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More Than Its Sound: The Political, Economic, and Social Reasons Behind the Saxophone's Exclusion from the Symphony Orchestra

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MORE THAN ITS SOUND:
THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL REASONS
BEHIND THE SAXOPHONE'S EXCLUSION
FROM THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Kyle Beaudoin
An Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
for Honors in
The Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance

The School of Arts and Sciences
Rhode Island College

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to uncover the reasons why the saxophone was not integrated into the orchestra. Through an examination of political, economic, and cultural accounts of Paris during the nineteenth century, this paper attempts to examine the effects on the saxophone's reception. During the nineteenth century, French composers had a vehement fascination with timbre and the manipulation of its effects as a new aesthetic dimension in music; the perfect environment for an entirely new timbre to be added to ensembles, let alone introduced. The multitude of acclaim that the saxophone received from prominent composers, critics, and other noteworthy musical figures upon its arrival to the French capital does not add up with the ultimate dismissal it received by the orchestra as an institution. Therefore, because of the excessive amount of commendations—many that explicitly say the saxophone could be, or is destined to be the newest expressive tool in the symphony orchestra—the instrument's timbre must not be the ultimate reason for its quick dismissal. This paper consults general historic events and individual accounts from music critics, musicians, composers, instrument makers, and military leaders in attempt to determine why the saxophone was not added to orchestral forces around the time it was invented.

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I. Introduction

No other instrument holds a position more salient in the sense of cultural symbolism than the saxophone. From merely the word itself one imagines a profuse amount of specific images, locations, and sounds. Atmospheres containing hazy, smoke-filled tints, boisterous crowds, and corybantic dancing are typically conjured by the word, "saxophone." The brothels of Storyville in New Orleans, the Green Mill of Chicago, and the famous Harlem Cotton Club; in these legendary places where the bar taps ran until dawn, so did the rebellious groans of the saxophone. Out of the array of possible connotations tied to the saxophone, none, however, are related to classical¹ music. The least likely image is a saxophonist amid the woodwinds section encompassed by strings in a symphony orchestra, the last place one would imagine the instrument is in the concert hall, and the last sounds to come to mind would be the mellifluous tones in which the instrument's inventor had envisioned for his legacy-establishing innovation.

With its invention during the Romantic era in the nineteenth century, prior to the authority it assumed as the choice tool of expression in the cultural phenomena and musical revolution of the Jazz Age, one could reasonably infer that the saxophone was also an influential agent in the evolving aesthetics of the Romantic period. Unfortunately, that was not the case; the saxophone had a Lilliputian impression on the mainstream music practices during that century. Its advocates declared the instrument as a poster child of the woodwind family, but the musical community ignored it as an abandoned orphan. Born into what appeared to be the prime conditions for a successful integration into the symphony orchestra, the story of the saxophone proved quite the opposite as one tinged with travail, sectarian prejudice, calumny, polarization, and caustic irony.

Composers of the early nineteenth century, inspired by the gaping holes that Beethoven had smashed into the walls of the Classical era's austere fortress of

¹ Here I use the term as a hypernym for European musical traditions in the predominant ensembles of the Classical, Romantic, and twentieth-century periods.

aesthetics, had germinated the seemingly prime conditions in which the saxophone should have thrived by departing from the restraint, objectivity, and meticulous procedures of the Classical era with their own musical ideas. Driven by new aesthetics of interiority, composers sought to create individual styles through form adaptations, new genres, harmonic progressions not previously accepted or heard, extended and colorful chord sonorities, texture modifications, prolonged melodies, and phrasing, among many others. Romantic era composers were liberal enough to vastly depart from the previously defined Classical models through an array of drastic alterations, so why was that liberality not inclusive towards the newly invented instrument in its evolving aesthetics within the context of orchestral instrumentation?

Among the expanding deviation from the Classical period's characteristics of music, Romantic composers had an increasing interest in timbre, particularly French composers. Unveiled in France during the mid-nineteenth century, the novel timbre of the saxophone was an epoch-making subject of interest among the timbre-obsessed musical culture. In a society that emphasized timbre to the extent that dozens of treatises on the subject were published, it is only reasonable to presume that French composers would have seized the opportunity to add the newfangled timbre of the saxophone to the wind color palate of the orchestra. Why is it that the symphony orchestra continued to steadily expand the instrumentation for its winds section since the late Baroque era, but renounced the proposal made to include the saxophone? Though it may be presumed that the reason for rejecting a newly created instrument from an already established ensemble is due to its timbre, that was not the case; the reasons behind the saxophone's rejection from the orchestra were ones of industrialized economic monopoly and political association, which resulted in stigmatizing social implications.

II. The family and early life of Adolphe Sax

The legacy of the Belgian instrument maker, Adolphe Sax, is well known; however, what is not well known is how his early childhood affected his career practices. By providing the context of Sax's origins and early musical studies, the reasons for the saxophone's exclusion from the symphony orchestra will be clarified subsequently beside a summary of Sax's early life. In the process it will be helpful to examine the start of Sax's career since the technology of the saxophone is tied with his own personal success.

Sixty miles south of Brussels, Belgium, lay the humble town of Dinant. The small town is well known for its extensive history of metalwork craftsmanship since the Middle Ages, most notably for its production of *dinanderie*, a type of late medieval brass used for an assortment of domestic items. Among the numerous *dinanderie* craftsmen of Dinant was the distinguished Charles-Joseph Sax (1790 – 1865), an instrument maker. In his adolescence, Charles-Joseph was an apprentice to a carpenter, which qualified him to become a cabinet-maker and several years later he was hired as a metal craftsman to construct parts for spinning machinery at a local factory. During his employment at the factory he married Marie-Joseph Masson in 1813. November 6 of the following year would supply them with the first of eleven children, Antoine-Joseph Sax, better known by his moniker, Adolphe. Due to effects from the fall of the First French Empire in 1815, the new family was forced to relocate after the Dinant factory closed.

Charles-Joseph, his wife, and one-year-old Adolphe moved to Brussels where the elder Sax sought to combine his carpentry and blacksmithing skills with his beloved hobby of playing the serpent by establishing a small instrument shop. It is nearly unbelievable, considering the prominent legacies in musical instrument developments from both Charles-Joseph and his son that he had never served an apprenticeship to the instrument-making trade before venturing into the vocation; his only qualification was his experience as an instrumentalist. Charles-Joseph's aspiration of forging his musical hobby with his professional abilities resulted in an

intense, continuous, and passionate investigation of the acoustics of wind instruments, an imperative quality that he would pass onto his son.

With his fine manual dexterity and ingenuity, he was soon able master the laws concerning the bore, tone hole placement, and other various elements of serpent making. Within a few years Charles-Joseph had earned a local reputation as a producer of great quality serpents and flutes, which expanded later to clarinets, bassoons, and brass instruments. His variety of woodwind instruments quickly attracted notice and gained him a medal at the Industrial Exhibition of 1820, and the title of musical-instrument maker to the court of the Netherlands, uncannily foreshadowing the career of Adolphe.

Adolphe's childhood was one of calamities. According to Oscar Comettant, Sax's first biographer, he repeatedly endured an unbelievable array of grievous accidents. As a toddler he fell down three flights of stairs, cracking his head against the stone floor and was believed to be dead. At the age of three, he swallowed vitrioled water, which he mistook for milk and later a sewing pin. In the remaining years of his childhood, he was seriously burned in a gunpowder explosion, fell onto the side of a hot cast iron frying pan, and escaped asphyxiation three times by his removal from rooms where varnished items were laid out to dry during his naps. And later he was hit on the head by a cobblestone while playing near a house under construction, and fell into a river some years after. The aberrant childhood of Sax was well known by the Dinant locals, who commonly referred to him as "little Sax, the ghost."² "He's a child condemned to misfortune; he won't live,"³ his mother once asserted. While he undoubtedly lived through his accident-prone childhood, the portion of his mother's statement regarding misfortune would prove to be true, as misfortune was a persistent and defining theme throughout Sax's life.

Aside from his juvenile accidents, Adolphe was given a very comprehensive musical education from childhood due to the inclinations of his father's profession and hobbies. In 1828 he was accepted as a flutist to the Royal School of Music, the

² Albert Rémy, "Adolphe Sax", *Ville de Dinant*. January 28, 2017.
<http://www.dinant.be/en/inheritance/adolphe-sax/>.

³ Ibid.

precursor to the *Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles*, which was established four years later in 1832. During his training there he proved to be a genuine virtuoso in his flute and clarinet studies; he exhibited skills so extraordinary that a visiting German composer, Joseph Küffner, dedicated a clarinet duo for Sax to perform in 1834.⁴ If not for the ancient patrilineal conventions that classified the majority of craft families, which was still prevalent during the nineteenth century, Sax may have had a career similar to those of Franz Liszt or Niccolò Paganini.

Following his father, Adolphe and his younger brothers began careers as instrument craftsmen under the family's workshop. Sax's first experiments concerned the deficiencies of the instrument in which he excelled, the clarinet. At the tender age of fifteen his first innovations were shown at the *Concours Industriel de Bruxelles* of 1830, which contained two flutes and a clarinet fashioned from ivory;⁵ however, they were listed under Charles-Joseph's name in the official catalogue, as it's likely that his father had a substantial involvement in constructing them. The first time Adolphe's name was mentioned in an exhibition was the 1835 *Concours Industriel de Bruxelles*, in which the catalogue described a "boxwood clarinet with 24 keys, invented and perfected by Sax fils".⁶ This modified clarinet attracted considerable approval for the twenty-year-old inventor.

Sax's following years were dedicated to improving the bass clarinet. With the knowledge of his father's self-taught comprehension on acoustic theory, he produced an improved model with a larger bore, adjusted the locations of the tone holes, added closed cup keys, and added a speaker key to aid sound production in the high register. Patented in 1838, his newly modified bass clarinet was received with substantial success, establishing his reputation as an instrument maker in both Brussels and Paris. His enhanced version provoked enthusiasm in significant

⁴ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 12.

⁵ Though this instrument holds the stamp of "C. Sax", it has been attributed as his first experiment with the clarinet. Adolphe's name is not listed beside this instrument or the two flutes in the 1830 catalogue because he was still an apprentice in his father's shop, working under Charles-Joseph's name.

Oscar Comettant, *Historie d'un inventeur au dix-neuviè siècle: Adolphe Sax, ses ouvrages et ses lutes*. (Paris, Pagnerre, 1860), 6. See figure 2.1.

⁶ Malou Haine, *Adolphe Sax (1814-1894): sa vie, son œuvre et ses instruments de musique*. (Brussels, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1980), quoted in Cottrell, 13.

Parisian figures, such as François Habeneck, the conductor of the Paris Opéra orchestra. When Habeneck visited Brussels the young inventor's work had impressed him to the degree that he referred to all other clarinets as "barbarian instruments".⁷ But a recurrent theme in Sax's career had appeared from this early stage as an inventor, namely that praise was always equivalently paired with opposition. The bass clarinet soloist at the *La Grande Harmonie* in Brussels refused to use Sax's new instrument despite the praise it received from prominent musicians, on the account that it had come from "that weedy little pupil, Sax".⁸ Sax responded to the bass clarinetist's insult with "play your clarinet, then and I shall play mine."⁹ This tenacious response exhibited a quality of his that would be responsible for enabling countless opportunities throughout his career, but would also be partially responsible for obstructing the saxophone's opportunity to become a permanent member of the orchestra.



Figure 2.1: An ivory clarinet; fifteen-year-old Adolphe's first exhibition experiment. Displayed at the 1830 *Concours Industriel de Bruxelles*.

⁷ Albert Rémy, "Adolphe Sax", *Ville de Dinant*. January 28, 2017. <http://www.dinant.be/en/inheritance/adolphe-sax/>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

It was in Brussels during the years of experimentation with the bass clarinet that Sax developed his iconic instrument. Handwritten notes and published letters in *La Belgique musicale* from Charles-Joseph provide documentation that the saxophone was invented in 1838, nearly a decade before its patent was established, while Sax was still working in his father's shop¹⁰. Aspirations of fixing the intonation and timbral discrepancies of the bass clarinet were provoked from his experience in playing the instrument himself. Though later Sax claims the idea of the saxophone was inspired by the timbral disparity between the strings and winds in the symphony orchestra, scholars can only speculate on whether the saxophone was initially a result of a failed bass clarinet modification, or an independent project. Perhaps comparable to his childhood defined by accidents, the saxophone was too, an accident. The possibility of the saxophone coming into existence as an attempt at solving the issues of the bass clarinet corresponds with Charles-Joseph's statements, which assert that the saxophone was invented in 1838, the very year that Adolphe patented his new bass clarinet. This conjecture, however, is unlikely, as Sax would have known the acoustic differences between cylindrical and parabolic cones due to the training he received in his father's workshop. It is far more probable that the saxophone came into existence through an independent pursuit that occurred simultaneously beside his bass clarinet project. Sax's bold declarations state that he invented the saxophone to create a timbre between those of the overpowering brasswinds and the imperceptible woodwinds; one that could easily approach the strings in the orchestra without consuming or greatly contrasting with the voice-like delicacy of the section. His knowledge of acoustical timbre imbalances was later validated by the success his reorganization for French military bands received,

¹⁰ Maurice Hamel, *Notes complémentaires sur Adolphe Sax* (Archives of H. et A. Selmer, Paris, 1925), quoted in Cottrell, 42.

suggesting that the idea behind the instrument was not initially generated by a flawed bass clarinet renovation attempt as far more probable.

Perhaps the timbre of the late Renaissance instrument, the serpent, that captivated his father from a very young age during his time as an amateur musician in the *Dinant Société d'Harmonie* also enthralled young Adolphe to the extent that it served as the source of inspiration behind the idea of the saxophone. The old church ensemble instrument is comprised of a wooden S-shaped body—similar to that of the saxophone, with finger holes, a few keys, and a brass wind cup mouthpiece. As a descendent of the bass cornetto, the combination of a wooden body with finger holes and a brass wind cup mouthpiece produces an amalgam of a mellow and soft woodwind timbre and a strident and penetrating brasswinds timbre and was admired because of its inimitable ability to blend with human voices; the very principles which Sax sought after in his invention.

Regardless of the reason behind its invention, the saxophone certainly transformed the development of western music, only not in the direction that Sax had anticipated. The remainder of Sax's life would be consumed by efforts aimed to establish the saxophone's permanent residence in the orchestra and other ensembles, and as a legitimate instrument. If it weren't for his political connections during one of the most politically insecure periods in France's history, his monopolization over the Parisian instrument manufacturing commerce, and the social stigmatizations he accrued from various forms of slander, the saxophone may have become more than an occasional visitor to the symphony orchestra. Despite the early successes in Belgium, a single city appeared to offer far more economic opportunities than his entire home country: Paris.

III. 1830s: Shifting Politics and the Rise of Military Music

Before Sax turned the Parisian musical community on its head with his arrival in 1842, the capital had endured a multitude of political insurgencies and economic fluctuations in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Throughout the century France's political climate was akin to Nor'easter storm, but

the first several decades were particularly hazardous, as the 1789 Revolution essentially left the nation "without supplies" for the succeeding storms. Tossed to and fro between republics, empires, and monarchies the rapidly harsh "winds" of nineteenth century French political climate would ultimately determine the saxophone's fate before the century ended.

In attempts to evince the milieu of French politics in which the saxophone would be first introduced a review of France's political turbulence from the French Revolution until the 1830s will help establish a sense of how the frequency of monumental changes from the first three decades of the nineteenth century had affected the political climate, economics, and the nation's culture of the succeeding decades.

The Revolution of 1789 led to the establishment of the First Republic, a short-lived founding that would succumb to Napoléon I's *coup d'état* in 1799. During the last ten years of the eighteenth century France had rid itself of the feudalist *Ancien Régime*, but began the nineteenth century with a similar autocracy cloaked with the liberties of the Napoléonic Code. Crowned emperor in 1804, Napoléon I's imperial conquests and reformed moderate ideas did not last even a decade. A failed invasion of Russia forced Napoléon to abdicate in exile to the remote island of Elba, off the coast of the Italian peninsula in 1814.

During Napoléon's exile, the Bourbon monarchy was restored with King Louis XVIII in 1814. The reign of Louis XVIII was different than the absolute monarchy of Louis XVI, which led to his execution during the revolution. Instead, Louis XVIII was essentially a titular king who ruled under a constitutional monarchy in which he shared authority with a constitutionally organized government. His reign was briefly interrupted by an ambitious Napoléon who escaped exile and led 1,500 men to Paris to recapture his authority.¹¹ It was during this period called *Cent-Jours* (Hundred Days) that the Napoléonic wars and First French Empire would end through the Waterloo campaign of 1815. Napoléon's ultimate fate would be yet

¹¹ Jonathan Fenby, *France: A Modern History from the Revolution to the War with Terror*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 41.

another exile to the isolated island of St. Helena in the south Atlantic Ocean and King Louis XVIII would return to power within the year.

Childless, Louis XVIII's death in 1824 handed the throne to his brother Charles X. Charles X, an *ultraroyaliste* who valued protecting the interests of the aristocratic landowners and clergy created right-wing policies enforced through a draconian ruling to manipulate the French constitution to suit their interests. Still enlightened by the ideas established by the revolution several opposition groups were revived and forced Charles X to abdicate in the 1830 *Révolution de Juillet* (July Revolution). Louis-Philippe duc d'Orléans, lieutenant general of the kingdom at the time, was then asked by legislature to accept the crown and he became the king on August 8, 1830. Louis-Philippe's reign would be the longest and most stable that France would see since the revolution.

The rapid changes of the ruling class in France corresponded to its stationary and falling economy. Prior to the Revolution of 1789, the first and second estates, made up of wealthy nobles and clergymen, were not taxed and the third estate, or "commoners" bore an enormous taxation burden. Naturally, increased spending by kings, the wealthiest classes being tax-exempt, and the working classes being overly taxed led to an economic collapse. The demand for goods plummeted and the majority of artisans, farmers, and merchants were without work. Harvests were poor and food was too expensive for the third estate to purchase. Bread riots frequently occurred and were even taken to Versailles in marches demanding that the people be fed. Following the revolution, the French economy was to remain poor and the nation's debt high during the Napoléonic Era.

The defeat of 1815 that cost Napoléon his authority also cost the nation a significant portion of its wealth. Napoléon paid for his expensive series of wars through a variety of shoddy means such as low pay rates for soldiers, taxation increases, an insecure currency reform; he also sold Louisiana to the United States, sold lands that were formally owned by the Catholic Church, and collected requisitions on countries under his control. While his continuous military campaigns stimulated a temporary economic growth by the production of weapons and other equipment, construction of fortifications, and the maintenance of the

massive armies, it was an ephemeral economic lift. The French economic system proved to be fragile and not self-sufficient after the cessation of many industries that relied on British trade had greatly damaged the economy, merely due to Napoléon's embargo against British trade in response to the British naval blockade of French coasts in 1806.¹² It was only under King Louis-Philippe's reign that the economy would stabilize for a period long enough to provide a fecund environment for France's middle and working classes through public encouragement and acts that benefitted aspiring merchants.

After the fall of the First French Empire, an increased concern of international standing formed. Napoléon's France had used the classic medium of imperial expansion to gain international hegemony, but his fallen empire left the subsequent regimes economically drained and drastically insecure politically. Succeeding French leaders focused on reconstructing and altering their nation's government (either to tailor to the aristocracy's or the citizens' desires) and fixing their economies while the concern regarding international influence manifest itself in ways other than military power. Rather than seizing territories via military force, France, as well as other European nations, sought to seize national styles of art. Music was the most adaptable form of art to brand nationally, as its aesthetics varied greatly across the continent whereas visual arts did not yield such diversity. Nationalism in music flourished due to two principal ideas of the nineteenth century, the Romantic movement's exaltation of emotion and identity and the enlightened liberal beliefs that a legitimate state must be based on a "people" rather than a monarch, God, or dynasty.

The direct association between the two ideas was well defined in this context, as the military held a strong cultural representation of the nation and by extension its citizens, especially visible during the time of the First French Empire. Thus, music played by the representatives of the collective people of a nation easily combined the Romantic stress on identity with civic nationalism. France was not alone in its efforts to provide a vehicle for nationalist music to assert a degree of

¹² Ibid, 57.

international identity and authority on art. England, Prussia, Spain, the United Netherlands, Russia, and the Austrian empire all pursued enhanced versions of their previous military bands to aid national identity and proclaim superiority over the cultures of their neighboring countries.

During the 1820s and 1830s, the surrounding nations continued to enhance their military bands considerably through an expansion of instrumentation and increased discipline while France's military bands remained stagnant. It appeared that French military bands were defeated with Napoléon at Waterloo. The superior condition of the military bands of the Germanic states was particularly excruciating for France. Germanic military bands had made advancements since the late seventeenth-century when they seized various auxiliary percussion instruments from the Ottoman Empire's janissary bands during their resistance to the last Ottoman invasion. In the century when nations formed, a national identity was a pressing ambition, and at a time when Prussian and Austrian military bands were internationally known for their excellence, it isn't hard to imagine that most French citizens had shared the concern that their military bands reflected the frenetic period that their nation was experiencing. The subject was clearly a concern among citizens as numerous local newspapers and periodicals frequently observed the pathetic state of French military bands in comparison with their Germanic competitors. One can discern the severity of the contrast concerning military music between the nations through an article from *L'Illustration*, which comments, "Whoever heard an Austrian or Prussian band surely broke into laughter upon hearing a French regimental band."¹³

In effort to deal with the embarrassing problem, King Louis-Philippe called for an institution that would specifically train military musicians. Erected in 1836 the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire* began to address the poor conditions haunting French regimental bands under the instruction of its director Frederic Berr. The establishment of the *Gymnase* was the commencement of a period of reform in French military music, a period that would reach its culmination and reverse

¹³ Michael Segell, *The Devil's Horn: The Story of the Saxophone, From Noisy Novelty to King of Cool* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 17.

national eminence between European military ensembles within the decade due to the radical restructuring by the young Belgian.

At the time Sax arrived in Paris in 1842 France was in a fairly secure period economically and politically due to King Louis-Philippe's policies, which restored the international relations that Napoléon's reign had previously impaired. King Louis-Philippe's policies favored the bourgeoisie over the aristocracy, which greatly allowed entrepreneurs and traders to flourish as the many developments in manufacturing, transportation, technology, and science continued into the first half of the nineteenth century, making Paris, in particular, a wealthy city. In turn, the accumulated wealth in Paris stimulated more musical patronage from the bourgeoisie, which gave composers and musicians ample opportunities for employment in salons, concert halls, or music schools.

As a city that had had an extensive history and reputation in crafting musical instruments since the seventeenth century, Paris reaffirmed itself as the principal instrument-producing center in Europe thanks to the fertile economic setting provided by King Louis-Philippe's bourgeois support accompanied by industrial expansion in the 1830s. Before permanently settling there, Sax traveled to the instrument-producing capital in 1839 to strategically promote his new bass clarinet, but he also used the occasion to become acquainted with the well-known musicians and composers that were reaping the newfound musical patronage offered by the city, such as Hector Berlioz, Jean-Georges Kastner, Giacomo Meyerbeer, and Fromental Halévy. His redesigned bass clarinet delivered a prestige to his name in Paris, which drew notice to the radar of Louis-Philippe's *aide-de-camp*, General Marie-Théodore Gueilly, Comte de Rumigny, who would later travel to Brussels to seek Sax's assistance with the reformation of French regimental bands. General de Rumigny's offer would have appeared to Sax as the opportunity of a lifetime and a one-shot deal, however in revisiting the affair through a diachronic lens it proved to be tragically ironic, the "Brutus" of Sax's life; what he believed to be a beneficial and amicable affiliation was really the source of his instrument's grievous fate in European art music. In short, Sax's acceptance to the *aide-de-camp*'s offer was the lone event that almost exclusively instigated the hostility towards the saxophone by

musicians, composers, instrument manufacturers, attached permanent connotations to the instrument, and ultimately caused its rejection from becoming a permanent member of the symphony orchestra.

IV. 1840s: Politics, Economics, and Aesthetics Collide

"Hurry and finish your new family of instruments!"

The 1840s marked a profound transformation in Parisian musical life due to the young Belgian's arrival. The humiliating state of French military music experienced a reformation that instigated hostile opposition and impelled beliefs of conspiracy. The centuries-old tradition of instrument artisan families became endangered by the burgeoning economic threat of Sax's manufacturing process and provoked nearly all the instrument makers to retort with unscrupulous behaviors and slanderous accusations. The pages of the city's musical periodicals were dominated by an unremitting infatuation with the novel timbre of the saxophone. Sax's tenacity resulted in a nearly unified reaction of unprecedented opposition within the Parisian musical community.

While his signature invention was consistently met with praise for its inimitably beautiful timbre and frequently received endorsements from Paris' most respected composers, it was never permanently accepted into the foremost instrumental ensemble in the nineteenth century. This leads one to believe the cultural decision was not a matter of timbral color appropriate for the orchestra, but the associations the instrument had accumulated through the commotion its inventor had triggered for the Parisian musical community. This commotion was inevitably associated with the authorities of the French military and the King.

Sax's decision to leave Brussels for Paris was stimulated by several events. The jury for the 1841 *Concours Industriel de Bruxelles* awarded him with a silver medal for his bass clarinet, clarinet, and "a bass saxophone in brass¹⁴"—the first recorded use of the word saxophone—, on account that they believed he was too

¹⁴ Sax actually presented his saxophone behind a curtain, as not to disclose it and avoid the risk of plagiarism.

Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 14.

young for gold because if they bestowed him with the highest award, they claimed he would have nothing to work towards on subsequent occasions. Dissatisfied with the jury's reasoning, Sax responded by saying, "if I'm too young for the gold medal, then I am too old for the silver."¹⁵ Feeling slighted by the exhibition jury, Sax made plans to move to the instrument producing capital, where he had an emergent reputation due to his bass clarinet, with hopes for better recognition.

His relocation plans were definite when the high-ranking French army official and King Louis-Philippe's *aide-de-camp*, Lieutenant-General Marie-Théodore Gueilly, Comte de Rumigny traveled to Brussels in 1842 with the proposition of a lucrative offer involving French military bands. As part of the attempts to make France's military bands surpass those of Prussia, the King had sent de Rumigny across Europe in search for inventors of new and enhanced instruments that could be added to regimental ensembles. After hearing Sax's instruments, de Rumigny was convinced that his instruments were imperative to raising the conditions of French military music. General de Rumigny returned to Paris and expressed interest in the young inventor's works while Sax took a brief trip to Berlin to study German methods of instrument manufacturing, possibly as a maneuver to discover the clandestine process behind the precise intonation and quality of Prussian military band instruments. His 1842 Berlin trip would later trigger accusations that Sax copied the saxophone from prototypes in Berlin made by instrument maker Wilhelm Wieprecht, the Prussian military band orchestrator and purveyor.

Upon returning from Berlin, Sax set off for Paris with only thirty francs to his name in 1842.¹⁶ Within one year he had managed set up a humble shop on rue Neuve-Saint-Georges with the support of many distinguished advocates from the Parisian musical community. The first recognized composer with whom he became acquainted with was Fromental Halévy; the most significant, but not because of any authority on French musical conventions, or his usage of the saxophone in compositions, but because he introduced him to his lifetime friend and most ardent

¹⁵ Georges Kastner, *Manuel général de musique militaire* (Paris: F. Didot, 1848) 235.

¹⁶ Albert Rémy, "Adolphe Sax", *Ville de Dinant*. January 28, 2017.
<http://www.dinant.be/en/inheritance/adolphe-sax/>.

supporter, Hector Berlioz. Sax's first musical connection was the composer Fromental Halévy who introduced him to Berlioz in 1842. While Halévy wasn't nearly as influential as Berlioz, he did express eager sentiments for the saxophone: "Hurry and finish your new family of instruments (saxophones) and come and succor to the poor composers that are looking for something new and to the public that is demanding it, if not to the world itself."¹⁷ Through contact with Halévy, Sax met with the well-established Berlioz in June 1842 in a gathering that lasted several hours where he detailed his inventions and their intended musical roles in various ensembles. Berlioz's response to Sax's illustrative ideas spawned an unceasing interest in Sax and his inventions from the Parisian press, which resulted in a fertile beginning for his business.

In his earliest published article from 12 June 1842, in the *Journal des Débats*, Berlioz articulated copious eulogies to the young inventor. On the saxophone, he said:

"Its sound is of such rare quality that, to my knowledge, there is not a bass instrument in use nowadays that could be compared to the saxophone. It is full, soft, vibrating, extremely powerful, and easy to lower in intensity. As far as I am concerned, I find it very superior to the lower tones of the ophicleide, in accuracy as well as in the stability of the sound. But the character of its tone is absolutely new, and does not resemble any of the timbres heard up until now in our orchestras with the sole exception of the bass clarinet's lower E and F. Owing to its reed, it can increase or diminish the intensity of its sounds. The notes of the higher compass vibrate so intensively that they may be applied with success to melodic expression. Its principal merit in my view is the varied beauty of its accent, sometimes serious, sometimes calm, sometimes impassioned, dreamy or melancholic, or vague, like the weakened echo of an echo, like the indistinct plaintiff moans of the breeze in the woods and, even better, like the mysterious vibrations of a bell, long after it has been struck; there does not exist another musical instrument that I know of that possesses this strange resonance, which is situated at the edge of silence."¹⁸

To Sax, Berlioz's lionization was the beginning of the recognition he felt he did not receive in Belgium. However, despite the frequent exaltations the saxophone received from various influential composers, Sax was to experience resilient

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Hector Berlioz quoted in Richard Ingham, *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4.

opposition, not only from his commercial competitors, but also from composer and musicians, all of which was a direct reaction to his political employment.

The French Military's Newest "Weapon" and Aristocratic Favorite

To understand how the saxophone's image developed as an incongruous maverick to since its introduction in the musical world, one must first understand the context in which it was initially employed, as it was from the political connotations that the litigations and calumny grew, all combined contributing to the failed attempts of adding it to the symphony orchestra.

Given the early support from Berlioz and other composers it's likely that Sax believed there would be no difficulty integrating the saxophone into the orchestra. Therefore in 1844— one year after he opened his rue Neuve-Saint-Georges shop— his focus may have shifted towards constructing industrial success when he accepted the *aide-de-camp*'s offer of military employment. Recognition in the instrument-producing capital had already been going quite well at this time and Sax would have perceived General de Rumigny's offer as a way to secure a footing within the fierce pecuniary competition in instrument manufacturing. He would have understood that there was a substantial prospective market for wind instruments offered by a French military seeking to counter the splendor of Prussia's ensembles and by reorganizing bands around his instruments, he would receive near continuous profits. Furthermore, the instrument which he used to form the foundation of the proposed band instrumentation was already patented, the saxhorn in 1843, giving Sax the sole opportunity to supply instruments to the French military.

Although military ensembles assimilated the saxophone more readily than any other institution, the prospect of using it was originally opposed. Having General de Rumigny's advocacy was not sufficient to order Sax's revisions of regimental bands, since he did not hold a position in the music sector. Sax and his formidable allied Lieutenant had to overcome opposition from military band authorities since practically no one directly connected to the music sector—

musicians, instrument makers, conductors, instructors—favored the proposition reforms of the young Belgian, whom they considered an opportunistic interloper.

The process of reform began with a request from General de Rumigny instructing Sax to send letters to the top French authorities concerning the matter. Sax wrote letters to General de Rumigny, Marshal Soult, the Minister of War, and King Louis-Philippe himself, sketching his proposed reorganization¹⁹ of French military bands, suggesting that the addition of his saxhorns, and piston valve bugles would greatly improve the neglected condition. The king was already familiar with Sax's work because he visited his stand at the Industrial Exhibition earlier in 1844²⁰, but Marshal Soult adjured a demonstration of the purposed instrumentation. Soult's request took the form of a comparison between thirty-two musicians representing the established military band instrumentation and a nine-piece band exclusively playing Sax's instruments²¹. Sax's instruments were superior to the established instrumentation, despite the inequality in number. The Minister of War then ordered a special committee, headed by de Rumigny, to examine Sax's instruments and reform plans before taking further action beginning in early 1845.

However, rather than a mere demonstration of Sax's suggested instrumentation, obstruction from Michele Carafa, the director of the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire*, led to another comparison between Sax's instrumentation and Carafa's. Carafa contended that Sax's plans were far too radical and the traditional instrumentation only needed an adjusted balance in number per section to compete with other nations' bands. For purposes of appearing to be fair, (after all, General de Rumigny was the head of the committee) the committee arranged a public competition between the proposed instrumentations at the Champs de Mars, which took place on 22 April 1845. Carafa presented a rebalanced traditional French military ensemble while Sax's instrumentation was slightly altered from his original

¹⁹ See figure 3.1. It is likely that Sax did not include saxophones in his first proposed re-orchestration plan because he either felt the instrument had not been sufficiently developed for display, or he did not want to jeopardize his patent application by allowing competitors to see it, as it was not yet to patented. Given Sax's bellicose temper regarding his patents later on, the latter is far more likely to be the reason.

²⁰ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 19.

²¹ Georges Kastner, *Manuel général de musique militaire* (Paris: F. Didot, 1848) 253.

proposal; he replaced the ophicleides with two indeterminate saxophones. Sax must have genuinely considered the odds to be greatly in favor of Carafa because, in an out-of-character act, he decided to take the risk of displaying his unpatented signature instrument in a public event.²² However, at the event seven of Sax's musicians—including the two saxophonists—failed to arrive, having been bribed by Carafa and Sax's other opponents.²³

Figure 3.1: Sax's initial proposed re-orchestration for French military bands (1845)

| | | |
|---|--|--------------------|
| I Eb Piccolo | 2 Bb Baritone Saxhorns | 2 Bb Ophicleides |
| 1 Eb Clarinet | 2 Bb four-valve Saxhorns | 1 Snare Drum |
| 6 Bb Clarinets | 4 Eb Contrabass Saxhorns | 1 Bass Drum |
| 6 three-valve Trumpets (Sax's invention) | 2 three-valve Cornets | 1 Tenor Drum |
| 2 Eb Saxhorns | 2 Valve trombones (Sax's invention) | 2 Pairs of Cymbals |
| 4 Bb Saxhorns | 2 Trombones | 1 Triangle |
| 4 Bb Tenor Saxhorns | | |

Even without the saxophones an estimated crowd of 20,000, which consisted of journalists, military officers, musicians, and the general public, voiced their opinion that Sax's orchestration was superior to Carafa's. The press announced Sax's victory as a victory for France. Journalists of *L'Illustration* declared, “we have the right to hope that our brave army will now be able to defy its rivals in concerts

²² Regarding note 17, this uncharacteristic display of pre-patented saxophones contradicts my belief that Sax's reason for not originally providing saxophones in his band reorganization was out of fear of potential competitors seeing it, not due to the saxophone's state of development at that time in 1844. However, evidence confirms that the saxophone was indeed sufficiently developed enough for critical performances, as in February 1844 Sax performed the saxophone in an arrangement of Berlioz's *Chant sacré* for his instruments in his shop salon for an audience consisting of elite musical figures, such as Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and Habeneck. Sax would not have shown an instrument that he thought was undeveloped in any way to such an influential audience. See Comettant (1860) for more information regarding the salon performance.

²³ Georges Kastner, *Manuel général de musique militaire* (Paris: F. Didot, 1848) 265.

as in battle²⁴." The degree of distinction attributed to Sax's instrumentation was so pronounced that journalists used vociferous comparisons such as, "a Stradivarius violin compared with a violin from the village, a glass of generous Bordeaux next to an adulterated beverage made in Suresne, that is the difference which exists between the old music and that proposed by M. Sax."²⁵ After the public's expressed approval for Sax, the committee agreed on a negotiated arrangement between Sax's radical plans and the traditional ensemble instrumentation by retaining the oboes and bassoons, but including all of Sax's instruments, including the saxophones that did not show at the event. They then put forth the proposal to the Ministry of War, which accepted it with an amendment; the oboes and bassoons were omitted just as Sax had suggested²⁶. The remodeled French military band instrumentation was officially announced to the public in the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* on 17 August 1845: "By ministerial decision, the instruments of Mr. Adolphe Sax have just been adopted for the music of the army."²⁷

Furthermore, with the Ministry of War's order to reorganize French regimental bands around Sax's instruments, certain necessary amendments to military institutions had to be made. Since his instruments were entirely new, nobody except Sax himself and his few employed musicians knew the logistics of playing the saxophone and saxhorn, which prompted the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire* to require new staff positions to train soldiers on Sax's instruments. In 1846 Jean-François-Barthélémy Cokken became the first professor of saxophone and Jean-Baptiste Arban the first professor of saxhorn, marking an official acceptance of the instruments, despite the opposition.

Periodicals, such as the *Revue* and *L'Illustration*, frequently published articles regarding Sax's participation in political events and described the acclaimed usage

²⁴ *L'Illustration*, (17 June, 1845), quoted in Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone*, (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 21.

²⁵ Leon Krutzer, *La Quotidienne*, (11 May 1845), 1, quoted in Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone*, (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 21.

²⁶ Frederick Hemke, *The Early History of the Saxophone*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1975), 203.

²⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine related to this source in particular. *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 14, no. 33, (17 August 1845), 272.

of his instruments by military institutions. Several examples can be observed beginning about several months prior to Ministry of War's official verdict on Sax's instruments, for instance, the *Revue's* March 2 reporting on the King's satisfaction with Sax's instruments:

"Mr. Sax, having performed during these last days several musical pieces with the new brass instruments of his invention, in front of the Minister of War, and the latter having brought back to the king keen satisfaction that this concert had brought him, His Majesty wished to hear them in his turn; consequently, Mr. Sax was summoned Sunday to the castle with his orchestra, and he played there three pieces in the presence of the king and of all the royal family: instruments and instrumentalists obtained an equal success. Mr. Sax, by the desire of the king, has also played several of his other instruments."²⁸

In fact, Sax did not only have the support from the French regime of Louis-Philippe and the military, but had also accumulated several royal patrons from various regions of France and several European countries within his first three years of living in Paris. A series of articles from the *Revue* document the patronage he accumulated from regions of France other than the capital and abroad. An 1844 article reveals that Sax's display concerts, which focused on saxhorns, attracted "an elite public going to the Gallery-Adelaïde concert hall to hear them", and "before his departure, Mr. Sax was called to Windsor...", where "His Royal Highness Prince Albert... after having highly congratulated him on his double talent of instrument maker and performer, made numerous [instrument] orders from Sax."²⁹ Several months later news presented in the *Revue* announced, "His Royal Highness Prince Albert declared himself a patron of this skillful and clever instrument maker."³⁰

Sax furthered his royal network in England by captivating the Queen in May 1845, as well as the Prince of Saxony-Weimar, who, during a trip to Paris attended a salon concert in his shop and expressed, "great testimonial satisfaction, [for] a performance of his new instruments."³¹ Royal families did not only provide Sax with

²⁸ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 14, no. 9, (2 March 1845), 70.

²⁹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 13, no. 46 (17 November 1844), 385.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 14, no. 3 (3 January 1845), 22.

³¹ "Her Majesty the Queen of England, during her visit to the Duke of Buckingham, asked again to hear the instruments of Mr. Ad. Sax." *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 14, no. 21 (21 May 1845), 174.

generous patronages and open support, but some also presented him with honorary royal titles, such as Guillaume II of Holland's issue marking Sax a royal knight of the Couronne de Chêne.³² Such titles, patronages, and vocalized support would have indefinitely impacted the Parisian public's opinion of Sax, and by extension the saxophone.

Sax's alignment with an array of aristocratic figures, especially in the location that had vehemently expressed their resentment against nobility about a half-century earlier negatively impacted the use of the saxophone in the symphony orchestra. Royal figures had even stated their beliefs that Sax's instruments would cause "a revolution in military and orchestral music."³³ However, unlike the previous centuries, where the tastes of princes, dukes, counts, dukes, and kings guided musical aesthetics through commissioned works of their court composers and *kapellmeisters*, in the nineteenth century, the aristocracy no longer had such an influence on musical conventions. Instead the expanding bourgeois obtained an amassed influence on the output of composers. In addition, the Romantic notion of self-conception itself opposed the older cultural conventions of catering compositions for the interests of aristocratic rulers; in its place, composers took an introverted stance, composing solely for themselves with an emphasis on imagination and individual freedom from social conventions and political restraints. Principal examples of denunciation towards the musical heritage of the royal patron system can be seen from leading Romantic composers as early as 1805 when Beethoven mocked the aristocratic dance of the minuet by using a scherzo in an undanceable tempo in the third movement of his Symphony No. 3.

By association with aristocracy—even as they no longer held a crucial influence on music as in previous centuries—Sax's exchanges would have appeared as symbolic to the former system of musical cultivation, but instead of composing works for royal institutions, Sax invented instruments. Although he did not invent the saxophone for specific usage in French military bands, the first usage of it being in military ensembles and the admiration expressed by officials would've made it

³² *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 14, no. 37, (14 September 1845), 303.

³³ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 13, no. 22, (2 June 1844), 195.

appear that Sax was catering to the royal regime just as *kapellmeisters* catered to their patrons before. The Parisian public would have perceived aristocratic advocacy for Sax and the saxophone as an effort to reclaim the slightest influence on musical production. With an emphasis on the important cultural influence the growing bourgeoisie had midway through the nineteenth century and the introverted Romantic philosophies of the self, it is likely that composers were defiant towards any proclamations or suggestions made by those in power, therefore encouraging the rejection of using of Sax's endorsed "noble" instruments.

Publications would have also presented an image of Sax entwined with the military to the general public. Since the first institutionalized ensembles that employed the saxophone were those of the French military the instrument would have accrued an inseparable connotation with regimental bands. According to Emily I. Dolan, the connotations that instruments held prior to their usage within the orchestra dictated their functions within the ensemble.³⁴ She continues by mentioning that the trumpet's timbre became associated with images of royalty and war, due to the instrument's role in those settings, the trombone had a parallel with the church, and the horn became symbolic of nobility and forest hunting scenes.³⁵ For instance, the trumpets due to their representation of such settings almost always employed fanfares and battle cries, such as in George Frideric Handel's *Water Music*, HWV 348-350 and Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Similarly the horns became vehicles for hunting calls and symbolizing noble intrusions, e.g. the treatment given to horns as early as J.S. Bach's first Brandenburg Concerto and later in Johannes Brahms's Horn Trio in Eb Major, Op. 40. By the time Gustav Mahler wrote his Third Symphony in 1896 the horn had a permanently distinct function as an aristocratic symbol.

If the cultural associations of instruments did prescribe their musical functions within the orchestra, then the trumpets and horns had already acquired the connotations of military music and aristocracy far before the invention of the

³⁴ Emily I. Dolan, "The Work of the Orchestra in Haydn's Creation," *19th Century Music* 34, no. 1 2010: 21.

³⁵ Ibid, 22.

saxophone. Even if composers during the nineteenth century had not promoted interiority, the orchestra left no room for the images that the saxophone conjured by its social function in French culture, nor could they override connotations developed in the Middle Ages; thus, promoting rejection on two levels, one cultural and one aesthetically. Composers would have rejected using the instrument due to the promotions it received from the very institutions that were condemned by the middle classes at the turn of the century, which during Sax's life held a significant amount of influence in music production, and the orchestra had already contained instruments that promoted what the saxophone came to represent in the nineteenth century, leaving it only to function as a representation of exoticism in timbre.

Centuries of Local Tradition Agitated by a Interloping Foreigner

Instrumental connotation's aside, Sax's business did not only profit substantially from the reorganization of French military bands, the economic dynamics leading into the middle of the nineteenth century, which affected Europe in its entirety, greatly contributed to Sax's success, but also indirectly contributed to the saxophone's rejection in the orchestra.

The increasing industrialization, technological development, and urban expansion that enveloped the economy of nineteenth century France led to bourgeois prosperity, resulting in the ability to spend their extra income on leisurely items. In addition, the technological developments allowed for a rapid expansion in markets because inventions such as the steam-driven engine made the construction of products and buildings easier and less time consuming. Furthermore, transportation of materials and distribution of products were also vastly expanded and hastened with the steam locomotive. Before and during Sax's arrival in Paris, a significant growth of factories and railroads occurred in the capital, which in turn displayed accumulated wealth in its dealings, especially what it was recognized for: the instrument-making industry.

A city that was once recognized for its inimitable quality of musical instruments made by the artisan families of century-old instrument guilds had been transformed by the mid-nineteenth century into a city where instruments were

manufactured and sold in large quantities as tradable commodities. The city's distinguished past in the profession was nurtured by the industrial revolution, evident in the number of musical instrument exhibitors in French exhibitions throughout the years showing a total of 72 in 1827, 109 in 1834, and 243 in 1855.³⁶ Paris' rich heritage in the musical instrument craft was so extensive that brass and woodwind patents in the city alone outnumbered all other types of patents, with the exception of the piano, from 1840 to 1870.

However, not all Parisian instrument makers subscribed to the ways fostered by the industrial revolution. Many manufacturers—particularly those who were part of the prior guild families, maintained traditional approaches and had only small or medium-sized enterprises. Many were not willing or able to make the capital investments necessary to expand their companies. The young instrument maker did not attempt to build a reputation through family ties and traditions; instead he established his business in 1843 with the new capitalist philosophy that came with the industrial revolution. Investors funded entrepreneurs whom they believed to appear fertile, in exchange the entrepreneur offered shares within his company and if successful, both parties would receive generous profits later on. In December of 1842 Sax managed to raise 40,000 francs from ten shareholders, each contributing 4,000 francs.³⁷

As his company productions drastically expanded through the military band contract he proved to be an attractive proposal for potential investors. Sax's distinction also quickly attracted investors abroad. For instance, the French-born magnate, Oskar Eduard Bénazet, the son of a casino owner in Baden-Baden, Prussia, a small spa town just outside the border of France. After Sax and his employed musicians played a concert set up by Berlioz, the journalists of the *Revue* report: "We said that the director at eaux de Baden, Mr. Bénazet who likes to encourage arts everywhere, having recognized the superiority of Mr. Sax's instruments, is about to become one of the principal supporters of this young and skillful artist."³⁸

³⁶ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 94.

³⁷ Ibid, 22.

³⁸ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 13, no. 21, (26 May 1844), 186.

Bénazet invested 300,000 francs into one entrepreneur's galloping track in the nearby town of Iffezheim, making it likely that the article's phrase, "principal supporter," indicates some type of financial support. With an increasing amount of investors focused on Sax, other instrument manufacturers would have found it difficult to expand their businesses to compete with Sax's growing enterprise. Additionally, those who were not interested investing in Sax's business probably turned to other large-scale operations, as the small-scale instrument makers wouldn't have seemed nearly as profitable, adding to the difficulty of expansion for traditional makers.

Sax's presence and increasing success intensified the vigorous commercial atmosphere, which characterized the Parisian instrument industry where profits and reputations were at stake. Within the first year of establishing his shop he was already exporting instruments to England, Holland, and Germany. And he also had established the support of leading *opera buffa* composer, Gioachino Rossini, who began to advocate for the adoption of his instruments by the Conservatory in Bologna.³⁹ His business was able to monopolize the industry, not only because of his utilization of capitalist investment strategies, but also due to the ways in which he founded his manufacturing process. By using the assembly methods that resulted from the industrial revolution, Sax broke the production process into small units of specialized craftsmen. Each unit was responsible for producing only one component of the finished instrument, which was fully assembled at a later stage by another unit. Sax greatly benefited from this division of labor because the production of wind instruments, and the saxophone, in particular, required an array of diverse skills, diverse skills that would have rarely been present collectively by individuals. In this manner he was able to hire employees who possessed skills only in melding brass, others who were only able to cut toneholes, those who could only assemble the key springs and fix pads, and those who could create mouthpiece casts. In this method of employing small units of craftsmen, Sax was able to keep labor costs low and produce instruments at expedited rates compared to traditional artisan

³⁹ Adolphe Doucet de Pontécoulant, *La France musicale*, (9 June 1844), 121.

methods. Another way he kept labor costs low was through his usage of prison labor from the inmates of the *Centre de détention de Melun*, just southeast of Paris.⁴⁰

In addition to his divided manufacturing process he was one of the few Parisian instrument manufacturers who invested early in the establishment of his business in steam driving machines.⁴¹ These machines greatly advanced the engineering procedures of musical instruments. Prior to the assistance of steam machines, the body of brass instruments required strenuous hand cutting, beating, and shaping, but the support of such a machine allowed the brass to be mechanically cut and wrought. It was such a significant contribution to instrument building that not only historians, but contemporaries too, observed the groundbreaking combination of technology and instrument production introduced by Sax. A review of the Exhibition of Products in 1849 not only acknowledges the improvement Sax's manufacturing process had on the industry but also summarizes the bedlam felt by instrument manufacturers caused by Sax:

"The construction of brass instruments took a large step since last exposure and this may - being the only part of instrument-making that is in progress...Until he came to settle in Paris, the brass instrument manufacturers lounged in a gentle calm, always maneuvering from the old routine and on old principles. Why would they be worried? ...Barely Mr. Ad. Sax had set foot on French soil when he experienced what it costs, torment learned from their apathy, with new ideas came numb competitors."⁴²

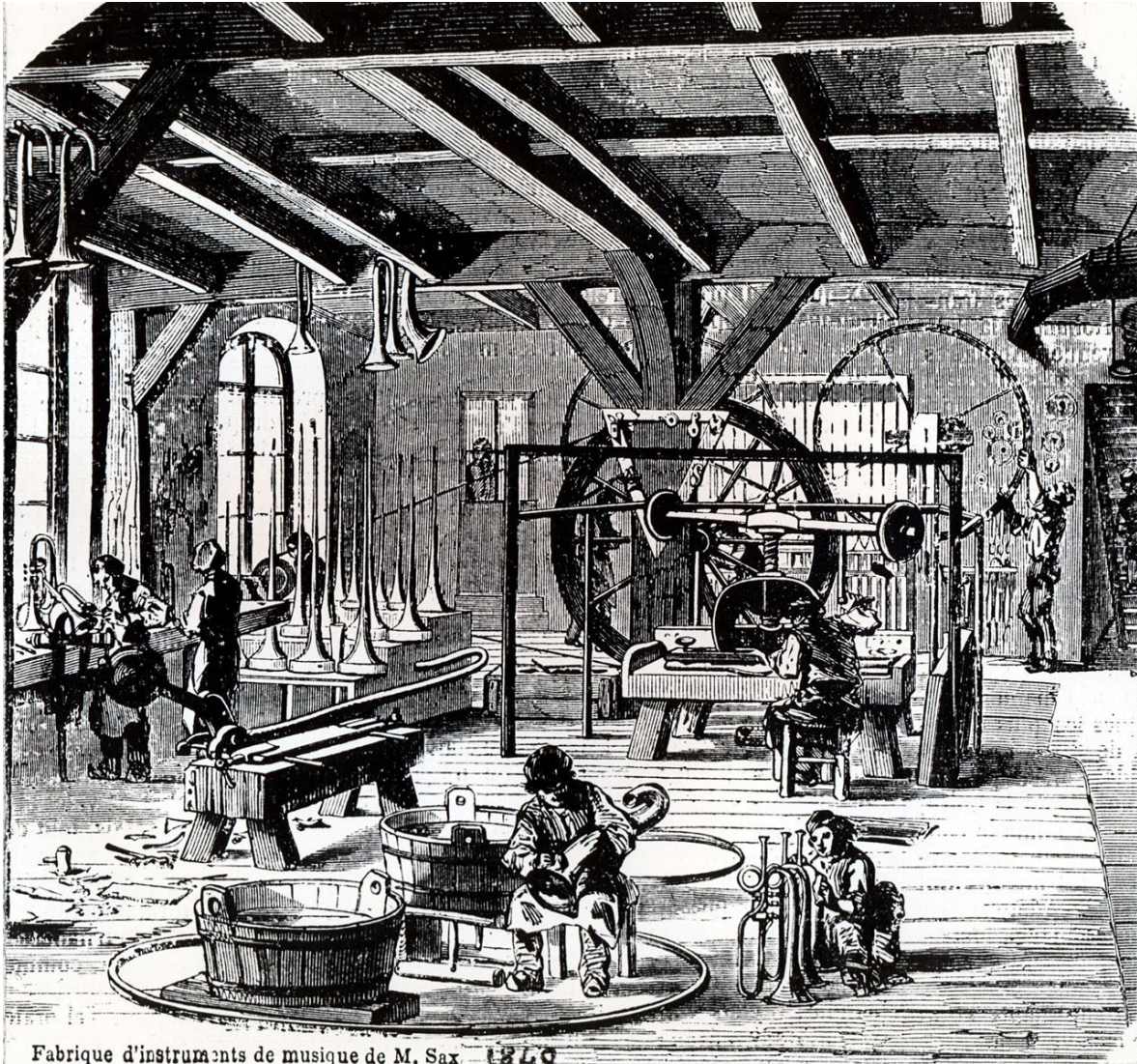
Sax's technologically advanced methods of production were revolutionary and caused his competitors to diverge from their traditional methods in order to remain in business. The ambitious interloper's presence agitated the centuries-old traditions of instrument making, which would have negatively affected the saxophone's acceptance in the Parisian musical community. For centuries, the rich Parisian heritage of instrument makers has been interwoven with its prominent musicians. These prominent families formed "dynasties" within the Parisian musical community, as described by Cecilia Hopkins Porter: "In this way they expanded musical dynasties of both men and women members, networks reinforced by the

⁴⁰ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 96.

⁴¹ To see the extent that Sax's production relied on these machines, see Figure 4.1 and 4.2.

⁴² *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 18, no. 32, (5 August 1849), 240-241.

inclusion of powerful friends and colleagues in composing, performance, instrument building, music engraving, and publishing."⁴³ According to the exhibition article, instrument makers in the nineteenth century had continued their old routine and worked on old principles; did these principles include the networking aspect so valued by these persuasive families?



Fabrique d'instruments de musique de M. Sax 1840
Figure 4.1: This engraving depicts Sax's assembly process. In the foreground and to the left are sets of workers, each responsible for a different stage of assembly, and steam-driven engines are seen behind them.

⁴³ Cecilia Hopkins Porter, *Five Lives in Music: Women Performers, Composers, and Impresarios from the Baroque to the Present*, (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 44.



Figure 4.2: "Maker of wind instruments by M. Adolphe Sax—Interior view of the workshops."

Sax's manufacturing process relied heavily on steam-driven engines, as observed on the right wall. These steam-powered devices transformed energy from burning coal into heat, becoming steam. The steam expanded into a piston cylinder, pressuring it to rise, which then transferred the energy through a crankshaft and wheel creating using rotary motion to produce power and force. These machines made the tasks such as brass cutting and shaping, soldering, and engraving easier through the assistance of torque.

It's likely that the tradition that gave instrument makers authority in Paris' musical circle remained intact through the political and economic plights leading into the nineteenth century, as Porter explains, "In the second half of the seventeenth century, in fact, about five hundred Parisian instrumentalists—*role models to younger generations* [emphasis added]—were interrelated in these families' circles, forging virtual "monopolies" through blood, marriage, and professional associations."⁴⁴ While it seems five hundred instrumentalists may not be a very large number in a city that contained roughly 600,000 residents in 1700,⁴⁵ it demonstrates how expansive the instrument craft families were, thus how much influence they could have exerted on local musical practices. Porter's statement also

⁴⁴ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁵ "Ville de Paris: Population & Density from 1600," *Wendell Cox Consultancy*, accessed March 8, 2017, <http://www.demographia.com/dm-par90.htm>.

explains that these interconnected instrumentalists served as role models for younger members of craft families, consequently promoting the continuation of the networking tradition between musicians and instrumental family artisans.

Connections between instrument manufacturers and instrumentalists during Sax's lifetime require further investigation, although it is evident that several of his competitors were also performers for the *Paris Opéra* where Sax worked as a conductor for the onstage *banda*.⁴⁶ Since Sax experienced hostile opposition from pit musicians when composers called for his instruments, it is likely his disturbance on the influence of the Parisian musical "dynasties" would have resulted in musical alienation; contributing to the rejection of the saxophone in the orchestra.

Perhaps the most obvious reason that Sax was able to dominate the instrument manufacturing industry so early in his career was his alignment with the French military. His reorganization plans for military ensembles were built around his patented instruments,⁴⁷ permitting only his business to produce them. As the sole manufacturer for such a considerable portion of regimental band instruments he was able to secure profits by manufacturing thousands of new instruments each year for the military alone. Also, the high degrees of damage instruments obtained in military activities would allow Sax to supply replacements as needed. His secured contract with the military allowed him to use profits for company expansion, further promoting his instruments and endangering competing manufacturers. His attainment of the military contract also took profits from instrument makers who were supplying the French regimental bands before the instatement of Sax's re-orchestration.

Akin to the French military's implementation of Sax's instruments, Belgium also employed Sax's instruments in its military ensembles, providing profits for Sax and further connotations for his instruments as political utilities. Around the same time that France was debating band reform, King Leopold I had asked Belgian military conductor and composer, Valentin Bender to reform *1e Régiment des*

⁴⁶ Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 135.

⁴⁷ See figure 3.1 for reference.

Guides, a military band that accompanied the royal family as they traveled abroad.⁴⁸ Military contracts and the adoption of his instruments by political institutions were not limited to the nation of France; Belgium, England, and Russia would also contribute to his significant upsurges of affluence.

Despite the fertile environment provided by "the King of the French", traditional workers became marginalized and responded with attempts to protect their rights through various organizations and scrupulous actions. Sax's special protection provided by the military and his royal patrons infuriated competitors with longstanding reputations, who did not take kindly to a young foreigner beginning to dominate their industry. Initially competitors responded by claiming the saxophone was "built on a false theory," "invalid," and had "no future,"⁴⁹ at the 1844 exhibition where he unveiled it. Others took further action by way of false accusations, lawsuits, counterfeiting, and shop raids.

The main course of action taken by endangered competing instrument makers was filing lawsuits against his patents in attempts to discredit him as the inventor of his instruments. The two patents he had received before the saxophone were also victims of false accusations. His family of saxhorns, patented in 1843 and his family of saxotrombas, patented in 1845, were the subject of dispute before the saxophone's patent. Lawsuits were made on the basis that saxhorns merely consisted of an extension of existing brass technology, claiming that Sax's homogeneous family could not be pronounced as his invention, and similar accusations were made for saxotrombas.

The trend in litigation was most popular for the saxophone, however. As Sax was applying for the saxophone patent in 1845 he faced contentious efforts to prevent him from receiving it. The application was opposed on a number of grounds including accusations that Sax had not invented it but instead stole it from other inventors, claims that it was not an original invention but was a combination of previous instruments, and even farcical assertions that it was not musical. The most

⁴⁸ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 13, no. 35, (30 August 1844), 278.

⁴⁹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 18, no. 32, (5 August 1849), 240-241.

common vindication used to prohibit Sax from receiving the patent was that he had not invented it. Instrument makers as far as Prussia and Italy claimed that Sax had stolen their inventions. A published letter from Sax to Prussian inventor and military orchestrator, Wilhelm Wieprecht, details just how frequently this claim was made:

"You're not the only one, moreover, who were holding such language; Paris and elsewhere, there are people like you interested in the question, repeating that since nearly three years and more, they know that they, too, are the inventors of my instruments, they had made similar instruments in some corner of their studio, etc. But these are words and nothing else; these people should live a century where they could always sing the same refrain."⁵⁰

The conflict between Wieprecht and Sax appears to be a result of competing national identity manifested in instruments. Similar to Sax, Wieprecht was an instrument manufacturer and supplier to the military, and in 1843 he was appointed the director-general of the Prussian 10th Confederate Army Corps where he exercised a profound influence on the development of Prussian military music through re-orchestration and modified instruments. Wieprecht's accusations were made through a series of articles published in Prussia, which were then reproduced in France, in which he claimed that during Sax's trip to Berlin in 1842 the idea for the saxophone was stolen from Prussian models. Sax recognized the accusation as a defense mechanism in response to France's improving military bands:

"I trust that your articles have been inspired by a patriotic feeling, but it is not at all an excuse; the first patriotism of a man of honor is the worship of justice and loyalty; sir, I am justified in saying that you have failed in one and the other. Before we met, you had me attacked in the newspapers; it was a mistake on your part...There, indeed, after a few generalities, you say that the saxophone was nothing but a snorkel, it should therefore not be called saxophone, but wieprechtophone."⁵¹

In order to settle the countless indictments claiming that Sax was not the actual inventor, he delayed his patent application for one year and issued a challenge to those that claimed they were the true inventors of the saxophone; if any one could produce a saxophone within the year, then he would withdraw his application. As

⁵⁰ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 16, no. 36, (6 September 1846), 283.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 285.

Sax confidently expected, no other inventor was able to construct a saxophone and on 21 March 1846 he submitted his application, three months later on 22 June 1846 a patent was granted for the period of fifteen years.

Despite their failure to craft a saxophone themselves, a ruthless last attempt at stopping Sax was made by Parisian instrument makers. Litigations were filed against him as he was submitting the application in March 1846 on the assertion that he had violated a law passed in 1844, which stated that an invention could not be described as original before the patent was taken out, if it had received adequate exposure that allowed it to be copied or built. The case dragged on far past the date of Sax's patent approval. The judges themselves had appointed a panel of specialists that were familiar with Sax's instruments to advise their verdict. Among the panel members was Cokken, who as professor of saxophone for the military affirmed:

"Having learned that some have denied the existence of the saxophone, I come to attest to you that this instrument really does exist, that I play it myself, and that I teach it at the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire*. I take advantage of this opportunity to add that the saxophone is an instrument as beautiful as it is good, of great power, of magnificent timbre, and finally the easiest to learn. I do not doubt that excellent results can be obtained from it in military bands as well as symphony orchestras"⁵²

In addition to Cokken's affidavit the panel also took evidence from an array of journalists and musicians who had heard or written about the saxophone, all of who did not possess the knowledge required to build one. After hearing from various witnesses and spectators the panel stated their belief that the allegations against Sax were false and his saxophone patent should be allowed to stand. However, the case verdict would not be decided for another eight years as France once again witnessed a revolution in 1848.

Furthermore, these economic quarrels were frequently entangled with political strife. The conflict between Wieprecht and Sax was specifically described as a polemic between military band directors, to which Wieprecht's refusal of Sax's 1845 challenge displayed "the most explicit recognition of weakness and

⁵² Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 24.

inferiority."⁵³ The media's presentation of the situation as two military band directors would have only strengthened the political connotations attached to the instrument and stressed the widespread disturbance that Sax had on Parisian instrument making traditions. In the court case, which began in March 1846, several references were made on Sax's behalf regarding the importance the saxophone had for the military. A letter written by Giacomo Meyerbeer in 1849 was shown by Sax's lawyer stating:

"I would limit myself to mention his bass clarinet, a formerly defective instrument, but today an achieved improvement, and his saxophones, comprising a family of six members from high to low, *whose magnificent and particular sonority will be of a valuable help to military bands and will even be able to be added to orchestras*, [emphasis added] therein furnishing composers with new combinations of instruments."⁵⁴

Even in court proceedings the saxophone's identity was presented as interrelated with military music making. His competitors recognized the saxophone's martial identity and even went as far as accusing Sax of paying off the French military to accept his instruments. In addition, they scrutinized the financial assistance that the General gave Sax on occasion. A letter written by General de Rumigny denies these accusations:

"I just learned that in the course of the discussions between Mr. Sax and some instrument makers, it was said that money interests had persuaded me to adopt the instruments of his invention, and that this consideration had also influenced the decision of the commission charged by the Minister of War to care for the improvement of military music. I declare here in the most formal way that this assumption is an outrageous slander, and in giving my support to Mr. Sax, I had no other goal than to admit in the regiments the best instruments. I gave Mr. Sax some money in his times of distress, to prevent him from succumbing to the fight of his genius against mediocrity and envy. This money has never exceeded one thousand to fifteen hundred francs; by giving, I have always stated that it would produce no interest, and I even added that he should not consider repay if serious difficulties arose later... As Chairman of the Committee, I helped get them adopted in the army; the very thorough examination of the different instruments in use in the armies of all the countries was done in the presence of all members of the music section of the Institute, Mr. Séguier, Mr. Colonel

⁵³ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 15, no. 49, (5 December 1846), 390.

⁵⁴ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 27.

Savart; genius of two colonels who had their regiments in the best music of the army. All decisions were taken unanimously and signed after reading by all members, without exception."⁵⁵

The recurrent associations with the French military in Sax's legal disputes stimulated even more direct associations in the French press. Such candid comparisons between the saxophone, military bands, and the high level of opposition from Sax's competitors would have fortified destructive implications for the instrument in both political and economic spheres. The *Revue* bluntly relates the military mentality to the chaos caused in the Parisian instrument sector by Sax:

"...the warrior enthusiasm of the National Guard has even entered the industry of wind instruments, both wood and copper, as both an artistic and commercial matter that is of interest. These designations and this industrial branch, which bore many fruits, aroused the jealousy of the other instrument makers that have not found a better way to stop this artistic individuality to challenge his [Sax's] inventions, and to perfection and same strength of its workforce."⁵⁶

This "warrior enthusiasm" was most clearly articulated between Sax and his most powerful competitor, Pierre-Louis Gautrot. Gautrot was an influential figure, similar to Sax, in the Parisian instrument making industry—only he was not perceived as detrimental since he married into a craft family with a substantial history. Gautrot was entirely a businessman, he was not an artisan, inventor, or performer as Sax was. His dedication to rigorous training in commerce allowed him to increase production far past the stages obtained by Sax's company. In 1855 his profits were large enough to open a second factory at Chateau-Thierry where land and labor were cheaper than in Paris. There he hired 320 workers and operated a 14-horsepower steam engine for production. The second factory also contained housing blocks for staff.⁵⁷ Gautrot demonstrated emulous business actions against Sax throughout his career. Similar to Sax's *Société de la Grande Harmonie*, a hybrid orchestra created exclusively to premiere Sax's instruments in an orchestral setting, Gautrot created a band of thirty-six employees at his second factory, all of whom he provided with extensive solfege lessons, instrumental training, a rehearsal room,

⁵⁵ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 16, no. 21, (23 May 1847), 172-73.

⁵⁶ Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 18, no. 31, (12 August 1849), 253.

⁵⁷ William Waterhouse, "Gautrot-Aîné, First of the Moderns," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 125.

and a band director. Parallel to the publishing company Sax set up to print method books and works for his instruments, Gautrot also formed a publishing subdivision in his company. However large Gautrot's company became, it did not meet the reputation of the young Belgian's regarding quality. Complaints of poorly made instruments were common occurrences to Gautrot, one contemporary observes:

"To what does Monsieur Gautrot owe the enormous growth of his business? Doubtless to the cheapness of his prices. It is a fact that his instruments enjoy universal distribution: in every village we may find trombones and cornets bearing his stamp—but no trombone or cornet bearing his stamp that won't already, alas, have needed repairing several times. That, before anything else, is the main defect of Monsieur Gautrot's wares. He learned long ago that the secret of good business lies in combining modest profits with a massive turnover. Right from the start he has set out to bear all of his competitors in price. He has managed to do this, but at what cost! I can recall innumerable occasions when I have tried to tune some student-model cornet with a baritone... I'm not enough of a maker myself to know how much more difficult it is to solder well than to solder badly. But what I do know is that the first thing to check on an instrument is its intonation... All too often I'm reminded of a cutting remark that an England maker once made to me: "Monsieur, when we need cheap quality goods, we get them from France." This then, before any other consideration, is my reproach to Monsieur Gautrot, which is borne out by long experience. It is more an expression of regret, because I am far from failing to recognize the important achievements of this maker, an intelligent popularizer [sic] who, thanks to his modest prices, has helped enormously to promote the brass band movement in France."⁵⁸

But it was not Gautrot's prices that kindled the "warrior enthusiasm" between the two. It was the devious measures he undertook to revoke Sax's reputation and achievements. Beginning just after the Champs de Mars event when Sax obtained the War Ministry contract in 1845, Gautrot organized a campaign committee of thirty-four principal Parisian instrument manufacturers with the intention of restricting Sax's victory.⁵⁹ First Gautrot's organized committee composed a threatening letter to Sax, and when he showed no trepidation, the group resorted to litigation. Other attempts led by Gautrot aimed at ruining Sax's career consisted of an August 1847 protest of brass wind manufacturers demanding the nullification of Sax's patents. Unfortunately the damages induced by Gautrot's faction grew into a

⁵⁸ Ibid, 127.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 128.

twenty-year process of claims and counter-claims, but Sax never "put up the white flag."

"Clever composers will hereafter derive wondrous effects from saxophones"

While the political and economic influence asserted by Sax kept his name in the public's ear, it also produced an array of social consequences for his instruments. A significant shift in artistic and cultural control occurred between the 1830s and 1840s, a shift that gave the bourgeoisie more authority on musical practice. Consequentially, tastes in music changed and aesthetics followed. As the middle class grew, so did domestic music making. The bourgeoisie spent their accumulated wealth on musical instruments and music making. Their prosperity also fueled urban expansion, had created several concert halls and theaters available for public attendance, vastly expanding music performance from the formerly restricted venues of imperial courts and few public venues. The liberty to participate in musical activities was not exclusive to the middle class either; the working class also participated in music activities for leisure, most notably promenade concerts.

It is evident that the general population had an increased appreciation of music by the number of public concerts held in Paris; in the 1826-27 season 78 concerts were held and the 1845-46 season increased nearly 500 percent at 383 concerts across Parisian venues.⁶⁰ Wider access to musical performances led to fragmented musical tastes, however. The fragmented tastes in musical genres developed into markers of class. By 1847 the practices of Germanic aesthetics had become described as "classical music" thanks to their sanctification by European conservatories and these aesthetics mainly appealed to the aristocracy and upper middleclass. This was largely imparted to the venues where the repertoire was played. The "classical" music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven was usually performed in concert halls in a similar manner to imperial court customs, to mainly upper middleclass audiences, whereas new styles of composers such as Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Berlioz, and Bizet were typically performed for middle and working

⁶⁰ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 92.

class audiences in a less restricted manner. Aficionados who were familiar with Germanic repertoire and their stylistic traits approached newer genres with caution due to the commercialization, grandiosity, and clear virtuosity they exhibited; the very elements the lower classes enjoyed. Inevitably, the vox populi of the middle class developed a disdainful view of "classical" music and its devotees. A fragmented social structure surrounding the production and consumption of music in Paris ensued a tension between art music and popular styles, which affected how the public heard the saxophone.

Sax's instruments gained the support of many leading composers in Paris; however, composers were cautious when considering writing for the saxophone. Perhaps that was the case because the saxophone was continuously the subject of vying contentions, political scandals, and Machiavellian defamation. While the advocacy exhibited by Sax's connections aided sales, it did not aid the saxophone's musical character. One would assume that declarations on the saxophone's beautiful timbre⁶¹ and potential value to symphony orchestras by influential figures such as Berlioz, Jean-Georges Kastner, Oscar Comettant, Adolphe Adam, Halévy, Gaetano Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Arban, Ambroise Thomas, and Rossini would have persuaded composers to write symphonic works with the saxophone.

Berlioz was the most outspoken towards the potential of the saxophone since its formal beginnings. In 1846, the very year it was patented, he began advocating for its adoption in conservatories. In a letter to Monsieur Humbert Ferrand regarding the defects of Prague Conservatoire he wrote: "The saxophone, a new member of the clarinet family, [sic] and really of value when the performer can bring out its characteristics, ought nowadays to have a separate place in Conservatoire classes, for the time is not far distant when every composer will wish to employ it."⁶² In addition to the goals of preserving traditions another reason

⁶¹ Rossini referred to the saxophone's timbre as, "The most beautiful sound that I know." Ibid, 102.

⁶² Although concerning conservatories he contradicts himself earlier in his *Memoirs*: "A musical Conservatoire ought, in my opinion, to be an establishment for *conserving* [Berlioz's emphasis] the practice of musical art in all its departments, and learning and acquirements connected with it, the monumental works produced by it, and in addition to this, by placing itself at the head of the progressive movement inherent to an art so young as European music, it ought to preserve all good

conservatories never considered instituting saxophone classes is perhaps due to the alleged ease to learn the instrument. Reports from the *Revue* state that five saxophonists who received prizes in the annual military music solo competition had only nine months of study on the instrument.⁶³ The reputation of the saxophone being a relatively easy instrument to learn still exists presently, though Larry Teal adds, "easy to play *badly* [Teal's emphasis]."⁶⁴ While it takes less effort to produce a tone and achieve technical mastery than other wind instruments like the clarinet, it is a deceptive conception; simply learning how to make a sound and play rapidly does not provide one with musicality and creative sensitivity. The relative ease of learning the saxophone may have been perceived as an unworthy for conservatory study by the older generations teaching at those institutions. The development in technology that made Sax's enhancements of clarinet mechanics and the saxophone possible could have been resented by instrumentalists of previous generations, as the conservatory attitude was aimed at preserving "golden era" of music. When younger players began to use Sax's clarinets while studying at conservatory those professors who used did not use most likely felt a deal of jealousy towards their students who were able to overcome issues that they struggled with throughout their careers. An example of our time can be observed by how members of the baby boomer generation easily dismiss academic achievements by millennials because they're able to use the internet for a quick access to information, whereas baby boomers had to search libraries for extended periods to find the same information.

The Parisian press even attempted to use leading composers' support for Sax as a way to discredit the obloquies he amassed from the Parisian musical community.⁶⁵ Despite the press's efforts to help Sax through accentuating the

and beautiful work bequeathed to us by the past, whilst advancing with prudence to future conquests."

Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 492.

⁶³ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 16, no. 35, (29 August 1847), 346.

⁶⁴ Larry Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*, (USA: Alfred Publishing, Co., Inc, 1963), 9.

⁶⁵ "We learn that Mr. Meyerbeer, Mr. Rossini and Mr. Fétis the elder, have just ordered from Mr. Adolphe Sax, for use in the various establishments which they direct, several of the instruments invented or improved by this young artist. Very positive facts, and very honorable testimonies victoriously respond to the attacks of critics." *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 13, no.8, (25 February 1844), 68.

support of leading composers, a large portion of articles about Sax were comprised of slander. As early as 1841, while he was still residing in Brussels, vilification in Parisian papers accused him of copying inventions devised by M. Lefevre in Nantes.⁶⁶ Sax's eager supporter, Berlioz reacted to the initial recurrent accusations with:

"It is scarcely to be believed that this gifted young artist should be finding it difficult to maintain his position and make a career in Paris. The persecutions he suffers are worthy of the Middle Ages and recall the antics of the enemies of Benvenuto (Cellini), the Florentine sculptor. They lure away his workmen, steal his designs, accuse him of insanity, and bring legal proceedings against him. With a little more dash they would assassinate him."⁶⁷

An abundance of defamatory reports on Sax's instruments must have been thoroughly confused readers in Paris as the press also reported on Sax's achievements in earning the highest prizes in various exhibitions. In 1849 he received the only gold medal to be presented to a wind instrument manufacturer at the *l'Exposition Nationale des produits de l'industrie agricole et manufacturière* for his saxophone. And four months later he became a *Chevalier de Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur*, one of only three instrument makers to receive the honor. Between the reports on his trials, allegations concerning authorship, and political reforms, the Parisian public must have had a perplexed opinion of Sax: Was he winning gold medals for instruments that weren't his own inventions? Did he bribe the Ministry of War to reorganize military bands around his alleged instruments for profit? Did he prosecute traditional instrument manufacturers to reduce competition? Surely the accusations by longstanding members of the Parisian musical community had more weight than Sax's dismissals.

Another point to consider in reviewing the social reception of the saxophone is the increased interest in timbre in France in the nineteenth century. Numerous treatises were written on timbre, demonstrating the important role it had taken on in musical aesthetics in nineteenth century France. Initiated in the earlier half of the century, Berlioz was one key figure in the "emancipation of timbre." Some important

⁶⁶ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 10, no. 20, (11 March 1841), 314.

⁶⁷ Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 492.

publications on the subject include the 1837 work written by Kastner, *Traité General D'instrumentation*, and of course Berlioz's famous 1844 *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration Modernes*. Berlioz summarizes how important timbre and orchestration were to French culture in the Romantic age in his treatise: "Never in the history of music has so much been said about instrumentation as at the present time."⁶⁸

This new interest in timbre would continue to define French orchestral music throughout the century when orchestration masters Ravel and Debussy formed themes around the interplay of timbral changes. This fascination with timbre inspired composers to enrich their orchestral sound with new instruments among the multitude that were being invented at the time. Numerous comments on the saxophone's novel timbre were made throughout the 1840s. In fact, it should be noted that the subject of the vast majority of articles written in journals of the time focused on the new timbre of the saxophone. Far more commented on the new and unique timbre than Sax's other instruments, his legal proceedings, exhibition winnings, and position within the French military combined. Some early examples explicitly comment on the timbral effects the saxophone could yield for the orchestra:

"a new instrument named the Saxophone, both of his invention [referring to Sax's flute with an altered key system], obtained unanimous votes by the jury because of the accuracy and beauty of their timbre; these instruments were recognized worthy to be allowed in the orchestra, and likely to produce there the newest and most brilliant effects."⁶⁹

Others speak so highly of the instrument's timbre that they refer to it as capable of fooling the listener into believing they were hearing a human voice:

"However the second part of the concert, in which we hear Sax made a solo and a saxophone quartet, was undoubtedly the most interesting from the standpoint of the test instruments...Profoundly altered by the action of copper in the walls, the reed causes the saxophone to have a natural sound of penetrating, energetic, passion: you'd think by now to hear a human

⁶⁸ Hector Berlioz, *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration Modernes*, (Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter 2003), 1.

⁶⁹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 14, no. 11, (16 March 1845), 87.

voice....Meanwhile, Mr. Sax does not work alone, but he creates the earliest a school for young saxophonists. It's not enough to have a beautiful voice; we must also know how to sing." ⁷⁰

The last sentence suggests that the scarcity of saxophonists outweighed its timbre qualities akin to the human voice, another factor that deterred composers from writing for it. Yes, the Parisian musical community agreed that it possessed a beautiful timbre, but if a composer were considering scoring for it, then they would also have to deal with the hassle of finding a saxophonist to play it. And given the only opportunities to study saxophone in 1849 were either at the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire* or with Sax himself, composers may have believed that the available saxophonists did not have skills capable of performing at the degree of difficulty they wished to use.

In his *Grand Traité*, Berlioz not only praised the saxophone's unique timbre and its potentials, but also mentions the short time it took to achieve mastery from woodwind doublers:

"Clever composers will hereafter derive wondrous effects from saxophones associated with clarinet family, or introduced in other combinations which would be rash to attempt foreseeing. This instrument is played with great facility; its fingering proceeding from the fingering of the flute, and from that of the hautboy. Clarinet-players, already familiar with the mouthing, render themselves masters of its mechanism in a very short time. These are SAXOPHONES. These new voices given to the orchestra, possess most rare and precious qualities. Soft and penetrating in the higher part, full and rich in the lower par, their medium has something profoundly expressive. It is, in short, a quality of tone *sui generis*, presenting vague analogies with the sounds of the violoncello, of the clarinet and corno inglese, and invested with a brazen tinge which imparts a quite peculiar accent."⁷¹

Even in the late twentieth century French music was characterized by the "magic of timbre" as described by composer Henri Dutilleux, when he spoke of timbre as being among the most important attributes a composer could use and referred to it as "*sites auriculaires*" – points of beauty for the ear.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 18, no. 102, (14 October 1849), 322.

⁷¹ Hector Berlioz, *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration Modernes*, (Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter 2003), 242.

⁷² Caroline Rae, "The Magic of Timbre: French Orchestral Sound", *City of Light: Paris 1900-1950 Philharmonia Orchestra*, accessed March 10, 2017
http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/paris/essays/10/the_magic_of_timbre

Few composers did show their capability of exploiting orchestral colors as part of their compositional practice in addition to the customary reliance on harmonic and rhythmic conventions. These works were written for staging at the *Conservatoire de Paris* and the *Paris Opéra*, where Sax had obtained a conducting position in November 1847. (Interestingly enough, the Sax vs. Carafa battle repeated itself in the *Opéra* house, as Carafa was the director of the onstage *banda* prior to Sax and he did not leave his post without conflict.) The first work to use a saxophone was Kastner's *La dernier roi de Juda*, which premiered in the concert hall of the *Conservatoire de Paris*. Kastner's operas were rarely staged and published since his reputation was as a music critic and theorist; similarly *La dernier roi de Juda* had only a single performance. Kastner's sparse scoring in bass clef for a bass saxophone in C as an additional low brass voice displays the unfamiliarity composers had with the novel instrument; even a close friend of Sax did not know the conventions of saxophone writing at the time, (using bass clef) therefore it is highly unlikely that composers who heard the instrument would have known the range and transpositions it required.

The second opera of the 1840s didn't actually feature the saxophone because the composer's decision was met with relentless opposition. In Meyerbeer's 1849 composition, *Le Prophete*, he intended to replace the cello solo from the adagio of act five with an alto saxophone during the first few rehearsals. The resistance of the pit musicians, however, prevented the composer's alteration when they threatened to leave if Sax's instruments were to be used. Feeling guilty because he surrendered to the performers, Meyerbeer wrote a long letter to Sax saying that he still regarded the saxophone as a wonderful instrument, even if he hadn't been able to use it in his work.⁷³

The Parisian community perceived the saxophone as a musical interloper; an instrument made by a foreigner that made its arrival into music making through an administrative order. Emily I. Dolan's theory, which asserts that the connotations attached to instruments prior to their usage within the orchestra dictated their

⁷³ Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 132.

musical functions within the orchestra is proven true, as the Parisian instrument manufacturing community's reception of the saxophone as an "invalid"⁷⁴ outsider contributed to its prescribed its orchestral role. The saxophone's orchestral role became one of an exotic outsider, used rarely for color and conjuring the strange.

Whatever economic and musical success Sax obtained in the French military was to be lost towards the end of the 1840s when the 1848 Revolution caused him to lose his most powerful ally. In the midst of Sax's success, given to him mostly by his administrative allies, a sequence of ill-fated incidents occurred during King Louis-Philippe's reign. In 1845 a bad cereal harvest was exacerbated by a poorer harvest in 1846 due to its encompassment of multiple agricultural food staples, such as bread and potatoes. Short food supply levels caused food prices to rise at a disturbing rate. Higher food prices resulted in a reduced expenditure on leisurely items, such as textiles, household objects, and houses from the bourgeoisie since an increased portion of income had to be used on food. In turn, a colossal decrease in production of many industries occurred. In 1847 700,000 of France's workers had been laid off in the rail and steel industry alone. Shortly after, investors and finance houses were soon affected and became bankrupt, not being able to return deposits to livid clients.

The economic recession also had a destructive impact on the musical community of Paris. The rising costs of living caused hordes of musicians to emigrate. Periodicals report the effects as a "time when singers and instrumentalists have deserted Paris,"⁷⁵ and "the European turmoil right now plunges most artists in misery,"⁷⁶ diminishing to the "point that the first orchestral violins have seen their salaries cut two hundred francs a month. The prices of lessons also undergo significant reductions,"⁷⁷ and "the greatest talents are even forced to submit to necessity, because, above all, we need to eat."⁷⁸ The many musicians without work would have discouraged any attempt to write the

⁷⁴ See note 49.

⁷⁵ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 16, no. 25, (25 March 1847), 208.

⁷⁶ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 17, no. 44, (29 October 1848), 334.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 334.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 334.

saxophone into the orchestra. If any institutions could not afford to employ even the standard chamber orchestra, then composers would be encouraged to reduce their pre-written worked or commission works with minimal instrumentation; thus the economic restraints of Paris at the end of the 1840s would have affected the saxophone's opportunity to be added to orchestral ensembles.

In addition, if a composer wished to use the saxophone in place of a standard orchestral instrument, then the musician whose instrument was to be replaced would continue without work. The instrumentalist who was replaced would continue to contribute to the unemployment rate of the Parisian musical community, whereas saxophonists who were considered talented enough to perform in professional spheres were most likely employed to some degree in regimental bands. The recession leading into 1848 resulted in limited funds and a scarcity of musicians for Paris, which would have dissuaded composers to score economically, thus excluding the possibility to add the saxophone to their works because there may not even have been a sufficient number of musicians to form an orchestra at a given institution to perform them.

In turn, the shortage of job opportunities would have only heightened the resistance from wind players against any composer who wished to substitute or write in one of Sax's instruments in place of a traditional one. In the case when a composer speculated writing for the saxophone for a new work at this time—like Meyerbeer's situation in *Le Prophete*—opposition from professional Parisian musicians was likely to arise. Parisian performers would have vocalized complaints that the saxophone was not necessary and that other instruments were capable of the performing rigorous technical passages and powerful fanfares characteristic of early saxophone parts. Economic scoring would have been a priority to composers who remained in Paris at the end of the 1840s, leaving no room for an addition of the eulogized instrument.

Parallel to the world-changing event at the end of the eighteenth century, political pressure on the king increased, escalated into riots, and became a revolution when protesters were shot. Within twenty-four hours King Louis-Philippe abdicated and fled to England, bringing in yet another shift in authority.

After Louis-Philippe's sovereignty was disposed of, a citizen's Provisional Government was established and while it only lasted four months, Sax suffered considerably without his powerful allies. Sax's well-established network of military bureaucrats and royal patrons was discarded along with Louis-Philippe, and his opponents obtained positions of power in which they hastily used to ruin him.

Sax's ongoing court case regarding his alleged violation of the 1844 patent law had been deferred due to the riots, but resumed during the first month of the Provisional Government's placement—only, it would continue with different prosecutors. The original lawyer, Adolphe Crémieux, for the plaintiffs was appointed the position of Minister of Justice during the time the Provisional Government was in place and Crémieux's replacement maliciously exploited Sax's connections with Louis-Philippe's regime and the military with the intentions to accentuate Sax's supposed anti-republican tendencies.⁷⁹ The court's verdict revoked components of his saxhorn patent and his saxotromba patent, however his saxophone patent remained. Sax characteristically appealed the court's decision, but it wouldn't be until 1854 before the court decided in his favor.

Concurrently, while Sax was still dealing with a series of strenuous litigations initiated by his enemies, which pushed him closer to debt. Carafa, his opponent from the Champs de Mars event seized the opportunity to initiate the first music-related decision of the Provisional Government, as he was well connected with the Provisional Government administration. Carafa instigated an order to repeal Sax's reorganization of military bands and return to the pre-1845 instrumentation when Sax's instruments were not used.⁸⁰ Music periodicals reported on the matter that "it was based on little more than a miserable question of pride."⁸¹ Later in 1848, the

⁷⁹ There is no definitive evidence for Sax's political views, though Horwood suggests that Sax took part in street fights against those who were opposed to the monarchy. For more information see Wally Horwood, *Adolphe Sax 1814-1894: His Life and Legacy*, (Baldock, United Kingdom: Egon Publishing, 1992), 82.

⁸⁰ "The cavalry ensembles were still destined to retain some of Sax's instruments, but not under the name 'saxhorn', recalling the arguments that had long been issued by the Provisional Government order that 'the names given to certain instruments will be replaced by their proper names.'" Malou Malou Haine, *Adolphe Sax (1814-1894): sa vie, son œuvre et ses instruments de musique*. (Brussels, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1980, 107.

⁸¹ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 26.

Provisional Government was abolished and popular elections designated Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte as president.

The 1840s began as a promising journey to the city where instrument making was among the most respected professions. Initial effusive support expressed by leading Parisian musical figures affirmed the city's promises; financial achievements and formal recognitions followed, making Sax's future appear indefinitely auspicious. The prosperity offered originally by Sax's infamous military contract, however, would never outweigh the destructive effects it generated. The financial benefits given to him by royal and military authorities yielded an abhorrent sectarian prejudice from the instrument manufacturing industry, resulting in a full-scale "war" over Sax's instruments. A politically and economically charged "war" that would impact the attitudes of the Parisian musical community to the extent that the very musical fate of his most reviled instrument was decided. The 1840s ended with the rescindment of Sax's powerful allies, biased lawsuit verdicts, and the beginning of a devastating future for the saxophone in orchestral music.

V. 1850s: Imperial instrument or working man's voice? The Saxophone's Paradoxical Identities

After a decade in the city of instrument manufacturing Sax had revolutionized Parisian attitudes on music. His instruments had transformed France's military bands from despondent and mediocre ensembles structured by a senseless arrangement of disparate instruments to vehement and enriched ensembles of international fame for their balance and rich amalgam of timbres. His new manufacturing methods had provoked an amplified competitiveness within the instrument manufacturing industry and the plethora of patents he took out encouraged an overprotective mentality of the most trivial details among other inventors. Conservatories adopted his modified family of clarinets, not only in

France, but also across the continent,⁸² but the most notable event for Sax in the 1840s was the unveiling of his inimitable saxophone. The city of Paris expressed reactions from adoring fascination and astonishment to incredulity and mimicry at the never before heard timbre presented in the saxophone during the first decade of Sax's time there.

Succumbing to debt, Sax "played the same hand" with the new regime of President, later Emperor Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte III. Despite the pending lawsuits and bankruptcy, Sax's imperial ally would rescue him and he would continue to exert considerable force on the instrument manufacturing industry. The political and economic facets of Sax's life oscillated throughout the 1850s due to the unstable decisions of the government, rival litigations, and his supervision of promotional concerts; eerily reflective of the preceding decade. The 1850s was a period where the saxophone was implemented into ensembles without an executive order and the social frameworks of those ensembles permanently affixed cultural identities to the instrument.

The most significant event in the 1850s regarding the saxophone's reputation in instrumental discourse was the development of divergent societal venues and performances.

"Fighters live longer than others"

When the upheaval occurred in 1848 the saxophone had only been patented for two years and used in military bands for three years, hardly enough to revolutionize instrumental music as music critics and composers predicted. The temporary system that had assigned severely biased positions of authority against Sax had depleted his wealth in the revocation of his patents (aside from his saxophone patent) and costly court fees. To combat these expenses he considered reducing his number of employees, however, he was persuaded not to in order to avoid the possibility of a retaliation just after the worker-led revolution. Instead he

⁸² Albert R. Rice, *From the Clarinet d'Amour to the Contra Bass: A History of Large Size Clarinets 1740-1860*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 305.

was forced to borrow a loan of 30,000 francs from Paul Leroux, his associate.⁸³ The beginning of the decade was off to a terrible beginning; he had lost his patents and military contract and within the first two years he filed bankruptcy on July 5, 1852. Yet, as Sax once stated, "fighters live longer than others,"⁸⁴ he fought to adapt to the new political climate of France in the same manner as he did with Louis-Philippe's regime.

But during Sax's attempts to regain governmental patronage Napoléon's term was scheduled to end in May 1852, and his attempts would be made in vain since the newly constructed constitution of 1848 prohibited elected officials from running for a second term. Napoléon, however, saw things differently and made the argument that one term would not be long enough to implement his economic plans. The National Assembly refused to consider amending the constitution out of concern that term extensions would lead to the abuse of presidential office and power. Subsequently, Napoléon gained popular appeal to the idea of a term extension through various tours promoting his policies. The National Assembly did not reconsider, despite his attempts and on 2 December 1851; Napoléon III initiated a *coup d'état* through appropriation of power, claiming the right to do so as a referendum on his widespread popularity. He then dissolved the National Assembly, declared a new constitution, and held referendum in November 1852 to confirm his position as emperor. The Second Republic gave way to the Second French Empire and Sax was to gain an extremely powerful new ally.

Looking to absolve his debt and reintroduce his instruments to the French military, the largest purchaser, he began to integrate himself with Napoléon III's administration during an 1852 military parade when Napoléon expressed satisfaction in the bands featuring his orchestration. Napoléon III was already familiar with Sax's work since he presented him with the *Chevalier de Ordre national*

⁸³ Though this loan initially proved unbeneficial, as M. Leroux passed away shortly after and his family demanded a full reimbursement. Sax and M. Leroux's family eventually reached an agreement in which he was able to repay the loan over the period of eight years. Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 27.

⁸⁴ Frederick Hemke, "Musical Celebrating Adolphe Sax," (speech, Urbana, Illinois, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, 2014), North American Saxophone Alliance, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXWi9A60lyI&t=350s>.

de la Légion d'honneur award in 1849, thus making it possible for Sax to put forth his revised⁸⁵ military band orchestration plans when Napoléon considered reorganizing the military band of the *Garde impériale* for his private use. Reminiscent of the previous decade, Sax was invited to audition for the Emperor himself. Following the invitation, on New Years Day 1853, just weeks after Napoléon's *coup*, Sax arranged a band to demonstrate his orchestration for the newly hailed Emperor. Sax's audition was reported a success:

"M. Sax received congratulations from his illustrious audience, including Mr. Meyerbeer and Mr. Fleury, Colonel of the regiment guides. Yesterday, Saturday, the model music [instrumentation] had to be heard in court in the presence of the Emperor, and there is no doubt that this hearing was an opportunity for a brilliant triumph for Mr. Sax for his instruments and his artists."⁸⁶

Figure 5.1: Sax's revised instrumentation proposal for French military bands (1854)

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 2 Flutes/piccolos | 2 Eb Soprano Saxhorns | 4 Valved Trumpets |
| 4 Eb Clarinets | 2 Bb Alto Saxhorns | 2 Cornets with either pistons or valves |
| 8 Bb Clarinets | 2 Bb Baritone Saxhorns | 3 Trombones |
| 2 Bb Soprano Saxophones | 4 Bb Bass Saxhorns | 1 Bass Trombone |
| 2 Eb Alto Saxophones | 2 Eb Contrabass Saxhorns | 1 Bass drum and 1 side drum |
| 2 Bb Tenor Saxophones | 2 Bb Contrabass Saxhorns | 2 Percussionists |
| 2 Eb Baritone or C Bass Saxophones | 3 Eb Alto Saxotrombas | 2 Pairs of Cymbals |

The speculation from music periodicals were confirmed about a year later when the success of Sax's private concert became concrete through Napoléon's first musical order: the *Garde impériale* would follow Sax's instrumentation proposal. Three weeks later in August 1854, Sax's new patron issued another decree, which ordered French regimental bands to follow the same instrumentation as the *Garde impériale*. Thanks to Napoléon's order each regimental band would feature an octet of

⁸⁵ See Figure 5.1.

⁸⁶ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 22, no. 1, (2 January 1853), 7.

saxophones and Sax would recover financially. But Sax did not only recover financially by the reinstatement of his military band orchestration, his influential patron arranged for his debt be paid and honored him with the title of *Fabricant officiel d'instruments de musique à l'empereur* (Official Musical Instrument Manufacturer to the Emperor) on 8 April 1854— an authoritative title, which Sax began to engrave on his instruments.⁸⁷



Figure 5.2: An engraving on a saxophone exhibiting Sax's new distinguished title from Napoléon III.

Napoléon's promotional actions would have only further strengthened connotations of the saxophone with the military and provoked instrument manufactures to continue their crusades in restricting Sax's economic and musical influence in Paris. One can only imagine the vast envy other manufacturers felt when the Emperor rescued Sax from financial ruin and appointed his business as the sole manufacturer for the empire, despite his loss of saxhorn and saxotromba patents. To others, it must have appeared as a vindictive action by Sax since the annulment of his patents allowed for any manufacturer to produce saxhorns and saxotrombas, except only he was able to sell to imperial organizations. However, any productivity brought to Sax's business due to his imperial title was offset in the later half of the decade when several detrimental decisions regarding military music transpired. Funding cuts shut down the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire* entirely in 1856, forcing the *Conservatoire de Paris* to reluctantly accept a request to provide

⁸⁷ See Figure 5.2

the training for regimental musicians. Sax himself requested to teach the saxophone at the *Conservatoire*, as there was no present saxophone teacher employed there.⁸⁸ Although he obtained the position, the *Conservatoire's* decision to omit his name as a professor in the brochures displays the divide between military and traditional music since military music classes were considered to be unrelated to the main studies of *Conservatoire de Paris*.⁸⁹ The *Conservatoire's* decision to exclude Sax and other military class professors in its brochures exhibit the stigmas that the traditional learned, or "classical" circle had affixed to martial music making. Such a decision made by the most persuasive institution in Parisian music traditions is indicative that to classically trained musicians the saxophone had secured a stationary association with military music at that point and was incompatible with the traditions of the "classical" community.

Fluctuating Finances: Sax's Uncompromising Personality and Patent Paranoia

Notwithstanding the terrible beginning framed by bankruptcy, the 1850s was a rather successful financial decade for Sax. The middle of the nineteenth century commenced a rising international market for wind instruments owed to the growing popularity of military bands in Europe. Sax catered to the international interest in military band music through securing patents and licensing agreements with agents in other countries, such as England, Belgium, Russia, Spain, and Prussia. An early brochure from the decade lists prices not only in francs, but Prussian thalers and silbergroschen, British shillings, and Spanish reales.⁹⁰ Sax had the most success in the British market, where he had authorized agents as early as 1846 to sell his imported instruments. An 1854 ad in the British journal, *Musical Times*

⁸⁸ "Among the artists who today play the saxophone, there is not one who is equipped to teach all individuals of the whole family, from the soprano to the bass, and non of those who play possesses the best sound because of the instrument they practiced previously and which they are obliged to continue to play every day. If therefore the teaching of the saxophone were abandoned to a professor other than myself, the timbre would inevitably deviate from that which I wanted and have achieved.... It is not only to prevent the torture of me hearing all my life a timbre different from that which should be obtained that I insist upon this point; you know, gentlemen, how important are the posture and sound production in relation to the human voice... you appreciate even more this importance with regard to a new family of instruments." Sax quoted in Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 34.

⁸⁹ See Figure 5.3.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 94.

announced that Sax's representative company had, "just received a great variety of soprano, alto, tenor and bass of Sax's new and beautifully toned instruments, the Saxophone," which "possess a charm equal to the originality of their tone, and they carry to the highest degree of perfection, *la voix expressive*." ⁹¹

| | |
|--|--|
| 2 ^e Professeurs, morceaux de concours et lauréats pour chaque branche d'études : | |
| Composition musicale (prix de Rome), p. 528 ; — contrepoint et fugue, p. 533 ; — harmonie, p. 537 ; — accompagnement, p. 542, 548 ; — solfège, p. 550 (hommes), p. 556 (femmes), p. 566 (chanteurs), p. 568 (chanteuses) ; — vocalisation, p. 570 ; — préparation au chant, p. 571 ; — chant, p. 572 ; — orgue, p. 581 ; — piano, p. 584 (hommes), p. 589 (femmes) ; — clavier, classes préparatoires, p. 595 ; — harpe, p. 603 ; — violon, p. 607 ; — violon (classes préparatoires), p. 612 ; — alto, p. 614 ; — violoncelle, p. 615 ; — contrebasse, p. 620 ; — flûte, p. 624 ; — hautbois, p. 629 ; — clarinette, p. 633 ; — | |
| SOMMAIRE-TABLE. | |
| basson, p. 637 ; — cor, p. 641 ; — cor à pistons, p. 645 ; — cornet à pistons, p. 647 ; — trompette, p. 649 ; — trombone, p. 652 ; — opéra, p. 655 ; — opéra-comique, p. 661 ; — tragédie, p. 667 ; — comédie, p. 672 ; | |
| Classes pour les élèves militaires (1856-1870) : solfège, p. 677 ; — harmonie et composition, p. 678 ; — cornet à pistons, p. 679 ; — saxophone, p. 680 ; — saxhorn, p. 681 ; — trombone à pistons, p. 682. | |

Figure 5.3: The separation between traditional music courses at the *Conservatoire de Paris* (top paragraph, and its continuation below "SOMMAIRE-TABLE") and the military music courses (*Classes pour les élèves militaires*), the only category that included saxophone courses in formal study in the nineteenth century.

An indication of Sax's economic domination and influence on musical practice, even through his financial struggles at the beginning of the decade can be observed through local amateur band competitions. A *Revue* article from 1852 reports that bands composed entirely of Sax's instruments won the top prizes for a contest in the town of Abbeville, located near the coast of northern France.⁹² The fact that amateur community bands outside of Paris a decade after his arrival had conformed to Sax's instrumentation implies that he asserted a high level of influence

⁹¹ Ibid, 97.

⁹² *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 20, no. 37, (12 September 1852), 307-308.

on French musical practices—only on wind ensemble practices, not the elite tradition of orchestral music.

Such a degree of authority on the marketplace as well as musical practice revealed Sax's uncompromising behaviors. The number of litigations that he pursued in the 1850s was much larger, and for the cases that ended before the decade's end, he was triumphant, perhaps due to his status with Napoléon. Even unaware customers who purchased counterfeit saxophones were perceived as "enemies" to Sax. In 1850 he successfully sued Lyon instrument maker, Michel Rivet for a counterfeit saxophone when an unsuspecting soldier brought it to Sax's factory for repair. Sax's obdurate manners about the protection of his saxophone patent resulted in the unforgiving confiscation of the customer's saxophone in a series of events, which the purchaser explains from his perspective:

"I know nothing about it all. I was stationed in Lyon, I had to get into the music portion of the regiment; I went to M. Rivet, here; I said: "I want to buy a saxophone, how much?" He said: "It is my price, I'll give you a saxophone on that model." I do not think on it much longer; when the saxophone is made, I pay my money that my family sent me. Voila! we come to Paris; I need to repair my instrument, I go to M. Sax who said, "But, boy, it is a counterfeit of my instrument; I'll enter bailiff." Indeed, he goes looking for a bailiff. "But, sir," I said, "I do not know why you take my saxophone, I bought Mr. Rivet in Lyon, which I will address, and voila! I am without my instrument that I paid for with my own money."⁹³

Rivet was fined 400 francs in damages and was ordered to insert the verdict in three newspapers, but Sax persisted and called for authorities to seize the unfortunate soldier's counterfeit instrument. Common sense reveals that the soldier would not have brought his saxophone to Sax's shop for repair in the first place had he known it was counterfeited. Imaginably that would have occurred to Sax, but he bitterly requested seizure of the forged saxophone anyway, perhaps because he saw it as an opportunity to further capitalize on the event. He was more than aware that military officials would order the soldier to purchase an "official" saxophone if he wished to continue performing in regimental bands, in turn allowing him to profit. The

⁹³ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 19, no. 34, (25 August 1850), 285.

inventor's aggressive behavior directed towards an innocent man most likely resulted in a diminished respect.

Out of the numerous litigations he pursued in the 1850s, the most significant were his cases against Gautrot. After being appointed the official instrument manufacturing to the Emperor, he believed that the case, which revoked his patents under the biased Provisional Government appointees, could be overturned in his favor through an appeal (now that he had appointees biased towards him, not against.) In 1854 the case finally did end in his favor, deeming all parts of his saxhorn and saxotromba patents to be valid.⁹⁴ With an increased confidence from his previous win; Sax vigorously sued Pierre-Louis Gautrot for patent infringement in June 1856 for his sarrusophone, an imitation of the saxophone both visually and verbally.

Just three days after Gautrot's sarrusophone patent was granted in Sax filed suit for copyright infringements on 12 June 1856. The resemblances between the saxophone and sarrusophone were extremely obvious. First, in the latter's name; Gautrot claims that he named his invention after the French bandmaster Pierre-Auguste Sarrus. As a transcription of the case points out that Sax's lawyer claimed his decision to name it after somebody other than himself when he invented it was an act intended to confuse customers who wished to purchase saxophones:

"he will forge a name that will have all the physiognomy of the saxophone name, and he can say sarrussophone, and exclaim: "I found my business!" He then, procreated an instrument which he claims to be composed of a copper body, a mouthpiece, a reed and armed with nineteen keys, exactly like the saxophone, called the sarrussophone."⁹⁵

A French soldier and musicologist, Louis Adolphe le Doulcet, comte de Pontécoulant also believed this was the reason behind the instrument's name, which he wrote in his *Organographie* of 1861 that "Gautrot, seeking to counterbalance the success and

⁹⁴ "A judgment of the imperial court of Rouen has completed all the trials of Adolphe Sax, ending successfully for the famous inventor on all issues." *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 23, no. 27, (2 July 1854), 218.

⁹⁵ Guinard Prunier-Quatremère, "Concurrence Déloyale. Sax Contre Gautrot. 8 November 1862", *Tribunal De Commerce De Paris*, (Paris, FR: Impr. N. Chaix, 1862), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Site Richelieu, Paris, France.

vogue of the Saxophone, thought of producing a crude imitation under the name sarrusophone."⁹⁶

And Gautrot's plan worked, for the name did confuse advertisers and customers. Ads placed by Gautrot in several numbers of *La France chorale* were "mistyped," attributing him as the inventor of the saxophone. Gautrot claimed that it was an error on the publisher's part, but Sax's lawyer argued that he purposely sent in his ad containing the word "saxophone" so that when customers went to his shop looking for saxophones he could sell them sarussophones instead. On the matter of name infringement the court ruled that not only the use of "sarrus" was a misleading attempt to confuse consumers, but Gautrot's attachment of "ophone" was also considered a direct infringement on Sax's patent since he was the first to combine the ancient Greek word, which means "to speak," with a name.

The sarrusophone was also incredibly similar to the saxophone visually.⁹⁷ Both were made of brass with conical bores, used single reed mouthpieces,⁹⁸ were transposing instruments in the keys of Eb and Bb, and had a range of two octaves and a minor sixth. The two instruments were parallel in construction to the extent that method books were published as methods for either the saxophone or sarrusophone.⁹⁹ The court ruled entirely in Sax's favor on 8 July 1859, ordering Gautrot to pay damages of 50,000 francs. Gautrot failed to honor this agreement and was ordered to pay an additional 150,000 francs. However, he continued to violate the court's order by selling unmarked models of Sax's instruments and sarrusophones, which eventually cost him a massive 500,000 francs in damages to Sax. The last counterclaims and appeals between the two didn't end until 1867.

⁹⁶ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 67.

⁹⁷ See Figure 5.4

⁹⁸ Gautrot initially conceived the instrument with a double reed, but later demonstrated that both double and single reeds could be used on the sarrusophone. See figure 5.5.

⁹⁹ An 1875 method book written by A. Boscher is published as "*Méthode de 1er saxophone-alto (ou sarrusophone) in mi bémol extrait de la méthode générale d'ensemble: fanfare enseignement simultané pour tous les instruments à vent, cours complet en vingt-quatre leçons de 2 heures chacune*". See Figure 5.6.

Sax's stubborn personality and inclination to rush into litigation were a large component behind his financial ruin at the end of his life but was also indirectly impacted composer's decisions to score for his instruments. Sax's routine of suing anybody who even hinted at patent infringements, and in some cases the innocent bystanders involved, would have given him the notoriety to be avoided by traders, and perhaps by extension musicians and composers. In a city categorized by a ferocious instrument building industry where the smallest innovations were patented, and even hints of infringement were legally pursued, one can easily imagine composers joked amongst each other that scoring for the saxophone would result in a lawsuit.



Figure 5.4: The sarrusophone contained the same key work with a similar fingering system, as well as a curved bocal that resembled the iconic one on the saxophone.



Figure 5.5: Gautrot added to the resemblance between the sarrusophone and the saxophone by including a single reed mouthpiece in his later patent.



Figure 5.6: An 1875 method book advertised as compatible for both the study of the saxophone and that of the sarrusophone.

The Emergence of an Underprivileged Voice

However, Sax's restored imperial indenture and aggressive litigations had only minimal influence on the aesthetic course of the saxophone. The most significant event that disseminated the saxophone's cultural symbolism as incongruous with the symphony orchestra was its employment in working class music traditions. Though attempts looked ostensibly successful regarding the integration the saxophone into orchestral settings through the effort of Sax's hybrid *harmonie* orchestra and the growing number of *Paris Opéra* scores that included it, simultaneous events within working class venues added detrimental connotations to the instrument's character.

A brief summary of the history of these working class musical traditions, their repertoire, their venues, and their values will help clarify how the saxophone's usage in such settings affected its social perception.

The venues and ensembles, which used the saxophone prior to the inventor's anticipated arrival in the concert hall, formed its associations. The concert hall denied the instrument's entrance due to the contrasting venues where it was already celebrated. These venues were the city parks, cafes, and taverns, where the popular custom of promenade concerts made its name. Promenade concerts arose from the traditions of informal music making among the lower-middle classes in such settings. The 1830s and 1840s promenade concerts saw a change to its practices: street musicians and hobbyists were no longer at the center of the performances instead aspiring professionals took the reins. Promenade ensembles weren't comprised of any standard instrumentation but typically consisted of a combination of military wind ensemble and chamber orchestra instrumentation. Aspiring professional musicians performed in these settings because they hoped to get enhance their name and get bookings with larger fees. The promenade repertoire consisted mostly of arrangements of popular opera themes, dances, and works by lesser-known composers. The works from lesser-known composers and arrangers were used to promote composers also trying to create names for themselves, who were often times acquaintances with the aspiring musicians, into a wider public domain, hoping spectators would be willing to market in modified

editions for amateurs at affordable costs to perform at home or in salons. The collaborations between the musicians and arrangers transformed these informal events into large-scale commercial operations.

The audience consisted of working and lower-middle class members who were unable to afford sophisticated classical music performances, but could manage the lower prices for promenade concerts. These concerts were incredibly popular with audience sizes from 1500 to 5000 with an average of 2500.¹⁰⁰ The success of the promenade tradition in Paris was largely due to the popularity of the eccentric conductor and impresario, Philippe Musard. Musard was widely popular during the 1830s and 1840s due to his bizarre use of unorthodox sound effects while conducting. He was known for drawing large crowds by peculiarly incorporating the firing of pistols and smashing of dinner plates and chairs into his performances.¹⁰¹ Musard's strange behaviors were the byproducts of efforts to satisfy the audience's demand for flamboyancy and showmanship, which characterized promenade concerts.

Promenade audiences desired certain elements in performance that were not always present in the concert halls; they preferred novelties, awing musical effects and daring extremes. And in order to satisfy those desires, Musard and other promenade conductors frequently utilized virtuosic soloists and exotic instruments. Informality and entertainment were the defining traits of such concerts, much like present rock and roll concerts. Solos played by star performers were a substantial feature for the repertoire of mixed popular dances like the polka, quadrille, and gallop, and well-known opera segments, which included using instrumental soloists for vocal lines and playing themes and variations upon the melodies. Dances made up a substantial portion of Musard's repertoire, so much that he was referred to as "Lord of Quadrilles and Galops."¹⁰² As the middle of the century approached, Musard's success waned, and he retired in 1852; however, a new era of promenade concerts had commenced with his most tenacious emulator, Louis-Antoine Jullien.

¹⁰⁰ Adam Carse, *The Life of Jullien*, (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons, 1951), 8.

¹⁰¹ See figure 5.7.

¹⁰² Adam Carse, *The Life of Jullien*, (Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons, 1951), 5.

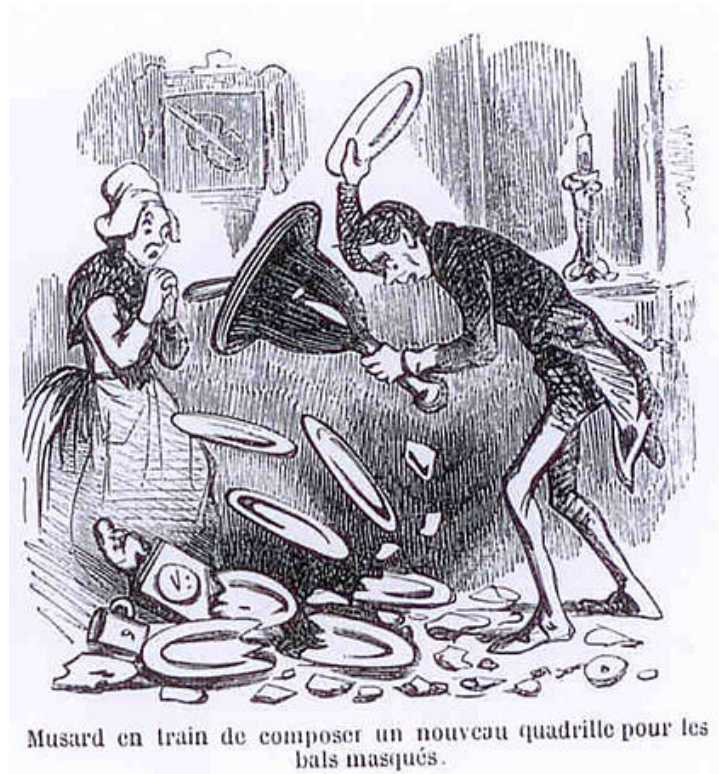


Figure 5.7: "Musard en train de composer un nouveau quadrille pour le bals masqués." ("Musard composing a new quadrille for the masked balls.") Amédée de Noé, pseudonym "Cham", *Nouvelles charges*, album du Charivari, (Paris, FR: 1851).

While the saxophone was used in Musard's concerts, it was in Jullien's orchestra that it would be widely utilized and to an extent, fetishized. Jullien began his career as a soldier, then studied flute and violin at *Conservatoire de Paris*, but lost his status as a student due to his fondness for light classical music and showmanship displays during his performances.¹⁰³ He viewed the popular Musard as a role model in the 1820s and began his own promenade orchestra. After a few prosperous years he was appointed the conductor for the *Paris Opéra* Balls, masked balls that occurred during the *Carnaval de Paris*.¹⁰⁴ But Jullien and his orchestra had moved to England in 1840, where he lured large audiences in the same manner as he had in Paris. From 1840 into the late 1850s, Jullien followed a routine of performing for a brief season each year in London and for the rest of the year, return to Paris and then tour across Europe and the United States.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 14.

He quickly gained international fame and distinguished himself from Musard by using more structured concerts programs, pre-staged theatrical elements, and collectively employing more skilled musicians. An article in the British magazine, *Punch*, describes the typical atmosphere of Jullien's concerts:

"With coat thrown widely open, white waistcoat, elaborately embroidered shirt-front, wristbands of extravagant length turned back over his cuffs, a wealth of back hair, and a black moustache—itself a startling novelty—he wielded his baton, encouraged his forces, repressed the turbulence of his audiences with indescribable gravity and magnificence, went through all the pantomime of the British army or Navy Quadrille, seized a violin or piccolo at the moment of a climax, and at last sank exhausted into his gorgeous velvet chair. All pieces of Beethoven's were conducted with a jeweled baton, and in a pair of clean kid gloves, handed to him at the moment on a silver salver."¹⁰⁵

Among the eccentric novelties of Jullien's concerts were the most notable and distinguishing musicians of his orchestra, the two saxophone soloists, Charles-Jean-Baptiste Soualle and Henri Wuille. The two had a sizeable influence on the dissemination of the saxophone during the 1850s and 1860s, as both were not only involved in Jullien's orchestra, but also performed in concerts in formal contexts in France, Belgium, England, and the United States. Not much information is known on Henri Wuille, but it is understood from *Revue* articles that he was a Belgian saxophonist with virtuosic abilities, who later in his career taught saxophone at *Conservatoire de Strasbourg*.¹⁰⁶ Comparatively, much is documented on Soualle.

As a distinguished clarinetist, Charles-Jean-Baptiste Soualle had graduated from Hyacinthe Klosé's clarinet class at *Conservatoire de Paris* in 1844, shortly after he became the clarinetist for the *Opéra Comique* until the 1848 revolution, which forced him to take refuge in England. There he became the principal clarinetist at the *Queen's Theatre* before joining Jullien's orchestra. Soualle's performances in Jullien's band were often presented with exotic overtones; several pamphlets have him listed as playing a "corno musa,"¹⁰⁷ which was undoubtedly the saxophone, as a critic from *Musical World*, describes the "corna musa" as being "made of brass, has

¹⁰⁵ Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 454. Also, see Figure 5.8.

¹⁰⁶ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 20, no. 48, (30 November 1851), 385-388.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 111.

the reed and mouthpiece of a clarinet, bristles with keys, and the bowl or bell of a horn. It has a mellow rich tone—a compound of the clarinet and the cornet."¹⁰⁸ Soualle took his Eastern stage personality further during his solo tours in Asia after Jullien's death by embracing the moniker "Ali Ben Sou Alle" and dressing in oriental costume. Soualle's intentional display of the saxophone as an exotic novelty reinforced the concept of the instrument as being such, especially during the period where France displayed an emergent musical interest in exoticism.



Figure 5.8: Jullien's eccentric personality. One of Jullien's signature spectacles: performing a piccolo or violin while conducting at the culmination point of a work.

It was the presentation as a novelty act within farce promenade concerts that greatly contributed to the cultural perception of the saxophone as an exotic incongruity with the contrasting traditions of the symphony orchestra. Having been featured in Jullien's concerts for nearly twenty years and the main "act" of for about

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 112.

one decade, an association with informal, ostentatious, working class traditions of music making was established for the instrument. And given Jullien's widespread popularity and enormous concert attendance, it's likely that a large number of individuals were exposed to the saxophone for the first time through promenade concerts—especially those living outside of France where it was not used in military bands. After two decades of Jullien's massively successful tours, it became expected among the general European public that they saxophone would be heard in promenade concerts and the strong identification with such flamboyant contexts restricted its use in the symphonic concert hall traditions that became associated with the upper and middle class in the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, the serious attempts at incorporating the saxophone into the orchestra were undermined by promenade concert arrangements. A significant portion of promenade repertoire was composed of arrangements of melodies from new and popular operas. Seeing as the saxophone was a commercial attraction for promenade orchestras, it was often used to perform the vocal melodies, as well as other instrumental parts in operatic arrangements. Therefore it is likely that operatic arrangements, which originally contained saxophone parts, would preserve those parts entirely for the saxophone. Though the score could not be located, a concert poster for Musard's concert on the themes of Limnander's *Chateau de la Barbe Bleue*¹⁰⁹ reveals that works originally containing saxophone parts were performed at promenade concerts. The flippant treatment of saxophone parts from works premiered at the *Paris Opéra* in wild shows associated with working class settings would have discredited the "legitimacy" of those operas. Because the saxophone was esteemed in working class promenade settings, and for the most part, the furthest aesthetic deviation in those operas was the usage of its novel timbre, affiliations were made based on the instrument.¹¹⁰ In addition, promenade

¹⁰⁹ See Figure 5.9.

¹¹⁰ While I am aware that promenade concerts featured a far greater number of arrangements from operas that did not originally contain the saxophone, as the number of popular operas without the saxophone was much larger, the operas that did originally contain saxophone parts were short-lived in terms of performances in comparison to their contemporaries. This suggests that the usage of the saxophone in the operatic context was negatively received due to its eminence in promenade

arrangements on symphonic pieces included saxophone parts, which were criticized because of the very orchestral custom of following the composer's instructions exactly regarding orchestral scoring. For instance in 1849 a London critic chastised Jullien's performance of Beethoven's fifth symphony for adding instruments that Beethoven had not scored for; caustically asking where in the score Jullien had found the parts for "four ophicleides and a saxophone, besides those of his favorite regiment of side-drums?"¹¹¹



Figure 5.9: A promenade concert poster advertising quadrilles and other dance themes from Limnander's *Chateau de la Barbe Bleue*.

operatic arrangements. The Operas featuring the saxophone were contemporary works, which were initially received at the height of promenade traditions, whereas a promenade arrangement, which gave the saxophone the vocalist line in an aria from earlier works, such as *Così fan tutte*, would not have affected the opera's popularity as it had already earned recognition.

¹¹¹ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 112.

Jullien's renowned series of promenade concerts held an important role in early conception of the saxophone due to the titanic size of the audiences they often attracted.¹¹² One can better understand the size of the crowds that attended Jullien's concerts from a quotation by Berlioz in his *Memoirs*:

"Four or five years after this sort of musical congress, Jullien, whom I have already mentioned in connection with the opera at Drury Lane, came to Paris to give a series of grand concerts in the circus at the Champs-Élysées. His bankruptcy prevented him from signing the necessary engagements; but I was happy enough to obtain his certificate for him, and with it the power of contracting..." "I have money, I have money," he cried, taking handfuls of gold and bank-notes out of his pocket.... The next, in spite of my resistance, was to pay of his Drury Lane debt. The fact was that he had already received considerable sums for his concerts at the Champs-Élysées..."¹¹³

Berlioz reveals that Jullien's 1858 concert series had such large turnouts that he was able to pay him back not only for the entry payment to perform but also the money he owed Berlioz for his Drury Lane appearance in England years before.¹¹⁴ Because the promenade bands were comprised of low class musicians and audience members, the saxophone's association with such venues helped define its identity; the identity of working class, self-taught musicians performing light classical and popular music in a flamboyant and casual style. (Preceding the events that would transpire in America with African-Americans and jazz.) Even when orchestral composers did score for the saxophone, it had connotations of being a "peasant" instrument and only reinforced the social class divide. Even in Bizet's *L'Arlesienne* suites, the only orchestral repertoire that from the nineteenth century that remained part of orchestral repertoire, the saxophone represents a commoner, the music from the streets.¹¹⁵

The use of promenade bands was the most influential and significant contributor to the saxophone's working class connotations; however, it was not the

¹¹² See Figure 5.10.

¹¹³ Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 493.

¹¹⁴ Regarding Jullien's bankruptcy in Berlioz's quotation: Jullien was known for impulsive spending and overspending on concert engagements. Towards the end of his life (1860) he became increasingly mentally ill, which contributed to his imprudent purchases. For more information see Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966).

¹¹⁵ Michael Segell, *The Devil's Horn: The Story of the Saxophone From Noisy Novelty to The King of Cool*, (New York: Picador, 2005), 249.

only one. Cottrell considers the relatively low prices of the instrument family a noteworthy factor in the extensive working class's usage. The costs of other instruments were usually prohibitive for working class salaries, opposed to the saxophone, which was comparatively cheap. Saxophones from Sax's shop were priced between 50 and 95 francs, whereas the average prices for flutes were 140 to 230 francs in Paris, and the symbolic instrument of the bourgeoisie, the piano, was priced at a whopping 2,000 to 3,000 francs. The low cost of saxophones permitted working class families to afford the leisurely activity of music celebrated in the middle class, whereas even flutes may have been unaffordable to such families. The average working class salary was around 3,000 francs a year and the average middle class salaries began around 3,500 francs and could be as much as 25,000 francs,¹¹⁶ giving the middle class far more options for purchasing instruments and with those instruments, far more ensemble options to participate in. The working class had severely limiting options as instrumentalists and if they played the saxophone, they only had the option to join the military or promenade bands. Cottrell's observations are especially important for the saxophone's working class implications because in the nineteenth century instruments became used as markers of class.

¹¹⁶ All numerical figures were derived from: Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 96.

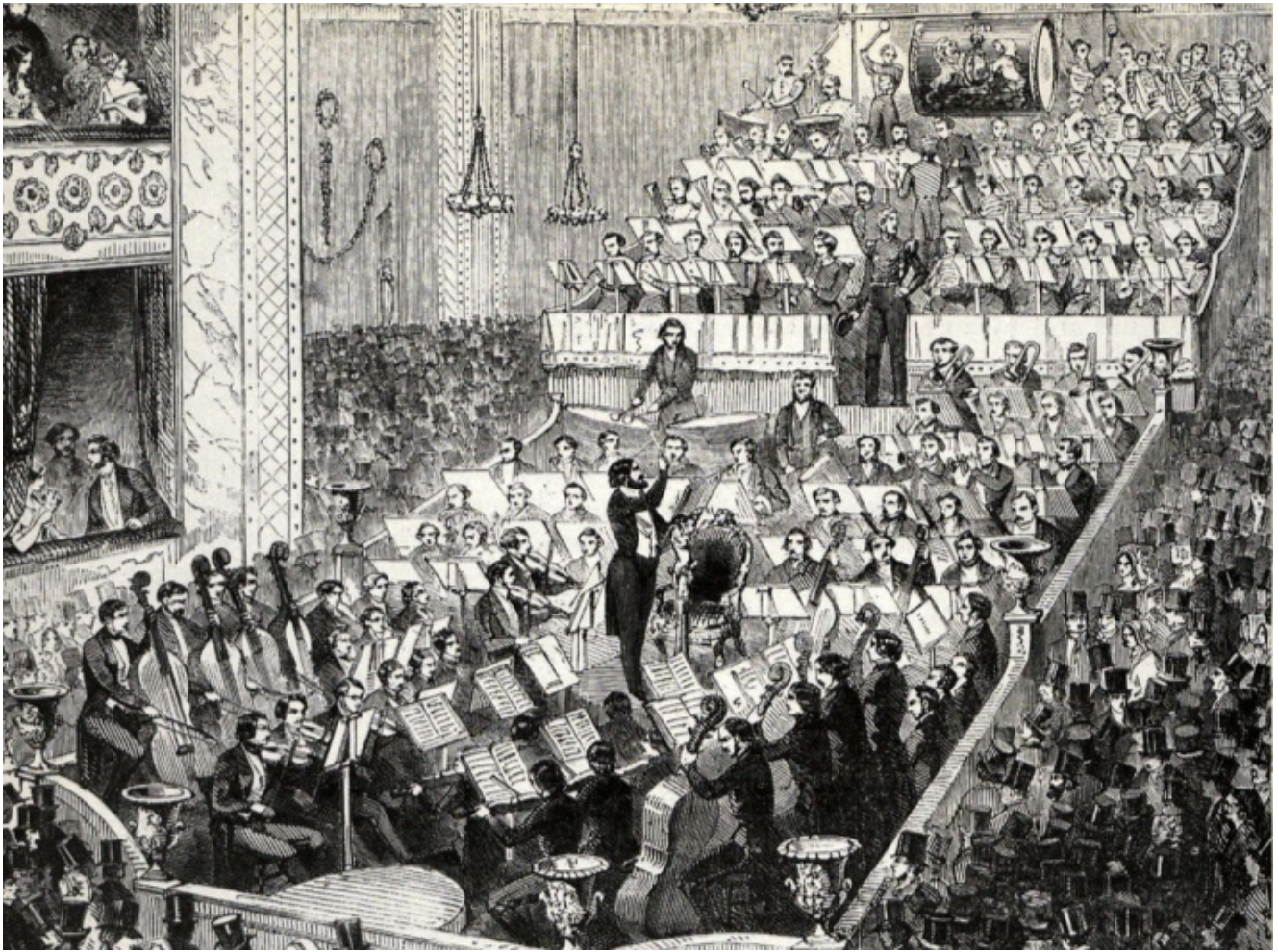


Figure 5.10: An etching displaying the massive audiences drawn to Jullien's promenade concerts. His velvet chair can be seen on the podium.

"A Monster Concert," *London Daily News* 1849, Jullien's Orchestra at a Promenade Concert 'in Covent Garden Theatre

Stifled Bourgeois Attempts at Claiming the Saxophone?

Promenade orchestras were not the only ensembles intentionally promoting the saxophone, however; there were groups, institutions, and individuals dedicated to displaying the possibilities the instrument wielded in an orchestral setting. The conceptual eulogies verbalized by composers during the 1840s became concrete endeavors in the 1850s. These ensembles did experience a degree of success; however, they failed to achieve their goal because of their less frequent

performances aimed at a restrictive audience in comparison to the large-scale, public operations of promenade concerts.

The two major ensembles that specifically worked to promote the saxophone in orchestral settings were, unsurprisingly, involved with Sax himself. The first was within the institution of the *Paris Opéra*, where he had obtained the position as the conductor of the onstage *banda* in 1847. The second was a promotional touring hybrid orchestra employed by Sax called the *Société de la Grande Harmonie*, which was founded in 1853. Because the first usage of saxophones in an orchestral setting were in the *banda* and scored works for the *Paris Opéra* it is necessary to examine the social attributes of the *Opéra* as an institution and its effects as a venue before discussing Sax's *harmonie* orchestra.

The saxophone found the most success in the *Paris Opéra* for a number of reasons. The foremost reason was also what gave Sax obtain a position there: opera was considered an apparatus of national policy. The development of opera in France occurred due to a customary government contribution. The *Paris Opéra* began its very existence through government patronage as *Académie Royale de Musique* under a 1669 decision from Louis XIV. At its creation, the appointed composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully, and librettist Philippe Quinault produced *tragédies en musique*, which were used as a form of political propaganda filled with monarchal allusions. In the age of nationalism, opera as a political asset became prevalent once more, especially under King Louis-Philippe's reign. The heritage of French opera was revived as Louis-Philippe helped establish a reputation for the *Paris Opéra* as a sort of national theatre. Because the bourgeoisie progressively defined the French concept of "nation," the "Citizen King" promoted operas with a subject matter pertaining to the bourgeoisie. Richard Taruskin describes this renewal of political influence through opera as, "a deliberate modernization and popularization of an ancient and aristocratic art."¹¹⁷

Sax was able to obtain his conducting position at the *Paris Opéra* through his political connections. The direct level of authority and role of military musical

¹¹⁷ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 3, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 206.

practices exerted by Louis-Philippe's regime on the institution itself can be observed by the fact that the director of the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire* held the *banda* position prior to Sax. As the saxophone entered the musical world as a political device through military bands, it is not surprising that the *Opéra* was the most accommodating institution for the addition of the saxophone. The function of opera as a device of national identity continued after the 1848 Revolution during Emperor Napoléon III's rule and coincidentally the first decade of Napoléon III's reign initiated a pattern of cumulative use for the saxophone in opera. An additional factor that contributed the instrument's usage in the operatic context was the genre's reliance on a sense of novelty and musical spectacles, especially in *Opéra Comique*, making the opera house a more accommodating environment for musical innovation than the concert hall.¹¹⁸ While only three operas scored for the saxophone during the 1850s, Sax was able to assert more influence involving the production of all staged works at the *Opéra* because of his imperial designation from Napoléon; as a result he incorporated saxophones in a far greater number of performances in the onstage *banda*.

The tradition of including an onstage *banda* originated from Italian opera traditions, which drew on local civic or military bands for stage productions to assist realistic settings.¹¹⁹ The *banda* was a diegetic ensemble; music that the characters could hear and respond to within the story. Music written for *banda* ensembles usually matched the context of the plot, for example the *banda* in the ballroom scenes of *Rigoletto* would try to replicate the style of dance music of sixteenth century Mantua. The director of the *banda* was ordinarily asked to score the ensemble's music according to the composer or main orchestra conductor's wishes. Under Napoléon III's protection, Sax was able to score for a significant number of operas including the *banda*. Between 1847 and 1892, two years before his death, Sax conducted his *banda* comprised of saxophones, saxhorns, saxotrombas, and

¹¹⁸ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 102.

¹¹⁹ Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 139.

saxtubas, among traditional instruments, in thirty-nine operas, four ballets, and one oratorio.¹²⁰

Opera offered Sax the artistic opportunity to override the conventions of strict adherence to scoring held by orchestral traditions because with each production, or revival, alterations to attract audiences were welcomed to a certain degree. One particular liberality in revival productions was the option to rescore *banda* parts for his instruments in famous operas, such as Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Rossini's *Robert Bruce*, and Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* and *Robert le diable*. Sax exercised command through his position with the Emperor by incorporating his instrumentation in the *banda* regardless of the context. As De Keyser mentions, "even when a score does not mention any Sax instrument, we know in some instances from other sources that Sax furnished instruments for some particular productions."¹²¹ Therefore, Sax's *banda* scoring had forced the saxophone into music practices through another political institution with varied degrees of appreciation.

However, composers did feature the saxophone in scores that were not imposed by Sax's decisions. The inclusion of the saxophone at the *Opéra* occurred in three different forms: alternatives to parallel traditional instruments in the orchestra, as entirely new solo timbral devices, and the introduction of entire families within the *banda*.¹²² In the 1850s, saxophones were not only included in an augmented *banda* usage, but also the main orchestra. The first opera of the decade to use the saxophone was Armand Limnander de Nieuwenhove's *Le Chateau de la Barbe-Bleue*, in which the composer scores for an Eb alto saxophone. Coincidentally, the premiere of this opera portraying the French folktale of Bluebeard, a wealthy and powerful nobleman who recurrently kills his wives, occurred at the *Opéra Comique* on the eve of Napoléon III's *coup d'état* on 1 December 1851. The Belgian composer gave the saxophone several lyrical solos, signaling his understanding of the instrument as an expressive voice, rather than a timbral "filler" between the

¹²⁰ Ibid, 141.

¹²¹ Ibid, 153.

¹²² Ibid, 134.

woodwinds and brass. The following year Limnander scored another lyrical solo for the alto saxophone in his two-act *Le Maître chanteur*. In addition, he used the saxophone as a solo instrument in his instrumental intermezzi for both operas.¹²³

The only other composer to score for the saxophone as part of the main orchestra in the 1850s was Halévy, who deviated the furthest away from its now "traditional" role as a solo color in an orchestral setting by scoring for a quartet of saxophones in his *Le Juif errant*. The 1852 work had parts for a soprano, two altos, and one bass saxophone. But their usage was restricted to the fifth act only, perhaps because Halévy wanted to avoid criticism for attempting to radically redraw the orchestra by including not merely a new solo instrument, but a family. The performance was met with success however; the *Paris Opéra's* records show that a total of fifty performances occurred and among the performers recorded was Sax himself.¹²⁴

Even with Sax's position, which he used to alter *banda* scores, the saxophone made little impression in opera orchestras. The number of operas containing saxophone parts in following decades oscillated, and at its peak, during the last two decades of the century, the number of works wouldn't exceed double-digits, while saxophone parts in promenade arrangements exceeded double-digits each season. Opera offered the greatest tolerance towards the misconstrued instrument, but only because the institution had a heritage as a political mechanism in France. Sax's networks in both regimes and position as *banda* director were the principal reasons his instrument was used in on and off stage ensembles. Had Sax not obtained a position as *banda* director and assisted the French government, the saxophone may have never been heard within the theatre of the *Paris Opéra*.

The diminutive success at the opera house may have prompted Sax to make a desperate commercial attempt at motivating composers to score for the saxophone. The measure used to ensure that his instrument would be utilized in orchestral music was the formation of a mixed ensemble of wind and string instruments to display the cohesive effects that could be produced. Formed in 1853, this hybrid

¹²³ Ibid, 154.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 145.

instrumentation was a mixture of a chamber orchestra and a wind ensemble, which he entitled the *Société de la Grande Harmonie*. The ensemble's performances in both his shop and tours abroad were well received, but short-lived, as there is no news of performances in assorted Parisian musical periodicals after 1854. The probable reason for the ensemble's abrupt ending may have been due to a drastically increased volume of business, which came with Sax's title of *Fabricant officiel d'instruments de musique à l'empereur*.

The *Grande Harmonie* was fundamentally a commercialized attempt to disseminate of the latent aesthetics produced by Sax's instruments. Since his arrival he had been holding organized concerts of classical era transcriptions in his shop salon; the only differences his *Grande Harmonie* offered were that it was much larger ensemble with a formalized instrumentation closer to that of the traditional orchestra, and it performed outside his Rue Saint-Georges salon. With a touring "template" for his proposed orchestral reform, Sax believed his instruments would have a better chance of joining the ranks of the symphony orchestra:

"Mr. Sax is convinced that in the arts it is not merely a matter of creating and inventing... 'Creations as often as possible before the public, in order to gradually accustom them to accept what is true, what is logical, what is excellent, instead of the old errors, the secular routines to which they carry an affection so particular and devoted.'"¹²⁵

Sax's uncompromising personality regarding his anticipated orchestral "revolution" is eminently displayed through his reported beliefs. Sax's inflexible temperament and envisagement for the saxophone "as a family within an orchestra...the seven members from sopranino to contrabass able to pass melodic lines smoothly as the members of the strings or voices of the choir"¹²⁶ was manifested in his ensemble's performances. His purpose of this touring *Grande Harmonie* orchestra was to slowly create public tolerance for his instruments in the orchestra, but his comments also reveal that he believed that the routine of scoring for the traditional orchestra was a celebrated error, to which composers and audiences were fallaciously loyal. If he had made statements criticizing the

¹²⁵ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 22, no. 32, (7 August 1853), 210.

¹²⁶ Michael Segell, *The Devil's Horn: The Story of the Saxophone, From Noisy Novelty to King of Cool* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 15.

conventional ensemble traditions throughout his life,¹²⁷ then it can be presumed that the celebrated contemporary composers of his time—who in most cases if they were well recognized had previously composed orchestral works—would have been insulted. Composers would have received his statements as direct insults to their works, as they were partaking in the "old errors" and "secular routines to which they carry with an affection."

The ensemble's innovative attempts to correct those "errors" and disrupt those secular routines were incredibly well received by critics, however. A plethora of laudable comments on the *Grand Harmonie* would have only increased Sax's stubborn beliefs and ego. A remarkable number of celebratory comments appeared on Sax's "true," "logical," and "excellent": "We know well the value of the saxophone when it will have introduced a complete system [family] in orchestras. There is a world of new effects to draw from the complete families of different timbres: this will be the future of a man of genius."¹²⁸

And those that compared the saxophone to stringed instruments, which reassured Sax's belief that the saxophone was worthy as an additional orchestral family:

"Thus, the saxophones in the *Torchlight* [*Marche aux Flambeaux*, Meyerbeer], produce effects of a novelty of incomparable sonority: they are the cellos of the wind instruments."¹²⁹ "The enormous bass Sax, whose flags [sic] are three times that of the ophicleides, renders the accompaniment parts in such a way as to sound like bowing or pizzicato..."¹³⁰

One critic even directly addressed the near universal avoidance of saxophone scoring from composers:

"For many years Mr. Sax has maintained a persevering struggle against opinions which may be sincere, but which are nevertheless disastrous to musical art, for they limit its growth. Mr. Sax's system is perfect and complete. Wherever he has presented his instruments, they have been judged the best constructed; wherever he presented his music, she found herself the best of all. With the

¹²⁷ Another *Revue* article confirms such comments were habitual of Sax, as on multiple occasions he had criticized primary traditional instruments in comparison to his: "the young virtuosi, Henri and Józef Wieniazski, came to defend the interests of the stringed instruments and the piano, in which Mr. Sax sought to dispute their superiority." *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 19, no. 20, (19 May 1850), 171.

¹²⁸ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 20, no. 48, (30 November 1851), 386.

¹²⁹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 23, no. 2, (9 January 1854), 8.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 8

adoption of the Sax system [family] in our orchestras... they have only to let their thoughts spread and they are sure to meet a docile and faithful interpreter. Why, then, oppositions and struggles? Could it be that the brilliance of the truth which delights the clairvoyant eyes offends the sick eyes of its bright light?"¹³¹

The multitude of journalistic admiration for the prototype orchestra does not correspond to repudiation of the saxophone within orchestral instrumentation. But it was not the opinions of critics that would convince composers to score for it; what really mattered was Sax's reputation within the Parisian musical community. No matter how beautiful the effects of his instruments were, Sax had been viewed as a defensive opportunistic interloper with a stubborn, explosive personality since his arrival one decade before.

Furthermore, the "revolutions" made by Sax's instruments had first occurred by way of a government decree, twice. While the reorganization of military bands was admired, the recurrent behavior in Napoléon's regime amplified Sax's persistence in obtaining a wide degree of influence on music making decisions for profit. Ergo, the template orchestra could have been perceived by the Parisian musical community in the same way as Sax's reorganized orchestration for regimental bands: as the beginning of an attempt to "standardize" orchestras around his instruments for profit. While of course nineteenth century French composers and musicians knew such instances could never be enforced, the refusal to compose for the saxophone may have been a form of protest to the Belgian's strategically made political allies, commercial "reign," and uncompromising nature.

An array of crucial factors concerning the saxophone's acceptance in the orchestra occurred during the 1850s: the saxophone was interpolated into regimental ensembles again after a brief hiatus; the main institution of saxophone study, the *Gymnase de Musique Militaire*, closed and passed responsibility to *Conservatoire de Paris*, where a well-defined divide was made between traditional and military studies; Sax's defensive nature was amplified in damaging ways regarding patents; Sax's imperial privileges allowed him to continue his business productions and successfully win lawsuits, as well as promote the saxophone at the

¹³¹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 22, no. 30, (24 July 1853), 262.

Paris Opéra. But the direct connection to the most powerful individual in France did not foster an enthusiastic interest that the saxophone had received from promenade orchestras.

The instrument that was originally applauded in royal courts and requested by royal patrons across Europe had become favored by the French working class. This rather paradoxical development had serious consequences on the cultural representation of the saxophone's associations. The instrument's ephemeral association with royal bands and nobles had dwindled and the most antithetical social group began to absorb it in their music making practices. Musard and Jullien were not only vital figures in the development of light classical music and the widespread facility of publicity in music concerts, but also in the designation of a cultural identification for the saxophone; one that unfortunately contradicted the social ideologies which the orchestra came to represent. Promenade concerts were imperative to the saxophone's identity as a novelty act; the flamboyancy and exoticism aroused a flippant view from participants of the traditional music school. Sax tried to prove his instrument could facilitate art, not merely ostentatious effects, but his notoriety provoked resistance. The number of enemies made by Sax throughout his life resulted in a nearly unified decision to eschew scoring for his instruments from Parisian composers, to which he attempted to combat through his *Grand Harmonie* orchestra, but he could not appeal to the bourgeoisie and their expropriation of the orchestra through his efforts alone.

The saxophone had received its identification as a voice of the oppressed long before it became the symbolic expressive tool of emancipated African-Americans during the Jazz Age. Those who labored day and night, but still could not participate in the domestic leisurely activity of music making because they had no means to obtain an instrument found an opportunity in inexpensive prices of the saxophone. Those who wished they had the opportunity to hear for themselves, the seamless transition of contemplative serene phrases to agitated grand melodies in the works of Franz Liszt, or the elongated lyrical *bel canto* melodies adorned with virtuosic technique in a Bellini aria had the option to hear them in promenade concerts. While the saxophone's association with the superficial concert customs of

the working class in the mid-nineteenth century was a vital reason behind the blatant disregard shown by composers, its ascribed identity became a reason upon which orchestral composers scored for it in the twentieth century. Many orchestral works of Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff, Glazunov, Kabalevsky, and Khachaturian would designate the saxophone, perhaps as a hidden representative proletariat voice; a voice of the unprotected laborer, the ethnic minorities, the forgotten peasants; the same laborers who could only access music through attending promenade concerts in nineteenth century Paris.

VI. 1860s: Old News

The 1860s would be a decade that contained more adversities than Sax had accumulated throughout his life. Not only would his connection with Napoléon III emerge as nugatory when the cavalry ensemble program was cut altogether, but he would also grieve the deaths of an inordinate number of supporters. He would see his last exhibition prize revoked and his saxophone patent expire, causing him to endure the sight of his commercial enemies modifying his prized invention and receiving their own saxophone patents. Furthermore, the increased number of saxophone patents corresponded with the escalated number of wind instrument patents in general, pushing Sax and his invention into anonymity.

Napoléon's national popularity diminished greatly, which undoubtedly affected Sax in the musical community. French citizens made known that the majority did not approve of the Emperor's policies. In 1860 the elected assembly was given greater authorities and the restraints on the press were eased, which created an environment where political dissension could be voiced. Napoléon would not reverse his policies despite the two million opposition votes in favor of a republic in the election of 1863.¹³² By the 1869 election the opposition vote had increased to three million and the public's message impelled him to restore a genuine parliamentary government through a new constitution, which established a hereditary emperor system as chief of state. In addition, foreign policy errors added

¹³² Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 32.

to the regime's humiliation: Napoléon's ill-judged involvement in the second French intervention in Mexico proved costly, futile, and seemed to present a possible conflict with the United States. Moreover, a new threat began to loom near the Empire: the rising dominance of Prussia, under the leadership of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Officials of the Second French Empire began to alter their agenda; creating national styles and music was no longer a priority, instead raising the regime's national level of approval became a foremost concern.

With increasing attention on government reform and foreign threats a cascade of undesirable political decisions caused a recession for Sax's factory. In an effort to limit national debt an 1860 decree was made, which reduced French military band numbers drastically. The cuts included a large number of Sax's instruments. The 1860 decree may have not initially affected Sax's sales, but in 1867 another mandate, which eradicated the cavalry section of military music entirely,¹³³ indefinitely caused the Rue-Saint-Georges shop to grieve. According to Pontécoulant, after the 1860 ensemble number decreases, there were 226 regiments that required instruments, which were normally purchased at intervals of every five years and valued at more than 1.1 million francs.¹³⁴ The abandonment of cavalry military music altogether would have reduced that figure significantly. The end of the decade would reveal that the saxophone's dissemination relied almost entirely on the success of the military bands and the Empire: as the Empire declined, so did military music, and in turn the worth of the saxophone.

Despite Napoléon III's actions, which left Sax feeling slighted by his patron, he did, however, assist Sax in 1861 when his fifteen-year saxophone patent was about to expire. Napoléon issued an imperial decree for the prolongation of the patent of the saxophone, acknowledging Sax as the sole manufacturer for another five years.¹³⁵ Under nineteenth century French laws, patent extensions were

¹³³ Although several leading ensembles remained due to an impending international competition: *Guides de la Garde Impériale and Garde républicaine de Paris*. Ibid, 123.

¹³⁴ Malou Haine, *Adolphe Sax (1814-1894): sa vie, son œuvre et ses instruments de musique*. (Brussels, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1980), 107.

¹³⁵ Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 133.

extremely difficult to obtain, in fact only one had been granted before the saxophone.¹³⁶ To be considered for a patent extension two criteria had to be met: 1) the inventor had made a substantial contribution to a particular art or industry, and 2) the inventor had not been able to profit from his invention through exceptional circumstances that were beyond his control.¹³⁷ Sax believed he had cause on both grounds since his inventions were widely considered revolutionary to wind instrument technologies and his resources were depleted from sequences of legal battles with competitors. In short, legal authorities could not decide on the matter, causing Napoléon to intercede, by which he gave Sax a special extension for five years.¹³⁸ It is likely that without the Emperor's assistance, Sax would not have received an extension, assuming tribunal authorities took into consideration the amount of time the plethora of saxophone patent challenge cases consumed; an expiry would have prevented new cases from forming, saving tribunal authorities time, costs, and stress. Napoléon's intercession would have been considered yet another biased act of power to help sustain Sax's company by other instrument manufacturers.

The military band reduction impaired the dissemination of the saxophone in orchestral settings because of Sax's decreased production. Fewer saxophones on the market meant fewer saxophonists, and fewer saxophonists prevented the chance to expand the infinitesimal number of saxophonists at the time. By the 1860s there were few "classical" saxophone virtuosos;¹³⁹ most performers were military trained musicians or working class amateurs. Such an absence of skilled saxophonists would

¹³⁶ The inventor was granted a five-year extension for his patented system of wood preservation in 1841. Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 31.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 32.

¹³⁸ "Art. 1 - The term of the invention patent granted to Antonius Joseph Sax, known as Adolphe Sax, on October 13, 1845, for the saxotromba instrument, is extended by five years, subject to the payment of the annual fee fixed by Article 4 of the Act of 5 July 1844. Art 2 - The term of the invention patent granted to Mr. Sax on 21 March 1846 for the so-called saxophone instrument is also extended by five years and under the same condition."

Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 133.

¹³⁹ I am referring to those prominent saxophonists who were classically trained musicians and consciously pursued solo and ensemble careers with success, such as, Henri Wuille, Charles Soualle, Louis-Adolphe Mayeur, and Edouard Lefèvre.

have deterred composers from scoring for the instrument. The diminutive number of actively performing classically trained saxophonists was further decreased when, perhaps the most active and well-known performer, Charles Soualle, died in 1865.

But the stagnant number of saxophonists was not the only contributor to the saxophone's rejection from the orchestra during the 1860s. The deaths of Sax's most ardent supporters caused an inevitable absence of discussion about the instrument in Parisian musical periodicals. In 1865 Meyerbeer's death eliminated the chance of the saxophone being written into the celebrated composer's grand operas.

Corresponding to the elimination of cavalry ensembles in 1867, Kastner, saxophone composer and zealous advocate passed away. The following year Rossini passed away, and along with him went his support for the instrument. The dearth of discussion and promotion from foremost musical figures reinforced the saxophone's vanishing image after its height in French culture through military music making.

The lack of sponsorship was almost entirely eliminated when one of the most influential Parisian critics and perhaps the most enthusiastic saxophone sponsor passed away in 1869; Berlioz's death was also the "death" of the saxophone as a prevalent topic in Parisian music periodicals. Although he may have never scored for the saxophone in the orchestra, he published the most articles encouraging the usage of the saxophone than any of Sax's acquaintances, so many that he wrote in his *Memoirs* that he'd been criticized for "excessive use of Sax's instruments" to which he describes the reason: "no doubt on the sound principle that I have often praised them, even if I do not happen to have employed them anywhere except in one scene of *La Prise de Troie*, an opera of which no one has yet seen a note."¹⁴⁰

Berlioz's incessant advocacy for the saxophone was sincere despite the fact that he neglected it in his scores. The autograph score of *La damnation de Faust*, Op. 24 contained alto and tenor saxophone parts, which were crossed out before they were completed.¹⁴¹ Cottrell believes that the reason for Berlioz's decision to omit the saxophone parts was due to the poor reception of his operas during the 1840s and 1850s. Cottrell suggests that if Berlioz were "to have begun to score for an

¹⁴⁰ Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 506.

¹⁴¹ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 47.

exotic instrument such as the saxophone, particularly in light of the antipathy demonstrated towards Sax by many musicians, might have further limited Berlioz's chances of performances."¹⁴² In addition, by the 1840s his reputation was as a critic and writer, not a composer. Therefore, Berlioz's incongruous choice to never score for the instrument may have been out of concerns for personal success in his declining popularity as the century passed.

The death of several of Sax's advocates and the elimination of the saxophone's primary ensemble drastically diminished the instrument's relevance. The declining interest in the instrument to the general public would have presented even fewer reasons for composers to score for it. Even in industrial exhibitions—the setting where Sax received the most attention and honor—the weakened interest for the saxophone showed. At the *Exposition universelle d'art et d'industrie de 1867* Sax had won the *Grand Prix*, priced at 20,000 francs; however, he never saw the prize, as the decision was bitterly revoked.¹⁴³ It became clear that the Belgian who amazed judges with a never before heard timbre had become "old news."

Further contributing to the decline of the saxophone's popularity was the enormous increase of instrumental patents during the decade. The "quests" for new timbres was answered by instrument manufacturers who sought to improve and invent new instruments like Sax had done nearly twenty years earlier. Critic Eduard Hanslick, observed the industry's desire to provide composers with a multitude of timbres in his review of the 1863 London Industrial Exhibition:

"Each proud father of a young brass instrument is particularly concerned to think up a new outrageous name. If there are ten new improvements invented for the common flugelhorn, or the ophicleide, so they are introduced into the musical world as ten new instruments, often under the most arbitrary and incomprehensible names. One finds in the catalogue of exhibited brass instruments, among others, the following: schwannenhorn, glyceide, euphonion, tritonikon, phonicon, trompettin, zvukoroh, baroxyton, sarrusophone, pelitticon, konigshorns, helicon, and half dozen compounds including the name "Sax", ect. ect. All these fabulous creatures could easily be brought under two or three more familiar designations"¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid, 104.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 33.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 102.

Hanslick's quote reveals the ridiculous amount of "new" instruments that had attempted to enter musical practices through nineteenth century commercialism. The exclusive timbre of the saxophone was no longer a phenomenon; new timbres were being introduced each year, obscuring the saxophone's unique feature that had given it unprecedented distinction.

As the saxophone vanished from bourgeois music publications and conversations it remained in the ears of the working class. Promenade concerts continued to exploit it with themes of exoticism. After Jullien's death in 1860, the following generations of promenade orchestra conductors continued to employ it in the same satirical routines. London Promenade leader Alfred Mellon gained considerable success in his imitation of Jullien's "Turkish" burlesques in which he dressed his saxophone soloist, a Frenchman by the name of Cordier, in janissary attire and presented him as "Ali Ben Mustapha."¹⁴⁵ Jullien's son also followed in his father's exaggerated theatrical footsteps and habitually presented his principle clarinetist as "Ali Ben Jenkins" for saxophone solos.¹⁴⁶ These Orientalized saxophone performances continued to be the most popular pieces in working class music concerts, as Rivière notes on "Ali Ben Mustapha"'s solos during one Covent Garden season, "He soon became the lion of the season."¹⁴⁷ Saxophone solos in Turkish costume demonstrate the marginalized view the instrument had gained; just as Turkish and oriental cultures had been ostracized by European cultures, so was the saxophone in "classical" music.

Despite the dwindling interest in the saxophone from the Parisian public, it still managed to find its way into the *Paris Opéra*, albeit it mainly as a substitute instrument. Meyerbeer's 1865 grand opera, *L'Africaine* featured the saxophone as a alternative part for the bass clarinet, which according to Saint-Saëns's review of one performance was not well received: "[Meyerbeer], as a compliment to Adolphe Sax substituted a saxophone for the bass clarinet the author indicated. This resulted in

¹⁴⁵ Jules Prudence Rivière, *My Musical Life and Recollections*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1893), 126.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 116.

¹⁴⁷ Jules Prudence Rivière, *My Musical Life and Recollections*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1893), 126.

the suppression of that part of the aria *O Paradis sorti de l'onde* as the saxophone did not produce a good effect"¹⁴⁸ Saint-Saëns's remark is ironic considering that he scored for the saxophone on several occasions.¹⁴⁹ Meyerbeer's death prevented him from his next composition project; a re-orchestrated *L'Africaine* in which he prepared for by staying with Sax for hours each day to study the properties of his instruments near the end of his life.¹⁵⁰

Another opera that the saxophone was featured as a substitute was the 1861 Paris production of Richard Wagner's *Tannhauser*. Upon arrival in Paris, Wagner discovered that there was not a sufficient number of skilled horn players to fill the twelve parts required for his *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The *Opéra* directors told Wagner that saxophones sounded similar, so he rewrote the twelve horn parts to fit the ranges of the alto and baritone saxophone.¹⁵¹ To fulfill Wagner's substitute demands the *Opéra* management agreed to order these instruments from Sax at the cost of 1000 francs.¹⁵² Apparently Sax took this as an opportunity to promote his business, as Wagner claims in his memoirs:

"Regarding this problem, I had to deal with a terrible man the famous musical instrument maker, Sax, who tried to help me with all kinds of surrogates such as Saxophones and Saxhorns; moreover, he was officially appointed to conduct the music behind the scenes. It was an impossibility ever to get this music played properly."¹⁵³

Perhaps this example of Sax attempting to convince Wagner to use his instruments is an illustration of how other composers saw him: promoting his instruments for his own profit, not for art's sake, just as they conceived his military band reorganizations.

Wagner may have not appreciated the saxophone, but one particular composer demonstrated his admiration for the instrument through an instrumental

¹⁴⁸ Camille Saint-Saëns, *Musical Memories*, (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Company, 1919), 248.

¹⁴⁹ *Orient et Occident*, op. 25, the opera *Henry VIII* contains a quintet (S/ 2 A/T/B) in the *banda* section, and the cantata *Les Noces de Prométhée*, op. 19, contains two altos and a baritone.

¹⁵⁰ Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 142.

¹⁵¹ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 124.

¹⁵² Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 146.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 146.

recitative. Ambroise Thomas's 1868 opera, *Hamlet*, was perhaps the most progressive use of the saxophone because it demonstrated demanding technical capabilities for a wind instrument, which were understood previously as exclusive to the clarinet, oboe, and flute.¹⁵⁴ *Hamlet*'s scoring is possibly the first example to exhibit the saxophone's versatility in musical character, which is displayed through transient alterations of rapid passages of sixteenth notes and *amoroso* lyricism.

4. Récit

Ambroise Thomas

Allegro moderato (♩ = 112)

Allegro moderato (♩ = 112)

f

8va

Récit (ad lib.)

mf

8va

Récit (ad lib.)

21

quasi recitativo

p

longo

24

Andantino (♩ = 48)

lento

Andantino (♩ = 48)

pp sostenuto

Figure 6.1: Thomas's scoring exploits the saxophone's acrobatic technical abilities as well as acknowledging the instrument's vocal-esque qualities through lyricism in a recitative.

¹⁵⁴ See Figure 6.1.

The 1860s were an especially poignant time for Sax and the saxophone. The Emperor's shift of focus from enriching the French national identity through military band bravura to maintaining approval at home had reduced the instrument's prominence in French culture, which in turn had also decreased the demand for its production, as the majority of saxophone sales were made by the military. Following the elimination of a portion of the saxophone's primary ensemble were the deaths of the instrument's most dedicated supporters, leaving the pages of music periodicals absent of the word "saxophone." The scarcity of promotion in the Parisian musical community furthered the saxophone's waned image after its martial height in French culture. The expiry of Sax's patent resulted in an array of altered and debased versions from other instrument manufacturers, which could have offended the ears of composers. The increased number of saxophone patents pushed the saxophone further into anonymity, as it corresponded with the increasing number of wind instrument patents of the decade. The increased number of wind instrument patents was mostly composed of transient inventions, which although few made any impact on musical practice had also made the accessibility to new timbres a common occurrence, resulting in a reduced significance for the saxophone's once exclusive idiosyncrasy. Moreover, the saxophone's relevance to classical traditions further degenerated as the rising popularity of "Ali Ben Mustapha"s continued to foster connotations of exoticism in promenade concert settings. The unfortunate combination of events during the 1860s had caused the saxophone to fade away from a culturally revered practice, the bourgeois public's attention, and the instrument manufacturing industry, ultimately rendering it as *démodé*.

VII. 1870s: The Orchestra at Last

The poignancy of the previous decade was intensified during the 1870s. After the amalgamation of events, which drained Sax's revenue and removed the saxophone from the "front page" of Parisian papers each week, Sax was forced to accept defeat simultaneously with the Empire. France's defeat in the Franco-

Prussian War in 1871 created a colossal amount of debt for the nation, which was dealt with by massive military funding cuts from the succeeding Third Republic. The Republic's reduced military spending had eliminated the expenditure for the music division entirely, causing Sax to declare bankruptcy twice before nearly vanishing from Parisian music culture altogether. Additionally, the most prominent saxophone chamber repertoire composer and one of the few "classical" saxophone virtuosos had passed away, further removing the instrument from public performances and modishness. Despite the multitude of unfortunate events that affected Sax and his instrument in the 1870s, Sax's intended *raison d'être* for the saxophone was achieved: a composer had finally scored for it in a purely orchestral work. Had this serendipity become a common occurrence, the later half of the century may have been parallel to the former for Sax.

The Collapse of an Empire and the Demise of an Instrument

Just as the previous political changes affected the saxophone's presence and identity in France, the changes in authority had directly influenced the fate of the "war" instrument. The 1870s were an exceptionally devastating and turbulent time for French politics: Prussia's victory in the Franco-Prussian War brought ruin to Napoléon III's administration; the nation accumulated massive debt; *La Commune de Paris*, a revolutionary group, was suppressed by martial force to prevent another revolution and 20,000 French socialists were executed; France had to cede Alsace and the northern portion of Lorraine to the German states due to the provisions of the Treaty of Frankfurt; and the process of instating a new republic was drawn out until 1879. The chaotic events had affected all French residents to varying degrees; however, the 1871 defeat had severely affected Sax and the course of the saxophone.

His formidable patron of eighteen years was permanently removed from power and the elimination of music spending not only cost Sax the contract that ensured continuous business, but also abrogated the central institution for teaching the saxophone. In 1871 Sax reported that he had supplied less than 2,000 francs worth of instruments to the military that year.¹⁵⁵ Two years later in 1873, he

¹⁵⁵ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 34.

declared bankruptcy for the first time since 1852— only this time he had no influential patron to absolve his debt; instead, he had to make an agreement with his creditors to permit him to remain in business. Sax's company maintained enough profits to remain for the following four years, until he had to yet again declare bankruptcy.

Despite Sax's amassing debt, he continued to make attempts at ensuring his name-bearing instrument would outlast his insolvent business. Out of desperate concerns for the future of his beloved instrument, he wrote letters to the directors of the *Conservatoire de Paris* offering to teach the saxophone for free;¹⁵⁶ however, his attempts were unavailing, as the *Conservatoire* would not allow any saxophone classes to resume. It would take seventy-one years for the *Conservatoire de Paris* to offer saxophone classes again, which resumed under the direction of Marcel Mule in 1942, presently regarded as the "Father of Classical Saxophone."¹⁵⁷ The *Conservatoire's* dismissal of Sax's proposal further confirms the traditional school's flippant views of the saxophone; if the *Conservatoire's* 1856 decision to omit Sax's name as a professor and divide military classes had revealed the stigmatization of the saxophone as a military instrument, then the 1871 decision to refuse Sax's free labor unapologetically confirmed the "classical" school's frivolous opinion of the instrument. The decision was one of symbolism; Sax had only desired to secure proper techniques and methods for the saxophone with the assiduous hopes that performers could facilitate the highest degree of performance, leading to serious treatment from "classical" traditions; however, the *Conservatoire's* refusal clearly exhibited imperious views that the saxophone was incongruous with learned traditions.

To Sax, saxophone classes at the *Conservatoire* without the military affixation were a vital component to establishing its residency in the orchestra. Without the furtherance of a proper method of playing, saxophonists would not be able to achieve sufficient musical proficiencies, barring them from the opportunity to

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 109.

¹⁵⁷ Alexander Morin, *Classical Music: Third Ear: The Essential Listening Companion*, (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2002), 1161,

participate in the often challenging nature of orchestral repertoire, had any composers scored for it. The scarcity of adequately skilled saxophonists was probably a factor taken into consideration by composers who desired to use it: if a one wrote a piece, would they be able to find a saxophonist with the facility to meet the demands of their music in performance? The likelihood was slim even in Paris where saxophonists were relatively abundant, due to Sax's presence there. The issue of hiring capable saxophonists persisted into the mid-twentieth century for composers, as Marcel Mule suggests: "I would say that the one most evident elements of discouragement was that composers of the time [the 1940s] did not write enough for the saxophone. I believe that they really thought there were not enough good saxophonists available. What a pity!"¹⁵⁸ If the lack of adequate performers was a deterrent for composers in the 1940s when the saxophone was at the center of popular music in Europe and the United States, then one can easily conceive how this problem was drastically exacerbated for composers during Sax's lifetime.

In addition, the majority of saxophonists were of the working class, many of whom only purchased saxophones due to the affordability in order to participate in leisurely activity of music-making that had become so adorned by the bourgeoisie; it is very unlikely that members of the working class could also afford to take music lessons on a regular basis. With the average salary for a Parisian laborer in 1871 at five francs per day, equaling approximately 1,810 francs per year,¹⁵⁹ method books were just about the only option for the majority of saxophonists at the time. The few method books offered earlier by Sax, Cokken, Kastner, Klosé, Mayeur, and others, were relatively expensive for working class members, ranging from 15 to 24 francs during the 1870s; it would take about three to five days of work for the average working class laborer to afford one.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Eugene Rousseau, *Marcel Mule: his Life and the Saxophone* (Shell Lake, Wisconsin: Etoile, 1982), 78-79.

¹⁵⁹ Pierre Sicsic, "City-Farm Wage Gaps in Late Nineteenth-Century France," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (September, 1992), 683, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2122890>.

¹⁶⁰ Comparing the prices of 1870s edition method books: Hyacinthe Klosé *Méthode complète de Saxophone-baryton*, (Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1879) and Louis Mayuer Grand *Méthode complète de*

The insufficiency of apt saxophonists was compounded by the death of prominent saxophone virtuoso Henri Wuille in 1871. Despite his promenade orchestra connections, he was one of the few “classically” trained musicians who transferred their technique and methods as a clarinetist to the saxophone. In addition to his promenade orchestra career he was one of the first solo touring saxophonists to who performed classical transcriptions and contemporary works commissioned by Sax, as one critic from the *Revue* recorded:

“M. Wuille an artist of great talent...played in the last winter in several concerts, and has performed on this same instrument the toughest features with ease, to the unanimous applause of a connoisseur public. M. Wuille, whose skill is indisputable, however proved wrong the misjudged the character of the instrument, which is not intended for shiny [flashy] things, but for expressive music and mysterious effects.”¹⁶¹

The *Revue*’s description of Henri Wuille’s performances confirms the atypical nature of virtuosity and repertoire choices as the opposite of what was normally expected by saxophonists and the style of music they performed. The critic’s phrase “connoisseur public” leads one to believe that the audience was comprised of bourgeois members. The critic also reports that Wuille’s performance refuted the “misjudged character of the instrument” by demonstrating the saxophone’s capabilities of making art music, rather than the ostentatious styles used in promenade concerts.

The scarcity of skilled saxophonists was compounded four years later when the largest contributor to saxophone solo and chamber works, composer Jean-Baptiste Singelée had passed away. The Belgian violinist and composer was first to treat the saxophone as a serious classical instrument, as he composed over thirty *Solos de Concours* for Sax’s students at the *Conservatoire de Paris*. These works were all published by Sax’s business and provided the earliest repertoire for the instrument. Singelée provided the earliest saxophonists with a variety of chamber works including solos, duets, trios, and the first saxophone quartet work. Singelée

Saxophones, (Paris, Léon Escudier, 1878). The prices of saxophone method books remained stagnant throughout the nineteenth century, despite its decline in formal popularity since the 1840s.

¹⁶¹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 20, no. 48, (30 November 1851), 262.

continued to compose saxophone chamber works until his death in 1875. The 1870s presented an endangered environment for saxophone's existence: there were no institutions providing saxophone study, and the instrument's most active composer had passed away. Singelée's absence indefinitely contributed to the saxophone's waning existence in post-imperial France.

While Singelée was the leading saxophone chamber work composer in Sax's lifetime, many other composers had also made fewer, but significant contributions nonetheless, in establishing repertoire for the thirty-five-year-old instrument. The small amount of chamber saxophone repertoire was birthed in the later half of the nineteenth century. One of the issues in establishing repertoire for it was the fact that the saxophone was initially seen more as a utilitarian instrument than an artistic one. Its reverence as the solution to balance issues in military and wind bands outweighed any reputation it obtained as a purely expressive medium. Therefore, it would not replace the violin or cello in trios, solos, or duets aside the piano intended for salon performances. Sax understood that his instruments were received more as solutions to ensemble problems than expressive solo instruments, so he ran a publishing business from 1858 to 1878 to encourage the saxophone's expressive vocal-like qualities through producing chamber repertoire.

Composers such as Jules Demersseman, Jermone Savari, Paul-Agricole Génin, Jean-Baptiste Arban, and Léon Chic promoted the saxophone through an array of chamber works published by Sax's company. Solos to quartets were published from the 1850s onwards. Perhaps one reason why the campaign to exhibit the saxophone as a salon-oriented instrument failed was due to the dated aesthetics in which the composers engaged in: titles such as *Freischütz Fantasy*, *Fantasie brillante*, *Caprice*, *Solo sur la Tyrolienne*, betray their Romantic connotations, as they were written in a relatively light classical style and were intended to display the technical and lyrical capabilities of the saxophone.¹⁶² A *Revue* article points the stylistic disparity out in the saxophone's chamber works:

¹⁶² See Figure 7.1 and 7.2.

"To the works of which M. Sax composes his new repertory, one could join with happiness pieces taken from classical authors. Thus, we think that some andantes, some scherzi, and quartets by Haydn and Mozart, ingeniously translated for an equal number of his new instruments, would produce a very interesting effect...these pretty pieces, somewhat light in style, it is true, that he made us hear sounds of former times..."¹⁶³

The critic proclaims that the new repertoire for the saxophone could be agreeably placed besides the works of classical composers and that the audience had heard "sounds of former times" in the newly composed works.



Figure 7.1: *La Chanson du Printemps*, an early tenor saxophone solo chamber piece, which adheres to Classical era aesthetics: a simple *galant* melody bares triads of the harmonic progression via appoggiatos; evenly structured phrases with antecedent and consequent phrase members; and sequenced imitative gestures.

¹⁶³ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 19, no. 20, (19 May 1850), 171.

Perhaps the anachronistic aesthetics used in these works had harmed the instrument's reception since the first half of the nineteenth century yielded a multitude of distinct aesthetics—all of which had departed from the cosmopolitan aesthetics of the classical period—that had become accustomed in all genres. The controlled harmonic tension, stability between consonance and dissonance, perfectly proportioned formal structures and utilization of thematic developments of the classical period were oppressors to the Romantic spirit and its need for subjectivity. Through reduced formal restrictions, romantic composers could fully express their individual ideas: by the time saxophone repertoire had become available, musical aesthetics were solely driven by emotion and subjectivity, not the rationality and logic used in the previous era. Because the saxophone's chamber repertoire emerged in the later half of the nineteenth century and consisted of exclusively classical aesthetics, it is possible that audiences received the repertoire as "impassive" and *démodé*, rendering the saxophone in a similar manner. Had composers wrote chamber works in a more romantic style, the saxophone may have become a defining timbral feature of late romantic salon music: instead the instrument's earliest chamber works attempted to redraft the previous era's aesthetics by including a new timbre.

Solo sur la Tyrolienne

for E♭ Alto Saxophone and Piano
to Monsieur Adolphe Sax

transposed score

Léon Chic
(1819-1916)

The image displays a musical score for 'Solo sur la Tyrolienne' by Léon Chic, originally composed for E♭ Alto Saxophone and Piano. The score is presented as a transposed score. It begins with the tempo marking 'Maestoso' and the dynamic 'ff' (fortissimo). The score is written for two staves: the E♭ Alto Saxophone (top) and Piano (bottom). The key signature is one flat (B♭ major or F minor), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the initial entry of both instruments. The second system, starting at measure 4, features a 'legato' passage in the piano part. The third system, starting at measure 8, is marked 'Largement' and includes a 'dolce' (softly) instruction for the saxophone part. The piano part in this section features a series of chords marked 'pp' (pianissimo).

Figure 7.2: An early solo chamber work for alto saxophone and piano, *Solo sur la Tyrolienne* displays aesthetics that belonged to the previous century. Features such as clear tonic-dominant relationships, even phrases, driving rhythmic pulses, and monorhythmic gestures between both instruments.

Paris was one of the foremost cities for music in the Romantic era; it is likely that Parisians who listened to the saxophone's chamber works were weary of styles that seemed archaic compared to the unprecedented aesthetics produced by Frédéric Chopin and the innovative forms of variations created by Franz Liszt and Niccolò Paganini. Not only were the new opposing romantic styles and philosophies at their height, but the time period also yielded scathing satirical works that mocked classical composer's values. One well-known example is Jacques Offenbach's operetta, *Orphée aux enfers*, which parodied Gluck's stoic musical values that attempted to "Delight the eyes and ears, to rouse up and to affect the hearts of an audience, without the risk of sinning against reason or common sense"¹⁶⁴ in his reform opera setting of *Orfeo ed Euridice* through licentiousness and mindless celebrations. Therefore, music's purpose was regarded as one to fulfill artist's needs for self-expression during Sax's lifetime; its purpose was no longer to suit the audience's pleasures and needs through intellectual stimulation as it was during the Classical era.

After Sax declared his third bankruptcy in 1877, he was forced to sell his music publishing rights in order to provide partial reimbursement to his creditors. When his publishing company ended, the pieces for saxophone chamber repertoire followed, augmenting the educational and cultural issues already presented in the 1870s.

Out of Business

As Sax's influence on military musical practices dwindled, so did his business. The 1870s were the beginning of the end for Sax's company: in 1877 he declared his third and final bankruptcy. He could not afford to reach an agreement with his creditors this time and was forced to sell his prized instrument collection, which contained 467 examples of his own inventions, and also instruments from earlier periods. His instrument collection was set at the price of 40,000 francs; however, the historic collection, which included the first models of the Eb alto and baritone saxophones, a concert pitched soprano saxophone, and several *Légion d'Honneur*

¹⁶⁴ Francesco Algarotti, *Essay on the Opera*, (NY: Edwin Mellen, 2005), 20.

winning gold and silver plated saxophones, had only accumulated 12,000 francs in its auction.¹⁶⁵ The prime results of Sax's most laborious toils had not even been valued at one-third of the price, which he reluctantly posed upon his priceless trophies.

After the auction of Sax's most valued possessions he and his creditors reached an agreement that permitted him to pay 25% of his remaining debt over a five-year period in order to allow his company to remain. His company endured through the next two decades, making barely enough profits to remain in business. He would not have to relocate his factory to a smaller building until two years before his death. By the time the 1878 *Exposition Universelle* was held Sax could not even afford the entry fee. Typical of Sax's adamant and paranoid nature, he protested to the minister of Agriculture, claiming that he was being denied the opportunity to display his newest designs and if he were not allowed to participate the public would assume that his company had ceased production entirely because other manufacturers were able to exhibit their versions of his inventions.¹⁶⁶ Cottrell notes that his qualms of injustice behind his protest were proven valid when the *Exposition* jury awarded a series of gold, silver, and bronze medals to his competitors for "their excellent saxophones."¹⁶⁷

The sixty-four year old inventor, who had consecutively defeated his competitors in various exhibitions since his arrival in Paris, must have had an amalgam of indignation, envy, and despondency stirring within by the end of the decade. His fears had been confirmed: the once most successful instrument inventor and luminary's days of success had long passed.

"The only victories, which leave no regret, are those that are gained over ignorance" - Napoleon I

The decade that gave nothing but misfortune and tribulation to Sax did, however, ironically yield an event that would become regarded as the most important event in classical saxophone history: the first scoring for the saxophone

¹⁶⁵ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 35.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 35.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 35.

in a purely orchestral work. Georges Bizet's 1871 suite entitled, *L'Arlésienne* marked the commencement of saxophone usage in orchestral works that were not tied with opera—though earlier operatic inclusions were not less momentous. Bizet's usage of the saxophone was significant a number of reasons: the decision was not associated with or induced by Sax himself, it was the first usage of the saxophone as both a soloistic and collective voice, and it is used to represent the laborers that had readily accepted it in their promenade concerts. Diachronically speaking, *L'Arlésienne* is also significant because it is the only orchestral saxophone work from the nineteenth century that is still performed by modern orchestras.

The pioneering work began as incidental music for Alphonse Daudet's play of the same name, which translates to "The Girl from Arles." The first performance of occurred on October 1, 1872 at the *Théâtre du Vaudeville*. The play is set in Castelet, a rural village on the banks of the Rhone in southern France, where the young peasant, Frédéri, falls in love with "The Girl from Arles." Shortly before their wedding date Frédéri learns that his soon to be bride has been unfaithful and the discovery drives him into insanity. His family attempts to help their son cope with the loss of his lover by arranging another marriage for him, but Frédéri is constantly reminded of "The Girl from Arles" and eventually commits suicide by jumping off a balcony during the town's harvest celebration. Bizet compiled the folk-themed dances into two orchestral suites for orchestra after the play's short-lived twenty-one performances. Bizet wrote several folk-like themes himself, but also incorporated three existing tunes from a folk music collection published by Vidal of Aix in 1864: *La Marcho di Rei*, the *Danse dei Chivau-Frus*, and *Er dou Guet*.¹⁶⁸

Bizet's usage of the saxophone in *L'Arlésienne* embodies its ascribed social identity. The very first orchestral saxophone solo is used to represent Frédéri's younger brother, nicknamed "l'Innocent," also a peasant in rural France. After Bizet's theme and variations on the folk melody, *La Marcho di Rei* the orchestra ritards, fades, and prepares for "l'Innocent"'s theme with three solemn chords and a long pause. The *con sordini* string accompaniment in *tutti* and *ostinato* clarinet

¹⁶⁸ Daniel Gregory Mason, *The Appreciation of Music, Vol. III: Short Studies of Great Masterpieces*, (NY: H.W. Grey Co., 1918), 109.

motive set an innocuous accompaniment for young peasant's theme.¹⁶⁹ The saxophone enters for a solo marked *espressivo assai*, which renders a sensitive, curious, but also mournful melody.¹⁷⁰ Daniel Gregory Mason believes that because the recurring motive throughout the saxophone's solo is harmonized differently at each appearance, Bizet intended to represent naïveté in the young peasant;¹⁷¹ perhaps to symbolize a character that repeats the same curious actions in different situations.

Clar.
Saxop.
con sordini.
Vus. ppp con sordini.
B. p
(mettez les sourdines)
(mettez les sourdines)
ppp
Andante molto.

Figure 7.3: Bizet *L'Arlésienne* First Suite, movement one: the young peasant's saxophone melody is accompanied by simple *tutti* string harmonies and a recurring clarinet motive.

¹⁶⁹ See Figure 7.3.

¹⁷⁰ See Figure 7.4.

¹⁷¹ Daniel Gregory Mason, *The Appreciation of Music, Vol. III: Short Studies of Great Masterpieces*, (NY: H.W. Grey Co., 1918), 105.

Bizet — L' Arlesienne, Suite No. 1

2
Saxophon in Es

Andante molto Solo

87 *pp* *longa* *p espressivo assai*

93

98 *poco cresc.*

103 *sf* *dim. p* *dim. pp* 5

113 *Un poco meno lento* *p* *f* *cresc. ff*

Figure 7.4: L'Innocent's penetrating thematic melody embodied through an Eb alto saxophone solo.

Bizet's decision to score for the saxophone specifically for music that was originally used for a play set in a rustic village in southern France provides evidence for the working class implications that became affixed the instrument. Coincidentally, the play had premiered at the *Théâtre du Vaudeville*, located in the IX^e *arrondissement*, just south of the bohemian *Montmartre* district. The *Théâtre du Vaudeville* was known for putting on performances of *comédie en vaudevilles*, short comedies, which featured *opera buffa* elements and melodies from popular vaudevilles; an appropriate venue for working class audiences. The saxophone's cultural identity was ultimately confirmed through the work of Musard, Jullien, and other promenade orchestra leaders, but in 1872 Bizet had inaugurated its role as a working class representation in the orchestra as such; the instrument that is celebrated by the peasants. Though it's clear that the saxophone never lost its military connections either; Zoltán Kodály's 1926 suite from his Hungarian folk opera, *Háry János* contains saxophone solos throughout, but most notably is the

satirical usage of it in the movement entitled, “The Battle and Defeat of Napoleon.”¹⁷²



Figure 7.5: Sardonically used alto saxophone solos in Zoltán Kodály’s *Háry János Suite*. Kodály’s use of the saxophone in the context of representing Napoleon’s army and French confirm the saxophone’s initial connotations as a French military instrument.

Bizet’s scoring was undoubtedly the most monumental appearance of the saxophone of the decade, but it did make other cameo forms at the *Opéra*. In fact, by the end of the 1870s the saxophone’s presence was sufficiently established from its occasional “visits” to the *Opéra* that it was listed as part of the official instrumentation of the resident orchestra next to bass clarinetist, Louis Mayeur’s name.¹⁷³ The first work to include a saxophone at the *Opéra* was Massenet’s 1875 oratorio, *Ève* where he gave the soprano saxophone a brief appearance with harp,

¹⁷² See Figure 7.5.

¹⁷³ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 103.

cello, flute, clarinet, and horn in accompanying a duet between Adam and Eve. The second work was the three-act ballet, *Sylvia*, composed by Léo Delibes in 1876, which continued the *Opéra's* traditions past Napoléon's rule. The ballet features an alto saxophone solo in the barcarolle scene where strings and flute accompany the alluring barcarolle melody. Perhaps Delibes chose to use the saxophone for this scene because the barcarolle has its origins as a folk song that was sung by Venetian gondoliers; what better way to represent the simple gondola oarsmen than to sing their folk song through a laborer's instrument?

And the following year Jules Massenet scored for various saxophones in his opera *Le Roi de Lahore*. The grand opera is set in Lahore, India where the village's residents prepare for an attack from a neighboring village. King Alim, his minister Scindia, and the high priest Timour prepare for battle. Scindia secretly loves Alim's niece, Sita and when Alim dies in battle Scindia attempts to marry her. However, Alim goes to Paradise where the god Indra makes a deal with him allowing him to return to earth: if he can compel Sita to live as a humble beggar for the remainder of her life. Various saxophones were used throughout the lush orchestration and melodramatic action of *Le Roi de Lahore*,¹⁷⁴ but most notably is the opulent solo during the charming ballet in Indra's paradise. Massenet's decision to score for the saxophone confirms other connotations that became affixed to it through promenade concerts: the oriental themed "Ali Ben" burlesques. The instrument had become so firmly associated with the exotic east that Massenet did not merely choose to use it for an opera set in India, but he also used it to represent the highest possible state according to the followers of Hinduism, the Hindu afterlife vision of paradise. In that way Massenet did not use the saxophone to signify the exotic in a flippant manner like it was in promenade concerts, but a genuine one: to sincerely portray the Hindi people's culture with a degree of accuracy—though it was inaccurate to use the saxophone at all as a representative of Indian culture, it was an earnest effort. The subject matter of Massenet's opera was of melodramatic

¹⁷⁴ Act III calls for Eb alto and Bb tenor saxophones and Act IV requires a Bb Contrabass saxophone. Demar Irvine, *Massenet: A Chronicle of His Life and Times*, (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 2003), 97.

historical fiction, not merely satirical scenes of costumed Frenchmen playing quasi-eastern melodies. Massenet's serious handling of a fabricated musical representation of a distant culture confirmed beliefs of French culture: the saxophone had become symbolic of eastern philosophies.

The saxophone's identities as a working class instrument and exotic representative were formally confirmed by the works produced in the 1870s. Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* depicted simple, innocent, rural peasants through saxophone usage in authentic folk dances and songs; Delibes' charming saxophone solo of a barcarolle melody in *Sylvia* furthered the rendition as poor laborer's voice; and Massenet's usage in *Le Roi de Lahore* ascertains the beliefs, which became accepted in French culture that the instrument was an exotic entity.

Overall, the 1870s continued the distressing trend of the previous decade. Sax plunged into bankruptcy twice due to the elimination of the military band budget; he was forced to sell his collection of his prize-winning instruments—and the public demonstrated how little his inventions were worth to them, as they didn't even raise one third of the asking price—and he could not even afford the entry fee to participate in the 1878 *Exposition Universelle*. The annihilation of formal saxophone study at the *Conservatoire de Paris* and the deaths of prominent saxophonists and composers had Sax fearing not only for the future of his business, but also his nonpareil instrument. Sax's perception of his fading existence in the Third Republic could easily be summarized in Gustave Flaubert's letter to George Sand on the aftermath of the *La Commune de Paris*: "I come from Paris, and I do not know whom to speak to. I am suffocated. I am quite upset, or rather out of heart. The sight of the ruins is nothing compared to the great Parisian insanity..."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Gustave Flaubert, *The Correspondence of George Sand and Gustave Flaubert: Collected Letters of the Most Influential French Authors*, (Norway: e-artnow, 2015), 10 June 1871.

VIII. 1880-1894: The Phoenix Instrument: Death of the Inventor, Reincarnation of the Saxophone

The last two decades of the nineteenth century would not “play a different tune” for Sax’s business and the saxophone: his company would continue to be impecunious; the glory of French military music would remain buried with the Second Empire; and the saxophone would continue its existence destitute of an institution to provide formal training. Sax would continue fighting for his instrument’s “life” until his death in 1894. It was in these years that Sax proved to composers that he was not promoting the use of his instruments for profits, especially in the time when he needed it the most, but with intention to leave a significant contribution to French music culture.

The 1880s and 1890s left France searching for a new identity for its new republic. The wake of the Second Industrial Revolution prompted the nation to return to colonial expansion for resources, thus detracting focus on the state; military bands were the perhaps furthest concern in asserting national influence. During the 1880s an expansionist stance France had impelled the Franco-Chinese War of 1883-1885 in which France invaded and captured Tonkin and Annam and by 1893 had created a colony in Laos.¹⁷⁶ France had also established posts in Brazzaville, a large city on the Congo River in Africa earlier in the decade, motivating other conquests in Africa. In 1884 the age of New Imperialism was in full force, as the Berlin Conference was created in order to mandate the European colonization in Africa, where France asserted itself considerably. Adhering to Conference policies, France colonized Tunisia opposing other major European nation’s interests nonetheless. Affirming a national dominance was no longer a matter of displaying the most disciplined and musical military ensembles. The harmonious frequencies of exclusive performances by Sax’s ensembles in the extravagantly decorated Imperial *Tuileries* palace no longer functioned as assessments to decide how to contend France’s superior identity among Europe, France had returned to the use of maps.

¹⁷⁶ Edward G. Ruoff, *The Franco-Chinese War of 1883-1885*, (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1953), 7.

Public Pleas: From Tycoon to Beggar

Towards the end of his life, Sax became increasingly destitute. The man who had once loaned thousands of francs to Berlioz for a concert tour in Russia had now found himself in the same financial state as when he arrived to the French capital. The once young and tempestuous industrialist who had caused a revolution in the process of manufacturing musical instruments had assumed a position in Parisian life as an unfortunate and penurious old man. In 1887 out of desperation, he made public pleas for financial assistance to help him reimburse those he owed and pay the remainder of his court fees.¹⁷⁷ Several musical Parisians did show concerns and assist Sax in his fiscal dilemma. Composer Paul Lacôme, who had later composed saxophone chamber works, had made plans to help Sax, though it is unclear whether his plans were carried through,¹⁷⁸ and composer Emmanuel Chabrier wrote to Vincent d'Indy—a composer of saxophone orchestral repertoire— regarding "Poor père Sax! When one thinks that this talented man has passed his life to become a bankrupt in order to enrich men who today have decorations and are millionaires... it is disgusting."¹⁷⁹

Sax also continued to make pleas for saxophone classes to resume at the *Conservatoire*, claiming that composers were unable to find saxophonists for the parts they wrote or contemplated writing. In 1883 he wrote letters to the director of the *Conservatoire* regularly, ironically the director was now Ambroise Thomas, the composer who had written the lengthy saxophone recitative in the opera, *Hamlet* in 1868. An excerpt from one of the many letters sent to Thomas describes the difficulties composers faced when they planned to score for the saxophone:

"The family of the saxophone does not consist only of the four types known and popularized by military music. It consists of up to sixteen members and the professor should accustom his students to play if not on all of them at least on several types. The force of habit is such that saxophonists who refuse to play another instrument than the one they are used have been able to oppose the wishes of composers...The saxophone in F appeared to me as the true type which should be adopted for the symphony. Some time ago I had the occasion to play this instrument separately for

¹⁷⁷ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 36.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 36.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 37.

two of our young masters, M. Massenet and M. Saint-Saëns. They were so impressed by the timbre, the penetrating charm, and the extraordinary novelty of this orchestral voice that they at once conceived the project of using it (as Meyerbeer had done at the beginning of *L'Etoile du Nord*). M. Massenet introduced it in one of his symphonic pieces; M. Saint-Saëns at once composed a solo for *Henry VIII*. However, both composers clashed with the ill-will or inability of a saxophonist who was used to his saxophone in E-flat, and both of them were forced to retreat, and entrust their solos to other instruments; M. Massenet to the clarinet, and M. Saint-Saëns to the oboe. These are the fruits of blind habit: to be able to deprive the inspiration and inventiveness of composers of new resources, and to present impassable obstacles.”¹⁸⁰

Sax claims that composers had to scrap their ideas for using the saxophone because either they could not find a saxophonist for performance or the saxophonist they hired was not skilled on the other members of the instrument family. Thomas would not agree completely, despite his earlier scoring for the instrument; however, in the 1892 evaluation of *Conservatoire de Paris*'s practices included a suggestion to resume saxophone classes.

One interesting detail is Sax's thoughts about the members of the family pitched in F, as those he thought would be the ones added to the orchestra. Though Sax does not reveal the reason why he believed that in his letter, modern saxophone scholars suppose his belief was due to the smaller bell on the saxophone in F, or mezzo-soprano, which would make it easier to softly blend with the strings. If that were the case, one would imagine that Sax would have promoted more saxophones in F.

Despite Sax's belief that the mezzo-soprano saxophone would be the one integrated into the orchestra, the 1880s and 1890s had proven that the alto would be sufficient for orchestral needs. An upsurge of works containing the instrument premiered at the *Opéra* during the remaining decades. Beginning with Massenet's 1880 oratorio, *La Vierge*, which depicts the ascension of the Virgin Mary, the bass saxophone commenced the instrument family's most successful decade in orchestral music. The following year Massenet also incorporated the bass saxophone into his four act opera, *Hérodiade*. Another composer utilized the colors of the low saxophone family members that same year when Ambroise Thomas's *Françoise de*

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 58. It is not known which works Sax is speaking of in this letter.

Rimini premiered with a baritone saxophone in its orchestra.¹⁸¹ In 1883 Saint-Saëns composed parts for a quintet of saxophones (soprano, two alto, tenor, and bass) in the banda score for *Henry VIII*.¹⁸² Three years later Émile Paladilhe's 1886 opera, *Patrie*, used the saxophone. ...

While the 1880s brought a considerable proliferation of saxophone performances to the *Opéra*, none would premiere after *Patrie*. To complicate the saxophone's residence at the institution, the *Opéra*'s official saxophonist, Louis Mayeur passed away in 1894, removing the formal integration of the saxophone from the only non-military establishment that embraced it. Had the saxophone not found a mild acceptance at the *Opéra*, its orchestral potentials may have never been discovered.

Outside of the works that took place at the *Opéra* were three captivating works, two of which were never published and discovered in archives during the middle of the twentieth century. The first was Paul Dukas's *L'Ondine et le Pêcheur*, a concert aria that was composed in 1884, but was not discovered until the middle of the twentieth century. Oddly enough, the work begins with a lyrically enchanting alto saxophone solo.¹⁸³ Like Massenet, Dukas appears to have been ahead of his time due to his variety of uses for the saxophone within the orchestra; the saxophone doesn't merely serve as a recurring solo voice, but also as harmonic support and timbral coloring throughout.¹⁸⁴ The other work, César Franck's opera, *Hulda* was written in 1886 and uses a quartet of saxophones on stage for the prologue scene. *Hulda* was not published during Franck's lifetime or completely performed until 1979.

¹⁸¹ Perhaps Thomas's 1882 scoring had prompted Sax to pursue the reinstatement of saxophone classes at the *Conservatoire* the following year.

¹⁸² Ignace De Keyser, "Adolphe Sax and the Paris Opéra," *Brass Scholarship in Review: The Historic Brass Society*, 6, (1999): 152.

¹⁸³ See Figure 8.1.

¹⁸⁴ See Figure 8.2.

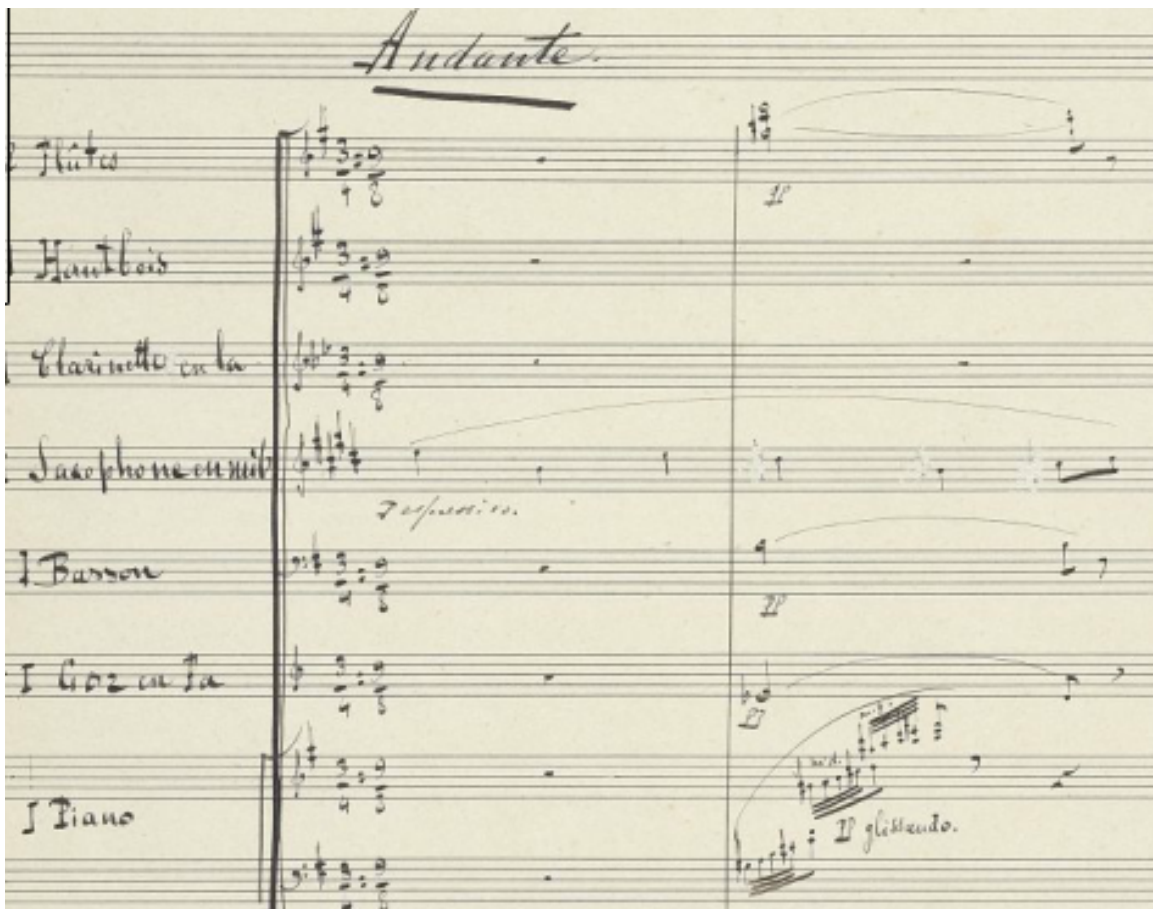


Figure 8.1: The opening saxophone solo in Dukas's posthumously discovered concerto aria for soprano voice and orchestra, *L'Undine et le Pêcheur*.



Figure 8.2: Dukas's use of the saxophone as a collective orchestral color (fourth staff from the top.)

The final momentous saxophone work of the century was yet another brilliant opera by Massenet. *Werther*, the 1892 work was a *drame lyrique* that premiered in Vienna at the *Imperial Theatre Hofoper*. The Viennese premiere was adapted to a German translation of the original French libretto, which is loosely based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Sturm und Drang* epistolary novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. The nineteenth century saxophone "finale" would contain the most consistent use of the instrument throughout its entirety as both a solo voice and a member of the collective ensemble.¹⁸⁵

In the same year as *Werther's* Viennese premiere Sax was forced to sell his famous rue Saint-Georges shop and move to a smaller building. It is believed that the 78-year-old Sax had his son, Adolphe-Edouard, handling the majority of the

¹⁸⁵ See Figures 8.3 and 8.4.

business at this point. On February 7, 1894 Sax passed away and was buried in a tomb in the Montmartre Cemetery in Paris. Cottrell suggests that the ordinary tomb he was given reflects the near obscurity he had by the end of the nineteenth century as it has no distinguishing markings. Adolphe-Edouard ran his father's pioneering business until 1929, when the Selmer Company purchased it. Sax's life, according to Cottrell, mirrored the very image of the artistic philosophies owned by the century:

"Sax can be seen as a romantic figure because romanticism was an integral component of nineteenth century French culture. His struggles against the various fates that befell him, his rise from humble origins to gracing French corridors of power, his legal battles with those who conspired against him, his idiosyncratic genius and fiery temper, his impoverished final years, even his affection for a woman he felt unable to marry, could all contribute to a reading of his life which sees him as that quintessentially romantic character: the artist as hero."¹⁸⁶

The *fin-de-siècle* took Sax's life, but it did not take his scandalous name bearing invention. Though Sax left this world with massive debts; however, it is the world that was in debt to him for sharing his genius invention with it.



Figure 8.3: One of the many alluring saxophone solos in Massenet's *Werther*. The annotation above the clarinet staff states that the solo is intended for the saxophone' however, if there is no saxophonist available the clarinetist may play the solo, indicative that saxophone players were difficult to scarce until the very end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁸⁶ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 37.

The image shows a musical score for the second staff of *Werther*. It features several staves for different instruments: Cl. (Clarinet), Sax. (Saxophone), Bsns. (Bassoons), Cors. (Horns), and Timb. (Timpani). The saxophone part is marked 'en animant' and 'très expressif'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f* and *ff*. The tempo markings 'en animant', 'très expressif', and 'rall.' are also present.

Figure 8.4: A small portion of the consistent usage of the saxophone as a collective orchestral color in *Werther* (second staff).

IX. CONCLUSION

The common belief as to why saxophones do not make up a portion of the woodwind section in the symphony orchestra being due to the saxophone's "incongruous" timbre is still a prevalent misconception among classical musicians. While some may argue that the saxophone's creation was condemned by chronology, having been invented after the foundations of the Germanic traditions had been established with J.S. Bach, Joseph Haydn, W.A. Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven; there was far greater complexity involving the novel instrument's dismissal than chronology. Invented at a seemingly perfect time and culture, the saxophone was conceived at a time when French composers craved mastery over

timbre and continuously searched for new ways to manipulate orchestral colors like starving vultures quest for fresh carcasses.

Unfortunately, Sax unknowingly destined his instrument to exclusion from the traditions of symphonic art music through his initial alliance with the French military and King Louis-Philippe. The saxophone first entered musical practice through compulsory orders of re-orchestration in French military bands—and though it was welcomed eventually, it was originally met with opposition from all levels of military music authority. The young foreigner's request became an executive order, which all military musicians and sergeants were obliged to follow. Sax's instruments would develop military band connotations and become known for notoriously interloping—just as their inventor was known in the Parisian realm of instrument manufacturing. To further these martial connotations, Sax repeated his interloping maneuvers with the subsequent long-term political establishment, the Second French Empire of Napoléon III. The demand for inclusion manifested a general disrespect for the novel instrument when it had not yet earned any musical “reputation.” Instead of allowing authorities, and consequently composers, to recognize for themselves the artistic possibilities that the saxophone possessed, the decrees made on Sax's behalf in the French military bequeathed saxophone with an audacious reputation.

Of course, Sax's own audacious personality in the Parisian instrument manufacturing industry contributed to the general perception of the instrument's impression. A multitude of scandalous lawsuits involving an instrument that forced its way into French music did not assist Sax's hopes for the saxophone's integration into the orchestra. The tightly interlaced music networks of Paris had governed over musical practices for centuries; Sax's disturbance in these uninterrupted and securely networked traditions had restricted the saxophone's future from its inception.

In addition, the saxophone developed as a favored exoticism among the working class traditions of promenade concerts, sharply contrasting with the once aristocratic, but during Sax's lifetime bourgeois controlled large-scale ensemble of the orchestra. Wildly popular in these contexts, the saxophone developed an

identity as an outlandish exoticism in French culture. While the saxophone found something of a home at the *Opéra*, it was largely due to the genre's reliance on audience enticement through novel and exotic sounds, which only added to the implications offered by promenade orchestra usage.

The stigmatizations, which originally developed in Sax's lifetime, endured the test of time, as the saxophone remains an exotic outsider to the orchestra contemporarily. Composer, John Adams, when asked why he has written the saxophone into his orchestral works elaborates on the further developments of those stigmatizations that occurred in the twentieth century:

"The saxophone is by now a very anecdotal sound. When people hear it they immediately connect, even unconsciously... with popular music, whether it's blues, or R&B, or jazz. It's almost impossible to divorce one's awareness of the sax sound. That's so iconic, and when you hear that you just make all of these connections - urban New York and street people and kids and jazz... sex, drugs, and violence. The saxophone... carries that cultural message with it."¹⁸⁷

Sax had believed that his invention would be the revolutionary basis for a restructured symphony orchestra—a homogeneous family that would support the vocal qualities of the string family; and his belief was intuitive because the saxophone *would* become the basis for a reformed orchestra: the jazz band.

Despite the frequent praise from composers in the nineteenth century, the only orchestra that would adopt the instrument was Berlioz's theoretical orchestra of 467 instrumentalists, which contained five saxophones. But "the rest" isn't just "history." We can either continue to allow orchestral music to be dictated by cultural perceptions or break free and explore all the true possibilities that lie within using the nineteenth century instrument in orchestral music. We can continue to embrace old prejudices, but at what cost to music? If we continue to accept the saxophone's history as one defined by an "incongruous" timbre to the most significant major ensemble of the western world, we undermine the very nature of the instrument's timbre. Yes, the saxophone's timbre is incredibly versatile, fitting an extensive variety of musical styles, so why is it that the "classical" style has yet to utilize this

¹⁸⁷ Jason Caffrey, "Classical Saxophone in Proms Spotlight," *BBC News*, September 4, 2014, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-28980993>.

timbre? With global admiration for the saxophone, composers like John Adams have been increasingly writing orchestral works with the addition of the “exotic” instrument; perhaps the twenty-first century will prove the judgments made four years after its patent as correct after all: “the alto saxophone, [is] one of the most moving voices that can enrich our orchestras.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 20, no. 2, (20 January 1850), 171.

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