

Musical Sociability in the Parisian Chaussée d'Antin District (1830–1850)

Louise Bernard de Raymond

The nineteenth century marked a time when the Parisian bourgeoisie retreated into the intimacy of the private sphere. This used to be a commonplace of literary history.¹ Indeed, work in material history has shown how the search for comfort in Parisian apartments involved the gradual adoption of technical devices allowing for “a break from the outside world ... the muffling of sounds and the obscuring of views.”² Nevertheless, as Sharon Marcus has shown in *Apartment Stories*, nineteenth-century bourgeois buildings in Paris were not “enclosed cells, sealed off from urban streets, markets, and labor,” but rather “fluid spaces perceived to be happily or dangerously communicating with more overtly public terrain.”³ However, although Marcus’s brilliant work is centered on an analysis of two apartment-house novels in which music plays an important role (Balzac’s *Le Cousin Pons* and Zola’s *Pot-Bouille*), musical matters are surprisingly little considered.⁴ Yet not only does music have the ability to pass through doors, windows, and walls; beyond sound, musicians and their practices circulate between the home and the street. This ability to blur the boundaries between these places makes music a privileged phenomenon, particularly so if one wishes to rethink the interdependent relationship between domestic and urban life.⁵

1 Michelle Perrot, ed., *Histoire de la vie privée*, vol. 4, *De la Révolution à la Grande Guerre* (Paris: Seuil, 1987).

2 Manuel Charpy, *Le Théâtre des objets. Espaces privés, culture matérielle et identité bourgeoise. Paris, 1830–1914* (PhD diss., Université de Tours, 2010), 24.

3 Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2–3.

4 Marcus, 74–6, 178–80.

5 Raising similar questions about the circulation of sound between private and public spaces, Jacek Blaszkiewicz examines the institution of the café-concert and the sonic impact of street music in *Fanfare for a City: Music and the Urban Imagination in Haussmann’s Paris* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2024).

A photograph of rue Saint-Lazare, taken by Charles Marville in the mid-1860s, illustrates this tension between the desire for withdrawal and the porosity of domestic space (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 – Charles Marville, *Photographie de la rue Saint-Lazare depuis la rue Taitbout*, Paris, Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris, fonds Charles Marville, ca. 1868.

On the surface, the photograph gives an impression of silence: it seems to reveal a hermetic boundary between the buildings and the street. The street, in the Parisian district of Chaussée d'Antin, seems deserted: no pedestrians, beggars, street vendors, street singers, vehicles, or buses disturb the tranquility of the inhabitants, who are hidden behind high facades with closed shutters. Yet this impression is above all a product of the technical constraints of photographic practice in the 1850s and 1860s. The long exposure times required by the process made it impossible to capture movement, thus contributing to the pervasive image of a deserted Paris conveyed by Marville's photographs of this period—a closer look at the sidewalks in this photograph reveals elongated shadows, which in fact correspond to passing pedestrians.⁶ Indeed, it is likely that, as he walked the street, Charles Marville heard a universe of sounds that escaped the photograph: a peal of bells from the Trinité Church (seen in the background); or piano music emerging from one of the apartments that line the street. One thing is certain: if the photographer had walked the route two decades earlier, he would have heard instrumental music coming from the apartment on the second floor of the second building on the left.⁷ This apartment was then occupied by an amateur musician, Louis-Philippe Girod de Vienne, Baron de Trémont, who organized regular chamber music meetings (so-called *séances*) between 1839 and 1848.⁸ A few yards away, another amateur from the same circle, the pharmacist Paul-Antoine Gratacap (known as Cap), held similar meetings for many years in his home at 9 rue des Trois-frères.⁹ The apartments of these two close friends were centers of musical sociability in an artistic neighborhood then undergoing a renaissance. According to a tradition inherited from the *ancien régime*, professionals and amateurs from the Chaussée d'Antin mingled every winter, on Friday evenings at Cap's house, on Sunday afternoons at Trémont's, to play instrumental music together (see Fig. 2).

6 Patrice de Moncan, *Charles Marvilles. Paris photographié au temps d'Haussmann* (Paris: Éditions du Mécène, 2009), 15.

7 But not the bells of the Trinité, conceived by the architect Théodore Ballu, between 1861 and 1867.

8 Between 1819 and 1838, Trémont hosted such meetings in the apartment he was renting on rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin, in the same district as the Chaussée d'Antin.

9 The sources do not allow us to determine the precise period of Cap's meetings. His correspondence confirms that they were held for sure in the 1830s and 1840s but possibly even before. On the organization of Trémont's *séances*, see Louise Bernard de Raymond, "La galerie du baron de Trémont, lieu de musique sous la monarchie de Juillet. Espace domestique, pratiques musicales et identité nobiliaire," *Revue de musicologie* 110, nos. 1–2 (2024): 43–72.

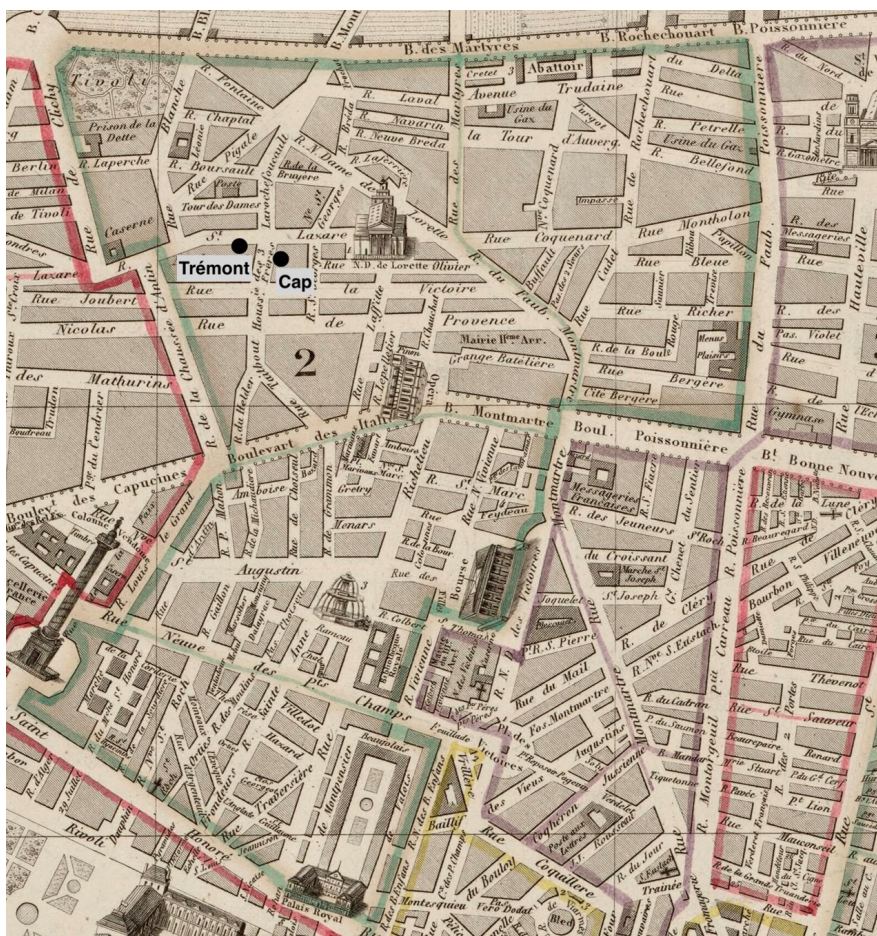


Fig. 2 – The homes of Trémont and Cap, 1830–1850. Charles Dyonnet, *Nouveau plan ou guide de l'étranger dans Paris* (Paris: Logerot, 1841). BnF, Gallica.

Although these meetings took place in private homes, with listeners invited by the hosts, they operated on the same organizational and seasonal principles as the public concerts with which they were somehow in competition. The Cap and Trémont *séances* took place approximately every two weeks during the Parisian concert season (from November to April) and were based on programs that were partly known in advance. The amateurs and professionals, both performers and listeners, were the same as those who made up the orchestra and the audience of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire or the Paris Opéra. Cap and Trémont thus had to coordinate with numerous musical events in the neighborhood, if only to ensure that their guests were

not already booked. Even if little information circulated in the press about these meetings,¹⁰ they were fully engaged with public musical life.

This article will thus not treat these *séances* as isolated phenomena. Rather, my aim will be to understand the extent to which they contributed to shaping the neighborhood's musical life in the second quarter of the nineteenth century; and, conversely, how the rapidly changing musical life shaped forms of sociability between amateurs and professionals. Indeed, if, as Sharon Marcus has stated, "like the city ... the apartment house provides a unifying frame for heterogeneity" in Parisian society,¹¹ conversely the neighborhood can be regarded by its inhabitants as "a vast domestic space, a large family house with adjoining rooms," as Rémy Campos has shown in his article on the Parisian *quartier de la chanson* at the end of the nineteenth century.¹² I will therefore examine two interdependent spaces: the Cap and Trémont apartments on the one hand; and the Chaussée d'Antin neighborhood on the other.

The first part of this article will seek to understand the spatial inscription of these apartments within the musical topography of the Chaussée d'Antin in the 1830s and 1840s. This neighborhood, more than any other, was the site of a transformation of musical life in the wake of the French Revolution. The few streets on the right bank of the Seine—between the Boulevard des Italiens and the Boulevard Montmartre to the south, the Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière to the east, the Boulevard des Martyrs to the north, and the Rue de Clichy and the Chaussée d'Antin to the west—as well as a few neighboring streets, formed a dense web of public institutions and businesses linked to this new musical life.¹³ I will first present a map highlighting the

10 I have found only one mention of the Trémont meetings in the press and none about Cap; by comparison, the salon of pianist Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman, also located on rue Saint-Lazare, was the subject of very regular articles. A search in Gallica and Retronews has allowed me to identify nearly 90 articles devoted to the Zimmermann salon (announcements of meetings or reports) between 1833 and 1845 in *Revue musicale de Paris*, *Gazette musicale de Paris* (later *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*), *Vert-vert*, *Le Journal de Paris*, *Le Ménestrel*, *La France musicale*, and *La Sylphide*.

11 Marcus, *Apartment Stories*, 12.

12 Rémy Campos, "Le quartier parisien de la chanson de la fin du XIX^e siècle aux années 1930," *Histoire urbaine* 26, no. 3 (2009): 85. The *quartier de la chanson*, as its contemporaries called it, brought together a group of streets located in Paris's 10th arrondissement. At the end of his article, Campos suggested that the complex of *Nouvelle Athènes*, located on the Chaussée d'Antin, was "the model of the modern art district" in the 1830s and 1840s.

13 This perimeter corresponds to the division officially established during the Directory and the Consulate. Paris was then divided into 12 arrondissements and 48 neighborhoods.

density of musical institutions, professions, professionals, and amateurs in the district: a design that is based on recent work on concert venues and instrument makers, as well as on musical diaries from the 1830s. The remainder of the article will attempt to access the professionals and amateurs in their own words: beyond its topographical reality, the Chaussée d'Antin district was, above all, a space, understood as a “practiced place,” to use Michel de Certeau’s celebrated formula.¹⁴ In this framework, the Chaussée d'Antin as geometrically defined by urban planning constitutes a place; but as experienced and practiced by its musicians—through their daily movements, encounters, and sociabilities—it becomes a space. My aim is to highlight the way in which these musicians understood the articulation between domestic and public musical spaces. This form of research relies on the triangulation of sources of a varied nature, necessitated by the fact that such private chamber music meetings left, by definition, few traces. In addition to unpublished sources on contemporary musicians, written by Trémont to complete his collection of autograph letters,¹⁵ I will make use of Trémont’s and Cap’s correspondence with the musicians in their circle,¹⁶ their journals and memoirs,¹⁷ their musical scores, and also archival

It was not until 1860 that Paris was redrawn into the 20 arrondissements it has today; see Philippe Vigier, *Nouvelle histoire de Paris. Paris pendant la monarchie de Juillet (1830–1848)* (Paris: Hachette, 1991), 233.

¹⁴ Throughout this article, I will continue to use the terms “space” and “place” as defined by Michel de Certeau in *L'invention du quotidien*, vol. 1, *Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 172–4. The notion of “lived space” (*espace vécu*) has been mobilized in French urban history to describe the ways in which inhabitants collectively experience and appropriate a neighborhood. In this tradition, “lived space” refers less to Lefebvre’s concept—implying resistance to dominant spatial order—than to the collective daily practices through which inhabitants invest a given urban territory with social meaning—a usage closer to De Certeau’s “practiced place.” See Alain Cabantous, “Le quartier, espace vécu à l’époque moderne: ambiguïtés et perspective d’une histoire,” *Histoire, économie et société* 13, no. 3 (1994): 427–39; see also Campos, “Le quartier parisien de la chanson;” Mélanie Traversier, “Le quartier artistique, un objet pour l’histoire urbaine,” *Histoire urbaine* 26, no. 3 (2009): 17.

¹⁵ Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Français 1256–12761, *Collection de lettres autographes de personnages célèbres des XVII^e et XIX^e siècles du baron de Trémont*, 6 vols. This source has been discussed in detail in Bernard de Raymond, “La galerie du baron de Trémont.”

¹⁶ These unpublished letters are mainly preserved in the Music Department of the BnF, but also in the Municipal Archives of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, at the Institut de France and in the collection of Trémont’s autograph letters. Mentions of Cap’s and Trémont’s meetings are also found in the correspondence of Felix Mendelssohn, George Onslow, Hector Berlioz, Frédéric Chopin, and Charles Dancla.

¹⁷ The diary kept by the Polish composer Józef Brzowski during his stay in Paris in

sources that provide information on the materiality of the homes of these two amateurs: inventories made after death, wills,¹⁸ auction catalogs of their collections of autographs.¹⁹ The objective is twofold. First, I aim to show how the spatial proximity of musicians and music professions at the Chaussée d'Antin favored forms of sociability that took shape in and around Cap's and Trémont's domestic meetings.²⁰ Second, I seek to highlight how the "gift economy"²¹ at work in these domestic gatherings helps explain how professionals and amateurs relied on such events to further their careers, musical lives, and the construction of symbolic capital.

A District for New Musical Professions

In the first half of the nineteenth century, profound changes in Parisian musical life left their mark on the urban planning, architecture, and demographics of the Chaussée d'Antin (see Fig. 3). The district had long been home to troupes from the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique, and the Théâtre-Italien. During the July Monarchy, the Opéra was located on rue Le Peletier (inaugurated in 1821), the Théâtre-Italien occupied the Théâtre Favart (until it burned down in 1838), then the Salle Ventadour after a three-year exile at the Théâtre de l'Odéon on the left bank of the Seine. The Opéra-Comique occupied the Salle Ventadour (until 1832), then the Théâtre des Nouveautés

1836–1837; the memoirs of Eugène Sauzay, already cited: Eugène Sauzay, *Les Quatre âges de la vie, tapuscrit des mémoires du violoniste établi par son descendant Norbert Ricard*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département de la musique (VM FONDS 192 BAS-boîte 5).

18 Archives nationales (AN), MC/ET/XXVI/1163, *Inventaire après décès du baron de Trémont*, August 2, 1852; Archives nationales (AN), MC/ET/XXVI/1162, Testament du baron de Trémont; Archives nationales (AN), MC/ET/CVII/1006, Testament de Paul-Antoine Gratacap, February 6, 1876.

19 *Catalogue d'une collection de belles estampes anciennes et modernes ... dont la vente se fera pour cause du décès de M. le baron de Trémont ...* (Paris: Maulde et Renou, 1852); *Notice des ouvrages de musique, partitions, collections, recueils, méthodes, etc. provenant de la bibliothèque de feu M. le baron de Trémont, dont la vente aura lieu les jeudi 23 et vendredi 24 décembre 1852 [...]* (Paris: Imprimerie Bonaventure et Ducessois, 1852); *Catalogue d'une intéressante collection de lettres autographes provenant d'un cabinet connu [Cap]* (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1878); BnF, Département de la musique, cv-4775.

20 Pilar González Bernaldo de Quirós, "Sociabilité urbaine," *Hypothèses* 12, no. 1 (2009): 296.

21 Rémy Campos, "Donner un concert. Les formes de la libéralité dans les salons parisiens (1870–1914)," in *Financing Music in Europe*, ed. Etienne Jardin (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), 79–108.

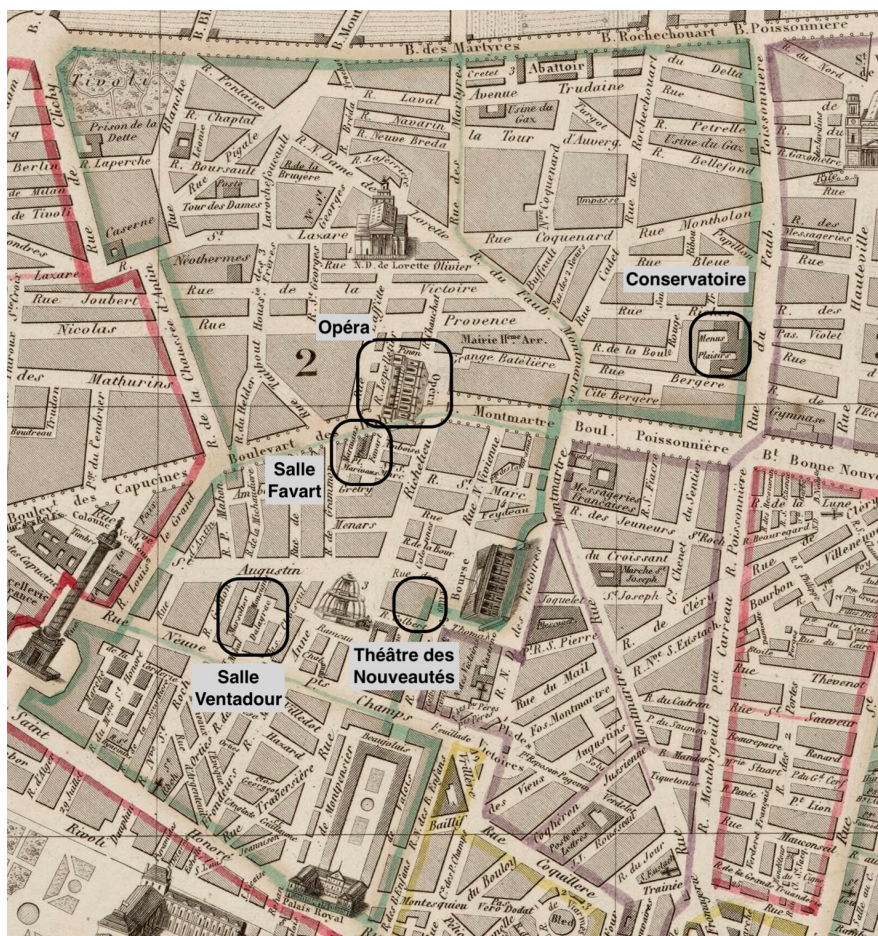


Fig. 3 – Musical institutions at the Chaussée d'Antin.

(until 1840), and finally the “second” Salle Favart. Founded in 1795 in the wake of the French Revolution, the Paris Conservatoire—which profoundly transformed musical life by centralizing the training of professional musicians and composers—was established on rue Bergère.

It was around this institutional center that the Chaussée d'Antin began to welcome new venues, professions, and people linked to the growth of musical life. From 1830, music publishers, whose trade had gradually emerged since the mid-eighteenth century in the Halle au blé and Saint-Eustache districts, migrated to the second *arrondissement ancien* (which roughly corresponds to the current ninth *arrondissement*), where the Chaussée

d'Antin district is located.²² This area also ranks second in the concentration of instrument makers, particularly piano makers. Beyond the best known (Erard, Pleyel, Herz, and Pape), 42 makers opened their workshops and stores there. The unprecedented growth of public concerts also resulted in a concentration of concert halls in its immediate surroundings. The 68 Parisian halls that most frequently featured public concerts between 1822 and 1848 were thus concentrated in an area roughly corresponding to that district.²³ Among them, those built by piano makers at the end of the 1830s would play a key role in the development of Parisian public concerts.²⁴ This is particularly the case with the Salle Herz (built in 1838 at 48 rue de la Victoire), the Salle Pleyel (built in 1839 on 22–34 rue de Rochecouart), and the Salle Erard (built in the late 1850s on 13 rue du Mail). But the most prestigious musical venue in the neighborhood—and arguably in Paris as a whole—was the Salle du Conservatoire, home to the renowned Société des Concerts du Conservatoire founded in 1828. Finally, among the multitude of musical periodicals that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century, many settled on the Chaussée d'Antin.²⁵

The neighborhood's musical geography was also a social geography.²⁶ The old second arrondissement was one of those whose population grew the most between 1801 and 1846: the Chaussée d'Antin became the district

22 This is particularly the case for Brandus, Troupenas, Richault, Schlesinger, and Sieber, to name only the most well-known publishing houses; see Annick Devriès and François Lésure, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs de musique français*, vol. 2, 1820–1914 (Geneva: Minkoff, 1988), 16–7.

23 This perimeter runs from rues Rivoli and Grenelle-Saint-Honoré (to the south), to rue Montorgueil (to the east), to rues Castiglione and Chaussée d'Antin (to the west), to rues Saint-Lazare and de la Tour d'Auvergne (to the north); see Étienne Jardin, “Les concerts parisiens de 1822 à 1848 d'après les archives du droit des pauvres,” in *Archives du concert. La vie musicale française à la lumière de sources inédites (XVIII^e-XIX^e siècles)*, eds. Étienne Jardin and Patrick Taïeb (Arles-Paris: Actes Sud-Palazzetto Bru-Zane, 2015), 105–16.

24 Laure Schnapper, “Le rôle des facteurs de piano dans le développement du concert public à Paris,” in *Organisateurs et formes d'organisation du concert en Europe, 1700–1920. Institutionnalisation et pratiques*, eds. Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrick Veit, and Michael Werner (Berlin: BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2008), 237–55.

25 Notably the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, *L'Abeille musicale*, and *La Danse. Journal des bals et des salons* in rue de Richelieu, while *Le Ménestrel* in rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs.

26 Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrick Veit and Michael Werner, “Espaces et lieux de concerts: Les contours d'un champ de recherche,” in *Espaces et lieux de concerts en Europe, 1700–1920. Architecture, musique, société*, eds. Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrick Veit and Michael Werner (Berlin: BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2008), 8.

of bankers and businessmen (the Paris Bourse was also located there),²⁷ but also of musicians, artists, and men of letters. The former, who belonged to the well-to-do—even wealthy—bourgeoisie, assiduously frequented the neighborhood's many cultural, musical, and entertainment venues and were the main customers of piano companies and publishing houses.²⁸ The latter were drawn to this new cultural center. The district also saw extensive private building work at the end of the Restoration, attracting both the rising bourgeoisie and artists. The Church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette and the urban complex of Nouvelle Athènes are the most notable achievements. The Square d'Orléans—a group of neoclassical buildings built in 1830 within the area of the Nouvelle Athènes—has remained famous for hosting a phalanx of well-known artists.²⁹ Pianists Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmermann, Jean-François Marmontel, Frédéric Chopin, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Clara Loveday, the sculptor Dantan jeune, the writers Alexandre Dumas père, George Sand, and the singer Pauline García-Viardot all lived, at least for a time, in this luxurious complex in the 1830s and 1840s.³⁰ Beyond the Square d'Orléans the list of Chaussée d'Antin musicians in the 1830s is long: Luigi Cherubini, Adolphe Adam, Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, Hector Berlioz, Gilbert-Louis Duprez, François-Antoine Habeneck, Fromental Halévy, George Onslow, and Antoine Reicha; those passing through included Franz Liszt, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Felix Mendelssohn, Gioachino Rossini, and Giuseppe Verdi, who all benefited from the immediate proximity of the Conservatoire and the Opéra.³¹

27 From 1801 to 1846 the population of Paris's second arrondissement experienced an overall increase of 164% (just below the first arrondissement at 177%), a process that intensified during the July Monarchy; see Vigier, *Nouvelle histoire de Paris*, 235 and 356–8.

28 The Chaussée d'Antin is one of the four Parisian districts in which the turnover of piano makers exceeded one million francs between 1830 and 1850; see Malou Haine, *Les Facteurs d'instruments de musique au 19e siècle. Des artisans face à l'industrialisation* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1985), 74, 77.

29 Constance Himelfarb, "La 'Nouvelle Athènes': une colonie d'artistes à Paris sous le duc d'Orléans," *Espaces et lieux de concerts en Europe*, 79–100.

30 Bruno Centorame, "Le square d'Orléans," in *La Nouvelle Athènes. Haut lieu du Romantisme*, eds. Bruno Centorame, Valérie Chiche, and Georgina Letourmy-Bordier (Paris: Action artistique de la Ville de Paris, 2001), 80–3.

31 Hugh Macdonald, "De l'Opéra au Conservatoire: la géographie musicale de Paris sous la Monarchie de Juillet et le Second Empire," in *La maison d'artiste. Construction d'un espace de représentations entre réalité et imaginaire XVII^e–XX^e siècles*, eds. Jean Gribenski, Véronique Meyer, and Solange Vernois (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 165–9.

This list of major institutions, entrepreneurs, famous composers and instrumentalists attests to the importance of the Chaussée d'Antin in Parisian musical life in the 1830s and 1840s; but it falls far short of capturing the extraordinary concentration of musicians (professionals and amateurs) in the neighborhood. With this in mind, I intend to focus on the daily reality of a community of musicians rather than on exceptional individuals. The map below (which samples the 1837 edition of Planque's *Agenda musical*) will help to illustrate this concentration (see Fig. 4). Planque presented a list of

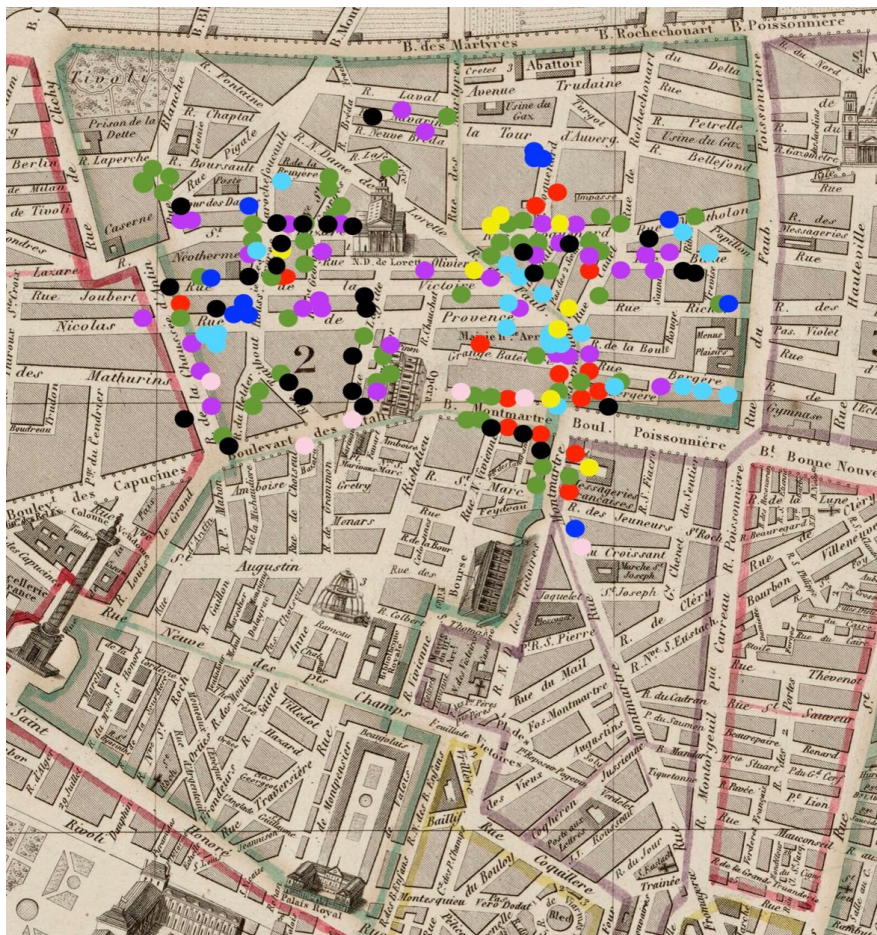


Fig. 4 – Map of professional and amateur musicians in the Chaussée d'Antin. Purple: members of the Opéra, Opéra-Comique, and Conservatoire orchestras, and Conservatoire teachers; red: piano makers and tuners, string sellers; pink: engravers, copyists, and publishers; green: professional performers; black: composers, both men and women; light blue: teachers; yellow: performers at balls and parties; blue: amateurs.

Parisian musicians, amateurs, and music merchants, all classified by occupational category, along with their addresses.³² On this basis, I have systematically listed all musicians and music-related occupations in some thirty streets in the neighborhood. Planque is incomplete insofar as his names relied on a subscription model: to appear in his *Agenda*, one had to apply and pay. Moreover, my survey of a single year and only a few streets obscures migrations of businesses and people over time. Despite these reservations, Planque's *Agenda* offers a snapshot of the neighborhood's social and spatial musical geography. The map reveals, for example, that publishers and piano makers attracted around them the trades essential to their businesses: engravers, copyists and printers, tuners and string merchants were grouped in the streets adjacent to the workshops. Unsurprisingly, a large number of instrumentalists settled on the Chaussée d'Antin who taught at the Conservatoire and/or belonged to the orchestras of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire, the Opéra, the Théâtre-Italien, or the Opéra-Comique. The neighborhood was also the home of many musicians, both men and women, who gave private lessons (in singing, piano, harp, guitar, music theory, harmony, composition); and also composers, both men and women, and "artists for balls and evenings." On the few streets documented, there were also more than 75 instrumentalists (strings, woodwind, brass, piano, guitar) who declared neither affiliation with an orchestra or institution, nor any particular profession. Finally, the *Agenda* reports around thirty musical amateurs in the area. The figure rises to 114 if we consider the second arrondissement as a whole, making it the arrondissement most densely populated by amateurs (more than a third of Parisian amateurs), at least according to Planque.

This assembled information allows us to begin thinking about the neighborhood not only in its topographical materiality, but as a practiced place. The *Agenda*, for example, highlights figures such as the Carnauds, father and son, who appear together in several sections: as violinists, instrument dealers, teachers of accordion, flute, flageolet, cornet, guitar and violin, conductors, instrumentalists for balls and evenings, as well as copyists (in the father's case). The example of Henri Herz is even more striking, in that the professions he pursued (pianist, professor at the Conservatoire, composer, piano maker, concert-hall owner) spanned art, pedagogy, and entrepreneurship.³³

³² Planque, *Agenda musical contenant les noms et demeures de tous les artistes et commerçants en musique*, vol. 3, (Paris: Collinet, 1837).

³³ Laure Schnapper, *Henri Herz, magnat du piano. La vie musicale en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions EHESS, 2011).

Thus, despite its limitations, the map allows us to understand that the simultaneous exercise of such varied activities was made possible by geographical proximity.³⁴ To put this another way, the concentration of shops, theatres, concert halls, and music-related businesses on the Chaussée d'Antin enabled the musicians of the district to become less dependent on other forms of patronage.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that, long before it became a source for twenty-first-century musicologists, Planque's *Agenda* was a tool designed to encourage contact between musicians. Indicating one's profession and address was obviously a way to build a clientele in a bourgeois district where the piano was part of the education of young girls and where public, private, or charity balls were numerous during the winter season.³⁵ The *Agenda* also highlights a significant number of musicians who did not report any institutional affiliation. Clearly, for these aspiring instrumentalists or composers, the environment of the Chaussée d'Antin provided a network likely to lead to stable employment in an orchestra or to pursue several careers simultaneously. The journal of the Polish composer Józef Brzowski (1805–1888), visiting Paris during the winter of 1836–1837 (the year used here for data collection from Planque's *Agenda*), allows us to understand how the neighborhood's music sociability could be approached.³⁶ Brzowski arrived in November 1836 and settled in a hotel frequented by other Polish musicians, on rue Bergère next to the Conservatoire. He hardly left the Chaussée d'Antin during his entire stay, his discovery of Parisian musical life taking place almost exclusively within the neighborhood. The bulk of his journal recounts evenings in the theaters, concert halls, and private musical gatherings, as well as his visits to Chopin. But a significant

34 Campos makes the same claim for the “quartier de la chanson” at the end of the 19th century. The international dominance of Parisian song was then, paradoxically, based on local musical practices. The topography of this district in the northeast of Paris—which brought together in a circumscribed space all the essential trades for the song industry—made it possible to articulate the uses of space, sociability, and the music economy. See Campos, “Le quartier parisien de la chanson,” 82–6.

35 In his “revue de Paris” which appeared twice a month in the newspaper *Le Siècle*, Pierre Durand gave detailed accounts of the *saison des bals* that took place in Paris every year from November to April. (This chronicle has been systematically investigated for the period 1837–1848).

36 Long extracts from the journal are published in Marie-Paule Rambeau and Ewa Talma-Davous, “Józef Brzowski. Un musicista polacco nella Parigi musicale della Monarchia di luglio,” in *Chopin e il suono di Pleyel. Arte e musica nella Parigi romantica*, ed. Florence Gétéreau (Briosco: Villa Medici Giuliani, 2010), 82–157.

part describes in detail his wanderings, which were often the occasion for unexpected encounters. On March 7, 1837, for example:

Passing the Palais Royal around noon, I met Chopin, with whom I returned while chatting, and I walked along the Rue de Rivoli. [...] In the evening, returning from a visit, I accompanied an Englishwoman; along the way, we spoke at length about music and artists.³⁷

On several occasions, an impromptu meeting in the street or in an apartment offered Brzowski the opportunity to go to a concert or meet a new musician. On December 16, 1836, for example, Brzowski was invited by the cellist Louis Norblin, whom he had met some time earlier, to a musical *séance* at Cherubini's house. It was on this occasion that he met the conductor François-Antoine Habeneck, who invited him to a dress rehearsal of the orchestra of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire—a venue for which tickets were extremely difficult to obtain.³⁸ Indeed, Brzowski's account of his time in Paris offers a striking illustration of what Certeau describes as the practice of the urban walker.³⁹ The walker does not simply move through a geometrically defined place; he transforms it into space through his random wanderings, making use of the venues and occasions that the neighborhood offers: the street, the apartment of an acquaintance, the salon of an amateur. In this sense, Brzowski's wanderings are not merely biographical detail but a concrete embodiment of the porosity between domestic and urban musical space to which we should now turn.

Playing Music "As Neighbors": Sociabilities in the Amateur Home

The spontaneous nature of musical sociability in the Chaussée d'Antin, so tellingly reflected in Brzowski's journal, explains why artists and amateurs practiced music together in domestic settings. Given the exceptional concentration of musicians in the neighborhood, music was—quite simply—a neighborhood practice, a diversion that could serve as a pretext for getting to know one another. As if to demonstrate this, Planque's *Agenda* shows

³⁷ Rambeau and Talma-Davous, 143.

³⁸ "I received this invitation with all the more pleasure since access to these rehearsals was forbidden to listeners who were not members of the orchestra." Rambeau and Talma-Davous, 141.

³⁹ Certeau, "Marches dans la ville," chap. 7 in *L'invention du quotidien*, 139–64.

that some buildings were inhabited by a multitude of musicians. 7 rue Saint-Lazare, in 1837, housed a flautist from the Opéra, another from the Théâtre-Italien, and the violin conductor of the Théâtre des Variétés. At 12 rue Blanche were five clarinetists and a flageolet player. Amateurs and professionals mixed freely: on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Lazare alone, between numbers 7 and 17, there were a double-bass player, two violinists, a clarinetist, a trombonist, a pianist, and two amateur pianists. The cases of Cap and Trémont offer a further striking illustration of the phenomenon of the integration of amateurs into the spontaneous musical sociability of the neighborhood. The composer Henri Jean Rigel, for example, sent this letter to Cap (between 1829 and 1839 according to the latter's address):

Dear Sir,

As I did not have the honor of finding you at home, I would like to make a perhaps indiscreet request. This evening, [...] I would like to play spontaneously a few pieces of ensemble music, and I should be most flattered if you had nothing better to do than to come over this Saturday evening at 8 o'clock and help us with your generous talent on the cello. *As a neighbor, and wishing to make your acquaintance more fully* [emphasis mine], I have reason to hope that you will be good enough not to refuse.⁴⁰

The inventory taken after Trémont's death in 1852 shows that his apartment was designed to facilitate musical gatherings. The latter were held in the exhibition gallery of his home, which also displayed part of his print collection.⁴¹ The room was furnished with a piano stool (the piano itself was probably rented in the neighborhood when needed), four mahogany music stands, and about fifteen stools (pieces of furniture that could easily be

40 Letter from Henri Jean Rigel to Cap, n.d., Paris, BnF, Département de la musique, LA-RIGEL HENRI JEAN-21. "Cher Monsieur, n'ayant pu avoir l'honneur de vous trouver chez vous, je désirerais vous faire une demande peut être indiscreète. Ce soir, [...] je désire faire quelques morceaux de musique d'ensemble improvisés, et j'aurais été très flatté si vous vous [sic] n'aviez rien de mieux à faire que de venir ce soir samedi à 8 h nous aider de votre aimable talent sur le violoncelle. Comme voisin et désirant faire plus amplement votre connaissance j'ai lieu d'espérer que vous serez assez bon pour ne pas me refuser." Rigel later lived at 82, rue Saint-Lazare, not far from Cap's home.

41 On this gallery as a music venue, see Bernard de Raymond, "La galerie du baron de Trémont." On the material reality of Parisian musical salons in the later period of the Second Empire, and in particular the question of multiple reception rooms and their configuration for musical performance, see Nicole Vilkner, "Structuring Audiences and Music at Parisian Receptions," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 147, no. 1 (2022): 221–48.

moved around depending on the configuration of the players). Trémont, himself a viola and double-bass player, also owned a large collection of string instruments. Three violins (including a Stradivarius⁴² and a Vuillaume), two violas (including a Lupot), three cellos, two double basses (including a Vuillaume), together with seven violin bows and three cello bows (including some by Tourte⁴³), were stored in a cabinet adjoining the gallery.⁴⁴ As confirmed by a letter to Cap from the bookseller Casimir Gide, the presence of instruments in amateur apartments allowed musicians to avoid transporting their own equipment around the neighborhood and to the upper floors of buildings: “I still count on your presence this Sunday at two o’clock [for our grand musical *matinée*]. You shall find at my home a cello most eager to resonate under your fingers.”⁴⁵

Among the hundreds of musicians living or staying at the Chaussée d’Antin, who precisely attended the chamber music *séances* organized by Cap and Trémont? The sources are much richer for Trémont but, given his geographical and especially emotional proximity to Cap, we can assume that their circles overlapped, at least in part.⁴⁶ By cross-referencing around fifty letters with musicians’ memoirs and unpublished notes by Trémont preserved in his collection of autographs,⁴⁷ I have been able to compile a list—undoubtedly far from exhaustive—of the musicians and amateurs who attended his salon at least once between 1819 and 1848 (see Tables 1 and 2).

42 The Stradivarius was purchased from General Lamorlière in autumn 1818. Trémont then had Baillot try out the instrument, as evidenced by two letters from the latter dated October 25 and November 2, 1818. (BnF, Département de la musique, LA-BAILLOT PIERRE MARIE FRANCOIS DE SALLES-69).

43 The iconographic documents in the fonds Albert Pomme de Mirimonde of the BNF’s Département de la musique contains photographs of the violin bows made by François Tourte in the years 1780–1790, PHOT MIRI-21 (319).

44 Archives nationales (AN), MC/ET/XXVI/1163, *Inventaire après décès du baron de Trémont*; Archives nationales (AN), MC/ET/XXVI/1162, Testament du baron de Trémont. The instrument collection was sold at auction after Trémont’s death.

45 Letter from Casimir Gide to Cap, February 15, 1850, Paris, BnF, Département de la musique, LA-GIDE CASIMIR-12. “Je compte toujours sur vous dimanche à 2 heures [pour notre grande *matinée musicale*]; vous trouverez chez moi un violoncelle qui sera bien heureux de resonner [sic] sous vos doigts.”

46 Their correspondence is abundant and testifies to a long-standing friendship that went beyond the musical sphere. Cap was also one of the executors of Trémont’s will. (See MC/ET/XXVI/1162, *Testament du baron de Trémont*.)

47 See notes 13–17.

Amateurs

NAME	PROFESSION	INSTRUMENT(S)
Louis-Léopold Boilly	painter	piano
Auguste de la Croix de Chevrières, comte de Sayve	pensioner	violin
Gaspard Augustin Ernouf (baron)	pensioner	cello
Paul-Antoine Gratacap	pharmacist	cello
Claude-Ignace Louvrier de Lajolais	pensioner	violin
Marie Martin Marcel, Vicomte de Marin	pensioner	harp, violin
Charles Paillet	expert at the Royal Louvre Museum	viola
Baron de Trémont	pensioner	viola, double bass

Professionals

INSTRUMENT	NAME
violin	Delphin Alard, Pierre Baillot, Charles de Bériot, Charles Dancla, Charles-Philippe Lafont, Lambert Massart, Pierre Rode, Jean-Jacques Vidal, Henri Vieuxtemps
cello	Auguste Franchomme, Louis Norblin, Olive-Charlier Vaslin
double bass	Achille Gouffé
piano	Frédéric Chopin, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Arthur Kalkbrenner, Honorine Lambert, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdi, Camille Pleyel [born Moke], Sigismund Thalberg

Table 1 – Instrumentalists at the Trémont *séances*.

Performers and their wives	
Regular listeners	Daniel-François-Esprit Auber
	Pauline Duchambge
Other musicians and composers	George Onslow
	Antoine Reicha (1798–1800)
	Hélène de Montgeroult (1819)
	Sigismund Neukomm (1825)
	Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdi (1825)
	Hector Berlioz (1829)
	One-off listeners
	Gioachino Rossini (1829)
	Maria Malibran (from 1829)
	Frédéric Chopin (1837)
	Joseph Brzowski (1837)
	Giacomo Meyerbeer (1837–1838)
	Johan Peter Pixis (1844)

Table 2 – Attendees at the Trémont *séances*.

Many of the string players who performed at the Trémont meetings were members of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire and had founded or belonged to chamber music ensembles that also gave public concerts.⁴⁸ Among the pianists—in addition to Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg, and Honorine Lambert, who seem to have come occasionally—regulars included Camille Pleyel (born Moke) and Friedrich Kalkbrenner. These renowned instrumentalists mixed with members of the nobility and other people of means, such as the Viscount de Marin, the Count of Sayve, Claude-Ignace Louvrier de Lajolais, and Baron Ernouf; members of the upper middle class, including Cap and the art dealer and expert at the Musée royal du Louvre Charles Paillet, uncle of the violinist Eugène Sauzay; and painters, notably Boilly. This circle of mainly male musicians was surrounded during the Sunday sessions by a small committee of equally prestigious male and female listeners. In addition to the performers and their wives, numerous musicians

⁴⁸ Most violinists have a connection to Pierre Baillot, either as his students or members of his quartet. Baillot was the founder in 1814 of the first string quartet composed entirely of professional musicians to perform publicly in Paris.

and composers attended. Alongside regulars such as Onslow, Auber, Pauline Duchambge, and Malibran, there were more occasional visitors such as Reicha, Hélène de Montgeroult, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Neukomm, Rossini, Brzowski, Mendelssohn, and Pixis.

Each year, from November to April, this social and artistic elite gathered every two weeks to play and listen to instrumental music. From 1819 to 1829 the sessions were held at 3 rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin. They paused with Trémont's appointment to the Prefecture of Côte-d'Or in 1831 and do not seem to have resumed until 1837.⁴⁹ From January 1839, they took place at his last residence, 45 rue Saint-Lazare.⁵⁰ During these two periods, the repertoire ranged from duets to sextets for solo strings, strings and piano, or wind instruments. The presence of Liszt, Thalberg, and Chopin in Paris also provided an occasional opportunity to perform sonatas, concertos, or fantasies for solo piano. Vocal music seems to have been excluded, even though the friendship between song composer Pauline Duchambge and Maria Malibran suggests that voices may have resonated in the apartment on rue Saint-Lazare. Amateurs, including Trémont, frequently mingled with local artists.

In their programs, these musical *séances* were similar in some respects to *ancien régime* salons, which Trémont knew well, having frequented them in his youth. They took place at his home, establishing a pattern that allowed for the formation of a group of regulars and with sociability based on rules of civility and politeness.⁵¹ But the meetings differed from salons and other social gatherings in one essential aspect: music, far from being just another form of entertainment, seemed to be the key reason for the gatherings.⁵²

49 This chronology was reconstructed from musicians' correspondence addressed to or mentioning Trémont, held in the Music Department of the BnF and in Trémont's collection of autograph letters, as well as from Brzowski's journal and Mendelssohn's letter to his brother and sister, dated March 1, 1825.

50 As we learn from the inventory after his death. The 1848 Revolution and Trémont's declining health seem to have put a stop to his musical activities (see letter from Jean-Jacques Vidal to Trémont, November 29, 1848, cited in *Catalogue de la belle collection de lettres autographes de feu M. le baron de Trémont*, article 1446, 217: "Les joies de la république viendraient-elles jeter une crêpe funèbre sur nos réunions musicales! J'espère que non.")

51 In this, they meet a good part of the "set of criteria" established by Antoine Lilti to define the elusive object of the salon; see Lilti, *Le Monde des salons. Sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), 75. In his entries, Trémont always evaluates the musicians he met from the point of view of their urbanity: Auber, Cherubini, Grétry, Meyerbeer, and Rossini are particularly praised in this regard; see Jérôme Dorival, *Hélène de Montgeroult. La marquise et la marseillaise* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2006), 239.

52 See James Deaville, "The Well Mannered Auditor: Zones of Attention and the Imposition of Silence in the Salon of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Oxford Handbook of Music*

Although the works performed were obviously the subject of discussion, as we shall see later, nothing in the accounts consulted suggests that games were played or that a meal was served.⁵³

Entry into the circle was gained through a network of acquaintances within the neighborhood. It was Chopin, for example, who invited Brzowski to attend a musical meeting at Trémont's house on April 30, 1837.⁵⁴ Brzowski's journal account of the event suggests that the home of the amateurs on the Chaussée d'Antin was a space of emulation, even solidarity, between artists. Liszt played Chopin's C-minor Étude in the composer's presence, Brzowski describing the scene vividly:

We watched ... Liszt approach the piano; he was undoubtedly stimulated by all the talent on show because he had Chopin at his side. [It wouldn't be] far from the truth to say that Liszt was more inspired than ever. As he raised his hands to tame the sublime instrument under his fingers, Chopin sat close to the piano and listened to his *Étude in C minor*, which in Liszt's left hand was like a storm, while the more expressive right hand communicated pain and despair. Liszt's face was ablaze with the fire of inspiration, and Chopin's features were pale, with the power of the performance returning him to thoughts of the work he had created, like a child being fed returns to its mother's breast.⁵⁵

Listening in the 19th and 20th Centuries, eds. Christian Thorau and Hansjacob Ziemer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 55–76. See also Campos, “Donner un concert,” Lilti, *Le monde des salons*, 62–65 and Himelfarb, “Un salon de la Nouvelle-Athènes en 1839–1840,” 34.

53 According to his posthumous inventory, there were few obvious sources of entertainment: a mahogany checkerboard in a living-room cupboard and a card table in the library.

54 Brzowski's Journal, April 24, 1837, 144–5: “J’ai fait remarquer [à Chopin] que je n’avais pas encore entendu Kalkbrenner [...]. Il m’a promis de me donner l’occasion d’entendre ce pianiste dimanche prochain à une matinée musicale chez un amateur connu [chez Trémont], M. Fromont [sic], qui a l’habitude presque chaque dimanche de faire des réunions chez lui où se produisent des artistes, et justement Kalkbrenner doit y jouer ce jour-là.”

55 Cited in Rambeau and Talma-Davous, “Józef Brzowski,” 145–6. “On regarda ensuite Liszt s’avancer vers le piano; il s’avançait sans doute stimulé par toutes les ressources du talent car il avait à ses côtés Chopin qu’il estimait, aimait et dont il appréciait le génie. [...] Et je ne m’écarterai pas non plus de la vérité, si je dis que Liszt était plus inspiré que jamais. Quand il leva les mains pour dompter l’instrument sublime sous ses doigts, Chopin s’assit tout près du piano puis il écouta son *Étude en ut mineur* qui, sous la main gauche de Liszt, était comparable à une tempête, pendant que la droite, plus expressive, exprime la douleur et le désespoir. Le visage de Liszt était enflammé par le feu de l’inspiration et les traits de Chopin étaient pâles, devant la puissance de l’exécution qui retournait à la pensée de l’œuvre qu’il avait créée, comme un enfant qu’on nourrit retourne au sein de sa mère.”

Brzowski's testimony shows that the Trémont performance space seems to have fostered an intimacy conducive to intense sharing between listeners and performers. Trémont offers a further anecdote in which the physical proximity between Maria Malibran and the violinist Charles de Bériot led to emotions of great intensity:

[Maria Malibran's] deep sensitivity for music was not cooled down like that of most of those who profess it. Having come to my house to hear pieces by Fesca that Bériot played to perfection, when he came to the Adagio of the Quintet in D major, she left her place, stood behind Bériot's chair, and followed the music with her eyes, shedding tears.⁵⁶

Of course, Malibran, like Liszt and Chopin, may well have performed during these musical gatherings; perhaps Trémont and Brzowski idealize their accounts, however other sources indicate that the works played at the amateur's home were listened to with "genuine interest."⁵⁷ Thus, if the spatial proximity of the musicians at the Chaussée d'Antin favored unexpected musical experiences, it also led, in the case of the Cap and Trémont séances, to musical practices with a strong ritual element surrounding a repertoire (chamber music) and a core of musicians accustomed to playing together regularly. This form of sociability seems to have encouraged a feeling of common identity among these musicians,⁵⁸ one that went beyond simple neighborly relations.

Shaping Music and Careers from Home: Gift Economy

Apart from enforced absences from Paris, I held musical gatherings at my home for 50 years (from 1798 to 1849), ones at which all the famous musicians, French and foreign, agreed to be heard. As it would have required a huge fortune to finance such occasions, I was all the more flattered by their selfless and benevolent support.⁵⁹

56 BnF, Département des manuscrits, Français 12759, notice inédite "Maria Malibran," 542.

57 According to George Onslow: "Ce sera donc *under my own patronage* que mes nouveaux quintettes seront entendus pour la première fois et je désire ardemment que ce soit chez celui qui est la véritable source de l'intérêt avec lequel ils seront écoutés." Letter from Onslow to Trémont, August 31, 1828, cited in Viviane Niaux, *George Onslow, Gentleman compositeur* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2003), 289–90.

58 González Bernaldo de Quirós, "Sociabilité urbaine," 298.

59 BnF, Département des manuscrits, Français 12756, "Biographie de Mr de T***** [Trémont]," folio 34.

According to Trémont, the participation of professional musicians at his *séances* always took place outside any financial or contractual agreement. But can it be described, as he does, as “selfless”? Certainly a sense of local solidarity probably encouraged these gatherings, but the correspondence between Cap, Trémont, and the artists of the Chaussée d’Antin highlights some sort of economy at work: an economy of gift culture. According to Rémy Campos, this was at the heart of Parisian social practices at the end of the nineteenth century: “musical performance presented as a gift rather than a contractual obligation was less a paid transaction than an exchange of goods.”⁶⁰ The gift of music had to respond to a set of counterparts, a cycle of reciprocal debt that was sometimes endless.⁶¹ Such forms of politeness, which might seem to belong to the *ancien régime*, were defined by the Comtesse de Bassanville in her *Guide des gens du monde*:

A hostess owes courtesy to anyone who has agreed to participate in a concert given by her; and she repays this courtesy with a dinner, a box, and even a small gift, if she is wealthy and the person she has invited is much less so; but this gift must be offered with great delicacy so as not to appear as payment.⁶²

The Comtesse refers here to social gatherings in which music is just one event among others: alongside a meal, games, theater, reading, and even mere conversation. In the case of Cap and Trémont, this gift economy—the moral obligation to give back—is also at work, but is exercised differently, since music is the main reason for their meetings. The correspondence used in writing this article allows us to clarify the modalities and nature of the reciprocities at work and how they affected communal musical life. By participating in the neighborhood’s amateur musical performances, the professional “offered himself,”⁶³ which put him in a position to expect

60 Campos, “Donner un concert,” 97. Indeed, a gift economy does not mean that no financial transactions have taken place.

61 *Ibidem*. Campos’s understanding of the concept follows Marcel Mauss’ *Essai sur le don* (1925). From this anthropological perspective, the gift is part of a social system based on a triple obligation: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to return. Jacques Derrida (*Donner le temps I. La fausse monnaie*, 1991) opposed this view, arguing that the gift escapes the order of calculation and economy and is an impossibility, an *aporia*. See François Nault, “La grâce du don ou l’horizon théologique de la déconstruction (Mauss, Derrida, Hénaff),” *Études théologiques & religieuses* 85, no. 3 (2010): 299–321.

62 Anaïs de Bassanville, *Guide des gens du monde dans toutes les circonstances de la vie* (Paris: Lebigre-Duquesne Frères, 1867), 255.

63 Jacques T. Godbout, “Recevoir, c’est donner,” *Communications* 65 (1997): 42; cited in

something back from his hosts. These reciprocal exchanges were conducted with varying degrees of grace, as demonstrated by this letter to Cap from the bookseller and composer Casimir Gide:

I am sorry I was unable to attend yesterday to see and hear the interesting music of Mr. Blanc.⁶⁴ I had to go to a concert given by Madame Sabatier⁶⁵ and Lafont,⁶⁶ two artists who sang at my house this winter and to whom I have contracted the painful obligation of buying nine tickets. That's the other side of the coin.⁶⁷

This sense of reciprocity perhaps explains why, even with a finger injury, cellist Franchomme maintained his commitment in a concert given by Trémont:

I am once more obliged to ask you to postpone to another of your meetings the solo I was to play tomorrow at your house, having been clumsy enough yesterday to cut one of the fingers of my left hand. However, you can count on me to play the bass in your quartets, but that is all I can hope to be able to do tomorrow.⁶⁸

By contributing his unwavering commitment to the two amateurs' sessions, Auguste Franchomme opened up a cycle of compensation. In 1835, the 27-year-old was already principal cello of the Théâtre-Italien orchestra, but he was just beginning his career as a composer. In the process of publishing his *Caprices pour deux violoncelles*, he relied on Cap, whose teacher he was, to access the advice of a seasoned composer, George Onslow:

Campos, "Donner un concert," 99–100.

64 The composer Adolphe Blanc, Cap's stepson.

65 Undoubtedly the singer Émilie-Perrine-Suzanne Sabatier (born Bénazet), who performed in numerous Parisian salons in the 1840s.

66 The cellist Charles Philippe Lafont, who belonged to Trémont's circle and doubtless also to Cap's.

67 Letter from Casimir Gide to Cap, April 18, 1856; Paris, BnF, Département de la musique, LA-GIDE-CASIMIR-14. "Je suis désolé de ne pas avoir pu aller hier venir voir et entendre l'intéressante musique de Mr Blanc. J'ai dû aller hier au concert de Mad^e Sabatier et de Lafont, deux artistes qui ont chanté chez moi cet hiver et envers lesquels j'ai contracté la douloureuse obligation de prendre 9 billets. C'est le revers de la médaille."

68 Letter from Franchomme to Trémont [n.d., but between 1839 and 1852 according to Trémont's address on the envelope], Paris, BnF, Département de la musique, LA-FRANCHOMME AUGUSTE-4.

It would be necessary ... for us to rehearse my *Caprices* before giving them to Mr. Onslow [...]. If you wish us to postpone the performance until Wednesday at noon (at your home), we shall have a little more time to work on them.⁶⁹

The original edition of this work, published that same year by Janet et Cotte as Op. 7, bears a dedication not to Onslow but to Cap (see Fig. 5). The practice of dedication is associated with the *ancien régime* and a rhetoric of flattery towards powerful patrons, but indeed “as the patronage system began to give way in the later eighteenth century to a more capitalist economy, and composers gradually sought financial support from the growing publishing industry ... composers and publishers honored new sorts of individuals in this prominent position on the title page”⁷⁰—in this case, an amateur.⁷¹

Emily Green has recently analyzed dedications as a “type of interaction between actors [composers, dedicatees, publishers, buyers]” representative of the “transitioning economy of the late eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries.”⁷² According to this perspective, the title page of Franchomme’s *Caprices* op. 7 can be seen as a public window onto a private sociability: it signals to buyers that Cap played a role in the conception of the work. But the meanings of a dedication may well be multiple. Was Cap’s name mentioned for commercial reasons, signaling that the work was aimed at an amateur audience? This is doubtful, because the generic title “caprice” and the indication of Franchomme’s professional position (“*violoncelle solo à l’Opéra Italien*”) indicate a technically demanding work—and, as a matter of fact, even the “*violoncelle accompagnant*” played by Cap is quite difficult. As Green has shown, drawing specifically on the work of the anthropologist

69 Letter from Franchomme to Cap, May 3, 1835; Paris, BnF, Département de la musique, LA-FRANCHOMME AUGUSTE-9. “Il faudrait ... que nous répétions mes caprices avant de les faire entendre à Monsieur Onslow [...]. Si vous vouliez que nous en remettons l’exécution à Mercredi à midi (chez vous) nous aurions alors un peu plus de tems pour les travailler.”

70 Emily Green, “A Patron among Peers: Dedications to Haydn and the Economy of Celebrity,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 8, no. 2 (2011): 216.

71 Beyond this example, many works are dedicated to amateurs in the neighborhood. Notably: Onslow’s Quartet op. 53, the first Quintet with two violas by Adolphe Blanc, dedicated to Cap; Onslow’s Quintet op. 18 and Kalkbrenner’s Fourth Piano Trio op. 84, dedicated to Trémont. The list of dedicatees of Onslow’s works is particularly revealing in this context. Of the 88 dedications noted on his works published between 1806 and 1864, more than a third (30) are to amateurs; see the catalog of Onslow’s works in Niaux, *George Onslow*, 259–73.

72 Emily Green, *Dedicating Music, 1785–1850* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2019), 2.

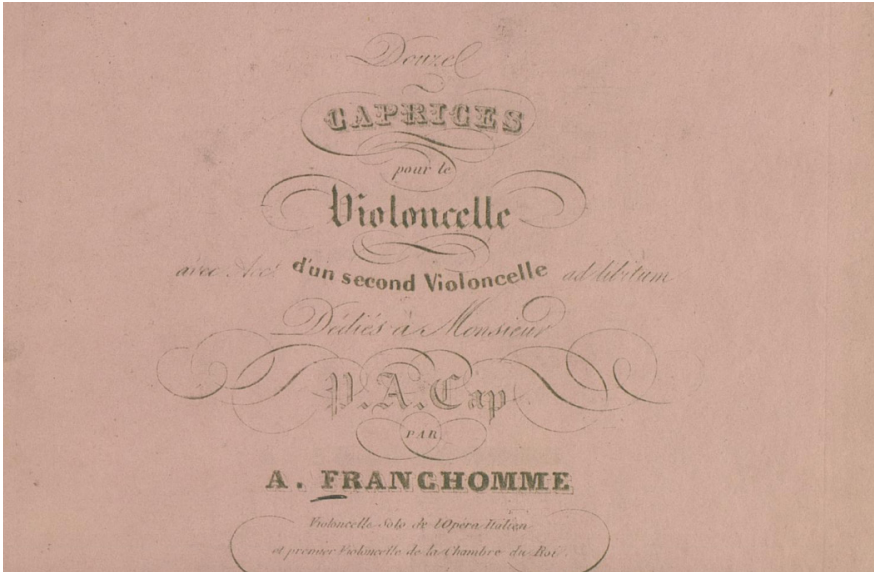


Fig. 5 – Title page of the original Janet & Cotellet edition of Franchomme's *Caprices* op. 7 (1835).

Marcel Mauss, dedications are also part of the gift economy, insofar as they reciprocally increase the “symbolic capital” of both parties, in Bourdieu’s sense.⁷³ By dedicating his *Caprices* to Cap, Franchomme linked his name to the elite musical gatherings of a well-known amateur of the Chaussée d’Antin. This may have been meant to lend the work a form of legitimacy, a guarantee of seriousness: its title, *Caprice*, evoked, after Paganini, a world of extravagant virtuosity. In return, the dedication cast Cap as an excellent cellist, capable of playing the second cello part in a very demanding work, something that placed him in a class of his own as an amateur. Indeed, the term “amateur” acquired a hackneyed connotation in the second quarter of the 19th century. The Comtesse de Bassanville, for example, instructed those organizing social gatherings not to “tire guests with amateur music in the desire to make the daughter or brother of a friend shine.”⁷⁴ As a matter of fact, in the correspondence of the professionals who attended their

⁷³ Green, 42–3, 66–70.

⁷⁴ Bassanville, *Guide des gens du monde*, 78. In his *Art de briller en société*, Bescherelle advised similarly: “Amateur de tout genre, faites de la musique chez vous, à huis clos; mais ne cédez jamais aux instances que l’on emploiera pour vous engager à vous faire entendre dans un salon: songez qu’il y a dans cette prière beaucoup plus de politesse que de désirs.” See Louis Nicolas Bescherelle, “Concert,” in *L’Art de briller en société et de se conduire dans toutes les circonstances de la vie* (Paris: Maresq et Compagnie–Gustave Havard, 1851), 20.

gatherings, as in the press, Cap and Trémont were placed in a separate, superior category, that of “distinguished amateur.”⁷⁵

Beyond the moral obligation of politeness and the construction of symbolic capital, Franchomme’s dedication to Cap can also be read for its traces of “multiple authorship.”⁷⁶ As his letter of May 1835 shows, the cellist worked on his *Caprices* with Cap and probably played them with him. We can thus imagine that the chosen instrumentation was linked to Cap’s meetings: the latter’s desire to perform in his own home. In addition, writing of the second cello part probably took into account his student’s abilities. But Cap’s role may not have stopped there: amateur salons were also venues where musical opinions were exchanged. Neither Cap nor Trémont left a journal that might allow us to find details of the conversations held during their *séances*, but their correspondence suggests that their opinion was actively sought by musicians. For example, in a letter dated February 25, 1835, the tenor Adolphe Nourrit thanked Trémont for his advice given after the premiere of Halévy’s *La Juive*.⁷⁷ As the singer made clear: “will try to follow the advice [Trémont] has been so kind as to give him, and he hopes he shall succeed more easily, as he made the mistake, [which the amateur] so rightly pointed out to him, only as a consequence of a change that the author thought he must make in the outcome of his play.”⁷⁸ Because they fostered shared musical practices over a long period, as well as the expression of taste among participants—especially the hosts—the salons of Cap and Trémont were probably conducive to this sense of “multiple authorship.”⁷⁹ Even if it is difficult to measure precisely the role played by Cap in the composition of Franchomme’s *Caprices* Op. 7, the example allows us to grasp how the gift economy of such domestic musical gatherings was not limited to polite exchanges,

75 “Nouvelles,” *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 19, no. 27 (July 4, 1852): 223. “L’art musical vient de perdre un de ses amateurs les plus distingués. M. le baron de Trémont est mort presque subitement dans la 73e année. [...] Les matinées musicales qu’il donnait chez lui, et dans lesquelles il faisait sa partie, ont été longtemps célèbres.”

76 Green, *Dedicating Music*, 148–66.

77 The work was premiered at the Paris Opera two days earlier, on February 23, 1835.

78 Letter from Nourrit to Trémont, February 25, 1835. Cited in *Lettres autographes de feu M. le baron de Trémont* (Paris: Laverdet, 1852), 163.

79 Rebecca Cypess shows how the instruments available at eighteenth-century *salonniers* explain the instrumentation of works published by those in their circle. She also develops the question of Green’s multiple authorship in the case of Boccherini’s Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, Op. 5, dedicated to Madame de Brillon; see Cypess, *Women and Musical Salons in the Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 132–49.

but had clear repercussions on the compositions themselves, as well as on musical life. The regular participation of certain musicians in Cap's and Trémont's gatherings allowed them, in turn, to use these meetings to their own advantage. The amateur home was a place where composers could test out their latest works before publishing them or hearing them performed in a public concert. According to letters and memoirs, such exchanges were common during this period: many musicians regularly asked Cap or Trémont if they could try out a work they had just finished.⁸⁰ The violinist Hubert Léonard took advantage of his participation in a musical *séance* at Cap's house in January 1844 to ask him for a read through of his latest composition:⁸¹

Would you be kind enough to allow me (next Friday) to try out with the quartet a small piece that I have just finished. I would be very happy to hear it and at the same time to receive your good opinions. I will come to your house early so that I can say it before your company arrives.⁸²

Musicians could also make use of musical gatherings at the home of one of the two amateurs to request that a particular work be performed. Salons thus became places to discover new works in a privileged setting. For example, Léonard asked Cap: "Since the quartet is to meet [at your home this evening], could you not rehearse Mr. Onslow's unpublished quintet [...]?"⁸³ For Onslow, every quartet or quintet was played at a Cap or Trémont *séance* before being published. One of the reasons seems to be that it was only in this intimate setting that Onslow felt he could supervise the performance and ensure that his thoughts were well respected. As he wrote to Trémont in August 1828:

I promise to see you during February. I will arrive in Paris with three quintets [probably op. 33, 34, 35, published in 1829] [...]. I will not send you my latest productions, my good friend, for the reason that, since nobody wants to make use of that excellent invention the metronome is, most of the movements are taken at the wrong tempo, which completely distorts the composer's thoughts.

80 Especially the pianist Kalkbrenner, the violinists Lafont and Dancla, Franchomme and Onslow.

81 Perhaps this was the *Souvenir d'Haydn. Fantaisie sur l'air* Gott erhalte Franz der Kaiser *pour le violon avec accompagnement de quatuor*, published by Richault as Op. 2 in 1845.

82 Letter from Hubert Léonard to Cap, Paris, January 16, 1844, LA-LEONARD HUBERT-1.

83 Letter from Hubert Léonard to Cap, Paris, n.d., LA-LEONARD HUBERT-3.

It is therefore *under my own patronage* [in English] that my new quintets will be heard for the first time, and I fervently hope that it will be at the home of the person who is the true reason for the interest with which they will be listened to.⁸⁴

Finally, amateurs could be encouraged to support the careers of professional musicians in their circle in various ways. While the latter were not paid for participation, Cap and Trémont certainly provided them with financial support in other ways. We have seen that the pharmacist took cello lessons with Franchomme, but also Louis Norblin; his daughter learned the piano with composer Louise Farrenc.⁸⁵ As for Trémont, he took double-bass lessons with Achille Gouffé.⁸⁶ They could also take part in subscriptions for the publication of a work or subscribe to a series of public concerts. Trémont, for example, appears in the list of subscribers for César Franck's *Trios* op. 1,⁸⁷ and as one of the main subscribers to Pierre Baillot's public quartet concerts.⁸⁸ As we saw in the case of Casimir Gide, a musician playing in an amateur's house had the right to expect in return that his host would buy tickets for his public concerts. But musicians were also careful to offer tickets to the amateurs, thus ensuring the presence of a large and committed audience that the press would subsequently be able to highlight in its review.⁸⁹

84 Cited in Viviane Niaux, *George Onslow*, 289–90. “Je me promets de vous voir dans le cours de février. J'arriverai à Paris escorté de trois Quintettes. [...] Je ne vous enverrai pas mes dernières productions mon bon ami, par la raison que personne ne voulant s'astreindre à profiter de l'excellente invention du métronome, la plupart des mouvements sont pris à faux et dénaturent entièrement la pensée du compositeur. Ce sera donc *under my own patronage* que mes nouveaux quintettes seront entendus pour la première fois et je désire ardemment que ce soit chez celui qui est la véritable source de l'intérêt avec lequel ils seront écoutés.”

85 Letters from Louis-Pierre-Martin Norblin to Cap, Monday, September 17 and April 13, 1829, LA-NORBLIN MONSIEUR-4 et 5; letter from Franchomme to Cap, “Wednesday evening,” n.d., LA-FRANCHOMME AUGUSTE-23; letter from Louise Farrenc to Madame Cap, “Tuesday,” n.d., LA-FARRENC LOUISE-13.

86 In a letter dated April 30, 1841, the double bass player Achille Gouffé offered him advice on how to fix a buzzing string and also gave him an appointment in November for the resumption of lessons after the summer season, LA-GOUFFE ACHILLE-5.

87 Léon Vallas, *César Franck*, trans. Hubert Foss (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1951), 49.

88 Paris, Bru Zane Mediabase, fonds Baillot, “Principaux souscripteurs pour les séances de quatuor de Pierre Baillot,” in “Documents relatifs aux séances de musique de chambre (Baillot),” accessed July 1, 2026, <https://www.bruzanemediabase.com/node/1551>.

89 Letter from Franchomme to Cap, n.d., LA-FRANCHOMME AUGUSTE-23: “Je prie Monsieur Cap d'avoir la bonté de me faire savoir ce soir ou demain matin s'il veut un 2d billet de parterre pour le Concert de Dimanche, parce que je suis prévenu que plus tard ou en aurait

Amateurs could help musicians in less visible but equally important ways. For many musicians working in Paris at the time, institutional recognition played an important role in the shaping of their public identity: educational qualifications, job titles, affiliations, or awards facilitated upward social mobility.⁹⁰ But the quality of the compositions was generally not enough to gain this institutional recognition. Musicians needed the support of their peers and, at times, that of amateurs with particularly important networks. Various letters capture composer George Onslow in the process of shaping his public identity. After Boieldieu died in 1834, Onslow tried to get elected at his place at the Institut de France; and he turned to Trémont for help in this venture, asking him to secure Auber's support (Trémont was a close friend of Auber, who lived in the same street).⁹¹ In addition to being one of the most successful opera composers of his time, Auber had been a member of the Institut de France since 1829, and was thus one of those who voted in the election of new academicians. As Onslow wrote to Trémont:

The death of poor Boieldieu ... leaves a vacancy at the Institut; I have long regarded my admission as *the most flattering reward* [emphasis mine] for my musical work. [...] I beg you, dear Trémont, to consult [Auber] on this topic, to remind him of his feelings towards me [...]. Please be so good as to let me know what he tells you. My dear friend, I can count on no one more than you to support me, and I thank you in advance for everything you will do in my interest.

Please send me what you learn on this subject: the names of the candidates, their greater or lesser chances of success... and, dear Trémont, accept the expression of all my friendship.⁹²

disposé [sic]." Letter from Louise Farrenc to Cap, n.d., "Dans le cas où vous n'auriez pas pu avoir de billets pour le concert de demain, je pourrais vous céder *un* ou *deux* parterre; veuillez me faire savoir si cela vous serait agréable et agréé, je vous prie, mes compliments empressés." LA-FARRENC LOUISE-11.

90 Louise Bernard de Raymond and Fabio Morabito, "The Composer as Process," in *Antoine Reicha and the Making of the Nineteenth-Century Composer*, eds Fabio Morabito, Louise Bernard de Raymond (Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2021), pp. xvii-xviii.

Laure Schnapper, "Le rôle des facteurs de piano dans le développement du concert public à Paris," in *Organisateurs et formes d'organisation du concert en Europe, 1700-1920. Institutionnalisation et pratiques*, eds Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrick Veit and Michael Werner (Berlin: BWV Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2008), pp. 237-255.

91 Onslow failed in 1829, but succeeded in 1842 after three attempts.

92 Letter to Trémont dated October 16, 1834, cited in Niaux, *George Onslow*, 318. "La mort du pauvre Boieldieu ... laisse une place vacante à l'Institut; il y a longtemps que j'y regarde

This letter, and more broadly this article, may point to an unresolved tension: between, on the one hand, the feelings of solidarity, community, and sometimes friendship that formed among the musicians of the Chaussée d'Antin and, on the other, exchanges of goodwill that seem to have been shaped more by obligation and personal interest. However, the fact that professionals and amateurs were able to use the musical meetings at Cap and Trémont to obtain favors—which were granted with varying degrees of goodwill—did not prevent them from the sincere pleasure of playing music together. Beyond personal interests, the intimacy between participants could lead to intense musical experiences.⁹³ Indeed, the gift economy at work in Cap and Trémont's séances contributed above all to the creation of lasting social bonds.⁹⁴ From impromptu sessions between neighbors to meetings that approached the concert format, amateurs and professionals from the neighborhood developed, year after year, a network that they used to shape their careers and the public musical life of the Chaussée d'Antin. Every sector of the broader musical economy—and every facet of the musician's profession—was thus affected: composition, publishing, public concerts, and even institutions were all influenced by the ties established in these domestic spaces.

mon admission comme la récompense la plus flatteuse que puissent obtenir mes travaux en musique. [...] Plus de soixante morceaux complets, [...] deux opéras [...] me donnent, ce me semble, quelques droits à me présenter; j'en parlais l'hiver dernier à Auber et Cherubini et l'un et l'autre me répondirent fort obligeamment. Je vous prie, mon cher Trémont de voir le premier à ce sujet, de lui rappeler ses bonnes dispositions à mon égard et lui dire que je lui écrirai bientôt. Soyez assez bon pour me transmettre ce qu'il vous aura dit. [...] Je ne puis, mon cher ami, compter sur personne plus que sur vous pour m'épauler et vous remercie d'avance de tout ce que vous voudrez bien faire dans mon intérêt. Veuillez me mander le résultat de vos informations à ce sujet, le nom des candidats, leur plus ou moins de chances de réussite...; Et recevez, cher Trémont, l'expression de toute mon amitié."

⁹³ We might then conclude with James Davies that what is at work in Cap and Trémont's sessions "lies somewhere between the 'hard' and 'soft' views of gift exchange [Mauss *versus* Derrida]," see James Davies, "Julia's Gift: The Social Life of Scores, c. 1830," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131, no. 2 (2006): 304.

⁹⁴ Alain Caillé, *Don, intérêt et désintéressement*. Bourdieu, Mauss, Platon et quelques autres (Paris: La Découverte, 1994), 94; cited in Campos, "Donner un concert," 92.

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Abstract

This article reconsiders, through the lens of musical sociability, the relationship between domestic and urban spaces in the Chaussée-d'Antin district in Paris between the 1830s and the 1850s. It investigates the Chaussée-d'Antin both as a musical topography (a remarkable concentration of musical venues, businesses, and homes) and as shaped by the physical and social mobility of its inhabitants. Drawing on a wide range of sources (including newspapers, correspondence, memoirs, notarial records, and musical scores), the article reconstructs the chamber music gatherings hosted in the homes of the baron de Trémont and the pharmacist Antoine Gratacap. The social interactions fostered by these gatherings shaped careers, artistic production, and the symbolic capital of both amateur musicians and professional artists. In this light, the musical life of the district is shown to emerge at the intersection of domestic interiors permeable—both physically and symbolically—to the surrounding public sphere.

Keywords: musical sociability, Chaussée-d'Antin, chamber music salons, gift economy, urban music life

Louise Bernard de Raymond is Associate Professor in the Department of Music at the Université de Tours (France). She holds a degree in musical analysis and aesthetics from the Paris Conservatoire and completed her PhD on Reicha's string quartets at Sorbonne Université. She co-edited the volume *Antoine Reicha, compositeur et théoricien* (Olms, 2015) with Jean-Pierre Bartoli and Herbert Schneider, as well as *Antoine Reicha and the Making of the Nineteenth-Century Composer* (Ut Orpheus, 2021) with Fabio Morabito. Her recent research focuses on chamber music practices in nineteenth-century France, with particular attention to the role of collective musical practices in shaping both the material and symbolic dimensions of domestic space in Paris during the July Monarchy.

