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FRENCH MUSICAL BROADCASTING IN 1937:

THE SPLIT BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATIONS IS CONFIRMED

by Christophe BENNET

WE have previously seen that the period of Leon Blum's "Front populaire" coincided with the cropping up of some big artistically innovating private stations. Throughout the first semester of 1937, Musician Robert Jardillier, who was also Minister of Posts and Telephones in Blum's first government, enforces a policy of artistic implementation of the Public network, as he had stated in the autumn of 1936. By monitoring the musical broadcasting of Radio-Paris (also named Le Poste national), which was the spearhead of the public broadcasting force, we can easily notice marks of its action. Even more than the previous year, this station is different from its great competitor, the private station, Radio-Cité, which we had chosen as a model of French private stations of the pre-war years. Whereas the volume of the musical programs is decreasing here and there¹, opposed artistic stances are confirming that their respective policies are matching their different conceptions of the media. If the programmers of the stations show a common intent of acculturation, their means of operating are more different than in the past and they widen the gap already noticed between the public network and the private stations.

FROM THE INTRUSION OF POLITICS IN THE MUSICAL BROADCASTING TO THE CONFRONTATION OF CONCEPTIONS

Motivated by a purpose of the democratization of culture, a political project which is a leitmotiv of "Front populaire", the tenant of the "Rue-de-Grenelle" Posts and Telephones ministry faces a serious dilemma: promoting high-flown musical art (especially by increasing the artistic level of the musical broadcasting) or stemming in the outflow of the audience, drawn by private stations, whose programs were more attractive and entertaining.

A PUBLIC NETWORK SPLIT BETWEEN THE PROTECTION OF MUSICAL ART AND THE OPENING TO MORE MAINSTREAM AESTHETICS

Although the popularization of high-spirited works remains at the core of Minister Jardillier's project, he wishes to match the diversity of tastes of the listeners. At first he leads several actions with the aim of improving the quality of the musical performances. In 1937, he

¹ Let's recall here that the year 1936 constituted in this frame a record that was never defeated: cf. Christophe Bennet, "French Musical Broadcasting in 1936: a record of programs and a wind of innovations" on the Site of Groupe PLM, Publications des membres de l'équipe, juin 2013, 22 p.: http://www.plm.paris-sorbonne.fr/IMG/pdf/french_musical_broadcasting_in_1936.pdf.

creates specialized orchestras that are dedicated to the Paris programs². This results in a rise of the artistic level of the symphonic concerts:

“These orchestras are provided with complete sections and can henceforth banish the ‘arrangements’, i.e. the poor transcripts of the most famous works from their programs, and expand their repertoire to works that couldn’t be performed by limited orchestras.”³

He also widens the orchestras’ repertoire to vocal works, a genre that was evidently appreciated by the audience:

“The organization of our symphonic season led indeed to dedicating, a more important place to the lyrical performances in the programs of autonomous orchestras: opera, comic opera, operettas, and thus a program essentially in accordance with the tastes of the listeners.”⁴

However, he concedes that chamber music only targets a minority of listeners:

“It is obvious that this music is exclusively dedicated to the elite. I don’t mean that we should deter those who are not part of it yet. Quite the reverse. But the best way is to release it in fairly small doses. This is why chamber music is only broadcasted through limited programs: 30 minutes devoted to bands, 15 minutes dedicated to instrumental soloists, and 15 minutes to singers. And for whatever work, whose performance requires more time, a special slot will be reserved on Friday afternoons on Radio-Paris.”⁵

As for the recitals of chamber music, he operates a severe reduction of the length of symphonic concerts, the programs of which he wants to lighten:

“We have operated a reorganization of the 5 p.m. Paris concerts. [...] Their artistic value was questionable and indeed questioned. Their reorganization will be including a considerable reduction of the duration of the performances in front of the microphone and a proportional increase of the time devoted to rehearsals [sic].

Besides, a very strict control will be operated on the content of the programs, so that any work of an austere nature or of such a length that its place would be badly chosen will be removed. This must be reserved to the symphonic performances of the evening.”⁶

The introduction of more entertaining programs in the musical slots is significant, even if these are less frequent on Radio-Paris than on the PTT station. Precisely, Radio-Paris ‘*Le Poste national*’ spares no expense recruiting a specialist of entertaining music, announcer Louis Merlin, who hosted a monthly program as of Friday June 18th 1937⁷:

² For instance, the “*Orchestre Radio-Symphonique de Paris*” was created in January and directed by Eugène Bigot [AN, F41 2254]. According to Historian Karine Le Bail, those creations especially follow an obvious political will: contributing to an artistic decentralization aimed at reducing the unemployment of musicians sparked by the exploitation of new technical processes. [Karine Le Bail, “*Musique, pouvoir, responsabilité*”, a History thesis at Paris IEP, 2005, p. 40].

³ Report by M. Jean Castagnez on behalf of the Finance Commission of the “*Chambre des Deputes*” about the budget 1938, cited by *La documentation radiophonique* in April 1938 [Department of the “*Archives écrites*” of Radio France].

⁴ Talk by Jardillier on October 20th 1936, p 8: in answer to the questions of Senator Pierre Robert, spokesman for the subsidiary budget of PTT. Source: collection of “*Archives écrites*” of Radio France, file number 68 (Government stations and generalities).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷ *Mon Programme n° 282* of June 12th 1937, p. 3.

“De la Presse asked me for the implementation once a month of an entertaining show in the evening. I had chosen the title ‘La Radio en fête’ (the Radio party), which would enable me to put everything I wanted. For the first time I had an orchestra of 24 to 28 musicians, a dozen of choristers, actors and singers, and a fairly large studio at my disposal.”⁸”

Aiming at satisfying the beauty which is in the eye of the beholder, Jardillier organizes a coordination of the programs. This coordination is supposed to bring to any listener with a middle-range receiver the so-called “evening program” (8.30 – 10.30 pm) with the genre he prefers. From January 3rd 1937 five groups of stations were organized, enabling to listen to a different program every evening: either symphonic, lyrical, or entertaining music, or a drama, or a retransmission⁹.

Thus, the whole federal program¹⁰ previously scheduled on Tuesdays disappears. Radio-Paris, however, gets a new federal option with the symphonic program on Thursdays. In this way, the “*Orchestre national*” becomes the orchestra of the whole network, since some of its performances might have covered a Paris station that not necessarily belonged to the group of federal broadcasting¹¹. Eventually, the direction installs a department called “Listeners mail”, which is in charge of centralizing, examining and replying “any letter linked to claims and suggestions released by the listeners, in the area of the management of the services of the French national broadcasting.”¹²

UNEQUALED CONVIVIALITY IN THE COMMERCIAL STATIONS

But the operations aiming at reducing the austerity of the programs and improving the musical quality of the shows couldn’t replace the friendly spirit and the conviviality of the private competitors. Drawing a vivid picture of the before-war years stations, Pierre Scize, a press analyst, will soon be welcoming the originality of Marcel Bleustein’s station in these terms:

“Among all the private stations, Radio-Cité is perhaps the one which has created the most tangible and vigorous links with its audience. There is a shop spirit, cordial, generous, easily accepting discussion, with plebeians, but in a nice way. There are people (so many people!) whose radio remains definitely set on the 180.9 m wavelength after its first adjustment. These are like friends of the station, or even a little more: they are its family.”¹³”

⁸ Louis Merlin, *J’en ai vu des choses...1900-1939*, Paris, Éditions Julliard, 1962, p. 411.

⁹ The groups were constituted in this way: group A : Radio-Paris, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nice ; group B : Paris-PTT, Grenoble, Marseille ; group C : Tour Eiffel, Lyon ; group D : Strasbourg, Rennes ; group E : Lille, Limoges, Toulouse [Sources : ‘*Archives écrites*’ of Radio France, administrative note, file # 69].

¹⁰ The ‘federal programs’ were high-quality programs relayed by the whole network of the Government stations. Like the very first important work to be aired (Smetana’s *The Sold fiancée*, on October 26th 1928 from the Opera-Comique theatre), they are organized by the French National Federation for Broadcasting [Christian Brochand, *Histoire générale de la radio et de la télévision*, t. I : 1921-1944, Paris, La Documentation française, 1994, p. 306].

¹¹ Report by Jardillier dating from October 20th 1936, p. 12.

¹² Report by Mr. Jean Castagnez. The department that received the complaints of the customers of the PTT administration had also been allocated to the Broadcasting branch of the PTT since Minister Georges Mandel. However, only two people work in this section: an inspector and his secretary, which is not enough simply to absorb the wave of complaints concerning ‘the dancing programs’, according to the journal of Governmental stations (which means the scheduled programs that were actually not broadcasted). [*Le Petit Radio n°511* of January 22nd 1937, p. 3: “The Complaints Bureau is open ...”].

¹³ *Messidor* of July 7th 1939, cited by Christian Brochand in *Histoire générale de la radio*, p. 413-414.

The choice of its team is important for the popularity of the station. Wishing to make Radio-Cité “a young radio ruled by a young team”¹⁴, Marcel Bleustein surrounding himself with three ground-diggers already reputed for their abilities. On February 1st 1937, reporter Jean Antoine¹⁵ is appointed Executive Manager of the station. The latter appoints journalist Jean Guignebert¹⁶ as the manager of the spoken programs. As for Jazz specialist Jacques Canetti¹⁷, who is the artistic manager, responsible for the programs, he has been in charge since the previous year.

On some occasions, the station might have gathered its main stars in order to offer their most regular listeners prestigious galas, such as the “*Revue à vendre*”, a supper-show with 300 guests for the 2nd anniversary of the creation of the station¹⁸, on Friday September 29th 1937. So as to regroup this unusual community of regular listeners, an association was founded: the Association for the Listeners and Chums of Radio-Cité¹⁹.

THE PUBLIC / PRIVATE DIVISION AT THE CENTER OF THE DEBATES ON MUSIC

Beyond the differences and the similarities that could be noticed between the public and the commercial stations, the debates about musical broadcasting often oppose the supporters and detractors of each of the two French networks. In its edition of November 28th 1937, the weekly *Radio-Magazine* publishes the result of an opinion poll stating that 80% of the listeners, whatever their social level, declared preferring to listen to the private stations²⁰. One week later, columnist Francis Dorset entitled his “Complaints Bureau” with a very significant question: “Private stations or Government stations?” He introduced his subject with the protest of a female listener:

¹⁴ “Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet”, *La traversée du siècle*, TF1, TV program of April 12th 1996.

¹⁵ At the time he is recruited by Bleustein, Jean Antoine (1900-1958) is leading a team of broadcasts for the newspaper *L’Intransigeant*. In July 1932 on Radio-LL he had tried to launch a series called “the sound journal” (fed with reports), but he had quickly abandoned the project, for lack of sufficient equipment. Apart from the articles he signed in specialized magazines (such as *Lumière et Radio* in 1930), he held the broadcasting columns of *L’Intransigeant* until February 1st 1937, when he was appointed executive manager of Radio-Cité. The year before, he had already given a series of “filmed broadcasts”, such as the one entitled “An hour in Barcelona” released on Saturday May 2nd 1936, illustrated by Catalan sardanas [Source: *Radio-Magazine* n°656 of May 10th 1936, p. 3 : article by Pierre Domène entitled “Three ideas per day”].

¹⁶ Jean Guignebert (who died in 1958) was the editor-in-chief of “*La Voix de Paris*”, the spoken bulletin of Radio-Cité. He transformed most of the spoken programs into “opinion forums”. Treating the news in a quick way, his team is going to modify the rules of the game and to draw all audiences. He was to replace Jean Antoine, who had discovered him, at the head of the station (in 1938). Director of the Center of information for the “*Radio nationale*” (in 1938), he was Chairman of the “*Conseil supérieur de la RDF*” until March 1946.

¹⁷ Directly solicited by Marcel Bleustein, Jacques Canetti (1909-1997) was the artistic manager of Radio-Cité from 1936 to 1940 in parallel with the management of the Polydor records company: “I told him: ‘You’ll get my reply tomorrow, because I can’t get rid of these people overnight’. And when I asked Polydor what they thought of that, they told me: “Don’t hesitate, because when you’re there, you’ll be able to play our records!” There was indeed a small ulterior utilitarian but friendly motive, because they made no trouble and I became the artistic manager of the upcoming Radio-Cité” [Source: sounding archives of “*Comité d’Histoire de la Radio*”, conversation with Jacques Canetti broadcasted by René Duval in 1975].

¹⁸ *Mon programme* n°299 of October 9th 1937, p. 3 : “*Échos et informations*”

¹⁹ In order to become a member, an entrance fee of 3 francs only was asked the first year. The annual subscription reaches 12 francs, but doesn’t exceed 5 francs for the members of a same family.

²⁰ *Radio-Magazine* n°737 of November 28th 1937: “*L’actualité*”.

“Our subscriber Mrs. Haipher rises against the results of a rating which Radio-Magazine had recently referred to, which concluded with a would-be preference of the listeners for the private stations²¹.”

Here, as one of the causes for the disaffection for public stations the journalist states the poor responsiveness of his fellow citizens to classical music. For him, cultural habits are particularly decisive in this domain:

“The musical education of the French remains to be done. Meanwhile, the only ones of our compatriots who are interested in music are those who were born in musical families, who learned music in their childhood, or who fortunately acquired a natural taste and an instinctive understanding of the musical thing. Besides, we’ve already noticed many times that one could be very clever, smart and well-educated and yet understand nothing to music.²²”

The comparison that this observer makes between the weak audience figures of the public stations, which is henceforth statistically proven, and the difficult relation of the listeners to classical music must be situated within the frame of the debate in periodicals about broadcasting programs toward the middle of the decade.

Beside the continuous expression of preferences and artistic dislikes, the idea is now generally admitted that even if music were not the thing of the masses, the Radio is really what the majority wants it to be. Comparing it to the political regime and to the institutions, the very conservative Francis Dorset himself concedes that it is “like the sovereign crowds [ant that] it couldn’t be otherwise in a century of enlightenment and progress.²³” In the same vein, Paul Dermée, stating that “the radio is for the listeners and not the listeners for the radio”, explains that their wishes have to be taken into account²⁴. However, the tastes must still be determined, Lucien Leduc continues in his column of “*Le Petit Radio*” in date of September 24th 1937. “Delighting the listener is the point; he brags, yes, but which?” He humorously formulates three main profiles of consumers: the listeners who prefer the talks; those who are loyal to the broadcasted drama, and the unconditional supporters of music that he divides in five groups

*“The one who likes the sound of music, military or jazz;
The one who only basks in a happy and popular melody;
The one who enjoys operetta and dislikes grand opera;
The one who only wants to hear chamber music for his pleasure.²⁵”*

This classification (which omits the amateurs of symphonic music used to Parisian concerts) leads him to conclude, the following week, that the popular good fairy must try to satisfy all the categories of listeners with a priceless variety. Following on the topic of government stations, which his newspaper favors, he adds: “I do not (on the contrary) ban a preference for those which want to learn or to be moved by beautiful works.²⁶” This musical eclecticism incidentally is central to the policy of Marcel Bleustein’s team. This team even considers that this option has raised their audience figures. In the edition of July 15th 1938, the

²¹ *Ibid.* n°738 of December 5th 1937, p. 2.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Radio-Magazine* n°645 of February 23rd 1936 p. 3: “Bureau of claims”.

²⁴ *Mon Programme* n°270 of March 20th 1937, p. 4, article entitled: “We must take into account the wishes of the listeners”.

²⁵ *Le Petit Radio* n°546 of September 24th 1937, p. 3: “From one micro to the other”.

²⁶ *Ibid.* n°547 of October 1st 1937, p. 3.

editorial board will be justifying their stance for a listener who, apart retransmissions, denounces “too short concerts (barely fifteen minutes) and an excess of entertaining music”:

“It is this formula of ‘entertaining music’ that caused our success and we persist in finding it appropriate. We however must bring to your attention that we rather frequently provide concerts for the whole evening. Besides, we must take every taste into account: not everyone necessarily enjoys classical music.”²⁷ ”

If the shortening of the concerts of classical music frustrates some music-loving consumers, they remain listeners – and even pen friends! – of the private station. Reflecting a global tendency, the observers of the broadcasting press consider the acceleration of the rhythm of programs more as a positive value of the commercial stations than a disadvantage. This is probably because those shortened programs are matched with sweet inventiveness. Through the words of one of its columnists, *Le Petit Radio* itself admits in January 1938:

“Only the private radio appears to look for perpetual rejuvenation. I don’t mean that all the ideas were good, but they show many efforts, initiative, and imagination.”²⁸ ”

Noticing that 1937 was a year of transition, with programs “more brilliant than usually”, Lucien Leduc predicts that the Radio, thanks to its penetration into the masses and the technical progress, can now dare any audacity:

“If the Radio doesn’t ‘start’ in the good way, it may stagnate in a routine. The Radio [has to] opt for more modernity, more vitality, and more rhythm, so that it includes more and more listeners in its programs, instead of relegating them into the role of simple customers. Such are my wishes for the broadcasting year 1938.”²⁹ ”

A detailed monitoring of the broadcasting of the two models of stations will enlighten the debates about music broadcasting. Both the governmental purposes (on Radio-Paris ‘Le Poste national’) and the convivial spirit (on the rival station) will especially be visible.

**AN ARRANGEMENT OF THE
PROGRAMS AND THE CONTENTS IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE RESPECTIVE
ORIENTATIONS**

The monitoring of the respective “time schedules” reveals a first line of division between the types of programs. Each of the two models of station has its proper features. The content and the shaping of the musical programs show the artistic identity of the stations as much as they reveal the guidelines of their policy.

²⁷ *Ici...Radio-Cité* n°28 of July 15th 1938, p. 4: “The mail box”.

²⁸ *Le Petit Radio* n°561 of January 7th 1938, p. 3: “From one micro to another”, by Lucien Leduc.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

A PROFUSION OF RECITALS BY ANONYMOUS PEOPLE ON RADIO-PARIS AND STAR GALAS ON RADIO-CITÉ

The convergence of the phenomenon of proliferation of broadcasting slots and the decrease of the durations observed in 1936 is becoming confirmed. On Radio-Paris, no less than 23 musical programs can be counted on Wednesday June 30th 1937. That day, the listeners could hear two symphonic concerts: at 5 pm, under conducort Raoul Labis and at 8.30 pm, by the “*Orchestre national*”, under the baton of D.-E. Inghelbrecht. Before the “musical conversation by Ch. Oulmont”, we can notice two tracks of “light and various music” by the Andolfi orchestra. Over the afternoon, five little fifteen-minute vocal recitals frame an instrumental recital: “Piano, by Mrs. Aussenac de Broglie.” Finally, 12 tracks of storyline records are completing the musical program and last from 10 minutes (such as the slot titled “*Le Nil*” from 6.50 to 7 am) to 30 minutes (such as the one entitled “Famous French conductors” at 11 am; “From rustic dances to the accordion ball”, at 11.30 am or “A party at Versailles” at 2.30 pm).

Average of the daily musical slots³⁰

	Radio-Paris	LL or Cité	in total
1930-1935	6	3	4,5
1936-1939	15	17	16
Decade	9	9	9

On Radio-Cité, the most striking phenomenon is the reduction of the durations. Due to the introduction, as soon as 1936 of very short slots from 5 to 10 minutes (21%) and the profusion of programs lasting from 12 to 40 minutes (71%), the private station is rapidly stabilizing at an average of 20 minutes per program. Concerning the 2,023 slots that we have recorded for the period of 1936-1939, 1,501 (74%) last less than thirty minutes, although only 522 (26%) reach or last more than half an hour. Splitting in the same way the 1,770 programs of ‘*Le Poste national*’, we can find a relative balance between the 923 programs that do not exceed 30 minutes (52%) and the 847 others. By continuing to usually broadcast concerts of at least one hour (330 in total) beside the short slots that will be increased from 1937, ‘*Le Poste national*’ remains at an average of half an hour per program.

As regards the way of announcing the weekly programs in the broadcasting magazines, the indications that are supplied by Radio-Paris remain predominantly very detailed (70% of the programs are mentioning the name of the composers or the performers). On the contrary, Radio-Cité prefers to give priority to the theme of the programs (only 33% of the programs mention the name of the musicians) and definitively breaks with Radio-LL’s habits, where the composer used to be the indispensable reference. For the year 1937 (103 slots where the theme is the only indication), we could for instance quote the program of Thursday June 24th entitled “Vibraphone recordings” and one of the records slots of Saturday June 28th, that was simply entitled “movie organ”.

³⁰ For a more detailed view of the Year 1937, cf. le table 3: “the musical slots in June 1937”.

On Radio-Paris, the year 1937 is marked by the continuation of scenarised concerts (through records or live) and the emergence of numerous miniature recitals. We have seen that the decision to break up the concerts of chamber music into scattered quarters of an hour had been ordered from the highest point of hierarchy³¹. This decision is not so much a project of acculturating the listeners by little touches as a means of stopping the audience drain. Yet the implementation of this policy of reducing the slots that are “considered as too difficult” is very clumsy. In fact, the program makers of the station cannot find any better idea than replacing one hour and a half of sonatas and melodies by four quarters of an hour of almost adjacent³² short recitals. The tactics is as little appropriate since the recruitment criteria of those anonymous performers appear to be more based on their “maturity” than their talent³³.

Like in the first hours of the “*Poste national*”, the short sequences of records are still giving the tempo of the mornings of the listeners. Although there were generally two tracks between 7 and 9 am in 1936, the slot is widening in 1937. The musical wake up is a little earlier, such as for the 6.50 to 7 am program on Wednesday June 3rd entitled “Absences” followed at 7.15 by a slot entitled “popular instruments” and at 8 am a longer track of “African inspirations”. That year, while the announcements of the programs are systematically detailed, we still can detect some combinations of records and studio productions. Often occurring before a symphonic concert of “various music” at 5 pm³⁴, and a half hour of a pedagogical program or chamber music, the evening unrolls as previously described³⁵. There is an alternation of “home-made productions”, of relays of lyrical-theatre shows and symphonic concerts, among which the “*Orchestre national*” gets the lion’s share (3 references for the only month of June 1937). In the last part of the evening, though there was a series of dancing music and “light symphonic music” in 1936, both performed by the orchestras of the station³⁶, this is the opposite from 1937: “varied music” (then played by records) is scheduled before the very regular performances in the studio of Jo Bouillon’s dance orchestra (8 references in June 1937).

Besides, there is no real intention of introducing a difference between the programs of the weekend and the other days. On Saturday, we can only notice a “padding” at the end of the morning slots and the beginning of the afternoon, like for the working days. As for the musical broadcasting on Sunday, here are the observed orientations for 1937: after the sequences of religious music at the end of the morning and the noon organ recitals, the great Paris music societies, following the agreements with Minister Robert Jardillier, are, one after the other, occupying the end of the afternoons, for instance “*Les Concerts Poulet-Siohan*”, conducted by M. Cloez on June 6th; “*Les Concerts Lamoureux*”, conducted by Eugène Bigot on June 13th and “*Les Concerts Colonne*”, conducted by Paul Paray on June 20th.

³¹ Report by Jardillier of October 26th 1936.

³² Like on Friday June 4th 1937 when, after one hour of chamber music from 4 to 5 pm, sequences of 15 minutes of sonatas and melodies strung together were programmed at 5.30, 5.45, 6.30 and 6.45 pm. And this is without counting the “sung duet” at 7.45 and the “pieces for piano” at 8.30 pm. [Cf. table 6 : “The concerts and recitals of Radio-Paris on Friday June 4th 1937”].

³³ *C’est vrai*, February 1937. This article was entitled: “the fault: being young”: “The artists who come for an audition at Radio-Paris are often hurt by a terrific affection that the eminent jury of this national station can’t forgive. [...] “All right, they say [to the singer or the lovely pianist], the technique is perfect, good style... Unfortunately!... you’re too young!”

³⁴ Like for the concert conducted by Raoul Labis on Tuesday June 29th 1937, with the same contents and title as the program supposed to have been released of Tuesday June 15th ? [Source: *Le Petit Radio*].

³⁵ Christophe Bennet, *French Musical Broadcasting in 1936*, op. cit.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Finally, concerning entertainment music, Radio-Paris proposes only three genres, including dance music, a category that reaches at least a record 8% duration in 1937 (whereas it was neighboring 12% in 1934 and 1935). Song is increasing in comparison with the first period (1930-1935), but it still represents the ridiculous level of 1%. For the period 1936-1939, the programs of entertainment music only owe their average level of 2% to the exceptional year 1938, when 10 programs reach 4% of the whole hours of June. In this, Radio-Cité is more eclectic. First we can notice the important sections that are in progress compared to Radio-LL: songs (climbing from 5% to 11%); dance music (from 11% to 13%), entertainment music (passing from 16% to 14%). Some isolated genres of Radio-Cité are unknown, either on Radio-LL or on Radio-Paris: the “*chansonniers*” (song makers) programs, in a tradition of “*café-concert*”, musicals, and music-hall (6%) and the didactic programs in the area of entertainment music³⁷.

Beside the immoderate use of records (62% in 1937 against 32% for Radio-Paris), which is not an exception³⁸, it is the abundance of the relays that makes a difference between Marcel Bleustein’s station and “*Poste national*”. While on Radio-Paris the relays are systematically of classical concerts, the Radio-Cité programs makers install their microphones in very different places. Over the 155 relays that our sampling records, the 69 slots of dance music constitute 45% of the programs. Among the most frequent collaborations, we can notice: “*Le Monte-Cristo*”, the “*Ambassadeurs dance hall*”, and the “*Bœuf sur le toit*”. The station also hires venues in order to release its galas and singing competitions. For instance, the “*Salle Pleyel*” is the venue where Saint-Granier presents the “*Crochet radiophonique*” in 1936 and 1937 and the movie theatre *Normandie* will also, from 1938, be the special venue of “*Parades des chansons*” and other “*Galas des vedettes*”. The programs of entertainment music (14%), such as “*Les fiancés de Byhrr*” and the programs of music-hall (14%), such as “*Le music-hall des jeunes*” provide the station with other occasions to produce “*outhouse shows*”³⁹.

At noon, the diversity of styles, the regularity of the scheduled programs, the speed of the renewal of the musical slots is as perceptible as in 1936. Between 12 and 12.15 am, a track entitled “*New records*” is usually proposed. This track promotes recent publications. Whereas some little bands used to come alternatively in 1936 to frame the news slot of 1.30 pm (“*Le trio Tzipine*”; “*Le quintette Hot Richardet*”; “*Gino Bordin et son ensemble hawaïen*”; “*Le trio instrumental Josca Muszca*”; “*L’orchestre Caussade*”⁴⁰), there is an increase of the use of the records in 1937. These concern as much the successful operettas (“*Comtesse Maritza*”; “*Rêve de valse*”; “*Un de la Canebière*”⁴¹) as the classical music (*Ma mère l’Oye*; the Prelude of *Parsifal*; the “*Capriccio espagnol*”⁴²).

Every evening, the broadcasting consists of ephemeral programs and at least a forty-minute top-time scheduled every week on a set day. The first, which usually don’t exceed fifteen minutes (like the performances of artists “*at the mike*”), are very regular in 1937. The

³⁷ For a more global outlook of the repartition of the categories of the musical programs of the two models of station, one could see tgraphs 1 and 2 (lists of 1937). In the article “*French musical broadcasting in 1936*”, a very precise topology of the musical programs can also be found.

³⁸ Christopher Todd, *Pierre Descaves, témoin et pionnier de la radio*, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000, p. 186.

³⁹ In June 1937, 8% of relays could be counted on Radio-Cité vs 2% on “*Le Poste national*”.

⁴⁰ Cf. the week from June 12th to 19th 1936 [according to *TSF Programme*]

⁴¹ On Tuesdays June 8th, 15th and 22nd 1937 [Source : *Le Petit Radio*].

⁴² Between June 7th and 14th 1937.

weekly programs, which are brightened up by numerous musical moments⁴³, most often broadcast public shows: the famous “*Crochet radiophonique*” on Monday; the “*Music-hall des jeunes*” on Wednesdays; the “*Parade des chansons à succès*” on Thursdays; the “*Gala des vedettes*” on Fridays. Like many of her counterparts, the female speaker, Yvonne Galli, is often associated with the title of the program. Elected “muse of the Radio” in 1935⁴⁴, she regularly leads the programs of the station, with perfect elocution⁴⁵. One could also find some punctual events, whose duration is largely longer than the ordinary programs. For instance, Pierre Descaves himself, whose articles show his affection for the Governmental radios, pays his tribute to the broadcasting by Radio-Cité, on October 9th 1937 of the rehearsals of the “*Orchestre symphonique de Paris*” conducted by Pierre Monteux, “an innovation which directly [immerses] the audience into an ignored world, until now reserved to a few connoisseurs.”⁴⁶

COMPOSERS AND PERFORMERS IN CONCORDANCE WITH THE COLOR OF THE PROGRAMS

Based on the mentions of composers and performers, the monitoring of the contents of the programs enables to understand what the musical broadcasting of that time was like. Concerning the repartition of composers, Radio-Paris “*Poste national*” proposes an extremely large range, even if we count fewer mentions in 1937 (1,283 references in June) than in 1936 (1,736 ref.). On the contrary, we notice a progression of the references of composers on Radio-Cité (36 ref. in June 1936 against 47 in June 1937), including only 8 people unknown to the general public (*cf.* table 4). Regarding the citations of performers, the variations are opposite, but “*Le Poste national*” is still showing a much higher number of references⁴⁷ (*cf.* table 5). Anyway, while studying the whole period 1936-1939 we can see that the monthly average of the mentions of performers on Radio-Cité is almost three times as high as the ones observed on Radio-LL. A more linear evaluation even enables the assessment, at the end of the decade, of the supremacy of the private station in this matter, a situation that hides the exceptionally low level of 1937.

By considering the two corpuses of composers in a proportional way, one could elicit the major feature of each station. In 1937, the composers are predominantly French on “*Le Poste national*” (54%) and very famous on Radio-Cité (94% could be identified). The prize list of the most often mentioned musicians reflects the tendency of the stations. Thus, we can notice that all the composers mentioned on “*Le Poste national*” belong to the category of classical music (*cf.* table 1). Two composers are in common with the top-ten of Radio-Cité (Bach and Gounod), a prize list which is more diversified than that of Radio-Paris, since composers of operettas and songs can also be found.

⁴³ Composer and conductor Michel Emer (1906-1984) produces and leads a “home” variety orchestra which performs every day.

⁴⁴ As is written on the program of the 4th great radio gala given on March 4th 1936 at “*Salle Pleyel*”: “a great concert broadcasted by the Government network and Radio-Cité”.

⁴⁵ *Cf.* “*Le Crochet radiophonique Monsavon*”, “*La Famille Duraton*” (where she performs the role of the mother) and “*Enfants en liberté*” (which she hosts in 1940 under the pseudonym of “*Mademoiselle Floraline*”): Jean Cocart, *Les radios privées d'avant-guerre*, box of 3 CD published in 1994 by EPM Musique CD n°1 and n°2.

⁴⁶ Christopher, Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

⁴⁷ Between 1936 and 1937, the mentions of the performers are becoming more frequent on “*le Poste national*”, from 213 to 347, whereas they decrease on the private station from 157 to 64.

Whatever the musical category, composers are mentioned in programs whose theme is more or less well determined. Some songs, for instance, provided they are fairly rhythmical, could easily be found in the slots of dance music. This is the case of “*Les trois mandarins*” by Paul Misraki, a song scheduled in “Present-day Dances”, on “*Le Poste national*” on Sunday, June 20th 1937⁴⁸.

Most often, the composers appear in the programs thanks to the musical work chosen by the performer. Following the example of its predecessor Radio-LL, Radio-Cité aligns a significant proportion of Russian composers, because it often echoes the artistic activity of the expatriate performers who had fled the Soviet regime. This station broadcasts a “relay of the gala commemorating Pouchkine: *Eugene Oneguine*, music by Chaikovsky, by the Paris Russian opera.” In a more French spirit on June 3rd, “*Le Poste national*” releases some pieces by Darius Milhaud, a musician on the air during the Thirties. One of them is performed by the composer himself: “Works by Darius Milhaud: a) “*Chant de délivrance*”; b) “*Les amours de Ronsard*”; “*Printemps*”, piano by the author; “*Les songes*”. Some other criteria complete the aesthetic category or the geographic origin of the composers: their capability of composing in distant genres (which set them as “cultural passers”) and their presence on the air as performers. Like Darius Milhaud, Georgius (1891-1970), a comedian, belongs to the 92 composers which are also mentioned as performers in the second period⁴⁹. This author of many successful songs, including “*La plus bath des javas*” (1925), “*Le lycée Papillon*” (1935) or the irresistible “*Quand les andouilles voleront*” (1936), also called “the public entertainer” is mentioned 4 times in our corpus as a composer, and 6 times as a performer. His songs are classified in dancing music as well as in “*chansonniers*”, for instance “*La femme fatale*” (written in collaboration with Vincent Scotto) and “*Tu mens*”, two songs that he performed on Tuesday January 12th 1938 in the frame of the “*Concert Lustucru*” on “*Le Poste parisien*”⁵⁰. Among the musicians listed on Radio-Paris, the so-called Bétove (1883-1965) also combines the status of “passer” with that of performer. Mentioned in the recital of melodies by Mrs. Bertilia on June 5th 1937 (“*Tout mon coeur s’élançe vers toi*”) and the one by Miss Laure Diana on June 18th 1938 (“*Trois minutes d’arrêt*”), he is, at other moments of the decade, mentioned as singer pianist⁵¹. Dating from 1938, the recording that we found at “*La Phonothèque de l’INA*” is absolutely hilarious. Under the applause of a laughing audience, the artist proves his mind-blowing talent by first imitating a sailors’ march (“*Bâbord, tribord, fiers de la France, on tient le coup mille sabords!*”) and “*Ouné canzone soud-américaine*”⁵² [sic]. His sense of humor does not concern comical songs only. According to the weekly newspaper “*TSF Programme*”, it is with incomparable talent that he imitates classical musicians: “Bach, Lully, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Schumann, Schubert, and Wagner.”⁵³

The identification of the performers which we counted in the second half of the decade confirms that there were very different customs in the matter of musical broadcasting. While we were able to identify most of the performers on Radio-Paris, the tendency is the opposite in the second part of the decade, with a bigger proportion of performers now totally forgotten. This is due to the procession of opera singers and the anonymous instrument players which feed the slots of the afternoons on “*Le Poste national*”. From 1937, the year when those

⁴⁸ Source : *Le Petit Radio*.

⁴⁹ Georgius, pseudonym of Georges Guibourg, is regularly scheduled on Radio-Cité in June 1937 from 8 pm to 8.25 [Source : *TSF Programme*].

⁵⁰ Jean Cocart, *op. cit.*, CD2, page 15.

⁵¹ Source : *Mon Programme*. Bétove is mentioned 3 times as a composer and 2 times as a performer.

⁵² “*Phonothèque de l’Ina*”, proper title : “Bétove”, support: KO 109.

⁵³ *TSF Programme* n°315 of October 9th 1936: “*Bétove et ses pastiches*” by André Sévry .

miniature recitals become systematic onward, the references of the “stars” are steadily decreasing: 38% in 1937, 37% in 1938, 35% in 1939. Contrary to this, the proportion of performers on Radio-Cité still known today (66%) is incomparably higher than on Radio-LL’s (18%).

Beside the emergence of the bands, the top-ten of the most broadcasted performers also shows the permanence of classical performers on Radio-Paris as the anchoring of the song and variety music on Radio-Cité (cf. table 2). The “*Jo Bouillon orchestra*” (1936-1947) is the only common denominator of the two lists. In June 1937, this orchestra plays 8 times, in late evenings, in the studio of “*Le Poste national*”, whereas the 4 performances released by its private competitor are aired through relays.

Globally, the stars of the show-business, which proliferate on Radio-Cité, are by the way shared between the theatres and the studios. Under the pseudonym of Saint-Granier (1890-1976), Jean Granier de Cassagnac, who hosts “*Les fiancés de Byhrr* » on Radio-Cité with the female comedian Jane Sourza (1904-1969), is a prolific composer as much as a dynamic performer. For example, as a singer, he plays the character of Pedro in the Hungarian operetta *Kalinka* (music by Lajos Latjái), which went on at the “*Théâtre de l’Empire*” from February 21st to June 19th, 1933. In June 1937, while he has been presenting the “*Crochet radiophonique*” on Radio-Cité for two seasons already, he, together with Pierre Varenne, produces “*La Revue du rire*” for the very popular female singer Marie Dubas. Interviewed on the occasion by Jean Guignebert, the editor-in-chief of the program “*La voix de Paris*” (who immortalized “*Le doux caboulot*” in 1933 and “*Mon legionnaire*” in 1936), he is also solicited by Jane Sourza, his partner in the revue⁵⁴:

“Marie Dubas: - “Jeez, isn’t it my dear partner Jane Sourza? (Imitating the role of Carmen from the program “*Sur le banc*”). This is Jane Sourza, the only woman who makes me laugh, the only one...”

Jane Sourza: - “Well! My dear, Mrs. Marie, don’t mention it! So, really, you’re about to perform the revue in the ABC theatre?”

M.D.: - “Yes indeed! My dear, absolutely!”

J.S.: - “Well, I’m very happy, you know. Moreover, I’m glad to perform with you, very happy, indeed! But, tell me, are you going to release your “*tour de chant*”? [...]

M.D.: (after the description of her first project): - “Then I play a Marchioness...”

J.S.: - “A genuine Marchioness?”

M.D.: - “Yes, an actual one!”

J.S.: - “With feathers?”

M.D.: - “A present-day Marchioness...”

J.S.: - “Splendid! And then?”

M.D.: - “Then I’ll be performing a nurse... yes, a woman who is in a beauty salon... But I can’t say anymore, because these are surprises...”

J.S.: - “Isn’t it too sad?”

M.D.: - “Well, it’s rather funny!”

J.S.: - “OK! It appears that there’ll be some other funny things... Well, then, so long Mrs. Marie.”

M.D.: - “Yes, I’m so pleased to perform with you, Mrs. Sourza!”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Beside her presentations with Saint-Granier, Jane Sourza is the heroine of a daily program on Radio-Cité “*Sur le banc*”. She performs the delightful role of an ingenuous female beggar called Carmen, while the other beggar is embodied by song maker Raymond Souplex (1901-1972).

⁵⁵ Program recorded in June 1937 on Radio-Cité, and published in “*Les radios privées d’avant-guerre*”, CD1 track 17.

By observing the distribution of the protagonists of the musical background of our two reference stations, and by monitoring some of the great icons of the show-business, we notice that the composers and the performers mentioned are in perfect relation with their respective cultural orientations. Beyond this qualitative or quantitative information released by the broadcasting newspapers, however, there is a backstage. Through a closer monitoring, we can see that some other features are completing the frame of what we call “musical broadcasting”.

SOME PHENOMENA ARE LESS VISIBLE

We’re going to examine four of the factors that we must take into account in this study of the relation between music and radio⁵⁶.

AN UNCONVENTIONAL ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MUSIC AND ADVERTISING

Whatever its shape (the sponsoring of a concert, a sung slogan or brand jingle), the commercial message is linked to the issue of the broadcasted music. We mustn’t forget that the private stations mostly get their revenues from publicity. Besides, it is precisely in 1937 that the first publicity convention was held. On the occasion, independent producer Louis Merlin declared that the “average listener – after a long day of work – only asks for entertainment.⁵⁷”

Regulated from December 1937⁵⁸, broadcasting publicity is often released through musical creations or arrangements, in lyrics, or based on preexisting melodies. In every case, the musical sequences are truly matching the aesthetic affections of the targeted public⁵⁹. 1937 is also the first year when Radio-Cité launches a “broadcasting publicity competition”. It takes place in the evening, a few minutes before the 6.30 musical program. The listeners taking part must “mention the name of the brand and the corresponding jingle, by classifying the slogans by preference.⁶⁰” This initiative by the private station very well shows its will to consider commercial jingles as a proper genre. Their build is variable and they seem to progressively replace spoken advertisements⁶¹.

⁵⁶ Each of these points has been developed in a thesis defended in 2007 by the author of this article at the Paris IV University: "Music and Radio in France in the Thirties: the creation of a musical genre".

⁵⁷ Christopher Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁵⁸ In December 1937, an agreement was reached between the professional institutions of the private stations and the press. This agreement aimed at containing the increase of broadcasting advertisement to 6 minutes an hour [Marc Martin, "La presse écrite contre l'information radiophonique" in *Histoire des informations radiodiffusées et télévisées*, Paris, GHERA, 1989].

⁵⁹ Jean-Rémy Julien, *Musique et publicité. Du Cri de Paris...aux messages publicitaires radiophoniques et télévisés*, Paris, Flammarion, 1989. Let's more precisely read the "Musique et publicité radiophonique" chapter, p. 161-224.

⁶⁰ *Ici...Radio-Cité n°73* of May 26th 1939, p. 5 : "Notre 5e Grand Prix de la publicité radiophonique".

⁶¹ At least, it was the hypothesis of Jean-Rémy Julien in his article "Fluctuat nec mergitur, Musique et publicité radiophonique de 1922 à 1937" in *Vibrations*, n°3, 1986, p. 29-48. We personally follow the point of view of Cécile Méadel (*op. cit.*, note 29 page 342), when she writes that the lack of data in this matter doesn't enable to verify its postulate.

This unexpected association of music with the commercial message is going to generate some new productions (like the series patronized by the Crème Simon and produced by resourceful Louis Merlin) and sophisticated series theme tunes. From the Year 1937, which definitively remains *the* Year of “musical broadcasting”, Saint-Granier and Jane Sourza host a public show entitled “*Les fiancés de Byrrh*”, broadcast from the Normandie movie theater on “*Avenue des Champs Elysées*”,⁶². The “*Orchestre Jo Bouillon*” had recorded the theme tune, based on a motive of a traditional song, “*La Vigne au Vin*”⁶³. Musicologist Julien Tiersot, who, at the end of the 19th Century, devoted some lines of explanation to this melody, had written:

“It has the shape of a ‘didactic’ song, since every verse enumerates, in turns, by turns, the diverse steps in the annual culture of the grapevine.”⁶⁴

One could especially notice here the quality of the arrangement that, in turns, by turns, enhances the different instrumental sections of the entertaining orchestra⁶⁵: two big musical parts, strictly instrumental, are framing a sung chorus⁶⁶.

Beyond the musical invasion of advertisements slots, the omnipresence of the commercial message (especially as regards the private stations from 1935 on) is dividing the observers and the consumers. Some columnists of the broadcasting press are reviewing their conceptions as soon as publicity starts improving. After denouncing a “dishonorable advertising system”⁶⁷, Pierre Descaves finally praises the work done by the agencies and attributes an accomplished form of maturity to publicity⁶⁸. He is even astonished by the fight of some defenders of the classical heritage against the looting of some of the classical masterpieces⁶⁹.

MUSICAL DIDACTICISM STIMULATED BY PASSIONATE ACTORS

From 1932 on, the Radio-LL station had stood out owing to the originality of several programs that Jacques Bureau had been able to broadcast. He then used to teach the listeners how to appreciate hot style jazz⁷⁰. Marcel Bleustein found Henry Gédovius, also keen on jazz, who appeared to be a worthy successor of the pioneer of the station of “*La Rue du Cirque*”. Right from the creation of Radio-Cité this experienced music lover produces the first of a long series called “*Une soirée à Harlem*”, a title that he will use again from 1945 on, on R.T.F.⁷¹. From 1937, he keeps proposing his programs of “authentic jazz” on Radio-37, all the more so as he’s been recruited especially for the monitoring of the daily programs of recorded music:

⁶² In this program the winning couple used to be offered an apartment. It was held on Wednesdays at 8 pm.

⁶³ Jean Cocart, op. cit., CD 2, track 10.

⁶⁴ Julien Tiersot, *Histoire de la chanson populaire en France*, Paris, Éditions Plon-Heugel, 1889, p. 150-151.

⁶⁵ The theme is successively exposed by the section of trumpets, then embellished by the saxophones, to which a tutti of trombones are responding, after a refrain of muted trumpets.

⁶⁶ On the theme tune of 2’31’’, we find three long orchestral sections: an introduction of 59’’, an interlude of 11’’ and a conclusion of 40’’.

⁶⁷ *TSF-Programme* n° 18 of January 18th 1931, p. 4: “*Mes écoutes*”, by Pierre Descaves.

⁶⁸ *Mon Programme* n° 269 of March 13th 1937, p. 7: “*La publicité réhabilitée*”.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* n° 278 of May 15th 1937, p. 5: “*Protection des classiques*”.

⁷⁰ Jean-Jacques Ledos and Lise Mansion, “*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.

⁷¹ In 1936, this is already a weekly program.

“You will be operating the link between the suppliers and our studios, so that the records would be left with our services, filed in the order of their running, [and given back to] the suppliers who have rented them. [...] The amount of your salary is fixed at 1,000 francs a month, as of June 1st”⁷² “

This main activity doesn't prevent him from producing his daily programs on Radio-Cité⁷³, which lets one imagine that there are not so many jazz lovers capable of speaking of this style in front of a microphone. Actually, he deals with orchestras and jazz improvisers as a knowledgeable music lover. The numerous signed pictures that we found in his archives prove his regular attendance at American jazz-band concerts⁷⁴. He's also close to the French performers, as we can see in his “war correspondence” with conductor Jacques Hélian, who, after World War 2, was to become the second record-millionaire after Tino Rossi⁷⁵.

On “*Poste National*”, the titles of the programs are more pedantic. The “musical causeries with a listening of records” concern more sophisticated aesthetic fields. Throughout the second half of the decade, a long series of 91 talks on “Lyrical drama in France from its origins to the present” completes the list of the “musical talks” which Radio-Paris usually proposes to its listeners. In retrospect, those programs were published in three volumes “available from ‘*Poste national*’, without any obligation to refund postage”⁷⁶[sic]. These volumes are entitled: “*Des origines à la Révolution*” (31 talks throughout the season 1935-1936); “*De la Révolution à l'année 1900*” (32 talks released in 1936-1937); “*De l'année 1900 à nos jours*” (28 talks in 1937-1938)⁷⁷. Their reading is particularly instructive. They teach how the announcers, who are among the elite of the music and musicology of that time, argue with recorded examples. The style of the talks, very varied, mostly depends on the panache of the speaker and therefore can be either boring or pleasant. In 1937, Reynaldo Hahn starts a short series on the operetta about Offenbach. After entertaining the listeners with an explanation of one of Mozart's operas that they have been listening to, the author of *Ciboulette* repeats the experience of an illustrated causerie in a genre that he knows well⁷⁸.

Consistant with the subject, friendliness crops up in the very first sentences:

“I'm here to speak about Offenbach. The subject is attractive and fertile. So fertile that he could be treated in an incomplete way; so attractive that I would rapidly introduce the question, if I didn't follow my wretched tendency to only retain amusing aspects, and then would avoid anything looking like musicology. But I cannot tell you about Offenbach without narrating his lifetime (oh! very briefly) and revealing the origins of a genre of which he was not only the creator, but also definitely the inimitable representative.”⁷⁹

⁷² Letter by CEO G. Gémond on June 21st 1937.

⁷³ In 1937, “*Une soirée à Harlem*” is still scheduled on Radio-Cité (On Wednesdays from 10.30 to 11 pm).

⁷⁴ Such as the one of Freddie Taylor “and his Swing Men from Harlem” signed on March 14th 1935.

⁷⁵ Mobilized as of August 27th 1939, the one who is at that time only the “rider-cum-radio operator” Georges der Mikaelian writes to him from “*l'état major de la brigade du secteur 115*”. “*Archives écrites de l'Inathèque de France*”, Fonds Gédovius.

⁷⁶ *Histoire du Théâtre Lyrique en France*, Ministère des PTT, Direction de la Radiodiffusion, 1938 : Tome 1, 248 p. ; tome 2, 325 p. ; tome 3, 285 p.

⁷⁷ Cf. page 3 of each of the volumes, where the following advertisement also appears: “The performance of musical works was, at the time of their broadcast, illustrating the conferences gathered in the present book. Deprived of the listening of these musical works, the reader will be able to take an interest anyway in the reading of the commentaries that used to match them; this is why the text was maintained.”

⁷⁸ He also signed a causerie on Charles Gounod (*Histoire du théâtre lyrique en France*, tome 2, p. 98-107) and another one entitled “*Le chevalier Glück. – Armide*” (tome 1, p. 179-184).

⁷⁹ *Histoire du théâtre lyrique en France*, “*de la Révolution à l'année 1900*”, tome 2, p. 265.

The nice atmosphere resembles more a friendly conversation than a ponderous lecture, thanks to the abundant personal asides:

“Besides, this joke appears to be necessary to every biography of a precocious musician, even to Mozart’s. According to me, even in the case of Mozart, I can’t believe in any exploit, and for many reasons.”⁸⁰”

Yet the spirit of the programs of musical didacticism is sometimes more stiff, less natural and then boring. In the daily newspaper *Ce Soir* of April 10th 1937, Pierre Descaves deplores the “sad, sad and minor” tone of a choral lesson aimed at the children on Radio-PTT. In order to “purify this atmosphere of sadness and lethargy, he writes, one had better have imitated the private stations to have the children themselves sing⁸¹”.

MUSIC LOVERS AT THE MICROPHONE

In fact, at the second half of the decade, there is a proliferation of competitions and other “tournaments” of amateur musicians on the private stations. Yet, the astonishing comparison of anonymous people and the microphone is not new. This had been inspired by one of the actors of the public network.

In February 1937, André Danerty died. He was the creator of “competitive auditions of performers” which had highlighted many new talents. Louis Pondron, the manager of “*Le petit radio*” pays a vibrant tribute:

“He had brought the song to the radio, and he wanted to serve it and present it under any form. Provided with a creative spirit, a brilliant organizer, he wanted the radio to make new talents emerge. [...]”

Dear readers and listeners, this is what André Danerty achieved for you.

For more than eight years, 9,000 letters have brought the testimony of your kind recognition. [...]”

These letters underline the importance of the loss for the Song and the Radio.”⁸²”

The man who is paid such a tribute in the weekly journal of the public stations had brought about the creation, in December 1931, of a “Friendly fund for the immediate relief of artists”, in order to alleviate, by gifts, the most urgent cases, and to help unemployed artists with “loans of honor”⁸³. But his gratitude is mostly due to the “*Soirées des vieux succès*” (Old Hits Evenings), which he had been organizing for ten years on Radio-PTT. This program, which was very successful, obtains a special prize in the referendum about “the programs that the readers / listeners” [from *Le Petit radio*] prefer in the Paris area in the autumn 1932⁸⁴. Those “Galas of old hits and audition concerts of artists” opened the door professionally to some of the broadcasting stars of the thirties. For example, we could

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

⁸¹ Quoted by Christopher Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁸² *Le Petit Radio* n°515 of February 19th 1937, p. 3, article by Louis Pondron: “*André Danerty est mort*”.

⁸³ *Ibid.* n°246 of December 26th 1931, p. 7 : “*Un gala radiophonique de la chanson*”.

⁸⁴ *Le Petit Radio* of October 8th 1932, mentioned by Christian Brochand in *Histoire générale de la radio et de la télévision en France*, tome I, p. 466.

mention Lucien Huberty, barytone⁸⁵, and the female singer Paule Sandra⁸⁶. According to columnist Jacques Tem, Danerty would even have steered the famous humorous singer Ouvrard “towards this new means of expression [...] in order to entertain countless audiences⁸⁷”. Those galas, with artists from “his troupe” meet such a notoriety that the station “*Paris-PTT*” creates the program untitled “*Succès d’autrefois*” in February 1938, with the only aim of continuing the work of this song lover⁸⁸.

As far as commercial stations are concerned, Radio-Cité is certainly not alone to broadcast the performances of unknown people. On “*Le Poste Parisien*”, for instance, Georges Briquet every Sunday evening leads some “*concerts d’amateurs*” that are accompanied by an orchestra conducted by Godfroy Andolfi⁸⁹. Yet Radio-Cité strongly increases the options of broadcasted amateurs competitions.

On January 6th 1936, the “*Coup de crochet*” had begun. It was soon entitled the “*Crochet radiophonique*”. Owing to the lack of room in the studios, the managers of the station had the idea of hiring a venue and broadcasting from there, as was already usual in the United States: “a one-hour program in front of an audience invited for free.⁹⁰” So that they wouldn’t compete with the professional shows, the beginning of the relays is scheduled at 7 pm and ends at 8. This also enables employees and working people to “take advantage of these free events on leaving the office or the factory.⁹¹” In his memoirs, Marcel Bleustein explains that, despite this precaution, the owners of the musical theater “*L’A.B.C.*” had done all they could to prevent those galas, by imposing a levee on the tickets through the Society of Authors. The criticisms in which “the other Paris stations, jealous of [their] success” appear to be involved, doesn’t prevent the leaders of the station to stage numerous events at “*Salle Pleyel*⁹²” or at the movie theater “*Le Normandie*”. After the “*Crochet radiophonique*” sponsored by the soap maker Monsavon (scheduled on Mondays), the station presents the “*Music-hall des jeunes*”, patronized by the furniture maker Léviton (on Tuesdays). According to Bleustein, this program “ensured the success of a myriad of young artists who have become famous: Édith Piaf, Rina Ketty, Jean Tranchant, Éliane Cély, André Claveau, Micheline Presles, Roger Nicolas, Lucienne Delyne and Charles Trenet⁹³”. It wasn’t rare indeed for those young stars to be, shortly after the competition, solicited by the theaters, cabarets and music-halls, or even by other radio station. The manager of Publicis also explains that Radio-Cité often used to hire “the winner of the weekly competitions” by contract for a series of programs. In fact, we have found some “solo” performances by the laureates, such as the one by Miss Mania, scheduled on Sunday June 20th 1937 and that of a so-called Georges Alides, who was broadcasted on June 26th 1938.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* n°548 of October 8th 1937, p. 1, article by Jacques Tem. Lucien Huberty is often mentioned in the programs as a performer of the Opera.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* n°553 of November 12th 1937, p. 1, article by Jacques Tem. Paule Sandra is mentioned several times in the programs of Radio-Paris. In June 1937, she was the weekly “vedette” of the station Radio-LL with Charles-Henry Montbart from the “Cabarets Montmartrois”.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* n°539 of August 8th 1937, p. 1, article by Jacques Tem : “Ouvrard”.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* n°567 of February 18th 1938, p. 2. “Aiming at replacing “*Les vieux succès français*”, which had been organized for ten years by the much-missed André Danerty, “*Les succès d’autrefois*” will start on Paris-PTT on February 22nd 1938”.

⁸⁹ *Radio-Magazine* n°759 of May 1st 1938, p. 2-3 and n°797 of January 22nd 1939, p. 5.

⁹⁰ Marcel Bleustein, *Les Ondes de la liberté*, p. 109.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁹² Bleustein explains that this venue had never contained so many people: “the 3,000 seats were filled, the entryways, the stairs were overcrowded. The line-jumpers – who had to be refused entry – represented at least the half of the room.” [*Les Ondes de la liberté*, p. 111]

⁹³ *Les ondes de la liberté*, p. 113.

THE PURPOSES AND PHENOMENA OF ACCULTURATION

Beyond the priority of the technical and economical limits faced by the stations, their managers often wish to raise the musical taste of the listeners. In the matter of the targeted quality of music, the public stations don't have the monopoly of ideas.

Apart from the stars of dance music, of the commercial song and the music-hall, the artists performing in the field of classical music are regularly broadcasted on Radio-Cité. The station newspaper enjoys adding the pictures of the performers who use the studios of "Boulevard Haussmann" in its columns. This is why we can, under Charles Tournemire's picture, read "the great organist": "the organ will have an important role in the new Radio-Cité programs."⁹⁴ The female lyrical singer Lucienne Astruc and the pianist Walter Joseph, "whom you will be hearing throughout the next program 'The musical Fridays of Radio-Cité' (at 3.30 pm)" are also regular visitors of the station⁹⁵. In the field of the "chansonniers" (song makers), we find some performances by Léo Lelièvre, one of the members of the first Administrative Board of "Poste national".

The broadcasting of Radio-Cité is built on a permanent reflection of its managers, stimulated by the frequent forums of listeners. In agreement with the idea of the columnist Francis Dorset, stating that "sophisticated people don't have the exclusivity of sensitiveness"⁹⁶, Georges Migot⁹⁷, the producer of one of the musical programs on Radio-Cité, draws an optimistic conclusion from his proper observations. An abundant correspondence has shown to this experienced musician the increase of the listeners' interest for classical music. In 1939, he'll be explaining this success by the multiplicity of the angles he's used to proposing for a same work:

"Out of modesty and discretion, if I don't speak about the letters I receive that are for me a great artistic joy, I can say that after three years of 'mission', Radio-Cité has trained an important group of listeners interested in music, improperly called 'serious' since it can be (and it is often the case) nice, happy and subtle. [...] Several auditions are certainly necessary for each of these works: I do this, and for each new listening I try to present the work, in its morphology, in its historical context, without any expression, or in a comparative way. With a work that is set at a crossroad, anyone can reach it by different paths. And I did notice the recruitment of elites, who had ignored that they were. Indeed, we must confess that elites exist in any field, but they can reveal themselves at the only contact of superior works"⁹⁸.

⁹⁴ Ici...Radio-Cité n° 38 of September 30th 1938, p. 8. Charles Tournemire (1870-1939) plays the organ of Sainte Clotilde's [Michel, Fischer, "Langages et styles pianistiques : divers reflets d'une réalité", in Danièle Pistone (dir.), *Musiques et musiciens des années trente*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2000, p. 326].

⁹⁵ Ici...Radio-Cité n° 47 of November 25th 1938, p. 4. Lucienne Astruc stars many programs, including the one of Sunday June 27th 1937. After his performances with Mrs. Casafuerte in the series of "Sonates modernes" in 1936, Walter Joseph will be attending the "Magazine musical de Jean Granier" in 1939, when he will be performing in an "accompagnement à deux pianos" with Albert Lasry. We can notice here that like the "Poste national" the Friday pm slot is dedicated to chamber music.

⁹⁶ Radio-Magazine n° 384 of February 22nd 1931, p. 2 : "Ce que pensent les sans-filistes des programmes qui leur sont offerts".

⁹⁷ Georges Migot (1891-1976) produces a program on Radio-Cité entitled: "La musique vous parle". As a composer, he also appears in the programs: as the author of the orchestral piece called "Deux poèmes de Brugnol" performed by the "Orchestre de Radio-Paris", conducted by Eugène Bigot, during the "concert symphonique" of Saturday June 12th 1937.

⁹⁸ Ici...Radio-Cité n°67 of April 14th 1939, p. 6 et 8 : "La musique vous parle", by Georges Migot. This way of acting matches in any point the recommendation of a reader of the journal "Radio-Magazine" that the columnist Francis Dorset had published on March 15th 1936, with this precision: "This is one of the most intelligent letters

Besides, there is a factor that stimulates the presence of classical music in the air: the stylistic eclecticism of the great composers, whose works may easily be associated with lighter pieces. The gathering of pieces that are musically distant (a surprising gathering if compared to the current criteria) are all the less incongruous as in the mind of the music makers and of the listeners of the thirties, musicians easily move from one style to another. As regards the composers, they can be announced in the programs of traditional concerts as well as in the sequences of entertaining music. Yet it is the diversity of their production that causes the interest of either the educated music lovers or the the general public. For example, we can quote the cases of Emmanuel Chabrier (12 references in June 1937 on Radio-Paris⁹⁹), Reynaldo Hahn (8 references¹⁰⁰) and Gabriel Pierné (16 references¹⁰¹). Regarding individual performers, the border is fragile between lyrical music and the song. The radio increases the notoriety of the artists. With the operetta acting as a crossroad, they navigate from one to the other genre, but the radio also arouses vocations which do not exceed the frame of the TSF network. For some of these “stars of the Radio¹⁰²”, their “broadcasting qualities” justify the diversity of their repertoire. Concerning collective performers (bands, choirs, orchestras), the capacity of mastering a large musical range is a genuine professional stake and it leads some classical musicians to also reach the genres of commercial and entertaining music. These cultural passers broadcasted by the radio are bringing together musical works. Through the sliding from a musical field to the other, the radio of the thirties allows the connection of some registers that are as distant from each other as light-hearted songs, opera, “pot-pourris” of overtures or Viennese waltzes.

The year 1937 is rich in features that show the muddle of phenomena that constitute “musical radio” in the thirties. Like the previous one and the next two pre-war years that we’ll be analyzing at a later stage, the monitoring of the year 1937 enlightens some of the specificities and contradictions that make the richness and the complexity of the radio of the thirties •

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

I have ever received on the so much subtle and tricky topic of the musical teaching to the general public. I copy it without removing the mere line”.

⁹⁹ Including the short sequence of Wednesday June 2nd dedicated to the theme of the villages where his “*Ronde champêtre*” arrives before the “*Chemin fleuri*” by the Hawaiian guitarist Gino Bordin.

¹⁰⁰ Including the operetta “*Brummel*” that was released in totality on Monday June 7th on Radio-Paris. The solo and duo tunes of his scenic works often feed the concerts of light music or the programs of mixed music..

¹⁰¹ Including the stage-music from “*Impressions de Music-hall*” on Monday June 28th and the “*Concertstück pour harpe*” on Wednesday June 9th. Some exuberant titles are often scheduled in the mixed programs, such as the “*Marche des Soldats de plomb*” (at the concert of “*musique symphonique légère*” on Thursday June 17th).

¹⁰² This is especially the title of the cover-page of the weekly newspaper “*Le Petit Radio*” during the three last years of the decade.

Table 1:

The ten composers the most cited in June 1937

Row	Composer	nb ref.	Musical caterogy	nb ref. in the decade (RP + LL/Cité)	Composer	nb ref.	Musical caterogy	nb réf. décennal (RP + LL/Cité)
	On Radio-Paris (1 283 ref.)				On Radio-Cité (47 ref.)			
1	Fauré, Gabriel (1845-1924)	29	19 th Century	141	Wagner, Richard (1813-1883)	3	19 th Century	73
2	Debussy, Claude (1862-1918)	28	20 th Century	178	Verdi, Giuseppe (1813-1901)	3	20 th Century	51
3	Schubert, Franz (1797-1828)	25	19 th Century	139	Georgius (1891-1970)	3	Song	4
4	Mozart, Wolfgang-Amadeus (1756-1791)	24	Classical	172	Bach, Jean-Sébastien (1685-1750)	2	Ancient music	120
5	Chopin, Frédéric (1810-1849)	19	19 th Century	78	Trenet, Charles (1913-2001)	2	Song	6
6	Ravel, Maurice (1875-1937)	19	20 th Century	133	Scotto, Vincent (1874-1952)	2	Operettas and alike	47
7	Gounod, Charles (1818-1893)	18	19th Century	101	Gounod, Charles (1818-1893)	2	19th Century	101
8	Massenet, Jules (1842-1912)	18	19 th Century	101	Bizet, Georges (1838-1875)	2	19 th Century	74
9	Bach, Jean-Sébastien (1685-1750)	17	Ancient music	120	Beethoven, Ludvig van (1770-1827)	2	19 th Century	101
10	Liszt, Franz (1811-1886)	17	19 th Century	58	Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Felix (1809-1847)	2	19 th Century	51

Table 2:**The ten performers the most cited in June 1937**

Row	Performer	nb ref.	Musical category	nb ref. decade (RP + LL/Cité)	Performer	nb ref.	Musical category	nb ref. decade (RP + LL/Cité)
	On Radio-Paris (363 ref.)				On Radio-Cité (64 ref.)			
1	Labis, Raoul (19..)	11	Classical performer	25	Orchestre Jo Bouillon (1936-1947)	4	Entertaining band	32
2	Orchestre Jo Bouillon (1936-1947)	8	Entertaining band	32	Cerdan, Simone (?-?)	4	Song	4
3	Inghelbrecht, Désiré-Émile (1880-1965)	5	Classical performer	28	Georgius (1891-1970)	3	Song	6
4	Lorgès, Jean (?)	5	Lyric-art	5	Trenet, Charles (1913-2001)	2	Song	13
5	Rousseau, Émile (18.-19..)	4	Lyric-art	17	Netter, Yvette (?-?)	2	Song	5
6	Orchestre national (1934-....)	4	Classical band	26	Orchestre Fred Mélé (19..?)	2	Entertaining band	5
7	Bigot, Eugène (1888-1965)	4	Classical performer	37	Quatuor à cordes hongrois (le nouveau) (?)	2	Classical band	2
8	Doyen, Jean (1907-1982)	4	Classical performer	44	Quatuor à cordes Indig (?)	2	Classical band	4
9	Orchestre Georges Dervaux (?-?)	4	Classical band	14	Sablon, Germaine (1899-1985)	1	Operettas and alike	7
10	Bâton, René (1879-1940) (pseudonyme : Rhené-Baton)	4	Classical performer	13	Duhour, Clément (1912-1982)	1	Operettas and alike	3

**Table 3:
The musical slots in June 1937**

	Radio-Paris	Radio-Cité	In total
Number of musical programs	490 (60 %)	332 (40 %)	822 (100 %)
Number of musical hours	250:55 (68 %)	120:38 (32 %)	371:33 (100 %)
Average duration of the musical slots	0:30	0:21	0:27
Average number of the daily slots	16	11	14
Average duration of the daily music	8:21	4:01	6:11

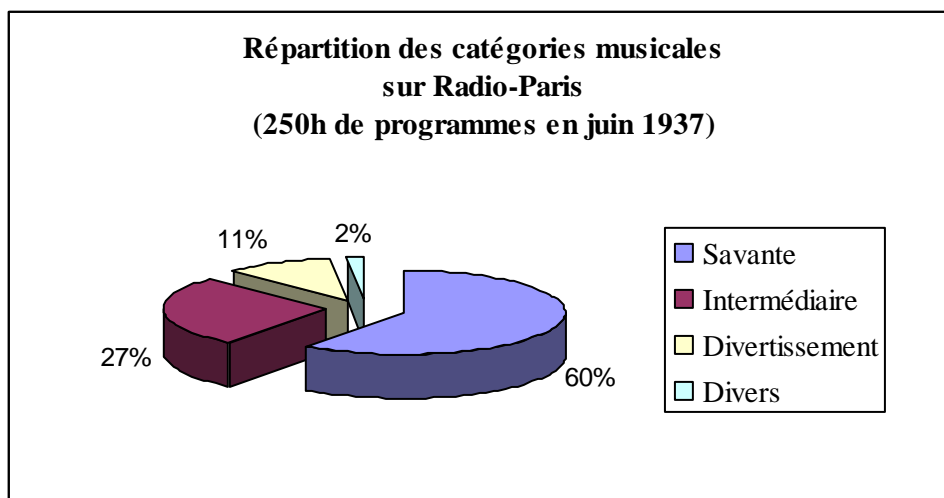
**Table 4:
The composers broadcasted in June 1937**

	Radio-Paris	Radio-Cité	In total
Number of the composers cited	526	32	534
Number of the specific composers	502	8	-
Number of the composer in common	24	24	-
Number of the references of composers	1 283 (96 %)	47 (4 %)	1 330 (100 %)
Ratio (ref. / nb)	2, 4	1, 5	2, 4

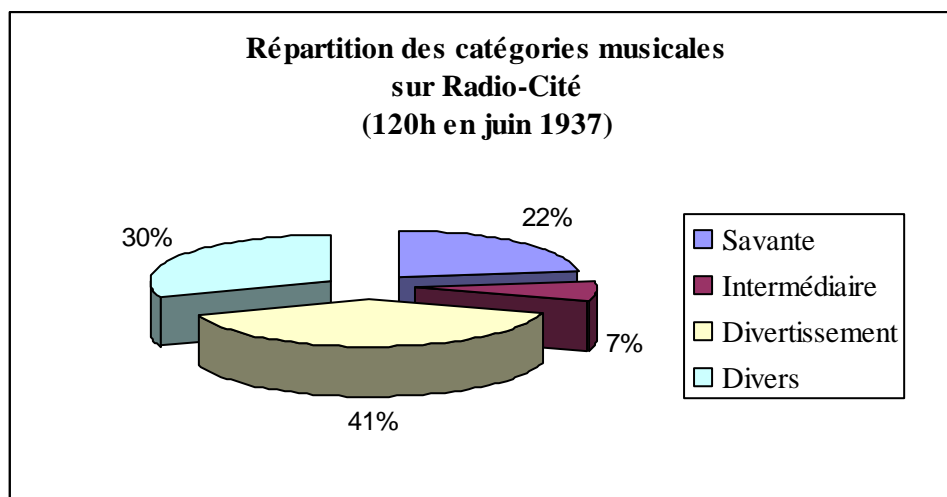
**Table 5:
The performers broadcasted in June 1937**

	Radio-Paris	Radio-Cité	In total
Number of the performers cited	277	51	323
Number of the specific performers	272	46	-
Number of the performers in common	5	5	-
Number of the reference of performers	363 (85 %)	64 (15 %)	427 (100 %)
Ratio (ref / nb)	1, 3	1, 3	1, 3

Graph 1:
The repartition of the musical categories on Radio-Paris
(250 hours of programs in June 1937)



Graph 2
The repartition of the musical categories on Radio-Cité
(120 hours of programs in June 1937)



**Table 6:
The concerts and recitals
on Radio-Paris
on Friday June 4th 1937**

Title	Genre	Description	Start	End	Duration
Symphonic concert	Light and various music	Suite du concert de musique symphonique légère : <i>Le Calife de Bagdad</i> (Boieldieu) ; <i>Sérénade</i> (Moszkowski) ; <i>Nocturne en mi bémol</i> (Chopin) ; <i>La lettre d'amour</i> (Stewart) ; <i>La damnation de Faust</i> (Berlioz) : a) <i>Danse des Sylphes</i> ; b) <i>Marche hongroise</i> ; <i>Valse de concert</i> (Moszkowski) ; <i>Les yeux noirs</i> (Ferraris).	13:30	14:00	0:30
Concert	chamber	Musique de chambre : Le Quintette instrumental de Paris : <i>Quatuor en ut</i> (Mozart) ; <i>Sonate pour flûte et piano</i> (Schubert) ; <i>Variations libres</i> (Pierné) ; <i>Sonate a cinq</i> (Malipero).	16:00	17:00	1:00
Concert	recital	Mélodies, par Mme Elsa Scher-Meister : <i>L'ange (Der Engel)</i> ; <i>Dans la serre (Im Treibhaus)</i> ; <i>Douleurs (Schmerzen)</i> ; <i>Rêves (Traume)</i> (Wagner).	17:30	17:45	0:15
Concert	recital	Violon et violoncelle, par Mlles Violette et Paule d'Ambrosio : <i>Duo en sol majeur</i> (Mozart).	17:45	18:00	0:15
Concert	recital	Mélodies, par Mme Elsa Scher-Meister : <i>Ridente la calma</i> ; <i>Dans un bois solitaire</i> (Mozart) ; <i>Le plaisir de la mélancolie</i> ; <i>Je t'aime</i> (Beethoven) ; <i>Soir</i> (Fauré) ; <i>L'enfant prodigue, air de Lya</i> (Debussy).	18:30	18:45	0:15
Concert	recital	Violon et violoncelle, par Mlles Violette et Paule d'Ambrosio : <i>Courante</i> (Clérambault) ; <i>Fortune</i> (Campra) ; <i>Gavotte</i> (S. Rousseau) ; <i>Trois pièces enfantines</i> (Mortari).	18:45	19:00	0:15
Concert	recital	Duos, par Mme et M. Adeline : <i>Gai printemps</i> (Wachs) ; <i>La plume qui s'envole</i> (Zurfluh) ; <i>Les rossignols</i> (Weckerlin) ; <i>Sur le mur du jardin</i> (Leslie Sarwing).	19:45	20:00	0:15
Concert	recital	Pièces pour piano par Marie-Antoinette de Freitas-Branco : <i>Trois histoires</i> (Ibert) : a) <i>Bajo la messa</i> ; b) <i>A giddy girl</i> ; c) <i>Le petit âne blanc</i> ; <i>Pastourelle, Toccata</i> (F. Poulenc) ; <i>Ronda que passa</i> (Barozo Netto) ; <i>Sous les orangers</i> (Turina) ; <i>Tango</i> (Albeniz) ; <i>Gitanerias</i> (M. Infante).	20:30	21:00	0:30