

8 Contingencies of Meaning in Transcriptions and Excerpts: Popularizing *Samson et Dalila*

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"Music and Meaning"—An Introduction

The main character in a recent filmed version of *Howards End*, Helen, becomes agitated in the middle of a lecture on "Music and Meaning."¹ The middle-aged male speaker was haughtily describing the impressions that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony suggested to him, as if they were the composer's own and should be the audience's as well.

You can hardly fail to recognize in the development section of the first movement a mighty drama and struggle of a hero beset by perils, riding to magnificent victory and ultimate triumph.

The audience at the Ethics Society at first listened, perched slightly forward, motionless and unblinking. They were balding older men and the occasional young amateur, male and female, those who could afford to idle on a rainy afternoon—a group of mixed social classes as the story later reveals.

In the third movement, we no longer hear a hero but a goblin, a single solitary goblin [Helen looks at her watch] walking across the universe, from beginning to end.

At this point the camera shifts from the hands of the speaker's elderly mother who is playing the period piano, to Helen's hand as she takes the umbrella beside her and prepares to leave, and then to an old man's hand raised with a question for the speaker. As Helen walks out, the old man asks,

old man: Why a goblin? Why a goblin?

speaker: The goblin is the spirit of negation.

old man: But why specifically a goblin?

The speaker stutters, a young man, Leonard Betts, gets up to follow Helen, and the piano drowns out the speaker's words. The orchestra takes over as he runs out into the rain, and we never get an answer to the question.²

In the following scene, a rain-soaked Leonard appears at Helen's richly ap-

pointed bourgeois house to ask for his tattered umbrella that Helen had taken by mistake. They engage in conversation.

Leonard: What do you think of the lecture?

Helen: I don't agree about the goblins, do you? But I do about the hero in shipwreck. You see, I've always imagined a trio for elephants dancing at that point, but he obviously didn't.

Her sister: Does music have meaning, of the literary kind?

Her brother: That's pure slush.

Helen: How boring it would be if it were only the score.

Her brother: Only the score? [they rush off in conversation]

Near the end of the film, just before Helen and Leonard steal away on a boat and make love, Leonard explains why he had married a crass, insensitive woman he obviously didn't love—

Leonard: I didn't think people like you exist except in books and books aren't real.

Helen: But they are more real than anything else. When people fail you, there's still music and meaning.

Leonard: That's for rich people to make them feel good after their dinner.

In this tale, music reveals itself as much more, something dangerous but not anarchic that subverts social hierarchy regardless of age, background, or status. In this case, it brings together a landed bourgeois woman and a poor working-class clerk. Music may encourage flights of imaginative fancy, but when its interpretation goes too far or someone wishes to impose their reading of it on others, listeners protest. In its polyvalence, music resists any person's claim to absolute authority.

But this was the turn of the century, before, as Peter Bürger (1984: 80) put it, the avant-garde denied the signifier its signified, some might say for reasons Leonard Betts might sympathize with. In the context of that period's widespread preoccupation with increasing literacy, many believed music was legible, like illustrated magazines and newspaper supplements, even if its narratives were abstract or multivalent. Audiences "read" music as they might have a novel of the time, whether coded with many layers of meaning or utterly straightforward. They saw comprehending and appreciating it, especially its beautiful form and harmonious proportions, as prerequisites to feeling its beneficial effects.

Scholars and critics have long understood meaning as a function of a composer's intentions, a conscious relationship between signifiers and signifieds. More recently, under the influence of postmodernist concerns, we are becoming more attuned to the role played by a listener's predilections. The nineteenth century presents a rich domain for exploring how music not only represents but also generates meaning for listeners. Even if music has its own structural coherence, it was understood as fair game in the bricoleur's search for experiences to facilitate self-definition, to help make sense of life, and to understand what is essential for survival. Music stimulates emotion, reveals one's emotions to oneself, and, for better

or worse, as in *Howards End*, evokes impressions different for each listener. It provides frameworks on which to hang beliefs, keep alive memories, or envisage destinies. For example, the goblins represented to Helen "the phantoms of cowardice and unbelief." (Projecting her own feelings, Forster noted, "she had felt the same and had seen the reliable walls of youth collapse . . . the music summed up to her all that had happened or could happen in her career" [1910: 34].) In France, politicians wished to tap into music's capacity for meaning for a very different purpose. They looked to music to play a significant role in the formation of citizens, the health of the democracy, the unity of the French people beyond and against class distinctions, and the struggle over cultural identity—how their international peers and future generations would remember them, regardless of social, economic, religious, and political differences in the population. In the words of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981 [1935]: 276, 278), music was widely recognized as "an active participant in social dialogue," its "dialectics . . . interwoven with the social dialogue surrounding it."

I sympathize with listeners' tendency to see themselves mirrored in artworks, to project their own concerns onto those of the composer, and, in opera, to seek enlightenment (or catharsis) through the feeling that the performer is portraying the listener and the work represents the listener's own reality. That a female character like Dalila or Carmen is "strong," at least strong enough to bring a male under her spell, and her male counterpart "weak," or at least willing to submit to female charm, may seem today to reflect fear that liberated women threaten the social order, or to suggest that the character was indeed created to evoke misogynistic feelings. But an interpretation rooted in feelings about our own realities too often essentializes the artistic experience, reducing it to one's current concerns, and this rarely involves sensitivity to paradoxes inherent in a work's possible meanings and to other "plausible intersubjective interpretations."³ What if characters like Dalila and Carmen, for example, were covers for other kinds of oppositions, even the inverse of what we might expect today?⁴

Listening to music is rarely just a private affair, and the experience is rarely separate from the form and format in which we perceive it. In the film *Howards End*, Helen and Leonard heard Beethoven in a piano transcription played by an old woman during a lecture to a motley crowd in a Victorian hall. All the audience heard was an excerpt. In this chapter I take such experiences seriously and suggest that the discourse, or meanings, generated by *Samson et Dalila* involve not just the opera itself but also the many forms and contexts in which it became known. Focusing on important determinants of the musical experience that have been ignored by scholars, I offer a methodology for decentering the work and studying meanings that arise from excerpts and transcriptions of it. If we have only reviewers to tell us how audiences responded to orchestral excerpts, and virtually no one besides the fictional characters of novels to document the perception of transcriptions, we must interrogate the kind of expectations encouraged by fragments, especially when placed in certain contexts, and seek to widen our understanding of a listener's "horizon of expectation."

As in perception, conscious attention, especially to works of art, "is only possible

upon a background, or horizon, of distraction.”⁵ This horizon includes not only the personal preoccupations of individual listeners but also that which might affect understanding relative value, or in Aristotle’s terms, its final purpose. With this in mind, I investigate myriad concerns that may have informed interpretations of *Samson et Dalila*, starting with the political context in which the opera was conceived, the musical issues being explored, the composer’s possible attitude toward the characters, and what the work itself allowed the composer to accomplish. These concerns not only shed light on the composer’s possible intentions and the meanings he may have wished to encourage but also lead to an interpretation of what the characters may represent that is more ambiguous than the work’s Orientalist binarisms suggest.

Because *Samson et Dalila* was not produced onstage in France for fifteen years, I then examine the forms and contexts that rendered it popular. I argue that because so much music was presented in excerpts or transcriptions—whether in orchestral concerts, piano recitals, or outdoor wind-band performances—this created certain perspectives on the work and made possible meanings distinct from those associated with the staged opera. Transcribers, music publishers, and concert organizers brought their own intentions to bear on how the work might be perceived. The first two determined what excerpts were available to the public, thereby establishing boundaries on what was heard and imagined; the third placed these fragments in meaningful relationships with the music surrounding them on concerts, and thus set the terms for comparison and comparative judgments. In the case of transcriptions and excerpts, then, one should consider how their means, manner, and mode contributed to the audience’s experience: the instruments used and skills needed of the performers, whether professional or amateur; the context in which the performance was heard, whether serious or popular, whether performed alone or surrounded by other works; and the relationship of their narrative configuration—their plot, thought, and character—to those of the opera in its original form.

All these factors imply that meaning is contingent, conditioned by certain frameworks, and affected by a sometimes disjunct, sometimes cumulative layering of meanings. Developing a “horizon of expectation” for understanding these entails a “passage from the individual to the collective or social aspects” of what is being heard and analyzed, and acceptance of meanings as socially constructed (de Man 1986: 58–60). By socially constructed I mean that the choice of which fragments became known was influenced by certain social, political, and cultural forces, including public taste, and in turn conditioned audience response to the first complete performances of the opera. French society, besides having its experience of the opera shaped by excerpts and transcriptions, changed significantly between 1877, the premiere of *Samson et Dalila* in Weimar, and 1890, its French premiere. That in the 1890s critics shifted their emphasis from the exotic charms of Dalila to the strength and virility of Samson suggests that meaning was not a stable category even when it came to the opera as a whole.

My hope is that this chapter sheds light on how excerpts and transcriptions in the late nineteenth century can shape the perception of meaning in a work, how we can trace changes in musical meaning over time, and how we think about mean-

ing in postmodern appropriations and recontextualizations, including those used in film and various new media.

Conception and Creation: The Hermeneutics of Charm

Under the photograph of Saint-Saëns facing the title page of the piano-vocal score of *Samson et Dalila* is a short citation in the composer's hand from the opening of its most famous air, "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix comme s'ouvrent les fleurs" (My heart opens to your voice like flowers open at the kisses of dawn) (figure 8.1). Early sketches for the opera begin with the consequent of this melody, "Réponds à ma tendresse" (Respond to my tenderness).⁶ The air refers to the central plot of the opera, Dalila's seduction of the enemy Samson for the sake of her people, the Philistines. Placed here it also functions as an emblem of the composer and the opera.

To understand its significance for Saint-Saëns, it is important to examine both the musical and political context in which he conceived the opera between the late 1850s and the late 1860s. What led him to begin *Samson et Dalila* has often been explained as a response to a competition for a prize in oratorio writing. Handel's music was very popular in Paris in the late 1850s. Excerpts from Handel's *Samson* were performed at the Paris Conservatoire in April 1857, February 1860, and April 1861, and Saint-Saëns subscribed to the 1861 Gesellschaft edition.⁷ The Société des Oratorios and amateur choruses also performed Handel oratorios in the late 1860s and early 1870s. In this context, Katharine Ellis has argued that Handel evolved into a republican icon, his music representing much that republicans thought French society should embrace—robustness, solidity, healthy energy, and virility.⁸ Was Saint-Saëns, a committed republican, playing into Handel's appeal and signaling the meaning associated with Handel's music when he wrote a Handelian-influenced Hebrew chorus in 1859 and later incorporated it as the opening of his own *Samson et Dalila*? Scholars have also pointed to another possible inspiration for the opera: Voltaire's *Samson* set to music by Rameau in 1732. The lyrics of Samson's hymn, "Israël! Romps ta chaîne! O peuple, lève toi!" echo Voltaire's air, "Peuple, éveille-toi . . . romps tes fers," set to music by Gossec and performed with the proclamation of the Constitution in 1791 and 1795. In both, the Hebrews call for reviving their grandeur and pride, important republican concerns in the 1860s.⁹

Still another motivation may have contributed to the decision to write this opera. Saint-Saëns began his career as a composer of instrumental and sacred music. Even though critics praised him for his knowledge of timbres and the clarity of his forms, acknowledging him as one of the lively forces in modern music, some criticized his earlier music for its lack of individuality and charm. In 1872, a reviewer of his first opera, *La princesse jaune*, commented:

I told myself that what I had [before me] was a very extraordinary pianist, an organist from the best school, a conductor full of promise, a harmonist [who knew as much] as possible, a doctor in music, a memory full of all the masterpieces from all periods; but in the middle of all this wealth, I was forced to admit, like the cock in the fable, that

<- forced
a line
break at
"piano-"

<- forced
a line
break at
"éveille-"

Camera
ready

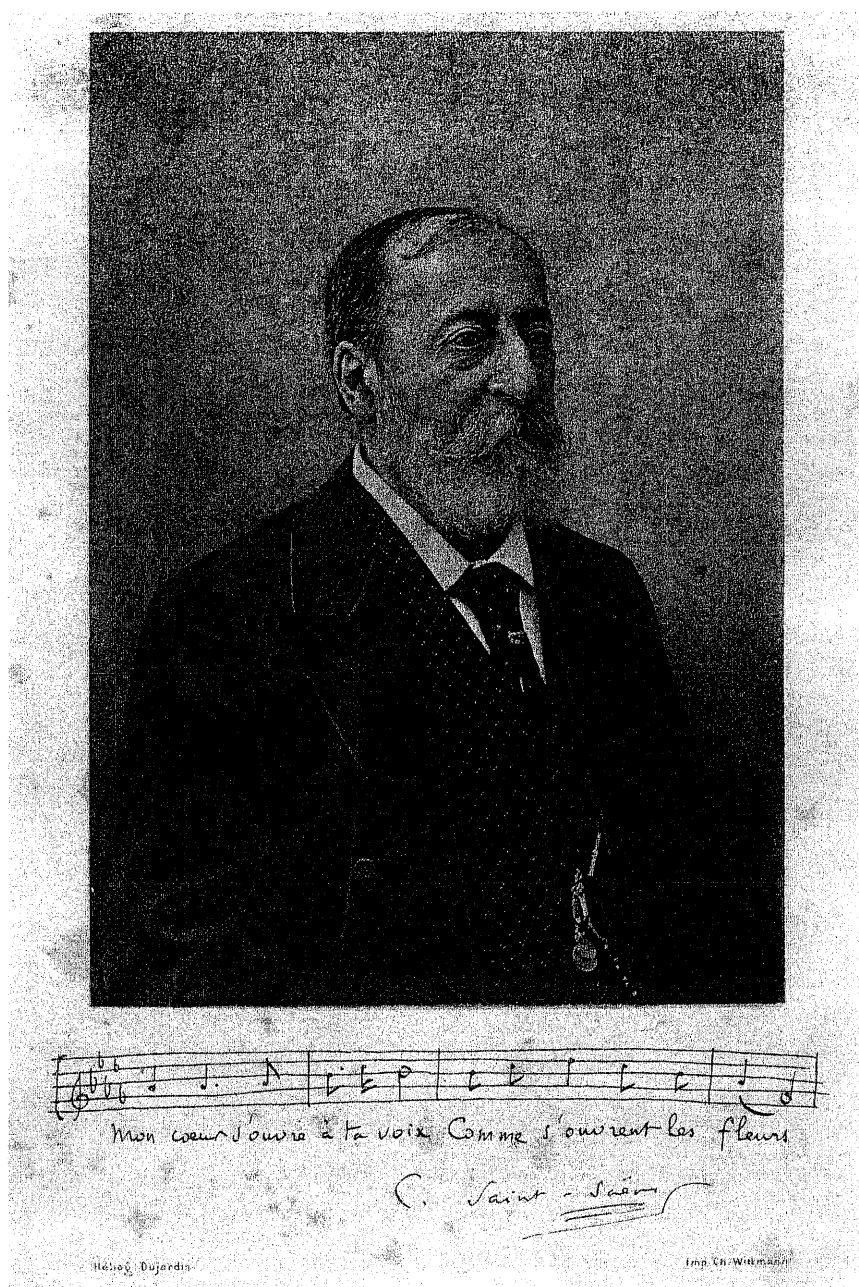


Figure 8.1. Saint-Saëns photo with “Mon coeur” sketch, from piano-vocal score

the least millet seed would have been better. The millet seed that Saint-Saëns lacks is individuality, it's charm.¹⁰

If Saint-Saëns was sensitive to such a perspective, did this contribute to his decision, just after this premiere, to return to the opera he had begun to compose earlier on Dalila, a woman most known for her charm? His original title, in fact, was *Dalila*. The subject was popular in the late 1850s, especially Octave Feuillet's three-act *Dalila*, and was used in the 1866 Prix de Rome competition.¹¹ The next year Saint-Saëns began sketching his opera with the second act, which features Dalila and the two other main characters in solos and duets.¹² His inspiration included Italian melodic expression; one reviewer pointed to the fourth act of Verdi's *Aida*.¹³ After setting the opera aside for years, did the composer see the work as an opportunity to seduce us with his voice, as Dalila seduced Samson with hers? In pencil and purple ink, Saint-Saëns created drawings of flowers over the sketches for the opening of act 3, "Look at my misery . . . have pity on my weakness," probably composed in 1873. Was he thinking of the power of the lady of the lilacs (*des lilas*), the flowers Voltaire's Dalila used to "enchain" Samson, or his music as the musical flowers of his imagination?

In many ways the composer charms audiences by means of Dalila, the only female singer in the opera, who, despite her exotic appearance, leads listeners to take her perspective. We often get her point of view; she is the primary agent of the drama. To engage her seductive charms and her "*puissance enchanteresse*," Dalila destabilizes Samson with music reminiscent of the "weakness" which he says she sees in him in act 1. Like the chromatically descending tritone (E# to B) he uses to symbolize his anguish and his pleasure (perhaps also foreshadowing his surrender to her), Dalila sings a long sequence of chromatic half-steps spanning a tritone from A down to D#, when, after he tells her he loves her, she asks him to remember "these beautiful days spent on one's knees before a lover." (Similar descending chromaticisms permeate the instrumental music at the beginning of act 2, when we first see her house, surrounded by "Asian flowers and lush vines.") In exchange for her song and "in hopes of learning the secret of his strength," she then asks to possess not his body but his voice which is the key to his power: "My heart opens to your voice . . . let your voice speak again."

With curves and chromaticisms carefully controlled and manipulated in their every nuance, Dalila gives voice to Saint-Saëns's notions of desire and musical charm. "To enslave" Samson and "enchain" him to herself, she musically links the memory of his "caresses" with her idea of love. Starting on the pitch D \flat where he left off singing "I love you," she goes on to entreat him in one of the most powerful moments of the opera: "Respond to my tenderness, give me ecstasy [*ivresse*]." This is symbolized musically by three interlocking chains of chromatically descending lines that end on the tritone G \flat -C (figure 8.2). Unfortunately for Samson, she does not have to be sincere for her charms to take effect. In the duo that follows, a strophic variation of this section, he responds to her descending lines and the "tenderness" she offers him in three ways: with a rising arpeggio as if to console her as he sings, "With my kisses, I want to dry your tears"; by echoing the descending chro-

Un peu plus lent

dolce
Ah! ré - ponds à ma ten - dres - se,

pp

Ver - se - moi, verse - moi l'i -

cresc. sans presser
vres - se! Ré - ponds à ma ten - dres - se!

piu cresc.
Ré - ponds à ma ten - dres - se! Ah! verse -

cresc.

dim.
moi, verse - moi l'i - vres - se!

p

pp

Camera
ready

Figure 8.2. *Samson et Dalila*, excerpt, piano-vocal score, “Ah, réponds à ma tendresse”

maticisms and singing with her a third lower; and finally by moving into unison with her at the end of the stanza as she pleads for ecstasy. Musically this is the surrender love calls for—Samson's music follows Dalila's, the man loses his will to the woman's. Love indeed has rendered the Other vulnerable and submissive, but in this case the Other is male.

The opera is also a story of the struggle for individuality, as represented by Samson. In her analysis of the biblical story, Mieke Bal sees, as the main themes, the problem of the hero and those associated with love rather than heroism or love itself. "Redeem us from love" is the theme of this myth. From Bal's perspective, based on a reading of Lacan, Dalila is there to help Samson "reach awareness."¹⁴ She holds up a mirror that allows him to "discover" himself and ultimately to escape his symbiotic bond with God (and himself), to "be reborn" (1987: 65–66).

At some point after writing act 2, Saint-Saëns changed the title of his opera to reflect the importance of both Dalila and Samson, or, one might say, the need for both charm and individuality in his music. In a way they represent what Bal (1987: 45) calls the "riddle about strength and sweetness" that runs through Samson's life, beginning with his secret encounters with the lion.¹⁵ What Saint-Saëns does with such a story offers an answer to this riddle. As French culture was trying to think about race and gender in increasingly essentialist terms, he focuses on the anti-essentialist aspects of his two main characters. Both are complicated, neither reducible to stereotypes. Dalila is not particularly weak (in the Bible she is depicted as socially successful and independent, having her own house). Samson is mostly passive and ends up in chains, hardly the proud hero; the libretto omits any reference to his slaying of the lion and one thousand Philistines. Saint-Saëns's answer to the riddle is both to foreground the confrontation of "sweetness" (or charm) and "strength" (or individuality) as conflicting forms of power, and to suggest that pleasure (sexual as well as other kinds) lies in their coexistence or comingling.

Through performers who would draw attention to the complexities of gender in the story, Saint-Saëns could also de-essentialize the notion of who is speaking through them and what they represent. Dalila's voice is central in the opera, but her charms are not those of a typical light soprano. Saint-Saëns conceived such a role for the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot and dedicated the opera to her. He once referred to her voice as "of enormous power and prodigious range . . . made for tragedy," and to the singer as one who lent "incomparable grandeur" to whatever she performed. At the first performance of excerpts, another woman known for her strength and virile music, the composer Augusta Holmès, sang the part. Through such a character the composer could both address his critics and explore what he may have coveted, not only her power of seduction but also her unrepressed sexuality, attraction to strength in others, and desire to dominate it—in short, her will and ability to get what she wants.

Saint-Saëns's description of the tenor voice of Henri Regnault, a painter friend who sang the role of Samson in the private premiere with Mlle Holmès, suggests that neither was his idea of Samson that of the stereotypical male hero. The composer appreciated a certain feminine-like charm in his friend, calling his voice "exquisite" with "an enchanting timbre" and "an irresistible seduction." Perhaps he

<— forced a
line break at
"anti-"

saw himself that way or sought to explore those aspects in himself, for he explains, "as we loved and admired the same things, the good feelings that united us were very natural" (Ratner 1985: 110, 120 n. 18). In Samson, Saint-Saëns had a hero who was weak in many ways, helpless, surrendering, and responsive rather than initiating—stereotypically feminine—while maintaining a physical strength of mythic proportions.

The main characters in the opera speak almost incessantly of their voices, yet often it is as a medium for something else, the source of their power. Beyond the role of religion in defining this, what Samson and Dalila signify is ambiguous. The historian Michel Faure understands their opposition as the class conflict underlying French society at the time. In the late 1850s, he explains, Samson would have been understood as a lion symbolizing the "people," and his story "the myth of the left," with workers enslaved to a corrupt bourgeois society. After the Paris Commune, however, this image was easily reversed.¹⁶ The composition of the opera amid war with Prussia, the siege of Paris, and the reassertion of power by the Third Republic adds further ambiguities, particularly to the possible meaning of Dalila. France was forced by the war to give up its imperialist pride and to accept its relative weakness vis-à-vis its neighbors. With these changes came a return in politics to female allegories, not just Marianne crowned with a phrygian cap but also Liberty wearing a lion's muzzle.¹⁷

Women have long served as allegories in France, particularly political allegories, whether of democracy, monarchy, liberty, or anarchy.¹⁸ Exotic women, too, I would argue, allowed the French to explore their attitudes about their colonies, the woman standing in as the quintessential Other, desirable but potentially dangerous. Susan McClary (1991) and Ralph Locke (1992) have eloquently shown that women the likes of Carmen and Dalila are often victims of misogyny and the racist, imperialist climate of the times.¹⁹ But as Paul Robinson (1985: 65) pointed out, these women are "rarely experienced as victims" and, in any case, "their vocal assertiveness places them on an absolutely equal footing in many love duets and gives lies to the notion that women are inferior creatures." Moreover, in the early 1870s the focus of public attention was not the colonies but rather the humiliating defeat of the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of the Paris Commune. In this context, some French saw the value in learning from other societies, such as those "bound by ties of deference, status, and a sacred union of the human and natural orders."²⁰ Those who preferred to concentrate French resources on recuperating Alsace and Lorraine (largely conservatives and monarchists) protested the country's imperialist ventures bitterly and with some success.

In the 1870s and 1880s the stereotype of the exotic woman relied on a certain ambivalence critical to its function.²¹ To the extent that Dalila seduces audiences into the illusion, listeners are given the opportunity to explore what existentially weak women call on to survive, learn about the nature of their charm, its uses, and the limits of its power. They could consider what it means to be the weaker in a dyad, what kind of relationship is possible with stronger Others, how they might appropriate these tactics (as the composers do) as a way to empower themselves. A Dalila could stimulate reflection about how the French viewed themselves, their

strengths and weaknesses, perhaps also their repressed desires, fantasies, hopes, and dreams related to France's political position in Europe.

To the extent that Voltaire's Dalila influenced Saint-Saëns's concept of the woman or audience reception of the character, other interpretations are also possible, especially given that a new edition of Voltaire's *Samson* was published in 1877 (the year *Samson et Dalila* was premiered in Weimar). Voltaire's Dalila is a pacifist. She tells the Hebrews to "forget combat" and prays to Venus to instruct her on the "charming art of pleasing and seducing" for the purposes of bringing "peace on earth." She sees her duty as love. If love is dangerous, as the prologue points out, Voltaire's Dalila also suffers, a victim of following the orders of the High Priest. When she learns her actions have betrayed Samson, she commits suicide.

Operas featuring exotic women are thus not convincing principally because of their predictable plots—the women usually die. I argue they are occasions to ponder the nature and meaning of musical charm and its power, an illusive magic as untranslatable as the foreignness of the exotic women. The importance the women give to their ability to "enchant" and the consciousness with which they call on it suggest that feminine charm was not considered entirely pejorative, an instrument of "the devil" leading to a man's ruin—but instead, at least in some cases, could be desirable and worthy of developing especially if it gives voice, as it does in many of these operas, to the will of an older male. The role charm plays in this music suggests that, whether consciously or not, composers thought it an essential element to explore, understand, and promote in French music.²²

First Performances: Meaning from Excerpts

Critics by the late 1870s were largely enthusiastic about Saint-Saëns, but the composer did not have an easy time getting the opera staged. When he proposed it to the Opéra in the mid-1870s, after the private performance of excerpts arranged by Pauline Viardot in 1874 and later with Holmès and Regnault, he was rebuffed by the theater's director, Olivier Halanzier. Halanzier objected to the lack of melody and found it more oratorio than opera, even though oratorio was in fashion.²³ He also thought the Old Testament and the image of Samson with a shaved head would not appeal to audiences.²⁴ Instead, in 1876 the Opéra chose to put on Mermet's *Jeanne d'Arc*. Mermet's *Roland et Roncevaux* (1864) was having a "triumphant tour" in the provinces. Its blatant patriotism portrayed the Franks as militarily successful, and Roland, their hero, celebrated in marches and dancing, was probably closer to what French audiences wanted to hear after their 1871 defeat.²⁵ Saint-Saëns wrote to the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts asking for help in getting his opera performed in Paris. He was again told that the work was inappropriate for the stage. The composer later confessed that he had received "such hostility" whenever he spoke of it and that, had it not been for Liszt (who said he would arrange a performance in Weimar in 1877), he would have "renounced" finishing it.²⁶

Other than concert performances of the individual acts and various transcrip-

tions, *Samson et Dalila* onstage was not known to the French public until the 1890s. Yet by the time the Opéra finally produced it in 1892, it was already hailed as the composer's most popular work.²⁷ The story of how this paradox emerged helps us to understand how music generates meaning in the absence of the original form of the work and in contexts different from those envisaged by the composer.

Table 8.1 shows in what forms the French public was able to hear the opera. Orchestras performed excerpts in the 1870s and 1880s. Transcriptions and fantasies were made available for piano and voice. Wind bands, made up of soldiers or working-class amateurs, gave their own versions in public parks, and singers presented airs in private salons.

This proliferation of genres raises certain questions. If part of *Dalila's* charm comes from the insistent repetition of recurring themes and entire sections within scenes, and from act to act, what happens to the meaning of the work—and to the whole project of charm in *Samson et Dalila*—if listeners come to know the work only through excerpts and transcriptions, most of them without the voice? And what happens when a work is cut into pieces, especially *Samson et Dalila*, whose scenes are largely through-composed and whose vocal writing integrates short, unaccompanied recitatives with bel canto singing? In short, what is the nature, meaning, and value of a work of art when it is presented in something other than its original form?

In his book *Music in the Moment*, the philosopher Jerrold Levinson (1997) suggests that people listen and comprehend music perfectly well without necessarily being aware of large-scale form. Like the nineteenth-century psychologist Edmund Gurney (1880), who inspired his ideas, Levinson believes that meaning derives principally from the moment-to-moment process of a work's unfolding. This thesis should give us pause. If the value of a work is a function of its individual parts, what kinds of meaning do parts generate in the absence of the whole to which they belong? Parisian orchestras occasionally performed an act or a selection of fragments from a new opera hoping that these would generate interest in a recent work. Eventually, however, some excerpts and not others entered the orchestral repertoire, suggesting that fragments could be appreciated as self-sufficient.

What happens to the meaning of a fragment when one hears another composer's music before and after it? Gurney and Levinson contend that meaning arises when a listener grasps connections to immediately neighboring music, thus concatenating what is heard. This suggests a resonance from one musical moment to the next. Gurney may very well have arrived at his emphasis on temporal succession as a source of meaning by observing the nineteenth-century taste for aesthetic contrast. Nineteenth-century music often creates contrast through what we now call masculine and feminine themes. This principle also dominated the structure of late-nineteenth-century concert programs in France. Many achieved balance through the juxtaposition of diverse genres. Even if these genres may have been understood as distinct parts of a musical meal, with the beginning and end serving functions different from those served by the middle, they were also seen as opportunities for comparison, digested as part of the same experience and valued for teaching judg-

Table 8.1. Selected Performances and Publications of *Samson et Dalila*

Opera	Orchestras	Wind Bands	Publications
Weimar, 2 Dec. 1877 Brussels (concert) May 1878 Hamburg, 1882 Liège, 1888 Rouen, 3 March 1890 Paris, Théâtre-Lyrique (Eden) 31 Oct. 1890	Act I, CC, 26 Mar. 1875		Durand acquires the opera (Apr. 1875)
	"Danse des prêt," CC, 16 Jan. 1876		"Danse des prêtresses," pf (Durand, 1876)
	"Danse des prêt," CC, 11 Nov. 1877		"Danse des prêtresses," JM (11 Aug. 1877)
	"Bacchanale," CP, 23 Nov. 1877		pf, v [German and French] (Durand, 1877)
	"Bacchanale," CP, 17 Nov. 1878		H. Cramer, <i>Reminiscences</i> (Durand, 1877)
	"Danse," "Bacch," CC, 25 Jan. 1880		Orchestral parts (Durand, 1878)
	Act III, CC, 26, 28 Mar. 1880		"Bacchanale," pf, pf à 4 (Durand, 1878)
	"Danse," "Bacch," CC, 23 Jan. 1881		11 detached numbers, pf, v (Durand, 1879)
	"Danse," "Bacch," CL, 21 Dec. 1884		
	Air, CL, 1 Feb. 1885		F. Spindler, <i>Fantaisie brillante</i> , pf (Durand, 1882)
	Air, CC, 22, 29 Nov. 1885		
	"Danse," CC, 15 Apr. 1887		
	Duo, 1889 Exposition, 31 May 1889		
	"Danse des prêt," CL, 17 Nov. 1889		
	"Danse des prêt," CC, 15 Dec. 1889		
	"Danse," "Bacch," CC, 19 Oct. 1890		"Chant de Dalila," v, pf <i>Le figaro</i> (19 Mar. 1890)
	"Bacchanale," CC, 23 Nov. 1890		G. Bull, <i>Fantaisie</i> , pf facile (Durand, 1890)
	Air, SdC (Strasbourg), 4 Feb. 1891		A. Lefort, <i>Fantaisie</i> , pf, vln (Durand, 1890)
			L. Roques, <i>Illustrations</i> , pf à 4 (Durand, 1890)

Military bands (Paris):
24 Sept., 12 Oct. 1890

Geneva, Dec. 1891		<i>Bon marché</i> : 6 June, 25 July 1891	G. Meister, <i>Fantasia</i> , wind band (Evette, 1891)
Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes, Dijon, New York (concert) Algiers, Montpellier, Florence, March 1892		<i>Military bands</i> (Paris): 1892-94: 68 times incl. 3, 5, 7, 24 July; 4, 11 (2x), 14 Aug.; 9, 29 Sept. 1892; 16, 18, 19, 21, 31 May; 1 June (2x), 7, 8 (2x), 6 July 1893	pf, v (New York, 1892) "Bacchanale," pf, vc (Durand, 1892) L. Roques, "Mon coeur," Duo, Hymn, pf à 4, vln, vc (Durand, 1892) "Danse des prêtresses," pf, Le figaro (23 Nov. 1892)
Monte Carlo			
Paris, Opéra, 23 Nov. 1892			
New Orleans, Jan. 1893			
Milan, Cairo, Feb. 1893			
London, Sept. 1893			
Antwerp, Dec. 1893			
		<i>Military bands</i> (Algiers): 5 Mar., 6 Apr., 22 June 1893	
Moscow, St. Petersburg, Brussels, 1894		<i>Bon marché</i> : 24 June, 12 Aug. 1893; 21 July 1894 8 July, 10 Aug. 1895	pf, mandoline or guitar (Durand, 1894) <i>Fantasia</i> , military band (1894) <i>Fantasia</i> , pf, fl (1894)
New York, 1895		<i>Military bands</i> (Paris): summer 1895	L. Roques, 2 Suites faciles, pf à 4 (Durand, 1895)
Buenos Aires, 1896		9, 25 June, 2, 4 July 1896	G. Papin, pf, vc (Durand, 1896)
Barcelona. Jan. 1897			

Continued on the next page

Table 8.1. Continued

Opera	Orchestras	Wind Bands	Publications
Paris Opéra, June 1897		27 May (2x), 4, 8 July 1897	E. Kosteck, Grand duo, pf (Durand, 1897)
100th performance			
Rio de Janeiro, 1898		10 July, 2, 7, 14, 21, 25, 28 Aug. 1898	A. Luigini, Fantasia, pf orch (Durand, 1898)
Paris Opéra, 30 Oct. 1898, Free performance		4, 11 June, 23, 30 July, 4, 20, 27 Aug., 3 Sept., 8, 15 Oct. 1899	

Note: CC = Concerts Colonne; CP = Concerts Populaires; CL = Concerts Lamoureux; Jardin = Jardin zoologique d'acclimatation; JM = *Le journal de musique*; v = voice; pf = piano; pf à 4 = piano, four hands; vln = violin; vc = cello.

ment, a crucial attribute for training citizenship. In other words, a certain meaning was attached to where excerpts were placed on concerts and what surrounded them.²⁸

Conductors played an important role in how audiences would encounter musical fragments. Edouard Colonne knew how to market new music to Parisian audiences and program it appealingly. Even before its staged premiere in Weimar in 1877, he tried to get audiences interested in *Samson et Dalila* by performing the premiere of its first act in March 1875 on a concert that always used a chorus and took place on what was often the most popular day of the year: Good Friday. This performance featured the premiere of Gounod's *Jésus* and ended with an audience favorite, the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The concert was indeed well attended, and ticket sales at the door were the highest for the season.²⁹ Ironically, however, it was not the allusions to Judeo-Christian religiosity that appealed to the public, even on Good Friday. Nor did reviewers compare it to the excerpts from Handel's *Samson* by the Concerts Padeloup that were warmly received the previous month. Instead, they noted that listeners found Saint-Saëns's style inaccessible, elevated, and too complicated, but admired his orchestral colors, even the bizarre ones. They especially appreciated the strikingly original "Dance of the Priestesses," the music in which Dalila begins to work her magic on Samson.³⁰

Colonne's success with this trope of musical charm led him in January 1876 to excerpt the "Dance of the Priestesses." In many ways, he treated it as a new independent work, placing it second on the program, a position often reserved for new music. It may have appeared to audiences as the next in Saint-Saëns's series of tone poems. Like *Phaeton* (which Colonne premiered in 1874), followed by *Le rouet d'Omphale* and the *Danse macabre* (which he premiered in 1875), it was "descriptive music," its exotic narrative inspiring imaginative uses of the orchestra.³¹ It also had a memorable theme and clear structure that was easy to follow.

In January 1880 Colonne moved the "Dance of the Priestesses" to fourth on the program, the position of new work in their repertoire, and paired it with another dance from the opera, the equally exotic "Bacchanale," first excerpted by Padeloup in 1878 (figure 8.3). This introduced his audience to material from act 3, which he presented later that March. Colonne again chose Good Friday. As with the premiere of act 1 five years earlier, audiences preferred the instrumental music, particularly the brilliant orchestration of the "Bacchanale."³² It is significant that the Handelian-influenced choruses and music that revealed Samson's fate on having been seduced, and his courage in resisting his chains, apparently held little interest for audiences of this period.

The reception of these excerpts may surprise us, especially since scholars in recent times have pointed out how unstable the music is harmonically and rhythmically. To what extent did the context in which conductors placed the excerpts encourage audiences to embrace this music despite the absence of the dancers for whom they were written? In the first three performances, the excerpts were twice adjacent to Mozart and Beethoven. Colonne performed the 1875 premiere of act 1 before Mozart's funeral march, a work he had paired with Saint-Saëns's Second Piano Concerto on 13 December 1874. This choice is striking, and not just for the

Camera
ready

6^e ANNÉE — ASSOCIATION ARTISTIQUE — 6^e ANNÉE
Siège de la Société : 155, Faubourg Poissonnière.

DIMANCHE 25 JANVIER 1880. A 2 HEURES PRÉCISES

15^{ME} CONCERT DU CHATELET

PROGRAMME

1. SYMPHONIE en fa mineur (1^{re} audition)..... TSCHAIKOWSKY
Introduction et moderato — Andantino — Scherzo — Finale.
2. SCÈNES D'ENFANTS orchestrées par B. GODARD..... R. SCHUMANN
 - a. Des pays mystérieux.
 - b. Colin-Maillard.
 - c. Bonheur parfait.
 - d. Réverie.
 - e. Sur le cheval de bois.
 - f. L'enfant s'endort.
 - g. En songe.
3. CONCERTO pour violon..... BEETHOVEN
Allegro e cadenza — Larghetto — Rondo.
M. CAMILLE SIVORI.
4. SAMSON ET DALILA..... C. SAINT-SAËNS
 - a. Danse des prêtresses de Dagon.
 - b. Bacchanale.
5. PRÉLUDE DE LA REINE BERTHE..... V. JONCIÈRES
6. POLONAISE DE STRUENSÉE..... MEYERBEER

L'Orchestre sera dirigé par M. Ed. COLONNE.

CE PROGRAMME DOIT ÊTRE DÉLIVRÉ GRATIS.

Premières Loges, Baignoires et Fautouils de Balcon 4 fr. — Fautouils d'Orchestre, 3 fr. — Première Galerie, 2 fr. — Stalles d'Orchestre et Pourtour, 1 fr. 50 — Parterre et Premier Amphithéâtre, 1 fr. — Deuxième et troisième Amphithéâtre, 75 c.

En location : Premières Loges, Balcon et Baignoires, 5 fr. — Fautouils d'Orchestre, 4 fr. — Galerie, 2 fr. 50. — Stalles et Pourtour, 2 fr. — Parterre et Premier Amphithéâtre, 1 fr. 25.

On trouve des Billets : Au THÉÂTRE DU CHATELET, tous les jours (excepté le Lundi), de 1 heure à 5 heures, et le Dimanche de 10 heures à midi 1/2 ; à l'OFFICE DES THÉÂTRES, boulevard des Italiens, 15 ; — AGENCE DES THÉÂTRES, avenue de l'Opéra, 60 ; — chez BRANDUS, rue Richelieu, 103 ; — DUPUIS, rue de Rivoli, 146 ; — DURAND, SCHÖNEWERK et C^{ie}, place de la Madeleine, 4 ; — GREGH, chaussée d'Antin, 10 et boulevard des Italiens, 17 ; — HEUGEL, rue Vivienne, 2 bis ; — KATTO, rue des Saints-Pères, 17 ; — MACKAR, passage des Panoramas, 22 ; — MASCLER, rue du Bac, 43 ; — O'KELLY, faubourg Poissonnière, 11 ; — TELLIER (ancienne maison GÉRARD), boulevard des Capucines, 12 ; — THAUVIN, boulevard Saint Michel, 38. — A la salle des dépêches du Figaro, rue Drouot, 22.

Dimanche 1^{er} Février 1880, 16^e Concert

3604 Imp. V^{ie} RENOU, MAULDE & COCK, R. Rivoli, 144, à PARIS.

Figure 8.3. Concerts Colonne, program of 25 January 1880

reuse of the Mozart. Why did Colonne not juxtapose Saint-Saëns's act 1 with Handel, whose choruses had served as a model? Two months earlier, on 24 January 1875, he had programmed an excerpt from Handel's *Saul* before the premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Danse macabre*. In 1876 the "Dance of the Priestesses" again followed Mozart. Beethoven, of course, was on many Colonne programs, but what is noteworthy is the Violin Concerto he performed adjacent to this dance twice on 16 January 1876 and 25 January 1880. On 19 December 1880 Colonne had programmed the premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne*, also between a Mozart symphony and Beethoven's Violin Concerto.³³ Did Colonne hope listeners would hear a sympathetic resonance between Saint-Saëns's music and that of Mozart and Beethoven? Saint-Saëns was recognized as a pianist for his interpretations of classical music. Germans appreciated his Mozart, and Parisians his virtuoso renditions of Beethoven. Saint-Saëns performed Beethoven's Fantasy for Piano, Chorus, and Orchestra regularly in Paris, including with the Conservatory orchestra the week after the premiere of act 1 from *Samson et Dalila*. He also composed his own Variations on a Theme of Beethoven (1872), which audiences could have heard at the Concerts Colonne on 31 January 1875, three months before their rendition of act 1, and again on 3 April 1876. Might listeners have appreciated the similar phrase structures and formal clarity? Would the influence of the French violin school on the work have made it good for comparison, or might the virtuosity of Beethoven's solos have drawn attention to that of Saint-Saëns's orchestration? If the violinists incorporated Saint-Saëns's cadenza for the concerto, might audiences have compared the work to the composer's approach to Beethoven's music?³⁴ In some ways the German masters set a high standard. When the performance of the dances after Beethoven's Violin Concerto in January 1880 was well received, the comparison worked to Saint-Saëns's advantage, for reviewers suggested that he was on the way to becoming a "grand maître."³⁵

With Saint-Saëns next to Mozart and Beethoven, the Frenchman's orchestral colors (especially in the "Bacchanale") offered audiences the kind of contrast that made for instructive comparisons. The novelty of the dances' exoticism not only enhanced the distinction of Saint-Saëns's music but also led audiences to associate his music with progress and regeneration, even if he did not challenge the principles and structures of classical music. The organization of concert programs in the 1870s would have contributed to this conclusion, for on many of them German classical music and French contemporary music alternated, with the former framing and creating a reassuring context for the innovations of the latter.

That alternating pattern began to change, however, in the 1880s, as conductors programmed less German classical music and more contemporary music. On 25 January 1880, Colonne began with Tchaikovsky's Symphony in F minor, and after the excerpts from *Samson et Dalila* came the prelude from another recent French opera, Joncières's *La Reine Berthe* (Opéra, December 1878) (figure 8.3). On 29 February Colonne's audiences heard two excerpts from Charles Lefebvre's opera, *Dalila*, and, in March, act 3 of *Samson et Dalila* was followed by excerpts from act 3 of Massenet's *Le roi de Lahore* (Opéra, April 1877). The latter would have allowed audiences to compare two concepts of the Orient (the temple of Dagon

versus a Hindu paradise), two versions of Orientalist choral singing and dance music (the Philistine's "Bacchanale" as against the Hindu "Divertissement des esclaves persanes"), and two styles of conducting (as Saint-Saëns and Massenet conducted their own works).

Colonne's orchestra performed excerpts from *Samson et Dalila* a dozen times from the 1870s through the 1890s. Their success as distinct works made them as popular with Colonne's audiences as the tone poems given about the same number of times (see table 8.1). The excerpts provided opportunities for audiences to increasingly compare Saint-Saëns with his French contemporaries. For example, in 1885 and 1887 the "fine and delicate" orchestration of the "Dance of the Priestesses" provided contrast with that of Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* and his powerful *Marche troyenne*. In 1885 Colonne, focusing on vocal style, twice put an air from *Samson et Dalila* after melodies by Edouard Lalo and placed the dances next to music by Franck, Bizet, and Tchaikovsky. Beginning with the premiere of his "Ride of the Walkyries" in 1881, Wagner appeared on four of the remaining eight Colonne concerts with Saint-Saëns's dances but only once was Saint-Saëns's music adjacent to Wagner's. The prelude from *Lohengrin* came after an intermission, as if direct comparison between the two would not be fruitful. The dances from *Samson et Dalila* allowed audiences to situate Saint-Saëns's exoticism in a variety of musical contexts and to test his accomplishments against those of his peers. Colonne thus played an important role in predisposing his audiences to considering a succession of possible meanings.

Transcriptions and Their Meanings

These orchestral successes also had practical functions. With such performances often preceding publication of the musical scores, it is possible that Saint-Saëns used them as opportunities to hear his works before finalizing them for publication.³⁶ Also, and perhaps more important, one week after Colonne's premiere of act 1 in 1875, Durand acquired the score. A year later he published Saint-Saëns's piano transcription of the "Dance of the Priestesses," the selection Colonne had excerpted.³⁷ When Weimar agreed to produce the opera in 1877, Durand published Saint-Saëns's piano-vocal score of the entire opera in French and German, and an eleven-page piano fantasy based on the work "Reminiscences" by Henri Cramer.³⁸ In August 1877, partly to draw attention to the premiere abroad, *Journal de musique*, a family magazine sympathetic to living composers and whose editor had attended the Weimar premiere, reproduced Saint-Saëns's three-page piano transcription of the "Dance of the Priestesses" (figure 8.4). The following year Ernest Guiraud, a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, made a version of this and the "Bacchanale" for piano, four hands.

Why so many transcriptions, particularly for piano, and why by 1877 had both publishers and performers perceived the "Dance of the Priestesses" and the "Bacchanale" as excerpts capable of achieving popularity without the dancers or the orchestra? Transcriptions were certainly a mode of transmission and dissemination. They allowed access of the work to a wider public, somewhat like recordings

DANSE DES PRÊTRESSES

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS.

Allegretto (104.)

PIANO

sempre pianissimo

leggeramente

in g

Danse des prêtresses de Dagon extrait de *Samson et Dalila* (Lurid Schœnewerk et C^{ie} éditeurs 4 place de la Madeleine)

Made figure 30 picas wide.

Camera ready

Figure 8.4. "Dance of the Priestesses," reproduced in *Journal de musique* (August 1877)

except one had to perform them oneself. Listeners who heard them at orchestral concerts may have purchased them as a reminder of these performances and their musical experiences. Except for those who could afford a subscription at the Opéra or Opéra-Comique or who produced operas in their own homes—the musical manifestation of luxury—most people became familiar with art music only through some virtual representative. Transcriptions blurred the boundaries between classes, as did consumer goods at department stores that likewise helped domesticate luxury products and encourage desire for them. Most Parisians could only afford to purchase cheap imitations of the real thing, be it furs, jewelry, or music.

Transcriptions allowed audiences to get to know a work in a variety of formats. Saint-Saëns made piano transcriptions of all his major pieces and often published them simultaneously. He also made them of works by J. S. Bach, Gluck, and Beethoven as well as Berlioz, Gounod, and Wagner, which suggests that he found the exercise useful and satisfying. Sabina Ratner sees them as part of the broader practice of self-borrowing that characterizes Saint-Saëns's compositional output.³⁹ Transcriptions contributed to the repertoire of professional pianists who, following the example of Liszt, were expected to give renditions of works popular in other media, such as opera.⁴⁰ More important, they also allowed Saint-Saëns to try out new works for his peers, such as at the Société Nationale, well before orchestras performed them.⁴¹ Often audiences heard his piano transcriptions first and sometimes found them as satisfying as the original form.⁴² To augment the genre, Saint-Saëns, like other composers, looked to friends he could trust. That illustrious composers such as Fauré and Guiraud would make transcriptions of Saint-Saëns's music suggests that this was not considered lowly work. In becoming coauthor of a work by Saint-Saëns, they would have had to take the genre seriously.⁴³

For publishers, composers, and transcribers, transcriptions were a way to make money and build reputations even if a work never caught on. They were not cheap. While Saint-Saëns's piano-vocal score of the whole opera cost fifteen francs, piano fantasies based on the work, such as Cramer's *Reminiscences*—all produced by the same publisher, Durand—cost from five francs for a five-page version (the price of the best seats at the Concerts Colonne) to nine francs for a thirteen-page *Suite facile* for piano, four hands. Few composers failed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by transcriptions.

Of particular interest in this study is how transcriptions mediate and shape the meanings associated with a work. What happens, for example, when the medium changes? For some, such as Busoni, a great work is always great even if in transcription. Its meaning comes from its essence, not necessarily the medium in which one hears it.⁴⁴ To the extent that transcriptions neutralize the specificity of the original instruments, they encourage the transcriber to act *through* the new medium to communicate something beyond the transcription. The piano is ideal for this kind of work for, as Joseph Kerman (1999: 41, 69) points out, it can mimic human voices, strings, woodwinds, and even the orchestra. From this perspective, the meaning of a transcription can be tied to its function as a sign to the original work or to some essence perceived in it. In this sense, for Busoni and others, transcrip-

tions are not very different from the original work since both are signs to the originating idea.⁴⁵

French composers learned this skill at the Conservatory. Transcribing one's cantata for voices and piano was a required part of the Prix de Rome competition. In most cases and except for the orchestral performance of the winning cantata each year, the piano-vocal transcriptions would be the only form in which these works were heard. It was crucial, therefore, that their essence be perceivable through the medium of transcription and that they stay as close as possible to the original, with no major cuts or rearrangements.

To the extent that transcriptions allow for fragmentation of the original work and presentation of excerpts out of the original context, however, they did not always signify their origins in a simple and straightforward manner. Yes, transcribed excerpts were often used to draw attention to a recent production of a work, particularly those published around the time of its premiere and appearing in newspapers and music magazines. Transcriptions could be used to keep the work in the public ear, in the case of opera, even before it was staged. As reviewers suggest in writing on the orchestral excerpts from *Samson et Dalila*, they also could add pressure on officials to stage it.⁴⁶

But the piano transcriptions of the two opera fragments from *Samson et Dalila* point to a problem in assuming that they signified the opera. Without the orchestra and unable to appeal through their timbres, it is not obvious how these piano transcriptions were understood. Both are dance pieces easily excerpted from the opera, capable of being listened to without the larger context. Neither was difficult for amateurs to perform, with their two-bar gestures, repetition of short passages, and consistent left-hand pattern for long stretches. Perhaps with their grace notes, accented weak beats, and augmented seconds, they brought to mind the charms of exotic culture in general. Like other piano pieces published in *Journal de musique* in 1876–77—songs and dances from Serbia, Peru, Montenegro, Turkey, and Israel—they allowed French audiences to bring the exotic into their homes, to study it up close and become comfortable with it. By performing this music, amateurs could domesticate its exoticism. For republicans advocating an imperialist agenda based on assimilation, such music may have helped French families contemplate the benefits of cultural assimilation without forcing them to consider the social and political consequences of assimilating exotic peoples.

Transcriptions are also a mode of translation and critique, a reading of the original representing a will and desire to convert one kind of order into another, foregrounding what is important.⁴⁷ As such, they represent a distinct form of creativity, more like wood-cut engravings than photographs. They give musical form to the way the transcriber heard or understood the original work, constituting what recent scholars have called an "écriture de l'écoute," a "composition de l'écoute," or an "interprétation composée."⁴⁸ In this sense, the medium of the transcription and its means are less significant than what the transcriber chose to include or exclude, embrace or resist in the original.

Leaving aside the virtuosity that often bathes the borrowed tunes, the piano fan-

tasies on *Samson et Dalila* from 1877, 1882, and 1890 embody what the transcribers thought were its most salient elements. Because these authors sometimes reordered, expanded, and contracted fragments of the original, their fantasies offer various readings of the essence and meaning of *Samson et Dalila*, some of them quite different from what either the composer may have envisaged or one might construe upon seeing the whole opera staged. As such, transcriptions call into question opera as a fixed system of representation. They are neither simple signs to some original nor mere objects of consumption. They have their own authenticity giving them the power to produce meaning and to legitimize perspectives on the work that could change over time. Since transcriptions affect the experience of the work, the transcriber's choices establish boundaries on not only what listeners hear of the work but also what they are likely to imagine. That certain excerpts were repeatedly used in these fantasies attests to their popularity over others that could have been chosen.

Three of the fantasies based on *Samson et Dalila* and published by Durand—Henri Cramer's *Reminiscences* (1877), Georges Bull's *Fantasie* (1890), and Léon Roques's *Illustrations* (1890)—concentrate on music associated with the opera's two main characters (see table 8.2).⁴⁹ What is marked and unmarked in the music derives from the exotic and non-exotic elements underlining this gender opposition. These fantasies start with Samson's hymn from act 1 in which he expresses his strength and associates himself with the Hebrew God: "Israel, let us rise once again. . . . In the Lord follow me." This returns in the middle of his act 2 duo with Dalila, when he explains why he must leave her. His "call to duty" creates the context for her quintessential air, "My heart opens," the musical representation of charm in which she draws Samson's voice into unison with her own. The three fantasies culminate with the "Bacchanale," a celebration of Dalila's victory over Samson.

The choice of these excerpts is significant, as is the order in which they appear. Samson's music represents his commitment to his people before his seduction by Dalila, not his defeat nor his moment of triumph when he breaks the chains. Dalila's music expresses love, not betrayal or anything that reveals her other side. (Music that shows Dalila as unambiguously evil is not included.) The juxtaposition of love with duty was a classic theme in French drama since Corneille. In this fantasy, however, love for a woman does not function as a foil to underline how great is a man's love for his God or his country. By ending with the "Bacchanale," the transcriber, like the orchestral audiences of this music, seems more interested in the musical power of exoticism and thus in the appeal of Dalila's charm, even if in the opera this ultimately results in the male's defeat. Moreover, the excerpts suggest that the two characters are not irreconcilable antagonists. Samson's four-square rhythms and tonal harmonies function as baseline expectations that make Dalila's virtuoso display that follows seem extraordinarily effective. In this sense, the music associated with Dalila and the Philistines provides occasions for transcriber and performer alike to push on the boundaries of the expected, exploring musical equivalents for the exotic Other.⁵⁰

The placement of the "Bacchanale" in these three fantasies implies another message as well. Even if eight of the eleven pages of Cramer's *Reminiscences* are Dalila's

Table 8.2. Piano Fantasies

H. Cramer, *Reminiscences* for piano (Paris: Durand, 1877), eleven pages

1. Act 1/2 Samson's hymn
2. Act 2 Dalila, "Pourquoi repousser ma tendresse?" "on coeur s'ouvre"
3. Act 1 Dalila, "Printemps"
4. Act 1/3 Female Philistine chorus: "Voici le printemps"
5. Act 3 "Bacchanale"

F. Spindler, *Fantaisie brillante* for piano (Paris: Durand, 1882), nine pages

1. Act 1/3 Philistine Chorus, "Voice le printemps"
2. Act 3 "Bacchanale"
3. Act 1 Samson's hymn
4. Act 2 Dalila, "Mon coeur s'ouvre"
5. Act 1 Samson's hymn

G. Bull, *Fantasia facile* for piano (Paris: Durand, 1890), five pages

1. Act 1 Samson's hymn
2. Act 1 Dalila, "Printemps"
3. Act 2 Dalila, "Mon coeur s'ouvre"
4. Act 3 "Bacchanale"

L. Roques, *Illustrations* for piano, four hands (Paris: Durand, 1890), nine pages

1. Act 1 Samson's hymn
2. Act 2 Samson, Dalila, duo "Pourquoi repousser ma tendresse?"
3. Act 2 "Mon coeur s'ouvre"
4. Act 1 Dalila, "Printemps"
5. Act 1/3 Female Philistine Chorus, "Voici le printemps"
6. Act 3 "Bacchanale"

L. Roques, *Suite facile*, No. 1 for piano, four hands (Paris: Durand, 1895), thirteen pages

1. Act 1 Philistine Chorus, "Voici le printemps"
2. Act 1 "Danse des prêtresses"
3. Act 1 Dalila, "Printemps"
4. Act 1 Samson's hymn

L. Roques, *Suite facile*, No. 2 for piano, four hands (Paris: Durand: 1895), thirteen pages

1. Act 2 High Priest, Invocation to Dagon
2. Act 2 Duo Samson, Dalila, "O toi bien-aimé"
3. Act 2 Dalila, "Mon coeur s'ouvre" (eight to nine pages)
4. Act 3 "Bacchanale" (two pages)

airs and excerpts from the female Philistine chorus, the transcribers encircle the feminine music with masculine music, with Samson's hymn first and the "Bacchanale" last. The "Bacchanale," too, shares this shape, incorporating static but oscillating material within the framework of its aggressive, energetic sections. This suggests that the masculine frames the feminine, even within the context of exoticism. Musical structure thus draws attention to the fact that, as in the opera, Dalila nei-

ther acts independently nor has the last word; she follows the orders of the High Priest who creates the context for understanding her actions. This interpretation of the musical sequence supports Levinson's and Gurney's notion of meaning as affected by what comes before and after a given section. At the same time it strengthens the proposition that some overall sense of form is necessary for a more complete musical comprehension.

The three fantasies also interject Dalila's air, "Here comes spring bringing hope to loving hearts," with which she begins to enact her charm. In the opera this follows the "Dance of the Priestesses" and ends act 1. Unlike "My heart opens," this tune is neither exotic nor chromatic. Instead, it shows another side of the character presented here as lyrical and loving, even naïve, with no suggestion of her manipulative nature. Such an excerpt, with the main character stripped of her difference and excessive exoticism, may have been considered more accessible to traditional opera audiences whom concert organizers wished to attract to the new production, for the excerpt appeared in the newspaper *Le figaro* on 19 March 1890, just two weeks after the French premiere of the opera in Rouen.

Cramer and Roques also include two more excerpts. Before Dalila's seductive air, both insert part of the duo in which Samson tries to resist Dalila's entreaty, "Why push away my tenderness?" and eventually comes to recognize his love for her. Later, before the "Bacchanale," they incorporate the Philistine chorus, "The voices of spring." The overall structure of this fantasy thus differs from that of Bull's in ignoring temporal succession in the opera. Here Dalila's two airs come in reverse order. This makes some sense if one hears the fantasy in two parts. The first builds from Samson's hymn of duty and his expressions of resistance to Dalila's successful seduction. The second interjects the Philistines' spring song—music that appears both before Dalila's spring song in act 1 and before the "Bacchanale" in act 3—as a bridge between these two sections, thereby representing both male and female Philistines, the sensuous and the warrior in their culture. In these two fantasies, therefore, exotic music associated with Dalila and the Philistines far outweighs music associated with Samson in quantity and importance. Its first half culminates in Dalila's conquest of Samson, and its second half consists entirely of music associated with the Philistines.

Fritz Spindler's 1882 *Fantaisie brillante*, published the year of the Hamburg premiere of the opera, presents a more balanced relationship between feminine excerpts (five pages) and masculine material (four pages). It begins with the female Philistine chorus and ends with Samson's hymn. However, while reiterating the same excerpts, it more or less reverses their order. The result suggests a different interpretation of the opera's meaning. With the Philistine chorus and "Bacchanale" first, their music serves as the frame for perceiving the couple. This could suggest that Dalila's culture and its exotic difference are the context for understanding her power over Samson. Perhaps not surprisingly, the longest and the most virtuosic section is Dalila's seduction aria, the very notion of seduction inspiring the transcriber's "brilliant" pianism.⁵¹

These fantasies suggest that, until the work was known as an opera in France,

Saint-Saëns's publisher and these transcribers judged that audiences were more interested in the charms of the exotic woman and her culture than any other aspect of the opera. Undoubtedly they were also addressing the fantasies and desires of those who would have performed these pieces. Most likely it was women, for they dominated the world of amateur pianists and singers. Excerpts from Saint-Saëns's opera appeared regularly in private salons in the 1880s.⁵² By 1888 teachers at the Conservatory were assigning their students vocal excerpts for the annual exams.⁵³ Dalila's airs soon became "classics" among "all female singers."⁵⁴

Understanding charm was important to young French women. In an 1887 speech to a women's high school, Eugène Spuller, the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine-Arts, told women that they should nurture "grace, charm, and delicacy," and at the same time "develop a virile character" so that they can also be like fathers to their children if their husbands die. The country, he told them, wants "useful women" (i.e., good wives and mothers), not "useless ornaments to society" (Spuller 1888: 246–49). Certainly Dalila was both charming and useful to her people, and the French public apparently enjoyed reading about her and listening to her music.⁵⁵ After 1890, however, this attitude changed subtly as a profoundly conservative current began to influence republican leaders. As the feminist movement began to gain force, there was a predictable backlash. In 1894 Spuller (1895: 93, 96) told those at another women's school that "feminine education" must not be confused with "virile education." Women "are not made to command, but to inspire." Their role is to bring "a spirit of sweetness and reconciliation into the Republic . . . not to do battle with the opposite sex, but to unite and complete one another." With this new spirit of hostility toward strong women, it should be no surprise that the reception of Dalila would change dramatically, and that in 1890 singers would begin to perform the act 2 air "Love, come help my weakness," in which Dalila plots her betrayal and assumes that Samson's force will be "in vain." In this context, the meanings associated with Saint-Saëns's opera could not remain the same.

Staging the Opera: New Contexts and New Meaning in the 1890s

On 3 March 1890 the French premiere of *Samson et Dalila* at the Théâtre des Arts in Rouen stimulated a new wave of interest in the opera, as did the Parisian premiere on 31 October. The director Henry Verhurt had been looking for a work that was "recognized and at the same time unknown to Parisians" to inaugurate a new lyric theater.⁵⁶ His recent production of it was ideal to bring to Paris, as was the venue he envisaged. The Eden-Théâtre, just a block from the Opéra, had been used by the Concerts Lamoureux for performances in the mid-1880s, and otherwise produced exotic spectacles and ballet. It was therefore an appropriate place to stage a work known so far for its orchestral excerpts and exoticism. For the new venture, the theater was transformed, its promenade gallery removed, and some

seats in the balcony taken away to make space for boxes. Like the Théâtre des Arts, the Théâtre-Lyrique (Eden) attracted the musical cognoscenti to *Samson et Dalila*, but few others.

Critics embraced the opera immediately, calling it Saint-Saëns's best for the theater. Henri Bauer asserts that the "freshness, charm, and delicacy" of the "justly famous" romantic duo would "attract all those who had not yet heard it as well as all those who know it and would like to hear it again."⁵⁷ Another praises this duo in which the composer deploys "all the richness of his inspiration, all his art of declamation, and all the nuances of his so colorful orchestral palette."⁵⁸ At the same time reviewers begin to explore a new perspective on the opera's meaning. Camille Bellaigue emphasizes the work's "virile poetry," "male severity," and "style that eschews all affectation, all refinement that is too picturesque, almost all Oriental color."⁵⁹ This suggests that, for him, the story is less about charm—the woman's wickedness and the man's entrapment—than it is about strength, virility.⁶⁰ Ernest Reyer, too, explains that it is not just about an exotic seductress; it overflows with choruses and music for men. His focus is almost entirely on Samson, the "Jewish Hercules." In the first act Samson "revives the courage of his brothers, promising to lead them to battle"; in the second he resists Dalila's charms three times, "always master of his secret"; in the third he "shatters the pillars of the temple." Arthur Pougin notes that the librettist modified the character of Dalila to render her more theatrical and make her seem "a ferocious fanatic" rather than a "perverse and self-interested woman." His point is that she stands for religion rather than women. Like Reyer, he prefers the first act, praising "the purity of its lines" and the choruses "of grand allure" influenced by Bach and Handel. He considers this the composer's "most powerful and noble" work. In their annual review of Parisian performances, Edouard Noël and Edmond Stoullig also focused on Samson. They pointed out that, although he was an "imprudent" man who was betrayed, Samson saw his strength return while his enemies were making fun of him, unaware that his hair was growing back.⁶¹ This shift of focus from Dalila's charm and the exoticism of the second and third acts to Samson's strength, along with the more severe style of the first act, signals a significant evolution in public taste.

Publishers and performers helped draw attention to these premieres. Besides Dalila's spring song published in *Le figaro* on 19 March, Colonne reprogrammed the "Bacchanale" the same day and twice again that fall. And as we have seen, two more fantasies for piano were published. Increasingly there were also fantasies, sometimes called "mosaics," for other instruments, including the wind band. In the fall of 1890, even before the Parisian premiere, military bands performed one such transcription in Paris. The following summer on 6 June the amateur wind band of the department store Bon Marché opened its 1891 season with a similar transcription of the opera, repeating it again on 15 July.

Like opera fantasies in military band concerts, this wind-band transcription was placed in the middle of the program, typically the fifth of six pieces, as if it were a main course of the musical meal that often began with a march and ended with a polka or waltz. Thousands attended these concerts on Saturday nights in the square outside the store, as well as the late afternoon concerts given by military

SAISON D'ÉTÉ

CONCERT DU SAMEDI 21 JUILLET

5^{me} Audition

dans le Square

à 8 heures ½ du soir

PAR

L'HARMONIE

DU

BON MARCHÉ

SOUS LA DIRECTION

de M. Paulus * *ex-chef de musique de la Garde Républicaine*

PROGRAMME

1^o Marche du Figaro G. WITTMANN.

2^o Samson et Dalila. SAINT-SAËNS.

3^o Anna Bolena DONIZETTI.

4^o Fragments de **Rienzi**. R. WAGNER.

5^o Solo de Cornet, par M. PRIALOUX . . J. MELLÉ.

6^o Mystères des bois L. ITASSE.

FINALE

La prochaine audition aura
lieu le Samedi 4 Août

Camera
ready

Figure 8.5. Concert of the Bon Marché's Harmonie in the Square

Made figure 30 picas wide.

Camera ready

SAMSON ET DALILA
Op. de S. SAÏKS.

PRIX N° 145
Doublures
2^e 1869.

1^{re} FLÛTE.
2^e FLÛTE U.
HAUTBOIS.
3^e CLARINETTE MIB.
CLARINETTE Solo et 1^{re}
2^e 3^e CLARINETTES.
SOPRANO.
ALTO.
TENOR.
BARYTON.
BASSONS en UT.
TROMPETTES MIB.
PISTONS.
CORS MIB.
TROMBONES.
P. BUGLE.
CONTRALTOS Sib.
ALTOS MIB.
BARYTONS Sib.
BASSES Sib.
C. BASSE MIB.
C. BASSE Sib.
BATTERIE.

Arr: par G. MEISTER
Chef de Musique du 1^{er} Génie.

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Figure 8.6. Meister's Fantasy for wind-band, introduction

bands throughout the city several days a week. Wind-band transcriptions not only provided access to those who could never afford to see the opera but also whetted appetites and recalled the memories of those who could attend the Opéra.

The 1891 wind-band fantasy by George Meister, conductor of the first regiment of the military engineers' military band, is a large compilation of music from the opera comprising thirty-one pages in the conductor's score (cf. tables 8.2 and 8.3).⁶² Even if Durand authorized its publication, the fantasy does not respect the original order of the excerpts in the opera.⁶³ In a strange sort of way, however, it does signify one of the work's origins, a fully orchestrated "Marche turque" in MS 545 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. This march, reused as the main section of the "Bacchanale," is a prime example of Saint-Saëns's self-borrowing. He either wrote it in 1859, around the same time as his "choeur d'Israel" later used in the opening of *Samson et Dalila*, or more likely around the time of the "grand march," *Orient et occident*, dated October 1869.⁶⁴ Like *Orient et occident*, the "Marche turque" was written for *grande harmonie* in twenty-seven to thirty-two parts—flutes, clarinets, oboe, saxophones, cornets, trumpets, trombones, and saxhorns of all sizes.⁶⁵

Meister's fantasy resembles the "Marche turque" especially in its tune and texture. The woodwinds articulate the tune in staccatos (clarinets in the "Marche turque"; flutes, oboe, and E♭ clarinet in the fantasy and opera), although the phrase accent in the "Marche" falls on the tonic whereas in the fantasy and the opera it comes on the repeat of the dominant. As in the opera, the fantasy deletes the grace notes drawing attention to the syncopated beats in the opening measures. But otherwise it creates a similar texture. The bare accompaniment of repeated eighth notes on and off the beat creates a static background, also as in the opera. With successive iterations of this tune, the intensity also builds similarly, although the opera adds strings. A valved cornet joins the woodwind tune, together with other brass (saxhorns in the "Marche" and an alternation between bugle and contraltos in the fantasy); a quartet of saxophones, doubled by flutes in the fantasy, adds a layer of alternating sixteenth notes; and the rest of the brass reinforce one or another of the alternating eighths. As such, the wind-band transcription of the "Bacchanale" forges almost an equivalence between the sign and the opera's signified, bypassing the mediating role of the opera.

The organization of this fantasy—Meister's choices from the opera and the order in which he presents them—echoes the critics' focus in 1890 on Samson and the male choruses. Whereas in the earlier piano fantasies the music of Samson provides a horizon against which to judge and enjoy the difference of Dalila's music, in this arrangement the music of men dominates. The work begins and ends with fragments from Hebrew choruses. In the opening segment from act 1, scene 1, the chorus expresses distrust of Samson when he refers to God's action in freeing the people from Egyptian bondage, "That happened long ago . . . now we suffer." Then, in a last excerpt from act 1, scene 2, they shift to faith in his leadership and God's mercy. Besides including two of Dalila's songs, the middle sections focus on the Hebrews' oppressors, both the lascivious, pleasure-seeking Philistines and the aggressive Philistine soldiers. These choices, of course, may reflect the fact that the performers would be male wind-band players, many of them soldiers or men play-

Table 8.3. Wind-band Fantasies

Samson et Dalila, arr. G. Meister (Paris: Evette et Schaeffer, 1891) for harmonie (in thirty-five parts); also performed by military bands, thirty-one pages

1. Act 1 Opening bars
Hebrew Chorus fragment, "Ils ne sont plus, ces temps"
2. Act 1/3 Philistine Chorus, "Voici de printemps"
3. Act 3 Recit *for oboe*
"Bacchanale"
4. Act 1 Dalila, "Printemps" *for contralto*
5. Act 2 Philistine soldiers preparing to ambush Samson:
their theme with Abimélech and the High Priest's curse
6. Act 2 Dalila, "Mon coeur s'ouvre" *for cornet*
Duo, "Réponds" *for cornet and trombone; tutti*
7. Act 1 Hebrews' response to Samson's hymn

Samson et Dalila, arr. Grossin, mosaic for military band, perf. 1899,
as described in *Le petit poucet* (August 1899)

1. Act 2 Prelude, Durand score pp. 94–95
2. Act 1 Hebrew Male Chorus, pp. 71–73
3. Act 1 Philistine Female Chorus, "Voici le printemps," pp. 73–76
4. Act 1 "Danse des prêtresses," pp. 84–88
5. Act 2 Dalila, "Mon coeur s'ouvre," pp. 147–56 *for bugle*
Duo, "Réponds" *for bugle and trombone*
6. Act 3 Samson, p. 224
7. Act 1 Samson's hymn and the Hebrews' response, pp. 48–57 *for trombone and tutti*

Samson et Dalila, arr. A. Luigini (Durand, 1898), fantasy for orchestra with piano
conductor, nine pages

no "Bacchanale"

ing for civic occasions. But other factors may also have contributed to these choices and the fantasy's structure.

Of utmost significance is the principle of aesthetic contrast, characteristic of much military music. The opening excerpts pit the Hebrew and Philistine choruses against each other, the "majestic" followed by the "mellow [*moelleux*]." ⁶⁶ After the Philistines' spring song that ends on "Let us always remember . . . love alone endures and will never die," the "Bacchanale" comes next, as it does in the opera. However, whereas the Spindler piano fantasy has Dalila's seductive music following the passion of the "Bacchanale," as if a female response to the masculine frenzy, this wind-band transcription presents her spring song of soft, lyrical simplicity and manipulative naïveté after the "Bacchanale," an andante after an allegro. Moreover, since Meister truncates the "Bacchanale" somewhat, her song functions in part as a continuation of its more languorous middle section, albeit without the exoticism.

What follows Dalila's song is another allegro propelled by dotted rhythms, music again associated with the Philistines.

The choice of the Philistine soldiers' music situated in the middle of the fantasy is significant. In the opera we hear their first theme when protecting Abimélech in act 1, scene 2, and their second one initially sung by the High Priest cursing the Hebrews in act 1, scene 4. But the counterpoint of these themes comes only at the end of act 2, that is, *after* Dalila's seduction and Samson's revelation of his secret. Placed by Meister *before* "My heart opens," the temporal reversal has narrative implications. With the Philistine soldiers waiting in the wings, we are reminded of the intended betrayal and so hear the seduction scene differently. After "My heart opens" and the romantic duo, the return to music from act 1 is also salient. Ending with the Hebrews' response to Samson's enthusiastic hymn, "Let us rise and be free," their dotted rhythms and leaping fourth foreshadow Samson's call for God's strength at the end of the opera, and the fantasy seems to suggest that, despite the seduction, the will of Samson and his God would prevail. With Samson promising victory, the fantasy thereby concludes on an optimistic tone that, if played by soldiers, could have been meant to uplift both the army when going into battle and the French back home still demoralized by the Prussian defeat.

The alternation of solos and tutti in the fantasy contributes to these musical contrasts. As in the opera, a short cadenza for oboe, *recitativo ad libitum*, accompanied by a long chord in the trombones (horns in the opera) intervenes between the Philistine chorus and the "Bacchanale." The "Bacchanale" then rapidly builds to a long tutti. After this, a solo contralto (with a bugle sometimes substituting) presents Dalila's spring song. It was typical in military and wind-band fantasies of the time for operatic music sung by a female to be performed by the bugle or valved trumpet. The tone remains sweet for this love song as woodwinds eventually double the melody and saxophones add an arpeggio accompaniment reminiscent of lieder. After the basses introduce the aggressive music of the Philistine soldiers and the whole ensemble takes part in the counterpoint of their two themes, the "tumult leads to the calm of Dalila's tender phrase," the valved cornet playing Dalila's seductive air.⁶⁷ Samson and Dalila's love duo follows, "Respond to my tenderness," split between the cornet (leading two clarinets, alto saxophone, and contralto) and the trombone (doubled by the flute, oboe, soprano and tenor saxophones). Building to its climax, the entire band joins in. The duo, however, stops short of including Samson's declaration of love and surrender. Perhaps the transcriber thought this would make the return to the theme of duty in his optimistic hymn at the end seem more plausible. Without the surrender, the bombastic tutti of the final section could also function as an expression of continued resistance.

The inclusion of these solos serves other purposes as well, some related to their function as signs to the opera. Of particular interest are the words for "Here comes spring" and "My heart opens," printed under Dalila's airs as if to suggest that performers have them in mind while playing (see figure 8.7). Was Meister hoping to communicate to listeners the iconic nature of the sign and the meaning of the words? He also indicated performance instructions, asking the cornet player to interpret the female airs just as in the opera, "*dolce*" and then "*dolcissimo e cantabile*."

Made figure
30 pi-
cas wide.

Camera
ready

Op. 48/63

23

The image shows a musical score for a wind band, measures 1 through 27. The score is written for a large ensemble, including woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The notation is complex, with many notes and rests. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into systems, with measures 1-11 on the first system, 12-21 on the second, and 22-27 on the third. The lyrics are in French and are written below the staves. The score is marked with 'Op. 48/63' at the top left and '23' at the top right. The lyrics include: 'A la fin de la guerre', 'Mais, ô mon bien-aimé', 'comme sur vent les feuilles', 'à ta voix', 'délirieux et extatique', 'Mon cœur s'élève', 'A la fin de la guerre', 'Mais, ô mon bien-aimé', 'comme sur vent les feuilles', 'à ta voix', 'délirieux et extatique', 'Mon cœur s'élève'. The score is marked with 'Op. 48/63' at the top left and '23' at the top right. The lyrics include: 'A la fin de la guerre', 'Mais, ô mon bien-aimé', 'comme sur vent les feuilles', 'à ta voix', 'délirieux et extatique', 'Mon cœur s'élève', 'A la fin de la guerre', 'Mais, ô mon bien-aimé', 'comme sur vent les feuilles', 'à ta voix', 'délirieux et extatique', 'Mon cœur s'élève'.

Figure 8.7. Meister's Fantasy for wind-band, Dali's air

In asking soloists to imitate the human voice, to play as the characters sing, Meister was challenging them to explore operatic expressivity, including sentiments and music associated with women. Listeners could reap the benefits without the luxury of women or opera singers. Organizers of military-band performances considered the contributions of these soloists important enough to list their names in the programs.

Meister's tempo choices also imitate those of the opera:

Moderato;

Allegretto (quarter note = 76) for the Philistine chorus;

Allegretto (quarter note = 120) for the "Bacchanale";

Andante (quarter note = 84) for Dalila's spring song;

Allegro moderato (quarter note = 116) and *animato poco a poco* for the Philistine soldiers preparing to ambush Samson;

Andante (quarter note = 66) for the seduction air, *Un peu plus lent* for the duo; and

Allegro (half note = 76) for the Hebrew chorus and finale.

This, too, contributes to the sense of contrast from one section to the next. At the same time it sheds light on the work's organization and integrity as distinct from its capacity to signify the opera. The middle sections, framed by the male choruses and extending from the "Bacchanale" through the seduction scene, are a balanced A-B-A'-B' in terms of texture and tempo. In order for the rhythmic proportions of these sections to mirror this structure, Meister may have truncated the strophic repetition of "My heart opens" and the romantic duo. At the same time he incorporates intact both Dalila's spring song and the Philistines' ambush of Samson. The result is sections of roughly the same length.

This compositional structure gives much more weight both to Dalila's spring song and the music accompanying the Philistines' ambush than the opera does. Several motivations might have led to this. In much military music, assertive, upbeat sections that are meant to rouse and inspire soldiers alternate with lyrical sections that provide relief and a respite from the demands of energetic display. This could symbolize the juxtaposition not only of the masculine and the feminine but also of military service and private, civilian life that soldiers were there to protect. In Meister's fantasy, the docile, hypnotic rhythms and melodic tenderness of the love song serve the function of difference well. Here it is not the allure of the Oriental as in the opera but rather the stereotypical feminine and the expression of love. The section functions musically as if it were a trip home to one's beloved in the middle of a life filled with battles and men. The words written under its notes suggest the soldiers' feelings, their anxiety about their beloveds waiting for "their return," their nostalgia for spring as a time of "hope for hearts in love," and their "memories of past happiness." In this context, Dalila's song probably would have been heard as expressing universal sentiments with which soldiers or their beloveds might identify.

Meister's choices also reflect his desire to challenge performers in their ensemble playing. Indeed, while some considered wind-band transcriptions of art music "travesties," those promoting them believed they would have a positive effect on

both performers and audiences.⁶⁸ Renewing the concert repertory for military musicians with works using different scales and harmonies, more complicated melismatic ornaments, quicker rhythms, and more subtle textures helped soldiers grow as musicians. The coordination demanded by this music undoubtedly also helped to make them better soldiers. In the Philistines' spring song, three chamber groups alternate and come together, creating the need for subtle balance in the performing forces. Accompanying Dalila's spring song and her seductive air, the clarinets and saxophones would have to hold long notes quietly and play extended, delicate repeated staccatos in unison and sweet arpeggios, like the strings and harp in the opera. From this perspective, it is perhaps understandable that Meister would devote so much attention to the music for the Philistines' ambush, otherwise a minor part of the opera. Not only does it extend the chamber groups in alternation to more instruments and tighter, closer juxtapositions, its difficult counterpoint requires precision and clarity from the whole band. Such music thus not only helped composers and theaters to attract attention to new works but also gave band members opportunities for different kinds of playing, using the complexities of contemporary music to stretch their skills and capacities.

Another year would go by before the Paris Opéra produced *Samson et Dalila*, even with pressure from productions in the provinces (Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes, Dijon, and Montpellier) and abroad (Geneva, Monte Carlo, Algiers, Florence, and a concert version that March in New York). Meanwhile, in July and August 1892, Parisians could hear eleven performances by the military bands of three infantry regiments, as well as the zoo orchestra performing the wind-band fantasy all over the city, from the Champs de mars in the prestigious seventh district and the centrally located Tuileries and Luxembourg gardens to three sites in the working-class eastern part of town.

When the Opéra did schedule it for 23 November, they spent very little on the decor and costumes and, although Colonne conducted it from memory, Mme Blanche Deschamps-Jehin, the wife of the well-known conductor, was unconvincing as Dalila, her powerful voice a bit overwhelming and her talents perceived as "a little too bourgeoise."⁶⁹ Moreover, the opera evidently started thirty minutes late because there was so much talk in the corridors, possibly about problems in Dahomey and Tunisia that were dominating the news.⁷⁰ One critic noted that since the story had become "trop connu," especially with Reyer's *Salammbô* produced at the Opéra all that year, the listener could become "absorbed in the exclusive admiration of the art." Critics were divided over the dramatic qualities of the outer acts, some praising the "grandiose effect" of its choruses and "skillful simplicity" of its style, and others bemoaning the influence of oratorio on the lack of dramatic movement. At the same time they observed that the public preferred the second act not just because of its theatrical color and intimate beauty but also because of the ease with which the air and duos had been excerpted and made known through performances in homes and on concerts.⁷¹ As in 1890, it was anticipated that the "irresistible intertwining, the freshness, charm, and delicacy" of the romantic duo would attract to the production those who had not heard it as well as those who already knew it well.⁷² For its part, on the day of the premiere, *Le Figaro* responded

conservatively, publishing a piano transcription of the ever-popular "Dance of the Priestesses," and Roques, addressing the renewed interest of audiences in the duo, made new transcriptions of it for piano, four hands, and for violin and cello.

Throughout December 1892, the Opéra performed *Samson et Dalila* after another work of far less significance by an unknown composer, Alix Fournier's one-act opera, *Stratonice* (1892), as if to discourage audiences.⁷³ Still, sixty-one performances of the opera followed in two years, as did transcriptions for other instrumental combinations (see table 8.1). Compilations published after the opera was staged, however, treat it somewhat differently than those from the 1870s and 1880s. Roques's first *Suite facile* for piano (1895) contains only excerpts from act 1 and, unlike all previous piano fantasies based on the opera, follows Meister's 1891 wind-band version: it ends rather than begins with Samson's hymn. Dalila's and the Philistine's languorous music, including the "Dance of the Priestesses," establishes the context for what Samson stands up for when he proclaims, "Israel, break your chains! O people, rise up." In his second *Suite facile* with excerpts from acts 2 and 3, Roques for the first time incorporates music expressing Dalila's duty to her people. Placed before the love duo with Samson, "O, you beloved, for whom I've been waiting," and the seduction air, "My heart opens," it plants betrayal as the central motivation for Dalila's behavior. Coming after these, the "Bacchanale" reinforces the image of depravity and decadence.

After being produced as an opera, *Samson et Dalila* left the repertoire of major orchestras but joined that of military and wind bands (see table 8.1). Their performances interwove closely with those at the Opéra. For example, between performances at the Opéra on 3 and 26 May 1893, military bands played the work on 16 May at the Tuileries, 18 May at Passy, 19 May at the Palais Royal, 21 May in the Luxembourg gardens, and 23 May again in the Tuileries. Anticipating the 9 June performance at the Opéra, these bands repeated it on 31 May at the Palais Royal, 1 June at both the Champs-de-mars and out where workers lived, the Buttes Chaumont, as well as on 7 June at the Palais Royal and on 8 June at the Champs-de-mars. From 1892 through 1894, over sixty military-band performances were heard in more than a dozen Parisian gardens, and this continued through the turn of the century.

These concerts had programs and notes published for them in *Le petit poucet*, a magazine of military-band music. Whereas the notes for Meister's fantasy performed by Garde Républicaine in 1896 featured only a description of the excerpts from the opera, those for Grossin's military-band arrangement of *Samson et Dalila* performed in 1899 included a short performance history of the opera, an outline of the excerpts with reference to the analogous pages in the published piano-vocal score, and a narrative linking them to the opera. These cite the texts from the Chorus of the old Hebrews from act 1, the first stanza of the Philistine chorus, "Here comes spring," and two stanzas of the text for Dalila's seduction air and duo for bugle and trombone:

Bugle: My heart opens to your voice. . . .
Ah respond to my tenderness . . .

Trombone: Dalila! Dalila! I love you!
Bugle: Wooed by the summer breeze . . .
Bugle and trombone: Ah respond to my tenderness . . .

In this case the performance clearly was intended to point to the opera as a theatrical production and musical score, perhaps even creating a desire to hear it at the Opéra. Why then, one might ask, does this fantasy present the excerpts out of their original order? Like Meister's fantasy, the organizing principle seems to be aesthetic contrast and an overall tripartite structure resembling that of military music, with the Hebrew male choruses framing music associated with Dalila and the priestesses. The mosaic begins with the highly chromatic prelude from act 2, a tone poem suggesting the fall of night in an exotic locale. Next come two choruses: the harmonically and melodically static male chorus of old Hebrews singing in praise of their God and foreshadowing their deliverance by Samson, followed by the more supple arabesques of the female Philistines' spring song. This leads to Dalila's entreaty for Samson to follow her, as played by the bugle—the "Dance of the Priestess" used for the first time in such a setting—and Dalila's seductive air. Love appears as an interlude in a piece about men. Perhaps most significant, as in the fantasy for orchestra published in 1899, there is no "Bacchanale" to distract listeners with its charm. Like other fantasies from the 1890s, Samson has the last word. The composer ends, perhaps addressing the French, with a call for the Hebrews to return to their previous grandeur.

Such a reading of the opera may have been self-serving, with military band conductors using Saint-Saëns as a pretext to expand the boundaries of military music without questioning its conventional structures. But if we take history as a set of practices and music as important *lieux de mémoire*, places that remind us of the ambiguities underlying our treasured monuments, this interpretation makes some sense. After 1889, "the year of exoticism," many French were tiring of exotic Others. A decade of extensive colonization wrought with troubles had also made them less naïve about their "*voyages imaginaires*." Some began seriously to question France's civilizing mission and its "great idea of raising up the races." As the French had to come to grips with conquering and governing their colonies—particularly Dahomey, in the 1890s, with its ferocious female Amazons—works portraying women as willful, rebellious, and even capable of treason began to challenge the conventions associated with exotic female characters, to imbue them and what they may have stood for with increasing ambivalence. At the same time, with the first stage of the Franco-Russian alliance completed in August 1891, the country was feeling a renewed sense of strength as a nation, encouraging a celebration of their virile qualities. Increasingly in the 1890s transcriptions as well as critics drew attention to these qualities in the opera, planting the seeds for misogynist interpretations. By the one-hundredth performance at the Opéra in 1897, reviewers were calling Dalila "treacherous," her voice "hypocritically caressing."⁷⁴ Studying the contingencies of meaning implied in opera fantasies thus helps to draw our attention to how music can express the flux of national identity. As Pierre Nora (1984: vii, ix) has pointed out, it is sometimes "places without glory, little frequented by

research and disappeared from circulation that make us most realize what the place of memory is."

Conclusion

The aesthetic of authenticity and the value we ascribe to the apparent intentions of a composer have often blinded us to how an opera reaches diverse audiences and generates meaning. In this chapter I have shown why we should reevaluate our assumptions about the composer's or the Opéra's hegemony. When works were written to tolerate fragmentation and reproduction in many formats and contexts, it was not possible to control the uses to which they could be put and the ensuing meanings they could generate. Some, as I have suggested, emerged from choices made by transcribers and from juxtapositions with the music surrounding them on concerts. Orchestral and vocal excerpts, piano and wind-band transcriptions, and a wide range of popular venues led to pressure on theaters to produce *Samson et Dalila* and played an important role in popularizing it; but they also helped to shape listeners' "horizon of expectation." Before the work was staged, these focused principally on Dalila, feminine charm, and the work's exotic elements. After it reached the Opéra in 1892, they shifted to celebrating Samson and virile strength. This tells us much about the flux in French taste and French identity during this period. Excerpts and transcriptions are thus important for the perspective they offer on the history of reception and public taste.

Such practices were not unique to *Samson et Dalila*. From the Second Empire through World War I, many operas in France, both foreign and contemporary French works, went through this process. Beginning in the 1860s, the Garde républicaine's conductor A. Sellenick composed and performed wind-band fantasies on not only popular operas by Meyerbeer and Verdi but also Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* in 1867, the year of its Théâtre-lyrique premiere. Also in the 1860s, long before the opera was staged at the Eden Theater in 1887, audiences heard the march and prelude of *Lohengrin* in Parisian concert halls, and fantasies on *Lohengrin* for piano or wind band. Orchestral concerts and wind bands in public parks played excerpts from new works such as Massenet's *Hérodiade* and Reyer's *Salammbô* before their staged premieres in 1882 and 1892.⁷⁵ Even if an opera was produced on stage soon after its composition, such as Delibes's *Lakmé* in 1883, Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* in 1883, and his *Prosperine* in 1887, most large-scale works were heard most often and by the most people in some partial form. In 1899 the editor of *Le petit poucet* claimed that without the help of wind-band transcriptions, "the glory of Saint-Saëns, Massenet, and Reyer would not have penetrated as easily into the provinces [where there were not always symphony orchestras] and works of theirs that cannot be adequately played by the solo piano would have remained completely unknown."⁷⁶ In making a work available to amateurs as well as professionals, provincials as well as Parisians, and in diverse private and public venues, transcriptions and excerpts broke down meanings tied to the class, education, politics, and location of Opéra audiences.⁷⁷

Such a study leads us to interrogate the compositional consequences of such

contingent meanings. Did the knowledge that their work would inevitably be transcribed and perhaps become known largely through excerpts and transcriptions in turn influence composers' choices of what and how they wrote? The "Dance of the Priestesses," for example, was appreciated for its orchestral effects in part because its main theme could so easily be fragmented and played by a wide range of instruments. What effect did such consideration have on works that became part of the canon? Did some composers feel it was necessary at the end of the nineteenth century to inhibit the performance of excerpts and the medium of transcription by writing music that could not move easily among different formats, venues, and performers? From this perspective, Debussy's focus on timbral specificity and formal ambiguity in his *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and other works takes on a new light, as does his desire for musical meaning that was immanent rather than transcendental. Debussy and other French modernists embraced an aesthetic of difficulty to distance music from the general public, reversing the practice of making it accessible.⁷⁸ Schoenberg, too, wished to get beyond pianistic writing that was really just a transposition of orchestral music. Even if his colleagues at the Association for Private Musical Performances made chamber transcriptions of many contemporary works, including Debussy's *Faun*, Schoenberg told Busoni that transcriptions made him fearful of losing control over his own work.⁷⁹ Modernism, then, may have arisen partly as a reaction to the processes I have outlined here, sacrificing all that this tradition brought to audiences in terms of meaning as well as access to the contemporary music of their times.

Notes

For a fuller discussion of the issues raised in this chapter, see my *Useful Music, or Why Music Mattered in Third Republic France*, to be published by the University of California Press. I am grateful to Marianne Wheeldon and Byron Almén for their kind invitation to participate in the symposium, "Music and Meaning," at the University of Texas at Austin on 27 January 2003; to Jim Webster for inviting me to present this to the music department at Cornell University on 9 October 2003; and to colleagues and students for their helpful comments on these occasions as well as at the University of California, San Diego, on 8 February 2005.

1. *Howards End* (1992) was directed by James Ivory and produced by Ismail Merchant. The screenplay, based on a novel by E. M. Forster, was written by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala.
2. All this is ironic, for in E. M. Forster's novel upon which the film is based, it is Helen, not the lecturer, who imagines the goblins. Moreover, she is listening to an orchestral performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, not a piano transcription.
3. This expression comes from Robert Hatten (1994: 5).
4. If we take gender to be what S. Žižek (1989: 87) has called a "floating signifier" whose "literal signification depends on metaphorical surplus-signification," we can use it to consider a network of possible meanings generated by a work. Gender is one element of the "ideological field" discussed in Žižek's *Sublime Object of Ideology*. For him, such elements

"are structured into a unified field through the intervention of a certain 'nodal point' (the Lacanian *point de capiton*) which 'quilts' them, stops their sliding and fixes their meaning."

5. In his *Resistance to Theory* Paul de Man (1986: 58–60) discusses "horizon of expectation," derived from Husserl's phenomenology of perception and used by Hans Robert Jauss to explain the nature of historical consciousness. See Jauss 1982a: 79; 1982b: chap. 5.

6. Ms 545, Bibliothèque Nationale, Département de Musique, Paris.

7. Moreover, Saint-Saëns's friend, Pauline Viardot, sang an air from this work at the Conservatoire in 1862. See Servièrès 1930: 171.

8. See Ellis 2005, chap. 6.

9. Gossec also set this to music to accompany the transfer of Voltaire's ashes to the Panthéon in 1791. See Pierre 1899: xxviii.

10. Paul Bernard, *Revue et gazette musicale* (16 June 1872).

11. Feuillet's *Dalila* was published in many editions including in 1855, 1857, 1860, 1870, 1876, and 1892. Two other dramas on the topic were also published in 1857: Armand Lapointe's *Dalila et Samson* and Francisque Tapon Fougas's *La princesse Dehli-la ou Des lilas*, a parody in five acts.

12. According to James Harding, an excerpt from act 2 was performed in a salon in 1867. In his entry, "Samson et Dalila," Hugh Macdonald suggests that Saint-Saëns abandoned his opera after sharing aspects of act 2 with his friends and "only after the appearance in 1872 of his third opera, *La princesse jaune*, did he feel sufficiently encouraged to resume *Samson et Dalila*" (*New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com>; accessed 16 Sept. 2003). The sketches, ending with those for act 3, were completed on his first trip to Algeria in 1873, the orchestral parts in January 1876. See Servièrès 1930: 34; and Ratner 1985.

13. Victor Wilder, "Premières représentations," *Gil blas* (2 Nov. 1890).

14. Bal (1987: 65) writes, "Delilah's role could ultimately be compared to the analyst's. It is only when she reproaches Samson for not feeling real love in the sense of surrender that he realizes that surrender is what he seeks, that he understands the real nature of his love and the anxiety that knowledge evokes in him. She is the instrument of, or the partner in, his talking cure."

15. In the Bible, chapter 16 of the Book of Judges, this riddle comes from Samson. During a bachelor party before his first marriage, he asks it in the form of a declarative sentence: "Out of the eater came forth a meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (14:14). Later the Philistines answer it in the form of a question, "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" Bal (1987: 42, 45) interprets this as the relationship between pleasure and strength in sexuality.

16. Michel Faure 1985: 117–19.

17. See the bust of Liberty reproduced in Agulhon 1981: 97.

18. See Agulhon 1981: 12–13.

19. Also see McClary 1992 and Locke 1991 for excellent bibliographies on this subject.

20. According to Debora Silverman (1989: 127), scholarly writers on the arts and crafts of Japan were particularly attracted to such values.

21. According to Homi K. Bhabha (1986), this insures the replicability, predictability, and thus understandability of stereotypes.

22. I develop this thesis more fully in part 2 of my *Useful Music, or Why Music Mattered in Third Republic France*, forthcoming from the University of California Press.

23. Oratorio was declared in fashion in "Paris et départements," *Ménestrel* (7 Feb. 1875): 78.

24. As reported in Victorin Joncières, "Revue Musicale," *La liberté* (21 June 1897).

25. See Collet 1922: 37. Note that Roland was another hero of French history, also commemorated with a "Hymne de Roland" by Rouget de Lisle written around the same time as his more famous "Marsaillaise."

26. Letter to Jules Combarieu of 8 November 1901; cited in Ratner 1985: 114.

27. See Henry Bauer, "Les premières représentations," *Echos de Paris* (25 Nov. 1892).

28. Among today's conductors, Pierre Boulez is one of those who arrange their concerts with a keen ear for how one work affects the perception of another on the same program.

29. The concert earned 4,806 francs in part because ticket prices were increased somewhat for the concert programs for the year (Concerts Colonne Archives, Paris).

30. Octave Fouquet, *Revue et gazette musicale* (28 Mar. 1875): 100–101.

31. Audiences preferred these to *La jeunesse d'Hercule*, which Colonne premiered on 28 January 1877. Auguste Morel, in "Concerts annoncés," *Ménestrel* (4 Feb. 1877): 79, found that, in trying to express abstract and philosophical ideas, this piece "required too much" of music.

32. The vocal music was far less successful partly because of the singers. See A. M. [Auguste Morel], "Concerts et soirées," *Ménestrel* (4 Apr. 1880): 143.

33. The Société des Concerts du Conservatoire chose similar works to pair with Saint-Saëns's music. On 27 February 1876 they performed a "very noble and elevated" chorus from *Saul* immediately before *Le rouet d'Omphale*, and "par piquant contraste déjà très marqué" followed this with Beethoven's Violin Concerto. See Aug. [Auguste] Morel, "Concerts et soirées," *Ménestrel* (5 Mar. 1876): 110.

34. Saint Saëns's cadenza for Beethoven's Violin Concerto was not always well received. A reviewer of Marguerite Pommereuil's performance at the Concerts Pasdeloup wrote in the *Revue et gazette musicale* 44.5 (4 Feb. 1877): 36–37, "Pour faire quelque chose d'aussi spécial qu'un point d'orgue de concerto, de même qu'une étude, il faut de toute nécessité pratiquer l'instrument et le bien posséder. M. Saint-Saëns est un compositeur de premier ordre, un admirable musicien et un grand pianiste: il a échoué, complètement échoué dans cette cadence pour le violon, dont le style même est étranger à celui de l'oeuvre." I am grateful to Maiko Kawabata for directing me to this.

35. *Ménestrel* (1 Feb. 1880): 70.

36. Colonne also performed *Phaeton* before the orchestral score and parts were published in 1875 and *Danse macabre* nine months before their publication that October.

37. "Paris et départements," *Ménestrel* (4 Apr. 1875): 143.

38. In 1876 Cramer had also done a transcription of Saint-Saëns's *Danse macabre* for easy piano.

39. These included compositions reworked for different instrumental combinations, works extracted from larger ones and adapted for a new usage, and the reemployment of melodic material from one composition in a subsequent composition. See Ratner 1997: 243–56; see also the transcriptions listed for each work in Ratner 2002.

40. Sabina Ratner pointed this out to me in a telephone conversation on 23 February 2003.

41. Furthermore, according to Brian Rees (1999: 164), composers submitted their works in piano versions for consideration by their peers and for secret voting.

42. A. M. [Auguste Morel], "Concerts et soirées," *Ménestrel* (5 Mar. 1876): 111.

43. Guiraud produced transcriptions for piano, four hands, of *Le rouet d'Omphale*, *Danse macabre*, *La jeunesse d'Hercule*, and *Hymne à Victor Hugo*, as well as one for two pianos, eight hands, of *Danse macabre*. Fauré transcribed for piano, four hands Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne* and his overture to *La princesse jaune*.

44. See Busoni 1922: 147–53.

45. For further discussion of this attitude, especially in the music of Schumann, Liszt, and Busoni, see Szendy 2000a, 2000b.
46. E. de Bricqueville, "Nouveaux concerts," *Ménestrel* (28 Dec. 1884): 31.
47. Dufourt 1991: 179.
48. See Szendy 2000a: 15; Pauset 2000: 131–40; Szendy 2001; and Zender 2002: 36. Zender used the latter term to describe his orchestration of Schubert's *Winterreise*. This work, performed at the Cité de la musique in November 2002, was part of a series of concerts dedicated to transcriptions, twenty-five of them focusing on piano transcriptions.
49. Jean-Léon Roques took first prize in counterpoint and fugue at the Conservatory in 1862, composed operettas (*La rosière d'ici* for Anna Judic), and was later accompanist at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens, conductor, and organist. Besides his numerous transcriptions of many composers' works, he orchestrated Offenbach airs for café-concert performances.
50. Here I am using virtuosity to mean not just bravura but also what Kerman (1999: 67 ff.) calls "virtù," or power and capacity.
51. Because Dalila sings remnants of this aria mockingly after the "Bacchanale," one could hear the aria placed here as tinged with her treacherous intentions.
52. For Mme Brunet-Lafleur's performance of a Dalila air in April 1884, Countess Elizabeth Greffulhe paid more than one thousand francs. This was a large sum, supporting the interest it held for her. At this concert Saint-Saëns's music was paired with an air from *Tannhäuser* sung by Jean-Baptiste Faure.
53. Exam presented by a vocal student in the class of M. Boulanger, 14 January 1888. Notes taken during the annual exams at the Conservatory in the 1880s (AJ37.239, Archives Nationales, Paris).
54. Intérim, "Chronique musicale," *Figaro* (1 Nov. 1890); Ernest Reyer, "Samson et Dalila," *Journal des débats* (9 Nov. 1890). There were also occasional performances of transcriptions of the entire opera. According to "Concerts et soirées," *Ménestrel* (20 June 1880): 231, a singing teacher in Bordeaux organized a performance of the opera by his students, accompanied by two pianos and harmonium, and later students of Mme Bosquet-Luigini performed a four-hand piano version of the opera, possibly Roques's *Illustrations*, in their recitals of 7 May 1891 and 2 June 1892. In the second context, *Samson et Dalila* was surrounded by short works of Chaminade and Chabrier as well as four-hand versions of Wagnerian operas. These included Chaminade's "Fileuse," "Sévilane," and "Idylle arabe," Wagner's overture to *Tannhäuser*, a fantasy on *Lohengrin*, and a chorus from *Vaisseau fantôme*, most of them for piano, four hands, as well as Beethoven's Eroica Symphony for two pianos, eight hands.
55. Subsequent editions of Feuillet's *Dalila* appeared in 1870, 1876, 1882, and 1892.
56. Intérim, "Chronique musicale." According to their review of the 1890s performance at the Eden-Théâtre in their *Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique*, Edouard Noël and Edmond Stoullig (1892: 513) suggest that it was they who suggested *Samson et Dalila* to Verdhurt.
57. Henri Bauer, "Les premières représentations," *Echos de Paris* (2 Nov. 1890).
58. Intérim, "Chronique musicale."
59. Camille Bellaigue, writing in *Le figaro* (26 Jan. 1889). In spite of such praise, he goes on to say that he prefers the composer's oratorio *Le Deluge*.
60. In his review of the Rouen premiere, Léon Kerst, too, noted that the composer treated the subject with "unusual vigor" ("*Samson et Dalila*," *Le petit journal* [4 Mar. 1890]).
61. Reyer, "Samson et Dalila"; Arthur Pougin, "Semaine théâtrale: *Samson*," *Ménestrel* (9 Nov. 1890): 354–56; Noël and Stoullig 1892: 513–15.
62. This is the earliest wind-band version of the opera in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Besides his wind-band transcriptions of waltzes, polkas, and marches,

Georges Meister had already produced important band fantasies of operas soon after their premieres, such as Saint-Saëns's *Prosperine* (1888; Opéra-Comique 1887), Chabrier's *Le roi malgré lui* (1890; Opéra-Comique 1887), and Messager's *La Basoche* (1891; Opéra-Comique 1890). As with *Samson et Dalila*, he made a fantasy of Reyer's *Salammbô* (1890) before its Opéra production in 1892. In 1892 he also published military-band fantasies of Bizet's *La jolie fille de Perth*, revived in 1887, and Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, premiered in Karlsruhe in 1890 and performed in Paris at the Opéra-Comique in 1892. Meister continued to produce fantasies of such works throughout the 1890s.

In response to an earlier version of this paper delivered at University of Texas at Austin, on 27 January 2003, Robert Hatten encouraged consideration of how these fantasies might resemble overtures. In the case of *Samson et Dalila*, however, there is no overture and the short introduction does not announce the work's subsequent themes.

63. Durand's explicit authorization is noted on the bottom of the first page of the conductor's score.

64. Sabina Ratner (1997: 246 n. 11) notes that the handwriting and paper of this manuscript "strongly resemble that of an early 'choeur d'Israel' dated 1859 by Saint-Saëns." In a telephone conversation with the author on 23 February 2003, Ratner noted that MS 545 is a compilation of the composer's manuscripts which he gave to the Opéra archivist Charles Malherbe who probably bound them in the order the composer indicated.

65. What makes it a "musique turque" is the inclusion of a large drum, cymbals, a triangle, and a tambour de basque. See Kastner 1848: 332.

66. "Programme analytique," *Le petit poucet* (9 June 1896): 3–4.

67. *Ibid.*

68. In an editorial comment, Henry-Abel Simon writes that "the genius does not shine through less" in them and that the "practical result" of performing such music would be "the modification of the repertoire of our music societies that is so much desired and the elevation of taste" (*Orphéon* [Jan. 1882]). Efforts to improve the quality of military music had begun with discussions at the Chambre des députés in 1882 and culminated in new laws in 1898 calling for additional training and status assigned to directors of military bands. See the Annex no. 1507 for the 13 December 1882 session of the Chambre des députés A.N., S.E. t.4, 312–13.

69. F. Régnier, "Premières représentations. Opéra. *Samson et Dalila*," *Le Journal* (24 Nov. 1892).

70. Bicoquet, "La soirée parisienne. *Samson et Dalila*," *Echos de Paris* (25 Nov. 1892).

71. Régnier, "*Samson et Dalila*"; Henri Bauer, "Les premières représentations," *Echos de Paris* (25 Nov. 1892).

72. Henri Bauer, "Les premières représentations," *Echos de Paris* (2 Nov. 1890).

73. Emile Eugène Alix Fournier (1864–1897), a pupil of Delibes, won a Deuxième Second Grand Prix de Rome in 1889. Louis Gallet wrote the libretto of his one-act opera, *Stratonice*, published by Paul Dupont in 1892. With a subject echoing that of Méhul's *Stratonice* (1792), the work had recently won the Crescent competition. In his review, "Paris au théâtre," in *Le petit journal* (10 Dec. 1892), Léon Kerst called it "antimusical," a work of "pretentious incoherence" without "any ideas" whose reception was "less than zero." Still, it was performed fourteen times until the last one on 4 March 1893.

74. Victorin Joncières, "Revue musicale," *La liberté* (21 June 1897).

75. Léon Chic published a fantasy on *Hérodiade* for musiques militaires in 1882, just after the world premiere in Brussels in December 1881, but two years before the Opéra produced it. The Concerts Colonne featured excerpts of it sung by M. Faure on 17 February 1884, only two weeks after its Opéra premiere on 1 February, and Salomé's air sung by Mme

Fides-Devriès there on 11 April 1884, Good Friday. Likewise G. Meister published a fantasy on *Salammbô* for musiques militaires in 1890, coinciding with the world premiere in Brussels; Théodore Dureau did one for harmonie militaire in 1891; and Gabriel Parès published a "Second Fantasy" on *Salammbô* in 1892, the year the work premiered at the Paris Opéra.

76. "A nos lecteurs," *Le petit poucet* (2 May 1899).

77. In this sense, transcriptions and excerpts challenge the direction, tempo, and dynamics of Georg Simmel's trickle-down theory. Simmel (1904) argues that when "subordinate social groups" have tastes resembling those of "superordinate groups," they result from the former imitating the latter in search of new status claims, a process he interprets as unidirectional. For a fuller discussion of this, see my article "Material Culture and Postmodern Positivism: Rethinking the 'Popular' in Late 19th c. French Music" (2004: 356–87).

78. Debussy may have preferred that listeners hear his music in his chosen genres, but in the Selznick Archives of the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, there is an agreement dated October 1948 in which, for a license fee, the Debussy heirs allowed for "unlimited usage of special orchestration, provided these arrangements are dignified concert versions, without burlesque, swing, or jazz." I am grateful to Sarah Reichardt for drawing my attention to this.

79. See François Nicolas 2000: 48–49.

