

1832-1842: a Crucial but Forgotten Decade in the Life of Manuel García Jr.

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ABSTRACT

Manuel García Jr. is probably the most renowned among the singing teachers of the 19th century. Such fame, however, is not matched by an in-depth knowledge of his life history, especially regarding the crucial ten-year period between 1832-1842, which starts with the death of his father in 1832 and ends with his achievement as a fully established teacher at the Paris Conservatory in 1842. During this decade, he published two works that had a revolutionary impact on the history of singing: *Mémoire sur la voix humaine* and *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*. García conceived these works to assert his primacy in the knowledge and teaching of the so-called 'voix sombrée', the vocal emission that was considered highly topical in Paris after Duprez's return from Italy. The link between García, Duprez, the operatic repertoire of the 1830s and the 'voix sombrée' can be found in the life and work of Manuel and his first famous pupil and first wife, Eugénie, in Italy from 1835 to 1839. In Italy, they became acquainted with the works of Bellini and Donizetti in the early days of their dissemination. The literature on García has long ignored many of the key events of this crucial period and has often assigned incorrect dates to both the publication of his teaching works and the start of his professorship at the conservatory. This study aims to fill this significant gap, in order to fully highlight the role played by García during the period that saw the transition of vocal art from bel canto to melodrama.

KEY WORDS

Manuel García Jr.,
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Introduction

Manuel García Jr., born Manuel Patricio Rodríguez Sitches (1805-1906),¹ is probably the most renowned among the singing teachers of the 19th century, as well as being a figure of reference for any study of operatic vocalism. This is due to a combination of various reasons: he was the son of Manuel García Sr. and brother of María Malibran and Pauline Viardot, three singers of historical relevance; he had several famous pupils;² he also published a singing method which is still unequalled in its breadth, and, lastly, he made innovative physiological observations regarding the vocal apparatus thanks to a laryngoscope of his own invention.

Such fame, however, is not matched by an in-depth knowledge of his life history, especially regarding the crucial ten-year period between 1832-1842, which starts with the death of his father in 1832 and ends with his achievement as a fully established teacher at the Paris Conservatory in 1842. This lack of information is also evident in the only biographical work on his life, entitled *García the Centenarian and His Times* by Malcom Sterling Mackinlay. It is no coincidence that James Radomski points out that “the principal biography of Manuel Patricio García remains the anecdotal García the Centenarian [...] although a scholarly study is long overdue”.³ Even though Mackinlay’s text is unreliable at times, it has nevertheless been a point of reference for authors. As will be seen in the pages of this work, the texts dedicated in various ways to the singing teacher, and the lemmas in the main biographical dictionaries, including music dictionaries, either ignore the events of that period or neglect their importance. The most relevant of these events is undoubtedly García’s marriage to Cécile Eugénie Mayer, who was the first of his pupils to have an important operatic career under the stage name Eugénie García. They lived not only in Paris, but also in London, Vienna and, for several years, in Italy. Furthermore, it should be noted that texts on García’s life propose conflicting dates for García’s first and fundamental scientific and didactic works, an unjustifiable uncertainty when one considers that they were published around the middle of the 19th century and had a wide resonance in France and abroad. The *Mémoire sur la voix humaine*, for example, is dated either 1840, 1841 or 1847, and the same happens, albeit for different reasons, which are explained later on in the text, for the *Traité Complet de l’Art du Chant*. Similarly, the beginning of García’s teaching at the Paris Conservatoire is also attributed to very different years, 1835, 1842, and 1847.

To supplement, and in some cases correct, the generally accepted information on García, it is therefore necessary to draw on several known sources which, despite having been available for some time, have not yet been consulted or taken into due consideration. The results of this research could be useful not only from a merely historical point of view, but also in terms of suggesting insights into the way García

1 Quirós Rosado, *Rodrígues Sitches*.

2 Among his most famous pupils were: Eugénie García Mayer, Erminia Frezzolini, Henriette Nissen Saloman, Jenny Lind, Johanna Wagner, Julius Stockhausen, Charles Santley, Charles Battaille.

3 Radomski, [James,] “Letters from Manuel Patricio”, 238.

approached the evolution of vocal art at that time, in the period between the age of bel canto and that of romantic melodrama. Lastly, it also reveals important biographical details about Eugénie García, who, despite being a leading figure in the vocal art of her era, is still waiting to be rightly acknowledged as such.

1832-1835: Between Paris and London

A Brief Stay, Almost an Escape

On 10 June 1832, Manuel García Sr. died suddenly in Paris. Due to García Jr.'s absence at the funeral, a family friend, Paulin Richard, read an eulogy on his behalf.⁴ The reason for his unusual absence is explained by an announcement in a British newspaper which informs its readers that he is in London to teach singing.⁵ This news shows García Jr.'s determination to pursue a teaching career independently of García Sr. which is in complete contrast to Mackinlay's assertion that, from 1830 onwards, the son had joined his father's school in teaching singing and had continued without interruption.⁶ Richard's tribute to García Sr. concludes with two exhortations that sound like a call for García Jr. to take the reins of his father's École de García, the first being to publish the treatise outlining his father's didactics and secondly, to complete the training of a young pupil in whom Manuel Sr. had placed great expectations.⁷

In Paris as Teacher and Husband of Cécile Eugénie Mayer

Manuel García Jr. soon returns to Paris and becomes the singing teacher and, subsequently, on 22 November 1832, also the husband of the young pupil, whose name is Cécile Eugénie Mayer. She is the daughter of a wealthy entrepreneur with a passion for music, Gustave Mayer, and was born in Paris on 8 April 1814.⁸ The marriage act reveals that the groom's witnesses are outstanding personalities of the Parisian opera world: Ferdinando Paér and Adolphe Nourrit.⁹ Paér, a friend of García Sr., is at the time Directeur de la Musique du Roi as well as a member of the Académie de Beaux-Arts of the Institut de France,¹⁰ while Nourrit, the 'prémiere tenor' of the Académie Royale de Musique, is not only a friend of García Jr. (the son of his singing teacher), but also of Cécile, for whose father he worked as an accountant. Indeed, Nourrit is likely to be the person who referred Cécile to García Sr., his own former singing teacher.¹¹ Mackinlay, it has to be said, gives no account of the marriage of Cécile and García Jr. Although passionate about singing, Cécile does not initially seem to have a suitable voice, but she is nevertheless an excellent pianist.¹² In ten months of study with García Sr. she

4 Richard, "Discours de M. P. R.", 158–159. The speech's author is given as P. R. in the published work. The initials P. R. have been already referred to Paulin Richard in Radomski, [James,] *Manuel García (1775–1832)*, 289.

5 *The Morning Post*, 8 May 1832.

6 Mackinlay, *Garcia the Centenarian*, 114.

7 Richard, "Discours de M. P. R.", 159.

8 Archives de Paris (hereafter, AdP), État civil reconstitué, 5-Mi-1-175; Acte de naissance de Cécile Eugénie Mayer.

9 AdP, État civil reconstitué, 5-Mi-1-2070; Acte de mariage de Manuel Patricio Rodriguez et Cécile Eugénie Mayer.

10 The close friendship between Paér and García Sr. finds confirmation in a letter quoted in Radomski, [James,] *Manuel García (1775–1832)*, 190.

11 "Quelques Particularités sur Adolphe Nourrit", *Le Ménestrel*, 21 April 1839; Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 235.

12 Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 233–243; De La Madelaine, *Théories Complètes*, 294–298.

has achieved a beautiful, robust contralto voice which, however, is still harsh and does not reach a very wide range.¹³ Under García Jr., however, she soon acquired greater vocal extension and considerable flexibility.¹⁴ Thus, within a short time, she was ready to face the public. Under the stage name of Eugénie García she made her debut on 12 March 1833 in a concert organised by her husband and Franz Liszt at the Vauxhall in Paris, in which Nourrit also participated.¹⁵ The press devotes some attention to the debut of the new member of the famous family of singers praising the wide vocal range, interpretative energy, and confidence in coloratura, but in contrast expressing some doubt about the excessive use of embellishments.¹⁶ As confirmation of the fame she had gained in Paris as a concert singer, Eugénie performed at court on 16 March 1834.¹⁷ It seems reasonable to assume that young Manuel, as husband and teacher, was constantly at her side.

Back in London, with his Wife, alongside the Greatest Singers of the Time

Subsequent reports about the García couple place them in the United Kingdom, which evidently exerted a considerable attraction on Manuel. On 30 April 1834, Eugénie sang in London in a concert alongside virtuosi of the highest calibre: Giulia Grisi, Rubini and Tamburini.¹⁸ At a later concert, in addition to these, she also performed with Malibran and Ivanoff; De Bériot played the violin and Pauline García, the future Mme Viardot, took part at the piano.¹⁹ The García couple seemed inclined to settle in London, as they not only stayed there for the summer season, which usually attracted singers and musicians from all over Europe. In fact, Eugénie performed at the first Exeter Hall Festival on 30 October.²⁰ On 12 January 1835 their first-born son, Manuel Charles, was born in London.²¹ A few months later, Eugénie returned to singing, and performed on 15 June with Rubini and Lablache,²² and on 2 July, at Drury Lane, with Malibran.²³ As already mentioned, Mackinlay makes no mention of either García's marriage with Cécile Mayer or the birth of his first son, completely ignoring his extended sojourn in London and its importance, long before García finally decided in 1850 to live in Britain for most of his life.

13 Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 233-243; De La Madelaine, instead, affirms that Cécile started the training under García Sr. in September 1830, De La Madelaine, *Théories Complètes*, 294-295.

14 Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 237-238.

15 *Journal des Débats*, 15 February 1833. From here on, the stage name 'Eugénie' is used instead of the birth name 'Cécile'.

16 *Revue Musicale* 7, no. 7 (1833): 54-55.

17 *Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 16 March 1834.

18 *The Morning Post*, 25 April 1834; *Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 18 May 1834.

19 *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, 16 July 1834; *Teatri Arti Letteratura*, 24 July 1834. Malibran, it should be noted, came to London expressly for this concert.

20 London, The Foundling Museum, Gerald Coke Handel Collection, 7/E/EXETER.

21 "Transcript of Manuel Charles Auguste's record", Find my Past, last accessed 27/09/2025, <https://www.findmypast.com/transcript?id=GBPRS%2FB%2F491748872%2F1>.

22 *The Morning Post*, 13 June 1835.

23 *The Morning Post*, 1 July 1835.

1835-1839: in Italy, Professional Successes, and Personal Sorrows

Milan and Novara, with Malibran and De Bériot

Although Eugénie feels destined for a concert career, Malibran is convinced that she should instead become an opera singer and obtains an engagement for her in the Carnival season in Novara for two of Bellini's works: *La sonnambula* (Amina) and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Romeo).²⁴ Manuel and Eugénie therefore decide to move to Italy, but before reaching Novara, they spend some time in Milan. This can be deduced from a letter Malibran wrote on 25 January 1836 to Duke Visconti, the Director of the Teatro alla Scala who was hosting her in his palace, in which she asks permission to receive her brother and sister-in-law at her table upon their return from Novara. Malibran specifies in this letter that she had done this before, which means that Manuel and Eugénie had already been guests there as early as the autumn of 1835.²⁵ Reports of their stay in Milan confirm the veracity of some accounts about Erminia Frezzolini that would otherwise remain aleatory. Regli and Fétis, in fact, state that García gave Erminia singing lessons there,²⁶ while Piccolomini Adami adds that this was on the recommendation of Malibran.²⁷ Therefore, the meeting between the student (Erminia), the diva (Eugénie) and the singing teacher (Manuel) can only have taken place in the final months of 1835, when Erminia was visiting her father, Giuseppe, who was also engaged at La Scala for the Autumn season.

Other news, albeit indirect, of García's stay in Milan in the autumn of 1835 can be deduced from the *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*, in which there are two examples of the way Malibran tackled one passage from *Sonnambula* and one from Vaccaj's *Giulietta e Romeo*, operas that appeared in La Scala's 1835 autumn season.²⁸ Manuel may have heard his sister sing the *Sonnambula* on stage in Italian only in Milan, because at Drury Lane in London in 1833 and 1835, and on other possible occasions he may have heard her perform, the opera was sung in English. The question regarding Vaccaj's *Giulietta e Romeo* is more uncertain, because Malibran, as was customary, included this piece in Bellini's *Capuleti* given at La Scala in the 1836 Carnival season.²⁹

It was not García's first time in Milan, since he had already been there a few years earlier. One newspaper review of the time report that he was warmly received there in several private concerts.³⁰ This stay in Milan is also confirmed by Malibran, who, in a letter dated 7 February 1828, informed her husband Eugène that Manuel had just left Paris for Milan.³¹ For these years, Mackinlay mentions an unspecified

24 Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 238-239.

25 Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, Coll. Pallotti, vol. XIX, n. 1177.

26 Regli, *Dizionario Biografico*, "Frezzolini Erminia"; Fétis, "Frezzolini (Hérmelin)". As a confirmation of this news, at the time of Frezzolini's debut in London, several newspapers mention her as a pupil of García: "Foreign Musical Intelligence", *The Morning Post*, 29 December 1841; "Theatrical Intelligence", *The Atlas*, 1 January 1842; "Madame Frezzolini - The New Prima Donna", *Wexford Independent*, 5 January 1842. It should be noted that the list of García's famous pupils compiled by Mackinlay does not include Frezzolini's name.

27 Piccolomini Adami, *Erminia Frezzolini*, 5-6.

28 García, *Traité Complet en Deux Parties* [vol. 2], 37, 52.

29 The libretto of La Scala's *Capuleti* is available at urn:oclc:record:1046599068.

30 *I Teatri: giornale drammatico musicale e coreografico*, 6 April 1828.

31 Quoted in Giazotto, *Maria Malibran (1808-1836)*, 547.

period in Italy and a debut in Naples in early 1829 which finds no confirmation in any source of information,³² whereas Manuel's debut at the Paris Théâtre des Italiens in October 1828 is well documented in the press.³³

As mentioned above, after their stay in Milan in the autumn of 1835, García and Eugénie went to Novara. Here they were joined by Malibran who, during a break in her La Scala commitments, helped to set up the *Sonnambula* in which Eugénie was to make her debut. Malibran's assistance is given by conducting the piano rehearsals, the stage rehearsals and the first two orchestra rehearsals, with De Bériot as first violinist.³⁴ Reviews of the debut unanimously underline the strong vocal and temperamental similarities between the diva and the debutant.³⁵ The choice of parts in this first season as an opera singer places Eugénie in Malibran's footsteps: a contralto who is able to manage very different parts thanks to the use of a well-practised vocal technique that gives her a wide range, combined with solid musical training that enables her to vary the part by adapting it to her possibilities.

To attend his sister's important debut, however, Manuel must have travelled from Novara to Milan. Delacroix noted in his diary that, in conversation, García recalled some details of Malibran's stage performance in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*, which she sang only at La Scala between late 1835 and early 1836.³⁶

Having concluded Eugénie's engagement in Novara, at the beginning of 1836 the Garcías went back to Milan. Malibran, however, did not stay there for long, as she married De Bériot on 29 March in Paris. It is very unlikely that brother and sister-in-law were present at the wedding. On 9 April, Eugénie made her debut at the Theater am Kärntnertor in Wien with Coppola's *La pazza per amore*, followed by Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Ricci's *Chiara di Rosenberg*.³⁷ The following engagement was for the Autumn season at the Teatro Carignano in Turin, with Rossini's *Otello* and *Il Barbiere*.³⁸ It was probably here that Manuel and Eugénie received the news of Malibran's death on 23 September.

The Carnival season of 1836-1837 did not see Eugénie on stage. The reason is made clear in an advertisement published in a newspaper which states that, after a pregnancy that prevented her from accepting engagements, she was once again available to consider any future proposals.³⁹ On 1 February 1837, in fact, Manuel and Eugénie's second son, Gustavo Alberto, was born in Milan. While their eldest son, Manuel Charles, bears the name of his paternal grandfather, their newborn is named after his maternal grandfather, Gustave Mayer. Gustavo's second name is a tribute to his godfather, the lawyer Alberto Parola, Duke Visconti's right-hand man in the ma-

32 Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 90-91.

33 Mongredien, *Théâtre-Italien de Paris*, 585-599.

34 Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 239-240.

35 *Il Pirata*, 24 November 1835; *Il Figaro*, 28 November 1835; *Lettera all'editore de L'Eco*, Manuscript, Biblioteca Livia Simoni del Museo Teatrale alla Scala, Casati 1376.

36 Delacroix, *Journal*, 249-250.

37 *La Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 8 May 1836; *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, 3 August 1836.

38 *Il Pirata*, 7 October 1836.

39 *Il Figaro*, 22 February 1837.

nagement of the Teatro alla Scala and a good friend of De Bériot and Malibran's.⁴⁰ Evidently, while waiting for the birth, the couple chose to live in Milan because they found a solid network of personal relationships there.

Alongside Eugénie, 'Prima Donna Assoluta'

The engagement for the Spring season at the Teatro Valle in Rome soon arrived, where Eugénie sang two operas she had already performed, *Otello*⁴¹ and *Sonnambula*,⁴² and one new one, Coccia's *Caterina di Guisa*.⁴³ The audience raved about Eugénie. A printed portrait distributed during the performance for her benefit points to her as the heir to the late Malibran: "Let's open our heart to the joy, our tears are unjust, the goddess of singing has come back to life in her".⁴⁴ On May 15th comes the praiseworthy appointment to the Accademia Filarmonica Romana.⁴⁵ The echo of Eugénie's success in Rome soon reached Paris as is evident in the following comment: "There is a lot of talk behind the scenes about the upcoming debut of Madame Eugénie García, sister-in-law of Madame Malibran, who has already obtained the most brilliant successes not only in London – significant, though not conclusive – but also in Italy, which is much more decisive".⁴⁶ The French press, therefore, was well informed about Eugénie's engagements, first in London, then in Italy, and alluded to her possible return to Paris. Her Italian career and reputation, in any event, continued to grow steadily. In fact, she was later engaged as 'prima donna assoluta' in Parma for the 1837-1838 Carnival season, where, in addition to Rossini's well-rehearsed *Otello*, she sang in Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* and Donizetti's *Belisario*.⁴⁷ She subsequently travelled to Genoa to perform *Marin Faliero*,⁴⁸ *Otello* once again,⁴⁹ then Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux*,⁵⁰ and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.⁵¹

Two letters sent by Adolphe Nourrit to his wife, Adèle, confirm Manuel's presence with Eugénie in Parma and Genoa. Nourrit arrived in Italy at the end of 1837, eager to practice the vocal technique with which Gilbert Duprez had challenged his position as 'prémier tenor' of the major Parisian opera house.⁵² In the first letter, Nourrit writes that he had apologised to Manuel because, having changed his travel plans, he had not stopped in Parma to visit him and Eugénie.⁵³ In the second one, he writes that

40 Milano, San Fedele Church, Register of the parish act, n. 48.

41 *Il Pirata*, 18 April 1837.

42 *Il Pirata*, 19 May 1837.

43 *Il Figaro*, 21 June 1837.

44 *Il Figaro*, 5 July 1837: "S'apra alla gioja il core, è ingiusto il pianto, risorta è in costei la Dea del canto".

45 Archive of Accademia Filarmonica Romana, Minutes of the session of 15 May 1837. Regli, erroneously, refers to the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, see Regli, *Dizionario biografico*, s.v. "Garcia Eugenia."

46 *L'Indépendant*, 23 July 1837: "Il est beaucoup question dans les coulisses des prochains débuts de Mme Eugénie García, belle-sœur de Mme Malibran, et qui a déjà obtenu les plus brillants succès à Londres, ce qui n'est pas concluant, mais en Italie, ce qui est plus décisif".

47 Molossi, *Diario del Teatro Ducale*, 156-161.

48 *Il Pirata*, 24 April 1838.

49 *Il Pirata*, 4 May 1838.

50 *Il Pirata*, 29 May 1838.

51 *Il Figaro*, 7 July 1838.

52 Quicherat, *Nourrit* [vol. 3], 59.

53 Quicherat, 138.

Manuel wrote back, informing him that he was going to spend the spring in Genoa.⁵⁴

After Genoa they moved on to Padua, where Eugénie was cast in Bellini's *Beatrice*⁵⁵ and Donizetti's *Lucia*,⁵⁶ and then to Bergamo for the same operas;⁵⁷ in the fall, they travelled to Padua once more for Donizetti's *Marin Faliero*.⁵⁸ In one year, therefore, Eugénie took part in three productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and as many of *Beatrice di Tenda*. In his *Traité*, García cites several musical examples from these operas, four from the former,⁵⁹ and as many as twelve from the latter,⁶⁰ demonstrating that the direct, in-depth knowledge he had of these operas had begun in Italy during the early time of their diffusion.

However, there is another possible connection between Eugénie's career and Manuel García's *Traité*. In Padua, Giovanni Battista Velluti heard Eugénie sing and was positively impressed. He consequently invited her to his villa in Mira for some advice on ways to improve.⁶¹ It is likely that on this occasion García was given the aria from Morlacchi's *Tebaldo e Isolina* by Velluti, which he later included in the *Traité*, noting: "I received it from Giovanni Velluti who, alone, today knows the secrets of this lost art", and adding in a footnote: "He has retired to the banks of the Brenta".⁶²

In October 1838, the French press offers one of the rare direct reports on Manuel for those years, calling him a "maître de chapelle en Italie".⁶³ After Padua, Eugénie was engaged for the Carnival season at the Teatro Apollo, Rome's most prestigious opera house, where she performed *Marin Faliero* and *Beatrice di Tenda*.⁶⁴

It is evident that her repertoire gradually stabilised on titles by Bellini and, above all, Donizetti, which required mastery of the high notes – no easy task for a contralto voice like hers. In February, a French newspaper informs its readers that the 'prima donna assoluta' is about to return to Paris. Despite this move, she does not intend to sever ties with Italian theatres and indicated where any potential engagement proposals should be directed.⁶⁵

In Naples, the Last Days in Italy and the Farewell to Nourrit

When Eugénie's engagements in Rome end, the couple goes to Naples to meet Nourrit, who, in the meantime, has been joined by his wife and children. After dining with Garcías on March 4, Guillame Cottrau, the Franco-Neapolitan music publisher and musician, describes them as talented artists with stately manners and very much in

54 Quicherat, 141.

55 *Il Figaro*, 21 July 1838.

56 *Il Figaro*, 1 August 1838.

57 *Il Figaro*, 18 August 1838; *Il Figaro*, 19 September 1838.

58 *Il Pirata*, 28 September 1838.

59 García, *Traité Complet en Deux Parties* [vol. 2], 21, 65, 66, 69.

60 García, 13(2), 16, 22, 24, 26, 28, 39, 52 (2), 57, 61, 67.

61 *Il Figaro*, 12 December 1838; Regli, "Eugenio García", 114.

62 García, *Traité Complet en Deux Parties* [vol. 2], 100: "Je le tiens de Giovanni Velluti, qui seul, aujourd'hui, possède les secrets de cette école éteinte"; "Il vit retiré près des bords de la Brenta".

63 *La France Musicale*, 21 October 1838.

64 *Il Corriere dei Teatri*, 9 February 1839.

65 *Il Figaro*, 2 February 1839.

love with each other.⁶⁶ The next day Nourrit asks Manuel and Eugénie for their opinion on the results of the changes to his vocal technique after his studies in Naples. Mme Nourrit thus writes:

Manuel sat down at the piano, had him sing various phrases, and seemed delighted with what he heard. Adolphe thought he could no longer sing Guillame Tell, and to prove it, he began to sing the most difficult phrases. Manuel, delighted, told him that there was a change, but that the change was for the better, much better. [...] Manuel and his wife showered him with compliments.⁶⁷

On the morning of 8 March, Nourrit committed suicide. García was personally involved in the event: in a letter dated 12 March, he provided the most detailed and direct testimony on the last days of the great French tenor's life.⁶⁸ Adèle Nourrit, her children, Manuel and Eugénie, left Naples on April 7,⁶⁹ and on the 13 of the same month were in Rome, waiting to embark from the harbour of Civitavecchia.⁷⁰

Despite its relevance, García Jr.'s life between 1832 and 1839 has not yet been examined in secondary literature. In the mid-nineteenth-century, Regli, Escudier, and De La Madelaine wrote extensive and well-informed pages on Eugénie's career, emphasising her belonging to the García family and school.⁷¹ Fétis does indeed dedicate a specific lemma to Eugénie,⁷² but, in the entry on Manuel, he only briefly mentions his marriage to Eugénie and does not record that Manuel travelled for several years following his wife's remarkable career.⁷³ The French obituaries for Manuel García Jr., published in Paris in 1906, clearly recall the marriage.⁷⁴ In the same year, García Tapía also speaks about it, but withholds the name of the bride and provides erroneous information about the couple's children.⁷⁵ By contrast, in 1908, Mackinlay makes no mention of the marriage, and of the many events related to it. There is only one event that Mackinlay relates to the years in question (1832-1839); it is the beginning of García's teaching at the Paris Conservatoire, which he dates to 1835.⁷⁶ As will be seen in the following pages, however, this event actually occurred several years later. Finally, Mackinlay only mentions Nourrit as a pupil of García Sr., thus ignoring the

66 Cottrau, *Lettres d'un Mélomane*, 69.

67 Quicherat, *Nourrit* [vol. 1], 483: "Manuel se mit au piano, lui fit dire différentes phrases, et parut enchanté de ce qu'il entendait. Adolphe croyait ne plus pouvoir chanter Guillame Tell, et pour le prouver, il attaqua les phrases les plus difficiles du rôle. Manuel, enchanté, lui dit qu'il y avait un changement, mais que ce changement était en mieux, en beaucoup mieux. [...] Les compliments de Manuel et de sa femme ne lui manquèrent pas".

68 Quicherat, *Nourrit* [vol. 3], 410-413. Pleasants' summary of Quicherat's work on Nourrit is the only text published in recent times that has, albeit incidentally, mentioned García's stay in Naples, but it has not been taken into due consideration by scholars who have written about García: Pleasants, *The great tenor tragedy*, 114-118.

69 *Il Pirata*, 23 April 1839.

70 Quicherat, *Nourrit* [vol. 1], 511.

71 Regli, "Eugenia García", 112; Escudier, *Études Biographiques*, 238-9; De La Madelaine, *Théories Complètes*, 298.

72 Fétis, "García (Mme Eugénie)".

73 Fétis, "García (Manuel)".

74 "Mort de Manuel García", *La Liberté*, 3 July 1906; "Nécrologie – Manuel García", *Le Ménestrel*, 8 July 1906.

75 García Tapía, *Manuel García*, 147.

76 Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 114.

fact that García Jr. was a close friend of the great French tenor and that in Naples he had witnessed his tragic death.⁷⁷ These questionable choices led Mackinlay to distort the chronology and geography of events in García jr.'s life that were relevant both professionally and personally. Evidently, Mackinlay's work seems to have prevailed over all other sources of information, becoming a point of reference for later authors who, in treating García's biography, overlooked many important events that preceded and paved the way for the young singing master's final settlement in Paris.

1839-1842: Back in Paris for Full Professional Affirmation

Immediately at Work on the Singing Method

On 9 May 1839, the news of García's arrival in Paris spread rapidly, giving maximum prominence both to the fact he belonged to a very special family and to his experience as a singing teacher.

Manuel García, the brother of Madame Malibran and Pauline García, the most skillful singing teacher of our time, has just arrived in Paris. Garcia's teachings have given the musical world both M. Géraldy and Mme Manuel García, who has just replaced Mme Damoreau at the Opéra-Comique.⁷⁸

This confirms that his fame as a teacher developed in parallel with Eugénie's as a singer. In November, *La France Musicale* reported that he was working on a singing method which was to "be a real event in the music world".⁷⁹ This is the first in a long series of announcements about García's initiatives, all published by *La France Musicale*, a journal that would prove to be particularly attentive to the demands of the young singing maestro. García was thus also about to fulfil the second of the exhortations addressed to him by Paulin Richard at his father's funeral: to publish a singing method illustrating his father's didactics.⁸⁰ On 11 December 1839, Eugénie made her debut at the Opéra-Comique with *Eva*, a reworking of Coppola's *La pazza per Amore*, which she had already sung in Vienna in 1836. This work, which is now rarely performed, enjoyed considerable fame at the time and must have been particularly appreciated by García, who reports no less than seven musical examples of *La pazza per Amore* in his *Traité*.⁸¹ Berlioz's praise testifies to the fact that Eugénie was tremendously successful.⁸² Everything also seemed to be in place for Manuel to establish himself as a teacher in Paris, then the very center of musical life.

77 Mackinlay, 92-94.

78 *La France Musicale*, 6 May 1839: "Manuel García, le frère de madame Malibran et de Pauline García, le plus habile des professeurs de chant de ce temps-ici, vient d'arriver à Paris. C'est aux leçons de M. García que le monde musical doit M. Géraldy et Mme Manuel García, qui vient remplacer Mme Damoreau à l'Opéra-Comique".

79 *La France Musicale*, 3 November 1839: "qui sera un véritable événement dans le monde musical".

80 Richard, "Discours de M. P. R.", 159.

81 García, *Traité Complet en Deux Parties* [vol. 2], 6, 13, 17, 25, 38, 39, 69.

82 Hector Berlioz, "Théâtre de L'Opéra-Comique, Première Représentation d'*Eva*", *Journal des Débats*, 13 December 1839.

At the beginning of 1840, *La France Musicale* reports that García's singing method is almost finished.⁸³ In the spring, however, Eugénie has serious health problems, as a result of which she is often unable to perform; indeed, at one concert rehearsal she even needs medical assistance.⁸⁴ This does not slow down Manuel's activity. On 14 June, *La France Musicale* reports that the method is being printed and confirms that it will be "a vast monument that will bring together the finest theoretical pages ever written on singing, with the best selected examples from ancient and modern musical repertoires alike".⁸⁵ A week later, the same journal announces a series of articles on singing with his signature.⁸⁶ However, only two articles are brought to print the first of which would come out in September, while the other would appear as late as January 1841. This dense succession of announcements, only partially fulfilled and without haste, seems designed to keep the readers' attention while concealing certain difficulties, since other sources inform us that the publication of the singing method was not going as *La France Musicale* suggested. It was during this period that García wrote a letter to the editor of the *Gazette Médicale de Paris* that was reported in the 27 June issue.

Sir, it is only in the last few days that I have come across a memoir published in the *Gazette Médicale* on 16 May, by Mr Diday and Mr Pétrequin, on the physiology of voice. This work interested me all the more because I have just started publishing a singing method in which I deal with the same questions. I have been teaching my art for more than eight years now, during which time I have observed some of the facts recorded in these gentlemen's memoirs; in particular, the fixity of the larynx during the production of the chest register in dark timbre (what these gentlemen call *voix sombrée*). Without wishing in any way to destroy the value of the facts they point out, I think it is my duty, as well as in my interest, to claim a precedence that will be guaranteed by the testimony of all my students and that of several doctors.⁸⁷

Physiologists Diday and Pétrequin are the authors of the *Mémoire sur une nouvelle espèce de voix chantée*, work dedicated to the 'voix sombrée', i.e., the emission that the tenor Gilbert Duprez, after having practised it in Italy, had proposed with resounding success on the stage of the Paris Académie Royale de Musique in April 1837.

83 *La France Musicale*, 25 January 1840.

84 *Journal des Débats*, 27 March 1840.

85 *La France Musicale*, 14 June 1840: "un vaste monument qui réunira les plus belles pages théoriques qu'on ait encore écrites sur le chant, aux exemples les mieux choisis du répertoire musical, ancien et moderne".

86 *La France Musicale*, 21 June 1840.

87 *Gazette Médicale de Paris*, 27 June 1840: "Monsieur, j'ai eu connaissance seulement ces jours-ci d'un mémoire, publié dans la *Gazette Médicale* le 16 mai, par MM. Diday et Pétrequin, sur la physiologie de la voix. Ce travail m'a d'autant plus intéressé que je viens de mettre sous presse une méthode de chant, dans laquelle je traite les mêmes questions. Il y a plus de huit ans que l'enseignement de mon art m'a conduit à constater quelques-uns des faits consignés dans le mémoire de ces messieurs ; notamment la fixité du larynx pendant la production du registre de poitrine en timbre sombre - ce que ces messieurs appellent *voix sombrée*. Sans prétendre détruire en rien la valeur des faits qu'ils signalent, je pense qu'il est de mon devoir aussi bien que de mon intérêt de réclamer une antériorité qui aura pour garantie le témoignage de tous mes élèves et celui de quelques médecins".

This *Mémoire* had been published in the *Gazette Médicale de Paris* on 16 May.⁸⁸ Shortly afterwards, on 1 June 1840, it had also been presented to the Académie des Sciences de Paris.⁸⁹ The two physiologists replied to García with a letter to the editor dated 29 June:

The latest issue of the *Gazette Médicale* (27th June) contains a complaint from Mr Manuel García about our paper on voix sombrée. This complaint is based on the announcement of a work in press, in which the author says the same questions will be dealt with, as well as on some verbal communications with his friends. [...] However, up to now, the announcement of a work that is to be published and a few oral confidences to his friends have not been considered sufficient proof of anteriority. So far, no one has thought himself entitled to claim the honour of a new theory, simply because he has come across one of the facts whose contemplation has led other minds to its discovery. [...] We shall wait until his work has been published to judge to what extent his theory differs from ours or resembles it.⁹⁰

García was claiming “the honor of a new theory” on a rather precarious basis, as well highlighted by Diday and Pétrequin, but he did not hesitate to engage in a polemic to be recognised as fully competent on a subject that he evidently deemed very important.⁹¹ It should be noted that, in attesting his precedence, García did not refer to a scientific work but only to a singing method. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that, at least until the first half of 1840, he thought only of writing on a method of singing, into which he would probably insert a part devoted to physiological observations. To prove the veracity of what he wrote to the editor of the *Gazette Médicale de Paris* and to reply to Diday and Pétrequin, García could have accelerated the completion of the work on the method long announced in *La France Musicale*. The documents, however, outline quite a different strategy. On 3 August 1840, shortly after Eugénie, who had recovered, returned to the stage,⁹² Manuel wrote a letter to the ‘Ministre de l’Intérieur’ asking to be appointed professor of singing at the Paris Conservatoire. The document reveals that, strange as it may sound on the part of an applicant, García’s conditions were very strict: to choose his pupils personally, to be their only teacher and, above all, to follow his own teaching principles exclusively.

88 Diday and Pétrequin, “Mémoire sur une nouvelle espèce de voix chantante”, *Gazette Médicale de Paris*, 16 May 1840.

89 *Comptes Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l’Académie des Sciences*, 1 June 1840, 869.

90 *Gazette Médicale de Paris*, 18 July 1840: “Le dernier numéro de la *Gazette Médicale* (27 juin), contient une réclamation de M. Manuel García, à propos de notre mémoire sur la voix sombrée. Cette réclamation est appuyée sur l’annonce d’un ouvrage sous presse ; où seront, dit l’auteur, traités les mêmes questions, et sur quelques communications verbales à ses amis. [...] Or, jusqu’ici on n’a point considéré comme un titre suffisant d’antériorité, l’annonce d’un ouvrage à paraître, et quelques confidences orales à ses amis. Jusqu’ici, nul ne s’est cru autorisé à revendiquer l’honneur d’une théorie nouvelle, par cela seul qu’il aurait rencontré un des faits dont la méditation a conduit d’autres esprits à sa découverte. [...] Nous attendrons que son ouvrage ait paru pour juger jusqu’à quel point sa théorie diffère de la nôtre, ou lui ressemble”.

91 Some highlights of the dispute between García and Diday and Pétrequin, although lacking documentary references related to García’s biography, are given in Bloch, “The Pathological Voice”, 17–18.

92 *Le Ménestrel*, 19 July 1840.

I would like a singing class made up of students who I think have all the required skills. I would direct their vocal studies exclusively. No teaching method would be imposed on me, as I wish to use only that of my father.⁹³

The Minister replies to him that his prestige is undisputed, but that introducing a specific teaching method would require the consent of the director and the steering committee. He therefore refuses García's request and suggests that he submit his method for approval

I could not give it [i.e., the class] to you under the conditions you have requested. The teaching at the Conservatoire is uniform; it is directed by a committee and by the Director; and it could only be with their consent that a different method may be introduced. For the time being, therefore, I can only express my regrets to you and urge you to submit your plans to the Director of the Conservatoire, so as to secure his assent. I will then hasten to comply with your wishes.⁹⁴

It is therefore reasonable to assume that García's singing method, which included pages expressly devoted to the 'voix sombrée,' was primarily aimed at obtaining a teaching appointment with special autonomy at the Paris Conservatoire. This intention, subsequently, was seriously undermined by Diday and Pétrequin's *Mémoire*. But why did García choose to submit to the Minister a request that was inadequately supported and, consequently, destined to be rejected? Instead of receiving a refusal and a request for publication from the Minister, he could, rather, have hastened the printing of the *Traité*, which had already been announced in the columns of *La France Musicale*, quoted to the editor of the *Gazette Médicale*, and solicited by Diday and Pétrequin. The answer to this question comes from a careful analysis of the available documents. García tried to forward his request anyway, knowing that the *Traité*'s publication would be delayed since he was giving priority to another work.

A Change of Strategy: the Controversy with Diday and Pétrequin and the Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine

In the fall of 1840, García opted for a particular strategy. While *La France Musicale* was once again reiterating that the singing method was in press by publishing a

93 Letter from Manuel García to the Minister, 3 Aug. 1840 in the Archive National de France, Dossier d'Artistes, Dossier Manuel García, AJ-37-69/3 (hereafter ANF/Manuel García): "Je désirerais une classe de chant composée d'élèves qui auraient, selon moi, toutes les facultés requises. Je dirigerais exclusivement leurs études vocales. Aucune méthode d'enseignement ne me serait imposée, désirant n'employer que celle de mon père". Singing students at the Paris Conservatoire in those years had one teacher for vocalization and one for operatic declamation.

94 ANF/Manuel García, AJ-37-69/3, Minute of the letter of the Minister to Manuel García, 6 Sept. 1840: "je ne pourrais vous la donner [la classe] dans les conditions que vous mettez à votre sollicitation. L'enseignement du Conservatoire est uniforme ; il est dirigé par un comité et par le Directeur ; et ce ne pourrait être qu'avec leur consentement qu'une méthode différente pourrait y être introduite. Je ne puis donc quant à présent que vous exprimez tous mes regrets, et vous engager à soumettre vos projets à M. le Directeur du Conservatoire, à vous assurer de son assentiment. Je m'empresserai alors d'acquiescer au vœu que vous m'exprimez".

brief excerpt,⁹⁵ he decided to challenge Diday and Pétrequin on their own ground by undertaking a physiological study. This was presented on 16 November 1840 at the Paris' Académie des Sciences under the title *Mémoire sur la voix Humaine*. On this occasion, only a very short summary of García's work was published in the reports of the academic session.⁹⁶ The entire original *Mémoire* was not published and remained in manuscript form.⁹⁷ It is worth noting that Mackinlay claims the diatribe with the two physiologists arose because of the singing master's *Mémoire*, whereas in fact the reverse is true.⁹⁸

On 22 November, *La France Musicale* announces that García's method will be released simultaneously in France, England, Germany and Italy, thus outlining an international publishing plan.⁹⁹ The first issue of the journal in 1841 gives yet another announcement of the forthcoming publication of the method, together with a short extract.¹⁰⁰ The first issue of the *Gazette Médicale* of 1841, by contrast, blames the many conflicts of 1840 by reporting some examples, including the dispute that pitted Diday and Pétrequin against García; in this regard, the *Gazette* takes the opportunity to point out that the singing master formally acknowledged the precedence of the two physiologists.¹⁰¹ García does not reply, perhaps because at this point, more than the response of the *Gazette Médicale*, which is clearly as favorable to the two physiologists as *La France Musicale* is to him, he awaits the 'super partes' judgment of the Académie des Sciences. Finally, the report of the academic commission was read and approved at the session of 12 April.¹⁰² The preparation of the academic report took longer than expected because two commissioners, Savart and Savary, had to be replaced due to their precarious state of health. The report praises García's work, judging it broader and more articulate than that of Diday and Pétrequin; nevertheless, it adopts a central notion from the work of the two physiologists, affirming that the 'voix sombrée' is "a particular voice that had only been known in France for three years, having been imported from Italy by a famous artist connected with our major opera house".¹⁰³ This is unacceptable to García, who, as we have seen, denies from the very first letter to the editor of the *Gazette Médicale* any novelty in the 'sombrée' emission. Consequently, he does not hesitate to be punctilious even with the academic commissioners. Just a week later, he writes again to the Académie to reiterate his precedence over Diday and Pétrequin and to insist that the 'voix sombrée' is by no means a new kind of vocal emission:

95 *La France Musicale*, 27 September 1840.

96 *Comptes Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, 16 November 1840, 815-816.

97 Archives de l'Académie des Sciences de Paris, Dossier de séance du 12 avril 1841.

98 Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 131.

99 Manuel García, "Émission et Qualité de la Voix / Manière de Placer la Bouche", *La France Musicale*, 22 November 1840, 354.

100 Manuel García, "De l'Enseignement du Chant", *La France Musicale*, 3 January 1841, 1-3.

101 *Gazette Médicale de Paris*, 9 January 1841.

102 *Comptes Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, 12 April 1841, 638-644.

103 *Comptes Rendus*, 12 April 1841, 642: "la voix sombrée, voix particulière qui n'était alors connue que depuis trois ans en France, où elle a été importée d'Italie par un artiste célèbre attaché à notre première scène lyrique". Following Diday and Pétrequin, the members of the academic committee allude here to Gilbert Duprez, the tenor that had a tremendous success at Paris Opéra in 1837, after returning from Italy, where he had lived and sung for several years.

Before Mr Diday and Mr Pétrequin had established, in their Mémoire, the fixity of the larynx during the emission of all the tones of the scale in dark timbre, I have been teaching it for several consecutive years. As early as 1832, I communicated this fact to Doctors Hippolyte Larrey and Edouard Louis, whose honourable testimony I am not afraid to invoke. Since then, I have taught it to all those entrusted to my instruction.¹⁰⁴

García states that he began teaching the lowered position of the larynx in 1832. Similarly, in his 1840 letter to the editor of the *Gazette Médicale* he wrote that he had been teaching it for more than eight years, which, subtracted from 1840, gives precisely 1832. Only a few days later, Paulin Richard, in an essay accompanying the publication of the academic report in the columns of *La France Musicale*, stigmatizing the commissioners' words with a nonchalance bordering on irreverence, wrote:

The members of the academic committee are such good observers they cannot have failed to notice that this so-called special voice has not been imported by anyone in France or elsewhere. The obscure timbre, for it must be called by its name, has existed for as long as there have been obscure syllables, and each of us has spent his life using obscure timbre without knowing it, just as M. Jourdain did with prose.¹⁰⁵

The two physiologists, no less tenacious than the singing teacher, submitted a complaint that was read at a subsequent session of the Académie.¹⁰⁶ In May 1841, García's *Mémoire* was published in two issues in a medical journal, *L'Esculape*.¹⁰⁷ *La France Musicale* did the same, but in four issues.¹⁰⁸ The simultaneous publication in a journal for physicians and one for musicians underlines not only the dual nature of the *Mémoire*, but also García's extensive background in physiology, which set him apart from all his contemporaries. In May 1847 the *Mémoire* was published again with some changes.¹⁰⁹ This final version was then included in the second edition of the *Traité* discussed below.

Publication of the *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*

The dispute with Diday and Pétrequin had thus found its tacit conclusion, but the singing method remained unpublished. In August 1841, a new announcement appeared:

¹⁰⁴ *Comptes Rendus*, 19 April 1841, 692: "Avant que MM. Diday et Pétrequin eussent établi, dans leur Mémoire, la fixité du larynx pendant l'émission de tous les tons de la gamme en timbre sombre, je l'avais enseignée pendant plusieurs années consécutives. Dès 1832 j'ai communiqué ce fait à MM. les docteurs Hippolyte Larrey et Edouard Louis, au témoignage honorable desquels je ne crains pas d'en appeler. Depuis, je l'ai enseigné à toutes les personnes que j'étais chargé d'instruire".

¹⁰⁵ *La France Musicale*, 25 April 1841: "MM. les commissaires sont trop bons observateurs pour n'avoir pas remarqué que cette prétendue voix particulière n'a été importée par personne en France ni ailleurs. Le timbre obscur, car il faut l'appeler par son nom, existe depuis qu'il y a des syllabes obscures, et chacun de nous a passé sa vie à faire du timbre obscur sans le savoir, comme M. Jourdain de la prose". The 'M. Jourdain' quoted in the article is the main character of Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*.

¹⁰⁶ *Comptes Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, 5 May 1841, 797.

¹⁰⁷ García, "Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine", *L'Esculape, Gazette des Médecins-Praticiens*, 9 May 1841, 23 May 1841.

¹⁰⁸ García, "Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine", *La France Musicale*, 9 May 1841, 16 May 1841, 23 May 1841, 30 May 1841.

¹⁰⁹ García, *Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine*.

ared, with no follow-up, like the previous ones.¹¹⁰ The slow progress of the publication of the singing method confirms that the work was suspended around June 1840 to give precedence to the *Mémoire*. The delay, however, may also have been influenced by other events, both familial and professional. In fact, another announcement given on the same page informs us that Mme García, having recently given birth, would soon be able to return to the stage. The impact of his wife's precarious state of health and the birth of a third child is therefore not to be underestimated.¹¹¹ It should also be noted that in the same period García's activity as a singing teacher was particularly demanding. For three years, he guided Henriette Nissen's training and, in 1841, followed her debut on the stage of the Théâtre des Italiens, first as Adalgisa in *Norma* alongside Grisi and then as the acclaimed Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* by Rossini, in place of Persiani. From the end of August 1841 to July 1842, he also worked on the vocal rehabilitation of Jenny Lind, who soon rose to become one of the foremost stars of the operatic world of that era.¹¹²

Finally, the release of the method, titled *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*, is recorded on 6 November 1841.¹¹³ The first advertisement appeared, as expected, in *La France Musicale*, on 14 November, a full year and a half after the same journal had written that it was already in press.¹¹⁴ The complexity of the publication process is clearly revealed by the contradiction between "MDCCCXL" of the title page, which was probably printed before the controversy between García and Diday and Pétrequin had begun, and the year "1841" on the following page in the subtitle "Extrait des Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Sciences, séance du 12 avril 1841", beneath the title of the academic commission's "Rapport sur le Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine", which is reproduced in full.¹¹⁵ A footnote to the academic *Rapport* mentions the date of the presentation of the *Mémoire* to the Académie.¹¹⁶ The *Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine* was partially published in the *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant* under the title "Extrait du Mémoire présenté à l'Académie des Sciences", as part of the chapter headed "Description abrégée de l'appareil humain".¹¹⁷

It is important to note that the *Bibliographie de la France* attests to the title *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*, while *La France Musicale* advertises the *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant en Deux Parties*, informing the public that the second part will be published in early 1842. The *Traité* published in 1841, in fact, did not include the musical examples that an advertisement in *La France Musicale* had announced in June 1840.¹¹⁸ The second part would not be printed until 1847, with the new edition of the method

110 *La France Musicale*, 15 August 1841.

111 *La France Musicale*, 15 August 1841. The third child is Maria Rodriguez, born on 30 July 1841; see Archives de Paris, État civil reconstitué, 5-Mi-1-511.

112 Holland and Rockstro, *Memoir of Madame Jenny Lind* [vol. 1], 115.

113 *Bibliographie de la France ou Journal Général de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie*, 6 November 1841, 552.

114 *La France Musicale*, 14 November 1841.

115 García, *Traité Complet*, vii.

116 García, *Traité Complet*, viii.

117 García, *Traité Complet*, x-xvi.

118 *La France Musicale*, 14 June 1840.

definitively entitled *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant en Deux Parties*.¹¹⁹ On this occasion, García included the *Mémoire* published in May of the same year by Duverger.

The Appointment as ‘Professeur de Chant’ at the Paris Conservatoire

Lastly, on 10 September 1842, García was appointed professor of singing at the Paris Conservatoire with effect from 15 November of the same year.¹²⁰ It is highly probable that the breadth of the *Traité* helped remove any doubt about the young maestro’s teaching abilities. No document attests to the fact he submitted his work to a commission, as suggested at the time by the Minister, nor that he insisted on teaching autonomy. Even without official declarations, however, the ‘voix sombrée,’ i.e., the core of the dispute between García and the two physiologists and the cornerstone of his teaching, was recognised by the Paris Conservatoire. This recognition came at the same time as the appointment of the champion of the ‘voix sombrée’: Gilbert Duprez. *La France Musicale*, of course, praised the choices made by Daniel Auber, the new Conservatoire’s Director after Luigi Cherubini.

Mr. Auber [...] has appointed Duprez and García, singing teachers [...]. It has been a long time since we asked for the position that has finally been granted to them. May Mr Auber continue to pursue the reforms with the same vigor, the same spirit of justice and the same intelligence, and he will meet with nothing but approval.¹²¹

By *La France Musicale*’s own admission, the reports on García published by the journal between 1839 and 1842 were part of a conscious ‘media action’ aimed at favouring García and Duprez and, at the same time, at ‘reforming’ the teaching of singing at the Conservatoire.

The Need for a Clear Summary regarding Reference Texts

In such a complex succession of events, and in the absence of any in-depth biographical study, it is not surprising that there is often a difference between the information provided by primary sources and the data reported by reference texts such as monographs, specialist articles, and the latest editions of biographical and music dictionaries. Consequently, today’s researchers can be easily disoriented by reading discordant or erroneous reports on García’s works and on the beginning of his teaching at the Paris Conservatory. It would be very interesting to illustrate how such confusion arose, but that would overextend this study; nevertheless, it is useful to provide a brief overview of the data reported by the main secondary sources.

¹¹⁹ *Bibliographie de la France ou Journal Général de l’Imprimerie et de la Librairie*, 21 August 1847, 403.

¹²⁰ ANF/Manuel García, AJ-37-69: Ministerial act 2131.

¹²¹ *La France Musicale*, 18 September 1842: “M. Auber [...] a fait nommer MM. Duprez et García, professeurs de chant [...]. Il y a longtemps que nous avons demandé [...] la place qui vient enfin de leur être accordé. Que M. Auber continue à opérer des réformes avec la même vigueur, le même esprit de justice et la même intelligence, et il ne rencontrera que des approbateurs”.

As mentioned above, the *Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine* can be associated with several events: its presentation to the Académie des Sciences, the report made by the academic committee, its summary publication in the first edition of the *Traité*, and finally its expanded publication both in autonomous form and in the second edition of the *Traité*. These events have often been used, mistakenly, as references to date the *Mémoire* to one or more among the years 1840, 1841 and 1847. The majority of texts indicate correctly 1840 as the year of its presentation to the Académie des Sciences.¹²² Other texts mistakenly date the presentation of the *Mémoire* to April 12, 1841, linking it explicitly to the *Comptes rendus* of the academy.¹²³ This evidently results from a misunderstanding of an indication given in the *Traité* that does not refer to the presentation of the *Mémoire* (which took place on November 16, 1840), but to the approval of the *Rapport* of the academic commission on the *Mémoire*.¹²⁴ Mackinlay is the only author who distinguishes between the date of submission to the Académie and the date of the rapport's approval, and thus correctly dates both events.¹²⁵ Concerning the year of publication of the *Mémoire*, some texts incorrectly indicate 1840, likely relying on the frontispiece of the *Traité* where it is listed.¹²⁶ The publication of the *Mémoire* is also dated 1841 by some texts. Three of them do refer to the *Comptes* cited in the *Traité*, but this is incorrect as the *Comptes* contain the *Rapport* of the academic committee on the *Mémoire*, and not the *Mémoire* itself.¹²⁷ Two of them do not provide any references to explain why they propose such a year.¹²⁸ Finally, one text mentions the 1847 edition of the *Mémoire* published by Duverger.¹²⁹ It is to be noted that the publications given in May 1841 by *L'Esculape* and by *La France Musicale* are not reported in any text, even though they were the very first editions of the *Mémoire* and the only ones that carry the entire original work.

Regarding the *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*, two texts mention only the edition of 1840, relying on the wrong year given in the frontispiece.¹³⁰ Following the same approach, four texts date the first edition, incorrectly, to 1840 and the second, correctly, to 1847.¹³¹ One text correctly assigns the first edition to 1841 and the second one to 1847, but does not explain the reason for replacing 1840 with 1841.¹³² Some texts choose to mention only the 1847 edition, which indeed is the definitive

122 García Tapía, *Manuel García*, 143; Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 130; Levien, *The Garcia Family*, 14; García, *School of Garcia* [vol. 2], viii; Fitzlyon, "García Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez)"; Sloniinsky et al., "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez"; Corder, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez"; Fernández and Tamaro, "Biografía de Manuel Patricio García".

123 Fitzlyon and [James] Radomski, "Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez) García"; Radomski, [James,] "García, Manuel Patricio [Manuel Patricio Rodriguez Sitches]"; Radomski, [Teresa,] *Manuel García (1805-1906)*, 27; Cousin, *Manuel García fils*.

124 García, *Traité Complet*, vii.

125 Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 130-131.

126 Beghelli and [James] Radomski, "García, Manuel (Patricio)"; *Grosses Sängerlexikon*, 4. ed., s.v. "García, Manuel jr".

127 Beghelli and [James] Radomski, "García, Manuel (Patricio)"; Fitzlyon and [James] Radomski, "Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez) García"; Radomski, [James,] "García, Manuel Patricio [Manuel Patricio Rodriguez Sitches]".

128 Mioli, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez"; Corder, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez".

129 Quirós Rosado, "Rodríguez Sitches, Manuel Patricio (Manuel Patricio García)".

130 Fitzlyon, "García Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez)"; Corder, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez".

131 Radomski, [Teresa,] *Manuel García (1805-1906)*, 27; Quirós Rosado, "Rodríguez Sitches, Manuel Patricio (Manuel Patricio García)"; Fitzlyon and [James] Radomski, "Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez) García" (this latter marks "1840-47/R" to indicate that the second edition is a reprint – information that is only partially correct, because in 1847 the second part was published for the first time); Cousin, *Manuel García fils*.

132 García, *School of Garcia* [vol. 2], viii.

two-part edition, but only one gives the correct title, *Traité Complet de l'art du Chant en Deux Parties*;¹³³ the other cite the title of the first edition, *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*.¹³⁴ One particular case should be noted: the entry devoted to García in one dictionary mentions only the 1847 edition of the *Traité*, but with the incomplete title *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant* instead of *Traité Complet de l'art du Chant en Deux Parties*. In the same entry, however, there also is a list of García's works that includes the first edition of the *Traité* with the correct title *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant* but the wrong year, 1840; furthermore a third edition dated 1851 is also reported.¹³⁵ This news probably comes from the *Bibliographie de la France*, which, however, clearly mentions only a third edition of the first part.¹³⁶ Another text confusingly summarises various information and cites a two-part 1840 edition and a three-part 1851 edition, both under the title *Traité Complet de l'Art du Chant*, which was in fact the title of the first one-part edition.¹³⁷ Finally, only one text indicates both editions, clearly pointing out the need to correct the year 1840 of the first edition with "recte 1841".¹³⁸

The beginning of García's teaching at the Paris Conservatory is attributed to the correct year, 1842, only by a small number of texts.¹³⁹ Mackinlay assigns this event to 1835: "It has always been said that the post was given to him by Auber, but investigations show that this is incorrect. Auber was not appointed director of the Conservatory until 1842".¹⁴⁰ This statement, although incorrect, has been treated as reliable by the authors of many subsequent texts.¹⁴¹ However, most texts assign it to 1847, a year for which no documentary evidence exists.¹⁴²

Conclusions and Research Perspectives

It is thus evident that a substantial lack of information limits current knowledge of Manuel García Jr.'s early life as a voice teacher, researcher and author. This is unfortunate because he is an important witness to a period of strong change in the history of vocal art. This is exemplified by Duprez's success on the stages of the Paris Opéra, after which the 'voix sombrée' became a topic of lively debate among singers and audiences alike.

García engaged in a heated controversy against Diday and Pétrequin, seeking public acknowledgement of his precedence over them thanks to his long experience in

133 García Tapia, *Manuel García*, 144.

134 Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 166; Levien, *The García Family*, 16; Slonimsky et al., "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez"; Grosses Sängerlexikon, 4. ed., s.v. "García, Manuel jr".

135 Radomski, [James], "García, Manuel Patricio [Manuel Patricio Rodriguez Sitches]."

136 *Bibliographie de la France ou Journal Général de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie*, 26 July 1851, 400.

137 Mioli, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez".

138 Beghelli and [James] Radomski, "García, Manuel (Patricio)".

139 Levien, *The García Family*, 16; Mioli, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez".

140 Mackinlay, *García the Centenarian*, 165–166.

141 Radomski, [Teresa], *Manuel García (1805–1906)*, 27; Radomski, [James], "García, Manuel Patricio [Manuel Patricio Rodriguez Sitches]"; Quirós Rosado, "Rodríguez Sitches, Manuel Patricio (Manuel Patricio García)"; Beghelli and [James] Radomski, "García, Manuel (Patricio)"; Cousin, *Manuel García fils*.

142 Fitzlyon and [James] Radomski, "Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez) García"; Fitzlyon, "García Manuel (Patricio Rodriguez)"; Slonimsky et al., "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez"; Grosses Sängerlexikon, 4. ed., s.v. "García, Manuel jr"; Corder, "García, Manuel Patricio Rodriguez".

teaching what they called ‘voix sombrée.’ He explicitly claimed that his expertise in ‘voix sombrée’ begun in 1832, a fact explained only by knowing that in that year he interrupted his collaboration with his father and teacher Manuel García Sr., who died shortly thereafter. Following this event, he was entrusted with completing the training of Cécile Eugénie Mayer, who soon became his wife and his first pupil to achieve stardom. He himself stated publicly that, in fulfilling this task, he had applied his own convictions. From 1835 to 1839, in his dual role of husband and teacher, Manuel Jr. lived with Eugénie in Italy when the works of Bellini and Donizetti prevailed over those of Rossini and Cimarosa.

In the same period, Duprez lived for several years in Italy before returning to sing triumphantly in Paris, in 1837, undermining Nourrit’s position in front of the Parisian audience. As a result, Nourrit decided to go to Naples to practice ‘voix sombrée.’ His endorsement of a different emission from the one learned under Manuel García Sr. received the warm approval of Manuel Jr. and of Eugénie. It is worth remembering that Diday, Pétrequin, and the members of the academic commission believed that ‘voix sombrée’ was a “nouvelle espèce de voix chantée” that Duprez had brought to Paris from Italy.

García, on the contrary, denied both its novelty and geographical origin, as he did not wish to regard it as a particular way of singing entirely discontinuous with the past. To demonstrate his conviction, he tried to analyse the ‘voix sombrée’ by systematically comparing traditional Italian didactics with physiological science focusing in particular on vocal timbres. In any case, García was fully aware that the ‘voix sombrée,’ whether new or not, was nonetheless a vocal phenomenon characteristic of his era. He embraced it wholeheartedly and sought to promote it, even questioning the teaching principles of his father’s school (exemplified by Nourrit’s way of singing before his trip to Italy), and entering into controversy with those who, like Diday and Pétrequin, challenged his primacy. This is the core of the *Mémoire*, which, therefore, cannot in any way be separated from the *Traité*, from the call to teach at the Paris Conservatoire, and finally, from the intense media campaign of *La France Musicale* in advocating for the establishment of a ‘reformed’ school of singing at the Conservatoire. Both the *Mémoire* and the *Traité*, consequently, constitute an invaluable reservoir of first-hand information on the art of singing in the first decades of the 19th-century, and their in-depth study could provide many answers to scholars’ questions about the era that saw the transition from bel canto to melodrama. This information, however, can only be adequately understood and evaluated together with a detailed knowledge of García’s biographical milestones, which are a faithful reflection of the historical context in which he lived. This work has sought to outline the prerequisites necessary for further research in this field.

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