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Rosemary Hamilton Yeoland; with a foreword by Guy Ducrey, *La Contribution littéraire de Camille Mauclair au domaine musicale parisien*. Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008. xxii + 331 pp. Notes, bibliography and index. \$119.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 0-7734-4860-8.

Review by Lisa Norris, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

In *La Contribution littéraire de Camille Mauclair au domaine musicale parisien*, Rosemary Hamilton Yeoland addresses the most neglected aspect of a somewhat neglected French author's oeuvre. As Yeoland asserts, Camille Mauclair (1872-1945) was a fascinating critic and historian who wrote prolifically on all of the arts. He also produced poetry and fiction. Extremely sensitive to changes in intellectual and aesthetic currents, Mauclair's writings reveal much about French culture during the Symbolist era and the early twentieth century. This review will briefly summarize Yeoland's work, and then analyze what it does and does not offer.

The book opens with a Preface by Yeoland, which itself synthesizes the monograph. The Preface is followed by a Foreword by Professor Guy Ducrey, who praises Yeoland's scholarly undertaking. Yeoland then supplies an Introduction, which provides summaries of earlier monographs on Mauclair.[1] Having confirmed the need for a study on Mauclair and music, she informs the reader of her study's "triple methodology." Yeoland states that Mauclair's writings on music serve as the "critique thématique." Secondly, she endeavors to examine the musicality of Mauclair's prose and poetry. Finally, Yeoland claims the study has a socio-critical dimension, as she uses Mauclair's work to reveal fin-de-siècle Parisian society (pp. 13-14). She then explains the tripartite, roughly chronological division of her study, which we will follow here.

Part one traces the formation of Mauclair's aesthetic. Yeoland identifies Richard Wagner's concept of the fusion of the arts and Stéphane Mallarmé's Symbolist theory as the two primary forces that shaped the young Mauclair's aesthetic. She then examines his Symbolist aspects: the preoccupation with the Self, elitism, "ideorealism" and Art as the new religion. Yeoland briefly indicates Mauclair's support for anarchism, a sympathy many Symbolists shared. Finally, she explains how Mauclair broke with the Symbolists in 1897 and declared his dedication to serving art and the public through his writing.[2]

Yeoland examines music in Mauclair's fiction in part two. These writings reflect the impact of Wagner despite Mauclair's adherence to his mentor Mallarmé, whom Yeoland places in opposition to the German composer. Focusing on his few novels, she traces Mauclair's movement from a Symbolist aesthetic (*Eleusis*, 1894; *Couronne de clarté*, 1895) to his public break with the circle in *Le Soleil des morts* (1898), his *roman à clef*. Yeoland finds music a prevalent theme in all of these novels, with the exception of *L'Orient vierge* (1897), to which we will return.

While part two focuses on music in Mauclair's novels (and just briefly on his poetry), part three turns to his non-fictional music studies. First Yeoland examines Mauclair's historical texts, starting with his monograph on Robert Schumann (1906). Here, she first employs a device that becomes standard for the remainder of the text: she compares Mauclair's understanding of a topic with that of a musicologist from his own era first, and then with recent musicological scholarship. We will return to this. In this

chapter, Yeoland asserts that Schumann's criticism served as a model for Mauclair's own (pp. 142-43). Also, Schumann's *lieder* provides an opportunity for Yeoland to address the musicality of Mauclair's poetry (pp. 161-65), which she considers to be "*schumannien*."

Mauclair the historian/educator emerges when Yeoland investigates his ambitious *Histoire de la musique européenne de 1859-1914* (1914). Far from the hyperbole Mauclair often employed as a critic, in this history Yeoland notes the clarity and strength of his prose in his treatment of French and other European composers. She also makes much of his "internationalism," to which we will return. Here, as in her subsequent chapters, Yeoland synthesizes Mauclair's lengthy texts. These later chapters address Mauclair's *La Religion de la musique* (1909) and *Les Héros de l'orchestre* (1921). Both are compilations of his music criticism published in various journals from c. 1903-1919. Mauclair's topics ranged from the lingering shadow of Wagner over French music and the related push for a purely French style of music, to the problem of musical "snobism," and the ideal music critic. Yeoland provides numerous examples of Mauclair's style as critic. She quotes his highly evocative metaphors and analogies, noting the frequency with which they evoke the visual arts, poetry and even scent. He did this in an effort to communicate forcefully and, in the synaesthetic fashion so dear to his generation, to stimulate multiple sensory responses in the reader.[3]

Yeoland addresses the legitimacy of Mauclair's criticism through a minor literary scuffle in her penultimate chapter. The musicologist Louis Laloy publicly declared Mauclair incompetent in musical matters since he was totally untrained. Mauclair retorted that unlike dry academics, he *felt* music, and as a *litterateur* he had every right to publish these felt responses to "make" the reader love music. Indeed in prior chapters Yeoland quotes a number of feverish descriptions of intensely sensual responses to musical performances. Mauclair made no secret of his melomania; for him, it gave credibility to his music criticism. Furthermore, like many of his literary generation, Mauclair was inspired by such great writers as Baudelaire, Zola and Mallarmé, who had also published essays as critics of the visual arts and music.

Yeoland's focus on Mauclair's life-long literary engagement with music is laudable, for this is indeed the least examined area of his oeuvre. That said, it is regrettable that the book offers little more than synopses of selected texts. One longs for meaty analysis and contextualization. Instead, one finds incomplete scholarship and weakly supported positions.

Even on the level of formal analysis, this study lacks depth. For example, Yeoland has a lovely opportunity as a scholar of French literature and an accomplished musician herself to explain the musicality of Mauclair's poetry. His poems were inspired by music, aspired to be musical themselves, and some were even set to music. Yeoland considers the musicality of repeated sounds in his poems, but only ever so briefly and in the context of his Schumann monograph (pp. 162-165), rather than in depth and with his other creative writing. In contrast, Simonetta Valenti minutely scrutinizes the musicality of Mauclair's poetic structure, meter, and phonetics, with far more substantive results.[4]

It is obvious that Yeoland has scrupulously read much of Mauclair's published and unpublished writings, which is no small feat. However, her use of other sources, both from Mauclair's contemporaries and later scholarship, indicates a very incomplete, or uninformed, address of the topic. For example, Yeoland resorts to the same one or two musicologists rather than providing a wide range of sources to gauge the accuracy, effectiveness or impact of Mauclair's music criticism and histories. She frequently cites dictionaries and encyclopedias in footnotes, and secondary texts (on Symbolism, for example) are often very dated. The Bibliography itself is quite incomplete. Unfortunately, all of this calls her scholarship into question.

Another troublesome aspect that seems rooted in incomplete scholarship is the way Yeoland presents the formation of Mauclair's early aesthetic. She quite rigidly sets Wagner's and Mallarmé's theories in

strict opposition rather than acknowledging their complex points of confluence which allowed Maclair to embrace both. Yeoland's insistence that Mallarmé was dedicated exclusively to the intellect compels her to minimize the poet's concession that music dominated the arts. She must also ignore both the profound, emotional impact music made upon Mallarmé and the fact that Maclair himself witnessed the effect of music on his mentor. Thus, Yeoland's framework for understanding Maclair's Symbolist-era writings is not only weak but misleading.

This last omission raises the least successful aspect of this book: the lack of a social context for Maclair's work. This is a clearly stated goal and necessary for the study, but it is simply absent. Her treatment of *L'Orient vierge* (1897) provides a case in point. The novel involves a futuristic invasion of the East by an enlightened European despot in order to bestow a European way upon these alien peoples. One might conclude that this is just Symbolist elitism. But the context sheds light both on the work and on Maclair. His novel was written at the height of the Dreyfus Affair. Maclair's letter of support to Emile Zola, imprisoned for his infamous pro-Dreyfus *J'Accuse*, attests to the young man's allegiance to Dreyfus' cause. So yes, Maclair appears to have opposed the nationalist, anti-Semitic fever that gripped France in the 1890s. But at the same time, he wrote *L'Orient vierge*. Far from being a simple case of Symbolist haughtiness, the novel indicates that the seeds of Maclair's racism and conservative political leanings were already sprouting *despite* his stated Dreyfusard stance. None of this is discussed in Yeoland's book, however. Instead, she briefly notes a "colonialist" aspect to the novel, and the absence of music in it (pp. 92-95). Valenti, on the other hand, throws far more light onto why racism emerged in Maclair's literary works (Valenti, p. 42).

This lack of contextualization relates to another focal point of Yeoland's study: Maclair's "internationalism." This is a fascinating, important issue. It is true, as she asserts, that Maclair took pains to write a *European* history of music in 1914 during an era of ever-growing chauvinism in France. However, it is not truly pan-European but primarily Germanic and secondarily, Eastern European. Even on the eve of another German war, Maclair was at pains to again go against this tide of germanophobia by publishing this book. Maclair loved to take oppositional stances; his early career especially was studded with controversies. Yet at the same time, Maclair grew increasingly nationalistic, and he became involved in *L'Action française*. This makes his "internationalism" appear contradictory. As in relation to the Dreyfus Affair, the context makes for a highly complex and fascinating issue. It should be addressed rather than ignored.

By the later 1920s Maclair had turned his hyperbole in a dangerous direction and become involved in anti-Jewish activities. Prominent in the public eye, he published xenophobic and anti-Semitic diatribes in widely read newspapers and journals. These incendiary articles, full of venom, rage and hatred, were collected in volumes such as *La Farce de l'art vivant* (1928) and *Les Météques contre l'art français* (1929-1930).^[5] It is also true that Maclair contributed to and served as editor of openly anti-Jewish publications.^[6] Not surprisingly, Maclair stood accused as a *collaborateur* upon his death.

Yeoland mentions this last fact only briefly; the other facts go unmentioned. One cannot blithely extol Maclair's "internationalism" without addressing evidence to the contrary. Unpleasant as it may be, Maclair's broader involvements do provide a valuable social context for his work. His trajectory from early radicalism to extreme conservatism reflects a broader pattern among his generation.^[7] Yeoland purports to situate Maclair in his milieu yet consistently elides evidence of his ugly side, and those who have examined these issues are not in her Bibliography (see note 6). To cite another example: Yeoland notes that in his *Histoire de la musique européenne* (1914) Maclair blamed the French public's benighted taste for "puerile" operettas primarily on two 'Germaines francises,' Giacomo Meyerbeer and Jacques Offenbach (p. 182), but she fails to even mention that he had singled out two Jewish composers. Given what Maclair became, there is a professional, even ethical responsibility to address this.

Ultimately, there are aspects of this study that are positive. Yeoland has synopsized Mauclair's considerable writings on musical topics, the most neglected aspect of his oeuvre. Her chapter on *La Religion de la musique* is probably the strongest. And despite redundancies, the structure and organization of the book are clear.

Yeoland had stated three goals for her book. She did present music as an ongoing theme in Mauclair's work. She aspired to examine musical elements of Mauclair's style of writing, which she addressed only briefly and superficially. Regretfully, she did not provide a context for Mauclair's musical writings (beyond an oversimplified early aesthetic framework), nor demonstrate what they reveal about the Parisian milieu.[8] Yeoland's dedication to her subject, and her passion for music and French literature are not in doubt. It is therefore difficult but still necessary to conclude that on a scholarly level this book is not successful.

NOTES

[1] The primary studies of Mauclair that Yeoland summarizes are: Georges Jean-Aubry, *Camille Mauclair* (Paris: Sansot, 1905); Alan M. Marchbank, "Camille Mauclair: Life and Works, 1890-1900," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Edinburgh University, 1973); Willaim C. Clark, "Camille Mauclair and the Religion of Art," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, 1976); Lisa Ann Norris, "The Early Writings of Camille Mauclair: Towards an Understanding of Wagnerism and French Art, 1885-1900," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1993); Simonetta Valenti, *Camille Mauclair, homme de lettres fin-de-siècle* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2003).

[2] Camille Mauclair, *Servitude et grandeur littéraires* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1922). Further memoirs, and an indication of his lifelong devotion to his mentor, are found in Mauclair, *Mallarmé chez lui* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1935).

[3] The consistency of Mauclair's method would have been demonstrated by indicating that he routinely discussed the visual arts in musical terms. One finds this especially in his *Impressionism* (first published London: Duckworth, 1903). Mauclair first emerged as a historian with this book, and with *The Great French Painters and the Evolution of French Painting from 1830 to the Present Day* (London: Duckworth, 1903). Both were subsequently published in French. In both texts, Mauclair insisted on music's central place in the formation of French art. See Norris, "The Early Writings of Camille Mauclair."

[4] See Valenti, pp. 353-383.

(5) In 1928 Mauclair also republished his *La Religion de la musique et les héros de l'orchestre*, a volume filled with moving accounts of his encounters with music. How could both the outraged xenophobe and the inspired melomane be operating simultaneously? Here then, is the kind of intriguing issue that context raises.

[6] Romy Golan tracks Mauclair's descent beautifully; other scholars have discussed this ugly aspect of Mauclair as well. See Romy Golan, "From Fin-de-Siècle to Vichy: The Cultural Hygienics of Camille (Faust) Mauclair," in Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb, eds., *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995). See also Simon Epstein, *Les dreyfusards sous l'Occupation* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001). Another valuable text is Michael Marlais, *Conservative Echoes in Fin-de-Siècle Parisian Art Criticism* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

[7] This is the topic of Epstein's valuable work.

[8] For a more effective discussion of the cultural milieu in Maclair's early years see Edward Kearns, "Maclair and the Musical World of the 'Fin de Siècle' [sic] and the 'Belle Epoque'" *The Modern Language Review* 96:2 (April 1, 2001), Page 334(1).

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