

Erik Satie's *musique d'ameublement* and Max Jacob's *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais**

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Musique d'ameublement

Satie's concept of *musique d'ameublement* (furniture music) ensures he is viewed as a precursor of minimalism, muzak, and many other 20th-century musical genres. The concept of music which is experienced as a backdrop to everyday activities rather than as the sole focus of a listener's attention is something with which Satie was familiar in his role as a Montmartre café pianist in the late 19th and early 20th century: he had first-hand experience performing popular tunes of the day as a background to eating, drinking, and conversation. Music as mechanism, music as a backdrop to other activity reach an apogee in Satie's furniture music. This article will explore the concept and context of Satie's furniture music focusing on his collaboration with Max Jacob, *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* (1920), a play which is examined here for the first time. The play, which received a single performance on 8 March 1920 and then disappeared from public view, featured furniture music entr'actes by Satie which link directly to the staging. Music is also central to the play, as two of the characters play instruments as part of the stage action. While Satie's furniture music has been studied extensively by authors from Roger Shattuck to contemporaries including Steven

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Moore Whiting, Douglas Kahn and Hervé Vanel, the original performing and artistic context of his 1920 *musique d'ameublement* was unknown until now.¹

Satie conceived what might be termed 'art' furniture music, which he created himself, as opposed to existing popular music played as a background to other activity, in Montparnasse on the left bank of the Seine during World War I. During the war, traditional concert venues and galleries closed and musicians and artists were inventive in finding alternative spaces for their work. One of the most significant of these venues was 6 rue Huyghens, an artists' studio round the corner from the Dôme brasserie in Montparnasse, which was owned by the Swiss painter Emile Lejeune. Lejeune suggested to a friend, the concert impresario Arthur Dandelot, that the studio be used as a concert venue; Dandelot took up this suggestion but soon passed the role of organiser to the Swedish composer Henrik Melchers.² Many of these concerts were given in conjunction with poetry readings and exhibitions, some under the explicitly interart banner Lyre et Palette. One of the first musical events in this space was a Satie-Ravel festival promoted by Lyre et Palette which took place on 18 April 1916,³ introduced by the composer Roland-Manuel, whose talk was published with a bibliography by H. Roberge in the same year.

¹ Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1969; Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian. From Cabaret to Concert Hall*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999; Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001; Hervé Vanel, *Triple Entendre: Furniture Music, Muzak, Muzak-Plus*. Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

² Emile Lejeune, « Montparnasse à l'époque héroïque, 6 ». *Tribune de Genève*, 31 (6 février 1964), p. 1.

³ A copy of the programme is housed in IMEC (Institut Mémoire d'Éditions Contemporaines, Saint-Germain-les-Blanches-Herbes, France), catalogue number SAT 25.11. This attractive

Lejeune published his memoirs of Montparnasse in a series of articles in the newspaper *Tribune de Genève* in 1964, one of which tells an intriguing story about Satie: ‘Poets also collaborated in these events. For our catalogue, Jean Cocteau and Blaise Cendrars each wrote a poem dedicated to Satie. The latter, swearing me to secrecy, warned me that during the exhibition opening he would sit at the piano and discreetly improvise. He said “It will be furniture music. I want the visitors to circulate: I’m counting on you and our friends, to whom I have also spoken, to set the tone”.’⁴

Lejeune is surely referring to the ‘Instant musical’ by Satie played at the vernissage (preview) on 17 November 1916 of the first exhibition organised at 6 rue Huyghens and, if his memoirs are accurate, this is the first recorded use of the term ‘furniture music’ in connection with Satie. The two poems were read at this event: Cocteau’s poem, ‘Hommage à Erik Satie’,

folded programme features a black, red and blue woodcut design on the front, with motifs including a tricolour flag, bread and wine glass, musical score, stave with treble clef and notes, cello, and a cockerel.

⁴ Emile Lejeune, « Montparnasse à l’époque héroïque, 7: 1^{re} exposition (du 19 Novembre au 5 Décembre 1916, Kisling, Matisse, Modigliani, Ortiz de Zarate, Picasso) ». *Tribune de Genève*, 33/6 (8-9 février 1964), p. 1: « Les poètes aussi avaient collaboré. Pour notre catalogue, Jean Cocteau et Blaise Cendrars composèrent chacun un poème, dédiés l’un et l’autre à Erik Satie. Ce dernier, me mettant dans le secret des dieux, m’avait avisé qu’au cours du vernissage, discrètement, il s’installerait au piano et improviserait. ‘Ce sera, me disait-il, de la *Musique d’ameublement*. Aussi, je voudrais que les visiteurs continuent de circuler. Je compte sur vous et les copains, que j’ai du reste avertis, pour donner le ton.’ »

echoes Satie's writings about being a 'phonometer', one who measures sounds,⁵ while Cendrars' 'Le Musickissime' is a stream of consciousness which conjures up Satie's sound world.⁶

Satie goes into more detail about his concept of furniture music in a beautifully calligraphed publicity document written for a projected performance in 1918. This was to have taken place at Maison Jove, a couture and interior decoration house run by Germaine Bongard, a great supporter of contemporary music, sister of the couturier Paul Poiret and at the time, lover of Amédée Ozenfant who ran a gallery at the same location.⁷ Satie intended

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In an article « Ce que je suis » ('What I am') in « Mémoires d'un amnésique », *Revue musicale S.I.M.* 4 (1912), p. 69.

⁶ This passage is particularly evocative of Satie's style: 'Duo de music-hall

Sur accompagnement d'auto

Gong

Le phoque musicien

50 mesures de do-ré do-ré

Ça y est !

En un accord diminué en la bémol mineur

ETC.!

Quand c'est beau un beau joujou bruiteur

danse la sonnette

Entr'acte'

⁷ Satie had already participated in performances at this venue, for instance a concert presented by the writer René Chalupt devoted to Satie and to Granados, who had recently drowned, at Jove couture house on 30 May 1916.

these scores, *Tapiserie en fer forgé* and *Carrelage phonique*, to be exhibited and performed at Ozenfant's gallery, though the war put paid to these plans.⁸ Satie's introductory document begins:

'Furniture entertainment organised by the 'Nouveaux Jeunes' group of composers for Jove, couturier and interior designer.

Furniture Music for evenings, meetings etc... What is Furniture Music? Pleasure!

Furniture Music replaces

'waltzes'

'operatic fantasies', etc.

Don't confuse them! It's something else!

No more fake music!; let's have furniture in musical form!

Furniture Music completes your furnishings;

It allows Everything; It is worth Gold; It is new; It doesn't change your habits;

It doesn't tire you out; It is French;

It never wears out; It is not boring.

You do better with it! CREATED AND MADE-TO-MEASURE

Listen without embarrassment.'⁹

⁸ See Ornella Volta, preface to score *Erik Satie, Musiques d'Ameublement*. Paris: Salabert, EAS 17141X, 1998.

⁹ The text is reproduced in Volta, preface to *Musiques d'Ameublement*, p.

II: « divertissement mobilier organisé par le group des musiciens « Nouveaux Jeunes » pour Jove, couturier-décorateur.

La Musique d'Ameublement pour soirées, réunions, etc... Ce qu'est la Musique d'Ameublement ? – un plaisir !

La Musique d'Ameublement remplace

This text resembles Satie's fake advertisements for musical services (most of which were written for his own amusement rather than for publication), suggesting that a company is behind this idea.¹⁰ Satie's two 1917 furniture pieces were written for specific imagined spaces, no doubt just as 'made to measure' as more conventional products from the Poiret and Jove couture houses. One of them, 'Carrelage phonique' (Sonic floor tiles) for flute, clarinet, and strings 'peut se jouer à un lunch ou à un contrat de mariage. Mouvement: Ordinaire' (may be played at a lunch or when signing a marriage contract. Tempo: Ordinary). The other, 'Tapisserie en fer forgé' (Wrought iron tapestry) for flute, clarinet, trumpet, and

les « valses »

les « fantaisies sur les opéras », etc....

Ne pas confondre ! C'est autre chose !!!

Plus de « fausse musique » : du meuble musical !

La Musique d'Ameublement complète le mobilier ;

Elle permet Tout ; Elle vaut de l'Or ; Elle est nouvelle ; Elle ne dérange pas les habitudes ;

Elle ne fatigue pas ; Elle est Française ;

Elle est inusable ; Elle n'ennuie pas.

L'adopter c'est faire mieux ! CONFECTION & SUR MESURE

Ecoutez sans vous gêner. »

¹⁰ This is a good example of Satie's 'exercice de style' approach to writing which shows how familiar he was with advertising slogans and 'puff pieces.' « Notre musique est garantie jouable » ('Our music is guaranteed playable') reads one of these slogans; see Ornella Volta (ed.), *Satie Ecrits*. Paris: Champ-Libre, 1979, p. 188. Amusing parody advertisements were commonplace in the Montmartre artistic scene in the late 19th century and are a genre to which Satie contributed; see Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, Chapters 4 and 5.

strings, was composed ‘pour l’arrivée des invités (grande réception). A jouer dans un vestibule. Mouvement: Très riche’) (For the arrival of guests at a grand reception. To be played in an entrance hall. Tempo: Very rich; **Ex. 1**).

Ex. 1. Satie, *Tapissierie en fer forgé*

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Tapisserie en fer forgé" by Erik Satie. The score is for a four-measure piece and includes parts for Flute, Clarinet in B-flat, Trumpet in C, Percussion (Tambourin and Tom-tom), Alto Saxophone, and Cello. The tempo is marked "TRÈS RICHE". The title "TAPISSERIE EN FER FORGÉ" and the composer's name "ERIK SATIE" are written at the bottom.

The quite distinct social status of these occasions is reflected not so much in the musical content – both pieces are four bars long and repeated as often as required – but in the textual prefaces. The ‘mouvement’ of this sonic ‘wrought iron tapestry’ is not a tempo at all, and I do not believe it indicates the texture of the music. Rather, it surely refers to the fact that people who could purchase this music for their homes are, indeed, very rich – unlike the designated users of his other furniture piece, who are ‘ordinary’ folk. And the wealthy potential audience for this work would decorate their home with wall hangings, while the piece aimed at

ordinary people is, literally, more down-to-earth. Like Satie's movements titled *Entr'acte*, this is music written for a transitional space or a transitional moment. Marked with a single dynamic indication, this music has the same qualities as music played by a barrel organ or café piano; the more it is repeated, the less we notice it.

One of Satie's sketchbooks, which also features sketches for *Socrate* and for his talk 'Eloge des Critiques',¹¹ shows that he had other ideas for furniture music pieces for specific spaces: *Carrelage pour cabinet noir de luxe* (Tiling for luxury black office); *Tenture sonore*, « ferait très bien dans un salon Louis XVI pendant une réception de parents de province (fin de soirée) » (Sonic wall hanging, 'would be very good in a Louis XVI salon when welcoming provincial relatives (end of an evening)'); *Trépied à deux pieds* « soirée intime (trente personnes) » (Two-footed tripod, 'intimate evening (30 guests)'); *Papier phonique* « pour chambre d'ivrogne très ordinaire, ameublement économique » (Sonic paper 'for a very ordinary drunk's room, cheap furniture').¹² The latter sounds as though it would have been suited to a space with which Satie was intimately familiar, though no music was composed under this title: it appears Satie would not allow glimpses into his private space, even in the form of furniture music. This sketchbook includes short scores of *Tapisserie en fer forgé* and *Carrelage phonique* plus, in pencil on the bottom right hand corner of p. 27, a short score of *Carrelage pour cabinet noir de luxe* (**Ex. 2**) which appears for the first time in print below:

Ex. 2. Satie, *Carrelage pour cabinet noir de luxe*

¹¹ This talk was given on 5 February 1918 and is published in Volta (ed.) *Ecrits*, p. 76-9.

¹² Now housed in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département de la Musique, Ms 9623(2).

The title *Carrelage pour cabinet noir de luxe* has several potential meanings: a ‘cabinet’ could refer to an item of furniture, a box of curiosities, a lavatory cubicle or an office. The *cabinet noir* was an administrative office charged with controlling mail after the monarchy was restored in 1815,¹³ and Satie’s friend Max Jacob published a collection of fictional letters entitled *Le cabinet noir* in 1922. The dedicatee of Jacob’s *Le cabinet noir* was the composer Roland-Manuel, then a friend of both Satie and Jacob. A ‘cabinet noir’ could also be a box of tricks — a very Satiean expression.

Max Jacob

Three years after his first experiments in the genre of furniture music, Satie composed a second set of *musique d’ameublement* as entr’actes to a play by Max Jacob, *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais*. While Satie’s 1917 furniture music pieces were written for spaces imagined by the composer, these entr’actes were intended for performance in a specific

¹³ I am very grateful to Gilles Christoph for this suggestion.

venue. This play is unpublished — it does not appear in the volume of Jacob's complete works published in 2012 — and was thought lost, but the manuscript has resurfaced and is now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.¹⁴ Jacob took some time to settle on a title for this play: the two manuscript copies show that he toyed with *L'enfant de la maison*, *La baronne*, and *La tortue sentimentale et le buisson ardent* before deciding on *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* (which can be roughly translated as 'Always a ruffian, never a crook') – a line spoken in the final scene of the play.

Max Jacob (1876-1944) was an exceptionally multi-talented artist, active as a poet, novelist, critic, playwright, artist, and astrologer. He was from a modest Jewish background and brought up in Brittany, but after experiencing an intense vision of Christ in 1909 Jacob became a practising Catholic and spent much of his later life in a monastery, though sadly this did not prevent him being transported to the concentration camp at Drancy where he died in 1944. Jacob knew Picasso since the great painter's first visit to France in 1901, and when Jacob formally converted to Catholicism in 1915, Picasso was his godfather. According to John Richardson, Jacob fell 'instantly in love with [Picasso] [...] Picasso did not return Jacob's overheated feelings, but in his cannibalistic way he lived off them. He also came to depend on Jacob's prodigious intelligence and quirkish passion for French literature, not to mention his merciless mockery and bitchy wit, his saucy song-and-dance routines and lurid accounts of louche adventures.'¹⁵ It was Jacob who nicknamed the Montmartre studio 'Le Bateau-Lavoir' where Picasso and several other artists lived in the early 20th century. Jacob was not only close to Cubist painters; he was also one of the earliest theoreticians and

¹⁴ It is part of the Max Jacob collection in the Département des Manuscrits. Jacob's complete works are edited by Antonio Rodriguez; *Max Jacob; Œuvres*. Paris: Quarto Gallimard, 2012.

¹⁵ John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso, volume 2, 1907-1917: The Painter of Modern Life*. London: Pimlico, 2/2009, p. 4.

commentators on the movement. Anna Davies writes: ‘Jacob’s preface to [his poetry collection] *Cornet à dés*, and Apollinaire’s *Les peintres cubistes* of 1913, may be seen as the seminal texts in literary Cubism, which in turn influenced [Pierre] Reverdy to found his avant-garde journal *Nord-Sud*.’¹⁶ Jacob contributed to Reverdy’s journal and wrote for many other small art magazines of the period including *SIC* (Sons, idées, couleurs) and *391*. Satie published aphorisms and extracts of his *Cahiers d’un mammifère* (A Mammal’s Notebook) in the latter magazine.¹⁷

Jacob wrote a ‘News from Paris’ feature in *391*, published in New York in 1917 alongside articles, poems and drawings by Edgard Varèse, Francis Picabia, Albert Gleizes and others. Here, he promotes the ‘Forthcoming publication of prose poems by Max Jacob’ in the middle of the paragraph, which begins ‘Paris – Publication of Nord-Sud, journal edited by Pierre Reverdy. – Disappearance of Picasso to Rome where he is going to organise a Russian ballet – quarrels of poets, poets of quarrels.’¹⁸ This allusion to the Ballets Russes commission

¹⁶ See Anna J. Davies, *Max Jacob and the Poetics of Play. MHRAs Texts and Dissertations*, vol. 80. London: Maney/MHRA, 2011, p. 2. Jacob poems, including extracts of *Cornet à dés*, were set by his friend Francis Poulenc.

¹⁷ Complete copies of many of these avant-garde magazines can be downloaded at the University of Iowa’s Digital Dada Library: <http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/collection.html> (accessed 2 July 2015). Satie contributed bawdy aphorisms to *Le Pilhaou-Thibaou*, a ‘supplément illustré’ to *391* published on 10 July 1921, and an extract of Satie’s ‘Cahiers d’un mammifère’ which was essentially an attack on Auric and Cocteau was first published in *391*, no. 17 (June 1924).

¹⁸ Jacob, « Nouvelles de Paris ». *391* no. 5 (June 1917), p. 8: « Apparition prochaine des poèmes en prose de Max Jacob » ; « Paris – Apparition du Nord-Sud, revue, dirigé par Pierre

Parade does not mention Satie, who did not join Picasso and Cocteau on the trip to Rome.

Jacob retreated from Paris in 1921, returning to his native Brittany where he spent much time in a monastery and paid rare visits to the capital.

Jacob and Satie

It is unclear precisely when Jacob met Satie, though as they had many artistic acquaintances in common it would have been surprising if their paths had not crossed frequently before their collaboration. Both were involved in Lyre et Palette poetry and music wartime events at 6 rue Huyghens; one of these events took place on 26 September 1916 and included readings of poems by Apollinaire, Cendrars, Cocteau, Jacob, Pierre Reverdy, and André Salmon, and on 3 December Paul Dermée gave a talk on Jacob's work in a *matinée littéraire* at the same venue.¹⁹ The writer and composer surely also met at 6 rue Huyghens on 6 June 1917, when Satie and Juliette Méerovitch performed *Parade* in its piano duet version and Jacob read some of his poetry.

Max Jacob had sent poems to Satie in 1919,²⁰ and in the same year he was part of the select audience at an early private performance of Satie's *Socrate*.²¹ And both Satie and Jacob

Reverdy ». « Disparition de Picasso, à Rome où il va organiser un ballet Russe – querelles de poètes, poètes de querelles. »

¹⁹ Billy Klüver, *A Day with Picasso*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999, p. 80-1.

²⁰ Robert Orledge, *Satie the Composer*. Cambridge: CUP, 1990, p. 361 note 38.

²¹ This took place at Jane Bathori's home in January 1919. Bathori recalls: 'Satie came to my home one Sunday afternoon with a few friends. He brought with him the first part of *Socrate*: Alcibiades, which I sight-read. Valentine Gross, Jean Cocteau, Max Jacob, Roland-Manuel and the Comte Etienne de Beaumont – all were delighted and astonished [...].' Bathori, 'Les musiciens que j'ai connus' (trans. Felix Aprahamian), *Journal of the British Institute of*

were involved in interart performances at Paul Poiret's couture house on rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré sponsored by the literary magazine *SIC*.²² Jacob's close friendship with Poiret involved the multitalented artist adopting his astrologer's persona as the couturier perhaps surprisingly 'consulted [Jacob] on the most auspicious colours of socks and ties to wear.'²³

Jacob also dedicated a poem to Satie, 'Encore pour Satie', which remains unpublished.²⁴ A short, repetitive poem in colloquial language, it refers to a 'canal' where 'badly behaved children are sent',²⁵ if Jacob hoped Satie would set this poem, his wishes did not come to fruition. While the two artists mentioned each other in correspondence with third parties,²⁶ only one letter from Satie to Jacob is published in the comprehensive

Correspondance presque complète edited by Ornella Volta. As both Jacob and Satie were

Recorded Sound, vol. 15 no. 964, p. 238-9; cited in Robert Orledge, *Satie Remembered*.

London: Faber, 1995, p. 175.

²² Mary E. Davis, *Classic Chic: Music, Fashion, and Modernism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, p. 115.

²³ Klüver, *A Day with Picasso*, p. 88 note 16; citing Pierre Andreu, *Vie et mort de Max Jacob*. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1982, p. 75.

²⁴ The undated manuscript is now housed in IMEC, SAT19.21. The IMEC catalogue suggests the poem may have been written in 1919, though there is no evidence to support this assertion.

²⁵ « Vous avez vu le canal quand on va dans l'air au métro ?/ où qu'on met les enfants pas sages [...] »

²⁶ On 12 December 1918 Jacob complained in a letter to Roland-Manuel that Satie refuses even to look at him. See François Garnier (ed.) *Correspondance de Max Jacob*, vol. I. Paris: Editions de Paris, 1953, p. 179; « Je suis heureux des succès de Satie bien qu'il persiste à ne pas me regarder [...] »

prolific letter writers, it is surprising that there is not more documentary evidence of their relationship. In this letter Satie writes that a friend of Jacob's told him that the poet had sent some poems for him to collect at the home of their common friend Pierre Bertin,²⁷ though the most striking fact about this letter is that Satie addresses Jacob as 'tu', a privilege he does not accord to close friends such as Darius Milhaud and Henri-Pierre Roché. Jacob did not forget Satie; nearly two decades after the composer's death, his name 'was included in a *List of the living and dead* which Max Jacob drew up towards the end of his life to remind him to pray every day for their souls.'²⁸

Ruffian toujours, truand jamais

This most unusual fusion of theatre and music was written for a venue which was more associated with another art form: an art gallery. Billy Klüver, in his fascinating short book about a set of photos taken by Cocteau in 1916, gives a detailed description of this space which was part of various adjoining buildings in the 8th arrondissement of Paris owned by Paul Poiret, including 107-9 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and a mansion at 26 avenue d'Antin.²⁹ Klüver clarifies that 'No. 109 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré was a separate lot on the other side of the mansion. Around 1911 Poiret leased the space on the ground floor facing the street to Galerie Barbazanges. The gallery consisted of a front room behind which were

²⁷ Ornella Volta (ed.), *Erik Satie: Correspondance presque complète*. Paris: Fayard/IMEC, 2/2003, p. 380. Satie dates this letter 'Jeudi 2 Oct. 1919', though Volta, in her notes on p. 917, says the letter was sent the previous day.

²⁸ Volta (ed.), *Correspondance presque complète*, p. 916: 'Le nom d'Erik Satie figure dans la *Liste des vivants et des morts* que Max Jacob avait établie à la fin de sa vie pour ne pas oublier de prier pour leurs âmes, tous les jours.'

²⁹ Klüver, *A Day with Picasso*, p. 62.

several smaller rooms that led to a large 70-square-meter room 5 1/2 meters high with no windows and a glass skylight roof. All in all there were approximately 250 square meters. Barbazanges agreed that Poiret could organize exhibitions of his own choosing in the gallery from time to time. Poiret also broke through the wall and made a door leading from the mansion to one of the rooms of the gallery.³⁰ Klüver also points out ‘There was a mezzanine level above the front room of the gallery, which might also have been used’³¹ – a fact which is specifically relevant to the Jacob/Satie collaboration.

Max Jacob’s first play, a one-act ‘pièce bouffé’ entitled *Trois nouveaux figurants au théâtre de Nantes*, was premiered at Galerie Barbazanges on 24 June 1919³² with Jacob himself playing the principal role (a headmaster), his only appearance as an actor.³³ On the same day Satie wrote to his friends, the actor Pierre Bertin and his wife, the pianist Marcelle Meyer, that ‘I would have liked to have heard the play by good Jacob. You know that Max

³⁰ Klüver, *A Day with Picasso*, p. 63-4. Billy Klüver interviewed several previous residents of this building complex, including François Heim, the owner of Galerie Heim which was located at 109 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré until the building was destroyed in 1970.

³¹ Klüver, *A Day with Picasso*, p. 65.

³² Annie Marcoux and Didier Gompel-Netter (eds.) *Max Jacob: Les propos et les jours. Lettres 1904-1944*. Paris: Zodiaque, 1989, p. 63. Jacob was clearly under a lot of pressure with various commitments: he wrote about this work to his friend Mme Henri (Emma) Hertz on 26 May 1919: « P.S. On me demande une petite pièce en 1 acte pour un concert et elle n’est ni achevée, ni répétée, ni recopiée. Et la peinture!!! »

³³ Béatrice Mousli, *Max Jacob*. Paris: Flammarion, 2005, p. 218.

and I are, now, friends. Besides, his talent had nothing to do with our quarrel.³⁴ This was not the first argument Satie had had with Jacob.³⁵

The two manuscript copies of *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* are accompanied by an anonymous typewritten note which explains that ‘a first sketch includes numerous corrections by the author in black and red inks, and the second features handwritten notes by Pierre Bertin concerning the staging of the play.’³⁶ The author of the note also mentions that Jacob wrote to Cocteau in 1919, probably in December, that ‘[Pierre] Bertin is rehearsing my play...’³⁷ *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* has three acts, the first of which is by far the shortest. Its characters are: Le baron Gimalac (Edouard); La baronne (Blanche); their daughter Germaine; her piano teacher, whose voice only is heard; Lucien (the baroness’ lover; described at his first appearance in scene ii as being of ‘very feminine appearance,

³⁴ Letter of 24 June 1919 to Marcelle Meyer in Volta (ed.) *Correspondance presque complète*, p. 372: « J’aurais voulu entendre la pièce du bon Jacob. Vous savez que Max & moi sommes, maintenant, amis. Son talent n’avait rien à voir dans notre brouille, *du reste*. »

³⁵ When Satie insulted the critic Jean Poueigh after he published a negative review of *Parade*, Satie was sued for libel and fell out badly with Jacob whom he accused of taking his legal troubles lightly. See a letter Jacob wrote to Jacques Doucet on 10 August 1917, published in English translation in Ornella Volta (ed.) Michael Bullock (trans.) *Satie seen through his letters*. London: Marion Boyars, 1989, p. 135-6.

³⁶ Anonymous author, collection Max Jacob, BNF Département des Manuscrits: « un premier brouillon portant de très nombreuses corrections de l’auteur à l’encre noire et rouge, le second des notes manuscrites au crayon de Pierre Bertin relatives à la mise en scène de la pièce. »

³⁷ « En décembre (?) 1919 Max Jacob avait annoncé la pièce à Jean Cocteau dans une lettre: ‘Bertin fait répéter ma pièce...’ »

wearing make-up and light colours’);³⁸ his friend Arthur; Raoul, a police inspector referred to throughout as ‘l’apache-policier’; Ferdinand le bistro, a café owner whose mysterious past is revealed in the final scene, and Joseph, a domestic servant.

A preview of the play published in *Comœdia* on 5 March 1920 reveals that ‘The ‘piano teacher’s voice’ will be provided by the invisible organ of an artist who has chosen a strange pseudonym: Phanérogame.’³⁹ This name refers to a flower with exterior reproductive organs, and is also the title of a Max Jacob ‘humorous and philosophical novel’ which he published at his own expense in 1918.⁴⁰ While this might suggest that Jacob was the mystery voice, it was clear by February 1920 that he would not be well enough to attend the performance. Could Satie, author of the piano triptych *Embryons desséchés* (1913) devoted to obscure creatures including the sea cucumber, have instead provided the voice of the piano teacher? Notes on the manuscript of the first scene of Act III raise another possibility. Against the teacher’s last words in this scene, Bertin has clearly written on the manuscript then crossed out the name ‘Le Flem’ – which must be a reference to the composer Paul Le Flem (1881-1984), an assistant to Albert Roussel at the Schola Cantorum who taught Satie.⁴¹

³⁸ « très féminin, fardé, couleurs claires ».

³⁹ José de Berys, « Chez Orphée: La Musique d’Ameublement. Une idée de M. Erik Satie. ‘Comme la tapisserie !’ ‘Inutile d’écouter !’ » *Comœdia*, 5 March 1920, p. 2 : « La ‘voix d’un professeur de piano’ empruntera l’invisible organe d’un artiste qui a choisi un pseudonyme étrange: *Phanérogame*. »

⁴⁰ See Rodriguez (ed.), *Max Jacob : Œuvres*, p. 64: « roman humoristique et philosophique. »

⁴¹ Le Flem was also linked to Jacob. Both composer and poet were Breton and Le Flem set some of Jacob’s poetry at different stages of his long career, including *Morvenn le Gaëlique* (1963), a title which referenced a Breton pen name Jacob occasionally used.

Music plays an essential role in the play. It acts sometimes as background to the stage action, in other words without the characters apparently being aware of it, and two characters are identified with specific instruments: the baron plays the trombone, and his daughter Germaine is a pianist. In the first scene, Germaine is heard ‘à la cantonade’ playing the piano and the baroness draws attention to this background music: ‘A mes amours... Ah! Ah! Ah! [she laughs and sings the tune played by the piano]’.⁴² Here and elsewhere, the music is a backdrop to the action which is thrown into relief on the rare occasions when the characters explicitly pay it attention. Germaine’s function in the play is almost exclusively as a piano student, either practising ‘à la cantonade’ or as the audience’s sole focus during a piano lesson. The expression ‘à la cantonade’, which appears frequently in the stage directions, is key to the meaning of the stage/music relationship in the play. It can signify ‘in the box seats’ or ‘to no-one in particular’ and can also refer to a character onstage talking to another character who is offstage or vice versa. The notion of characters conversing beyond the stage boundary, whether or not they are being listened to by other characters, blurs the stage/audience dividing line, and the concept of music played ‘to no-one in particular’ unifies the stage action with Satie’s furniture music concept. This work was written for a specific space (we will see that Satie indicates a particular spatial distribution for the performers of his entr’acte music) and, as Klüver noted the gallery had a mezzanine level, we can assume that this upper space was used for the ‘à la cantonade’ elements of the play.

The role of the baron is more varied than that of Germaine, but in the first act he is also presented as a musician, in his case an amateur trombonist. The second scene of Act I opens with the baroness wanting to spend time with her lover and nagging her husband: ‘Go and amuse yourself with your trombone, idiot!’ When he does not immediately obey, she

⁴² « [elle rit et chante l’air que joue le piano] »

insists a couple of times: ‘Your trombone, old chap!’⁴³ Having introduced both instruments, Jacob combines them in scene iii. Germaine plays the piano and the baron the trombone, again ‘à la cantonade’, and each line in the conversation between the baroness and Lucien ends with what is described in the manuscript as a ‘gémissement du trombone’ (groaning). In this broad comedy with sinister undertones, Jacob has the perfect opportunity to use an instrument with evident comedic potential. It is not clear what the piano is playing, or indeed whether it matters what music is used, though in the manuscript at the head of Act III in Bertin’s hand there is a reference to Schumann. The curtain at the end of Act I falls while Lucien and the baroness kiss, and nothing in any of the manuscript material of the play cues Satie’s entr’acte music. Satie’s title of the first entr’acte, ‘Chez un bistrot’, anticipates the location of the second act of Jacob’s play: the music prolongs the action of the play, blurring the boundaries between the stage and interval locations.

For Act II, the stage set represents a liquor seller’s front room. Here, Lucien is in far more colloquial mode when talking to his friend Arthur, reflecting his friend’s tone of voice rather than the stilted formal language, including the imperfect subjunctive, he used with the baroness: it appears that Lucien will be whatever others want him to be. We move from an upper-class household to a seedy criminal world. Lucien and his friend Arthur talk about forging post office documents, though they are soon joined by Raoul the hooligan policeman, described as ‘half-thief, half-inspector, half-guy.’⁴⁴ Raoul suspects them of forgery and arrests Lucien and Arthur at the start of scene iii. Lucien wonders whether this is a joke and starts talking to Raoul about a girl called Mariette to distract him. The second act ends, a cue

⁴³ « Nigaud !... Amuse-toi avec ton trombone, va t’amuser, va ». [...] « Ton trombone, pépère ! »

⁴⁴ ‘moitié cambrioleur, moitié inspecteur, moitié mec.’

for Satie's second entr'acte 'Un salon' to set the scene for the return of the stage setting in the baron and baroness' house.

The first scene of Act III is dedicated entirely to a piano lesson given to Germaine – a mixture of the teacher counting out beats, correcting her (she keeps missing a B flat) and asking after her family:

The teacher (à la cantonade): (*spoken*) B flat, Germaine! (*sung*) and and two and and one and and three and four and one and two and three and... (*spoken*) and your mother's well? (*sung*) and-a four and and one and two and-a one and two and-a three and-a four... (*spoken*) she's so nice, so calm (*sung*) and one and and two and three and four... [*spoken*] Has your little brother been to work this week? No! He's away (*sung*) and one and two and three... [*spoken*] You must count, Germaine, otherwise you'll never get there (*sung*) and-a two and-a three and four and... [*spoken*] Daddy plays the trombone (*sung*) and one and two and three and four and one and two and three... (*spoken*) it's unusual, a good solo trombonist [...]⁴⁵

In scene ii Raoul takes Lucien, accompanied by Arthur, to the baroness' house. In the following scene, an animated discussion between Lucien, Arthur and Raoul is interspersed with Germaine and the piano teacher 'à la cantonade' and again in the manuscript, the name 'Le Flem' is clearly visible in pencil, this time not crossed out. The baroness mentions her family connections such as a government minister in an attempt to intimidate Raoul into

⁴⁵ « Le professeur (à la cantonade): (*parlé*) Si bémol, Germaine ! (*chanté*) et et deux et et un et et et trois z et quatre et un et deux et trois et... (*parlé*) et la maman est bien (*chanté*) et de quatre et et un et deux z et z trois z et quatre... (*parlé*) elle est si douce si paisible (*chanté*) et un et et deux et trois et quatre... Le petit frère a travaillé cette semaine ? Non ! Il est en voyage (*chanté*) et un et deux et trois... Il faut compter, Germaine, sans quoi vous n'arriverez pas (*chanté*) et deux z et trois z et quatre et... Le papa fait du trombone (*chanté*) et un et deux et trois et quatre et un et deux et trois... (*parlé*) c'est rare les bons trombones soli »

dropping the charges against Lucien. She shows him a dagger when this does not work and finally tries to bribe Raoul to let her lover go. At the height of this drama, to puncture the tension, the piano teacher's words again come to the fore: 'One and two and three and four... B flat, Germaine! There! *Rinforzando*...' Raoul accepts a cheque as a bribe; he is also offered jewellery by the baroness but tells her that her rings are worthless because their stones are made of glass. In the seventh scene the baron joins in the action, first accusing Lucien of stealing an objet d'art from his collection, then arguing with the baroness; she threatens her husband with a hatpin and he responds by pulling out a gun. This is a cue for the *apache-policier* Raoul to read out charges in official style against the couple for making threats. In the final scene only Ferdinand le bistro speaks, summing up the scene, stating his motto is 'Ruffian toujours! Truand jamais' and revealing he is a former theatre claque leader, chef, and grand inquisitor. He asks the baron not to 'forget that he owes his freedom to his humble servant' and requests money – but the baron's pockets are empty.⁴⁶

Pierre Bertin sketched two introductions for the performance, one for Jacob's play and one for the entr'acte music. On Jacob, he wrote: 'Innovation in art rarely happens with specialists – today, Max Jacob the poet presents to you Max Jacob the playwright. 'Ruffian toujours, truand jamais' is Max Jacob's second play. We think it will reveal to you, as to us, a new spirit in theatre. [...] [B]road humour provides salvation for the worry and bitterness which turns the characters you will see into thieving puppets. It's new theatre which gives an odd relief to many current trends.'⁴⁷ Bertin also found it necessary to introduce the concept of

⁴⁶ « Je pense que Mr la baron dans sa généreuse mansuétude n'oublie pas qu'il doit la liberté à son humble serviteur. Un beau geste, baron ! Allons ! Votre bourse, baron, votre bourse ! »

⁴⁷ Bertin, unpublished document now housed in IMEC, SAT 40.7; 'L'innovation en art surgit rarement des spécialistes de cet art – Max Jacob poète vous présente Max Jacob auteur dramatique. « Ruffian toujours, truand jamais » est la seconde pièce de Max Jacob. Nous

furniture music before the performance, thus playing a triple role as singer, actor and compere: ‘Also for the first time, thanks to Erik Satie and Darius Milhaud and conducted by M. [Félix] Delgrange, we present to you furniture music during the intervals of the play. We specifically wish to ask you not to give it any attention and to act during the interval as if it did not exist. This music, specially written for Max Jacob’s play, claims to be part of life in the same sense as a private conversation, a painting in the gallery, or the chair on which one is sitting. Try it for yourself. Messrs Erik Satie and Darius Milhaud are available to answer any questions and discuss commissions.’⁴⁸

Satie’s ‘entr’acte’ music: Sons industriels

Satie gave his furniture music entr’actes the overall title *Sons industriels*. The music was written at the last minute and a letter Satie addressed to Milhaud on 5 March 1920 may suggest it was a collaborative composition:

pensons qu’elle vous révélera comme à nous un esprit nouveau au théâtre. [...] la cocasserie sauve ce que l’inquiétude et l’amertume font des fauches fantins que vous allez voir. Théâtre nouveau qui donne un relief étrange à bien des tendances actuelles.’

⁴⁸ IMEC, SAT 15.8: ‘Nous vous présenterons aussi pour la 1ère fois, par les soins de MM. Erik Satie et Darius Milhaud et sous la direction de M. Delgrange, la musique d’ameublement, pendant les entr’actes de la pièce. Nous vous prions instamment de ne pas lui attacher d’importance et d’agir pendant l’entr’acte comme si elle n’existait pas. Cette musique, spécialement écrite pour la pièce de Max Jacob, prétend à contribuer à la vie au même titre qu’une conversation particulière, qu’un tableau de la galerie, ou que le siège sur lequel on est assis. Vous en ferez l’essai.

MM. Erik Satie et Darius Milhaud se tiennent à votre disposition pour tous renseignements et commandes.’

‘Dear Milhe-Milhe,

It’s Tie-Tie writing to you: he’s finished his two ‘*things*.’ He’s happy as a king. We’ll ‘*have them*.’ Have you read *Comœdia*? I’m very ‘*amazed*’ by this article. Yes, very. They’re talking about the ‘*mysterious collaborator*’, ‘one of the most gifted young composers of the new school’ – but shush! It’s a surprise!’

Who is it?

Thank you so much for coming to the ‘Furniture Music.’ Yes, old chap. See you on Sunday, won’t I?’⁴⁹

The manuscript score and parts in IMEC are exclusively in Satie’s hand and there is no known manuscript material written by Milhaud, but does Satie’s enigmatic statement ‘we’ll have them’ mean that the composers wanted to trick the audience into believing that Satie was the sole composer? It is more likely that Milhaud’s contribution to the event was a piano piece, *Printemps* (1919) written for the first-half concert. In his memoir *Notes sans musique* Milhaud writes ‘Satie and I wrote our scores [in the plural] for the instruments

⁴⁹ *Correspondance presque complète*, p. 397-8: [Vendredi 5 Mars 1920]

« Cher Milhe-Milhe.

C’est Tie-Tie qui vous écrit : il a terminé ses deux « *trucs* ». Il est heureux comme un roi.

Nous les « *aurons* ». Avez-vous lu *Comœdia* ? Suis très « *épaté* » de cet article. Oui, très.

On parle du « *mystérieux collaborateur* » :- « un des jeunes compositeurs les mieux doués de la nouvelle école – mais, chut! c’est une surprise! »

Qui est-ce ?

Combien je vous remercie de votre venue à la « Musique d’Ameublement ». Oui, mon vieux.

A dimanche, n’est-ce pas? »

which were used in the play.’⁵⁰ The *Comœdia* preview article by José de Berys introduces the newspaper’s readers to the concept of furniture music, asking them not to be alarmed: ‘you will see that this novelty, despite its surprising name, is worthy of your attention. [...] Just as the decorative motifs of a tapestry or frieze are repeated uniformly to contribute to a bigger picture, the motifs of *furniture music* will be repeated incessantly *and it will be pointless to listen to them.*’⁵¹ At the end of the article de Berys wonders whether the authors will be signing a publishing contract with a well-known Paris furniture retailer.

The instrumentation of Satie’s furniture music entr’actes drew on the performers of the rest of the programme: the pianists Marcelle Meyer and Andrée Vaurabourg; three clarinetists, Linger, Duquès and Pigassou; and an unnamed trombonist who contributed to Max Jacob’s play. Satie asked the clarinetists to position themselves in three corners of the room, the fourth corner being occupied by the piano, while the trombone was positioned in a box on the first floor of the gallery.⁵² This surround sound effect was not calculated to make things easy for the conductor Félix Delgrange, though it does show that the spatial dimension of the music was crucial to Satie’s conception.

⁵⁰ Darius Milhaud, *Notes sans musique*. Paris: Julliard, 1949, p.138: « Satie et moi écrivîmes nos partitions pour les instruments qui étaient utilisés au cours du spectacle. »

⁵¹ Berys, ‘La Musique d’Ameublement.’ *Comœdia*, 2636, p. 2 (emphasis in original); « vous verrez que la trouvaille, malgré ce vocable surprenant, est digne d’attention. [...] de même que les motifs décoratifs, d’une tapisserie ou d’une frise se reproduisent uniformément pour donner une impression d’ensemble, de même les motifs de la *musique d’ameublement* seront répétés sans arrêt *et il sera inutile de les écouter.* »

⁵² See Volta, preface to *Musiques d’Ameublement* score. Volta refers to one of the clarinetists as ‘Picassou’ though he must be Georges Pigassou, a bass clarinet specialist who often performed in contemporary music programmes.

Satie's overall title *Sons industriels* underlines his functional, anti-artistic intent. Robert Orledge notes the origins of the material used by Satie in these pieces: 'in 'Chez un bistrot', Satie 'uses an as yet unidentified French popular song (which shows some similarities with the student song 'Gaudeamus igitur'), and the second ['Un salon'] parodies first Mignon's romance 'Connais-tu le pays, où fleurit l'oranger?' from Act 1 of Ambroise Thomas' opera *Mignon* (1866), and then Saint-Saëns' celebrated *Danse macabre* of 1874.'⁵³ 'Chez un bistrot' therefore features material in popular song style which is precisely what would be heard in a café, while famous arias and celebrated classics composed by establishment figures of the second half of the 19th century are portrayed by Satie as fodder for domestic entertainment. Viewed in this light, the Thomas and Saint-Saëns extracts do not so much reference the originals as their commercial dissemination in the form of household music for amateurs. Ambroise Thomas was director of the Paris Conservatoire during Satie's unhappy student days at that institution, and Georges Auric mentions that Thomas referred to Satie at the time he composed his *Sarabandes* (1886) as 'a truly insignificant pupil.'⁵⁴ Satie even wrote an article for *L'œil de veau* in 1912 which ostensibly is about Thomas but which focuses more on his fruitless search for an umbrella than on the composer.

Saint-Saëns was never a favourite of Satie. The *Chat Noir* journal described him on 29 March 1890 as a 'musicien ambulante' (perhaps a reference to his extensive travels, though more likely a suggestion that he could be a street performer on the barrel organ),⁵⁵ and following his joke application for a vacant seat at the Institut, Satie sent Saint-Saëns, in his

⁵³ Robert Orledge, preface to the SOUNDkiosk edition of the 1920 *Musique d'ameublement*. Brighton: SOUNDkiosk, 2010, SKI01.

⁵⁴ Auric, preface to Jean Cocteau, *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*, Paris: Stock, 1979, p. 11 ; « un élève bien insignifiant ».

⁵⁵ See Whiting, *Satie the Bohemian*, p. 96.

capacity as president of the jury, a letter of protest on 17 May 1894 when he failed to be elected. (At Ambroise Thomas' death in 1896, Satie, provocatively and inevitably unsuccessfully, also applied for his seat at this august institution.) Satie expressed his contemporary thoughts on Saint-Saëns in a short article for the Communist daily *L'Humanité* in 1919: 'M. Saint-Saëns – that great patriot – was in his time an *'advanced'* composer. It is true that this *'advanced'* time was not yesterday, nor even the day before yesterday. We know what M. Saint-Saëns has done for composers of all types. Ah! Dear old M. Saint-Saëns isn't a *'decent sort'*. He certainly knows how to put into practice that nice saying *'All for me, nothing for others.'* What a charming man! There's someone who doesn't like socialists.'⁵⁶

Satie mocks Saint-Saëns in words as a character who is the opposite of the Three Musketeers, foregrounding an alleged characteristic – a lack of solidarity for his fellow composers — which is calculated to repulse the readers of *L'Humanité*. Satie's insult to these eminent composers in his *musique d'ameublement* is at least threefold: he parodies some of their best-known works; his titles take them out of prestigious concert performance venues and put them into popular and domestic spaces; and by situating their music as part of the furniture rather than as the principal focus of attention, Satie asks his audience to direct its attention elsewhere. His toying with standard repertoire by composers at the heart of Parisian cultural life situates his work as a provocative 'other', and just as Jacob parodies the drawing room comedy in his play, Satie parodies drawing room music in the second entr'acte.

⁵⁶ Cited in Volta (ed.), *Ecrits*, p. 50; original in *L'Humanité*, 11 October 1919, p. 1-2:

« Monsieur Saint-Saëns – ce grand patriote – a eu son heure « *avancée* ». Il est vrai que cette heure « *avancée* » ne date pas d'hier ni même d'avant-hier. Nous savons ce qu'a fait M. Saint-Saëns pour les musiciens de toutes catégories. Ah! ce n'est pas un « *bon type* », ce brave M. Saint-Saëns. Combien il sait pratiquer la gentille maxime: « *Tout pour moi, rien pour les autres.* » Quel charmant homme! En voilà un qui n'aime pas les socialistes. »

With the Saint-Saëns extract, Satie gives the macabre chromatic violin tune a jaunty, upbeat character, a stereotypical piano accompaniment and a surprise ‘this is the end’ gesture in the final bar (Exx. 3a and 3b):

Ex. 3a. Saint-Saëns, *Danse macabre*: solo violin, second theme, measures 32³-41¹



Ex. 3b. Satie, ‘Un salon’: measures 13-20

Gaiement

Satie’s parodic method is strikingly similar to that of Gabriel Fauré and André Messager in their *Souvenirs de Bayreuth* (1880), which takes well-known themes from Wagner and puts them through procedures which turn them into barrel organ music. Music played by a barrel organ lacks dynamic variety, is typically a simple tune over a formulaic accompanimental figure, and is based on short foursquare phrases which are repeated ad nauseam.

The first, and so far only, performance of *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* and its associated furniture music took place on 8 March 1920 at the Galerie Barbazanges alongside an exhibition of children's paintings. This performance also acted as conclusion to the launch party of Jacob's first solo exhibition.⁵⁷ The Jacob/Satie collaboration was the second half of the programme, the first being devoted to music: Stravinsky's *Berceuse du chat* was performed by Pierre Bertin and the three clarinetists, and Marcelle Meyer played piano works by members of Les Six. Meyer's programme included Auric's 'foxtrot' *Adieu, New York!*, Milhaud's *Printemps* and music by Tailleferre. Children's art was appreciated in avant-garde circles for its freshness and untutored quality: indeed, number 36 (March-June 1924) of the journal *Feuilles libres*, to which Satie contributed, includes drawings and poems by 'Quelques Enfants.' But there is certainly no obvious connection between children's art and the adultery, counterfeit and corruption themes of the play. Milhaud's well-known account of the evening highlights that 'contrary to our instructions, as soon as the music started, the listeners hurried back to their seats. Satie shouted in vain 'Talk! Walk around! Don't listen!' They listened, they were quiet. It was a failure... Satie hadn't counted on his music's appeal.'⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Mousli, *Max Jacob*, p. 219.

⁵⁸ Milhaud, *Notes sans musique*, p. 138: « Mais contrairement à nos prévisions, aussitôt que la musique commença, les auditeurs se dirigèrent rapidement vers leurs places. Satie eut beau leur crier : 'Mais parlez donc ! Circulez ! N'écoutez pas !' Ils écoutaient, ils se taisaient. Tout était raté... Satie n'avait pas compté sur le charme de sa musique ! » In his book, Milhaud gives Jacob's play the title *Un figurant au théâtre de Nantes*; he is certainly confusing *Ruffian toujours* with the earlier Jacob play with the title he cites, which was performed at the Galerie Barbazanges on 24 June 1919.

Jacob was not present at the performance as he was knocked down by a car on 31 January 1920 while on the way to a Ballets Russes performance of Manuel de Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat*. He soon contracted pneumonia in hospital and spent two months in a public ward.⁵⁹ He wrote to a friend in mid-March 1920: 'I wanted to wait until I was well enough before writing a letter worthy of you, but tiredness, a cough, a painful and useless shoulder mean I don't have the strength. I must only thank you briefly for coming to see me in hospital, for all your lovely and precious words, for the unmerited honour of your visit. I'm going to travel south as soon as work commitments allow me to leave.'⁶⁰

Two reviews of *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* were published, one by José de Berys in *Comœdia* on 10 March and another by Jean-Gabriel Lemoine in *Le Crapouillot* on 16 March. Perhaps Lemoine took seriously Satie's request to ignore the entr'acte music, as his review focuses solely on Jacob's play, not mentioning the other elements of the performance at all.⁶¹ Berys, also the author of the preview published in *Comœdia*, mentions the socially

⁵⁹ Rodriguez (ed.), *Max Jacob : Œuvres*, p. 66.

⁶⁰ Marcoux and Gompel-Netter (eds.) *Max Jacob: Les propos et les jours*, p. 66, addressee not indicated but the editors believe he is le comte de la Garde: « Je voulais attendre d'être assez bien portant pour vous écrire une lettre digne de vous et la fatigue, la toux, une épaule toute douloureuse et inutile ne m'en laisse [sic] pas la force. Je n'ai que celle de vous remercier brièvement de votre présence si courte près de mon lit d'hôpital, de toutes vos belles et précieuses paroles, de l'honneur immérité de votre visite. Je vais partir au midi aussitôt que mes affaires me permettront un voyage. » Jacob spent April-May 1920 convalescing in the South of France (Rodriguez (ed.), *Max Jacob: Œuvres*, p. 66).

⁶¹ Jean-Gabriel Lemoine, « Spectacle d'Avant-garde: Une pièce de M. Max Jacob: *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* (Représentation unique donnée à la Galerie Barbazanges le 8 mars 1920). » *Le Crapouillot*, 16 March 1920, p. 6: « La pièce, disons-le tout de suite, a été

select audience and all aspects of the evening's entertainment starting with Jacob's play: 'It's clear that the dialogue is to be savoured, studded with profound aphorisms, words which are striking and always ironic. The tone is violent humour, with real comic force. A total success. [...] Before Max Jacob's play, Marcelle Meyer was the stylish performer of various works by Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric and Germaine Tailleferre, and during the intervals we heard a curiosity: 'furniture music' which we were forbidden to listen to, but which gave much pleasure.'⁶² The reviews between them list most of the performers: in addition to Pierre Bertin in the role of Lucien, André Berley of the Odéon played Ferdinand le bistro, M. Chaumont was Raoul, Mme Thouvenel played the baroness, and MM. Lisflon, Barençay and Daubigny played other roles. It is not clear who played Germaine (a role which may have been played by one of the pianists on the programme) and the real person behind the piano teacher 'Phanérogame' remains an enigma.

Conclusion

remarquablement interprétée, et notamment par Pierre Bertin, dont le Lucien avec ses allures ambiguës, sa voix trainante et son mélange de canaillerie et de distinction est un type de « ruffian » moderne tout à fait réussi. »

⁶² José de Berys, « Les petites premières: Ruffian toujours, truand jamais à la Galerie Barbazanges. » *Comœdia*, 10 March 1920, p. 2: « Sachez que le dialogue en est savoureux, émaillé d'aperçus profonds, de mots cinglants et constamment ironiques. C'est d'un humour violent et d'une grande force comique. Le succès a été complet. [...] Avant la pièce de M. Max Jacob, Mme Marcelle Meyer avait interprété, en pianiste de grand style, diverses œuvres d'Igor Stravinski, de Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, Germaine Tailleferre, et l'on joua aux entr'actes la curieuse « musique d'ameublement », qu'il était défendu d'écouter, mais qui plut beaucoup. »

The performance space of *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais* is central to its conception. From World War I until the early 1920s, Satie's music was often performed in small private and semi-private venues which, like the Galerie Barbazanges, were not primarily associated with musical performance. The use of the 'à la cantonade' space for the trombone and piano performers in Jacob's play, and Satie's spatial conception of his *musique d'ameublement* interludes, shows that the gallery layout had a bearing on the artwork. One wonders whether the intimate connection between space and work militated against further performances of *Ruffian toujours, truand jamais*.

In the last years of Satie's life his work increasingly resulted from collaboration, notably with artists such as Max Jacob whom he met at Montparnasse interart events: the most significant works of 1924, his last active year as a composer, are the ballets *Mercur*e and *Relâche*. *Mercur*e saw Satie rekindling his collaboration with Picasso and *Relâche*, composed for the Ballets Suédois, was ultimately a Satie/Picabia/René Clair work, though it was based on a concept by Blaise Cendrars. Satie and André Derain also toyed with a number of ballet scenarios around 1923-4, though none of these resulted in finished works. All these collaborations and projects saw him moving in experimental artistic and high society circles and being part of the significant crossover between these groups, though Satie's involvement in left-wing politics in his working-class suburban home of Arcueil was one of many reasons why he would always be a social outsider in this environment.

In his *musique d'ameublement* Satie composes for human performers what would most logically and easily be performed by a mechanical instrument. Satie's furniture music is in a sense a retort to contemporary concerns that machines will put humans out of work: in typically paradoxical fashion, he creates musical machines which are not to be played by a barrel organ, player piano or other mechanical instrument but by human performers. The concept of furniture music has proved influential on later generations of composers in

different genres, from John Cage to Brian Eno, and (which would surely have horrified Satie) muzak has developed from its origins in the USA in 1934 to become omnipresent in shopping centres worldwide. However, Satie's *musique d'ameublement* is rather different from contemporary manifestations of background music because he composed for live instrumentalists, which poses specific performance practice problems as the presence of performers makes the music hard to ignore. Satie was one of the most collaborative and most multimedia of composers: he always provoked, questioned, and experimented, and if he bored some listeners, this was after all part of his aesthetic.