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Music and the Convergence of the Arts in Symbolist Salons: From the Salons de la Rose†Croix to the Salons d'Art Idéaliste

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Abstract:

During the 1890s, European symbolist artists organized salons that included multiple art forms with the aim of creating an artistic phenomenon. The evolution of exhibition practices at this time coincided with a deep interest in the synthesis of the arts, as well as research regarding the union of sensory perception. This article contextualizes the convergence of the arts in the symbolist movement, in particular the inclusion of music in their exhibitions. Employing a concrete approach, it focuses on two such cases in Paris and Brussels.

Music and the Convergence of the Arts in Symbolist Salons: From the Salons de la Rose†Croix to the Salons d'Art Idéaliste

by Lucien Midavaine

Introduction

Since the early 1970s, scholarship on symbolism has highlighted the preeminent role of the musical imagination and musical performance in iterations of the movement in France and Belgium. Music was a singular and at times dominant focus for symbolists in both countries. This was particularly true for idealist artists, a subset of the multifaceted symbolist movement, characterized by their link to late nineteenth-century esoterism and the deep influence of German composer Richard Wagner (1813–83) on their work.^[1] In the 1890s, most of

these artists briefly gravitated around French writer and occultist Joséphin Péladan (1858–1918) before losing their vigor in the decades that followed. Along with different esoteric movements of the time, the idealists were the catalyst of salons, which—like the artists who took part in them—aimed to bring together different artistic practices. In these salons, the integration of music went beyond bringing together two previously dissociated artistic events (the concert and the art exhibition). Instead, they aimed to reveal a correspondence between these two different sensory experiences—as Charles Baudelaire had imagined in poetry—and two different embodiments of the same aesthetic ideal.^[2]

Thus far, little academic consideration has been given to the musical events that occurred at idealist art salons; the topic has stagnated between studies of the visual arts and musicology. The purpose of this paper, then, is to underline the importance of studying symbolist art and music together, not so much to demonstrate how they might have “influenced” one another but rather to show their complementarity in symbolist thinking about art. A more global approach is necessary to contextualize the convergence of the practices that resulted from the mix of synesthetic theories and a Romantic heritage that encouraged the union of the arts. It is my contention that music in these contexts was the primary means utilized to achieve a symbolist goal: the union of art and spirituality.

This article considers two central points: the way in which music was actually presented in these salons and the role that music played in these environments. It aims to compare the practical reality of these events with the theory espoused by the organizers, in particular regarding the importance they granted to music and visual arts. Repeatedly, the ambitions of the organizers overshadowed reality, especially in the gap seen between Wagnerian theories of “total art” and their implementation outside of the opera.

These points are examined through two major salons of idealist symbolism: the Salons de la Rose†Croix (R†C) in Paris and the Salons d'Art Idéaliste in Brussels. In addition to giving great importance to music, these two salons show a logical progression in idealism, involving many of the leading idealists. Moreover, as art historian Sébastien Clerbois has pointed out, a comparative study between French and Belgian symbolist groups is necessary, since they were heavily connected. More generally, starting in 1886, the critical reception of French symbolism—mainly the work of Odilon Redon—was more favorable in Brussels. Conversely,

the international recognition of Belgian symbolism owes a great deal to the Salons de la R⁺C in Paris.[3]

The Convergence of the Arts in the Symbolist Movement

During the nineteenth century, the German Romantics initiated the redefinition of the classical distinction between the arts, an idea that then spread throughout Europe. The work of Richard Wagner was a significant touchpoint for Romantic theories concerning the union of the arts. With his ten major operas, composed between 1840 and 1882, Wagner gave the operatic genre a new dimension by reinforcing the expressiveness of the orchestra and writing librettos that brought Germanic mythology to light. In these works, the composer strove to master all of the arts—music, poetry, theater, visual arts, and even architecture—all of which could be seen in the specially designed theater he built in Bayreuth. The composer's aesthetic research led him to formulate the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art, an ideal embodiment of the synthesis of the arts toward which many artists aspired during the *fin de siècle*.

The power of Wagner's music, like that of Ludwig van Beethoven, Edvard Grieg, or Robert Schumann, dazzled the young symbolists. They envied its ability to be suggestive while remaining elusive. Musicologist Jean-Michel Nectoux has shown that the symbolists valued how music creates mystery by transcending spoken language: it communicates a great deal, but through subtle means.[4] Paul Valéry went further when he wrote that "symbolism is summarized very simply in the common intention of several families of poets . . . to 'reclaim from music what belongs to them.'"[5] Indeed, music, devoid of visual form, has an ambiguity that fascinated symbolist poets and painters. This was especially the case for Wagner's music, which cultivated ambiguity through harmonic instability by reducing the border between the minor and major modes, and by using cadences that bring little harmonic resolution. This ambiguity—which Péladan compared to the mysterious smile of the *Mona Lisa*—was used as a model for poetry and visual arts.[6]

The great importance given to music was also influenced by nineteenth-century philosophy, especially criticism of Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theories, which shed a more favorable light on the ability of the arts to express anything belonging to the metaphysical world. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was believed that ideas beyond the tangible world were inaccessible to humans. Due to their temporality, the arts cannot express anything that exists independently of human perception. However, during the *fin de siècle*, philosophers considered whether the artist, through his work, could get closer to pure ideas (Kant's *noumenon*). For the French philosopher Henri Bergson, music, as an art with duration, was the most appropriate format to represent reality. Bergson considered the essence of art to be its power of revelation: art uncovers the reality that people usually perceive as simplified and homogeneous. According to the esoteric thought that flourished during the late nineteenth century, the artist was a prophet who could perceive ideas in all things and, thus, could understand the divine.[7]

In addition to these aesthetic and philosophical aspects, the convergence of music and visual arts was also the consequence of scientific studies that compared the sensory perceptions. The idea of merging the arts was therefore not born from a desire for aesthetic modernism, but rather from research that provided a scientific basis for their correspondence. In this

field, the works of German physicist Ernst Chladni (1756–1827) are essential. Using a bow to vibrate a metal plate sprinkled with sand, Chladni obtained shapes commonly termed “acoustic figures” (fig. 1).^[8] These works were seen as scientific demonstrations of the existence of a visible equivalent to sound. Color was also at the center of scientific and esoteric research. Analogous to sound, color was seen as a vibration: what we perceive through our senses (colors, shapes, sounds, smells) are vibrations that spread through the air to different sensory organs.^[9] Therefore, the different arts could be synthesized precisely because they all produce physical effects on people using the same means. This mindset also gives a physical basis to synesthesia, defining it as the ability to perceive vibrations by all senses. It includes the phenomenon of colorful hearing—the association of musical notes with colors—as well as the perception of colors in sound vibrations, of sounds in color vibrations, and even of shapes in odoriferous vibrations. Such theories flourished at the fin de siècle and found supporters far beyond symbolist circles.

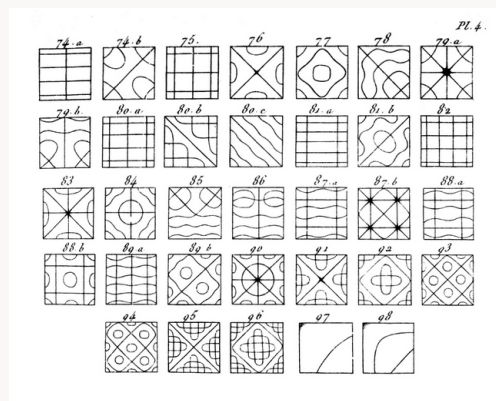


Fig. 1, Chladni’s acoustic figures, 1809. Published in Ernst F. F. Chladni, *Traité d’acoustique* (Acoustic Treatise) (Paris: Courcier, 1809), n.p., plate 4. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

[\[larger image\]](#)

All of these theoretical, philosophical, and scientific elements stimulated the convergence of the arts, either through works that brought together all of the senses or through events that brought together all of the arts. In 1891, a year before the first Salon de la R+C, an iconic practice was born at the Théâtre d’Art in Paris, under the direction of playwright Paul Fort. It involved the creation of scenic works comprising the projection of colored light and the release of odors—a synthesis of the arts based on Wagnerian theatrical principles. However, these attempts were unsuccessful due to technical failures and limited public interest.^[10]

When Music Entered Exhibitions

During the nineteenth century, artists found new freedom in organizing their own exhibitions, which expanded exhibition practices considerably. At this time, salons and studios began to serve as informal concert venues. While studios had been an important social venue for some time, they became a regular site of exhibitions and concerts, between acquaintances or open to the public.^[11]

In France, the number of musical performances in private venues increased alongside the growth of the bourgeoisie. Sometimes they were organized by musicians, such as composer Charles Gounod, singer Pauline Viardot, and composer Camille Saint-Saëns, whose “Mondays” took place irregularly between 1858 and the end of the 1880s. During the same period, composer and organist Charles Bordes regularly invited fellow musicians to his home to play late into the night. Composers Emmanuel Chabrier, Vincent d’Indy, and violinist Eugène Ysaÿe often participated in these evenings. However, these examples of musical acquaintances playing together are the least high-society facet of these gatherings of artists, which brought together musicians, as well as writers and visual artists. Several private salons were initiated by intellectuals such as writer George Sand, heiress Winnaretta Singer, writer Judith Gautier, and patron Berthe de Rayssac. All of these Parisian gatherings contributed to the growth of chamber music outside of the official circuit, and they were also places of revelation for young composers.[12]

The situation was different in Brussels, where music was starting to be experienced more often in artists’ studios. This is partially explained by the lack of suitable places to play chamber music in the Belgian capital, as the official performance halls were either too big or not particularly suitable for musical performances with an audience. Therefore, musicians appreciated the intimate aspect of the atelier venues. The first concert of this type in Brussels was probably held in the studio of painter Charles Hermans in 1880. The journal *Le Guide musical* (The music guide) reported that this first attempt could be seen as an experience of the union of the arts, stating that “the arts are sisters . . . the senses sharpen each other, the perceptions become more immediate.”[13] Between 1880 and 1900, these concerts were organized regularly around Brussels by artists including sculptor Charles Van der Stappen, painter and sculptor Constantin Meunier, and painter Isidore Verheyden. At the turn of the century, the mansion of painter Anna Boch, the site of many of these concerts, became the primary gathering place for artists like organist Joseph Jongen, composer Gabriel Fauré, d’Indy, and Ysaÿe. In these examples, intimate concerts were born out of the common ambitions of painters and musicians who were searching for new ways to practice the arts outside of an official framework. Most of the time, such concerts were held by progressive artists, mainly related to Les XX (The Twenty).[14]

Founded in Brussels in 1883, Les XX was the leading avant-garde group of artists in Belgium during the late nineteenth century. It included major painters such as James Ensor, Fernand Khnopff, Félicien Rops, and Théo van Rysselberghe. The group became known for inviting a number of key European artists to exhibit in Brussels between 1883 and 1893, including Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, among many others. Moreover, the annual Salon des XX (Salon of the Twenty) was notable for organizing conferences and concerts alongside the exhibition. These concerts took place in one of the exhibition rooms, which was filled with canvases, allowing the visual arts and music to coexist in a way rarely seen before.

However, the concert programs, starting with the first Salon des XX in 1884, were far from innovative in light of the group’s progressive tendencies. This contrast grew more profound in 1887, when Les XX exhibited painter Georges Seurat and other neo-impressionist artists. To remedy the situation, the secretary of the group, Octave Maus, requested that French

composer Vincent d'Indy (1851–1931), an early Wagnerian and former student of César Franck at the Paris Conservatory, organize music sessions of a more modern variety. Beginning in 1887, the Salons des XX became a forerunner of the musical avant-garde, inviting Fauré and later the young and still unknown Claude Debussy in 1894. Madeleine Maus, Octave's wife, remembered the special atmosphere that Les XX created during their concerts:

... the instruments came out of the boxes placed on the side of the stage at the foot of the luminist canvases, and the concert began. In the smell of the fresh paint unfolded the melodic outlines and harmonies whose novelty, far from confusing the soul, allowed it to bloom effusions that were only waiting for this spring shower.[15]

In France, the diversification of concert venues ran parallel to the reception of Wagner's work. The German composer had, at first, given great importance to the recognition of his work on French stages. However, the premiere of *Tannhäuser* (1845; fig. 2) at the Paris Opera in 1861 was a debacle. The support of French Emperor Napoleon III was frowned upon by Wagner's republican partisans, and the composer had a tense relationship with the direction of the opera, refusing to make the changes demanded by some influential members. Eventually, the opera was canceled after just three shows, marking the beginning of the negative reception afforded Wagner's work in France. The anti-German wave, encouraged by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, gave birth to a deep—and mutual—resentment of the German musician.[16] Because of this, Wagner's music was completely absent from the Paris Opera until 1891.

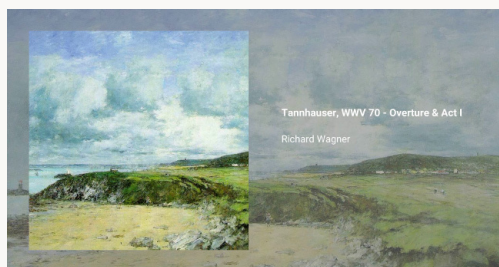


Fig. 2, Richard Wagner, *Tannhäuser*, WWV 70, Overture, 1845. Unknown performer, n.d. Available from: <https://youtu.be/8P79cCG6Y00>. [larger image]

However, the French were far from unanimous in their rejection of Wagner, for the composer had ardent defenders since the early 1860s, like Baudelaire, Saint-Saëns, and painter Henri Fantin-Latour. The performance and diffusion of his works therefore had to occur outside of the official circuit, which was quite political and under the influence of nationalist movements. Starting in 1874, Wagner's repertoire was more regularly played in private circles. In the 1880s, conductor Charles Lamoureux organized concerts featuring Wagner's music that attracted the likes of poet Stéphane Mallarmé, writer Joris-Karl Huysmans, and writer Édouard Dujardin, founder of the *Revue wagnérienne* (Wagnerian review). In the same decade, Judith Gautier organized Wagnerian evenings with pianist and composer Louis Benedictus (1850–1921), which d'Indy attended.[17] Mallarmé's famous "Tuesdays," which began in 1880, were also a meeting place for Wagnerians like Dujardin and Huysmans, in addition to symbolist writer Georges Rodenbach and artist Odilon Redon.[18]

However, due to Wagner's absence from the Paris Opera, Brussels established itself as the French-speaking capital of Wagnerism. *Lohengrin* (1850; fig. 3) was Wagner's first opera to premiere at the Brussels Opera, the Royal Theater of La Monnaie, in 1870. During the 1880s, the Brussels Opera witnessed the premieres of several pieces by French composers, including Jules Massenet's *Herodiade* (1881), Ernest Reyer's *Sigurd* (1884), and Emmanuel Chabrier's *Gwendoline* (1886), the latter of which the composer had first introduced to the press in the studio of Constantin Meunier. These premieres established La Monnaie as a major stage for the recognition of French composers, to the point that the French press regularly traveled to attend performances of works deemed "too Wagnerian" for Paris.[19]

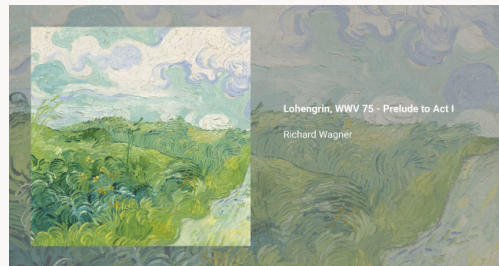


Fig. 3, Richard Wagner, *Lohengrin*, WWV 75, Overture, 1850. Unknown performer, n.d. Available from: https://youtu.be/tt_NekjEwBI. [larger image]

Wagner's popularity among the artists of the fin de siècle can be easily explained. Although Wagner did manage to create a total work of art, his admirers attributed more to the man himself than the synthesis of the arts. In fact, they saw the work of the German composer as a remedy for the world's "disenchantment," following the concept introduced by sociologist Max Weber. For idealist artists, such works were seen as the cure for a world that, by means of rationalization, had lost its origin and was trapped in a vain materialism, incarnated in art by realism and naturalism (which also dominated the stage at that time). With Wagner, the theater was a place of retreat reserved for the sacred, set against the secularization of the present. The composer gave his stories a philosophical-religious tone that, accompanied by staging and music both mystical and grandiose, conferred a mysterious atmosphere that was treasured by the symbolists.[20]

It should be noted that during the nineteenth century, the French clergy faced continued hostility from anticlerical revolutionary movements. The situation came to a turning point when the Second French Empire collapsed and the Third Republic was proclaimed in 1870. In 1892, the Catholic Church, under the instruction of Pope Leo XIII, ordered the *Ralliement*: henceforth the clergy must rally to the French Republic. The church, appearing to fail in the eyes of many Catholics, prompted esoterism, as much as Wagnerism, to fill the perceived gap of spirituality. The union of the arts was therefore a mystical project—to restore unity to the world. For Parisian salon founder Joséphin Péladan, proof of the decadence of the century was "the deplorable divorce of art and faith." [21] Wagner was able to reconcile the two, subsuming a role abandoned by priests; according to Péladan, the artistic revival came from Bayreuth. [22] Art historian Philippe Junod has pointed out that Wagner perfectly

exemplifies the prophetic role of the artist as the priest for a new religion based on the cult of art.[23]

The First Salon de la R†C (1892)

Within this context, Wagner became the model that Péladan—or the “Sâr,” as he called himself in order to express an orientalist influence—employed when establishing his art salon, which he conceived as a multidisciplinary event. Prior to this venture, Péladan had been known as a writer. His early works were regarded with some contempt in Paris, although they were seen favorably in Brussels, notably among Les XX.[24] In 1890, he founded the *Ordre de la R†C esthétique du Temple et du Graal* (Order of the Aesthetic R†C of the Temple and the Grail), a Rosicrucian society with the aim of an aesthetic revival. To do so, Péladan organized six annual salons, from 1892 to 1897, that he defined as “a manifestation of art against the arts, of the ideal against the ugly, of the dream against the real, of the past against the infamous present, of the tradition against the joke.”[25] He concerned himself with exhibiting beauty in all its incarnations, pictorial as well as musical. Péladan spoke of the salon as a “geste esthétique” (aesthetic deed), that is to say a heroic exploit with medieval inspiration. He wrote that the *Ordre de la R†C* was first and foremost a group of artists, including painters, sculptors, and composers, who adhered to the idealist aesthetic.[26]

The first Salon de la R†C was held at the Durand-Ruel Gallery, in the ninth arrondissement of the French capital, in March 1892. To finance his project, Péladan found a patron, Antoine de La Rochefoucauld (1862–1959). At its start, several famous artists, notably Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, and Edward Burne-Jones, showed no interest in the salon and declined Péladan’s invitation to exhibit. The final exhibitors were primarily the artists to whom Péladan had given favorable opinions in his reviews of the Parisian official Salons, which he began writing in 1882. They included, among others, Maurice Chabas, Rogelio de Egusquiza, Ferdinand Hodler, Rodo (pseudonym of Auguste de Niederhäusern), Alphonse Osbert, Armand Point, Carlos Schwabe (who designed the poster; fig. 4), and Alexandre Séon, as well as the Belgians Albert Ciamberlani, Jean Delville, and Fernand Khnopff. Several Nabis and its associated painters were also present, against Péladan’s will but at the insistence of La Rochefoucauld: Émile Bernard, Charles Filiger, and Félix Vallotton. The opening took place on March 9, 1892. In addition to the artists, Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine attended, as did several ministers and political representatives. The opening was a resounding success: a massive crowd stood in front of the gallery, which had been decorated with flowers and embalmed with incense for the occasion. To reinforce the ceremonial atmosphere, the prelude of Wagner’s *Parsifal* (1882) was played by trumpeters at the entrance of the gallery, where busts of Dante and Wagner stood.[27]



Fig. 4, Carlos Schwabe, Poster for the first Salon de la Rose-Croix, 1892. Lithograph. Museum of Ixelles, Brussels. Photo: Museum of Ixelles, Brussels. [\[larger image\]](#)

Péladan intended to put on several concerts at the first Salon de la R+C. At first, he considered inviting Grieg, whom Péladan greatly admired, to conduct his own works. He also planned to stage Christoph Willibald Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), for which he asked Pauline Viardot—who created the role of Orpheus in the version of the work adapted by Hector Berlioz—to recommend two of her students to interpret the main roles.^[28] Finally, in an interview with the newspaper *Le Temps* (The times), Péladan also added to these a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1727).^[29]

None of these projects came to pass. In the end, five thematic evenings were scheduled, devoted respectively to Beethoven, César Franck (1822–90), Franck's students, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, and Wagner. Franck and his students were the only contemporary composers who were given an evening. Franck's music and his involvement in the revival of sacred music in France were of particular importance to Péladan. His novel *L'Androgyne* (1891) was even dedicated to the composer:

To César Franck, to the greatest master of French music since Berlioz. To the Catholic and pure genius, dead without glory after a life as august as his work. I raise this stele to a genius and to the shame of Rome, Paris, and the Republic, united in the same hatred of idealist art.^[30]

During these evenings, pieces by Erik Satie (1866–1925) and Louis Benedictus were also performed.^[31] The program attached to the salon catalogue (fig. 5) also mentions “Parties de piano” (Piano pieces) by Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840–1910) during the Beethoven evening, in addition to a praise to Beethoven. Bourgault-Ducoudray was a professor of the history of music at the Paris Conservatory. A conductor and a composer, he was also known for gaining recognition for traditional and folkloric European music among the French public.

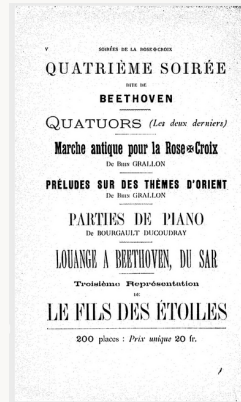


Fig. 5, Program of the musical evenings of the Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1892. Published in *Geste esthétique: Catalogue du Salon de la Rose+Croix*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie Durand-Ruel, 1892), v. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

This program also featured two works by Bihn Grallon, the name of a fictional character from Péladan's novels, whom some musicologists considered a pseudonym for Satie. However, it was certainly Louis Benedictus who performed. Indeed, a program published later (figs. 6, 7) indicates that Grallon conducted the *Pope Marcellus Mass* (1562; fig. 8) by Palestrina, which Péladan had previously announced would be conducted by Benedictus.^[32] In a review of the concert in *L'Écho de Paris* (The echo of Paris), Henry Gauthier-Villars writes of a “conductor whose reputation is second to none,” a description incompatible with Satie.^[33] In 1892, the latter was twenty-five years old and, after he had been expelled from the Paris Conservatory, was working as a pianist at the cabaret Le Chat Noir (The Black Cat) and composing almost exclusively for the piano. It seems highly unlikely that Satie would have conducted forty singers in a Renaissance music program at this point in his career.



Fig. 6, Program of the musical evenings of the Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1892. Fonds Péladan, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

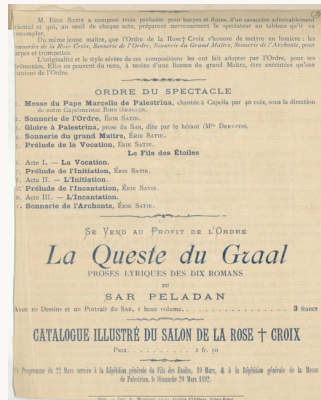


Fig. 7, Program of the musical evenings of the Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1892. Fonds Péladan, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 8, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Pope Marcellus Mass*, Kyrie, 1562. Unknown performer, n.d.
Available from: <https://youtu.be/s8C04qmiUU>. [\[larger image\]](#)

Péladan met Satie not long before the salon, in 1890. The two men shared some common interests, which led Satie to agree to join the order as a composer. Although his collaboration with Péladan was short lived, many of Satie's early works were directly dependent on his involvement with the Rosicrucians. In 1891, he composed the *Première pensée Rose+Croix* (First Rose+Croix thought), a prototype of the *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* that were played on the occasion of the first salon. He also composed stage music for Péladan's play, *Le Fils des étoiles* (The son of the stars; fig. 9), which the author described as "Wagnérie en trois actes" (Wagneria in three acts). However, it is surprising that the official composer of the order was not more Wagnerian. Regarding Wagner's influence on the Western musical world, Satie still argued for the development of a French music "without sauerkraut, if possible."^[34] Jean Cocteau later shared an anecdote that illustrates the relationship between the two men: when Péladan asked, concerning the *Sonneries*, if Wagner would have "written this chord," Satie answered, "yes yes, knowing perfectly that he wouldn't have."^[35]



Fig. 9, Erik Satie, *Le Fils des étoiles*, Prelude to Act I: “La Vocation,” 1892. Performed by Alessandro Simonetto, Vicenza, 2016. Available from: <https://youtu.be/NblBwbJJzk0>. [larger image]

Originally written for harp and trumpets, the *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* (fig. 10) are known only by the version for piano also written by Satie in 1892. The frontispiece of the score is based on a motif from Puvis de Chavannes’s *La Guerre* (The war; fig. 11). The composition is divided into three parts: the Air of the Order, the Air of the Grand Master (dedicated to “Sâr Péladan”), and the Air of the Grand Prior (dedicated to Antoine de La Rochefoucauld). The context of the composition cannot be precisely determined. Was this a commission from Péladan specifically for the first salon? If so, what were the specifications? From a musical perspective, the three airs are similar and typical of Satie’s R+C period.[36] They consist first in the presentation of a melody, followed by a static progression of unusual chords, or vice versa. Once the melody and the chords have been presented, they then come together, giving more sonic power while keeping solemnity by avoiding any climactic moment. It is clear that Satie wanted to give an antique character to his compositions, using a modal melodic element with a simple and floating rhythm, evoking the medieval plainchant.[37]

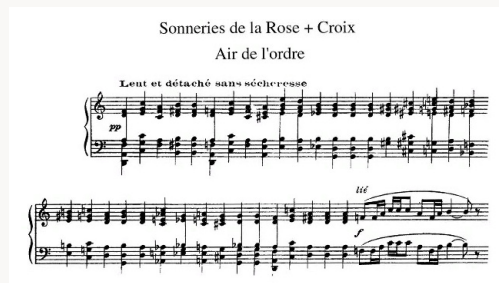


Fig. 10, Erik Satie, *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix*, “Air de l’Ordre,” 1892. Performed by Jean-Yves Thibaudet, London, 2003. Available from: <https://youtu.be/1vkKvFFEe2Q>. [larger image]

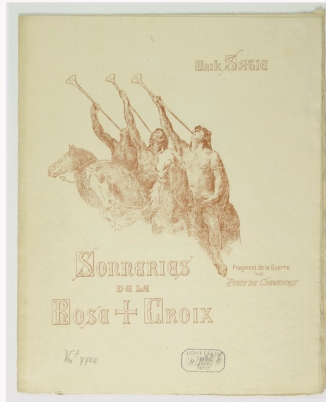


Fig. 11, Frontispiece for the score of the *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* by Erik Satie, 1892. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

The first Salon de la R+C also involved d'Indy, whom Péladan met in 1885 while attending Wagnerian events. In the first version of the concert program, the composer was to conduct the evening devoted to Franck, scheduled for March 24, 1892. However, d'Indy's involvement in the R+C was far from innocuous, as it gave credit to the salon. Péladan was taking advantage of the contribution of d'Indy, an influential Wagnerian, a widely respected musician, and a former student of Franck. Furthermore, the French composer had been a key character in setting up the musical performances at the Salon des XX in Brussels since 1887. On the other hand, the participation of d'Indy and the Franckist school in the R+C immediately gave rise to fierce criticism.^[38] Péladan's extravagance and uncompromising opinions annoyed many artists, and several stayed away from his salon. In his diary, composer Ernest Chausson wrote about this tense situation:

[Camille] Benoit [French composer and musicologist] bitterly blames me for letting Franck's works play at the Rose+Croix. But I have nothing to do with it! . . . [Alfred] Ernst [French musical critic], it seems, said that he would have nothing more than admiration for d'Indy (!), that his esteem had evaporated since he had agreed to participate in La Rochefoucauld's Salon.^[39]

On March 22, 1892, the Durand-Ruel Gallery was transformed into a 300-seat concert hall for the first evening, devoted to Palestrina.^[40] The excitement caused by the rediscovery of the work of the Italian composer in the nineteenth century established him as the main figure of Renaissance music. The evening began with the recitation of a praise to Palestrina written by Péladan and delivered by an actress in costume, which was interspersed with three *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix*. Next, Péladan's play, *Le Fils des étoiles*, was presented, set to the music of Satie and with stage decoration by Alexandre Séon. The *Pope Marcellus Mass*, conducted by Benedictus, was performed by forty singers, including the castrato Domenico Mustafà, for whom Péladan had great admiration.^[41] The writer had retrograde tastes, such as for baroque and Renaissance music, which were incorporated into his works. He also maintained an interest in the tradition of castrati—male singers who were castrated before puberty in order to retain their high-pitched voice—which was considered outdated by the end of the nineteenth century. Later, Péladan reported that the *Pope Marcellus Mass* “was

executed *a capella* and behind a curtain so that the vulgarity of the Parisian chorister did not distract the eyes from the majesty that prevailed in the ears.”[42]

The model for these ritualized evenings is clear: the salon was an attempt to mimic a Catholic mass. It alternated praise and sacred music, and included hidden performers, all in a room infused with incense. It would therefore not be hard to imagine the paintings as a substitute for stained glass windows. Hiding the choir further deified the music. It is worth noting that in his Bayreuth theater, Wagner had lowered the orchestra pit so that the musicians could not be seen by the public, who instead were to focus only on the drama that unfolded before their eyes. The salon therefore functioned as the site of aesthetic preaching, with the core message that art alone could offer redemption to humanity. In this aesthetic-liturgical project, the multidisciplinary nature of the Salons de la R†C makes perfect sense. In an interview given to *L'Écho de Paris*, Péladan explained:

Our goal would be to merge aesthetics with mysticism, so that art was pious and piety was artistic. . . . And when I say “art,” I’m not talking only about painting or sculpture that today attract the crowd at Durand-Ruel, but also about literature and music. . . . Music especially, this Christian art among all others, that unfortunately the clergy does not understand, because they ignore it.[43]

By fusing aesthetics with mysticism, Péladan was responding to the desacralization experienced in France during the Third Republic. Péladan was opposed to the Ralliement ordained by Pope Leo XIII, which he saw as the submission of the Catholic Church to the state. Henceforth, for him, the only possible religion was art. He confirmed this thought in the catalogue of the salon: “You can someday close the church, but the museum? The Louvre will officiate if Notre-Dame is profaned. . . . Humanity will always go to mass when the priest is Bach, Beethoven, Palestrina; one cannot atheize the sublime organ.”[44] For Péladan, art was indeed a religious event: his salon was a temple in which artists were the priests. This is what writer Jean Lorrain remarked in his description of the fourth salon, in 1895:

As soon as I enter I see that I am in a temple: chiaroscuro and vapors of incense, whispers of worshipers revering in the corners, and the four walls of the room—I was going to write chapel—glittering stained glass windows, which are paintings by Duthoit, Chabas, Maurin, and Armand Point.[45]

Among the many articles written by Péladan, a critique published in 1889 in *La Grande revue* (The grand review) describes some of his synesthetic thoughts, three years before the first Salon de la R†C. He writes:

Mr. Paravey [director of the Opéra-Comique from 1888 to 1890] should put some incense in the accessories. The action of perfumes would collaborate powerfully with that of harmony. At Bayreuth, I advised that one should try odorous sprays during the act of the flower women: for the aromatic action acts similarly to the sound wave.[46]

Péladan adhered entirely to vibration theories and this influenced his theoretical work as much as his salon. In this excerpt he refers to the hypothetical proximity of the phenomena of hearing and smell, to which he attached great importance, along with the symbolism of smells.[47] A year before the founding of the Théâtre d’Art, Péladan already put forward the

scientific basis for the confusion of sensory perceptions, and thus for the union—Wagnerian in this case—of the arts, by advocating the use of smells in the theater. This shows that the diffusion of incense was not only intended to give the Durand-Ruel Gallery a church-like atmosphere, but also that odorous emanations were a part of the multiplicity of perceptions he wanted to offer to the public.

The exhibition was a huge success. It aroused curiosity and stood out as one of *the* events of the year in Paris, even though some members of the press and intellectuals were more reserved with their reviews, often saying more about Péladan than the exhibition itself.^[48] However, the first musical evening ended in disaster. The public and the press were, for the most part, hostile. Painter Théo van Rysselberghe gave a telling commentary:

Yesterday I attended the execution of Palestrina's mass, for which the Sârlatan [*sic*] had the nerve to have some snotty kids sing; it was really pathetic—And it is sad to see worthy people believing in the sincerity and honesty of the intentions of this villainous person. I could not talk longer without getting mad. And to invoke Wagner, Delacroix, Beethoven—(all occults!) to make the good souls swallow [his salon] better!—No; my good friend, it's sickening and sadder than I thought.^[49]

Despite the bad reviews, Péladan planned to remount *Le Fils des étoiles* and continue with the evenings devoted to Beethoven, César Franck, Franck's students, and Wagner. In the end, La Rochefoucauld decided to cancel all except for the evening devoted to Wagner, which was delayed. La Rochefoucauld did not like Benedictus and preferred that Charles Lamoureux conduct the Wagner evening. Péladan first succeeded in keeping Benedictus, but the terrible reviews of the first evening prompted La Rochefoucauld to change the musical plans of the salon.^[50] The Wagner evening finally took place on April 5, 1892, under the direction of Lamoureux and without Péladan. The audience heard—in their reduction for two pianos by composer Camille Chevillard—several extracts of *Das Rheingold* (The Rhinegold; 1854), played by Xavier Leroux, Fortunato Luzzatto, and Chevillard himself; the “Spinning Chorus” from *Der fliegende Holländer* (The Flying Dutchman; 1843; fig. 12); and the “Venusberg Music” from *Tannhäuser* (1845). Pierre-Émile Engel also sang extracts of the finale of *Parsifal* and two non-scenic works: the second *lied* from the *Wesendonck Lieder* (1858) and the *Siegfried Idyll* (1870).^[51] Sadly, there is little information about this concert. Most press reviews focus on an incident that occurred during the concert when a violent pro-Péladan man entered the gallery and assaulted La Rochefoucauld before being thrown out.^[52]

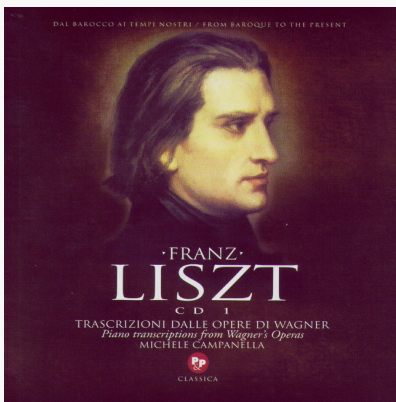


Fig. 12, Richard Wagner, *Der fliegende Holländer* (The Flying Dutchman), “Spinning Chorus,” piano transcription by Franz Liszt, 1860. Performed by Michele Campanella, Rome, 2006. Available from: https://youtu.be/R-Q9N_RXxgI. [larger image]

Péladan had uncompromising aesthetic principles and little interest in music theory. It is certain that he admired Wagner more as a playwright than a composer. Regarding music, he was mostly concerned with the creative process and the psychological effects of listening.[53] His book *Théâtre complet de Wagner* (Wagner’s complete plays; 1894) is primarily a critical scene-by-scene description of the operas, which often passes over the musical aspects. When it came to deeper musical theory, Péladan quoted musicians or theoreticians, notably Maurice Kufferath and the *Revue wagnérienne*. [54] Péladan, like many of his contemporaries, saw program music as superior to “pure music.” For him, dramatic music “in which the composer has constrained himself to submit his art to the expressive conditions of a poem” unseated all others. [55] According to this aesthetic, music reveals all its expressive capacity by subordinating itself to literature.

Wagner’s influence on Péladan is visible as much in his salons as in his literary work, in which he used musical vocabulary abundantly: the chapters are named “preludes” and “nocturnes.” The writer also used a literary process comparable to a Wagnerian leitmotif. [56] Furthermore, he demonstrated a commitment to the theory of the correspondence of the arts. For Péladan, if the use of a leitmotif was a valid artistic process, then it must be applicable to all arts. He believed that “an aesthetic theory is valid only if its abstract rules apply to all the arts, [and] because beauty is the absolute law of all the modes that realize it, it is necessary that its definition and its categories are found exactly parallel to all the arts.” [57]

In his novels, Péladan notes the effect of listening to music on his characters. *La Victoire du mari* (The victory of the husband; 1889) tells of the honeymoon in Bayreuth of a young couple, whose purity might be compromised by listening to Wagner. For Péladan, music was a nervous art that exerted a heavy influence on the human mind:

As music produces nervous states analogous to passionate phenomena, it is the vivacity of sensation that determines the general formula. For the metaphysician, this intensity shows that the art of sound, attacking the peripheral faculty and producing

in the listener diathesis of moral pathology, reveals itself as substantial art not only in its means, but in its action.[58]

And further,

One does not notice in music the same lack of passionate expression that I noted for the arts of drawing. One would search in vain for a group in the whole art which virtually illustrated the second act of *Tristan and Iseult*, the awakening of Brunhild, the hymn to Venus of *Tannhäuser*. [59]

Péladan's use of medical terminology (e.g., diathesis of moral pathology) is indicative of the ambiguity of his assessment. Because music is the most powerful and the most expressive of all the arts, it affects the nervous system and can be harmful if too intense. This observation also appears to be Péladan's attempt to provide a scientific basis for Catholics' mistrust of music. Indeed, the power of music has been a much-discussed issue for Christian denominations since the Reformation during the sixteenth century. This debate has echoed throughout the history of sacred music, which was sometimes perceived as a frivolous activity that distracted from worship and other times as a vehicle of faith.[60]

The Salons d'Art Idéaliste (1896–98)

In 1896, Jean Delville (1867–1953) was a well-known painter in the Belgian art scene who had made a strong impression in Paris at the salons of Sâr Péladan, his close friend. Although Delville's work was not unanimously appreciated, it was legitimized by the Belgian Prix de Rome (Rome Prize) in painting, which was awarded to him in 1895. At this point, the painter was somewhat isolated from the avant-garde circles of Brussels and had begun to work on a project that he had been considering for some time: an exhibition reserved for idealists. He claimed to be a faithful disciple of the Sâr and presented his salons as a continuation of the Salons de la R†C.[61] He began to look for potential artists to show, but the task was difficult. Since 1895, more and more artists had turned away from Péladan and his close entourage. Delville therefore faced refusal from the main figures of symbolism on both Belgian and French sides. He also encountered another problem when Péladan himself rejected the initiative, fearing that too much Belgian autonomy would overshadow his own salon, which had already been deserted by many artists.[62]

The first Salon d'Art Idéaliste (Salon of idealist art) opened on January 11, 1896, at the Salle Saint-Luc, in the center of Brussels. The catalogue cover features a quote from Wagner and another from Péladan (fig. 13). Whereas the poster of the exhibition (fig. 14), made by Delville, announced the inclusion of thirty-eight artists, in actuality only a few were shown. In addition to Delville, there were works by Henriette Calais, Maurice Chabas, Albert Ciamberlani, Rogelio de Egusquiza, Edgard Maxence, Joseph Middeleer, as well as Isidore and Hélène De Rudder, among others. To flesh out his exhibition, Delville added several reproductions of Pre-Raphaelite works by Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and George Frederic Watts.

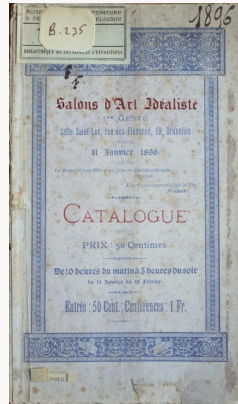


Fig. 13, Cover of the catalogue of the Salons d'Art Idéaliste, 1896. Library of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels. Photo: Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 14, Jean Delville, Poster for the Salon d'Art Idéaliste, 1896. Lithograph. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Photo: Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. [\[larger image\]](#)

This first salon included several conferences, and the musical performances were limited to only one afternoon. The salon catalogue announced a session of sacred music conducted by Johan Herbert Schaecken on February 20, 1896. Schaecken was a Dutch musician and a former student of the Brussels Conservatory, where he had won a first prize for composition. He was the director of the choir section of the Catholic Circle of Brussels for some time before taking the position of choirmaster at the Église des Carmes (Carmelite Church) in Brussels. [63] The musical program of that afternoon included mainly vocal and organ music from the Renaissance. Works performed comprised a Sanctus by Orlande de Lassus, a Canticle by Claude Goudimel, *Vexilla* by Philippe Basiron, *O Sacrum* by Giacomo Carissimi, *Adoramus Te* by Palestrina (fig. 15), *Sœur Monique* by François Couperin, as well as works by Bach and Handel. In addition to the choir, one could hear Jeanne Kufferath on the harp, [64] and, on the organ, Clémentine Mailly, wife of Alphonse Mailly, professor at the Brussels Conservatory and organist of the Église des Carmes. [65] The careers of these two women are still known today, as is regrettably often the case with nineteenth-century female musicians.

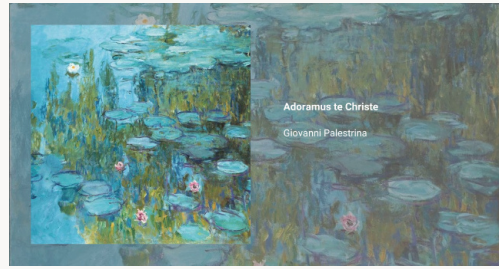


Fig. 15, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Adoramus Te*, 1584. Performed by Słowiki Choir, n.d. Available from: <https://youtu.be/HJAYyBdmm90>. [larger image]

Le Guide musical describes the concert as a “framework of special gray tone and veiled, purely intellectual, with a little deliberate discretion and a mysticism close to fanaticism.”[66] Like Péladan’s evenings, the concert was accompanied by staging that imitated the Christian liturgy. In a room infused with incense, the singers stood behind veils, as they had for the Palestrina’s *Mass* at the R†C. Delville went a step further by playing almost exclusively sacred music and, most importantly, by calling on a chapel master to conduct the evening. However, it should be noted that Delville wasn’t a faithful Catholic like Péladan. In his case, these liturgical elements were used for a wider spiritual aspect, mystical or metaphysical, rather than ideological. The choice to conceal the singers also shows his desire to not distract the audience from the canvases, which were visible during the performance. The effect seems to have worked, since the review in *La Libre critique* (The free critique) highlights that “the works of art were dissipated, exhaling themselves the religious musical sensuousness.”[67] Comments from the visitors were reminiscent of those made regarding the R†C. For instance, critic Max Sulzberger wrote:

As soon as one crosses the threshold of this exhibition, one feels enveloped in an atmosphere of mysticism. The organ being played as I entered, shortly before the official opening, completes the impression: one believes oneself to be in a church.[68]

As noted above, the taste for Renaissance and baroque music was typical of the idealist movement. Since it belonged to an ancient and idealized time, early music was central for these artists. Questioning the choice to offer this type of music, Auguste Joly of *La Libre critique* wrote: “We know the old Parisian joke: since we had forgotten church singing, Wagner has triumphed by re-serving it to us.”[69] Indeed, there are many aspects of Wagner’s work that evoke Christian music. The character of worship imbued in Wagner’s performances has already been highlighted in previous studies: from the “pilgrimage” of Wagnerians to Bayreuth,[70] to the church silence imposed by Wagner in his theater.[71] Wagner’s success and the new enthusiasm for Renaissance sacred music occurred together for a specific reason: both were responses to the desire for the sacred. This was particularly visible at the R†C, where the two musical evenings that took place were devoted to Palestrina and Wagner, respectively.

The second Salon d’Art Idéaliste benefitted from a more favorable foundation than its predecessor. From this point forward, Delville conceived of his salon as a Belgian initiative, although he never denied his admiration for Péladan and his attachment to the R†C. This

time, Delville obtained works by artists such as Puvis de Chavannes, Séon, and Burne-Jones, who had previously declined his invitation.[72] Furthermore, this second act received the support of the lawyer and art patron Edmond Picard. This meant that the salon would take place in the Maison d'Art, Picard's private residence, which had been renovated to host exhibitions, concerts, and plays.[73]

The musical events were more important than the previous year, but they were also much closer to the usual concert programs of the Brussels art scene. On March 6, 1897, pianist Georges de Golesco gave a recital of works by Frédéric Chopin, accompanied by a conference dedicated to the composer given by Maurice Kufferath.[74] On March 24, an important musical morning was planned, directed by violinist Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931). The program was diverse: one of Schumann's sonatas for violin and piano; Bach's *Partita No. 2 in D Minor for Solo Violin*; Brahms's *Vergebliches Ständchen* (Futile Serenade; 1881–82); "Träume" (Dreams), taken from the *Wesendonck Lieder* by Wagner; and a song by Beethoven. Ysaÿe also played Franck's *Violin and Piano Sonata in A Major* (fig. 16), which the composer had dedicated to him, with Émile Bosquet on piano.[75] The journal *L'Art moderne* (Modern art) published a long article on the salon, delivering a relevant analysis:



Fig. 16, César Franck, *Violin and Piano Sonata in A Major*, FWV 8, 1886. Performed by Sarah Cross (violin) and Stefano Ligoratti (piano), n.d. Available from: <https://youtu.be/2I1jvOxghME>.

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Go, with these brief notions, and visit the salon currently open at the Maison d'Art. Attend, in this mind, the concerts and conferences by which one tries to intensify and complete the effect of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and you will better understand what lyricism is in these efforts and their true meaning, not devoid of greatness and faith.[76]

Several of Delville's writings reveal the theory and the means used to allow concerts to intensify or complement the effect of the visual arts. Delville's conception of music was—like the entirety of his work—resolutely esoteric. Some artworks fully illustrate the close link between music and occultism in the mind of a painter who was alternately Martinist, Rosicrucian, theosophist, and Freemason. This is the case of the frontispiece for the score of Alexander Scriabin's *Prometheus* (1910; fig. 17) and, later, the canvas *Le Dieu de la musique* (The god of music; figs. 18, 19).[77] The result of esoteric research, these works make extensive use of symbols that are sometimes difficult to read. Nevertheless, these works include rounded and translucent shapes, resembling airstreams, that likely represent sonic waves, and several celestial elements that might refer to the Harmony of the Spheres.[78] The correspondence between the arts is present here in their esoteric dimension: the world is made of analogies

and correspondences, but these are hidden and accessible only through insider's knowledge—in which Delville was fully immersed.[79]



Fig. 17, Jean Delville, Frontispiece for the score of *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* by Alexander Scriabin, 1910. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

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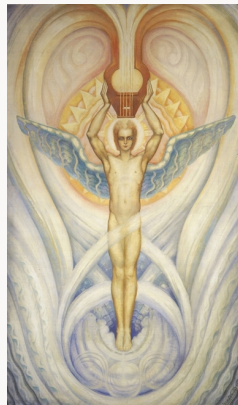


Fig. 18, Jean Delville, *Le Dieu de la musique* (The god of music), 1937. Oil on canvas. Royal Conservatory of Brussels, Brussels. Photo: Royal Conservatory of Brussels. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 19, Jean Delville, *Le Dieu de la musique* (The god of music), 1937. Colored pencil on paper. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Photo: Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. [\[larger image\]](#)

In his book *La Mission de l'art* (The New Mission of Art; 1900), Delville formulated a question that would be the subject of sustained research: “Do we know, indeed, whether the Harmony of Form does not correspond to, or *is* not actually, musical vibrations rendered objective?” [\[80\]](#) This book also expands vibration theories, adopting a theosophist point of view: vibrations are no longer only sounds or colors; they are generated by the thoughts or ideas themselves. Thus, the formal representation of an idea—a painting, for instance—has the power to transmit mental or spiritual vibrations to the spectator.[\[81\]](#)

At the end of his life, in 1952, Delville published an informative article that sums up how occultism perceived the relationship between sounds, shapes, and colors.[\[82\]](#) He refers to two sources: Ernst Chladni’s acoustic figures and *Thought-Forms* (1905), a major book in theosophist literature written by Charles W. Leadbeater and activist Annie Besant. This publication is devoted to the study of colored forms supposedly produced by the vibrations of thoughts. The book presents fifty-eight figures of increasing complexity that correspond with feelings or emotional states and ends with forms generated by the music of Gounod, Felix Mendelssohn, and Wagner. Following this train of thought, and based on the richness of the forms produced, the authors deduce the superiority of Wagner’s music (fig. 20). They conclude that “no other composer has yet built sound edifices with such power and decision.” [\[83\]](#) This mindset goes beyond theories on the mere proximity of different vibratory phenomena: it supports that each vibration—of which we perceive only a tiny part—produces sound, color, and form, as well as emotion. However, a complete perception of sound, color, form, and emotion is only possible for clairvoyant individuals, that is to say synesthetes.[\[84\]](#)



Fig. 20, “Plate W. Music of Wagner,” 1905. Published in Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater, *Thought-Forms* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1901), 82. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.
Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

In addition, Delville nuanced the idea that in the symbolist hierarchy of the arts, music sat at the peak. He joined Péladan in the potentially harmful effects of listening to music:

It may be said that if music, considered as social magnetism, helps towards solidarity of life in rising civilisations, as well as in their intellectual refinement, it is still nothing more than a marvelous means of preparing the race, the people, for an aesthetic comprehension of Form. Music is the method of expression which best corresponds to the unconscious sensibility of the crowd, but Form, less vague and further separated from the inferior condition where the impression is received through the nerves, will ever remain in a select sphere corresponding best with the clear perceptions of the few.[85]

The “nervous” properties of music—which according to Péladan even have a sexual character—are incompatible with the chaste lucidity encouraged by the idealists.[86] According to Delville, music is more easily understood because it speaks to “unconscious sensibility,” that is to say to a non-intellectual perception. The visual arts are found at a safer distance, corresponding to the time required for the processing and understanding of visual perception. Delville seems to have been heavily influenced by the Kantian hierarchy of the arts. In his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant establishes two hierarchies: one according to pleasure criteria, and the other according to cultural criteria. From a pleasure point of view, music occupies second place, after poetry; Kant admits its charm and ability to move the soul. However, from a cultural point of view, music finds itself last, dominated by visual arts. Considered in this way, visual arts link a concept with the senses through form and therefore can only be perceived by the spectator with the help of the intellect. Music, on the other hand, imposes itself without any need for reflection and, thus, causes no thought.[87]

It is now easier to understand the intentions behind Delville’s incorporation of music in his salons: although listening to music may refine the perception of a painting, the music itself remains secondary. Since the visual aspect takes precedence over music, the synthesis of the

arts is only possible via tangible form. This is what the artist had already suspected in 1897: “according to my feeling, there should be only one art: plastic art, the art of pure form.”[88]

Conclusion: The Creation of a Sacred Environment

The study of these fin-de-siècle Parisian and Belgian concerts encourages a reconsideration of symbolist salons as places that delivered more than simple exhibitions of visual art. With the addition of music as a mode of artistic representation, the idealists created a richer context that was more than merely visual. The musical performances were well-organized and processed events, which entailed more than just playing music in exhibition rooms. The contact between music and visual works was willingly determined by many elements: the choice of the musical repertoires as well as instruments; the alternation between music, oration, and theater; the scenography of the concerts; and even the choice of the odors diffused.

These events were so carefully considered precisely because they had one primary and superior goal in the eyes of Péladan and Delville: the union of art and spirituality, be it Catholic or esoteric. These were therefore both aesthetic and liturgical events, designed to awaken religiousness. In idealist salons, the preeminent role of music was one of worship as a substitute for the Catholic liturgy. The salon was a temple in which artists were priests, as Péladan had wanted, and it was primarily via these musical and theatrical evenings that they proposed that art could succeed religion. Everything was ceremoniously built to allow worshipping: sacred music, praises, the diffusion of incense, and paintings in the place of stained glass. Music was thus one element among others in the creation of a sacred space.

However, the study of these salons also sheds light on the way music was considered within the symbolist movement. For the idealists, it appears to sometimes have taken a secondary place to the visual arts, and to be the subject of an ambiguous relationship more than of an unconditional admiration. Because the idealists gave such enormous power to art, music prompted them to question the necessity of preventing its harmful effect on the audience. If the non-formal existence of musical art fascinated some artists, others, like Delville, remained reluctant to conceive of a real work of art without form. According to such principles, although music is secondary to visual art, it also has another function: to aid the audience in appreciating drawing or painting. Hence, there was an ambivalence about music among the symbolists: it was at once omnipresent and essential, but only truly ideal in a limited role.

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Notes

All translations by the author unless otherwise indicated.

- [1] Art historian Jean-Paul Bouillon describes two distinct groups of painters during the symbolist period: the “picturists” (*imagiers*), adepts of what was usually called “idealism,” and the “formalists” (*formalistes*), painters influenced by Paul Gauguin, most of whom were members of the Nabis. Jean-Paul Bouillon, “Le Moment symboliste,” *Revue de l’Art* 96 (1992): 5–11, [doi:10.3406/rvart.1992.347979](https://doi.org/10.3406/rvart.1992.347979).
- [2] Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) first mentioned the possibility that sensory perceptions could merge in the poem “Correspondances” (Correspondences) from *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857). He later specified this idea in his book about Wagner in Paris: “Ce qui serait vraiment surprenant, c’est que le son *ne pût pas* suggérer la couleur, que les couleurs ne pussent pas donner l’idée d’une mélodie, et que le son et la couleur fussent impropres à traduire des idées” (What would really be surprising is that sound *could not* suggest color, that colors could not give the idea of a melody, and that sound and color were incapable of translating ideas). Charles Baudelaire, *Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1861), 215.
- [3] Sébastien Clerbois, *L’Ésotérisme et le symbolisme belge* (Wijnegem, Belgium: Pandora, 2012), 13–17.
- [4] Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Harmonie en bleu et or: Debussy, la musique et les arts* (Paris: Fayard, 2012), 22.
- [5] “Le symbolisme se résume très simplement dans l’intention commune à plusieurs familles de poètes . . . de ‘reprendre à la musique leur bien.’” Paul Valéry, preface to Lucien Fabre, *Connaissance de la déesse* (Paris: Société littéraire de France, 1920), 12–13.
- [6] Laurinda S. Dixon, “Art and Music at the Salons de la Rose+Croix, 1892–1897,” *The Documented Image: Visions in Art History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 165–86.
- [7] Armel Mazon, “Musique et esthétique du temps selon Kant et Bergson,” *Phantasia* 3 (2016), <https://popups.uliege.be:443/0774-136/index.php?id=467>.
- [8] Ernst F. F. Chladni, *Entdeckungen über die Theorie des Klanges* (Leipzig, Germany: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1787).
- [9] Georges Roque, “Ce grand monde des vibrations qui est à la base de l’univers,” in *Aux origines de l’abstraction (1800–1914)*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2003), 51–67.
- [10] Pascal Rousseau, “Le Spectacle des sens: La Synesthésie sur la scène symboliste du Théâtre d’Art,” in *Le Spectaculaire dans les arts de la scène: Du romantisme à la belle-époque* (Paris: CNRS, 2006), 157–65.
- [11] Didier Van Geit, “La Musique dans les ateliers d’artistes,” in *Bruxelles, convergence des arts 1880–1914* (Brussels: Vrin, 2013), 339–44.
- [12] Myriam Chimènes, *Mécènes et musiciens: Du salon au concert à Paris sous la IIIe République* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 289–94. For Berthe de Rayssac’s salon, see Sarah Hassid, *Héros, errants d’une histoire à contretemps: Le Salon littéraire, artistique et musical de Madame de Rayssac* (Paris: École du Louvre, 2015).
- [13] “Les arts sont sœurs . . . les sens s’affinent mutuellement, les perceptions deviennent plus immédiates.” M. Th., “Belgique-Bruxelles,” *Le Guide musical*, March 25, 1880, 3.
- [14] Van Geit, “La Musique dans les ateliers d’artistes,” 340–42.
- [15] “. . . les instruments sortaient des boîtes déposées sur le côté de l’estrade au pied des toiles luministes, et le concert commençait. Dans l’odeur de la peinture fraîche se déroulaient les contours mélodiques et les harmonies dont la nouveauté, loin de dérouter l’âme, faisait fleurir en elle des effusions qui n’avaient attendu que cette printanière ondée.” Madeleine Maus, *Trente années de lutte pour l’art, 1884–1914* (1926; repr. Brussels: Lebeer Hossmann, 1980), 93.
- [16] Gerald B. Turbow, “Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France,” in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, ed. David C. Large and William Weber (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 134–66.
- [17] Cécile Leblanc, *Wagnérisme et création en France, 1883–1889* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005), 9–18.
- [18] Danièle Pistone, “Le Symbolisme et la musique française à la fin du XIXe siècle,” in *Symbolisme et musique en France: 1870–1914* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1995), 9–29.

- [19] For Wagner in Brussels, see Manuel Couvreur, ed., *La Monnaie wagnérienne* (Brussels: Cahiers du Gram, 1998).
- [20] Timothée Picard, *L'Art total: Grandeur et misère d'une utopie (autour de Wagner)* (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 110–11.
- [21] “le divorce déplorable survenu entre l’art et la foi.” Joséphin Péladan, *Les Héroïnes de Wagner*, autographed manuscript, n.d., ms. 13205, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.
- [22] Roland van der Hoeven, “De la musique des sphères aux coulisses de l’opéra,” in *Splendeurs de l’idéal: Rops, Khnopff, Delville et leur temps* (Brussels: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon/Pandora/ULB, 1996), 239–69.
- [23] Philippe Junod, “Du wagnérisme au musicalisme,” in *Richard Wagner, visions d’artistes: D’Auguste Renoir à Anselm Kiefer*, exh. cat. (Geneva: Somogy, 2005), 78.
- [24] Clerbois, *L’Ésotérisme et le symbolisme belge*, 25–27.
- [25] “une manifestation de l’art contre les arts, de l’idéal contre le laid, du rêve contre le réel, du passé contre le présent infâme, de la tradition contre la blague.” Joséphin Péladan, “Le Salon de la Rose+Croix,” *Le Figaro*, September 2, 1891, 1.
- [26] “Memento,” *La Jeune Belgique* 10, no. 9 (September 1891): 354–55.
- [27] Léonce de Larmandie, *L’Entracte idéal: Histoire de la Rose+Croix* (Paris: Bibliothèque Chacornac, 1903), 25.
- [28] Christophe Beaufls, *Joséphin Péladan, 1858–1918: Essai sur une maladie du lyrisme* (Grenoble, France: Jérôme Millon, 1993), 226.
- [29] “Au jour le jour: Chez le sâr Péladan,” *Le Temps*, March 9, 1892, 2.
- [30] “À César Franck, au plus grand maître de la musique française depuis Berlioz. Au génie catholique et pur, mort sans gloire après une vie aussi auguste que son œuvre. J’élève cette stèle à un génie et à la honte de Rome, de Paris et de la République unis en une même haine de l’art idéaliste.” Joséphin Péladan, *L’Androgyne* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1891), 13.
- [31] Louis Benedictus has sometimes been mistaken for his relative, chemist and composer Édouard Benedictus (1878–1930). It was Louis who took part in the Salons de la R+Ç, as Édouard was thirteen years old at the time of the first salon.
- [32] “Au jour le jour: Chez le sâr Péladan,” 2.
- [33] “chef d’orchestre dont la réputation n’est plus à faire.” Henry Gauthier-Villars [L’Ouvreuse du Cirque d’été], “Lettre de l’ouvreuse,” *L’Écho de Paris*, March 24, 1892, 3.
- [34] Erik Satie, *Écrits*, ed. Ornella Volta (Paris: Champ Libre, 1977), 69. It is interesting to note that Satie explained in this very text that he pleaded in favor of French music with Debussy at the time he was composing music for Péladan’s *Le Fils des étoiles*.
- [35] “Écrit cet accord . . . oui oui, sachant bien que non.” Jean Cocteau quoted in Beaufls, *Joséphin Péladan, 1858–1918*, 225.
- [36] For Satie’s *Sonneries* and R+Ç music in general, see Patrick Gowers, “Satie’s Rose-Croix Music (1891–1895),” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 92 (1965): 1–25; Grace Wai Kwan Gates, “Satie’s Rose-Croix Piano Works,” in *Erik Satie: Music, Art, and Literature* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 49–66.
- [37] Musicologist Alan Gillmor cites the use of the golden ratio in these compositions. See Alan M. Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), 86–89. This was later discussed in Courtney S. Adams, “Erik Satie and Golden Section Analysis,” *Music & Letters* 77, no. 2 (1996): 242–52, [doi:10.1093/ml/77.2.242](https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/77.2.242).
- [38] Roland van der Hoeven, “Vincent d’Indy, agitateur musical bruxellois,” in *Bruxelles, convergence des arts 1880–1914* (Brussels: Vrin, 2013), 186–88.
- [39] “Benoit me reproche aigrement de laisser jouer des œuvres de Franck à la Rose+Croix. Mais je n’y suis pour rien, sapristi. . . Ernst, paraît-il, a déclaré qu’il n’aurait plus pour d’Indy que de l’admiration (!), que son estime s’était évaporée depuis qu’il avait consenti à coopérer au Salon de La Rochefoucauld.” Ernest Chausson, *Écrits inédits*, ed. Jean Gallois (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 1999), 298–99.
- [40] The program attached to the salon catalogue indicates 200 seats. A concert program published later indicates 300 seats.
- [41] Beaufls, *Joséphin Péladan, 1858–1918*, 226–27.
- [42] “fut exécutée à capella et derrière un rideau afin que la vulgarité du choriste parisien ne dissuadât pas les yeux de la majesté qui s’imposait aux oreilles.” Joséphin Péladan, “Mustapha et l’art palestinien,” *Revue musicale S. I. M.* 10, no. 1 (1913): 20.

[43] “Notre but serait de fusionner l’esthétique avec la mysticité, de façon à ce que l’art fut pieux et que la piété fût artiste. . . . Et quand je vous dis l’art, je ne parle pas seulement de la peinture ou de la sculpture qui attirent aujourd’hui la foule chez Durand-Ruel, mais aussi de la littérature et de la musique. . . . La musique surtout, cet art chrétien entre tous et que malheureusement le clergé ne comprend pas, car il l’ignore.” Interview with Joséphin Péladan, *L’Écho de Paris*, March 12, 1892, 3.

[44] “Vous pourrez quelque jour fermer l’Église, mais le musée? Le Louvre officiera si Notre-Dame est profanée. . . . L’humanité ira toujours à la messe quand le prêtre sera Bach, Beethoven, Palestrina; on ne peut pas athéiser l’orgue sublime.” *Geste esthétique: Catalogue du Salon de la Rose+Croix*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie Durand-Ruel, 1892), 9–10.

[45] “À peine entré je vois que je suis dans un temple: clair-obscur et vapeurs d’encens, chuchotements de fidèles en adoration dans les coins, et aux quatre murs de la salle, j’allais écrire de la chapelle, des vitraux brazillants qui sont des peintures signées Duthoit, Chabas, Maurin et Armand Point.” Jean Lorrain, “Pall-mall semaine,” *L’Écho de Paris*, March 28, 1895, 2.

[46] “M. Paravey devrait mettre un peu d’encens dans les accessoires. L’action des parfums collaborerait puissamment avec celle de l’harmonie. À Bayreuth, j’ai conseillé qu’on essayât des pulvérisations odorantes à l’acte des femmes-fleurs: car l’action aromale agit similairement à l’onde sonore.” Joséphin Péladan, “Critique musicale,” *La Grande revue: Paris et Saint-Petersbourg*, May 25, 1889, 408–10.

[47] Michel de Lézinier, *Avec Huysmans: Promenades et souvenirs* (Paris: André Delpeuch, 1928), 172.

[48] Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond, “The Reception of the Rose+Croix: A Symptom of the Réaction Idéaliste,” in *Mystical Symbolism: The Salon de la Rose+Croix in Paris, 1892–1897*, ed. Vivien Greene, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2017), 36–45.

[49] “J’ai assisté hier à l’exécution de la messe de Palestrina, que le Sarlatan a eu le toupet de faire chanter par quelques gosses mal mouchés; c’était vraiment navrant—Et il est triste de voir des gens de valeur croire à la sincérité et à l’honnêteté des intentions de ce crapuleux personnage. Je ne pourrais plus longtemps en parler sans trop m’exciter. Et se réclamer de Wagner, de Delacroix, de Beethoven—(tous occultes!!) pour mieux faire gober par les bonnes âmes!—Non; mon bon ami, c’est écoeurant et plus triste que je ne le pensais.” Letter from Théo van Rysselberghe to Octave Maus, [March 1892], inv. 6292, Archives of Contemporary Art in Belgium, Brussels.

[50] Beaufils, *Joséphin Péladan, 1858–1918*, 228.

[51] Pierre-Émile Engel (1847–1927) was a French tenor. He was active in Paris and at La Monnaie, in Brussels, before being appointed professor at the Paris Conservatory.

[52] E. S. [Édouard Schuré?], “Concerts parisiens,” *L’Art moderne*, April 24, 1892, 134–35; Emile Berr, “Chez l’archonte,” *Figaro*, April 6, 1892, 2; and Jules Claretie [Perdican], “Les Théâtres,” *Le XIXe siècle*, April 7, 1892, 3.

[53] Leblanc, *Wagnérisme et création en France, 1883–1889*, 342.

[54] Maurice Kufferath (1852–1919) was a sharp critic of the Wagnerian performances at La Monnaie before he became the director of the theater in 1900. He was also director and then owner of *Le Guide musical*.

[55] “où le compositeur s’est astreint à soumettre son art aux conditions expressives d’un poème.” Joséphin Péladan, *L’Art idéaliste et mystique* (Paris: Chamuel, 1894), 154–55.

[56] Beaufils, *Joséphin Péladan, 1858–1918*, 157–58.

[57] “une théorie esthétique n’est valable que si ses règles abstraites s’appliquent à tous les arts, car la beauté étant la loi absolue de tous les modes qui la réalisent, il faut que sa définition et ses catégories se retrouvent exactement parallèles à tous les arts.” Péladan, *L’Art idéaliste et mystique*, 155–56.

[58] “Comme la musique produit des états nerveux analogues aux phénomènes passionnels, c’est la vivacité de la sensation qui a décidé la formule générale. Pour le métaphysicien, cette intensité montre que l’art des sons, attaquant la faculté périphérique et produisant chez l’auditeur des diathèses de pathologie morale, se révèle comme l’art substantiel non seulement en ses moyens, mais en son action.” Péladan, *L’Art idéaliste et mystique*, 154.

[59] “on n’observe pas dans la musique la même lacune d’expression passionnelle que j’ai relevée pour les arts du dessin. On chercherait vainement un groupe dans l’art entier qui illustrât virtuellement le second acte de Tristan et Yseult, le réveil de Brunehilde, l’hymne à Vénus de Tannhäuser.” Péladan, *L’Art idéaliste et mystique*, 249.

[60] See Philippe Vendrix, ed., *Music and the Renaissance. Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2011).

- [61] *Première geste: Catalogue du Salon d'Art Idéaliste*, exh. cat. (Brussels: Salle Saint-Luc, 1896). A copy of the catalogue is stored at the library of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels.
- [62] Clerbois, *L'Ésotérisme et le symbolisme belge*, 96–116.
- [63] “Chronique religieuse,” *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 18, 1880, 2.
- [64] Jeanne Kufferath is the cousin of Maurice Kufferath. She should not be mistaken for Jane Kufferath, violinist and daughter of Maurice.
- [65] Marriage certificate of Jean Alphonse Ernest Maily and Clémentine Sanderbergh-Matthiessen, April 27, 1886, Civil status / Marriage certificate, n° 93, National Archives of Belgium, Brussels.
- [66] “cadre si spécial de tonalité grise et voilée, purement intellectuel, d’une discrétion un peu voulue et d’un mysticisme qui touche au fanatisme.” “Chronique de la semaine: Bruxelles,” *Le Guide musical*, March 1, 1896, 173.
- [67] “les œuvres d’art s’étaient comme dissoutes, exhalant elles-mêmes, la religieuse volupté musicale.” Auguste Joly, “Concerts,” *La Libre critique*, February 23, 1896, 66.
- [68] “À peine a-t-on franchi le seuil de cette exposition, qu’on se sent comme enveloppé d’une atmosphère de mysticisme. L’orgue que l’on touchait, au moment où j’y entrais, peu de temps avant l’ouverture officielle, complète encore l’impression : on se croirait dans une église.” Max Sulzberger quoted in Jules Du Jardin, *L’Art flamand*, vol. 6 (Brussels: Arthur Boitte, 1900), 191.
- [69] “On sait la vieille plaisanterie trop parisienne: comme on avait oublié le chant d’église, Wagner a triomphé en nous le resservant.” Auguste Joly, “Concerts,” *La Libre critique*, February 23, 1896, 67.
- [70] Several French Wagnerians associated the journey to Bayreuth to attend the annual festival with a pilgrimage. Attending the festival in 1891, writer Romain Rolland wrote: “Oui vraiment, je suis en Terre Sainte; et c’est ce qu’il vous faut imaginer d’abord pour bien vous représenter Bayreuth. C’est un lieu de pèlerinage, un centre religieux comme Lourdes, ou la Mecque. . . . Cette ville de 2200 h. a pour seule raison d’être, de desservir le culte de Wagner” (Yes really, I’m in the Holy Land; and that’s what you need to imagine first to picture Bayreuth. It is a place of pilgrimage, a religious center like Lourdes, or Mecca. . . . This city of 2,200 inhabitants has the sole purpose of serving the worship of Wagner.) Letter from Romain Rolland to Auguste Geffroy, Bayreuth, July 1891, published in *Études Romain Rolland. Cahiers de Brèves* 16 (September 2005): 4–5.
- [71] Junod, “Du wagnérisme au musicalisme,” 76–83.
- [72] Clerbois, *L'Ésotérisme et le symbolisme belge*, 121–23
- [73] About the Maison d’Art, see Jane Block, “La Maison d’Art: Edmond Picard’s Asylum of Beauty,” in *Irréalisme et Art Moderne: Les Voies de l’imaginaire dans l’art des 18e, 19e et 20e siècles: Mélanges Robert-Jones* (Brussels: Université libre de Bruxelles, 1991), 145–57.
- [74] Georges de GoleSCO was a pianist and musical critic of Romanian origin. Belgian composer Joseph Ryelandt dedicated his opus 31 to him.
- [75] L. K., “Chronique de la semaine: Bruxelles,” *Le Guide musical*, March 28, 1897, 252.
- [76] “Allez, avec ces brèves notions, visiter le salonnet actuellement ouvert à la Maison d’Art. Assistez dans cet esprit aux concerts et aux conférences par lesquels on essaie d’intensifier et de compléter l’effet que font les peintures, les dessins, les sculptures, et vous comprendrez mieux ce qu’il y a de lyrisme dans ces efforts et leur sens véritable, non dépourvu de grandeur et de foi.” “Le Salon de l’Art idéaliste à la Maison d’Art,” *L’Art moderne*, March 14, 1897, 84.
- [77] Along with the oil on canvas, Delville made a drawing of the very same pattern as a gift to pianist Arthur De Greef, with the following dedication: “Je trône sous le rythme et les ondes, Dans le cœur des hommes et des mondes” (I hold court under rhythm and waves, in the hearts of men and worlds).
- [78] The Harmony of the Spheres (or Music of the Spheres, or *Musica universalis*) is a philosophical concept that establishes a correspondence between music and celestial distances. This ancient concept was revived among nineteenth-century esoterics.
- [79] Daniel Guégou, *Jean Delville: La Contre-histoire* (Paris: Liénart, 2016), 91–98.
- [80] “Sait-on bien si les formes harmonieuses ne correspondent pas ou ne sont pas des vibrations musicales objectivées?” Jean Delville, *The New Mission of Art: A Study of Idealism in Art*, trans. Francis Colmer (London: Francis Griffiths, 1910), 66. Originally published as *La Mission de l’Art: Étude d’esthétique idéaliste* (Brussels: Georges Balat, 1900).

[81] For a deeper look at the influence of theosophy on late nineteenth-century Belgium, see Sébastien Clerbois, “In Search of the Forme-Pensée: The Influence of Theosophy on Belgian Artists, Between Symbolism and the Avant-Garde (1890–1910),” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 2002), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/autumn02/259-in-search-of-the-forme-pensee-the-influence-of-theosophy-on-belgian-artists-between-symbolism-and-the-avant-garde-1890-1910>.

[82] Jean Delville, “Les valeurs esthétiques,” *Bulletin de l’Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 34 (1952): 20–21.

[83] Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater, *Thought-Forms* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1905), 82.

[84] For Delville’s aesthetic, see Flaurette Gautier, “Jean Delville et l’occulture fin de siècle” (master’s thesis, Université de Tours, 2012); Brendan Cole, *Jean Delville: Art between Nature and the Absolute* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

[85] “L’on peut affirmer que si la musique, prise comme magnétisme social, aide à la solidarité animique des civilisations naissantes, ainsi qu’à leur raffinement intellectuel, elle n’est encore qu’un moyen merveilleux pour préparer les races, les peuples, à la compréhension esthétique de la Forme. La musique est le mode expressif correspondant le mieux à la sensibilité inconsciente de la foule, mais la Plastique, moins flottante, et dégagée davantage du domaine intérieur de l’impression nerveuse, restera toujours dans une sphère sélective correspondant le mieux à la sensibilité lucide de l’élite.” Delville, *The New Mission of Art*, 49.

[86] Jean-Pierre Guillermin, “De l’artiste à l’ariste: Joséphin Péladan contre les décadences,” *Romantisme* 20, no. 67 (1990): 65–66, [doi:10.3406/roman.1990.5651](https://doi.org/10.3406/roman.1990.5651).

[87] Herman Parret, “Kant on Music and the Hierarchy of the Arts,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56, no. 3 (1998): 251–64, [doi:10.2307/432365](https://doi.org/10.2307/432365).

[88] “d’après mon sentiment, il ne devrait exister qu’un seul art: l’art plastique, l’art de la forme pure.” Jean Delville, Quarterly report, Venice, January 14, 1898, file 0I4154, Archives of the Royal Academy of Science, Letters and Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels.

Illustrations

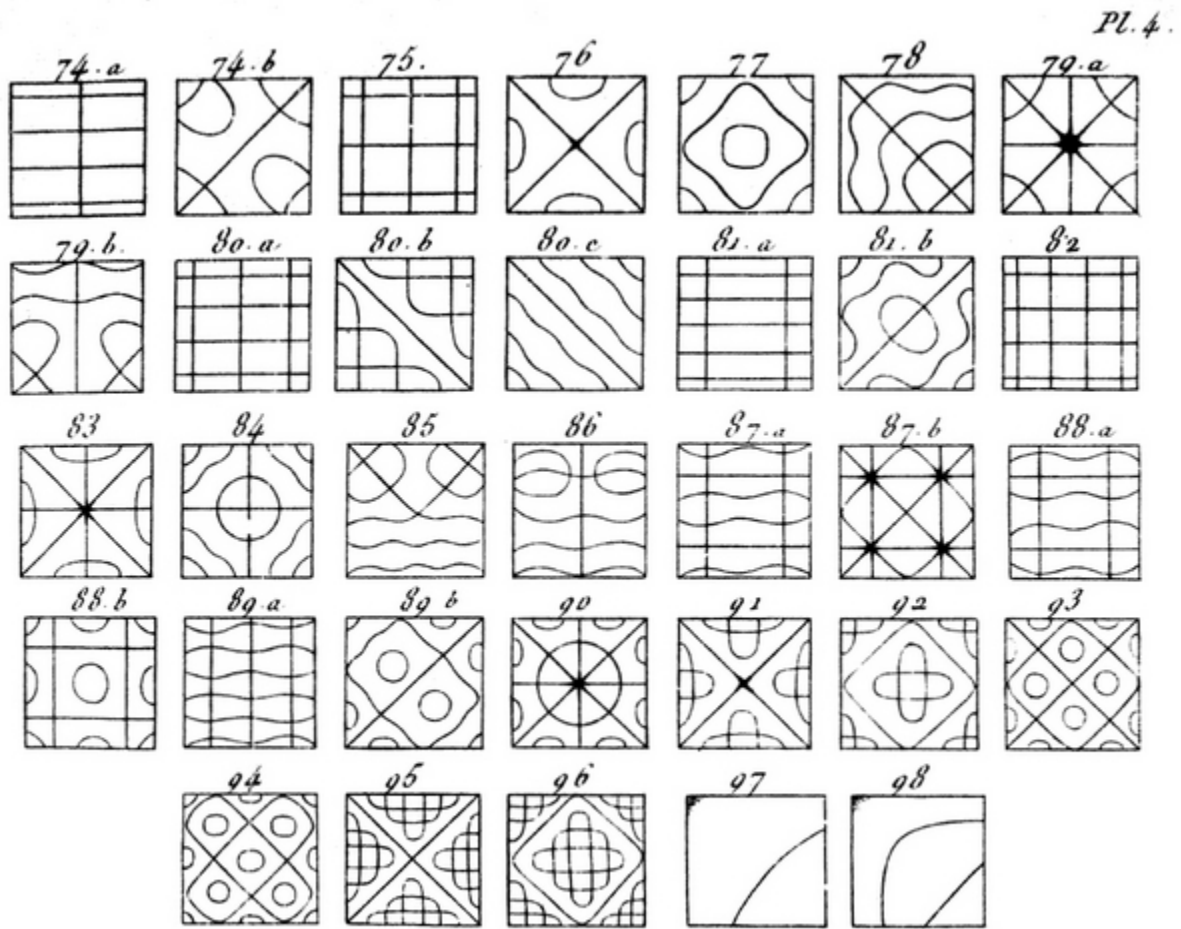
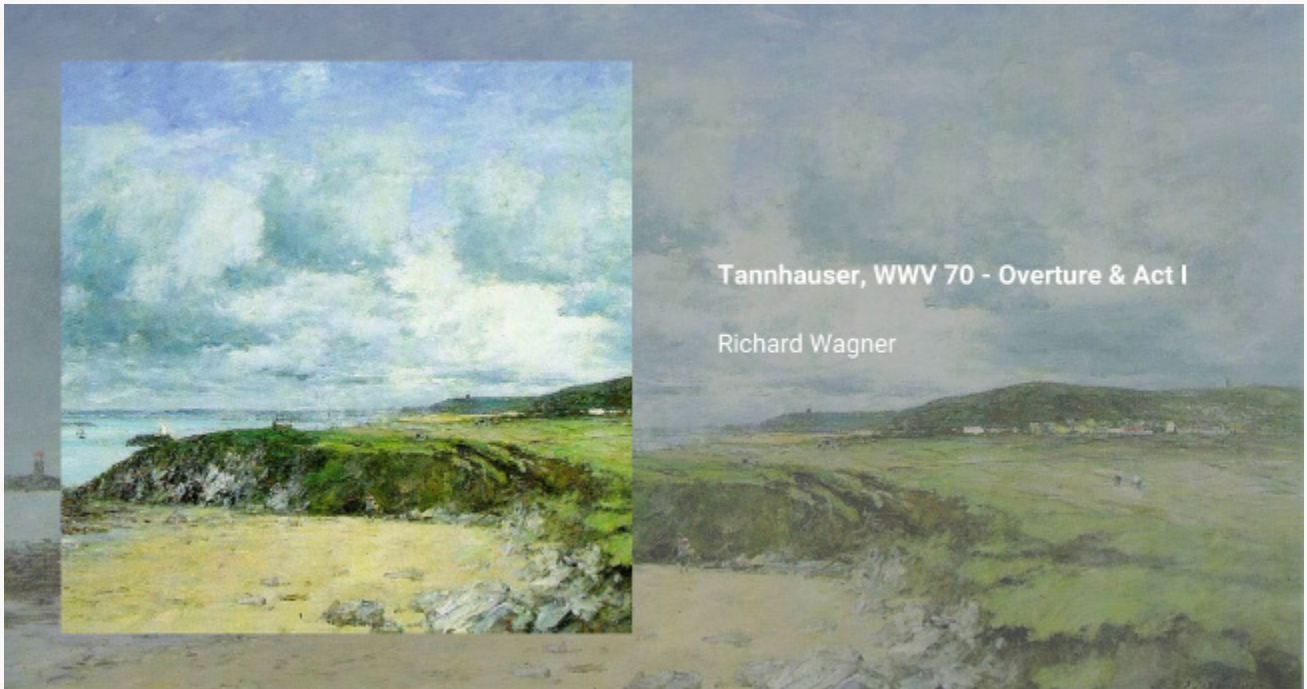


Fig. 1, Chladni's acoustic figures, 1809. Published in Ernst F. F. Chladni, *Traité d'acoustique* (Acoustic Treatise) (Paris: Courcier, 1809), n.p., plate 4. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

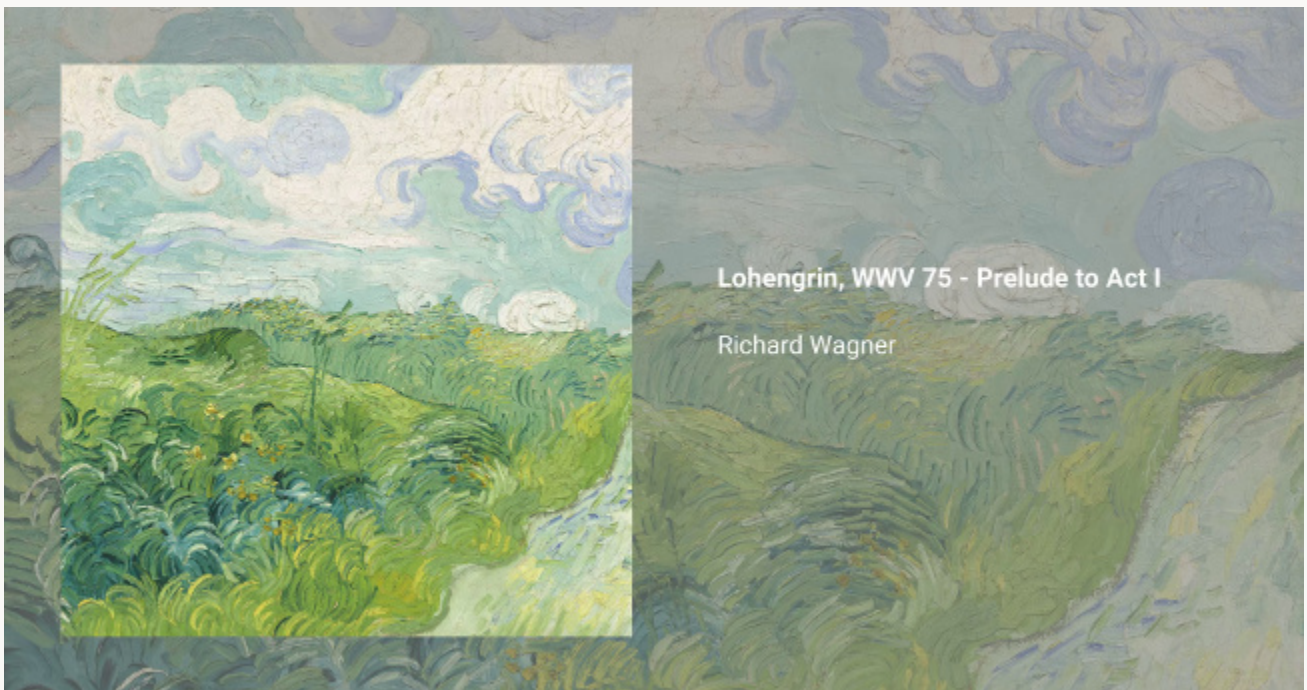
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Tannhäuser, WWV 70 - Overture & Act I

Richard Wagner

Fig. 2, Richard Wagner, *Tannhäuser*, WWV 70, Overture, 1845. Unknown performer, n.d. Available from: <https://youtu.be/8P79cCG6Y00>. [return to text]



Lohengrin, WWV 75 - Prelude to Act I

Richard Wagner

Fig. 3, Richard Wagner, *Lohengrin*, WWV 75, Overture, 1850. Unknown performer, n.d. Available from: https://youtu.be/tt_NekjEwBI. [return to text]



Fig. 4, Carlos Schwabe, Poster for the first Salon de la Rose-Croix, 1892. Lithograph. Museum of Ixelles, Brussels. Photo: Museum of Ixelles, Brussels. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 5, Program of the musical evenings of the Salon de la Rose-Croix, 1892. Published in *Geste esthétique: Catalogue du Salon de la Rose-Croix*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galerie Durand-Ruel, 1892), v. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



G. LERIES DURAND-RUEL (7)
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SOIRÉES DE LA ROSE † CROIX

300 Places — Prix unique : 20 Francs

Répétition générale du 19 Mars 1892

PREMIÈRE SOIRÉE

LE 22 MARS 1892 — A 8 HEURES 1/2

La Messe du Pape Marcello

DE
PALESTRINA

Chantée à Capella, *in extenso*, par 40 voix
SOUS LA DIRECTION DE BIHN GRALLON

L'ORDRE DE LA **Rose † Croix** DU TEMPLE devait, pour obéir à son esthétique exclusivement traditionnelle et hiératique, inaugurer ses fêtes musicales par le chef-d'œuvre de la musique religieuse : cette *Messe du Pape Marcello* qui fut composée en exécution des secrets du Saint Concile de Trente. Composée en 1565, en contrepoint fugué à six parties, elle est regardée depuis trois siècles comme la plus haute expression du chant religieux.

Pie IV, scandalisé du caractère profane et mièvrément joli que cet art accentuait depuis deux siècles, allait le bannir des églises. Palestrina écrivit sa Messe et sauva la musique d'une sorte d'excommunication.

Les pieux de l'harmonie retrouveront à cette audition le point de départ et d'assise où s'appuyent les deux colonnes d'Hercule de la Beauté harmonique, les deux incomparabilités : le Finale de la neuvième Symphonie et les deux actes mystiques de *Parsifal*, cette œuvre la plus sublime du siècle.

Le Conservatoire chante parfois des *improperia* mais la fameuse Messe s'entend si rarement que son exécution devient une date dans les éphémérides de la haute culture.

Au reste, exécution, ici, signifie restitution, le musicien est d'abord désorienté lui-même par l'austérité de cette œuvre, qui symbolise la voix de l'humanité adorant son Sauveur.

La notation en valeurs longues en acception a complètement changé et fait qu'une ronde, représentant actuellement l'unité de la mesure, ne vaut parfois qu'un seul temps dans la musique du XVI^e siècle où elle était considérée comme semi-brève ; et enfin, le mouvement qu'il convient de prendre est douteux, car toutes les apparences tendent à en faire exagérer la lenteur et, le métronome ne datant que de ce siècle, on ne peut avoir de ce côté que des indications discutables.

Nous avons consulté à cet égard toute une bibliographie et résumé l'opinion des savants musiciens dont le nom fait autorité : Niedermeyer, Choron, Fétis, d'Ortigue, etc, ce qui représente les seuls documents dont on puisse s'entourer hors de l'Italie.

Fig. 6, Program of the musical evenings of the Salon de la Rose†Croix, 1892. Fonds Péladan, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)

M. ÉRIK SATIE a composé trois préludes pour harpes et flûtes, d'un caractère admirablement oriental et qui, au seuil de chaque acte, préparent nerveusement le spectateur au tableau qu'il va contempler.

Du même jeune maître, que l'Ordre de la Rose † Croix s'honore de mettre en lumière : les *Sonneries de la Rose-Croix, Sonnerie de l'Ordre, Sonnerie du Grand Maître, Sonnerie de l'Archonte*, pour harpes et trompettes.

L'originalité et le style sévère de ces compositions les ont fait adopter par l'Ordre, pour ses cérémonies. Elles ne peuvent du reste, à moins d'une licence du grand Maître, être exécutées qu'aux réunions de l'Ordre.

ORDRE DU SPECTACLE

1. **Messe du Pape Marcello de Palestrina**, chantée à Capella par 40 voix, sous la direction de notre Capelmeister BIHN GRALLON.
2. **Sonnerie de l'Ordre**, ÉRIK SATIE.
3. **Gloire à Palestrina**, prose du SAR, dite par le héraut (M^le DREYFUS).
4. **Sonnerie du grand Maître**, ÉRIK SATIE.
5. **Prélude de la Vocation**, ÉRIK SATIE.

Le Fils des Étoiles

6. Acte I. — **La Vocation**.
7. **Prélude de l'Initiation**, ÉRIK SATIE.
8. Acte II. — **L'Initiation**.
9. **Prélude de l'Incantation**, ÉRIK SATIE.
10. Acte III. — **L'Incantation**.
11. **Sonnerie de l'Archonte**, ÉRIK SATIE.

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Fig. 7, Program of the musical evenings of the Salon de la Rose†Croix, 1892. Fonds Péladan, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 8, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Pope Marcellus Mass, Kyrie*, 1562. Unknown performer, n.d.
Available from: <https://youtu.be/s8C04qmiUUs>. [return to text]



Fig. 9, Erik Satie, *Le Fils des étoiles*, Prelude to Act I: "La Vocation," 1892. Performed by Alessandro Simonetto, Vicenza, 2016. Available from: <https://youtu.be/NblBwbJJzk0>. [return to text]

Sonneries de la Rose + Croix Air de l'ordre

Leut et détaché sans sécheresse

The image displays a musical score for Erik Satie's "Sonneries de la Rose + Croix, Air de l'ordre." The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of music. The first system begins with the instruction "Leut et détaché sans sécheresse" and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second system features a melodic line in the right hand with a slur and the marking *lié*, and a corresponding bass line with a dynamic marking of *f*. The score is set in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

Fig. 10, Erik Satie, *Sonneries de la Rose + Croix*, "Air de l'Ordre," 1892. Performed by Jean-Yves Thibaudet, London, 2003. Available from: <https://youtu.be/lvkKvFFe2Q>. [return to text]

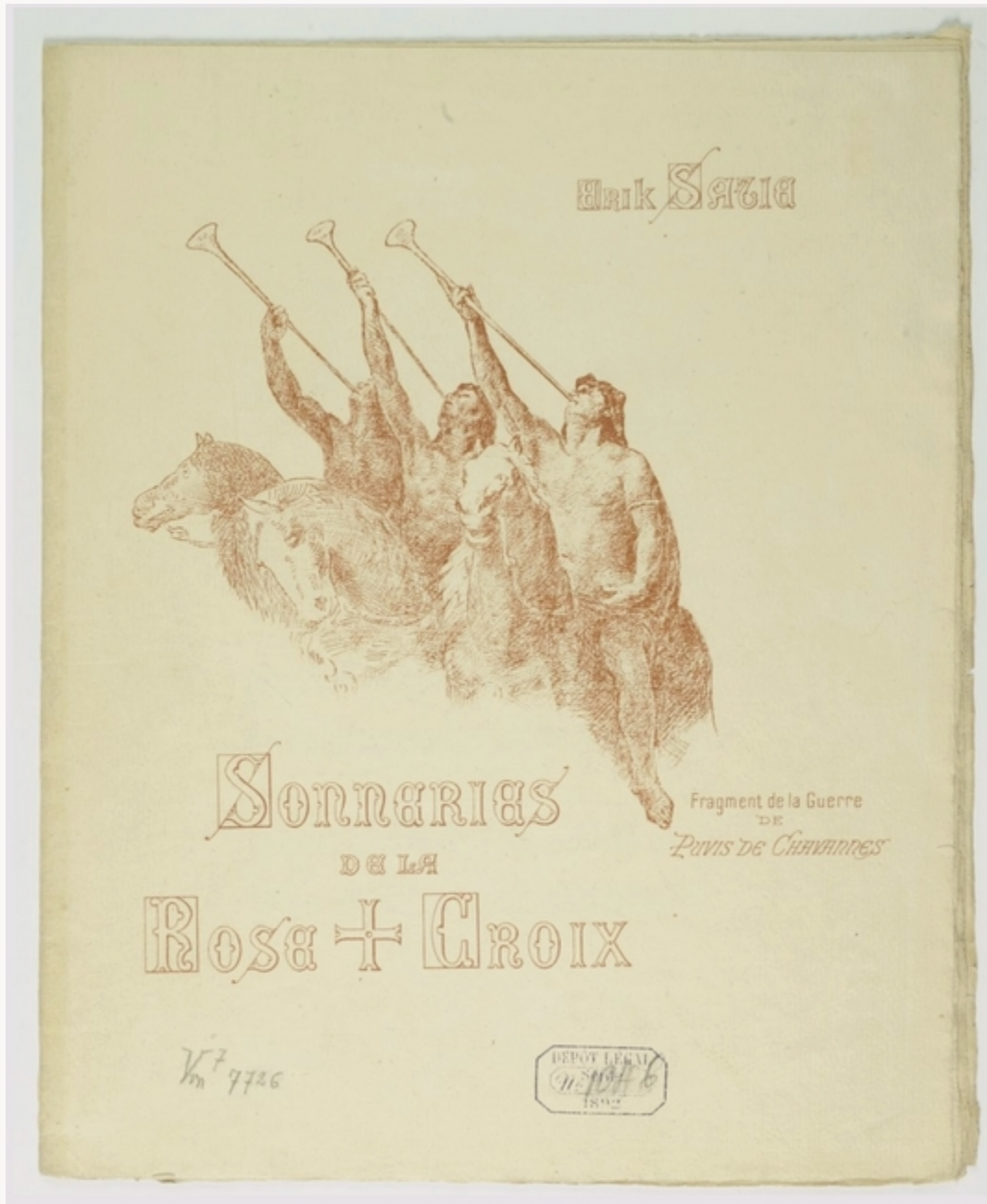


Fig. 11, Frontispiece for the score of the *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* by Erik Satie, 1892. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)

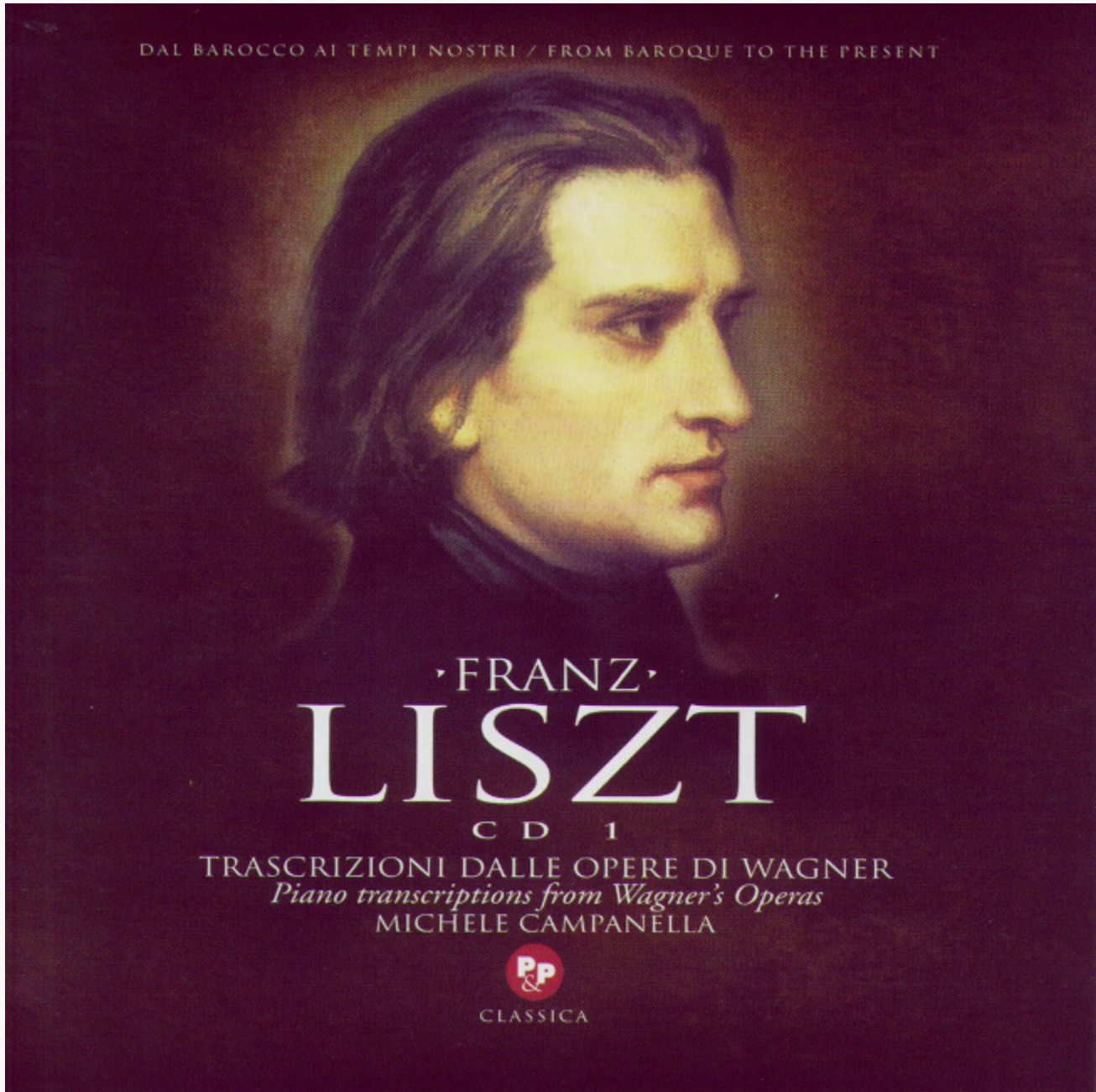


Fig. 12, Richard Wagner, *Der fliegende Holländer* (The Flying Dutchman), "Spinning Chorus," piano transcription by Franz Liszt, 1860. Performed by Michele Campanella, Rome, 2006. Available from: https://youtu.be/R-Q9N_RXxgI. [return to text]

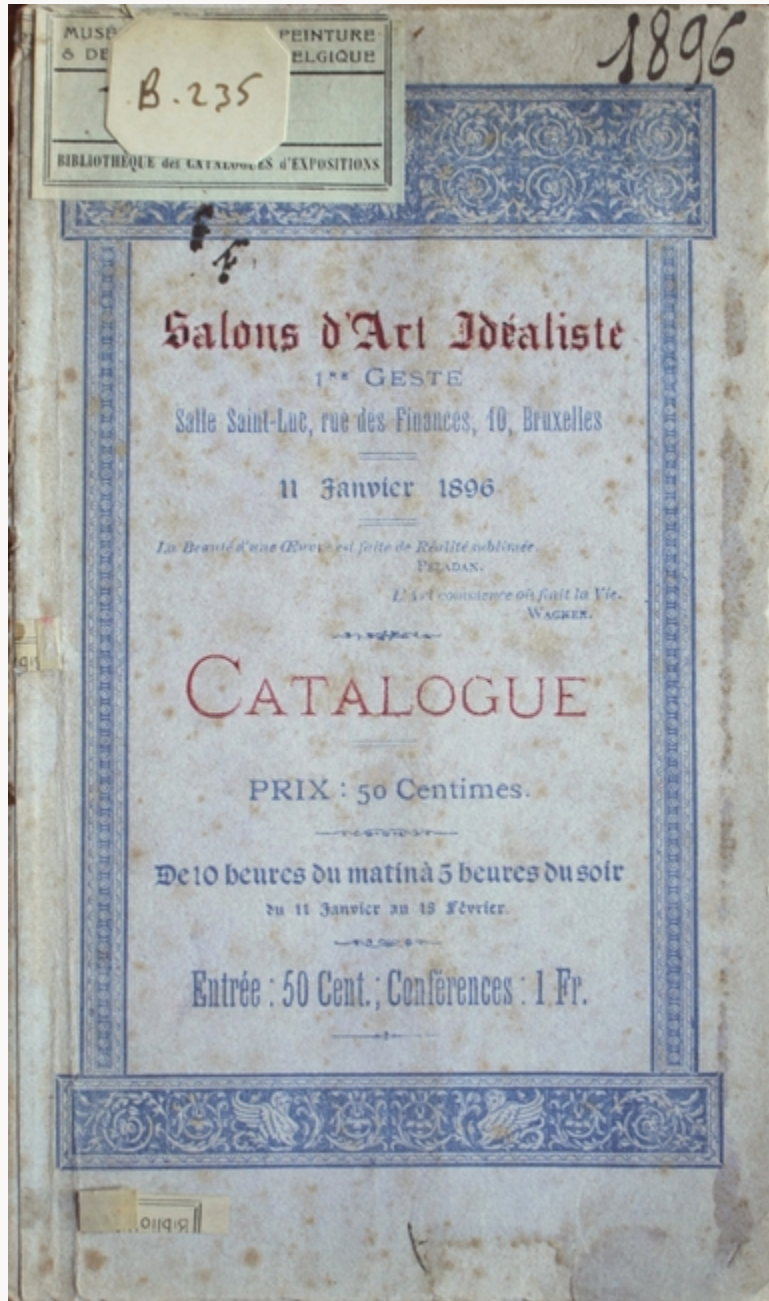


Fig. 13, Cover of the catalogue of the Salons d'Art Idéaliste, 1896. Library of the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels. Photo: Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 14, Jean Delville, Poster for the Salon d'Art Idéaliste, 1896. Lithograph. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Photo: Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. [\[return to text\]](#)

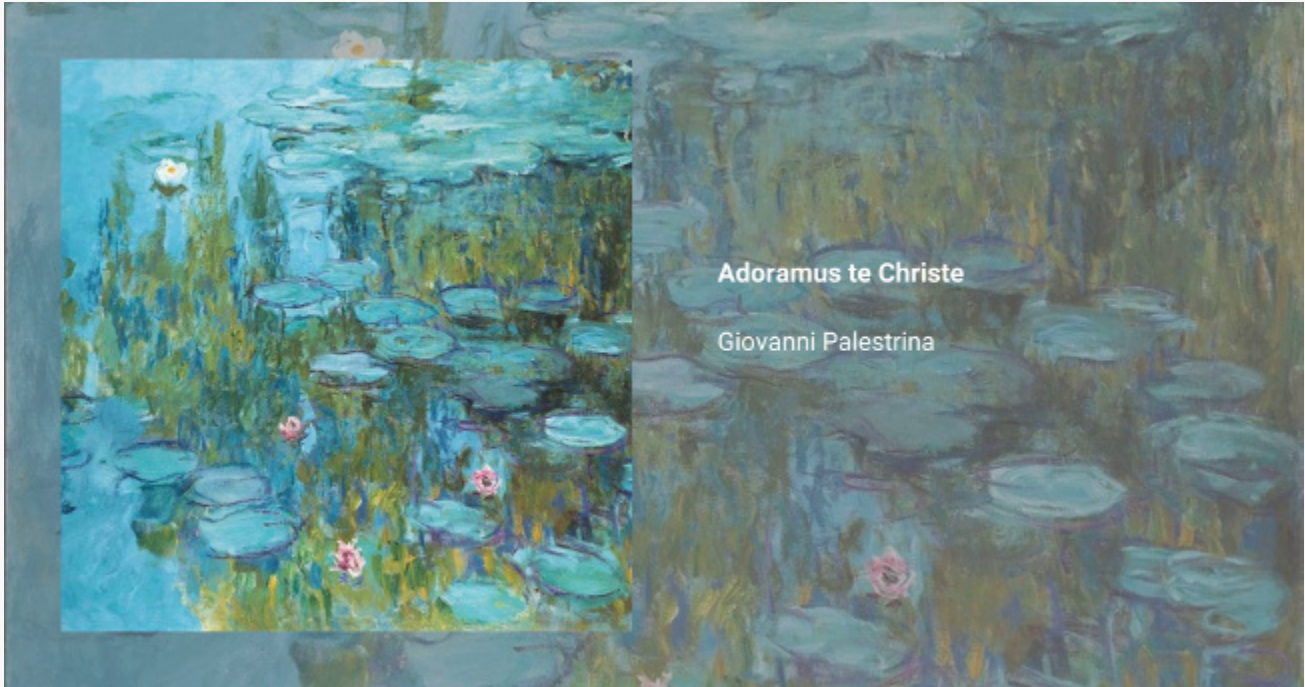


Fig. 15, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Adoramus Te*, 1584. Performed by Słowiki Choir, n.d. Available from: <https://youtu.be/HJAYyBdmm90>. [return to text]



Fig. 16, César Franck, *Violin and Piano Sonata in A Major*, FWV 8, 1886. Performed by Sarah Cross (violin) and Stefano Ligoratti (piano), n.d. Available from: <https://youtu.be/2I1jvOxghME>. [return to text]



Fig. 17, Jean Delville, Frontispiece for the score of *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* by Alexander Scriabin, 1910. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

[\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 18, Jean Delville, *Le Dieu de la musique* (The god of music), 1937. Oil on canvas. Royal Conservatory of Brussels, Brussels. Photo: Royal Conservatory of Brussels. [\[return to text\]](#)

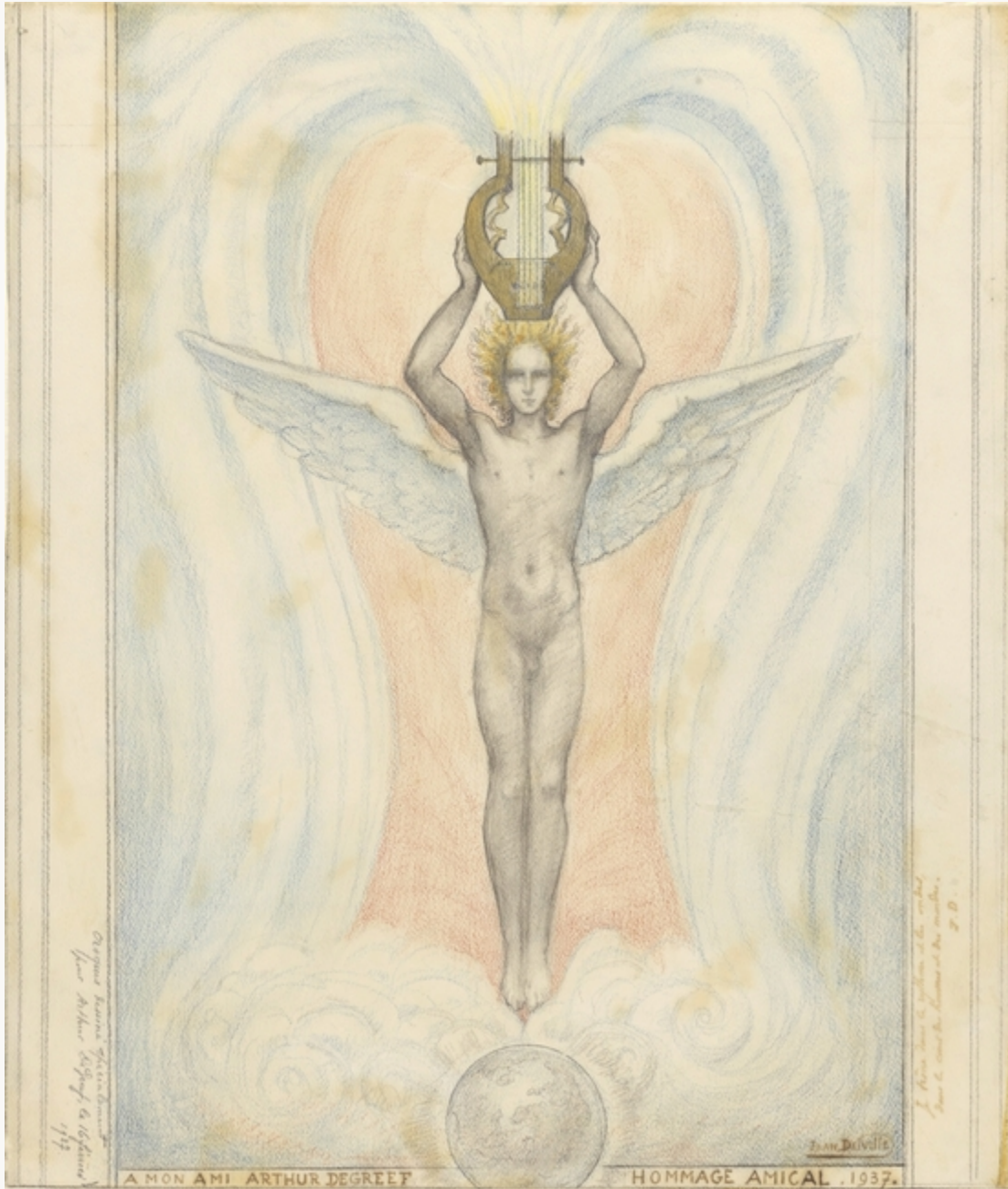


Fig. 19, Jean Delville, *Le Dieu de la musique* (The god of music), 1937. Colored pencil on paper. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Photo: Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 20, "Plate W. Music of Wagner," 1905. Published in Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater, *Thought-Forms* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1901), 82. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.
Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)