

**Use of Parody Techniques in Jacques Offenbach's *Opérettes* and
Germaine Tailleferre's *Du Style Galant au Style Méchant***

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Abstract

In past scholarship, Germaine Tailleferre has been briefly written about as the only female member of *Les Six* and as a composer of instrumental music. Her body of piano music and a few of her other compositions have been analyzed, but her operatic output and style have to this point not been examined. This dissertation begins to fill that gap by studying the radio operas that were commissioned in 1955 by Radio France. Using parodic techniques developed early in her career, Tailleferre and her librettist, Denice Centore, created a cycle of five short operas that reflected the historical scope of French opera in miniature: *Du Style Galant au Style Méchant*. The fourth opera in the cycle, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, is a parody of the *opérettes* of Jacques Offenbach. This dissertation examines the parodic style of both Offenbach and Tailleferre, and shows how she successfully recreated Offenbach's compositional style in her radio opera using specific imitative techniques.

In the first chapter, an overview of the scholarship on literary and musical parody and available biographical information on both Offenbach and Tailleferre are presented. Chapter 2 is an outline of the history of parody and parodic methods, linking those used in literature to the various methods of musical parody common in twentieth-century music. Chapter 3 is a discussion of Offenbach's *opérettes*, his style, and use of parody in his compositions. Chapter 4 is a detailed analysis of *La belle Hélène*, identifying characteristic parodic traits in Offenbach's compositional style. Chapter 5 is a presentation of events and mentors from Germaine Tailleferre's life that influenced her neoclassical style and compositions that displayed parodic tendencies both before and after the creation of the cycle. Finally, Chapter 6 is an in-depth analysis of *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, connecting the parodic techniques used by

Tailleferre and Centore with those identified in Offenbach's *opérettes*. Highlights of my American premiere staging of this opera are also included.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Imitation in the arts takes many forms, and many authors, visual artists, and composers have tried their hand at paying homage to, criticizing, or commenting on others's works with parody. Some of these works have become iconic, such as Andy Warhol's soup cans or Weird Al Yankovic's pop music send-ups. In 1886, Camille Saint-Saëns created his "Tortoises" movement from *Le carnaval des animaux* by borrowing from another French composer, Jacques Offenbach. Saint-Saëns lifted the familiar "Can Can" (*Infernal Galop*) melody from *Orphée aux enfers* and turned it into the plodding tortoise by slowing it down tremendously. Offenbach's melody was so familiar to the public that the joke was immediately apparent. Later, also in France, Erik Satie and Vincent Hyspa created parody chansons using popular tunes of their day.¹ Germaine Tailleferre, Satie's "musical daughter," created imitative works in her own manner, thus continuing the tradition.

Tailleferre is best known today as a member of *Les Six*, a group of young musicians in post-World War I Paris who rejected the ideas of the romantic era in favor of more modern approaches to composition. While the works of Poulenc, Honegger, and Milhaud are relatively well-known today, those of Auric, Durey, and Tailleferre are not, for reasons discussed in papers by other scholars.² As the most musically conservative of the Six, Tailleferre composed self-identified neoclassical music for ballet, orchestra, opera, film, television, solo instruments, voice, and her major instrument, the piano. Part of her identity as a neoclassicist grew from her talent for imitating the compositional styles of other composers, a technique she developed early in her career at the Paris Conservatory.

¹ Steven Moore Whiting, "Erik Satie and Vincent Hyspa: Notes on a Collaboration," *Music & Letters* 77, no. 1 (February 1996), 65-6.

² I will present reasons for the lack of information on Germaine Tailleferre elsewhere in this dissertation. Durey removed himself from composing with the other members of *Les Six* not long after the term was coined; therefore, he remains relatively obscure. According to Robert Shapiro, his own writings and those of Frédéric Robert are the two most extensive sources on the composer. Robert Shapiro, *Les Six*. (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2011), 149. Colin Roust has undertaken an extensive study of Auric's life and has written the most extensive information on his life.

Early Twentieth-Century Compositional Climate

Tailleferre flourished in a group of male composers and was identified as a compositional equal at a time when women were considered subordinate to men in the creative arts. Poulenc, Milhaud, and Honegger have been written about extensively, as has *Les Six* as a group, but Tailleferre and her music have only received scholarly attention, though limited, since the 1980s. These sources will be detailed later in this dissertation. Although she has an extensive catalogue of film scores and several ballets and operas, Tailleferre did not promote herself or her work during her lifetime and did not take full advantage of her association with *Les Six*. Every piece she presented to a publisher was printed, but several compositions never made it into a publisher's hands. Many of her early manuscripts were destroyed during World War II, when a German officer used her home in Grasse as a communication center. Among the vandalism to the house, she realized that some of her papers had been used as fuel for the fireplace.³ Many of the compositions among her lost papers were unpublished and never recovered. Robert Shapiro offers these additional reasons for why Tailleferre's works are not more widely known:

Tailleferre evidently suffered from a low sense of self-worth . . . [she] was certainly not the self-confident champion of her work that Picasso and Cocteau were . . . Furthermore, she tended to be rather disorganized and sometimes behaved carelessly, thoughtlessly giving away, for example, autograph manuscripts to others as gifts, music that has not seen the light of day since.⁴

Previous scholarship on Tailleferre has examined in detail some of her piano and a few of her other instrumental and solo vocal works, as noted in the literature review below. However, to my knowledge this is the first scholarly work on any of her operas. Specifically, I discuss the four extant "pocket operas" she composed for Radio France in the mid-1950s and explore how she employed parody techniques in these works. The fourth opera of this cycle, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, is analyzed in greater detail in the final chapter. Each opera was based on a general style of French opera or on a specific composer, and Tailleferre borrowed various style, plot, and structural elements directly from works by the parodied subjects. In the

³ Shapiro, *Les Six*, 266. This information was imparted in an interview by Robert Shapiro with Françoise Tailleferre-Radziwill, given in Paris during the summer of 1991.

⁴ *Ibid*, 264.

four Tailleferre operas, these borrowed style elements are identified for comparison with similar elements found in the imitated works. Although specific operas by the parodied composers are studied and cited in this dissertation, no single work seems to have provided a model for any of these operas, as she combined elements from several pieces to create her parodies.

Monsieur Petitpois achète un château is based on the *opérettes* of Jacques Offenbach, and the discussions of this work and of Tailleferre's music in general are prepared by chapters three and four, which are devoted to analyzing the stylistic traits found in Offenbach's *opérettes*. His extant body of work is discussed in general, with the parodic specifics of *La belle Hélène* examined more closely. Layers of parody in the text, music, costuming, and staging are explored, along with their connections to parodic traits found in literature. Offenbach laid the groundwork for imitating serious French opera and its composers, and set the stage for Tailleferre's parodic compositions.

By analyzing Tailleferre's operas and placing them in context with other compositions pre-1900 and beyond, I hope to reintroduce them to a generation of performers and audiences that are largely unaware of her music. For scholars, these long-neglected works add a needed link between the song and operatic parodies of the late 1800s and more modern works. In her music, Tailleferre's personal style sometimes became chameleon-like as she was able to distill elements from other composers and create material which, while sounding like it could have been written by the composer being parodied, rarely directly quote any musical material. The operatic cycle I discuss, *Du style galant au style méchant*, is representative of this technique as Tailleferre and her librettist Denise Centore created miniature versions of larger operas containing identifiable characteristics of the composers and operas she was imitating.

Methodology

In this dissertation, I analyze Tailleferre's pocket operas through comparison with the works of the parodied composers, drawing on methodologies used in the scholarship on parody. Close parallels are identified between the Russian Formalist methodology of parody and Tailleferre's neoclassical approach to composition. A more in-depth analysis of the fourth extant opera, *M. Petitpois achète un château*, reveals that she successfully employed the parodic techniques of intertextuality, parodia, and paratragedia in recreating Offenbach's compositional style. She

also reconstructed the format of Offenbach's *opérettes* in *Petitpois*, reflecting the structural parody championed by the Russian Formalists. Before looking at her specific parodic techniques, however, the term "parody" must be defined.

In *Grove Music Online*, two definitions exist. The first highlights the earliest use of the term parody: a work (usually a mass) in which more than one voice is taken from an existing composition.⁵ This use of parody still existed in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as mentioned above, and Tailleferre would have been familiar with the practice as she analyzed and realized figured bass lines from some of these older works.⁶ The other definition emphasizes humor and ridiculousness as exemplified in the satires based on various French operas during the *Querelle des Bouffons*.⁷ Tailleferre would have also been familiar with this form, since several of the authors and composers in her social circles created these types of works.⁸ My initial study of the opera cycle showed elements of both definitions, as only one of the operas is overtly humorous. With further study, I found that Tailleferre generally tended to utilize elements of the first definition more than the second because she borrowed style and form elements from older composers to create new works. This technique is especially evident in this cycle as plots, character names, and other elements of French opera styles are recreated. Analyzing her Offenbach parody was problematic, as many of his works began as parodies of other composers. This point is addressed in detail in chapters 3 and 5 of my dissertation. Since the other three operas are based on composers or groups of composers who were not known specifically for parody, defining the imitated style characteristics was more straightforward.⁹

Although comedic parody has been extensively researched in past and current studies, non-comedic parody has been discussed in literary terms but rarely in a musical context, so this dissertation adds to the scholarship in this field. Early in her years at the Paris Conservatoire,

⁵ Michael Tilmouth and Richard Sherr. "Parody (i)." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 6, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20937>.

⁶ An example of her realizations is *Les Maîtres du Chant* (1924-27), a series of transcriptions and realizations of various composer's songs. The composers included Lully, Scarlatti, Charpentier, and Monteverdi.

⁷ Michael Tilmouth. "Parody (ii)." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 6, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20938>.

⁸ Stravinsky used neoclassical techniques in some of his compositions, as did the other members of *Les Six*.

⁹ Rameau did compose some parody operas, as did others in the group I will discuss, but the main body of their works did not use this technique and operas by these composers using this process are not referenced. As Offenbach was known for his parodies, this is a central topic of his analysis.

Tailleferre was already known for borrowing elements of style from other composers. She had reduced and transcribed some of Stravinsky's ballets (à la Liszt) for four-hand piano, and gave the same treatment to other orchestral works.¹⁰ One of her successful Conservatoire-era works, the 1913 *Romance* for piano, was based on a theme by Fauré, and Tailleferre cited both Fauré and Stravinsky as influences on her mature style. Likewise, in the 1920s, parody was a defining feature of her mature works. *Le Marchand d'oiseau* (*The Bird Seller*, 1923) a ballet commissioned by the Ballet Suédois, was immediately labeled "feminist" by critics as not only the composer but most of the creative team were female.¹¹ However, Tailleferre herself classified the ballet, and many of her other works, as neoclassical, which she defined in parodistic terms. This will be examined more completely in chapter 5, a description of her stylistic tendencies. Her imitation of Chopin and other styles in this ballet are also discussed in chapter 5. Tailleferre's chameleon-like method of composition was encouraged by her friend Pablo Picasso, who "advised her not to 'simply repeat that "little Germaine Tailleferre act" every morning. Force yourself to find something different so as to constantly renew yourself; avoid using the "recipes" that you have already found.'"¹²

She began to parody other composers and styles as she expanded her compositions to include other genres, including solo instrumental and vocal pieces, and opera. Robert Shapiro describes her music as "vastly innovative, [revealing] a constant originality. Well crafted, intriguing, melodious, substantive, sophisticated, and emotional."¹³ Tailleferre herself described her approach to composition by stating, "I do not have a great deal of respect for tradition. I write music because I enjoy it."¹⁴ These statements support Tailleferre's penchant for creating new music based on the composers who preceded her because she was not afraid to be musically different. Her process of emulating and borrowing stylistic characteristics is overtly exemplified in her operatic cycle *Du style galant au style méchant*, written in 1955 for broadcast on Radio France. Each of the four "pocket operas" was written in a different style of French opera, as related by the librettist Denise Centore, Tailleferre's niece:

¹⁰ Robert Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 2-3.

¹¹ Hamer, 115-16.

¹² Shapiro, 260.

¹³ *Ibid*, 261.

¹⁴ Odette Pannetier, "Avec Germaine Tailleferre," *Candide*, 19 November, 1931.

One imagines scenarios and comical lyrics reminiscent of the classical operas of Rameau (*The Daughter of the Opera*), the Romantic operas of Boieldieu or Auber (*The Beautiful Ambitious One*), realistic opera in the style of Bruneau or Charpentier, and a boiled down “slice of life” libretto worthy of Zola (*Unfortunate Eugenie*), and also operetta in the style of Offenbach (*Mr. Petitpois Buys a Castle*).¹⁵

From these descriptions, not only did Centore aim to replicate the textual style of these libretti, but Tailleferre’s score attempted to musically evoke the style of the selected composers. These operas reflected her earliest style tendencies – filtering other composers’s characteristics through her own music.

These four works had not, until recently, been performed in their entirety since their broadcast on December 28, 1955. A concert performance of three of the operas (including *M. Petitpois*) was sung at Radio France in Paris in 1962, the cycle of four extant operas was performed in Limoge, France, in 2014,¹⁶ and *Le Bel Ambitieux* was performed at the end of January 2016, in Yvetot, France, but to my knowledge no other productions of these operas have occurred since their broadcast in December 1955. These works are ripe for revival now that the parts are available for rental, and, for the next three years, French students taking the music portion of the Bac will write an essay about the operas.¹⁷

I directed the staged version of the American premiere of *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château* that was performed on February 11, 2016. This enactment aimed both to showcase this little-known work and to more deeply analyze the opera through performance. Through discussions with the singers, orchestra members, the conductor, and my own observations, I discovered elements of the work that cleverly imitated parts of well- and not-so-well-known operas by Jacques Offenbach, the composer who provided the inspiration for *M. Petitpois*. In chapter six of my dissertation, I address in detail these parodied elements and the various

¹⁵ “On imaginera des scenarios et des lyrics cocasses rappelant l’opéra classique à la Rameau (*La Fille d’Opéra*), l’opéra romantique de Boieldieu ou d’Auber (*Le Bel Ambitieux*), l’opéra réaliste à la Bruneau ou Charpentier et l’on mitonnera un livret « tranche-de-vie » digne de Zola (*La pauvre Eugénie*), et également l’opérette à la mode d’Offenbach (*Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*).” George Hacquard, *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six*. Translated by George Hacquard. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998), 176.

¹⁶ “L’Affaire Tailleferre,” *Opéra-Théâtre* of Limoges, accessed October 2, 2015, <http://www.operalimoges.fr/en/spectacle/128>.

¹⁷ The Bac (baccalauréat) is the academic qualification exam which French students take at the end of high school. An essay question on the music portion of the exam requires the students to describe an interpretation of the cycle.

opérettes that inspired the opera's eight numbers.

Because *M. Petitpois* is only twenty minutes long, I selected three other Tailleferre pieces to be performed on the concert to show contrasts in her style. As she wrote several pieces in various genres, there was a wide selection from which to choose. Much of this music has rarely been heard since its composition, and recordings, if they exist, are difficult to find. I decided to include the second and third movements of her *Sonate par harpe* (1957), her *Six chansons français* (1929), and the three-movement serialist *Sonate for Solo Clarinet* (1957), each written for different performance forces and composed in three distinct styles. I chose these works to offer the audience a broad range of Tailleferre's musical style, since the opera cycle is not representative of the larger body of her work.

In this dissertation, I compare and contrast Tailleferre's method of parody with Offenbach's methods as presented in his body of *opérettes*. Chapter two details the definitions of parody from their beginnings through current trends, emphasizing the meanings and methods closest to those used by Offenbach and Tailleferre in their compositions. In chapter three, I present Jacques Offenbach's compositional career and how he came to create his body of staged musical works. A more comprehensive discussion of one of these *opérettes*, *La belle Hélène*, comprises chapter four. Specific parodic methods and techniques used by Offenbach and his librettists are teased out in the detailed analysis presented in this chapter. Germaine Tailleferre's career as a neoclassical composer and the various forms of parody she employed are presented in chapter five. Finally, chapter six is a close look at her Offenbach parody, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, discussing the parallels between this work and various Offenbach *opérettes*.

Survey of Related Research

Many books, articles, and papers have been written on the subject of parody, some specifically concerned with how it is used in musical drama. Some of the books that were most helpful in my research were the various writings on György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, and Carolyn Williams's

Gilbert and Sullivan: Gender, Genre, Parody.¹⁸ *Parody: ancient, modern, and post-modern* by Margaret A. Rose informed my discussion of the history of parody and the various forms Offenbach and Tailleferre employed.¹⁹ Two articles and two books included discussions of parody in the works of composers who were contemporaries or immediate predecessors to Tailleferre. One of the books traced the history of parody in musical theater from the 1800s into the twentieth century.²⁰ Conversations with other scholars working on parody in music were also beneficial, as were the writings on literary and cinematic parody. Two books on parody in general that were helpful are Simon Dentith's book defining parodic idioms and Lars Elleström's ideas on how to interpret parody in the arts.²¹

Of course, to be able to correctly place Tailleferre's works in context, an extensive study of French operatic history was required. David Charlton's, Hervé Lancombe's, and Piero Weiss's books on various aspects of opera in France were invaluable resources when surveying the styles and genres that Tailleferre parodied.²² Other in-depth examinations of specific styles and composers were used to formulate basic style characteristics of the compositional techniques

¹⁸ Amy Marie Bauer, "Compositional Process and Parody in the Music of György Ligeti" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1997), Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), Amanda Sewell, "Blending the Sublime and the Ridiculous: A Study of Parody in György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*," (Master's Thesis, Master of Music, Bowling Green State University, 2006), Yayoi Uno Everett, "Signification of Parody and the Grotesque in György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*," *Music Theory Spectrum* 31 (2009), 26-56, and Carolyn Williams, *Gilbert and Sullivan: Gender, Genre, Parody*. (New York: Chichester, 2010).

¹⁹ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: ancient, modern, and post-modern*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

²⁰ Carol K. Baron, "Varèse's Explication of Debussy's *Syrinx* in *Density 21.5* and an Analysis of Varèse's Composition: A Secret Model Revealed," *The Music Review* 43 (1982): 121-34, Cassandra I. Carr, "Charles Ives's Humor as Reflected in His Songs," *American Music* 7 (1989): 123-39, George Colerick, *From The Italian Girl to Cabaret: Musical Humour, Parody and Burlesque* (London: Juventus, 1998), and Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody, and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000).

²¹ Simon Dentith, *Parody: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge-Taylor, 2000), and Lars Elleström, *Divine Madness: On Interpreting Literature, Music and the Visual Arts Ironically* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002).

²² Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, ed., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-comique* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Charlton, *French Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), Hervé Lacombe, *L'Opéra en France et en Italie (1791-1925)* (Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, 2000), Lacombe, *The Keys to French Opera in the Nineteenth Century* (tr. by Edward Schneider, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Weiss, *Opera: A History in Documents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Charlton, "Genre and Form in French opera," *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth Century Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Tailleferre claimed to parody, such as the books by Patrick Barbier, William L. Crosten, William Gibbons, and Steven Huebner.²³ After I identified the specific style traits of each operatic parody, comparisons and contrasts were easier to find as were works from the representative composers that aligned with Tailleferre's pieces. A sense of where these works belong in the continuum of French opera history was also ascertained from surveying the evolution of operatic styles in the country and Europe in general.

Two books were particularly helpful in my research on Jacques Offenbach. Alexander Farris's *Jacques Offenbach* (1980) detailed the composer's life including information on his extended family and some brief musical analyses.²⁴ James Harding took a more narrative approach in his telling of Offenbach's life, interspersing factual information with storytelling.²⁵ Offenbach's own essay in *Le Ménestrel* provided a glimpse into his concept of the ideals of musical theatre. His over one-hundred scores and notes on his *opérettes* were essential to my study, since they provided the information necessary for determining Offenbach's parodic style.

Very little has been written about Germaine Tailleferre as a person or as a composer. Other than a short memoir that was dictated by Tailleferre and some letters, only scores exist for primary sources. The memoir is in French, as is a short article written by Frédéric Robert for *Revue Internationale de Musique Française*.²⁶ A few short interviews and articles by other members of *Les Six* were the only other primary sources, including Carl B. Schmidt's four-volume anthology of Georges Auric's music criticism, which includes twelve reviews of her work.²⁷ Other primary sources include an article by Vera Rašin on *Les Six* and Jean Cocteau, Darius Milhaud's memoirs, and two books concerning French composers.²⁸

²³ William L. Crosten, *French Grand Opera: An Art and a Business* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1948), Patrick Barbier, *Opera in Paris, 1800-1850: A Lively History* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1995), Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin-de-Siècle: Wagnerism Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), and William Gibbons, *Building the Operatic Museum: Eighteenth-Century Opera in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2013).

²⁴ Alexander Farris, *Jacques Offenbach* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980).

²⁵ James Harding, *Jacques Offenbach: A Biography* (New York: Riverrun Press, 1980).

²⁶ Germaine Tailleferre, "Mémoires à l'Emporte-Pièce," Recueillis et annotés par Frédéric Robert. *Revue Internationale de Musique Française* 19, (February 1986): 7-82.

²⁷ Carl B. Schmidt, ed., *Écrits sur la musique de Georges Auric/Writings on Music by Georges Auric*, Tomes 1-4 (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009).

²⁸ José Bruyr, *L'écran des musiciens* (Paris: J. Corti, 1930), Paul Landormy, *La Musique Française Après Debussy* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), Darius Milhaud, *My happy life*. (London: M. Boyars, 1995), and Vera Rašin, "Les Six' and Jean Cocteau," *Music and Letters* 38 no. 2 (April 1957), 164-9.

Study of Tailleferre's full scores and piano reductions of *Du style galant au style méchant* were essential to determining style characteristics and to ascertain how best to stage *M. Petitpois*. I examined other Tailleferre works such as her *Six chansons française* and her *Sonate pour Clarinet Seule* in order to ascertain her personal style as it evolved from her conservatory years through the 1900s. Selected opera scores from the composers she claimed to parody in the cycle were also examined to link borrowed style characteristics. An extensive survey of most of Jacques Offenbach's one hundred and two musical dramas was completed in the course of staging *M. Petitpois*, again to find style parallels. Offenbach's *opérettes* were essential source material because both Tailleferre and her librettist and niece Denise Centore drew heavily from his plot structure, method of naming characters, and other aspects of his most successful works.

A few more secondary source material has been written: Samuel Trickey's 1955 dissertation on the members of the *Les Six* and nine other dissertations mentioning Tailleferre exist, but all concern aspects of her instrumental and solo vocal music. Trickey presented a comprehensive overview of *Les Six* up to the 1950s, detailing subjects such as the formation and interests of the group, their aesthetic orientation, and their contributions to music to that point.²⁹ Laura Mitgang conducted one of Tailleferre's final interviews in May 1982, and her article "One of 'Les Six' Still At Work" revealed some of the composer's thoughts on her musical life as a whole.³⁰

Most dissertations on Tailleferre provide an analyses of specific works or *Les Six's* style in general. Three papers mention her as a member of the group in relation to their overall style characteristics, mainly focusing on harmony, neoclassicism, and national identity.³¹ Four others specifically address piano pieces: Barbara Scheidker wrote on the group's collected solo piano works, the piano is singled out in a paper on Tailleferre's *Deuxième Sonate pour violon et piano*, and the final two dissertations are studies of her body of piano works as a whole.³² These last

²⁹ Samuel Miller Trickey, "Les Six" (Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State College, 1955).

³⁰ Laura Migang, "One of 'Les Six' Still At Work," *The New York Times* (May 23, 1982).

³¹ Richard Bobbitt, "The Harmonic Idiom in the Works of Les Six." (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1963), Janice Louise Minor, "Were They Truly Neoclassic? A Study of French Neoclassicism Through Selected Clarinet Sonatas by Les Six Composers: Arthur Honegger, Germaine Tailleferre, Darius Milhaud, and Francis Poulenc" (D.M.A. Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2004), Bianca Robichaud, "Les Six: Conséquences d'une inentité nationale" (Thèse de doctorat, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences sociales, 2005).

³² Barbara Scheidker, "Cultural Influences on the Piano Music of *Les Six*" (D.M.A. Treatise, The University of Texas at Austin, 1995), Janelle Magnuson Gelfand, "Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983): Piano and

dissertations are on different topics since Brigitta Duhme-Hildebrand discusses the aspects of pleasure exemplified in Tailleferre's music and Sunmie Kim analyzes her solo vocal works for pedagogical purposes.³³

Other secondary sources are slightly more numerous and almost all of them include consideration of *Les Six* as a group and their circles of friends. James Harding's *The Ox on the Roof; Scenes from the Musical Life in Paris in the Twenties* is a description of the titular bar and ballet, as Harding presents a broad idea of the music scene in Paris during the years the group flourished.³⁴ The other four books are studies of how the group interacted with and was influenced by various composers, artists, and authors in Paris and the rest of Europe during the early 1900s.³⁵ Of the remaining three secondary sources, the first is Hervé Lacombe's book on Poulenc, another is a description of the technical issues of staging *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, and the last is an account of how the French composer Henry Barraud created commissions for Radio France.³⁶

George Hacquard, Tailleferre's friend and the director of the school where she played piano for music classes during her final years, wrote an account of her life from his remembrances and from interviews with members of her immediate family and close friends.³⁷

Chamber Works" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, 1999), Julian Lawrence Gargiulo, "Germaine Tailleferre's Solo Piano Works" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland, 2001), and Samuel Anthony Silva, "In Her Own Voice: Exploring the Role of the Piano in the *Deuxième Sonata Pour Violin et Piano* by Germaine Tailleferre" (D.M.A. Dissertation, University of Memphis, 2008).

³³ Brigitta Duhme-Hildebrand, "Die Französische Musikerin Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983): Leben und Werk unter dem Aspekt des Vergnügens an der Musik" (Inaugural Dissertation for Ph.D., University of Cologne, 1991), and Sunmie Kim, "A Study of Selected Songs of 'Les Six': Pedagogical Analysis for College Voice Students in Korea" (Doctor of Education Dissertation, Columbia University, 2006).

³⁴ Jean Cocteau, *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* (1918) Translated by Rollo H. Myers (London: The Egoist Press, 1921), and James Harding, *The Ox on the Roof; Scenes from the Musical Life in Paris in the Twenties* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972).

³⁵ Eveline Hurard-Viltard, *Le Groupe des Six ou le matin d'un jour de fête* (Paris: Meridiens Klincksieck, 1987), Jean Roy, *Le Groupe des six* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), Jens Rosteck, "Von 'Sinnlicher Süsse' und 'Spröden Wundern: Die Pariser 'Groupe des Six' und der Wiener Schönberg-Kreis – Stationen einer Begegnung zwischen zwei europäischen Avantgarden," *Stuien zur Musikwissenschaft* 44, (1995): 303-48, Catherine Miller, *Jean Cocteau, Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Claudel et Le Groupe Des Six: Rencontres poético-musicales autour des Mélodies et des Chansons* (Sprimont, Belgique: Mardaga, 2003), and Pascal Lécroart, *Paul Claudel et la Rénovation du Drame Musical: Étude de ses collaborations avec Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, Paul Collaer, Germaine Tailleferre, Louise Vetch* (Belgium: Pierre Mardaga, 2004).

³⁶ Lynette Miller Gottlieb, "Images, Technology, and Music: The *Ballets Suédois* and *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*," *Advance Access* (February 2007, 523-55), Myriam Chimènes, *Henry Barraud, Un compositeur aux commandes de la Radio*. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2010), and Hervé Lacombe, *Francis Poulenc* (Paris: Fayard, 2013).

³⁷ Georges Hacquard, *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six*, (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1998).

Robert Shapiro's two books, one on *Les Six* as a group and an annotated bio-bibliography specifically about Tailleferre, were helpful in placing Tailleferre in context with this group of composers. The latter book contains a short biography and an annotated catalogue of all her known works, each with Shapiro's comments on the piece itself and a short performance and recording history.³⁸

Five other books directly consider one or more of Tailleferre's works. The earliest of these was a companion book to a 1992 celebration of Milhaud, Honegger, and Tailleferre's music, and contains program notes on the pieces performed.³⁹ Nicolas Slonimsky and Jacques Bonnaud wrote overviews of the Parisian musical scene post-1900 in their books from the late 1990s.⁴⁰ Two more recent articles provide analyses of the cultural and psychological impact of specific Tailleferre works. One of her early ballets, *Le Marchand d'oiseaux* (1923), was examined as a feminist work by Laura Hamer, and Kiri L. Heel assessed the personal cathartic influence of Tailleferre's *Six chansons française* (1929).⁴¹ Both authors shed light on how these pieces were received at their premieres and how women composers and women's issues were viewed in the 1920s.

Numerous reviews of Tailleferre's music and advertisements of her concerts both in Europe and the United States appear in various newspapers. An interesting article from the *Washington Post* society pages in 1927 and reported that Ralph Barton, Tailleferre's first husband, had finally found the "perfect wife" after four tries.⁴²

³⁸ Robert Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), and Shapiro, ed., *Les Six: The French Composers and Their Mentor Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2011).

³⁹ Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, *Des compositeurs a fêter D. [Darius] Milhaud, A. [Arthur] Honegger, G. [Germaine] Tailleferre: 1992* (ARCAM, 1992).

⁴⁰ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music Since 1900* (New York: Schirmer Bookd, 1994), and Jacques Bonnaud, *Dictionnaire de l'opéra contemporain: de 1945 à 1998: art lyrique vivant* (Bagnols-sur-Cèze: J. Bonnaud, 1999).

⁴¹ Laura Hamer, "Germaine Tailleferre and Hélène Perdriat's *Le Marchand d'oiseaux* (1923): French feminist ballet?" *Studies in Musical Theater* 4, no. 1 (August 19, 2009), 113-20, and Kiri L. Heel, "Trauma and Recovery in Germaine Tailleferre's *Six chansons françaises* (1929)" *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 15 (2011), 38-69.

⁴² Anonymous. "At Last Mr. Barton Finds the "Perfect Wife:" Why the artist is sure his talented French beauty is the ideal love mate he missed in three American brides," *Washington Post* (1923-1954), January 9, 1927, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Washington Post* pg. SM3.

Other sources that mention Tailleferre's works include program books from an exposition on Jean Cocteau and a pamphlet by Jullian Philippe.⁴³ An article detailing the personnel of and works performed by ballet companies choreographed by Jean Börlin listed the numerous pieces Tailleferre wrote for his ensembles.⁴⁴ This article also gave brief descriptions of how each ballet was received and the number of times it was performed, so it was a useful tool for determining the public reception of her music. The final two items in this category were a book on neoclassicism by Scott Messing and Josiane Mas's history of *Les Ballets Suédois* during the 1920s.⁴⁵

Because Tailleferre was the only woman in a group of male composers, women in music around the early- to mid-twentieth century is a subject that is addressed and, specifically, how the perception of women composers throughout the twentieth century affected the reception of her music. All the books I consulted were written after Tailleferre's death in 1983 and offer an historical perspective on these topics. Compiled lists of women composers offer a glimpse into how many females were active writers during each era. Volumes by Judith Lang Zaimont, Danielle Roster, and Mary McVickers fall into this category.⁴⁶ As the operas I studied were written for performance on the radio, Helen Thornham and Elke Weissmann's book on feminism in media studies was consulted.⁴⁷ The rise of the New Musicology in the 1980s and 1990s led to numerous books on gender and music, many of which included at least brief discussions of Tailleferre's work.⁴⁸

⁴³ Pierre Geogel, *Jean Cocteau et son temps, 1889-1963*; [exposition], 1965, and Jullian Philippe, *Mémoires d'une bergère*, Special Collection, department des Arts du spectacle, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁴⁴ George Dorris, "The Choreography of Jean Borlin, A Checklist with the Tours and Personell of Les Ballets," *Dance Chronicle* 22, no. 2 (1999): 189-222.

⁴⁵ Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), and Josiane Mas, *Arts en mouvement: les ballets suédois de Rolf de Maré: Paris, 1920-1925*. ([Montpellier]: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2008).

⁴⁶ Judith Lang Zaimont, ed. *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective, volume II, 1984-1985* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), Danielle Roster, *Les Femmes et la Création Musicale: Les compositrices européennes du Moyen-Age au milieu du XX^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), and Mary McVicker, *Women Composers of Classical Music: 369 Biographies from 1550 into the 20th Century*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2011).

⁴⁷ Helen Thornham and Elke Weissmann, *Renewing Feminism's Radical Narratives, Fantasies, and Futures in Media Studies* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

⁴⁸ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Ruth A. Solie, *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994), Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, ed., *Rethinking Music*

Conclusion

Few writings exist on the use of non-comedic parody in music, Jacques Offenbach's compositional style in his *opérettes*, twentieth century French operas composed by Germaine Tailleferre, and the bulk of Radio France's mid-twentieth-century musical commissions. This dissertation addresses these topics in various levels of detail, presenting topics for further research on these subjects. My work contributes to the discussion of multi-layered parody both comedic and non-comedic in staged musical compositions by analyzing the connections to parody in literature. Structuralist and Russian Formalist methods of parody appear in these operatic parodies, and discovering the layers placed in the works by the composer, librettist, and later the director and designers during the staging process is important to determine what types of parody appear. Offenbach's *opérettes* present a prime example of parodic layering. My discussion of his techniques highlights the coordination of his librettists with his composition and production methods to create highly successful and humorous stage works.

I hope that scholars of women composers, twentieth century French opera, and operatic radio production will benefit from my discussion of Tailleferre's commissioned radio operas. My comparison of these short works to the composers and larger works parodied creates a model for future closer analysis of these operas, as does my own close analysis and staging of *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*. My plot and character comparisons between Offenbach's and Tailleferre's operas detail how a parody can successfully emulate another work without musically quoting the parodied work. And finally, my selection of these nearly-forgotten compositions by a French woman will add to the body of scholarship currently being written on women in music and their contribution to opera, a genre that has traditionally been dominated by male composers.

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Beverley Diamond and Pirkko Moisala, ed., *Music and Gender* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), Karin Pendle, ed. *Women and Music: A History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), Susan McClary, *Reading Music: Selected Essays* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007).

Chapter 2

Parody

The parodic tradition in French music has deep roots that extend back before the Enlightenment and that have been particularly prominent since the mid-nineteenth century. Igor Stravinsky, working in Paris during the early twentieth century, also borrowed from other composers. He stated, “My instinct is to recompose, and not only students’ work, but old masters’ as well... Whatever interests me, whatever I love, I wish to make my own.”¹ This “recomposition” is seen in his reworking of Bach’s Concerto for Two Violins into his own Violin Concerto; the sections of *The Rake’s Progress* that, in his words, were “deeply involved in *Così [fan tutti]*”;² and some of his other neoclassical pieces. Stravinsky was not secretive about naming the works that influenced his compositions. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Erik Satie and Vincent Hyspa created parody chansons using the popular tunes of their day. Hyspa was known for retexting songs, while Satie was hired to adapt the music to fit the new words. One of their favorite parodic targets was Paul Delmet, as related by Steven Whiting: “Delmet’s [sentimental romance] melody for ‘Une femme qui passe’ was borrowed for ‘Le Noyau qui ne passe pas,’ a query to an accidentally swallowed prune stone.”³ Whiting notes that Hyspa’s humorous parodies were considered “tongue-in-cheek”⁴ and ironic commentary on the real text.⁵ Tailleferre, Satie’s self-proclaimed “musical daughter,” created imitative and parodic works in her own manner, thus continuing the tradition of French parody. Her works, however, were usually non-ironic versions of the pieces being parodied. An early example of this tendency is Tailleferre’s 1920 piano solo *Hommage à Debussy*. None of Debussy’s themes are exactly quoted in this composition, but Tailleferre imitates the older composer’s style. She did not specifically call the work a parody, but its title and style classify it in this genre.

¹ Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 110.

² Ibid, 158. Joseph N. Straus disputes Stravinsky’s claim and links the work more closely to *Don Giovanni* in his book *Remaking the Past*.

³ Steven Moore Whiting, “Erik Satie and Vincent Hyspa: Notes on a Collaboration,” *Music & Letters* 77, no. 1 (February 1996), 70. The song titles listed translate to “A Woman Passes” and “The Stone Does Not Pass.”

⁴ “pince-sans-rire”

⁵ Whiting, 70.

These examples from Saint-Saëns, Stravinsky, Hyspa and Satie, and Tailleferre represent only a handful of compositional strategies employed in parodic works. From two Greek definitions of parody, *parodia* and *paratragodein* (or *paratragoedia*), several threads of thought on the meaning of the term have evolved. Using the above composers as examples of some of these threads, Saint-Saëns directly copies Offenbach's work but inserts it into a different context. It is humorous because a formerly fast dance number is used to represent a very slow animal. Stravinsky's "recomposition" of Bach and others is not intended to be humorous or critical. Instead, it pays homage to the early masters by quoting some element(s) of the melodic and/or harmonic structure of the parodied piece onto which Stravinsky adds his own compositional voice, creating a new work that stands on its own merits. Hyspa and Satie lifted all of the music from the songs they parodied, adding new words to twist their meaning to a sometimes completely unrelated topic. Each of these songs were meant to be humorous, and mocked (sometimes gently, others not) the singer and songs that were targeted. Tailleferre's form of parody came closer to that of Stravinsky, although she chose not to quote previous composers specifically. She used general recognizable elements of their styles to create new works that evoked the sound of the emulated composer while adding her own voice to the piece. The following sections will explore these early works, the strategies employed in their creation, and trace their development through the twenty-first century, commenting on how multiple authors describe and explain various forms of parody.

Three Basic Parody Strategies

Parodia

In Ancient Greece, two distinct definitions of parody existed side by side: *parodia* and *paratragoedia*. One, *parodia*, emphasized the transformation of words that turn one song into another in a humorous way. Aristotle first discussed this word in his *Poetics* when describing the different forms of theater in the ancient world.⁶ Fred Householder used the Aristotle and other

⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*.

contemporaneous texts to define *parodia* as “a narrative poem of moderate length, in epic meter, using epic vocabulary, and treating a light, satirical, or mock-heroic subject.”⁷ Margaret Rose further explains the use of the term by adding that other writers like Quintilian allude to imitating another singer in creating a new ode. She also notes that this definition does not change the subject of the parodied epic, it just makes it humorous.⁸ Similar definitions of the term extended into the sixteenth century. J.C. Scaliger described the term in his 1561 essay *Poetices libri septem* as the inversion or turning of the words to a Homeric epic in order to render it ridiculous.⁹ In this text, Scaliger describes how he and others used Virgil’s *Aeneid* as source material to create *parodia* drinking songs that ridiculed the serious text.¹⁰ Although Scaliger did not intend for the term to connote negativity, his use of the term “ridiculous (*ridicula*)” caused later critics to assume that these parodies mocked the epic poetry. Rose maintains that this was not the case, as the term can also be translated as “funny” or “amusing,” words which do not carry the same connotations in English as “ridiculous.”¹¹ This misunderstanding could have led to various later definitions that emphasize negative criticism and absurdity. From these multiple interpretations, the parody writers could have been using the epics to create entertainment, like Scaliger’s drinking songs, or in other ways described later in this text.

Quintilian thought the use of puns belonged to this branch of the definition, remarking that “apt quotation of verse may add to the effect of wit” and that this wit may be created by “the invention of verses resembling well-known lines, a trick styled parody.”¹² No mention of imitation of sound and form occurs in Quintilian’s writings on this subject, and Householder believes that this point separates the early definition of parody from the one used in modern times.¹³ Again, there is no mention of mockery or ridicule in this version, only imitation and twisting of an existing model for humorous purposes. This thread of parody implies intertextual

⁷ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: ancient, modern, and post-modern*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7.

⁸ *Ibid*, 7-8.

⁹ J.C. Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem*, (Lyons, 1561), 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 46.

¹¹ Rose, 9-10.

¹² Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 4 volumes, trans. H.E. Butler, (London and Cambridge, MA, 1960), v2, 491.

¹³ Rose, 22.

references, as the puns are not humorous without prior knowledge of the quoted “well known lines.”

Near the end of the sixteenth century both the neutral and negative definitions of *parodia* were in general use. John Florio defined the term in his 1598 *Worlde of Wordes, Or Most Copious and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* as “a turning of a verse by altering some words.”¹⁴ The same year, however, Ben Jonson penned the line, “A *Parodie!* A *parodie!* with a kind of miraculous gift to make it absurder than it was” in act 5, scene 5 of his play *Every Man in his Humour*.¹⁵ Isaac D’Israeli echoed Johnson’s baser use of the term in his descriptions of “*parodi*,” singers who would follow balladeers from village to village performing the same epic poems but altering the words to give them a “buffoonish” bent.¹⁶ His use of the term reconnected it to the earliest Greek usage, when epic poems were sung. As these examples show, the definition of *parodia* was becoming more diverse in literature, theater, and music, keeping at its core the technique of altering an existing work for a different use. Rose summarizes her various references to the ancient and pre-Classical use of the term by stating that parody:

Could imitate both the form and subject-matter of the heroic epics, and create humour by then rewriting the plot or characters so that there was some comic contrast with the more “serious” epic form of the work, and/or create comedy by mixing references to the more serious aspects and characters of the epic with comically lowly and inappropriate figures from the everyday or animal world.¹⁷

The length and complexity of this comprehensive definition illustrates how difficult it was—and still is—to describe the various attributes and function of parody. This definition also only takes into account the usage of the word pre-1900, and does not include the earliest musical references to the practice of creating parody.

In music, uses of the word “parody” originally stemmed from the branch of definitions that began with *parodia*. The term was first applied to music in 1587 in the title of a Mass by

¹⁴ Rose, 10.

¹⁵ Ben Jonson, *Every Man in his Humour*, (*The Holloway Pages*: <http://hollowaypages.com/jonson1692humour.htm>), accessed April 23, 2016.

¹⁶ Isaac D’Israeli, “Parodies,” in Isaac D’Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, Second Series (1823) 14th ed. (London, 1849), 2, 505-6.

¹⁷ An even more detailed four-point description of ancient parody is presented on page 25 of Rose’s book. Rose, 15.

Jakob Paix; however, the method it described was in use much earlier in chant and motets.¹⁸ During the Renaissance, borrowing in this way was common and the technique was described by theorists such as Nicola Vicentino and Gioseffo Zarlino in their writings. Pietro Cerone gave the most detailed description of how to use an existing work to create a new composition in *El Melopeo y maestro* (1613). According to the practice of the day, he stated that the music from the model piece should be used at the beginning and end of every movement, with some material interspersed in the body of the work.¹⁹ In this definition and usage, no mention is made of rewriting the original text, only the re-use of the music. This practice was known as *contrafact* or *contrafactum*, the substitution of one text for another where the music is not altered.

Parodic practice in music can be traced at least to the ninth century, when melismatic passages of chants were troped. These tropes varied in text depending on the liturgical day, and several similar musical melismas could have different sets of words. This practice of texting untexted notes and the related form *prosula* evolved through the centuries until composers began borrowing tenor lines from other works to create ‘Tenor Masses’ in the fifteenth century. As early as the fourteenth century, entire points of imitation and polyphonic settings from chansons, madrigals, motets, and sometimes other Masses were used to create new works, though this practice was most common during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These parody Masses are not in any way “buffoonish,” nor do they ridicule the works they imitate; they merely use the same music as the older composition, with new music and words added after the initial statement. For this reason, the term ‘imitation Mass’ is often used in place of parody. It is interesting to note in light of the overall subject of this chapter that some of the earliest Masses in this style were composed by Franco-Flemish musicians, borrowing from earlier motets.²⁰ Josquin and his school are cited as some of the first to utilize this technique, though the Italian Antonio

¹⁸ The process of troping melismas, adding text to previously untexted parts of chant or inserting new music into existing chant was practiced as early as the eighth century in France. Motets developed from the clausulae inserted into chant. The clausulae were lifted and retexted as a separate piece of music, which became known as the motet. Tilmouth and Sherr.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Alex Lingas, "parody mass." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed April 2, 2016), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e4988>.

Zachara da Teramo and the Belgian Jacob Obrecht were known to have used it earlier.²¹ The *Missa Mater Patris* (early 1500s) by Josquin is thought to be the first true parody Mass as it does not include a structural cantus firmus, though as stated above, the term “parody” was not used to describe such works until the late 1500s.²²

Secular application of this technique during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was also common in chanson-motets and various keyboard works. Motets, which were composed by lifting the clausulae from Masses, adding new text to this line and an additional two or three polyphonic parts, were part of this early concept of parody in music. Chansons were created from and modeled after these motets, and some chanson refrains found their ways into these liturgical works. In this use of parody, humor is not the intended result, only the copying of musical lines. Some of the secular songs based on motets could, however, be comical imitations of the quoted works.

Tilmouth and Sherr, in their *New Grove* article on the practice of parody, mention that by the end of the sixteenth century much parody had become pastiche, or a compilation of material from other sources with no original ideas presented.²³ This term, however, did not appear in regular usage until the late 1800s so any usage of this method during the Renaissance era would fall under parody. A more thorough exploration of the term will appear later in this text. Evidence presenting a usage of this method pre-1800 has been presented above in the discussion of the writings of two late sixteenth-century authors, Scaliger and Florio, who partially defined parody as inverting or turning words in a song to make them ridiculous.²⁴ Imitative and collective use of other composer’s material was well-established throughout Europe by the start of the baroque era, with Handel and Bach borrowing widely from themselves in some works.²⁵

²¹ Tilmouth and Sherr.

²² This Mass was based on a three-voice motet by Antoine Brumel. Gustave Reese, "Josquin Desprez (biography)" *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, Macmillan, 1980), 240.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Rose, 280-82.

²⁵ Tilmouth and Sherr refer to this practice by Bach and Handel as “reworking” their pieces, but there are instances where music was not completely reused but melodic and harmonic ideas are borrowed from other works, such as Handel borrowing from some of his operas to create music for his oratorios. If Stravinsky’s quote about “recomposing” is taken to mean parody, this practice definitely qualifies.

Parodia began as an ancient Greek term stressing imitation of classic epic poems. As the term evolved over the next two millennia, it came to mean any non-musical work where the text was altered in some way to create a humorous form of the original. In music, non-texted passages of Mass movements were removed from their context, texted, and became polyphonic motets. Music from secular songs was sometimes used as the basis for Mass movements or, in some cases, complete Mass settings. This process expanded into the baroque era, with composers borrowing musical phrases and entire melodies from themselves to create new works with or without text. These works were not necessarily humorous, a trait that will be further explored in the other vein of parody.

Paratragodein or Paratragoedia

The other main Greek branch of the definition of parody, *paratragodein* or *paratragoedia*, focuses on intertextual references, emphasizing the satire of dramatic tragedy that criticizes the false and becomes meta-fictional. Satirical parody of this sort appears in the novel *Don Quixote*, which comically and critically satirizes the chivalric tales of knights. Quixote tries to do good, but generally ends up causing harm to himself or others, although his exploits are based on his delusional view of the world. Sancho Panza, whom Quixote dubs his squire, sees the reality of the situations, and is the reader's entry into Quixote's world. Walther Kranz adds a sharper tone to his reading of *paratragoedia* when he defines it as "to mockingly imitate the style of tragedy."²⁶

Paratragoedia has been linked to Aristophanes, the ancient Greek playwright, in whose play *The Frogs*, the titular amphibians battle and argue in a 'mock-heroic' style as the tragedy unfolds. No specific story or play is used as a model for this piece, so the work does not copy another, as in the previous discussion of *parodia*. Instead, Aristophanes is lifting an entire style of writing, the Euripidean tragedy. The humor comes from the ridiculous presentation of frogs acting as humans, in normal situations, using normal speech. Parallels can be drawn between the plays of Euripides and Aristophanes; the characters themselves, their way of speaking and

²⁶ Walther Kranz, "Paratragödie" in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, XVIII/4, 1410-11.

acting, and the conflict that drives the plot. Continuing in this tradition, Rose mentions Menippus of Gadara, a Cynic active in the mid-third century BCE.²⁷ His writing style combined parody and satire, as Eugene P. Kirk describes: “The chief mark of Menippean satire was unconventional diction...in outward structure Menippean satire was a medley – usually a medley of alternating prose and verse, sometimes a jumble of flagrantly digressive narrative, or again a potpourri of tales, songs, dialogues, orations, letters, lists, and other brief forms, mixed together.”²⁸ Rose continues stating that Menippean parodic and satirical works used Aristophanes’ plays as source material, creating a link back to his definition.²⁹ The use of multiple sources and satire describes the definition of *paratragodia* coined by Aristophanes almost to the letter.

Satire and its parodic use is linked with this branch of parody. Rose relates that the definition of satire has undergone as much confusion and scrutiny as that of parody, as the Greek words *satyr* and *satira* or *satira* were alternately considered its etymological root.³⁰ With these two words as its origin, satire has been known to contain aspects of both ridicule and the compilation of borrowed material. John Dryden, writing on the development of satire in 1693, referred to the way satire critically commented on the targeted work.³¹ Playwright Henry Fielding defined satire in his work *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* by giving the character of “Medley” a chance to describe his purpose in the play. He answers, “to ridicule the vicious and foolish Customs of the Age, and that in a fair manner, without Fear, Favour, or Ill-nature, and without Scurrility, ill Manners, or common Place.” This eighteenth-century definition combines the Greek roots by naming the character after the latter but having him describe the former. Rose comments further that the character suggests a cathartic element of satire, as the ridicule is meant to “expose the reigning Follies in such a manner, that men shall laugh themselves out of them before they feel they are touched.”³² Fielding comes close to the modern

²⁷ Rose, 84.

²⁸ Eugene P. Kirk, *Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism*, (New York, 1980), ix.

²⁹ Rose, 86.

³⁰ Scholarship in the 1970s by Michael Coffee suggests that the correct root is *satira*, defined as “medley,” and the phrase *lanx satira* translated by Rose as “a medley of ingredients.” Given this history, satire would seem to have been used to describe a practice closer to pastiche, although the term is not used in this manner today. Rose, 80.

³¹ John Dryden, ed. George Watson, *Discourse Concerning the Origin and Progress of Satire*, vol. 2, 105.

³² Henry Fielding, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, (London, 1737), 4.

definition of satire in his play, differentiating satire from parody in that there is no specific model that forms the basis for the new work.

Literary hoaxes also are related to this branch of parody, as they comment in an ironic or satiric manner on the work they are imitating. Quintilian described this practice by citing the *Letters of Obscure Men* (1516), written by Ulrich von Hutten and other authors who penned counterfeit letters meant to attack their targets in a satiric manner. These men impersonated the “real” authors, writing letters in their style and under their names in a comic imitation of contemporary collections.³³ Lawrence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy*, written two hundred years later, uses the hoax as Sterne created the character of Tristram as the author of his own fictional life’s story. Shandy relates his opinions on the events prior to and during his lifetime, commenting negatively and comically on the practices of society during the eighteenth century.

Another major literary hoax was perpetrated by the Scottish poet James Macpherson in 1762. He “discovered” a lost manuscript of epic poems by Ossian (or Oisín), an Irish warrior-poet, and published his translations. It was later discovered that Macpherson had created the poems himself based on Gaelic ballads, drawing source material from John Milton, Homer, and Biblical texts. Despite being discredited, the set of poems influenced many future writers and was a major influence on the early Romantic movement in literature.³⁴

In narratives such as von Hutten’s and Sterne’s, the real author can hide behind his or her creation to more sharply and anonymously criticize society or a specific target. Authors may choose to employ this method of parody for several reasons: a straightforward critique of the subject may not be possible for societal or political reasons, a female author may pose as a man to more easily have her work published, or perhaps the writer might wish to remain anonymous. Robert Schumann wrote many articles on music under the names of Eusebius and Florestan in *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* not only to mask his opinions on his peers, but to be able to argue with himself about musical issues of the day. His work under these pseudonyms qualifies as parody because he was writing in two different voices that imitated particular character traits and reflected different opinions on the subject discussed. In presenting his opinions this way,

³³ Rose, 70.

³⁴ Thomas M. Curley, *Samuel Johnson, the Ossian Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland*, (Cambridge U.P.) 2009, Introduction.

Schumann filtered his ideas through two different character lenses. Though containing the same root as *parodia*, *paratragedia* differed in that it was more about the imitation of a style rather than the altering of a specific work. Literary hoaxes and pseudonym writings also fall into this category as they are original works based on the style of others.

Burlesque

A third definition of parody, burlesque, was later added to the two ancient Greek ones listed above. Parody in this form was harsh satire that ridiculed works in a critical manner. Crude humor, travesty, and the suggestion of insanity or an insane world were hallmarks of burlesque. The earliest usage of the word indicated that it meant “buffoonery,” as in the titles of Scarron’s *Le Virgile Travesty en vers Burlesques* (1648-53), and Cotton’s *Scarronides: or, Virgile Travestie. A Mock-Poem. Being the First Book of Virgils Æneis in English, Burlésque* (1664).³⁵ In the latter work, Cotton parodies writings about the Roman gods by giving them base, extremely commonplace ways of speaking.³⁶ By reducing the usually elegant, lofty language of the Virgil texts to what would be considered pub talk, Cotton makes a complete travesty of the traditional perception of the Olympian beings. Readers who knew the *Æneid* and other writings by Virgil would immediately recognize his methods, and find the entire situation laughable. D’Israeli referred to both texts as buffoonery, finding that the humor ranged from the fanciful to the malignant.³⁷ In this sense, the humor in the situation was caused by incongruity taken to an extreme level, as the ancient myths were mocked mercilessly.

Parody classified under this genre had been written in France in the early 1300s in the manuscript *Roman de Fauvel*. This allegorical verse romance criticized the clergy and society in general, commenting on the corruption and sin rampant at that time in the Catholic Church and the aristocracy. Though not known as *burlesque*, the *Roman de Fauvel* exemplified the raucous, critical ridicule that this term embodied.

³⁵ Rose, 27.

³⁶ C. Cotton, *Scarronides: or, Virgile Travestie. A Mock-Poem. Being the First Book of Virgils Æneis in English, Burlésque*, (London, 1664).

³⁷ D’Israeli, 246.

Conclusion

These three streams of parody, traced from their inception to the Enlightenment era, show how early writers interpreted the ancient Greek term in many ways. Each branch highlights the comic aspect of parody, ranging from a mild reworking of a few words in a song to a comprehensive critical ridicule of societal issues. The branches differ in the amount of material used from a pre-existing source (if one is used) and the degree to which the source or target is mocked. Critical satire is also an element in both burlesque and *paratragoedia*, but does not factor as strongly into *parodia*, which relies more on reworking existing sources in some way. Both branches can be extremely complex or rather simple in their construction, although *paratragoedia* tends to seem more complex as a broad style of writing or composition is being emulated. Good parodists can make this form appear straightforward when actually a very complex intertwining of references and ideas appears. Musical parody initially was a completely different concept, but aligned with *parodia* in its use of re-texting both liturgical and secular songs for other purposes.

Post-Enlightenment Theories of Parody

Since the eighteenth century, definitions of parody have grown considerably more complex. Philosophers and scholars of this era analyzed Aristotle, Aristophanes, Quintilian, and other Greek and Roman writers to interpret the ancient findings in new ways. Isaac D'Israeli, working in the early 1800s, wrote extensively on this subject. His definition, continuing in the line of Aristophanes, stated that parody was “a changing of another work and a method of criticizing the false; applications range from comic fancy to satiric to malignant reduction of the original to the ridiculous.”³⁸ This wide-ranging explanation of the term fuses the burlesque aspects of ridicule with the meta-fictional critique of Aristophanes, emphasizing that a target work was used and that the product was meant for entertainment purposes.

Another even darker meaning of the term was coined by Nietzsche in 1886 when he called parody “a lack of originality and its laughter the laughter of despair.”³⁹ Later writers, using Nietzsche as a model, saw parody as negative and nihilistic.⁴⁰ This black parody had no

³⁸ Isaac D'Israeli, *Parodies*, 505.

³⁹ Rose, 280-82.

⁴⁰ Iser, 1972, and Newman, 1986, in Rose, 280-82.

comedic elements but instead turned its parodied subject into nothingness, as Fred Newman implied, or was a negative commentary on the subject. Margaret Rose has written on this concept as part of post-modern parody, which was partially extant during the time of Offenbach's and Tailleferre's work. Neither composer wrote parody in this vein, though Offenbach could be scathingly satiric. This branch will be more fully addressed in the section on post-modern parody.

Staged Works

Pastiche operas, oratorios, and revues became popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, with arias and other pieces by various composers combined into one work. Handel was known for combining a mixture of arias and other pieces from selected works for subscription concerts, and works by other composers were amalgamated into concerts by soloists or impresarios. Parody as imitation and influence still existed, as Mozart paid homage to baroque French opera styles in his early opera *Idomeneo*. The work contains several baroque-style dances, and even ends with a multi-movement ballet in the style of a baroque suite. Speaking about Mozart's adaptation of the French style, David Cairns states in his book on Mozart's operas that "*Idomeneo* is a classic example of Mozart's ability to inhabit a form with complete artistic freedom and make it his own."⁴¹ Mozart kept the French love of dances, and imitated Gluck in his scene development and smooth transition of recitative into aria and back. This form of parody was not trying to be comic, but used a target source (Gluck and French opera in general) as a model to compose a new work in a similar style. Other composers of the era used imitation in similar ways for both vocal and instrumental compositions.

Singspiel and ballad operas parodied more serious works, with ballad operas actually using re-texted versions of real operatic arias and popular songs. By the nineteenth century, originality was highly praised and any composer who imitated another was considered derivative. Parody flourished on the stage, however, as the *opérettes* of Jacques Offenbach mocked the reign of Napoleon III, Parisian life, and more serious operas of his day. The operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan became popular send-ups of society both in England and the

⁴¹ David Cairns, *Mozart and His Operas*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 51.

United States, and these works later inspired composers such as Stephen Sondheim to employ parody techniques in their musicals.

Russian Formalists

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, a school of theorists called the Russian Formalists published extensively on parody and parodic techniques in literature. The best known of these theorists, Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), is discussed extensively by Rose. She highlights his analysis of the novel *Tristram Shandy* as Menippean parody and details the various criticisms of his essay by other theorists and philosophers based on his findings and his omission of contemporary scholarship on parody.⁴² Both Rose and Victor Erlich view the analytical methods of the Russian Formalists as “laying bare” the structure of other literary works in their parody. As Erlich notes, “in their assessment of contemporary Russian literature they praised ‘naked’ verbal play in verse and encouraged techniques of indirection in prose fiction, e.g. parody, stylization, whimsical toying with the plot...they consistently played up those literary works, the only content of which was form.”⁴³ Essentially, the Russian Formalists preferred parody where the link to the source material was apparent, and the reader could clearly see how the author was altering the material for parodic purposes. The suspension of reality that many other authors aimed to achieve was not present, and the fourth wall was broken as the writer let the reader in on the methodology. These theorists used *Tristram Shandy* as an example because Sterne does not hide his structure, even though the entire premise of the book is based on creating a false author. Erlich described the suitability of the novel for Shklovsky’s formalist analysis because it was “the most non-objective and form-conscious of the famous novels.”⁴⁴

Shklovsky mentions two other elements of parody in his writings: that parody (and, by extension, all other works) is created to both parallel and contrast a given model, and that these “intertextual” references cause the work to be “perceived against a background of other works, and in connection with them, and that the form of a work is determined by its relationship to

⁴² Rose, 103-8.

⁴³ Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism. History – Doctrine (1955)*, (New Haven, 1981), 248.

⁴⁴ Erlich, 196.

other forms which have preceded it.”⁴⁵ This view of parody draws on *paratragodein* in its relationship to existing works while not quoting or copying them, but adds the intertextual element that infers that a reader must know the work(s) referenced to fully understand the parody. An element of *parodia* is also implied as Shklovsky advocates parody as a way to revitalize or renew older forms by altering them in ways that create new forms. An example that he cites is Pushkin’s novel *Eugene Onegin*. Not only does he see this as a parody of Sterne’s writing formula for *Tristram*, he also views the book as subject to both comic and tragic interpretations, depending on the era in which it is read.⁴⁶ This was the first mention of comic parody by Shklovsky, as most of his parodic writing emphasized imitation of form. Tailleferre echoed Shklovsky’s idea of renewing older forms because her opera cycle, when looked at as a whole, creates a miniature timeline of French *Opéra* history. Lully and Gluck, the first composers of the genre, are represented, as are other styles and composers up to Offenbach and beyond. Older styles and forms are recreated, and modern audiences are reminded of France’s rich tradition of opera through the new compositions.

Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304-74), the Italian poet and scholar, offered this thought on imitation in a letter to Boccaccio:

An imitator must take care to write something similar yet not identical to the original, and that similarity must not be like the image to its original in painting where the greater the similarity the greater the praise for the artist, but rather like that of a son to his father. While often very different in their individual features, they have a certain something our painters call an “air,” especially noticeable about the face and eyes, that produces a resemblance . . . we must thus see to it that if there is something similar, there is also a great deal that is dissimilar . . . for the resemblance is to be felt rather than expressed.⁴⁷

Mark Taylor comments that this means the poet (imitator) can create a work that significantly alters many aspects of the original but still reflects the essence of the parodied work.⁴⁸ Tailleferre

⁴⁵ Viktor Shklovsky, *O Teorii Prozy*, (Moscow, 1929), 27. Rose adds that Shklovsky mentions that he believed a new form did not arise to give voice to a new content, but to replace an old form that had lost its artistic value. Rose, 110.

⁴⁶ Shklovsky, *Evgenii Onegin (Pushkin I Stern)*, in *Ocherki po Poetike Pushkina*, (Berlin, 1923), 199-220. Translated by M. Holquist, in Victor Erlich (ed.) *Twentieth-Century Russian Literary Criticism* (New Haven, 1975), 63-80; 63.

⁴⁷ Francesco Petrarca, *Letters on Familiar Matters [Rerum familiarium libri]*, XVII-XXIV, tr. Aldo S. Bernardo (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), XXIII, 19, pp 301-2.

⁴⁸ Mark Taylor, *Shakespeare’s Imitations*, (Newark: Associated University Presses; 2002), 25.

reflects this method of parody exactly in her interpretations of French opera because she created miniature pieces that are stylistically similar to the composers and types of opera she is imitating while not directly quoting these works. Each piece resembles the older compositions because the style(s) of the parodied composers are used to create a new work.

Boris Tomashevsky, a contemporary of Shklovsky, also referenced the plot of an operatic work in his *Teoriya Literaturny (Theory of Literature, 1925)*. He stated that the ending of Beaumarchais's *Le mariage de Figaro*, in which all the characters find out in the final act that they are related, is a parody of the same plot device used by Molière in his play *L'Avare*, itself a parody of theatrical conventions.⁴⁹ This finding reinforced Shklovsky's theory that new works using old forms revitalized the older form and made it fresh. Tomashevsky contradicted other parts of Shklovsky's theory in his continued interpretation of the term: "the functions of parody are many, but its usual function is to ridicule an opposing literary group, destroying its aesthetic system and exposing it."⁵⁰ This latter definition draws on the idea of parody as burlesque, something Shklovsky alludes to in the more critical usages of the term. The difference between the two theorists lies in Shklovsky's view of burlesque parody as useful non-comedic criticism, and Tomashevsky's feeling that it merely mocks its target.

Rose finds the theories of Russian Formalists inconsistent, not only because these two theorists' ideas clash, but also because she does not see them addressing the actual structure of parody.⁵¹ In her opinion, they list methods of creating parody, but do not explain how these methods were used in the creation of parodic works. Boris Eikhenbaum attempts to address these issues with the idea of "literary evolution" – "[it] is complicated by the notion of struggle, of periodic uprisings, and so [it] lost its old suggestion of peaceful and gradual development."⁵² Parody, in his theory, is part of this development in its refreshment of old forms through imitation. Tynyanov, another Russian theorist, built on this theory when he defined the "double function" of parody as "(1) the mechanization of a specific device, and (2) the organization of

⁴⁹ Boris Viktorovich Tomashevsky, *Teoriya Literaturny*, (Leningrad, 1925), 149 f. The titles translate to *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Miser*.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 161. Rose added that he later used the word "grotesque" to describe comic distortion, and gave examples of some of its more "vulgar" forms. Rose, 115.

⁵¹ Rose, 117.

⁵² Boris Eikhenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'", in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, (Lincoln, NE, 1965), 134.

new material, to which the mechanized old device also belongs.”⁵³ Both authors view parody as a means of development, a literary device that brings older forms back to literature through imitation. Neither addresses the comic aspects of parody, a point that Rose makes in her analysis of the Russian Formalists. Tynyanov suggested a sympathetic aspect of parody as it can pay homage to its target through imitation.⁵⁴ This view of its use would explain the lack of humorous aspects in his definition, and links it more closely with the initial musical meaning of the word than with the ancient Greek meanings. This disjunction is partly addressed in his explanation of the use of parody:

Parodies of plots often are deeply concealed...when the parody is not revealed, the work changes...even the parody, the main element of which lies in stylistic details, naturally loses its parodic character when torn away from its second plane [source] (which can simply be forgotten). This is an important measure for resolving the question about parody as a comic genre. The comic is usually the colouring which accompanies parody, but is by no means the colouring of the parodic itself. The parodic character of the work may fade away while its comic colouring remains. Parody lies wholly in a dialectical play with the device. If a parody of tragedy becomes a comedy, a comedy parodied may be a tragedy.⁵⁵

Rose includes the example *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932) by Stella Gibbons as an example of the above statement, noting that it “is still comic even if one does not know the specific works it parodies, because its parody of those works has evoked them (the other works) for the reader of the parody before or while making fun of them by exaggerating their peculiarities.”⁵⁶ In other words, Gibbons’s work stands on its own as comic, but if the reader is aware of the work(s) being parodied, another plane of meaning (Tynyanov’s phrase) is revealed, taking the comedy to another level. This closely expresses the form of parody Tailleferre uses in many of her works as they stand on their own merits as compositions, but contain deeper and usually non-comedic meanings when the model is known.

Tynyanov’s closing statements imply that a work is still parodic even if its model is forgotten. Rose remarks that neither he nor Shklovsky intended this, as both feel parody

⁵³ Yuriy N. Tynyanov, *Dostoyevsky i Gogol' (k Teorii Parodii) (1921)*, (Letchworth, 1975), 430.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 436.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 455.

⁵⁶ Rose, 122.

revitalizes old forms and keeps the older modeled works “alive.”⁵⁷ This ties directly into the oldest uses of *parodia* where both the modeled work and the parody would be performed together, as were Hyspa and Satie’s parody songs and, much later, Weird Al Yankovic’s reworking of current popular music. When parody is created in this way, literary or musically, part of the older form or model is preserved in the newer work, hopefully (from the composer or author’s standpoint) sparking a recollection of the work it is imitating.

Bakhtin

Mikhail Bakhtin, writing in the late 1920s, was viewed as both agreeing with and criticizing the work of the above-mentioned Russian Formalists. Bakhtin echoed these theories as he emphasized the duality of parody in that it both draws from a model and creates a new work, and does not feel a parody had to contain humorous aspects, but saw the voice of the model and the voice of the parodist as contrasting sharply. He felt that no matter how closely a style or model was imitated, the most important part of the newly created work was the individual voice of the author or composer emulating the older target.⁵⁸ Bakhtin distinguished several different methods and levels of parody in his writings. As he explained:

Parodistic discourse can be extremely diverse. One can parody another person’s style as a style; one can parody another’s socially typical or individually characterological manner of seeing, thinking, and speaking. The depth of the parody may also vary: one can parody merely superficial verbal forms, but one can also parody the very deepest principles governing another’s discourse. Moreover, parodistic discourse itself may be used in various ways by the author: the parody may be an end in itself (for example, literary parody as a genre), but it may also serve to further other positive goals. But in all possible varieties of parodistic discourse the relationship between the author’s and the other person’s aspirations remains the same: these aspirations pull in different directions, in contrast to the unidirectional aspirations of stylization, narrated story and analogous forms.⁵⁹

From this quote, Bakhtin recognizes that the imitation of style is an important aspect of parody. The diversity of what can be parodied and the number of layers (depth) used in the parodied

⁵⁷ Rose, 123.

⁵⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problemy Poetiki Dostoyevskogo*, (Leningrad, 1929), trans. Caryl Emerson, (Manchester, 1984), 185-93.

⁵⁹ Bakhtin, 194.

work are also important factors as the imitator shows the part of the original work that is important to him in this choice. Comedy is not always the focus of this work, which aligns with the thinking of the Russian Formalists mentioned above. Differences appear in his description of the depth of the parody, whether it is surface-level format or the synthesis of an overall style. Duality of voice is still present, but the use of parody for positive reasons and as an end in itself differs from the critical and functional goals expressed by other theorists. The author of the new work is in control of his purpose, Bakhtin feels, and is empowered to use as much or as little of the model as needed to express this purpose.

Comedy and comic parody are not completely ignored by Bakhtin as he described the use of parody in the English comic novel *Little Dorrit* by Charles Dickens:

[Here] we find a comic-parodic re-processing of almost all the levels of literary language...that were current at the time...this usually parodic stylization of generic, professional, and other strata of language is sometimes interrupted by the direct authorial word...the primary source of language usage in the comic novel is a highly specific treatment of 'common language.'⁶⁰

Language usage of the lower classes is viewed as the source of comedy in this novel, but the voice of the author still permeates the text in this form of parody. Bakhtin also finds this use of language in Sterne's writings, but feels that he more strongly exaggerates and exploits the differences between the lower and upper class methods of speaking than does Dickens.⁶¹ This distinction aligns with his above statement that authors may use different depths of parodic device to achieve similar purposes. Bakhtin termed this a "hybridization" of language, stating that "where [it] occurs, the language being used to illuminate another language...is reified to the point where it itself becomes an image of a language."⁶² This statement almost mirrors the Aristotelian definition of *parodia* as imitation and transformation of language for parodic purposes. He later continues to describe this treatment of language as *parodic stylization*, or a new language that creates its own internal logic within an authentic world.⁶³ This view

⁶⁰ Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Holquist, (London, 1981), 301.

⁶¹ Ibid, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 301.

⁶² Ibid, 362.

⁶³ Ibid, 364.

translates easily into musical parody, as the composer is changing the stylistic language of another into their own means of communicating, whether for comedic or non-comedic purposes.

Burlesque and travesty are addressed later in Bakhtin's writings, and he contradicts other theorists's thinking on the reasons such mocking works were created:

The genre itself, the style, the language are all put into cheerfully irreverent quotation marks, and they are perceived against a backdrop of a contradictory reality that cannot be confined within their narrow frames. The direct and serious word was revealed, in all its limitations and insufficiency, only after it had become the laughing image of that word – but it was by no means discredited in the process.⁶⁴

Viewed in this light, the Greeks did not perceive these parodies as mockery, but as lighthearted entertainment. Rose relates this to Bakhtin's study of sacred Medieval parody and to Paul Lehmann's writings on the subject, in which both comic and serious parody were seen as imitation for entertainment purposes, and therefore not sacrilegious.⁶⁵

Reception Theorists

In the mid-twentieth century, reception theory became an important school of thought, with the German Hans Robert Jauss at its forefront. These scholars were concerned with a reader's "reception," or interpretation, of parodic literature. Jauss coined the phrase "horizons of expectation," a theory in which a reader would begin a text with a certain expectation based on the title or format of a work and then have that expectation shattered by some form of parodic technique. He argued that if the reader's expectations were confirmed, this was not parody but another form of humor; this form of parody requires the shattering of expectations. Jauss agreed with Bakhtin that parody could "exploit the discrepancies between high and low on the level of either form or content in order to attack its object through critical imitation or to transform it into something new through an artistic heightening of the imitation."⁶⁶ He is more concerned, however, with the "evocation and disappointment of expectations with more explicit reference to

⁶⁴ Bakhtin, 55-6.

⁶⁵ Paul Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter*, (Munich, 1922), 10.

⁶⁶ Hans Robert Jauss, "Über den Grund des Vergnügens an komischen Helden" in *Das Komische*, ed. Wolfgang Preisendanz and Rainer Warning, (Munich, 1976), 104-5.

parody” than the Russian Formalists.⁶⁷ His above definition does not overtly mention the comic aspect of parody, but it is more evident in his later explanation of the critical function of parody: “a comparison between the parody and that which is parodied is involved: the comic hero is not comic in himself, but, placed against a horizon of certain expectations, is comic in so far as he negates these expectations or norms.”⁶⁸ As a result of this failure to meet expectations, the “high is made low” and the reader perceives comic intent in the writing. Rose links this style of parody most closely to burlesque, as a “carnivalistic” aspect of this technique is mentioned by Jauss.⁶⁹ From the 1960s through the 1990s, this form of parody came to mean insanity, or an insane and discontinuous world, emphasizing the negative aspects of a carnival atmosphere.⁷⁰

Another German that wrote in this school of thought was Wolfgang Iser, who spoke of an “implied reader” with whom an author (either real or fictitious) speaks through a text. Iser uses *Tristram Shandy* as an example of this parodic technique, in which “the author speaks of, and to, the reader, often with didactic purpose, or ironically to chide the reader for not taking an active enough part in the conversation between themselves and the author suggested by the text.”⁷¹ He later speaks of meta-fictional parodic texts that set up expectations in the reader within the text, again using Sterne’s novel as an example. This parodic device speaks directly to the reader in a way that creates its own world with parameters that are later broken within the text itself. A reader becomes an implied participant in the work, and the perceptions of that reader are controlled by the author and his character’s voice.

Neo-classicism in Music

In the early twentieth century, composers embraced the music of past masters and eras as material worthy to be imitated and parodied. The term “neo-classicism” was first used in 1923 to describe the type of music Igor Stravinsky was composing at the time, as it used modern techniques and tonalities set in older forms and rejected the excesses of romanticism and

⁶⁷ Rose, 172.

⁶⁸ Jauss, 105.

⁶⁹ Rose, 173-5.

⁷⁰ Macherey, Hassan, and Amis in Rose, 280-82.

⁷¹ Wolfgang Iser, *Der implizierte Leser. Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett*, (Munich, 1972), 98-9.

expressionism. His works *Pulcinella* (1919–20) and *The Rake's Progress* (1947–51) are representative of this style of writing, though other composers such as Prokofiev were creating works in this style before him.⁷² Other composers adopting the neo-classic approach to writing music around the 1920s included a group of young French musicians that were to become *Les Six*. Erik Satie, self-proclaimed mentor to the group, had written his *Sonatine bureaucratique* (1917) using part of a piece by Clementi, so this method of borrowing style from older composers was familiar to the members of *Les Six*. Tailleferre became friends with Stravinsky during her career, and, as mentioned, was Satie's "musical daughter," so she knew this style well after having been exposed to it through the older composers. As its name implies, neo-classicism uses parody to reference older works, composers, and styles in its creation. Though usually not connected with the early parody masses as often no exact musical quotation is used at the start of each work, these works connect both with *parodia* and *paratragoedia*. The connections to these terms will be explored more fully in the following sections.

Intertextuality

Another way of examining parody is presented by Michael L. Klein in his writings on intertextuality in music. This method is closer to how I will approach Tailleferre's works, as he is more concerned with the strategies composers use to reinterpret music. Klein separates influence from intertextuality by defining the latter as "any crossing of texts."⁷³ Influence then becomes a subset of the term, as it occurs when a work is specifically referred to or cited. In literature, intertextuality involves knowing a wide body of literature, as the author frequently does not specifically mention the other work, but alludes to it. If the other work or works are not known (and sometimes even if they are), the reference may be missed. Conversely, suggestions of other texts that the author did not intend can be found, depending on interpretation. Influence is easier to spot, as the author usually names the source or provides enough of it to be recognizable. In French poetry, an example of intertextuality from the late 1890s is found in Stéphane Mallarmé's

⁷² Prokofiev's First Symphony (the "Classical") was composed in 1916-17, and exhibits many neo-classical traits. Arnold Whittall. "Neo-classicism." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed April 2, 2016), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19723>.

⁷³ Michael L. Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music: Musical Meaning and Interpretation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 11.

symbolist poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard*.⁷⁴ Anthony D. Klein, in his analysis of the poem, has identified at least five possible intertextual references from literature that Mallarmé may have been thinking of when composing the poem.⁷⁵ These books range from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and would have been familiar to Mallarmé in his work as an English teacher in Paris.⁷⁶ Although none of these works are mentioned by name or quoted, the text alludes to characters and events that occur in each book. No proof that Mallarmé knew these books was presented in Klein's analysis, so the knowledge of these works was assumed from Mallarmé's two decades as an English teacher. This type of intertextual relationship is common in literature and was well-known to authors, as mentioned by literary critic Harold Bloom.⁷⁷ Such references in musical works also occurred, but were not studied in this way until the early twentieth century. Composers, and later critics, would mention pieces sounding like other works and sometimes composers would freely admit being influenced by other compositions. As in literature, however, pieces that are not quoted are difficult to link to a work if composers are not forthcoming in citing their sources of inspiration.

Intertextuality is found in the Russian Formalist theory of repurposing older texts and methods into newer parodic forms. It is an essential part of their theory, as a model or models for the renewal must exist. Tynyanov's quotation mentioned above asserts that a work is still parodic if its source has been forgotten, in which case the intertextual meaning would be lost. If a source is found that the author did not intend as a reference, there can still be an intertextual relation between the two if the correlation is very strong. The Mallarmé references cited above are an example of both strong and weak intertextuality, as the poet's references to shipwreck recall *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Coleridge is a strong connection. Allusions to Jules Verne are less strong, as Mallarmé does not give enough information in his poem to make a definite link to Verne's stories. These intertextual examples also tie into reception theory, as a

⁷⁴ *A throw of the dice will never abolish chance.*

⁷⁵ Anthony D. Klein, Stéphane Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard*. Accessed March 28, 2016. <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/French/MallarmeUnCoupdeDes.htm>.

⁷⁶ A. Klein.

⁷⁷ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 8-16.

reader of the poem had to have perceived it as connecting to the other texts in some way. Continuing in this line of thought, other previous or future texts could be connected to the poem depending on the reader's background and experiences with other literature.

Translating these theories into the analysis of music, Michael Klein finds intertextual links in compositions by comparing chordal structure, melodic shape, and topical references.⁷⁸ Again, as in literature, the trap of finding unlimited allusions must be avoided, and historical data narrows what could possibly be referenced. Tailleferre and Centore list the composers they are parodying for each opera so the field of possible source material is contained, though, in some cases, still massive in scope. Offenbach sometimes hinted at his musical and textural references, but in most cases never overtly stated whom or what he was parodying. This trait makes it more difficult, but not impossible, to determine his influences. In the context of this dissertation, ideas for analysis from the above-mentioned scholars and those to be cited below have been used in determining if a piece is close enough to the style and content of Offenbach's works or to one of the songs in Tailleferre's operas to be considered an intertextual match. Stylistic considerations from the Russian Formalists and Receptionists have been essential in determining how Offenbach, Tailleferre and Centore have modeled their composition after those that came before.

Modern Theories of Parody (post-1960)

Structuralists and Post-Structuralists

In the 1960s, other schools of thought on parody arose; some based on the Russian Formalist theories, others reverting to the ancient Greeks, and still others heading in new directions. One school linked directly with the Formalists and their followers was Structuralism, a system that sees literature as a stream of coded symbols understood by society as a whole. One early structuralist was Julia Kristeva, whose essay "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman" written in 1966 presented a connection between the works of Bakhtin, the early Russian Formalists, and modern discourse. She believed that all of the above-mentioned theorists were describing a form of intertextuality when they (especially Bakhtin) stated that "every text is the absorption and

⁷⁸ Klein, 11.

transformation of another text...poetic language is read as a double language.”⁷⁹ In this view, she seems to imply that all works are a combination of the works that preceded them, and no text should be read as having only one meaning. Kristeva differed from the Formalist ideas in her interpretation of “carnivalistic (burlesque)” parody. She believed that this form should be treated as serious writing rather than as comic parody. Her reasoning for this is as follows: “The laughter of the carnival is not simply parodic; it is not more comic than tragic, it is the two at the same time, it is, if one will – *serious*, and only in this way is its stage neither that of the law or of the parody, but of its *other*.”⁸⁰ She does not specify what the “other” is, but the remainder of the quotation suggests that by “serious” she means that carnivalistic parody should not be taken as light or frivolous, but as a device on the same plane as the other constructs of parody. Rose sees this division as Kristeva’s attempt to give parody the “modern assumption that parody is only largely comic, and that its comedy cannot also be ‘serious.’”⁸¹ In other words, both forms of parody exist and should be given equal weight in analysis.

Another Structuralist with ties to the above authors was Renate Lachmann, who lists multiple terms that have been used to refer to intertextuality.⁸² She explains the various implementations of these terms, and argues whether or not they should be used to describe literature itself or only as a vehicle to comment critically on literature using this technique. Lachmann’s take on parody specifically references literature, but it is not a stretch to see its connection and application to musical parody:

In the case of practices like the imbedding of foreign texts or text elements in the actual text (such as quotation, allusion, reminiscence, etc.) or the interweaving of a number of foreign texts which belong to different poetics (heterogenisation, bricolage) or the repetition and opposition to a known text as replication, contrafact, parody, etc., we are concerned neither with the evocation of an intact world of literary tradition, nor with the proof of unfathomable knowledge, which is sunk in the text as quotation, but with the

⁷⁹ Julia Kristeva, “Le mot, le dialogue et le roman,” (1966) in Julia Kristeva, *Σημειωτική*. Recherches pour une sémanalyse, (Paris, 1969), trans. Alice Jardine, Thomas Gora and Léon S. Roudiez, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” in Kristeva, *Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Léon S. Roudiez, (Oxford, 1980), 146.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 162.

⁸¹ Rose, 179.

⁸² Some of these terms include “hypertext,” “paratext,” “text in text,” and her own “implied text.” Renate Lachmann, “Ebenen des Intertextualitätsbegriffs” in *Das Gespräch*, ed. Karlheinz Stierle and Rainer Warning (Munich, 1984), 133-8.

semantic explosion, which happens when the texts touch, for the production of aesthetic and semantic difference.⁸³

Her term *semantic explosion* is particularly interesting as its perceived negative connotations to the modern reader combine the *parodia* element of textual transformation with the critical function of *paratragedia*.⁸⁴ Reception is also part of the equation as the explosion occurs when two texts or references (or, to use the structuralist term, symbols) are put together that create an ironic or disjunctive situation that was not expected. Musically, this moment happens when something familiar, such as sonata form, is interrupted with an extra development section or a tonal melody suddenly hits a “wrong” note.⁸⁵ The listener is jolted into realizing that they are not experiencing something familiar, but the familiar made new. This technique can be included for comic effect in both literature and music, but it is not always meant to induce laughter. Returning to the example of how Saint-Saëns uses Offenbach’s “Can-can” in *Le carnaval des animaux*, multiple readings of the “Tortues” movement can occur depending on the listener’s knowledge of music (recognizing the melody as Offenbach’s), French culture (how the dance phenomenon was perceived in its era by various factions of the public), or knowledge of how Offenbach commented on society in general with the use of this dance in his various *opérettes*. Rose also points out a fact she feels many of the Structuralists omit – intertextuality as a means of analysis was derived initially from the study of parody in literature.⁸⁶

Friedrich Nietzsche took the negative aspect of parody in another direction when he presented the idea that “parody [is] the opposite of originality, and the carnivalistic laughter produced by it [is] a sign of its decadence and lack of future rather than of anything hopeful.”⁸⁷ Rose adds to this negatively critical statement Nietzsche’s 1886 definition of parody: “lack of originality and its laughter the laughter of despair.”⁸⁸ This view was echoed by a few other late twentieth century writers, namely the post-structuralists, who consider parody a parasitic form of

⁸³ Lachmann, 138. The italics are mine.

⁸⁴ Using the term “explosion” would, for some, indicate a violent and hence negative connotation.

⁸⁵ Adding “wrong notes” to music was a common technique among *Les Six*, and critics often mentioned this in a negative manner.

⁸⁶ Rose, 185.

⁸⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (Berlin, 1967), Abteilung vi/2, (1968), 163.

⁸⁸ Rose, 281.

writing reserved for a lower class of author. Michel Foucault put a more positive spin on Nietzsche and other author's views, calling parody "farce" that celebrates its target in a "consciously positive and critical way."⁸⁹ Foucault also links parody back to the Formalist view of the new refreshing the old in his statement, "[parody creates a 'monumental history']: a history given to reestablishing the high points of historical development and their maintenance in a perpetual presence, given to the recovery of works, actions, and creations, through the monogram of their personal essence."⁹⁰ New works are built on the old, and old works are remembered through the intertextual references made to them in newly created literature and, by extension, music.

Post-Modernists

Theorists in the modernist era viewed parody in a negative light, terming it "burlesque," "travesty," and "carnivalistic." This interpretation continued into the post-modern era, but other theorists returned to a more positive connotation, and all linked intertextuality and meta-fictional functions to the use of parody in literature. Between 1900 and the 1960s, almost all the theorists employing the term "post-modern" use it to describe the collapse of moral ideals, anti-rationalism, and extremism in society and an irrational view of life in general, expressed through satiric parody.⁹¹ The few positive theorists mention hope in technology and industrial innovation to, as Leslie Fiedler wrote in 1969, "Close the Gap" between high and low culture in society.⁹² Post-1970 the balance becomes more even between the positive and negative ideas on parody, especially in writings on architecture.

Deconstructionist Theories and Other Late-/Post-Modern Theories

As described above, many post-modern authors possessed negative views of parody. Most of these were classified as Deconstructionists, who, as the term implies, tore apart the structures of literature, architecture, and other works of art to find the essence of the work and exploit its

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971), in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, (Harmondsworth, 1986), 94.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 94.

⁹¹ Rose, 197-200.

⁹² Leslie A. Fiedler, "Cross the Border – Close the Gap," *A Fiedler Reader*, (New York, 1977).

inherent weakness. The more positive views also delved into structure, but found new creativity in these works instead of dead forms. Artwork that rejected interpretation was also prized by these authors, as discussed in Susan Sontag's 1966 essay "Against Interpretation." Her view of parody was that imitating older works adds meaning to new ones. She felt that:

Interpretation, based on the highly dubious theory that a work of art is composed of items of content, violates art. It makes art into an article for use, for arrangement into a mental scheme of categories. Interpretation does not, of course, always prevail. In fact, a great deal of today's art may be understood as motivated by a flight from interpretation. To avoid interpretation, art may become parody. Or it may become abstract. Or it may become ("merely") decorative. Or it may become non-art.⁹³

Rose interprets Sontag's statement to mean that criticism in the form of parody shows "*how it* [the work being studied] *is what it is*, even *that it is what it is*, rather than to show *what it means*" so parody is the "demonstration of the form *rather* than the content of a work."⁹⁴ In other words, the form is "laid bare" to demonstrate how the creator has constructed a work to make it what it is. This would seem to correlate with Shklovsky's ideas of finding the form of a work and then imitating it to create new works.

Another post-modern writer, Linda Hutcheon, coined the term "historiographical meta fiction" to describe literature that combined historical references with intertextuality to create fictional works with multiple allusions to both real events and other older literary sources. This does not translate well to music, as even if older pieces are quoted in intertextual fashion, there is no "musical fiction" upon which to draw. Neoclassical composers used both direct quotes and lifted style (both in form and in specific composer's styles) to create their new works, so their music ties more closely to Sontag's writings than Hutcheon.

Although comedic parody has been extensively researched in past and current studies, non-comedic parody has been discussed in literary and architectural terms but rarely in a musical context. Harold Bloom spoke extensively about literary and poetic imitation in his book *The Anxiety of Influence*. Citing Nietzsche and Freud as "the prime influences upon the theory of influence" in his writings, Bloom also rejects portions of each philosopher's concepts in forming

⁹³ Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," in Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (1966), (New York, 1978), 10.

⁹⁴ Rose, 210.

his theoretical principles.⁹⁵ Using ancient Greek names and stories from the Gnostic tradition to make his case, Bloom describes six “revisionary ratios” that poets struggle to overcome in their quest to become great.⁹⁶ In the introduction to the book, Bloom seems to warn against comparison in the study of parody: “Poetic influence need not make poets less original; as often it makes them more original, though not therefore necessarily better.”⁹⁷ With this statement, Bloom is destigmatizing the processes of influence and parody, but only if done well. A poet will be influenced by the body of work that preceded his or her efforts, but when the writer ceases to worry about this problem and creates what they are meant to create, their works will stand with those that came before. As Bloom later declares in his main argument, “Poetic influence... always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation.”⁹⁸ This directly correlates with Igor Stravinsky’s ideas of what serious parody is, a “recomposition” of the past into a new work, filtered through the creativity of the new author. This intentional misreading and misinterpretation of older works can be seen as the impetus for new works. I, however, would suggest that self-designated parody of a work does not involve the negative connotations implied by these words but rather an open knowledge and acceptance that influence is occurring, and that the resulting work is more an homage to the author or composer being emulated. Tailleferre openly accepts the music of the past in her compositions, and is knowingly influenced by those whose work preceded hers, and her works are often open tributes to the composers that inspired them.

Joseph N. Straus took Bloom’s revisionary ratios and developed his own ratios that apply to musical imitation and parody. Straus sees these techniques as tools that twentieth-century composers used to “reinterpret earlier music in accordance with their own compositional needs. These strategies...define a twentieth-century common practice.”⁹⁹ His eight musical ratios were developed to describe twelve-tone compositions and not the works of Tailleferre and her

⁹⁵ Bloom, 8-16.

⁹⁶ These six revisionary ratios are: 1. Clinamen, 2. Tessera, 3. Kenosis, 4. Daemonization, 5. Askesis, and 6. Apophrades. A brief description of each can be found in Bloom, 14-16, and a more detailed description in the remainder of his book.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 7.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 30.

⁹⁹ Joseph Nathan Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 17.

contemporaries, as they deal with techniques most applicable to twelve-tone compositions, but the elements of centralized structure and chord function still apply.¹⁰⁰ His specific techniques then can be used to analyze neoclassical music include re-using motives from the imitated work, moving background elements to the foreground and vice-versa, separating or condensing chordal elements, and restructuring harmonic passages that are evident in his progressions from the old work into the new work. In his analysis of the works of Bartók, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, Straus isolates elements as small as a third in his intertextual relations. For example, in discussing Schoenberg's orchestration of Bach's Chorale Prelude "Schmücke dich" (BWV 654), Straus explains how the isolation of descending thirds recreates a structural element of the Bach work.¹⁰¹ As will be shown in chapter 6, Tailleferre's form of parody contains structural elements of older composer's general works such as sonata form and styles of songs, as well as smaller structural elements that the composers used to create their style. Closely related melodic material is also used, which would invite analysis as fragments or reordering of pitch sets, so the terms are not completely unusable.

Some of these theories of parody may seem too dark to include in a discussion of Offenbach's comedic works, but a broad analysis of all definitions is justified when Tailleferre's complete "pocket opera" cycle is considered. Of the five, only the Offenbach parody was meant to be overtly humorous. Research and analysis of the type included in this dissertation on the other operas will necessitate the inclusion of these more serious definitions. The following theories were presented well after the composition of Tailleferre's cycle, but some can still be applied to her other operas.

Writing in the 1970s and 80s, Ihab Hassan first derides parody as a "mutant replication of genres," which would link his definition to the structuralists of the 1960s. However, he later calls parody "a different concept of tradition, one in which continuity and discontinuity, high and low culture, mingle not to imitate but to expand the past in the present."¹⁰² This second definition is drawn from the writings of Bakhtin, and reinforces the Formalist view of remaking past forms into new forms, thus keeping older forms new. This thinking is much closer to how the

¹⁰⁰ Not all of the works analyzed in Straus's book are twelve-tone. Straus, 17.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 45-6.

¹⁰² Ihab Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn. Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*, (Ohio, 1987), 170.

neoclassicists created their works, especially the final phrase where the past is expanded into the present. These composers were not trying to reinvent the past with their new pieces, but pay homage to the older masters by creating new material using their stylistic imprints or quotations from their music. Another post-modern view that supports this reading was presented by Jean Baudrillard, who said of parody that “simulation is master, and nostalgia, the phantasmal parodic rehabilitation of all lost referentials, alone remains.”¹⁰³ Parody in his definition includes an element of nostalgia in referencing the past so the intertextual reference material is not forgotten. Neoclassic composers, as mentioned above, bring back elements of past masters in their compositions in part so that the older works may be sought out by listeners who wish to hear what is being emulated.

Two authors who directly discussed music in their parodic theories were Theodor Adorno and Fredric Jameson. Adorno, writing in 1962, criticized Stravinsky for using older forms in his neoclassic music by calling it “pastiche.” Jameson puts a more positive spin on Adorno’s findings, calling pastiche and parody “the imitation or, better still, the mimicry of other styles and particularly of the mannerisms and stylistic twitches of other styles.”¹⁰⁴ He continues, “a good or great parodist has to have some secret sympathy for the original...still, the general effect of parody is...to cast ridicule on the private nature of these stylistic mannerisms and their excessiveness and eccentricity with respect to the way people normally speak or write...[parody is] the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask.”¹⁰⁵ Jameson’s definition ties directly back to the Formalist view of stylistic imitation, in which a specific model is not used but a more general feel for the characteristics that identify an author, composer, or other artist in the creation of their works is presented.

While almost completely eliminating humor from parody and emphasizing the negative and critical aspects of the term, modernists and post-modernists have concentrated on the darker aspects of parody. Structuralism did not portray parody in such dark terms, but concentrated on the stylistic ideas used in the creation of parodic works. Later theorists separated pastiche from

¹⁰³ Jean Baudrillard, “The Orders of Simulacra” (1975), trans. Philip Beitchman in *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, Philip Beitchman, (New York, 1983), 72.

¹⁰⁴ Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society” in Hal Foster, (ed.), *Postmodern Culture* (1983), (London, 1985), 113.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 114.

parody, calling the former “blank” and “uninspired,” while others viewed these works as creative combinations of past stylistic elements that positively made the old new. Many of these concepts agree with the idea of *paratragedia*, removing the comic aspect and highlighting the burlesque.

Contemporary Definitions

Since there are many streams of thought that define parody, current scholars who have tried their hand at the task have chosen to use composite definitions. I agree that this is the best approach, as one definition does not sufficiently describe the multiple facets the term has come to represent today. Current (post-1980s) theorists have proposed different interpretations of parody using multi-layered methods of describing their views. Some of the scholars I use as references in determining my idea of parody include Cassandra I. Carr, Seymour Chatman, Joseph A. Dane, Lars Elleström, Yayoi Uno Everett, and Carol K. Baron. In the following paragraphs I will summarize their parodic theories and explain how they align with and differ from my views.

Cassandra I. Carr blends many older theories when she describes how Charles Ives uses parody in his songs. She states that Ives includes the musical devices of “ludicrous[ly] pairing grossly incongruous music and words, exaggeration or distortion of musical and verbal clichés, and caricature of both compositional and performance styles.”¹⁰⁶ Carr combines the imitation and turning of verse, a device of *parodia*, with the burlesque idea of ridiculing serious forms when describing how Ives relates humor in his parodic songs. In chapter three of this dissertation, I show that Offenbach used similar techniques, especially when he gave the kinds of serious songs or words that are usually sung by traditional serious operatic characters to completely opposite comic characters. He often also relates terrible news in happy, lilting songs. Tailleferre does not go to these extremes in her compositions, but in chapter five I discuss the ways in which she more closely matches the other form of parody Carr identifies in Ives’ work, witty but gentle parody and wry philosophical humor.¹⁰⁷ In her Offenbach parody, discussed in chapter six, Tailleferre does not mock or ridicule his works or his style but rather imitates how he used humor to comment on the societal norms of his day. Carr, however, does not completely

¹⁰⁶ Cassandra I. Carr, “Charles Ives’s Humor as Reflected in His Songs,” *American Music* (Summer, 1989), 125.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

address how the musical style of Ives's work contributes to the parody, if it contributes at all. She only mentions the general style of a piece, not the specific elements that parody another work. In my analysis in chapters three and four I detail specific intertextual references to other past and contemporary operas, as these elements comprise Offenbach's overall style in constructing his parodies. His use of contemporary references was specific enough to enhance the humor of his works, but general enough to remain amusing to twenty-first century audiences.

Four categories of parody are defined by Seymour Chatman in his article "Parody and Style." These include strict parody, travesty, satiric pastiche, and pure (non-satiric) pastiche, all areas that had been tackled in some form by earlier writers.¹⁰⁸ Chatman addresses the humorous, burlesque, and serious forms of parody with these categories, taking into account the widely varying ways of creating the genre. He differentiates parody, or the practice of keeping as much of the parodied work as possible but changing it just enough to give it a new meaning, with pastiche, the practice of imitating the style of the targeted work.¹⁰⁹ Unlike post-modernists, however, he does not identify a negative element in the practice of creating pastiche. Using his definitions, I show in chapters three and five that both Offenbach and Tailleferre created pastiches of other composers' works, as they rarely kept any original music or words from the operas and composers they emulated. In his own definition of parody, Chatman combines elements of his four categories by terming parody "stylistic imitation for satirical effect, whether the satiric target is inappropriate content or style."¹¹⁰ He then clarifies the distinction between parody and satire: parody only imitates what already exists, while satire does not need a specific model. He also sees parody as serving a different purpose than satire – in his words, "parody concurrently [with humor] pays homage to...the original...[it is] a kind of twitting or rallying of the original, such that even the target, the *parodee*, can admire the accomplishment."¹¹¹ As I further explain in chapter three, Offenbach managed to do this in some of his works as one of his favorite targets, Giacomo Meyerbeer, enjoyed seeing how his works were twisted into new forms. Harding relates:

¹⁰⁸ Seymour Chatman, "Parody and Style," *Poetics Today* 22:1 (Spring, 2001), 28.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-30.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30. By "inappropriate content or style" Chatman is referring to the elements of the target work to which the author objects, causing them to be specifically chosen for parodic treatment.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32-33. The italics are Chatman's.

One of [Offenbach's supporters] was Meyerbeer himself. He bore no grudge against Offenbach. The witty parodies of his work, he knew, were good publicity. Through modesty, perhaps, he did not come to the first performance of a new operetta, but turned up invariably at the second. The routine was that he arrived...and was ushered into a box...During the performance Offenbach would visit him. Compliments were exchanged, often in the form of veiled witticisms.¹¹²

Meyerbeer regarded Offenbach's work favorably and recognized his talent. This trait saved him the more scathing treatments often given to composers that criticized Offenbach's works. Offenbach parodied the latest popular operas in Paris, and opera-goers could see Meyerbeer's work one night, then go to Offenbach's the next. Both composer's works benefitted from the cross promotion. As will be detailed in chapters five and six, Tailleferre's and Offenbach's works fall into different categories as she lifted stylistic characteristics from Offenbach, firmly categorizing her work as pastiche, while he created both satiric and non-satiric versions of other works. Sometimes he used a musical framework from another opera merely as structure to present a satirical view of the nobility (*Le roi Carotte*) or of Parisian life in general (*La vie parisienne*). In other cases, such as *Orphée aux enfers*, he used the style of one composer, in this case Gluck, to skewer another composer.¹¹³ I agree with Chatman's designation of a non-humorous, non-satiric category of parody, a classification that many theorists in all eras ignore. While humor and satire are very important elements in the historical development of parody, my research on Tailleferre and Centore indicates that they did not create their *opérettes* with the intent to satirize or ridicule, but rather to employ humorous stylistic characteristics of the composers that she parodied.

Chatman also raises a fascinating point later in his article: parody is useful in determining what distinctive stylistic characteristics make an author's work recognizable, as these distinctions are what other authors use to create parodies of the target. His own work on Henry James and two subsequent parodic works based on the author delineated the characteristic features of James's style, and Chatman determined the success of the parodies based on the number of

¹¹² Harding, 81.

¹¹³ Offenbach was upset by several bad reviews Berlioz had published about his work. When the composer decided to stage a revival of the Gluck opera, Offenbach retaliated with this scathingly satirical piece that even used one of Gluck's melodies in a derisive manner.

“Jamesian” influences he found in each.¹¹⁴ In chapter six, I use this idea in a slightly different manner. Since Tailleferre claimed to be using Offenbach as a stylistic influence, I closely analyze her work and compare several compositional choices to similar points in selected works by Offenbach. Following Chatman’s argument, Tailleferre could claim to have been successful in imitating the older composer’s style if the stylistic points of reference were similar. I address this topic in chapter six, during my analysis of the individual numbers in *Monsieur Petitpois*. Purely “Offenbachian” characteristics are difficult to find, however, as he was parodying other composers in many of his works. Chatman does not address this issue, and a double- or triple-layered analysis may be needed to find some traits. In fact, Offenbach’s use of parody is itself one of his stylistic traits, compounding the problem. Despite this issue, Chatman’s ideas, though initially referring to literature, transition well to the study of musical parody.

Joseph A. Dane takes a similar view of parody to Chatman, calling it “the imitative reference of one literary text to another, often with an implied critique of the object text.”¹¹⁵ He continues to list two characteristics that define parody: meta-literary characteristics that make it a form of literary criticism, and its parasitic qualities that make it chameleon-like in form.¹¹⁶ Because of this fluidity, Dane finally concludes that “definitions of parody and various theories of parody should be regarded as useful tools only” as a method to delineate a history of the genre.¹¹⁷ I find that while these definitions are extremely useful in determining where different threads of parody begin, end, and intersect, they are also essential in categorizing contemporary and historical works. When the definition is found that aligns with the time period of the author/composer and his immediate influences, it colors the reading of the type of parody used in the work. These definitions would have been the references the author/composer used to create the piece, so the meaning of the word at that time is important. Other definitions may be applied as influence, however, if the creator of a work does not specify the technique used (and they often do not). These definitions are useful in determining the possible intent of the parody. I agree with Dane’s favorable assessment of utilizing definitions as tools for analysis, as a

¹¹⁴ Chatman, 26-7.

¹¹⁵ Joseph A. Dane, *Parody: Critical Concepts Versus Literary Practices, Aristophanes to Sterne*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 4.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 10.

contextual setting for the term is needed to describe the various forms of parody employed by an author or composer. Dane, however, discusses satire as an “exaggerated imitation of a style in order to satirize or ridicule [the style] but does not address the comic nature of parody.”¹¹⁸ This comment demonstrates the limitations of Dane’s research, echoes Shklovsky’s theory of burlesque, and touches on the Formalists’s lifting of a target style for parody. This definition also adapts well to music, especially Offenbach’s more satiric works like *Orphée aux enfers*. In chapter three I discuss how he takes a phrase from Gluck’s *Orfeo*, uses it completely out of context, then over-exaggerates his style into a farcical violin solo that repels rather than attracts Eurydice. Dane’s idea of using definitions as tools to identify instances and types of parody will be essential in chapters three and four of this dissertation to identify how Offenbach’s parodic works utilize the above-mentioned theories. After these elements are identified, linking Tailleferre’s techniques to Offenbach’s in chapters five and six will be facilitated, as the tools will have already been identified to perform the extraction of style.

Irony is a facet of parody that, as defined by Lars Elleström, ties in closely to Dane’s parodic ideas. Elleström bases his ideas of this concept on D.C. Muecke’s definition of parody that states, “the word ‘parody’ more commonly in English means not the adoption or inversion of a style, but the exaggerated imitation of a style in order to satirize or ridicule either stylistic mannerisms or mannered ways of thought or both.”¹¹⁹ This exaggeration of style is discussed above, and also echoes the Russian Formalist and Structuralist views of using elements of a target style to create an imitative work. Elleström goes further, calling parody “a result of the same interpretive procedures as hyperbole,” since stylistic elements are amplified in both forms.¹²⁰ This interpretation does not coincide with my way of analyzing Tailleferre’s work in chapters five and six, as she directly lifts style elements and does not add any exaggerated hyperbole to what Offenbach created. However, since Offenbach did exaggerate compositional elements and aspects of his targets, Elleström’s theories are more useful when analyzing his works, as will be detailed in chapters three and four.

¹¹⁸ Dane, 10.

¹¹⁹ D.C. Muecke, *The Compass of Irony*, (London: Methuen, 1969), 120.

¹²⁰ Lars Elleström, *Divine Madness: On Interpreting Literature, Music, and the Visual Arts Ironically*, (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), 98.

Elleström also believed that the reader's familiarity with the target source material was an essential factor in the success of irony: if the reader doesn't know the intertextual references, then the ironic contrast is lost. Elleström separated irony from parody by maintaining that the former must contrast in some way either with itself, another work, or an outside influence that makes the material ironic and the latter does not need to contrast with its target, merely exaggerate its form or ideas. I agree for the most part with his thoughts, but think that contrast is part of the exaggeration in parody, whether ironic or not. As will be shown in chapter three, Offenbach uses contrast for both purposes extensively in his works, heightening reality in some cases (*Barbe-bleue*) and contrasting magic with reality in others (*Barkouf*, *Le voyage dans la lune*). Irony as contrast also appears in Offenbach's *Ba-ta-clan*, where all of the main characters are actually French men and women in disguise as Chinese nobles. This ironic situation draws attention to the main plot, which mocked the French rule of Napoléon III and the manner in which the government kept a close watch on the public. Because the story involved Chinese rulers and not specific French officials, it works as parody today as well as it did in 1855.

When Elleström speaks specifically of staged works, he notes that the references read as parody can come from the dialogue, the actions of the actors, the costumes, or any number of complex signals inherent to the performance. In his view of irony and parody, any one or multiple signs can create the appearance of incongruity. Later in his essay he specifically addresses the multiple levels of irony that can occur when music is added to a staged work. On the most basic level, Elleström notes that "irony in opera is often simply equated with irony in the libretto," and the other layers are ignored.¹²¹ He also sees no hierarchy as to which layer(s) create the most important irony, considering them all equal. This concept of layering parody will be used extensively in the analysis of Offenbach and Tailleferre in chapters three through six, as their works contain several moments where more than one element is used for parodic purposes. Of course, the exact staging of Offenbach's works cannot be known as he constantly adjusted the actor's movements as he rewrote his works during rehearsals. Some pictures of costumes from the premiere performances are extant, and the fact that Offenbach sometimes created pants and travesty roles added to the layers of visual and auditory comic parody. Many of his character's

¹²¹ Elleström, 143.

names had double meanings, as will be extensively discussed in chapter three. Tailleferre could not layer as many elements, since her works were written for the radio costuming and staging were only implied by sound effects. She does use character names with double meanings, as will be discussed in chapter six, and all of the roles but one in *Petitpois* are names found in Offenbach's works.

Yayoi Uno Everett also specifically addresses musical parody in the compositions of Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen, relying heavily on Hutcheon's theories in setting up her ideas. Her definition of musical parody includes three ways to categorize the subject, and is based on the basic premise that parody in music is "a composer's appropriation of pre-existing music with intent to highlight it in a significant way."¹²² Everett's three categories are "deferential (neutral), ridiculing (satirical), or contradictory (ironic), based on how the new context transforms and/or subverts the topical/expressive meaning of the borrowed element."¹²³ Parody must be considered in context, she continues, as the way a statement is delivered or the setting of a musical trope can drastically alter its meaning. This associates her ideas with Elleström's views on the varied layers of parody in staged works, as costuming and staging choices add to the context of a line. Multiple readings of a scene can exist depending on these choices, therefore, as stated above, altering the meaning. Further defining satire and irony, Everett claims that "satire arises out of localized forms of substitution or de-contextualization [but] the structure of irony is embedded within a broader concept of trope or metaphor that arises from the global context of a piece."¹²⁴ This statement aligns her definition of satire closely with the transformative nature of *parodia*, without the negative connotations many theorists have associated with the word. Irony, then, follows the *paratragoedia* stream of thought as it encompasses entire styles rather than specific substitution of elements. She shows her findings on a Venn diagram, overlapping the categories and placing her examples into the appropriate

¹²² Yayoi Uno Everett, "Parody With an Ironic Edge: Dramatic Works by Kurt Weill, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Louis Andriessen," *Music Theory Online*, Volume 10, 4, December 2004, accessed May 6, 2016, http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.y_everett_frames.html?q=mto/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.y_everett_frames.html.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

section based on the amount of each element she found in the compositions.¹²⁵ In her conclusion, Everett presents a basic statement that she feels must be addressed when attempting to analyze musical parody: “Interpretation of musical parody presents a special type of intertextual discourse in negotiating between the composer’s intention, social reception, and cultural discourses to ground his/her aesthetic orientation.”¹²⁶ If an analysis confronts and explains these three areas, it will, in her opinion, appropriately represent the function of the parody. Using elements of this statement in my analysis of Offenbach and Tailleferre’s operas in each subsequent chapter of this dissertation will help me present a broader view of how their parodies interrelate with other music and social issues of their times. I would, however, add the intentions of the librettist and director to the composer’s intentions, as the text and staging of an operatic work affects the cultural discourses (tropes) used in both the words and the staging. Everett does not address these issues, but they are crucial to the overall parody and audience reception of the work.

Like Everett, Carol K. Baron applies her model for analyzing musical parody on twentieth-century music. Her analysis of Edgard Varèse’s *Density 21.5* and its connections to Claude Debussy’s *Syrinx* provide a model for analyzing parody works based on historical inferences and her own analyses of both pieces. Her definition of parody does not address humor—in fact, she rejects it. She focuses instead on the borrowing of structural elements such as form, scales, and motifs to form the basis of a new work.¹²⁷ Baron links her definition closely with the Renaissance composers who borrowed structural and melodic elements from popular songs and their own music to create parody, paraphrase, and cantus firmus masses. This aligns most closely with Aristotle’s approach to *parodia*, without the element of humor derived from the inversion or insertion of new words. This trait separates her definition from almost all the other theorists; therefore, I consider it to be outside the two main streams of parodic thought I have discussed up to this point. She only addresses non-texted music, so the elements of lyrics, staging, and costuming are completely absent from her analysis. In chapters four and six, I use

¹²⁵ Everett only maps three works in this study by the titular composers, but this format could easily be applied to other parodic works.

¹²⁶ Everett.

¹²⁷ Carol K. Baron, “Varèse’s Explication of Debussy’s *Syrinx* in *Density 21.5* and an Analysis of Varèse’s *Composition: A Secret Model Revealed*,” (*The Music Review* 43, 1982), 121.

the structural element of her argument to break down *La belle Hélène* and *Monsieur Petitpois* number by number in order to identify the elements of parody used by each composer. This detailed analysis allows me to compare Offenbach's work with other former and contemporary works and identify where the parody originates. In the Tailleferre work, I use the Offenbach elements to find similar elements in her work that successfully create the parody.

Application of the Definitions

The various streams of thought on how "parody" is defined led me to consider a composite definition of the term. In particular, I gravitate towards the definition Carol K. Baron uses in her essay on Varèse's use of a Debussy composition; to her, parody is "neither quotation nor satire but the utilization of specific, structurally significant elements of one work as the basis of a new work."¹²⁸ In my analysis of Offenbach in chapters three and four and Tailleferre in chapters five and six, I take a broad view of this definition, using "structure" to refer to how Offenbach, Tailleferre, and other composers constructed the overall framework of their operas, a view that echoes the ideas of the Russian Formalists and the older views of *paratragedia*. Quotation may be used as part of the form, since using another composer's structural elements constitutes a quotation just as much as using specific notes or harmonies. Comedy does not have to play a role in parody, and Baron seems to dismiss the notion of parody equaling humor in her rejection of satire in her definition. Using this perspective, I will examine in chapter three how Offenbach's operas are put together: how they open, the way specific pieces of music fit into their plots, how conflict is presented and resolved, and whether there are recurring forms or genres used in telling the stories. I will do the same thing for Tailleferre in chapter five. Elements of the libretti were also studied, as text plays a vital role in creating parodic elements in both composer's works. Offenbach was not known to have a formulaic method for composing his works, though he did use similar forms in his many *opérettes*. His librettists also knew the style of plot he expected, and were able to effectively rework serious *opéras* and *opéras-comiques* to match these parameters. In fact, several comic libretti were penned by the same composers that had written the serious libretti used as a target. Tailleferre, in creating her miniature operas, did not exactly

¹²⁸ Baron, 121.

quote music by any composer, as will be shown in chapters five and six, but instead utilized elements of structure, form, and signature compositional style to evoke the qualities that the works of the parodied composers exhibited. She and Centore had intimate knowledge of the elements of style exemplified by each composer in his works, and chose those features that would be most recognizable to their audience. Following Chatman's approach, I tease out the components these women chose to highlight, comparing them with elements found in Offenbach's work, to determine the level of success this parody reaches. Before considering Tailleferre, however, I will describe the way Offenbach created the French *opérette*, and detail some specific works that exhibit his compositional traits.

Chapter 3

Parody and Style Considerations in Jacques Offenbach's *Opérettes*

Jacques Offenbach composed over one hundred sung musical works for the stage, some as short as four musical numbers, others up to five acts long. With such an extensive body of work in one genre, one would expect to find repetition in one or more aspects of the works. Indeed, similar musical, structural, plot, and character elements do appear in many of his works, albeit in different ways. Stock character types found in most dramatic genres appear in all of his *opérettes*: heroes, heroines, servants of all kinds, and buffo characters. These roles are not always identical to their counterparts in serious *opéra*, as Offenbach frequently parodies the model for humorous effect. Although he does not often add new texts to music from other composers in his pieces, Offenbach tends to follow structural formulae in creating his musical numbers, and certain musical styles recur both at particular structural points in each *opérette* and in certain plot situations. Offenbach was also well-known for parodying other composers in his works, sometimes quoting brief passages of music, and this technique influenced the plots and characters he used and how musical numbers fit into each piece.

Using a compositional formula for constructing a staged work is not unprecedented in French opera, as Jean-Baptiste Lully used a relatively strict template to create almost all of his works for the stage.¹ Lully's works, however, tended to more consistently follow his model, as most of his *tragédies en musique* were about the same length and contained almost identical elements in parallel places. Offenbach's method of composing was more flexible, as works of comparable lengths contain a different ordering of elements. Stock characters, types of songs, and scene construction all contribute to a similarity of design in Offenbach's works. However, each character and song is shaped to fit a particular situation, so no two characters or plots are exactly the same. By utilizing a consistent framework to construct his compositions, Offenbach was continuing the traditional methods of composing French opera that Lully had initiated in the seventeenth century. By constructing a repeated framework in his *opérettes*, Offenbach might be

¹ Norman Demuth, *French Opera: Its Development to the Revolution* (Sussex: The Artemis Press, 1963), 147-71.

said, in the language of Shklovsky and other Russian Formalists discussed in chapter 2, to be “laying bare the device” of operatic construction and loosely parodying the older techniques by constructing a repeated framework to compose his *opérettes*. Offenbach created a structural format for his stage works upon which he hung various compositions created in the parodic style of his targets. Below, I will discuss how Offenbach specifically tailored this parodic structure to his method of composition: the similarities and differences in his stock characters, some of the recurring song types in his pieces, and the plot elements that recur in Offenbach’s *opérettas*. When used to flesh out the structures of his various plots, these details were his principal method of creating parody in his compositions. Representative selections from his more than one-hundred works for the stage will be used to illustrate these general points and the various methods of parody that Offenbach employed. In the next chapter, his *opéra bouffe La belle Hélène* will be presented as a more detailed case study of how the parodic elements mentioned here and the parody strategies discussed in chapter 2 specifically appear.

Offenbach’s Paris

Paris in the mid-nineteenth century was an exciting place for opera composers to practice their craft. The grand operas of Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Jacques Fromental Halévy, and Gioachino Rossini were playing at the Paris Opéra; the stage of the Opéra-Comique was busy with the works of François-Adrien Boieldieu, Hector Berlioz, and Auber’s lighter works; the new Théâtre Lyrique was showcasing operas by Adolphe-Charles Adam: and the latest Italian imports were on display at the Théâtre Italien.² Another style of French opera was added to these in the mid-1830s when Adam produced the first works of what was to become *opérette* at Paris’s Opéra-Comique. Lighter in nature and sometimes less coherent in plot than *opéra comique*, this genre kept the latter’s spoken dialogue interspersed with various musical numbers, but often parodied or satirized more serious operatic works. The best known and most popular composer of this genre in France was Jacques Offenbach, who was so successful that he opened his own Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens in 1855 to stage his works.³

² Donald J. Grout and Hermine W. Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 4th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 336-77.

³ Grout and Williams, 379.

With librettist Ludovic Halévy and others, Offenbach helped establish a genre that later inspired the operettas of William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan in England; Franz Lehár, Franz von Suppé, and Johann Strauss, Jr. in Vienna; John Phillip Sousa, Victor Herbert, and Sigmund Romberg in the United States; and composers of future generations worldwide.

By the age of fourteen, Jacques Offenbach was playing cello professionally in the orchestra of the Opéra-Comique.⁴ In this position, he would have heard and played much of the popular operatic music that came through this theater between 1833 and when he left in 1838. He met Halévy while there, and began writing his first stage works. Offenbach continued composing unperformed works while touring Europe as a professional cellist, settling back into full-time conducting and composing when he was appointed director of the Comédie-Française in 1850.⁵ His dream of regularly staging his *opéra-comiques* did not materialize until 1855, when his “*anthropophagie musicale*” (“musical cannibalism”), *Oyayaye*, was selected for performance during that year’s Exhibition season in Paris.⁶ From this beginning, Offenbach continued to write various forms of musical theater until his death in 1880. Two works, the *opéra comique Belle Lurette* and the *opérette bouffe Mam ’zelle Moucheron*, were produced posthumously. *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, almost finished before his death, was completely orchestrated, reordered, and the dialogue set to recitative after his passing by Ernest Guiraud.⁷ Because, as Alexander Faris relates in his biography of Offenbach, “[he] did not think of a work as complete until it had been performed before an audience, after which he would revise and finalize it,” a definitive version of *Hoffmann* cannot exist.⁸ Enough sketches remained, however, that the current edited version is considered by scholars to be close to his intentions, and many other versions of its numbers and recitative exist based on Offenbach’s notes for the opera. Faris devotes almost a chapter and a half of his book to this subject, and his writings describe the struggle between

⁴ Andrew Lamb. "Offenbach, Jacques," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed April 7, 2016), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20271>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* Other one-act works had been produced by other opera companies, but this was his first major success that led to consistent performance of his works. The genre label, which was known in English as “musical cannibalism,” was given by Offenbach.

⁷ Ernest Guiraud (1837-92) was the original orchestrator of *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*. Guiraud was a prominent orchestrator who set the recitatives for Bizet’s *Carmen* to music, among other works by the composer. Debussy and Dukas studied composition with him before his death.

⁸ Alexander Faris, *Jacques Offenbach*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 203.

Offenbach's son Auguste-Jacques and the other composers and impresarios who altered the score.⁹ In the introduction to the 2001 edition of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Anne Lawson relates more of this dilemma: "Scholarly research and the discovery of more of Offenbach's own material by Fritz Oeser and most recently by Michael Kay has [reordered the acts and] restore[d] other significant musical materials."¹⁰ Based on Offenbach's papers, his sketches, and a comparison with an earlier complete score, this version may be the closest to date to the composer's wishes.

Genre of Works

During this era of Parisian opera, genre labels were fluid and sometimes a composer would list a work under one genre only to have later producers and/or scholars classify it in another way. Many of these operas were assigned a genre depending on the opera house where they were produced, with George Bizet's *Carmen* (1875) serving as a typical example. *Carmen* opened at the Opéra-Comique with spoken dialogue, but its dark subject matter and overt sexuality initially shocked the audiences who expected something lighter in tone. It has retained this genre label, although later in 1875 Ernest Guiraud set the dialogue to recitative for an 1875 performance at the Vienna Court Opera. M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet and Richard Langham Smith state in their Grove Music Online entry on *opéra-comique*:

Rather than the blind labelling of all French lyric works with spoken dialogue as 'opéras-comiques', a more fruitful approach to individual works is to heed the terminology of the authors and their contemporaries and, with that as a guide, to place them in appropriate theatrical, musical, literary and aesthetic traditions. In any case, 'opéra comique', as currently used, is not so much a genre (with many sub-genres) as an indication of procedure: the mixing of spoken and sung elements.¹¹

⁹ Faris, 188-221.

¹⁰ Jacques Offenbach, *The Tales of Hoffman*, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001), vi. In this passage Lawson is referring to the reordering of the middle three acts as *Olympia—Antonia—Giulietta*, among other material in Acts IV and V. Richard Freed, "New 'Hoffman'—It's the Real Thing: Musicologist Promises More Authentic Offenbach Opera." *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1988.

¹¹ M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet and Richard Langham Smith. "Opéra comique." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed July 28, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43715>.

This quotation indicates that many composers and librettists of the day, like Offenbach, put their own labels on their works and later generations grouped them together based on compositional procedures. As described in the following paragraph, Offenbach's compositions received a similar treatment.

Though today his body of work is known by the general term *opérettes*, Offenbach used more than twenty different labels to describe his works, based on the theater in which they were performed and other genre characteristics.¹² The exceptions to this are his two *opéras* *Les fées du Rhin* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.¹³ Both of these works are sung through and are not parodies or satires of other works, as are most of Offenbach's *opérettes*. Both works tackle more serious subjects, *Hoffmann* more so than *Les fées*, but both still contain a few of the comic moments that he is famous for in his other pieces. Only fourteen of his musical staged works were designated as *opérettes*. To distinguish Offenbach's use of the term from its modern usage, a closer look must be taken at the characteristics of his genre labels. All of the pieces he terms *opérettes* are one act long and do not use a chorus. They appear in his compositions from the beginning of his career as a producer in 1855 until four years before his death.¹⁴ No immediate distinguishing factors stand out to indicate why this genre name was chosen for these works, as they cover a variety of subjects and there are other genres that are also one act long, have spoken dialogue, and no chorus.¹⁵ Although there were earlier composed works that would later be placed in this genre, Offenbach is credited with first coining the term "*opérette*" to describe his one-act *La Rose de Saint-Flour*.¹⁶

Another very similar genre label is the *opérette bouffe*: the works bearing this label are also one act long with spoken dialogue. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below list the titles and premiere dates of Offenbach's *opérettes* and *opérettes bouffes*. As seen in Table 3.2, all but one of his nine

¹² Offenbach indicated what genre he classified each work on the title page of the score.

¹³ *The Rhine Fairies* and *The Tales of Hoffman*. Unless otherwise stated, all translated titles are from the published English editions of his works.

¹⁴ Offenbach opened his Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens in 1855 and had production control over all the works staged there, however, he had been staging productions in Paris since 1853 in other spaces with other producers.

¹⁵ As all these works were one act long, a connection can be made between the *-ette* ending and its use in French as a diminutive. He may have merely meant them as "little operas," though the problem with his other similar one-act works remains.

¹⁶ Faris, 157.

opérettes bouffes were written before 1861, and only one was written with a chorus.¹⁷ Surveying the twenty-three works classified in these two genres, in addition to the traits mentioned above most have four or fewer sung roles and six to eleven musical numbers, including an overture or introduction. Of the four with larger casts, two have five sung roles, one nine, and the largest twelve. *Mesdames de la Halle*, the *opérette bouffe* with the largest cast, also included a chorus. No distinction could be found between the *opérettes* and those with the added distinction of *bouffe*, as they all contain similar characteristics. The only difference noted was that the latter were so named early in Offenbach's career, while *opérettes* continued to be written and named until his death. Also, although his theatrical license was renegotiated in 1858 to allow him to use more than four singing actors on stage, over half of these small-scale works were written after the change. As in Bartlet and Langham Smith's discussion of *opéra comique*, the difference may only be procedural rather than indicative of genre, and Offenbach may have settled on the shorter label later in his career. In modern terms, an operetta is a short, comic, staged work with spoken dialogue. Without an indication of exact length or number of acts, the main body of Offenbach's works fit this modern term.

¹⁷ *Mam'zelle Moucheron* (1881) was produced posthumously.

Title	Premiere	Act(s)	# of Roles	Chorus?
<i>Un postillon en gage</i>	1856	1	??? ¹⁸	No
<i>La rose de Saint-Flour</i>	1856	1	3	No
<i>Le 66</i>	1856	1	3	No
<i>Le mariage aux lanternes</i>	1857	1	4	No
<i>La chatte métamorphosée en femme</i>	1858	1	4	No
<i>Un mari à la porte</i>	1859	1	4	No
<i>Daphnis et Cholé</i>	1860	1	4	No
<i>Jacqueline</i>	1862	1	4	No
<i>Il signor Fagotto</i>	1863	1	6	No
<i>L'amour chanter</i>	1864	1	???	No
<i>Jeanne qui pleure et Jean qui rit</i>	1864	1	4	No
<i>La romance de la rose</i>	1869	1	5	No
<i>Pomme d'api</i>	1873	1	3	No
<i>Pierrette et Jacquot</i>	1876	1	4	No

Table 3.1: Works Offenbach listed as *opérettes*.

¹⁸ Entries of “???” indicate that the work or part of the work was not available for consultation.

Title	Premiere	Act(s)	# of Roles	Chorus?
<i>Le financier et la savetier</i>	1856	1	4	No
<i>La bonne d'enfant</i>	1856	1	3	No
<i>Vent du Soir, ou L'horrible festin</i>	1857	1	4	No
<i>Une demoiselle en loterie</i>	1857	1	3	No
<i>Les deux pêcheurs, ou Le lever du soleil</i>	1857	1	2	No
<i>Mesdames de la Halle</i>	1858	1	12	No
<i>Les vivandières de la grande-armée</i>	1859	1	???	No
<i>Apothicaire et perruquier</i>	1861	1	4	No
<i>Mam'zelle Moucheron</i>	1881	1	9	No

Table 3.2: Works Offenbach listed as *opérettes bouffes*.

Offenbach's two most frequently used genre labels were *opéra-comique* and *opéra bouffe*, the first having been used twenty-four times (see Table 3.3) and the second twenty-eight (see Table 3.4). At the start of his career Offenbach desperately wanted one of his works to be staged at the Opéra-Comique, so six of his first fifteen works bear this title.¹⁹ After he opened his own theater in 1855, he did not write another *opéra-comique* until 1861. These early *opéras-comiques* were between one and three acts long and contained spoken dialogue, as the “*comique*” in the genre label implies. Unlike some of the other genre, these appeared throughout his career. Character numbers ranged from only three in his earliest works to casts with several named roles and a chorus in later years.²⁰ Even after his license allowed more singing actors on stage, Offenbach wrote four *opéras-comiques* with casts of five or fewer. Many of these works were parodies of serious operas, such as *La fille du tambour-major*, which was based on Gaetano Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*.²¹ Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* contain all of the characteristics of his *opéras comiques*, and all were written after the opening of his Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens. Faris offers an explanation for these genre labels: “When the Bouffes-Parisiens [opened] in 1855,

¹⁹ Faris, 157.

²⁰ Offenbach's theater license dated June 4, 1855 allowed him to produce “comic plays with words and music, for two or three characters” so his casts were initially limited by this arrangement. Faris, 50.

²¹ James Harding, *Jacques Offenbach: A Biography* (New York: Riverrun Press, 1980), 231.

the nature of the works demanded descriptions like “*bouffonnerie*,” “*opéra-bouffe*,” and, once he had invented the term “*opérette*” for [a show], “*opérette-bouffe*.””²² Judging from this statement, Offenbach may have used the different labels for pragmatic reasons to let his audiences know what type of work they would be hearing. This would have either expedited advertising, or given him the opportunity to explain to the press exactly what each designation held in store for his patrons. This reasoning would also explain the drought of *opéras-comiques* between the opening of his theater and 1861, as he would have been promoting the theater’s name by adding some form of the word *bouffe* to the genre label.

²² Faris, 157.

Title	Premiere	Act(s)	# of Roles	Chorus?
<i>L'alcôve</i>	1847(?)	1	NA	Yes
<i>Un nuite blanche</i>	1847(?)	1	NA	No
<i>La Duchesse d'Albe</i>	1847-8(?)	3	NA	NA
<i>Pépito</i>	1853	1	3	No
<i>Luc et Lucette</i>	1854	1	NA	No
<i>Un nuite blanche (rewritten)</i>	1855	1	3	No
<i>La chanson de Fortunio</i>	1861	1	9	No
<i>Monsieur et Madame Denis</i>	1862	1	5	Yes
<i>La baguette (Fédia)</i>	1862	2	NA	No
<i>Le fifre enchanté ou Le soldat magician</i>	1864	1	5	Yes
<i>Coscoletto, ou Le lazzarone</i>	1865	2	4	Yes
<i>Les bergers</i>	1865	3	21	Yes
<i>La permission de dix heures</i>	1867	1	6	Yes
<i>Robinson Crusocé</i>	1867	3	9	Yes
<i>Vert-Vert</i>	1869	3	14	Yes
<i>Fantasio</i>	1872	3	10	Yes
<i>Fleurette, oder Trompter und Näherin</i>	1863/72	1	3	No
<i>Le corsair noir</i>	1872	3	NA	NA
<i>La jolie parfumeuse</i>	1873	3	12	Yes
<i>Bagatelle</i>	1874	1	4	No
<i>La créole</i>	1875	3	8	Yes
<i>Madame Favart</i>	1878	3	7	Yes
<i>La fille du tambour-major</i>	1879	3	11	Yes
<i>Belle Lurette</i>	1880	3	12	Yes

Table 3-3: Works Offenbach listed as *opéras comiques*.

Title	Premiere	Act(s)	# of Roles	Chorus?
<i>Croquefer, lu Le dernier des paladins</i>	1857	1	5	No
<i>Dragonette</i>	1857	1	4	No
<i>Barkouf</i>	1860	3	NA	No
<i>M. Choufleuri restera chez lui le</i>	1861	1	6	Yes
<i>Bavard et bavarde</i>	1862/63	1/2	10	Yes
<i>Les géorgiennes</i>	1864	3	22	Yes
<i>La belle Hélène</i>	1864	3	12	Yes
<i>Barbe-bleue</i>	1866	3	18	Yes
<i>La vie parisienne</i>	1866	4	18	Yes
<i>La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein</i>	1867	3	12	Yes
<i>Geneviève de Brabant</i>	1867	3	26	Yes
<i>Le château à Toto</i>	1868	3	10	Yes
<i>Le pont des soupirs</i>	1868	2/4	8	Yes
<i>L'île de Tulipatan</i>	1868	1	5	No
<i>La Périchole</i>	1868	2	16	Yes
<i>La diva</i>	1869	3	16	Yes
<i>La princesse de Trébizonde</i>	1869	2/3	14	Yes
<i>Les brigands</i>	1869	3	24	Yes
<i>Boule de neige (Barkouf rewritten)</i>	1871	3	8	Yes
<i>Les braconniers</i>	1873	3	NA	Yes
<i>La Périchole (rewritten)</i>	1874	2/3	16	Yes
<i>Madame l'archiduc</i>	1874	3	17	Yes
<i>La boulangère a des écus</i>	1875	3	12	Yes
<i>La boîte au lait</i>	1876	4	11	Yes
<i>Le docteur Ox</i>	1877	3	18	Yes
<i>La foire Saint-Laurent</i>	1877	3	10	Yes

<i>Maître Péronilla</i>	1878	3	11	Yes
<i>La marocaine</i>	1878	3	15	No

Table 3-4: Works Offenbach listed as *opéras bouffes*.

A wide assortment of labels comprises the remainder of his listed genres. Some are closely related to the genres listed above, such as his *opérettes bouffes* and his *opéras bouffons*, but others are singular designations or represent only a few works. These include *revues*, *saynètes* (skits), *pièces d’occasions*, *opéras féeries*, *opéras bouffe féeries*, and his singular works that included a *légende bretonne*, a *légende Napolitaine*, a *valse*, a *tableau villageois*, an *anthropophagie musical*, a *Chinoiserie musicale*, a *comédie à ariettes*, an *opérette fantastique*, a *conversation alsacienne*, and a *fantaisie musicale*. Almost all of these singular works were either written before the opening of his theater, or were written for a special occasion such as his summer trips to Germany. Because he still needed to make money to keep his theater in Paris running, he would take a limited cast and orchestra with him to perform compact works that could be easily produced on the road. A complete listing of Offenbach’s works and the associated genre labels, performance forces, act structure, and librettists is included in the appendix to this dissertation. Some titles, such as his *opéra bouffes féeries*, seem to indicate the subject of the work, while others, like his *fantaisie musicale*, appear to be more general designations. According to Faris, “a *féerie* was any piece involving supernatural characters,” which explains Offenbach’s choice to label *Le roi Carotte* (1872) as an *opéra bouffe féerie*.²³ *Carotte*’s title character is an ordinary carrot turned king, and there are three enchanters that create spectacular effects during the course of the show. His other work in this genre, *Whittington* (1874), takes place partly on an enchanted island. *Geneviève de Brabant* (1875) and *Le voyage dans la lune* (1875) are listed as *opéras féeries* and contain fantastic situations. The latter, translated as *The Voyage to the Moon*, was based on Jules Verne’s novel *De la terre à la lune* (*From the Earth to the Moon*). Much of the action takes place on the moon and involves its

²³ Faris, 166.

inhabitants who believe the earth to be unpopulated until three earthlings crash-land in their lunar village.²⁴

These four *féeries* all fit Faris's definition, but other works containing similar characters and situations are not given this genre label. Offenbach classifies *Les trois baisers du diable* (*The Three Kisses of the Devil*, 1857) as an *opérette fantastique* although, as the title suggests, the devil is one of its four characters and therefore it would seem to fit the above definition. Interestingly, *Les contes d'Hoffmann* had almost the same genre label but, as it also contains supernatural characters and fantastic situations, it also could have been labeled a *féerie*, although the work is much longer and on a darker subject.²⁵ No reason is given for his distinction between these genre labels, and Offenbach did not seem to classify works solely on their content.²⁶ By comparison and definition, *Orphée aux enfers* (1858) could have easily been labeled as either of the above. Instead, it was labeled an *opéra bouffon*, although it was based on a mythological story and contained enchantments and fantastical situations. *Les trois baisers du diable* had been written the previous year (1857) and his next *féerie* did not appear until 1874, so oversaturation of the market in a particular genre does not seem to be a reason for the renaming. All of the other ten works produced during 1857 and 1858 were labeled either as *opérettes* or *opérettes bouffes*, so he did not seem to worry about too much genre repetition. This distinction seems to bear out the theory that Offenbach was promoting his new theater at this time with the labels of his *oeuvre*.

Three of his works changed genre labels when they were revised: the *tableau villageois* *Le trésor à Mathurin* (1853) became the *opérette* *Le mariage aux lanternes* (1857), *Le pont des soupirs* (1861) changed from a two-act *opéra bouffon* to a four-act *opéra bouffe* (1868), and the two-act *opéra bouffon* *Geneviève de Brabant* (1859) was revised into a three-act *opéra bouffe* (1867), and then revised again into a five-act *opéra féerie* (1875). *Le trésor à Mathurin/ Le*

²⁴ This *opéra féerie* contained a "Ballet des flocons de neige (Ballet of the Snowflakes)" which sparked a trend of "snow dances" in operas and ballets. Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* contains one of the most famous of these dances.

²⁵ *Hoffman* was written just over twenty years after the shorter work, and was deemed an *opéra fantastique*, although Offenbach initially called it an *opéra féerie*, according to Lawson. Faris, 157.

²⁶ Genre labels of fairy tale and fantastically-themed staged works from all European countries were fluid during this time, seemingly at the whim of the composer or author. David J. Buch gives an explanation of this trait in relation to W.A. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* in his article "Fairy-Tale Literature and *Die Zauberflöte*."

marriage aux lanternes was one of two compositions Offenbach re-labeled with revision, but it kept its genre label.²⁷ Its original incarnation was composed as a concert work meant to entice the director M. Perrin to stage some of Offenbach's other works.²⁸ For its staging four years later, the original librettist Léon Battu collaborated with Michel Carré to create the new work, so a change of title may have been suggested by either the librettists or Offenbach himself.²⁹ The score for *Le trésor à Mathurin* could not be located, so a comparison of the compositions was not possible. The reclassification of *Le pont des soupirs* is slightly clearer as it was successful in both versions. It was so well known that twenty-one years later William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan blatantly parodied it to create their operetta *The Gondoliers* (1889).³⁰ A possible reason for the label change is that after 1862 Offenbach no longer used the term *bouffon* but labeled most of these compositions *bouffes*. This change explains the first revision of *Geneviève de Brabant*, but does not explain its later revision into an *opéra féerie*. The music was extensively revised with the addition of three ballets, but the story essentially remained.³¹ A possible explanation of the change from *bouffon* to *bouffe* is that the suffix *-on* is used as a diminutive in French and the longer versions had this suffix removed. Even if writings from Offenbach himself are found that address his methods of distinguishing between genre labels, we will never fully understand his system of naming his works.

General Style Characteristics

Various scholars have written about Offenbach's general style as it relates to his theatrical works. One of the major hallmarks of his compositional technique was his love of parody and satire, and he would use just enough of other composer's music in his works that theatergoers would recognize the source of the parodied material.³² An example of this is from Offenbach's 1855 *chinoiserie musicale, Ba-ta-clan*, an overall parody of a piece he heard during the 1841

²⁷ *Barkouf* (1860) became *Boule de neige* (1871), both labeled *opéras bouffes*.

²⁸ Faris, 42-4.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 44.

³⁰ Faris provides more information on the parallels in his book, including musical examples that are very similar. Faris, 83-4.

³¹ *Ibid*, 171.

³² An exception to this is his lifting of Gluck's "Che farò senza Euridice" which becomes a running joke in *Orphée au enfers*. Faris, 64.

carnival season in Cologne named *Za Ze Zi Zo Zu, oder die beflügelte Nase, eine chinesische Dummheit*.³³ A few numbers from this work parodied Meyerbeer and Bellini.³⁴ One specific example is how Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* was parodied by Offenbach's use of Bach's *Eine feste Berg* in one scene. Other references to this opera were also part of the show. Offenbach's penchant for mimicking other composer's styles first surfaced during his short career as a professional cellist when he performed a satire of Victor Hugo's romantic dramas with Gustave Roger, a popular tenor, at a concert of his own works in 1843.³⁵ This Hugo satire, *Le Moine bourru*, was one of Offenbach's first parodic stage works and imitated grand opera. It was a complete short comic scene, foreshadowing his later one-act works.³⁶ As detailed in the previous chapter, these early compositions employed the strategies of *parodia* and *parode* almost exactly as Offenbach lifted some of the music from the work, only changing the wording for comic effect.³⁷

Because Offenbach so frequently imitated other composers, finding original elements in his work is difficult. However, some of his early ideas of style can be gleaned from an essay he wrote in 1856. In this missive, he announced a contest that invited young composers to help “provide creative artists worthy of the French theater...[I] only ask three things from them: skill, knowledge, and originality. Is that too much to ask?”³⁸ In his article, he divides the history of *opéra-comique* into three phases, praising and criticizing the composers in each as he describes their styles. He defines his understanding of the term near the beginning of the paper:

³³ *Za Ze Zi Zo Zu or the Winged Nose, a Chinese Farce*. Faris, 53. The Cologne Carnival season begins in mid-November, is suspended from advent to 6th January, then continues until Lent. Operas are part of the festivities, along with parades and parties.

³⁴ Faris, 53.

³⁵ Harding, 35-6.

³⁶ *The Surly Monk*. This work started his reputation as a satirist, and gained him admission to a salon where he met his wife, Herminie de Alcain. Harding, 36-8.

³⁷ Aristotle defined *parodia* as “the comic imitation and transformation of an epic verse work.” Quintilian expanded this fourth-century BC definition in the first century AD by adding that the parody was a song with altered words, almost exactly the technique Offenbach used in this early work.

³⁸ *C'est pour obvier à cette fatigue précoce des jeunes imaginations, et pour créer à la scène française des artistes dignes d'elle, que je convie les jeunes compositeurs à un petit tournoi musical dont les conditions sont indiquées plus bas. Le théâtre que j'ouvre à leurs essais ne réclamera d'eux que trois choses: de l'aptitude, du savoir, et des idées. Est-ce exiger trop? Le Ménestrel*, July 27, 1856, 3. Translated in Faris, 57.

Opéra-comique is an eminently French creation...what else is [it], in fact, but sung vaudeville? The term itself points to that: gay, diverting, amusing stuff. That is how the famous creators of the form understood and practiced it...[in the first *opéra-comique*] *Blaise le savetier* by Philidor...one can find the germ of the qualities that were to characterize the genre...simplicity of melodic form, restraint in instrumentation, such are the distinguishing merits of the early compositions.³⁹

The two characteristics Offenbach highlights in this explanation are qualities often present in his works: his tunes were simple enough to be easily remembered by his audiences, and he often used very few instrumentalists in his orchestras. In describing the success of *Ba-ta-clan*, the former trait was exemplified. Harding writes, “the operetta made such an impression that a café-concert was named after it...the tunes were heard everywhere in Paris. People sang them, danced to them, hummed them.”⁴⁰ Word of mouth advertisement was created through the catchy tunes. Utilizing only a few instrumentalists in his pit orchestras was sometimes a practical matter of not having the funds to hire more musicians, but even his later works that used full orchestras did not require Wagnerian forces. The parameters of the 1856 opera contest reflected the style and construction of his early works: the opera would be written to a libretto provided by Ludovic Halévy and Léon Battu titled *Le Docteur Miracle*, and it was to last around forty-five minutes.⁴¹ Only four characters could be used, keeping it within the boundaries of Offenbach’s theater license, and the composers could only write for an orchestra of thirty or fewer.⁴² These *opérettes* were judged by a jury that included Battu, Eugène Scribe, and Charles Gounod, and was chaired by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber. More than seventy composers entered the first round, and six finalists were chosen to set the libretto to music. Georges Bizet and Charles Lecocq were selected as joint winners, and their versions of *Le Docteur Miracle* were performed

³⁹ ...L’opéra-comique, en effet, qu’est-ce autre chose que le vaudeville chanté? Le mot lui-même l’indique: œuvre gaie, récréative, amusante. C’est ainsi que l’ont comprise et pratiqué des maîtres qui en furent les illustres pères... Blaise le savetier by Philidor...on y trouve le germe des qualités qui devaient caractériser le genre...simplicité dans la forme mélodique sobriété dans l’instrumentation, tels sont les mérites particuliers qui distinguent ces compositions primitives. *Le Ménestrel*, July 27, 1856, 1. Translated in Faris, 55.

⁴⁰ Harding, 80.

⁴¹ The libretto was based on Richard Sheridan’s farcical play *St. Patrick’s Day*, keeping the essential plot elements and altering the character names slightly to move the story from England to Padua, Italy. No parodic elements are apparent either in the music or the story except its adaptation from Sheridan’s original work.

⁴² Faris, 57.

on alternate nights at Offenbach's theater during April of 1857.⁴³ Bizet's version continues to be performed today, and recordings exist of Lecocq's version.

Offenbach's eclectic style is addressed by Faris as he asks the question, "Did Offenbach ever become a specifically French composer?"⁴⁴ He continues to explain that Paris in the mid-nineteenth century had a cosmopolitan sound as composers from France, Italy, and Germany all contributed to the music of the day. These composers were often not trained in their country of birth, adding to the eclecticism of the operatic scene in Paris. Faris believes that Offenbach was influenced by the operatic music of Mozart and Rossini, with a mix of dance music borrowed from several countries, including the Algerian can-can, the Tyrolian and Viennese waltzes, and the Bohemian polka. He concludes that "the seemingly quintessential Frenchness of an Offenbach operetta lies in the subject-matter, the social comment, and the wit of the libretto rather than in the music."⁴⁵ This assertion begs this follow-up question: did Offenbach's librettists make his operas French, or did the combination of musical parody and the libretti create this Frenchness? This question of style will be addressed in the discussions of character and plot in the following chapter, along with an analysis of the characteristics of both the music and libretti of Offenbach's *opérettes* that distinguish them as French.

Characters and Character Traits in Offenbach's Works

While much has been written about Offenbach's music, comparatively little literature exists on character types used in his works. Given the above question on style, this seems to be a matter worth studying to determine if stock characters contributed to the general style of his *opérettes*. Certain types of characters appear in many of Offenbach's works, most as parodies of classical theatrical stereotypes. In addition to the hero and heroine, there are two types of servants, mythological or magical characters, and several categories of buffo roles written into his shows. Each type will be addressed individually, with specific examples of how Offenbach molded his characters to fit the story and the typical parodic strategies employed in relation to each character type. The function of the chorus in his later works will be addressed, as the rules of his theatrical

⁴³ Faris, 57.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 65.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 65-6.

license did not allow its use until after the license was renegotiated in 1858. Typical plot elements that each character faced will also be mentioned, as they often determined how the part was written. Song construction was also an important part of character use, as Offenbach repeatedly employed similar formulaic elements for many of these roles. As with the characters, parodic elements in these aspects of composition will be addressed as they occur.

Passive Heroes

Since its creation at the turn of the seventeenth century, most operas have contained heroes and heroines. In Offenbach's works this is also mostly true, with a few exceptions including *Les deux aveugles* and *Les deux pêcheurs ou Le lever du soleil*, both one-act *bouffonneries musicales* written for two men;⁴⁶ the types of characters in these works will be addressed later in the section on buffo roles. Roles of the heroic type exist back to the early operatic stories of Orpheus and Eurydice, and Greek dramatic roles predate these. Offenbach does not stray far from an established model in creating his heroes. A brief survey of these characters finds that most are young tenor roles, and in some cases a second tenor role is written that also has heroic elements. These heroes parody those in serious opera as they usually are either in love or fall in love during the course of the work, and there is always an obstruction they must overcome to find happiness. To illustrate a typical scenario for these characters, the plots of a few Offenbach *opérettes* will be examined to compare and contrast these men.

One of Offenbach's early works, *Croquefer ou Le Dernier des Paladins*, features a typical example of his heroes.⁴⁷ This one-act *opérette* was a parody of the medieval *chansons de gestes* and contained many anachronisms used for comic effect such as a mailman and a telescope.⁴⁸ The heroic tenor role is not the title character, but Ramasse-Ta-Tête (Pick-Up-Your-Head), a parodic turn on the chivalric medieval knight. This name illustrates another trait that sometimes appears in these works – the use of wordplay in character names.⁴⁹ In this case, these

⁴⁶ *The Two Blind Men* and *The Two Fishermen or the Sunrise*.

⁴⁷ *Croquefer or the Last of the Knights*.

⁴⁸ The use of anachronisms was a common trait in Offenbach's works, always for comic effect.

⁴⁹ Robert L. Folstein, *Jacques Offenbach: An Annotated Discography*. (Berg/Taunus: Verein für Geschichte/Denkmal- und Landschaftspflege e.v. Bad Ems, 1999), 317- 19. Other characters in this production include Croquefer (Iron Eater), Boutefeu (Ramrod), Mousse-à-Mort (Death-flavored Mousse), and Fleur-de-Soufre (Sulphur Flower).

names fit what Rose terms *irony*, because they send both an apparent (literal) message and a real (coded) message, with the difference creating the comic effect.⁵⁰ Ramasse-Ta-Tête is the nephew of the title character, and is in love with Fleur-de-Soufre, the daughter of the show's villain, Mousse-à-Mort. Ramasse-Ta-Tête rescues Fleur-de-Soufre from Mousse-à-Mort and Croquefer as the old knights negotiate a peace between their two sides. A toast between the older men reveals that Fleur-de-Soufre and Croquefer's shield-bearer, Boutefeu, have tried to poison them. Instead of killing them, the drinks turn out to be strong laxatives thus ending the battle and allowing the two lovers to live in peace. In the hero's opening number, a trio with Croquefer and Boutefeu, the last soldier in the country's army, Ramasse-Ta-Tête sings of his prowess in battle. This number parodies the heroic arias heard in many grand operas of this time, and creates satire like Isaac D'Israeli described in his theories as it changes a common work, making it ridiculous (see the previous chapter for more on D'Israeli's definition of parody).⁵¹ Ramasse-Ta-Tête's next set of numbers, three duets with Fleur-de-Soufre that are linked musically, reveal that he told her that they would be friends. However, he then tries to tell her to go away after he remembers his duty to his uncle. This sets up the classic conflict between love and duty that many heroes in opera face, in this case parodied in comic fashion. Offenbach uses this technique to parody French opera again in the manner D'Israeli described, and often (as in *Orphée*, for example) he uses the conflict for comedic purposes.⁵² Eventually, Ramasse-Ta-Tête and Fleur-de-Soufre fall in love and plan to run off together to the opera. This part of their plan is revealed in a duet that parodies three love duets from contemporary operas that the audience would know, thus recognizing the joke.⁵³ This form of parody can be traced back to *parode* and John Florio's 1598 definition in which the tune of a piece is retained, but the words are altered.⁵⁴ Ramasse-Ta-Tête then joins in the quintet in which the poisoning is revealed, ending in a chorus of "hélas" (alas) after which the two antagonists run off to deal with the effects of the laxative. In this

⁵⁰ Rose, 88.

⁵¹ Isaac D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature* (London: J. Murray, 1793), vol, 2, 504-11.

⁵² In *Orphée*, the title character is happy to be rid of his wife, but *L'Opinion Publique* reminds him of his duty.

⁵³ Offenbach creates a double layer of humor here as the operatic imitations inspire the pair to run off and join the opera. These parodied works include duets by Auber (*Manon Lescaut*), Meyerbeer (*L'Étoile du Nord*), and Delibes (*Six demoiselles à marier*).

⁵⁴ Rose, 281.

number, Ramasse-Ta-Tête both protects Fleur-de-Soufre and tries to prevent his uncle from making a deal that would end the war, thus putting him and the shield-bearer Boutefeu out of a job. The hero has little to sing in the finale, as it consists of Croquefer moralizing about the evils of war and a chorus of “la la la” sung by all five characters.

Ramasse-Ta-Tête is typical of tenor roles in Offenbach’s works in that this character is sometimes only included to provide a romantic male lead, and plays a more passive role in the plot. Most of the action involves the two older men, both baritones, and the soprano lead, but four of the seven sung numbers involve lengthy solos by Ramasse-Ta-Tête. This character is usually brave and heroic, but is led more by love than a sense of duty to family or country. In *Croquefer*, the female lead drives the main action, and the male lead follows along. This scenario parodies some French operas such as Lully’s *Armide*, where a strong female character traps a man in a relationship: in the end, however, the hero prevails and breaks the woman’s spell. Offenbach parodies this relationship as his hero begins by remembering his duty and leaving the heroine, but eventually he forgets his duty and runs away with the heroine.

Active Heroes

Another example of a hero from one of Offenbach’s later large-scale productions is Paris from *La belle Hélène*, as will be discussed further in the next chapter. His role is also not titular, but he takes part in most of the action in the show and is essential to the plot. Paris represents another common Offenbach tenor – a crafty planner whose schemes result in him getting the girl and often angering several other men in the process. This version of the hero is almost an anti-hero as his main purpose is to trick the “father” or “boyfriend/husband” character and make off with the female lead. In this *opéra bouffe*, Paris works alone, but in other works there are co-conspirators who help the hero, always to the same end. This parody turns Héléne into a willing participant and not the victim of the myth, so it fits with Aristophanes’ *paratragoedia* because the tragedy in the myth is turned to comedy by reinterpreting some of the characters.

Offenbach creates a character similar to Paris in the one-act *Il signor Fagotto*. In this *opérette* the title character is actually the servant Bacòlo, who invents a famous Italian composer to outwit his master, Bertolucci, a pompous music lover. As a composer, Offenbach and his librettists probably knew more than one person to use as a model for the old master. Bacòlo uses

two different disguises to trick his master into thinking he is Fagotto. As the invented composer, Bacòlo praises the young composer Fabricio, who is in love with Bertolucci's daughter Clorinda. In the end, Bacòlo manages first to save Clorinda from an arranged marriage so she can wed Fabricio, and then to win the hand of Moschetta, another servant, for himself. Bacòlo's character seems to parody Figaro, and the plot contains elements of *Le Barbier de Séville ou la Précaution inutile*, although no direct link is mentioned. Offenbach and his various librettists used this story and specifically the character of Figaro as a parodic basis for several heroic tenors in their shows, even though Mozart's and Rossini's Figaros were baritones. More on how this character is parodied and presented in other Offenbach works is detailed below in the section on servants. Bacòlo uses disguises and trickery to outwit the nobility much in the same way as Paris, but his objective is to help the heroine marry someone else.

La vie parisienne presents a different type of situation as there are multiple couples that fit the hero/heroine model. In this *opéra bouffe* each of the male characters has an agenda, and some are aided by the female leads. Both active and passive heroes are present in this work, as Raoul de Gardefeu represents the crafty planner and the character known as "the Brazilian" is a romantic placeholder. The Brazilian has several solo arias, as did Ramasse-Ta-Tête, but is not an essential part of the plot as the actor also plays two other roles in other acts.⁵⁵ The Brazilian parodies the type of person who wants to live "the Parisian life" by squandering all of his money, and he allowed Offenbach to make fun of foreigners aspiring to an imagined version of life in Paris. It employs the type of *paratragedia* described by Fuzelier in the eighteenth century as criticism of falsity by presenting an exaggerated view of how people from other countries saw Paris, and also criticized tourists in the process. Gardefeu creates much of the action through his planning and does have important musical moments, but his singing is more ensemble-driven, as are many of Paris's solo turns. Offenbach composed this work around the mid-point of his career, and, as these two character descriptions show, he had established certain recurring roles for male leads by this time. Either one or both of these types of male leads appear in the remainder of his works that have both male and female characters as he parodies both strong heroes and tragic heroes.

⁵⁵ The additional roles also have several solos, but none create plot action.

Leading Heroines

Some Offenbach works feature a female lead who is the main focus of all the action. *Dragonette* is a good example of this type of work as the title character is mistaken for her twin brother who has been lost in the war and is feared a deserter. She convinces everyone to let her look for him, and ends up hearing him come back with the enemy flag, thus winning the battle for the Republican Army.⁵⁶ *Dragonette* is the epitome of a strong heroine as she drives the main action forward, with the only distraction a brief sub-plot concerning two buffo characters who fall in love.

Another character that fits this description is Dorothée from the *opérette bouffe La bonne d'enfant (The Nanny, 1856)*. She wants to marry and has two suitors, each of whom makes his case for her hand during the one-act composition. In a series of near misses and mistaken identities, she finally decides to marry someone completely different. As in *Dragonette*, Dorothée instigates and is the cause of most of the action, and finally makes her own unexpected decision.

These women were both independent and strong, and may have reflected how Offenbach saw his wife, Hérminie d'Alcain. She was his confidant and he respected her opinion, often over his own. Faris relates, “Ever since they were married, Jacques had enlisted Hérminie as a critic.”⁵⁷ Harding elaborated on their relationship:

Young though she was, Hérminie knew how to give her husband the balance he needed....She put up equably with his changing moods. Her calm and her patience formed a welcome complement to his nervy personality....She gave [her children and Jacques] her unsparing devotion. The problem of handling a temperamental husband and an exigent baby was complicated by an eternal shortage of money. She performed miracles on a house-keeping budget of minute proportions. For the....years that were most difficult in Offenbach's life, she was an essential support to him. Without her he might never have survived.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Le Ménestrel* reported that Queen Marie-Amélie, the widow of Louis-Philippe, saw the show while in exile in England and wept when *Dragonette* captured the enemy flag and the cast sang “Crions en chœur: vive la France!” Faris, 59. This *opéra bouffe* was one of two Offenbach parodies based on Donizetti's *La fille du régiment (The Daughter of the Regiment, 1840)*. The other was *La fille du tambour-major (The Drum Major's Daughter, 1879)*, which is described elsewhere in this chapter. *Dragonette* only hears her brother come back as the character of the brother is never seen; his regiment is heard returning offstage.

⁵⁷ Faris, 190.

⁵⁸ Harding, 40-41.

Even though he had several mistresses, he never forgot who ran his household, and she tolerated his eccentric behavior. Hérménie's strong, stable character and her resourcefulness were traits found in Offenbach's heroines, so she could have been the parodic model for more than one.

Supporting Heroines

Female characters have played an important role in opera since its beginning so it comes as no surprise that Offenbach had his own take on the women in his operas – including those that were played by men for comedic purposes, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The eponymous cannibal queen in *Oyayaye* shows some typical traits of Offenbach female leads, even though she is more of an antagonist than a heroine. In this work, the male lead is stranded on an island with his string bass and spends the entire show trying to convince the female lead, the queen of the cannibals, not to boil him for dinner. He finally escapes by turning his bass into a boat and sailing away. He does link in with the other tenor roles in that he tries to seduce the queen while trying to save himself, but, given the plot, this is one time when getting the girl might prove fatal! As the Paris World Exposition of 1855 was open at the same time this work premiered, it is likely that Offenbach was parodying exotic cultures by distorting the way they functioned, a form of parody linked to *paratragedia*. *Oyayaye* is the only Offenbach composition with both male and female characters in which there is not a distinct heroine. Most of the females in his works are strong, independent women who can and do take care of themselves, while they “allow” themselves to be seduced by the male lead. These traits generally extend to the older women characters as well as the ingénues, while most of the foolish characters are male.

As will be discussed further in the next chapter, the eponymous heroine in *La belle Héléne* was written to fit this mold as she is well aware of her effect on men and of the fate for which she is supposedly destined. She is empowered to make her own choices, and eventually decides to run off with Paris to Troy. Unlike many of Offenbach's other heroines, Héléne's range usually remains below f#”, with very few a” written in chorus passages. It is very rare to find a lead that is not a dramatic or lyric soprano in Offenbach's works, and most chorus numbers only list a soprano part along with the chorus tenors and basses. Héléne was specifically written for Hortense Schneider, and Offenbach may have limited the character's range to show her voice to its best advantage as she suffered from debilitating stage fright.

In *Croquefer*, Fleur-de-Soufre is more passive than both of the above-mentioned characters for many of the same reasons Ramasse-Ta-Tête is not a bigger part of the plot. She becomes a bargaining chip between the two old knights, and eventually resorts to attempted murder so she can escape with Ramasse-Ta-Tête. After convincing him that he loves her in their series of duets, she poisons the knights during a drinking song and the two young people run off together.⁵⁹ Although she has been kidnapped by Croquefer, she figures out a way to escape and puts her plans in motion without prompting from any of the male characters, reinforcing the idea of the strong female leads that Offenbach favors. Female characters like this could have been parodic foils to the male characters in rescue operas; the parodic twist in *Croquefer* is that the man comes to rescue the woman, but she figures out on her own how to escape and takes him away with her. Parodying an entire genre such as the rescue opera and its individual characters links with the manner in which the Russian Formalists (especially Shklovsky) viewed stylistic parody as “creat[ing] both a parallel and contrast to some model.”⁶⁰ Offenbach copies the general plot of the rescue opera, but changes it by flipping the genders of the rescuer and the rescued, and adding other details that both resemble and alter the usual scenario. The model for *Croquefer* could have been Luigi Cherubini’s early rescue opera *Lodoïska*, which contains elements of Offenbach’s composition. There are two old knights, a maiden in a tower, and a plot to poison two of the characters, all parts of *Croquefer*.

Servants

Gioachino Rossini and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart were well known for setting Beaumarchais’s archetypal crafty servants to music: Figaro and Susanna. In the spirit of this tradition, Offenbach created his own parodic versions of the two including the above-mentioned hero/servant, Bacòlo. Like the heroes, the servants tend to represent one of two categories: they are either crafty planners like the previously-mentioned pair, or buffo characters only used for comic relief. The buffo form of these characters will be addressed later in this chapter.

Characters in Offenbach’s *opérettes* represent a fairly balanced mix of social classes.

⁵⁹ It is common for the soprano lead to have very fast, florid passages that extend up to high B^b and C. She is also often the only moving voice in ensemble numbers.

⁶⁰ Viktor Shklovsky, *O Teorii Prozy*, (Moskva: “Krug,” 1925), 25.

Whenever an upper-class character was written, there were usually one or more servants of some type helping them. For example, in *Croquefer*, the old knight's shield-bearer Boutefeu is responsible for the continuation of the war and has a hand in the attempted poisonings. He falls in the crafty planner category because even though he is not the focus of the plot, his actions help create major structural points in the story. He is not included for comic relief, as the two old knights fulfill that function. Offenbach could have also been parodying Mozart's Leporello with this character, as Don Giovanni's servant also was not the focus of the plot but played a key role in important situations. Russian Formalist scholars viewed the creation of parallel characters in theatrical works that resembled those used in other operas a form of parody, so these characters fit this parameter, as explained above.⁶¹

John Styx, Pluton's servant in the Underworld in *Orphée aux enfers*, is another planner, but does not play as central a role to the plot as the characters mentioned above. Styx helps Jupiter seduce Eurydice in part to retaliate against Pluton for trapping him in Hades. He is considered a minor character, as he is prominent in only one scene and only has one aria, but is crucial to the plot as he transforms Jupiter into a fly and is tasked with keeping Eurydice away from Pluton until the end of the opera. Styx is usually played by a comic actor as his part does contain amusing moments, but he is not an entirely buffoonish character.

As mentioned with Bacòlo above, sometimes the servants also take on the hero or heroine role in these *opérettes*. In *La bonne d'enfant* (*The Nanny*, 1856), the titular character is a nanny who wants to have her own house and husband. She carefully tricks her three suitors into thinking each one of them is the only object of her affection before finally choosing one to marry, a common plot of many *opéra buffe* composed during the mid-nineteenth century. There is no hero in this *opérette bouffe* but a leading heroine-servant, as the eponymous nanny Dorothee controls all of the action and the situations in the show. Her role shows that servants and lower-class women were also given the independence and strength Offenbach reflected in the above mentioned noblewomen, parodying Figaro's Susanna and other such characters.

⁶¹ Viktor Shklovsky describes the use of this technique in his essay on Russian Formalists. Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, eds., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 3-24, 12.

Mythological and Magical Characters

Offenbach usually wrote works about real people in slightly odd situations. Sometimes, however, mythic, supernatural, and magical figures made appearances either as cameos or as main characters. The first composition containing such a figure was *La chatte métamorphosée en femme* (1858), in which the mysterious Dig-Dig, a conjurer, changes the hero's white cat back into a girl using an amulet.⁶² Dig-Dig contains both serious and comic elements, and is essential to the plot twist at the end of the story. Characters with magical powers were not new to opera, and Offenbach's use of them parodied their appearance in other works, such as Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821), which Hector Berlioz had produced with his own added recitatives in 1841 at the Paris Opera.

La chatte métamorphosée en femme was produced just before Offenbach's first major success, *Orphée aux enfers* (described above), which was based on the ancient Greek myth. Several of the Greek gods make appearances and are pivotal to the story line, and there are many fantastic situations and places. *Orphée* was a parodic nod to the Grand Opéras in Paris at the time, and his use of a melody by Gluck directly referenced Berlioz's re-composition of that composer's *Orphée et Eurydice*, then in production to be revived at the Théâtre Lyrique. Almost all of the characters in this *opéra bouffon* possess some form of magical ability, and the plot uses these traits to create comic situations. Almost every character could be considered a buffo role, with the exception of L'Opinion Publique (Public Opinion), who acts as Orphée's conscience. She, however, also creates a few comedic moments with her comments and actions. L'Opinion Publique was another parodic element taken from Gluck's works as she embodies both the ancient Greek chorus and the characters representing the virtues that were often present in Gluck's prologues.

Almost fourteen years later, in 1872, Offenbach composed an *opéra bouffe féerie* based on a tale by E.T.A. Hoffman entitled *Le roi Carotte* (1872).⁶³ Initially intended to be a cautionary tale addressed to Napoleon III, it was not performed until after the Franco-Prussian

⁶² *The Cat Transformed Into A Woman*. In the story, Minnette was enchanted by another sorcerer and turned into a white cat.

⁶³ *King Carrot*. Offenbach would return to these stories late in his career to create his final work, the opera *The Tales of Hoffman*. This libretto was completed before the war, but, as the fighting greatly slowed the production of theatrical works, it could not be performed as soon as Offenbach wanted.

War had made the topic *passé*. As Faris describes in his book, the character of King Fridolin, who was deposed by radicals, represented Napoleon III. The radicals were the army of vegetables and their leader, a carrot who is turned into a king by a sorceress. Faris continues, “the people find that the new king has more faults than the old one. Fridolin is restored, and Carotte is turned back into a vegetable.”⁶⁴ Napoleon III was not restored to the throne as predicted by the opera, but another prediction had to be altered because it too closely resembled real life. In the *opéra bouffe féerie*, Fridolin decides to declare war on the neighboring regime, and his minister Trac assures him that his forces are prepared. Fridolin was seen to represent Napoleon III and Trac represented Antoine Alfred Agéno, le Duc de Gramont, the French foreign minister who was blamed for bad relations with Prussia. Because this incident sparked the war, Offenbach and his librettists removed the reference because they did not want to incite a potential riot. This was one instance when the librettist’s parodic predictions imitated life! Overall, the parody in this work is representative of D’Israeli’s view of using parody for critical purposes, following work begun by Christopher Stone and Sir Owen Seaman.⁶⁵ Offenbach saw a problem with the court, and this was a way to voice his opinion in a humorous manner.

In *La roi Carrotte*, Offenbach’s magical antagonists included the sorceress, enchanter, and necromancer. As in many of his works, the female sorceress was not written as a comic character, but the two male roles are comic foils for the hero, a trait that will be more fully discussed in the following section.

Buffo Characters

Shakespeare loved to insert characters meant to add comic relief into his plays, and Offenbach takes this idea to its limits as he will generally have only one or two “serious” characters while the remainder of the cast fills comic roles. This includes the chorus, who portray everything from Greek Gods (*Orphée aux enfers*) to a mute army (*Croquefer*) to Swiss tourists on holiday (*La vie parisienne*). Sometimes his comic characters are mute, or can only grunt, bark, or make some other unintelligible noises. *Croquefer* contains such a role, as Mousse-à-Mort is described as “A

⁶⁴ Faris, 166.

⁶⁵ Christopher Stone, *Parody* (London, M. Secker, 1914), 8.

dismembered knight, father of Fleur-de-Soufre.”⁶⁶ During the creation of this work, Offenbach was working on what would become *Orphée* and needed to obtain a new license that would allow him to use the large cast and chorus he envisioned for the production. He tested the limits of the censors by writing for five characters instead of the four his license allowed, but, as the rules stated that there could only be four *speaking* characters, Offenbach claimed that the mute character did not break the laws. The officials let the character remain as audiences appreciated Offenbach’s jab at the rules and the comedy the mute character added to the production.⁶⁷ Within a year Offenbach had his new license and could create works with no limits on his casts. In *Croquefer*, because Mousse-à-Mort has had his tongue cut out by the enemy, he is effectively mute and can only sing in grunts. He is also instructed in the musical score to *imit[er] le cri du chien* (imitate the bark of a dog) and to hum *avec la bouche fermée* (with the mouth closed) which makes for an interesting bass line in the quintets! Figure 3.1 below shows a portion of the second quintet where four characters sing three different texts and Mousse-à-Mort only hums. Eventually he does get to sing “ah,” but shortly returns to his humming. This character was not added to parody anything or anyone, but was merely meant to test the censors.

Mon père ah comme il chan-ge l'ef - froi gla - ce mon coeur! hé-las! hé-las!

Un feu brû - le mon coeur, Un feu brû - le mon coeur, hé - las! hé - las! c'est

Hum hum

Figure 3.1: Excerpt from *Croquefer* Offenbach, “Quintette,” mm. 13-19. The second line of text has been removed for clarity. Top line: *My father, change the icy terror in my heart! Alas!* Middle line: *A fire burns in my heart, Alas!* Omitted line: *Qui donc leur prends les change? Qu'ont ils? Quelle pâleur! (What kind of madness is this change? What is happening to them? What pallor!)*

⁶⁶ *Chevalier incomplet, père de Fleur-de Soufre*. It is revealed in the text that he has lost almost all his limbs and his tongue in the war.

⁶⁷ Faris, 61.

A similar technique of vocal production is employed for purely comic effect in Act II of *Orphée aux enfers*. After John Styx turns Jupiter into a fly so he can enter Eurydice’s locked room through the keyhole and seduce her, they perform the “Duo de la mouche” (Duet of the Fly). He sings (buzzes) most of his part of the duet after informing the audience that he must play his role as a fly: “*Not another word! Because from this moment, I will only buzz.*”⁶⁸ Eventually, when Jupiter’s plan begins to work, they both buzz in the duet, trading moving lines as seen in Figure 3.2. In other parts of the song, she sings words while he buzzes his answers back to her.

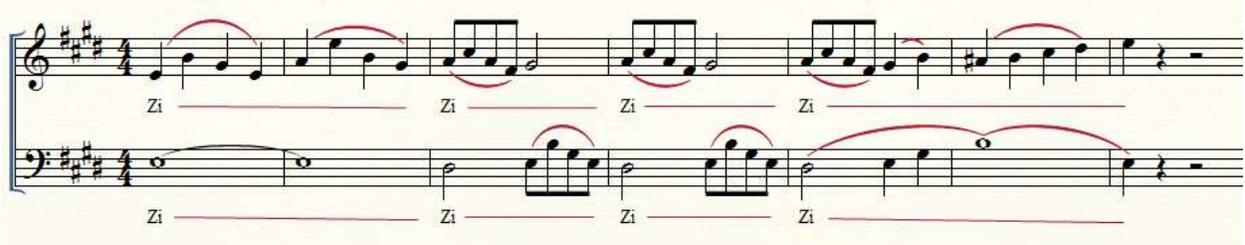


Figure 3.2: Excerpt from *Orphée aux enfers*. Offenbach, “Duo de la mouche (Duet of the Fly)” mm. 196-202. Eurydice sings the top line, while Jupiter is on the lower part.

Both the ensemble from *Croquefer* and this duet contain serious texts as the first is a lament about the effects of the poison on the two knights, and the second speaks of how nice a fly Jupiter has become and about his methods of seducing Eurydice. Again, Offenbach is using *parode* by imitating serious operatic songs in comedic manners. The intertextual references implied by these numbers also draw on *paratragedia*, though there is no implied criticism of an event or a specific work.

A third example of this type of character is Minette, the title role in *La chatte métamorphosée en femme*. She is one of the very few female buffo characters Offenbach inserts in his works. A more detailed discussion of this trait will be addressed in the next section. Minette begins the *opérette* as a pretty white cat but it is soon revealed that *la chatte* is the enchanted form of a woman that the hero of the work, Guido, has rejected for marriage. She is changed back into a woman by the enchanter Dig-Dig (described above) but never completely abandons her feline instincts. In a duet and a set of couplets, her florid coloratura is accompanied

⁶⁸ *Il s'agit de jouer mon rôle. Plus un mot! car, dès ce moment. Je n'ai droit qu'au bourdonnement!*

by assorted cries of “*miaou*,” much to the dismay of the hero. This excessive coloratura parodied the manner in which some Italian divas created elaborate vocal cadenzas, and could have been directed at a specific contemporary singer. It also is an intertextual reference to the “Duetto buffo di due gatti” (Humorous Duet for Two Cats), compiled in 1825, and to an earlier composition that was used in the “Duetto,” the “Katte-Cavatine (1812).”⁶⁹ At the end of the show, it is revealed that the transformation was a hoax to entice Guido to marry Minette, and the real cat escapes during the final chorus of “*miaous*.” Minette is not the heroine of the story as that role belongs to Marianne, Guido’s housekeeper, who aids in the deception. Instead, Minette behaves like the cat she supposedly was, and thus creates comic situations. Guido is also shown to be foolish, as the enchanter and the housekeeper are revealed to be the clever characters.

La belle Hélène contains many comic characters, chief among them Menelaus, Hélène’s long-suffering husband. Orestes (a pants role), the two Ajaxes, Achilles, Agamemnon, and the priest Calchas all have comical lines and scenes, and all of these characters are described in more detail in chapter four. Everyone on this list is male, which is another common Offenbach trait. As mentioned above, he will very rarely include a comic or foolish female, preferring to write them as sly, crafty, intelligent, strong women. The men are the fools, and are always getting outsmarted by the females in the cast. These exceptions include Minette (discussed above), two widows in *Le mariage aux lanternes* (*The Wedding Lanterns*, 1857),⁷⁰ and a fencing teacher acting as a *vivandière* (canteen bearer), who is part of a comic couple in *Dragonette*. It is interesting to note, however, that the *vivandière* is played by a tenor in drag, essentially making her another male role! In *Barbe-bleue* (*Bluebeard*, 1866),⁷¹ the peasant girl Boulotte pretends to be a comic character when she is actually planning to marry the knight Barbe-bleue and reveal the secret of what has happened to his past five wives. Offenbach rarely created silly, foolish female characters, and the scarcity of buffo women in his *opérettes* reflects this trait.

⁶⁹ This duet is itself a parody with intertextual references. Mistakenly attributed to Rossini, it is a combination of two duets from his *Otello* and the “Katte-Cavatine” by Danish composer Christoph Ernst Friedrich Weyse (1774-1842). Compilation is attributed to “G. Berthold,” thought to be the pseudonym of Robert Lucas de Pearsall. Edward J. Crafts, “A Tale of Two Cats”, *Bollettino del Centro Rossiniano di Studi*, 3, 1975, 5.

⁷⁰ A more literal translation would be *The Marriage under the Lanterns*.

⁷¹ *Barbe-bleue* was Offenbach’s parodic take on the story of Bluebeard the pirate, as told by Charles Perrault in 1697.

In *Dragonette*, Offenbach again uses the older men in the story as the source of comic relief. This work, however, also has a comic couple who provide the funny sub-plot of falling in love and getting frisky after gathering aphrodisiac mushrooms.⁷² They are similar to the Ajaxes and Achilles in *Hélène* in that they are not essential to the plot or action, but appear just to make the story more ridiculous. Several characters in Offenbach's larger works perform this function, because when he could only use a cast of three or four every character had to be essential to the plot. These purely buffo characters parody the classic Harlequin character in its many incarnations, and Offenbach used them liberally in his compositions.

La fille du tambour-major (1879), the last work Offenbach saw staged before his death, contains several buffo characters of different types. One, Le Marquis Bambini, is typical of the older male roles added for purely humorous effect. Bambini is similar to the two knights in *Croquefer* in that he is an old war hero, grown feeble with age. He is the intended husband of the titular heroine who is in love with the hero, a young lieutenant. Bambini is essential to the plot, but does not need to be on stage because much of his action could be presented and resolved through dialogue. His presence is only needed for comic relief, and his few sung solos could easily be covered by another character. He pairs with Le Duc several times in scenes and in songs to create humorous situations, as Stella (the title character) and Robert (the hero) plot to marry.

Parents, mainly fathers, and other paternal figures account for several buffo characters in Offenbach's works. Not all *opérettes* contain these roles (for example, *Oyayaye*) but those that do tend to portray the older male in similar ways. In *La chanson de Fortunio* (*The song of Fortunio*, 1861), the fatherly figure is Fortunio, the title character and an old lawyer who heads a company with several clerks. It was the parodic sequel to a play, *Le Chandelier* by Alfred de Musset, for which Offenbach had been commissioned to write incidental music. This music was never used, so Offenbach was able to recycle the music into a new show. Fortunio's clerks spread the rumor that he charmed his wife into marriage by singing a perfect seduction ballad that was guaranteed to win the heart of any woman. The old man had since lost and forgotten the song, but one of his clerks finds it. This clerk is secretly in love with his boss's wife but had not

⁷² As mentioned above, the female half of the couple is actually played by a man, increasing the comic effect.

acted on his feelings, though Fortunio suspected his wife was having an affair anyway. At the conclusion of the opera the clerks sing the love ballad, Fortunio realizes his mistake and reconciles with his wife, and all the clerks suddenly acquire new girlfriends. Everyone recognizes that the song is still a potent spell, and the clerks hide it for later use. Fortunio is made to look foolish in this short *opéra comique*, as his second clerk, Valentine, is the hero. The young wife is the heroine and, although the hero is in love with her, the relationship never manifests and she regains the love of her husband. Additional comic relief is provided by the other clerks, all pants roles, who pine for Fortunio's cook, Babet. As in *Hélène*, Offenbach chooses to mock a group of men that are not essential to the plot. Selected other shows containing similar ensembles are *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* (1867), *La vie parisienne* (1866), and *Geneviève de Brabant* (1867), composed around the same time. Each of the above-named works contains multiple secondary male characters that band together in different ways to comically harass the leads. This recurring band of comic characters parodies the ensembles of supporting men in more serious operas: soldiers, friends, or fellow students, among others.

Character names often had double meanings in these productions, sometimes describing the character's traits, and sometimes describing the exact opposite. In *Croquefer* there are examples of both types. The name of Croquefer's squire, Boutefeu, translates loosely to "Ramrod." During the action, he tries multiple times to provoke additional fighting between the two old knights, encouraging the hostility and thwarting the peace talks. When Fleur-de-Soufre decides to poison the knights and escape, he again pushes the action forward by obtaining the ingredients she needs and serving the drinks. Although not parody under the various definitions presented by Rose, these names are often ironic, especially when they describe the complete opposite of the traditional character.⁷³

Fleur-de-Soufre is an example of an ironic contrary name as she is described in the libretto as an "unfortunate princess resigned to becoming a poisoner."⁷⁴ Her name translates to "Sulfur Flower," combining the beauty of blossoms with the reek of sulfur. It could also refer to the yellow color of the element, giving her name a different meaning. Because the librettists used the word "soufre" instead of "jaune" (yellow) to describe the floral portion of her name,

⁷³ Rose, 270-83.

⁷⁴ *Princesse infortunée qui se résigne à devenir empoisonneuse.*

audiences would find the connotation of the word humorous. Mousse-à-Mort is another pairing of incongruous words, as few Parisians would associate death with a fluffy dessert! The presentation of his name is also interesting to note as the hyphenated “à” means that the mousse is flavored by death, not “death by mousse.” Another way of looking at his name involves the old French origins of “mousse” which could refer to “froth or bubbles on a drink.” Using this definition, his name could be seen as a clue to the poison drinks later consumed by the two knights. The intention of the librettists is not recorded, but, given the librettist’s cleverness with words and names in other works, this is a plausible interpretation.

Not all of *Dragonette*’s characters have names with double meanings, but the two buffo characters were christened with monikers that describe general characteristics about them. As described in the score, their names and descriptions read as follows;

Tytire, *maître de danse*
Mme. Schabraque, *vivandière – professeur de baton*

Translated, Tytire means “he who was shot,” a clue to why he might be a professor of dance or, in another interpretation, the shooting may be the reason why he is dancing. Schabraque translates to “an ugly or foolish woman” or “a saddle blanket for a cavalry horse.” Both are relevant to the character, as she is portrayed by a tenor in drag as a comic character, and her station as a *vivandière* means she is in service to the horse guard, hopefully, however, not as a saddle blanket. French audiences would have noticed the comic names before the show began, and would associate their roles in the regiment accordingly. These names are also more ironic than parodic, but the characters themselves still parody the typical buffo role.

Offenbach used the parodic strategies of both *parodia* and *paratragedia* along with irony in his plots and in the names and actions of characters to add to the humor in his *opérettes*. In some cases, the Russian Formalist technique of “laying bare the device” is used, letting the audience in on the fact that the characters know they are in a show and not real life.

Anachronisms and intertextuality provide many such moments in his shows, as he mixes contemporary Parisian life with whatever era or country his *opérettes* are set.

Buffo characters, whether principal or secondary, are Offenbach’s main method of creating a humorous mood in his compositions, and thus receive considerable parodic treatment. Male servants, nobility, and parental figures are his main targets, as his librettists found many

ways to parody current events and contemporary *opéras* in them. Very few female buffo characters appear in his works, and then, they tend to be cross-dressing roles. Even the names of the characters added to the comedy in an ironic manner, as they were often words or phrases that described (or derided) the person. Another factor that contributed to the success of the comedy were his actors; he retained many of them for years and would write to their strengths. These elements combined to create memorable shows, many which are still funny today even though the main target of their humor was in the distant past.

The Chorus

Choruses became important in Offenbach's works beginning with *Orphée aux Enfers*, his first multi-act work after his license was re-negotiated to allow larger performing forces.⁷⁵ In this *opéra bouffon*, the chorus does not function as a Greek chorus, which might be expected given the subject of this work. Instead, Offenbach inserts a character called "*L'Opinion Publique*" (Public Opinion, described earlier) who performs this function. She not only parodies the Greek chorus in ancient drama, but also is a parodic representation of the press in Paris and, in accordance with the character's name, the opinion of the contemporary Parisian public. In this work, the chorus becomes alternately Pluton's minions, bored residents of Olympus, and bacchantes in Hades. They are merely there to fill out the voice parts in the large chorus numbers that begin to appear in Offenbach's works after this time, and are treated as a nameless, faceless crowd who just happen to be around when action transpires between the main characters. At times, the chorus will repeat a last line or important point that is sung by one of the main characters, to the point where the words no longer make sense or have meaning. These songs are frequently stories that explain why a character has done something or why the character is in a certain situation, and the chorus is, in a way, commenting on the story with their repetition. This function parodies the Greek chorus, but is not present in all Offenbach works that contain a chorus. These pieces are also typical of many operas as many composers used this song form, so Offenbach was parodying a contemporary compositional practice.

⁷⁵ This was not Offenbach's first work using a chorus, as he included one in his earlier works *Croquefer* and *Ba-ta-clan*, both written for expositions. His first work *L'alcôve* also has a chorus, though it was never performed. *Mesdames de la Halle*, written in 1858, is considered his first official use of a chorus after his license changed. Harding, 90-91.

La belle Hélène includes several ensemble numbers in which the chorus echoes lines or words for emphasis, commenting on the action. In Act 1 when Hélène realizes that Paris is “*L’homme à la pomme* (the man with the apple),” the chorus recites the line over and over until the words become meaningless. Similar repetition happens at the end of Act One and at the end of Act Three. In all three cases the chorus is not furthering the action but just reiterating what the lead characters have already sung, as will be further explained in chapter Four. Faris suggests that this repetition was not merely a conscious choice but a pragmatic necessity, as Offenbach was known to produce works at a rate no other composer could match.⁷⁶ Camille Saint-Saëns commented negatively on this trait, saying “[Offenbach] had a system of abbreviations which he pushed to its extreme limits; and the simplicity of his method of composition allowed him to use it frequently.”⁷⁷ Faris believed that Saint-Saëns’s reference to simplicity referred to all the repetition in his music, but adds, “there is nothing wrong in that; the inspired use of the formula is fundamental to popular music, and unites the Strausses and Irving Berlin, Offenbach and George Gershwin, Sullivan and the Beatles.”⁷⁸ This method of writing allowed him to create works for the public at such a speed that he always had something new to present, and it clearly worked for him.

Offenbach uses the chorus in a different manner in *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, written three years later with the same librettists, Ludovic Halévy and Henri Meilhac. In this *opérette bouffe*, the chorus sings the first number, setting up the action for the rest of the show. They repeat words as in the chorus of *La belle Hélène*; however, they also further the action and comment on the action in their songs, more closely parodying a Greek chorus. An example of this occurs in Act Two when the chorus announces the victorious return of the soldiers from the war, setting up a scene in which the Grande-Duchesse congratulates then promotes the dim-witted soldier she has placed in command of the troops. A soloist could have sung this part of the scenic exposition or the Grande-Duchesse could have explained the return and victory herself, but the use of the chorus makes the scene more true-to-life as a crowd would probably gather to

⁷⁶ In 1864, the year *La belle Hélène* premiered, Offenbach only composed three three-act works. Four or five stage works of varying lengths per year was his normal output, with 1855 as his most prolific year. That year, he composed music for eleven different productions.

⁷⁷ Camille Saint-Saëns, *Harmonie et Mélodie*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1893), 224.

⁷⁸ Faris, 187.

welcome their men back from war with a victory parade. This use is also in keeping with the rest of the *opéra bouffe* as the chorus has an important role in all three acts – a trait that was uncommon in earlier Offenbach works that used the chorus sparingly. It parodies the “Consecration of Swords” scene in Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*, and other operas with similar chorus scenes. It is interesting to note that the “Toreador Scene” from Bizet’s *Carmen*, written about eight years later by the same librettists that penned Offenbach’s *La belle Hélène* and *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, contains similar elements to both the above scenes. The librettists very well could have been parodying themselves!

In one of Offenbach’s last works the chorus also plays a substantial role in the action. *La fille du tambour-major*, an *opéra comique* based on Donizetti’s *La fille du régiment*, contains songs that are labeled as chorus numbers, a designation that did not always appear in Offenbach’s scores that employed a chorus.⁷⁹ In the chorus numbers, the ensemble not only comments on the action but also offers new information that helps further the plot, parodying Greek choruses and contemporary opera choruses. As in his previous numbers in which a chorus is employed, Offenbach often intersperses short solos with choral answers in call-and-response fashion. This was one of his favorite ways to use the full ensemble no matter the size of the cast, and a piece like this can be found in every work with three or more characters.⁸⁰ Couplets with the chorus would also be used in this manner. A soloist would sing two or more strophes, then the chorus would answer in a longer response than the above call-and-response solos. A short example of Offenbach’s use of call and response between a soloist and a chorus is seen in Figure 3.3 below. These two song structures, with other common musical forms Offenbach preferred to use in his works, will be examined more closely in the following section.

⁷⁹ These numbers are referred to in various ways: *chœur avec couplets* and *chœur général* are two examples.

⁸⁰ In his works with four cast members, these pieces appear as solos with the other characters answering in the role the chorus would later play in these numbers.

Qu'a-fil fait? Il a pén-é-tre chez moi, chez un-e femm-e ar-ré-tez-le!
 Qu'a-fil fait? Ar-ré-tons-le

Figure 3.3: Offenbach, “Chœur,” *Madame l'archiduc*, Act Three, no. 16, mm. 18-24.

Types of Numbers

In the previous sections I allude to some of the song types Offenbach tended to write into his *opérettes*, especially in the segment describing the role of the chorus. I will now discuss more specific information detailing the format of his musical numbers, beginning with the Overture and other instrumental pieces he commonly composed. These stylistic traits are important to recognize, as later composers drew on them to create their own parodies of Offenbach.

Overtures and Entr'actes

Every extant *opérette* begins with either an overture or an introduction, and sometimes both are used. At times, Offenbach did not write the overture to a work until it was performed in Germany or Austria and, in one case, Eduard Haensch compiled the overture before the work was performed in Germany.⁸¹ Of the eighty-two extant *opéras* and *opérettes* I examined, fifty-four works contain opening numbers called *ouvertures*. In fourteen compositions, this piece is called an *introduction*. There does not seem to be a pattern to what he calls the opening number because some of the introductions lead directly into sung pieces and some come to a full stop before the first aria or ensemble begins. At least three of his overtures segue directly into the main action, as does one introduction, so this does not seem to be a distinction. In the seven

⁸¹ *La belle Hélène* was performed in Paris without an overture, but Eduard Haensch, the orchestrator, composed one based on the work for its opening in Germany in 1865.

works that list both an overture and an introduction, the latter functions as a prelude, setting up the action in the remainder of the work. Offenbach used this idea in *Hoffman* as there is no overture, only a prelude to the main story. This is the only extant piece that contains a designated *prélude*. Three of Offenbach's compositions, *Les deux aveugles* (1855), *La vie parisienne* (1866), and *Fantasio* (1872), contain either an overture or an introduction, depending on the version used for performance. The remaining three works were only examined in fragmented form, and no mention of either type of opening number was found.

Both his introductions and his overtures are sectional, usually highlighting one or more of the tunes that will be heard later in the show. An example of a typical Offenbach overture is the opening to *Croquefer*. It contains multiple sections, each previewing part of the music in the *opérette bouffe*. Each song is briefly represented, with the majority of the over four hundred measures devoted to the “Galop” section of the love duet and the music from the Finale, which echoes the opening number. Offenbach's penchant for composing similar music for the first and final songs of his work will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, as it is an important style characteristic of his *opérettes*.

Dragonette has a similar overture that is about half the length of *Croquefer*'s, even though the works are about the same length. In the latter *opérette*, the opening number also starts the overture, but *Dragonette* begins with a thirty-one measure excerpt from the fast ending of the love duet. Part of *Dragonette*'s opening couplets are excerpted, then the overture picks up the beginning of the love duet. Offenbach returns to the couplets, quoting the “la la” refrain at the end of the song, before ending the overture with music from the end of the finale. In both overtures, Offenbach highlights the duets, as this music comprises the majority of each show.

This pattern continues in the overtures to his multi-act works as well. In *Orphée aux enfers* the opening overture is less than four hundred measures long, ending with a large section of the famous “Infernal Galop,” or “Can Can.” In its original two-act form, Offenbach only wrote a prelude to open the work. Many of the opening numbers from Offenbach's stage works did not have long instrumental preludes, and some of his introductions and overtures lead directly into the action.

Similar to the overtures are Offenbach's entr'actes, which appear between most sections of his multi-act works. There are at least two cases, however, in which there is not an

instrumental piece between acts. *Le roman comique* (The Comic Novel, 1861) has an entr'acte between acts one and two, but there is no instrumental number after the second act. Instead, the third act begins with a chorus number. *Les géorgiennes* (1864) has a similar construction, except that there is no entr'acte between the first two acts, but one between acts two and three. In *Bavard et bavarde* (1862/3) and *Les bergers* (1865), this piece is called an introduction, and in *Barbe-bleue* (1866) and *Le docteur Ox* (1877) there are multiple pieces called *entr'actes*. Three works contain a very short instrumental piece that leads directly into a chorus number: *Orphée aux enfers*, *La vie parisienne*, and *Les braconniers* (1873). In these cases, the instrumental interludes function more as scene-change music than as a signal for a full intermission. Harding, in describing the way Offenbach composed, offered this reason for the differing lengths of music between acts and scenes:

The same neurotic care for detail that he showed in administering his theatre also dictated his method of composing. As a scene developed on paper he kept in his mind's eye a clear picture of what was happening on stage. He knew from bar to bar the exact positions of singers, chorus and walk-ons. When the time came for rehearsals it was invariably found that he had provided the right amount of music, just enough and no more, to allow the singers to move from place to place or carry out what "business" was needed.⁸²

Because Offenbach was directly involved with rehearsing all of his pieces, he knew exactly where he would place the actors and what set movement would be necessary. In modern works, most composers add vamp bars that can be repeated as needed to accommodate slower scene changes, but Offenbach's detailed knowledge of the mechanics of the theater allowed him to precisely time out the necessary music.⁸³ Most of his entr'actes are single-themed, relatively short pieces that either continue the music of the previous scene or present new music that sets the mood for the next act. In some cases, as in a few of his overtures and introductions, the entr'acte segues directly into the action of the scene.

⁸² Harding, 100-1.

⁸³ Vamp bars occur in the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, and Frank Loesser. In most cases, these bars occur at the end of scene change music so stage hands and actors have time to prepare properly for the next scene and there is music under the complete change.

Waltzes

Dance has always been an important part of French opera, and the *opérette* continued this tradition in its own way. Waltzes were very much in fashion in Paris during the mid-nineteenth century, and Offenbach took advantage of this trend by inserting a waltz of some type into almost all of his theatrical works. These waltzes appear in different forms, depending on the piece and the effect Offenbach wanted to create. In almost every show, waltz-like vocal solos or duets are sung by the hero or heroine, often when they are falling in love. An example of a “lover’s waltz” that fits every aspect of the description is Fortunio’s song from *La Chanson de Fortunio* (1861), mentioned earlier in this chapter. Originally written for Alfred de Musset’s play *Le Chandelier* (1835), Offenbach re-used it as the cornerstone of his later work, composed as a sequel to Musset’s comedy. In the original play, Fortunio is in love with his employer’s wife and uses this song to seduce her. In Offenbach’s version, Fortunio is an old man who has forgotten about the song and when his young employee finds it and hears the legend of its powers as an aphrodisiac, he uses it on Fortunio’s much younger wife to seduce her. This song became so popular that it was turned into a polka and a waltz not long after the *opéra comique* premiered in 1861.⁸⁴ Other such waltz-songs also became popular in this way, most notably the “Invocation à Vénus,” Hélène’s lament that was sung by children, fashionable ladies, and others all over Paris not long after the premiere of *La belle Hélène* in 1864. This song will be further discussed in chapter four. These “lover’s waltzes” parodied the traditional love duets heard in *grand opéra* and *opéra-comique*. Sometimes a specific parodic target was used, as in the earlier mentioned three-part duet in *Croquefer*, but often the parody was in the wordplay between the two lovers. Another waltz that became famous throughout Paris and Western Europe will be discussed in chapter four, “Hélène’s Waltz” from the Act Two finale of *La belle Hélène*.

A second type of waltz that Offenbach often used were Tyrolian waltzes, distinguished by the use of yodeling or yodel-like passages in their refrains. These were popular in late nineteenth-century Paris and Offenbach tended to employ them for parodic purposes in scenes where trickery and foolishness was involved or with lower-class characters. An example appears in Act Three of *Le roi Carotte* when a group of rebels is searching for the true king. In this

⁸⁴ Harding, 122-3.

Ronde des Colporteurs (Round of the Peddlers), a sorcerer who is trying to restore the rightful ruler to the throne and two of her followers disguise themselves as peddlers to infiltrate Roi Carotte's palace. They sing a trio in the form of a Tyrolian waltz describing their travels to Persia and the wares they are selling, which includes a chorus of "ahs" that give the song its yodeling feel. Offenbach reinforces the lower-class disguises of the rebels with this number, which fools Roi Carotte into admitting them to his palace.

Another example of this sung waltz form appears in the Act 2 finale of *La vie Parisienne*. At this point of the *opéra-bouffe*, Gardefeu is trying to woo the Baroness but must create a diversion that gets the Baron away from her for a while. With the help of the servants Frick and Gabrielle, Gardefeu hosts an elaborate dinner party for a group of tourists on holiday, beginning with this *Air Tyrolien* that invites them to the soirée. Gabrielle sings the short verses and provides the elaborate yodeling work in the "la la" refrain. Although the Baron is an upper-class character, the status of the servants and the tourists are reflected by the choice of the *Tyrolien*. Trickery is also involved, as the entire party is a ruse to otherwise occupy the Baron while Gardefeu seduces his wife. In every example presented, the lower class and perceived low intelligence level of the characters is indicated by Offenbach's use of this type of waltz, as is the suggestion of trickery. Surveying Offenbach's use of waltzes in his works, he appears to prefer the Viennese waltz when writing both vocal and instrumental selections, often using it as a love song or duet for the main characters. The Tyrolian waltz seems to be used to mock the lower classes or foolish characters.

Couplets

Almost every Offenbach *opérette* with vocal solos contains one or more in couplet form. His version of this form is usually two strophes long, and sometimes contains a refrain sung either by a soloist or an ensemble. These numbers are almost always expositional in nature, as the character is usually explaining certain actions or situations. Because of this trait, many couplets occur very early in the *opérette* or during an act finale. An extreme example of Offenbach's use of couplets is found in his *opérette-bouffe* *La romance de la rose* (1869), written using the

melody of “The Last Rose of Summer.”⁸⁵ Of its six musical numbers, half contain couplets although only one aria bears that explicit title. One song, “*Chanson du Chien du Colonel*” (*The Song of the Colonel’s Dog*), contains four couplets that are sung by the soloist and the full ensemble. Each short verse is rhymed every two measures, and part of the refrain is barked.

Another example of expositional couplets occurs in *Le mariage aux lanternes*. After the overture, the first two sung numbers are duet couplets. The first, mainly sung by the hero Guillot, explains why the heroine, Denise, should concentrate on her chores. It introduces the owner of the farm, Mathurin, who is never seen or heard but is the instigator of much of the plot. Denise has short vocal answers to Guillot’s questions, but does not sing any of the couplets. In contrast, the couplets that immediately follow this number are sung by two young widows who are contemplating finding new husbands. They take turns singing each couplet, first telling of how Catherine’s husband beat her, then of how Fanchette had to beat her husband. Both women end their verse with a refrain of “ah,” linking this song to the previously described waltzes. After a non-strophic trio, a set of three couplets starts a drinking song. This differs from the other two couplet songs in that the chorus is sung by all four previously mentioned characters instead of just one. Couplets dominated the solo songs in Offenbach’s *opérettes*, but a genre of songs, the *chanson à boire*, appear in almost every staged work.

Chanson à boire

Drinking songs (*chansons à boire*) are a feature of many Offenbach *opérettes* and take many forms, from solo couplets to full ensemble numbers. In some shows, the drinking song either explains some of the action or is the catalyst for further action. This is true in *Croquefer*, where the drinking song celebrating peace between the two old knights is also where Fleur-de-Soufre attempts to poison them and escape. Her plan only partially works, as the poisoning agent is too weak to kill the knights, merely producing a strong laxative effect. This *chanson* begins with a set of short couplets by Croquefer toasting to their peace, with interspersed responses from the other four actors in the ensemble. Fleur-de-Soufre then takes over, hinting that she has spiked the drinks, and the entire ensemble ends up imitating a military band. In this song, future action is set

⁸⁵ In this work, the tune is used in almost every number in one form or another. This is an extreme form of parody, as the intertextual reference of the song permeates the entire composition.

up with the poisoning and the past action of making peace is celebrated. This number parodies the drinking songs in operas like *Les Huguenots* where a group (usually of men) celebrate a grand event that has or is about to occur. Offenbach's version begins in this spirit, but ends with the comic twist of the poisoning. Taking the old form and adding a parodic twist employs one of the earliest definitions of *parodia*, as defined by Hegemon and Aristotle.

A different kind of *chanson à boire* occurs in *Le mariage aux lanternes*. Guillot, a young farmer, has just been told that his uncle has left him a treasure under a tree that he can claim later that evening. To celebrate, Guillot brings out a jug of wine and gets drunk while singing couplets about his current life. The three women in the cast join him in a chorus that celebrates drinking wine over water. No action is celebrated or furthered by this song, and its only purpose seems to be to give Guillot a chance to drink and the ensemble another song to sing. No plot points would be lost if the song was omitted. This type of number is rare in Offenbach's works, especially his one-acts, as he usually used every moment of music and dialogue to further the story.

Orphée aux enfers does not contain a drinking song specifically labeled a *chanson à boire*, but almost all of its second act and the end of the final act are drinking scenes. There is a "Hymne à Bacchus" in the final act, but, as mentioned, most of this act includes drinking. When the gods revolt against Jupiter, the "Chœur de la révolte" contains many mentions of ambrosia, so it comes the closest to this genre. Drinking in this case is merely a part of the lifestyle of the gods (in act two) and the revelers in the underworld (in the final act). Several solo couplets, ensemble numbers, and dances comprise these acts, most with a reference to some form of alcohol or partying. The overall effect parodies the supposed lifestyle of the Greek gods; drinking and lounging. In every case presented here, solos combine with ensemble singing to create a festive atmosphere. Most *chansons à boire* further the action in some manner, and are set in duple or triple meter. Drinking was a way of life for the French, and Offenbach celebrated this love of wine in his works in various songs. In the *chansons* assigned to peasant characters, the rustic life of these people is parodied as are the lifestyle parties of the aristocracy in works like *La vie Parisienne*.

Act Finales

Act finales are present in every extant work that I studied, although some bear different titles. Most of the finales in the one-act shows are rather short, while the songs concluding multi-act works are usually in two or more sections with each section changing meter and/or tempo. Almost the entire cast sing the extant finales, whether just two performers or an entire chorus, and all begin and end at a rapid tempo. Short vocal solos are commonly interspersed, mainly sung by one or more of the lead characters. In almost every case these numbers would function as a conclusion, wrapping up the action and, if there were subsequent acts, they might preview coming plot points.

Dragonette's finale is typical of the ending numbers in Offenbach's one-act compositions. *Dragonette* has some short initial solos that interact with solos by the other characters, telling of the return from the war of her brother (whom we never see). The entire ensemble of four then sing "Vive la France" to the end of the show. All the action is quickly wrapped up by this number, and everyone in the cast contributes to the conclusion.

Another less typical one-act finale occurs at the end of *Mr. Choufleuri restera chez lui le... (A Musical Evening at Mr. Cauliflower's Home, 1861)*. As in *Dragonette*, the leads have solos that interact with the full ensemble, including a chorus. All of the action, however, has wrapped up in the dialogue immediately preceding the song, so this finale consists mainly of nonsense syllables that comprise the conclusion to the opera that the hero was composing for the titular character. By creating a double finale through dialogue and music, Offenbach is parodying his own and other's operas that contain elaborate finales. Using nonsense syllables adds to the humor, as the audience would expect words in such a piece. Both finales are very short; *Choufleuri* is just over fifty measures in common time and *Dragonette* about twice that long in duple meter. By composing such short finales for these short shows, Offenbach seemed to want to leave the audience with a quick, brief tune that gave the ensemble a final moment to shine.

Offenbach's multi-act works typically contain more elaborate finales at the end of the beginning acts, while the finale to the entire work closely resembles the length and single theme of the one-act opérette finales. *Orphée*'s act one finale is a good example of the elaborate endings Offenbach wrote in these instances. It is divided into five parts, as labeled by Offenbach: *Scène, Chœur, Couplets, Valse*, and a *Strette Finale*. In the opening two sections, *Orphée* is

joyfully celebrating his freedom as his wife has just died, a stark parodic contrast to Gluck's version, when Orphée mourns Eurydice's death. Most of this section is quick, and consists of Orphée singing solo lines accompanied by an offstage chorus of adults and children. The character of l'Opinion Publique appears, to everyone's dismay, and sings two quick couplets that end with the offstage chorus joining in the refrain. She censures Orphée for celebrating his wife's demise, and tells him it is his duty as a husband to go after her and save her. He asks to be able to bid farewell to his students, and the young violinists enter to play and sing the *Valse*. This is a Viennese waltz, not Tyrolian, as Offenbach is not representing the lower class or symbolizing any form of trickery. The finale ends with a short, fast, duple-meter section sung by the chorus, l'Opinion Publique, and Orphée. This chorus comments on Orphée's situation in the manner of a Greek chorus, as the ensemble concurs that he must go because "*C'est l'honneur qui t'appelle, et l'honneur passe avant l'amour.*"⁸⁶ In these five sections, Offenbach recaps the preceding act's action and sets up the remainder of the plot as Orphée heads to the Underworld to find Eurydice. In contrast, the finale to the entire work is a fast, single-sectioned mostly choral song that reiterates the "Infernal Galop" or "Can-can" theme. Offenbach does not have to preview any more action and he restates the most memorable theme from the show so the audience would remember it.

Conclusion

Jacques Offenbach satisfied a need for light opera in Paris at a time when *grand opéra* and *opéra comique* were still popular in the city. In the mid-nineteenth century, *opéra comique* was turning to darker, more serious subject matter, so his light, comedic shows filled an increasing void. His *opérettes* parodied both of the above genres and satirized elements of Parisian life and government, giving the public a chance to laugh at themselves and others. Offenbach and his librettists worked quickly, commenting on and parodying current events while they were still fresh in the minds of the Parisian public. The writers accomplished brilliantly, because the parody was specific enough to directly relate to its target, but general enough to still be relevant to audiences today. Beginning with the libretto and continuing through the music, staging, and

⁸⁶ "It is honor that calls you, and honor comes before love."

costuming, elements of parody were layered into the compositions. Previous parody writers used only one layer of parody, usually lifting a familiar tune and adding new words, so this application was new to the French audiences. Anachronistic elements such as mailboxes and other contemporary references added comedic elements to shows set in earlier times. In some cases, entire opera plots were lifted for parodic treatment, twisted through another character's perspective or a fresh take on an old myth. Even when much of an established story was used, the new music and irreverent libretto gave the composition a fresh feel. Because of their skilled construction of parodic layers, most of Offenbach's *opérettes* do not sound dated and many are still performed today.

Although he worked with a number of librettists, his biggest successes were with writers who understood his style and thus constructed parodic libretti that allowed Offenbach to compose music that parodied contemporary composers. Meyerbeer was his favorite contemporary target, and the composer often attended Offenbach's shows to see how his friend had re-worked his latest opera. The cross-promotion was beneficial for both composers, and the Parisian public enjoyed connecting the works. Other composers such as Wagner were skewered for comedic effect in both the libretti and in parodic musical quotation. Offenbach's many librettists worked on a rapid timeline, pushed by the composer to quickly complete libretti that kept up with his furious compositional pace. Despite the uneven quality of the libretti he worked from, his music and methods survive to this day and inspired the next generation of parody operettists, namely Gilbert and Sullivan. In the following chapter, I will present a detailed study of *La belle Hélène*, delving deeper into some of the parodic and stylistic traits discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Parodic Strategies in *La belle Hélène*: A Detailed Overview

In December 1864, Offenbach was searching for ideas for evening-length works to be premiered at his theatre, the *Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiennes*. He looked once again to Ludovic Halévy, with whom he had been collaborating since the earliest years of his career. In his turn, Halévy brought in Henri Meilhac as a co-writer, continuing the collaborative relationship that they had begun with Offenbach on the 1862 *opérette La baguette*.¹ Capitalizing on the success of his 1858 *Orphée aux enfers*, Offenbach pitched the idea of an *opérette* based on the Trojan War to his librettists. All three eventually rejected the idea of setting the war itself to music, but thought the backstory of how Paris abducted Héléne would make a good plot.

Although both *Orphée* and *Hélène* were based on Greek myths, there were several differences between the two productions. *La belle Hélène* was three acts long while *Orphée* was only two, and *Hélène* bore the genre label *opéra bouffe* instead of *opéra bouffon*.² Hortense Schneider, Offenbach's latest vocal discovery, sang the title role at his request and was paid 2,000 francs per month, an unusually high salary for that era. This was also an unusual arrangement since she was hired not as a member of the company, but rather as a solo artist just for this production. The work was a popular success in Paris, as songs and bits of the libretto became part of the vernacular and Schneider became an operatic star. Critics did not respond to it as harshly as they had to *Orphée*, since Offenbach was not directly targeting an established operatic theme with his parody. They did, however, still dismiss it as frivolous. In the *Journal des Débats*, Jules Janin harshly panned both works as sacrilege. However, the public ignored his writings and Offenbach made him a target of criticism in the press.³

¹ Halévy had co-written nine libretti with others before writing *La baguette* with Meilhac in 1862. After *Hélène* in 1864, the pair wrote nine more libretti for Offenbach.

² The original version of *Orphée* was only two acts; however, it was expanded to four acts in 1874. No reason was given for the change in genre label, as both works appear to have very similar construction. However, the suffix *-on* is used as a diminutive in French, so the original two-act *Orphée* may have borne the title for this reason.

³ After Janin gave *Orphée* a bad review, Offenbach revealed that he had used one of Janin's own writings as one of Pluto's most humorous speeches. Harding, *Folies de Paris*, 51.

Parodic connections between Greek mythology and the text of *La belle Hélène* have been discussed in an article by Dana Munteanu, continuing work begun by Albert Gier and Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer.⁴ Following Lars Elleström, Munteanu argues that parody in performed theatrical works can contain multiple layers as staging, costumes, and voice inflection are added.⁵ Munteanu states, “Parody can target social customs and types of discourse that are not necessarily literary...complex parody often functions on multiple levels that need to be understood as co-existent.”⁶ With this layering of parody in mind, descriptions of staging and the extant photographs and sketches of the costumed actors are helpful in determining if other elements add to the parody that can be read in the libretto and score. Earlier forms of parody, *parodia* and *paratragedia*, are also present in these compositions. This chapter highlights these instances, using both the original definitions and their later interpretations by various philosophers. These parodic techniques, employed by Offenbach and his librettists in the text and the music, layer with the parody in the costuming, settings, and staging to create compositions that are as effective today as they were in the late nineteenth century.

La belle Hélène Synopsis

Offenbach’s three-act *opéra bouffe* opens on the High Priest Calchas watching over the temple where Hélène is leading the women of Sparta in the festival of Adonis. Paris, fresh from judging the beauty contest between Venus, Minerva, and Juno, arrives seeking the prize Venus has awarded him for judging her the winner, the love of Hélène. Disguised as a shepherd, Paris bribes Calchas to help him woo Hélène. After the introduction is arranged, the queen shows an interest in “the shepherd,” and looks forward to seeing him at the upcoming contest. King Ménélas, his brother Agamemnon, and the heroes Achille, Ajax I, Ajax II, and Oreste,

⁴ Munteanu cites the following articles as part of her essay on this subject: Gier, A. “‘La Phocéenne! La Phocéenne!’ Travestie und Parodie bei Offenbach, Giraudoux und anderen.” In *Europäische Mythen von Leibe, Leidenschaft, Untergang und Tod im (Musik-)Theater: Der Trojanische Krieg*, edited by P. Csobádi et al. 538-48. Anif/Saltzburg: Mueller-Speiser, 2002, and Neuschäfer, H.-J. “Die MythenParodie in *La belle Hélène*.” In *Jacques Offenbach und seine Zeit*, edited by El Schmierer. Laaber-Verlag, 2009. Dana Munteanu, “Parody of Greco-Roman Myth in Offenbach’s *Orphée aux enfers* and *La belle Hélène*.” *Syllecta Classica*, 23 (2012), 77-101.

⁵ Lars Elleström, *Divine Madness: On Interpreting Literature, Music, and the Visual Arts Ironically*, (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), 98.

⁶ Munteanu, 79-80.

Agamemnon's playboy son, enter to a chorus boasting of their great strength and heroic deeds.⁷ Paris, still disguised as a shepherd, joins the contest to solve a set of riddles presented by Ménélas. After several failed attempts by Achille and the Ajaxes, Paris easily solves the riddles and impresses Héléne. Revealing himself as "l'homme à la pomme" (the man with the apple), Héléne realizes that he has come for her, as was foretold. Calchas, prompted by another bribe from Paris, sends Ménélas off to Crete, so that Paris has time alone with Héléne.

In Act Two, Héléne resists Paris's advances as a matter of honor, but asks Calchas to send her a dream of Paris, who has entered her chambers disguised as a guard. When Paris reveals himself to Héléne, she allows herself to believe that he is the dream she requested, so anything that happens will not tarnish her honor. She still resists his advances, asking if she is more beautiful than Venus. He hedges his answer while telling her just enough of what Venus did to win the contest to sway her favor. Soon she gives in, but Ménélas returns and catches them in bed together. In the act finale, Héléne pleads her innocence, stating "so it wasn't a dream!" She then chastises her husband for coming home early without warning. Paris is banished, however, and Héléne falls into depression.

Act Three opens with the entire Spartan court on a beach in Naples. Héléne has come here to try to forget Paris, but Ménélas follows her around asking her to explain what she meant by "it wasn't a dream." She scolds him because he is angry about her "dream," when he discovered his wife and Paris in bed together. Héléne threatens to make him scream by making the dream reality. Venus has taken revenge on the king for banishing Paris by cursing Sparta, making the women of the country lust after the men, causing many social problems. Agamemnon and Calchas sing a "Patriotic Trio," asking Ménélas to give Héléne to Paris "for the good of the country." He protests, asking that it to be left to "a future Ménélas." The king then reveals that he has called the Grand Auger of Venus to come from Kythera to help find a less drastic solution to the problem. Oreste announces the arrival of the Grand Auger, who is actually Paris in yet another disguise. His solution to Sparta's problem is to take the queen to Kythera to sacrifice one hundred white heifers. After Ménélas agrees and convinces Héléne to go, Paris reveals himself, taunting the Spartans as he takes her back to Troy.

⁷ In the myth, both Ajax the Great and Ajax the Lesser fight in the Trojan War. These distinctions were altered by the librettists.

Social Satire

Satirical commentary in theatrical works was not uncommon in Paris and Offenbach composed many works as part of that tradition. In the case of *La belle Hélène*, Munteanu identifies the satiric resemblance between the Second Republic and the manner in which the Spartan court is portrayed.⁸ Contemporary Parisian social conventions also appeared in these works, mainly for humorous anachronistic purposes. Some of these references and comparisons are detailed below.

Ridicule of Napoleon III and the Second Empire

Offenbach did not shy away from commenting harshly on society and had done so in previous libretti, most notably in *Orphée aux enfers*, and the success of these works proved that the Parisian public enjoyed the satiric look at themselves and their government. In his book *Histoire de l'opérette en France*, Florian Bruyas describes the composition in this way:

Disguised as amusing and harmless fun, Meilhac and Halévy's play is thus a violent satire against Parisian manners and against the frivolity of the city, which, living in euphoria and confidence, allows a foreigner little by little to take a place that is not his own. Opponents of the Empire have wrongly claimed that *La Belle Hélène* was directed particularly at this hated regime. The play, in fact, goes much further. It is still and will always be relevant in all nations of the world because it does not criticize one political system over another, but simply the eternal vices of humanity that are found in all latitudes and in all countries and of which the heads of government and their entourage obviously symbolize better than anyone the dangers and foreseeable consequences for the people of whom they are in charge.⁹

This quotation suggests that the parody goes deeper than topical quotes and contemporary references, and explains the work's wide appeal and longevity. Themes such as criticizing those in power were often the subject of parody and satire, as was the besting of a nobleman by a

⁸ Munteanu, 91.

⁹ "Sous un aspect très amusant et anodin, la pièce de Meilhac et Halévy est donc une violente satire contre les mœurs parisiennes et contre la frivolité de la capitale qui, vivant dans l'euphorie et la confiance, laisse peu à peu l'étranger prendre une place qui n'est pas la sienne. Les adversaires de l'Empire ont prétendu, bien à tort, que *La Belle Hélène* était dirigée particulièrement contre leur régime détesté. La pièce, en réalité, va beaucoup plus loin. Elle est encore et sera toujours d'actualité dans toutes les nations du monde, car ce qu'elle fustige, ce n'est pas du tout un régime politique plus qu'un autre, ce sont simplement les vices éternels de l'humanité que l'on retrouve sous toutes les latitudes et dans tous les pays et dont les chefs de gouvernements et leur entourage symbolisent évidemment, mieux que personne, les dangers et les conséquences prévisibles pour les peuples dont ils ont la charge." Florian Bruyas, *Histoire de L'Opérette en France 1855-1965*, Lyon: Emmanuel Vitte (1974), 81.

perceived lower-class character. This is, in fact, a trope in early Italian *opera buffa*, the genre that inspired Offenbach in his creation of the *opéra bouffe* genre. Wolf Rosenberg commented on the political aspects of *La belle Hélène* in general, calling the work a warning from Offenbach and his librettists to the aristocracy that change was inevitable, and that if they did not embrace it, their government would suffer a fate similar to that of Sparta and Troy.¹⁰ Either the warning was missed or the nobility chose to ignore it, and the regime fell six years after the premiere of this work.

Oreste, here portrayed as a playboy and partier, represented frivolous Second Empire courtiers that squandered taxpayer's money. Citizens were expected to pay taxes, and the public felt that these taxes were misspent on merriment and fancy buildings (such as the Palais Garnier) instead of being used to better the lives of the people. Harding suggests that "to a certain extent the operetta reflected a social mood which regarded pleasure and the pursuit of a good time as the only worthwhile aim."¹¹ While most characters generally fit with this assessment, Agamemnon does state that he thinks the good times cannot last, foretelling the downfall of Sparta and, parodically, Napoleon III. This was one of the aforementioned warnings that Offenbach and his librettists were giving to the court in this *opérette*. His thinly-veiled parody of such issues and of courtly life in general helped make his works popular with all classes of the Parisian public.

In Act One, the scenes in which Paris bribes Calchas satirized the corrupt officials in both the church and the government whom the French people of all classes might have encountered. Most authors who have written about Offenbach's *opérettes* do not mention specific characters when discussing parody, preferring to discuss their actions in a parodic manner. Isaac D'Israeli comes closest in describing how Paris, and especially, Calchas were written when he called this form of parody "a critical exposition. What do we parody...[but] dramatic writers, who frequently make their heroes act against nature, common sense, and truth?"¹² Both characters

¹⁰ Wolf Rosenberg, "Politische und gesellschaftskritische Aspekte bei Offenbach," in *Jacques Offenbach – Komponist und Weltbürger*, Winfried Kirsch and Ronny Dietrich, ed. (Mainz: Schott, 1980), 32-33.

¹¹ Harding, 155.

¹² Isaac D'Israeli, "Parodies," in *Curiosities of Literature*, Second Series, 14th ed. volume 2 (London: G. Routledge and Co., 1858), 510-11

are parodies; Paris of the operatic hero who will stop at nothing to gain his prize, and Calchas of the government officials.

Venus's curse and its effect on the court of Sparta were also a reference to the Second Empire. After traveling to Naples, Oreste summarizes the curse, "King Ménélas wounded the goddess by chasing away Paris. Since that day, Venus has placed in the heart of the women of Greece a huge need for pleasure and love."¹³ This becomes a problem, as husbands leave their wives—and vice-versa. This exaggeration of courtly life parodied the way in which Napoleon III actually ran his court and would have been especially amusing to middle-class Parisians. Faris believes that this scene parodies the *haut monde* of the decadent Second Empire: "In the Greek society of the operetta Agamemnon and Menelaus are the only moral characters, and Menelaus is stupid. The rest are cynical, amoral, hypocritical..."¹⁴ Offenbach and his librettists used this parodic exaggeration of nobility for satiric comedy, to the delight of the French public. Building on this parodic character depiction, Offenbach often created nobility and/or paternal figures that were foolish or weak-minded. In this case, he seemed to be using Ménélas to parody how Napoleon III was blind to the workings of his own court. The king is often portrayed as not realizing what is happening and as being easily fooled, mirroring how some Parisians viewed their own emperor.

Ridicule of French Conventions

In addition to satirizing the Second Empire court, Offenbach inserted parodic takes on contemporary French conventions into his shows. Two that many Parisians would have easily recognized occur at the end of Act Two, when Ménélas discovers Héléne and Paris in bed together. After unsuccessfully trying to convince Ménélas that the entire incident is only a dream, Héléne scolds him by saying that a wise husband would not return home without the foresight and propriety to tell his wife, so she can be ready for him. This parodied Parisian life, as spouses often sent ahead word that they were returning so their partners had time to get their lovers out of the house. This scene probably resonated with many in the audience, as it parodied

¹³ "Le roi Ménélas blessa la déesse en chassant Pâris. Depuis ce jour, Vénus a mis au cœur des femmes de la Grèce un immense besoin de plaisir et d'amour."

¹⁴ Faris, 118.

social convention of the day that allowed married men and women to have extramarital relationships without repercussions.¹⁵ As he leaves, Paris warns Ménélas and his court that Venus has declared Hélène his prize and that they are risking the wrath of the goddess if they force him to leave. With a final declaration of “The hour of the shepherd must come!” the act ends.¹⁶ This act finale contains the fast music and patter Offenbach tended to place at the end of acts, linking his works to the *opera buffa* tradition. He also sent the audience into the intermission with a cliffhanger that parodied other theatrical productions popular in Paris at the time.

Parody and Intertextuality in the Libretto

In addition to social satire, other factors in the text invoked different forms of parody. In his discussion of literary parody in *La belle Hélène*, Neuschäfer identifies two major parodic techniques used by Meilhac and Halévy: mixing the older myth with objects from contemporary times and the superfluous use of heroic characters for ridiculous purposes.¹⁷ Anachronisms were written into several Offenbach works, always for comedic purposes, and ridicule of characters, mythology, and other stage works was a common occurrence in his shows. Elements of both in *La belle Hélène* will be discussed in this section.

Anachronisms

Anachronisms were a favorite comic technique used by Offenbach’s librettists in scripts for his shows. Some went by quickly, like the use of a carrier pigeon to bring Venus’s letter about Paris to Calchas, but some were much more elaborate. In the finale of the opening act of *La belle Hélène*, Halévy and Meilhac set up an entire scene with a single anachronism. Achille and the two Ajaxes compete in a contest to solve a word game. None of the men can decipher Ménélas’s riddle until Paris appears in his disguise of a shepherd and easily solves the first three parts with

¹⁵ The divorce law of 1792 was not in effect at this time. When it was reinstated in 1884, men could divorce their wives for infidelity but women could not divorce their husbands for the same reason. Michèle Plott, “Divorce and Women in France,” *Encyclopedia of 1848 Revolutions*, <https://www.ohio.edu/chastain/dh/divorce.htm> (accessed September 9, 2016). Since married couples could not divorce at the time the piece was composed, this social convention was well-known.

¹⁶ “Il faut qu'elle sonne, l'heure du berger!”

¹⁷ Neuschäfer, 172-4.

the answers “loch,” “homme,” and “hotte.”¹⁸ The final answer, “ive,” helps Achille discover the correct answer is locomotive, to which Paris replies, “And it's hard to have solved that four thousand years before the invention of the railways!”¹⁹ This word game also parodies the singing contest in act two of Richard Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*, which had premiered disastrously in Paris three years earlier in 1861.²⁰ Instead of a high-minded singing competition for the hand of the heroine, Offenbach creates a contest in which riddles are solved. Moving the contest from the stuffy aristocracy to a lower-class form of entertainment that both parodied and ridiculed Wagner’s work, because the word puzzles given by Ménélas were nonsensical and contained anachronistic references. Because they entered the scene boasting about their strength and accomplishments, and Paris is subsequently found to be the cleverest man in the room, the heroes are seen as idiots for losing to a shepherd. This form of ridicule will be discussed later in this section, when stock characters in this production are described.

A French social convention portrayed in operas like *Tannhäuser* was a journey or pilgrimage by one or more of the characters for religious or redemptive reasons.²¹ At the end of both Acts One and Three a pilgrimage must be taken to resolve an issue with the gods. In the finale of Act One, Calchas tells Ménélas that he needs to travel to Crete on a pilgrimage at the request of the god Jupiter. He does not, however, tell him that the true reason is to give Paris time to seduce his wife. In the Act Three finale, Paris, disguised as the Grand Auger of Venus, decrees that Héléne must travel with him to Kythera to make a sacrifice, thus ending Venus’s curse. Such pilgrimages were not uncommon in the 1860s as penitents would travel to Rome to visit the Vatican. Pilgrimages to Lourdes or Santiago de Compostella were more popular among Parisians, so this was a parody of these journeys. Ménélas’s trip could also be seen as directly parodying *Tannhäuser* in the hero’s pilgrimage to Rome. Instead of Paris, however, the king is

¹⁸ In this case the translations do not matter as the answer is the combination of the sound of the words in French: lō-cō-mōt.

¹⁹ *Et c'est fort d'avoir trouvé ça quatre mille ans avant l'invention des chemins de fer!*

²⁰ Because the opera was to be staged at the Paris Opéra, Wagner had to insert a ballet into the work and make other alterations. Political opponents to Napoleon III and Princess Pauline von Metternich, wife of the Austrian ambassador to France, created disturbances at the performances so Wagner closed the opera after only three performances. Richard Wagner, trans. Edward L. Burlingame, *Art, Life, and Theories of Richard Wagner*, (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1883), 199-201.

²¹ Offenbach makes other references to Wagner’s opera in this composition, as he was ridiculing its failure in Paris. These are discussed later in this chapter.

sent off on a penitent journey, putting a parodic twist on Wagner's plot. Paris does go on a journey when he is banished at the end of Act Two, but this journey is punishment and does not involve him seeking forgiveness.

A game that would have been common in nineteenth-century Paris provides another anachronistic scene. In act two, Calchas is seen running "the Game of the Goose," a board game imported from Italy in which players roll dice to move markers around a spiral game board. Marks on the board allowed the player to move ahead rapidly or get sent backwards, depending on their roll. Versions of this game were popular throughout Europe as early as 1570 and it was played in France in the 1860s. This game was sometimes referred to as a race or chase game, so placing it early in act two would have been a parodic reference to Paris's pursuit of H el ene and his "catching" her by the end of the act. The name of the game could also refer back to those versions of H el ene's birth myth which state Zeus and Nemesis (instead of Leda) turned into geese rather than Zeus becoming a swan to seduce the nymph.²² Such intertextual references are interspersed throughout the libretto, in the manner that D'Israeli and others referred to as meta fictional.²³ Musically, the ensuing seduction scene is a combination of a lilting Viennese waltz with recitative-like sections in triple meter, shown in figures 4.1 (waltz) and 4.2 (recitative) below. Breaking up the seductive waltz in this manner was comical, as H el ene almost gives in but twice stops at the last moment to ask a question. This parodied many female characters in operatic seduction scenes where she does not protest, but gives in easily, like Rosina in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Offenbach brilliantly separated the sections with different music that sounded similar, but also reflected Paris's frustration with the questioning.

²² Aaron J. Atsma, <http://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Nemesis.html>, Theoi Project, (New Zealand, 2016), accessed September 14, 2016.

²³ D'Israeli, *Parodies*, 510-11.

Oui! c'est un rê - ve, Oui! c'est un doux rê - ve d'a-mour! La nuit lui prêt-te son mys - tè - re

Oui! c'est un rê - ve, Oui! c'est un doux rê - ve d'a-mour! La nuit lui prêt-te Son mys - tè - re

Figure 4.1: Example of a waltz-like phrase. Offenbach, “Duo,” Act II, no. 15, mm. 15-23.

E - cou - te - moi Pa - ris je veux in - ter - ro - ger Non! le prin - ce, mais le ber - ger Je vou - drai bien sa - voir

Figure 4.2: Example of a recitative-like phrase. Offenbach, “Duo,” Act II, no. 15, mm. 51-59.

Set pieces and costuming could add to the identification of this connection as a mixture of Spartan and Second Republic architecture and fashion, adding another layer of parody to the show. Sketches and pictures from the original production indicate that the designers chose to portray more of Sparta than Paris, but more recent productions have combined features from both eras. For example, figure 4.3 shows a modern production the Théâtre du Châtelet staged in 2015. In this image, an airplane is carrying Calchas and Ménélas to Crete. This staging places air travel in ancient Greece, an anachronistic touch that is not in the original libretto, but that fits well with the spirit of Offenbach and his librettists.



Figure 4.3: Ménélas and Calchas go to Crete, Théâtre du Châtelet, 2015. © Marie-Noëlle Robert 2015.²⁴

In figures 4.4 and 4.5, the original sketches of Offenbach's premiere cast in costume shows the influence of ancient Greece on the production.

²⁴ Théâtre du Châtelet, 2015. © Marie-Noëlle Robert 2015. https://www.google.com/search?tbm=isch&tbs=ring%3ACfuzqFN9Lb8yIjgCOBAFA3SMYFJbYU1TyPFIBRIbq61rqn3S7b9pitEmHIzyVuoVu6cec8fmJZwZly1Sqf3WZ5lmmCoSCQI4EAUDdIxgERMXLjIhrJwKhIJUthTVPI8UgRFVaJHQ4g6kAqEgkFEhurrWuqfRFss5qonl6XSCoSCdLtv2mK0SYcEcOK4N_151eB2KhIJjPJW6hW7px4RnOwro6_1IEB8qEglzxYlnBmXLREflwGmW0jIFyoSCVKp_1dZnmWaYETsWK300YU1V&q=la%20belle%20helene%20images&bih=635&biw=1366&ved=0ahUKewjr_6rPrZzPAhUY0IMKHavXDNsQ9C8ICQ&dpr=1#imgcr=TD0iuWWU2H_SbM%3A



Figure 4.4: Original costume for Paris.²⁵



Figure 4.5: Original costume for Ménélas.²⁶

Stock Characters

Central to all of Offenbach's *opérettes* was the cast of stock characters described in chapter three. Many of these character types appear in *La belle Hélène*, some more than once. Corresponding with the second parodic technique Neuschäfer identified in *Hélène*, the superfluous use of heroic characters for ridiculous purposes, these stock characters and the manner in which they are used showed parodic ridicule of both the Greek myth and the heroes' roles in other theatrical works. Perhaps the most obvious use of this technique is the presence of the two Ajaxes, Achille, and Oreste, as they are not depicted as the heroes they were in the *Iliad*. To the contrary, they are all revealed as mindless buffoons when Paris defeats them in Ménélas's word game. They also do nothing to stop Paris from taking Héléne with him back to Troy at the end of the show. In an additional parodic nod to his one weakness, Achille is

²⁵ “[La belle Hélène, opéra-bouffe de Meilhac, Halévy, Offenbach: Dupuis (Pâris): dessin / de Draner],” Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Arts du Spectacle, 4-0 ICO THE-78 (224,3), in Gallica, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b64019714.r=85837;2>.

²⁶ “[La belle Hélène, opéra-bouffe de Meilhac, Halévy, Offenbach : Kopp (Ménélas) : dessin / de Draner],” Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Arts du Spectacle, 4-0 ICO THE-78 (224,6), in Gallica, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6402245j.r>.

afflicted by a sore heel, which is briefly mentioned by the characters in act three.²⁷ Another reference to Achille's mythic fate is presented in a passing joke about the exile of Paris when Achille states, "It's a foreboding affair...if this man killed me one day it wouldn't surprise me!"²⁸ Several jokes of this type are found in the script, parodying the mythological story of the work. Educated audience members would appreciate these nods to the traditional story, and the lines were funny enough in context that even those not familiar with the myth would laugh. The references also cement the ridiculousness of the situation and the way the heroes are presented.

Making light of these normally heroic characters begins in the middle of the first act, when the people of Sparta assemble for the entrance of Ménélas, Héléne, and the visiting royalty. Offenbach's march combines the chorus with solo couplets by each nobleman. These verses also set up some of the comic aspects of these characters, as Offenbach and his librettists overemphasize their pomposity and egoism. This parody resembles Mikhail Bakhtin's description of carnivalistic burlesque, because it greatly exaggerates the manner in which characters would enter and be presented in grand opéra, and sets up the comic situations in the remainder of the show.²⁹ Offenbach is using over-exaggeration of the normal grand opéra convention of introducing royal characters with epic fanfares and grand entrances by making the entire affair ridiculous and the warriors inept. Comedy is key to his method, and the over-the-top presentation cements the parody.

After the introduction of the heroes and royalty, Paris enters disguised as a shepherd because he was in the fields when the goddesses asked him to judge the beauty contest. Presenting Paris as a shepherd evokes the Arcadian settings of many early operas, notably the many *Orfeo* operas written in the seventeenth century. Offenbach is also parodying his own *Orphée*, in which Pluto disguises himself as a shepherd to lure Eurydice to Hades.

Referring back to the character types described in chapter three, several stock characters from vaudeville and classical theater appear in *La belle Héléne*. Paris is the crafty hero who uses

²⁷ Achille and the second Ajax discuss how bad the beach is; Ajax Two states that the beach is "all pebbles" and that Achille should not go there "because of your heel."

²⁸ "Affaire de pressentiment...cet homme-là me tuerait un jour, que ça ne m'étonnerait pas!" Homer does not write what happens to Achille in the *Iliad*, however, in book three of the *Posthomerica (The Fall of Troy)* Quintus Smyrnaeus relates that Paris shoots Achilles in the heel with an arrow guided by Apollo, killing him. <http://www.theoi.com/Text/QuintusSmyrnaeus3.html>, accessed September 14, 2016.

²⁹ Rose, 169.

trickery and wit to achieve his goals, Ménélas is the daft husband who is tricked into giving Paris access to his wife, and Calchas is the compliant and somewhat corrupt public official (in this case, a high priest) that aids in the deception after Paris bribes him. The other leading male characters, Agamemnon, Achille, and the two Ajaxes, are inept kings who are inserted only for comic relief. On the female side, Héléne is the heroine who, while trying to stay faithful to her husband, allows fate to take its course and is seduced by Paris. She also aids in tricking her husband, and is not depicted as completely complacent. Three female servants and two other male characters fill out the minor roles in the cast. Oreste, Héléne's nephew and Agamemnon's son, was written as a *travesti* role. He is the typical skirt-chasing young man that appears for comic purposes in many stage works of the era, such as Urbain in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. This stock character has roots in Mozart's Cherubino and was later seen in other characters like Richard Strauss's Octavian (and in chapter six we will see that Germaine Tailleferre's Offenbachian Oreste becomes a parody of himself). In some productions of *La belle Héléne*, this role is given to a tenor, which removes some of the comedy associated with the part. In the original cast photographs, the costume Léa Silly wore (Figure 4.6) included a full beard and impressive moustache, again adding to the ridiculousness of the character. As seen in the picture, the costume evokes the "Albanian" disguises from Mozart's *Così fan tutti*. Oreste is written as a playboy who seduces women, so there could be a parodic link between the characters. This link could also be attributed to the costumer, who may have read the character's description and associated him with *Così*.³⁰

³⁰ No records exist to show exactly who made the costuming choices for this production, but, as Offenbach was known to keep control over almost every aspect of his shows, he must have approved of the choice.



Figure 4.6: Léa Silly as Oreste in 1864.³¹

Parody of Greek Mythology

Parisians in the middle and upper classes would have been familiar with the mythological story surrounding the Trojan War, so Halévy and Meilhac took liberties with the tale and added elements of other stories linked to the Trojan War and Héléne. This parodic intertextuality occurs throughout the libretto in various forms, and comically twists the story. An oft-used technique is the trivialization of elements of the original Greek myth. One of the first trivializations occurs in the act two “Invocation à Venus,” containing Héléne’s phrase “*tourne vers ton enfant un bec favorable*” (“Turn to your child a favorable beak”), a comment that became popular for children to say to their parents in Paris. Héléne keeps a picture of her mother, the nymph Leda, and her father Zeus (in the guise of a swan), in her room. Lamenting the seduction of Leda by the swan, she begs Zeus to *tourne vers ton enfant un bec favorable*, and asks Venus *Pourquoi, as-tu choisi notre famille pour faire tes expériences?* (“Why have you chosen our family for your experiments?”) In this speech, Héléne refreshes the audience’s memory of her lineage, creates a joke based on Zeus’s transformation into a swan, and recalls the beauty contest that sent Paris in

³¹ Photo from the 1980 Heugel edition of the score.

pursuit of her. Neither Venus nor Zeus make an actual appearance in the show and the plot is not affected by their mention, but the references add to the humor of the plot. Meilhac and Halévy include this incident as a joke and to set up why Héléne is anxious about the appearance of Paris in Sparta, and Offenbach wrote the “Invocation” as a strophic aria to allow the audience to better hear the words. This scene appears at the start of the act where Paris finally succeeds in seducing Héléne, as Zeus’s pursuit of the nymph and his later disguise preview and parody Paris’s pursuit of Héléne, including when he disguises himself as a guard to gain entrance to her chambers.

The seduction scene links with older versions of the myth, in which Héléne is not carried off by Paris but remains faithful to her husband while a phantom image of her is taken to Troy.³² Meilhac and Halévy parodically invert this portion of the story, as in act two Héléne allows herself to believe Paris is only a dream sent to her by Calchas. Because Paris is only a dream, she reasons, giving in to him would not be adultery. During their duet, Héléne interrupts the seduction twice to ask Paris if she is more beautiful than Venus. Paris dodges the question, and his answers entice Héléne to yield, if only so he can see that she truly is the more desirable woman. This scene is mixed with humor and seduction – in fact, it was considered so erotic that the published version of the libretto of an 1873 revival in London listed a disclaimer that the duet had been truncated by order of the Lord Chamberlain, and that the entire duet had been removed from an earlier performance in the city.³³

In the show’s finale, comedic theatrical convention and another variation on the myth are employed. Héléne refuses to follow Ménélas’s order to accompany the Grand Auger of Venus (Paris in disguise) to Kythera to sacrifice one hundred white heifers, stating, “*l’offense vient de vous...laissez moi!* (the offense was yours...leave me alone!).” Paris reveals his identity only to her, but she still protests in the name of honor, even though she realizes it is her fate to go with Paris. Mistaken identity and disguises were common in farces of this time, and Offenbach could have used this technique in this case to parody the various other works that used this plot point. Héléne weakens her protests, but only after Ménélas and the rest of the court demand that she *va, pars, pars pour Cythère* (“Go, leave, leave for Kythera”) does she finally accept her fate and

³² Aaron J. Atsma, <http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Proteus.html>, Theoi Project, (New Zealand, 2016), accessed September 14, 2016.

³³ Richard Traubner, *Operetta: A Theatrical History*, New York: Routledge (2003), 47.

board the boat with Paris. Just before they embark, Calchas seem to realize the deception and states, *Y a que'que chos' là-d'sous!* (“There is something fishy going on!”), but his warning comes too late. This realization of deception by another character after it is past the point of reversal was also a common farcical technique, and, in this case, the parody is the literal translation of the old saw, “that ship has sailed.”

As the two sail away on his boat, Paris announces, “Do not wait, King Ménélas, I have Hélène, she is mine! I am Paris!”³⁴ Munteanu finds parodies of two sections of the *Odyssey* in this conclusion. First, she likens the way Paris tricks Ménélas to the manner in which Ménélas and Hélène trick king Theoclymenus of Egypt. In Euripides’s escape tragedy *Helen*, the Egyptian king wants to marry Hélène, thinking he has killed her husband. But instead, Ménélas comes in disguise to rescue her, and they escape by telling the king that they must perform a funeral for the “dead” Ménélas on a ship at sea.³⁵ Offenbach parodically inverts this story so that Paris is the one tricking Ménélas, as he and Hélène run off to Troy. Hélène is changed from the faithful wife and victim of an unwanted marriage to the willing participant in a deception.

Munteanu also notes that another portion of the myth is parodied by the manner in which Paris taunts the Spartan court as he leaves with Hélène. It parodies how Odysseus revealed his identity to the blinded Cyclops as he sailed away with his men, causing the angered creature to ask his father Poseidon to punish Odysseus. He was punished by never being allowed to return to his kingdom after helping win the Trojan War. In similar fashion to the *Odyssey*, after Paris boasts about tricking Ménélas, the angry king gathers armies to besiege Troy in hopes of rescuing Hélène. This ending is not depicted in Offenbach’s work, but audience members who knew the myth would know what followed. Munteanu sums up the comparison thus: “The reference to the Cyclops episode from the *Odyssey* is surprising in this context, but it emphasizes the brilliance of the escape plan and the foolishness of the deceived Ménélas.”³⁶ Parodying other parts of the *Odyssey* in a comedic *opérette* featuring a plot detailing the events leading up to the story of the Trojan War was a clever stroke by Offenbach and his librettists, and reinforced the

³⁴ “*Ne l’attends plus, Roi Ménélas, j’emporte Hélène, elle est à moi! Je suis Paris!*”

³⁵ Munteanu, 96.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 97.

genius of the parodies they produced. Even though the music is light and happy at the conclusion of the show, this reference reminded the audience of the consequences of Paris's actions.

Musical Parody and Intertextuality

Layering the parody in the scenery, costuming, and libretto, Offenbach inserted parodic references to specific popular (and unpopular) operas and the operatic genre in general into his compositions. Some of these references were tributes to composers he admired like Rossini and Verdi, but others ridiculed operatic practices and specific works, like Wagner's failed *Tannhäuser* premiere. Many times the music linked with the libretto to reinforce the parody, making it more apparent to the audience.

Composer Parodies

Offenbach begins his parodic nods to other operas, specifically and generally, in the opening scene. A light, major-mode theme leads into the first chorus, a hymn to Venus.³⁷ This opening number previews a main plot point of the work by summoning the goddess of love, who promised Héléne to Paris, and parodies earlier operatic preludes that praised the gods. Linda Hutcheon defined this type of parody in 1985 as "repetition with difference but [it] need not also be comic."³⁸ Offenbach's "prelude" praises the goddess and previews the theme of the entire work, the pursuit of love. This chorus is typical of the light, strophic numbers he often composed in that it is very repetitive both musically and texturally. Héléne enters to a minor-mode melody sung by the women, and laments her fate in couplets based on the minor-mode theme, parodying the manner in which the diva in many operas sang an expositional *cavatina* to explain her situation. This aria, "Amours divins! Ardentes flames!" was one of the popular tunes lifted from the show and sung by women all over Paris.³⁹ It mourns the death of love, and asks Venus to bring back love and passion to the world. Again, Offenbach is previewing the action by setting up Héléne as an unhappy wife in a loveless marriage and is parodying many themes typical of opera seria. In contrast, Oreste is introduced in a set of happy couplets. He has come to

³⁷ This opening chorus is not to be confused with the "Invocation of Venus" that Héléne sings in act two.

³⁸ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

³⁹ Faris, 112.

distract Calchas with two of these women while he enters the temple during the females-only ceremony. This entire opening sequence is similar to Giuseppe Verdi's 1842 *Nabucco*, in which the High Priest Zaccaria also presides over a temple. In Verdi's opera, another beautiful young woman falls in love with a man who is part of the army that kidnapped her. Offenbach may have had this Verdi sequence in mind when he wrote Héléne's opening aria as a lament. Even if this was not the exact model for this action, the opening act as a whole parodies the splendor of the *grands opéras* presented in Paris at this time and provides an intertextual reference to a similar plot. Many elements of *parodia* are present in this scene, especially Quintilian's first-century AD definition of *parode* as later defined by John Florio in 1598, the turning of verse in an imitational song. Ben Jonson added to this definition in 1616 by stating that the imitation was more absurd than the original, creating the parody and comedic aspects.⁴⁰

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the word game that Ménélas holds is a parodic reference to the singing contest presented in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Offenbach musically reinforced the link to the opera by using a brief quotation from it as a fanfare twice during the contest. In some versions of the libretto, Agamemnon asks Ménélas if the fanfare is Greek and he answers that he had imported it from Germany for the ceremony, an oblique but clear reference to Wagner's opera.⁴¹ Layering this musical citation to a plot and text reference would have created a strong link to the Wagnerian work in the minds of the audience.

Offenbach's final nod to a contemporary composer was more positive. In the middle of act three, Calchas and Agamemnon are not pleased with how the king is handling both his wife and the current social situation, so they confront Ménélas in a trio. This trio, referred to as the "Patriotic Trio," parodies and uses the melody from Gioachino Rossini's patriotic trio "Quand l'Helvétie est un champ de supplices" from *Guillaume Tell* (1829).⁴² Figure 4.7a below presents the opening phrase to Rossini's trio, and figure 4.7b shows the parallel phrase from Offenbach's. The two melodies are almost identical rhythmically and are exactly the same melodically. Offenbach's accompaniment is slightly different from Rossini's, generally rhythmically and not

⁴⁰ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 261.

⁴¹ Harding, 149. Dana Munteanu also commented extensively on this reference in her above-mentioned article.

⁴² "While Every True-hearted Switzer is Groaning."

harmonically. This trio is not only a melodic parody, but also parodies the genre of the patriotic trio. Rossini's trio is rallying the Swiss men to fight for the country's independence, while in Offenbach's trio, Calchas and Agamemnon are encouraging Ménélas to give up Héléne for the good of his country. In the late sixteenth century, both J.C. Scaliger and John Florio identified forms of *parodia* that were inversions of or alterations to existing songs. Offenbach and his librettists align with this definition as they are using both the text and music to parody Rossini's work. The text is similar in its plea for saving the country even though the request is more personalized and slightly inverted, and the music is almost identical to the Rossini trio and therefore easily recognizable to anyone that knew *Guillaume Tell*.⁴³ Humor in the trio comes from the new text itself, and it is not criticizing or mocking the other opera. Its placement and use to inspire patriotic feeling is the intertextual reference, and audiences would presumably recognize the parallel and appreciate the clever humor.



Figure 4.7a: Rossini, *Guillaume Tell*, Act II, No. 11, mm. 5-9.



Figure 4.7b: Offenbach, *La belle Héléne*, Act III, No. 20, mm. 2-6.

⁴³ Rossini's opera was originally staged in Paris in 1829, and had successful long runs in various forms throughout the 1830s in Vienna and in London. The Metropolitan Opera in New York first staged the opera in 1831. In Vienna, performances were regularly staged into the early twentieth century. With its popularity across Europe, this opera was a natural target for Offenbach. Gustav Kobbé, Earl of Harewood, *Kobbé's Complete Opera Book*. (London and New York: Putnam, 1954), 313, and Philip Gossett and Patricia Brauner, "Gioachino Rossini," 765–796, in *The New Penguin Opera Guide*, edited by Amanda Holden, (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001), 794.

Offenbach's Style and Style Parodies

Even when he was not specifically targeting another opera or composer, Offenbach added elements of style into his compositions that both parodied conventional opera and revealed elements of his own musical style. Some of these are apparent in his overtures and entr'actes, while others occur in the various vocal numbers. For example, the brief one hundred and four measure overture begins and ends with the music heard during the finales of both the first and final acts, a typical Offenbach characteristic. The center section features the opening phrase of "Le jugement de Paris," a tune that was met with silence during the dress rehearsal. This disapproval was a surprise to the cast and to Offenbach himself, since it was one of their favorite melodies in the show. After a night spent composing two additional versions, both Offenbach and the soloist decided that the original was still the best, and eventually audiences agreed.⁴⁴ As in most of his overtures, Offenbach selected what he felt the best tunes were from the work and gave the audiences a short preview of what they would hear. Another way of viewing this combination of tunes is that the beauty contest between the goddesses, described in Paris's aria, set in motion the travel depicted by the other two tunes. Hélène and Paris were fated to be together because of the outcome of the contest, the act one finale sends Ménélas away allowing Paris to seduce Hélène, and the act three finale is the actual abduction. Offenbach may have craftily linked these tunes together to highlight this part of the story, and actually told the entire story in the short overture, if one knows the references the melodies suggest. This overture is one of the few that Offenbach connected (*Enchaînez avec No. 1*) to the opening chorus, in this case a hymn to Venus (not Hélène's later "Invocation to Venus") sung by the ensemble. The last statement of the finale motif that leads into the opening chorus is forebodingly repeated four times in a minor mode, signaling the coming conflict and possibly parodying the manner in which music indicated ominous actions in other operas.

Offenbach's entr'acte to the second act contains another tune that became very popular in Paris, "Hélène's Waltz," later sung by her and the chorus in the act two finale.⁴⁵ Bookending an act or an entire *opérette* with a tune was one of Offenbach's common practices, and it gave the

⁴⁴ Faris, 125.

⁴⁵ This tune became so popular all over Europe that Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky parodied it twenty-five years later in his *Sleeping Beauty* waltz. Tchaikovsky used most of the opening repeated phrase as the basis of this work. Faris, 119-22.

audience two or more hearings of the melodies he felt would most catch their ears. In this case, as in many, he was correct in thinking that this tune would become popular. It is interesting to note, however, that Offenbach did not choose to use the song that dominates this act, the love duet between Paris and H el ene. This melody was not chosen for repetition at this time, as it is used in the entr'acte to act three.

At only thirty-two measures, the entr'acte to act three is the shortest instrumental work in the show and opens with twelve measures of the act two love duet. This leads into the theme from H el ene's couplets in the act two Finale, when she scolds M en elas for not warning her that he was coming home early. Placing these two themes in the final entr'acte reminded the audience of the action that set up the consequences to be revealed in act three. This piece also differs from the instrumental preludes to the other two acts as it is the only one to use past melodies instead of previewing future tunes, setting up what is to come. There is no parody in this as other composers used melodies from the numbers in a show for their mid-act and mid-scene pieces, but the use of the melodies to review the previous act is a style point that Offenbach used cleverly in this situation.

A vocal and instrumental technique that Offenbach often employed was exaggeration for humorous purposes. Examples of this occur in both the finales to act one and act three. At the beginning of the act one Finale, Paris reveals his identity to the Spartan court, and H el ene laments her fate to be taken away by "l'homme   la pomme (the man with the apple)," a reference to the golden apple Paris gave Venus as a prize for winning the beauty contest. This chorus comprises the first section of the three-section finale and shows Offenbach's ability to take a short phrase and stretch it into a full piece. As seen in Figure 4.9 below, H el ene sings the phrase "l'homme   la pomme" and the chorus repeats it in short eighth-note bursts, creating a waltz-like accompaniment that eventually becomes nonsensical in its constant repetition, but reinforces Paris's importance and place in the plot.

Figure 4.8: Offenbach, *La belle Hélène*, Act One, No. 8, mm. 31-37.

In the last section of this finale, the chorus and Héléne join in to encourage Ménélas to *Va, pars, pars pour la Crète* (“Go, leave, leave for Crete”), while Paris plots how he will seduce Héléne. Musically, this ending tune was heard in the overture, and will be heard again at the end of the final act with almost identical words, and the text is repeated to the point of nonsense, as occurred earlier in the finale. Offenbach liked to re-use music, whether to enhance the plot or for purely pragmatic reasons. In the plot, this melody signifies a journey so it was appropriate that Offenbach used it both for Ménélas’s trip to Crete and for the final abduction when Paris carries Héléne off to Troy. Though not leitmotifs, Offenbach is still using music to enhance the story.

Another example of parody and stylistic convention occurs near the end of act three during the arrival of the Grand Auger of Venus, who is actually Paris in disguise. His arrival is met with a sad chorus pleading to the Auger and the goddess for mercy. This hymn was a style parody of the type of happy paeans supplicants would sing to praise the gods, as it flips the intended emotion. This plea is not joyous, however, as were most paeans, and the Auger (Paris in disguise), chastises them for their sorrow and responds with couplets in the form of what Offenbach labels a “Tyrolienne.” As discussed in chapter three, Offenbach used the Tyrolean waltz to signal trickery or deception of lower-class or unintelligence characters. This number agrees with that practice because Paris is using his disguise to trick Ménélas into giving him Héléne. Offenbach calls Paris’s couplets a “Tyrolienne avec Chœur (Tyrolean with Chorus),” though it is a polka rather than a waltz. It still contains the yodeling figures common to Offenbach’s other pieces in this genre, and has an oom-pah accompaniment common to a polka; both elements that are not normally found in operas. In Figure 4.10 below, Paris has a very active yodeling figure over the sparse chorus and instrumental accompaniment. The oom-pah figure is

evident in the accompaniment, and the chorus accents the stronger beats. Combined, these elements create a rustic feel to the piece that is out of place in ancient Greece, but reinforces the lower intelligence level of the people Paris is deceiving.

Figure 4.9: Offenbach, *La belle Hélène*, Act Three, No. 21b, mm. 34-41.

Conclusion

Overall, in this *opéra bouffe* Offenbach, Halévy, and Meilhac used both the classic method of *parodia*, defined by Aristotle in the fourth century BC as the comic imitation and transformation of an epic verse work, and *paratragoedia*, defined by Aristophanes as the parody of dramatic tragedy used for satiric purposes. Using the epic characters from Homer’s *Odyssey* to create new comic personas and an enhanced storyline places *La belle Hélène* directly in line with later definitions of *parodia*, especially the Russian Formalists who added intertextual ideas into the basic comic distortion of a text. Offenbach parodically refers to not only his own *Orphée* but also to works by Wagner, Verdi, and Rossini, ridiculing the former composer and merely parodying the latter two. These musical intertextual references relate directly to the scenes: the *Tannhäuser* fanfare announced the royal singing contest while Offenbach’s version announced the riddle contest, and Offenbach even named his ensemble work a “Patriotic Trio” just as Rossini titled his call to arms. Rossini’s trio inspired the people to fight to save their country, while Offenbach’s pleads with Ménélas to personally sacrifice himself to save his people. Informed opera-goers would grasp the connections, and the humor of the two scenes would be enhanced. The librettist’s nod to the other versions of Hélène’s birth mythology and to the other portions of the *Odyssey* also required specific knowledge to realize exactly which intertextual materials were

being referenced. This level of layered parody was extremely sophisticated, as Offenbach and his librettists had to understand their audiences to assure they would get these musical jokes.

Many elements of *paratragoedia* were also present, although not as difficult to recognize as the intertextual references. Offenbach's use of anachronistic contemporary references (such as the locomotive in the word game) aligns closely with the Russian Formalist view of destroying the illusion of reality because the audience is reminded that this is only a show, not a real depiction of ancient Sparta.⁴⁶ Bakhtin's ideas following the Russian Formalists are also germane to this work, especially the stress on comic elements of the work and burlesque carnivalistic parody that is satiric without becoming overly negative.⁴⁷ *La belle Hélène* at times uses very silly language and situations to comment satirically on Napoleon III and his court, but these scenes are staged in a comedic manner that never becomes brutal or angry. This ability to create satiric social commentary in a manner that all levels of society found humorous was one of the reason Offenbach's compositions were so successful. He poked fun at the upper and lower classes equally, so the people could not only laugh at the "other" class but also at themselves. This is evident in *La belle Hélène* in the manner that Ménélas and the other kings are depicted, the power of the supposed lower-class women that Oreste brings in to distract Calchas, and in keeping Paris disguised as a shepherd when he outsmarts the warriors in the word games. All classes are represented, and each has its own strengths and weaknesses exploited for comic purposes.

Offenbach was well-established as an *opérette* composer by the time he presented *La belle Hélène* at the Théâtre des Variétés. Building on the success of *Orphée aux enfers*, this parodic look at ancient Greece became one of his biggest successes and made a star out of the leading actress, Hortense Schneider. Through the use of intertextual references to the mythic story of both Paris's portion of the Trojan War and the story of Odysseus in general, Halévy and Meilhac crafted a libretto that also contained parodic contemporary references. Many of these references were specific to the workings of Napoleon III's court, but most were general enough to cover the workings of nobility in any country during any era, so the script has held up over the decades. Offenbach used parodic musical references not only to his own *Orphée* but to other

⁴⁶ Rose, 109.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 169.

contemporary composers such as Rossini and Wagner to enhance the humor in the composition. These references sometimes poked gentle fun at other popular operas, and sometimes were humorously scathing in their criticism of the works. Uses of parody in both the libretto and the score complemented each other and appealed to the knowledgeable opera patron in late nineteenth-century Paris.

Chapter 5

Germaine Tailleferre and Her Use of Parody

Early in her years at the Paris Conservatoire (1904-1915), Tailleferre was known for borrowing stylistic elements from other composers. She had reduced and transcribed (à la Liszt) some of Stravinsky's ballets for four-hand piano, and gave a similar treatment to other orchestral works.¹ These early transcriptions gave her a detailed knowledge of how other composers arranged elements in their works—similar to the manner in which J.S. Bach, Handel, and other composers had learned their craft. This allowed her to analyze the styles of each composer and she used these techniques to pay homage through parody to both contemporary and older composers in her pieces. From these early transcribed piano works and her own pieces for piano and harp, Tailleferre expanded her compositional output to include solo works for all orchestral instruments, chamber music, ballets, operas, incidental music, and film music.

As a member of *Les Six*, Tailleferre's music and collaborative projects were heard in the concert halls and salons of post-World War I Paris. After this artificially grouped circle of friends separated, she received commissions for compositions in many genres, including several pieces specifically written for broadcast on Radio France.² In this chapter, I will discuss her work as a parodist in multiple genres, her commissions for Radio France, and the ways in which she chose to stylistically parody various composers. An in-depth study of *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château* follows in chapter six, detailing how Tailleferre used specific stylistic elements from Offenbach's *opérettes* to create her brief, humorous opera.

Compositional Climate for Germaine Tailleferre

Early Life

Tailleferre struggled from early in her life to become a musician. Her mother, Marie-Désirée Taillefesse, was supportive and began her daughter's piano training at age four.³ She encouraged

¹ Robert Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 2-3.

² *Les Six* was the construct of Henri Collet's article in 1920 based on a suggestion from Jean Cocteau.

³ Germaine, her mother, and her sisters legally changed their surname to "Tailleferre" around 1900. "Taillefesse" literally translated to "buttocks cutter," so the new name that translated to "iron cutter" was a welcome

the five-year-old Germaine in the composition of her first opera, *Sur les lieux du malheur* (*At the Places of Misfortune*), which was never completed.⁴ Tailleferre's father Arthur, however, "was not sympathetic to his daughter's vocation, and equated her venture to that of street-walkers."⁵ After winning prizes for sight-reading and several other areas at the Paris Conservatoire, her father relented and was proud of her achievements, though he never supported Tailleferre financially.⁶ Tailleferre composed twelve short harp etudes for Caroline Tardieu, the Conservatoire's assistant professor of harp, while at the Conservatoire, and important later works for harp inspired by her early study of the instrument.⁷ These early harp pieces showed influences of Fauré, as did many of her early piano compositions.⁸ Although she did not know it at the time, her friendship with Caroline Tardieu would prove an important connection to Radio France in later years.

While studying at the Paris Conservatoire, Tailleferre met classmates Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud and Arthur Honegger. Milhaud became a close friend, and the pair collaborated on piano transcriptions and score study.⁹ Poulenc met Auric through a mutual piano teacher, and later was introduced to the other members of *Les Six*.¹⁰ Henri Cliquet-Pleyel was another member of the group's Conservatoire compositional class and although he influenced some of Tailleferre's pieces, he was never a member of *Les Six*.¹¹ Tailleferre was discovered when Erik Satie, the mentor of *Les Six*, heard her early piano duet *Jeux de plein air* (*Outdoor Games*, 1917) and immediately declared her his musical daughter.¹² This connection led to Tailleferre's inclusion in Les Nouveaux Jeunes (The New Young), a group of composers assembled by Satie. This group was comprised of several of her peers in Paris: Roland-Manuel, Charles Koechlin,

change. Robert Shapiro, "Germaine Tailleferre" in *Les Six: The French Composers and Their Mentors Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie*, ed. Robert Shapiro, (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2011), 451.

⁴ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 1-2.

⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid*, 2

⁷ Georges Hacquard, *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six*, (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1998), 252, 267.

⁸ Robert Shapiro, "Germaine Tailleferre" in *Les Six: The French Composers and Their Mentors Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie*, ed. Robert Shapiro, (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2011), 244-45.

⁹ *Ibid*, 245.

¹⁰ Robert Shapiro, "Les Six: Survey of an Avant-Garde Movement" in *Les Six: The French Composers and Their Mentors Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie*, ed. Robert Shapiro, (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2011), 40.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 38.

¹² Shapiro, "Germaine Tailleferre," 247.

Jean Wiéner, Marcelle Meyer, Albert Roussel, and her friends Auric, Durey, and Honegger, and later Milhaud and Poulenc.¹³ Although Louis Durey had studied music independently and not at the Conservatoire, he was later introduced to the group as was Frances Poulenc, also an independent scholar. Through this association Tailleferre was introduced to Poulenc and the author Jean Cocteau, who became as influential as Satie in the creation and mentoring of *Les Six*. Cocteau wrote *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* (*The Cock and the Harlequin*, 1918) partly as a description of the new anti-romantic and anti-impressionist style of music in which the group was composing, and the book became a manifesto for their movement.¹⁴ Partly at Cocteau's prompting, journalist Henri Collet wrote two articles for the journal *Comoedia* in January 1920 naming Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc, and Tailleferre as "Les Six Français."¹⁵ However, no common musical bond connected the group and the six seemed to be arbitrarily chosen, as Milhaud commented in 1927:

A lot of musicologists who were badly informed believed and even wrote that we had a common aesthetic. It was not the case at all. Our ages, our friendships, and our musical activities were at the origin of our union. But time showed very quickly that we had absolute differences in our trends. . . What makes an art full of life is the fact that it is based on diversity, fantasy, and imagination. Furthermore among us there were deep differences in race, musical education, and tastes.¹⁶

Prejudice

Despite these differences, her association with *Les Six* offered Tailleferre opportunities to have her compositions performed publicly on a regular basis, a luxury enjoyed by few female composers in the early twentieth century. Shapiro summed up the problem: "Tailleferre was required to fight against the traditional assumption that men only were capable of writing important and timeless musical works. Although women have been readily accepted as musical performers, they are often merely perceived as the glorified servants of music."¹⁷ Critics in the

¹³ Frédéric Robert, *Louis Durey: L'Ainé des "Six."* (Paris: Les éditeurs français réunis, 1968), 27-8
Robert Orledge, *Satie the Composer*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 250.

¹⁴ Shapiro, "Avant Guard," 45-6.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 52.

¹⁶ Darius Milhaud, "La Musique française depuis la guerre" in *Etudes* (Paris: Editions Claude Aveline, 1927), 17.

¹⁷ Shapiro, "Germaine Tailleferre," 261.

early twentieth century also showed this bias in their reviews of her works. After the performance of the orchestral arrangement of *Jeux de plein air* given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, one critic wrote,

After repeated beckoning from [the conductor, Tailleferre] left her place in the first balcony and allowed him to lead her out on the stage to take the applause. . .Seldom has a concert audience had a chance to see a pretty girl come forth as a composer. Not in the whole history of music can one encounter more than half-a-dozen women who have written works taken seriously by musicians.¹⁸

Even the headline was sexist, calling the then thirty-four-year-old Tailleferre a “girl composer.” Other reviews of the concert also judged it a success, although they used similarly biased language to describe her. Most of the other members of *Les Six* were supportive and appreciative of Tailleferre and her music, but they unfortunately added to this discriminatory perception.

Milhaud wrote:

Tailleferre is a delightful musician. . .She produces little, but each work is remarkably *mise au point* [well developed]. Her music has the great merit of being without pretension; it is most attractive because it is sincere. It is really the music of a young girl in the loveliest sense of the word.¹⁹

While not meaning to be malicious and intending to praise her music, Milhaud unconsciously added to the condescending attitudes about female composers by deeming her works “the music of a young girl.” Poulenc also intended to praise Tailleferre, but went further than Milhaud in demeaning her status:

How lovely she was in 1917. . .How sweet and gifted she was! She still is, but I sometimes regret that, through an excess of modesty, she was never able to exploit all the possibilities in herself as could, for example, someone like Marie Laurencin [a popular French Cubist painter], who knew how to extract the most from her feminine genius. Be that as it may, [Tailleferre] made a most charming and precious contribution to music and one that always delights me.²⁰

¹⁸ “Girl Composer at Symphony Concert: Mlle Tailleferre Hears Her Music Played,” *Boston Globe*, March 6, 1926.

¹⁹ Milhaud, 18.

²⁰ Francis Poulenc, *Entretiens avec Claude Rostand* (Paris: René Julliard, 1954), 42.

It is not clear what Poulenc meant by “feminine genius,” but Laurencin primarily painted female subjects and successfully and exclusively explored this genre.²¹ Using the painter as a model, Poulenc may have meant that Tailleferre should have only created works on feminine subjects, and not explored large forms if she wished to have been more successful. This remark also referred back to Cocteau’s 1920 statement that Tailleferre was the “Marie Laurencin for the ear,” and Satie deeming her “our Marie Laurencin” in his writings, linking her with the more well-known painter.²² Tailleferre dismissed these feminine pronouncements:

But what difference does it make? The essential thing is that it be music. I do not see any reason why I should not write what I feel. If it gives the impression of being feminine, that is fine. I was never tormented by explanations. I tried to do the best I could, but I never asked myself if it was feminine or not. If it is music, it is music.²³

In 1962, Tailleferre was asked by interviewer Martine Cadieu if she believed women had less compositional talent than men. Her answer indicated that she realized how fortunate she was to have been associated with *Les Six*:

No [I do not believe women have less talent than men]. I know several gifted young ladies, but terrible difficulties have remained in this field, one does not trust women, no one helps them. And then. . .the sentimental life of a woman, her home, her children, prevent the fulfillment of vocations. It is nothing new. . .[I was] tremendously lucky to have been adopted by [*Les Six*], I worked, lived, created in a marvelous ambiance.²⁴

When interviewed shortly before his death, Auric agreed with her assessment of women composing music, stating “I do not know what feminine music is. One would have to be a woman to understand. . .for me, there is music, and that is all.”²⁵ He was one of the few who thought of Tailleferre as simply a composer, not the demeaning and sexist term many peers and

²¹ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marie-Laurencin>, accessed October 10, 2016.

²² Jean Cocteau, *Carte Blanche* (Paris: Editions de la Sirène, 1920), 22, and Erik Satie, *Ecrits*, ed. Ornella Volta (3rd. Edition, Paris, Editions Champs Libre, 1990), 81.

²³ Laura Mitgang, “One of *Les Six* is Still at Work,” *New York Times*, May 23, 1982, 25 and 28.

²⁴ Martine Cadieu, “Musiciens d’aujourd’hui: Duo avec. . .Germaine Tailleferre,” *Nouvelles Littéraires*, March 15, 1962.

²⁵ Mitgang, 25.

reviewers used, “woman composer.” Tailleferre did not let these comments affect her compositional choices, and, as will be discussed in the following section, successfully composed works in many genres.

Compositional Oeuvre

Tailleferre’s primary instrument was the piano, so it is not surprising that many of her early works were composed for this instrument. It was also the instrument she was playing when Satie discovered her. Fifty-seven of her compositions were either initially penned for the piano or were adapted for the solo instrument. She also composed eight reductions and multi-movement pieces for piano four hands, twenty-four works for two pianos, and three organ pieces. One of her compositions for two pianos, *Jeux de plein air* (1917), was the piece she was playing when Satie declared her his “musical daughter.” These ninety-two keyboard works comprise the bulk of her compositional output and span her entire career.

As mentioned above, she also penned short etudes for harp. Tailleferre composed several concerti for solo wind and string instruments with orchestra, pieces for orchestra alone, band works, and chamber music for strings and winds. She especially turned to chamber composition after 1960, composing or adapting almost twenty pieces for solo instrument or chamber ensemble between this decade and her death in 1983. Her only work for symphonic band, *Suite- Divertimento* (1977), was composed during this period as a product of her friendship with Désiré Dondeyne. Dondeyne was the conductor of the Orchestre des Gardiens de la Paix, a French military symphonic band, and he collaborated with Tailleferre in creating band orchestrations of many of her orchestral pieces.

After leaving the Conservatoire, she began to compose ballets, most notably *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (*The Newlyweds on the Eiffel Tower*, 1921) with four of the other members of *Les Six* and *Le Marchand d’oiseaux* (*The Bird Seller*, 1923). Other ballets would follow, most for Rolf de Maré’s Ballet Suédois and one for Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes.²⁶ Her *Ballet des Parfumes* was extracted from her musical comedy *Parfums*, and she reduced most of her ballet

²⁶ Unfortunately, *La Nouvelle Cythère* was never produced because Diaghilev died before it could be staged. Tailleferre used music from the ballet in other compositions. Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 9-10.

scores for piano after their premieres. Later in her life she earned a living playing for dance studios, and these compositions may have been part of her portfolio.²⁷

Around 1930 Tailleferre began to compose incidental music for plays and film scores. As her career progressed, she composed scores for several documentaries, a few feature films, and scores for television and radio programs. She was not choosy in selecting whom she worked for, and several different directors requested her services. After returning to France from the United States following World War II, Tailleferre began a long and productive career writing commissioned works for Radio France. These came about through her friendship with Jean Tardieu, the son of her Conservatoire harp professor, who was the program director for Radio France.²⁸ Many of these programs were written expressly for Radio France, with music composed by Tailleferre. One of these commissions was her *Concerto pour flute, piano, et orchestra*, written for and premiered by Jean-Pierre Rampal. Its radio performance in 1953 was its only airing, and, according to Shapiro, the score has been lost.²⁹

Beginning in 1925, Tailleferre composed several pieces that incorporated voices. At least four employed orchestral accompaniment, and several were scored for voice and piano. As a pianist, she would often accompany vocal soloists in concert performing both her pieces and those by other composers.³⁰ In 1929 she collaborated with Jane Bathori, a mezzo-soprano who often sang works by the members of *Les Six*, on the song cycle *Six Chansons françaises*. The texts are adapted from seventeenth and eighteenth century poems and reflect a cynical view of love and relationships.³¹

Throughout her career Tailleferre also composed a cantata, multiple extended works for voice and orchestra, and eleven operas of varying lengths.³² This operatic output does not include her earliest unfinished opera that she composed at age five. Of her six full-length

²⁷ Shapiro, "Germaine Tailleferre," 273.

²⁸ Morgane Paquette, "Les commandes radiophoniques à Germaine Tailleferre," https://www.reseau-canope.fr/tailleferre/documents/pdf/08_Commandes_Radiophoniques_Tailleferre.pdf, accessed September 13, 2016.

²⁹ Many of Tailleferre's compositions are considered lost – she had a habit of giving away scores without keeping a copy, and several pre-World War II scores were purportedly burned by the German officers who used her home as a base. Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 21.

³⁰ Many instances of this were reported in contemporary newspaper concert announcements. Shapiro, "Germaine Tailleferre," 253.

³¹ Tailleferre divorced Ralph Barton around the time this cycle was composed, and her tumultuous relationship with him may have inspired the composition. Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 15.

³² Hacquard, 278-80.

operatic works only three were staged and four were either premiered or broadcast after their staging on Radio France. The overture to *Zoulaina* (1931), a three-act comic opera that was never performed, was extracted and performed on several orchestral concerts.³³ Her close relationship with Tardieu at Radio France led to the airing of these operas not long after their composition. Tailleferre's five short "pocket" operas were a 1955 commission from Tardieu intended only for broadcast on Radio France. This cycle, *Du style galant au style méchant* (*The galant style in wicked style*), included parodic takes on several French composers and operas. This cycle will be discussed later in this chapter, and a detailed analysis of the fourth opera in the cycle, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château* (*Mister Petitpois buys a Castle*), is presented in chapter six.

No composer creates pieces with the exact same characteristics but, as was shown in chapter three with Jacques Offenbach, there are often stylistic traits that run throughout their compositional catalogue. Tailleferre experimented with different compositional styles at different points of her career, but there were elements that can be traced from her earliest works to later pieces. In the following section, these style characteristics will be identified and discussed.

Style Characteristics

Les Six Styles

As a group, the members of *Les Six* were unified more by the styles they were against than a common style. Shapiro summed up this viewpoint:

[*Les Six*] shared a common mission: to create for themselves. . . a music to re-identify itself with its immutable aesthetic characteristics, which included their philosophical and practical rejection of Impressionism and Teutonicism. This nationalistic cause. . . was somehow generalized into an overall and parallel examination of the country's musical expression. A foundation, however, for the rejection of Wagner and French Impressionism was rooted in the *fin de siècle*. . . This association of young French musical iconoclasts also sought to eradicate the exalted or sterile in their own country's music, typified by the academic Romanticism of Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931) and particularly by the musical expression of the Wagnerian César Franck (1822-90).³⁴

³³ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 54.

³⁴ Shapiro, *Les Six*, "Introduction," 22-3.

Each member of *Les Six* went about this mission in their own way, creating their unique version of new French music. In an interview less than a year before her death, Tailleferre described her method of composition in this way:

First I use my head – what sounds, what form to give, how to do it. Next I look for a theme at the piano. If I find one, I begin to work, to write it, and from then on I use the piano a lot...if the theme comes, things usually happen very quickly. In concertos, though, one may find a musical idea that works very well for the slow movement...there is always one [movement] that is better than the others.³⁵

Her themes seemed to be influenced by the composers she knew and had studied. Tailleferre, Shapiro reports, did not completely reject Impressionism because she had studied with Maurice Ravel, and some of her works show both his and Debussy's influences.³⁶ She classified many of her own works as "neoclassical," which she defined in parodic terms. Scott Messing described neoclassicism in less than glowing terms, but his definition captures the parodic idea that Tailleferre seemed to reference. Messing states, "The invention of the terms neoclassicism and new classicism, whatever their semantic fineness, supplied a convenient code by which composers could put forward aesthetic ideas based upon a nostalgic evocation of a moribund style."³⁷ Older forms can be enlivened through their use in new music, and nearly forgotten styles brought back to life by creating new music based in these methodologies. Tailleferre's use of older forms and musical evocation of older composers fits this definition, and parody is also described by the term.

Use of Parody

Tailleferre periodically imitated other composers in her pieces from the beginning of her professional career. One of her successful Conservatoire-era compositions, the 1913 *Romance* for piano, was based on a theme by Fauré. She had studied his works in her classes and met the

³⁵ Laura Mitgang, "One of 'Les Six' Still at Work," *The New York Times*, May 23, 1982.

³⁶ Shapiro, *Les Six*, 25.

³⁷ Scott Messing, "Polemic as History: The Case of Neoclassicism" in *The Journal of Musicology*, Volume 9, 4 (Autumn, 1991), 492.

composer at a keyboard examination.³⁸ Many of her compositions from the 1920s also showed the influence of other composers. This was most apparent in her *Hommage à Debussy* (1920) for piano, a blatant imitation of his style as the title indicates, and the *Ballade pour piano et orchestra* (1920), which Shapiro lists as “derived from *Morceau symphonique* [by Alexandre Guilmant].”³⁹ Another work, the 1924 *Les Maîtres du Chant: Airs de Lully* was a realization of twelve figured bass airs by Lully. From 1925 to 1927 she composed more works for the *Les Maîtres du Chant* series, including the realizations of both French airs and works by Italian Baroque composers.⁴⁰ Her ability to realize the figured bass lines in stylistically appropriate renditions meant that she had a solid knowledge of the composers’ styles and was therefore able to replicate them, as will be discussed later in this chapter. This ability colored her original compositions, as she often created works in the styles of various composers.

For example, her two contributions to *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (“The Newlyweds of the Eiffel Tower,” 1921) were parodic in their imitation of nineteenth-century dance forms; the “Valse des dépêches” (Waltz of the Telegrams) and the “Quadrille.”⁴¹ Linda Hutcheon comes closest to defining the method of parody Tailleferre employs when she defines parody as “repetition with difference [that] need not also be comic.”⁴² Tailleferre is not imitating other composers or styles to ridicule them, but merely uses their “musical language” and older forms to create her own versions of the style. She would use this technique throughout her compositional career. These parodic techniques were what Tailleferre considered when classifying her music as “neoclassical,” because she emulated older forms and composers to create new pieces.

Her parodic influences expanded to other composers and styles as she began composing in other genres, including solo instrumental and vocal pieces, opera, and other stage works. Shapiro describes her music as “vastly innovative, [revealing] a constant originality. Well

³⁸ Tailleferre was so shaken by the exam that she perfectly played her Bach fugue transposed to another key. She did not realize her error until Fauré questioned her about it later. Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 4-5.

³⁹ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 37-38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 44-6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

⁴² Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, (Urbana [u.a.]: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2000), ff.

crafted, intriguing, melodious, substantive, sophisticated, and emotional.”⁴³ Tailleferre described her approach to composition by stating, “I do not have a great deal of respect for tradition. I write music because I enjoy it.”⁴⁴ These statements support Tailleferre’s penchant for creating new music based on the composers who preceded her because she was not afraid to be musically different. Tailleferre cited both Fauré and Stravinsky as influences on her mature style and she was also influenced by other composers she had studied. Some of these composers will be referenced in the following description of her style.

Tailleferre’s next large composition, the ballet *Le Marchand d’oiseau* (*The Bird Seller*, 1923), had been commissioned and performed by the Ballet Suédois. It was immediately labeled “feminist” by critics because the composer and most of the creative team were female.⁴⁵

When Tailleferre was asked about the composition of her ballet, she freely admitted that she deliberately alluded to Chopin in the “Waltz” and that the “Pavanne” parodies the *fête galante* style created by eighteenth-century painters. She did not quote any of Chopin’s melodies in the “Waltz” movement but instead evoked the sound of his music by using his stylistic language. This approach is seen in the use of triplet figures and the initial dotted quarter note followed by three eighth notes as seen below in figure 5.1. Additionally, the harmonic structure of the piece, the parallel chords in the left hand figure, and the use of tempo markings to create rubato are all characteristic of the older composer. Tailleferre’s use of rubato also evokes Chopin’s performance practice. The pastoral feel of the “Pavanne” is evident in Tailleferre’s use of the oboe as the principal melodic instrument (in the full scoring), the use of the Dorian mode, and the simple, folk-like sound of the opening melody as seen in figure 5.2, also below.

⁴³ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 261.

⁴⁴ Odette Pannetier, “Avec Germaine Tailleferre,” *Candide*, 19 November, 1931.

⁴⁵ This ballet did not have a feminist plot, and this designation and the demeaning sexist comments included in the reviews were a product of the era. Hamer, 115-16.

Mouv^t de Valse

presses **f**

Rall.

pp *rubato*

Figure 5.1: Germaine Tailleferre, *Le Marchand d'oiseau*, “Valse,” mm. 1-9.

Danse du Marchand d'Oiseaux.
PAVANE

p

p

Figure 5.2: Germaine Tailleferre, *Le Marchand d'oiseau*, “Pavane,” mm. 1-6.

Tailleferre discussed the ballet's composition in 1923:

[I wrote in this manner] to adapt scrupulously the musical text to the personality of my diverse characters, to cut for them a perfectly fitted musical theme, to design sometimes the parody of a Romantic waltz, even the Viennese ones; to amuse myself by alluding to certain schools, especially the one from the eighteenth century with its light, pompous, and flashy little ballets...I could have chosen just as well the Impressionists or the Nordics or the Italians: but really, didn't I have the right to find my innocent pleasure in these writing games?⁴⁶

This quotation indicates that Tailleferre used parody to fit musical styles to certain characters, a trait that musically mirrors Alfred Liede's 1966 definition of parody as "artistic imitation."⁴⁷

This affinity for linking styles to characters will be mentioned later in the chapter on *Petitpois*, as Tailleferre uses a quotation from an Offenbach love duet to introduce a newly-formed couple. Another link to Offenbach through waltz forms will also be discussed.

Debussy and Fauré had composed pieces inspired by *fête galante* paintings so, since she had been inspired by both composers, a movement that parodied this style would not be unexpected. Tailleferre also parodies another older genre in the "Pavanne."⁴⁸ Maurice Ravel and Fauré both composed pieces in this form, so the parody is multi-layered. Linda Hamer, in her writings on *Le Marchand d'oiseau*, suggests that the music for this movement not only uses the older dance form but also parodies the musical styles of Bach and Scarlatti. This, in Hamer's estimation, shows that Tailleferre did not rely on one style or technique but sampled from many, sometimes combining them.⁴⁹ Synthesis of genre is a sophisticated form of composition, and the ease that Tailleferre showed in creating works of this form speak to her level of talent.

Imitating styles and using older forms was a trait that continued throughout her compositional career. This feature of her style was encouraged by her friend Pablo Picasso, who "advised her not to 'simply repeat that "little Germaine Tailleferre act" every morning. Force yourself to find something different so as to constantly renew yourself; avoid using the "recipes"

⁴⁶ Germaine Tailleferre, "Quelques mots de l'une des Six," *L'Intransigeant*, June 3, 1923.

⁴⁷ Rose, 282.

⁴⁸ A pavan is a Renaissance processional dance form characterized by a slow duple meter.

⁴⁹ Hamer, "Germaine Tailleferre and Hélène Perdriat's *Le Marchand d'oiseaux* (1923): French feminist ballet?," *Studies in Musical Theatre*, vol. 4, 1, 118.

that you have already found.”⁵⁰ Picasso was well-known for his many style periods, and Tailleferre took his advice to heart as she was not afraid to experiment with diverse styles. Shapiro commented, “[before receiving Picasso’s advice] it [was] apparent that. . .[she] had already been approaching musical creation in such a manner; Picasso’s suggestion could have only reinforced her confidence in her ability to vary, or transform, her musical repertoire effectively and at will.”⁵¹

Igor Stravinsky inspired one of her excursions into a new style. In 1957, shortly after Stravinsky began composing serial pieces, Tailleferre decided to try her hand at serial composition. She composed two works in this style: her relatively brief *Sonate pour clarinette seule* and an opera. This opera was titled *La petite Sirène* (The Little Mermaid, 1957) and was based on the Hans Christian Anderson tale *Den lille havfrue*. Tailleferre described her foray into serialist techniques to a friend in this way: “Dodecaphonic and concrète music, which attract me, represent such work that I would not have the strength to undertake it. It would be as if I would want to express myself in Chinese! It is a little late to learn.”⁵² Her *Sonate pour clarinette seule* contains three short movements that resemble the form Stravinsky used in his serialist *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo*. Tailleferre’s solo, like Stravinsky’s, has a slight jazz feel in the first and third movements that is reminiscent of the jazz-influenced works of Stravinsky and Leonard Bernstein, among others.⁵³ Compositional elements Tailleferre borrowed from these two composers include motivic repetition in each movement as seen in figure 5.3, and the use of “blue notes” in the melody as seen in figure 5.4.



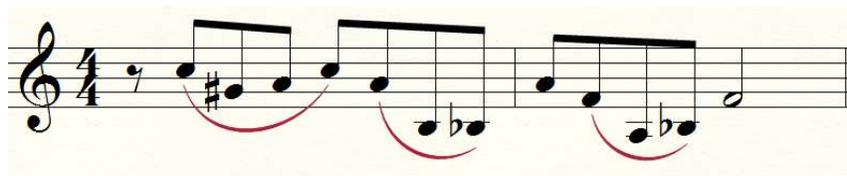


Figure 5.4: Example of a phrase featuring blue notes. Germaine Tailleferre *Sonata pour clarinette seule*, Allegro tranquillo, m. 7-8.

While she does not change meter as often as Stravinsky in the *Three Pieces* or Bernstein in his Clarinet Sonata, she still creates an arhythmic feel consistent with the other composers' works by continuing patterns over bar lines and adding rests on strong beats, as seen in figure 5.5.

Tailleferre's Sonata contains a cadenza in the middle of the third movement, a feature not found in the other two solos. This could be a neoclassical nod to the sonatas of composers like Mozart, who included cadenzas in their compositions (see figure 5.6).⁵⁴ Tailleferre did not completely abandon tonality in this solo, as all three movements maintain a sense of tonal line while using serialist techniques. Both the *Sonate pour clarinette seule* and *La petite Sirène* are still representative of her overall style in that she composed tuneful melodies, then repeated and developed them throughout the individual movements and pieces. In a 1962 interview, Tailleferre discussed her venture into other styles; "I never locked myself into a system, I despise [using a set style]. [I only used polytonality] when my instinct dictated the choice."⁵⁵ The same comment might apply to serialism, as her Clarinet Sonata and one opera were her only works specifically using this technique.

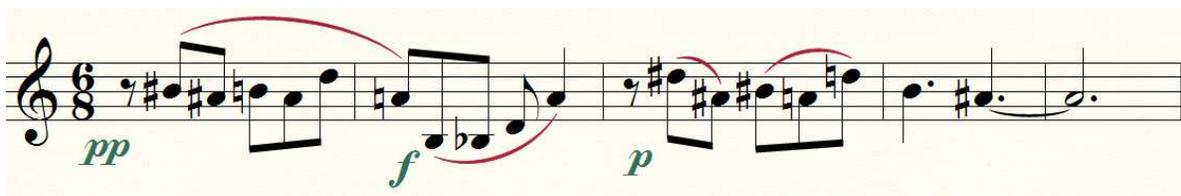


Figure 5.5: Example of continuing patterns over bar lines and adding rests on strong beats. Germaine Tailleferre, *Sonata pour clarinette seule*, Andantino espressivo, m. 31-5.

⁵⁴ In 1936 she had written some cadenzas for two piano concerti by Mozart and Haydn, so this practice would have been a normal parody of their Sonata forms.

⁵⁵ Martine Cadieu, "Musiciens d'aujourd'hui: Duo avec. . . Germaine Tailleferre," *Nouvelles Littéraires*, March 15, 1962.



Figure 5.6: Cadenza and surrounding measures. Germaine Tailleferre *Sonata pour clarinette seule*, Allegro brioso, m. 8-13.

Tailleferre’s serialist opera *La petite Sirène* was a Radio France commission composed as a collaboration with the surrealist poet Philippe Soupault, who supplied the libretto. Tailleferre used interesting orchestration in this work as each of the three acts contains a different set of instruments. Act one uses strings and the second act adds the harp, timbale, and an ondes Martenot.⁵⁶ The third act is scored for oboe, clarinet, two trombones, and percussion.⁵⁷ According to Shapiro, the opera has never been staged but was premiered in a broadcast on Radio France.⁵⁸ Because it received limited airplay, Tailleferre self-borrowed some tunes from the opera to create other compositions. One notable piece based on the opera is her *Choral, pour trompette et piano* (1973). Shapiro surmised that her prime motivation was “the realization that compelling musical ideas which were not being exposed in their original settings would be lost

⁵⁶ This instrument was used by Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Olivier Messiaen in their works, and was a popular sound to include in French compositions of the 1930s.

⁵⁷ Paquette. *Le premier acte fait appel à un ensemble à cordes, avec trois instruments par pupitre. Le deuxième acte convie également les cordes: contrebasse, harpe, timbale et ondes Martenot. Enfin, dans le troisième acte. . .utilisés le hautbois, la clarinette, deux trombones et des percussions: vibraphone, célesta, tam-tam, grosse caisse et cymbal.*

⁵⁸ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 23.

to the world, unless set in a more accessible context.”⁵⁹ Offenbach also seemed to have realized this fact, as he also borrowed from his own *opérettes* and other works to create new compositions. His “Chanson de Fortunio” melody originally came from incidental music he had composed for a failed play. Tailleferre also re-set music from more successful works. Shapiro cites her *Sonata pour harpe* (1953), now a standard in the harp repertoire, as the source material for her *Concerto pour chant et orchestra* (1953) and the last major work she composed, the *Concerto de la fidélité* (1981) for high voice and orchestra.⁶⁰ Self-borrowing was not a new parodic technique, as composers such as J.S. Bach and G.F. Handel were well-known for re-using melodies from their own works. Tailleferre borrowed from her early works to create later compositions presumably for the reason Shapiro presented – she wanted the melodies she thought were her best to receive a wider hearing and set them in genre that were more consistently performed.⁶¹

Other compositions showed Tailleferre’s penchant for parodying the style of other composers. In his bio-bibliography of the composer, Shapiro believes that “Tailleferre’s music, especially during [the 1910s and early 1920s], reflects the language of the masters she revered, her French forefathers, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Louis Couperin, Jean-Baptiste Lully, and the Italians Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti and [it] made no apologies for such affinities.”⁶² These affinities are reflected in the titles of some pieces such as the piano quartet *Fantaisie sur un thème donné de G. Caussade* (1912) and the piano solo *Hommage à Debussy* (1920), for example.⁶³ Shapiro also cites Tailleferre’s *Ballade pour piano et orchestra* as having an “orchestral palette [that] was unhesitatingly Ravelian.”⁶⁴ Later, in 1936, Tailleferre wrote the first of two versions of her only cantata, the *Cantate du Narcisse*, with a text by Paul Valéry based on his poem *Narcisse*. This initial version was composed in the style of Christoph Willibald Gluck

⁵⁹ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 24.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, *Bio-Bibliography*, 24.

⁶¹ This practice was not unusual. Aaron Copland, for example, use his *Fanfare for the Common Man* as a basis for the fourth movement of his *Symphony #3*. Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 412.

⁶² Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 9.

⁶³ Georges Caussade taught counterpoint to Tailleferre, Milhaud, Honegger, and Auric at the Paris Conservatoire. She won the prize for counterpoint in 1913 for developing a theme by Fauré. Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

and is considered neoclassical. In a review of a radio performance of the work in 1949, one critic described the cantata as:

valued as much for the inspiration of the poet as for that of the musician. The whole beginning of the score is a delight, from the prelude, calm and transparent as the water in which the handsome adolescent looks at himself, up to the recitative of the nymphs declaring their desire. The long soliloquy of Narcissus is treated in larger slices, with a note of modernism or, if one prefers it, of neoclassicism, which show the originality of expression in which the delicate, feminine composer of the Group of Six revels.⁶⁵

The critic continued, saying that the music “went to the source of our [French] 18th century music and even to the end of the 17th century. She has combined the finest pastiche of Rameau and of Campra, with a touch of *Gluckisme* which intervenes at the end.”⁶⁶ These comments reinforce the idea that Tailleferre was consciously emulating other composers, and was skilled at this form of imitative parody.

According to Shapiro, a second version of the cantata was purportedly composed that contained strictly impressionist elements. He states, “There are two distinct musical versions of the cantata, the initial, neo-Classical one...and a version that Tailleferre would correct some years later, in a somewhat impressionistic mode.”⁶⁷ This is the only mention of the revision I have found, but it would not be surprising to discover that she had re-written parts of the score in the impressionist style, as she sometimes composed in the styles of Debussy and Ravel.

⁶⁵ *L'œuvre, dira un critique, vaut autant par l'inspiration du poète que par celle du musicien. Tout le début de la partition est un délice, depuis le prélude, calme et transparent comme l'eau où se mire le bel adolescent, jusqu'au récit des nymphes avouant leur désir. Le long soliloque du Narcisse est traité en tranches plus larges, avec une note de modernisme ou, si l'on préfère, de néoclassicisme, qui accuse l'originalité d'expression où se délecte le délicat compositeur féminin du Groupe des Six.* Haquard, 130, and Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 157-8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 158. It is not clear which version of the cantata this critic reviewed, although Shapiro reported that the revisions occurred around 1943.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 18.

Radio Commissions

First Commissions

Tailleferre's music had intermittently been broadcast on Radio France from the mid-1940s when her friend Jean Tardieu began assisting with programming for Radio France. Tardieu commissioned Tailleferre to compose incidental music for radio plays, background music for documentaries, and original works for broadcast. She had been composing film scores since the mid-1930s, and these works complemented her work in radio. One of the first commissions she received was to compose a setting of Georges Hugnet's poem *Ici la voix* ("Here is the Voice," 1954) for a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Paris.⁶⁸ Not long after this commission, Tardieu asked Tailleferre to compose a set of *opéras de poche* (pocket operas), with libretti by her niece, Denise Centore. Tailleferre had collaborated with Centore earlier in 1955 on the chanson "La Rue Chagrin" ("Grief Street"). The operatic cycle, titled *Du style galant au style méchant* ("From the Galant Style to the Mischievous Style," 1955), originally consisted of five operas, each emulating a particular style or composer of French opera. Each opera in the cycle was to be about twenty minutes long, use a chamber orchestra, and have casts of five to seven characters. Centore summed up the commission thus:

One imagines scenarios and comical lyrics reminiscent of the classical operas of Rameau (*The Daughter of the Opera*), the Romantic operas of Boieldieu or Auber (*The Beautiful Ambitious One*), realistic opera in the style of Bruneau or Charpentier with a boiled-down "slice of life" libretto worthy of Zola (*Unfortunate Eugenie*), and also an operetta in the style of Offenbach (*Mr. Petitpois Buys a Castle*).⁶⁹

A fifth opera, *Une Rouille à l'arsenic* (A Bottle of Arsenic) completed the cycle; it parodied popular chansons and was performed with the other four operas at their premiere. The score has

⁶⁸ Hacquard, 171.

⁶⁹ "On imaginera des scénarios et des lyrics cocasses rappelant l'opéra classique à la Rameau (*La Fille d'Opéra*), l'opéra romantique de Boieldieu ou d'Auber (*Le Bel Ambitieux*), l'opéra réaliste à la Bruneau ou Charpentier et l'on mitonnera un livret « tranche-de-vie » digne de Zola (*La pauvre Eugénie*), et également l'opérette à la mode d'Offenbach (*Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*)." George Hacquard, 176.

since been lost, and only two airs are extant.⁷⁰ Judging from her descriptions of these operas, Centore aimed to replicate the textual style of the older *libretti* and Tailleferre's score was to musically evoke the style of the selected composers. These operas were consistent with her earliest stylistic tendencies – filtering other composer's characteristics through her own music. The cycle will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Tailleferre continued to compose music for broadcast on Radio France throughout the remainder of her career. Some of these works included a set of nine French folk songs for voice and instrumental ensemble, art songs on poems by French poets Claude Marny and Margo Lion, and a song cycle using poems of Marthe Lacloche entitled *Paris sentimental*.⁷¹ Her serialist opera *La Petite Sirène* was broadcast on the station, as was *Dolorès*, an *opérette* composed in 1950. Two works were broadcast in 1959: a one-act radio play entitled *Les Mémoires d'une bergère* that was a collaboration with Philippe Jullian, and the chamber opera *Le Maître*, on a libretto by Eugène Ionesco. Shapiro describes the score to *Le Maître*, as “a searing, ambiguous musical language that effectively reflects the angst of [the] libretto.”⁷² This composition does not seem to parody any specific composer, but adds to the number of styles Tailleferre experimented with during her career. Her final commission for Radio France was composed in 1982, not long before her death. She was asked to compose a concerto for soprano and orchestra in the same style of the concerti she had written in the 1950s. As the work was created in her earlier style and form that she had used, she was parodying herself. Tailleferre entitled it *Concerto de la fidélité*, and it was well-received by the press.⁷³ Tailleferre commented on her many commissions in a 1982 interview with Laura Mitgang, saying “I have really gotten the better of interviewers who ask me, ‘Why do you write music?’ ‘For money!’ I said...each time I received a commission, whatever it was, I was glad to have earned a little bit more money...one has to live. I continue to support myself through my profession.”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ These two airs are a waltz dedicated to Germaine Montero titled *Chanson de Paulo la Gagneuse*, and the popular romance *La Gagneuse*. They are housed at the Radio France library. Morgan Paquette, “Les commandes radiophoniques à Germaine Tailleferre,” https://www.resean-canope.fr/tailleferre/documents/pdf/08_Commandes_Radiophoniques_Tailleferre.pdf.

⁷¹ Shapiro, *Bio-Bibliography*, 22-3.

⁷² *Ibid*, 23.

⁷³ Paquette.

⁷⁴ Mitgang.

Du style galant au style méchant

Given her talent for emulating other composer's styles, it was not surprising that Tailleferre based her opera cycle on other composers of French opera. In addition to Centore's description of the cycle (cited above), Tailleferre stated,

[I have composed for the radio before,] but I found it much more fun to write my *opéras-bouffes Du style galant au style méchant*: a faux 18th century [piece], a faux romantic [piece], a faux Offenbach [piece] – the most successful, I think, of all these “in the manner of” [works]—and a faux naturalistic [piece] with, finally, a police drama burned by arsenic.⁷⁵

In this quotation, Tailleferre references in order *La fille d'opéra (The Girl of the Opera)*, *Le bel ambitieux (The Ambitious One)*, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château (Mr. Petitpois Buys a Castle)*, and *La pauvre Eugénie (Poor Eugénie)*. Having staged *Monsieur Petitpois* as part of this dissertation project, I am struck that Tailleferre felt it was the best work in the cycle. It is indeed a finely crafted work that was very well received by the audience.

Certain parameters were followed in structuring the cycle. None of the operas are longer than twenty-five minutes, the casts range from five to seven characters, and the accompaniment is limited to a chamber orchestra of fifteen to twenty players. These parameters closely resemble the restrictions Offenbach placed on the compositional contest he sponsored for young opera composers, described in chapter three.⁷⁶ It is not known if Tailleferre and Centore consciously decided to parody Offenbach in this way or if the similarities were a coincidence, but the parallels are striking all the same.

Each opera in the cycle was based on different composers or styles of French opera spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the following section will briefly discuss the similarities and differences between the style being referenced and the parodies by Tailleferre and Centore.

⁷⁵ “Mais je me suis bien plus amusée encore à écrire mes opéras-bouffes *Du style galant au style méchant*; un faux 18th siècle, un faux romantique, un faux Offenbach - le plus réussi, je crois, de tous ces "à la manière de" -, et un faux naturaliste avec, pour finir, un policier brûlé à l'arsenic.” Germaine Tailleferre, *Mémoires à l'emporte-pièce*, *Revue internationale de musique française*, 19 (Paris:Champion-Slatkine, February 1986), 76.

⁷⁶ These parameters included a cast of four singing characters, an orchestra of less than thirty, and a running time of forty-five minutes or less.

The composer and librettist stated that *La fille d'opéra* was composed in the style of Rameau's operas. The first characteristic of the work that reflects Rameau is the eight-measure-long overture that acts as a slow prologue to the much faster opening duet. This very short, slow *ouverture* also contains the dotted rhythms typical of the slow openings of French overtures, as seen in figure 5.7. Tailleferre intersperses aria and recitative without breaks in the same manner Rameau connected these sections. Although there is some spoken dialogue in *La fille*, it is minimal and most of the action occurs through the arias and ensemble numbers. There is only one aria, "Forlane," sung by the titular character. It consists of three couplets, which was a form in which Rameau composed. Tailleferre also stays close to the composer's style by avoiding excessive coloratura, a criticism of Italian opera during Rameau's era. Noticeably missing from Tailleferre's work are the dance forms Rameau interspersed throughout his operas. No reason is given for this omission; Tailleferre may have thought that dance numbers in a radio opera would take valuable time from the plot, but their absence is a noticeable departure from Rameau's style.



Figure 5.7: Germaine Tailleferre, Overture to *La fille d'opéra*.

Le bel ambitieux is based on the *grand opéra* styles of Boieldieu, Auber, and Rossini. Tailleferre's work is closer to the *opéras comiques* composed by these men, as there are extensive sections of spoken dialogue in *Le bel* that are similar to sections of Boieldieu's *La dame blanche* (1825) and Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (1830). She also parodies the many duets, trios, and ensemble numbers all three older composers were known for placing in their operas. The two short arias in *Le bel* are in couplet form and feature lyric melodies with florid accompaniments, which also parodies the overall style of these works. As Tailleferre was limited to a small cast, none of the grand ensemble numbers are present in her *opérette*, although these were a staple of *grand opéras*.

Third in Tailleferre's cycle is the "slice of life" opera *La pauvre Eugénie*, based on the operas of Gustave Charpentier and the novels of Emile Zola. In her preface to the score, Morgane Paquette calls the work "the musical equivalent of Zola's *Rougon-Macquart*," linking Eugénie to the title character of the Zola novel.⁷⁷ Aspects of the plot are lifted from the first two acts of Charpentier's *Louise*, in which the title character works in a dress shop and, in the end, runs off with her lover. Tailleferre's sparse score closely reflects Charpentier's methods of composition used in *Louise*. Instead of individual scenes or numbers Tailleferre's work is divided into five *tranches de vie* (slices of life) and a final chorus. Also, Tailleferre does not include an overture, merely composing a slow, dramatic ten-bar introduction to the first exchange of sung dialogue. Charpentier did not include an overture to his most popular opera, *Louise*, but intended for the opening prelude to segue into the first scene in much the same manner. Tailleferre's chromatic harmonies and text-setting are also adapted from Charpentier's work.

Tailleferre's fourth opera, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, is analyzed in detail in chapter six so will not be discussed here. The final lost opera, *Une Rouille à l'arsenic*, also will not be discussed here as not enough of it is extant to make a comparison to the popular chansons on which it is based.

Conclusion

Germaine Tailleferre created a compositional career built on the re-imagining of older forms and the styles of other composers. Beginning with her earliest piano and harp works, Tailleferre showed an innate ability to creatively adapt the stylistic traits of many different composers through her compositions. She parodied works by Debussy, Ravel, Lully, and even briefly ventured into serialism. Tailleferre's skill in parodying these styles was shown to great advantage in her 1955 radio opera cycle *Du style galant au style méchant*. This work showcases her skills of parodying four very different styles of French opera from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

⁷⁷ "C'est le pendant musical des Rougon-Macquart de Zola." Morgane Paquette, preface to Germaine Tailleferre's *Four Opéras Bouffés*, vol. 2, (Paris: Gérard Billaudot, 2012), 2-3. *Les Rougon-Macquart* is a cycle of twenty novels written by Zola tracing the lineage of the three children of Adelaïde Fouque, her husband Rougon, and her lover Macquart.

Chapter 6

Parodic Strategies in *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*:

A Detailed Overview

In the spring of 1942 Germaine Tailleferre and her daughter Françoise moved to the United States to escape the German occupation of France.¹ During this self-imposed exile she and her daughter lived outside of Philadelphia near Swarthmore College, and she composed only one work, an a capella “Ave Maria” for the college’s woman’s choir.² After her return to France in 1946, Tailleferre resumed composing; during the 1950s alone, she wrote more than fifty works, including operas, film scores, ballets, and instrumental music. This decade marked the beginning of her compositional relationship with Radio France as many of her works were aired soon after their premieres or first heard on the network. Tailleferre’s tie to Radio France actually emerged from connections that she had made during her years at the Paris Conservatoire, through Caroline Luigini-Tardieu, who had been Tailleferre’s harp professor.³ During those early years Tailleferre became friends with Caroline’s son, Jean Tardieu, who later became the music director of the state-run network Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (RTF). Another link to the RTF was more personal because Françoise’s first husband, Jean-Luc de Rudder, also worked with Jean Tardieu at the network. These relationships and the commissions that resulted helped introduce Tailleferre’s music to the French radio public. At the beginning of the 1950s, Tardieu asked Tailleferre to compose works directly for the radio, including operas, scores for radio plays, and her 1953 Concertino for Flute, Piano and String Orchestra written for and premiered by Jean-Pierre Rampal.⁴ This collaboration between Tailleferre and Radio France led Tardieu to commission a set of five *opéra-bouffes* in 1955. These operas were to be short radio productions, each lasting around twenty minutes, requiring seven or fewer singers, and a chamber orchestra. The libretti for these operas were written by Tailleferre’s niece, Denise Centore. Georges

¹ A more detailed description of Tailleferre’s exile can be found in Robert Shapiro’s essay on her life. Robert Shapiro, *Les Six: The French Composers and Their Mentors Jean Cocteau and Erik Satie*, (London: Peter Owen, 2011), 265.

² Shapiro, *Les Six*, 265.

³ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁴ Robert Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography*, (London: Greenwood Press, 1994), 21.

Hacquard relates in his biography of Tailleferre that Centore was “seduced by the challenge of parody.”⁵ This led Tailleferre to make each segment of the opera cycle a parody.

Each composition in the cycle is a parodic take on either a specific French operatic composer or a style of French opera, as detailed in chapter five. Only four of the operas are extant: the score for the fifth, *Une rouille l’arsenic*, composed “in the style of popular chansons” has been lost.⁶ Only two of the numbers from this lost opera are extant and the manuscripts of these pieces are preserved in the Radio France library.⁷

Chronologically, the five operas trace the history of French opera in miniature. The first, *The Daughter of the Opera*, is based on the operas of Jean-Philippe Rameau. Tailleferre structured this piece in a similar manner to the old master, including his method of setting French to recitative that reflected the natural rhythm of the language. The second, *The Beautiful Ambitions One*, reflects the ideals of Romanic era French operas by François-Adrien Boieldieu and Daniel François Esprit Auber by including florid melodies in duets and an aria. *Unfortunate Eugenie* incorporates a realistic plot in the spirit of Gustave Charpentier, even making the heroine a seamstress like his *Louise*.

The fourth opera of the cycle, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, parodies the *opérettes* of Jacques Offenbach. As described in Chapter Three, Offenbach was himself a parodist, so emulating his style could have proven a challenge for Tailleferre and Centore. This challenge comes from Offenbach’s broad compositional range as he was able to mold his pieces to match his target’s characteristics. Tailleferre chose to use the overall structure of the *opérette*, focusing on the broad form he used for nearly all of his stage works. The other three extant operas were based on composers who also wrote parody, but not to the extent of Offenbach.

⁵ “Denise est séduite par le défi de la parodie.” Georges Hacquard, *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six* (Paris: Editions L’Hartmann, 1998), 176.

⁶ “dans le style des chansons populaires.” Tailleferre spoke of all five operas in a radio interview she gave June 15, 1955, but only four were performed at the radio premiere on December 28, 1955. These notes are one of only a few mentions of the fifth composition by Tailleferre. Germaine Tailleferre, personal notes for a radio interview, March 10, 1955, Harry Ransom Center collection, University of Texas at Austin.

⁷ These chansons are “a popular-style romance (*La Gagneuse*) and a waltz dedicated to Germaine Montero (*Chanson de Paulo la Bafouille*).” “*Une romance populaire (La Gagneuse) et une valse dédiée à Germaine Montero (Chanson de Paulo la Bafouille)*.” Morgane Paquette, “Les commandes radiophoniques à Germaine Tailleferre,” https://www.reseau-canope.fr/tailleferre/documents/pdf/08_Commandes_Radiophoniques_Tailleferre.pdf, accessed September 13, 2016.

Petitpois's title page lists the dedication "à Madame Agathe Mella." Mella (1909-2003), who also went by the first name Nathalie, was an author, lyricist, and also Radio France's Director of Programming for the Paris-Inter station, in whose studios Tailleferre's operas were performed.⁸ When Mella assumed the directorship of this station, she "sought a formula eclectic enough to satisfy the French audience of Paris-Inter, as much as an international audience."⁹ Tailleferre dedicated this composition to her in honor of her work at the station and in restructuring French radio.¹⁰ In this opera, finding the elements that define Offenbach's *opérettes* and re-working them in her own manner give *Monsieur Petitpois* its style, an unmistakably Offenbachian style, filtered through Tailleferre's voice.

Performance History

The premiere of *Du style galant au style méchant* aired on Radio France December 28, 1955. The orchestra of the RTF provided accompaniment, and the singers were Denise Benoît, Claudine Collart, Renée Doria, Pierre Germain, René Hérent, and Lucien Lovano.¹¹ It has not received much airtime since its premiere, and in 2011 Robert Shapiro surmised this reason;

That a revival of [the operas] has never materialized is due not only to a simple ignorance of their existence but also to the fact that the operas invoke a bygone stylistic era and that such period evocations are often considered lightweight or pretentious. The *opéras bouffes*, however, have been variously occasionally [*sic*] rebroadcast by Radio-France during the ensuing decades and will not escape the next revival of such archaic but compelling musical fodder.¹²

⁸ "Directrice des programmes de Paris-Inter." "Paris-Inter" was the general branch of French radio after WWII and later merged with the RTF. "Radio France" refers to the network of stations that absorbed the Paris-Inter and other stations. http://data.bnf.fr/13804606/agathe_mella/, accessed September 18, 2016.

⁹ "Les Cahiers d'Histoire de la Radiodiffusion: Année radiophonique 1953," 77, July-September 2003, 60

¹⁰ <http://www.telesatellite.com/actu/tp.php?tp=7275>, accessed September 18, 2016. Only the last two operas in the cycle contain dedications. *La Pauvre Eugénie* is dedicated to the Belgian composer Paul Gilson.

¹¹ "La série sera diffusée avec succès le 28 décembre 1955, l'orchestre étant celui de la RTF avec le concours en solistes de Denise Benoît, Claudine Collart, Renée Doria, Pierre Germain, René Hérent, Lucien Lovano." Hacquard, 177. The listing in the Gérard Billaudot December 1996 Catalogue of Tailleferre's works lists the premiere cast as: Claudine Collart, Freda Betti, Denise Benoît, Lucien Lovano, René Hérent, René Soria, Pierre Germain, and Pierre Saugey. This book also lists Marc Vaubourgoin as the director. http://www.billaudot.com/_pdf/composers/tailleferrecatalogue.pdf, 11.

¹² Shapiro, 269.

At the time of his writing, he was not wrong. However, in the few years since his book was published, the works have been revived in multiple fashions. From 2016 to 2018 French students taking the music portion of the Bac (*baccalauréat*) have the option to write an essay about the operas, making more young musicians aware of the shows.¹³ A concert version of the four extant operas was performed in Limoges, France, in 2014. These four operas were adapted to the stage by the Opéra de Limoges in November 2014. This production combined scenes from all four extant *opéras* and altered parts of the scripts and plot lines.¹⁴ This performance was conducted by Christophe Rousset and directed by Marie-Ève Signeyrole. The roles in the four operas were divided between Luc Bertin-Hugault, Dominique Coté, Antoinette Dennefeld, Aaron Ferguson, Henri Pauliat, Jean-Michel Richer, and Magali Arnault Stanczak, with additional actors and dancers providing background characters. An adaptation of *Le belle ambitieux* was also performed in Yvetot, France, in January 2016 by the Conservatoire de Musique d'Yvetot under the direction of Didier Beloeil. And, on February 11, 2016, as part of this dissertation project, I directed the American premiere of *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château* at the University of Kansas. The orchestra was conducted by Raffaele Cipriano and the singers were (in alphabetical order) Alexis Alfaro (Oreste), Amelia Lawson (Héloïse), Alan Martin (M. Petitpois), Kelli Van Meter (Cunégonde), Anthony Rohr (Adelestan de la Bombardière), Dennis Ryan (Le Duc de la Bombardière), and Steve Scott (Notaire). In addition to this staging, the original conditions of the opera's premiere were recreated in a radio performance broadcast by Kansas Public Radio on February 9, 2016. To date, no other productions are known of this opera or of the cycle.

Monsieur Petitpois achète un château Synopsis

Monsieur Petitpois opens in the great room of a run-down castle where the owner, the Duc, is discussing with his Notaire terms for selling the property. Also in the room is the old nanny, Cunégonde, who raised the Duc's son. She is hard of hearing, and uninterested in the Duc's plans. The Notaire assures the Duc that the Petitpois family, newly rich from the invention of the

¹³ The Bac is the academic qualification exam which French students take at the end of high school.

¹⁴ A transcript of the script is available at the website for the production, though the changes are not indicated in this document.

moustachette, will arrive soon and purchase the old castle. Adelestan, the Duc's son, returns from the military, boasting of his exploits on and off the battlefield. He has seen a beautiful girl at the train station, and fallen in love without knowing her name or if he will ever see her again. Adelestan mocks the two men with her, not knowing that he has just run into the Petitpois family.

Monsieur Petitpois arrives at the castle with his nephew, Oreste, and his daughter, Héloïse. Adelestan immediately recognizes the beautiful girl he saw at the train station, and they begin to flirt with each other. Petitpois explains his wonderful invention, with the help of his nephew. The Duc, Notaire, and Cunégonde realize that Adelestan and Héloïse are interested in each other, a fact that Oreste, Héloïse's fiancé, does not yet notice. Cunégonde and the Notaire warn Adelestan to be careful while the Duc distracts Petitpois and Oreste by showing off portraits of his ancestors. Petitpois asks to see the castle before he signs the papers, so everyone except Adelestan and Héloïse departs on a tour. Left alone in a romantically dark corner of the garden, the young couple confess their love for each other and share their first kiss. Melodramatically, Oreste chooses that moment to return, and catches them in each other's arms. He calls everyone back, angry at what he has stumbled upon.

Everyone realizes that this is a problem not only for the couple and Oreste, but that it might stop the sale of the castle. Name-calling ensues, and the insulted Adelestan challenges Oreste to a duel. Oreste did not expect the soldier to take the insults seriously, and is visibly shaken as the Duc explains the traditional rules of dueling in the la Bombardière household. All this is too much for Héloïse, and she daintily faints. Now defending both his and Héloïse's honor, Adelestan and the Duc sing their family war cry, causing Oreste further panic. Not wanting to see violence disrupt the sale of the property, the Notaire comes up with a solution: if Petitpois buys the castle, his daughter becomes a duchess by right of title and is free to marry Adelestan. Everyone agrees that this is a good solution, because, as the Duc comments, "we must uphold Old France!"

Social Satire

Tailleferre takes a more general approach to satirizing French life in *Petitpois* than Offenbach did in many of his compositions. Offenbach often specified targets such as the Second Empire

and Napoleon III, as in *La belle Hélène* (discussed in chapter 4), but took a more general approach to the upper classes in works such as *Dragonette*. Tailleferre chose to broadly parody French nobility, using characters similar to many that Offenbach created. Generality extends to the setting, as the audience is never told exactly what era the characters inhabit, leaving this detail up to the radio listener's imagination. Centore provides a hint to the time period and setting in the written forward to the opera that the medieval castle depicted "would make a beautiful set for *Les Huguenots*."¹⁵ This comment is intentionally vague, as a castle room in that day could look similar in present-day France, and the mentions of a train and pocket watch set its time well past the sixteenth century depicted in Meyerbeer's opera. Anachronisms play a major role in Offenbach's works, so the addition of these items may be part of the parody if the opera is staged in the earlier setting. Placing *Petitpois* in the era of *Huguenots* premiere, 1836, would make sense because a parodic connection could be made to the rise of the nobility during the July Monarchy and *Petitpois* wanting to join this social class. The lack of a distinct era poses creative problems for a director transferring this work to the stage, with multiple options available for costuming, set pieces, and props. These choices could create a satire of a particular era, or a particular monarch. Since no era is specified, this analysis will concentrate on the libretto, music, and the staging choices I made in my production of the work February 11, 2016 at the University of Kansas. These choices were informed by specific historical events, detailed below in the analyses.

Satire of the Nobility and French Convictions

In this production, I chose to costume the characters in early twentieth-century clothing, not specifying a particular French regime. In the opening scene of the opera the Notaire explains to the Duc who *Petitpois* is: "Sir Duc, M. *Petitpois* is a celebrated industrialist whose inventions

¹⁵ Centore's entire quote was "Passons sans tarder dans la vaste galerie du château de la Bombardière, une bâtisse dans le goût moyenâgeux, tellement réussie qu'on se croirait à l'Opéra en train de jouer *Les Huguenots*." The above translation is from the piano reduction of the score published in 2015. A more accurate translation of the entire quote might be "Let us now slip into the large gallery at the castle la Bombardière – a magnificent pastiche of a medieval castle, a beautiful opera set for *Les Huguenots*." Germaine Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*, (Paris: Gérard Billaudot, 2015), 36.

have attracted the attention of His Majesty the Emperor at the last Exposition.”¹⁶ This most likely refers to either the 1855 Exposition Universelle, an international exposition of agriculture, industry, and art that occurred just after the beginning of Napoleon III’s reign or to the 1867 Exposition Universelle, a similar exposition that was created by a decree from Napoleon III. Other such Expositions were held in 1878, 1889, and 1900 when the German Empire was flourishing, so the Emperor referred to in the libretto may not have been French. Several new inventions were shown at these expos, and they could have inspired the creation of the *moustachette* and its inventor. Also, every era has its plethora of inventors who create “interesting” if not potentially useful items such as this moustache protector, so the specific reference is also general, a parodic technique that Offenbach’s librettists used to make his *opérettes* timeless. A national system of railways was new to France during the Second Empire and massively expanded during the Third Republic, so the scene at the train station could also be referencing either era. Tailleferre’s Duc is a parody of old nobility, steeped in tradition but lacking the money to continue his old lifestyle. He still has a single servant, but she is too old to be an effective nanny or maid. Her character parodies the downfall of the nobility after the July Revolution, and the period from the late 1800s when aristocratic households were run by increasingly smaller servant staffs. Adelestan, the Duc’s son, parodies French military officers in his egotistical behavior and bravado equally appropriate in either the Second Empire or the Third Republic. As mentioned above, Petitpois could parody the middle class nouveau-riche post-July Monarchy, but also parodies many inventors of the era such as Louis Pasteur and Pierre and Marie Curie. Oreste and Héloïse are more difficult to place in the social structure of the era, because they represent stock characters instead of specific societal members. Specific parallels cannot be drawn with any one group of persons during the Second Empire, but their connections to stock characters will be discussed later in this chapter.

Centore’s choice of plot parodies many of Offenbach’s stock story lines: a problem is presented, conflict occurs with ridiculous situations ensuing, and an unexpected solution resolves the problem, allowing almost all of the characters to have a happy ending. Versions of this plot

¹⁶ *Monsieur le Duc, Monsieur Petitpois est un célèbre industriel dont les inventions ont retenu l’attention de Sa Majesté l’Empereur, à la dernière Exposition. Tailleferre, Monsieur Petitpois achète une château*, (Paris: Gérard Billaudot, 1974).

are as old as theatrical productions themselves, though the use of satire, ridicule, and intertextual humor places the work in the same mode as Offenbach's style. Centore parodies these scenarios by making each character a larger-than-life version of themselves and presenting each situation as real, but with ridiculous twists. As discussed in chapter three, Offenbach humanized larger-than-life characters like Zeus, Orphée, and Hélène by placing them in everyday situations with human problems, but also reversed this narrative by placing "real" people in extraordinary circumstances. Centore uses the second technique in this libretto, inserting a silly invention and the purchase of a run-down castle to add to the plot's humor. The condition of the castle the Duc is selling adds to the humor, setting him up as a sympathetic noble character. Petitpois, with his new fortune, would want to live like the upper class and would view purchasing a castle as cementing his new social status. Elevating Héloïse to the title of Duchess at the end of the opera also parodies how the bourgeoisie could suddenly become nobility and, perhaps, how money can buy status.

A major plot point in Tailleferre's opera is the duel between Oreste and Adelestan. Throwing down the gauntlet and dueling were traditions across Europe during that era, and modern audiences in 1955 would recognize this as an old convention. This duel also establishes the Duc as upholding the ancestral traditions in his explanation of the family rules of combat. Parodying the old European traditions ties *Petitpois* to Offenbach's works because he often wrote some of these traditions and conventions into his *opérettes*. Some examples are the medieval chivalric traditions in *Croquefer*, the conventions of courtship in such works as *Le mariage aux lanternes* and *Un mari à la porte*, or daily work and play as seen in *La chanson de Fortunio* and *Les deux aveugles*. Referring to conventions and traditions connected the plots to audiences, and Tailleferre and Centore used this trait in Offenbach's fashion in *Petitpois*.

Offenbach Style Parody and Satire

Two Offenbach *opérettes* in particular might have inspired the plot for *Petitpois*. *Croquefer* shares some medieval elements of the setting and the idea that upholding ancestral traditions is the duty of the nobility. The moated castle in *Petitpois* could have easily dated from the medieval era with its ancestral portrait gallery, and this ancestral tradition is mentioned in the war cry sung by the Duc and Adelestan. In *Croquefer*, the action occurs in the tower of a similar

ancient castle, and old chivalric traditions are championed by Boutefeu in his request to continue the war for the honor of Croquefer's family and kingdom. Adelestan's character has much in common with Ramasse-ta-Tête, as both are boastful soldiers returning from war who fall in love at first sight.

Le château à Toto begins with Toto, a nobleman, selling his castle to raise money. A rival baron, Jean de Crécy-Crécy wants to end the ancestral feud between the families by purchasing the castle and using it for his animals. Ernest Massepain, the local notary, is assisting with the sale. The Vicomtesse, a former peasant, and the Marquis Raoul accompany Toto to Catherine's farm to negotiate the sale. At the farm, Raoul tries to woo Catherine, who is engaged to Pitou, another farmer. Toto finds the daughter of the baron, Jeanne, to his liking, and the feeling proves to be mutual. At the sale, Jeanne has disguised Pitou as a rival purchaser, who outbids her father for the castle. After Pitou is unmasked and escapes, Crécy-Crécy and Toto both don disguises, the baron to court the Vicomtesse and Toto to court Jeanne. Meanwhile, Catherine has rejected the Marquis and decided to marry Pitou, Crécy-Crécy is unmasked but wins the hand of the Vicomtesse, and Toto is free to marry Jeanne, who now owns Toto's castle.

This plot has much in common with the plot of *Petitpois*. Toto is trying to sell his castle using a notary in a similar manner to Tailleferre's Duc. Toto is played *en travesti* by a high soprano while the Duc is a low bass, so these roles are parodically flipped between the two operas. There is also an unnamed old servant, played by a bass, who parallels Cunégonde. She is played by a soprano, so these roles are also flipped. Catherine, the young farmer, is very similar to Héloïse in that both treat their fiancés badly at the beginning of the opera. Unlike Héloïse, however, Catherine is reconciled with her fiancé in the end and lives happily ever after. This plot point is flipped in *Petitpois* when the fiancé is rejected in favor of the hero. At the end of *Le château à Toto*, the castle is restored to Toto because he marries Jeanne, the daughter of the Baron, who outwitted and outbid her father to own the castle. This is parodied in *Petitpois* because Héloïse, *Petitpois*'s daughter, can only marry Adelestan after her father purchases the castle, making her a duchess. In both operas, the sale of the castle is negotiated by a notary. Although no direct evidence establishes a connection between Offenbach's two *opérettes* and Tailleferre's *Petitpois*, there are so many parallels and parodic twists in common between the compositions that the relationship is difficult to ignore.

The overall construction of *Petitpois* also parodies Offenbach. In 1855, at the beginning of his career as an opera producer, Offenbach published an essay stating his ideals for French *opérettes*. This missive also announced a contest for composers and listed a set of rules. He declared, “Our only ambition is to ‘write short,’ but if you think about it for a moment that is no mean ambition. In an opera that lasts barely three quarters of an hour, where one may only have four characters on stage, and an orchestra of thirty musicians at most, the ideas and melodies have to be like ready money.”¹⁷ He was not only stating his rules for the contest, but also the rules the government mandated he follow for his own works, allowing him to produce the winners at his theatre. Although they may not have had to, Tailleferre and Centore honored these rules. Not just the Offenbach parody but all four of the operas are around twenty minutes each, use casts of five to seven singers, and employ a chamber orchestra of about sixteen. Since the entire cycle adheres to these rules, it is not clear if the women were consciously parodying Offenbach or if these parameters were set by Radio France. Tailleferre also included some of Offenbach’s musical structural elements in her composition such as the brief overture and act finales. These elements will be discussed later in this chapter.

Parody and Social Satire in the Libretto

His librettists created one of the layers of parody in Offenbach’s shows, and Tailleferre’s operetta continues this tradition. Centore utilized some of the techniques Offenbach’s librettists employed such as wordplay and creative character names in her text as one parodic layer. She also, as described above, chose some of Offenbach’s character traits and plot points to parody. Layering intertextual references was a frequent style trait of Offenbach’s *opérettes*, as was combining staging, costuming, and character traits. Tailleferre and Centore did not have as many parodic layers to work with as a staged production would have, but still skillfully added elements and techniques that reflect techniques Offenbach used. A few of these techniques are detailed below.

¹⁷ “Il n’a d’autre ambition que celle de faire ‘court,’ et si l’on y veut réfléchir un instant, ce n’est pas là une ambition médiocre. Dans un opéra qui dure à peine trois quarts d’heure, qui ne peut mettre en scène que quatre personnages, et qui n’utilise au plus un orchestre de trente musiciens au plus, il faut avoir des idées et de la mélodie argent comptant.” Jacques Offenbach, *Le Ménestral*, July 27, 1836, 2. Translation from Faris, 57.

Character Names

Offenbach's librettists created many character names that contained puns or were ironically opposite of the character's actual traits. At least twenty-four *opérettes* contain names that can be interpreted in this way, including *Croquefer*, in which all five names contain wordplay or irony, as detailed in chapter three. Other examples include Boulotte (*Barbe-bleue*), the clever peasant who outsmarts Barbe-bleue. Her name translates to "chubby, dumpy, plump and small," appropriate for a peasant but not the beautiful girl described in the plot. *Belle Lurette* contains many such characters, among them Malicorne (a person with bad manners), Merluchet (dried fish), and Friquette (a species of sparrow).

Centore's libretto uses similar wordplay, as part of the humor comes from the translation of some of the names and terms used in the show. Petitpois, for example, literally translates to "little pea." He is also referred to as a tadpole and a green bean by various characters in the script. Other names scattered through the opera have similar double meaning. When the Duc is showing off the portraits of his ancestors, he refers to one of his ancestor's horses as Rodolphe, nicknamed Beaupied (beautiful foot), a good nickname for a horse. Later in the libretto he refers to two more ancestors as Ermangard le Mal-Cuit (Ermangard the Undercooked) and Luitpol Longue-Oreille (Luitpol Long-Ears). Although none of these characters actually appears in *Petitpois*, the use of the silly names is a parodic tribute to the way Offenbach's librettists would christen their characters.

At least one character in *Petitpois* has a deeper parodic layer: Héloïse. In Offenbach's *Barbe-bleue*, Meilhac and Halévy changed the names of Barbe-bleue's wives from Charles Perrault's originals to the names of historically notorious French women.¹⁸ The name Héloïse was taken from the twelfth-century French Abbess of the same name, who became notorious after her affair with Pierre Abélard became public. According to Abélard's writings, Héloïse was a gifted writer and very intelligent, which fits well with Offenbach's strong female characters.¹⁹

¹⁸ Perrault's original wives were named after heroines in classic literature. Meilhac and Halévy chose other women such as Eléonore in honor of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Isaure, in honor of Clémence Isaure, who started a poetry contest in France. Jacques Offenbach, *Barbe-bleue*, (Paris: E. Gérard & Co., 1866).

¹⁹ Pierre Abélard, *Historia Calamitatum*, in Betty Radice, trans, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, (New York: Penguin, 1974). Another source linking the Tailleferre use to this source is "France Musique," <https://www.francemusique.fr/musique-classique/germaine-tailleferre-monsieur-petitpois-achete-un-chateau-dans-le-style-d-offenbach-analyse-2390>, accessed September 26, 2016.

This character fits well into Tailleferre's composition because, according to her letters to Abélard, Héloïse preferred not to be married but to remain free to choose whomever she wished.²⁰ Tailleferre's Héloïse reveals a similar philosophy when she chooses another man over her fiancé on a whim.

Centore's use of these character names shows a strong knowledge of Offenbach's style and the reasons some of these names were selected. They are craftily worked into the libretto in the same manner the older librettists used these elements, and add a parodic layer to the composition that may not initially be noticed by non-French speakers or by those who do not have a strong knowledge of French history.

Stock Characters

Offenbach's librettists created different versions of stock characters, depending on the plot. Tailleferre and Centore chose seven of these roles, and created individuals that compiled traits from several versions of these characters. These seven characters are the old father figure (the Duc), two crafty servants (Cunégonde and the Notaire), the love-interest hero (Adelestan), the would-be young playboy (Oreste), the foolish inventor (Petitpois), and the strong female heroine (Héloïse). Figure 6.1 shows the full cast from the American premiere performance in character.

²⁰ Héloïse, "Héloïse's First Letter," <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/heloise1.asp#first>, accessed September 24, 2016.



Figure 6.1: Full cast of *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*. From left to right: Oreste, the Notaire, M. Petitpois, the Duc, Adelestan, Héloïse, and Cunégonde.²¹

Tailleferre alters Offenbach's satiric take on the nobility by making her Duc a calm, intelligent man who is most interested in upholding the traditions of his ancestors. Petitpois, the *nouveau riche* character, is not a crafty planner but a man that gets duped by the noble. In Offenbach's hands, the Duc would likely be silly or daft, and Petitpois would perhaps trick him into giving him the castle for nothing. Tailleferre parodies many of Offenbach's plots in this switch, turning them in the manner of *parodia*. There are several ducal characters in Offenbach's shows: such as Le Duc de Marly from *Belle Lurette*; Sinfroy, Duke of Curaçao from *Geneviève de Brabant*; Le Duc Della Volta from *La fille du Tambour Major*; and Le Duc de Mantoue from *Les Brigands*. Multiple counts, kings, and princes also make appearances in these libretti. Some of these characters are minor, like the character in *Les Brigands* who shares the stage with multiple nobles, but many are important to the plot. Le Duc de Marly, for example, is the heroine's adopted father and tries to arrange an unwanted marriage for his daughter, setting up

²¹ Photo by the author, February 11, 2016.

the conflict. Tailleferre's Duc, however, is closer to the old knight Croquefer. Both characters have sons that are egotistical military officers, and both have a strong sense of duty to uphold tradition. Unlike Croquefer, however, the Duc is intelligent and assists his son in winning Héloïse by defeating Oreste. And whereas Croquefer is duped into drinking poison and never manages to negotiate the peaceful end to the war, Tailleferre's Duc does accomplish his own goal in the show, selling his castle to Petitpois.

Even though they are minor characters with no solos and very few lines, both Cunégonde and the Notaire fall into the crafty servant category. Their characters are similar to several minor characters from Offenbach's *opérettes*, including John Styx from *Orphée aux enfers*; Boutefeu, Croquefer's shield-bearer; and Calchas from *La belle Hélène*. "Cunégonde" appears as a character in Offenbach's *Le roi Carotte* so the use of this name could be a nod to this specific character. Another possible source is Voltaire's *Candide*: Tailleferre and Centore's Cunégonde may in fact be Voltaire's Cunégonde, but aged by several decades. Tailleferre was familiar with the poet's works because she had used the text of one of his poems in her 1930 song cycle *Six Chansons Françaises* and Centore would have known his work from her studies as a researcher and writer.²² Unfortunately, neither source can be verified as the women did not specify where they found the character names. Tailleferre's Cunégonde was a nanny to both the Duc and his son, and parodies French female servants. She is also a flipped version of the *soubrette* character found in many operas such as Susanna, Cecchina, Despina, and Rosina, to name a few. These characters are young, flirtatious servants who usually end up outsmarting other older and upper-status characters. Tailleferre's Cunégonde is an ancient curmudgeon who has an answer, if not an opinion, for everything. This attitude is in keeping with the feisty tone of the *soubrette*, tempered by age. She seems not to care when the Duc asks for her opinion, but later is concerned for the safety of Adelestan as he flirts with Héloïse. Asking for a servant's opinion is a reversal of convention, since the help was generally not consulted in important

²² Tailleferre used Voltaire's *Souvent un air de vérité (Often an Air of Truth)* as the text for the second song in her cycle. Germaine Tailleferre, *Six chansons françaises*. (Paris: Heugel, 1930). Centore researched and wrote at least one book on historical figures and contributed to radio programs concerning historical figures for Radio France, so she would have been acquainted with Voltaire. http://www.bnf.fr/en/tools/lr.search_results.html?query=denise+centore&x=0&y=0, accessed September 22, 2016. These books include: Denise Centore, *Claude Bernard, cet inconnu*, S.l: s.n. (1963) and Denise Centore, *La règle de Saint Benoît, inédit radiophonique (Analyse Spectrale De L'Occident, 1959)*, S.l: s.n.

matters such as the sale of a residence. This plot point adds to the ambiguity of the setting, as this could be viewed as an Offenbachian anachronism or as a normal convention of more modern times.

Notaries appear in many Offenbach *opérettes*, such as *La Périchole* and *La créole*. Both *La Périchole*'s and *La créole*'s Notaries are very minor characters. In *Le château à Toto*, however, the Notarie is slightly more prominent, as is the one in *Petitpois*. Both Notaries in *Toto* and *Petitpois* are active in the sale of the titular castles, and both help the major characters realize a solution to their conflicts. This exemplifies Offenbach's 1836 *Le Ménestrel* quotation, cited in full above, stating that in his works all characters are important.

Adelestan is the stereotypical hero found in many operas. He specifically falls into the love-interest hero category, because his function is to be the romantic lead. His character causes plot conflict which sets up much of the opera's comic action, but his storyline is secondary to the main plot of selling the castle. Several of Offenbach's heroes could have been models for this role, notably fellow tenor Ramasse-ta-Tête as described in chapter three. Another possible model is Fritz from *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*. Fritz is a low-ranking soldier that the Grande-Duchesse swiftly promotes to higher and higher ranks. He does not deserve, nor is he militarily able to fulfill the roles of these ranks, but the Grande-Duchesse is in love with him and is trying to win his favor. Fritz, however, is in love with Wanda and doesn't realize the Grande-Duchesse's motives. Adelestan has the same attitude of bravado as Fritz, but is already an officer. Neither Offenbach role has many solos after their initial couplets, and Tailleferre keeps this model for Adelestan, but all three characters sing love duets and have supporting roles in the ensemble numbers.

Oreste's name could have come from the playboy *en travesti* role in *La belle Hélène*. In *Petitpois*, Oreste is the nephew of the title character and Héloïse's fiancé. This role is written for a tenor, but sits high enough in the vocal range that a contralto would be able to sing the role, if desired.²³ Casting a female in this role would be an interesting choice, as it would parallel Offenbach's Oreste from *La belle Hélène*. As there is no listing of who originally sang the role in the radio premiere, either casting could be considered. Oreste parodies the buffoonish figures in

²³ The written range for the role is from Eb3 to Ab4.

Offenbach's compositions but is not a father figure or old man. Centore has again parodically turned the role from an older man to a young simpleton. During Tailleferre's opera, Oreste fails to notice the initial flirting between Adelestan and Héloïse, only realizing what is happening when he walks in on their first kiss. He inadvertently finds himself in a duel with Adelestan, facing the likelihood of losing and being required to jump off the highest tower into the moat. His cowardice is revealed, and he tries to unsuccessfully talk his way out of the fight. Ménélas from *La belle Hélène* is a good parallel for this character, as both fail to see other men seducing their partners until they walk in and catch them in the act. Both men also try to pass the blame onto others; Ménélas by asking if a "future Ménélas" could break the curse, and Oreste by trying to blame Adelestan for picking the fight. In the end, both men also lose their partners to the hero. Tailleferre's Oreste does not share much of a resemblance with the ancient Greek character of the same name. In the mythology, Orestes (the Greek spelling) avenges his father's death by killing his mother and her lover. To placate the Furies, Orestes travels to Tauris where he is saved by his sister. The only connection to *La belle Hélène* is that according to the myth, Orestes marries the daughter of Ménélas and Hélène.²⁴ Both Offenbach and Tailleferre chose to use the name of the hero for different reasons: Offenbach because he was Agamemnon's son, and Tailleferre presumably in reference to Offenbach's choice.

Monsieur Petitpois himself is a difficult character to place in the context of Offenbach's works. He is the heroine's father, which would set him up as a buffoon in many of Offenbach's *opérettes*; he is indeed buffoonish, as signaled by translation of his name. Petitpois is initially introduced as the inventor of a revolutionary but ridiculous invention, also seeming to suggest a buffoon. He is not an active participant in much of the plot; however, after his opening couplets. In the second to last number the focus returns to him, since the rest of the cast is encouraging him to purchase the castle and resolve the plot conflicts. A possible model for this role is the Brazilian from Offenbach's *La vie parisienne*. Both characters are introduced with brilliant solo couplets, then essentially disappear from the action until the end of the show. This placement is the only parallel between the men, however, as the roles are otherwise very different. Another model is Sifroid (or Sifroy), the Duke of Curaçao, from *Geneviève de Brabant*. He is the title

²⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Orestes-Greek-mythology>, accessed October 18, 2016.

character's husband and, like Petitpois, is not portrayed as either a hero or a buffoon. Like the abovementioned characters, he only appears at the beginning and the end of the shows, and does not play a significant role in the action. Tailleferre's Petitpois is introduced to set up a reason for the main action and resolves it in the end when he agrees to buy the castle, but otherwise is just the vehicle to bring Oreste and Héloïse to the château. *Le roi Carotte* contains Offenbach's only character with a vegetable name, in this case also the titular role. Similar to the other two roles, King Carotte appears at the beginning and end of the *opérette*, but has no role in the action. Any one of these characters could have been a model for Tailleferre's Petitpois.

Tailleferre's final character is the heroine of the story, Héloïse. She is depicted as a beautiful blond girl who thinks her father is endearingly daft and her fiancé, Oreste, is a complete idiot. When she sees Adelestan, her first instinct is to dump Oreste and make a play for the stronger, more attractive Lieutenant. Héloïse parodies Offenbach's Héléne both in name and in character type. The two characters are similarly young and beautiful, and both feign resistance to the men who finally manage to seduce them. There is also a character named Héloïse in *Barbe-bleue*, but she is a minor ensemble role so the name may have been seen here and linked to Héléne as the spellings are close. At one point in the show, as Adelestan and Oreste fight over her, Héloïse faints—an action that is not typical of Offenbach's strong heroines. Centore may have had Eurydice's death in mind as a parallel to this incident, as both events allowed the women to control the men in some way. Eurydice was able to escape Orphée and stay with her lover, and Héloïse stopped the duel between Adelestan and Oreste. Héloïse shows herself as a strong female character in the way she makes up her own mind about whom she will marry and by the way she suggestively hints to Adelestan that “it must be poetic, the park in the moonlight...” (“*Ça doit être joliment poétique, ce parc au clair de lune...*”). She is not the central focus of the plot, and does not further the main action in any way, however. Héloïse parallels characters such as Minette from *La chatte métamorphosée en femme* and Denise from *Le mariage aux lanternes* who are important love interests for the hero, but do not create or further the main action.

Musical Parody and Intertextuality

Since Offenbach himself was an expert parodist, parodying the manner in which he composed and constructed his *opérettes* and the individual numbers within the shows is problematic. He quotes other composers both overtly and subtly, using their style of composing when not lifting phrases from their works. When attempting to replicate Offenbach's *opérettes*, choices must be made between borrowing material from contemporary composers as Offenbach did, choosing to use only composers from Offenbach's time, mining Offenbach's own works, or a combination of the above. Tailleferre's selection of these elements are detailed in the explanation below, as she chose to combine many of the same techniques Offenbach employed in constructing his *opérettes*.

As discussed in chapter three, Offenbach had a musical model that he followed in almost all of his works. Briefly, he began with a short overture, introduced the characters and plot, and constructed act and show finales that recapped the action. Tailleferre used parts of this model to create *Petitpois*, and this gives the piece its distinct sound. Structurally, all but one of Offenbach's one-act compositions contained between six and thirteen separate numbers.²⁵ Tailleferre chose to compose eight numbered pieces plus the unnumbered *Ouverture* and three very short pieces entitled "*Cri Général*," fitting Offenbach's model. *Petitpois*'s "*Ouverture*" is only thirty-four measures long, matching the approximate length of the overtures that Offenbach composed for many of his one-act and multi-act pieces. He tended to bookend his shows by placing the same music in the overture and the finale and Tailleferre parodies this trait by using a slightly shorter version of the music from the finale as her overture. Offenbach often used material from more than one number in most of his overtures, creating two or three short sections. Tailleferre does not quote any other numbers in her opening, so this overture does not exactly parody Offenbach's main tendencies. Tailleferre's overture is light and quick, mimicking many Offenbach pieces. In the following sections, Tailleferre's use of Offenbach's structural model will be examined, breaking down how she parodied Offenbach in her music and forms.

²⁵ The only complete *opérette* that is shorter is *Les deux aveugles*, a show for two tenors that consists of four numbers.

Musical Imitation

Two layers of musical parody are found in the love duet between Adelestan and Héroïse. First, Tailleferre is parodying the extended love duet from *Croquefer*, in which Offenbach borrows love duets from three contemporary operas to create his number. Tailleferre only borrows from one opera, *La chanson de Fortunio* by Offenbach, instead of the three used by Offenbach. This duet would have been recognizable to some of Tailleferre’s audience as a parody of the title song from Offenbach’s *La chanson de Fortunio* (1861), which became popular as a recital piece prior to World War I. Lifting the accompaniment and closely parodying the melody of the title air is the second layer of parody in this number. The similarities between the two pieces can be seen in Figures 6.2a and 6.2b below, piano reductions of the first few bars of both pieces. The arpeggiated accompaniment is almost identical, and the vocal lines differ only slightly.

Figure 6.2a: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Duo,” no. 4, mm4-9.

Figure 6.2b: Offenbach, *Chanson de Fortunio*, “Chanson de Fortunio,” mm.2-7.

Dramatically, both songs serve similar functions in their respective operas. Fortunio sings this to seduce his employer’s wife and it is later used by one of his clerks to seduce Fortunio’s wife. In *Petitpois*, Adelestan is seducing Oreste’s fiancée and not his wife, but the objective and result are the same. The vocal staging of the *Petitpois* duet calls into question Héroïse’s fidelity as she initiates the piece. In other sections of the libretto, she suggestively hints twice that the castle court yard “must be poetic in the moonlight.” After it is clear that she is leaving Oreste for

Adelestan, Oreste remarks that her falling into the arms of a soldier “is becoming a habit.” With this in mind, Tailleferre may have chosen to quote this sure-fire seduction air to make us question through the use of parody who is seducing whom.

Tailleferre reiterates part of the overture as *Petitpois* reaches its climax and Adelestan and Oreste are preparing to duel. At this point, the Notaire realizes that all the problems can be resolved if M. Petitpois signs the papers to purchase the Duc’s castle and everyone except Petitpois sings a lively ensemble number naming the positive consequences if he goes through with the sale. Melodically, this piece, the overture, and the finale begin with the same notes in the first eight measures. The rhythm and number of notes is altered slightly to accommodate the words, and the antecedent phrases are completely different melodically but only slightly harmonically changed. Figures 6.3a, b, and c show the opening eight-measure theme of these three pieces with the accompaniment and vocal parts in piano reduction. As shown, the melodic line is almost identical in the three excerpts and the harmonic structure is exactly the same. A few chordal notes are omitted or added into the vocal and accompaniment lines.



Figure 6.3a: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Ouverture,” mm.6-13.

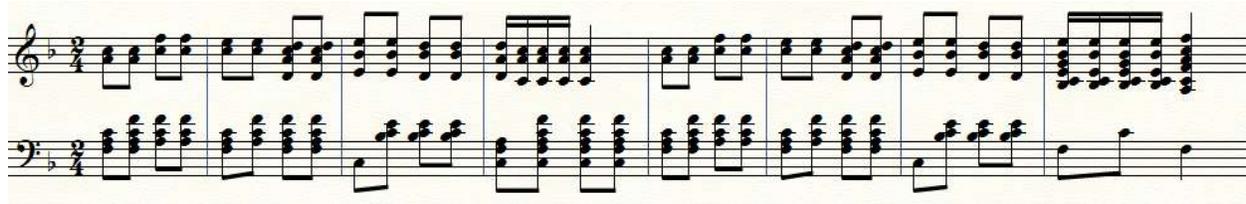


Figure 6.3b: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Signez, signez, M. Petitpois,” mm.7-14.



Figure 6.3c: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Final,” mm.6-13.

In the following eight measures (the consequent phrase), the harmonic structure in all three excerpts best fits C major, featuring V and I chords in this new key in the same rhythmic combination as the I and V chords in the opening phrase’s key of F major. The melodic line and accompanying figures are similar in the *Ouverture* and the *Final* (figures 6.4a and c) but the scalar figure in the bass is missing in “*Signez*” (figure 6.4b). A more static repeated note figure replaces the scale, and the initial presentation shifts from the bass voice to the sopranos. This repetitive use of melodic and harmonic material was criticized in Offenbach’s works, though he employed this technique as a time-saving measure, allowing him to create shows at a rapid pace. Tailleferre’s borrowing of this technique parodies Offenbach’s method of composition, and links it to many of his one-act *opérettes*.



Figure 6.4a: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Ouverture,” mm.14-21.



Figure 6.4b: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Signez, signez, M. Petitpois,” mm.15-22.

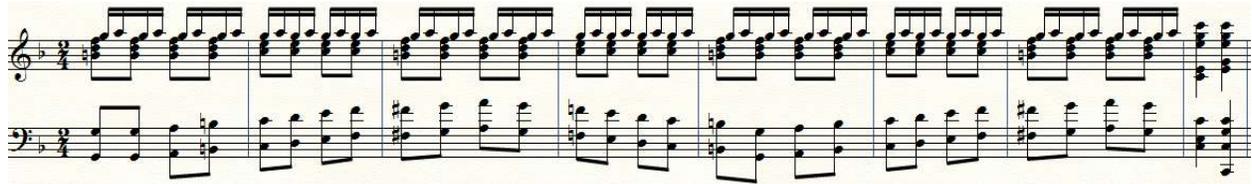


Figure 6.4c: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Final,” mm.14-21.

Tailleferre uses a similar technique to the love duet in composing “Signez,” closely mimicking the melody of one of Offenbach’s popular airs from *La vie parisienne*. This piece, known as the “Air du brésilien,” is sung by the Brazilian, celebrating how he had squandered his money the last time he was in Paris and telling how he plans to do it again. Figure 6.5a shows the opening four measures from Tailleferre’s “Signez, signez, M. Petitpois,” and figure 6.5b shows a corresponding phrase from Offenbach’s piece. There are similarities in the constant eighth notes and the general shape of the melody, as seen in the over-stemmed notes of these phrases. Starting in the first measure, Tailleferre takes the descending F-E-D-C line and breaks it into two short motifs of F-E-D and E-D-C. She also places the first eighth note of the pattern on the first beat, where Offenbach begins his phrase on an anacrusis. Although the remainder of the pieces are not melodically similar, they both have a light duple feel. Tailleferre parodies this style throughout, and the short melodic quote links the two pieces.

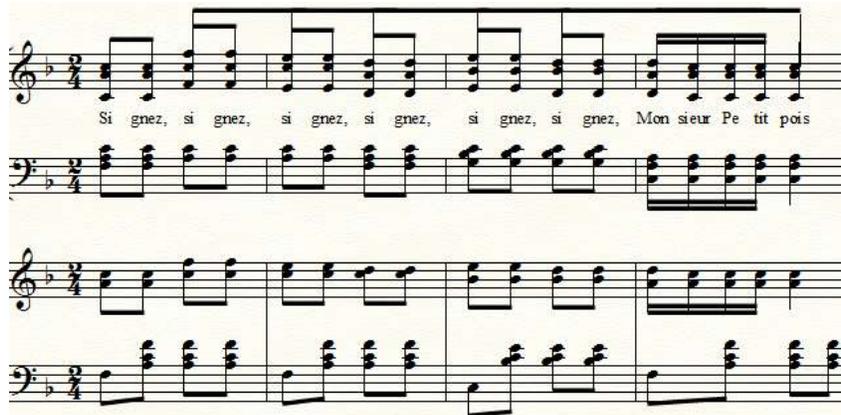


Figure 6.5a: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “Signez, signez, M. Petitpois,” mm.7-10.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The top system consists of a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line has the lyrics: "Et plus rien, o Pa ris! Pa ris! En six mois tu m'as tout ra flé,". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment with similar rhythmic patterns and chords.

Figure 6.5b: Offenbach, *La vie parisienne*, Act I, no. 6b, “Air du brésilien,” mm. 23-26.

Traditional Genre Parody

Offenbach included different forms of waltzes into his shows, and the second piece in *Petitpois* parodies one of these forms. Tailleferre labels this waltz a *valse tyrolienne*, and it exhibits the yodeling characteristics of the genre in Oreste’s and Héloïse’s “la la” line during the refrain, which will be described in detail below. With the assistance of his daughter and nephew, Petitpois uses this waltz to introduce his fantastic new invention. Oreste is excited to show off the product, but Héloïse is more interested in Adelestan than the *moustachette*.

In chapter three, Offenbach’s use of the Tyrolian waltz was identified with either lower-class characters, trickery, or both. Tailleferre introduces Petitpois and his invention with such a number, suggesting that the family hailed from a lower class and commenting on the ridiculousness of the invention. Figure 6.6 below is a photograph from the Kansas Public Radio

broadcast of the American premiere I staged of the opera, showing the invention in use by Petitpois during his couplets. This product is hailed by Petitpois and the Notaire as being a sensation at “the Exposition,” even receiving attention from the emperor.



Figure 6.6: The *moustachette*, as worn by M. Petitpois (Alan Martin) at the Kansas Public Radio broadcast.²⁶

Tailleferre’s *valse tyrolienne* “La Moustachette” contains the strong-weak-weak beat pattern and yodeling refrain found in Offenbach’s versions of this common waltz. Figures 6.7a and 6.7b below show a phrase from this number compared with a similar section of the “Air Tyrolien” from Offenbach’s *La vie parisienne*. In Tailleferre’s version, Petitpois’s solo line is joined by his daughter and nephew in the rousing chorus. This waltz shows characteristics of the *Ländler*, an Austrian folk dance, in its slower tempo and yodeling refrain. Similar intervals and articulations common to yodeling are seen in both examples.

²⁶ Photo by the author, February 9, 2016.

with the rhythmic characteristics of mazurkas.²⁷ In this piece, the Duc is showing off the portraits of his ancestors to the Petitpois family, partly to distract them from noticing Adelestan's interest in Héloïse, and partly to impress upon them the traditions that are linked to the castle through his family. Its construction is similar to Adelestan's opening couplets as it contains moderate tempo sections followed by a faster refrain sung by the ensemble. "La galerie des ancêtres" differs from the opening couplets in that it has a double eight-bar refrain, first sung by Petitpois and then by the ensemble.

Tailleferre's mazurka seems to not be rhythmically correct for the style because the emphasis is placed on beat one instead of beats two or three, as shown in Figure 6.8 below. However, the rhythm and intervals employed create agogic accents on beat two in many measures. This could be viewed as a parodic turn on the dance, in the same manner that the character who sings it, the Duc, is a parodic turn on Offenbach's fatherly characters. Changing the meter of the fast ensemble sections is also a departure from the style. The dotted rhythms and moderate tempo are, however, traditionally linked with the mazurka.

The image shows a musical score for a piece in 3/4 time. It consists of three staves: a vocal line (bass clef), a piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs), and lyrics. The lyrics are: "Ad-mi-rez i - ci Mes-sieurs quel-ques por - traits de mes ai-eux peints dans le genre ca-mai-eux C'est ce qui se fait demieux." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords.

Figure 6.8: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, "La galerie des ancêtres," mm. 5-12.

Parody of Musical Forms

The first vocal number in *Petitpois* is a parody of the couplet style that Offenbach and other composers used. This number is an entrance aria for Adelestan, introducing him to the audience

²⁷ In 1938 Offenbach's nephew, Jacques Brindejonc-Offenbach, assisted in compiling some of his uncle's music for a new ballet, *Gaîté Parisienne*. This ballet was commissioned by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, under the direction of Léonide Massine. Much of the plot of the ballet is loosely based on *La vie parisienne*, and a mazurka is one of the numbers. The mazurka is typically characterized by the stress on beats two or three. George Balanchine and Francis Mason, "Gaîté Parisienne," in *101 Stories of the Great Ballets* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), pp. 183–86.

by listing some of his exploits in war and his feelings about love. Structurally, it is set up in couplet form, with the three verses completely written out. Each moderate-tempo verse is followed by a faster trio section involving the other three characters on stage, the Duc, Notaire, and Cunégonde. This trio refrain warns Adelestan that his actions will lead to trouble, as they do in the course of the plot.

Tailleferre introduces Adelestan in the same manner that Offenbach introduces other heroic characters. This couplet specifically resembles how Ramasse-ta-Tête is introduced in *Croquefer*, where the knight also sings of his exploits and that he has come to save the day and bring peace. Although no musical material is shared between the numbers, both feature a solo verse with a trio refrain, and both have alternating moderate and faster sections. This construction is typical of many Offenbach numbers (and couplets in general) as he mixed solos with ensembles frequently in his vocal pieces. Another example of this construction is Oreste's first couplets from *La belle Hélène*, in which he is also touting his exploits. This aria does not change tempo, but there are three couplets that alternate with a choral refrain. Offenbach's other common use of this construction was addressed in the discussion above of the Duc's aria "La galerie des ancêtres."

In his multi-act works, Offenbach would include a finale at the end of each act that recapped the action and set up what was to come in the following act. Even though *Petitpoin* is only one short act, Tailleferre composed the equivalent of an act finale at the midpoint of the work, intensifying the action and setting up the coming conflict. Titled "Patatra" (Crash), the repetitive text acknowledges the mess the characters are in, and warns Adelestan of the "fury of Oreste" because he was caught kissing Oreste's fiancée. As short as this opera is, this piece divides it into two sections and functions as an act finale. Tailleferre and Offenbach both use the technique of reminding the audience of the plot and setting up what is to come in these act-ending numbers.

Musically, most voices in this ensemble piece are harmonically static, repeating one note per beat or jumping octaves. The uppermost part, however, is melodically active. This vocal arrangement can be found in many of Offenbach's chorus numbers, such as the Act One finale of *La Belle Hélène* (Figure 6.9a). The slow harmonic movement of the lower parts is evident, in contrast with the active upper line. An excerpt from Tailleferre's work (Figure 6.9b)

is rhythmically similar to Offenbach's finales, as Tailleferre adds a second set of sixteenth notes to Offenbach's repeated rhythm to accommodate the text.

Figure 6.9a shows two systems of musical notation for Offenbach's *La belle Hélène*, Act One, no. 8, mm. 273-284. The first system (measures 1-6) features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef, both in 2/4 time. The vocal line has a melody of eighth notes with lyrics: "Va, pars pars pour la Cré-te, Pars pour la Cré-te, Pars pour la Cré-te Que rien ue t'ar-ré-te". The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system (measures 7-12) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "Ni flots ni tem-pé-te Va pars pars pour la Cré-te Pars pour la Cré-te Pars pour la Cré-te". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern.

Figure 6.9a: Offenbach, *La belle Hélène*, Act One, no. 8, mm. 273-284.

Figure 6.9b shows two systems of musical notation for Tailleferre's *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, "Patatra," no. 5, mm. 4-12. The first system (measures 1-4) is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal line in treble clef has lyrics: "Pa-ta-tras, quel dé-gat, quel gâ-chis quel sal-mis quel sou-ci, pest', ce-ci est fu-". The piano accompaniment in bass clef features a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The second system (measures 5-12) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "nes-te crai-gnons les fu-reurs d'O-reste les fu-reurs d'O-reste Pa-ta-tras quel dé-gât". The piano accompaniment continues with the same complex rhythmic pattern.

Figure 6.9b: Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, "Patatra," no. 5, mm. 4-12.

Tailleferre chooses not to add the longer notes Offenbach eventually uses at the end of his finale in the sixty-two bars of her chorus, but the repetition of words is similar, as is the short orchestral tag at the end of the number. It is the first full ensemble piece in the opera, which adds to the feeling of wrapping up part of the show. These numbers by Offenbach and Tailleferre, whether at the end of an act or at a turning point in the plot, reinforce the musical and dramatic climaxes through repetition, the use of large forces, and driving tempo and cadence. Tailleferre parodies Offenbach’s style and overall operatic construction in her “Patatra,” setting up the audience for the remainder of the action, while Offenbach is using a musical technique later used by composers like Richard Rodgers and Stephen Schwartz.²⁸

Tailleferre includes three numbers in *Petitpois* that are unique in that they are short ensemble recitatives titled *Cri Général*. Each *cri* invokes a different character’s name after they have done something to another character (Oreste and Adelestan threatening each other) or to themselves (Héloïse faints), and is the equivalent of the cast shouting the name of the character in unison. Figure 6.10 shows a reduction of the first of these three, the warning to Oreste. During each *cri* all characters except the one named in the piece sing the recitative. Offenbach often included *mélodrames*, short musical numbers under spoken dialogue, in his shows, but none of these pieces contain lyrics. Tailleferre’s *cris* seem to serve the same purpose as the *mélodrames*, allowing action to occur with musical accompaniment.



Figure 6.10: Oreste’s *Cri*. Germaine Tailleferre, *Monsieur Petitpois achète un Château*, “*Cri Général*.”

²⁸ In an example from Schwartz’s 2013 production of *Pippin*, the players and the Leading Player crown Pippin and bring back a short phrase from the opening song “Magic to Do” as a recap of the action and a look ahead to act 2.

Traditional French *mélodrame* is defined in *Grove Music Online* as “a work that is divided into a number of generally short, independent musical numbers, to be played between the passages of spoken text.”²⁹ Peter Brooks lists some of its connotations as “the indulgence of strong emotionalism; extreme states of being, situations, or actions; or inflated and extravagant expression.”³⁰ George Steiner states this more concisely: “Where the theatrical is allowed complete rule over the dramatic, we get melodrama.”³¹ In Offenbach’s *opérettes*, he often creates characters and situations that call for strong expression and emotion such as Orphée’s resistance to retrieving Eurydice from Pluto’s kingdom. These moments sometimes employ *mélodrame*, music over spoken dialogue, to intensify the emotion of the action and create heightened theatricality. Tailleferre’s *cris* are played between sections of text, but all three keep the same general structure, maintaining the continuity of musical thought. Offenbach did not text his *mélodrames*, but they are often played under dialogue and use melodic material from another number. This use of *mélodrame* links Tailleferre’s opera to Offenbach’s works as she parodied the manner in which he utilized this form in her *cris*.

A fourth longer piece that also incorporates the word *cri* in its title follows these short numbers, the “Cri de guerre des La Bombardières” (War Cry of the La Bombardières). This *cri* is not a *mélodrame* and is not related to the previous three fragments; rather it functions as a patriotic call to arms. In this number, the Duc is encouraging Adelestan to win his duel with Oreste. Patriotic numbers such as Tailleferre’s war cry occur in at least two Offenbach *opérettes*. In *Dragonette*, the four characters sing “Vive la France!” in the finale after Dragonette captures the enemy flag. In *La belle Hélène*, Agamemnon, Calchas, and Ménélas sing a “Patriotic Trio” of a different sort, encouraging Ménélas to sacrifice for the good of his country.

²⁹ Peter Branscombe. "Melodrama." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18355>.

³⁰ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 11-12.

³¹ George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (New York: Hill and Wang, Dramabook, 1963), 108.

Offenbach's patriotic numbers tend to glorify national causes, although the trio in *La belle Hélène* is more personal because Ménélas is asked to give up his wife. Tailleferre's war cry parodies these songs, with loyalty to family traditions the main subject. Traditions are also important in the *Petitpois* number; the song itself has been passed down through generations of Bombardières, and the rules for dueling are specific to the family. Tailleferre is parodying the spirit of the patriotic piece rather than creating a number that glorifies the country. Songs of this kind are not uncommon in opera, the most notable being Giuseppe Verdi's choruses from *Nabucco* that became rallying cries in Italy.³² Both Offenbach and Tailleferre are tapping into this tradition of patriotic operatic choruses with the inclusion of such numbers.

As are most Offenbach show finales, Tailleferre's finale to *Petitpois* is very short, only forty-four measures long. No action takes place and the plot is wrapped up in this final number, as the cast sums up in one phrase how buying the castle makes Héloïse a duchess, therefore of the proper class to marry Adelestan, how the "simpleton" Petitpois enters the nobility, and how wonderful it is to have ancestors and traditions. As mentioned above, this piece is an almost exact melodic duplicate of the overture. Tailleferre's only alterations to the finale are that she repeats an eight-measure phrase in the middle, and adds an extra orchestral stinger to the end.

This piece is typical of Offenbach's show finales: a quick full ensemble number that summarizes the action. Examples of this are the finales to *Dragonette*, where the final forty-two measures are an ensemble summary of the action, and the twenty-nine measure ensemble finale to the four-act *Le voyage dans la lune*. No melodic similarities to any Offenbach composition are included, but the style and structure he used in his shows is parodied in that he wrapped up his *opérettes* with music similar to that in the overture, giving the audience a final hearing of a tune he hoped they would remember.

³² Mary Jane Phillips-Matz,, *Verdi: A Biography*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 765.

Conclusion

In their operatic cycle, Tailleferre and Centore sought to evoke the style of the composers they parodied. As mentioned in chapter two, Seymour Chatman determined the success of the parodic literature he studied based on the number of influences and references to the parodic target.³³ Using this as a point of reference, the connections to Offenbach described in this chapter suggest that the two women were very successful in parodying Offenbach's *opérettes*. Character names, the use of social, chivalric, and historical satire, and intertextual references to Offenbach's music both melodically and structurally combine in parodic layers to create a distilled version of the older composer's style. Costuming and staging can add another layer; to this end, I dressed the cast in my production in faux Second Empire clothing and added sight gags that were in the spirit of Offenbach's stage directions. Overall, Tailleferre accomplished her goal in *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château* – recreating Offenbach and the history of French Opera in miniature.

³³ Seymour Chatman, "Parody and Style," *Poetics Today* 22:1 (Spring, 2001), 26-7.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

Parody in music and other arts has taken many forms over the centuries, as evident in the several definitions and philosophies related to the term. Ancient Greek philosophers identified the streams of *parodia* and *paratragoedia* to classify works written and composed at that time. From these two initial branches that identified the comic alteration of an extant song (*parodia*) or the satiric intertextual use of a work (*paratragoedia*), multiple interpretations emerged. Of particular interest to this dissertation have been those writers, such as Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Tomashevsky, who identify parody as a method of revitalizing and paying homage to older styles and works. In addition, this work draws on the contributions made to parody theory by Cassandra I. Carr, Seymour Chatman, Joseph A. Dane, Lars Elleström, Yayoi Uno Everett, and Carol K. Baron, who have recently posited composite definitions of the term. In music history, this branch of parody has manifested in such genres as parody masses, neo-classical compositions that employ older forms and techniques, and specific works like Jacques Offenbach's *opérettes* and Germaine Tailleferre's operatic cycle *Du style galant au style méchant*.

Offenbach selected both specific and broad targets for his parodic stage works, often using humor to draw attention to and/or satirize his peers. While Offenbach did not adhere to a specific compositional style, his methods of constructing *opérettes* was consistent in its use of stock characters and musical genres for particular kinds of plot points. He rarely quoted other composers' works, reserving this technique for comedic moments. His talent for parodic technique is apparent in his layering of elements in his *opérettes*. His plot structures, character names, casting, anachronisms, and judiciously placed motivic borrowing combine with costuming, set pieces, and staging to create timeless parodies still enjoyed by today's audiences. Many of these elements are apparent in his prequel to the Trojan War, *La Belle Hélène*.

Though set in ancient Greece, *La Belle Hélène* contains contemporary nineteenth-century references and has been interpreted by modern directors to include everything from air travel to mimosas on a yacht. Offenbach made these interpretations possible by creating parody based in

the tradition of both *parodia* and *paratragedia*, linking the comic imitation of the first with the satiric bite of the second. Paris references the pastoral traditions of earlier works while reversing the plot of rescue operas, Ménélas champions the traditions of the state while spoofing the nobility, and the heroes of the Trojan War are cast as bumbling idiots. Offenbach references established tenets of opera, mythology, and the French state, twisting them to his own comic advantage. His and his librettists' intertextual references also satirically allude to Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, ridiculing the opera both musically and through offhand comments in the dialogue.

Because Offenbach molded his compositional style to match his targets, there were many elements Tailleferre and Denise Centore could tease out from his works to use in *Monsieur Petitpois achète un château*. When they chose elements of his style, specific structural elements in his pieces and overall methods of construction were selected to create their own miniature *opérette*. Centore mixed plots from two Offenbach works, borrowed names used by his librettists, and created a leading character with a self-deprecating moniker. Tailleferre composed pieces with similar genre characteristics of typical Offenbach numbers, ordered them in a similar manner, and chose a melodic fragment from one of his popular love songs to create a new duet for her young couple. Tailleferre and Centore succeeded in evoking the essence of Offenbach's works by using similar methods of construction, sampling from the composer's own works rather than from his contemporaries.

The duo used similar techniques to construct the remainder of the operas in *Du style galant au style méchant*. Unlike Offenbach, Tailleferre and Centore borrow more from *parodia* than *paratragedia* because the remainder of the cycle is not intended as satire or, in most cases, to be humorous at all. The parody is apparent in the musical style of the individual pocket operas; Tailleferre imitates the manner of text setting and accompaniment common to different eras of French opera. Her ability to adapt the characteristic styles of these older composers shows her deep knowledge of music history and an inborn ability to distill this information into a creative format. Each individual style is recognizable, even without the addition of the names of the parodied composers. This talent for musical mimicry is shown to varying degrees in the

remainder of her *oeuvre*, as many of her ballets, piano, and chamber works draw on older forms and styles. Identifying the structural, musical, and textural methods employed in Tailleferre's parody of Offenbach will transfer to a detailed analysis of the remaining operas in the cycle as similar techniques can be used to find their parodied characteristics.

Future Directions for Research

Looking forward, more scholarly study is needed in the area of non-humorous musical parody, especially in post-nineteenth century genre. Works by neo-classical and neo-romantic composers would be a logical starting point. Pieces that overtly honor or mimic another composer's style can be analyzed to identify the stylistic characteristics that were deemed representative of the parodied composer's works. An examination of different parody works based on the same composer could yield substantially different ideas of the most important style traits, leading to a discussion of how each parodist selected the elements they chose to imitate. For example, a study could be undertaken to examine parodic works based on the music of Georges Frideric Handel. A direct analysis could be done of the third movement of Francis Poulenc's *Concert champêtre* and Percy Grainger's *Handel in the Strand*, both of which use Handel's "The Harmonious Blacksmith" and parody broader aspects of early eighteenth-century music. Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's *Concerto Grosso 1985* is another parodic perspective on the piece from later in the twentieth century.

Deeper study of Offenbach's body of work might help determine how his own parodic style changed throughout his career, building on the structural and compositional traits I have identified in this dissertation. Analysis of Tailleferre's three remaining extant *opérettes* is another area for future work, as this study only discusses in detail *M. Petitpois*. Other pieces based on Offenbach's form of *opérette* were discovered in the research of this document, such as *La Halte au moulin* (1868), an *opéra comique en un acte*, composed by Offenbach's original Eurydice, Delphine Ugalde. An analysis of these stage works might reveal more about the influence of Offenbach and his works on other composers.

Overall, both Offenbach and Tailleferre displayed an uncanny ability to adapt the styles, structures, and forms used by other composers. Though they sometimes used this skill for

different purposes, the results were similar in that it is apparent which composers and styles they were parodying in their compositions. When imitating Offenbach, Tailleferre applied the techniques of her predecessor to construct an *hommage* to his body of work.

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

Opéra Comique (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>L'alcôve</i> (1)	1847 (?)	de Forges, Leuven, Roche	?/Yes
<i>Une nuit Blanche</i> (1)	1847 (?)	de Saint-Georges	?/No
<i>La Duchesse d'Albe</i> (3)	1847-8 (?)	de Saint-Georges	?/Not Avail.
<i>Pépito</i> (1)	1853 (S,T,B)	Battu, Moinaux	9/No
<i>Luc et Lucette</i> (1)	1854 (?)	de Forges, Roche	?/Not Avail.
<i>Une nuit blanche</i> (1)	1855 (SST)	Plouvier	6/No
<i>La chanson de Fortunio</i> (1)	1861 (7S, T, B)	Crémieux, Halévy	11/No
<i>Monsieur et Madame Denis</i> (1)	1862 (3S, T, Mute)	Laurencin, Chapelle, Delaporte	10/Yes
<i>La baguette (Fédia)</i> (2)	1862 (?)	Meilhac, Halévy	?/Not Avail.
<i>Le fifre enchanté ou Le soldat magicien</i> (1)	1864 (3S, T, B)	Nwitter and Tréfeu	9/Yes (M)
<i>Coscoletto, ou Le lazzarone</i> (2)	1865 (2S, T, B)	Nwitter and Tréfeu	10/Yes
<i>Les bergers</i> (3)	1865 (10 S, 10 men)	Crémieux, Gille	32/Yes
<i>La permission de dix heures</i> (1)	1867 (S, M, 3T, B)	Mélésville and Carmouche	10/Yes
<i>Robinson Crusoé</i> (3)	1867 (2S, 2M, 3T, 2B)	Cormon, Crémieux	35/Yes
<i>Vert-Vert</i> (3)	1869 (5S, M, 4T, 4B)	Meilhac, Nwitter	34/Yes
<i>Fantasio</i> (3)	1872 (S, M, 4T, 4B)	Musset	22/Yes
<i>Fleurette, oder Trompter und Näherin</i> (1)	1863/1872 (S, 2T)	de Forges, Laurencin	8/No
<i>Le corsaire noir</i> (3)	1872 (?)	Nwitter, Tréfeu, Offenbach	?/Not Avail.
<i>La jolie parfumeuse</i> (3)	1873 (8S, M, T, 2B)	Crémieux, Blum	25/Yes
<i>Bagatelle</i> (1)	1874 (3S, B)	Crémieux, Blum	9/No
<i>La créole</i> (3)	1875 (3S, M, T, 3B)	Millaud, Meilhac	24/Yes
<i>Madame Favart</i> (3)	1878 (2S, 3T, 2B)	Duru, Chivot	30/Yes
<i>La fille du tambour-major</i> (3)	1879 (4S, M, 3T,3B)	Duru, Chivot	30/Yes
<i>Belle Lurette</i> (3)	1880 (6 Women, 6 Men)	Blum, Blau, Toché	31/Yes

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

Opéra Bouffe (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Croquefer, ou Le dernier des paladins</i> (1)	1857 (S, 4T)	Jaime, Tréfeu	11/No (mute chorus)
<i>Dragonette</i> (1)	1857 (S, 2T, B)	Mestépès, Jaime	9/No
<i>Barkouf</i> (3)	1860 (no music)	Scribe, Boisseaux, Blanchet	11/No
<i>M. Choufleuri restera chez lui le</i> (1)	1861 (2S, 3T, B)	de Saint Rémy, de Morny, L'Épine, Crémieux, Halévy	8/Yes
<i>Bavard et bavarde</i> (1/2)	1862/63 (6S, A, T, 2B)	Nwitter, Cervantes	23/Yes
<i>Les géorgiennes</i> (3)	1864 (11 Women, 11 Men)	Moinaux	19/Yes
<i>La belle Hélène</i> (3)	1864 (3S, 2M, 4T, 3B)	Meilhac, Halévy	28/Yes
<i>Barbe-bleue</i> (3)	1866 (9S,3M, 4T, 2B)	Meilhac, Halévy, Perrault	36/Yes
<i>La vie parisienne</i> (4)	1866 (4S, 5M, 3T, 6B)	Meilhac, Halévy	37/Yes
<i>La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein</i> (3)	1867 (3S, 3M, 3T, 3B)	Meilhac, Halévy	36/Yes
<i>Geneviève de Brabant</i> (3)	1867 (14 Women, 3T, 9M)	Tréfeu, Crémieux	47/Yes
<i>Le château à Toto</i> (3)	1868 (3S, 2M, 2T, 3B)	Meilhac, Halévy	35/Yes
<i>Le pont des soupirs</i> (2/4)	1868 (2S, 4T, 2B)	Crémieux, Halévy	??(only have 2Act version/Yes
<i>L'île de Tulipatan</i> (1)	1868 (S, M, 3T)	Chivot, Duru	13/No
<i>La Périchole</i> (2)	1868 (4S, 4M, 6T, 2B)	Meilhac, Halévy	31/Yes
<i>La diva</i> (3)	1869 (3S, 9 Women, 7 Men)	Meilhac, Halévy	24/Yes
<i>La princesse de Trébizonde</i> (2/3)	1869 (7S, 2M, A, 3T, B)	Nwitter, Tréfeu	37/Yes
<i>Les brigands</i> (3)	1869 (10S, M, 9T, 4B)	Meilhac, Halévy	27/Yes
<i>Boule de neige</i> (3)	1871 (2S, 2M, T, 3B)	Nwitter, Tréfeu	46/Yes
<i>Les braconniers</i> (3)	1873 (??)	Chivot, Duru	23/Yes
<i>La Périchole</i> (2/3)	1874 (4S, 4M, 6T, 2B)	Meilhac, Halévy	No 3 Act version Available/Yes
<i>Madame l'archiduc</i> (3)	1874 (3S, M, 7T, 6B)	Millaud, Meilhac, Halévy	27/Yes
<i>La boulangère a des écus</i> (3)	1875 (6 Women, 6 Men)	Meilhac, Halévy	24/Yes
<i>La boîte au lait</i> (4)	1876 (4 Women, 7 Men)	Grangé, Noriac	29/Yes
<i>Le docteur Ox</i> (3)	1877 (5S, 2M, 8T, 3B)	Mortier, Gille, Verne	22/Yes

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

<i>La foire Saint-Laurent</i> (3)	1877 (5 Women, 5 Men)	Crémieux, Saint-Albin	28/Yes
<i>Maître Péronilla</i> (3)	1878 (3S, M, 3T, 4B)	Nwitter, Ferrier, Offenbach	31/Yes
<i>La marocaine</i> (3)	1878	Ferrier, Halévy	??/??

Opérette (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Madame Papillon</i> (1)	1855 (??)	Servières, Halévy	Ballet version extant
<i>Un postillon en gage</i> (1)	1856 (??)	Plouvier, Adenis	??/??
<i>La rose de Saint-Flour</i> (1)	1856 (S, 2T)	Carré	11/No
<i>Le 66</i> (1)	1856 (S, T, B)	de Forges, Laurencin	10/No
<i>Le mariage aux lanternes</i> (1)	1857 (3S, T)	Carré, Battu	8/No
<i>La chatte métamorphosée en femme</i> (1)	1858 (S, M, T, B)	Scribe, Mélesville	9/No
<i>Un mari à la porte</i> (1)	1859 (S, M, T, B)	Delacour, Lartigue, Morand	8/No
<i>Daphnis et Cholé</i> (1)	1860 (2S, M, B)	Clairville, Nicolaïe, Cordier de Vaulabelle	12/No
<i>Jacqueline</i> (1)	1862 (2S, T, B)	d'Arcy, Crémieux, Halévy	8/No
<i>Il signor Fagotto</i> (1)	1863 (3S, T, 2B)	Nwitter, Tréfeu	7/No
<i>L'amour chanter</i> (1)	1864 (??)	Nwitter, L'Épine	??/??
<i>Jeanne qui pleure et Jean qui rit</i> (1)	1864 (S, M, T, B)	Nwitter, Tréfeu	10?No
<i>La romance de la rose</i> (1)	1869 (2S, 2T, B)	Tréfeu, Prével, Nwitter	6/No
<i>Pomme d'api</i> (1)	1873 (2S, B)	Halévy, Busnach	11/No
<i>Pierrette et Jacquot</i> (1)	1876 (2S, M, B)	Noriac, Gille	8/No

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

Opérette Bouffe (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le financier et le savetier</i> (1)	1856 (S, 2T, B)	Crémieux, About	8/No
<i>La bonne d'enfant</i> (1)	1856 (S, T, B)	Bercioux	6/No
<i>Vent du soir, ou L'horrible festin</i> (1)	1857 (S, 2T, B)	Gille	8/No
<i>Une demoiselle en loterie</i> (1)	1857 (S, T, B)	Jaime, Crémieux	7/No
<i>Les deux pêcheurs, ou Le lever du soleil</i> (1)	1857 (2T)	Dupeuty, Bourget	6/No
<i>Mesdames de la Halle</i> (1)	1858 (5S, M, 3T, 3B)	Lapointe	11/Yes
<i>Les vivandières de la grande-armée</i> (1)	1859 (??)	Jaime, de Forges	Not Available
<i>Apothicaire et perruquier</i> (1)	1861 (S, 3T)	Frébault	??/No
<i>Mam'zelle Moucheron</i> (1)	1881 (7 Women, 2 Men)	Leterrier, Vanloo	9/No

Opéra Bouffon (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Orphée aux enfers</i> (2)	1858 (6S, M, 4T, 3B)	Crémieux, Halévy	24/Yes
<i>Geneviève de Brabant</i> (2)	1859 (14 Women, 3T, 9B)	Jaime, Tréfeu	47/Yes
<i>Le pont des soupirs</i> (2)	1861 (2S, 4T, 2B)	Crémieux, Halévy	22/Yes
<i>Le roman comique</i> (3)	1861 Manuscript Fragments only	Crémieux, Halévy	??/??
<i>Le voyage de MM. Dunanan père et fils</i> (3)	1862 (3 Women, 6 Men)	Siraudin, Moinaux	9/Yes

Bouffonnerie musicale (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Les deux aveugles</i> (1)	1855 (2T)	Moinaux	4/No
<i>Tromb-al-ca-zar, ou Les criminels dramatiques</i> (1)	1856 (S, T, 2B)	Dupeuty, Bourget	12/No
<i>La leçon de chant électromagnétique</i> (1)	1867 (T, B)	Bourget	7/No

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

Pièce d'occasion (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Entrez, messieurs, mesdames</i> (1)	1855 (??)	Méry, Servières, Halévy	??/??
<i>Les dragées du baptême</i> (1)	1856 (??)	Dupeuty, Bourget	??/??

Saynète (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le rêve d'une nuit d'été</i> (1)	1855	Tréfeu	??/??
<i>Paimpol et Périnette</i> (1)	1855 (S, T)	de Lussan, de Forges	8/No

Revue (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le carnaval des revues</i> (1)	1860 (??)	Grangé, Gille, Halévy	??/??
<i>Les hannetons</i> (3)	1875 (7 Women, 8 Men)	Grangé, Millaud	??/No chorus

Opéra Bouffe Féerie (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le roi Carotte</i> (4)	1872 (8 Women, 8 Men)	Sardou, Hoffmann	37/Yes
<i>Whittington (Le chat du diable)</i> (3)	1874 (2S, T, B)	Nuitter, Tréfeu, Brougham-Farnie	38/Yes

Opéra Féerie (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seprate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Geneviève de Brabant</i> (5)	1875 (14 Women, 3T, 9B)	Tréfeu, Crémieux	47/Yes
<i>Le voyage dans la lune</i> (4)	1875 (4S, M, 3T, 3B)	Leterrier, Vanloo, Mortier	35/Yes

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

Tableau Villageois (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le trésor à Mathurin</i> (1)	1853 (??)	Battu	??/No

Légende Napolitaine (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le décaméron, ou La grotte d'azur</i> (1)	1855 (??)	Méry	Not Avail.

Anthropophagie Musicale (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Oyayaye, ou La reine des îles</i> (1)	1855 (S, T)	Moineaux	Not Avail/No

Légende Bretonne (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Le violoneux</i> (1)	1855 (S, T, B)	Mestépès, Chevalet	9/No

Chinoiserie Musicale (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Ba-ta-clan</i> (1)	1855 (S, 4T, B)	Halévy	11/Yes

Comédie à Ariettes (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Trafalgar - Sur un volcan</i> (1)	1855 (??)	L'Épine, Méry	Not Avail.

Opérette Fantastique (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Les trois baisers du diable</i> (1)	1857 (S, M, T, B)	Mestépès	11/No

List of Offenbach *opérettes*

Conversation Alsacienne (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Lischen et Fritzchen</i> (1)	1863 (S, B)	Dubois, Boisselot	6/No

Fantaisie Musicale (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Les refrains des bouffes</i> (1)	1865	Libretto Lost	????

Valse (Acts)	Year Composed (Number of characters)	Librettist(s)	Seperate Numbers/ Chorus (Y or N)
<i>Tarte à la crème</i> (1)	1875 (??)	Millaud	??/??

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