

## CHAPTER 3

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE IN INDIVIDUAL ENSEMBLESIntroduction

In spite of the relative frequency with which the music of Rameau and Gluck is performed today, research into the manner in which it was originally played in France has been but sporadically carried out. The most recent and detailed published study of the Académie from the point of view of performance practice is concerned with the seventeenth century.<sup>1)</sup> Other studies, notably those by Cucuel, Haas, Carse and Borrel have dealt with the Académie while covering wider contexts; but the questions that might readily be raised by any enquirer into performance practice in Paris are almost bound to be important enough to warrant lengthier answers than he would find in these books.

Enquiry into conditions of performance in different areas of Parisian musical activity around 1800 is hampered by the disappearance or destruction during the last century of the manuscript music and documents belonging to all the smaller theatres, the Opéra-Comique and the concert societies.<sup>2)</sup> Thus there is some excuse for the absence of detailed work, even though continuing searches are still bringing further manuscript material to light.<sup>3)</sup> The collection of the Académie, however, has been preserved for the most part, and therefore contains unique material which appears not to have been greatly investigated. For our purpose this collection provides mostly complete sets of manuscript instrumental part-books used in the original performances of operas and ballets, and manuscript copies of the full scores.

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1) J. Eppelsheim, Das Orchester in den Werken Jean-Baptiste Lullys, Tutzing, 1961

2) Manuscript parts made for the Comédie Italienne in 1777 of Sacchini's L'Olympiade have by chance been preserved by the Académie: Lajarte/CATALOGUE, Vol.II p.279

3) The recent discovery of the manuscripts of the Tuileries chapel is a case in point; see section (9) of the present chapter.

Examination of the extant part-books was carried out on the following operas:

1788	Démophon	(Cherubini)
1789	Nephté	(Lemoyne)
1791	Corisandre	(Langlé)
1794	Horatius Coclès	(Méhul)
1798	Olimpie	(Kalkbrenner)
1800	Les Horaces	(Porta)
1801	Astianax	(Kreutzer)
1802	Le retour de Zéphire	(Steibelt)
1803	Anacréon	(Cherubini)
1806	Nephtali	(Blangini)
1807	L'inauguration du Temple de la Victoire	(Le Sueur & Persuis)
1807	La Vestale	(Spontini)
1808	Alexandre chez Apelles	(Catel)
1809	Fernand Cortez	(Spontini)

There was insufficient time to examine the string parts of these works, and so certain conclusions could only be reached on wind and percussion performance practice. There is ample room for further research to be done on this material.

The sections in the present chapter concerned with private concert societies and military ensembles necessarily rely to a great extent on information from secondary sources. That concerned with the Tuileries chapel has benefited from recent studies carried out by M. Jean Mongrédién.

#### (1) The Académie

##### a) General observations

Before investigating this theatre more closely, it will be helpful to record some general statements about performance, further to previous discussions on the increased volume of sound and on conducting.

The balance of opinion hostile to this orchestra may be adjusted by the comments on its excellence made by J. F. Reichardt in 1802-3.<sup>1)</sup> His

<sup>1)</sup> "Das Orchester hat mir bei dieser Mozartschen Musik grosses Vergnügen gemacht. Es spielt noch mit seiner ganzen alten Kraft und ist reich an schönen Soloinstrumenten. Kreutzer, der vortreffliche, energische Violinist, führt es jetzt brav an." (Letter of 22 November 1802) "Die Chöre besser als ehemals und die ganze Orchesterparthie eben so gut und gross ausgeübt. Die herrliche Ouverture ward mit ganz hinreissender Kraft gespielt." (*ibid.*) Reichardt/PARIS, Vol. I pp. 163, 179.

experience being immeasurably broader than Smart's at the time should persuade us of his praise rather than the younger man's exaggerated claims on behalf of London orchestras, which, although contemporary, Carse/BB prints side by side with Reichardt's without comment.

The feature on which all commentators, whether French, English or German, were agreed was the bad quality of the singing in comparison with the instrumental playing:

"... the band [is] very full and good: the action of the performers highly animated and expressive; the music and the singing well-supported, and the scenery extremely grand ... The singing is far inferior to that of the English Opera ..."<sup>1)</sup>

"Il faut maintenant se demander pourquoi le chant a rétrogradé, en France, dans une proportion égale à celle des progrès de l'exécution Instrumentale." <sup>2)</sup>

It may have been the case that the recent increase in the volume of the orchestra (referred to above) was linked to the deterioration in vocal performance. Even Mme. Branchu was not immune to this trend.

"Personne n'ignore que le système de développement de voix, adopté pour le grand Opéra de Paris, dans tous les temps et principalement depuis dix ans ... l'habitude de jeter des sons et de crier pour être entendu ou applaudi a déjà le charme de sa voix ... " <sup>3)</sup>

détruit

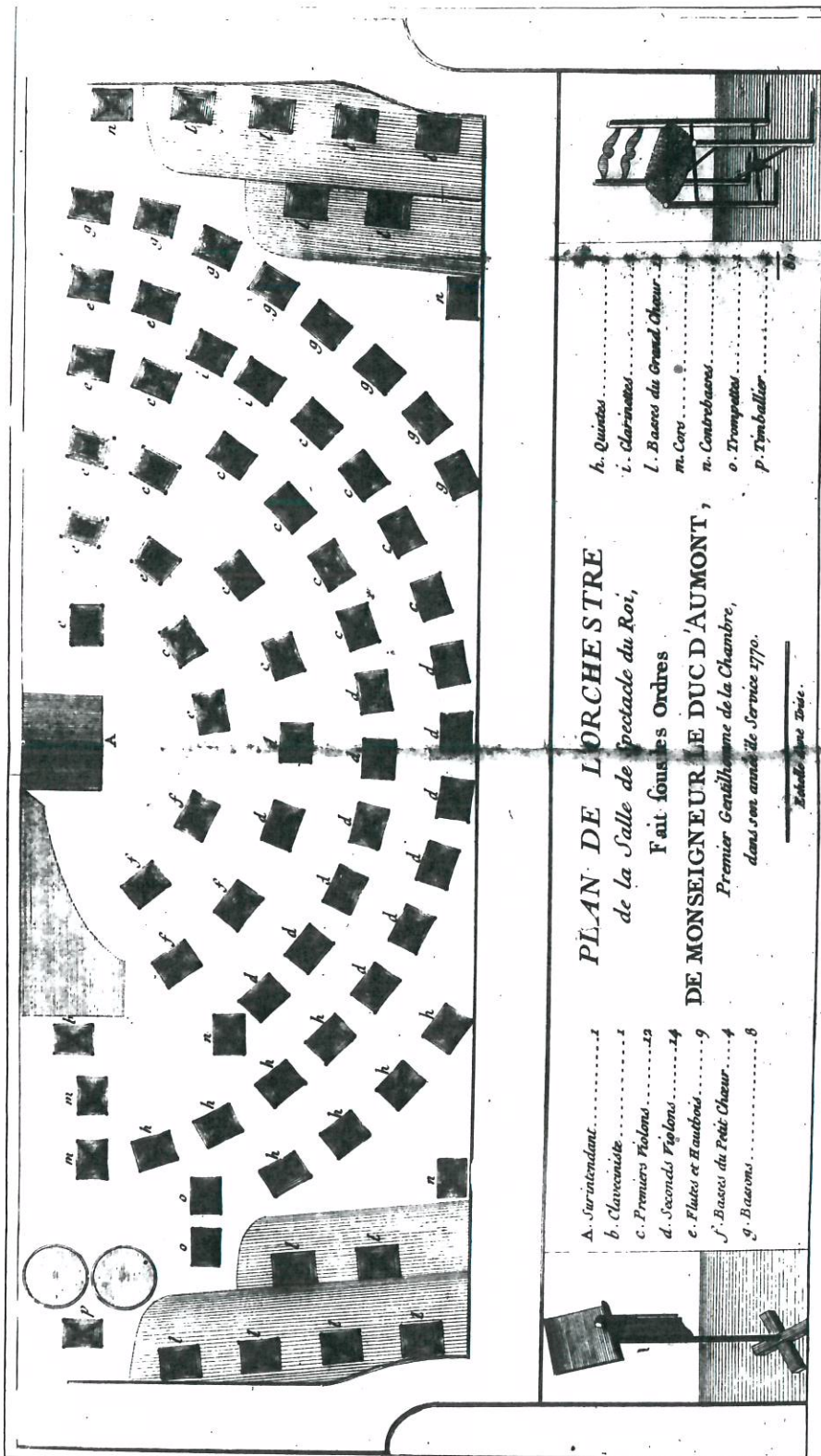
The taste for loud music was not new in Paris. Leopold Mozart had noted that "the Parisians must be fond of noisy music" in connection with performances of Stamitz's symphonies.<sup>4)</sup> The steady influence of abstract instrumental music on the Parisian consciousness may have meant that a

1) GUIDE p.96

2) CAM no.7, 8 January 1803

3) CAM no.6, 1 January 1803

4) "Wenn ich nach den Steimetzischen Synfonien, die in Paris gestochen sind, urtheilen sollte, so müssen die Pariser Liebhaber von Lermenden Sinfonien seyn. Alles ist Lermen ... " Letter of 29 June 1778 in Mozart/WECHSEL Band II, p.506



**PLAN DE L'ORCHESTRE**

de la Salle de Spectacle du Roi,

Fait sous les Ordres

**DE MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC D'AUMONT,**

Premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre,

dans son année de Service 1770.

Tableaux de Bois.

- A. Surintendant.....1
- b. Claveciniste.....1
- c. Premiers Violons.....15
- d. Seconds Violons.....14
- e. Flutes et Hautbois.....9
- f. Basses du Petit Chœur.....4
- g. Bassons.....8

- h. Quintes.....
- i. Clarinettes.....
- l. Basses du Grand Chœur.....
- m. Cors.....
- n. Contrebasses.....
- o. Trompettes.....
- p. Tambour.....

1770

"L'orchestre de la Salle de Spectacle du Roi...1770"

(Opposite page 86)



liking for a robust style of playing was encouraged, a new delight in the things instruments could do discovered, and that the voice, by comparison, was now found wanting.

The last passage quoted above shows that new factors had entered performance practice at the Académie since the Revolution. The commentary in the Almanach général, 1792 (see p.62 above) was at pains to contrast the situation at the Académie with that at the Théâtre de Monsieur, where "l'Auditeur ne perd absolument rien de ce qui se passe sur la scène ... " Such comparisons not only suggest that the traditional styles of orchestration used by composers for the Académie were unworkable, but also that it was realised that the constitution of the orchestra itself needed re-examination. Under the enfeebled control of Rey changes took place slowly, with the result that the period from 1790 to 1810 resembles one of transition in performance practice.

b) Seating

Three plans are shown: that opposite (1770) is from an unknown source,<sup>1)</sup> that opposite p.87 (1773) is taken from Matthew/HISTORY, and the third, opposite p.88 from Hass/PRAXIS, p.253 (? ca. 1810). No plans have been traced from the intervening period.<sup>2)</sup> The first two, both of the Versailles court orchestra, illustrate numbers of players in each section very close to or identical with those described in SPECTACLES for 1784, 1787 and 1788, but <sup>here</sup> referring to the Académie. There is no evidence for assuming that the Versailles plans also represent seating at the Académie, but I have nevertheless done so; first, since comparison of numbers is so coincidental, and second, because there is no reason to suppose that the seating would have varied to a great degree between these theatres, whose repertoire and personnel were frequently the same.

1) Original kindly provided by Professor A. Geoffroy-Dechaume, Poitiers.

2) The Bibliothèque de l'Opéra itself lacks such plans.



The only important numerical differences between the Versailles plans occur in the cellos, flutes and oboes, and bassoons:

	1770	1773		1770	1773
Violins	26	26	Flutes & Oboes	9	7
Violas	8	7	Clarinets	2	2
Cellos, Petit Choeur	4	4	Bassoons	8	6
Cellos, Grand Choeur	12	14	Horns	2	4
Double-basses	4	4	Trumpets	2	-
			Timpani	1	1

These differences will be considered below. The discrepancy in the figures for horns and trumpets is in reality a convenience of notation; a maximum of four regular players playing both instruments were employed at this time.

The principles governing the physical disposition of the orchestra in 1770-1773 may be defined as follows:

- (1) the presence of a small group of violins, violas, cellos and a double-bass, two horns and two or four flutes and oboes, clustered about the harpsichord;
- (2) the positioning of the cellos, Grand Choeur, on raised platforms at each side of the ensemble, and of the double-basses beside these cellos at each corner;
- (3) the association of the bassoons with the bass section of the ensemble;
- (4) the association of the clarinets with the woodwind;
- (5) the separation of the horns from the woodwind and their association with trumpets and drums;
- (6) the seating of the upper strings and violas so that the stage is faced, and the instruments shielded by the players from the audience.

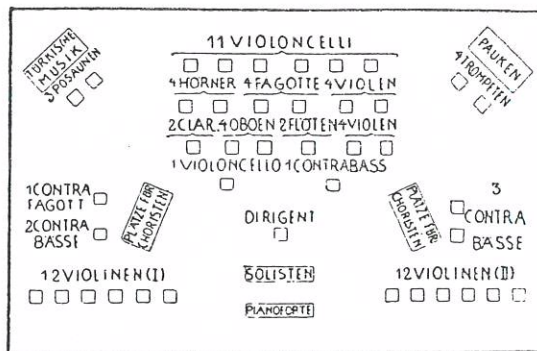


Abb. 12: Orchester der *Großen Oper* in Paris um 1810 (nach Haas, a. a. O. S. 253)

The Académie orchestra, probably after 1810. From R. Haas, Aufführungspraxis der Musik, reprinted in M.G.G.

(Opposite page 88)



It is probable that the bassoons would have 'masked' the tone of some other instruments as heard from the audience; also that there can have been no effective aural contact between the double-basses. On the other hand, their separation and that of the cellos, Grand Choeur, must have rendered the bass line audible to all other players.

Haas's plan, printed without acknowledgement of a source, must be later than the postulated 1810 on account of the double-bassoon,<sup>1)</sup> an instrument hardly documented at this time in Paris.<sup>2)</sup> Moreover, it clearly represents the Académie orchestra in concert formation rather than in the pit, because of the vocalists. The differences, nevertheless, are both marked and interesting. The concept of Petit Choeur and Grand Choeur has been superseded in favour of blocks of instruments divided into winds and strings. The cellos communicate the bass to the woodwind, but the violins take the beat directly from the conductor. The horns are associated with the woodwind, not the trumpets. Instead of the primary opposition of the bass with the remainder of the ensemble, the disposition now favours opposition of violins against the remainder.

Three similarities with 1773, however, are just as notable: the presence of a keyboard instrument, the comparable placing of the double-basses and the placing of a single cello near the conductor.

Considerations of numbers of players apart, the formations of 1773 and late Empire signal a change from "baroque" to "classical" thinking. The importance of the continuo group has dwindled, the emphasis on the bass line is reduced and the wind instruments are seen as a homogeneous group acting in a supporting relationship to the strings.

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1) See chapter 5, p.231.

2) Although only two trumpets appear in ALMANACH /II, 1809, four were noticed by a correspondent of the Leipzig Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung in 1810. See Carse/BB p.56

c) Treble and bass

The lack of sufficient bass tone in the Académie orchestra was recorded in at least three statements up to circa 1780; the first two have often been reproduced.

"Pas assez de contre-basses et trop de violoncelles, dont les sons traînés à leur manière, étouffent la mélodie et assomment le spectateur." (J.-J. Rousseau) 1)

"[the bassoons, being too numerous] absorbent la rondeur et la gravité des basses." (Gossec) 2)

"Les parties faisant basse dans les grands effets ne sçauroient être trop fortes, surtout actuellement que l'on croit ajouter à l'effet en doublant et chargeant les parties élevées, comme violons, flûtes, clarinettes, petites flûtes etc. La physique nous démonstre assez clairement que les sons élevés et aigus ne paroissent tels à l'oreille, que par l'opposition et la comparaison qu'elles en fait [sic] avec les sons graves ... " (L. J. Francoeur)<sup>3</sup>

Francoeur also thought that rapid notes on the cellos did not produce the required support for the treble instruments, since the double-basses were too dull (sourd) to match them in such instances.

Complaints such as these were readily supportable in theoretical terms by the many writings, not only by Frenchmen,<sup>4)</sup> that described the bass as the foundation of the orchestra, ideally audible to all the players. Accordingly, the four double-basses of the Académie were positioned separately in each corner of the ensemble. Yet it was only by 1783 that their number was increased to five, and by 1799 to six. The really effective alterations in constitution before 1789 were the reduction of the bassoons by half, to four in 1783 (at which number they remained), and the reduction of cellos from sixteen (1770 plan) or even eighteen

1) METH, article "Orchestre"

2) Written around 1780 in the Mémoire sur l'administration de l'Opéra, quoted in Hellouin/GOSSEC p.75

3) Francoeur/DIAPASON, article "Serpent"

4) Haas/PRAXIS p.217 quotes a German author of 1779. Meude-Monpas/DICT says in 1787, "la basse est le principe d'un concert ... " (article, "Orchestre")

(1773 plan) to twelve by 1783.<sup>1)</sup> The criticism of both Gossec and Rousseau were, as a result, both answered in practical terms. Where previously the bass line had been artificially justified by multiplication of numbers, this policy simply produced lack of clear definition and imprecise rhythm. (We have seen above the reported lack of good cellists in Paris as late as 1809). What was needed were better cellists and fewer violins, and particularly a style of orchestration that avoided the simple doubling of treble lines of which Francoeur complained. Both ends were achieved under the Empire, and both followed the successes of the opéra-comique orchestras that has already been described.

The number of Académie violins remained at about twenty-six from 1770 until 1792-3; if, as seems probable, there was some breaking down of the division into Petit Choeur and Grand Choeur (see next section) this would undoubtedly have swung the tonal balance in favour of the orchestra and against the voice in recitatives and solos. If some redress of balance between treble and bass was effected before 1789 in the wind instruments, the situation in the strings became less satisfactory, given the more traditional methods of scoring and the new technique of violin bowing and construction.<sup>2)</sup>

Whether by accident owing to the political situation or design owing to the various administrative changes at the Académie that this situation brought, the number of violins dropped, according to SPECTACLES and ALMANACH/II, from 28 in 1789-91 to 24 in 1793 and 20 in 1794, thereafter to rise momentarily to 25 by 1799, and drop once again to 21 in 1800 and 23 in

1) The 1783 figures in each case are taken from SPECTACLES. No supernumerary cellists were ever noted in SPECTACLES from 1783, although supernumeraries were accounted for in the violin section. The five extra cello players in the 1773 plan cannot therefore be reckoned as a permanent feature of the orchestra's flexibility.

2) Violas remained at 6 from 1783 to 1809. Totals of 7 and 8 are noted in the orchestra plans of 1770 and 1773.

1808-9.<sup>1)</sup> The lower figures dating from the wealthier Empire period suggest that a reduction in numbers was heard to be desirable; if this was so, the criticisms of Beaumarchais and the Almanach Général may well have been allayed. A single double-bass represented the only increase in any section of the strings over the same period. By 1808-9, therefore, the string numbers (23 - 6 - 12 - 6) characterised a reasonably compact and self-balancing group. The bassoons were by this time chiefly used as tenor voices. Likewise, the trombones, still mainly employed as inner sustaining or as punctuating instruments, could not be classed as adjuncts to the bass line. The wind instruments now formed a separate and flexible group, making it easier for composers to avoid the doubling of treble winds.

The upper woodwind instruments, like the violins, did not alter greatly in number up to the Revolution. The changes in the conventions of their usage, and thus their sound within the ensemble, can only be deduced from evidence apart from the music itself. This evidence will be set out in section (e) below.

#### d) Grand Choeur, Petit Choeur

The traditional polarity between larger and smaller groups of instruments is clearly evinced in the seating plans shown above, 1770 and 1773. The fan-like arrangement of players expressed their dependent relationship with the microcosmic group centred on the continuo. Until the advent of Gluck the practice was to employ the Grand Choeur only to accompany the choruses and to play the overtures and ballets. The changes that Gluck made in performance practice and those that took place after his final return to Vienna appear not to have been peremptory, but evolutionary. The evidence defining the ramifications of Gluck's influence in this respect may be set out as follows.

<sup>1)</sup> During the extremely unsettled period of administration from 1794 to 1799, many economies were made and the orchestra sounded thin (in December 1798) to at least one commentator. Performances were sporadic, morale low. See Pougin/OPERA p. 105



The Encyclopédie stated:

"Le grand chœur est composé de huit basses qui sont en haut des deux côtés de l'orchestre. La contrebasse est du grand chœur, ainsi que les violons, les hautbois, les flûtes et les bassons ... On appelle petit chœur, dans l'orchestre de l'Opéra, un petit nombre des meilleurs instrumens de chaque genre qui forme comme un orchestre particulier autour du clavecin et celui qui bat la mesure. Il est destiné pour les accompagnemens qui demandent le plus de délicatesse et de précision." 1)

Judging from the greater distance between the bassoons and the harpsichord (plans for both 1770 and 1773) than between other winds and the harpsichord, we may surmise that this instrument was not of the Petit Chœur. The clarinets also do not seem logically arranged as part of this group. It is impossible to tell how many flutes and oboes were regarded as part of the Petit Chœur. The double-bass nearest the harpsichord was clearly placed intentionally.

The only writer who appears to have regarded the early breaking up of the traditional modes of performance as conclusive was Castil-Blaze:

"Tous ces obstacles disparurent devant le génie et la volonté ferme de Gluck. Grand chœur et petit chœur réunirent à sa voix; tous ces combattants furent appelés et rangés sur le front de bandière." 2)

In circumstantial support of this statement is the fact that whereas in some older scores instructions are found concerning the employment of these two groups,<sup>3)</sup> no such mention of the Chœurs has been found in music by the present writer after Gluck's La Cythère assiégée (1775). Few, moreover, would argue that Gluck's mature music depended on a Baroque division into concertino and ripieno groups.

Yet the arguments supporting the persistence of such groups, or at least for the continuing need to create sub-groups within the orchestra,

1) ENCYCLOPEDIE, 1772, article "Chœur"

2) Castil-Blaze/ACADEMIE, Vol.2 p.353

3) Borrel/MUSIQUE p.44


are even more persuasive. One of the attributes of the Petit Choeur was "précision", an orchestral quality not lightly to be rejected by a composer of wide experience in the Italian musical theatre. Castil-Blaze's account is misleading as it stands, for five reasons.

- (i) No temporary director could reform the Académie orchestra overnight and impose a new style of performance practice on all works beside his own. The institutional nature of the Académie was even more conspicuous than it is today. The orchestra, additionally, enjoyed certain powers of decision.<sup>1)</sup>
- (ii) Gluck himself asked for "Violoncelle du petit Choeur" in La Cythère assiégée, p.57 (Ex.8). Here the orchestra accompanies an aria, and the smaller and larger ensembles are given different music. This is putting new wine in an old bottle; in comparison, however, Lemoine's Nephté (1789), p.43, specifies a reduction in the number of violas when, in recitative, Nephté's soprano voice is heard after a male soloist has sung.
- (iii) The four cellos of the Petit Choeur were so listed in SPECTACLES up to 1794, and so in all probability sat apart from the main body of cellos until at least this date. In 1799-1800 they were listed as "Pour solo et tutti", a delineation which hardly makes sense unless referring to an organised sub-grouping. In Haas's plan, as I have mentioned, a cello is still placed near the keyboard player.
- (iv) As late as 1789 Meude-Monpas described the division thus:  
 "A l'Opéra, on nomme petit choeur quelques Musiciens d'élite qui se placent plus près du Conducteur de l'Orchestre, et qui sont toujours sur leurs gardes, en cas les chanteurs se tromperoient ... " 2)

1) For example, they could vote on new members. See Carse/BB p.72

2) Meude-Monpas/DICT, article "Choeur". This writer took some of his material from older sources such as the ENCYCLOPEDIE, but more often his information appears to be up to date.

The small group could hardly have corrected soloists effectively if the whole band were sounding as well. Although the above definition is very close to that in the *Encyclopédie*, Meude-Monpas does not actually define the size or composition of the *Petit Choeur*.

- (v) The full score, partly autograph, of Candeille's unperformed Ladislas et Adélaïde (dated 1791) bears the following instruction: "Les instrumens à vent de tutty n'entreront en force qu' au Choeur"  
 [B. de l'Op.  1012.A.I, f.114v.] The movement in question opens with music for two soloists, and the chorus enters later. The significance of "de tutty" will become apparent in due course.

The most reasonable conclusion is that the *Petit Choeur* was retained in recitative as long as the kind of writing was of the older and more free type, unadorned by descriptive music, but that arias and ensembles used the full body of strings. Today, sixteen cellos need not sound obtrusive in quiet music or recitative. In the 1780's, players were attuned to the less sensitive style of *Grand Choeur* music and a relatively unsophisticated manner of orchestral direction.<sup>1)</sup> Moreover, although twentieth-century voice production may enable a singer to compete favourably with many instruments, it is hardly to be doubted that vocal training has changed over 200 years in pursuit of increased volume.

Some types of recitative, on the other hand, may well have been designed for all the strings. The measured recitative for Agamemnon at the end of act 2 of Gluck's Iphigénie en Aulide (Ex.9) illustrates the kind of writing that naturally demanded a weighty accompaniment, where the composer places the voice in alternation with the instrumental ensemble. As measured and more fully-scored recitative became more common in the 1780's, the *Petit Choeur* would have diminished in importance and the full string band, given increased opportunities, have been more inclined

<sup>1)</sup> Grétry reminds us, too, how singers at the *Académie* would demand that the players follow their tempo. This would obviously have been more difficult to manage with the whole string ensemble. Grétry/MEMOIRES, Vol.I pp.53-6

to overwhelm the voice, thus engendering the complaints quoted earlier on.

Owing to the time-beater and the violin-leader, the practical status of the harpsichord and fortepiano in the Académie orchestra had always been less marked than at most other theatres; yet as Haas pointed out,<sup>1)</sup> the keyboard continuo was frequently encountered in the earlier nineteenth century. Catel was listed as "claveciniste" of the Académie in SPECTACLES, 1793. There is no evidence that this orchestra performed without a keyboard continuo, associated with the cellos stationed near at hand, as late as 1810. Talking generally, Choron could say in 1813:

"A l'orchestre, le Piano sert pour l'accompagnement: on y ajoute le violoncelle pour renforcer les basses." 2)

As far as the wind instruments were concerned, there was never any question of deploying the full forces indiscriminately at all times. As with the strings, subdivision persisted after Gluck, but was organised in flexible ways according to context. Reductions in numbers of wind instruments took such forms as:

1775	Grétry: <u>Céphale et Procris</u>	p.156 "deux bassons" p.163 "tous" p.165 "deux bassons" p.170 "tous"
1779	Gluck: <u>Iphigénie en Tauride</u>	p.92 "Une flûte seule" "Une clarinette seul"
1781	Piccinni: <u>Iphigénie en Tauride</u>	p.90 (Oboes and clarinets) "Tantôt les uns tantôt autres"
1782	Edelmann: <u>Ariane dans l'isle de Naxos</u>	p.1 (Bassoon) "un seul" p.7 "une clarinette"

This degree of specification was eventually to become the rule when the orchestra had settled into early nineteenth-century proportions, especially under the guidance of Spontini; the surviving methods of subdivision which still applied up to that time must now be examined in more detail.

1) Haas/PRAXIS p.164 et seq.

2) Choron/TRAITE p.85. A fortepiano was ideally required in Lemoyne's popular Les Prétendus (Académie, 1789); see Ex.23.



e) Flutes and oboes

The balance of argument with regard to performance practice of the flutes and oboes rests on three extra-musical considerations. First, that although the rigid application of a Petit Choeur technique was no longer everywhere practicable after Gluck's example, some division between solo instruments and the remainder was frequently desirable. Second, that the marking "solo" does not, according to examination of the part-books after 1788, necessarily mean that only one player took the "solo" line; and third, that the part-books indicate that more than the six players indicated in SPECTACLES were involved in the performance of flute and oboe music. These considerations will be treated in reverse order, beginning with the most readily identifiable mode of practice.

The enumeration of orchestral players in SPECTACLES has already been shown to be slightly at variance with the Académie plans, 1770 and 1773. In SPECTACLES 1784 and 1789-91 six players are listed, as against the seven illustrated in the 1773 plan. After this date, however, interesting variations are displayed in the enumeration and the categories under which players' names are listed, giving invaluable clues as to the interpretation of the music itself; this music chiefly appears in scores written in modern fashion, with two parts to each instrument.

In the summary table below taken from SPECTACLES and ALMANACH/II, the categories are reproduced precisely as they appear in these journals.

	FLUTE	FLUTE and OBOE	OBOE
1789	Sallentin	---	André, Garnier aîné
1790	Wunderlich		Schneitzhoeffler, Garnier cadet
1792	Sallentin Wunderlich, Fauvel	Garnier cadet Delcambre Maze	Garnier aîné Schneitzhoeffler
1793	Wunderlich	---	Garnier aîné, Schneitzhoeffler
1794	Garnier cadet		Delcambre aîné, Félix

1799-	Hugot (soloist)	---	Sallentin (soloist)
1801	Wunderlich		Schneitzhoeffer
	Garnier cadet		Delcambre aîné, Félix
1809	Wunderlich	---	Sallentin
	Garnier cadet		Schneitzhoeffer
	Lépine		Delcambre aîné, Félix

There is no difficulty here about the continuing identity of the players; the significant points are the transference of Sallentin from flute to oboe, of Garnier cadet from oboe to flute, and the presence of Fauvel and Maze in 1792. These last two names would indeed appear problematical were we not able to compare these names for 1792 with the instrumental part-books used in performance.

In each of the six operas whose part-books were examined from Démophon (1788) to Les Horaces (1801) and also in Anacréon (1803), the music for flute and oboe was, without exception, arranged in no less than five books:

Flûte seule	Flûtes et Hautbois	Hautbois solo
Flûtes		Oboi

If, as must naturally be assumed, all these books were in use at once at certain, if not all, points in the performance, it will be seen that at least eight players would have used them: three flautists, three oboists and two "Flutes et Hautbois". This latter part-book was always found to be a straightforward combination of the two other parts, and although it therefore extended at times to four simultaneous staves, it is not likely that more than two players would have used it. (This is suggested by the engraving opposite p. 57.) The lighting would hardly have sufficed, and the orchestral plans suggest that, traditionally at least, flutes and oboes always sat by twos. This leaves open the possibilities that the two performers assigned to "Flûtes et Hautbois" either doubled both flute parts, both oboe parts, or played one part belonging to each instrument.

The nature of the contents of the other books likewise furnishes no further clues to performance practice, since the copyist did not

differentiate between any book designed for the same instrument. That is, the same music and the same markings (such as "solo") were reproduced under the appropriate instrument in all three flute contexts and all three oboe contexts. This naturally renders the nature of instrumental subdivisional practice difficult to distinguish.

The clue to the rôle which Fauvel and Maze took is provided by the fact that both players performed in the Académie orchestra on an instrument other than the flute or oboe. Maze appeared as a second violinist in SPECTACLES 1784 and 1787 to 1794, inclusive. (By 1799-1800 his name no longer appeared). Fauvel did not appear in the Académie list, nor that for any other orchestra in SPECTACLES, before 1792; but in 1792, 1794 and 1799-1800 he was assigned as a viola player; his entry as a cellist in 1793 was probably therefore a mistaken one.<sup>1)</sup>

These facts being so, it is to be concluded that the six flute and oboe players listed in SPECTACLES<sup>2)</sup> were supplemented by two additional players from time to time in a surviving example of organised doubling between winds and strings. Although this practice of using single players for more than one instrument dated back to Lully's time it has not been extensively explored, and only Cucuel among historians mentions joint responsibility in one man for a stringed and a wind instrument.<sup>3.)</sup> Nevertheless, in SPECTACLES, merely in the one year 1784, Coppeaux was listed under both timpani and viola, and Garnier (l'aîné?) under both oboe and second violin, which suggests that the tradition of "doublures" was unbroken and somewhat plentifully used up to, as well as beyond, 1789.

The musical position of the two supplementary players on flute and oboe can only be conjectured since there is no precise record of when they

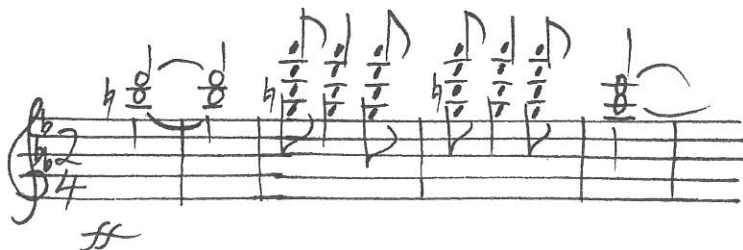
1) That Fauvel and Maze were in each case identical is proved by examination of addresses in SPECTACLES. This periodical distinguished brothers by their initials; so this possibility is ruled out.

2) And in Carse/ORCHESTRA p.26 and Haas/FRAGE p.163 3) Cucuel/ETUDES p.35; Borrel/ORCHESTRE and Castil-Blaze/ACADEMIE Vol.II p.355 only mention wind instruments, timpani and harp.

participated. Many French composers after Gluck, following the latter's example, scored extensively at the Académie for the strings in the main, with several wind instruments in combination. The occasions on which the full band was employed were not numerous; they are frequently marked off from the rest of the score by dramatic events, and stand out clearly as special features. It seems obvious that the supplementary players were used on these occasions, or else played when a composer went so far as to specify that "all" the flutes and oboes were to participate.

That four flutes or two flutes and two piccolos were expected to be available at the kind of passage which I have just described is strongly suggested by details in Floquet's Le seigneur bienfaisant (1780) and Méreaux's Jocaste (1791), an unpublished piece. Page 139 of Ex. 13a shows the part of the storm opening act 2 of the former that includes two flutes and two piccolos. Reference to the Académie copy score (B. de l'Op. A.282.A.II) confirms that the scale passages belong to the piccolos and that the oboes are omitted altogether. Clearly the oboists took up flutes, the flautists piccolos, and there is every likelihood that the supplementary players joined in too. In Jocaste, after the carrying off of Oedipus to hell and during the burning of the royal palace, a section of very full scoring contains the following bars for flutes in four independent parts:

Act 3, f. 49.  
(Full score in  
Ex. 13)



Here the oboes play as well, so that the participation of the supplementary players would have been almost obligatory.

Occasionally a written instruction appears to suggest more instruments than the conventional two on the stave. Such an instance is "Toutes les Flûtes" in the chorus and ensemble, "Hymne à la Déesse de la Liberté" in Candeille's La patrie reconnaissante (1793), f.336.

As will be seen below, two developments took place around 1800 that indicate with some certainty that the practice of doubling extra flutes or oboes became obsolete: the wind section was re-organised, and the "Flûtes et Hautbois" part-books began to disappear, so that only Anacréon (1803), of those operas whose instrumental material I have examined, possessed such a book after 1801.

If lack of instructions hamper investigations into the practice of doubling in louder music, a similar difficulty obtains in examining the instruction "solo", the second of our three considerations. As already stated, all the part-books indiscriminately contain the word "solo", with no further indication of how it was interpreted. At this point, reference must be made to the table above, p. 97. It will be seen that from 1799 to 1801 one flautist and one oboist were officially nominated as soloists. This was not an arbitrary distinction, but, according to Castil-Blaze, part of a deliberate policy of re-organisation that took place in 1797, after which

"Les soloistes se reposaient pendant les ensembles de la symphonie, et ne se faisaient entendre que dans les récits du chant instrumental." 1)

Castil-Blaze named the following as official soloists:

Hugot (flute)	Lefèvre (clarinet)	Duvernoy (horn)	Rode (violin)
Sallentin (oboe)	Ozi (bassoon)		Levasseur (cello)

The performance practice as described above may well have altered in later

1) Castil-Blaze/ACADEMIE Vol.II p.352. Cf. Berlioz/MEMOIRES, 1878, p.76 (1824), the commentary on musicians in the Académie orchestra: "Voilà Baillet! il ne fait pas comme d'autres violons solos, celui-là, il ne se réserve pas exclusivement pour les ballets; il ne se trouve point déshonoré d'accompagner un opéra de Gluck."



years (those in which Castil-Blaze and Berlioz experienced the system in operation) from the period in which it was first introduced, or at least have been introduced gradually. Yet the practice of featuring solo instruments in non-vocal movements was not uncommon at the turn of the century, as may be seen from manuscript items at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra. A good example is one of the divertissements from Méhul's Adrien found both in the autograph collection (Bibliothèque Nationale) in E flat (Exx. 18, 19) and in a copy in a modified version in C (Bibliothèque de l'Opéra), headed "Divertissement du 3<sup>e</sup> Acte d'Adrien / 9 Nivose an 10 / 26 xbre 1801". It was most obviously for this kind of musical occasion that the special soloists were reserved.

Assuming that this was the case, the situation in the main parts of operas after this time was that two flautists normally played, with either three or four oboes available. This may be seen both from SPECTACLES in the table above, and from the different disposition of part-books that is found. The major change is that the "Flûtes et Hautbois" book no longer appears regularly from 1801.

1801	<u>Astianax</u>	Flûte seule	Hautbois solo
1802	<u>Le retour de Zéphire</u>	Flûtes	⌈Oboi missing?⌋
1806	<u>Nephtali</u>	{ Flûte seule Flauti	{ Hautbois solo Oboi (2 books)
1808	<u>Alexandre chez Apelles</u>	{ Flûte seule Flûtes et petites flûtes	⌈Hautbois solo missing? Oboi (2 books)

There is no clue in SPECTACLES as to the identity of the fourth regular oboist; it may have been the practice for Sallentin to play the normal oboe parts in addition to solo items in ballets.

The indication "solo" in the normal course of an opera between 1789 and 1810, therefore, on the strength of the re-organisation of ca. 1797, probably simply meant performance by one instrument only. Yet even in this case it is difficult to be certain, because certain details in the

manuscript parts for Kalkbrenner's Olimpie (1798) suggest the employment - maybe even as an exception - of two flutes in a passage labelled "solo" in a movement incorporating choral writing.

The movement is a "Marche Religieux [sic] des Prêtres et Prêtresses" in act 1, f.138. The flute solo in question, a prominent feature of the music, appears as expected in all three part-books, but that for "Flûtes et Hautbois" looks unused at this point. The relevant passage in both the solo flute book and the book for the second and third players is phrased, however, in red performer's crayon. Both these part-books have a page-turn during the solo, but at a different place. In the "Flûtes" part-book is a performer's note in crayon, "Tournez pour le solo". The implication is therefore that this "solo" was executed by two players, presumably Hugot and Wunderlich. The second solo part is unlikely to have been phrased and annotated simply in order to accommodate Hugot's possible absence, for his desk could, with far less trouble, have been occupied by the second player. Dual performance seems by far the likelier situation.

We are faced as a result with the possibility that "solo", in some or all choral accompaniments, indicated more than a single player, as the balance demanded.

The final consideration, the way in which interchange between soloists, "solo" groups and the whole section of eight instruments was realised in the period following the demise of Petit Choeur and Grand Choeur practice in the wind instruments, rests on our prior conclusions above. It is certain that written instructions, and sometimes printed ones, cannot always mean what they say, unless specific numbers of instruments are included in the manner which Spontini was to adopt in La Vestale. Singular and plural are frequently muddled, as in "flûtes seul", "oboi

solo". What appears to have been the case was that the difference in genre between fully scored movements or passages, choral and perhaps vocal accompaniments and purely divertissement music affected the number of flutes and oboes liable to be called into play, more especially before about 1800, up until when the two extra doubling players were thought necessary. Before this time, four flutes and four oboes were available for strenuous music, and after this time, only three flutes and four oboes, employed only to play their own instrument. The interpretation of "solo" may well have been dependent upon the context. Thus the 'baroque' practice of sub-division was propagated necessarily through the fact that a similar number of flutes and oboes could be called upon in 1810 as in 1773.

f) The piccolo

From SPECTACLES 1787 to 1792 either two or three men, including Falcot and Valère from 1789, were listed as responsible for percussion other than the timpani, and for the piccolo. After 1792 special designation for the piccolo never re-appeared, but in ALMANACH/II 1799-1800 Falcot and Valère were still responsible for the percussion; it seems probable that they continued to exercise responsibility for the piccolo, at least when flutes doubled with piccolos.

No separate part-books have been discovered for the piccolo, and in Nephté (1789) and Le retour de Zéphire (1802), the music for the piccolo is written in to all the flute part-books. Yet in situations such as that of Zéphire, where both types of instrument play simultaneously, the important piccolo part would seem to have made a separate book essential. Ex. 15, from Cherubini's Démophon, is typical of much Académie writing of the period in that flutes, oboes and piccolos are required at once in a context seeming to demand extra players for the piccolos rather than two of the regular flautists. In other contexts, particularly where percussion

instruments were demanded, these flautists may have had to double on the smaller instrument.

g) Clarinets

A table drawn from the seating plans, from SPECTACLES and from ALMANACH/II shows the following numbers of players:

1770 - 1789	2	
1789 - 1794	2	
1799 - 1801	2 and X.	Lefèvre (soloist)
1809	2 and X.	Lefèvre

In each set of part-books examined up to Spontini's Fernand Cortez (1809) there was never more than one clarinet book, nor ever, with one exception, an indication from the labelling that another book had existed, and since been lost. The inference to be drawn is that no more than two clarinets were ever demanded at once until 1809. Such labels as "solo" could only mean one instrument to the part. In the autograph opening chorus of Steibelt's Intermède (1806), Ex.11, the twin labels "solo" by each clarinet part clearly represent an indication of melodic material, not a reduction in numbers.

La Vestale is perhaps problematical in that two clarinets are numerically specified at the beginning of many arias and smaller pieces, yet in one or two large choruses (e.g. act 3, p.389) no such specification is made. In this opera all three instruments may have been required at these times. Although no supplementary part-book has been discovered, several wind books have in fact been mislaid at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, among which a second clarinet part could have existed. The music itself, nevertheless, is always in two rather than three parts, and the involvement of three instruments must remain conjectural.

The single exception mentioned above is the case of Kreutzer's AstiCanax (1801), whose surviving clarinet part is labelled "Premier Clarinette" in conformity with the "Premier Hautbois" labelling generally

found where two oboe books occur. In all other cases, however, the clarinet part-book is labelled "clarinettes". After the re-organisation in 1797 two clarinet books would seem to have been a necessity; the disappearance of the solo books may indicate that these were less substantial than the extant books; in other words, that they contained only music for the ballets and divertissements.

The first time that four clarinets may definitely be said to have been used at the Académie is in the first version of Spontini's Fernand Cortez (1809). The first stage music (act 2, p.448 of the printed score) is written out for the orchestral clarinets in the main part-book.<sup>1)</sup> A crayon note, "Une  $\frac{1}{2}$  heure au théâtre" in the book at this point confirms that the main players were used for the stage music. Additionally, a separate book for two players on high F clarinets is provided. These exceptional instruments, which are not indicated in the printed score,<sup>2)</sup> were conceived not only for this "Musique barbare dans le lointain" but also for many parts of act 3, in addition to the normal clarinets. This is indicated both by the Académie copy score and Spontini's autograph in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra. The participation of the F clarinets in rehearsal and perhaps also in early performances is shown by the agreement between the copy score and the part-books, and their completeness in respect of the F clarinet parts. At some stage the parts were all given back to C clarinets, the autograph being similarly altered to serve as printer's copy.

The following extract from the part-book, taken from the original version of the act 3 aria, "O douleur, o fatal présage", demonstrates the need for four clarinets.

- 
- 1) Of the wind part-books, only those for clarinets, 2nd oboe, bassoons and stage music have survived.
- 2) No other operatic composition that I have seen before 1811 used F clarinets, which had been the preserve of military music: see p. 298 below



Here all four clarinets played in the pit since no stage music was indicated, and the Académie copyist followed his normal practice of writing all the parts for one instrument in each part-book.

#### h) Bassoons

The number of players, according to SPECTACLES and ALMANACH/II, was as follows:

1789 - 1791	4	1792, 1793	5
1794	4	1799 - 1801	4 and E. Ozi (soloist)
		1809	4, not including Ozi

The case of bassoon performance practice is similar to that for the clarinets. In all operas except one where the part-books were examined, two bassoon books were found. This applied even after 1797. Observations concerning the disappearance of solo part books therefore apply to these instruments as well as to those previously discussed. Four instruments may be assumed to have been the rule in performance. Music in four parts for bassoons appears without special comment in Steibelt's Intermède, f.19 (Ex.11) and Le Sueur's Adam, p.109 (Ex.12). No bassoon music has been found in five parts.

In support of the conjecture that four bassoons were normally heard, particular specifications of numbers of instruments may be quoted, such as "2 bassons seuls" (Corisandre, act 1, p.34) or "Basson seul" (Adrien, act 3, f.145), Ex.20.

The single exception to the case of two part-books surviving is Corisandre (1791) by Langl c. Three bassoon books exist for this opera. It will be noted that there were five players listed for 1792 and 1793,

and that these lists <sup>could have</sup> postdated the situations which they described. As a result, it may be seen that the otherwise dubious appearance of five players may well indicate the presence of an attempt to add materially to the strength of the Académie wind band at the very period in which Republican operas were being staged and the orchestra added to by the participation of at least two serpent players (SPECTACLES 1793). Possibly the fifth bassoonist was reserved for fully-scored sections of music and purely instrumental movements as the extra flute and oboe players would seem to have been.

### Conclusion

Woodwind performance practice at the Académie conformed increasingly to the demands for exactitude that were put forward by composers. These demands themselves became gradually more explicit; they arose both out of the desire to create particular effects and as a question of necessity where several instruments of one kind were available. A newly established awareness of the value of decorative music and of the virtuoso wind player inevitably encouraged the employment of true solos, especially in exclusively orchestral music; this tendency was recognised in the re-organisation of the orchestra in 1797. Yet music designated as "solo" seems to have been interpreted differently in different musical contexts. While in music heard without voices single instruments were doubtless intended, there is evidence to suggest that in the situation of a choral accompaniment the need for balance, at least occasionally, demanded more than one instrument. Before about 1800, moreover, extra players were employed for large-scale orchestral writing; they participated without the operation of any written indication in the score. A fifth bassoon was available in about 1791-1792 and two serpent players in 1792. (No manuscript material has been examined from that year, but the rarity of serpent music in full scores suggests that their rôle was principally to double the bass part when required).

Two string players doubling flute and oboe were provided up to about 1800 for the same purpose. Not until Spontini's La Vestale is there found a comprehensive system wherein the exact number of woodwind instruments required is specified.

In a different context, Reicha's advice to composers in 1816 was on the side of moderation and clarity in scoring for wind instruments and the voice; his use of the term "solo" by this date admitted of no ambiguity:

"Lorsqu'un compositeur veut n'accompagner une voix qu'avec les instrumens à vent il faut les traiter en solo, c'est-à-dire n'en employer qu'un seul de chaque espèce excepté dans les terminaisons.."1)

i) Horns

The four "horns" portrayed in the orchestra plan, 1773, represent two horn and two trumpet players as the 1770 plan more correctly shows. Both SPECTACLES and Castil-Blaze<sup>2)</sup> indicate that the first appearance of four horns took place in 1788. This number was retained until some time between 1793-4 and 1798-9, when, probably at the time of the reorganisation mentioned above, it was increased by one. Duvernoy then became official soloist in addition to the four players already employed.

Comparison with the orchestral material is consistently satisfactory. For each opera, two part-books for the horn have been found; examination revealed that each book, from Cherubini's Démophon<sup>o</sup> (December 1788) onwards, contained a single part for both the instruments using it when the writing was in two parts overall; when three or four different notes were to be sounded at once (see below) each part-book made the appropriate difference, but only for as long as this method of writing lasted. It must be assumed that the part-books for the solo horn, as those for the solo woodwind, have been lost. Certainly the "Solo pour le Cor par le Cen Frédéric Duvernoy",

1) Reicha/COURS p.249

2) Castil-Blaze/ACADEMIE Vol.II p.347

part of the ballet in Le retour de Zéphire (1802), f.253, is not in the two regular orchestral part-books. It may be said that after 1799 four players rather than five still formed the essential strength of the section.

The various instances of cross-crooking in Académie scores illustrate the simultaneous use of four instruments. This fact has been verified by reference to the part-books. The following assertion is almost totally untrue:

"Les quatre cors ne sonnent ensemble qu'on 1794; Méhul les emploie dans Horatius Coclès, et seulement pour l'ouverture de cet opera." 1)

(This opinion has been variously reproduced in later histories) The part-books show that the writing for four cross-crooked horns in Langlé's Corisandre (March 1791), act 1, p.100, was undoubtedly played by four instruments, exactly as in the printed score:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for three horns: Cors Eb, Cor F, and Cor C. The score is in 2/4 time and consists of four measures. The first measure has a whole note for each horn. The second measure has a whole rest for Eb and F horns, and a half note for the C horn. The third measure has a whole rest for Eb and F horns, and a half note for the C horn. The fourth measure has a whole note for each horn. The word 'etc.' is written at the end of each line.

Similar scoring in the course (and not in the overture) of Horatius Coclès, p.47, was likewise performed as written, as the part-books again demonstrate. There was no reason why the Académie, having increased the number of horns to four, should have forbidden them to play simultaneously.

It is much more likely that the four instruments all played music written in two parts, at least in orchestral movements and concerted numbers,

1) Idem, loc. cit.





The famous horn-player Duvernoy was employed as "trumpeter" at the Théâtre Favart for several years early in his career, as noted on p. 119. We have already seen how, in the woodwind section, doubling continued to be practised after 1789 without written indications at the Académie. Similar expedients were necessary in the brass section at the same period; the tradition continued unbroken for a time.

Each set of orchestral material examined dating from 1788 to 1798 (Démophon, Nephté, Corisandre, Horatius Cocclès, Olimpie) revealed the following scheme of part-books:

Trumpet 1	(one book)
Trumpet 2	(one book)
Trombones, sometimes labelled "Haute-contre", "Taille", "Basse"	(three books)

Before any interpretation of this pattern is possible, some analysis of how frequently brass instruments were used in combination is obviously necessary. An examination of twenty-one of the thirty works written for the Académie during the nine years 1789-97 produces four categories of opera:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) NO TROMBONES   | (2) TROMBONES NEVER SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH HORNS AND TRUMPETS |
| Les Prétendus  | Nephté   |
| Les pommiers et le moulin                                    | Bacchus et Ariane  |
| Antigone   | Jocaste  |
| La rosière républicaine                                      | Corisandre   |
| Denys le tyran   | (Soliman et Eronime - unperformed)                         |
|  | Fabius   |
|  | Le siège de Thionville                                     |
|  | La patrie reconnaissante                                   |
| (3) ONE TROMBONE ONLY SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH HORNS AND TRUMPETS |  |
| Militiade à Marathon (Lemoyne, 1793: frequently)             |  |
| Toulon soumis (Rocheport, 1794: overture only)               |  |
| Toute la Grèce (Lemoyne, 1794: frequently)                   |  |

## (4) THREE TROMBONES SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH HORNS AND TRUMPETS

Démophon (Cherubini, 1788: one aria only)

Démophon (Vogel, 1789: two occasions)

Cora (Méhul, 1791: frequently)

(Adrien, by Méhul; written 1791-2 but not performed until

1799: frequently)

La triomphe de la République (Gossec, 1793: two occasions)

Anacréon chez Polycrate (Grétry, 1797: four movements only)

The employment of all three types of brass instrument simultaneously is therefore seen to be far rarer than their selective employment. Operas of the second category would appear to have demanded that two of the trombonists double on the trumpet. In the third category the extra player frequently required by Lemoyne may well have been the newly indicated Plet. For the operas in the fourth category, the relative infrequency of simultaneous brass within some of these operas suggests that outside players would not have been employed, but that a practice of doubling was used. (There is no doubt, from the appearance of the trombone part-books, that the music for these instruments was actually played). Further examination of the music suggests that the third and fourth horn players doubled either trumpet or trombone. The reason is that none of the occasions on which simultaneous brass were employed contains horn writing in more than two written parts. (Passages for horns in three or four real parts sometimes required trumpets, but never trombones). There cannot be said to have been any increase in the number of operas requiring consistent use of horns, trumpets and trombones together, and we would not be justified, on an empirical view, in assuming the employment of specially hired extra musicians.

As we have seen from SPECTACLES, the section took on stable (and modern) proportions from 1798-9, when two trumpets and three trombones regularly appeared in orchestra lists. From 1801 onwards only one part-

book was copied for the trumpets.<sup>1)</sup> This may additionally suggest that doubling between brass instruments had ceased, if we rightly imagine that two books had been necessary previously not so much for any convenience of seating (the two clarinetists, as well as the horns, always shared part-books) as for the convenience of players involved in doubling.

It is therefore only from around 1798-9 that we may assume nine players to have performed on brass instruments at one time at the Académie. Before this period there were resources only for seven players, and in the great majority of cases, composers themselves saw to it that the brass writing in their stage works could be accomplished by this number, or even fewer brass players.

k) Conclusion

Until the reorganisation of the orchestra <sup>about</sup> in 1797, which was probably responsible for the provision of stable numbers of trumpet and trombone players, doubling continued to be practised between all three types of brass instrument when three trombones were required to play together with trumpets and horns, and between trumpets and trombones in any opera that required the latter instrument. The horns, four in number since 1788, can be shown to have functioned as a section of four from at least Corisandre and probably did so before that. These developments in the horn section may have contributed somewhat towards the inaudibility of singers at the Académie that was reported in 1792 and 1802, but the first such reproach that I have noted (Beaumarchais's in 1787) antedates the augmentation of this section. The cause of inaudibility may be laid only with difficulty at the door of the trombone and trumpet section; these instruments did not frequently play together before 1800; and in the arias and duets of all works at the Académie up to 1810, even La Vestale

<sup>1)</sup> Les Horaces (1800) has two trumpet books; Astianax (1801) and all succeeding operas only one.

and Cortez, the trombones were used sparingly. Graph no.5 (placed with the examples) illustrates the percentage use of the brass in all movements studied from the period.

(2) Théâtre Italien, Salle Favart, later called the Opéra-Comique National

a) General observations

"Les étrangers qui arrivent à Paris sont étonnés quand ils vont à la Comédie Italienne, de n'y trouver ni paroles Italiennes, ni musique Italienne, ni auteurs ni acteurs Italiens." 1)

The name of the theatre dated back to the merging of the Italian troupe with the French bouffons in 1762. It was chiefly within this company that opéra-comique grew to maturity, particularly through the works of Grétry, Dalayrac and Méhul. The company was disbanded in 1801 after which it combined later in the same year with its rival, the Théâtre Feydeau, to form the new Opéra-Comique. This latter company will be discussed below.

The decade from 1790 was a period of rivalry with the Feydeau and of orchestral expansion. The excellent leadership and musical accomplishments of both theatre orchestras have already been discussed. In the absence of original manuscript parts an investigation of the orchestra's performance practice has been made through the analysis of 56 opéras-comiques produced between 1789 and 1800.

b) The strings

No seating plans have been found for any Parisian theatre orchestra except the Académie from the present period; almost the only listings of players are those in SPECTACLES and ALMANACH.

The numbers of lower strings, according to these journals, show small increases as follows:

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1) ALMANACH/I 1791, p.33

	VIOLAS	CELLOS	DOUBLE-BASSES
1789	2	6	2
1791	2	5	3
1794	4	5	3
1799- 1800	4	7	3

The violins, by contrast, show a reduction in number towards 1800; both these adjustments may be compared to similar ones at the Académie. Totals in parenthesis indicate different information in SPECTACLES and ALMANACH/I.

	VIOLIN I	VIOLIN II
1789, 1790	8	9
1791	8 (7)	9 (7)
1792	8	8 (6)
1793-4		15
1799- 1800		15

Whereas around 1789 the proportion of strings at the Italiens was roughly 9 (violins) - 1 (violas) - 3 (cellos) - 1 (double-bass), a combination whose lack of tenor and bass support implied the conspicuous participation of the continuo, by 1800 it was approaching the more modern 4 - 1 - 2 - 1 arrangement.

In the course of the path towards the establishment of his new balance, the traditional practice of doubling instruments remained. The outward sign lies in the discrepancies in the totals of violin players in 1791-2 noted in the table above. Examination of players' names and addresses shows that the timpanist Lescot, employed until 1791, was also a second violinist. ALMANACH/I, in fact, labelled him as "timballier au besoin" in 1791. Guthmann (i.e. "Gouthemann" mentioned in the Académie MS) had been a second violin since before 1789; in 1791 he no longer appeared in this capacity, but in the trumpet section, noted for the first time in this same



year. This confirms that he had doubled on these two instruments before that date and also implies that he continued to do so after it. Guthmann's fellow trumpeter "Frédéric" (Duvernoy) appears in the orchestra list in 1791. Fétis, however, wrote that Duvernoy joined the Favart in 1788;<sup>1)</sup> if this were so he too may have doubled as a string player. Lescot's successor as timpanist, Hardouin, was not listed as a string player at this time. As late as 1809, however, as a member of the Opéra-Comique orchestra, he was recorded in ALMANACH/II as both timpanist and viola player. He therefore may have practised on both instruments from 1792 at the Favart, making a part-time total of five violas.

Only a minority of opéras-comiques needed the fullest resources of brass and timpani, and those that did used them for a limited number of items. Given the economic hardships of the period whose often lethal effects on the theatres have been well documented, it is not difficult to understand the need for doubling and the continuance of its practice to 1800.

c) The woodwind

The constitution of the woodwind according to SPECTACLES and ALMANACH was:

	FLUTE	OBOE	CLARINET	BASSOON
1789- 1790	3 (Kretlay, Duverger, Vogel)	0	0	2
1791	1 (Duverger)	2 (Kretlay, Vogel)	2	2
1792-4	1	2	2	3
1799- 1800	3	2	2	3

By analogy with Académie practice and eighteenth-century orchestra lists generally it may be assumed that at least two of the players listed initially

1) Fétis/BU, article "Duvernoy"

as flautists were also oboists, and that some doubling between these instruments persisted beyond 1791. Nevertheless, the need for two permanent flautists rather than one may be statistically demonstrated throughout the decade. Between 1790 and 1794 nine operas were produced that occasionally needed a group of four flute and oboe players in simultaneous addition to both clarinets and bassoons. Also, before the official appearance of the clarinets in 1791, several operas needed four flute and oboe players simultaneously in addition to the bassoons. A further five operas first performed between 1795 and 1798 needed six upper woodwind players simultaneously. If a permanent flautist was not employed, a continuous system of doubling must have operated.

Sporadic demands began to be made for nine wind players at once, however; Grétry's Lisbeth (1797) and Dalayrac's Gulnare (1798) precede three operas in 1799 and two in 1800 that needed this number. All these pieces from Lisbeth on required a piccolo in addition to two flutes at these concerted points, so that we may date at least one and perhaps both new flautists that appear in ALMANACH/II 1799-1800 from about 1797. The third "flautist", whose duties, when definable, were always associated with the piccolo, may indeed have been specially employed to play that instrument in particular, although the rôle of the piccolo in French opéra-comique was surprisingly slow in growing.<sup>1)</sup>

The absence of clarinetists from SPECTACLES 1789 and 1790 seems by many comparisons a tardy and unlikely omission, yet it is fact that very few operas given at the Théâtre Italien before 1790 used them at all. Of all the many works by Dalayrac, Dezède, Rigel, Champein and Grétry written for this theatre before the Revolution that I have seen, only four require

<sup>1)</sup> Despite Carse/ORCHESTRA p.39, "The octave flute or piccolo had no regular place in eighteenth century orchestras." See Graph no.2

clarinets.<sup>1)</sup> Five of the six operas dating from 1789 that I have read, by G. Martini, Propiac, Chappelle and Dalayrac, do not use the instrument; Grétry's Raoul Barbe-Bleu uses them only once. Yet the following year all seven operas examined employ the clarinet; the composers were Grétry, Dalayrac, Méhul and Berton. This extensive use persisted unbroken, so that only five operas examined from between 1790 and 1800 do not employ them at all, the composers in all five cases being Solié and Della-Maria. Such facts suggest that SPECTACLES 1790 ought to have included clarinets or that its information applied in arrears.

There was, therefore, an obvious and strong need felt for the participation of clarinets on a permanent basis. It was incorporated with parity straight away. We may note that Méhul's Stratonice (May 1792) dispensed completely with the oboes, using only flutes, clarinets and bassoons. (Méhul was preceded in this by Gaveaux's L'amour filial at the Feydeau, March 1792. The procedure was more common at smaller theatres; H. Joseph Rigel's Les Amazones, Ambigu-comique, 1789 was one example)

The additional bassoon recorded from 1792 was Etienne Ozi. No composer appears to have written three separate bassoon parts for the Favart and bassoon solos were not common; if the extra voice was a permanent one it may have doubled the first bassoon part, strengthening the tenor line of the ensemble in parallel with the somewhat increased number of violas.

d) The brass

It seems certain that the Favart did not employ four horn players permanently until 1798. SPECTACLES lists only two players up to 1794; ALMANACH/II, 1799-1800 lists four. In accordance with this all three operas before 1798 whose scores explicitly require four horns do not use

<sup>1)</sup> All by Grétry: Le Huron (1768), Les Deux Avars (1770), Zémire et Azore (1771) and Les mariages Samnites (1776). The position has been described as follows: "La comédie Italienne n'en possédait [i.e. the clarinet] pas encore en 1780, Grétry l'avait employée dans Zémire et Azore; mais seulement dans la trio de la glace et comme instrument inusité et dont l'effet devait être magique," from Adam/SOUVENIRS p.181

trumpets at all. These were Méhul's Stratonice and Mélidore et Phrosine (1794) and Dalayrac's Adèle et Dorsan (1795). The same applies to Méhul's overture La chasse du jeune Henri (May 1797). For these pieces the trumpeters must have been used as extra horn players.<sup>1)</sup> In 1798, on the other hand, both Dalayrac's Le château de Monténéro and Boieldieu's Zoraïme et Zulnare use four horns together with two trumpets.

The four horns, once established, did not play at once simply when the composer wrote in four parts for them. Some two-part writing bears instructions like "les 4 Cors ensembles" (Le château de Monténéro, p.162) and the practice is certain to have operated most of the time in other works. The possibility must be mentioned that in operas without trumpets before 1798 the horns may have been doubled in strength when the expression demanded. This would not have been out of keeping with the practice of the time; the only written evidence for it is the entry in SPECTACLES 1793 quoted in the last footnote.

As I have mentioned, Guthmann and Duvernoy first appear as trumpeters in SPECTACLES 1791. Both would seem likely to have acted as such since 1788, especially if Fétis's evidence concerning Duvernoy was correct. Not many Favart operas before the Revolution used trumpets, which is the most likely reason for their omission.<sup>2)</sup> In 1789 only two of the six operas examined needed trumpets. The trumpets remained two in number to 1800 and no additional players were required in the music.

The trombonist Sturme was first listed from 1792; by 1799-1800 there were two players. To assume that Sturme began regularly in 1791 agrees

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- 1) As noted above, Duvernoy was listed as a Favart trumpeter to 1794 and a horn player in 1799-1800. SPECTACLES 1793 shows further the principle of interchange in the entry for the Théâtre du Palais-Variétés:  
Premiers Cors: Bury, Marcilliac      Second Cors et      Ziwony, Chevalier  
Trompettes:
- 2) The four by Grétry that did were Le Magnifique (1773), Les Mariages Samnites (1776), Aucassin et Nicolette (1779) and Richard Coeur de Lion (1784); a fifth was Dalayrac's Sargines (1788)