

Introduction

In 1954, an American husband-and-wife team published a short biography of Jacques Offenbach entitled *Cancan and barcarolle*.¹ That title summed up and continues to sum up the general impression of the composer. The *cancan*, made familiar by the ballet suite *Gaité parisienne* and movie portrayals of the Moulin Rouge in the Belle Époque, is an outworn cliché, shorthand for French naughtiness and “ooh-la-la.”

It pervades modern cinema. For some films, such as Jean Renoir’s *French Cancan* (the English title a deliberate indicator of its international usage), John Huston’s *Moulin Rouge* (both 1954), and Cole Porter’s *Cancan* (1960), it serves as a kind of theme song. In the Mexican film *Un Quijote sin mancha* (1969), starring Cantinflas as a lawyer for the poor, performing the cancan so tars the reputation of a dancer that she is denied custody of her child. Baz Luhrmann’s *Moulin Rouge* (2001) perversely cites it not as accompaniment to dance, but to a song describing a spectacular entertainment.

What is usually referred to as *le cancan* is in fact *le chahut*, a high-kicking frolic that originated in the peasant *contredanse* and was made popular in working-class Parisian dance-halls in the 1830s. A journalist of the period explained “*Le cancan* is the art of lifting one’s skirt, *le chahut* the art of lifting one’s leg.”² Deliberately smutty and audacious, an attraction for slumming householders, *le chahut* was glorified by Offenbach, injecting native Rhenish wit into a proletarian Parisian gesture of defiance. The familiar music that concludes Offenbach’s *Orphée aux enfers* (1858) is technically a *galop*, a lively dance of Hungarian origin. This *galop infernal* replaces, at Pluto’s command, a staid Olympian minuet, in other words, an exuberant bacchanal to mock the neoclassical traditions of French establishment

¹ Arthur Moss and Evalyn Marvel, *Cancan and barcarolle. The life and times of Jacques Offenbach* (New York: Exposition Press, 1954).

² [A. Vermorel] *Ces dames*, 2nd edn. (Paris: Charles Noblet [1860]), 61.

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Excerpt

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1. Gustave Doré's sketch of the finale of *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), sometimes called "La bacchanale," sometimes "Le galop infernale." Doré designed the costumes for the original production.

culture. A genuine *cancan* first appears in Offenbach's opera of modern life *La vie parisienne* and was later organized into the *quadrille* exhibited in the 1890s at the Moulin Rouge.

As for the *barcarolle*, a gondolier's song, it bookends the Venice act of Offenbach's unfinished opera *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (1881). In context, its melodic dreaminess brackets a cynical intrigue of jealousy, betrayal, and murder. However, it has since been exploited as a lush and languorous background for romantic scenes in films and even commercials, the musical equivalent of melted chocolate. Roberto Benigni wallows in it in his fantasy of the death camps *La vita è bella* (1997); in Kenneth Lonergan's *Margaret* (2011), an emotionally separated mother and daughter (Renée Fleming and Susan Graham) are reconciled as they listen to it sung at the Met.³

The recycling of these hackneyed passages promotes the impression that Offenbach is all champagne and *petits fours*. Similar clichés circulated in his lifetime. Such neat encapsulations conceal the real importance of

³ A full list of Offenbach music used in film scores can be found at www.imdb.com/name/nm0006220.

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Offenbach and his achievements. Despite attempts to pigeon-hole him as a mere entertainer, an accidental survivor from the Second Empire, he persists and his reputation grows. What explains this persistence of Offenbach's appeal? Whatever their qualities, his competitors, Hervé, Lecocq, even Chabrier, are the stuff of occasional antiquarian revivals. If we are to go beyond the easy stereotypes of high kicks and popping corks, we have to identify the elements in Offenbach that transcend national and temporal borders and the boundaries of genre.

Comedy, notoriously, gets short shrift from aestheticians and critics. Solemnity is confused with profundity. The nature of history, including literary, musical, and dramatic history, is to gravitate to high seriousness and to grant more significance to the grave than to the gay. *Il penseroso* receives higher marks than *l'allegro*. So the pervasive influence of Offenbach's comic operas has been overlooked or slighted. Yet, in the West (and even parts of the East), they have been as significant in shaping attitudes towards music in the theatre, sexual mores, and the classical legacy as any artwork created in the nineteenth century. Offenbach, a deflator of unexamined certainties and disseminator of tuneful exuberance, shrewdly undermined establishment values.

Esprit (wit, verve) is considered, especially by the French, to be a fundamentally French characteristic, although it seems to belong more to the history of taste and fashion than to artistic categories. "*Esprit* ... that clarity, that craft, that skill, and that frothy sparkle that delight the mind. In those aspects of our deepest being, I see the very soul of my country: clarity, light, gaiety, delicacy, and good taste"⁴ is a typical *obiter dictum*. Offenbach was in this respect granted honorary status as not only a Frenchman but a Parisian, in the sense of sophisticated, light-minded, or racy. Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* defines the common view of him as "Very Parisian, good form [*bien porté*]."⁵ Offenbach shares with Heine the paradoxical position of an outsider who exemplifies Gallic wit. Heine, who translated his own poetry into French, was regarded by contemporary Parisians as a French writer.⁶ Offenbach, the cantor's son from Cologne, the cello virtuoso with the *choucroute*-flavored accent, outstripped even Heine in becoming identified with French *esprit*, at the same time that he

⁴ J. Pradella in *Le sémaphore* (c. 1862, Marseilles), quoted in Hervé Lacombe, *The keys to French opera in the nineteenth century*, trans. Edward Schneider (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 283.

⁵ Gustave Flaubert, *Œuvres*, ed. A. Thibaudet and R. Dumesnil (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), II, 975.

⁶ He was the favorite poet of Offenbach's librettist Ludovic Halévy. Daniel Halévy, "Une musique jail-lit," in *Le siècle Offenbach*. Cahiers de la compagnie Jean-Louis Barrault–Madeleine Renaud 24. Ed. Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud (Paris: Julliard, 1958), 18.

was mistrusted as a Jew and a German contributing to the subversion of traditional French values.

Another limiting cliché about Offenbach designates him the musical spokesman for the Second Empire. This linkage of Offenbach to the *mœurs* of the society of Napoleon III began quite early: Jules Lemaître, writing of *La belle Hélène*, Offenbach's Homeric parody of 1864, called it "one of the favorite diversions of an age which was, alas, very frivolous, but was also one of the most peaceful, lively, amusing and brilliant ages in our history."⁷ Later commentators endorsed Lemaître's first clause, but failed to quote his second. To this were added the inevitable sneers of anti-Semites who despised Offenbach as the musical expression of the Second Empire's get-rich-quick ethos. Léon Daudet dismissed him as a "Jewish composer ... whose frenzy marvelously expresses the disarray and insanity of French society on the eve of 1870."⁸ Offenbach's music, for all its brilliance, had to share the opprobrium of meretricious superficiality imputed to his society.

Joanna Richardson, in her book on the Second Empire, had no doubts about the direct connection between Offenbach's operas and historical events. "*La belle Hélène*," she wrote, "reflected the contemporary régime without mercy. In fact it was shown up so pitilessly that its early end appeared inevitable ... [Offenbach] was perfectly in tune with imperial Paris, and, as long as the Empire lasted, his triumph was assured ... when the Second Empire fell, his world really ended."⁹ This tidy formulation conveniently ignores the fact that Offenbach continued to write a great many successful operas during the decade following the Franco-Prussian war.

The eternal recurrence of this cliché derives from a view of the reign of Napoleon III as crass, venal, immoral, its achievements spurious, its art crowd-pleasing rather than path-breaking. Frédéric Loliée, in his *chronique scandaleuse*, characterized the Second Empire as "a cosmopolitan carnival ... a sort of masquerade in which all the follies of the senses and the mind

⁷ Jules Lemaître, *Impressions de théâtre, 1^{re} série* (Paris: Librairie H. Lecène et H. Oudin, 1888), 217 *et seq.* Francisque Sarcey seconded this opinion: "That famous quadrille in *Orphée* carried away our whole generation in its frantic vortex. At the first sounds of that rabid orchestra, didn't it seem to you to see a whole society leaping up at a bound and stampeding to the dance? It would waken the dead, that music! How those rhythms, now skipping, now furious, seemed to be made to communicate both a moral and a physical trepidation to that whole out-of-tune audience for whom life was only a sort of dance of death." *Quarante ans de théâtre. Feuilletons dramatiques. La critique et les lois du théâtre. La Comédie-Française* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Annales politiques et littéraires, 1900), 191–92.

⁸ Léon Daudet, *Souvenirs et polémiques* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992), 295–96.

⁹ Joanna Richardson, *La vie parisienne 1852–1870* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 268–69. Richardson also believed that *opéra bouffe* suited the Parisian indifference to good music, *La vie parisienne*, 263.

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were unleashed all at once in the full fling of a perpetual party.”¹⁰ For him, the rise of *opéra bouffe* was a sign of the times, a distracting *passatempo* in an age of heedless hedonism. Perhaps the most extreme statement of this belief is that of the novelist François Mauriac: “The laughter we hear in the music of Offenbach is the laughter of the Empress Eugénie, gone mad.”¹¹

All this is reasoning *a posteriori*. So is the notion that the Second Empire’s levity and moral malaise were inexorably doomed to the debacle of Sedan. French intellectuals lamented that the defeat was due to what Flaubert called “the long falsehood in which we lived.”¹² Some contemporary critics deplored the performances at Offenbach’s Bouffes-Parisiens as skeptical contributions to the national downfall, working like opium on the soul. A newly united Germany, with Richard Wagner as its minstrel, saw France’s subjugation as a natural consequence of its superficiality. This *outré-Rhin* hostility hovered in the background when the Frankfurt School of social theory turned its attention to the nineteenth century.

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Fascinated by the Paris of Napoleon III, both Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin took an interest in Offenbach. Adorno believed that the Second Empire originated the capitalist culture industry, which substituted *ersatz* for quality and elevated kitsch as the norm. This stimulated Benjamin to a more comprehensive critique, *Paris, die Hauptstadt des XIX. Jahrhunderts*, and led him to suggest a closer consideration of the composer in light of his analysis of commodity fetishism: “an interpretation of Offenbach might just demonstrate in an extremely logical way this double meaning: namely that of the underworld and Arcadia – both are explicit categories of Offenbach and can be pursued even in details of the orchestration.”¹³ Adorno was the first to publish such a study: his analysis of the demonic element in *Les contes d’Hoffmann* characterizes the opera as a materialistic waxworks, whose Biedermeier interiors are haunted by ghosts and automata.¹⁴ Benjamin shared Adorno’s negative view of bourgeois materialism and his concept of *Hoffmann* as a dying

¹⁰ Frédéric Loliée, *La fête impériale* (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1912), 154–55.

¹¹ Quoted in Elliott Stein, “Offenbach, or a Parisian life,” *Musical Times* 102, 1420 (Jun. 1961): 350.

¹² Flaubert to Maxime du Camp (Sep. 1870) in *Correspondance* (Paris: Librairie de France, 1926–1954), VI, 161.

¹³ Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *Briefwechsel 1928–1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), 527.

¹⁴ Theodor Adorno, “Hoffmanns Erzählungen in Offenbachs Motiven” (1932), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), IV, 42.

man's ode to death. He intended to explore this symbiosis in his grandiose *Passagenwerk*, known as the “arcades project” in English, on the social topography of the arcades of Paris. He was also inspired by Karl Kraus's 1928 lecture on *La vie parisienne*, which pointed out that Offenbach's alleged frivolity was a façade. “That is Offenbach's secret,” Benjamin wrote. “How amidst the profound nonsense of public decency [*Zucht*] – whether that of the upper ten thousand, a dance-floor or a military parade –, the profound sense of private indecency [*Unzucht*] opens a visionary eye.”¹⁵ Benjamin perceived in Offenbach, beyond the superficial cynicism, a Utopian vision of paradise lost.

Had he completed his study, Benjamin's interpretation of Offenbach might have effaced the clichés. Far more influential, however, was the study of Offenbach produced by another fellow traveler of the Frankfurt School, Siegfried Kracauer. A refugee from the Nazis living in Paris, Kracauer had the ambition of creating a *Gesellschaftsbiographie*, a close study of an industrial society that, like the Weimar Republic, had fostered both genius and decadence, and then succumbed to a Prussian hegemony. In this exercise, Offenbach was situated as an emblematic figure of a Jewish intellectual movement, a tool to analyze the revolutionary power of humor and parody against the mechanisms of dictatorship. Kracauer's dear friend Benjamin, already embarked on the arcades project, halted his own research, waiting to see what the younger man would achieve.¹⁶ (As it happens, both Benjamin and Adorno mocked what they regarded as their colleague's sell-out to cheap popularity – biography was *infra dig*.) Kracauer had no musical training or instinct, so that Offenbach's scores receive scant discussion in his book; instead, a Marxist grid is laid over the relationship between the composer and his milieu. The *œuvre* is to be explained by its ambient conditions.¹⁷

¹⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Karl Kraus liest Offenbach,” *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Tillman Rexroth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), II, 356 (IV, 515).

¹⁶ Stefan Bub, “Jacques Offenbach bei Walter Benjamin und Siegfried Kracauer,” *Euphorion* 100 (2006): 117–28; Norbert Nagler, “Jacques Offenbachs musikalische Utopie: die Sehnsucht nach der herrschaftsarmen Heimat. Reflexionen zu Siegfried Kracauers Gesellschaftsbiographie des Second Empire,” in *Jacques Offenbach*. Musik-Konzepte Heft 13. Ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1980), 87–103.

¹⁷ Gertrud Koch, *Siegfried Kracauer, an introduction*, trans. Jeremy Gaines (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 65–74. Also see Harald Reil, *Siegfried Kracauers Jacques Offenbach. Biographie, Geschichte, Zeitgeschichte* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003). The Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch considered Kracauer's neglect of music to be tantamount to discussing Michelangelo with no mention of painting. Ernst Bloch, “Der eigentümliche Glücksfall über Jacques Offenbach,” in *Siegfried Kracauer*. TEXT+KRITIK Heft 68. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1980), 73–75.

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The completed work, *Jacques Offenbach und das Paris seiner Zeit*, appeared in 1937 in German, and shortly thereafter in French and English. Kracauer too insisted on the close relationship between what he called the Offenbachiad and its period, but he tried to demonstrate the subversive quality of the operas. Nothing if not tendentious, the German-Jewish biographer read the Second Empire by the glare of Fascist torch-lit rallies. So Kracauer echoed all the standard references to the infernal *galop* that ends *Orphée aux enfers*, “though its glamorous frenzy served the ends of Imperial policy and suited the tastes of the generation, it also contained elements of danger. For it led straight to dionysiac orgies which could only end in self-destruction. If the *Marseillaise* [quoted in Act II] was a direct attack on the dictatorship, this dance was an indirect attack.”¹⁸

Well-intentioned though this teleology may be, the reasoning is faulty. It praises Offenbach for attacking a regime whose excesses he was simultaneously fueling. It perpetuates the image of Offenbach as imbedded in a disreputable past.¹⁹ It involuntarily supports the Nazi branding of Offenbach as “degenerate, racially inferior art.” Kracauer’s book is still in print as the most available book on Offenbach; an annotated German paperback came out in 2005, which suggests that it is now regarded as a classic. Much of the critical attitude that Offenbach’s music is a direct reflection of the ostensibly corrupt world of Napoleon III derives its intellectual respectability from Kracauer’s theses. The authors who succeeded Kracauer adopted this concept of Offenbach as a Rigoletto whose cap and bells concealed a disruptive intent, a resolute opponent of imperial power who pretended to serve the regime. They insisted on the political satire imbedded in his work. This, however, is both to over-emphasize Offenbach’s interest in politics and to mistake the nature of *opéra bouffe*.

Are the marital squabbles of Jupiter and Juno in *Orphée aux enfers* a veiled reflection of the domestic life of Louis-Napoléon and Eugénie, or are they simply the farcical leveling of classical culture? Is this programmatic satire or wanton fooling? Is Offenbach a tool of the regime or its antagonist? If one had to decode the politics of the libretti the operas would never have had the international success this book seeks to record. Of Offenbach’s intimate circle, Ludovic Halévy was a skeptical Orléanist,

¹⁸ Siegfried Kracauer, *Jacques Offenbach und das Pariser seiner Zeit*, ed. Karsten Witte (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), 182; the English translation *Orpheus in Paris. Offenbach and the Paris of his time*, trans. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938) was reissued in 2002 with a *marxisant* foreword by Gertrud Koch.

¹⁹ Gerd Gmünden, *German Exile Cinema 1933–1951* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 49, 73.

Nadar and Victorien Sardou republicans. True, the composer frequented establishment salons and officials in hopes of promoting his theatrical interests. True, he was protected by Achille Fould, a minister who ran the Bureau des Théâtres, and by the Emperor's half-brother the Comte, later Duc, de Morny. The sovereign himself attended an Offenbach opera on four celebratory occasions.²⁰ This hardly makes the composer either a courtier or a *carbonaro* in camouflage.

On the Fringes

Classifying Offenbach as a specifically French phenomenon tied to a specific regime does him an injustice. However, in one respect the *coup d'état* of 1851 did provide Offenbach with an opportunity he would not have had in a more egalitarian society. The implementation of an order that maintained in power a social class accustomed to wealth and possessed of a weak conscience and a taste for diversion furnished him with the perfect audience for his theatre.²¹ Compared with Meyerbeer, who spent much of his life as Prussian court conductor, Offenbach's sphere was not high society, but the boulevard, the non-official press, the latest slang, the most up-to-date fashion. The satire in his libretti is social, partaking of Honoré Daumier and Henri Monnier, Eugène Labiche and Paul de Kock. His true subversion takes place in the realm of art, specifically music.

Offenbach's fellow expatriate Heine observed that

it is excitement that draws the Frenchman to the theater, and the last thing he wants is calm. If the author leaves him a single moment for contemplation, he might be liable to summon Rover – in other words, whistle. The important thing for the dramatic poet in France is to make sure that the audience neither becomes disengaged nor has time to breathe, that emotions come one after the other, that love, hatred, jealousy, ambition, pride, and honor – all the passionate feelings already raging in the Frenchman's real life – explode on the boards with even greater intensity!²²

The demand by an increasingly literate society for such stimuli produced a glut of what Saint-Beuve in 1839 called “industrial literature.” Musical

²⁰ The emperor was said to have taken umbrage at the song of the obsequious courtiers when *Barbe-bleue* was performed at the Palais de Compiègne, but this had more to do with its impropriety on the occasion than with its political sentiments.

²¹ Raymond Lyon, “Parmi les heureuses circonstances ...,” in *La vie parisienne. L'Avant-scène Opéra* 206. Ed. Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Éditions Premières Loges, 2002), 39–44.

²² Heinrich Heine, *De la France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 309–10. Originally published as *Französische Zustände* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1833).

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farcies, melodrama, serial novels and comic operas with almost interchangeable plots and characters were mass-produced.

French romantic drama had failed to produce masterpieces, in part because of this need to divert; its best plays are historic melodramas, packed with flamboyant crimes but slowed down by verse dialogue. Heine saw this as a natural outcome of the triumph of mediocrity, “the shrinking of all grandeur and this complete annihilation of heroism are above all the work of the middle class that attained power in France with the fall of the hereditary aristocracy and triumphantly imposed its rigid, cold shopkeeper’s ideas in every sphere of life.”²³ This in turn resulted from a desire for order and a fear of anarchy; common sense and social regulation were opposed to “unwholesome” metaphysical and moral anxiety. “It is clear,” wrote Louis Roger in 1863, “that the present generation is descending toward materialism. Art is no major factor for it.”²⁴

In his painting “Music in the Tuileries Gardens” (1862), Édouard Manet, dubbed by a recent exhibition at the Musée d’Orsay “the man who invented modernism,” depicted Baudelaire and Offenbach in symmetrical balance, leaning against tree trunks. The juxtaposition is apposite. Establishment art in the nineteenth century is typified by its gigantism: the three-volume novel, the wall-filling genre painting, the five-act grand opera, the orchestral symphony, and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, all earnest and encyclopedic in aim. Baudelaire contested the idea that this monumentality was the true representation of the modern era. For him, the genuine mark of modernity is a concern for triviality. Offenbach agreed. He dedicated an intricately composed song in *Le pont des soupirs* to an admiral’s spurs, another to a colonel’s jabot in the posthumous *Belle Lurette*, and, in *La vie parisienne*, he has a whole salon full of *faux* socialites sing a round about a coat split up the back.

This reversal of values, the eternal replaced by the fugacious, the work of individual genius by the commercial manufacture, is summed up in a remark of Offenbach’s collaborator Ludovic Halévy: “The most beautiful landscape is a wall covered with posters.”²⁵ Like Baudelaire, Offenbach appreciated the ephemeral;²⁶ what he found attractive about the theatre

²³ Heine, *De la France*, 312.

²⁴ Louis Roger, “Les Compositeurs de musique devant le public, l’état et les privilèges de théâtre,” *L’univers musical* (8 Oct. 1863): 323; also see Max D’Ollone, *Le théâtre lyrique et le public* (Paris and Geneva: La Palatine, 1955), 181.

²⁵ Ludovic Halévy, *Carnets*, ed. Daniel Halévy (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1935), quoted in Kracauer, *Jacques Offenbach*, 268.

²⁶ Daniel Halévy, “Une musique jaillit,” 16–17.

was that “the play a-borning makes one forget the one dying. No comparisons, no connections, no analogies: a series of tableaux that evaporate like magic lantern slides, and, once vanished, the greatest success weighs no more on the public mind than the noisiest flop.”²⁷ His scores offer a profound sense of the void, the evanescent, even the nihilistic.

Peter Conrad has described Garnier’s sumptuous new house for the Paris Opéra as a coquettish building intended to accommodate a “luxurious and hedonistic inferno like that of Offenbach’s cancan girls,” an atmosphere the architect deemed *féerique* – “the same word Offenbach used to classify the genre of *Orphée aux enfers*: fantastical, phantasmal.”²⁸ The interior of the Opéra building and the flurry in its public spaces may bear some likeness to Offenbach’s musical caracoles, but its grandiosity is inimical to his taste for the ephemeral and the transitory. The frequent appearance of the composer and his creations to be found in the realms of graphic illustration indicates that his style is as up-to-date and insouciant as they are. His penchant for satirizing the classics and neoclassics of the French stage finds its equivalent in Daumier, whose febrile draftsmanship might be compared with Offenbach’s nervous rhythms. In Judith Wechsler’s neat formulation, in Daumier’s theatrical sketches, “his rapidly drawn lines and repeated contours indicate the figure without fixing it, and this conveys a sense of movement.”²⁹ Not only does this speed course through Offenbach’s own prolific compositions, but his personal appearance – the emaciated body enswathed in a fur coat, the pince-nez and side-whiskers – partners such indelible cartoon types as the hunchback Mayeux, the conman Robert Macaire, the pompous bourgeois Joseph Prud’homme and the monarchist bully Ratapoil.

Aux Bouffes on pouffe!

The Larousse *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX^e siècle* (*Dictionary of the 19th Century*), in its entry on *opéra bouffe*, insists on the relationship between

²⁷ Halévy, “Une musique jaillit,” 17, 19.

²⁸ Peter Conrad, *A song of love and death. The meaning of opera* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1987), 239–40. The association of Garnier’s unfinished Opéra with the failings of the Second Empire led to a postwar debate over funding to complete it. See Michael Strasser, “The Société Nationale and its adversaries. The musical politics of *l’invasion germanique* in the 1870s,” *19th-Century Music* 24, 3 (Spring 2001): 234–35.

²⁹ Judith Wechsler, *A human comedy: physiognomy and caricature in 19th century Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 154–55. Daumier was motivated to create his series of caricatures of neoclassic drama when Ponsard’s five-act tragedy *Ulysse* was staged at the Comédie-Française on 19 June 1852. On that occasion, Offenbach was in the pit, conducting the incidental music by Charles Gounod. See Jean Cherpin, *Daumier et le théâtre* (Paris: L’Arche, 1958), 32.