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# Collecting Musical Instruments in France (1795-1995) From National Heritage to Cultural Policy

Florence Gétreau

## Abstract

Even if Michele Todoni (1616-1690) had already publically displayed his collection in Rome, the concept of a public collection of musical instruments seems not to have emerged before 1795, in the wake of the Parisian Convention nationale (First Republic). In the legislation that was to establish the Institut national de Musique, the future Conservatoire, the Convention insisted that a National Cabinet of instruments for public education should exhibit a »collection of ancient or foreign instruments and also those in present use which, by virtue of their perfection, may serve as models«. Based on instruments confiscated from aristocratic private houses, this Cabinet fulfilled its aims for one generation – but Luigi Cherubini dismantled this educational collection in 1816, of which only 13 items are still preserved. Following other attempts as Vienna 1825 or Edinburgh 1859, public collections were progressively opened at the time of international industrial exhibitions, governed by ideals of national emulation, an awareness of national heritage and mass culture. Loan exhibitions of ancient instruments in London 1872, Paris 1878, Bologna and Brussels 1888, Paris 1889 etc. highlighted national schools of instrument making and taxonomic displays and encouraged private collectors all over Europe to give their collections eventually in part to public institutions. Colonialism also often gave rise to ensembles of non-European instruments.

Following Pascal Ory (*L'aventure culturelle française*, 1989) and Marc Fumaroli (*L'État culturel*, 1991), it seems that the French Front Populaire 1936 and, later, André Malraux 1958 embodied cultural policies with a hitherto unknown degree of democratization. But they had little impact on musical instrument collections in France when several collectors across Europe began to consider not only the technical but also the cultural and social contexts of these artefacts to be significant. Only recently have collections with a programmatic dimension been established, combining heritage and cultural policy.

## Musikinstrumente sammeln in Frankreich (1795-1995): vom nationalen Erbe zur Kulturpolitik

Auch wenn bereits Michele Todoni (1616-1690) seine Sammlung in Rom öffentlich ausstellte, kam das Konzept einer öffentlichen Sammlung von Musikinstrumenten, dank der Convention nationale (Erste Republik), in Paris nicht vor 1795 auf. Im Gesetz zur Gründung des Institut national de Musique, das spätere Konservatorium, ist festgehalten, ein nationales Instrumentenkabinett solle zur öffentlichen Bildung eine »Sammlung historischer oder ausländischer Instrumente sowie solche, die aktuell in Gebrauch sind, kraft ihrer Perfektion als Modell dienen mögen«, ausstellen. Basierend auf Instrumenten, die man in aristokratischen Privathäusern konfisziert hatte, erfüllte das Kabinett sein Ziel für eine Generation. 1816 wurde die Sammlung, von der nur 13 Objekte erhalten sind, von Luigi Cherubini aufgelöst. Nach weiteren Versuchen in Wien 1825 und Edinburgh 1859, richtete man öffentliche Musikinstrumentensammlungen zunehmend zur Zeit internationaler Industrieausstellungen ein, im Zeichen nationalen Wettstreits und geleitet von den jeweiligen Vorstellungen zu Nationalerbe und Massenkultur. Leihausstellungen alter Musikinstrumente wie in London 1872, Paris 1878, Bologna und Brüssel 1888 oder Paris 1889 hoben nationale Instrumentenbauschulen hervor, und die Instrumente klassifizierende Ausstellungen animierten auch private Sammler in ganz Europa, Teile ihrer Sammlungen öffentlichen Institutionen zu übergeben; im Gefolge des Kolonialismus wurden zudem Ensembles nicht-europäischer Musikinstrumente gebildet.

Nach Pascal Ory (*L'aventure culturelle française*, 1989) oder Marc Fumaroli (*L'État culturel*, 1991) scheint in Frankreich durch den Front Populaire 1936 sowie durch André Malraux 1958 Kulturpolitik durch eine bis dahin ungekannte Demokratisierung verkörpert worden zu sein. Doch zeigten sich kaum Auswirkungen auf Musikinstrumentensammlungen in Frankreich, während in Europa mehrere Sammler die technischen, aber auch kulturellen und sozialen Zusammenhänge dieser Artefakte als bedeutend erachteten. Erst in jüngster Zeit wurden Sammlungen von richtungsweisendem Ausmaß gegründet, die kulturelles Erbe und Kulturpolitik verbinden.

From the Renaissance to the Age of Enlightenment, musical instrument cabinets across Europe could take the form of an Instrumentarium developed for the purpose of musical use, a cabinet of study, an ostentatious treasure, and some even belonged to all of these different categories. These ensembles were collected by princes, scholars, travelers, performers, many of whom were also patrons, experimenters, makers, and even pedagogues. Quite early, some of these owners were aware of the technical, historical, cultural and symbolic value of their ensembles.<sup>1</sup> Based on instruments that are still extant today, on written sources, and iconographical evidence, the present contribution demonstrates that musical instrument collections hold a significant place in the history of material culture, in the history of collecting, and in the history of institutions devoted to human heritage.

### After the French Revolution: a Cabinet for the Nation (1796-1816)

Among French cabinets of the Ancien Régime were the famous or forgotten collections of Pierre Trichet in Bordeaux, Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc in Carpentras, François Filhol in Toulouse, and Pierre Borel in Castres. Among the great musicians there were also some famous collectors: François Champion, Louis de Caix d'Hervelois, and Esprit-Philippe Chédeville. They had several dozen instruments for their own use.<sup>2</sup> Several members of the aristocracy, Louis-François de Bourbon, prince of Conti (1717-1776), and Jean-Baptiste Bonnier de La Mosson (1702-1744) had both a famous cabinet and a musical salon.<sup>3</sup>

Then came the collapse of the Ancien Régime; and soon after, in 1795, the range of functions held by musical instrument collections were debated among the members of the National Convention. In the first legislation outlining the organization of a National Institute for Music (later Conservatoire), it was planned that »A Cabinet of Ancient, Modern, and Foreign instruments, and for those in present use, by virtue of their perfection, items that may serve as models« should be established in the library.<sup>4</sup>

The terms Ancient (no more in use), Modern and Foreign (non-European) are exactly the same as those which had already been used ten years earlier in the »Art du faiseur d'instruments de musique, et lutherie«, probably written by Jacques Lacombe<sup>5</sup>. In this supplement to the »Encyclopédie méthodique. Arts et Métiers mécaniques«, he used these terms in order to describe and define »Instruments de Musique Anciens et Etrangers de différentes sortes« and »Instruments de musique Anciens et Modernes«:

»Parmi les instrumens *anciens*, se trouvent ceux des Hébreux, des Grecs, des Egyptiens & des Romains [...] on retrouve des figures [...] sur les anciens monumens; & c'est d'après les copies que les antiquaires & les dessinateurs en ont tirées ou rapportées, que nous les faisons connoître. Les instrumens étrangers, tels que ceux des Nègres, des Chinois, des Tartares, des Indiens, &c sont cités dans les relations de voyages: c'est d'après ces relations que nous en donnerons une idée.«<sup>6</sup>

Regarding music, Félix Vicq d'Azyr's »Instruction sur la manière d'inventorier et de conserver, dans toute l'étendue de la République, tous les objets qui peuvent servir aux arts,

1 Laurence Libin, Arnold Myers: Collections. In: The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. London 2014, pp. 606-659. – Les collections d'instruments de musique, 1re partie. Musique – Images – Instruments. Ed. by Florence Gétreau (Revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale 8. Les collections d'instruments de musique 1er partie), 2006. – Musique – Images – Instruments. Ed. by Florence Gétreau (Revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale 9. Les collections d'instruments de musique 2e partie). 2007.

2 Florence Gétreau: Quelques cabinets d'instruments en France au temps des rois Bourbons. In: Musique – Images – Instruments 2006 (note 1), pp. 24, 27-40.

3 Thomas Vernet: Les collections musicales des princes de Conti. In: Musique – Images – Instruments 2006 (note 1), pp. 44-67.

4 Florence Gétreau: Le Museum, section de musique. Une utopie révolutionnaire et sa descendance. In: Orphée Phrygien. Les musiques de la Révolution. Ed. by Jean Rémy Julien and Jean-Claude Klein. Paris 1989, pp. 217-231. – Florence Gétreau: Aux origines du Musée de la Musique. Les collections instrumentales du Conservatoire de Paris. 1793-1993. Paris 1996, pp. 50-57.

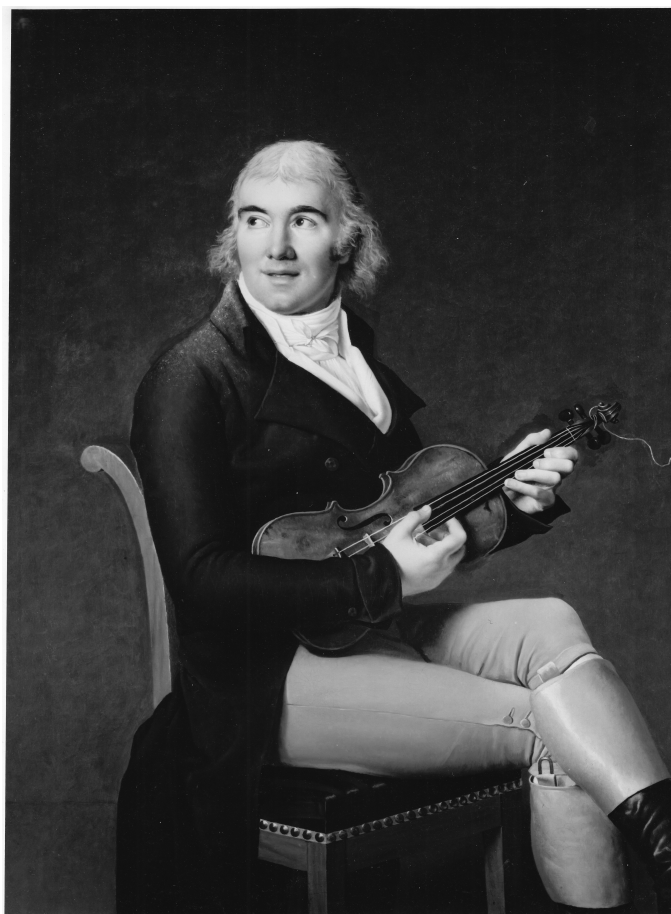
5 Malou Haine: Les instruments de musique dans les »Arts et métiers« de l'Encyclopédie méthodique. In: Musique – Images – Instruments (Revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale 15. Portraits, ballets, traités), 2015, pp. 174-175.

6 [Jacques Lacombe]: Encyclopédie méthodique. Arts et métiers mécaniques. Art du faiseur d'instruments de musique, et lutherie. Paris 1785, p. 1 and plates 1, 2-3, 8-9.

aux sciences et à l'enseignement» – proposed by the Commission temporaire des arts and adopted by the Comité d'instruction publique de la Convention nationale in 1793 – had already established that:

»Les intentions de la Convention nationale sont, que partout où les citoyens, chargés du soin de rédiger les inventaires, trouveront des instrumens de musique, si ces instrumens sont anciens, on les conserve pour servir à l'histoire de l'art; que, s'ils sont modernes, et qu'ils offrent un grand degré de perfection, on les conserve encore, et qu'il ne soit mis en vente que ceux-là seulement qui ne porteront aucun caractère de perfection ou d'ancienneté. Les instrumens étrangers ne seront pas non plus mis en vente [...].«<sup>7</sup>

The temporary committee for the arts charged Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni (1757-1821), a professional violinist (fig. 1)<sup>8</sup>, to visit all the hotels and apartments of emigrated and condemned aristocrats. He was a native of the North Italian city of Cueno, pupil of Gaetano Pugnani (1731-1798), Master for the harpsichord at the Comédie Italienne, and played first violin in the orchestra of the Théâtre de Monsieur until 1792. He visited 113 houses in the course of 17 months between 1794 and 1796 and gathered together 400 instruments for the French nation. Among them were about 40 harpsichords, 100 bowed instruments, woodwind and plucked instruments which reflected the taste and performance practice of the past decades. Some were not ancient nor foreign instruments. All of them were transferred on stretchers from a central deposit in the rue Bergère in Paris, to the new Institut National de Musique. As part of my doctoral research I was able to identify 22 bowed instruments acquired in these revolutionary seizures in the »Dépôt des classes« of the Conservatoire. These instruments had been used for over a century and



1 Césarine Davin-Mirvault (1773-1844), Portrait of Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni (1751-1821), oil on canvas, exhibited at the Salon of 1804. New York, The Frick Collection, photo © The Frick Collection

a half in teaching, and they were in very bad condition. I was able to reveal that a harpsichord by Couchet-Blanchet-Taskin (property of Kenneth Gilbert since 1978) before 1795 had belonged to one of those who had been condemned and emigrated, the Princess Palffy-Kinsky, rue Saint-Dominique, patron of the harpsichordist and composer Leontzi (Antonine) Honauer (1737–c. 1790).<sup>9</sup> The method used by Bruni for his systematic inventory allowed these identifications. This instrument was inventoried as follows: »Rue Dominique,

7 Instruction sur la manière d'inventorier et de conserver, dans toute l'étendue de la République, tous les objets qui peuvent servir aux arts, aux sciences et à l'enseignement. Proposée par la Commission temporaire des arts, et adoptée par le Comité d'instruction publique de la Convention nationale. Paris 1793, p. 65. – Florence Gétreau: Un cabinet d'instruments pour l'instruction publique. Faillite du projet, ouverture du débat. In: Le Conservatoire de Paris. Des Menus-Plaisirs à La Cité de la Musique. Ed. by Anne Bongrain and Alain Poirier. Paris 1996, p. 139.

8 Ludwig Finscher: Bruni, Bartolomeo. In: Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Personenteil. 2nd ed. by Ludwig Finscher. Kassel, New York, Stuttgart 2000, cols. 1150-1154.

9 Florence Gétreau: Les instruments de musique reflet de l'histoire du goût. In: Musiques et musiciens au faubourg Saint-Germain. Délégation à l'Action artistique de la Ville de Paris. Ed. by Jean Gallois. Exhib. Cat. Paris 1996, pp. 56-57.

n° 1522. Quinski. Le 4 floréal, l'an 2ème. [N°] 34. Un clavecin, fond gris, à bandes dorées, refait à Paris, par Pascal Taskin [...] année 1778». <sup>10</sup>

Apart from some instruments (mainly violins, celli, harpsichords and pianofortes) which were set aside for the use of professors and students in the classes between 1796 and 1806, a small room, located next to the music library of the new Conservatoire and named »Cabinet d'instrumens«, housed the instruments which »could serve as models«. Several dozen of them, however, were sold at a public auction as early as November 1797 in order to finance the maintenance of the Conservatoire building. <sup>11</sup> Moreover, a dozen old harpsichord cases (»carcass«) were burnt in the stoves of the Conservatoire in May 1816, a very cold spring day. <sup>12</sup> When Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) became the institution's director in April 1822, he even ordered to empty the Cabinet so that he could install his office in this room, and he sent the remaining instruments from the Ancien Régime to public auction. <sup>13</sup> Altogether, more than one hundred of the instruments that had been »reserved for the nation« as a heritage for instruction were sold once more. It is quite clear that the Convention nationale had been at the forefront of a very modern project, asserting that musical instruments constituted a heritage which served as »models« for the instruction of the public. Yet it was only fifty years later that a new public collection devoted to an audience broader than pedagogues and pupils was officially created in the same institution, next to the library, in 1862 under Napoléon III, after the acquisition of Louis Clapisson's (1808-1866) historical musical instruments.

## French Collections during the 19th Century

### Amateurs of Art and Craft, and Painters

The Convention nationale's project had most likely been too visionary for musicians who, confronted with this ensemble of instruments gathered for the French nation, had showed

purely practical responses relating to their teaching and revealed no motivation and collective vision for the establishment of a public Cabinet. As a result, the first collections of »ancient« or historical instruments were, from the First Empire onwards, private initiatives. <sup>14</sup>

Besides quartet players and amateurs of ancient lutherie, the main role was played by amateurs of curiosities of all kinds. The most famous of these was Charles Alexandre Sauvageot (1781-1860). Violinist at the Opéra from 1800 to 1829, he later served at the Customs Administration from 1810 to 1847. His vocation as a collector came from two musicians of the Opera's Orchestra, the cellist and numismatist Louis Norblin and François-Noël Lamy, a double bass player, who initiated Sauvageot to the art of China and Japan. Over a period of forty years, Sauvageot collected about 1,500 objects and antiquities (fig. 2), donating them to the Louvre in 1856. <sup>15</sup> He became the archetype of the romantic collector and inspired Honoré de Balzac for the eponymous hero of his »Cousin Pons« (1847). Sauvageot's collection, in addition to his very precious knives with songs of Benediction and Grace, <sup>16</sup> had about fourteen musical instruments. <sup>17</sup> Among his rarities was an 18th-century Indian tamburi, bought at a public auction in 1842 after the death of the cabinetmaker François-Honoré Georges Jacob <sup>18</sup>, a harpsichord by Pietro Faby from 1591 <sup>19</sup>, an Irish aeolian harp, brought from Scotland by the Czech composer and pianist Jan Ladislav Dussek when he returned to France <sup>20</sup>, tree kits <sup>21</sup>, tree ivory recorders <sup>22</sup>, and a German cittern by Michael Boehm made in 1726. <sup>23</sup>

14 Florence Gétreau: *Alte Instrumente im Frankreich des 19. Jahrhunderts. Die Rolle des Conservatoire und private Initiativen.* In: *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis* XXI, 1998, pp. 181-182.

15 Alexandre Sauzay: *Catalogue du Musée Sauvageot.* Musée imperial du Louvre. Paris 1861, p. VIII.

16 Flora Dennis: *Scattered knives and dismembered song. Cutlery, music and the rituals of dining.* In: *Renaissance Studies* 24 / 1, 2010, pp. 163, 169, 180.

17 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 318.

18 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 324, n° 1409. Now Paris, Musée de la Musique, D.973.6.2.

19 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 324, n° 1352. Now Paris, Musée de la Musique, D.OA.418.

20 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 318, n° 1353. Now Paris, Musée de la Musique, D.OA.424.

21 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 318, n° 1358-1360. Now Paris, Musée de la Musique, D.MR.R.437, D.MR.R.438 and D.OA.161.1.

22 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 318, n° 1357-1357 bis and ter.

23 Sauzay 1861 (note 15), p. 318, n° 1355. Now Paris, Musée de la Musique, D.O1.419. - Michel Huynh: *Les instruments de musique de Pierre*

10 Bartolomeo Bruni: *Commission temporaire des Arts. Section de Musique. État general des Inventaires d'Instrumens de Musique, mis en Réserve pour La Nation, Par la commission temporaire des Arts, Depuis son Etablissement, Par Bruni.* Paris, Archives nationales, F 17 1034, [18 April 1794 to September 1796], f. 2.

11 Gétreau 1996 (note 4), pp. 51-54.

12 Gétreau 1996 (note 4), pp. 57-64.

13 Gétreau 1996 (note 4), pp. 67-71.



2 James Roberts (before 1800–after 1867), Charles Sauvageot (1781-1860), in his apartment 56 rue Poissonnière in Paris, gouache, 1856. Paris, Musée du Louvre, département des Arts graphiques, RF 24032, photo © RMN-Grand-Palais [Musée du Louvre], Thierry Le Mage

At the beginning of the century another category of collectors can be made out in the painters who cultivated the »Troubadour« style. Pierre Révoil (1776-1842), born in Lyon, exhibited his art at the official Salon regularly and gathered a collection of objects of all sorts, sometimes depicting them in his works with evident historical inconsistency and anachronisms.<sup>24</sup> His collection included a precious cittern by

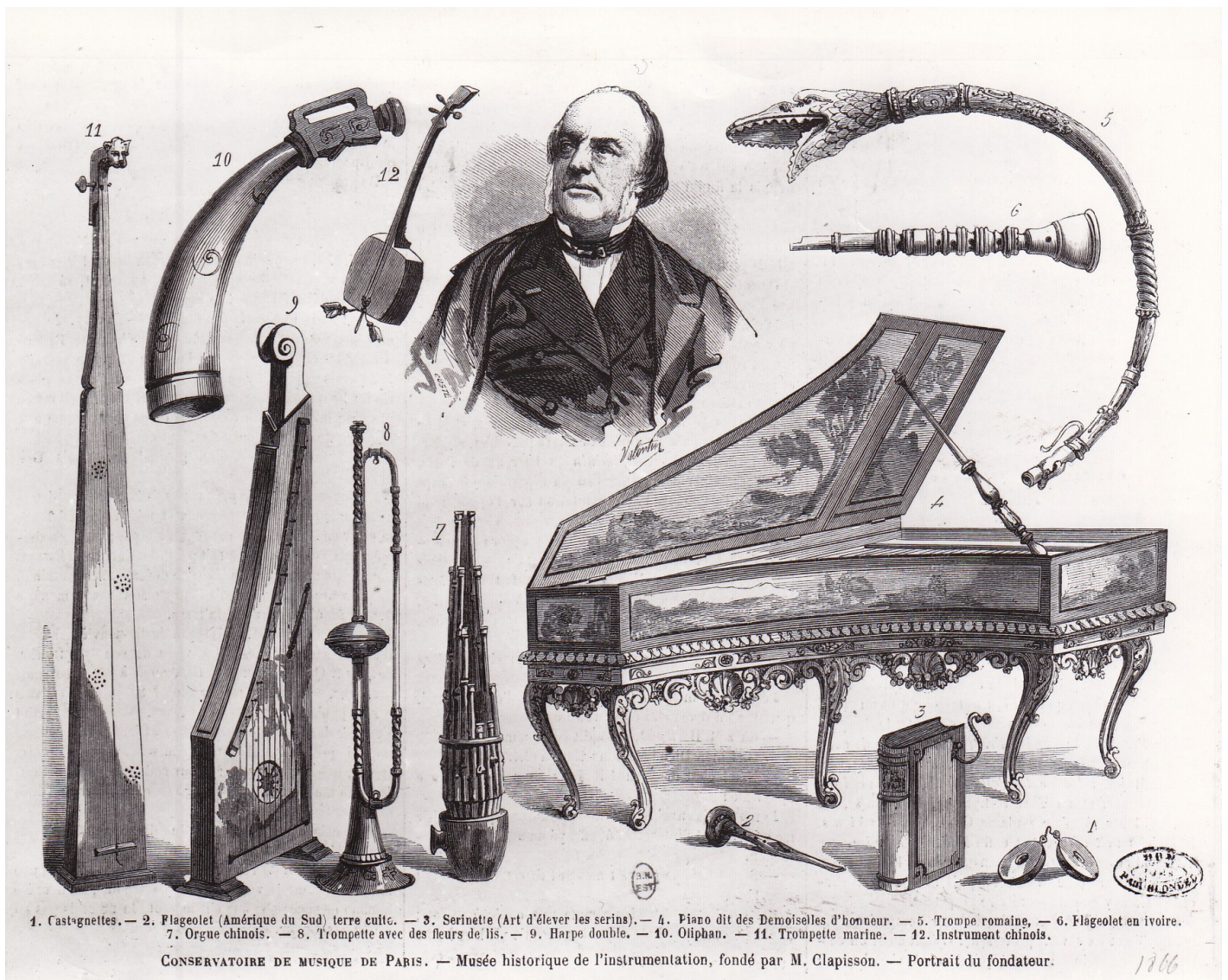
Révoil et d'Alexandre-Charles Sauvageot. In: *Le Revue du Louvre et des musées de France* 47 / 3, 1997, pp. 47-57.

24 Marie-Claude Chaudonneret: Les peintres troubadours collectionneurs d'instruments de musique. In: *Musique - Images - Instruments* (Revue

Girolamo Virchi in Brescia, purchased by the Louvre in 1828.<sup>25</sup> Many other painters such as Louis Leloir (1843-1884), Jean-Georges Vibert (1840-1902), Gustave Jacquet

française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale 1. Innovations et traditions dans la vie musicale française au XIXe siècle), 1995, pp. 24-32.

25 Now Paris, Musée de la Musique, D.MR.R.434. - Chaudonneret 1995 (note 24), p. 28. - Huynh 1997 (note 23). - Joël Dugot, Florence Gétreau: Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and musical iconography. In: *Gitarre und Zister. Bauweise, Spieltechnik und Geschichte bis 1800*. 22. Musikinstrumentenbau-Symposium Michaelstein, 16.-18. Nov. 2001. Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein (Michaelsteiner Konferenzberichte 66). Blankenburg 2004, pp. 56-59, 66-67.



3 Conservatoire de Musique de Paris. Musée historique de l'instrumentation, fondé par M. Clapisson. Portrait du fondateur, anonymous plate for a newspaper, 1866. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Va 286, f° 11, photo©BnF

(1846-1909), Ferdinand Roybet (1840-1920), and Louis-Robert Carrier-Belleuse (1848-1913) used their »ancient« instruments in »historicist« works, an omnipresent artistic movement in the official exhibitions throughout the century.<sup>26</sup>

It was not before the middle of the 19th century that specialized collections of musical instruments finally emerged in

Paris. The most famous collection of this type was gathered by Louis Clapisson (1808-1866). A composer of Opéra-comiques, a professor of harmony at the Conservatoire, a friend of the musical establishment, and member of the Institut de France before Hector Berlioz,<sup>27</sup> he collected compulsively but without real interest in the history of instrument making. He never collected with a view to the importance of an item,

<sup>26</sup> Florence Gétéreau: *Collectionneurs d'instruments anciens et ensembles de musique ancienne en France (1850-1950)*. In: *Musikalische Ikonographie (Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft 12)*. Ed. by Harald Heckmann, Monika Holl and Hans Joachim Marx. Laaber 1994, pp. 75-77.

<sup>27</sup> Florence Gétéreau: *Clapisson, Antoine-Louis*. In: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Personenteil 2*. Ed. by Ludwig Finscher. Kassel, New York, Stuttgart 2000, cols. 1177-1179.



4 Henri Sauvage (1853-1912), Portrait de Charles Petit (1833-1926), huile sur toile, 1888. Blois, Musée du château, photo © by courtesy of Blois, Musée du château

an instrument maker, an invention, or their cultural significance. His 320 precious specimens, some of prime importance from a historical point of view – and not only for their decorative aspect – is likely to have become the first public museum in the field of musical instruments in 1864, after he had sold his collection to the government in March 1861. In a newspaper illustration, he is called the »Founder of the Historical museum of instrumentation« (fig. 3). Clapisson made the most not only of the revenues from the sale, but

he officially became the curator of his own collection with a pension for life, transferable after his death to his widow. What an expense for the state!<sup>28</sup> Louis Adolphe le Douclet, comte de Pontécoulant (1794-1882), commented on this acquisition and its lack of a real historical and cultural program in a series of articles in »L'Art Musical«. He was very critical of Clapisson's lack of ambition and he had no faith in his capa-

28 Gétreau 1996 (note 4), pp. 181-188.



city to initiate a historical and cultural dynamic for this new national collection. According to him, Clapisson's program was divided into three sections: a »Gallery of souvenirs« – for Pontécoulant, artistic rags and tatters from a bric à brac store: »défroques artistiques, des oripeaux de magasin de bric à brac« –, a »Gallery of instruments« classified by categories, and a »Gallery of Models'«, built and offered by instrument makers. Pontécoulant was not convinced by this program:

»I do not see in M. Clapisson's plan anything that is not agreeable, even endearing; but they are only hors d'œuvres. I believe that the author, when he conceived his idea, had lost sight of the object indicated by the Convention in their decree of creation. Mr. Clapisson's plan is a collector's design; it is the work of a man of taste, of a man of wit, but good only for an amateur's Cabinet. It lacks grandeur; it is neither rational nor philosophical, it misses the goal without reaching it.«<sup>29</sup>

Clapisson died in March 1866, and Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) became his, even more ineffective, successor during the last three years of his life. The next curator was Gustave Chouquet (1819-1886). Having been the New York correspondent for »La France Musicale« for 16 years, he wrote articles on Chamber Music, Concerts of the Société du Conservatoire and on Orphéons for the same journal when he returned to Paris. He was active as a librettist and wrote a superficial »Histoire de la musique dramatique en France« which nevertheless won a prize from the Académie des Beaux-Arts.<sup>30</sup>

In the first decades of the Musée Instrumental, provincial collectionism in the field of musical instruments was still represented by amateurs like Charles Petit (1833-1926). He was a banker in Blois, a violinist in an amateur quartet, and he collected 520 ancient instruments that he would never play, as confirmed by his 1888 portrait by Henri Sauvage (1853-1912) (fig. 4).<sup>31</sup>

### Instrument Makers and Historians of Lutherie or Musical Instruments

During the second half of the century, a new category of collectors emerged among professionals in the field of instrument making. Auguste Tolbecque, Adolphe Sax, Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, Antoine Fontaine-Besson, and Léon Bernardel are among the most prominent. Gustave Chouquet was aware of the importance of these ensembles in providing serious foundations for a general history of instrument making. This insight guided his actions as a curator of the Musée Instrumental at the Conservatoire between 1871 and 1886, a period of frequent public auctions of musical instruments at the Hôtel Drouot. One of his most exceptional acquisitions was the selection of 58 instruments during the public auction after Adolphe Sax's (1814-1894) third bankruptcy in 1877.<sup>32</sup> He selected specimens of Sax's major inventions as well as precious ancient instruments collected by Sax for study purposes. Among 467 specimens from all periods and all countries, Sax owned North African instruments that had been collected by Guillaume André Villoteau (1759-1839) during Napoléon's campaign in Egypt. The introduction to the auction catalogue underlined that:

»Conceived in a spirit of superior and rigorous method, this collection offers by groups or families the various specimens which compose it, so that the instrument makers, the artists, the musicographers, can at a glance follow a type from its embryonic origins to its last improvements.«<sup>33</sup>

In Niort, another collector, Auguste Tolbecque (1839-1919) had a similarly great reputation. Son of the famous violinist of the same name and professor for cello in Marseille from 1865 to 1871, he was also a violinmaker; as a student, he had been trained by Victor Rambaux, a master working for the Parisian Conservatoire. Having retired at Fort Foucault, in Niort, a »historicist home«, he exhibited with ostentatious scenography his second collection of 275 specimens which

29 Adolphe Le Douclet Comte de Pontécoulant: Musée Instrumental II. In: L'Art Musical 19, 11 Apr. 1861, pp. 145-146.

30 Gustave Chouquet: Histoire de la musique dramatique en France depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours. Paris 1873.

31 Michel Aubert: Henri Sauvage, peintre et humaniste blésois (1853-1912). Exhib. Cat. Blois, Château 1997, p. 39, n. 45.

32 [Adolphe Sax]: Catalogue du musée instrumental de M. Adolphe Sax. Collection unique d'instruments de musique de tous temps et de tous pays. Vente à Paris, Hôtel des ventes mobilières, 3-6 décembre 1877, Me Gustave Carré, commissaire-priseur. Paris 1877.

33 Sax 1877 (note 32), last cover page. – Malou Haine and Ignace de Keyser: Le Musée instrumental d'un artiste inventeur. La collection privée d'Adolphe Sax. In: Adolphe Sax. His influence and legacy. A bicentenary conference. Proceedings of the international conference. 3-5 July 2014 (Revue belge de musicologie/Belgisch tijdschrift voor muziekwetenschap 70). Ed. by Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, Géry Dumoulin and Howard Weiner. Brussels 2016, pp. 149-164.

he had acquired between 1880 and 1889. His first collection, with precious items like the famous componium by Diederich Nicolas Winkel and the harpsichord by Vincent Tibaut in Toulouse, had been sold to Victor-Charles Mahillon for the Conservatoire in Brussels in 1879.<sup>34</sup>

Tolbecque was an amateur historian of early ancient instruments from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. He frequently based his knowledge on visual evidence found on monuments and in picture galleries. In this field, he participated to this typically provincial flavor of erudition and published two booklets which offered a »defense and illustration« of historical organology as well as an advertising opportunity as a maker of his own attempts at reconstruction.<sup>35</sup> He re-used the texts as first and last chapters of his famous and still useful manual on violin making, »L'Art du luthier«, which was a quite innovative book at the turn of the century, especially concerning its historical dimension and generous share of observations, a far cry from the protective, conventional, and normative attitudes of violin makers who defended their secrets of making and standardization of models.<sup>36</sup> In a way, Tolbecque was an archaeologist who verified his hypotheses with an experimental approach. In 1896, at the »Exposition de la Musique et de la Danse«, he exhibited a showcase full of his own reconstructions, with instruments from Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, through to the 18th century. He even distributed a printed check-list of this collection of reconstructions that was to sell to Charles Petit soon after the exhibition. However, in many aspects, he over-interpreted his sources: he added fanciful decorations on the bass viol after Il Domenichino's painting representing Saint Cecilia, and he used the inaccurate drawing of a cornett from the Correr-Fau collection, reproduced in a stylized way in the famous Dictionary by Viollet-le-Duc, instead of using the original instrument which already numbered amongst the items at the Musée Instrumental. Tolbecque, as a cellist, tried to play his reconstructions and claimed that he was a pioneer in this field, ignoring his competitors, during the international exhibition in

1889. Indeed, his attempts were full of compromise, as careful scrutiny of his bowing technique on photographs reveals.<sup>37</sup>

#### Founders of Early Music Ensembles since 1889

In the history of collections, a crucial period began with collectors who had the wish to re-use their ancient instruments and who were founders of early music ensembles. In 1889, the Parisian International industrial exhibition provided the first opportunity to listen to ancient harpsichords played in front of the public on an official occasion. The famous Ruckers-Taskin harpsichord (in the Musée de la Musique since 1980) belonged to the private collector Monsieur Pichon at the time, who lent it for a special evening of early music in March 1889, captured by a vignette in »L'illustration« which shows the harpsichordist Louis Diémer.<sup>38</sup>

Eugène de Bricqueville (1854-1933) was innovative as both a collector and a performer. He was an organist and correspondent of the musical journal »Le Ménestrel«, in which he published short contributions on the history of organ and of opera. Based in Versailles from 1880, he collected instruments and printed three successive catalogues of his property. He is also the author of different booklets on ancient instruments and on collecting them.<sup>39</sup> He was also interested in musettes, hurdy-gurdies and their »nobles amateurs«, and the viola d'amore. Moreover, he published a pioneering study on the advertisements of musical instrument sales and public auctions that appeared during the 18th century in the »Annonce, Affiches, et Avis divers«, a source still very useful today. His collection was not very extensive but some good items are now held at the Musée de la Musique. Besides his interest in the history of instruments, he was first and foremost a musician who used his own collection to give concerts

34 Victor-Charles Mahillon: Catalogue descriptive & analytique du Musée Instrumental du Conservatoire royal de Musique de Bruxelles. Gand 1893. Reprint: Brussels 1978, pp. 449, 485.

35 Auguste Tolbecque: Quelques considerations sur la lutherie. Paris 1890. – Auguste Tolbecque: Notice historique sur les instruments à cordes et à archet. Paris 1898.

36 Auguste Tolbecque: L'Art du luthier. Niort 1903.

37 Florence Gétreau, Alban Framboisier: Auguste Tolbecque et Eugène de Bricqueville. Deux organographes collectionneurs d'instruments anciens. In: Collectionner la musique. Érudits collectionneurs. Ed. by Denis Herlin, Catherine Massip, Valérie de Wispelaere. Turnhout 2015, pp. 427-439.

38 Le Salon de 1889 (N° 2409, 27 April 1889). In: Les gravures musicales dans L'illustration. 1843-1899. Vol. 2. Ed. by H. Robert Cohen, Sylvia L'Ecuyer Lacroix, Jacques Léveillé, Barry S. Brook. Québec 1983, p. 334; reproduction of the vignette p. 898. – Florence Gétreau: L'iconographie du clavecin en France (1789-1889). In: Musique ancienne – instruments et imagination. Music of the past – instruments and imagination. Actes des rencontres internationales harmoniques, Lausanne 2004. Ed. by Michael Latcham. Bern 2006, pp. 186-187.

39 Eugène H. de Bricqueville: Un coin de la curiosité. Les anciens instruments de musique. Paris 1894.



5 Eugène de Bricqueville et l'ensemble «La Couperin», photographie, Versailles, 1904. Private collection, photo © private coll.

with friends. In 1906, he founded the ensemble «La Couperin» (fig. 5), a group of friends that played instruments from his own collection, sometimes with quite imaginative groupings and playing techniques.<sup>40</sup> In the introduction to the first catalogue of his collection, published in 1889, he wrote:

»It is impossible to form a complete idea of the history of music unless we have before us the expressive agents of this art so widespread in our age, and alas! So superficially practiced. Moreover, all these abandoned, old-fashioned instruments, in their form and organization – I will add, by their tuning – can serve as documents of the general history of taste and practice, even outside their application to Music [...]. Therefore we can understand the usefulness for a musician to have a collection in which the greater part of the elements of ancient instrumentation can find their place.«<sup>41</sup>

40 Gétreau/Framboisier 2015 (note 37), pp. 441-447.

41 Eugène H. de Bricqueville: *Catalogue des instruments de musique anciens qui composent la collection formée par M. Eugène de Bricqueville... 1887-1889*. Avignon 1889, pp. 2-3.

#### From the Musée Instrumental to the Musée de la Musique

I now turn to one last collector, the First Lady (in all senses) of this gallery of French collectors, Geneviève Thibault de Chambure (1902-1975), who was and remains the central figure in France for the past century. At the age of 17, she took her bachelor of music with a study on «John Dowland, poet and musician». Trained by Lazare Lévy (piano), Eugène Cools (harmony and counterpoint), Nadia Boulanger (fugue and organ), and André Pirro (musicology) at the Sorbonne, she began a doctoral thesis on «La chanson française et la musique instrumentale de 1450 à 1550» in 1925, but she never completed it. Nevertheless, she published two series of Renaissance songs with Yvonne Rokseth and Eugénie Droz. She bought her first music book in 1916 when she was fourteen, an edition of Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Atys*. In 1926, she became one of the founding members of the *Société de Musique d'Autrefois* (fig. 6)<sup>42</sup>, an association active until her death in 1975. In 1928, she bought 150 books of madrigals from the 16th cen-

42 Florence Gétreau: *Les archives de la Société de Musique d'Autrefois (SMA), 1929-1975, conservées au musée de la Musique à Paris*. In: *Fontes Artis Musicae* 54 / 1, 2007b, pp. 33-54.



6 The Société de Musique d'Autrefois in 1929. Geneviève Thibault (in the middle) is playing an archlute from her collection. Photo © private collection

ture<sup>43</sup> and, in 1929, she acquired Lecerf's entire collection of musical instruments, comprising about 258 items, 120 of which were reconstructions of ancient instruments. At the end of her life, her collection held 800 items, and has been part of the national heritage at the Musée de la Musique and the Bibliothèque nationale de France since 1980.

G. Thibault became curator of the Musée Instrumental in October 1961 when she was already sixty years old. After six years in this official capacity, there she founded a »re-

storation workshop« with the American harpsichord maker and scholar Frank Hubbard<sup>44</sup> (fig. 7) and, in the same year, co-authored a booklet on preservation published under the auspices of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).<sup>45</sup> Later she organized the first courses in organology ever to have taken place in France, at the Conservatoire. She also asked the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) to sponsor her in founding a research center on instruments

43 Catherine Massip, Florence Gétreau: Les collections Henry Prunières et Geneviève Thibault de Chambure. Formation, composition, interaction, valorisation. In: *Collectionner la musique. Histoires d'une passion*. Ed. by Denis Herlin, Catherine Massip, Jean Duron, Dinko Fabris. Turnhout 2010, pp. 241-256.

44 Gétreau 1996 (note 4), p. 432-437.

45 Alfred Berner, Norman Brommelle, John Henry van der Meer: *Preservation & restoration of musical instruments. Provisional recommendations*. London 1967.

and musical iconography;<sup>46</sup> and she also organized concerts and recordings in order to make known the collections to a larger public.

The culmination of these efforts of cultural dissemination to a broad public is the famous, travelling exhibition on »Eighteenth Century Musical Instruments: France and Britain«<sup>47</sup> organized by the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A), the Horniman Museum, the Musée Instrumental, and G. Thibault's collections. It was exhibited in five cities in Great Britain and nine in France, supported by permanent guided tours, musical demonstrations, and concerts.<sup>48</sup> Even if the travelling department of the V&A was extremely trained and expert, as pointed out by Josiane Bran-Ricci in the ICOM CIMCIM Newsletter VIII (1980), the flip-side of its exceptional audience and reception, even in the specialized press, were the damages caused to the keyboard instruments exhibited without showcases and real protection.

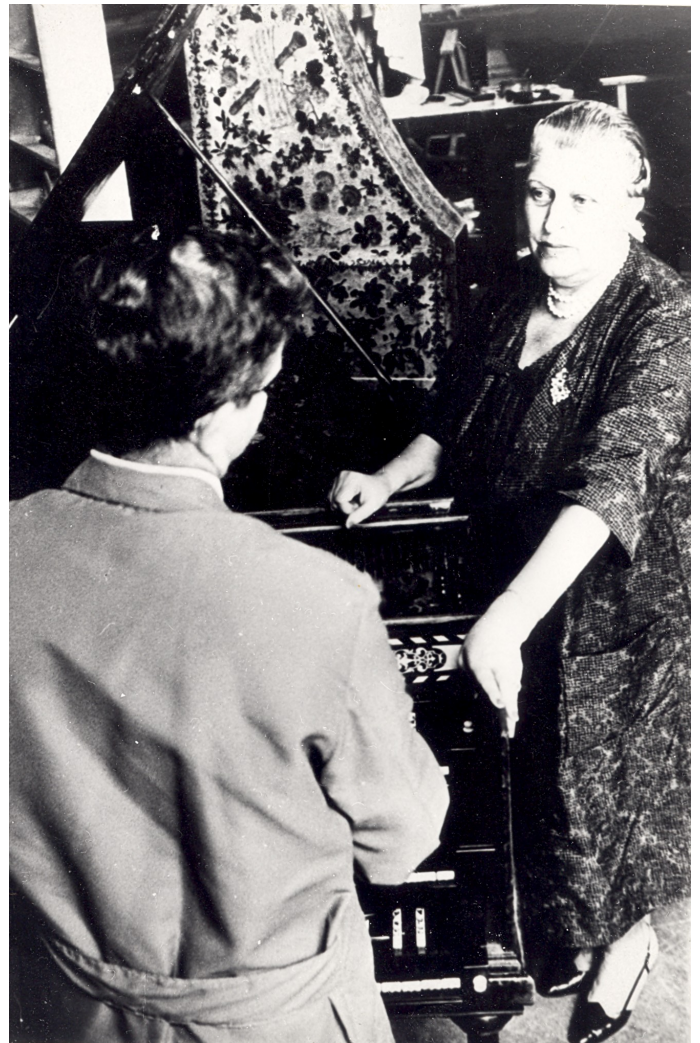
During her twelve years as a curator of the Musée instrumental, 1961-1973, G. Thibault fought to obtain a decent building that matched the importance of the collections exhibited at the Conservatoire and she put the donation of her own collection in the balance to obtain – without success – a decision from André Malraux, the first »Ministre des Affaires culturelles« under Charles de Gaulle. These are the arguments she used in a letter addressed to him in June 1962:

»It would be necessary to found a real »Museum of Music« where, alongside the old instruments, European and non-European instruments of the past, one would find those of today, both a sextet of saxophones and a »Martenot« or the first prototypes used in the concrete music laboratory of the RTF [Radiodiffusion Télévision Française]; in short, it would be necessary to hear all of them«<sup>49</sup>.

46 Gétreau 1996 (note 4), p. 595. – Sylvette Milliot: Le Centre d'icônographie musicale de la Recherche Scientifique à Paris. In: *Revue de Musicologie* 69 / 1, 1983, pp. 85-98. – Josiane Bran-Ricci: Geneviève Thibault de Chambure. Du Musée Instrumental au Centre d'Iconographie Musicale du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. In: *Imago Musicae* IV, 1987, pp. 17-19.

47 Geneviève Thibault (Mme de Chambure), Jean Jenkins, Josiane Bran-Ricci: Eighteenth century musical instruments. France and Britain. *Les instruments de musique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. France et Grande-Bretagne.* London 1973.

48 John Pope-Hennessy, »Foreword«. In: Thibault et al. 1973 (note 47), pp. 19-22.



7 Geneviève Thibault de Chambure and Frank Hubbard in the restoration workshop of the Musée Instrumental in the Conservatoire, 1967. Photo © private collection

Over the next 20 years, and with the help of the famous museologist, founder of the Musée des Arts et Traditions populaires, and director of ICOM Georges Henri Rivière, who had himself been a close friend of G. Thibault since the 1930s, Josiane Bran Ricci and I have defended the necessity of a museum of music, planning an institution of new ambition, growing from 95 m<sup>2</sup> to 65,000 m<sup>2</sup>. After seven years of programming and negotiations, six months before he passed away,

49 Letter by Geneviève Thibault de Chambure to André Malraux, Ministre chargé des Affaires Culturelles, 12 June 1962. Archives of the Musée Instrumental in the Musée de la Musique.

Rivière wrote a letter to Jack Lang which undoubtedly marks a turning point for the Parisian Musée de la Musique. After detailing the strain under which curators and conservators struggled, he defended the necessary independence of this new museum:

»If you let yourself be persuaded by the fallacious arguments that one will not fail to brandish, the museum of the Conservatory will continue to collapse and will not regain such a chance of renovation for the next century. Please do not be the one who sentenced it to death. Make it an independent museum and you will be the person who founded it in law.

I am convinced that, thanks to you, the Musée Instrumental du Conservatoire will become the National Museum of Music and that this autonomy will become for it the dawn of an even increasing influence...<sup>50</sup>

In October 2017, the Musée de la Musique celebrated its maturity after its opening to the public in 1997: the former Musée Instrumental was transferred in 1989 from the rue de Madrid to the cultural site of La Villette, in the north-east of Paris,

50 Letter by Georges Henri Rivière to Jack Lang, Ministre de la Culture, 17 July 1984. Copy sent by Rivière to Florence Gétreau and preserved since that time in her private archives.

located within the complex of the Cité de la Musique, which brought together the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, several concert halls, and a multimedia musical library. The different buildings were conceived by the architect Christian de Portzamparc. The scenography of the permanent exhibition was designed by the architect Frank Hammoutene, on the basis of a scientific programme designed by me and placed under the direction of François Lesure and later Henry Loyrette. After its opening to the public in 1997, four directors of this new heritage institution have followed and its permanent exhibition has been reworked twice. The scientific activities of the museum have developed continuously as have the pedagogical and cultural program, including temporary exhibitions and their catalogues.<sup>51</sup> It may be argued, therefore, that the visionary project of the National Convention with its »Cabinet d'instruments« for public instruction, and later that of a Museum of Music envisaged by Geneviève Thibault and Georges Henri Rivière, has played a leading role at an international level for the development of a new concept of music instrument collections.

51 Un musée aux rayons X. Dix ans de recherche au service de la musique. Musée de la Musique. Ed. by Frédéric Dassas, Joël Dugot, Laurent Espié. Exhib. Cat. Paris, 2001. See also the series »Les cahiers du musée de la musique« published between 2002 and 2007, with nine volumes devoted to conference proceedings, systematic catalogues of various sections of the collection, and exhibition catalogues.

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