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FRENCH MUSICAL BROADCASTING IN 1936:

A RECORD OF PROGRAMS AND A WIND OF INNOVATIONS

by Christophe BENNET

THE YEAR 1936 marks an important step in the evolution of French broadcasting. Echoing the ephemeral hope which the election of Leon Blum's "Front populaire" creates in a growing middle class, the year also coincides with the launching of new programs on private stations. These had recently been handed down to businessmen who were to counterbalance the principles of broadcasting of the Government's network. Placed for 18 months in the hands of Post and Telephone Minister Georges Mandel, the latter was henceforth financially wealthy and structurally organized. By June, a new Minister, Robert Jardillier, a convinced socialist, was appointed. He particularly catches our attention for two reasons: he is a radio professional and is an accomplished musician¹. Accompanying more than ever the daily life of French people (with tunes on the lips of the strikers of the spring), music still accounts for 60% of the programs broadcasted and is characterized by a formidable stylistic eclecticism. Drawing its richness from the cultural and social disparity, this eclecticism is the most point of animated debates. Let's come back on a year that what decisive in many regards.

THE MEANS OF ENTERING THE MUSICAL BROADCASTING WORLD

Assessing the links between music and the radio in the interwar period requires a multiplication and a comparison of the angles of observation. We shall first make a few points of method. Then, we'll describe the extraordinary increase of the number of the musical broadcasting programs, which is a major phenomenon of 1936. We shall also focus on their contents (according to the types of stations). Eventually, we'll propose a synthesis of the speeches they woke up.

THE FRENCH SPECIFICITY OF A DOUBLE PUBLIC / PRIVATE NETWORK

The project of a global apprehension of what music was broadcasted during the Thirties must not mask the French specificity. What fixes its limits and participates in its wealth is the coexistence of private stations and the Government's network. The odd 400.000 hours of musical programs² broadcasted by the thirty French stations during the decade imposes a sampling of the data. The two stations we chose as patterns of this study are *Radio-Paris*, which was re-bought by the French Government in 1933, and *Radio-Cité*, renamed and reshaped by Marcel Bleustein since September 1935³. The elements we will discuss about were removed from the whole month of June 1936.

¹ A member of the ruling council of *Radio Lyon PTT*, this academic lecturer had published several works (including a farewell to Anna de Noailles in *La Revue Musicale* of June 1933) and musical causeries (i.e. Friday June 8th 1934, from 8 pm to 8.30 pm on *Paris-PTT*: "The Popular Song and the Culture of the Mind").

² Despite the necessarily approximation (especially due to the relays operated between the stations) this calculation takes into account the steady rise of the duration of the programs.

³ Duval, René, "Radio-L.L. devient Radio-Cité" in *Cahiers d'Histoire de la Radiodiffusion* n° 84, p 133-144. For a comprehension of the evolution of *Radio-Paris "Le Poste national"*, this article could be read: Duval, René, « Radio-Paris », in Barrot, Olivier and Ory, Pascal (dir.), *Entre-deux-guerre*, Paris, François Bourin, 1990, p. 127-146.

A better comprehension of what the broadcasting was in 1936 results from a wider research. In fact, the aim of monitoring the Thirties is to understand what the stakes are for the different actors and to detect the phenomena of musical acculturation linked to the mass phenomenon of listeners. Concerning the comparison between the figures of 1936 and those of the other years of the decade, they always concern the two models of station (*Radio LL* preceding *Radio-Cité*) and are based on the thirty days of June, which appeared to be representative enough to be chosen as a standard month for measurement⁴.

EXAMINING THE PROGRAMS

The almost total inexistence of sound archives of the musical programs is fortunately counterbalanced by the abundance of specialized newspapers which not only announced the daily programs, their selections by the columnists, the criticisms, but also witnessed the artistic proliferation, the lifestyle of the stations, their reception by the listeners. Confronting the collected information in the weeklies of “TSF programs” gives a rather precise picture of the reality of the programs (sometimes modified at the last minute), but also (for this very reason) of the broadcasters’ purposes.

For the year 1936, a scrupulous input of the mere contents of the musical programs was possible due to the complementarities of several newspapers that remain accessible at the BnF and at the Inathèque de France: *Choisir*, *TSF program*, *Le Petit Radio*, *Mon program* and *Radio-Magazine*⁵. But their monitoring, instructive as it is, quickly reveals the limits of the knowledge we can draw from it.

While 9/10th of the programs on *Radio-Paris* mention the composers or the performers, more than half of the musical tracks on *Radio-Cité* only indicate the theme of the program (against 20% on *Radio-LL* in 1935). This situation distorts the comparison of the two stations and would reduce the relevance of their reading if it were founded on a single corpus of programs⁶. Furthermore, we know that the dilution of the genres (even the dilution of the styles throughout a same program) deforms the reality of a title given by the station⁷. A global reading certainly enables the conception of a typology of programs which we’ll examine later, but it also requires an angle of complimentary approach, by monitoring the cited composers and the performers.

COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS

Indexing the composers and their performers reveals that part of the sound realities drowned in stylistic gatherings is as unexpected as distorted. It especially enables to assess the fashion phenomena by tracing the recurrence of the works and the appearances of their authors and performers. But the difference in the attitude of the two broadcasting networks imposes a major caution when interpreting the data. As we can see, observers may prefer proportionality to quantity in their comparisons :

⁴ 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, upheld at University of Paris-Sorbonne 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>.

⁵ The first two are available for consultation in paper form respectively at Inathèque and BnF, the following two can be read as microfilms at BnF, the last having the advantage of being digitized by the Inathèque de France.

⁶ Five categories emerged within the types of information provided by the programs : all or part of the cited performers (21% of the whole tracks on both networks in 1936); all or part of the cited composers (20%); cited composers and cited performers (23%); only the theme (32%); unknown content or unidentifiable (4%).

⁷ Bennet, Christophe, “French Musical Broadcasting in 1935: toward modern radio? A comparison of two models of stations”, http://www.plm.paris-sorbonne.fr/IMG/pdf/french_musical_broadcasting_in_1935.pdf.

whereas *Radio-Paris* cites 667 composers (accounting for 1.736 distinctive references) only 31 appearances (for only 36 references) can be read in the programs of *Radio-Cité*. Concerning the performers, the domination of *Radio-Paris* is less overwhelming, since 167 performers (for 347 references) can be found instead of 121 ones (for 157 references) on *Radio-Cité*⁸.

So that this heterogeneous mass of performers and authors⁹ could take sense, an attempt at identifying and classifying appeared necessary. It is especially instructive as these categories will be treated either in terms of evolution over the whole decade (with the sharpest interest) or in a global perspective (with the caution already evoked). In order to avoid a fastidious enumeration of the genres and styles broadcasted on the waves, we invite any interested reader to watch the two additional parts (the typology of composers and performers) which summarize the dominating tendencies and indicate their most cited ambassadors.

PRACTICE VS DISCOURSE

It's indeed at the intersection of the description of the programs and those of composers and performers that the conclusions concerning the musical broadcasting practices will be more realistic. But this picture would not be complete if we didn't add a last dimension: the actors' discourse.

Soon we'll see that, rather than adding a subjective value to fixed, though rational, statements the debates surrounding the triple musical gesture of production, broadcasting and reception enable the monitoring, the understanding and even the anticipation of the actions and the reactions of all the protagonists.

Masses of written elements which we mostly chose from the specialized press give information on the orientations of the thinking of the broadcasters and the listeners. The respective conceptions are often relayed by journalists, wise and sometimes pro-active go-betweens. Owing to a lack of converging points of view of opponents, they try at least to understand and define the stakes of a mass broadcasting. Delving into those speeches shows such concepts discussed as those of musical education, aesthetical criteria, an organization into a hierarchy of styles and taste, or possible guiding principles in the making of programs. This highlights sometimes astonishing practices that would be incomprehensible otherwise. This unveiling eventually allows to spatially and temporarily expand the spectrum of analysis (to the other months and stations) and to compare our sampling to a larger environment or measure the representativeness of the two stations and their possible specificities.

We hope that this formal introduction will facilitate both the understanding of the music as it was broadcasted in 1936 and the comprehension of what their actors could say and do about it.

AN INCREASE OF THE DAILY BROADCASTING AND AN ABUNDANCE OF STYLES

The most significant event of the year is undoubtedly the conjunction of a multiplication of the programs and a lengthening of the broadcasting durations.

⁸ The reverse will be true at the end of the decade : in 1939 422 references of performers will be accounted on *Radio-Paris* vs. 562 on *Radio-Cité*.

⁹ In 1936, 54 out of the 671 composers cited were also performers (8%), whereas 34 out of the 285 performers were also known as authors (12%).

A BOOM OF THE TRACKS AND OF THEIR DURATIONS

We won't go on about the causes of the general rise of the hours of broadcasting which are different according to the stations. We'll just mention that on the one hand, owing to a fresh financial allowance provided by royalties on Radio, the public network implements Mandel's policy and prolongs the duration of broadcasting. On the other hand, the very young private stations increase the daily broadcasting in order to affirm a will of change and to get more money thanks to more advertising beaks¹⁰. The musical programs are following this move since their duration on *Radio-Cité* (170 hours and 30 minutes) doubles in comparison with the previous year (77 hours and 45 minutes). Besides, the 300 hours and 33 minutes that *Radio-Paris* totalizes in June are the result of a similar growth (of 106%) which propels the year 1936 at the top of the decade in this matter¹¹. Thanks to an average duration of 10 hours of music daily, *Radio-Paris* establishes a new record for the decade, while *Radio-Cité* with more than 5 hours, definitively breaks with the usual 2.5 daily hours of *Radio-LL* and approaches the maximum average of 8.75 hours it will reach in 1939.

As a logical result, this growth has a consequence on the number of broadcasting tracks, which increases in the same proportions (from 314 in June 1935 to 788 in June 1936). However, if the quantity of programs hardly doubles on *Radio-Paris* (from 185 to 342), they increase more than threefold on the private network (from 129 to 446). These rises respectively amount to an average of 11 daily tracks of 53 minutes for the former and 15 daily tracks of 23 minutes on the latter. Globally the musical tracks of the Government's stations are twice as long than those of private ones. On these, the principle of an advertising patronage renewed at every change of program matches the principle of an accelerated turnover of the styles, a strategy that we'll examine further down.

If the lengthening of daily broadcasting also favors the increase of the number of the composers cited on *Radio-Paris* (which leaps from 449 to 667, another record) the 31 authors only on *Radio-Cité* represent only a fifth of the 152 composers of the station run by Lucien Levy in 1935. Actually, on the new principles, the private station, of a wider broadcasting only advantages the performers (from 40 to 121) and generates the weakest ratio of the decade in terms of composers: they're broadcasted 1.16 times on average (2.6 on *Radio-Paris*). We already guess that *Radio-Cité* only mentions once or twice the most famous names of music, while the crowd of composers on *Radio-Paris* rhymes with inevitable duplications and multiple citations for some of them.

As for the evolution of the modes of broadcasting, due to the fact that the sudden rise of the daily duration and of the number of the programs inflates the volume of all the categories of programs, it appears to be more judicious to compare their proportionality. Thus, we can learn from statistics that the sagging of live programs on *Radio-Paris* (from 73% in 1935 to 67% of the hours of broadcasting in 1936) slightly advantages the relayings from the outside (from 2% to 5%); similarly the strong step back of live programs on the private station (from 46% to 20%) favors the soaring of direct broadcast (or "retransmission") (from 0% to 22%) while the playing of records remains at levels close to those of 1935 (respectively around 25% for *Radio-Paris* and 50% for the private station)¹². The tense relations between the phonographic industrialists are softening in the second half of the decade and enable the record to retain its status of a key tool of the musical broadcasting policy, particularly for the private stations. But some figures cited earlier show that the significant evolution of the modes of broadcasting is mainly due to two factors: the contracts signed with the national theatres (for the public network) and the new principle of a strong broadcasting of weakly legitimate music (in the private sector).

¹⁰ *TSF Program* n°298 May 29th 1936, p 2. This article assesses the action of Georges Mandel as minister. There's a notification of the average duration of the daily programs coming from 6/8 hours to 14/15 hours. The royalties on radio had been perceived since 1933, but the number of radio sets rose more significantly as of 1935.

¹¹ The accumulated hours of musical broadcasting altogether rose from 219 hours to 471 hours. This figure was overtaken only once, in 1939 (483 hours).

¹² The types of the formats could be split into five categories: live (233 hours in total of both stations, meaning 43%); live and records (4.75 hours, meaning 1.3%); records (169.5 hours, meaning 39.6%); indeterminate (12 hours, meaning 3%); retransmission (51 hours, meaning 13.2%).

As far as live broadcasting is concerned, it results from contracts passed with establishments, mostly Parisian ones, or with provincial concert halls. Following difficult secret negotiations between the Post and Telephone ministry and the directors of Government theatres, the latter understand that public Radio can rescue them from the economic crisis jeopardizing their future¹³. Meanwhile private stations take their microphones to the trendy dancing halls, the music-hall theatres and other operetta and movie theatres, which rent their stages for celebrities' galas. This diversification of styles and the new flavor it gives to live broadcasts reflect the globality of the programs that we are about to examine.

A TYPOLOGY OF THE PROGRAMS

To get the best sight of the programs we considered their classification through a categorization which is more instructive than simplistic. Two major facts enabled this classification.

We first noticed an incredible distance between the representations of the Thirties concerning the stylistic matter and the current musicological criteria. We can't but observe that neither the nature of any performer nor the (so-called) symphony orchestras¹⁴ allow to trace their performance back to a classical background (or "serious music" as it was then called) as we would nowadays. Sometimes, it on the contrary constitutes the only reliable element that creates "the unity" of a composite program of heterogeneous works. The disparity of the pieces that the instrumental groups of classical music (characterized by string quartets) can integrate in their repertoire adds up complexity in the building of a typology of programs. Actually, many contradictions and even incongruities can be noticed (by a contemporary observer) in the double page of "Programs chosen by / ordered for you" in the weekly *Mon Program*. The "chamber music soli" column is rather homogeneous and consists of classical music indeed, but strangeness often crops up in the other three categories that complete the panorama. As an example we could mention the "Johann Strauss concert" broadcasted on Sunday June 21st from the Eiffel Tower and classified among "symphonic concerts", while the "Strauss concert" released on Wednesday June 24th appears in the "light music – jazz" section¹⁵. Furthermore the military marches proposed by *Lyon-PTT* on June 4th appear in the ranks of the "best symphonic concerts" of the week of May 31st¹⁶. As for as the selections of "lyrical theater", the last musical section, they include *Fleurette* by Offenbach (*Radio-Paris* on June 14th), the same week as the works by Delibes, Martini, Poulenc and Palestrina [sic] that *Lyon PTT* displays in its program of June 20th are classified in the category of "light music-jazz"¹⁷ !

The second element of complexity lies on the already observed phenomenon of an astonishing cohabitation in a same program of diametrically opposed musicians or works aesthetically speaking¹⁸. This custom concerns less the private network where, due to the shortening of the durations, the musical styles broadcasted in a given slot are much more related. The most striking example is the principle of "trash concerts" which some of the listeners of *Radio-Paris* condemn loudly in the

¹³ Anyway the crisis not only strikes the musical theatres. On this topic one could read especially: Robert, Guy, "Le mariage forcé de la Comédie-Française et de la Radio d'État", in *Cahiers d'Histoire de la Radiodiffusion* n° 84, p. 112-132.

¹⁴ During the Thirties the notion of orchestra doesn't necessarily refer to a number of musicians: "An orchestra of three disabused musicians [performs] a delicious romance by Gounod; [let's say 'no' to these] embryos of orchestras whose executions are almost always capital" (*Le Radiogramme de Toulouse*, n°308 of September 28th 1930, p. 4) and: "Every day we hear exotic knick-knacks by an asthmatic orchestra [...] not to forget the Viennese ritornellos played by three musicians named the So-and-so orchestra" (*Radio-Magazine*, n° 654 of April 26th 1936, p. 3).

¹⁵ *Mon Program*, June 19th 1936.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, May 29th 1936.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, June 12th 1936.

¹⁸ Bennet, Christophe, "French Musical Broadcasting in 1935", op. cit., p. 5.

columns of *Radio-Magazine*¹⁹. It is true that the symphonic concerts that this public station releases this year (particularly at meal-times) have the common characteristic to mix vastly different works under the title “light and various”. Let’s take as an example the concert by the “Pierre Mangeret Orchestra”, broadcasted between 11 am and 2 pm on Friday June 5th. Under the title of “symphonic concert” it gathers: *Parade d’amour*, *Marche des grenadiers* (Schertzinger²⁰) ; *Guillaume Tell Overture* (Rossini) ; *Voix du printemps* (J. Strauss) ; *La Traviata* (G. Verdi) ; [...] *Ariette* (Vidal) ; *Les noisettes* (Dupont) ; *Berceuse* (Gretchaninoff) ; *Valse de Mireille* (Gounod) ; *Troisième Marche aux flambeaux* (Meyerbeer) ; *Suite algérienne* (Saint-Saëns). Francis Dorset who has been denouncing this kind of mixtures for many years holds the stance of his partner columnist:

“M. Dominique Sordet [calls “trash concerts”] the concerts where all kinds of music (the best and the worst) are neighboring pell-mell in a horrible promiscuity. [...] By using this metaphor he just wanted to castigate the enemies of music, the vandals who impose disgraceful neighbours on Mozart and Beethoven”²¹.

Despite programs that sometimes belonged to different categories, our choices permitted to propose a typology of the programs. Without describing it in detail (since it can be found in the 3rd appendix) we’ll only sketch the main lines.

Considering the whole of the programs of the two stations, we notice that among the four categories of programs, “classical music” is the most broadcasted, with 32% of the tracks and 42% of the durations²². Then comes “entertainment music” (31% and 31%), followed by “intermediate music” (23% and 18%). Although this denomination is not academic it appeared to be the most appropriate for qualifying a music which, without belonging properly to one or the other of the previous categories, nevertheless connected them. We feel that, under this unconventional term, we could gather the different currents of operetta as well as the multiple shades of light symphonic music then frequently called “genre music”. This intermediate subcategory serves as a title for programs where the coexistence of genres that were not too remote from each other did not permit to opt for one of the first two categories. Finally, the “sundry” section (14% and 9%) includes genres which are in a minority (as for the typologies of the composers and performers), to which we associate the “undetermined” subcategory (for unidentified programs).

If we mean to underline the strong elements of each station, we can notice a breathtaking domination of the programs of classical music on *Radio-Paris* (72% of their durations) to the detriment of the entertainment music (6%). On *Radio-Cité*, the balance plays in the opposite way but less sharply (55% of entertainment vs. 13% of classical music). On either side intermediate music reaches the third place (respectively 20% and 16%). Eventually we can note that on the private station “undetermined music” (8%) inflates the “sundry” section (15%), because the newspapers don’t yet mention some of the themes or contents that regular listeners could identify.

In order to connect this analysis of the programs to the customs linked to the trends of the period, we’re going to examine the most often cited composers and performers, especially as some of them may have constituted both the title and the theme of the program.

¹⁹ “Trash concerts” is a quote from the musical columnist of *Radio-Magazine* Dominique Sordet. In the edition of May 3rd 1936 of this weekly newspaper we learn that a reader, M. Lacouture, shocked by this terminology decides to stop subscribing in reprisal ! (N° 655, p. 3).

²⁰ Victor Schertzinger (1890-1941) is an American composer of operettas, songs and movie music. In 1930 he wrote *Paris, je t’aime d’amour*, created by Maurice Chevalier in the movie *Parade d’amour* by Ernst Lubitsch, a filmed operetta adapted from a text by L. Xanrof and J. Chancel.

²¹ *Radio-Magazine*, n°655 of May 3rd 1936, p. 3: “Bureau of claims”, by Francis Dorset.

²² Concerning the durations, the percentage calculated is an average of the respective percentages instead of the one of the total of the durations. This choice has the double advantage to reduce the disparity of the volumes stated between the two stations and to represent more objectively what could be called a “policy of broadcasting”.

THE PREEMINENCE OF GREAT COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS

With the purpose of connecting the corpus of the programs and those of the performers and the composers, we fused the nine categories into four big families for the first corpus (cf. the appendixes). The shape of the corpus of the performers cited shows a striking similarity with that of programs and confirms the supremacy in comparable proportions of classical music on *Radio-Paris* and of entertainment music on *Radio-Cité*. We also notice that the performers, contrary to the composers, do not navigate so much from a station to another. Of the 285 performers cited by the two stations, only 3 are common to both lists (for an average of 6 for the whole decade)²³.

Regarding the distribution of the composers, the information that drew our attention is the decennial record of the percentage of “cultural go-betweens”: almost a quarter of the people cited. This criterion helped us label musicians who used to compose or perform in several types of (sub) categories. By doing so they favor (in the representations) and operate (in the aesthetical components of the works) a sliding from one category to another. This very high figure leads us to nuance a corpus of programs, whose titles are as reductive as indicative of the fragility of musical borders²⁴. In a similar frame of mind (since the category was thought of as a linking one) the proportion of composers of “intermediate music” also occupies the first rank in the decade, for *Radio-Paris* (31%) as much as for *Radio-Cité* (29%)²⁵. Its main representative is the operetta, which we distributed into three subcategories, even though five are commonly accepted²⁶. In terms of references of composers, the multiplication of programs on Radio-Paris favors operetta composers. By the way, they are often cited in programs where classical music dominates. Well-known composers are particularly present in our corpus. For instance, Vincent Scotto (1874-1952) is the most often cited composer concerning the subcategory we called “operettas and songs” with 47 references over the decade²⁷. Its 16 references in 1936 (as many as Robert Schumann or André Messager) constitute a genuine peak compared with the other years²⁸. Among his 15 appearances on *Radio-Paris*, there are 9 distinctive pieces and three songs broadcasted twice : *Tchi-Tchi* (on June 1st and 13th), *Marinella* (on June 3rd and 16th) and *J'aime les fleurs* (on June 8th and 27th). They are recorded in four types of programs: “light and variety” music (4), song (4), dancing (5) and mixed music (2). In the latter cases, *Le Tango de Lola* neighbors *la Rhapsody in blue* by Gershwin (on June 17th) and *Sous les ponts de Paris* is in excellent company beside an extract from *Louise* by Charpentier (on June 22nd). The variability of the backgrounds of these appearances clearly shows that the genre which the “go-between” attributes to the operetta refers to the reality of navigations between remote musical categories.

²³ They are two lyrical performers and a pianist : Amelita Galli-Curci (1882-1963), Émile Rousseau (18..-19..) and Mrs Febvre-Longeray (?). We could not identify the latter, who gave a “Debussy recital” on Sunday June 14th at 2 pm on *Radio-Cité* and participated in the chamber music concert by OSP (Orchestre Symphonique de Paris) on Monday June 22nd at 5.30 pm on *Radio-Paris*.

²⁴ In June 1936, the “go-between” composers most cited and common to the two stations were André Messager (14 references on *RP* and 2 on *RC*); Vincent Scotto (15 and 1) and Reynaldo Hahn (13 and 1).

²⁵ In our undertaking of reducing the number of categories (motivated by a double wish of synthesis and of linking the three corpuses) we constituted the one of “intermediate music” for the musicians who composed operettas and their by-genres (generally the major post) ; works of “light symphonic music” (of the 19th and 20th centuries), pieces of jazz.

²⁶ Velly, Jean-Jacques, “L’opérette des années trente”, in Pistone, Danièle (dir.), *Musiques et musiciens à Paris dans les années trente*, Champion, Paris, 2000, p. 158-165 : 1) the “Comédie musicale à la française” ; 2) the Viennese operetta (or singing operetta) ; 3) the American and French operetta “à grand spectacle” ; 4) the Marseille operetta ; 5) the operetta by great composers (meaning the great authors of the 19th Century). Concerning this lyrical specialty, we’ll recommend the reading of: Dufrene, Claude, *Histoire de l’opérette*, Paris, Fernand Nathan, 1981.

²⁷ Including both the type of French operetta “à grand spectacle” and the Marseille operetta, this subcategory is referring to what Émile Vuillermoz qualified as “opérette de boulevard”: “A little screenplay [...] gives a pretext to the proceedings of some verses of “café-concert” – usually without any link with the action – and choruses officially dedicated to the dancing-balls » (*Radio-Magazine* n°360 of September 7th 1930, p. 5).

²⁸ Representing 37% of the totality of his references. In our corpus, this prolific composer of successful works is only missing in 1939 and usually totalizes two or three appearances a year.

Table of composers and performers on *Radio-Paris*

Rang	The 5 musicians the most cited on Radio-Paris	Number of references in 1936	Categories	Number of decennial references	Percentage (regarding the decade)
1 st rank composers	Fauré, Gabriel (1845-1924)	33	Classical 19 th Century	141	23%
2 nd rank composers	Saint-Saëns, Camille (1835-1921)	32	Classical 20 th Century	164	20%
3 rd rank composers	Debussy, Claude (1862-1918)	31	Classical 20 th Century	178	17%
4 th rank composers	Schubert, Franz (1797-1828)	27	Classical 19 th Century	139	19%
5 th rank composers	Ganne, Louis (1862-1923)	27	Classical 19 th Century	101	27%
1 st rank performers	Cloez, Gustave (19..)	22	Classical performer	41	54%
2 nd rank performers	Orchestre Victor Pascal (1...-....)	19	Classical collective	46	41%
3 rd rank performers	Orchestre symphonique de Paris (OSP) (1...)	17	Classical collective	18	94%
4 th rank performers	Tomasi, Henri (1901-1971)	12	Classical performer	15	80%
5 th rank performers	Orchestre des Concerts Poulet (1929-?)	10	Classical collective	12	83%

The hit parade of composer and performer references on *Radio-Paris* perfectly illustrates the policy of broadcasting which is hugely classical. The last column is particularly interesting since it permits to compare the references of the year 1936 with the whole decade (including the two networks). We can notice that composer Henri Tomasi, here cited as the conductor of OSP, benefits largely from the growth of the daily concerts. The strong appearance of conductors (22 distinctive for 81 in total), including Gustave Cloez and other classical conductors (17 for 104 references), constitutes another incontestable record on *Radio-Paris*. An evident relation establishes itself between the bottom and the top of the table above. However, as the rates of the last columns indicate, even if 1936 is a very great year for them, the famous composers are globally often broadcasted. The winner is Gabriel Fauré, which proves the listeners' blatant affection for modern French music. We can also notice that Claude Debussy, the most cited composer in the whole decade, appears at the third rank of this table of 1936. Besides we can get a first clue of the divergence of mind between the listeners and the program makers of the public network. In fact, the latter, who favor classical music are in the eye of the cyclone as regards the polemics fuelled by the specialized press.

Francis Dorset here reproduces a letter received from M. Cauquelin, self-styled “less than twenty”:

“And we would be delighted (delighted indeed !) to be able to listen from 9 pm or 8 pm 30 the national orchestra performing Debussy, Chabrier, [...] or César Franck, etc. until 11 pm on *PTT*. But we don't want them all day, from evening to morning, without an interruption ! Exactly as the best blade shaves endlessly, the *PTT* programs bore indefinitely!²⁹”

A few weeks later, the columnist of *Radio-Magazine* tries to calm down feverish debates in which diverging points of view endlessly struggle:

²⁹ *Radio-Magazine*, n°654 from April 26th 1936, p.3: “Bureau des réclamations”, by Francis Dorset.

“M. René Brochet, a detractor of Debussy, who was recently abused by a fighting female reader, writes in order to thank us for defending him. [...] The music by Debussy in 1936 hardly justifies these passionate arguments. The composer of *La Mer* and *Nocturnes* is henceforth a classical composer. Debussy may not be as creative as Bach or Beethoven. However we owe him joys of a rare quality. Through his work, some of our national genius is expressing itself and France would be cruelly impoverished if the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* [and] *Pelléas* were deleted by an iconoclast.³⁰”

Table of composers and performers on *Radio-Cité*

Rang	The 5 musicians the most cited on Radio-Cité	Number of references in 1936	Categories	Number of decennial references	Percentage (regarding the decade)
1 st rank composers	Messager, André (1853-1929)	2	Operettas and derivative	90	2%
2 nd rank composers	Strauss, Oscar (1870-1954)	2	Operettas and derivative	18	11%
3 rd rank composers	Wagner, Richard (1813-1883)	2	Classical 19 th Century	73	3%
4 th rank composers	Franck, César (1822-1890)	2	Classical 19 th Century	60	3%
5 th rank composers	Ravel, Maurice (1875-1937)	2	Classical 20 th Century	133	2%
1 st rank performers	Ventura, Ray (1908-1979)	5	Performer of commercial music	10	50%
2 nd rank performers	Orchestre Josca Muszca (?)	5	Classical collective	5	100%
3 rd rank performers	Bordin, Gino (19...;...)	4	Performer of commercial music	9	44%
4 th rank performers	Dorsay, Roland (?-?)	4	Performer of commercial music	4	100%
5 th rank performers	Trio instrumental Josca Muszca (?)	4	Classical collective	4	100%

On the private network, the low number of references of composers preclude any attempt at statistical interpretation. Yet we could notice that the composers who are cited are for the most part very famous. Among the 31 composers mentioned by *Radio-Cité* only 4 (in a non classical genre) don't figure in the table of the 667 composers cited by *Radio-Paris*³¹. As for the previous table the principle of a regular broadcasting temporarily exaggerates the number of appearances of an artist (Cf. the last column). This is especially the case of the five performers listed who have been acting very regularly since they were hired for weekly programs. Their style is unrelated to the top of the table. In fact on *Radio-Cité* the references of composers of entertainment music rarely appear. Without any further indication on the musical style of Josca Muszca, we can risk the prudent hypothesis that he used to conduct classical-oriented bands (chamber orchestras) and to perform in an intermediate repertory, even in folklore music.

Considering the categories of the programs, the composers and the performers who were announced on either of the two rival stations, we already can see the divergence of their conceptions of music broadcasting. The detailed monitoring of the contents underlines this difference.

³⁰ *Ibid*, n°659 from May 31st 1936, p.3: “Bureau des réclamations”, by Francis Dorset. Let's add here that the 671 composers cited in 1936 are French and account for 57% of the composers. The others are Anglo-Americans (8%), unidentified (13%) or from other countries (22%).

³¹ They are: Al Dubin; Mario Melfi (commercial music); Gordon MacRae (foreign song); Thomas Andrew « Tom » Dorsey (jazz).

**OPPOSED CONTENTS AND MODES OF
BROADCASTING**

A careful screening of the contents confirms the implicit appearance of the diverging founding principles and tactics. Actually those are going to impact the audience of the rival stations.

THE PRIMACY OF CLASSICAL MUSIC ON THE PUBLIC NETWORK

We have shown that on *Radio-Paris* the comparison of the three corpuses of programs, composers and performers nuanced but also confirmed the supremacy of classical music over entertainment music. In 1936, the latter is relegated to the last decennial rank as far as durations are concerned (only 6% for a decennial average of 10%). However, the deciphering of the contents of the programs reveals that the pieces of “intermediate music” and of “commercial music” are more present than we could suppose. The numerous duplicates that we picked up are echoing trendy productions. For instance the songs by Mireille (June 1st, 16th, 19th, 27th), Paul Misraki (June 8th, 27th), the *Poupées valsantes* and other *Tambourins chinois* by Kreisler (June 1st, 3rd, 14th, 16th, 17th) and the 15 references of Vincent Scotto that we already pointed out. The strong proportion of “mixed music” programs (10% of the tracks) permits strange encounters as much as it helps tracing light pieces. The emergence of mixed programs often coincides with a gathering of records around a theme. Its title (and the semantic field linked to this title) is the only common denominator. The program makers of *Radio-Paris* are very fond of this. We could for instance quote inspirations such as : “the sea” (June 8th) ; “rivers” (June 12th) ; “flowers” (June 18th) ; “at Nogent on Sunday” (June 29th) ; “in the village” (June 30th) and a track devoted to “Paris” (June 22nd) : with « Paris s’éveille » from *Louise*, (Charpentier) ; *A Paris dans chaque faubourg* (Joubert) ; *La Chanson de Paris* (Yvain) ; *Sous les ponts de Paris* (Scotto)³².

Some light works also snake in and out in the programs of the orchestras performing live. We find a profusion of such programs in the samplings of 1936. The 54 symphonic concerts to which we can add up 57 sequences of “light and various symphonic music” account for a third of the programs. This perfectly reflects the policy of a profusion of live music that helps balance the budgets of the public network. Beside the midday slot, when symphonic works have for a long time been surrounding a short lyrical recital on *Radio-Paris*, some classically-oriented concerts appear at other moments of the day. They are completed by usual performances in the evening of prestigious orchestras (such as the National Orchestra, broadcasted eight times in June³³). From 3 pm to 7 pm we most often find the OSP orchestra (17 references), Concerts Poulet (10) or Padeloup (9), or orchestras conducted by Gustave Cloez (22), Henri Tomasi (12), Raoul Labis (7) or Roger Ellis (4). The implementation on *Radio-Paris* of the principle of relays (by the gathering of several stations) also exaggerates the volume of concerts by symphonic orchestras³⁴. In fact we can notice that 30 concerts are broadcasted in common with *Radio-Colonial* station. A fresh concept in 1936 is the introduction on the public network of a formula already well spread abroad: the “midnight concert”. It occurs every Friday

³² We can recall here that the French capital is very often cited as an inspiration in the Thirties: Basile, Giusy, “La chanson au cinéma dans les années trente”, in *Musique et musiciens à Paris*, op. cit., p. 245. Among the 600 most appreciated songs in the interwar period, we did not notice less than 18 examples for which the word “Paris” appears at least in the title (sources : *Un siècle de chanson française*, 1996, Paris, Beuscher : volumes 1919-1929 et 1929-1939).

³³ In June 1936 two conductors are cited: Jean Morel (4 references) and its official conductor Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht (4).

³⁴ We here introduce the concept of “concert by a symphonic orchestra” which is broader than the accepted one of de “symphonic concert”. The latter refers to a repertory which more completely consists of classical works and accepts less stylistic digression and slidings towards the surrounding genres.

evening under the direction of Marius-François Gaillard (4 citations). This conductor will be replaced by Rhené-Baton the following year³⁵.

We were struck by a peculiar phenomenon: certain orchestras have a genuine capacity of performing very sundry repertoires. Both their instrumental nomenclature³⁶ and the inventiveness of active arrangers enable them to string together tracks of dancing music (often set at 22 pm 45) with a program of light symphonic music (at 11 pm). Beyond the open-mindedness of their conductors, this polyvalence expresses both the flexibility of the genres and the opportunity of multiplying the performances. *Radio-Paris* often takes advantage of this polyvalence and proposes at the end of evening two types of music with a single orchestra. We can mention these orchestras: Godfroy Andolfi (June 1st and 22nd) ; Roland Porée (June 2nd) ; Robert (June 6th) ; Atkins (June 7th and 13th) ; Chapelier (June 8th and 10th) ; Lucien Goldy (June 14th and 17th) ; Ernest Guillou (June 21st and 24th) ; Pierre Mangeret (June 27th) et Victor Pascal (June 4th, 9th, 11th, 16th, 18th and 30th).

Let's focus on the latter, whose orchestra (one of the most often cited) perfectly illustrates this double competence and let's examine what *Le Petit Radio* said about him:

“This issue of bringing music culture through the radio will eternally be discussed. How could we steadily educate the taste of the audience? Do we have to pour the easy works they enjoy ? Must we impose them a unanimous dose of classical music? Victor Pascal and his orchestra appear to have found the correct solution. [The performance of light pieces is succeeded by] the tactful performance of more serious works but not too many, and they can only be enjoyed because they were preceded and served by works that the listener knows well and appreciates. The experiment I'm talking about has been carried out for a long time. Indeed it has been lasting from December 24th 1933, the first time when M. Victor Pascal was asked to conduct an orchestra on *Radio-Paris* until now, the time of his 530th concert³⁷ : [...] Through these performances, he revealed some unknown works like this *Overture burlesque* by Méhul in which three kazoos are being played. Such is, in brief, what the Radio owes to M. Victor Pascal. Beside sometimes very fugitive stars, isn't it more legitimate that this column dedicated to our “celebrities” should host one of the best creators of orchestral music, one of those who will have most contributed to the artistic education of our listeners?³⁸”

Originating from the official journal of the public stations, this statement witnesses the concept of an educative principle which dominates on the government network so that some small orchestras are said to be “assigned missions”. Like Victor Pascal, their conductors are running a conscientious daily action of awareness-raising as to classical music. They are as imaginative as talented even though their notoriety may not extend their lifetime³⁹. The “intermediate music” they play is neither dramatic nor exclusively happy but can be associated to the boring “high music” (“*La grande musique*”) of the symphonic concerts. Their music is probably supposed to reconcile the lovers of multiple and most different styles. Yet the newspapers appear to indicate that such middle-of-the road music provided by *Radio-Paris* divides more than it federates. The scheme is completely different on *Radio-Cité*.

³⁵ This is the pseudonym of René Bâton (1879-1940). Newspaper *TSF Program* n°246 of June 2nd 1935 (p.3) indicates that “ [in order to match the practices of some of the European countries], Post and Telephone minister Georges Mandel decided that henceforth the stations of the public network should release every Friday a concert from 11 pm to 1 am”.

³⁶ The numerous pictures we watched permit to establish an average composition of these orchestras: about twenty musicians including a half of strings (with a bass, a piano, a guitar) and an average of three performers in every wood section (including a saxophone) and brass, a drums player and a percussionist.

³⁷ This score provides an average of one concert performed every two days!

³⁸ Sem, Jacques, *Le Petit-Radio* n° 511 of January 22nd 1937, p. 1.

³⁹ It was actually impossible to find out the dates of birth and death of Victor Pascal. The only traces at BnF are some of his performances as a cellist on 78-track records.

THE DOMINATION OF THE ENTERTAINMENT MUSIC ON THE PRIVATE STATIONS

On the private network the soaring of the number of the tracks matches an organization and logic of periodicity (daily or weekly) which is more palpable than earlier. Many musical rendezvous are shaping the daily time of the listeners. Furthermore their slots are obviously chosen with the greatest care. Far from *Radio-Paris* which broadcasts from 7 am to midnight *Radio-Cité* is on the waves for only three tracks during the working-week. At first, there are the early morning programs, when the short tracks of light music (“genre music”, Viennese music or operettas) are neighboring with either accordion dance (8 tracks on June 1936), military marches (9 tracks) or “morning music-hall” (18 tracks). Interrupted at about 8.40 am, the programs resume at noon and color the lunch-time (when the news dominates) with fresh musical releases mentioning the name of the advertisers (such as *Brunswick*, *Gramophone*, *Columbia*, *Polydor* or the “happy quarter of an hour” by *Éditions Paul Beuscher*). The name of the artist broadcasted is sometimes replaced by the theme of the program (like the “sailors’ songs” on June 11th). At last there is a long track in the evening which musically begins with “the success of the day” from 7.30 to 7.40. It is often performed by a certain Roland Avellys (1910-1978) who sings under the original pseudonym of “The Unnamed Singer”. Thus there is a succession of tracks of about 20 minutes each. They are mostly oriented toward commercial music, but the classical repertory is not forgotten (as for the rather late “concerts of records” on Monday and Saturday evenings or chamber music on Wednesdays⁴⁰). It appears that the station is very proud to underline the presence of celebrities in their studio. In fact we can often read : “At the microphone, So-and-so sings” or “So-and-so plays”. As far as Sundays are concerned, the station is used to broadcasting without any break from 8.30 to 0.30. We find a broad range of weekly programs such as “listeners’ requests” or “the musical quarter of an hour”. These tracks will be proposed every day of the working-week as of the following years. Jazz (16 tracks⁴¹) is well represented in the continuity of the tradition of *Radio-LL*. The station had actually originally pioneered in this area from 1932⁴². The producer of the program “An evening in Harlem”, broadcasted on Wednesdays from 11 to 11.30 pm is the considerable Gedovius, who remains loyal to the station and is integrated in Marcel Bleustein’s new crew⁴³. As far as his artistic manager Jacques Canetti is concerned, he personally announces the retrospective program “Ten years of hot jazz” on Sunday evenings, and will be acting in this area until 1939.

Generally speaking, a particular care was taken as regards the “frame” of either program : contrary to the public network, the producer and/or the announcer are very often highlighted in the radio-journals. The famous French singer Charles Trenet won’t be presenting the daily program “The Crazy Singer” before the next year. Yet the station already learns how to draw the collaborations of celebrities from the season 35-36. We could especially refer to the occasional performances of the then famous singer Julien (on June 16th) or of the humorist-singer from Montmartre Jean Marsac (on June 23rd), and to the arrival on the station of one of the pioneering professional radio-announcers, Marcel Laporte, alias Radiolo⁴⁴. A fair balance is struck between the stars of the show business who become announcers for a single day and the professional announcers who become stars themselves. Their action anyway extends far beyond the location of the studios on Boulevard Haussmann. In fact many fashionable cabarets and dancing-halls also become Radio studios. For instance we could mention the live broadcast from the *Dancing des Ambassadeurs* (on June 7th, 14th, 15th, 21st and 28th) and those

⁴⁰ Broadcasted from 10.30 to 11 pm the “Series of modern sonatas by Mme de Casafuerte and Walter Joseph” is dedicated notably to Darius Milhaud (on June 17th), to Maurice Ravel and Germaine Tailleferre (on June 24th).

⁴¹ We counted 11 programs, including 4 by Quintette Hot Richardet (on Monday at 1.15 pm), and 5 didactic sections, while there wasn’t any program of jazz picked up on Radio-Paris.

⁴² Ledos, Jean-Jacques (and Mansion, Lise) “Le jazz et la radio, une union durable” in *Cahiers d’Histoire de la Radiodiffusion* n° 75 “1932-1982 : un demi-siècle de jazz sur les radios francophones”, p. 21. Jacques Bureau had convinced owner Lucien Lévy to leave the studio open so that he could play the records he had been given by Hugues Panassié.

⁴³ Cf. “French Musical Broadcasting in 1935: toward a modern radio? A comparison of two models of stations”, art. cit., p. 17.

⁴⁴ *Radio-Magazine*, n°656 from May 10th 1936, p.13. Beside his photograph in a medallion can be read: “Marcel Laporte, the famous Radiolo is now announcer on *Radio-Cité*”.

from *Le Boeuf sur le Toit* (June 1st, 21st, 28th and 29th). They had attracted Jean Cocteau, Darius Milhaud or Jean Wiener during the Twenties and still had prestige and reputation in the Thirties⁴⁵.

While the private station also relays shows of classical music (such as the contest of tenors, baritones, basses live from the Paris Opera on Sunday June 7th) it hires other venues for very different productions. Actually, a large number of seats are required to host the public of some of the shows broadcasted. The station inaugurates the principle of an attendance of the public, which provides a fresh and living touch soon to be copied by the other private stations. One of the first public radio-shows is the henceforth famous “young people’s music-hall”, patronized by *Lévitan*, a furniture maker. It was produced by Jean Nac and broadcasted on Tuesdays from 9 pm to 9.45. Marcel Bleustein wrote that this program “permitted to spark the success of a myriad of young artists that are famous nowadays : Édith Piaf, Rina Ketty, Jean Tranchant, Éliane Célis, André Claveau, Micheline Presles, Roger Nicolas, Lucienne Delyne and Charles Trenet⁴⁶”. Yet the program that is about to rouse enthusiasm is indisputably the “crochet radiophonique”. Patronized by the *Monsavon* brand of soap, it is broadcasted from the famous concert-hall Salle Pleyel on Mondays from 8 pm to 8.30 and hosted by Saint-Granier:

“It was in Montmartre, in a café-concert theater since been transformed into a cinema that the crochet was born. For a whole winter the public crowded to attend a game which is actually rather cruel. [...] The radio took possession of this attraction which seemed to have faded away. Every week, *Radio-Cité* organized a parade of singers who weren’t all allowed to end their number under the patronage of a soap seller [...]. When one of them goes wrong the crochet operates. Yet the crochet operates soundly, if I may say : the voice of the condemned singer is suddenly covered by an orchestral racket... ‘Let the jury’s and the public’s justice pass!’ Yet another station, *Le Poste Parisien*, is having its crochet. Here is coming back the same procession of type-writers, electricians, accountants, seamstresses, zinc-plumbers etc. who come and sing tunes by Tino Rossi, by Jean Lumière, by Lucienne Boyer or any current celebrity in front of the microphone. Operetta tunes, chamber opera or even opera are ‘tackled’ by those daring amateurs who may sometimes have genuine talent. [...] Yet we don’t know if these exhibitions wouldn’t risk giving birth to dangerous illusions for those who are spared the fatal crochet...But the organizers are washing their hands of it! [Sic]⁴⁷”.

The radio-crochet, a popular show, the edges and dangers of which Clément Vautel perfectly evaluated, however remains a social phenomenon, so that the newspapers themselves comment and hold forecasts. This short paragraph could be read a few weeks later in another specialized journal :

“The heartless radio-crochet is still rampant on *Radio-Cité*. These past two weeks the quality of the competitors was apparently superior. Without influencing the popular jury... we would be surprised if the female contestant on Whit Monday, a professional pianist whose accomplished voice is particularly radiogenic, didn’t qualify⁴⁸”.

Anyway these exposures underline the role the cultural go-betweens of the vocal genre (in which the songs by Tino Rossi gladly rub shoulders with operatic arias !). They moreover create a link between the public and the station’s program makers and provide the latter with clues as to what their listeners require from them, or what they enjoy.

As a temporary conclusion, we could say that out of respect for the educative principle, the public network maintains a confusion of the genres by inserting light pieces into rather classical frames. This option opposes a deliberately visible policy of catering for every genre and every style. In the private programs, the musical genres and styles are better delineated in shorter slots and are also more numerous, with entertainment getting the lion’s share. The causes and consequences of these practices generate passionate debates, the main lines of which we’re about to draw.

⁴⁵ Arnaud, Claude, “Autour du Bœuf sur le toit”, in *Entre-deux-guerres*, op. cit. p. 287-314.

⁴⁶ Bleustein, Marcel, *Les ondes de la liberté*, Lattès, Paris, 1984, p. 113.

⁴⁷ *Radio-Magazine* n° 659 from May 3rd 1936, p. 2: “Radio-chronique “ by Clément Vautel.

⁴⁸ *Choisir* n°94 from June 14th 1936, p. 2 : “notes d’écoute”.

**THE DEBATES CONCERNING THE
MUSICAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

So as not to get drowned in a debate beyond the frame of our paper, we'll be considering only three axes of the issue.

CLASSICAL MUSIC OR COMMERCIAL MUSIC?

The actors of broadcasting quickly understand that their audience is multiple. How should the repartition of the music styles be dosed when the receivers of the programs almost always expressed contradictory expectations? As the historiography of the Radio has already shown, there are as many listeners to back one broadcasting policy as there are others to denounce it⁴⁹! Therefore, the task consisting in the distribution of music styles is particularly arduous for the program makers. Yet the journals seem to consider that they eventually get by fine:

“At various levels, they deserve encouragements and congratulations: they know how to choose, how to build programs of variable duration, how to mix gravity, seriousness, happiness, playfulness, melancholy, liveliness. They just have to keep making progress in the same way without caring about the too inflexible people who don't understand that programs cannot necessarily cater for others.⁵⁰”

In the matter of broadcasting choices, and more especially of quotas of music to be broadcasted, Francis Dorset who is in charge of the exciting “complaint office” in *Radio-Magazine* believes that the medium shouldn't ignore the socio-cultural variety of its listeners, even in the name of a noble principle of artistic elevation:

“Art may not be a question of majority, but the Radio at least is indeed what the majority wants it to be. Like the regime or the institutions, it reflects the sovereign crowd and this can't be otherwise in a century of enlightenment and progress.⁵¹”

Without taking any frank stance in favor of classical aesthetics (which he admits to prefer because of his education), and with the purpose of escaping the temptation of establishing an arbitrary hierarchy of tastes, the columnist has for several years been postulating that neither style should be rejected. On the contrary, the best music representative of every category should be broadcasted :

“So many misunderstandings could occur on the basis of these two simplistic expressions : “light music” and “classical music” ! The reality is different. Hadn't we better say “easy music” / “classical music” ? I'm not so sure. In fact some extremely classical music is known to bring a feeling of clarity, simplicity and natural grace. On the contrary, some other music produced by clumsy composers might be peaks of obscurity, heaviness, ugliness. [...] If the artistic managers of our radio stations cared about it, the musical programs that could be called “artistic conciliation”, both pleasant and sophisticated would be rather easily implemented.⁵²”

This mark of tolerance and this wish of going deeper in the perceptive criteria goes the same way as his counterpart, musical critic Dominique Sordet⁵³. Despite the conservatism he was often blamed for, he also championed popular records:

⁴⁹ Cf. more especially Méadel, Cécile, *Histoire de la radio des années trente*, Paris, Anthropos / INA, 1994.

⁵⁰ Hervier, Paul-Louis, “Points de vue et façon de voir”, *Mon program* of January 3rd 1936, p. 4.

⁵¹ *Radio-Magazine* n° 645 of February 23rd 1936, p. 3.

⁵² *Radio-Magazine* n° 383 of February 15th 1931, p. 2.

⁵³ Cf. above the note 21.

“This has to be proclaimed: popular records also have their masterpieces, more moving and sometimes less boring than many a pretentious musical turd produced by a member of the Institute or by a fauve acclaimed by snobs.⁵⁴”

In the same vein as his two colleagues of *Radio-Magazine*, but estimating he’s less musically educated, columnist Clément Vautel points out that the listeners express their dislikes more than their tastes. He confirms our idea of an intermediate music, a middle one, a kind of vast “no man’s land⁵⁵”, when he quotes a reader with whom he claims he feels “in good company”:

“There are not only those who hold for ‘hight music’ and the ‘kazoos’. The ‘third side’ exists and I think it constitutes the immense majority of the ‘wireless listeners’. I honor myself indeed to be one of them. Here are my preferences:

Accordion, just a little bit – a little anyway – Viennese waltzes or beautiful concert waltzes [...], bright overtures (no longer any *Festin de l’Armaignée*), [...] I’m not adverse to listening to Beethoven, nor am I frightened by Haendel’s *Largo*... But don’t you mention *Pelleas et Mélisande* to me.

Mozart? Of course... This doesn’t prevent me from taking pleasure in listening to operetta, jazz or even a popular caf’ con’ ditty. Yet don’t count on me for an evening of chamber music.

Here is, as a whole, my musical line... Is it so primary, or typical of a ‘Beotian’? If so, never mind... I enjoy what I enjoy and I don’t care so much about the contempt of those that are called the fine creatures from the Holy Wood.⁵⁶”

Either appraisals or rejections of the programs, the comments that feed the specialized press are founded upon the taste (or disgust) of listeners who are exposed to the choices of the broadcasters. The latter’s principles are oscillating between the idea of an education of the musical taste remaining to be done (a dominant feature of the public network) and entertainment (with private stations catering for a strong popular demand). Permanent debates therefore take place between the role of the Radio and the impact it should have on the listeners, particularly as a means of acculturation. On the side of the radio rulers, there is no lack of arguments concerning what to broadcast to meet the demands of the public. The latter is vastly heterogeneous. Yet it more than ever seems to belong, socially speaking, to the middle classes and even the most modest ones.

EDUCATING AND ENTERTAINING

Often assigned with musical responsibilities by the stations, the composers enter the debate. Among others Darius Milhaud states that the task of educating belongs to the institutional organisms of broadcasting. Beyond mere taste, he points out the *need* of music that this medium is developing⁵⁷. Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht (1880-1965)’s statement on the issue more especially caught our attention, because beyond his status as composer (out of the 22 references of our decennial samplings his *Nursery* appears 11 times), he also fulfills the roles of performer (28 citations as conductor of the Orchestre National) and manager. In fact he was entrusted by Minister Jean Mistler with nothing less than the monitoring of the programs of *Paris-PTT* with a right of inspection of *Radio-Paris*, as well as the artistic implementation of the federal programs. In July 1934 he had given an interview to newspaper *TSF Program*, where he explained the leading principles of his action as artistic manager.

The Belgian composer’s arguments deny the ones of our “average listener” when he postulates (or states?) an evident lack of education of the masses in the matter of musical repertoire:

⁵⁴ *Radio-Magazine* n° 645 of February 23rd 1936, p. 3.

⁵⁵ We propose this metaphor that matches the one of « stylistic frontiers ».

⁵⁶ *Radio-Magazine* n° 647, March of 8th 1936, p. 2: « Radio-chronique ».

⁵⁷ *Mon Program* of September 18th 1936: an article signed by Paul Dermée entitled: “The Radio must renovate the whole musical area, declares Darius Milhaud”.

“We shouldn’t preach converted people, i.e. release music to the music lovers who made the effort of coming and listening, as happens in the concerts. On the contrary, we have to infiltrate a mass which is a priori hostile to any music.”

But to explain the avowed dislike of the masses for Roussel (and his already evoked *Festin de l’Arraignée*) and Debussy, he adds:

“The reasons for this hostility are easy to detect. The unfortunate listener who ignores the simplest harmony was generally overwhelmed by a forced ingestion of works that are too high above the average level. It was a forced and over-extended ingestion.”

Joining many of the ideas evoked earlier, he proposes as an answer to his pre-supposed statement a cautious diversification of the genres and a shortening of the duration of the musical programs:

“We mustn’t expect continuous attention from the listeners ; 90 minutes constitute the maximum dose that should be administered to the patient [Sic]. While the rules of time are real, the rules of genre also exist. [...] After stating these principles we’ll try to match the famous formula “educating while entertaining”, an ideal formula whose sesame is yet uneasy to discover. We wouldn’t like to draw the listeners to tolerate the music but to like it... [The thing is possible] under the condition of starting from what is usual to the ear until imperceptibly attracting the listener to areas that are less visited. Once these new horizons are discovered they constitute a starting point for a farther excursion... The mistake would be to strike the listener frontally. By imposing him authentic masterpieces without any preparation we have ridiculed many indisputable works. For short, we shouldn’t shock too much through over-beautiful music, we must abandon the highest slopes to the alpinists and content ourselves with bringing the mass to a middle-slope. If the Radio reaches this goal, it will have succeeded in its most beautiful missions.⁵⁸”

It appears that the outcome of this policy hadn’t significantly modified the contents of public wires in 1936. At the crossroad of a recommended “educative entertainment”, the acculturated and but under-cooperative listeners still actually propose the same recipes through the “mediators” of the broadcasting press!

Francis Dorset praises the cleverness of one of his readers, a certain Robert Gas from Rouen, whose long letter he publishes in his “complaint office”. This listener claims that the musical illiteracy of the people who have a rather high level of culture could be explained by the fact that this art requires a special education (we are confronted since childhood to words and to the beauty of the visual, whereas nature contains sounds and no music). We lose our time, he goes on, by trying to make the masses highly sensitive to music. They however get lost in the complexity of its writing. To “memorize the melody”, which is the *sine qua non* condition of any assimilation, he proposes some sessions of explanation, in which the basics of musical writing would be analysed. And he ends his letter so :

“Such causeries would advantageously call both on their intelligence, their curiosity and their sensitiveness. But first of all, do take care of the choice of the announcer and of the performer! Do not use either pedagogy or literature! All must come from the heart and the very substance of music; all the rest must be clear, attractive and short.⁵⁹”

A couple of weeks later, this idea of a bowdlerized didacticism provokes the reaction of M. Gardien, a former music teacher from Dôle. Deploring a lack of musical education for young French he points out that in Germany, Austria or Switzerland, a child from the lower classes “remembers as easily a nice tune by Bach, Franck, Beethoven or Mozart as any familiar refrain.” And Francis Dorset concludes:

⁵⁸ *TSF Program* n°202 of July 29th 1934, p. 45: “Quelques instants avec D.E. Inghelbrecht” by Pierre Keszler.

⁵⁹ *Radio-Magazine* n°648 of March 15th 1936 p.3: “Bureau des réclamations”, by Francis Dorset.

“The mind and the sensitivity of the child are soft wax which easily receives any imprint. Adults are obstinate in their habits or preferences. Their ears and taste are often irremediably fouled. There is no reeducating them. What for, anyway? It is great madness to intend to impose one’s proper taste to the rest of the world.⁶⁰”

While they are supposed to be settled rather far from the purpose of an education of the masses, the private stations are the ones to eventually apply the principle of short tracks. But this principle serves the cause of entertainment. As we’ll come back later in our next articles on the stances of their managers (more readable at the end of the decade), let’s now address the third and last point at the core of the debate on musical broadcasting in 1936.

THE HOPES OF IMPROVEMENT AND MODES OF BROADCASTING

1936 was a great year of transition for the Government’s network, owing to the obvious hopes that were brought with the political changes. Succeeding the firm but effective Georges Mandel, Robert Jardillier, the Minister of a Government with potential changes, is a grassroots man. The specialized press tells us that his ministerial duties did not lead him to give up conducting the “Chorale Mixte Universitaire” of Dijon⁶¹ every week. This expert’s skills make the press hope “he will be able to carry out in his ministry an advantageous action in the interest of the broadcasting” by “cleansing its artistic and technical services⁶²”. The weekly *TSF Program*, beside the publication of the whole statement which was also broadcasted by *Radio-Cité* [Sic], hopes “he’ll rule on against the abuse of live broadcasts from the Government theatres : the Comédie-Française, Opéra-Comique, Opéra and Odéon.”

In fact, this is the first of the two most recurrent demands concerning the means of improving the State Radio. Many people deplore the excess of the shows from those theatres that are broadcasted on the waves of the national network (4 or 5 times a week). What’s more they are broadcasted time and time over. These monotonous and growing replays amplify (in both senses of the term) the policy of those establishments and come to unnerve irate listeners⁶³:

“It is always the same operas or chamber-operas that are broadcasted, about ten or a dozen at all in every category. And while we can hear ‘the pitiful venture of an unhappy brigadier from Navarra about four times a week, we vainly expect *Werther* or *Hérodiade*, as if they effectively were deleted from the repertoire of our lyrical theatres. We cry foul-play ! Variety is an essential condition of the success of these live broadcasts.⁶⁴”

The second most common complaint against the National network concerns the catch-all programs designed without any coherence. Dorset backs the request of the listeners who demand that the national broadcasting cancel its exotic noon *chinoiseries*, “ a musical trash whose titles are announced pompously”, in favor of artists and forms of quality :

“Could the managers of *Radio-PTT* (and also those of *Radio-Paris*) deign to mind the fact that these concerts do not interest anyone? [...] Easy music does exist and is not bland music. It may be charming. We demand that the concerts (from 12.30 pm to 2 pm) be composed of successes by Ray

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, n°652 of April 12th 1936, p. 3 : “Bureau des réclamations”, by Francis Dorset.

⁶¹ *Mon program* of October 23rd 1936: article by Carol-Bérard: “La musique accroît le prestige de la France”; and *Radio-Magazine* n° 680 of October 25th 1936, p. 1: “Radio-Chronique” by Clément Vautel.

⁶² *TSF Program* n° 300 of June 12th, p 5 and n°301 of June 19th 1936, p. 45.

⁶³ Gossot, Nathalie, “Le répertoire de l’Opéra de Paris dans les années 1930”, in *Musique et musiciens à Paris*, op. cit. p. 125-134, and Branger, Jean-Christophe, “Répertoire lyrique et politique de création à l’Opéra-Comique dans les années trente”, *Ibid* p. 135-150.

⁶⁴ *Radio-Magazine* n°655 May 3rd 1936, p 1: “Opéras-comiques oubliés” (article not signed), and *Ibid*, n° 430, p. 4 of January 10th 1932 : “The managers of our lyrical theatres know that beside *Tosca*, *Faust*, *Manon*, any work could retain their clientele” (article by Dominique Sordet).

Ventura, Mireille, Pills and Tabet, by good bands of symphonic jazz, operettas, etc. We don't want any the singers of *Radio-Paris*, or the boring orchestras of *Radio-PTT* more⁶⁵,

Besides, the subject of fake programs, which make the newspapers lie indirectly, is at the centre of sharp recriminations and is even growing owing to the government's "censorship" (encouraged by zealous Marceau Pivert⁶⁶). From the very birth of the Radio the stations (and not only public ones) were indeed inclined to modify their programs at the last minute. For instance, we learn that *Radio-Cité* replaced its programs of March 18th from 8 to 9 pm by an exclusive program of advertisements. This swept away the originally expected hearing of a tango orchestra, Pierre Dac and Ignace⁶⁷! Yet the main reproach leveled at private stations was the lack of quality of the programs. For lack of inventive and spirited programs, private Radios tend to fall into inexpensive commercials, trite romances and fairground records.

For the month of April, traces could be found in the journals of two emerging and distinctive stations: *Le Poste-Parisien*, where ingenious and lively sections illustrate programs that are essentially built for the Radio, and *Radio-Cité*:

"When a foreign celebrity is passing through Paris or when a female singer gets a strong popularity, it is rare for them not to be invited by *Radio-Cité*. In this way one of the most moving piano concerts broadcasted this year was certainly the one by Alexandre Borovsky devoted to Bach.

Playing records ? *Radio-Cité* won't go too far ! The works played are first class. [...] These programs still constitute a chronicle of current musical events, and the rarest existing. The one that the phonographic industry produces for connoisseurs and that the Government ignores.

At least, if we could enumerate the relays from cabarets organized at the end of the programs by *Radio-Cité*, we could easily see that they are touring the most elegant nightlife of the capital. The programs of this young private station, which are so many inventive and elegant chronicles of the activity of a great city, deserve to teach the committees and councils that make up the important and passive headquarters of Government stations⁶⁸."

It is interesting to notice that from 1936 on the clever initiatives of some of the private stations balance their poor financial means. They even represent a model for the national network. The latter is financially provided, but also sclerosed, caught in the vice of a competition which is about to become even harsher.

For the moment, we'll just propose a temporary conclusion. First the year 1936 was "a good vintage" concerning the broadcasting of music. As a whole the French Radio is the vector of a plural artistic expression which perpetuates the tradition of great composers as much as it favors the emergence of new forms and celebrities. Besides, on behalf of a moral and republican principle of education of the crowds, the public network gives priority to a rather classical music through myriads of lyrical performers (65 in June on Radio-Paris representing 40% of the performers) and many little versatile orchestras. But instead of reconciling the cultured music lovers and the mass which is to be acculturated, these pell-mell programs and the introduction of certain works of unequal value on the contrary spark tears and teeth-gnashing. At the same time, some private stations invent fresh formats of programs that perfectly match the medium's features. They also reduce the durations of the slots, raise the turnover of the tracks and bet on the gaiety and on the quality of the works and the artists (whom they even hire!) in a range which leaves no style aside. Finally, they establish the principle of a participation of the public and give flesh to an invisible mass of listeners who become spectators and actors of the show...

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, n°654 of April 26th 1936, p 3: "Bureau des réclamations".

⁶⁶ *Le populaire*, October 10th 1936. Marceau Pivert, the General Inspector of the French Radio declares: "We keep working toward a social revolution to which we dedicate all our forces... For the democratic and proletarian forces, let's get an absolute liberty. For the enemies of the people shall we have no pity."

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, n°649 of March 22nd 1936, p 12.

⁶⁸ *Radio-Magazine*, n°654 of April 26th 1936, p 3 : "Un magazine sommaire et parlant", by Pierre Domene.

The gap that we observed between the two networks was just opening. The study of the musical broadcasting of the three next years promises to be fascinating •

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

Appendix 1: typology of the composers (accumulation of the references of Radio-Paris and Radio-Cité in June 1936)

Styles and genres	Categories (9) et sub-categories (34) of their works	1772	100%	The most representative on the decade	
Classical music	Ancient music	83	5%		
	Baroque	81	5%	Bach, Jean-Sébastien (1685-1750)	
	Medieval	1	0%	Josquin Des Prés (1440?-1521?)	
	Renaissance	1	0%	Finck, Hermann (1527-1558)	
	Classical period	62	4%		
	Chamber/ Recital	22	1%	Haydn, Joseph (1732-1809)	
	Orchestra	32	2%	Mozart, Wolfgang-Amadeus (1756-1791)	
	Art-lyric	8	0%	Glück, Christoph Willibald (ritter von) (1714-1787)	
	Classical 19th Century	462	26%		
	Chamber / Recital	132	7%	Schubert, Franz (1797-1828)	
	Art-lyric	119	7%	Gounod, Charles (1818-1893)	
	Light symphonic music	69	4%	Strauss, Johann (1825-1899)	
	Orchestra	142	8%	Fauré, Gabriel (1845-1924)	
	Classical 20th Century	729	41%		
	Chamber / Recital	211	12%	Debussy, Claude (1862-1918)	
	Art-Lyric	56	3%	Puccini, Giacomo (1858-1924)	
	Light symphonic music	215	12%	Filippucci, Edmond (?)	
	Orchestra	247	14%	Ravel, Maurice (1875-1937)	
	Classical vocal	Operetta and derivative (19th and 20th Centuries)	172	10%	
		Musical	7	0%	Heymann, Werner Richard (1896-1961)
Movie music		18	1%	Oberfeld, Casimir (1903-1945)	
Classical Operetta		52	3%	Messenger, André (1853-1929)	
Operetta and songs		66	4%	Scotto, Vincent (1874-1952)	
Foreign Operetta		29	2%	Lehar, Franz (1870-1948)	
Popular vocal	Song	130	7%		
	Commercial song	45	3%	Lenoir, Jean (1891-1976)	
	Foreign song	9	1%	Bixio, Cesare Andrea (1898-1978)	
	French song	68	4%	Richepin, Tiarko (1884-?)	
	Typical or traditional song	8	0%	Tiersot, Julien (1857-1936)	
Entertainment	Commercial music	112	6%		
	Instrumentally dominant	26	1%	Messier, A (?-?)	
	Vocally dominant	9	1%	Burke, Joe (?-?)	
	Dancing	67	4%	Paradis, Henri (?-?)	
	Foreign (typical or folkloric)	10	1%	Bordin, Gino (19..;....)	
	Humor	0	0%	Bach (1882-1953)	
	jazz	Jazz	5	0%	
		Hot	0	0%	Armstrong, Louis (1901-1971)
Swing		5	0%	Pollack, Ben (1903-1971)	
Genres in minority	Divers	17	1%		
	Children	0	0%	Aubertin, Madame (?)	
	Military music	14	0,79%	Sousa, John Philip (1854-1932)	
	Folkloric music	3	0%	Ferraris, A (?-?)	

Appendix 2: typology of the performers (accumulation of the references of Radio-Paris and Radio-Cité in June 1936)

Styles et genres	Categories (9) et sub-categories (34) of the performers	504	100%	The most representative on the decade	
Classical music	Classical performer	142	28%		
	Conductor of a chorale or a choir	0	0%	Roger-Ducasse, Jean (1873-1954)	
	Conductor of an orchestra	83	17%	Bigot, Eugène (1888-1965)	
	Instrument player	59	12%	Doyen, Jean (1907-1982)	
	Classical band	133	26%		
	Choir or chorale	2	0%	Chorale (ou chœurs) Félix Raugel (193.-1963)	
	Chamber band	14	3%	Quatuor à cordes Radio-Paris (?)	
	Orchestra	117	23%	Orchestre national (1934-....)	
	Classical vocal	Art-lyric performer	99	20%	
		Opera and / or opéra-comique	21	4%	Martinelli, Germaine (1887-1964)
Opera-comique and operetta		23	5%	Bourdin, Roger (1900-1973)	
Recital		55	11%	Vallin, Ninon (1886-1961)	
Operetta and derivative		19	4%		
Operetta and song		10	2%	Hérent, René (1897-1966)	
Operetta and movies		2	0%	Brancato, Antoine (19..-1991)	
Operetta and opera-comique		7	1%	Sablon, Germaine (1899-1985)	
Popular vocal	Songs performer	50	10%		
	Commercial song	17	3%	Gouin, Fred (1889-1959)	
	Song and operetta	7	1%	Sorbier, Jean (1894-1969)	
	Foreign song	2	0%	Gardel, Carlos (1890-1935)	
	French song	24	4,76%	Trenet, Charles (1913-2001)	
	Regional or traditionnal	0	0%	Saint-Cricq, Henri (?)	
Entertainment	Commercials performer	19	4%		
	Accordion	2	0%	Raiter, Léon (1893-1978)	
	Conductor of orchestra	11	2%	Sella, Guy (?-?)	
	Instrument and / or not classical repertoire	1	0%	Hermae (?)	
	Instrument player	5	1%	Féret, Charles (?-?)	
	Music and humor	0	0%	Bach (1882-1953)	
	Commercial music bands	25	5%		
	Vocally dominant	1	0%	Learly et Verdy (?)	
	Special compound	6	1%	Pills & Tabet, duo (1932-1939)	
	Commercial music orchestra	17	3%	Orchestre Jo Bouillon (1936-1947)	
	Accordion orchestra	1	0%	Orchestre Alexander (?)	
	jazz	Jazz performer	8	2%	
		Conductor of band	1	0%	Pol, Léo (?-?)
		Instrument player	7	1%	Grapelli, Stéphane (1908-1997)
		Jazz collective	6	1%	
Small band		6	1%	Quintette Hot Richardet (1911-1988)	
Big band		0	0%	Orchestre Jack Hylton (192.-193.)	
genres in minority	Vocal group	0	0%	Mills Brothers (1930?-1980?)	
	Sundry	3	0%		
	Military orchestra conductor	0	0%	Musique de la Garde républicaine (1848)	
	Military band	3	0%	Dupont, Pierre (1888-19..)	
	National or typically regional (individual and band)	0	0%	Argentina (1890-1936)	

Appendix 3: typology of the programs (accumulation of the tracks and the durations of broadcasting music of Radio-Paris and Radio-Cité in June 1936)

	Number of tracks	% of the tracks	durations	% of the durations
Categories (4) and sub-categories (29) of the programs	788	100%	471:03:00	100%
Classical	254	32%	237:55:00	42%
Chamber	17	2%	18:45:00	3%
Symphonic concert	56	7%	72:00:00	12%
Classical didactic	4	0%	3:45:00	0%
Symphonic music	48	6%	23:10:00	5%
Art-lyric	16	2%	18:25:00	3%
Recital	67	9%	29:30:00	6%
Symphonic and art-lyric	5	0%	5:35:00	1%
Symphonic and recital	41	5%	66:45:00	11%
Intermediate	180	23%	87:05:00	18%
Jazz didactic	5	0%	3:00:00	1%
Jazz	11	1%	5:00:00	1%
Mixing	61	8%	20:05:00	4%
Light music and various	84	11%	49:15:00	9%
Operettas	19	2%	9:45:00	2%
Entertainment	242	31%	112:55:00	31%
Café-concert	0	0%	0:00:00	0%
Song	71	9%	22:00:00	6%
Humor singers	4	1%	1:00:00	0%
Musical	0	0%	0:00:00	0%
Dancing	72	9%	43:40:00	11%
Commercial music didactic	0	0%	0:00:00	0%
Music-hall	38	5%	11:50:00	3%
Movies music	2	0%	0:25:00	0%
Commercial music	55	7%	34:00:00	10%
Sundry	112	14%	33:08:00	9%
Ethnologic didactic	1	0%	0:30:00	0%
Children	10	1%	5:28:00	1%
Indeterminate	64	8%	15:55:00	4%
Military music	9	1%	2:40:00	1%
Traditional music	11	1%	4:20:00	1%
New international productions	17	2%	4:15:00	1%
Religion	0	0%	0:00:00	0%