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## French Musical Broadcasting from 1925 to 1939

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## **FRENCH MUSICAL BROADCASTING BETWEEN 1925 AND 1939: A DOMINATION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC**

*In the early 1980's, historian René Duval released a publication which became a reference on the topic of French Radio. He especially focused on pre-war stations and cleared a vast uninvestigated ground. Throughout a chronological survey, where he describes every situation that contributes to bringing about some thirty broadcasting stations on the French territory, Duval emphasized similarities that occurred in the Thirties between the programs of public and private stations<sup>1</sup>. He particularly showed that music was the basic broadcasting material of the very first French stations. Whatever the network or the power of diffusion, broadcasted concerts, in which musical art dominates, were at that time the "trading business" of broadcasting stations whose major listeners were members of the local bourgeois middle class<sup>2</sup>. Sketching a first picture of the links and political, socio-economic and artistic factors, this researcher paved the way for new historical and musicological prospects.*

### **TWO STUDIES ON PRE-WAR MUSICAL BROADCASTING**

#### **ART MUSIC ON PARISIAN STATIONS AROUND 1925**

Backing on first university research carried out on Radio History, Sylvie Garrec proposes an original musicological study dealing with the first-hour's medium<sup>3</sup>. Focusing on the musical programs or concerts that they offer, she looks into the musical contents of the four stations then existing in Paris one by one and compares them<sup>4</sup>. She also draws a very precise list of the composers who were mentioned between March 1924 and March 1925.

This inventory highlights the primacy, on Parisian wires, of French 20<sup>th</sup> century music. On the top board are in fact some particularly recurrent musicians: Gabriel Fauré, Reynaldo Hahn, Paul Vidal, Gabriel Pierné, followed by Cécile Chaminade, Maurice Ravel, Georges Hüe, Henri Busser and Florent Schmitt<sup>5</sup>. Beside her quantifications, Garrec submits the

<sup>1</sup> DUVAL, René, *Histoire institutionnelle de la radio en France*, Phd in Sciences of Information, University of Paris II, 1979, published the same year : *Histoire de la radio en France*, Paris, Alain Moreau. The author describes French specificity of a double network in the interwar period: public and private. He also shows how organized associations of 'wireless receivers', as they were called then, acted and even fuelled broadcasting activities throughout the twenties. But centralized policies of successive governments progressively deprived them of their prerogatives,

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140, p. 178, p. 194, p. 207, p. 217-218, and p. 238. Radio-concerts programs broadcasted in the private stations period of "the great venture" (1922-1933) are here largely detailed.

<sup>3</sup> GARREC, Sylvie, *Radiophonie et programmation de la musique sérieuse à Paris, 1924-1925*, dissertation of Master degree in musicology, held under the direction of Jean-Rémy Julien, University of Paris-IV, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, chapters V (programmation radiophonique) and VI (étude comparative des programmations). The four targeted stations are: Radio-PTT, Radio Tour Eiffel, concerning the public network, and Radio-Paris (Radiola) and Le Petit parisien (which is about to become le Poste Parisien).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46-95.

following hypothesis: “the main problem of broadcasters was to enhance modern music, to broadcast it without scaring away (and then losing) the majority of their audiences”<sup>6</sup>. If she especially concentrates on “serious music” (“*musique sérieuse*”), meaning classical music as it was then called, she also examines the composers of minority genres, like jazz or military music, about whom she indicates:

*“It was actually impossible to find out any biography reference for some of the composers who are completely unknown nowadays. This fact reinforces the feeling of amateurism that the study of broadcasts from 1924 to 1925 suggests: a system of personal relationship may have played a role in the broadcasting of these musicians.”*<sup>7</sup>

Besides, Sylvie Garrec explains that classifying the composers broadcasted poses musicological problems such as matching yesterday’s sections with current segments and definitions. The undertaking, she goes on, is to “formulate an aesthetic judgment apart from its context”. Inaugurating new methodological and investigation processes, she especially highlights the age-old influence of those at the receiving end over those broadcasting as far as radio musical broadcasting is concerned.

## A PROGRESSIVE DROP OF CLASSICAL MUSIC DURING THE THIRTIES

Devoting a thesis to French Radio in the Thirties, Cécile Méadel places some of the activities of the major stations in perspective with the socioeconomic and political context of the growing up of the medium<sup>8</sup>. The complex muddle of factors which weigh on this evolution has inevitable impacts on the broadcasts, which the historian segmented into themes, so as to outline its features. In the chapter dedicated to music, she indicates that, apart from mutations that occurred in the mid-Thirties, music invariably accounts for 60% of the programs and budgets of the stations<sup>9</sup>.

In order to support her analysis of broadcasted music, she uses the same method as Sylvie Garrec, examining, on the one hand, the types of programs (under the titles provided by specialized magazines) and, on the other hand, the statistics of the composers mentioned.

As far as the first are concerned, “due to hazy groups (“*musique légère*”, symphonic concert, mood music, lyrical program, records or more simply concert)”, samplings only enabled her to make out a “musical orientation” of the stations<sup>10</sup>. Her analysis of Radio-Paris’ musical styles, for instance, shows the discontinuity of its musical broadcasting across the

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41. Speaking about her attempts of identification of musicians, the auteur indicates (p. 4) that 3 letters addressed in this purpose to la Sacem (French Society dealing with musician play rights) remained unanswered.

<sup>8</sup> MÉADEL, Cécile, *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, Phd in History under the direction of Jean-Noël Jeanneney, Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris, 1992. This thesis was published afterward under the title of : *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, Paris, Anthropos / INA, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> MÉADEL, Cécile., *op. cit.*, p. 323. Titled « De la musique avec toute chose », referring to Verlaine’s quote and reemployed by Robert Jardillier in October of 1938, Chapter XIV can be found p 313-329.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

years<sup>11</sup>. At the most, she explains, it can be noted that “compared to other stations, this one rather substantially broadcasts classical music<sup>12</sup>”.

In order to assess the evolution of broadcasting through the angle of composers, Cécile Méadel carried out a sampling of the programs of two stations that were comparable in 1932 (Radio-Paris and Le Poste Parisien). She then compared these samplings to other ones from 1937<sup>13</sup>. The results she obtained show a noticeable evolution of the groups of composers which she classified chronologically, “respecting the criteria used by stations to qualify classical composers as such” (from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup>) :

*« Mood music or pop music (apparently difficult to dissociate) head the most played genres in 1937 on both stations, whereas five years before, this commercial music was overstepped by 19<sup>th</sup> century music. [...] The 19<sup>th</sup> century is a golden mine for station broadcasting, mainly in 1932. Some forty composers altogether were shared by the two stations. Between 1932 and 1937, however, their appearances are going down in absolute value. This fact is more particularly true for Le Poste Parisie : while they used to account for almost one half of the programs in 1932, they hardly represent one seventh five years later. On Radio-Paris, the figure is shrinking from 22% to 12% of the composers mentioned . 20<sup>th</sup> century music faces a similar evolution. <sup>14</sup> »*

These two comparative studies screening the appearances of both programs and composers broadcasted lead Cécile Méadel to consider the “Musical Babel” as one of the characteristic features of the music of the Thirties<sup>15</sup>. But her findings mainly tend to unveil the invention of its proper stylistic patterns, delimiting an “entertainment” genre and a “highbrow” register, which could be found in no other musical area. Without attempting to explain how the blend of song, opera and symphonic music can constitute a coherent mixture, Méadel comes to the conclusion that the very notion of music itself acquires a uniformity which it hadn’t got before: “With Radio, the mere genre of music becomes a unity<sup>16</sup>”.

**A MORE ACCURATE VISION OF MUSICAL  
BROADCASTING IN FRANCE IN THE THIRTIES**

A more recent university research highlights some of the zones that the pioneer work of Cécile Méadel left in the shadow. The thesis which the author of this article defended a few years ago confirms the hegemony of classical music on the wires, while revealing the

<sup>11</sup> Contrary to Sylvie Garrec’s study which proposed a picture of musical broadcasting within a whole season, Cécile Méadel attempted to monitor an evolution of the dispatching of musical genres throughout the time. Her samplings of Radio-Paris (a week of programs) concerned several years: 1930, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1939.

<sup>12</sup> MÉADEL, Cécile, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

<sup>13</sup> Jotting down the names of the composers played for one week of 1937 and two of 1932 (when the information released was too short to provide relevant data), she found a result of 349 musicians representing a total of 465 pieces performed.

<sup>14</sup> MÉADEL, Cécile, *op. cit.*, p. 318-319.

<sup>15</sup> *La radio des années trente* [thesis], p. 703.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter « De la musique avant toute chose », p. 329.

circumstances of its “cohabitation” with emerging softer, more entertaining and more popular aesthetics,<sup>17</sup>.

In order to understand the musical features that emerged on the Radio of the Thirties, multiple angles of monitoring were used that highlighted both the mechanisms of musical production and the latter’s own features. In the purpose of recounting actual facts in their dynamics and immediate reality, we decided to make samplings throughout the whole decade.

## TWO MODELS OF STATIONS FOR THE DECADE

Two of the some thirty stations existing in the Thirties perfectly represent the evolution: Radio-Paris / Poste national and Radio-LL which is to become, under the name of Radio-Cité, one of the most popular private stations of the pre-war period. These two models of stations are as representative of the beginning of the decade (when there was a split between big and handmade local stations) as of the pre-war period (when the cleavage was between government-owned public stations post controlled by the “PTT” administration of and powerful commercial stations).

Due to the inequality of programs depending on the seasons, a picture taken every year at the same time was preferred to random measurements. The month of June was chosen as a standard of the decade because it happened to follow a kind of average pattern between the “full” season and the summer period, usually emptier in the matter of programs.

A typology of radio broadcasts, quantified by genre, by the number of sets and by duration was built to facilitate the understanding of this corpus of 10 months of broadcasting<sup>18</sup>.

## CONFRONTING CONTENTS AND ARGUMENTS

Studying the occurrences of composers was as interesting as monitoring musical performers, who were also ever-present in the printed programs. Gathering respectively 2 185 composers and 2 012 performers, the stocklists built from the rewriting of the programs show a qualitative and quantitative picture of the musical broadcasting of the Thirties. In fact, bringing to light the categories and stylistic subdivisions in which these musicians evolved, these indexes precisely show their recurrence, for both the composers and the noticed performers are listed with an indication of the number of their references (meaning their cited works) and the years when they appeared<sup>19</sup>.

Two complementary purposes motivated the building of another corpus gathering the arguments (in both meanings of the term !) of the actors of French musical broadcasting in the

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<sup>17</sup> BENNET, Christophe, *Musique et Radio dans la France des années trente : la création d’un genre radiophonique*, thesis of doctorate in History of Music and Musicology of University of Paris-Sorbonne, held in June 2007 under the direction of Michèle Alten. This thesis was published under the following title: *La Musique à la Radio dans les années Trente*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2010: <http://www.editions-harmattan.fr/index.asp?navig=catalogue&obj=livre&no=31655>.

<sup>18</sup> These 5 360 programs, corresponding to more than 3 350 broadcasting hours provide a wide database that can be exploited either in a progressive perspective or in a comparative or global view.

<sup>19</sup> Composers and performers listed in these both indexes generate 15 874 references that had to be classified in order to bring any sense. This database is currently being posted on line at: <http://www.plm.paris-sorbonne.fr/spip.php?rubrique6>.

Thirties, firstly explaining some aspects of acting which the indexes left unlighted and enhancing the conditions of broadcasting and receiving. On the other hand, the purpose was to verify the consistency between the two models of stations and other stations of the French network. This corpus of database was built from a scrupulous monitoring of broadcasting press organs readable either at Radio France (department of the written archives) or National Library Francois-Mitterrand (audiovisual department) and Inathèque de France (same site). Including some 900 press articles, this database appears to be relevant since it gathers diverse columnists' orientations.

**1930-1935: BETWEEN THE TRADITIONNAL  
CONCERT PATTERN AND AN EMERGING  
BROADCASTING GENRE**

Building corpuses from multiple sources led to a necessary temporal separation in the chronological study of musical broadcasting. Historian Christian Brochand had suggested periodical frames that perfectly apply to our topic. Considering the process of professionalization of broadcasting programs, he defined 1935 as a “go-between year” between a “transitional Radio (1929-1935)” and a “modern Radio (1935-1040)”<sup>20</sup>.

## **ECLECTIC PROGRAMS AND MYRIADS OF COMPOSERS**

The strong diversity shown by the typology of programs (29 categories<sup>21</sup>) reveals that the broadcasting managers intend to satisfy a broad panorama of listeners. Despite the economic contingencies that the station faces, they try to provide coherent broadcasting, instituting listening habits which give them their tempo: at noon, in the evening, on Sundays. For either nationwide or self-made local stations, the apparent confusion of programs should mainly be seen as a melting-pot of genres that would be considered today as an aberration. Apart from classical concerts, they often produce successions of entertaining commercial dance music which they borrow respectively from café-concerts or music- and dance-halls, thus progressively building a principle of entertaining music. We can see that from its very beginning Le Poste national (the other name of Radio-Paris at the time when the French Government bought it back in 1933) imitates and leads this musical innovation further. The apparition of numerous little orchestral groups is indeed significant: their adaptability enables them to perform either a repertory from the Romantic period (a recurrent style) or a vocal program with songs and pieces of dancing music. Copying, on the one hand, existing schemes of aesthetically consistent shows, and inventing, on the other hand, heterogeneous sequences of playing records, sometimes “humanized” by small station-orchestras, The radio of the first

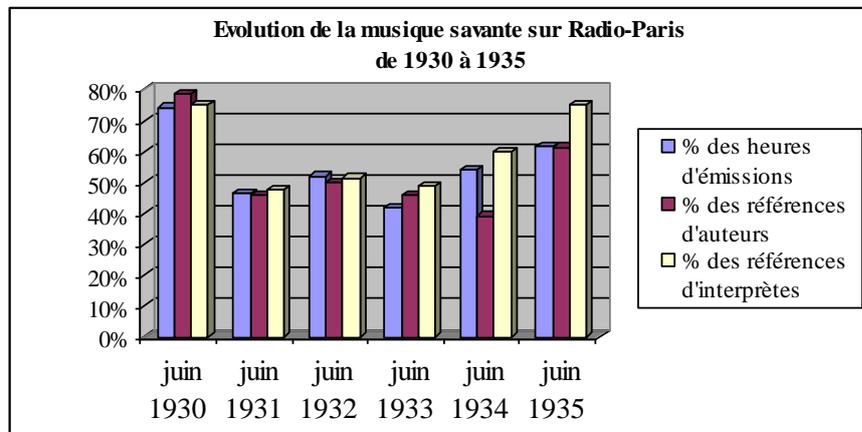
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<sup>20</sup> BROCHAND, Christian, *Histoire générale de la radio et de la télévision, t. I : 1921-1944*, p. 390 et 406.

<sup>21</sup> These typologies of programs, composers and performers are shown in detail in a previous article: BENNET, Christophe, « La programmation musicale en 1936 », in *Cahiers d'histoire de la radiodiffusion* n°88 April-June 2006: <http://web.chr2009.free.fr/?p=667> .

half of the Thirties has already found its proper style. The mixture of improvisation and reproduction contributes to the emergence of typically “radiophonic” musical programs<sup>22</sup>.

The association of programs’ and composers’ typologies enhances an interesting fact: the celebrity of musicians appears in their capability of belonging to any program declined, from a classical concert to the musical “middle-of-the-road” series (“light and mixed music” or “*musique légère et variée*”). Protagonists of a “middle genre”, like those of “light music” or operetta, drift as easily into classical music programs as in entertaining series. Viennese composer Franz Lehár perfectly embodies this versatility since he can be found either in symphonic or lyrical concerts or in music-hall and movies’ music programs. The large range of musical writing, in which “operatic” occupies a golden place, is indisputably one of the vectors of the frequent appearances of several composers. Those who could be qualified as “unspecialized or universal musicians”, in opposition to their counterparts focusing on a precise genre, are easily inserted, thanks to carefully chosen titles, in the multiple thematic series whose unity was only due to their ambiance. Innumerable “little masterpieces” utilized by the broadcasters of the Thirties both enable them to feed these multicolored programs and to introduce indisputable values in the matter of cultural legitimacy. However, stations would probably not broadcast such “tonal” pieces more meeting an intellectual demand than for their inexhaustible musical variety. Besides, in the first half of the decade, a relative relationship could be underlined between the programs of a big national station and those of a modest local station. Yet, considering both Radio-LL’s programs and composer lists, a slight decrease of classical programs can be observed<sup>23</sup>.



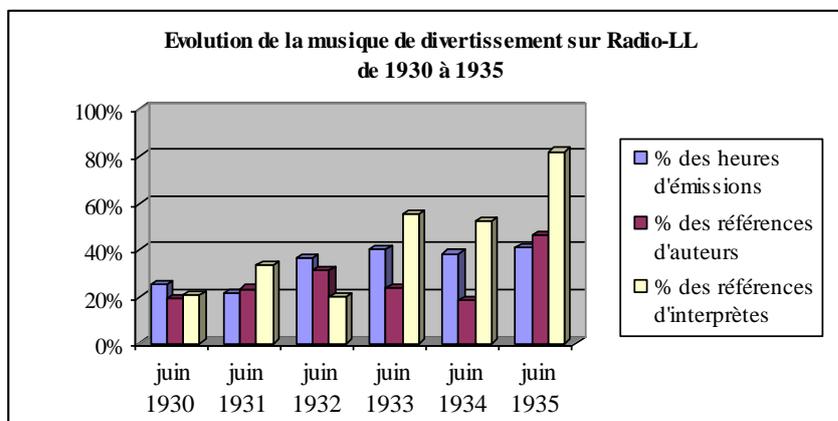
By associating the databases of programs, composers and performers of both stations, two opposite tendencies appear. On Radio-Paris, Classical music dominates<sup>24</sup>. Whereas these programs are mainly produced “live” from the studios of the station, the category of Classical music largely oversteps the categories of “entertaining music” (mostly recorded), and “middle music”. In such little studios thin orchestras of a dozen musicians are used to mixing symphonic works with commercial songs and dances, as if they tried to imitate traditional programs of record combinations.

<sup>22</sup> *Musique et Radio dans la France des années trente*, op. cit. « Des programmes privilégiant l’éclectisme », p. 25-52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, « Une myriade d’auteurs », p. 53-82.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the graph « évolution de la musique savante sur Radio-Paris de 1930 à 1935 ».

Lacking such a median tool, Radio-LL's programs are more thematically consistent and segmented. The microphone is the main vector of entertaining music. At the end of this six-year period, this model of program insensitively oversteps classical music, mostly broadcasted, through records playing<sup>25</sup>.



## DIVERGENCES OF IDEAS AND INTERESTS

Globalizing the arguments of the actors of the decade's broadcasting, we can underline the action of a managing minority, intellectually demanding, open to classical music, to the art of broadcasting and apparently motioned by a project of masses acculturation in the field of music. Those who can be qualified as an elite are opposing a majority of listeners who are, if not growing, at least composed of sharply critical customers who steadily express their aspirations and dislikes more openly. Although they acknowledge the legitimacy of the use of the medium for pedagogical purposes, they however reject this principle the moment they are listening! Year after year, evidences and statements add up to denounce a saturation of "highbrow music" (informally called "*Grande musique*" by French people).

What however happens is that programs-makers, cautiously progressing against winds and tides, are not so awkward, given their modest resources. At a time when the economic background is unfavorable, Radio managers attempt to spare their audiences, without any help (a euphemism!) from their potential allies: record-making industries, the national lyrical theatres, and musical performers<sup>26</sup>. What's more, it is hardly likely that the huge broadcasting of classical music was meant only with the purpose of mass acculturation. The broadcasting of a symphony by Beethoven, which might be perceived by some listeners as a boring music lesson, would nonetheless be felt as actual entertainment by others. Without any genuine "bill of specifications", the radio steadily grows up on the basis of its prime. It becomes progressively free from the recitals of chamber music, from the "1926-type" radio-concerts as a disgruntled listener qualified them in *La Parole libre TSF*<sup>27</sup>. In the very first hours of broadcasting, this profusion of traditional broadcasts was hardly astonishing, since what we could call an "average audience" came from the bourgeoisie, acclimated to the values of

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the graph « évolution de la musique de divertissement sur Radio-LL de 1930 à 1935 » and read the chapter concerning performers scheduled at this period: « la forte valeur identitaire des musiciens de stations ».

<sup>26</sup> At the beginning of the decade, all this actors keep striking radio, considering it more as a potential rival than as a possible partner.

<sup>27</sup> *La Parole libre TSF* n°115 of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1930, p. 2: « La composition des programmes ». The listener denounces « the alternation of singing, piano solo, adagio for cello and sonata for violin ».

music as an art. The more we progress in the decade, the less this is true. As far as the public / private cleavage is concerned, the monitoring of the different arguments through the broadcasting press confirms what quantitative tools had suggested. Whatever the political orientation of the magazine, the actors before 1935 are therefore more willing to express themselves about the radio in a broad sense than on the difference between two distinct models of broadcasting.

**1936-1939: SIMILARITIES ON THE GROUND AND  
DIFFERENCES ON THE FORM**

Throughout the second half of the decade, the interference of several evolution factors is shaking up the programs of French radio. Successive governments are perfectly aware of the decrease of the audience that the national network faces. In spite of an insidious reinforcement and its involvement in program organization, and despite the enhancement of its artistic supply (due to the complementarity of territorial resources), the public sector struggles to prevent the fleeing of audience toward commercial stations. Responding to their aspirations, private stations imagine new ways of conceiving programs and making Radio. Often composed in relation with publicity specialists and corresponding to the wishes of a growing multitude, their programs match their likely tastes. Faced with a sophisticated way of speaking, an administrative routine, the endless pressure of public policies, private stations play on the ground of distraction, fantasy and imagination. Every year more numerous, listeners prefer them to Government's stations, because they're more interesting, younger, more active and happier.

### **AN AUDIENCE IS TO ACCULTURATE**

Examining some of the statements of managers is particularly meaningful: either acting in favor of the public network or for a big private station, the personalities heading musical programs express conceptions that are eventually convergent. Faced with the listener's boredom inspired by unknown aesthetical expressions which they appeared to be fed up with, the only solution is to conceal their purpose of acculturation. The project eventually consists in cautiously infiltrating the listeners' culture (or non-culture?), in situations that they don't consider as educative (operettas, well-known masterpieces, short sequences). These managers commonly estimate they would help their listeners to assimilate music which doesn't belong to their culture through the progressive capitalization of a minimum of "middle-of-the-road values". On the side of the public network, Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht, who is responsible for "high surveillance of Paris-PTT's programs" and is in charge of the artistic management of federal programs, explains that "we should not be upset by a too beautiful music, but abandon summits to alpinists and just bring the masses to mid-slope.<sup>28</sup>". On the private side, Jean-Guignebert, editor-in-chief of "La Voix de Paris" on Radio-Cité, suggests impregnating their intelligence without their knowledge:

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<sup>28</sup> *TSF Programmes* n°202 July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1934, p. 45 : « Quelques instants avec D.-E. Inghelbrecht », by Pierre Keszler.

« *Of course the hearing of light music won't bring a considerable enrichment to the brain but it will extend knowledge, will polish the slightest bit of sensitivity and will pave the way for the listening of deeper music.*<sup>29</sup> »

Believing either of them, the listeners make an obstruction to any “attempt” at acculturation. And this is mainly due to their incapacity to decode these sophisticated musical expressions. These managers’ records and stances are rather similar. However, their implementations and the results of their respective policies (at least in terms of public opinion) are different.

## **RADIO-PARIS: ACCULTURATION THROUGH THE MUSICAL DIVERSITY OF THE CONCERTS**

From the very first years of the decade, Radio-Paris, without being an exception, took to flooding its listeners with heterogeneous musical programs. The purpose consisted in interfering in the listeners’ auditive habits. In an article titled “For a musical education of masses”, columnist Paul Dermée had interpreted this choice of the broadcasters as a will of not being too didactic or too austere. Thus, diversity, a variety of music, appears to be felt by the actors of broadcasting as synonymous with entertainment. According to this observer, dreadful mixtures resulting from this conception reduce the pedagogic impact of the medium. Yet he admits that eventually these colorful broadcasts indeed enabled many consumers to accustom themselves to some of the greatest composers and to their works<sup>30</sup>. In June 1939, on Radio-Paris (which had then become ‘Le Poste National’) there is still a plethora of “concert variés” (mixed programs), “light music” (“*musique légère*”), and series of record-playing entitled “light music concerts”. Conducted by François Gras, the concert broadcasted on Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1939 illustrates both the partial legitimacy of such mixtures and the contests they inspire. For the beginning of this Sunday afternoon, here is what *Le Petit Radio* announced:

« *Concert, direction Fr. Gras : Old Nick (Tzipine) ; La pie voleuse, ouverture (Rossini) ; La Housarde (Ganne) ; Blanche Neige et les sept nains, sélection (Churchill) ; Yvonne (Jeanjean) ; En relisant vos lettres (Masson-Kick) ; Saltarelle (Gounod) ; The Donkey Serenade (Friml) ; Boublichka (Némo et Mills) ; Jubilee Stomp (Ellington) ».*

It clearly appears that the program of the concert is mainly oriented in a “light music” spirit. Through a kind of aesthetical neighborhood all this tunes that are not properly speaking from the symphonic field may be related to a formal, rather accessible, musical classification, a “middle style” music that could be linked to the “mid-slope” which Inghelgrecht was talking about. Considered separately on basic criteria of writing, however, some of these works are very distant. Nowadays it would be difficult to match Ellington’s swing with *Exquisite Romances* by Gounod or the flowing themes from *The Thieving Magpie* by Rossini with the simple melodies of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, conceived to be easily memorized and hummed. Yet the Radio-Paris program makers precisely dare such mixture, thanks to the arrays of entertainment and symphonic pieces (“*musique légère et variée*”). The concept of

<sup>29</sup> *Ici...Radio-Cité* n°10 March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1938, p. 6 : « La boîte aux lettres ».

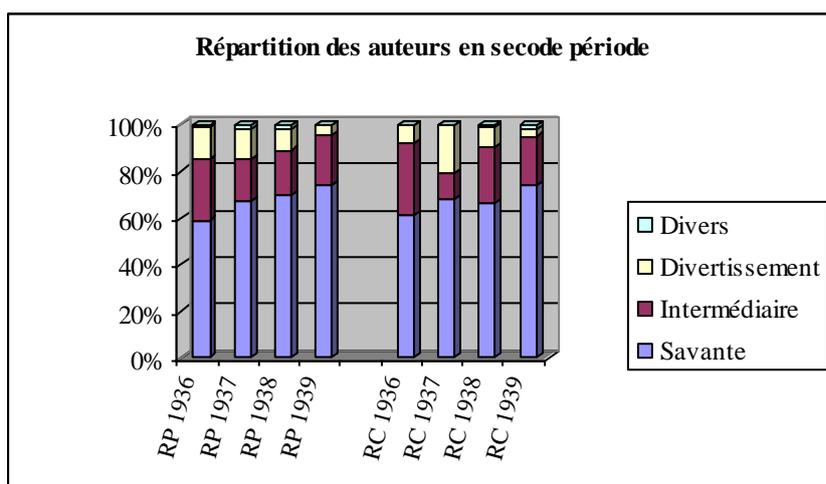
<sup>30</sup> *La parole libre TSF* n°181 du 18 octobre 1931, p. 3 : « Pour l’éducation musicale des masses » by Paul Dermée

“rather classical but accessible aesthetics” is a principle that favors sliding from one style to another.

On Radio-Cité, classical music is far from being neglected, as the high proportion of composers of this category witnesses. But the recipe is utterly different.

### HETEROGENEOUS AND APPEALING MUSICAL CAPSULES ON RADIO-CITÉ

Radio-Cité addresses a probably more popular public than Radio-Paris'. Without making any pejorative distinction, without positioning any genre above another, the station wishes to broadcast the best pieces of every genre. Beside celebrities of dancing, commercial songs and music-hall shows, broadcasters regularly program performers whose aesthetic is more classical, such as organist Charles Tournemire, operatic singer Lucienne Astruc and pianist Walter Joseph. These last two are used to regularly performing through recitals of sonatas in a program called “*Vendredis musicaux de Radio-Cité*” (“Musical Fridays on Radio-Cité”), at 3.30 p.m. Either giving a sweet lesson of some musical abstracts or stepping in as performers, these characters, who represent multiple genres, never stay in front of the microphone for long, but frequently come back to it. These short musical series seem to be all the less repetitive as they appear in program schedules that are always being reshaped.



From 1938 on, a daily program aims to honor great musical art through the recordings of masters. For about twenty minutes, this music lovers' rendezvous marks the beginning of the evening programs, at 6.30 p.m.. As an example, we could show the program of the week of June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1939, published in the station's magazine in a box entitled “Radio-Cité's 'musical moment'”:

« *Dimanche à 18h17 – Debussy : Sonate pour flûte, alto et harpe.*

*Lundi à 18h25 – J.-S. Bach : Cantate, par les chœurs et orchestre de la Société Bach.*

*Mardi à 18h25 – Vaughan Williams : Sérénade à la Musique, solistes et orchestre sous la direction de Sir Henry Wood.*

*Mercredi à 18h45 – Liszt : Légende de Saint François de Paule marchant sur les flots , Valse oubliée, La Campanella.*

*Jeudi à 18h22 – Berlioz : La Damnation de Faust (extraits) avec Charles Panzéra , José de Trévi et M. Berthon.*

*Vendredi à 18h23 – Chausson : Le Roi Artus, avec Endrèze et Poème pour violon et*

orchestre, avec *Yehudi Menuhin*.  
*Samedi à 18h17 – Florent Schmitt : Suite en Rocalle, par le Quintette Instrumental de Paris.*<sup>31</sup> »

By 1939, the very young Paris Philharmonic Orchestra becomes a regular guest of the studio located, in “la rue de Washington”. This orchestra provides, in exclusivity for Radio-Cité, prestigious concerts, such as the “8<sup>th</sup> gala by the Paris Philharmonic Orchestra [performed on June 4<sup>l</sup>] under the baton of soloist Jacques Thibaud.<sup>32</sup>”

Showing French musical broadcasting in the Thirties through two models of stations confirms the hypotheses founded upon some of the pioneer works : highly listened private stations were wishing to satisfy a demand of musical entertainment contrary to a stubbornly cultural supply, embodied by a public network desperately seeking audiences. However, if one examines the most characteristic aspects of each of the two conceptions of the medium, such as the narrow links between music and advertisement<sup>33</sup>, the handling of the microphone by listeners or the emergence of didactic programs, we on the contrary perceive connections that were unsuspected so far. These similarities, a kind of look-alike, constitute the only substance of musical broadcasting of the decade. Split between their convictions and the maintaining of an audience, broadcasting stations hesitate, seek, find, invent and copy each other. Generalist as a fact, they are confronted with antagonistic audiences, the invisible mass thought to be “noisy” and demanding. Henceforth, we can authenticate the specificity of musical broadcasting in the Thirties by this weird dichotomy: the omnipresence of light-hearted song and the pregnancy of Classical music. But, characteristic it is, this Radio sets up the integrality of modern radio paradigms. By reconciling the general interest with particular stakes, “highbrow” and popular expressions, entertainment and education, program-makers inaugurated and implemented all the patterns of our current audiovisual media.

Many thanks to Mr. Gérard Hocnard for his help regarding the language issues.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ici...Radio-Cité* n°74 du 2 juin 1939, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> This renowned artist attended a few times before the inauguration of the new studio [*Ici...Radio-Cité* n°69 May, 5<sup>th</sup> 1939, p. 6 : « La brillante inauguration du studio Washington »].

<sup>33</sup> An article on this topic is called: Radio Advertising in the Music Broadcasting in France in the Thirties. It can be found on the site of PLM: <http://www.plm.paris-sorbonne.fr/spip.php?article616>