartz of 17 October 1916, Lettres Autographes, d'Indy, Département de la Musique, Bibliothèque Nationale. Also see his letter to Ropartz of 4 January 1918, in the same collection.

For d'Indy's attacks on "Les Six" and Wiéner, see his articles "Le Public et son evolution," *Comoedia,* 1 October 1923, and "Matière et forme dans l'art musical moderne,"

Ravel and Leftist Classicism

If, among older composers, d'Indy was the most prominent to espouse the orthodox model, Ravel was the most visible to contest it symbolically on both political and aesthetic grounds. Ravel's response to the postwar climate and to the cultural pieties that we have observed was to assume the intellectually critical role identified with the postwar Left. He thus became engaged with the dominant ideological and aesthetic issues, but subtly—on a symbolic level—through gestures that can be most fully understood within this context. For like d'Indy during the Dreyfus Affair, Ravel now sought political expression, but for the culturally tolerant and intellectually critical position he had defined for himself in the course of the war.[43] World War I had been a turning point for Ravel who, although patriotic, would discover that his patriotism was rooted in the universalist goals defined by the Left since the French Revolution.

Ravel received the manifesto and the invitation to join the "Ligue pour la Défense de la Musique Française" while at the front and, enraged at its principles, responded as follows:

> It would be dangerous for composers systematically to ignore the productions of their foreign colleagues and thus to form a sort of national coterie: our musical art, so rich in the present epoch, would not delay to become enclosed in its [own] clichés. . . . I hope, nevertheless, to act as a Frenchman and count myself among those who want to serve.[44]

Accordingly, Ravel's compositions in wartime subtly tweaked official 'patriotic' classic dogma: as he said of his "French suite" (the *Tombeau de Couperin*), "no, the 'Marseillaise' doesn't figure into it. . . ."[45] Although the work was, for Ravel, an homage to French music of the eighteenth century, he deftly demonstrates its interpenetration with that of other cultures. While some have perceived a rhythmic reference to Rameau in the "Rigaudon," others have noted that, ironically, there seems to be one to Scarlatti in the "Forlane." Ravel (of Basque origin,

Comoedia, 28 January 1924. These attacks are discussed by Jean Wiéner in his *Allegro appassionato* (Paris, 1978), 78–81.

[43] On the politicization of d'Indy's aesthetic during the Dreyfus Affair, see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics*, 24–35.

[44] Ravel's response to the league may be found in several sources, including the collective book (no editor given) published by the Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs, et Editeurs de Musique, *Maurice Ravel* (Paris, 1975), 31–32.

[45] Marcel Marnat, *Maurice Ravel* (Paris, 1986), 409.

and thus aware of the artificiality of cultural frontiers) indeed uses dissonance in a manner that recalls Scarlatti—as a pungent "color."[46]

After the war and his experience of censorship, as well as his greater exposure to lower social classes, Ravel's political inclinations became more pronounced, as did those of many in his generation. Manuel Rosenthal explicitly observed that it was less ideology that made Ravel an "homme de gauche" than a sympathy for humanity and a hatred for social injustice. The fact that Ravel now manifested Socialist proclivities, subscribing only to the Socialist *Le Populaire de Paris*, and frequenting Socialist politicians reveals only one level of his postwar engagement.[47] It is equally present in his reaction to "hyper-patriotism," or to "particularism," and in his response both to the Légion d'Honneur nomination and to the question of Germanic cultural influence.

Many explanations of Ravel's refusal of the Légion d'Honneur have been offered: according to Manuel Rosenthal, it was because so many had been killed in the war, and Ravel had not actually fought.[48] Others cite his brother's (untrue) statement that he was opposed to decorations, as well as his supposed resentment at having been refused the "Prix de Rome" five times by the Institut.[49] But the most probable explanation within the context that we have examined is Ravel's attitude, politically, toward the government of the "Bloc National." Ravel's view of the conservative coalition and its policies was well known, particularly to his closest circle of friends, to whom he confided his "dangerous" opinions. In a letter of January 22, 1920, to Roland-Manuel, Ravel made the following jocular but nevertheless highly significant statement: a legionnaire, he quipped, "does not have the right to be a bolshevik and their triumph is still not a reason to abandon them."[50] Bolshevik being a term now freely applied by the Right to dissenters on the far Left, Ravel was perhaps referring here to his refusal of orthodox postwar patriotism. This is why, in a letter of April 13, 1920, he complains that *L'ordre publique* said precisely what it shouldn't, undoubtedly

[46] The "Forlane" was ostensibly modeled on one by Couperin. It has been noted that the inclusion of the "Forlane" and the reference to Couperin had been inspired by an article on Couperin by Jules Ecorcheville (killed during the war) in the *Revue musicale S.I.M.*, which itself includes a "Forlane" by Couperin. See Roland-Manuel, *Ravel* (Paris, 1938), 135–36. As Manuel Rosenthal points out, we cannot be sure of how much Ravel knew of Scarlatti, but he did comment that Rameau (the other great explorer of harmonic effects and the expressive use of dissonance) was "trop raisonnable." See Manuel Rosenthal, *Ravel. Souvenirs*, ed. by Marcel Marnat (Paris, 1995), 172.

[47] See Arbie Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader. Correspondence, Articles, Interviews* (New York, 1990), 113. Also see Manuel Rosenthal, *Ravel. Souvenirs*, 15–17 and 127.

[48] Marnat, *Maurice Ravel*, 486.

[49] Orenstein, *A Ravel Reader*, 196.

[50] Marnat, 486.

referring to its phrase concerning "a host of courageous men wearing a red ribbon in their buttonhole."[51]

It was apparent to many that the huge number of nominations for the Légion d'Honneur in 1920—2,071, for all grades—was related to wartime service, as a kind of recompense for patriotism. Hence Ravel pointed out in the same letter that *L'Humanité* made an intelligent statement regarding his refusal, saying on April 8, 1920, that "a red ribbon will not bleed on his [Ravel's] buttonhole. This distinction deserves another one."[52] Ravel refused to be decorated on the basis of association with the war, which he now perceived less in terms of French victory than (as those on the Left) as bloody and tragic.

Other gestures equally reveal Ravel's ideological inclinations after the war, and specifically his proximity to the cultural positions characteristic of the French Left. As we have seen, its classic doctrine proposed no 'model,' but rather a set of values and concepts diametrically opposed to those associated with official "prescriptions." Prominent among these was autonomy, as opposed to collectivism or established 'models,' as well as universality, or an openness to the riches of foreign cultures, including the Germanic. Hence in a period of recrudescent anti–semitism and Germanophobia, Ravel was clearly as iconoclastic as some youth in his continuing interchange with musicians in former 'enemy' countries, and his prominent interest in Mahler. Ravel continued to idolize Gustav Mahler and even met his widow, Alma; indeed, works like *La Valse,* of 1919, inspired by the Viennese waltz, reveal his attraction to Mahler's poignant, ironic vision and his techniques of powerfully distorting banal themes. And despite the "ban" on all things associated with the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ravel persisted in his interest in its culture of both past and present. In a letter of October 3, 1924, he not only asks for a copy of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies,* but requests that one of his photographs be sent to a publisher in Vienna, who had requested it for a lexicon.[53]

Other gestures were yet more aggressive. At a time when contemporary German and Austrian music was still considered "Boche," and thus dangerous, Ravel openly championed the work of Arnold Schoenberg. Influenced by Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1913, Ravel retained his interest in the composer, even after it became professionally

[51] Orenstein, 201.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Marnat, 489, and Ravel, Lettres Autographes 10/3/24, Département de la Musique, Bibliothèque Nationale. It is also significant that in a period of recrudescent anti-semitism, Ravel made an orchestral version of his *Mélodies hebraïques,* which were performed at the Concerts Pasdeloup on April 17, 1920. On recrudescent anti-semitism, see Jane F. Fulcher, "The Preparation for Vichy: Anti-Semitism in French Musical Culture between the Two World Wars," *The Musical Quarterly* LXXIX/3 (Fall 1995), 458–75.

dangerous to do so. In 1927, when the dominant sentiment was still strongly against the composer in France, Ravel provocatively invited him to Paris to conduct two concerts of his works for the Société Musicale Indépendante. This was a time when the still hyper-patriotic Société Nationale de Musique would permit the performance of foreign composers only from formerly allied or neutral nations.[54]

It is thus not surprising that Ravel's postwar style, if more "austere," was not, as some have claimed, typical of interwar neoclassicism, for if anything were "typical" in France, it was the Schola's model. The dominant paradigm, as we have noted, was "architectural," balanced in form, devoid of irony or of borrowing from "lower" cultural levels, and of the influence of "dangerous" cultures. These included not only the Germanic (of recent date), but those associated with races or nationalities from which France was to be "protected" culturally, such as black American jazz.[55] Ravel not only ignored these proscriptions, he openly flouted them in several works, including *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (which incorporated references to jazz) and his *Sonata for Violin and Piano* of 1927. The latter work, like his earlier *Sonata for Violin and Cello,* as many have noted, is not a "sonate d'école," as was expected now by critics: not only is the first movement both formally innovative and harmonically dissonant, the second movement, marked "Blues," again manifests the influence of black American culture.[56]

Even more effectively than in discourse, Ravel thus manifested his values, asserting, through his compelling stylistic synthesis and independence, the truth of "revolutionary classicism." His classic iconoclasm, however, did not prevent the Action Française from attempting to appropriate his work (like Debussy's) by projecting its model onto

[54] Marnat, 418 and 491. The Société Nationale de Musique would allow contemporary German music only in 1938. It is significant to note that Schoenberg had performed Ravel's music in his "private concerts" in Vienna. See Huynh, 68.

[55] On French cultural "protectionism" in the interwar period, particularly against black American influences, see Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years. France in the 1930s* (New York, 1994), 94–95.

[56] On the "Duo Sonata," of 1922, see H. H. Stuckenschmidt, *Maurice Ravel,* trans. by Samuel R. Rosenbaum (Philadelphia, 1968), 195. He especially notes the "daring counterpoint" and "reckless coupling of two keys," as well as "its occasional forays into the new province of atonalism." Moreover, the work subtly employs a "blues" element in its themes, and the first movement is based only loosely on sonata form. Ravel's conception of classicism was shared by another "homme de gauche," Charles Koechlin, who explained, in a letter to Max d'Ollone, of February 8, 1920, that classicism shouldn't be seen as simply retrogressive or "vieux jeu" and pretentiously "pompier" (conventionalist, or in the manner of d'Indy), for the classics were revolutionary in their time. Hence, for him, as for Ravel, classicism does not have the connotation of "old"; Fauré and Debussy are classic because of the purity of their writing and thought, as well as their clarity. Even in *Parade* he observes classic qualities "as absurd as they may seem." Charles Koechlin, *Correspondance,* 42–43.

selected compositions. This was patently the case when the journal affiliated with the Action Française, the *Revue critique des idées et des livres,* lavished praise on Ravel in 1923. In his discussion of *L'Heure Espagnole,* Fernand-Georges Roquebrune extols its delicate humor as well as what he perceives as "cette alliance du bon goût et de la tradition libre" (this alliance of good taste and free [or unacademic] tradition). He then proceeds to compare Ravel's classicism in the work to the operettas of Jacques Offenbach, which are, to the contrary, characterized by "excessiveness" and parody. Offenbach's work, Roquebrune continues, is clearly marked by lack of taste, and hence cannot be completely assimilated in France, or incorporated into the French temperament of tact and measure.[57] Such rhetorical tactics have done much to obscure our perception, from an historical distance, of the vast conceptual and aesthetic difference between Ravel and such nationalist supporters.

Apparently in response to these malevolent appropriations, the *Revue musicale* (again, associated with the *Nouvelle revue française*) brought out an issue on Ravel in 1925 (during the government of the Leftist coalition, the "Cartel des Gauches"). Here, for Roland-Manuel, Ravel is "an inheritor of the French classics" in his application of a "rigorous discipline," which deters him from the "seductions of the arbitrary" and leads him to confound the "beautiful and the useful."[58] He thus interprets Ravel's classicism in a manner that recalls both Gide and Claudel —as associated not with formal models but with simplicity, universality, and autonomous, critical intelligence.

Classicism, Autonomy, and *Socrate*

The same could be said of Satie, who had anticipated the principal values and themes of the Left concerning the 'true' classic spirit in a work that he wrote at the end of the war. This was to be *Socrate,* the theme of which is the individual's conscience, one that the Socialist Party, which Satie joined at the start of the war, would long continue to stress.[59] In *Socrate* Satie again comments on the classic, however no longer in the spirit of Dada; here he challenges the monologic truth of wartime dogma both trenchantly and discreetly. Once more, since the Left proposed no 'model,' but rather a set of concepts and values, it is these we may discern translated creatively in *Socrate,* and above all the ideal of critical autonomy and dialogue.

[57] See the *Revue critique des idées et des livres* 1923, 184–85.

[58] As cited by Marnat, 529.

[59] On Satie's attraction to the Socialist Party at the start of the war, see Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics,* 204.

Since the Princesse de Polignac was currently reading the *Dialogues* of Plato in the original Greek, she suggested that Satie develop a new dramatic form to set passages from the work. Satie himself had long been interested in ancient culture, and, in fact, had recently read Victor Cousin's nineteenth-century translation of Plato's *Dialogues.* It has already been postulated that Satie identified personally with the figure of Socrates, seen as society's "gadfly," pungently noting its injustices and hypocrisies. But it is also important to note that nationalist thinkers, including the later Georges Sorel, had condemned Socrates's intellectual independence, seeing him not as a victim, but rather as justly punished. This was particularly true in wartime, when conformity was rigidly imposed, which gave special meaning to Satie's selection of the poignant death of Socrates from the *Dialogues.*[60]

In *Socrate,* Satie obediently is "classic," but as he understood and interpreted the term, or in accordance with his own political conception of France and of its classicism. The stylistic elements to translate this were suited to the literary genre of the text—Socratic dialogue—which, as Julia Kristeva has observed, challenges monologic truth. For it is not a rhetorical genre; rather, it seeks to reveal truth dialogically by employing the structure of a supposedly recorded dialogue, framed by narrative. Such a genre, one inherently opposed to "monologism" or control, construes 'truth' as arising from the dialogical relationship between the different speakers. Satie would thus employ a style in *Socrate* to which he referred as "simple and familiar," or one that was anti-rhetorical, suited to the absence of a strong authorial voice in the genre.[61]

Like *Parade, Socrate* is highly unified, but here Satie relies not on absurdly balanced structure, but rather on the force of rhythmic continuity. This was another original interpretation of the dominant wartime belief that a distinctive feature of French music traditionally was the priority and clarity of its rhythm. But here it serves principally

[60] Concerning the nationalists's view of Socrates, see Benda, *La Trahison des clercs,* 170. The "Mort de Socrate," from "Phaedo," is the third section of the work, following the opening "Portrait de Socrate," from "Symposium," and the middle section, "Bords de l'Illissus," from "Phaedrus." Satie was concerned not only with the purely philosophical passages, but rather with those depicting Socrates's personality and life. According to Satie, the work was a kind of hommage to Socrates: "En ecrivant cette oeuvre . . . je n'ai nullement voulu ajouter à la beauté des Dialogues de Platon . . . ce n'est qu'un reverie d'artiste . . . qu'un humble hommage." See Ornella Volta, *L'Ymagier d'Erik Satie* (Paris, 1979), 65. The work was published in 1919 by Eschig in a version for one voice and piano, which became the basis for the later "corrected" edition done by Cocteau's publishing house in Paris, the Editions de la Sirène. On the editions of *Socrate* see Wolfgang Rothert and Andreas Traub, "Zu einer unbekannten Ausgabe des "Socrate" von Erik Satie," *Die Musikforschung* XXXVIII/2 (1985), 118–21.

[61] On Socratic dialogue, see Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York, 1980), 81.

to underscore the intellectually uncompromising text: rhythmic patterns not only create atmosphere, their transformations provide acute textual emphasis.[62] Like Lully, perhaps a model in the use of simple but evocative rhythmic patterns, Satie is interpreting dramatic veracity as scrupulous adherence to the incisive text. Here he similarly makes the 'leap' from political discourse to 'representation' through a stylistic articulation that subtly contests dogma and insinuates a compelling message.

The irony of *Socrate* is that it premiered publicly (after the war) at the Société Nationale, perhaps owing to the support of Satie's former teacher, d'Indy, who found "things truly poetic and musically felt" in the work.[63] For after the war *Socrate,* like *Parade,* was appropriated superficially by conservatives as "classic," the complexity and 'transgression' of their messages "flattened out" in accordance with monologic nationalist discourse. But Satie, a master of the subversive and contradictory gesture, now, at the moment that he was being "taken up" by high society, chose provocatively to join the French Communist Party.[64]

The Limits of Orthodoxy: Cocteau Versus "Les Six"

A younger generation of composers, his admirers, "Les Six," were similarly marked by contradiction—a trait that Cocteau attributed to all the new art, although his theories were part of the paradox.[65] Less compromising than their elders in all they rejected of the dominant postwar culture, they would still tolerate Cocteau's 'new nationalist' rhetoric, in which he construed them as classic and French.

[62] Each section of *Socrate* is characterized by a predominant rhythmic figure that runs consistently throughout it, both creating the ambience and supporting the text. Transformation of rhythmic patterns is closely linked to the meaning of the text, and where appropriate, voice and orchestra proceed in taut rhythmic tension. For the expression of heightened emotion Satie relies not only on this, as well as on orchestration (in the orchestral version), but also on the gradual rise of the vocal tessitura.

[63] The first performance of *Socrate,* on June 24, 1918, was at the home of the Comte Etienne de Beaumont, and was followed by another "private" performance on March 21, 1919, at Sylvia Beach's bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, with such notable intellectuals as Gide, Claudel, and Francis Jammes in attendance. The first public performance, at the Société Nationale de Musique, took place in January, 1920. On d'Indy's approbation of the work, see Vincent d'Indy, *Lettres a Auguste Sérieyx,* ed. by M. L. Sérieyx (Lausanne, 1961), 26.

[64] *Parade* was revived several times between 1919 and 1924, with great success, now representing a contemporary classicism that had been impossible to promote during the war itself.

Satie joined the French Communist Party the year after its founding in France; given the general hatred and fear of Bolshevism in France, this was a subversive gesture indeed.

[65] Jann Pasler, "Paris: Conflicting Notions of Progress," in Jim Samson, ed., *Music and Society. The Late Romantic Era* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1991), 408.

For since the time of *Le Coq et l'arlequin,* written in the wake of attacks on *Parade,* Cocteau had been developing a discourse to construe the new music as French and patriotic, as opposed to "Boche." Dedicated to Georges Auric, *Le Coq* was perceived as the "manifesto" of the six young composers whom Cocteau sponsored soon after *Parade* and in the early twenties.[66]

In it Cocteau built upon the strategy that Apollinaire had already devised in connection with the Cubist painters, whom he had presciently championed before the war. Both writers attempted to make a place for the new music and art in wartime by presenting them as "l'art vivant," or the "living" incarnation of a still vital past, and thus "safe." As they discovered, Cubism could be presented as both traditional and patriotic and as oriented toward the future—the ideal continuity between modernity and tradition.[67] Cocteau's tactic, like Apollinaire's, was thus essentially to espouse wartime values, while arguing for a more capacious and a contemporary interpretation of them. This is what he meant when he proclaimed the necessity of "reinventing nationalism," opposing his 'liberal' conception both to conservative traditionalism and to nihilistic Dada.[68]

We may perceive Cocteau's orthodoxy, however, not only in his condemnation of impurity or eclecticism, as embodied in the harlequin, but in his attack on the exoticism of Romantics like Delacroix.[69]

[66] *Le Coq et l'arlequin* was completed in the summer of 1918 and published soon after, shortly before the war's end. Significantly, it was published by the Editions de la Sirène, which Cocteau and Cendrars had founded the preceding Spring, as a result of their rejection by other publishers, including the *Nouvelle revue française. Le Coq* was stimulated by Cocteau's reaction to *Parade*'s premiere, as well as by his conversations with Georges Auric that took place both before and after the 'scandalous' premiere. As a result of the latter, and its dedication to Auric, it was perceived as the "Manifesto" of "Les Six." On it, see Jean Cocteau, *Romans, poésies, oeuvres divers,* ed. by Bernard Benech (Paris, 1995), 419 and 498 and Francis Steegmuller, *Cocteau. A Biography* (Boston, 1970), 205–07. Also see Georges Auric, *Quand j'etais là* (Paris, 1979), 78.

[67] Christopher Green, *Cubism and its Enemies,* 193. On Apollinaire, see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory. Sites of Mourning,* 215–16.

[68] Steegmuller, *Cocteau,* 257–59. On Auric's use of a similar phrase, "we have to reinvent nationalism," see Paul Collaer, *A History of Modern Music* (New York, 1955), 225. As Auric's subsequent development reveals, however, his conception of this "re-invention" was substantially different from that of Cocteau, being aligned with the ideology of the Left.

[69] We see this already in the opening paragraph, dedicated to Georges Auric, in which the condemnation of eclecticism—the pollution by non-French elements—first appears. The metaphoric harlequin, for Cocteau, with his "masque" and his multi-colored costume, is, by insinuation, and in keeping with wartime dogma, unpatriotic: "After having renounced the song of the cock [the symbol of French patriotism] he hides. He is a cock of the night." Also common was Cocteau's attack on "exoticism," here embracing "oriental" elements and the Romantic. Like Pierre Lasserre, Cocteau praises classicists such as Ingres and then denigrates Romantics like Delacroix, invoking his "rich bazar." See Cocteau, *Romans, poésies, oeuvres divers,* 442.

Throughout *Le Coq* Cocteau repeatedly advocates the wartime values considered distinctively French—line (or melody), simplicity, a human scale, and a balanced architecture.[70]

His tactics were right on target: Cocteau could indeed go on to achieve his goal of becoming the spokesman for a "new" French music and for a modern nationalist classicism. Yet in light of the postwar polarization of "nationalist" and "universalist" classicism, he would grow more conservative, gradually moving from the liberal to the traditionalist Right. By 1923 he was positioning himself squarely against the leftist classicism of the *Nouvelle revue française,* in battle with the Action Française and its affiliated *Revue universelle.*[71] This was the period when the Catholic theologian, Jacques Maritain (who admired *Le Coq*), wished to challenge the claim of Gide and his colleagues at the *Nouvelle revue française* that they, above all, represented "modern" French classicism. Maritain enlisted the services of the Catholic journalist, Henri Massis, who wrote an article on Cocteau's protégé, Raymond Radiguet, in the *Revue universelle* in which he made claims to the contrary. In addition to this battle over classicism, Cocteau was referring to himself as an "anti-Dadaist," after having participated in the Dadaist circle during the war. It was the Dadaist attack on the political and aesthetic order that issued from the war that Cocteau was now abjuring, as articulated most fully in his *Le Rappel à l'ordre.*[72]

The question thus inevitably arises of the accuracy of Cocteau's depiction of the aesthetic of those younger French composers to become known as the group "Les Six." Were they classic nationalists similarly seeking a more modern interpretation? The reality here is indeed more complex, or less clearly cut than among their elders. Despite their frequent grouping with Stravinsky, whom they admired, it is important

[70] Here Cocteau counterposes the Baroque example of Bach to Beethoven and the high classic style, arguing that "Beethoven develops form and Bach develops ideas." Cocteau, in addition, naïvely accuses Stravinsky, in *Le Sacre,* of being "not yet of the race of architects." Ibid., 431 and 446.

[71] Universal, in the sense of the *Revue universelle,* was, of course, associated with Catholicism. As evidence of Cocteau's growing conservativism, in his 1923 preface to *Le Coq* Cocteau makes it clear that he was not "praising" the circus and music hall—the charm of the clowns and the negroes—but rather their lesson of equilibrium, discrete force, and grace. Ibid., 424. On the "liberal," as opposed to the "traditionalist" Right, see the still authoritative study of René Rémond, which explains the distinctions within this conceptual model of related but different "families" of the Right, *Les Droites en France* (Paris, 1982), 37–41 and 97–98.

[72] See Steegmuller, *Cocteau,* 336–37. As Steegmuller observes, the Catholic theologian, Jacques Maritain, who was close to the Action Française (until 1926) quoted several aphorisms from Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'arlequin* in his *Art et scholastique,* of 1920. On Cocteau's earlier Dadaist phase, see Prochasson and Rasmussen, 273. On Maritain's Catholic nationalism, or "conservative modernism," and its relation to Cocteau's, see Stephen Schloesser, *Mystic Realists,* 273–94.

to note that their classic approach, as opposed to his, developed from their generational, cultural experience in France. Members of what historians have referred to as "the generation of 1914," they were educated in the dominant culture and sometimes drawn to it in spite of themselves. They had grown up exposed to "modernist" innovation, but were to find themselves torn between it (as well as the classicism of the Left) and more traditional cultural values. Such 'dialogic' tensions activate their works of the twenties, even if they unequivocally rejected the pious conventions they associated with wartime controls and the narrow conception of legitimacy they enforced.[73] Although their rejection was primarily cultural, it is important, again, to recall that the cultural elements they rejected carried distinct political associations in the period.

These young composers were drawn to Satie's ironic, modernist "play" with established meanings, or his "critical classicism" that defied convention, even if apparently formally orthodox. Their classicism was thus culturally critical, as opposed to Stravinsky, who was outside the culture, and found a different challenge within the traditionalist expectations now imposed. His conception was in fact much closer to that of composers in the Weimar Republic, where he frequently spent time, much to the public consternation of critics in France. Stravinsky's ideal, like his German confrères (whom he also influenced) was objectivity, as opposed to barbarism—a dispassionate analysis of past styles, or of the "constructive principles" at work within them. But "Les Six," in the most integral sense, were rather in search of a culture more immediate and 'real' than the fossilized classical culture propagated during the war. While they did share a taste with their elders (and young Germans) for a return to melody, precision, and simplification, they did not associate these exclusively with "high culture," traditional genres, or "grande musique."[74]

The reality of "Les Six" is thus substantially different from the picture painted by Cocteau in *Le Coq,* and by Henri Collet in his subsequent article which bestowed the name on the group.[75] Collet had

[73] Robert Wohl, "The Generation of 1914 and Modernism," in *Modernism: Challenges and Perspectives,* ed. by Monique Chefdor, Ricardo Quionnes, and Albert Wachtel (Urbana, IL, 1986), 66–78. Wohl discusses precisely these issues in his article as well as in his book, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge, MA, 1979). On "dialogy," in Bakhtin's sense, as the ability to think "against one's self," see Matei Calinescu, "Modernism and Ideology" in Monique Chefdor, Ricardo Quionnes, and Albert Wachtel, eds., *Modernism,* 79–93, and especially p. 90.

[74] Paul Landormy, *La Musique française après Debussy* (Paris, 1943), 115. On the relation of Stravinsky's ideas to those of composers in the Weimar Republic, see Huynh, 174–78 and 222–23.

[75] Collet stresses the phrase from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Ma vie musicale:* "In reality, all music that one is in the habit of considering universal is still national." This he then compares with Cocteau's pithy dictum, "Je demande une musique française de France,"

written of "Les Six" in a two-part article which was published in *Comoedia* in January, 1920, and entitled "Un livre de Rimsky et un livre de Cocteau—Les cinq russes, les six français, et Erik Satie." During the war, Pierre Lasserre had already singled out the Russians as models of composers who rooted their style and inspiration in their native soil.

Yet far from being insouciant or nationalist youth, sharing Cocteau's and Collet's opinions, "Les Six" were critically and conflictually engaged with the major ideological questions of their period. Not firmly "aligned," as were their elders, as intellectuals they were absorbed by the contemporary issues, and especially universalism versus "particularism," addressing it in terms of stylistic and often textual choices. Georges Auric, for example, despite his initial conversations with Cocteau which led to *Le Coq,* would enter into relations with politicized writers who strongly opposed Cocteau.[76]

Milhaud similarly faced the issues: for him, the French tradition was unquestionably "universal," one that, since the Revolution, tolerated a wide variety of religions and races. The classic, for him, thus meant the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations that he, as Freud before him, perceived as shaped and shared by Jews and non-Jews alike. Milhaud's interest in Greek civilization, moreover, was furthered by his long collaboration with the writer, Paul Claudel, who was prominent in the circle of the *Nouvelle revue française.* Milhaud would thus inscribe 'his' classicism—the stylistically synthetic, formally innovative, and intellectually critical classicism of the Left—in works like the eclectic *Esther de Carpentras.* It was indeed because of the force of the translation of Milhaud's beliefs into terms of style that his works were attacked in the thirties by the pro-fascist press.[77]

implying a common perspective. Collet was close to Cocteau in terms of his circle and his politico-aesthetic position. He contributed to the "Rightest" avant-garde journal, *L'Esprit nouveau,* publishing a prominent article on Satie in 1920. In addition, he was a critic for *Comoedia* (to which Cocteau also contributed), perhaps the most important theatrical journal of the period, and not only avowedly nationalist, but virulently anti-German. See Beate Kraus, "Henri Collet et *Comoedia,*" *Revue internationale de musique française* (June 1989), 31–32.

[76] Throughout the twenties, Auric experienced a series of intellectual tensions, expressing them above all in print as a critic for several leading French journals, including *Nouvelles littéraires.* In the thirties, however, this would change, as Auric, facing the decade's political polarities, became more firmly aligned politically, writing now in the Socialist journal, *Marianne.* And he would express this ideological commitment not only in print, but through a return to his style of the twenties, now appropriated by the Left. See Jane F. Fulcher, "Musical Style, Meaning, and Politics in France on the Eve of the Second World War," *The Journal of Musicology* XIII/4 (Fall 1995), 425–53.

[77] *Esther de Carpentras* concerns religious and racial tolerance in France. To make fun of extremists among both Christians and Jews, Milhaud deftly interweaves styles associated in the period with "Jewish music," notably that of Offenbach, with more traditional styles and techniques (such as fugue) as well as with contemporary South American dance music. See Jeremy Drake, *The Operas of Darius Milhaud* (New York, 1989), 140–51. Also see Fulcher, "The Preparation for Vichy." The librettist, Armand Lunel, to whom

Abjuring Cocteau's nationalism, in practice, all six composers were eager to explore contemporary Austrian and German music, as well as past composers outside the nationalist Pantheon. Milhaud and Poulenc traveled to Austria to visit Schoenberg and his pupils at a time when such exchanges were frowned upon, and he and Jean Wiéner went to the Soviet Union in the early twenties, a period of fear of the "Bolshevik threat."[78] The lack of orthodoxy invited attacks on both them and Stravinsky, who ignored these dynamics, for all were measured by conservative critics against the declarations of their mentor, Cocteau. The linkage with Stravinsky was reinforced not only by their common circle and emulation of him, but by another incendiary context that framed their work, and reveals their (not his) intent.

In December, 1921, Jean Wiéner gave a series of "concerts-salades" in which he audaciously presented "la musique de notre temps," transcending nationalities and cultural levels. A friend of Cocteau, Stravinsky, and Milhaud, with whom he had attended the Paris Conservatoire, Wiéner was a pianist and composer who had recently opened a chic new Parisian bar. Hence he could mobilize "le tout Paris," or those who were socially prominent and "above the rules," who could afford to ignore or deride the official classicism of the postwar Republic.[79] Wiéner here found support for new music, for all that official and bourgeois France had excluded, a place for young composers in aesthetic revolt and in search of a new means of recognition.[80]

both Milhaud and Poulenc were close in the twenties, was in the circle of the *Nouvelle revue française.* See Francis Poulenc, *Correspondance 1910–1963* ed. by Myriam Chimènes (Paris, 1994), 230. On attacks on Milhaud by pro-fascist circles in the thirties, see Fulcher, "Musical Style, Meaning, and Politics in France."

As Collaer points out, Milhaud was concerned with the theme of universalism throughout his career, which helps to explain his long association with Paul Claudel. See Collaer, *A History of Modern Music,* 243. This becomes evident in the thirties in their collaboration on works such as *La Sagesse,* concerned with universal wisdom.

[78] On Milhaud and Poulenc's trip to Austria to see Schoenberg, see Darius Milhaud, *Notes sur la musique. Essais et chroniques,* ed. Jeremy Drake (Paris, 1982), 132–33.

[79] See Jean Wiéner, *Allegro appasionato* (Paris, 1978), 40–44, 47–49 and 163. As Wiéner himself put it, his desire to organize concerts stemmed from the bleak situation musically that he encountered in Paris around 1920. Because of such concert activities, Wiéner was perhaps the most important sponsor of "Les Six," leading Milhaud to refer to him as "notre mécène artiste." See Myriam Chimènes, "La Princesse Edmond de Polignac et la creation musicale," in Hughues Dufourt and Joël-Marie Fouquet, eds., *La Musique et le pouvoir* (Paris, 1987), 140. Despite the fact that Wiéner's "message" was opposed to Cocteau's, he still rather liked *Le Coq et l'arlequin,* and considered Cocteau as part of his circle. This would change, of course, when Wiéner grew close to the Communist Party in the mid-1930s.

[80] To use the term propagated by the sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, both the means of educational "reproduction" and consecration had been temporarily interrupted during the war. Almost all the members of the group had their education and careers interrupted by the war, during which the traditional path to success and recognition, the "Prix de Rome," was suspended. Thus after the war they were forced to find new means of support and public recognition, and here Cocteau was essential.

This emerged provocatively in Wiéner's concerts, intended to be and immediately construed as a challenge to the official nationalist and 'exclusive' classic aesthetic that we have seen. Wiéner noted the atmosphere among "Les Six" as one of revolt and contestation, or, as Auric was to put it, of a "new spirit" that was free of all prejudice.[81] Stravinsky, outside of these cultural dynamics, and himself politically conservative, appeared to be unaware of this fact, finding the concerts a convenient contact with the elite.[82] Wiéner's challenge, however, was inherent not only in the aesthetic nature of the works selected, but in the melange of music from different levels of culture and different, even "dangerous" national cultures. Most provocative of all, perhaps, was the inclusion of modern German music, still shunned in most other concerts throughout the twenties as unpatriotic, or "Boche."[83]

On December 6, 1921, Wiéner gave the first of his "countercultural" concerts, in which he included the American jazz band of Billy Arnold, to the delight of Ravel. Juxtaposed with this was a performance of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* on player piano, as well as a sonata by Wiéner's longtime friend, Darius Milhaud.[84]

Les Six and Stravinsky: Traitors or Classicists?

The disjunction between this racial, cultural melange and Cocteau's claims incited critics' fury, as we may observe in the attacks on Wiéner and Cocteau in the *Courrier musical.* In 1923 Louis Vuillemin, in his notorious article, "Concerts métèques" ("half-breed concerts"), impugned both "Les Six" and Stravinsky as products of "le mauvais goût international" (international bad taste). Far from construing them as classical nationalists, Vuillemin suggests an insidious political goal—of seeking to "gangrene" the "national organism"

[81] Wiéner, *Allegro appasionato,* 47 and 75–77. Wiéner and "Les Six" were thus part of a much larger current of violent hatred on the part of French youth for all aspects of "la France officielle" and the social groups that sustained it. See Agulhon, 351.

[82] On Stravinsky's politics and "social pretentions," see Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions* (Berkeley, 1996), 1514–16.

[83] Roland-Manuel, writing in *L'Eclair* in 1922, pointed out that it had been a long time since the Société Musicale Indépendante, which did not reject modern German music, had offered such interesting concerts. See Wiéner, 14.

[84] On Ravel's praise of the inclusion of jazz in the "concerts salades," see Wiéner, 49. As Wiéner points out (49–52), on December 15th he programmed Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire,* together with works of Stravinsky, Satie, and Milhaud, to which he added a quarter-tone work of Habá. Further programs in 1922 included both Wiéner and Schoenberg, and, in 1923, members of "Les Six," to which was added Stravinsky, Satie, Rossini, Gounod, and Mozart.

and show the many foreigners present the decline of postwar French taste.[85]

It was precisely this kind of attack that motivated Cocteau's continuing defense of "Les Six" and Stravinsky, and the rhetoric through which Nadia Boulanger attempted to legitimize the latter. Despite the fact that Stravinsky's motivations were substantially different from those of "Les Six" and their generational, cultural rebellion, his appearance along with them had adverse effects. For although Stravinsky associated his ideal of historical "objectivity" with the temperate and the neutral, it was here ascribed the ironic or critical distance—the agonistic attack on a suffocating tradition—of "Les Six," and thus considered a provocation. Perhaps for this reason, in 1922 a performance of Stravinsky's *Symphony for Wind Instruments* and his *Concertino* provoked audience hilarity and whistles. Stravinsky's case, moreover, was certainly not abetted, in this combative context, by the contestatory counter-applause of his supporters within Wiéner's circle.[86]

Nadia Boulanger, a nationalist and monarchist (like Stravinsky), and thus close to the Action Française, sought to dissociate him from Wiéner's context, and to reinscribe him as traditionalist and classic.[87] In the twenties Boulanger's aesthetic rhetoric remained close to nationalist orthodoxies, emphasizing the roots of French classicism in the Ancien Regime, and thus stressing proportion and balance. Using this

[85] Wiéner, 66. On Vuillemin's attack, see Fulcher, "The Preparation for Vichy," 458. Vuillemin further claims that this "movement" is beginning to "vomit half-breeds" and their pianistic, vocal, or symphonic "commies" as collaborators, again invoking the pervasive fear of "Bolshevism." A similar rhetoric appears in artistic journals associated with the far Right in this period. *L'Art,* for example, railed against excessive foreign influence and "complots étrangers." Between 1923 and 1928, *La Peinture* crusaded for the restoration of moral order through the artistic means that it believed necessary to effect it—pictorial order. Recalling wartime themes, its battle was still to save form in art, construed as not only integral to moral order, but as a source of "French genius." See Jean-François Sirinelli, ed., *Histoire des droites en France* II, 173. Other journals, like *Critique, art, philosophie,* openly attacked Jewish artists in the name of "ordre" and "puissance," or a classical attitude in politics and art, recalling Maurras. Ibid., 174. Less openly Rightist publications, even those associated with the avant-garde, expounded similar ideas, espousing a conservative classicism in both politics and art. *Après le cubism,* of Amadée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (to become Le Corbusier) called for a "new purism," here associating classicism with the collectivity and with rigor. See Prochasson and Rasmussen, 271.

[86] Wiéner, 66. A similar reaction attended the premiere of *Mavra* in 1924. On it, see Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions,* 591–96. Such responses may have been compounded by the fact that Stravinsky, who now advocated cosmopolitanism, was traveling continually, including trips to former enemy countries.

[87] The daughter of a (purported) former Russian princess, and thus a supporter of aristocracy and monarchy, Boulanger was drawn ideologically to the doctrines of the Action Française. Hence she preached the virtues of monarchy, while condemning democracy, and continued to do so until the end of her life. See Léonie Rosentiel, *Nadia Boulanger,* 197–99.

rhetoric, Boulanger dissociated Stravinsky from Wiéner's "counterculture," as seen in her article on the composer in *Le Monde musical* in 1923. Here, as Scott Messing has astutely observed, she praises Stravinsky's "constructivism," or his "architectural" approach, one emphasized by other supportive conservative critics in the period. Even if opposed to conservative strictures, Boulanger employed the rhetoric as a necessary or judicious means of 'protecting' innovation in postwar France.[88]

But this attempt to represent the composer as a traditional "architectural" classicist would backfire, which explains why Stravinsky and "Les Six" were condemned in the name of classicism at the beginning and end of the thirties. Most revealing of this reasoning is Robert Bernard's highly vitriolic book, *Les Tendances de la musique française moderne,* published in 1930. In it Bernard indicts Stravinsky for his insidious influence on youth in France, here applying a standard of the classic that ostensibly dates back to the war.[89] Stravinsky's return to the past, he argues, is both arbitrary and superficial, but, he continues (recalling wartime rhetoric), he cannot deeply influence the French. For such musical currents, the origins of which lie outside the national culture, are incapable of enduringly affecting the French sensibility and the complexities of the French intellect. Stravinsky's bare and superficial technique stems not from a true classic aesthetic, but rather reveals the composer's disquieting hostility to both thought and expression. According to Bernard, Stravinsky has destroyed both classical construction and thematic development, preferring the distinctly unclassical technique of merely juxtaposing different ideas. For Bernard, then, Stravinsky is by no means a classic, despite his reference to historical styles; rather, he is promoting an "artistic formula" that is the mere codification of "disorder."[90]

Indeed, Stravinsky's bitterness over such jaundiced, politicized readings emerges blatantly in his diatribe on musical meaning and

[88] It is important here to remember that ever since wartime "Union Sacrée," "architecture," in music as in art, was a constructive metaphor, central to the dominant artistic discourse. See Kenneth Silver, *Esprit de Corps,* 50. And see the letter of Nadia Boulanger to Charles Koechlin, of 1917, in which she points out not only the necessity of combating certain wartime strictures, but the difficulty in doing so. Koechlin, *Correspondance,* 33–35.

[89] Robert Bernard, *Les Tendances de la musique française moderne.* Cours d'esthetique. Huit conferences prononcées au Conservatoire Internationale de Paris et en Sorbonne (Paris, 1930). It is significant that Bernard's reasons for attacking Stravinsky are opposite Adorno's, for the latter construed Stravinsky's neoclassicism as "inauthentic" because it was a return to the past. See Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music,* trans. by Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Bloomster (London, 1973), 135–43.

[90] Robert Bernard, *Tendances de la musique française moderne,* 124. Like Lasserre, whom he cites earlier in his arguments (121), Bernard was convinced that the present disorder in the realms of thought and art stemmed ultimately from the application of irrational Romantic principles. (See 211.)

criticism in his *Chroniques de ma vie*.[91] But he was not the only victim: Bernard and others similarly noted that what is missing in the works of Satie and "Les Six" is the essential component of classicism—a "spiritual climate."[92]

Aside from 1936 and '37, when classic modernism was legitimized by the Popular Front, which was combating Fascist Romanticism, this conception of classicism remained dominant in France. But as we have seen, the fact that it was the so-called "national style" ignited the political battle over constructions of "the classic," into which composers in France were drawn. Although their 'representations' in music did not simply mirror the ideological constructions expressed in discourse, they did transmit ideology by reflecting discernible sets of political values. These they communicated by either stylistically translating, inflecting, or contesting the dominant classic conception, and in the latter case (for those on the Left) by asserting the values of independence and the inclusive.

In sum, the composers we have examined were intellectuals and here Edward Said's definition is apt: they made political choices publicly, and regardless of professional consequences—out of independent ideological convictions. Like writers, more often considered in discussions of the intellectual, their "business," especially in this period, was, as Said has put it, to "represent," regardless of dogma, or to "speak the truth to power." While, clearly, it would be a distortion to draw direct lines between ideological representations and corresponding classic styles, it would also be an error to ignore these significations in hermeneutic analysis or in historical contextualization.[93] Composers inscribed

[91] See (in English translation) Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (London, 1936), 174–76. Significantly, Stravinsky would be attacked not only in France, but in Fascist Italy in the late thirties, for similar reasons. On the Italian context, see Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York, 1987), 129. Here again, the attack would be centered on the purported absence of "moral aspirations" in his music.

[92] Bernard, 125–28. Satie, however, is a mixed case for Bernard, for like Cocteau, he is able to construe some of the elements of Satie's style—bareness, simplicity, absence of the "extra musical," a propensity for the horizontal, or counterpoint, and an interest in line—as classical, in the traditional sense. However, he goes on to argue that the "climat spirituel," so essential to authentic classicism, is missing in his work, as in that of "Les Six." The absence of this quality in "Les Six" Bernard perceives as the result of their "undisciplined adolescence" and premature praise; but, like other conservatives, he sees Honegger as the exception, he alone being capable of overcoming this "aesthetic impasse."

[93] See Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual. The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York, 1994), xv, and 12–13. Also see his discussion of the intellectual in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 80–83. Among the more recent French sources on the intellectual, perhaps the most relevant here are Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels" 1880–1900* (Paris, 1990) and Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock, eds., *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français* (Paris, 1996).

meanings in their works within this intertextual, representational context, while others were often ascribed, and it is this interplay of meanings and perceptions that we must recreate. In conclusion, the recent question of "the" ideology inherent in neoclassicism is, perhaps, "mal posé":[94] we should rather ask 'which' classicism was intended, and how was it 'read'?

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On hermeneutic analysis in music, as used in this specific sense, see Robert Hatten, "Grounding Interpretation: A Semiotic Framework for Musical Hermeneutics," *The American Journal of Semiotics* XIII/1–4 (Fall 1996), 25–42.

[94] The question was raised most recently by Richard Taruskin, who astutely noted the issues involved, in "The Dark Side of Modern Music," *The New Republic*, Sept. 5, 1988, 28–34.

As Harvey Sachs points out, in *Music in Fascist Italy* (136), Alfredo Casella saw a strong relation between neoclassicism and fascism, based fundamentally on metaphor. Both, for him, stood for order and for a reactionary revolution, an argument which recalls that of the monarchist Action Française, which used it to justify aristocratic hierarchy and authoritarianism. As Sachs notes, however, non-fascist practitioners of neoclassicism disagreed, convinced that their style was both refined and aristocratic. Adorno then condemned Casella as both bourgeois and fascist, thus again linking neoclassicism and fascism in the literature.