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David Tunley, *Salons, Singers and Songs: A Background to Romantic French Song, 1830-1870*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. ix + 283 pp. Appendices, bibliography, index. \$79.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 0-7546-0491-8.

Review by William Weber, California State University, Long Beach.

Members of the French upper classes heard a lot of vocal music in salons during the middle of the nineteenth century. At most salons one was treated to a substantial amount of opera and song, as well as instrumental medleys of opera pieces. This was not a specialized interest, as opera and symphonic music tend to be now, but rather a general taste, an interest general to wealthy or educated people as a whole; it was assumed everyone knew a wide repertory of such music. David Tunley has written a useful overview of the salons, song genres, and composers current in this world between 1830 and 1870. The book does not engage very deeply with issues current either in social history or in the new historicist musicology. But it does provide a handy way by which to get a glimpse at this important area of French cultural life from a healthily broad aesthetic perspective.

Tunley fortunately resists the frequent tendency to see music history only through the composers and tastes that have been defined as canonic. He treats with respect the *romance*, the vocal idiom that was by far the most popular around 1830. He calls it "a singer's rather than a composer's art" (p. 61) and suggests that it was widely appreciated in sophisticated terms. He gives an excerpt from a *romance* by A.-G.-H. Romagnesi ("Belle rose, charmante fleur") that he finds particularly deserving to be heard.

He then shows how around 1830 the art song began to evolve out of the *romance*. Pieces called *mélodie* came from Hippolyte Monpou, Louis Niedermeyer, Henri Duparc, Victor Massé, and Hector Berlioz, though retaining links to the *romance*, while not becoming an overly specialized taste. Present-day singers are in fact bringing back songs by Duparc and Monpou as the distinctions between "serious" and "light" music have come increasingly into question. A similar tendency is at work in the study of German song. As can be seen in the work of David Gramit, musicologists are looking back at the Lied prior to Franz Schubert, finding that we must appreciate the music of his predecessors in their own terms, but also recognize that Schubert himself self-consciously served a wide popular public in certain of his songs.[1]

The book suggests interesting perspectives as well on the social history of composers. Tunley shows a wide range of composers prominent in writing songs, some of them singers, others opera conductors, still others music critics. Quite a few were women, most of them singers who wrote songs usually in national idioms, but others such as Pauline Duchambge (1778-1858) from a wealthy and educated family, recalling the evidence given by Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson that a remarkable number of women from such background became composers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[2] The biographical sketches suggest that, compared with eighteenth-century composers, song writers now came much less often from families of musicians, some of them in fact being children of well-off professionals and businessmen.

Tunley does not seem to have read widely within social history, mentioning only briefly Adeline

Daumard's work.^[3] But his cleanly written discussion of the salons confirms substantially the argument that the three elites of title, wealth, and talent were beginning to form an upper class, the eventual unitary bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century, during this period. Periodicals commented endlessly upon the audiences at fashionable public or private concerts as coming from diverse social origins but making up a common elite defined by its cosmopolitanism, public prominence, and fashion consciousness. The hosts of the main salons tended to be from Orleanist aristocratic extraction (Prince Joseph Ney de la Moskowa, son of the Marshal Ney) or foreign (the Austrian ambassador Rodolphe Apponyi and the Comtesse Merlin) or from major bourgeois families such as the Emile and Delphine Girardin.

The blending of elite lines takes one back to disputes over the "rise" of the bourgeoisie by revisionists such as Patricia O'Brien and Pamela Pilbeam.^[4] While the argument for an ideologically defined rising middle class seems convincing in Jeremy Popkin's study of the press in Lyons, in this context the other point of view clearly holds sway.^[5] I made a case for it in *Music and the Middle Class*, showing how different elites were moving closer to one another in concert life in London, Paris, and Vienna in the 1830s and 1840s.^[6] Jane Fulcher likewise has argued that the Paris Opéra of Louis Véron in that period attempted, if ultimately unsuccessfully, to blend conflicting social groups and ideological tendencies.^[7] Work on the Opéra after 1830 in fact has shown that there were no more bourgeois in the boxes then than before the Revolution.

Tunley provides an eighty-five-page list of reports on salon concerts between 1830 and 1870 that is a useful basis for more intensive research on the subject, especially on the people hosting the events. It is particularly interesting to find a growing number of public officials holding salons after 1850: for example, the Turkish Ambassador (1850), the Prefect of the Seine (1855), the vice-president of the Legislative Corps (1861), the Minister of Justice (1861), and the Minister of State (1862). It is equally notable that high-level musicians held important salons—the violinist Pierre Zimmerman in the 1840s and the eminent Gioachino Rossini in the 1850s and early 1860s. All told, musical events functioned as major social venues where the national elite gathered.

One of the most fundamental changes in musical culture is evident in the works listed here: the rise of the first international canon of great works. The first canonic repertoires emerged in separate national forms during the eighteenth century, known as "ancient music" in Britain and *la musique ancienne* in France. At the start of the nineteenth century music by Austrian, German, and in a few cases Italian composers—not simply Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven—began to spread across Europe and America in close relationship with a highly idealistic aesthetic, indeed an ideology, for "classical music." Yet at the same time opera began to develop its own canon, defined in less lofty terms, within the repertoires of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Meyerbeer. The Paris Opéra was the main forum where the latter movement came about, and the Société des Concerts held in the Conservatoire established the most important orchestra for the former one.

While the citations of salon music in periodicals do not tell all of what was performed, they are extensive enough to show that works were remaining longer in repertory after around 1850 and in fact being treated in canonic fashion. Programs have only recently come into their own as a source for tracing musical taste, for which the list is an important resource. The main point that emerges is that Austro-German classics stayed on in performance in close relationship with opera excerpts and the emerging Franco-Italian opera canon just described. Prior to 1850 opera pieces by Gluck, Mozart, Weber, and Beethoven (and as well the latter's *Adelaide*, set to an Italian text) were occasionally done alongside pieces by Rossini, Bellini, or the highly popular Adolph Adam. Mozart's music was especially multi-cultural, one might say, finding close relationships to music defined from the highest to the lowest ranks of the emerging canonic scale, rather as Lawrence Levine showed happened to Shakespeare's plays. During the 1850s one finds French works of the late eighteenth century, and even a few by Louis XIV's composer J.-B. Lully, part of the unusually strong new taste for what we now call early music that

the English musicologist Katherine Ellis has been studying productively. Still, the *romance*, the *mélodie*, and opera excerpts remained the focus of salon performances in 1870. The French equivalent of the *Liederabend*, a concert by one singer focused upon classical works, did not become common until the 1890s.

Schubert was by far the most important classical composer that emerged within the salon repertory. Tunley's chapter on the performance of Schubert's songs shows that his songs were done often in salon performances by the end of the 1830s. In February 1841, for example, the Zimmerman salon offered songs by Schubert as well as *romance*-like vocal quartets by Massé and Pauline Thys (p. 153). In such a context these works were not treated as high art but rather as part of what is best called sophisticated general taste. Only after 1860 did the Schubert songs—chiefly the cycles—become redefined as art music separate from songs seen having lighter taste.

It is of equal interest to find songs by Robert Schumann turning up in salons in the middle of the 1860s. By that time Schumann was known as the leading musical ideologist, first in his magazine, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, and then in his *Collected Writings on Music and Musicians* (1854). He framed the main principles for serious musical taste as opposed to the crude, commercialized music he saw dominating opera and salons—the very world of which we speak. For better or for worse, his idealism about musical practice had a greater impact than that of any other writer in dividing musical taste in to the light and the serious. By 1900 concerts given by singers tended either to offer a homogeneous classical or lighter contemporary repertory.

Much more could be done in analyzing the repertory found in the salons than has been done here. Looking at other libraries' resources could help a lot. The Bibliothèque de l'Opéra holds a big collection of programs for public concerts dating from around 1850; the Department of Portraits in the Royal College of Music, London, has a big scrapbook of programs from private concerts done in the 1850s through the 1880s; and there are also pertinent collections in Leipzig, Berlin, and Vienna. The main conclusion I have reached in looking at these programs is that the shift of concert repertories from contemporary to classical came about more slowly in Paris than in the other cities. In certain respects Paris remained in the buoyant, flashy world of the 1840s for the whole century.

NOTES

[1] David Gramit, "Schubert and the Biedermeier: The Aesthetics of Johann Mayrhofer's 'Heliopolis,'" *Music & Letters* 74 (1993): 355-82.

[2] Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 2001). [NOTE: Reviewed on H-France, June 2002, <http://www3.uakron.edu/hfrance/reviews/weber.html>

[3] Adeline Daumard's *Bourgeoisie Parisienne, 1815 à 1848* (Paris, 1963).

[4] Pamela Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789-1914, France, Germany, Italy and Russia* (Chicago, 1990); Alfred Cobban and Patricia O'Brien, "The 'Middle Class' in France, 1815-48," *French Historical Studies*, 5 (1967): 41-56.

[5] Jeremy Popkin, *Press, Revolution, and Social Identities in France, 1830-1835* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

[6] William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class* (London, 1975; reprint, Ashgate, 2003).

[7] Jane Fulcher, *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicized Art* (New York, 1987).

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