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Re-examining Salon Space: Structuring Audiences and Music at Parisian Receptions

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Abstract Historians have viewed nineteenth-century music salons in Paris as concert-like environments where performers and audience gathered in a designated music room. Architectural studies and first-hand accounts, however, show that the music salon incorporated multiple reception rooms, and that guests frequently listened to musical performances from adjoining spaces. While conceptual space has been a subject central to salon studies, this project analyses material space, re-evaluating how the architecture of the salon influenced audience structure, listening modes and compositional practices. This architecture was ultimately central to the development of salon opera, which flourished between 1850 and the 1870s and was epitomized by Gustave Nadaud's *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* (1854).

An 1883 painting by Giuseppe de Nittis depicts a salon at the Parisian *hôtel particulier*, or urban mansion, of Princess Mathilde Bonaparte, cousin to Napoleon III (see Figure 1). Hosting a large-scale music salon every Sunday during the December to April social season, Princess Mathilde was among those who set the standard for receptions during the Second Empire.[1] Her soirées were representative of aristocratic salons, court-like gatherings that brought together politicians, ambassadors, writers, artists and other dignitaries. In many ways, Nittis's rendering reinforces established historical thought on the Parisian salon, presenting a dense scene of attenders circulating in an ample residential space.

Nittis's painting also exposes a factor that has been largely taken for granted in musical scholarship, namely the architectural complexity of the Parisian salon. Historians have traditionally viewed music salons as concert-like environments where

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[1] Nittis's painting pictures Princess Mathilde's residence at 20 rue de Berry, where she lived from 1871 until her death. There she entertained dignitaries and politicians on Tuesdays and hosted an intimate circle of artists on Wednesdays. Her Sunday music salon was the largest gathering of the week and is probably the inspiration for the painting. For more on Princess Mathilde's weekly receptions, see Caroline L. Murat, *My Memoirs*, ed. Robert Leighton (New York: Putnam, 1910), 67–83.

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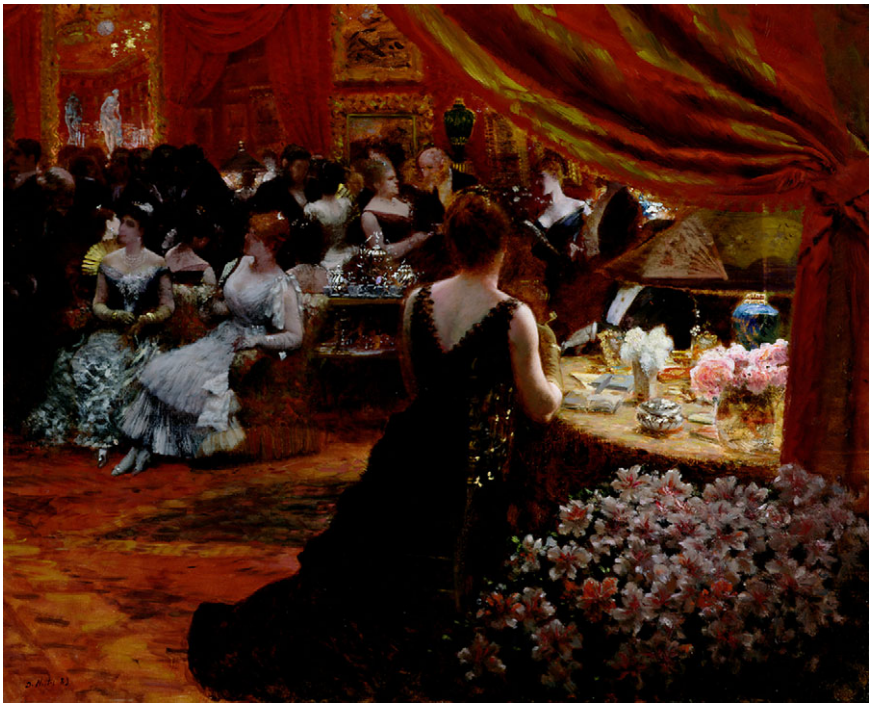


Figure 1 Giuseppe de Nittis, *Salon of Princess Mathilde* (1883), oil on canvas. Pinacoteca Giuseppe de Nittis, Barletta, Italy/Bridgeman Images.

performers and audience were gathered in a designated music room.[2] However, Nittis's representation indicates the use of at least three reception rooms at Princess Mathilde's event: first, the *grand salon*, the focal point of the painting, which is filled with a throng of guests; second, the adjoining room visible in the left corner; and finally, the implied third reception room from which the viewer observes the scene, its boundary delineated by the draped curtain. Although no musicians are pictured, the attentive postures of the two seated women could suggest that they are observing a performance off the canvas. Nittis's painting underscores the fact that attenders would typically disperse across multiple rooms, a factor that complicates the spatial logistics of the salon.

The multidimensional attributes of Princess Mathilde's rue de Berry salon were not exceptional for aristocratic salons, and not even for smaller-scale bourgeois salons. Examination of the design history of Parisian *hôtels particuliers* and *appartements* built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows that architects commonly situated the salon beside other reception spaces, promoting the circulation of guests through multiple rooms at social gatherings. Written accounts in newspapers, journals, personal memoirs and literature articulate ways in which the room distribution had a bearing on the activity of guests at residential events. While this may seem to be an innocuous

[2] David Tunley, *Salons, Singers, and Songs: A Background to Romantic French Song 1830–1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 18–41.

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factor, it has the potential to contribute new perspectives on a variety of long-standing enquiries surrounding the salon, such as audience listening habits and the aesthetic characteristics of salon repertory.

Space has been a central topic in salon studies; however, the emphasis has always slanted towards analysing conceptual space rather than material space. Applying Jürgen Habermas's theorization of the public sphere, Dena Goodman's work has shown that the type of social discourse fostered by the eighteenth-century Parisian salon opened a conceptual public space within private residences.[3] Taking a slightly different approach and interpreting the salon through the lens of Friedrich Schleiermacher's 'third space' (neither public nor private), Jennifer Ronyak has suggested that the Stägemann salon in nineteenth-century Berlin was a flexible arena where social parameters of gender could be challenged through musico-literary improvisation.[4] Both Goodman's and Ronyak's approaches underscore the idea that the salon arena facilitated activities and behaviours that subverted the norm. Such analysis is valuable in understanding the social currency of the salon, particularly reinforcing the idea that salons in European cities functioned as a laboratory for new ideas about music, politics, aesthetics and gender roles. However, the conceptual approach to salon space has eclipsed other spatial approaches, such as those that consider its materiality, interior decoration and architecture.

The fact that material approaches are scarce is not surprising, because it is difficult to pinpoint a static model of the salon for analysis. Unlike concert halls or opera theatres, singular venues that remained a relatively fixed space for a vast number of performances, the circuit of salon venues was constantly in flux, evolving as hosts experienced changes in social standing, and shifting with the different political regimes. Further compounding the variability in salon spaces, each household had its own site-specific conditions, a factor that may have discouraged scholarly generalization about the salon's material characteristics.

Setting these challenges aside for the time being, however, it is evident that musical studies have comprehensively shown that material environments have been influential factors that have shaped audience behaviour, repertory and music reception. Considering audience behaviour, James Johnson's architectural analysis of Parisian opera houses indicates that seating arrangements affected listening habits, with factors such as line of sight, lighting and enclosed boxes directing audience attention towards or away from the stage.[5] As to spaces shaping musical repertory and generic evolution, Anselm Gerhard has argued that rapid urban growth in Paris presented a new 'space of experience' that led to the development of grand opera, a genre that corresponded to the sprawling scale of the modern metropolis.[6] Even musical reception, as Adam Krims has shown, can be affected

[3] Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 2–11.

[4] Jennifer Ronyak, '"Serious Play", Performance, and the Lied: The Stägemann *Schöne Müllerin* Revisited', *19th-Century Music*, 34 (2010–11), 141–67 (p. 141).

[5] James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 9–34.

[6] Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1–20.

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by geography and interior design as musical objects or performances are interpreted in relation to their surroundings.[7] How then, might these modes of analysis be applied to the salon? For instance, it logically follows that the structural designs of the salon would have affected the organization of audiences and therefore have influenced listening habits. In addition, the salon's 'space of experience' might be considered a factor that inspired generic or compositional development. Following this line of enquiry, one is tasked with determining which spatial characteristics might be interpreted as constant factors across a seemingly variegated domestic terrain.

Some scholarship has taken strides towards addressing the materiality of salon space. Salon scholars, such as David Tunley and Myriam Chimènes, present detailed descriptions of salon rooms in their monographs that chronicle nineteenth-century Parisian salon life.[8] Information about salons' decoration and furnishings has been well documented in the visual arts as well as in guests' diaries, particularly by social aspirants who were impressed by the material displays of wealth and accomplishment.[9] This visual aspect of the salon has drawn attention from guests and modern historians alike; however, few have speculated as to how those features might have affected music-making. One exception is the work of Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, who have shown that the acoustic profile of music rooms in early modern European residences determined the types of household instruments that were viable in the space.[10] This research is useful in helping historians characterize salon repertories, building an understanding of musical functionality in domestic space; the study does, however, analyse the activity as it is bound by a single music room.

This article draws from architectural perspectives on the salon but looks beyond the single-room model. I propose that the multiroom organization of the salon is central to understanding its musical activity. A survey of the design history of Parisian *hôtels particuliers* and *appartements* built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows that there were long-standing features of domestic architecture that structured reception activity. Drawing from written accounts in newspapers, journals and other writings that articulate salon experiences, I identify the ways in which room distribution bore upon guest circulation and modes of listening. Finally, I consider how composers adapted music to the salon's multidimensional features, considering improvisatory genres such as the fantasy and potpourri, as well as the genre of *opéra de salon* that flourished from the 1850s into the 1870s. Composers and librettists of salon opera

[7] Adam Krims, *Music and Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2012), xiv–xvi.

[8] Tunley, *Salons, Singers, and Songs*, 18–42; Myriam Chimènes, *Mécènes et musiciens: Du salon au concert à Paris sous la III^e^ République* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 204–10.

[9] Paintings by Jean Beraud, Charles Giraud and Giuseppe de Nittis offer detailed depictions of Parisian salons and reception rooms. Guest diaries that chronicle salon culture abound. Authors that devote attention to the visual aspect and social interactions of the salon include Virginie Ancelot, Count Viel Castel and Princess Caroline Murat.

[10] Deborah Howard, 'Introduction: Music-Making in Residential Space', *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space, and Object*, ed. Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, Proceedings of the British Academy, 176 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1–7; see also Tarek Berrada, 'Music at Home: Spaces for Music in French Seventeenth-Century Residential Architecture', *ibid.*, 291–308.

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went so far as to incorporate residential architecture into staging instructions in order to create an interdimensional theatrical experience, a feature epitomized in Gustave Nadaud's successful work *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* (1854).

Structuring receptions in the Parisian *hôtel* and *appartement*

The aristocratic salons hosted at *hôtels particuliers* have historically been distinguished from the bourgeois-style salons held at modest *appartements* as scholars have agreed that these stratified groups had distinctly different tastes and behaviours.[11] Viewing these salons through an architectural lens, however, one finds unexpected commonalities, since architects had standardized the spatial composition of reception spaces during the eighteenth century. This evidence introduces considerations about how salon circles were navigating similar environments, even if those groups formed different habits in response to multiroom receptions.

Most upper-class and aristocratic music salons were hosted in *hôtels particuliers* or *hôtels privées*, multilevel residences featuring front courtyards and rear gardens. When aristocrats mobilized around court life in Paris in the eighteenth century, they increased the demand for *hôtels*. During this period, construction proliferated and architects optimized the *hôtel* floor plan to facilitate large social receptions.[12] The resulting generation of luxury residences eventually housed some of the most prominent music salons of the nineteenth century. For instance, Émile and Delphine Girardin lived in Hôtel Marbeuf, which underwent extensive interior remodelling by Jacques-Guillaume Legrand and Jacques Molinos in 1789–90.[13] Princess Belgiojoso, famed for hosting the Liszt–Thalberg piano duel at her salon, lived from 1831 to 1848 in an *hôtel* on rue d'Anjou built for Madame de Malesherbes in the eighteenth century.[14] In addition, from 1826 until 1838, the arts patron and ambassador Antoine Apponyi regularly hosted musical events at his residence, the Austrian embassy at the Hôtel de Monaco in rue Dominique, built in 1784 by the architect Brongniart.[15]

Although each *hôtel* would have a different structural footprint, its interior layout would have adhered to the design principles standardized in the eighteenth century.[16] One of the

[11] Tunley distinguishes between the aristocratic, bourgeois and music salons as distinctly different types of gatherings. Tunley, *Salons, Singers, and Songs*, 18–27. Also, Louis Epstein has tested the theory that musical taste was discernible through the geography of salon locations. See Epstein, 'Mapping the Salon', The Musical Geography Project, <https://musicalgeography.org/project/mapping-the-salon/> (accessed 10 August 2020).

[12] For a comprehensive history of the Parisian *hôtel,* see Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986). See also Manuel Villaverde, 'L'hôtel particulier, une ambition Parisienne', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 71 (2012), 572–3.

[13] Anne Martin-Fugier, *La vie élégante, ou La formation du Tout-Paris: 1815–1848* ([Paris]: Fayard, 1993), 282.

[14] Charles Lefeuve, *Les anciennes maisons de Paris sous Napoléon III*, 5 vols. (Brussels: Coomans, 1873), i, 81.

[15] Rodolphe Apponyi and Nicolas Mietton, *Les français envient notre bonheur: Journal, 1826–1848* (Paris: Tallandier, 2008), 638.

[16] Meredith Martin, 'The Ascendancy of the Interior in Eighteenth-Century French Architectural Theory', *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 15–34.

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most important tenets was functional distribution, or the spatial arrangement of rooms, a topic that was addressed at length in Jean Courtonne's 1725 architectural treatise.[17] Designers not only were particular about the general location of rooms, but also reflected upon which rooms should adjoin and, moreover, how the placement of doors could steer inhabitants or guests through the house. The architect Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières proposed that the residential floor plan should progressively direct traffic through public reception rooms, such as the antechamber and salon, before progressing to the more intimate spaces, such as the bedroom and study.[18] Another priority in residential design was to promote circulation at social gatherings. Eighteenth-century architects accomplished this by clustering groups of reception rooms in what was called a *massée* arrangement, a feature that became standardized in *hôtels* and a *distribution* that was captured in Nittis's painting discussed earlier.[19]

The floor plan for Count Apponyi's residence at the Hôtel de Monaco is a case in point (see Figure 2). Leaving their horses and carriage in the courtyard, guests would enter through the vestibule (C) and would move counter-clockwise to the antechamber (D), a waiting-room space where visitors were received. From there, guests would be ushered into the music room (G), where large open doorways welcomed visitors to circulate to the dining area (E) on the right or the grand salon (H) on the left. This sequence of interconnected, *massée* reception rooms reflects the design intent to circulate guests across several rooms. In accordance with eighteenth-century design standards, the more private areas, such as the bedroom, dressing room and washroom, are located on the opposite side of the residence with a small passage (O) discouraging general circulation through these areas.[20]

Accounts of musical receptions at the Hôtel de Monaco documented by the embassy attaché Rodolphe Apponyi affirm how the *massée* reception rooms structured the event and, most significantly, divided the crowd during the musical performance. Describing a typical soirée, Apponyi indicated that the buffet salon would be set with food while another adjoining room would have game tables, set with the intent of dispersing the crowd ('partager la foule').[21] When the group assembled for the music programme, Apponyi indicated that the volume of guests would not fit in a single room. At an 1832 new year's event featuring Chopin, Kalkbrenner, Liszt and Rossini, Apponyi reported

[17] On distribution and interior design, see Martin, 'The Ascendancy of the Interior'. See also Jean Courtonne, *Traité de la perspective pratique, avec des remarques sur l'architecture* (Paris: Jacques Vincent, 1725), 92–7.

[18] Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, *Le génie de l'architecture, ou L'analogie de cet art avec nos sensations*, ed. Robin Middleton, trans. David Britt (Santa Monica, CA: Getty, 1992), 32.

[19] Dennis, *Court and Garden*, 61.

[20] Narrow corridors were used sparingly in the *hôtel* to provide passage into the more private areas of the household. See Robert Neuman, 'French Domestic Architecture in the Early 18th Century: The Town Houses of Robert de Cotte', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 39 (1980), 128–44 (p. 133).

[21] 'A l'une des extrémités d'appartement, est placé le buffet aussi pour partager la foule, et à l'autre, il y a des tables de jeux et une avec des gravures.' From Rodolphe Apponyi, *Vingt-cinq ans à Paris, 1826–1850: Journal du Comte Rodolphe Apponyi, attaché de l'ambassade d'Autriche-Hongrie à Paris*, 4 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1913–26), i (1913), 40 (entry for 3 January 1827).

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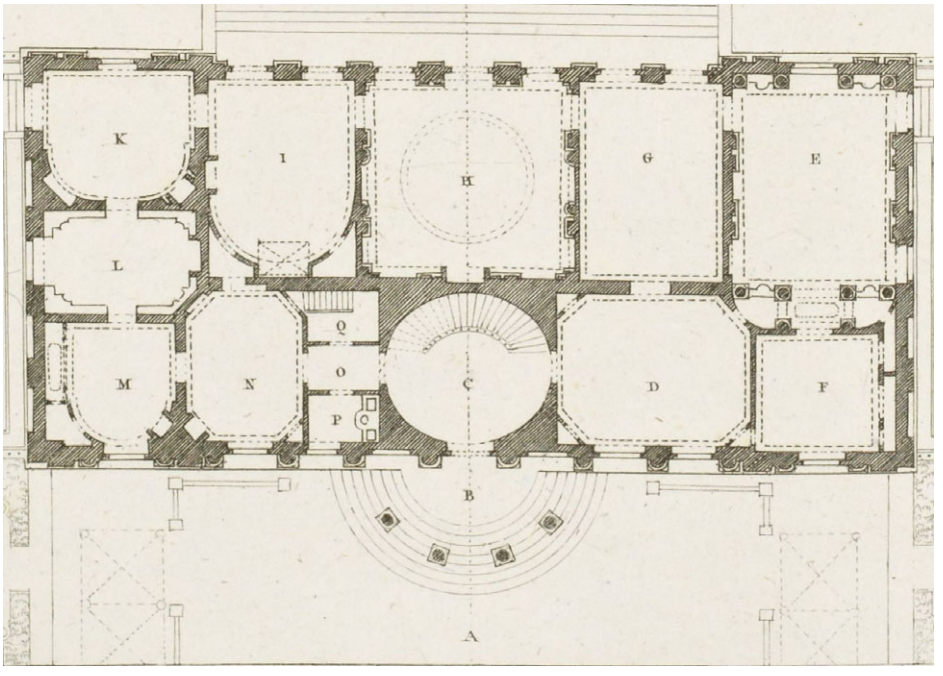


Figure 2 Hôtel de Monaco floor plan (detail), residence of the Austrian ambassador Antoine Apponyi from 1826 to 1838. BnF.

that two large rooms were filled, necessitating listening from adjacent spaces.[22] Some *hôtel* doorways could measure up to ten feet high and five feet wide, facilitating sonic and some visual communication between rooms. However, many were narrower and would have obstructed the view of peripheral listeners.[23]

While *hôtels* had ample capacity for salon guests, even modest-sized events at *appartements* or *maison particuliers*, smaller single-floor residences, promoted similar patterns of circulation.[24] Modelling the *appartement* design after the *hôtel*, city developers built a larger number of these smaller accommodations in the first half of the nineteenth century. These structures were designed for the expanding middle class, who emulated the leisurely pursuits of the urban elite by hosting salons and other household soirées. The reception rooms of the *appartement* functioned much like those of the *hôtel* but were simply reduced in proportion.[25]

[22] 'Un concert a eu lieu ce soir chez nous. Les deux grandes galléries étaient comblées.' From Apponyi, *Vingt-cinq ans à Paris*, ii (1913), 305 (entry for 30 December 1832).

[23] On the architectural dimensions of an *hôtel*, see Ronald Lambell, *French Period Houses and their Details* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1992), 50, 89 and 114.

[24] On the history of the *appartement*, see Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 135–65.

[25] On the *appartement*'s derivation from the *hôtel*, see Monique Eleb-Vidal and Anne Debarre-Blanchard, *Architectures de la vie privée: Maisons et mentalités XVII^e–XIX^e siècles* (Brussels: Archives d'architecture moderne, 1989), 11. See also Patrick Celeste, 'L'immeuble et son interior', *In extensio*,

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The journalist Henri Blanchard, who traversed dozens of salon receptions varying in size, prestige and location, reported on such events in his *Revue et gazette musicale* column 'Auditions musicales' between 1849 and 1858. Reflecting on the parameters for a successful event, Blanchard claimed in 1852 that a flourishing salon needed not only to feature a talented roster of musicians but also to meet some architectural preconditions. He wrote:

> *Every aristocratic or bourgeois salon that can contain a hundred people by adding the dining room, the bedroom, and the cleared-out study* has its own composer of the future, its own distinguished pianist, its Pleyel or its Thalberg, its Vieuxtemps or its Servais, its Dorus, its Leroy, its Jancourt, its Garimond, its singers of *romances* and *chansonettes* rivalling Mmes Sabatier and Ponchard or Levassor.[26]

Blanchard indicates that a music salon would comprise at least four adjoining reception spaces. In *appartements*, even the bedroom (*chambre à coucher*) may have been among the receiving rooms.[27] Because of the smaller scale, architects did not have the flexibility to separate the intimate spaces (bedroom, study) from the social areas of the residence (salons, dining areas). As a result, the *appartement* bedroom would often be linked to the primary reception spaces, and in some cases guests would even need to walk through the bedroom to reach the main salon, a feature that probably aggravated bourgeois anxieties about breaches in domestic privacy.[28]

Because the proportions of the *appartement* were more compressed, the hosts of bourgeois salons were more likely to regulate the circulation of guests at a musical event. In some instances, hosts provided seating arrangements that limited movement. The playwright and painter Virginie Ancelot described the resulting gridlock in the performance room, also verifying the fact that guests listened from adjoining rooms in an *appartement.* She wrote:

9 (November 1985), 75–6. The similarities between *hôtel* and *appartement* construction are evidenced in the 45 floor plans compiled in Pierre Henri Gélis-Didot's 1893 anthology which consistently incorporate the architectural innovations found in the *hôtel*, such as *massée* reception rooms. See Pierre Henri Gélis-Didot, *Paris Mansions and Apartments, 1893: Facades, Floor Plans, and Architectural Details* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2011).

[26] 'Chaque salon aristocratique ou bourgeois qui peut contenir une centaine de personnes en y adjoignant la salle à manger, la chambre à coucher et le cabinet de travail débarrassé, a son compositeur d'avenir, son ou sa pianiste très-distingué, son Thalberg ou sa Pleyel, son Vieuxtemps ou son Servais, son Dorus, son Leroy, son Jancourt, son Garimond, ses chanteurs de romances et de chansonnettes rivalisant Mmes Sabatier et Ponchard, ou Levassor' (emphasis added). From Henri Blanchard, 'Auditions musicales', *Revue et gazette musicale*, 21/7 (15 February 1852), 2–3.

[27] Seventeenth-century *hôtel* designs embedded bedrooms into the foot traffic of the residence and even used staged bedrooms for receiving guests. This interior organization was later discontinued in eighteenth-century *hôtel* plans. See Dennis, *Court and Garden*, 69.

[28] Marcus, *Apartment Stories*, 21. The distribution of rooms in the bourgeois *appartement* was the subject of debate and innovation as architects introduced features such as narrow corridors to discourage public circulation to private chambers. The architects César Daly and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc advocated for the strategic separation of public and private rooms. See Sharon Marcus, 'Haussmannization as Anti-Modernity: The Apartment House in Parisian Urban Discourse, 1850–1880', *Journal of Urban History*, 27 (2001), 723–45.

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> The seats placed in the main salon where drama and music are played are amassed in rows that cover the room entirely, without any free space to circulate […] From a distance, we see the women we know, gentlemen friends at the doorways, since men are relegated to the rooms that surround the great salon, because *we have arranged to have a few more guests than the appartement can contain; it is an absolute necessity that some guests cannot enter*; this makes the evening quite memorable.[29]

Ancelot's account underscores the fact that the guests' overflow was not due to the miscalculation of the host but rather a customary feature of the salon. Sources corroborate this detail, showing that bourgeois hosts went so far as to employ staff to direct the flow of guests. The Italian composer and pianist Giuseppe Curci stationed guards at the doors of his Parisian salon to coordinate arrivals and departures. When his salon reached capacity, guests were compelled to wait outside until others exited. Apparently, even the reviewer Blanchard was once left to wait in the cold.[30] Measures such as fixed seating and stationed guards indicate that bourgeois hosts anticipated and supervised the interspatial dynamics of the salon. The nature of these measures also illustrates how the *massée* reception rooms which promoted circulation were fundamentally at odds with the emerging nineteenth-century preference for silent audiences. It is, therefore, not surprising that movement was strictly regulated in the aforementioned salons, since the middle-class audiences were known to be stringent proponents of this trend, an ethic exaggerated in the behaviour of the fictional character Madame Verdurin in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, who was intolerant of those who talked over or disturbed musical performances.[31]

One of the by-products of the spatial divisions in salon space was that the architectural borders of a room often differentiated between conversations and activities. It resulted in groupings of guests that stratified the social experiences, often by gender. For instance, accounts suggest that the smoking and billiard rooms were typically populated by men, while the women congregated in the music room. The previous quotation from Ancelot substantiates this idea, as she claimed that she was typically seated amid an audience of women in the music room while men were relegated to peripheral rooms.[32] Princess Caroline Murat also described such divisions in Princess Mathilde's salon and wrote: 'While [Princess Mathilde's] men

[29] 'Les sièges placés dans le salon d'honneur où se passent comédie et musique sont entassés sur plusieurs rangs dans toute la pièce, de manière à la couvrir entièrement sans aucun espace libre qui puisse servir à circuler […] On aperçoit à distance les femmes que l'on connaît, on voit ses amis aux embrasures des portes, car les hommes sont relégués dans les pièces qui entourent le grand salon, puisqu'on *s'est arrangé pour avoir un peu plus de monde que l'appartement n'en peut contenir; il est de première nécessité qu'il y ait quelques invités qui ne puissent pas pénétrer*; cela rend la soirée tout à fait mémorable' (emphasis added). Virginie Ancelot, *Les salons de Paris: Foyers éteints* (Paris: J. Tardieu, 1858), 221.

[30] Henri Blanchard, 'Auditions musicales', *Revue et gazette musicale*, 21/11 (14 March 1852), 2–3.

[31] Madame Verdurin, a bourgeois *salonnière* aspiring to higher social status, is characterized by her attentiveness to salon performances. On her affected immersion in music, see Marcel Proust, *La prisonnière* from *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Nouvelle revue française, 1923), 59–79.

[32] Virginie Ancelot wrote, 'L'on est placé, à mesure qu'on arrive, tant qu'il y a des sièges vacants, et, si vous avez à vos côtes des femmes que vous ne connaissez pas.' Ancelot, *Les salons de Paris*, 221.

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guests were mostly to be sought in the groups of talkers, the women overflowed the music-rooms.'[33] In another instance, a journalist reported on an 1868 salon hosted by Archbishop Georges Darboy at the Hôtel du Châtelet and observed differences in the ways that men and women circulated between three reception rooms, noting that a group of young men congregated in the billiard room.

> A double door, wide open in front of the fireplace, reveals a young priest and a second lieutenant playing billiards [… Women] come and go as they please. The young women are innocently drawn near the billiard door […] As the gallery door is opened, excellent chamber music can be heard. An usher distributes the programme of works selected by the archbishop. We listen religiously at first, then conversations resume with the discreet chatter produced by a large meeting of well-behaved people. The young men have abandoned billiards to come and listen to the music.[34]

These spatial distinctions reflect the gender stereotypes surrounding the salon, given the fact that the music salon and its repertory have been historically feminized.[35] However, the notion of gender division in the salon warrants cautious treatment because it distracts from the fact that guest groupings were ultimately flexible. After all, the report on Archbishop Darboy's salon eventually pointed out that the groups of men and women rejoined each other to hear the music performance. Furthermore, the notion that the music room in a salon was, in some cases, largely populated by women could lead to the more traditional thinking that the salon audience encompassed only the people in the concert room.

To this point, I have worked towards establishing the fact that salons hosted in urban *appartements* and *hôtels* systematically utilized multiroom reception spaces, often organized in *massée* formation, and that this architecture was a consideration in event planning. Such standardized conditions offer further opportunity to examine the ways in which the space structured modes of listening as well as aesthetic choices in music composition.

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[33] Murat, *My Memoirs*, 77–8.

[34] The Hôtel du Châtelet, designed by the architect Mathurin Cherpitel and built in rue de Grenelle in the 1770s, was designated as the official residence of the archbishop of Paris from 1849 to 1905. Georges Darboy was archbishop of Paris from 1863 to 1871. 'Une porte à deux battants, toute grande ouverte en face de la cheminée, laisse voir un jeune prêtre et un sous-lieutenant qui jouent au billard [… Les femmes] vont et viennent et se placent à leur guise. Les jeunes filles se sont naïvement rapprochées de la porte du billard […] On ouvre la porte de la galerie et une excellente musique de chambre se fait entendre. Un huissier distribue le programme des morceaux choisis par Monseigneur. On écoute d'abord religieusement, puis les conversations reprennent avec ce brouhaha discret produit par une nombreuse réunion de gens bien élevés. Les jeunes hommes ont abandonné le billard pour venir écouter la musique.' 'X.', 'Chez Monseigneur', *La vie parisienne*, 6/23 (6 June 1868), 407.

[35] On the gender politics of the French salon, see Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*, as well as Jolanta Pekacz, 'The Salonnières and the Philosophes in Old Regime France: The Authority of Aesthetic Judgment', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), 277–97. On gendering the repertory of the salon, see William Cheng, 'Hearts for Sale: The French Romance and the Sexual Traffic of Musical Mimicry', *19th-Century Music*, 35 (2011–12), 34–71. See also Jeffrey Kallberg, 'The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne', *Representations*, 39 (1992), 102–33.

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Considering peripheral listening in the multiroom salon

Historians agree that it is difficult to generalize about the behaviours of nineteenth-century audiences, conceding that even in single-room spaces, such as concert halls and opera houses, audiences had highly variegated experiences. The emerging ethic of attentive, immersive listening in the nineteenth century often clashed with logistical matters of the theatre, such as audience members arriving late, departing early or becoming distracted with side conversations.[36] In this respect, music salon guests and concertgoers faced similar disruptions. However, one anomaly – the routine convention of listening from adjacent rooms – was truly unique to the salon. Studying this audience group, therefore, brings a new set of considerations into focus.

Did (for instance) some peripheral listeners regard salon music-making to be ambient sound? Did the indirect transmission of music to adjacent spaces cultivate more passive listening habits? In this view, salon architecture might have delineated boundaries between potentially active listeners in the music room and passive listeners in the surrounding spaces. One might presume that the latter group would not exert the necessary degree of attentiveness to track elements of musical structure and meaning.[37] Such a premiss would validate the success of potpourri-style works and fantasies in the salon, since such genres do not oblige listeners to trace thematic linkage between sections. Along those lines, improvisatory-style genres also forgive lapses in attention, providing natural gathering points where a guest might re-engage as a listener when attracted by a familiar theme. An unusual arrangement by the cellist and composer Auguste Franchomme, a regular performer in the salon of Princess Mathilde, invites this analytical perspective. In his setting of Chopin's Nocturne in F major, op. 15 no. 1, Franchomme adapted it into a quasi-potpourri for cello and piano, a curious choice since the original work might have been considered a quintessential example of Parisian salon music (see Example 1).[38]

Transposing the initial theme of the nocturne to G major, Franchomme's arrangement retains the ternary form but omits the étude-like middle section of Chopin's piece, replacing it with the primary theme of Chopin's Nocturne in G minor, op. 37 no. 1. Perhaps Franchomme replaced the middle section of op. 15 no. 1 because the original pianistic idioms were ill-suited for a string instrument and
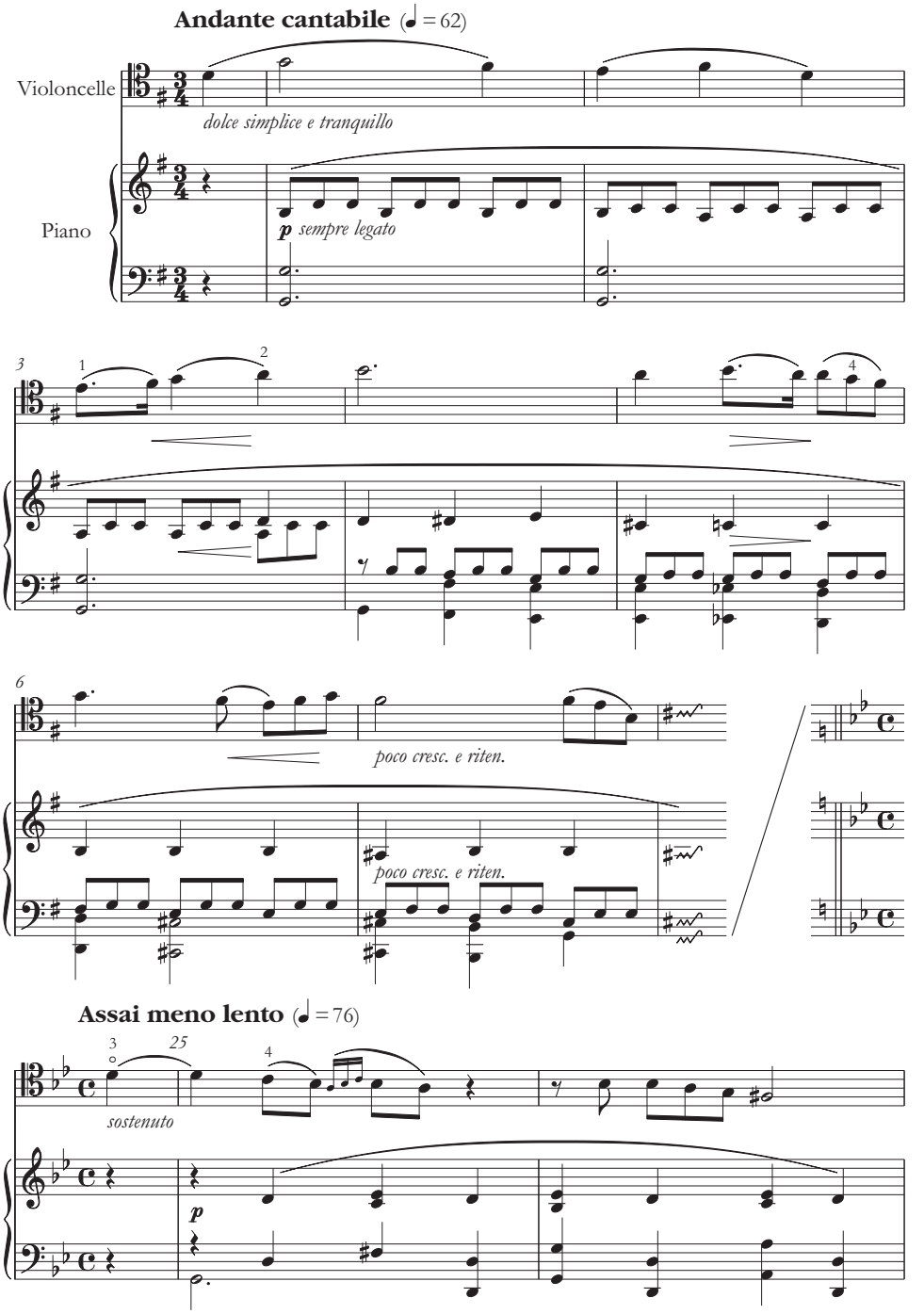
[36] On the inattentiveness of members of opera audiences, see Cormac Newark, 'Not Listening in Paris: Critical and Fictional Lapses of Attention at the Opera', *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 35–53. See also Katherine Ellis, 'Researching Audience Behaviors in Nineteenth-Century Paris', *The Oxford Handbook of Music Listening in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Christian Thorau and Hansjakob Ziemer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 37–54.

[37] Applying Theodor Adorno's theories on listening to his study of nineteenth-century audiences in Amsterdam, Daryl Cressman argues that concertgoers engaged structural listening, intellectually navigating the past, present and future of the work to understand the formal whole. See Cressman, 'Listening, Attentive Listening, and Musical Meaning', *Building Musical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam: The Concertgebouw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 29–48.

[38] Auguste Franchomme, *Oeuvres de Chopin traduites pour le violoncelle* (Paris: Gérard, 1870).
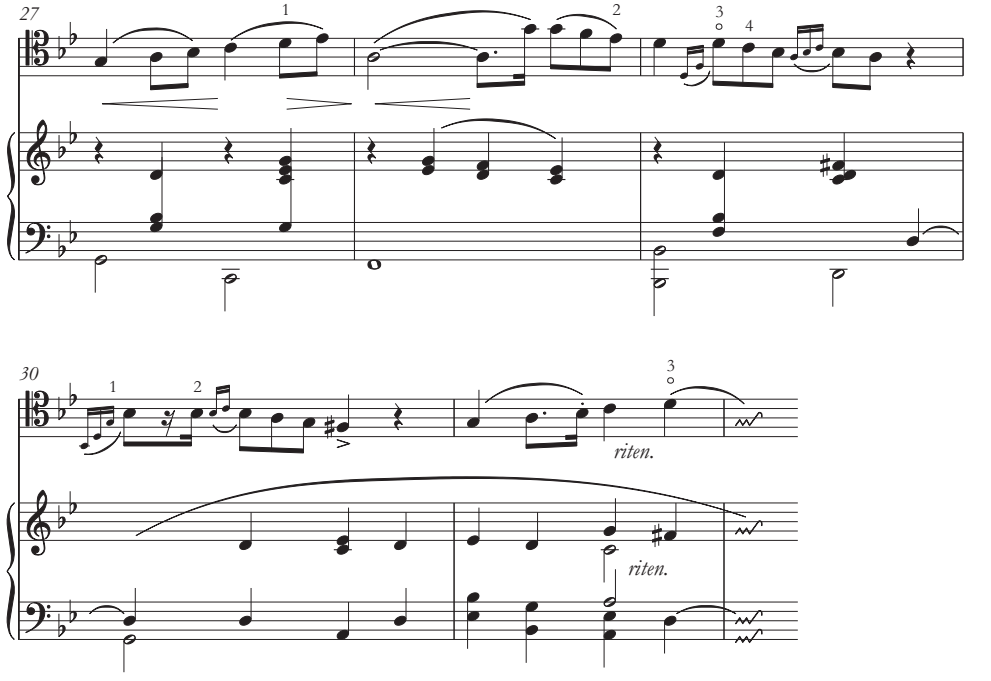
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Example 1 Frédéric Chopin, Nocturne op. 15 no. 1, arranged by Auguste Franchomme for cello and piano, bars 1–8 and 25–32.



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Example 1 (cont.)



he recognized that a lyrical, singing melody would better display the cello. Alternatively, his revision might have been a compositional exercise designed to display how the two nocturne themes correspond as melodic and modal inversions – each begins on D4, the major-key theme rising a major sixth to B4 in the first phrase, whereas the parallel minor-key theme descends a minor sixth to F#3 (compare bars 1–4 with bars 25–6). Viewed through the lens of the multiroom salon, the potpourri-style format may have accommodated the mercurial attention of guests. The middle section offers listeners a point of re-engagement with the introduction of a second 'primary' theme.

While some adjacent guests may have viewed the concert as background, it is also worthwhile to consider how peripheral listeners might have been more active participants in the salon audience. Nineteenth-century accounts corroborate this interpretation, indicating that spatially detached guests were not excluded from the performance, but that they simply comprised another audience layer. The violinist Eugène Sauzay wrote of Princess Mathilde's salon at 20 rue de Courcelles, where she lived from 1857 until 1870:[39]

[39] Princess Mathilde lived at 10 rue de Courcelles from 1848 to 1857, at 20 rue de Courcelles (now destroyed) from 1857 to 1870, and at 20 rue de Berry (now destroyed) from 1871 until her death in 1904.

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> Four salons communicate through a large greenhouse. In the salon in the middle [stood] the piano around which the singers grouped, with the instrumental quartet on the left and, on the right, a piano-organ on which Saint-Saëns or Cohen improvised. At the first chord, each of the listeners had chosen their place, the more musical near the piano exchanging compliments with the performers, the others dispersed either in the greenhouse, or in the adjoining rooms, where the poetry of the flowers and their perfume mingled with the charm of the music.[40]

Sauzay's word choice is apt when he notes that the four salons 'communicate', implying that a current of interaction was promoted by the *massée* spaces. He observed that sound and scent bent around architectural perimeters, highlighting the flexible boundaries of the space.

Peripheral guests were also shown to be engaged members of the audience in James Tissot's 1875 painting *Hush* (see Figure 3). The scene depicts a residential concert in London where Parisian-style society salons proliferated.[41] Tissot acknowledges the parallelism between the London and Parisian salon scenes by picturing Giuseppe de Nittis in the doorway, in a nod to his colleague who later painted Parisian social events such as the interdimensional scene at Princess Mathilde's residence (see again Figure 1).[42] Tissot's painting shows a violin-and-piano duo poised to perform: the violinist awaits her cue, her bow resting at her side, while the pianist examines the pages of his score. Most notably, a large number of guests are pictured outside the music room – the crowd extends into the atrium and up a winding flight of stairs, substantiating the notion that peripheral audiences could be sizeable. Furthermore, their seating on the stairs suggests decisive positioning – the guests situated themselves with the intent to listen, even though they lacked a clear line of sight.

These adjacent guests ultimately subvert the traditional understanding of architectural partitions. Walls and doors are conventionally understood to be situational boundaries that divide activities and conversations, even if they do not block the acoustic seepage. Listening across those boundaries, therefore, destabilizes those situational divisions.[43] When it is done secretively, as in eavesdropping, such listening

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[40] 'Quatre salons communiquant par une vaste serre. Dans celui du milieu, le piano autour duquel se groupaient les chanteurs, avec le quatuor instrumental à gauche, et à droite un piano-orgue sur lequel improvisaient Saint-Saëns ou Cohen. Au premier accord chacun des auditeurs avait choisi sa place, les plus musiciens près du piano échangeant des compliments avec les exécutants, les autres dispersés soit dans la serre, soit dans les salons voisins ou la poésie des fleurs et de leur parfum se mêlait au charme de la musique.' Brigitte François-Sappey, 'La vie musicale à Paris à travers les *Mémoires* d'Eugène Sauzay, 1809–1901', *Revue de musicologie*, 60 (1974), 159–210 (p. 205).

[41] It is widely established that London and Parisian society salons were similar. See William Weber, *Music and the Middle Classes: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 38–40. Guides such as the anonymous *The Young Lady's Book: A Manual of Elegant Recreations, Exercises, and Pursuits* (London: Vizetelly, Branston & Co., 1829) taught English ladies Parisian social practices (pp. 405–7).

[42] Nancy Rose Marshall, Malcolm Warner and James Tissot, *James Tissot: Victorian Life, Modern Love* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 99.

[43] The sociologist Erving Goffman theorized that walls and doors create situational boundaries. Goffman, 'Communication Boundaries', *Communication Theory*, ed. C. David Mortensen (New York: Routledge, 2017), 213–25.

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Figure 3 James Tissot, *Hush* (1875), oil on canvas. © Manchester Art Gallery/Bridgeman Images.

is considered a breach of social etiquette. In the salon, however, overhearing or listening through a wall was a collectively sanctioned form of listening and was not viewed as improper. This paradigm shift is significant because it illustrates how the salon event temporarily suspended the rules of privacy delineated by residential architecture, supporting the idea that the *massée* rooms were viewed as a cohesive unit.

Even so, adjacent audiences would have missed details of the performance. Studying eavesdropping in the writing of Proust and others, Ann Elizabeth Gaylin theorizes that outside listeners must exert greater hermeneutical effort in their analysis of events because they glean an incomplete set of data, lacking a degree of context or meaning.[44] Gaylin argues that the outside listener seeks to complete the narrative by retelling or re-examining the information in order to arrive at a more coherent yet highly subjective interpretation. This line of analysis maps well onto adjacent listening in the salon. Missing elements such as gestural cues and other performance expressions visible to the immediate audience, the detached listeners would be compelled to compare their experiences with other guests. Thus, discussion about the music functioned not only as intellectual exchange, but also as information gathering to help guests construct a more complete narrative of the concert. In this respect, peripheral listeners might have performed a central function in salon culture by catalysing discourse. This idea aligns with the salon's reputation as a dynamic place where musical works were discussed and

[44] Ann Gaylin, *Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9–12.

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evaluated, a dialogue that may have been fuelled in part by the guests' urge to compare their experiences in order to arrive at a more cohesive narrative.

Salon performances may have also worked towards engaging the imagination of adjacent listeners. For instance, aural gestures such as ornamentation or brilliant passages may have compensated for the visual impediments of the salon. Nineteenth-century audiences were particularly attentive to the gestures of performers, reading expressive content into the embodied flourishes and facial rhetoric of performance.[45] Since architectural partitions obstructed this visual element, it follows that salon performers may have incorporated sonic gestures to conjure the visuality of their performance. Virtuosic elements found in salon-style compositions were critiqued in their own time because they seemed excessive and superfluous.[46] Viewed through the lens of the multiroom salon, however, seemingly overindulgent passages can be read as aural annotations that translated the visual component that peripheral audiences lacked.

Admittedly, one could hear fantasies and elements of bravura in concert halls – certainly these genres and gestures were not designed for residential stage alone, even if the salon did cultivate them. In this regard, the direct relationship between compositions and the architecture of the salon is difficult to trace. One genre, however, emerges as an exception, constituting a decisive response to the spatial idiosyncrasies of residential receptions. Proliferating in Paris between the 1850s and 1870s, salon operas, or *opéras de salon*, were written expressly for residential performance. Propelled by the interest and support of prominent patrons such as Rossini, Madame Gaveaux-Sabatier and Princess Mathilde, these one-act musical comedies were fundamentally connected to residential architecture since they routinely incorporated the salon's *massée* reception spaces into the staging and plot.

It is important to note that salon opera is an area that has received negligible attention in musical studies and warrants more detailed investigation (see Appendix for a selective list of works consulted for this study).[47] Further work is needed to show how the genre fits into the aesthetics and ecosystems of nineteenth-century opera, particularly considering its close relation to the subgenres of *opérette*, *opéra-bouffe* and vaudeville. While it is beyond the scope of this present study to offer a comprehensive

[45] Lawrence Kramer, 'Franz Liszt and the Virtuoso Public Sphere: Sight and Sound in the Rise of Mass Entertainment', *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 68–99 (p. 77).

[46] Dana Gooley, 'The Battle against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Franz Liszt and his World*, ed. Dana Gooley and Christopher H. Gibbs (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 75–112.

[47] Pierre Girod, 'Un demi-siècle d'opéra de salon', *Histoire de l'opéra français*, ed. Hervé Lacombe, 3 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 2020) ii, 560–70. Also, see the data set of salon operas compiled by Mark Everist, 'France: Musiques, Cultures, 1789–1918 – Music in the Second Empire Theatre', <http://fmc.ac.uk/mitset/> (accessed 15 July 2021). Other discussion of salon opera has centred on the work of Pauline Viardot. Rachel Miller Harris, 'The Music Salon of Pauline Viardot: Featuring her Salon Opera *Cendrillon*' (DMA dissertation, Louisiana State University, 2005); Lauren Rebecca Berman, 'Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon* and its Relevancy for the Developing Opera Singer' (Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 2017).

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treatment, the following discussion offers inaugural thoughts, particularly considering how salon opera emerged as a product of its environment.

Staging interdimensional music

As one critic observed in 1854, Nadaud's salon opera *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* was not only *à la mode*, but was being performed 'just about everywhere' on the Parisian residential circuit.[48] A prolific chansonnier who wrote more than 300 art songs during his career, Nadaud was familiar with the formulas for musical success in the salon arena.[49] Probably his opera circulated widely not only because it was clever and appealing, but also because he was shrewd enough to design a portable production. To be successfully restaged in different residential spaces, Nadaud's opera and others like it required only modest resources.[50] Most salon operas involved only a small cast of two to five singers (accompanied by the piano) who alternated spoken dialogue, airs and ensemble pieces.[51] The scenery and set were similarly minimalistic. In fact, librettists strategically set the action of many salon operas in private, urban homes.[52] Thus, the salon rooms became the scenery and the material decorations of the hosting residence – from the piano to the tables and chairs – were repurposed as the props.[53]

By incorporating the material features of the residence into the dramatic action, salon operas ultimately blurred the boundaries between staged space and reception space. In many cases, salon operas further destabilized this conceptual barrier by incorporating metatheatrical elements and parody. In *L'accord parfait* (1863) by the composer Paul Bernard and the librettist Galoppe d'Onquaire, for instance, one of the main characters is a viscount who composes salon operas. The viscount sings a song about staging his opera for an audience of 300. The song constitutes a comical metanarrative as the character describes the very scene that surrounds him, explaining that the guests first squeeze into the limited seating and later participate in animated debates to critique the operatic plot and music. D'Onquaire's libretto to *L'accord parfait* also experiments with the structure of the salon audience by integrating adjacent listening into the scene. The opera opens with a prolonged interdimensional dialogue in which the viscount and his neighbour, the marchioness, greet each other and perform a duet while occupying two different reception rooms.[54] While one of the

[48] Jules Lovy, 'Causeries musicales: Soirées', *Le ménéstrel*, 21/18 (2 April 1854), 2.
[49] Jean Piat, *Gustave Nadaud, 1820–1893: Sa vie et son œuvre* (Roubaix: Musée de Roubaix, 1993).
[50] Galoppe d'Onquaire, *Le spectacle au coin de feu* (Paris: Lagny, 1863), 2–5.
[51] Henri Blanchard, 'L'opéra de salon', *Revue et gazette musicale*, 18/6 (9 February 1851), 44.
[52] A number of salon operas, including Charles Manry's *La bourse ou la vie* (1856), Gustave Nadaud's *Porte et fenêtre* (1857), Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin's *L'amour à l'épée* (1858) and Paul Bernard's *L'accord parfait* (1863), are set in Parisian residences.
[53] If additional resources were needed for a production, a circuit of salon vendors would supply hosts with the necessary props. Adolphe Belloir, an 'entrepreneur des fêtes', painted screens and constructed other set decorations; and the sculptor Mathurin Moreau provided a variety of costumes. See Émile Barateau, 'Opéras de salon: Le Docteur Vieuxtemps et la Volière – À deux pas du bonheur', *Le ménéstrel*, 22/13 (25 February 1855), 1.
[54] D'Onquaire, *Le spectacle au coin de feu*, 93–7.

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rooms is treated as the main stage and the other as offstage, presumably guests seated outside the main performance area would have had a view of the offstage activity, presenting a flipped perspective of the performance. The scene is inventive because it ensures that each audience member would see only a portion of it. Therefore, irrespective of seating, each guest would need to overhear part of the performance, engaging modes of listening that had become common practice for adjacent listening in the salon.

Salon opera librettos show that some creators integrated the *massée* reception rooms into the staging directions. Several called for characters to sing from adjacent rooms, to speak from behind closed doors and even to communicate through open windows. By surrounding the audience with the action, opera would probably have been experienced by guests in an especially immersive format. Beyond this, composers and librettists also used interspatial dialogues as a dramatic device that provided the circumstances for misunderstanding and the opportunity for unseen trickery. Nadaud's *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* is a case in point.

In a plot that parodies Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* presents the tale of two young sisters, Rosine and Isabelle, who live in Florence with their 60-year-old uncle Géronte. The audience is led to believe that Géronte is in love with his wards and wishes to marry whichever would have him. Géronte keeps Rosine and Isabelle locked in the household, hiring two valets, Scapin and Crespin, for domestic service. Pretending to be old and ugly, the new servants are in fact young wealthy gentlemen in disguise who pledge their love to Rosine and Isabelle. When the sisters both turn down Géronte's proposal of marriage, the uncle seeks vengeance by vowing to marry them to the seemingly undesirable valets. The sisters willingly sign the marriage contracts and the disguised suitors reveal their true identities, Dorante and Valère. In the end, the plot departs from the Rossinian standard when Géronte announces that he orchestrated the whole scheme. Knowing that the girls were penniless and therefore not easily matched in marriage, he locked the girls in the house as a pretence in order to propel the curiosity of the townspeople, thus inspiring sympathetic young men to come to their rescue.

From the outset, Nadaud's opera eschews traditional notions of staging. First, the libretto instructs that the set should be empty during the first scene, with the two main characters hidden behind closed doors. Nadaud's libretto describes the scene:

> A salon. Door at the back. Doors on the right and left. Three chairs and two small tables loaded with upholstery cloth. On the small table on the left, ink and a feather pen. *The scene is empty. Rosine and Isabelle are locked in their rooms on the right and on the left.*[55]

In a staging of *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* at Princess Mathilde's residence at 20 rue de Courcelles in 1854 that was billed as the hundredth performance, the greenhouse salon

[55] 'Un salon. Porte au fond. Portes à droit et à gauche. Trois chaises et deux guéridons chargé de tapisseries. Sur le guéridon, à gauche, de l'encre et une plume. *La scène est vide. Rosine et Isabelle sont enfermées dans leurs chambres à droit et à gauche*' (emphasis added). Gustave Nadaud, *Le docteur Vieuxtemps: Opéra-comique de salon en un acte* (Paris: Heugel, [*c.*1854]), 9.

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was treated as the 'main stage'.[56] Presumably her guests of honour, such as Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie, would have been seated in this greenhouse, although it is safe to assume that other guests spilled into the surrounding rooms. Those situated in the greenhouse would have heard but not seen the sisters exchange morning greetings in the opening duet, 'Bonjour, ma sœur' (see Example 2). In his musical setting, Nadaud's topical cues compensate for visual impediments, sonically depicting the hidden characters with formulaic musical gestures. For instance, the treble range and delicate texture of the broken chords in E major foreshadow the gender and age of the singers (bars 1–4), and the shift to a sicilienne in the parallel minor (bar 6) signals a lament. Some of Nadaud's musical hints, however, rest below the surface textures. For instance, after Rosine sings her first stanza, Nadaud modulates to C major/minor as Isabelle sings her parallel verse a third lower. On the one hand, this transposition is practical, distinguishing between mezzo and soprano vocal ranges. On the other hand, Nadaud complicates a seemingly straightforward strophic duet by ending in a different key, a manoeuvre that foreshadows the sisters' ability to evade containment, harmonically and figuratively:

Rosine (*de sa chambre à droite*):
Bonjour, bonjour, ma sœur;
Le soleil dore ma fenêtre;
Il semble que tout va renaître
A sa bienfaisante chaleur.
Et, seule en ma triste demeure,
Je le vois briller et je pleure!
Bonjour, bonjour, ma sœur.

Isabelle (*de sa chambre à gauche*):
Bonjour, bonjour, ma sœur,
Je vois voltiger l'hirondelle;
Il me semble qu'il m'appelle
Avec un cri plain de douceur …
Et, seule en ma triste demeure,
Je la vois voler et je pleure!
Bonjour, bonjour, ma sœur.

Rosine (*from the right bedroom*):
Hello, hello, my sister;
The sun gilds my window;
It seems that all will be reborn
In its beneficent warmth.
And, alone in my sad abode,
I look at it shine, and I cry!
Hello, hello, my sister.

Isabelle (*from the left bedroom*):
Hello, hello, my sister,
I see the swallow flutter;
It seems to me that he calls me
With a cry of sweetness …
And, alone in my sad abode,
I look at it fly, and I cry!
Hello, hello, my sister.

As Nadaud's opera proceeds, wall partitions continue to be used as a narrative device. A wall conceals Rosine and Isabelle as they plot to overturn the balance of power from the confinement of their rooms. This reaches a climax in scene xvi, when Géronte announces his plan to marry the sisters to Scapin and Crespin. From the main stage area, Géronte sings to Rosine and Isabelle, who respond behind the locked doors of their adjoining bedrooms (see Example 3):[57]

[56] The performance took place at the princess's Sunday salon, 30 April 1854. See Henri de Viel Castel, 'Conversation: Une représentation théâtral chez S. A. I. Madame la princesse Mathilde', *Le constitutionnel*, 36/122 (2 May 1854), 1–2. Also see Galoppe d'Onquaire, 'Soirée de S. A. I. Mme Princesse Matilde: 100[e] Réprésentation du Docteur Vieuxtemps', *Le ménestrel*, 21/22 (30 April 1854), 2.

[57] The libretto indicates that Géronte speaks in a loud voice throughout the scene so that he is heard by his nieces. 'Il dit tout cette scène à haute voix de manière à être entendu par ses nièces.' D'Onquaire, *Spectacle au coin de feu*, 85.

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Géronte (*allant vers la porte à droite*):
Ah! mademoiselle Rosine,
De résister vous faites mine!
Vous préférez les jeunes gens
Aux beaux hommes de soixante ans.
Vous épouserez Scapin!

Rosine (*de sa chambre*)
Tant mieux!

Géronte
Hein!
Qu'est-ce à dire?
Un coucou niche par ici.
Est-ce de moi que l'on veut rire?
Vous épouserez Scapin!
Je l'ordonne ainsi!

Rosine
Tant mieux!

[Géronte] *se dirige vers la chambre d'Isabelle à gauche*
Ah! ma tendre nièce Isabelle … [etc.]

Géronte (*going to the door on the right*):
Ah! Miss Rosine,
You pretend to resist!
You prefer young men
To handsome men of sixty.
You will marry Scapin!

Rosine (*from her room*)
Fine!

Géronte
Huh!
What should I say?
A cuckoo nests here.
Is it laughing at me?
You will be married to Scapin!
I order it so!

Rosine
Fine!

[Géronte] *goes to Isabelle's room on the left*
Ah! my dear niece Isabelle … [etc.]

Responding to Géronte's threats, the sisters chirp the concise response, 'Tant mieux!', a descending major third that imitates the call of a cuckoo (Rosine in bars 32–4 and 47–51; Isabelle in bars 87–9 and 102–6).[58] The sisters' interjections present a *double entendre*: they pose as caged birds, seemingly submissive to Géronte's orders; at the same time, the cuckoo call signifies their underlying deception as they guard their knowledge of Scapin's and Crespin's true identities.[59] The audience is led to believe that Géronte is hoodwinked when he asks, 'A cuckoo nests here. Is it laughing at me?' These expectations are overturned, of course, when it is revealed that Géronte orchestrated a broader heist in plain sight. The tapestry of misdirection in *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* works towards illustrating the complexity of salon interactions as participants interpret cues both hidden and visible.
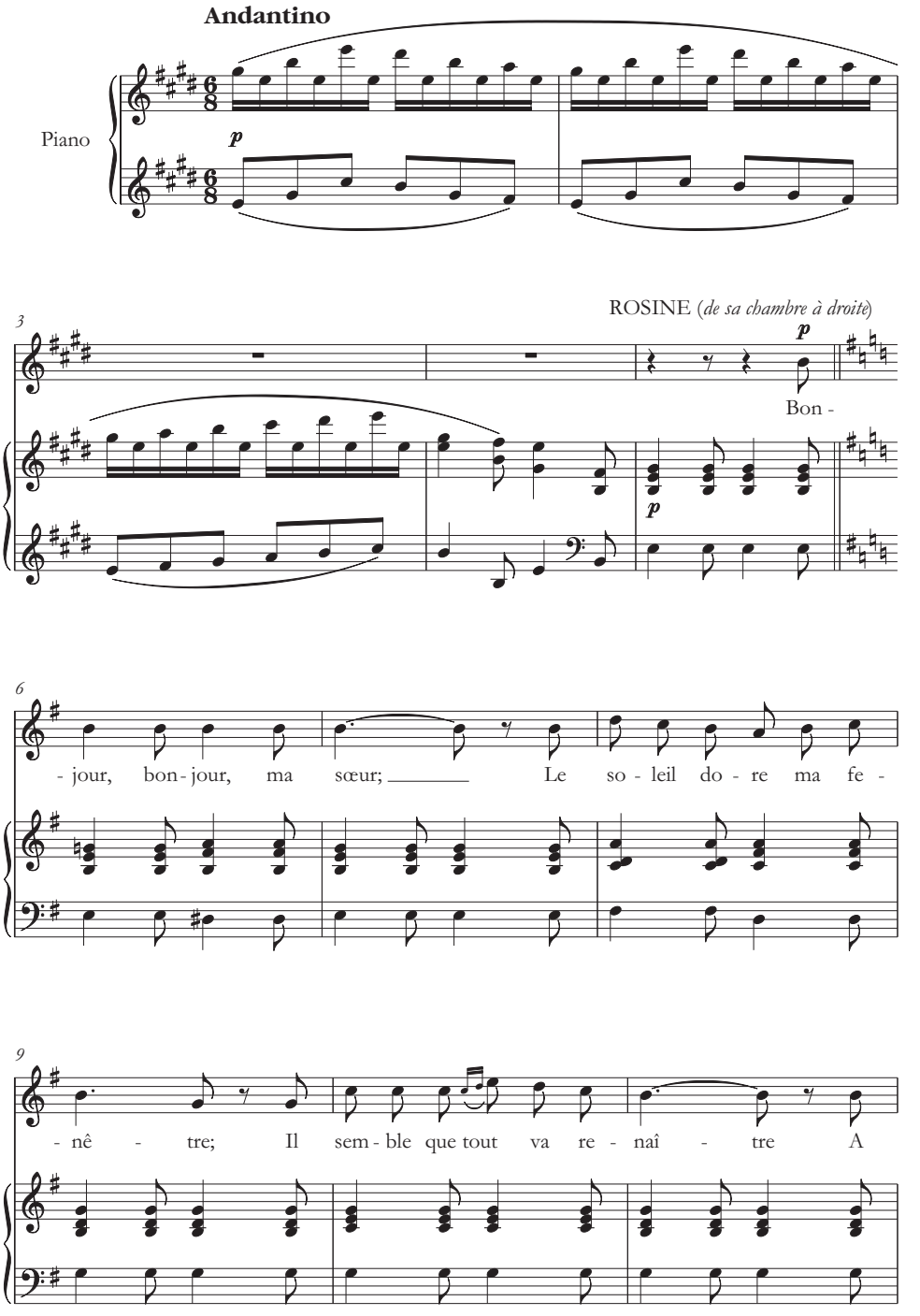
As *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* demonstrates, creators of salon opera purposefully incorporated the idiosyncrasies of salon space on many levels. Salon guests were exposed to different sections of a partitioned scene, resulting in the fragmentation of audiences' perspectives. Opera characters used walls and closed doors to conceal their schemes, thus transforming architecture into symbolic dramatic tools. Guests were sonically and visually surrounded by the immersive action, and therefore compelled to participate in a multimodal, sensory experience. Combining these elements with a degree of irony and metacommentary, creators of salon operas tested the traditional boundaries

[58] The cuckoo motif first appears in the trio's instrumental introduction in bars 1–7, and it is heard again in bars 56–62, before Géronte turns his attention to Isabelle.

[59] The opportunistic cuckoo is known to be one of nature's tricksters because it lays its camouflaged eggs in other birds' nests.
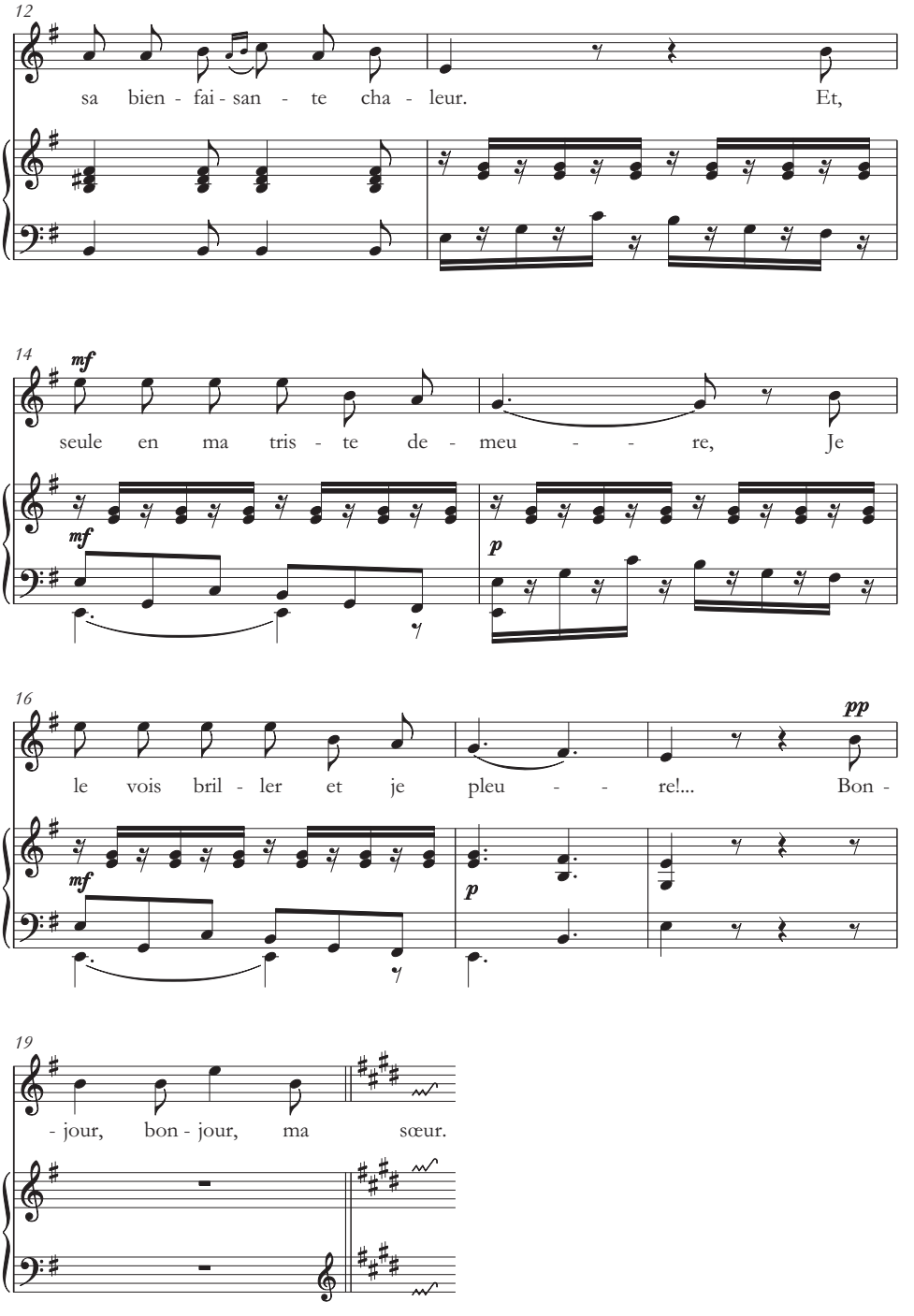
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Example 2 Gustave Nadaud, *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* (1854), scene i, no. 1, bars 1–20.
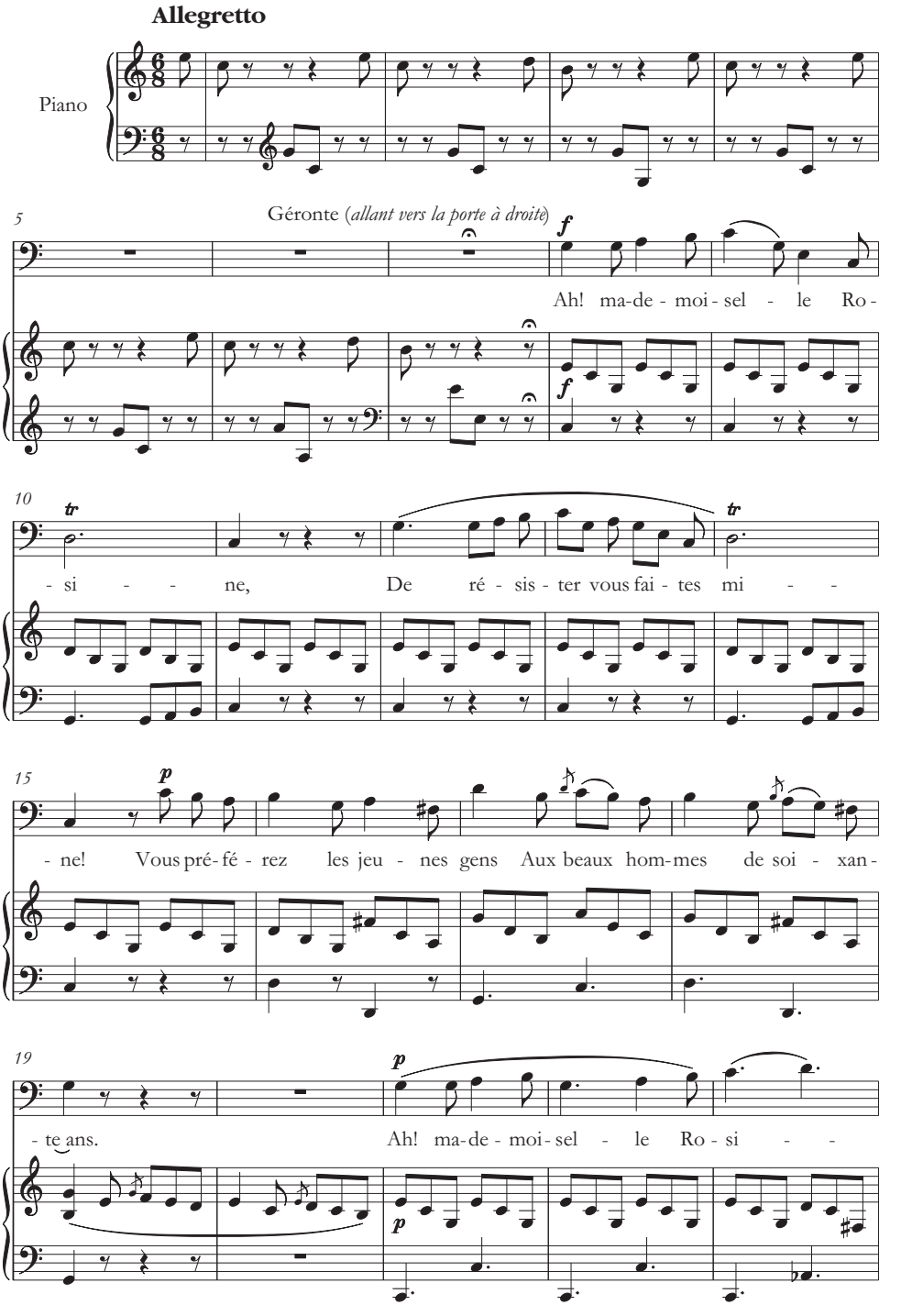


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Example 2 (cont.)
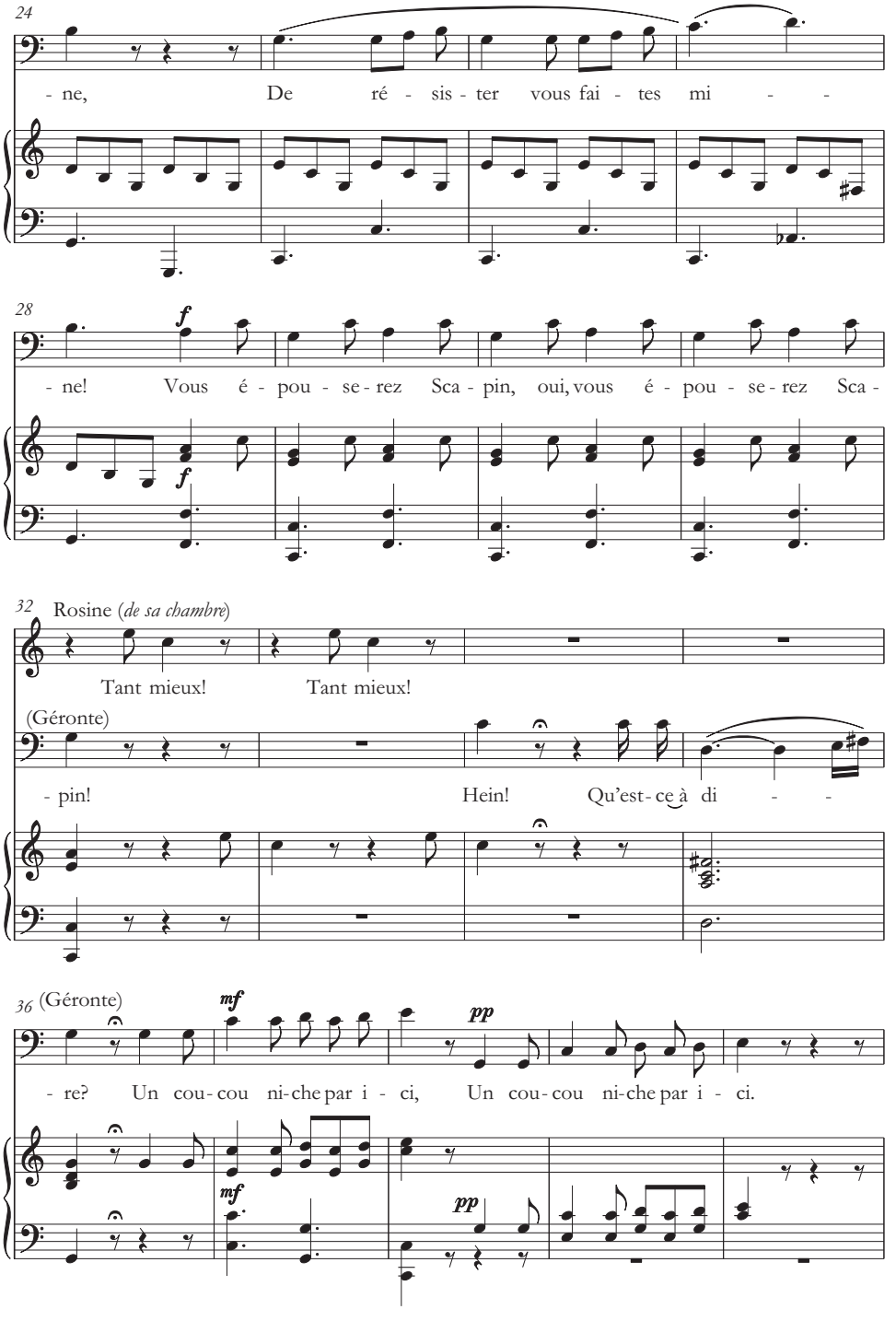


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Example 3 Gustave Nadaud, *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* (1854), scene xvi, no. 7, bars 1–55.
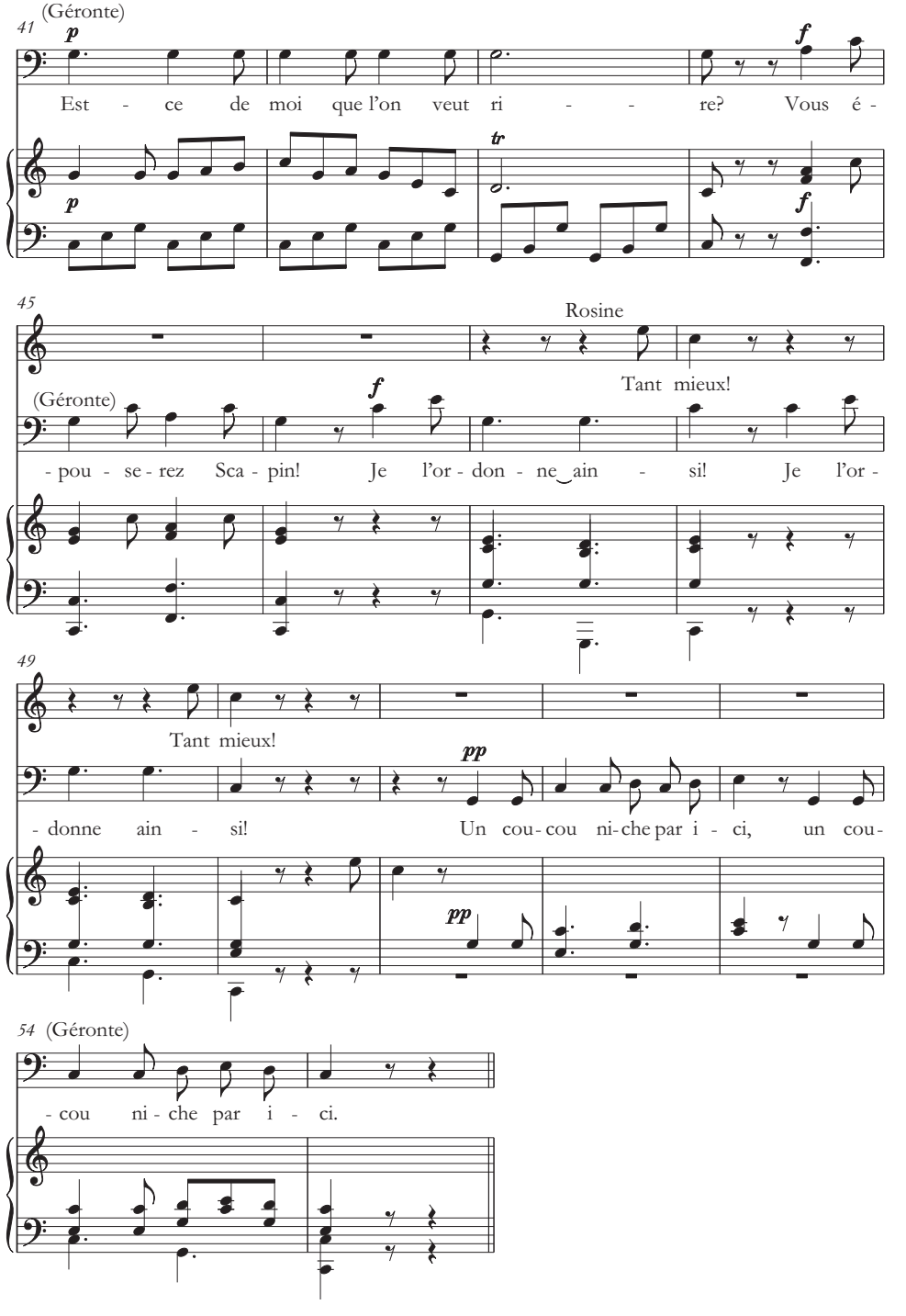


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Example 3 (cont.)



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Example 3 (cont.)



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between audience and stage, and they challenged guests to reflect upon the artistic production of the salon with self-consciousness.[60]

These facets of salon opera would have been novel for Parisian audiences. Moreover, the interdimensional effects they witnessed were quite different from those experienced at opera houses. At the Paris Opéra, offstage elements were typically used to distance the audience from uncanny, mystical or supernatural characters. For instance, a distant celestial voice promises God's forgiveness in Act 3 of Verdi's *Don Carlo* (premièred at the Paris Opéra in 1867). In the same vein, a choir of angels affirms the salvation of Marguerite in Act 5 of Gounod's *Faust* (1859).[61] In salon operas, however, offstage singing was never used for grandiose effect, since the urban-centred plots revolved around amusing tropes of miscommunication, more akin to the plots found in Italian *opera buffa* and some *opéra-comique*. In these last two genres, however, offstage happenings were neither prolonged nor routinely used since the limited wing space at smaller theatres like the Opéra Comique was prohibitive.[62]

One consideration that invites speculation, however, is how salon opera may have influenced the Théâtre des Bouffes Parisiens. Opening in 1855, when salon opera was just reaching its stride in the residential circuit, some Bouffes Parisiens productions seem to have taken a cue from salon opera by featuring extended offstage elements. Jacques Offenbach's *Un mari à la porte* (1859, libretto by Alfred Delacour and Léon Morand), for example, dramatizes (as the title suggests) interdimensional activity inside and outside the house.[63] The correspondence is suggestive of the ways in which salon opera spurred others to explore deconstructive approaches to musical comedy.

At the performance of *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* at Princess Mathilde's residence, members of the audience acknowledged Nadaud's novel approach to staging salon space. Reviewing *Le docteur Vieuxtemps* for the front pages of *Le nouvelliste* and *Le constitutionnel*, Count Henri de Viel Castel praised Isabelle and Rosine's opening duet, the interdimensional scene previously discussed, declaring that it was one of the most successful numbers and won the audience's immediate approval.[64] Viel Castel went on to argue that salon programming should not merely replicate the musical material presented at mainstream venues, but that it should maximize the potential of the salon through tailored productions. He wrote,

> At the receptions of high society, four or five first-rate talents or prodigies protected by public favour repeat a hundred times in a winter the pieces of music and the songs they

[60] Nadaud's other salon opera works, such as *La volière* and *Porte et fenêtre*, also incorporate interspatial scenes, using the sonic seepage between rooms to propel the plot and to add dramatic interest to the scene. Nadaud's salon operas were in high demand and were heard in the salons of Mme Orfila, Camille Doucet and MM. Rodrigues and Gide, as well as the minister of state Eugène Rouher. See Barateau, 'Opéras de salon'.

[61] Parisian audiences may even have heard the 1822 Parisian adaptation of Mozart's *Idomeneo*, in which the commanding voice of Neptune sounds from offstage, ordering Idomeneo to save his son. See Julian Rushton, *W. A. Mozart: Idomeneo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 83.

[62] On the limited stage and wing space at the Opéra Comique from 1840 to 1887 at Salle Favart, see Evan Baker, 'The Scene Designs for the First Performances of Bizet's *Carmen*', *19th-Century Music*, 13 (1989–90), 230–42 (pp. 233–4).

[63] Jacques Offenbach, *Un mari à la porte* (Paris: Heugel, 1859).

[64] Viel Castel, 'Conversation', 2.

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> perform or sing better at the Conservatoire, at the Grand Opéra or at the Italian Opera. Why not let them rest next winter? *Why not look for new entertainment for our salons, composed for our salons? Why not allow a phalanx of writers and artists to be reformed, raised and matured in the greenhouses of the world to work for* [*salon patrons*]*?*[65]

Referring to the 'greenhouse' in which Nadaud's opera was premièred, Viel Castel aptly uses metaphors of cultivation to argue that the sprouting genre held promise. Stirred by the performance of *Le docteur Vieuxtemps*, Viel Castel critiqued the standard musical fare of the salon, questioning the suitability of conservatoire-style programmes and excerpted opera arias in residential contexts. Contemplating the possibilities for customized salon repertory, Viel Castel confronted the ways in which the salon affected the structure of musical performances.

Conclusion

My objective in this study was to invite new consideration of the salon, viewed through a spatial lens. The multiroom aspect of the residential receptions complicates the ways in which we might assess the repertory and activity of the salon. Applying an environmental mode of analysis to the salon sheds light on performative elements, inviting enquiries about musical embodiment and gesture in compositions. It also raises questions about the development of nonlinear modes of listening – for instance, might Erik Satie's experiments with ambient listening in his *musique d'ameublement* (furniture music) have been inspired in part by the prismatic listening habits developed in the salon much earlier in the century? As composers of salon opera experimented with staging in residential theatres, they may have ultimately paved the way for more deconstructive and multimodal approaches to musical drama.

Returning to Nittis's painting after considering the intricacies of salon architecture, one might interpret new layers of detail. The draped curtains in the foreground frame the reception rooms as a multifaceted stage. Though the musical performers are seemingly absent from the scene, we might surmise that they are simply obstructed from view, as was so often the case. Nittis displays the members of the audience as if they were the performers, heightening the salon's ambiguous differentiation between staged and unstaged space. The painting also presents a limited view of the event, encapsulating the ways in which the audience would see and hear only a fraction of the activity, lacking the more holistic viewpoint that a concert hall could offer. The seemingly innocuous architectural distribution of *massée* rooms for residential receptions ultimately presents a complex space of experience that moulded the fundamental structures of the artistic activity it sustained.

[65] 'Quatre ou cinq talen[t]s de premier ordre, ou protégés par la faveur publique, répètent cent fois dans un hiver, au milieu des réunions du grand monde, les morceaux de musique et les chants qu'ils exécutent ou qu'ils chantent mieux, au Conservatoire, au grand Opéra, ou à l'Opéra Italien. Pourquoi ne les laisserait-on pas reposer l'hiver prochain. *Pourquoi ne pas chercher pour nos salons des divertissemen[t]s nouveaux, composés pour nos salons? Pourquoi ne pas laisser se reformer une phalange de littérateurs et d'artistes, élevés et muris dans les serres-chaudes du monde et travaillant pour lui?*' (emphasis added). *Ibid.*

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APPENDIX
SELECTED *OPÉRAS DE SALON* CONSULTED FOR THIS STUDY

Note: The librettos and scores are all available at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Composer	*Librettist*	*Opera*	*Year*
Nadaud, Gustave	Nadaud, Gustave	*Le docteur Vieuxtemps*	1854
Nadaud, Gustave	Nadaud, Gustave	*La volière*	1855
Jonas, Émile	Mestépès, Eugène	*Le duel de Benjamin*	1855
Weckerlin, Jean-Baptiste	Malherbe, Jules	*Tout est bien qui finit bien*	1855
Manry, Charles	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*La bourse ou la vie*	1856
Nadaud, Gustave	Nadaud, Gustave	*Porte et fenêtre*	1857
Weckerlin, Jean-Baptiste	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*Le mariage en poste*	1857
Weckerlin, Jean-Baptiste	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*L'amour à l'épée*	1858
Bernard, Paul	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*Bredouille*	1858
Weckerlin, Jean-Baptiste	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*La laitière de Trianon*	1858
Weckerlin, Jean-Baptiste	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*Manche à manche*	1858
Bernard, Paul	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*Loin du bruit*	1860
Aulagnier, Antonin	Constantin, Marc	*La dot de Rose*	1860
Mahoudeau, F.	Mahoudeau, F.	*Un billet de logement*	1861
Bordès, Luigi	Saint-Germain, Jules Tardieu de	*Le miracle des roses*	1862
Pfeiffer, Georges	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*Le capitaine Roch*	1862
Duprato, Jules M.	Bogaerts, P.	*Marie Stuart au château de Lochleven*	1863
Duprato, Jules M.	Bogaerts, P.	*Une promenade de Marie-Thérèse*	1863
Bernard, Paul	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*L'accord parfait*	1863
Hocmelle, Pierre-Edmond	Onquaire, Galoppe d'	*La mort de Socrate*	*c.*1863
Lecocq, Charles	Guette, Jules de la	*Le baiser à la porte*	1864
Lecocq, Charles	Guette, Jules de la	*Liline et Valentin*	1864
Nadaud, Gustave	Nadaud, Gustave	*Le roseau chantant*	1864
Mahoudeau, F.	Mahoudeau, F.	*Souvenirs d'enfance*	1875
Douay, Georges	Tourte, Francis	*Un mariage d'autrefois*	1875

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