

La Renaissance musicale
Revue hebdomadaire de critique, d'esthétique et d'histoire
(1881-1883)

A weekly journal, *La Renaissance musicale. Revue hebdomadaire de critique, d'esthétique et d'histoire*¹ [RNM] was published in Paris by the Schiller printing house² from 6 March 1881 until 20 October 1883. The journal appeared on Sundays until 3 April 1883, then on Saturdays, starting with the 10 February 1883 issue. By changing its publication day, the journal allowed its readers to be aware of the concerts offered in Paris on Sundays. The last issue of the journal (13 October 1883) appeared without explaining the reasons for its disappearance.

La Renaissance musicale is made up of three volumes measuring 13.2 x 10.2 inches. The volumes consist respectively of 520, 624 and 336 pages for a total of 1480 pages. Until the issue of 25 December 1881, each issue contains twelve pages, then, from the issue of 6 January 1883 until the last one, each is eight pages in length. However, reducing the number of pages did not reduce the richness of content as smaller fonts were used and advertisements were removed.

From the beginning, the journal's editor, Edmond Hippeau, claimed to defend the new French school, stemming out of efforts to overthrow the Italian school:

When some half-century ago, Berlioz and Wagner dispensed with the routine and declared war against the Italian school, a true revolution took place in the musical world. Now, there is no longer anything to overthrow: the evolution has taken place... and the new school ... rules over the entire world ... Its reign is what we call *La Renaissance musicale*.³

Unlike *Le Ménestrel*, which was anti-Wagner and slow to recognize Berlioz's talents, the RNM was mostly pro-Wagner and Berlioz. The journal also defended the French school.⁴ Created by Edmond Hippeau (1849-1921) to follow *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, which ceased publication in 1880, the RNM "claimed to be free from any commercial bonds and respectful toward artists."⁵ Hippeau was not only the journal's editor and administrator, but also a regular contributor. A strong advocate of both

¹ From now on referred to as RNM.

² Located at 10 et 11, Faubourg Montmartre in Paris.

³ Edmond Hippeau, "La Renaissance musicale," RNM I, 1 (6 March 1881) : 3-4.

⁴ Joël-Marie Fauquet, *Dictionnaire de la musique en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 1047. In fact *premières* of works such as Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII* and Massenet's *Hérodiade* were given detailed reviews in the journal.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 352.

Wagner and Berlioz, founder of *L'Avenir diplomatique*⁶ and former editor of the *Événement* and *L'Écho universel*, Hippeau took, in January 1883, the initiative of associating the RNM with a publishing company known as *Union des jeunes compositeurs*. Moreover, the RNM had links with important music publishers such as the Firmin Didot et C^{ie} bookstore,⁷ Calmann-Lévy,⁸ and the Sandoz and Fischbacher library.⁹ All regularly advertised in the RNM. It was possible to subscribe to the RNM in Parisian publishers' offices and in foreign ones: Schott frères in Brussels and London; Fürstner in Berlin and Leipzig; Gutmann in Vienna; Guido in Florence; Ricordi in Rome, Naples and Milan, and finally, Baudin in Constantinople. This impressive list of foreign agents is an indication of the journal's importance and influence.

Until the issue of 24 December 1882, the journal opens with a decorated frame-like title page inside which one reads both title and sub-title, the publication date, names of collaborators,¹⁰ prices and places to obtain subscriptions.¹¹ The following page entitled "Programme des concerts" is divided into four parts, generally publishing from top to bottom and from left to right: (i) the Concert Populaire conducted by Jules Pasdeloup; (ii) l'Association artistique with the Concerts du Châtelet directed by Ed. Colonne (iii) the Grands Concerts at the Cirque des Champs Élysées, directed by Édouard Broustet¹² (iv) and the Nouveaux Concerts conducted by Charles Lamoureux in the Théâtre du Château-d'eau.¹³ Occasionally this page includes advertisements concerning new publications or bonuses from the *Renaissance musicale*: namely, piano music, and vocal music with piano. At the conclusion of the concert season, this second page advertises, among other events, the organ concerts by Alexandre Guilmant at the Palais du Trocadéro.

The subsequent pages are divided into two columns and are always introduced with a content summary. This is generally followed by a "Revue dramatique et musicale"

⁶ In the journal advertisement inserts are reserved to *L'Avenir diplomatique* and Hippeau sometimes refers to his past diplomatic career; moreover, he was familiar with this field as the author of *L'Histoire diplomatique de la Troisième République* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1889).

⁷ Firmin Didot et C^{ie} published amongst other titles the *Biographie universelle des musiciens...* by Fétis and *Les Concerts classiques en France* by Eusèbe Lucas.

⁸ Calmann-Lévy published the following works by Berlioz: *Les Soirées de l'orchestre*, *Les Grottesques de la musique*, *À travers chants*, *Les Mémoires*, *La Correspondance inédite*.

⁹ The Fischbacher Library published books by contributors to RNM: *Le Drame musica* by Édouard Schuré and *Un Successeur de Beethoven*, *Étude sur Robert Schumann* by Léonce Mesnard.

¹⁰ Collaborators are listed in the following manner: on the first line appear Ernest Reyer, Jules Massenet and Camille Saint-Saëns, from the Institut, followed by thirty-two names. Next one reads the names of Paul Arène, Ch. Bannelier, Camille Benoît, Boisselot, Bourgault-Ducoudray, Maurice Cristal, Ernest David, Armand Éphraïm, Paul Foucher, Octave Fouque, Fourcaud, Gonzague Privat, Charles-Jean Grandmougin, Alex. Guilmant, L. Victorin Joncières, Philbert Joslé, Adolphe Jullien, P. Lacôme, Henri Lavoix fils, Th. Lindenlaub, D. Magnus, Léonce Mesnard, Charles Monselet, Édouard Noël, Ch. Pigot, Ch. Émile Ruelle, Édouard Schuré, Armand Silvestre, Edmond Stoullig, Terzetto, A. Thurner, Johannes Weber.

¹¹ Until 2 July 1882, the lists of depositories were located on the lower part of the title page, after the indication "Subscriptions are available in the journal's offices, 42, rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires and from the editors whose names follow."

¹² Instigator of Russian music and new music in France.

¹³ On rare occasions, other orchestras are mentioned.

dedicated to the theater, the opera and comic-opera. Next a “Revue bibliographique” treats new publications, and biographies of musicians past and present. An important section “Chronique” in three parts follows: “Paris,” “Départements” and “Étranger.” The section on Paris covers concerts,¹⁴ examinations at the Paris Conservatory, administrative gatherings concerning musical life in the city, etc. In “Départements,” the cities which are most often referred to are Angers with its Association Artistique and Concerts populaires; Bordeaux and its main theaters,¹⁵ Nantes,¹⁶ Dijon,¹⁷ Rouen,¹⁸ Nîmes, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Toulouse, and Pau.

The section “Nouvelles de l'étranger”¹⁹ always deals with Belgium, primarily with Brussels: the season at the Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, Théâtre de l'Alhambra, Théâtre des Variétés; and the Royal Conservatory of Music, its examinations, concerts and various activities. Musical events in Liège and Antwerp are also treated. London's prestigious theatres and concert venues—Covent-Garden, the Drury Lane, Her Majesty's Theater and the Crystal Palace, etc.—are among the main centers of interest. In other countries, musical life in the capitals and the major cities is given an important place: Milan and La Scala, Rome and the Costanzi Theater, Berlin and the Royal Opera, Leipzig and the Gewandhaus, Madrid and the Royal Theater, etc. News from Russia, and particularly from St. Petersburg, covers in detail theater impresarios, the opera troupes and programs. The New World does not escape the collaborators' attention. The construction of the Metropolitan Opera House and various tours by artists and troupes are mentioned. One can observe that the RNM offers its readers a wide range of original articles, scientific studies, diverse reviews, in short, a well-documented and rich reflection of international musical activities.

The articles in RNM deal extensively with Wagner and Berlioz while at the same time offer reviews of first performances and original studies, discussed below. The clearly pro-Wagner inclination of the editor quickly created a violent polemic between Hippeau and Saint-Saëns, founder of the Société nationale de musique (SNM).²⁰ Saint-Saëns harshly criticized Hippeau's Wagnerian opinions, considering them a danger for the future of French music. One of the journal's official collaborators, Saint-Saëns, contributed only a short article “La résonnance multiple des cloches” [The multiple resonance of bells].²¹

In addition to a wealth of information on Wagner scattered throughout the journal, his theories, his works and enthusiastic reviews of his operas performed in Germany are

¹⁴ Quite often chamber music concerts in Salle Pleyel, Salle Herz, etc.

¹⁵ The Grand-Théâtre-français, the Théâtre des Célestins and the Théâtre des Variétés.

¹⁶ With its Grand-Théâtre.

¹⁷ Where the Guillier Hall was very active.

¹⁸ Including the numerous activities of the Théâtre des arts.

¹⁹ The following selection is necessarily limited.

²⁰ Created in 1871, this association aimed at allowing young French composers to present their works. In 1881 it had 207 members. Not until 1886 were foreign composers' works introduced in the SNM programs.

²¹ RNM, I, 28 (11 Sept. 1881): 5.

mentioned in various editorials and columns signed by Hippeau, Jullien, Schuré and Noufflard. Moreover, three quarters of the 17 February 1883 issue and the 24 February 1883 issue focus on the composer's death; and, from the issue of 4 September 1881 until that of 11 December 1883, a new autobiography by Wagner *L'Œuvre et la Mission de ma vie* [My life, work and mission] is published, in translation by Hippeau in the form of a *feuilleton*.²²

The RNM was also very favorably disposed towards Berlioz. In 1882 a subscription is started to help erect a monument in the composer's memory. Hippeau and Noufflard signed many studies of the composer's works, and Hippeau published from the 11 December 1881 issue and that of 11 August 1883, a long *feuilleton* entitled "Berlioz intime" which later appeared as a book in 1883 and again in 1889. Moreover, in the journal's first issue one reads that "it will publish in turn the following works which are entirely original."²³ In fact, only six of the fifteen announced articles were realized in the journal's pages:

- "Félix Mendelssohn, d'après ses nouveaux biographes" par Ernest David ; ["Félix Mendelssohn, according to his new biographers" by Ernest David].²⁴
- "Acoustique des salles de théâtre et de concert" ["Acoustics of theaters and concert halls"].²⁵
- "La musique serbe et les rhapsodes croates" par Louis Léger ; ["Serb music and Croatian rhapsodies" by Louis Léger].²⁶
- "Scènes de province", par Charles-Jean Grandmougin ; ["Scenes from the Provinces" by Charles-Jean Grandmougin].²⁷
- "Les mariages à l'Opéra au XVIII^{ème} siècle" (nouvelle série) par A. Thurner ; ["Weddings at the Opéra in the XVIIIth Century" (new series) by A. Thurner].²⁸
- "Musiciens d'hier et d'aujourd'hui" et "Ambroise Thomas" par Victor Wilder ["Musicians from the Past and Present" and "Ambroise Thomas" by Victor Wilder].²⁹

The first of these series is devoted to the Mendelssohn family. Its author, Ernest David, based his text on *Die Familie Mendelssohn, 1799-1847, nach Briefen und Tagebücher*³⁰

²² First intended for the journal's subscribers, this biography was later published in Paris by Fischbacher in 1884.

²³ See RNM I, 1 (6 March 1881): 5.

²⁴ Ernest David, "Les Mendelssohn-Bartholdy" in twenty-three installments of RNM published from I, 10 (8 May 1881) and II, 10 (5 March 1882).

²⁵ Johannes Weber, "Acoustique des salles de théâtre et de concert," in nine installments of RNM published from I, 2 (13 March 1881): 6-8 to I, 10 (8 May 1881): 5-7.

²⁶ Louis Léger, "La musique serbe et les rhapsodes croates," RNM I, 18 (3 July 1881): [3]-4 and I, 20 (17 July 1881): 5-6.

²⁷ Charles-Jean Grandmougin, "Scènes de province. David d'Ormael," RNM I, 5 (3 April 1881): 4-5.

²⁸ A. Thurner, "Les mariages à l'Opéra au XVIII^{ème} siècle," RNM II, 47 (19 November 1882): 370-72, RNM II, 48 (26 November 1882): 380-81, and RNM II, 50 (10 December 1882): 397-98.

²⁹ Victor Wilder, "Musiciens d'hier et d'aujourd'hui," RNM I, 1(6 March 1881): 6-7.

published by Sébastien Hensel, the composer's nephew. Initially, the volume was conceived for the family, however, due to his friends' insistence, it was published. This chronicle of Mendelssohn's family contains many letters prior to 1830 that are important for the understanding of the composer's intellectual and artistic development.

Another valuable series is by Édouard Grégoir. Entitled "Notices et biographies—Recherches sur la vie et les œuvres d'artistes-musiciens, facteurs d'orgues, historiens, etc. "[Notices and biographies—Research on the life and works of musicians, organ builders, historians, etc.]"³¹ This article consists of notices about musicians omitted from Fétis and Arthur Pougin's *Biographie universelle des musiciens*. Their corrections are exceptionally rich in content and include many important bibliographical references. It would be too long to consider each series of articles, but one by Johannes Weber deserves mention. It deals with the acoustics of theatres from an historic, scientific and comparative point of view.³²

Hippeau was assisted by excellent collaborators such as Johannes Weber, Édouard Grégoir, the violinist Jenő Hubay, Ernest David, Édouard Noël, Charles Barthélémy, Léonce Mesnard, Armand Éphraïm, Georges Noufflard and enthusiastic Wagnerians like Charles-Jean Grandmougin, Victorien de Joncières, Adolphe Jullien and Édouard Schuré.³³

Hippeau translated Wagner's autobiographical writings and also wrote books about Berlioz: *Berlioz, l'homme et l'artiste*³⁴ [Berlioz the man and the artist], *Berlioz intime* [Berlioz, an intimate view]³⁵ and *Berlioz et son temps* [Berlioz and his time],³⁶ that are considered "among the first writings to set the musician's bibliography on a solid footing."³⁷

Johannes Weber (1818-1902) served as Meyerbeer's secretary and wrote the musical *feuilleton* in *Le Temps* from 1861 to 1895. He also wrote books on music and on the teaching of music in France. Weber was interested in aesthetics, and translated Lindau's *Richard Wagner* (1885). Weber's remarkable contributions to the RNM attest to the quality of his work.

Édouard Grégoir (1822-1890) was a composer, writer on music and pianist. His compositions include the historical symphony, *Les Croisades* (1846), a symphonic

³⁰ B. Behr, Berlin, 1879, 3 vols. in-8⁰.

³¹ Édouard Grégoir's fifteen-part series begins in RNM I, 20 (17 July 1881): [3]-4, and concludes in RNM III, 32 (18 August 1883): 261-62.

³² See footnote 26.

³³ Fauquet, 1047.

³⁴ Paris, P. Ollendorff, 1890.

³⁵ Paris, Fischbacher, 1883.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Fauquet, 594.

oratorio, and *Le Déluge* (1849), lyrical dramas and comic operas. As a writer, he contributed to several journals, including *Le Précurseur d'Anvers*, *La Maîtrise* and *La France musicale*.

Ernest David (1824-1886) was a music critic for the RGM, *Le Ménestrel* and *Le Bibliographe musical*. In these journals, he wrote on the Italian schools and masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁸

The following four collaborators, Grandmougin, Joncières, Jullien and Schuré, all wrote about Wagner in the RNM and elsewhere. The pseudonym Terzetto that follows many musical and theatrical reviews is the collective signature used by three of these four authors. This makes identification of their individual contributions impossible. Charles-Jean Grandmougin (1850-1930) expresses his admiration for Wagner in a volume entitled *Esquisse sur Richard Wagner*³⁹ [Notes on Richard Wagner] in 1900. In *Études sur l'esthétique musicale* [Studies on musical aesthetics]⁴⁰ Grandmougin offers a survey of music history from Ancient Greece to the nineteenth century.⁴¹

Félix-Ludger Rossignol, known as Victorien de Joncières (1839-1903) was a composer and music critic. He contributed to *La Liberté* using Jennius as a pseudonym. In the RNM he also used this pseudonym as well as Joncières. Adolphe Jullien (1845-1932), historian and author, began his career as music critic at *Le Ménestrel* in 1869. He also wrote for other journals, including *Le Français*, *La Chronique musicale*, *Le Journal des débats*, *Le Moniteur universel*, and *La Revue contemporaine*. For RNM Jullien contributed many articles on the major composers of the nineteenth century, including Schumann, Liszt, Berlioz, Meyerbeer and Gounod.

Édouard Schuré (1844-1929) was recognized as the most important expert on Wagner in France, and was among the founders of the *Revue wagnérienne* (1855). Schuré's *The Musical Drama*,⁴² the second volume of which is entirely dedicated to Wagner "had a considerable influence in the artistic milieu."⁴³ Among other pro-Wagner contributors to the RNM, are Victor Wilder, Louis Fourcaud and Georges Servières. Victor Wilder (1835-1892), a man of letters and writer on music, is responsible for two biographies, one on Mozart, the other on Beethoven.⁴⁴ In addition to the RNM Wilder also wrote for *L'Événement*, *L'Opinion nationale*, *La Presse théâtrale*, *Le Gil Blas*, *Le Ménestrel*, and *La Presse musicale*. "He spent ten years of his life translating Wagner's libretti."⁴⁵ Louis Fourcaud (1851-1914), also a man of letters and writer on music, started out at *Le*

³⁸ Pierre Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX^e siècle* (Éditions Rediviva, 1990, a new edition of the 1866-1876 publication): 1466.

³⁹ Fauquet, 1316.

⁴⁰ Paris, Durand, Schoenewerk et C^{ie}, 1900.

⁴¹ Paris, A. Charles, 1900.

⁴² Paris, Sandoz and Fischbacher: 1875.

⁴³ Fauquet, 1135.

⁴⁴ *Mozart, l'homme et l'artiste* (Paris, Charpentier: 1889) and *Beethoven: sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, Charpentier: 1883).

⁴⁵ Fauquet, 1316.

Gaulois. Between 1880 and 1914, he was considered one of the most prolific music critics along with Adolphe Jullien.⁴⁶ At times, Fourcaud used Junius as a pseudonym. Georges Servières (1858-1937) was a writer on music and music critic. His work is exemplary, both because of the variety of the subjects treated and his detailed exploration of primary source material.⁴⁷ Servières observed aspects of the reception of the works of contemporary composers. This is reflected in one of his first books, *Richard Wagner jugé en France* [The reception of Richard Wagner in France] (1887).⁴⁸ Servières was a music critic at the RGM, at *Le Ménestrel*, and *Le Guide musical*. His volume on César Franck, Édouard Lalo, Jules Massenet, Ernest Reyer, and Camille Saint-Saëns remains a useful resource of modern French music.

Table of initials and pseudonyms

Initials	Personal names
E. H.	Edmond Hippeau
W.	Johannes Weber
A. E.	Armand Éphraïm
C. B.	Charles Barthélémy
E. D.	Édouard Dujardin
Z. E.	Zénon Étienne (unidentified)
pseudonym)	
Z.	Id.
Pseudonyms	Personal names
Junius	Louis Fourcaud
Victorien de Joncières	Félix-Ludger Rossignol
de Thémines	Achille Lauzières de Thémines

This volume in the RIPM collection was prepared with a microfilm copy of the journal in the Music Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Volume I, No. 1 (1 January 1882) concludes on page 12, but issue No. 2 (8 January 1882) begins with two unnumbered pages and thereafter continues with the repetition of page numbers 9 through 12, after which the page numbers continue uninterruptedly beginning with page 13 until the end of the year. The first two pages of each issue are never numbered.

⁴⁶ Fauquet, 483.

⁴⁷ Fauquet, 1145.

⁴⁸ Paris, Librairie scientifique: 1898.