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► **To cite this version:**

Christophe Bennet. French Musical Broadcasting in 1935: Toward a Modern Radio?: A Comparison of two Models of Stations. 2015. hal-01146792

**HAL Id: hal-01146792**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01146792>**

Preprint submitted on 29 Apr 2015

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## **FRENCH MUSICAL BROADCASTING IN 1935: TOWARD A MODERN RADIO? A COMPARISON OF TWO MODELS OF STATIONS<sup>1</sup>**

*During the Thirties, France shows a profound transformation of its broadcasting panorama. To the pioneer listeners' great displeasure, successive governments lead constant actions to reinforce their control of the stations<sup>2</sup>. In parallel of this situation, an explosion of the households' equipment level occurs. In fact, the number of sets owned is multiplied by ten from the beginning of the decade to its end<sup>3</sup>. This development then leads to a diversification of new musical broadcasting expressions. This fact will eventually contribute to emerging forms of acculturation of the listeners<sup>4</sup>. In order to verify this hypothesis, a meticulous monitoring of musical programs has constituted the indispensable first step. It helped understand the complex relations that then tied up between the different actors of broadcasting. An abundance of written sources from specialized magazines compensated the almost total absence of sound archives<sup>5</sup>. This article aims at highlighting this issue. Through most of this period, the French Department of Audiovisual Archives (INA) can provide documents. Both printed musical programs and some of the sounding musical features will be analyzed.*

In order to exploit the written database that would be both readable and significant, and also take into account the French specificity of a double network of public and private stations<sup>6</sup>, the necessity occurred of a limitation of two quantitatively and qualitatively representative stations. An examination of the panorama showed that two stations were meeting the targeted criteria : Radio-Paris (also named Le Poste national from 1933 on) and Radio-LL (these being the initials of its founder, engineer and builder of radio sets Lucien Lévy), a private station renamed Radio-Cité by Marcel Bleustein when he bought it back at the end of 1935<sup>7</sup>. Two major reasons explain the choice of mid-1935 as the period to monitor. The first is linked to the implementation, in January 1935, of the 1933 Act banning publicity in Government-owned stations. This law was to have a substantial impact on the programs<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The French version of this article can be read in the *Cahier d'Histoire de la Radiodiffusion* dedicated to the year 1935: <http://web.chr2009.free.fr/?p=663>

<sup>2</sup> Méadel, Cécile, *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, Paris, Anthropos / INA, 1994, p. 56-75.

<sup>3</sup> By 1930, 0,5 million sets were numbered (for an estimated 1.875 million of listeners) whereas the figure reaches in 1939 the bar of 5.220 million (for 19.574 million of listeners, meaning one in two French people). [Sources : ministère des P.T.T.]

<sup>4</sup> Bennet, Christophe, *Musique et Radio dans la France des années trente : la création d'un genre radiophonique*, a doctor's thesis 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>5</sup> Jeanneney, Jean-Noël, *Une histoire des médias, des origines à nos jours*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> At the dawn of the Thirties, 25 stations are broadcasting in France: 14 « licensed » private stations and 11 from the national network [Sources: website <http://100ansderadio.free.fr> (this website was visited on February 2004)].

<sup>7</sup> The issues of the newspaper *Choisir* in the years 1935, 1936, 1937 show that musical broadcasts are utterly comparable for the stations of the public network. An indisputable unity also occurs under the comparison of private stations' programs. Concerning the geographical spread of the targeted stations, it is almost equal and covers about the whole French territory [*Histoire de la radio des années trente*, op. cit., p. 170]. For a presentation of both stations, the following work will be useful: POUZOLS, Bernard, *Quand la radio s'appelait TSF*, Paris, Éric Baschet, 1982, p. 56 and p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, op. cit., p. 39.

Secondly, as Christian Brochand states it, the year 1935 appears to be, “as for the professionalization of the programs”, a “go-between” between a “transitional Radio” (1929-1935) and a “modern Radio” (1935-1940)<sup>9</sup>.

From a methodological point of view, the whole input of the musical programs of June 1935 led to a necessary ordering of the data. A sorting by musical genre and type of broadcasting (record-playing, live concert) seemed to be the best mean to evaluate first proportions and contents, and secondly to bring up periodicities and constitutive elements of both “time schedules”<sup>10</sup>.

## FROM IMPRECISION TO COMPLETENESS OF THE SOURCES

Specialized newspapers (presenting weekly radio programs) used to detail the programs of the upcoming week, day by day for every station. This chronological and homogeneous presentation of the programs is completed by elections by musical genre, and accompanied by critical articles and columnists’ observations. Their dichotomy is amazing, stretching as it does from the most laconic title to a fastidious enumeration of the whole content of the concert, including the titles of the pieces and the names of the composers.

Some imprecision may spark off uncertainties for a current observer : the end of the programs is not necessarily mentioned, which lead to prefer the most plausible hypothesis. Besides, titles and composers are sometimes unequally detailed. On Radio-LL, many programs are simply called “concert”, without any possibility of dissociating a live concert from a series of records<sup>11</sup>. On this very station, we guess that the musical entertainment program of the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 1935 with “Guy Sella from the Olympia” (a Paris theater) was previously recorded, since the piece *Le Revenant* by the so-called Sella is written in the newspapers as having been “requested again” (at what time ?, by whom ?). On Radio-Paris, some of the indications may justify the supposition of “live programs” for the dancing orchestras (on June 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>), whereas others contradict it (on June 17<sup>th</sup>). Furthermore, French stations’ managers, like their American counterparts<sup>12</sup> anyway, are likely to be tricking their audience. Astonishing non credulous listeners, they even sometimes boast of the artist’s presence in their studio, whereas they actually only play a record<sup>13</sup>. Crossing the information of several periodical papers happily enables to reduce mistakes of interpretation. It permits to bring comprehension to sibylline data and to strengthen their reliability<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, for a recital of cello, released on Radio-Paris in the evening of June 12<sup>th</sup>, *Mon Programme TSF* solely quotes the names of the works and their composers. Likewise, in the afternoon of June 6<sup>th</sup>, newspaper *Choisir* indicates the attendance of “2 violins, viola, cello and bass” for a concert that *Radio-Magazine* only qualifies as “Chamber music”.

<sup>9</sup> *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Let’s admit this anachronism for the current designation of “program schedules” as the first step of a temporal detachment between our article and its objet, Music in the Thirties’ broadcasting.

<sup>11</sup> On this station, some of the programs are even announced as “concert of records”.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas, George H *The Early Days of Radio Broadcasting*, Jefferson, North Carolina, and London, Mc Marland & Company, Inc, Punlishers. 1987, p. 184.

<sup>13</sup> *La Radiodiffusion*, Annuaire 1934, Ministère des P.T.T.

<sup>14</sup> The elements referenced in this article were collected from *Radio-Magazine* (1923-1939), *Choisir* (1932-1937), et *Mon Programme TSF* (1932-1960), the three main broadcasting daily magazines that were sold in 1935. They can be consulted as microfilms or printed documents at the audiovisual department of the French National Library (BNF Tolbiac, underground).

But the comparison of the weeklies reaches its limits when they contradict each other. It is especially the case in the evening of June 8<sup>th</sup> on Radio-Paris, for which *Radio-Magazine* announces the opera *Richard Cœur de Lion* by Gretry, whereas other magazines mention two chamber operas, *Le Devin de village* by J-J Rousseau and *Les Voitures versées* by Boieldieu. The difference of the scheduled programs is even more obvious in the evening of Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>, when the listeners are supposed to hear either *Ariane à Naxos* by Richard Strauss by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra or *La Norma* by Bellini, broadcasted live from the National Opera ! This uncertainty about some of the programs invites to carefulness regarding our classification, especially as this difference represented another of the recriminations regularly expressed by the listeners<sup>15</sup>.

Sometimes, another program was presented only because the initial one was not ready<sup>16</sup>. The content of the one of the Wednesday June 26<sup>th</sup> on Radio-Paris was exactly identical to the one on Friday 21<sup>st</sup>. It was more likely the adjournment of a missed program than a repeat. Anyway, this detail calls for two remarks. First, the title of the program differs although the content is the same, which engages caution regarding an attempt of classification by titles. The program entitled “commercial music” (*variétés*) would suggest a classification as light music, but the subtitle “popular songs” (“by a lyric singer with a piano”) added on the mention of the Wednesday concert almost resembles a recital. This example shows how the mention of the content is much more enlightening than a sometimes deceptive title. Elsewhere, without any further explanations on a program, the feeding of the database should be done carefully. In fact, if the likely mistaken number of occurrences of *La Demande en mariage* by Erik Satie is inconsequent for this well-known composer, a double input could exaggerate the actual reputation of Loïsa Purget, whose work *La Belle si nous étions* might wrongly appear to have been broadcasted twice.

Concerning the meticulous enumerations which some of the magazines detail, it could be noted that the symphonic concert (with a female singer) of Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> on Radio-Paris details no less than 24 titles and 15 composers! As Cécile Méadel suggests, the very precise list of the pieces performed indicates “that their listener [did] listen for such or such singer [...] and neither for a program nor a radio<sup>17</sup>”. We however think that this hypothesis should not be the only justification of a scrupulous input of the integrality of several programs. We also can see in this exhaustive communication the emergence of the program makers’ “conscientiousness”. This fact indeed shows a break from the announcement of the “moonshine” programs by amateur broadcasters in the Twenties<sup>18</sup>. It also shows a new requirement of the listeners. This zeal is a real chance anyway, because it facilitates a classification of the programs which will have to be examined.

<sup>15</sup> As the columns devoted to the listeners’ mails show.

<sup>16</sup> Méadel, Cécile, « Programmes en masse, programmes de masse ? La diffusion de la radio en France pendant les années trente » in ROBIN, Régine (direction), *Masses et culture de masse dans les années trente*, Paris, Les éditions ouvrières, 1991, p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> Ulmann Mauriat, Caroline, *Naissance d’un média : histoire politique de la radio en France de 1921 à 1931*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 1999.

## THE DANGERS AND LIMITS OF A TYPOLOGY BASED ON GENRES

To classify programs, the opportunity occurred to keep the terminology proposed by the actors of the period, as historian Christian Brochand did<sup>19</sup>. Here is how the weekly *Mon Programme TSF* entitled a very instructive table in its central pages:

“Tables of the best programs we chose and classified by genre for you”.

Concerning music, the journal proposes four categories : “Operas, chamber operas, operettas”; “symphonic concert”; “chamber music”; “light music (*musique légère*), jazz”. Let’s observe that this last category includes many styles of songs and dancing music including “mood music” and “commercial music”, which means any type of music then in fashion. At first sight, we might tend to gather the three first genres in a more global group of “serious music” (which is how “classical music” was called in the inter-war period<sup>20</sup>). But a deeper analysis of the contents and of the critics’ columns linked to the musical context calls for a further circumspection. In fact, issue 176 of *Mon Programme* shows that the program of June 3<sup>rd</sup> entitled “concert symphonique” (“symphonic concert”) figures in the Monday’s “light music” selection! Beside operetta tunes by Franz Lehár and Léo Delibes, this concert especially includes pieces by Schubert, Honegger, Debussy and Mozart<sup>21</sup>. Far from being an exception, the gathering of so distant pieces in a same program is highly significant: it is the mood or spirit rather than the belonging to such a genre or period that creates the unity of a concert. This is why in regard of its content a magazine would classify it in a seemingly inappropriate category according to today’s criteria. In our hypothesis of acculturation phenomena, this is a capital idea of what we could call a “dilution of genres”. In fact, in the case of a listener blindly believing his newspaper’s selection, he would, in a series of would-be “light music”, actually be hearing some of the best ambassadors of classical music.

Some audiovisual archives witness an even sharper heterogeneity. In the middle of the decade, one of the Pathé news movie magazines shows that on *Le Poste parisien*<sup>22</sup>, a musical program could embrace most diverse genres. In the studio, we can successively see : Eliane Celitz (who will lend her voice in the French version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*), the vocal group of a certain Théodore Pothorjinski (performing a potpourri of popular Ukrainian tunes), followed by the very colorful orchestra of “Quona Cuban boys”<sup>23</sup>! The porosity of musical frontiers is clearly appearing, as well as the polyvalence of some of the orchestras. These have a wide repertory and play a role in the standardization and the mixing of the genres. On June 10<sup>th</sup>, for instance, Lucien Goldy’s orchestra, which is scheduled five times on Radio-Paris in dancing evenings, plays *Humoresque* by Dvorak as well as operetta tunes by David Pérez (1711-1778). Likewise, on Radio-Paris on June 4<sup>th</sup>, the symphony orchestra conducted by Maurice André<sup>24</sup> performs a piece by Frédo Gardoni whose accordion-orchestra is weekly broadcasted on Radio-LL.

<sup>19</sup> Brochand, Christian, *Contribution à une histoire générale de la radio et de la télévision en France, (1922-1974)*, Thèse, Université de Paris VII, 1989.

<sup>20</sup> *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, op. cit., note 13 p. 318.

<sup>21</sup> Despite the easy association of “light music” and operetta (though *Mon Programme* associates operetta and opera), we feel the contradictions a classification with this period’s criteria generates.

<sup>22</sup> This is a private station whose classical music broadcasting is important and comparable to that of Radio-Paris.

<sup>23</sup> « Les années TSF », *Les mercredis de l’Histoire*, Arte, program of the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1995.

<sup>24</sup> His orchestra is scheduled three times on Radio-Paris. On June 9<sup>th</sup> of June, he performs works by Chabrier, Gounod and Florent Schmitt.



In the purpose of an inevitable classification of the programs, this stylistic flexibility leads to caution: it will be necessary as much as possible to compare the titles of the programs with their contents. Besides, regarding our topic, we will accept a contextual typology of the genres, but we will assess their contents according to current musicological criteria. For instance, we will include the already cited “symphonic concert” of the end of June in a more general “classical music”<sup>25</sup> for the mere reason that a majority of its pieces are nowadays classified as such.

## THE DOMINATION OF MUSIC ON THE WAVES

### PERIODICITIES AND BROADCASTING SERIES

For the period of June 1935, the analysis of the data of broadcasting newspapers confirmed an established fact: musical programs did account for about 60% of the whole programs<sup>26</sup>. The 185 programs of Radio-Paris and the 128 of Radio-LL (which used to broadcast from only noon on working days) generate a corpus of 313 programs, representing approximately 220 hours of broadcasting (140 and 80 hours respectively). The disproportion of the different volumes of programs leads us to put aside a global statistical approach which would be too tainted with Radio-Paris’ values. We will then more often consider respective data through proportionality criteria. Considering contents as much as titles, and clarifying several uncertainties thanks to multiple small indications, some of the most important features of musical broadcasting have been unveiled. For a further understanding, the presentation of concerned programs requires crossing the proposed musical genre with the means of their broadcasting:

- “chamber music, recital”; “symphonic concert” for live programs ;
- “mixing series<sup>27</sup>”; “classical music” for the playing of records ;
- “art-lyric”; “light music” for so-called genres broadcasted live or through records.

In fact, the first appearing split occurs between the musical styles and the types of programs. As a general rule, the releasing of a record-playing section or a live program is rather readable or at least deductible. On Radio-Paris, three-fourth of the programs are produced live from the studio (or by relaying a concert from a Paris theater) and accounts for 71% of the classical programs (chamber music, art-lyric, symphonic concert). As regards the last fourth, the record-playing series mainly favors a classical repertory<sup>28</sup>: 65% are “classical-oriented”, whereas 30% are classified as “light music” (*musique légère*) and only 2% considered “mixed music”. On Radio-LL, both standards of programs are equally set (50% of the programs). However, whereas “commercial music” doesn’t represent more than a fourth of the record broadcasting<sup>29</sup>, their proportion in the programs produced by the station itself is huge: more than 80% vs. only 11% of classical music (and exclusively chamber music). Secondly, sorting independently from the mode of their broadcasting leads to rather similar results : on Radio-Paris, 70% of the programs are classically oriented and “light music” absorbs 30% of the programs. As far as Radio-LL is concerned, there is a big half of “light

<sup>25</sup> And not, as the magazine states, as « entertaining symphonic music ».

<sup>26</sup> Cf. more especially: Albert, Pierre, and Tudesq, André Jean, *Histoire de la radio télévision*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1986, p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> This is the category of the programs in which no major musical genre emerged.

<sup>28</sup> We recall here that some of the programs are only “classical-oriented” since some of their contents should not be classified as such.

<sup>29</sup> As a minimum. In fact, 40% of the records Radio-LL would broadcast have an unidentifiable content. Classical music records only represent 15% of the scheduled records, “mixed music” 18%.

music” (53%), as much of “mixed music” (13%) an important part of undefinable programs due to a lack of data (20%). Several questions raised by this first assessment find partial answers in the schedule of programs which is sketched below.

On both stations a more complete supply of programs can be noticed on Sunday. While the very same artists are used to performing on Radio-LL, Radio-Paris obviously wishes to propose a variety of genres (including religious tunes around noon). Concerning working days, some constant features can be observed for each station.

At 7 a.m., Radio-Paris invariably starts the broadcasting day with two half-hour series (classical, mixing or light music). At noon, a one-hour-long concert is usually broadcasted<sup>30</sup>. When not dedicated to radio-theater, evenings are musical and cover any style: chamber music (every Monday and sometimes on Wednesday); commercial music and songwriters (on Friday). Like any other big European station, Radio-Paris is provided with an impressive symphonic orchestra<sup>31</sup>. Conducted by Désiré-Emile Inghelbrecht, the French National Orchestra releases a concert almost every Thursday evening<sup>32</sup>. At about 10.30 p.m. every evening, the station broadcasts a final program of dancing music, combining no less than nine orchestras. Eclecticism therefore appears to be a strong wish of Radio-Paris. Its multiple productions are to be matched with the importance of its financial means<sup>33</sup>.

Concerning Radio-LL, we can also summarize the major features of musical programs. Among these, we will underline the very recurrent performances of certain artists. Léon Raier, for instance, “presents his latest hits” every Sunday. Among the weekly attendances, we can also notice: Gino Bordin “and Ferrari’s Orchestra” (on Mondays at 12.30), Guy Sella “and his troop” (on Mondays in the early afternoon), Yvette Netter “in her repertory<sup>34</sup>”, “Celebrities Dora Gold and Spada” (on Monday evenings) or “Celebrities Paule Sandra and Jany Mascou” (on Saturday evenings). Whereas midday concerts are “French gaiety”-oriented (like the program presented on Wednesdays by a certain Stervel), evenings are largely dedicated to classical and lyrical music records (on Mondays) and to chamber music with artists performing live in the studio (on Wednesdays and Fridays). It is highly probable that the “Smetana Recital” performed by Paul Tortelier on June 19<sup>th</sup> on Radio-LL was far less costly than any of the symphony orchestras frequently broadcasted on Radio-Paris. Probably due to the modesty of its budget, Radio-LL, a private station, mainly produces one of the most difficult classical genres: chamber music.

We clearly see how the classification of the programs both enables a sketch of a time-schedule and quantitatively distorts (especially due to the mixing of the genres) their contents,

<sup>30</sup> These concert’s programs are rather light-spirited and often include a female singer performance. The orchestras derive their titles from the name of their conductor: Francis Touche (6 times), Andolfi (5 fois), Jean Doyen (4 times), Robert Krettly (3 fois).

<sup>31</sup> Broadcasts on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 1935 witness the greatness of the BBC Orchestra, then conducted by Toscanini [« Arturo Toscanini de 1935 à 1941 », *C’était hier*, France Musique, September 11<sup>th</sup> 2000]. Likewise, Radio Luxembourg’s orchestra was “marvelously constituted [...] and reputed for its quality” [Maréchal, Denis, « Les premiers auditeurs de Radio Luxembourg » in *Histoire des publics à la radio et à la télévision : actes de la journée d’études du 20 mars 1992*, Paris, Comité d’histoire de la radiodiffusion, 1992, p. 139-143].

<sup>32</sup> Between 1934, the year of its creation, and 1938, this orchestra provided 500 radio-concerts, with an average of 120 different programs every year. [ÉCUYER, Sylvie L’, « La musique classique à la radio » in NATTIEZ, Jean-Jacques (direction), *Musiques du XXe siècle*, Paris, Actes sud – Cité de la Musique, 2003, p. 959].

<sup>33</sup> Indeed, at the middle of the decade, Radio-Paris swallows 6 of the 13 million francs which the Government yearly allows to to French network for musical programs. [*Histoire de la radio télévision*, op. cit., p. 315].

<sup>34</sup> It must have been a popular repertory, since the only mention of the current recording edition concerns a song titled: *The Village Hooker*.

which reduces the relevance of the deductions. It is then necessary to widen the mode of exploitation of the sources through a meticulous examination of the composers broadcasted.

## AN ABUNDANCE OF COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS

A first point could be underlined : it has been impossible to identify a majority of the composers. In our corpus of programs, 1,050 titles of musical works or composers are cited (856 on Radio-Paris and only 194 on Radio-LL). A list of 542 composers was drawn : 445 were cited on Radio-Paris and 152 on Radio-LL, including 55 that were common to both stations. The attempt at a classification by period highlighted the problems which Sylvie Garrec had previously met<sup>35</sup>: 257 composers are completely unknown nowadays. As for identifying the 285 composers, only the crossing of several dictionaries permitted it<sup>36</sup>. Regarding Radio-Paris, 58% of the composers mentioned have been identified, whereas they are only 49% on Radio-LL. The 55 shared composers have been identified in a proportion of 84% which is hardly astonishing, particularly as they are most often well-known. The most broadcasted composers are the following ones<sup>37</sup>:

On Radio-Paris : Debussy (17, 2) ; J-S Bach (16, 1) ; Mozart (14, 1) ; Saint-Saëns (13, 2) ; Louis Ganne<sup>38</sup> (10,2) ; Massenet (10, 1).  
On Radio-LL : Léon Raiter (0, 6) ; Robert Planquette<sup>39</sup> (2,4) ; Rodolphe Hermann (0, 4) ; Paddy<sup>40</sup> (0, 4).

A deeper analysis suggests that 80 occurrences from the 6 most frequently mentioned musicians on Radio-Paris (representing a bit more than 1% of the composers) account for almost one tenth of the total occurrences for this station. On Radio-LL, the most interesting fact is the number of composers cited only once : 125 (meaning 82% of the composers). This figure reveals an important turnover of the broadcasting of the private station. Let's focus now on the two main phenomena of our lists.

The First noticeable element is the huge number of unknown musicians composing in weakly legitimated genres. All the identified musicians are considered by the dictionaries as having composed classical music (including operetta), apart from a certain Mateo (2, 0), a Mexican tango composer and José Padilla (1, 0), a Spaniard who composed music for a Moulin Rouge revue<sup>41</sup>. As regards "light music", there is one first evident remark: the

<sup>35</sup> *Radiophonie et programmation de la musique sérieuse à Paris, 1924-1925*, op. cité, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Under the concept of « identification », we mean the awareness of at least the first and last names of the composer, and his dates of birth and death. Beyond the very complete dictionary Grove [*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*], two Internet sites were consulted, respectively listing 10,600 composers [<http://composers-classical-music.com> (March 2004)] and 5,000 composers of operas and operettas [<http://opera.stanford.edu> (March 2004)]. Despite a sometimes random spelling of the names, approaches could be tried towards SACEM (the French organization protecting music rights), though 3 letters Sylvie Garrec had sent in this purpose were not replied to. [*Radiophonie et programmation de la musique sérieuse à Paris, 1924-1925*, op. cit., p. 4].

<sup>37</sup> The first number in parenthesis is the number of references measured on Radio-Paris and the second on Radio-LL. These values are only indicative since either a three-minute song or a three-hour opera both generate only one reference of their composer.

<sup>38</sup> This is a composer of operettas of whom Radio-Paris was used to broadcasting many opuses (via orchestra or records). On Radio-LL a same extract of *Les Saltimbanques* was broadcasted on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Planquette is a composer of operettas. Radio-LL proposes 4 times an extract of *Rip*, whereas Radio-Paris twice schedules a record of *Les Cloches de Corneville*.

<sup>40</sup> It was impossible to discover the first name of this musician who belonged to Guy Sella's troop. Like him, most of the composers of light and commercial music are imprecisely identified.

<sup>41</sup> José Padilla (1889-1960) especially wrote *Valencia*, a song of the 1925 Moulin Rouge revue [Website <http://composers-classical-music.com>].



composers mentioned account for more than half the unidentified composers<sup>42</sup>. At a second level of analysis, we can observe that those were mainly broadcasted via records. This testifies to an already important activity at that time in the production of “commercial records”, in which the radio both acts both as promoter and competitor.<sup>43</sup> At that very period of the Thirties, plethoras of unknown authors are either recorded or broadcasted and ephemerally cited in the programs. Their names appear in the magazines via a title or a performer that may be as ephemeral. Nowadays, it is difficult to dissociate the composers who were then well-known (and cited) as such, from the ones who anonymously used to participate in a fashionable female singer’s repertory such as Yvette Netter’s<sup>44</sup>. It is likely that only the double qualification of composer and performer (like accordionist Léon Raiter and pianist Paddy, so often cited on Radio-LL) enabled musicians to reach a kind of celebrity.

Precisely, the multiple sides of successful celebrities constitute the second significant phenomenon. The observed emergence of new musical aesthetics in the United States and in Europe is indisputably linked to the forms of music which the industrial society generated<sup>45</sup>. But it was materialized by the enlarging of a middle class (which was its main target) especially thanks to the taking into consideration of these new listeners’ demands. In a rather dark socio-political context, as described by American historian Eugen Weber<sup>46</sup>, a success crops up on the waves in 1935, which utterly summarizes the spirits of the French : “*All is OK, My Lady Marchioness!*” (“*Tout va très bien, Madame la Marquise!*”). This song perfectly reflects the surrounding insouciance, even though some more serious things are looming (alluded to in the “that” of “apart from *that*, My Lady marchioness”). Whether as a premonition of an oncoming terror or a satirical joke about monarchical values, it is indeed the audience that plebiscites this song, highly furthering what its authors Ray Ventura and Paul Misraki had imagined<sup>47</sup>.

Listeners demand other escaping modes, from tears to laughter through “charm songs” (e.g. Tino Rossi’s) or even the subjects of entertainment offered by the multiple song writers catering for cabarets<sup>48</sup>. The resounding success of Ventura’s band “*Les Collégiens*”<sup>49</sup> can be explained as much by a popularization of jazz (a so-called “Gallic swing”), as by perfect adhesion to a vogue of French puns and to a parody of off-hand comments such as expressed over drinks at “*Café du Commerce*”<sup>50</sup>. However, humor is not the only ingredient of song-texts based on day-to-day experience. The radio of the Thirties largely broadcasts realistic songs, old-fashioned and nostalgic, often relegated to popular networks (street songs,

<sup>42</sup> More than 55% of the unidentified composers belong to the category of « light music » (according to either their title or the musical environment in which they are cast, while 39% write in a “highbrow” style and 5 % are impossible to classify (for lack of data). Meanwhile, 39% of individuals compose in a classical style and 5% are impossible to classify (due to a lack of data).

<sup>43</sup> Julien, Jean-Rémy, *Enjeux et techniques de la promotion du disque : un cas particulier : la radio*, mémoire de maîtrise de musicologie, Université de Paris IV, 1984.

<sup>44</sup> She was scheduled in three concerts on Radio-LL, but neither the titles she performed nor their authors were cited.

<sup>45</sup> Denizot, Anne-Marie, *Musique et art radiophonique*, dissertation of Master in Musicology, University of Paris VIII, 1988, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Weber, Eugen, *La France des années 30 : tourments et perplexités*, Paris, Fayard, 1994.

<sup>47</sup> « L’orchestre des collégiens de Ray Ventura », *La danse des mots*, Radio France International, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003 program).

<sup>48</sup> The word « songwriters » is cited five times in Radio-LL’s programs.

<sup>49</sup> « Ray Ventura », *Les greniers de la mémoire*, France Musique, émission du 31 mars 2002.

<sup>50</sup> « O my dear, with all these bombs they surely will ruin the weather!”

dance halls, the subway). When listening to *Les Naufragés*<sup>51</sup> performed by Damia<sup>52</sup> (“the tragedian of Song”) or *Sur la zone* by Germaine Bachelard (alias “the sparrow Girl”<sup>53</sup>) or even *Où sont tous mes amants ?*, which Fréhel recorded in 1935<sup>54</sup>, we understand how the genre of the realistic song durably lies on clichés taken at face value or tongue in cheek.

Édith Piaf, pathetic too in her sources of inspiration, embodies the other essential demand of the listeners: youth. She belongs to these “starlets” fished up by Marcel Bleustein, whose program “the music-hall of the young people” contributed to launching<sup>55</sup>. This radio-program perfectly matches the newly renamed station’s policy, which a brochure presents as a slogan: “Radio-Cité: a young radio ruled by a team of young people”<sup>56</sup>.

Satisfying both the youth’s demands and the public’s wish of having a say in the programs and a closer proximity, in a word that of a “popularization of the programs<sup>57</sup>”, will lead to the appearance of a new broadcasting tone (which we’ll be monitoring at the end of the paper).

However, Classical music still occupies a major place on wavelengths of the Thirties. This is why we propose to show two phenomena brought out by our classification, which summarize some of the main features of its broadcasting.

## AESTHETICS ENHANCING NATIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY VALUES

### A DOMINATING FRENCHNESS

The first phenomenon concerns the strong proportion of French speaking musicians cited in the programs. They account for almost the half of the identified composers<sup>58</sup>. We also notice that among French composers the most broadcasted by the national station Radio-Paris two of them are emblematic figures of what could be called “musical protectionism”: Debussy and Saint-Saëns. The first had underlined his militancy for a “clearly French tradition, [for] the virtues of our race<sup>59</sup>”. As for the second, like many members of the “Institut”, he initiated a “National League for the Defense of French Music<sup>60</sup>”. In the political context of the

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<sup>51</sup> Also sung by Mia Polia, a singer of Concerts Padeloup, in the « symphonic concert » of June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1935 on Radio-Paris, cited by *Mon Programme* as one of the best programs of light music. This is another example of the porosity of the musical genres.

<sup>52</sup> « Les années TSF », *Les mercredis de l’Histoire*, Arte, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995 program.

<sup>53</sup> *Libre échange*, Radio bleue, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1995 program. This song was broadcasted on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the very day when she also explained the origin of her stage name.

<sup>54</sup> « L’année 1935 », *Au rythme du siècle*, France Musique, Match 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000 program. This song sung by Fréhel was by Wander and Charlys. We can find *J’écoute la guitare*, another song by these authors mentioned in a program of recorded songs on Radio-Paris on June 16<sup>th</sup> of June.

<sup>55</sup> « Marcel Bleustein Blanchet », *Le bon plaisir*, France culture, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1996 program.

<sup>56</sup> « Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet », *La traversée du siècle*, TF1, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1996 program.

<sup>57</sup> Greenfield, Thomas Allen, *Radio, a Reference Guide*, New York – Westport, Connecticut – London, Greenwood Press, Inc, 1989, p. 4 : « Music of all kinds [...] was always popular, especially dance bands featuring « crooners » such as Bing Crosby and Vic Colombo. After the 1930s [...], the network’s new national programs became very powerful and popular too ».

<sup>58</sup> 43% of the cited composers are French speakers (from France, Belgium, Switzerland and Monaco), whereas 15% of the composers are German and 12% Italian. What’s more, the names of many of the unidentified composers sound French.

<sup>59</sup> Debussy, Claude, *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, Paris, Gallimard, 1971.

<sup>60</sup> Marnat, Marcel, *Ravel, souvenirs de Manuel Rosental*, Paris, Éditions Hazan, 1995.

Thirties, when cultural recession is at stake<sup>61</sup>, we understand the golden role that the musicians who are so ostensibly involved in Frenchness play on Radio-Paris. This situation may explain why Ravel, who justified through an answer to the League the reasons why he didn't adhere to its values<sup>62</sup>, is broadcasted twice less frequently than the author of *Pelléas*<sup>63</sup>. This comparison shows that whereas the promotion of a national culture is inscribed since the Thirties in a “bill of specifications” of Governmental Radio<sup>64</sup>, its musical programs are politically colored. It also confirms that the broadcasting tool may have an actual influence as a sociopolitical institution<sup>65</sup>.

If the strong national personalities play an obvious role in the musical programs, however, radio rulers also attribute the lion's share to musicians who are still alive. This is the second significant element emanating from our data. It precisely shows that those who represent consensual values are as largely broadcasted as those who bring in more modern aesthetics.

## THE PROMOTION OF LIVING COMPOSERS

As an example, we might indicate that young Henri Tomasi is scheduled once on Radio-Cité<sup>66</sup>. Other French speaking composers whose works were significant in 1935 are referenced : Poulenc, Milhaud, Honegger and Messian<sup>67</sup>. Apart from the latter, they are all cited in the programs of Radio-Paris. Arthur Honegger is even mentioned in a program of Radio-LL<sup>68</sup>. As a whole, however, the volume of orchestral creations significantly shrank from the beginning of the Thirties on<sup>69</sup>.

The only musical work qualified as a “premiere audition” is the 7<sup>th</sup> *quartet for saxophones* by Glazunov<sup>70</sup> released on June 17<sup>th</sup> on Radio-Paris in a concert of chamber music. By the way, we underline the fact that a big proportion of recitals generate a heightened listing of composers. Performers themselves increase the list of otherwise mentioned composers participating indirectly in the process of acculturation to classical music. The particular case of the first release of the Russian composer's work incites us to detail the scale of foreign composers in the context we described earlier. Musical premieres by Mascani, Berg, Webern, Prokofiev and Gershwin did particularly mark the field of Classical music on 1935<sup>71</sup>. Among

<sup>61</sup> Dard, Olivier, *Les années trente. Le choix impossible*, Paris, Librairie générale française, 1999.

<sup>62</sup> *La Revue Musicale*, numéro spécial « Maurice Ravel », décembre 1938.

<sup>63</sup> All in all, the name of Ravel is mentioned 9 times (8, 1). We personally think that this balance also witnesses the fact that Debussy and Saint-Saëns were more played and recorded at that time. In *Le paradoxe du musicien* Pierre-Michel Menger actually shows that in terms of performing rights, the tendency will steadily invert in favor of the composer of *The Boléro*.

<sup>64</sup> « La musique classique à la radio », op. cit., p. 959.

<sup>65</sup> Moulergues, Nathalie, *Musique et radio : les diverses approches de la question*, dissertation of Master of Musicology, University of Paris IV, 1978.

<sup>66</sup> His vocal work *O Cinciarella* is broadcasted on June 7<sup>th</sup>, at a time when Tomasi, aged 34, was about to create *Mana*.

<sup>67</sup> « L'année 1935 », *Au rythme du siècle*, France Musique, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000 program.

<sup>68</sup> On Radio-Paris, Arthur Honegger (6, 1), who that year composes *Jeanne au bûcher*, is scheduled as many times as the total of the references of Francis Poulenc (3, 0) and Darius Milhaud (3, 0).

<sup>69</sup> Sylvie Garrec compared the months of January as a sampling: 31 creations in 1925, 17 in 1935, 4 in 1955 et 1 in 1963 [*Radiophonie et programmation de la musique sérieuse à Paris, 1924-1925*, op. cit., p. 9].

<sup>70</sup> Born in 1865 and dead in 1936, Alexander Glazunov (6, 0) is one of the 13 Russian composers (4.5% of the identified composers : 12 on Radio-Paris and one on Radio-LL).

<sup>71</sup> « L'année 1935 », *Au rythme du siècle*, France Musique, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000 program.

these five composers only the Russian and the American were scheduled on June<sup>72</sup>. We may consider the absence of the Italian composer as the result of his link with Mussolini's fascist regime<sup>73</sup>. Besides, the reason for the nonappearance of members of the Second Vienna School is likely to be aesthetic. In fact, atonality, which dominates in works such as *Lulu* or the cantata *Das Augendlicht* by Webern (both written in 1935) may justify the fear of a loss of audience. Whatever the reason for their non-broadcasting anyway (either their weak accessibility or a boycott policy), those composers remain the genuine creators of a “musical internationalism” by forming the famous and worldwide “Société Triton<sup>74</sup>” in 1932.

Highly colored by nationalism, the broadcasting of classical music then appears to be spread thanks to predominantly contemporary composers (55%<sup>75</sup>). Throughout the musical programs of both stations, we can see a kind of “promotion” of the most current since 75% of the contemporary composers are still alive at the time of their broadcasting.

Associated with the primacy of “light music” that we observed in the first part of the article, this strong proportion of living composers broadcasted through classical programs is a reality. This leads to a new question: how do the program makers balance pedagogy and musical entertainment?

## BETWEEN EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

### TWO COMPATIBLE OBJECTIVES

The first symposium dedicated to music on Radio was held in May 1928 in Göttingen. If the pedagogical potential of the medium was already underlined, new definitions of “musical entertainment” were also proposed<sup>76</sup>. In this spirit, the three basic missions (information, education, entertainment) were reaffirmed in 1934 by the people responsible for the Government's network<sup>77</sup>. So, what proportion could be devoted to “commercial music”? Furthermore, in the perspective of keeping a maximum of listeners, wouldn't pedagogy be synonymous with strategy?

<sup>72</sup> Serguei Prokofiev (4, 0), who created his *Second concerto for violin* in 1935 is mentioned through the broadcasting of four different works. George Gershwin (1, 0) whose *Porgy* constitutes the biggest success of the year, is scheduled on June 4<sup>th</sup> via *Rhapsody in blue*, which he had composed in 1924 under the recommendation of Paul Whiteman [*The Early Days of Radio Broadcasting*, op. cit., p. 176].

<sup>73</sup> The creation of his opera *Nerone*, on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1935 at the MilanScala Theater is the “lyrical event of the musical season in Italy” [« L'année 1935 », *Au rythme du siècle*, France Musique, March 27<sup>t</sup>, 2000] program. Pietro Mascani was to be blamed until his dead in 1945 for his adhesion to fascist values.

<sup>74</sup> Founded by Pierre-Octave Ferrou, this society would gather artists from anywhere. Among them, we can enumerate: Richard Strauss (3, 0), Arnold Schoenberg (0, 0), Igor Stravinski (1, 0), Serguei Prokofiev (4, 0), Bela Bartok (0, 0), Maurice Ravel (8, 1), Albert Roussel (2, 0), Jean Rivier (0, 0) ; Henry Tomasi (1, 0). [« 1935 : 1<sup>ère</sup> exécution du concerto de Prokofiev », *Anniversaire*, France Musique, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1995 program].

<sup>75</sup> 55% of the composers mentioned belonged to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. 29% to the Romantic period, 7% to the Classical period, 7% to the Baroque period and 2% to the Medieval and Renaissance periods.

<sup>76</sup> « La musique classique à la radio », op. cit, p. 965.

<sup>77</sup> *La Radiodiffusion*, op. cit.

To this dilemma, Radio-Paris brought an answer that can be found in the content of their programs. Dancing music or jazz music<sup>78</sup>, which constitutes the essential of “light music”, is daily broadcasted but addresses the night-owls, on the basis of cabaret evenings. At the time when the audience level is high, the music is indeed classical but rather accessible. As we saw, the programs used to mix quantities of light pieces, on the fringe of classical music. These include operettas, a genre that was very appreciated by French people at the time<sup>79</sup>. Beside composers in fashion, like Charles Levadé (5, 0) or Jacques Offenbach (4, 1), the names of operatic performers are another means of attracting the audience. The symphonic concert scheduled at noon on June 14<sup>th</sup><sup>80</sup> illustrates this double strategy : Francis Touche’s orchestra is accompanying Miss Line in *Berceuse* (“Lullaby”) by Charles Levadé, but the adagio of Haydn’s 8<sup>th</sup> *Sonata* (8, 0) furtively wedges in ! Both the porosity of musical borders and such an insidious insertion accustom the listeners to a repertory of classical music.

As far as the private network is concerned, there is an attempt of conciliating “the show business aspect [meaning the promotion of artists] and a cultural interest<sup>81</sup>”. Besides, historian Pierre Miquel underlines that “private was not necessarily synonymous with vulgarity<sup>82</sup>”. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, the recital dedicated on Radio-LL to the “works of Mrs. Alice Sauvrezis” (0, 1), far from being an exception, is a significant example indeed, The *Madrigals* by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (0, 1), followed by Gabriel Fauré’s *Second impromptu* (6, 3) and an extract from Ruggero Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci* (2, 1)<sup>83</sup>, bring in a touch of Baroque music on Radio-LL in the evening of June 14<sup>th</sup>. We could also indicate that the duration of the musical extracts reproduces that of songs and hardly exceeds three or four minutes<sup>84</sup>. This equivalence of the listening standards to be found on the private station confirms the idea of a confusion of the genres. This idea is even furthered in the mid-Sunday program. It was not possible to identify its content, but the concert most likely performed “with the help of baritone Gerlor, Miss Martenville and Miss Suzane Riette” was not “light music” properly speaking. Yet, it also might have been susceptible to reach a great number of listeners, due to this mobilizing slot of mid-Sunday (usually devoted to “commercial music” on this station). Regarding the terminology presenting the show, we then dare the hypothesis that its content was situated mid-way between classical and popular aesthetics.

As a general rule, we can see that the pedagogical purpose of the stations is in a line with a global environment of light programs felt as entertainment programs. Classical music, such as defined nowadays, is distilled either through shows gathering a majority of extracts from operettas, or through heterogeneous records sections. Beyond these general features, the monitoring of the contents, and more particularly the recurrence of certain titles or composers,

<sup>78</sup> In 1935, there is no formal border between the two genres in the mind of the program-makers since the word « jazz » never appears in the programs consulted. The only newspaper *Mon Programme* uses this term in its daily selection of the best programs with a section entitled: “Light music, jazz”.

<sup>79</sup> “The massive mails of the listeners lead Radio-Toulouse (a private station) not to repeat the experience of the broadcast, in 1934, of *Pelléas* and to prefer operettas instead of Debussy [Martin, Marc, « Connaître le public des radios privées avant la guerre » in *Histoire des publics à la radio et à la télévision : actes de la journée d’études du 20 mars 1992*, Paris, Comité d’histoire de la radiodiffusion, 1992, p. 26, citing the newspaper *Radio-Magazine* of the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1934].

<sup>80</sup> *Mon programme* also selected it as one of the best programs of “light music”!

<sup>81</sup> *Quand la radio s’appelait TSF*, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>82</sup> Miquel, Pierre, *Histoire de la radio et de la télévision*, Paris, Éditions Richelieu, 1973, p. 37.

<sup>83</sup> Pathé’s newsreels clearly show that without any relation between the styles of the works broadcasted they were linked by a laconic « now you’ll be hearing (...) » [« Les années TSF », *Les mercredis de l’Histoire*, Arte, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1995 program].

<sup>84</sup> Entitled “The great operas”, the June 3<sup>rd</sup> program is a genuine model, since seven extracts are scheduled in twenty minutes’ time.



also shows the influence of a significant interaction between supply and demand on the broadcasting.

## FASHION PHENOMENA AND SPECIFICITIES

Comparing the programs of both stations, it is impossible to find out any same work broadcasted by the two. A composer in fashion might have been shared by the stations, but our data always refer to different musical pieces. Besides, serious redundancies are occurring within each station. *Le Coucou (The Cuckoo)* by Swedish composer J.E. Jonasson (3, 0) is broadcasted three times on Radio-Paris, when *Mefistofele* by Italian composer Arrigo Boito (0, 2) is scheduled on Radio-LL on June 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The recurrence of certain titles, which is an undeniable component of an acculturation process may find three complementary explanations. First, the stations dig in their stocks of records, which are not inexhaustible. Besides, Marcel Bleustein may not have been so dishonest when he pretended that, when he bought Radio-LL, “there were only ten poor records that used to be played endlessly!<sup>85</sup>”. Secondly, a successful work might have been scheduled under several different modes of broadcasting. For instance, on Radio-Paris, extracts of *Mignon* by Ambroise Thomas (2, 0) are proposed in a program of records on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and performed live by Raoul Labis’s orchestra on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Finally, an orchestra could propose a same performance in order to maximize its preparation. For example, the work *Esquisses flamandes* by Michel Brusselmans (2, 0) is performed on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> on Radio-Paris<sup>86</sup>. A musical piece would not have been proposed again if not appreciated, a point which was largely expressed in the listeners’ mails.

Stations obviously match the ideals of their time. By broadcasting musical styles in fashion, they all contribute to a slow mutation of their listeners’ tastes. But their fidelity is visibly impacted by specificities or “brand marks”. Stations indulge in a competition with their own “stars”. In fact, some music-hall artists are almost entirely connected with a station to which they bring their tone. French composer and singer Mireille wrote songs that were on everybody’s mind at the time, but she is cited only once on Radio-Paris<sup>87</sup>, and never on Radio-LL<sup>88</sup>. Yet, as André Gillois witnesses, “she belonged to the happy band of comic items on *Le Poste parisien*<sup>89</sup>”. This remark indicates how the almost total exclusivity which some artists reserved to their station builds a first bridge between humor and music and enlarges the sphere of musical entertainment.

Eventually, it’s important to underline another specificity that concerns the Sunday evening show on Radio-LL, a program entitled: “[records] concert by request of the listeners”. This notion of an interaction between a station and its listeners is capital in our question. Besides, it is relevant to a fresh broadcasting spirit. This comes from the immersion of the audience in the programs, resulting in new musical forms.

<sup>85</sup> « Marcel Bleustein Blanchet », *Le bon plaisir*, France culture, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1996 program.

<sup>86</sup> The fact that the conductors were different (Maurice André on June 9<sup>th</sup> and Jean Doyen on June 29<sup>th</sup>) raises an uncertainty : either the orchestra was the same, or there were two distinctive orchestras, which strengthens another hypothesis : the wish to seduce the audience through music in fashion.

<sup>87</sup> In a program of recorded songs on June 30<sup>th</sup>. She’s cited as composer and not as performer.

<sup>88</sup> This does not necessarily mean that she wasn’t broadcasted, as may have been the case in the program of June 3<sup>rd</sup> : “a fashion presentation”.

<sup>89</sup> « Le centenaire de la radio », *Les bâtisseurs d’Europe*, France Inter, February 9<sup>th</sup>; 2002 program. André Gillois was soon to be the famous voice that used to announce « the French speak to the French » on the BBC.

**TOWARDS FRESH AND TYPICAL BROADCASTING FORMS**

Anyway, France isn't the only country which faces such phenomena. In Germany the birth had already been felt "of an independent genre [which would clearly drift apart] from a more or less perfect reproduction of existing performing forms"<sup>90</sup>. In the same way, the American public succeeds, at the beginning of the Thirties, in imposing a fresh and distinctive style, more or less inspired by its national heritage: "a distinctly radiophonic musical style emerged"<sup>91</sup>.

**MUSIC AND ADVERTISING**

From 1935 on, the listeners are expressing a growing demand both for entertainment shows and for live programs with a public attending. In addition, the managers ruling private stations want to match the advertising agencies' expectations to reach a wider audience<sup>92</sup>. At the time, many shows were financed by a then called "advertising patronage", though it hardly appeared in the radio magazines themselves. For such concerts, the name of the sponsor was repeated several times during the program. This situation may explain why the magazines sometimes mention three short successive series of concerts. In fact, there may have been three different sponsors<sup>93</sup>. Ever more numerous, these operations of patronage could explain the progressive reduction of the duration of concerts that Cécile Méadel observed on private stations<sup>94</sup>.

At the beginning of radio, advertisers would catch the attention with striking slogans or commercial initiatives<sup>95</sup>. Meanwhile, the 1933 license fee bans any advertisement on public stations, causing the collapse of huge advertising contracts<sup>96</sup>. Straight away, deprived advertising entrepreneurs such as Jacques Trémoulet or Marcel Bleustein retrieve from their former owners vegetating stations that have become genuine burdens. Revolutionizing the programs, they are about to invent all the current broadcasting forms<sup>97</sup>.

Today, we know that a commercial radio could not work without a clever alchemy of three elements : publicity, musical programs and the audience<sup>98</sup>. Using their intuition as their

<sup>90</sup> « Der Rundfunk und die Umschichtung des Musiklebens » [Radio and the disruption of musical life], article published in *Der Deutsche Rundfunk*, Berlin, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1926.

<sup>91</sup> *The Early Days of Radio Broadcasting*, op. cit., p. 169.

<sup>92</sup> *Histoire générale de la radio et de la télévision, t. 1 : 1921-1944*, op. cit., p. 469.

<sup>93</sup> On *Mon programme*, we can read about the Radio-LL's evening programs of Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup> of June : "19.45: Concert avec Jean Solar. 20.15: Concert. 20.30: Concert." [Until 21].

<sup>94</sup> « Programmes en masse, programmes de masse ? La diffusion de la radio en France pendant les années trente » op. cit., p. 68. By the middle of the decade, the difference is already perceptible: in June 1935 the average duration of the musical programs is 45 minutes on Radio-Paris and 35 minutes on Radio-LL.

<sup>95</sup> Marcel Bleustein, who founded the firm Publicis is said to be the inventor of French advertising slogan. In 1929, he had rescued the post Radio-Bordeaux by proposing a raffle to its listeners [Cazeneuve, Elisabeth, and Mauriat, Caroline, « Les auditeurs en France jusqu'en 1939 » in *Histoire des publics à la radio et à la télévision : actes de la journée d'études du 20 mars 1992*, Paris, Comité d'histoire de la radiodiffusion, 1992, p. 73-84].

<sup>96</sup> "Because of Minister Georges Mandel", Marcel Bleustein declares: "I lost the exclusivity of 18 Government stations, meaning contracts of 12 million francs, which I had been able to get" [« Georges Mandel: un ministre à son poste », *L'écho du siècle*, La cinquième, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000 program].

<sup>97</sup> While devoting huge slots to song, Marcel Bleustein is going to increase the general volume of broadcasting (from several hours to the whole day) [« Le 30 mai 1927: la création de Publicis par Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet », *Les jours du siècle*, France Inter, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1999 program].

<sup>98</sup> Hennion, Antoine and Méadel, Cécile, « Programming Music: Radio as Mediator » in *Media, Culture and Society* 8 (July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1986), London, 1986, p. 281-303.

only tool and “a great experience of the street”, these advertising pioneers of the Thirties, are going to empirically apply this combination and indirectly contribute to the emergence of stars of the song. Marcel Bleustein is actually about to convince young artists to perform radio-advertising-spots:

[Speaking of advertisement slogans]

“Instead of having them spoken, I asked Charles Trenet (then aged only 20) to sing them:

- Personally, I ‘m quite OK, since I can get a little money!
- Then I gave him 50 francs!<sup>99</sup>”

Other artists, such as André Claveau, Jean Tranchant or Edith Piaf, also born with Radio, will soon impose themselves on a constant growing public<sup>100</sup>. Then appears the famous “broadcasted crochet” (patronized by the soap brand *Monsavon*) in which Saint-Granier used to have people singing in the whole country. Besides, the combination of music and publicity sparks off rather consistent musical works. As an example, we present a song performed by the then famous duet “Johnny Heiss and Charles Trenet”. This song brings an idea of what could be heard on the waves of the mid-Thirties:

(Charles) “There are no roses without a horn, (Johnny) no spouses without a mother-in-law

(C) No serenades without mandolin, (J) no novelists without novels.

(C) There is not, as far I know, (J) any banquet without fascinating speeches,

(C) There is no doctoring without medicine, (J) no great celebrity without a little torment (C: *bis*).

(Slower)

(C) For instance, a funny thing: one day all is black, the day after all is pink,

(Singing together at the third)

My friends, life is rain, shining weather, who laughs on Friday will cry on Sunday.

But yet at home, do remember that anytime (C) you can be happy and hum at that time:

(As a duet, *a capella*)

“Good evening love, sweetheart, darling, home sweet home, I’m so well at home!”

(C) We are happy all day long, (J) since we possess, for sure:

(Both, in a jerky rhythm) a *Martin* stove and a heater (*bis*),

Arthur Martin (*bis*).

(Slow)

Proud Today, proud Tomorrow!”<sup>101</sup>

Built as a genuine song, this musical ad whose composer’s name has been forgotten by posterity adds up to lots of strands which weave the Radio tangle. In our purpose of finding out the phenomena of acculturation, the awareness of their existence is indispensable for the understanding of what were “the worlds of broadcasting art<sup>102</sup>” in 1935.

## A FRESH TONE

We can easily imagine that the obsolete diction of a lecturer characterizing the Government Network matched the wish of educating, in a republican acceptation of the term. Programs entitled “musical causeries” did participate to this so-called “public instruction”<sup>103</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> « Le 30 mai 1927 : la création de Publicis par Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet », *Les jours du siècle*, France Inter, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1999 program.

<sup>100</sup> In 1935 a decisive milestone was reached in the matter of the equipment of French households. Until then they were below the European average.

<sup>101</sup> *Libre échange*, Radio bleue, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1995 program.

<sup>102</sup> Becker, Howard S, *Les mondes de l’art*, Paris, Métailié, 1988, [1982].

<sup>103</sup> *La Radiodiffusion*, op. cit., p. 135. 150 musical causeries were released on Radio-Paris between 1929 and 1933, meaning before the Government nationalized the private station. This fact shows that in the early Thirties, speaking of Classical music was not reserved to the public network.

The “Comity of Propaganda for Music”, which was a department of the French National Broadcasting indicates:

“Among the most effective means of moralizing and educating the masses, a golden place must indisputably be granted to musical propaganda.<sup>104</sup>”

Regardless of the high artistic quality which, as some of the actors still remember<sup>105</sup>, were enhanced by formal and solemn academic lectures, the public progressively drifts toward private stations on which the tone is lighter.

Compared to the doctoral pedagogy of the members of the French Academy (“L’Institut”), listeners were likely to prefer the satiric and “verbal jousts” proposed by the new private programs<sup>106</sup>. As well as for the fusion of music and advertisement, we can notice an immersion of political contest into the song area. This sometimes arouses a quirky musical creativity. As an example, we can quote the song *Angelina* which was broadcasted in 1935. This satirical pamphlet jokes at the Italian army’s difficulties in Ethiopia:

“Angelina, piccola mia, Angelili, Angelili, Ange, Angelina,  
If I go to war (bis), yes my love, until my coming back you’ll ever love me.  
I’m only a soldier, but when I’ll be over there, I want, such as Attila, to be the rats’ plague.  
Eating as ravioli those from Ethiopia, even eating the Negus to entertain the guys!”<sup>107</sup>

The kind of freedom of speech that leaks out from this song extract may be an opposite view proposed by the new private posts to a Government network considered more institutional and even propagandist.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1935, when songwriter Robert Rocca solemnly announces the launching of Radio-Cité as “the first morning of the very first show<sup>108</sup>”, he implies a genuine birth beyond a simple change of Radio-LL. He’s probably not so far from the reality<sup>109</sup>. Actually, as numerous archives collected by René Duval testify, the young and fresh tone of Radio-Cité coincides to the invention of professionalism and of popular Radio<sup>110</sup>. Jacques Canetti who was then the station’s artistic manager even states:

“We did invent public shows. They enabled an active audience’s involvement in all our activities<sup>111</sup>”.

Thus, when private stations are blamed for slipping down into populism and for “shaping people’s taste”, he replies:

“We also had serious programs. [...] For every Sunday evening, Marcel Bleustein had accepted a classical music show with the Paris Orchestra (80 musicians). Félix Van Gardner, [Jacques] Thibaud, Darius

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135.

<sup>105</sup> Historian and collector Jacques Poinson witnesses: “we used to address people of a rather high standard. Therefore, the number of the listeners was lower; but you can believe me, there was a better quality.” [« Georges Mandel : un ministre à son poste », op. cit.].

<sup>106</sup> For instance, broadcasted for a few minutes at dinner time «The Duraton family » on Radio-Cité surprises the entire France through a rather comical family chronicle.

<sup>107</sup> « L’invasion de l’Éthiopie », *Les jours du siècle*, France Inter, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1 2003 program.

<sup>108</sup> « Marcel Bleustein Blanchet », *Le bon plaisir*, France culture, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1996 program.

<sup>109</sup> In June 1935, the month of our sampling, Marcel Bleustein is already the owner of the station Radio-LL. Yet he visibly preferred to wait for a couple of months to compose a professional team with a view to revolutionizing the programs under the name of Radio-Cité.

<sup>110</sup> DUVAL, René, *Histoire de la radio en France*, Bibliothèque des médias, Paris, 1979.

<sup>111</sup> « Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet », *La traversée du siècle*, TF1, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1996 program.

Milhaud, all the greatest names used to queue at the door of the Radio-Cité studio. That is to say: our private station didn't try at all costs to make money, because we could have found a commercial show for Sunday; it had to be said!<sup>112</sup>”

These contradictions may confuse the analysis of any observer of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A further one could even be added. Whereas an undeniable revolution occurred in the programs, former Radio-LL announcer Gédovius was nevertheless maintained in the fresh team<sup>113</sup>. Then, should we speak of an innovation or a continuity? This detail is even more important considering historian Bernard Pouzols' statement:

“Radio-Cité already rhymes with continuous music with a disc-Jockey (who then wasn't called so) named Gédovius. He has stored in his memory a fabulous and entire collection of records. Knowing by heart any author, performer, recording, especially in jazz, he is the major initiator of a sociological phenomenon in France : the conquest of young people by the Radio. Fanciful in his working hours as in his life, he gets the airing of a show as we catch a bus, overflying, announcing in a breathless voice a program he has just imagined<sup>114</sup>. If French schoolchildren started doing their homework listening to the radio in the Thirties, this is thanks to Gédovius!<sup>115</sup>”

The modern forms of Radio are clearly going to happen in the year of 1935. Yet this modernity gets its roots from the beginning of the decade in the resources of some atypical individuals like Gédovius. Thanks to such characters several concepts get mixed up in contradictory ways: youth, entertainment, pedagogy and Classical musical culture<sup>116</sup>.

As a conclusion, we can state that from the monitoring of sampled musical programs of two stations of the Thirties, in an attempt to assess fresh phenomena of acculturation, some features commonly shared by both networks did emerge.

Within every station, the broadcasting of a “high-brow culture” is important but in a way which a contemporary observer could see as very strange if not replaced in its context. As a first significant element, fondness for the vocal genre appears to be a “connecting vector” between different cultures. As a result of this enthusiasm the broadcasting of the repertoires of diverse operatic singers, baritones or popular singers highly contributes to the “musical signature” of the stations<sup>117</sup>. Besides, giving priority to the works by composers still alive (and especially French ones), the designers of musical programs cleverly reconcile entertainment and education. However, this last concept is to be handled cautiously. Actually, we could try to understand the wide broadcasting of classical music either as an attempt toward an “education of the masses” (on the State network) or to spare the fringe of the listeners who demand such a music (on the private network). Both networks share another common point: the works broadcasted are usually easily accessible. We can notice that even on the Government network the broadcasting of musical programs hardly includes avant-gardist aesthetics such as dodecaphonic and Serial music. Their production already vivid in 1935<sup>118</sup> seems to concern only the music theaters. Finally, the vocal genre of operetta, a much

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<sup>112</sup> « Marcel Bleustein Blanchet », *Le bon plaisir*, op. cit.

<sup>113</sup> Internet Site <http://100ansderadio.free.fr>.

<sup>114</sup> Specialized papers could not present in detail such programs!

<sup>115</sup> *Quand la radio s'appelait TSF*, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>116</sup> In fact, we may consider that such a « savant culture » (in which jazz could be included) necessarily appears in the choice of the musical pieces and in their schedule.

<sup>117</sup> If vocal genre dominates on the waves, it's also the outcome of a technological fact: before the invention of microphone, it was largely easier to capt the sound from a singer than from a strings quartet [Sariette, Éric, *La musique et le micro*, Paris, Horizons de France, 1934].

<sup>118</sup> « L'année 1935 », *Au rythme du siècle*, France Musique, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000 program.



appreciated style, is a means of attracting the listeners toward shows including other more classical works. What could, however, be interpreted as a tactic of the programs makers is denied by a contextual phenomenon. This appears both through the monitoring of the program contents and through the criticisms published in the radio-newspapers: a “symphonic concert” considered by a newspaper as a “light music show”, in which Franz Schubert (9, 2) is cited beside Franz Lehar (6, 0) obviously shows the usual mixing of genres. Because of the porosity of the stylistic frontiers and of the acceptance of the mixing of such different composers we could even speak of an “unrecognized acculturation”!

We can however also note diverging elements, singular features for each network. With more detailed contents, the musical programs of French national station Radio-Paris, which is financially privileged include musical evenings of quality: music chamber, wide symphonic orchestras or operatic shows. Whereas these programs are roughly shorter on private stations, we can already see in 1935 some elements indicating an imminent split in the tone and the making of the programs. In June of that very year, beside the release of record-playing series “by our listeners’ request”, Radio-LL dedicates an important space to popular genres (such as Léon Raiter and his accordion) and to music-hall artists or other “celebrities” performing successful songs. The rare classical shows produced by the station are only recitals. By the way, their performers bring contents that are not less interesting than those of the chamber music concerts scheduled by Radio-Paris. Classical orchestras are only broadcasted through records series, probably due to a lack of money. Never the less, this is a significant and regular broadcasting. Hegemony of classical music is indeed an essential component of the broadcasting landscape of the interwar period. As has often been observed<sup>119</sup>, the use of new technologies enabled cultural industries (record companies, radios) to carry the elements of an academic or high-brow culture.

By mid-1935, the start of professionalism in the making of programs coincides with the appearance of a gap between both networks. This is particularly visible in the blend of politics and publicity in the songs broadcasted. These unexpected affinities extend the mixing of genres and lead to creative and specifically broadcasting works. Focusing on each following year, further articles will show how the pre-war program makers of each network dealt with the dilemmas and the emerging concepts born with the powerful medium.

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

[Coming back to the PLM’s website](#)

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<sup>119</sup> Kalifa, Dominique, *La culture de masse en France, tome 1 – 1860-1930*, Paris, Éditions La découverte, 2001.