

**Jean-Jacques
Rousseau
et la
Révolution**

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JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU IN
THE POPULAR MUSIC OF
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:
THE MAGASIN DE MUSIQUE AND
THE FÊTE CIVIQUE DU 20 VENDÉMIAIRE III

In the final moments of Rousseau's *La découverte du nouveau monde* (1740-1741), Colomb calls two warring nations to the fête:

O vous que des deux bouts du monde
Le Destin rassemble en ces lieux
Venez, peuples divers, former [sic] d'aimables jeux.
Qu'à vos concerts l'Écho réponde.
Enchantés les cœurs et les yeux.
Jamais une plus digne fête
N'attira vos regards. (OC II:839)

In this example given years before the *Lettre à d'Alembert* (1758) and the *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* (1771), Rousseau, in the persona of Colomb, calls us to witness the perfect fusion of opposing ideologies in the celebration of fête. Here music and dance come to signify a moral code of conduct in which the individual is subsumed by the collective will (Vernes 1978, 64).

The distance between the Isle of Guanahan and Revolutionary France is indeed insignificant when one considers just how closely the mission of Colomb resembled that of the government of the new Republic. Like Colomb, the leaders of the Revolution had to subdue passion-dominated subjective behaviour that threatened the collectivity. Music had a role to play in both instances, but was its role instrumental in subjugating passion, or was it merely representational? In other words, was music an agent in establishing a new moral order, or, in the linguistic sense, an arbitrary sign of such order?

As far as the leaders of the French Revolution were concerned, music was to be an integral part of all public ceremony, perhaps even its most important part (Ozouf 1975, 391). One need only turn to the *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* to discover the value these leaders assigned to the role of music in nation-building:¹

Quand un peuple se régénère par une grande révolution, il doit accueillir et protéger les arts qui aident à la faire réussir [...]. Parmi les arts qui suivent la marche des révolutions, concourent à leur progrès et se lient sans cesse à la prospérité publique, la Musique est sans contredit un de ceux dont l'influence est la plus marquée et le succès le moins incertain (Pierre 1895:39).

In the days following the Terror, music was assigned an instrumental role to play in founding the new Republic. The LaFayettes and the Robespierres of the Revolution had not forgotten the use to which ancient civilizations had put music. The *Moniteur* and the *Décade philosophique* chronicled the powerful effects music was thought to have exercised on ancient civilizations (Pierre 1895, 37-38). Articles spoke about music as a “means” to be used to “purify”, to “soften”, to “fix public spirit”; a means to “inspire love of country” and “respect for the laws”. Indeed, the *faire causatif* became intimately associated with music and *fête* during the Revolution. In fact, under Robespierre, music became one of the single most important tools for bonding the individual to the new *volonté générale*.²

There is no doubt that Rousseau would have been somewhat uneasy with the instrumental role assigned to music by the leaders of the Revolution. That Rousseau’s own writings preclude a causal role for music in the shaping of behaviour can be demonstrated by comparing the articles on *musique* in the *Encyclopédie* and the *Dictionnaire*. Two aspects distinguish these articles: first of all, we find that in the later article written for the *Dictionnaire*, Rousseau added a considerable number of anecdotes documenting the effects of music. But more importantly, he also added a theory of imitation in which inflection and accent were identified as forces capable of affecting the human heart. While the anecdotes illustrate Rousseau’s continued fascination with the theory of effects, the theory of imitation illustrates his attempt to destroy any direct causal link between music and behaviour. In the article in the

1. La Fayette himself often remarked that he owed more to the music of the Garde Nationale than to the bayonets of his soldiers (Dufrane 1927, 125).
2. During the Revolution, music and imagination were considered to be more effective keys to mass action than scientific reasoning (Donakowski 1977, 44).

Dictionnaire, Rousseau specifically precludes the premeditated use of music to modify behaviour.

On n'avait point trouvé de moyen plus efficace pour graver dans l'esprit des hommes les principes de la Morale & l'amour de la vertu; ou plutôt tout cela n'était point l'effet d'un moyen prémédité, mais de la grandeur des sentiments, & l'élévation des idées qui cherchaient par des accents proportionnés à se faire un langage digne d'elles. (*Dictionnaire* 1768:311)

For Rousseau, music was truly a language in the sense of a signifying system in which acoustical image was arbitrarily linked with ideas (concept). With Rousseau, music no longer attempts to mimic the natural world as in the classical aesthetic; rather, the relationship between sound and idea is interpreted by the composer. With Rousseau, music enters the realm of semiosis where a triadic relationship is established between sound as representamen, physical and psychological phenomena as objects, and ideas as interpretants. In the hands of the skilled composer sound and accent could therefore communicate concept, but as language, only within the bounds of conventional usage and understanding.³

It was not one hundred per cent clear that the Convention understood this nuance in Rousseau's thought. Documents exchanged between various branches of government during the Revolution illustrate a certain degree of ambiguity concerning the definition of music as "agent" and the definition of music as "sign". Transitive verbs abound. In announcing the Fête de l'Être Suprême (June 8, 1794), the Convention solicited music capable of "evoking" memories dear to the Revolution. In their response to the announcement, musicians stated that their music would "propagate" Republican spirit. When it came to discussing the very means of celebrating the newly instituted fêtes décadaires, an article published by the *Journal des théâtres et des fêtes nationales* described music as capable of "opening" Republican souls; as capable of "instilling" in the public the practice of sharing simple and innocent pleasures (Pierre 1895, 40).

If, in theory, the leaders of the French Revolution had falsely ascribed an instrumental role to music, in practice, music functioned within Revolutionary fête exactly as Rousseau would have theorized, for in fête, music became arbitrarily associated with image. Roger Barny draws our attention to the one aspect of fête that ties all its various

3. For an explanation of Rousseau's theory of imitation, see the letter addressed to d'Alembert and dated June 26, 1754 (OC 1909, X:84).

manifestations together, i.e., the presence, within the ritual of fête, of visual signs associated with the new liturgy (Barny 1986, 166). In fête, visual imagery symbolizes the reason for fête. It is visual imagery whose truth is transparent, whose meaning can be seized at a single glance. It is not the parade nor any particular distribution of spectators and participants that creates the ritual of fête, but rather the symbolic centre around which fête is celebrated. At the centre of fête is image, symbolic image that, much like a magnetic force, pulls other elements of fête, including music, into its orbit.

Paule-Monique Vernes has described these centres as “centres prétextes, les causes occasionnelles autour desquels [sic] spontanément les danseurs s’élancent.” (Vernes 1978, 68) Pretext, yes, but more than simple pretext, these centres are the loci of highly charged symbolic imagery upon which the very possibility of fête depends. The piquet couronné de fleurs around which the peasants dance in the *Lettre à d’Alembert* is not a gratuitous image; without it, or without some other symbol to take its place, fête can degenerate to become the locus of the nefarious passions of “jalousie” and “amour propre” described by Rousseau in the second *Discourse*. Here, assembled in small groups for the first time,

Chacun commença à regarder les autres et à vouloir être regardé soi-même, et l’estime publique eut un prix. Celui qui chantoit ou dansoit le mieux; le plus beau, le plus fort, le plus adroit ou le plus éloquent devint le plus considéré, et ce fut là le premier pas vers l’ingalité, et vers le vice en même tems : de ces premières préférences nâquirent d’un côté la vanité et le mépris, de l’autre la honte et l’envie; et la fermentation causée par ces nouveaux levains produisit enfin des composés funestes au bonheur et à l’innocence. (OC III:169-170)

What is to prevent such degeneration within fête? Imagery stronger than song and dance must be present; something of symbolic dimension must be given to be seen.⁴

Inspired by the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Robespierre insisted upon placing the citizens of the new Republic at the symbolic centre of fête conferring upon them alone the right to perform its

4. Ozouf points out the importance of these visual symbols: “Curieusement, la fête révolutionnaire paraît plus soucieuse de montrer au peuple...et de transporter sur des brancards des Libertés, des Histoires, des Philosophies, des Concordes, des Raisons, des Peuples, que de figurer la réalité, y compris la réalité révolutionnaire...” (Ozouf 1975, 392).

music.⁵ Thus, for the Fête de l'Être suprême (June 8, 1794), Robespierre demanded that the people execute the music: "...quant à l'exécution, elle doit avoir lieu, non par les artistes du théâtre, mais par les masses populaires" (Dufrane 1927:136). The musicians of the Institut national de musique concurred with Robespierre's vision.⁶ Dufrane describes the activities of the days preceding the Fête de l'Être Suprême:

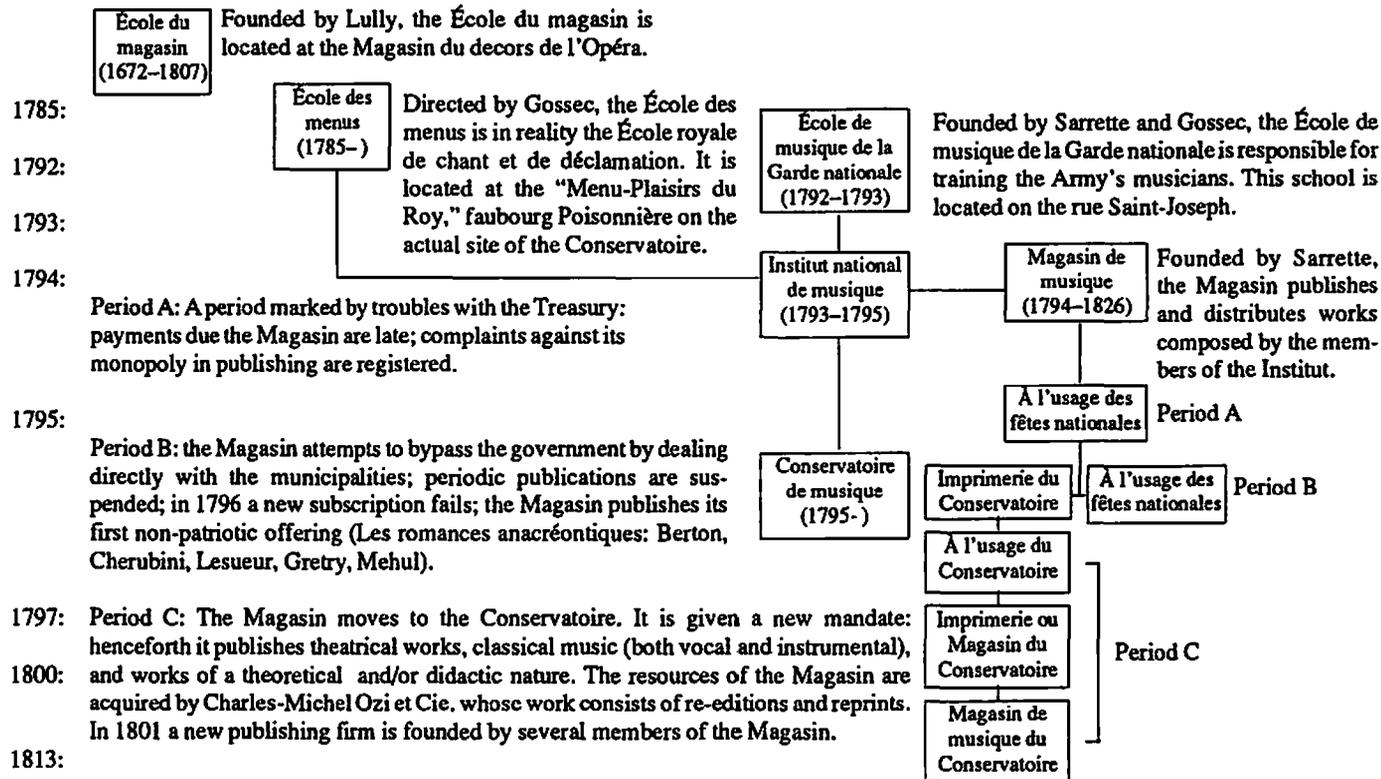
Le lendemain fut une journée mémorable dans l'histoire de la musique populaire. Méhul, Devienne, Dalayrac, Duvernoy, Lesueur, Chérubini — et cent d'autres parmi les moindres — se répandirent dans tout Paris, chacun dans la section qui lui était désignée, et en plein air, sur les places publiques, aux carrefours les plus animés, ils chantèrent tant et plus le petit chœur de Gossec, jusqu'à ce qu'ils l'eussent fait retenir par la foule qui devait l'entonner solennellement le lendemain. (Dufrane 1927:140) Et trois jours après, [...] il fut exécuté le matin, aux Tuileries, par 2400 choristes. (Dufrane 1927:137)

On this occasion, it is the collectivity, the voice of the volonté générale singing in unison, that is given to be seen at the symbolic centre. In this instance, sound was interpreted by the image of unison; both referred to a value esteemed by the founders of the new Republic. But this relationship between sound and value was temporary, for during the course of the Revolution, many different images occupied the symbolic centre of fête. For each, new music was needed. With the ever increasing demand for new music composed with specific fêtes in mind, the number of original compositions required became enormous (Hellouin 1903, 38-39). A new institution sprang up to meet this need; as of September 1794, the responsibility for the musical organization of fête fell into the hands of the Magasin de Musique.

We can trace the origin of the Magasin de Musique back to La Fayette's Garde Nationale (cf. Figure 1). Bernard Sarrette, then a captain in the Garde Nationale, was a great lover of music. A witness to the very first examples of Revolutionary fête in the days immediately following the fall of the Bastille, Sarrette recognized the important role that music

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5. "L'homme est le plus grand objet qui soit dans la nature; et le plus magnifique de tous les spectacles, c'est celui d'un grand peuple assemblé....Combien il serait facile au peuple français de donner à nos assemblées un objet plus étendu et un plus grand caractère! Un système de fêtes bien entendu serait à la fois le plus doux lien de fraternité et le plus puissant moyen de régénération" (Robespierre III:176).
 6. A letter composed and signed by several of the distinguished members of the Institut National de Musique attests to their agreement with Robespierre's vision (cf. Dufrane 1927, 139).

Figure 1. Evolution of the Magasin de Musique



would play in public celebration and to that end, assembled a musical group within the Garde Nationale. On September 27, 1789, at Notre Dame, during the consecration ceremonies of the flag of the Garde Nationale, *La musique de la Garde Nationale*, under the direction of Sarrette, assumed its functions. It was this musical wing of the Garde that became, in 1793, the Institut National de Musique, and then later in 1795, the Conservatoire National.

As for the Magasin, it was established several months before the execution of Robespierre (July 29, 1794). On February 11, Sarrette presented a petition to the Comité du Salut Public, proposing the formation of the Magasin (Pierre 1895, 22-23). On February 15, 1794, in a decree issued by the Comité du Salut Public, the Magasin was officially founded. Its purpose was double. First of all, the Magasin would function as a clearing house, publishing all music destined for use in public ceremonies. As a society of editors and distributors, the Magasin would be able to assure that copyrights were respected (Hellouin 1903:58). Secondly, and more importantly, the Magasin was to control the selection and subsequent distribution of all music destined for use in public ceremony, thereby becoming the official musical voice of the Revolution (Pierre 1895, 15). In order to attain this goal, the Magasin proposed the following plan: each month it would deliver to all 550 departments in France a collection of original music. The package was to contain one symphony, one hymn or patriotic chorus, one military march, one rondeau or quick step, and at least one patriotic song; in short 50 to 60 pages of new music composed specifically for the purpose of promoting Republican ideals (Pierre 1895, 16).

The Magasin delivered its first package in April of 1794, responding to a call issued by the Convention (Pierre 1895, 32:n.1). With its first delivery ready to go, the Magasin sent a copy to the Comité du Salut Public. By April 9, additional copies were on their way to the 550 departments in France.⁷ More deliveries followed throughout the ensuing months. If the goal was to promote the sharing of simple and innocent pleasure, the means used to reach the goal were quite often anything but simple and innocent. Rousseau would have perhaps been appalled to view the gradiose fêtes written by Marie-Joseph de Chénier, composed by François Joseph Gossec, and staged by Jacques Louis

7. Having fallen out of favour with the Convention, Sarrette found himself temporarily confined to prison. Gossec, chief composer of the Magasin, assumed responsibility for the delivery. (cf. Hellouin 1903, 58-59).

David.⁸ So far were they from the spontaneous kind of fête that had been pictured in the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, that they seemed in fact not to resemble fête at all. However, the nature of fête had changed after the death of Robespierre. With Robespierre silenced and the Terror subsiding, the celebrating mass yielded its place at the symbolic centre of fête to the nostalgic images upon which the new utopia was to be constructed.⁹

Thus it was that during this period, the ideas and utopian visions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau assumed their place at the symbolic centre of fête. Not surprisingly, the name of Jean-Jacques Rousseau figures prominently among the titles delivered by the Magasin de Musique during the month of September 1794. Two of these titles appear on the program of ceremonies organized on October 11, 1794 for the translation of Rousseau's remains to the Panthéon.¹⁰ Because the music of Gossec and the poetry of Chénier so clearly illustrate the tone of fête during this period, it is to one of their Hymns that we now turn to illustrate the use of symbolic image within the fête.¹¹

Although Gossec never crossed Rousseau's path, their lives are very curiously related. Born in Belgium, Gossec spent the first 17 years of his life studying and practising music in various churches. While a cantor in the cathedral in Antwerp, Gossec met some very influential persons who decided to send him to Paris with a letter of recommendation to Rameau. Rameau was so impressed with the talent of the young

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8. An article that appeared in *France musicale* (1841, p.145) attests to the importance of the roles played by Gossec, Chénier, and David in the organization of public ceremonies: "La Révolution peut être comparée à un grand drame lyrique, paroles de M.-J. Chénier, musique de Gossec, décoration de David." (cf. Hellouin 1903, 40-41).
 9. Ozouf underlines the use of these nostalgic images in fête: "Ce qui nous frappe au contraire, c'est la présence, dans le cérémonial qu'ils imaginent, de très vieux éléments, brassés et rebrassés." (cf. Ozouf 1975, 399).
 10. The other work is the "Ode to Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (words by Désorgues, music by L. Jadin). Pierre gives a complete list of the contents of the September delivery (cf. Pierre 1895, 127 & 133). Many other hymnes celebrating Rousseau were sung during this ceremony, but were not distributed by the Magasin. Among them are: "Air Républicain" (words by Piis, music by Gaveaux); "Hymne en l'honneur de J.-J. Rousseau" (words by Buard, fils); "Stances sur la translation de J.-J. Rousseau au Panthéon" (words and music by Porro); "Air des Visitandines" (words by Simien).
 11. "Insofar as the Terror may be said to have begotten a theater consonant with its doctrinal postulates, that theater resided in the fêtes, the great pageants of 1793 and 1794, which David designed as 'tableaux vivants' marshaling all citizens into Jacobinism's social cosmos." (Brown 1980, 75).

Gossec, that he secured a place for him as conductor of La Poplinière's orchestra, the same orchestra that Rousseau had conducted years before on that woeful day when he had attempted so desperately to impress Rameau with excerpts from his *Muses galantes*. Although it is impossible to determine what influence Rousseau might have had upon Gossec, it is clear that Gossec was familiar with many of Rousseau's musical theories (Hellouin 1903, 159). It is not a fortuitous coincidence that when asked by Robespierre to compose the music for the Fête de l'Être Suprême, Gossec chose to use the enchastric mode which, as the *Journal des théâtres et des fêtes* pointed out at the time, was the mode which Rousseau had associated with the tranquil soul (Hellouin 1903, 153-154).

The circumstances surrounding the composition of the *Hymne à Jean-Jacques Rousseau* are somewhat curious. It appears that Gossec had been in bed with a very bad toothache at the time he was asked to compose the music for Rousseau's fête.¹² In a letter written October 8, four days before the fête was to take place, and addressed to the poet Coupigny, Gossec seemed to have been in rather ill humour:

Citoyen mon collaborateur (le poète Coupigny), je suis aussi malade d'une fluxion aux dents qui me tient depuis huit jours et qui m'oblige d'avoir la tête enveloppée de linge et de coton, et de garder par conséquent la maison ; malgré cela il m'a fallu composer la fête pour J.-J. Rousseau, qui aura lieu décadi prochain au Jardin National et de là au Panthéon. Pour cette fête, il m'a fallu passer encore trois nuits et cela provient de ce que les poètes sont toujours en retard, ainsi que les arrêtés et ordres des autorités constituées... (Dufrane 1927, 144-145)

Gossec's composition was a long way from the kind of simple melodies supplied by other composers for the occasion. It was, in fact, a "véritable mise en scène" composed for chorus, orchestra, and soloists, the solo lines being sung by smaller groups of men and women within the larger chorus. There are in fact five groups, each responsible for a verse the text of which corresponds to the interests of the group concerned.

Jean Roussel gives a highly romanticized account of this fête in the opening pages of his book *Jean-Jacques Rousseau en France après la Révolution (1795-1830)*. His observations are based upon extracts from

12. According to Tiersot, the "Hymne à J.J. Rousseau" is not one of Gossec's better compositions. Tiersot seems to attribute this to Gossec's toothache: "Au moins pour sa composition nouvelle, put-il disposer d'un délai de trois jours et trois nuits, avec le mal de dents par dessus le marché! Son Hymne à Jean-Jacques Rousseau ne compte d'ailleurs pas au nombre de ses meilleures productions." (Tiersot 1908, 203).

Figure 2.
Hymne à J.-J. Rousseau :
chanté au Panthéon le 20 Vendémiaire III
Musique de Gossec: Paroles de M.J. Chénier

LES VIEILLARDS ET LES MÈRES DE FAMILLE

Tal qui d'Émile et de Sophie,
 Dessinas les traits ingénus,
 Que de la nature avilie,
 Rétablis les droits méconnus.
 Éclaire nos fils et nos filles,
 Forme aux vertus leurs jeunes cœurs,
 Et rends heureuses nos familles,
 Par l'amour des lois et des mœurs.

1^{re} strophe

LES REPRESENTANTS DU PEUPLE

Ta main, de la terre captive
 Brisant les fers longtemps sacrés
 De sa liberté primitive
 Trouva les titres égarés;
 Le peuple s'armant de la foudre
 Et de ce contrat solennel,
 Sur les débris des rois en poudre
 A posé son trône éternel.

2^e strophe

LES ENFANTS ET LES JEUNES FILLES

Tu délivras tous les esclaves;
 Tu flétris tous les oppresseurs,
 Par toi, sans chagrins, sans entraves,
 Nos premiers jours son des douceurs.
 De ce dont tu pris la défense
 Reçois les vœux reconnaissants;
 Rousseau fut l'ami de l'enfance,
 Il est chéri par les enfants.

3^e strophe

CHEUR

O Rousseau modèle des sages
 Bienfaiteur de l'humanité,
 D'un peuple fier et libre
 Accepte les hommages.
 Et du fond du tombeau
 Soutiens l'égalité.

LES GENEVOIS

Tu vois, près de ta cendre auguste,
 Tes amis, tes concitoyens;
 Philosophe sensible et juste
 Nos oppresseurs furent les tiens:
 Et, dans ta seconde Patrie,
 Genève agitant son drapeau
 Genève, ta mère chérie,
 Chante son fils, le bon Rousseau.

4^e strophe

LES JEUNES GENS

Combats toujours la tyrannie,
 Que fait trembler ton souvenir;
 La mort n'attend pas son génie,
 Ce flambeau luit pour l'avenir;
 Ses clartés justes et fécondes
 Ont ranimé la terre en deuil;
 Et la France au nom des deux mondes,
 Répand des fleurs sur ton cercueil.

5^e strophe

a report filed by Ginguené, member of the Commission exécutive du Comité d'Instruction publique, with which he mixes references to the idyllic examples of fête in the *Lettre à d'Alembert*. Roussel's conclusion is that the fête du 20 vendémiaire seemed to illustrate the *Lettre à d'Alembert*.¹³ But this fête was far too grandiose to be likened in fact to anything pictured in the *Lettre*. The amount of planning that Lakanal put into its execution would preclude any comparison with a spontaneous gathering around a "piquet couronné de fleurs".¹⁴

Roussel describes the scene:

Au Palais National (les ci-devant Tuileries), une île avait été aménagée au centre du grand bassin, avec douze peupliers de vingt pieds de haut. Le cercueil y reposa dans la nuit précédant la grande marche vers le Panthéon : la population parisienne qui vint à son tour veiller Jean-Jacques put croire que le site paisible d'Ermenonville [...] s'était transporté au cœur de la ville. Le lendemain, après un bref discours du président de la Convention, Cambacérès, un immense cortège se forma, des chars représentant les œuvres de Rousseau, [...] On chantait l'Hymne à J.-J. Rousseau de M.-J. Chénier, qui célébrait le « bienfaiteur de l'humanité ». Le char qui transportait le cercueil était peint en « rouge national ». (Roussel 1972, 12)

It is difficult to imagine exactly how Gossec's Hymne was performed, but when one considers that floats represented Rousseau's different works and then looks at the disposition of performers in the Hymne, the picture becomes clear. Each of the five groups responsible for a verse in the Hymne can be associated directly with one or more of the major works of Rousseau. While Roussel neglects to give details concerning the floats, one can hypothesize, associating text and verse in the following scenario.

The first group (cf. Figure 2) is comprised of "les vieillards et les mères de famille"; its text refers directly to *Émile* and to the importance of instilling young hearts with the love of virtue. The second group is comprised of "les représentants du peuple"; echoing the concerns of the second *Discours* and of the *Contrat Social*, the text calls upon mankind to break the chains of tyranny. The third group is comprised of "les enfants et les jeunes filles". Here again the text seems to refer to *Émile* as the singers acknowledge Rousseau's concern for the education of

13. "La fête funèbre de vendémiaire semblait illustrer la Lettre sur les spectacles....C'était ce bonheur-là que Paris ressentait." (Roussel 1972, 13).

14. As Roussel reports, Lakanal, organizer of the fête, presented his project 20 days before the appointed day. "Ordonnateur de la fête, Lakanal, vingt jours auparavant, avait présenté son projet en des termes qui avaient un caractère politique et social assez net,..." (Roussel 1972, 14).

children. The fourth group is comprised of "les Genevois"; its text confirms Rousseau's affinity with the Swiss people and might best reflect concerns expressed in the *Lettre à d'Alembert*. The fifth and final group is comprised of "les jeunes gens" who acclaim the dawn of a new age illuminated by the ideas of Rousseau. What better float for this group than one representing the *Contrat Social*? Between each verse, all voices join in the refrain exalting the glory of Rousseau, model to all men of wisdom and benefactor of all humanity who, from the bottom of his tomb, will sustain the Republican ideal of equality. The text of this "tableau vivant" is the work of Chénier; the music that of Gossec.

One can only imagine the effect of this hymn to Rousseau. It is doubtful that the various groups within the chorus appeared in theatrical attire, costume and makeup; more likely that each group was comprised of persons whose real age and condition corresponded exactly to those indicated by Chénier. This was not theatre in the sense of illusion imitating reality, but rather a true "tableau vivant" given for all to witness. A certain pomp and decoration was used, of course, but these were of a kind that Rousseau, writing his *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*, would have approved:

Beaucoup de spectacles en plein air, où les rangs soient distingués avec soin, mais où tout le peuple prenne part également [...] (OC III:963) Ne négligez point une certaine décoration publique; qu'elle soit noble, imposante, et que la magnificence soit dans les hommes plus que dans les choses. On ne sauroit croire à quel point le cœur du peuple suit ses yeux et combien la majesté du ceremonial lui en impose. (OC III:964)

Should one speak of these great public ceremonies organized during the days of the Magasin in terms of anti-fête? I do not believe so. As Jean Ehrard has shown, fête is first and foremost commemorative, repetitive, and thus conservative, tending, even as it claims to revolutionize, to consolidate the existing order (Ehrard 1975, 373). The fête civique organized to commemorate Rousseau, like all examples of fête, sought to freeze a moment in time, and then to present that moment as a symbol for the purpose of ideological indoctrination. In spite of all their sound, image, and movement, fêtes are frozen symbolic "tableaux" which, as Jean Terrasse has pointed out "font saisir le moment où l'essence se substitue à l'histoire escamotée au profit d'une vision idéaliste et mythique. . . ." (Terrasse 1981, 49) It is the sarcophagus of Rousseau that occupies the symbolic centre of fête on the 20 vendémiaire, l'an III; around it dances the extended family of man; mothers, fathers,

children, persons old and young all engaged in the act of remembering, remembering that which was deemed important for Republicans not to forget. It is this scene that interprets the music of Gossec, that transforms it into a "langue digne de l'idée qu'elle cherche à représenter".

Whatever the perceived link between the musical ideas of Rousseau and the leaders of the Revolution, it is less important than the actual link. In the mythical reality reflected by the fête of the 20th vendémiaire, a new France held out a symbol and called its citizens to the dance.

Venez, peuples divers, former [*sic*] d'aimables jeux.
Qu'à vos concerts l'Écho réponde.
Jamais une plus digne fête
N'attira vos regards. (OC II:839)

For the short period during which the République Française continued to require its services, the Magasin de Musique helped move the citizens of the new Republic down the long, ever so long road to Utopia.

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