

# THE CONTE MUSICAL AND EARLY MUSIC

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THE REVOLUTION OF JULY, 1830 WAS, despite the hopes and enthusiasms of Jeune France romantic spirits, not a very glorious affair, and the 'monarchie de juillet' which succeeded it is notably chiefly for the rise in wealth and power of the bourgeoisie. In contrast to political and social developments the decade of the 1830s is a brilliant period in French literature and the arts, showing the full flowering of Gallic romanticism.<sup>1</sup> The year 1830, for which Delacroix's *Liberty Guiding the People* stands as visual symbol, is marked by two events of interest to students of French musical culture: the premiere of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and the publication in translation of the tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann.<sup>2</sup>

Enthusiasm for Hoffmann's work led to the vogue for the *conte fantastique*, a genre cultivated by a large number of French writers great and small. Some of these writers imitated not only Hoffmann's manner but his subject matter as well. It is thus not surprising, given Hoffmann's musical bent, to find many *contes* dealing at least peripherally and in many instances centrally with music and musicians. Following Hoffmann's models they present musicians coupling eccentricities of appearance and behavior with uncompromising devotion to high artistic standards – a combination pretty well guaranteed to provoke uncomprehending and unsympathetic response from society at large. Exceptional cases are provided by sketches of performers whose extraordinary natural talents,

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<sup>1</sup> See J.-M. BAILBÉ, *Le Roman et la musique en France sous la monarchie de Juillet*, Paris, Minard, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> On Hoffmann's vogue in France see Elizabeth TEICHMANN, *La Fortune d'Hoffmann en France*, Geneva, Droz, 1961; Pierre-Georges CASTEX, *Le Conte fantastique en France de Nodier à Maupassant*, Paris, Corti, 1951, ch. 3-5. Delacroix's celebrated painting was actually introduced to the public in the first Paris salon under Louis Philippe, in April, 1831; it was painted during the preceding autumn. See P. A. TRAPP, *The Attainment of Delacroix*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, p. 98.

usually displayed in a God-given state – that is, without benefit of any instruction – earn them rapturous recognition.

Almost none of these tales, even those produced by major writers such as Balzac, Dumas père, and George Sand, or by major composers such as Berlioz and Wagner, approach the vividness and narrative verve of Hoffmann's work. Most of them are easy, intermittently enjoyable reads, serving as light entertainment while at the same time enabling their authors to make points not necessarily closely connected to the stories' subjects. Thus attacks on philistinism in society, on the stinginess and incomprehension of government or private patronage, on the feebleness of modern culture as opposed to an idealized past, could easily be slipped in under the tales' coating of picturesque fiction. It might be said that in general French musical *contes* are less fantastic and more didactic than their German models. This is not, I hasten to add, to say that they may be relied upon for accurate presentation of facts, never one of the goals of their authors. Their real aim – a revolutionary one in French culture – was to establish music as an equal partner of literature.

Short fiction of all types was published in the Parisian periodic press. The number of journals was large and their character, not to mention their political and social allegiance, varied widely. Whether there were enough readers for all the journals published – many were short-lived – is one question. Another is whether there were enough papers to accommodate all the contributors; in the 1830s nearly everyone, regardless of profession, seems to have been a part-time journalist.

One would expect that musical tales would have been especially welcomed in musical journals. This is not generally true, and certainly not of Fétis's *Revue musicale*, published from 1827 to 1835; however much guesswork and however many errors there may be in Fétis's scholarly work, he did not encourage avowed fictionalizing of music history.<sup>3</sup> Very different is Maurice Schlesinger's *Gazette musicale de Paris*, founded in 1834 (after 1835, when Schlesinger took over the *Revue musicale*, known as the *Revue et Gazette musicale*). Schlesinger, who had established a musical press in Paris in 1821, was of course concerned to promote the music he published. More than this, he wanted to champion German musical culture in general and, in opposition to Fétis, to stress the connections between literature and music. He therefore encouraged and in at least a few cases commissioned stories which presented musicians as artists, often alienated from their philistine surroundings, who strove to attain the lofty idealism enunciated in

3 Fétis did publish six Hoffmann stories in the *Revue musicale de Paris* in 1830–31. See Katharine ELLIS, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France. La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–80*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 49.

German romantic philosophy and popularized in the work of Hoffmann. In her monograph on the *Revue et Gazette musicale* Katharine Ellis lists 79 *contes musicales* published in that journal between 1834 and 1846, when Schlesinger sold the journal and retired as its editor.<sup>4</sup> Since many of the tales were published in installments, the number of weekly issues featuring them is something like a third of the journal's total run in this period. Their influence on the journal as a whole was greater than their number would imply; many critical and historical pieces in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* of these years are similar in tone and language to the *contes*. In Ellis's words

Allegiance to Hoffmann brought with it a substantial amount of intellectual baggage concerning the nature of the artist, of criticism and of the artist's place in society. As such it gave Schlesinger and his writers a framework of ideals within which to work, and a ready-made genre in which these ideals could be presented. Both the message and the means were new to music criticism in France, and Schlesinger made the most of their novelty to give the journal's first years a Romantic lustre in which the contents of his *contes fantastiques* informed all other criticism, whether music reviews or historical articles.<sup>5</sup>

What I shall term *contes historiques*, stories devoted to music of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, which are the subject of this paper were all published in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*. They are ten in number, a small proportion of the whole, and are mostly the work of a single writer, Stéphen de la Madelaine, whose name was for some years carried on the journal's masthead. Their appearance coincides with a spurt of interest in old music in the early 1830s; their idiosyncratic contents, presently to be described, call for some explanation.

Most of the musical tales published by Schlesinger deal with the period favored by Hoffmann, roughly the years 1740 to 1820. An exception to this in Hoffmann's work, "Signor Formica" (also known as "Salvator Rosa"), from *Die Serapionsbrüder*, a tale set in 17th-century Rome, was well known to French readers, including Berlioz's librettists Wailly and Barbier, who incorporated elements of it into the carnival scene in *Benvenuto Cellini* (note here the anachronism typical of our subject; the opera, set in Rome instead of Florence where its chief episode actually took place, has a 16th-century setting). On the whole Schlesinger's team of writers chose topics familiar, at least in a general way, to their audience; an example is Jules Janin's *conte fantastique* "Le Dîner de Beethoven," a story elaborating an anecdote about the composer known to Schlesinger and doubtless supplied by him to Janin, which opens the first issue of the *Gazette musicale*.<sup>6</sup> (Janin, one of the first French

4 ELLIS, *op. cit.*, App. III.

5 ELLIS, *Ibid.*, p. 49.

6 *Gazette musicale de Paris*, 1 (1834), pp. 1-3, pp. 9-11. On Janin see J.-M. BAILBÉ, *Jules Janin, 1804-1874: Une sensibilité littéraire et artistique*, Paris, Lettres modernes, 1974; Jacques LANDRIN, *Jules Janin, conteur et romancier*, Paris, Les Belles

*Hoffmannistes*, had published tales about Hoffmann as early as 1831.<sup>7</sup>) French musical taste, as described or perhaps prescribed by critics, was conservative in resisting innovation, represented in the 1830s by late Beethoven and especially by Berlioz and to some degree Chopin; but there was as yet little interest in any music earlier than the French operas of Gluck. Why did Schlesinger and his *confrères* think their readers would be interested in tales about Renaissance musicians? And how did their authors come by the information contained in these tales?

Interest in early music was less characteristic of the first generation of French romantics than it was of their German counterparts. In commissioning or accepting stories dealing with some of the “pères de la musique” Schlesinger was doubtless pursuing his avowed aim of educating French readers in German culture. He could count on a general interest in violent or at least colorful episodes of the past, especially the 16th century. This is also German in origin, a feature of the “Gift und Dolch” romanticism of the later 18th century.<sup>8</sup> It was very much alive, nourished by the popularity of the novels of Walter Scott, in 19th-century Paris, as the success of Dumas’ *Henri III et sa cour* (1829) and of Scribe and Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots* (1836) testify. The *contes historiques* read in part like précis of novels, in part like sketches for plays or opera librettos. Librettos of the period can in turn resemble a *conte historique*. An example is *François I<sup>er</sup> à Chambord*, an opera by Prosper de Ginastet, premiered at the Opéra in April, 1830. The libretto, by Moline de Sainte Yon and Fougeroux, concerns Leonardo da Vinci and his mistress Carina. The latter is saved from danger by François I<sup>er</sup> at Marignano; the victorious king takes Carina with him to Chambord on his return to France. The king makes amorous advances to Carina, but she responds by telling him of her love for Leonardo. The magnanimous monarch thereupon frees her and unites the two lovers. Stéphen de la Madelaine may have seen this opera; he could certainly have written its plot as a *conte historique*.<sup>9</sup>

French interest in early music as an object of serious study and, to a lesser extent, of revived performance began with the work of Alexandre Choron (1771-1834). His modest editions of pieces of Renaissance music had some cir-

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lettres, 1978; Martha FAWBUSH, “The *Contes musicaux* of Jules Janin,” M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1989. For Janin’s cynical attitude toward the vogue of the *fantastique* see the preface to his *Contes fantastiques et littéraires* of 1832, cited in CASTEX, *Le Conte fantastique*, pp. 69, 83.

7 “Hoffmann et Paganini” in the *Journal des débats*; “Kreyssler” in *L’Artiste*. See CASTEX, *Le Conte fantastique*, p. 413.

8 Walther REHM, *Das Werden des Renaissancebildes in der deutschen Dichtung vom Rationalismus bis zum Realismus*, Munich, C. H. Beck, 1924, ch. 4-5.

9 This outline is given in a review of the work’s premiere in *La Revue musicale sér.* 2, tome 1, vol. 7 (1830), pp. 210-12. On Ginastet see FÉTIS, *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1874), vol. 4, p. 6. Ginastet knew Balzac; he was given the task of reading proofs of Balzac’s musical novella *Gambara*, published in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 4 (1837). See BALZAC, Paris, Club de l’Honnête homme, 1956, vol. 15, pp. 31-32.

culation; his *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens* of 1810-11, though not very original (it was largely written by his collaborator François Fayolle, who in turn relied heavily on German sources such as Gerber's *Lexikon*) was a useful source to his contemporaries; and he gave a series of historical concerts beginning in 1827. These were well attended, attracting the interest of literary figures as well as musicians.<sup>10</sup> Victor Hugo's odd burst of poetic enthusiasm, "Que la musique date du seizième siècle," was apparently inspired by Choron's concerts.<sup>11</sup>

The revolution of 1830 put an end to Choron's activities, which had been sponsored by Charles X. His efforts were carried on by François-Joseph Fétis, who during his long career wrote much – including but not limited to his *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (1835-44) – on early music and who presented five *concerts historiques*, lengthy, organized according to a didactic plan, and accompanied by lectures, in Paris in 1832-35.<sup>12</sup> These concerts had mixed success, but lots of people – including almost certainly Stéphane de la Madelaine – heard them; and Fétis's articles on old music in his *Revue musicale* made his work known to anyone who cared to read them.

Others who interested themselves in early music at this time include Auguste Bottée de Toulmon, librarian at the Conservatoire and a friend to Berlioz, and the composer Le Sueur, also at the Conservatoire, who in his later years devoted himself to historical studies and who published some of the results, occasionally wayward, of his research in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* shortly before his death in 1837.<sup>13</sup> Among the younger generation Adrien de la Fage (b. 1805), a student of Choron and Baini, was to become a distinguished scholar.

There was then enough interest in history, especially that of France and Italy, and in early music – even if the latter was still regarded mostly as a curiosity without real artistic significance – for Schlesinger to feel assured that an occasional tale dealing with this music would be welcome reading to his subscribers.

10 Robert WANGERMÉE, "Les Premiers concerts historiques à Paris", *Mélanges Ernest Closson*, Brussels, Société belge de musicologie, 1948, pp. 186-87. On Choron see Brian SIMMS, "Alexandre Choron (1771-1834) as a Historian and Theorist of Music", Ph.D., Yale University, 1971.

11 The poem is dated 29 May 1837 in Hugo's *Rayons et ombres*; see HUGO, *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Pierre ALBOUN, Paris, Gallimard, 1968, vol. 1, pp. 1098-105; but its enthusiasm for Palestrina dates from earlier years. Hugo also attended Fétis's *concerts historiques*; after the second one (16 Dec. 1832) he wrote to Fétis thanking him for "exhumant ces merveilles" and asking if two of the pieces on the program could be used in his *Lucrece Borgia*. See WANGERMÉE, "Les Premiers concerts historiques", p. 191.

12 WANGERMÉE, "Les Premiers concerts historiques"; *idem*, *F.-J. Fétis, musicologue et compositeur*, Brussels, Palais des Académies, 1951 (the contents of the programs are given on pp. 303-08 of this book). Fétis published all of his concert lectures in the *Revue musicale*. The most important recent study of Fétis is Peter BLOOM, "F.-J. Fétis and the *Revue musicale* (1827-1835)," Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1972.

13 See App. I of this study.

He also published a good deal of related material, including biographical and historical sketches, in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*. Some of these are listed in Appendix I of this study.

Appendix II is a chronological list of *contes historiques musicales* published by Schlesinger in the brief period (1835-38) when his journal featured these tales, along with précis of their contents. Here I shall comment briefly on these stories and on the author of most of them, Stéphen de la Madelaine.

We might begin with Jules Janin's "Stradella." Janin was a well-known writer who had already published a volume of *Contes fantastiques* (1832). He cultivated with ease the fluid, half-serious, occasionally colorful language of Jeune France writers, and he had some interest in music (he too was a friend of Berlioz), though I think none in early music. "Stradella" is a story, perhaps indebted to Hoffmann's "Der Dichter und der Komponist," about a young composer of the present who wants to write an opera about the 17th-century singer and composer Alessandro Stradella (1644-82), the flamboyance of whose personal life was well known (in anecdotal and probably exaggerated form) in France.<sup>14</sup> Every suggestion of the hapless composer is seized upon by a poet, who transforms the material of Stradella's life into operatic clichés, including a happy ending in place of the composer's murder. This is a *conte historique* only in the sense that it recounts the life of a 17th-century musician within a present-day framework. It is typical of the genre nonetheless, for Janin uses the tale to attack and satirize the work of contemporary librettists. His subject matter for this tale, published in July of 1836, could hardly have been chosen at random, for an opera entitled *Stradella*, written by Louis Niedermeyer, to a libretto by Emile Deschamps and Emilio Pacini, was premiered in Paris on March 3, 1837.<sup>15</sup> The reviewer for the *Revue et Gazette musicale* noted both its use of operatic stereotypes and its happy ending, adding that the music seemed too contemporary; the composer should have tried for a style more in keeping with Stradella's epoch, following "les savants travaux de M. Fétils."<sup>16</sup> Was Janin gifted with prophetic insight? Probably not; he must have known Deschamps if not Niedermeyer, have heard about *Stradella*, and, frank as usual, have fairly guessed the libretto's style and content.<sup>17</sup>

14 An account of Stradella's life is given in Pierre BONNET-BOURDELLOT, *Histoire de la musique et ses effets* [Paris, 1715], Amsterdam, Jeanne Roger, 1722.

15 Félix CLÉMENT and Pierre LAROUSSE, *Dictionnaire des opéras*, rev. ed., Paris, Librairie Larousse, 1905, vol. 2, pp. 1051-52.

16 *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 4 (1837), pp. 79-80.

17 On Deschamps see H. GIRARD, *Un bourgeois dilettante à l'époque romantique: Emile Deschamps*, Paris, Champion, 1921. It is just possible that Janin might also have been thinking about what Berlioz's librettists had done to the life of Benvenuto Cellini.

Berlioz's one contribution to the *conte historique*, "Le Premier opéra," is also by far the best of the series, not at all reminiscent of Hoffmann but set forth with a dashing élan worthy of Dumas. I have written elsewhere in some detail about this tale.<sup>18</sup> Here I will only say that Berlioz mixes fact (about Benvenuto Cellini and Alfonso della Viola) and fiction with an adroit hand, and his author's stance, serious in telling a good story while at the same time making it clear that the story is a parable about present-day life, specifically that of Hector Berlioz, is cleverly maintained. The tale is one of revenge, that of Alfonso della Viola on Duke Cosimo I of Florence standing for what Berlioz would have liked to do to the authorities who cancelled the projected first performance of his *Requiem*. But it is also a vivid portrait of the artist Cellini (reflected, a bit less strikingly, in that of the musician Viola), far truer to Cellini's autobiography than the figure drawn by Berlioz's librettists for the as yet unperformed *Benvenuto Cellini*. Berlioz may have been in part motivated to write this tale by seeing what Stéphen de la Madelaine was doing and characteristically thinking he could do it better; in any event this is Jeune France historical fiction at its best.

Before considering the tales written by Madelaine we need to know something about their author.<sup>19</sup> Etienne-Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas Madelaine (1801-68) was born in Dijon. He came to Paris in 1825 to study literature. A good bass who remained interested in singing throughout his life, he entered the royal chapel and sang in the "musique particulière" of Charles X. This ended with the Revolution of 1830, much to Madelaine's regret; in an essay of 1836 called "De la musique religieuse" he deplores the shutting down of the chapel and the "death of religious music in France,"<sup>20</sup> sentiments echoed in his final *conte historique*, "Le Maître de chapelle de François I<sup>er</sup>."<sup>21</sup> Madelaine entered the Conservatoire; he remained active in musical circles, becoming and remaining a friend of Berlioz even as he began (1833) a career in the civil service.

It may well have been Madelaine's friendship with Berlioz which got him accepted as a writer for the *Revue et Gazette musicale* during the years 1835-38. His closeness to Berlioz is demonstrated in many of his tales as well as in "Des Jeunes compositeurs de musique," a brief essay in which he describes the uselessness to French composers of the Prix de Rome.<sup>22</sup> A passage characterizing the boredom of a French musician (Berlioz?) in the Villa Medici in Rome also

18 James HAAR, "Berlioz and the 'First Opera'," *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 3 (1979), pp. 32-41.

19 Much of the information about Madelaine given here is taken from Pierre LAROUSSE, *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, Administration du grand dictionnaire universel, 1866-79; repr. Geneva, Slatkine, 1982, vol. 14, p. 1087.

20 *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 3 (1836), pp. 121-24.

21 *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 5 (1838), pp. 245-49, 253-57. See App. II, no. 10.

22 *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 3 (1836), pp. 91-94.

serves to illustrate Madelaine's attitude toward early music and his entertaining if slapdash style (note the spelling of the Renaissance theorist Gafori's name):

[...] – il [the young composer] compulse, dans la bibliothèque de l'Académie, quelques vieilles r[h]apsodies de Tinctor ou de Gassorio, qui pourraient tout au plus lui servir à monter des concerts historiques, si M. Fétis n'en avait pas monopolisé l'exploration, à force de talent et d'érudition.

During the years he wrote for the *Revue et Gazette musicale* Madelaine also produced two novels. In later years he taught singing and published several books on vocal technique while continuing his government career. His pen remained as ready as ever; he wrote a long series of novels in a tone of Christian didacticism.<sup>23</sup>

The years 1835-1838 were ones in which Berlioz, always close to Schlesinger, was particularly active at the *Revue et Gazette musicale*, indeed nearly controlling it. That a friend as congenial to Berlioz as Stéphen de la Madelaine should be taken on as a writer for the journal is not surprising. Perhaps his connection with the now disbanded *chapelle royale* made him seem eligible as creator of *contes historiques*. In the Paris which had been listening to Fétis's lectures and concerts and reading his sober accounts of early composers in the *Revue musicale*, the time may have seemed right, especially to Berlioz, for presentation of some more entertaining material on the subject. Madelaine, whether a volunteer or pressed into service, was a facile writer who got up just enough factual material to get him started, then scribbled out stories with ease, probably sending his first draft straight to the printers (the egregious spelling errors in names and titles in these stories are probably the result of printers' trouble over Madelaine's handwriting). Early music, its progress in the public eye slow and steady under Fétis, was now in for a ride. It seems no coincidence that Madelaine's first *conte historique* appeared in the very issue of the *Gazette musicale* (II, no. 44, 1 Nov. 1835) in which the acquisition of the *Revue musicale* was announced.

This first tale, "L'Auteur de *Charmante Gabrielle*" (App. II, no. 1), takes us into the Renaissance; in fact Madelaine's time machine overshoots a bit by starting his tale at the end of the 15th century although its hero, Eustache Du Caurroy, a young man at the story's opening, was actually born in 1549. The lady in the tale – all of Madelaine's *contes* have an *opéra-comique* love story included – is the author's fantasy; otherwise the story is reasonably accurate. The pieces mentioned by Madelaine, including the one in the story's title, are said by Castil-Blaze to have been attributed to Du Caurroy; Fétis finds no authority for this.<sup>24</sup>

23 See the entries for Madelaine in *Catalogue générale des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1930, vol. 103, cols. 179-82.

24 FÉTIS, *Biographie universelle*, vol. 2, p. 222.

The hero's keyboard playing, like most of the fictional performances praised by Madelaine, was modest but heartfelt; he played simple melodies accompanied by "accords naïfs," with some rudimentary stabs at counterpoint of which "Franco and Dufay laid down the principles in this epoch." As with the pre-romantics of the late 18th century, for Madelaine Middle Ages and Renaissance were all a single period, in his case viewed as a musical Age of Faith; chronological exactness was a matter of no concern.

Madelaine allowed his imagination greater play in his next story, "Comment l'opéra fut introduit en France" (App. II, no. 2). He had probably heard, in Fétis's first *concert historique*, some of the music from the *Ballet comique de la royne*. Everyone – Fétis, Castil-Blaze, Le Sueur – concerned at this time with early music mentioned this event. Madelaine decided not to describe it in detail but instead to connect it with Italian dramatic music and thus to give Italy credit for the foundation of French opera – a sound enough notion but one illustrated with reckless fantasy. The work which is said to have inspired the young Beaulieu, Vecchi's opera *Endymion*, is a mythical one. It is, conveniently, lost, says Madelaine, but was composed under the influence of Cavalieri, Mei, and Caccini, of Goudimel's harmonic advances, of Vincenzo Galilei's recitatif, and of the choruses in Peri's *Euridice*. Not bad for a work that in the tale's context must have been written well before 1580. To this description Madelaine adds, in a paragraph that cannot have pleased Berlioz overmuch, that Vecchi's music and that of his contemporaries while simple in form and mediocre in style had a "cachet de vérité" not always found in "nos mélodies tourmentées et notre gigantesque instrumentation."

The 17th century, a period which Madelaine's contemporaries, following Fétis, considered to be the beginning of dramatic and instrumental musical styles recognizable to modern ears, was his choice for three tales. "Francesca" (App. II, no. 6) gives what purports to be an account of the early career of Giulio Caccini's older daughter, today noted as a composer of opera and monodic song.<sup>25</sup> If Madelaine knew this he ignores it; for him Francesca is solely a singer, poor but beautiful and as usual of irreproachably pure and noble character. Beginning his tale in Rome (his preferred Italian locale, wherever his protagonists actually lived) in 1602, he conveniently suppresses Giulio Caccini as dead for some time (he actually lived until 1618) and as poor but worthy. Francesca makes her debut ca. 1605 in an opera by Alessandro Scarlatti (b. 1660). Precise dates even of 17th-century musicians were not always known at this time, but serious historians came closer than this; Madelaine simply didn't care (he could for example have

25 On Francesca Caccini's career see Warren KIRKENDALE, *The Court Musicians in Florence during the Principate of the Medici*, Florence, Olschki, 1993, no. 82, pp. 308-29.

used an opera to a libretto by Chiabrera, to whom he refers in another tale).<sup>26</sup> What especially impressed him was that Francesca was the first performer to make a fortune from her art (he was obviously thinking of some of the well-paid sopranos of his own day); this may not be strictly true, but he was correct in thinking that money mattered rather a lot to the Caccini clan.

“Corelli” (App. II, no. 4) is a relatively restrained account of the composer’s early and late life, embroidered with the inevitable love story (here without a happy ending) and using anecdotal information about Corelli (his study with Bassani and the switch-of-mode performing episode in Naples) which were then thought to be true. Surprisingly, in view of his usual glorification of performers, Madelaine presents Corelli as a young violinist of limited skills and says nothing about his playing in later years; something of Corelli’s mixed reputation as performer, going back to 18th-century writers such as Burney, was familiar to him.

The last of the 17th-century tales, “La Jeunesse de Bassini” (App. II, no. 8) is in contrast almost pure fiction. Bassani (whose name is never spelled correctly by Madelaine) is made to live in Rome though his career was known to have been spent mostly in Ferrara; he plays in the orchestra for the premier, ca. 1630, of the “new” opera *L’Enlèvement de Céphale* (= Caccini’s *Il rapimento di Cefalo*, performed in Florence in 1600), the simple music of which produced an effect familiar to modern listeners who have attended the “séances archéologiques” of Choron and “notre savant collaborateur Fétis.”<sup>27</sup> Bassani, though his playing is not that of a modern virtuoso, is constantly praised as a violinist – more than Corelli had been. This is an odd story even by Madelaine’s standards.

Odder still – much odder, in fact – are the three stories about Dufay, Josquin, and Mouton (App. II, nos. 5, 7, 10), written at different times but clearly intended to form a trilogy<sup>28</sup>. Madelaine, who must have known Choron and Le Sueur as well as Fétis, was clearly intrigued by the Franco-Flemish composers of the 15th century. He cheerfully made not only Mouton but Dufay and Josquin French, the latter two depicted as working in Paris. He had read enough to know that these composers were not *naïfs* like Du Caurroy (in his view); they should be treated with respect, in the case of Josquin approaching adulation.<sup>29</sup> Yet Dufay

26 Berlioz wrote an account of Giulio Caccini’s life (adjoining one on Corelli); see his “Esquisse biographiques,” *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 4 (1837), pp. 219–21; it is reasonably accurate by the standards of the period.

27 FÉTIS now (1837) wrote on occasion for the *Revue et Gazette musicale*.

28 I have discussed these tales elsewhere; see my “Music of the Renaissance as Viewed by the Romantics,” *Music and Context. Essays for John M. Ward*, ed. Anne DHU SHAPIRO, Cambridge, MA, Department of Music, Harvard University, 1985, p. 126–144.

29 A substantial article on Josquin by Fétis appeared in *La Revue musicale*, 8 (1834), nos. 31, 33–34, pp. 241–43, 260–62, 265–67.

is depicted as innocent, even befuddled in matters other than his musical craft; one wonders if Madelaine had a contemporary, perhaps the recently deceased Choron, in mind when he wrote “La Vieillesse de Guillaume Dufay.” And the heartless concentration of Dufay and Josquin, intent on creating counterpoint, in the face of the suffering Hélène, could be a reflection of Fétis (it also reminds one of Diderot’s portrait of Rameau as someone who would not care if his wife and child were to die so long as the funeral bells tolled the correct partials).<sup>30</sup> The “Gift und Dolch” side of the Renaissance as imagined by the Romantics appealed to Madelaine; the 15th-century trilogy presents Paris as dark and dangerous, with robbers and assassins lurking in the narrow streets.

These stories are full of colorful detail, more so than those about later periods, and contain playful, affectionate touches, such as Mouton being dubbed “L’Agnelet” by his classmates. They show an even greater lack of attention to chronology than Madelaine’s other stories; Louis XII (r. 1498-1515) is said to be on the throne in 1470; Josquin, born ca. 1440-50, for Madelaine lives until the early 17th century. Madelaine was clearly leaving history to the *savants* as he scribbled historical fiction. Under the influence of Berlioz he may have thought that the researches of the rather self-important Fétis offered material ripe for half-humorous treatment. How did his readers take these stories? With a smile, surely, especially if they had been keeping up with the work of Fétis. Yet a letter to the editor concerning Madelaine’s “L’Auteur de *Charmante Gabrielle*” thanks the author for clarifying the career of Eustache Du Caurroy, offering only minor corrections about his parentage and family.<sup>31</sup>

Like Berlioz Madelaine lets his readers know that present-day musical life in France is on his mind even as he pens his *contes historiques*. The redaction of the *Revue et Gazette musicale* must nonetheless have worried a bit about whether these tales were confusing as well as entertaining their readers. Fétis, once he had joined Schlesinger’s journal as a writer, surely wanted to put a stop to these effusions. In any event the vogue for the Hoffmannesque *conte fantastique* was passing. Madelaine himself, though he went on writing for other musical journals and continued to write fiction, stopped contributing to the *Revue et Gazette musicale* and turned his musical interests into more prosaic channels. His *contes historiques* are not among the masterpieces of musical fiction; but they do show Jeune France enthusiasm and sensibility in an entertaining light.

30 In *Le Neveu de Rameau*. This work, unpublished during Diderot’s lifetime, appeared in Paris in 1823 as part of his collected works.

31 *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 2 (1835), p. 386, a letter by E. de Vadancourt.

## APPENDIX I

Some Contributions on Early Music  
in the [*Revue et*] *Gazette musicale de Paris*, 1834-37

1 (1834)	pp. 11-13 22-24 29-30 38-40	Joseph MAINZER, "La Chapelle sixtine à Rome" <i>chiefly an account of contemporary performance in the chapel but with many historical references</i>
	293-97	——, "De l'origine de l'opéra. Fragment" <i>important composers of opera in the 16th century, including Alfonso della Viola, Striggio, Malvezzi, Cavalieri and Vecchi</i>
	357-58 373-76	——, "Coup d'oeil sur le développement historique de la musique moderne" <i>école flamande, école romane</i>
2 (1835)	pp. 133-35	"Curiosités musicales. Confrairies de Sainte-Cécile" <i>statutes of a 16th-century confrairie in Paris; a promise to give one for Evreux</i>
	213-17 221-25	CASTIL-BLAZE, "Les Concerts" <i>from Clovis to the present</i>
	261-63	G. E. ANDERS, "Concert curieux au xvii <sup>e</sup> siècle" <i>report on a concert historique given by J. M. Dilherr in Nuremberg in 1643. See Willi Kahl, "Das Nürnberger historische Konzert von 1643, und sein Geschichtsbild", Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, 14 (1957), pp. 281-303.</i>
3 (1836)	pp. 65-71	Bottée de TOULMON, "Discours prononcé par M. Bottée de Toulmon au Congrès historique, nov. 1835" <i>a plea for the history of music to be taken as a subject for serious study</i>
	211-20 226-33	CASTIL-BLAZE, "Histoire de la musique en France" <i>a thumb-nail sketch; but read by Madelaine</i>
	441-45	Bottée de TOULMON, "Adam de la Halle" <i>sketch of Adam's life; discussion of Robin et Marion with examples</i>
4 (1837)	pp. 149-51	P. RICHARD, "Curiosités. L'état de musique à Rome en 1639" <i>letter by Maugars; see New Grove XI, p. 841. Only the first installment is given; on p. 158 readers are told that the remainder cannot be offered since the author has lost the manuscript.</i>
	181-93 207-10 215-19	J.-F. LE SUEUR, "Notice historique sur Lulli et sur la grande école qui l'a enseigné laquelle école remonte sans interruption jusqu'à Charlemagne" <i>a random collection of the author's historical notes</i>

## APPENDIX II

*Contes historiques in the Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris 1835-38*

1. Stéphen de la MADELEINE, "L'Auteur de Charmante Gabrielle," 2 (1835), pp. 354-57.

Beauvais, end of the 15th century. Bernard Ducaurroy, a procurator, mistreats his son and daughter. His son Eustache is finally sent to Paris to study; the only thing he knows is keyboard playing. He works for a clerk in whose office he meets Gabrielle de Bois-Roger, a widow suing for her estate. She takes up the boy, but loses her case and enters a convent. Eustache, in love, visits the convent to give keyboard lessons, first to her and then to others. He quickly gains fame as teacher and performer; he is eventually hailed as "prince des musiciens français" and becomes maître in chapels of Charles IX Henri III and Henri IV. His *Charmante Gabrielle* and *Vive Henri IV* are still known, surviving while other greater but less attractive works have disappeared.

*Comment* Eustache was b. 1549. He became vice-maître of the royal chapel, in 1595 becoming "surintendant de la musique." The pieces mentioned are said to be attributed to him by Castil-Blaze, "Histoire de la musique en France," p. 215.

2. MADELAINE, "Comment l'opéra fut introduit en France," 2 (1835), pp. 377-81.

In late 16th-century France dramatic music was at yet unknown; composers were satisfied with simple tunes, sometimes used as basis for Masses whose titles were "presques scandaleuses." Ballet still reigned supreme; its composers wrote "petits vaudevires" which did not satisfy young artists, among them Beaulieu. The latter wants to go to Italy, where opera had been born; he meets (and duels with) the duc de Joyeuse, who sends him to Florence. There he works as a clerk, falling in love with the clerk's daughter Carina. A new opera, Orazio Vecchi's *Endymion*, is announced (Vecchi had created comic opera in 1595). Beaulieu gets to it, meets and is taken up by Vecchi. The young Frenchman writes an *intermède* which is successful. He marries Carina and returns to France, where Joyeuse introduces him at court; he writes the ballet for the duc's wedding in 1582, starting the traditions of French opera.

*Comment* The *Ballet comique de la royne* was given in 1581; according to Fétis the music was written by Lambert de Beaulieu; in Madelaine's story his biography is completely fictional. Some of the ballet music was given in Fétis's first *concert historique* in April, 1832.

3. Jules JANIN, "Stradella," 3, 1836, pp. 239-42, 247-51, 255-58.

The story begins with a discussion of the difficulties and contretemps inherent in opera – clashes between composers and librettists, impresarios and theater directors, composers and publishers. To illustrate, Janin cites the case of the young composer Michel, who has come upon the life of Alessandro Stradella with its tales of seduction, attempted murder, artistic success, and tragic end (murder by adherents of a seduced woman). As each part of the story is told to a poet, the latter imagines

it transformed into a libretto, with every operatic cliché faithfully adhered to; the women become more virtuous, the composer less villainous, and the murder changed into a happy ending with a marriage. Janin concludes by damning operatic stereotypes, which he knows will continue to be practiced in spite of anything he says.

*Comment* As noted in the text of this article, an opera (libretto by Deschamps, music by Niedermeyer) on the life of Stradella was premiered in Paris some nine months after the publication of Janin's tale. It seems that Janin knew what the libretto was to contain, for his description fits very well with what Deschamps wrote.

4. MADELAINE, "Corelli," 3 (1836), pp. 395-401.

Rome, 1670. G. B. Bassini, one of the city's best violinists, is approached by the young Corelli, recommended by Bassini's friend Munari in Fusignano (Calabria). Corelli plays for Bassini; his technique is mediocre but the piece he plays is excellent. Corelli shyly admits that he wrote it; he then plays a counterpoint to it and variations on it. A composer! But he wants to become a violinist, and Bassini takes him on. Corelli loves Nelia, daughter of Bassini, but is too shy to show it. She marries a Neapolitan nobleman, and Corelli leaves for the household of Matteo Simonelli, head of the papal chapel. Nelia and her husband go to Paris; Corelli follows (and meets Lully); he and Nelia have an affair. Corelli flees; Nelia dies in childbirth, leaving a daughter of dubious parentage.

Naples, 1712. Corelli, at the height of his fame, plays several concerts. At the second one he sees Nelia (?) in the audience, switches to the minor in a major piece (to the discomfiture of the conductor, Alessandro Scarlatti), and leaves the stage in confusion. The woman turns out to be Nelia's daughter; Corelli visits her but is coldly rebuffed. He returns to Rome and dies soon after.

*Comment* Apart from the technicolor image of Corelli's personality and love life - sheer invention on Madelaine's part - there are several factual discrepancies: Fusignano is near Bologna, not in Calabria; Corelli might conceivably have studied with Bassani, but the latter was not much older than he, and worked in Ferrara. The trip to France is apocryphal. But in the 18th century Simonelli, a singer in the papal chapel, was claimed as teacher of Corelli; the latter did go to Naples, though in 1702.

5. "La Vieillesse de Guillaume Dufay," 3 (1836), pp. 453-60.

Late 15th-century Paris. On a summer night, a group of strollers listens to Dufay, "le premier compositeur de la renaissance, le père de l'harmonie", discuss "ses récentes découvertes sur l'harmonie tonale." It is late; Dufay heads for home but gets lost, knocks and enters a strange house he thinks is his own. Told that his housekeeper is ill, he says he will send for Grégoire Deprez, father of his pupil Josquin. The maid, Ursula, speaks of her mistress Héléne de Maugué; she had an affair with a man who was killed, leaving her with a baby daughter. She takes Dufay to be the child's great-uncle, from whom she hopes for support.

Héléne is the daughter of a musician, Thomas Chevrus. Dufay knew him, and welcomes Héléne as his own daughter. The next day he finds his own house; he

goes out with Josquin. They meet Hélène and Ursula by chance, return to Dufay's house, and Hélène is installed as mistress of the house. Ursula accompanies Josquin to St-Denis where he is now maître. Hélène's daughter is taken ill. Dufay watches over her, but absent-mindedly opens a window during a storm; his candle is knocked over, a fire started, and the window left open. The child dies of exposure. Hélène, delirious with grief, sings a lullaby at the baby's crib, singing it in two related forms. Dufay and Josquin listen, analyze, put the melodies together, and in that moment (in 1465) "le contrepont venait d'être découvert!" Josquin proposes to Hélène; they marry, to Dufay's delight.

*Comment* Sheer fiction from beginning to end; Madeleine ignored the writings of Le Sueur and Féty on Josquin and started from scratch. I can find nothing on Chevrus despite Madelaine's note that he is discussed by Guillaume Dupeyrac.

6. MADELAINE, "Francesca," 4 (1837), pp. 37-44.

Set in Rome, 1602. Francesca, poor but lovely young daughter of the widow Caccini, sings with a group of street musicians to earn money to buy medicine for her ailing mother. Her beautiful though untrained voice draws much attention, including that of a Roman impresario who engages her for the following operatic season. Unbeknownst to the mother, who disapproves of the stage, Francesca studies with the impresario, and makes her debut in an opera by Scarlatti. The mother, recovered, manages to get into the theater and hears with rapture her daughter's triumph (recorded by Doni). Francesca's late father, Jules Caccini, one of the fathers of dramatic music, lived and died poor; Francesca was the first example of a great fortune made on the operatic stage.

*Comment* Francesca grew up in and performed mostly in Florence, not Rome. For her career see Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence*, pp. 309-29 (Madelaine's reference to G. B. Doni is correct; see Kirkendale, p. 329). Giulio Caccini died in 1618; Alessandro Scarlatti was born in 1660.

7. MADELAINE, "Les Psaumes de Josquin," 4 (1837), pp. 109-13, 129-34.

Paris, 1510. Two visitors approach Josquin's house, in a poor *quartier*; "le savant Josquinus, le favori de messire Apollo," lives modestly. They hear the organ, playing "savantes modulations," and a woman singing. One of them, the Comte de Meulan, enters the house and meets Hélène Desprez. Josquin is absent, directing a concert to make money. He is deeply in debt; he pays expenses of performances, pays for his own carriage, etc., and despite being Louis XII's *maître*, is desperately poor (like most geniuses then and now). He is reduced to giving lessons in plainchant to court ladies. No one knows the identity of the Comte de Meulan, a figure unknown at court.

The king comes to Josquin's relief, and the composer is able to compose; he produces *Coeli enarrant gloriam dei* "en contrepont et canon à quatre parties," a wondrous work which Le Sueur in making his own setting of the text held in awe. Josquin is, by the way, a great singer, but he holds this of little account compared to his compositional genius.

Josquin is soon out of money again, and his request for aid is refused. He writes *Memor esto verbi tui* to jog the king's memory. Hélène goes to see the king, sees the Comte de Meulan instead; he promises help. Josquin hears of this and is jealous; he writes a *déploration* and sings it. Hélène, Ursula, and the comte hear it through closed doors and are affected. The comte gives Hélène a box inside which is a document giving Josquin a benefice. Josquin, still jealous, goes to the king to refuse it. Hélène is summoned to court, and it is revealed that the comte is Louis XII in disguise. Josquin accepts the benefice and writes *Bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo domine* in gratitude. He lives to a ripe old age, dying in the early 17th century and being replaced by Jean Mantou, *maître de chapelle* of François I<sup>er</sup>.

*Comment* Another bit of imaginative fiction, this one with some links with historical tradition if not fact. The basic musical elements are derived ultimately from Glarean's *Dodecachordon*, transmitted through a number of intermediates to Le Sueur and Fétis. "Mantou" is how the printers evidently read Madelaine's scrawled "Mouton." Unfortunately two motets of the three mentioned are no longer considered to be the work of Josquin.

8. MADELAINE, "La Jeunesse de Bassini," 4 (1837), pp. 157-60, 166-69, 181-85.

Rome, 1630. A letter from Gribaldi to the painter Scavarda complains that Gribaldi's godson Giambattista [Bassini] is frittering away his time in Rome. Scavarda finds out that Bassini is spending his time studying the violin with Matteo. Going to hear the new Chiabrera opera, *L'Enlèvement de Cephale*, Scavarda sees Bassini playing a solo violin accompaniment to an aria. Bassini when confronted denies this. Gribaldi, arrived in Rome, goes with Scavarda to another performance of the opera; he sees Bassini and leaves Rome in fury, cutting off his godson.

[Meanwhile] Bassini sings in a confraternity; he is there smitten with a young singer, Bianca, but she disappears. Months later on a visit to Matteo he finds that Bianca is also his student. He plays in the theater to replace the ailing Matteo; this is the humble beginning of his splendid career as violinist. He marries Bianca and they move to Florence; after her death Bassini returns to Rome, raises a family, is the first violinist of his day and the teacher of Corelli.

*Comment* Almost everything about this story is fiction. Bassani (Madelaine never gets the name right) if he was as is now thought born before 1650 could conceivably have taught Corelli, but he was not very much older, certainly not the age Madelaine makes him. His career was spent largely in Ferrara, and no Roman connection is known. He did enjoy some fame as a violinist. The opera mentioned here is presumably Caccini's setting of Chiabrera's *Rapimento di Cefalo*, produced in Florence in 1600.

9. BERLIOZ, "Le Premier opéra. Nouvelle," 4 (1837), pp. 427-31, 435-37 [also published in Berlioz, *Voyage musical en Allemagne et en Italie*, (Paris, 1844), vol. 2, p. 229, and in *id.*, *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* (Paris, 1852), p. 5]

Set in 1555, the story is an exchange of letters between Benvenuto Cellini and the musician Alfonso della Viola. The composer wrote a new kind of work, in which all the dialogue is sung. Performance in Paris is promised for this work, based on

the episode of Paolo and Francesca in the *Divine Comedy* (Viola had already gained fame by setting the Ugolino episode as dramatic monody). At the last moment the performance was put off; Duke Cosimo “changed his mind.”

Viola is furious and Cellini, who had suffered similar rebuffs, sympathizes and sends the composer money to allow him to produce the opera elsewhere. After two years Cellini writes angrily that he has heard that Viola, now successful, has written a new work for Florence. Just wait, answers Viola, who invites Cellini to come to Florence to see for himself.

In an epilogue Cellini, in Florence where he ponders his Perseus, meets Viola; all, including a huge orchestra, is in readiness, but at the last moment Viola “changes his mind” and disappears along with the score. Cellini and Viola go off to Naples together, the composer’s revenge complete.

*Comment* Berlioz probably got information about Viola from Choron’s *Dictionnaire historique*; see James HAAR, “Berlioz and the ‘First Opera,’” *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 3 (1979), p. 36. The story is of course pure fiction, but Viola is mentioned as a composer of opera in an anonymous article on the origins of opera, published in the *Gazette musicale*, 5 (1834), pp. 293-97; see App. I above.

10. MADELAINE, “Le Maître de chapelle de François I<sup>er</sup>. Chronique du xv<sup>e</sup> siècle,” 5 (1838), pp. 245-49, 253-57

Rural France, c. 1470, in the reign of Louis XII. The chevalier de Landes and a young page arrive at a village fête; the page does not dismount. Why? The chevalier, named Claude Mouton, has a sister who is pregnant. He fought and killed the father in a duel, and brought his sister, disguised as a page, to the chateau and village of Landes. There she dies in childbirth after producing a son. Raised by the chevalier (and with the help of a local barber-surgeon), the young Jean is given the chevalier’s name. Growing up, the timid boy is entranced by the barber’s bagpipe and invents a better one, resembling the oboe. He plays and begins to compose. He is sent off to a military training school in Paris, where his oboe is taken away from him and held by an officer who lets him play in his spare time; he accompanies the officer’s wife in Goudimel’s *De Profundis*.

The officer’s wife is invited to court; Mouton goes with her to a ceremony where Josquin, having written a Mass that is a “pas de géant” in his art, sings in it. Mouton is entranced and develops a fever; in his delirium he keeps saying “Josquinus ego sum! Josquinus musicorum princeps.” The barber from Landes comes to Paris to try to cure him; he meets with Josquin and brings the latter to Mouton. Josquin plays for Mouton, who is entranced. He begins to study with Josquin and is cured; he becomes “le meilleur élève d’un maître incomparable.” Mouton becomes head of the royal chapel, starting a tradition that unfortunately comes to an end with Le Sueur and Cherubini.

*Comment* The account of Mouton’s birth and upbringing and of his delirium is sheer fiction. An old tradition going back to the time of Ronsard made Mouton a pupil of Josquin, but there is no evidence to support this.

