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### Publication Date

2016

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Repetitive Novelty: Italian Opera in Paris and London in the 1830s and 1840s

By

Eleanor Clare Cloutier

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Mary Ann Smart, Chair  
Professor James Davies  
Professor Nicholas Mathew  
Professor Carla Hesse

Fall 2016



## Abstract

### Repetitive Novelty: Italian Opera in Paris and London in the 1830s and 1840s

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Music

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My dissertation connects music, politics, and society by focusing on the cultural life of the Théâtre Italien in Paris and the King's Theatre in London. I claim that a culture of "repetitive novelty" emerged at the Italian opera houses as a means of managing the gap between the reality of a fractured, rapidly changing society and the ideals of a stable political and social situation. I argue that the need to stabilize rapid change was a particular civic imperative in Paris after the July Revolution and in London after the Reform Act of 1832. The worrying success of a repetitive work, the proliferation of ways to enjoy a celebrity, or the struggle of audience members to belong to an elite crowd all required people in Paris and London to reconcile their experiences of disorienting pace and change. My dissertation explores the ways in which politics pervaded social and fashionable life and the ways elite opera goers experienced, celebrated, and resisted change.

The first chapter addresses the composition of the audience at the Théâtre Italien, drawing on archival documents written by opera-goers in combination with newspaper articles written about opera-goers. In the following chapter, I examine what these audiences listened to and saw in order to explore what the experience of repeated spectacles meant to them. My third chapter concerns the sheet music and objects that people bought to remember performances, which I use to open up the range of meaning that one opera singer could have in a burgeoning celebrity culture. Each of these chapters draws on a broad understanding of politics, which I treat as more than mere state governance and top-down official policy, but as something lived and experienced. I argue that the politics of intimate relations and the politics of music must be examined through texts and objects that provide glimpses into everyday life: letters bargaining for better seats, gifts between friends, gossip columns, and reviews of the twentieth performance of an opera. These ephemera, far from eschewing politics, supply the key to understanding a new and quietistic kind of modern political life.

For Bernard H. Mangelsdorf and Tili Boon Cuillé

## Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and love of friends, family, archivists, librarians, institutions, mentors, colleagues, and all the people who refuse to stay neatly within those boundaries. Thank you for combining scholarship and pleasure.

At UC Berkeley, the Music Department, Graduate Division, Berkeley Connect, and the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program all supported me institutionally or financially as I worked and traveled. Thanks especially to my research assistants: Simrath Matharu, David Pankratz, Bret Hart, Catherine Swaidan, Elodie Yuan, Jacob Bjorseth, Jacob Barczak, Frank Yu, Kelly Dell, Yida Wang, Adela Waton, and Jeremy Lam - you made data a lot more fun.

My grateful thanks to the librarians and archivists at Berkeley and abroad who helped me find and reproduce the content necessary for this enterprise: Susan Powell in the UC Berkeley maps library, and all the people at the British Library, John Rylands Library, Bodleian Library, Bibliothèque Nationale, and Archives Nationales. The D-Lab at Berkeley provided a wonderful second home for me, and I'm so grateful to those who collaborated and commiserated, including Camille Villa, Cindy Nguyen, Brendan Mackie, Brooks Ambrose, and Janet Torres.

Thank you to those who have helped me work through ideas, whether at conferences or in seminars. I presented excerpts from Chapter One at the Digital Humanities Faire in April 2015 and 2016 and at "EZ Music" in March 2016, all at UC Berkeley. Parts of Chapter Two were presented at "Consuming Passions," a conference organized by the French department at Washington University in St Louis (October 2013). Special thanks to the participants in Mary Ann Smart's seminar on Italian Opera who workshopped Chapter Three in the fall of 2014, and to Ben Walton and the anonymous reviewers at the COJ who strengthened that chapter's arguments and footnotes.

The Music Department at UC Berkeley has been a welcoming home for scholarship and teaching. Thank you to all the staff, and especially to Jim Coates and Lisa Robinson, for making our work possible. I've been lucky enough to have wonderful mentors and colleagues who generously shared with me: thanks to James Davies for his wit and his dog, Nick Mathew for advice and his family, Richard Taruskin for office hours *al fresco*, and Carla Hesse for her valuable time. Mary Ann Smart was there from day one, asking questions, finding insights that I'd inadvertently written, and bringing out the best, both in prose and personal development. Her belief in this project and unflagging energy improved my ideas and my life immeasurably.

This work was supported by the generosity of friends and family. Thanks to the IPH crew, who has been there since the beginning: Ben Sales with his irreverance and Emma Cohen with her incisive questions and unwavering support made the best cohort I could ask for. Joe Loewenstein, Jamie Ake, Amy Lehman, Deva Estin, and Shelby Carpenter (who added Caitlin Brown to the mix) got us all through. At UC Berkeley, Melanie Gudesblatt and Jamie Apgar proofed both bread and drafts, while Anicia Chung Timberlake guided, supported, and humored me. I was also lucky enough to have the company of Emily Frey, who is a master of well-timed jokes, Alexandra Pressman, who makes everything better with her sense of perspective and fun, and Linda Louie, who is the best companion for cozy nights and train rides. Jen Wang provided very necessary "real talk," while Rachel Vandagriff and Rachana Vajjhala went on countless walks with me. You've all made this chapter of my life much more enjoyable.

My parents and siblings (both by birth and by marriage) encouraged me, buoyed me, and shared their love of words and playing with ideas. Thanks especially to Lory for setting my musical examples, to Mom for opera dates, and to Dad for reading aloud the good bits from *Opera News*. Regards to all. Noah Bronstein has supported me in so many ways and has been a stalwart companion in dealing with the vicissitudes of married and academic life. Thank you.

My grandfather, Bernard Mangelsdorf, bought me my first cassette tape—a recording of *Madama Butterfly*, one of his favorite opera--when I was little. This dissertation is dedicated to the person who started my love of opera, and to the person who encouraged me to see opera as a viable course of study: Tili Boon Cuillé (with assistance from Herbert Lindenberger, tea and cookies, and her wonderful family). Thanks to both of them for sharing their love with me.

All translations and errors are my own, unless otherwise marked.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. Musical Chairs	9
Chapter 2. The Queen of Elegance and Ennui	36
Chapter 3. How to Possess a Singer (Appropriately)	52
Works Cited	72
Figures	80



## Introduction: Three Ways of Looking

This dissertation asks who these people were, who went to the opera in Paris and London night after night, and what Italian opera meant to the different factions of society in the 1830s. Whether singing, spectating, or socializing, people at the opera mattered. They mattered socially: who met with whom, how they were dressed, and how they listened could determine where someone fell in the social hierarchy. They mattered politically: the rising middle class was not just a social issue, but one with practical and political consequences. Finally, people mattered musically and materially, as they sang, bought souvenirs, and sang again. At its most basic level, my argument is that Italian opera was central to the lives of the elite (and aspiring elite) in both cities, and that by examining relationships fostered at the theater from multiple angles, we can gain insight into the political and social situation of the 1830s.

The political ramifications of music and theater are generally considered in terms of revolutionary change. Did theatergoers riot during the French Revolution? Did Verdi cause the Risorgimento? I consider instead the role music played during the relative peacetime of the July Monarchy and of the transition from late Georgian to early Victorian England. With Napoleon safely defeated, travel and relations could resume between the two countries, and the two Italian opera houses I examine entered into an agreement to share singers between them. This relative stability, and the singers who returned year after year to theaters in both capitals, allows for a different kind of inquiry. My study proceeds not from a theory of opera as a political catalyst or incendiary force, but from a conception of opera as both entertainment and social glue. Thus, the kinds of questions that ground these chapters are those that interrogate such concepts as stability, musical sociability, celebrity, and consumption. What happens, for example, when people see the same shows and the same performers night after night? How did impresarios, composers, and singers create the impression of novelty? and what was the value of boredom?

In a static world, the smallest differences become noticeable. The Théâtre Italien moved three times due to a fire, and these changes of venue set off flurries of descriptions--both of what remained the same at each new theater and of what changed as the troupe moved. Even the success of a new opera was simultaneously thrilling and old hat. Reviewers called *I puritani*'s Elvira "yet another mad woman on the stage," and whether an audience member responded to the opera's multiple mad scenes with naïve excitement or elegant boredom revealed something about her class and social status.<sup>1</sup> In London, upwardly-mobile middle classes, conservative Tories, and cosmopolitan Whigs reacted differently to Giulia Grisi, the opera's star soprano, and each group consumed gossip and souvenirs tailored to their perspective. By looking at subtly changing but reliably similar phenomena and at different reactions to the same performer, I tease apart potential meanings--not in the hope of discovering any one true meaning, but to argue that multiplicity and a negotiated happy medium have value. Seeing beyond the calm surface to the contentious claims of boredom and novelty can open new perspectives on our own stable (yet constantly threatened) way of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Castil-Blaze, "Théâtre Italien," *Revue de Paris*, 1 February 1835, 70.

## ANOTHER TALE OF TWO CITIES

Paris and London are paired both in fiction and in reality: the two cities were (*pace* Benjamin) the capitals of the nineteenth century. Paris had centralized and well-funded cultural institutions: the Théâtre Italien received a subvention of 70,000 francs each year, along with a government-provided theater, costumes, and scenery.<sup>2</sup> Censorship was eliminated from 1830-1835, and even after 1835 French censors permitted more than any Italian censors did.<sup>3</sup> The chance for lucrative and relatively uncensored operas brought Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, and even Wagner to Paris. The audiences there were cosmopolitan and sophisticated, both in terms of origin and of taste. Ambassadors, foreign nobility, Italian refugees, and tourists all flocked to Paris after the threat of Napoleon had passed. This blend of the cultural elite from around Europe enjoyed sophisticated entertainment ranging from political satires to innovative ballet productions.

London shared this thirst for entertainment, and in 1831 the management at the King's Theatre entered into an agreement with the administration at the Théâtre Italien to share Italian opera singers between the two houses.<sup>4</sup> The singers would perform from October to March in Paris, then would cross the channel and finish out the London season, which ran from January or February until July or August.<sup>5</sup> Italian opera was one of the main entertainments for the London elite; though English operas were attempted, they never gained the popularity of hits by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. According to one guidebook, the King's Theatre "unites the first talents of France and Italy, at the most enormous salaries" and was the "most celebrated in London for the title, wealth, beauty, and splendour which assemble within its walls."<sup>6</sup>

This constellation of wealth, talent, and sophistication attracted not only aristocrats and the cultural elite, but also members of the increasingly powerful bourgeoisie. The landscape of British society and politics was shaped in part via the theater. The social geography was

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<sup>2</sup> This subvention was established in 1828. The government also provided a fully-furnished theater (the Salle Favart), a scenery workshop, costumes, scores and musical instruments and agreed to pay for furniture repairs, building upkeep, and fire insurance. In 1837, the government saw that the Théâtre Italien was prospering and reduced the provisions, eliminating all support but the use of the theater. They planned to eliminate the subvention in 1840, but after the fire of 1838 the Minister of the Interior was convinced to propose an annual subvention of 60,000 francs to offset the expense of renting a new theater, a plan that was approved by the chamber in 1843. "De la Nécessité d'accorder une subvention au Théâtre-Italien," *La France musicale*, 11 June 1843. The 1837 sum is supported by the minutes in *Chambre des Députés, Subvention aux théâtre royaux*, No. 255, Chapitre 18, 3 June 1837, p. 181, <https://books.google.com/books?id=-U40AQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA181#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

<sup>3</sup> H. Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 16. Castil-Blaze proposed that when *I puritani* went to Italy and Austria that instead of "gridando libertà," (cry freedom) the singers could substitute "gridando ilarità" (cry hilarity) as had been done before in *Don Giovanni*. Castil-Blaze, "Théâtre Italien," 74.

<sup>4</sup> Édouard Robert and Carlo Severini took over the Théâtre Italien from Émile Laurent for the 1830-31 season and Pierre Laporte was in charge of the King's Theatre. The two theaters could not have been less alike in terms of fortune, despite their shared artists: Laporte was constantly in debt and borrowed money from Robert and Severini to keep himself and his theater afloat. Albert Soubies, "Le Théâtre-Italien au début du règne de Louis-Philippe," in *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du théâtre*, ed. Société de l'histoire du théâtre (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1908), 223, 226-229.

<sup>5</sup> E. Mogg, *Mogg's New Picture of London; or, Stranger's Guide to the British Metropolis, etc.* (London: E. Mogg, 1838), 65; J.H. Brady, *A New Pocket Guide to London and its Environs* (London: Parker, 1838).

<sup>6</sup> F. Coghlan, *The Stranger's London Guide* (London: Whitmore, 1834), 29.

undergoing a tectonic shift as more and more people moved to the city, new industries cropped up, and radicals rioted. Tories, Whigs, and businessmen all wanted stable progress, but no one could agree on what kind of stability or progress was best. The passage of the Reform Act of 1832, which helped restore Whigs to power for the first time in almost 50 years, extended suffrage and reduced parliamentary fraud. Whigs hailed these changes as progress away from revolution and toward a more peaceful society, which, incidentally, would rely on the traditional responsibility and power of the aristocracy to provide for their tenants and was supported by some of the oldest and wealthiest aristocratic families. This combination of conservative liberalism appeased middle-class land-owners and business men.<sup>7</sup> Tories, however, thought that the expansion of the electorate would put power in the hands of the mob and that the Whigs were cosmopolitan fops who were no longer connected to the land or to British ideals. While the Whigs were out of power, many of them settled in continental Europe or threw themselves into appreciation of the arts.<sup>8</sup> This continued even after the Whigs regained control of Parliament; the Italian opera remained the purview of cosmopolitan aristocrats and the continent remained important as a finishing school for aristocrats and aspiring gentry.

The importation and enjoyment of continental entertainment was a fraught subject. Concert halls and theaters were venues not only for musical performances but for social negotiations. Miscellany concerts gave way over the first half of the nineteenth century to specialized concerts focusing on instrumental music and works by deceased composers.<sup>9</sup> Opera was still fashionable, but as Jennifer Hall-Witt has shown, aristocrats were losing authority at the theater and resented that loss.<sup>10</sup> These fears about music and its concomitant luxury and expressions of authority tie into changes in urban society, but should also be considered as part of an old, yet still familiar, debate about the power of music to communicate, to transmit, and to cross boundaries as an agent of destabilization.<sup>11</sup> Italian opera lends itself particularly well to this purpose, as its singers and its music passed through many different social and political milieux. Reactions to the incorporation of fashionable Italian singers into society, such as anecdotes about misadventures at Epsom, duels, and dinner parties gone wrong, and the commercialization of these singers through souvenirs can all be seen as part of a larger process in which influential groups of English taste-makers tested the limits of how cosmopolitan and how *à la mode* they could be without sacrificing the bedrock British values of steadiness and solidity.

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals, 1830-1852* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 40.

<sup>8</sup> Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform*, 52-53, 68-69.

<sup>9</sup> William Weber, "Redefining the Status of Opera: London and Leipzig, 1800-1848," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36, no. 3 (2006): 507-532. Weber focuses on economic factors and repertoire choices in concert halls and theaters to study class divisions and ease of access to music, and uses concert programs to argue that a rising middle class helped create the instrumental musical canon as we know it. *Music and the Middle Class: the Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975); *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-century England: a Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Hall-Witt argues that aristocratic patrons rioted over cast changes at Her Majesty's Theatre in the early 1840s because they resented the diminution of their authority at the opera that resulted from the management courting a wider base of patrons. Jennifer Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780-1880* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Roger Parker, "'As a stranger give it welcome': Musical Meanings in 1830s London," in *Representation in Western Music* ed. Joshua S. Walden (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

James Johnson famously tracked a process in Paris culminating in the 1830s, by which the predominantly aristocratic spectators at opera and orchestral concerts were joined by greater numbers of the bourgeoisie, with those listeners at the same time becoming increasingly attentive.<sup>12</sup> This change in the demography of the audience, along with the new seriousness of symphonic works by Haydn and Beethoven and the rise of the musical work as individual subjective utterance, prompted a silent respect among listeners that was completely different from the conversational sociability of opera-going a quarter-century before. Though Johnson does not write about the audience at the Théâtre Italien during the 1830s, he draws a connection between the audiences there during the Restoration and those who attended the concerts of Beethoven symphonies presented at the Conservatoire in the 1830s. Johnson argues that as the theaters gradually squeezed in more people--especially members of the bourgeoisie--audiences became less connected to their neighbors, which, in turn, caused people to mute their reactions and attend more to the stage, since they were no longer surrounded mainly by friends and acquaintances. Because the capacity of the theaters is essential to this part of Johnson's argument, it is important to note that the statistics about theater capacity he cites often come from later sources and do not accurately represent the size of audiences in the 1820s and 1830s. In fact, the capacity of Théâtre Italien stayed roughly the same across this period.<sup>13</sup>

Despite these evidentiary issues, Johnson's main argument, that people began to listen attentively and that this attentive listening was an important social signifier, does hold true for the Théâtre Italien in the 1830s. Attentive listening was still unusual enough that newspapers and

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<sup>12</sup> James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> In support of this narrative, Johnson cites the Palais Royal as holding 1300 seats, the 1793 Théâtre des Arts as having 1750, and the Favart as containing 1900 seats during the Restoration. The Palais Royal could hold 1300-1400 spectators in the 1750s. Johnson cites Lagrave, *Le Théâtre et le Public*, but mis-cites the page number and misquotes the figure: Lagrave says that the theater could hold "between 1300 – 1400 spectators, and maybe even more." Henri Lagrave, *Le Théâtre et le public à Paris de 1715 à 1750* (Paris: C. Klincksiek, 1972), 86. Johnson cites a source from 1875 as saying that the Théâtre des Arts at the Salle Louvois could hold 1650 people, but this number is for 1794. Albert de Lasalle, *Les treize salles de l'Opéra* (Paris: Sartorius, 1875), 182-183. In 1823, when the Théâtre Italien was there, it had 1282 seats, according to a contemporary almanac. Séb. Bottin and J. de la Tynna, *Almanach du commerce de Paris* (Paris: J. Smith, 1823), 606. The Salle Favart, which housed the Théâtre Italien from 1815-19 and 1825-38, seems to have held 1500 places in 1829 and 1200 places in 1838. James Johnson got the figure of 1900 from Janet Johnson's dissertation, *The Théâtre Italien and Opera and Theatrical Life in Restoration Paris, 1818-1827*. She cites Alexis Donnet's 1837 book (though both she and WorldCat give the publication date as 1857, this seems to be a misreading of 1837), which attributes 1980 seats to the Salle Favart. This is by far the largest figure, and contemporaneous sources disagree with it. Janet Johnson, "The Théâtre Italien and Opera and Theatrical life in Restoration Paris, 1818-1827" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1988), 289n51; Alexis Donnet, Orgiazzi, and Jacques Auguste Kaufmann, *Architectonographie des théâtres* (Paris: L. Mathias, 1837), 38. Janet Johnson also examined seating plans from 1827, and recommends looking at Bottin's *Almanach du Commerce de Paris*. Bottin's *Almanachs* from 1829 and 1838 give very different numbers from Donnet's 1837 figure (1500 and 1200, respectively). Séb. Bottin and J. de la Tynna, *Almanach du commerce de Paris* (Paris: Gaultier-Laguionie, 1829), 368 (13); Séb. Bottin, *Almanach du commerce de Paris* (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1838), 448(5). The trend therefore isn't a clear one from exclusivity to the masses if we eliminate the outlier of 1900. The Palais Royal had 1300-1400 seats in the 1750s, and by the Restoration, the Théâtre des Arts had 1282 seats, and the Salle Favart had 1200-1500 seats, which decreased across the 1830s. The audience size fluctuated according to building, with all three audiences hovering around 1300.

guidebooks noted the behavior and described dilettantes breathlessly hanging on to every last note.<sup>14</sup> While Johnson thoroughly (and persuasively) explores the social significance of silence at the theater, this focus overlooks the endurance of more unruly social practices that centered on the charisma of star performers and the variations with which those performers embellished familiar, formulaic, and beloved works. What was said in the breaks between arias and acts, what was worn, and who a person sat with mattered just as much as whether a person listened attentively or not.

### ACTIVISM OR APATHY?

People of different political stripes mixed at the Italian opera houses in Paris and London, and music and gossip traveled easily between theaters and the homes of patrons. Political life interacted with opera in the form of state directives and in the influence that government appointees were able to exert on the visions of society and political viewpoints expressed in the new works commissioned.<sup>15</sup> While King Louis-Philippe and his ministers exerted a strong influence over the Opéra, the Théâtre Italien was less directly controlled by the government. Contemporary spectators were divided over how much political energy or emotion was communicated in performances at the Théâtre Italien. One critic, reacting to the famous cry of freedom (*Gridando "libertà!"*) in Bellini's *I puritani*, insisted on the French listener's immunity to revolutionary sentiments: "Here we are less impressionable to these cries of liberty: they have mystified us too frequently over the last forty years for us to be duped once again--not by the

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Auger's *Physiologie du Théâtre*, which describes the parterre of the Théâtre Italien as having "un caractère tout à fait religieux, musicalement parlant; à sept heures cinq minutes il est entièrement garni, et présente, à qui le voit d'en haut, l'image d'une tache d'encre au fond de la salle brillante, mais vide. Ce public est silencieux presque autant qu'il le serait dans une église : il attend avec la résignation qui accompagne les actions importantes de la vie humaine; là, on cause peu, on se recueille; et, comme si le savoir-vivre imposait ses lois, à l'entrée de la salle, dès qu'on pénètre sous le péristyle, on s'empreint d'une senteur aristocratique qui influe sur vos actions pendant tout le cours de la représentation." Hippolyte Auger, *Physiologie du théâtre*, vol. 3 (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1840), 265-266. Robert, the director of the Théâtre Italien, also contrasted the Parisian theater with those found in Italy in an attempt to persuade the Vicomte de la Ferté that Malibran should come to the Théâtre Italien despite her high fees: in Italy, she would have to sing 4-6 times per week in theaters that were so vast that she would have to shout, and she would have to rehearse on the days of performances. What was worse, according to Robert, "Les Italiens écoutent maintenant la musique comme les Anglais et n'applaudissent et ne redemandent les acteurs que lorsqu'ils poussent des cris d'énergumènes; aussi ces malheureux artistes sont sur les dents; ils perdent leur talent et abrègent leur carrière. Que deviendrait notre chère madame Malibran sur ces théâtres et avec un public si barbare et si vandale ! Avec son énergie et son âme brûlante, elle aurait la poitrine ruinée en peu de temps, et ses forces ne pourraient résister à une pareille fatigue. Son véritable théâtre, sa véritable patrie est Paris où elle est chérie, aimée et appréciée pour ce qu'elle vaut au théâtre et dans le monde. Il faut ajouter que pour ce qui est relatif à la Société, il n'y a pas la moindre ressource en Italie ; point de concerts privés, ressource si avantageuse aux artistes de Paris." Letter from Édouard Robert to Vicomte de la Ferté, 29 September 1830, quoted in Soubies, "Le Théâtre-Italien au début du règne de Louis-Philippe," 47.

<sup>15</sup> Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); J. Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

refrains of the Marseillaise, even when they are sung by the best of republicans.”<sup>16</sup> But of course even a rant against patriotism and engagement is a political statement: for *La Quotidienne* to claim that the call to elevate love of nation above personal loyalties in Bellini’s duet meant nothing to Parisians was in fact a strong endorsement of passivity and neutrality. Meanwhile, another critic opined that the success of the Théâtre Italien rested on its elevation of art above political differences, as politicians mingled to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the musical performance and all were united by concern about the principal tenor’s head cold.<sup>17</sup>

Musicologists have generally approached the relationship of politics and opera in Paris as one of extension: because the Opéra was directly overseen by the government, their productions can be examined for the influence of politics. Jane Fulcher reads imagery and press reactions for political meaning, defined as support for or reactions against central acts from a regime. She argues that state desires directly shaped Meyerbeer’s commissioned operas *Robert le diable* and *Les Huguenots* to project new images of the institution, the genre, and the regime, and reads the works hermeneutically to connect these ideas. Anselm Gerhard takes a broader view of politics when he argues that the negative portrayal of extremism and idealization of passivity in *Les Huguenots* supported the ideal of the *juste milieu*, which King Louis-Philippe and his minister of education, François Guizot, promoted as an amicable compromise between extremes. Those writing about London, in contrast, have focused overwhelmingly on class, audience, and the ways imported operatic styles--and performers--challenged and unsettled the national values of virtue and restraint.<sup>18</sup> Mary Ann Smart and Emanuele Senici have both made claims for the value

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<sup>16</sup> Jean-Toussaint Merle, *La Quotidienne, moniteur de l'avenir*, 2 February 1835; Mark Everist, Sarah Hibberd, and Walter Zidarik, "Vincenzo Bellini, *I puritani*: dossier de presse," in *Vincenzo Bellini et la France: histoire, création, et réception de l'oeuvre*, ed. Maria Rosa De Luca, Salvatore Enrico Failla, and Giuseppe Montemagno (Lucca: Libreria musicale Italiana, 2007), 452.

<sup>17</sup> "Les Théâtres," *La Mode : revue des modes, galerie de mœurs, album des salons*, 24 October 1835.

<sup>18</sup> For an eighteenth-century background, see Suzanne Aspden, "'An Infinity of Factions': Opera in Eighteenth-Century Britain and the Undoing of Society," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9, no. 1 (1997): 1-19; *The Rival Sirens: Performance and Identity on Handel's Operatic Stage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); "'Sancta Caelia Rediviva': Elizabeth Linley: Repertoire, Reputation, and the English Voice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 27, no. 3 (2015): 263-287; Jonathan Rhodes Lee, "Virtue Rewarded: Handel's Oratorios and the Culture of Sentiment" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2013). For studies concerning the first half of the nineteenth century, see Rachel Cowgill, "Re-gendering the Libertine or, the Taming of the Rake : Lucy Vestris as Don Giovanni on the Early Nineteenth-century London Stage," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10, no. 1 (1998): 45-66; "'Wise men from the East' : Mozart's Operas and their Advocates in Early Nineteenth Century London," in *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914 : Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, ed. Cyril Ehrlich, Christina Bashford, and Leanne Langley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); "'Attitudes with a Shawl': Performance, Femininity, and Spectatorship at the Italian Opera in Early Nineteenth-century London," in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Christina Fuhrmann, *Foreign Opera at the London Playhouses: from Mozart to Bellini* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jennifer Hall-Witt, "Representing the Audience in the Age of Reform: Critics and the Elite at the Italian Opera in London," in *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, ed. Cyril Ehrlich, Christina Bashford, and Leanne Langley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780-1880*; Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Verdian opera in the Victorian parlor," in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, ed. R.M. Marvin and H. Poriss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); "The Victorian Violetta: the Social Messages of Verdi's *La traviata*,"



of connecting Italian opera to its varied social circumstances: Smart connects domestic performances of Italian arias to different social groups in Paris, examining how sheet music written by Italian expatriates and exiles resonated with political sentiments and in-jokes within certain circles, but for a wider audience, lost these additional meanings and gained others.<sup>19</sup> Senici has similarly argued that because Rossini's operas and excerpts from them were repeated, distorted, and re-interpreted throughout Italy, we must examine specific contexts to understand political interpretations.<sup>20</sup>

## THE CYCLE OF EXHILARATION AND ENNUI

Rather than identifying grand shifts based on the political values encoded in newly composed works, I begin by acknowledging that much of the experience of attending the opera in both London and Paris was one of repetition, routine, familiarity, and even boredom. An operatic culture founded on relentless repetition of works and performances that were themselves marketed to some extent as novelties is the oxymoronic foundation on which this study is constructed. The stasis of the Italian operatic repertoire and the corresponding fixity of the slate of Italian performers who yoyo-ed between Paris and London from 1834 to 1842 affords a special view of the social fabric and the texture of operatic consumption and reception in these cities. At various points in the chapters that follow, I shall draw on press reports and more intimate documents such as letters and diaries to track the cyclical process by which opera-goers responded to the spectacles on offer with poses of luxurious ennui and critical disdain, only to flare at isolated moments into reactions of rhapsodic pleasure or violent distaste.

I begin by establishing who went to the Théâtre Italien and what it meant to be part of that community. After a fire destroyed the Théâtre Italien's home at the Salle Favart on January 14, 1838, subscribers wrote letters requesting to renew or upgrade their boxes as the company moved theaters three times in as many years. In the absence of subscriber lists from the period, I use data from archival letters to flesh out the social and psychic geography of Paris. Combining letters that articulate attempts to become part of the elite with descriptions of the geographical and political divisions of Paris allows me to document this work of identity and mobility from an ethnographic perspective.

My second chapter turns to some of the new operatic works performed for these audiences and the aesthetic and political debates they stimulated, with a particular focus on Bellini's opera *I puritani*, composed for the Théâtre Italien in 1835 and transferred to London in May of that year. The opera became a staple of the Théâtre Italien's repertoire and a showcase for its four stars, who appeared in it every season from 1835 to 1841, both on the stage and in private concerts. With this popularity came discussion of the opera's originality, its artistic value, and its staying power, all of which reflected larger concerns about the political and social effects

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in *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton*, ed. Rachel Cowgill, et al. (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2010); "Idealizing the Prima Donna in Mid-Victorian London," in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Mary Ann Smart, "Parlor Games: Italian Music and Italian Politics in the Parisian Salon," *19th-Century Music* 34, no. 1 (2010). 39-60.

<sup>20</sup> Emanuele Senici, "Rossinian Repetitions," in *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism*, ed. Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

of repetition. I explore the conflicting desires for stability and change among the elite, the paradoxical stance of conservative liberals, and debates over sensationalist literature to demonstrate how reactions to predictable artistic novelty at the Théâtre Italien echoed and reinforced these concerns about the pace of modern life.

My final chapter moves to London, to focus on the prima donna Giulia Grisi, as she was imagined and possessed by different groups within the London audience. Audience members could bring various versions of the diva home: through reports (or experiences with her) as a guest or entertainer at parties, through gossip about her personal life reported in newspapers, and through pieces arranged “as sung by” her. I look to Grisi not to recover a single idea of the soprano as a celebrity or as a woman, but to assess the many forms her celebrity took, keyed to the taste and identity of the particular segment of the audience implied by each separate manifestation of the diva’s presence—whether souvenir, anecdote, or printed music. The souvenirs generated to commemorate and extend Grisi’s fame attest to the ways members of different classes defined themselves through their relationship with the star singer. The fluid and constantly negotiated relationship between the diva and her audience might be seen as a miniature and very concrete expression of social relations in London, during a period of changing class and national definitions.

Each of these chapters is posited on an understanding of politics as defined not only by governance but by lived experience. I argue that the politics of relationships as well as the politics of music must be examined through texts and objects that give glimpses into every-day life: letters bargaining for better seats, gifts between friends, and reviews of the twentieth performance of an opera. The status quo in Paris and London was propped up by the production and reproduction of quotidian objects and by public expressions of “private” interiorities. The multiplicity of generic experiences is key to understanding the quietist politics of the era. By focusing on the mundane, we can get closer to an understanding of how music, society, and politics interacted: we find, as we do for the people who acted, created, and enjoyed opera, an infinite variety.



## Chapter One: Musical Chairs

As we write these lines, there is playing, in the ruined walls of what was one of our beautiful theaters, the most terrible and the most frightening of all dramas: the theater of the Italians is afire.

This night, around one o'clock, a fire burst out at the Théâtre Italien. At midnight, after the performance, the firefighters made their usual round with great care, and found everything perfectly in order. Three quarters of an hour later, one of them heard a sort of crackling in the walls of the scenic workshop and immediately knew there was a fire.

Help arrived quickly from all sides, but, in less than half an hour, the flames burst out everywhere with such violence that it was no longer possible to save the theater. All parts of the theater were ablaze. ...

Sad and bizarre coincidence! In Saint Petersburg flames devoured the palace of the Tsars, in London the Royal Exchange, and in Paris the leading theater of singing; as if the terrible element wanted to prove by this triple disaster that nothing can resist its power, and that throne, arts, and commerce, are all equal faced with fire.<sup>1</sup>

Thrones, arts, and commerce might be equal when burnt, but the *Monthly Repository* quoted an unknown French paper in observing that the destroyed buildings were each the epitome of the nation that built them: "the Palace of Russia, despotism; the Theatre, of French love of the fine arts; the Exchange, of English commerce."<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores the ways in which the social life of the Théâtre Italien combined all of these characteristics: despotism (of the mildest kind), love of drama both on- and off-stage, and commerce. In a world struggling to define "elite," a world in which aristocrats, ambassadors, and bankers competed for invitations, and a world in which political satisfaction was impossible, opera provided an opportunity for high society to flaunt its good taste, for parvenus to attempt to gain acceptance, and for unlikely neighbors to enjoy access to singers, songs, and fantasy.

The burning of the theater left subscribers bereft, and many hurried to write the management asking for a good seat at whatever new venue the theater might inhabit. The Théâtre Italien moved to the Salle Ventadour to finish out the season, then moved again in the fall to the Odéon. These letters, preserved at the Archives Nationales in Paris, illuminate the social lives of the subscribers, the ways they listened, what they valued in an opera house, the tactics they used to plead with the administration, and the connections among them. This trove of correspondence also offers valuable information about the demography and social geography of Paris, filling in some important lacunae in the understanding of what the theater meant to political and social life in the 1830s. Although Janet Johnson and Steven Huebner have studied audience demographics

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<sup>1</sup> *Paris élégant: journal des modes, chronique des salons, des théâtres, de la littérature et des arts*, 16 January 1838.

<sup>2</sup> Leigh Hunt, *Monthly Repository* 386 (February 1838); quoted in W. Baddeley, "London Fires in 1838," *Mechanics' Magazine*, 9 February 1839.

during the 1820s, the archive lacks subscriber lists for the following decade.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Walton's assessment of the repertoire and meaning of the Théâtre Italien during the Restoration stops short of the July Monarchy.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction, James Johnson has argued that Rossini's works and the rising number of dilettantes and members of the bourgeoisie in attendance silenced the theater's audience during the Restoration, and he implies that this silence continued in tandem with audiences at the Conservatoire who listened with rapt attention to Beethoven.<sup>5</sup> At the Théâtre Italien specifically, Johnson sees an expansion of the theater's capacity, combined with policies that prevented consistent seating for regular attendees and that mixed together the elite of birth and of banks, as checks on ostentation. Although this may have been the case during the Restoration, things looked quite different by the advent of the July Monarchy.

In the absence of solid information about subscribers and audience behavior during the July Monarchy, studies of Italian opera during this period generally focus on music, on singers, or on reception.<sup>6</sup> The collection of subscriber letters, although narrowly focused on seating preferences and unavoidably skewed, allows us to perceive something of the detailed social texture of audiences during this period, one of the most elusive facets of operatic history. Both high and low escape documentation in this archive; people who dropped by the ticket office in person to handle their subscriptions or bought admission to individual performances through a ticket-seller do not appear in the archive of correspondence, nor do those who had free entries arranged by the court.<sup>7</sup> People with titles were more likely than members of the middle classes to

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<sup>3</sup> Janet Johnson, "The Théâtre Italien and Opera and Theatrical life in Restoration Paris, 1818-1827" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago); Steven Huebner, "Opera Audiences in Paris 1830-1870," *Music & Letters* 70, no. 2 (1989). 206-225.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris: the Sound of Modern Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> On singers, see, for example, Chantal Cazaux, "Giulia Grisi, Giovanni Battista Rubini, Antonio Tamburini, Luigi Lablache: un quatuor vocal pour *I puritani* et *Marino Faliero*," in *Vincenzo Bellini et la France: histoire, création et réception de l'oeuvre*, ed. Maria Rosa De Luca, Salvatore Enrico Failla, and Giuseppe Montemagno (Lucca: Libreria musicale Italiana, 2007); J. Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); and his "Gautier's 'Diva': The First French Uses of the Word," in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford University Press, 2012); Céline Frigau Manning, *Chanteurs en scène : l'oeil du spectateur au Théâtre Italien (1815-1848)* (Paris: Honoré Champion Editions, 2014); and her "Playing with Excess: Maria Malibran as Clari at the Théâtre Italien," in *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris, 1750-1850: Exchanges and Tensions*, ed. Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014); and Susan Rutherford, "'La cantante delle passioni': Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 19, no. 2 (2007). 107-138. On the aesthetic and generic dimensions of Italian opera in Paris, see Mark Everist, "'Tutti i francesi erano diventato matti' : Bellini et le duo pour voix de deux basses," in *Vincenzo Bellini et la France: histoire, création, et réception de l'oeuvre*, ed. Maria Rosa De Luca, Salvatore Enrico Failla, and Giuseppe Montemagno (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2007); Philip Gossett, "Music at the Théâtre-Italien," in *Music in Paris in the Eighteen-Thirties*, ed. Peter Bloom (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1987); and Emilio Sala and William Ashbrook (trans.), "Women Crazy by Love: An Aspect of Romantic Opera," *Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1994). 19-41.

<sup>7</sup> For example, an undated document (included in a box of documents from the 1830s; Archives Nationales (A.N.) AJ/13/1161/I) gives the "State of the free *loges* and entries of the Théâtre Italien." The document lists 11 boxes and 30 places that are to be given as free entries to those of political and artistic importance, including the Director of the Opéra, the royal household, and the Minister of the Interior.

have servants carry out their ticket orders in person when they were in Paris, although anyone wealthy enough to leave the city during the summer needed to write to reserve seats.<sup>8</sup> There is no way to know how the group of subscribers who wrote letters compares to the entire body of subscribers or audience members in terms of demographics or behavior; but with letters from 500 individuals over a three-year period, the collection is extensive enough to supply some real information. The theater capacity ranged from 1200 to 1600 seats, and hosted shows on three nights each week. Thus a group of 500 subscribers represents a larger portion of this audience than it would first appear, because people went several times a week, and most subscriptions were for boxes that held between four and six people. However, the letters are most illuminating for the panoramic view they provide of overall trends, balanced with closer consideration of a few especially rich cases.

This bifocal reading is made possible in part by tools and methods from the digital humanities. Visualizations of data indicate large trends, such as the large number of letters written from abroad, which then lead to more detailed observations: many of the English writers used the same ticket seller and make up a network of English patrons. I use a combination of spreadsheets, geospatial and network visualizations, and graphs to interpret the letters. After creating a master spreadsheet indexing date, sender, ticket information, and any references to other people, addresses, and taste, I analyzed the data, and compared within and across categories to discover trends. Certain letters and groups of letters emerged as especially interesting during this process; some individuals pleaded excessively or aggressively, and networks became visible among people who referred to each other. From the spreadsheet, I turned to memoirs, diaries, and newspapers to gain a sense of the kinds of sociability that reigned at the Théâtre Italien. Newspapers describe the audience's composition and behavior in terms calibrated to specific readerships, reflecting what they believe their readers wanted to think about the Théâtre Italien. Finally, I returned to the letters to search for clues about how people

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This totals 106 places. While Louis-Philippe had free *loges* at the Théâtre Italien, he did not at the Opéra: according to Jane Fulcher, he paid 18,300 francs for three *loges* in the center of the first tier in 1831. Jane F. Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 63; H. A. C. Collingham and R. S. Alexander, *The July Monarchy: a Political History of France, 1830-1848* (New York: Longman, 1988), 130.

<sup>8</sup> Huebner suggests that the Opéra and the Théâtre Italien drew from a similar segment of the Parisian population, though people tended to subscribe to only one theater. Huebner draws on lists of subscribers to the Opéra (1833-34 and 1866-67) and the Théâtre Italien (1851-52) that include both names and addresses, reading them in conjunction with directories published by Sébastien Bottin and Firmin Didot to establish a professional and social profile of opera subscribers during these years. He finds that in the late 1840s people tended to subscribe to either the Théâtre Italien or the Opéra, not both. If a subscriber to either theater had another subscription, it was more likely to be to the cheaper Opéra-Comique. The figures that follow are taken from his "Opera Audiences in Paris," 207-208, 217. In 1833-4, 32% of subscribers to the Opéra had noble titles, while in 1866-7, 33.9% did. At the Théâtre Italien in 1851, a slightly larger percent (34.4%) were titled, but the two theaters are roughly comparable, especially when held up to the subscribers to the Opéra-Comique: only 18.4% of its subscribers were nobles. While the collection of letters requesting new seats after the fire at the Théâtre Italien indicate that only 17% of subscribers who wrote letters were titled, this difference can be explained by exclusion from the archive of people who had servants do their business in person. Many of the letters from nobility are either written by an intermediary or couched in the third person, telling the administration that, for example, "The Marquise de Caraman presents her compliments." It is often unclear whether the nobles used the third person themselves or had a secretary write the letter on their behalf.

behaved, what they cared about, and what kind of relationship they assumed with the Théâtre Italien.

### LIFE FINDS A WAY

For the Parisian press, the disturbance of the fire seemed to give a jolt of novelty to proceedings at the Théâtre Italien. Newspapers began to describe the audiences afresh, probably hoping to sell papers by exploiting the trauma and to reassure readers that the bastion of bel canto would continue as before. The fashion magazine *Paris élégant* gave passing mention to the destruction of the blaze, but rushed to reassure readers that the lyricism of baritone Luigi Lablache, the ornaments of Giulia Grisi, and the popular balls held in the theater would all resume almost immediately:

We are an odd and ill-behaved people. As soon as the smoke stopped rising from the rubble of the fire, as soon as the sad “*De Profundis*” was pronounced over the tomb of the unfortunate Severini, the *salle* Ventadour theater already echoed remorselessly with the celestial song (in all its calm and limpid purity) of the nightingales and the warblers that miraculously escaped the flames of the Salle Favart. The devastation passed and left no trace of memory. That night of fire, so frightening when one heard its long roaring, so red that no one could look at it straight on, that night is forgotten like any other. However, as it disrupted our pleasures, there will be several extra performances on Sundays, a few more *bals Musard*; and in all, at the end of the season, we’ll find that we haven’t lost a cavatina by Lablache, a roulade by Grisi, or a dance step. That is the most important thing, and everyone will be content.<sup>9</sup>

Life went on once the smoke had cleared, and the Théâtre Italien was transplanted to the glittery halls of the Salle Ventadour, just down the street. The principal singers, chorus, and stagehands were just fine and the troupe resumed its season under the management of Louis Viardot (one of the theater’s two directors, Carlo Severini, had died in the fire, while his partner Édouard Robert faced a slow recovery) fifteen days after the fire with a performance of *I puritani* on Wednesday, January 30. As noted by *Paris élégant*, five extra performances were added on Sundays to supplement the usual Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday performances, and the troupe cycled between the few productions that had been saved from the fire: *I puritani*, *Don Giovanni*, *Norma*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The Italians even managed a premiere: Donizetti’s *Parisina* opened a month later, at the end of February, and achieved seven performances during the shortened season. These five productions were supplemented by a few performances of *Il matrimonio segreto* and *La prova d’un opera seria*. Though the repertoire was not as varied as usual, interest and support remained high. (See Appendix 1 for an account of the repertoire.)

Despite rumors about defects in the theater, its larger size and its potential after improvements kept subscribers flocking to the theater, according to *L’Abeille musicale*:

The reopening will have the advantage that the administration of the theater will make more profit, and that one will find the place sufficient to contain the dilettanti, who moped around the door of the old theater without ever getting inside. The voices of Mlle Grisi, of Rubini, and of Lablache are perfectly at their ease in this beautiful place, and as soon as the orchestra (which is too feeble for the size of the room) is enlarged, once the room is lit in a manner to bring out the

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<sup>9</sup> *Paris élégant: journal des modes*, 16 February 1838.

elegance of the *toilettes*, nothing will stop this theater from remaining the meeting place of the brilliant society that is one of its principal ornaments.<sup>10</sup> The theater's most important decoration--the elegant subscribers--continued in the new venue, even if the lighting and orchestra left something to be desired.

The move to the Ventadour, even if it was temporary, presented an opportunity for subscribers to make their case for well-placed seats. Seat negotiations for returning subscribers usually took place during a very short period in the summer. Renewal notices went out in August, and subscribers had a few weeks in which to respond affirmatively, and until the beginning of the season, in October, to negotiate. The misfortune of moving theaters was not without benefits, as the larger theater provided opportunities for more people. L. Davelny wrote to Viardot on 18 January 1838, asking for a better seat on behalf of a friend, M. Aubertot, saying that "Salle Ventadour being much bigger than the other, you can without a doubt dispose of a certain number of *loges*."<sup>11</sup> The only subscriber to bring up the inconvenience of the Salle Ventadour as a place for performances was Charles Hervey, a writer on theater in both Paris and London.<sup>12</sup> Hervey wrote on 19 January, trying to be as inoffensive as possible:

I didn't want to add to the number of the annoying people who must be afflicting you. I'm therefore writing a little note to put my interests in your obliging hands as concerns the *loge* at the Italiens. I hear that we'll suffer the *avant-scènes* at Ventadour. I therefore count on you to make sure that the *loge* that is given to me is the least bad possible (*la moins mauvaise possible*).

Hervey was one of the kinder subscribers, or possibly one of the few close friends who wrote in – he concluded by apologizing for the trouble his request might cause and mourning the loss of their mutual friend Severini.<sup>13</sup>

The imperturbability of the troupe and of its subscribers led the *Petit Courrier des dames* to remark that although the Salle Ventadour was larger and the public even more sympathetic than usual, in February of 1838 it was easy to say "Nothing changed! It's just more people!"<sup>14</sup> The *Petit Courrier des dames* echoed *L'Abeille musicale* in observing the continuity between old and new, but ended with dire predictions: "As for the performance, we know that they are always the same masterpieces, executed by the same artists with the same precision. ... However, the saddest of predictions is circulating at this moment in the musical world; Rubini is only waiting for the end of the season to retire. ... Next year, what will happen to the Théâtre Italien? Rubini retires to Bergamo, Lablache to London, and what's more, next October gripping drama will thrash about on the stage at Ventadour, and the Théâtre Italien must find some other location... where? The Odéon? Père-Lachaise *dramatique*!"<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *L'Abeille musicale*, February 1838.

<sup>11</sup> L. Davelny to Viardot. 18 January 1838; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1838.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Hervey and Alexandre Lacachie, *The Theatres of Paris* (London: John Mitchell, 1846). Hervey also wrote travel literature for Ainsworth's Magazine and other publications. Charles Hervey, "Brighton," in *Ainsworth's Magazine*, ed. W. Harrison Ainsworth (London: Hugh Cunningham, 1842).

<sup>13</sup> Charles Hervey to M. Viardot, 19 January 1838; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1838.

<sup>14</sup> "Chronique des salons," *Petit Courrier des dames: modes de Paris : littérature, beaux-arts, théâtres*, 5 March 1836.

<sup>15</sup> *Petit Courrier des dames*, 15 February 1838.

## TOUT PARIS

All of fashionable Paris went to the Théâtre Italien, according to newspapers, but sources vary by orders of magnitude on the extent of this class during the July Monarchy. Galignani's *New Paris Guide* for 1831 gives the population within the city limits as 774,338.<sup>16</sup> The *Almanach des 25,000 adresses des principaux habitants de Paris* concerns itself with only 3% of the population, but even this segment of "important inhabitants" includes bankers, shopkeepers, violinists at the Opéra, and peers.<sup>17</sup> Balls hosted by King Louis-Philippe sometimes had as many as 2,000 or 3,000 guests, and yet Count Rodolphe Apponyi could still say that the rooms were deserted, and that he had no one to dance with. Ladies of high society rejected the invitation to the ball Apponyi referred to, leaving attendance to ambassadors, foreigners, and "those of a different class."<sup>18</sup> These ladies (and gentlemen) of high society formed what *Le Siècle* called "the elegant world" or "*tout Paris*," and *Le Siècle* put the number of important men and women (including dandies, men of letters, marvels, blue stockings, and celebrities of all sorts) at four or five hundred.<sup>19</sup>

The number of these fashionable people who went to the Théâtre Italien is also inconsistent: the Salle Favart had 1200 places for attendees, while the Odéon had 1628 and the Salle Ventadour 1200 again.<sup>20</sup> With subscribers attending between one and three performances

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<sup>16</sup> Galignani's *New Paris Guide* (Paris: A and W Galignani Co, 1838). Jardin and Tudesq roughly agree with this figure, giving the 1831 population of Paris as 786,000 and the 1836 population as 866,000. Adeline Daumard estimates that during the July Monarchy, the lower class (including servants, military men, and artisans and shopkeepers who eked out a living) made up 75-80% of the population. The bourgeoisie made up roughly 15% and the remaining 5% was of the very rich, which included both aristocrats and bankers. André Jardin and André Jean Tudesq, *Restoration and Reaction, 1815-1848* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 379-382; Adeline Daumard, *La Bourgeoisie parisienne de 1815 à 1848* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963).

<sup>17</sup> Henri Dulac, *Almanach des 25000 adresses des principaux habitants de Paris* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1835).

<sup>18</sup> Rodolphe Apponyi, *Vingt-cinq Ans à Paris (1826-1850): Journal du Comte Rodolphe Apponyi, attaché de l'ambassade d'Autriche-Hongrie à Paris*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: Plon Nourrit, 1913), 330-331. Apponyi was the Austrian ambassador to Paris and a prolific diarist, and he wanted to renew his *loge* in the first tier at the Théâtre Italien for two nights per week for the 1840-41 season. Apponyi, 14 August 1840, A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840. On the public perception of Louis-Phillipe's court and balls, see Anne Martin-Fugier, *La Vie élégante, ou, la formation du tout-Paris, 1815-1848* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 67-72.

<sup>19</sup> James Johnson (*Listening in Paris*, 244) interprets "*tout Paris*" more literally, and claims that all of Paris, from peer to proletariat, was represented at the Opéra during the July Monarchy. *Le Siècle* makes clear that this "*tout Paris*" was figurative: "Le monde élégant a fait trêve à ses frivolités ordinaires, pour encourager l'industrie et fêter l'inauguration du chemin de fer de Saint-Germain. Il est un bataillon sacré, composé de quatre ou cinq cents individus, dandys, gens de lettres, merveilleuses, bas-bleus et célébrités de tout genre, qui se met sous les armes à toutes les solennités: c'est ce bataillon que l'on appelle *tout Paris*. Aux premières représentations, aux soirées brillantes de l'Opéra, aux courses du Champ-de-Mars, aux réceptions de l'Académie, figure toujours ce public d'apparat; et le lendemain vous lisez dans le compte-rendu des journaux: *Tout Paris* assistait à ce spectacle, *tout Paris* s'était donné rendez-vous à cette cérémonie." "Revue de Paris," *Le Siècle*, 2 September 1837, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Even these numbers are up for debate: Galignani's guidebooks from 1838 and 1842 say that the Salle Ventadour was the same size as the Salle Favart, while Bottin's guidebooks say that the Salle Ventadour was bigger by 500 seats (1700 as opposed to 1200). Letters from subscribers in 1838 also claim that the new theater was bigger than the burnt one. For Salle Favart and Odéon in 1838: Galignani's *New Paris Guide*, 439, 441. For Ventadour: Galignani's *New Paris Guide* (Paris: A. W. Galignani, 1842), 467; Séb.

each week, the audience of the Théâtre Italien at any of the three venues it occupied in the late 1830s was clearly larger than the four hundred of the *Siècle*'s "*tout Paris*" but less than the crowds who attended balls at the court. The Théâtre Italien formed a middle ground between the stodgy exclusivity of the Faubourg Saint-Germain and the overly inclusive hospitality of the court. Based on numbers alone, the space at the Théâtre Italien compelled the higher classes to mix, as the theater was frequently filled to capacity.

Whether made up of 25,000 or 500, high society in Paris was in a muddle during the July Monarchy. Parisian society was not only less amicable than during previous regimes, but also lacked a clear hierarchy or center. The July Revolution was famously a calm revolution that replaced an absolute monarch (the Bourbon Charles X) with a constitutional monarch (Louis-Philippe of the Orléan branch). The vaunted continuity of the transition notwithstanding, these political changes caused upheaval and social divisions, which could be read in the geography of Paris. (See Fig. 1.1 for a map of Paris and its neighborhoods during the 1830s.) The Faubourg Saint-Germain was the bastion of the ultra-royalist aristocrats who supported the Bourbons; the Faubourg Saint-Honoré was for more liberal nobles who supported Louis-Philippe and the Orléanists; the Marais was for older wealthy (and frequently Jewish) families whose money came from trade; and the Chaussée d'Antin was for nouveaux riches and Bonapartists.<sup>21</sup> Relations between groups were difficult, and sociability suffered. As Virginie Ancelot, the hostess of one of the most prominent salons, put it, "the Faubourg Saint-Germain was sulky and hostile, while the revolutionaries were irritated and threatening: too many regrets and too many hopes occupied the mind for anyone to enjoy carefree conversation."<sup>22</sup> The rapid succession of governments in such a short time created political enmity as supporters lingered and resented those in power, and those in power feared those who ruled previously. As a result, salons were either deserted or partisan, and peaceful conversation about neutral topics was difficult to come by.

Aristocracy (of different vintages), wealth, and intellectual or artistic genius all counted in determining whether someone belonged to *tout Paris*; but there was no single judge or obvious pinnacle of the hierarchy. The older aristocrats in the Faubourg Saint-Germain scorned the King and his overly inclusive (and informal) court, and nouveaux-riches in the Chaussée-d'Antin thought the Faubourg Saint-Germain was dull and frozen. This multiplicity of authorities led Victor Balabine, secretary to the Russian ambassador, to claim in 1843 that Paris had no center: "there are therefore only coteries without any link between them; they are all scattered members of a body mutilated by revolution. Each of these coteries has a color, a nuance that belongs to it alone, each is a leaf torn from the grand book of national history, a page of the past, or the scheme for some new idea, some new revolution to foment in the future."<sup>23</sup> Balabine gets to the heart of the matter: social unity had been lost in revolution, and "*tout Paris*" struggled to

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Bottin, *Almanach du commerce de Paris* (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1838), 448 (5); *Almanach-Bottin du commerce de Paris*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris: Bureau de l'Almanach du commerce, 1842), 415. For letters from 1838, see A.N. AJ/13/1169/III.

<sup>21</sup> Throughout this chapter I will use the arrondissement system in place during the July Monarchy. Arrondissements 1 through 9 were on the Right Bank, going roughly from west to east, and arrondissements 10 through 12 were on the Left Bank, also going from west to east.

<sup>22</sup> Virginie Ancelot, *Un Salon de Paris: 1824-1864* (Paris: Dentu, 1866), 147-148.

<sup>23</sup> Victor de Balabine, *Journal de Victor de Balabine: secrétaire de l'ambassade de Russie: 1842-1847* (Paris: Émile-Paul Frères, 1914), 102-103.

reform itself into a cohesive entity. The geography of Paris was up for grabs, as was the social hierarchy.

Aristocratic lineage did not necessarily correspond with wealth and prestige: one could belong to the Faubourg Saint-Germain by birth and by politics, but live in reduced circumstances in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré with the more liberal nobility. Behavior and connections distinguished the Faubourg Saint-Germain from the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and those who belonged to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, even though they might live in the slightly cheaper part of the city, still conducted themselves like a member of the aristocratic elite, and shunned the new court and new wealth.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the city was partitioned according to status, but appearance and behavior had become as important as birth in determining where each member of society belonged. Delphine de Girardin observed that while eight ruffles on a dress were the height of fashion in the Chaussée d'Antin in April 1839, the same dress would be considered scandalous in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.<sup>25</sup> She sums this up by stating that each fashion could only be properly appreciated in its own *quartier*, and each neighborhood had a different relationship to fashion: the Chaussée-d'Antin innovated, the Faubourg Saint-Honoré adopted, the Faubourg Saint-Germain consecrated, and the Marais executed and buried.

These geographical and cultural distinctions are also apparent in Apponyi's diary entry for Ash Wednesday 1835. He recounts that he had begun his social itinerary the evening before at a ball hosted by the Baronne de Meyendorf in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, drifted to a masked ball in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, then to the Théâtre des Variétés, and finally to a cabaret in Belleville. As his group of friends moved north, the parties became more crowded and the dancing wilder. The cachucha (or *chahut*) at the masked ball in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré remained within the limits of decency, as required by the presence of the police captain, "but at the same time, the dancers found means to reveal all and to stop themselves just at the limit. Compared to that which is danced at the Île d'Amour [in Belleville], at the Grand-Saint-Martin and elsewhere, this one was like rose water: a *chahut* of good company."<sup>26</sup> Paris also becomes more violent as Apponyi and his friends travel into the crowds to the north: outside the Théâtre des Variétés, they witnessed a fight that ended in a challenge to a duel, and in Belleville, they found themselves in the middle of stones, plates, and broken furniture thrown by the populace and the Jockey Club, Lord Seymour's crowd.<sup>27</sup>

These emerging sects disturbed the convivial sociability that Parisians remembered from pre-Revolutionary days, when people of opposing viewpoints could meet peaceably to debate philosophical questions, hear Talma declaim, or read a play together.<sup>28</sup> The salons of the July Monarchy were calcified along political and financial lines; though women still held salons, they were much more likely to invite only members of one political party or to avoid political

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<sup>24</sup> Martin-Fugier, *La Vie élégante*, 100-112.

<sup>25</sup> Emile de Girardin, "Lettre XII, 27 Avril 1839," in *Le Vicomte de Launay: lettres parisiennes*, ed. Théophile Gautier (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1857), 128.

<sup>26</sup> Rodolphe Apponyi, *Vingt-cinq Ans à Paris (1826-1850): Journal du Comte Rodolphe Apponyi, attaché de l'ambassade d'Autriche-Hongrie à Paris*, 4 vols., vol. 3 (Paris: Plon Nourrit et Co, 1914), 38.

<sup>27</sup> Lord Seymour was an Englishman who lived in Paris at the time and was famous for his eccentricities, his carousing, and his founding of the Jockey Club, a club for young men to drink and play pranks. *The Cosmopolitan*, vol. 4 (New York: Schlicht & Field, 1888), 371-373.

<sup>28</sup> Ancelot, *Un Salon de Paris*, 147-148.



discourse entirely.<sup>29</sup> The Duchesse de Dino quotes Adolphe Thiers as neatly describing each of the main camps as they appeared to him in 1837:

The salon of Mme de Lieven is the observatory of Europe; that of Madame de Ségur is purely Doctrinaire, with no concessions; that of Madame de la Redorte is entirely in the power of M. Thiers; with Madame de Flahaut the convenience of the Duc d'Orléans is the general desire, and with M. de Talleyrand the convenience of the King; the house of Mme de Boigne is for the 11th of October and for the concession, though the most bitter of concessions; the cabinet of Mme de Dino is alone guided by the most perfect independence of mind and judgment.<sup>30</sup>

This flattery from Thiers was no doubt gratifying to the Duchesse de Dino, but even her salon had a political bias – she was Talleyrand's companion and helped host his royalist salon.<sup>31</sup>

Salonnières relied on artistic entertainment (frequently borrowed from the opera houses), literary worship, and light conversation to paper over political rifts. To mention just one well-known example, the duel between Liszt and Thalberg, the culmination of a series of charity concerts put on by the Princesse de Belgioioso in 1837, was used to settle an aesthetic debate about whether Thalberg or Liszt (read: lyric or orchestral virtuosity on the piano) was superior, as well as to unite the aristocracy from the faubourgs and the *nouveaux-riches* from the Chaussée-d'Antin in charitable activity.<sup>32</sup> As Dana Gooley has shown, however, the aesthetic debate was always bounded and constrained by social groupings: Liszt had outraged aristocratic sensibilities by openly attacking Thalberg in a letter published in the *Gazette musicale*. Both the nobility of birth and of wealth could enjoy the concert, however: the two men played fantasies and divertimentos on popular operatic tunes, including favorite themes by Rossini, Pacini, and Meyerbeer, all of which were familiar to the elite audience.

Piano performance was far from the only way to bring music from the theater into the home, and scores of anecdotes and vignettes in contemporary diaries and memoirs attest to the

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<sup>29</sup> Steven Kale argues that the social mixing at salons of politically and financially diverse parties decreased during the July Monarchy, as the salons became more separated. Steven D. Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). Sarah Horowitz, however, analyzes correspondence from the 1820s and 1840s to reveal that while men such as Guizot had more restricted social connections, limited by political viewpoint, women were more likely to have friends across the political spectrum of both genders. Women's networks, however, did not bridge social gaps even if they spanned political divisions. Horowitz points out that though women could bring non-politically active elites into the playing field, they did not connect elites and non-elites. The barrier between the Faubourgs and the bourgeoisie was both too large and too uninteresting for elite hostesses concerned with their own social standing to cross. Sarah Horowitz, *Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 104-120, 171.

<sup>30</sup> Dorothee de Courlande Dino, "27 Avril 1837," in *Chronique de 1831 à 1862*, ed. Princesse Radziwill (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Co., 1909), 112.

<sup>31</sup> For more on the Duchesse de Dino's political leanings, see Horowitz, *Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France*, 115.

<sup>32</sup> Dana A. Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18-77. David Tunley points out that the line between a private charitable concert for hundreds of possibly paying guests and a public concert benefiting a specific cause was blurry during the July Monarchy, both in terms of social purpose and musical repertoire; David Tunley, *Salons, Singers, and Songs: a Background to Romantic French song 1830-1870* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).

strong links between operatic culture and social life, as well as a love of opera that spanned political divisions. Amateurs and professionals sang excerpts from operas at home both formally and informally, and some people even brought the theater literally into their houses: Count Jules de Castellane had a theater in his *hôtel* in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré featuring somewhat professional performances. Although the singers were usually amateurs, the costumer for the Opéra provided the clothes, while Pierre-Luc-Charles Ciceri, the Opéra's set designer, did the decorations, and on at least one occasion, Madame Berlioz (the former Harriet Smithson) and Mademoiselle Davenay (a rising star at the Gymnase) sang.<sup>33</sup> The Marquis de Bellissen, on the other hand, had strictly amateur performances in his private theater. De Bellissen purchased Royaumont Abbey, 30 kilometers north of Paris in 1832, and turned it into a theater where he and his friends put on original operas such as *L'incendio di Babilonia* and *L'Eté à Paris*, as well as operas borrowed from the Théâtre Italien and the Opéra.<sup>34</sup> The *Abeille musicale* breathlessly described the success of the amateurs at one such evening and cited the performance *Les Puritains* (translated from the Italian) as a demonstration of "the rapid progress of musical sentiment in the elegant classes of society."<sup>35</sup> The "elegant class" at this performance mainly consisted of Bonapartists: the host, the Marquis de Bellissen, had been a Chamberlain in Napoleon's household along with de Montaigu (the replacement for Lablache), Charles de la Bouillerie (the translator) was the *Maître des Requêtes* and treasurer for the *Intendance Générale du Domaine Extraordinaire* under Napoleon, and the Vicomte Doguereau (who played Arturo) was the son of Jean-Pierre Doguereau, a *maréchal-de-camp d'artillerie* who served under Napoleon, and the nephew of Lieutenant-Général Louis Doguereau, who served both under Napoleon and as a member of the Chamber of Deputies during the July Monarchy.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Count Jules de Castellane was a very liberal noble, whose political beliefs shaded toward Saint-Simonianism. He was the president of the Athénée, an academy that held courses, concerts, and literary discussions; Martin-Fugier, *La Vie élégante*, 246-247; Edouard Ferdinand de la Bonninière Beaumont-Vassy, *Les Salons de Paris et la société parisienne sous Napoléon III* (Paris: F. Sartorius, 1868), 156; "Chronique," *Petit Courrier des dames: modes de Paris : littérature, beaux-arts, théâtres*, 15 May 1837; Jules Lecomte, *Le Perron de Tortoni : indiscretions biographiques*, 2 ed. (Paris: E. Dentu, 1863), 321-327.

<sup>34</sup> De Bellissen was a favored patron of the Théâtre Italien: he is on the lists for entrance to rehearsals of *I Briganti* in 1836 and *Ildegonda* in 1837. Several of the principals who performed at his theater were subscribers to the Théâtre Italien: the Vicomte Doguereau (who played Arturo) shared a *loge* with the Baron Mauni. See A.N. AJ/13/1161/V for rehearsal lists. Baron Mauni to M. L'Homme, 19 September 1840, A.N. AJ/13/1169/II/1840.

<sup>35</sup> "M. de Bellissen vient de favoriser une nombreuse société réunie dans l'ancienne abbaye de Rougemont, à deux lieues de Chantilly, d'une représentation *des Puritains*, opéra de Bellini, traduit en français par M. Charles de la Bouillerie, et exécuté par des amateurs qui valent mieux que les artistes de notre Opéra-Comique. Madame Deforges s'est placée, dans le rôle d'Elvire, au premier rang des virtuoses de salon. M. de Montaigu remplissait le rôle de Lablache, et M. Panel celui de Tamburini. Leur célèbre duo a excité un enthousiasme universel dans l'auditoire. M. le vicomte d'Ogeureau n'a pas été un moins habile remplaçant de Rubini, dans le rôle d'Arthur. Les chœurs, dirigés par M. Lecocq, l'orchestre, conduit par M. Launer, et le piano, tenu par M. de Flottow, ont eu leur part dans l'éclat et le charme de cette soirée, qui atteste les rapides progrès du sentiment musical dans les classes élégantes de la société." *L'Abeille musicale*, July 1836.

<sup>36</sup> *Almanach impérial* (Paris: Testu, 1810), 72, 76; Jean-Pierre Doguereau and Jonquière Clément, *Journal de l'expédition d'Egypte* (Paris: Perrin et cie, 1904), 16-17, 20.

The *Abeille musicale* published a slightly more discreet description of society entertainments in January 1838. It lamented that the Opéra wasn't playing favorite masterpieces as often the public desired, causing the public to flee to the Théâtre Italien and to their own homes: if the Opéra wouldn't play what they wanted, the most privileged tier of the public would perform their favorites themselves, enjoying *Moïse* in the salon and *Guillaume Tell* at the tea table.<sup>37</sup> The *Abeille musicale* protected the identities of the ladies of the chorus as it had not done for the principal performers at the Marquis de Bellissen's amateur production of *I puritani*:

One of these Mondays it was decided that the choruses of *Moïse* would be sung; madame O-- readied her salon, the premier musical salon in Paris, her piano, her pretty voice and her completely artistic grace. An orchestra was improvised, composed of violins, violas, basses, and *contrebasses* directed by M. D--, chief of the division of finances. The piano was taken by M. de B--, one of the most distinguished accompanists in the capital. As for the choruses, they happily did not have those of the Opéra, but choruses where one noticed simply madame la comtesse de Sp-- madame O--, madame la vicomtesse du B--, les jolies demoiselles B--, madame C--, and many other charming ladies, talents of the elite who, for this day, wanted to be taken for simple choristers.<sup>38</sup>

These initials thinly disguise the identities of "tout Paris." For those in the know, the "comtesse de Sp--" was easily completed as the comtesse de Sparre, and "madame O--" was Madame Orfila. The comtesse de Sparre (born Naldi) was a professional singer before her marriage, while Madame Orfila was known for having one of the best amateur voices in Paris.<sup>39</sup>

The repertoire and reputations of these home theaters and of Liszt and Thalberg's piano duel would not make sense without the Opéra and the Théâtre Italien saturating social life and culture. Whether Saint-Simonian or Napoléoniste, operas pervaded social life, and, in turn, people from different political parties mixed at the Théâtre Italien. Madame Orfila's salon gained its prominence from the participation of the three most popular composers, and the pieces sung at the Théâtre Italien were heard throughout Paris, in salons, home performances, and even on street corners. The two theaters had worked out a schedule to accommodate music lovers: the Opéra had performances on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, while the Théâtre Italien opened its doors on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from October to March. Though most subscribers to the Théâtre Italien only went once a week, the Théâtre Italien still loomed as a central part of Parisian sociability. It was only open when "tout Paris" was in town (the majority of the elite left for the summer) and its dramas provided a common reference point for the elite and aspiring elite of all political stripes.

## AT THE THÉÂTRE ITALIEN

The collection of letters gives the impression of a connected audience, in which opera-goers interacted with their seatmates, knew who belonged, and who was likely to be missing. People from different neighborhoods had to coexist at the Théâtre Italien, and the letters help create a picture of where members of different classes and inhabitants of different neighborhoods sat and

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<sup>37</sup> "Moïse au salon," *L'Abeille musicale*, January 1838.

<sup>38</sup> "Moïse au salon."

<sup>39</sup> The Comtesse de Sparre also organized a concert in 1843 to aid the victims of an earthquake in Guadeloupe. *Le Globe*, 7 April 1843; quoted in Martin-Fugier, *La Vie élégante*, 159n96, 315. For more information on Mme. Orfila, see Jules Janin, *L'été à Paris* (Paris: L. Curmer, 1844), 247; Frossard, *Souvenirs de la Baronne Frossard (1813-1884)* (Paris: H. Gautier, 1885), 24, 27.

how they interacted, both in the theater and in the outside world. The rhetorical strategies and networks found in the letters reveal how seating at the Théâtre Italien (and its concomitant social values) interacted with the city's geography. Certain spectators might try to make up for a bad address by relying on a network of friends and business associates to vouch for their musicality and suitability as a patron. Foreigners had a particularly difficult time getting good seats traditionally reserved for the French elite, and the letters reveal a network of British patrons. Some doyennes of Parisian society also worked on behalf of foreigners, and allowed their boxes to be sublet when not in use. This subletting practice occasionally led to conflict, and the original renters of the box were not shy to claim their rights. The theater's patrons felt a sense of ownership, and the letters recommending that someone properly belonged to the community formed at the Théâtre Italien projected a coherent, if partly imaginary, social world. The logic underlying many of the letters could be reduced to a syllogism: the elite went to the Théâtre Italien; therefore, if one went to the Théâtre Italien, one belonged to the elite.

The composition of the theater's audience was relatively stable from year to year, and the management encouraged this stability by allowing subscribers to renew their boxes and make seating requests before ticket sales were opened to the general public.<sup>40</sup> Out of 286 letter writers known to have had subscriptions, 58% subscribed in more than one year.<sup>41</sup> Many people claimed their long-standing subscriptions as a reason why they should have a better *loge* in the coming season: several claimed that they had been subscribers for four years, while a Madame de Sahune boasted a decade-long history as a subscriber and a Monsieur Lutterothe had subscribed since 1816, or for 24 years.<sup>42</sup> Only 5% of written subscription requests were explicitly for a new patron, and even those were frequently written by subscribers requesting a *loge* for their friends.<sup>43</sup> Less than 3% declined the offered seat, and about half of these people did so as a bargaining tool, rejecting the administration's offer in hopes of a better seat.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Johnson (*Listening in Paris*, 189) says that at the Théâtre Italien during the Restoration, "The short three- or six-month contracts for renting boxes nourished a sense of disconnectedness and unfamiliarity among audiences, since no particular care was taken to assign subscribers the same box for successive subscriptions." This was no longer the case by 1838, as subscribers were solicited for renewals and relied on returning to their own box. Changes in box locations caused anger about subscribers' rights, as I will discuss below.

<sup>41</sup> For this figure I counted all people who refer to a subscription, whether for the current season or from the previous year, request a change of seat (thereby implying that they had a seat before), or accept an offer.

<sup>42</sup> Probably the Baronne de Sahune, married to an "Auditeur au Conseil d'État," (a member of the legal arm of the French government) who lived near the Faubourg Saint-Honoré at 27 Rue Cambon, just to the east of Place Vendôme. Lutterothe has two entries in the *Almanach des 25,000*. Both are listed as property owners. Monsieur and Madame C.W. Lutteroth lived in the third arrondissement, and Henri Lutteroth, an abolitionist and evangelist, lived in the first. The addresses given in the letter, however, are for Epinay sur Seine (written in August) and 10 Place Louis XV (now Place de la Concorde), right by the Tuileries in the first arrondissement. Dulac, *Almanach des 25000*.

<sup>43</sup> A subscription for one year without evidence of a subscription the preceding year (for example, someone who writes in 1839 accepting a subscription but does not make a reference to his or her subscription for 1838) does not indicate that the subscriber was new for 1839. I have counted "new" subscriptions only for those who explicitly mention that this is their first time subscribing.

<sup>44</sup> I include both people who categorically declined (for example, because they would be out of town) and those who declined in hopes of a better seat, since we have no way of knowing whether their request was

This stability brought people close together over an extended period of time, and this prolonged exposure created connections between patrons who, though they might differ politically, at least wanted to attend the same operatic performance. Though we can only imagine how audience members might have interacted during performances and whether they also interacted outside of the opera house, we can make a strong conjecture that many of them did—that their connections within the theater led to, promoted, and strengthened connections of other kinds that might not have been possible without their encounters at the Théâtre Italien. Those who stayed knew their seatmates and referred to them in their requests, either asking if they could have the box of a departed neighbor or friend, requesting a seat next to a friend, or renewing on their neighbor's behalf. These neighborly connections form little networks: for example, both Colonel Thorn and M. Ardoin wrote in inquiring after the Duc d'Osuma's box, while the Duchesse de Noailles asked about Colonel Thorn's.<sup>45</sup> Each party knew about the vacant box in the first tier through social connections. Competition was less stiff for the second tier: only one person wrote in after the death of the Marquise de Bethisy asking for her box.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, M. C Vergé wrote in referring both to seat neighbors and to a friend: though he would like to renew his subscription, he would prefer to move closer to the center of the theater, and take orchestra seats 16 and 17 over 19 and 20. He reminded the administration that "I made a similar demand a year ago, and, though the title holder of numbers 16 and 17 changed, it was not I who benefited."<sup>47</sup> Vergé also mentioned that the Marquis de Lamberville (who was in the country at the moment) would also like to renew his subscription.

These social connections determined more than just where individuals sat and whether they got to watch the performance: people wanted not only to see the show, but to see it in close proximity to their friends, and they would therefore deliberately arrange for seats near each other. M. Herbert asked if he could have a seat near M. Lemoine for a specific performance, letting the theater know that he would be willing to sit "to the right or to the left, in front or behind."<sup>48</sup> One of the more revealing notes comes from before the fire: in it, Edmond Blanc, the Minister of the Interior, asks for a *loge* for the next Saturday, specifically a *loge* in the *avant-scène* second tier, on the opposite side from the *loge* of M. le Duc de Choiseul. Tantalizingly, this request is followed by "I will tell you the reason" and nothing more.<sup>49</sup> Some friends shared

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granted. Lequeltiannve to Viardot regarding Mme. de Sahune; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839; Lutterothe 3 August 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>45</sup> Fortunately, Colonel Thorn and M. Ardoin wanted the *loge* in separate years. Ardoin sat there for the 1839-1840 season, while Col. Thorn wanted it for the 1840-41 season. Ardoin to M. Lormois, 8 April 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840; Col Thorn to M. le Directeur, 11 August 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840; Duchesse de Noailles, 8 October 1840, A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840

<sup>46</sup> Gabriel Vendeuvre wrote in saying that the Marquise de Bethisy was dead, and that he would like to have her box in the second tier. 1840. Gabriel Vendeuvre to Charles Dormoy, 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>47</sup> C Vergé to M. Dormoy, 4 August 1840; AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>48</sup> M. Herbert to Charles Dormoy, 28 September 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>49</sup> It is not clear what advantage this would have given Blanc: he might have been able to see into the Duc de Choiseul's box, but he couldn't have communicated with him easily. This probably was not the scandalous Duc de Choiseul-Praslins (who committed suicide in 1847 while in jail for his wife's murder after she dismissed the governess with whom he was having an affair). Instead, it was most likely Phillippe-Gabriel de Marmier, who received the title Duc de Choiseul from his father-in-law in 1818. Philippe-Gabriel was a member of the *Chambre des députés* during the *Cent Jours*, the Restoration, and throughout the July Monarchy. He supported the majority for most of his career as a politician, and his

boxes, others sat near each other, and some special friends paid for the box of a beloved: M. Malançon wrote in 1839 to renew *baignoire* #5 for himself and also to reserve *balcon* #6 for Mlle. Cornélie Falcon, the star soprano of the Opéra during the 1830s.<sup>50</sup> Falcon performed at the Opéra from 1832 to 1838, but her career ended prematurely when she lost her voice during a performance. Her fame persisted, and in 1839 she was still very much a fashionable celebrity. The two sat kitty-corner to each other in different rows, preserving a semblance of propriety, as they did not marry until Malançon became a widower after 1840 (see Fig. 1.2 for the seating arrangements at the Théâtre Italien with Malançon and Falcon's seats marked).

The letters also reveal something about interactions outside the theater, and about the ways the geography of Paris mapped onto seating within the Théâtre Italien, and vice versa. The subscription audience was primarily made up of people from the first, second, and tenth arrondissements (which correspond roughly to the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the Chaussée-d'Antin, and the Faubourg Saint-Germain, respectively). (Fig. 1.3 shows the proportion of the audience that wrote from Paris and from other parts of Europe, while Fig. 1.4 focuses on the Parisian subscribers. Fig. 1.4 is a plot of the addresses of 373 subscribers onto a map of Paris that clearly shows clustering on the fashionable side of the city.) Tier membership was also strongly correlated to street address. Of the 242 subscribers who have an address identifiable by arrondissement, 78% come from the first, second, and tenth arrondissements, which contained the most fashionable districts. This proportion jumps to 93% when only subscribers who had seats in the first tier are considered, whereas only 55% of people who sat in the second or third tier came from the fashionable neighborhoods (see Fig. 1.5 for graphs of audience distribution in these tiers by arrondissement).

The proportions of people from the Chaussée-d'Antin, Faubourg Saint-Germain, and Faubourg Saint-Honoré also shifted according to tier. The first tier was by far the most expensive, and had a higher proportion of people from the Faubourg Saint-Germain than the rest of the theater (43% vs. 19% overall). Some caution is necessary when interpreting this figure. While this might seem like a clear indication that the Faubourg Saint-Germain dominated the first tier, the rarity of having a subscriber with both an identifiable address and a specific tier makes these numbers somewhat unreliable. Only 14 people had both a known address and a seat in the first tier, six of whom were from the tenth arrondissement; such numbers are too small to be reliable. Furthermore, the King and his entourage sat in the first tier, and their boxes were reserved separately from the renewal letters.

Despite the small number of people with both an address and a tier, these proportions are meaningful. Of the 92 people who had both an identifiable address in Paris and a specific tier, the proportions spread across neighborhoods are roughly the same as for all 244 people who have identifiable addresses, and the tier distribution is similar to that of all the 242 people who clearly belonged to a specific tier (see Fig. 1.6 for comparisons). Because the proportions are similar between the smaller sample and the larger groups of either arrondissements or tiers, deviations from these proportions are also meaningful (see Appendix 2 for more detailed information). Most people from the first arrondissement (near the court and the Faubourg Saint-Honoré) sat in either the second tier or the orchestra (44% and 30%, respectively). This is

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wife was a *dame d'honneur* for the empress Marie-Louise from 1810 to 1814. J.B.P.J. Courcelles, *Histoire généalogique et héraldique des pairs de France, des grands dignitaires de la couronne, des principales familles nobles du royaume, et des maisons princières de l'Europe, précédée de la généalogie de la maison de France* (Paris: Courcelles, 1826), 118.

<sup>50</sup> Malançon to Dormoy, 8 September 1839; AJ/13/1169/1839.

different from the general population: out of all the letters, with and without addresses, 19% sat in the second tier, and 10% sat in the orchestra. The second tier had slightly more people from the Faubourg Saint-Honoré than would be expected (38% as opposed to 30% overall). The orchestra level was more popular among the elite than it was among the rest of the letter writers. Only 10% of all people asked for seats in the orchestra, but 25% of people who lived in the first, second, and tenth arrondissements did.

The letters also allow for the re-construction of social networks, which then reveal the strength of connections across neighborhoods. Subscribers wrote in asking for favors or renewing on behalf of friends, name-dropping, or referring the administration to their banker or business person. Out of 189 connections, 106 have addresses in Paris associated with both parties. People who lived in fashionable neighborhoods were the most likely to write about others and the most likely to be referred to. People in both the first and second arrondissements wrote about others who lived in their same neighborhood quite a bit (14 and 10 letters, respectively). However, the connection *between* the first and second arrondissements is even stronger; 19 letters written by people from either neighborhood referred to someone from the other. The tenth is the only other arrondissement that comes close to being as connected (see Fig. 1.7 for an image of the network between arrondissements showing the relative number of letter writers per arrondissement and the strength of connections between arrondissements).

The practical implications of these networks in producing geographical connections are revealed in the contents of the letters. In 1839 Charles Mévil (a subscriber who lived in the Chaussée d'Antin), his brother-in-law M. Déron (who lived nearby), and Déron's box-mate M. Chavannes (who lived far outside of fashionable Paris, at the top of the fifth), all requested improvements in their seats. (See Fig. 1.8 for their addresses imposed on a map of Paris). Mévil succeeded in moving down a tier when the Italians moved to the Odéon in 1839. Chavannes asked twice that year if he and Déron could also descend, but without success, so all three parties reiterated their request the next year. Mévil's letter was the most friendly – along with his request to renew his own seat and to upgrade that of his brother-in-law, he mentioned that he would be in London, and offered to perform favors or errands for the theater's administration while he was there.<sup>51</sup> The administration must have responded favorably to his request, because the Déron family finally got their box in the second tier, even if instead of the four places they had requested, they only got two.<sup>52</sup> Chavannes was not so lucky, and he wrote yet again to ask for a better box, hoping “that nothing will oppose the satisfaction of this just demand from one of your oldest subscribers.”<sup>53</sup> Chavannes tries to position himself as one of the ideal elite subscribers, but his address and his degree of connection (friend of the brother-in-law of a valued subscriber) worked against him, and he remained in the third tier.

The Duc d'Osuna's box was in the first tier, and competition was stiff for it. Monsieur Ardoin wrote in April 1840 that—though he had given up his subscription in the second tier last year in order to share the Duc d'Osuna's box in the first tier with the Comte de Tasena and therefore couldn't renew his own subscription—he hoped that the administrator could accommodate his desire to sit, once again, in the first tier.<sup>54</sup> (See Fig. 1.9 for an illustration of this network and the types of connections.) In August of the same year Colonel Herman Thorn

<sup>51</sup> Mévil to Charles Dormoy 10 July 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>52</sup> A Déron, July 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>53</sup> Chavannes, 3 August 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>54</sup> A Ardoin to M. Lormois, 4 August 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840 De Vatry to Charles Dormoy, 20 August 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

also wrote to ask if he could have the box of the Duc d'Osuna, who had left for Spain the previous spring. Colonel Thorn was an extremely wealthy American who had lived in Paris since 1830, and he believed that "his years of being a subscriber gave him the right to have the preference."<sup>55</sup> Colonel Thorn does not seem to have officially gotten the Duc d'Osuna's box in the first tier: his response in September simply says that he will accept the box offered in replacement of his previous one and leaves the matter ambiguous.<sup>56</sup> A letter from the Duchesse de Noailles, however, makes it clear that though Colonel Thorn had a seat in the second tier that season, he was not sitting in it. She wrote in October 1840 saying that she had heard from a friend, M. de Pinieux, that Colonel Thorn's box in the second tier was available, and asking if she could rent it for the season (but requesting that the administration rent it out to someone else until December 1, when she would return to Paris).<sup>57</sup> Whether the Colonel Thorn took the Duc d'Osuna's box in the first tier (as Monsieur Ardoin had done the year before), or whether he did not go to the Théâtre Italien after having accepted his seat, the affair reveals networks of subscribers and mechanisms for bolstering status. Monsieur Ardoin, through knowing the Duc Tasena, was able to sit in the Duc d'Osuna's box. Colonel Thorn wanted the Duc d'Osuna's box, but didn't get it, while the Duchesse de Noailles learned through an intermediary, M. de Pinieux, that Colonel Thorn's box was available and desired to sit in it.

Both Ardoin and the Duchesse de Noailles drop names in their attempts to secure a desired seat. Ardoin was probably a member of the Ardoin banking family that included an *électeur* and inhabited the Chaussée-d'Antin; but he felt the need to explain that his lapsed subscription was due to his close relation with nobility and that he had continued to attend the Théâtre Italien, though he wasn't subscribed.<sup>58</sup> Mentioning the Comte Tasena bolstered his case, as he was titled (though foreign) and was also clearly connected to the Duc d'Osuna, a Spanish noble.<sup>59</sup> The Duchesse de Noailles, on the other hand, felt no need to refer to nobility other than her own; instead, she drew on personal connections: M. de Pinieux gathered information about the Colonel Thorn's box via personal communication with the director. The Duchesse de Noailles emphasized this not only by mentioning him as her source at the beginning of her letter,

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<sup>55</sup> Thorn to M. le Directeur du Théâtre Italien à Paris, 11 August 1840; AJ/13/1169/1840.

Colonel Thorn's home in Paris was the Hôtel Monaco in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. He made his house's Episcopalian services available to other American expatriates from 1835-1841. He also hosted many balls and social events, and was known for his displays of wealth. Martin-Fugier, *La Vie élégante*, 112-113.

<sup>56</sup> Col. Thorn to M. Dormoy, 16 September 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>57</sup> Duchesse de Noailles, 8 October 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>58</sup> Ardoin does not sign his letter with his first name, but he gives his address in 1840 as 64 Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. The *Almanach des 25000* for 1835 lists only one Ardouin, and states that he is a banker and *électeur* at 45 rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin. This is most likely Jacques Ardoin or Ardouin (the spelling varies) who was a deputy during the 100 Days and the July Monarchy. P.C. de Batines, *Catalogue des Dauphinois dignes de mémoire* (Paris: Prudhomme, 1840), 10. Whether the Ardoin who wrote a letter to the Théâtre Italien was the same as this Jacques Ardoin is unknowable; however, the letter-writer did share the latter's name and in 1840 lived very near to where Jacques Ardoin lived in 1835.

<sup>59</sup> The Comte Tasena is elusive. He does not appear in lists of Italian nobility, but he does appear in Mariano d'Ayala's *Calendario politico di cittadini e fatti memorabili* (1868) as a carabinieri who participated in the 1821 revolution. This is not unlikely, as many political refugees from Italy settled in Paris during the July Monarchy, but the lack of further corroboration makes positive identification impossible. d'Ayala Mariano, *Calendario politico di cittadini e fatti memorabili in Italia dal 1794 al 1866* (Firenze: Tipografia nazionale di V. Sodi, 1867), 63-64.



but by concluding with an affirmation of his authority: “Monsieur de Pinieux has assured me that this [seat transfer] is possible according to what you have told him.” This appeal to a connection with the director is similar to the tactic of Colonel Thorn. He revealed his social connections (he knows that the Duc d’Osuna left for Spain the previous spring) and drew on his ties to the theater: his “longstanding subscription to a *loge* gives the right to this favor.”

Examination of another network, this time clustered around Lucy Mary Nangle, an English woman, reveals another strategy. Like Chavannes and Thorn, Nangle appealed for a better box on the basis of her long-standing subscription, stressing that she had been stuck in the third tier for four years, despite repeated requests to descend.<sup>60</sup> Nangle then had two people act on her behalf: Madame Tamburini, a person who dealt with the Théâtre Italien on behalf of several other English people, went to the box office for her and handled payment, while a Madame Callaghan, the wife of one of the leading bankers in Paris, wrote in recommending that the Nangles descend a tier.<sup>61</sup> Callaghan was not only a social connection of the Nangles, but she also argued that they deserved a better place because of the length of their subscription and also, more importantly, because the family was “very musical and misplaced in the third tier.”

Nangle was probably at a double disadvantage; she was English and not a part of Parisian high society (although the two were not mutually exclusive, as the example of Lady Harriet Granville, a prominent hostess and the wife of the English ambassador, attests).<sup>62</sup> Nangle was, however, part of British society in Paris, which formed its own network. (See Fig. 1.10 for an illustration of this network.) We have seen that Nangle had her friend, Mme Callaghan, write on her behalf. M. Tudor, another Englishman, also used Mme Callaghan’s services, but this time as a client: while traveling in England, he wrote in to renew his subscription and directed the administration to see his banker, Mme Luc Callaghan et fils, for the necessary funds.<sup>63</sup> Not every English person had the benefit of a well-connected friend, and using a ticket seller such as Mme Tamburini seems to have been the primary way British expatriates got subscriptions at the Théâtre Italien. Tamburini wrote on behalf of the Nangles, of M. MacLean, who was traveling in England, and of Mme de Calabrella, who would take the seat of a Mrs. Jenkins. Many of her

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<sup>60</sup> Nangle to Charles Dormois, 7 August 1839; Nangle to Viardot, 14 August 1839; Nangle to Charles [Dormoy] 8 September 1839, all in A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>61</sup> Tamburini to M. le Préposé à la location des loges du Théâtre Italien, 23 September 1839, A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839. She wrote on behalf of a M. Maclean, and a M. Brunton and Mme la Baronne de Calabrella used her services while in London. Mme la Baronne de Calabrella to Monsieur le Directeur au Bureau de location du Théâtre Italien, 5 September 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839. Callaghan, 6 September 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839. She signs the letter Mme A Callaghan, née Coppinger. Adelaide Coppinger was from an Irish family and married Luc Callaghan (died January 1832). Luc Callaghan helped open the first savings bank (*caisse d’épargne*) in Paris with Delessert and Hottinguer. Their daughter Lucile married the Count Eugene de Villele, who was “nephew of the celebrated prime minister to Louis XVIII and Charles X and of the Archbishop of Bourges.” John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry; Or, Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland Etc.* (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), 327. *Journal de la Société de Statistique de Paris*, ed. Société de statistique de Paris and Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris: Société de statistique de Paris, 1905), 281.

<sup>62</sup> Harriet Granville, Georgiana Howard, and Virginia Surtees, *A Second Self: the Letters of Harriet Granville, 1810-1845* (Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1990); Martin-Fugier, *La Vie élégante*, 149-155.

<sup>63</sup> Tudor to M. Dormoy, 30 March 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840. As noted earlier, he also made several special requests: could the stool that he left in his box be sent to his *tapissier*? And could he descend to the first tier, because of his weak eyesight and because of the chandelier?

clients had connections to Britain: Lucy Mary Nangle was born a Tichborne (as she writes in her letter) and her father was a Baronet; Mr. MacLean was traveling in England; Mrs. Jenkins, whose seat Mme de Calabrella took, has a British name.<sup>64</sup>

Both Mme Callaghan and the Marquise de Caraman addressed the subject of the substantial community of foreigners in Paris. Mme Callaghan, aside from writing on behalf of the Nangles and acting as Tudor's banker, also wrote a letter on her own behalf that is much more directly manipulative than other letters: she requests the box letter G in the first tier for every night of the week, and reminds the administration both that she is one of the longest-standing subscribers, and that "the rapport of my house with foreigners of distinction frequently leads them to subscribe as well."<sup>65</sup> While Callaghan reminded the administration of her clout with foreigners when asking for a better seat, the Marquise de Caraman asked whether she should rent her box out to these strangers, or if the administration would. She planned to be in the country for the first six weeks of the 1840-41 season but was unsure whether the administration would rent out her box for her: "This question being frequently addressed to the Marquise de Caraman by foreigners who are looking for *loges* for these first performances, she would like to know what response she should give; because Mme de Caraman will not deal with them directly if she is certain that the administration will dispose of her *loge* during her absence."

The Marquise de Caraman was very demanding. The administration heeded her repeated and urgent requests that the administration rent out her *loge*.<sup>66</sup> But on her return in November, she was horrified to discover that even though she had returned to the city and invited friends to attend the opera with her, her box was unavailable.<sup>67</sup> This was not simply a matter of inconvenience, but of justice: "She knows very well that these sub-locations always remain conditional on the return of the subscriber and that they should cease the moment when the subscriber reclaims his rights; she counts on the justice of M Dormoy to give her her *loge* next Saturday, and he will easily find a means to compensate the people who wanted it." She even proposes that as a last resort, he could offer the subletters her box for a later performance, since she would inevitably be away again. Most importantly, however, she "relies on his [the

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<sup>64</sup> J. Steward, *The Stranger's Guide to Paris* (London: Baudry's European Library, 1837), 259-261.

<sup>65</sup> Mme Callaghan to Charles Dormoy, 5 April 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>66</sup> On 4 October 1840, she requested that M. Dormoy send her the coupons either that day between 5 and 6pm or the next morning before she left for the country at 9AM. On 5 October 1840, she gratefully accepted that the administration would rent out her *loge*, but insisted that "it is also urgent that the subletting of her *loge* in this manner be equally guaranteed, her absence making it impossible to be warned in time to dispose of the *loge* in favor of anyone, if the administration gives it to her at the last minute. She believes that M. Dormoy understand this, and that the fashion for the Théâtre Italien at the beginning of the season will remove all difficulties." She wrote again October 6, saying that she would have a friend check to make sure the *loge* was rented out, but reassured the administration that "this does not affect her preference that she would like to rent it out through the administration if this is possible." Marquise de Caraman to M. Dormoy, 28 September 1840; 4 October 1840; 5 October 1840; 6 October 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, she warned Dormoy that the people who shared this *loge* with her, knowing that she would return, would come from the country expressly for the performance on 7 November, and that she had no means to warn them; therefore the *loge* would be occupied by its true subscribers, which could cause upsetting disagreements. Marquise de Caraman to Charles Dormoy, 4 November 1840; A.N. J/13/1169/1840.

administrator's] kindness, which she has already experienced, to give her her rights, which are of the longest standing."

The "rights" of subscribers were a thorny issue.<sup>68</sup> From a distance of two centuries it seems easy to see the gaps in communication that allowed the misunderstanding to happen: the Marquise de Caraman asked the administration to rent out her *loge*, but she didn't tell them when to stop renting it out. Subletting a box was a normal practice, as was a patron asking the administration to do so for them. Most requests, however, specify a beginning and an end date, which avoids the confusion of the Marquise de Caraman. More interesting than miscommunications, however, is the Marquise's assumption of legal rights to her *loge*, and her feeling that being deprived of it would be an injustice.

The Baron Louis-Charles-Auguste de Jassaud also claimed legal rights to his box.<sup>69</sup> Baron Jassaud was upset because the administration had not saved his box from the previous season for him, and therefore he had to settle for a lesser box. His first letter, written on 25 August 1839, was a standard renewal request: he asked the administration to retain the *loge* he had the previous year (*avant-scène* in the second tier, preferably for Thursdays) and to send to his house for money if he was not back in Paris by September 8.<sup>70</sup> Baron Jassaud's request was by no means the latest renewal; people continued writing renewal requests through early September. His second letter makes it clear, however, that the administration did not honor his request.

He informed the administration that their decision was "singularly unjust, arbitrary, and even dangerous, in that it violates property, and the public will think the same, when they are informed."<sup>71</sup> He asserted that as an established principle, the administration saves the boxes of people they know are returning, even if the parties haven't responded in time. Therefore, this break from tradition created a dangerous precedent and "subscribers from now on will be reduced to exchanging their rights for this capricious omnipotence." The quasi-ownership of a particular *loge* was so important to the Baron because he believed it to be "not only a thing of consent, but of convenience, in the *loge*'s size and its position, whether for the view, the sound, the heat, and he cannot be indifferent to changing this." He was also offended by the lack of a good reason on the part of the administration. They didn't change his seat because of *force majeure*, as they did after the fire of 1838; instead, this denial of his rights simply seemed fickle and unjust. Finally, though he was willing to work with the administration, he insisted that it was the management's responsibility either to find him a suitable *loge* or to give him back the one he had the previous year. He reassured the administration that he did not mean to cause difficulties and would accept whatever *loge* they proposed, "as long as it meets the following conditions: a

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<sup>68</sup> For a discussion of the formation of rights as a concept, see Dan Edelstein, "Enlightenment Rights Talk," *The Journal of Modern History* 86, no. 3 (2014): 530-565. Lynn Hunt also traces the spread of discourse on rights from learned circles to popular culture, via sentimental literature. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007). While I do not claim that the content of Italian opera spread ideas about the natural rights of man, audience members certainly had ideas about their rights as subscribers and the relationship between personal rights and communal rights.

<sup>69</sup> Baron Jassaud was a military man who served under Charles X, a Commander in the Légion d'honneur, and an art collector. L. de Magny, *Le Nobiliaire universel: ou, recueil général des généalogies historiques et veridiques des maisons nobles de l'Europe* (Paris: Institut Heraldique, 1857), 250, 253; C. Harmand, *Manuel de l'amateur des arts dans Paris, pour 1824* (Paris: Hesse et Cie, 1824), 165.

<sup>70</sup> Baron Jassaud to M. Dormoy, 21 August 1839; AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>71</sup> Baron Jassaud to M. Dormoy, 6 September 1839; AJ/13/1169/1839.

closed *loge* in the second tier, in the middle, with 3 places, on Thursdays; or, a closed *loge* in the second tier, on the side, with four places, on Thursdays, the closest possible to the *loges* in the middle.” The Baron made two threats: first, he asserted that public opinion was with him, or would be, once he publicized the situation. He also vowed to fight unfair *loge*-disbursement practices on behalf of all subscribers to the Théâtre Italien, and he promised to make this fight public. Oddly, having made this threat, his next sentence is more temperate, as he admitted that he “should acknowledge how politely you informed me, monsieur, of the administration’s decision.” Still, the administration’s courtesy clearly did nothing to absolve them of responsibility in his eyes.

Like the Marquise de Caraman, the Baron believed that he had rights to his *loge*, and the substitution of an inadequate *loge* was unacceptable. The Baron wrote again in August of 1840 (slightly earlier in the month than the previous year) to let the administration know that his health would not permit him to occupy his *loge* this year and that M. le Comte de Niewekerke, his *loge*-mate from last year, would like to renew the engagement in either person’s name. The letter concludes “Undoubtedly I do not need to remind you that we have suffered all the fortune and the vicissitudes of your theater: that we have ceded to exigencies. This gives us rights to your special interest and I am convinced, in advance, that it is not in vain that I make this appeal to your loyalty.”<sup>72</sup>

Subscribers’ insistence on their rights and their anger when their requests were denied reveal a sense of ownership in the theater. These nobles believed that because they had gone to the Théâtre Italien for so long, because they had decorated their boxes, because they were important members of society, their box and its enjoyment belonged to them. While recognizing the authority of the administration (and even attempting to placate it or to appeal to the administration’s values) the subscribers felt that because they had paid money for a particular box, it now partially belonged to them, and their own rights were bound up with the rights of the rest of the subscribers. The Théâtre Italien was not only a personal enjoyment, it was also a community, and unfair treatment of one subscriber presented a danger to all. Though the *Revue et gazette musicale* moaned that the gatherings at the Odéon were no longer gatherings “en famille,” it is clear that connections between subscribers persisted and that community feeling survived and even prospered at the new theater.<sup>73</sup>

## OVER THE RIVER AND FAR AWAY

Where someone sat in the theater was not only important for whom they would then sit next to, but also for what they could see and hear. When the Théâtre Italien moved across the river to the Odéon, subscribers complained. The sightlines were bad, the *loges* were too small, and above all, the theater was too far away. The Odéon, or that “unfortunate theater” was not as good as the Favart, and subscribers reminded the management of this even while professing their loyalty. Marcellin de Fresny wrote in 1839 that he would renew “Whether at the Odéon, at Ventadour, or at Favart, if the good fortune of the theater and its subscribers takes you there.”<sup>74</sup> Similarly, M. le Blant wrote in 1840 that he would keep his subscription “in the hope of a better future for the

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<sup>72</sup> Baron Jassaud to Charles Dormoy, 15 August 1840; AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>73</sup> Henri Panofka, “Ouverture du Théâtre Italien à l’Odéon,” *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 7 October 1838.

<sup>74</sup> Marcellin de Fresny, 25 July 1839; AJ/13/1169/1839.

theater.”<sup>75</sup> Most objections to the Odéon were on account of the distance to the Left Bank and the poor translation of reserved seats at the Favart to the new building. While the patrons living in the Faubourg Saint-Germain benefited from the move, as the new theater was right next door, seventy percent of subscribers lived on the Right Bank, and moving the Théâtre Italien to the Odéon forced them to cross the river.

Some subscribers reduced the number of days in their subscription, specifically citing the new location as the reason. M. Duchêne reduced his subscription from three days to two: “Because there’s no chance of seeing the Italians re-cross the river, at least not this year, two days per week will be enough.”<sup>76</sup> M. Prufutz, before knowing the fate of the troupe, said that he would renew for two days per week, *unless* they remained at the Odéon, in which case he would only take one day per week.<sup>77</sup> Even one of the most ardent fans, A.P. Praire, reduced his subscription to from two boxes for two days a week and one box for Saturdays to only one box for Tuesday, Saturday, and every other Thursday, and another box on Tuesdays for the weeks without the Thursday box. His reason for the reduction? “That unfortunate theater that is so far away.”<sup>78</sup> As one subscriber, Charles de Garandé, promised, “Even though the Odéon is very far from my home, I still will not break the subscription that I have had to the Théâtre Italien for eight years.”<sup>79</sup> The distance from his return address, Rue Colbert, (close to the Palais-Royal) to the Odéon is almost triple that to the previous buildings: 2.7 kilometers, as opposed to under a kilometer to the Salle Favart, the Salle Ventadour, and even the Conservatoire.

The increased distance caused newspapers to grumble as well. The *Petit courrier des dames* moaned that “We are therefore condemned, for six months at least, to climb this difficult and long hill of the Odéon! In truth, it would require no less than the troupe of Italians to bring fashion to the cursed theater of the Odéon, which has, over the last twenty years, seen many promising lyric and dramatic enterprises meet their deaths.”<sup>80</sup> The Odéon had struggled to support a troupe since being rebuilt after a fire in 1818. All sorts of genres were essayed, including tragedy, comedy, opera, and legitimate drama by at least two different companies.<sup>81</sup> *L’Abeille musicale* agreed with the *Petit Courrier des dames* that the Théâtre Italien might be the

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<sup>75</sup> M. le Blant to Charles Dormoy, 2 September 1840; AJ/13/1169/1840. He also requested a seat closer to the middle, and reminded the management that M. Sevre de la Caze had also voiced this request on his behalf.

<sup>76</sup> Duchêne to Charles Dormoy, 4 September 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>77</sup> M. Prufutz, 3 September 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>78</sup> A P Praire to M. le Directeur du Théâtre Italien, 21 or 27 August 1839; AJ/13/1169/1839. A P Praire to C. Dormoy, 2 September 1840; AJ/13.1169/1840.

<sup>79</sup> Charles de Garandé to Charles Dormoy, 30 August 1840; AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>80</sup> *Petit Courrier des dames*, 10 October 1839.

<sup>81</sup> “The Odeon reopened September 30, 1819, and among the company were Joanny, David, Provost, Samson, and Mlle Brocard: Casimir Delavigne's tragedy of *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* was first performed there. The theatre subsequently forsook tragedy and comedy for opera, under the management of M. Bernard, who made his fortune by the production of *Robin des Bois*. Then came the legitimate drama with Beauvallet and Mme. Albert, and later still, M. Harel, accompanied by Messieurs Georges, Lockroy, Bocage, and Mlle. Dorval. Since 1832, the Odeon had been occupied by directors and performers of every kind, from Castelli's little actors to the company of the Theatre Français, who, during M. Vedel's management of the two theatres, went from the Rue Richelieu to the Odeon, and vice versa. After the destruction by fire of the Salle Favart, in 1838, the Italian Opera was transferred to the Odeon, where it remained until the period of its removal to the Salle Ventadour.” Hervey and Lacauchie, *The Theatres of Paris*, 136-137.

only company that had a hope of surviving at the Odéon, thanks to the draw of the popular repertoire and the privileged audience who could traverse the increased distance easily:

If this beautiful *salle* can be occupied by a dramatic troupe, it would be above all the Italian troupe, which alone is capable, by the power of the talents that compose it, of making the public traverse the distance between the Odéon and the Chaussée-d'Antin. We add that the public that decorates the *loges*, formed of the aristocrats of nobility and finance, only arrive at the theater in carriages, and that to them it is almost indifferent to stay in the carriage a few minutes more. Also, we hope that the authority will not be influenced by unfounded demands, and won't abandon the *quartier* of the Odéon and one of the most beautiful *salles* in the capital to an unhappy fate <sup>82</sup>

The *Petit Courrier des dames* also related the success of the Théâtre Italien at the Odéon to the devotion of its audience members and the insulation from inconvenience provided by their carriages. <sup>83</sup>

A year later, the magazine still claimed that the subscribers to the Italian opera were unusual in their devotion to their preferred music:

The elegant and artistic crowd of Paris follows the Bouffes wherever they will go. They will brave all the weariness, all the inconveniences...; a cavatina by Rubini, and all will be forgotten! Also, since the reopening, hasn't the *salle* always been full? The elegance and comfort of the theater seduces; these beautiful red carpets that wind over the corridors and stairs, these waves of light, so cleverly and richly distributed, these *loges* upholstered in silk, with carpets, with paintings; all this gives a truly royal look. As for the execution of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, it was perfect. <sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *L'Abeille musicale*, 7 February 1838.

<sup>83</sup> "Figurez-vous cette magnifique salle de l'Odéon décorée avec cette richesse, ce luxe, ce goût que nous aimions tant à l'ancienne salle Favart, et vous n'aurez encore qu'une idée incomplète du spectacle vraiment royal que présente la nouvelle salle des Italiens. De toutes parts le gaz étincelle à travers l'or et le cristal, de magnifiques tapis rouges serpentent depuis le vestibule jusqu'au sommet de la salle, par tous les vastes corridors et les longs escaliers de marbre garnis de caisses de fleurs et d'orangers. Les loges et les galeries sont chamarrées de resplendissantes peintures et d'ornementes d'or en relief. ... Prédire, comme on l'a tant fait depuis six mois, que la vogue des Italiens cessera quand il faudra aller jusqu'au fond du Faubourg Saint-Germain pour les écouter, serait une insignifiante chicane; car le public des Italiens est un public à part, privilégié, invariable: c'est un public que les distances ne peuvent tout au plus effrayer que pour ses chevaux et ses voitures.

Donc, le jour de l'ouverture de l'Odéon, la réunion était des plus nombreuses et des plus brillantes; nombreuse au point que plusieurs centaines de personnes qui comptaient sur la grandeur du local ont dû rebrousser chemin. L'ouvrage que la troupe a choisi pour sa rentrée était *Othello*. C'est déjà mieux commencer que les autres années; car cette partition de Rossini est un œuvre d'un autre ordre que *Les Puritains*. Du reste, si Bellini eût pu assister à cette solennelle représentation, il n'eût pas eu de quoi prendre le moindre ombrage, car sur le nouveau rideau de la scène, son nom figure entre celui de Rossini et celui de Mozart. Nous avons retrouvé Rubini, Lablache, Tamburini et Mlle Grisi ce qu'ils étaient l'année dernière: admirables. Ivanoff a obtenu aussi beaucoup de succès. Mlle Grisi avait perdu de son embonpoint de l'hiver dernier. Tout était donc pour le mieux. Espérons alors que ce sera comme chez Nicollet, *de plus fort en plus fort*." *Petit Courrier des dames*, 10 October 1838.

<sup>84</sup> *Petit Courrier des dames*, 10 October 1839.

Though the *Petit Courrier des dames* spent more time on the decorations than on the music, it cited musical experience as the principal factor mitigating the inconvenience of the location. Similarly, the *Revue et gazette musicale* claimed that though the social atmosphere of the new theater could not compare to that of the old, the music made up for it. The previous building apparently housed a tight knit society: “the gatherings at the Salle Favart were, so to speak, family gatherings; everyone knew each other, and people went as one does to a salon. Furthermore, there was a sympathy between the public and the artists that is frequently missing in our salons.”<sup>85</sup> Although the new theater initially lacked the comfortable atmosphere cultivated at the Favart, as people searched in vain for their friends in their former places, the *Revue* found that the talents of the artists, the music of Rossini, and the beautiful theater made up for this deficiency. It finished by summing up the charms of the new theater: “The beautiful room of the Odéon was full; it had a most agreeable appearance; the elegance of the dresses, the freshness of the decoration, magnificent lighting, the transformation of one part of the balcony into little closed boxes, all made up an ensemble that flattered the view and pleased the spectators.”

There were problems, however. The third tier and the *Rez de Chaussée* were particularly afflicted by disadvantages in the new theater. A column obscured the view of Mme de Sahune, while a balustrade blocked that of M. Ancelle.<sup>86</sup> M. Ancelle and M. Tudor also complained about the lights: M. Tudor asked to descend to the first tier “because of the chandelier and the weakness of his eyes.”<sup>87</sup> The *Rez de Chaussée*, one of the more sought after levels because of its proximity to the stage and use of *loges* instead of benches (as in the orchestra), was also disappointing at the Odéon. Mme la Marquise Amelot de Chaillou pronounced that “if it weren’t for wanting to retain my rights as a subscriber to your theater, I would renounce my *loge* rather than keep the one in the *Rez de Chaussée*. It is well placed, because it is *en face*, but the *parterre* of the Odéon is not the *parterre* of the former theater. Please oblige me by switching my *loge* to either the first or second tier.”<sup>88</sup>

These complaints make it clear that the Odéon did not stack up to the Salle Favart. More interestingly, it highlights exactly why people objected to their seats: audience members wanted good views of the stage, they didn’t want to be obscured, and they wanted to be able to hear well. Long-time subscriber Lieutenant General Arrighi was most specific in his request: he wanted to be closer to the center of the first row of the orchestra, but he would be forced to cancel his subscription if, as in the previous year, he was forced to sit near the doors and the kettledrums.<sup>89</sup> People also wanted to be comfortable and to socialize as they wished: the Marquise de Miraflores told the administration that her box at the Odéon was neither as large nor as commodious as her old box.<sup>90</sup> The Princesse de Bagration refused to share her box with anyone, wanting instead the box entirely to herself.<sup>91</sup> Having gone to the trouble of furnishing and

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<sup>85</sup> Henri Panofka, “Ouverture du Théâtre Italien à l’Odéon,” *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 7 October 1838.

<sup>86</sup> Madame de Sahune made her complaint and request for a better seat view through an intermediary, M. Lequeltiannve, who also mentioned business dealings with her husband and M. Adam. De Sahune to M. Viardot, written by Lequeltiannve, 7 September 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839. Ancelle to Charles Dormoy, 30 August 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>87</sup> Tudor to Dormoy, 30 March 1840; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>88</sup> Mme la Marquise Amelot de Chaussou, 17 August 1839; A.N. AJ/13/1169/1839.

<sup>89</sup> Le Lieutenant General, Duc de Padova, M. Arrighi, 7 August 1840, A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>90</sup> Marquise de Miraflores to Charles Dormoy, 25 September 1840, A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>91</sup> In the context of these letters, “une *loge* entière” means for all three nights of the week.

decorating it at her expense, she did not wish to be annoyed by other patrons using her box, even if they attended the theater on different nights.<sup>92</sup>

There had been a rumor that although the acoustics of the Odéon were excellent, patrons could not adequately see and be seen by each other, a function that was especially important to those who frequented the Théâtre Italien. The *Dilettante* reassured its readers that “no woman who wanted to show herself was ignored in the shadows; the radiance of the lights came to all, and not one remarkable *toilette* was unappreciated. The dazzling gleam of the chandeliers, the placement of the *loges*, their size, their space, placed on view even the most feeble, for all to admire and to forget nothing.” This observation is followed by a minute description of the star of the Italians, Giulia Grisi, and a “Madame de S...” exiting the opera: “Grisi was all in white, with sleeves à la Nanette, and bands in her hair (*coiffée en bandeaux*); Madame de S... had a charming little velvet hat pinned with grey pearls, frosted with rose, ornamented on the side with plumes and shiny ribbons.”<sup>93</sup> These women were the height of fashion: the hat worn by Madame de S... had been described by the *Gazette des salons* as the latest in winter hats.<sup>94</sup> *La Mode* ran an illustration of a box at the Théâtre Italien in 1835 (see Fig. 1.11).<sup>95</sup> Though a stylized version of an opera box, the straight pillars frame the curvy lines of the ladies’ dresses and gently sloping shoulders. The man, languidly leaning against the wall, gazes off into the distance. This illustration and the descriptions of the exit of the Théâtre Italien agree on both the heights of fashion reached by those at the Théâtre Italien and the importance of display.

These idealized fashion plates and descriptions serve the same purpose as glowing newspaper accounts of the elegant and amicable society that was unperturbed by distance because of their carriages. The Parisian press wrote about the theater in a fantasist vein, chronicling more what the newspapers wanted the Théâtre Italien to be than what it actually was. *La Mode* pointed out that in the fashionable crowd:

Between the *entr’actes*, Lord Granville reasons on the musical character of Bellini with the Count Pahlen, and Rossini discusses with Mercadante the conferences of Kalish; but what has dominated the chatter of the foyer for the last two days, what overshadows both Grandvaux and the arrival of Léopold; what is much more interesting than Mendizabal and O’Connell, is Rubini’s head cold, that ill-fated *infreddatura*, which came to seize the tender Elvino by the throat after one of the most brilliant performances of *La sonnambula*. The dilettantes impatiently wait in excitement for the end of this indisposition, which cannot help but yield to the old Italian recipe: *acqua calda et benè* [sic] *coperto*.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Princesse de Bagration to Charles Dormoy, 27 August 1840, A.N. AJ/13/1169/1840.

<sup>93</sup> *Le Dilettante: journal musical et littéraire*, 28 October 1838.

<sup>94</sup> The hat of “Madame de S...” was advertised in almost the same words in the *Gazette des salons* at the end of September. “Mais le velours glacé sera porté tout l’hiver avec distinction. ... Nous citerons les deux premiers essais en ce genre avec lesquels deux de nos élégantes les plus à la mode doivent opérer leur retour de Bade. L’un est en velours épinglé gris de perle (couleur qui s’annonce comme devant être en faveur cet hiver) glacé de rose, avec plumes et rubans glacés de même. » de Mésangère, *Gazette des salons: journal des dames et des modes*, 30 September 1838.

<sup>95</sup> *La Mode*, 28 November 1835.

<sup>96</sup> Lord Granville was the British Ambassador to France for much of the July Monarchy (1824–1828, 1830–1835, 1835–1841) and was a Whig, married to Lady Harriet Cavendish. Count Pahlen was Russian, and involved in defeating Napoleon. In 1835, Russian and Prussian troops met peacefully in Kalisz. The Orgy of Grandvaux was a hunting party in 1835 that rumor turned into an orgy. “Chronique,” *Revue de Paris*, October 1835. The heir to the Belgian throne, Léopold, was also born that year. Mendizabal was



In *La Mode*'s view, the foyer of the Théâtre Italien did not just provide a space for elite sociability: it also provided a location where political differences and events of national and international importance could be ignored. Rubini's cold was far more interesting than the most recent political scandal in France (termed the Orgy of Grand-Vaux), the arrival of Léopold of Belgium, the Spanish treasurer's dilemmas regarding the Carlist revolts, or the overthrow of Peel's ministry in England. *La Mode* describes an audience so obsessed with music that concern for a singer's cold unites them and supplants politics or current events as a topic of conversation.

This description is also striking for its emphasis on foreign politics and music; though the audience was comprised mainly of inhabitants of and visitors to French *chateaux*, the interlocutors and the events are English, Russian, Prussian, Belgian, Spanish, Irish, and above all, Italian. Politicians discuss music, while composers discuss current events. Despite these differences, all are united in concern for Rubini's health and love of music. Music's role in cooling heated arguments continued at the Théâtre Italien, where subscribers included Legitimists, Orléanists, and Bonapartists, as well as foreign ministers.

*La Mode* finished the article with a cattier perspective on the mixing at the Théâtre Italien. While the author claimed that the Théâtre Italien was a place in which all nationalities and parties mix freely and ignore political events, he continued by detailing the actual topics of conversation - witticisms, slander, and indiscretions:

There the men of all parties, the journalists of all stripes, the poets of all schools, the military men of all colors and the diplomats of all governments, there they rub shoulders, they greet each other, they weigh each other up or observe each other with a courtesy and an insouciance that is completely French. There the news of the day, the witticisms of yesterday, the slander of the corridors, the revelations of the boudoirs and the indiscretions of the antechamber are devised, and will then scatter throughout Paris and spread in all the salons as sarcastic comments, as mischief, as foolish remarks, in little lies, and, passing from mouth to mouth, and from Café Torioni to the Bourse, from the home of Véry to [the Jardin du] Luxembourg, from the hotels of Faubourg Saint-Germain to the Tuileries, and will almost always finish, as Rivarol said, by becoming idiocy.<sup>97</sup>

These two different modes of interacting--focused on music or on gossip--avoided explicitly political arguments. However, musical expertise and gossip are also political, through and through: like politics, they traffic in minute shifts in power and they grant the greatest power to those who can exchange information and provide access. While at the Théâtre Italien harsh political disagreements were sidelined, gossip and aesthetic appreciation rushed in to fill the void and provided structure for elite sociability.

And while all observers concurred that the public of the Théâtre Italien was the most elegant, aristocratic, and cultivated audience in all Paris, some minority voices dared to wonder whether that outward polish really bespoke an equally admirable interior. Perhaps following the lead of journalists who had begun to mistrust and mock the evidence of appearances after the revolution of July 1830 had resulted in the installation of the oxymorically titled "citizen-king" Louis-Philippe, the *Revue musicale* brought its native irony to bear on the prosperous exteriors of the typical audience member at the Italian opera:

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the Spanish Prime Minister during a turbulent time of trying to settle the Carlist wars, and Daniel O'Connell was an Irish Whig MP in the House of Commons who helped overthrow Peel in 1835. *La Mode*, 24 October 1835.

<sup>97</sup> *La Mode*, 24 October 1835.

However full of plebeian principles one might be, one can't deny the superiority of the society of the Théâtre Italien over all other audiences, even over that of the Opéra, *at least from outward signs*. If seductive language, elegant fashions, and exterior charm were the signs from which one could recognize a soul that is pure, virtuous, and thinks nobly, the Salle Favart, during the brilliant performances of the Italian troupe, would host the most precious part of the French nation.<sup>98</sup> Stopping short of actually impugning the virtue of the theater's public, the paper nevertheless strongly insinuated that less attractive values and behaviors might lurk behind the polished façades.<sup>99</sup>

Another manifestation of the decade's vibrant interest in the difficulty of reading character and true rank from appearance can be found in the collections of so-called *physiognomies* and *physiologies* that attempted to describe and categorize different types of people. These publications ranged from book-length inventories that attempted to describe all of "Les Belles Femmes de Paris" to brief and ephemeral stories in fashion magazines. At least one catalogue concentrated specifically on the many species of theater-goer on view in the French capital. In the "Physiologie du spectateur" that appeared in *La Mode* in 1836, each variety of spectator is categorized in terms of occupation, clothing, and seating within the opera house.

The types catalogued included, but were not limited to: "fossils" who attended only out of habit, naïve young men who cried and bled with those on stage, hearty businessmen who loudly greeted friends throughout, sad wilted women who came to lose themselves in the music, blasé dandies, young ladies who came not for the music, but to be taken home after, family men forced to go (and take the children) by a wife with a migraine, bearded classicist snobs, and above all, flâneurs, who--like the writer in *La Mode*--observed those around him.<sup>100</sup> According to *La Mode*, each of these types behaved differently according to their station and position within the theater. The fossils and the businessmen sat in the orchestra seats, though they couldn't have gotten along well with each other, as the businessman "drinks a lot, talks a lot and never listens, and knows everything and everyone" and the fossils shush their neighbors so that they can hear every last note. The weeping young men press their chins against the velvet of the second tier of *loges*, while in the first tier, a pale, suffering, well-dressed woman enters in such a way that all eyes are drawn to her sensitive beauty. Further along the side of the first tier sits another couple; this time a blasé man and his escort, who are more interested in each other and fashion than the opera. Bearded men overrun the parterre and swear, smell, and preach the gospel of Shakespeare, Ronsard, and Alexandre Dumas. Finally, at the entrance to the balcony, flâneur resides, where he observes all. The only thing all these fragmented social groups have in common in insularity: the businessmen greet only each other, the young men have eyes only for the stage, and so on. The *Physiologie* gives the impression of a lively and diverse audience, full of social groups that can

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<sup>98</sup> *Revue musicale*, 11 October 1835.

<sup>99</sup> Sandy Petrey argues that Charles Philippon's caricature of King Louis-Philippe as a pear demonstrated that any two objects could be made to resemble each other, and that outward appearances could be deceiving. The connection between king and pear became popular because citizens saw the reign of Louis-Philippe as a similar substitution; though Louis-Philippe claimed to be the king of the French (rather than the King of France), he laid claim to all the honors and tributes typically paid to a king; Sandy Petrey, *In the Court of the Pear King: French Culture and the Rise of Realism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

<sup>100</sup> "Physiologie du spectateur," *La Mode : revue des modes, galerie de mœurs, album des salons*, 5 March 1836.

all see each other, but interact mainly with their own kind. Yet the author protests that the audience members are a perfect representation of the population of Paris--analogous to the *chambre des députés* representing the nation, even if the majority of spectators is made up of "the ridiculous."

## CONCLUSION

While listeners at the Théâtre Italien might have been silent and attentive during cabalettas, what was more critical, both to their enjoyment and their identity, was their behavior between arias – in the corridors, in *loges*, and in the foyer of the theater. How a person reacted to an aria didn't necessarily require listening, and reactions, consumption, and gossip all proved a person's right to belong and demonstrated their status. It was not so much a question of whether they listened, but what they did with this listening.<sup>101</sup> *La Mode*'s "Physiologie du Spectateur" lists all the different types of listeners at the Théâtre Italien, and reveals that even those who listened carefully did so for different purposes: the fossil listens impassively to an air he has heard twenty times, but he does so because he has chosen the appropriate theater for his social position and will remain there; the naïve young man experiences everything with the freshness of youth, and sobs along with the actors, because he is from the provinces; the pale young woman also feels with the actors, and even though she doesn't understand music and beats out of time, she feels the music with her soul and gracefully throws a bouquet to Grisi.<sup>102</sup>

Each of these audience members listens, but how they listen, where they sit, and what their listening does for them tells us (and those observing them) about who they are as individuals and as members of the community. The Princesse de Bagration would no more sit in the third tier than the Baron Jassaud would sit in the orchestra: each member had their place, both in and out of the theater. The networks of recommendations and the appeals to the administration, however, reveal that there was more at stake than social status. Listeners attempted to persuade administrators based on musicality, loyalty to the theater, and influence with others. The Théâtre Italien formed a central part of the July Monarchy's social life because it offered a way for people to interact, to coexist, and to prove their worth while avoiding direct political action. This studied neutrality in the theater, however, was part of the same negotiations of power, and the opera house acted as a substitute political sphere for subscribers to work out the relationships of the social body.

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<sup>101</sup> James Johnson's *Listening in Paris* covers a variety of meanings for attentive listening, including academic interest, moral superiority, and social anxiety. Here, I look at the persistence of unruly behaviors and suggest that what someone does alongside their listening is just as (or maybe even more) important.

<sup>102</sup> "Physiologie du Spectateur."

## Chapter Two: The Queen of Elegance and Ennui

Let's imagine a woman young and pretty enough to be jaded by all the fashionable pleasures that still produce sensations in ordinary people: *toilettes* for a ball, violets in winter, new novels at midnight, and Italian music.

There she is, this queen of elegance and ennui, lightly leaning on the front of her *loge* at the Favart, very distracted and preoccupied: because she hears, maybe for the hundredth time, *Otello* or *La cenerentola*, and she appreciates much more vividly the revolutions in dress and hair, the delicious scandals of the *loges*, the comments of the balcony and the galleries.

It is to her, to this slightly disdainful protectress, that we dedicate this little book.... It will be, if you will, the *vade mecum* of the dilettante, the preface and the epilogue of the libretto, the distraction and relaxation during the recitative; it will be on the velvet of the *loges*, next to the lorgnon devoted to the beauty of Mlle Grisi; it will brush the glove of the ladies like a bouquet of roses. May it live forever! ...

Thanks to our Italian Album, nothing will perish of the intrigues, the passions, the delights and the happiness of our seasons with the *bouffes*. Later, our fanaticisms and our outpourings of flowers will be remembered.... On this pyramid of the foyer, we will write each artist's name that springs up from the shadows and promises a new illustration. Like so, the assemblies of the Favart will have their tablets, and our bravos will have their archives.

-*Les Italiens* (Paris, 1836)

In this preface to a collection of biographies of the opera singers at the Théâtre Italien, the anonymous author imagines a sophisticated, beautiful, and bored young lady, and dedicates the book, and all the experiences it encapsulates, to her - even though she is presumably unimpressed by the lorgnon and velvet found in her *loge*. The Queen of Elegance and Ennui is bored because repetition has made these novelties lose their charm. She has already received violets in winter, already read new books at midnight, and already seen *Otello* and *La cenerentola* over and over, and she therefore ignores the performance on stage in favor of observing the slight variations in the human drama around her.

She was not the only one. Though the preface to the biographies revels in the luxuries found at the opera, the repetition of these sensual experiences season after season caused some reviewers to conclude that opera-going had become formulaic. Ernest Legouvé, writing for the *Gazette musicale de Paris*, worried about the repetition of events at the Théâtre Italien, and the impossibility of writing something different when the same things happened year after year:

How to avoid the style of protocol when talking about the re-opening of a theater which, for some years, brings us, periodically and on a fixed day, the same great and admirable artists, the same repertoire, with only some suppressions or

additions more or less significant? Only one event... comes to cast its lugubrious variety into the banal formulas.<sup>1</sup>

Legouv  had gone to the opera frequently enough, and the social and theatrical entertainments repeated themselves with enough regularity, that he, and presumably his reader, couldn't think of anything new to say. The only event that created variety and interest that year was the death of a beloved composer, Vincenzo Bellini, a few weeks before the opera season opened with his latest opera, written especially for Paris: *I puritani*.

By October of 1835, when Legouv  wrote his review, *I puritani* had already faded into a background of repetitious social occasions that proceeded with the regularity of weekly schedules and seasonal traditions. Even when *I puritani* first appeared in Paris the previous January to popular acclaim, reviewers were divided as to its originality. Criticism was expected, as *Le Constitutionnel* explained with the voice of experience:

M. Bellini's success is missing absolutely nothing: not the enthusiasm and the approval of the public, not the faint praise and jealous reticences, not the unjust criticism and denigrating voices. All this is necessary, is it not, to prove talent and certify a success?<sup>2</sup>

These habitual responses to something new, even something exciting and popular, draw attention to the delicate balance between repetition and novelty during the July Monarchy. In what follows I will suggest that *I puritani* became an exemplary site for critics and listeners to exorcise their impatience with artistic styles and practices that had become routine, and that commentaries on the opera's originality and lack thereof inscribed in miniature much broader concerns about the political and social effects of repetition.

## REASSURING REPETITION

The boredom felt by the Queen of Elegance and Ennui and by Legouv  was nothing new in the 1830s. Depictions of boredom proliferated in literature and newspaper accounts, but the subject of these depictions was generally a young man, a romantic, a dejected republican, or a dandy, rather than the sophisticated woman described in the dedication to *Les Italiens*. In this section, I examine the ways in which the Th  tre Italien's repertoire and *I puritani*'s successful variations on tradition provided opportunities for elite boredom, and ask what the cultivation of elite boredom may have accomplished socially. Disillusionment, a sense of the inefficacy of political actions, and blocked careers had defined a generation, and young men expressed themselves by means they could control: dress and attitude. Fran  ois Guillet has argued that young romantics used boredom as a method for distinguishing themselves from older generations.<sup>3</sup> According to this theory, an affectation of boredom differentiated the younger generation from bourgeois middle-aged men as well as from politicians and patriarchs, and signified their removal from their petty concerns. Similarly, the Queen of Elegance and Ennui's boredom sets her apart from

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Legouv , "R  ouverture - Obs  ques de Bellini," *Gazette musicale de Paris*, 4 October 1835; quoted in Mark Everist, Sarah Hibberd, and Walter Zidarik, "Vincenzo Bellini, *I puritani*: dossier de presse," in *Vincenzo Bellini et la France: histoire, cr  ation, et r  ception de l'oeuvre*, ed. Maria Rosa De Luca, Salvatore Enrico Failla, and Giuseppe Montemagno (Lucca: Libreria musicale Italiana, 2007), 435.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Constitutionnel*, *journal du commerce, politique et litteraire*, 17 February 1835, ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 415).

<sup>3</sup> Fran  ois Guillet, "Les Jeunes, la violence et l'ennui dans la premi  re moiti   du XIX   si  cle," in *L'Ennui: histoire d'un   tat d'  me (XIX  -XX   si  cle)*, ed. Pascale Goetschel (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012).

other spectators. Rather than marveling at the spectacle or having sorrows of her own that needed to be drowned in music, she leans lightly on her box, she listens distractedly, and she “appreciates” the goings-on of the other audience members. She is so young and beautiful (and, it is strongly implied, aristocratic and wealthy) that the world and all its luxuries are spread before her. Unlike disgruntled young men whose boredom demonstrated their disdain for what they could not have, she affects boredom to demonstrate her ease of access. Surplus leaves her bored, and her boredom advertises her comfort in this stylish world. *Les Italiens* borrows her sophistication and claims it as its own, using her firm sense of belonging to enter into the velvet *loges*, thereby gaining access to the inner workings of the Théâtre Italien, its artists, and its elite audience.

The collection and the dedicatee’s boredom go beyond simply demonstrating ease of access to luxury. *Les Italiens* makes its historical project explicit: it will document the total sensual experience at the Théâtre Italien and preserve it for posterity, acting as “an archive” for the bravos. The Queen of Elegance and Ennui similarly acts with an eye to the future. The Théâtre Italien was the most elite of the major theaters in Paris, and its patrons included royalty, ministers, ambassadors, leading artists, and salonnières. Professing boredom with this glittery spectacle imposed a hierarchy, differentiated between “us” (the sophisticated elite who attended regularly) and “them” (a group that included the naïve spectator who was all agog and the intellectual listener who carefully analyzed the score, among others) and made the hierarchy into something permanent. The hundreds of performances she has attended, the uncountable bouquets, and the innumerable novelties that have faded with repetition collapse time into an unbroken expanse of all things that have bored and will continue to bore, implying that boredom, and the hierarchy created by elite withdrawal from popular pleasures, would endure.

For elite patrons of the Théâtre Italien during the 1830s, stability and hierarchy were almost desperately reassuring. The frequent and abrupt regime changes over the previous 40 years had given rise to a society deeply divided along political lines, and a shifting social structure as wealthy bourgeois attempted to climb the social ladder. The predictability of the social season (roughly November through Easter) stemmed from its repetitious schedule; each year, the Théâtre Italien performed on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday (to alternate with the Opera on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) while salons and balls also had their habitual night of the week.<sup>4</sup> Even so, certain changes could be observed over the course of the July Monarchy: the Sunday routine of riding in the Bois de Boulogne slid from an elite activity to a crowded affair best avoided, while the Opéra added non-subscription nights to their schedule. In the face of unwanted political divisions and social change, elite boredom makes sense as a hierarchical tactic that simultaneously required and professed disdain for routine entertainment. Far from being undesirable, commemoration of the familiar events at the Théâtre Italien contributed to a sense of stable permanence.

This stable permanence was not merely social in nature; the management at the Théâtre Italien relied on favorite operas to sustain a season, with the introduction of new operas predictably spaced out to arouse interest. Though Rossini had not written an opera since *Guillaume Tell* in 1829, his operas remained favorites at the Théâtre Italien and were performed frequently (the Queen of Ennui’s experience sitting through hundreds of *Cenerentolas* and

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<sup>4</sup> This regularity continued throughout the July Monarchy, to the extent that in 1845, Victor de Balabine, the secretary to the ambassador of Russia, could write a typical weekly schedule in his journal that began “Toutefois, c’est toujours le même train.” *Journal de Victor de Balabine: secrétaire de l’ambassade de Russie: 1842-1847* (Paris: Émile-Paul Frères, 1914), 4 February 1845, 206.

*Otellos* is indicative), thus creating an inevitable comparison between the old standards and new works by Bellini, Gaetano Donizetti, and Saverio Mercadante. Rossini was extremely active socially and in the management of the Théâtre Italien until his departure for Naples in 1836, and his physical presence at the Théâtre Italien also invited people to contrast new operas with his familiar favorites.<sup>5</sup> Writing in *Le Charivari*, Albert Clerc expressed general agreement with adages about “the charms of change and the boredom of uniformity,” and indeed, found that even good things, when repeated, become “tedious and nauseating.” One exception, for Clerc, seems to have been the operas of Rossini. Given the unsated appetite of Parisian audiences for Rossini’s operas, the composer’s silence called for consolation that only repetitions of the familiar old works could provide: “the best [consolation] that we still find, is to return to hear for the thousandth time, *Otello*, *Le Barbier*, or *La Gazza Ladra*.”<sup>6</sup>

While Rossini’s operas had become standards, with *Otello* and *La cenerentola* performed frequently season after season, new operas often appeared only briefly before vanishing. During the 1830s, an opera that returned to the Théâtre Italien over ten times, or—rarer still—was mounted in subsequent seasons, was seen as unusually successful.<sup>7</sup> *Le Courrier des théâtres* pointed out how difficult it was in France to find a piece that “contents, without sating” the elegant and privileged dilettanti.<sup>8</sup> In this atmosphere, a new opera that had the potential to become a mainstay of the repertoire was rare enough to merit comment. Jean-Toussaint Merle, writing for *La Quotidienne*, thought that *I puritani* might be just such a piece, and predicted (accurately enough, we can now say) that the four performances that had taken place so far “had only aroused the curiosity of the public” and that this curiosity would not be satisfied in the remaining two months of the season. He also rejoiced that *I puritani* would return the following season “in all the radiance of its novelty.”<sup>9</sup> At the same time, however, Edouard Monnais warned that it was no adequate substitute for a new work by Rossini. Rossini’s huge popularity and subsequent silence created a perennial problem of depletion. Despite *I puritani*’s popularity, Monnais did not think it was innovative enough to provide this resolution, and therefore it would join the ranks of quickly-fading and repetitive novelties.<sup>10</sup>

Was repetition such a problem though? Emanuele Senici has suggested that Rossini’s operas were successful partly because they were repetitive, and I propose that Bellini’s *I puritani* likewise succeeded because it was predictably novel. That is, Rossini’s Italian operas used repetition in new ways; compared to Paisiello, Cimarosa, and Mayr, Rossini used fewer ideas and repeated them more, and the operas themselves were also performed more frequently. *Il*

<sup>5</sup> Janet Johnson points out that Donizetti and Bellini edited their operas for performance in Paris, changing arias in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La straniera* into ‘close contrefacts’ of favorite Rossini numbers. Janet Johnson, “Donizetti’s First ‘Affare di Parigi’: An Unknown Rondò-finale for *Gianni da Calais*,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10, no. 2. 168-169.

<sup>6</sup> *Le Reformateur*, however, thought that the *dilettanti* had already labeled Rossini as a used-up fashion, just as they had labeled Mozart and Gluck when Rossini came along. Albert Clerc, *Le Charivari*, 28 January 1835, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 408).

<sup>7</sup> See Céline Frigau’s Appendix A, which lists how many times per year operas were performed from 1818 to 1848. Céline Frigau, “L’Oeil et le geste : pratiques scéniques de chanteurs et regards de spectateurs au Théâtre Royal Italien, 1815-1848” (Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris VIII, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> *Courrier des théâtres*, 26 January 1835, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 418).

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Toussaint Merle, *La Quotidienne, moniteur de l’avenir*, 2 February 1835, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 451).

<sup>10</sup> Edouard Monnais, *Le Courrier Français*, 29 January 1835, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 420). Monnais, *Le Courrier Français*, 5 October 1835 (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 424).

*barbiere*, *La cenerentola*, *La gazza ladra*, and *Otello* each averaged eight or nine performances per year from 1835 to 40 at the Théâtre Italien, meaning that these operas that were already highly repetitive internally were also the most frequently repeated works at the theater.<sup>11</sup>

While Rossini's style was founded on short and incisive rhythmic and melodic cells, repeated many times within a number, Bellini tended to return to a few distinctive melodic motives and contours across the entire length of an opera, to link emotional states and create tunes that sound familiar on first hearing. The *Journal des femmes* observed that:

His songs do not need to be heard several times to be appreciated or to be understood: one retains them at the first hearing: one hums them without wanting to; they draw themselves so neatly into your ear, that one would almost believe oneself to have refound an old acquaintance.<sup>12</sup>

Bellini's melodies may have sounded familiar also because of the prevalence of small-scale motivic repetition within *I puritani* and across his other operas—his famously long melodic phrases frequently rely on rocking intervals, especially leaps of fourths and sixths, and the vast majority of the melodies in *I puritani* start on an upbeat and with leap upward.<sup>13</sup> Elvira's uncle, Giorgio, sings arias that fit this pattern of melodic repetition particularly well. In the first act, Giorgio describes predicting Elvira's death to her father, saying that she will die if she can't marry Arturo. In the second act, he describes Elvira wandering around, crowned in flowers and imagining her wedding day, as a prelude to a second prediction of her death (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).<sup>14</sup>

The static recitation of Giorgio's conversation with Elvira's father contrasts both with the expressive celebratory duet with Elvira that precedes it and with the entrance of Arturo, which interrupts it. Similarly, Mary Ann Smart has proposed that the comfortable stability found in Giorgio's second act description of Elvira's insanity contrasts with his later chromatic evocation

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<sup>11</sup> Emanuele Senici, "Rossinian Repetitions," in *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism*, ed. Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 253. Figures are based on Frigau, "L'Oeil et le geste." In comparison, most new operas performed in these years appeared only three to five times in the year of their première. Bellini's *Norma*, *La sonnambula*, and *I puritani* were the exceptions during the late 1830s; *Norma* averaged eleven performances per year, *La sonnambula* seven, and *I puritani* an astounding fourteen.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal des femmes*, 15 February 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 444). In fact, part of this familiarity did derive from the audience's long-standing acquaintance with the songs. When the heroine, Elvira, enters raving in the second act because her lover left her, she remembers his voice and imagines his presence. "Qui la voce sua soave" copies the melody and accompaniment of Bellini's air "La ricordanza" (also to lyrics by Pepoli, published in 1834) which similarly laments the memory of a lost love. Though "La Ricordanza" might not have reached Paris before *I puritani*'s premiere, Mary Ann Smart has observed that the end of "Qui la voce sua soave" also resembles Imogène's dream scene, "Lo sognai ferito" in *Il pirata*, from 1827, which appeared in Paris after 1832. Emilio Sala and William Ashbrook (trans.), "Women Crazy by Love: An Aspect of Romantic Opera," *Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1994): 19-41; Mary Ann Smart, "In Praise of Convention: Formula and Experiment in Bellini's Self-Borrowings," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53, no. 1 (2000): 25-68.

<sup>13</sup> The three exceptions to this in *I puritani* are "Suoni la tromba," a military tune, and the hero Arturo's final two melodies proclaiming his love: "Vieni fra queste braccia" and "Credeasi, misera!"

<sup>14</sup> Bellini re-used other musical and dramatic devices as well; Elvira makes her entrance while singing in all three acts. She first appears as an excited bride-to-be, then returns twice as an insane ex-fiancée. These mad scenes lent themselves to another kind of repetition, as they became popular numbers for performance outside of the opera house.



of Elvira's voice as he tries to convince Riccardo to help the pair of lovers.<sup>15</sup> The predictable and repetitive melodies are balanced by more exciting music and unusual transitions; many scenes transition into the next via an interruption from off-stage or an abrupt change in tone. The opera's pacing is also famously less taut and symmetrical than is typical, perhaps because of librettist Pepoli's inexperience (as has often been claimed) but possibly because Pepoli and Bellini sought an alternative to the conventional three-act structure. Rather than the structure found in *Otello* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, in which a dramatic conflict is set up in the first act, a crisis occurs in the second, and the third brings resolution, *I puritani*'s crisis occurs in the first act, which renders the second act remarkably static and casts the third act as a continuation of the crisis, which itself is only resolved in the last few minutes.

*I puritani* was a success in part because it was both predictable and novel, thus fitting into a tradition based on Rossini's success that valued this type of expected novelty. Elite boredom required fashion and fads to dismiss, and this cycle of encountering and quickly dismissing a new phenomenon was one way that members of the elite could establish and advertise their superiority. To put this another way, novelty was still desired, because fashions needed to change in order to continue creating hierarchies, but what was valued above all was *predictable* novelty. Despite complaints by critics that *I puritani* was unoriginal, it went on to have a long run. In an unprecedented stability that encompassed both event and text, the opera would return to Paris with the same singers for the next seven years.

## JUST ANOTHER CALL TO REVOLUTION

The familiarity of *I puritani* extended beyond its music. The plot was borrowed from a royalist drama, Jacques-François Ancelot's *Têtes rondes et cavaliers*, but with political modifications.<sup>16</sup> Above all, the basic plot of *I puritani*, a love triangle that must overcome opposition, was so familiar to operatic audiences by the 1830s that *L'Entr'acte* could casually refer the public to tradition instead of giving a plot summary: "There are, as usual, two separated lovers, a rival and a sympathetic father... But we congratulate the author for granting us a reprieve from the classic '*crudel tiranno*.' For a tyrant in the piece, there's only the parliament, which isn't seen but which persecutes poor Rubini cruelly."<sup>17</sup> By far the most popular tune in the opera was the military bass duet "Suoni la tromba," which included the famous cry of freedom: "*Gridando libertà!*" Some critics tied themselves in knots trying to explain its popularity while denying its political efficacy, and one strategy they used was to credit repetition with inuring audiences to revolutions. These denials of political work at the Théâtre Italien came from critics of all stripes, and in what follows I will disentangle the stakes of quietism for different parties among the theater's public, as a means of bringing into focus the social and aesthetic work performed by repetition at the theater and in the political life of the moment.

The opera is set during the English Civil War, with Arturo (Giovanni Rubini) and Elvira (Giulia Grisi) as lovers separated by a political rift between their families. Elvira is the daughter of the Governor General of the Puritan fortress, while Arturo is a royalist (or cavalier), loyal to

<sup>15</sup> Mary Ann Smart, *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-century Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 82.

<sup>16</sup> The opera's title referred to Sir Walter Scott's *Old Mortality*, translated in French as *Les Puritains d'Ecosse*.

<sup>17</sup> *L'Entr'acte*, 26 January 1835, ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 427).

the deposed queen, who is being held prisoner in the fortress.<sup>18</sup> Elvira's uncle Giorgio (Luigi Lablache) and her father give consent for her to marry Arturo, but on the eve of their wedding Arturo helps the imprisoned queen escape, turning both Cromwell's parliament and the inhabitants of the fortress against him. The belief that she has been abandoned by Arturo drives Elvira mad, and she raves mournfully until Arturo returns and an offstage Cromwell sends a messenger bearing his pardon for all traitors in the opera's last act.

As noted by *L'Entr'acte*, Arturo and Elvira are types, or ingredients, rather than active agents. The "two separated lovers" are caught up in an inevitable conflict between two groups; none of the characters onstage manages to do anything to change the enmity that has immobilized them, and resolution arrives only by way of that hoariest of operatic conventions, the messenger who arrives at the last minute. The Puritans of the title create an inescapable conflict for Arturo, whose loyalty to the Stuarts is personified in Queen Enrichetta. As soon as Arturo learns that the prisoner is the queen, his ensuing actions are inevitable, a fact that he recognizes when asking her not to remind him of Elvira. "Non parlar di lei che adoro" (Do not speak of her whom I adore), he begs her; he must do his political duty no matter the consequences. Cromwell *ex machina* further weakens the agency of the principal characters; Elvira and Arturo simply have to wait until obstacles are removed, and then Elvira regains her reason and Arturo is no longer hunted, so they can marry.

The passivity of this plot and characters, together with the opera's abundance of atmospheric detail, matched the political mood of the July Monarchy remarkably well. Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (1836) and *Robert le Diable* (1831) illustrate a fashion in the 1830s for a profusion of characteristic details that disguised characters who had little depth or dramatic force, but who were instead acted upon by larger forces in a pre-determined conflict, a dramatic manifestation of the *juste milieu* that Anselm Gerhard has identified as governing the production of French *grand opéra* during this period.<sup>19</sup> Gerhard contrasts the slightly insane passion of

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<sup>18</sup> Lasting from roughly 1642-1651, the English Civil War consisted of a series of conflicts between supporters of King Charles I (often called "royalists" or "cavaliers") and supporters of the English Parliament (often called "Roundheads"). Sparked by the crown's role in forcing changes to the Church of Scotland and by the need to quell a Catholic rebellion in Ireland, which many in Parliament believed the King secretly supported, the war hinged in large part on complex disagreements over the nature and shape of the national church. According to the stereotypes in which Bellini's opera trades, and through which nineteenth-century Parisian audiences would have interpreted it, English Puritans more or less uniformly supported Parliament. Queen Henrietta was Charles I's wife and Charles II's mother, and she tried to escape after Charles I was executed in 1649. Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector after the wars and ruled until his death in 1658. After his death, England's government became unstable again until General George Monck, the Governor of Scotland, organized a parliament which restored King Charles II to the throne.

<sup>19</sup> The *juste milieu* was a guiding principle of the July Monarchy, made explicit in a speech of Louis-Philippe in January 1831 and defined in an 1835 speech by François Guizot, the Minister of Education, to the Chamber of Deputies as "essentially the enemy of absolute principles, of consequences pushed too far." Gerhard connects a profusion of characteristic detail to an emptiness of "genuine character," and finds "behind the superabundance of 'the characteristic,' an attempt to disguise the lack of character that afflicts dramatis personae like Raoul, Robert the Devil, and John the Prophet." Characters like Raoul and Robert, Gerhard suggests, are "being determined by external influences, [their] roles apparently dependent on the function assigned to them in a plot controlled by others, if not by an inscrutable fate." Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 174, 177.

Marcel in *Les Huguenots* with the idealized passivity and neutrality of the duc de Nevers: “[Nevers] was the means whereby operagoers were confirmed not only in their own hypocrisy and apathy but also in the belief that political conflicts were fundamentally destructive and that therefore the best course for the prudent citizen, like Nevers, was as far as possible to avoid situations in which conflict might arise.”<sup>20</sup> As with Meyerbeer’s operas, *I puritani* demonstrates the folly of extremism and idealizes passivity. All the problems in the plot are sparked by Arturo’s political devotion and that of the Puritans, and waiting patiently eventually results in a peaceful solution. At the same time, generic conventions overdetermine the narrative arc through which Arturo and Elvira’s love is first thwarted and then resolved by external forces, rendering the lovers pawns within a generic narrative structure.

Unlike Pepoli’s libretto for *I puritani*, the play that inspired the opera had an obvious political thrust that appealed not to bored elites or those who favored a middle ground, but to angry ultra-royalists. Naturally, then, Ancelot’s protagonists have far more agency and gumption than Pepoli’s and Bellini’s. The libretto’s source, Ancelot’s *Têtes rondes et cavaliers*, was first performed at the Théâtre Nationale de Vaudeville in September 1833.<sup>21</sup> Ancelot and his wife Virginie were established and prolific dramatists, but *Les Têtes rondes* was a flop. Reviewers understood the drama as a calculated appeal to the ultra-royalist denizens of the Faubourg Saint-Germain via a sympathetic portrayal of the exiled and beleaguered queen. The queen’s position as a hostage in the Puritan fortress was read as analogous to that of the Duchesse de Berry (mother of the Bourbon claimant to the throne), and the whole story was seen by some as an easily interpreted allegory for the divided social scene in Paris. However, according to Hippolyte Rolle, the vaudeville created a “momentary fusion between the two camps,” if only in the sense that it was unanimously booed by both the modern *Têtes rondes* and the *cavaliers*, all of whom then promptly forgot about the piece.<sup>22</sup> In Rolle’s allegorical reading, supporters of the Bourbon claim to the French throne were represented in the play by the royalist supporters of the Stuart king, Charles II (Arturo and other cavaliers), while he thought that modern day Puritans were the Orléanists, who supported Louis-Philippe. Orléanists and Republicans alike disapproved of Ancelot’s story because of its unfairly negative portrayal of the Puritan characters. *Le Charivari*, a staunchly Republican journal, thought Ancelot’s play staged an unequal fight by casting the Puritans as “an imbecile, a traitor and an officer of very equivocal character.” The review continued: “it is only too easy to give victory to his [Ancelot’s] party, when one creates such adversaries for it.”<sup>23</sup>

Arthur Clifford in the *drame* has much stronger political convictions than Bellini’s and Pepoli’s Arturo. Clifford’s choice of duty over love springs from a deeply-felt conviction rather than being the inevitable consequence of opposing political views. Clifford expands on his family’s strong political ties when explaining his apparent romantic defection as his duty: his

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<sup>20</sup> *The Urbanization of Opera*, 214.

<sup>21</sup> Though the Théâtre National du Vaudeville performed vaudevilles, these were not the vaudevilles performed for a primarily bourgeois audience at the Porte Saint-Martin. The Théâtre National du Vaudeville was located in the first arrondissement and plays by Ancelot in particular catered to the Bourbonist tastes of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

<sup>22</sup> Hippolyte Rolle, *Le Constitutionnel, journal du commerce, politique et littéraire*, 26 January 1835, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 410-414).

<sup>23</sup> *Le Charivari*, 27 September 1833. For the political leanings of *Le Charivari*, see David Kerr, *Caricature and French Political Culture 1830-1848: Charles Philipon and the Illustrated Press* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 103.

family lent their fortune and blood to support the English monarchy and owe their success to the royal family, and he will therefore the example of his ancestors and be ready to die for the Stuart cause. He spends his time away from the Puritan fortress with Charles II in Scotland, and when he is captured after his return, he points out the merits of being an open royalist rather than an old hypocrite, like the Puritan General Monck (who agrees with this assessment).<sup>24</sup> Clifford proclaims that it is better to be able to state one's convictions and die for political faith than to serve a detested cause and hide one's true loyalties out of fear. Monck agrees, despite his own example, and asks for Clifford's sympathy, pointing out how difficult the lot of these 'hypocrites' can be: constantly in fear, detesting triumphs, and only hoping that time will absolve them.<sup>25</sup>

Even the abandoned heroine in the play, Lucy, works to change events. Clifford's release at the end of the play comes as a result of his fiancée begging Cromwell for his pardon for rescuing the queen. In order to delay his execution long enough for the pardon to arrive, Lucy reveals a letter accusing Arturo of involvement with a treasonous group based in the Puritan fortress, which must be investigated immediately, while Arturo is still alive. Although Lucy's actions require others to act as well and involve a certain negation of her authority in order to be effective, the third act is propelled by her. She works for Clifford's release, rather than mourning in madness as she does in the first two acts of the play and all three acts of the opera.

These explicit political statements and effective actions contrast sharply with the portrayal of Arturo and Elvira in the opera. While Bellini and Pepoli took the basic story from Ancelot, they cut the third act, with the letter, the treason, and the opportunity this solution gave to display Clifford and Lucy's courage and moral character, and thus dimmed the political convictions of the cavalier hero. Clifford is a self-sacrificing and loyal royalist who acts nobly and courageously for his deep convictions, while Arturo spends more time regretting his temporary abandonment of Elvira than justifying his actions. In the opera, the political situation is simply presented as inevitable, and the spotlight falls on the love story.

If there was any political message at all in the opera, reviewers identified it as a potentially peaceful and republican one. When not claiming that *I puritani* was apolitical, reviewers emphasized the historically inaccurate clemency that provided the happy ending.<sup>26</sup> Monnais thought that granting amnesty to the subjugated cavaliers was a reasonable move for England and "a sign of grandeur, of strength, and of liberty."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Charles

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<sup>24</sup> General George Monck was a Royalist until he was imprisoned by Parliament, but then swore to support Parliament, quelled rebellion in Ireland, and was made the Scottish Governor by Oliver Cromwell. During his time in Scotland, he put down a plot by his second-in-command to restore Charles II to the throne. However, after Cromwell's death and during the upheaval that followed, Monck was instrumental in creating a new parliament and restoring Charles II.

<sup>25</sup> Ancelot and Saintine, *Têtes rondes*, 58-59.

<sup>26</sup> The final reprieve was the most historically unrealistic point of the opera, and reviews of the opera wondered whether Cromwell's clemency was intended as a republican message for the French public. The *Vert-Vert* used the change to give a history lesson: unlike Shakespeare, who used his Henry plays to depict political and military events during the War of the Roses, Pepoli eschewed military history and created a love drama, even altering the character of Cromwell by endowing him with mercy, when really, after the death of Charles I, Cromwell sold 7000 prisoners to work on English plantations in America. *Vert-Vert*, 25 January 1835, ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 473).

<sup>27</sup> *Courrier des Théâtres*, 29 Jan 1835 ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 423). The concern for accuracy extends beyond the story to the costumes, which were criticized for historical and geographical inaccuracy. Rubini's clothes were more Italian than English, and better suited to a marquis of Tulipano

Beauregard drew attention to the historical inaccuracy of the closing scene, while approving its message: "In truth, we must have an Opera Buffa for Cromwell to become a good guy. Is it an epigram, is it advice? I don't know; all that I can say is that apparently the *Puritains* were more accommodating than the doctrinaires."<sup>28</sup> The quietist message identified by Beauregard was more in keeping with hatred for extremism found in *Les Huguenots* than with the strongly royalist message of *Têtes rondes et cavaliers*.

The pacifying political message identified by reviewers in *I puritani* reinforced the ideal of the *juste milieu*, particularly the stability and passivity desired and embodied by the most prominent audience members of the Théâtre Italien. The variety of political affiliations and concerns represented by audience members at the Théâtre Italien, which included the *nouveaux-riches* of the Chaussée-d'Antin, the royalists of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and the liberal aristocracy of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, supported an art form that demonstrated stability and the ideal *juste milieu*. Even though few liked the *juste milieu*, it was believed to be better than the alternative of partisan squabbling. Ancelot's royalist play divided audience members, and for a politically-mixed audience such as the one found at the Théâtre Italien, a repetitive love story with the politics on the side pleased all and allowed for easy mingling.

Given this desire for political passivity and social harmony, it seems inconsistent that the opera's runaway hit should be a battle-cry for liberty and death to political enemies. In Act II, Elvira's uncle, Giorgio, and her rejected lover, Riccardo, switch from lamenting Elvira's madness to, in the cabaletta, "Suoni la tromba," vowing that they will bravely defend liberty, kill Arturo if he fights against them, and see a new dawn break over defeated tyrants. The *Gazette musicale de Paris* wrote that at the first performance the cabaletta produced "a thunderous explosion," while other reviewers described the performance acting as a current of electricity passing through the house, unifying spectators in such an uproar of acclaim that, unusually, Bellini had to appear in person to respond after an internal act finale (see Fig. 2.3).<sup>29</sup>

The cabaletta fits easily within the tradition of finales, as the *Revue des deux mondes* pointed out: "For a duet, the formula is the same, with the only difference [from a solo cavatina] being that during the interval from the andante to the allegro, instead of one singer, there are two who come back on stage; there's no musical difference, except in this case the cabaletta is sung in unison."<sup>30</sup> However, this familiar form was clothed in a novel sonority that apparently made all the difference. Whereas the usual pattern in a duet cabaletta would be for the two characters to sing separate solo stanzas, followed by a third stanza in harmony, Bellini's Giorgio and

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than to chevalier Talbot, while Grisi's outfit, though reportedly lovely, was a bit too fancy for a Puritan virgin. Merle, *La Quotidienne*, 2 February 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 453). The reviewers for the *Vert-vert* and *Le Temps* agreed that Lablache's costume was the best, because it was historically accurate, as he had had it made according to an old design that he had found on a prior visit to London. The reviewers are kind enough to give credit to Lablache for the success of his costume while excusing Rubini for the ridiculousness of his, saying that Rubini has far more important things to think about than whether his costume is silly. *Vert-Vert*, 25 January 1835 ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 476). François-Adolphe Loève-Veimars, *Le Temps: journal des progrès*, 30 January 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 470).

<sup>28</sup> The doctrinaires were in favor of a constitutional monarchy and came into power with the Orléanistes during the July Monarchy. During the trial of Charles X's ministers in 1830, the doctrinaires wanted to execute them but were opposed by Louis-Philippe. Charles Beauregard, *La Gazette de France*, 29 January 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 433).

<sup>29</sup> *Gazette musicale de Paris*, 1 February 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 434).

<sup>30</sup> *Revue des deux mondes*, 1 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 463).

Riccardo combine forces to sing the last verse in unison. The unusual sonority of the two male voices trumpeting out a military tune astounded and amazed audiences even while critics complained that such a simple tune was a waste of two great voices and might be better performed by drunken church musicians.<sup>31</sup>

The lack of originality made the cabaletta less effective for some critics, and some thought that the three-fold repetition of the revolutionary message neutralized it as well. Though reviewers recognized that the finale's words and rousing music might be interpreted politically by the audience at the Théâtre Italien, they claimed that the moment was denatured because endless repetitions of republican sentiments had inured the audience to all talk of revolutions.<sup>32</sup> Beauregard wearily noted that modern France had become so mired in bureaucracy and political hair-splitting that it was no longer even possible in France to believe in and die heroically for a political cause. In essence, the slow pace of paperwork was to blame for the death of earnest action.<sup>33</sup> Jean-Toussainte Merle similarly denied the effectiveness of the duet's political message, claiming that French audiences had become indifferent through repetition of revolutionary cries:

We do not share the opinion of some political dilettantes who attribute a part of the success of this morsel to the patriotic commonplaces expressed there. These words would perhaps be extremely electrifying in some *venta* of Milan or of Bologna, but here we are less impressionable to these cries of *liberté*: they have mystified us too frequently in the last forty years for us to be duped again, not even by the refrains of the *Marseillaise*, even when they are repeated by the best of republics.<sup>34</sup>

*I puritani*'s generic plot, predictable variation within the Rossinian tradition, and the low-level novelty of its most successful number, "Suoni la tromba," can be read as a rejection of the political ferocity of Ancelot's drame and as a vote for stasis, or the status quo. The critics' very insistence that "Suoni la tromba" had no political force betrays their anxiety in the face of political extremism and their collective commitment to maintaining a state in which artistic novelty was mild and predictable, and revolutions failed simply because people were tired of them.

## SENSATION-LESS SENSATIONALISM

But predictability could also be offensive or objectionable, it seems. Although Giulia Grisi shone in Elvira's first act *polacca*, many reviewers expressed impatience with the opera's frequent mad

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Everist, "'Tutti i francesi erano diventati matti' : Bellini et le duo pour voix de deux basses," in *Vincenzo Bellini et la France: histoire, création, et réception de l'oeuvre*, ed. Maria Rosa De Luca, Salvatore Enrico Failla, and Giuseppe Montemagno (Lucca: Libreria musicale Italiana); Loève-Weimars, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 471).

<sup>32</sup> Henri Castil-Blaze contrasted the liberality and tolerance of French audiences and censors with policies in Italy, with the implication that France no longer had need of such strict censorship or fear of cries of liberty. "*I puritani* passeront les Alpes ; les Italiens de Milan, de Naples, les attendent : mais je doute que la censure autrichienne et napolitaine permettent à Riccardo, à Giorgio, de dire ce vers *gridando libertà*. Nous pourrions leur céder la variante ingénieuse colloquée dans Don Giovanni ; ils chanteront à leur tour *gridando ilarità !*" Castil-Blaze, "Théâtre Italien," *Revue de Paris*, 1 February 1835, ("I Puritani: dossier de presse," 461). See also Hervé H. Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>33</sup> Beauregard, *La Gazette de France* ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 429).

<sup>34</sup> Merle, *La Quotidienne* ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 452).

scenes, dismissing them as unoriginal, repetitive, and emotionally fatiguing. Mad scenes abounded on the stages of Paris in the 1830s, to the point that Castil-Blaze could describe Elvira's second act mad scene as her "cavatina as a mad woman in a white dress with wild hair, following the custom adopted by the crazy women of theaters."<sup>35</sup> This tradition of disheveled hair and a white dress went back to Giovanni Paisiello's *Nina, ossia la pazza per amore* in the 1780s, but had been seen most recently in the performances of Harriet Smithson (of Berlioz fame) as Ophelia at the Odéon and in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, which had been staged at least thirty times at the Théâtre Italien in the preceding five years, including the week before the premiere of *I puritani*. In both *Anna Bolena* and *I puritani*, the chorus reports mournfully on the mental health of the heroine, whose own music alternates between melancholy, sanity, and exuberant hallucinations of her impending marriage.<sup>36</sup>

Noting these similarities, critics deemed Elvira's madness derivative and monotonous. Because spectators have "seen so many madwomen file across the stage," Castil-Blaze called for the deployment of mad scenes only when they were truly justified dramatically. The *Revue des deux mondes* lodged a much broader complaint, accusing Bellini of composing according to stale formulas:

M. Bellini completely abstained from all new ideas...what's disconcerting about the new opera by Bellini is the method, the method (hideous invention of this century with neither faith nor conscience), by which a gifted man makes his art a craft, and reproduces the same idea one hundred times, instead of advancing down the road of progress and painful work.<sup>37</sup>

These reviewers were offended by the easy popularity granted to a work that they heard as lacking all originality. They were most concerned about what this stagnation—and popular acceptance of stagnation—meant for musical progress. Without intellectual and artistic labor, Bellini's re-use of melodies and forms not only stalled artistic progress, but the popularity of his works satiated audiences who were satisfied with mere craft and imitation rather than art.

These concerns about repetition and unoriginality as a mire that slowed artistic advancement and trapped authors were shared by Desiré Nisard and opponents of popular literature. In a series of articles published in the *Revue des deux mondes* in 1833 and 1834, Nisard debated with Jules Janin over the forms literature should take. Nisard claimed that the sensational and formulaic "industrial" literature brought about the moral degradation of society, whereas elite and ancient works of genius could improve society. Industrial literature required no work by author or reader, lacked logic, and acted like a drug.<sup>38</sup> Taking an opposing view, Janin labeled the popular literature "young" rather than "industrial," and argued that it would rejuvenate society.<sup>39</sup>

Nisard particularly objected to imitations being valued as highly as originals, and believed that the habitual clichés of modern literature degraded language and literature:

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<sup>35</sup> Castil-Blaze, *Revue de Paris* ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 460).

<sup>36</sup> R, *Le Voleur*, 31 January 1835, ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 477); Monnais, ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 422). Frigau, "L'Oeil et le geste," Appendix A, 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1 1835 ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 463).

<sup>38</sup> Desiré Nisard, "D'un Commencement de réaction contre la littérature facile (Décembre 1833)," in *Documents littéraires de l'époque romantique*, ed. Richard Bolster (Paris: Minard, 1983), 213.

<sup>39</sup> Jules Janin, "Manifeste de la jeune littérature (réponse à M. Nisard - janvier 1834)," in *Documents littéraires de l'époque romantique*, ed. Richard Bolster (Paris: Minard, 1983).

One no longer wants...this sacramental language where the words call each other, where 'eye' calls 'blue,' 'forehead' calls 'pure,' 'finger' calls 'slender' and 'long', 'soul' calls 'profound,' and so on—language that is made before all thought, vague land where the entire troupe of imitators grazes in freedom, a dish where the last to come has as good a portion as the first.<sup>40</sup>

Automatic pairings of certain words and formulaic descriptions that required no art or effort for creation reduced artists to the level of their imitators, as anyone could write something in the genre simply by stringing together well-known phrases. The repetition of phrases depleted an original utterance by making even combinations that were once new and effective into worn-out clichés that were still, somehow, popular.

Charles Beauregard elaborated on this theme of the intellectual and emotional languor that takes hold in the absence of original ideas and feelings in his review of *I puritani*. Beauregard found the long, unvaried spans of insanity in Bellini's opera monotonous, oppressive, and emotionally draining:

The role of a madwoman presents a huge variety of situations and effects; all the movements of the soul, all the accents of the voice find expression here...But, and here's the rub, there remains one situation [madness] that dominates all these nuances despite the ability of the artist, an annoying and forced situation, and which, if it goes on for too long as in *I puritani*, degenerates into fatigue on the part of the singer and even for the audience...This is not the goal of art.<sup>41</sup>

Instead of feeling each emotion with Elvira, all the spectator felt was pity for her insanity, a constant that could easily produce apathy. Beauregard blames the libretto, music, and acting for failing to move the audience. Instead of novelty that shocked, he simply saw Elvira's mad scenes as more of the same.

Nisard believed that *littérature facile* relied on feelings, not thought, for its effects, and that it therefore depended on the element of surprise to jolt readers into a vivid reaction. Because *littérature facile* has run out of shocking things to portray, it now needed to either repeat itself or invent new horrifying catastrophes that were sometimes even pornographic:

Who doesn't see that it [literature] is at the end of its resources, that it's dying of banality, that it is exhausted, as the people say energetically, that there are no more mysteries in the bedroom, and that one cannot prolong its life in delivering it those of the bed?...The novel is simply a spent industry which no longer knows what to paint that has not been painted a thousand times, and asks to be permitted to say things which should not be said, unspeakable, on pain of death by starvation.<sup>42</sup>

Like the blasé listener bored by routine, or the revolutionary quelled by paperwork and repeated exhortations, readers found even the most gothic horrors too familiar to provoke a reaction. The slew of similar stories dulled readers' sensibilities just as the plethora of insane heroines, and the proliferation of mad scenes in *I puritani*, diminished the impact of Elvira's predicament.<sup>43</sup>

While Nisard worried about the effect of repetition on the progress of art, the music critic

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<sup>40</sup> Nisard, "D'un Commencement de réaction contre la littérature facile (Décembre 1833)," 221.

<sup>41</sup> Beauregard, *La Gazette de France*, ("*I puritani*: dossier de presse," 431).

<sup>42</sup> Nisard, "D'un Commencement de réaction contre la littérature facile (Décembre 1833)," 216.

<sup>43</sup> Janin acknowledges that there are bad imitations, but argues against their deleterious effect. Instead of claiming that they reduce the effectiveness of the original and all others in the genre, Janin views bad imitations as tributes to the good ones of the past. Janin, "Manifeste de la jeune littérature."



for the *Revue des deux mondes* questioned the discernment of an audience that could approve so heartily of the simple melody and blatant performance style of “Suoni la tromba.” An audience that had experienced the overture to *The Magic Flute* and Beethoven symphonies should not be moved by such a “vulgar” duet.<sup>44</sup> The *Revue*’s critic wanted music that prompted subtle analysis accessible only to the most astute; an unoriginal cabaletta that was nothing more than loud and energetic—particularly such a cabaletta with revolutionary lyrics—might well alarm a newspaper whose readership depended on society remaining mired in bureaucracy and not sparking new revolutions. A society that could support the advancement of art (as defined by activity of the intellectual elite, who had access to new music and time to respond to its challenges) was a stable society, while un-thinking popular responses that failed to distinguish between gilt and gold hearkened back to revolutionary days.

Whether reviewers criticized or lauded the score and performers, they agreed that success was measured by transporting the audience members, making them weep, and then making them cheer. As in Janin and Nisard’s disagreement over the industrial literature, some writers saw these affective responses as valuable, while others believed that unthinking pleasure that bypassed the intellect was no better than a drug. Italian music’s appeal to instinct and its ability to act on the emotions apparently without engaging the mind made it an ideal un-intellectual art form, its appreciation requiring no special training but only openness to emotion and to pleasure. Etienne Delécluze cast Italian music and simple listening pleasure as almost pre-lapsarian, a precious form of aesthetic experience that academics were trying to take away from innocent listeners. Music, he wrote, is:

the only art in which the power of instinct is stronger than that of reflection...in fact, it is the only art whose productions seduce, carry away, and transport us without our knowing why or how. Leave us at least this innocent happiness.”<sup>45</sup>

*Le Constitutionnel* also approved of the popularity and accessibility of *I puritani*. In a review of a benefit performance a month after the premiere, the paper’s critic found that:

The majority of the public grasps it themselves and rapidly understands these likeable and distinguished productions, unlike works that are exceptional and marvellously imaginative, which are only comprehended bit by bit, and move from admiration by a few to general admiration. At the second performance of *I puritani*, the foyer and the corridors already rang with the best and most agreeable motifs, as if the work had already been familiar to them for more than a month.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, the *Journal des Femmes* praised Bellini’s arias precisely because enjoyment did not require listening over and over with great attention, and because they could be hummed almost immediately, almost as if they were known beforehand. Music that seemed already familiar on the first listening provided a sense of connection to the past as well as a guarantee for the future, as easily remembered tunes stuck around and became effortlessly popular.

Whether this popularity and accessibility was a good thing depended on the reviewer. The *Journal des femmes* suggested that for a dilettante, easily accessible music would be a defect, since understanding it would not require concentrated and repeated listening. The

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<sup>44</sup> *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 464).

<sup>45</sup> Delécluze contrasted modern Italian opera with the operas of Gluck, saying that by mixing recitative and aria, Gluck requires the audience’s full attention constantly from beginning to end, and that this lack of repose is fatiguing and unpleasant. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 3 October 1835, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 441-442).

<sup>46</sup> *Le Constitutionnel*, (“*I puritani*: dossier de presse,” 415).

reviewer set himself up in opposition to the opinions of the *dilettanti*, who fawned over *La Grisi* in borrowed Italian words and made judgment of music into a complicated science, instead articulating his opinion based on his own two ears alone:

But I perceive that I have neglected the style necessary for giving weight to my critique. These magic words, which give the air of knowing, the air of a privileged audience of dilettantes, who alone have the right to swoon over the accents of the diva Grisi...I only have one tongue at my service: on the other hand, two ears very sensitive to the melody; and you will not recuse their judgment, even though it is rendered in non-sacramental terms.<sup>47</sup>

This reliance on his own senses and the pleasure he took in his sensual experiences set the reviewer apart from dilettantes who relied on their intellect to understand and approve of music, and celebrated a popular approach to listening. Similarly, the Comtesse de Bradi congratulated the unthinking crowd on the happy coincidence of Bellini's reputation and the merit of the new work, which then allowed audience members (including herself) to enjoy the opera without worrying about intellectually justifying their pleasure.<sup>48</sup>

Though Delécluze, the Comtesse de Bradi, and the reviewer at the *Journal des femmes* celebrated *I puritani* and its uncomplicated pleasures, not all reviewers agreed, especially as sheet music made the opera even more accessible. The *Courrier des théâtres* noted that the accessibility (and therefore the effect) of the musical numbers was heightened at the second performance by the availability of printed copies.<sup>49</sup> While the *Courrier des théâtres* and *Le Constitutionnel* pointed to easily remembered tunes and available prints as a way of heightening emotional effects and making the opera admired, and *L'Entr'acte* seemed neutral, *La Quotidienne* characterized the move to popular print as degrading:

This pretty polonaise has too much success to escape the humiliation of the popularity of a quadrille; it will fall in the domain of M. Musard, who will render it to good account, as a contredanse, with a flageolet accompaniment; happiness again if it escapes the vaudeville composers, who will make it into an exit snippet for Mlle Déjazet or a complaint for Arnal.<sup>50</sup>

*La Quotidienne*'s concern about the spread of Bellini's opera to balls and popular music halls echoes that of Nisard, when he worries that the easy accessibility of *littérature industriel* will degrade literature.

The stakes of this journalistic sniping were more significant even than the sweeping question of "the progress of art." Different ways of listening stood for different types of people: the manner of listening told *who* was listening. Easy pleasure was more widely accessible than academic analysis (or even than boredom), and defenders of pleasure argued in favor of modern art forms whose abundance and popularity demonstrated not the death of elite art but the vitality of modern life.

## CONCLUSION

Replacing novelties with new things that were quickly revealed as mere variations on the old fueled a rapid pace of consumption. However, it also enabled a background affect of long, slow

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<sup>47</sup> *Journal des Femmes*, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 444).

<sup>48</sup> *Revue du théâtre, journal des auteurs, des artistes, et des gens du monde*, 3 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 465).

<sup>49</sup> *Courrier des théâtres*, 28 January 1835, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 419).

<sup>50</sup> Merle, *La Quotidienne*, ("I puritani: dossier de presse," 451).

boredom, as each “new” thing faded into the last. A constant stream of predictably novel experiences could be considered as both a quickly changing and faddish barrage of input and as a repetitive influx of things that were either passé or soon-to-be passé. Benjamin Walton and Anselm Gerhard have explored the idea that the Restoration proceeded at a sedate pace compared to the frantic and frequent changes of the Revolution.<sup>51</sup> The July Monarchy perhaps struck a balance between slow boredom and frantic upsets, a sort of *juste milieu* of temporal experience. Much like the political *juste milieu*, which failed in its attempt to reconcile extremes as a bland whole, these temporal experiences never resolved into a single average and steady pace, but instead remained a contentious riot of coexisting paces.<sup>52</sup>

Reactions to *I puritani* echo these concerns. Elite boredom, denial of the political effectiveness of *I puritani*, and preoccupations with unoriginality all reflected larger concerns about the effects of repetition in daily life. Whether considered sensational or boring, the stability and predictable novelty of the Théâtre Italien reinforced and contributed to the creation of a pluralistic *juste milieu*.

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<sup>51</sup> Benjamin Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris: the Sound of Modern Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera*.

<sup>52</sup> Reinhart Koselleck identifies different levels in the construction of temporal experiences: while singular events fall into recursive structures and patterns that link the events through their common features, biological and anthropological change transcends these structures; see his *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe, reprint ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

### Chapter 3: How to Possess a Singer (Appropriately)

The woman was enchanting. Her uncle, a tyrant. Every night, Colonel Ragani forced her out on stage to sing for unappreciative fools. She suffered under the scrutiny of the public, and yearned for a day when someone would rescue her from her uncle and release her from the misery of parading before dilettantes, prostituting her voice and her art. If only someone would see her perform and understand what lay beneath; a soul driven by music, but pining for love...

This, at least, was the story that Olivier Dupuget told himself about Giulia Grisi.<sup>1</sup> On the evening of February 1, 1836, he made his rescue attempt. After the second act of *Marino Faliero*, he snuck through the fireman's door connecting the front of the house with the backstage of the Théâtre Italien. Carrying two pistols concealed on his person, he found his way into the mad rush of stagehands moving scenery and choristers milling about dressed as knights and fishermen. Trying desperately to look like he belonged, he walked casually through the bustling area near the stage. Finally, his goal appeared; the staircase to Grisi's dressing room. Cane and letter in hand, he advanced to introduce himself to the singer and to propose himself as her champion.

Suddenly, he heard a noise. She was there, behind him! She swept through the backstage scrum, guarded by Carlo Severini, the director of the theater. Though onstage she was the adulterous wife of Marino Faliero, now she was just a woman in need of protection. Dupuget stepped forward out of the shadows to offer his services, but his sudden appearance must have startled her, because she let out a thrilling scream and rushed past him up the stairs to her dressing room. He turned to follow, but was thwarted by Severini, who stopped him and demanded to know how he had gained admittance to the private sanctuary of the artists. Dupuget insisted that he must ascend the staircase after Grisi to deliver his note, but Severini ordered him to leave. Édouard Robert, the co-director of the opera house, joined in at this moment to help Severini eject the resistant Dupuget from the theater.

The entrance of Colonel Ragani threw the scene into even greater confusion. Ragani had come backstage to visit his niece and found her terrified and hysterical in her dressing room. Ragani met the three men as they approached an exit and recognized Dupuget as the man who had attempted to sneak into Grisi's house under false pretences three times over as many years. As the men advanced toward the exit, Dupuget suddenly climbed its stairs and drew a sword from his cane. Looming over Ragani from his newly advantageous height, Dupuget slashed wildly at the Colonel. The Colonel blocked the blow with his right arm and tried to disarm the madman, but Dupuget instead struck the Colonel's right hand and left ring finger. Robert, standing behind Ragani, took a hit to the right ear. Drawn by the shouting, two firemen stepped forward to subdue Dupuget. On searching the prisoner, they found his two loaded pistols and immediately transferred him to the custody of the police. Two weeks later, his trial proved him guilty and sentenced him to a month's imprisonment.

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<sup>1</sup>And this is the story that I have concocted from reading accounts of the incident in various newspapers and memoirs. My main sources have been; "Paris Intelligence - the Court, News, and Fashions," *The Lady's Magazine and Museum*, March 1836; "Accidents and Offences," *Examiner*, 6 March 1836; *La moda*, 14 March 1836; *L'Abeille musicale*, June 1836; *Le Mercure de France*, 12 February - 12 March 1836; J. Méry, *Les nuits parisiennes* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1860); and "Chronique des salons," *Petit Courrier des dames: modes de Paris : littérature, beaux-arts, théâtres*, 5 March 1836.

The incident brought flocks of admirers to the theater in the days that followed, as they congratulated Robert on his narrow escape and ascertained that their diva was unharmed. After the incident, Grisi received permission to carry a firearm and practiced until, one newspaper ironically proclaimed, she was “almost certain of not missing [the bass Luigi] La Blache [sic] at four paces distance!”<sup>2</sup> Since Lablache’s girth was well known, and four paces is not a very long distance, it seems likely that more reliance was placed on the personal guards who flanked her (disguised as dilettantes) whenever she left the house.

The newspaper accounts of the incident all agree on the basic events: Dupuget found his way backstage, attempted to make contact with Grisi, and injured Robert’s ear with his sword cane while attempting to hit Colonel Ragani. Embellishments came into play as newspapers took up the story and tailored their retellings to fit their readership. As summarized by the *Petit courier*, reports of the story were written to appeal to different national audiences: “Here, among a mocking population, we laughed at his love, at his folly; in Germany, these were sympathized with, in Switzerland, above all, they cursed the fatal beauty of the indifferent Desdemona.”<sup>3</sup> The *Petit courier* follows this comparative analysis of national presses with a description of Dupuget’s reactions to the verdict and his reasons for making an appeal – at least he would see his diva one more time, even if it were only in court.

Though the *Petit courier* ignores the British periodical press, publications for English audiences were just as tailored to their audiences. While a version for men published in the *Examiner* focused on Dupuget’s defence that he was driven mad by Grisi’s beauty and voice, the *Lady’s Magazine* emphasized the real danger that Grisi had faced from Dupuget.<sup>4</sup> The Paris correspondent for *The Lady’s Magazine* dramatically revealed that Dupuget intended the two loaded pistols for Grisi and for himself, and that he had “a paper containing an exact account of Grisi’s daily employments.” In response to this attack, Grisi was then authorized by the Police Prefect “to carry a loaded pistol for her preservation, and in case of fresh annoyance, to blow out the brains (if he has any) of her inamorato!”<sup>5</sup> Though no English papers reported Grisi’s words directly, *The Lady’s Magazine* showed Grisi’s emotions through her actions. Her insistence on learning to shoot a pistol and her desire to have bodyguards accompany her in public demonstrated her fear and courage while also allowing the public a glimpse into her daily routines. These embellishments purported to offer readers insight into the private lives of public figures: the notorious would-be assassin, driven to extreme lengths by his desire to approach his idol, and the celebrated singer, who, though she resisted Dupuget’s inappropriate advances, was available to her public in so many ways. Creative approaches to reporting gave the reader more insight into the prisoner’s interior life and set up each periodical as a unique contributor to the cluster of information surrounding the trial.

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<sup>2</sup> “Paris Intelligence - the Court, News, and Fashions.”

<sup>3</sup> “Chronique des salons.”

<sup>4</sup> “Accidents and Offences.”

<sup>5</sup> The pair of loaded pistols might imply a tragic and melodramatic murder-suicide rather than an abduction or seduction. “Paris Intelligence - the Court, News, and Fashions.” The *Petit Courier des dames* also focused on the aftermath of the incident, reporting, like *The Lady’s Magazine*, that since the incident, by order of her uncle, Grisi only went out flanked by two guards, who were disguised “en dilettanti.” “Chronique Des Salons.”

Speculation about the private lives of singers was nothing new, but the forms this interest took in London during the 1830s differed from those of the previous century.<sup>6</sup> Rather than reading a scandalous memoir that was obviously falsified (such as that of Elizabeth Billington) or sedate reviews of performances, readers now could read plausible stories about singers and other celebrities' daily life in the newspapers.<sup>7</sup> Stories such as those about Grisi's misadventure let readers feel as if they knew her personally. Though Dupuget's attempt to reach Grisi made him famous for a month or two, the incident was only a small part of Grisi's celebrity in the 1830s. While newspapers had to introduce their readers to Dupuget, explaining that he was the author of two books, Grisi needed no introduction.<sup>8</sup> The setting of the story provided any contextual reminders that readers might need. While Dupuget's fame extended only as far as his actions (after his imprisonment, he faded from public interest), speculation about Grisi's role and reaction to the incident was part of a much larger interest in the inner workings of the diva's emotional and personal life.

While most people agreed that stalking a singer was inappropriate, the boundaries, real and imagined, on a proper relationship with a famous performer varied according to class and station. In what follows, I examine Grisi not to recover a single idea of her as a performer or as a woman, but to assess the many ways in which she could be a celebrity depending on the identity of the audience and their use of gossip, souvenirs, or sheet music. With her followers in France, England, and Italy, all of whom devoured information about her background, tribulations, and successes, Grisi can be considered as a part of a nascent celebrity culture in the 1830s.<sup>9</sup> She was

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<sup>6</sup> They also differed from practices in Paris. For an exploration of the Parisian context for the celebrity of the women who sang at the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique, see Kimberly White, "The Cantatrice and the Profession of Singing at the Paris Opéra and Opéra Comique, 1830-1848" (Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University). The singers at the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique were, like Grisi, subject to professional, moral, and matrimonial expectations, and their characters and portrayals in the press and in biographies both shaped and reflected their social importance.

<sup>7</sup> *Memoirs of Mrs Billington from her Birth* was published in 1792. The book was in fact written by James Ridgway and the scandalous stories, including that Billington was illegitimate and had several affairs, are unprovable. For more information, see Susan Levin, "Vice, Ugly Vice: *Memoirs of Mrs Billington from her Birth*," in *Romantic Autobiography in England*, ed. Eugene Stelzig (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2013). Eighteenth-century audiences could get to know one of their favorite singers, Elizabeth Linley (1754-1792), through verses she published after her public singing career was finished, through plays (Samuel Foote's *The Maid of Bath* and *The Rivals*, by Linley's husband, Richard Brinsley Sheridan), and through published letters by Sheridan. During her performing career, however, her image was formed through exclusive access at private concerts and a carefully selected repertoire. Suzanne Aspden discusses the cultivation of her image primarily through use of concert programs and letters and diaries published later in the century or after Linley's death. Suzanne Aspden, "'Sancta Caelia Rediviva': Elizabeth Linley: Repertoire, Reputation, and the English Voice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 27, no. 3 (2015). 263-287. Tom Kaufman addresses newspaper depictions of Grisi in a slightly later period in his article on her 'rivalry' with Pauline Viardot from 1848-1852. Much as I have done here, he takes a myth (that Grisi and her husband Mario attempted to sabotage Viardot's career), and explores its formation in the popular press. Tom Kaufman, "The Grisi-Viardot Controversy, 1848-1852," *Opera Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1997). 7-22.

<sup>8</sup> Amedée Dupuget wrote *Le démon de Socrates* (Paris: Chez Levavasseur, 1829) and *C'est de Jehanne-la-Pucelle* (Paris: Guyot, 1833), a two-volume retelling of the story of Joan of Arc in the style of the fifteenth century.

<sup>9</sup> For work on historical celebrity, see Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Tom Mole, ed. *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*

available to her audiences both directly and indirectly: she mingled with society and relied on the support of patrons for defence and employment, but was also accessible to a wider crowd through press reports that disseminated details about her marriage, divorce, and the duel fought over her, about her performances in operatic roles and at private concerts, and about her dress and hairstyle when she attended the opera. While Grisi's celebrity was formed in both Paris and London, this chapter focuses on seductive material objects found only in London, including a miniature almanac with portraits and poems dedicated to leading singers and ephemeral sheet music unavailable in the French libraries. In contrast with the Parisian context explored in the first two chapters, the practicalities of going to the opera and demographics of the audience in London have been the object of substantial recent research.<sup>10</sup> This chapter therefore approaches London audiences through their patterns of consumption, as these patterns reveal the multiplicity of ways in which Grisi interacted with and intersected with her audience. For each type of evidence, I ask what sort of work it did to bring the singer closer to her fans and how it, at the same time, cemented her fame. Each manifestation of celebrity yields slightly different answers to these questions; the fluid and constantly negotiated relationship between the diva and her audience offered a locus for expressing and negotiating social relations in London during a period of changing class and national definitions.

## A HISTORIAN'S SUMMARY: RULES FOR POSSESSING A DIVA

Do not kidnap her. Marry her or duel over her, but be prepared for scandal and only do so if you are of high rank and the lady is willing. Invite her to sing for you and your friends (breaking bread together is optional). Buy graven images of her and devour accounts of her. Sing arias as her. Do all things according to your station.

Audiences in London, whether middle class or elite, faced an identity crisis. Over the course of the 1830s and 1840s, an increasingly powerful middle-class first supported the cosmopolitan Whigs and the political change they brought in, and then opposed them. Businessmen brought their morally upright families to the opera to demonstrate that although they were newcomers to the *haut monde*, they were cultured. Aristocrats needed to prove their social value and to defend

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(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Joseph R. Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Paul Metzner, *Crescendo of the virtuoso : spectacle, skill, and self-promotion in Paris during the Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Anne Helen Petersen, *Scandals of Classic Hollywood: Sex, Deviance, and Drama from the Golden Age of American Cinema* (New York: Plume, 2014); On more modern celebrity, see Sharon Marcus and Carlo Rotella, *Celebrities and Publics in the Internet Era* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780-1880* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2007); "Representing the Audience in the Age of Reform: Critics and the Elite at the Italian Opera in London," in *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, ed. Cyril Ehrlich, Christina Bashford, and Leanne Langley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); William Weber, "Musical Culture and the Capital City: The Epoch of the *beau monde* in London, 1700-1870," in *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Simon McVeigh and Susan Wollenberg (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); "Redefining the Status of Opera: London and Leipzig, 1800-1848," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 36, no. 3 (2006); Michael Burden, "Pots, Privies and WCs; Crapping at the Opera in London before 1830," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 23, no. 1-2 (2011). 27-50.

their position at the top of the cultural hierarchy. For a singer to appeal to both the morals of the rising middle class and the sophistication of Whig aristocrats, he or she needed to engage with their audiences flexibly and through diverse means.<sup>11</sup> An ideal artist could be assessed in various ways - fashionable, virtuous, foreign (but not too foreign) – and could engage with their audiences to different extents depending on the medium.

Grisi was depicted as jealous, gracious, bubbling over with genius, unoriginal, devotedly hard working, lazy and capricious, and above all, natural, foreign, and slightly scandalous.<sup>12</sup> The fluidity of her image allowed her to appeal to many different audiences. Singers like Grisi and her co-stars at His Majesty's Theatre gave lessons and private concerts, were welcomed to suppers (though occasionally at arm's length), their clothing and activities were reported alongside those of aristocrats, and their images were available for easy purchase. Their celebrity was fungible and fulfilled a desire for novelties that fit comfortably into cycles of repetition, and

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<sup>11</sup> For a failed celebrity image, we can look to Rosine Stoltz who performed at the Paris Opéra from 1837-1847. As Mary Ann Smart and Kimberly White show, reviews and gossip created an image of Stoltz as temperamental, hard, and manipulative. This culminated in a disastrous performance of Donizetti's *Robert Bruce* in December 1846, during which she threw a fit because of bad audience behavior. The subsequent scandal led to her retirement from the Opéra. Mary Ann Smart, "The Lost Voice of Rosine Stoltz," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6, no. 1 (1994): 31-50; White, "The Cantatrice and the Profession of Singing at the Paris Opéra and Opéra Comique, 1830-1848," 229-251.

<sup>12</sup> For Grisi as jealous, see Kaufman, "The Grisi-Viardot Controversy, 1848-1852," 7-22. He primarily cites *The Musical World* and *The Times*. On divas and charity in general, see Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Idealizing the Prima Donna in Mid-Victorian London" and Hilary Poriss, "Prima Donnas and the Performance of Altruism," in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21-60. The Westminster Hospital made Grisi an honorary life governor in 1838, and the minutes (as reported in the *Athenaeum*) ask that "the thanks of this Board be communicated to her for her gratuitous and invaluable service." "Westminster Hospital," *The Athenaeum*, 8 September 1838. On Grisi as a genius, *The Spectator* claimed that as Elvira in *I Puritani* "even Bellini could not damp the ardour of her genius; but, when she achieved a triumph of expression, it was not by his help, but in spite of him." "Bellini's New Opera," *The Spectator*, 23 May 1835. *The New Monthly Magazine* disagreed, however, on this matter, and argued that though Giuditta Pasta was a genius, Grisi was a pale imitation. "Giulietta Grisi," *The New Monthly Magazine*, September 1835. According to *The Musical World*, "The singing portion was all up hill work to Grisi; but she triumphed over the poverty of the composer's imaginings, and as actress soared to the utmost pinnacle of tragic fame." "Theatrical Summary," *The Musical World*, 7 June 1838. Grace Kehler reads this emphasis on labour disciplining the unruly voice as an appeal to middle-class desires for sincere acting. Grace Kehler, "Performing the British Nation; Foreign Opera and the Prima Donna," *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal* 8 (2002): 14. This hard-working image contrasted with that of Grisi as capricious and vain: in 1845, *The Spectator*, which, in general, supported Grisi and her fellow Italians, reported that the Paris Tribunal of Commerce had fined the singer because she refused to play a secondary role in *Il Matrimonio Segreto*. "Miscellaneous," *The Spectator*, 3 May 1845. "Lazy" and "capricious" are terms also related to "natural," which is taken here to mean supposedly authentic behavior untamed by civilization. Regarding the idea of "natural" and "excessive" acting in the Parisian reception of Malibran, see Céline Frigau Manning, "Playing with Excess: Maria Malibran as Clari at the Théâtre Italien," in *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris, 1750-1850: Exchanges and Tensions*, ed. Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014). Published gossip emphasized the diva's status as a foreigner in English society and on the scandals that arose from Grisi's activities. The *Evening Standard*, among other journals, reported on the duel between Lord Castlereagh and Gerard de Melcy with almost gleeful disgust. "Notes of the Month," *The Monthly Chronicle*, July 1838.



their relationship with audiences depended on both ‘parasocial’ relations and social relations, according to the status of their fans.<sup>13</sup> Because of this, artefacts detailing these interactions range from newspaper articles and books to diary entries and souvenirs. Concert programs, portraits, poetry, and sheet music speak to the importance of the singers; people who could not possibly have known the singers directly commemorated them by collecting memorabilia and making the singers part of their daily lives.

### AN INVITATION TO DINE

One story in particular illustrates the difficulty that society members had in negotiating the boundary between professional and personal relationships with singers. In July 1837, Nathaniel Willis regaled readers of *The Mirror* with the story of a private concert at which the stars of the Italian opera house performed.<sup>14</sup> Grisi, Giovanni Battista Rubini, Antonio Tamburini, and Luigi Lablache arrived accompanied by a foreign princess, sang popular arias to overwhelming applause, and then basked in the glow of success as dignitaries and attachés clustered around them. This bliss was not lasting, however. When supper was announced and the throng rose to go in, a “powdered menial” informed Grisi that a separate supper had been prepared for the singers. The outrage of Grisi, her fellow artists, and their friends was immediate, but quickly dispelled by the princess, who suggested that she (and other similarly cosmopolitan people) join the singers in their repast. Artists and their sophisticated friends trooped down to the housekeeper’s parlour, and enjoyed a raucous dinner that lasted until sunrise the next morning, while the hostess and her other guests dined formally upstairs.

The story clearly demonstrates the difficulty of having commercial entertainers who mixed socially with princesses and dignitaries. Famous artists moved in the *haut monde*, but were not an established part of it because they were also paid for their services. Singers could, and did, marry into the aristocracy (though generally non-English aristocrats).<sup>15</sup> However, patronage remained an influential support system for singers, and singers’ status as not-quite-servants and as celebrities not-quite-inside aristocratic society led to their inclusion in many different levels of society and their occasional exclusion from social gatherings, such as the supper party described by Willis.

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Salmon uses the term “parasocial relations” to describe the celebrity of literary stars in the 1830s. “Lionism... may be conceived as a model of face-to-face intimacy informed and reshaped by parasocial dimensions: neither a fully interpersonal oral encounter nor a relationship of physical separation, it stands somewhere between these two communicational strategies.” Richard Salmon, “The Physiognomy of the Lion: Encountering Literary Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*, ed. Tom Mole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 68.

<sup>14</sup> Willis did not name names, so although the society hostess and her faux pas might have been gossiped knowledge during the 1830s, it is now impossible to identify the culprit. Nathaniel Parker Willis, “London,” *The Mirror of literature, amusement, and instruction*, 5 August 1837.

<sup>15</sup> Carolina Naldi married the Count de Sparre in 1823, Henrietta Sontag married the Count Rossi in 1828, and Giulia Grisi married the Count de Melcy in 1836. Singers were much more likely to marry other theatrical professionals. For more details on the marriages of opera singers in France during the July Monarchy see Kimberly White, “Female Singers and the *maladie morale* in Parisian Lyric Theaters, 1830-1850,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 16, no. 1 (2012): 57-85. Although White focuses on the Parisian moral context, many of the singers that she discusses appeared in London as well.

This exclusion angered Grisi and her fellow singers, who felt that they belonged with the rest of the guests and were insulted to be shunted off into an inferior room. When Grisi learned of the separate supper, her countenance shifted rapidly:

Medea, in her most tragic hour, never stood so absolutely the picture of hate as did Grisi for a single instant, in the centre of that aristocratic crowd. Her chest swelled and rose, her lips closed over her snowy teeth, and compressed till the blood left them... I knew, then, that there was more than fancy — there was nature and capability of the real — in the imaginary passions she plays so powerfully. A laugh of extreme amusement at the scene came from the high-born woman who had accompanied her, suddenly turned her humour, and she stopped in the midst of a muttering of Italian in which I could distinguish only the terminations, and with a sort of theatrical quickness of transition, joined heartily in her mirth. It was immediately proposed by this lady, however, that herself and their particular circle should join the insulted prima donna at the lower table, and they succeeded by this manoeuvre in retaining Rubini and the others, who were leaving the house in a most unequivocal Italian fury.<sup>16</sup>

Grisi gave vent to all her feelings; whether hatred or amusement, her face and body projected her emotions fully. The clenched lips, the rising chest, the Italian muttering, and finally, the abrupt laughter, betrayed her extreme emotions. All Italians were temperamental and hot-blooded, the author seems to assume; but Grisi's display of emotion, and her rapid transitions, lent credibility to her theatrical performance. Emotions possessed and transformed her, both in real life and on stage.

Willis equates these transparent displays of emotion with unrestrained behavior. Once the group reached the housekeeper's parlor, they dismissed all the servants and locked the doors. The singers put on cloaks and tattered opera hats because it was chilly, then applied themselves to the meal with great enthusiasm and informality, dismissing the servants and helping themselves to the truffle pies and bumpers of champagne. Rubini was slighted, and "continually reminded Grisi, who by this time had quite recovered her good humour, that, the night before, supping at Devonshire-house, the Duke of Wellington had held her gloves on one side, while his grace, their host, attended to her on the other."<sup>17</sup> Though comfortable dining with the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Devonshire, the Italian artists happily ignored social strictures to attend to pleasures such as warmth and delicious food. Willis describes the singers at their most natural, when they have "throw[n] aside rank and distinction, (yet without forgetting it)."<sup>18</sup> This description, however, highlights their balancing act; they can partake of yet never fully belong to the highest classes. The juxtaposition of worldly and traditional British values continues with the conclusion of the piece. When the supper and the stories were exhausted, the revellers took their carriages and the author strolled off into the early morning sunshine, "balancing the silent rebuke of the healthy countenances of early labourers going to their toil, against the effervescence of a champagne hour, which, since such comes so rarely, may come, for me, with what untimeliness they please."<sup>19</sup> The story that follows this account of a "champagne hour" contributes to this contrast: the newspaper then reports on a new Scottish recipe for feeding cattle frugally.

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<sup>16</sup> Willis, "London," 94.

<sup>17</sup> "London," 95.

<sup>18</sup> "London," 94.

<sup>19</sup> "London," 96.

What did it mean to highlight the contrast between foreign luxury, sophisticated audiences, and down-to-earth laborers and cow farmers? The story was republished in 1840, in Willis's three-volume *Loiterings of Travel*, and newspapers continued to republish it for the next few years along with reviews and advertisements for the book. Willis's vignette made the snobbery of a society hostess ridiculous in the eyes of a wide public, and provided an intimate view into the world of Grisi while highlighting her precarious position between high society and paid servant. The story was pitched to cosmopolitan society members, who laughed at the silliness of a hostess who separated the singers from the guests, and to those who aspired to belong to that sophisticated *haut monde*.

The themes of Willis's supper story can also be found differently inflected in other anecdotes. Newspaper descriptions of Grisi and her fellow singers in London emphasized their unique and foreign participation in traditional English pastimes such as Epsom races and duels while contrasting their behavior with British social expectations.<sup>20</sup> *The Literary Gazette* reported that on Epsom Grand Day, 25 May 1837, *La cenerentola* had to be substituted for *Don Giovanni* because Grisi was so ill "of Epsom (*quoere*: salts?)" that she couldn't appear.<sup>21</sup> A year later, *The Monthly Chronicle* provided further details: "the public were kept waiting at the doors till nine o'clock, and even then only got such music as a coach full of half incapable opera singers, headed by a manager in no better plight, were able to afford. Ivanoff, having a Russian head, made an effort to pacify the audience by a song, while his companions were endeavouring to recover from the flush of the champagne."<sup>22</sup> *The Monthly Chronicle* frames its story as a complaint against the management of the theater and as a demonstration of the generous behavior of the English people. The Italians enjoy entertainment too much and cannot hold their drink well enough to behave suitably, while the Russian Ivanoff has a natural ability to perform even while sauced. The English, however, have a natural inclination for forbearance, and even though the Italians and their manager got drunk and delayed the performance, the public tolerated their bad behavior.

English virtue and the failure of the Italian singers to fit in completely while participating in society came to bear again a month later, when *The Monthly Chronicle* criticized *The Evening Standard*'s coverage of the duel between Grisi's husband, Gerard de Melcy, and Lord Castlereagh. *The Monthly Chronicle* points out that a certain spiteful (and Tory) newspaper wished that both Grisi's mastery of "delicious difficulties" and the Epsom winner Amato's performance were impossible and therefore never attempted. They then let the *Standard* speak, damning itself with its disdain:

There is, it seems, a singing-woman, named Grisi, a foreigner, at some of the theatres; with this person Lord Castlereagh thought proper to become enamoured, and either not knowing, or knowing, her to be married, addressed to her a love-letter.

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<sup>20</sup> For more regarding attitudes towards foreign singers in nineteenth-century Britain, see Roberta Montemorra Marvin, "Verdian opera in the Victorian parlor," in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, ed. R.M. Marvin and H. Poriss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); "Idealizing the Prima Donna in Mid-Victorian London.," J.Q. Davies, "'Veluti in Speculum': The Twilight of the Castrato," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 17, no. 3 (2005). 271-301; Kehler, "Performing the British Nation; Foreign Opera and the Prima Donna," 1-22.

<sup>21</sup> "Drama," *The Literary Gazette: A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts*, 27 May 1837.

<sup>22</sup> *The Monthly Chronicle* June 1838.

The *Standard* tells the story of the letter's interception and the subsequent duel in scathingly polite terms, and finishes with a moral worthy of John Bull:

When will our nobility and gentry learn that horse-racing and the singing taste are the cancer of their order? Why not let Mrs. Grisi stay at home, and her amiable consort with her; and leave Mr. Gully to his pot-house in Carey-street?<sup>23</sup>

The cattiness of the *Standard* places it firmly in the moral and anti-Italian camp, while the *Monthly Chronicle*'s ironic inclusion of the *Standard*'s criticism proclaims their support of cosmopolitanism.

The *Standard*'s Tory opposition to the frivolity of opera and horseracing, and their concern for the social effects of these cosmopolitan entertainments highlight some of the political and class tensions felt in England during the 1830s. The Whigs came back into power in 1830 for the first time since the 1780s. Many members of their leading families had spent the intervening years on the continent, and they brought back enthusiasms for opera and other urban luxuries that unnerved resolutely country-based Tories.<sup>24</sup> Old Tory families saw the Whigs' delight in fashionable activities, along with their liberal policies that extended suffrage and threatened reform, as attacks on the standards that had become comfortably entrenched during their fifty years in power. Cosmopolitanism, as represented by the visible and active expatriate communities in London, threatened a staid and edifying way of life.

To these people, performers such as Grisi and her co-stars, Lablache, Tamburini, and Rubini, were frivolity and dangerous cosmopolitanism made flesh. They sang trivial songs (read: non-instrumental, non-intellectual) and moved between Paris and London. In each place, they belonged to a larger community of Italian exiles and refugees, many of whom were artists, and most of whom were involved in Giuseppe Mazzini's revolutionary society, "Giovine Italia," a group that Tories hated and feared. Though Tories disliked the influx of revolutionary and democratic Italians, exiled poet Ugo Foscolo and other liberal moderates were welcomed by Whigs throughout the 1820s. Italian refugees were received at Holland House and by Lord Lansdowne at Bowood, where the elite intelligentsia gathered. When Mazzini arrived in London, his republicanism made him more attractive to liberal reformers, as he thought the English party system an ineffective tool for political change and believed Parliament was too far removed from the needs of the people.<sup>25</sup> Middle-class reformers with liberal political leanings supported Italian exiles in their fight against foreign oppression, particularly in the 1840s.<sup>26</sup>

Grisi's mixed welcome in London can therefore inform our understanding not only of celebrity, but also of questions about social and political changes. The Italians described by the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Mirror* are convivial and social (but do not fit into conventional society), as displayed by their behavior at the separate supper party and at Epsom. The assumption of the hostess of the supper that singers should be separated, and the *Standard*'s disgust at the duel over Grisi, however, also appealed to a particular audience. Since at least the

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<sup>23</sup> "Notes of the Month," *The Monthly Chronicle*, July 1838.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals, 1830-1852* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Emigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 113-114, 123-124, 128, 210.

<sup>26</sup> As historian Maura O'Connor has put it, "Some sympathizers were motivated by humanitarian concerns, and still others were moved by liberal foreign-policy ideals and the perceived role of England leading other Europeans to self-determination." Maura O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Political Imagination*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 58-92, esp. 60.

1730s, Italian opera had been an object of desire and a luxury ripe for disapproval. In the early Victorian context, however, Italian opera and Italian singers also played a more specific role, as a focus for tensions about class and statecraft that had been present, though muted, since the French Revolution.<sup>27</sup>

While gossip about dinners and duels quickly becomes repetitive and any real substance is usually papered over with anecdote, gossip is nevertheless crucial to understanding how artists and the whole enterprise of Italian opera fit into Victorian society, and how Victorian society reacted to these cosmopolitan singers. Many gossip items from the 1830s are incomprehensible now, such as lists of guests at supper parties or soirées. These lists generally describe the venue, the food, and the approximate number of guests, before going on to list the notable invitees. Whether or not Lord Cavendish actually accepted the invitation, and whether or not he interacted with the Misses Hardy (there were three) is the kind of information that can only be found in romance novels that imagine the social scene.<sup>28</sup> Patricia Meyer Spacks argues that gossip in nineteenth-century novels is important not for the events and intrigues narrated, but rather because it can reveal something about the character of the gossipers through their choices of subject matter and of phrasing.<sup>29</sup> Gossip published in newspapers encourages readers (both then and now) to imagine the interiority of the subject and, more importantly, gives insight into the gossip's audience. Journalistic reporting on Grisi's behavior at Epsom or the dress she wore to the opera allowed readers in the 1830s to feel that they knew Grisi more intimately and to solidify their own social groupings while judging her. Celebrity gossip functions similarly to gossip in fiction: Kent Puckett proposes that the careful deployment of minor social errors in fiction renders characters more approachable, easier to identify with, and gives the impression of interiority.<sup>30</sup> Though Grisi is depicted as unabashedly different from proper society, her embarrassment and rage at not being invited in to dine strikes a chord with all those who have, at one time or another, been excluded. The organization of social missteps and criticisms into a generally accepted code of conduct -- also known as etiquette -- can be read as a manifestation of hierarchy.

## PERFORMANCE AND PRINT

Predictable and opaque gossip and repetitive opera criticism challenge the historian determined to extract information about social structures and meaning from the reception of Italian opera. Generic enthusiasm and rhapsodic exclamations are provoking, both of thought and of irritation.<sup>31</sup> For example, what can the careful historian do with evidence such as the enthusiastic

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<sup>27</sup> For the earlier context, see Suzanne Aspden, "'An Infinity of Factions': Opera in Eighteenth-Century Britain and the Undoing of Society," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9, no. 1 (1997): 1-19.

<sup>28</sup> A typical description of a gathering can be seen in "The Fete at Devonshire House," *Morning Post*, 4 June 1832. A modern embellishment of soirées during the 1830s can be found in Loretta Chase's "Dressmakers" series, in which she uses excerpts from gossip papers as chapter headings. Loretta Chase, *Silk is for Seduction* (New York: Avon, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Though gossip frequently deals with ephemeral and seemingly unimportant subjects, Spacks argues that this attention to specific detail "implicitly acknowledges that conventional triviality may allow the articulation of intense human feeling." Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Kent Puckett, *Bad Form: Social Mistakes and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Susan Rutherford uses the diaries and letters of individuals to great effect in *Verdi, Opera, Women* in her presentation of the diversity of ways in which women (both characters and audience members)

prose we find in the diaries of Princess Victoria?<sup>32</sup> Victoria loved the sound of Giulia Grisi's voice, but said so in terms that generally communicate even less than obsessively retold (and possibly fictional) anecdotes in newspapers. The words opera fans use to capture the ecstasy and transport they experience while listening to a favorite singer arguably change far less across the decades than either the style of the music sung or the bodily mechanisms and techniques that produce those voices.<sup>33</sup> And yet it is not an option to ignore the testimony of a listener as prominent or prolific as the Princess Victoria.

Consider, for example, Princess Victoria's account of the performance by Grisi and Maria Malibran that she heard at Mrs. Anderson's Concert in 1835:

Grisi then sang "Stanca di più combattere" *most exquisitely!* I do not think that Malibran is to be *compared* to Grisi. Grisi's high notes are *so soft*, so round and so sweet. Her voice is so very feeling too, and her execution is *so exquisite!*<sup>34</sup>

In emphatically preferring Grisi to Malibran, Victoria went against common opinion, both then and now. Malibran was generally considered more intense, more glamorous, far more dramatically adventurous, and more versatile in the styles and gestures she commanded. Her vivid and tragic personal history of unhappy relationships with both her father and her first husband combined with her predilection for passionate roles to create a star persona that embodied the intensity and savagery that were often part of Italian opera.<sup>35</sup> Victoria's strong preference for Grisi indicates a proclivity for the gentle, the domestic, the sweet, and the conventionally bounded feminine that is not altogether surprising in the future monarch.<sup>36</sup>

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engaged with social and political issues in Verdi's Italy. Susan Rutherford, *Verdi, Opera, Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Forbes relies extensively on Victoria's diaries in her biography of Grisi and her second husband, Mario. Forbes's account does not always agree with the current text of the journals. For example, Forbes recounts that in September of 1835, though the Princess enjoyed a concert, she "did not, however, approve of Grisi's dress, an ugly dingy foulard with a large muslin collar, nor of her hat, 'a frightful little pink bonnet.'" The journals published online in 2012 say nothing about the bonnet being "frightful" or the dress being ugly and dingy, they simply describe the clothes in neutral language. The journals may have been cleaned up, however, by Lord Esher or by Princess Beatrice as they transcribed them, and perhaps Forbes had access to a different version. She does not give footnotes indicating the sources of her information. Elizabeth Forbes, *Mario and Grisi: a biography* (London: V. Gollancz, 1985), 31. RA VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W) 11 September 1835 (Lord Esher's Typescripts). Retrieved 15 September 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Roland Barthes addresses this phenomenon in his essay "One Always Fails in Speaking of What One Loves." Discussing Stendhal, he finds that "In this erotic promotion of what is commonly taken for an insignificant detail, we recognize a constitutive element of transference (or of passion): partiality." Obsessive attention to insignificant observations, and repetition of these observations, all help convey the underlying emotion that the writer or speaker has for the object or experience. Roland Barthes, "One Always Fails in Speaking of What One Loves," in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 297.

<sup>34</sup> Emphases all her own. Royal Archives (RA) VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W) 22 May 1835 (Lord Esher's Typescripts). Retrieved 15 September 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Her untimely death in the fall of 1836 only added to this reputation. See J. Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 89.

<sup>36</sup> This vision of femininity is particularly unsurprising because of the extensive editing performed on the text of Queen Victoria's diaries. The manuscripts were destroyed by Princess Beatrice, under orders from her mother, the Queen. Prior to the manuscripts' destruction, Beatrice transcribed, edited, and redacted them. Viscount Esher also transcribed the manuscripts for the diaries from 1832-1861. However, as

Although Princess Victoria's remarks mostly stop short at the kind of generic enthusiasm that offers very limited insight into the vocal and performative realities of her historical moment, the aria that Grisi sang so "*exquisitely*" is itself a rich piece of evidence that preserves in amber (so to speak) information about the soprano's vocal abilities, aesthetic tastes, and the dramatic profile she wished to project across the footlights. That aria, "Stanca di più combattere," does not come from any complete opera, but was composed to order for Grisi by her friend and vocal coach Marco Aurelio Marliani. She sang it frequently and especially made it her signature as a substitute for arias that she found unimpressive or unflattering. In Paris, Grisi sang "Stanca di più combattere" as an insertion in Bellini's *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* (substituting for Giulietta's "O quante volte"); in London, she inserted it into the first act of Rossini's *Otello* in 1835.<sup>37</sup>

The first act of *Otello* presented a challenge to the singers; Desdemona enters not with a grand aria announcing a diva's presence, but with a duettino between Desdemona and her maid. This duet captures the sweet simplicity of Desdemona's character, but does not provide many opportunities for displaying the voice. Its most showy passages consist of repeated turns for Desdemona, while all other passages are easily doubled by Emilia, the maid. The parallel thirds are delightful to listen to, but express sympathetic commiseration more than heated passion (see Fig. 3.1). In lieu of this simple duet, most *prime donne* decided instead to first enter with an aria of their own choosing and then sing the duettino once their presence had been established. While Pasta sang another *scena* and *cavatina* by Rossini, Adelaide Tosi performed a slow movement by Meyerbeer and a *cabaletta* by Nicolini, and Grisi used Marliani's "Stanca di più combattere."<sup>38</sup>

Since "insertion arias" (as they are often called) were generally chosen by the singer as a means for displaying his or her voice, even insertion arias that were not written to order for a particular voice can reveal much not only about a singer's vocal strengths and weaknesses, but also about the ways they would like to be seen and about the kind of dramatic persona s/he might wish to convey or embrace. "Stanca di più combattere," designed for Grisi by Marliani--a

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Cynthia Huff notes, "the private dimensions of Queen Victoria's record could never and cannot now be separated from public expression and political/familial editing and censorship." Cynthia Huff, "Private Domains: Queen Victoria and Women's Diaries," *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 4, no. 1 (1988). 47. For more analysis of Queen Victoria's diaries in the context of representational practices see R. Steinitz, *Time, Space, and Gender in the Nineteenth-Century British Diary* (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2011); and M. Homans, *Royal Representations: Queen Victoria and British Culture, 1837-1876* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> By 1835, the aria was so popular that two of the guests at dinner with Princess Victoria performed it for her. A month later, Victoria heard Grisi in *Otello* for the first time, and wrote that "The song which Desdemona sings when she first comes on in the first act, which begins 'Stanca di più combattere', and which Grisi sung most exquisitely! ... She personates the meek and ill-treated Desdemona in a most perfect and touching manner." A year later, she would call "Stanca di più" her "favourite song." RA VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W) 2 May 1835 (Lord Esher's Typescripts). Retrieved 15 September 2014; RA VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W) 14 May 1836 (Lord Esher's Typescripts). Retrieved 15 September 2014. On the use of the aria in Bellini's opera, see J. Q. Davies, "Gautier's 'Diva': The First French Uses of the Word," in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (Oxford University Press, 2012), 134.

<sup>38</sup> On Pasta's use of an aria from *La donna del lago* into *Otello*, see Philip Gossett, *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 210. For a discussion of Adelaide Tosi's choice of numbers by two different composers and the continued life of Nicolini's "Or che son vicino a te" see Hilary Poriss, "Making Their Way through the World: Italian One-Hit Wonders," *19th-Century Music* 24, no. 3 (2001). 197-224.

composer who knew her voice better than anyone—and an aria that she found appealing or useful enough to carry around from city to city, and from opera to opera, is an even richer source of insight.<sup>39</sup> The aria, which was performed in various recital and operatic contexts and also published as sheet music for fans to sing at home, bears a strong imprint of Grisi's personality and ownership. In its material form, as sheet music, "Stanca di più combattere" is almost analogous to the other physical souvenirs of singers popular in the 1830s such as engraved portraits and commemorative poems. The aria made its way into the homes of London patrons both as a memory of a performance and as a printed souvenir to be bought and possessed.<sup>40</sup> Amateur singers could masquerade as their favorite opera star by buying and performing sheet music advertised "as sung by" artists such as Grisi, but these performances inevitably evoked and competed with participants' memories of the diva's own performance.

Marliani's knowledge of Grisi's voice makes it likely that he would include melodic patterns and ornamentation that would display her voice to advantage. Commercial prints of the aria, therefore, could give amateurs who hadn't heard Grisi (but still wanted to participate in fashion) an impression of her capabilities and of her voice. The sheet music could evoke Grisi's live performances; but at the same time its connection to past performances lingering only in memory might serve to remind the amateurs who bought this music of the ephemerality of those performances. Amateurs could play dress-up as their diva by singing her aria, but could never achieve her timbre or emotional performance.

The aria begins with a straightforwardly simple melodic statement: singers at home could pick out the opening phrases, which are diatonic and squarely emphasize the beat (see Fig. 3.2). Leaps in mm. 10, 13, and 15 all are within the tonic and dominant chords, and a beginning singer could easily cut the minimal ornamentation in mm. 11 and 14 if needed. The aria's simplicity makes it accessible to the amateur performer, but also emphasizes the distance between the amateur and Grisi. Anyone can sing the phrase as "Giulietta" as indicated in the score, but only Grisi could sound like herself.<sup>41</sup>

Though "Stanca di più combattere" begins simply, it also includes passages that are pleurably beyond the skills of an amateur and which capture a sense of what only Grisi could do. Though the final section of the cabaletta exceeds the limits of an amateur performer, it still retains a sense of delicacy and careful articulation (see Fig. 3.3). The arpeggios in mm. 71-75 and the rapid runs in mm. 65-66, though standard for opera singers, are difficult for amateurs and suggest Grisi's voice rippling. In his story about Grisi at the supper party, Willis describes an impromptu performance in which she imitated a pet mockingbird. His account of the performance gives an idea of the agility of her voice, and of the various tones she could deploy:

How much embellishment there was in her imitations of her treasure I do not know; but certainly the whole power of her wondrous voice, passion, and knowledge of music seemed drunk up at once in the wild, various, difficult, and

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<sup>39</sup> On insertion arias and what they can tell us about singers, see especially Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> On the uses of souvenir scores and domesticating opera music in Victorian England, see Montemorra Marvin, "Verdian opera in the Victorian parlor."

<sup>41</sup> Though "Giulietta" as the name in the score does raise the question of whether amateurs were impersonating the character Giulietta from *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*, the title page indicates only that "Stanca di più" was sung by Grisi in *Otello*, therefore making it unlikely that this London publication refers to the Parisian performance.



rapid mixture of the capricious melody she undertook. First came, without the passage which it usually terminates, the long, throat-down, gurgling, water-toned trill, in which Rubini (but for the bird and its mistress, it seemed to me) would have been inimitable: then, right upon it, as if it were the beginning of a bar, and in the most unbreathing continuity, followed a brilliant passage from the *Barber of Seville*, run into the passionate prayer of *Anna Bolena* in her madness, and followed by the air of “*Suoni la tromba intrepida*,” the tremendous duet in the *Puritani*, between Tamburini and Lablache. Up to the sky and down to the earth again - away with a note of the wildest gladness, and back upon a note of the most touching melancholy - if the bird but half equals the imitation of his mistress, he were worth the jewel in a Sultan’s turban.<sup>42</sup>

Grisi’s agility, her range of pitch and emotion, and her continuity of breath are certainly suggested by the arpeggios and runs at the end of “*Stanca di più combattere*,” and this idea of her voice is supported by another piece written expressly for Grisi: the showpiece for the role of Elvira in Bellini’s *I puritani* is a similarly burbling aria, “*Son vergin vezzosa*.” Like “*Stanca di più combattere*,” “*Son vergin vezzosa*” requires careful articulation of repeated notes (see Fig. 3.4). The articulation marks in m. 2 specify that the arpeggio should be separated, and the slurs in m. 3 demarcate the repeated Es. The extended trill on F# in mm. 12-13 slows down into a sixteenth note trill in m. 14, followed by another repeated E requiring careful articulation and giving the impression of throbbing as the gesture is repeated again in m. 15. Similarly, in “*Stanca di più combattere*,” the descending passages require careful control of breath to articulate and emphasize each note, while the chromatic passage in mm. 73-74 highlights Grisi’s control and delicacy (see Figs. 3.5 and 3.6). While Rossini’s opening duettino provided occasions for displaying articulation and trills, and Malibran’s choice emphasized her dramatic capabilities, Marliani’s aria emphasized the timbre of Grisi’s voice along with her breath control and subtle shading of pitch.

Though highly evocative of the specificities of Grisi’s voice, the sheet music does not preserve her performance: how did she look? What gestures did she make? When did she breathe? Did she play with tempo? How many ornaments did she put in, and where? Instead, owning and playing the sheet music reinforces the singularity of Grisi’s performance at the theater as something distinct from amateur performance and the sheet music. Though the print is reproducible, Grisi’s performance is not.

The specificity of Grisi lost importance, however, when her celebrity was used to promote sales. For the crowd buying music for three shillings, collective fame mattered more than precision or accuracy, and publishers used singers and operas interchangeably to advertise sheet music. At least two arrangements of “*Stanca di più combattere*” advertise themselves “As sung by Giulietta Grisi in *Otello*.”<sup>43</sup> However, Czerny’s arrangement of the same aria places it in a collection “*Gems à la Malibran et Pauline Garcia*” rather than “*Gems à la Grisi et Persiani*” (see Figs. 3.7 and 3.8), while Bochsa’s “*Gems de l’Opéra*” includes Bellini’s “‘*Deh! Non ferir, deh sentimi*,’ sung by Mesdames Pasta, Malibran, & de Meric.”<sup>44</sup> The options do not stop there;

<sup>42</sup> Willis, “London.”

<sup>43</sup> Marco Aurelio Marliani, “*Stanca di più combattere*, aria - introduced and sung by Madlle Giulietta Grisi - in the opera of *Otello* [by Rossini],” (London: Lonsdale & Mills, [1834?]). *Stanca di più combattere* (London: Mori & Lavenu, [c. 1830]).

<sup>44</sup> Charles Czerny, “*Gems à la Grisi et Persiani*,” in *Impressions de l’Opéra: Trois Fantaisies Brillantes* (London: R. Cocks and Co., n.d.). The differences in Czerny’s arrangement are probably due to the fact

the piece is arranged for either harp or piano, and includes optional flute or cello accompaniments. Similarly, Bochsa's "La Loge à l'Opéra Italien" includes the number "L'amo, ah l'amo" or "Bellini's favourite cavatina, as sung in his operas *Capuleti, Sonnambula, & Puritani*."<sup>45</sup> The reuse of arias by composers is not unusual, nor is arrangement of a piece for various instruments or the sharing of arias between singers. However, the interchangeability of singers demonstrated by the list of Pasta, Malibran, and Henriette Méric Lalande (misattributed as de Meric) or "Stanca di più combattere" being credited to Grisi, Malibran, and Viardot contrasts with how carefully reviewers and dilettantes scrutinized singers and compared them to each other. The performances mattered as singular events, but once transformed into commercial objects for reproduction such as sheet music, celebrities were interchangeable to this new type of consumer.

Memory of Grisi's performance, and comparison between home performance and that of the star, however, were fashionable trading cards, held only by those who went to the opera. Grisi's performances, captured in print, could appeal both to those who valued the sheet music a way of consuming interchangeable celebrities and to those who valued it for its reinforcement of the specificity of Grisi's performance as witnessed personally.<sup>46</sup> Sheet music such as "Stanca di più combattere" allowed the daughters of aspiring businessmen to partake in the activities of the elite. However, prints of music "as sung by" Grisi, although commercial, still allowed elitism to reign. Only those who had seen Grisi perform could truly possess the sheet music, because its secret lay not in the amateur's performance of it, but in the inevitable failure of that performance to live up to the memory of Grisi performing it herself.

## YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

While memories were fashionable, tangible items were easier to display, particularly if they were small tokens of friendship. In December of 1835, the *Literary Gazette* announced the publication of a Lilliputian gem to commemorate the New Year.<sup>47</sup> For several years, a miniature almanac summarizing and celebrating the passing year had been published in Germany, and in its usual fashion (according to the *Gazette*), England had not only contributed to the genre, but had surpassed the original.<sup>48</sup> Schloss's *English Bijou Almanac for 1836* was the first in a series that lasted eight years. Each volume was as big as a lady's thumbnail and included a calendar, a listing of the royal family and ministers, and poems celebrating six notable personages, with a portrait of each dedicatee (see Fig. 3.9).

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that he composed in a solo piano idiom, whereas the first two were arranged as piano-vocal scores. Nicolas Charles Bochsa, "Gems à la Malibran. The favorite airs sung by Made Malibran ... Arranged for the harp & piano forte, with (ad lib.) accompt for flute and violoncello," (London: Mori & Lavenue, [1830]).

<sup>45</sup> "L'amo ah l'amo," in *La Loge à l'Opéra Italien* (London: T. Boosey and Co, n.d.).

<sup>46</sup> Hall-Witt, *Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780-1880*.

<sup>47</sup> "Advertisements," *The Literary Gazette; and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, & c: For the Year 1835*, 26 December 1835.

<sup>48</sup> The miniature almanac was popular in the 1830s in France and Germany. The *Almanac* also belongs to a tradition of British gift books or literary annuals, and musical albums, though it is the first British miniature almanac that I am aware of. The British literary annual was first introduced in 1823, and the Musical Annual in 1829. J. Rappoport, "Buyer Beware: The Gift Poetics of Letitia Elizabeth Landon," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 58, no. 4 (2004). 441-473; J.Q. Davies, "Julia's Gift: The Social Life of Scores, c.1830," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131, no. 2 (2006). 287-309.

The miniature book provided a lasting memory of a fleeting moment: each volume spanned a year, informing people of the dates of holidays and capturing notable personalities, but the book was designed to be re-read later, in reminiscence and wonder. However, each year's almanac, no matter how marvellous or sentimental, would also be superseded the following January by another volume. The poems speak to this double purpose of capturing and preserving passing fashions.<sup>49</sup> Most of the poems, even those celebrating the living, focus on the endurance of the subject's fame into the future. Authors and composers such as Goethe, Mozart, and Beethoven are claimed as universal and will endure into perpetuity in the hearts of their admirers.<sup>50</sup> At least one poem per year was devoted to a member of the royal household, and the other poems praised authors, poets, painters, and singers. While many of these poems were *in memoriam*, such as those for William IV and Maria Malibran, others addressed current events and fashions: the births and marriages of royalty, the publication of popular books, and success at the theater. Malibran, Grisi, and Pasta are celebrated for radiant moments of performance and for the lasting memories of these moments (see Fig. 3.10).<sup>51</sup>

The content of the poems dedicated to divas and the size and function of the bijou almanac foreground the fundamental paradox of celebrities simultaneously being both replaceable commodities and universal heroes whose influence will endure forever. This sort of engagement is encouraged by the poems, which depict the singers as simultaneously specific and detailed, but also out of reach. Each diva is celebrated for her own unique character and circumstance; in death, Malibran is sanctified and made saccharine, Grisi, at the height of her fame, is a vision of peaceful nature, while Pasta, though retired, is vibrantly and violently alive. Though reviews of Malibran's performances written while she was alive stressed her passionate nature and complete immersion in her characters (most notably Desdemona), posthumously the poem depicts milder emotions. The moment of performance is reduced to the "sweet emotions, smiles and tears" that she expressed (and that her audience shared.) Pasta, on the other hand, is unrestrained. The poem catches her in motion, hands, hair, and eyes all joining to express her passion. Pasta retired in 1835 (and gave her last performance in London in 1837), but her fervent performances as Norma and Medea remained vivid in the memories of critics through the 1840s

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<sup>49</sup> Francesco Izzo calls this genre of poem "verses of permanence." Though Izzo discusses commemorative and laudatory poetry mainly in the context of the Italian journal *Teatri arti e letteratura*, his categories and the different approaches to celebrity culture and events that they represent are still valid in an English context. Francesco Izzo, "Poetry for Female Singers in *Teatri arti e letteratura*," in *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>50</sup> According to the Almanac, human memories are better than marble statues: Sir Walter Scott will be remembered in the hearts of all, and Mozart's music continues to haunt the ears and hearts of listeners. While Mozart touches the heart, Beethoven connects the minds of his listeners to heaven through his music, which acts as his own shrine. Goethe's poem claims for him both universality of time and place; all people recognize themselves in his writing and all times will gather to sing his praises. Letitia Elizabeth Landon, *The English Bijou Almanac* (London: Schloss, 1839).

<sup>51</sup> *The English Bijou Almanac* (London: Schloss, 1836). Malibran's portrait and poem was accompanied by a miniature piece of music, entitled "Malibran's Farewell," which was a simplified version of the rondo from Balfe's *Maid of Artois*. The portrait proved so popular that it was republished the following year and available separately for sale in the same Lilliputian proportions. Grisi's poem was published in 1838 and Pasta's in 1840, after a change in the authorship of the almanac. *The English Bijou Almanac* (London: Schloss, 1838); S. Lover, *The English Bijou Almanac* (London: Schloss, 1840).

and new performances by rising stars would inevitably be measured against Pasta's passion.<sup>52</sup> Grisi's performances also captivated the senses, but in a much calmer manner.<sup>53</sup> She is equated with nightingales, fairies, and peaceful evening reveries. Each stanza of the poem flows with comparisons to nature and the imagination, the only imagery that could come close to conveying the sound and sight of Grisi. She is too marvellous to be real and the author addresses her in the final couplet, asking if she is only a dream.

The rhetorical strategy of these poems involves pulling each singer closer for inspection before relegating her to the foggy space of dreams or memory. Recollections of Malibran touch listeners who discovered their love for her only too late; the retired Pasta reigns on in memory; Grisi is a gauzy dream. These appeals to imagination are intensified by the almanac's miniature format. From the outside, a book is a closed object that a person can know completely; but once open, the text is no longer contained and its potential meanings and associations stretch to infinity. Miniature books exacerbate this tension because they are so obviously objects: they can be passed from hand to hand or cradled in a velvet box like a jewel. Susan Stewart has suggested that almanacs were particularly suited to the process of miniaturization and to the concomitant expansion of interior worlds via the imagination.<sup>54</sup> Opening the book to the almost miraculously miniscule writing can also prompt a tug in the opposite direction, however: while the world is reduced to fit within the covers, the tiny writing threatens to disappear into infinity and to magnify the world. The divergence between material and meaning produces the possibility of infinite containment and expansion; if a book the size of a thumbnail can contain the world and a year, what else might it hold? And, moreover, what secrets were hidden inside other exteriors? The reduction of fashionable London to a tiny book encourages the discovery of microcosms in all spaces and opens up the imagination of the reader to alternative interiorities, such as memories and make-believe.<sup>55</sup>

Fantasy and the imagination were (and are) crucial to celebrity culture. Participation required memories and mental connections between buyer and star. The poems emphasize the imaginative aspect of celebrity and posterity by elaborating on the emotional and fantastic transformations of singers and audiences. The interplay between memories and tangible objects such as the almanac parallels the interplay between the aura of a celebrity and her physical instantiation in the form of performance. This tension between a general imagining of the artist and a specific performative moment speaks to the tension in the process of celebrity: celebrities

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<sup>52</sup> An early example of this comparison can be found in *The New Monthly Magazine*, which argued in 1835 that though Giuditta Pasta was a genius, Grisi "was yet but a miniature copy, in which the essential characteristics of great style were, in a considerable degree, lost." "Giulietta Grisi." This article was republished three years later in Felix Fax, "Portfolio Papers," *The Torch*, 23 June 1838.

<sup>53</sup> "Mme Malibran," "Pasta," and "Giulietta Grisi" – even their names as given as the titles of poems imply different treatment. Madame Malibran is clearly foreign, while the formidable Pasta doesn't need (or get?) a title. Only Grisi required the specificity of a first name, as she had a sister and at least one cousin working in theaters across England and Europe. Using the diminutive form of Grisi's name, "Giulietta," rather than the more typical Giulia or Julia, supports the lighter nature of her poem, just as its use in the advertisement for "Stanca di più combattere" supports the image of the singer as delicate, feminine, and easy to possess.

<sup>54</sup> "Such experiments with the scale of writing as we find in micrographia and the miniature book exaggerate the divergent relation between the abstract and the material nature of the sign." S. Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

<sup>55</sup> *On Longing*, 41.

were prized for their unique personalities and performances, but they were also rapidly replaced, only available through the imagination, and part of a fashionable cycle. The inclusion of singers in the *Bijou Almanac* illuminates all of these contexts: the singers' poems can be read as celebrations of specific talents (Malibran is the subject of tragedy, Pasta of passion, and Grisi of fantasy) and as a commercial enterprise of nostalgia.

The almanac could be bought at a range of prices, so was accessible to a variety of patrons. For as little as a shilling and sixpence, the album could be "beautifully bound, [with] gilt edges, in a highly embellished case," or one could purchase additions. The sum of the most expensive options would be 12 shillings, to have an almanac "elegantly bound in extra illuminated morocco or vellum," an "elegantly illuminated and beautifully gilt morocco case, with spring fastenings," and the "powerful microscopic eye-glass (of half an inch focus) in tortoiseshell" folded into its own little tortoiseshell case.<sup>56</sup> In the 1840 edition, Schloss proudly proclaimed that the almanac was "Patronised by Her Majesty the Queen, and all the Royal Family," while personalized copies of the 1841 edition were presented to the members of the Royal Family.<sup>57</sup> Those aspiring to elegance could not go wrong with the uncontroversial little book as a gift or souvenir.

For those who gave the bijou as a gift, it acted as a token of friendship and reminder of the giver, both for the recipient and for their other friends.<sup>58</sup> The almanac was designed for display: the *Mirror* claimed that "For our part, we have not seen so pretty and useful a little trifle to lie upon a boudoir-table, pier-slab, or *encognure*, as is the English Bijou."<sup>59</sup> The *Literary Gazette* also imagines the little book in a lady's home, but draws attention to its perfection as a gift: "So pretty, so fit for presents, so convenient to send, and so easy to keep; so curious on the boudoir toilette, so amusing on the drawing room table... Instead of *petty* larceny, it is downright

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<sup>56</sup> 12 shillings in 1830  $\approx$  29.69 pounds in 2005, which  $\approx$  51.58 pounds in 2016  $\approx$  \$74.66 in April 2016)  
1s 6d in 1830  $\approx$  3.71 pounds in 2005, which  $\approx$  4.95 pounds in 2016  $\approx$  \$7.16 in April 2016.

These are all very rough estimates, because currency is very strange.

Currency converter from the Nat Archives: <http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results.asp#mid>  
For 2005-2016 conversion, I used <http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/>

<sup>57</sup> "This ingenious and tasteful miniature; which Sir E. Bulwer happily called the humming-bird of our gay annuals, has, upon that hint, been mounted in a manner extremely beautiful for presentation to the Royal Family, in compliment to the christening of the Prince of Wales. Her Majesty's copy is deposited on the breast of a white rose of mother-of-pearl, with its tiny glass like a dew-drop in the rainbow by its side. A humming-bird is sipping from between the rose-leaves. The sprig is of silver gilt. Prince Albert's copy is on another rose, with different foliage—in allusion to Germanic national emblems. That for the Duchess of Kent is another variety. For the Princess Royal, the Bijou is suspended, like a fruit, on a golden pine-tree; the glass, her own portrait (which is one in the publication), and the lines accompanying it, elegantly framed, forming other fruits hanging on each side. The infant Prince's copy is laid on an exquisitely carved cabinet of ivory, surmounted by the plume of Wales. The whole are executed with extraordinary skill, and stand a few inches high on velvet-covered pedestals enriched with various ciphers and devices, and covered with bellglasses. Of all the pretty things got up for this gratifying occasion—though some may be more gorgeous and costly—there will not be any (we venture to predict) more charming or appropriate than Mr. Schloss's well-imagined, and loyal, and patriotic tribute." "Varieties," *The Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c*, 22 January 1842; Julian I Edison, *Miniature Book News* 17 (1969).

<sup>58</sup> On cultures of female friendship, see Sharon Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>59</sup> The *Mirror* is cited, along with other journals, in the 1839 edition of the *Bijou Almanac*. Landon, *The English Bijou Almanac*.

robbery, to tempt us to possess a bijou for each of the dozen or two of friends, &c., whom we cannot help remembering and loving, and wishing to remember and love us at Christmas.”<sup>60</sup> The *Gazette* defines the perfect gift as something convenient to both the giver and the recipient, which will remind the recipient of the giver’s affection and inspire the same affection in them. The gift is part of a transaction of remembrance between friends.<sup>61</sup> The *Bijou Almanac* reified memories of celebrities and of a specific historical moment, and also memories of friendship. Depending on the owner, the specificity of a singer or their general celebrity status could take precedence, but most importantly, the *Bijou Almanac* allowed the owner to enjoy both possessing a singer and possessing a fashionable object.

## CONCLUSION

Possessing a singer could be as simple as buying a poem or as complicated as stalking Grisi in her dressing room. While one of these reactions is threatening, violent, and inappropriate, it is not too difficult to believe that Dupuguet’s obsession with Grisi was nurtured by some of the same mechanisms of marketing and mediation that also generated the delicate little almanac and the sappy commemorative poems. Somehow female opera singers—even more than other celebrities, I would argue—uniquely inspire the impulse to draw near, to know intimately, and even in some way to “own” the prima donna. The heady combination of performed role and public persona encouraged nineteenth-century audience members to identify with and occasionally impersonate the singer and contributed to an appearance of intimacy. Grisi was obviously a performer when she stepped onstage as Elvira in *I puritani* or Desdemona in *Otello*, but this obvious role-playing paradoxically rendered her off-stage persona even more personal. Objects and texts, such as miniatures, scores, portraits, and stories in gossip magazines, encouraged their owners to connect and identify with Grisi’s public persona and its illusion of authenticity.

Access and intimacy were both desirable to Grisi’s audiences in the 1830s and crucial elements in defining and creating her as a celebrity. Material and textual objects that drew on and inspired the imagination in different ways allowed opera-goers and fans to develop a satisfying relationship with star performers. This not only allowed Grisi to reach different audiences through distinct media channels--think of the different desires of young women performing in parlors, of society grand-dames, and of prospective suitors--but also sustained the illusion of depth. A composite image of a celebrity, conjured by a proliferation of materials with the active encouragement of imagination and memory, gives the distant subject the texture of reality and permits a kind of intimacy that is no less important because entirely imagined.

London operagoers needed their imaginations (and preferably also memories of a performance) to make a score sing or a souvenir almanac attain its full meaning. Their particular memories are inevitably lost to us in the twenty-first century; but the physical and textual sources that inspired them can, in turn, stimulate our own imaginations as historians and opera lovers. The material specificity of these souvenirs, manufactured to order for a precise place, time, and cultural mood, make them especially rich sources for historians. Encountering a volume like the

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<sup>60</sup> *The English Bijou Almanac*.

<sup>61</sup> For an exploration of the contemporaneous French culture of friendship and gift-giving, see Sarah Horowitz, “States of Intimacy: Friendship and the Remaking of French Political Elites, 1815--1848” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2008).

*Bijou Almanac* sparks especially vivid fantasies—and yes, also insights--into the singer and the audience members who loved her.

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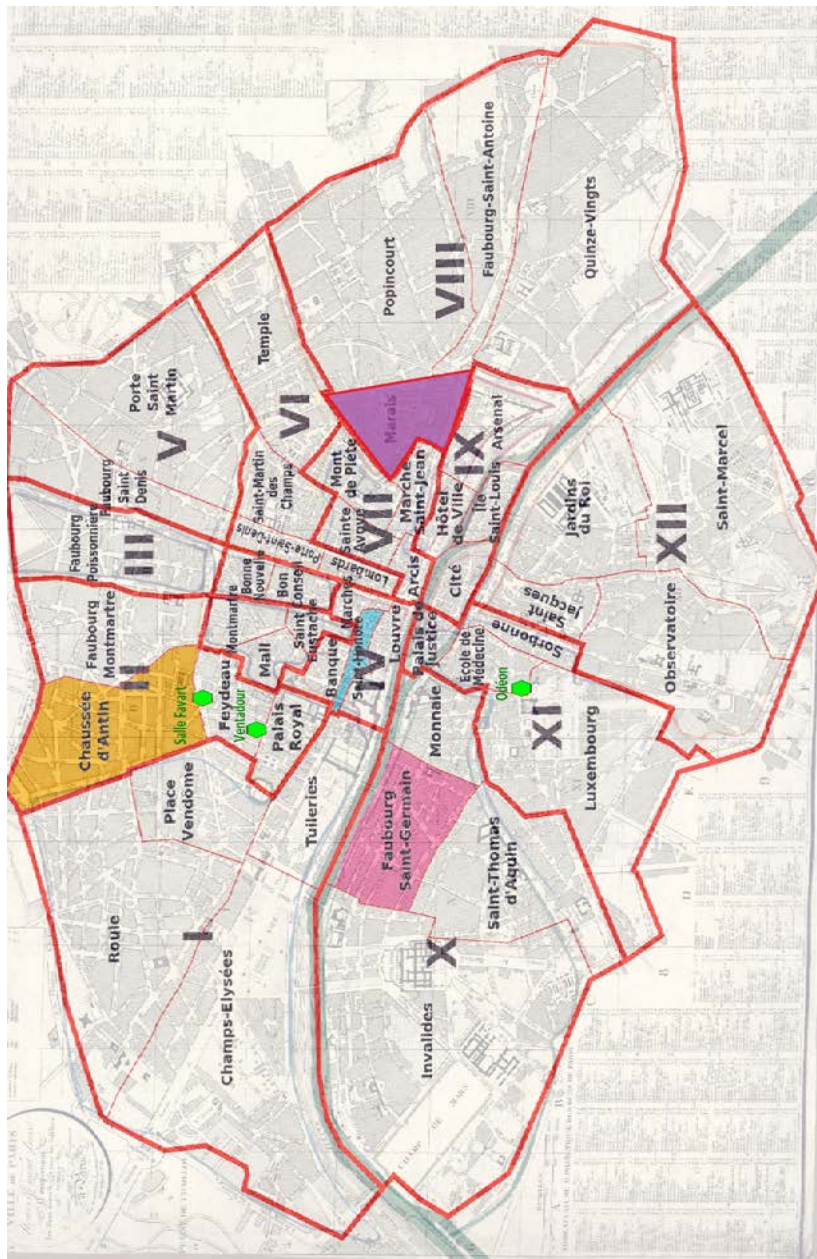
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## FIGURES

### Chapter One: Musical Chairs

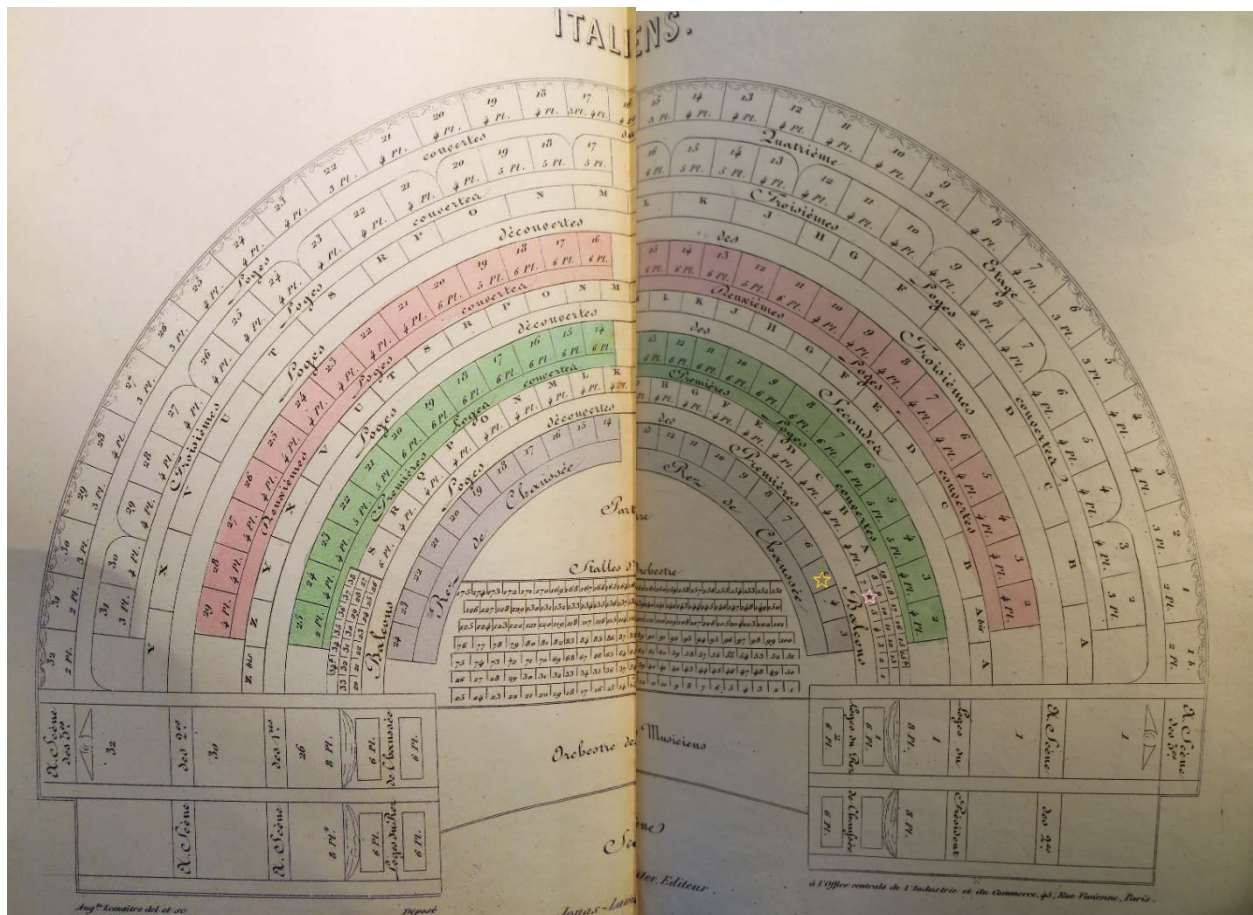
Fig. 1.1: Hocquart map of Paris (1830) georectified to modern Paris, with an overlay of the former arrondissement system.



Theaters are marked in green. Salle Favart is in the second arrondissement at the top, near the Salle Ventadour (middle), while the Odéon is across the river in the eleventh.

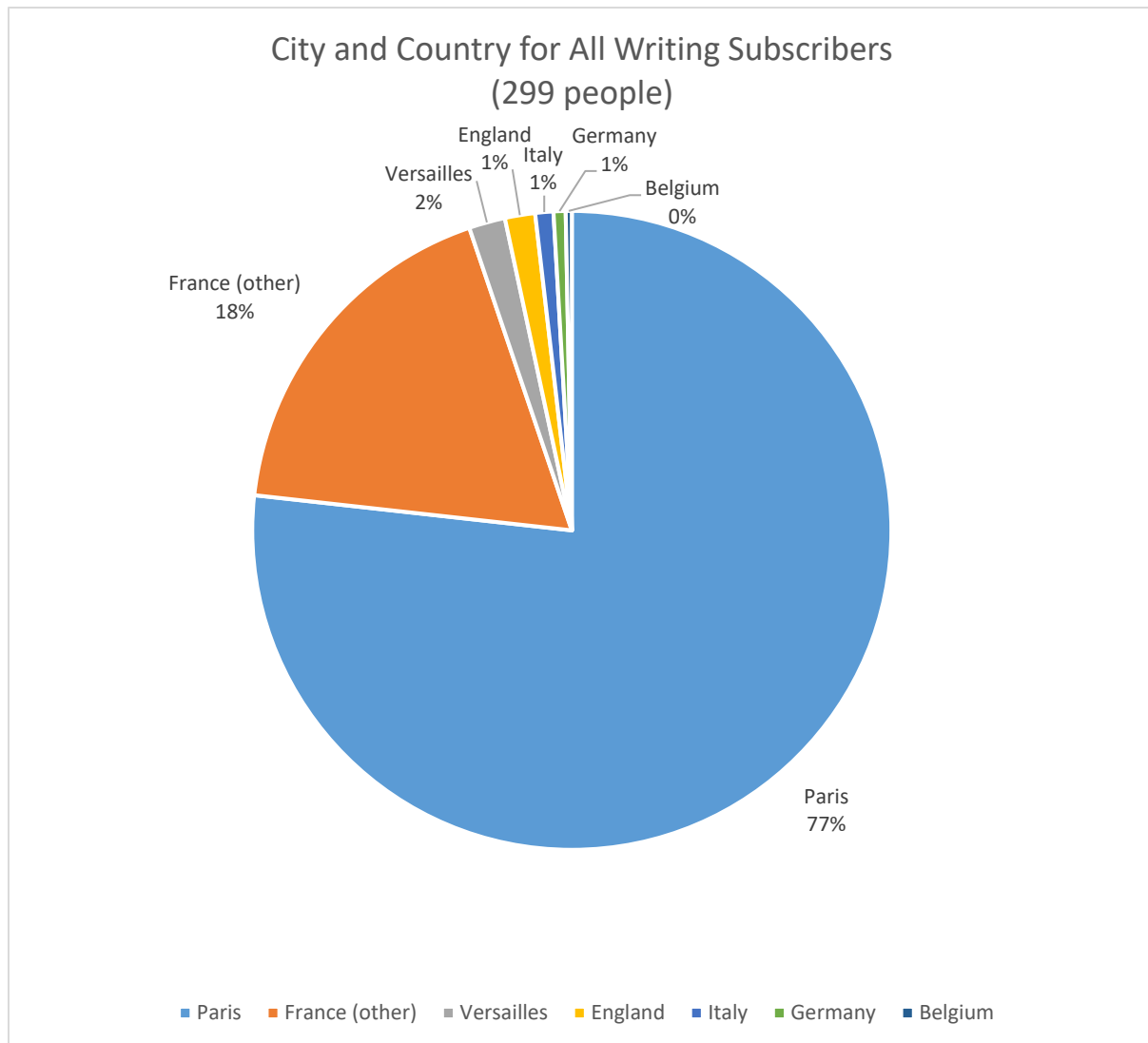


Fig. 1.2: Seating Chart of the Théâtre Italien, with Malançon and Falcon's seats starred



Malançon's seat is marked by the yellow star, and Falcon's is marked by the pink star. The seating chart comes from Jonas-Lavater's *Plans des Principales Salles de Théâtres de Paris* and is of the Salle Ventadour. There is no date for the plan, but the text that accompanies it makes it clear that the book was published after 1844. Therefore, it might not be the seating chart that existed when Malançon was buying tickets. It is, however, the only one of the theater plans collection that matches the terms used by subscribers: other theaters, such as the Odéon and the Opéra, use terms like "Stalles d'amphithéâtre" and "galerie" that do not appear in the collection of letters written about the Théâtre Italien.

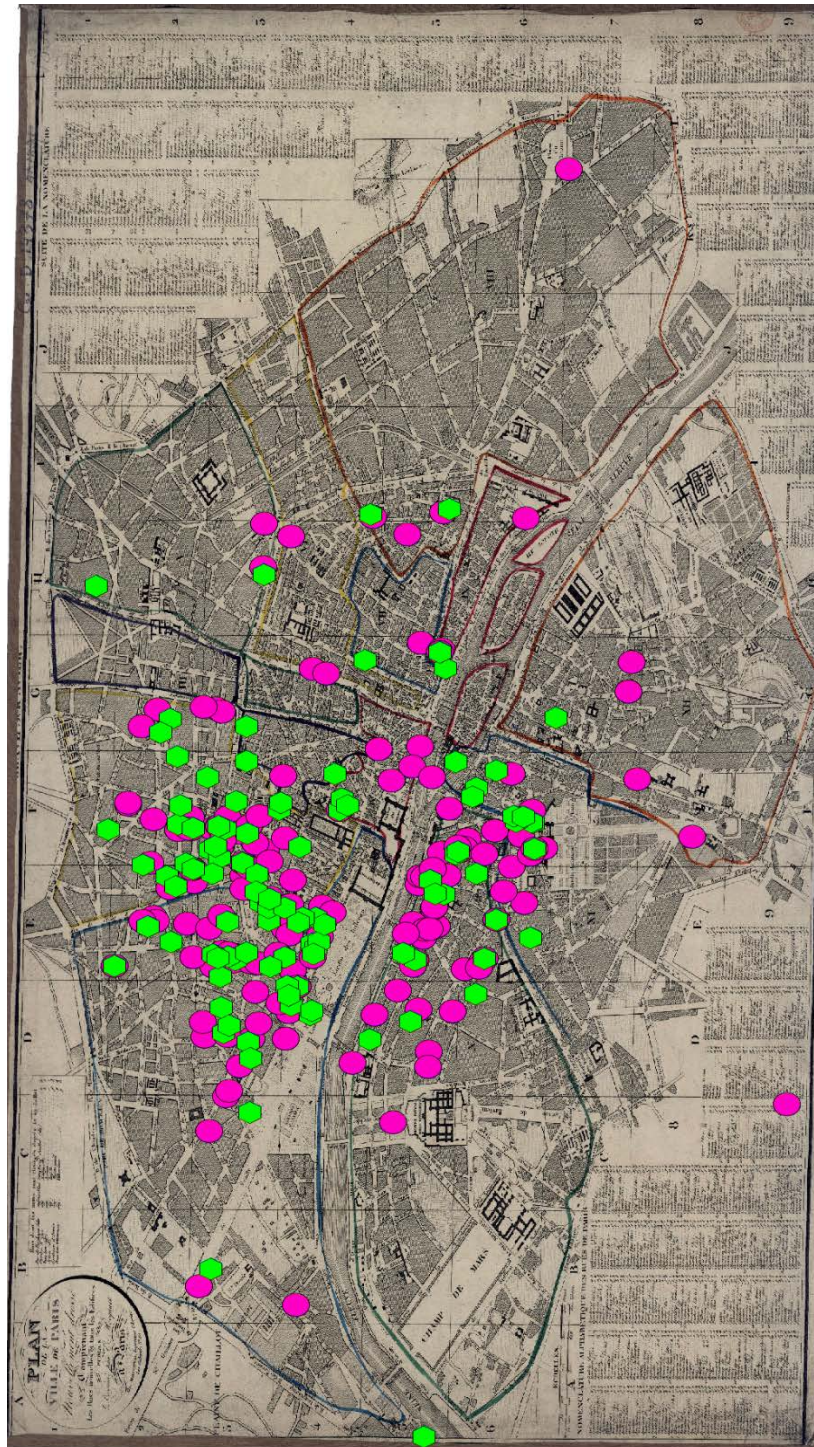
Fig. 1.3: Geographical distribution of writers



299 subscribers have addresses identifiable by city and country (22 have more than one addresses – for this chart, all addresses were counted).

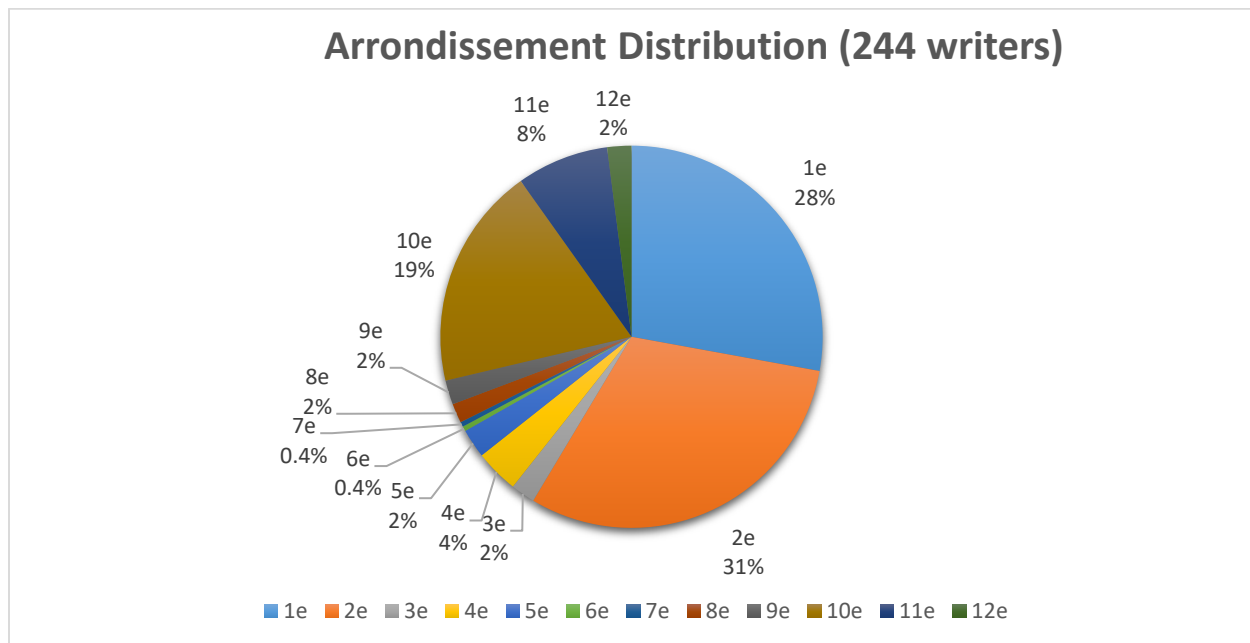


Fig. 1.4: Hocqart Map of Paris (1830), with subscriber overlay



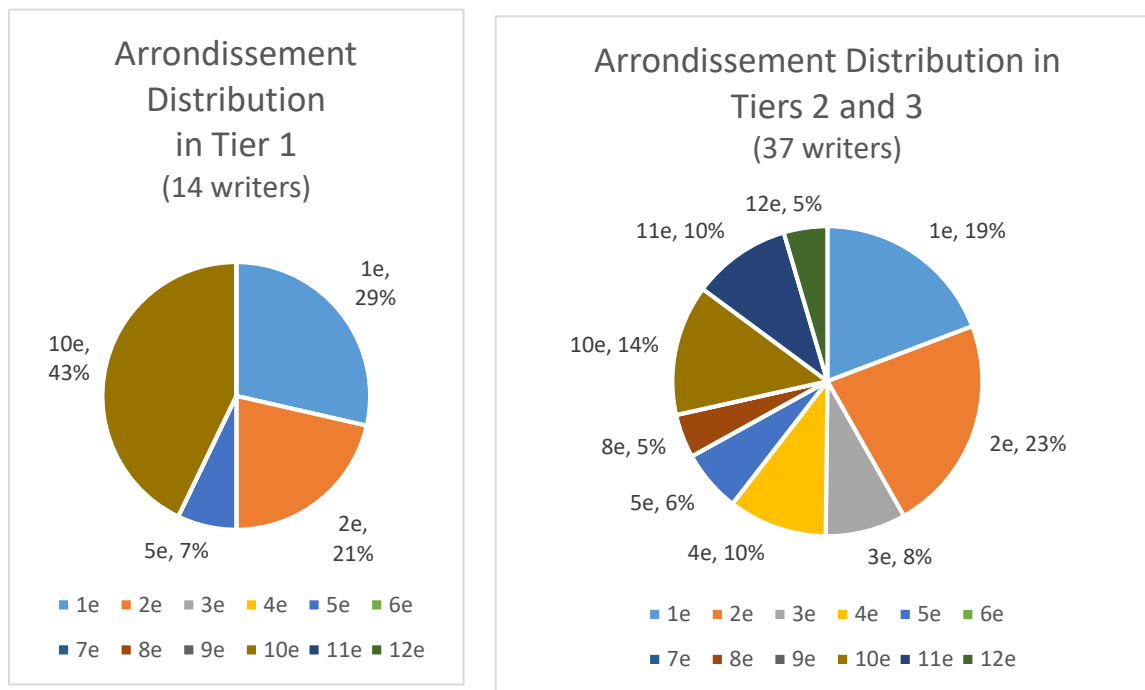
Out of 471 unique individuals, the letters provided 189 return addresses (in green). My undergraduate research assistants and I found 184 additional addresses by looking in sources such as the *Almanach des 25,000 principaux habitants de Paris* during the relevant years (in pink). Most of the subscribers are concentrated in Paris, particularly on the west side.

Fig. 1.4 (continued)



People from the first, second, and tenth arrondissements make up 78% of the 244 writers with known addresses in Paris.

Fig. 1.5: Arrondissement distribution according to tiers



When restricted to those who had seats in the first tier (and had known Parisian addresses), the percentage of people from the first, second, and tenth arrondissements increases to 93%. When restricted to those who sat in the second and third tier (who had known Parisian addresses), this percentage drops to 55%.

Fig. 1.6: Comparisons between all known tiers, all known addresses, and people whose tier and address is known.

The subsection of people with both a known arrondissement AND a known tier (92 people) has very similar proportions to all people with known arrondissement (244 people) and all people with known tiers (242 people). For more detailed data, see Appendix 2.

## Arrondissements

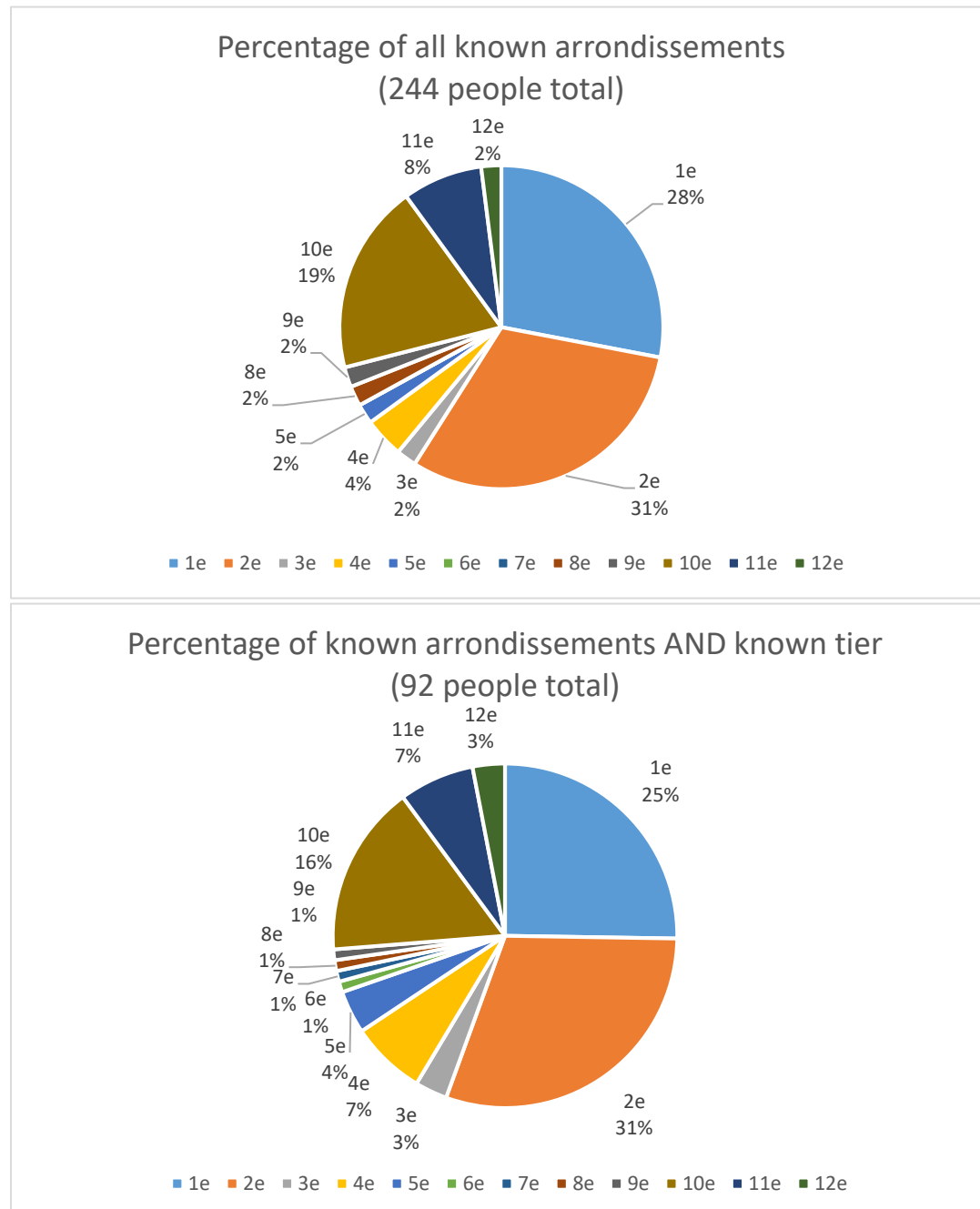


Fig. 1.6 (continued)  
Tiers

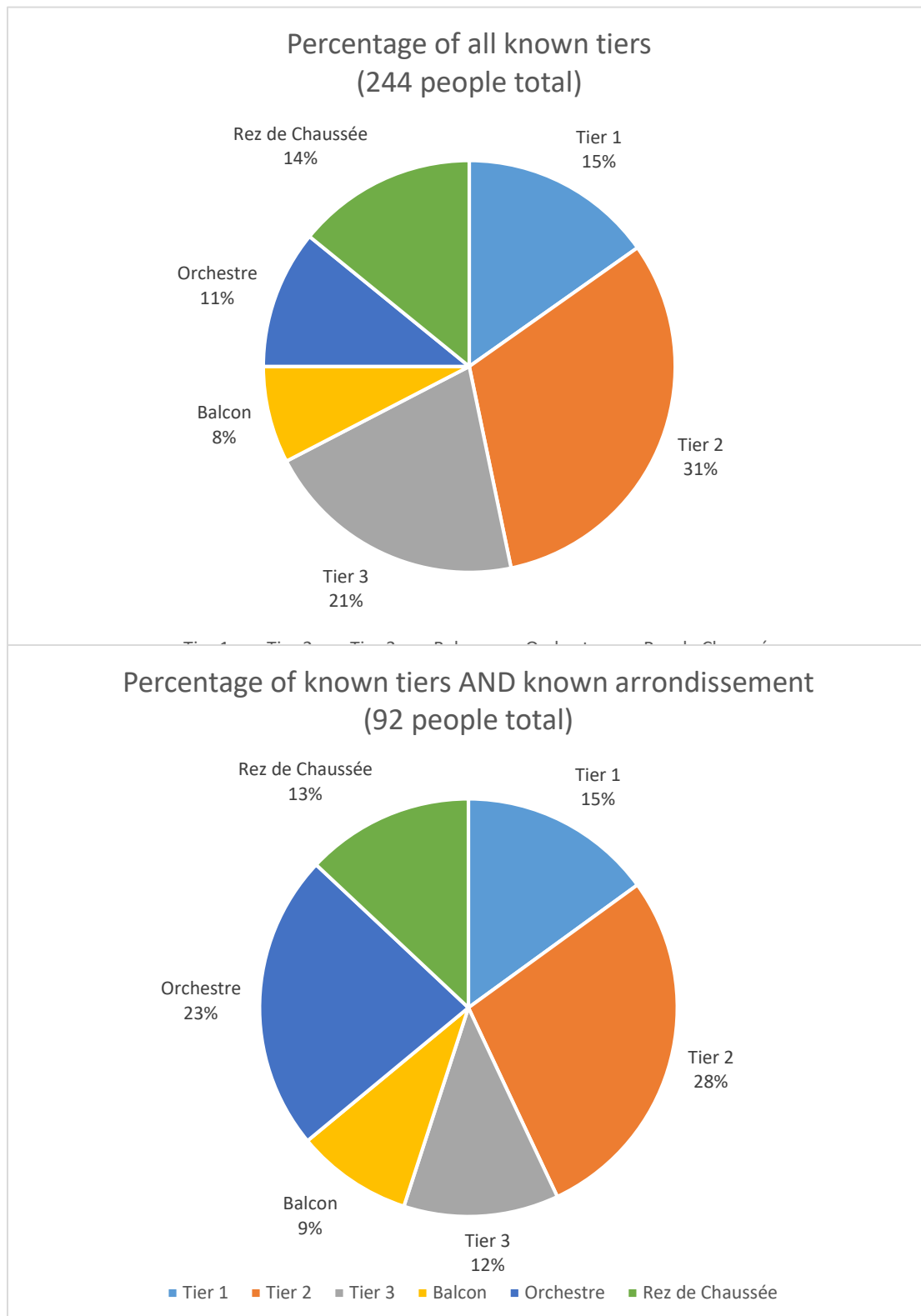
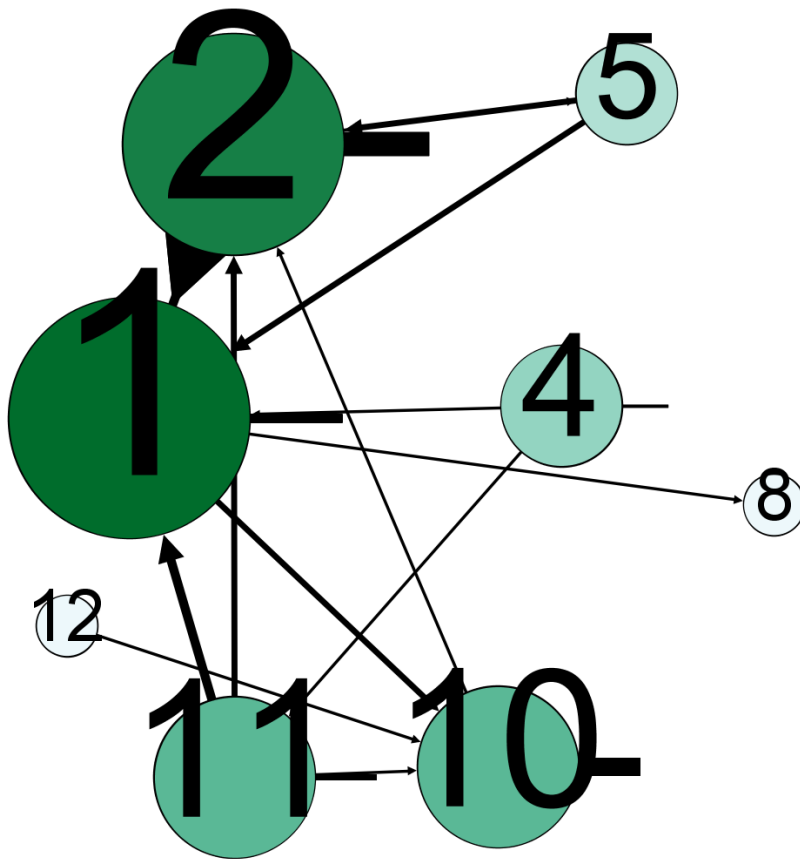


Fig. 1.7: Networks between arrondissements



This network shows connections between subscribers across neighborhoods. A connection means that a person wrote a letter with an identifiable address that mentioned another person whose address could also be identified. The size of each circle indicates the number of letters that went out and in to that neighborhood, while the weight of the arrow shows the strength of the connection between two neighborhoods. The first and second arrondissement interacted the most.

The first and second arrondissements were the most connected: they were both mentioned the most and wrote the most letters on behalf of other people. These relationships were imbalanced, however. People in the first referred to others more than others referred to them. The third graph shows reciprocity in specific relationships. In the connection between the first and the second arrondissement, the first was more likely to write about the second than the reverse.



Fig. 1.7 (continued)

Number of Connections per Arrondissement

Arrondissement involved	Number of connections
1	59
2	67
3	3
4	7
5	18
6	3
7	0
8	2
9	8
10	25
11	9
12	0

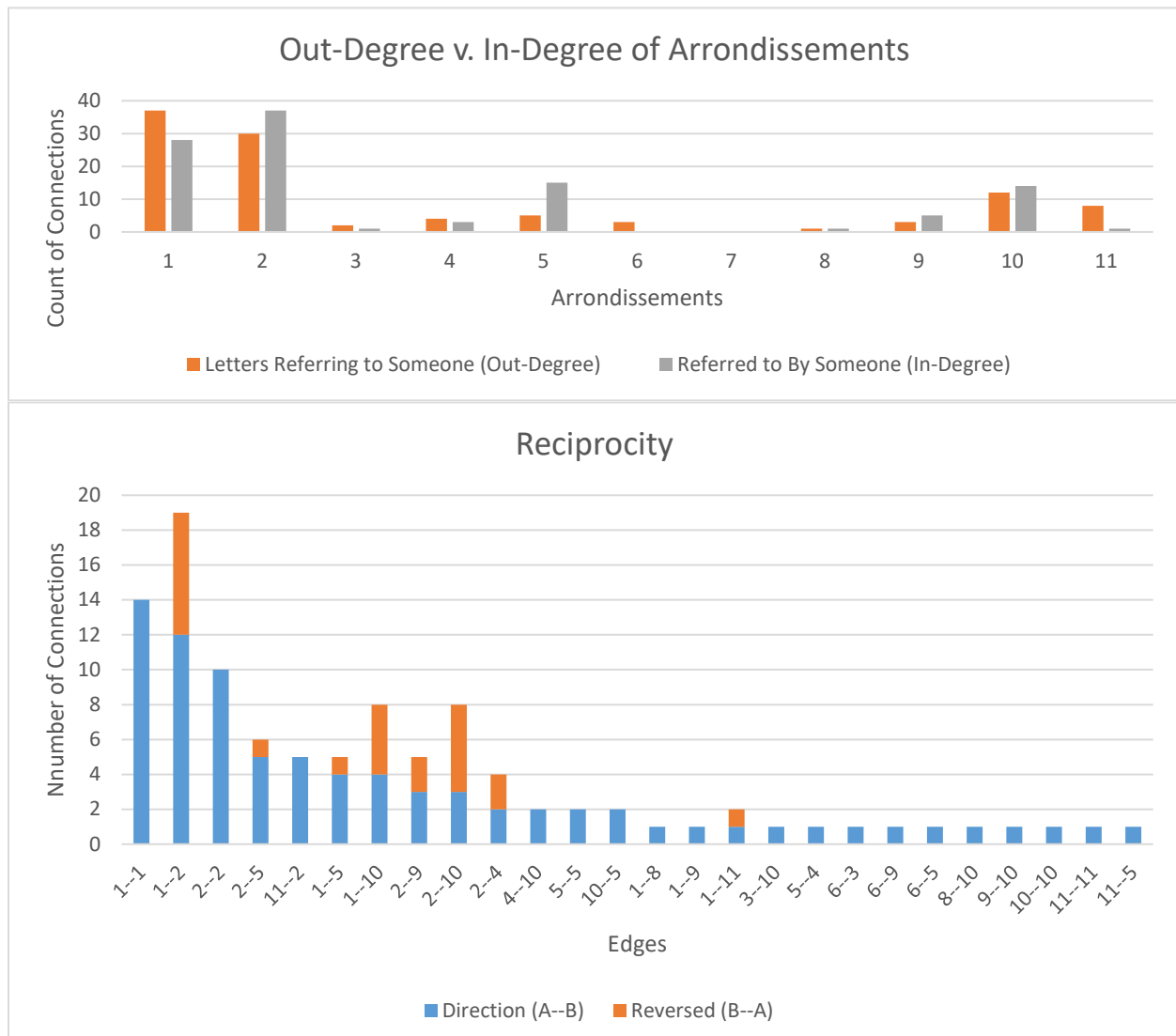
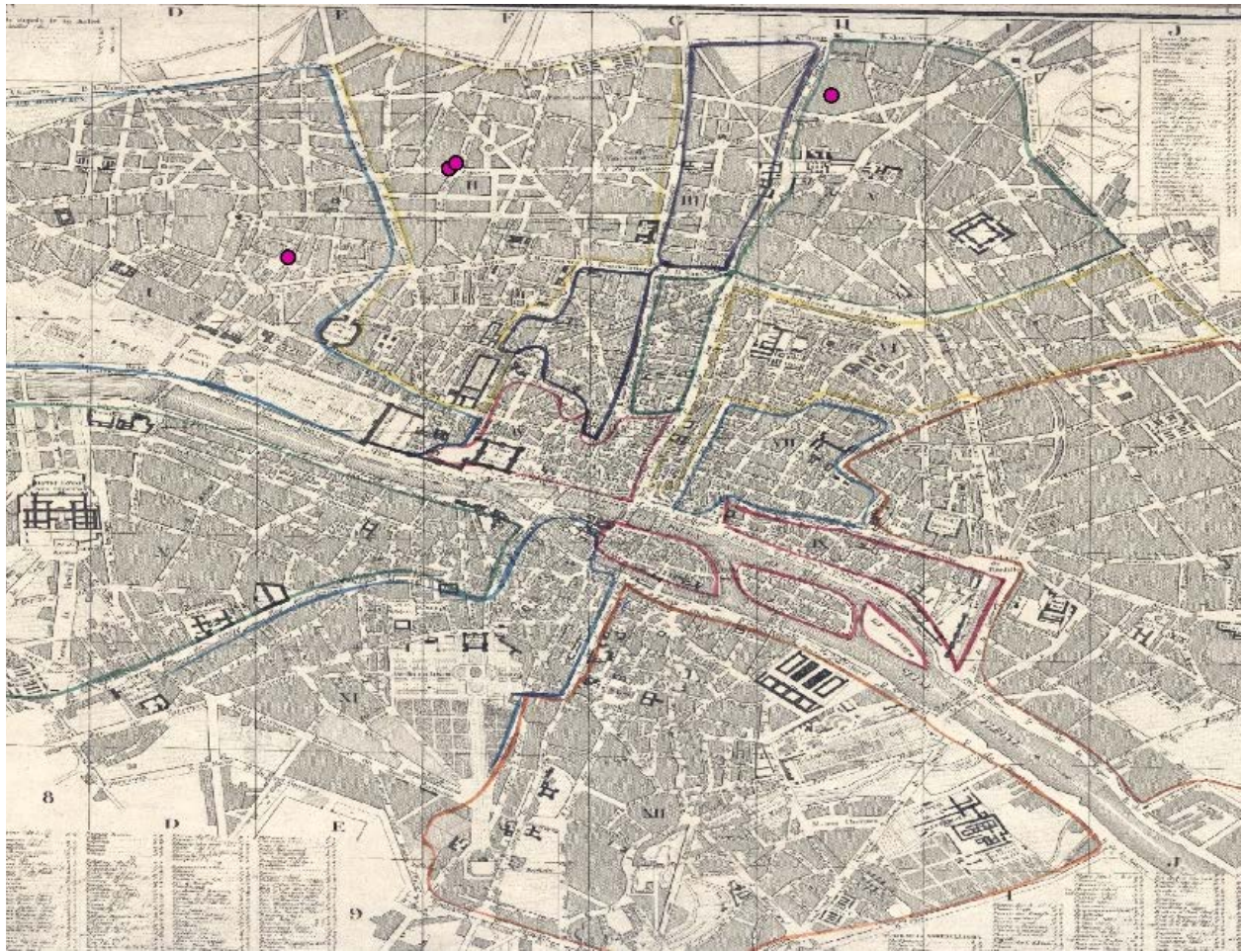
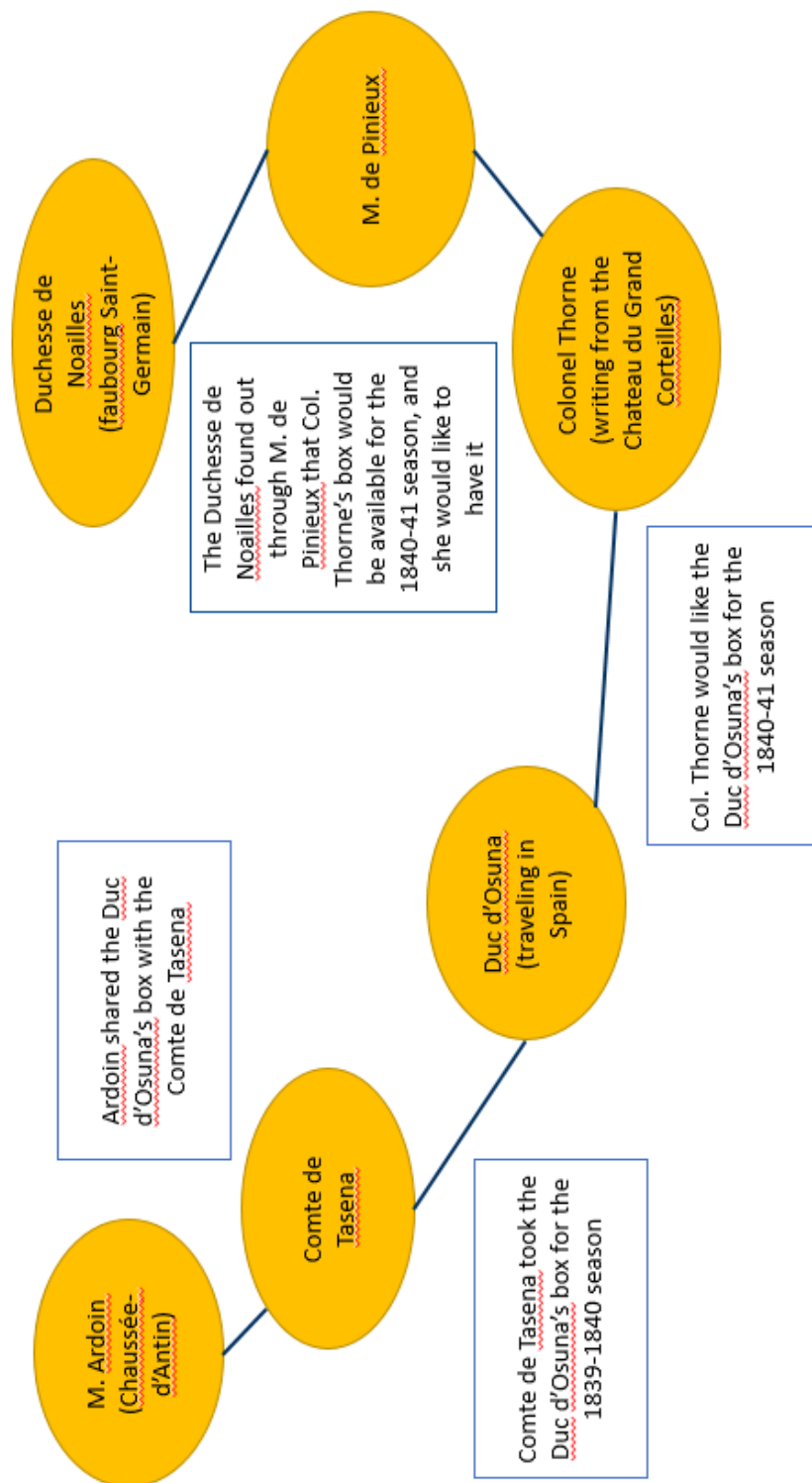


Fig. 1.8: Déron, Mévil, Chavannes network



From left to right, the dots represent 1) Déron, 2) Mévil, and 3) Chavannes.

Fig. 1.9: Network around the Duc d'Osuna



92





Fig. 1.11: Fashion Illustration from *La Mode*, 1835



*La Mode*, 28 November 1835

## Chapter Two: The Queen of Elegance and Ennui

Fig. 2.1: Bellini, *I puritani*: Giorgio, Act I “Sorgea la notte folta”

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system features a vocal line (bass clef) and a piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

**System 1:**

sor - gea la not - te fol - ta ta - cea la terra e il cie - lo pa -

**System 2:**

rea natura av - vol - ta av - volta in mes - to vel

**System 3:**

l'o - ra propi - zia a mi - se - ri il tuo pre - gar, tue la - gri - me

Fig. 2.2: Bellini, *I puritani*: Giorgio, Act II “Cinta di fiore”

The image displays a musical score for a vocal and piano arrangement. The vocal line is written in a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Cin ta di fio re e col bel crin dis ci ol to ta lor la". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, a treble and a bass clef, both in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line with eighth notes and rests in the left hand.

Cin ta di fio re e col bel crin dis ci ol to ta lor la

Fig. 2.3: Bellini, *I puritani*: Giorgio and Riccardo, Act II “*Suoni la tromba*”

The musical score is written for three parts: Soprano (R), Alto (G), and Piano. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are in Italian.

**First System:**

- Soprano (R):** Suo - ni la tromba, e in tre - pi do
- Alto (G):** Suo - ni la tromba, e in tre - pi do
- Piano:** The piano part features a complex melodic line in the right hand with many slurs and ties, and a bass line with triplets (marked '3') and slurs.

**Second System:**

- Soprano (R):** io pu - gner-ro da for - te.
- Alto (G):** io pu - gner-ro da for - te.
- Piano:** The piano part continues with similar melodic and rhythmic patterns, including triplets and slurs.



### Chapter Three: How to Possess a Singer (Appropriately)

Fig. 3.1: Rossini, *Otello*: Desdemona and Emilia's duettino, Act I, mm. 38-44.

38

mor du - ra un mo - men - to il

mor, des - ta in noi l'a - mor,

40

giu - bi - lo, e - ter - no e il suo do -

du - ra un mo - men - to il giu - bi - lo e -

42

lor, e - ter - no e il suo do - lor,

ter - no e il suo do - lor, e - ter - no e il do - lor,

Fig. 3.2: “Stanca di più combattere,” mm. 5-15, Lonsdale and Mills.

5 GIULIETTA

Stan - ca di più com - bat - te - re, con la crudel mia

8

sor - te, sen - to a - van - zar la

10

mor - te, ma oh! dio lon - tan da

*col canto.*

12

te; sep - pi i sos - pir re -

This musical system covers measures 12 and 13. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 12 contains a half note G4, a quarter rest, a half note A4, a quarter rest, a half note B4, a quarter rest, and a half note C5. Measure 13 contains a half note D#5, a quarter note E5, a half note F#5, and a quarter note G5. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes in the treble clef, while the left hand plays a series of eighth notes in the bass clef, both spanning measures 12 and 13.

14

pri - me - re, pe - nar, ta - cer, lan

This musical system covers measures 14 and 15. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps. Measure 14 contains a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a half note B4, a quarter note C5, a half note D#5, a quarter note E5, a half note F#5, and a quarter note G5. Measure 15 contains a half note A5, a quarter note B5, a half note C6, a quarter note D6, a half note E6, and a quarter note F#6. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes in the treble clef, while the left hand plays a series of eighth notes in the bass clef, both spanning measures 14 and 15.

Fig. 3.3: “Stanca di più combattere,” Cabaletta, mm. 63-75, Mori & Lavenu

The image displays a musical score for a cabaletta, measures 63 through 75. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are in Italian. The score is divided into four systems, each starting with a measure number (63, 66, 70, 73) in the left margin. Trills (tr) are indicated above certain notes in measures 63, 66, 67, 69, and 70. The lyrics are: "ma lun - gi i fa - ti tros - se - ro quel - le a dora - te" (measures 63-65), "fa - ci a me do - len - te tol - se - ro la spe - me del mio" (measures 66-69), "cor e a me do - len - te tol - se - ro la" (measures 70-72), and "spe - me del mio co-re e a me do - len - te" (measures 73-75). The melody is characterized by frequent sixteenth-note runs and trills, creating a sense of urgency and emotional intensity.

63 *tr* ma lun - gi i fa - ti tros - se - ro quel - le a dora - te

66 *tr* fa - ci a me do - len - te tol - se - ro la spe - me del mio

70 *tr* cor e a me do - len - te tol - se - ro la

73 spe - me del mio co-re e a me do - len - te

Fig. 3.4: Bellini, *I Puritani*: “Son vergin vezzosa,” mm. 1-16.

*brillante*

Son ver - gin vez - zo - sa in ve - sta di

26

*ALL. MOD.* *pp*

4

spo - sa, son bian - ca ed u - mi - le qual

7

gi - glio d'a - pril. Ho chio - me o - do -

*pp*

10

ro - se cui cin - ser tue ro

13

se, tue

16

ro

Fig. 3.5: “Stanca di più combattere,” Cabaletta, mm. 67-68, Mori & Lavenu

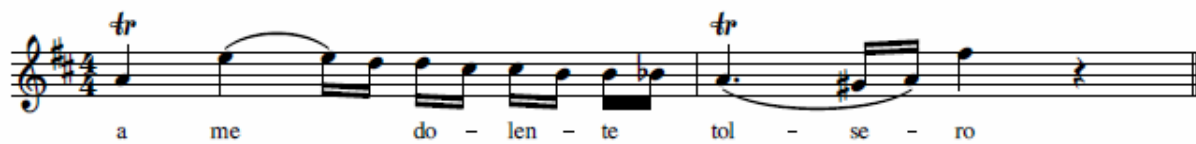


Fig. 3.6: “Stanca di più combattere,” Cabaletta, mm. 73-74, Mori & Lavenu



Fig. 3.7: Title page of Czerny, "Impressions de l'Opéra: Gems à la Malibran et Pauline Garcia."

Nº 2

IMPRESSIONS DE L'OPERA,  
OU  
GEMS À LA  
*Grisi, Persiani, Malibran, Pauline Garcia,  
Pasta, & Rubini.*  
Trois Fantaisies Brillantes,  
*Sur les Motifs favoris Chantés par ces célèbres Artistes.*  
POUR LE  
FORTE PIANO.  
Nº 1, GEMS À LA GRISI, ET PERSIANI.  
2, GEMS À LA MALIBRAN, ET PAULINE GARCIA.  
3, GEMS À LA PASTA, ET RUBINI.  
*Composées et Dedicées à*  
*Miss Firth,*  
Hampstead.  
PAR  
CHARLES CZERNY.

Ent. Sta. Hall.

THESE WORKS ARE COPYRIGHT.



OP. 648.

Price 5/-

London, Printed by Messrs R. COCKS & CO. 20, Princes Street, Hanover Square.

MUSIC SELLERS IN ORDINARY TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY.

QUEEN VICTORIA I.

and at Vienna, by P. Mechetti.



Fig. 3.8: Page 10 of Czerny, *Impressions de l'Opéra: Gems à la Malibran et Pauline Garcia*



Fig. 3.9: Schloss's *Bijou Almanac* (1837, 1839). Held at the John Rylands Library in Manchester. A standard-size ID card gives an idea of scale in the photograph on the right.

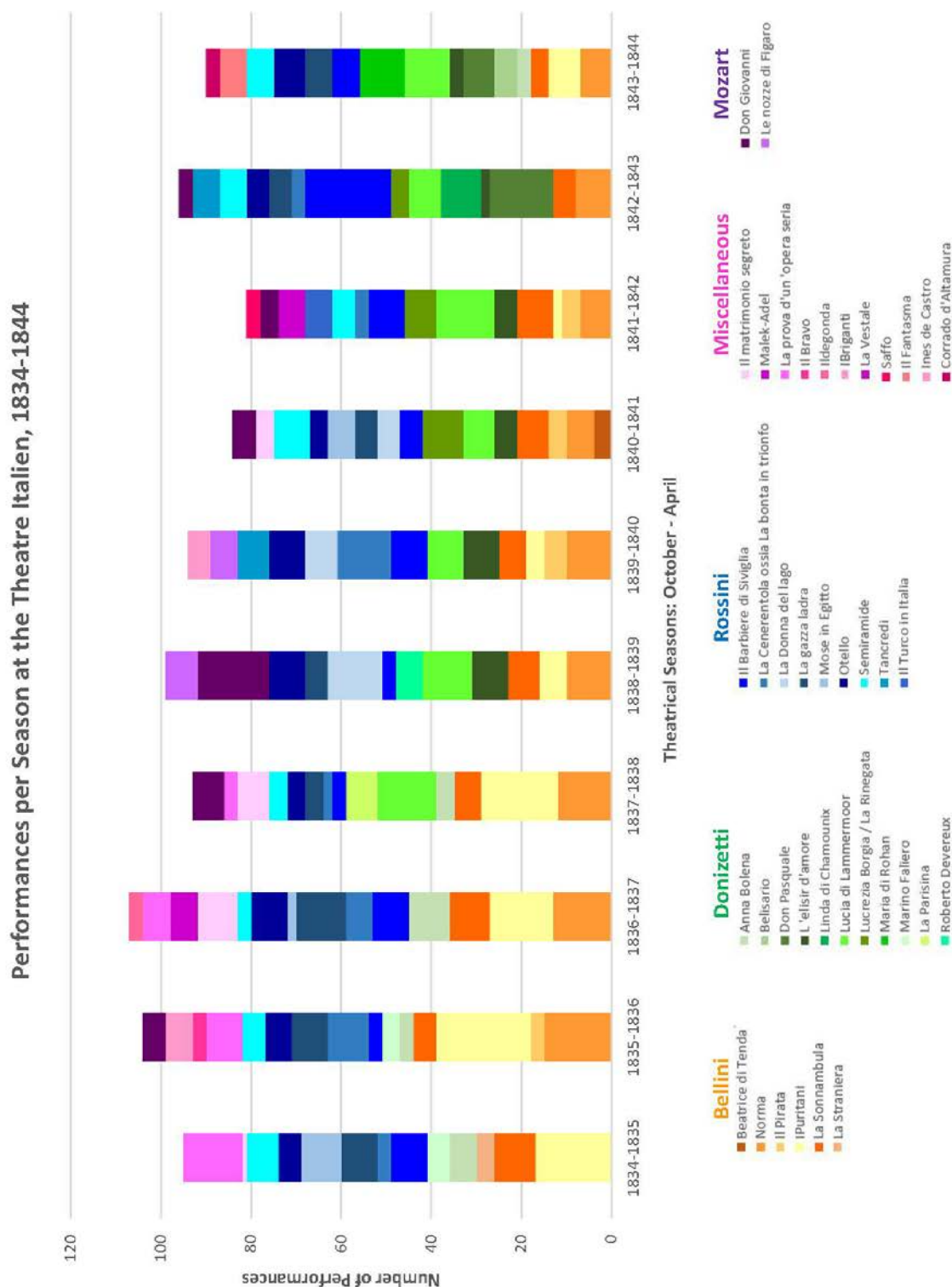


Fig. 3.10: Poems from the *English Bijou Almanac* (Schloss).

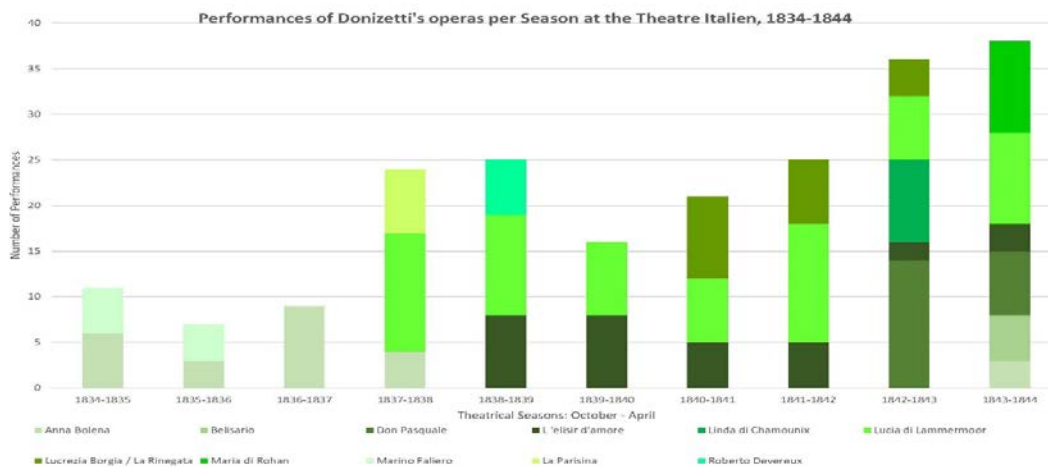
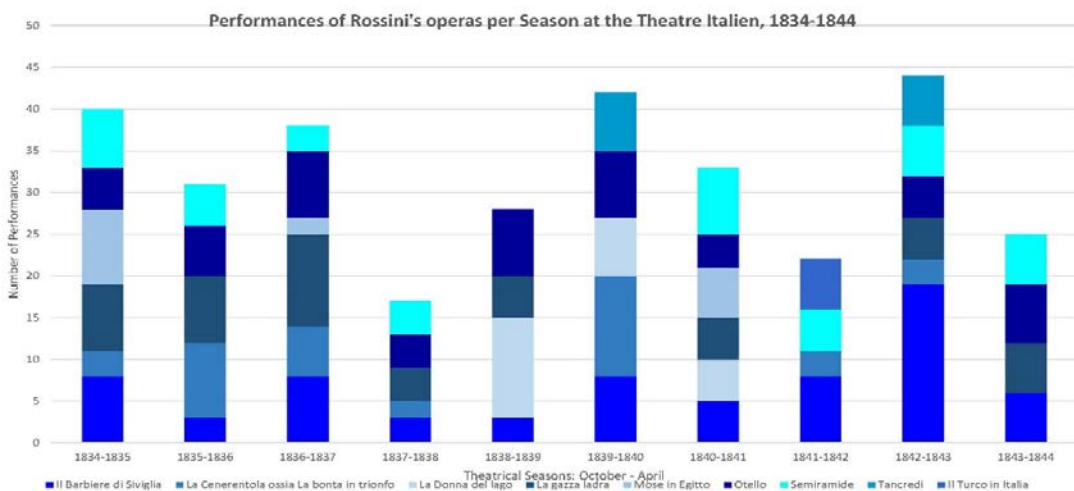
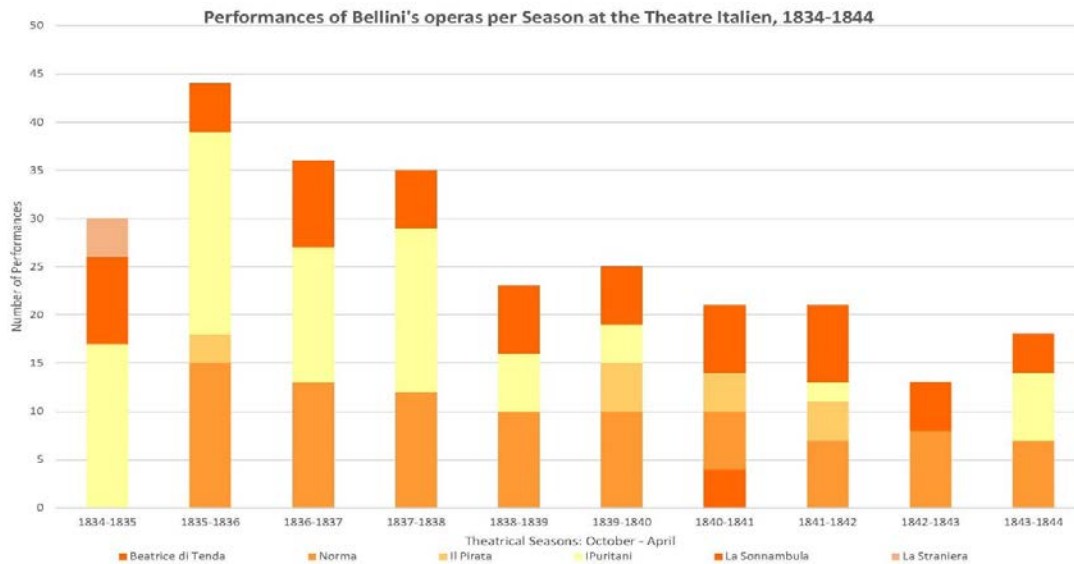
<p><b>MADAME MALIBRAN</b> (1836)</p> <p>Mournfully, ah! Mournfully Shed the myrtle o'er her; Not alone with verse and flower- With the heart deplore her.</p> <p>Sweet emotions, smiles and tears, Lived amid her numbers; Let their tender memory Sanctify her slumbers.</p> <p>Angels claim the angel one; Fling the palm above her; Too late, with a fond regret, We find how much we love her.</p>	<p><b>GIULIETTA GRISI</b> (1838)</p> <p>I heard her, and the air was filled With one delicious song; Such as when leaves and flowers are hushed The night hours bear along; When singing to the sweet south west, The nightingale broods o'er her nest.</p> <p>I saw her, and the large dark eyes, Were lit with heart and thought; A thousand fairy fantasies, By that sweet face were brought. Lady art thou what thou dost seem, Or art thou but a lovely dream?</p>	<p><b>PASTA</b> (1839)</p> <p>I see thee, with thy night-black hair Flung wild and loose in thy despair; Upraised are thy imploring hands To heaven, which yet thy prayer withstands, And in thy deep and flashing eye Is passion's utter agony.</p> <p>A Grecian statue dost thou seem, Wrought up in some tumultuous dream; While in the music of thy tone Is every thrill to sorrow known. Queen art thou – and still must be queen, While one heart keeps thy haunting scene.</p>
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## Appendix 1: Analysis of Repertoire at the Théâtre Italien

All data in this appendix comes from Céline Frigau, “L’oeil et le geste: Pratiques Sceniques de chanteurs et regards de spectateurs au Theatre Royal Italien, 1815-1848,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris VIII, 2009). The excerpted seasons cover the years when the four principal singers were Rubini, Lablache, Tamburini, and Grisi.



## Comparison of Bellini, Rossini, and Donizetti



### Distribution of premieres during the July Monarchy over days of the week

From the 1830-31 season to the 1846-47 season, 39 operas had their premieres at the Théâtre Italien. This counts both world premieres and Parisian premieres. There were no premieres in the 1847-48 season. 95% of premieres took place during the regularly scheduled week, however, the premieres of *Fausto* and *Beatrice di Tenda* took place on Mondays, with *Fausto* in the 1830-31 season, and *Beatrice di Tenda* in the 1840-41 season. There are no meaningful trends across the 18 year period in the day of the week for the premieres.

Monday	5%
Tuesday	44%
Thursday	33%
Saturday	18%

## Appendix 2: Distribution of letters by arrondissement and tier

Tables should be read from left to right. The percentages are calculated from the row total. The bottom rows allow a comparison between the subset of people with both addresses in Paris and known seats and the larger set of people with either known seats or known arrondissements.

Table 1: Percentage of people from each neighborhood who sat in each tier: Where did people from specific neighborhoods sit?

Arrondissement	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Balcon	Orch	RdC	Grand Total	Number of people
1e	17%	43%	0%	4%	30%	4%	100%	23
2e	11%	25%	7%	18%	21%	18%	100%	28
3e	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3
4e	0%	50%	17%	17%	17%	0%	100%	6
5e	25%	25%	25%	0%	0%	25%	100%	4
6e	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	1
7e	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	1
8e	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	1
9e	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	1
10e	40%	0%	20%	7%	20%	13%	100%	15
11e	0%	50%	17%	0%	17%	17%	100%	6
12e	0%	0%	33%	0%	33%	33%	100%	3
Each tier as a percentage of the all people with known tiers and addresses	15%	28%	12%	9%	23%	13%	100%	92
All Tiers	14%	29%	19%	7%	10%	13%	92%	244
Difference	2%	-1%	-7%	2%	13%	0%	8%	

- Most people from the first arrondissement sat in either the second tier or the orchestra (44% and 30%, respectively). This is different from the general population: out of all the letters, with and without addresses, 19% sat in the second tier, and 10% sat in the orchestra.
- Though 29% of people who wrote in sat in the 2nd tier, and 28% of people with addresses in Paris sat in the 2nd tier, no one known to live in the tenth sat there, and 44% of people from the 1st did.
- Around 14% of people who wrote in (both with and without addresses in Paris) sat in the first tier. In comparison, 40 % of people who wrote in from the tenth sat there.
- 10% of all people asked for seats in the orchestra, but between 20-30% of people who lived in the first, second, and tenth did. The orchestra level was more popular among the elite than it was among the general population.

Table 2: Percentage in each tier of different neighborhoods: Where did the people in each tier come from?

Arrondissement	1e	2e	3e	4e	5e	6e	7e	8e	9e	10e	11e	12e	Total	Number of people per tier
Tier 1	29%	21%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	43%	0%	0%	100%	14
Tier 2	38%	27%	8%	12%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%	100%	26
Tier 3	0%	18%	9%	9%	9%	0%	0%	9%	0%	27%	9%	9%	100%	11
Balcon	13%	63%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	100%	8
Orch	33%	29%	0%	5%	0%	0%	5%	0%	5%	14%	5%	5%	100%	21
RdC	8%	42%	0%	0%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	17%	8%	8%	100%	12
Arrondissements with Known Tier	25%	30%	3%	7%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%	16%	7%	3%	100%	92
All Arrondissements	28%	31%	2%	4%	2%	0%	0%	2%	2%	19%	8%	2%	100%	244
Difference	-3%	0%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	-1%	-1%	-3%	-1%	1%		

- 25% of the 92 people with a known arrondissement and known tier come from the first arrondissement. This is fairly similar to the percentage of the 244 people with a known arrondissement who come from the first: 28%.
- While only 28% of people with a known arrondissement and known tier come from the first, and 25% of people with a known arrondissement come from the first, 38% of Tier 2 comes from the first. Tier 2 has more people from the first than would be expected.
- The first tier has a lower percentage of first and second arrondissement attendees than the overall audience. The first tier is instead dominated by people from the tenth.
- The second tier has a much lower percentage of people from the tenth than the overall audience: no people who sat in the second tier and had a known address came from the tenth, whereas 19% of all people with a known arrondissement were from the tenth.

## Appendix 3 – Distribution over letters requesting days of the week

(.5 days per week means that a person wanted to attend once every two weeks.)

<b>In 1838:</b>	<b>57 letters specified how many days per week someone wanted to attend, and 58 days were mentioned.</b>			
	<i>Of the 57 letters</i>			<i>Of the 58 days</i>
	<i># of days per week</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Day of the week</i>
	0.5	1.75%		Jeudi
	1	84.21%		Mardi
	2	7.02%		Samedi
	3	7.02%		
<b>In 1839:</b>	<b>111 letters specified how many days per week someone wanted to attend, and 104 days were mentioned.</b>			
	<i>Of the 111 letters</i>			<i>Of the 104 days</i>
	<i># of days per week</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Day of the week</i>
	0.5	4.50%		Jeudi
	1	86.49%		Mardi
	2	7.21%		Samedi
	3	1.80%		
<b>In 1840:</b>	<b>104 letters specified how many days per week someone wanted to attend, and 113 days were mentioned</b>			
	<i>Of the 104 letters</i>			<i>Of the 113 days</i>
	<i># of days per week</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Day of the week</i>
	0.5	3.85%		jeudi
	1	86.54%		mardi
	2	4.81%		samedi
	3	4.81%		
<b>In All years:</b>	<b>272 letters specified how many days per week someone wanted to attend, and 275 days were mentioned</b>			
	<i>Of the 272 letters</i>			<i>Of the 275 days mentioned</i>
	<i># of days per week</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Day of the week</i>
	0.5	3.37%		Jeudi
	1	85.75%		Mardi
	2	6.34%		Samedi
	3	4.54%		