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Grieving Through Music in Interwar France:

Maurice Ravel and His Circle, 1914-1934

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requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Musicology

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor Tamara Levitz, Chair

Between 1914 and 1918, the French modernist composer Maurice Ravel was deeply affected by his experiences as a soldier in World War I, the deaths of many friends in combat, and the passing of loved ones on the home front. The aim of this dissertation is to determine how the music that Ravel wrote and performed after 1914 engaged with contemporary French cultures of mourning. Archival research in Paris and the United States has allowed me to examine funeral accounts and obituaries in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century periodicals, as well as the correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks, and collected materials of Ravel and his grieving friends, in order to ascertain how grief and its display were socially constructed and understood in interwar France within Ravel's social circle. Obituaries and funeral accounts published in Parisian periodicals between 1875 and 1925 reveal that as a result of wartime nationalism and divisions between soldiers and civilians, modes of mourning shifted during the war from personal, descriptive, and direct representations of grief, to emotionally guarded and collectively oriented ones. In response to this stoicism, Ravel and many of his peers sought new ways of managing grief, including keeping the memory of lost loved ones vividly present through

celebrating death anniversaries publicly and privately, collecting photographs, obituaries, and other objects that once belonged to loved ones, sharing their grief with other mourners, and performing or composing music that allowed them to recall corporeally the presence of those they mourned. Analysis of the wartime works of Ravel's contemporaries reveals that many of them wrote music that not only offered a space for audiences and performers to mourn, but also justified the sacrifices and grief engendered by the war by framing them optimistically as sources of France's strength and eventual victory. By drawing on archival research, psychoanalytic theory, memory and trauma studies, and cultural history, I show how Ravel engaged with and in some instances subtly resisted nationally-oriented French cultures of mourning through providing his listeners with musical portraits of the psychic difficulty of grief and trauma in *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1918), *Frontispice* (1919), and *La Valse* (1920). I demonstrate as well how Ravel's specific brand of rhythmically regular and kinesthetically demanding postwar modernism, evident in works like *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, the Sonata for Violin and Violoncello (1922), the Sonata for Violin and Piano (1927), and the Piano Concerto in G Major (1932), allowed Ravel to convey his own grief, while also providing a musical means for his friends H el ene Jourdan-Morhange and Marguerite Long to physically work through, perform, and share their grief with one another.

The dissertation of Jillian Corinne Rogers is approved.

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For Penelope –

In gratitude for all that you have shown me about how to live and love through loss.

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Introduction

When we have suffered a great and irreparable loss, the world seems small and insignificant, and our grief the only real thing in it.

George Moore¹

I begin with these words by the Irish novelist and playwright George Moore because they sum up one of the points I aim to make in this study: that the losses that Maurice Ravel and his peers suffered during the course of World War I shaped their engagement with music in significant ways. However, these words also hold personal meaning for me since they speak to my own experience of mourning, which led to my decision to undertake a project that addresses the relationship between mourning and musical performance. In the fall of 2009, while still mourning a loss that I had encountered several months before, I found myself deeply affected not only by a number of texts whose authors were concerned with defining the psychic mechanics of mourning and melancholia, but also by several of Ravel's post-1917 compositions, including *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse*. I was haunted by this music, struck by the sound of ghostly presence that I heard in poignantly highlighted silences, gleamingly dissonant passages, and moments of strangeness and expressive forcefulness. I was especially drawn to what I perceived as *Le Tombeau de Couperin*'s affective dissonance—how the predominantly optimistic and cheerful affect of the suite's music seems at odds with the ostensible emotional gravity of the piece suggested by Ravel's dedications of each movement to a fallen fellow soldier.

The resonance that I felt with Ravel, as well as my interest in his compositions, blossomed with my awareness that Ravel composed each of these pieces while recovering from a

¹ I found this phrase handwritten on an album leaf with Maurice Ravel's signature and two measures from *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* just below it in The Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library, Charles Alvar Harding Music Collection, R252.A. George Moore was an Irish poet, novelist, and playwright who was friends with Louise Alvar Harding and her husband Charles, in whose collection this album leaf can be found. Ravel dates his autograph 23 October 1923. Paul Valéry also contributes an autograph (it appears just below Ravel's) dated October 1923.

series of losses he suffered during the First World War. By the time of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, Ravel had not only lost a number of close friends who were killed in the war, but also had to face the deaths of fellow composers Lili Boulanger and Claude Debussy. Perhaps most devastating of all, he lost his mother, with whom he had been extraordinarily close.² Perhaps nearly as physically and emotionally draining were Ravel's experiences of 1915, 1916, and 1917 as a truck driver at the front, an occupation that brought him face to face with his own mortality on a regular basis, and likely prevented him from fully processing each of the losses that he came to experience between 1914 and 1918. Ravel's letters of the mid- to late-teens and early 1920s communicate how traumatic these events were for him. He frequently dwells on his ill health and inability to get back to work composing, specifically attributing the latter to his mother's death and to neurasthenia, a psychobiological ailment he claimed to have developed after 1914.³ Ravel's preoccupation with grief and trauma after 1914 is evident in the texts he chose to set, the dedications he included for several of his compositions, and his frequent choices to compose music for friends who were also in mourning, including the pianist Marguerite Long and the violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, both of whom lost their husbands in the war in 1914.

In this dissertation, I contribute a new thread to scholars' conversations on music's role in negotiating politics and national identity after World War I by showing that Ravel's post-World War I compositions were also sites for the emotional, physical, and political negotiation of grief and trauma. Within Ravel studies, little work has been done on the relationship between his musical output and mourning during World War I. I address this gap by studying

² Ravel lived with his mother until he began serving in the French army in March of 1915.

³ See Arbie Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); 154-206; Ravel's correspondence between 14 September 1914 and 21 September 2 1920 are of particular interest. Neurasthenia was the term used in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to describe a disorder that was understood at the time as somewhat akin to shell shock. While neurasthenia is not the same as the ailment that doctors today call post-traumatic stress disorder, it does share a number of symptoms with that disorder. For more on neurasthenia and its impact on another modernist composer, Charles Ives, see Gayle Sherwood, "Charles Ives and 'Our National Malady'," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 555-584; and Gayle Sherwood, "Charles Ives and Neurasthenia: A Response to Stuart Feder," in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 641-643.

correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks, photograph albums, and French periodicals in Parisian and American archives, and by providing a socio-historical account of the practices, meanings, and affective parameters of mourning within Ravel's circle. I combine this archival research with music analysis and interpretive methods drawn from psychoanalytic and affect theory, as well as memory and trauma studies, in order to perform close readings of Ravel's postwar compositions. My analyses show that Ravel's particular brand of postwar modernism allowed the composer to express his own grief, while also providing musical opportunities for his friends to work through, perform, and share their grief with one another. By providing a historical account of the relationship between the mourning practices of Ravel and his peers and musical modernism, my dissertation work contributes not only to the growing body of Ravel scholarship within musicology, but also to cultural-historical studies of mourning in interwar France.

Within cultural history there is a rich and established body of scholarship on death, mourning, and politics in World War I-era and interwar France that is essential to understanding French cultures of mourning between the wars. In addition to Philippe Ariès's broad study of mourning in the Western world from the Middle Ages to the present, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Stéphanie Petit have written important texts on grief that address socio-cultural conceptions and performances of mourning in France during the war through specific and detailed examples that address the interplay between politics, gender, and emotional expression.⁴ Audoin-Rouzeau's *Cinq deuils de guerre 1914-1918* offers an especially significant historiographic intervention into studies of mourning during World War I by focusing on the

⁴ Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974); Stéphanie Petit, *Les Veuves de la Grande Guerre: D'éternelles endeuillées?* (Paris: Éditions du Cygne, 2007); Stéphanie Petit, "Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre: Un deuil spécifique?" *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 198 (June 2000): 53-65; Petit, "Les Veuves de la Grande Guerre ou le mythe de la veuve éternelle," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 197 (March 2000): 65-72. See also Françoise Thébaud, "La Guerre et le deuil chez les femmes françaises," in *Guerre et cultures (1914-1918)*, eds. Jean-Jacques Becker, Jay M. Winter, Gerd Krumeich, Annette Becker, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (Paris: Éditions Armand Colin, 1994), 103-110.

uniqueness of individual grief rather than on collective experiences of mourning.⁵ Susan Grayzel and Mary Louise Roberts have also written important studies that address constructions of gender and women's social roles as mourners and emotional caretakers during and after the war in France and elsewhere.⁶ Daniel Sherman similarly takes up the issue of how French World War I monuments construct and reinscribe gender roles and identities in *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*. His book, along with studies of French commemorative monuments and ossuaries by Annette Becker, Marilène Patten Henry, Antoine Prost, and Jay Winter, demonstrate the political complexity of French national and public cultures of mourning after the war by showing how these monuments engage variously with French interwar ideas about spirituality, gender, and local versus national belonging.⁷ As illuminating as each of these studies is, however, these authors only rarely address music or musicians.

Scholars of French musical modernism have filled in the gap left by cultural historians by elaborating how musical societies and institutions, as well as public and private music making, were vehicles for the performance of varied and complex interwar political ideas and affiliations. Michel Duchesneau, Jane Fulcher, and Roger Nichols have written informative studies that provide insight into the musical societies in which Ravel and his friends participated.⁸ Fulcher's

⁵ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils de guerre (1914-1918)* (Paris: Noesis, 2001); and Audoin-Rouzeau, "Corps perdus, corps retrouvés: Trois exemples de deuils de guerre," *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 55, no. 1 (January-February, 2000): 47-71.

⁶ Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (London: Longman, 2002); Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 17-46.

⁷ Annette Becker, "From Death to Memory: The National Ossuaries in France after the Great War," *History and Memory* 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1993): 32-49; Annette Becker, *Les Monuments aux morts: Patrimoine et mémoires de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988); Marilène Patten Henry, *Monumental Accusations: The Monuments aux Morts as Expressions of Popular Resentment* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); Antoine Prost, "Mémoires locales et mémoires nationales: Les Monuments de 1914-1918 en France," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167 (July 1992): 41-50; Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*, trans. by Helen McPhail, foreword by Ken Inglis (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁸ Michel Duchesneau, "La Musique française pendant la Guerre 1914-1918: Autour de la tentative de fusion entre la Société Nationale de Musique et de la Société Musicale Indépendante," *Revue de Musicologie* 82, no. 1 (1996): 123-

The Composer as Intellectual is particularly relevant to my project since she addresses music for commemoration, as well as the particulars of Ravel's and other composers' interwar politics, something that Duchesneau and Nichols touch on but never fully address due to their interest in musical institutions. Regina Sweeney's study of French popular song and its politics, *Singing Our Way to Victory*, has also been an invaluable resource for considering the musical-political climate in France during World War I, as has the edited collection on music and the Great War, *La Grande Guerre des musiciens*, which offers a wealth of information on wartime organology, the sounds of war, and composers' and listeners' politics, all while revealing valuable archival sources on musical production during the war.⁹

Several music scholars have focused on the ways in which music signaled and reflected wartime politics and culture. These authors often address the musical features of wartime circumstantial music in detail, and provide resources for locating circumstantial music that has fallen into obscurity since 1918. In addition to Jane Fulcher's aforementioned study, these sources include Glenn Watkins's cross-cultural examination of art music production, *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War*, Marianne Wheeldon's study of Debussy's late style, and essays by French scholars Sophie-Anne Leterrier and Benedicte Grailles.¹⁰ Leterrier's and Grailles's articles are especially valuable resources for scholars looking to determine the repertoire and the most prevalent musical features of the art music produced during World War I since both authors devote attention not only to the well known wartime compositions of composers like Ravel, Debussy, and Lili Boulanger, but also to compositions by lesser known

153; Duchesneau, *L'Avant-garde et ses sociétés à Paris de 1871 à 1939* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 1997); Jane Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years: Music in Paris, 1917-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁹ Regina M. Sweeney, *Singing our Way to Victory: French Cultural Politics and Music During the Great War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001); *La Grande Guerre des musiciens*, eds. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Esteban Buch, Myriam Chimènes, and Georgie Durosoir (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009).

¹⁰ Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Bénédicte Grailles, "Chanson de marche, *lamento* funèbre et hymne à la Renaissance," in *Chefs-d'oeuvre et circonstances: Trois concerts* (Dainville, France: Archives Départementales du Pas-de-Calais, 2000), 39-46; Sophie-Anne Leterrier, "Culture de guerre et musique nationale: La Musique française dans la Grande Guerre," in *Ibid.*, 15-38.

composers that survive only in archives or have only rarely, if ever, been recorded. Although several of these authors discuss Ravel and his wartime compositions at length, none have thoroughly addressed the relationship between Ravel's postwar music and French interwar cultures of mourning.

In recent years Ravel scholars have produced a number of illuminating studies that focus on Ravel's music from the perspective of his personality, social identity and relationships, sexuality, and emotional life. Barbara Kelly and Jann Pasler, for instance, have each addressed how Ravel's social relationships influenced his compositional choices.¹¹ Many scholars have also been especially drawn to Ravel's ironic disposition, artificiality, and dandyism, including Zarah Ersoff and Kelly, as well as Roger Nichols, Michael Puri, Lloyd Whitesell, and Stephen Zank, most of whom have examined these through attention to what has been perceived as Ravel's musical masking.¹² Moreover, Puri and Peter Kaminsky have examined through psychoanalytically-inspired close readings how Ravel's psychic and emotional life played a role in compositions like *Daphnis et Chloé* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.¹³

The Ravel scholar whose work perhaps comes closest to my own is Puri, who has worked on the relationship between Ravel's music, memory, masking, and dandyism, all while utilizing psychoanalytic theory as a tool for musical analysis. In *Ravel the Decadent: Memory,*

¹¹ Barbara Kelly, "Ravel after Debussy: Inheritance, Influences, and Style," in *Berlioz and Debussy: Sources, Contexts and Legacies*, eds. Barbara Kelly and Kerry Murphy (London: Ashgate, 2007), 167-180; Jann Pasler, "A Sociology of the Apaches: 'Sacred Battalion' for *Pelléas*," in *Ibid.*, 149-166.

¹² Lloyd Whitesell, "Ravel's Way," in *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity*, eds. Sophie Fuller and Lloyd Whitesell (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 49-78; Lloyd Whitesell, "Erotic ambiguity in Ravel's music," *Ravel Studies*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 74-91; Michael Puri, "Memory, pastiche, and aestheticism in Ravel and Proust," in *Ibid.*, 56-73; Zarah Sophia Ersoff, "Musical Dandysme: Aestheticism and Orientalism in *Fin-de-siècle* France," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2013); Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); Michael Puri, *Ravel the Decadent: Memory, Sublimation, Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Stephen Zank, *Irony and Sound: The Music of Maurice Ravel* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009). I address this in more detail in Chapter 4, but the idea of Ravel as a master of musical masking originates with Alexis Roland-Manuel's 1925 article, "Maurice Ravel ou l'esthétique de l'imposture," *La Revue musicale* 6, no. 6 (April 1, 1925): 16-21, and was perpetuated by Vladimir Jankélévitch's studies both of Ravel and of Russian and French musical modernism more broadly. See Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Ravel*, trans. Margaret Crosland (New York: Grove Press, 1959) and Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹³ Peter Kaminsky, "The Child on the Couch; or, Toward a (Psycho)Analysis of Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*," in *Unmasking Ravel: New Perspectives on the Music*, ed. Peter Kaminsky (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 306-330.

Sublimation, and Desire, Puri addresses how French *fin-de-siècle* notions of memory appear in the many idiosyncratic thematic and motivic returns of Ravel's compositions. Puri thoughtfully attends to Ravel's tendency to represent Proust's *moments bienheureux* in his music, citing Ravel's *Sonatine*, *Daphnis et Chloé*, *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, the Sonata for Violin and Piano, and *La Valse* as notable examples. In this study, I add to Puri's findings on the relationship between Ravel and memory by considering how musicians' everyday encounters with music—for instance, composing, playing the piano, or listening to music—engendered *moments bienheureux* integral to the work of mourning. Although Puri mentions Ravel's postwar mourning in his analyses of a handful of Ravel's compositions, he focuses more on Ravel's dandyism. In general, scholars' concentration on Ravel's dandyism has largely occluded attention to how his masking in his postwar compositions might be related to new emotional concerns related to the losses he experienced during the war.

A handful of musicologists, however, have discussed the relationship between Ravel's postwar compositions and mourning, and I draw on their work significantly throughout this dissertation. In her essay "Outside Ravel's Tomb," Carolyn Abbate performs an illuminating analysis of how Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* bear the traces of *fin-de-siècle* technologies of modernization, and especially the composer's mourning of the ostensible death of the live performer.¹⁴ And Deborah Mawer, in her essay on Balanchine's staging of *La Valse*, suggests that Ravel's post-1917 "preoccupation with death" is evident in the 1920 ballet.¹⁵ Likewise, Emily Kilpatrick's article on how Ravel's *Trois chansons pour chœur mixte* engages with his wartime politics, as well as his mourning of the deaths of several friends at the beginning of the war, is a valuable contribution to the growing body of work on how Ravel

¹⁴ Carolyn Abbate, "Outside Ravel's Tomb," *Journal of American Musicological Society* 52, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 465-530.

¹⁵ Deborah Mawer, "Balanchine's *La Valse*: Meaning and Implications for Ravel Studies," *Opera Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2006): 90-116.

coped with the war's losses through music.¹⁶ My project draws on, as well as contributes to these scholars' work through delving into more detail concerning what mourning meant for Ravel and his peers, and showing through comparative study how the political, psychological, and corporeal aspects of grief, mourning, and trauma in interwar France took shape in his postwar compositions.

Understanding how Ravel negotiated grief in his post-1914 compositions requires discerning how he mourned, and what mourning meant for him. Accessing information about the emotional life of a historical subject, and especially a historical subject like Ravel, who was well known for his social and emotional modesty, is not an easy task. The emotional complications of grief and trauma make this all the more difficult since social norms concerning emotional expression often prevent people from talking about the struggles they face in coming to terms with loss. Many theorists have addressed this marked hesitation, and while for some—for instance, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and a number of other critical theorists—the expression of grief that would accomplish “normal mourning” in Freud’s formulation seems inadequate and specifically unethical in that it refuses to preserve the radical alterity of the other who has died, subsuming the other indistinguishably into the mourning subject’s ego instead.¹⁷ For others, however, particularly psychoanalytic theorists like Freud, Nicholas Abraham, Maria Torok, and Julia Kristeva, the refusal is mostly unconscious, and performed as a way of avoiding the acceptance of a loss that threatens to severely damage, if not entirely destroy, the ego.¹⁸ In addition, many psychologists have asserted that trauma victims—not only those who have

¹⁶ Emily Kilpatrick, “Into the Woods: Retelling the Wartime Fairytales of Maurice Ravel,” *The Musical Times* (2008): 57-66.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, eds. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia [1917],” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. 14 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957-1974), 239-260; Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed., trans., and with an intro. by Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

experienced and survived physical, sexual, or psychological violence, but also people who have had to face intense grief related to the death of a loved one—often utilize a number of protective mechanisms to deal with day-to-day life in the wake of trauma, including minimizing or even denying the violence or threat the trauma posed.¹⁹ Therefore, when a person experiences a loss as traumatic and thus remains incapable of integrating the feelings, memories, and bodily experience of a loss into their psyche, the impulse to talk about the grief becomes even more likely to be suppressed.

The tendency to leave one's trauma or grief either wholly or partially unvoiced was prevalent in France at the beginning of the twentieth century. Philippe Ariès, for instance, has argued that at some point between the French Revolution and the beginning of the twentieth century, death and the grief that accompanied it became intensely private and ultimately shameful matters for the French.²⁰ As studies of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder amongst soldiers who fought in World War I have demonstrated, the frequency and violence with which death occurred, as well as social rules concerning mournful expression during and after the war resulted in widespread grief and psychic trauma developed through silence, but also resulting in it.²¹ The French notion of *pudeur*, or public modesty, similarly attests to the social restrictions against public displays of both sexuality (with which the term *pudeur* is most often associated) and displays of emotion, and was particularly evident in the years during and after the First World War. While these social constructions of grief are part of the reason why I find Ravel's works of this period fascinating, especially the ways in which he negotiates and performs grief

¹⁹ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); *Death and Trauma: The Traumatology of Grieving*, eds. Charles R. Figley, Brian E. Bride, and Nicholas Mazza (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1997); *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*, eds. Bessel Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (New York: Guilford Press, 1996); Julie P. Sutton, "Trauma: Trauma in Context," in *Music, Music Therapy and Trauma: International Perspectives*, ed. Julie P. Sutton (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002), 21-40.

²⁰ Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 85-90.

²¹ On the connection between World War I soldiers and traumatic stress, see Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* and Gregory Thomas, *Treating the Trauma of the Great War: Soldiers, Civilians, and Psychiatry in France, 1914-1940* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

within the boundaries of the social rules of his cultural moment through a musical-affective language that both reflects and resists these rules, they also make it necessary to develop an idea of how people conceived of and dealt with grief, musically or otherwise, through the compilation and careful interpretation of trace fragments of people's emotional lives.

I address these challenges through an interdisciplinary methodology centered on archival research, psychoanalysis, memory and trauma studies, and music analysis. Rather than attempting to discern Ravel's emotional life through sources that speak to his experience alone, I take after a number of scholars of twentieth-century musical modernisms who have emphasized how musical production and performance shape and are shaped by social connections. Thus I examine the constructions of grief and mourning Ravel would have encountered in his daily life, and especially through other mourners in his social circle. Brigid Cohen, Valérie Dufour, Zarah Ersoff, Tamara Levitz, and Carol Oja have each written studies that productively examine how transnational, lesbian, gay, or other small-group identifications affect the politics, musical engagement, and self-fashioning of composers, performers, artists, and listeners.²² Focusing on Ravel's circle of friends, patrons, and fellow artists, and understanding these people to be part of the same general emotional communities, allows me to provide a more nuanced account of how Ravel constructs and negotiates grief, mourning, and trauma in his postwar compositions than examining solely national cultures of mourning would allow.²³ While this study would lack important context if I failed to address predominant national trends in mourning and its politics—especially since I find that Ravel and his contemporaries often shaped their musical and mournful expressions specifically in relation to these—I examine ideas concerning grief and

²² Valérie Dufour, *Stravinski et ses exégètes (1910-1940)* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2006); Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Brigid Cohen, *Stefan Wolpe and the Avant-Garde Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Tamara Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Ersoff, "Musical Dandysme."

²³ I draw the term "emotional communities" from Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). I address this term in more detail at the beginning of chapter 2.

its performance on the national level only as a backdrop for understanding the specific epistemology of grief understood by Ravel and his peers.

In addition to gleaning knowledge on the relationship between mourning, French modernism, and Ravel's music through literature by cultural historians, scholars of early-twentieth-century French musical life, and Ravel scholars, I study primary as well as published sources in Parisian and American archives. In order to ascertain the socio-emotional world in which Ravel and his peers learned to mourn, I examine representations of mourning appearing in obituaries and funeral accounts printed in Parisian newspapers and music journals in response to musicians' deaths between 1875 and 1925. Moreover, I study the correspondence, diaries, memoirs, scrapbooks, photograph albums, concert programs, method books, and archival collections belonging to Ravel and musicians, performers, and patrons in his social sphere for the insight they provide into the specific practices, meanings, and affective parameters of mourning—musical and otherwise—of Ravel and his grieving contemporaries. I focus in particular on archival materials and published texts pertaining to or once belonging to Laura Albéniz, Jane Bathori, Nadia Boulanger, André Caplet, Chouchou, Claude and Emma Debussy, Manuel de Falla, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, Reynaldo Hahn, Marguerite Long, Maurice Maréchal, Jean Roger-Ducasse, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, Misia Sert, and Émile Vuillermoz. I circumscribe my study of mourning to this group of people because each of them had close ties to Ravel or other people in his circle, was roughly of the same generation, lived a large part of her/his adult life in Paris or its suburbs, and left archives, correspondence, diaries, or other materials that bear the traces of her/his emotional ideologies or practices.²⁴

A caveat is necessary here, however: this group of people does not constitute an “inner circle” of all very close friends. For example, while Emma Debussy and Ravel knew each other,

²⁴ These people were also roughly of the same generation, all being born between 1850 and 1895, with the majority of them born between 1870 and 1880; Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux was the oldest among them, and Maurice Maréchal the youngest.

to my knowledge they did not interact much. Even in instances like this one where two people were not close, the existence of numerous friends in common has allowed me to consider them part of the same general socio-emotional community. In the case of Emma Debussy and Ravel, both were very close with Marguerite Long and Georges Jean-Aubry. My focus on mourning, as well as the limited, scattered, and incomplete nature of archival sources has necessitated that I understand Ravel's emotional community broadly in this way. Similarly, the emotional practices of some of Ravel's closest friends—for instance Cipa and Ida Godebski, Léon-Paul Fargue, Georges Jean-Aubry, Madame Fernand Dreyfus, Alexis Roland-Manuel, Ida Rubinstein, Lucien Garban, and Maurice and Nelly Delage—would have been incredibly illuminating to this project, but the dearth of archival sources that might attest to how they practiced and understood mourning prevents me from including their experiences in this study.

My approach to archival sources and their interpretation is informed largely by Jann Pasler's work on music as a public utility in Third Republic France.²⁵ I especially appreciate Pasler's recognition of her own alterity to both her historical subjects and the wide range of texts, images, objects, and traces they left behind. She describes, for instance, her "intense scrutiny of minute particulars," which she says provided her with the resistance she needed to feel that she was doing justice to her historical subjects without imposing her own epistemological tradition upon them. Yet she also recognizes the limits of knowing, and articulates the play of imagination in her historical hermeneutics. She writes, for instance, that, "in this way, I have sought to imagine a world through a complex interplay between knowing and not knowing."²⁶ Pasler therefore recognizes the tension between history and hermeneutics that exists in all histories, and prevents her history from hardening into fixity by acknowledging the imagination that necessarily went into her work. Moreover, she leaves the hermeneutic circle

²⁵ Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

open to dialogic participation from her readers, who she hopes will utilize the documents she provides to “become conversant in the language of the times.”²⁷ Taking after Pasler, I examine a wide range of texts, objects, and images from archives, including the organization of the archives themselves, in order to obtain a better understanding of the emotional practices in which Ravel and his friends engaged while grieving. Rigorous study of sources as well as their imaginative interpretation is something that I practice as well, wishing for my readers to become similarly conversant in the musical and linguistic interwar conventions for mourning.

In considering the relationship between music and emotional life, my thinking has been shaped by a number of scholars who understand music and other cultural productions as what Monique Scheer has termed “emotional practices”—“habits, rituals, and everyday pastimes that aid us in achieving a certain emotional state . . . carried out together with other people, artifacts, aesthetic arrangements, and technologies.”²⁸ Music sociologist Tia DeNora has suggested that we understand music as what Michel Foucault termed “technologies of self” that “permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being.”²⁹ Central to DeNora’s proposition that music serves a vital role in self-constitution, self-regulation, and self-modulation, is her claim that music acts as a “prosthetic technology of the body,” producing bodily movements that “lead actors to identify, work-up and modulate emotional and motivational states” on the one hand, and providing “a resource for configuring motivation and entrainment, enabling the body to do what, without music, it could not do” on the other.³⁰ According to DeNora, prosthetic technologies enable and empower social actors to engage in a

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51 (May 2012): 193-220; 209.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49; 18.

³⁰ Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 107.

variety of meaningful ways with the world around them, and to transform themselves (and, potentially, that world as well) if they so choose. Similarly, the object relations theorist Christopher Bollas has asserted that people select objects to shape, re-shape, and discover their subjectivity, as well as to facilitate self-expression, and to conjure emotional, physical, or psychological states of being. Bollas understands our everyday lives as “living dreamwork”—a space in which we seek out, often subconsciously, objects that will assist us in processing emotional trauma.³¹ One of the aims of this dissertation, then, is to show not only how music functioned as an emotional technology of self in France during and after World War I, but also how Ravel designed his compositions with the awareness that music could function as a means for working through grief and trauma.

Determining how music functioned as an emotional practice also requires that I turn to psychoanalytic and affect theory, as well as to memory and trauma studies. Although I occasionally draw on Freud, I am more interested in post-Freudian approaches that enable me to address the psychic mechanics of mourning and melancholia as well as the ways in which people connect psychically and affectively to living and dead love objects, and material or performed objects like music. The work of Nicolas Abraham, Maria Torok, Jacques Derrida, and Vamik Volkan has been especially helpful in facilitating my development of a framework for addressing what has variously been termed melancholia, resistant mourning, perennial mourning, and impossible mourning.³² For the sake of consistency, I use the term “resistant mourning” throughout this dissertation to refer to the phenomenon whereby a person chooses

³¹ Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self-Experience* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 19, 21.

³² Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*; Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas Rand, with an intro. by Jacques Derrida (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Jacques Derrida, "Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," trans. Barbara Johnson, *Georgia Review* (1977): 62-116; Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, intro. by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York: Routledge, 1994); Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*; Vamik Volkan, "Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies," in *On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia,"* eds. Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007), 90-109. Tamara Levitz provides an overview of these sources in *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone*, 475-484.

to hold on to a loss—to continue to mourn—rather than cut the libidinal ties that bound them to a loved one. I supplement my use of these scholars’ work on resistant mourning with the work of trauma scholars like Judith Herman, Joanna Stubley, Bessel Van der Kolk, David Aberbach, and Peter Levine, each of whom has addressed practices and objects through which people cope with traumatic experiences and symptoms.³³ Finally, affect theorists like Teresa Brennan, Silvan Tomkins, and Jonathan Flatley have influenced my thinking about how people engage with objects and other people as a way of managing their feelings in everyday life.³⁴

My approach to musical texts has been shaped especially by the work of Flatley and other scholars of literary modernism who have examined how mourning, melancholia, and trauma appears in texts written at the *fin de siècle* and during and after World War I. Significantly, many of these authors frequently draw from a variety of disciplines in their interpretations, including affect theory, memory studies, and psychoanalytic theory, and thus offer models for my own work. Patricia Rae’s edited collection *Modernism and Mourning*, for instance, includes a number of provocative essays on the intersections between European (primarily British) post-World War I literature and the expression and political implications of mourning.³⁵ Similarly, Jonathan Flatley’s idea of “affective mapping,” whereby a cultural object serves as a resonant space or “map” that assists people in understanding their socio-cultural/historical context and negotiating their affective lives accordingly, has offered a useful framework for talking about the music French composers wrote to cope with loss, grief, and trauma after 1914.

³³ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*; Joanna Stubley, “Bearing the Unbearable: Melancholia Following Severe Trauma,” *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* 17, no. 3 (September 2003): 219-240; Peter A. Levine, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1997); *Traumatic Stress*, eds. Bessel Van Der Kolk, Alexander McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth; Peter A. Levine, *Healing Trauma: Restoring the Wisdom of the Body* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, Inc., 1999).

³⁴ *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, eds. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, with a biographical sketch by Irving E. Alexander (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

³⁵ *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. Patricia Rae (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

Although the outpouring of work on modernism and melancholia in literature studies has not yet been matched in music studies, Tamara Levitz stands out as one musicologist who addresses the ways in which artists, writers, composers, and performers engaged with French interwar cultures of mourning. In *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone*, Levitz argues that the second tableau of *Perséphone*, the collaborative project of André Gide, Igor Stravinsky, Jacques Copeau, and Ida Rubinstein, provides a window into the melancholia these artists experienced as a result of their inability to fully mourn their individual losses. Drawing on a variety of scholars who have addressed the phenomenology of grief, mourning, and melancholia, Levitz demonstrates how the psychic experience of difficult mourning can be understood as shaping *Perséphone's* musico-dramatic construction. Throughout her study, Levitz uses a rich body of archival materials to provide a detailed context for determining how personal relationships, life events, and socio-historical circumstances shaped her historical subjects' artistic productions. Levitz's work here inspires my own, and while I take many of my theoretical cues from her work on musical mourning, I focus my examination on Ravel's music rather than Stravinsky's, and explore in addition how musical performance offered a space for the bodily working through of grief for Ravel and those in his social circle.

In chapter 1, I analyze obituaries and funeral accounts related to musicians' deaths published in Parisian periodicals between 1875 and 1925 in order to determine the socio-emotional world in which Ravel and his peers learned to express and negotiate grief. I show that during World War I the Parisian press replaced detailed, personal, and explicit representations of grief with impersonal, nationalistic, and emotionally guarded ones. This shift in public reactions to musicians' deaths was shaped by nationalist wartime discourse that framed soldiers' deaths as more deserving of public grief than others. In chapter 2, I consider how this wartime shift in the aesthetics and politics of mourning shaped the practices and affective parameters of mourning within Ravel's social sphere. Inspired by Monique Scheer's conception of "emotional practices" and Barbara Rosenwein's idea of "emotional communities" I examine the

correspondence, memoirs, diaries, photograph albums, scrapbooks, and collected archival materials of Ravel, Laura Albéniz, Jane Bathori, Nadia Boulanger, André Caplet, Emma and Chouchou Debussy, Manuel de Falla, Marguerite Long, Maurice Maréchal, Jean Roger-Ducasse, and Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux. I demonstrate how the shame, guilt, and contempt felt by musicians in mourning, as well as those who watched others mourn, were tied not only to a gendered wartime discourse that privileged heroic masculinity, but also to ideas concerning the limits of language to convey difficult emotions. In addition, I interpret the archival sources of Ravel and his peers through the psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan's descriptions of behaviors common to resistant mourners. I show that despite the wartime interdictions on certain performances of grief, Ravel and several of his contemporaries performed their resistant mourning through a variety of practices focused on persistently remembering their loved ones, as well as sharing their grief with others who were also in mourning.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 address how Ravel and his peers mourned through music. In chapter 3, I show how the music that Parisian composers wrote for mourning during the war engaged in different ways with the French State's wartime politics of mourning. By analyzing works written for mourning between 1914 and 1918 by Gabriel Pierné, Claude Debussy, Nadia and Lili Boulanger, Florent Schmitt, Reynaldo Hahn, André Caplet, and Ravel, I demonstrate that while music written for mourning the war's losses took many shapes, much of this music engaged with nationalist wartime discourse that framed loss, mourning, and personal sacrifice as sources of French heroism, glory, and eventual victory. Ascertaining the range of musical responses to loss written during the war provides an important context for understanding how Ravel's post-1917 compositions offered a different vision of mourning focused on the psychological aftereffects of national and personal trauma. In Chapter 4, then, I demonstrate how Ravel's struggle to mourn after the war appears in his three most immediately postwar compositions: *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse*. Drawing on psychoanalytic theories of trauma and difficult mourning, I show how moments of strangeness, absence,

violence, and discord in each of these compositions can be understood as traces of Ravel's resistant mourning and the trauma he suffered during the war's tenure. I argue that Ravel's returning time and again to these themes in his compositions reveal what Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet, and other trauma specialists have termed the "compulsion to repeat."

In the fifth and final chapter of this dissertation, I show how Ravel and his peers understood music making as a therapeutic bodily practice that could help them cope with grief. By examining the correspondence, concert programs and reviews, and archival collections of Ravel, Nadia Boulanger, Marguerite Long, Maurice Maréchal and others in relation to the *fin-de-siècle* discourse on bodily memory proffered by Henri Bergson in *Matière et mémoire* and Marcel Proust in *À la recherche du temps perdu*, I show that Ravel and others in his social circle used musical activities as a way of keeping lost loved ones sensually ever-present. Moreover, I demonstrate that interwar French music pedagogues, critics, and psychologists like Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Jean d'Udine, Marguerite Long, Émile Vuillermoz, and Léon Weber-Bauler understood a close connection between music making, physical movement, and emotional transformation. With this in mind, I argue that the minimalist neoclassical musical style—marked by repetitive, kinesthetically demanding, etude-like, and rhythmically regular musical passages which Ravel's contemporaries referred to as *style dépouillé*—of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, the Sonatas for Violin and Violoncello and for Violin and Piano, and the Piano Concerto in G Major, reflect Ravel's desire to offer the friends for whom he wrote these compositions the opportunity to cope with their grief through bodily movement produced through musical performance.

Chapter 1

The Parisian Press and Changing Cultures of Mourning in Ravel's France

Too evident sorrow does not inspire pity but repugnance, it is a sign of mental instability or of bad manners: it is morbid . . . One only had the right to cry if no one else can see or hear. Solitary and shameful mourning is the only recourse, like a sort of masturbation.

Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*¹

In 1877, J. Marquerie, the owner of a *magasin de deuil* just down the street from the Paris Opéra on Rue de la Paix, published a small book entitled, *Le Deuil, histoire, règlements, usages, modes d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui*.² As Marquerie explains in his preface, he wrote this book in order to “respond in a general fashion, with some clear and precise information, to questions addressed to me daily, not only by my clients, but also by the artists, artisans, and workers involved in the art and industry of decoration and clothing.”³ Marquerie provides his readers with some interesting details on mourning practices in other time periods and cultures before coming to his last chapter, a “Guide de deuil actuel” (Guide to mourning today), in which he gives instructions and even provides sample letters for planning a funeral and inviting friends and family to the ceremony. In addition, Marquerie presents a detailed guide to the durations of mourning periods, which, as in other *guides de deuil* of this period, are based strictly upon the

¹Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 90. Here, Ariès is discussing death and mourning in twentieth-century Western Europe.

²“Magasin de deuil” translates literally to “mourning store.” Such stores were locations, somewhat like the stores called “Pompes funèbres” in Paris today, for purchasing mourning stationary, floral wreaths, headstones, and other objects related to mourning the death of a loved ones. J. Marquerie, *Le Deuil, histoire, règlements, usages, modes d'autrefois et aujourd'hui* (Paris: La Scabieuse, 1877) ; Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Tolbiac, 8-R-10958. The title of Marquerie's book translates to “Mourning, history, rules, uses, fashions of yesterday and today.”

³ *Ibid.*, 5; “Si je me décide à coordonner ces notes et à leur donner la forme d'un volume, ce n'est point pour obéir à une suggestion d'amour-propre, pour me poser en auteur et en législateur du deuil, c'est simplement pour répondre d'une façon générale, par quelques renseignements clairs et précis, aux questions qui me sont journellement adressées, non seulement par les clients de ma maison, mais aussi par les artistes, les artisans et les ouvrières qui s'occupent de l'art et de l'industrie de la décoration et du vêtement.” Unless otherwise cited, the translations that appear in this chapter and throughout this dissertation are my own. I would like to thank Tamara Levitz for her advice on several of these.

degree of the relationship between the mourner and the deceased. In an 1872 pamphlet distributed by another Parisian funeral home, a section entitled “Règlement des deuils” (Rules of mourning) prescribes a mourning period of one year and six weeks for a widow or widower, whereas someone grieving the loss of a parent was only expected to grieve for a year. The performance of grief over the loss of a grandmother or grandfather, a brother or a sister, or a child was prescribed to last only six months in each case, while the death of an aunt or an uncle required a mourning period of only three months.⁴ Marquerie's manual, and others like it, also provided social rules for public performances of mourning, including detailed lists of what types of clothing and jewelry were acceptable for each type of grief.

While these manuals hierarchize mourning, they address neither the psychological processes involved in it, nor the range of socially acceptable affective responses to grief. These guides were not meant to provide or reflect upon how long a person felt he or she was in mourning, nor to give an amount of time during which one was expected to emotionally cope with and eventually move past the death of a loved one. We can imagine that significant dissonances would have occurred between the prescriptions for mourning found in these Parisian *guides des deuils* and what a mourner actually felt the mourning period of a loss should be. The prescriptions found in these guides acknowledge no differentiation between an aunt with whom one was extraordinarily close, and one who played only a very minor role in the life of a mourner. These manuals therefore do not recognize the ways in which grief, and our subsequent performance of it, is undeniably varied, unpredictable, and deeply dependent upon a variety of psychic and social factors.

Maurice Ravel and the musicians, artists, writers, and socialites with whom he shared a social sphere, were exposed to rules concerning how to express grief, not only in clothing, but also in actions, words, and gestures. Although these rules were not included in *guides des deuils*, they had an unignorable social and affective potency. These “feeling rules,” which Arlie

⁴ Baucheron, *Etiquette à suivre pour les deuils* (Paris: Imp. de F. Malteste, 1872), 3-4; BnF, Tolbiac, VP-20438.

Hochschild has described as “norms according to which feelings may be judged appropriate to accompanying events,” can be understood as part of a social-affective nexus that, while not always consciously recognized, is integral to how any group of people comes to engage with the world.⁵

For Ravel and his peers, the Parisian press was a rich source of information on public opinions about many aspects of contemporary French life, including mourning.⁶ Many of the musicians, patrons, writers, and artists in Ravel’s social sphere frequently wrote for major Parisian dailies, or for more specialized artistic, musical, or literary journals that appeared weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly.⁷ Those who did not write for these journals and newspapers at least frequently read them, since many of those in Ravel’s circle (including the composer himself) mention in their correspondence having read an article or review in one journal or another, or ask the person to whom they are writing if they have read a particular author’s article. The Parisian press’s varied responses to death and loss in the form of obituaries, funeral accounts, and other kinds of stories related to people’s, and especially musicians’ deaths can therefore be understood as a barometer of contemporary feelings about public mourning. In addition, however, the coverage of musicians’ deaths functioned as a source of information for how to engage affectively not only with loss itself, but also with expressions of grief performed in relation to loss. To a certain extent, then, articles published in the Parisian press complemented *guides de deuils* by providing Ravel and those in his social sphere with ideas about how to feel in

⁵ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 56.

⁶ Regina Sweeney describes the growth of the Parisian press, as well as of its readership and general influence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the Introduction to *Singing Our Way to Victory: French Cultural Politics and Music During the Great War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 5.

⁷ Many of Ravel’s close friends were music critics, including Alexis Roland-Manuel, Jean Marnold, Gustave Samazeuilh, H el ene Jourdan-Morhange,  Emile Vuillermoz, Henry Pruni eres, and Nadia Boulanger. In addition, Ravel and numerous of his peers mention having read certain articles in a number of Parisian newspapers and journals in their letters.

response to loss, how to perform these feelings through public and private mourning, and how to feel about their own and others' expressions of grief.

Philippe Ariès and Geoffrey Gorer, two social historians who work on French and British cultures of mourning respectively, have posited that there was a shift in cultures of death and loss in Western Europe around the *fin-de-siècle*. Both historians have asserted that a significant change occurred at some point in the late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century concerning both the expression of grief and people's shame in relation to the performance of mourning rituals. Ariès, for instance, has argued that at some point between the French Revolution and the twentieth century, French attitudes towards death shifted. According to Ariès, in the nineteenth century people were able to be more openly emotional when responding to death. This was a period of "hysterical mourning" in which mourning rituals were "unfurled with an uncustomary degree of ostentation." However, one of Ariès's most striking assertions, which appears in the epigraph with which I opened this chapter, is that at some point in the early twentieth century "too evident sorrow" came to be disdained, leaving "solitary and shameful mourning" as "the only recourse, like a sort of masturbation." He notes that funeral ceremonies needed to "remain discreet and must avoid emotion" and that "the outward manifestations of mourning are repugned and disappearing."⁸ Ariès fails, however, to illuminate the specifics of this veritable sea change in displays of grief. He neither explains the ways in which this shift manifested itself, nor addresses what within French culture may have led to or developed out of this shift. Moreover, he is unable to specifically pinpoint when this change occurred.

Like Ariès, Gorer observes the disappearance of mourning customs and rituals, as well as the rise of a strong sense of embarrassment tied to expressions of grief. However, unlike Ariès, Gorer posits a possible relationship between World War I and shameful mourning. In the autobiographical introduction to his 1965 book, *Death, Grief, and Mourning in Contemporary Britain*, he writes that, although he cannot fully recall when "the full panoply of public

⁸ Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death*, 67, 90.

mourning became exceptional rather than general . . . the evidence suggests that it was towards the end of the war, in 1917 and 1918.”⁹ Gorer asserts that one possible reason for the disappearance of mourning customs was that the immense number of men killed in the war, and the consequently large number of widows these men left to survive them, rendered mourning rituals untenable. He also suggests that mourning rituals may have disappeared as a way of preventing the morale of on-leave soldiers from plummeting. Indeed, these are both viable and even likely reasons for the shift in attitudes towards public displays of grief. And yet Gorer does not inform his readers of the evidence to which he refers that might help to demonstrate that this shift took place at this particular time. In the end, neither Gorer nor Ariès provides details about the mechanics of this shift in mourning cultures.

In this chapter, I examine the coverage of musicians’ deaths in numerous major Parisian daily newspapers and several music-specific journals in order to determine the mechanics of the shift away from open, direct, and public expressions of grief towards ones that were guarded, evasive, and intensely private. Through examining journal coverage of musicians’ deaths that occurred between 1875 (the year in which Ravel was born) and 1925 (the year following the death of Fauré, who was a teacher, mentor, and friend of many in Ravel’s social circle), I trace the trajectory of a shift in the affective aesthetics of the reporting on death that took place specifically during World War I. I show that the Parisian press’s shift in its representations of death, grief, and mourners was distinctly intertwined with a wartime ideology that constructed a large divide between civilians and soldiers. This shift was also tied to a significant rise in *pudeur des sentiments*, which Jean-Claude Bologne has described as a sense of shame surrounding the display or even discussion of anything that might be considered a social “weakness.” Bologne articulates that this includes not only the expression of emotion (not just sadness but also joy—tears and laughter can, at different moments, be considered equally socially offensive), but also

⁹ Geoffrey Gorer, *Death, Grief, and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (London: The Cresset Press, 1965), 6.

talking about oneself too much, or posing “indiscreet” questions.¹⁰ He emphasizes that *pudeur*, whether of the *sentiment* or *corporelle* variety, is always tied to what is considered a social weakness or indiscretion at any given moment. Recounting how this increase in *pudeur des sentiments* manifested itself in the Parisian press during the war years illuminates how Ravel and his peers came to experience and understand loss and grief during and after the First World War. This examination ultimately provides a socio-historical backdrop for understanding how the music written by Ravel and his contemporaries between 1914 and 1934 engaged with wartime and interwar French cultures of mourning.

Before the Great War: Mourning Georges Bizet, Ambroise Thomas, and Jules Massenet

On June 7, 1875, exactly three months after the birth of Maurice Ravel, the French daily newspaper *La République française* published a descriptive account of the funeral of Georges Bizet, the 36-year-old composer of *Carmen*, who had died suddenly several days earlier:

From moment to moment as the ceremony progressed, one felt the emotion swelling, augmented by [musical] sonorities that were both warm and painful. Tears flowed with abundance, hardly contained sobs threatened to burst forth everywhere. It seemed as if up until this moment one had not been able to believe the stroke of fate that had just robbed contemporary French lyric art of one of its most beloved representatives, and that the so unexpected death of poor Bizet was only a dream! But there, however, in front of the black coffin, in the presence of this silent crowd with eyes red with tears, under the flowing, lamenting chords of this music, doubt was no longer possible. Horrible reality appeared cruel with its procession of anguish and regrets . . . Regarding Monsieur Gounod, emotion did not permit him to say all that was so obviously held in his heart about Bizet, who he mourned both as a student and a friend. After having described in a few warm words the painful anguish of Madame Geneviève Bizet, the wife of the artist who died so tragically, the voice of Monsieur Gounod suddenly gave out; he couldn't continue.¹¹

¹⁰ Jean-Claude Bologne, *Histoire de la pudeur* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1986), 13-15.

¹¹ “Chronique du jour,” *La République française*, 7 June 1875: “D’instant en instant, à mesure que la cérémonie avançait, on sentait l’émotion aller croissant, aiguillonnée par ces sonorités à la fois chaudes et douloureuses. Les pleurs coulaient avec abondance, les sanglots à peine contenus menaçaient d’éclater de toutes parts. Il semblait que jusqu’à ce moment on n’avait pu croire au coup de foudre qui venait de priver l’art lyrique français contemporain de l’un de ses représentants les plus aimés et que la mort si inattendue du pauvre Bizet n’était qu’un rêve! Mais là, pourtant, devant ce cercueil noir, en présence de cette foule silencieuse aux yeux rougis de larmes, sous l’effluve des accords lamentables de cette musique, le doute n’était plus possible. L’affreuse réalité apparaissait cruelle avec son cortège d’angoisse et de regrets... [...] Quant à M. Gounod, l’émotion ne lui a pas permis de dire tout ce que renfermait évidemment son cœur sur celui qu’il pleurait à la fois comme élève et comme ami. Après avoir décrit en quelques

The author of this account of Bizet's funeral does not refrain from communicating to his readers the immense sadness of the people present. He describes in vivid detail the bodily reactions of those mourning Bizet: their eyes, their tears, the sounds they made or did not make, and how the sound of the music augmented the already-too-palpable sorrow that filled the cathedral and weighed on those present. He even goes so far as to describe how Charles Gounod's body reacted under the weight of his sorrow, which, he tells his readers, was intensified suddenly by repeating the words of Bizet's wife. Emotion rendered Gounod's breath, his throat, or his larynx—or perhaps all three—miserably uncooperative, forcing him to stop in the middle of his eulogy for his friend.

Other accounts of Bizet's funeral focus on similar aspects of the ceremony. Almost all of the journalists who address Bizet's funeral make descriptions of mourners and their emotions central to their reports. Through vivid depictions of grieving bodies, reporters attempt to viscerally recreate in their readers the emotions they witnessed and felt. Henri Moreno's coverage of Bizet's death in *Le Ménestrel* is illustrative in this regard. Similar to the account of Bizet's funeral published in *La République française*, Moreno's account focuses on those grieving, specifically the emotions that he and other mourners felt, and the outward physical manifestations of these emotions. On June 6 he writes that “All the attendees were under the weight of an indescribable emotion: this emotion was generally present from the entryway of the church, where the musical funeral service was made up of pieces borrowed from the oeuvre of Bizet.”¹² A week later on June 13, he felt the need to further expound on the funeral, writing that,

We told you about the pain of the entire audience, made up of all kinds of people. We will add that Messieurs Lhérie, Duchesne, Bouhy, as well as the musicians of the Orchestre Pasdeloup, were so profoundly moved in interpreting the fragments from works of the young composer who we are all mourning, that they doubled the

chaleureuses paroles les angoisses douloureuses de Mme Geneviève Bizet, la compagne du malheureux artiste, la voix de M. Gounod s'est tout à coup éteinte; il n'a pu continuer.”

¹² H. Moreno, “Semaine théâtrale et musicale: Georges Bizet,” *Le Ménestrel* (June 6, 1875): 211: “Tous les assistants étaient sous le poids d'une indicible émotion: cette émotion s'était généralisée dès l'entrée à l'église, où le service funèbre en musique se composait de morceaux empruntés à l'oeuvre de Bizet.”

emotion of the men and women attending, who were as numerous as the men at this mournful ceremony. We noticed amongst other saddened, even dismayed figures, Madame Galli-Marié and Mademoiselle Chapuy, the two remarkable interpreters of *Carmen*.¹³

Journalists also created emotional sympathy in their readers through focusing on the emotional responses of those closest to Bizet. For instance, in his June 6, 1875 article for *Le Ménestrel*, Moreno reprinted the notice posted at the Opéra-Comique in which Ludovic Halévy, the cousin of Bizet's wife, announced the composer's death. Moreno then proceeds to give details about what led to Bizet's death (it is still unclear, he tells his readers, whether it was a throat abscess or an embolism that killed the composer), but he takes care to mention that Bizet's death had rendered his widow "crazy with grief."¹⁴ Similarly, the author of *Le Figaro's* account of Bizet's funeral focuses on the speech given by Monsieur du Locle, then the director of the Opéra-Comique, and also a close friend of Bizet, as well as on the moving speech given by Charles Gounod, who, like du Locle, was one of Bizet's close friends. The journalist even includes a quotation from Bizet's widow that Gounod used in his eulogy:

Gounod then came up and said only a few moving words, speaking of the man and the grief that his death inspires. In order to give a better idea of this, the master recalled, with true tears, the touching thought that Madame Bizet expressed to him yesterday: "In the six years of happiness that our marriage gave me, there isn't one hour, not one minute which I would not be happy to relive!"¹⁵

Similarly, the author of an obituary for Bizet that appeared in *Le Figaro* on June 4, 1875 chose to close his obituary by drawing attention to the grief of Bizet's wife and child, a rhetorical move

¹³ H. Moreno, "Semaine théâtrale et musicale: Georges Bizet," *Le Ménestrel* (June 13, 1875): 219: "Nous vous avons dit la douleur de toute l'assistance, composée d'illustrations de tout genre. Ajoutons que MM. Lhérie, Duchesne, Bouhy, ainsi, du reste, que les musiciens de l'orchestre Padeloup, étaient si profondément émus en interprétant les fragments des oeuvres du jeune grand musicien que nous pleurons tous, qu'ils en ont doublé l'émotion des assistants et des assistantes, aussi nombreuses que les hommes à cette funèbre cérémonie. On remarquait entre autres figures attristées, atterrées même, celles de Mme Galli-Marié et de Mlle Chapuy, les deux remarquables interprètes de *Carmen*."

¹⁴ H. Moreno, "Semaine théâtrale et musicale: Georges Bizet," *Le Ménestrel* (June 6, 1875): 211: "Un abcès à la gorge—d'autres dissent une embolie, c'est-à-dire un caillot de sang obstruant une artère—aurait enlevé le jeune et déjà célèbre compositeur au milieu même de sa famille, à Bougival où il passait l'été; sa pauvre jeune femme, fille du grand compositeur F. Halévy, est folle de douleur!"

¹⁵ Le Masque de fer, "Échos de Paris," *Le Figaro*, 6 June 1875: "Gounod s'est avancé ensuite et n'a dit que quelques mots émus, parlant de l'homme et des regrets qu'il laisse. Pour en donner une idée, le maître a rappelé, avec de véritables larmes, cette touchante pensée que Mme Bizet exprimait hier devant lui: 'Des six années de bonheur que le mariage m'a données, il n'est pas une heure, pas une minute par laquelle je ne serais heureuse de passer encore!'"

that would have made the very personal grief of these mourners the lasting idea in the reader's mind as they finished reading. Emphasizing as well the shock that Bizet's family felt at the moment of his death, this journalist writes, "Today, there is no more than a widow and a child in mourning who still cannot believe that this husband, this father, so beloved, who spoke only of the future that promised him such wonderful things, has left forever. Bizet died at midnight . . . he passed away without agony, without even knowing that death was coming; his family at first thought he was asleep, then that he had fainted!"¹⁶

The press coverage of Bizet's death and funeral communicates that the outward and direct expression of grief—whether through silently flowing tears, noisily uttered sobs, or suddenly inarticulate words—was, in the summer of 1875, not only permitted, but in fact considered a normal and not disdainful aspect of mourning. Explicit displays of grief appear to have even been encouraged in the Parisian press, rather than being shame- or contempt-inducing expressions. In addition, journalists focus most often on the people with whom Bizet had forged personal relationships, people whose grief bespoke not only a musical or a national loss, but also a very painful and personal psychic deprivation.

Similarly, the journalists who reported on the death and funeral of Ambroise Thomas in February 1896 focused on the mourning practices and the expressions of grief of those closest to Thomas, the former director of the Paris Conservatoire, and composer of the successful operas *Mignon* and *Hamlet*. Many of the articles in Parisian daily newspapers that addressed Thomas's death drew attention to mourners through the inclusion of both a list of people who had paid their condolences at the Thomas home or the Conservatoire, as well as a list of who had sent flowers or condolence letters.¹⁷ These lists were often supplemented by the inclusion of personal

¹⁶ Le Masque de fer, "Échos de Paris: Mort de Georges Bizet," *Le Figaro*, 4 June 1875: "Aujourd'hui il n'y a plus qu'une veuve et un enfant en deuil qui ne peuvent croire encore que ce mari, ce père si jeune, si aimé, qui ne parlait que de l'avenir qui lui réservait de si belles destinées, est parti pour jamais. Bizet est mort à minuit; il avait beaucoup souffert d'oppressions; il s'est éteint sans agonie, sans avoir pressenti la mort; sa famille l'a cru d'abord endormi, puis évanoui!"

¹⁷ "Mort de M. Ambroise Thomas," *Le Petit Parisien*, 13 February 1896; "La Mort de M. Ambroise Thomas," *Le Petit Parisien*, 14 February 1896; "La Mort de M. Ambroise Thomas," *Le Petit Parisien*, 15 February 1896; A.M., "Ambroise

articulations of grief over the loss engendered by Thomas's death. *Le Figaro*, for instance, printed several condolence letters received by Thomas's widow, including one from Thomas's friend Giuseppe Verdi that reads, "With the greatest grief I mourn with you the loss of a great artist, of an honest man, and of a friend for 40 years."¹⁸ Moreover, three days after Verdi's condolence letter appeared, *Le Figaro* printed a letter written by Madame Thomas on February 16, 1896 to the members of the Municipal Council of the city of Metz, where Thomas had been born. Here, André Maurel, the author of this article, offered his readers a window into Madame Thomas's grief over her husband's death:

Messieurs, At the moment when my heart has just been so cruelly struck, I feel myself surrounded by universal sympathy, and among the testimonies that I have received, I attach the highest value to that of the city of Metz, which shares my grief in deploring the death of one of its most illustrious children. I thank the Municipal Council for its eagerness in addressing to me its deep condolences and I am profoundly grateful for the deliberation immediately taken in honor of the noble departed, an extract of which you kindly addressed to me. Lost in my grief, I ask you to accept, messieurs, my very sincere feelings of gratitude. Signed: Elvira Ambroise-Thomas.¹⁹

This letter and the one from Verdi feature a number of contemporary formal and linguistic conventions for condolence letters at this time, and thus are perhaps not as interesting for what they say, as for the fact that *Le Figaro* considers them newsworthy. Condolences and other expressions of grief, particularly if written or uttered by those closest to someone who has died,

Thomas: Les Derniers moments," *Le Figaro*, 13 February 1896; André Maurel, "La Mort d'Ambroise Thomas," *Le Figaro*, 14 February 1896; André Maurel, "Ambroise Thomas: Avant les obsèques," *Le Figaro*, 15 February 1896; "La Mort d'Ambroise Thomas," *La République française*, 15 February 1896; "La Mort d'Ambroise Thomas," *La République française*, 16 February 1896; "La Mort de M. Ambroise Thomas: La Date des funérailles. La Chapelle ardente. Au Conservatoire," *L'Éclair*, 16 February 1896; "La Mort de Massenet," *La République française*, 15 August 1912; "La Mort de Massenet," *Excelsior*, 15 August 1912; "Massenet vient de mourir: Parmi les personnalités qui sont fait inscrire..." *Excelsior*, 14 August 1912; "Le Mort de Massenet," *Comoedia*, 14 August 1912; "Le Mort de Massenet," *Comoedia*, 15 August 1912.

¹⁸ André Maurel, "Ambroise Thomas: Avant les obsèques," *Le Figaro*, 15 February 1896: "Avec le plus grand chagrin, je pleure avec vous la perte du grand artiste, de l'honnête homme et de l'ami depuis quarante ans."

¹⁹ André Maurel, "Obsèques d'Ambroise Thomas," *Le Figaro*, 18 February 1896: "Messieurs, Au moment où mon coeur vient d'être si cruellement frappé, je me sens entourée de la sympathie universelle, et parmi les témoignages que j'ai reçus, j'attache le plus grand prix à celui de la Ville de Metz qui s'associe à mon deuil en déplorant la mort d'un de ses plus illustres enfants. Je remercie le Conseil Municipal de son empressement à m'adresser ses vives condoléances et je lui suis profondément reconnaissante de la délibération prise immédiatement en l'honneur du noble défunt et dont vous avez bien voulu m'adresser l'extrait. Abimée dans ma douleur, je vous prie d'agréer, messieurs, mes bien sincères sentiments de gratitude. Signé: Elvira Ambroise-Thomas."

seem to have offered one important and emotionally engaging form of media coverage following musicians' deaths: through reading about the feelings and actions of those close to someone who has died, the audiences of Parisian journals learned which were acceptable ways in which to publicly and privately express their own feelings concerning the death of a loved one.

Even when journals do not provide detailed descriptions of mourners' expressions of grief, the Parisian press still demonstrates a noticeable interest in drawing attention to the mourners who had the closest personal relationships with Thomas. This is evident in the coverage of *Le Petit Parisien* and *L'Éclair*. In each, authors focus on the fact that Thomas's widow barely left his side in the days just following his death. The author of a front-page article in *Le Petit Parisien* from February 14, 1896 writes that, "Madame Ambroise Thomas hardly left the body of her husband except for a few minutes the whole day. Her sisters, Madames General Renaud, de Serres, Baudron de Vermeron, Bertrand, her sister-in-law, Madame Remaury, and her niece, Madame Lafont, took turns staying by her side."²⁰ Moreover, in *L'Éclair's* coverage of Thomas's funeral, one author took the time to describe Madame Thomas's entrance into the chapel:

A little before 11 o'clock, Madame Ambroise Thomas entered, on the arm of her brother, Monsieur Ramaury, into the *chapelle ardente*, where she kneeled to the left of the catafalque, followed by his family, which included her brother-in-law, Monsieur Renaud, general of division, in full uniform; at the right prayed the sisters who had tended to and watched over Monsieur Thomas.²¹

In addition to drawing attention to Thomas's widow's grief, the author of this *L'Éclair* article also takes care to mention the presence and actions of close family members at the funeral, and

²⁰ "La Mort de M. Ambroise Thomas," *Le Petit Parisien*, 14 February 1896: "Durant toute la journée, Mme Ambroise Thomas n'a quitté que quelque instants à peine le corps de son mari. Auprès d'elle se tenaient tour à tour ses soeurs, Mmes la générale Renaud, de Serres, Baudron de Vermeron, Bertrand, sa belle-soeur, Mme Remaury, sa nièce, Mme Lafont."

²¹ "Funérailles. Les Obsèques d'Ambroise Thomas. Le Directeur du Conservatoire. Nombreuse affluence. Les Honneurs militaires. La Cérémonie religieuse. À l'Église de la Trinité. Au cimetière Montmartre. Les Discours," *L'Éclair*, 24 February 1896: "Un peu avant onze heures, Mme Ambroise Thomas pénétrait, au bras de son frère, M. Ramaury, dans la chapelle ardente, où elle s'agenouillait à gauche du catafalque, suivie de ses parents, parmi lesquels son beau-frère, M. Renaud, général de division, en grand uniforme; à droite, priaient les soeurs qui ont soigné et veillé le maître."

privileges the actions of these people over those of State officials who were also present. Many authors mention the close friends of Thomas who came to visit the composer's body in the mortuary chamber in the days just following his death. *La République française* reported that, “In the afternoon, Madames Alexandre Dumas and Charles Gounod stayed to watch over the mortuary chamber, where the members of the family had been taking turns watching over the body. The Count and Countess of Eu, Madame Léo Délibes, the Count of Chambrun, the professors of the Conservatoire and a few intimate friends were the only ones admitted close to the body.”²² In addition, several dailies revealed that Massenet, a close friend of Thomas, stayed for a long time in the mortuary chamber, and that his “grief was profound.”²³

Le Ménestrel's coverage of Thomas's death similarly demonstrates the Parisian press's desire to publish stories that were focused on more personal aspects of grief and mourning. In his account of Thomas's funeral, Henri Moreno chose to reprint lengthy excerpts of speeches given at the funeral. The speeches he included were not those of the most prominent State officials present, but rather of those who had been closest to Thomas, specifically Monsieur Bourgault-Ducoudray, Théodore Dubois, and Massenet, each of whom had been students, colleagues, and close friends of the composer.²⁴ Arthur Pougin's “Notes et Souvenirs,” published on February 16 and dedicated to Ambroise Thomas, offers another example of this focus on the personal. Here, Pougin expresses without hesitation not only his love for Thomas, but also how he feels his grief is impeding his ability to work:

I would lack the courage to undertake, on this mournful day, a study on the life and the musical oeuvre of the great and noble artist that art and France have just lost in

²² “La Mort d’Ambroise Thomas,” *La République française*, 15 February 1896: “Dans l’après-midi, Mmes Alexandre Dumas et Charles Gounod sont restées un moment à veiller dans la chambre mortuaire, où se remplaçaient les membres de la famille. Le comte et la comtesse d’Eu, Mme Léo Délibes, le comte de Chambrun, les professeurs du Conservatoire et quelques intimes ont été seuls admis près du corps.”

²³ “La Mort d’Ambroise Thomas,” *La République française*, 16 February 1896: “Hier, M. Massenet, qui avait pour le célèbre compositeur une amitié profonde s’est rendu au Conservatoire et est resté longtemps dans la chambre mortuaire.” André Maurel, “Ambroise Thomas: Avant les Obsèques,” *Le Figaro*, 15 February 1896: “L’accès de l’appartement du directeur du Conservatoire est toujours très difficile. Seuls les amis intimes du maître ont été reçus. Parmi ceux-ci, citons M. Daubrée, de l’Institut, et M. Massenet, dont la douleur était profonde.”

²⁴ H.M., “Les Obsèques d’Ambroise Thomas,” *Le Ménestrel* (February 23, 1896): 57.

such an unexpected and rapid fashion . . . The heart would tighten at this thought and, for my part, I would not have had the mind free enough to try to carry out a judgment on the considerable oeuvre of the *maître* that I loved with an affection as sincere as it was respectful. I will limit myself to gathering here a certain number of notes and memories that one will not find, I think, without some interest, returning later to any kind of reasoned appreciation. It is not the time for critique, but rather entirely for grief and sorrow.²⁵

Particularly striking here is Pougin's adamant assertion that tributes to Thomas should focus on remembering who Thomas was through the sharing of personal anecdotes, rather than critiques or analyses of his compositions. As we will see, Pougin's declaration, while well-understood and often taken to heart in the years before World War I, ceased to carry much weight for journalists writing during and after the war. However, before addressing in more detail how printed discourse surrounding grief and mourning changed between 1914 and 1918, I will turn to the coverage of Jules Massenet's death in August 1912, which provides an example of the effusiveness of mourning and grief that was present in the Parisian press in the years just prior to World War I.

Jules Massenet, the composer of *Le Cid*, *Manon*, and *Thaïs*, and beloved Conservatoire professor, died on August 13, 1912. In the daily newspaper coverage of Massenet's death, like that concerning Thomas's and Bizet's deaths in the late nineteenth century, journalists focus on the more personal aspects of Massenet's life; this entailed an emphasis on the mourners closest to Massenet. Several newspapers recounted for their readers Massenet's last moments, drawing attention to who was present in these emotional instants. The following description of Massenet's last moments and the communication of his death to his widow appeared in *Le Petit Parisien*:

M. René Failliot, his grandson-in-law, and one of his nephews were at his side when he breathed his last breath. Madame Massenet, who had stayed at Egreville, was

²⁵ Arthur Pougin, "Ambroise Thomas: Notes et souvenirs," *Le Ménestrel* (February 16, 1896): 50-52: "Le courage me manquerait pour entreprendre, en ce jour de deuil, une étude sur la vie et l'oeuvre du grand et noble artiste que l'art et la France viennent de perdre d'une façon si imprévue et si rapide . . . Le coeur se serra à cette pensée et, pour ma part, je n'aurais pas l'esprit assez libre pour essayer de porter un jugement sur l'oeuvre si considérable du maître que j'aimais d'une affection aussi sincère que respectueuse. Je me bornerai à grouper ici un certain nombre de notes et de souvenirs qu'on ne trouvera pas, je pense, sans quelque intérêt, remettant à plus tard toute espèce d'appréciation raisonnée. L'heure n'est pas à la critique; elle est tout entière au regret et à la douleur."

immediately told of the painful event and rushed to Paris, as did her daughter, Madame Bessaud.²⁶

Le Matin similarly dramatized these events:

Saturday morning, feeling a bit indisposed, Monsieur Massenet left his property at Egreville (Seine-et-Marne) in order to come to Paris to consult his doctor. His health caused so little worry to those around him that Madame Massenet did not accompany her husband. The death of the author of so many popular works was peaceful, even if quick. Feeling worse, Monday night, the *maître* called to his side the husband of his granddaughter, Monsieur René Failliot, and one of his nephews. After a bad night, the sick man, having lost consciousness, died peacefully in the early morning. Forewarned by telegram, at the house in Egreville where she was staying, Madame Massenet rushed in the morning to the mezzanine on rue de Vaugirard, but it was too late.²⁷

These excerpts demonstrate that journalists got their readers invested in their stories by creating dramatic narrative arcs that informed their readers of Massenet's last moments, the fact that his death was a surprise, as well as the news that his wife was tragically absent at the moment of her husband's death.

Like the coverage in *Le Matin* and *Le Petit Parisien*, *Excelsior's* coverage of Massenet's death and funeral focused specifically on the mourners closest to Massenet. For instance, in the coverage of Massenet's funeral on August 18, Pierre Montamet took care to list the names of those in the family who were present, as well as their placement in relation to others, and then followed this with the names of Massenet's close friends, colleagues, and students who were present.²⁸ Moreover, the front-page photograph printed in *Excelsior* on August 18, 1912

²⁶ "Un grand musicien français disparaît: Massenet est mort subitement," *Le Petit Parisien*, 14 August 1912: "M. René Failliot, son petit-gendre, et l'un de ses neveux étaient à son chevet lorsqu'il rendit le dernier soupir. Mme Massenet, restée à Egreville, fut aussitôt avisée du douloureux événement et accourut à Paris, ainsi que sa fille, Mme Bessaud."

²⁷ "Massenet: Une mort douce. Une oeuvre énorme," *Le Matin*, 14 August 1912: "Samedi matin, se sentant quelque peu indisposé, M. Massenet avait quitté sa propriété d'Egreville (Seine-et-Marne) pour venir à Paris consulter son médecin. Son état inspirait si peu d'inquiétude à son entourage que Mme Massenet n'avait pas accompagné son mari. La mort de l'auteur de tant d'oeuvres populaires a été douce, quoique rapide. Se sentant plus mal, lundi soir, le maître fit appeler à son chevet le mari de sa petite-fille, M. René Failliot, et un de ses neveux. Après une mauvaise nuit, la malade, ayant perdu connaissance, s'éteignit doucement, au petit jour. Prévenue par télégramme, au château d'Egreville où elle résidait, Mme Massenet accourait dans la matinée, à l'entresol de la rue de Vaugirard, mais trop tard." The reporting on Massenet's death in *Comoedia*, especially on August 14-16 and 18, similarly focused on those closest to Massenet, especially his widow and the family members that were present at his death, as well as on other mourners who came to pay their condolences.

²⁸ Pierre Montamet, "L'Hommage suprême. Massenet eut, hier, à Egreville, les obsèques qu'il avait désirées. Elles furent simples et touchantes: Un petit cortège d'amis et de disciples accompagna le maître à sa dernière demeure," *Excelsior*, 18 August 1912.

indicated the placement of mourners through numbers placed over peoples' heads and a caption that reads "The descent of the body into the grave in the presence of the family (1) Madame Massenet (2) General Massenet, brother of the deceased (3) Monsieur Failliot, son-in-law."²⁹ Thus through using pictures of mourners, *Excelsior* allowed its readers to even further identify with the corporeal reality of grief.

Journalists writing on Massenet's death underlined the bodily dimensions of mourning by including vivid and moving descriptions of mourners' grief, often in a detailed-oriented and poignant language reminiscent of the coverage of Bizet's death in 1875.³⁰ For instance, Pierre Montamet, in his article for *Excelsior* on August 18, describes Massenet's funeral by writing that, "Abbé Henry, priest of the parish, recited a low mass. The silence of the small chapel was barely disturbed by these sad litanies. Everybody looked at the black catafalque, eyes filled with tears, souls lost, evoking pious memories from students in some instances, and friends' confidences in others."³¹ Maurice Saugey, a journalist for *Comoedia*, provided even more details, including not only who were the most tearful of the funeral's attendees, but also the moments that seemed to draw the most overt emotional expressions from those present:

It is now the most moving moment: Massenet, who is still there amongst all those who so passionately loved him, is going to be torn from them . . . Each person is pulling himself away and evoking, it seems, with more mournful fervor and vibrant emotion, Massenet's face so living and so clear, which is now elongated, impassive, inanimate, from now on indifferent to all vain agitation. Without even a word being pronounced, in an impressive silence, the coffin glides down and disappears. This was the grand musician that was Jules Massenet. Everybody goes away, feeling intense emotion. Monsieur Henri Cain cries abundant and sincere tears, Monsieur Gustave Charpentier tells of the profound affection that he had had for Massenet: "I cherished, I loved three people more than anyone in the world: my father, who I lost

²⁹ "La Descente du corps dans le tombeau en présence de la famille (1) Mme Massenet (2) Général Massenet, frère du défunt (3) M. Failliot, petit-gendre."

³⁰ "La Mort de Massenet," *La République française*, 15 August 1912; "La Mort de Massenet," *Excelsior*, 15 August 1912; "Massenet vient de mourir: Parmi les personnalités qui sont fait inscrire..." *Excelsior*, 14 August 1912; "Le Mort de Massenet," *Comoedia*, 14 August 1912; "Le Mort de Massenet," *Comoedia*, 15 August 1912.

³¹ Montamet, "L'Hommage suprême": "L'abbé Henry, curé de la paroisse, récita une messe basse. Le silence de la petite basilique fut à peine troublé par ces dolentes litanies. Chacun regardait le noir catafalque, les yeux gonflés de larmes, l'âme à la dérive, évoquant qui des souvenirs pieux d'élèves, qui des confidences d'amis."

a few years ago; my old comrade Landry from the Opéra-Comique, dead also, and my venerated teacher, who I am burying today. Do I need to explain the emptiness in my heart?" Monsieur Gustave Charpentier arrived the same morning from Antibes in order to attend the funeral. The crowd disperses little by little. And the small town of Egreville takes up again its monotonous and sad quality, all the more saddened by the great grief that has struck it.³²

Through describing the tears of one of Massenet's close friends, and printing a moving personal expression of Charpentier's grief, Saugey conveys the emotions of those present, relaying what he imagines were the thoughts of the mourners.

Paul-Émile Chevalier, in his coverage of Massenet's funeral for *Le Ménestrel*, similarly focuses on the displays of grief performed by those closest to Massenet. In a somewhat poetic style, he recalls that, "in the farthest corner of the cemetery, close to an ordinary iron gate protecting a well, there are some family members hunched over as if broken by their pain, and some dismayed friends whose eyes barely retain silent tears."³³ Chevalier does not hesitate to describe the ways in which the grief of the mourners present affected their bodies. He finishes his account by romantically invoking the apparent disjunction between nature, which had chosen to smile upon Massenet on the day of his funeral, and the sorrowful emotions of everyone present. He writes that, "although everyone's hearts are bruised by mute emotion, although their minds are lugubriously seized by so much desired simplicity, although the sadness relentlessly obliterated everyone, nature, imposing silence on the celestial anger, unleashed on all the days before and after—nature, exceptionally resplendent on that particular

³² Maurice Saugey, "La Mort de Massenet: Les Obsèques," *Comoedia*, 18 August 1912: "C'est maintenant l'instant le plus émouvant: Massenet, qui est encore là, au milieu de tous ceux qui l'ont si passionnément aimé, va leur être arraché... Et chacun se recueille, évoque, semble-t-il, avec plus de ferveur douloureuse et d'émotion vibrante son visage si vivant et si clair, maintenant étendu, impassible, inanimé, désormais indifférent à toute vaine agitation. Sans qu'une parole soit prononcée, dans un silence impressionnant, le cercueil glisse et disparaît. C'en est fait du grand musicien que fut Jules Massenet. Chacun s'en va, en proie à une émotion intense. M. Henri Cain pleure des larmes abondantes et sincères, M. Gustave Charpentier dit le profonde affection qu'il avait vouée à Massenet: 'Je chérissais, j'aimais trois êtres par-dessus tout au monde: mon père, que j'ai perdu, il y a quelques années; mon vieux camarade Landry, de l'Opéra-Comique, mort aussi, et mon vénéré maître, que j'enterre aujourd'hui. Faut-il vous dire le vide de mon coeur?' M. Gustave Charpentier était arrivé le matin même d'Antibes pour assister aux funérailles. La foule se disperse peu à peu. Et la petite bourgade d'Egreville reprend son aspect monotone et triste, encore plus attristée par le grand deuil qui l'a frappée."

³³ Paul-Émile Chevalier, "Les Obsèques de Massenet," *Le Ménestrel* (August 24, 1912): 267: "et, dans l'ultime coin de ce cimetière, près d'une quelconque grille de fer qui défend une fosse profonde, des parents inclinés, comme cassés par la douleur, quelques amis atterrés dont les yeux retiennent mal de silencieuses larmes."

Saturday, greets with a radiant and gay sunbeam the one of all its sons who it had most particularly cherished.”³⁴

The Parisian press's coverage of Massenet's death and funeral frequently employed this sort of strikingly expressive and poetic or romantic tone. For instance, Pierre Montamet opens his coverage of Massenet's funeral at Egreville with the following passage:

Nature rendered itself beautiful and tender yesterday in Egreville. The sun, after having shown a gray face for several long days, shone in all its intensity, its rays of gold sweetly caressed the earth. Large green trees—the opulent forest of Fontainebleau is close by—conversed in low voices. A warm wind blew calmly; birds twittered cheerily and without care. In the neighboring fields the glebe, still completely damp, exhaled a heavy and peaceful perfume . . . It is on this poetic day, in the middle of this atmosphere as if weary of life and drunk with hope, that the funeral of the great Massenet was celebrated.³⁵

In describing the country landscape where Massenet's funeral took place, Montamet uses a number of classic poetic devices. He personifies trees, the sun, and the still damp earth, and uses sonorous and sensuous language to describe and render audible, palpable and aromatic to *Excelsior's* readers all that surrounded those who mourned Massenet.

First-person expressions of grief offered another strategy for Parisian newspapers to affectively communicate to their readers the emotions of those mourning Massenet. Many musicians responding to Massenet's death claimed their grief through using the first person to express their despair at the loss of a cherished friend, colleague, or teacher. These accounts demonstrate the relative comfort that many people felt in publicly displaying their emotions, and thus the degree to which the acknowledgment and performance of grief was unmarked by shame or contempt at this historical moment. *Excelsior's* coverage of Massenet's death makes

³⁴ Ibid.: “Et, alors que les coeurs sont meurtris de muette émotion, que les esprits sont lugubrement saisis de tant de simplicité voulue, que la tristesse anéantit implacablement tous les êtres, la nature, imposant silence aux colères célestes, déchainées tous les jours qui prédédèrent et qui suivirent, la nature, exceptionnellement resplendissante ce samedi-là, salue d'un radieux et gai rayon de soleil celui de tous ses fils qu'elle avait plus particulièrement chéri...”

³⁵ Montamet, “L'Hommage suprême”: “La nature s'était fait belle et tendre hier, à Egreville. Le soleil, après avoir montré grise mine pendant de longs jours, rayonnait dans toute son intensité, ses effluves d'or caressaient doucement la terre. Les grands bois verts—la sylve opulente de Fontainebleau est proche—devisaient à voix basse. Un vent tiède soufflait, calme; les oiseaux, étourdis et grisés par son haleine, chuchotaient. Dans les champs avoisinants, la glèbe, toute humide encore, exhalait un parfum lourd et paiteux . . . C'est par cette journée de poésie, au milieu de cette atmosphère comme lasse de vie et ivre d'espoir, que les obsèques du grand Massenet ont été célébrées.”

this particularly evident. Both the front and second pages of the August 14, 1912 issue of the newspaper are devoted to his death. The first page consists of a large spread of photographs taken of Massenet throughout his life, while the second page reprints numerous personal emotional reactions to Massenet's death under the headline, "L'Hommage de ses disciples." Similar to the mournful expressions of Verdi and Elvira Thomas in the newspaper coverage of Thomas's death, here *Excelsior* prints a number of personal and moving statements of grief. Xavier Leroux wrote, for instance, that he was "just hearing the mournful news and crying like a child."³⁶ Charles Silver, on the other hand, conveyed the depth of the loss he felt upon Massenet's death by writing, "My pain is as deep as if I had lost a family member. I had been so involved in his life! When I saw him for the last time—it wasn't all that long ago—he was jovial and gay, as he always was. Together we recalled some old and pleasant memories, memories more than twenty years old. Thus it was with painful disbelief that I learned of his sudden death."³⁷

Other friends of Massenet expounded even further on the depth of their grief, often focusing on the moment when they found out about Massenet's death, as well as on their emotional and bodily responses to this news. In each instance, the authors communicate ownership of their grief in poignant and personal first-person expressions. Arthur Pougin, for instance, wrote about the moment in which he received the telegram announcing Massenet's death:

It was at sixty leagues from Paris, at the seaside, in the middle of vacation, that I received by telegraph the terrifying news of the sudden and surprising death of Massenet, who I had known was still perfectly healthy at the time of my departure; and it is with, I can truly say, a wounded heart and eyes full of tears, that I take up my pen to try to retrace quickly the details of the so active, so brilliant, and so

³⁶ M. Xavier Leroux, cited in "L'Hommage de ses disciples," *Excelsior*, 14 August 1912: "J'apprends à l'instant la douloureuse nouvelle et je pleure comme un enfant."

³⁷ M. Charles Silver, cited in *Ibid.*: "Ma douleur est aussi profonde que si j'avais perdu un parent. J'ai été tellement mêlé à sa vie! Quand je l'ai vu pour la dernière fois—il n'y a pas encore très longtemps—il était aimable et gai, comme il le fût toujours. Nous remuâmes ensemble de vieux et plaisants souvenirs, des souvenirs de plus de vingt ans. Aussi ai-je appris avec une douloureuse stupéfaction sa mort foudroyante."

prodigiously laborious career of this friend, of this companion of my youth, whose success and glory I believe I can say I had predicted.³⁸

Henri Heugel, on the other hand, told his readers about the moments leading up to the composer's death:

For two years I have followed with anguish the progress of the relentless illness that he resisted only with the strength of his spiritual energy. It was the relentless struggle against death . . . And the next day, near dawn, there was a phone call, dismal this time: "Things aren't going well, come quickly." I rush and I find him stretched out dead on his bed. The night had been a little difficult, and they had had one of his nephews, who was luckily in Paris, come in haste. Massenet had quickly lost consciousness and then passed away peacefully and without any suffering at around 4 o'clock in the morning. There he was, with his poor face totally emaciated and bearing a trace of the torment and worry that had disturbed the artist his entire life.³⁹

In general, the men who authored homages to Massenet after his death did so in a language that was simultaneously personal, direct, and affectively potent. Jean d'Udine, for instance, wrote an homage to Massenet in which he used the first person to express the love he felt for the composer and his music. He closes his obituary by writing about *Manon* that "it is probably this small engraving that will remain, for me, the most characteristic representation of a man who I loved and adored and who I rediscover in that image, imbibing with the same voluptuousness the fragrant elixir and pretty chords created by his laborious hands, the marvelously skilled hands of the consummate practitioner."⁴⁰

³⁸ Arthur Pougin, "J. Massenet," *Le Ménestrel* (August 17, 1912): 257-259: "C'est à soixante lieues de Paris, au bord de la mer, en pleines vacances, que je reçois télégraphiquement la nouvelle terrifiante de la mort subite et foudroyante de Massenet, que je savais encore plein de santé lors de mon départ; et c'est je puis bien le dire, le coeur meurtri et les yeux pleins de larmes que je prends la plume pour essayer de retracer rapidement les détails de la carrière si active, si brillante, si prodigieusement laborieuse de cet ami, de ce compagnon de mes jeunes années, dont je crois pouvoir dire que j'avais prédit le succès et prévu la gloire."

³⁹ Henri Heugel, "Les Derniers Heures," *Le Ménestrel* (August 17, 1912): 260: "...depuis deux ans je suivais, avec angoisse, les progrès de l'implacable mal auquel il ne résistait qu'à force d'énergie morale. C'était la lutte implacable contre la mort . . . Et le lendemain, presque à l'aurore, nouveau coup de téléphone, lugubre celui-là: 'Cela ne va pas, venez vite.' J'accours et je le trouve étendu mort sur son lit. La nuit avait été un peu agitée, et l'on avait fait venir en toute hâte un de ses neveux heureusement à Paris. Massenet n'avait pas tardé à perdre connaissance et s'était ensuite éteint doucement et sans aucune souffrance, vers quatre heures du matin. Il était là, avec son pauvre visage tout amaigri et portant comme un reste du tourment et de l'inquiétude qui avaient agité toute sa vie d'artiste."

⁴⁰ Jean d'Udine, "Massenet," *Le Courrier musical* 15, nos. 17-18 (September 1 and 15, 1912): 473-476: "Et c'est probablement cette petite estampe qui restera, pour moi, la représentation la plus caractéristique d'un homme que j'ai adoré et que je retrouve là, lichant avec la même volupté l'élixir odorant et les jolis accords agencés par ses mains laborieuses, ses mains merveilleusement adroites de praticien consommé."

Mourning after 1914: Responding to the Deaths of Lili Boulanger, Claude Debussy, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gabriel Fauré

Vivid and emotional descriptions of mourners, as well as personal tributes written in the first person virtually disappear in the commemorative literature on musicians who died during and after the war. Lili Boulanger and Claude Debussy died ten days apart in March 1918, and, despite their success and fame, the Parisian press devoted little attention to their deaths. While this oversight was doubtless partially due to the wartime cessation of printing undertaken by most journals devoted to musical life, this does not entirely account for the absence of attention to these two musicians' deaths.⁴¹ Unlike music-specific journals, most major Parisian dailies continued printing, but the necessary focus on the war effort largely occluded news in music, theater, art, and literature. The multi-day, multi-section format that appeared in response to Bizet's, Thomas's and Massenet's deaths was replaced in the cases of Debussy's and Boulanger's deaths by the appearance of one short article, usually several days after the musician's death, that briefly recounted her or his life and works. In marked contrast to obituaries published prior to 1914, details about Boulanger's and Debussy's last moments, information concerning their upcoming funerals, and personal recollections are almost entirely absent in this coverage.

The minimal coverage of Debussy's death was likely the result of his death occurring during the Ludendorff offensive, one of the largest raids directed at Paris during the war.⁴² Thus the majority of the Parisian press's attention was directed towards informing the public about the German military's activities and the subsequent Allied forces' responses. *L'Éclair's* coverage of Debussy's death appears to have been the most extensive, perhaps because it was written by Émile Vuillermoz, an ardent admirer of Debussy. Even Vuillermoz's obituary, however, begins on the very bottom right-hand corner of the newspaper's first page and continues for only a few

⁴¹ This includes *Le Monde musical*, *Le Ménestrel*, and, as far as I can tell, *Comoedia* since the Bibliothèque Nationale de France owns no copies of it published during the war years.

⁴² The Ludendorff offensive began March 21, 1918, and resulted in a number of bombs exploding within the city limits of Paris. These explosions taking place within the city were mentioned in the correspondence of a number of musicians, including Debussy's wife, Emma, who discusses her need to leave Paris almost immediately after her husband's death, in part due to the cannons, which were terrifying her daughter Chouchou.

short paragraphs onto the second.⁴³ This article thus seems brief in comparison to the coverage of Thomas's and Massenet's deaths in previous decades.

Furthermore, journalists during the war paid scant attention to mourners, as well as to their expressions of grief. Thus Debussy's widow, Emma, who was a well-known musician and prominent figure in Parisian musical and social circles, and a fierce champion of her husband's works, was hardly mentioned in the obituaries for the composer. The same is true of the coverage of Lili Boulanger's death: the only journal to mention her mourners is *Le Figaro*, in which Maurice Loudet wrote that "Lili Boulanger is dead . . . after having suffered greatly and for a long time, surrounded by her mother and her sister, Mademoiselle Nadia Boulanger, whose grief is shared by numerous friends."⁴⁴ Articles describing or even mentioning Debussy's or Lili Boulanger's funerals are conspicuously absent in the Parisian press, despite the fact that at least Boulanger's funeral was very well-attended.⁴⁵

The tone of homages to Debussy and Boulanger also differs significantly from the earlier homages to Thomas and Massenet. The use of poetic or expressive language is now completely absent, and authors replace first-person expressions of grief with rhetoric that frames the losses of these composers in national or collective terms. In his article on Debussy in *La République française*, Debussy's friend Gustave Samazeuilh writes, "France just lost one of its greatest musicians, one of the artists who today represented most spectacularly the key aspects of [France's] spirit and its taste."⁴⁶ And Henry Quittard, in his article for *Le Figaro*, wrote that, "It

⁴³ Émile Vuillermoz, "Claude Debussy est mort," *L'Éclair*, 27 March 1918.

⁴⁴ Maurice Loudet, "Lili Boulanger," *Le Figaro*, 17 March 1918; "Lili Boulanger est morte . . . après avoir beaucoup et longuement souffert, entourée de sa mère et de sa soeur, Mlle Nadia Boulanger, dont la douleur est partagée par de nombreux amis."

⁴⁵ I assume that Debussy's was, as well, although I cannot say for sure at this time. Lili Boulanger's funeral was definitely well attended, however, as demonstrated by the 30 or so pages of signatures that appear in the guest book for her funeral, which took place at La Trinité in Paris on 19 March 1918. BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 120 (08).

⁴⁶ Gustave Samazeuilh, "Mort de Claude Debussy," *La République française*, 27 March 1918: "La France vient de perdre un de ses plus grands musiciens, un des artistes qui représentaient aujourd'hui avec le plus d'éclat, à l'étranger l'essentiel de son esprit et de son goût."

is with great pain that French musicians learn of the death of Claude Debussy.”⁴⁷ The use of “I” thus nearly completely disappears, most often replaced by “we,” as in one journalist’s article in *L’Écho de Paris*: “We learn with great sadness the death of the composer Claude Debussy. This is for French musical art a cruel loss.”⁴⁸ In his obituary for Debussy in *L’Éclair*, Vuillermoz similarly avoids directly claiming his grief. He writes, “We just lost a great leader. And we will soon come to fully realize this through the ferocity of fate that chooses such a moment to take him away from us!”⁴⁹ In addition, unlike the authors of articles addressing Bizet’s, Thomas’s, and Massenet’s deaths, the journalists who covered the deaths of Debussy and Boulanger are not interested in describing the grief personally experienced by those close to them, nor in eliciting sadness from their readers.⁵⁰

This tendency to address grief impersonally persisted in the Parisian press’s coverage of Camille Saint-Saëns’s and Gabriel Fauré’s deaths, which occurred in the early 1920s. The articles written in response to these men’s deaths almost exclusively display what historian Jean-Claude Bonnet has described as a neutrality marked by “informative dryness” that characterized a great deal of French obituary writing of this period.⁵¹ Authors writing in response to Saint-Saëns’s death in 1921, and to Fauré’s in 1924, described events in a disaffected play-by-play manner, providing only the most mundane facts of each ceremony, and paying only negligible attention to mourners or their actions. These journalists appear to have been only rarely interested in

⁴⁷ Henry Quittard, “Claude Debussy,” *Le Figaro*, 27 March 1918: “C’est avec une vive douleur que les musiciens français apprendront la mort de Claude Debussy.”

⁴⁸ I., “Claude Debussy,” *L’Écho de Paris*, 27 March 1918: “Nous apprenons avec un vif chagrin la mort du compositeur Claude Debussy. C’est pour l’art musical français une perte cruelle.”

⁴⁹ Vuillermoz, “Claude Debussy est mort”: “Nous venons de perdre un grand chef. Et nous nous apercevrons bientôt de la férocité du sort qui choisit un tel moment pour nous appauvrir!”

⁵⁰ I do not want to suggest here that this was always the choice of these individual authors; it is more than likely that the editors and other administrators of these journals shaped what many of these authors wrote. This does not, however, change the fact that, during the war, the aesthetics of reporting on death changed significantly.

⁵¹ Jean-Claude Bonnet, “Les Morts illustres: Oraison funèbre, éloge académique, nécrologie,” in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre , vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 217-241; 239: “Un ton de dérision douce inspire souvent les obituaries du Times, alors que les journaux français ont plutôt cultivé la sécheresse informative et préféré une écriture neutre à l’insolence polémique.”

discussing the feelings, movements, or speeches of those with the most personal relationships to the deceased. Instead, they focus on the presence and speeches of State officials. For instance, while excerpts from the speech given at Saint-Saëns's funeral by his close friend Alfred Bruneau were printed in *Comoedia's* coverage of the composer's funeral, the lengthy speech given by Léon Bérard, then the Ministre de l'Instruction Publique des Beaux-Arts, was given pride of place in the newspaper: a complete transcription of his speech appears on the front page with the headline "Saint-Saëns fut un artiste français" (Saint-Saëns was a French artist).⁵²

In general, after the war the Parisian press began to frame loss in collective or national terms.⁵³ The cultures of mourning that had developed before the war changed, and in ways that not only engendered new social models and imperatives for mourning, but also constructed new norms for affective engagement with displays of grief. For instance, after the war disclaimers accompany expressions of grief that might be considered personal or particularly emotive. Numerous interwar writers expressed their grief somewhat directly, but in each case felt the need to include in their tribute some sort of apology or explanation for their feelings. These disclaimers thus betray anxieties that likely resulted from a fear of contempt, disgust, or shame on the part of their readers. Théodore Dubois, who was a close friend and colleague of Saint-Saëns, authored an obituary for the composer in which he framed Saint-Saëns in national terms and expressed emotion over his death, albeit while communicating a certain amount of anxiety concerning his expressive choice. He begins his article by firmly establishing Saint-Saëns's Frenchness, writing, "Camille Saint-Saëns represented the flag around which all French

⁵² "Saint-Saëns fut un artiste français," *Comoedia*, 25 December 1921.

⁵³ A number of obituaries written on the occasion of Fauré's death demonstrate this, including those by André Messager, who writes, "rien ne saurait combler le vide affreux que laisse parmi nous, ses disciples, ses amis, le départ de celui que nous admirons, que nous aimions tant! Le silence et les larmes peuvent seuls convenir dans le moment où nous frappe une perte aussi cruelle et nous ne pouvons que nous associer à la douleur des siens, en face de cette mort qui met en deuil tout le monde musical." André Messager, "Gabriel Fauré," *Le Figaro*, 5 November 1924. And Roland-Manuel wrote "Nous avons vu mourir, il y a trois ans, au faite de la gloire, le plus illustre musicien de notre temps. Nous voyons s'éteindre aujourd'hui le plus grand." Alexis Roland-Manuel, "Ceux qui s'en vont: Gabriel Fauré," *L'Éclair*, 5 November 1924.

composers, regardless of their tendencies, had been able to rally and group themselves.”⁵⁴ While Dubois concludes his obituary with a personal expression of grief over the loss of Saint-Saëns, his utterance simultaneously reveals his uneasiness concerning the grief contained within it:

And if I add to this that for almost ten years we had lived next to La Madeleine, he, as organist of the *Grande Orgue* (what a marvelous improvisor!!!), me, as choirmaster, you will then understand the depth of grief that I am made to endure upon the death of such a man, an artist, a brother, and friend!⁵⁵

Dubois’s anxiety concerning his personal expression of loss appears in his need to justify his sadness through pointing out the close working relationship he had had with Saint-Saëns over a long span of time. In addition, Dubois avoids claiming full ownership of his grief by refusing to say “I.” Rather than owning his feelings through a first-person expression of grief, he instead articulates that he is “made to endure” this death. Georges Auric makes a similar linguistic move when he writes in 1925 about the effect that André Caplet’s death has on him. Auric manages to convey his grief in personal terms, but then immediately reframes it as collective. He renders his grief something felt not just by himself, but rather by all musicians, writing that, “I don’t need to wait any longer in order to express, in these columns, the painful stupor that overcomes me, which overcomes all musicians at the news of the death of André Caplet.”⁵⁶

Turns of phrase like this are common in the commemorative literature on musicians who died after the war, and some writers offered even more explicit instances of discomfort with overt expressions of grief. Max d’Ollone, for example, in his tribute to Saint-Saëns in *Le Monde musical*, asks his readers to “permit him” to continue outside of the “normal” frame of discussing life and works: “You see that I have completely burst out of the framework that you

⁵⁴ Théodore Dubois, “Camille Saint-Saëns,” *Comoedia*, 24 December 1921: “Camille Saint-Saëns représentait le drapeau autour duquel pouvaient se rallier et se grouper tous les compositeurs français quelles que soient leurs tendances.”

⁵⁵ Ibid.: “Et si j’ajoute encore que pendant près d’une dizaine d’années nous avons vécu côté à côté à l’église de la Madeleine, lui, comme organiste du Grand Orgue (quel merveilleux improvisateur!!!), moi comme maître de chapelle, on comprendra la profondeur des regrets que me fait éprouver la disparition d’un tel homme, d’un tel artiste, d’un tel confrère, d’un tel ami!”

⁵⁶ Georges Auric, “La Musique,” *Les Nouvelles littéraires* (May 9, 1925): 7: “Il ne faut pas j’attende plus longtemps pour exprimer, dans ces colonnes, la douloureuse stupeur qui me saisit, qui saisit tous les musiciens à la nouvelle de la mort d’André Caplet.”

had outlined for me. But the death of a *Maître* who I had always so profoundly admired inspires in me, I admit, something other than the desire to analyze, like so many others, such and such of his works. And I hope that your impartiality will permit me to make a few more reflections for which you are in no way responsible.”⁵⁷ The anxiety that d’Ollone expresses here—his need to admit to his readers that he is in fact deeply affected by Saint-Saëns’s death, as well as his need to ask permission from his audience in order to speak about his personal recollections and emotions rather than Saint-Saëns’s oeuvre—is a far cry from Pougin’s 1896 assertion after the death of Ambroise Thomas that the most appropriate form of commemoration just after the death of a beloved composer and musician was not analyses of works, but rather personal recollections.

In addition, within this new postwar affective aesthetic, silence became an integral aspect of commemoration. In his homage to Saint-Saëns in *Le Monde musical*, Raoul Laparra opens by acknowledging his discomfort in expressing his feelings regarding the composer, and suggests silence as one solution when faced with the task of commemoration. He writes, “You ask me to express my feelings about he who has just died. This is difficult in just a few words. But, when we can’t say enough, it would be better to keep quiet. Isn’t silence the most appropriate form of emotion in the face of the great forces of nature?”⁵⁸ Likewise, Jean Chantavoine, in his obituary for Fauré in *Le Ménestrel*, advocates silence in response to loss:

What can we say about Gabriel Fauré at the hour when he leaves us? When confronted with the death of such an amiable *maître*, it seems impossible to have any other opinion than sorrow, than mourning, no language other than tears. And if we listen well to the lesson of resigned serenity given to us the other day at La Madeleine by his Requiem, this very sorrow, is it not necessary to quiet it? And then, what would be the point of ending our sad contemplation? The best of his oeuvre is,

⁵⁷ Max d’Ollone, cited in “Les Hommages des musiciens à Camille Saint-Saëns,” *Le Monde musical* 32, nos. 23 and 24 (December 1921): 375: “Vous voyez que je suis complètement sorti du cadre que vous m’aviez tracé. Mais la mort d’un Maître que j’ai toujours si profondément admiré m’inspire, je l’avoue, autre chose que l’envie d’analyser, après tant d’autres, telle ou telle de ses oeuvres. Et j’espère que votre impartialité me permettra encore quelques réflexions qui n’engagement nullement votre responsabilité.”

⁵⁸ Raoul Laparra, cited in *Ibid.*: 375-376: “Vous me demandez d’exprimer mes sentiments sur celui qui vient de disparaître. Cela est difficile en peu de mots. Or, quand on ne peut assez en dire, il vaut mieux se taire. Le silence n’est-il pas la forme la plus vivante de l’émotion en face des grandes forces de la nature?”

as we say, present in everybody's memory; even better still, the sap of his oeuvre has so sweetly and deeply penetrated our sensibility that we can neither disengage from nor define it without a surprising effort, conscious in advance of the vanity of such an effort. Above all let us protect ourselves from the excess that he had detested: Let us not swell in our voices, as we have done too often, in order to celebrate the gentleness that was his; let us avoid hyperbole in telling of his importance and let us not raise to our lips the noisy trumpet in order to sing of this delightful player of the flute.⁵⁹

Chantavoine's main concern is to mourn Fauré in a manner that the *maître* would have wanted, and thus in a way that reflects something of Fauré's personality. However, Chantavoine's insistence on the containment of overt vocal displays of grief, especially when read in the context of the postwar Parisian press's careful avoidance of personal and emotive expressions, suggests that by 1921 silence had developed a new prescriptive dimension in responses to loss.

Pudeur des Sentiments and Post-1914 French Politics of Mourning

After 1914, the silence and feelings of shame that often became attached to mourning were connected to wartime discourse that framed soldiers' deaths as more deserving of public grief than the deaths of civilians. During and after World War I, a new hierarchization of death and loss was configured in response to the distinctions established between soldiers and civilians. These distinctions were shaped by and also shaped the Parisian press's choices about what to print, including the organization and content of news stories. In his study of World War I-era French trench newspapers, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau demonstrates that many soldiers

⁵⁹ Jean Chantavoine, "Gabriel Fauré," *Le Ménestrel* (November 14, 1924): 469-470: "Que dire de Gabriel Fauré, à l'heure où il nous quitte? Devant la mort d'un maître si aimable, il semble n'y avoir pas d'autre opinion que le chagrin, pas d'autre que le deuil, pas d'autre langage que les larmes. Et si l'on entend bien la leçon de sérénité résignée que, l'autre jour, à la Madeleine, nous donnait son Requiem, ce chagrin même, ne faudrait-il pas le taire? . . . Et puis, à quoi bon sortir de notre triste recueillement? Le meilleur de son oeuvre est, comme on dit, présent à toutes les mémoires; bien mieux encore, le suc en a si doucement et si profondément pénétré, notre sensibilité que nous ne pouvons le dégager ni le définir, sans un surprenant effort, conscient par avance de sa vanité. Gardons-nous surtout d'un excès qu'il eût détesté: N'enflons pas la voix, comme on l'a fait trop souvent, pour célébrer la douceur de la sienne; évitons l'hyperbole pour vanter sa mesure et n'embouchons pas la trompette bruyante pour chanter ce délicieux joueur de flûte."

felt a strong resentment and even disgust towards civilians and the Parisian press.⁶⁰ According to Audoin-Rouzeau, front-line soldiers reading Parisian journals and newspapers “suffered great despair at seeing nothing described or understood as they would have liked, seeing their life, their thoughts and their activities so thoroughly travestied.” They felt that the French press “created a heavily opaque screen between civilians and troops” that prevented the possibility of making understood to civilians “the extent of their distress and their hardships.”⁶¹ Audoin-Rouzeau explains that it was not only the content of the news stories that French soldiers despised, but also the hierarchy of things printed: “the overall press view of the war was cause for reproach—its selection of news to print and the hierarchy of events it created. Did it not give too much space to news affecting only the civilian population, to the detriment of news on the front? . . . Consequently, the soldiers were inclined to think that their sacrifices were neither recognized nor properly valued.”⁶²

However, French soldiers’ concerns about civilian life went far beyond issues of the press. In addition to being obsessed with not being forgotten, soldiers remained concerned throughout the war with the ways in which civilians seemed to them to continuously fail to recognize either the sacrifices of front-line soldiers, or the privileged status civilians held by continuing to live comfortable lives far from the dangers of the front lines. This created a divide between trench soldiers and civilians that civilians and soldiers alike perceived.⁶³ And, due to the massive number of French men mobilized, most journalists and others writing the commemorative literature published after Debussy’s, Boulanger’s, Saint-Saëns’s, and Fauré’s

⁶⁰ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*, trans. Helen McPhail (Providence: Berg, 1992). See in particular his fourth chapter, entitled (in English translation) “The Hated Home Front.”

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 103.

⁶³ Emma Debussy’s letters from the spring of 1918 seem to demonstrate her awareness of this division, as do the letters of a number of other musicians in Ravel’s circle, including many of the journalists and music critics who were writing during and after the war. I discuss this in detail in chapter 2.

deaths either knew soldiers, or were themselves soldiers in the war, and thus their articles were at least partially informed by the discourse that helped to create these divisions.⁶⁴

Audoin-Rouzeau's analysis of trench newspapers shows that regardless of the carefulness and conscientiousness of the press and the contributions of civilians to the war effort, soldiers nevertheless perceived a large divide between themselves and their supporters far from the front.⁶⁵ Thus in France during and after the war there was a nearly unbridgable social gap born out of the ideology that the experiences of soldiers were not only incomprehensible to anyone not on the front lines, but that because of their difficulty and life-threatening nature, these experiences demonstrated a greater degree of sacrifice, and therefore a greater dedication to France. Dying for one's country, or at least putting oneself in the position to do so, was the *sine qua non* of good French citizenship during and after the First World War, and therefore this kind of death came to have an importance beyond all other deaths, not only in the trench newspapers of French soldiers, but also in a wide array of other national discourses, including the Parisian press.⁶⁶ Death and loss during the war thus became hierarchized in more extreme dimensions than people had experienced in France's recent past. Unsurprisingly, grief and mourning followed suit.

Stéphanie Petit addresses the hierarchization of mourning during World War I in her study of French war widows. She argues that these women were not only expected to follow customs for mourning in relation to their dress and toilette, but that their specific performances of war-widowhood were designed, encouraged (in some instances), and generally valued for their pedagogical and civic potential. Drawing attention to the importance of the display of heroism for both soldiers and the women who mourned them, Petit writes that,

⁶⁴ Albert Bertelin, Roland-Manuel, Jean Roger-Ducasse, amongst others, were both soldiers and music journalists.

⁶⁵ Audoin-Rouzeau, 119-120.

⁶⁶ Susan Grayzel has pointed out that some civilian deaths, particularly of innocent victims—most often women and children—of air raids and others whose deaths were considered a form of *mourir pour la patrie* (dying for the homeland) were considered grievable to the same extent as those of French soldiers. See “The Souls of Soldiers’: Civilians under Fire in First World War France,” *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 3 (September 2006): 588-622.

War widows were not just simply widows: they mourned Heroes. Bearers of a civic message, their veils had to represent and ‘recall’ to young men the sacrifice of so many men. Consequently, the widows of the Great War had to wear their grief with dignity, and maintain ‘an intact fidelity’ to the brave *Poilu*, ‘the image of a widow eternally in mourning’ became essential.⁶⁷

To prove her point, Petit cites R. Doumic’s allocution to the Assemblée Générale given November 18, 1917. Doumic’s speech offers a striking example of the degree to which France’s war widows were perceived in terms of what they, their grief, and the deaths of their husbands provided for France:

Widows of Heroes for whom you will maintain the cult among us, mothers of children marked for the future, your task is hard, but so beautiful! Look it in the face! It is through this task that your forces will be strengthened and your soul filled with pride.⁶⁸

Doumic emphasizes the value of widows’ displays of grief, while also refusing to acknowledge the uniqueness of each man who has died, or the uniqueness of each widow’s experience of grief. He thus makes all war-related mourning matter in precisely the same way, for each serves the exact same purpose: to provide an example of the noble suffering necessary to be “filled with pride.” The French press substantiated this lack of uniqueness by printing the names of heroes who died in the war in lists of “Morts au champs d’honneur,” usually without any shred of personal information attached to each man’s name. Only very rarely was someone given a more extensive acknowledgement of who he was in life, of who loved him and was loved by him, or of who he was to those who knew and loved him while he was living.

This hierarchization of loss and grief in World War I-era France often resulted in the erasure of individualized or personal forms of remembrance, commemoration, and mourning. In his work on French interwar commemoration, Daniel Sherman explains that societies that

⁶⁷ Stéphanie Petit, “Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre: Un deuil spécifique?” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 198 (June 2000): 53-65; 64; “Or, les veuves de guerre n’étaient pas de simples veuves, elles pleuraient des Héros. Porteurs d’un message civique, leurs voiles devaient représenter et ‘rappeler’ aux jeunes le sacrifice de tant d’hommes. Par conséquent, les veuves de la Grande Guerre durent porter dignement leur deuil, et conserver au brave Poilu ‘une fidélité intacte,’ l’image d’une d’une veuve éternellement en deuil’ s’imposant.”

⁶⁸ R. Doumic, *Allocution prononcée à l’Assemblée Générale de l’Association Mutuelle des Veuves de Guerre, le 18 novembre 1917* (Paris: Levé Impr., 1917), 4; cited in Petit, “Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre,” 64: “Veuves de Héros dont vous entretenez le culte parmi nous, mères d’enfants marqués pour l’avenir, votre tâche est rude, mais si belle! Regardez-là en face! C’est par elle que vos forces seront raffermies et votre âme emplie de fierté.”

have undergone a traumatic event or series of traumatic events often feel the need to privilege collective needs over those of individuals, and this extends to the ways in which societies choose to mourn their losses. Thus one significant form of dominant memory appears in the displacement of individual mourning, and the “channel[ing] of mourning in a direction that conforms to dominant perceptions of the national interest.” Furthermore, for Sherman the work of commemoration “inscribes or reinscribes a set of symbolic codes, ordering discourses, and master narratives that recent events, perhaps the very ones commemorated, have disrupted, newly established, or challenged.”⁶⁹ The Parisian press, by virtue of its shift away from personal, individualized, and emotive aspects of grief and mourners in the articles it published after 1914, offers one potent instance of the displacement of individual mourning that took place in the years during and after the Great War. The way that the press addressed grief and mourning after musicians' deaths thus inscribed new modalities of mourning. Whether inadvertently or intentionally, Parisian journals advocated the nearly silent containment of personal, non-national grief, and, in so doing, rendered outward manifestations of such grief ethically questionable in ways that often led people to feel ashamed of their own mourning as well as that of others.

For musicians in Ravel's social sphere, the Parisian press's inability during the war's tenure to devote attention to the deaths of their loved ones—even the most famous and beloved composers, performers, and critics—may have been a particularly wounding realization of the hierarchization of lives and deaths engendered by the war. The reduced and impersonal coverage of musicians' deaths in Parisian newspapers and journals printed during the war severely diminished the acknowledgement or recognition of the grief that people close to these musicians were feeling. This lack of recognition emerging out of the privileging of certain lives and deaths over others is strikingly evident in a 1918 tribute to Claude Debussy written by Alfred Mortier in *Le Courrier musical*, one of the only music journals to continue publishing during the

⁶⁹ Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 7.

war. Mortier, who explains during the course of his obituary that he had been a longtime friend of Debussy's, tells his readers that, in the context of the ongoing war, Debussy's death barely registers, especially since, given Debussy's age (he was 56), he had accomplished almost everything he set out to do:

Claude Debussy is dead. In the immense cataclysm in which so many remarkable minds perish, so many young men who were the hope of the race and whose first works promised the richest future, the death of Debussy appears less cruel than it would have appeared in normal times. Because he had the leisure of living in times of peace, he was able to edify his memory, and he died having achieved nearly all that he had set out to say.⁷⁰

Mortier thus took care to emphasize Debussy's privilege of having lived a leisurely life. Mortier's rhetoric reflects an ideology similar to that of the French soldiers described by Audoin-Rouzeau: Debussy's death has less value because he was not subjected to the threat of dying for his country. This ideology allowed Mortier to forget, despite his friendship with the composer, that Debussy, while he did not experience the difficulty of being a front-line soldier, lived a life filled with numerous other challenges, and was also an ardent contributor to the war effort—writing several compositions specifically in response to the war—despite suffering at this time from the exceedingly painful cancer that would bring about his death before the war's end.

Ideological hierarchizations like Mortier's belittled the grief of many living in interwar France, and, I suggest, led many mourners to feel a whole range of largely negative feelings about their grief. The existence of *guides de deuil* through the war, Douminic's speech about the necessity of war widows' displays of grief, and the large number of French World War I monuments featuring grieving wives and mothers indicate that mourning was an essential part of French wartime and interwar culture. However, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 2 through specific examples within Ravel's social sphere, a hegemonic culture of heroic masculinity left little room for mourning to occur in ways that permitted the adequate acknowledgment of the

⁷⁰ Alfred Mortier, "Claude Debussy: Souvenirs et impressions," *Le Courrier musical* (April 1, 1918): 148: "Claude Debussy est mort. Dans l'immense cataclysm où périssent tant de belles intelligences, tant de jeunes hommes qui étaient l'espoir de la race et dont les premières oeuvres justifiaient le plus riche avenir, la disparition d'un Debussy paraît moins cruelle qu'elle ne l'eût été dans un temps normal. Car il a eu les loisirs de la paix, il a pu édifier sa mémoire, il meurt ayant presque achevé ce qu'il avait à dire ici-bas."

personal measure of a loss. Even women mourning the deaths of fallen soldiers risked having their grief categorized as excessive, or, perhaps more perniciously, had their grief politicized for nationalistic purposes in ways that effaced the individual dimensions of their losses. Mourning in interwar France was thus frequently concomitant with a deeply felt lack of recognition of not only the uniqueness of the person being mourned, but also the experience of the mourner.

Numerous theorists and philosophers have addressed the importance of recognizing uniqueness in practicing ethical mourning. In *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, the philosopher Adriana Cavarero articulates how much we desire that each of our unique stories be communicated to others. She writes that, “If leaving behind a design, a ‘destiny,’ an unrepeatable figure of our existence ‘is the only aspiration deserving of the fact that life was given us,’ then nothing responds to the human more than the telling of our story.”⁷¹ Similarly, Jacques Derrida emphasizes the importance of preserving the uniqueness of loved ones after their deaths through the stories we tell about them, although he warns against relying on conventions. He argues that ethical mourning consists of articulating who someone was against the grain of hegemonic and “inherently dangerous” commemorative literature like obituaries and funeral orations.⁷² He finds, however, that he struggles to do this himself, and ultimately asserts that the best way to remember a friend who has passed on is to either allow them to speak for themselves—what Derrida’s editors Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas call a “law of citation”—or to keep them inside of us, as a foreign body living within us.⁷³ Derrida writes,

Upon the death of the other we are given to memory, and thus to interiorization, since the other, outside us, is now nothing. And with the dark light of this nothing, we learn that the other resists the closure of our interiorizing memory . . . death constitutes and makes manifest the limits of a me or an us who are obliged to harbor

⁷¹ Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, trans. with an intro. by Paul A Kottman (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 4. Here, Cavarero cites Hannah Arendt, “Isak Dinesen (1885-1962),” in Isak Dinesen, *Daguerreotypes and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), vii-xxv; xx.

⁷² Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, “To Reckon with the Dead: Jacques Derrida’s Politics of Mourning,” in *The Work of Mourning*, eds. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-30; 8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 22.

something that is greater and other than them; something outside of them within them.⁷⁴

Derrida frames his desire to internalize lost loved ones as an attempt to mourn ethically through recognizing the radical uniqueness of each person and relationship. And yet, as many psychoanalytic theorists have pointed out, the internalization of a lost love object is not only an ethical decision, but also a psychic process.⁷⁵ The palpable absence of acknowledgment of the uniqueness of individuals' lives, deaths, and relationships in Parisian journals after 1914 thus generated an affective, psychic, and physical response to grief wherein people rendered their bodies mute and motionless in efforts to keep their grief contained, while also, paradoxically, interminable.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 11-12.

⁷⁵ I will discuss this in greater length in chapters 2 and 4. See also Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia [1917]," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, vol. 14 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957-1974), 239-260; Vamik Volkan, "Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies," in *On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia,"* eds. Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007), 90-109; Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Introjection-Incorporation: Mourning or Melancholia," in *Psychoanalysis in France*, eds. Serge Lebovici and Daniel Widlöcher (New York: International Universities Press, 1980); and Tamara Levitz's discussion of the texts listed in this footnote in *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 476-484.

Chapter 2

“This Secret Pain that Accompanies our Days”: Mourning in Ravel’s Circle After 1914

Thank you, my dear friend, for your warm sympathy. I was so happy to have your thoughts with me on this particularly moving anniversary... since I know that you also carry this secret pain that accompanies our days!

Mme B. Albert Roussel to Nadia Boulanger, 1939¹

We can imagine Ravel’s shock and sadness when on January 5, 1917, having returned to Paris on military permission, his mother passed away before his eyes. Having lost his father in 1908 and numerous friends since then, weary from a recent hernia surgery and the tedium of a military service that did not offer him the involvement nor the excitement he had hoped for, lonely and estranged from friends and family who didn’t write to him as often as he would have liked, and frustrated by his inability to compose or make music during his service, Ravel experienced his mother’s death as a terrible blow at what was already a depressing moment in his life. He had been fearing her death for quite some time, as evidenced by the panicked letters he sent to friends in order to inquire about her health or to ask them to go visit her and report back to him.² Even in the first weeks of World War I when he was still trying to decide whether or not to enlist, he was consumed with worry that leaving his elderly, frail mother alone in the apartment that they shared at 4 Avenue Carnot in Paris would bring about her death.³

¹ Mme B. Albert Roussel to Nadia Boulanger, 15 April 1939, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Département de la Musique (hereafter Mus.), Nouvelles lettres autographes (hereafter NLA) 102: “J’ai été si heureuse que votre pensée soit venue vers moi en cet anniversaire particulièrement émouvant...car, je sais que vous aussi portez cette douleur secrète qui accompagne nos jours!”

² See for example Ravel’s letters to Madame Fernand Dreyfus in 1916, a microfilm of which is housed at the BnF, Mus., VM MICR- 15.

³ He explicitly expresses this concern to numerous friends including Maurice Delage and Cipa Godebski. See Maurice Ravel to Maurice Delage, 4 August 1914, in Arbie Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); and Ravel, letter to Cipa Godebski, 20 August 1914, in *Ibid.*, 152.

According to his letters and accounts from his friends, Ravel's mother's death was a traumatic event from which he never fully recovered. Ravel's friend, the socialite and amateur musician Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, describes in vivid detail how physically shattered Ravel and his brother Edouard appeared at their mother's funeral, writing that the brothers "almost had to be supported" and "couldn't remain upright."⁴ Ravel lived the rest of his life in a nearly perpetual state of convalescence marked by exhaustion, depression, insomnia, weight loss, and, eventually, towards the end of his life, mental enervation. Ravel referred to this complex of health conditions as neurasthenia—a popular early-twentieth-century diagnosis that acted as an umbrella term for a whole host of psychological, neurological, and physiological disorders. He wrote to his friend Hélène Kahn-Casella that even if he were able to fully recover from his ailments "there would always be something broken."⁵ While Ravel did not always clarify that his physical, mental, and emotional infirmities stemmed from his mother's death, Ravel's close friend and student Manuel Rosenthal emphasized that many of Ravel's friends felt that the death of his mother "was a wound that never healed."⁶

Ravel was, of course, only one of an extraordinarily large number of people who experienced loss during World War I and found it insurmountable. The First World War was by all accounts an incredibly devastating event for French citizens. The loss of human life that occurred between August 1914 and November 1918 is staggering. In 1914 alone, 300,000 men were killed, with 1.3 million casualties in total by the war's end.⁷ The mourning that resulted from these losses was incredibly widespread. As Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau,

⁴ Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, entry of 7 January 1917, in *Journal: 1894-1927*, ed. Myriam Chimènes (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 925-926; cited and trans. in Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 188.

⁵ Maurice Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 19 January 1919, in Jean Roy, ed., "Soixante-deux lettres de Maurice Ravel à Hélène et Alfredo Casella," *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 1 (1985): 59-111; 76: "Quand même, si je me retape entièrement, il restera toujours quelque chose de cassé."

⁶ Nichols, *Ravel*, 190. Hélène Jourdan-Morhange similarly writes in *Ravel et nous* that Ravel was obsessed with his mother's death. See *Ravel et nous* (Genève: Éditions du milieu du monde, 1945), 22.

⁷ Leonard Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War, 1914-1918*, French sections trans. by Helen McPhail (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 69.

and Annette Becker have observed, “by the end of the war, few families were completely spared.” By their calculations, some 39 million people—“practically the whole of French society”—were mourning war-related losses in the late teens and 1920s.⁸ However, as Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphanie Petit, Annette Becker, Daniel Sherman, Jay Winter, and other scholars of French cultures of mourning during World War I have noted, mourning was a highly variable activity that was shaped by national and collective, as well as local and personal concerns.⁹ Audoin-Rouzeau makes this clear in his touching and intimate study of personal grief during the war, *Cinq deuils de guerre, 1914-1918*.¹⁰

Accessing a richer knowledge of how Ravel was affected by and mourned his mother’s death and the deaths of friends who died during the war necessitates examining not only public and large-scale social constructions of mourning as I did in the last chapter, but also the mourning practices and ideologies with which he was familiar more locally. The cultural anthropologist Monique Scheer has drawn on Pierre Bourdieu’s practice theory in order to suggest that emotional management takes place through “emotional practices”—“manipulations of the body and mind to evoke feelings where there are none, to focus diffuse arousals and give them an intelligible shape, or to change or remove emotions already there.”¹¹ Scheer’s point in

⁸ Smith, et. al., 71.

⁹ Stéphanie Petit, *Les Veuves de la Grande Guerre: D'éternelles endeuillées?* (Paris: Éditions du Cygne, 2007); Stéphanie Petit, “Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre: Un deuil spécifique?” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 198 (June 2000): 53-65; Petit, “Les Veuves de la grande guerre ou le mythe de la veuve éternelle,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 197 (March 2000): 65-72. See also Françoise Thébaud, “La Guerre et le deuil chez les femmes françaises,” in *Guerre et cultures (1914-1918)*, ed. Jean-Jacques Becker, Jay M. Winter, Gerd Krumeich, Annette Becker, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (Paris: Éditions Armand Colin, 1994), 103-110; Annette Becker, “From Death to Memory: The National Ossuaries in France after the Great War,” *History and Memory* 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1993): 32-49; Annette Becker, *Les Monuments aux morts: Patrimoine et mémoires de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988); Marilène Patten Henry, *Monumental Accusations: The Monuments aux Morts as Expressions of Popular Resentment* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); Antoine Prost, “Mémoires locales et mémoires nationales: Les Monuments de 1914-1918 en France,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167 (July 1992): 41-50; Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*, trans. by Helen McPhail, foreword by Ken Inglis (Oxford: Berg, 1998); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹⁰ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils de guerre, 1914-1918* (Paris: Noesis, 2001).

¹¹ Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51 (May 2012): 193-220; 209.

identifying emotions as practices is to intervene critically in the production of the history of emotions. She asks historians to attempt to ascertain “what people are *doing*” through analysis of third-person accounts and other source materials, rather than only through first-person textual accounts, which she says have been “traditionally viewed . . . as the royal road to individual feeling.”¹² With Scheer’s idea of emotional practices in mind, in this chapter I determine how Ravel and musicians in his social circle mourned by studying their emotional practices as they appear in what they say and do after the deaths of loved ones. I ascertain this information through their biographies and a wide array of source materials, including their correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks, photographs and photograph albums, as well as the organization and contents of their archives. Addressing the emotional practices of Ravel and his peers through the study of these different types of source materials allows me to provide a more nuanced account of Ravel’s emotional and mourning styles than reading his correspondence alone would permit.

An understanding of the mourning styles adopted by this group, and more importantly, how these took on affective, social, and political meaning, provides an essential context for the project I undertake in the next three chapters of this dissertation: understanding how Ravel and others in his social sphere engaged with French cultures of mourning in their postwar compositions and musical practices. Thus although I occasionally refer to musical aspects of the mourning practices adopted by Ravel and those in his circle in this chapter, the richness of their non-musical practices is such that I have chosen to reserve more in-depth discussion of how music assisted them in negotiating grief for chapters 3, 4, and 5. However, before I delve into the specifics of the shape, feeling, and practice of mourning within Ravel’s circle, I would like to give the reader some information on the “cast of characters” whose materials I study in this chapter.

During and after the war, Ravel and many of his closest friends were in mourning. At least four men that Ravel knew or was friends with were killed in 1914—Joseph de Marliave,

¹² *Ibid.*, 217-219. Emphasis in original.

Alberic Magnard, and Pierre and Pascal Gaudin—and each year of the war only brought more loss.¹³ Ravel’s close friend, the accomplished virtuoso pianist and pedagogue Marguerite Long, was faced with the death of her husband Joseph de Marliave in the first months of the war. Like many World War I widows, she heard rumors that he had been killed on August 24, but was forced to wait in agonizing suspense to have his death confirmed in late October.¹⁴ Similarly, the violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange lost her husband, a young painter named Jacques Jourdan, in 1914. In addition, Jacques Charlot, the cousin of the Parisian music publisher Jacques Durand, was killed in the war in 1915, and Jean Cruppi, the son of Ravel’s patron Louise Crémieux, also died while defending France. Moreover, Jean Dreyfus, the stepson of Ravel’s *marraine de guerre*,¹⁵ Madame Fernand Dreyfus, and the stepbrother of Ravel’s friend and student Alexis Roland-Manuel, was killed in combat in late 1916 or early 1917. Likewise, Ravel’s post-war friend the accomplished cellist Maurice Maréchal experienced the deaths of numerous friends during the war. His war diaries are filled with his reactions to friends’ deaths and his ongoing grief over these losses.¹⁶ Almost all of Ravel’s colleagues, in fact, and especially the many men of Ravel’s generation who served in the war and befriended fellow soldiers only to witness or receive word of their deaths shortly thereafter, were affected by the deaths of close friends and family members killed in combat.

For Ravel and many of his peers, however, grief over the deaths of lovers, friends or family members who were killed in the war, as well as daily worry for the safety of the men at the

¹³ Pierre and Pascal Gaudin died in December 1914 on their first day at the front. Ravel dedicated the “Rigaudon” of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* to them. In addition to the deaths of the Gaudin brothers, Ravel had also been faced with the death of one of his contemporary composers, Alberic Magnard, who died defending his home from German troops in September 1914, and the musicologist Joseph de Marliave, who was the husband of Marguerite Long and the dedicatee of the “Toccata” movement of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*.

¹⁴ See Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long: A Life in French Music, 1874-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); also, see Long’s correspondence with Jean Roger-Ducasse and Alfred Bruneau from the fall of 1914 in her archives at the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler (hereafter MMM), Fonds Marguerite Long (hereafter F-ML), Correspondance.

¹⁵ This is a French term, especially popular in World War-I era France, for “war godmother.” Many enlisted soldiers during the war had *marraines de guerre* who would send them letters and care packages.

¹⁶ See Maurice Maréchal, “Carnets de guerre,” in Luc Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Tallendier, 2005), 215-343.

front, was compounded by painful personal losses not directly related to the war. Ravel's sorrow after the death of his mother is one example of this. Nadia Boulanger, however, is another contemporary of Ravel who, after 1914, was mourning the deaths of people who had not died in the war. In the year before the war began, Nadia was faced with the death of her close friend, mentor, and musical partner Raoul Pugno, with whom she had been composing *La Ville morte* before his sudden death in January 1914. In 1918, however, Nadia encountered perhaps the most devastating loss of all: the death of her younger sister Lili on March 15. Lili had been ill for quite some time, and, when Nadia was not devoting time to teaching or to working for the Comité Franco-Américain, she was taking care of Lili and transcribing for her what would be her final compositions. Lili's death at the age of 24 plunged Nadia into a state of mourning from which she never emerged, as her postwar musical activities, correspondence, and diaries and datebooks attest.¹⁷

Others in Ravel's social sphere who suffered overwhelming grief from non-war-related losses in close temporal proximity to the war include Emma Debussy, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, Maurice Maréchal, and Misia Sert. Claude Debussy died just ten days after Lili Boulanger on March 25, 1918, and the daughter Emma Debussy had had with the composer died a year and some months later in July 1919. The salon organizer and amateur musician Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, a close friend of Gabriel Fauré's and a supporter of the musical endeavors of Debussy, Ravel, Long, and the Boulanger sisters, was faced with the death of her husband, the painter René de Saint-Marceaux on April 23, 1915. To her grief was added her worry for the life of her son Jacques who was serving on the front lines of a war from which "one learns everyday of a new death."¹⁸ Maurice Maréchal had lost his fiancée, Thérèse Quedrue

¹⁷ I will discuss Nadia's mourning for Lili's death in greater detail later in this chapter as well as in chapter 5. For more on this subject, see her archives at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, as well as Jeanice Brooks's overview of the immediate consequences of Lili's death on Nadia's state of mind during the war in *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger: Performing Past and Future Between the Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Chapter 1 of Brooks's book is especially relevant here.

¹⁸ Saint-Marceaux, entry of 16 December 1914, in Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 837: "On apprend tous les jours une mort nouvelle."

almost precisely a year prior to France's entry into World War I, and was mourning her death throughout the war, as demonstrated by his many diary entries devoted to his grief.¹⁹ During the war, as well, the socialite Misia Sert was mourning the death of her estranged husband Alfred Edwards, who had died in the summer of 1914, and who, she claimed in her memoirs, she had continued to love during the last years of his life, despite his unfaithfulness to her and their separation.²⁰

It is primarily the people I have just described—Maurice Ravel, Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, Marguerite Long, Nadia Boulanger, Emma Debussy, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, and Maurice Maréchal—whose personal and archival materials I study in this chapter. I also add to this list Manuel de Falla, Jean Roger-Ducasse, and numerous soldiers who wrote letters to Lili and Nadia Boulanger to be published in the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*, a journal distributed by the Comité Franco-Américain between 1915 and 1918 that updated soldiers as to each other's whereabouts and news.²¹ In this chapter, I group these mourning musicians, artists, and socialites together, considering them to embody a social space akin to what Barbara Rosenwein has termed an “emotional community.” Unsatisfied by the binary construction of opposing emotional “regimes” and “refuges” proposed by the historical anthropologist William Reddy, Rosenwein prefers to understand the people she studies as participating in “emotional communities.” These are multi-tiered and overlapping, consisting, she suggests, of both larger circles (overarching emotional communities), and smaller circles (subordinate emotional communities), that people move freely into and out of. She clarifies that “whether overarching of

¹⁹ Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 223 n3.

²⁰ Misia Sert, *Misia par Misia* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 192-194.

²¹ Consisting primarily of reprinted letters written to the Boulanger sisters by soldiers who had once attended the Paris Conservatoire, the ten issues of the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* are exceptionally rich sources for first-hand accounts of music making during the war. I draw on them throughout this dissertation. See BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1).

subordinate, emotional communities are not coterminous with just any group . . . An emotional community is a group in which people have a common stake, interests, values, goals.”²²

My aim in this chapter is not to prove that Ravel and other musicians in his social sphere were all part of the same emotional community, nor to mark this emotional community as especially distinct from other contemporaneous ones that Ravel and his peers may have moved in and out of. This would not only be reductive, but also divert attention away from my point, which is to show that the forms, symbols, common expressions, and meanings of Ravel’s mourning (and the mourning of others in his circle) was part of a shared network of expressions, conventions, actions, and feelings. Although these people did not singularly adopt mourning styles at the *a priori* exclusion of others, they learned how to mourn, as well as how to feel about mourning, not only from public discourse like the newspapers and journals I examined in chapter 1, but also largely from one another. As anyone who has ever experienced the death of a loved one knows, mourning is an extremely individual and personal experience. How someone responds to death or loss is shaped by myriad factors including the relationship of the mourner to the mourned, the circumstances of the death itself, and the psychic and emotional make-up of the mourner. Indeed, each person in Ravel’s social milieu reacted to and processed the losses they encountered differently. Yet Rosenwein’s idea of emotional communities permits me to acknowledge how, despite the differences between the approaches to mourning taken by people in Ravel’s social circle, there are similarities in the ways in which they performed, responded to, interacted with, and at times subverted the numerous conventions in fashion for mourning and consolation.²³ Understanding emotional experience in terms of Scheer’s emotional practices and Rosenwein’s emotional communities thus permits me to examine mourning as it took place within a loosely-conceived community of mourners that Ravel was surely a part of at least some of the time.

²² Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 23-25.

²³ *Ibid.*

In the first part of this chapter, I show how the shift towards “solitary and shameful mourning” that I addressed in chapter 1 manifested itself in a heightened concern for emotional self-presentation within Ravel’s social sphere. Through studying these musicians’ correspondence, diaries, and other private materials, I demonstrate that mourning in Ravel’s emotional community was shaped by gendered constructions of emotional expression, as well as contemporary ideas about the limits of language. These observations undergird my demonstration in the second half of this chapter that the mourning practices in which Ravel and others in his circle engaged reveal that many of them became mourners who sought to resist, challenge, and subvert the norms for constrained non-national mourning present in post-1914 French society.

Concern with Emotional Self-Presentation

The correspondence and diaries of many people in Ravel’s social sphere demonstrate that they were exceedingly concerned with emotional self-presentation. Even in their private writings, Ravel, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, and Maurice Maréchal express an awareness that their most personal materials would be read by people aside from those for whom the materials were intended. Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux writes in her journal on October 14, 1914 that she knows that the memories of the war that she’s recording will be interesting to those living after her.²⁴ Maréchal, on the other hand, does not make a statement as clear as Saint-Marceaux’s about his awareness that his journal will be read by others, but as Luc Durosoir, the editor of Maréchal’s war diaries asserts, his dedication of his diaries to his mother seems to indicate an awareness that his journal would indeed be read by others.²⁵ Even in letters, one of the most private forms of communication available besides speaking in person or on the telephone, Ravel and others recognized that their fame might lead to their letters being read by others. This fear

²⁴ Saint-Marceaux, entry of 14 October 1914, in Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 826.

²⁵ Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 221.

was certainly generally exacerbated as well by the large-scale censorship of correspondence that took place during the First World War. However, within Ravel's social sphere, this also applied to emotional expressions. Ravel, for instance, writes to Lucien Garban in March 1917, just after his mother's death, that he would prefer to answer his questions about his emotional state in person rather than via letter.²⁶

Letters and diaries reveal that many musicians in Ravel's social circle felt the need to hide their grief. Maurice Maréchal, for instance, responds to the deaths of several friends in his war journal by noting that he must, "containing my emotion, letting nothing appear, carrying in resignation on one's shoulders the weight that is each day a little heavier: this is what remains for me."²⁷ The widow of French composer Albert Roussel similarly emphasized the need to hide her pain in writing to Nadia Boulanger after receiving a condolence letter from her on what would have been Roussel's sixtieth birthday, "Thank you, dear friend, for your warm sympathy. I had been so happy that your thought came to me at the moment of this particularly moving birthday...since I know you also carry this secret pain that accompanies our days!"²⁸ Nadia Boulanger makes clear the distinction between her public performance of grief and the private pain she feels in spite or perhaps because of that performance when writing to her friend and pupil Marcelle de Manziarly after the death of her mother that, "Externally all is really fine—[while] in truth there is the same impossibility of adapting to anything at all—an emptiness without name, one's heart amputated from itself—what to do?"²⁹ Rendering one's grief private

²⁶ Ravel to Lucien Garban, 17 February 1917, in "La Correspondance de Maurice Ravel à Lucien Garban," *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 7 (2000): 19-68; 63.

²⁷ Maréchal, entry of 2 June 1915, in Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 249: "Contenir mon émotion, ne rien laisser paraître, porter avec résignation sur les épaules le fardeau chaque jour un peu plus lourd: voilà ce qu'il me reste."

²⁸ Mme B. Albert Roussel to Nadia Boulanger, 15 April 1939, BnF, Mus., NLA 102: "J'ai été si heureuse que votre pensée soit venue vers moi en cet anniversaire particulièrement émouvant...car, je sais que vous aussi portez cette douleur secrète qui accompagne nos jours!"

²⁹ Nadia Boulanger to Marcelle de Manziarly, c. 22 June 1935, BnF, Mus., NLA 289: "Extérieurement tout vraiment bien—vérité, même impossibilité de s'adapter à rien—une vide sans nom, le coeur amputé de lui-même—que faire?" This statement was even made after saying that she had just received an "unforgettable welcome" by "so many with understanding hearts" ["Accueil inoubliable"; "Tant de coeur de compréhension"].

was thus a troubling predicament that often led musicians to dwell on the discrepancy between socially acceptable external appearance and painful inner sorrow.

The private and personal phenomenology of grief could be alluded to but often required minimizing, especially when mourning someone who died outside the purview of the war. With few exceptions, the private pain of grief was not to be performed, even in circumstances or at events where overt mourning might be expected, such as at funerals and ceremonies celebrating the anniversary of a loved one's death. Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, for instance, emphasizes that this containment of emotion needs to occur in more private circumstances when she discusses the mass she went to on the one-year anniversary of her husband's death. She writes that, "[while] my children shower me with care and attention, and my friends as well, I hide my pain and break my heart."³⁰ Similarly, 12-year old Chouchou Debussy, in a letter to her half-brother indicating that these rules were so well-established that children knew to abide by them, writes that "At the cemetery, Maman could not have controlled her feelings any better. As for myself, I could think of nothing but one thing: 'You must not cry because of Maman.' And so I gathered all my courage . . . I did not shed one tear."³¹ Here Chouchou articulates the emphasis placed on keeping grief to oneself in private as well as in public. Just after the death of her father she wrote that she "wanted to burst into a torrent of tears, but I repressed them because of Maman. Alone throughout the night in the big bed with Maman, I was unable to sleep one minute. I developed a temperature, my dry eyes questioned the walls."³² Chouchou Debussy's descriptions of containing her grief allude to one of the reasons grief was considered undesirable, namely its ability to invade and "contaminate" someone else. Emma Debussy expresses this concern when after her husband's death she writes to André Caplet, a close friend

³⁰ Saint-Marceaux, entry of 25 April 1916, in Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 895: "mes enfants me comblent de soins et d'attentions, mes amis de même, je cache ma douleur et déchire mon coeur."

³¹ Claude-Emma (Chouchou) Debussy to Raoul Bardac, 8 April 1918, in *Claude Debussy, His Life and Mind*, ed. Edward Lockspeiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 223-24; cited and trans. in Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long*, 61.

³² *Ibid.*

of her and her late husband, “Poor André Caplet, you who is at this very moment in the midst of fiery combat and to whom I should address words of ardent courage, these are renewed complaints that only sadden you.”³³

The transmission of grief was odious in part because mourning was so often the purveyor of negative affective responses.³⁴ In other words, the more explicit and personal the expression, and the more these expressions fell outside of or exceeded prescribed conventions, the more negative affective reactions could attach to it. On the other hand, similar to how the Parisian press preferred public displays of grief that could be framed in national or collective terms, many people in Ravel’s social sphere found ways of publicly expressing their sadness over someone’s death, as well as their commitment to keeping their memory alive, through participating in or designing events and associations to honor them. These associations fell within already established European traditions of memorializing musicians, writers, and artists by building monuments, publishing commemorative volumes, and holding memorial concerts, exhibitions, or festivals in their honor.³⁵ Such associations, as well as the events and monuments they brought to fruition, were public and socially acceptable containers for the expression of grief since they offered a collective opportunity to mourn, even if they were often spearheaded by those closest to, and arguably the most personally affected by the death of the deceased. For example, the widows of both Romain Rolland and André Caplet write to friends and colleagues of their late husbands in order to solicit their support for monuments and archives to be created

³³ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, 14 April 1918, BnF, Mus., Fonds André Caplet (hereafter F-AC), NLA 269, vol. 1B: “Pauvre André Caplet, vous qui êtes en pleine fournaise et ce qui je devrais adresser des paroles d’ardent courage. Ce sont des plaints renouvelées qui viennent vous attrister.”

³⁴ Teresa Brennan has addressed theoretically the various connotations and mechanics of the transmission of affect in *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). The transmission of affect has also been discussed at length by Silvan Tomkins. See Silvan Tomkins, *Shame and its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, eds. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwich, Adam Frank, and Irving E. Alexander (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

³⁵ An excellent source on nineteenth-century European cultures of commemoration is Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

in their memory.³⁶ Likewise, Marguerite Long was the president of the Comité de Patronage for the Association des Amis de Gabriel Fauré, and Nadia Boulanger was constantly engaged with promoting her sister's compositions through her activities with the Association des Amis de Lili Boulanger.

More personal expressions of grief, however, even when expressed privately and amongst friends, were avoided since these were often considered by both parties to be excessive, annoying, and embarrassing. Roger-Ducasse, for instance, referred to Marguerite Long's grief as "obscenely egotistical" because she dwelled on her grief and shared it with others. In 1915 he wrote to Lambinet to report: "And then everything is terrible, everyone is horrible, clergy, courts, army. This woman, she is the opposite of Pangloss."³⁷ On another occasion, he disdainfully points out her expression of sorrow as a cause for reproach, writing that, "she is more and more the same, with the same exaggerations, the same unhappy feelings."³⁸ This contempt was felt and even expected by mourners as well, as evidenced by Emma Debussy's nearly constant apologies to friends after the death of Debussy in March 1918, and of Chouchou in July 1919.³⁹ While mourning her husband, Emma cannot help but share with André Caplet how much she is suffering, but clarifies that he should not believe that she has forgotten "all the heroes who have struggled for years." She begs forgiveness for grieving so openly, articulating that she is "certain that [she's] annoying everyone with [her] sorrow."⁴⁰ Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux expressed

³⁶ See Geneviève Caplet to Alexis Roland-Manuel, 2 June 1925, BnF, Mus., NLA 265; and Madame Marie Rolland to Nadia Boulanger, 15 March 1948, BnF, Mus., NLA 102.

³⁷ Jean Roger-Ducasse to André Lambinet, 19 March 1916; in Jacques Depaulis, ed., *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet* (Sprimont, Mardaga, 2001), 110-111: "obscènement égoïste"; "Et puis tout va mal, tout est mauvais, clergé, magistrature, armée. Cette femme, c'est Pangloss à l'envers." Ducasse's reference to Pangloss, the overly and bafflingly optimistic teacher in Voltaire's *Candide*, is actually a reference to Marguerite Long's late husband, Joseph de Marliave, who Roger-Ducasse often called by this nickname.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 111-112: "Elle est de plus en plus la même, avec les mêmes exagérations, les mêmes sentiments malheureux."

³⁹ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, 14 April 1918, 20 June 1918, 3 or 4 August 1918, undated letter from late 1918 or early 1919, 15 September 1920, 20 September 1920; BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B [Letters 170-173; 182-183]. Emma Debussy to Marguerite Long, undated, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance.

⁴⁰ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, 20 June 1918: BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B: "tous ces héros qui luttent depuis des années"; "J'ai la certitude d'ennuyer tout le monde avec mon chagrin."

similar concerns for how her grief might have negatively affected her friendship with the conductor André Messager.⁴¹ Furthermore, in his war diaries, Maurice Maréchal frames the outward expression of personal emotions as disdainful, and connects this to a necessary *pudeur*: “Enclose within oneself violent emotions, deep sorrow, or involuntary impulses . . . In what appears to be coldness, there is *pudeur*, and true feelings need this . . . We should disdain the language of a man who seeks to exaggerate what he feels and draw pity for what he suffers. Appearances, remarks, manners of a cold dignity . . . But I’ll stop myself since it’s better to quiet oneself than to always complain.”⁴²

Ravel was of course well known for precisely the *pudeur de sentiment* that Maréchal describes.⁴³ Roland-Manuel writes about Ravel’s *pudeur* manifesting itself in his avoidance of situations in which he might be required to express emotion, for instance in saying goodbye to a friend who was leaving for the front lines during the war, as well as on the occasion of his mother’s death, which, according to Roland-Manuel, plunged the composer into “silent distress.”⁴⁴ Ravel’s standoffishness was often described as a *sécheresse du coeur* (coldheartedness), something of which Ravel himself was aware. Towards the end of his life, Ravel commented on this, denying it to his friend Jacques de Zogheb, who recounts: “‘Do you see,’ he confided to me one evening, ‘one speaks of my *sécheresse du coeur*. It’s false. And you know it. But I am Basque. The Basque feel things violently, but confess very little and only to a

⁴¹ Only Messager’s response to this letter exists; André Messager to Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, 30 July 1925, BnF, Arts du Spectacle [hereafter AdS], MN-32. He opens this letter with the following question: “Comment pouvez-vous penser que votre chagrin importuner ma tendre amitié?” (“How could you think that your grief could disturb my tender friendship [for you]”).

⁴² Maréchal, entry of 6 October 1914, in Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 238: “Renfermer en soi les émotions violentes, les chagrins profonds ou les élans involontaires . . . Dans cette froideur apparente, il y a de la pudeur et les sentiments vrais en ont besoin . . . Dédaigner le langage d’un homme qui cherche à outrer ce qu’il sent et attendrir sur ce qu’il souffre. Les dehors, les propos, les manières d’une dignité froide . . . Je m’arrête, mieux vaut se taire que toujours se plaindre.”

⁴³ The French musicologist Robert Brussel used this phrase to describe Ravel’s music as well as his personality and politics in “La Mort de Maurice Ravel,” *Le Figaro*, 29 December 1937. See also Jean-Claude Bologne, *Histoire de la pudeur* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1986), 13-15.

⁴⁴ Alexis Roland-Manuel, “Des valse à ‘la Valse,’” in *Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers* (Paris: Éditions du Tambourinaire, 1939), 141-151; 149: “Ce deuil le plongea dans une détresse muette, dans un désarroi d’enfant perdu: ce fut sans doute la plus profonde douleur de sa vie.”

few people.”⁴⁵ While Ravel attributes his *pudeur* to his Basque heritage, the war likely also played a role in shaping his need to keep grief silent, especially in the case of losses that were not directly related to the war. Thus Ravel’s need to maintain a brave face in the wake of his mother’s death was augmented and complicated by an increase in the amount of shame, guilt, and contempt that came to accompany some expressions of mourning in France in the years during and after the First World War.⁴⁶

Mourning as a Gendered Emotional Practice

Within this social sphere, the shame, contempt, and guilt that became attached to publicly expressing one’s desolation over the death of a loved one were directly tied to prevalent ideas concerning heroic masculinity. This conception of masculinity privileged stoicism and silent suffering and was linked to centuries-old ideas within French military discourse. Maréchal’s comments on the necessity of *pudeur*, for instance, were the result of reading Alfred de Vigny’s *Sevitude et Grandeur Militaire*, an 1835 collection of essays reflecting on French military service.⁴⁷ Vigny criticizes military life for all of its constraints even while praising the effectiveness of the resulting military system. In a chapter entitled “On the constraint of the

⁴⁵ Jacques de Zogheb, “Souvenirs ravéliens,” in *Ibid.*, 171-175; 172: “Voyez-vous, me confia-t-il un soir, on parle de ma sécheresse de coeur. C’est faux. Et vous le savez. Mais je suis Basque. Les Basques éprouvent violemment, mais se livrent peu et à quelques-uns seulement.”

⁴⁶ The *pudeur des sentiments* surrounding musical expressions seems to have, at least at times, been conceived of in nationalist terms for some in Ravel’s circle. For instance, in an interview in *Intransigéant* in 1932 after her return from a concert of all French music in Berlin, Marcelle Gerar—a famous soprano and friend of Ravel’s—says of her German audience, “Why this total incomprehension of Debussy while the Germans appreciate so well the *Lieder* of Schumann? Janine Weill [a close friend of Long’s] gave this explanation: that Schumann didn’t have *pudeur de ses sentiments*, while Debussy had *pudeur de ses sentiments*, not of his sensations, and that the expression of feelings is more in the German spirit than that of sensations.” (“Pourquoi cette incompréhension totale de Debussy alors que les Allemands apprécient si justement les lieder de Schumann? Janine Weill en donnait cette explication: que Schumann n’a pas la pudeur de sentiments, alors que Debussy a la pudeur de ses sentiments, pas de ses sensations, et que l’expression des sentiments est davantage dans l’esprit germanique que celle des sensations.”) André Willemin, “Retour de Berlin: Ambassadrice de la musique française... Mme Marcelle Gérard nous dit pourquoi les Allemands apprécient mal Debussy,” *Intransigéant*, 14 February 1932.

⁴⁷ Maréchal mentions having read Vigny’s *Sevitude et grandeur militaire* in the same diary entry of 6 October 1914 cited above in fn 38; in Durosoir, ed., *Deux Musiciens*, 238: “I’m reading *Sevitude et grandeur militaire* and I’m thinking bitterly that the army of our days is far from the value of the army of before. I’ll stop myself, better to quiet oneself that to always complain.” (“Je lis *Sevitude et grandeur militaire* et je songe amèrement que l’armée, de nos jours est loin de valoir l’armée d’autrefois. Je m’arrête, mieux vaut se taire que toujours se plaindre.”)

soldier and his individual character,” Vigny argues that abnegation is “a heavier cross to bear than that of the martyr—you have to have carried it for a long time in order to know its greatness and its weight.”⁴⁸ He defines abnegation as relinquishing one’s “liberty to think and to act,” and asserts that this is exemplified in “military character.” Every soldier, he writes, has a “uniform and cold look.”⁴⁹ Vigny clarifies that this abnegation is both the result and the means of bringing into action the military’s system of power. It is related to a performance of self embodied in “perpetual reserve.” As he explains, “[A man] can’t let loose in front of his inferiors without leaving to them a familiarity that carries with it the attainment of his power.” In Vigny’s estimation living one’s life in this power-oriented “perpetual reserve” often produces men “who enclose themselves in the silence of a monk.”⁵⁰

Numerous people in Ravel’s social sphere confirm this privileging of stoicism within the military and without. Aside from using Vigny’s text as a handbook for how to conduct himself in his new military life, Maréchal, while reflecting on how his war service has changed his personality, remarks, “it’s true that I’ve lost much of my sensitivity.” And yet he worries that André Caplet—one of his closest friends and fellow soldiers during the war—will mock him for his “romantic air.”⁵¹ Ravel, who had to return to his military service only weeks after his mother’s death, relays that his captain has told him that he must “snap out of it.” According to Ravel’s captain, the antidote to grief is distraction: he gives Ravel a promotion, takes him with him as he makes his rounds, and promises him a visit to the front lines.⁵² Certainly, this latter

⁴⁸ Alfred de Vigny, *Servitude et grandeur militaire* (Paris: F. Bonnaire, V. Magin, 1835), 37: “L’abnégation du guerrier est une croix plus lourde que celle du martyr. Il faut l’avoir portée long-temps pour en savoir la grandeur et le poids.”

⁴⁹ Ibid., 38: “la renonciation entiere à la liberté de penser et d’agir”; “le caractère militaire.” Ibid., 37: “une figure uniforme et froide.”

⁵⁰ Ibid., 39: “une perpétuelle réserve”; “Il ne peut déridier son front devant ses inférieurs, sans leur laisser prendre une familiarité qui porte atteinte à son pouvoir.”; “qui s’enfermaient dans un silence de trappiste.”

⁵¹ Maréchal, entry of 13 April 1917, in Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 314: “C’est vrai que j’ai perdu beaucoup de ma sensibilité”; “mon air ‘romantique.’”

⁵² See Ravel’s letter to Mme Fernand Dreyfus, 9 February 1917, published in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 180; and Ravel to Ida Godebska, 14 February 1917, in the Frederick R. Koch Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Box 51, Folder 1094.

distraction was offered in the interest of forcing Ravel to recall the heroism of so many others. In writing about Ravel's mother's funeral, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux shows that the culture of heroic restraint extended to civilians as well. She criticizes Ravel and his brother for their behavior at their mother's funeral, writing that, "both were in utter turmoil, incapable of reaction or self-control. A lamentable and distressing spectacle at this time when heroism displays itself as naturally as breathing."⁵³ According to Saint-Marceaux, the Ravel brothers' reaction to their mother's death was not only unheroic, but also decidedly unnatural—especially, she implies, for two soldiers.

Jean Roger-Ducasse articulates that the heroism of emotional constraint was expected more from men than from women. In a letter to Lambinet just after Fauré's death, he explains that Fauré's children had asked him to speak on behalf of his teacher's former students. He tells Lambinet: "But I would not have been able to. So, in order to avoid all masculine susceptibility, and, indeed, to avoid a long-winded Protestant speech from Koechlin, I asked Nadia [Boulanger] to replace me and to say a few words that I know will be those that one must say, in our name, to everyone."⁵⁴ While his decision to ask Boulanger to speak was undoubtedly informed by his knowledge of Nadia's proclivity for and commitment to mourning, in articulating that giving a eulogy for his beloved teacher would have challenged his masculinity in ways he could not bear, Roger-Ducasse implies that Nadia was a better choice because she was a woman and thus less susceptible to criticism for her emotional expressions.

Indeed, within Ravel's social circle, as in interwar France more broadly, mourning openly was understood as not only a task to be undertaken by women, but also as their patriotic responsibility. As I discussed in chapter 1, the grief of war widows and mothers of soldier sons

⁵³ Saint-Marceaux, entry of 7 January 1917, in Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 926; quoted and trans. in Nichols, *Ravel*, 188.

⁵⁴ Jean Roger-Ducasse to André Lambinet, 7 November 1924, in Jacques Depaulis, ed., *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2001), 159: "mais je n'aurais pas pu. Alors, pour éviter toute susceptibilité masculine, et, je l'avoue, éviter un laïus protestant de Koechlin, j'ai demandé à Nadia [Boulanger] de me remplacer et de dire quelques mots que je sais qui seront ceux qu'il faut dire, en notre nom à tous."

was frequently appropriated and utilized as a powerful symbol of national sacrifice.⁵⁵ One of the most visible examples of this is the predominance of the figure of the grieving mother or wife in interwar monuments and other commemorative artworks.⁵⁶ On the one hand, this may have permitted women who experienced war-related losses a bit more leeway in terms of publicly displaying their sorrow. On the other hand, as Roger-Ducasse's statements about Marguerite Long's excessive grief demonstrate, these silent, still, and stone representations of grieving mothers, wives, or sisters were far afield from actual lived, experienced, and expressed grief. War widows in France were thus charged with the task of acting as emotional laborers—bearers, symbols, and conduits for the nation's grief, especially when the ethos of heroic masculinity prevented men from grieving on their own—but only if they were capable of carefully controlling their grief.⁵⁷ Moreover, this leeway only partially extended to women (and men) who lost loved ones outside of the purview of the war.

People in Ravel's social sphere frequently demonstrate the genderedness of mourning by writing about their grief differently depending on whether they are writing to a man or a woman. Ravel's extant correspondence indicates that he wrote to Ida Godebska, Madame Fernand Dreyfus, Marguerite Long, Marie Gaudin, and H el ene Jourdan-Morhange in more direct terms about his grief over the loss of his mother than he wrote to his male friends. And Emma Debussy expresses her grief over the deaths of both her husband and her daughter to Marguerite Long with much less guilt, shame, and fear than she does when writing to Andr e Caplet, despite the fact that both Caplet and Long were close to the Debussys and would have each shared and

⁵⁵ For more on this topic see Carol Acton, *Grief in Wartime: Private Pain, Public Discourse* (Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Petit, "Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre," 53-65; Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Th ebaud, "La Guerre et le deuil chez les femmes fran aises," 103-110.

⁵⁶ See Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* and Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*.

⁵⁷ For more on the criticism of war widows, see Margaret H. Darrow, "French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I," *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (February 1996): 80-106; 82. Darrow cites several important sources of men's condemnation of mourning women during the war, including Abel Hermant, *La Vie   Paris (1916)* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1917), 113-14; Lucien Descaves, *La Maison anxieuse* (Paris: G. Cr s, 1916).

understood her grief. She speaks to Long about her sadness and distress largely without apologizing, and definitely without the kind of obsessive apologies she presents to Caplet. However, even if more open and personal displays of grief—whether expressed in public or private—were considered normative for female mourners, this did not prevent women from being either condemned for these expressions by others, or feeling generally ashamed and embarrassed by their inability to contain their emotional expressions to the extent they felt was socially expected or accepted.

Mourning and the Limits of Language

The quieting of oneself and one's grief in the presence of others was also tied to the idea that language was incapable of adequately expressing or consoling someone's grief. In her book on mourning in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, cultural historian Sandra Gilbert has written that, "the embarrassment of the comforter is a sign of a wound for which neither mourner nor comforter has proper language."⁵⁸ Indeed, one notable convention of condolence letters exchanged within this social milieu is the acknowledgement of the inability of words to provide mourners with comfort or consolation. Émile Vuillermoz writes to Nadia Boulanger after the death of her sister about the "uselessness of words of consolation in such a moment" and Boulanger concurs in her 1914 condolence letter to Marguerite Long, which reads "I don't know which words to write to you since I feel so much that they are all useless before a loss like yours."⁵⁹ Similarly, in a phrase that captures the inadequacy of words to convey either sympathy or grief, Maggie Chevillard, the wife of the conductor Camille Chevillard, writes to Marguerite Long in 1914 that, "no word would be able to express the grief that we feel, nor all of the

⁵⁸ Sandra Gilbert, *Death's Door Modern Dying and the Ways We Grieve* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 254.

⁵⁹ Émile Vuillermoz to Nadia Boulanger, 19 March 1918, BnF, Mus., NLA 115: "On sent trop la vanité des paroles de consolation en un pareil moment"; Nadia Boulanger, letter to Marguerite Long, 27 October 1914, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance: "je ne sais quels mots vous écrire, tant je sens qu'ils sont tous inutiles devant un tel deuil."

affectionate sympathy we have for you.”⁶⁰ In a letter to Emma Debussy after Chouchou’s death, André Caplet asserts that the only proper response when words are lacking is silence: “Madame Debussy! What to tell you? All that I will express will be so empty, so pallid...that I prefer to remain in silence, this dismayed silence with which I received the terrifying news that Dolly had so kindly thought to transmit to me.”⁶¹

The difficulty of expressing feelings related to grief and trauma manifests itself not only in the acknowledgment of the inadequacy of words, but also in the use of ellipses. Eve Sorum, in her work on post-World War I British literature, has argued that ellipses offered writers a way to articulate the existence of trauma without doing the difficult work of verbalizing that experience.⁶² Ravel and many of his peers use a similar strategy when writing about their experiences of loss. Ravel’s letters are riddled with ellipses that often behave like mysterious bearers of barely contained emotions and experiences.⁶³ Ellipses are likewise a predominant feature of the letters published in Nadia and Lili Boulanger’s *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*. In the hundreds of letters the Boulanger sisters reprint in the *Gazette*, soldiers frequently recount their war experiences through the use of ellipses. Moreover, Nadia Boulanger’s practices of editing the *Gazette* indicate that ellipses were considered an effective way to simultaneously allude to and cover up the most emotionally effecting facets of grief and trauma. Although she had written a letter to her readership that not only solicited their responses to the question of what music should be performed in France and abroad after the war, but also told them of her sister’s untimely death, Nadia Boulanger edits their responses

⁶⁰ Maggie Chevillard to Marguerite Long, 6 November 1914, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance: “Nul mot ne saurait exprimer le chagrin que nous en ressentons et toute notre affectueuse sympathie pour vous.”

⁶¹ André Caplet to Emma Debussy, undated, BnF, Mus., NLA 32 [letter 75]: “Madame Debussy!...quoi vous dire? tout ce que j’exprimerai sera tellement vide—tellement pale...que je préfère garder le silence—ce silence atterré avec lequel j’ai accueilli la terrifiante nouvelle que Dolly a en la prévenante attention de me transmettre.”

⁶² Eve Sorum, “Mourning and Moving On: Life after War in Ford Madox Ford’s *The Last Poet*,” in *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. Patricia Rae (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 154-167.

⁶³ For instance, see Ravel to Jean Marnold, 12 March 1917, in René Chalupt and Marcelle Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1956), 148-149; and Ravel to Madame Fernand Dreyfus, 9 February 1917, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 180.

expressly in order to omit any mention at all of Lili's death, including the many condolences she received from soldiers who responded to the questionnaire.⁶⁴ Boulanger's use of ellipses thus also communicates the social imperative to acknowledge grief even while rendering it mute, or nearly so.

Silence was not only a prescribed response to loss and grief, but also a common spontaneous and unavoidable reaction. One of the most common characteristics exhibited by people who have suffered trauma is an inability to speak about that trauma or feelings associated with it. The death of a loved one is often traumatic for those left alive, and while this can be the case for almost any loss, the potential for a loss to be traumatic increases when a mourner feels culpable for it—a scenario that is often termed “survivor guilt”—or feels that their sorrow concerning a loss is greater than what is considered socially acceptable. The thoughts that one could have prevented the death of another, made that death easier, or should have died in the place of another frequently renders the loss of a loved one more traumatic as well.⁶⁵ In addition, mourners often experience sudden deaths, or losses in which the death of a person cannot be confirmed—for instance, kidnappings, missing persons cases, and corpseless deaths—as traumatic. Deaths of this kind frequently produce resistant mourning, in which mourners find it extraordinarily difficult to put the depth or experience of that loss into words.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Comparing the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* [BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1)] with the original letters that Nadia received [BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (06)] illuminates these edits.

⁶⁵ Vamik Volkan makes this argument in “Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies,” in *On Freud's “Mourning and Melancholia,”* eds. Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007), 90-109; 96.

⁶⁶ For more on resistant mourning see *Ibid.* as well as Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia [1917],” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. 14 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957-1974), 239-260; Jacques Derrida, “Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok,” trans. Barbara Johnson, *Georgia Review* (1977): 64-116; Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed., trans., and with an intro. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Joanna Stubley, “Bearing the Unbearable: Melancholia Following Severe Trauma,” *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* 17, no. 3 (September 2003): 219-240; Patricia Rae, “Introduction,” *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. Patricia Rae (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 13-49. Tamara Levitz provides an exegesis of many of these texts in *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 475-484.

Resistant Mourning in Ravel's Circle

A close examination of the biographical and archival materials of the people in Ravel's social circle reveal that many amongst them, including Ravel, might be considered resistant mourners who refused to fully accept losses rather than attempting to cut the libidinal ties that bound them to those they mourned. Numerous post-Freudian psychoanalytic theorists have built upon Freud's seminal theorization of mourning and melancholia, including not only Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, but also Vamik Volkan, who uses the term "perennial mourners" to describe mourners who "keep the object representation of the lost person or thing within their self-representation as a specific and unassimilated 'foreign body.'"⁶⁷ Volkan observes that mourners who live with such an unassimilated foreign body in their ego frequently cannot escape the imagined presence of their lost loved ones.

In his decades-long study of hundreds of cases of mourning, Volkan has noticed that perennial mourners tend to engage consistently in a number of common behaviors. First, perennial mourners' fixations on loss produce a tendency to lose or misplace things. In addition, many of these mourners use terms like "frozen" to describe both their dreams and their general sense of being hopelessly static within their mourning processes. Furthermore, such mourners typically focus on death, tombs, or cemeteries, obsessively read obituaries, and talk or act as if the person being mourned is still present and watching over them. Particularly striking is perennial mourners' frequent use of what Volkan calls "linking objects." He argues that "through the creation of a linking object or phenomenon, the perennial mourner makes an 'adjustment' to the complication within the mourning process; the mourner makes the mourning process 'unending' so as not to face their conflicted relationship with the object representation of the deceased or lost thing." Volkan specifies that a linking object can be "a song, a hand gesture, or even a certain type of weather condition," but that no matter the object or objects chosen, the perennial mourner experiences these as "magical" objects that link them to the deceased person,

⁶⁷ Volkan, 98.

serving as an “external bridge between the representations of the mourner and that of the lost person, just as the introject serves as an internal bridge.”⁶⁸

The archival materials left behind by Ravel and other mourners in his social sphere demonstrate that many of them engaged in the behaviors Volkan describes. Ravel was particularly known, for instance, for misplacing things in the years after the war, as Marguerite Long recalls in her accounts of going on tour with Ravel in the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁹ All the more remarkable, however, are the archived materials of Marguerite Long and Nadia Boulanger, which demonstrate each woman’s obsession with reading and collecting obituaries. Marguerite Long, for instance, wrote a fair number of obituaries—including ones for Ravel, Ida Rubinstein, and the pianists Dinù Lipatti and Émile Sauer—but also collected and kept an extraordinarily large number of obituaries and funeral accounts. She collected as many as twenty press clippings after the sudden death in 1953 of her friend and business partner Jacques Thibaud. Her archive also contains various articles devoted to the deaths of Emile Sauer, Florent Schmitt, Anna de Noailles, Dinù Lipatti, and Paul Dukas.⁷⁰ Roger-Ducasse confirms Long’s preoccupation with scanning the papers for obituaries and other news items related to her husband’s death in a 1915 letter he wrote to Lambinet: “Then Marg[uerite] shows us in *Le Temps* and *Le Matin*, the citation of poor Jo . . . then Bruneau’s article in *Nouvelle Revue*, then there was another in I don’t know what.”⁷¹

Like Long, Nadia Boulanger was preoccupied with obituaries and funeral accounts. She kept numerous obituaries that were printed after Lili’s death, as well as a scrapbook devoted

⁶⁸ Ibid., 101-103.

⁶⁹ Marguerite Long, “Souvenirs de M.L.: Albeniz, Debussy et Fauré,” MMM, F-ML, Documents biographiques, Boîte 1, Bio. 5.

⁷⁰ MMM, F-ML, Documents divers sur des sujets divers, Boîte archive 4.

⁷¹ Roger-Ducasse to Lambinet, 23 July 1915, published in Depaulis, ed., *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet*, 106: “Puis Marg. nous montre dans le *Temps* et le *Matin*, je crois, la citation du pauvre Jo . . . Puis l’article de Bruneau dans la *Nouvelle Revue*, puis d’un autre dans je ne sais quoi.”

entirely to articles on the death of her very close friend and fellow performer Raoul Pugno.⁷² Boulanger's scrapbook dedicated to Pugno's death includes forty-seven pages of obituaries, funeral accounts, and other articles related to the pianist's death in six languages. Although she may have used a press clipping service to obtain these excerpts, Nadia's handwriting appears underneath each one with the date and name of the newspaper in which the piece was found, demonstrating that she played an active role in constructing this memento.⁷³ Nadia's obsession with collecting memorial literature extended to materials that were published on the anniversary of her sister's death, since she lists newspapers and journals in which she found articles devoted to Lili in a series of notebooks she kept for recording her correspondence.⁷⁴ Similar to Long and Boulanger, H el ene Jourdan-Morhange wrote numerous obituaries, spearheaded projects like *Ravel et nous* and *Mes amis musiciens* in memory of Ravel and other friends after their deaths, and also lovingly created two scrapbooks in memory of her relationship with Ravel. One of these was in relation to Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Violoncello, and the other concerned the composition of his Sonata for Violin and Piano. Both scrapbooks include a manuscript autograph of the score, and several letters from Ravel to Jourdan-Morhange in which he refers to the composition included in the scrapbook.⁷⁵ All of these items demonstrate the strong need she felt to memorialize her friends after their deaths.

During and after the war, many people in Ravel's social sphere intimated their resistant mourning through frequently using expressions in their correspondence, diaries, or memoirs indicating that they felt "stuck" in endless grief. Much of Ravel's correspondence after his mother's death bears the marks of his deep and continuing grief over this loss. Ravel writes to

⁷² There were not very many obituaries for Nadia Boulanger to collect after the death of her sister on 15 March 1918, as I discussed at greater length in chapter 1.

⁷³ Nadia Boulanger, "Raoul Pugne [sic]. Articles n ecrologiques: recueil factice de coupures de presse," BnF, Mus., Vma 4043.

⁷⁴ Nadia Boulanger, "Carnets de correspondance," BnF, Mus., R es. Vm. Ms. 129 (1).

⁷⁵ The Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library (hereafter PMML), Robert Owen Lehman Collection, R252.S698.

Hélène Kahn-Casella in September of 1919 that he thinks that “this terrible time has stunned me, and I won’t be able to recover from it.”⁷⁶ Later the same month, Ravel writes to Manuel de Falla to offer his condolences on the death of his mother, and tells him that he hasn’t yet “pulled himself together,” but that he hopes that his grief “will finally subside in the long run.”⁷⁷ Just three months later, Ravel writes to Ida Godebska that, “I’m thinking that it will soon be 3 years that she’s been gone, and yet my despair increases daily.”⁷⁸ Ravel continues to refer to his *cafard*—a slang word for depression—for many years afterwards, often near the anniversary of his mother’s death, as his letters to Falla and Kahn-Casella in the first months of 1924 indicate.⁷⁹

Marguerite Long, Emma Debussy, and Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux also allude to feeling trapped in infinite mourning. Marguerite Long refers to the three years after her husband’s death as a time in which she was “buried” or “trapped” in grief.⁸⁰ Similarly, Emma Debussy refers to her grief after the death of her husband as a “labyrinth of pain,” and tells Marguerite Long after Chouchou’s death that she feels “the horrible nightmare” so deeply that she no longer knows where she is.⁸¹ These phrases indicate her inability to move past or even see outside of her current state of mourning. Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux repeatedly refers to endlessly mourning her husband in her private journal. She writes almost six months after his

⁷⁶ Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 10 September 1919, in Roy, ed., “Soixante-deux lettres,” 77: “cette terrible époque m’a assommé, et que je ne m’en relèverai pas.”

⁷⁷ Ravel to Manuel de Falla, 19 September 1919, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 193.

⁷⁸ Ravel to Ida Godebska, 27 December 1919, in *ibid.*, 195.

⁷⁹ Ravel to Manuel de Falla, 11 January 1924, in “Correspondance de Maurice Ravel adressee à Manuel de Falla,” *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 3 (1987): 7-26; 15; Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 13 February 1924, in Roy, ed., “Soixante-deux lettres,” 94.

⁸⁰ Marguerite Long, *Au piano avec Gabriel Fauré* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1963), 72: “emmurée dans mon deuil.”

⁸¹ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, postmarked 14 April 1918, BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B: “ce labyrinthe de douleur.” Emma Debussy, Letter to Marguerite Long, undated, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance: “Mais le cauchemar horrible dans lequel je suis est si profond en moi que je ne sais plus très bien où je suis.”

death, for instance, that she senses that she is “in a moral distress” that she will “never be able to overcome.”⁸²

For this group of people, continuing to grieve—even if this experience was painful—was a way to keep their dead loved ones alive: it offered them a means to continue to connect with them, to not forget them, and, in not facing the loss as a loss, to alleviate some of the pain associated with their death. There was even a paradoxical pleasure to be felt in this mournful existence, which Marguerite de Saint Marceaux described in her journal three months after her husband’s death as “a painful melancholy but with pleasure.” It is in this particular emotional state that she says she feels closer to her husband and “more in communication” with him.⁸³ She also often uses her journal as a way of communicating with her husband, speaking to him on several occasions as if he were still alive, and asking him if he can see her pain and feel her tears.⁸⁴ Nadia Boulanger likewise communicated with her sister and mother after their deaths. She used her personal journals and datebooks to write messages to her sister Lili after her passing in 1918, and many years after her mother’s death Boulanger reported that “*Maman* has always been my judge . . . Mother is still with me; I feel her presence. Time has not changed that.”⁸⁵

Like Saint-Marceaux and Boulanger, Ravel acknowledged that he continued to live with his mother’s presence after her death. He writes to Lucien Garban six months after the death of his mother and tells him that he’s been waking up in the middle of the night, sensing her “close

⁸² Saint-Marceaux, entry of 3 November 1915, in Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 874: “J’y suis misérablement dans une détresse morale que je ne pourrai jamais surmonter.”

⁸³ Saint-Marceaux, entry of 1 July 1915, in *ibid.*, 862: “une mélancolie douloureuse mais avec plaisir”; “plus en communication.”

⁸⁴ Saint-Marceaux, entries of 1 May 1915–8 July 1915, in *ibid.*, 858-863.

⁸⁵ Nadia Boulanger, cited in Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, trans. M.M. Shriver (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), 9. See also Nadia Boulanger’s datebook for January 1919, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vmf. Ms. 88 (1), and Brooks’s discussion of it in *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 23.

to [him], watching over [him].”⁸⁶ Three years later, Ravel reports to Garban that he is still having insomnia and nightmares, although he relates these to neurasthenia rather than specifically to his mother’s death.⁸⁷ But a letter that Ravel wrote to Manuel de Falla several months before suggests that Ravel’s self-proclaimed neurasthenia was likely tied to this woeful event. He writes: “This solitude that I feared so much before [now] seems delightful. I live more with those who have left me.”⁸⁸ Ravel had a complicated and ambivalent relationship with solitude. At times it made him feel closer to his dead parents, allowing him to live immersed in memories of being with them, as he tells his close family friend Marie Gaudin just after the anniversary of his mother’s death—and just after the death of Marie’s father—in January 1921.⁸⁹ At other times, however, this solitude turns on him, rendering him desperately lonely and in need of actual living company. Just two weeks before writing to Falla about the comfort that living in solitude brings him, for instance, he writes to Hélène Kahn-Casella about the terrible loneliness he feels, telling her that he needs his friends to write to him, even if he is unable to respond to their letters right away.⁹⁰

Emma Debussy is another figure in Ravel’s social sphere who deeply desired to maintain connections with loved ones who had died. She sought to recreate Debussy’s and her daughter’s presences after their deaths, but was also troubled by her failure to do so. She heartbreakingly writes to Marguerite Long after Chouchou’s death in 1919: “I am still calling Chouchou...she no

⁸⁶ Ravel to Lucien Garban, 20 June 1917, in “La Correspondance de Maurice Ravel à Lucien Garban,” *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 7 (2000): 66: “je la sens près de moi, me veillant.”

⁸⁷ Ravel to Lucien Garban, 6 April 1920, in Arbie Orenstein, ed., “La Correspondance de Maurice Ravel à Lucien Garban (1919-1934),” *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 8 (2004): 9-89; 27.

⁸⁸ Ravel to Manuel de Falla, 16 December 1919, in “Correspondance de Maurice Ravel adressee à Manuel de Falla,” 12: “Cette solitude que je redoutais tant autrefois me semble délicieuse. Je vis davantage avec ceux qui m’ont quitté.”

⁸⁹ Ravel to Marie Gaudin, 6 January 1921, in Michel Delahaye, ed., “Lettres de Maurice Ravel à la famille Gaudin, de Saint-Jean-de-Luz; 2e partie: 1919-1927,” *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 10 (2007): 14-56; 17: “Je vais bientôt me trouver tout seul. J’aime autant ça: comme ma pauvre maman, je vivrai de souvenirs.”

⁹⁰ Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 2 December 1919, in Roy, ed., “Soixante-deux lettres,” 78: “J’espère pouvoir reprendre le travail, mais cette solitude me semble terrible. Il faudra que les amis m’écrivent souvent et qu’ils m’excusent si je ne leur réponde pas toujours.”

longer hears me!!”⁹¹ Moreover, Emma describes the way in which the reality of Debussy’s absence disturbs her ability to keep him with her, telling André Caplet that she is afraid of going back to the home she had shared with Debussy (she and Chouchou had gone to St-Jean-de-Luz to avoid the bombing of Paris happening at the time) because it will force her to face the reality of his death. She also adamantly articulates that the most important task in this period of mourning is to continue in this painful state, writing that, “the greatest tragedy, which could yet overtake me, would be to no longer feel this fervent search for His trace.”⁹²

Perhaps no one makes clearer the importance of continuing to suffer through the pain of one’s losses than Maurice Maréchal, the accomplished cellist who premiered Ravel’s Sonata for Violin and Violoncello with Jourdan-Morhange in 1921. He writes to Nadia Boulanger after Lili’s death, articulating his conception of resistant mourning with striking clarity. He sympathizes with Nadia, telling her that he “knows all that you are suffering through” since he had experienced a loss similar to hers—the death of his fiancée as well as of numerous friends—in the recent past.⁹³ Then he writes,

The only true and long assuagement is to feel that the suffering doesn’t pass. It would be too painful if it lasted only the strict duration of mourning prescribed; and then we accustom ourselves to it so well eventually; the true suffering would be to no longer suffer. The alleviation of grief must happen little by little; then, when the first bitterness and the first indignation has gone away, we find that sometimes we are able to relive happy memories, veritable minutes full of joy and happiness. They leave an impression that is so comforting, that not only has the being about whom we were just speaking been entirely and intimately evoked, but the reunion of people who loved each other has indeed been realized anew.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Emma Debussy to Marguerite Long, undated, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance: “Moi j’appelle toujours Chouchou...Elle ne m’entend plus!!”

⁹² Emma Debussy to André Caplet, postmarked 14 April 1918, BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B: “Il me semble que le plus grand malheur qui pourrait encore m’accabler, serait de ne plus ressentir cette recherche passionnée de Sa trace.”

⁹³ He’s speaking about the death of his fiancée Thérèse Quedrue, who passed away on July 22, 1913. See Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 224 n.3.

⁹⁴ Maurice Maréchal to Nadia Boulanger, 26 May 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (6): “C’est pourquoi, je sais tout ce que vous pouvez souffrir. Le seul et vrai et long adoucissement est de sentir que la souffrance ne passe pas. Ce serait vraiment trop pénible qu’elle ne dure que la durée stricte d’un deuil; et puis—on s’habitue si bien à la longue; la vraie souffrance serait de ne plus souffrir. Il faut de reste que cela devienne peu à peu de la douceur; alors, à l’époque où la première amertume et la première revolté ont disparu, on trouve quelquefois, à revivre des souvenirs heureux, de véritables minutes de pleine joie et de bonheur. Elles laissent une impression si reconfortante, celle que l’être dont

For Maréchal, resistant mourning offered a strategy for dealing with loss that allowed a mourner not only to remain faithful to the dead beloved, but also to gain a sense of comfort, even if only occasionally, in feeling that the lost person was actually with you—not just evoked, but felt and experienced as if she were still living. In another letter, Maréchal responds to Nadia, “indeed the only way of making dear departed beings live in oneself is to act and to think as if truly they acted and thought next to us—in actual truly living beings.”⁹⁵ Boulanger’s and Maréchal’s understanding of the relationship between the mourner and the mourned echoes descriptions of the introject—the psychic sign of resistant mourning—articulated by Volkan, Abraham and Torok, and Derrida. The idea that having the departed live “in oneself” and simultaneously “next to us,” thus maintaining their own psychic boundaries that prevent them from being fully incorporated into the ego of the mourner, is precisely Abraham’s and Torok’s representation living in the crypt—“a complete person with his own topography”—or Volkan’s introject—“an unassimilated object representation.”⁹⁶

Resistant Mourning Through Practices of Persistent Memory

Maréchal’s advice to Nadia Boulanger illuminates two aspects of mourning that were important to many of their peers. First, he advocates the necessity of persistently mourning, of extending the period of mourning well beyond what is conventionally practiced or expected. Here, Maréchal was certainly referring to the *guides de deuil*, discussed at the opening of chapter 1, that were published by *magasins de deuil* and funeral trade magazines as detailed

on vient de parler, entier intime, n’a pas seulement été évoqué, mais que la reunion de tous ceux qui s’aimèrent a bien été réalisé à nouveau.”

⁹⁵ Maréchal to Nadia Boulanger, 15 May 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (4): “Du reste, c’est bien le seul moyen de faire vivre en soi les êtres chers disparus, que d’agir et de penser comme si vraiment ils agissaient et pensaient à côté de nous – en êtres très réellement existants.”

⁹⁶ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Introjection-Incorporation: Mourning or Melancholia,” in *Psychoanalysis in France*, eds. Serge Lebovici and Daniel Widlöcher (New York: International Universities Press, 1980), 3-16; 8. Volkan, 98-99.

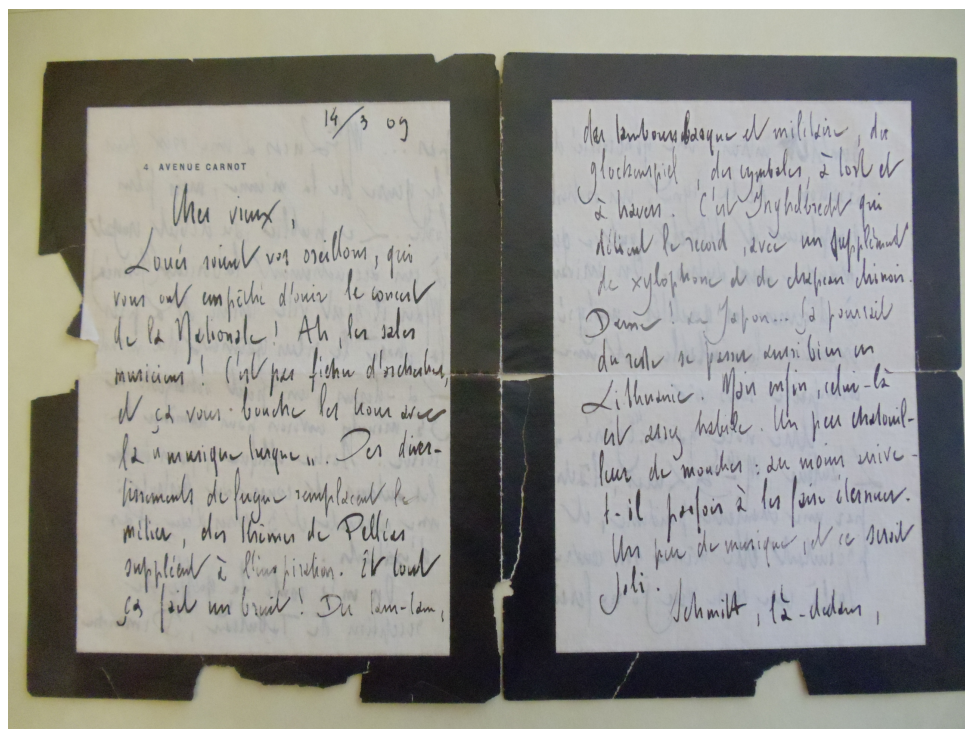
guides to mourning etiquette, including how long one should remain in mourning, and what clothing and accessories were appropriate during this period.⁹⁷ Second, Maréchal emphasizes that one of the keys to recreating the presence of a loved one—which was central to this persistence—rests in never allowing the memory of that person to fade. Actions must be taken to recall being in the dead loved one’s presence, even if this causes the mourner pain. Ravel, Nadia Boulanger, Emma Debussy, Saint-Marceaux, and Maréchal were actively engaged in both these aspects of resistant mourning. Their archival materials show that they continued to live in grief for many years after the psychic trauma initially caused by the death of a loved one, often relying on a variety of linking objects that allowed them to preserve the memory as well as the presence of the people they had lost.

Nadia Boulanger, Emma Debussy, and Manuel de Falla performed their continuing grief by using mourning stationary for many years after loved ones’ deaths. This type of stationary—marked by a black border of widths that varied according to the stage of mourning one felt him- or herself to be in—was, due to its immediate recognizability, a particularly effective way of communicating that one was still in mourning (See Figure 2.1). Laura Albéniz, who was an accomplished artist, Isaac Albéniz’s daughter, and a close friend to many musicians living in Paris during the teens, 1920s, and 1930s, articulated the communicative efficacy of *papier de deuil* (mourning paper) when she wrote to Paul Dukas in January 1916 that “when I saw the *enveloppe de deuil*, I knew before opening it that your father had died.”⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Extant examples include J. Marquerie, *Le Deuil, histoire, règlements, usages, modes d'autrefois et aujourd'hui* (Paris: La Scabieuse, 1877); Baucheron, *Etiquette à suivre pour les deuils. A l'immortelle. Maison special de deuil. Baucheron 65 Rue de Rivoli* (Paris: Imp. de F. Malteste, 1872), BnF, Tolbiac, VP-20438, 3-4; *Le Guide de Deuil. Renseignements generaux concernant les inhumations* 2, no. 4 (January 1916), BnF, Tolbiac, JO-71402.

⁹⁸ Laura Albéniz to Paul Dukas, 14 January 1916, BnF, Mus., W-48 (37).

Figure 2.1: Letter from Maurice Ravel to Cipa Godebska, 16 September 1909, Frederick R. Koch Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.



Nadia Boulanger was particularly diligent in her use of *papier de deuil*. She regularly used it during the fifteen years between Lili's death and her mother's, both when writing to close friends such as Marcelle de Manziarly, as well as to business associates such as Marc Pincherle and Albert Carré.⁹⁹ Curiously, however, she uses it much less in the years following her mother's death in 1935. This was possibly due to the influence that her mother's mourning practices had on Nadia while she was still living; perhaps with her mother no longer present to supervise Nadia's performances of mourning conventions, she chose to stop using *papier de deuil* as an expression of her grief.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps, as well, the conventions for the use of mourning stationary

⁹⁹ Nadia Boulanger to Marc Pincherle, 12 May 1926, BnF, Mus., LA 13; Boulanger to Albert Carré, 1 July 1923, BnF, Mus., LA 13.

¹⁰⁰ The influence that Raïssa Boulanger had over her daughter was paramount, especially considering that Nadia not only lived in the same apartment with her mother until the latter's death, but in fact shared a room with her for a large portion of this time. See Spycket, 12. In addition, Madame Boulanger was most likely a resistant mourner herself, having kept, for instance, her husband's room closed up but completely as it had been when he died for the 4

were more lax than they had been in previous generations. Ravel for instance, used *papier de deuil* only on rare occasions—and never with any consistency—after the deaths of his father, his mother, and his uncle, while Manuel de Falla corresponded with it for at least a full three years after the death of his mother, and Emma Debussy used it for a number of years after the deaths of her husband and daughter.

The people in Ravel's social sphere also indicated the persistence of their grief through self-fashioning that silently but significantly reminded others that they were still in mourning. Marguerite Long continued to use her married name in her personal correspondence throughout the rest of her life, often signing her name "Marguerite Long de Marliave." She also received a very large amount of correspondence from friends who addressed her in this way, despite using "Marguerite Long" as her stage name. Long's correspondence also shows that she continued to live in the apartment on Rue Fourcroy that she had shared with Marliave at least until 1923.¹⁰¹ Long performed widowhood through her dress as well: photographs of her housed at the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris show that her post-1914 wardrobe—both professionally and personally—included more black than prior to her husband's death.¹⁰² Jérôme Spycket, in his biography of Nadia Boulanger, remarks on the shift in Boulanger's wardrobe after the death of her mother, pointing to a picture of Nadia with Stravinsky taken on a steamer in 1937 in which Nadia is dressed very conservatively and completely in black—"deliberately austere, if not ascetic," according to Spycket.¹⁰³

years between his death in April 1900 and when Raïssa moved herself and her two daughters to the apartment at 36 rue Ballu in October 1904. See Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 17.

¹⁰¹ It is difficult to know precisely when she left the apartment on Rue Fourcroy for the apartment she lived in later in life on l'Avenue de la Grande Armée, but a letter from Ravel addressed to "Madame Long de Marliave" dated 26 June 1923 indicates that she was living the Rue Fourcroy apartment at least until this time. See Ravel to Marguerite Long, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance.

¹⁰² MMM, F-ML, Iconographie. Many of the photographs of Long from before the war show her wearing white. This changed significantly during and after the war, although this may have also had something to do with a shift in fashion, or with her age.

¹⁰³ Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 86-88.

Moreover, commemorating the date of someone's death was a popular and significant way of mourning. Celebrating anniversaries offered many in Ravel's social circle the opportunity to re-plunge themselves into mourning in order to relive the loss and feel all of the emotions that they had first experienced upon the death of a loved one. Death anniversaries acted as a forum for the more open expression of these feelings than might be socially permitted on other days during the year. Nadia Boulanger paid an enormous amount of attention to death anniversaries, for instance staging annual memorial masses at La Trinité in Paris—the cathedral where the funeral ceremonies for both her sister and her mother were held—in the second or third week of March every year after Lili's death. After her mother died on March 19, 1935, just four days after the 17th anniversary of Lili's death, these masses came to be of even greater importance to Nadia. In a notebook listing correspondence she sent and received from 1916 onwards, Nadia makes notes—especially in the 1970s—about these masses at La Trinité, including who attended, what music was performed, and how she felt while attending the mass. In one of these entries, for example, Nadia lists who gave the mass, who sang, and then writes, “So many people were there. Very reverential. But what emptiness—what absence.”¹⁰⁴

For Boulanger, honoring death anniversaries was both an ethically responsible homage to the dead performed annually, and a means to comfort other resistant mourners through acknowledging the depth of the loss of which they were profoundly reminded each year on one particular day. Until it was lost in the late 1960s, Boulanger kept a calendar in which she listed people's birthdays and death dates; however, many of these are also marked in heavily inked boxes in the same notebooks in which she recorded her correspondence.¹⁰⁵ With extraordinary diligence, she sent letters, cards, or notes to myriad friends on the anniversaries of their loved ones' passings. She always wrote these letters by hand, made them personal and distinct (never

¹⁰⁴ Nadia Boulanger, “Carnets de Correspondance,” BnF, Mus., Rés. Vmc. Ms. 129 (1): “Il y a beaucoup du monde. Très recueilli. Mais quel vide—quelle absence.” Handwritten entry dated March 15, 1980. This entry was perhaps misdated by Nadia since it appears to be in her hand, but by all accounts she died in October of 1979.

¹⁰⁵ Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 88; Nadia Boulanger, “Carnets de Correspondance,” BnF, Mus., Rés. Vmc. Ms. 129 (1-4).

relying on formulaic writing despite the quantity of these letters she needed to write, especially in her later years), and added her own thoughts and memories concerning the deceased whenever possible.¹⁰⁶ Writing these letters frequently offered her the opportunity to commiserate in shared grief. She writes, for example, to Marcelle de Manziarly on the first anniversary of the latter's father's death, "You know the deep respect, the intuitive and reflective affection I had for your Father—his memory, evoked so often, is particularly present tonight and I would like only to say to you that all of this will only cease with the end of my life."¹⁰⁷

Nadia's attention to death dates has often been described as cultish. Hugues Cuenod, for instance, said that she lived in a *culte de malheur* (cult of misfortune).¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Albert Roussel's widow writes to Boulanger in August 1938 to thank her for the letter she received acknowledging the one-year anniversary of her husband's death, and writes that "The pain returns, and you who guards the cult of beings who were dear to you, you understand my distress."¹⁰⁹ Nadia's keen desire to acknowledge death anniversaries was thus often understood as an obsession, although one that seemed to have been appreciated by others who had lost loved ones and felt that she at least understood their continuing grief and the pain that it caused.¹¹⁰

Many people with whom Nadia communicated were similarly concerned with death anniversaries. For many years after the deaths of their most precious loved ones, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux and Maurice Maréchal marked the anniversaries of these deaths by writing

¹⁰⁶ Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 88.

¹⁰⁷ Boulanger to Marcelle de Manziarly, 10 January 1922, BnF, Mus., NLA 289: "Tu sais quel sentiment de profond respect, d'affection intuitive et réfléchie j'ai eu pour ton Père—son souvenir, si souvent évoqué est particulièrement présent ce soir et je voudrais seulement te dire, et que tout cela ne cesse qu'avec ma vie."

¹⁰⁸ In Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 90.

¹⁰⁹ Madame B. Albert Roussel to Nadia Boulanger, 24 August 1938, BnF, Mus., NLA 102: "La douleur rapproche et vous qui gardez le culte des êtres qui vous furent chers vous comprenez ma détresse."

¹¹⁰ Interestingly, the modern-day perception of Marguerite Long in France seems to be that she was intensely neurotic and similarly fanatical (although not necessarily in relation to mourning). This is the way that she was depicted in a theatrically staged rendition of Jean Echenoz's novel, *Ravel*, that I saw in March 2013 at the Théâtre Artistic Athévains in Paris.

about their unending grief in their journals.¹¹¹ In his correspondence, Ravel talks on at least two occasions about how his sadness is connected to the anniversary of his mother's death: when writing to Ida Godebska in December 1919 and to Hélène Kahn-Casella in January 1920.¹¹² Marguerite Long was similarly obsessed with death anniversaries, as shown through her collecting and saving of numerous articles on the anniversaries of Debussy's and Fauré's deaths, as well as her participation in commemorating the anniversary of Fauré's death by giving a speech at his grave on November 4, 1940—an event to which she brought her piano class—as part of her role as vice president of the Société des Amis de Gabriel Fauré.¹¹³ The celebration of anniversaries was and continues to be an important form of memorializing in France and elsewhere, and therefore is in no way specific to this group of people. However, the zeal with which they marked these anniversaries—and in particular the death anniversaries—when viewed in tandem with other mourning practices suggests that this commemorative activity was an integral part of the strategy of resistant mourning for Long, Boulanger, Maréchal, Ravel, and others in their social milieu.

The material objects preserved in these musicians' archives also demonstrate that mourners in Ravel's social circle used a variety of what Volkan termed "linking objects" that allowed them to keep their dead dear ones as vividly present and alive as possible. Through the use of linking objects Ravel and his peers maintained, upheld, and even in some situations continued to strengthen cathectic engagements that might have otherwise been dissolved after their loved ones' deaths. Indeed, within this emotional community a great variety of objects

¹¹¹ See Saint-Marceaux, journal entries for April 23 from 1916 until 1925, in Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 895, 936, 984, 1031, 1072, 1105, 1145, 1193; Maréchal, entry of 22 July 1917, in Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens*, 321-322.

¹¹² Ravel to Ida Godebska, 27 December 1919, published in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 195; Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 15 January 1920, in Roy, ed., "Soixante-deux lettres," 79.

¹¹³ See MMM, F-ML, Documents divers sur des sujets divers, Boîte Archive 3, Gabriel Fauré. In this collection there is a document with the words she pronounced at his grave on this date, as well as a list of the attendees. It is important to recognize that Marguerite Long's interest in promoting Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel after their respective deaths was at least in part due to her desire to construct herself as the most informed living interpreter of their works, a persona she could construct due to her close personal relationships with each of these composers. Her desire to frame herself in this fashion, however, should not preclude the sincerity of her continuing grief over their deaths.

functioned in this way: each of these people lived in an incredibly rich and potently imaginative object world that helped them to stave off indefinitely the conclusion of the mourning process. Some of the objects already discussed in this chapter surely functioned as linking objects, for instance the scrapbooks Hélène Jourdan-Morhange made after Ravel's death. Pointing out in this chapter the ways in which people in Ravel's social sphere used linking objects to connect with the people they mourned will provide a useful background for my discussion of the ways in which specifically musical objects and practices functioned as linking objects for Ravel and his peers in chapter 5.

Nadia Boulanger's archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BnF) reveals that she used correspondence notebooks that had once belonged to Lili as linking objects. In the three years following her sister's death, Nadia marks each of these notebooks with confessions that her use of them is undertaken as a way of remembering and linking to Lili's presence. In her January 1919 datebook, for instance, Nadia wrote, "I place this new year before you, my little beloved Lili—may it see me fulfill my duty towards you—so that it is less terrible for Mother and that I try to resemble you."¹¹⁴ Her 1920 diary likewise features an inscription that reads, "I take up with emotion this notebook which She had in her hands! A new year begins and never has my external optimism been further from what is going on inside me."¹¹⁵ Where in 1920 Nadia uses her datebook as a confessional space in which to articulate the vast gulf between her inner feelings and outer self, in 1921 Nadia expresses the phenomenology of the persistence of Lili's memory in terms of the paradoxical nature of resistant mourning—its ability to simultaneously engender comfort and pain. On the datebook's title page Nadia lovingly inscribed: "This book was in the hands of my little Lili—could there be from now on anything other than days devoted to her memory—in her last year perhaps, and so I entrust it to the dear

¹¹⁴ Nadia Boulanger, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vmf. Ms. 88 (1): "Je place cette nouvelle année devant toi, ma petite Lili adorée—qu'elle me voit remplir mon devoir vis-à-vis toi—qu'elle soit moins terrible p[ou]r Maman et que j'essaie de te ressembler." Cited and translated in Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 23.

¹¹⁵ Nadia Boulanger, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vmf. Ms. 89 (1): "Je reprends avec émotion ce cahier qu'Elle a eu entre les mains! Une nouvelle année commence et jamais mon optimisme extérieure n'a été plus loin de ce qui se passe en moi." Cited and translated in Brooks, *Ibid.*, 23.

memory that guides me, supports me, and is to me at the same time so sweet and so cruel.”¹¹⁶ In his biography of Boulanger, Spycket wonders how Nadia had the time to maintain such an extensive list of correspondence, and suggests that, “perhaps the black moleskin book represented for her a sort of extended family which gave her some relief from ‘the burden of loneliness.’”¹¹⁷ Indeed, with the understanding that creating these lists in these notebooks offered Nadia a way of actively bringing Lili’s presence into her daily life, comes the realization that it was never a question of time for Nadia, but rather a necessary daily action taken in the interest of continually mourning her sister’s absence.

Nadia’s desire to keep Lili’s memory alive extended also to keeping things that reminded her of Lili’s presence and of their relationship in the last three years of her life. Her archive at the BnF includes several sheets of paper on which Nadia kept track of Lili’s health with notes about her pulse, temperature, and general condition. In addition, after Lili’s death, Nadia went to the Villa Medici and collected data concerning the precise state of Lili’s accommodations. She made extensive lists of items she found in the apartment, noting whether these items belonged to the Villa or to Lili. She organized her lists according to the types of items (i.e. “livres” [books]) or, more often, by the location where the items were found (i.e. “Caisse en bois” [wooden case] or “Dans le petit buffet” [in the the small dresser]). These lists include details about the items themselves, for instance when she notes the color and material of handkerchiefs, or marks that in “le petit buffet” there was “1 box of tea, half-full.”¹¹⁸ Her seemingly fanatical attention to precisely how things were organized, arranged, and appeared when she went to retrieve Lili’s things suggests that she was attempting to preserve on paper, to the best of her ability, the state of things when Lili was alive. This would have offered her a multi-textured, three-dimensional

¹¹⁶ Nadia Boulanger, “Carnets de correspondance,” BnF, Mus., Rés. Vmc. Ms. 129 (1): “Ce livre fût entre les mains de ma petite Lili—puisse-t-il ne voir passer que des jours dignes de son souvenir—année définitive peut-être et que je confie à la chère mémoire qui me guide, me soutient et m’est à la fois si douce et si cruelle.”

¹¹⁷ Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 88-90.

¹¹⁸ Nadia Boulanger, “Inventaire des meubles et objets qui se trouvaient dans l’appartement de Lili Boulanger à la Villa Medici, à Rome (1919),” BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 130: “1 boîte de thé, à moitié remplie.”

aide mémoire that she could access when she needed to, perhaps in instances when she felt herself precipitously close to forgetting. Nadia's inventory of Lili's accommodations acted as a stand-in for what she and her mother may have otherwise preferred: to keep the room precisely as it had been when Lili had been living. This is, after all, what Nadia's mother had done after her husband's death in 1900, and it was surely something that Nadia either learned from her mother's reaction to that loss, or was urged by her mother to enact after Lili's death.¹¹⁹

Marguerite Long's archive likewise provides a wealth of information on what she considered the linking objects that would best allow her to connect with her dead husband. Surely a good number of the objects Long utilized in order to maintain a link to her husband are not present in this archive, but what does remain is telling. As one might expect, Long kept a number of items that once belonged to her Marliave, including several of his notebooks, one of which is a small brown leather-bound book that includes a combination of phone numbers, recipes, favorite quotations, ledgers of purchases, and impressions of composers, musical works, and concerts.¹²⁰ Long also kept letters that Marliave wrote to colleagues and editors, ones that he received from some of their mutual friends, and a long letter that he had written to Long's sister in May 1914.¹²¹ Moreover, Long saved copies—often in typewritten draft form—of memorial literature written about Joseph de Marliave by their music critic friends.¹²²

In addition, within the large collection of pictures, photographs, and paintings currently housed in Long's archive, several of these stand out as having been perhaps particularly dear to her. For example, one opens a stunningly beautiful green, purple and orange stamped and gilded leather box—the only thing so ornate in the entire collection—to find a number of smaller framed pictures, more than half of which are of her husband. Three of these are in a wallet-style

¹¹⁹ Spycket notes that Raïssa was mourning several losses during Nadia's childhood, including the deaths of two infants within the first two years of their lives, and the death of her husband. See Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, 10-17.

¹²⁰ MMM, F-ML, Joseph de Marliave.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*; and MMM, F-ML, Correspondance.

¹²² MMM, F-ML, Joseph de Marliave.

photograph holder with two sepia-toned portrait-style photographs of Marliave—one of him in uniform, the other of him in more casual attire—with a central picture of Long and Marliave together. There is another—of him on a horse in his full military uniform—in a small oval frame backed with gold velour. One of these mementos appears a bit more precious than the others, however, due in part to its container: it rests in a beautiful and intricately crafted pewter frame, its metal molded and carved into a delicate floral motif topped with two lovebirds. Additionally, unlike the other framed photographs in this box, the sheet of plastic covering the photograph as well as the photograph itself are both well-worn and wrinkled, suggesting that this particular photograph was a well-loved, much-handled, and especially potent linking object for Long.

In general, photographs seem to have held a special affective and memorial potency for Long. That at least some photographs were tied to grief is evident, for instance, in an *enveloppe de deuil* containing several photographs of two different dogs; dates on two of these indicate that the photos were taken 24 years apart.¹²³ The *enveloppe de deuil* and the photographs contained within it are catalogued in the archive as a single item—one of the very few “collections” of items to be catalogued in this way—and thus suggest that they were brought to the archive like this.¹²⁴ Long’s choice to place these photographs in an *enveloppe de deuil* indicates that she kept them as reminders of her beloved pets after their deaths. Moreover, like the pewter-framed picture described above, there is one photograph of Long within a series of pictures taken during her courtship or marriage to Marliave that appears to have held special importance for her. These “action” photos of Long seated at the keyboard offer close-up views of her hands as she performs

¹²³ MMM, F-ML, Iconographie, Boîte B: Mariage et famille, 175.

¹²⁴ Just a note about the naissance of the Fonds Marguerite Long at the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris: as Cecilia Dunoyer explains in her biography of Long, the materials found in this archive are what remain of the entirety of Long’s belongings after many of her possessions were sold at auction after her death in 1966. What remained after the auction was boxed up and stored at the offices of the Concours Long-Thibaud, a music competition she founded with the violinist Jacques Thibaud in the 1940s, until these materials were transferred to the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler several decades later. However, it is clear that nearly everything in this archive once belonged to Long, and that many of the materials housed there have retained a large amount of their integrity. See Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long*, xii-xiii.

different pianistic movements, which are noted on the backs of the photographs.¹²⁵ One of these photographs appears far more wrinkled and previously handled than the others, and also idiosyncratically features a rounded top, as if it had been cut to fit a frame. This photograph also differs from the others in the set because it shows Long leaning back into her husband, who is standing behind her and grasping her elbows as she plays. Only five of the eight photographs in this set show Marliave's hands touching her arms, and out of these only this one and one other provide the viewer with a glimpse of Marliave's uniformed torso. It is only in this particular photograph, however, that one witnesses Long touching, sinking into, and allowing herself to be completely enveloped by Marliave.¹²⁶ This photograph may have thus functioned as a linking object for Marguerite Long because it allowed her to inhabit the memory of his presence, his touch, and what it felt like to play the piano while he was next to her.

Most of the linking objects utilized by Ravel's contemporaries that I have described thus far have lent themselves more to private usage. However, many of the objects that ostensibly linked Boulanger, Ravel, Long, Maréchal and others to their departed loved ones were designed for public consumption, and thus able to function as containers for collective and public mourning while still facilitating mourning that was more private and individual. Books published by, written about, or simply preferred by someone being mourned offer examples of objects that operated in this way, as in the case of Joseph de Marliave's *Études musicales*, Émile Vuillermoz's commemorative *Tombeau de Jules Echorcheville*, or the obituaries for Lili Boulanger that were saved by Nadia. As I will detail in chapter 5, many people in Ravel's social sphere also came to rely on musical works and concerts as linking objects that could function on both private and public levels.

¹²⁵ MMM, F-ML, Iconographie, Boîte A: "Jeunesse," 17-24.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 23. In the other photograph (24) she is leaning forward and away from him as she plays.

Shared Grief, Friendship, and Resistant Mourning

The correspondence exchanged within Ravel's social sphere demonstrates that sharing grief with other people in mourning—and perhaps especially with other resistant mourners—was an important emotional practice for people in this social group. The cultural anthropologist and historian William Reddy has argued that emotional expressions should not be understood merely as indicators of inner emotional states, nor as reflections of how emotions are socially constructed within a particular culture, but rather as “emotives”—performative expressions used by subjects as a way of enhancing or augmenting emotion.¹²⁷ Indeed, Ravel and his peers often discussed their emotions with one another because they needed a shared outlet for these kinds of expression, first because it was therapeutic to share this kind of information with someone who could sympathize with their feelings, and perhaps more importantly as a means of continuing to mourn, to memorialize, and to prevent themselves from forgetting a loved one who had died.

Despite or perhaps because of the social restrictions surrounding mournful expression, for this group of mourners the knowledge that a friend was in mourning often facilitated the expression of grief. Ravel, even in spite of the *pudeur* that so many of his friends considered a strong feature of his personality, demonstrated an increased willingness to share his grief over his mother's death with friends who had recently lost loved ones. In the first months of 1917 he writes to only a handful of friends about the loss of his mother; these largely include only veiled and ambiguous references to his ailing health or general unhappiness. In his letters to Jean Marnold from February and March of 1917, he writes that “I have been and still am considerably depressed” and then, a month later, “Since the day after my arrival, I haven't left the room and hardly my bed, thanks to my frozen feet which are beginning to heal themselves. You can

¹²⁷ William M. Reddy, “Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions,” *Current Anthropology* 38, no. 3 (June 1997): 327-351.

imagine what my worries have been...Always nothing on the subject of my transfer.”¹²⁸ In a letter to Charles Koechlin written on February 19, Ravel only slightly more directly acknowledges the effect his mother’s death has had on him: “First of all, pardon me for still not having thanked you for your expression of sympathy, which touched me deeply. I was, and still am, very depressed, and don’t have the courage to reply to my friends.”¹²⁹ Similarly, he writes to Lucien Garban on February 12 that he must have spoken to the Dreyfuses and heard that he is “not good, in terms of morale.”¹³⁰ In these letters, Ravel immediately moves from a vague reference to his mother’s death to trivial business matters. Ravel also writes to Ida Godebska about his unhappiness, contrasting his mood to that of his fellow soldiers—who are “friendly and gay”—and his captain, who tries to take his mind off of things.¹³¹

The only person to whom Ravel writes in order to share more details concerning his emotional state at this time is Madame Fernand Dreyfus, whose stepson Jean was killed in combat at some point during late 1916 or early 1917. He writes to her:

Spiritually, it’s dreadful...it was such a short while ago that I wrote to her and would receive her frail letters, which saddened me...and yet, they gave me such joy. I was still happy then, despite the inner anguish...I didn’t know it would happen so quickly. And now, this horrible despair, the same recurring thoughts...It’s not good that I am so far away from my poor Edouard.¹³²

Here, he acknowledges, openly, directly, and in a manner that may have seemed to him impossible with other friends (albeit not without some telling ellipses), that the source of his sadness is his mother’s death. To be sure, his other friends understood the underlying reason for

¹²⁸ Ravel to Jean Marnold, 19 February 1917, BnF, Mus., LA 89: “J’ai été, et suis encore bien abattu.” Ravel, letter to Jean Marnold, 12 March 1917, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 148-149: “Depuis le lendemain de mon arrivée, je n’ai pas quitté la chambre et presque pas le lit, grâce à mes pieds gelés qui commençaient à se guérir. Vous pouvez penser quelles sont mes préoccupations...Toujours rien de nouveau au sujet de ma mutation.”

¹²⁹ Ravel to Charles Koechlin, 19 February 1917, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 180.

¹³⁰ Ravel to Lucien Garban, 12 February 1917, in “La Correspondance de Maurice Ravel à Lucien Garban” (Cahiers Maurice Ravel 7), 62: “pas très bonnes, en ce qui concerne le moral.”

¹³¹ Ravel to Ida Godebska, 14 February 1917, Frederick R. Koch Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, box 51, folder 1094: “aimables et gais.”

¹³² Ravel to Madame Fernand Dreyfus, 9 February 1917, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 180.

his dire emotional state. Here, however, he provides details about his mental process of mourning: the complexity of the feelings he experienced both before and after her death, that he is now feeling “horrible despair,” and that he feels a desperate need at this time to be near his brother—the only person who he imagines might feel his mother’s loss in the way that he does.

The condolence letters that Ravel wrote to friends who had just experienced a significant loss demonstrate with especial clarity his willingness and even desire to share the terms of his mourning with friends who were going through what he imagined to be a similar experience. Thus after the death of Manuel de Falla’s mother in 1919, Ravel consoles his friend by telling him that he has never been able to get over his mother’s death, but that he hopes that de Falla will fare better than he. When someone close to Hélène Jourdan-Morhange dies in 1923, Ravel consoles her through sharing with her how he felt when his mother died: “I deeply sympathize with you; up until the moment when it’s over, we don’t believe it will be so atrocious. And afterwards, we understand that we would have preferred to keep her even in this state.”¹³³ Upon hearing the news of Hélène Kahn-Casella’s divorce from her husband Alfredo Casella, Ravel responds with incredible sympathy. He takes the opportunity to tell her about his own emotional state: “I know well that nothing can replace certain affections . . . My letter isn’t very comforting: pardon me, I’m doing what I can. I’m not very happy... [...] Physically, I’m doing somewhat better. I’m far from being healed, but I’m coughing less and gaining weight. Although, even if I entirely reestablish myself, something will always remain broken.”¹³⁴ Moreover, on the

¹³³ Ravel to Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, 12 October 1923, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 200-201: “je vous plains profondément; jusqu’au moment où c’est fini on ne croit pas que ce sera si atroce. Et après on comprend qu’on aurait préféré la garder même dans cet état.” I write “someone close to her” since it is unclear for whose death Ravel offers Jourdan-Morhange his condolences. René Chalupt and Marcelle Gerar, both of whom were friends with Ravel and Jourdan-Morhange, write in their commentary about this letter that Jourdan-Morhange had just lost her mother, but other correspondence of Jourdan-Morhange indicates that her mother did not die until the fall of 1934. See, for instance, Colette, *Lettres à Moune et au Toutounet: Hélène Jourdan-Morhange et Luc-Albert Moreau, 1929-1954*, ed. Bernard Villaret (Paris: des Femmes, 1985), 100-101 (see the condolence letters dated 1 October 1934).

¹³⁴ Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 19 January 1919, in “Soixante-deux lettres,” 76: “Je sais bien, rien ne remplace certaines affections. Mais vous avez encore quelques amis, des vrais, qui ne vous aimeront que davantage . . . Pas très réconfortante ma lettre: pardonnez-moi, je fais ce que je peux. Je ne suis pas très gai... [...] Physiquement, il y a du mieux. Je suis loin d’être guéri, mais je tousse moins, et j’engraisse. Quand même, si je me retape entièrement, il restera toujours quelque chose de cassé...”

death of Marie Gaudin's father in 1921, Ravel associates her grief with his own—they were childhood friends from St-Jean-de-Luz and thus knew each other's parents—and also refers to the other mutual losses they shared in the fall of 1914: the deaths of Marie's brothers Pierre and Pascal. He writes "We were all so happy in 1914! We hadn't sensed it. I am soon going to find myself all alone. I like this so much: like my poor mother, I will live in memories; and then, I'll be able to work. This will be less horrible than seeking a respite from memory in the stupid life that I lead."¹³⁵ Condolences functioned for Ravel, then, not only as purveyors of consolation and sympathy, but also, like death anniversaries and linking objects, as opportunities to honor her memory and bask in recollections of her presence.

In addition to facilitating mourning through providing Ravel and others with a safe space for remembering and emoting, shared grief was a conductor of friendship. This is evident in the progression of friendship found in many of the letters exchanged between mourning musicians in Ravel's social sphere. For example, Maurice Maréchal and Nadia Boulanger strike up a friendship over their shared understanding of each other's losses, even while grieving the deaths of different people. On March 25, 1918, just days after Lili's death, Maréchal addresses Nadia formally as "Chère Mademoiselle," and expresses his condolences conventionally in writing, "I share greatly your pain, and ask you to believe in my very real sympathy."¹³⁶ However, when he writes to her two months later, his words are more personal, unconventional, and forthcoming than those found in most condolence letters. Instead of the conventional phrases seen in most letters of condolence, he shares with Nadia that he "knows so well the vacuum that your dear little sister's death must have left in you," and confesses the beauty he finds in her decision to continue the work on the *Gazette* that she and Lili had begun together, which he imagines as a

¹³⁵ Ravel to Marie Gaudin, 6 January 1921, in Delahaye, ed., "Lettres de Maurice Ravel à la famille Gaudin," 17: "Nous étions tous si heureux en 1914! Nous ne l'avons pas senti. Je vais bientôt me trouver tout seul. J'aime autant ça: comme ma pauvre maman, je vivrai de souvenirs; et puis, je pourrai travailler. Ce sera moins bête que de chercher l'oubli dans la vie stupide que je mène."

¹³⁶ Maréchal to Nadia Boulanger, 25 March 1918, BnF, Mus., NLA 83: "Je prends une grande part à votre douleur—et vous prie de croire à ma bien vive sympathie."

way of prolonging Lili's memory, and thus Nadia's mourning as well.¹³⁷ After receiving confirmation from Nadia that sharing his grief with her is welcome, he expounds further on his thoughts, and eventually suggests that they meet in person to discuss their experiences of mourning and his reasons for not wanting to share his grief in the *Gazette*.¹³⁸

Maréchal's letters to Nadia convey that while grief is appropriate to share within the context of private relationships with other mourners, sharing his grief publicly is far more circumscribed. Maréchal confesses that he is concerned that his ideas about mourning, while appropriate to discuss with Nadia, are not suitable material for the *Gazette*. He is particularly anxious about the idea of anonymous soldiers reading his thoughts and feelings, which was likely related to his *pudeur* and the culture of heroic masculinity in which he found himself.¹³⁹ Although Maréchal ultimately concedes to Nadia the permission to publish in the *Gazette* anything from his letter that she would like, she chooses to publish nothing concerning Maréchal's perspective on grief, keeping this to herself instead.¹⁴⁰ By early September of 1918—less than four months after their first personal correspondence—Boulanger and Maréchal appear to be in fairly regular and friendly contact. Maréchal has not yet begun to address her as “Chère amie”—a sure sign of friendship—but the rapport between the two is undeniable. Maréchal's letter of September 5 indicates that she is worried about his health, that she has shared with him how much her grief pains her, and that she has responded to his suggestion

¹³⁷ Maréchal to Nadia Boulanger, 15 May 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (4): “Je sais si bien le vide que doit vous laisser la disparition de votre chère petite soeur et je vous admire tant, de chercher une consolation dans la poursuite de l'oeuvre commence à vous deux. C'est très beau—vous permettez bien qu'en vous le dise?” Expressions that conveyed the sharing of grief were extraordinarily common in condolence letters exchanged within this group. Common phrases included expressions along the lines of “Je prends une grand part à votre douleur,” “Nous pleurons avec vous,” and “Je partage votre souffrance.”

¹³⁸ Maréchal to Nadia Boulanger, 26 May 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (6): “Peut-être pourrais-je mieux vous expliquer un jour de vive voix, pourquoi j'ai tant de mal à écrire pour la Gazette.”

¹³⁹ Ibid.: “Mais le sentiment que des inconnus lisent la Gazette suffit à arrêter chez moi tout besoin d'expansion. N'y voyez-là qu'un aveu quelque peu embarrassé . . . Je ne vois du reste aucun inconvenient à ce que vous fassiez paraître dans la Gazette tout ce que vous trouverez bon d'y mettre j'ai pleine confiance en vous et si vous croyez qu'il y a des nouvelles intéressantes...”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. and Maurice Maréchal, *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 10 (1918): 49-50; BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1).

that they speak in person by inviting him to spend time with her in Paris.¹⁴¹

The correspondence Nadia Boulanger received from the wife of the composer Paul Roussel in 1916 and 1917 also demonstrates how similar experiences of mourning engendered and solidified friendships. Paul Roussel was a prisoner of war, and his wife began regularly writing to the Comité Franco-Américain—the organization for which Nadia and Lili Boulanger worked that was responsible for publishing the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*—in 1916 after her husband went missing. Madame Roussel and Boulanger established a relationship centered largely on their respective worries and concomitant anticipatory grief concerning the health and wellbeing of their closest loved ones: Madame Roussel’s husband and Nadia’s sister. Madame Roussel communicates the extent to which Nadia’s sympathy—made all the more significant due to Nadia’s own grief—increased their closeness when she addresses her for the first time as “Chère grande amie,” and asks Nadia’s permission to address her in this way since “you took me under your protection at a time when I was, and when I still am, so distraught.”¹⁴²

Even in instances when friendship was already well established, the knowledge that someone had experienced a significant loss could bring a new and desired closeness. It becomes clear through reading the correspondence exchanged within this group of mourners that they were desperately seeking people with whom to share their grief, and often saw the grief of friends tragically and more recently thrown into mourning as an opportunity to share their otherwise unshareable feelings while also sympathetically and sensitively communicating that their friendship was a safe space in which to express grief to whatever extent they felt necessary. Nadia Boulanger, for instance, refers to the death of Raoul Pugno when she sends her

¹⁴¹ Maréchal to Nadia Boulanger, 5 September 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (6).

¹⁴² Madame Paul Roussel to Nadia Boulanger, undated but around 1917 or early 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (6): “Chère grande amie. Permettez moi de vous nommer ainsi, d’autant mieux que vous m’avez prise sous votre protection en un moment où j’étais, où je suis encore si désespérée...” Later in this letter she relates her grief as well as the grief of Paul’s parents to Nadia’s, writing that “You also have much sadness, kiss so sweetly your little Lili, I would like so much that she no longer suffers, that she gets better, I think of you very often.” (Vous aussi vous avez beaucoup de chagrin, embrassez bien doucement votre petite Lili je voudrais tant qu’elle ne souffre plus, qu’elle guérisse, bien souvent je pense à vous...).

condolences to Marguerite Long in October 1914.¹⁴³

Likewise, in Nadia Boulanger's correspondence with her student and lifelong friend Marcelle de Manziarly, she shifts how she discusses her grief over Lili's death after learning that Manziarly's brother has been severely wounded in the war. In the months just following Lili's death, Boulanger writes to Manziarly and her siblings, telling them that she hasn't wanted to leave her mother "during these terrible days." She refers obliquely to her grief: rather than articulating the sadness and pain she feels from Lili's death, she places this burden onto them, writing "I know that you know how much this pains me, that you understand my pain—and this is a tie between us."¹⁴⁴ Likewise, in a letter written on June 23, 1918 she makes only veiled references to how she's coping with her sister's death. Only a month later, however, on July 25, 1918, Boulanger writes on the occasion of Manziarly's brother's brush with death—a war injury that required the amputation of his right leg and nearly that of his left as well—that "Here now pain is between us—I now better understand the affection that attaches me to you." After articulating that their separate but still shared mourning has illuminated and strengthened their friendship, Boulanger writes "I have lived for years in this torture of thinking only of the suffering that was close to me, sharing it and trying to shed some light on it. It is therefore with all of my forever-wounded heart that I sympathize with you."¹⁴⁵ Nadia feels closer to Marcelle not just because they have both experienced grief, but because they have both experienced the worry and suffering that comes from anticipatory grief—the panicked, barely staved-off grief that arises in waiting for a death that you hope will never come to pass, but fear all the more due to its seeming inevitability.

¹⁴³ Boulanger to Marguerite Long, 27 October 1914, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance.

¹⁴⁴ Boulanger to Marcelle de Manziarly, et al., undated [March 1918?], BnF, Mus., NLA 289 [letter 28]: "Je sais que vous mesurez toute ma peine, que vous la comprenez—et c'est un lien de plus entre nous."

¹⁴⁵ Boulanger to Marcelle de Manziarly, 25 July 1918, BnF, Mus., NLA 289: "Voici que la douleur est entre nous—et je comprends mieux l'affection qui m'attache à toi . . . J'ai vécu des années dans cette torture de ne penser qu'à la douleur qui était près de moi, à la partager et à tenter de l'éclairer un peu. C'est donc de tout mon coeur à jamais meure que je te plains."

Ultimately, despite the difficulty and stigma of communicating their grief to someone, it was imperative for Nadia Boulanger, Ravel, Marguerite Long, Maurice Maréchal, Emma Debussy, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, and their peers to do so, even if this was done obliquely, or only in particular situations. As I will demonstrate in the three chapters that follow, music making offered Ravel and his grieving friends just such opportunities to perform and share their grief with one another.

Chapter 3

Sorrow, Patriotism, and Hope: Mourning Musically in Paris During World War I

And when after spending a good afternoon
Near Fontainebleau
We arrived in Paris
At the very moment of the mobilization
We realized my comrade and I
That the little car had driven us to a new epoch
And though we were full-grown men already
We'd just been born

Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Little Car*¹

With the call to mobilization on August 2, 1914, life changed drastically for many French musicians. Many of Ravel's acquaintances, if not already in the military, enlisted immediately and were sent to the front within the first months of the war, including Ravel's brother Edouard, Erik Satie, Jean Roger-Ducasse, Joseph de Marliave, Maurice Delage, Maurice Maréchal, and Florent Schmitt.² Others attempted to join the military but had to wait before being permitted to enlist. Ravel, for instance, was two kilograms underweight, and thus had to wait until spring 1915 to be admitted into the military. André Caplet, on the other hand, did not make it to the front lines until September 1915. The older generation of French musicians, including Claude Debussy, Charles Koechlin, Gabriel Pierné, Camille Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, and Vincent d'Indy, remained behind on the home front, as did female musicians like Nadia and Lili Boulanger. Regardless of whether they were on the front lines or the home front, however, the importance of national duty and sacrifice led everyone to find their own way to take part in the

¹ Guillaume Apollinaire, "The Little Car," in Donald Revell, ed. and trans., *The Self-Dismembered Man: Selected Later Poems of Guillaume Apollinaire* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 69-75; 75: "Et quand après avoir passé l'après-midi / Par Fontainebleau / Nous arrivâmes à Paris / Au moment où l'on affichait la mobilisation / Nous comprîmes mon camarade et moi / Que la petite auto nous avait conduits dans une époque nouvelle / Et bien qu'étant déjà tous deux des hommes mûrs / Nous venions cependant de naître."

² In a letter to Manuel de Falla in December 1914, Ravel tells de Falla what he knows of the whereabouts of their friends, including Schmitt, Delage, and Edouard. Maurice Ravel, letter to Manuel de Falla, 15 December 1914, in Arbie Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 157.

war effort, whether through volunteering at hospitals, working for charity organizations, or making music.

At the beginning of the war, composers often felt pessimistic about how much they could contribute to the war effort. This was in part because the French government ordered the closing of theaters and concert halls beginning in August 1914, and would not reopen them until at least early 1915, if not later. In the first year or so of the war, a number of Ravel's older musical comrades refused to compose altogether, arguing that musical work was a frivolous and unpatriotic activity, especially with thousands of men dying mere miles away. As late as October 1915, for instance, Saint-Saëns, when asked what he had been doing since the war had begun more than a year earlier, responded: "I've refused to write the ballet that I had planned to give at Monte-Carlo, I cannot sing when France suffers." Clearly annoyed by this line of questioning, Saint-Saëns added, "You want to release a review in the middle of the war and you ask me my advice? Here it is: take the money that you would use for this publication and give it to the wounded."³ Others agreed. Gustave Charpentier said that he "hadn't thought for a minute of making music," and André Gedalge—once Ravel's counterpoint teacher at the Conservatoire—said that, having no current project,

I don't think at all of music. Night and day, for the last year, I hear the battle rumbling on the horizon. If I were able to think of anything aside from those who, happier than me, are in the thick of it, I would want to write *la Marseillaise*. Unfortunately for me, it's already been written: in any case, like music, I hear, write and understand only it [*la Marseillaise*].⁴

³ Camille Saint-Saëns, cited in "Théâtres: La Musique pendant la guerre," *Le Temps*, 19 October 1915: "J'ai refusé d'écrire le ballet que je m'étais engagé à donner à Monte-Carlo. Je ne puis chanter lorsque la France souffre. Pour moi, la France avant tout, la musique ensuite et si, pour qu'elle sorte immédiatement victorieuse de cette horrible guerre, il suffisait que je m'engage à ne jamais écrire une note de ma vie, je briserais ma plume avec joie. Vous voulez faire paraître une revue en pleine guerre et vous me demandez un conseil? Le voici: prenez l'argent que vous destinez à cette publication et donnez-le pour les blessés."

⁴ Gustave Charpentier, cited in *Ibid.*: "qu'il n'avait pas songé une minute à faire de la musique." André Gedalge, cited in *Ibid.*: "Je ne pense à aucune musique. Nuit et jour, depuis un an, j'entends à l'horizon gronder la bataille. Si j'étais en état de penser à autre chose qu'à ceux qui, plus heureux que moi, sont dans la fournaise, je voudrais écrire *la Marseillaise*. Malheureusement pour moi, elle a été déjà écrite: en tout cas, comme musique, je n'entends, je n'écris et ne comprends qu'elle."

Debussy, Koechlin, and Ravel also felt ambivalent about how much they could contribute as composers but ultimately decided that “working for the fatherland by writing music”—as Ravel put it—was a worthwhile even if complicated task.⁵

For many, writing music and literature, and creating art for mourning during the war entailed addressing national political concerns. The establishment of the Union Sacrée on August 4, 1914 played a large role in the development of a national program of shared wartime values. This “sacred union” aimed to unify the French Republic by creating a united front that could benefit the nation at war. This entailed leftist and socialist political leaders who had previously opposed the war, even as recently as the summer of 1914, agreeing to refrain from striking.⁶ In addition to allowing the French Republic to present a united front against the Central Powers, French politicians hoped the Union Sacrée would increase support for the war effort and repair pre-war political and religious conflicts during the war in ways that might persist after the war’s end. Ostensibly eliminating left-wing dissension, however, resulted in what Regina Sweeney has termed a “wartime ethos” centered on right wing ideas and symbols. Sweeney contends that, “despite the apolitical rhetoric, symbols promoted by the radical right dominated. The constellation of symbols and ideas included a powerful nationalism, the glorification of the army and the French *poilu*, a hope of revanchism, and a perception of unity across all boundaries—which made the rhetoric of class divisions no longer legitimate.”⁷ The Union Sacrée thus promoted Republican ideas about national unity, brotherhood, and the

⁵ Ravel to Roland-Manuel, 1 October 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 155. I will discuss Debussy’s and Ravel’s ambivalence in greater detail later in this chapter in my analyses of their wartime occasional pieces. For more on Koechlin’s feelings about his role in the war, see Aude Caillet, “1914-1918. Rupture et renouveau: l’effort de guerre de Charles Koechlin,” in *La Grande Guerre des musiciens*, eds. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Esteban Buch, Myriam Chimènes, Georgie Durosoir (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 119-134.

⁶ Erin M. Brooks, “Sharing the Stage with the *Voix d’Or*: Sarah Bernhardt and Music in the Belle Époque” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2010), 516.

⁷ Regina Sweeney, *Singing Our Way to Victory: French Cultural Politics and Music During the Great War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 56.

importance of personal sacrifice, while permitting right wing nationalism, anti-pacifism, and pro-Catholic sentiments to flourish.

The invasion on August 4, 1914 of neutral Belgium by German troops passing through the country in order to reach France, as well as the destruction of the historic Reims Cathedral by a German shell on September 19, 1914 strengthened anti-German nationalism as well as pro-Catholic sentiments within French society. The German invasion of Belgium was commonly referred to as rape in contemporary discourse, with the Germans' atrocities, especially those perpetrated on women and children, recounted in French newspapers.⁸ This tragedy as well as the destruction of the Reims Cathedral led to widespread accounts of German "barbarism." As Erin Brooks has pointed out, the Reims Cathedral became a site of French memory, nationhood, and mourning, acting as "one of the unifying symbols of French wartime art, helping solidify French claims as cultural victim."⁹ Despite pre-war conflicts between anticlerical Republicans and the monarchist-supported Catholic Church, Catholic symbols gained popularity during the war not only because of the symbolic weight of the bombing of the Cathedral, but also due to the renewal of faith that occurred with the loss of so many lives, and the linkage in the French imagination between Germany and Protestantism. Annette Becker has explained, for instance, that for the French, "the Germans were a race of barbarians, situated somewhere between the Mongols and the Vandals, and of whom Martin Luther was both descendant and symbol."¹⁰

Much French wartime art, especially the many monuments designed as sites for mourning, reflect the collectivism and nationalism that were central to the Union Sacrée's idealist political unity, as well as the Catholic and right-wing symbolism that came to be

⁸ Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 50-51.

⁹ See Erin Brooks's discussion of the French public's response to the destruction of the Reims Cathedral in "Sharing the Stage," 516-518. Brooks as well as Marianne Wheeldon note Debussy's response to the destruction of the Reims Cathedral, which he considered an example of the "barbaric atavism" and "revolting brutality" of the Germans. See Brooks, 518, and the letter both she and Wheeldon cite: Claude Debussy, Letter to Jacques Durand, 30 September 1914. See Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 51.

¹⁰ Annette Becker, *War and Faith: The Religious Imagination in France, 1914-1930*, trans. Helen McPhail, foreword by Ken Inglis (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 11.

associated with it. In Antoine Prost's study of the French monuments built to commemorate and mourn the losses of the Great War, he points out that despite the ways in which the tens of thousands of monuments erected in France during the reconstruction exhibit a vast array of differences—often resulting from tensions between the national and the local, the religious and the political, and the public and the private—the singular goal and achievement of all of these monuments was to give expression to “the profound unity of their national conscience and of their adhesion to the Republican State.”¹¹ He argued that, “the monument is neither only a souvenir, nor a tomb: it is also an altar of the Homeland or the Republic.”¹² Prost also points out that many of the monuments built to honor the hundreds of thousands of citizens who gave their lives for France relied heavily on Christian symbolism. He explains that despite the French Republic's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century secularization efforts and the separation of Church and State in 1905—which ostensibly forbade religious symbols from being placed on public monuments—many of the interwar public monuments to the dead still came to be adorned with crosses and other symbols of Catholicism.¹³

Despite their tendency towards collectivism and Catholic symbolism, monuments and other cultural productions utilized for mourning showcased a variety of political viewpoints. Cultural historians like Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, Marilène Patten Henry, Stéphanie Petit, Antoine Prost, Daniel Sherman, and Jay Winter have demonstrated that mourning was an activity through which French citizens expressed national or local allegiance and concerns about who deserved to be remembered and how, as well as ideas about nationality,

¹¹ Antoine Prost, “Mémoires locales et mémoires nationales: Les Monuments de 1914-1918 en France,” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 167 (July 1992): 41-50; 50: “l'unité profond de leur conscience nationale et de leur adhesion à l'État républicain.”

¹² *Ibid.*, 50: “Le monument n'est pas seulement un souvenir, ni une tombe: c'est aussi un autel, celui de la Patrie ou de la République.”

¹³ *Ibid.*, 45-46. Prost clarifies that the State often tried to get local communities that had erected such monuments to take them down, or change the Christian crosses to “croix de guerres” (war crosses). He notes, however, that to his knowledge this was only successful on one occasion (see p. 46).

religion, race, and gender.¹⁴ Their work demonstrates that literary works, fashion, private performances of grief, and monuments constructed to honor the dead, were all important sites for the articulation and negotiation of ideas about how to mourn. In *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*, Daniel Sherman shows that representations of memory in commemorative literature, artwork, sculpture, and social practices like ceremonies were not only contingent upon various social, cultural and political dynamics such as the Union Sacrée, but also the result of a negotiation between individual and collective memory.¹⁵ Rather than understanding French postwar commemoration as one modality of a universal bereavement shared by all Europeans, or as a series of embodiments of an ideologically unified approach to remembrance, Sherman sees commemorative artworks as rich sites of struggle and resistance: between individual and collective remembrance, between public and private grief, between national and local aims, and between civilians' and combatants' rights to mourn.

For art music composers who wrote music for mourning during the war, composing offered a space for the expression of grief, as well as a site for the negotiation of personal and national political concerns. Judging from their letters, many composers were deeply affected by the invasion of Belgium and the destruction of the Reims Cathedral, and both events appear in

¹⁴ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Les Armes et la chair: Trois objets de mort en 14-18* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009); Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils de guerre (1914-1918)* (Paris: Noesis, 2001); Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, "Corps perdus, corps retrouvés: Trois exemples de deuils de guerre," *Annales* 55, no. 1 (January-February, 2000): 47-71; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *Histoire culturelle de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005); Annette Becker, "The Avant-Garde, Madness and the Great War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 1 (January 2000): 71-84; Annette Becker, "From Death to Memory: The National Ossuaries in France after the Great War," *History and Memory* 5, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 1993): 32-49; Annette Becker, *La Guerre et la foi: De la mort à la mémoire* (Paris: Armand-Colin, 1994); Annette Becker, "Guerre totale et troubles mentaux," *Annales: Histoire, sciences sociale* 55, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 2000): 135-151; Annette Becker, *Les Monuments aux morts: Patrimoine et mémoires de la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Ed. Errance, 1988); *La Grande Guerre des musiciens*, eds. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Esteban Buch, Myriam Chimènes, Luc Durosoir (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009); Stéphanie Petit, "Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre: Un deuil spécifique?" *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 198 (June 2000): 53-65; Stéphanie Petit, *Les Veuves de la Grande Guerre* (Amiens: Université Picardie-Jules Verne, 1998); Stéphanie Petit, "Les Veuves de la Grand Guerre ou le mythe de la veuve éternelle," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 197 (March 2000): 65-72 ; Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *Penser la Grande Guerre: Un Essai d'historiographie* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2004); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

¹⁵ Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*, 2.

musical works for mourning in this period.¹⁶ The Union Sacrée also had lasting effects on the art music world, especially in unifying previously competing or ideologically opposed musical organizations. This is exemplified by the creation of the Festivals de Musique Française and the Ligue Nationale pour la Défense de la Musique Française, as well as the merging of the Société Musicale Indépendante with the Société Nationale, and of the Concerts Colonne with the Concerts Lamoureux, although the latter was also a matter of necessity since both orchestras' performing forces were reduced as a result of the mobilization.¹⁷ The Ligue Nationale offers a good example of the Union Sacrée's tendency to privilege right-wing values since its leaders were primarily anti-German nationalists who in 1916 attempted to ban performances of contemporary Austro-German composers' works, much to the chagrin of more cosmopolitan composers like Ravel.¹⁸ The Union Sacrée's aims at political unification also find analogues in Jacques Rouché's attempts to program works at the Opéra during the war that were by composers who had been well-known for their opposing political ideologies in the pre-war period, as well as Jacques Durand's attempt to create a collective editorial endeavor. Durand's plea to other editors drew on the rhetoric of the Union Sacrée, and especially on the idea of personal sacrifice undertaken for the good of the nation; he suggests that editors "come to sacrifice at the altar of the collectivity in the name of the Union Sacrée."¹⁹ In addition, the Union Sacrée led musicians to compose, perform, or program music espousing nationalist symbols and

¹⁶ Debussy and Ravel mention the bombing of the Reims Cathedral in their letters from the fall of 1914. See Debussy to Durand, 30 September 1914, cited in Wheelton, *Debussy's Late Style*, 51; and Ravel to Maurice Delage, 21 September 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 155 n6. Erik Satie mentions the bombing as well in "A Mammal's Notebooks." See excerpts from these in *The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Dawn Ades (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 254-255.

¹⁷ For more on these mergers and new institutions, see Michel Duchesneau, "La Musique française pendant la Guerre 1914-1918: Autour de la tentative de fusion entre la Société Nationale de Musique et de la Société Musicale Indépendante," *Revue de musicologie* 82, no. 1 (1996): 123-153.

¹⁸ See *Ibid.*; Michel Duchesneau, *L'Avant-garde musicale et ses sociétés à Paris de 1871 à 1939* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 1997); Maurice Ravel, letter to Ligue Nationale pour la défense de la musique française, 7 June 1916, in Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader*, 169. It should be noted that the Ligue Nationale put a fair amount of pressure on composers like Ravel to sign their petition, for instance through slightly veiled threats to inhibit performances of their works; see Duchesneau, "La Musique française pendant la Guerre 1914-1918," 132, and Roger Nichols, *Ravel*, 184-85.

¹⁹ Jane Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25; Jacques Durand, *Quelques souvenirs d'un éditeur de musique* (Paris: A. Durand et fils, 1924), 70, cited and trans. in Fulcher, 44: "venir sacrifier à l'autel de la collectivité au nom de l'Union Sacrée."

values. This was especially the case for the many composers who felt compelled to write music as a way of contributing to the national war effort.

The music composers wrote expressly for mourning between 1914 and 1918 took a wide variety of shapes. While some composers wrote large-scale, monumental compositions designed for collective and public mourning, others created compositions using popular and easily recognizable symbols of national mourning like anthems and funeral marches. Still others crafted intimate and personal expressions of grief seemingly geared towards private musical performance. Regardless of their choice of medium, however, most composers wrote music in support of the war effort that responded to current events while engaging with a nationalistic French wartime politics of mourning that ultimately framed loss and mourning optimistically. Personal loss was considered the result of tragic but ultimately necessary sacrifice made in the interest of the collective good of the nation and France's eventual victory. Much of the music composers wrote for mourning thus provided French audiences not only with a space for public national mourning, but also the persistent hope that their suffering would be worthwhile.

As I show in this chapter, this State-aligned politics of mourning is evident to varying degrees in compositions written between 1914 and 1918 by Gabriel Pierné, Claude Debussy, Lili and Nadia Boulanger, Florent Schmitt, Reynaldo Hahn, André Caplet, and, to a lesser extent, Maurice Ravel. The large-scale "Prélude" for orchestra and chorus that Gabriel Pierné wrote as the opening for Sarah Bernhardt's and Eugène Morand's 1915 play *Les Cathédrales* facilitated collective mourning while instilling hope for victory in French publics. Moreover, the compositions Debussy wrote for mourning during the war demonstrate his sorrow over wartime losses, but also his anti-German politics and the need he experienced to shape the optimism/pessimism of his musical mourning for different publics. Nadia Boulanger's intimate expression of musical mourning, "Soir d'hiver," reveals her concerns with women's mourning during the war, and her understanding of mourning as an ultimately productive activity in both national and personal terms. Similarly, the music written for mourning by musician-soldiers

Florent Schmitt and Reynaldo Hahn express the contemporary concerns of French soldiers—discussed at greater length in chapter 1—that their sacrifices be remembered and rewarded. On the other hand, André Caplet’s wartime songs reflect the Catholic renewal that occurred during the war through underlining that appealing to God through prayer could assuage the pain of grief. Finally, Ravel’s 1914/1915 song for unaccompanied choir, “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis” offers a melancholically ambivalent rather than optimistic expression of mourning, and thus demonstrates how his commitment to patriotism and personal sacrifice was tinged by what I believe was a subtle resistance to France’s nationalistic wartime politics of mourning. Taken together, these compositions demonstrate the predominance of Parisian composers’ tendencies to espouse the nationalistic, pro-sacrifice, and optimistic politics of mourning preferred by the French State between 1914 and 1918. They also provide a frame for my discussion in chapters 4 and 5 of how Ravel’s response to public and collectivist cultures of French mourning emerges in his post-1917 compositions.

Mourning Musically in France during World War I: Some General Characteristics

In Sophie-Anne Leterrier’s enlightening study of French circumstantial music of World War I, she argues that, while “musique de guerre” (war music) does not constitute a genre in and of itself, several features are common in much of the music composers created in response to the war.²⁰ For instance, many of the compositions intended for mourning employed rich and varied, but also distinctly symbolic instrumentation, including wind instruments evocative of the Revolution’s outdoor funeral ceremonies, brass instruments associated with martial *topoi*, and percussion, which became specifically linked with funeral marches. Not unexpectedly, composers preferred organs and bells for liturgical references, and harps and celeste for depictions of heaven. By and large, works for mourning featured voices—whether in the form of

²⁰ Sophie-Anne Leterrier, “Culture de guerre et musique nationale: La Musique française dans la Grande Guerre,” in *Chef-d’oeuvres de circonstances* (Dainville, France: Archives Départementales du Pas-de-Calais, 2000), 15-38; 27. Leterrier’s short study offers an excellent overview of the conventions of French circumstantial music written during World War I. The observations I present in this section are based on her research. See Leterrier, 24-33.

a choir, a vocal soloist, or both—in part due to their ability to actively dramatize and humanize mourning in ways that produced identification, especially through representations of the army, communities of or individual mourners, or of the collective community of France’s war dead. Given that the army and France’s war dead comprised only men, many of these choruses were written for male performers.

In addition to these timbral conventions, music for mourning utilized harmonic, melodic, textual, and genre conventions in order to create sonic spaces for mourning the war’s losses. Aside from the funeral march *topos*, composers frequently relied on contrasts between major and minor keys, as well as on shifts between fast-paced, animated music and slower, lamenting music in order to dramatize suffering and mourning, as well as the turn to optimistic and hopeful perspectives on loss.²¹ As examples of writing of this kind, Leterrier cites Florent Schmitt’s *Chant de guerre*, Henri Büsser’s *Hymne à la France*, and the majority of Auguste Macquet’s pieces, including his *Hymne aux morts de la Grande Guerre*. Leterrier notes as well that much of the vocal writing in music designed for mourning underlines suffering by challenging vocalists to sing in registers that could communicate emotional or physical pain.²² Moreover, composers frequently interpolated music from French hymns and patriotic songs, as well as from liturgical music, in order to quickly evoke sonic symbols of national pride or solemn lament.

Composers were especially fond of religious reflections on loss during the war. Leterrier suggests that this was due in part to soldiers’ experiences. She writes,

For many soldiers, the war was a religious experience . . . During the war, moments of passion were able to become moments of deliverance; music didn’t diminish the horror of the massacre, but it carried, at its very core, a principle of hope, and had been able to sustain, to nourish, to reach even the man ‘without religion,’ giving him a voice with which to summon and celebrate. Music therefore contributes to the

²¹ Ibid., 28. The passing from suffering to joy is something that Leterrier addresses as a common theme in her article. A number of circumstantial compositions begin with lamentation and end with the rejoicing experienced upon France’s victory. Camille Saint-Saëns’s *Cyprès et Lauriers* (1921) is a good post-war example of this trend.

²² Ibid., 28-29.

nationalism of which the cult of dead soldiers would become an integral part between the two wars, and to its definition as a civil religion.²³

Indeed, many composers drew on religious rhetoric during the war, and a large number of compositions written for mourning were religious works for voice. A handful of French composers wrote requiems, including Marc Delmas, Alexandre Georges, Guy Ropartz, E. Delaunay, and Abbé J. Fabre. Only the last two composers published their requiems in the teens, and neither seems to have been well known.²⁴ More common were settings of Catholic texts, or musical references to Catholic musical traditions. While some composers chose to set liturgical texts, composing requiems or merely parts of them (i.e. Pie Jesu), others chose to set Catholic poetry or texts that had religious undertones or were calls to prayer. Even when a Catholic text wasn't chosen, references to France's Catholic history appeared in musical references to or quotations of the liturgy. Even more present in the compositions French musicians and audiences used for mourning, however, is the musical development and affirmation of what Leterrier terms the post-1914 civil religion: the nationalist commitment of French citizens to the idea of a unified France willing to make a whole host of sacrifices for a single cause.²⁵

Mourning, Brotherhood, and Hope: Gabriel Pierné, *Les Cathédrales*, and French Republican Mourning

Premiered at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt on November 6, 1915 and performed fourteen times in Paris during November and December, Gabriel Pierné's "Prélude" for *Les Cathédrales*

²³ Ibid., 32: "La guerre a été pour beaucoup de combattants une expérience religieuse . . . Pendant la guerre, les instants de ferveur ont pu être des instants de délivrance; la musique n'a pas diminué l'horreur du massacre, mais elle a apporté, en son sein même, un principe d'espoir, et pu soutenir, nourrir, relier même l'homme 'sans religion,' lui donner une voix pour appeler et pour célébrer. La musique contribue donc à ce que le culte des soldats morts devienne partie intégrante du nationalisme entre les deux guerres, et à sa définition comme religion civile."

²⁴ Marc Delmas, *Messe de Requiem* (1925); Alexandre Georges, *Messe de Requiem* (1923); Guy Ropartz, *Requiem* (1937-1938); E. Delaunay, *Requiem. Cantique funèbre et patriotique* (1917); Abbé J. Fabre, *Messe de Requiem à 3 voix égales ou inégales alternées avec le chant de l'église Vaticane* (1915). Ropartz's requiem was premiered in 1938, and Georges's in 1927. Ropartz's requiem garnered quite a bit of popularity, but I've seen little information about Georges's work. One author who cites a review of the premiere—which took place at the consecration of the Lorette chapel in 1927—is Annette Becker in *War and Faith*, 129.

²⁵ This idea of a "région civile" that developed during the war is addressed at length by Becker in *War and Faith*.

reflects in myriad ways the collective Republican mourning embodied in monuments to the dead during and after the war.²⁶ In addition to espousing many of the musical conventions of French national mourning outlined by Leterrier, Pierné's "Prélude" was also considered by critics to be an important vehicle for French mourning. Written for Sarah Bernhardt by the playwright and artist Eugène Morand, *Les Cathédrales* is an allegorical play that stages national mourning, as well as France's hoped-for victory. Easily understood as a response to the bombing of Reims Cathedral, Morand's play depicts five French cities' beloved, ancient cathedrals bemoaning their fates at the hands of the German eagle. Due to the brave actions undertaken by the Strasbourg cathedral—played by Sarah Bernhardt—the German eagle falls to its death in the Rhine at the end of the play. Critics of the play lauded Bernhardt's performance, as well as the play itself, which they asserted was important in creating both an opportunity to mourn and a glimmer of hope for French audiences. Bernhardt's contemporaries heard her voice as "crying on our ruins and our dead," and understood the tears she cried on stage as carrying a ray of hope for France's eventual victory.²⁷ Her voice—especially when "mixed with the penetrating harmonies of Gabriel Pierné's symphony"—was also praised for "lulling the agony of the dying, the sleep of the dead."²⁸ In addition to her voice, Bernhardt's body was considered a symbol of wartime mourning by French audiences since a 1915 leg amputation left her seeming to embody on the French stage the ubiquitous presence of French soldiers wounded in the war.²⁹

²⁶ See Brooks, "Sharing the Stage," 514-555. In her dissertation, Brooks extensively discusses not only the "Prélude", but also the other five musical numbers that exist in published scores (see p. 524). I focus my discussion here for the most part on Pierné's "Prélude", in part because scores and recordings are far more accessible for this piece than the others. I would also like to thank Esteban Buch for bringing Pierné's "Prélude" to my attention during his seminar *Musique et Politique dans XXème siècle* at the École des Haute Études en Sciences Sociales in February 2013.

²⁷ Régis Gignoux, "Les Théâtres: Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt," *Le Figaro*, 8 November 1915: "Tendre pour pleurer sur nos ruines et nos morts, sa voix s'éleva, crépitante comme une flamme, pour condamner et pour maudire.[...] Et, dans ses larmes et de femmes, elle avait le rayonnement de la victoire qu'elle venait d'appeler, d'amener..."

²⁸ Adolphe Brisson, "Chronique Théâtrale," *Le Temps*, 15 November 1915: "La Voix, mêlée aux harmonies pénétrantes de la symphonie du musicien Gabriel Pierné, se fait tendre pour bercer l'agonie des mourants, le sommeil des morts."

²⁹ Brooks, "Sharing the Stage," 500-564.

Pierné's "Prélude" to *Les Cathédrales* is a dramatic composition for mixed chorus and large orchestra. Prior to composing the "Prélude," Pierné had garnered experience in composing dramatic music not only from his teachers at the Conservatoire—Jules Massenet and César Franck—but also from having written the incidental music for several of Bernhardt's plays in the 1890s. Pierné had also chosen to set a number of Catholic-themed works for voice and orchestra before turning to the project of *Les Cathédrales*, including his oratorios *La Croisade des enfants* (1905), *Les Enfants à Bethléem* (1907), and *Saint François d'Assise* (1912), and the symphonic poem (with chorus) *L'An mil* (1898).³⁰ In his "Prélude," Pierné draws on a variety of recognizable wartime musical symbolism, stunning instrumental effects, and leitmotivic engagement with his musical material, in order to create a nine-minute-long stand-alone piece that sounds stylistically like Wagner, Mahler, or Liszt, all composers with whom he would have become familiar either through his training with Massenet, or through conducting their works for the Concerts Colonne. Few of Pierné's letters or personal materials survive that might tell us more about Pierné's political position vis-à-vis the French war effort or French nationalism. As Erin Brooks has suggested, however, Pierné may have stood behind the war's *revanchist* politics since his family had lived in Lorraine until the French territory was brought under German control during the Franco-Prussian war, at which time they moved to Paris.³¹

The "Prélude" sets the stage for Morand's play with ABA form that not only provides a dramatic and evocative opening for what follows, but also delivers an effective musical analogue for the public, collective, and Catholic-oriented wartime mourning that Morand's play both engendered and depicted. This form gives Pierné the opportunity to create powerful musical-affective shifts through strategic key and tempo changes that align with shifts in instrumentation. The "Prélude" opens with a somber and dismal mood that matches the

³⁰ Ibid., 523.

³¹ Ibid., 522-23.

opening scene of the play—a misty and war-torn French battlefield at dusk.³² The B section then provides a stark contrast to the A section in a shift to B major, complete with harps, harmonium, and chorus, before returning to the somber affect of the initial A section, although here associated more explicitly with mourning through Pierné’s addition of distant tolling funeral bells in the “Prélude”’s final pages.

One of the most striking features of this composition is the extent to which Pierné uses the French national anthem in creating a vehicle for public mourning. The opening phrase of the “Marseillaise” appears no less than ten times in this short piece. It first appears in the opening measures of the “Prélude” in the lowest registers of the orchestra: bass clarinet, contrabassoon, and the cellos and basses play a “somber and expressive” rendering of the first four measures of the anthem over the ominous tremolo of the timpani. This potent and nearly instantaneous signifier of French national mourning is passed amongst the instruments of the orchestra; aside from the opening and closing statements of the theme in the low strings and woodwinds, Pierné usually gives the anthem to the orchestra’s brass. In the A sections, the “Marseillaise” is most often presented chromatically so as to convey the fear and anxiety of French citizens at war.

Figure 3.1: Gabriel Pierné, “Prélude” for *Les Cathédrales* (Paris: Rouart, Lerolle & Cie, 1916), mm. 1-5: the chromatic rendering of the “Marseillaise” that opens the “Prélude.”

The image shows a musical score for four string parts: Violons (Violins), Altos, Violoncelles (Violoncelles), and Contrebasses (Double Basses). The score is for measures 1-5. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked "Lento non troppo". The Violoncelles and Contrebasses parts are marked "sombre et expressif" and "pp molto legato". The Violoncelles part also includes "couri" and "meno pp" markings.

³² The programmatic note that prefaces the musical score reads, “Ciel de crépuscule. Plaine dévastée, submergée de brouillard et noyée de brume, une plaine du Nord entres les tranchées.” Or, “The sky at twilight. A devastated plain submerged in fog and mist, in the north of France near the trench line.” I use Brooks’s translation on pp. 526-527 of “Sharing the Stage.” Brooks has provocatively argued that this “northern fog” might be coded reference to German musical traditions (see p. 528).

The “Marseillaise” was an obvious choice for a composition intended to both represent and elicit French mourning. Although it had remained controversial in the early to mid-1870s due to its revolutionary associations, the song’s popularity in 1879—after Republicans came to control the Senate—led the *Chambre des Députées* to name it France’s national hymn in February of the same year.³³ As Jann Pasler has pointed out, the song was valued for the ways in which it embodied republican values:

People alluded to the same effects that had impressed revolutionaries: its powerful influence on crowds, its call to ‘patriotism, courage, honor, disinterestedness, and all the civic and military virtues,’ its exaltation of liberty and independence, and especially its irresistible music, whose ‘energy’ infused the ears of all who heard it and united them in shared sentiment. However, it was not so much as a song of war that it appealed to them, but rather as a song of brotherhood (*fraternité*) and ‘universal peace,’ as well as the ‘sacred song of a new religion,’ namely, patriotism.³⁴

Regina Sweeney confirms that during the war the “Marseillaise” was a potent example of the *Union Sacrée*’s preference for the French right’s values over leftist values like antimilitarism, anticlericalism, attention to class divisions, and internationalism, citing examples of the “Marseillaise” being sung in response to the leftist socialist anthem, “Internationale” at the beginning of the war.³⁵ With France’s participation in this new conflict, the “Marseillaise”’s associations with peace dissipated, and it became a strong symbol of France at war. As a representation of the French nation and its republican values the “Marseillaise” could be understood as an inspiring call to arms, a reminder of the importance of patriotism, brotherhood, and courage, and, when rendered chromatic and ominous, a powerful signifier of France’s material and personal losses.

Far more uplifting than the somber A sections, the B section of the “Prélude”’s ABA form embodies the spirit and hope of France (mm. 46-84). Here Pierné pulls out all the stops: in B/C-flat major, celestial harp arpeggios underlay expansive, upwardly soaring melodies and open-

³³ Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2009), 278, 339.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 339.

³⁵ Sweeney, *Singing Our Way to Victory*, 59-60.

harmonic chords in the brass as a wordless choir enters, doubled by a harmonium (See Figure 3.2). This collective of mixed voices in a “heavenly” idiom suggests that Pierné was attempting to represent the spiritual and political efficacy of France under the Union Sacrée, but also unified across multiple generations.³⁶ This latter theme was common in World War I-era propaganda, for instance in the poster in Figure 3.3 below that depicts generation upon generation of French soldiers leading seamlessly into one another, lending strength and determination to the French soldiers of today. Pierné underlines the importance of taking up arms in France’s defense through the use of martial topics in the second half of the B section (mm. 67-76). First, we hear a lone trumpet play two hopeful major-key repetitions of the “Marseillaise” (mm. 59-62), followed by the entrance at Rehearsal 9 (mm. 67-76) of a snare drum playing a martial pattern. At this point the choir and harmonium drop out, but the harps and brass become more excited, more confident, increasing in volume and tempo as they seem to herald France’s victory in layered major-key repetitions of the “Marseillaise.”

Just as the piece reaches its climax, however, tragedy strikes. At Rehearsal 10 (m. 77), France’s rising hope, fueled by the excitement of battle, is replaced by plummeting disappointment. Pierné composes a dramatically chromatic descent—based on the descending dotted rhythm in the second measure of the “Marseillaise”—in all voices, including those of the wordless chorus, which enters singing in a “plaintive” manner at this precise moment (See Figure 3.4). This is easily one of the most unsettling moments of the “Prélude.” After this musically fashioned fall from grace, a glimmer of hope sounds in the prettily harmonized statement of the “Marseillaise” in the trumpets and horns, played within the nearly silent sound environment of only a contrabass pedal, the intermittent plucking of a cello, and the distant cadence of a gently played martial pattern on the timpani (mm. 84-88). Pierné has the “Prélude”

³⁶ As Brooks has pointed out in her analysis of Pierné’s “Prélude” to *Les Cathédrales*, wordless choirs were rather in vogue in early twentieth-century Paris, and utilized by a variety of composers to create an otherworldly affect. Brooks suggests that Pierné’s use of wordless chorus in the “Prélude,” “emphasizes otherworldliness by evoking the voices of the cathedrals themselves, or at least the ethereal representation of a religious atmosphere.” See Brooks, “Sharing the Stage,” 529.

Figure 3.2: Gabriel Pierné, “Prélude” for *Les Cathédrales* (Paris: Rouart, Lerolle & Cie, 1916), mm. 43-50: B section begins at Rehearsal 6 (m. 46).

The image displays a page of a musical score for Gabriel Pierné's "Prélude" from the opera *Les Cathédrales*. The score is arranged in two systems. The left system includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Horns (Hb.), Clarinet in A (Cl.), Clarinet in Bb (Cl.B.), Bassoon (Bso), Bassoon in C (C.B.), Cor Anglais (Cors), Trumpet (Ttp.), Timpani (Timp.), and Gong/Cymbal (G.C.). The right system includes parts for Trombone (Btb.), Clarinet in A (Cl.), Clarinet in Bb (Cl.B.), Bassoon (Bso), Bassoon in C (C.B.), Horns (Cors), Trumpet (Ttp.), Trombone (Ttb.), Horns (Horn), and Bassoon (Bso). The score features various musical notations, including dynamics like *poco rall.*, *Le double plus lent*, and *BATTEZ à 8*. There are also rehearsal marks and performance instructions such as "à def. d'un bon Trb. solo" and "à def. de Chœurs".

Figure 3.3: Fraipont, “France toujours! France quand même!” (Paris: Editions Delandre, 1914-1918), Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center, George F. Tyler Poster Collection, Allied Posters of World War I. Accessed online 13 November 2013 <http://digital.library.temple.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16002coll9/id/3362/rec/1>.



Figure 3.4: Gabriel Pierné, “Prélude” for *Les Cathédrales* (Paris: Rouart, Lerolle & Cie, 1916), mm. 76-83.

waffle between hope and despair in following this statement of the “Marseillaise” with two echoes of the final three-note fragment (played in chords) of the first phrase of the anthem in the trombones—the first landing on a G minor seventh chord, and the second on a more hopeful sonority evoking G major (mm. 89-93). Then the funeral bell tolls and the choir enters (mm. 94), this time chanting the litany, “O Domine Exaudis Nos” (“Oh God Please Hear Us”). After eight measures of prayer over sparse instrumentation, the strings plead and swell one last time (mm. 102-103). But the return of the chromatically descending partial “Marseillaise” motive—first in the strings and then hauntingly in the wordless chorus—leads to two final repetitions of the “Marseillaise” precisely recalling the low-register, chromatic statements of the anthem that opened the “Prélude” (mm. 112-121). Pierné’s punctuates these mournful repetitions with tolling funeral bells and *bouche fermée* chords in the choir.

While Pierné's "Prélude" ends despondently, Morand's and Bernhardt's play recuperates these mournful moments as part of a trajectory towards eventual victory. Adolphe Brisson described the final scene and Pierné's spectacular music in his review: "In a terrifying crescendo, the orchestra and the chorus swell with the rolling of the drums, the sounding of the trumpets, the thundering of the cannon, the distressed murmurs of the multitudes. Sarah's words sail over these innumerable sounds and become intertwined finally with the warm accents of a victorious *Marseillaise*."³⁷ In addition to providing a space for mourning, then, *Les Cathédrales*, with the help of Pierné's music, also staged the values considered most important to winning the war: brotherhood, hope, ancestral French strength and perseverance, and the necessity of sacrifice in order to achieve victory.

Debussy and the Shaping of Musical Mourning for Different Wartime Publics

Debussy's wartime compositions reflect his desire to contribute to the war effort through music. They also reveal, as Marianne Wheeldon has suggested, that he fashioned his responses to wartime tragedies in relation to the different publics for which he was composing.³⁸ Depressed by his inability to participate in the war, and saddened by what he considered the insignificance of his contribution to the war effort, Debussy wrote to Jacques Durand just after the start of the war: "What I am doing seems so wretchedly small. I've got to the state of envying Satie who, as a corporal, is really going to defend Paris."³⁹ At the beginning of the war, Debussy found that he could barely compose, writing to Durand just two days after the bombing of Reims Cathedral on September 21, 1914 that since the beginning of the war he had "not written a note

³⁷ Brisson, "Chronique Théâtrale": "Dans un terrifiant crescendo, l'orchestre et les chœurs se gonflent du roulement des tambours, de la sonnerie des clairons, du mugissement de la cannonade, des confuses rumeurs de la multitude. Le verbe de Sarah domine ces bruits innombrables et s'unit à la fin aux chauds accents d'une *Marseillaise* victorieuse."

³⁸ Wheeldon, "Public and Private: Wartime Occasional Pieces," in *Debussy's Late Style*, 20-54.

³⁹ Claude Debussy to Jacques Durand, 8 August 1914, in François Lesure and Roger Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, trans. Roger Nichols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 291; cited in Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 87.

nor touched a piano,” a reflection that saddened him because he felt that “at my age, time lost is lost forever.”⁴⁰ But Debussy returned to composing shortly thereafter, writing a handful of circumstantial pieces between 1914 and 1916 explicitly in response to the war, including *Berceuse héroïque*, “Noël des enfants qui n’ont plus de maisons,” *En blanc et noir*, and a short *Élégie*.⁴¹ Debussy’s musical responses to the war were not as monumental as Pierné’s, and yet in the works that he composed explicitly for wartime mourning, he often relied on the musical and textual rhetoric common to French national mourning. Although these pieces showcase very different takes on mourning, all three convey through conventional symbols not only the sense of loss Debussy felt—for friends who died, for his inability to compose, for the destruction of his beloved homeland, and for his own inability to participate in the war—but also his allegiance to the French Republic.

Berceuse héroïque was the first piece that Debussy composed after France’s mobilization. Composed in 1914 and 1915 for the *King Albert’s Book*, *Berceuse héroïque* is a tribute to the Belgian soldiers who fought and died during the first days of the war in their efforts to prevent the German invasion of France.⁴² Debussy relies on a combination of national musical references and martial musical gestures to convey Belgium’s wartime losses. Debussy composes affective contrast through a quotation of the Belgian national anthem “La Brabançonne” in the middle of the piece; it functions here like a short B section between two larger A sections (mm. 38-48). The majority of the piece embodies a somber affect through Debussy’s use of pentatonicism, a slow tempo, and low register; this is particularly evident in the

⁴⁰ Debussy to Jaques Durand, 21 September 1914, in François Lesure, Denis Herlin, and Georges Liébert, eds., *Correspondance (1872-1918)* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 1846-1847; cited and trans. in Watkins, *Proof through the Night*, 88.

⁴¹ Debussy also composed *Ode à la France* during the war, but I do not discuss it here because it remained incomplete during Debussy’s lifetime. However, like the other pieces of Debussy’s I discuss here, *Ode à la France* drew on contemporary conventions for musical mourning such as “tolling bells and a soldier’s chorus.” See Brooks, “Sharing the Stage,” 525; and Watkins, *Proof through the Night*, 116-121.

⁴² Debussy dedicates the piece “to pay homage to King Albert I of Belgium and his soldiers” (“pour rendre Hommage à S.M. le Roi Albert 1er de Belgique et à ses Soldats”).

composition's opening measures. In her lengthy analysis of this piece, Marianne Wheeldon reads the slow and plodding quarter-note ostinato in the pianist's left hand that opens the piece as indicative of the "march-like tread" of a funeral dirge (mm. 1-20).⁴³ The "berceuse" of Debussy's title thus suggests that this piece is a lullaby for the men still marching to their deaths, those who have already died, or perhaps for those still living—like Debussy—who mourn them. This opening section also features folk-tune-esque melodic material in the right hand that Wheeldon has termed "processional music" (mm. 11-20), as well as major key clarion calls that bring with them clear sonic connections to the war (mm. 21-24).⁴⁴

The centerpiece of the movement is Debussy's quotation of "La Brabançonne" that appears at m. 38. He creates an affective shift by setting the anthem in C major, and indicates that it should be played "proudly" (*fièrement*), although also *piano* and "calmer" (*plus calme*). Wheeldon has noted that Debussy added additional symbolism for the pianistic performer here by asking her to play it, along with the A section's clarion calls, not only in a major key, but also on the piano's white keys; the E flat minor material of the rest of the A sections, by contrast, is performed using black keys.⁴⁵ The anthem fades away almost as quickly as it appeared: after one brief statement—only five measures long—of the anthem's opening, Debussy has the pianist perform fragments of "La Brabançonne" in D flat minor, a musical technique that Glenn Watkins has pointed out Debussy had used once before, in his *Préludes* for piano written several years earlier, to "suggest the tune as heard from a distance."⁴⁶

After "La Brabançonne" and its fragments fade away, Debussy returns to the *Berceuse*'s opening material. Wheeldon observes that when Debussy returns to the march/lullaby theme, the folk-like processional music, and the clarion calls of the opening, he "undoes much of the

⁴³ Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style*, 22.

⁴⁴ Debussy brings these out even more in his orchestral score for this piece, scoring them for trumpet.

⁴⁵ Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style*, 22-23.

⁴⁶ Watkins, *Proof through the Night*, 88-89.

Figure 3.5: Claude Debussy, *Berceuse Héroïque* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1915; repr. Mineola, FL: Dover Publications, 1992), mm. 37-48: quotation of “La Brabançonne.”

The image shows a musical score for Claude Debussy's *Berceuse Héroïque*, specifically measures 37-48. The score is presented in three systems. The first system is marked "Plus calme" and "p fièrement". The second system is marked "Revenir progressivement au Mouvt" and "expressif". The third system is marked "p" and "m.g.". The score features a piano accompaniment with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by Debussy's signature style of impressionistic harmony and rhythmic flexibility.

narrative work” of the piece’s first section, “dismantling little by little the distinctive features of each topic and thereby the extra-musical resonance associated with each idea.”⁴⁷ She points out that the “march-like tread . . . ceases entirely,” while the clarion calls are subsumed into the E-flat minor harmony rather than standing out in C major as they had in the opening (see mm. 61-66). Wheeldon’s analysis of Debussy’s orchestration of the *Berceuse* demonstrates that Debussy significantly altered the composition’s four final measures, adding another statement of “La Brabançonne” for solo horn, and ending the movement with another statement of the clarion call played by the trumpets.

⁴⁷ Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 24.

Debussy had misgivings about this composition, as did his critics. He felt that war and art, and more specifically war and music, did not make “for a good marriage.”⁴⁸ He wrote to Stravinsky in October 1915 that, “music is in a bad situation here . . . It only serves charitable purposes . . . war is a state of mind contradictory to thought.”⁴⁹ To Robert Godet in January 1915, he spoke of his regrets concerning *Berceuse héroïque*, which he said was “very hard [to write], especially as the ‘Brabançonne’ stirs no heroic thoughts in the breast of those who weren’t brought up with it . . . It’s the best I could do, feeling the continued proximity of hostilities as a physical restraint.”⁵⁰ After its premiere at the Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux on October 26, 1915, Émile Vuillermoz described Debussy’s *Berceuse héroïque* as embodying “the format of a condolence card, written in chosen and circumspect terms, with a discreet salute to a shredded flag.”⁵¹ He relays that the piece has been generally misunderstood, and displays his own displeasure with the composition in writing, “let’s hope that the author of *Pelléas* had wanted to express only an essentially provisional opinion on the situation of our [allied forces].”⁵² In a letter written to Vuillermoz the same day in which this article appeared in *Le Temps*, Debussy defends the composition: “This lullaby is: melancholy and discreet and the ‘Brabançonne’ doesn’t make a racket. If you don’t hear enough of the ravaging of Belgium in it, let’s say no more on the subject.” He closes his letter by asserting that, “there’s no way of writing war music in wartime. To be honest, there’s no such thing as war music, as you know!”⁵³ Vuillermoz and other critics felt that Debussy’s expression of nationally-oriented grief was too

⁴⁸ Debussy, letter of 1914, in Watkins, *Proof through the Night*, 90.

⁴⁹ Debussy to Stravinsky, 24 October 1915, in Lesure, Herlin, Liébert, eds., *Correspondance*, 1952-53; cited and trans. in Watkins, 90-91.

⁵⁰ Debussy to Robert Godet, dated 1 January 1915, in Lesure and Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, 294-295.

⁵¹ Émile Vuillermoz, “Musique de Guerre,” *Le Temps*, 25 January 1916: “le format d’une carte de condoléances, rédigée en termes choisis et circonspects, avec un discret salut au drapeau déchiré.”

⁵² *Ibid.*: “L’auteur de *Pelléas* n’a voulu exprimer, espérons-le, sur la situation de nos allies qu’une opinion personnelle essentiellement provisoire.”

⁵³ Debussy to Émile Vuillermoz, 25 January 1916, in Lesure and Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, 313.

understated, thus failing, as Wheeldon has put it, “to provide the requisite pomp or patriotism” wartime audiences expected, and which they would receive just two weeks later in Pierné’s “Prélude” to *Les Cathédrales*.⁵⁴

As Wheeldon and Watkins have both pointed out, Debussy consciously took care to avoid the subtlety of his *Berceuse héroïque* with the next wartime composition he composed: the song “Noël des enfants qui n’ont plus de maison.” Composed in late 1915, this song presents a less ambiguous message than *Berceuse héroïque*. In “Noël des enfants,” Debussy mourns the plight of children orphaned by the war’s tragedies, coming “suspiciously close to being an unabashed piece of heart-tugging propaganda,” in Watkins’s reading.⁵⁵ The song is essentially a prayer, set to a text Debussy wrote himself. After explaining that the Germans have taken away their homes, their parents, and burnt down their churches—surely a reference to the German bombing of the Reims Cathedral—the children in Debussy’s Christmas carol call on the infant Jesus to punish the Germans, and help the children of France, Serbia, and Belgium by “Giv[ing] them back their daily bread.” Debussy closes the song by pleading, “Give victory to the children of France!”⁵⁶ After performances of the song in the fall of 1916 and the spring of 1917, Debussy shared the song’s public success with Paul Dukas, attributing its triumph to his text: “I can also verify how our public remains attached to the same sentimental songs! . . . ‘Mama is dead; Papa is off to war; we have no more little shoes; we would like bread more than toys’; and to conclude: ‘Victory to the children of France,’ It’s no more cunning than that? It is only that it goes straight to the heart of the citizenry.”⁵⁷ Debussy understood this song, and especially its text as “the only way I have to fight the war.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 30.

⁵⁵ Watkins, *Proof through the Night*, 106.

⁵⁶ Claude Debussy, “Noël des enfants qui n’ont plus de maisons” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1916): “Tâchez de nous redonner le pain quotidien”; “Mais donnez la victoire aux enfants de France!”

⁵⁷ Debussy to Paul Dukas, April 1917, in Lesure, Herlin, Liébert, eds., *Correspondance (1872-1918)*, ed. François Lesure, Denis Herlin, and Georges Liébert (Paris: Gallimard, 2005): 2092-2093; cited and trans. in Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 31, and Watkins, *Proof through the Night*, 108.

Although one of the goals of Debussy's musical setting of "Noël des enfants n'ont plus des maisons" may have been, as Wheeldon has suggested, "not to obscure the text," Debussy bolsters the propagandistic elements of his text by instilling anxiety and sadness in his listener, while also creating a far more hopeful conclusion than he had provided for *Berceuse héroïque*. Considering Debussy's own concerns for his young daughter Chouchou's health and safety throughout the war, "Noël des enfants" can be understood as a musical translation of Debussy's and other adults' worries about the negative social impact of the war, something that was considered, like the destruction of the Reims Cathedral, to be the result of German "barbarism." Although marked "Doux et triste" (Sweet and sad), Debussy's children's prayer moves along at a quick tempo, especially in the A-minor A sections. The fast pace of the song, its very quickly articulated and syllabically-set text, and the perpetual galloping eighth notes in the A sections of this ABA song all lend it a sense of panic reminiscent of Schubert's famous song about a child in danger—*Die Erlkönig*.⁵⁹ Debussy adds to this panic by placing certain repeated phrases in a high tessitura, for instance the "tout pris" (taken everything) of "Les ennemis ont tout pris" (The enemies have taken everything), which Debussy repeats three times in each appearance of the refrain. This straining into a higher tessitura in order to communicate emotional distress occurs as well in the song's B section (mm. 27-59), especially on the words "Punissez-les!" (Punish them!), "Vengez les enfants de France!" (Avenge the children of France!), and "Noël." Just before the return to the opening verse at m. 60, Debussy foregrounds the pleading prayer of the children by setting the line "Tâchez de nous redonner le pain quotidien" (Just try to give us back our daily bread) in a lower vocal tessitura, with a significant slackening of tempo and a sparser accompaniment (mm. 54-59). After reiterating the verse once more, Debussy returns to this low tessitura in mm. 75-78 to frame as a prayer the words "Noël, écoutez nous, nous n'avons plus de

⁵⁸ Debussy to Henri Busser, cited in *The Poetic Debussy: A Collection of His Song Texts and Selected Letters*, 2d ed., ed. Margaret G. Cobb, trans. Richard Miller (University of Rochester Press, 1994), 193; cited in Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style*, 36.

⁵⁹ Watkins makes a similar observation in *Proof through the Night*, 108.

petits sabots” (Jesus, listen to us, we no longer have little shoes). He then follows this more direct petition with the text “Mais donnez le victoire aux enfants de France!” (But give the victory to the children of France!), set to an ascending, crescendoing, and accented vocal line and an accompaniment that affectively and musically parallels it (mm. 81-84). Finally, by shifting from A minor to A major in the last two measures of the song, Debussy provides his listeners with the hopeful conclusion that was missing in *Berceuse héroïque*.

Debussy marks his 1916 suite for two pianos, *En blanc et noir*, as a wartime occasional piece through the epigraphs he places at the beginning of each movement, his dedications, and the symbolic and narrative musical features of the suite’s second movement. Numerous scholars have asserted that the epigraph to the first movement communicates Debussy’s feelings about those who, like him, “stay in place” rather than enlisting.⁶⁰ Because fighting in the war and committing to sacrifice one’s life for the overall benefit of the nation was the *sine qua non* of good French citizenship during the war, many French citizens were concerned with what they termed *embusqués*—soldiers who shirked their national duty by feigning illness or injury.⁶¹ Debussy’s letters of this period indicate his feelings about his own, as well as others’ inability to serve in the war. In a letter to Durand in October 1914, Debussy writes that he’s glad to know that his wife’s son, while too ill to fight, will still be “making himself useful” in the war effort “as interpreter, cyclist and secretary at the mixed hospital in Melun.” In the same letter he indicates that while he would “be happy to write a Heroic March” he also feels that “to play the hero while sitting peacefully a long way from the action seems to me ridiculous.”⁶² While Debussy did not

⁶⁰ See Wheeldon’s discussion of this idea in *Debussy’s Late Style*, 44-46.

⁶¹ See chapter 1; see also Gregory Thomas, *Treating the Trauma of the Great War: Soldiers, Civilians, and Psychiatry in France 1914-1940* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), Chapter 2, 71-94; Susan Grayzel, “‘The Souls of Soldiers’: Civilians under Fire in First World War France,” *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 3 (September 2006): 588-622; “L’Impôt du sang’: Republican Rhetoric and Industrial Warfare in France, 1914-18,” *Social History* 14, no. 2 (1989): 201-223.

⁶² Debussy to Jacques Durand, 9 October 1914, in Lesure and Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, 293-294.

write a “heroic march” during the war, he did understand composing, including *En blanc et noir*, as a means to “fight in the war” from the sidelines.⁶³

Despite the first movement’s epigraph, it is *En blanc et noir*’s second movement that seems to be musically engaged with French national mourning. Although Debussy dedicates the first and third movements to his friends Serge Koussevitzky and Igor Stravinsky, respectively, he makes the memorial bent of the piece particularly evident in his dedication of the second movement to Jacques Charlot, Jacques Durand’s cousin, who was killed in combat on March 3, 1915.⁶⁴ The movement’s epigraph matches Debussy’s dedication since it is a grateful tribute to Charlot’s sacrifice drawn from François Villon’s “Ballade contre les ennemis de la France” (Ballad against the enemies of France).

The music of this movement recalls the overt musical symbolism of *Berceuse héroïque*, as Wheeldon and Watkins have both pointed out. Like the *Berceuse*, *En blanc et noir*’s second movement features clarion calls (mm. 7-10), repeated martial rhythms in the piano’s low register (mm. 3-11), and French folk-tune-esque material (mm. 12-17) in its opening, as well as anthems used to signify the nations at war. Generally speaking, the narrative trajectory of this piece is a musical “battle” between the German Lutheran hymn “Ein Feste Burg” and the French folktune melody. After identifying fragments of music that evoke Debussy’s *La Cathédrale engloutie* and “an ecclesiastical tone created by timbral allusions to plainchant,” Wheeldon reads this piece as a response to the destruction of the Reims Cathedral, about which Debussy

⁶³ Wheeldon has made the argument that the first movement’s epigraph, if understood in the larger context of its original appearance in Gounod’s opera, might be understood, along with the movement that follows it as a reference “to old age and nostalgia for the past” or as “depict[ing] a prewar sensibility.” See Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 44-46. Her argument is convincing, especially considering the lack of musical signifiers of war or mourning during the first movement, and yet I think it is important to consider this epigraph as an important reflection of Debussy’s efforts to create a nationalist persona during the war.

⁶⁴ Jacques Charlot was also the dedicatee of the first movement—the “Prélude”—of Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. In the same letter to Durand cited above (dated 9 October 1914), Debussy mentions Jacques Charlot, writing “I’m sure he has a firm sense of duty and, if fortune continues to favour him, will come back a general! More simply, we must just hope he comes back...in one piece!” Lesure and Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, 294.

had been especially vocal in his letters in the fall of 1914.⁶⁵ In line with French wartime cultural politics, the French folk tune, with the support of the “Marseillaise,” overtakes the German hymn, signifying the hoped for French victory.⁶⁶ Debussy’s use of a Lutheran German hymn here reflects the link between Germanness and Protestantism that Annette Becker has asserted became a popular ideological construction in France after 1914.⁶⁷ Debussy was very clear about his program for this work, writing to Durand on 22 July 1915 just after finishing this movement that “You will see what ‘happens’ to the Lutheran hymn for having imprudently wandered into a French ‘caprice.’ Toward the end, a modest carillon call rings out a pre-Marseillaise; everyone will excuse me of this anachronism, it is admissible in an epoch when the paved streets, the trees of the forest are vibrating with this innumerable song.”⁶⁸

Even though the French caprice melody ultimately wins out over the German hymn, resulting in a French victory symbolized through celebratory fanfares at the close of the movement, a shadow of doubt remains. This is in part due to Debussy’s quotation of the “Marseillaise,” which as Wheeldon has pointed out is in an “embryonic state,” “stripped of its repeated notes, dotted rhythms and march characteristics” (see Figure 3.6). By presenting his listeners with a distorted and almost unrecognizable statement of the French anthem, Debussy can be understood as communicating not only his ambivalence, as Wheeldon has suggested, but that even if victory were to be achieved, the war’s losses would leave France, its landscape, and its people, irrevocably changed.⁶⁹ Just a week earlier Debussy had told Durand that he was in the process of making “a slight change in the color” of the second movement, which he said was

⁶⁵ Debussy to Jacques Durand, 30 September 1914, in Lesure, Herlin, Liébert, eds., *Correspondance*, 1848-1849; cited in Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 51; also, Debussy to Nicolas G. Coronio, end of September 1914, in *Ibid.*, 1849-1850.

⁶⁶ For more details on *En blanc et noir* see Watkins’s discussion in *Proof through the Night*, 91-95; and Wheeldon’s analysis in *Debussy’s Late Style*, 47-54.

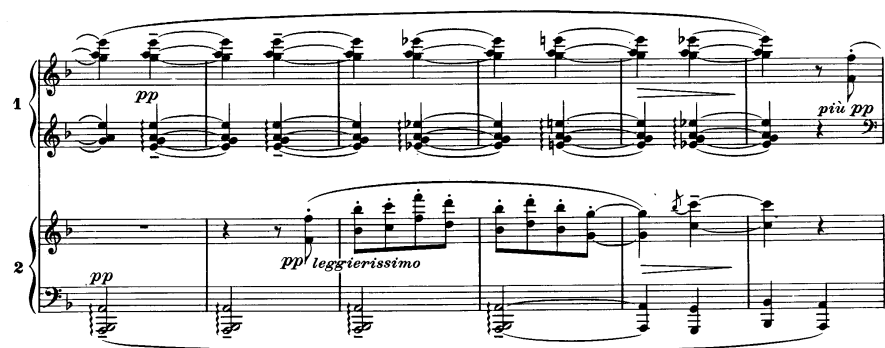
⁶⁷ Becker, *War and Faith*, 11.

⁶⁸ Debussy to Jacques Durand, 22 July 1915, in Lesure, Herlin, Liébert, eds., *Correspondance*, 1910-1911; cited in Wheeldon, 52.

⁶⁹ Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 52-53.

“too profoundly black and almost as tragic as a ‘Caprice’ by Goya!”⁷⁰ We can only imagine what Debussy’s score looked and sounded like before the alterations he made to it, but what does seem clear from Debussy’s “Noël des enfants” and the second movement of *En blanc et noir* is that Debussy found it necessary to remain at least somewhat optimistic, and to convey this optimism in the works he composed for the French public. He conveys to Durand that he “doesn’t see things as ‘dressed in black’ as you,” and reveals his optimism in writing, “[The war] will be hard, long, merciless with pain; but for us, men of the city, let’s contain our worries, let’s work for this beauty of which people have an instinctive need, all the more strong for having suffered.” Debussy’s ultimate goal, it seems, was to cheer up his friend, to “make [him] smile,” by “dissipat[ing] for a while the sinister clouds that draw themselves to [his] present worries.”⁷¹ It seems that this was his goal with the piece he dedicated to Durand’s cousin as well: to instill in Durand, even briefly, the hope that the pain and loss would be worth it, even if life might never be the same again.

Figure 3.6: Claude Debussy, *En Blanc et noir* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1916), Mvmt. 2, mm. 162-173: “Marseillaise” quotation (mm. 163-171).



⁷⁰ Debussy to Jacques Durand, 14 July 1915, in Lesure and Nichols, eds., *Debussy Letters*, 297.

⁷¹ Debussy to Jacques Durand, 22 July 1915, in Lesure, Herlin, Liébert, eds., *Correspondance, 1910-1911*: “Je ne vois pas les choses si ‘vestues de noir’ que vous”; “Ce sera dur, long, impitoyable aux douleurs; mais pour nous, hommes de la ville, contenons votre angoisse, travaillons pour cette beauté dont les peuples ont l’instinctif besoin, plus forts d’avoir souffert.”; “si elles vous font sourire, elles dissiperont pendant un moment, les nuages sinistres où se plaît votre présente inquiétude.”

Figure 3.6: (cont.)

The image shows a musical score for two staves, labeled 1 and 2. Staff 1 is the upper staff, and Staff 2 is the lower staff. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. Staff 1 features a melodic line with various dynamics including *pp*, *p*, and *librement*. Staff 2 features a more rhythmic accompaniment with dynamics like *piu pp* and *à peine*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In addition to the more public circumstantial pieces like *Berceuse héroïque*, “Noël des enfants,” and *En blanc et noir*, Debussy also wrote an *Élégie* for solo piano in December 1915 that exhibits the least optimistic vision of the war’s losses amongst his wartime circumstantial pieces. Debussy composed this twenty-one measure piece for a war charity volume entitled *Pages inédites sur la femme et la guerre*. As Wheeldon has explained, this book had a far more limited press run than other fundraising books for which Debussy created submissions, and thus offered him the opportunity to craft a more private response to the war.⁷² The nationalist symbolism that appeared in his other works for wartime mourning is replaced here by what can easily be read as a more intimate account of the experience of grief, especially how memories of those who have died are never entirely pleasant or painful, but rather lie paradoxically in between, changing from moment to moment. Marked “lent et douloureux” (slow and painful), Debussy’s *Élégie* focuses on a melodic idea that appears primarily in the left hand and low register of the piano. From the beginning, Debussy asks the pianist to perform the melody quietly but expressively.⁷³ However, he fragments this melody and adorns it with chords and short figural motives in the right hand, rendering it affectively different with each passing moment. Debussy concludes his *Élégie* by returning one last time to the slow, descending melody that opened the composition, here punctuating it with softly played chords that suggest

⁷² Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style*, 36-37.

⁷³ His instructions here are *mezza voce*, *cantabile espress*.

D minor. This final repetition of the melody ends abruptly and lends Debussy's *Élégie* an even more ambiguous conclusion than those that appeared in his other more publicly oriented works for wartime mourning. For Debussy, then, musical mourning seems to have been an activity shaped by his concerns for where and by whom his grief might be heard.

Hope and Solidarity from the Home Front: Lili and Nadia Boulanger's Musical Mourning

Lili and Nadia Boulanger found ways to contribute to the war effort from the French home front, musically and otherwise. Although Lili, as a recent winner of the Prix de Rome spent much of her time at the Villa Medici in Rome during the war, both women were actively involved in the war effort through the work they did for the Comité Franco-Américain. Their activities for the Comité between 1914 and 1918 included corresponding with musician-soldiers and their families, editing and printing much of this correspondence for publication in the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*, writing to donors in France and the United States to obtain funds for soldiers and their families, organizing concerts for the same purpose, and sending packages to soldiers and their families that included everything from shirts to books and music scores.⁷⁴ In addition to these activities, the Boulanger sisters gave benefit concerts for a variety of organizations during the war, and also wrote music for mourning.

Although written before the war, Lili Boulanger's *Pour les funérailles d'un soldat* was premiered on November 7, 1915 at the Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux, and frequently programmed on concerts in Paris thereafter. Written in 1913—the year in which she won the Prix de Rome for her cantata *Hélène et Faust*—Boulanger's composition sets to music the Catholic burial of a soldier. Boulanger wrote this piece, which draws on a variety of musical styles, for piano, baritone, and chorus. It is unsurprising that Boulanger's *Pour les funérailles d'un soldat* was popular between 1914 and 1918 since the composition utilizes many of the

⁷⁴ For more on their activities, see collection of documents pertaining to the Comité Franco-Américain in BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1-12). Also see Jeanice Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger: Performing Past and Future Between the Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 25-26.

conventions for wartime musical mourning popular in France at the time. Boulanger opens the composition with a funeral march in the lowest register of the piano. The male choir that intones the majority of the first verse sings in the stilted march-like rhythm of the piano until the piano plays the “Dies Irae” on the words “Prière des morts” (Prayer of the dead). In addition to these two clear references to musical mourning, Boulanger draws on at least two other musical styles that communicate musical-spiritual reflection. First, Boulanger sets the text “L’Âme appartient à Dieu” (The soul belongs to God) to full choir—heard here for the first time in the piece with female voices—in a kind of “heavenly” Renaissance-style unaccompanied polyphony. Moreover, when Boulanger repeats the first verse for the first time, she sets it not to the funeral march motive of its first appearance, but rather to music that was clearly designed to sound like Gregorian chant, which had grown increasingly popular in modernist French musical circles at the *fin-de-siècle* in part due to the establishment of the Schola Cantorum by Charles Bordes, Alexandre Guilmant, and Vincent d’Indy in 1894. In its title, its telling of a story of a good, Christian soldier, its death-related musical *topoi*, and its setting for voice, Boulanger’s composition aligned with other pieces designed for nationally mourning those who had died for France.

During the war, Lili turned her compositional attention to several musical prayers that while not specifically related to the war, demonstrate her concern with mourning between 1914 and her death in 1918. These include her *Vieille prière bouddhique*, which Annegret Fauser has termed “a prayer for peace for humanity”⁷⁵; the song “Dans l’immense tristesse,” which Caroline Potter has suggested may have been connected to the death of Lili’s goddaughter in September 1916⁷⁶; her *Psaumes XXIV, CXXIX, and CXXX*, the latter of which has been described by Potter as a “musical response to the war . . . express[ing] the suffering and pain of the times”; and her

⁷⁵ Annegret Fauser, “Lili Boulanger’s ‘La Princesse Maleine’: A Composer and oHer Heroine as Literary Icons,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 122, no. 1 (1997): 68-108; 75; cited in Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger* (Burlinton, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 88.

⁷⁶ Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 109.

Pie Jesu, which was the last composition she wrote before she died in March 1918. With the exception of “Dans l’immense tristesse” and the *Pie Jesu*, each of these is a large-scale work for orchestra, choir, and soloist that focuses on the communal experience of mourning and prayer, albeit never in direct response to the war.

Like her sister, Nadia Boulanger composed music for mourning between 1914 and 1918. Her compositions differ from her sister’s, however, in being more intimate expressions of grief than Lili’s publicly oriented, large-scale works for orchestra and choir and/or soloist, while also bearing more obvious connections to the war effort. Nadia’s song “Soir d’hiver” offers a good example of this. Composed in the winter of 1914-1915 and premiered at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt on December 29, 1915, “Soir d’hiver” is set to a text that Nadia wrote herself. The song’s narrator tells the story of a young woman, whose husband is at the front, singing a lullaby to their son. Her son’s image reminds the woman of her husband, and despite the pain of this memory, she eventually finds the strength to continue to wait for her husband, buoyed by the hope that she has for France’s victory. Unlike the wartime music of many of her male contemporaries, Nadia’s song employs neither anti-German rhetoric, nor easily recognizable sonic symbols of battle or the French nation. Instead, her song offers an intimate portrait of one woman’s personal experience of loneliness, anticipation, and grief during the war.

In this through-composed song, Nadia uses a modernist musical style that conveys through shifts in mood, affect, genre, and key not only the young mother’s sorrow and anxiety, but also her hope and pride. The beginning of the song evokes F-sharp minor, and features a sparse accompaniment to the narrator’s opening lines: “Une jeune femme berce son enfant: elle est seule, elle pleure, mais elle chante” (A young woman sings a lullaby to her child: she is alone, she cries, but she sings). Beginning at m. 4 with “elle est seul,” the soprano’s vocal line grates in major and minor seconds against the accompaniment, creating a sense of discomfort and anxiety that continues through the next line, “Car il faut bien qu’il entend la chanson douce et tendre pour qu’il s’endorme” (Since [her child] must hear the sweet and tender song in order to

fall asleep). At m. 12, on the final word of this line—“s’endorme” (fall asleep)—Nadia switches to a tuneful diatonic lullaby that the mother sings to her child. By underpinning this lullaby with a repeating modal chord progression in F minor (mm. 10-16), Boulanger brings an ironic sadness to the lullaby’s text: “Voici Noël, mon petit enfant bleu. Les cloches sonneront pour que tu sois joyeux” (It’s Christmas, my little blue child. The bells will ring so that you could be joyful).

In mm. 17-26, Boulanger conveys that the act of singing this lullaby brings back the young mother’s worries about her husband. She returns to the sparse and despondent affect of the song’s opening as the young mother recalls that, “Celui qu’elle aime est parti” (the one she loves is gone). As the young woman asks herself where he is, if he hears her voice, and if he even knows that she’s alive, Boulanger communicates her heightening anxiety through a series of short and punchy, ascending, and ever-quickening phrases that culminate in a frantic eighth-note alternation (See Figure 3.7a). After a brief pause in m. 23, the narration begins again, returning to the same affect and texture that opened the song, as well as to the text on the theme of crying from the song’s beginning, although here with a new twist that conveys the pain of her grief: “Elle pleure si simplement que le coeur en a mal” (She cries so simply that her heart is sick).

In the second half of the song, Boulanger reframes her protagonist’s grief and pain as necessary contributions to the war effort. She has her “look at her son and see if he resembles the man who she tirelessly awaits,” which makes her recall her husband’s “entire soul” and “all of his tenderness.”⁷⁷ This act of remembering is a turning point in the song: Boulanger begins a new section at m. 33, which she marks with a key change, a new triplet motive at the beginning of each measure, and a more declamatory vocal style. She draws attention to this moment as a

⁷⁷ Nadia Boulanger, “Soir d’hiver” (Paris: Heugel & Cie, 1916): “elle regarde son fils et cherche s’il ressemble à celui qu’elle attend inlassablement”; “toute son âme”; “toute sa tendresse.”

Figure 3.7a: Nadia Boulanger, “Soir d’Hiver” (Paris: Heugel & Cie, 1916), mm. 16-23.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line starting with the lyrics "Ce - lui qu'elle aime est par - ti..." and the piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with "et la chanson s'ar - rê - te! Et le dit: «Où est-il à cette heu - re?" and the piano accompaniment. The third system concludes with "Entend-il ma voix? et sait-il que je vis?" and "El - le". The score includes various performance markings such as "Retenu", "expressif, douloureux", "très soutenu", "Accel.", and "Plus vite", along with dynamic markings like "mf" and "f".

reframing of the opening by rewriting the text “elle pleure, mais elle chante” from the song’s first measures as “elle pleure, mais elle espère” (she cries, but she hopes). The music Nadia composes for this section is more energetic: at m. 33 she gives the performance instruction “bien rythmé” (rhythmical), and asks the vocalist to sing “with a great inner enthusiasm.”⁷⁸ The pianist plays major-key triplet fanfares at the start of each measure for the next twelve measures—nearly to the end of the song—that convey the young woman’s renewed hope and strength. Nadia tells us that she “hears the victory from afar,” “senses the struggle without thanks,” “believes in Justice,” and “knows that an entire life is given over, joyous and proud.”⁷⁹ The singer joins the pianist in

⁷⁸ Ibid.: “avec un grand enthousiasme intérieur.”

⁷⁹ Ibid.: “elle entend de loin la Victoire”; “elle devine la lutte sans merci”; “elle croit à la Justice”; “elle sait que toute une vie s’est donné, joyeuse et fière.”

some of these triplets while crescendoing, which suggests her increasing faith in the war effort (mm. 37-48).

The moment when the young mother decides that she will commit herself to awaiting her husband's return is the song's climax. On the words "elle attend" (she waits) the soprano leaps from C-sharp to F-sharp (mm. 47-48). Boulanger underlines this as a courageous and proud moment by having the pianist hammer out alternating F-sharp major and D-sharp major seventh chords in accented *fortissimo* triplets (m. 44). This triplet gesture musically parallels the alternating chordal eighth notes that marked the high point of the mother's sorrow and doubt in m. 23 (see Figure 3.7a above, as well as Figure 3.7b below). By recomposing this earlier moment in this way, Boulanger seems to suggest that the woman's doubt and sorrow inspires the sacrifice she makes in eternally awaiting her husband's return. It is her proud duty, Boulanger seems to declare musically, not only to wait tirelessly for her husband, but also, as she suggests in the song's final measures, to continue to sing lullabies to her son, who "has the heart of a man."⁸⁰

Figure 3.7b: Nadia Boulanger, "Soir d'Hiver" (Paris: Heugel & Cie, 1916), mm. 41-44.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Soir d'Hiver" by Nadia Boulanger, measures 41-44. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes prominent triplet chords in the right hand and eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The lyrics are: "sait que toute u - ne vi - e s'est don - né - e, joy - euse et riè - re, et elle at - tend,". The piece concludes with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic and a final triplet chord.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: "qui tient le cœur d'un homme."

Nadia Boulanger's "Soir d'hiver" reflects contemporary concerns with women's mourning. Historians Carol Acton, Stéphanie Petit, Daniel Sherman, and Françoise Thébaud have shown how women's mourning was an important site during the war for the articulation of a national politics of mourning centered on sacrifice. As I mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, this is evident in the large number of World War I monuments featuring grieving mothers and children.⁸¹ As Stéphanie Petit has shown, these monuments were part of a larger effort by the French government to make the grief of war widows more visible in order to teach future generations the importance of sacrifice to a strong, unified, and ultimately victorious France.⁸² Françoise Thébaud has summed this up in asserting that, "Death (to give it, to endure it) is the lot of men, and the courage of women is to accept it. This courage is expressed in 'sublime' acts or words."⁸³ One popular example of such a "sublime" act was offered in the story of a French woman who, having lost six sons in the war, at one of their funerals emitted a "grand and harrowing" cry: "Long live France all the same!"⁸⁴ Like other compositions for mourning during this period, Boulanger's "Soir d'hiver" valorizes personal sacrifice and underlines the importance of intergenerational memory in sustaining the war effort. However, by unambiguously making women's mourning the subject of this song, Boulanger importantly acknowledges and offers a musical space for women's mourning that contrasts with the male chorus/soloist focused pieces and military oriented works composed by her male contemporaries. She articulates the importance of women's personal sacrifice, while underlining the ambivalence and struggle women felt to remain at home, eagerly awaiting news from their

⁸¹ For more on representations of women, children, and their grief in World War I monuments, see Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*.

⁸² Petit, "Le Deuil des veuves de la Grande Guerre: Un deuil spécifique?" 53-65. Ann Cvetkovich addresses "the way that trauma can be used to reinforce nationalism when constructed as a wound that must be healed in the name of unity" in *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 16.

⁸³ Françoise Thébaud, "La Guerre et le deuil chez les femmes françaises," in *Guerre et cultures 1914-1918*, eds. Jean-Jacques Becker, Jay M. Winter, Gerd Krumeich, Annette Becker, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994), 103-110; 106: "La mort (la donner, la subir) est le lot des hommes et le courage des femmes est de l'accepter. Ce courage s'exprime en actes ou mots 'sublimes'."

⁸⁴ Cited in Thébaud, 106: "ce cri, ce sanglot superbe et déchirant: Vive la France quand même."

husbands as they taught the next generation of French soldiers about the sacrifices of their fathers.

Mourning, Heroism, and Morale on the Front Lines

Reynaldo Hahn and Florent Schmitt, both of whom had become friends with Ravel while attending the Paris Conservatoire, wrote music for French national mourning while enlisted as soldiers. Florent Schmitt wrote his *Chant de guerre*, op. 63 in the fall of 1914, finishing it in January 1915 while stationed at Toul.⁸⁵ Hahn wrote two compositions tied to the war in 1915: the song “À nos morts ignorés,” as well as a suite of twelve waltzes entitled *Le Ruban dénoué*. While the prettiness of *Le Ruban dénoué*’s waltzes can be understood as providing Hahn with a distraction from the horrors of war, *Chant de guerre* and “À nos morts ignorés” can both be understood as calls to arms that mourn death and destruction while also keeping up morale through justifying these losses nationally and spiritually.

Completed in January 1915, Schmitt’s *Chant de guerre* is a short but powerful composition embodying a musical style similar to Gabriel Pierné’s and Lili Boulanger’s large-scale works for chorus and orchestra. Like Morand’s, Bernhardt’s, and Pierné’s *Les Cathédrales* and Debussy’s “Noël des enfants,” Schmitt’s work is propagandistic in that it draws on and musically politicizes current events. Schmitt sets a text by Léon Tonnelier that frames France’s enemies as “barbarians,” who desiring to harm the French people, began by attacking Belgium. Tonnelier mourns the destruction of both the French and Belgian landscapes, and reminds citizens that their sons are “fighting with pride under the folds of the flags,” spurred on by the “memory of their ancestors.” The final line of the song instills the French public with hope:

⁸⁵ This is noted at the conclusion of *Chant de guerre*’s score. See Florent Schmitt, *Chant de guerre*, op. 63 (Paris: A. Durand & Fils, 1916; repr., Huntsville, TX: Recital Publication, 1997).

“Already,” Tonnelier claims, “from Alsace to Flanders, a mighty rumbling sings of victory and liberty.”⁸⁶

Schmitt sets Tonnelier’s poem for solo tenor or soprano, male chorus, and piano or orchestra. This is a male voice dominant arrangement, which, as already discussed, was popular during the war. This arrangement also likely served the needs of *Chant de guerre*’s first performance, which took place in a military zone in Toul, France in late 1915. Schmitt was not married to this arrangement, however, since at its premiere at the Paris Opéra on May 25, 1916 Yvonne Gall sang the solo part, accompanied by an all-woman choir.⁸⁷ Similar to Nadia’s “Soir d’hiver,” Schmitt dramatizes the text line by line using a modernist musical language that effectively communicates sorrow, anger, and triumph. Like many of the publicly oriented wartime circumstantial pieces by Debussy, Pierné, and Nadia Boulanger, Schmitt’s *Chant de guerre* acknowledges the death, destruction, and emotional turmoil wrought by the war, but couches all of this within an optimistic and hopeful framework suggesting that France’s losses will be avenged in victory.

The piece begins with a calm, quiet, A-flat major opening, underlined by a wordless chorus that ethereally underpins the tenor’s tuneful song describing the beauty of the French landscape. At m. 16, however, Schmitt moves to G flat with a more agitated accompaniment in order to prepare the listener for the “l’ouragan de batailles” (storm of battles) that the tenor announces two measures later, and which can be heard in a shift to B minor accompanied by less rhythmic stability, and a gradually accelerating tempo. Schmitt marks this shift in affect by

⁸⁶ Ibid.: “combattre avec fierté sous les plis du drapeau”; “au souvenir des ancêtres”; “Déjà, d’Alsace en Flandres, rumeur immense, chantent la victoire et la liberté.”

⁸⁷ Reviews of performances of this piece in France and the US indicate that Charles Dalmores was the work’s soloist at its premiere at the front (in Toul) in 1915, and by an unidentified male soloist at its US premiere at a Boston Music Art Society’s concert in early 1918. For a performance of the work at the Opéra on May 25, 1916, however, an all-woman choir was featured, including “Mmes Lapeyrette, Bugg, Bourdon, Courbières, Gabrielle Gills, Lormont, Montjovet, and Mlle Yvonne Gall.” Gall was the soloist for this performance. See the announcement for this performance in *Le Temps*, 24 May 1916. The score that was published in 1916, however, includes all male voice types (tenors, baritones, and basses). It seems that it was performed this way for the American premiere of the piece, as well as a 1928 performance of the composition at the Société Internationale des Amis de la Musique Française that featured the soprano soloist Mlle Marcelle Bunlet. See “Soul of France in New ‘Song of War,’” *New York Times*, 17 March 1918; and Claude Altomont, “Concerts divers. Société Internationale des Amis de la Musique Française,” *Le Ménestrel* (May 11, 1928): 209.

asking the chorus to begin singing text for the first time in the piece at this moment; they echo the soloist in singing just after her/him: “Ah! L’ouragan de batailles!” (Ah! The storm of battles!). As the soloist sings of war-ravaged fields of wheat and villages set on fire, Schmitt builds a sense of anxiety musically through an agitated accompaniment and accented, crescendoing octave leaps in the chorus. On the words “Quel barbare Attila” (What barbarous Attila) at m. 26-27, Schmitt modulates as the soloist asks “who dares to cut the throats of the Flemish.”⁸⁸ This chromaticism as well as a diminution in the accompaniment’s harmonic rhythm beginning in m. 29 generate a rising tension that is somewhat resolved in the drawn out G octaves of the tenor’s call to the French public—“France!”—three bars later in mm. 31-32. This tension is additionally released through the rapidly and chromatically plummeting sixteenth notes of the accompaniment underneath this attention-grabbing address. At m. 33, the accompaniment ceases for the first time in the piece, providing a brief moment of silence that rhetorically emphasizes the tenor’s reminder to the people of France that “tes fils sont là!” (your sons are there!).

The destruction of the French and Belgian landscapes conveyed textually and musically in mm. 18-35 serves as a motivating force for the call to arms that dominates the second half of the piece. At m. 36 all of the voices drop out in order to mark a return to musical material from the opening of Schmitt’s *Chant*: the calm and consistent rocking eighth notes of the piece’s opening as well as the consonant choir appear here, again in A-flat major. The text of this section showcases common wartime rhetoric, including a call to take courage “in the memory of [our] ancestors,” to defend the “sacred ground” of France, and to “fight with pride under the folds of the flag.”⁸⁹ Schmitt suggests that fighting in and for the “memory of [our] ancestors” is especially important by marking these words at mm. 52-53 with the tenor’s leap of a sixth from C flat to A flat, and underlining this heroic leap with an accented E major ninth chord and fast-

⁸⁸ Schmitt, *Chant de guerre*: “qui ose égorger les Flandres?”

⁸⁹ Ibid., “au souvenir des ancêtres”; “sol sacré”; “combattre avec fierté sous les plis du drapeau.”

moving, ascending triplet figures in the accompaniment. On the next word—“Patrie” (Homeland)—Schmitt asks the tenor to sing another A flat “à pleine voix” (in full voice) before commencing with a descending declamatory vocal line to the text, “O sol sacré, nous saurons te défendre, combattre avec fierté sous les plis du drapeau” (O sacred ground, we know how to defend you, to fight with pride under the folds of the flag). Throughout this section Schmitt employs a polyphonic texture in which the choir sings different words in support of the tenor’s proclamation: “France, look, your sons are there under the flags!”; “*Patrie*, o sacred soil, glory and honor to the flags!”; and “France, ah look!, your sons are there lined up under the flags!”⁹⁰ By having each singer intone a slightly different text, and then culminate together on an A major/B double flat major chord on “drapeaux” (flags)—the patriotic symbols of the French and Belgian nations—Schmitt represents musically and textually the unity the Union Sacrée sought to achieve.

In the final twenty measures of *Chant de guerre*, Schmitt continues to reframe the losses and fears described earlier in the song as the basis for eventual victory and celebration. Beginning at m. 61, Schmitt returns to the disjunct melodic motive to which he had set the text “Quel barbare Attila, voulant meurtrir ton âme, ose égorger les Flandres?” (What barbarous Attila, wanting to crush your soul, dares to cut the throat of the Flemish?). Schmitt sets the new text—“Déjà d’Alsace en Flandre, déjà, rumeur immense chantent la victoire et la liberté!” (Already, from Alsace to Flanders, [an] immense rumbling sings the victory and liberty!)—to a similarly shaped melody that draws attention to the resonance between this moment and the earlier one, primarily through setting “Flandres” in both instances to a half-step descent (see Figures 3.8a and 3.8b). In Schmitt’s rendering of sorrow into victory, he replaces the choppy accompaniment and the chorus’s forceful vocal cries from earlier in the song with smooth and fluid arpeggios in the piano, and a polyphonic but consonant choral part. On the word “victoire” (victory) in m. 66, Schmitt brings back the ascending triplet figures that had previously

⁹⁰ “France, Vois, tes fils sont là sous les plis du drapeau!”; “Patrie, ô sol sacré, gloire et honneur au drapeau!”; “Honneur à tes drapeaux!; France, ah! Vois, tes fils sont là rangés sous sous les drapeau!”

underlined “memory of our ancestors,” which seems to emphasize that recalling past generations of French triumphs and losses can provide the motivation necessary to succeed in battle. When the soloist sings “et liberté!” (and liberty!) in the following measures, Schmitt has him/her sing *fortissimo*, landing on a belted out A flat that unleashes a torrent of undulating arpeggios in the accompaniment. Schmitt concludes his *Chant de guerre* triumphantly with all vocalists singing a *fortissimo* A-flat major chord while the pianist plays sparkling sixteenth-note arpeggios underneath. His conclusion seems to suggest, like Nadia Boulanger’s conclusion for “Soir d’hiver,” that all of the nation’s sorrows will be justified at the moment of France’s victory.

Figure 3.8a: Florent Schmitt, *Chant de guerre*, op. 63 (A. Durand & Fils, 1916), mm. 27-30.

The image displays a musical score for measures 27-30 of Florent Schmitt's *Chant de guerre*. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains four staves: a vocal line and three piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "- bare At - ti - la, vou - lant meur - trir ton â - - me," and then features a *fortissimo* (f) vocalization "A - iap - pah!" on a long note. The piano accompaniment consists of three staves, each with a *fortissimo* (f) vocalization "A - iap - pah!" on a long note. The second system contains two staves: a piano accompaniment staff and a piano accompaniment staff. The piano accompaniment staff features a *fortissimo* (sf) vocalization "A - iap - pah!" on a long note. The piano accompaniment staff features a *fortissimo* (sf) vocalization "A - iap - pah!" on a long note. The score is marked with a box containing the number 4 at the beginning of each system.

Figure 3.8a: (cont.)

ose é-gor-ger les Flan - dres?

A iapl

A iapl

A iapl

sf *p* *molto cresc.*

Detailed description: This musical score continues from the previous page. It features a vocal line at the top with lyrics 'ose é-gor-ger les Flan - dres?'. Below the vocal line are three staves for a string ensemble (violin I, violin II, and viola), each with a dynamic marking of *sf* and a slur. At the bottom is a piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *p* and a *molto cresc.* instruction. The piano part includes a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line.

Figure 3.8b: Florent Schmitt, *Chant de guerre* (Paris: A. Durand & Fils, 1916), mm. 61-62.

10 Dé - jà, d'Al - sace en Flan - - - - dre,

- peaux!

- peaux!

- peaux!

- peaux!

10

sf *p* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score shows measures 61-62 of Florent Schmitt's 'Chant de guerre'. It begins with a boxed measure number '10'. The vocal line has lyrics 'Dé - jà, d'Al - sace en Flan - - - - dre,' followed by a long note. Below the vocal line are three staves for a string ensemble, each with a dynamic marking of *sf* and a slur. The piano accompaniment starts with a boxed measure number '10' and features a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line. Dynamic markings include *sf* and *p*.

Whereas Schmitt's *Chant de guerre* turned the mourning of a destroyed French landscape into a call to arms foretelling France's victory, Reynaldo Hahn's "À nos morts ignorés" underlines the importance of remembering the men of France fighting in the war. Hahn's song is in a more intimate genre than Schmitt's. Written for voice and piano, it sounds more like a charming *café-concert* song than the monumental work that Schmitt designed. During the war Hahn seems to have preferred to write in light genres, perhaps because time necessitated this, but also as a form of distraction from the violence taking place all around him. The other composition he wrote in 1915, *Le Ruban dénoué*, is a set of twelve Chopin-esque waltzes that Hahn explains in the preface to the suite were written "sometimes at night, at the desk of the *État-Major*, sometimes in the middle of the woods, in a cabin shaken by the cannon, sometimes during the interminable winter days, worrying and sad," and even in one case "in a place where the perpetual zipping of bullets silenced the birds."⁹¹ Although tied to the war and considered "musique de guerre" (war music) by Vuillermoz, *Le Ruban dénoué*'s waltzes were a little too charming and refined to be considered public occasional pieces designed for French national mourning, something Vuillermoz suggests in writing while reviewing the piece that, "Could one have proven with a prettier impertinence to the universe that despite the prosaicness of modern times, the French will always find a way to make war into lace!"⁹²

Hahn's song "À nos morts ignorés" is clearer in its aims to provide a reflection on the deaths and mourning of soldiers, even while still embodying much of the charm and sentimentality of *Le Ruban dénoué*. Dedicated to Monsieur le Général Vandant, commander of the 10th Infantry Division, Hahn's "À nos mort ignorés" sets a poem by Louis Hennevé conveying

⁹¹ Reynaldo Hahn, Preface to *Le Ruban dénoué*: "tantôt la nuit, au bureau de l'Etat-Major, tantôt au milieu de bois, dans une cabane ébranlée par le canon, tantôt durant les interminables journées d'hiver, angoissantes et moroses"; "le claquement perpetual des balles a fait taire les oiseaux."

⁹² Émile Vuillermoz, "Musique de guerre," *Le Temps*, 25 January 1916: "Could one have proven with a prettier impertinence to the universe that despite the prosaicness of modern times, the French will always find a way to make the war into lace!" This also had very gendered implications since Vuillermoz had titled his famous article about Lili Boulanger's winning of the Prix de Rome in 1913, "Guerre en dentelles," which Annegret Fauser has translated as "Fighting in Frills." See Émile Vuillermoz, "Guerre en dentelles," *Musica* 12 (1913); and Annegret Fauser, "La Guerre en dentelles": Women and the 'Prix de Rome' in French Cultural Politics," *The Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 83-129.

that France's dead soldiers have no need for headstones or wreaths of flowers since they live in everyone's hearts and minds. The song's last verse suggests that they do not need prayer either, since God "will receive in his light those who have served on earth by dying for their country."⁹³ Through naturalizing, prioritizing, and justifying soldiers' deaths, Hahn's song suggests that soldiers' deaths matter more than those of others'—something I addressed in chapter 1 as a theme in much of the World War I-era discourse on the divisions between soldiers and civilians. This song text thus reflects the prevalent worries amongst French soldiers that they would either be forgotten, or that their sacrifices would be for naught.⁹⁴

Hahn dramatizes these ideas through conventional melodic, harmonic, and textual techniques. Set in C major, the song comprises three verses, each beginning with the words "Il n'a pas besoin de..." (He does not need...), which are set diatonically and syllabically to very similar melodies. This is in contrast to the remainders of each verse, which explore different modes of expression (see Figures 3.9a, b, and c). As the song progresses, Hahn asks the singer to move into higher and higher tessituras in the last part of each verse, with the result that the words "paradis" (paradise), "Dieu" (God), and "lumière" (light) in the final verse are set to the highest pitches the singer will intone during the song: a high E, F-sharp, and E, respectively (see Figure 3.9c).⁹⁵ Hahn underlines the glory of French soldierly sacrifice on the word "drapeau" (flag) at the end of the second verse through E major and C augmented chords, complete with glissandi and rolls in the piano (mm. 24-26). He does something similar at the song's climax at the end of the third verse, where the soloist sings that the soldier "doesn't need prayer to open paradise for them, since God receives, in his light, those who serve well the earth and die for

⁹³ Last verse: "Il n'est pas besoin de prière / Pour leur ouvrir le paradis / Car Dieu reçoit, en sa lumière, / Ceux qui l'ont bien servi sur terre / Et qui meurent pour leur pays!"

⁹⁴ See Becker, *War and Faith*, in particular her first chapter, in which she discusses many soldiers' decisions to convert—usually to Catholicism, but also, on fewer occasions, to Judaism or a Protestant faith.

⁹⁵ Leterrier considers Hahn's song as manifesting the typical musical-dramatic of many wartime songs for mourning, and also notes that this rise to E on "paradis" is supported by the entire orchestra in the orchestral version of the song (see Leterrier, 28-29).

their country” (mm. 27-37).⁹⁶ Through rolled chords and the sudden appearance of E major chords in these two instances (mm. 24-26 and m. 30-31), Hahn musically links fighting under the flag to receiving God’s light, and thus underlines not only the importance of sacrifice, but also the spiritual gains it will engender.

Figure 3.9a: Reynaldo Hahn, “À nos morts ignorés,” in *Mémoires de Reynaldo Hahn*, Volume 2, No. 16 (Paris: Heugel, 1918), mm. 5-8.

The musical score for Figure 3.9a consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Il n'est pas besoin d'une pier - re Aux lieux où repo - sent nos morts . — Notre". The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and features rolled chords and a steady bass line. It also begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Figure 3.9b: Reynaldo Hahn, “À nos morts ignorés,” in *Mémoires de Reynaldo Hahn*, Volume 2, No. 16 (Paris: Heugel, 1918), mm. 13-20.

The musical score for Figure 3.9b consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking and a triplet of eighth notes. The lyrics are: "- nir, comme un tré - sor. Il n'est pas besoin de cou - ron - ne Pour fleu -". The piano accompaniment is in grand staff and features rolled chords and a steady bass line. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system of the vocal line begins with a *doux* (softly) marking and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The lyrics are: "rir leur dernier re - pos; — La seule pal - me qu'on leur don - ne Sur -". The piano accompaniment continues with rolled chords and a steady bass line, ending with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

⁹⁶ Reynaldo Hahn, “A nos morts ignorés,” in *Mémoires de Reynaldo Hahn*, Volume 2, No. 16 (Paris: Heugel, 1918): “Il n’est pas besoin de prière pour leur ouvrir le paradis, car Dieu reçoit, en sa lumière, ceux qui l’ont bien servi sur terre et qui meurent pour leur pays!”

Figure 3.9c: Reynaldo Hahn, “A nos morts ignores,” in *Mélodies de Reynaldo Hahn*, Volume 2, No. 16 (Paris: Heugel, 1918), mm. 27-32.

The image displays a musical score for the song "A nos morts ignores" by Reynaldo Hahn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system begins with the tempo marking "gravement". The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Il n'est pas be- so-in de pri - è - re Pour leur ouvrir — le pa - ra -". The piano accompaniment features a piano dynamic marking "pp" and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics ". dis, — Car Dieu re- çoit, en sa lu - miè - re, Ceux qui l'ont". The piano accompaniment includes a "dim." (diminuendo) marking and another triplet of eighth notes. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 4/4 time signature.

Wartime Mourning and Catholic Redemption in André Caplet’s “La Croix douloureuse” and “Détresse”

As we have seen throughout this chapter, many composers turned to Catholic imagery, texts, and musical symbolism in their wartime occasional pieces. One of the most interesting although little-studied Catholic composers of this period was André Caplet, a close friend of Debussy’s who had also been a classmate of Ravel, Hahn, and Schmitt at the Conservatoire. While several recent essays have addressed the Catholic, and more specifically Maritainian, religious symbolism in Caplet’s *Le Miroir de Jésus* (1923), long considered to be his

masterpiece, I turn my attention now to two of his wartime songs, both of which shed light on Caplet's spiritually-inflected politics of mourning.⁹⁷

After leaving for the front in September 1915, Caplet composed several modernist art songs that engaged with the wartime penchant for Catholic mourning that Leterrier has discussed in her work on French national musical cultures.⁹⁸ Caplet's interest in sacred music was with him long before the war, since he had been trained at the Schola Cantorum, the Parisian school established in 1894 with a curriculum emphasizing familiarity with sacred genres and works, particularly Gregorian chant, and the development of modern compositions based on the liturgy. However, it is interesting to note that Caplet had only written two songs based on religious texts or themes prior to 1914.⁹⁹ His pre-war compositions reflect his fascination with Symbolism, especially Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, as well as his interest in chamber music.¹⁰⁰ After 1914, however, Caplet turns to composing almost entirely Catholic-themed works for voice.¹⁰¹ Perhaps, as Leterrier has suggested of the revival of sacred song

⁹⁷ See Sylvain Caron, "André Caplet et Jacques Maritain: Une résonance du paradigme médiéval entre la musique et les idées," in *Musique, art et religion dans l'entre-deux-guerres*, Sylvain Caron and Michel Duchesneau, eds. (Lyon: Symétrie, 2009), 43-55; and Dominique Escande, "La Transposition de l'art du quattrocento dans *Le Miroir de Jésus* (1925) d'André Caplet et ses résonances avec le nouvel art sacré," in *Ibid.*, 335-346. There are numerous essays in this edited collection that are good resources for better understanding the Catholic revival in interwar France. For general information about the Catholic revival in immediately post-World War I French musical cultures, see especially Sylvain Caron and Michel Duchesneau, "La Musique et la foi entre les deux guerres: Vers un nouvel humanisme?" in *Ibid.*, 1-14; Delphine Grivel, "'Le Réveil du sentiment religieux' dans la musique et les arts: L'Exemple de Maurice Denis, peintre mélomane," in *Ibid.*, 307-324; and Nicole Dubreuil, "La Religion et l'art moderne: Opposition ouverte et connexions souterraines," in *Ibid.*, 367-386.

⁹⁸ Leterrier, "Culture de guerre et musique nationale," 32.

⁹⁹ Marie-Christine Catherine Allen, "The Wartime Melodies of Andre Caplet," (D.M.A. Diss., University of Arizona, 1994), 67.

¹⁰⁰ Before the war, his major compositions were orchestral works like *Le Masque de la mort rouge* (based on Poe's story) and the tone poem *Salammbô*; secular vocal songs like *Le Livre rose*, *Chanson d'automne*, *Il était une fois*, and *Paroles à l'absente*; and numerous chamber works, including three pieces for violoncello and piano, a Quintet, a Septet, and a double quartet entitled *Suite Persane*. See Arthur Hoérée, "L'Oeuvre de André Caplet," in *Hommage à André Caplet, 1878-1978*, ed. Yvonne Gouverne (Sainte-Marie de la Pierre-qui-Vire, France: Zodiaques, 1978), 35-44; 36-37; reprinted from Arthur Hoérée, "L'Oeuvre de André Caplet," in *La Revue musicale* 6, no. 9 (July 1, 1925): 13-23.

¹⁰¹ These include many compositions other than *Les Prières* and the two I discuss in detail below, including a *Messe à trois voix*, *Prière normande*, *Le Miroir de Jésus*, *La Part à Dieu*, *Pie Jésus*, *Panis Anglicus*, *Pater Noster*, *Tu es sacerdos*, *Hymne à la naissance du matin*.

during the war, Caplet's wartime experiences renewed his need for religious reflection.¹⁰² His song cycle *Les Prières*, composed between 1914 and 1917 while Caplet was a soldier, is one obvious example of Caplet's desire to write prayers. Although not directly connected to the war through dedications or epigraphs, Caplet's settings of the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Apostle's Creed were likely inspired by what he may have understood as a potent need to appeal to a spiritual higher power during the war. Alternatively, he may have been inspired by the prayers of dying soldiers, or those about to emerge from the trenches to face their German foes and, more often than not, their deaths.

The two songs that Caplet wrote during this period, and which he linked epigraphically to the war—"La Croix douloureuse" and "Détresse"—convey musically the importance of submitting to God's will while mourning. Both written by Catholic authors, the texts for these songs present prayers to an all-powerful God in whose hands rests the fate of each song's subject. Completed in 1918 and labeled a "prière des âmes en deuil" (prayer for souls in mourning), "La Croix douloureuse" sets a text by the early nineteenth-century French Catholic poet Henri-Dominique Lacordaire. In Lacordaire's poem, a mourner struggles with but eventually comes to accept the losses that God has bestowed on her/him. Prior to the singer's entry at m. 15, Caplet creates an eerie, dark sound world marked by uncertainty, hesitation, and uneasiness. Caplet's musical setting of the poem begins with sparse, chromatic chords in the piano and a destabilizing syncopated D pedal in the bass (See Figure 3.10). Caplet sets the narrator's bleak recognition that "si vous l'aviez voulu, Seigneur, elles ne couleraient pas de mes yeux, ces larmes brûlantes" (if you had wanted, dear God, these burning tears would not have spilled from my eyes) to two parallel, chromatically ascending phrases, each finishing with a large and disjunct leap, while the syncopated bass continues (mm. 16-20). The right hand of the keyboard doubles and harmonizes the singer's first two lines, which remain within the musical-

¹⁰² The essays in *Musique, art et religion dans l'entre-deux-guerres* do not really discuss Caplet during the war, nor pinpoint when André Caplet's ostensible religious conversion—if we could even call it that—took place, focusing instead on his musical activities of the 1920s. See Caron, "André Caplet et Jacques Maritain," 43-55; and Escande, "La Transposition de l'art du Quattrocento dans *Le Miroir de Jésus* (1925)," 335-346.

Figure 3.10: André Caplet, “La Croix douloureuse” (Paris: Durand, 1918; repr. Huntsville, TX: Recital Publications, 1998), mm. 1-17.

The musical score for "La Croix douloureuse" by André Caplet, measures 1-17, is presented in a standard format with a vocal line (CHANT) and a piano accompaniment (PIANO). The tempo is marked "Modéré (Quasi lento)". The piano part begins with a *pp* dynamic and includes markings for *ppp creso.*, *ff*, and *dim.*. The vocal line includes the lyrics "Hé - las! si vous l'aviez vou - lu, Seigneur," and "en retenant". The score is in 2/4 time and features various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

affective state of fear, confusion, and disappointment that Caplet sets up in the song’s instrumental introduction.

Caplet creates a significant shift in affect, however, when the song’s narrator considers that “if you had wanted, they could have lived” (si vous l’aviez voulu, ils vivraient) in mm. 24-26. At the precise instant that this act of mournful imagination takes place (on “vivraient” [could have lived]), Caplet composes a radical musical-affective shift on multiple levels. First, the singer revoices the D flat from the two previous measures to a D natural. This is the highest

Figure 3.11a: André Caplet, “La Croix douloureuse” (Paris: Durand, 1918; repr. Huntsville, TX: Recital Publications, 1998), mm. 25-28: affective shift on “vivraient.”

The image shows a musical score for the song "La Croix douloureuse" by André Caplet, measures 25-28. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo changes from "Rit." to "a Tempo" at measure 26. The lyrics are: "ils vi - - - vraient et se - raient en - co - re près de moi, ces ê - - - tres ten - dre -". The piano accompaniment includes a glissando into a tremolo at measure 26.

pitch the singer has reached thus far, and the piano confirms the joy of this moment of imagination by supporting the narrator’s D natural with a B flat major chord that extends through the first three beats of m.26 (see Figure 3.11a). Caplet additionally marks this moment as special through having the pianist play a glissando into a tremolo. When in mm. 24-27 the narrator imagines the people he loved still alive and next to him—“[ils] . . . seraient encore près de moi, ces êtres tendrement aimés” ([they] . . . could be living and close to me, these tenderly loved beings)—Caplet composes a melody that contains smooth step-wise motion and two upwardly soaring leaps, first of a perfect fifth (B flat to F) on “ces êtres” (these beings) and then of a major sixth on “aimés” (loved). The accompaniment here sparkles with tremolos and delicate, consonant countermelodies, all of which convey the narrator’s joy in permitting herself/himself to reflect on those s/he has lost. This temporary reverie is disrupted, however, when the narrator recalls that her/his imagination cannot truly bring back loved ones who have

died. Caplet conveys the pain and disappointment of this realization in a dissonant A-flat on “mort” in m. 30. Caplet’s representation here of the pain and pleasure of wallowing in the memory of dead loved ones might be considered a sonic analogue to the paradoxical pain and pleasure of resistant mourning discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

The musical-affective shift of this simultaneously mournful and joyful remembrance that Caplet effects on “vivraient” is paralleled by another such shift in m. 36, at the moment when the narrator expresses his love for God’s will. With a shift to what sounds at first like D major, a diatonic melody characterized by rising fifths and fourths, and a consonant accompaniment, Caplet paints the narrator’s declamation of love and trust for God as even more joyful than remembering lost loved ones (See Figure 3.11b below). After this declamation, however, the song gradually creeps back to the minor mode as the narrator accepts “the painful cross with which you [God] overpower me.”¹⁰³ The narrator’s prayer changes here from one in which he seeks answers and wishes to have the loss reversed, to one in which he accepts the loss and only asks for God’s help in bearing it: “I call on you only to help me bear [the painful cross].”¹⁰⁴ Caplet sets the narrator’s resignation to a vocal line evoking D minor (mm. 61-64), and creates the expectation in the listener that this is how the song will end. In the last two measures of the song, however, the piano shifts to the major mode. With this last-minute change to conclude the song with a return to the D major chords previously used to represent the narrator’s love for God and his will, Caplet seems to suggest that embracing God’s will, no matter how painful, will resolve the anguish of loss through religious redemption.

¹⁰³ André Caplet, “La Croix douloureuse” (Paris: Durand, 1918; repr. Huntsville, TX: Recital Publications, 1998): “la croix douloureuse dont Vous m’accablez.”

¹⁰⁴ The last line verse of this song indicates this transformation. Ibid.: “Je courbe la tête, et j’accepte, ô mon Dieu, en l’unissant à la Vôtre, la croix douloureuse dont Vous m’accablez. Je vous conjure seulement de m’aider à la porter.”

Figure 3.11b: André Caplet, “La Croix douloureuse” (Paris: Durand, 1918; repr. Huntsville, TX: Recital Publications, 1998), mm. 32-38: affective shift on “Mais j’adore.”

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (measures 32-38) features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with the lyrics "Mais j'a -" and continues with "do - - re Vo - tre vo - lon - té, dont les desseins sont im pé - né -". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *cresc. molto*, *sf*, *sf*, *p*, *dim.*, and *pp*. Performance instructions include *en animant*, *en retenant*, *Très retenu*, and *dolce*. The second system (measures 39-44) features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "do - - re Vo - tre vo - lon - té, dont les desseins sont im pé - né -". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *ppp* and *legato*. Performance instructions include *a Tempo*.

Caplet’s *Détresse* follows a strikingly similar trajectory. Setting a poem by the French Catholic writer Henriette Charasson, this song is a plea to a fear-inspiring God to make a loss—not yet entirely confirmed—not so. The epigraph to the song tells us that Charasson wrote the poem “for a soldier, wounded and ‘presumed dead’ after the fighting in Neuville St Waast en Artois on September 28, 1915.”¹⁰⁵ Caplet’s composition thus renders into song one of the common situations of the First World War: remaining unsure about whether or not loved ones

¹⁰⁵ André Caplet, “Détresse!” (Paris: Durand, 1919; repr. Huntsville, TX: Recital Publications, 1998): “Poème écrit pour un Soldat, blessé et ‘porté disparu’ après les combats de Neuville St Waast en Artois le 28 September 1915.”

had been killed in combat.¹⁰⁶ As in “La Croix douloureuse,” Caplet uses chromatic harmony to create a sense of confusion and instability in “Détresse.” We can imagine that this resonated with the feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and worry of French citizens who awaited news about loved ones who had gone missing or been presumed dead. The narrator describes her experience of helplessly confronting the cruel loss, of silencing her grief in God’s presence, and then pleads with God to lighten the losses that humankind has been made to bear. She cries that, “His life is in your hands, and my happiness is in your hands, and thus you must perform miracles for me.”¹⁰⁷ Then she asks God to take pity on her, like he would on the children that believe that their all-powerful father arranges everything from heaven.”¹⁰⁸ During the final line of the song (mm. 70-77), the accompaniment suddenly becomes rhythmically regular, providing steady eighth notes as the song and piano evoke G major. On the singer’s final word, “ciel” (heaven), Caplet shifts—as he had at the end of “La Croix douloureuse”—to the major mode (See Figure 3.12 below). The regular diatonic eighth notes continue as the piano plays a simple, tuneful, and descending, though not quite lamenting melody. Caplet infuses a touch of uncertainty in the piece’s last four measures through alternating between tonal and atonal pitch clusters, but the song’s general message seems to be, as in “La Croix douloureuse,” that it is only through accepting peacefully and gratefully God’s all-powerful will that the mourner may be redeemed, and the pain of her or his grief resolved.

¹⁰⁶ For more information on this specific issue during World War I, see Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* and Audoin-Rouzeau, *Cinq deuils de guerre*.

¹⁰⁷ Caplet, “Détresse!”: “Sa vie est dans vos mains, et mon bonheur est dans vos mains, et je sais qu’il me faut par vous des miracles.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.: “leur père est tout puissant et qu’il dispose du ciel.”

Figure 3.12: André Caplet, “Détresse” (Paris: Durand, 1919; repr. Huntsville, TX: Recital Publications, 1998), mm. 68-82: musical-affective shift on “ciel.”

The musical score consists of four systems. The first system (measures 68-72) is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. The vocal line begins with a somber mood, marked *p* (piano). The lyrics are: "som - - - bre, — Quand ils croient — encore que leur père est tout puis -". The piano accompaniment features a dark, descending melodic line in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 73-78) continues in B-flat major. The vocal line becomes more expressive, marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *doux* (softly). The lyrics are: "- sant — et qu'il dis - po - - - se — du ciel. —". The piano accompaniment becomes more active, with a flowing eighth-note pattern in the right hand. The third system (measures 79-82) shows a key signature change to D major. The vocal line is now in a more bright and hopeful mood, marked *dim.* (diminuendo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. The fourth system (measures 83-86) concludes the piece in D major, with the vocal line ending on a sustained note and the piano accompaniment providing a final harmonic resolution.

Patriotic Melancholy in Ravel's "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis"

In contrast to the wartime music for mourning written by many of his peers, Ravel's *Trois chansons pour choeur mixte sans accompagnement* provides music for mourning that exhibits an understated patriotism, as well as an introspective and perhaps ambivalent take on the war and its losses. Ravel wrote these songs in the fall of 1914/winter of 1915 after several months of turmoil brought by the mobilization of French troops. Immediately after the call to mobilization on August 2, 1914, Ravel was conflicted about enlisting. He wrote to Maurice Delage on August 4 asking for moral support: "Write to me immediately," he implored, "so that I can feel the presence of a friend."¹⁰⁹ He wanted to perform his civic duty for France, but was also afraid of leaving his aging mother by herself in their Paris apartment, especially since his brother had already enlisted. He writes to Cipa Godebski in late August 1914 to tell him that after being chastised by "everyone . . . those who were mobilized, volunteers, and even an officer," he has decided to enlist, but still has reservations about what this will do to his mother: "You know how much I love her. I don't know how well she will be able to endure what I am hiding from her: my brother has volunteered as a driver. But I know, I am certain of what will happen when she learns that both of us are leaving: she won't even have to die of hunger."¹¹⁰ His guilt over this decision was immense, and would continue to be so, especially after his mother's death in January 1917.

Ravel's desire to serve his country, however, and to participate in "the splendid moments of this holy war . . . the most grandiose, the noblest action which has ever been seen in the history of humanity (even including the French revolution)!" had gotten the better of him.¹¹¹ He decided to enlist in August, but was rejected for being two kilograms underweight. After persistently applying for months, he was finally accepted into the 13th Artillery Regiment in

¹⁰⁹ Ravel to Maurice Delage, 4 August 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 150.

¹¹⁰ Ravel to Cipa Godebski, 20 August 1914, in *ibid.*, 152.

¹¹¹ Ravel to Maurice Delage, [19] September 1914, in *ibid.*, 155 n6.

March 1915.¹¹² In the meantime, like his contemporaries, Ravel found other ways to contribute to the war effort. In addition to volunteering to help the wounded, he committed himself to “working for the fatherland by writing music.”¹¹³ For Ravel, this entailed putting aside *Wien!*, which would eventually become *La Valse*, and *La Cloche engloutie*, an opera he had been working on with the German librettist Gerard Hauptmann. Given French cultural politics during the war and the Austro-German associations of these pieces, Ravel considered them “not very timely.”¹¹⁴ He turned his attention instead first to a French piano suite—which would later become *Le Tombeau de Couperin*—and then, a little later in the fall, to his *Trois chansons pour chœur mixte sans accompagnement*, which he completed in February 1915.

At the time when he was writing *Trois chansons*, Ravel was mourning several losses and disappointments. He was not only coping with the disappointment he felt in being rejected from the army, writing to Roland-Manuel in October 1914 that he was “not consoled” by friends who told him he needn’t worry about signing up, nor about being rejected, since he could just as easily perform his national duty by writing music.¹¹⁵ He was also lonely and worried about friends who had already been sent to the front, including his brother. Moreover, as noted in chapter 2, by December 1914 at least four of his friends or colleagues had died while defending France: Alberic Magnard had been killed by German troops at his home on September 3; Joseph de Marliave’s death on August 24 had been confirmed by late October; and Ravel’s childhood friends from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Pascal and Pierre Gaudin, had both been killed on November 12.¹¹⁶

¹¹² See his letter to Ralph Vaughn Williams, 5 April 1915, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 159.

¹¹³ Ravel shares both of these pieces of information with Roland-Manuel in a letter of 1 October 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 155.

¹¹⁴ Ravel to Roland-Manuel, 26 September 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 154. In his following letter to Roland-Manuel dated 1 October 1914, he repeats again that “it’s delicate to work on *La Cloche engloutie*—this time I think it really is—and to complete *Wien*, a symphonic poem” (see p. 155).

¹¹⁵ Ravel to Roland-Manuel, 1 October 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 155.

¹¹⁶ Étienne Rousseau-Plotto also remarks that Ravel may have been affected by the disappearance in combat of Alain-Fournier, whose novel *Le Grand Meaulnes* was a favorite of Ravel’s that he considered setting to music. See Étienne

The dedications and texts for *Trois chansons* reflect Ravel's mourning, his disappointment concerning his military rejection, and also his patriotism. Ravel dedicated each of the movements of *Trois chansons* to people who could ostensibly help him enlist. Tristan Klingsor, an old friend and fellow "Apache" who had military connections was the dedicatee of the first movement. Moreover, he dedicated the second movement to Paul Painlevé, who was the French Prime Minister in 1914/1915. Finally, the third movement was dedicated to Sophie Clemenceau, a close friend of Ravel's who Roger Nichols surmises may have introduced Ravel to Painlevé.¹¹⁷ Ravel's *Trois chansons* are also the only compositions aside from *Noël des jouets* for which Ravel wrote the texts. In the first song, "Nicolette," a young woman walking alone in the forest, approached first by a wolf, then by a handsome and kind suitor, and finally by a rich but unattractive old man, leaves the forest with the last. The last song, "Ronde," offers a cruelly ironic twist: after two verses where a chorus of older people warn children not to go into the forest filled with ghouls and wicked, fantastical creatures, in the last verse the children tell the old people that they have no need to worry about the forest—the creatures they had worried about had already been frightened away. While Marcel Marnat suggests that the old people of Ravel's "Ronde" are stand-ins for problematic "pre-war ideologies," Emily Kilpatrick alternatively suggests that, for Ravel, the old people are the "*grandes personnes*, the 'big people' in a world where Ravel still felt himself a child, the grown-ups who, as the Little Prince well knew, seek to replace the magic and wonder of childhood with the grim dreariness of the adult world."¹¹⁸

Whereas the first and third songs of Ravel's *Trois chansons* obliquely address wartime losses and disappointments, the second song, "Trois beaux oiseaux de Paradis," directly refers to

Rousseau-Plotto, *Ravel, portraits basques* (Anglet: Atlantica-Séguier, 2004), 126; and Christopher Palmer, "Debussy, Ravel and Alain-Fournier," *Music & Letters* 50, no. 2 (April 1969): 267-272.

¹¹⁷ Nichols, *Ravel*, 179.

¹¹⁸ Emily Kilpatrick, "Into the Woods: Retelling the Wartime Fairytales of Maurice Ravel," *The Musical Times* (2008): 57-66; 65.

the war.¹¹⁹ This is evident most obviously in the refrain that Ravel penned for this song: “Mon/ton ami z’il est à la guerre” (My/your friend/beloved is away at war). This refrain appears six times throughout the song at the end of every other line, four times using “mon” (my), and twice using “ton” (your). Interestingly, and only noticeable when looking at the text/score, Ravel marks this refrain as a recurring sentiment that exists outside of the dominant textual current of the song by placing it in parentheses each time it appears. In addition, Ravel’s three birds of paradise are blue, white, and red—the colors of the French flag. Each of the birds brings the narrator—whose friend is away at war—something different: the blue bird brings a blue-eyed glance, the white bird a kiss, and the red bird a crimson heart, which leads the narrator’s heart to “grow cold” (*froidit*).

Figure 3.13: Maurice Ravel, Text for “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis,” from *Trois chansons pour chœur mixte sans accompagnement* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1916).

Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis (Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis Ont passé par ici
Le premier était plus bleu que ciel, (Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Le second était couleur de neige, Le troisième rouge vermeil

“Beaux oiselets du Paradis, (Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Beaux oiselets du Paradis, qu'apportez par ici?”
“J’apporte un regard couleur d’azur (Ton ami z-il est à la guerre)”
“Et moi, sur beau front couleur de neige, Un baiser dois mettre encore plus pur.”

“Oiseau vermeil du Paradis, (Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Oiseau vermeil du Paradis, que portez-vous ainsi?”
“Un joli cœur tout cramoisi, (Ton ami z-il est à la guerre)”
“Ah! je sens mon cœur qui froidit...Emportez-le aussi.”

Three beautiful birds of paradise (My love is gone to the war)
 Three beautiful birds of paradise have passed this way.
 The first was bluer than the sky (My love is gone to the war)
 The second was the color of the snow, the third was red as vermillion

“Beautiful little birds of paradise (My love is gone to the war)
 Beautiful little birds of paradise, what do you bring here?”
 “I carry an azure glance (Your love is gone to the war)
 And I must leave on a snow-white brow, a kiss even purer.”

“You red bird of paradise (My love is gone to the war)
 Red bird of paradise what are you bringing me?
 “A loving heart, flushing crimson (Your love is gone to the war).”
 “Ah, I feel my heart growing cold...Take it with you as well.”

¹¹⁹ I have chosen to focus my discussion of Ravel’s *Trois chansons* on “Trois beaux oiseaux de Paradis” because it is clearly a wartime occasional piece. For more on the first and third movements, see Emily Kilpatrick’s article (cited above), and Renato Calza, “Ravel e la grande Guerra, ‘Trois chansons pour chœur’ (1914-1915), ‘Mon ami z-il est à la guerre (moi, je reste ici, hélas!),” *Musica e storia* 6, no. 2 (December 1998): 421-462.

Despite these direct references to the war, Ravel's text for "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis" uses more oblique symbolism and wordplay than the allegories, overt symbolism, and undisguised propaganda of wartime occasional works by Pierné, Schmitt, Hahn, Boulanger, and Debussy. Roger Nichols, for instance, has argued that the song's final words—"Emportez-le aussi"—offer a double entendre that can be read as a reference to the narrator's cold heart ("Carry it away as well"), as well as to Ravel's desire to be sent to the front ("Carry him away as well"). Clothed in blue, red, and white, the birds of paradise Ravel describes can be understood as French soldiers "fighting under the folds of the flag" as Tonnelier and Schmitt were writing contemporaneously. But are these soldiers alive or dead? Ravel's "paradise" here can be read not only as a post-death heavenly realm, but also as the front lines, where Ravel longed to be at the time. Either way one reads it, however, the text of "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis" can be understood as an indication of the extent to which Ravel was more than willing to commit himself to the same fate that Joseph de Marliave and the Gaudin brothers had suffered.

Paralleling his textual elusiveness, Ravel finds subtle ways to express his patriotism and loss musically. While he avoids the overt musical symbolism offered by national anthems, martial *topoi*, or other clear-cut quotations, he sets his songs for unaccompanied choir—a genre that was popular during the war due to its ability to express or represent the unity and collectivism central to the war effort and national mourning—and also draws on historical French musical styles that were instantly recognizable to his critics.¹²⁰ In a review of Ravel's *Trois chansons* published in May 1917, Gaston Carraud described them as "little pastiches, treated by Monsieur Ravel with a mindful skill, in the great tradition of our Renaissance."¹²¹ Similarly, Jean Marnold described the songs in August of the same year as a "pastiche of our old

¹²⁰ Emily Kilpatrick refers to Ravel's choice to compose these songs for unaccompanied choir as "expressive of a subtle but undeniable patriotism." Kilpatrick, "Into the Woods," 58.

¹²¹ Gaston Carraud, "Les Concerts," *La Liberté*, 14 May 1917: "*Trois chansons* pour chœur sans accompagnement, petits pastiches traités par M. Ravel avec une spirituelle habileté." "Spirituelle" is a tricky word to translate; it can refer to intellect or spirituality. I've chosen here to translate it as "mindful" because this captures, in a sense, both definitions of the word and is yet ambiguous enough to not confine it precisely to either one.

sixteenth-century French songs.”¹²² Ravel’s use of older French song would have communicated his allegiance to France and France’s history in a way that had been in fashion since at least the 1890s, and, like Pierné’s “Prélude” for *Les Cathédrales*, drew on and reproduced the image of a France unified across past and present that had gained special importance during the war.¹²³ As Renato Calza points out, these songs can also be read as indications of Ravel’s desire to melancholically “detach from the present times” and return to a prior time “dominated by *joie de vivre*.”¹²⁴ Such musical returns to the past, especially in the context of French modernism and loss, have also been considered melancholic expressions by musicologists Tamara Levitz and Jonathan Cross, both of whom study musical modernists’ neoclassical impulses.¹²⁵

Unlike in the wartime occasional pieces of his contemporaries, Ravel shies away from starkly opposing affects in “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis,” choosing instead to have the listener wander in a liminal affective space between sorrow and pleasure through various repetitions of the same textual/musical refrain. The lush wordless and otherworldly chorus subtly alters the harmony each time the soprano and baritone soloists sing their verses and the haunting refrain. For instance, in the piece’s opening four measures, Ravel employs ambiguous harmony; the wordless chorus, in combination with the soprano soloist, hints at F major/minor, A-flat major, and C minor. When the basses enter with the second repetition of the opening

¹²² Jean Marnold, “Musique. Société Musicale Indépendante,” *Mercur de France* 122 (August 16, 1917): 700-701; 701.

¹²³ For more information on the renewed popularity of *la musique ancienne* in France at the *fin-de-siècle* see Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*; Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in music: from the genesis of the concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988); Katharine Ellis, *The Politics of Plainchant in Fin-di-siècle France* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013); Jane Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹²⁴ Renato Calza, “Ravel e la grande Guerra: ‘Trois chansons pour chœur’ (1914-1915), ‘Mon ami z-il est à la guerre (moi, je reste ici, hélas!),” *Musica e storia* 6, no. 2 (December 1998): 421-462; 430-431: “di distacco dai tempi presenti”; “di tempi dominate dalla *joie de vivre*.”

¹²⁵ Tamara Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially 474-564; Jonathan Cross, “Paradise Lost: Neoclassicism and the Melancholia of Modernism,” in *Rethinking Musical Modernism, Proceedings of the International Conference held from October 11 to 13, 2007* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology, 2008), 55-64.

line's text—"Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis"—at m. 5, they sing a C and an F that suddenly gives the listener a sense of F major. Although the refrain's melody remains the same throughout the song, Ravel scores the underlying harmony differently with each repetition. He also exacerbates this feeling of aimless, moment-to-moment wandering with a polyphonic chorus whose individual singers often shift or maintain harmonies over bar lines and create elisions between phrases, for instance in the unsettling rising elisions that mark the singers' repeated returns to the refrain.¹²⁶ The moderate/slow tempo of this song, and the graceful meandering and tunefulness of the melody here, however, render the instability the listener feels more pleasurable than uncomfortable.

At the conclusion of the song, however, Ravel makes it clear that this has been a lament all along. Eight measures before the song's end, Ravel marks a tempo change—"poco più lento" (a little bit slower)—as the bass soloist sings the refrain's melody to the text "un joli coeur tout cramoisi" (a pretty heart completely crimson) in response to the narrator's question of what he brings with him. He follows this with the parenthetical and eerie acknowledgement that "ton ami z-il est à la guerre" (your friend is away at war). Under the bass soloist's now familiar melody, the tenor sings a stepwise, descending, chromatic line that traverses from A-flat to C, resembling the descending chromatic ground basses of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European lament traditions (See Figure 3.14). After a half-beat pause, the soprano soloist responds over the chorus's *bouche fermée* humming: "Ah je sens mon coeur qui froidit! Emportez-le aussi" (Ah! I feel my heart, which is growing cold, carry it/him away with you). This pause—appearing only in this eighth and final repetition of the refrain melody—combined with the soprano's words here, indicate that she is taken off guard as well as put off by the tenor's suddenly emotional confession, a musical scenario that reflects the privileging of stoicism in wartime France. Unlike the music for mourning of his contemporaries, Ravel's "Trois beaux

¹²⁶ Maurice Ravel, *Trois chansons pour chœur mixte sans accompagnement* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1916), "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis," mm. 16-17, 32-33, and 44-45.

oiseaux du Paradis” concludes not by foretelling France’s victory, but rather with a modally and affectively ambiguous F sung quietly and in unison by the soprano soloist and altos.

Figure 3.14: Maurice Ravel, *Trois chansons pour chœur mixte*, “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1916), mm. 41-48.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the song "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis" by Maurice Ravel. The first system is for the Bass Soloist (B. Solo) and the second is for the Soprano Soloist (S. Solo).

System 1 (B. Solo): The tempo is marked "Poco più lento" with a 4/4 time signature. The music is in B-flat major. The lyrics are: "«Un jo - li cœur tout cramoisi, (Ton a - mi z-il est à la guer-re)»... «A faith - ful heart all crimson red (Thy be - lov'd is to the fighting gone)»...". The score includes a piano (p) dynamic marking and a "Ah!" vocalization at the end of the phrase.

System 2 (S. Solo): The tempo is marked "très doux" and "Rit." (Ritardando). The music is in B-flat major. The lyrics are: "«Ah! je sens mon cœur qui froidit... Empor - tez - le aus - si.» «Ah! I feel my heart growing cold... Take it al - so with thee.»". The score includes dynamics of piano (p), fortissimo piano (fpp), and fortissimo (f), along with the instruction "bouche fermée" (closed mouth).

As Renato Calza has observed, these songs, and especially “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis,” can be understood to reflect not only Ravel’s wartime emotional state, but also his political perspective during the war. In this song Ravel avoids the anti-German rhetoric privileged by many of his peers in their wartime music for mourning. This compositional decision can be understood as a reflection of his ambivalence vis-à-vis French nationalism during the war years, evident, for example, in his 1916 response to the petition created by the newly formed Ligue Nationale pour la Défense de la Musique Française. While at the front, Ravel replied to their proposal to ban performances of contemporary Austro-German music by asserting that while he shared their “obsession with the triumph of our fatherland,” he believed that systematically ignoring the works of foreign composers could only hinder French music.¹²⁷ Just a month before this response, Ravel expressed his ambivalence to French nationalism to Madame Fernand Dreyfus. In discussing his desire to enlist he underlined that this was not the result of a wish to fight to defend his country, but rather due to a sense of national duty and his desire for adventure: “I am peaceful...I have never been courageous. But there it is: I was curious for adventure. It has such a taste that it becomes necessary.”¹²⁸ The placid melancholy and understated patriotism of Ravel’s “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis” might therefore be understood as Ravel’s peaceful yet ardent plea to join his fellow countrymen in a war that had by December 1914 already taken so many lives.

In his “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis,” Ravel subtly resists the generally State-supportive and optimistic musical mourning of his peers. This piece is not a grandiose vehicle for public mourning like those written by Pierné, Lili Boulanger, and Florent Schmitt. Instead it exhibits a delicacy and intimacy that resonates more with Debussy’s, Caplet’s, Hahn’s, and Nadia Boulanger’s circumstantial compositions. Ravel’s piece also diverges from those of his

¹²⁷ Ravel to the Ligue Nationale pour la Défense de la Musique Française, 7 June 1916, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 169.

¹²⁸ Cited in Calza, “Ravel e la grande guerra,” 424: “Je suis pacifique –scriveva Ravel nel maggio 1916 – je n’ai jamais été corageux [sic]. Mais voilà: j’ai eu la curiosité de l’aventure. Elle a une telle saveur qu’elle devient nécessaire.” [Letter from Ravel to Madame Fernand Dreyfus, cited in Marcel Marnat, *Maurice Ravel* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986), 412.]

contemporaries in using a predominantly restrained musical language that avoids overt national symbolism. Perhaps most significantly, however, Ravel's resisted the urge apparent in Pierné's music for *Les Cathédrales*, Nadia Boulanger's "Soir d'hiver," Schmitt's *Chant de guerre*, Hahn's "A nos morts ignorés," and Debussy's "Noël des enfants" to recuperate and justify through a positive musical-affective shift towards the middle or end of a piece, the war's pain, destruction, and losses. This intimacy and subtle resistance to nationalistic cultures of French mourning is not only a feature of "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis," but also appears in the pieces for musical mourning that Ravel wrote after the war. After he was released from his military service in the spring of 1917, Ravel returned to a composition that he had begun three years earlier—his neoclassical piano suite *Le Tombeau de Couperin*—and dedicated each movement to a friend who had died in the war. Moreover, in 1918, Ravel wrote the fifteen-measure piano piece *Frontispice* on a commission from his friend Ricciotto Canudo, who wanted a musical composition to act as a preface to his war poem *S.P. 503: Le Poème du Vardar*. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, in both of these compositions, as well as his 1920 ballet *La Valse* Ravel provides his listeners not with recuperations of the war's losses, but rather with musical portraits of the psychological traces of the grief and trauma that he experienced after 1914, and with which he became even more intimately familiar after 1917.

Chapter 4

Locating Grief and Trauma in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse*

When the composer Jean Roger-Ducasse first heard Marguerite Long perform *Le Tombeau de Couperin* in a private performance in May 1918, he was shocked to find that Ravel had decided to dedicate a suite of cheerful dances to dead soldiers, and even more perplexed by Long's exuberant willingness to perform it, especially since its final movement was dedicated to her husband. Troubled by the mismatch between the music, which for him didn't include even "a measure of emotion," and the dedications, which he says would have been better suited "to dancers or pleasure girls," Roger-Ducasse calls Ravel a "bizarre being" and wonders if he had perhaps intended to play a cunning joke "by establishing a paradox between the sounds of his notes and the glorious syllables of [the names of the dedicatees]."¹ He cannot imagine, however, that Ravel could be this cynical, and thus dismisses this as a possibility. We know that others shared Roger-Ducasse's consternation since Ravel wrote to Léon Vallas in August 1919 about how some people had been "astonished that this homage to the dead should not have a funereal, or at least a morose quality."²

The reviews of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*'s premiere on April 11, 1919 betray a similar disquiet, primarily because all of them are missing any mention of Ravel's dedications. In reading the reviews of this performance it would seem as if the piece were not a work of mourning at all. Not a single one of the critics at the Salle Gaveau that evening mentioned the work's dedications.³ Many of these reviewers were musicians or pianists, and since the piano

¹ Jean Roger-Ducasse, letter to André Lambinet, 6 May 1918, in Jacques Depaulis, ed., *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2001), 120-121: "pas une mesure d'émotion"; "à des danseurs ou à des filles de joie"; "un être bizarre"; "A-t-il voulu ruser, et établir un paradoxe entre les sons de ses notes et les syllabes glorieuses de ces noms?"

² Cited in Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 204.

³ I was able to find only eight reviews of this premiere. There may be more that I haven't been able to find, but out of the ones printed in *La Liberté*, *Mercure de France*, *La République française*, *Le Courrier musical*, *Le Monde musical*, *L'Oeuvre*, *La Verité*, and *L'Ordre publique*, no one mentions the dedications. I looked for reviews of *Le*

score had been published the previous year—with Ravel’s dedications and his drawing of a funeral urn on the title page (see Figure 4.1 below)—most if not all of them would have been aware of the piece’s memorial elements. Jean Marnold, at least, had a copy of the score since he cites a specific passage—“page 12, lines 3 to 6”—in his review.⁴ Critics’ lack of discussion about Ravel’s dedications is somewhat bizarre given the postwar Parisian socio-political climate, in which connections between the war and artworks emanating in response to it were emphasized frequently.⁵ It is particularly striking that no one mentions the dedications or the composition’s relationship to the war in these reviews since the dedicatee of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*’s sixth movement, Joseph de Marliave, was the late husband of Marguerite Long, the pianist who premiered the suite.⁶

Similarly, Ravel’s contemporaries did not really talk about *Frontispice*, Ravel’s only other immediately postwar composition. Written for five hands and published in the artistic journal *Feuillets d’art* in 1919, *Frontispice* was not performed in Ravel’s lifetime, and thus there are no reviews to communicate his contemporaries’ opinions of it. However, even friends of Ravel who knew of the composition appear to have remained mute about the piano piece. The Italian poet Ricciotto Canudo, who commissioned *Frontispice* as an accompaniment to his war-experience-inspired poem *S.P. 503: Le Poème du Vardar*, says nothing about it, nor do Ravel’s

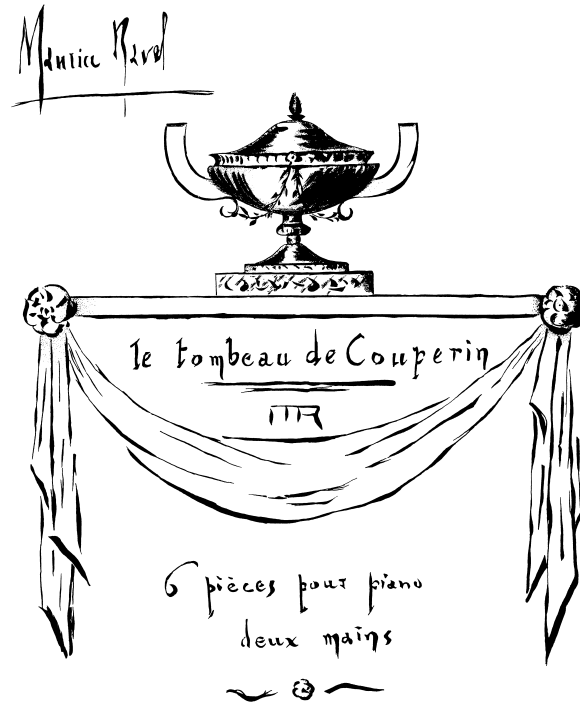
Tombeau de Couperin’s premiere—but to no avail—in *Le Figaro*, *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Temps*, *L’Excelsior*, *Le Carnet critique*, *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, and *L’Éclair*.

⁴ Jean Marnold, “Musique: Quelques concerts. Wagner aux Tuileries,” *Mercur de France* 511 (October 1, 1919): 522-528; 523.

⁵ Marnold’s review is a case in point, since he attributes *Le Tombeau*’s warm reception to the fact that this performance marked Ravel’s return to creative activity after “five years of tragic interruption filled by the fatigues of war and the sickness that followed it,” but yet remains mute about the dedications. *Ibid.*, 523: “cinq ans d’interruption tragique remplis par les fatigues de la guerre et la maladie qui s’ensuivit.”

⁶ Reception of Marguerite Long’s performances after her return to the stage in 1917—she stopped performing publicly after she received word of her husband’s death on the front lines in October 1914—frequently mentions that she is a war widow.

Figure 4.1: Maurice Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918; repr. 1957): Title Page Drawing.



friends Alfredo Casella, Edwin Evans, Igor Stravinsky, and Maurice Delage, who, like Ravel, worked for Aeolian after the war.⁷ Ravel's contemporary biographers and the authors of the large amounts of commemorative literature that appeared after his death steer away from any discussion of the composition.⁸ Current biographers of Ravel consider *Frontispice* to be one of the oddest in his entire oeuvre. Roger Nichols, for example, refers to it as “one of [Ravel's] strangest,” and posits that “the music itself is puzzling,” demonstrating “scant connection to anything Ravel had written before.”⁹ Marcel Marnat similarly calls the work “the strangest by Ravel,” clarifying that, “the language here is as new as possible, astonishingly removed from the

⁷ As Rex Lawson has suggested, each of these composers was involved with the Aeolian Company's attempts to have French modernist composers write compositions for pianola, of which Ravel was one. Lawson convincingly argues that, due to its arrangement for five hands and the extraordinary difficulty of this 15-measure composition, *Frontispice* was likely the composition Ravel once agreed to compose for Aeolian. Rex Lawson, “Maurice Ravel: *Frontispice* for Pianola,” *The Pianola Journal* 2, no. 2 (1989): 36-38.

⁸ Vladimir Jankélévitch mentions it once in passing in *Ravel*, trans. Margaret Crosland (New York: John Calder Ltd. & Grove Press, Inc., 1959), 113.

⁹ Nichols, *Ravel*, 196-197.

rest of the *création ravélienne*.¹⁰ And Tobias Plebuch—one of the few scholars who has undertaken extensive analysis of the piece, locates in *Frontispice* the “absurdity of the world,” which he says “breaks [Ravel’s] language.”¹¹

Critics of Ravel’s 1920 ballet *La Valse* did not find it strange, but rather fantastic, spectral, and ultimately violent. Ravel’s friend Florent Schmitt, for instance, found *La Valse*’s nested themes to be fear inducing, and described the conclusion as “a worrying and intense ride.”¹² Roland-Manuel’s analysis of the piece focused on its “phantom dancers” and the sense of “hallucination” it brought to the listener. He was particularly enamored of what he saw as a “new element” Ravel introduced in this piece, which was “difficult to express but incontestable”: “a mute and coarse violence,” a “rawness” that had been hinted at in *Daphnis et Chloé*, but only came to full fruition in *La Valse*’s contrasts between “the mute darkness” and the “affectionate or frenetic turns of the dancers.”¹³ In a review for *Le Temps*, Theodor Lindenlaub called *La Valse* a “dance macabre,” and relayed that Ravel’s series of waltzes left him with a “spectral impression.”¹⁴

Lindenlaub, however, like many critics who would follow him, also heard in Ravel’s carefully crafted compilation of nineteenth-century Viennese dances the composer’s nostalgia for an unretrievable past.¹⁵ For Lindenlaub, the “spectral impressions” of *La Valse* emerged

¹⁰ Marcel Marnat, *Maurice Ravel* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 437-438: “le plus étrange de Ravel”; “La langage est ici aussi nouveau que possible, étonnamment libéré de tout le reste de la création ravélienne.”

¹¹ Tobias Plebuch, “Der stumme Schrecken, Ravels Frontispice,” in *Hommage à Ravel 1987* (Bremen: Die Hochschule, 1987), 155-165; 165: “Die Betrachtung der Absurdität der Welt schlägt nach innen . . . Daran zerbricht seine Sprache.”

¹² Florent Schmitt, “Les Concerts: Concerts Lamoureux,” *Le Courrier musical* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 1921): 6: “une chevauchée inquiète et ardente.”

¹³ Roland-Manuel, “La Quinzaine musicale: ‘La Valse’ de Maurice Ravel aux Concerts Lamoureux, les Ballets Russes et le ‘Sacre du printemps,’” *L’Éclair*, 20 Decembre 1920: “danseurs fantômes”; “dans une sorte de hallucination”; “cet élément nouveau”; “d’une sorte de sourde et rauque violence, d’âpreté”; “C’est par lui que de sourdes ténèbres s’opposent aux voltes câlines ou frénétiques des danseurs.”

¹⁴ T. Lindenlaub, “À travers les concerts: Compositions inédites...M. Ravel,” *Le Temps*, 28 December 1920: “danse macabre”; “l’impression spectrale.”

¹⁵ This has been an incredibly popular reading of this composition. For a general overview of readings of *La Valse* as expressing Ravel’s nostalgic longing for a pre-war past, see Michael Puri’s chapter on the ballet (Chapter 6) in *Ravel*

from his understanding of the ballet as a representation of a backward glancing, guilt-ridden mindset—a “mental atmosphere”—that seeks to both hide and simultaneously reveal the presence of negative affects such as fear, pain, disappointment, and sadness. He wrote that Ravel, “who so gladly disorients his imagination as if he had wanted to escape from some sort of dissatisfaction in himself,” in *La Valse* “returns in the middle of ruins, from the void of the present, to the obstinate waltzes of yesteryear.”¹⁶ Through the “timbral amalgamations” and the “friction’ of foreign tonalities” of these dances, Lindenlaub suggests, Ravel “reinforces the desired impression of secret dread, of heartbreak that gasps in this fever and dizziness.”¹⁷

In this chapter I take these critical omissions, assertions of strangeness, and observations of violence and spectrality as starting points for considering how the three compositions that Ravel wrote in the years immediately following the war and his mother’s death—*Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse*—reveal Ravel’s struggle to mourn after 1917. Through close readings of these compositions I show that Ravel performs his struggle with grief and its expression repeatedly in ways that resemble what Freud termed the “compulsion to repeat”—a commonly observed symptom of trauma.¹⁸ Understanding Ravel’s immediately postwar compositions in terms of the psychic mechanics of mourning provides insight into his politics of mourning by showing the extent to which Ravel focuses on the violence, as well as the corporeal and psychic difficulty—the by-products of emotional labor—of mourning in World War I-era France. Showing how Ravel underlined the struggle, and ultimately the impossibility of mourning in these ways sheds light on how he sought musical

the Decadent: Memory, Sublimation, Desire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 168-184. This is also Jann Pasler’s reading in *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 698-700.

¹⁶ Lindenlaub, “À travers les concerts”: “une atmosphère mentale”; “Ce rare et singulier artiste qui dépaysé si volontiers son imagination, comme s’il voulait échapper à un je ne sais quoi d’insatisfait en lui-même s’en est retourné, au milieu des ruines, du vide du temps présent, de la misère, les valse obstinées d’autrefois.”

¹⁷ Ibid., “amalgams de timbres et ce qu’on appelle le ‘frottement’ continu de tonalités étrangères”; “renforcent l’impression voulue de secrète angoisse, de déchirement, qui halette sous toute cette fièvre et ce vertige.”

¹⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, vol. 18 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 3-66.

means to mourn more adequately without falling back on the wartime politics of mourning evident in the music of many of his contemporaries, which I addressed in detail in the previous chapter.¹⁹

Connections between misfitting, mourning, and spectrality have been illustrated within the philosophical and psychoanalytic discourse of Jacques Derrida, Nicolas Abraham, and Maria Torok. Derrida, for instance, writes in *Specters of Marx* about the “out-of-joint-ness” of time as an indication of a spectral presence that he ties to loss.²⁰ And Abraham and Torok, drawing on their experiences with patients who they came to identify as resistant mourners, read literature for moments where melancholic authors indicate the existence, causes, and terms of their traumatically repressed grief in cryptic but revealing “magic words.” These haunt the mourner by “making strange and incomprehensible signs to him, forcing him to perform unwonted acts, arousing unexpected feelings in him.”²¹

Literary scholars like Cathy Caruth, Jonathan Flatley, and Eve Sorum, and the music scholar Tamara Levitz, have similarly suggested that loss and trauma frequently appear in modernist World War I-era and interwar texts in moments where readers perceive absence, strangeness, or incongruity. In his study of “affective maps” in modernist literature, Flatley observes that melancholic modernist authors like Henry James ask readers to engage in “a kind of bodily immersion” engendered through “just enough noncomprehension to necessitate reading into the text.”²² Caruth, on the other hand, locates the performance of trauma in

¹⁹ Adequate mourning was especially important to Jacques Derrida. See Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, “Reckoning with the Dead: Jacques Derrida’s Politics of Mourning,” in *The Work of Mourning*, eds. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-30.

²⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, intro. by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York: Routledge, 1994). For an excellent and pithy account of Derrida’s theory of spectrality in relation to loss, see Tamara Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 480-484.

²¹ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, “Introjection-Incorporation: Mourning or Melancholia,” in *Psychoanalysis in France*, eds. Serge Lebovici and Daniel Widlöcher (New York: International Universities Press, 1980), 3-16; 8.

²² Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 89.

twentieth-century literature in “crying wounds,” whereas Eve Sorum discovers Ford Madox Ford’s wartime trauma in his interwar novels’ ellipses—marked absences that signal the unspeakable wounds of trauma.²³ Tamara Levitz, on the other hand, has considered instances of incongruity in the second tableau of Igor Stravinsky’s, Ida Rubinstein’s, André Gide’s, and Jean Copeau’s 1934 collaboration, *Perséphone*. She shows how in moments of rupture and discord, Gide’s libretto reveals his grief over the deaths of loved ones, while Stravinsky resists mourning in this scene through musical pastiche: “sudden temporal shifts, evidence of pain masked with nostalgic pleasure, neoclassical borrowings, and outbursts of sentimental memories.”²⁴ Strangeness, incomprehension, incongruity, and marked absence thus often reveal authors’ subconscious desires to have their readers delve further into their works in order to discover the unspeakable trauma, hidden in plain view so to speak, within them.

Beginning with Alexis Roland-Manuel’s essay on Ravel’s “esthétique de l’imposture” (aesthetic of deception) in 1925, there has been no shortage of discussion on the ways in which Ravel’s music seems paradoxically to conceal while drawing attention to the act of concealing. This was Vladimir Jankélévitch’s take on Ravel’s music in his 1939 text on Ravel, as well as his 1962 philosophical reflection on French and Russian modernism more broadly, *La Musique et l’ineffable*. In both texts, Jankélévitch observes Ravel’s mastery in the art of masking, which he terms “inexpressive espressivo” due to the ability of performances of violently suppressed emotion to communicate what would be otherwise inexpressible. He writes that in moments of modernist musical masking, “there is in its very furor, in its outrage, something suspect that betrays the passionate intention, torment and humanity, and an all-too-human anguish.”²⁵ Jankélévitch also notes, however, that there are moments when Ravel’s musical masks

²³ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Eve Sorum, “Mourning and Moving On: Life After War in Ford Madox Ford’s *The Last Post*,” in *Modernism and Mourning*, ed. Patricia Rae (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 154-167.

²⁴ Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries*, 531.

²⁵ Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 42.

momentarily fracture under the pressure of concealment, causing “wrenching cries” to spill out ever so briefly in *Chansons madécasses* and *L’Enfant et les sortilèges*.²⁶ For Jankélévitch, as for Roland-Manuel and other of Ravel’s contemporaries, Ravel employed masking in his music “in order to avoid speaking of himself.”²⁷ This is particularly apparent, Jankélévitch argues, in Ravel’s dances, which in their “appearance of frivolous detachment” serve “the baffling stratagems of modesty.”²⁸

Recently musicologists Zarah Ersoff, Michael Puri, and Lloyd Whitesell have proffered illuminating analyses of Ravel’s life and works that render his modesty and masking less baffling by attributing them to his dandyist social identity and sexuality.²⁹ Puri, for instance, has convincingly argued that Ravel’s 1911 ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* provides ample musical examples of the sublimation of sexual desire that was characteristic of late-nineteenth-century dandyism. According to Puri, this sublimation is evident in *Daphnis*’s *volte-face*, which channels the character’s jealousy towards his sexual rival Dorcon—embodied in the violently aggressive *geste brusque*—into “the stylized courtliness of the waltz.”³⁰ Like Jankélévitch’s observation of “wrenching cries” in Ravel’s music, Puri’s psychoanalytically-informed analysis of *Daphnis et Chloé* demonstrates that the “sublimity without interruption” that is dandyism’s objective is almost always impossible: there will always be moments where the dandy’s attempts at

²⁶ Ibid., 42 n28.

²⁷ Jankélévitch, *Ravel*, 116.

²⁸ Ibid., 134.

²⁹ Lloyd Whitesell, “Ravel’s Way,” in *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity*, eds. Sophie Fuller and Lloyd Whitesell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 49-78; Zarah Ersoff, “Musical Dandyism: Aestheticism and Orientalism in *Fin-de-siècle* France,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2013); Michael Puri, “Dandy Interrupted: Sublimation, Repression, and Self-Portraiture in Maurice Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé* (1909-1912),” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60, no. 2 (2007): 317-372. Each of these authors addresses Ravel’s dandyism as an expression of his sexuality; although it may never be known for certain whether Ravel had affairs with men or women, Lloyd Whitesell has argued that Ravel’s permanent bachelorhood, as well as his statement (in a letter to Helene Kahn-Casella in 1919) that musicians are not made for marriage, can be understood as articulations of Ravel’s resistance to social-sexual norms of his time that suggest his queerness. Dandyism as an aesthetic posture was practiced by and large by contemporaries of Ravel, for instance Reynaldo Hahn, Marcel Proust, and Oscar Wilde, all of whom had love affairs with men.

³⁰ Puri, “Dandy Interrupted,” 325.

composed self-presentation fail, where repressed desire returns to puncture, if not shatter, the serene and charming musical surface.

The “wrenching cries” and emotional masking found in Ravel’s oeuvre demand reevaluation after 1914, and even more so after his mother’s death in January 1917. Certainly Ravel’s concerns with aesthetic and sexual self-fashioning did not disappear after 1917, although they may have been overrun by new emotional concerns that further complicated his choices for social and musical self-presentation. We can imagine, for instance that the “suppression of the ‘natural’” through an “artful manipulation of posture, social skill, manners, conversation, and dress” central to *fin-de-siècle* French dandyism would become ever more agonizingly difficult when a dandy is faced with the intense grief that accompanies the loss of a close friend, or, more painful still, a parent with whom one has spent all the years of his life save the last.³¹ Indeed, scholars like Carolyn Abbate, Jean-Christophe Branger, Renato Calza, Emily Kilpatrick, and Deborah Mawer have each written illuminating essays that acknowledge that Ravel seems to have been concerned with death and mourning in the compositions he wrote after 1914. However, none of these scholars has yet performed a comparative analysis that seeks to determine the mechanics of Ravel’s postwar mourning, nor how musical composition may have been a means for him to productively work through the grief and trauma he was faced with after 1914 through narrativizing it and sharing it with others.³²

³¹ This definition of dandyism comes from Rhonda K. Garelick, *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin-de-Siècle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3.

³² Carolyn Abbate, “Outside Ravel’s Tomb,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 3 (Autumn, 1999): 465-530; Jean-Christophe Branger, “Ravel et la valse,” *Ostinato rigore* 24 (2005): 145-60; Emily Kilpatrick, “Into the Woods: Retelling the Wartime Fairytales of Maurice Ravel,” *The Musical Times* (2008): 57-66; Deborah Mawer, “Balanchine’s *La Valse*: Meanings and Implications for Ravel Studies,” *The Opera Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2006): 90-116; Renato R. Calza, “Ravel e la Grande Guerra: ‘Trois chansons pour choeur’ (1914-1915), ‘Mon ami z’il est à la guerre (moi, je reste ici, hélas!),” *Musica e storia* 6, no. 2 (December 1998): 421-462.

Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Grief and Trauma

At the time when Ravel was composing *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse*, Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet were continuing their study, which they had begun long before the war, of the causes, symptoms, and treatments of trauma. Both psychologists observed not only the existence of traumatic memories—the conscious or unconscious memories of the initial trauma that remain unintegrated in the psyche—but also the usually unconscious repetition of trauma in their patients’ behaviors and dreams. Janet, for instance, remarked that many of his patients who had been diagnosed with hysteria relived the “cognitive, affective, and visceral elements of traumatic memory” through what he termed “subconscious fixed ideas.”³³ Freud, on the other hand, observed that soldiers who had participated in the war, as well as other patients with traumatic neuroses, developed a “compulsion to repeat” their trauma, often in their dreams, but also through their general behaviors, and, in the case of children, in their play.³⁴

Profoundly influenced by Freud and Janet, most if not all contemporary trauma scholars and specialists note that people who experience trauma through being faced with death—their own or someone else’s—or other kinds of violence, tend to relive the bodily, emotional, and psychic states produced in the initial moment of trauma.³⁵ Psychoanalysts Vamik Volkan and

³³ Bessel Van der Kolk and Onno Van der Hart, “Pierre Janet and the Breakdown of Adaptation in Psychological Trauma,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 146, no. 12 (December 1989): 1530-1540; Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 37: “idée fixe.”

³⁴ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 3-66. Judith Herman cites both Freud and Janet in her account of trauma and how to recover from it in *Trauma and Recovery*. She explains that, “Long after the danger is past traumatized people relive the event as though it were continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume the normal course of their lives, for the trauma repeatedly interrupts. It is as if time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep.” Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 37.

³⁵ In addition to Judith Herman’s work the following contemporary sources helpfully address the impulse to reenactment: *Death and Trauma: The Traumatology of Grieving*, eds. Charles R. Figley, Brian E. Bride, and Nicholas Mazza (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1997); Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*, eds. Bessel A Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (New York: Guilford Press, 1996); Shanti Shapiro, “Trauma, Ego Defenses, and Behavioral Reenactment,” in *Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology: Clinical Intervention with Adult Survivors* (New York: Lexington Books, 1992), 35-58

Joanna Stubley have shown how mourning can become complicated and linger for years in instances of unexpected or otherwise traumatic death, and especially in cases where mourners feel in some way responsible for a death.³⁶ Trauma specialists Judith Herman and Peter Levine have also asserted that traumatic symptoms tend to persist in instances when mourners do not have time to process their grief, as in combat or other situations that involve prolonged exposure to death with little time to recognize and grieve each loss, a state they refer to as hyperarousal.³⁷

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's "cryptonymy" provides a useful framework for understanding the psychic experience of difficult to process or traumatic grief. Through paying attention to the specifics of their patients' traumas and life experiences, examining the cryptic "magic words" their analysands used to describe these experiences, and decoding linguistically analysands' post-trauma actions, Abraham and Torok strove to achieve a nuanced and personal approach to psychoanalysis. Abraham and Torok's cryptonymy offered a significant departure from the concept of mourning proposed by their psychoanalytic predecessors. For Sándor Ferenczi, Freud, Melanie Klein, and numerous twentieth-century psychoanalysts, introjection was considered a normal psychic process beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout one's lifetime.³⁸ Whereas Freud and Klein cited introjection as the cause of a melancholic response to loss, in her 1968 essay "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse," Maria Torok proffered a reformulation of melancholic or resistant mourning by suggesting that a different term was needed to make sense of cases of mourning in which

³⁶ Vamik Volkan, "Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies," in *On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia,"* eds. Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007), 90-109. Joanna Stubley, "Bearing the Unbearable: Melancholia Following Severe Trauma," *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy* 17, no. 3 (September 2003): 219-240.

³⁷ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 33-36; Peter Levine, *Healing Trauma: Restoring the Wisdom of the Body* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, Inc., 1999), 1-18.

³⁸ Sigmund Freud *The Ego and the Id*, in *The Standard Edition of the Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. 19 (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974), 3-68; Judith Butler, "Melancholy Gender—Refused Identification," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 5, no. 2 (1995): 165-180; Melanie Klein, "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States (1940)," in *The Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: Free Press, 1987), 146-174.

mourners became fixated on their loss. She posited that in such instances, rather than the slow and gradual process of introjection, an instantaneous “fantasy of incorporation” takes place.³⁹ This fantasy of incorporation occurs through a subject’s refusal to mourn, acting as a “magical cure”—a coping mechanism that “dispenses with the painful task of readjustment” that acknowledging the loss completely would entail. In Abraham and Torok’s words, “it is to avoid ‘swallowing’ the loss, that one imagines swallowing, or having swallowed, what is lost, in the form of an object.”⁴⁰

For Abraham and Torok this swallowing of a lost love object produces a tomb, crypt or vault. They write that,

Grief that cannot be expressed builds a *secret vault* within the subject. In this crypt reposes—alive, reconstituted from the memories of words, images, and feelings—the objective counterpart of the loss, as a complete person with his own topography, as well as the traumatic events—real or imagined—that had made introjection impossible.⁴¹

The inability to speak about or to acknowledge a loss psychically is often the cause of the fantasy of incorporation.⁴² Whether due to traumatic circumstances surrounding the loss, social norms that render the expression of grief difficult, or the presence of a shameful secret that the mourner keeps for the person being mourned after their death, the shame and guilt that prevents a mourner from being able to talk about and process their loss produces the building of a secret crypt inside the mourner’s ego.⁴³ Abraham and Torok also underline that the fantasy of

³⁹ Maria Torok, “The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse,” in *The Shell and the Kernel: Revelations of Psychoanalysis*, ed., trans., and with intro. by Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 107-124; 113.

⁴⁰ Abraham and Torok, “Introjection-Incorporation,” 5. Also, see Torok, “The Illness of Mourning,” in which she points out the frequency with which her melancholic patients dream of about “eating and burying” corpses (pp. 122-123).

⁴¹ Abraham and Torok, “Introjection-Incorporation,” 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Abraham’s and Torok’s theorizing of *cryptonomie* focuses primarily on the presence of shameful secrets, often related sexual trauma or desire, engendered by the person being mourned. Other psychoanalysts and psychologists, however, have addressed the extent to which traumatic deaths, death scenarios in which the mourner feels in some way responsible for the death, and losses that are unspeakable in a given social context also lead to resistant mourning. See Volkan, “On Not Letting Go” and Stubley, “Bearing the Unbearable.”

incorporation must remain secret, often to the mourner herself. Torok wrote in 1968, for instance, that, “Refusing both the object’s and reality’s verdict, incorporation is an eminently illegal act; it must hide from view along with the desire of introjection it masks; it must hide even from the ego.”⁴⁴

This crypt contains a combination of the affects associated with the lost love object, including desire. Derrida, for instance, describes the crypt as a “vault of desire” that is created through the exclusion of that desire. He sustains that, “what the crypt commemorates, as the incorporated object’s ‘monument’ or ‘tomb,’ is not the object itself, but its exclusion, the exclusion of a specific desire from the introjection process: a door is silently sealed off like a condemned passageway inside the Self, becoming the outcast safe.”⁴⁵ This desire is contradictory, producing pleasure in addition to shame and guilt. According to Derrida, the contradictory nature of the desire creates the opposing forces necessary to build the walls of the crypt:

Without this contradiction within desire, nothing would be comprehensible: neither the relative solidity of the crypt—what architects call the ‘resistance of the materials’ which balances the pressures, repels intrusions, foresees collapse, or in any case delays it, tries to compute, like miners, the moment a shaft should be allowed to cave in—nor the hermeticism and indefatigable effort to maintain it, nor the failure of that effort, the permeation from within or from without, seeping through the crypt’s partitions, passing from one part of the divided Self to the other, engraving itself upon several surfaces along the angular lines which we will identify later and which always follow the division of a “fantasmatic double(ness),” each fantasy being “double and opposed.”⁴⁶

“Built by violence,” Derrida emphasizes, the angular, fragmented, and fractured tomb, simultaneously concretized and always on the verge of collapse, leaves its seeker to traverse a labyrinth of dead-ends and secret passageways: “The cryptic fortress protects this analysis-register by provoking the symbolic break. It fractures the symbol into angular pieces, arranges

⁴⁴ Torok, “The Illness of Mourning,” 114.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 69-70. See also Abraham and Torok, “Incorporation-Introjection,” 9.

internal (intra-symbolic) partitions, cavities, corridors, niches, zigzag labyrinths, and craggy fortifications.”⁴⁷ Through dividing and shattering the ego in the moment of encryption, the contradictory desire that is both the cause and the object of psychic entombment betrays its presence, even in attempting to do the opposite.

Abraham and Torok foreground that the dead-alive entities, or “intrapsychic secrets,” entombed in the mourner’s ego never remain completely buried.⁴⁸ Fissures in the surface of the crypt permit spectral remnants of the secret desire to spill out and cast shadows on the outer walls of the crypt, betraying the presence of the mourner’s cryptonymy through hard-to-read yet telling signs and symbols:

Yet it happens that with libidinal activity, “in the middle of the night,” the phantom of the crypt may come to haunt the keeper of the graveyard, making strange and incomprehensible signs to him, forcing him to perform unwonted acts, arousing unexpected feelings in him.⁴⁹

Mourning, then, leaves the living to abide with phantoms and fissures. These phantoms arise out of a crypt built out of and through the impossibility of ever completely mourning a loss, out of an encryption process that enables mourners to shut away the unspeakable. This forceful shutting away, or “swallowing,” of the loss and everything that accompanies it, is the mechanism by which resistant mourners are able to preserve the memory of the person who they mourn.

What remains for these mourners who cannot adequately or directly verbalize their grief is a language laden with specters that keeps up appearances but yet cannot avoid the interpolating apparitions that haunt its syntax. This is a language that emerges out of a forced swallowing of memory, desire, and doleful expression. Abraham, Torok, and Derrida focus on language because in their readings of Freud—especially the case of the Wolf-Man—and in their work with patients, the presence of the crypt manifested itself in “word-things” produced by

⁴⁷ Derrida, “Fors,” 68, 76.

⁴⁸ Derrida in particular is fond of the idea of the living dead: “The inhabitant of a crypt is always a living-dead, a dead entity we are perfectly willing to keep alive, but as dead, one we are willing to keep, as long as we keep it, within us, intact in any way save as living.” Ibid., 78.

⁴⁹ Abraham and Torok, “Introjection-Incorporation,” 8.

what is buried in the crypt. In discussing the *Verbarium* created by Abraham and Torok in their analysis of the Wolf-Man's case, Derrida proffers that this "reconstitut[ion] [of] the hieroglyphic code" that the Wolf-Man "had to invent in order to say without saying the interdict" is strikingly distinct from any commonly spoken language. He explains that, "a certain foreign body is here working over our household words" and that this foreign feeling of the words "is attached to the Thing [mourners] are occupied with."⁵⁰

The spectrality of Ravel's immediately postwar musical language is evident not only in critics' reactions to *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse*, but also in many moments that might be considered musical "magic words." These are moments of musical force or violence, instances of formal, stylistic or affective incongruence, or moments when Ravel draws attention to the highly constructed nature of musical gracefulness or placidity. Throughout these compositions, Ravel seems to use these musical techniques in order to play with the idea that direct emotional expression—which might be understood as an explicit acknowledgement of grief or trauma—must be avoided. As Abraham's, Torok's, and Derrida's theory of cryptonymy sustains, at the center of several of these pieces is contradictory desire, which Ravel represents through music that is historically, socially, and personally linked to longing. By fracturing these representations of desire, rendering them dissonant, or littering them with spectral emanations and violent ruptures, Ravel movingly underlines the impossibility as well as the potentially deleterious consequences of this process of burying one's losses, memories, feelings, and contradictory desires within one's psyche.

Composing in the Midst of Grief

Le Tombeau de Couperin, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse* were all completed between 1917 and 1920, when Ravel was attempting to cope physically and emotionally with the grief and trauma he had encountered between 1914 and 1917. After beginning *Le Tombeau de Couperin* in

⁵⁰ Derrida, "Fors," 82-83.

the summer and fall of 1914, Ravel returned to it in the spring or summer of 1917, and completed it in November of the same year.⁵¹ The few letters of Ravel's that survive from this period demonstrate the depression he felt after his mother's death in January 1917. While still serving in the military, he writes to his war godmother, Roland-Manuel's mother Madame Fernand Dreyfus, at the beginning of February about his "horrible despair," which he says is only exacerbated by his captain telling him to "snap out of it," and "kind and cheerful comrades" who make him feel "more isolated here than anywhere else."⁵² A few days later he writes the same to Ida Godebska, confessing that he is "terribly unhappy here" and feels torn from "all that he cares about" by a captain who continually tries to distract him from his grief.⁵³ Despite his captain's best efforts, Ravel's grief would continue well past the first months after his mother's death. He writes to Lucien Garban on June 20, 1917 that he is still awaking troubled in the middle of the night, "sensing her close to me, watching me."⁵⁴ It is within this context of persistent grief that Ravel returned to *Le Tombeau de Couperin*.

Although Ravel left no information about the composition of *Frontispice*, making it difficult to determine his emotional state when he composed it, it is clear that Ravel was still mourning his mother's death in the fall of 1919—after the publication of *Frontispice*—and the winter of 1920, when he returned to working on *La Valse*. Ravel had begun working on the ballet in 1906—then calling it *Wien!*—perhaps, Roger Nichols has suggested, inspired by his friend Ricardo Viñes's "melancholy meditations" on the annual Opéra ball, to which they had

⁵¹ Ravel mentions a "suite française" to Roland-Manuel in a letter dated 1 October 1914. See Ravel to Roland-Manuel, 1 October 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 155-156; Ravel writes to Jacques Durand on July 7, 1917 to tell him that *Le Tombeau de Couperin* is coming along, and that the "Menuet" and the "Rigaudon" are finished. See Ravel to Jacques Durand, 7 July 1917, in René Chalupt and Marcelle Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres* (Paris: Laffont, 1956), 150. His notation on the score indicates he finished the composition in November 1917.

⁵² Ravel to Mme Fernand Dreyfus, 9 February 1917, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 180.

⁵³ Ravel to Ida Godebska, 14 February 1917, Frederick R. Koch Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, box 51, folder 1094.

⁵⁴ Ravel to Lucien Garban, 20 June 1917, in "La Correspondance de Maurice Ravel à Lucien Garban," *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 7 (2000): 19-68; 66: "je la sens près de moi, me veillant..."

both been invited by Misia Sert in 1905.⁵⁵ Ravel had resumed working on the composition in the summer and fall of 1914, but decided to put down the work after the war began, finding its Austro-German topic “untimely.”⁵⁶ He picked it back up, however, around December 1919, and finished it in February 1920 on a commission for Diaghilev, who rejected the work when Ravel performed it for him at Misia Sert’s home in 1920.⁵⁷ Returning in 1919 to the composition he had worked on frequently in his mother’s “dear silent presence” filled with “infinite tenderness,” he tells Ida Godebska, makes him recall her presence.⁵⁸ At around the same time, while still in the midst of preparing *La Valse* for Diaghilev, Ravel writes to Héléne Kahn-Casella to tell her that now that he has begun composing again, he “think[s] about [his mother] everyday, or rather every minute.”⁵⁹ Like *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, then, *La Valse* was composed while Ravel was attempting to cope with and recover from the death of his mother, as well as the war’s innumerable tragedies, all of which affected him physically, emotionally, and psychically.⁶⁰

Ravel’s obsession with death and mourning between 1917 and 1921 is also evidenced by the fact that he chose to spend large amounts of time with friends who were also in mourning during this time. Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, who was depressed and still mourning the death of her husband in April 1915, writes in her diary that Ravel came to her home for dinner

⁵⁵ Nichols’s assertion is based on Viñes’s diary: “Then on the 28th [January 1905] he was invited by Misia Edwards, together with Viñes, Grovlez, Pierre Bonnard and Cipa and Ida Godebski, to the Opéra ball. Viñes recorded in his diary: ‘It was the first time I had been to the Opéra ball, and as always when I see young, beautiful women, lights, music and all this activity, I thought of death, of the ephemeral nature of everything, I imagined balls from past generations who are now nothing but dust, as will be all the masks I saw, and in a short while! What horror, oblivion!’” See Nichols, *Ravel*, 59.

⁵⁶ See my discussion of this in chapter 3.

⁵⁷ Nichols, *Ravel*, 209-210.

⁵⁸ Ravel to Ida Godebska, 27 December 1919, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 195.

⁵⁹ Ravel to Héléne Kahn-Casella, 15 January 1920, in Jean Roy, ed., “Soixante-deux lettres de Maurice Ravel à Héléne et Alfredo Casella,” *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 1 (1985): 59-111; 79; trans. in Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 183.

⁶⁰ For instance, Ravel spent the years immediately after the war recuperating from neurasthenia. For more on Ravel and neurasthenia, see Ravel to Madame Fernand Dreyfus, 10 September 1918, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 182-183. After having surgery for ganglions in his lungs in the fall of 1918, he spent the first two months of 1919 in Mégève, Switzerland. See his letters from 1919 in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 185-188; Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 155-165; and Nichols, *Ravel*, 195-196.

twice in the weeks after his mother's death while he was still on leave from military service.⁶¹ After being released from active military duty in April or May of 1917, Ravel went to stay with Roland-Manuel's parents at their home in Lyons-la-Forêt.⁶² Staying at the home of his war godmother and her husband likely provided him with a special comfort that came not only from his close relationship with Madame Fernand Dreyfus, but also from knowing that the couple was in mourning as well since their son Jean had been killed in the war in the months prior. In addition, Ravel became closer friends during this time with people—and especially women—who had also lost loved ones during the war, including Hélène Jourdan-Morhange and Marguerite Long. Both of these women became not only close friends, but also favorite performers of his after the war.⁶³ This shift in Ravel's social circle, evident in the people with whom he spent time, as well as the letters that I discussed in chapter 2 in which he took the opportunity to share his grief with mourning friends, might be understood as related to the development during World War I of what Jay Winter has termed “fictive kin networks,” in which people came to rely on others for material as well as emotional support in times of mourning.⁶⁴

Grief, Trauma, Silence, and Music

As I addressed in detail in chapter 2, many of the mourners in Ravel's social sphere were, like Ravel, concerned with emotional self-presentation. This often led them to internalize their grief in order to avoid socio-emotional censure. Nadia Boulanger and Marguerite Long, for instance, described their grief after the deaths of loved ones in terms of masking, silence, and the pain that this caused. Marguerite Long recalls “enclosing [herself] in silence” upon the death

⁶¹ Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, journal entries dated 16 January 1917 and 29 January 1917, in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *Journal: 1894-1927* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 927, 928.

⁶² Nichols, *Ravel*, 190.

⁶³ Whereas Ricardo Viñes was Ravel's preferred pianist before the war, but after the war Long became his favorite pianist.

⁶⁴ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Chapter 2, especially p. 46.

of her husband in 1914.⁶⁵ Similarly, Boulanger wrote to Marcelle de Manziarly after her mother's death that, "from the outside, all appears truly fine—in truth, [there is the] impossibility of dealing with anything—a void, without name, breaks my heart in two."⁶⁶ In another letter to Manziarly, Boulanger recognizes her tendency to hide her feelings even from those closest to her, who she worries that she alienates by remaining distant, writing, "perhaps one day I will again find my equilibrium—and I will know how to show my heart, which, too much in pain, takes refuge in silence, to you and those to whom I am closest."⁶⁷

According to many in Ravel's circle, silencing one's grief had the potential to do harm, creating a difficult-to-escape feedback loop that exacerbated the pain of loss rather than providing relief. Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, for instance, wrote in her diary on the first anniversary of her husband's death of "hiding [her] pain" and thus "destroying [her] heart."⁶⁸ In June 1915, while stationed at the front, Maurice Maréchal reflected on the deaths of his fiancée two years earlier, as well as the death of his close friend Oscar Frank who died in combat, and decided that keeping his emotions to himself is the best recourse. In his diary he writes that, "containing my emotion, letting nothing appear, carrying in resignation on one's shoulders the weight that is each day a little heavier: this is what remains for me."⁶⁹ After her father's death in 1918, 12-year-old Chouchou Debussy similarly conveyed that containing her emotions led to more grief, pain, and sadness rather than less. She explained to her cousin Raoul Bardac that, "struggling against the indescribable grief" of her Mother, while "frightful," allowed her to "for a

⁶⁵ Marguerite Long, *Au piano avec Gabriel Fauré* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1963), 72: "Je m'enfermai dans le silence."

⁶⁶ Nadia Boulanger to Marcelle de Manziarly, 22 June 1935, BnF, Mus., NLA 289, 146: "extérieurement tout vraiment bien—en vérité, impossibilité de s'adapter à rien—une vide sans nom, le coeur ampute de lui-même—que faire. Attendrai—et travailler."

⁶⁷ Nadia Boulanger to Marcelle de Manziarly, 7 September 1935, BnF, Mus., NLA 289, 149: "un jour peut-être je retrouverai mon équilibre—et je saurai, avec toi, avec ceux qui me sont le plus proche, montrer mon coeur qui, trop douloureux, se réfugie d'autant plus dans le silence, qu'il devrait se sentir en confiance le plus."

⁶⁸ Saint-Marceaux, entry of 25 April 1916, Chimènes, ed., *Journal*, 895.

⁶⁹ Maurice Maréchal, "Carnets de guerre," entry dated 2 June 1915, in Luc Durosoir, ed., *Deux musiciens dans la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Tallendier, 2005), 215-343; 249: "Contenir mon émotion, ne rien laisser paraître, porter avec résignation sur les épaules le fardeau chaque jour un peu plus lourd: voilà ce qu'il me reste."

few days . . . forget my own grief.” She adds, however, that “now, I feel it all the more poignantly.”⁷⁰

Making the processing of emotional turmoil all the more difficult and painful was the general social moratorium, especially evident during the war, on open discussion of traumatic symptoms or experiences. This often prevented women, and especially men, from receiving treatment that might help them acknowledge their trauma in order to work through it. This was in part because doctors believed that hysteria was contagious, and worried that “hysterical ‘suggestions’ could spread among troops at the front, weakening morale, destroying discipline, and inspiring an epidemic of neuropsychiatric cases.”⁷¹ Moreover, discourse about trauma and hysteria in France during World War I suggested that the emotional or physical shock of violent combat produced traumatic symptoms only in predisposed individuals who had exhibited a weakness of constitution prior to their military service. Soldiers who complained about mental, emotional, or physical problems that were not plainly observable were often considered “weak-willed shirkers” and accused of malingering.⁷² Because hysteria was constructed as a “feminine” illness in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, diagnoses of hysteria challenged the masculinity of French men, and led doctors to keep such diagnoses to a minimum for fear of “fostering an image of a weak-willed fighting force.”⁷³

Amongst Ravel’s contemporaries, music was imagined as a viable vehicle for otherwise inexpressible emotions or experiences. A number of Ravel’s philosophical contemporaries were quick to point out how the hermeneutic openness of music—as compared to literature, visual, and other arts that were considered more directly representational—made it an apt art for the

⁷⁰ Claude-Emma (Chouchou) Debussy to Raoul Bardac, cited and trans. in Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long: A Life in French Music, 1874-1966* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 61.

⁷¹ Gregory Thomas, *Treating the Trauma of the Great War: Soldiers, Civilians, and Psychiatry in France, 1914-1940* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 21.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 20-25, 48-49.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

conveyance of feelings that were otherwise difficult to express. As the historian Sophie-Anne Leterrier has observed, a number of World War I soldiers interviewed in Jean Norton Cru's *Témoins* "asked themselves if music wasn't the most efficacious means of expression for rendering that which soldiers felt unable to describe."⁷⁴ Annette Becker similarly points out that Henri Malherbe, in his 1917 novel *La Flamme au Poing*, wonders if "the secret and passionate language of music could indeed translate the dark greatness of soldiers' sacrifices and the entirety of the violent spectacle that haunts our vision."⁷⁵

Discussions of the usefulness of music's hermeneutic openness circulated within interwar French art music and philosophy circles as well. Vladimir Jankélévitch, for example, claimed that music "signifies nothing, unless by convention or association." Regarding music's hermeneutics, he wrote that "everything is possible, the most fabulous ideologies and unfathomable imputed meanings. Who will ever give us the lie?"⁷⁶ In addition, the early twentieth-century music historian René Dumesnil located the importance of music's polysemy in its ability to maintain confidentiality. He observes that, "whether or not a musician draws their inspiration from a personal memory, from felt emotion, remains confidential and cannot be expressed in a manner that the listener will sense except from the notice printed in the program." Citing Debussy's late sonatas as examples, Dumesnil emphasized that works without explicit or clear associations to the war were important because of the plausible deniability they offered composers who struggled emotionally at the time.⁷⁷ Within Ravel's circle, as well as

⁷⁴ Sophie-Anne Leterrier, "Culture de guerre et musique nationale: La Musique française dans la Grande Guerre," in *Chef-d'oeuvres de circonstances* (Dainville, France: Archives Départementales du Pas-de-Calais, 2000), 15-38; 15: "Jean Norton Cru mentionne d'ailleurs plusieurs 'témoins' de la guerre de 1914-1918, notamment Lemerrier, Maillet, Pézard, qui se demandent si la musique ne serait pas le moyen d'expression le plus efficace pour rendre ce que les combattants se sentent impuissants à décrire."

⁷⁵ Annette Becker, "Musique et culture de guerre," in *ibid.*, 9-14; 12: "le langage secret et passionné de la musique . . . pourrait bien traduire seul . . . la grandeur obscure des sacrifices de nos combattants et tout le violent spectacle qui hante nos regards."

⁷⁶ Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, 11.

⁷⁷ René Dumesnil, *La Musique en France entre les deux guerres, 1919-1939* (Genève: Éditions du Milieu du monde, 1946), 25: "Que le musicien en puise ou non l'inspiration dans tel souvenir personnel, dans telle émotion ressentie,

more broadly in World War I-era and interwar France, then, music was an important site for expressing the overwhelming experiences and emotions that the war engendered, and that were difficult to convey through spoken language.

***Le Tombeau de Couperin* and Cryptonymy**

Well before the pianist plays even the first delicately twinkling notes of the “Prélude”, Ravel’s title for *Le Tombeau de Couperin* acts as a kind of “magic word” prompting us to consider a psychic crypt. In “Fors,” Derrida tells us that the crypt is “not a natural place but the striking history of an artifice, an *architecture*” that “commemorates, as the incorporated object’s ‘monument’ or ‘tomb’ . . . the exclusion of a specific desire from the introjection process.”⁷⁸ In his article on “Tombeau” in the *Dictionnaire de la Mort*, Marc Villemain makes a distinction between *tombe* and *tombeau* that strongly resonates with Derrida’s interpretation of Abraham and Torok’s psychic crypt:

In the West, no distinction was really made between a *tombe* and a *tombeau* until the eighteenth century, even if *tombe* tended somewhat to designate a grave, with *tombeau* acting more as a synonym of mausoleum. In the contemporary French language, the distinction is clearer: *tombe* is the place where the body has been buried, the grave where it has been placed, while *tombeau* denotes the architectural ornamentation that signals the presence of the *tombe* and invites contemplation.⁷⁹

On the one hand, Ravel’s assignment of different dedications to each of the individual movements of the suite allows his *Tombeau* to act, in alignment with the pre-eighteenth-century definition of *tombeau*, like a mausoleum. On the other hand, especially given the funerary urn that Ravel drew for the piano score’s title page, Ravel’s title more generally can be understood as

cela reste pour ainsi dire confidentiel et ne pourra s’exprimer d’une manière sensible pour l’auditeur que dans la notice imprimée du programme.”

⁷⁸ Derrida, “Fors,” 67, 72.

⁷⁹ Marc Villemain, “Tombeau,” *Dictionnaire de la Mort*, ed. Philippe Di Folco (Paris: Larousse, 2010), 1034-1036; 1035: “En Occident, jusqu’au XVIII^e siècle, l’on ne fait pratiquement pas de distinction entre une tombe et un tombeau, même si la tombe tendait plutôt à désigner l’espace funéraire, le tombeau passant pour synonyme de *mausolée*. Dans la langue française contemporaine, la distinction est plus nette: la tombe est le lieu où est ensevelie la dépouille, la fosse où elle est déposée, tandis que prend la dénomination de *tombeau* l’ornementation architecturale qui signale la présence de la tombe et invite au recueillement.”

the ornamented monument that gives the lie to the tomb, that points to the existence of secrets, bodies, memories, and affects buried beneath it.⁸⁰

The ways that Ravel enhanced the polysemy of the composition's title especially contributes to understanding it as an analogue to one of the Wolf-Man's magic words. As Abraham, Torok, and Derrida point out, the linguistic signals of mourning are polyvalent encodings of the trauma that led to the crypt's very creation and thus betray its existence. First, there are Ravel's indications that his audience understand the composition as a memorial: the drawing of the funerary urn on the title page, Ravel's dedications to fallen soldiers, and his naming the composition a *tombeau*. Ravel, however, rendered each of these signifiers of mourning polysemous, preventing them from operating or being understood straightforwardly. In what Roger Nichols has called an attempt to "downplay the memorial elements of the suite," Ravel claimed that he never intended to have the drawing published.⁸¹ Rather, he "amused [him]self in drawing these arabesques on the first page of [his] manuscript, without ulterior motive," and his publisher subsequently "amused himself by reproducing this fine drawing." Ravel added that, "the engraver added to it skillful alterations which give it an awkward and pretentious allure that I was far from intending."⁸² Regardless of what Ravel may have initially intended with his drawing, he nevertheless allowed it to appear on the title page of the published score of the work, rendering it the first thing that anyone sitting down to play the suite would notice.

⁸⁰ Stéphane Mallarmé's *Tombeau d'Edgar Poe*, *Tombeau de Charles Baudelaire*, and *Tombeau de Paul Verlaine* demonstrate a late-nineteenth-century literary precedent for understanding *tombeaux* a memorial genre used to describe tombs/monuments. In each of these memorial poems, Mallarmé describes the tomb/monument that is the site of each man's burial. As Gérard Genette and later Marie-Claire Mussat have suggested, Ravel was more than likely aware of these poems since he was familiar not only with Mallarmé's poetry, but also the poetry of each of the men to whom Mallarmé pays tribute.

⁸¹ Nichols, *Ravel*, 204.

⁸² Letter in Lisa Cox sale catalogue 56 (October 2001), item 82 (translation from catalogue) cited in Nichols, *Ravel*, 204. Admittedly, we can't be sure what Ravel drew and what may have been added by someone else, but the handwriting is his, and letters and manuscripts indicate that he was, in any case, quite the doodler.

Moreover, Ravel asks his listeners to read into his text by referring in his title to the musical memorial tradition of the *tombeau* while also making unclear precisely for whom he wrote the composition. Musicians—primarily lutenists, but also guitarists, viol players, and keyboardists—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote single-movement instrumental dances that they termed *tombeaux* to honor through “commemorative mimesis” the memory of a friend, teacher, or famous musician who has died.⁸³ Indeed, Ravel’s *Tombeau* is a memorial tribute, but to whom—or to what—never appears entirely clear. Ravel’s dedications to six fallen friends confound not only the eighteenth-century genre definition of a *tombeau* (as a single-movement work created in tribute to a single person), but also the title of the composition indicating that we understand it as a tribute to Couperin. Ravel undermined even the latter understanding, contending in his 1928 “Autobiographical Sketch” that the piece is not so much an homage to Couperin as a tribute to all eighteenth-century French music.⁸⁴

It is in the music, however, that we find the clearest invitations to read more deeply into *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, and to consider it intertwined with Ravel’s postwar resistant mourning. Jonathan Cross and Tamara Levitz have each addressed how modernist musicians have turned to music of the past as a way to express alienation, nostalgia, loss, and melancholia. Drawing on Adorno’s suggestion that, in Cross’s words, “a profound nostalgia for what had been lost” was central to modernism, Cross has asserted that Schoenberg recomposed musical references to the pre-twentieth-century music-historical past in his *Drei Klavierstücke*, op. 11 (1909) as an expression of nostalgia. Similarly, Stravinsky drew on references to the musical past in his *Symphony in C* (1938-1940) as a way of mourning musically his loss of homeland, as well as the deaths of his mother, daughter, and wife.⁸⁵ In *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone*,

⁸³ Marie Claire Mussat, “Le Tombeau dans la musique du XXème siècle,” in *Tombeaux & monuments* (Rennes: Interférences, Presses de l’Université Rennes 2, 1992), 133-144; 133; Abbate, “Outside Ravel’s Tomb,” 470.

⁸⁴ Ravel and Roland-Manuel, “Autobiographical Sketch,” in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 32.

⁸⁵ Jonathan Cross, “Paradise Lost: Neoclassicism and the Melancholia of Modernism,” in *Rethinking Musical Modernism, Proceedings of the International Conference held from October 11 to 13, 2007* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology, 2008), 55-64.

Levitz shows how the music Stravinsky chose for setting *Perséphone* “traveled right back into the heart of his past by recreating the affect, sounds, and corporeal sensations he associated with rituals of death he had witnessed in his life.” She points out that he used myriad references to music of the past in order to communicate loss, including music evoking Renaissance church music in *Perséphone*’s opening and conclusion, as well as older dance forms and other neoclassical borrowings in its second tableau.⁸⁶

Ravel’s compositional decisions in *Le Tombeau de Couperin* reveal that like Schoenberg and Stravinsky, he drew on older music to communicate his desire for a past rendered ever more unreachable through the death and absence of loved ones. In each movement of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* Ravel draws on eighteenth-century dance forms, some with particularly vivid associations to his past and the people to whom he dedicates each movement. In some instances these dances embody his desire for the past, while in others, they act as masks that Ravel dons in order to create a sense of emotional distance between himself and his listener—something that Jean Marnold asserted eighteenth-century French music, and especially that of Couperin, was especially adept at accomplishing.⁸⁷ Regardless of how he draws on the musical past, Ravel’s dances are peculiarly marked by figures, moments, and gestures that reveal his struggle to mourn. In next several sections of this chapter, I focus on these moments as they appear in three of *Le Tombeau*’s movements: the “Forlane,” “Rigaudon,” and “Menuet.”

Revealing the Crypt’s Topography: *Le Tombeau de Couperin*’s “Forlane”

The third movement of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, a “Forlane” that Ravel dedicated to his friend Gabriel Deluc, reveals the psychic experience of Ravel’s mourning by presenting his listeners with a musical mask that attempts but ultimately fails to conceal a mournful desire for

⁸⁶ Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries*, 518-560.

⁸⁷ Jean Marnold, “Musique: Maurice Ravel: *Trio pour piano, violon et violoncelle*,” *Mercur de France* 112 (November 1, 1915): 530-535.

an unretrievable past. By choosing a musical model imbued with desire—the “Forlane” from François Couperin’s 1722 *Quatrième concert royal*—and then juxtaposing ornate and graceful surface details with dissonant and disjunct melodic material, Ravel composes the unstable psychic world that Derrida, Abraham, and Torok described as characteristic of the fractured topography—the “puzzle of shards”—of the psyche rent by inexpressible grief.⁸⁸

For Ravel, Couperin’s “Forlane” would have been linked to desire historically and socially. At the time when Ravel first began conceiving of composing his own “Forlane,” the French musicologist Jules Ecorcheville noted the recent popularity of the social dance, and emphasized the socio-historical connections between the forlane and desire in an April 1914 article for *La Revue musicale S.I.M.* Ecorcheville stresses the recent popularity of the dance in Italy as well as in Parisian *salons*, and attributes the craze to the Pope’s recent substitution of the forlane for the tango, which he had recently banned.⁸⁹ He also explains the forlane’s origins through seventeenth-century discussions of the dance, for instance a 1609 account of the forlane being danced at Venetian public balls by courtesans who “amuse themselves [in dancing the forlane] in order to pass the time, and to get to know their lovers.”⁹⁰ Ecorcheville further emphasizes the forlane’s role in courtship, lust, and love by drawing on a 1683 account of the Venetian carnival season whose author remarks that the forlane was one of the most popular dances of masked balls in which participants would alternate between dancing the forlane, drinking, and conversing.⁹¹

Ecorcheville recounts the dance’s eighteenth-century history as well, noting that it was popular amongst French composers André Campra, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and François

⁸⁸ Derrida, “Fors,” 76.

⁸⁹ Jules Ecorcheville, “La Forlane,” *La Revue musicale S.I.M.* 10 (April 1, 1914): 11-28; 11-19; discussed and cited in Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries*, 550-551.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20: “Ce sont pour la plupart de petites courtisanes, qui s’amusent à cela pour passer autant de temps, et entretenir par ce moyen leurs amoureux.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

Couperin. In fact, when Couperin composed his “Forlane” in 1722, the association between the forlane and courtship, love, and pleasure would have been quite clear since its appearance in André Campra’s *opera-ballets L’Europe galante* (1697), *Le Carnival de Venise* (1699), and *Les Fêtes vénitiennes* (1710) always involved it being a dance number in a scene about the triumph of love, perhaps unsurprising given that each of these ballets stages an amorous plot set in Venice. After noting Jean-Philippe Rameau’s, André Campra’s, and François Couperin’s uses of the forlane in their music, Ecorcheville concludes his article with a transcription of Couperin’s “Forlane,” and the statement that “the forlane is everywhere.”⁹² Thus as a sensual partner dance that was marked both contemporarily and socio-historically as a sonic and kinesthetic embodiment of lust, the forlane, and Ravel’s use of it in *Le Tombeau*, appears to signify desire.

However, the forlane may have functioned as a symbol of desire for Ravel on personal terms as well. The contemporary popularity of the forlane in Ravel’s Paris has led Tamara Levitz to suggest that *Le Tombeau de Couperin*’s “Forlane” was modeled on “a live dance—a vivid, kinetic, emotional expression of human feeling through movement, corporeal practice restored through theater.”⁹³ Levitz asserts that Ravel expressed his love for the composition’s dedicatee, his longtime friend Gabriel Deluc, by composing a “Forlane” that bears the imprints of a previous moment of their having danced the sensual couple dance together.⁹⁴ But Ravel also had a significant personal history with Couperin’s “Forlane” that I believe led it to be bound up with desires to return to specific moments in his past. In the first several months of 1914, Ravel wrote a letter to Cipa Godebski from St.-Jean-de-Luz in which he discusses the Pope’s prohibition and

⁹² Ibid., 26: “La forlane est partout. Point n’est besoin d’aller la chercher si loin, ni dans l’espace ni dans le temps. Elle représente un des modes familiers de la pensée musicale de notre occident.”

⁹³ Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries*, 550.

⁹⁴ Levitz, 551; Meredith Ellis Little, “Forlana,” *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 2d ed., vol. 9 (New York: Grove, 2001), 91-92. Little writes about this dance: “According to Carlo Blasis (*The Code of Terpishore*, 1828) it was a lusty, but graceful, dance of flirtation. One or more couples performed at once, the partners moving towards and away from each other, touching hands and feet, turning and beating the air with their arms.” She also tells us that the use of the “forlana” in French court life began with its appearance in André Campra’s late-seventeenth century operas *L’Europe galante* (1697) and *Le Carnival de Venise* (1699).

tells Godebski that he's been at work transcribing Couperin's "Forlane." It is likely that Ravel was made aware of this "Forlane" and perhaps the pope's edict as well either through Ecorcheville's article, or through interactions with Ecorcheville, who he knew personally from the latter man's commission of Ravel's *Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn* for the 1909 Haydn centenary.⁹⁵ After the war, Ravel idealized the spring and summer of 1914 that he spent at St.-Jean-de-Luz with his mother; he spent much of his time returning to compositions from this time period, often as a way of recalling the presence of lost loved ones who died during the war's tenure.⁹⁶ As I discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, this was a musical mourning practice built precisely out of a mournful yet fraught desire to engage with the sensual ghostly presence of dead loved ones. By the end of the war Ecorcheville, Deluc, and Ravel's mother had all died.⁹⁷ In light of all this, Couperin's "Forlane" might be understood as a musical condensation of Ravel's memories, affects, images, and sounds of that final summer in 1914 before everything changed. Couperin's "Forlane" can thus be considered a musical manifestation of the paradoxically pleasing and painful desire, characteristic of resistant mourning, to access an unreachable past.⁹⁸

Listening to Ravel's "Forlane" with Couperin's in mind, it is difficult not to be struck by how Ravel seems to "bury" Couperin's "Forlane" within his own. With the self-assertion, candor, and mirth typical of his personality, Ravel once remarked to his students that "If you have something to say, this something will never emerge more distinctly than in your unintended

⁹⁵ Bryan Proksch, "Vincent d'Indy as Harbinger of the Haydn Revival," *Journal of Musicological Research* 28, nos. 2-3 (2009): 162-188; 180.

⁹⁶ I discuss this as a common practice within Ravel's circle in much greater detail in chapter 5. There, I cite as evidence of Ravel's idealization of his pre-1914 life his letters to Marguerite Long and Marie Gaudin of 14 January 1920 and 6 January 1921, respectively. See Maurice Ravel, letter to Marguerite Long, 14 January 1920, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Maurice Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 168-169; and Ravel, letter to Marie Gaudin, 6 January 1921, in Michel Delahaye, ed., "Lettres de Maurice Ravel à la famille Gaudin, de Saint-Jean-de-Luz; 2e partie: 1919-1927," *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 10 (2007): 14-56; 17.

⁹⁷ Ecorcheville and Deluc died in combat almost exactly seven months apart: Ecorcheville on February 19, 1916, and Deluc on September 15, 1916. Less than four months later, Ravel's mother died.

⁹⁸ Recall from chapter 2 that the desire to keep lost loved ones present lives on in resistant mourning that grieving musicians in Ravel's circle described as paradoxically both pleasurable and painful.

unfaithfulness to a model.”⁹⁹ Ravel’s “Forlane” seems to be one of the most apt examples of this since it is largely through listening to the two forlanes side by side that an analyst can hear how Ravel’s movement sounds as if it is haunted by Couperin’s piece.¹⁰⁰ Carolyn Abbate has heard Ravel’s composition similarly, since in her captivating reading of Ravel’s “Forlane” she suggests that there is “a more nebulous object . . . heard *through* the walls of the tomb,” a “dead” and “unreal” forlane—Couperin’s—that “can be sensed as something that pushes, distorts, and twists.” For Abbate, the “hand in the box” that animates Ravel’s “Forlane” is the ghostly hand of mechanistic musical inventions symbolizing the performer’s absence in the face of new musical technologies at the *fin-de-siècle*.¹⁰¹ I take after Abbate in considering Couperin’s “Forlane” a ghostly internal object that pushes and distorts the musical surface of Ravel’s movement, but have chosen to understand Couperin’s “Forlane” not as a “dead” or “unreal” mechanistic object, but rather as the very real and palpable desire for the presence of a lost loved one.

When heard side by side, Ravel’s “Forlane” comes off as a grossly distorted re-composition of Couperin’s dance. Where Couperin offers listeners pleasant, graceful, and unassuming tonal chord progressions that employ a great deal of conjunct and predominantly diatonic motion within a relatively circumscribed melodic range, Ravel, on the other hand, presents listeners with bizarrely angular leaps, often at the interval of an augmented third, a tritone, or a seventh (Figures 4.2a and 4.2b). While Ravel employs rhythmic motives similar to those of Couperin’s “Forlane,” the similarity between these rhythmic figures only serves to enhance the strangeness of the strikingly dissonant music of Ravel’s movement, particularly in

⁹⁹ Frank Onnen, *Maurice Ravel* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1947), 16; cited in Deborah Mawer, “Mechanical Objects and Machines,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 56.

¹⁰⁰ Jann Pasler also discusses the productive potential of reading transcriptions for meaning in “Contingencies of Meaning in Transcription and Excerpts: Popularizing *Samson et Dalila*,” in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 170-214. Marianne Wheeldon cites Pasler when analyzing the orchestral version of Debussy’s *Berceuse héroïque*; see Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 26. Tamara Levitz has similarly examined the differences between the sketches for and the finished version of André Gide’s sketches for *Perséphone* in order to locate moments of haunting in *Modernist Mysteries*, 474-564.

¹⁰¹ Abbate, “Outside Ravel’s Tomb,” 498.

its refrains, in which listeners hear not only angular and dissonant leaps but also nonfunctional harmony. Thus while the general shape, rhythm, gestures, and underlying form of Couperin’s dance remain, Ravel clothes his source material in dissonance and disjuncture that produce the effect for the listener of being sonically haunted by Couperin.

Figure 4.2a: François Couperin, *Quatrième concert royal*, “Forlane” (Montréal: Les Éditions outremontaises, 2006), mm. 1-10.

7. Forlane

François Couperin
(1668-1733)

Gayement

Rondeau

5 *Fin*
1er Couplet

Figure 4.2b: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Forlane” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 1-8.

Allegretto ♩ = 96

PIANO
(*)

p

Martha Hyde's analysis of the differences between the forlanes by Ravel and Couperin supports my reading of Ravel's "Forlane" as a haunted psychic crypt. Hyde considers Ravel's "Forlane" an instance of "reverential imitation," a form of neoclassicism in which the imitation employed by the composer "follows the classical model with a nearly religious fidelity or fastidiousness."¹⁰² She asserts that most of Ravel's alterations to Couperin's original are surface "modernisms"—ninths and elevenths, resolutions that have been omitted or moved elsewhere, and modal mixture—that keep the structural foundation of the original intact. Hyde argues that this is an indication of the fact that for Ravel "the model exists in its own perfection as a sacred text on the other side of an abyss (in this instance Romantic music)—accessible, but beyond alteration or criticism."¹⁰³ Indeed, as I have argued, Ravel's model was a "sacred text," but not necessarily for the reasons Hyde has asserted.¹⁰⁴ Hyde points out that one of the main oddities in Ravel's rewriting of the "Forlane" appears in the soprano line, from which Ravel has removed resolutions, and replaced these with a transposition of what the inner voices had been doing in Couperin's "Forlane." This results, she writes, in "an odd surface effect: a descending pattern in the soprano superimposed on an implied ascending sequential progression in the bass."¹⁰⁵ This "odd surface effect," I would argue, permits the movement to bear a striking resemblance to the disjointedly angular surface of a psychic crypt created from the violence of an unspeakable and traumatic grief. These are the reflections of the ghost inside the crypt that haunt its outer walls.

However, just as the acknowledgement of grief requires concealment, so too does Ravel distract his listener from the "Forlane"'s angularity through instilling the movement with a

¹⁰² Martha Hyde, "Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1996): 200-235; 206.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁰⁴ Hyde understands neoclassicism, generally speaking, as always having the goal of "reviving" or "renewing" an older form. She writes that "if no genuine renewal occurs...the revivalist impulse has to be seen as abortive or trivial" (p. 205). Hyde's insistence that the *sine qua non* of twentieth-century musical neoclassicism is a kind of "faithful" renewal of a previous model, leads her to suggest that Ravel's attempt at reverential imitation in the "Forlane" was ultimately a failure, a situation which, she argues, gravely upset Ravel and made him feel like a failure as a composer; *ibid.*, 210-211.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

peculiar, uncanny, and ultimately unsettling grace. Inundating the movement with jaunty dotted rhythms, Ravel composes the “Forlane” so that it remains fairly rhythmically uniform and dance-like throughout. In addition, Ravel ornaments his “Forlane” with an abundance of grace notes, which occur with particular frequency in the movement’s non-refrain sections. The episodes of Ravel’s “Forlane” thus especially act as sites for the performance of serenity. To draw on Abbate’s reading of Ravel’s *Tombeau*, many of Ravel’s episodes sound like music boxes in overdrive; employing more consonant diatonicism melodically and harmonically than in the refrains, Ravel has his episodes twinkle in the piano’s high register with accompaniments matching the rhythmic profile of the melodies above them.¹⁰⁶ As the episodes beginning at m. 63 and m. 124 demonstrate, in these sections Ravel tends towards conjunct and stepwise motion within a relatively small range. The angular disjunctness of the refrain thus disappears in the episodes. Just as cryponymy involves the concealing of the fractured psyche, Ravel’s production of an overly ornate musical surface distracts the listener from the fractured dissonance of the “Forlane,” forcing her to pay attention to the overwrought gracefulness of the dance rather than to the desire, secrets, and memories that haunt and distort this movement.

The final episode of the “Forlane” presents another moment of dissonant incongruity that can be understood to betray the presence of a hidden secret. Unlike those before it, the “Forlane”’s final episode makes no attempt to distract its listeners from its dissonance. After what would seem to be the movement’s final episode at m. 140, at the precise moment when the rondo theme should return, an unexpected episode emerges instead (see Figure 4.3 below). As in other episodes, the rhythm here is homophonic, but this is overshadowed by extreme dissonance. Marguerite Long provided one example of how this section was heard by at least one of Ravel’s contemporaries:

¹⁰⁶ Abbate, “Outside Ravel’s Tomb,” 465-530.

The conclusion [of the “Forlane”] is rich with strange sonorities and bold dissonances. Camille Chevillard, who asked me to play the *Tombeau* for him at my house, stopped his ears at this passage. He did not like its flavour [sic] at all.¹⁰⁷

Chevillard, we might imagine, was particularly shocked and unsettled by this episode, which to my ears as well sounds *unheimlich* in Schelling’s sense of the word: “intended to remain secret, hidden away, [but] has come into the open.”¹⁰⁸ Ravel highlights the strange, haunting, and revelatory quality of this episode not only through “bold dissonances” that create bodily discomfort in listeners and leave them searching for explanations for what they’ve just heard, but also by placing it at a moment when the listener expects to hear the “Forlane”’s refrain. These sixteen measures might thus be understood as a brief spectral moment when concealed desire—here the expected, remembered refrain based on Couperin’s “Forlane”—emerges in “strange incomprehensible signs” that betray the existence of a psyche fractured by grief. This reading is further supported by the appearance, just after this final and especially dissonant episode, of five brief fragments of the refrain that rise in tessitura and thus seem to “float” away like fleeting specters.

Figure 4.3: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Forlane” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 138-162.



¹⁰⁷ Marguerite Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, ed. Pierre Laumonier, trans. Olive Senior-Ellis (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 96.

¹⁰⁸ Cited in Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny [1919],” in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock with an intro. by Hugh Haughton (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 133.

Figure 4.3: (cont).

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Rigaudon" by Maurice Ravel. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *pp* (pianissimo). The piece concludes with a fermata and the instruction "sans ralentir".

Masking, Sublimation, and the Violence of Cryptonymy in Ravel’s “Rigaudon”

Whereas in *Le Tombeau’s* “Forlane” Ravel composes a commentary on how the desire at the center of inexpressible grief creates a fractured, disorienting psychic crypt, in *Le Tombeau’s* fourth movement Ravel seems to display the pain and violence of the emotional work that goes into keeping one’s grief contained and imperceptible. Ravel dedicated the “Rigaudon” to his childhood friends from St-Jean-de-Luz, Pierre and Pascal Gaudin, who were both killed on their

first day on the front lines on November 12, 1914. Ravel’s “Rigaudon” features the ABA form typical of the rigaudon, a French folk dance that originated in Southern France—where the Gaudin brothers grew up—before becoming popular as a French court dance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

I understand Ravel’s “Rigaudon” as a testimony of the psychic trauma of emotional masking in large part because of the persistent reappearance of a brusque, violent, and dissimulating gesture that I term the “grotesque grin.” This gesture appears for the first time at the very opening of the movement, providing an emphatic and attention-grabbing introduction with what sounds like a traditional tonal cadence moving from IV⁷ through ii⁹ and then to the dominant before landing on a C-major root position chord (See Figure 4.4). Ravel constructs the figure so as to sound and function as a major-key cadence, but every chord except the C-major tonic is piled with sevenths, ninths, or elevenths, revealing the figure as more dissonant than it first appears to be. The performer is asked to play the gesture at a quick enough tempo, though, that in a cursory first listening, it is primarily the cadential nature of the figure that stands out.

Figure 4.4: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Rigaudon” (Paris: Durand, 1918), m. 1-2: “Grotesque Grin” Gesture



In my reading, the forcefulness with which cheerful affect is performed in this gesture betrays its dissimulation. Ravel renders aggressive what might otherwise function as a benign gesture through adding accents and asking the performer to play it *fortissimo*. In the orchestral version of the suite, Ravel adds to the forcefulness of the gesture through scoring it for *tutti* orchestra. The figure shouts its false contentedness—perhaps so loudly as to give the lie to its

expression—through gritted teeth and a forced smile. As a grotesquely overacted grin, this gesture functions as a mask that is a performed index of the effort expended in attempting to internalize and repress one’s grief, or make it fit with conventions of contained personal mourning privileged in France during World War I. It is like a “magic word” that attempts to conceal but simultaneously reveals the wound of psychic trauma.

This “magic word” appears repeatedly throughout the A sections, seeming in its frequent appearances as well as in its persistent attempts at concealment through musical recontextualization, to bear witness to the obsessive emotional panic that psychically repressing grief entails. The “Rigaudon”’s A sections feature the seemingly cheerful affect of an up-tempo, lively dance in C major, but achieve this through motivic material drawn from the grotesque grin gesture. The rhythmic elements of the gesture—the eighth note followed by two sixteenths, as well as the two eighth notes, and the four consecutive sixteenth notes—are especially prevalent here, albeit often performed in different combinations than found in the gesture’s first appearance. The music of the A sections also bears its affinity to the grin gesture through presenting similar interval configurations, such as the neighbor tone motion that characterizes the eighth note and two sixteenth notes figure (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Rigaudon” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 1-15.

The musical score for Ravel's "Rigaudon" (measures 1-15) is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the tempo marking "Assez vif" and a piano dynamic of "ff". The second system continues the piece, featuring a dynamic shift to "mf". The third system concludes the excerpt. The score is written for piano and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

In addition, much of the motivic material in the A sections seems aimed at retroactively normalizing the offending and revealing utterances in a kind of emotional denial and minimizing characteristic of the speech and actions of people who have experienced psychic trauma.¹⁰⁹ For instance, just after the first appearance of the grin gesture in the movement's first measures, Ravel composes an exceedingly quick transition to a *mezzo-piano*, unaccented, and captivatingly dancing passage that in its gestural, harmonic, and rhythmic resonances with the opening gesture, seems to attempt to save face: to distract from the initial offending gesture while also suggesting that there was nothing to conceal in the first place. To further draw attention away from the dissimulation of the gesture, Ravel uses a repeat sign in m. 8, thus reframing the grotesque grin of the opening as not so much an ill-conceived attempt to conceal, as the logical outcome of the straightforward harmonic and melodic progression accompanied, as convention would have it, by a crescendo. Ravel's use of a repeat sign rather than a rewriting of the material—it is only eight measures, after all—underlines his goal of retextualization for readers of the score.

Another example of this recontextualization occurs at mm. 23-24. Here Ravel composes a reiteration of the opening gesture in F-sharp—a tri-tone from the C major of the gesture in its first appearance. As in the case of the opening figure, Ravel asks the performer to accent it and play it *fortissimo*. This musical utterance is similar to the recontextualization of the opening gesture in that Ravel figurally, dynamically, and harmonically prepares it. As in the case of the grotesque grin that opens the movement, Ravel marks this gesture as inappropriate and requiring retroactive concealing through what follows it. Immediately after the F-sharp major chord in m. 25, Ravel asks the pianist to drop down to *pianissimo*—the softest dynamic of the A section so far—for a passage that is one of the most charming of the entire movement (see Figure 4.6). In mm. 25-32 Ravel presents us with sparkling staccato passagework, reaching into the piano's high register to create the dancing brilliance of a charming music box. Ravel

¹⁰⁹ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 2, 87.

highlights the twinkling character of this music in the orchestral version in scoring it for upper woodwinds—flute, oboe, and clarinet—and harp. Similar to how Ravel’s charming grace notes distracted the listener from the fractured and dissonant crypt in the “Forlane,” with this delicate and pretty music, Ravel seems to guide the listener’s attention elsewhere in the skillful misdirection required in concealing one’s emotional indiscretions. Ravel’s secret keeping here thus resembles cryptonymic repression, especially its requirement that trauma be kept hidden even from the ego that contains it.

The obsessive masking function of the grotesque grin gesture comes even more to the fore in the “Rigaudon”’s B section, where it acts as a kind of moderator attempting to keep undesirable emotional expression at bay. The B section embodies a somber affect that contrasts sharply with the seemingly jovial affect of the movement’s A section. Ravel achieves this

Figure 4.6: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Rigaudon” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 21-36.



affective contrast through a shift to C minor, a drastically slower tempo, and drawn-out melodic material over an undulating eighth-note accompaniment, rendering this section a doleful

barcarolle (rather than the cheerful jig of the A sections). The B section features four attempts at mournful expression that might be understood as reflecting Ravel's struggle to find the proper words for expressing grief. Each of the first three attempts begins with a despondent drone followed by a melancholy melody that avoids too strongly articulating sorrow by falling back in each case on jaunty melodic fragments reminiscent of the A section's motivic material (see Figure 4.7).¹¹⁰

Figure 4.7: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Rigaudon” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 37-68: B section.

¹¹⁰ Ravel makes the connection to lament clearer in the orchestral version of this movement through scoring these melodic attempts at mourning for oboe and English horn, both of which are historically linked with lament traditions.

That the grin motive functions as a signal of repressed emotion is particularly evident in its aggressive reappearance in the B section’s fourth attempt at mournful expression. Here the motive interrupts the fourth attempt, suddenly bringing about the movement’s recapitulation. Unlike Ravel’s previous efforts at emotional performance, this one does not begin with a drone, but rather with a new affective trajectory marked by a tuneful melody played in octaves, although still over the same undulating accompaniment (see Figure 4.8 below). It is at this precise moment—when the realization of an alternate expressive mechanism has only barely begun—that the grotesque grin gesture comes suddenly and violently crashing in, signaling both the return of the A section, but also, and more importantly, the evasion of an affective crisis.¹¹¹ Paradoxically, however, this attempted evasion does not avoid, but rather draws attention to the existence of the crisis it attempts to conceal.

Figure 4.8: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Rigaudon” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 84-98.

¹¹¹ Notably, in *At the Piano with Ravel* Marguerite Long counsels the pianist to make this moment especially dramatic through advising her to “slacken imperceptibly before the return to the first tempo where the music should at once be quick and powerful.” See Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 96.

The grotesque grin gesture's appearance at the close of the "Rigaudon" also suggests that it signals emotional foreclosure. The abrupt and bombastic return of the grin gesture at m. 93 ushers in an almost verbatim repeat of the A section with only two alterations. First, in line with common performance practice for rounded binary forms like the "Rigaudon," Ravel omits the repeat signs that appeared in the first A section. The second alteration is more telling. Seven measures before the end of the movement Ravel inserts a B flat into the right hand that continues to appear in the four following measures, accompanied by a shift in harmony. Although this is a subtle change, it is an important one since within the context of the movement, this hint of dissonance seems—in parallel to the fourth attempt at mournful expression of the movement's B section—to bring about the final, brusque appearance of the grotesque grin played, as in its other repetitions, *fortissimo* and with accents (see Figure 4.9).¹¹²

Figure 4.9: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, "Rigaudon" (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 119-128.



¹¹² Marguerite Long's suggestion for performing this final gesture is similar to her advice for performing the return of the A section. She writes, "In the last bar there should be no slackening of the four semiquavers to accommodate the hammered out accents." Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 96.

Fleeting Specters of the Crypt's (Dis)Contents in the "Menuet"

Just as the grotesque grin gesture acted as a kind of "magic word" communicating the mourning subject's emotional masking in the "Rigaudon," so too does the appearance of a violent musical outburst in an otherwise graceful dance reveal Ravel's resistant mourning in the "Menuet." This violent outburst resonates with the psychic cryptonymy of resistant mourning in conveying the impossibility of keeping the trauma of mourning completely shrouded from the ego. The violence of this outburst, especially when coming on the heels of a movement in which emotional repression was foregrounded, seems to intimate the deleterious and painful results of swallowing one's grief repeatedly.¹¹³

The A sections of the "Menuet"'s ABA form are sonic portraits of emotional reservation. In contrast to the busyness of the suite's other movements, the "Menuet" presents a calm façade through drawn-out and longer note values, slurred and legato articulations, a slower tempo, and the frequent use of a drone-like accompaniment in the left hand. Ravel further underlines the serenity of this dance through having the pianist play *pianissimo* or *piano* for the majority of the movement. As in the suite's other movements, Ravel enhances the "Menuet"'s refinement through the use of grace notes, although here with less frequency than in other movements. Moreover, Ravel sets the "Menuet" in a slow tempo, thus increasing its seeming poise and restraint. Marguerite Long heard a melancholy refinement in this movement relaying that when she played it, she always kept in mind the elegant dancers of Paul Verlaine's poem "Mandoline" from his 1869 poetry collection *Fêtes galantes*.¹¹⁴

As in the "Rigaudon," Ravel's "Menuet" sheds light on its encrypted emotional contents in the B section of its rounded binary form. The attempts at mournful emotional expression of the "Rigaudon" have morphed in the "Menuet" into an adamant and frustrated manifestation of unexpressed grief turned ghastly. The "Menuet"'s B section is a Musette, the first two 8-bar

¹¹³ Abbate, "Outside Ravel's Tomb," 504. Abbate writes in a footnote that "strange depth of violence" is the phrase Jankélévitch uses in *Ravel* (p. 141) to refer to the "Child's chaotic rage" at the opening of *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.

¹¹⁴ Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 96.

phrases of which are fairly unassuming (see Figure 4.10a). In both phrases the right hand plays a series of slurred root position diatonic chords with the same lilting triple meter of the A section. As Figure 4.10a below shows, the left hand centers on D in both phrases. However, Ravel shifts the rhythmic emphasis as well as the range of these D's in the second phrase, which has the effect of an “alarm bell” drawing the listener’s attention to a gradually building tension. Sure enough, the next phrase marks a defiant step in the direction of a new harmonic trajectory, intimating to the listener that something lies contained beneath the musical surface. At m. 49 Ravel abruptly changes the harmony for the first four bars of the Musette theme. Although he still asks the performer to begin *piano*, Ravel gives more force to the Musette theme through his instructions to the pianist to double the melody in the left hand, play without the soft pedal, and crescendo to *mezzo-forte*. Ravel further increases the weight of this passage by placing the Musette theme’s chordal melody an octave above its appearance at the opening of the B section. The crescendo continues through the next four measures, during which Ravel wrenches the listener up another minor third for the next repetition of the Musette theme’s first four bars.

Figure 4.10a: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Menuet” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 33-48.

The climax of the B section and the movement as a whole is a sudden and forceful emotional outburst that occurs at m. 57 (see Figure 4.10b). Through marking them *fortissimo* and accented, Ravel asks his performer to pound out with both hands two parallel two-bar chordal phrases based on the two penultimate bars of the original 8-bar Musette theme, the first beginning with a D-flat major chord, and the second beginning with B-flat minor. The octave G pedals contribute as well to the heaviness of these four measures, the affective weight of which fades away even more quickly than it appeared. Ravel asks the performer to take the volume down a notch beginning with the second chord of the B flat minor phrase, and dials down the volume even further in each of the next five measures. As if nothing the least bit disturbing had occurred, the Musette concludes as it began: with eight measures of the serene Musette theme, played gracefully and gently *pianissimo*. Notably, Ravel's emotional outburst is forceful, but also highly controlled, remaining within the same rhythmic, melodic, and gestural framework as the earlier repetitions of the Musette theme.

Figure 4.10b: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Menuet” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 49-65.

The musical score for Ravel's "Menuet" from *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (measures 49-65) is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 49-52) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction "3 Cordes". The second system (measures 53-56) features a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and includes the instruction "poco dim.". The third system (measures 57-65) starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes the instruction "soutenu", followed by a piano (*pp*) dynamic and the instruction "Sourdine".

Drawing on Jankélévitch's analysis of Ravel's "inexpressive *espressivo*," Carolyn Abbate has aptly described this outburst as an "intrusion of Romantic subjectivity" that with "a strange depth of violence' . . . seems to consume the world."¹¹⁵ Indeed, Ravel's intensely dramatic yet fleeting affective expression in this moment seems to permit his listeners access to something previously unrevealed in the suite. Because she is concerned with Ravel's mourning of the disappearance of the live performer concomitant with the *fin-de-siècle* rise of mechanical music making devices such as the phonograph and the player piano, Abbate reads Ravel's *Musette* as an embodiment of the accordions, organettes, and player pianos that were often referred to as *musettes*. For Abbate, Ravel's "Romantic piano-concerto *angoisse*" between measures 49 and 62 is the result of a dreadful encounter between man and machine. She posits that the emotional outburst in the *Musette* might be the "anguish originat[ing] with a machine imitating human passion" or, again after Jankélévitch, "a rare subjective emotion, displayed only *in extremis* when the marionette or mechanism is threatened with exposure as human."¹¹⁶ When the Minuet theme returns at m. 73 (See Figure 4.11 below), the *Musette* theme appears in the left hand, although only for eight measures. The *Musette*, argues Abbate, after "following the Minuet into far harmonic fields . . . is finally absorbed by that Minuet without actually ending at all." She asserts that the *Musette* continues to play "beyond range of our ear" where it is "permitted to slow down before it stops." According to Abbate, "there is a *rallentando* in the machine, but this dread revelation is made where no human ear remains to contemplate its meaning."¹¹⁷ Abbate's reading suggests that it is these traces of humanness manifest in the fallibility of a performer or mechanical object slowing down that Ravel mourns.

While Abbate's reading is compelling, I choose to read Ravel's "reach towards the tragic" in the *Musette* not as the staging of a crisis between man and machine, but rather as an

¹¹⁵ Abbate, "Outside Ravel's Tomb," 504.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 507.

expression of the difficulty of keeping one’s grief to oneself.¹¹⁸ The fragments of the Musette that continue into the A section are like spectral remnants of repressed grief that spill out of Abraham and Torok’s crypt of resistant mourning. Like an apparition, the Musette’s intense emotional climax appears and then fades away—returning to precisely the same eight measures with which the peering into the crypt began—with a quickness and ease that makes one wonder if the sonic event actually transpired, or if it was merely a hallucination. When the “Menuet”’s main theme returns in m. 73, Ravel reinforces the façade, rendering the tune even more charming and music-box-esque by placing it up an octave from its appearance at the opening of the movement. But the Musette played by the left hand subtly haunts the “Menuet.” Masterfully camouflaging its presence through dynamic uniformity, deft shifts into and out of G major to match the “Menuet” melody’s harmonic needs, and fluid rhythmic alignment, the Musette acts like a shape-shifting phantom. With the perfect alignment of the three quarter notes and then dotted half note of the eight-bar phrase’s two final measures (mm. 79-80), we realize that, like an unspeakable secret desire, the Musette has been inaudibly but no less materially present during the entire movement, waiting to be discovered by the listener who cares to search for the crypt.

Figure 4.11: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Menuet” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 73-84.



¹¹⁸ Marguerite Long wrote that, “the Musette, with its plaintive harmonies, reaches towards the tragic in a powerful crescendo of modulating chords, beneath which a pedal G is heard.” See Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 96.

Heroic Masculinity and the Repression of Trauma in *Frontispice*

In 1918, Ravel was still concerned with the difficulty of processing grief and trauma, as exhibited in *Frontispice*, which seems to represent musically the return of traumatic memories from life on the battlefield. In this short, 15-measure piece, Ravel takes the listener through some of the most dissonant music in his *oeuvre*, following this with a series of stoic chords and a brief and showy closing gesture. I read this musical progression as a moving albeit somewhat disturbing representation of the pain and suffering of loss and trauma, and their repression, which was required—especially in the military—within World War I-era France’s culture of heroic masculinity, discussed in greater detail in chapter 2.

Ravel wrote *Frontispice* as a musical preface for his friend Ricciotto Canudo’s volume of war poetry, *S.P. 503, Poème du Vardar*. The piece first appeared in a 1919 issue of the artistic journal *Feuillets d’Art*, accompanying a short excerpt from Canudo’s poem entitled *Sonate pour un jet d’eau* (Sonata for a fountain). Extant sources fail to reveal precisely when Ravel and Canudo spoke about the composition, but the two had known each other from around 1905 and had numerous friends in common, including Stravinsky and Satie, who knew Canudo through the avant-garde journal *Montjoie!*¹¹⁹ Both Ravel and Canudo fought in World War I; Ravel in France, and Canudo in France, Greece, and the Aegean Sea. While Canudo’s prewar writings address mostly music, theater, and literature, the war dominates the texts he published between 1916 and his death in 1923, indicating his obsession with recounting his war experiences. He published three book-length memoirs or novels about the war in addition to *S.P. 503, Poème du Vardar: Jours gris et nuits rouges dans l’Argonne: Douze fresques de l’action garibaldienne* (1916), *Combats d’orient: Dardanelles—Salonique (1915-1916)* (1917), *Mon âme pourpre: Roman de la forêt et du fleuve: L’Argonne et le Vardar* (1918), and *Les Reflets du feu sur quinze visages: Des Masses, des villes et des hommes* (1921). In each of these, Canudo reflects on the

¹¹⁹ They may have been particularly close in the years between the war since in 1913 Canudo frequently stayed at the “l’hôtel Splendide, 1bis avenue Carnot” which was right across the street from the apartment where Ravel was living with his mother at the time. This was apparently at Stravinsky’s and Ravel’s recommendation. See Philippe Rodriguez, *L’Affaire Montjoie!: Canudo et Stravinsky* (Paris: Didier Erudition, 2000), 12.

horrific sights, sounds, and feelings he experienced between 1914 and 1918, focusing on the ubiquitous and deleterious effects of the war on individuals and society, even while romanticizing his experiences.

The *Sonate pour un jet d'eau*, with which Ravel's *Frontispice* first appeared, sensually recounts the physical agony of war in the Macedonian heat. Using "l'eau" (water) and "feu" (fire) as a kind of refrain, Canudo emphasizes the intense heat and strong desire for water that he and his fellow soldiers experienced while digging trenches—here framed as a masculine sexual domination of the earth—in Macedonia. He recalls the "thirst and heat of paludian fevers" (la soif et la chaleur des fièvres paludéennes), and a "vain desire for water and wind" (un vain désir d'eau ou de vent), referring to this desire as an "irresistible dominatrix" (dominatrice irrésistible).

Tobias Plebuch has pointed out that Ravel's *Frontispice* incorporates the water imagery of *Sonate pour un jet d'eau*, and yet Ravel seems to have taken care to align *Frontispice* not just with *Sonate pour un jet d'eau*, but also with Canudo's *S.P. 503, Poème du Vardar* as a whole.¹²⁰ Deborah Mawer has pointed out that *Frontispice* appears to engage with the numerological focus on the numbers 5 and 3—from Canudo's military postal code 503—that Canudo indicated were an important aspect of *Poème du Vardar*'s design.¹²¹ She notes the 15 (5x3) measures of the piece, the writing for five hands (3 players), the 5-note ostinato featuring thirds and triplets, and the piece's 15/8 meter as examples of Ravel's attention to the numbers to which Canudo attributed importance. On the other hand, Arbie Orenstein has noted that *Frontispice* "captures some of the exoticism, water images, and evocations of nature" found in Canudo's poems.¹²² Ravel's *Frontispice* can also be read, however, as a reflection on the sensual and emotional content of Canudo's poetry, namely the horror and sensory inundation of war, and the lingering

¹²⁰ Plebuch, "Der stumme Schrecken," 155-165.

¹²¹ Mawer, "Musical objects and machines," 52-53.

¹²² Arbie Orenstein, ed., *Frontispice* (Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1975).

aftereffects of these experiences embodied in the psychological and traumatic disorders common in World War I, described variously as “shell shock,” “commotional syndrome,” “psychoneurosis,” “pithiatism,” “mental confusion,” or “battle hypnosis.”¹²³

The first ten measures of *Frontispice* convey the psychological confusion characteristic of these traumatic disorders through extreme metric, melodic, harmonic, and motivic dissonance.¹²⁴ Ravel wrote the piece for five hands, with one pianist playing in 15/8, another playing in 5/4, and the fifth hand playing short ornamented figures in 15/8 (presumably over the shoulder of the pianist sitting on the right side of the piano).¹²⁵ Ravel juxtaposes different musical ideas in ways that increase melodic and harmonic dissonance. Thus while one performer plays a triplet chromatic ostinato figure in her/his left hand and a chromatic melody beginning on D-sharp with her/his right hand, a second performer plays a mostly diatonic folk-like melody in eighth and sixteenth notes accompanied by C major and G dominant seventh chords. Meanwhile the third pianist plays *pianissimo*, ornamented, off-beat sixteenth-note figures that outline an F major/minor sonority.

The appearance of distinct, overlapping musical ideas in *Frontispice* can be understood as a musical analogue to auditory hallucinations and other sensory memories that traumatized soldiers suffered from during the war. The piece opens with an eighth-note ostinato figure in 15/8 that Plebuch has considered indicative of the water imagery of Canudo’s poem. But this music might also be heard as “dream-like” music denoting an alternate nightmarish reality, especially since it produces a similar affect as the chromatic ostinato that opens Schoenberg’s

¹²³ For more information on these terms, their presumed causes, their symptoms, their connotations, and how they were used by doctors and in which locales, see Gregory M. Thomas, *Treating the Trauma of the Great War: Soldiers, Civilians, and Psychiatry in France, 1914-1940* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 20-70.

¹²⁴ For more on auditory hallucinations associated with traumatic illnesses of World War I, see F.W. Mott, “Chadwick Lecture (April 26th, 1917): Mental Hygiene in Shell-shock, During and After the War,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 63 (1917): 467-488; 480; Edgar Jones, et. al., “Flashbacks and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Genesis of a 20th-Century Diagnosis,” *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 182 (2003): 158-163.

¹²⁵ Although the piece was written for five hands and has been performed this way, the pianola expert Rex Lawson has suggested that Ravel composed the piece to be performed on the pianola. Rex Lawson, “Maurice Ravel: *Frontispice* for Pianola,” *The Pianola Journal* 2, no. 2 (1989): 36-41.

Pierrot Lunaire, which Ravel first studied with Stravinsky in 1913, and spent the next ten years trying to have performed in Paris. The D minor folk melody that the second pianist enters with in m. 2 sounds familiar, but also, as Plebuch has asserted, as if from the past: “Uprooted and isolated,” he writes, the song “hangs in the air, ‘à la recherche du Temps Perdu.’”¹²⁶ This folksong recalls the musician-soldier Georges Grisez’s story of hearing a “horribly sad voice” singing a minor key folk song while serving for the Armée d’Orient in Macedonia.¹²⁷ Ravel may have read Grisez’s account since it was published in 1917 in the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*, which occasionally printed news about Ravel, and which Ravel likely received since Nadia and Lili Boulanger intended to send the journal to as many French musician-soldiers as possible. The third pianist also plays a birdsong that, as numerous scholars have observed, prefigures Olivier Messiaen’s interest in the genre in the 1950s and 1960s.¹²⁸ Throughout *Frontispice* each of these musical ideas maintains its profile as Ravel layers them one on top of another, creating an overpowering and inescapable sonic conglomeration suggestive of the unstoppable influx of traumatic memories.

Ravel conveys a growing sense of emotional and psychological instability by gradually increasing the piece’s dissonance. In each of the first three measures, he adds one new musical idea, then continues to add others more sporadically in the next four measures so that six different but concrete musical ideas are being performed simultaneously by m. 7. In mm. 9 and 10 Ravel further augments this dissonance through diminished note values in the first player’s right hand (the highly chromatic melody played over the “dream-like” music): s/he plays thirty-second notes in m. 9, and then thirty-second note quintuplets in m. 10, this latter measure being capped off by a dodecatuplet glissando. This layering of voices and diminution of note values

¹²⁶ Plebuch, “Der stumme Schrecken,” 164: “Entwurzelt und vereinsamt hängt der Gesang in der Luft, ‘à la recherche du Temps perdu.’”

¹²⁷ Georges Grisez, *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 6 [1917?] [BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1)]: 28: “cette voix me semble horriblement triste.”

¹²⁸ Plebuch, “Der stumme Schrecken,” 164 and Mawer, “Mechanical Objects and Machines,” 53. It should also be noted that this was not the first time Ravel had composed birdsong; he did the same thing in the “Lever du jour” scene in *Daphnis et Chloé*.

creates a steady crescendo, which becomes particularly overwhelming in *Frontispice*'s tenth measure (see Figure 4.12 below). Here Ravel asks all three pianists to perform an additional crescendo that instills this already harsh and grating sonic conglomeration with even more urgency, making the listener wonder how much more physical discomfort Ravel will force them to withstand.

Figure 4.12: Ravel, *Frontispice*, ed. Arbie Orenstein (Paris: Salabert, 1975), mm. 10-11.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece *Frontispice*. The first system shows measures 9 and 10, and the second system shows measures 10 and 11. The score is written for three pianists, with five staves in total. The top staff is a single melodic line. The middle two staves are for the right hand, and the bottom two staves are for the left hand. The music is characterized by a dense, complex texture with many overlapping lines and a steady crescendo. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system ends with a dashed line, and the second system begins with a circled measure number '10'. The word 'cresc.' is written above the first staff of the second system. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

At the end of m. 10, Ravel composes a brief pause and a new musical idea in m. 11 that can be understood as the repression of the psychic trauma conveyed in the previous measures. Ravel frames mm. 11-14 as a re-composition of the piece's first ten measures by beginning *piano* and gradually crescendoing and steadily adding voices. But this re-composition includes only one musical idea: a series of five stoic chords—G sharp minor, A minor, C sharp major, D major, and F major—repeated four times (see Figure 4.13 below). Ravel marks these legato, and only changes them in each repetition by adding additional voices that expand their tessitura and volume. When compared with what came before, these stoic chords appear like a sonic mask that attempts—adamantly and forcefully—to place a brave, polished, and ultimately heroic face on the psychological pain and overwhelm that came before.

Figure 4.13: Ravel, *Frontispice*, ed. Arbie Orenstein (Paris: Salabert, 1975), mm. 11-15.

Frontispice's final gesture minimizes what came before while also highlighting that this brave face, like so many other emotional masks, is only a temporary performance. This showy gesture consists of a sixteenth-note-dotted-eighth-note figure outlining an E sharp diminished 9th chord followed by an A augmented 7th chord, both played *pianissimo*. Within the context of what has preceded it, this gesture appears somewhat ridiculous. Once again, Ravel gives us a “magic word” that in its grotesque incongruence, points to the effort mustered in the donning of

an emotional mask. Ravel's *Frontispice* can thus be understood as a sonic representation of the hiding away, deep inside oneself, of the experiences and emotions that continue to haunt the psyche despite the soldier's best efforts to "snap out of it" as his captain commands.¹²⁹

Mourning and Memory in *La Valse*

As critics observed at its premiere in 1920, something haunted *La Valse* as well. In addition to the assertions of the piece's "spectrality," the purported destruction with which *La Valse* ends has been one of its most discussed features. As Ravel noted in letters to Maurice Emmanuel and Ernest Ansermet in 1921 and 1922, he was surprised by critics' reactions to the piece as a "tragic allusion" to the "end of the Second Empire" or the "state of Vienna after the war." He poked fun at these readings, and advised that, "tragic, this work can be, like all expression—desire, joy—pushed to the extreme. One should see in it only what the music expresses: an ascending progression of sonority, to which the stage will add those of light and movement."¹³⁰ Scholars and critics since have variously interpreted *La Valse's* ending as indicative of the tragic destruction of pre-World War I Europe, the triumph of pleasure, or, in Puri's reading, a bacchanalian combination of the "tragic and ecstatic—'Dionysian' in the Nietzschean sense of the term."¹³¹ In the last part of this chapter I add my own reading to these: that Ravel's *poème chorégraphique* can be understood as reflecting his struggles to mourn his mother's death. In my reading, Ravel's waltzes embody the memory-phantoms of mournful

¹²⁹ Ravel to Madame Fernand Dreyfus, 9 February 1917, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 180.

¹³⁰ Ravel to Maurice Emmanuel, 14 October 1922, in *Maurice Ravel*, eds. Lesure and Nectoux, 68; cited in Deborah Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel: Creation and Interpretation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 155-156 (I use her translation for the second sentence, although I use my own for the first): "Tragique, cette oeuvre peut l'être comme toute expression—volupté, joie—poussée à l'extrême. Il faut y voir que ce que la musique y exprime: une progression ascendante de sonorité, à laquelle la scène viendra ajouter celle de la lumière et du mouvement." Ravel also expresses his curiosity about critics' readings of the ballet in a letter to Ernest Ansermet, 20 October 1921.

¹³¹ Michael Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 172. For an overview of the scholarly reception of *La Valse*, see Puri's chapter on the piece (chapter 6). He notes that Hermann Danuser reads the close of *La Valse* as a triumph, versus George Benjamin's reading of the piece as "decay."

desire described by Abraham, Torok, and Derrida that persistently return to haunt and overwhelm mourners who cannot give voice to their grief.

Numerous scholars have suggested that the waltzes that Ravel composes in *La Valse* should be understood in relation to memory. Jann Pasler has described them as “fragments of pleasurable memories trying to be light-hearted, bearers of our desire, interrupted but ever returning again.”¹³² In *Ravel the Decadent* Michael Puri argues that *La Valse* consists of “objects of memory,” “waltzes whose fragmentation and unmediated juxtaposition indicate this memory to be in a state of crisis.”¹³³ Drawing on *fin-de-siècle* discourse on memory by Henri Bergson and Marcel Proust, Puri understands the opening of the ballet as representing the “arduousness of memory work.” For Puri the slow and sputtering waltz machine with which the ballet opens “tells us that [memory] is more than the simple retrieval of stored information: it is also an active struggle against an ever-present oblivion that constantly threatens to make the past inaccessible to memory.”¹³⁴ Puri thus conceives of the waltzes not as memories, but rather as the past that memory attempts to recapture. Rather than understanding *La Valse* as a representation of memory “in a state of crisis,” I read the ballet as a musical manifestation of Ravel’s own crisis of mournful memory.¹³⁵

As in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*’s “Forlane,” in *La Valse* Ravel couches his mourning for a remembered past in dances of another time that were linked culturally and personally to desire. As his scenario for the ballet indicates, Ravel understood his waltzes as dating from the nineteenth century:

¹³² Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 699.

¹³³ Michael Puri, *Ravel the Decadent: Memory, Sublimation, and Desire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170.

¹³⁴ Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 173-174.

¹³⁵ Puri suggests that in *La Valse* the waltzes are “objects of memory . . . whose fragmentation and unmediated juxtaposition indicate this memory to be in a state of crisis.” *Ravel the Decadent*, 170.

Through breaks in the swirling clouds, waltzing couple may be glimpsed. Little by little they disperse: an immense hall filled with a whirling crowd can be made out (A).

The stage is illuminated gradually. The light of the chandeliers peaks at the *fortissimo* (B).

An Imperial Court, about 1855.¹³⁶

Although the waltz eventually became a court dance, the close and intimate contact it required, as well as the fast, dizzying spinning it involved—which some social critics considered a phenomenological analogue to sexual ecstasy—had led to the dance’s condemnation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as sexually, socially, and physically threatening.¹³⁷ Puri suggests that Ravel was aware of the sexual nature of the dance in his analysis of *Daphnis et Chloé*. Here he points out that the “sexual threat that [the waltz] has held during its history” permits it to connote “the desire that binds a couple in love.”¹³⁸ He sustains that Ravel used the waltz in his dramatic works to communicate desire not only in *Daphnis et Chloé*, but also in *L’Heure espagnol* where it “reveal[s] the *figure* of Inigo’s sexual desire.”¹³⁹

Moreover, when Ravel completed *La Valse* in the fall and winter of 1919 and 1920, at least some of the specific waltzes in the ballet would have acted as potent reminders of his mother’s presence. Ravel had begun conceiving of this piece as early as 1906, and although we don’t know how far he had progressed on the ballet prior to his return to it in December 1919, his letters from this month indicate that he began working on it again between December 8 and

¹³⁶ Maurice Ravel, *La Valse* (Paris: Durand, 1921): “Des nuées tourbillonnantes laissent entrevoir, par éclaircies, des couples de valseurs. Elles se dissipent peu à peu: on distingue (A) une immense sale peuplée d’une foule tournoyante. La scène s’éclaire progressivement. La lumière des lustres éclate au *ff* (B). Une Cour impérial, vers 1855.” Cited and translated in Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel*, 155.

¹³⁷ For more on late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discussions of the waltz’s social and sexual dangers, see Sevin Yaraman, *Revolving Embrace: The Waltz as Sex, Steps, and Sound* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2002). Ravel further underlines the “dangerous” aspects of the waltz in a doodle involving dead dancers that he draws at the bottom of the autograph manuscript of *La Valse* arranged for piano, currently held at The Pierpont Museum and Library, Accession number Cary 512. <http://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/115542>.

¹³⁸ Puri, “Dandy Interrupted,” 323.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* Here, Puri draws from Roland-Manuel’s reading of *L’Heure espagnol* in *Maurice Ravel et son oeuvre dramatique* (Paris: Éditions musicales de la Librairie de France, 1928), 61.

December 22, and began orchestrating it on December 31.¹⁴⁰ On December 22 he tells Roland-Manuel that *Wien* has been coming along quickly, but a fair amount of the material for the piece had to have been developed by Ravel in the summer of 1914 (when he writes to friends about working on it) or beforehand.¹⁴¹ Moreover, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Ravel writes to Ida Godebski in late December and Hélène Kahn-Casella in mid-January, relaying to both women that working on *La Valse* reminds him of his mother's presence, making him miss her all the more.¹⁴²

The waltzes that Ravel includes in *La Valse* are fractured and fragmentary like the ghostly memories returned to haunt the mourner described by Abraham, Torok, and Derrida. This is especially evident in the opening and closing sections of *La Valse*, both of which are characterized by only bits and pieces of waltzes. The opening section of *La Valse* seems to follow the scenario Ravel provided for the ballet, moving the listener from a nebulous, minor-key “cloud” of sound, to a full-fledged D major waltz. Out of an ominous tremolo in the low strings the bassoons emerge with a grotesquely limping waltz fragment at mm. 12-13 (see Figure 4.14 below), with new fragments appearing every 3 to 6 measures (mm. 16-18; mm. 24-25; mm. 28-30). Other instruments gradually and intermittently contribute waltz fragments as well, including bass clarinets, woodwinds, and eventually strings. At A, the point where Ravel indicates a “whirling crowd” appears, the bassoons and violas emerge with an intact waltz melody—an elongated version of the waltz fragments heard at the opening. This waltz gathers momentum and makes its first significant breakthrough marked by a *forte* harp glissando, at

¹⁴⁰ Ravel was still not working at the end of September 1919, as he tells Manuel de Falla, but he writes to Georgette Marnold on December 8, 1919 to tell her that he's just sent the orchestration of his *Deux mélodies hébraïques* to Durand and that he's going to “move on to another genre.” See Ravel to Georgette Marnold, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 194. He writes to Roland-Manuel on December 22, 1919 that he's “returning to *Wien*.” See Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 166-167. Ravel writes to Ida Godebska on January 15, 1920 to tell her that he began *La Valse*'s orchestration on December 31. See Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 195-196.

¹⁴¹ Ravel to Roland-Manuel, 22 December 1919, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 166-167: “Je retourne à *Wien*. Ça gaze. J'ai pu enfin démarrer et en 4e.”

¹⁴² Ravel to Ida Godebska, 27 December 1919, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 195; Ravel to Hélène Kahn-Casella, 15 January 1920, in Roy, ed., “Soixante-deux lettres,” 79; trans. in Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 183.

Rehearsal 13. The waltz gradually picks up momentum, and more instruments join in until, as Ravel indicated in his scenario, the whole orchestra is engaged in playing this waltz at B.

Figure 4.14: Ravel, *La Valse*, orchestral score (Paris: Durand, 1921), mm. 14-20; bassoon fragments and muted horn response.

The image shows a musical score for Ravel's *La Valse*, measures 14-20. The score is arranged in four systems. The first system is for Bassoon (Bass), the second for Horns (Trumpets), the third for Timpani, and the fourth for Harp. The Bassoon part features a waltz fragment starting at measure 14, marked with a '2' in a box. The Horns part has a muted horn response starting at measure 15, marked 'Sourdines' and 'mf'. The Harp part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords marked with '#'. The Timpani part has a steady rhythmic pattern.

Whereas Puri understands this gradual progression as a staging of the “arduousness of memory work,” the ominous and grotesque nature of the waltz fragments articulates a resistance or ambivalence in this act of remembering.¹⁴³ This ambivalence resonates with Ravel’s statements to friends while completing *La Valse* that remembering his mother’s presence was both pleasant and painful. By beginning the piece in a minor key, as well as utilizing dissonant minor and major seconds in the first waltz fragments we hear, Ravel conveys apprehension about indulging in nostalgia. Moreover, he scores these fragments for bassoon, which had developed associations with the magical, supernatural, and grotesque through its appearances in the “Songe d’un nuit de Sabbath” movement of Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, and Paul Dukas’s *L’Apprenti sorcier*, amongst others pieces.¹⁴⁴ In addition, Ravel has the orchestra react defensively to each of the bassoons’ waltz fragments through accented chords in the muted

¹⁴³ Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 173-174.

¹⁴⁴ For more on the bassoon as magical and grotesque in Dukas’s *L’Apprenti sorcier* see Carolyn Abbate, “What the Sorcerer Said,” *19th-Century Music* 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1989): 221-230.

horns and strings (see Figure 4.14 above). By progressing from these minor key, ominous fragments to a full-fledged major key waltz played by the entire orchestra, Ravel seems to suggest that these memories become pleasant only once one accepts their presence.

If the first section of *La Valse* suggests ambivalence in mournful remembering, the central section of the ballet (R. 18 to R. 54) conveys the paradoxical pleasure of resistant mourning that can occur when luxuriating in memories of the past. Ravel takes the listener through a series of waltzes, giving her time to become comfortable with each one before moving on to the next. Although these waltzes appear in a variety of keys, Ravel maintains a relative sense of stability and comfort compared to the opening and closing sections through composing these waltzes primarily in major keys, and returning frequently to waltz melodies that become increasingly familiar through repeated hearings. The listener is easily swept up and enchanted by the waltzes that Ravel composes in this section. At R. 30, for instance, a waltz melody emerges that includes expressive portamento slurs over ascending and descending chromatic scales. Moreover, Ravel uses the full orchestra throughout most of this section, resulting in an immersion of sound that brings to mind Ravel's statement about feeling his mother's "dear sweet presence" enveloping him as he composed this piece.

It is in the third and final section of *La Valse*, however, that Ravel most clearly reveals his resistant mourning. He instills the majority of the final section of the ballet with an increasing sense of panic, which I read—similarly to Puri—as the dread in being faced with the disappearance into oblivion of the memories and imagined presence of a loved one who has died.¹⁴⁵ At the beginning of this section Ravel returns to the limping bassoon waltz fragments that opened the ballet, and follows these with fragment after fragment of the waltzes just heard in the central section; his concerns about the productivity of melancholic remembering seem to have returned. Ravel follows these fragments with waltzes from the first two sections of the

¹⁴⁵ We know from Ravel's letter to Manuel de Falla of 19 September 1919, that this was something with which he was concerned after his mother's death. See Ravel to Manuel de Falla, 19 September 1919, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 193-194.

ballet, although here these are out of order and only in bits and pieces.¹⁴⁶ Many of these fragments are distorted versions of their previous statements. For example, at Rehearsal 73 we hear the graceful and charming waltz that first appeared at Rehearsal 30 (there with its melody played eloquently by the strings), now played crassly and grotesquely by the horns, trombones, and tuba before disappearing—in a minor key—into the orchestra’s texture. In this shift of instrumentation, key, and affect, Ravel transforms its initial grace into something shockingly absurd: the memories have begun to warp and deteriorate.

As the desperation to continue to remember increases, so too does the panic communicated in each of these attempts. Each of these haunting memories attempts to come to fruition but ultimately fails. This is evident in extended passages of rising sequential motion and increasingly fast tempi, both of which mimic and contribute to listeners’ experiences of mounting dread. Rehearsal 82 offers one condensed example of this in Ravel’s re-composition of a waltz melody (first heard at Rehearsal 46) that rises chromatically over a bass line that also moves up incrementally by half step in each measure. Accompanied by Ravel’s instructions, “Accelerate until Rehearsal 85,” the music continues to rise by half step at an ever quickening pace in these twenty measures: the rate of ascent increases from once per measure to once per quarter note pulse. The combination of triple forte descending chords in the brass and *fortissimo* tremolo glissandi in the strings appearing at Rehearsal 85 would seem to put an abrupt end to this attempt to recapture the past, but another waltz immediately appears to try its hand.

Waltz fragments continue to appear, sometimes communicating this same desperation, at other times cropping up into consciousness only briefly. One of these deserves special mention, however. Two measures into Rehearsal 96, there suddenly emerges out of the full orchestral texture two measures of a particularly expressive waltz that had first appeared at the

¹⁴⁶ I do not have space here to provide a full breakdown of the form of *La Valse*. For more information on this, see Michael Puri’s illuminating analysis, including a chart with a complete breakdown of motivic appearances. Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 168-184; see Table 6.3 on p. 175.

beginning of the B section. Like the emotional outburst in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*'s "Menuet," it disappears just as quickly as it had entered (see Figure 4.15). For Puri, this moment is a "backward glance" that has the potential to evoke "intense nostalgia and melancholy, expressing as it does the drastic truth that dreamy reminiscence has no place in brutal reality," all of which he relates to Ravel's melancholy after his mother's death.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, this tuneful waltz stands out

Figure 4.15: Ravel, *La Valse*, orchestral score (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1921), mm. 710-714: "Backwards glance" at mm. 712-713.

The image shows a page of an orchestral score for Maurice Ravel's *La Valse*. It is divided into two systems of staves. The first system, measures 96-97, is marked "A peine retenu (1^{er} Mouvt)" and "Au Mouvement (assez animé)". It includes staves for Flutes (1^{re} and 2^e), Oboes, Clarinets (A and B), Bassoons, Horns (C and F), Trumpets (1^{re} and 2^e), Trombones (1^{er} and 2^e), Timpani, Triangle, Cymbals, Gong, and Harp. The second system, also measures 96-97, is marked "A peine retenu (1^{er} Mouvt)" and "Au Mouvement (assez animé) Div.". It includes staves for Violins (1^{re} and 2^e) and Cellos/Double Basses. The score contains various musical notations such as dynamics (ff, f, mf), articulation (accents), and performance instructions like "expressif" and "à 2".

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 183.

here as well since its scoring of middle woodwinds and strings gives it the quality of the human voice, especially when presented—as it is—between two *tutti* orchestral waltzes. This might be understood as a brief voice from the crypt—a moment when Ravel permits his mother’s voice to emerge from the texture of a piece written while Ravel remained immersed in her memory. This is also a turning point in the ballet since after this moment melody all but disappears. Ravel reduces each waltz to frantic fragments, harmonically impotent repetitions that cannot escape the harmonic rut in which they find themselves. Attempts to recreate the past through memory and mournful desire, Ravel intimates, are ultimately futile.

Ravel brings *La Valse* to a close with a forceful gesture that puts an end to these increasingly ineffectual attempts at recapturing melody/memory. This figure also suggests, in its similarity to other concluding gestures within Ravel’s postwar *oeuvre*, that Ravel understood this particular musical figure as signaling the impossibility of returning to a mourned for past. This gesture consists of an accented quarter-note quadruplet followed by an accented quarter note that Ravel marks “sans ralentir.” Ravel has nearly the entire orchestra play this gesture, which in subdividing the penultimate measure into four beats, seems to foreclose on the possibility of returning to the triple meter that is the most characteristic feature of the waltz. Notably, *La Valse*’s closing figure closely resembles the grotesque grin gesture that concluded the “Rigaudon” of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. A similar gesture appears as well at the conclusion of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*’s “Toccata,” in which Ravel sets it apart by having it appear after the only moment of rest in the movement (see Figures 4.16a, 4.16b, and 4.16c). Ravel’s reversing the

Figure 4.16a: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Rigaudon” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 124-128.



Figure 4.16b: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Toccata” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 248-251.

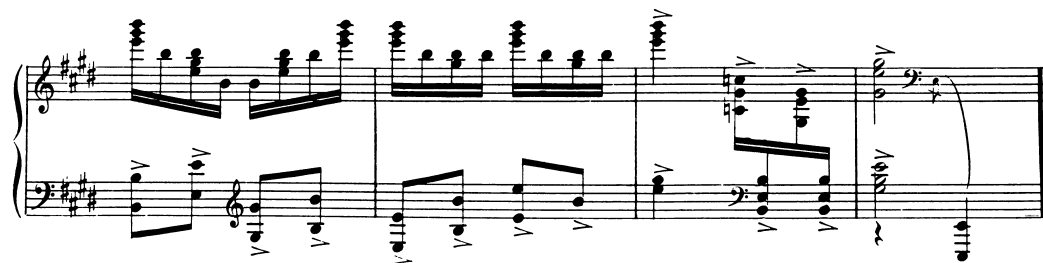


Figure 4.16c: Ravel, *La Valse*, orchestral score (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1921), mm. 750-755.

An orchestral score for the final measures (750-755) of La Valse by Maurice Ravel. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flutes (1st and 2nd), Oboes, Clarinets (A and B), Bassoons, Horns, Trumpets (1st and 2nd), Trombones (1st and 2nd), Tuba, Timpani, Triangle, Tom-tom, Tambourine, Cymbals, and Gong. The score is marked "Sans ralentir" (Without slowing down). The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests. The score concludes with a final chord and a fermata. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

order of the “Menuet” and “Rigaudon” movements in the orchestral version of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*—in which he omitted the “Fugue” and “Toccata”—seems to indicate his desire to have a gesture of this distinct profile close his other mournful attempt to reach an irretrievable past. Bearing these similarities in mind, this particular gesture, which is almost entirely absent from Ravel’s pre-war compositions, seems to communicate a forlorn yet necessary foreclosure on the simultaneously cherished and painful memories of lost loved ones that Ravel embedded in dances of the past. He banishes these, we might say, to the crypt, knowing, however, that they will return to haunt him again as they have so many times before.

Searching for a “Better Politics of Mourning”

The persistent appearance of haunting, incongruous, and violent moments in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse* suggests that in these pieces Ravel compulsively continued to perform the psychological trauma he suffered after 1914. In *Le Tombeau*’s “Forlane” and *La Valse*, he returned to music that could help him remember lost loved ones, whereas in the “Rigaudon,” “Menuet,” and *Frontispice* he composed commentary on emotional management and its inevitable failure through gestures that draw attention to the emotional outbursts that can emerge from keeping one’s grief silent. In *Frontispice* and *La Valse* Ravel presents his listeners with traumatic memories that haunt the mourner and/or soldier who cannot fully escape the past nor the present. Moreover, in *Le Tombeau*’s “Rigaudon” and “Menuet,” as well as in *La Valse*, Ravel uses closing gestures that communicate his frustration with the irretrievability of his pre-war past.

Building on Freud’s and Janet’s early theories of trauma, psychologists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have observed that in addition to reenacting in disguised form the initial moment of trauma in their thoughts, dreams, and actions, many people who survive traumatic experiences either consciously or unconsciously repeat and work through their trauma in creative works. David Aberbach, for instance, has suggested that, “Through creativity,

the artist may confront and attempt to master the trauma on his own terms and, in so doing, complete the work of mourning.”¹⁴⁸ Christopher Bollas has similarly asserted that individuals who “struggle with traumatic inner constellations” can “achieve a certain mastery over the effect of trauma” through “transformations of the trauma into works of art.”¹⁴⁹ For many artists and writers who face ongoing traumatic symptoms and memories, it is not only the opportunity to narrativize their experiences that makes working through their trauma in their artworks an appealing and productive move towards recovery. As Judith Herman points out, many survivors of trauma “feel called upon to engage in a wider world” through undertaking a “survivor mission” that helps them to redeem and process their trauma through social action.¹⁵⁰ She underlines the connection between the survivor’s social action and personal healing in writing that “although giving to others is the essence of the survivor mission, those who practice it recognize that they do so for their own healing. In taking care of others, survivors feel recognized, loved, and cared for themselves.”¹⁵¹

Ravel’s turn in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse* to introspective, intimate, personal, and psychological portraits of grief suggests that his post-1917 “survivor mission” involved seeking out and producing alternative modes of mourning for himself and his peers. Similar to how he subtly resisted the optimistic musical representations of wartime mourning of some of his contemporaries in “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis,” Ravel’s attention to the social and psychological difficulty of mourning in his post-1917 compositions belies his resistance to nationalistic and collective expressions of grief that often sought to justify rather than problematize the war’s losses. By focusing on rupture and discord in these pieces, Ravel

¹⁴⁸ David Aberbach, *Surviving Trauma: Loss, Literature and Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 3.

¹⁴⁹ Christopher Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 78.

¹⁵⁰ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 207-209.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 209.

poses a challenge to the hopeful and recuperative narratives of wartime mourning offered, for instance, by Pierné, Nadia Boulanger, Florent Schmitt, Reynaldo Hahn, and André Caplet.

In this way, Ravel's resistance to embodying World War I-era conventions for musical mourning in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse* prefigures and resonates with Jacques Derrida's concerns with how to mourn adequately and ethically. In his essay on Roland Barthes's death, Derrida finds fault with the "typical solutions" societies and individuals provide "on the occasion of the death." He questions the conventional ways of speaking of the dead after they have passed through expressing frustration with funeral orations and commemorative literature that are so often prone "to maneuver, to speculate, to try to profit or derive some benefit, whether subtle or sublime, to draw from the dead a supplementary force to be turned against the living, to denounce or insult them more or less directly, to authorize or legitimate oneself."¹⁵² Although he settles on no possible way to entirely avoid these conventions, Derrida strives to acknowledge the uniqueness of each person, of each death, of each "ending of the world" that comes to pass when a friend passes away, through resisting and problematizing the conventions he relies upon even while continuing to draw upon them.¹⁵³ In their introduction to their collection of Derrida's commemorative writings, *The Work of Mourning*, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas summarize,

Derrida reflects in these essays on the very genre of the eulogy of funeral oration, all the while himself giving orations and eulogies, pronouncing them, working within the codes and tropes of such speech acts and yet referring throughout to what exceeds them . . . Eulogizing the singularity of the friend, he has tried to inhabit and inflect both the concept and the genre of mourning differently. He has tried to reinvent, always in public and always in context, that is, always from within, a better politics of mourning.¹⁵⁴

According to Brault and Naas, Derrida suggests that the only way to mourn ethically is to fail to mourn—to not permit the process of mourning to end, to be *bad* at mourning, to fail at it, but to

¹⁵² Jacques Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," in *The Work of Mourning*, 31-68; 51.

¹⁵³ Jacques Derrida, "Letter to Francine Loreau," in *ibid.*, 91-104; 95.

¹⁵⁴ Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, "Reckoning with the Dead: Jacques Derrida's Politics of Mourning," in *ibid.*, 1-30; 18.

acknowledge consistently our failure. Derrida accomplishes this as best he can through the persistent performance of aporias: at every turn he worries about taste and tact and about the politics of how he remembers. He offers solutions, but then points out how they fail to truly maintain fidelity to those who have died. For Derrida, an ethical reckoning with the dead is one that foregrounds the very impossibility of mourning.

As I have argued throughout this chapter, the moments of rupture, violence, and discord that appear throughout *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse* can be understood as indications of Ravel's impossible mourning. Moreover, like Derrida's politics of mourning, Ravel's musical approach to mourning was not static, but rather shifted over time in relation to his losses and the particularities of his ever-changing emotional life. Desiring to serve in the war and feeling ashamed that he could not, serving in the war and feeling depressed and disillusioned by the experience, and facing the deaths not only of many close friends, but also of his mother, changed in each instance the way he chose to mourn musically. He articulates differently in each composition the "ending of the world" he has experienced, always doing so in ways that avoid a too heavy reliance on conventional genres, styles, and affects. Like Derrida, Ravel attempts to prevent his postwar performances of grief from acting as unquestioned solutions to the problem of mourning. Rather, he highlights the difficulty if not impossibility of mourning through hermeneutically and affectively difficult musical compositions that convey the struggle inherent in the work of mourning ethically, of striving to practice a "better politics of mourning." As we will see in the next chapter, Ravel's search for alternative modes of adequate mourning extended as well to his desire to compose music for grieving friends that could help them cope with and perform their grief in distinctly personal but productive ways.

Chapter 5

Coping with Grief Through Embodied Musical Practices: Memory, Movement, and Ravel's Postwar *Style Dépouillé*

Many of Ravel's contemporaries discerned a shift in his musical style after the war, often remarking that his post-1917 compositions displayed what they termed a "stripped down writing" (*écriture dépouillée*). This kind of writing has been described by Samuel Dorf as embodying a "classical simplicity . . . echoing what at the time were the ideas of the cubist aesthetic" characteristic of the musical style of post-World War I French modernist composers like Satie and Stravinsky.¹ Whereas Alexis Roland-Manuel used the term to describe Ravel's pared down harmony in *La Valse* in a 1920 review,² André Himonet commented in a 1927 review of Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Piano that it exhibited an *écriture dépouillée* in which the piano contrasts sharply with the violin, and the "harmony is for the most part as schematic as possible."³ Himonet remarks that Ravel seems to have taken a "vow of simplicity" in both this work and the Sonata for Violin and Violoncello, which he calls a "significant prototype" of this new style in which Ravel has "heroically stripped himself of the harmonic opulence that gave so much charm to his much earlier works."⁴ Ravel's friend the violinist and critic Hélène Jourdan-Morhange similarly described many of Ravel's postwar compositions as *musique dépouillée*, including, like Himonet, the Sonata for Violin and Piano and the Sonata for Violin and

¹ For more on the term "dépouillée" or "dépouillement" and its history see chapter 3, "Hellenistic Neoclassicism: Satie, Fauré, The Great War, and *Dépouillement*," of Samuel Noah Dorf's dissertation, "Listening Between the Classical and the Sensual: Neoclassicism in Parisian Music Culture, 1870-1935" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2009), 144-227.

² Alexis Roland-Manuel, "La Quinzaine musicale: 'La Valse' de Maurice Ravel aux Concerts Lamoureux, les Ballets Russes et le 'Sacre du Printemps,'" *L'Éclair*, 20 December 1920.

³ André Himonet, "Les Concerts: Concerts Durand," *Le Courrier musical* 29, no. 12 (June 15, 1927): 358: "On retrouve dans cette *Sonate* l'humour particulier à M. Ravel, son tact, sa netteté un peu coupante, accentuée encore par une écriture dépouillée (le "dépouillement" est la tarte à la crème du jour) linéaire au point que le piano, très curieusement traité, contrepointe parfois purement et simplement le violon, en particulier dans l'Allegretto, où l'harmonie est la plupart du temps aussi schématique que possible."

⁴ Ibid.: "On ne peut dire que l'auteur du *Tombeau de Couperin* a fait voeu de pauvreté, mais de simplicité en tout cas; il s'est héroïquement dépouillé (encore ce mot) de l'opulence harmonique qui donnait tant de charme à ses oeuvres de jadis pour tendre vers un art nerveux, d'une grâce de plus en plus incisive, dont cette *Sonate*, après celle pour violon et violoncelle, est un prototype significatif."

Violoncello, but also *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* and *Chansons madécasses*.⁵ Marguerite Long, Paul Bertrand, Alfred Boschot, and Émile Vuillermoz also used the same term to describe Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major.⁶ In addition to a focus on linearity rather than harmony, concomitant with a move towards sparser textures, these compositions feature an amount of repetition and rhythmic regularity that has led critics and scholars to observe that these and other postwar compositions, such as *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Boléro*, are more "machinistic" than Ravel's earlier compositions. Deborah Mawer, for instance, cites the Sonatas and *Frontispice* as examples of Ravel's "machines," noting that Ravel himself referred to the Duo as a "machine for two instruments."⁷

One answer to the question of what may have motivated Ravel's stylistic departure from earlier compositions lies in the observation that nearly all of the compositions that critics have cited as examples of Ravel's stylistic shift were either connected thematically to mourning in some way, or written for friends who, like himself, were mourning family, friends, or lovers who had died during the war. *La Valse*, which I argued in the previous chapter is a musical representation of the psychic experience of resistant mourning, was composed for Misia Sert, whose estranged husband Alfred Edwards died in 1914. Ravel dedicated his Sonata for Violin and Violoncello to Debussy, who had recently died.⁸ He also composed this Sonata to be

⁵ Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, "La Musique de chambre," in *Maurice Ravel* (Paris: Les Publications techniques et artistiques, 1945), 11-18.

⁶ Marguerite Long, cited in Robert de Naud, "Un Festival Debussy-Ravel: Des Souvenirs de Marguerite Long," found in the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler (hereafter MMM), Fonds Marguerite Long (hereafter F-ML), *Écrits sur Marguerite Long, Presse 1927-1966*: "Le 'Concerto,' que je rejoue pour la n...ième fois, a été écrit pour moi. Je l'exécute d'une manière dépouillée, suivant le texte." Georges Dandelot, "Concerts: Festival Ravel. Le Concerto pour piano," *Le Monde musical* 43, no. 1 (January 31, 1932), 20-21: "Puis le 2e mouvement (*lent*) qui est une très belle page, poétique, enveloppante, un peu dépouillée comme harmonie, à la manière des dernières oeuvres de Fauré." Paul Bertrand, "Concerts divers: Festival Ravel," *Le Ménestrel* (January 22, 1932): 34-35: "L'orchestre un peu réduit . . . s'agrège au piano pour former une construction musicale fermement ordonnée, lumineuse par son plan, rigoureuse par son dessin, mais qui n'exclut ni la souplesse, ni la fantaisie, ni le caprice, et s'enveloppe d'une sonorité à la fois chatoyante et dépouillée."

⁷ See Deborah Mawer's description of Ravel's postwar compositions—especially the Sonatas—in "Musical Objects and Machines," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47-67; 64.

⁸ The first movement of Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Violoncello was published in *La Revue musicale's* supplement, *Tombeau de Debussy*, in 1920, and performed at the Société Musicale Indépendante's memorial concert to Debussy in 1921, in which all of the compositions published in the *Tombeau de Debussy* supplement were performed.

performed by his friend Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, whose husband had been killed in the war, and Maurice Maréchal, who was still mourning the death of his fiancée (who died in 1913) and many friends who had died in combat. As in the case of his Duo, Ravel composed his Sonata for Violin and Piano for Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, who was grieving the deaths of lost loved ones into the 1920s.⁹ Ravel composed his opera *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* to a libretto by Colette in the 1920s, and although there are not explicit links to Ravel's or his friends' grief here, the opera's focus on a young boy's attempts to learn empathy after being punished by his mother may have been connected for Ravel to the guilt and grief he felt after his mother's death.¹⁰ Although Ravel wrote his haunting *Chansons madécasses* on a commission from Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who had lost her husband, mother, and father during the war years, he also wrote these songs to be sung by his friend Jane Bathori, who was going through a painful divorce from her husband in the 1920s. Finally, Ravel composed both *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and his Piano Concerto in G Major for his friend Marguerite Long, whose husband Joseph de Marliave was killed in the first month of World War I. Significantly, Ravel's postwar penchant for mechanism did not seem to extend—or at least not to the same extent—to compositions like the virtuosic and rhapsodic *Tzigane* and *Concerto pour la main gauche*, both of which he wrote for other performers with whom he had only minimal personal connections during the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹

⁹ See Ravel's letter of condolence to her dated October 12, 1923, in René Chalupt and Marcelle Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres* (Paris: Laffont, 1956), 200-201.

¹⁰ Numerous people have written about the psychoanalytic undertones of this opera, although none have specifically focused on Ravel's mourning. See Melanie Klein, "Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse," (1929), in *The Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: Free Press, 1987), 84-94; Peter Kaminsky, "The Child on the Couch; or, Toward a (Psycho)Analysis of Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*," in *Unmasking Ravel: New Perspectives on the Music*, ed. Peter Kaminsky (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 306-330.

¹¹ Reviews for *Tzigane* are scarce, but reviews for Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* frequently focus on the compositions lyricism; this is in stark contrast to reviews for the other instrumental solo and chamber works frequently labeled as "dépourillé." Also, after the Piano Concerto had been performed in Paris, many reviewers note how very different these two concertos are. See Roger Crosti, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre symphonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (November 10, 1933): 438; Claude Altomont, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre symphonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (February 3, 1933): 46; Roger Crosti, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre symphonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (January 27, 1933): 33; Denyse Bertrand, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre Philharmonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (March 26, 1937): 110.

Taking this synchronicity as a point of inquiry, in this chapter I explore the idea that Ravel's postwar shift in musical style was motivated largely by his desire—discussed in greater length in chapter 2—to share his resistant mourning with his friends. I show that this shift in Ravel's postwar musical style, which was widely observed by his closest friends, favorite performers, and a whole host of critics, was intimately bound up with ideas about music's ability to act as a bodily practice of mourning. During and after World War I, Ravel and many musicians in his social sphere were faced with overwhelming and in some instances traumatizing grief, the intensity of which was often only exacerbated by socio-cultural imperatives to temper one's grief, especially in instances of non-war-related death. Informed by the compelling new conceptions of sensual, movement-driven memory of their contemporaries Henri Bergson and Marcel Proust, as well as a burgeoning discourse within music pedagogy, modern dance, and psychology on music's therapeutic properties, Ravel, Nadia Boulanger, Emma Debussy, Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, Marguerite Long, and many of the soldiers who fought in World War I found in musical activities a vital means of emotional management. For Ravel, this translated into the rhythmically regular, kinesthetically engaging, and technically challenging pieces he wrote for grieving friends like Marguerite Long and Hélène Jourdan-Morhange.

Henri Bergson, Marcel Proust, and Memory in Early-Twentieth-Century France

French philosopher Henri Bergson's 1896 exegesis on human memory and perception, *Matière et mémoire*, and Marcel Proust's seven-volume novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*—released in installments between 1913 and 1927—remain two of the most influential texts for memory studies. Widely read and very popular in the first decades of the twentieth century, these texts provide a useful and illuminating context in which to understand music's abilities to

help musician's mourn through corporeally recalling being in the presence of lost loved ones.¹² Bergson's philosophies about consciousness, memory, time, and free will were exceedingly popular in *fin-de-siècle* Paris. The standing-room-only lectures he gave at the Collège de France as well as his writings influenced not only philosophers and scientists, but also artists, writers, and musicians.¹³ Jeanice Brooks surmises that, while it cannot be confirmed that Nadia Boulanger ever attended one of these lectures, numerous of her friends definitely did.¹⁴ Extant sources fail to reveal whether Ravel or others in his circle attended Bergson's lectures, but even if they had not heard Bergson speak, they likely were familiar with aspects of his thought through discussions of his philosophies appearing in *La Revue musicale* in 1925 and 1926.¹⁵ At the very least, Nadia Boulanger was familiar with Bergson's work, since his theories about time, music, and consciousness appear frequently in the lectures she gave in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁶ Boulanger's appreciation for Bergson as a philosopher in general is also suggested by her decision—along with others on the Comité Franco-Américain—to send musician-soldiers serving at the front copies of Bergson's essay on laughter, *Rire*, first published in 1900.¹⁷ Even for those who knew little of Bergson, they likely were able to get a little taste of his thoughts on memory from Marcel Proust's landmark novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the first volume of which

¹² Michael Puri has done a beautiful and thorough job of detailing the *fin-de-siècle* fascination with memory, as well as Ravel's participation in this fascination, in *Ravel the Decadent: Memory, Sublimation, Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See in particular his introduction. Puri's study, in which he performs detailed analyses of how Ravel's fascination with memory appears in his compositions, precludes the necessity for me to undertake an in-depth examination of all of the strains of memory and sensory related thought in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

¹³ On the far-reaching influence of Bergson see the collection *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, eds. Paul Ardoin, S.E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison (New York: Continuum, 2013), especially the editors' introduction (pp. 1-10). See also R.C. Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France, 1900-1914* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1988) and Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger: Performing Past and Future Between the Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 60-61.

¹⁵ Gabriel Marcel, "Bergsonisme et musique," *La Revue musicale* 6, no. 5 (March 1, 1925): 219-229; Charles Koechlin, "Le Temps et la musique," *La Revue musicale* 7, no. 3 (January 1, 1926): 45-62.

¹⁶ Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 60-61.

¹⁷ *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*, No. 6 [1917?], BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1). Numerous soldiers write to thank Nadia Boulanger and the Comité Franco-Américain for sending them a copy of Bergson's essay.

was published in 1913, with the second appearing after the war in 1919. Proust's novel was touted from its first appearance as placing Bergson's ideas about memory into lived—albeit fictionalized—experience, despite Proust's protestations to the contrary.¹⁸

In *Matière et mémoire* Bergson critiqued how psychologists like Théodule Ribot understood how memory functioned, and reconceived the role that memory played in how humans perceive, learn, and make decisions. After distinguishing between two types of memory—habit memory, which includes actions learned by rote, and spontaneous or pure memory, which includes specific events, dates, and experiences—Bergson asserted that human beings psychically preserve not just some, but rather all of their memories.¹⁹ Moreover, he suggested that memories are created, stored, and recalled through the sensory-motor system. Our perceptions of objects and our familiarity with them, according to Bergson, are developed through motor impulses and reactions; for Bergson, “there is no perception which is not prolonged into movement.”²⁰ These movements and their attendant sensations come into consciousness only when another sensory-motor movement or experience triggers them. Bergson envisioned this sensory-motor memory-recalling mechanism as a keyboard:

In the case of a present material object . . . order and co-existence come from an organ of sense, receiving the impression of an external object. The organ is constructed precisely with a view to allowing a plurality of simultaneous excitants to impress it in a certain order and in a certain way, by distributing themselves, all at one time, over selected portions of its surface. It is like an immense keyboard, on which the external object executes at once its harmony of a thousand notes, thus calling forth in a definite order, and a single moment, a great multitude of

¹⁸ For more on the relationship between Bergson and Proust, see Pete A.Y. Gunter, “Bergson and Proust: A Question of Influence,” *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, 157-176. In the timeline he provides at the end of this chapter, Gunter notes several articles that treat this topic—including interviews with Proust in which denies Bergson's influence—in Parisian newspapers (see p. 170).

¹⁹ Gunter argues that this is one of Bergson's singular and most important contribution to memory studies in “Bergson and Proust,” 157. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 113: “For, while motor apparatus are built up under the influence of perceptions that are analyzed with increasing precision by the body, our past psychic life is there: it survives—as we shall try to prove—with all the detail of its events localized in time. Always inhibited by the practical and useful consciousness of the present moment, that is to say, but the sensorimotor equilibrium of a nervous system connecting perception with action, this memory merely awaits the occurrence of a rift between the actual impression and its corresponding movement to slip in its images.”

²⁰ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 110-113.

elementary sensations corresponding to all the points of the sensory centre that are concerned . . . In our opinion the ‘region of images,’ if it exists, can only be a keyboard of this nature. Certainly it is in no way inconceivable that a purely psychical cause should directly set in action all the strings concerned . . . Pure memories, as they become actual, tend to bring about, within the body, all the corresponding sensations.²¹

By using the metaphor of a keyboard to conceptualize the mechanism by which external objects engage our pure memory, Bergson underlines not only the inherently multi-sensorial nature of remembering, but also how our perception of objects is dependent on bodily movement and vibration—on a chord being struck—within our bodies.

In locating the mechanism of memory in the sensory-motor system, Bergson’s aim was to demonstrate the extent to which memory is concerned with action. Recalling the past was, for Bergson, a powerful way to inform one’s actions in the present in order to influence the future. Bergson posits at the conclusion of *Matière et mémoire* that the nervous system is “the material symbol . . . of the inner energy which allows the being to free itself from the rhythm of the flow of things, and to retain in an ever higher degree the past in order to influence ever more deeply the future.”²² Although he refrains from giving examples of how, when, and in which situations active remembering might prove valuable, in this statement—as well as others throughout *Matière et mémoire*—Bergson reveals his perspective of the ultimate usefulness of an inherently corporeal remembering.

Often considered a fictionalized account of how Bergson’s phenomenology of memory functioned in everyday life, Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* might also be deemed a study on the corporeal phenomenon of mourning, which might be one reason why Ravel had it bound in hardcover for his library at his home in Montfort l’Amaury.²³ Repeatedly throughout

²¹ Ibid., 165.

²² Ibid., 296.

²³ Puri addresses the relationship between Ravel and Proust in the introduction of *Ravel the Decadent*, as well as in “Memory, Pastiche, and Aestheticism in Ravel and Proust,” in *Ravel Studies*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 56-73; 56. For more on Proust as a fictionalization of Bergson see Pete A.Y. Gunter, “Bergson and Proust: A Question of Influence.” In the timeline he provides at the end of this chapter, Gunter

his novel, Proust has characters encounter objects or perform actions that facilitate their remembering what it felt like to be in the physical presence of those who have died, or ceased to exist in their lives in the way in which they once had. It is always through a sensual perception, accompanied by or enacted through bodily movement, that Proust's characters actively recall the vivid presence of these loved ones. For instance, in the madeleine scene that so famously opens the novel, the taste of a madeleine cookie that has been dipped in orange-blossom tea makes the narrator suddenly aware of a previously shrouded memory from his past of the time he had spent with his Aunt Léonie before she passed away.

Similarly, when Swann hears a musical phrase played at a concert that had come, through repeated listenings in the presence of his former lover Odette de Crécy, to function powerfully as the “national anthem” of their love, he feels that “suddenly it was as though she had entered and this apparition was so agonizingly painful that his hand clutched his heart.”²⁴ Odette, in a certain sense, unexpectedly materializes through Swann's auditory faculties. He does not merely “recall” her, but is instead faced with her presence. That this apparition was only the beginning of a whole world of past experiences opened up by musically induced involuntary memory is evident in what follows:

And before Swann had had time to understand what was happening and to say to himself: “It's the little phrase from Vinteuil's sonata—I musn't listen!,” all his memories of the days when Odette had been in love with him, which he had succeeded until that moment in keeping invisible in the depths of his being deceived by this sudden reflection of a season of love whose slumber had taken wing and risen to sing maddeningly in his ears, without pity for his present desolation, the forgotten strains of happiness.²⁵

This moment is bittersweet for Swann in that, in it, he feels both extremely comforted, but also aggrieved by the realization that the past is a separate world to which one can never really return. For Swann, his memories “belonged to a mysterious world to which one may never

notes several articles that treat this topic—including interviews with Proust in which denies Bergson's influence—in Parisian newspapers (see p. 170).

²⁴ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, vol. 1, *Swann's Way* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 238, 375.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 375.

return again once its doors are closed,” and yet, he found the apparition of Odette and their previous encounters “like that of a protective goddess, a confidante of his love, who, in order to be able to come to him through the crowd and to draw him aside to speak to him, had disguised herself in this sweeping cloak of sound.” For Swann, and therefore we might imagine for Proust as well, music contained within it “supernatural” and “magic presence” that had the ability to momentarily open up a world of the past, along with the people in it, even if such magic was sadly only temporary.²⁶

Memory functions likewise as a magical bridge to the past in the case of the narrator mourning his grandmother in the fourth installment of Proust’s novel, *Sodome et Gomorrah*. Upon entering the Grand Hotel at Balbec and reaching down to unlace his boots, the narrator is visited by the “divine presence” of his grandmother, leaving him “shaken with sobs.”²⁷ Gaining access to this presence, the narrator asserts, requires the “recapturing” of “the context of sensation in which [memories] are preserved.” Such a recapturing by way of the chance of involuntary memory results in “installing alone in us the self that originally lived them.”²⁸ This is a powerful statement that aligns with Bergson’s understanding of memory as a specifically corporeal manifestation.

Proust maintains that the re-creation of the past through involuntary memory is a revival of the dead that happens only by chance. He writes:

I feel that there is much to be said for the Celtic belief that the souls of those whom we have lost are held captive in some inferior being, in an animal, in a plant, in some inanimate object, and thus effectively lost to us until the day . . . when we happen to pass by the tree or to obtain possession of the object which forms their prison . . . Delivered by us, they have overcome death and return to share our life. And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that

²⁶ Ibid., 383.

²⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, *Cities of the Plain*, 783.

²⁸ Ibid., 784.

material object will give us) of which we have no inkling. And it depends on chance whether or not we come upon this object before we ourselves must die.²⁹

And yet, as I will demonstrate, accounts from World War I soldiers, including Ravel and other musicians in his social sphere, attest to these people's beliefs that musical performance gave them access to the past like nothing else could. For some mourners, then, voluntary memory could be just as powerful as involuntary memory.

The Jaques-Dalcroze Method and Emotional Transformation through Musical Bodily Movement

Contemporaneous with Bergson's and Proust's ruminations on the potent connections between bodily movement, mental functioning, and memory was an interest in musical circles in determining and advocating a close relationship between music, movement, and wellbeing. One of the most active participants in these discussions in Western Europe was Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, whose method—*La Rythme* (now often simply called “Dalcroze Eurythmics”)—grew particularly popular in interwar France. After beginning his career teaching at the Geneva Conservatory, Jaques-Dalcroze began to give talks on his “rhythmic method” (*méthode rythmé*) in the first decade of the twentieth century, and opened his own school for teaching his methods in Hellerau, Germany in 1910. He published prolifically during and after the First World War in Parisian and other music journals, and taught and showcased his method at Parisian schools such as the Paris Conservatoire and the École Normale de Musique, which Alfred Cortot had founded in 1919, hiring many of the most famous names in French music to teach, including Marcel Dupré, Jane Bathori, Marguerite Long, Blanche Selva, Jacques Thibaud, Pablo Casals, Nadia Boulanger, Henry Prunières, Charles Koechlin, Jean Roger-Ducasse, Florent Schmitt, and, from time to time, Ravel.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, *Swann's Way*, 47-48.

³⁰ See Brooks's discussion of the École in *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 25. Ravel gave numerous master classes there in the 1920s, for instance a “Cours d'interprétation” in June 1925. See Marc Pincherle, “École Normale de Musique: Les Cours d'interprétation de MM. Maurice Ravel, Paul Dukas et Jacques Thibaud,” *Le Monde musical* 36, nos. 13 & 14 (July 1925): 253-255.

The rhythmic, movement-based music pedagogy that Jaques-Dalcroze brought to music schools in Germany, Switzerland and France (and later to England and the United States) had broader aims than creating more proficient musicians. Rather, he saw eurythmics as a way to “calm the mind, strengthen the will, and establish order and clarity.”³¹ While music played an integral role in Jaques-Dalcroze’s method—serving as the medium through which bodily movements were performed—music making was not so much the end goal of the process as a key element to achieving the results he desired: “Music is a considerable psychic force, a result of our animist and expressive functions that, by way of its power of excitation and regularization, can regulate all of our vital functions.”³² Believing that everyone has “a music in them” that “constitutes an individual’s personality,” Dalcroze thought that an educational system that had as its goal “establishing close relations between the conscious and the unconscious, as well as stimulating and then ordering our sensations and our feelings, had to develop our personality [defined as the music we have in ourselves].”³³ He added that this was particularly necessary after the war, arguing that, “Only an artistic education grounded in large part in physical exercise could calm our overexcited nervous systems.”³⁴ Thus it was in his novel blend of musical art and rhythmic bodily movements—not quite dance, but rather a kinesthetically focused, rhythmic musical gymnastics—that Jaques-Dalcroze located a way to calm individuals and in this way contribute to building a better, stronger, and more mindful postwar society.

³¹ Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Méthode de Jaques-Dalcroze: La Rythmique, enseignement pour le développement de l’instinct rythmique et métrique, du sens de l’harmonie plastique et de l’équilibre des mouvements, et pour la régularisation des habitudes motrices* (Lausanne: Jobin, 1916-1917), 7: “De plus ces exercices tendent à créer des habitudes motrices plus nombreuses, des reflexes, à obtenir pour le minimum d’effort le maximum d’effet, à tranquiliser ainsi l’esprit, à renforcer la volonté et à instaurer l’ordre et la clarté dans l’organisme.”

³² *Ibid.*, 8: “C’est que la musique est une force psychique considérable, une résultante de nos fonctions animiques et expressives qui, de par son pouvoir d’excitation et de régularisation, peut régler toutes nos fonctions vitales.”

³³ *Ibid.*: “Tout homme doit avoir la *musique en soi*... Cette musique constitue la personnalité d’individu. J’estime qu’une éducation ayant pour but d’établir des relations intimes entre le conscient et l’inconscient, de stimuler, puis d’ordonner nos sensations et nos sentiments, doit développer notre personnalité.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 10: “Après tout l’excitation guerrière qui nous anime en cette triste époque, il convient de songer sérieusement à demain. Une fois la guerre terminée, il ne faut pas que notre exaltation tombe à plat et meure faute d’aliments. Seule, une éducation artistique faisant une large part à l’exercice physique pourra apaiser notre système nerveux surexcité.”

After 1914, Dalcroze emphasizes how his method, with its exercises designed to better the nervous system through improving the body's reflexes, could assist in postwar social reconstruction. Like other music pedagogues—Jean d'Udine for example—he occasionally makes the case for his corporeally engaging musical practice's ability to prepare children and other citizens to defend the homeland, or at the very least to “fight for self-mastery and the power to place themselves, fully equipped, at the service of the human race.”³⁵ More than this, however, Jaques-Dalcroze touted the physiological, emotional, and psychological benefits of his method for individuals coping with war related conditions and disorders. In a 1919 article he wrote for *Le Monde musical*, Jaques-Dalcroze argued that his method was the key to healing neurasthenia, a nervous and physical disorder—often linked to shell shock—from which Ravel and many others were suffering after the war. Moreover, in a 1918 *Guide musical* article, he wrote that the ultimate goals of *La Rythmique* were improved psychic focus, physical economy, and the development of character, achieved through “a regularization of nervous response for hypersensitive or disordered individuals.”³⁶

The idea that musical movement could help one exteriorize their emotions in ways that were physiologically and psychologically beneficial was another key aspect of Jaques-Dalcroze's method, and one that intersected with theories of modern dance. In his 1921 book *Qu'est-ce que la danse?*, Jean d'Udine bemoans how people of the upper classes are taught to police their bodies from childhood, leading them to adopt “as complete a motor impassivity as possible” that while potentially making them appear “greatly distinguished,” also rendered them “perfectly

³⁵ Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Rhythm, Music & Education*, trans. Harold F. Rubinstein (London: The Riverside Press, 1967), x. See also Jean d'Udine, *Qu'est-ce que la danse?* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1921), 7: “Pratiqués normalement et sans affectation, dans un but de préparation à la défense de la patrie ou de distraction modérée, ces exercices portent en eux, outre un plaisir sain, une incontestable grandeur.” (Practiced normally and without affectation, in the goal of preparing to defend the country or of moderate distraction, these exercises carry in them, aside from a healthy pleasure, an incontestable greatness).

³⁶ Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, “La Rythmique, la plastique animée et la danse,” in *Le Guide musical* 61, nos. 38-40 (1918): 652: “Tout ont pour but suprême un accroissement de la concentration psychique, une organisation claire de l'économie physique, une augmentation de la personnalité, grâce à une éducation progressive du système nerveux, un développement de la sensibilité chez les sujets insensibles ou peu sensibles et, au contraire, une régularisation des réactions nerveuses chez les individus hypersensibles et désordonnés.”

inexpressive, morose, and boring.”³⁷ Like Jaques-Dalcroze, d’Udine understood dance as something not to be performed on stage, but rather as an activity that was beneficial for everyone in society. He asserted that dancing could be advantageous in helping us to express “our sentimental selves”: “through such a nuanced expression of our sentimental emotions, and through its moving power, it translates, with as much force as the orchestra of a piece by Beethoven or Wagner, the storms of the soul.”³⁸ Jaques-Dalcroze underlines the personal and societal benefits of emotional exteriorization through musical movement. He suggests that, “evolving rhythmically and giving our entire bodies and souls to music is one of the greatest joys there is. Is it not joy of a supreme order to exteriorize without constraint [our] sorrows and joys? . . . This jouissance . . . provokes the blossoming of altruistic qualities necessary to a natural social life.”³⁹ According to Jaques-Dalcroze, the joy of evolving rhythmically by giving ourselves to music guides us to altruism.

The physiological, mental, psychic, and emotional benefits of Jaques-Dalcroze’s rhythmic practices were extolled by numerous interwar medical doctors and psychologists, including Doctor Léon Weber-Bauler, who worked at the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze in the 1920s.⁴⁰ In a 1924 article Weber-Bauler asserted that the Dalcrozian method could improve an individual’s entire wellbeing, allowing him or her not only to express emotions through musical movement, but also to improve their reflexes. He writes that, “To be assimilated to the rhythms

³⁷ d’Udine, *Qu’est-ce que la danse?*, 13-14: “une impassibilité motrice aussi complète que possible”; “fort distinguées”; “parfaitement inexpressives, moroses et ennuyeuses.”

³⁸ On d’Udine’s idea of music as an everyday practice, see *Qu’est-ce que la danse?*, 192-195 ; 194: “Par son expression si nuancé de nos émois sentimentaux, par son pouvoir pathétique, elle traduit, avec autant de puissance que l’orchestre d’un Beethoven ou d’un Wagner, les orages de l’âme.”

³⁹ Jaques-Dalcroze, “La Rythmique, la plastique animée et la danse,” 659: “La joie d’évoluer rythmiquement et de donner tout son corps et toute son âme à la musique qui nous guide et nous inspire est une des plus grandes qui puissent exister . . . N’est-ce pas une jouissance d’ordre supérieur . . . que d’extérioriser sans contrainte nos douleurs et nos joies . . . cette jouissance . . . provoque l’épanouissement des qualités d’altruisme nécessaires à l’établissement d’une vie sociale naturelle.”

⁴⁰ I will focus here on Dr. Léon Weber-Bauler. However, a broader study might be undertaken detailing the medical and psychotherapeutic communities’ reception of the *méthode dalcrozienne*. Other medical professionals include the speakers at the 1er Congrès du Rythme in 1926, the proceedings of which were published in *Compte Rendu du Ier Congrès du Rythme tenu à Genève du 16 au 18 août 1926*, ed. Albert Pfrimmer (Genève: Secrétariat de l’Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, 1926).

that emerge from repetition and automatism is definitely to listen, comprehend, express oneself, and to help others understand that which nature gives us so freely, our own psychological life, and that of others.”⁴¹ Two years later, Weber-Bauler presented a paper at the first Congrès du Rythme in Geneva on his use of rhythmic gestures in psychotherapeutic work with patients suffering from nervous conditions including depression, phobias, abulia, and asthenia. In addition to detailing how he builds on Émile Coué’s autosuggestive method by asking patients to perform bodily gestures in time that come to be associated with specific ideas, emotions, or feelings, Weber-Bauler emphasizes the effectiveness he has found in using rhythmic massage on patients.⁴² By “distinctly rhythmicizing” his manipulations, he relays, he “creates a material hold, a veritable physical possession of the patient by the doctor” in which the “rhythmic maneuvers tend to interrupt the [patient’s psychic] fixation, since movement means mutation, and rhythm means harmonization, order, and automatism.”⁴³ These movements, he observes, return the patient to a calm state, “relieve psychodynamic tensions,” and make him or her more receptive to the therapeutic verbal suggestions of the therapist.⁴⁴ Weber-Bauler stresses how important it is that the psychotherapist be the dispenser of these

⁴¹ Dr. Léon Weber-Bauler, “Le Rythme et le bilan d’esprit,” *Le Rythme (Méthode Jaques-Dalcroze)*, publié par l’Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, Numéro spécial, no. 12 (1924): 26-29; 27: “Or, s’assimiler des rythmes, issus de la répétition et générateurs d’automatismes, c’est en définitive apprendre à s’écouter, à saisir, à exprimer, à faire comprendre aussi aux autres, ceux que nous répartissent si libéralement la nature, notre propre vie psychologique ou celle des autres hommes.”

⁴² In the 1920s the psychologist Émile Coué began publishing texts on his method of autosuggestion, whereby patients adopted positive mantras in order to improve their self image and mood. See Émile Coué, *Maîtrise de soi-même par l’autosuggestion consciente* (Nancy: C. Pierson, 1924; reprinted from 1923 edition published by the author); and René Centassi, *Tous les jours, de mieux et mieux: Émile Coué et sa méthode réhabilités* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1990).

⁴³ Dr. Léon Weber-Bauler, “Le Rôle du geste rythmé dans la pratique psychothérapeutique,” in *Compte Rendu du Ier Congrès du Rythme tenu à Genève du 16 au 18 août 1926*, 345-349; 347: “Mais j’ai modifié la méthode primitive en deux points; d’une part en *rythmant* très nettement mes manipulations et, d’autre part en étudiant mes *attitudes motrices et mes gestes*, auxquels je donne, au plus haut degré possible, une allure également rythmique . . . Or, les manipulations, succédant à une analyse du caractère du malade et des circonstances de la vie par le méthode verbale, créent une emprise matérielle, une véritable possession physique du malade par le médecin, du plus puissant effet suggestif, sans parler de l’effet de détente ou d’excitation suivant le cas. D’autre part l’action des manoeuvres rythmées tend à rompre la fixation, car qui dit mouvement dit mutation, qui dit rythme dit harmonisation, ordre, automatisme.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 347: “L’effet verbal suggestif et pédagogique, aidant l’effet périphérique de la manipulation rythmée, pénètre sous forme d’images motrices du même caractère harmonieux, tend à ramener le calme ou à rompre les tensions psychodynamiques sans aucune fatigue pour le malade puisqu’il reste passif dans l’attitude de la réceptivité.”

massages, since this “places the doctor in intimate, *material*, and corporeal contact with the patient in order to create a real or suggested sensation of strength and harmony.”⁴⁵ Seemingly influenced by Bergson, he asserts that gestures, movements, and touches are stronger purveyors of memory than are words. He urges other psychotherapists to practice rhythmic massage on their patients and perform rhythmicized and spatialized gestures with them in order to comfort, relax, and reassure them while helping them to work through their psychic trauma verbally and gesturally. By adopting rhythmic movement, psychotherapists could help patients improve or dispel their nervous conditions, or at least suggest new psycho-physiological pathways for coping with their physical and psychological ailments. He adds that while these gestures are effective on their own, music, including the musical-rhythmic exercises of Jaques-Dalcroze’s method, is a helpful supplement.⁴⁶

Music as “la plus grande consolatrice”

Ideas about bodily movement’s ability to incite memory and improve well-being proffered by Henri Bergson, Marcel Proust, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Jean d’Udine, and Léon Weber-Bauler find resonance in interwar French musicians’ musical activities, as well as in their descriptions of music making as an emotionally transformative practice. Many of Ravel’s contemporaries acknowledged a connection between private music making and mourning by framing music as “the greatest consoler” (*la plus grande consolatrice*). After the death of her husband in 1915, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux received condolences from André Messager, who counseled her on her decision to begin playing the piano again at home. He advised, “You are a thousand times right; do it [make music] as much as possible: music is the greatest consoler of broken hearts, and those who love and practice it as you do find in it the healing of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 346: “Il faut que le massage soit pratiqué, non pas par un baigneur, mais par le médecin psychothérapeute lui-même et il faut que les manipulations aient, en dehors de l’effet organique, deux buts: mettre le médecin en contact intime, *matériel*, corporel, avec le malade et arriver à une sensation réelle ou suggérée, de force et d’harmonie.”

⁴⁶ Ibid., 348.

the bloodiest of wounds.”⁴⁷ In a subsequent letter to Saint-Marceaux after the death of her son in 1925, Messenger again underlines music’s consolatory powers, writing, “I beg of you, don’t abandon music, it soothes and consoles better than any human language. Your fingers will accustom themselves again to the keyboard, and you will draw from this divine art a little consolation or take at least some serenity that will help you to overcome your horrible grief.”⁴⁸ Several of Marguerite Long’s friends communicated similar sentiments to her after her husband was killed in combat on August 24, 1914. Jean Roger-Ducasse, for instance, wrote to her in February 1915,

Suzanne tells us that you started practicing the piano a little again. That makes me very happy, for nowhere will you find such a desire to live again; I say live again, for the months you have just been through have been for you as if you did not exist anymore, or rather, as if nothing in you existed anymore . . . I am so thrilled to see you return to what may save you.⁴⁹

Similarly, the opera composer Alfred Bruneau wrote to Long in early 1915 with hopes that “a glorious peace will be established in France during 1915 that will allow us to resume our work which alone will soothe our pain and give us the force to continue on our path.”⁵⁰ Practicing the piano at home, then, appears in these letters as a soothing prescription for coping with grief.⁵¹

⁴⁷ André Messenger to Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, 8 August [1915], Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Département des Arts du Spectacle (hereafter AdS), MN-32: “Vous avez mille fois raison; faites-en le plus possible: la musique et [sic] la plus grande consolatrice des coeurs meurtris et ceux qui l’aiment et la pratiquent comme vous y trouvent la guérison des blessures les plus saignantes.”

⁴⁸ Messenger to Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, 10 July 1925, BnF, AdS, MN-32: “Je vous en prie, n’abandonnez pas la musique, elle soulage et console mieux que tout langage humain. Vos doigts s’habitueront de nouveau au clavier et vous puiserez dans cet art divin un peu de consolation ou tint au moins de sérénité qui vous aidera à surmonter votre affreux chagrin.”

⁴⁹ Jean Roger-Ducasse, letter to Marguerite Long, February 1915, in Jacques Depaulis, ed., *Roger-Ducasse: lettres à Marguerite Long et à son mari, Joseph de Marliave* (Paris: Observatoire Musical Français, 2007), 52; cited and trans. in Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long: A Life in French Music, 1874-1966* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 68-69.

⁵⁰ Alfred Bruneau to Marguerite Long, dated “janvier ou février 1915,” MMM, F-ML, Correspondance: “Souhaitons donc qu’une paix glorieuse s’établisse chez nous durant 1915 et nous permettre de reprendre notre travail qui, seul, adoucira nos peines et nous donnera la force de continuer notre route.”

⁵¹ As Ruth Solie has adroitly shown in “‘Girling’ at the Parlor Piano,” practicing the piano by oneself, or for the benefit of (male) family members, has historically been a gendered and fraught activity. According to Solie, for women and girls living in nineteenth-century Europe and the United States, the piano often functioned as a tool for the emotional management of themselves and the men in their families, thus reifying gendered cultural norms that framed women as domestic and emotional caretakers, and leaving them with little agency in their enculturation at the keyboard. While these prescriptions from male colleagues and friends of Long and Saint-Marceaux could be read in these terms,

Indeed, Long, Saint-Marceaux, and the French soprano Jane Bathori each convey that music making was central to their processes of mourning, often framing practicing music at home as the sole activity capable of helping them to cope emotionally with loss. In *Au piano avec Gabriel Fauré*, Long writes that after the death of her husband “I locked myself up in silence, walled up in my grief. The days passed without bringing me the resignation of the sacrifice [my husband and I had made]. Renunciation was my only refuge. Music alone consoled me. It is what saved me.”⁵² Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux makes a similar claim in a diary entry of July 7-8, just three months after her husband’s death: “I began again to practice the piano, I was able to play and even sing and I felt that I could do it, and that still this sense subsists in me. It’s the only activity that could help me stand living.” Four days later she reaffirms this, writing about a visit with friends, “We’re going to make some music again, and it’s the only thing that attaches me to this life, everything else irritates and tires me.”⁵³ For the acclaimed soprano Jane Bathori, singing offered her the solace she sought while going through a painful divorce from her husband and musical partner Émile Engel in 1920 and 1921; she writes to André Caplet on November 24, 1920, “I feel so alone here and without hope of getting close to someone in the way that I would like . . . I have caused suffering and it is thus perhaps just that I suffer in turn—my work is the only thing that gives me a little bit of joy.”⁵⁴ Thus in instances where condolences from friends and family ceased to console, music held the ability to provide mourning musicians

accounts from various men and women attesting to the emotional benefits of making music suggest that practicing the piano, and taking part in other private, and sometimes public music making activities offered consolation that little else could. Ruth Solie, “‘Girling’ at the Parlor Piano,” in *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 85-117.

⁵² Marguerite Long, *Au piano avec Gabriel Fauré* (Paris: R. Julliard, 1963), 72: “Je m'enfermai dans le silence, emmurée dans mon deuil. Les jours passaient, sans m'apporter la résignation du sacrifice. Le renoncement me semblait être l'unique refuge. La musique seule m'était consolante. C'est elle qui m'a sauvée.”

⁵³ Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux, entries of 7-8 July and 12 July 1915, in Myriam Chimènes, ed., *Journal: 1894-1927* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 863-864: “J’ai repris mon piano, j’ai pu jouer et même chanter et j’ai senti que je pourrais le faire et qu’encore ce gout subsiste en moi. C’est la seule occupation qui pourra me faire supporter la vie.” And, “Nous referons de la musique et c’est la seule chose qui me raccroche à la vie, tout le reste m’énervé et me fatigue.”

⁵⁴ Jane Bathori to André Caplet, 24 November 1920, BnF, Mus., Fonds André Caplet (hereafter F-AC), NLA 269, vol. 1A: “je m’y sens si seule & sans espoir de m’y rapprocher de quelqu’un de la façon que je voudrais . . . j’ai fait souffrir, alors il est juste peut-être que je souffrir à mon tour—mon travail est la seule chose qui me donne un peu de joie.”

in Ravel's social sphere with comfort and consolation, as well as a means to process their grief in ways that words could not facilitate.⁵⁵

In what follows I show that Ravel and other mourners in his social circle used music as a way of mourning through their bodies, engaging in musical activities that permitted them the best opportunity to maintain vivid sensual connections with the people they were mourning. In chapter 2 I drew on Vamik Volkan's theory of "linking objects or phenomena" and the archival materials of musicians in Ravel's circle to show the importance these musicians attributed to maintaining connections with lost loved ones by continuing to remember them through objects—such as photographs and correspondence diaries—and practices—such as writing condolence letters and using *papier de deuil* long after loved ones' deaths. These archival materials also demonstrate, however, that musical activities were extraordinarily prevalent ways of prolonging mourning *ad infinitum* for Ravel and musicians in his social milieu.

Connecting with the Dead through Music

The musical activities that Ravel, Nadia Boulanger, Marguerite Long, and Emma Debussy participated in after the deaths of their dearest loved ones demonstrate that they often organized their everyday lives around musical activities that would permit them to access the memories of the people they mourned. Rather than shying away from painful memories, this group of people chose to invest in the precise activities—different for each of them—that had the greatest potential to bring memories of those they mourned to their consciousness. In particular, each of these people seems to have had an interest in re-creating the pre-death presence of the ones they loved through the projects they undertook in at least the first ten years following the person's death. In this way, their musical activities resemble what Volkan termed "linking objects or phenomena": "magical" objects such as weather patterns, songs, or hand

⁵⁵ For more on the inability of words to convey condolences or soothe grief, see chapter 2.

gestures that permit mourners to “control their wish to ‘bring back’ . . . the lost person,” and to remain nostalgically melancholic so as not to have to fully accept the loss.⁵⁶

Ravel and myriad musicians in his social sphere, in fact, frequently describe music as permitting them to recreate vividly—often in ways that are simultaneously comforting and painful—features and people of their past. In the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* published and distributed by Nadia and Lili Boulanger during World War I, numerous musician-soldiers talk about having the opportunity to make music, most often privately or amongst a few friends, and how, in providing a distraction from the loneliness, violence, and depression they encountered daily in their lives as soldiers, time spent at the piano helped them to actively recall what their lives had been like before 1914. Albert Bertelin wrote that when, “I let my fingers wander adventurously on the keyboard of a very modest harmonium in the Église de St. Ouen-l’Aumône, I forget then for a little while the worries, the grief, the anguish of each day.” He adds that, “I have the illusion, [which] too quickly evaporate[s], of having resumed the course of my past life.”⁵⁷ Ernest Mangeret corroborates Bertelin’s perspective when he writes that, “A few moments of leisure permit me to become a little bit myself again . . . Recently, we found a piano in a half-demolished house, we went down into a cellar (you understand why!) and, when evening arrived, we gathered together, a few friends, to make a little bit of music.”⁵⁸ Similarly, Auguste Druvert, a bassoonist, recounts that playing music with another musician in

⁵⁶ See for example Vamik Volkan, “Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies,” in *On Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia,”* eds. Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007), 90-109; 102.

⁵⁷ Albert Bertelin, in *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 1 [1915 ?], BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1): 5: “je laisse errer un peu à l’aventure mes doigts sur le clavier d’un très modeste harmonium dans l’Église de St. Ouen-l’Aumône, j’oublie alors pour un temps, les soucis, les chagrins, les angoisses de chaque jour, j’ai l’illusion, trop vite envolée, d’avoir repris le cours de ma vie passée.”

⁵⁸ Ernest Mangeret, letter dated 15 October [1916], in *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 5 [1916 or 1917], BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1): 22: “Quelques moments de loisir me permettent de redevenir un peu moi-même . . . Ces temps-ci, nous avons trouvé un piano dans un maison à moitié démolie, nous l’avons descendu dans une cave (vous comprenez pourquoi!) et le soir venu, nous nous réunissions, quelques amis pour faire un peu de musique.”

his military zone allows them both to “recall the good old times.”⁵⁹ Louis Fourestier articulates that music’s potential to recall the past vividly is unlocked not only in music performance, but also in reading scores: “I have also . . . the *Psalme* of [Florent] Schmitt, this raw and powerful work, the reading of which recalled to me the beautiful performance [of it] at the Concerts Colonne, and the emotion provoked by the frenzy of its accents.”⁶⁰

In addition to movingly recounting how music allowed them to forget their present situation through recalling something of past events or past versions of themselves, several musician soldiers specify that performing and listening to music permitted them to “recreate” the presence of people from their past. Aimable Valin asserts in the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*, for instance, that playing his flute offered him a way to “recreate” friends with whom he once spent time: “I have my flute with me—I enjoy practicing a little and recreating [my former] roommates.”⁶¹ Maurice Maréchal, on the other hand, writes to the Comité Franco-Américain in 1918 that listening to Weber’s “Invitation à la Valse” on a phonograph makes him recall Paul Dukas’s orchestra class at the Conservatoire; whereas, when the phonograph switches to a tango, he “sees again this gang of young fools, so happy, so glad to be alive—Lucien Andésio—Laurent [L]—Pierre Jaunière—René Chizalet—some living, some missing, some killed.”⁶² For both of these men, music offered a special way to recall not only the generalized past, but also the people that one knew, loved, and cherished in it.

⁵⁹ Auguste Druvert, letter dated 28 January [1917], in *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 6 [1917], BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1): 17: “J’ai avec moi au groupe le camarade Corne (hautbois) qui est le seul musicien de profession, aussi nous causons ensemble (moi, je joue le basson) ce qui nous rappelle le bon temps passé.”

⁶⁰ Louis Fourestier, letter dated 2 February [1917], in *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 6 [1917], BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1): 22: “J’ai aussi les pièces de piano de Déodat de Severac, en lesquelles se cristallisent en sonorités, les émotions, les impressions que m’a suggérées ce pays qui set le mien et que j’aime; et le psaume de Schmitt, cette oeuvre rude et puissante, dont la lecture m’a rappelé la belle exécution des concerts Colonne et l’émotion provoquée par la frénésie de ses accents.”

⁶¹ Aimable Valin, letter dated 13 January [1917], in *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* 6 [1917], BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1): 56: “J’ai ma flûte avec moi—J’en profite pour travailler un peu et récréer les camarades de chambre.”

⁶² Maurice Maréchal to the Comité Franco-Américain, 23 June 1918, BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (6): “Maintenant le phonographe passe un tango, argentine, sans doute! Et je revois un bande de jeunes fous si gais, si heureux de vivre—Lucien Andésio [?]-Laurent [L]-Pierre Jaunière—René Chizalet—des vivants—des disparus—des tués.”

Ravel, too, understood music composition as an activity through which to recall the presence of his mother in the midst of his perpetual mourning. As I discussed in chapter 4, he makes the connection between music making, remembering, and mourning especially clear in the letters he writes to friends in 1919 and 1920. On September 19, 1919 Ravel wrote to Manuel de Falla to console him after his mother's death. Amidst his consolations, Ravel confessed that although three years had passed since his own mother's death, "I still haven't pulled myself together." One consequence of Ravel's relentless grief was that he "[hadn't] been able to resume work," even while feeling that "doing so would in any case be the best consolation, rather than forgetting," which, he said, he didn't desire.⁶³ Two months later, on December 27, 1919, Ravel informed Ida Godebska that he had resumed composing. The composition he had selected to work on in the month leading up to the third anniversary of his mother's death was *La Valse*.⁶⁴ He admitted to Godebska that returning to this composition had the effect of making him recall more strongly not only his mother's "dear silent presence enveloping me with her infinite tenderness," but also her absence.⁶⁵ Moreover, less than a month later, Ravel wrote to H el ene Kahn-Casella and revealed that, "I think about her everyday, or rather every minute. Especially now that I've started to work again and think back to those happy moments when I left her."⁶⁶ Composing, then, was a musical practice that permitted him to continue to remember his mother's comforting presence, and to recall the happier times before the war broke out, that, while tragically irrecoverable, were at least partially accessible through his memory.

Ravel's letters demonstrate that he idealized the summer and fall of 1914 as one of his happiest as well as most productive periods. In the above letter to H el ene Kahn-Casella in which

⁶³ Ravel to Manuel de Falla, 19 September 1919, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 193.

⁶⁴ See Ravel to Alexis Roland-Manuel, 22 December 1919, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Maurice Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 166-167.

⁶⁵ Ravel to Ida Godebska, 27 December 1919, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 195.

⁶⁶ Ravel to H el ene Kahn-Casella, 15 January 1920, in Jean Roy, ed., "Soixante-deux lettres de Maurice Ravel   H el ene et Alfredo Casella," *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 1 (1985): 59-111; 79; cited and trans. in Puri, *Ravel the Decadent*, 183.

he talks about the “happier times before I left her,” Ravel likely was referring not to the fall of 1914 and 1915, but rather to the months before the war broke out. Although Ravel did not actually go to the front until March of 1915, his letters from the fall of 1914 and the few that remain from early 1915 indicate that he was incredibly depressed, particularly fearing his mother’s reaction to his decision to enlist.⁶⁷ In addition, in January 1920 Ravel wrote to Long that “I have resumed working, in a furious manner, as before,” but then clarifies, “as before, [but] not completely: the last time was in Saint-Jean-de-Luz...No one better than you can understand my horrible sadness.”⁶⁸ The last time Ravel had been to Saint-Jean-de-Luz was the summer of 1914. Similarly, when Ravel wrote to Marie Gaudin, whose family he knew from Saint-Jean-de-Luz, in January 1921 to offer his condolences on the death of her father, he conjured 1914 as the time when “we were all so happy.”⁶⁹ Marie, too, had suffered loss during the course of the war: her two brothers, Pierre and Pascal Gaudin, had been killed in combat on their first day at the front in November 1914. For Ravel, and likely many others, the months before the war broke out stood out as a particular time, the memory of which required preserving.

The projects that Ravel undertook after 1917 demonstrate his desire to evoke through music composition—enacted at the piano⁷⁰—the presence of his mother recalled from the years immediately preceding the war. Between 1917 and 1925, he almost exclusively returned to music

⁶⁷ For more on this see Ravel’s letters to Roland-Manuel, Cipa Godebska, and Florent Schmitt from the fall of 1914 in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 150-158. I also discuss Ravel’s depression in the fall of 1914 in greater detail in chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Ravel to Marguerite Long, 14 January 1920, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 168: “j’ai repris le travail, d’un manière acharnée, comme autrefois . . . Comme autrefois; pas tout à fait: la dernière fois c’était à St-Jean-de-Luz...Nulle mieux que vous ne peut comprendre ma tristesse affreuse.” The second ellipsis here is Ravel’s.

⁶⁹ Ravel to Marie Gaudin, 6 January 1921, in Michel Delahaye, ed., “Lettres de Maurice Ravel à la famille Gaudin, de Saint-Jean-de-Luz; 2e partie: 1919-1927,” *Cahiers Maurice Ravel* 10 (2007): 14-56; 17: “Nous étions tous si heureux en 1914!”

⁷⁰ We know from numerous sources that Ravel composed at the piano. See Marguerite Long, “La Musique de piano,” in *Maurice Ravel* (Paris: Les Publications techniques et artistiques, 1945), 3-7; 7; and Émile Vuillermoz, “L’Oeuvre de Maurice Ravel,” in *Maurice Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers* (Paris: Éditions du Tambourinaire, 1939), 1-95; 16-17.

he had been working on in 1914 while living with his mother just prior to his military service. For example, in 1917, he resumed working on *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, which he had begun in the summer of 1914 while vacationing in Saint-Jean-de-Luz with his mother. Between the completion of *Le Tombeau* in November 1917 and the completion of *La Valse* in February 1920, Ravel devoted a great deal of energy to orchestrating compositions that he had composed during 1914, including four movements of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, as well as “Kaddisch”—the prayer spoken in Jewish mourning rituals—and “L’Enigme éternelle” from *Deux mélodies hébraïques*. Ravel also turned during this time to orchestrating “Alborada del gracioso” from *Miroirs* (1904-06), which Roger Nichols has suggested may have been inspired by the Spanish folksongs sung to Ravel by his mother when he was a child.⁷¹ In these years Ravel also made contact with Colette about their collaboration on the opera *L’Enfant et les sortilèges*, which consumed most of Ravel’s time during the first half of the 1920s. While the subject matter of *L’Enfant et les sortilèges* may have appealed to Ravel as a way to work through his guilt over abandoning his mother in the last years of her life, Ravel also took working on this opera as an opportunity to return to music for his planned but never completed opera *La Cloche engloutie*, which he had been working on in the summer and fall of 1914, and which appears in trace fragments throughout the opera.⁷²

Similar to Ravel, Marguerite Long centered her musical performances after her husband’s death in August 1914 on compositions that might help her to better evoke her husband’s presence. When she decided to return to the concert stage in 1917 after a two-and-a-half-year hiatus, she chose to perform music that she had been working on just before her husband’s departure for the front lines. In her first public performance after her husband’s death, she played Vincent D’Indy’s *Symphonie sur un thème montagnard*, which she had

⁷¹ Nichols, *Ravel*, 74.

⁷² For more on this see Emily Kilpatrick, “Enchantments and Illusions: Recasting the Creation of *L’Enfant et les sortilèges*,” in *Ravel Studies*, ed. Deborah Mawer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 31-54.

performed in May 1914 in the last public concert she had given before Marliave was sent to the front. Moreover, in the Spring of 1921, on the first full-length recital Long gave in Paris after her husband's death, she chose to perform several pieces that would have served as very strong reminders of being in her husband's presence. For instance, she performed Debussy's *L'Isle joyeuse*, which she was working on in the summer of 1914, and which, she tells us in *Au piano avec Claude Debussy*, was the last piece she had played for him before he left for the front.⁷³ Moreover, she programmed Fauré's Theme and Variations, as well as his 6th and 7th Nocturnes, all of which were some of Marliave's favorite compositions, as evidenced by his lengthy essay on Fauré's piano music for *Nouvelles Revues*.⁷⁴ In Roger-Ducasse's 1921 review of Long's recitals for *Le Monde musical*, he verifies that these concerts were connected to mourning and remembering Joseph de Marliave in writing that Long's performances acted as "a faithful tribute to a friend whose memory we honor."⁷⁵ Because Long would have had to practice these compositions daily at home in order to play them in public, honoring her husband's memory publicly in concert would have also offered her the opportunity to engage in musically remembering her husband's presence both on stage and off.

Like Long, Ravel, and the musicians who wrote into the *Gazette*, Nadia Boulanger also felt that making music could recreate the presence of dead loved ones. In a review for *Le Monde musical* published in 1919 for the Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux's concert at Châtelet commemorating the bombing of Saint Gervais a year earlier on March 29, 1918—just after the deaths of Lili Boulanger and Claude Debussy—she wrote of the "irradiated atmosphere, supercharged with emotional emanations" resulting from "the memories the concert evoked; the

⁷³ Marguerite Long, *Au piano avec Claude Debussy* (Paris: Julliard, 1960), 21.

⁷⁴ The essays that Joseph de Marliave published in *Nouvelles Revues* under the pseudonym "Saint Jean" were posthumously published in Joseph de Marliave, *Études musicales* (Paris: Alcan, 1917).

⁷⁵ Jean Roger-Ducasse, "Les Deux Concerts de Mme Marguerite Long," in *Le Monde musical* 32, nos. 7 and 8 (April 1921): 159: "Fidèle, ce faisant, au souvenir de l'Ami dont nous vénérans la mémoire."

vanished presences that it brought back to this place where they were so beloved.”⁷⁶ Although Boulanger clarifies that she is “thinking of Edouard Colonne and Raoul Pugno,” both of whom had performed with the Concerts Colonne before their deaths in 1910 and 1914, respectively, she was surely thinking as well of Lili—with whom she likely attended these concerts—and all of the musicians who had performed with the Concerts Colonne but had since been killed in the war. At the conclusion of her article, in fact, she provides a list of orchestra musicians who had participated in the war, including a list of men who had died in combat.⁷⁷ Seeming to echo Bergson’s assertion in *Matière et mémoire* of the power of memory to free us “from the rhythm of the flow of things” in the interest of realizing a better future, Boulanger explains in this article that “Nothing is better than music—when it takes us out of time, it does more for us than we have any right to expect: it has expanded the limits of our sorrowful lives . . . bringing us pure and new towards what was, towards what will be, towards what it has created for us.”⁷⁸ For Boulanger, musical performance offered like nothing else a way to remove oneself from the linear experience of time—to recall the presences of those that exist only in our pasts, and to imagine, with them, a better future beyond the pain of the present.⁷⁹

Whereas piano playing was Long’s medium for musical remembering, Nadia Boulanger adopted diverse musical media—including performing, orchestrating, and listening—to help her

⁷⁶ Nadia Boulanger, “Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux,” *Le Monde musical* 30, no. 5 (May 1919): 136-137: “Les souvenirs qu’il évoquait, les présences disparues qu’il ramenait dans ce milieu où elles furent si chères (je songe à Edouard Colonne, à Raoul Pugno), le public plus nerveux, plus sensitif, dans cette salle plus vaste, le retour d’un grand artiste longtemps absent, tout cela créait une atmosphère irradiante, surchargée d’émanations émotives.” Quoted and translated in Jeanice Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 19-20. Brooks also explains in footnote 20 that “Colonne had died in 1910; the first version of Franck’s *Rédemption* was premiered under his direction in 1873. Pugno had frequently performed with the Colonne orchestra and was renowned for his interpretations of Beethoven and Mozart piano concertos.”

⁷⁷ Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 20.

⁷⁸ Boulanger, “Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux”: 136-137: “Rien n’est meilleur que la musique—quand elle nous emmène hors du temps, elle a fait plus pour nous que nous n’avions le droit d’espérer: elle a élargi les limites de notre vie douloureuse, elle a auréolé la douceur de nos heures de bonheur, en effaçant les mesquineries qui nous diminuent, nous menant alors purs et neufs vers ce qui fut, vers ce qui sera, vers ce qu’elle a créé pour nous.” Cited and trans. in Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 19-20.

⁷⁹ This is essentially Jeanice Brooks’s reading of this passage. She writes, “the concert figures here as both commemoration and redemption, simultaneously conjuring a cherished past, the presence of the departed as resurrected spirits, and an eagerly desired future.” See *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 20.

recall her sister’s presence after her death in 1918. As Figure 5.1 demonstrates, beginning in 1919 and continuing throughout her life, Nadia Boulanger was committed to having Lili’s compositions performed whenever and wherever possible. Concert programs in Boulanger’s archival collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale reveal that in 1919 alone she arranged to have Lili’s compositions performed on at least five occasions. She organized a “Concert d’oeuvres de Lili et Nadia Boulanger” on January 12, 1919, and arranged for the premiere of Lili’s song cycle *Clairières dans le ciel* at a Société Musicale Indépendante (SMI) concert later that week on January 17.⁸⁰ In addition, Nadia arranged to have Lili’s *Pour les funérailles d’un soldat*

Figure 5.1: Performances of Lili Boulanger’s compositions in which Nadia Boulanger was involved (1919-1973)

Date	Composition(s)	Venue/Organization	Nadia’s Role in the Performance	Source(s)
January 12, 1919		Concert d’Oeuvres de Lili & Nadia Boulanger		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 17, 1919	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i> (premiere)	Société Musicale Indépendante	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195; BnF, Mus., SMI Programs
March 29, 1919	<i>Pour les funérailles d’un soldat</i>	Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
May 24-25, 1919	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i> (premiere, orchestrated)	Concerts Padeloup		<i>Le Figaro</i> , 22-25 May 1919
June 6, 1919	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i>	Société Musicale Indépendante	Performed on the piano	Caroline Potter, <i>Nadia and Lili Boulanger</i> (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), Appendix B: Catalogue of Lili Boulanger’s Works, 178.
March 7, 1920	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i>	Société des Concerts du Conservatoire		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 194
June 15, 1920	“Soir dans la plaine” & “Hymne au soleil” (premieres)	Société Musicale Indépendante	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., SMI Programs
March 23, 1922	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i>	Société Musicale Indépendante	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., SMI Programs
1923	<i>Psaume CXXIX</i> (premiere)	Institut de France		This performance is mentioned in the program notes for a concert in Brussels on 1 February 1925. See BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195

⁸⁰ Although I have not been able to find an account of either of these concerts in major daily newspapers, I have found concert programs in one location for the first of these; and in two locations for the second.

March 3, 1924	<i>Psaume CXXVIII</i> (Belgium premiere)			BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 9, 1925	<i>Cortège</i>	Wanamaker Store, Philadelphia	Transcribed; performed on the organ	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 11, 1925	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat</i>	Carnegie Hall	Transcribed; performed on the organ	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 15, 1925	<i>Cortège</i>	Wanamaker Auditorium, NYC	Transcribed; performed on the organ	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 21, 1925	<i>Cortège</i>	Cleveland Museum of Art	Transcribed; performed on the organ	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
February 1, 1925	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i> and <i>Psaume CXXIX</i> (both Belgium premieres)	Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
February 20 & 21, 1925	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat</i>	Boston Symphony Orchestra	Transcribed; performed on the organ	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
July 18, 1929	<i>Psaume CXXIX; D'Un soir triste; Clairières dans le ciel; Reflets; Pie Jesu; Faust et Hélène</i>	Palais de Fontainebleau, Conservatoire américain	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
June 30, 1930	<i>Vieille Prière Bouddhique</i>		Transcribed; performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
November 4, 1936	"Au pied de mon lit" & <i>Renouveau</i>	Morning Musicales	Concert under her direction	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 25, 1937	<i>Nocturne</i>	Chez Madame Verginiaud	Performed on the piano with Paul Makanowitzky	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
July 6, 1937	<i>Vieille Prière bouddhique</i>	Conservatoire américain		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 22, 1938	<i>Vieille Prière bouddhique; Nocturne; Cortège; Clairières dans le ciel; Psaume CXXIX; Faust et Hélène</i>	Union Interalliée: "Oeuvres de Lili Boulangier pour la 20e Anniversaire de sa mort"		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 2, 1938	<i>Pie Jesu</i>	Library of Congress	Concert under her direction	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 7, 1938	<i>Pie Jesu</i>	Ohio State University		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 15, 1938	<i>Pie Jesu</i>	Cleveland Art Museum		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 16, 1938	<i>Pie Jesu; Psaume XXIV</i>	Oberlin College		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
October 28, 1938	<i>Renouveau</i>	Conservatoire royal: Concerts de la société de musique de chambre et la maison d'art	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
November 8, 1938	<i>Renouveau</i>	Londonderry House: The Anglo-French Art and Travel Society	Concert under her direction	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
November 30, 1938	<i>Clairières dans le ciel</i>	Nantes: La Boîte à musique		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195

January 13, 1939	<i>La terre appartient à l'éternel</i>	Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 20, 1939	<i>Psaume XXIV</i>	Oberlin Conservatory of Music	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 23, 1939	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat</i>	Dayton, Ohio	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
February 11, 1939	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat</i>	Philharmonic-Symphony League of New York	Performed on the organ	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
February 26, 1939	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat</i>	National Symphony Orchestra	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 6, 1939	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat; Pie Jesu; Psaume CXXIX (American premiere); Psaume XXIV</i>	Lili Boulanger Memorial Fund Concert: Symphony Hall, Boston, Massachusetts	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 11, 1939	<i>Pour les funérailles d'un soldat</i>	Philadelphia Orchestra	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
August 26, 1939	<i>Renouveau</i>	Canterbury, Chapter House	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 12, 1940	<i>Nocturne; Cortège</i>	Orchestre symphonique du Centre musical et théâtral d'armée	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 28, 1942	<i>Psaume XXIV</i>	North Andover, Massachusetts: Joint Concert with the Concord Academy Glee Club & Brooks School Choir	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
May 5, 1942	<i>Psaume XXIV</i>	Concord, Massachusetts: Joint Concert with the Concord Academy Glee Club & Brooks School Choir	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
May 9, 1942	<i>Psaume XXIV</i>	Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Glee Clubs and Orchestras of the Beaver Country Day School	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 22, 1943	<i>Pie Jesu</i>	Sanders Theater, Cambridge, Massachusetts: War Savings Victory Concert	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
July 30, 1944	<i>Nocturne</i>	The Dominican Sisters of Edgewood College	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 17, 1947	<i>Psaume CXXIX; Nocturne; Pie Jesu</i>	Union interalliée	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 18, 1947	<i>Psaume CXXIX; Nocturne; Pie Jesu</i>	Cercle interalliée	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 21, 1947	<i>Psaume CXXIX; Nocturne; Pie Jesu</i>	Club d'essai	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 16, 1948	<i>Faust et Hélène (excerpts); Psaume CXXIX; Clairières dans le ciel; Nocturne; Cortège; D'Un matin de printemps</i>	Union interalliée: Pour le 30e anniversaire de la mort de Lili Boulanger	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195

October 1948 (day not specified)	<i>Nocturne; Cortège; Pie Jesu</i>	[Unidentified]		BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 11, 1952	<i>Clairières dans le ciel; Nocturne; D'un matin de printemps</i>	Union interalliée	Performed on the piano	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
May 9, 1957	<i>Nocturne</i>	Fondation Singer- Polignac	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 6, 1958	<i>Vieille Prière bouddhique; Pie Jesu; Psaume XXIV</i>	Statsradiofonien Symphoniorkester	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 23, 1958	<i>Vieille Prière bouddhique</i>	Harvard Glee Club and Radcliffe Choral Society	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
February 15- 18, 1962	<i>Psaume CXXX; Psaume CXXIX; Psaume XXIV</i>	New York Philharmonic	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 8, 1962	<i>Pie Jesu; Nocturne</i>	Cornell University Glee Club and Cornell Chorus	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 1, 1962	<i>Pie Jesu</i>	Sprague Memorial Hall, New Haven, CT	Conducted	BnF, Mus., Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 8, 1962	<i>Pie Jesu</i>	King's Chapel, Boston	Conducted	BnF, Mus.: Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 19, 1962	<i>Psaume CXXX; Psaume CXXIX; Psaume XXIV</i>	Boston Symphony Orchestra	Conducted	BnF, Mus.: Res. Vm. Dos. 195
April 21, 1962	<i>Psaume CXXX; Psaume CXXIX; Psaume XXIV</i>	Boston Symphony Orchestra	Conducted	BnF, Mus.: Res. Vm. Dos. 195
March 9-27, 1968 [?]		Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Exposition Lili Boulanger	Concert(s) under her direction [?]	BnF, Mus.: Res. Vm. Dos. 195
January 26, 1970	<i>Psaume CXXX</i>	Le Grand Orchestre symphonique de la R.T.B.: "Hommage à Lili & Nadia Boulanger"	Conducted	BnF, Mus.: Res. Vm. Dos. 195
July 6, 1973	<i>Psaume CXXIX; Faust et Hélène</i>	Conservatoire Américain	Performed at the piano	BnF, Mus.: Res. Vm. Dos. 195

performed at the Concerts Colonne-Lamoureux on March 29, and her *Clairières dans le ciel* performed at both the Concerts Padeloup in May, and in an SMI performance in June.⁸¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, Nadia arranged to have Lili's works performed in France, Belgium, and the US, and seems to have been particularly fond of touring with her compositions. Organizing these performances would have permitted Boulanger the opportunity not only to advocate for her sister's posthumous career and pay tribute to her after her death, but also to remember actively

⁸¹ Nadia Boulanger, "Programmes de concerts donnés par Nadia Boulanger," BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 195; "Courrier musical. Ce soir. Aux Concerts Padeloup," *Le Figaro*, 22 May 1919; Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), Appendix B: Catalogue of Lili Boulanger's Works, 178. Potter suggests that several movements of this were premiered at this performance, but programs in Rés. Vm. Dos. 195 and in collections of programs from the SMI housed at the BnF suggest otherwise.

her sister's presence through the other modes of musical engagement—public and private—that arranging these performances entailed.

Notably, Boulanger often participated in performances of Lili's works as a pianist, organist, or conductor. Although trained and often billed—especially in the United States—as a virtuoso keyboard player, Nadia felt apprehensive about her performing abilities.⁸² Performing Lili's works in public, especially considering the faithfulness she likely felt to her sister to represent her musical gifts to the world to the best of her abilities, would have entailed Nadia's frequent practice of her compositions at home, likely in the presence of their mother, who was also mourning Lili's death in the 1920s.⁸³ But performing, conducting, and arranging these performances frequently entailed other musical tasks, as well, including orchestration, transcription, and preparing compositions for publishers. The performance of *Clairières dans le ciel* given in May 1919 by the Concerts Padeloup was likely the result of Nadia's orchestration of the work, since the only extant copy of the manuscript is in her hand.⁸⁴ Nadia also orchestrated Lili's *Nocturne* around 1950, and her *Pie Jesu* around 1960; the latter composition was one of Nadia's favorites to program on her US tours in 1938 and 1962 (See Figure 5.1). Moreover, Nadia transcribed *Cortège* and *Pour les funérailles d'un soldat* for organ so that she could perform them on her United States tour in 1925, and completed alternate versions of several of Lili's last compositions, including *Psaume CXXX*, *Psaume XXIV*, *Dans l'immense tristesse*, and *D'un matin printemps*. Furthermore, according to Caroline Potter's "Catalogue of Lili Boulanger's Works" none of Lili's compositions were published before 1918. Considering Nadia's involvement in Lili's compositions after her death, as well as Gustave Samazeuilh's assertion that after 1918 one of Nadia's main goals was to "develop and disseminate the finished works of

⁸² See Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 29.

⁸³ Nadia Boulanger lived with her mother, Raïssa Boulanger, until Raïssa's death in March 1935, just days after the 17th anniversary of Lili's death.

⁸⁴ Caroline Potter wonders in *Nadia and Lili Boulanger* if "Nadia Boulanger is also responsible for this work," especially since, "Lili Boulanger scrupulously dated her manuscripts, and some stylistic features of the orchestrations are more characteristic of her sister's work." See Potter, 108.

her dear departed [sister],” it is likely that Boulanger undertook much of the work of preparing Lili’s compositions for publication.⁸⁵ Performing each of these musical tasks necessitated her working closely with the music written by her sister that she would have first encountered in Lili’s presence, either while hearing or performing Lili’s works with her, or in putting down on manuscript paper the musical figures Lili dictated to her when she was too weak to complete this task herself.⁸⁶ Many of the compositions that Boulanger was most keen to have performed after her sister’s death, in fact, were those composed in Lili’s last years.⁸⁷

Emma Debussy and Rosina and Laura Albéniz appear to have also used musical objects, performances, and practices as a way of maintaining connections with lost loved ones. Rosina and Laura Albéniz—the wife and daughter of Isaac Albéniz, who died in 1909—each write somewhat frantic letters to Marguerite Long asking for her assistance in getting Albéniz’s *Pepita* edited and staged at the Opéra-Comique. At one point, Rosina asks Long to see the publisher Eschig, arguing that only she could take care of the situation since Joseph de Marliave, who had assisted Albéniz with the libretto, and Albéniz were “two beings who were very dear to you.”⁸⁸ In this way she uses the idea of Albéniz’s *Pepita* as a musical link to their respective late husbands in order to persuade Long to take action.

Similarly, for Claude Debussy’s wife Emma, musical compositions written by Debussy held special memorial significance. Emma Debussy’s correspondence after her husband’s death in 1918 demonstrates that she was rather protective of Debussy’s works in terms of who would

⁸⁵ Gustave Samazeuilh, *Musiciens de mon temps: Chroniques et souvenirs* (Paris: M. Daubin, 1947), 287: “Elle n’eut dès lors, plus qu’un seul désir: oublier sa musique, mettre au point, répandre les oeuvres achevées de sa chère disparue.”

⁸⁶ Nadia Boulanger helped her sister compose a number of compositions, especially in the last years of Lili’s life. Lili’s *Pie Jesu* is one notable example of this: Lili dictated the composition to Nadia in the months before she died.

⁸⁷ According to Potter’s “Catalogue,” most of the works included in my Figure 1 were composed in Lili’s last years, and several also have original manuscripts in Nadia’s hand. These include, *Psaulme CXXX* (1916), *Psaulme XXIV* (with a manuscript in NB’s hand dated Rome 1916), *Psaulme CXXIX* (1916; manuscript in Nadia’s hand), *Dans l’immense tristesse* (1916; one manuscript fragment in Nadia’s hand), and *Pie Jesu*. See Potter’s Appendix B: “Catalogue of Lili Boulanger’s Works.”

⁸⁸ Laura Albéniz and Rosina Albéniz, letters from 7 January 1916 to 4 January 1923, MMM, F-ML, Correspondance; Rosina Albéniz to Marguerite Long, 4 January 1923, in *ibid.*: “deux êtres disparus qui vous furent très chers.”

perform, edit, or orchestrate them. In particular, she feared displeasing him, even after his death, by making decisions of which he would not approve, or allowing others to do so. In a letter to André Caplet, one of Debussy's closest friends and colleagues, Emma relays her fears vis-à-vis *Pelléas et Mélisande* and the *Fantaisie* for piano, that she will be "incapable of preventing that which could make him unhappy." She refers to this as an "incessant torture" and asks Caplet to assist her in protecting "all this beauty that we are going to dare to touch."⁸⁹ In addition, she didn't hesitate to express distress when performers she did not like performed his works.⁹⁰ That Debussy's music served as a physical as well as aural reminder of his being—of his trace that she sought endlessly—is clear in letters she writes to both Caplet and Marguerite Long, both of whom she trusted with the memory of Debussy that she understood was embedded in his music.⁹¹ Moreover, while she thoroughly enjoyed listening to Debussy's pieces being performed by others, hearing them also had the effect of conjuring Debussy's presence in a way that pained her and led her to leave performances immediately after they were finished. She often did this in an effort to avoid having to speak with anyone in what she described as her emotionally overwhelmed state. In a letter to Marguerite Long after her premiere of Debussy's *Fantaisie* at the Salle Gaveau in December 1919, for instance, Emma asks Long to excuse her for having left without seeing her, relaying that she was "too upset to stay any longer." Her emotional state, she tells Long, came from hearing her play his *Fantaisie* so well—so precisely in the manner that Debussy would have wanted—that both her husband's and her daughter's (both

⁸⁹ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, undated ("Vendredi"), BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B, [letter 173]: "c'est une torture incessante encore d'être incapable d'empêcher ce qui pourrait lui déplaire . . . Il faut que vous veniez pour toutes ces choses et que vous y assistiez . . . J'aurais des pages à vous écrire si je vous énumérais mes craintes pour toute cette beauté à laquelle on va oser toucher."

⁹⁰ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, dated [from postal stamp] 1 March 1919, BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B: "il faut que je vous parle à propos de la musique de pauvre cher Maître—Madame Carré reprend le rôle! C'est effroyable."

⁹¹ Emma Debussy to André Caplet, postmarked 14 April 1918, BnF, Mus., F-AC, NLA 269, vol. 1B: "Il me semble que le plus grand malheur qui pourrait encore m'accabler, serait de ne plus ressentir cette recherche passionnée de Sa trace."

now deceased) presences were recalled, engendering in her “emotion doubled by such a cruel grief.”⁹²

There are, of course, many reasons that these musicians turned to works that reminded them of their loved ones after their deaths. Convenience, facility, financial considerations, maintaining legacies, or holding a sense of responsibility to lost loved ones were all likely reasons for these musicians’ musical choices.⁹³ I believe, however, that we are overlooking something crucial to understanding how music took on meaning for these interwar French musicians if we do not explore what Tia DeNora termed in *Music and Everyday Life* “human-music interaction.” According to DeNora, “musical affect is constituted reflexively, in and through the practice of articulating or connecting music with other things.”⁹⁴ In the case of Ravel, Long, Boulanger, and Emma Debussy, and others in their emotional community, their personal histories with music and the people with whom they once shared this music shaped their affective experiences of composing, listening, and performing. In other words, they made musical choices in the years while they were in mourning that were influenced by an understanding of music as a medium saturated with the potential to permit them to recall intensely and viscerally loved ones with whom, or in whose presence, they made music.

Transformative Musical Performance in Ravel’s Social Sphere

Bergson’s and Proust’s sensorial and movement-based conceptions of how memories were stored, recalled, and experienced was paralleled at the *fin-de-siècle* and in the early

⁹² Emma Debussy to Marguerite Long, [December 1919], MMM, F-ML, Correspondance: “J’étais trop bouleversée pour demeurer plus longtemps”; “mon émotion était double d’un si cruel chagrin.” Debussy’s *Fantaisie* also became somewhat of a linking object for Marguerite Long, who, after premiering it in 1919, frequently programmed it on concerts for the rest of her life.

⁹³ The responsibility Nadia Boulanger felt to pay tribute to her sister is evident from her diaries and datebooks, and an entry from January 1919, less than a year after Lili had died, for example, reads, “I place this new year before you, my little beloved Lili—may it see me fulfill my duty towards you.” BnF, Mus., Vmf. Ms. 88 (1), cited in Jeanice Brooks, *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger*, 23: “Je place cette nouvelle année devant toi, ma petite Lili adorée—qu’elle me voit remplir mon devoir vis-à-vis de toi—qu’elle soit moins terrible p[ou]r Maman et que j’essaie de te ressembler.”

⁹⁴ Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 33.

twentieth century by discussions of the embodied aspects of musical performance. Prefiguring Tia DeNora's claim that music functions as a "prosthetic technology of the body" with the potential to "lead actors to identify, work-up, and modulate emotional and motivational states," numerous of Ravel's contemporaries conceived of music making as a beneficial and potentially emotionally transformative bodily activity.⁹⁵ In particular, many interwar French musicians understood the piano as an extension of the human body. Inspired by Marie Jaëll's assertions of the intertwined nature of the psychology and physiology of piano playing, Constantin Piron, in his 1949 method book *L'Art du piano*, for which Marguerite Long wrote an enthusiastic preface, wrote that "the pianist . . . adapts himself so well to his instrument that his sensibility is completely transformed . . . the pedals prolong so perfectly his feet, the keys react so precisely under his agile fingers that he has the distinct impression that he produces the sounds born spontaneously from his hands."⁹⁶ The music critic Émile Vuillermoz, who had been a supporter and close friend of Ravel, similarly asserted that the strings of the piano "become the extension of your nervous system." Vuillermoz specifies that for Ravel the piano was a cherished confidante, an "instrument-confesseur" through which one could discover "secret correspondences that delight you to the deepest depths of your subconscious."⁹⁷ He understood composing at the piano as an intimate and personal communion: "Between music written cerebrally, far from any instrument, and that which is born from a delicate palpitation of notes, from a tender intimacy with a musical tool that one indeed has in his hands, from a sensual contact like an embrace, there is the same difference as between children coming from a

⁹⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁹⁶ Constantin Piron, *L'Art du piano*, preface by Marguerite Long (Paris: Fayard, 1949), 40: "Un pianiste—lui aussi—s'adapte tellement bien à son instrument que sa sensibilité en est toute transformée et comme agrandie: les pédales prolongent si parfaitement ses pieds, les touches réagissent si exactement sous des doigts agiles qu'il a nettement l'impression de produire lui-même les sons comme s'ils naissaient spontanément de ses mains sans l'intermédiaire de la mécanique."

⁹⁷ Émile Vuillermoz, "L'Oeuvre de Maurice Ravel," 16-17: "Peu à peu, ses cordes deviennent le prolongement de votre système nerveux...vous découvrez en lui des correspondances secrètes qui vous charment jusqu'aux zones les plus profondes de votre subconscient."

marriage of convenience and a marriage of love.”⁹⁸ He imagines Fauré, for instance, “browsing the avenue of ivory keys, or turning down ‘Le plus doux chemin’ of black notes, to give rise beneath his flaneur’s fingers to the dizzying sounds and perfumes that spin in the night air.”⁹⁹ For Vuillermoz, then, making music at the keyboard opened up a world of multi-sensorial pleasures and comforts.¹⁰⁰

Marguerite Long also repeatedly emphasizes that playing the piano is a corporeal, multi-sensorial, and transformative vibrational activity in her 1959 method book, *Le Piano*. In encouraging students to “learn by heart,” for instance, Long counsels them to use the “memory of the ear, eyes, and fingers.”¹⁰¹ Long was particularly concerned with the sense of touch, which she described as “a sense as rich and perhaps more essential than that of sight, hearing, or smell.”¹⁰² For Long, the pianist’s hands and fingers engaged in the act of pianistic performance were “not only a miraculous muscular mechanism” but also “prodigious organs of perception tied to one’s sensibility.” The hand, she asserts, “is a vibrating antenna about which the fluidic possibilities are still not fully understood.”¹⁰³ These vibrations—the movements of the body involved in pianistic performance—engaged the mind, body, and nervous system, and even had the power to alter it. Long suggests as much in citing the surgeon Thierry de Martel, who wrote

⁹⁸ Ibid.: “Entre la musique écrite cérébralement, loin de tout instrument, et celle qui est née d’une délicate palpation de notes, d’une tendre intimité avec un outil musical qu’on a bien en mains, d’un contact sensual comme une étreinte, il y a la même différence qu’entre les enfants issus d’un mariage de raison et ceux qui sont nés d’un mariage d’amour.”

⁹⁹ Ibid., 20-21: “On voit très bien Gabriel Fauré parcourant l’avenue des touches d’ivoire, ou s’engageant sur ‘le plus doux chemin’ des notes d’ebène, pour faire naître sous ses doigts de flâneur tous les vertiges des sons et des parfums qui tournent dans l’air du soir.”

¹⁰⁰ In this portion of his rather lengthy article, Vuillermoz focuses primarily on Ravel and how his relationship with the piano shaped his writing for piano. However, he groups Ravel with Claude Debussy and Gabriel Fauré, the other two musicians that he feels had this kind of relationship with the piano. I should also underline that Vuillermoz sees the piano as well as the organ as serving this function; see Vuillermoz, “L’Oeuvre de Maurice Ravel,” 16.

¹⁰¹ Marguerite Long, *Le Piano de Marguerite Long* (Paris: Salabert, 1959), XVI: “Pour y arriver, on utilise la mémoire de l’oreille, celle des yeux et celle des doigts.”

¹⁰² Ibid., III: “Le toucher est bien un sens aussi riche et peut-être plus essentiel que celui de la vue, de l’ouïe, de l’odorat.”

¹⁰³ Ibid., VI: “La main . . . n’est pas seulement un merveilleux outil mécanique: elle est une antenna vibrante dont les possibilités fluidiques sont encore mal connues.”

that, “it is not our mind that mobilizes our fingers, but our fingers and their nearly unconscious movements that give movement to our mind.”¹⁰⁴ That the vibrations of playing or even just of listening to the piano had soothing, healing, and emotionally transformative potential for many interwar musicians, including soldiers whose nervous systems had been shattered by the sonic and physical violence and emotional trauma of the war, finds support in Ravel’s friend Misia Sert’s anecdote about how the French World War I fighter pilot Roland Garros, when on leave, would lay under the piano as Sert played for him.¹⁰⁵

Ravel’s awareness of the therapeutic potential of daily musical practice is evident in the postwar compositions he wrote for grieving friends. These compositions variously engage with the paradox of resistant mourning—explained in more detail in chapter 2—that mourning, even if painful, must continue so as to avoid the suffering that would result if the mourner were to cease grieving. They do so by permitting their performers to enact the difficult, painful, repetitive, and everlasting nature of their grief through intensely demanding and rhythmically regular movements of their hands, fingers, and arms engaged in particular kinds of kinesthetically demanding music-producing gestures. Such gestures, I argue, helped musicians in Ravel’s circle get back into their bodies, comforting and soothing them through a kind of “musical bodywork” that could potentially help them process the traumatic effects of loved ones’ deaths. Performing these gestures as they simultaneously sought to maintain meaningful connections with their dead loved ones through performance that brought vividly to consciousness memories of previous acts of music making could function as both an analogue and perhaps an antidote—even if temporary—to the pain of resistant mourning.

In the final section of this chapter, I turn my attention to the musical specifics of the postwar instrumental compositions that Ravel wrote for H el ene Jourdan-Morhange and

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., III: “ce n’est pas notre esprit qui mobilise nos doigts, mais nos doigts et leurs mouvements presque inconscients qui donnent le branle   notre esprit.”

¹⁰⁵ Misia Sert, *Misia par Misia* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 203: “Apr es d iner il se couchait sous le piano et je lui faisais de la musique.”

Marguerite Long in the 1920s and 1930s. I determine how the compositions that Ravel wrote for these two women, who were not only in mourning, but also two of his closest friends and preferred performers after the war, differ from the compositions Ravel wrote before the war, as well as for other people with whom he was either not friends, or who were not in mourning after the war. Through this analysis, I interpret Ravel's shift in his postwar music to a more linear, *dépouillée* musical style as a reflection of the understanding within Ravel's social milieu of music making and mourning as embodied and movement- and memory-oriented practices. As expressions of shared resistant mourning to be played by Ravel and his grieving friends, these compositions are characterized by similar rhythmically regular, pulse-oriented, and kinesthetically demanding music. However, Ravel seems to have also taken care to tailor his musical vehicles for mourning to the individual needs of his friends, as evidenced in the differences between the Sonatas for Violin and Violoncello and Violin and Piano, both written for Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, and *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and the Piano Concerto in G-Major, written for Marugerite Long.

Shared Resistant Mourning through Perpetual Pulse, Limited Lyricism, and Transgressive Technique: Two Sonatas for Hélène Jourdan-Morhange

The two compositions Ravel composed in the 1920s to be performed by the violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange were considered examples of Ravel's new *dépouillée* style after the war. However, both of these compositions also bear the traces of Ravel's and Jourdan-Morhange's shared resistant mourning in a particular combination of performative difficulty, austerity, rhythmic regularity, and instances of limited mournful expression. As already noted, Ravel wrote the first movement of the Sonata for Violin and Violoncello (hereafter the Duo), as a tribute to Debussy. Ravel and other composers honored Debussy's memory by writing compositions to appear in a *Tombeau de Debussy* supplement in the December 1920 issue of *La Revue musicale*. The compositions featured in this supplement were then performed in a Société Musicale Indépendante concert that took place in January 1921. Although Ravel dedicated the

Duo as a whole to Debussy, he also was keen on having it performed by Jourdan-Morhange, who premiered it in its entirety with Maurice Maréchal in April 1922. Moreover, Ravel dedicated his Sonata for Violin and Piano, completed in 1927, to Jourdan-Morhange, and expressly intended for her to perform it.

Ravel met Héléne Jourdan-Morhange while she was mourning the death of her husband, the painter Jacques Jourdan, who died in combat in the First World War.¹⁰⁶ After hearing her perform his Trio during the war, the two became close friends, especially after 1921 when Ravel moved outside of Paris to Montfort l'Amaury, where Jourdan-Morhange often spent time with her partner Luc-Albert Moreau.¹⁰⁷ Jourdan-Morhange remained one of Ravel's closest friends until his death in 1937, and published personal essays and books in his honor until her own death in 1961.¹⁰⁸ Between his death and her own, she consistently referred to Ravel as "an incomparable friend," citing the firmness of his decisions to have friends premiere his compositions despite offers from the greatest musical stars as one example of his devotion in friendship.¹⁰⁹ A letter Ravel wrote to Jourdan-Morhange in August 1923 after the death of someone close to her also indicates the sympathy he directed towards her, as well as the comfort he felt in sharing his grief over his mother's death with her.¹¹⁰

Scrapbooks held at The Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library once belonging to Jourdan-Morhange and containing manuscript autographs of Ravel's Sonatas attest not only to the closeness of the friendship between the violinist and the composer, but also to the extent to

¹⁰⁶ See Ravel to Héléne Jourdan-Morhange, 1 March 1920, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 200 n1.

¹⁰⁷ See Héléne Jourdan-Morhange's article "Ravel à Montfort l'Amaury" in *Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers* (Paris: Éditions du Tambourinaire, 1939), 163-169.

¹⁰⁸ These include *ibid.*, "Musique de chambre," and *Ravel et nous* (Genève: Éditions du milieu du monde, 1945).

¹⁰⁹ Héléne Jourdan-Morhange, "Le Grand Musicien Maurice Ravel est mort," *La République*, 29 December 1937; Jourdan-Morhange, "Ravel à Montfort l'Amaury," 167-168: "ami incomparable."

¹¹⁰ Ravel to Héléne Jourdan-Morhange, 12 October 1923, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 200-201. Chalupt's editorial commentary for this letter states Ravel wrote this letter in response to the death of Jourdan-Morhange's mother; however, this seems dubious since Colette writes to Jourdan-Morhange on 1 October 1934 to offer her condolences on the death of her mother. See Colette, *Lettres à Moune et au Toutounet (Héléne Jourdan-Morhange et Luc-Albert Moreau, 1929-1954)*, Bernard Villaret, ed. (Paris: Des femmes, 1985), 100.

which Jourdan-Morhange's musical ideas, preferences, and violinistic capabilities informed Ravel's composition of these pieces.¹¹¹ In each of these scrapbooks, Jourdan-Morhange reserved several pages for keeping letters that Ravel wrote to her in which he discusses the sonatas. In the case of the Duo, these letters often concern rehearsals, performances, and technical questions about violin performance, whereas in the case of the Sonata for Violin and Piano, Ravel frequently provides Jourdan-Morhange with updates on its progress. In a letter regarding the latter, Ravel even makes clear the existence of a connection between mourning and his compositional process in relaying that, while in the midst of working on the sonata, he had gone to "refresh his inspiration in the waves of the ocean with Maurice Delage, who just lost his father."¹¹² In addition, the many penciled in and subsequently erased comments, corrections, and expressive markings not in Ravel's hand that remain in the Sonata for Violin and Piano's autograph manuscript—which a letter from the publisher Jacques Durand in the scrapbook tells us Ravel requested be given to Jourdan-Morhange—suggest that Jourdan-Morhange's participation and feedback were integral to Ravel's composition of this piece.¹¹³

More so than his pre-war instrumental chamber compositions, Ravel's Duo and his Sonata for Violin and Piano exhibit a pulse-oriented mechanicity, part independence, circumscribed lyricism, and extended techniques that I argue were conceived as ways of permitting Hélène Jourdan-Morhange as well as the composer himself—since he composed at the piano and also appears to have initially intended to perform the Violin Sonata with Jourdan-

¹¹¹ Sonata for Violin and Piano, Manuscript Autograph, Robert Owen Lehman Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library, R252.S698; Sonata for Violin and Violincello (movements 2-4), Manuscript Autograph, Robert Owen Lehman Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library, R252.S698.

¹¹² Ravel to Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, 29 August 1926, in Sonata for Violin and Piano, Manuscript Autograph, Robert Owen Lehman Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library, R252.S698: "Parme de Sonate. Suis venu rafraîchir l'inspiration dans les flots de l'Océan, auprès de Maurice Delage, qui vient de perdre son père."

¹¹³ Since to my knowledge examples of Jourdan-Morhange's handwriting do not exist, I could not match the handwriting in manuscript autograph with hers. However, she confirms in "Ravel à Montfort l'Amaury" that he asked her for fingerings and bowings, and in "Musique de chambre," that she often helped him to recopy musical passages. Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, "Ravel à Montfort l'Amaury," 166-167; Jourdan-Morhange, "Musique de chambre," 17.

Morhange—to share, perform, and cope with their grief through musical performance.¹¹⁴ In the first movement of the Duo, for example, Ravel asks Jourdan-Morhange and Maurice Maréchal (who played the 'cello at the premiere and for numerous performances thereafter) to trade off frequently between ostinato eighth-note arpeggio figures for large swaths of the movement, their parts interlocking like a well-oiled machine. These ostinato passages, as well as the many instances where Ravel asks his performers to play syncopated quarter notes against one another, force them to either subdivide or lock into a rhythmic groove with their musical partners that, while difficult to achieve, when accomplished would bring a comforting sense of stability to each player (See Figures 5.2a and 5.2b below).¹¹⁵

Figure 5.2a: Ravel, Duo for Violin and Violoncello (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1922), First Movement, mm. 1-36.

The image shows a page of musical notation for the first movement of Ravel's Duo for Violin and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Allegro, ♩ = 120'. The Violin part (VIOLON) is in the upper staff, and the Violoncello part (VIOLONCELLE) is in the lower staff. The Violoncello part has a 'sur Ré' marking above a note. The score includes first and second endings marked with '1' and '2' respectively. The Violoncello part has a 'sur Ré' marking above a note in the first ending.

¹¹⁴ See Jourdan-Morhange, “Musique de Chambre,” 17.

¹¹⁵ When describing Ravel’s interpretive wishes, Jourdan-Morhange underlines that performers should take care not to rush these syncopations. *Ravel et nous*, 185: “Ne pas presser les syncopes.” She also refers to the first theme of the first movement of the Duo as a “quasi-berceuse,” which underlines the lulling quality of the regular rhythm produced here. *Ibid.*

Figure 5.2b: Ravel, Duo for Violin and Violoncello (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1922) First Movement, mm. 61-84.



Frequent ostinato passages and the persistence of a consistently stabilizing pulse characterize the second and fourth movements of the Duo as well. At the opening of the second movement, the violinist and 'cellist trade in plucking downbeats that set the tempo and the groove for the entire movement save twenty-six measures towards the end of the movement marked “moins vif” (See Figure 5.3a). Marked downbeats figure prominently throughout the second movement, which also features a distinctly mechanical melody and numerous perpetual motion passages that engage their performers in repeated rhythmic gestures, for instance at the *A tempo* at the end of the movement (See Figure 5.3b). The same groove-oriented aesthetic of the first and second movements is apparent in the punchy theme of the fourth movement—another decisively rhythmic motivic ostinato—as well as in the heavily accented quarter notes that create what Jourdan-Morhange once referred to as this movement’s “unwavering rhythm” (See Figure 5.4).¹¹⁶

Although the 'cello and violin parts often interlock or alternate in rhythmic precision, Ravel almost never permits doubling between them. This increases the solo exposure of each musician, but also makes it so that when one person plays more expressive melodic material, they are supported by the repetitive motor rhythms or consistent pulse being produced by the other player. At the opening of the first movement, for example, one instrumentalist plays the

¹¹⁶ Jourdan-Morhange, *Ravel et nous*, 184: “un rythme inébranlable.”

Figure 5.3a: Ravel, Duo for Violin and Violoncello (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1922), Second Movement, mm. 1-43.

Très vif. $\text{♩} = 160$
pizz.
ff pizz.
ff

1

The musical score for Figure 5.3a consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a tempo marking of 'Très vif' and a metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 160$. The first staff is marked 'pizz.' and 'ff', and the second staff is marked 'pizz.' and 'ff'. The second system begins with a first ending bracket labeled '1'. The third and fourth systems continue the piece with various musical notations including slurs and accents.

Figure 5.3b: Ravel, Duo for Violin and Violoncello (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1922), Second Movement, mm. 450-503.

1^{er} Mouvt
mf

ff

20 sur le chevalet

pizz. arco

The musical score for Figure 5.3b consists of four systems of staves. The first system is marked '1^{er} Mouvt' and 'mf'. The second system is marked 'ff' and includes fingerings 1 through 6. The third system is marked '20 sur le chevalet' and includes a 'y' marking. The fourth system is marked 'pizz.' and 'arco'. The score features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings throughout.

Figure 5.4: Ravel, Duo for Violin and Violoncello (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1922), Fourth Movement, mm. 1-21.

ostinato, while the other has a brief opportunity to perform her grief through expressive melodic material (See Figure 5.2a). As in the first movement, the second and fourth movements feature almost no thematic overlap, leaving each instrumentalist to perform her or his part, like their grief, on their own, even while in the rhythmically supportive and nurturing presence of someone else.

Critics and performers alike commented not only on the *dépouillée* aesthetic of this piece, but also on its difficulty. They often focused on the hard to perform rhythmic consistency and the uncomfortable exposure afforded to the two instrumentalists, as well as on the technical challenges of sound production. Hélène Jourdan-Morhange recounts, for instance, arguing with Ravel that “making the ’cellist play like a flute, and the violinist play like drums” was “too complicated” and rendered his Duo impossible to be performed by anyone but virtuosos. Émile Vuillermoz concurred, asserting in a review of the Duo’s premiere that rehearsing this piece would only make anyone who is not a “supervirtuoso” come to doubt their abilities.¹¹⁷ Vuillermoz noted that the difficulty of Ravel’s writing—and especially the “movements that he imposes” on his performers—made it impossible for the violinist and ’cellist to maintain the purity of sound and tuning of their instruments. He writes that, “These pizzicato, which are too

¹¹⁷ Émile Vuillermoz, “L’Édition musicale: Maurice Ravel: ‘Sonate’ pour violon et violoncelle,” *Le Temps*, 19 May 1922: “J’imagine que des exécutions répétées de sa dernière oeuvre par des interprètes qui ne seront pas des supervirtuosos finiront, tout de même, par le rendre moins confiant.”

tight, cannot be of the same caliber, the double stops meow, the bow strokes let us hear horrific scraping.”¹¹⁸ According to Vuillermoz, these are “rough spots” that, while unexpected, are central to the piece.¹¹⁹ Similarly, Jourdan-Morhange takes after Jankélévitch in remarking that in the Duo we can hear Ravel’s animalistic “growling,” citing the ’cellist’s accented harmonic friction under the violinist’s crescendo in the Duo’s slow movement as an example of the “game of ferocious beasts.”¹²⁰ Jourdan-Morhange attributes Ravel’s “musical rage” to the difficulties of his move to Montfort-l’Amaury, which was taking place during the composition of the Duo.¹²¹ It is also possible, however, to understand the transgressive timbres that characterize the Duo, and that numerous of Ravel’s critics disdained, as the result of Ravel’s attempts to offer his performers opportunities to express through the harsh, animalistic sounds and the physically demanding movements required to make these, the anger, sorrow, and pain they felt in mourning their dead loved ones.¹²²

Like the Duo, Ravel’s Sonata for Violin and Piano embodies a linear *dépouillée* aesthetic requiring repeated and rhythmically regular movements from its performers. After a more lyrical first movement, the second and third movements of this three-movement work offer strong examples of Ravel’s postwar machinistic impulses. The second movement, entitled “Blues,” opens with the violin creating a steady quarter-note pulse in G-major pizzicato chords at a moderate tempo. Although the piano’s entrance at m. 7 with an A-flat and E-flat initiates a harmonic instability that continues throughout the movement, the regular quarter-note pulse initiated by the violin at the movement’s opening provides a rhythmic consistency that listener

¹¹⁸ Ibid.: “Dans les mouvements qu’il impose il est vraiment presque impossible de conserver au violon de la pureté et de la justesse, et au violoncelle de la profondeur et du moelleux. Ces *pizzicati* trop serrés ne peuvent être du même calibre, ces doubles cordes miaulent, ces coups d’archet font entendre des râclements horribles.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid.: “Dans une oeuvre aussi parfaite, ces rugosités de matière prennent une importance inattendue.”

¹²⁰ Jourdan-Morhange, *Ravel et nous*, 188-189: “colères de loup”; Ibid., 186: “ce jeu de bêtes féroces.”

¹²¹ Ibid., 186: “cette rage musicale.”

¹²² Jourdan-Morhange discusses the reception of the premiere, which critics considered a “massacre” with many “wrong notes,” in *Ravel et nous*, 183-84.

and performer can rely on for all but a handful of measures throughout the movement. Jourdan-Morhange relays that Ravel wished that these chords should be performed with “an implacable rhythm (as implacable as in *Boléro*).”¹²³ The constancy of this rhythmic pulse provides an unwavering background that permits the violinist to express her sorrow at the always fleeting nature of the past in chromatic and blue-note-ridden portamento weeping figures of the expressive melody marked “nostalgico” (See Figure 5.5).¹²⁴

Figure 5.5: Ravel, Sonata for Violin and Piano (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1927), Second Movement, mm. 11-19.

The final movement of the Sonata for Violin and Piano maintains the idea suggested in my analysis of the previous movement that rhythmic consistency was a helpful tool for coping with grief. This movement presents a flight-of-the-bumble-bee-esque *tour de force* aptly titled “Perpetuum Mobile.” It begins like an engine trying to start, but once it gets going, it flies: the

¹²³ Ibid., 193: “un rythme implacable (aussi implacable que dans *Boléro*).” She really harps on the importance of unmovable rhythm in this movement, writing also that “Sur le fond immuable de l’accompagnement, l’allure générale du *Blues* garde sa belle tenue; sans se soucier des débordements du violon-saxophone, le rythme du piano, impassible, demeure.” (At the unmovable core of the accompaniment, the general allure of the *Blues* keeps its beautiful hold; without worrying about the excesses of the violin-saxophone, the rhythm of the piano, imperturbable, remains).

¹²⁴ According to Jourdan-Morhange it is only in the context of this rhythmic consistency of the accompaniment that this kind of expression can take place. Jourdan-Morhange affirms this in writing, “the violinist, in this *Blues*, can play like a gypsy with all the voluptuousness [that the rhythmic accompaniment of the piano] makes possible.” Ibid., 193: “le violoniste, dans ces *Blues*, peut jouer au tzigane avec toute la volupté dont il dispose.”

violin plays constant allegro sixteenth notes from the fifteenth measure until the Sonata's conclusion one hundred and eighty measures—and thus more than two thousand notes—later. Throughout the movement figural repetition abounds, with extensive passages that resemble arpeggio and scalar technical exercises for the violin; here, we might imagine that Ravel took some of his cues from Jourdan-Morhange's knowledge of violin exercises in addition to Paganini's *Caprices*, which Jourdan-Morhange claimed Ravel had her play for him as he was composing this Sonata as well as the solo violin piece *Tzigane*.¹²⁵ Pushing his violinist's arms and fingers to their limits, Ravel does not permit the tempo—which he demanded be “as fast as possible”¹²⁶—to lag for even a second in this protracted instance of what Jourdan-Morhange called Ravel's “demonic violin technique.”¹²⁷ In the midst of all of this kinesthetically demanding and incessant rhythmic movement, however, sixteen measures before the finale's conclusion Ravel suggests that musical movement can not only help us to recall presences from our pasts, but also move stridently into the future. Here he has the pianist play an altered quotation of the first movement's theme while the violinist continues with her pulsating sixteenth notes. Ravel thus prompts his violinist friend to perform and work through her grief as the pianist—her “incomparable friend” Ravel—gently reminds her of the importance of not forgetting what—and perhaps more importantly who—has come before (See Figures 5.6a and 5.6b).

Figure 5.6a: Ravel, Sonata for Violin and Piano (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1927), First Movement, mm. 1-6: First theme in piano.



¹²⁵ Ibid., 180-181.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 193: “Le *Finale*, disait Ravel, peut être pris aussi vite que possible.”

¹²⁷ Jourdan-Morhange, “Musique de Chambre,” 17: “la démonicité technique du violon.”

Figure 5.6b: Ravel, Sonata for Violin and Piano (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1927), Third Movement, mm. 75-86: return of theme from the first movement in the piano at m. 77.

The image displays a musical score for the third movement of Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Piano, specifically measures 75-86. The score is written for violin and piano. The violin part consists of a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The piano accompaniment features chords and a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo). A box labeled '16' is placed above the piano part at the beginning of the excerpt. The score is divided into three systems, each with a violin staff and a piano staff.

The pulse-oriented rhythmic regularity that characterizes the sonatas that Ravel composed for H el ene Jourdan-Morhange is unmatched in Ravel's other vehicles for violinistic solo and chamber performance. Ravel's pre-war instrumental chamber compositions, the Quartet (1905) and the Trio (1914), for instance, feature lengthy instances of sixteenth-note passagework but, unlike the sonatas, these compositions feature frequent shifts in tempo, gesture, and affect, lush textures, frequent melodic doubling, and rubato-oriented expressive instructions more typical of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Romantic, Symbolist, and

Impressionistic musical aesthetics. Similarly, Ravel's *Tzigane*, which he wrote as a virtuoso showpiece for the Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Aranyi in 1924, is a rhapsodic piece containing multiple lengthy passages of sixteenth notes that rival the Violin Sonata's intensity in terms of repetitive technical passagework. In *Tzigane*, however, Ravel asks the violinist to speed up, slow down, radically shift tempo, or pause with a frequency that prevents the violinist from embodying a rhythmic groove for more than a few moments at a time (See Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Ravel, *Tzigane* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1924), mm. 228-276.

The image shows a page of musical notation for Ravel's *Tzigane*, measures 228-276. The score is written for violin and consists of eight staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including sixteenth notes and rests. Dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, and *ff* are used throughout. Performance instructions like *Vpn*, *pizz.*, and *arco* are present. Tempo markings include *Moderato*, *Esitando*, *Vivo*, *Rall.*, *Allegro*, *Meno vivo*, and *Accel.*. Measure numbers 20, 21, 22, and 23 are indicated in boxes at the beginning of their respective staves.

In appearing much more fluid and rhapsodic than the streamlined, sparse, and mechanical sonatas Ravel wrote for his grieving friend H el ene Jourdan-Morhange, Ravel’s Quartet, Trio, and *Tzigane*, underline how groove, rhythmic regularity, and strict *moto perpetuo* musical performance were connected to Ravel’s and Jourdan-Morhange’s mutual understanding of music’s ability to function as a corporeal means to cope with grief.

Mourning through *Le Jeu Perl e*: A Suite and a Concerto for Marguerite Long

A similar penchant for mechanism, incredible virtuosity, a *d epouill ee* musical style, and *moto perpetuo* writing appears in the music that Ravel wrote for Marguerite Long after the death of her husband in 1914. Since we have far more extant sources on Marguerite Long’s biography, her preferred performance techniques, and her experience of playing Ravel’s pieces than we do in the case of H el ene Jourdan-Morhange, examining the two works Ravel composed for Long—*Le Tombeau de Couperin* and the Piano Concerto in G Major—lends even greater support to my argument that rhythmically regular and difficult musical performance were specifically tied to grief for Ravel and other mourners in his circle. Long and Ravel had been friends since at least 1910, when he solicited recommendations for students to perform his *Ma M ere l’Oye*.¹²⁸ Since pre-war correspondence between Ravel, Long, and Marliave has yet to be found, it is difficult to know how close Ravel was with Long and Marliave before Marliave was killed in the first month of the war. However, Ravel’s dedication of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*’s final movement to Marliave, his decision to have Marguerite Long premiere the suite, and a letter that Ravel wrote to Alexis Roland-Manuel on October 1, 1914 in which he mentions both having heard news of Marliave’s death, and being fearful to write to Long about this, suggests

¹²⁸ Marguerite Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, ed. Pierre Laumonier, trans. Olive Senior-Ellis (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 89. The MMM holds a typed manuscript of an “Hommage   Marguerite Long, 4 Juin 1956” (most likely written by Raymond Escholier), which explains that Ravel had been friends with Marliave before he knew Long, and that the couple was friends with Ravel from around 1908. MMM, F-ML, Documents biographiques, Bo te 2.

that their friendship was fairly well developed by the time of Marliave's death.¹²⁹ In any case, Ravel and Long were close friends by the time he completed *Le Tombeau de Couperin* in November 1917, since he writes to her in mid-1918 about when she might premiere the suite and addresses her "chère amie."¹³⁰

The correspondence between Ravel and Long from after Marliave's death intimates that the grief each of them had come to experience after 1914 was a part of their friendship. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, in a letter that Ravel wrote to Long to wish her a happy new year in 1920, he tells her that he has been working again "as before, but not quite: the last time was at St-Jean-de-Luz...No one better than you can understand my awful sadness."¹³¹ Although he declines to say it directly, Long had to have known what he meant: the "before" to which Ravel referred was his last intensely productive period of compositional activity during the summer of 1914, which he had spent at St-Jean-de-Luz with his mother. For both Long and Ravel, the summer of 1914 was a happier time that was now tragically irrecoverable. It was a time before the dark years of the war when, amongst other tragedies, Long lost her husband, and Ravel lost his mother. Ravel expresses his sadness to his friend because he knows that she sympathizes with him.

In her career as a pedagogue and virtuoso performer, Long championed a highly rhythmically regular and kinesthetically demanding style of piano playing known as *le jeu perlé*. Nicole Henriot-Schweitzer, a student of Long's, has described this style as requiring "fast finger-work very close to the keys so that a series of equally-sounded notes reminds us of uniformly shaped pearls on a string."¹³² The *jeu perlé*, characterized by its emphasis on notes of equal

¹²⁹ Ravel to Alexis Roland-Manuel, 1 October 1914, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 155-156.

¹³⁰ Ravel to Marguerite Long, 2 July 1918, in Chalupt and Gerar, eds., *Ravel au miroir de ses lettres*, 152-153.

¹³¹ Ravel to Marguerite Long, 14 January 1920, in *Ibid.*, 168: "j'ai repris le travail, d'une manière acharnée, comme autrefois . . . Comme autrefois; pas tout à fait: la dernière fois c'était à St-Jean-de-Luz...Nulle mieux que vous ne peut comprendre ma tristesse affreuse."

¹³² Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: An Historical Perspective* (White Plains, NY: Pro/Am Music Resources, 1992), 72.

duration and quality, an excessively clear and pointed style of articulation achieved through highly regular finger motions, and a relatively sparse use of the pedal, not only required the consistent practice of etudes and exercises (particularly of the five-finger, scalar, and arpeggio variety), but was also somewhat modeled on the experience and clarity that came out of practicing these exercises.¹³³ In all of her writings, and throughout her life, Long espoused the import of technical exercises to all manners and modes of performance. Several of Long's former students emphasize the importance of practice to Long, and the shape that practice took. Philippe Entremont, for instance, reports that "I got some very good practice techniques from her, things that I still do today—especially very slow practice, deep into the keys with high fingers."¹³⁴ Henriot-Schweitzer, taking after Long, advocates "very, very slow practice, deep into the keys, without pedal, close and not brusque. I like to think of slow-motion films, with absolutely smooth and hypnotic movements—and I recommend this regardless of what the final tempo must be."¹³⁵ Long's "deep into the keys" approach, which hypnotically focuses attention on the pianist's fingers moving fluidly into, out of, and between the keys, might be understood as a meditative practice that allowed Long, and, I would suggest, Ravel and other French composers who had both experienced loss and who wrote music suited to the *jeu perlé* style, a way of rhythmically and kinesthetically bringing back to their bodies the consistency, stability, and concrete temporality that Jaques-Dalcroze and Weber-Bauler lauded as important to a person's wellbeing.¹³⁶

¹³³ See Marguerite Long, *La Petite Méthode de piano* (Paris: Salabert, 1963). In her method book for beginner pianists, Long consistently returns to the importance of exercises devoted to "l'agilité des doigts," (agility of fingers) all of which are perpetual motion style exercises designed to improve the smoothness of movement between fingers. I would like to thank Rémy Campos for the wealth of information he provided about *le jeu perlé* in his seminar at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris in Fall 2011.

¹³⁴ Timbrell, 74.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

¹³⁶ The *jeu perlé* was one of numerous styles of piano playing taught and practiced in France at this time. Contemporaries of Long such as Alfred Cortot and Blanche Selva promoted pianistic performance styles that used far more of the wrist, arms, and upper body, as well as more pedal. Selva in particular advocated a style of playing largely centered around the "free fall" ("chute libre") of the hand and arm. For more on these styles of piano playing, see

Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* gave Marguerite Long ample opportunity to engage in the *jeu perlé* piano practice that she preferred after the death of her husband. By writing extremely difficult, highly repetitive, and kinesthetically demanding music for her, Ravel gave Long a musical outlet not only to perform the sheer difficulty of publicly grieving personal losses in wartime France, but also to engage in the *jeu perlé* style of piano playing that afforded her a sense of comfort in the regular and hypnotic movements required of her fingers and hands. The “Toccata,” “Prélude,” and “Fugue” movements of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* make demands on the pianist that border on the superhuman. In the suite's final movement, the “Toccata” dedicated to Long's husband that Long described as “especially dear to her,” a flurry of constant staccato sixteenth notes crowds every bar save three: the final two bars of the movement, as well as one bar towards the end of the piece in which Ravel offers the performer a short moment of solace in a thirty-second-note rest marked with a fermata.¹³⁷ The composer asks the pianist to play *vif*—around 144 beats per minute—for all but fourteen measures of the piece, which are marked, somewhat ironically, *Un peu moins vif*. While sometimes Ravel has both of the pianist's hands working together to maintain the perpetuity of the sixteenth notes, at other times, one hand plays sixteenth notes, while the other plays something else—sometimes more sixteenth notes, although at other times a countermelody or an accompanying figure (See Figure 5.8).

The same sort of perpetual and highly rhythmic hand and finger motion that Ravel demands of the performer in the “Toccata” is also required to play the suite's first movement. Ravel composed the *Tombeau's* “Prélude” so that the pianist is forced to play sixteenth-note sextuplets—in figurations that often resemble, draw on, and would likely benefit from technical

Timbrell's *French Pianism*, as well as Alfred Cortot, *Principes rationnels de la technique pianistique* (Paris: Senart, 1928) and Blanche Selva, *L'Enseignement musical de la technique du piano* (Paris: Rouart, Lerolle et Cie, 1916-1924).

¹³⁷ Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 97.

Figure 5.8: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* “Toccatà” (Paris, Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 1- 56.

VI. TOCCATA

à la mémoire du capitaine Joseph de Marliac

PIANO

exercises for the piano—at a breakneck pace (see Figure 5.9). With a metronome marking indicating a dotted quarter note equals 92, the pianist plays just over 550 sixteenth notes per minute. Ravel has the performer play these uncomfortably fast sextuplets in one hand or the other throughout the entirety of the movement, with the exception of a sixteenth-note rest at the end of measure 85—hardly a moment of repose! Long was especially known for her accuracy in performing this movement, to the extent that Ravel often told his students not to play the movement as fast as Long for only she could play it so every note could be heard.¹³⁸ Moreover, the *Tombeau's* second movement, an incredibly difficult “Fugue,” requires an amazing degree of hand independence: the performer often plays duple meter in one hand and triple in the other, without the sort of regularity that might make this task somewhat easier. Interestingly, Long's

¹³⁸ Ibid., 95.

solution for deficiencies in hand or finger independence laid in the return to technical exercises, in particular five-finger exercises.¹³⁹

Figure 5.9: Ravel, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, “Prélude” (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1918), mm. 1-36.

I. PRÉLUDE

à la mémoire du fils-trépassé Jacques Chabrier

MAURICE RAVEL

The image shows the musical score for the first movement, 'Prélude', of Maurice Ravel's 'Le Tombeau de Couperin'. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of 36 measures. It features a piano introduction with a tempo marking of 'Vif' and a metronome marking of 92. The score is written for piano and includes various dynamics such as pp, p, and mf. The piece is characterized by its fluid, slurred passages and heavy use of the pedal.

The corporeal challenges in the “Prélude,” “Fugue,” and “Toccata” of Ravel's *Tombeau* are exacerbated by the composer's only very rare indications that the performer should use the pedal or fluctuate in tempo in any way, which is a marked departure from Ravel's pre-war piano repertoire. Indeed, compositions like *Jeux d'eau* (1902), “Une Barque sur l'Océan” (1906), and “Ondine” (1908), all feature extended passages of consistent sixteenth or thirty-second notes, often in the form of scales or arpeggios. However, in order to capture the sound, movement, and sensation of water, in these compositions Ravel asks his performers to adopt an aesthetic of fluidity and expressiveness through many slurred passages, heavy use of pedal, myriad meter and tempo changes, and instructions like “d'un rythme très souple—très enveloppé de pédales”

¹³⁹ Long, *Le Piano*, V.

(in a very supple rhythm—very much enveloped in pedal), “très fondu” (very malleable), and “très expressif” (very expressive). The rubato-oriented aesthetic of these compositions is evident as well in the many instances of *rallentando*, *ritardando*, *retenez*, and *accelerando* that Ravel includes in these scores.

Similar passages of fast-moving sixteenth, thirty-second, or sixty-fourth notes appear in a handful of Ravel’s early works not based on water themes, most notably in the *Sonatine* (1903-05) and “Scarbo” (1908). The first and third movements of the *Sonatine* are particularly laden with such passages; however, as in “Ondine,” “Une Barque sur l’Océan,” and *Jeux d’eau*, Ravel here employs a variety of tempi, as well as myriad markings encouraging pianistic flexibility, for instance “très expressif,” “un peu retenu” (held back a little), and no less than nine *ritardando/rallentando* indications in the first movement alone. Moreover, in both of these movements Ravel gives his performers ample opportunities to shift out of these challenging passages and into somewhat easier, more melodically oriented material. Ravel’s “Scarbo” perhaps comes closest to approaching the demanding, perpetual motion oriented design of *Le Tombeau*’s “Toccata.” Both pieces, for instance, exhibit passages of repeated notes at nearly impossible tempi, and in “Scarbo,” as in the “Toccata,” Ravel demands that the pianist play many of these passages staccato and without pedal. However, because Ravel’s goal in “Scarbo” is to sonically convey the erratic and unpredictable movements of a mischievous being, much of Ravel’s writing in this piece is gestural (i.e. written so as to sound out the goblin’s roguish scurrying, and perhaps the frantic confusion of the unlucky person who he haunts). “Scarbo” thus not only displays the frequent tempo changes and a significant reliance on the pedal that characterize Ravel’s pre-war rubato oriented style, but also offers the pianist many chances to “catch her breath,” so to speak, in a plethora of pauses and eerie silences that make us wonder what the goblin’s next move might be.

Unlike in his pre-war piano pieces, in *Le Tombeau de Couperin* Ravel demands extreme mechanicity from any performer of this piece: she must become like a human metronome. As in

the sonatas he wrote for H el ene Jourdan-Morhange, Ravel replaces the rubatic with the robotic, forcing his pianist to play every note perfectly evenly, and almost never permitting her the opportunity to fluctuate in tempo, or to “hide” behind the pedal, which Long considered one of the greatest faults of amateur pianists.¹⁴⁰ Ravel’s “Pr elude”, for instance, is completely devoid of tempo changes or other instructions for expressive performance. In addition, Ravel prescribes using the pedal only in the final five measures of the movement, once the perpetual sixteenth notes have ceased their stirring. Similarly, the “Toccata” has only two tempo changes—the somewhat ironic “un peu moins vif” that occurs at m. 56 and its reversal to the original tempo fourteen measures later—and only three indications that the performer should indulge in using the pedal, all of which appear in the first twenty measures of the piece, lasting only one very quick measure in each case. In addition to what he included in the musical texts, Ravel’s instructions to pianists affirm his desire for extreme precision. In one instance, he advised that the three interludes of the “Forlane” must be “metronomic.” As for the “Toccata,” Long tells us that Ravel’s instructions were to “play ‘all the notes’ clearly and precisely in a movement which—apart from the tempo variation on page 26—must not slacken pace in the slightest degree right to the final octave.”¹⁴¹

A 1922 piano roll recording of the “Toccata” demonstrates the bodily strain of performing this piece.¹⁴² This corporeal struggle is sonically evident in the pianist’s many failed attempts at rhythmic consistency. His hands limp through the piece, faltering particularly on passages with exposed repeated notes, of which there are many. It sounds a bit like a machine breaking down: notes follow one another jerkily just as a machine slows down and speeds up due to tiny bits of rust lodged in the grooves of its cogs. This recording demonstrates the performer’s often futile efforts to maintain a steady tempo, to force his hands to participate in

¹⁴⁰Ibid., XV.

¹⁴¹ Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 95, 97.

¹⁴² “Toccata: from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*,” *Ravel Plays Ravel*, CD 14 201, Santa Monica, CA, Laserlight, 1995. Whether Ravel or Robert Casadesus made this piano roll recording remains contested.

seemingly ceaseless attempts at kinesthetic, not to mention sonic, accuracy. These are strains of a performer's musculature, a push and pull felt in individual muscle fibers, as well as in his bones, specifically in the joints that are interstitial spaces of kinesthetic negotiation, and in his skin as it flexes in the movement of pressing down each key and jumping—sometimes nimbly but just as often awkwardly—from key to key. This feeling in and through the flesh might be understood as a physical transduction of the psychic and indeed physical pain experienced in intense grief.

Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major offers another, and perhaps the best example of how Ravel and Long considered perpetual motion passagework typifying the *jeu perlé* performance style to be a bodily means to work through grief. Although Ravel had initially wanted to compose a piano concerto to play himself, he decided instead to write a concerto specifically for Long.¹⁴³ According to Long, at some point in the late 1920s Ravel turned to her at a dinner party at Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux's home and announced, "I am composing a concerto for you. Do you mind if it ends pianissimo and with trills?" Long reports that she happily agreed, but was surprised to find that, when Ravel showed her the completed concerto in 1931, it did not, in fact, end with this gesture.¹⁴⁴ As in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, Ravel took Long's pianistic preference for *le jeu perlé* into consideration while composing the G-Major Concerto. He wrote the latter piece simultaneously with the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, which had been commissioned by the Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who had his right arm amputated as a result of combat in the First World War.¹⁴⁵ Contemporary critics were quick to point out what were considered the vast differences between the two concertos. They remarked especially on the lyricism and

¹⁴³ As a letter from the French Ambassador in Berlin, André François-Ponchet, attests, Ravel was under a lot of pressure from the conductor Wilhelm Fürtwangler and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to perform the concerto himself; however, the deterioration of Ravel's health and performing abilities performed him from being able to do so. See François-Ponchet's letter, dated 21 December 1931, in BnF, Mus., Fonds Montpensier, cited in Nichols, *Ravel*, 322-323.

¹⁴⁴ Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 39-40.

¹⁴⁵ See Blake Howe, "Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability," in *The Journal of Musicology* 27, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 135-180; 137.

moving, if not tragic nature of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*.¹⁴⁶ The G-Major Concerto, on the other hand, offered an example of Ravel's *écriture dépouillée*, especially its reduced orchestra, and Ravel's return to a more "classic" style—"simple," "refined," "balanced," and displaying a "clarity of form"—reminiscent of the music of eighteenth-century composers like Bach and Mozart.¹⁴⁷ The differences between these concertos, however, also shed light on the connection between resistant mourning and Ravel's use of a *style dépouillée* featuring technical passagework.

The *Concerto pour la main gauche*, like Ravel's *Tzigane*, is far more rhapsodic than the Concerto in G-Major. In the former composition, Ravel seems to have taken the opportunity to compose in a more lush, Romantic, and expressive style redolent of his late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Austro-German forebears and contemporaries, including Schumann, Liszt, Mahler, and Richard Strauss.¹⁴⁸ Marguerite Long noted the expansive Romanticism of the

¹⁴⁶ On the lyricism of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Wittgenstein's performance of it, see Crosti, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre Symphonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (January 27, 1933): 33; Altomont, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre Symphonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (February 3, 1933): 46; Crosti, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre Symphonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* 95, no. 45, (November 10, 1933): 438. On the *Concerto pour la main gauche*'s difference from the G-Major concerto, in particular its "pompous" nature, see Denyse Bertrand, "Les Grands Concerts: Orchestre Philharmonique de Paris," *Le Ménestrel* (March 26, 1937): 110. On the "tragic power" and "dramatic intensity" of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, see Marguerite Long's discussion of the piece in *At the piano with Ravel*, 56-63.

¹⁴⁷ On the reduced orchestra, see Pierre Capdeville, "Le Piano: Le Concerto pour piano de Maurice Ravel," *Le Monde musical* 43, no. 5 (May 31, 1932): 157-158; Paul Le Flem, "Les Concerts symphoniques: Le Nouveau 'Concerto' de Maurice Ravel. – La 'Sinfonietta' de Prokofieff. – Musiques japonaises. – Un tour chez Grétry," *Comoedia* [c. 25 January 1932]. On the Piano Concerto in G Major as exhibiting "dépouillement," see Albert Boschot, "La Musique: Concerto pour piano de M. Maurice Ravel," *L'Écho de Paris*, 18 January 1932; Paul Bertrand, "Concerts divers: Festival Ravel," *Le Ménestrel* (January 22, 1932): 34-35; Edmond Delage, "Concerts: Concerts Padeloup. Brückner, G. Migot, Honegger, Prokofieff, M. Ravel," *Le Monde musical* 43, no. 1 (January 31, 1932): 17-18. On the G-Major Concerto as "classique," "simple," and "refined," characteristic of Bach, Mozart, and Saint-Saëns's neoclassicism, see Boschot's article in *L'Écho de Paris* (cited earlier in this note); Henry Prunières, "Les Concerts: Maurice Ravel: *Concerto*, pour piano et orchestre," *La Revue musicale* 13, no. 123 (February 1, 1932): 123-125; Robert Brussel, "Les Concerts: Festival Ravel: 1re audition du 'Concerto' pour piano," *Le Figaro*, 18 January 1932; Émile Vuillermoz, "Le 'Concerto' de Ravel," *Candide*, 21 January 1932, 11; Gustave Bret, "Musique: Festival Ravel," *Intransigent*, 16 January 1932; Paul Bertrand, "Concerts divers: Festival Ravel," *Le Ménestrel* (January 22, 1932): 34-35; Pierre Capdeville, "Le Piano: Le Concerto pour piano de Maurice Ravel," *Le Monde musical* 43, no. 5 (May 31, 1932): 157-158; Georges Dandelot, "Concerts: Festival Ravel. Le Concerto pour piano," *Le Monde musical* 43, no. 1 (January 31, 1932): 20-21: "la clarté de l'écriture et de la forme."

¹⁴⁸ In preparing the Concerto for Wittgenstein's commission, it is possible that Ravel looked to other compositions Wittgenstein had commissioned, including Richard Strauss's *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica* (1924) and *Panathenäenzug* (1926-27). Ravel had met Strauss personally in 1907, and was a supporter of his music, naming him in his June 1916 letter to the Ligue Nationale as one of the only contemporary German composers of merit. See Roger Nichols, *Ravel*, 93; and his letter of 7 June 1916, in Orenstein, ed., *Ravel Reader*, 169-171. Ravel was also likely familiar with Gustav Mahler's music, since his 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 8th symphonies had all been performed in Paris in the

concerto in referring to it as “grand, monumental, on the scale of flaming horizons and monstrous holocausts that consume the body and submerge the spirit.”¹⁴⁹ Ravel gives Wittgenstein abundant occasions to display soloistically his expressive pianistic talents, for instance at the piano’s completely solo entrance at Rehearsal 4, and in the cadenza that closes the movement (beginning at Rehearsal 50). Indeed, each of these sections, as well as many in between, feature quickly played passagework. However, as in his pre-war piano works and *Tzigane*, Ravel marks these passages with fluid tempi, rubato, and other expressive indications, intersperses them with melodically oriented passages (for instance the march of the concerto’s third movement), and composes so as to force Wittgenstein to use the pedal, perhaps in order to please the pianist, who was well known for developing new pedal techniques enabling one-armed pianists more access to otherwise challenging repertoire.¹⁵⁰

By contrast, all three movements of the G Major concerto showcase a striking amount of *moto perpetuo* passagework requiring far more prolonged absolute rhythmic accuracy than the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. Ravel opens the first movement, for example, with fourteen measures of quickly played arpeggio triplets. Then, after giving Long an opportunity to melodically express herself in the concerto’s blues-inflected second theme, he asks her to develop these themes refracted through strictly meted out, rapid fire, and perpetual eighth notes and eighth-note triplets. This continues almost until the slowed-down, timbrally spooky pre-cadenza at Rehearsal 25, after which Ravel has Long launch into the cadenza, featuring sixteenth-note sextuplets overlaid with a trilled version of the concerto’s second theme. The

years prior to World War I. Considering the argument I am making here about Ravel’s desires to write for friends, it is not at all outlandish to suggest that Ravel would have wanted to write something for Wittgenstein that he enjoyed as a pianist, or that might have helped him to mourn his losses, albeit according to distinctly different cultural-musical norms than those of Ravel’s Parisian social sphere.

¹⁴⁹ Long, *At the Piano with Ravel*, 57. I should mention that Marguerite Long’s discussion of the composition, as well as much of the contemporary reception of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* was strongly influenced by French public’s fascination with what they perceived as Wittgenstein’s heroism in continuing to perform in public despite his disability. In other words, Wittgenstein’s ability to “heroically overcome” his armlessness was often mapped onto Ravel’s composition. For more on this, see the reviews by Claude Altomont and Roger Crosti listed in footnote 146 above. See also Howe, “Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability,” 135-180.

¹⁵⁰ See Howe, 145, 148; and Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand/Schule für die linke Hand*, 3 vols. (Vienna, Zurich, and London: Universal Edition, [1957]).

movement closes with a return to the eighth-note passagework that characterized much of the movement's first half. Likewise in the third movement, which reminded one critic of a toccata and another of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, Ravel gives Long everything from practice at articulating repeated notes (at Rehearsal 4) to lengthy passages of material that resembles technical, and especially five-finger exercises (Rehearsals 5-7), as well as arpeggio exercises (Rehearsal 16-20) and keyboard traversing scales (Rehearsal 11), all in quickly played sixteenth notes.¹⁵¹ Although Ravel gives Long opportunities to engage in other kinds of pianistic performance, perpetual sixteenth notes—which Ravel rarely marks with slurs, expressive markings, or pedal indications that might otherwise permit Long to play in something less than perfect rhythmic precision—comprise 175 of the movement's 306 measures. Critics present at the Concerto's premiere noted that even when Long had the opportunity to take more liberties with tempi—for instance in the cadenza in the first movement—she decided against this. Instead, Henry Prunières discerned, she “played conscientiously, with nimble fingers, as would a good piano professor, without even a shadow of caprice, of poetry, or of sensitivity.”¹⁵² Long, in fact, prided herself on performing the concerto written for her with a style of piano playing—precise, technical, austere, and largely stripped of personal expression—that she understood Ravel to have intended in composing this concerto in a *dépouillée* style.¹⁵³

The concerto's second movement, however, makes particularly clear the connection between Ravel's *musique dépouillée*, and music's ability to act as a bodily means to cope with grief in interwar France. At the opening of the second movement, Ravel invites Long to perform

¹⁵¹ Dandelot, “Concerts,” 20-21: “Enfin le *Final*, court, éclatant, pétillant, vraie *toccata* pour piano et orchestre, que seul Ravel peut pousser à ce degré de perfection.” Le Flem, “Les Concerts symphoniques”: “Souvenir de jazz, puis un bref hommage au Tombeau de Couperin.”

¹⁵² Henry Prunières, “Les Concerts: Maurice Ravel: *Concerto*, pour piano et orchestra,” 123-125: “Mme Marguerite Long interprétait ce *Concerto* qui lui est dédié. Elle le joua consciencieusement avec des doigts agiles, en bon professeur de piano, sans l'ombre de fantaisie, de poésie, ni de sensibilité.”

¹⁵³ Long, cited in de Naud, “Un Festival Debussy-Ravel: Des Souvenirs de Marguerite Long”: “Le ‘Concerto,’ que je rejoue pour la n...ième fois, a été écrit pour moi. Je l'exécute d'une manière dépouillée, suivant le texte – c'est la volonté du musicien. Un interprète étranger, rebelle aux exigences de Ravel, a dit que les interprètes n'étaient pas des esclaves. Mais lorsqu'il suffit de transcrire une écriture aussi nette, je ne vois pas pourquoi nous nous permettrions des graffiti [sic].”

her grief through a slow, melancholy waltz with a melody that, while incredibly beautiful, is heavy, languorous and dripping with pathos to an extent that little in Ravel's *oeuvre* can match. Contemporary critics considered this movement not only an exceptionally fine example of Ravel's postwar *dépouillée* style, but also a "marvel of art and sensitivity" that exhibited like little else Ravel's "secret, contained emotion."¹⁵⁴ Long repeatedly voiced her anxiety over this passage, writing in 1945 that "this long, very long melody with its contained emotion" never ceased to worry her, both because of its expansiveness—it comprises nearly the first third of the movement—and the fact that Ravel forces her to play it completely solo, without the support of the orchestra.¹⁵⁵ That this is Long's resistant mourning given musical voice is indicated by the melancholy nature of the theme, as well as its length, its inability to resolve, the awkward and uncomfortable fashion in which the melody fails to align entirely with the waltz rhythm, and the isolation and exposure the performer is asked to endure. In addition, when Ravel brings back this theme at the end of the movement, he gives this melody to the English horn, an instrument traditionally associated with mourning and lament.¹⁵⁶

This moment of thematic return is not only unbelievably moving, but also communicates the important role that musical performance played in coping with grief for Ravel and Long. In yet another incredibly kind gesture of musical friendship, Ravel chooses this precise moment to

¹⁵⁴ Prunières, "Les Concerts: Maurice Ravel: *Concerto*, pour piano et orchestre," 123-125: "Cet *andante* est une merveille d'art et de sensibilité. L'émotion secrète, refoulée, de Ravel, s'y laisse découvrir et nous sommes bien près d'arracher son masque à ce merveilleux artiste si humain, si sensible et qui se plaît à poser à l'impassibilité." Paul Landormy, "Les Concerts: À Paris. Festival Ravel. *Concerto*, pour piano; Mme Marguerite Long; M. de Freitas-Branco," *Le Courrier musical* 34, no. 3 (1 February 1932): 71: "J'excepte l'*Andante* qui débute par une longue phrase aux contours tourmentés sur des harmonies volontairement un peu plates et qui renferme une émotion secrète." Robert Brussel, "Les Concerts: Festival Ravel: 1re audition du "Concerto" pour piano," *Le Figaro*, 18 January 1932: "Mais l'une et l'autre lui sont également chers, et si le *Concerto* lui a plu en raison de sa grâce et de son esprit, ce qu'il recèle de secrète émotion lui a plu bien davantage encore." Émile Vuillermoz, "Le "Concerto" de Ravel," *Candide*, 21 January 1932, 11: "il trouve le moyen d'écrire une mélodie d'une tenue magnifique, toute gonflée d'une émotion secrète et discrète et progressant avec une aisance, une noblesse et une ampleur incomparable."

¹⁵⁵ Long, "La Musique de piano," 5-6: "cette longue, très longue mélodie avec son émotion contenue."

¹⁵⁶ The English horn and oboe both have longstanding associations with elegiac expressions. One example of this is *Tristan und Isolde's* 3rd act, in which the English horn symbolizes an exterior manifestation of Tristan's own sadness, and the tragic nature of the love story through the mournful *alte Weise*. See also Sandra M. Gilbert's discussion of the Greek *elogoï*, which was frequently accompanied by an "oboelike doublepipe called *auos*," in Sandra M. Gilbert, *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Ways We Grieve* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 120.

give Long what he knows might help her most: the opportunity to hear her grief sympathetically voiced by someone else while her fingers move through measure after measure of technical-exercise-like and highly rhythmically regular passagework composed of steady thirty-second notes. This is her perfect *jeu perlé*. As in the “Toccata” of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, here Ravel gives Long an extended *moto perpetuo* devoid of slurs, pedal, or expressive markings.¹⁵⁷ Long’s *jeu perlé* continues until the last six measures of the movement, when Ravel gives her the softly played trills he had once promised her.¹⁵⁸ In these last six measures Ravel also provides an uplifting resolution to E-major that we have been anxiously awaiting for the entirety of the movement. By placing this moment of musical resolution right on the heels of Long’s *jeu perlé* passagework, Ravel seems to articulate that through musical performance, it is possible to achieve at least a moment of mental and emotional peace from one’s grief.

Ravel gave Long the Concerto in G Major just two days before her fifty-seventh birthday, on November 11, 1931. This was also the anniversary of the Armistice, a fact that had surely not escaped Ravel. In describing the first time she had the opportunity to play Ravel’s Concerto in G, Long recounts, “I sat down to sightread little by little these *pattes de mouches*, and when I arrived at this marvelous Andante, at the entry of the English horn, which repeats the phrase from the beginning of the movement with the thirty-second notes in the piano, I was so moved by it that I had tears in my eyes. They say that I play this concerto well. It is because it evokes for me so many poignant memories!”¹⁵⁹ Long’s tenderly evoked memories were, we might imagine, of the happier years spent sharing a life with Joseph de Marliave before the war. However, it is likely that the concerto was also a touching reminder in sound and movement of her friendship

¹⁵⁷ To the English horn player, however, Ravel gives the instruction “*expressivo*.”

¹⁵⁸ The fact that the Andante movement ends *piano* and with trills is perhaps an indication that Ravel had the Andante movement in mind for Long from the very start.

¹⁵⁹ Raymond Escholier [?], “Hommage à Marguerite Long, 4 juin 1956,” MMM, F-ML, Documents biographiques, Boîte 2: “Je me mis à déchiffrer petit à petit ces pattes de mouches, nous dit Marguerite Long, et quand, j’arrivai dans ce merveilleux andante, à l’entrée du cor anglais qui répète la phrase du début avec les triples croches au piano, je fus si émue que j’en eus les larmes aux yeux. On prétend que je joue bien ce concerto. C’est peut-être parce qu’il évoque pour moi tant de poignants souvenirs!”

with Ravel, their shared experience of resistant mourning, and the ways in which, for both of them, making music offered a way to express and cope with grief.

For H el ene Jourdan-Morhange, as well, Ravel’s gift of the Violin Sonata and its manuscript offered her not only the opportunity to mourn through repetitive, rhythmic movement, and transgressive musical sounds, but also to recall vividly the presence of her dear friend Ravel. The manuscript score that she so lovingly bound into a scrapbook, she tells us, serves as an “extremely moving” reminder of their friendship. She recalls Ravel’s thought, as well as his body and its movements as she plays from his manuscript: “It is extremely moving to contemplate the musical writing of an artist that one venerates: the accent drawn by a nervous hand holds so much for us, the beautiful curve of a more voluptuous slur. I have always had the impression of being more faithful to a musician’s thought in playing from his manuscript.”¹⁶⁰ Always the incomparable friend, Ravel gave both of these women musical gifts intended, perhaps, not only to help them mourn their losses in the teens and 1920s, but also to provide them with a musical source of mourning and remembrance after his own death in 1937.

¹⁶⁰ Jourdan-Morhange, *Ravel et nous*, 194: “De plus, il me fit l’hommage du manuscrit . . . Il est extr emement  mouvant de contempler l’ criture musicale d’un artiste que l’on v n re; l’accent trac  d’une main nerveuse nous devient essentiel, la jolie courbe d’un li  plus voluptueuse. J’ai toujours eu l’impression d’ tre plus fid le   la pens e du musicien en jouant d’apr s son manuscrit.”

Conclusion

Towards A New Understanding of Music's Therapeutic Potential in Interwar France

In this dissertation, I have shown how Ravel and numerous of his modernist peers negotiated the grief and trauma they faced in World War I through music and other social practices. Through the examination of musicians' obituaries and funeral accounts, I demonstrated how a nationalist wartime discourse that framed soldiers' deaths as most deserving of public grief resulted in a shift in French politics of mourning towards impersonal, nationalistic, and emotionally guarded expressions of grief. The correspondence, diaries, memoirs, scrapbooks, and archival materials of Ravel, Nadia Boulanger, Emma Debussy, Marguerite Long, Maurice Maréchal and others in their social sphere reveal that in response to this shift, Ravel and many of his peers became what psychoanalysts have termed melancholic or resistant mourners who kept the memory of their dead loved ones sensually and vividly present through collecting photographs and obituaries, making scrapbooks, writing correspondence, celebrating death anniversaries publicly and privately, and sharing their grief with other mourners. Moreover, informed by conceptions of corporeal memory suggested by their contemporaries Henri Bergson and Marcel Proust, Ravel, Nadia Boulanger, Marguerite Long, and numerous of their friends performed, composed, and arranged music that enabled them to recall the presence of dead loved ones sensorially.

The music written for wartime mourning by Ravel and his modernist contemporaries Claude Debussy, Gabriel Pierné, Nadia and Lili Boulanger, Reynaldo Hahn, Florent Schmitt, and André Caplet took a variety of shapes. A common thread amongst many modernist composers' compositions for wartime mourning, however, is their tendency to recuperate wartime grief, framing it in hopeful or optimistic terms in ways that aligned with the French State's pro-sacrifice politics of mourning. Ravel's post-1914 musical mourning appears more introspective, and can be understood as subtly resisting this optimism, especially after 1917. In

post-1914 pieces like “Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis,” Ravel framed his mourning for friends who had died in combat in terms of his own pre-combat patriotism. In addition, by reading *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Frontispice*, and *La Valse* through the lens of psychoanalytic conceptions of mourning, I showed that these pieces—all of which he wrote after the death of his mother and his release from military service in 1917—bear the traces of his resistant mourning and the trauma he suffered between 1914 and 1917 in moments of musical incongruity, discord, and violence, as well as in moments when Ravel returns to music from his pre-war past. Ravel’s post-1914 preoccupation with grief and trauma also appears in his decision to compose numerous compositions between 1917 and 1934 for friends who were, like him, coping with grief. These include the Sonata for Violin and Cello and the Sonata for Violin and Piano, which he wrote for Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, and *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and the G-Major Piano Concerto, which he composed for Marguerite Long. Through analyzing these compositions within the context of Bergsonian and Proustian conceptions of sensory memory and Émile Jaques-Dalcroze’s ideas about the abilities of musical movement to engender emotional, physical, and social transformation, I suggested that the rhythmic regularity and kinesthetic difficulty evident in these compositions not only suited the performance preferences of Ravel’s friends, but also offered them the opportunity to cope with their grief through transformative bodily movement.

Recognizing how Ravel and other musicians in his social sphere understood music making as intimately involved in the work of mourning not only sheds new light on Ravel and his music, but also has implications for the study of early twentieth-century French musical modernism more broadly, as well as for the history of music therapy. Notably, the theories on the transformational power of rhythmic musical movement touted by Jaques-Dalcroze, d’Udine, and Weber-Bauler, all of which gained wider recognition during and after the war, as well as Ravel’s and his peers’ turn towards music making as an act of embodied remembering, resonate with approaches developed in contemporary music therapy to help patients cope with grief and

trauma. In *Supportive Eclectic Music Therapy for Grief and Loss*, Australian music therapist Ruth Bright notes that listening to familiar music permits memories to come “flooding into conscious recall,” and that “the rhythm of music is important in recall, supporting detailed recollections of many kinds.” She also recognizes the importance for many people of feeling the physical sensation of sound’s vibration in evoking musical memories. Recalling memories musically, Bright asserts, offers many patients a way of working through the pain and trauma of their grief.¹ Peter A. Levine, on the other hand, emphasizes the role musical-rhythmic engagement plays in helping patients to cope with trauma. Similar to Tia DeNora’s observations of music’s ability to provide a helpful rhythmic bodily entrainment for infants in neo-natal intensive care units, Levine understands rhythmic musical practice, especially when undertaken in groups where contact and community can be developed, as an antidote to the “profound dysregulation of internal physiological rhythms”—evident in disturbances in “sleep/wakefulness, activity/rest, eating, elimination, sexuality, and a felt sense of a live rhythmic pulsation”—that is often produced in traumatized people, including those suffering from grief.²

This has been observed as well by Besser Van Der Kolk, a psychophysiologist who treats traumatized patients with movement oriented bodywork that similarly resonates with Jaques-Dalcroze’s, d’Udine’s, and Weber-Bauler’s early-twentieth-century ideas about the relationship between rhythmic movement and emotional wellbeing. After observing that traumatized people often had far lower heart rate variability—an indicator of the out-of-sync-ness of one’s respiratory and circulatory systems—than non-traumatized people, Van Der Kolk began having his patients use yoga as a way to improve their heart rate variability. This in turn helped them to bring a sense of comfort and safety back to their bodies in which they could work through and

¹ Ruth Bright, *Supportive Eclectic Music Therapy for Grief and Loss: A Practical Handbook for Professionals* (St. Louis, MO: MMB Music, 2002), xiv-xv, 41, 85-86.

² See Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 75-89. Peter A. Levine, “Trauma, Rhythm, Contact, and Flow,” in *Caring for the Caregiver: The Use of Music and Music Therapy in Grief and Trauma*, eds. Joanne V. Loewy and Andrea Frisch Hara (Silver Spring, MD: The American Music Therapy Association, Inc., 2002), 148-154; 151.

reprocess traumatic memories, eventually permitting them some relief from post-traumatic symptoms.³ Van der Kolk recommends other types of bodywork aimed at getting patients in touch with their bodies, including craniosacral, Feldenkrais, and deep tissue massage work such as rolfing, in addition to EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy), stressing that “as long as you move, you are going to be fine.”⁴

Although music therapy did not exist as an institutionalized discipline until World War II, the accounts I have presented in this dissertation of how Ravel and other musicians in his circle understood music as a medium through which they could not only create spaces for the expression of public and collective grief, but also maintain memory-based corporeal connections with loved ones, and facilitate physiological, psychological, and emotional transformation through rhythmic bodily movement, demonstrate that many musicians who lived through World War I understood music to have therapeutic benefits. Throughout this dissertation I have shown that many French modernist musicians were deeply affected by the war, its violence, its losses, and its politics, and sought ways to express their own grief while also engaging in activities devoted to helping French men and women recover from the violence, grief, and trauma they encountered daily between 1914 and 1918. In addition to being actively involved in care-based occupations throughout the war’s tenure—including volunteering at hospitals on the home front, caring for fellow soldiers (or other loved ones) who were sick or wounded, and working as ambulance drivers (one of the most common military assignments for musicians)—Ravel and many of his French musician friends wrote music for French publics in mourning, as

³ Bessel Van Der Kolk, in an interview with Krista Tippett, “Restoring the Body: Yoga, EMDR, and Treating Trauma,” *On Being*, originally aired July 11, 2013, transcript published at http://www.onbeing.org/program/restoring-the-body-bessel-van-der-kolk-on-treating-trauma-with-yoga-emdr-and-healing-0#main_content.

⁴ As Van der Kolk and Tippett point out, many of these modalities of healing bodywork remain only marginally practiced. For more information on alternative body-oriented healing methods, including therapeutic massage, craniosacral therapy, yoga, rolfing, Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, T’ai chi, and Reiki, see *Complementary Therapies in Rehabilitation: Evidence for Efficacy in Therapy, Prevention, and Wellness*, Carol M. Davis, ed. (Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, 2009); *Energy Medicine East and West: A Natural History of Qi*, David Mayor and Marc S. Micozzi, eds., foreword by James L. Oschman (New York: Elsevier, 2011); *Complementary Therapies for Physical Therapy: A Clinical Decision-Making Approach*, eds. Judith E. Deutsch and Ellen Zambo Anderson (St. Louis, MO: Elsevier, 2008). For more on EDRM, see Roger M. Solomon and Francine Shapiro, “Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing: A Therapeutic Tool for Trauma and Grief,” in *Death and Trauma: The Traumatology of Grieving*, eds. Charles R. Figley, Brian E. Bride, and Nicholas Mazza (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1997), 231-245.

well as for friends who continued to grieve privately for long after the deaths of loved ones. Moreover, André Caplet, Maurice Maréchal, and many of the soldier-musicians who wrote into the *Gazette du classes du Conservatoire* organized and performed for the benefit of wounded soldiers, not only to assist them financially, but also to help them physically and psychologically.

Understanding the extent to which the emotional benefits of musical production and performance were important to Ravel and others in his circle paints a new picture of certain strands of interwar French modernism. Rather than being considered a reflection of the “dehumanization of art” as suggested by José Ortega y Gasset, and more recently by Richard Taruskin, the sometimes mechanistic and repetitive and often kinesthetically challenging qualities of the French musical modernism not only of Ravel, but also of Debussy, Roger-Ducasse, Marcelle de Manziarly, and Stravinsky, might be better understood as deeply personal, and in fact intensely human responses to loss and trauma that shaped and were shaped by burgeoning conceptions of the physical and psychological benefits of music performance.⁵

Researching and writing this dissertation has deepened my interest in examining how people have turned to music as a means of accomplishing emotional work, and thus I hope to continue to explore this topic in future projects. Drawing heavily on my dissertation research, in my next project I plan to explore how music making functioned as a therapeutic practice in World War I-era and interwar France within French modernist circles, but also beyond these. For instance, I am interested in determining how the French medical discourse on trauma’s causes and treatments that developed during World War I shaped concert organizers’, composers’, and performers’ musical choices after 1914. Archival documents like musician-soldiers’ correspondence and diaries reveal that many enlisted French musicians were less concerned than their civilian counterparts with the nationalist implications of musical performance, focusing instead on music’s vibrational or otherwise non-symbolic capacities to

⁵ José Ortega y Gasset, “The Dehumanization of Art,” in *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature*, trans. Helene Weyl (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 3-56. Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 59-69.

provide comfort and distraction.⁶ By analyzing soldiers' personal accounts in correspondence, diaries, memoirs, and the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire*, and examining concerts organized for the wounded, I hope to ascertain how enlisted musicians acting as ambulance drivers during the war may have translated clinical treatments for trauma into musical performances designed to help soldiers mourn friends and cope with injury, depression, and violence. This research would also focus on determining how music's therapeutic abilities were constructed in gendered, racialized, and national terms and according to different types of trauma through examining concerts organized for soldiers from different racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds, as well as those designed for war widows, orphans, and other civilians affected by the war. In addition to ascertaining how ideas about music's therapeutic potential appears in the musical compositions and activities of numerous French modernists like Ravel, Boulanger, Stravinsky, Roger-Ducasse, Manziarly, Erik Satie, and members of the Parisian avant-garde collective *Les Six*, I plan to significantly broaden the scope of my research to address how music making was conceived as a therapeutic practice for ordinary French citizens, as well as non-French soldiers who fought in France between 1914 and 1918. I am especially interested in examining how French colonial troops and other soldiers from abroad who fought in France during the war may have turned to musical activities to cope not only with the grief and trauma they encountered through combat, but also the geographical and social displacement and isolation they experienced as a result of fighting far from their homes and families.

Ultimately, I hope that my research on how people have turned to music as a way of coping with difficult situations and emotions in the twentieth century will have practical applications outside of the academy. In drawing attention to how music therapy is something that people practice in daily life and with the musical materials they have available to them in

⁶ For instance, this is evident in many of the entries of the *Gazette des classes du Conservatoire* [BnF, Mus., Rés. Vm. Dos. 88 (1)], as well as in correspondence submitted by soldiers to the Comité Franco-Américain in response to Nadia Boulanger's questionnaire about what kinds of music should be performed after the war.

any given time and social context, my work aligns with Tia DeNora's recent research in clinical institutions on the links between music, everyday life, and emotional transformation.⁷ By orienting contemporary music therapists to socially and personally constitutive aspects of music making and listening, DeNora's research has shaped the clinical practices of contemporary music therapists in the United Kingdom. Through highlighting and examining historical instances of "musical self-medication," my work likewise has the potential to contribute to the field of music therapy through enriching how music therapists understand the myriad ways in which music has historically offered emotional assistance to people suffering from grief and trauma, or mental and physical illnesses more broadly. Moreover, at a time when music and arts programs in schools and communities, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Fulbright and Fulbright-Hayes research programs face significant budget cuts or even elimination, my research makes an argument for sustained funding for social programs involving music, musical organizations, and music research by emphasizing how music has historically played an integral role in emotional management for individuals and communities.

⁷ In addition to *Music in Everyday Life*, see also Tia DeNora, "The Pebble in the Pond: Musicing, Therapy, Community," *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 14, no. 1 (2005): 57-66, which has been reprinted as Chapter 9 in Tia DeNora, *Music-in-Action: Selected Essays in Sonic Ecology* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 147-156. The introduction (pp. xi-xx) as well as DeNora's essays "Health and Music in Everyday Life—A Theory of Practice" (pp. 157-174) and "Evidence and Effectiveness in Music Therapy: Problems, Power, Possibilities and Performances in Health Contexts" (pp. 175-188) in the latter volume also showcase DeNora's involvement in contemporary music therapy. Finally, see Tia DeNora, *Music Asylums: Wellbeing Through Music in Everyday Life* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), which was based on the research she undertook with BRIGTH, the Borough Centre for Rehabilitation, Interaction, Group Activity, Hospitality and Training.

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