GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE BEYOND LES SIX: GYNOCENTRISM AND LE MARCHAND D’OISEAUX AND THE SIX CHANSONS FRANÇAISES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983) is known in musicological scholarship primarily for the few years that she spent as the only woman in Les Six, a group of six Parisian composers who performed together and collaborated in the 1910s and 1920s. Though her membership in this group was salient in shaping her career, her gender and the particular meaning that it acquired within accounts and assessments of Les Six have come to define her to the exclusion of her later activities. Additionally, misogynistic stereotypes about female composers and androcentric musicological value systems that favor innovation and autonomy have hierarchized the members of Les Six such that Tailleferre has long been considered among the least significant members of the group. My dissertation addresses these issues by systematically examining literature on Tailleferre and on Les Six in order to document the role of misogyny and androcentrism, and by positing a compensatory gynocentric approach that both opens Tailleferre’s post-Les Six oeuvre for examination and offers opportunities for valuing her music beyond the restrictive agendas of androcentric musicology. This approach allows for my rich discussions of Tailleferre’s 1923 ballet Le marchand d’oiseaux (The Bird Merchant) and 1929 song cycle Six chansons françaises (Six French Songs), two significant but relatively unexamined works that, as I show, were central to Tailleferre’s professional and personal development. My studies offer not only thorough analyses of all aspects of the works, but also opportunities to better understand ballet, gender, and modernism in the 1920s, in the case of Le marchand d’oiseaux, and to explore music as a tool for recovering from trauma, in the case of the Six chansons françaises.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Germaine Tailleferre was, among other things, a composer, musician, mother, grandmother, two-time wife, friend, colleague, prize-winning music student, and Officer of the Legion of Honor. She lived in France most of her life, except for short stints in Spain during WWI and in the United States in the 1920s and during WWII. She wrote approximately 150 compositions for numerous genres including music for ballet, film, and opera; for chamber, orchestral, and wind ensembles; and, for harp, piano, violin, and voice. Her career spanned seven decades. Despite all of this, Tailleferre is known in musicological scholarship primarily for the few years that she spent as the only woman in Les Six, a group of six Parisian composers who performed together and collaborated in the 1910s and 1920s. Though her membership in this group was salient in shaping her career, her gender and the particular meaning that it acquired within accounts and assessments of Les Six have come to define her to the exclusion of her later activities. Additionally, misogynistic stereotypes about female composers and androcentric musicological value systems that favor innovation and autonomy have hierarchized the members of Les Six such that Tailleferre has long been considered among the least significant members of the group. Overt expressions

1 Les Six is Georges Auric (1899-1983), Louis Durey (1888-1979), Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), and Tailleferre. Erik Satie (1866-1925) and Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) mentored and advocated for the composers. I discuss the group in more detail in the second chapter.

2 My principal focus is on issues specific to Tailleferre’s compositions and their reception: over the course of the dissertation, in the second chapter in particular, I provide evidence for misogyny and androcentrism with regards to Tailleferre. On a more general level, I do not wish to engage in a lengthy justification of the idea that musicology has been traditionally androcentric or that misogyny limited women’s musical activities and reception. Many feminist musicologists have already long established this to be the case. See Susan McClary, Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Marcia J. Citron, Gender and the Musical Canon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Ruth A. Solie, ed., Musicology and Difference: Gender and
of misogyny create a hierarchized system of difference in which women are positioned as inferior based on articulated assumptions about their talents and abilities; androcentrism, that is, a male-centered system of valuation, operates in a more covert manner, whereby that which is deemed masculine or associated with masculinity – innovation and autonomy, with regards to music – are esteemed to the exclusion of most else. My dissertation addresses these issues by systematically examining literature on Tailleferre and on Les Six in order to document the role of misogyny and androcentrism, and by positing a compensatory gynocentric – female-centered – approach that both opens Tailleferre’s post-Les Six oeuvre for examination and offers opportunities for valuing her music beyond the restrictive agendas of androcentric musicology. This approach allows for my rich discussions of Tailleferre’s 1923 ballet *Le marchand d’oiseaux* (The Bird Merchant) and 1929 song cycle *Six chansons françaises* (Six French Songs), two significant but relatively unexamined works that, as I show, were central to Tailleferre’s professional and personal development. My studies offer not only thorough analyses of all aspects of the works, but also opportunities to better understand ballet, gender, and modernism in the 1920s, in the case of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, and to explore music as a tool for recovering from trauma, in the case of the *Six chansons françaises*.

Over the course of this introductory chapter, I familiarize the reader with Tailleferre, my subject; contextualize her life and career with a historical discussion of the social, cultural, and political climate of Paris in the 1920s, paying particular

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attention to gender; outline the structure of my dissertation; and, explain my
gynocentric approach in more detail. The biography that I provide first is gleaned from
a variety of sources, all of which I discuss at length in the historiographical analyses in
chapter two. Rather than cite each source individually here, and rather than explain in
detail the more controversial events in Tailleferre’s life, I refer the reader to the
subsequent chapters for more information.

A Brief Biography of Tailleferre

Tailleferre was born 19 April 1892 in Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, France, and she
died 7 November 1983 in Paris, France. Her childhood reads like a typical young
musical prodigy: she started playing the piano by ear at age two and was enthralled
with Mozart by age five. At eight years old she had composed a few pieces and had
plans for an opera. The first obstacle in her development appeared around this time
when her father protested her studying piano at the Conservatoire, likening studying
piano to prostitution.\(^3\) She and her mother conspired against her father, though, and
Tailleferre had a successful conservatory experience, winning many prizes. WWI
stood as another obstacle in her development, but it also brought her and some of her
fellow students close together when the Conservatoire closed temporarily. Under the
mentorship of Erik Satie, Tailleferre and her colleagues presented concerts at art
studios and small concert halls. The concerts caught the attention of promoter and
artist Jean Cocteau and critic Henri Collet, who singled out six of the young

\(^3\) Germaine Tailleferre and Frédéric Robert, “Mémoires à l’emporte-pièce,” *Revue internationale de
musique française* 19 (February 1986): 12. Refer to chapter two for more information.
composers and hailed them as the voice of French music.⁴ Thus, without the composers’ advanced knowledge, they became *Les Six*: Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre. *Les Six* has been described as a propaganda tool for Cocteau, who was concerned with promoting his own professional activities.⁵ Undoubtedly, the group identity proved beneficial for the six composers, but it is important to note that Cocteau’s own aesthetics have sometimes eclipsed those of the individual composers, leading critics and historians to depict their styles as more homogeneous than they actually were. Together, the composers of *Les Six* presented concerts, usually with other composers and certainly with other performers; they published a book of piano pieces, with one piece by each of the six composers; and, they collaborated on a ballet, *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (The Marriage on the Eiffel Tower, 1921), though Durey pulled out of this project at the last minute. More than colleagues, though, they were friends, sharing Saturday dinners together and keeping in touch for the rest of their lives. Equally important to understand is that their circle was far bigger than six. In addition to sharing stages with other composers and performers, they collaborated with artists, writers, dancers, and so on. By the time *Les Six* ceased to exist formally, with Durey’s defection in 1921, the group had served the purpose of bringing attention to the young

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composers at a time when usual avenues for career development were functioning less than optimally, if at all, because of the devastation of WWI.

For Tailleferre, *Les Six* proved both a blessing and a curse, in terms of her career. On the one hand, the group brought attention and recognition to her such that she might not have otherwise found. On the other hand, the group situated her among five male composers who were undoubtedly viewed as more talented than her. Regardless, Tailleferre found various successes after *Les Six*, especially with her 1923 ballet, which I discuss in detail, and her 1924 piano concerto. She also experienced career challenges, especially in her repeated attempts in the mid-1920s to find a professorship in the US. On her third trip to the US, in 1926, she continued to be unsuccessful in this regard, but she instead found herself a husband. After a one-day courtship and a three-week engagement, Tailleferre married well-known New York caricaturist Ralph Barton. The marriage was plagued with problems and ended violently. In chapter five, I address this and the manner in which Tailleferre engaged with her female colleagues and friends in her song cycle as a means of recovering from the trauma of her marriage. She immediately remarried and had her first and only child in 1931. In the 1930s and 40s, Tailleferre wrote various film scores, and by the 1950s, with her second marriage, another troubled one, finally behind her, she experienced her most compositionally prolific period. She composed and taught for the remainder of her life.

**Women and Changing Gender Roles in Pre- and Post-WWI France**

Tailleferre’s nine-decade-long life spans vast and profound social, cultural, and political changes in France. When she was born in 1892, French women were treated
as non-citizens: they could not vote, they had few rights over their bodies, they relinquished property and earnings to their husbands, they earned less pay than men for equal work, and they experienced numerous other inequalities. The France of Tailleferre’s later years made significant strides towards equality: women were given the right to vote (in 1944), they had rights of self-determination inside and outside of marriages, and immense strides towards labor equality increased women’s workforce participation and labor rights. These changes, of course, unfolded with various complexities and multidirectionalities that are reflected in the lives of French women and in their professional and personal activities. I undertake here a discussion of the social, cultural, and political climates of Tailleferre’s early life – until approximately 1930, the end of the focus of my study – in an effort to situate her particular professional and personal activities. In this summary discussion of women’s identities and experiences in the decades prior to 1930, I rely largely on the work of Mary Louise Roberts, a historian who theorizes in particular the phenomenon of the “new woman” (or “modern woman”) in the pre- and post-WWI periods, and on a 2006 anthology, A “Belle Epoque”? Women in French Society and Culture 1890-1914, which provides historical and theoretical discussions of feminism, identity, and experience. I also interject references to musicological scholarship on female composers of the period.

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In their introduction to the aforementioned anthology, Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr describe the relative stability and prosperity that France experienced from approximately 1880, once the Third Republic was established, until 1914. The Republic’s foundation of liberty, equality, and fraternity were the cornerstones of a stable democracy, but one that served only the male populace. Out of this contradiction of stability and inequality, the first wave of French feminism grew, addressing issues of suffrage, civil participation, education and labor equality, and so on. Holmes and Tarr find that French feminist organizations and supporters were relatively fewer than their counterparts in Britain and the US, and, though they were able to organize publicly, their political activism was of little concern to most French women. But if political feminism was beyond the majority of French women’s attention, profound social and cultural changes nevertheless affected all women’s personal, family, and professional lives, and reshaped contemporary understanding and experience of feminine social roles. Technological advances, urbanization, and growing consumerism offered increasingly numerous opportunities for education, socialization, and professionalization inside and outside of the home.

The production and consumption of printed materials grew markedly during the Belle Époque in part because of increasing ease of publishing and increasing levels of education; thus, the field of literature is particularly illustrative of the changing roles of women in French society. Women’s increased roles as authors, publishers,

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and consumers is notable and wide ranging. Women’s authorship varies from novels in the traditionally feminine romance genre, to understatedly feminist novels about women’s professional development, to shocking expressions of feminism and misogyny. Belle Époque women also took leadership roles in the field. Marguerite Durand, for example, founded, owned, and managed the newspaper, *La fronde*, a feminist publication produced exclusively for women. Literature also provided opportunities for women to organize together, as with the example of Natalie Barney’s homosocial literary salon (begun in 1909 and extending well past WWII). The group that grew around the salon undoubtedly represents the more radical side of women’s participation in literary activities, as outlined in Melanie Hawthorne’s chapter.

In analyzing women’s changing identities in the pre-WWI era, Roberts finds that most French women in the public sphere (with the exception of radical feminists such as Natalie Barney and doctor Madeleine Pelletier) maintained the femininity expected of them as bourgeois women, even while claiming spaces in traditionally male domains such as authorship, publishing, and other professions. Building on Roberts, Holmes and Tarr offer an example: “Marguerite Durand, owner-editor of the entirely female-staffed, campaigningly feminist newspaper, *La Fronde*, was renowned for her elegance, charm, beauty and gracious entertaining, and the whole tenor of the


paper and its staff confounded the idea that feminism meant the adoption of a
c Masculine style." Of other publicly successful yet still feminine figures like actress
Sarah Bernhardt and dancer Loïe Fuller, Holmes and Tarr explain: “They provided
role models for women privately negotiating the frontier between emancipation and
femininity, many of whom no doubt were heterosexual and anxious not to renounce
love and motherhood.” As Roberts explains, many of these so-called new women
had in fact a “lack of explicit feminism,” something that has sometimes made them
frustrating subjects for feminist historians and scholars. As Roberts explains in both
of her books, the terms “new woman” and “modern woman” were used inside and
outside France to describe women who took advantage of societal changes and
 technological advances that allowed them to explore life beyond domesticity. As
Roberts explains, though, this new-woman status arose from overt feminism in only a
minority of women. Roberts asks, then: “If these new women neither relied on an
explicitly articulated feminism to challenge conventional femininity nor relied on a
distinct ‘women’s culture,’ how, then, did they become new women?” Her answer is
that feminism is but only one possible expression of resistance. Seeking to illuminate
additional tactics that Belle Époque women employed to “[resist] gender norms and
move beyond a domestic destiny,” she finds that they entered the lucrative and
empowering careers of journalism and theater performance. Both fields were

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15 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 10.
18 Ibid., 9.
relatively open to women, both had an appealing congruence of modernity and ill repute, and both involved performance (of differing types) that allowed women to transgress gender norms within relatively acceptable rhetorics of satire and hyperbole.19 In their feminine feminism, then, the new women of the Belle Époque “assumed multiple, often conflicting, identities.”20 Roberts analyzes the very contradiction in the new-woman identity as challenging gender binaries: “They acted out various gender roles at a dizzying pace, merging them so fluidly as to contest their naturalized status. Thanks to their adventures, conventional femininity was exposed as a choice, not a destiny.”21

As participants in the world of art music, women similarly had to negotiate their identities within male-dominated professions. As performers and educators, women experienced relatively fewer obstructions to their participation and success – as performers because, like the theater performances of which Roberts writes, women were still occupying the position of object (of gaze, of pleasure), even if on the public stage, and as educators because this involved a nurturing role not too distant from that of a mother.22 As composers, though, women received relatively less acceptance and success, as Virginia Woolf notes in her 1929 *A Room of One’s Own*.23 Those women who did manage composition careers demonstrate various possibilities for negotiating

19 Ibid., 11-14.
20 Ibid., 17.
21 Ibid.
22 Nevertheless, women certainly numbered fewer than men as performers and educators, especially at the highest levels. The Paris Conservatoire, for example, was male dominated with only a few exceptions, such as Louise Ferrenc (1804-1875), who served as Professor of Piano from 1842 to 1873.
their gendered identity in a male-dominated, misogynistic profession. In her article, “‘La Guerre en dentelles’: Women and the ‘Prix de Rome’,” Annegret Fauser explores the various methods that women used to negotiate their early composition careers by tracing four women’s experiences in competing for the prestigious Prix de Rome between 1903 and 1913. Through the women’s stories, Fauser demonstrates the complex interrelatedness of gender, cultural politics, nationalism, media, aesthetics, and bourgeois social expectations.24

Augusta Holmès (1847-1903) and Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944) both appear to have firmly adopted the identity of the Belle Époque new woman. Both women had long careers that were variably successful. Holmès never married, though she had a lengthy relationship that involved children. Chaminade married at the age of forty-seven to a man twenty years older – the marriage, said to have been platonic, lasted just six years until his death in 1907 – and she commented later, “it is difficult to reconcile the domestic life with the artistic.”25 Jann Pasler has written about Holmès’s music and its reception, finding that she exploited both feminine and masculine personae at various times in her career.26 During her youth, she relied on her beauty, whereas later in her career, she took on a masculine appearance. Her music was often perceived as masculine for its large forms and Wagnerian style, though Pasler finds that this description of her music was generally laudatory (whereas being a “masculine

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woman” was usually assessed derogatorily). Pasler attributes much of Holmès’s success to her patriotism and to her ability to balance “virile” music with feminine music. Marcia J. Citron’s assessments of Chaminade situate her as relatively more feminine than Holmès.

Though she wrote a few large-scale works, the bulk of her output consists of songs and piano works. Additionally, she was known equally as a performer – she had many successful tours to the UK and the US. Citron also describes her as being relatively traditional both in her compositional style (which thus went out of fashion by WWI) and in her social relationships (she remained close with her family, rarely associating with artists circles or other musicians). Though both Chaminade and Holmès had successful careers and clearly adopted the identity of new woman, Citron finds that Holmès’s relatively more masculine identity helped her gain success in the more highly valued musical genres of opera and symphony; by contrast, Chaminade’s feminine traditionalism and introversion equated to success in less valued – feminine – chamber genres.

Sisters Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) and Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) were of the same generation as Tailleferre, though because of their parents’ encouragement, their need for income once their father died in 1900, Lili’s premature death, and Nadia’s cessation from composing in 1922, their compositional activities peaked earlier than did Tailleferre’s. Again, both women firmly fall into the category of new woman, and both negotiated their professional activities with variously feminine personae. As Caroline Potter explains, Nadia’s musical activities, though diverse, were

centered on education and on the promotion of music by other composers, both considered relatively feminine activities. Similarly, Jeanice Brooks has written on Nadia’s central role in Paris’s salon culture. Lili, on the other hand, was the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome in music. Fauser finds that Lili deliberately adopted the persona of an androgynous “child-genius,” akin to the literary femme fragile, after seeing the misogyny that her sister faced from the competition’s juries in the years previous: “Lili Boulanger’s embodiment of the femme fragile constituted a carefully constructed role, in which she took on the unthreatening aspect of the eternal female who needed the support and help of the strong masculine sex.” Just as Roberts describes, then, both of the Boulanger sisters tempered the potential rebelliousness of their professional activities by adopting variously feminine identities.

WWI, of course, had profound impacts on all aspects of French society, not least as a result of severe demographic shifts, with so many young men killed during the war. Women were left without marriage prospects, and France was left with the possibility of a dwindling population, at a crucial time when it needed to appear as a strong country capable of defending itself against Germany. In her work on women’s identities in this post-war period, Roberts identifies three categories of female identity that shaped post-war France and that helped society refashion itself after the trauma of war. The new woman of the Belle Époque era had shown that feminism and femininity, profession and family, were choices, rather than predetermined destinies.

28 Caroline Potter, Nadia and Lili Boulanger (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).
31 See Roberts, Civilization without Sexes, 9-12, for a summary.
In the post-war period, though, many women experienced professional life and self-sufficiency not by choice, but by necessity, when they failed to meet an appropriate husband. Furthermore, propaganda about the importance of motherhood and domesticity increased as the French government sought to repopulate the country. Roberts analyzes these seemingly conflicting options for female identity, finding three that dominated post-war French society. Roberts constructs the post-war search for gender identity in a sort of dialectic: the “mother” and the new woman stand opposed to each other, representing respectively women’s traditional domestic marital role and the new possibilities for women outside the home. More than just representing traditional domesticity, though, the mother represents France’s future military strength and national security – her domesticity is framed now as a political and national duty, rather than as a function of her inferiority. The new woman, in contrast, represents in part a loss of cultural identity, or the “Americanization” of Europe, and a demasculinization of the public sphere. But as Roberts describes, a third category of female identity, the “single woman,” bridges the two extremes of mother and new woman and establishes a category of unmarried, self-supporting women similar to the new woman, but without the stigma of self-identified feminism:

The third image, of the “single woman,” helped French men and women to negotiate this conflict between tradition and change. The single woman was the name given to the estimated 1.5 to 3 million women who were believed “destined” to remain single because of the war’s mortality and the resulting uneven sex ratio. As a woman who was not expected either to get married or to bear children, the single woman symbolized female identity apart from traditional domesticity – and hence the changing socioeconomic conditions of

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32 Ibid., 9.
postwar life. Poised at the frontier of changing female identities, the single woman symbolized the war’s impact on the social organization of gender.33

The single woman of the post-war era, then, would seem to continue the identity and gender-role negotiations of the pre-war feminine feminist. The single woman claims no political motivations for her professional activities, nor does she publicly shun domesticity. Instead, she secures her survival by adopting the trappings of the new woman, finding self-sufficiency in the public sphere.

The issues raised here in this summary of women’s identities in pre- and post-WWI France inform my work on Tailleferre throughout my dissertation. As a composer and as the only woman in Les Six, Tailleferre was firmly within the new woman or single woman identities. As I show throughout my dissertation, Tailleferre negotiated this potentially transgressive role by adopting the strategy that Roberts identified of performing femininity, especially in her persistent modesty and also in some of her musical choices.34 This strategy allowed Tailleferre a relatively successful career – one free from the potentially damaging label of radical feminist. But, as I show in my second chapter, it led to the general marginalization of Tailleferre as a “woman composer” – as less talented and less successful than her male colleagues. In my subsequent chapters, examining Le marchand d’oiseaux and the Six chansons françaises, I uncover in both works a balance of feminism and femininity that, I argue,

33 Ibid., 11. Roberts documents in detail over the course of her book the ways in which these three identities – generally named in French publications from the 1920s as la mère, la femme moderne, and la femme seule – were constructed and debated.

34 Fauser’s article on women in the Prix de Rome is again pertinent, as Fauser repeatedly explains that women had to convey just the right amount of femininity in their public personae: too little femininity and they would risk being labeled as masculine or as feminist, either way arousing suspicions that they sought to outdo men; too much femininity and they would risk not being taken seriously as composers.
account for their public success and for their relevance to Tailleferre and to the other women involved in their production, performance, and consumption.

**Gynocentrism and Feminist Musicology**

Feminist musicology has, since the 1980s when scholars first became relatively widely interested in women and music, gone through several “waves” or trends. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars were heavily invested in recovery, or compensatory history, as they sought to construct biographies of women and histories of women’s musical activities. As I show in the first part of the second chapter, scholarship on Tailleferre thus far largely falls into this category. In the 1990s, female composers fell out of favor as the subject of musicological scholarship, with feminist scholars favoring a gender- and sexuality-studies approach – that is, interrogating issues of gender and sexuality in canonical composers and works, and interrogating musicological constructions like canonicity and classical-popular and professional-amateur dichotomies that have devalued women’s musical activities and constructed a misogynistic, androcentric scholarly discipline. This approach is undoubtedly valuable, but it resulted in a lessening of attention to women as historical subjects. Recently, though, a sort of “third wave” of feminist musicology is combining the two approaches, recognizing that there is still much work to be done to uncover women, but also recognizing that the largely biographical approach of the 1970s and 1980s was limited in its ability to integrate histories of women and men and to question musicological approaches. Thus with the benefit of the gender scholarship undertaken in the 1990s, feminist scholars can combine nuanced understandings of identity.

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construction and performance and of institutional inequality with the study of un- or little-known women.\(^{36}\)

Two scholars in particular provide models for how the task of recovering female historical subjects can be combined with approaches that question dominant narratives and methodologies. Feminist musicologists Suzanne Cusick, working on Francesca Caccini (1587-after 1641), and Martha Mockus, working on Pauline Oliveros (b. 1932) both posit a gynocentric – female-centered – approach to the study of their respective subjects, arguing that by accounting for relationships between women, scholars can develop a more accurate understanding of their subjects and can expand narratives that are previously constricted by the limits of androcentrism. As my second chapter shows, androcentric musicological preferences for innovation and autonomy, and stereotypical low expectations of female composers have limited reception and scholarship of Tailleferre. As I show in Part I of the chapter, feminist approaches to Tailleferre have largely thus far focused on explaining her exceptional or token status. But as I conclude, she is ultimately viewed as exceptional only up to a point. She overcame certain social, political, educational, and familial barriers that have prevented or discouraged women from claiming composition as a profession. Beyond this, though, the androcentric approach taken by scholars – androcentric in valuing genius, innovation, and autonomy – has limited the scope of Tailleferre’s exceptionalism. She may have been a composer, but within an androcentric value

\(^{36}\) In her review of two works exemplifying recent approaches to studying women, gender, sexuality, and music, Heather Hadlock describes the “waves” of feminist musicology. For the review, see: Heather Hadlock, [Review], *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 61, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 633-645. For the reviewed works, see: Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon, eds., *The Courtesan’s Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Linda Phyllis Austern and Inna Naroditskaya, eds., *Music of the Sirens* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
system, she did not produce music of great value. Even feminist studies of her life and works, such as that by Laura Mitgang, have largely not addressed this challenge, but have simply operated within the feminist goal of recovery. While this is an essential task of feminist scholarship, it alone has done little to disrupt the long-standing hierarchy that devalued Tailleferre’s music in relation to that of her male colleagues, especially in *Les Six*, as outlined in Part II of the second chapter. By taking Cusick’s and Mockus’s approaches as my models, I posit that a gynocentric approach to the examination of Tailleferre’s music and her professional and personal experiences both furthers the task of recovering the details of her life and career beyond *Les Six* and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of gender identity and performance in her career and music. For the remainder of this chapter, I review Cusick’s and Mockus’s gynocentric approaches and outline my own gynocentric approach that I apply to Tailleferre’s ballet and songs in chapters three, four, and five.

I first recognized the possibilities of a gynocentric approach to Tailleferre’s music when I was reading biographies of her in the initial stages of the dissertation process – in fact, this is precisely what urged me to select Tailleferre as my subject (despite having exclaimed adamantly and frequently before this that I wanted a dissertation topic that was not limited to a single composer, a single time period, a single language, a single geographical area, etc.). One of Tailleferre’s biographers, Caroline Potter, author of the substantial and well-documented 1992 biography, mentioned many seemingly rich connections that Tailleferre had with women, though

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Potter tossed off most of them nonchalantly: an all-female group premiered Tailleferre’s string quartet from 1917; a woman was Tailleferre’s collaborator on *Le marchand d’oiseaux*; and, Tailleferre had strong connections with the Princesse de Polignac (née Winnaretta Singer, 1865-1943), Tailleferre’s esteemed patron and heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune. Then Potter really grabbed my attention when she described the *Six chansons françaises* as “a sort of risqué *Frauenliebe und –leben*” and noted that the six songs were dedicated to six of Tailleferre’s female friends. I found myself both surprised and pleased by all of these connections to women. I also found myself frustrated both that Potter and other authors did not elaborate on these female connections and that Tailleferre was so wedged into her traditional token position as the sole female member of *Les Six* and her sometimes-implicitly and sometimes-explicitly named position as the least important member of the group. I wondered right away if I could use the female connections of which Potter wrote to conceive of a sort of female musical community that would be akin to *Les Six*, but that would allow me to distance Tailleferre from the long-standing hierarchization of its members. And so began my dissertation. Only much later, though, with my discovery of the concept of gynocentrism was I satisfactorily able to situate and articulate my approach.

38 Caroline Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983): A Centenary Appraisal,” *Muziek and wetenschap* 2, no.2 (1992): 111, 114. The Princesse de Polignac is an exceedingly important figure in early twentieth-century French music. Through commissions and through her salon, she supported numerous composers and performers (many of whom showed their appreciation by dedicating works to her, Tailleferre’s 1924 Piano Concerto being just one example). Her biographer, Sylvia Kahan, is hardly exaggerating when she explains the rise of French neoclassicism as stemming from the Princesse’s musical preferences: see Sylvia Kahan, *Music’s Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), xvii.

Gynocentrism is central to Cusick’s several decades of research on Caccini, as I explain by examining three articles framing Caccini’s works and biography with a gynocentric approach.\textsuperscript{40} Two such studies appear in anthologies from 1993. In one, titled “‘Thinking from Women’s Lives’: Francesca Caccini after 1627,” Cusick quite literally rewrites history as she discovers that Caccini’s life story did not end soon after her husband’s 1626 death, as had previously been widely understood based on Alessandro Ademollo’s 1888 publication on the composer.\textsuperscript{41} Cusick finds that assumptions of women’s roles and positions, especially as widows, led previous scholars to assume that her husband’s death marked the end of her musical activities. Cusick instead uses the idea of “thinking from women’s lives,” developed by feminist philosopher Sandra Harding, to use Caccini’s relationships with women to uncover personal and professional activities after her first husband’s death.\textsuperscript{42} Cusick discovers a second marriage and numerous instances of professional musical activities, all of which allow her to document Caccini’s movements through the late 1630s. Reflecting on her discoveries, Cusick ends her essay as follows:

From the angle that most likely was Ademollo’s worldview, Francesca Caccini might as well have been dead when, instead, she returned to a gynecentric Florentine musical world in the 1630s. For such a world was not the real world in the ideology of “separate spheres,” which was the commonsensical view of gender in Ademollo’s time. That ideology has been shifting for a generation in

\textsuperscript{40} Cusick has since written a monograph on Caccini, which undoubtedly, though not explicitly, employs a gynocentric approach. I have chosen to use the earlier articles here to demonstrate her use of gynocentrism, as she is more explicit about her approach in the articles than in the book. For the book, see Suzanne G. Cusick, \textit{Francesca Caccini and the Medici Court: Music and the Circulation of Power} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).


our time toward a view of gender in which a gynecentric world can be just as real as any other. Once that shift of angle occurs, once we think of women as having lives beyond the marriage plot (lives from which we might think and act independently), both “facts” and a story about Caccini that have lain beneath our noses for centuries suddenly move into the reality we call history. New questions about the aging Caccini’s activities and the still barely visible world in which early modern women made music for themselves leap forward, begging for answers. We are likely to understand the whole fabric of seventeenth-century musical life better when we incorporate in our view a multiplicity of angles, including those that come of “thinking from women’s lives.”

In “Of Women, Music, and Power: A Model from Seicento Florence,” Cusick focuses her attention on Caccini’s 1625 opera La liberazione de Ruggiero dall’isola d’Alcina. This opera was one of several works commissioned by the Archduchess Maria Maddalena of Austria, a Florentine regent who used the 1625 Carnival to celebrate her daughter’s wedding and, as Cusick explains, to confirm her rule:

Considering the importance to her own career as regent the archduchess assigned to this occasion, it is not surprising that all the surviving works of the 1625 season are to a greater or lesser extent gynocentric: each explores the way a woman’s power might create a benevolent outcome to the plot. By far the most gynocentric of these, and the most original in its exploration of the possibilities of female power within the seicento masterplot, is Caccini’s La liberazione – the one entertainment composed by a woman, and the one paid for from the archduchess’s private fund.

La liberazione di Ruggiero, then, invites reading as a musico-theatrical essay on women’s ways of wielding power within a monarchy-affirming masterplot which, because it conflates the personal and the political, is necessarily patriarchal as well. Such a reading promises us a nearly unique opportunity to learn how the power dynamics of the early seicento, including those of

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43 Cusick, “Francesca Caccini after 1627,” 225. A note regarding spelling: Mockus uses “gynecentric” and Cusick uses “gynecentric” in two of her essays and “gynocentric” in the third. The OED and other dictionaries use “gynocentric” and “gynocentrism.” Thus, I have chosen to use the “o” spelling unless quoting directly from Mockus or Cusick.

patriarchy, could be imagined by women – by the work’s composer, and by its patron.\(^{45}\)

Analyzing characters, plot, text, and music, Cusick determines that while the opera outwardly advocates that women exercise their power by conforming to androcentrism, much as the archduchess herself ruled, Caccini’s music is actually ambiguous in its allegiances, thus potentially challenging patriarchal rule.\(^{46}\) Thirdly, and more recently, Cusick’s epilogue to a 2005 anthology on musical women of the early modern period uncovers Caccini’s place within a fascinating document commissioned by the same archduchess at the center of her earlier essay.\(^{47}\) The greater document, written by Cristoforo Bronzini, is a multi-volume series of dialogues presenting remarkably feminist views of “womanhood’s capacity for excellence.”\(^{48}\) Cusick describes the musical portion of the dialogues as a sort of “parallel universe,” where none of the standard figures or stories feature – especially the birth of opera and the prima/seconda prattica debate – and are replaced instead with a gynocentric world where music exists in chamber and devotional settings in the private home or in convents.\(^{49}\) Though Caccini dominates the dialogues on music, Cusick finds that the exceptionalism that is usually attributed to her is replaced with a treatment that instead positions her as representative of how women could make use of music as a “discourse of power” that is both within the realms of expected decorum for women and available

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 284-285.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 304.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., 426.
\(^{49}\) Ibid., 433.
to servants and nobles alike.\textsuperscript{50} “Together, the women musicians and women patrons in Bronzini’s gynecentric musical world could be imagined as collaborating in the establishment of a civil and political order.”\textsuperscript{51} With this document, then, Cusick herself did not find a gynocentric network within which to situate Caccini and her music, but instead revealed such an approach taken, remarkably, almost 400 years ago.

Oliveros lives centuries after Caccini, but gynocentrism proves a useful tool for Mockus as well as Cusick.\textsuperscript{52} Though Oliveros’s lesbianism – something Mockus views as central to her identity and to her music-making – is entwined in Mockus’s gynecentric approach in a way that is unimportant to my research on Tailleferre (as a heterosexual woman), Oliveros’s position within androcentric musicological narratives shares remarkable similarities with descriptions of Tailleferre and \textit{Les Six}, as is evident in Mockus’s introduction:

Previous scholarship on Pauline Oliveros…locat[es] her life and work as a disciple of John Cage and a lesser contemporary of composers Terry Riley, Lou Harrison, Gordon Mumma, and Robert Ashley. While she is often discussed in music histories of the twentieth century, she is positioned as the only woman working in experimental music. Furthermore, because most musicological narratives focus on the male-dominated field of composition, too many scholarly accounts of Oliveros’s work perpetuate sexist and heterosexist assumptions, trivializing her commitment to feminism and her life as a lesbian. \textit{Sounding Out} recontextualizes Oliveros’s music by placing her female colleagues, friends, and lovers at the center of her musicality. I argue that the \textit{women} in Oliveros’s life were far more important sources of creative energy and exchange than her male colleagues. These women inspired and challenged Oliveros’s radical aesthetic innovations during a crucial moment in

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 441.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Martha Mockus, \textit{Sounding Out: Pauline Oliveros and Lesbian Musicality} (New York: Routledge, 2008). I discovered gynocentrism and the possibilities of its application to feminist musicology when an anonymous reader – in response to my submission of my work on Tailleferre’s \textit{Six chansons françaises} to the journal \textit{Woman and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture} – recommended Mockus’s work on Pauline Oliveros. I am very grateful to the reader for this suggestion.
women’s history. Resituating Oliveros in a gynecentric network of feminist activists, writers, artists, and musicians critiques the masculinist musicological narrative that would confine her to the margins of twentieth-century music, and deepens our knowledge of the second wave of the feminist movement, especially its internal discontinuities.\(^53\)

As I show in Part II of my second chapter, approaches to narratives of Tailleferre’s life have been strikingly similar, with the male members of *Les Six* providing the counterparts to Cage, Riley, Harrison, Mumma, and Ashley (who would, conveniently for me, make six with Oliveros) and serving to relegate Tailleferre “to the margins of twentieth-century music.” Mockus describes Oliveros as being “positioned as the only woman working in experimental music” just as Tailleferre is defined as the only woman in *Les Six*. Mockus describes this androcentrism as directly responsible for the subordination of Oliveros with regards to her male colleagues and the “trivialization” of her feminist and lesbian identity.

Of course, the parallels between Tailleferre and Oliveros are not infinite. The two generations that separate Tailleferre and Oliveros mean that Oliveros benefited from the consciousness-raising and community-building activities of second-wave feminism, thus situating feminist thought as central to Oliveros’s life experiences. And from the scholar’s perspective, Mockus’s subject is not only alive, but was a full participant in Mockus’s research: Mockus interviewed the composer on numerous occasions and participated in Oliveros’s musical retreats.\(^54\) Mockus, then, was able to ask Oliveros about her music, her relationships, her sexuality, and her feminism;

\(^53\) Ibid., 3 (italics original).
\(^54\) Ibid., vii, 14-15.
Oliveros could comment on Mockus’s theories, her scholarship, and her book. In fact, the back cover of Mockus’s book begins with a comment from Oliveros herself:

*Sounding Out* is powerfully original and has given me a place in the field where I am no longer an outsider in a man-made music world. Martha Mockus’ [sic] insights provide previously unknown connections to my music, and she proves the feeling level in music that theorists often leave untouched. Her sensitive treatment of the material in this book affects me personally and brings out much that has been invisible or unavailable until now.55

Perhaps more importantly in marking the differences between Oliveros and Tailleferre is that Oliveros’s homosexuality lends an additional level to the centrality of her relationships with women. Undoubtedly, Oliveros’s lesbianism is central to Mockus’s study of her music and thus to her understanding of gynocentrism. But whereas the “gynecentric network” was for Mockus a crucial element of Oliveros’s “lesbian musicality,” Cusick has already provided a model for applying a similar approach to a heterosexual composer. Thus, I see the “gynecentric network” as offering its own suitable and fruitful approach to understanding Tailleferre’s music and career, without necessarily leading to lesbian musical aesthetics. Nevertheless, considerations of sexuality are certainly pertinent, as Tailleferre’s gynecentric networks included lesbian and gay composers, artists, and patrons, and homosocial networks, as will be shown at various points throughout my dissertation.

**Gynocentrism and Tailleferre**

Having given some examples of gynecentric approaches in feminist musicology, I want, now, to establish my own. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines gynecentric as “centred on, dominated by, or concerned exclusively with women;
taking a female or a feminist point of view,” and gynocentrism as “dominant or exclusive focus on women; gynocentric theory or practice; the advocacy of this,” and traces use of the words to the early and mid-twentieth century respectively. As a basis, these definitions are suitable, with the exception of the notion of exclusivity – I am not interested in using gynocentrism as a form of segregation or separatism. For now, though, I want to be more specific about defining my gynocentric approach to studying Tailleferre. As such, I have identified three elements of my gynocentric approach: first, identifying female networks, second, situating Tailleferre and her music within such networks, and third, analyzing music according to aesthetics, ideas, and issues that would be valued within such networks. The goal of such an approach is to expand scholarly understanding of Tailleferre and to address and potentially revalue some of her musical works apart from the androcentric musicological approaches that have been applied thus far, using Les Six to subordinate her worth.

Having explained what my gynocentric approach is, I need now caution the reader against certain assumptions about my approach. This cautionary note takes the form of a list of five things about which my approach is not. First, my approach should not be taken as a rejection of Les Six and the group’s importance to Tailleferre, 


57 Having written this list, I came across a similarly constructed cautionary note by Ellie Hisama in her analysis of musical modernism in the works of three female composers: Ellie M. Hisama, Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10-11. Like me, Hisama cautions against interpreting her work as representative of the women’s entire oeuvres and explains that she is not concerned with finding or listing common techniques or elements in their compositions. Additionally, her concerns of composer intention, and gender and modernism are applicable to the individual pieces that I study (the former to Tailleferre’s Six chansons françaises and the latter to Le marchand d’oiseaux), but are not appropriate for discussion in my own list.
or as a rejection of Tailleferre’s relationships with male colleagues, friends, and mentors. Les Six was undoubtedly important to Tailleferre, personally and professionally, but it is not her only professional or social network and it does not account for all of her professional achievements. A gynocentric approach thus offers an opportunity to expand beyond the network of Les Six, which I see as being used by critics and musicologists as an androcentric tool to limit Tailleferre’s worth. In fact, the group’s identity would be well served by a more nuanced understanding of its androcentrism: the homosexuality and dandyism of some of the group members and their acquaintances is out of step with patriarchal interpretations of the group.58 Recent work on Poulenc and his homosexuality goes a long way in deconstructing the gender-and heteronormativity presumed in androcentric approaches generally taken towards Les Six.59 Secondly, my approach should not be understood as attempting to segregate Tailleferre’s music – women’s music – from men’s music. In the past, segregation has been used as a way of subordinating women’s music, often by delineating public from private, absolute from programmatic, large-scale from chamber, autonomous from biographical, and universal from personal, and in each of these binaries, prioritizing the former. This negative application of a gynocentric approach has been used to judge women’s music as inferior and to justify its omission from the canon. Instead of this, then, my gynocentric approach argues that Tailleferre’s relationships with women could be as important – sometimes more important – than her relationships with men,

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58 Cusick rightly emphasized early in my dissertation work that the gender and sexual identity of Les Six and its members should be thought of from a fluid and spectral viewpoint, rather than from stock categories of male, heterosexual, etc.

59 See Richard D. E. Burton, Francis Poulenc (Bath: Absolute, 2002).
and that they help reveal elements of her music that have been otherwise overlooked or undervalued. Thirdly, building on this last point, my gynocentric approach is not concerned with finding a female or feminine aesthetic – that is, common techniques or approaches across Tailleferre’s music (or women’s generally) – as I do not believe such a thing exists.\(^6\) In other words, my gynocentric approach might reveal elements of Tailleferre’s music that have otherwise been overlooked or undervalued, but I am not interested in listing these elements or in plotting their existence throughout her oeuvre. Fourthly, and again building on this last point, by taking a gynocentric approach with some of Tailleferre’s music, I am not suggesting that it is a suitable approach for her entire oeuvre, or even for a majority of her music. Theoretically, my gynocentric approach could be applied to all of Tailleferre’s works, but this would be to more or less success, depending on the piece. Ultimately, though, this is of little concern to me, as it would simply be adopting the androcentric musicological

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\(^6\) Sally Macarthur’s book on feminist aesthetics ends with an informative enunciation of the challenge facing the feminist musicologist regarding this issue (see chapter eight): Sally Macarthur, *Feminist Aesthetics in Music* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002). Like me, she urges a valuation of the music she is studying based on its difference – its value to women. But, she notes that she risks “being accused of being an essentialist” (176). She finds it difficult to negotiate the potential balancing act, but does in fact posit a firm statement about her scholarship: “My hunch is that because women’s music does not conform to patriarchal ideas about beauty, it is viewed as inferior. My aim, then, is to offer alternative ways of thinking about, and discussing, this music in order to show that it is possible to write about it in meaningful ways. Part of the process involved asking different kinds of questions in order to arrive at different kinds of conclusions” (176). This approach – avoiding patriarchal value systems – is similar to my own. Unlike me, though, Macarthur ultimately does establish a definition of feminist aesthetics based on the works that she studies, but explained as potentially suitable in describing all music by women. She finds that the “act of transgression” (176) is a commonality in women’s music: “I suggest that the ideal in music is associated with a masculine aesthetic, otherwise disguised as a neutral aesthetic. Women have had to struggle against a sense of self-alienation because their music has seemed to be different from the masculinist aesthetic ideal. Women’s music is not assessable in terms of that ideal. As a consequence, I suggest that their struggle, even if occurring on a subconscious level, has given rise to difference” (177). While I am ultimately uncomfortable with the notion that all music by female composers is transgressive, Macarthur’s book offers a useful complementary approach.
My gynocentric approach reveals interesting elements of some of Tailleferre’s compositions, and this is all I want and need from it. Fifthly and finally, my gynocentric approach does not involve studying only Tailleferre’s female networks and their relationships to particular compositions. Instead, gynocentrism and Tailleferre’s female relationships allow the exploration of certain pieces of music and the discovery of certain central issues. Such issues become the organizing elements of my studies, but should not be taken as eclipsing gynocentrism, as they in fact arise from and are complementary to the gynocentric approach.

Having outlined a description of my gynocentric approach, I want to comment on its usefulness and on its place in a spectrum of possible approaches. I want to acknowledge that my approach may seem extreme. One the one hand, if this reaction arises from a concern that my approach involves a radical rejection of men akin to 1970s separatist feminism, then my response is that this is simply not my goal, nor would it be an appropriate approach with Tailleferre, who clearly had important relationships with men. On the other hand, if a gynocentric approach is considered extreme because it is dichotomous to traditionally androcentric scholarly approaches, then I acknowledge this to be the case. The reader might wonder why an opposite extreme would be useful, why I would not prefer a middle ground, why I would want to exchange one “centrism” with another, and why a “centrism” is even desirable (are “centrisms” not usually negative in their connotations?). In fact, I view the discomfort

\[61\] Biddle and Gibson are succinct and informative in their discussion of canonicity as arising from nineteenth-century androcentric projects of cataloguing and hierarchizing cultural artifacts and practices. See Biddle and Gibson, *Masculinity*, 2.
that may arise from my approach as productive in highlighting the inadequacies of
default androcentric approaches and in illuminating the relevance of otherwise
overlooked relationships and social networks.

After presenting in the second chapter two historiographies on scholarship on
Tailleferre and on Les Six, which show the androcentric approach taken in both cases
and the limits this placed on Tailleferre’s reception, the remainder of the dissertation
involves the close study of two of Tailleferre’s compositions that have strong ties to
networks of women. These two works are relatively unstudied, in part, I argue,
because of their gynocentrism and the attendant musical implications. They are also,
as I show, central to Tailleferre’s career and personal life.

The first composition is Tailleferre’s 1923 ballet Le marchand d’oiseaux (The
Bird Merchant). The work was composed for the Ballets Suédois (the Swedish Ballet),
and thus was choreographed by Jean Börlin, who also danced the title role. He was
one of the few men involved with this work. The others were another male dancer, the
male conductor (and presumably male orchestra musicians, though they have not
featured in my research), and the Ballets Suédois’ male impresario, Rolf de Maré (also
Börlin’s lover). Otherwise, the creative and performance teams were all female.
Tailleferre’s music accompanied the scenario and set and costume designs by Hélène
Perdriat, and the scenario involved two sisters and numerous other female characters.
In part because of this high percentage of female characters and artists, and also
because of perceptions of femininity in various elements of the work – all of which I
analyze in depth – the work has been considered rather traditional, and consequently
excluded from performance and scholarly canons because of its lack of innovation.
My work on the ballet attempts to reconcile this reception with the immense popularity of the work in the few years after its premiere. The overarching narrative thus entails questioning ideas about modernism and 1920s Parisian ballet.

The second case study involves Tailleferre’s 1929 song cycle, *Six chansons françaises* (Six French Songs). The collection was written immediately after the disastrous end to Tailleferre’s first marriage, as she grappled with the trauma of marital violence, divorce, and miscarriage. The gynocentric network surrounding the six songs consists of the six women to whom each of the songs are dedicated, the female performers of the songs – including Jane Bathori (1877-1970), a singer who performed many songs by the *Les Six* composers – and the female characters portrayed in the songs’ texts. If this group of women is not already fascinating enough, the texts of the songs present remarkably caustic tales of marital disharmony. I present a biographical reading of the songs, interpreting them as a key element of Tailleferre’s recovery process. With particular regard to the gynocentric network surrounding the songs, I reference trauma literature that emphasizes the importance of community in recovering from trauma.

Following these two studies, I close the dissertation by reflecting on the gynocentric approach and by offering thoughts on its further potential within Tailleferre’s oeuvre.
CHAPTER 2. TAILLEFERRE AND LES SIX: HISTORIOGRAPHIES

In this chapter, I undertake two historiographies: the first of biographies of Tailleferre, the second of writings on Les Six. In Part I, by comparing scholarship on Tailleferre and analyzing it from a feminist perspective, I establish that the bulk of research was undertaken with a now-outdated view of compositional genius. Though scholars take pains to describe Tailleferre’s talents and career activities and achievements, they ultimately lament her inability to achieve the same status as her male colleagues without either conceding that the obstacles placed in her path as a result of her gender made this impossible or questioning the narrowness of the genius model. The second historiographical analysis, in Part II, shifts focus to writings on Les Six. After discussing the group’s inception and activities, I thoroughly examine literature in order to understand how Tailleferre’s place in musicological scholarship compares to those of her male colleagues in Les Six. I find that the bulk of authors hierarchize the members of Les Six such that Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc are established as the three superior members of the group, with Auric, Durey, and Tailleferre being viewed as less prolific, less successful, and less talented in comparison. Tailleferre is frequently given the least attention from authors and discussions of her music are rare. Worse still, authors are sometimes remarkably caustic in their description of the female member of Les Six. This historiographical approach to my first chapter not only informs the reader about Tailleferre’s life and career, about scholarship on Tailleferre, and about reception of Tailleferre and Les Six, but also systematically documents the effects of misogyny in scholarship and reception, thus demonstrating the need for a new approach to research on Tailleferre.
PART I. SHE WAS NOT A MAN: ANALYZING BIOGRAPHIES OF TAILLEFERRE

Despite her ninety-one-year-long life and her devotion of all but her earliest years to music, Tailleferre receives only a two-paragraph article in *Grove Music Online*. The second of the two paragraphs begins as follows:

Unfortunately, Tailleferre never regained the acclaim she had enjoyed through her early associations with *Les Six*. Two unhappy marriages (to the caricaturist Ralph Barton in 1926 and to the lawyer Jean Lageat in 1931) proved a considerable drain on her creative energies, and her continual financial problems led her to compose mostly to commission, resulting in many uneven and quickly written works. Also, her natural modesty and unjustified sense of artistic insecurity prevented her from promoting herself properly, and she regarded herself primarily as an artisan who wrote optimistic, accessible music as “a release” from the difficulties of her private life.¹

Thus, Tailleferre is described as a composer who gained popularity only on the coattails of her male colleagues in *Les Six*. Once the group had ceased performing together regularly in the mid-1920s, her compositional talents and self-confidence were not great enough to maintain her popularity, demoting her to the realm of artisan and hobbyist when her finances were secure and to the realm of artistic hack when her finances were unstable.

On one hand, Tailleferre’s life was of course more nuanced than the few sentences above can possibly describe. On the other hand, the few sentences above are not completely misleading. But they do paint a picture of Tailleferre that is colored with stereotypes of female composers. They almost seem to point to a template that simply requires that a proper noun be inserted, perhaps like this: though *blank* achieved some acclaim early in her career by performing with her male friends and

colleagues, once her male counterparts established their own careers and once her youth gave way to maturity and marriage, the possibilities for a serious career in music dwindled. This first part of the chapter explores such templates and how they have been employed to tell Tailleferre’s life. Examining the limited English scholarship available on the composer (three chapter-length biographies were written in the 1980s and 1990s), I consider both the ways in which Tailleferre’s biography is amenable to being told through stock templates and the ways in which biographers adopt or avoid such patterns. In addition, as the three biographies of Tailleferre are relatively similar in length and in structure, this examination of them will involve comparison and critique as relevant. I also address French publications on Tailleferre and more recent biographies appearing in anthologies of female composers and their music. I preface my analysis of Tailleferre’s biographies with a foray into feminist literary theory in order to ground my own analysis.

*Writing a Woman’s Life*

Carolyn G. Heilbrun’s 1988 book *Writing a Woman’s Life* explores issues in writing biographies of women.² Heilbrun describes part of the aim of her book as “examin[ing] how women’s lives have been contrived.”³ All biographies are “contrived” in some respects, but in the case of a woman, past and prevailing gendered and social constructs intervene between the subject and the biographer in such a way that the events in her life are distilled to depictions of rebellion or conformity. Her gender, the reigning expectations for her gender, and the manner in which she fulfils

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³ Ibid., 18.
or challenges these expectations become the story of her life. Once reduced to a series of instances of rebelling against or conforming to societal expectations, certain patterns can be traced among women’s biographies.

Though Heilbrun does not concern herself exclusively with establishing a list of stock templates ascribed to women’s lives, she addresses many of them, to varying degrees, throughout her book. In an effort to approach them more systematically, I categorize these patterns under the following headings: “the private woman,” “the public woman,” and “woman creating identity.” By dividing her approach to writing women’s lives into these three categories, I situate a woman’s biography as a means of establishing identity.

The first of the three categories of stock templates, the private woman, is concerned with gendered and societal constructs that serve to limit a woman’s sphere to marriage, motherhood, and home life. The woman is thereby established as less powerful than her male relatives (father, brother, husband). The most obvious formulation of stock templates in this category involves a woman defined by the men in her life and by her dependents: woman as wife, daughter, and mother. Thus, stock templates such as the dutiful mother, the supportive wife, or the obedient daughter establish possibilities for rebellion or conformity. If these roles are understood as predetermined fates for a woman, then instances of rebelling against or conforming to these roles can result in their dominance over other aspects of her biography. Matthew Head’s work on pianist Charlotte “Minna” Brandes (1765-1788), who died too early to have become a wife or mother, presents an example of a woman destined to be
remembered as an obedient daughter.⁴ According to Head, in order to justify her compositions and avoid criticisms of her as transgressing her expected role, Minna’s father J. C. Brandes wrote a memorial biography of her that framed her compositional career as concerned with private music and pedagogically useful music, and as serving for Minna as a retreat from the stresses of the world and of her impending death. In his efforts to preserve his own social standing by casting his daughter in the only appropriate role for an unmarried young woman of the upper-middle class, J. C. Brandes suppressed information about his daughter’s compositional activities to the point of censorship.

Heilbrun calls a woman’s destiny as wife and mother the “marriage plot.”⁵ The marriage plot “demands not only that a woman marry but that the marriage and its progeny be her life’s absolute and only center.”⁶ In effect, the marriage plot suggests that a woman’s life does not begin until she marries, but ends at the same time: she is incomplete as long as she is striving for a husband and permitted no other striving once she has found him. Heilbrun puts it thus: “The woman must entrap the man to ensure herself a center for her life. The rest is aging and regret.”⁷ According to Heilbrun, the confinement to the private sphere (the home) that this marriage plot involves for the woman is established in childhood, when the father forces femininity

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⁵ Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman’s Life*, 51. The term is borrowed from literary criticism, where it is widely used with regards to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels that focus on bourgeois marriage and courtship rituals.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 21.
and its traditional roles upon his daughters, despite their talents, in order to maintain his own masculinity.⁸

The second of the three categories of stock templates, the public woman, is concerned with gendered and societal constructs that serve to explain a woman’s existence in the public sphere (outside the home and family). In this case, the condition of rebellion is emphasized over conformity, as the simple act of functioning within the traditionally male public sphere involves defying societal expectations. Examining the possibilities (or lack thereof) for women within the public sphere becomes increasingly important over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the one hand, increasing attention was given to women’s rights and as a result, women gained access to traditionally male roles. But as Heilbrun emphasizes, on the other hand, these advances in women’s rights simply allowed women access to a patriarchy. She quotes literary scholar Mary Jacobus: “This access to a male-dominated culture may equally be felt to bring with it alienation, repression, division – a silencing of the ‘feminine’.⁹ Thus, the woman is faced with a double-edged sword: in order to be successful within the male-dominated public sphere, she must give up her femininity; but as Heilbrun also discusses, giving up her femininity simply invites criticism of attempting to be masculine – this is not something praised, but rather something chided as “shrill”, “strident”, or “feminist.”¹⁰ Dame Ethel Smyth could be considered an extreme example of a woman whose femininity is called into question as a result of her place in the public sphere. An extreme example, because later in life

⁸ Ibid., 69-70.
¹⁰ Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman’s Life*, 15, 16.
she deliberately cultivated an identity as “strident feminist” in her involvement with
the British suffragist movement; but as Jane A. Bernstein points out at the beginning
of her essay on Smyth, critics (men) voiced their confusion, well before Smyth’s
political involvement in feminism, over the conflict between her own identity as a

The exceptional woman who is able to achieve some success within the public
sphere is often categorized as abnormal and alone in her success and breaking the
rules of society. Heilbrun categorizes this success as the result of the “quest plot,”\footnote{Heilbrun, \textit{Writing a Woman’s Life}, 48.} usually available only to men, not women. In order for a woman to adopt a quest plot
successfully – meaning without criticism from the patriarchy – an event beyond her
control must intervene in the assumed marriage plot.\footnote{Ibid.} Hildegard von Bingen is a
useful example of a woman whose quest plot is justified by drastic life events. By
choosing to place her in a convent as a child, her parents made the marriage plot
unavailable to her. As an adult, she justified her ambitions for expanding her convent
and her activities as a teacher, author, and composer – the fulfillment of her quest plot
– as obedience to divine command.

But Hildegard’s example, where the marriage plot is so completely
sidetracked, is rare. In most cases, women are not given such a clean break from the
marriage plot. If they exhibit tendencies toward the quest plot, they will most likely be
forced to negotiate between both marriage and career. Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

\footnote{Ibid.}
offers an example of a woman who attempted to fulfill familial and societal expectations for her gender while also achieving success as a musician and composer. As Nancy B. Reich’s essay on Hensel demonstrates, issues of gender, religion, family, tradition, intellectual beliefs, and class stifled Hensel’s potential for a public career. But portrayals of Hensel’s attempts to negotiate both the marriage plot and the quest plot vary in the degree of rebellion described, depending on their agendas. Hensel’s son’s biography of her and the rest of the family emphasizes his mother’s home life and her private music-making in order to establish his mother as conforming to nineteenth-century expectations for a woman of her class. More recent scholarship on Hensel has taken the opposite approach, emphasizing Hensel’s desire to publish – a desire suppressed by her father and brother. Marian Wilson Kimber has been critical of these more recent portrayals of Hensel’s suppressed rebellion, finding them exaggerated in order to make her a viable subject of musical scholarship.

Suppression as a result of gender handicaps female composers just as deafness handicapped Beethoven or madness handicapped Schumann. Thus, just as Hensel’s son’s emphasis of his mother’s conformity to the marriage plot furthers his own agenda, so musicologists’ emphasis of her struggle to adopt the quest plot (equating to a rebellion against the marriage plot, though, of course, Hensel did marry) helps them achieve their agenda of including Hensel in the canon of great composers.


The third of the three categories of stock templates, woman creating identity, involves aspects of each of the preceding categories, but focuses especially on agency in the creation of public and private identities. Heilbrun notes that biographers of women are often faced with their subjects’ desire to be something else or to escape their own identity. In the case of women entering the public sphere (attempting the quest plot), this could be portrayed as a desire to be a man or, similarly, a desire not to be a woman (attempting to avoid the marriage plot). In her examples of female writers, Heilbrun notes that this escape from femininity can come in the form of publishing anonymously (as Virginia Woolf did in her early career), publishing under a male pseudonym (George Eliot, for example), or exploring other identities through the characters of their novels. These examples illustrate an important aspect of identity in regards to women: the cultivation of distinct public and private personae. In discussing the public and private lives of men, Heilbrun states: “We hardly expect the career of an accomplished man to be presented as being in fundamental conflict with the demands of his marriage and children; he can allow his public life to expand occasionally into the private sphere without guilt or disorder.” Women, on the other hand, risk accusations of abandoning their husbands and children if they are presented as being heavily invested in their careers. As a strategy to avoid these accusations, Heilbrun finds that many women adopt modesty as the dominating aspect of their public persona. Heilbrun quotes the work of scholar Patricia Spacks, who finds that women’s autobiographies are full of what she calls “a rhetoric of uncertainty,” aimed

16 Heilbrun, Writing a Woman’s Life, 21, 111-12.
17 Ibid., 112.
18 Ibid., 25.
at diminishing their own responsibility for their successes. The case of Clara Schumann provides an excellent example of this: she repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with her compositional abilities, including in her marriage diaries, which her husband would have read. Nancy B. Reich finds herself unable to explain this continued self-doubt, but notes, importantly, that it surfaces only in regards to Schumann’s compositional abilities, not in regards to her abilities as a pianist. This is significant, because the realm of composer is the most masculine of the musical arts, and it is this realm in which her husband made his career. Expressing her own inability to match her husband’s talents serves to confirm both his superiority in the public sphere and her acceptance of her role as wife and mother.

Heilbrun’s discussions of identity in women of the twentieth century show patterns of increased self-assuredness among women as they mature. She finds two levels of maturity. The first comes generally in the early thirties, after a period of exceptional insecurity, which Heilbrun notes that Erik Erikson named “the moratorium.” The period of security that follows the moratorium is significant

19 Qtd. in ibid., 23.
20 The Schumanns kept diaries together during the first few years of their marriage: they would both contribute entries and would read and comment on each other’s writing. See Robert Schumann and Clara Schumann, The Marriage Diaries of Robert & Clara Schumann: From their Wedding Day Through the Russia Trip, ed. Gerd Nauhaus, trans. Peter Ostwald (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993).
22 The case of the Schumanns is complicated further by Robert’s difficulties in maintaining a successful performing and conducting career – Clara could be considered more successful than him, then, in the performing aspect of their professions. Nevertheless, the argument about Clara’s retreat from composing can be assessed separately.
23 Heilbrun, Writing a Woman’s Life, 49. Erikson’s term refers to a period of intense identity formation in late adolescence and early adulthood – a time when a person can explore his or her various options for maturity, without need for commitment. As Heilbrun suggests, this period can be experienced as traumatic, primarily because of the lack of commitment required. See Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, vol. 1 (New York: Norton, 1980).
enough to encourage a woman to enter the public sphere (Heilbrun cites Virginia Woolf and George Eliot as examples). The second level of maturity comes much later in life and has especially been experienced by women maturing in or after the second half of the twentieth century. In this period of a woman’s life, she is beyond the control of the marriage plot and is free to reflect on and construct her own identity. Heilbrun criticizes biographers who gloss over these golden years as an insignificant period of gradual decline; instead, she finds that women take advantage of the social security that old age affords them (or of their new-found indifference to societal expectations) in order to establish themselves as individuals. Perhaps Ethel Smyth can be offered again as an extreme example of the security that maturity can bring to a woman: in the early 1910s, while in her early fifties, Smyth campaigned intensely for the British suffragist movement and in the 1920s she became an author and expressed candidly her thoughts on sexuality.

**Writing Tailleferre’s Life**

These patterns in writing a woman’s biography provide perspective on the three English-language biographies of Tailleferre’s life and works, published in the 1980s and 1990s. The three short biographical chapters take different approaches and tones. Following a summary of each biography, I compare their portrayals of Tailleferre in terms of models of women’s biographies.

The earliest of the three biographies, published in 1984-1985 by Laura Mitgang, was largely informed by her master’s thesis on Tailleferre and by interviews

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25 Ibid., 131.
she conducted with the composer and her circle in 1982 and 1983.\textsuperscript{27} The longest and most thorough of the three, it blends biography, musical analysis, quotations from primary sources, and critical commentary. It has paved the way for much of the research into Tailleferre since her article. Though interviews provide important details about Tailleferre’s life and career, Mitgang supplies remarkably few quotations from the interviews.\textsuperscript{28} While she recognizes that Tailleferre’s educational and career opportunities and family experiences were shaped by her gender, the interpretations seem simplistic in light of later feminist scholarship.

Caroline Potter’s biography of Tailleferre was published in 1992 along with a comprehensive list of works compiled by Robert Orledge to commemorate the centenary of Tailleferre’s birth.\textsuperscript{29} Concerned that little attention had been given to Tailleferre’s career, Potter focuses her discussion on Tailleferre’s works, which takes precedence over non-musical events in Tailleferre’s life. Potter finds Tailleferre’s musical style lively, strong, and humorous, all qualities that she sees as making it worthy of more attention from scholars and performers alike. She recognizes, though, that Tailleferre’s significant self-borrowing and modesty have posed challenges for the longevity of her music.

The most recent biography is the first section in independent scholar Robert Shapiro’s bio-bibliography of Tailleferre, the least scholarly and the most problematic


\textsuperscript{28} See ibid., 221, for a list of all interviews. Tailleferre was interviewed four times in January 1982 and June 1983.

of the three. Shapiro provides no citations for any of his material, including only a brief source list at the end of the biography, and offers no direct quotations from Tailleferre or anyone else. Though Tailleferre’s works are mentioned, he attempts no musical analysis, discussing works only in terms of the situation of their composition, and using vague (and gendered) adjectives like light, joyous, or singing. Save for two paragraphs addressing historiographical issues, there is no critical commentary. Shapiro does not acknowledge Tailleferre’s gender as requiring special attention, nor does he feel that her gender limited her opportunities as a composer and musician. Shapiro’s discussion of Tailleferre’s life can be summarized as a watered-down series of events from birth to death as follows: exceptional child; prodigious but disobedient young woman; female composer in a male world whose career is stalled by insecurity; married woman and mother whose career is stalled by familial duties; struggling and aging woman who turns to less prestigious musical employment like radio and film composing, accompanying, and teaching to support herself and her family; and finally, frail elderly woman.

In contrast, both Potter and Mitgang present Tailleferre’s life in a more nuanced manner, though to varying degrees of effectiveness. Both biographers address the role that Tailleferre’s gender had in shaping her career, and both biographers include lengthy quotations from primary sources, giving Tailleferre agency in her own

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30 Robert Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1-29. A note regarding genre: the bio-bibliography seems particular to Greenwood Press, which has published almost one hundred books of the same format. A note regarding usefulness: if it were not for the fact that there is simply so little published scholarship available on Tailleferre, I would discredit Shapiro’s work completely and exclude it from all study. But on the other hand, though the biography is fraught with problems, his bibliography is useful.

31 Ibid., 13-14.
life and situating hers as a life that interacted with others. Mitgang, for example, opens her article with a discussion of the problem of femininity, citing Milhaud, Auric, and Roland-Manuel (1891-1966; composer, music critic, and close friend and colleague of the Les Six composers) explaining their interpretations of Tailleferre’s music and its perceived femininity. She also cites a passage on the subject from one of her interviews with Tailleferre:

> What difference does it make? The essential thing is that it be music. I do not see a reason why I shouldn’t write what I feel. If it gives the impression of being feminine, that is fine. I was never tormented by explanations. I tried to do the best I could, but I never asked myself if it was feminine or not. You can say that my music is neither masculine nor feminine. It is just plain music. This is what I try to do: I do what I want.\(^{32}\)

As a method for comparing and critiquing the three biographies closely, I apply the same categories outlined in the previous section: the private woman, the public woman, and woman creating identity. Being that Tailleferre was, among other things, a daughter, wife, and composer, much of her biography is concerned with the relationships she had with the men in her life. Addressing the first of the three categories of stock templates available for describing a woman’s life, the private woman, I focus first on Tailleferre’s role as daughter, wife, and mother in order to describe her life as a fulfillment of the marriage plot.

> All three biographies establish Tailleferre’s relationship with her father as problematic: one that establishes early in her life a conflict between the marriage plot and the quest plot. Despite her innate talent for music, Tailleferre’s father emphatically opposed her study of it. Both Shapiro and Potter emphasize that he

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likened a woman studying music to a woman prostituting herself, based on Tailleferre’s own memoir in which she recalls her father shouting his protestation.\textsuperscript{33} She writes: “…my father, violent, full of his bourgeois principles, shouted at the top of his voice: ‘For my daughter, to be at the Conservatoire or to walk Saint-Michel [to walk as a prostitute on the street], it is the same thing. Never would I give my authorization!’”\textsuperscript{34} Tailleferre is aided in studying music by her musically inclined and sympathetic mother. Though Mitgang does not convey the analogy of music with prostitution, she emphasizes the conflicts that occurred between Tailleferre’s parents and places Tailleferre’s mother as her daughter’s advocate:

Mme. Tailleferre, without consulting her husband, arranged for Germaine to play for one of the teachers at the Conservatoire de Paris. When Mme. Sautereau-Meyer accepted the gifted child, Tailleferre’s parents quarreled bitterly over allowing her to attend. Her mother helped her to practice secretly while her father was at work.

In 1904, Tailleferre entered the Conservatoire, where she studied solfège with Mme. Sautereau-Meyer through 1906. Her father continued to object and finally sent her to a convent school. In spite of this, Tailleferre earned a first prize in solfège and began to teach to earn money for her clothes and tuition. This was the first of many times in her life when she would work to support herself and her art.\textsuperscript{35}

Regardless of the details, all three of the biographers establish Tailleferre’s early life as one of rebellion: rebellion against her father’s wishes and thus against societal expectations and the marriage plot.

\textsuperscript{33} Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 110; Shapiro, \textit{Germaine Tailleferre}, 2.


\textsuperscript{35} Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 180.
This resistance to the marriage plot continued throughout Tailleferre’s early life. Her exceptional talent is noted by all of the biographers, a talent that is quantified by the numerous medals and prizes she won during her studies. Presumably due in part to the successes she had as a member of *Les Six* in the early 1920s, Tailleferre did not get married until 1926, when she was well into her thirties, to New York caricaturist Ralph Barton (1891-1931). The couple’s courtship was non-existent, as Tailleferre accepted her soon-to-be husband’s marriage proposal the first day they met. The suddenness of this relationship has been treated differently by each of the biographers: Mitgang makes no mention of the non-existent courtship, Shapiro suggests that Tailleferre had given up on love after being rejected in a previous relationship such that she was just glad to have been offered the chance at marriage at all, and Potter finds that Tailleferre was encouraged by friends to accept the proposal.36 In any case, it is unlikely that Tailleferre could have been in love with someone whom she had known only a few hours: the concept of marriage as her ultimate duty or as a necessary source of financial security certainly could have been looming in her conscious or unconscious mind.

Though all three biographers acknowledge Tailleferre’s marriage as difficult for her, they do so to varying degrees. Shapiro notes that Tailleferre’s husband was jealous of the attention paid to his wife, especially for her compositions and musical talents, but Shapiro embeds this among passages that emphasize the wealth and social networking that Barton offered Tailleferre: he introduced her to numerous

36 Ibid., 194; Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre*, 11; Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 115. Refer to chapter five for more information.
intellectuals, artists, and celebrities both in New York and in France and bought a house in France that was so lavish that it was featured in the most exclusive magazines.\textsuperscript{37} In addition, despite the earlier mention of jealousy on Barton’s part, Shapiro paints the marriage as a reciprocal artistic venture, for in 1928 and 1929 they each dedicated one of their own works to the other.\textsuperscript{38} Potter’s biography, with its focus on music, does not elaborate on the difficulties of the marriage, beyond the inclusion of a brief quote from Tailleferre in which she explains why she could not travel to Hollywood with Charlie Chaplin to compose for his movies: “I forgot that as a married woman…a young woman is never free.”\textsuperscript{39} Mitgang makes more of the relationship between Tailleferre and Chaplin and emphasizes that Barton specifically opposed a Hollywood collaboration between the two.\textsuperscript{40} Mitgang goes further in analyzing the marriage, noting similarities between it and Tailleferre’s second marriage: “[Tailleferre] could not reconcile men’s conflicts toward her: though attracted at first by her renown, they would eventually become threatened and try to prevent her from working. Only later did she realize that, for her, married life and composing were incompatible.”\textsuperscript{41} This passage illuminates an often-occurring struggle for women: in order to acquire a husband, a woman must have a certain level of accomplishment, but as soon as she marries, she is expected to forget all of her talents.

\textsuperscript{37} Shapiro, \textit{Germaine Tailleferre}, 11-12.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{39} Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 51. “Ce projet m’éblouisait, mais j’oubliais qu’étant mariée, même à un Américain, une jeune femme n’est jamais libre.” Translation from Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 115 (ellipses original to Potter).
\textsuperscript{40} Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 194.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 195.
As both Shapiro and Potter report, Tailleferre’s marriage ended dramatically: upon discovering that she was pregnant, Barton threatened abortion by shooting her in the abdomen.\textsuperscript{42} Though Barton did not shoot Tailleferre, she miscarried, and after a brief separation, Barton shot himself. Since this incident is central to my discussion of Tailleferre’s \textit{Six chansons françaises} (written immediately afterward), I save a detailed discussion for chapter five. However, I note here in prefacing my comparison of the different treatments of the episode that Barton had experienced various mental health issues throughout his life, and that his and Tailleferre’s marriage was not peaceful. Mitgang, presenting the separation quite differently from Potter and Shapiro, discusses nothing of the violence of the situation, simply saying that “distressing incidents” resulted in their separation.\textsuperscript{43} Aside from differing levels of detail regarding the end of the marriage, the three biographers present slightly different versions of events. Shapiro makes no mention of divorce: according to his telling of the events, Barton left for New York shortly after the miscarriage and shot himself, leaving a suicide note declaring that he loved another woman instead of his wife.\textsuperscript{44} Potter, though less detailed, indicates that Barton fled to New York and that his suicide came one month after the couple’s divorce was finalized.\textsuperscript{45} In both of these descriptions of the marriage’s end, Tailleferre is depicted as passively involved: she does not leave Barton, he leaves her. But Mitgang’s version of the story gives agency to Tailleferre: “After a series of distressing incidents, Tailleferre filed for divorce and Barton left for

\textsuperscript{43} Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 197.  
\textsuperscript{44} Shapiro, \textit{Germaine Tailleferre}, 15.  
\textsuperscript{45} Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 117.
New York. She would never see him again.\textsuperscript{46} Though Barton left for New York and killed himself, in Mitgang’s version, Tailleferre is ultimately responsible for ending the marriage by filing for divorce herself. Wherever the truth lies in this series of events, these biographies clearly paint different pictures of Tailleferre as passively or actively controlling her own life.\textsuperscript{47}

Tailleferre was married again within a year of her separation from Barton. She experienced similar jealousy from her second husband, lawyer Jean Lageat, over her musical activities, but at this time, I focus on her new role as mother, as she gave birth to her only child, Françoise Lageat (born November 1931), around the time of her second marriage. The three biographies do not agree on the order of events: whether the child or the marriage came first is unclear. More importantly, at least, the pregnancy seems to have come before the marriage. Potter alone addresses this issue by indicating that Tailleferre’s second husband insisted that they wed upon discovering that she was pregnant. Freshly freed from her tumultuous marriage to Barton, Tailleferre was not eager to remarry. Potter even suggests that Tailleferre wanted only a child.\textsuperscript{48}

The three biographies differ greatly in their depiction of Tailleferre as a mother. Shapiro, having earlier stated that Tailleferre’s career and talent reached their peak with her membership in \textit{Les Six}, finds that motherhood brought several periods

\textsuperscript{46} Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 197.

\textsuperscript{47} This issue – the shooting, miscarriage, and divorce – is elaborated on in the fifth chapter. Here, though, it is pertinent to note how much these three biographies underplay the truly disturbing nature of the events. I can only speculate as to reasons why the authors offer little acknowledgment: confusion regarding the order of events, hesitancy on Tailleferre’s part to discuss the events late in life, or a general avoidance of discussing such personal occurrences in scholarly writing.

\textsuperscript{48} Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 117.
of compositional inactivity during which time Tailleferre devoted herself to her daughter. Though Mitgang also indicates periods of inactivity in terms of composing after Tailleferre had given birth, she notes that Tailleferre filled these periods (especially while in Philadelphia during World War II) by composing for radio and film, teaching, and writing about the difficulties that the war brought to composers and artists in France.\(^\text{49}\) Potter, on the other hand, perhaps as a result of her focus on music, makes no mention of these periods of inactivity. Instead, Potter finds that Tailleferre turned to composition to find comfort during these difficult years. Discussing her \textit{Concerto pour violon et orchestre} (1936), Potter writes: “Its slow movement, a continuous melancholy song with gorgeous enharmonic modulations and a passionate central section, represents Tailleferre at her best, as does the finale, which is an inexhaustible fund of invention. Perhaps that shows us how much music was a solace for Tailleferre at this difficult period in her life.”\(^\text{50}\) This passage shows that, unlike Shapiro, Potter does not subscribe to the notion that Tailleferre reached her peak with \textit{Les Six}. Instead, Potter finds that her works of the 1930s and 1940s offer much to be praised. These varying depictions of Tailleferre as mother indicate differing levels of acceptance on the part of her biographers regarding of her ability to negotiate the marriage plot and the quest plot simultaneously.

Tailleferre was forced to negotiate between the marriage plot and the quest plot for much of her adult life. But prior to her first marriage, her life was largely in fulfillment of her musical career. With the help of her mother, she had rebelled against

\(^{49}\) Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 201. Mitgang is referring to the following article: Tailleferre, “From the South of France,” \textit{Modern Music} (November/December 1942): 13-16.

\(^{50}\) Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 118.
her father as a child and with his death in 1914 Tailleferre was freed from his control – and from his desire for her to fulfill the marriage plot. As all three biographies note, Tailleferre’s talent and dedication garnered her much attention from both her classmates and teachers at the Conservatoire. From this point until her first marriage, Tailleferre engaged herself fully with music. Perhaps her father’s death was the obligatory event, in Heilbrun’s terms, that intervened in Tailleferre’s marriage plot.

Another possible contender for the obligatory legitimizing event is Tailleferre’s 1917 meeting with Erik Satie. As portrayed by the three biographers, Satie was so enchanted with her compositions and performance that he christened her his “musical daughter” and included her in subsequent concerts that he organized, which soon led to the creation of Les Six. Potter makes much of this event: “This was a turning point in Tailleferre’s life, and after this she never looked back in pursuing her musical career.” But if this was the event that legitimized Tailleferre’s quest plot, it is fraught with contradictions. In describing her as his musical daughter, and situating her among five male composers who could presumably be called his “musical sons,” Satie created a new family for Tailleferre, seemingly casting her back into the early stages of the marriage plot. This family, however, lacked the supportive mother role. Instead, it firmly entrenched Tailleferre in her lasting role as lone woman attempting to work in a patriarchal profession while being pulled by societal expectations for a woman to fulfill the marriage plot.

51 Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 181; Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 111; Shapiro, Germaine Tailleferre, 5.
52 Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 111.
For the three biographers, Tailleferre’s role as lone woman in a male environment is one that continues throughout her life. In describing her influences, her colleagues, her collaborators, and her advocates, most of the names listed are male. Both Mitgang and Potter do take care to emphasize the women who were important to Tailleferre. Mitgang quotes friend Hélène Jourdan-Morhange as appreciating Tailleferre’s successes in a male profession: “…she was truly ‘the princess of the Six’ and that was very pleasing to us other women, to see one of ours emancipate herself (for the period) to the height of possibilities.”\(^{53}\) Potter, again emphasizing Tailleferre’s musical works, notes that each of the *Six chansons françaises*– works setting poetry about women’s lives and loves, which Potter intriguingly calls “a sort of risqué *Frauenliebe und –leben*”– are dedicated to Tailleferre’s female friends.\(^{54}\)

In discussing Heilbrun’s approach to women creating identity, I emphasize one aspect that is especially important when considering Tailleferre: modesty as a public persona. Shapiro, in a rare moment of critical commentary, finds modesty to be too “polite” a term to describe the insecurity that Tailleferre often exhibited in regards to her compositional abilities; instead, he proposes that she suffered from “a low sense of self-esteem.”\(^{55}\) But terminology as such is less important than determining the root causes for Tailleferre’s often-exhibited self-deprecation. All three biographers discuss this aspect of Tailleferre’s public persona, but none attempt explanations for this inclination. Instead, quite interestingly, both Shapiro and Potter take special care to


\(^{54}\) Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 116.

\(^{55}\) Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre*, 117.
emphasize that it was Tailleferre’s insecurity rather than her gender that was the biggest obstacle for her in achieving recognition along similar lines to the other more successful male members of Les Six (against whom her career has and will likely always be compared), without suggesting that the two issues might be interrelated. Shapiro writes: “Although some writers attribute her fall [after Les Six] to the common belief that a woman composer couldn’t be taken seriously, the evidence does not seem to bear this out as a sole explanation. …Tailleferre…did not further her cause with her own efforts, not having a propensity for self-promotion, unlike a Cocteau, or especially a Picasso, nor a strong sense for basic organization.”

Potter, after offering some commentary on the barriers Tailleferre encountered as a woman, writes, “perhaps the principal obstacle to greater success in her lifetime was what Poulenc described as her ‘excess of modesty’.”

What both biographers fail to acknowledge is that Tailleferre’s modesty is most likely a direct result of her gender. Modesty is an acceptable, if not publicly obligatory, personality trait for a woman. Furthermore, as the example of Clara Schumann illustrates, modesty is a coping strategy adopted by many women in order to avoid accusations that their public careers result in their abandoning their roles as wife and mother. By adopting a public persona characterized by modesty, Tailleferre diminished the importance of her musical ambitions, thereby conforming – or at least giving the illusion of conforming – to societal expectations for her gender. In interviewing Tailleferre’s granddaughter, Elvire de Rudder (b. 1955), with whom

56 Ibid., 13.
Tailleferre was very close, Mitgang reveals that Tailleferre’s modesty was in fact cultivated especially in public situations. Mitgang writes that de Rudder, “recalls Tailleferre’s outer naïvete [sic] and simplicity that, in her view, was a deceptive protection for the inner strength and equilibrium that sustained her.” With this brief sentence hidden amidst her description of Tailleferre’s maturity, Mitgang acknowledges the possibility of separate public and private personae for Tailleferre, without suggesting that her modest public persona was a direct result of her gender.

Though Mitgang’s and Potter’s biographies undoubtedly present, to varying degrees, feminist interpretations of Tailleferre’s life and career, both they and Shapiro ultimately express or imply an overall sense of dissatisfaction in their respective articles and chapters. Each of the biographers, to some respect, judges Tailleferre for not achieving more as a composer; each of the biographers is critical of her modest personality; each of the biographers finds something inherently lacking as they tell her story. The following lengthy quote from the end of Mitgang’s biography demonstrates this point:

> Given that time and circumstances prevented Tailleferre from obtaining greater personal freedom, one still cannot assume that she could have been more professionally successful. To label her simply the product of her era would be to ignore what we know about her as an individual. In spite of a male-oriented social structure, many women have, historically, overcome obstacles with their own inner strength and drive. Had Tailleferre proclaimed that “it would be better to marry music” at the age of 20 rather than she did in an interview at the age of 90, she would not necessarily have gone further, except on a superficial level.

> Again, we come to Tailleferre’s personality – the simplicity, modesty, lack of pretension, and honesty that all who have known her seem to remember. This was a woman of tremendous natural ability, both in art and in music. And yet

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she, as a creator, lacked a fundamental quality: egotistical, all-consuming, obsessive artistry.\textsuperscript{59}

I find many problematic statements in these paragraphs. First, I challenge Mitgang to list those female composers who she feels adequately overcame the “male-oriented social structure.” If Tailleferre’s lengthy occupation with music is not enough to qualify her as an example of overcoming obstacles in her patriarchal society, then I believe that there are few, if any, women who have managed to achieve such a thing. Second, it would have been impossible for Tailleferre to declare “it would have been better to marry music” at the age of twenty rather than ninety: at the age of twenty, the concepts of feminism and of gender equality barely existed, but by the 1980s, career ambition among women was acceptable and even desirable. Concepts of feminism and equality allowed Tailleferre to make such a retrospective statement; desiring her to have made it earlier in life, when it would have mattered, shows no sensitivity to the cultural, social, and political context of the time.

The last sentence of the quotation is especially telling of Mitgang’s main problem with Tailleferre. Altering the sentence as follows might serve to highlight the problem more clearly: “And yet she, as a creator, lacked a fundamental quality: \textit{she was not a man}.” “Egotistical, all-consuming, obsessive artistry” is the fundamental quality associated with compositional genius: \textit{male} compositional genius. Mitgang’s choice of language betrays the ultimate flaw in her and Shapiro’s approach to Tailleferre’s biography (and Potter to a lesser extent): they judge Tailleferre’s musical talents to be great enough to enable her to accomplish the same feats as any man,

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 210.
without conceding that the obstacles placed in her path as a result of her gender made this impossible. This fallacy is one that has been perpetuated by many who write about women. Only in addressing and overcoming the desire for historical women to have achieved in the same ways as men – to have published prolifically, to have achieved professional recognition through professorships or awards, and to have been ardently and exclusively devoted to music – can biographers adequately appreciate and describe women’s lives and careers.

**Writing Tailleferre’s Life en français**

If English-language scholarship on Tailleferre is now somewhat out-dated and certainly far from profuse, French-language publications on Tailleferre are even more scant. Were secondary-source biographies to exist, I would put them through a similar analysis as above in order to situate them among the three English biographies. But the two French publications that I have encountered differ significantly in their genre from the academic nature of the English publications – the first is written by a close friend of Tailleferre in her later life, thus taking a personal tone, while the second is Tailleferre’s 1970s memoir – and so I treat them very differently.

The most recent is a 1998 book on Tailleferre, written by Georges Hacquard.\(^{60}\) Hacquard was director at the École alsacienne, the school at which Tailleferre was employed part time for the last few years of her life, beginning in 1975. Tailleferre played piano at the school for young children’s movement classes. As he describes in his preface, Hacquard knew of her before she nominated herself to work at the school and was very pleased to have someone of such prestige working with him. Though his

colleagues seemed wary of her age, he found her young at heart and very happy to work with young people.\textsuperscript{61}

In his preface, Hacquard explains that he wrote his book with three intentions. First, he found himself in the unique position of getting to know Tailleferre late in her life, knowing already of her talent and her career. Second, he felt it necessary to compile all available documents, especially archival sources, personal memories, and personal documents, into a single and complete source that not only outlines Tailleferre’s life, but also takes the opportunity to correct rumors and contradictions in narratives of her life and of \textit{Les Six}. Third, he sees much in her musical oeuvre that has not been fully appreciated and he wants to advocate for performances of her works. He briefly questions how Tailleferre’s gender might have hindered her career.

Ultimately, although Hacquard’s book is lengthy and packed with references to important people, places, and events in Tailleferre’s life, its value is more that of a personal, rather than scholarly, account. Hacquard’s endnotes indicate that he certainly consulted multiple sources in compiling his biography, but their relatively low number does little to account for his 249 pages of prose. Moreover, aside from acknowledging in his preface that Tailleferre’s gender is important to any discussion of her life and career, he does not in fact offer critical commentary on this issue. For the purposes of my dissertation, then, I have chosen to consult Hacquard only when information is unavailable elsewhere or to augment opinions on an issue that is otherwise unclear or impossible to clarify with all other sources available to me.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 11.
Undoubtedly the most valuable document of all of those that I have discussed thus far is Tailleferre’s memoir, written in the 1970s and published in 1986. Tailleferre provides approximately fifty-five pages of prose in her own voice describing her life and career, from birth until the 1970s. She is candid about some of her career and personal challenges, and she describes surprising events that are unexplained elsewhere, such as a hot-air balloon ride that she took one night in the middle of a great storm with her brother and a friend. Undoubtedly, Tailleferre’s memoir is crucial to all scholarship on the composer. Since relatively few letters are available in public archives, since Tailleferre published few other writings, and since she was the subject of few interviews, the memoir provides the only instance of substantial and accessible personal writing. Mitgang was able to conduct interviews as part of her work on Tailleferre, but for her and especially all others, the memoir has been the primary source of personal information for scholars.

Despite the centrality of Tailleferre’s memoir to scholarship on the composer, the document has undergone no critical analysis. Tailleferre’s biographers do little to find patterns in her memoir, to consider her motives, or to question the material included and excluded. Furthermore, the document has not been republished with annotations (indicating mistakes of dating or explaining certain people and their relationships to Tailleferre), nor has it been translated into English.

While I have chosen not to concern myself, in this dissertation at least, with a thorough commentary on or analysis of Tailleferre’s entire memoir (though this would

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62 Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires.”
63 Ibid., 19-21.
undoubtedly be worthwhile and valuable and would be a suitable future project), I rely on the document repeatedly throughout my dissertation. Tailleferre’s own insights into her compositions and relationships are invaluable, especially with regards to works and relationships that have been ignored in favor of the usual focus on Les Six.

Because I reference the memoir at various points throughout the dissertation, I have chosen to avoid a lengthy discussion of it in this section, where I have been concerned instead with the narratives that Tailleferre scholars have created.

**Anthologizing Tailleferre**

If publications devoted to Tailleferre alone are relatively scant, she is often a mainstay in anthologies and surveys of female composers and their music. Such publications have been more frequent in the past decade or so, and several of them offer biographies of Tailleferre. Although they are significantly shorter than the biographies discussed to this point, they are important to summarize, for they illustrate both stagnancy and change in approaches to describing Tailleferre and her music.

Two surveys of female composers are pertinent here, each in a different language. The first, by Danielle Roster, is titled *Die großen Komponistinnen: Lebensberichte* and surveys great female composers, as its title suggests. Though the title is promising, the book itself falls a bit short. The twenty-page biography of Tailleferre certainly is indicative of interest in her and her career, but the biography itself is reminiscent of Shapiro’s, with few citations and a greater focus on her life than on her career. Karin Pendle’s 2001 survey of women and music presents a comprehensive look at female composers worldwide, with Tailleferre discussed in a

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64 Danielle Roster, *Die großen Komponistinnen: Lebensberichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-Verlag, 1998).
subsection of French composers. The brief biography vacillates between uncovering stereotypical treatments of Tailleferre and her music and contributing directly to such stereotypes. Having ended the previous discussion of composer Henriette Roget with a quotation describing her “feminine grace,” the authors begin Tailleferre’s bio by describing her as “the most feminine and graceful of all.” It becomes apparent, though, that the authors mean this as a stereotype of Tailleferre’s music, rather than their own opinions, when they quote from Ravel: “Turning such patronizing evaluations rather on their heads, Ravel would later remark that her music was ‘full of feminine charm, not at all an unworthy quality in music’.” The authors are clear, though, that Ravel’s opinion contrasted sharply with the multitude of critics who refused to take her works seriously. Ultimately, the authors find that Tailleferre’s style, described as “up-to-date neoclassicism” with her first violin sonata, becomes out of date in the post-WWII era, showing no progression over the course of her life. As a result, the authors end their biography by having to defend Tailleferre’s talents with a rather typical treatment of Tailleferre as a craftsperson, rather than a composer: “Nevertheless, her music is fine – well crafted, balanced, attractive – and it communicates a sense of well-being, a knowledge that even in a fast-changing world some things remain true.”

66 Ibid., 258.
67 Ibid., 259.
68 Ibid., 260.
69 Ibid., 261.
Two anthologies from the same period as these surveys present biographies of Tailleferre, both offering updates on some of the dominant trends. The second edition of James Briscoe’s *Historical Anthology of Music by Women* includes a biography by Caroline Potter, offering her a chance to update her work on Tailleferre. Though this biography is substantially shorter than her 1992 article, Potter includes several details and observations that she and other authors have previously ignored or downplayed. For example, she emphasizes the popularity and significance of Tailleferre’s ballet, *Le marchand d’oiseaux* (1923). Potter also draws attention to Tailleferre’s many contributions to film music in the 1930s, though Potter wonders whether simultaneous with this commercial success, Tailleferre did not also inaugurate her own demise: “In the 1930s, [Tailleferre] established herself as a film composer; her ability to write quickly to commission eased her constant financial worries, though it could be argued that this very facility and lack of self-criticism has harmed her reputation.” Potter also emphasizes 1957 as “a vintage year” of “extraordinary” production despite more personal crisis when Tailleferre was left to raise her granddaughter and step-grandson when her daughter became estranged from them. Potter’s biography ends with both a continuation of the trope of modesty as detrimental to Tailleferre’s career, now becoming tiring and not worth repeating here, and a sophisticated opinion of her oeuvre, deserving to be cited because it points out that logistical considerations of

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71 Ibid., 318

72 Ibid.
music production and dissemination are a factor in Tailleferre’s reception, something that other writers have not accounted for:

It is also fair to say that in her lifetime she suffered from prejudice against women composers, as many reviewers were unable to see beyond the fact that she was the only woman in Les Six. I believe that Tailleferre was more successful when handling large-scale musical forms – confounding the stereotype of the woman composer – which has perhaps not aided her posthumous reputation, as most currently available recordings are of smaller-scale works, which are more economically viable to perform and record. Although her output is undeniably uneven, her best works rank among the most attractive and successful composed by any member of Les Six, and they deserve to be far better known.73

The final anthology for discussion here is a multivolume work edited by Sylvia Glickman and Martha Furman Schliefer published over the course of several years. Volumes are divided by chronology and by genre, such that Tailleferre’s works appear in two volumes. Volume 6, from 1999, presents keyboard music by composers born in the nineteenth century and includes Tailleferre’s Pastorale in A-flat major (1928); volume 8, from 2006, presents music for large and small instrumental ensembles again by composers by born in the nineteenth century and includes the third movement (1919) of Tailleferre’s string quartet. Janelle Magnuson Gelfand, who wrote her doctoral dissertation on Tailleferre’s piano and chamber works, wrote biographies of Tailleferre for both volumes, the earlier one being much longer than the later.74 In addition to the five-page life-and-works, Gelfand writes an analysis of the Pastorale,

73 Ibid., 319
and includes a lengthy list of works, a bibliography, and a discography. Gelfand’s biography of Tailleferre is not significantly different from others, though she should be praised for not dismissing Tailleferre’s later years, which included periods, especially in the 1950s, of prolific production that have frequently been dismissed in other writings. Though she refrains from details, Gelfand acknowledges Tailleferre’s commitment to composing in the 1930s and 40s even when she had a difficult marriage and a sick husband to contend with, and Gelfand describes the 1950s and 60s as “a fertile period of composition” for Tailleferre.\(^75\) Gelfand also lists all of the awards and recognition that Tailleferre received in her old age (in the 1960s and 70s), including, for example, the Officer of the Legion of Honor (Officier de la légion d’honneur) in 1978.\(^76\) In her discussion of Tailleferre’s music, Gelfand augments the prevailing tendencies to describe Tailleferre’s music in relation to other composers and to downplay its importance because of her modesty with clear efforts to explain Tailleferre’s unique style and to find trends and progressions within her oeuvre. Opening her discussion of Tailleferre’s music, for example, Gelfand explains that it was inspired by Stravinsky and Satie and influenced by her teachers, Fauré, Koechlin, and Ravel, but that it is “distinguished by her own innovations, particularly a gift for soaring melody.”\(^77\) Discussing Tailleferre’s 1920 *Hommage à Debussy*, Gelfand finds that its polytonality, “shifting rhythms,” and “brief astringent dissonances” are typical of Tailleferre’s musical language.\(^78\) Similarly, her analysis of the *Pastorale* reveals

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\(^{75}\) Gelfand, “Germaine Tailleferre,” vol. 6, 463.

\(^{76}\) Ibid.

\(^{77}\) Ibid.

\(^{78}\) Ibid., 464.
that quintuple meters were a favorite of Tailleferre’s during the 1910s and 20s.\(^{79}\)

Gelfand’s paragraph describing progression in Tailleferre’s style is worth citing:

She relied on impressionistic sonorities and techniques in her piano and chamber pieces. However, her infatuation with the clavecinists and Baroque composers such as J. S. Bach, resulted in a clarity of form, melodic shape, texture, and rhythmic patterns that have placed her closer to the neoclassicists than to Debussy. Although she adhered to these principles during her creative life, subtle changes of style distinguish her music. When examined chronologically, her early works reveal an affinity for the French romantic style of Fauré. Her early ballet music reflects her neoclassical leanings; later she uses more sophisticated harmonic and rhythmic experimentation, corresponding to a period of experimentation with larger forms.\(^{80}\)

Though brief and rather general, Gelfand stands almost alone in her effort to summarize Tailleferre’s œuvre as one showing development. All too often, Tailleferre’s biographers view her as maintaining the same impressionist-tinged neoclassical style over the course of her seventy-year career. Gelfand not only challenges the notion that Tailleferre’s style did not change, but also, by describing her later works as involving experimentation with harmony, rhythm, and form, suggests that it was even innovative.

I concluded my section “Writing Tailleferre’s Life” with rather strong criticisms of biographies by Mitgang, Potter, and Shapiro. While these writings of the 1980s and early 1990s fulfilled a feminist goal of resurrecting historical women, they all expressed a naïveté in their interpretations of Tailleferre’s music and public persona and in their understanding of the social and political climates in which Tailleferre lived and worked. Whether bluntly stated or subtly implied, the earlier biographies ultimately evaluate Tailleferre’s music and career through negative

\(^{79}\) Ibid., 466.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 465.
statements: she was unable to achieve the same successes as her colleagues in *Les Six*, she was unable to overcome her challenging marital situations, and her musical style did not progress over time. More recently, Gelfand’s and Potter’s biographies show efforts both to understand how broader interpretive and historical trends have affected analyses of Tailleferre’s life and career and to evaluate her oeuvre for its own significance, rather than as a lesser equivalent to those of her male colleagues. While Gelfand’s tendency toward a tripartite division of Tailleferre’s stylistic progression is frustratingly reflective of now-clichéd great-composer master narratives, she commendably frames Tailleferre’s oeuvre positively. Additionally, both Potter and Gelfand highlight Tailleferre’s career achievements after *Les Six*, and, especially in the case of Potter, critique trends in reception of her works.
PART II: SHE IS A WOMAN: TAILLEFERRE IN WRITINGS ON LES SIX

Scholarship on Tailleferre alone may only have surfaced in the last thirty-odd years with developing interests in feminist musicology and the study of female composers. Tailleferre has always, however, been part of scholarship on Les Six, which attracted critical and scholarly attention since its inception.

Les Six was a group of six composers who performed and composed together in the late 1910s and early 1920s. They are Georges Auric (1899-1983), Louis Durey (1888-1979), Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), and Tailleferre. The group was named by music critic Henri Collet in 1920 after a concert featuring music by the six composers. Composer Erik Satie (1866-1925) was their musical mentor; poet, playwright, and general avant-gardist Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) was their promoter and collaborator. This simple description of the group and its close colleagues should not mislead the reader into thinking that the composers desired and sought the collectivity of an artistic group. In fact, while they were great friends at the time, and remained so for the rest of their lives, their assemblage was none of their doing. Ultimately, the group identity served its members well, but it was Collet and Cocteau’s creation (and to some extent Satie’s). Cocteau had been advocating for a French modernist musical style and saw the young composers that would make up Les Six as epitomizing his aesthetic preferences.

While I conceive of my dissertation as a reaction against decades of music scholarship that has defined Tailleferre only in relation to Les Six, it is undeniable that this group, its members, and its broader community were immensely important to her
personal and professional life. By addressing Les Six here, I want to do justice to the centrality of the group in Tailleferre’s biography. However, this part of the chapter also systematically explores literature on Les Six showing that narratives of the group hierarchize its members, generally placing Tailleferre in a subordinate position relative to the rest of the group. Furthermore, musicological narratives generally ignore her post-Les Six accomplishments, while other group members’ achievements, especially those of Honegger, Poulenc, and Milhaud, are not limited to their membership in Les Six. With this historiographical analysis of Tailleferre’s place in Les Six reception, my aim is to express the hierarchization of the group’s members. I am less concerned with examining why this is the case, taking for granted that Tailleferre’s sex is the underlying reason for this subordination. This will, however, likely become apparent to the reader over the course of the section. Before embarking on my lengthy historiography, I offer the reader a brief discussion of Les Six’ chronology, creation, and friends.

Les Six: Chronology and Creation, Cocteau and Collet

If Les Six ever existed in any official fashion, it was for but a scant sixteen months, a period defined by the naming of the group by Collet in January 1920 and by Durey’s defection in May 1921. Setting aside for now the issue of what it means to call Les Six an officially formed group, this short time period does little to indicate the near-life-long relationships that the group members had. Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, and Tailleferre met in 1913 as students at the Conservatoire. Poulenc, being younger, developing his musical talents later, and serving in the war, came to meet the others.

around 1918. An explanation of Durey’s first meetings with Les Six members is
difficult to determine, though his inclusion on the program of the first concert of Les
Nouveaux Jeunes in 1917 indicates that they were already on familiar terms. Les
Nouveaux Jeunes was the name that Satie gave to the composers that he gathered for
contervts starting 6 June 1917 and continuing through 1920. Satie’s efforts to support
young composers both gave them a concert venue during the difficult war years and
gave him, always young at heart, the youthful company on which he thrived. Les
Nouveaux Jeunes didn’t have set membership, but mainly included future members of
Les Six. The timeline in Table 1 indicates important dates for Les Nouveaux Jeunes
and Les Six.

There is, of course, much about the condensed timeline of this table that
requires commentary. Though I only list five concerts on this timeline, in fact many
concerts took place during the late 1910s and early 1920s that included works by
members of Les Nouveaux Jeunes and Les Six. Interestingly, though, I can only come
across definitive information about two concerts that included works by all six
members of Les Six. The first, on 5 April 1919, occurred before Collet christened them
as a group; the second, on 11 March 1920, was after their assemblage. Presumably,
there are other concerts, but details are difficult to find among secondary sources. Aside from the few public concerts, the publication of L’album des six in 1920 is the

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82 Milhaud recalls meeting Poulenc as early as 1915, though Milhaud describes their interaction at this
time as that of mentor and student (or even idol and student): Darius Milhaud, My Happy Life, trans.
Donald Evans, George Hall, Christopher Palmer (London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1995), 83.
83 Milhaud’s biography, for example, discusses two additional concerts including all members of Les
Six. The first involves them performing works by foreign composers; the second involves a
performance in Belgium. He gives no dates, locations, programs, performers, etc. Milhaud, My Happy
Life, 84-5.
only other public activity in which all of the six group members participated. This short anthology includes one solo piano piece from each of the group’s members: 

*Prélude* by Auric, *Romance sans paroles* by Durey, *Sarabande* by Honegger, *Mazurka* by Milhaud, *Valse* by Poulenc, and *Pastorale* by Tailleferre. Additionally, the group members certainly met frequently as friends, most notably for Saturday dinners at Milhaud’s home, followed by socializing at fashionable bars and music halls.  

These dinners were not confined to members of *Les Six*; other musicians, artists, writers, et al. were always included.

**Table 1: Les Nouveaux Jeunes and Les Six: Important Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>6 June 1917</td>
<td>First concert of <em>Les Nouveaux Jeunes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Cocteau’s <em>Le coq et l’harlequin</em> published</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 January 1918</td>
<td>Concert of <em>Les Nouveaux Jeunes</em> (including Tailleferre)</td>
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<td>1918</td>
<td>Concert of <em>Les Nouveaux Jeunes</em></td>
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<td>1919</td>
<td>First concert involving all future members of <em>Les Six</em></td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>Concert of <em>Les Nouveaux Jeunes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Concert of <em>Les Nouveaux Jeunes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March 1920</td>
<td>Second concert involving all members of <em>Les Six</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 June 1921</td>
<td>First concert involving all future members of <em>Les Six</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>18 June 1921</td>
<td><em>Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel</em> premiered</td>
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<td>18 June 1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 June 1921</td>
<td><em>Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel</em> premiered</td>
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84 Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 27.
87 Auric, Durey, and Honegger joined Satie in having their works performed at this concert.
89 Poulenc is the only member of the future Six who is not represented at this concert.
90 Milhaud is the only member of the future Six who is not represented at this concert.
92 Published most recently as *Album des six* (Boca Raton: Masters Music Publishers, 1996).
Les Six as a group is likely now best known for their collaborative work, with Cocteau and without Durey (he dropped out of the project and of the group), on the 1921 ballet Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel. Cocteau’s scenario is a surreal vision of a wedding celebration on the Eiffel Tower where the group is confronted with unusual guests that appear from the photographer’s camera. The five composers scored the ballet’s ten numbers, with Tailleferre contributing “La valse des dépêches” and the “Quadrille.”  

My timeline suggests that Collet’s January 1920 articles christening Les Six did not come out in response to a specific concert, thus indicating that his and Cocteau’s well-planned agendas actually generated the articles, rather than a more spontaneous reaction to a single concert. (As I pointed out, though, it is difficult to establish a list of concerts involving all members of Les Six, so there may in fact be a concert that occurred closer in time to the publication of Collet’s articles.) Undoubtedly the most detailed critical thought illuminating Cocteau’s and Collet’s agendas in creating Les Six is that by Jane Fulcher in her 2005 book, The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914-1940. Her thorough understanding of the complex personal and political relationships of the period reveals the intense nationalist motivations that fueled Cocteau and Collet’s support of the young composers. As Fulcher so meticulously reveals, Cocteau and Collet could well have

93 Details of the work are not relevant here, though I address them somewhat in my third chapter with reference to Tailleferre’s ballet, Le marchand d’oiseaux.

94 In her memoir, Tailleferre explains Collet’s selection of the six particular composers because he had just met them at Milhaud’s house the night before. Presumably, Tailleferre means the night before his article, but this is not clear. See Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 27.

chosen any number of young composers to further their nationalist agendas; in fact, the six composers they chose do not all conform to Cocteau’s and Collet’s calls for a modern style rooted in French tradition. The christening of Les Six was not really about each of the six composers or their respective musical styles. Instead, Fulcher finds that Collet’s reference to the “Russian Five” capitalized on then well-established propaganda from the French liberal Right that praised the nationalism that was so evident in the styles of the Russian composers. As Fulcher states, Collet’s articles blanketed the six composers with an aesthetic description that was both erroneous and long lasting:

While he admits that the individual personalities of the six composers are substantially different, Collet advances that they share a common conception of French art, the one exemplified, for Cocteau, in Satie. Here he invokes the metaphor that Cocteau employed in the dedication of Le coq, noting that all have managed to “escape” from Germany, and from Debussy, through the model of Satie. But as we will see when examining these composers, the former could not have been further from the truth, although Collet’s and Cocteau’s conception of them would stick in the minds of the group’s supporters and antagonists.

Beyond their times as Les Nouveaux Jeunes and Les Six, the six composers remained close (and, as I show in the next section, the group identity remained closely associated with each of the composers, though to varying degrees). They gathered for official celebrations of their music and their group at various points during the twentieth century. On 11 December 1929, they gave a public concert recognizing the tenth anniversary of Les Six. Auric, Durey, Honegger, and Milhaud each conducted one of their own works, while Poulenc and Tailleferre performed as piano soloists for

96 Ibid., 167.
97 Ibid., 168.
their own works. *Les Six* was celebrated by the Centre de documentation de musique internationale (CDMI) with an exhibition from December 1951 to January 1952. CDMI published a corresponding collection of letters and photographs. On 4 November 1953, the six composers again reunited in public for a reunion concert. This time, the material presented at the concert was recorded in sessions afterward (6-10 November 1953) and released by Columbia in 1954.

Also since the early 1920s, the composers of *Les Six* collaborated on various other projects, two of which are particularly notable. In 1927, Auric, Milhaud, and Poulenc worked with various other French composers on a children’s ballet titled *L’éventail de Jeanne*. In 1952, Auric, Honegger, Poulenc, and Tailleferre collaborated with several other French composers on an orchestral work called *La guirlande de Campra* – on a theme by André Campra (1660-1744) – which would later be choreographed as a ballet.

“Like a Dog Walking on his Hind Legs:” A Historiographic Analysis of Tailleferre and Writings on *Les Six*

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a thorough biography of each member of *Les Six* and members of the group’s broader community. It is, however, important to this dissertation to know how the group and each group member has been described over the past century in musicological scholarship and

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98 “Les Six,” *Centre de documentation de musique international* [CDMI] 3 (1 January 1952), 9-15. The publication includes brief letters from each member of *Les Six* recognizing CDMI for the exhibition. Honegger’s letter says that this is recognizing the thirtieth anniversary of the group, while Durey’s explains this as the thirty-fourth anniversary of the group. It is not exactly clear how they have arrived at these numbers, but the sentiment is not changed by this incongruity.

99 Tailleferre describes this concert in her memoir, but gets the date wrong. She describes it as the thirty-fifth anniversary occurring in 1955. See Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 75.

critical literature in order to make comparisons to Tailleferre. My dissertation proceeds from the fact that Tailleferre is only really known as a member of *Les Six*, despite her seven-decade-long career. Other members of the group, on the other hand, not only achieved success after *Les Six*, but also have had their career successes recognized in musicological scholarship. The following historiographical analyses of narratives of *Les Six* and its composers reveal pervasive patterns that ultimately have hierarchized the composers in musicological scholarship. I have chosen (from several possibilities) to organize this section in rough chronological order, beginning with literature published in the 1920s and moving to the most recently published scholarship on the group.

I am drawing here on scholarship and literature on the group generally, not on scholarship on individual group members or individual pieces of music. There are numerous publications on these composers and their hundreds of compositions (too numerous for me to examine), but since I am interested here in an analysis of descriptions of the group as a whole and in a comparative study of treatments of the six group members, I have chosen to eliminate literature that is focused on individual composers or works. Within this focus, I analyze diverse types of sources. Early central narratives of the group came from established critics, musicologists, and composers such as Paul Rosenfeld, Émile Vuillermoz, and Roland-Manuel in the form of journal articles. (The group was frequently featured in newspaper reviews of performances, many of which were written by these authors, but since these reviews are so numerous, I have selected the journal articles as representative.) Beyond this early part of the 1920s, *Les Six* becomes included in various surveys of modern music.
In the 1950s, reunions spurred several retrospective articles, including two contrasting approaches from female authors. *Les Six* continued to appear in surveys from the second half of the century and in publications devoted entirely to the group from the 1970s onwards. I end my historiography by analyzing entries in the Grove Dictionaries and Richard Taruskin’s *The Oxford History of Western Music*. Ultimately, though this historiography is not exhaustive, it is certainly thorough enough to adequately understand interpretations of Tailleferre’s position in the group.

When Henri Collet christened the six composers in January 1920, the first of the pair of articles deals mostly with his and Cocteau’s aesthetic (read: nationalist) concerns that assert simplicity as a reflection of French musical traditions.\(^{101}\) Though Collet recognizes that the six young composers have different musical styles, he sees them representing the unified conception outlined by their “theoretician,” Cocteau.

The bulk of Collet’s first article, though, focuses on Satie as the composer of the older generation who best epitomizes French musical traditions (Debussy, for example, does not reflect French musical traditions, according to Collet\(^{102}\)). In the second of the pair of articles, Collet focuses more closely on the six composers of the younger generation. He finds them already prolific, in large part due to the fact that they are not bound by compositional rules. Listing some of their compositions, he finds evidence of Cocteau’s strong influence in that the young composers have set his texts to music.

Summing up the group’s collective aesthetic, he finds that the young composers leave

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\(^{101}\) As already noted, Collet’s articles are reprinted as an appendix in Roy, *Le groupe des six*, 192-203.

\(^{102}\) Collet is reflecting Cocteau’s assessment of Debussy as being more influenced by Wagner and Stravinsky than by French composers. The result is a “foggy” and “blurred” style that lacks the clarity that is so central to French musical aesthetics. Cocteau describes this throughout *Le coq et l’harlequin*. 
behind complex textures for simplicity and treat development as the idea (à la Bach) rather than as the form (à la Beethoven). Also in this article, Collet describes the six composers individually. Poulenc’s many achievements impress Collet, especially considering the composer’s young age. Collet also describes his youthful, mocking musical style. Honegger is praised for his ingenious blend of timbres and is described, with Durey, as being the “most profound” of the group. Collet also finds him misunderstood. Collet compares Auric to Stravinsky, but finds Auric superior because of a greater organization in his music. Milhaud is praised for his intensity of emotions and tones, from prophetic to lamenting, from philosophical to popular. Collet also describes his “tonal superimpositions,” presumably referring to Milhaud’s use of bi- and polytonality.

Of Tailleferre, he writes: “The Jeux de plein air, the Pastorale, or the Quatuor by Germaine Tailleferre reveal finally a feminine nature without vanity or sentimentality. They are works of a frank and straightforward young woman of today, perceptive and informed by all of the boldness of her art.” Thus Tailleferre is singled out from the group’s beginning on account of her sex. Collet may see some sort of modern woman in her and her music, but it is different from her colleagues and marked by his perception of her gender nonetheless.

103 Collet, “Les six Français,” quoted in Roy, Le groupe des six, 202. “For Honegger is precisely, with Durey, the most profound of the six.” (“Car Honegger est précisément, avec Durey, le plus profond des Six.”)

104 Ibid., 203, “les superpositions tonales.”

105 Ibid. “Les Jeux de plein air, la Pastorale ou le Quatuor de Germaine Tailleferre révèlent enfin une nature féminine sans coquetterie et mièvrerie. Ce sont œuvres de jeune fille d’aujourd’hui franche et droite, fine et avertie de toutes les audaces de son art.”
Curiously, Satie wrote an article for the October 1921 issue of *Vanity Fair*, describing the “now famous” group, its reception among critics and audiences, and its six members. I find myself needing to exercise restraint to avoid the temptation to analyze all of the attractively quirky Satie-isms evident in this “somewhat critical account.” Instead, I limit myself to the task at hand and note that Satie makes a strong division within the group:

To me, the New Spirit seems a return to classic form, with an admixture of modern sensibility. This modern sensibility you will discover in certain ones of the “Six” – Georges Auric, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud.

As to the three remaining members of “The Six”, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Germaine Tailleferre, they are pure “impressionists”. There is no harm in that. I, myself, thirty years ago, was terribly “impressionist”.

... Fancy – Spontaneity – Daring – these are the first things we see – in Auric – in Milhaud – in Poulenc.

Preoccupation with academic conventions – with well established [sic] harmonic formulas – this is the lot chosen by Durey – Honegger – Tailleferre.

... They are born of opposite temperaments; they show you what a sympathetic and intelligent comradeship can accomplish – can tolerate.

Here we have a practical realization of honest free-thinking [sic] among artists – among artists who are really independent. It is the quiet recognition of the Right of Expression for all.

Though he splits the group and seems to sympathize more with the “New Spirit” of Auric, Milhaud, and Poulenc, rather than the “impressionism” of Durey, Honegger, and Tailleferre, he ultimately seems to see their individual differences and their differences.

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107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
conciliatory personalities as making for a vibrant and productive intellectual community.

Moving somewhat away from figures directly associated with the six composers, from 1923 to 1925 four interesting articles appeared on the group, presenting two distinct positions. American music critic Paul Rosenfeld wrote the first in 1923.\(^{109}\) Rosenfeld is mixed in his reaction to the group. Ultimately, while he praises certain composers, he finds that they will only achieve true success (publicly and aesthetically) once they distance themselves from Cocteau and from each other: self-determination is impossible within the confines of the group. More importantly for my purposes, Rosenfeld’s is the first substantial article to hierarchize the group’s members. From the beginning he singles out Tailleferre and Durey (Durey because he has already left the group): “To the rattle of snare-drums and the crowing of toy-trumpets, a new band of youthful Parisians has paraded onto the musical boards. It is called the Group of Six; and there are five composers in it, one superfine, four fine. Durey was the sixth.”\(^{110}\) At least, I assume here that Tailleferre is singled out as the “superfine” composer, with reference to her attractiveness.\(^{111}\) In any case, his second paragraph initiates a complete segregation of Tailleferre from the rest of the group: “The music of the men is full of edge; sharp, brusque, uncompromising.”\(^{112}\) He continues, making allusions between their music and machinery and metal – instruments of strength and sharpness – but persistently emphasizing that he is, here at


\(^{110}\) Ibid., 146.

\(^{111}\) It is possible that in describing “one superfine” composer, Rosenfeld is making a distinction between their talents, but then I would expect him to explain whom this “superfine” talent is, which he does not.

\(^{112}\) Ibid.
least, only talking of the men. He also praises their succinctness, both of time and of instrumentation: “Brevity, also, is the soul of these men’s wit.”\textsuperscript{113}

Having already discounted Durey because of his defection from the group, Rosenfeld in turn discounts Tailleferre and Honegger as well:

Tailleferre has nothing of great novelty to say. There is a certain charm and cleverness in what she writes that is feminine. She may in time prove herself a sort of Marie Laurencin of composition. But, at the present moment, the personage she resembles most is Chaminade; a vitriolic Chaminade, it is true, who prefers drinking \textit{amer Picon} straight, musically speaking, to sipping \textit{eau de cologne} off loaves of sugar. For “Les Mariés,” she wrote a dance of the little pneumatic blues; and it was as impudent as Offenbach and as steely as the tubes which conduct the missives. But her talent is very frail; and her inclusion in the group must be attributed chiefly to a fine enthusiasm for the sex on the part of the five male members.\textsuperscript{114}

He continues insulting Tailleferre as he begins his paragraph on Honegger – “Honegger is more respectable a musician than is the lady” – and returns as he ends his paragraph on Honegger – “and so his music, stronger than Tailleferre’s although it is, brings us something, too, which is never quite fresh.”\textsuperscript{115} In between, though he praises Honegger’s earnestness, he finds that his music dwells too much in the past. Ultimately, Auric, Milhaud, and Poulenc are most important to Rosenfeld:

With Poulenc, Auric, Milhaud, we penetrate more closely into the heart of the artichoke. These are the men who indeed carry the group. Without them there would be no Six. What is really vital and daring in the work of the band flows from out of them. They have the bite, the courage, the brutality. They, too, are candidates more than musicians arrived. But each one has something new to give, and in all three one senses excellent possibilities.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 148.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 151. In the 1920s, Tailleferre is often compared to painter Marie Laurencin (refer to chapter four for more information on Laurencin). Comparisons of Tailleferre to Chaminade are also made by more than just this author, though they are likely a result of the two composers’ common sexes and nationalities, more than actual stylistic similarities.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 151, 152.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 153.
He goes on at length praising the three, especially Milhaud. Ultimately, though, he finds that even the group’s central three composers have some maturing to do before they can achieve career success.

Rosenfeld may have had reservations about the group and its members, but French critic Émile Vuillermoz describes the group as a sham.\textsuperscript{117} He views the group as a promotional strategy devised to help its members survive. The composers purport to present new music that promotes French musical traditions, but instead they fool the public with offensive pranks. Far from presenting a unified aesthetic, the group’s members have “diverse tendencies, and contrary temperaments.”\textsuperscript{118} Vuillermoz describes Honegger as “a traditionalist;” Milhaud as a “classic scholastic,” though he is changeable; Poulenc and Durey have “ingenuity and charm” but are “timid;” Auric, as the youngest, “has composed so little that it is impossible to estimate him fairly;” “And then there is Miss Tailleferre, a charming Conservatoire student type, lacking positive personality, lacking any deep originality, but who develops with a certain feminine dexterity, in an environment where nothing seems to compel restraint.”\textsuperscript{119} Ultimately, Vuillermoz sees the six composers as too youthful to be taken seriously. Stravinsky and Schoenberg, instead, should be seen as “authentic revolutionaries.”\textsuperscript{120}

Vuillermoz’s article in Modern Music spawned (at least) two response articles published in the same journal and defending Les Six. For both authors, the group identity is privileged over individual identity, with neither describing distinctions.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 16-18.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 19.
between the composers. Thus neither article is helpful for understanding the
hierarchization of the group’s members, but I include a brief discussion here to
provide a more nuanced description of debates surrounding *Les Six*.

The first response from Leigh Henry finds that Vuillermoz is wrong in seeing
no common characteristics among the composers of *Les Six*.

First, they share the
skepticism of many postwar youth. Second, they share a propensity for melody instead
of theme (the latter he associates with German romantics). Third, their works share a
certain flatness – something akin to matte in painting (presumably he is referring to a
deliberately two-dimensional character that rejects the mimesis of traditional
approaches and that is considered a defining feature of modernist painting).
Comparing the composers to those previous in France, he admires that *Les Six* have
brought clarity to French music. Prior to them, French composers were caught up in
“introspection” and “subjectivity” – he is likely referring to impressionist composers
like Debussy, rather than more distant French composers.

Henry finds that

Vuillermoz “suffers from the idea that the real ‘modernist’ must be revolutionary;
[instead] the true modern may evolve as his surrounding conditions, imperceptibly.”

Ultimately, Henry finds that Vuillermoz’s article merely furthers the legend of *Les Six:
“Mr. Vuillermoz has established the Six more than any direct propaganda on their
part.”

Henry also articulates an interpretation of modernism that seems more
inclusive than other scholars: in calling not just for revolutionary actions, but also for

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121 Leigh Henry, “We are Seven,” *Modern Music* 1, no. 2 (June 1924): 10-17.
122 Ibid., 14.
123 Ibid., 15.
124 Ibid., 17.
imperceptible evolution, Henry broadens the possibilities for music and musical styles of the period.

The second response to Vuillermoz’s article comes from respected critic (and composer) Roland-Manuel (1891-1966).\textsuperscript{125} Roland-Manuel belonged to the same generation as the composers of Les Six and could easily have been a member of the group.\textsuperscript{126} He was a life-long supporter of the six composers, often writing reviews of their works for major newspapers and publications. In Modern Music, he explained Vuillermoz’s article as an indication of a dispute resulting from a “deep chasm” between the generations created by WWI.\textsuperscript{127} Roland-Manuel focuses on the notion that Les Six is anti-Ravelian (with Ravel standing, in this case, for all impressionist and pre-war composers). Roland-Manuel attributes anti-Ravelian sentiments not to the six composers, not even to Le coq, but to Satie, whose feelings have come to be associated with the rest. The six composers who initially were so attracted to Satie because of his non-conformism have, by 1925, the time of his article, seen the error of their ways and now praise Ravel and are more open to the older generation.

A few years after this series of articles, two British authors addressed Les Six – and Tailleferre specifically – the results of which succinctly express the challenges that Tailleferre, female composers, and women generally face in a patriarchal society. In his 1927 Survey of Contemporary Music, prominent Scottish music critic Cecil Gray (1895-1951) discusses various contemporary composers, revealing a distinct bias

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{126} Roland-Manuel had his Sept poèmes de Perse performed with works by Auric, Durey, Honegger, Poulenc, and Tailleferre at the 5 February 1918 performances of Les Nouveaux Jeunes at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. See Hurard-Viltard, Le groupe des six, 320.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Roland-Manuel, “Ravel and the New French School,” 17.
\end{itemize}
for German and English composers. He is scathing in his treatment of *Les Six*, finding them talented only in advertising, not in music.\(^\text{128}\) He singles out Tailleferre: “Of Mlle Germaine Tailleferre one can only repeat Dr. Johnson’s dictum concerning a woman preacher, transposed into terms of music: ‘Sir, a woman’s composing is like a dog’s walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.’ Considered apart from her sex, her music is wholly negligible.”\(^\text{129}\) Gray’s brief yet pointed analogy caught the attention of Virginia Woolf in her seminal text on the state of women writers. In *A Room of One’s Own* from 1929, she cites Gray’s statement on Tailleferre as an indication of the distance that female composers still have to travel in order to gain acceptance in a male-dominated profession. She finds that while women writers and other artists may not have as many obstacles in their paths as they have in centuries prior, “the woman composer stands where the actress stood in the time of Shakespeare.”\(^\text{130}\)

Woolf’s text may have brought attention to the plights of women writers and composers, but it did little to change critics’ approach to describing *Les Six*. For decades after this, still continuing at the present, the members of *Les Six* would be hierarchized such that three or four members of the group – Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc – would receive the most attention from critics and scholars, while the other two or three members – Auric, Durey, and Tailleferre – would be given less, and often negative, attention. Durey’s subordinate status in the group results from his defection in 1921 – leaving Tailleferre to scramble to compose his


\(^\text{129}\) Ibid., 245-6.

part for the ballet *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel* – and his devotion to politics (communism) – resulting in his compositional career often being directed at amateur musical groups. Though Durey created a life-long career from his musical activities (as composer, critic, and administrator), the narrow focus of conventional music criticism and musicological scholarship on high art has excluded Durey’s often politically motivated musical activities. Similarly, the narrow focus on high art and the assumption that women cannot produce high art have resulted in the subordinate rank of Tailleferre’s musical activities in comparison with her male colleagues.

Several surveys from the middle of the twentieth century exemplify this trend in narratives of *Les Six*. Constant Lambert’s 1934 rant against modern music focuses on Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc, with brief mention of Auric. Durey and Tailleferre are omitted completely. Claude Rostand’s 1950 treatment of piano masters discusses five of *Les Six* – Durey omitted – but is heavily biased towards Poulenc. Martin Cooper’s 1951 survey of French music from Berlioz to Fauré offers a lengthy discussion of the group and its members. He ultimately finds Auric and Poulenc the most authentically modern of the group, as they are the youngest and managed to avoid the influences of the previous generation. In his initial description of the six members, he betrays another trend among scholars, this time to characterize the group members by their “otherness.” Auric, Durey, and Poulenc, according to Cooper, at

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134 Ibid., 186.
least, seem not to be “others,” in that they are male, French, and Christian. Honegger, however, is “othered” by his Swiss background, Milhaud by his Provencal roots and Jewish religion, and Tailleferre by her sex. Unlike other scholars and critics, Cooper characterizes the music of Les Six altogether as mixing masculine and feminine qualities:

Simplicity, terseness and clarity were the qualities at which they aimed in music. Their ideal was consciously masculine…and they were opposed to the old-fashioned, decorative paganism of the late nineteenth century. … On the other hand a more feminine element, seldom absent for long from any French art, could be discerned in a new feeling for prettiness. Pastiche of French eighteenth-century ballet music, with its charming volubility, and the pretty pastel shades of Gounod’s early music were cleverly contrasted, or even combined, with negro rhythms and music-hall melodies; and all these varying and disparate elements were employed with that sure sense of the elegant, the amusing, and the novel which distinguishes the art of the Parisian dressmaker.

Not only is Cooper betraying a long-standing stereotype associating all things French with femininity, but also he sets himself up to highlight the six composers as leaning towards the masculine or the feminine in their music. Auric and Poulenc are the most masculine of the six, while Tailleferre is expectedly the most feminine; displaying various characteristics of both gendered types, Durey, Honegger, and Milhaud fall somewhere in the middle.

Other critics and scholars also use language that implies gendered interpretations. In a 1951 New York Times article spurred by the CDMI exhibition, Milhaud is described as “intensely French, but masculine and assertive,” and Poulenc as “sensitive and delicate, but with the assurance and mastery of a major composer;”

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135 Ibid., 184.
136 Ibid., 184-185.
in both cases, the contradictory nature of “but” suggests that the qualities in the two halves of the statements are not usually found together – that Frenchness is not usually masculine and assertive, and that sensitivity and delicacy is not typical of major composers.\textsuperscript{137} Again, the author divides the group, with Auric, Durey, and Tailleferre given brief descriptions, and more attention given to Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc, described together as “the busiest and most productive of the Six” and “having won international reputations for themselves.”\textsuperscript{138}

Returning to authors who hierarchize the group’s members, composer and musicologist Norman Demuth (1898-1968) divided the group in two of his books. In his 1952 book on twentieth-century music, he prefers Honegger and Milhaud, “two figures of prodigious strength.”\textsuperscript{139} Poulenc is only slightly better than a salon composer, and Auric’s music lacks variety. Of Durey and Tailleferre, he writes: “Durey soon retired to the country in order, in his own words, to compose ‘a page a day’. Tailleferre, after creating a mild sensation with her Ballade for Piano and Orchestra (1923), String Quartet (1919), and her Concerto for two pianos, chorus and orchestra (1934) – in which the pianos play an entirely doubling role in the concerto grosso style – vanished into musical oblivion.”\textsuperscript{140} On the contrary, in his 1959 look at French piano music, he finds that Auric and Poulenc contributed the most (and the most interesting) pieces to the instrument’s repertoire, though he does not speak of

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Norman Demuth, \textit{Musical Trends in the Twentieth Century} (London: Rockliff, 1952), 72.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
either composer in glowing terms.141

The November 1953 reunion concert prompted several articles on the group, and a comparison of two articles by female writers shows different approaches to describing the members. Janet Flanner (1892-1978), writing for *The New Yorker* under the name Genêt, describes the concert as attracting aging intellectuals, rather than the current generation of Parisian youth.142 Her description of the concert indicates that feelings of nostalgia for the immediate post-WWI years dominated the concert. She describes the group members: “Les Six, if taken together, are Louis Durey, whose name is always frankly forgotten; Mme. Germaine Tailleferre, whose name is remembered; and Auric, Poulenc, Milhaud, and Honegger, whose names and works are current and constant.”143 (As an aside, I can only imagine what Tailleferre’s reaction would have been if she had read these descriptions of her career by Demuth and Flanner. Tailleferre’s musical career was far from over by the 1950s. It must have been rather surreal to read during the most prolific decade of her career that she “[had] vanished into musical oblivion.”) Fortunately, a welcome respite comes from Tailleferre’s friend. If Tailleferre is only a historical figure to Flanner, to violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange (1892-1961), who interpreted many works by members of Les Six, she was a central figure in the group.144 In her review of the concert, Jourdan-Morhange gives Tailleferre authority by quoting from her (and only her) and by saying

143 Ibid., 192.
that her *Ouverture*, which opened the concert, immediately launched the evening “into the kingdom of the Six.”

Beyond the 1950s exhibition, recording, and reunion, *Les Six* became more and more a historical phenomenon. Though individual group members certainly continued in their careers, Honegger’s 1955 death served to transition *Les Six* out of the present and into the past. Descriptions of the group and its members changed little, however. Four book-length publications from 1955 to 1970 entirely exclude Tailleferre from their pages, beyond mention of her name in a list of *Les Six* members. Close colleague of *Les Six*, Paul Collaer (1891-1989) discussed Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc at length in his 1955 *A History of Modern Music*, though Durey and Tailleferre are almost entirely excluded from its pages. Similarly, the chapter in Roland-Manuel’s anthology of contemporary music devotes seven to eleven pages to each of Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc, again omitting a detailed discussion of Durey and Tailleferre. Histories of song by Denis Stevens from 1960 and by Donald Ivey from 1970 attend to *Les Six*, the former addressing all members except Tailleferre, though focusing on Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc, the latter addressing only Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc in detail.

In 1972, James Harding’s *The Ox on the Roof* marks the first book-length

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145 Ibid. “From the *Ouverture* for orchestra by Germaine Taillefer [sic], we were in the kingdom of the ‘Six’: good-humored and sparkling music from the orchestra.” (“Dès l’*Ouverture* pour orchestre de Germaine Taillefer [sic], nous étions dans le royaume des «Six»: musique de bonne humeur et scintillante d’orchestre.”)


study of Les Six.\textsuperscript{149} Though now outdated, it still represents one of only a few English book-length publications on the group and its members. Harding’s book runs chronologically from 1917 to 1929 (defined by Satie’s \textit{Parade} and Auric’s \textit{Aubade}). He addresses all six composers at various points throughout the book, paying less attention to Durey and Tailleferre. A paragraph from the middle of his book, however, shows that despite the details, his attitude towards the six is (stereo)typical:

Rather to their surprise, ‘Les Nouveaux Jeunes’ became, overnight, ‘Les Six’. Yet their instant notoriety contradicted the real state of affairs. They were even less closely-knit than the five Russians who had inspired their nickname. The links that bound them were purely those of friendship, time and circumstance. Their tastes and inclinations were wholly different. Honegger’s models were the German Romantics. Milhaud drew upon southern lyricism. Durey persisted in his attachment to Ravel and Debussy. Auric and Poulenc alone were whole-hearted in their support of Cocteau’s ideas, while Germaine Tailleferre, with feminine discretion, was ready to adopt whatever seemed to be the prevailing tone.\textsuperscript{150}

Another (stereo)typical paragraph describing the group comes from Peter S. Hansen’s 1978 survey of twentieth-century music.\textsuperscript{151} He titles his ninth chapter “Les Trois,” already betraying his attitude towards the group. In introducing the chapter, his preferences are clarified:

Durey retired to the country and from music; Mlle. Tailleferre wrote little of lasting importance; Auric became one of the most successful composers of music for motion pictures and eventually achieved international fame with his waltz “Moulin Rouge”. The remaining three – Milhaud, Honegger, and Poulenc – became France’s leading composers of the second quarter of the century.\textsuperscript{152}

Hansen is wrong about Durey: he may have retired to the country, but he did not retire

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\textsuperscript{149} James Harding, \textit{The Ox on the Roof} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1972).
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{151} Peter S. Hansen, \textit{An Introduction to Twentieth Century Music} (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978).
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 125.
from music. In excluding Auric from the group of leading composers, he displays a bias subordinating film music. As for his description of Tailleferre – well, at this point in my historiography, it is not surprising.

From the late 1980s to the present, various books have focused on Les Six and the music of the period, all of which continue to hierarchize the members. In 1987, Elaine Brody focuses on Milhaud and Eveline Hurard-Viltard, in the first French book devoted to Les Six, continues to subordinate Durey and Tailleferre, despite the detailed nature of her writing. Also in 1987, the film The Composers describes the group, situating them in the artistic community of Montparnasse (the focus on the series to which the film belongs). Though Tailleferre is actually featured in the film more than Auric and Durey, she only ever describes and plays other composers’ music – she performs Satie’s first Gymnopédie (1888) and Poulenc’s Le bestiaire (1919). Her own position in the group, compositions, and musical style are not featured.

In the early 1990s, two widely read surveys of twentieth-century music present somewhat opposing views on Les Six and its composers. Robert P. Morgan describes Les Six as responsible for the “new spirit” of post-war France: “Their common espousal of music that was direct in approach, light in touch, and free of the pretensions of the concert hall defined the very essence of the ‘new spirit’.” He focuses his attention on Poulenc, Milhaud, and Honegger, in that order. Ending his

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section on Honegger, he finds that neither he nor any other member of Les Six achieved a similar station as did Stravinsky, Schoenberg, or Bartók (other composers on whom he focuses in this chapter on neoclassicism). He finds that Debussy was the only high rank composer in France. After Debussy, “the subsequent absence of a dominant figure probably explains why the members of Les Six are commonly considered as a group, even though their formal connection lasted only a few years.” He also sees the group identity as important in “attempting to throw off the vestiges of Romantic individualism.” Regardless, he sees the group as largely responsible for shaping musical life in postwar Paris: “their combined historical significance thus clearly exceeds that of their individual attainments.”

Paul Griffiths, on the other hand, gives relatively little attention to Les Six and its composers, and ultimately finds that the group itself was insignificant. He calls Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel a “crazy skit” and finds that the composers “took a more consistently irreverent attitude to the past.” He ends his discussion of the group as follows: “Les Six did not exist as a group for more than a few years, and the three leading members, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud and Francis Poulenc, all went off in more positive and promising directions.” While the group’s identity was more important for Morgan than the individual composers, Griffiths sees the group as a something of a temporary teenage rebellion from which three of the composers

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156 Ibid., 167.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Paul Griffiths, Modern Music: A Concise History (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 67-68. In describing their irreverence for the past, Griffiths is comparing Les Six to Stravinsky, to whom he gives much more attention in his discussions of neoclassicism and French composers.
160 Ibid., 68.
emerged as mature, successful adults.

Hierarchizing of the group members continues from the 1990s through current publications. Nancy Perloff’s 1991 book *Art and the Everyday: Popular Entertainment and the Circle of Erik Satie*, separates the composers according to their apparent aesthetic preferences.\(^{161}\) She finds Auric, Milhaud, and Poulenc most closely aligned with Satie and Cocteau in avoiding impressionism and romanticism in favor of fusing popular music and art music with the aesthetic principles of parody, diversity, nostalgia, and repetition found in popular Parisian music venues such as the cabaret, circus, fair, and music-hall. On the other hand, Durey, Honegger, and Tailleferre were less concerned with distancing themselves from impressionism, though they were certainly inspired by Satie’s spirit. Glenn Watkins’s 1994 *Pyramids at the Louvre* recounts modernism and early postmodernism through various cultural trends and through the concept of collage.\(^{162}\) Though this approach allows for a welcome interdisciplinary perspective, Watkins ultimately focuses on typical canonical works, rather than using his interdisciplinarity to allow for a critique of canonical narratives. He finds Milhaud and Poulenc to be particularly successful, because of their sensitivities to current trends and because of a universality in their music. Durey and Tailleferre are included in name only, implying that their music failed to achieve the necessary trendiness and universality that Watkins values. Jean Roy’s French book on *Les Six* from 1994 offers details on the group and each individual member.\(^{163}\) Though


\(^{163}\) Roy, *Le groupe des six.*
he spends many more pages on Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc than on Durey and Tailleferre (almost twice more on each of the former four than on each of the latter two), he ends his book by calling for a rediscovery of Auric’s, Durey’s, and Tailleferre’s post-*Les Six* compositions. Tailleferre’s first violin sonata is an example of a particularly enjoyable work that should be heard more.\textsuperscript{164}

Several other French publications deal with *Les Six* in various ways. Michel Faure devotes much of his 1997 book on French neoclassicism to *Les Six* and its community.\textsuperscript{165} Discussing the group’s inception, he credits Cocteau with founding French musical neoclassicism and he describes Cocteau as calculating and manipulative in forming *Les Six* through the media to further his own aesthetic goals.\textsuperscript{166} Faure singles out Milhaud as especially symbolic of postwar changes in that he represented cultural diversity, religious tolerance, and communal cooperation.\textsuperscript{167} Faure also singles out Tailleferre, under the heading “a sexist excuse.”\textsuperscript{168} He explains that Cocteau’s musical world had few women within its ranks. Because women had more prominent places in other arts and because women’s emancipation was of high interest, Cocteau needed to have a woman in *Les Six* in order for it and him to be truly modern.\textsuperscript{169} Faure describes Tailleferre as nothing more than Cocteau’s puppet: he selected Tailleferre for the group far in advance of Collet’s christening and he chose

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{164} Ibid., 191.
\bibitem{165} Michel Faure, *Du néoclassicisme musical dans la France du premier XXe siècle* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1997).
\bibitem{166} Ibid., 113-117.
\bibitem{167} Ibid., 129-130.
\bibitem{168} Ibid., 130. “Germaine Tailleferre, un alibi sexiste.”
\bibitem{169} Ibid., 130-131.
\end{thebibliography}
her because she liked Satie and was a good muse for male composers. Describing this as the cause of Tailleferre’s life-long modesty, he writes, “far from protesting, Germaine Tailleferre interiorized these male chauvinist values.” Further segregating Tailleferre within the group, he associates her – and only her – with the past when describing pastoral trends in the works of the *Les Six* composers. The pastoral was a strong trope in neoclassical music of the era, and all of the *Les Six* composers displayed this in their works. Faure sees Tailleferre as having an authentic pastoral upbringing (Auric, Honegger, and Poulenc, being from cities and/or bourgeois families did not, for example), though he explains her pastoral musical style as belonging to an artisanal French tradition (the true pastoral nature of her upbringing is dubious, as her birthplace and childhood home was just seven miles from Paris’s center). Ultimately, though Faure’s book is detailed in respect to the greater community, his discussions of the individual members of *Les Six* hardly reflect a nuanced appreciation for their experiences and struggles. For example, when describing that the members of *Les Six* led charmed, pleasurable lives, he writes of Tailleferre and Poulenc: “The sentimental life of Germaine Tailleferre is a marathon towards love without clouds. Poulenc married his Catholicism with his homosexuality without a shadow of bad conscience.” His insensitivity is made even clearer in describing Tailleferre’s marriage to Ralph Barton. Ignoring the immense difficulties of her marriage (which I detail in chapter five) and betraying an outdated, fairytale view

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170 Ibid., 131. “Loin de s’insurger, Germaine Tailleferre intériorise ces valeurs machistes.”

171 Ibid., 197-198.

172 Ibid., 164. “La vie sentimentale de Germaine Tailleferre est un marathon vers l’amour sans nuages. Poulenc accorde son catholicisme avec son homosexualité sans une ombre de mauvaise conscience.”
that marriage – happy or not – is the only indicator of a woman’s success, he laments her divorce: “Her marriage with Ralph Barton offered Germaine Tailleferre the happiness of a beautiful, Provençal house in Sanary and a distinctive townhouse in Paris. Upon their declared divorce, her carriage returned to a pumpkin.”\textsuperscript{173} Altogether, Faure’s portrayal of Tailleferre shows insensitivity to the cultural and social forces and to her experiences that challenged her career such that he does little to advance understandings of \textit{Les Six}.

Other French publications from the past decade have a more narrow focus. Ursula Anders-Malvetti analyzes the group’s aesthetics in their piano music from 1917-1921.\textsuperscript{174} In both her biographical section and in her lengthy compositional analyses, she pays Tailleferre the least attention of the members in the group.

Catherine Miller’s book analyzes songs by members of \textit{Les Six}, specifically, songs that set words by Cocteau, Guillaume Apollinaire, and Paul Claudel.\textsuperscript{175} Though the specificity of the subject permits an opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of each of the composers, Miller joins the long list of others who attend to Tailleferre last and least.

Roger Nichols and Jane Fulcher present two of the most recent publications to attend to \textit{Les Six}, both addressing them as part of larger studies dealing with cultural,

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 250 (italics original). “Son mariage avec Ralph Barton offre à Germaine Tailleferre le bonheur d’une ravissante maison provençale à Sanary et d’un hôtel particulier dans Paris. Leur divorce une fois prononcé, ces carrosses redeviennent citrouilles.”

\textsuperscript{174} Ursula Anders-Malvetti, \textit{Ästhetik und Kompositionsweise der Gruppe der Six: Studien zu ihrer Kammermusik aus den Jahren 1917-1921} (Echternach, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi, 1998). It is apparent in reading her book that her definition of piano music is broad, referring to any work including or featuring piano.

\textsuperscript{175} Catherine Miller, \textit{Jean Cocteau, Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Claudel et le groupe des six: rencontres poético-musicales autour des mélodies et des chansons} (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2003).
social, and political histories and trends. Nichols organizes his book on the period from 1917 to 1929 by musical institutions and their associated genres and by major composers. In the latter category, he determines nine composers who were central to the spirit of the 1920s: Gabriel Fauré, Vincent d’Indy, Satie, Albert Roussel, Ravel, Stravinsky, Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc. Of the latter three, he intriguingly describes Honegger as “by some way the most successful and talked-of composer in the group by the middle of the decade.” Of Milhaud, Nichols espouses his La création du monde and describes how Satie saw him as the only member of the group who remained true to its aesthetic concerns. Nichols is perhaps most sensitive in his scholarship when situating some of Poulenc’s compositions within complex frames of identity and sexuality. It is unfortunate that he does not apply similar perceptiveness to a discussion of Tailleferre, gender, and identity.

Regarding Fulcher’s book, I have already mentioned its discussion of Les Six’s founding and of Cocteau and Collet’s involvement in the group. In treating each of the composers individually, Fulcher asserts that rather than being troublesome nationalist youth, they were instead culturally sensitive intellectuals who tackled the problem of nationalism versus universalism in their compositions. She examines each individual composer in terms of his or her background and positions during and after the war in order to determine how these translated into stylistic or artistic decisions.

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177 Nichols, The Harlequin Years, 231.
178 Ibid., 264.
179 Ibid., 241-247.
180 Fulcher, The Composer as Intellectual, 172.
Fulcher sees Auric’s music criticism presenting a more realistic view of the aesthetic position of *Les Six* (as opposed to that contrived by Cocteau), and his compositions (especially *Les fâcheux*) ridiculing social types, perhaps informed by his upper-class intellectual upbringing.\(^{181}\) Fulcher finds Milhaud as continually struggling to define himself both by his traditional Jewish and French roots and by contemporary society. Milhaud sought influences far and wide – as evidenced in his diverse social circle and his extensive travels – and he strove for universal appeal in his music.\(^{182}\) Describing Honegger, Fulcher finds his identity struggles manifested as strongly opinionated writings about music and as a clear attachment to Germanic musical traditions, which resulted in a musical style that was appealing to large numbers of people.\(^{183}\) Though Fulcher finds much innovation in Poulenc’s style and though she closely associates him with surrealist circles, she also emphasizes his admiration for Germanic composers and his traditionalism with regards to musical forms.\(^{184}\) As the oldest of the six composers, Durey was the first to come to political awareness. His age, combined with his need to reject his privileged upbringing and his nationalist education, brought him to reject Cocteau’s propaganda and align himself with communism.\(^{185}\) Finally, Fulcher addresses Tailleferre, focusing on the challenges that she faced as a female composer. Titling the section “Tailleferre and Dual Marginality,” Fulcher refers to

\(^{181}\) Ibid., 173-175.
\(^{182}\) Ibid., 175-184.
\(^{183}\) Ibid., 184-188.
\(^{184}\) Ibid., 188-191.
\(^{185}\) Ibid., 191-192.
Tailleferre’s outsider status both as an avant-garde artist and as a woman. In order to negotiate these two positions without seeming to espouse a standard revolutionary or feminist position, Tailleferre avoided an overtly contemporary musical aesthetic, instead choosing subtler mimicry in traditional packaging: “Tailleferre would find herself caught in the contradictory gender conceptions of her period, which despite a certain postwar openness nevertheless clung to traditional expectations. And so she would rebel, but within necessary limits, pushing the boundaries of conventional images and playing slyly with historical styles and techniques, inflected in a clever new manner.” Speaking directly of the impact of Tailleferre’s sex on her career, Fulcher addresses both positive and negative effects:

Indeed, throughout her career, Tailleferre simultaneously invoked and broke away from established conventions, as the first French woman avant-garde composer. Although her influences and tastes were similar to those of Francis Poulenc’s, she nevertheless was charged by critics with being ineluctably “feminine” in her style. Just as with Marie Laurencin, the painter who worked closely with Poulenc, gender typecasting played both a positive and negative role in Tailleferre’s career. It brought recognition, but with it dismissal as “feminine,” “pastel,” and “light,” or as Cocteau himself put it, “a Marie Laurencin for the ear.”

Perhaps more than anyone else, Fulcher fully recognizes both the impact of Tailleferre’s gender on her career and the ways in which Tailleferre negotiated her gender, either consciously or subconsciously. Despite this, Fulcher relegates Tailleferre to last place in her discussion of the composers, even though she does not follow an alphabetical ordering. Furthermore, Tailleferre receives less space in

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186 Ibid., 193-195. I address Fulcher’s specific discussion of Tailleferre’s Six chansons françaises in chapter five.
187 Ibid., 193.
188 Ibid., 194.
Fulcher’s book than the other composers of Les Six, with the exception of Durey.

Thus far, my lengthy (yet not exhaustive) literature review has been roughly chronological. However, I have delayed any discussion of musicological encyclopedias and dictionaries until now. Ultimately, there is no real need to discuss any of them at length, because they uniformly follow the trends in Les Six and Tailleferre scholarship and, even in their most recent editions, are disappointingly outdated. For the most part, articles on Tailleferre are brief (briefer than those for her colleagues in Les Six), stereotypical, and unrevised in editions beyond the 1980s or early 1990s. Since the Grove dictionaries and the recent Oxford History of Western Music by Richard Taruskin are most central to musicological scholarship, I will focus my attention on these, noting that other dictionaries like Baker’s and Greene show no more sensitivity to their subjects.\(^{189}\)

The 1935 Grove dictionary is the first to include entries on members of Les Six, though there is not yet an article on the group itself (the previous edition from 1926 included no entries on any members of the group).\(^{190}\) Its treatment of the six composers is inconsistent, sometimes tying them closely to Les Six, other times ignoring their membership in the group altogether. Furthermore, the entries include several errors. In this edition, the hierarchy of value placed on the six composers is

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\(^{189}\) Articles on Tailleferre in the Baker’s dictionaries from 1940 to 2001 are short and stereotypical. The first article on Tailleferre appeared in the fourth edition (1940). The fifth edition presented slightly more information, but from then to the most recent ninth edition (2001), the information is little changed (articles in the seventh, eighth, and ninth editions are identical). For the most recent edition, see Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, ed. Nicolas Slonimsky and Laura Kuhn (New York: Schirmer, 2001). David Mason Green’s encyclopedia from 1985 includes entries on all members of Les Six. Tailleferre’s is the shortest and it instructs the reader to refer to other entries for information on Les Six, whereas the group is described in full in entries for all other members of the group. See David Mason Green, Greene’s Biographical Encyclopedia of Composers (New York: Doubleday, 1985).

most evident in the size of the entries: Tailleferre’s is a scant paragraph, while other composers are given multiple columns. Tailleferre’s entry is so short that it includes no opinion regarding style or influences.

The 1954 Grove dictionary is the first to include an entry on Les Six as a group.¹⁹¹ Brief, it describes them as being artificially assembled under Cocteau and Satie, emphasizing their friendship over common aesthetic and artistic aims.

Individual entries on the composers are inconsistent in their relationship to the previous edition. Entries on Auric and Durey are similar to those from 1935, with paragraphs added to the end to account for the intervening years. Entries on Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc are greatly expanded from 1935 and generally treat the three as significant contemporary composers. Tailleferre’s entry is longer than that of 1935, but still notably shorter than those for other members of Les Six. No list of works is given, despite the appearance of a substantial (six-page) list in the case of Milhaud, for example. The entry erroneously describes her as a pupil of Milhaud, thereby subordinating her to him. The article ends: “Germaine Tailleferre’s success has not lasted, the reason being no doubt in part a slackening in her productivity, as well as the fact that her talent, for all its charm and refinement, proved to be slender.”

*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* from 1980, of course, is greatly expanded from previous editions.¹⁹² Generally, articles are more thorough, and include lists of works and bibliographies. Examinations of Auric’s, Honegger’s,

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Milhaud’s, and Poulenc’s entries reveal longer articles, with subdivisions into “life” and “works” and indications of three stylistic periods in their compositional careers. For all but Auric, pictures and/or musical examples are included as supplemental material to the articles. For each of these four composers, the articles indicate their ascension to the status of “great composer” based on described lineages with other “great composers,” compositional prolificacy, and stylistic development. Durey and Tailleferre are given entirely different treatments. Their entries are short, no pictures or musical examples or analyses are provided to supplement the prose, and no subdivisions structure the entries. In Durey’s case, stylistic distinctions and compositional progress are not discussed. In Tailleferre’s case, she is said to have maintained the same style for her entire career, with only brief explorations of polytonality and serialism.

The next Grove publication, from 1986, presents twentieth-century French “masters,” and includes Poulenc in its ranks. The book gives no indication why Poulenc is included with Fauré, Debussy, Satie, Ravel, Messiaen, and Boulez instead of another member or other members of Les Six. In the article on Poulenc (much of which is reprinted from the 1980 dictionary), Les Six is hardly mentioned and only Auric, Milhaud, and Honegger are listed by name. In 1992, The New Grove Dictionary of Opera includes entries for all six composers, and separate entries for operas by Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc. With regards to the composer entries, Robert Orledge’s entry on Tailleferre takes up more space than do the articles on Auric and

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Durey. However, Orledge is not overly kind to Tailleferre, ending his entry as follows: “As her talents as a musical dramatist were limited and her music uneven, Tailleferre has remained better known as a composer of ballets (such as Le marchand d’oiseaux, 1923), piano and chamber music; none of her operas has entered the repertory. However, much of her music has real spontaneity, freshness and charm, a revival of her shorter operatic works would prove worthwhile.”

The most recent two Grove publications pertinent here, *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* from 1994 and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* from 2001, bring my chapter back to the beginning. The articles are identical, both authored again by Orledge. I have already quoted from his article in the beginning of Part I of this chapter, so I will not repeat myself here. I will, however, point out my disappointment that the 2001 publication does not offer any improvements on Tailleferre’s previous entries. At least, however, in this Tailleferre is not alone, as the articles of several other members of *Les Six* are unchanged from previous editions of the dictionary.

Richard Taruskin’s *The Oxford History of Western Music* from 2005 addresses *Les Six* and its composers in his chapter, “The Cult of the Commonplace.” Taruskin ignores chronology and discusses several 1920s ballets by Auric, Milhaud, and

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195 Orledge, “Tailleferre, Germaine,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992). It is surprising to see Orledge give *Le marchand d’oiseaux* as an example of a ballet that has fared better than Tailleferre’s operas. As my chapters on the work show, it has been entirely omitted from performance and scholarly canons, despite its original success.


Poulenc before addressing *Les Six* as a group. His reasons for doing this seem to be to create a direct link between Satie’s *Parade* and 1920s ballets by members of *Les Six* (he focuses on Lynn Garafola’s concept of “lifestyle modernism,” which I address in my chapters on Tailleferre’s *Le marchand d’oiseaux*). Moving from ballets to neoclassicism, Taruskin again constructs a firm lineage from Satie’s *Socrate* to Poulenc and Milhaud, whom he describes as heirs of Satie’s “mantle of nakedness.”

He discusses various works of theirs with lengthy musical examples before finally addressing *Les Six* as a group. Focusing on both the nationalism inherent in Cocteau’s aesthetic agenda and his, and Auric’s, Poulenc’s, and Milhaud’s, preferences for American popular culture, Taruskin uses *Les Six* as a transition from his discussion of French composers to that of American composers. Though Poulenc and Milhaud have already had much attention and will have other works addressed at various points in Taruskin’s fourth and fifth volumes, and though Auric has had some discussion, Honegger, Durey, and Tailleferre get only this (Honegger will be addressed again briefly in the fifth volume):

The other three members of the group, which was somewhat artificially named by the critic Henri Collet on the basis of their chance appearance together in a concert program in 1920, were somewhat less inclined [than Auric, Milhaud, and Poulenc] toward “Americanism” or lifestyle modernism. They included Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), a French-speaking Swiss who inclined, like his native country, to an amalgamation of French and German styles, and who won his chief fame on the strength of his five symphonies and his forceful sacred cantatas; Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983), whose career eventually founders on the traditional prejudice against women composers; and Louis Durey (1888-1979), whose left-wing political convictions soon turned him passionately against what he saw as the frivolous values of lifestyle modernism, and to a degree against the values of modern concert music.

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198 Ibid., 573. “Naked” was a term often used to describe the simplicity and pared-down nature of Satie’s aesthetic.
altogether. Durey’s music is decidedly obscure, but his lucky charter membership in the celebrated Group of Six (like the membership of the equally shadowy César Cui among the Russian Five) had obliged every subsequent textbook to drop his name, as this one has now done. (In later life Durey wrote workers’ choruses on texts by Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh.)

Taruskin’s paragraph is rather ironic in that it gives the most attention to Durey, despite Taruskin’s opinion that he is essentially unworthy of attention. Since Taruskin gave Tailleferre even less attention than Durey and since his attention describes a failed career, it seems safe to assume that she is even less worthy of discussion than is Durey. However, Taruskin redeems himself somewhat in his brief discussion of Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel that follows. The only individual contribution to the ballet that he addresses is Tailleferre’s “Quadrille,” which he views as most successful in putting Cocteau’s statement about the ballet’s camera – its centerpiece – into practice:

> The camera from which animate objects materialize unpredictably was a device, Cocteau wrote, to ‘extricate objects and feelings from their veils and their mists, to show them suddenly, so naked and so alive that one can scarcely recognize them.’ Tailleferre’s Quadrille, whose five tiny sections put five such sudden manifestations together in a collage, best matches its sounds to the effect described by Cocteau.

Taruskin’s assessment of Tailleferre’s “Quadrille” as best expressing Cocteau’s aesthetics in music counters many previous descriptions that view her feminine and retrospective (either in her neoclassicism or in her affinity for impressionist composers) music style as least indicative of Cocteau’s aesthetic ideals. Without any other descriptions from Taruskin of Tailleferre’s music, it is impossible to reconcile these incongruities.

This lengthy historiographical analysis of discussions of Tailleferre in writings
on *Les Six* may not be exhaustive, but it addresses important publications and authors, and it draws from enough literature to allow me to comment on patterns by way of conclusion. With regards to hierarchizing the group’s members, Hansen’s term, “*Les Trois,*” singling out Honegger, Milhaud, and Poulenc as the three most successful and “best” composers in the group, serves well to summarize the writings of many of the authors. Both in terms of rhetoric and in terms of sheer number of words, authors repeatedly establish these three composers as the superior members of the group.

Auric, Durey, and Tailleferre are seen as less prolific, less successful, and less talented in comparison. *Les Six* is also sometimes divided into two different groups of three in terms of their stylistic tendencies, this time with Auric joining Milhaud and Poulenc as the three composers viewed as most closely aligned with Cocteau’s aesthetics – the aesthetics that are seen as representative of the group as a whole (Taruskin, of course, curiously represents the only exception). Durey, Honegger, and Tailleferre contrast these three in being more retrospective in their styles, in their ties to either French or Germanic musical traditions. These divisions are important in showing that, while gender is of central concern to my study of Tailleferre, gender is not the only category of difference. If the hierarchies that I have established were to be analyzed from the perspective of Honegger, then nationalism would be an important factor in determining subordination for his “Germanness.” Analyzed from Durey’s or Auric’s perspectives, and distinctions of value between music genres – the classical-popular dichotomy – would be an important factor in understanding why their music activities in the realms of film, amateur, and political musics ranked them in relatively lower esteem. That said, though, even with Milhaud and Poulenc, the more highly esteemed
composers in the group, religious devotion, with regards to Milhaud, and religious devotion and sexual identity, with regards to Poulenc, are important factors in understanding their music and careers.

Regarding Tailleferre alone, I will not bother reiterating some of the blatantly negative and overtly misogynistic attitudes toward her. I will, however, observe that she is frequently given the least attention from authors and that discussions of her music are rare, and, if they do go beyond simply mentioning the titles of some of her early works, involve only brief and general observations that often include gendered language. Taking an optimistic approach, one could argue that several recent authors, in various ways, have edged away from (stereo)typical treatments of Tailleferre or have urged for more attention to be paid to her: Fulcher, with the critical attention she gives to Tailleferre’s gendered identity; Roy, with his call for more attention to Tailleferre’s music; and, Taruskin, with his brief but atypical assessment of Tailleferre’s musical aesthetics. Optimism aside, there is an overwhelming tendency with almost all of the authors discussed in this part of my chapter (and in some cases in the first part of my chapter as well) to view Les Six as the height of Tailleferre’s career. Three writings from the 1950s are especially illustrative of this opinion. As already cited, Demuth, in 1952, described Tailleferre as “vanishing into musical oblivion;” Flanner, in 1953, described Tailleferre as a historical, not a current, figure; and the 1954 Grove article described her as having “slender” talent and a “slackening in productivity.” In fact, these authors, especially the Grove writer, are simply wrong. A quick count through Orledge’s 1992 list of works reveals that Tailleferre was especially productive in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In the ten-year period from
1946-1956 (a period chosen relatively arbitrarily, aside from being contemporary to these three articles), Tailleferre produced forty compositions. Comparing this to the ten-year period from 1916-1926, when Tailleferre was a member of Les Six and supposedly at the height of her career and productivity, she produced seventeen pieces. In fact, during the ten years from 1946-1956, Tailleferre was more productive than in any other ten-year period before or after (other ten-year periods had a productivity of between fifteen and twenty works). While my dissertation is not concerned with works from this prolific period of Tailleferre’s career, I use this inaccuracy, along with my thorough documentation of androcentric and misogynistic treatments of Tailleferre and her career, to show that a new approach is needed. The remainder of my dissertation offers one possibility.

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201 Orledge’s list of works is certainly the most reliable such document regarding Tailleferre’s oeuvre, though, as he admits in his introduction, it is incomplete due to various difficulties documenting all of Tailleferre’s compositions.
CHAPTER 3. HÉLÈNE PERDRIAT AND GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE’S BALLET LE MARCHAND D’OISEAUX (THE BIRD MERCHANT, 1923): CONTEXT AND CONTENT

*Le marchand d’oiseaux* (The Bird Merchant) is a ballet with music by Tailleferre, set, scenario, and costumes by Hélène Perdriat (1894-1969), and choreography by Jean Börlin (1893-1930). It was premiered 25 May 1923 at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées by the Ballets Suédois (Swedish Ballet). It was a popular and lucrative work for the Ballets Suédois and it held a central place in the company’s repertoire until it disbanded in 1925. The ballet was salient to Tailleferre’s career, as it brought her commissions from Sergei Diaghilev and the Princesse de Polignac. This and the following chapters resurrect this now little-known ballet.

With these two chapters, I have two primary concerns: first, uncovering all aspects of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, and second, analyzing the work and its reception from a gendered perspective, providing a new understanding of modernism and uncovering Tailleferre’s connections to women through her work. This first chapter on the ballet unfolds in two parts. In an effort to provide the reader with suitable context and to establish trends in scholarship on ballet in 1920s Paris, Part I provides a great deal of background information on ballet in 1920s Paris. Part II turns to *Le marchand d’oiseaux* providing information about and analyses of all aspects of the work. The following chapter, the second chapter on the ballet, turns to reception, critical analysis, and historiography, examining trends, exploring Tailleferre’s writing on the ballet, and conceptualizing femininity and modernity.

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1 In translating the title of the ballet from French to English, I have chosen “The Bird Merchant,” using the cognate of the French “marchand,” rather than “The Bird Seller.” The latter might be a more appropriate English translation, but the former is in keeping with English forms of the title appearing in performance reviews from the 1920s, as the reader will see throughout this chapter and the next.
My research on *Le marchand d’oiseaux* took place during the summer of 2009 at the archives of the Ballets Suédois at the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum) in Stockholm, Sweden. This rich collection contains manuscript scores, sketches of the staging and costumes, photographs of the dancers and the stage, company documents relating to the ballet, collections of press clippings, and other valuable documents. These two chapters on the ballet include all or parts of many of these research materials. I am especially grateful to the Dansmuseet for granting me permission to duplicate photographs Perdriat’s costume sketches.
PART I. SETTING THE STAGE: BALLET IN 1910S AND 1920S PARIS

This first part of my chapter (re)orients the reader to ballet in Paris in the 1910s and 1920s and discusses the Ballets Suédois, its personnel, and its works. In doing so, this section provides background information on Le marchand d’oiseaux, to be discussed in Part II of this chapter, and introduces and problematizes narratives on the subject, foreshadowing issues of femininity and modernity to be revisited in the following chapter.

Before the Ballets Suédois

Telling the story of ballet in 1920s Paris is no simple task. On the one hand, much has been made of the resurgence of ballet in the early twentieth century as reflecting nationalist tendencies in France generally.\(^2\) The Wagnerism that had swept Paris in the 1870s and 1880s had waned due to political events that pitted France and the Germanic countries ever more strongly against each other. For many French composers, a rejection of Wagner’s techniques also meant a rejection of the genre most associated with him – opera – in favor of a staged genre rooted in their own musical and cultural traditions – ballet. Additionally, French composers turned to their own compositional heritage for inspiration. The French neoclassicism that resulted grew out of and evolved in conjunction with trends in the other arts. In part, this marked ballet as a suitable replacement for opera, as it allowed composers, artists, choreographers, dancers, poets, and others to collaborate in the framework of the “total art work,” something that was important to many French avant-garde artists,

\(^2\) Jane Fulcher undoubtedly offers the most detailed scholarship on the intersections of music, nationalism, and politics during the period: see Jane F. Fulcher, The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France 1914-1940 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
though it was not connected to Wagner nor explicitly theorized as such. On the other hand, the dominant players on the ballet scene in Paris were not even French. Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929) and his Ballets Russes (Russian Ballet) presented a variety of works by French, Russian, German, and Italian composers, offering more of a pan-European plethora, rather than a French focus.

As much as nationalism, avant-garde and modernist expression have also been central to any story of ballet during this period. Starting with the trilogy of ballets by Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes in the early 1910s and moving through the 1920s with works by Satie and members of Les Six (more on these to come), the collaborative possibilities of ballet attracted a variety of modernist, avant-garde, and surrealist artists. They and their works have been placed at center stage in histories of music and dance. *Parade*, premiered by the Ballets Russes in 1917, is foremost.

In his seminal book on the rise of Parisian avant-garde art, Roger Shattuck describes *Parade* as “set[ting] the tone for the postwar years.”

“What stands out as eminently ‘modern’ about *Parade* – modern in the sense of expressing the whole artistic attitude of the twenties even though written in 1916-1917 – is its use of popular themes and jazz, its festive mood, and the clear lines of its organization.”

*Parade* established its collaborators – Cocteau (creator, librettist), Satie (composer), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973, set and costume designer), and Léonide Massine (1896-1979, choreographer), as well as Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) who wrote the program

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3 *L’oiseau de feu*, 1910; *Pétrouchka*, 1911; *Le sacre du printemps*, 1913.
5 Ibid., 157-158.
notes – as leaders of the avant garde. The success of the work – or, more correctly, the succèş de scandale – confirmed for Cocteau his own aesthetic and artistic beliefs, outlined in the 1918 publication of his manifesto Le coq et l’harlequin. Among other things, Le coq legitimized ballet as a suitable genre for expressing the avant garde through a meeting of different arts, paving the way for the Ballets Suédois, who would take up this task in earnest from 1920 to 1925.

For the younger composers of Les Six, Parade’s conflation of elements was most inspiring. The ballet blends music, art, dance, design, and sound; it blends high and low arts; it blends old and new music; it blends the real and the surreal; it blends French, American, and Oriental cultures. All at once, the audience was privy to the modern – cubism, sounds of technology, American film culture, jazz, music-hall and cabaret entertainment – and to the traditional – French simplicity, fugues and chorales, waltzes. While audiences at the time were confused and incensed by the conflation of elements in Parade, avant-garde artists were inspired. On 6 June 1917, just a couple of weeks after Parade’s premiere on 18 May, the first concert of Les Nouveaux Jeunes featured a four-hand piano version of Satie’s score. Its central place in this important concert cemented it as a piece that rallied the Parisian youth.

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7 This is, at least, the generalized version of the story that tends still to dominate musicological narratives. While Parade was undoubtedly influential for some, especially Poulenc and Auric, it was not necessarily given with the same high regard by all young composers. Again, Fulcher should be consulted, here regarding a sort of publicity machine driven by Cocteau and music critic Henri Collet and heralding Parade’s centrality to modern French musical aesthetics: see Fulcher, The Composer as Intellectual.

8 See Table 1 and my first chapter for more information on Les Nouveaux Jeunes and the formation of Les Six.
People of the Ballets Suédois: Rolf de Maré and Jean Börlin

The Ballets Russes dominated the Parisian ballet scene through the 1910s and similarly continues to dominate narratives of music and ballet of the era. But starting in 1920, the company had competition. The Ballets Suédois set up shop at Paris’s Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 1920 and immediately challenged Diaghilev’s monopoly on avant-garde ballet.

If Parade presented the first example of a collaborative ballet as “total art work,” the idea was adopted in earnest by the Ballets Suédois during their existence from 1920 to 1925. Though taking the “exoticism” of the Ballets Russes as its model, the Ballets Suédois was from the beginning more in line with the aesthetics of Cocteau and the avant garde. While this chapter complicates the long-running association of the Ballets Suédois with the avant garde, this connection was undeniably central to the company’s identity as is demonstrated by their repeated usage of the phrase “against all academicisms” to promote themselves.9

The Ballets Suédois had five complete seasons from 1920 to 1925. Table 2 shows the total number of performances and ballets performed each season.

Table 2: Ballets Suédois: Performances by Season10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seasons</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<td>517</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>395</td>
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<td>2758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Unique Ballets Performed</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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10 Ibid., 292. It is likely that Häger’s performance counts come from the company’s own performance ledger held at the Dansmuseet. For the purposes of this table, I have reproduced Häger’s counts exactly, though my own research discovered that his counts are not quite correct for Tailleferre’s ballet. The remaining tables in this chapter attempt to offer corrections as indicated.
The company was based in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The company also undertook various tours of France, Europe, and the US. In addition to these company tours, Jean Börlin and several of the company’s dancers toured with Ballets Suédois works in South America in 1926.

The company was founded by the wealthy Swedish aristocrat, Rolf de Maré (1888-1964). De Maré was an avid art collector, with a special interest in cubism, and he sought to create a ballet company that could make some of his works come to life, something that Erik Näslund emphasizes in his scholarship on the company. De Maré would engage artists in collaboration with composers and choreographers to create stage works that presented various media simultaneously. Näslund refers to these as “multi art” or “total theater,” notably similar to Wagner’s operatic “total art work.” And just as Cocteau combined high and low art forms in Parade with the Ballets Russes, the Ballets Suédois saw the mixing of high and low forms and various types of stage presentation (mime, circus, etc.) as central to its mission. Opinions on the avant-garde nature of the company were certainly mixed and too numerous to list here, save one particularly intriguing explanation of the company: “In accepting that

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11 See ibid. for information regarding cities and years. Detailed information is available in company archives at the Dansmuseet in Stockholm.

12 Details of this tour are vague, though some performances in particular South American cities are documented in the company’s performance ledger now at the Dansmuseet. Because of the incomplete records of this tour, I ignore it for the most part for the purposes of my current research.


the Ballets Suédois is to the choreographed arts what caricature is to drawing, their value will not be diminished, instead on the contrary.” While the reviewer does not really elaborate on this idea, his likening of the Ballets Suédois’ style to caricature implies both a superficial entertainment value and a deeper political, social, or cultural commentary, together, in this case, epitomizing the avant garde.

While avant-garde ballets have come to characterize the company and have taken a dominant place in scholarship, works with more conventional appeal equaled these modern works in number and achieved significantly more popularity for the Ballets Suédois during its existence. Näslund notes that the company’s earlier works are more traditional in conception than their later works, but I view this as perhaps a simplified understanding of the company’s trajectory. While works with more conventional appeal were necessary at first for the company to establish itself with the Parisian public, they actually maintained their popularity throughout the company’s existence, even dominating at certain points, especially when on tour throughout France and in the US. One French critic, as a general introduction to the company preceding his review of Tailleferre’s ballet, praised the diversity of the Ballets

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15 J. T., “Au Theatre Municipal: Les Ballets Suédois de Rolf de Maré,” *Ouest clair* (21 January 1925). Ballets Suédois. Books of Reviews, Press Clippings, etc., Book 5, CD V, 05-190-01. Dansmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden. “En admettant même que les ballets suédois soient à l’art chorégraphique ce que la caricature est au dessin, leur valeur n’en sera pas pour cela diminuée, bien au contraire.” As the citation indicates, this article was examined in the scrapbooks of the Ballets Suédois collection at the Dansmuseet. The first two numbers of the document number, 05-190-01, indicate that this article is found on the 190th page of the 5th scrapbook. The third number of the document number, 05-190-01, indicates that multiple digital copies were made of this page and that this article is found in the first digital copy. Henceforth, to limit length, citations of all articles found in the Dansmuseet collection will be followed with only their book, CD, and document numbers.

Suédois, nicknaming them “classic modern ballet.”\footnote{M. Roux, “Rolf de Maré et les Ballets Suédois,” \textit{La danse et les danseurs} (1 June 1923). Book 13, CD II, 13-104, “…ballets classiques modernes…”} This oxymoron is well chosen to express the conflation of styles among the company’s works, though it undeservedly ignores the many (Swedish) folk elements of their ballets. This juxtaposition of classic and modern elements is important to my discussion of Tailleferre’s ballet and will be revisited.

Comparisons between the Ballets Russes and the Ballets Suédois began immediately after the latter’s founding. As Näslund explains, de Maré even chose the name of his company in part because it played on the already well-established Ballets Russes.\footnote{Näslund, “Animating a Vision,” 48.} De Maré was aptly described as “the Swedish Diaghilev” by the French press.\footnote{Ibid., 38.} In addition to their affinity for modern works, the two companies also highlighted their own Russian and Swedish folk traditions. But ballet scholar Lynn Garafola notes that the companies differed in an important respect.\footnote{Lynn Garafola, “Rivals for the New: The Ballets Suédois and the Ballets Russes,” in \textit{Paris Modern: The Swedish Ballet 1920-1925}, ed. Nancy Van Norman Baer (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 66-85. In fact, Garafola outlines various differences between the companies in her chapter on the two, but the one I mention is particularly important here.} In the post-war period, the Ballets Russes experienced financial difficulties that severely limited their performance seasons. In part, this was due to new competition from the Ballets Suédois. The Ballets Suédois, with its wealthy impresario de Maré, did not have to rely on ticket sales for income (at least at first). In order to support the company, de Maré leased the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, founded a dance magazine that gave only a fraction of its attention to the Ballets Russes, and acquired several publications.
that would, of course, offer favorable reviews of Ballets Suédois performances.\(^{21}\) Partly as a result of financial difficulties, the Ballets Russes was not as ambitious in its avant-garde offerings during the 1920s as it could not afford to offend its audiences.

Founder and impresario de Maré was integral to the identity and success of the Ballets Suédois, though equally important was choreographer and star Jean Börlin. The two men met in 1918. Börlin was a dancer and choreographer with the Royal Swedish Ballet, but he found their traditional style stifling.\(^{22}\) With his preference for modernity, he encouraged de Maré to found the Ballets Suédois. Not only were Börlin and de Maré partners, but they were also lovers, something that may have contributed to the decision to base the company in Paris, away from the disapproval of de Maré’s family.\(^{23}\)

Börlin’s involvement in the company stretched far beyond its founding. He was the principal choreographer, principal dancer, director, and manager. He ran all rehearsals and did all of the teaching. All Ballets Suédois scholars point to his prolificacy, noting that his accomplishment of choreographing twenty-four new works in five years is unheard of.\(^{24}\) In large part, his choreographic successes came from his superior collaborative skills, in that he was able to adapt his styles to the artists with


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 42-44.


\(^{24}\) Näslund, “Animating a Vision,” 53-4; Näslund, “The Ballet Avant-Garde I,” 211. In fact, it is speculated that his early death, at just thirty-seven years old, was a result of overwork, though his dependency on drugs and alcohol after the disbanding of the Ballets Suédois (followed soon after by the dissolution of his romantic relationship with de Maré) certainly was the more direct cause of death.
whom he worked.\textsuperscript{25} He augmented his traditional ballet training with more popular forms of entertainment (acrobatics, circus, pantomime) and with folk dancing, especially from his native Sweden. Börlin was also greatly influenced by his extensive travels (with and sponsored by de Maré), resulting in ballets that display various “exoticisms,” popular among his audiences.\textsuperscript{26} The resulting choreography both engaged all aspects of the body and appropriately blended dance with the other artistic aspects of the ballets’ whole.\textsuperscript{27}

Similarities between Börlin as principal choreographer and dancer for the Ballets Suédois and Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950) as principal choreographer and dancer for the Ballets Russes are perhaps obvious. Both had star roles in their respective companies, and both were often adventurous and innovative in their dancing and choreography, frequently flouting strict balletic conventions by employing turned-in foot movements and acrobatics, for example. Nijinsky even provided material for Börlin early on in his career (just prior to the Ballets Suédois): Garafola recalls several instances where Börlin adopted Nijinsky’s movements or took on his roles.\textsuperscript{28} But Baer cites one contemporary historian who explains these likenesses as little more than superficial:

The Swedish Ballet departs entirely from the Asiatic, gorgeous, half-barbaric and decidedly erotic style [of the Russian Ballet] as much as it does from conventional platitude. … It desires something more than merely dancing,

\textsuperscript{25} Näslund, “The Ballet Avant-Garde I,” 205.
\textsuperscript{26} Näslund, “Animating a Vision,” 50-51.
\textsuperscript{27} Näslund quotes Börlin as explaining a problem with traditional styles: “In classical dancing, there is no correspondence between the movements of the legs and the movements of the upper part of the body.” Börlin’s combination of ballet, folk, and popular movement styles more fully engaged the body in holistic movements: see Näslund, “The Ballet Avant-Garde I,” 207.
\textsuperscript{28} Garafola, “Rivals for the New,” 75.
technical capacity and masterly execution; it desires to give expression to a thought, an idea. It also desires to interpret the inner life – the emotion of the human soul.29

While this reviewer preferred the depth of the Ballets Suédois, others criticized Börlin for lacking in technical ability and for not maintaining the slender body expected of dancers.30

But regardless of opinions about their abilities, these two leading men represent an important shift in the demographics of the ballet stage. Garafola’s chapter, “Reconfiguring the Sexes,” details this change with regards to the Ballets Russes, and I summarize her arguments here for two reasons: first, because the relationship and company positions of de Maré and Börlin are markedly similar to those of Diaghilev and Nijinsky; second, because the demographic shift that Garafola elucidates has implications on my later discussion of Le marchand d’oiseaux.31

In the nineteenth century, the female ballerina had been the focus of ballet. But Diaghilev’s homosexuality led to a switch in focus to the male ballerino, resulting in different kinds of roles for men and women. She was “dethroned” and often cast in misogynistically conceived roles, whereas he took on the sexuality previously reserved for women. “Diaghilev’s revolution dethroned the ballerina from [her] seemingly impregnable position within the dance universe. Within his company, her role was sharply curtailed; her repertory limited; her image radically transformed. At the same time, her eroticism and physical bravura were appropriated as attributes of the new

male hero.” Diaghilev and Michel Fokine (choreographer for the Ballets Russes) managed this demographic and identity shift in the 1910s without threatening gender expectations by choosing ballets with distant historical or imaginary scenarios. Part of Fokine’s approach involved the “naturalization” of the female body by dispensing with pointe shoes, corsets, and rigid movements. He saw these elements of traditional ballet as artificial. In redefining his ballerina’s form and movements, he sought a more authentic femininity, though in essence Garafola sees him as “neutralizing” the ballerina’s sexuality. Similarly, Nijinsky, as choreographer and star dancer, used his own body and his abilities as the model for his choreography and thus as the model for his fellow ballerinas and ballerinos. This meant that not only was Nijinsky the star of the show, but also that his body literally dictated his male and female colleagues’ movements. Garafola explains: “If the female body had dominated the ideology of nineteenth-century ballet to the extent of eclipsing and, in some cases, even banishing men from the stage, in Nijinsky’s ballets the male body not only claimed the stage but haunted the female bodies that shared it.” Garafola’s description of a sexual revolution in the Ballets Russes needs no refashioning in order to apply it to the Ballets Suédois. While the nature of the roles of women in the Ballets Suédois will unfold over the course of my chapters on Le marchand d’oiseaux, Börlin’s prominence as choreographer and lead dancer undoubtedly results in a similar

32 Ibid., 181.
33 Ibid., 183.
34 Ibid.
35 On the contrary, ballet based on classical technique was independent of the choreographer’s abilities and particular body type.
36 Garafola, Legacies, 184.
dominance and sexualization of the ballerino as in the case of Nijinsky and the Ballets Russes.

**The Avant-Garde Ballets Suédois: Satie and Les Six**

Just as the ballerino was privileged within the Ballets Suédois, so too were the company’s most avant-garde works. Modernism (remember, “against all academicisms”) was king and he has reigned throughout narratives of the Ballets Suédois. As a result, the following five works – the company’s most avant-garde – have become canonized: *L’homme et son désir* (Man and His Desire, 1921), *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel* (The Marriage on the Eiffel Tower, 1921), *Skating Rink* (1922), *La création du monde* (The Creation of the World, 1923), and *Relâche* (Canceled, 1924). The music for all of these works is by Satie and members of *Les Six*.37

As already mentioned, Cocteau found the Ballets Suédois especially amenable to his avant-garde aesthetics and his desire to combine art forms. What Diaghilev would not permit him to do with *Parade* – namely include spoken commentary throughout the performance – he was able to do with Börlin, de Maré, and the Ballets Suédois with *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*.38 In fact, this was perhaps Cocteau’s dream ballet, gathering his young protégés from *Les Six* as musicians and presenting a foray into the absurd, resulting in a much desired *succès de scandale*. Furthermore, this ballet more than any other demonstrates the Ballets Suédois’ mission of collaboration

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37 *Relâche* is a multimedia stage show that is described as reaching the peak of the Ballets Suédois’ innovation. Since the music is by Satie, not a member of *Les Six*, I will refrain from a lengthy discussion here. However, the work’s importance as part of the modernist canon necessitates its mention with other Ballets Suédois’ scholarly successes.

among artists and art forms. The work was conceived by Cocteau (he also wrote the scenario), composed by five of the members of *Les Six* (Durey opted out at the last minute with Tailleferre providing his missing score), choreographed by Börlin, and designed by Jean Hugo (1894–1984, costumes) and Irène Lagut (1893–1994, décor). Jane Fulcher notes the work’s ambiguity of genre: not only does it combine various media on stage, but also it incorporates spoken word, something that she suggests makes it somewhat closer to opera, though I wonder whether likening this aspect of the work to spoken theater or to later surrealist theater would be more apt.\(^{39}\) In fact, both ballet and music scholars point to the work’s surrealism. Though taking place in a familiar setting (the Eiffel Tower) and portraying a seemingly traditional occasion (a marriage), the absurdity of the events and staging serves to mock tradition. Further adding to the surrealism of the work was the warped backdrop view from the Eiffel Tower and the over-sized masks worn by the dancers.\(^{40}\) The music itself (addressed by very few scholars, and then only in broad terms) generally inflates the pomp of the marriage celebration by incorporating various recognizable techniques and styles (march, waltz, fugue, etc.) in an exaggerated manner, peppered with dissonances and musical clichés.

Honegger and Milhaud situate their own works for the Ballets Suédois firmly in this avant-garde tradition, though removed from Cocteau’s direct participation they privilege modernity over absurdity. Each of the three works between the two composers, Honegger’s *Skating Rink* and Milhaud’s *L’homme et son désir* and *La

\(^{39}\) Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual*, 159.

\(^{40}\) For scenarios of all Ballets Suédois works see Häger, *Ballets Suédois*. 
création du monde, engages with meta-issues of understanding existence and identifying the self in the modern world. Honegger’s ballet, on a poem by Riciotto Canudo (1879-1923) and with staging and costumes by Fernand Lèger (1881-1955), capitalizes on the popularity of skating and uses the undulations of the skaters/dancers as representative of feelings of monotony and anonymity associated with modern living. Auric, Honegger’s Les Six colleague, describes this in his program notes for the work:

This “danced poem” represents an unprecedented experiment in modern choreography, since movements, steps, gestures and attitudes are all inspired here by skating. In a dramatic setting that is deliberately kept very simple, reduced to essentials, Canudo has expressed one of life’s major, elemental forms of anguish. That is, sensual longing, which thrusts living beings towards and counter to one another and creates collisions, unions, all the harmonies and all the disharmonies of love and hate. The scene evokes a modern skating environment, the skating rink, where crowds of men and women meet, mingle and separate, in a musical, luminous, fairy-tale atmosphere.41

Auric highlights the work’s main concern that human life is fueled by one elemental drive: longing. Milhaud’s L’homme et son désir also privileges this fundamental aspect of human existence. Again described as a “danced poem,” this work, on a scenario by Paul Claudel (1868-1955) and with sets and costumes designed by Andrée Parr (dates unknown), is an additional example of the early-1920s avant-garde fascination with primeval life drives. Lacking any real plot, the work instead engages its audience in a seemingly universal exploration of human existence. Claudel explains such in one of his writings on the work: “There is nothing new about the subject of this drama, any more than there is in the boldest tragedies. It is the theme of man trapped in a passion, an idea, a desire, and vainly endeavoring to escape, as though

41 Georges Auric, Ballets Suédois Programme, quoted and translated in Häger, Ballets Suédois, 162.
from a prison with invisible bars, until the point when a woman, the image of both Death and Love, comes to claim him and take him with her offstage. Even the title of Milhaud’s second ballet for the company (and this time it is referred to as a “ballet” rather than “danced poem”), La création du monde, indicates a similar tendency towards universality. This time, though the scenario by Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961) and the stage designs and costumes by Fernand Léger are intended to portray African deities, legends, and settings, the overall effort is intended to explain human creation more generally.

Common to all three ballets is the expression of apparent universal truths, conveyed through an anonymity of principal characters. All three works have simply “man” and “woman” as their characters. Undoubtedly this pairing enforces heterosexual identities as universal and heterosexual partnerships as necessary to human existence. Furthermore, the plots of the three also reflect typical gender characterizations of rational, independent man and emotional, dependent woman (La création du monde should perhaps be excluded from this category, as Cendrars’s scenario does not ascribe personalities or character roles to his man and woman).

Aesthetically and musically, these ballets represent perhaps the most modern of the Ballets Suédois offerings. The skating movements that the choreography imitates in Honegger’s work are paired with cubist sets and costumes. Honegger’s music employs modern techniques like polytonality. Milhaud’s works, on the other hand, foreground contemporary fascinations with the seemingly provocative elements.

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42 Paul Claudel, Les Ballets Suédois (Paris, 1932), quoted and translated in Häger, Ballets Suédois, 125.
43 For specific designations, see Häger, Ballets Suédois. It is not necessarily clear how these designations are different.
of “primitive” and “exotic” cultures. Conceived by Claudel and Milhaud in Brazil, 
*L’homme et son désir* reflects the apparent exoticism of the tropics in all aspects of the 
work. Milhaud’s percussion-heavy orchestration presented a new, Brazilian-tinged 
sound to Parisian audiences. His other work, as already mentioned, explored African 
exoticism and gave Milhaud the opportunity to investigate jazz techniques and 
instrumentations. Choreographically, these avant-garde works by Satie and members 
of *Les Six* presented a clear avoidance of traditional ballet technique. Elaborate 
costumes sometimes restricted the movements, and acrobatics, pantomime, hard 
angles, and hunched or overextended contortions replaced pirouettes and arabesques. 

**The Other Ballets Suédois: Beyond the Avant Garde**

Stories of the Ballets Suédois, especially within musicology, generally end 
here with these avant-garde works characterizing the company and ballet of early-
1920s Paris. But privileging modernism gives a distorted view of the Ballets Suédois 
and its output. In fact, the company’s success during the 1920s was hardly based on 
these avant-garde ballets at all. On the contrary, the company’s ten most-performed 
ballets all reflect more traditional (be it classical French or foreign folk) musical, 
artistic, and dance styles as Table 3 indicates. Of these ten works, only *El Greco*, 
described as “mimed scenes” and based on paintings by the sixteenth-century Spanish 
artist, known by the same name, presents a deviation from the folk and classical 
elements popular in the rest. Though its provocative nature and minimal costumes may 
align it with the company’s modernist works, its basis in centuries-old art and its 
stormy Sabbath setting perhaps make it more akin with Romantic epic dramas. The 
remainder present music by contemporary composers, by Chopin, or based on folk
melodies, and choreography, sets, and costumes in traditionally accessible styles.

Despite the immense critical and audience popularity of these works, they have largely remained in the background of scholarship on the Ballets Suédois. Though the Swedish works are often pointed to as rooting the company in its native country, scholars favor the company’s avant-garde works – those by Satie, Milhaud, Honegger, and Les Six – thus perpetuating a value system where modernism reigns over popularity.

**Table 3: Ballets Suédois: Ten Most-Performed Ballets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballet</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Performances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Les vierges folles</td>
<td>Kurt Atterberg, from folk tunes</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divertissements</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chopiniana</td>
<td>Frédéric Chopin</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La boîte à joujoux</td>
<td>Claude Debussy</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuit de Saint-Jean</td>
<td>Hugo Alfvén</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dansgille</td>
<td>Eugène Bigot, from folk tunes</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Greco</td>
<td>D. E. Inghelbrecht</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le tombeau de Couperin</td>
<td>Maurice Ravel</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberia</td>
<td>Isaac Albéniz</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le marchand d’oiseaux</td>
<td>Germaine Tailleferre</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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44 Performance counts are from Häger, Ballets Suédois, 292, with one correction. He indicates twenty-eight performances of Le marchand d’oiseaux in the third season. But, my counts from the company’s ledgers indicate thirty performances for that season, making ninety-five total performances. Note that all subsequent tables indicate my corrected performance count for Tailleferre’s ballet.

The style classifications are my own. Manfred Kelkel also categorizes all twenty-four of the Ballets Suédois works by style, in a similar fashion. La musique de ballet en France de la belle époque aux années folles (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1992), 177.

45 This is a collection of short performances featuring various company dancers. Interestingly, the work is not described in either Häger, Ballets Suédois, or Baer, Paris Modern, despite its immense popularity.

46 This work is little described in Baer, Paris Modern, and not at all in Häger, Ballets Suédois. Kelkel, describes it as “simple divertissements:” La musique de ballet en France, 177.

47 Describing El Greco as “Spanish” is not entirely accurate. The ballet is perhaps better explained as a Christian epic set in El Greco’s Spanish home, Toledo, and reflecting his artistic style. Traditional Spanish music, dance, costumes, etc. are certainly more strongly represented in Iberia than in El Greco.
In fact, the company’s avant-garde works received few performances compared to many of the ten most-performed works, as shown in Table 4, which lists Ballets Suédois ballets by Satie and members of Les Six. Furthermore, not only did the avant-garde ballets receive relatively few performances in comparison with the company’s entire output, but also they were performed less and less over the course of the company’s existence. Performance counts of *L’homme et son désir*, *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, and *Skating Rink* all declined from 1920 to 1925.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ballet</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Premiere</th>
<th>Performances per season</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>L’homme et son désir</em></td>
<td>Milhaud</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>17 19 10 10</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel</em></td>
<td>Les Six</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>10 8 9 3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Skating Rink</em></td>
<td>Honegger</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>17 15 14 4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Le marchand d’oiseaux</em></td>
<td>Tailleferre</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>30 22 43</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>La création du monde</em></td>
<td>Milhaud</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>3 9 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Relâche</em></td>
<td>Satie</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>12 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, with this and the previous table, *Le marchand d’oiseaux* appears. Representing the more traditional side of the Ballets Suédois’s offerings, *Le marchand d’oiseaux* was performed more often than any avant-garde ballet, and it increased in popularity from its premiere in 1923 to the company’s disbanding in 1925. The numbers speak for themselves: *Le marchand d’oiseaux* was relatively more popular and more lucrative than ballets by Tailleferre’s mentor, Satie, and by her colleagues in

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48 From Häger, *Ballets Suédois*, 292. Here I have corrected what I believe to be the second error in Häger’s counts, the first correction having been made already in Table 3. I believe he reverses the seasonal performance counts for *La création du monde* and *Relâche*. He indicates twelve performances in the fifth season for *La création*, whereas three performances and nine performances in the fourth and fifth seasons respectively for *Relâche*. Since the latter did not premiere until 4 December 1924, during the fifth season, it could not have been performed during the fourth season. Similarly, since *La création* was premiered 25 October 1923, it had to have been performed during the fourth season. Note, however, that my switch does not impact total performances for either work.
Les Six. Why, then, is *Le marchand d’oiseaux* practically unknown to music and dance scholars alike? How has a scholarly focus on the innovation of modernism resulted in a skewed understanding of ballet in 1920s Paris? How has the gender of the ballet’s creators impacted its reception? I leave these questions lingering, returning to address them directly in the following chapter. For now, I put historiography and critical theory to the side to uncover the details of *Le marchand d’oiseaux* itself.
PART II. UNCOVERING LE MARCHAND D’OISEAUX

This second part of the chapter is devoted to *Le marchand d’oiseaux*. I describe sources on the ballet and my research of the Ballets Suédois archives at the Dansmuseet in Stockholm, Sweden; I detail the performance history of the ballet; I discuss the work’s inception. Then I synthesize my attempt at unearthing information about Hélène Perdriet, one of the ballet’s central – and also elusive – creators. Most importantly, I analyze all aspects of the ballet itself: its scenario, staging, costumes, choreography, and music. As mentioned at the opening to this chapter, I largely save an analysis of the ballet’s reception history for the critical analysis in my next chapter. However, from now on, I liberally pepper my own descriptions and analyses of the ballet itself with excerpts from reviews, establishing trends within the reception that I clarify and analyze in detail in the following chapter.

Sources and Archival Research

Although they sometimes mention it as one of the ballets by members of *Les Six*, musicologists and dance scholars have otherwise largely ignored *Le marchand d’oiseaux*. The only secondary sources in which Tailleferre’s ballet is given some attention are those about the Ballets Suédois generally. But despite its being the company’s tenth most-performed ballet and despite being more frequently performed than the company’s better-known avant-garde works, Tailleferre’s ballet has received

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49 After my completion of this and the following chapters on *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, an article on the ballet was published by Laura Hamer, who recently completed her doctoral work on women in France between the World Wars. See Laura Hamer, “Germaine Tailleferre and Hélène Perdriet’s *Le Marchand d’oiseaux* (1923): French feminist ballet?,” *Studies in Musical Theatre* 4, no. 1 (2010): 113-120. Because Hamer’s work on the ballet had no place in my research, I have chosen not to amend this section to include a discussion of her article. I have also made this choice because my research is both more thorough and more nuanced than Hamer’s.
little attention. For example, an extensive exhibition catalogue produced for 1996 Ballets Suédois exhibitions in New York, San Antonio, and San Francisco, and including contributions from Ballets Suédois scholar Erik Näslund and dance scholar Lynn Garafola, mentions Tailleferre’s ballet only in passing, to comment on the striking quality of the bird merchant’s costume.50

Other anthologies, both older and more recent, similarly avoid Tailleferre’s ballet. An intriguing collection from 1931 offers an early account of the company and contributions by many of its collaborators.51 It offers a scant paragraph on *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, whereas other works by member of *Les Six* are described in more detail and are elaborated on with the inclusion of scenarios and critical reviews. More recently, a published collection of articles from a 2006 conference on the Ballets Suédois presents the most recent work on the company, though still giving no attention to Tailleferre.52

Only Bengt Häger’s 1989 (English translation, 1990) coffee-table book,53 with pictures, scenarios, premiere information, and quotations from authors and critics for each ballet, and with lengthy opening commentary on the company, the ballets, and tours, comes close to balancing his attention to all of the company’s ballets.54 Though


51 *Les Ballets Suédois dans l’art contemporain*, (Paris: Éditions du Trianon, 1931). This appears to be compiled by Rolf de Maré as a sort of retrospective on his company.


53 In using this term, I want to call the reader’s attention to the book’s size, design, and focus on pictures (mainly costume and set designs, but also some photos of performances); the pejorative meaning of this term – implying a shallow approach – is not intended here.

54 Häger, *Ballets Suédois*. 
the amount of commentary for Tailleferre’s ballet is far more limited than that for the works by other members of *Les Six*, hers is at least included and given some consideration.

With little information available from secondary sources, I derive most of my information from primary source research undertaken at the Dansmuseet in Stockholm, Sweden in July and August 2009. The Dansmuseet, opened in 1953 by de Maré, holds all of the archives of the Ballets Suédois. My research at the museum’s study center included examinations of manuscripts, correspondence, staging and costume sketches and photos, journals, and collections of press clippings. The collections of press clippings were especially valuable: affixed in sixteen scrapbooks of one-hundred-plus pages each, they offer the researcher an incredibly comprehensive source of critical views on the company and its performances. Seemingly the only thing lacking from the Dansmuseet’s archives is a recording of Tailleferre’s music; in fact, my research turned up no recording of the work.55

Also missing from the archives at the Dansmuseet are descriptions of the choreography of the work, as Börlin left no choreographic score or systematic description of the dancing. Critical descriptions of the work and a few photographs (most of which capture standing poses rather than snapshots of movement) offer the researcher clues as to the general dance style, but no indications of specific steps, formations, or movements.

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55 As part of my work on this ballet, I oversaw a recording of the two-piano reduction of the ballet’s score.
Tailleferre’s score and instrumental parts are available for hire through Heugel (represented in the US by Robert King Music Sales, Inc.). A two-piano version of the score, arranged by the composer, was published in 1923.\footnote{Germaine Tailleferre, \textit{Le marchand d’oiseaux} (Paris: Heugel, 1923).} I will discuss the contents of the manuscript copies of the score, held at the Dansmuseet, later in this chapter.

**Performance History**

As already mentioned, \textit{Le marchand d’oiseaux} was popular among the Ballets Suédois’ output. After its 25 May 1923 premiere, during which it was programmed with Honegger’s \textit{Skating Rink} and the Ballets Suédois’ least-popular work \textit{Offerlunden} (which received just 5 performances), \textit{Le marchand d’oiseaux} was performed in Paris and on tours in Sweden (1923), the eastern US (1923-24), and France and neighboring countries (1925).\footnote{In performances led by Börlin and including Ballets Suédois dancers, though not formally presented under the Ballets Suédois name, Tailleferre’s ballet was also performed in South America (1926). Näslund notes that after the Ballets Suédois disbanded, Börlin “attempted” to capitalize on the company’s fame by touring with its dancers and presenting the company’s ballets: see Näslund, “Animating a Vision,” 53. The connection between these performances and the company is unclear. Some of the South American performances are listed in the company’s ledger: May 11 and 25 in Buenos Aires; June 23, 23, 24, 24, 25, 25 in La Plata; July 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5 in Montevideo, Uruguay; and July 19, 19, 24, 24, 24, 25, 25 in Rio de Janeiro; but, the ledger’s performance counts and the omission of the French performances to which Näslund refers make it clear that this is not a complete list. In addition, the ledger’s running performance count indicates there may have been more performances in South America than listed, as the count for 11 May 1926 indicates ninety-four performances of \textit{Le marchand d’oiseaux}, whereas the performance of 25 May 1926, the next listed, indicates it to be the 115th performance of the work.} Table 5 lists all known performances of \textit{Le marchand d’oiseaux} by the Ballets Suédois.

Since 1926, performances of \textit{Le marchand d’oiseaux} have been almost non-existent; I know only of two. Robert Shapiro’s list of works indicates a performance on 2 December 1950 by the Opéra Municipal de Clermont (France).\footnote{Robert Shapiro, \textit{Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography} (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 42.} No other details are readily available. More recently, the Ambache Chamber Orchestra performed...
Tailleferre’s score as a concert piece in May 2002. Diana Ambache, the orchestra’s founder and director, champions female composers and performed several of Tailleferre’s works with her chamber group. Aside from these two performances, I know of none since 1926.

Table 5: *Le marchand d’oiseaux*: Performances by City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>May 25,26,27,28,29,30</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 1,2,3,5,6,7,10,13,14,17,18,20,23</td>
<td>Göteborg</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 8,9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>December 6,7,8,9</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 10,11</td>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 25,26,27,28,29,31</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 1,2,3,4,4,5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-25</td>
<td>December 7,9,13,18,20</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 7,8</td>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 18,18</td>
<td>Brest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Lorient</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Rennes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Le Mans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Nantes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 For the only known review of this performance, see Brian Hunt, “Vive la musique des femmes!” *The Evening Standard* [London] (17 May 2002).

60 Unfortunately, Ambache did not record the performance of Tailleferre’s score.

61 In email correspondence with Robert King Music Sales Inc., US distributors of Heugel scores, I attempted to confirm this, but was only able to ascertain that no US performance is known from the 1960s onwards.

62 This information comes from the company’s own performance ledger, now in the company’s archives at the Dansmuseet. The ledger lists all company performances including date, place, work, and a (sometimes incomplete) running performance count of each work. This last piece of information proves difficult. The running performance count does not match my manual count of the performance dates: the running count says ninety-four for the 11 May 1926 performance, indicating that there would have been ninety-three performances with the Ballets Suédois proper (this indication of ninety-three next to the 17 March 1925 performance is missing). But a manual count of the Ballets Suédois performances sees 17 March 1925 as the ninety-fifth performance.

63 Note that I have indicated multiple performances on the same date by listing that date twice. On 8 December 1923, there was a matinee and an evening performance in Philadelphia, for example.

64 The company’s ledger indicates these five performances in Paris. A concert program in the company’s scrapbooks lists these dates along with 28 December 1924: “Ballets Suédois: Programme.” Book 6, CD V, 06-184-08. It is my hypothesis that this performance was cancelled after being included in the program and for this reason I have not included it in my own performance counts.
January 23  Angers
January 26  Saint-Nazaire
January 27  La Rochelle
January 29  Angoulême
January 30  Limoges
February 2  Brive
February 4  Arcachon
February 6,7  Bordeaux
February 8  Bayonne
February 9,11  Pau
February 13  Toulouse
February 15  Nice
February 19  Menton
February 20  Grasse
February 21  Cannes
February 23  Saint-Raphaël
February 26  Toulon
February 27  Hyères
February 28  Salon
March 2,4  Marseilles
March 5  Avignon
March 9  Lyons
March 10  Dijon
March 12  Troyes
March 14  Épinal
March 15  Verdun
March 17  Épernay

**Total** 95

**Inception**

Unfortunately, I have come across little information that explains the inception of the ballet. I have seen neither a hint in secondary literature nor any letters to indicate precisely who instigated this work. Tailleferre, of course, had already composed for the Ballets Suédois through her involvement in *Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, but beyond that, a connection between her, de Maré, Perdriat, and Börlin is

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65 This is not to say that a letter does not exist. While my research at the Dansmuseet was as thorough as I could be within my time there, the amount of unsorted and uncataloged general documents relating to the company was overwhelming. Within the scope of my project, it was unreasonable to go through all of the company’s general documents.
undocumented to my knowledge. The wording in her memoirs suggests that she was commissioned to compose for an already-existing project. She writes: “…the Ballets Suédois commissioned from me Le marchand d’oiseaux for which the scenario, costumes, and sets were by Hélène Perdriat.” Hacquard’s book also suggests that the ballet was already conceived before Tailleferre was asked to compose the music: “Rolf de Maré commissioned Germaine for ballet music. Scenario, costumes, décor by Hélène Perdriat.” Similarly mysterious is Tailleferre’s relationship with Perdriat. I have not been able to determine if Tailleferre was involved in the project from the beginning, as a true collaboration with Perdriat (and Börlin, perhaps), or if she was added as a creator after the scenario had been established. Judging from Tailleferre’s and Hacquard’s uses of the word “commission,” the latter case seems more likely. As far as Perdriat’s inclusion in the project, this is even more vague. I can only hypothesize that Perdriat’s paintings appealed to de Maré and that he recognized something in her style that would be amenable to dance and stage.

Hélène Perdriat

As creators of Le marchand d’oiseaux, Tailleferre and Börlin are joined by Hélène Perdriat, librettist and set and costume designer, and perhaps the most elusive of the three artists. My research into this ballet has turned up relatively little information on Perdriat, despite her importance to this work. Beyond mentions of her

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68 While more details would undoubtedly be valuable to my research, they are not vital to my dissertation project.
with regard to her involvement in *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, secondary sources give little or no information on Perdriat. In his “Glossary of Names,” Häger gives only a brief entry describing her as a “painter and engraver,” finding her to have had early career success but a sudden career end, listing 1919 exhibitions at the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d’Automne, and describing her as “painting graceful, well-executed works in a fêtes galantes vein.” With no other secondary-source literature available, I rely on several primary-source periodical articles from the 1920s and early 1930s to provide more information. While I recognize that the reliability of biographical information presented in these articles is dubious, descriptions of Perdriat’s paintings and artistic style are fascinating and worthy of a lengthy discussion, as they are invaluable in analyzing both Perdriat’s contributions to *Le marchand d’oiseaux* and the ballet’s general aesthetic.

Three of the articles on Perdriat are in American publications from April 1927 and January 1930 and are associated with showings of her works. Articles appearing in *Time* and *Parnassus*, coinciding with an exhibition of Perdriat’s works at the Chambrun Galleries in New York from 12 December 1929 to 11 January 1930, inform their readers about Perdriat and her works and style. The *Time* article is especially intriguing for its description of “the Perdriat legend,” referring to the numerous rumors surrounding her life and career, many of which are quite extraordinary. While the *Time* article purports to be presenting a more factually based account of her life, it is

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clearly built on the existing sensationalism. In large part, *Time* depicts Perdriat’s life as typical of the artist who overcomes adversity. She is described as turning to art after personal tragedy (her lover’s death) and illness. Having received no training, this “need to paint” exists as a primal urge essential to her physical and psychological healing. The *Parnassus* article builds on this legend, finding that Perdriat turned adversity into an identifying stylistic feature: her attention to detail is praised and explained, somewhat humorously, as a result of her short-sightedness. The Perdriat legend is perpetuated by *Time*’s claim that Perdriat’s first painting incorporated fingernail clippings and cotton into its landscape. Furthermore, Perdriat is described as attending parties with masks painted on her face in correlation with her mood.

Both articles use the term “exotic” to describe both Perdriat and her paintings. *Time* finds exotic Perdriat’s supposed wealth and home life, as well as her penchant for painting (almost exclusively) brunette women, most of which are self-portraits, or at least resemble such. *Parnassus* exoticizes Perdriat’s paintings, finding that they present mysterious places and lifestyles. Balancing this, her attention to detail is explained as bringing elements of realism to the exotic surroundings.

Undoubtedly the focus of Perdriat’s painting is her female subjects. Regardless of whether her figures are all in fact self-portraits – possibly a narcissistic desire for self-preservation – they undoubtedly share remarkably similar facial features and personae. *Time* notes a sense of luxuriousness and draws the reader’s attention to the figures’ long eyes, while *Parnassus* describes a simultaneously feminine, bold, sophisticated, and clear style, and Perdriat’s clever, capable, and fearless talent. *Parnassus*, though, gives a description of Perdriat’s figures that succinctly captures the
competing elements of their personae: they are “timid figures boldly designed.” Their coquettish gaze is supported by a self-assuredness that both enchants and unnerves the onlooker.

An earlier appearance of Perdriat in an American publication comes from *Vanity Fair*’s April 1927 issue. Instead of an article, Perdriat is featured in a one-page spread, including three paintings and captions for each. Rather than describing the specific paintings, though, the captions give more general information about the artist and her style. One caption names her husband, Norwegian painter Thorwald Helleson, and indicates that Perdriat was a writer before becoming an artist, perhaps explaining why she wrote the scenario for *Le marchand d’oiseaux* as well as designing its sets and costumes. Another caption describes her career achievements, highlighting her work on “an elaborate ballet at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées.” The third caption is most interesting, providing an expert description of the beguiling character of Perdriat’s works that is worth repeating in full here:

In any summary of Hélène Perdriat’s art, mention should be made of two of its prime qualities, qualities which, though directly opposed in character, are still incessantly juxtaposed in her canvases. These qualities are, first, an engaging and wholly disarming naïveté; second, a sophistication so advanced and complicated that it becomes almost sinister and perverse in character. In her paintings, the lamb, the child, the dove, are made to lie down – figuratively speaking – with the ape, the wolf, and the serpent. A flower of the field, once she has painted it, becomes [all] of a sudden, orchidaceous in quality. Animals of singularly doe-like demeanour take on the most fantastic and questionable natures. Her portraits apparently so simple, are really disturbing, so complicated are the emotions which they engender.

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71 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
Whoever the author may have been, his description of a simultaneous presence of “naïveté” and “perverse sophistication” captures well the depth of Perdriat’s style, without relying on some of the more stereotypically gendered language that the author of the *Parnassus* article employed.

Similarly eloquent and even more detailed in his analysis of Perdriat’s style, is León Pacheco, who published a Spanish-language article on the artist corresponding to Börlin’s performances of *Le marchand d’oiseaux* in South America in 1926. His elaborate analysis again grasps a combination of seemingly opposite elements in her art that create both depth and complexity for the viewer. The following passages are mere highlights from his dense and intriguing article:

Hélène Perdriat’s painting takes us to a world of privacies and feminine secrets from which we return with a soul that is filled with nostalgias and regrets. That is because her art is an essentially feminine art, revealer of everything that the female heart hides: her whims, her flirtations, her frivolities, her own sins. Because of this – just like every truth that is said in the language of beauty – it is a perverse art, a deliciously perverse one.

…

Oh, the sensibility of Hélène Perdriat! A complicated sensibility, the faintest thereof; one that is kindled by the intense color of fireworks, by the exuberance of her women who are always adolescent, who – wrapped in the riches of the sensual backgrounds – always exhale a certain perverse naïveté.

…

In Hélène Perdriat’s timid women, one is able to guess the mixture of artifice, of authentic beauty, of perversity and of naïveté in an intentional proportion, so that all of those feminine elements – gathered as one stylized ensemble – seduce us in the flimsiest of ways: in these creatures, one can feel the understanding of an epoch of mistaken beauties, of angelic dreams, of fevers that are soothed in a realm beyond nature…

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75 León Pacheco, “Hélène Perdriat y la Sensibilidad de la Pintura Femenina,” *Parisina* (20 May 1926): 27. Book 11, CD 11, 11-114, (final ellipses original). Translation by Mireya Obregon. “La pintura de Hélène Perdriat nos lleva a un mundo de intimidades y de secretos femeninos del que regresamos con el alma cargada de nostalgias y de arrepentimientos. Porque su arte es un arte esencialmente femenino, revelador de todo lo que esconde el corazón de la mujer: sus caprichos, sus coqueterías, sus frivolidades, sus mismos pecados. Por esto, como toda verdad dicha en lenguaje de belleza, es un arte perverso, deliciosamente perverso. … ¡La sensibilidad de Hélène Perdriat! Una sensibilidad complicada, levisíma, encendida por los colores intensos de luces artificiales, por la exuberancia de sus
In addition to Pacheco’s article, I also came across a French-language article on Perdriat in browsing through the Ballets Suédois scrapbooks at the Dansmuseet. With no date or source indicated on the article or scrapbook page, I have little source information. While the article’s very large spread, including seven paintings by Perdriat (including the staging of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*), is undoubtedly valuable, the text presents difficulties: not only is some of it unreadable because of damage to the page, but also the language is convoluted. That which is both readable and comprehensible address tropes already discussed above, including attention to detail, child-like naïveté, and resemblances between Perdriat and her subjects. The author also notes the large scale of her canvases: “In front of the enormous canvases going almost to the ceiling, her subjects, all female, appear as giants, who, obligingly, let themselves be modeled by a person who resembles them, who pleases them, and who has just left a toy box.”

Perdriat’s involvement in *Le marchand d’oiseaux* is fundamental in determining the style of the ballet and will be central to much of my discussion of the work in the remainder of the chapter. Her focus on women as artistic subjects is

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mujeres que siempre son adolescentes, que exhalan siempre cierta ingenuidad perversa, arropadas en las riqueza de unos fondos sensuales. … Se adviene, en las mujeres tímides de Hélène Perdriat, la mezcla del artificio de la belleza auténtica, de la perversidad, de la ingenuidad, en una proporción intencionada, para que todos esos elementos femeninos, reunidos en un conjunto estilizado, nos seduzcan de manera ligerísima: en estas criaturas se siente la comprensión de una época de bellezas equivocas, de sueños angélicos, de fiebres calmadas más allá de la naturaleza…”

76 R. de Nereys, “Les Femmes Artistes: Hélène Perdriat.” Book 4, CD III, 04-139-01, 04-139-02, 04-139-03. “Devant ses toiles énormes allant jusqu’au plafond, ses sujets, tous féminins paraissent des géantes, qui, complaisamment, se laissent modéliser par un personage qui leur ressemble, qui leur plaît, et qui vient de sortir d’une boîte à joujoux.”
transferred to the stage with the sisters of the ballet; the binary of naïveté and seduction is brought to life; the elusive exoticism of her style is put in motion.

**Scenario**

Between the published two-piano score, annotated manuscripts, and other documents in the Dansmuseet archives, Perdriat’s scenario exists in various forms, each more or less detailed, though presenting the same story. Each version of the scenario is more or less complete than the others and some include mistakes. For this reason, the scenario that follows is my own compilation from my translations of all existing versions of the scenario. See Appendix 1 for all scenarios in their original French and in translation.

In a little house by the sea live two sisters. The younger is humble and sweet. The older is haughty and flirty. During their sleep, their handmaid discovers two bouquets left on their doorstep. She calls her mistresses, and they marvel before the flowers. Then each chooses one according to her temperament, the younger sister taking the modest bouquet of wildflowers, and the older sister taking the large bouquet of red roses. All of a sudden the *Enfants de Marie* appear returning to church; they are in their stiff, white dresses, with crowns of flowers. They meet mischievous schoolgirls who make fun of their piety. Gardeners pass, their watering cans in hand, fruit in the folds of their skirts. Suddenly everyone stops in surprise, seeing a bird merchant balancing his cages. He speaks to the two sisters, but the older dismisses him scornfully. The younger sister smiles at the young merchant and recognizes with joy the flowers attached to the bars of his cage as matching her own bouquet. Again, a stranger approaches, this one richly dressed and masked. He captivates and delights the haughty sister. A mischievous schoolgirl suddenly cuts the ties of his mask, and everyone recognizes the old, black merchant from the port. The older sister runs away ashamed, chased by laughter, and the young bird merchant dances with his beloved.

The simplicity of the scenario and its grounding in traditional morality, rather than the surrealism or modernity that characterize the Ballets Suédois’ now-better

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77 I have chosen to retain the French “Enfants de Marie” throughout rather than translating it to “convent girls” or “little communicants” or some other approximate translation.
known works, are elucidated by the work’s many reviewers. Numerous critics called the scenario “simple” and “cursory.” One often-quoted review, written by novelist and critic (Sidonie-Gabrielle) Colette (1873-1954), has a bit of fun with the simplicity of the scenario: “A plot? You want a plot? Why? The handsome young man who sells birds embraces one of the beautiful young women and that suffices.” Explaining the simplicity of the ballet a little more, several reviewers describe it as a work that is only intended for entertainment and is otherwise void of a deeper philosophical meaning: “it is an amusement and nothing else.” After summarizing the ballet’s plot, well-known music critic Émile Vuillermoz (1878-1960) wrote:

I do not believe that it would be necessary to look for a symbolic and philosophical intention in this ingenious divertissement. Some conscientious commentators could, in effect, prove to us that one such scenario is written with the intent from the young girls, in order to prove that marriages of reason are not as good as marriages of love. But it is probably that this innocent fantasy has only purely decorative ambitions.


80 Sosthène, “Mlle Tailleferre et Casella.” “C’est un amusement et pas autre chose.”

81 Vuillermoz, “Les Premières: Théâtre des Champs-Elysées.” “Et je ne crois pas qu’il soit nécessaire de chercher dans ce divertissement ingénue une intention symbolique et philosophique. Des commentateurs consciencieux pourraient, en effet, nous démontrer qu’un tel scénario est écrit à l’intention des jeunes filles, afin de leur prouver que les mariages de raison ne valent pas les mariages d’amour. Mais il est probable que cette innocente fantaisie n’a que des ambitions purement décoratives.” Vuillermoz infantilizes the ballet’s female creators by calling them “jeunes filles,” even though Tailleferre is thirty-two at this point and Perdriat only a few years younger (and married).
Corroborating this opinion, other reviewers find that the simplicity of the scenario leaves room for a focus on the work’s visual and musical aspects, as with this example: “It is a divertissement almost without subject. Its spirit is for entertainment, for charming the eyes. Mlle Germaine Tailleferre worked to satisfy the ears.” Putting this discussion of the scenario’s simplicity in context, it is important to note that few reviewers found this superficiality to be detrimental. While one reviewer wrote, “the story of the “Marchand d’Oiseaux” is nicely simple, a little too much, however,” most reviewers praised the scenario, some even calling it “ingenious” and recognizing its naïveté as “artificial.” Expressing the latter concept, one reviewer relies on a French proverb, writing: “The story imagined by Mme Perdriat does not offer symbolic complication; it is a legend of the image d’Épinal.” (The phrase “image d’Épinal,” originally denoting prints from the town of Épinal, had come to describe more generally “a genre of naive and sentimental expression.”)


83 [Unknown author], “Les premières: Theatre des Champs-Elysées, les ballets suédois.” “Le livret de ‘Marchand d’Oiseaux’ est gentiment simple, un peu trop cependant.”


In addition to its perceived simplicity, reviewers also addressed the moral aspects of Perdriet’s scenario, describing it often as a fable. Many critics came up with their own “moral for the story,” picking up on either the temperaments of the sisters or the port merchant’s deception: “the overly proud will be punished,” “disappointed proud sister, modesty rewarded meek sister tale,” “the proud punished and the modest rewarded,” “all that glitters is not gold,” “you should be content with little,” and “under such beautiful sets, such ugly things.” Another critic likened Perdriet’s scenario to a Hans Christian Andersen tale, something he found suitable since both Andersen and the ballet company are Scandinavian.

Really, all that is missing from Perdriet’s scenario is the obligatory “once upon a time” and “happily ever after” that would truly mark it as a fairy tale. Regardless, Perdriet’s scenario serves the same purpose as fairy tales. As Catherine Orenstein explains: “Beneath the nursery veneer, or perhaps because of it, fairy tales are among our most powerful socializing narratives. They contain enduring rules of understanding who we are and how we should behave. … Under the guise of make-believe, they prepare us to join the real world and provide us with lessons that last a

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88 See, for example, Nozière, [Review of Le marchand d’oiseaux], Avenir (28 May 1923). Book 13, CD II, 13-91; S.S-n., “Balettafon på Operan.”
89 Dezaruaux, “Deux nouveaux ballets suédois.” “L’Orgueilleuse punie.”
lifetime.”\(^{91}\) Thus beyond warning young women to be wary of “richly dressed” strangers, Perdriat’s story encourages young women to act with the same “humble and sweet heart” of the younger sister. Modesty and kindness are the most treasured virtues.

Perhaps highlighting the moralistic tone of the work are the variations in title used in English- and Spanish-language contexts. Pacheco’s article on Perdriat titles the ballet *La jaula de los pájaros*, literally translating to *The Birdcage*.\(^{92}\) An English-language promotional poster, presumably used for the company’s US tour, titles the work *The Snare*.\(^{93}\) In both cases, the idea of entrapment is expressed by the title, both giving a sinister undertone to the work and emphasizing even more strongly the need for young women to be guarded in their interactions with others.

That the moral message of this tale is directed at young women is confirmed by the dominance of women as characters and as members of the corps de ballet. All of the following roles go to women: the handmaiden, the older sister, the younger sister, the *Enfants de Marie*, the schoolgirls, and the gardeners.\(^{94}\) Only the bird merchant and the old port merchant are men.

Perdriat’s choice of an old, black, working-class man as the masked stranger – as an unsuitable suitor for a young, white, bourgeois woman – reflects numerous and

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\(^{92}\) León Pacheco, “Hélène Perdriat.” Thanks to Mireya Obregon for pointing out the difference in the Spanish title of the work.

\(^{93}\) Häger, “Ballets Suédois,” 11.

\(^{94}\) Photographs of the cast onstage suggest that the total number of female dancers for *Le marchand d’oiseaux* was twenty. Ballets Suédois. Photographs, *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, Envelope: Scenbilder original kop. 1-8, items VI 215 and VI 216. Dansmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden.
complex attitudes regarding race and socioeconomic status in 1920s Paris.\textsuperscript{95} Perdriat chose this particular figure because his race and class would immediately mark him as an unsuitable partner for the older sister, thus instantly revealing the trick to the audience upon his unmasking. This instant recognition of “mismatch” is crucial in order for the audience to understand the message that vanity and superficiality are unbecoming traits for young women. In fact, the stranger’s race and class are not essential to the scenario: Perdriat could have relied on other commonly recognizable mismatches and had a similar outcome. If the unmasking revealed a woman, the mismatch would have immediately been apparent to an audience that would have presumed heteronormativity. Similarly, if the unmasking revealed a young boy or a very old (white) man, the mismatch would have immediately been apparent to an audience that would have presumed that attraction occurs between parties of relatively similar ages. By choosing to rely on race – rather than age (alone) or sex – as a marker of otherness, Perdriat participates in various race-based traditions, trends, and stereotypes. In associating an act of deception with a black man, she reflects a general deep-seated mistrust of people of color by the white French majority society. In this specific context, tendencies to sexualize people of color would further add to the perception of a mismatch between a young, white, (presumed) virgin woman and a (presumed) sexually experienced – and thus potentially predatory – older, black man. Additionally, in casting him as a port worker, she establishes an opposition between the exoticism of his international, sea-based profession and the bird merchant’s

\textsuperscript{95} For a detailed study of the complex interplays between gender, nationality, race, socioeconomics, labor, etc. in France in the interwar years, see Elisa Camiscioli, \textit{Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment In the Early Twentieth Century} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
pastoral, land-based profession, clearly marked as French in comparison. The exoticism of the character speaks also to wider societal fascinations with distant and different cultures, played out in various artistic works in the so-called “primitive” style – Milhaud’s *La création du monde*, for example – and in events such as the various Worlds Fairs that took place in Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, Perdriat’s particular casting of a masked, black man invokes the theatrical and popular traditions of racialized, comic “grotesque” figures such as blackamoors, golliwogs, and blackface. Precedents for the sexualized black male character can also be found in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute, 1791), in the character of Monostatos, and in Stravinsky’s *Pétrouchka* (1911), in the character of the Moor. *Die Zauberflöte* was revised in Paris in 1909 and thus may well have been a work with which Perdriat was familiar. Regardless, as I show in discussing Perdriat’s costume designs, critics made a clear connection between the character of the bird merchant and Papageno. As I show in analyzing Tailleferre’s score for the ballet, *Pétrouchka* provided musical material for Tailleferre, who may well have recognized the similarities between the masked stranger and the Moor.

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97 William Gibbons has presented his research on the 1909 Paris revival on several occasions, including “The Trials of Authenticity: *The Magic Flute* in 1909 Paris” at the conference “After the Magic Flute” at the University of California, Berkeley in 2010.
Staging

As with the scenario, Perdriat created the staging for *Le marchand d’oiseaux*. Consisting of a proscenium, a backdrop, and the façade of a small cottage, the bright colors clearly reflect Perdriat’s style. Additionally, the sumptuousness of the scene captivates the audience by conveying simultaneously senses of familiarity and exoticism. The outdoor setting seamlessly blends man-made and natural elements, especially with the billowing bushes that surround the cottage and the contented deer and birds positioned at various points on the proscenium and backdrop. This along with the timelessness and seemingly generic location of the scenery reflect the universality that is often implied or strived for with fairy tales.

The colors and style of the scenery were uniformly appealing to critics, who lavished praise on Perdriat and described the scene with equally colorful adjectives. Generally, reviewers find the décor charming, graceful, and captivating. The maritime setting, quaint cottage, and numerous animals were described particularly clearly by two reviewers. “The background shows a lake with amusing little boats, and drooping masses of daintily exotic trees and flowers. In the middle is a tiny white house with deep oval windows and a central doorway.”

“On the supports [sides of the proscenium], among the monstrous flowers, does contort and groom themselves with a damp tongue. Seagulls fill the blue sky.” Moving beyond description to

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98 A photo of the cast on stage and a sketch of the staging are included in the final unnumbered pages of *Les Ballets Suédois dans l’art contemporain*.

99 So many reviewers use these or similar terms that it is impossible to cite them all here.


analysis, reviewers express the juxtaposition of elements in Perdriat’s style, as in this example: “The décor and the costumes imagined by [Hélène Perdriat], where influences of Persians and contemporary colorists are mixed, exhale a sometimes delicate, sometimes acidic grace.” Other reviewers, many seeing in Perdriat’s style the naïvism or primitivism of painter Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), speak to the décor’s combination of childlike and exotic qualities. One reviewer explains: “Mme Hélène Perdriat designed the décor and the costumes with delicacy, taste, and imagination… Hence this mix of juvenilia and exotic fruits, that makes the most delicious of cocktails.” Another describes, “…a décor that is created as a tropical landscape, such as a child would envision it (n.b. a child who is already familiar with Japanese paintings)…” These descriptions are in keeping with those of Perdriat’s painterly style aside from the ballet, and they speak to the appeal and intrigue of Perdriat’s stage designs.

Returning to Häger’s description of Perdriat’s style as reflecting the fête galante (“courtship party”) genre, her staging for the ballet is a clear example. A subgenre of the fête champêtre (“rural party”) genre, which presents pastoral figures (both human – shepherds, for example – and animal or imaginary – nymphs, for example) engaging in pleasurable courtship rituals in luscious natural settings, paintings in the fête galante style maintain the natural setting and courtship rituals, but

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102 Boissy, [Review of Le marchand d’oiseaux]. “…le décor et les costumes imaginés par [Hélène Perdriat], où se melent les influences des Persans et des coloristes contemporains, exhalent une grâce tantôt délicate, tantôt acide.”

103 Roux, “Rolf de Maré et les ballets suédois.” “Mme Hélène Perdriat en conçut les décors et les costumes avec la délicatesse, le goût et l’imagination…D’où mélange de juvenilité et de fruits exotiques, qui font le plus délicieux des cocktails.”

104 S.S-n., “Balettafton på Operan.” “…en dekoration, som skall vara ett tropiskt landskap såsom barn föreställa sig det (n.b. barn, som ha ganska bra reda på japanskt måleri)…”
depict human figures, often in lavish dress. Furthermore, *fête galante* works reflect expectations for social conduct: “Full of restrained action and psychological subtleties, they depict a code of behaviour popular in the last years of the reign of Louis XIV (reg 1643–1715).”¹⁰⁵ Thus, Perdriat’s contributions to *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, with their groundings in fairy tale and artistic traditions, doubly convey the use of the arts to transmit social expectations for comportment.

Perdriat’s designs for the ballet include sketches of the two bouquets, as shown in Illustration 1 and Illustration 2.

**Illustration 1: Perdriat: Sketch of the Bouquets**¹⁰⁶

![Perdriat: Sketch of the Bouquets](reproduced_with_authorization_from_the_dansmuseet_dance_museum_stockholm_sweden)

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

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¹⁰⁶ Hélène Perdriat, Sketch, [Large Bouquet], Paris, 1923. Ballets Suédois. Box Svenska Baletten, Folder Fågelhandlaren, Item DM 204. Dansmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden. All illustrations hereafter are part of the same collection and thus are cited only with their unique title and item number.
Costumes

If the scenery presents a uniformly pastoral setting where the man-made elements blend effortlessly with the flora and fauna, Perdriat’s costume designs present two distinct styles that reflect separately both the two opposing elements of Perdriat’s painting style and the two opposing temperaments of the ballet’s characters.

In one group are the younger sister, the bird merchant, the *Enfants de Marie*, the gardeners, and the handmaid. Dressed in costumes of light colors and soft shapes, these characters represent the feminine and naïve elements of Perdriat’s style. The younger sister’s white skirt with rounded scalloped trim is suited to her soft character (see Illustration 3). The flowers, dropped shoulders on her leotard, and flowing sashes are also appropriate. Accentuating her femininity are her unnaturally narrow and downward slanted shoulders. Perdriat drew her with dark hair and eyes, rosy cheeks, and small dark lips, all features in keeping with Perdriat’s typical painterly subjects.

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Illustration 2: Perdriat: Sketch of the Small Bouquet

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

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107 Perdriat, [Small Bouquet]. DM 203.
Illustration 3: Perdriat: Sketch of the Younger Sister

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

The bird merchant’s distinctive costume is featured in various newspaper reviews of the work and is duplicated in several secondary sources. His brilliant yellow costume, wide-brimmed hat, and large birdcages are especially striking (see Illustration 4). Due to his profession and props, several reviewers make reference to Papageno of Die Zauberflöte. Perhaps reflecting her preference for drawing women, Perdriat’s sketch of the bird merchant shows an exaggeratedly curvy figure, with delicate hands, and a face that is similar to that of her female subjects. Additionally,

108 Perdriat, La soeur cadette. DM 196.
the character’s feminine qualities help convey a sense of wholesomeness and virtue that establish him as one to emulate. No reviewer commented on the feminine qualities of Börlin’s costume, though many singled it out as particularly attractive, as with the following example: “Mr. Börlin had as the bird merchant an exceptionally beautiful dress.”

Illustration 4: Perdriot: Sketch of the Bird Merchant

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

The prim Enfants de Marie are dressed somewhat similarly to the younger sister, though this time in white and blue. Their skirts and pants are shorter, but have

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11 Perdriot, Le jeune marchand d’oiseaux. DM 194.
the same rounded scallop to the edges (see Illustration 5). The light colors of their
costumes, their flowers, and their dainty faces suitably reflect their pious nature.
Aptly, one reviewer described, “Enfants de Marie with the dreamy faces of
angels…”112

Illustration 5: Perdriot: Sketch of the Enfants de Marie113

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

The gardeners are dressed in pink and white, with similarly billowing skirts
and sleeves with scalloped edges (see Illustration 6). Large pinafores protect their
dresses; they carry watering cans, rakes and flowers; and, they wear practical-but-
feminine Mary Jane slippers.

Finally, the handmaid’s shorter skirt suggests a working-class uniform, and her
rosary beads position her as a pious character (see Illustration 7 and Illustration 8).

“Enfants de Marie aux visages rêveurs d’anges…”
113 Perdriot, Les enfants de Marie. DM 200.
Illustration 6: Perdriat: Sketch of the Gardeners

Illustration 7: Perdriat: Sketch of the Handmaid, front

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

114 Perdriat, Les jardinières. DM 198.
115 Perdriat, [Handmaid, front]. DM 201.
In contrast to this group, the other characters include the older sister, the schoolgirls, and the masked stranger all wearing costumes with angular shapes and bold colors, reflecting the bold and self-assured elements of Perdriat’s artistic style. Maintaining the red of the younger sister’s costume, but exchanging white for black, the older sister’s dress is more obviously seductive (see Illustration 9). Showing a little more skin, her arms are exposed by a red sleeveless leotard. The transparent black scale-like material of her skirt is seductive and the pointy red zigzags that trim her skirt and pants reflect her sharp, arrogant personality. She carries a very elaborate fan made from large, fluffy, black, white, and yellow feathers. Perdriat imagines her hair

Illustration 8: Perdriat: Sketch of the Handmaid, back

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

as flaming red and her face with prominent dark eyes and small red lips. One astute 
reviewer sees the red hair as befitting the older sister’s strong personality, calling on a 
long-standing stereotype of redheads having particularly fiery temperaments.\textsuperscript{117}

**Illustration 9: Perdriat: Sketch of the Older Sister\textsuperscript{118}**

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

Reproduced with authorization from the Dansmuseet (Dance Museum), Stockholm, Sweden

The schoolgirls take up the colors of the older sister’s dress, but this time with wide short skirts and black-and-white or red-and-white checkered fabric (see Illustration 10). Their short skirts, gartered stockings, and braided hair are especially

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{118}] Perdriat, *La soeur aînée*. DM 195.
\end{itemize}
cheeky. Undoubtedly, the schoolgirls’ costumes received the most attention from critics. Their costumes were seen as particularly well matched to their mischievous personalities. Contrasting them to the *Enfants de Marie*, one reviewer wrote: “Mischievously, she [Perdriat] opposed the cool correctness of the *Enfants de Marie* [with] the liveliness of the schoolgirls in very short skirts…”¹¹⁹ The schoolgirls’ minimal costumes provoked comments from several reviewers, describing their outfits as, “brazenly low-cut and enticing,”¹²⁰ and as, “short-dressed to the extreme.”¹²¹

**Illustration 10: Perdriat: Sketch of the Schoolgirls**¹²²

The masked stranger is sketched in two costumes: his elaborate disguise that entices and tricks the older sister, and his working-class everyday clothing (see

¹¹⁹ Nozière, [Review of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*]. “Malicieuse, elle a opposé à la froide correction des *Enfants de Marie*, l’entrain d’écolières aux jupes très courtes…”

¹²⁰ Malherbe, [Review of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*], “effrontément décolletées et aguichantes.”


Illustration 11). The head-to-toe shawl-like covering disguises him and gives him an unusual shape, with a hunch on his back. The lace on his hat, the scarf around his neck, and the bouquet in his hands make him appear opulent. Once unmasked, the stranger’s rolled blouse and pants, bandana around his neck, and primary colors indicate his working-class social status. His muscular body, dark skin, and working-class dress are likely the features that give him away as poor and make him an unattractive suitor for the older sister. His lower-class status and unattractiveness seem to need little explaining in the eyes of reviewers. They give no attention to his costume; instead, describing him as a “Negro” seems enough to contextualize him.¹²³

**Illustration 11: Perdriot: Sketch of the Stranger, unmasked and masked**¹²⁴

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¹²³ So many reviewers use this term that it is impossible to cite them all here.
¹²⁴ Perdriot, L’inconnu démasqué and L’inconnu masqué. DM 197.
Beyond commenting on specific characters, reviewers saw the costumes generally as both reflecting Perdriat’s artistic style and presenting the more modernist aspects of the work. Colette described the costumes as “‘ironic,’” while another reviewer saw the “‘amusing design’” and “‘agreeable colors’” of the costumes (and décor) as reflecting Perdriat’s “‘originality.’” More directly categorizing the costumes, one reviewer described them as having a “‘cubist tendency,’” while another explained the “‘audacious futurism of the decor and costumes.’” Unanimously, the modernist aspects of Perdriat’s costumes were not treated with disdain from reviewers. Instead, critics lavished praise, calling them, “the most charming, most fresh, most becoming costumes,” and “the greatest pleasure of our evening.”

Choreography and Dancing

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Börlin left no evidence of his choreography. No choreographic score exists, nor do notes, diaries, or letters.

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125 Colette, “Les premières,” “costumes ironiques.”

126 Lapommeraye, “La semaine musicale.” “Mme Perdriat manifests her originality in the composition of the costumes and the décor, which are of an amusing design and are of agreeable colors.” (“Mme Perdriat ne manifesta son originalité que dans la composition des costumes et du décor, qui sont d’amusant dessin et du couleur agréable.”)


128 René d’Ixelles, “Comment ils on dansé,” Bonsoir (27 May 1923), quoted and translated in Shapiro, Germaine Tailleferre, 183.

129 Only one reviewer, that I found, had a negative comment regarding the costumes; he found them too revealing: Tenroc, “Théatre des Champs-Élysées.”

130 Madelaigue, “Au théatre: les ballets suédois,” “les costumes les plus charmants, les plus frais, les plus seyants.”

indicating choreographic decisions. This is not to say, however, that I am prevented entirely from discussing the choreography here. Mentions of the dancing in critical reviews on the work indicate that the movements were closely aligned with traditional ballet: Börlin avoided the modern dance steps that he had employed in works such as *Skating Rink* and *L'homme et son désir*. In fact, reviewers discussed the dancing very little likely precisely because the movements did not evoke concern or controversy. While this is unfortunate for the modern scholar, as it offers less information from which to judge the specifics of the choreography, it certainly gives a basis of comparison to other Ballets Suédois works for which the choreography took the brunt of concern because of its seemingly bizarre movements. Perhaps the only reviewer who longed for the interest of Börlin’s more modern style was composer, critic, and modernist Émile Vuillermoz, who said, “the choreography of this little ballet truly only presents a quite debatable interest.” More typical responses include the following: “an intelligent choreography by Jean Börlin,” “the choreography, very

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132 Professor Janice Ross, Stanford University, noted that diaries and letters of Ballets Suédois dancers might provide useful commentary on the choreography, something that would be helpful for future research on the ballet. Regarding research and reconstruction of choreography, Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer are seminal figures in the reconstruction of 1910s and 1920s French ballet, having reconstructed eight Ballets Russes works and five Ballets Suédois works. Their website describes their process: “Known as the ‘dance detectives,’ Hodson and Archer search and synthesize visual and verbal clues and, in most cases, interview witnesses and survivors of the ballets they bring back to the stage.” See www.hodsonandarcher.com, accessed 6 May 2011. Hodson and Archer have written numerous times about their reconstructions, including: Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer, “Twentieth-Century Reconstructions: Poetic Justice for Jean Börlin,” in *The Royal Swedish Ballet, 1773-1998*, ed. George Dorris (London: Dance Books, 1999).


classic: point, pirouettes, etc., is animated,” and “the choreography of M. Börlin rested, this time, on the classical book.” Only the schoolgirls seem to have escaped the classic style. Several Swedish reviewers describe their style as burlesque, and one clearly sees them as contrasting to the rest of the work: “A gathering of schoolgirls in checkered chessboard dresses and with edgy funny mannerisms form a grotesque element in the scenic picture for which Perdriat has created the outer colorful frame.” The following two reviewers address more pointedly the contrast between the classical choreographic style that Börlin adopted for Le marchand d’oiseaux and the avant-garde movements he preferred in some of his other works. “The large public that was found in the room did not leave repulsed by a spectacle whose program, which included nothing but ballet and dancing, had the appearance of being too uniform. It was right and we add that there were no regrets.” And addressing the female dancers specifically: “Each of the two danced the best style, with footwork and variations that valued their virtuosity and the harmony of their

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135 Lapommeraye, “La semaine musicale.” “La chorégraphie, très classique: pointes, pirouettes, etc., est animée…”  
136 Boissy, [Review of Le marchand d’oiseaux], “la chorégraphie de M. Borlin s’est appuyée, cette fois, sur un livre classicisme.”  
137 Bgs., “Svenska baletten på Storan”; Kj. S-g., “Balettsuccès på Operan.”  
138 [Unknown author], “Börlins Fågelhandlaren på Kungliga Teatern.” “En samling skolflickor i rutiga schackbrädskostymer och med kantiga, lustigt manierade rörelser, bilda ett groteskt inslag i scenbilden, vartill Hélène Perdriat skapat den färgglada yttre ramen.”  
139 [Unknown author], “Les ballets suédois,” Petit courrier Angers (25 January 1925). Book 5, CD V, 05-192. “Le nombreux public qui se trouvait dans la salle ne s’est pas laissé rebute par un spectacle dont le programme, qui ne comportait que des ballets et des danses, aurait pu lui paraître trop uniforme. Il a eu raison et nous ajouterons qu’il n’a pas eu à s’en repentir.”
gestures, without, however, indulging in that dizzying verve that is represented by the
name of choreographic acrobatics.”

If Börlin comes under any criticism for his part in *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, it is
that his choreography and dancing are too basic. This is precisely the attitude taken by
reviewer André Levinson in his lengthy review (with Raymond Charpentier) in
*Comoedia*: “M. Börlin, director, resorted to traditional crafts. He has thus created a
classic little ballet, very rudimentary, without doubt, hindered as it was by the primary
technique of his troupe and the insufficiency of his method.” But where Levinson
saw the troupe as lacking in ability, an equally well-respected and predominant
reviewer, Charles Tenroc, saw them as having made “technical progress.”

Tailleferre’s discussion of *Le marchand d’oiseaux* in her memoirs is brief, and
interestingly is focused solely on the dancing and choreography. She highlights some
intriguing behaviors from Börlin and explains her own opinions of and involvement in
the ballet’s choreography:

Börlin, lead dancer and choreographer of the company, was a mediocre dancer,
but he showed a very great kindness and an extreme modesty. Also he was
always delighted when the authors themselves sorted out the staging and
choreography. Paul Claudel did this almost entirely for *L’Homme et son désir*
of which the beginning is one of the most beautiful passages by Darius
Milhaud. For me who had no experience with dance, it was my first attempt: I
was anxious after each rehearsal to notice any progress and above all to see

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142 Tenroc, “Théatre des Champs-Élysées,” “progrès techniques.”
any well-ordered dance. The lead female dancer, Karina [sic] Ari, was very encouraging; on the stage, the entire ballet ensemble outlined some steps. Börlin held still poses, watching for a long time in the mirror, and never joining in, except at the dress rehearsal… whose date had been pushed forward!… 143 Before one such inertia, it was necessary for me to decide for myself the choreography, to the great relief of Börlin, who was only waiting for this. … Ignoring all of the steps, and having no idea of this technique, I resolved to do fewer movements in groups, in order to avoid the horrible spectacle of dancers arranged in rows of onions and raising their legs at the same time…

After a night of work, I arrived at a rehearsal and explained to Karina Ari my plan for the finale. The dancers, who were all waiting for me, showed delight at finally doing something, but, as I was not a dancer, I provoked general laughter when I tried to explain what I wanted and gave a demonstration. In my enthusiasm and recklessness, I made myself dance, or rather run from one side of the stage to the other, stirring up with my shoes a cloud of dust. I was, to the joy of all, a thundering bumbler who sounded like a cavalry charge.

I understood, at this moment, the incredible lightness of dancers who do not release a speck of dust up to the rigging! However, the opening push having been given with the intelligence and the talent of Karina, we have settled on a cheerful, bustling finale, where all of the stage, swarming with colors and rhythms, finally brought life to this ballet which, in the first days, seemed doomed to immobility. 144

This passage is fascinating for many reasons. Not only does it indicate Tailleferre’s relatively intense involvement in choreographic decisions and day-to-day rehearsals, but also it suggests that Börlin’s central role in the company did not necessarily result in efficient or firm leadership. Tailleferre’s own brazenness with the dancers – her willingness to embarrass herself as she attempts to dance – is contrary to the extreme modesty that is usually said to characterize her. 145

143 This and the previous ellipses are original.
144 Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 29-31. See Appendix 2 for the original French text.
145 Poulenc’s comments in this regard are repeated often: “How ravishing our Germaine was in 1917, with her school girl’s satchel full of all the Conservatoire’s first prizes! How kind and gentle she was! She still is, but I regret somewhat that, through an excess of modesty, she did not draw from herself all that a Marie Laurencin, for example, knew how to extract from her feminine genius. Be that as it may, what a charming and precious contribution her music makes! I am delighted by it each time!”
Music

Though in scholarship on Tailleferre much has been made of the importance of her music for *Le marchand d’oiseaux* for her career, little or no effort has gone into thorough analysis. The music’s salience for her career is emphasized for several reasons. First, it was so liked by the Princesse de Polignac that she commissioned Tailleferre to write a piano concerto in the style of the ballet. Second, Diaghilev enjoyed her music so much that he used the overture from *Le marchand d’oiseaux* as an interlude in his own company’s performances. Additionally, he commissioned Tailleferre for a work to be called *La nouvelle Cythère*, but his 1929 death came before the work could be finished or performed.

What seems to have so impressed these illustrious figures and Tailleferre’s other supporters is her deft ability to reinterpret the masters. The Princesse de Polignac, for example, was drawn to the elements that she heard as especially reminiscent of Scarlatti. In addition to Scarlatti, other baroque composers – Bach and Couperin – and baroque musical styles – contrapuntal, chorale, and dance styles – are


147 Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 114; Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 193. Mitgang also notes that Diaghilev and Tailleferre would sight-read scores together at the Bibliothèque de l’Opéra.

heard. But Tailleferre does not confine her neoclassical style to reinterpretations of baroque composers and styles. Chopin, Ravel, and Fauré are also evident in several sections of the work. Mitgang notes that people hear various composers: what for some sounds like Scarlatti sounds to others like Bach, and similarly for Couperin and Rameau, and Ravel and Fauré. Efforts on the parts of reviewers to describe the various composers that could be heard in Tailleferre’s score results in a lengthy and diverse list: clavecinistes, impressionists, Scarlatti, Haydn, Stravinsky, Chopin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Bach, Chopin, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Mozart, Couperin, Fauré, et al.

So audible is Tailleferre’s borrowing or re-imagining of existing music that the terms “pastiche” and “parody” are used time and again (aptly, I might add) to describe her work. It is important to note, however, that the terms are used here largely for their implication of involving multiple distinctive and recognizable styles, and not necessarily for their secondary definition involving exaggeration for a humorous effect. For example, one reviewer wrote: “The spirit of delicate and amusing parody overflows the form, the technique is always delicate, [well] picked, light, showing a reliable knowledge not only of modern music but also some of our classics.”

Another reviewer finds the pastiche to be ironic, but his description of the work generally indicates that the overall intention is not one of humor: “The sound image is,

149 Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 114.
151 [Unknown author], “Les premières: Theatre des Champs-Elysées, les ballets suédois.” “L’esprit en déborde sous forme de délicate et amusante parodie, la technique est toujours fine, choisie, légère, indiquant une sûre connaissance non seulement des musiques modernes mais encore de quelques-uns de nos classiques.”
typical of Mlle Tailleferre, delicate, lively, faithful, exact. Nothing affected nor
aggressive; her very reliable craft knows to put the ideas in relief. There is irony in the
scholastic pastiche of the initial polyphony.” Other reviewers explain the pastiche as
if presenting the listener with musical memories or souvenirs, as in this case: “The
music of Mlle Tailleferre is pleasant, fresh, and laced with pretty souvenirs.” Of all
of the reviews I have collected, only one truly imagines that the music had the
intention of mockery:

In this intrigue of a childish mocking, Mlle Germaine Tailleferre wrote a
graciously contrapuntal music, light and no less classical than modern. A
virtuoso of the piano, her agile fingers uphold the memory of pieces by
Mozart, Scarlatti, Couperin, Chopin, Fauré, whom she has interpreted so many
times. She remembers them in this jeer! In each instance, in composing, her
hands must have left the piano to thumb her nose at these illustrious and prim
musicians. … She can laugh at the cumbersome masters.

In revisiting previous composers and styles, Tailleferre often modernizes their
particular textures and melodic characteristics with dissonant harmonies. Many
reviewers acknowledge this combination of classic and modern elements, often in
similar terms. This excerpt, for example, is almost exactly the same wording as that
just quoted from Malherbe: “Graceful and light music, and no less classical than

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152 D., “Les nouveaux spectacles des ‘ballets suédois’.” “L’image sonore est, chez Mlle Tailleferre fine,
vive, fidèle, exacte. Rien d’affecté ni d’agressif; son métier très sûr sait mettre les idées en relief. Il y a
de l’ironie dans le pastiche scolastique de la polyphonie initiale.”

153 Boissy, [Review of Le marchand d’oiseaux]. “La musique de Mlle Tailleferre est agréable, fraîche et
faufilée de jolis souvenirs.”

154 Malherbe, [Review of Le marchand d’oiseaux]. “Sur cette intrigue d’une puérilité narquoise, Mlle
Germaine Tailleferre a écrit une musique contrapuntique gracieuse, légère et non moins classique que
moderne. Virtuose du piano, ses doigts agile gardent la mémoire de morceaux de Mozart, Scarlatti,
Couperin, Chopin, Fauré, qu’elle a tant de fois interprétés. Elle se les rappelle en les moquant! A tout
instant, en composant, ses mains devaient quitter le clavier pour faire un pied de nez à ces musiciens
illustres et compassés. … Elle peut se rire de ses maîtres encombrants.”
modern...”

Other critics give more detail on the classical and modern elements of Tailleferre’s piece, concluding that her polytonal and jazz-inflected or dissonant harmonies modernize the baroque textures and forms. One Swedish critic intriguingly describes this as jazz in a baroque context: “The music wants to be futuristic; it is in itself very simple and rather vivid, but is adorned with plenty of dissonances and both rhythmical and figural gimmicks, much like a modern jazz orchestra at its most baroque.”

For other reviewers, the combination of dissonant harmonies with baroque textures reminded them of Stravinsky. One Swedish critic wrote: “Mlle Tailleferre treats the classical themes with a gentle hand, but modernizes them pretty radically after Stravinsky’s model.” And, a French critic agreed: “Following the example of M. Stravinsky, she has got an overwhelming taste for polytonality.”

As I explain soon, Tailleferre alludes to Stravinsky’s *Pétrouchka* in the second number of her ballet, but the reviewers may also be referring to Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* (1920) as a possible “model” for Tailleferre’s approach. Whereas *Le marchand d’oiseaux* is a newly composed work that alludes to and quotes various composers and styles, many of which are baroque, *Pulcinella* is in fact an arrangement of various works by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) and several other baroque composers – it is very much written in a baroque style, with only very occasional modernist harmonies,
textures, and phrasing. Nevertheless, as I soon explain, Tailleferre’s admiration for Stravinsky was strong, and his neoclassical – neobaroque – ballet may well have influenced her compositional style.

The distinct styles of Tailleferre’s music are associated clearly with the characters of the ballet, dividing it into ten numbers. Table 6 indicates the divisions of Tailleferre’s score and the characters and musical styles associated with each section.

Table 6: Le marchand d’oiseaux: Musical Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-49</td>
<td>1. Overture</td>
<td>Contrapuntal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-95</td>
<td>2. Discovery of bouquets</td>
<td>À la Pétrouchka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 96-176 | 3. Sisters’ dances | Older sister: waltz à la Chopin  
Younger sister: forlane |
| 177-187 | 4. Enfants de Marie | Chorale |
| 188-222 | 5. Schoolgirls | Reprise of overture |
| 223-284 | 6. Gardeners | Passepied |
| 285-323 | 7. Bird merchant | Pavane |
| 324-358 | 8. Bird merchant and younger sister | Pavane continued |
| 390-508 | 10. Finale | Gigue |

Division of the ballet into discrete “numbers” is only somewhat apparent in the published two-piano score. Written into this version with subtitles are only the entrances of the Enfants de Marie, the schoolgirls, the gardeners, and the stranger, and the dance of the bird merchant. Why titles indicating the other characters’ numbers are left out is unclear as the musical divisions are no less distinct. Examination of manuscript scores at the Dansmuseet uncovered more detailed indications of the relationship between scenario and music. While the two orchestral manuscripts held at the archive had few details regarding the scenario (instead they had metronome

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markings added and sections crossed off, indicating various performance alterations), the two-piano manuscript contained detailed annotations indicating exact correspondences between action and music. These cues are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix 1, as one of the scenarios for the ballet, with measure numbers indicating exact placement, but I include here in Figure 1 my transcription of the first four annotations to show how clearly they were placed in the score. These annotations, along with the numbered scenario that Tailleferre outlined in a letter (also reproduced in Appendix 1) clearly explicate musical divisions and corresponding action.

Figure 1: *Le marchand d’oiseaux* measures 56-64 with annotations

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Layering a musico-narrative analysis with descriptions of musical content involves unpacking a string of quotations and allusions that, as already mentioned, invoke a lengthy list of potential sources. I offer here a number-by-number analysis addressing these most salient and characteristic aspects of Tailleferre’s score. My analysis focuses on the sources for Tailleferre’s score for two reasons. First, quotations of and allusions to distinct musical styles are undoubtedly the defining feature of Tailleferre’s score. Second, reviewers largely focused their attention on explaining these quotations and allusions to their readers, though not nearly in as much detail as I give. Recognizing Tailleferre’s influences and sources was seen as key to understanding the work generally.

From the first few notes of the overture, the work’s neobaroque tone is undeniably clear. The contrapuntal texture (or even faux-canon or faux-fugue texture), motivically constructed melody, and diatonic harmonies (grounded in D major) are strikingly baroque and strikingly mundane. The entirety of the overture is less a re-imagining of a baroque texture in a modern context, but instead simply baroque (especially in comparison with other numbers in the ballet, baroque textures and phrasing are combined with “modern,” chromatic harmonies, as I show). Furthermore, these baroque textures and harmonies unfold in a ritornello form, with three episodes (measures 6-14, measures 14-23, and measures 23-35) framed by an opening ritornello (measures 1-6) and a closing ritornello (measures 35-40) and coda (measures 40-49). As is typical, episodes explore different key areas and break the ritornello melody into constituent motives. Figure 2 shows the opening ritornello.
Figure 2: *Le marchand d’oiseaux* measures 1-6

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While many reviewers (and the Princesse de Polignac, as mentioned) found Tailleferre’s score reflective of Scarlatti, the texture and motives of the overture seem, to me, equally, if not more, aligned with Bach. One reviewer agrees, describing Tailleferre’s overture as, “a pastiche of the Concerto for orchestra and trumpet by Bach,” referring to Bach’s second Brandenburg Concerto (BWV 1047). Close comparison of the two reveals clear similarities, but no direct quotations on Tailleferre’s part. In fact, Tailleferre’s overture shares qualities with the first and third movements of the second Brandenburg Concerto and the opening movement of the first Brandenburg Concerto (BWV 1046). Additionally, in a nod to her colleague in Les Six, Tailleferre quotes the pulsing eighth-note rhythm that pervades the first movement of Poulenc’s Sonate (1918) for piano four hands (see Figure 3, bottom voice, and Figure 4).

Figure 3: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 25-28

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\(^{161}\) Lapommeraye, “La semaine musicale,” “[une] pastiche du Concerto pour orchestre et trompette de Bach.” Kelkel also finds the overture similar to Bach’s concerto: La musique de ballet en France, 196.
The second number, beginning the action of the ballet, sees the maidservant appearing, finding the bouquets, and showing them to the two sisters. The texture is strikingly different from that of the overture, replacing counterpoint with a largely accompanimental texture, as shown already in Figure 1. The low D is a pedal almost throughout, with the lilting sixteenth notes of measures 56 and 57 and the block chords of measures 60 and 61 forming the main musical material for this section. This section also sees Tailleferre’s modern harmonies sneaking in, especially in measures 58 and 59, where several tritones can be found. While the music for this section is notably less clear than the overture in terms of conveying a distinct style, it nevertheless is pastiche, in this case of Stravinsky’s Pétrouchka. The lilting sixteenth-note pattern of measures 56 and 57 (and much of the rest of the section) is the same pattern used by Stravinsky for the “Dance of the Coachmen and Grooms.” Furthermore, the block chords of measures 60 and 61 (and, again, much of the rest of the section) are similar to patterns used by Stravinsky for “The Masqueraders,” whose dance immediately follows that of the coachmen and grooms. Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8 show the two corresponding patterns from the two ballets together.
Figure 5: *Le marchand d'oiseaux* measures 50-52

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Figure 6: Stravinsky, *Pétrouchka* rehearsal 108

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Figure 7: *Le marchand d'oiseaux* measures 71-73

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Tailleferre’s choice of these particular motives is by no means coincidental. In the first case, Figure 5 and Figure 6, the lilting accompaniment is used in both ballets to accompany servant characters. In the second case, Figure 7 and Figure 8, Tailleferre’s choice of music paired with Stravinsky’s masked characters foreshadows the end of Perdriat’s scenario and allows the most astute listeners in on her game. While Tailleferre’s references to Pérouchka may be obscure, her intimate knowledge of the score and her very high regard for Stravinsky and his works confirm the correspondences. Even as a student at the Conservatoire, Tailleferre recalls in her memoirs being enthralled with Stravinsky’s music: “Reading four-hand [piano scores] of Pérouchka and Sacre du printemps with Darius Milhaud moved me deeply and got me dismissed from my organ class, [because] my improvisations, strongly influenced by Stravinsky, had incited cries of horror from my professor Eugène Gigout.”

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recalls attending every Ballets Russes performance and being dumbfounded when Stravinsky invited her for a drink and gave her flowers.\textsuperscript{163} The two became close: Tailleferre would dine with him at Coco Chanel’s country home and Stravinsky complimented her piano concerto.\textsuperscript{164} She continued her deep appreciation for his music, creating her own transcriptions of his three famous ballets to play in salons, especially that of the Princesse de Polignac.\textsuperscript{165} She would also play Stravinsky’s ballets for Ravel, whom she recalls urging her to do so even after a fourteen-kilometer hike: “Ravel put me at the piano and begged me to play for him all of \textit{Pétrouchka} by heart. It was for me the only way to express myself, because I was stuffed full of complexes.”\textsuperscript{166} Clearly, Tailleferre’s knowledge and appreciation of \textit{Pétrouchka} was deep and thorough enough that the relatively obscure references in her ballet may assumed to be deliberate on her part.

With the end of the second number introducing the two sisters and seeing them choose their respective bouquets, the third number presents their respective dances. The older sister is first, taking up a Chopinesque waltz. The eight-bar phrases, ternary form (with an introduction), and simple melody-plus-accompaniment texture are typical of Chopin’s piano pieces. Perhaps most characteristic of Chopin’s style, though, are the embellishments that Tailleferre introduces in the repeat of the A section. Figure 9 shows the first phrase of the first A section, where triplets dominate.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, 31-2.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, 33.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid. Tailleferre and Stravinsky even recorded \textit{Le sacre du printemps} together onto a piano roll. Tailleferre recalls being overwhelmed by his strong playing style. She also notes that the piano roll is lost and that it was not successful, because “les disques” were taking the place of player pianos.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, 36. “Ravel me mit au piano et me pria de lui jouer tout \textit{Pétrouchka} par coeur. C’était pour moi la seule façon de m’exprimer, car j’étais bourrée de complexes.”
the first part of the phrase. In Figure 10, the first phrase of the second A section, the triplets have become sixteenth notes and sextuplets.

As these examples also show, Tailleferre’s harmonic language has become more dissonant since the overture. Seventh and ninth chords abound, as do minor seconds and tritones. Even so, the melody hints at D as a loose tonal center. While Chopin is undoubtedly the source of the waltz’s material, it is worth nothing that Stravinsky sets the dance of the ballerina and the Moor in *Pétrouchka* to a waltz. Here, the similarities between the stories of the two ballets become apparent.

**Figure 9: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 102-110**

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In Stravinsky’s work, the ballerina rejects Pétrouchka’s advances in favor of the handsome and lavish Moor, dancing a waltz with the latter; in Tailleferre’s work, the older sister is similarly attracted to the masked stranger’s lavishness, though in this case she is unaware of his racial “otherness.”

The final cadence of the older sister’s waltz dovetails with the beginning of the younger sister’s dance, in this case a forlane (foreshadowed briefly when she chose her bouquet). Tailleferre’s balanced phrases, six-eight meter, and melodic upbeat are typical of forlanes, which are courtship dances. Also typical are pedal tones in the bass voice, something Tailleferre employs for several measures at a time, though not
throughout. Tailleferre’s colorful harmonies are atypical of forlanes, though in keeping with her own extended harmonic language. In this case, Tailleferre’s choice of a forlane is likely intended to pastiche the dance style rather than a particular composer, though similarities between her forlane and the middle six-eight section of Scarlatti’s Sonata K. 202 (L. 498) in B-flat major are evident, as Figure 11 and Figure 12 show.

**Figure 11: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 141-152**

![Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 141-152](image)

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Dance suites and their constituent movements, including the forlane, provided inspiration for many late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century French composers. Perhaps the best-known example is Ravel’s *Le tombeau de Couperin* (1914-17), which has a forlane as its third movement. Generally, Ravel was an immense influence for Tailleferre, not to mention a great friend and mentor, as a comparison of the two forlanes shows. Tailleferre’s neighbor-tone motive, texture, and extended harmonies in measures 146-149 (see Figure 11) have roots in Ravel’s movement (see Figure 13).

Rounding out this number, the sisters dance together onstage, accompanied simultaneously by both of their respective musics. The rhythmic values of the older sister’s waltz are halved, such that one three-four measure now fits into the space of half of a six-eight measure. Figure 14 shows the first six measures of the twelve that make up their combined dance, with the younger sister’s forlane appearing on the top staff and the older sister’s waltz on the middle staff.
The quick transition between the sisters’ dances and the following number is a quotation from Chopin’s “Minute Waltz” (Op. 64, no. 1) (see Figure 15).
The prim and proper Enfants de Marie are represented by an aptly chosen chorale. Its four even phrases, AA’BB’ form, and diatonic harmonies are clearly in keeping with Bach’s chorale style. Perhaps the only quirk of Tailleferre’s chorale is that each phrase consists of nine beats: a four-four, a three-four, and a two-four measure. The effect is lost on the listener, who only hears two four-four bars with a fermata on the last note of the phrase. Figure 16 shows the first phrase of the chorale.

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The mischievous schoolgirls dance to a reprise of the overture, this time presented as if mid-form. Two episodes are heard first (measures 188-198 and 198-212), followed by a ritornello (measures 212-217) and a coda (measures 217-222). The two episodes are particularly suitable to the mischievousness of the schoolgirls. Passing- and neighbor-tone motives are sequenced and set in phrases with quickening harmonic motion, clearly presenting a hectic, scurrying sound. This appearance of the overture material is also notable for a subtle change from the overture proper, something commented on by several reviewers. Here, Tailleferre quotes a popular children’s song, “Il court le furet” (“The ferret, it runs”), as shown in Figure 17 (the melody appears in the upper voice, beginning with the second eighth note of measure 205 and ending with the first note of measure 206) and Figure 18.\(^\text{167}\)

Tailleferre’s reasons for choosing this particular song are not obvious, though perhaps the fact that it is for children and that its lyrics suggest uncontrolled, hyper behavior is enough to connect it to the personalities of the ballet’s schoolgirls. Just as reviewers drew their readers’ attention to the schoolgirls’ costumes, so did many of them address this quotation, either mentioning reference to a popular children’s melody or naming the song directly. One reviewer explains the suitability of Tailleferre’s quotation: “Like le furet that it cites, it runs, it runs, it passes by here, it

\(^{167}\) An alternative title for this song is “Le furet du bois joli.” This melody exists in two forms, with only a slight difference between the two. The melody was anthologized just before Tailleferre wrote the score for the ballet (and perhaps at other times too, though this is the source most readily available to me): *Vieilles chansons pour les petits enfants* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1920?). The version of the song in this source is in A major, but the seventh note of the melody is F-sharp (the sixth scale degree). An online version of the melody is in D major, but uses the fifth scale degree for the seventh note of the melody, in keeping with Tailleferre’s version. “Il Court le furet,” Mama Lisa’s World: Children’s Songs and Rhymes, accessed 8 June 2010, [http://www.mamalisa.com/?t=em&p=118&c=22](http://www.mamalisa.com/?t=em&p=118&c=22).
also passes by there, it tries a bit of everything…”¹⁶⁸ After having featured this brief quotation of the “le furet” melody, Tailleferre adds the rest of the phrase to the melody and positions it as an accompaniment to the busy counterpoint at the ritornello. From measures 212-216, the melody is heard twice as octaves in the lower voices (beginning with the last three eighth notes of measure 212); as the harmonic motion of the ritornello quickens, the melody is shortened and repeated three more times from measures 216-219 (see Figure 19).

Figure 17: *Le marchand d’oiseaux* measures 204-207

![Figure 17: *Le marchand d’oiseaux* measures 204-207](image)

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Figure 18: “Il court le furet” measures 1-3

![Figure 18: “Il court le furet” measures 1-3](image)

¹⁶⁸ Boschot, “Ballets suédois: nouveau spectacle” (italics original). “Comme le furet qu’elle cite, elle court, elle court, elle passe par ici, elle passe aussi par là, elle essaie un peu de tout…”
Figure 19: *Le marchand d’oiseaux* measures 212-222
Taking up another Baroque dance, the gardeners’ number is a passepied, a fast-paced, minuet-like dance. Typically, this dance has eight-bar phrases with melodic upbeats and a constantly moving melody. Tailleferre’s version adopts these characteristics, adding relatively consistent pedal tones throughout (C from measures 223-239, D from measures 239-262, and C again from measures 262-273), playing up the dance’s pastoral roots and highlighting its suitable match for the gardeners. Tailleferre’s decorative turns are perhaps a reference to the flourishes of the *clavecinstes* (see Figure 20).
The diatonic harmonies of the passepie give way toward the end as this number transitions to the next. The gardeners’ charming dance is interrupted as the bird merchant makes his way on stage. Foreshadowing his music, the orchestra plays it first in quasi-inversion. But the gardeners will not be interrupted and they continue their dance. The annotated manuscript reads at this point: “The gardeners resume their dance in chaos and under new interruptions.”

Successfully interrupting the gardeners’ dance, the bird merchant takes up his own dance, a pavane, as titled in the published score. Its rocking accompanimental pattern is akin to an Alberti-bass pattern, which may have sparked some reviewers to reference Mozart as an influence on Tailleferre. The melody is smooth, calm, and stately, as one would expect from a pavane. But, to make it suit the character,

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169 Germaine Tailleferre, “Le marchand d’oiseaux”. Two-Piano Manuscript Score. Ballets Suédois. Dansmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden. “Les jardinières reprennent leur danse en désordre et [sous] de nouveau [interrompues].” The handwriting of the bracketed words was difficult to read, but these words seem to be correct based on the context.
Tailleferre intersperses the pavane with active overlays that seem to represent chattering birds. Figure 21 shows the first phrase of the bird merchant’s pavane. In this case, the chattering birds are suggested in the contrapuntal eighth and sixteenth notes in measures 289 and 290.

**Figure 21: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 285-290**

[Music notation image]

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One Tailleferre scholar briefly commented that this pavane is something of a mix of those by Ravel and Fauré.\(^{170}\) Closer inspection reveals that this suggestion is certainly plausible. Ravel’s *Pavane pour un infante défunte* (1899), Fauré’s *Pavane* (opus 50 in f-sharp minor, 1887), and Tailleferre’s number for the bird merchant all have modal melodies (specifically, they are both in minor keys and often do not raise the seventh degree), similar rocking accompanimental patterns (Fauré’s is more similar to Tailleferre’s than is Ravel’s), and repetitive forms. Additionally, Ravel’s

\(^{170}\) Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 114.
and Tailleferre’s pavanes share syncopated rhythms and the chordal planing that has become synonymous with pianistic impressionism.

At the end of his solo dance, the bird merchant offers his birds to each of the sisters, starting with the older sister (who rebukes him). As he approaches each, their respective dances are heard briefly. Accepting his advance, the younger sister joins the bird merchant for their pas de deux, set to the bird merchant’s pavane.

The masked stranger’s number presents an overly pompous fanfare and waltz suited to his lavish dress and seemingly important station. The dotted rhythms, repeated pitches, and bare fifths of the introductory section are characteristic of fanfares (see Figure 22). But Tailleferre distorts the fanfare with some diminished fifths, as in measures 360 and 364, for example.

**Figure 22: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 359-365**

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A low tremolo on octave Gs and a glissando lead into a slow waltz. This simple, diatonic waltz seems to parody a slow Viennese waltz. The dotted rhythms of
the fanfare continue. The dissonant harmonies of the fanfare have disappeared, however, and the neutral diatonicism is made even more innocuous by the regular four- and eight-bar phrases. But lest the diatonic harmonies and regular phrases be taken at face value, Tailleferre distorts the stranger’s music to reflect his deceptive and comedic positions. The melody for his waltz is distorted with octave displacements (similar to the registral shifting of the introductory fanfare) such that an otherwise largely stepwise melody becomes marred by octave and ninth leaps. Figure 23 and Figure 24 show the melody as written and rewritten to omit octave displacements.

**Figure 23: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 370-380, as written**

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Tailleferre’s second technique for distorting the stranger’s waltz comes at its phrase endings. The first such moment is shown in measure 378 in Figure 23. Here, the descending line in the bass taking the harmony from the dominant to tonic is already cliché and is exaggerated even more by tenuto marks on each note. At the second phrase ending, Tailleferre writes a turn with a fermata on its final note, as shown in Figure 25 (note that the phrase leading up to this is precisely the same as the first phrase shown in Figure 23; so, measure 385 is the same as measure 377).

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One of the manuscripts held at the Dansmuseet provides a clue as to Tailleferre’s concept for the masked stranger’s number. The same two-piano reduction that has the scenario written over the corresponding music (refer back to Figure 1) has the words “Danse grotesque et sentimentale” written over measure 371, the start of the
masked stranger’s dance. Tailleferre’s choice of words clearly references Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911), though no musical correspondences exist between the works aside from their waltz idioms (nor are there any musical allusions to Schubert’s *Valses nobles* and *Valses sentimentales*). The “grotesque” of Tailleferre’s waltz references the long-standing aesthetic category where the fantastical, bizarre, and ugly mix, often through distortion of something familiar or beautiful. As such, Tailleferre’s displaced melody and melodramatic phrase endings exaggerate the otherwise perfectly pretty waltz.

The stranger is unmasked to a rather melodramatic flourish of activity, which includes a descending line that literally represents the falling mask and figuratively represents the stranger’s downfall (see Figure 26).

**Figure 26: Le marchand d’oiseaux measure 389**

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171 This handwriting appears to be Tailleferre’s.
Immediately after the stranger is unmasked, the finale begins. A lively gigue, it leaves no space for shame or ridicule to be directed at the older sister or the port merchant. Instead, the frolicking gigue, suited to the pastoral setting, celebrates the bird merchant and younger sister’s pairing, again with something of a ritornello form. Figure 27 shows a full statement of the opening ritornello. This is followed by six episodes (measures 406-416, 416-427, 427-435, 435-443, 443-463, 463-488) and a closing ritornello (measures 488-508). The character of this finale is starkly contrasting to the parody of the stranger’s waltz. The grotesque is gone without a trace, replaced instead with the sincere glee of a country gigue.

**Figure 27: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 390-409**
As with much of the rest of the score, this gigue is dressed up with some dissonant harmonies. Additionally, the gigue shows an example of cross-rhythms, not found anywhere else in the ballet (see Figure 28).

This may exhaust the musical material of the ballet’s score, but there is one final annotation that Tailleferre made in that two-piano manuscript that should be discussed. A sign over the top of the final measure of the score – presenting a typical Baroque cadential flourish – directs the reader to a note that explains: “On the final chord, all of the ballet [company] must bow almost to the earth in making reverence to the public – It [sic] was a French tradition of the 18th century and is in the spirit of this finale.”172 This very specific performance direction confirms the deliberateness with

which Tailleferre drew from French musical – and in this case, ballet – traditions, a concern that appears for further discussion in the following chapter.

**Figure 28: Le marchand d’oiseaux measures 462-469**

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This concludes my analysis of Tailleferre’s score for *Le marchand d’oiseaux.*

My analysis reveals the numerous allusions and quotations that make up Tailleferre’s score. From Couperin and Bach to Poulenc and Stravinsky, Tailleferre crosses centuries and national boundaries to construct her score.

**Analyzing the Ballet: Combining Old and New**

My analysis of *Le marchand d’oiseaux* reveals details about all aspects of the ballet. Here, I want to synthesize my analysis to reveal similarities that bridge music, scenario, design, and dance. In sum, the whole ballet joins old and new elements: classic and modern, tradition and innovation blend. The largely traditional
choreography and the pastoral set design are decidedly classical, but Perdriat’s costumes and Tailleferre’s score combine classic and modern elements.

Recall Garafola’s description of the 1910s and 1920s as a masculinization of ballet. The ballerino took the star roles and sexual power previously belonging to the ballerina. The ballerina simultaneously was presented more naturally, without corsets and pointe shoes. In her book, *Classic Chic: Music, Fashion, and Modernism*, Mary E. Davis sees similar trends in fashion generally. In the 1910s, neoclassicism manifested in women’s fashion as long, straight dresses of draped rather than tailored constructions. In the 1920s, flapper fashions and the notion that simplicity was a defining element of French style continued the preference for straight and largely unstructured dress. Such trends dispensed with rigid corsets and full skirts that defined a shapely hourglass figure. Simultaneously, trends in art – cubism, for example – deconstructed the human form entirely, translating it into hard-lined, angular shapes, again dispensing with a curvaceous female silhouette.

Perdriat’s costumes for *Le marchand d’oiseaux* do not reflect these trends. Her designs include full skirts and corset-like tops that together emphasize a curvy shape. If the straight silhouettes of flapper fashions masculinized the female form, Perdriat’s costumes re-feminize her and cast her in a seemingly traditional aesthetic space. To say, though, that Perdriat’s costumes are entirely not in keeping with modernist trends would be a mistake. If their constructions and silhouettes are traditional, their bold colors and sometimes-geometric shapes are clearly modern. The angular points on the

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174 Ibid., 163-167.
older sister’s skirt and the short, checkerboard skirts of the schoolgirls reflect both burlesque fashions and cubist influences. The combination is a sort of stylized version of a French pastoral ideal.

In Tailleferre’s music too modern elements similarly mingle with traditional structures and styles. Throughout my analysis, I pointed to instances where dissonant harmonies modernized otherwise diatonic melodies and regular structures. Additionally, the allusions to Stravinsky’s Pétrouchka balance references to older composers and styles. Yet a third element of Tailleferre’s approach to the score reflects modern trends: her juxtaposition of various styles in quick succession. The musical collage that results from the multitude of allusions in her score is not unlike the sharp juxtaposition of elements of a cubist painting. In both instances smooth transitions are replaced with unexpected overlays. Thus while much of her musical material may seem traditional, the methods with which she combined it are new.

But, classifying some of Tailleferre’s musical material as old or traditional is problematic, because the old had become new in France. For several decades, national pride saw French composers reviving their own country’s musical history, not just for the purposes of hearing old music, but also for finding inspiration for new music. I have already discussed nationalism as the impetus for French neoclassicism, and my purpose in resurrecting the issue is to suggest that Tailleferre’s use of baroque dance types, for example, reflects both stylistic traditions and the modern trend to resurrect and refashion them. As evidence, I point again to Davis’s work on music and fashion during this period. In addition to nationalist sentiments and nostalgia for a utopian French aristocratic life, she explains that Paris of the 1910s and 1920s was “dance-
mad.” In basing much of her score on French dances of an admired bygone era, Tailleferre simultaneously appealed to three decidedly current concerns: nationalism, nostalgia, and dance. Her traditionalism was modern.

175 Ibid., 81.
CHAPTER 4. FEMININITY AND POPULAR MODERNISM IN *LE MARCHAND D’OISEAUX*: RECEPTION, CRITICAL ANALYSIS, AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The previous chapter on *Le marchand d’oiseaux* is concerned largely with two issues: first, contextualizing the ballet within dominant narratives of 1920s music and dance, and second, uncovering and analyzing the ballet itself. This second chapter on the ballet takes a more critical approach to the work and its reception, analyzing trends in the ballet and its reception to determine how and why it has been omitted from musical and balletic canons. Trends in the work and in its reception reveal that performed and perceived femininity have combined to result in a sort of second-class status for the work. Branching outward from *Le marchand d’oiseaux* to reconsider narratives of music and dance in 1920s Paris, I find that *Le marchand d’oiseaux* is representative of a widespread but little-acknowledged subcategory of modernism that privileges popularity over avant garde. Examining conflations of feminine and popular, I use *Le marchand d’oiseaux* to examine modernism beyond the avant garde and to propose a more inclusive narrative of ballet in 1920s Paris. I start the chapter turning to the ballet’s reception, first focusing on trends in critical responses to Tailleferre’s score and comparisons of Tailleferre’s score to the music of *Les Six*, and then addressing femininity both from the viewpoint of performance and reception. Finally, I synthesize and situate my work on *Le marchand d’oiseaux* with the term “popular modernism.”

**Praise and Criticism for Tailleferre’s Score**

Already over the course of the previous chapter, I incorporated critical responses to *Le marchand d’oiseaux* into my narrative and analyses. I used critical
writings on the ballet both for information about the work and to begin to establish critical opinions of its constituent components. In this chapter, over the next few sections, I focus directly on the ballet’s reception, analyzing patterns within it to help understand perceptions of the ballet’s creators, style, and short- and long-term value. I begin in this section with a discussion of critical reactions to Tailleferre’s score.

Tailleferre’s score received much praise from critics. Colette called the score a “triumph”¹ and another reviewer described it as “simply charming” and “skillfully written.”² Another reviewer described Tailleferre’s music as especially suited to ballet: “[The ballet presents] a rare group of proper musical qualities: freshness of inspiration, clear and rhythmic ideas as is suitable for a ballet, [and a] light and gracious orchestra.”³ Other critics praise Tailleferre for writing music so well suited to each individual character and to dance generally:

Linking [the décor, costumes, and dance] is a lively and fresh music, not lacking in parodic intentions, from which the décor and costumes appear as the visual transposition. Now, one can dance; the musical movement generates the bounding. No futile worry comes to cut the rhythmic line; the pace of the work unfolds and follows the only logic of ballet. Mlle Tailleferre’s orchestration is very subtle; there are, at the entrance of the Stranger, some horn phrases that aggravate the mystery and cause a sudden shudder; everywhere the union of sounds is perfectly easy with an unshakeable grace and verve.⁴

³ Dominique Sordet, [Review of Le marchand d’oiseaux], *Echo national* (28 May 1923). Book 13, CD II, 13-91. “…un rare ensemble de qualités proprement musicales: fraîcheur d’inspiration, idées claires et rythmées comme il convient à un ballet, orchestre léger et gracieux.”
⁴ Marcel Azais, “Chronique musicale,” *Action française* 6, no. 155 (5 June 1923): 2. Book 13, CD II, 13-100. “Joignes une musique vive et fraîche, non dénuée d’intentions parodiques, dont décors et costumes paraissent la transposition visuelle. Maintenant, on peut danser; le mouvement musical est générateur de bondissements. Aucun vain souci ne vient couper la ligne rythmique; la marche de l’oeuvre se déroule et s’enchaîne suivant la seule logique du ballet. L’orchestration de Mlle Tailleferre et très subtile; il y a, à l’entrée de l’Inconnu, quelques phrases de cors qui aggravent le mystère et font
Georges Auric, Tailleferre’s colleague in *Les Six*, is also eloquent in his praise of Tailleferre’s score. The following paragraph from his lengthy review explains that all of Perdriot’s contributions to the work were in support of Tailleferre’s music.

But [Perdriot’s] “pretext,” primarily, offers Germaine Tailleferre the occasion to generate the open air of the scene, over a clear and sonorous orchestra and a mobile background of unexpected and prickly harmonies, of gracious and gay turning melodies, like so many delightful birds. This is to be noticed: as long as the score is, we are not duped by lesser sentimentality, lesser languor. The real success the other evening of the *Marchand d’oiseaux*, the very nice sentiment for the public, is found in the launching of an alert and joyous work. The strong spirits can smile: identical results, they are not as easy as they think to achieve.\(^5\)

While reviewers generally praised the music, its lack of large-scale unity was one of two criticisms leveled by several critics. Revealing their biases for cohesion in large musical genres (symphony, opera, ballet, etc.) and using unity, or apparent lack thereof, as a judgment of ability, some reviewers ultimately found Tailleferre’s score deficient. Noted music critic Raymond Charpentier generally enjoyed Tailleferre’s score, but on two occasions in his lengthy review, he laments its lack of unity:

> Generally, the themes are clear, straight, and shown to their best advantage. They have the strength of growth and agreement with the subject: these virtues are neither banal nor current. For my part, I saw a bit of disparateness employed in the middle and by consequence a certain lack of unity.

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Each composition in a single group must contain an internal harmony that obtains itself notably by the combined action of modes of expression. It is perhaps this that is lacking in *Le Marchand d’Oiseaux*.\(^6\)

The second criticism leveled by multiple critics with regards to Tailleferre’s score is her orchestration. This, however, is a more contentious issue than the score’s unity, as reviewers actually express opposing opinions of Tailleferre’s orchestration. Several find the orchestration heavy, with brass drowning out strings. Charpentier commented on this: “M. D.-E. Ingelbrecht [conductor] led this ballet with his usual intelligence and vigor. The task was not easy because of the unbalanced material of the orchestra. With similar proportions, the strings were hardly heard and [were heard] not at all as soon as the winds and the brass played at full breath.”\(^7\) Another reviewer finds the same problem, but blames the size of the company’s orchestra, rather than the score itself: “The orchestration often lacks balance: the strings were muffled by the sounds of the brass and the noise of the percussion. But it seemed that this fault was more attributable to the make up of the Ballets Suédois orchestra whose quartet [string section] is truly not lush enough for Mlle Tailleferre’s polyphonic conception…”\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Charpentier and Levinson, “Au theatre des Champs-Elysées.” “M D.-E. Ingelbrecht conduisit ce ballet avec son intelligence et sa vigueur habituelles. La tâche n’était pas aisée à cause du déséquilibre matériel de l’orchestre. Avec de semblables proportions, les cordes ne s’entendent guère et même plus du tout, dès que les vents et les cuivres jouent à plein souffle.”

Perceiving Femininity

Moving outward from the score to consider the whole ballet, the most obvious and important trend saturating the critical literature is gendered rhetoric and observations and opinions about Tailleferre and Perdriat as female composers and artists. Few reviews, if any, refrain from invoking these strategies to describe the ballet. Thorough discussion of these trends is central to an understanding of the ballet’s long-term fate beyond these reviews of the 1920s.

Before I address gender in reviews of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*, I want to contextualize the issue by summarizing Marcia Citron’s work on reception theory from a feminist musicological perspective. While part of Citron’s chapter outlines the many pitfalls of reception, she sees its study as integral to a holistic understanding of music: “Reception is a crucial element in the dynamics of culture and forms a fundamental part of any understanding of music as social practice.” To this end, the value of a review changes over time. Initially, it is directly useful to and reflective of its readers; over time, it either loses its value entirely, or it becomes a historical document. It is with this understanding of the importance of reception as a historical document reflecting broader social and cultural issues that I rely on reviews so heavily in my research.

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10 Ibid., 170. Throughout her chapter, Citron also cautions as to the limits of reception studies. She warns that reception is limited to professional texts about public-sphere music making: the domains of men. Non-professional, unpublished reception certainly exists, but it is “ephemeral” and therefore difficult to quantify. Similarly, private-sphere music making exists, but the lack of professional reception to document it “reinforces the lowly position that these activities occupy on the hierarchy of musical value” (187). Therefore, “reliance on formal reception for how music has been received represents a partial view of actual practice” (189).
In detailing Citron’s feminist analysis of musical reception, I note that my own division of response (interspersed throughout the previous chapter) and reception (addressed in this chapter) reflects similar categories used by Citron and by other literary theorists. Response theory focuses on individual evaluations of musical works, largely outside of cultural and historical contexts. Thus reviewers’ descriptions or localized opinions of musical works and their elements fall into this category. Reception theory, on the other hand, is concerned with a sort of collective response that reflects aesthetic, cultural, and historical trends and judgments. For Citron, the main power of reception is its simultaneous reflection and control of “cultural metaphors.” Her example shows nineteenth-century reception establishing and perpetuating preferences for the grand scale (be it in music or colonialism). She elaborates, finding that reception forms a discipline in and of itself:

Formal reception creates meaning in each review or essay that is written and published. But it also forms a body of interpretation with signifiers and signs that spill over the boundary of a given essay into another, and even beyond. The intertextuality means that reviews make semiotic even if not literal reference to each other and to other pieces and composers. This intertextuality means that specific words come to have implicit meanings based on long-standing preconceptions:

The cultural meanings implied by the signifier Beethoven, for example, connote high quality, genius, and respect. The use of his name in criticism suggests a level to be aspired to and a realm of Serious Art and Deep Meaning. Intertextuality also operates on other aspects of musical practice. For

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11 See Ibid., 165-166 for an elaboration.
12 Ibid., 168.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 179.
example...the use of the word “feminine” around 1900 signified a separate and lesser kind of music.\textsuperscript{15}

Along similar lines, Citron describes critics as powerful: their professional status and their ability to reach large audiences situates them as tastemakers and as having the ability to “‘make or break’ a composer, work, or performer.”\textsuperscript{16} As such, reviews and reviewers “categorize:”

First, a review implies that the work belongs to an important category, for it is worthy of being discussed in print. Second, a review might impose categories on the work or the composer, be they in terms of genre, function, or style. A review summarizes the expectations of the audience and shapes them at the same time. It affirms associations between the respondents and the performance, including site, class, and gender. A review also sets a moral tone that confers status on the musical experience under consideration and the individual readers of the review.\textsuperscript{17}

The implications of reception for female composers take several forms (only those pertinent to my discussion are mentioned here). First, “the authority vested in the male critic has implications for women composers, who may find themselves objectified by the patriarchal subjectivity of the critic.”\textsuperscript{18} The female composer seeks “legitimation” from the patriarchal critic. Second, the mere knowledge of a female composer “modifies how a work will be received.”\textsuperscript{19} Informed by historical, cultural, and social constructions, critics have certain preconceptions regarding women’s abilities to compose and their musical styles and will “hear” their preconceptions regardless of whether or not they actually exist. Third, originality is a “paradigm” of

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. (capitalization original).
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 180.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 168.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 182.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 184.
reception, marking a composer’s individuality and talent in relation to a growing (and presumably homogeneous) middle class. This preference for originality is problematic for women who are raised to value “relationship and connectedness” rather than the isolation of originality.\(^{20}\) This leads to a double bind for women: “…male reviewers criticized women on the one hand for being too feminine in their music and not meeting male qualitative standards, and on the other for trying to be too masculine and thereby abandoning their natural feminine sweetness and charm.”\(^{21}\)

Taking Citron’s theories into account, I return to my own analysis of the reception of Tailleferre’s *Le marchand d’oiseaux*. Before turning to patterns in the reception, I note the sheer number of reviews of the ballet, picking up on Citron’s idea that review alone (be it negative or positive) indicates that the work has a certain value. My own collection of reviews of *Le marchand d’oiseaux* numbers just over one hundred, though it is not exhaustive because of limits of time. That the ballet was reviewed so heavily alone gives a certain merit to the work – that is, it indicates the work’s perceived significance or value at the time. But as my analysis shows, this merit is undercut in many accounts by the language of various reviewers.

As already mentioned, reviewers relied heavily on gendered rhetoric – gendered feminine rhetoric – to describe *Le marchand d’oiseaux*. This rhetoric takes two main forms, and their employment by reviewers is practically universal. The first of the two gendered feminine rhetorical types involves direct comment on the sex of the artists. Sometimes reviewers stop here, sometimes they use this as the basis for

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 186.

further comment on the artists’ intentions. The second of the two gendered feminine rhetorical types involves language that indirectly implies femininity in the work. In this case, reviewers use words – usually adjectives – that reflect expectations about women’s character traits and transfer such expectations to their art. Here, I detail occurrences of each type of rhetoric.

Undoubtedly, *Le marchand d’oiseaux*’s two female creators made the work a novelty in the ballet world. Satie scholar Ornella Volta recently proclaimed that this was the first ballet conceived by women, something that, if true, certainly warranted recognition then and still does now. Reviewers highlighted this, even using it as a selling point for their article. One author, for example, titles his very brief review of the piece, “For Feminists,” (“Pour les feministes”) and writes: “Here is something that will certainly please feminists, who will not fail to applaud the *Marchand d’oiseaux*, as much for its performance as for its authors.” His choice of “feminists” rather than “women” is curious: either he is simply conflating the two, or he truly believes that the ballet is intended for or best suited to feminists. Regardless, his review of the work targets a certain audience, suggesting that he feels the work is only suited to a subsection of the population. Another reviewer directed his opinion to a particular audience. He saw Perdriat and Tailleferre as exemplary women, to whom other young

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23 Jean de Merry, “Pour les feministes,” Éclair (24 May 1923). “Voilà qui vraisemblablement fera plaisir aux féministes, qui ne manqueront pas d’applaudir le *Marchand d’oiseaux*, tant pour son interprétation que pour ses auteurs.”
women should aspire: “And voila! Young post-war women take note.”24 Do as they
do, he says, making something of a statement about women’s rights to be involved in
the creative arts or in professional pursuits. But he speaks only to his female readers;
Perdriat and Tailleferre are not suitable models for his male readers. Other
recognitions of the sex of the ballet’s two authors are less direct in their
acknowledgements. One introduces the ballet as “a double feminine collaboration;”25
another recognizes the novelty: “We have here an excessively curious work, this new
ballet, owing to the collaboration of two women and where the roles for men are
reduced to a strict minimum…”26

For several reviewers, the ballet offered an example of women amusing and
occupying themselves, rather than engaging in serious art. For one reviewer, the
amusement enjoyed by the artists was simply passed on to the audience: “…the two
young authoresses…were probably as amused by the making of this gay spectacle as
much as we were to watch it.”27 Another presents the work almost as a glimpse into
women’s activities: “[The] charming pastime of two young women whose imagination
is full of vivacity and freshness.”28 But for other reviewers, these amusements

24 Lapommeraye, “La semaine musicale.” “Eh voilà! jeunes filles d’après-guerre prenez modèle.”
25 Jean Poueigh, “Théatre des Champs-Élysées: les ballets suédois,” La rampe (3 June 1923). Book 13,
CD II, 13-99, “une double collaboration féminine.”
une oeuvre excessivement curieuse que ce nouveau ballet dû à la collaboration de deux femmes et où
les rôles d’hommes sont réduits au strict minimum…”
27 Brunel, “Répetition générale au Theatre des Champs-Élysées.” “…les deux jeunes authoresses…se
sont probablement amusées à la confection de ce gai spectacle autant que nous-mêmes a le regarder.”
13, CD II, 13-95-01, 13-95-02. “Récréation charmante de deux jeunes femmes dont l’imagination est
pleine de vivacité et de fraîcheur.”
reflected women’s superficiality. Charles Tenroc’s mixed review implies that women are simply large girls who never grow out of wanting to play with dolls:

[A] work by women all full of sweetness, produced by two young women of refined taste who, having nothing better to do, amused themselves by dressing up their dolls. Mlle Perdriat and Mlle G. Tailleferre were “trained” for this on the stage! The first made the mannequins and assembled the rags: two sisters spun with the mentality of marionettes.29

If Tenroc interprets the ballet as women playing with dolls, then Levinson similarly views it as a game of make-believe, where the women imagine what birds think: “Mlle Perdriat (does she not have herself a name that tells of downy and chirping?) wanted to realize in the theatre one of the gracious and short ideas that germinate in a pretty bird’s head.”30 Another reviewer agrees that the ballet is merely superficially appealing, and finds this resulting not from child’s play but from women’s weakness for trends:

[The ballet] is an amusement and nothing else. … One could say that the instrumentation is a bit heavy for such a slender subject. This is accurate; but this heaviness is not a blunder: it is the fashion and you know that women often sacrifice everything for fashion…31

Common to all reviews of the ballet is a second type of gendered rhetoric, this one seeing reviewers adopt text that classifies the work as feminine by association


30 Charpentier and Levinson, “Au theater des Champs-Elysées.” “Mlle Perdriat (ne porte-t-elle pas elle-même un nom que l’on dirait duveté et pépiant?) a voulu réaliser au théâtre une de ces idées gracieuses et courtes qui germent dans une jolie tête d’oiseau.”

31 Sosthène, “Mlle Tailleferre et Casella,” *Le petit marseillais* (16 March 1925). Book 14, CD III, 14-73 (final ellipses original). “C’est un amusement et pas autre chose. … On pourra dire que l’instrumentation est un peu lourde pour un si mince sujet. Ceci est exact; mais cette lourdeur n’est pas une maladresse: c’est la mode, et vous savez que les femmes sacrifient souvent tout pour la mode...”
with traits expected of women. Of the following list of words appearing in reviews, most are found numerous times in one form or another: captivating, charming, dainty, delicate, delicious, easy, elegant, fresh, gentle, graceful, gracious, light, naïve, natural, pleasant, pretty, seductive, sensitive, sensual, simple, smooth, supple, voluptuous, warm. Such words appear in so many of the reviews that I have already quoted, making it redundant to isolate specific occurrences here. Undoubtedly, though, these trends in the reception of *Le marchand d’oiseaux* reflect general patterns in the reception of music by female composers. As Citron expects, reviewers of the ballet relied on their preconceptions about women to describe the work.

**Comparing Tailleferre’s Score to Les Six; and, In Her Own Words**

Turning back to the ballet’s music, I want to elucidate another approach that many critics took to explain Tailleferre’s style. In this case, reviewers situated the ballet in relationship to *Les Six*, the context in which Parisian audiences best knew Tailleferre and her music. Critics who referred to Tailleferre’s membership in the group universally viewed the ballet as different from and better than both her work as a member of *Les Six* and the group’s music and aesthetic outlook. One reviewer’s brief mention of *Les Six* seems almost intended to pacify his readers who might automatically ignore the ballet based on its composer and her associations: “The music is not at all aggressive, in spite of the fact that the musician started with the group of Six.”

An American reviewer writes (of the early Parisian performances): “Mlle. Germaine Taillefer [sic], who belongs to the group of Six – the revolutionaries who

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32 Poueigh, “Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.” “La musique n’en est nullement agressive, bien que la musicienne fasse partie du groupe des ‘six’.”
were to reform the laws of harmony – seems to have suddenly changed her mind.”

This same reviewer did, however, see remnants of *Les Six* in Tailleferre’s noisy orchestration, perhaps explaining why other critics found this aspect of Tailleferre’s music thorny: “Not to appear too unfaithful to her past Mlle. Taillefer [sic] lets herself go as far as a little rasping of string instruments and a little admixture of noisy brass.”

Another reviewer is more direct in his establishing this as a break from *Les Six*, finding that with the ballet Tailleferre found her true voice: “…here in the *Marchand d’oiseaux*… Mlle Tailleferre finally proved to be who she is… In reality Mlle Tailleferre’s debut is dated from the *Marchand d’oiseaux*. It is not dazzling. It is honorable. To work, now!”

A fourth reviewer sees *Les Six* as both beneficial and detrimental to Tailleferre’s career. On one hand, the group brought her attention that she would otherwise not have received, but on the other hand, she suffered undeservedly from negative attitudes towards the group’s style:

The name Mlle Tailleferre was linked before now to the more or less happy attempts of five young musicians with whom she had in common without doubt a certain taste for novelty, a certain desire for reacting against the impressionist formulas recognized as outdated.

But this attachment to the group of Six, after having had the benefit of assuring an appreciable notoriety, finished by comprising all of the inconveniences of systematic classifications. Mlle Tailleferre carried not at all the instinct toward a cruel and brutal music. The charm, a certain amiable and sweet grace are the very natural privilege of her very feminine, demure temperament.

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34 Ibid.

Just as well we gladly forget that we know the previous production of this young musician, her *Sonata*, her *Ballade*, to retain of her from now on only her charming score of the *Marchand d’oiseaux*…

This opinion that *Le marchand d’oiseaux* represented changes in Tailleferre’s compositional style – changes showing progression, improvement, individuality – and a clear dismissal of many of the seemingly shared aesthetics of *Les Six* was unsettling to Tailleferre. She addressed critics herself in an article published by *L’intransigeant* on 3 June 1923, just nine days after the premiere of her ballet. The swiftness of Tailleferre’s reaction indicates a sense of urgency on her part to assert her intentions with the ballet’s score. The title of her article alone, “Some Words by One of the Six,” though seemingly innocuous, betrays her desire to maintain alliances with her *Les Six* colleagues. Understated, insightful, and challenging, Tailleferre’s article is worth citing in its entirety:

Fitting scrupulously the musical text to the temperament of my diverse characters; carving out for them a well-arranged melodic theme; outlining at one point the parody of a romantic waltz à la Chopin, and at another that of all the romantic waltzes, even the Viennese; and, amusing myself, in a word, in making allusion to certain schools, notably those of the eighteenth century with their little light and pompous ballets, twinkling with good humor: here these were, in truth, my intentions in writing *Le Marchand d’Oiseaux*, a bagatelle composed in a month, in which all the influences that people have wanted to find are only intended, premeditated allusions.

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36 Sordet, [Review of *Le marchand d’oiseaux*]. “Le nom de Mlle Tailleferre était lié jusqu’ici aux essais plus ou moins heureux de cinq jeunes musiciens avec lesquels elle n’a de commun sans doute qu’un certain goût pour la nouveauté, un certain désir de réagir contre les formules impressionistes reconnues périmées. Mais ce rattachement au groupe des Six, après avoir eu l’avantage de lui assurer une appreciable notoriété, finissait par comporter tous les inconvénients des classifications systématiques. Mlle Tailleferre n’est nullement portée d’instinct vers une musique cruelle et brutale. Le charme, une certaine grâce aimable et douce sont l’apanage tout naturel de son tempérament demeuré très féminin. Aussi bien oublierons-nous volontiers ce que nous connaissons de la production antérieure de cette jeune musicienne, sa *Sonate*, sa *Ballade*, pour ne retenir d’elle désormais que sa charmante partition du *Marchand d’oiseaux*…”
I could have chosen just as well the impressionists, the northerners, or the Italians; in truth, did I not have the right to take innocent pleasure in these writing games?

If I find it expedient to make this little declaration, it is because the welcome that was allotted by the critics pleased me, surprised me, and frightened me all at the same time.

In truth, I am happy that people would want to remark, thanks to the talent of Carina Ari and to the expertise of M. Inghelbrecht, on this short and so hastily conceived work; I conclude – why would I not say it – that young composers have, today, an extraordinary opportunity that they did not possess before the war.

It is very rare that an artist who has a little bit of talent does not come, today, to benefit from the ease with which he is accorded so many symphonic concerts and musical ensembles. This consoles me in thinking that he must no longer have the example of unsung geniuses: of these gaunt and despondent composers who feverishly scribble their ruled paper in the cold and classic attic room.

Here is what I have to say. This is, as one might see it, neither a program, nor a profession of belief. If the limited public who already knew my works had believed to see, in this little ballet, some influences – a quiet wisdom, a return towards strict discipline – the public finds here my sentiments, or if it prefers, my justification. Being very attached, recently, to the “musique ancienne,” I colored, here and there, my little work with unobtrusive tones, taken from old palettes, without believing for one second in an evolution of my disposition and of my instincts.

Then, schools, niches, and methods, such was always the only link that had, thus far, closely united the “six” of which, with Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc, Satie [sic], and Auric, I am a part.

Les “six”! Still a school, will you say? No. Six good friends, very simply.37

The final sentence of her article explains why Tailleferre would reject any notion that her ballet score represents a clear shift away from the styles of her colleagues: they are not just colleagues, but friends – she would not reject her friends. Perhaps it is this

element that most surprised her about the critical responses to her ballet score. If critics saw her ballet as a turning away from *Les Six*, then they did not understand what *Les Six* was.

Tailleferre’s article has one principal goal: to explain the musical choices for her ballet score and to emphasize her conscious agency in making her choices. First, she explains that she wanted music that suited each individual character, and music that had a focus on melody. Second, she sought to make allusions to specific musical styles, periods, and composers both for their particular features and for the amusement these references brought her. Third, she explains her choices as intentional, and she refutes the idea that they signify a progression in her style towards something more suited to her individual aesthetic, rather than that shared with her *Les Six* colleagues. Thus, she explains her score as allusion, not evolution.

But beyond Tailleferre’s own goal with this article, she conveys another strong message to her reader. The language that she uses to describe her ballet and her efforts in composing it diminish its scope and significance and attribute its success to people other than herself. Twice she notes how quickly the score was written; she notes its short length; she describes it as a bagatelle, a word that, aside from its musical definition, implies something of little value, and in a musical context, implies something light and unassuming. Additionally, perhaps marking an important public expression of her so-called “excessive modesty,” as explained already in chapter two, she describes her compositional efforts as a game, as self-amusement. Though she does this to convey to her reader the consciousness with which she made her musical choices, this language suggests an insincerity regarding composing generally.
Furthermore, in describing her article as an expression of “sentiments” or as a “justification,” and not a “program” or a “profession of belief,” she undervalues both her music and her description of it. A “program” is something formal, something expressing compositional planning, but Tailleferre’s compositional efforts were spawned, according to her, out of mere amusement, and are therefore unworthy of a formal program. Similarly, a work whose mere existence needs justification hardly warrants alignment with a “belief” system; and anyway, how could she systematize her “beliefs” if this piece was merely a game, an amusement. This perhaps explains why she made no attempt to situate her work within broader French neoclassicist trends. Finally, Tailleferre credits Carina Ari (who danced the role of the older sister) and conductor Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht for the success of her work, downplaying her own achievements and those of Perdriat and Börlin.

Perhaps the most difficult element of Tailleferre’s article to analyze is the rejection of the idea of the struggling artist. It is not immediately apparent (to me, at least) how this issue is even relevant to the rest of her article. The purpose it serves, however, given her particular wording, does not do much to advocate for her compositional abilities. She says, essentially, that one needs only “a little bit of talent” to achieve any success in composition, since so many concert opportunities are available to young composers. While she undoubtedly intends her words to praise this situation as preferable over the vision of the eternally struggling artist, this romantic notion of struggle signifying artistic greatness is so ingrained that her effort to avoid it only weakens her own standing as an artist. While she finds consolation in the
newfound support for artists, she also seems to be conceding that she is not and could not be considered an “unsung genius.”

As a whole, Tailleferre’s article reflects many of the issues that Citron raised with respect to the reception of female composers. That Tailleferre responded to critics at all with her article indicates that she felt somehow undeserving of certain aspects of their response and that their acceptance and legitimation of her as a composer was important to her and her career. Additionally, in downplaying her responsibility for the work – instead crediting her colleagues – Tailleferre situates herself as one in a larger community, thereby nurturing relationships rather than boasting of her own individual achievements. Finally, by both downplaying and systematizing her compositional abilities, she distances herself from the model of the isolated male genius (while simultaneously championing his position), thereby passively refuting any implication that she might be attempting to be a serious – male – composer.

In essence, Tailleferre’s article is a performance of femininity. She positions herself firmly within accepted positions for women – hobbyist, nurturer, community member, and friend – and she eschews positions associated with men – creator, intellectual, and genius. In wanting to defend her musical choices, she negotiates a precarious position where too strong a defense could work against her. By situating herself and her compositional approach firmly within accepted feminine roles, Tailleferre finds perhaps the only option for defending herself with any possibility of success.
Performing Femininity

Tailleferre’s article is not the only instance of performing femininity – the ballet itself can be interpreted similarly in several ways. For example, reviewers who saw the ballet positively as a gesture of Tailleferre’s independence from Les Six may have done so because its traditional and feminine character presented a stark contrast, to them, from the masculinity of the modernist avant garde associated with the group. This correlation of traditional with feminine extends to other aspects of the ballet, as is evident by returning to Perdriat’s contributions to the work. Beyond the near-all-women cast, though, the fairy-tale scenario presents a similar conflation of femininity and tradition as with Tailleferre’s score.

Perdriat’s costume sketches for the work present perhaps clearer instances of femininity in the ballet. I wrote already in my previous chapter of a masculinization of ballet, and I suggested that Perdriat refeminizes ballet by employing full skirts and corseted tops. Because her costume choices directly counter trends of the period, Perdriat’s contributions to the ballet can be interpreted as performing femininity. If the ballet is understood in conjunction with her artistic style generally, her repetition of a perversely naïve female figure supports an interpretation of Perdriat as cultivating a deliberately feminine style. Explaining Perdriat’s feminine style is difficult without more details of her life and career. However, my understanding of Perdriat, based on the little that is available to me, reflects remarkable similarities with her contemporary, Marie Laurencin (1883-1956). Because significantly more information and scholarship on Laurencin is available, she is well suited as a model for my own discussion of Perdriat’s femininity.
Despite the decade between them (Perdriat was born in 1894), Laurencin and Perdriat share much in common in terms of their artistic styles and choices and their critical and scholarly receptions. Though Laurencin is described as a particularly illusive figure, she has in fact been the focus of relatively much more scholarly attention than Perdriat. My discussion here comes from Elizabeth Louise Kahn’s 2003 feminist and lesbian analysis of Laurencin’s art and life. Laurencin was a Parisian artist who ran with Picasso, Apollinaire (her one-time husband), Poulenc, Cocteau (he painted her portrait in 1921), and the like. Cocteau in fact immortalized a link between Laurencin and Tailleferre when he described the latter as “a Marie Laurencin for the ear,” referring perhaps to similarities in their styles or perhaps to their stations as women operating in largely male-dominated circles. Other prominent 1920s critics such as Roland-Manuel and Paul Rosenfeld have also made comparisons between Tailleferre and Laurencin, as have Tailleferre’s colleagues, Satie and Poulenc.

Laurencin’s styles and artistic choices are uncanny in their similarities to Perdriat. Laurencin predominantly drew women, often with similar facial features that reflect her own. Furthermore, her figures have long been described as having a sort of dualism that is simultaneously captivating and unsettling. Kahn quotes this description of figures that are “experienced and childish, irritating, seductive, created for the joy

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38 Elizabeth Louise Kahn, Marie Laurencin: Une Femme Inadaptée in Feminist Histories of Art (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), xvii.

39 This phrase is attributed to Cocteau in multiple places, especially online, though I cannot find any indication of the original source. The following is the most reliable secondary source to reproduce Cocteau’s words: Arthur Hoérée, “Tailleferre, Germaine,” The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 18, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan, 1980), 527-528.

and the torment of men.”

Apollinaire championed her work, always emphasizing its feminine qualities and her understanding of a fundamental difference between men and women. Kahn herself describes Laurencin as tempering modernity in her works: “Simultaneously, Laurencin counters the modernist look of her subjects by situating them in the traditional spaces of a romanticized or domesticated past – a park, a quiet unobtrusive interior, a universalized lost Arcadia.” Combined, these stylistic features led to her being described both during her life and after as “the ultra-femme, quintessential feminine femme peintre.”

Laurencin’s feminine style was popular during her lifetime, especially in the 1910s and 1920s. But since then, feminist scholars have cast her as an outsider precisely because of her feminine style, now interpreted as unfeminist. Kahn, however, reconsiders Laurencin, calling her “une femme inadaptée,” or “an unfit feminist,” explaining that her feminine style was not a rejection of feminism, but a personal search for identity. Kahn explains her artistic style: “Laurencin’s strategies have disturbed and troubled feminist art historians because of her seeming compliance with bourgeois codes for femininity.” But Kahn sees Laurencin’s style and her choices of subjects – including many self portraits and pairings of sisters – as helping to “negotiate her multiple and possibly conflicting identities,” including her sexuality.

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42 Kahn, Marie Laurencin, 44.
43 Ibid., 144.
44 Ibid., xxi.
45 Ibid., 79.
46 These terms are found throughout Kahn’s book.
47 Ibid., 102.
and her position within a male-dominated artistic world.\textsuperscript{48} Essentially, Kahn sees Laurencin’s style as simultaneously conforming to stereotypes about women and their artistic style and exploring a lesbian identity ostensibly outside of societal norms. Kahn describes the sisters of Laurencin’s paintings as having faces similar to her own self-portraits.

Most of these females bear the facial characteristics of the artist herself; they perform their pleasures not as lesbian lovers but as a multiple display of Laurencin’s narcissistic obsession. Thus the pictures are relieved of erotic charge, and the critic, the collector and the historian, male or female, can safely dismiss the contentious content of these works. For my reading, however, the Laurencin woman, with all of her floating identities and auras, is just one more indication of the artist’s intent to both disguise and uncover her lesbian desires.\textsuperscript{49}

Kahn finds that this double reading of Laurencin’s women worked to her benefit: then and now, critics and historians have been oblivious to the potentially “subversive content” of her works.\textsuperscript{50}

The striking similarities between Laurencin’s and Perdriat’s women suggest that Kahn’s reading of Laurencin’s style could be appropriately transferred to Perdriat’s. Her female subjects, traditional costume choices, alluring figures, and resemblances to self-portraits could reflect an exploration of her own identity and sexuality and/or an effort to cultivate a style that does not put her in the isolating position of an avant-garde woman. Thus, Perdriat’s style reflects a (sub)conscious effort to rely on femininity to define her style and to make it relevant and appealing both to herself and to her audience. Mary Louise Roberts’s discussion of a feminine

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 146.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 149.
feminism among professional women in the pre- and post-WWI eras, as I described in chapter one, seems very much applicable here.

I am not the only person to see similarities between Perdriat’s and Laurencin’s artistic styles. León Pacheco, whom I relied on in my previous chapter for a description of Perdriat’s style, likened the two artists and saw Laurencin as ushering in an era of femininity in art:

Amidst Paris’s new generations, an essentially feminine art – one for which the ideologies of Mme. Marie Laurencin are responsible – has already been defined. That is because Marie Laurencin has been the muse of avant-garde art. What is more, she has been the muse of cubism. She has introduced the sentiment of the feminine into all of modern art’s conquests, into all of its extravagancies and into all of its solid truths, outlining it in a way that was, until recently, unbeknownst to us: she has created, with the full rightfulness of life, the plastic art of women, with its sensibility, with its complexities, with its own charm. Once the authority of the female was conquered in the arts, expressing it was an easy feat. Among Paris’s female painters – a group for whom the human principle of beauty constitutes an indispensable element – Hélène Perdriat and Irène Lagut have been able to give a personal note to all of Marie Laurencin’s contributions.51

Pacheco seems to establish an artistic school out of these three female painters and their feminine style, suggesting a popularity and influence in the 1920s that is entirely not in keeping with their lack of longevity, their omission from artistic canons. He also connects the feminine and the modern, finding that Laurencin and Perdriat somehow bridge the two.

51 León Pacheco, “Hélène Perdriat y la sensibilidad de la pintura femenina,” Parísina (20 May 1926): 27. Book 11, CD III, 11-114. Translation by Mireya Obregon. “Entre las nuevas generaciones de París se ha definido ya un arte esencialmente femenino, del que son responsables las ideologías de Mme. Marie Laurencin. Porque Marie Laurencin ha sido la musa del arte de vanguardia. Es más: ha sido la musa del cubismo. Ha traído, a todas las conquistas del arte moderno, a todas sus extravagancias y a todas sus sólidas verdades, el sentimiento de la femenino, delinéandolo de manera hasta hace poco desconocida: ha creado, con los plenos derechos de la existencia, el arte plástico de la mujer, con su sensibilidad, con sus complicaciones, con sus encantos propios. Una vez conquistada esta autoridad femenina en el arte, su expresion fué fácil. Entre las pintoras de París, para las que el principio humano de belleza es un elemento indispensable, Hélène Perdriat e Irène Lagut han logrado dar una nota personal a todos los aportes de Marie Laurencin.”
Popular Modernism

Describing Perdrière’s style as performing femininity is both apt and satisfactory, but applying this explanation to *Le marchand d’oiseaux* is only partially fitting, as it does not so obviously describe Tailleferre’s music. For a more holistic categorization of the ballet, embodying all of its parts, I suggest the category of popular modernism. In the final two sections of the chapter, I explain *Le Marchand d’oiseaux* as a popular modernist ballet. In doing so, I uncover popular modernism as a concept that offers a more nuanced view of artistic trends in the 1920s. Thus, finally, I use the term and *Le marchand d’oiseaux* to expand scholarly understanding of ballet in 1920s Paris.

Popular modernism, in my conception of the term, explains *Le marchand d’oiseaux* as a ballet that reflects some avant-garde trends of its time, but tempers them with elements of more traditional music, art, and fashion in order to appeal to mass audiences. If modernist and popular are antithetical terms, in combination they reflect a sort of middle ground where the constant bite of the avant garde becomes a playful nibble and the perceived blandness of the popular is spiced up. As a popular work – with ninety-five performances and critical acclaim – reflecting modernist trends – dissonant harmonies, juxtaposed musical styles, angular and bold costumes – *Le marchand d’oiseaux* is popular modernism.

Popular modernism does more than account for the initial popularity of the ballet and its combination of traditional and modern elements, as is evident in scholarship on the concept with regards to non-musical arts (I have thus far found no one who applies this concept directly to music). As theorized by Elizabeth Majerus in
her contribution to the two-volume 2007 anthology, *Modernism*, the term “popular modernism” explains that which high modernism admonishes, namely women and/or femininity and tradition.\(^5\) Though Majerus uses magazines of the era – their commercial, artistic, and literary content – to illustrate her points, her argument is readily transferred to other art and popular culture of the era.

Majerus establishes high modernism as antitraditional and antifeminine.\(^5\) Because of this – well, put positively, because of high modernism’s focus on innovation and masculinity – it has dominated historical narratives. But Majerus finds that high modernism does not account for all modernism; in fact, high modernism reflects only a minority of art and culture from the period. Alternately, many modernist works and much in modernist culture incorporated traditional and feminine elements, especially in popular contexts, hence the term “popular modernism.” Where high modernism was often actively misogynistic, popular modernism “often embraced women and women’s culture because it had much to gain from doing so.”\(^5\)

Modernism influenced popular culture, and popular culture influenced modernism; the resulting popular modernism was “inclusive rather than exclusive” in that it did not reject the past or mass culture. “This more inclusive version of modernism created unusual opportunities for a wide array of women artists and women readers, since much of the art and culture that high modernism defined itself against was associated

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\(^5\) Though not necessary to repeat here, she provides various and multiple quotations to support this claim.

\(^5\) Ibid., 619. The “gain” is presumably commercial and monetary success.
with a feminized mass culture or with past traditions that were similarly feminized."\(^{55}\)

As both artists and consumers, women were central to this phenomenon of synthesizing modernism with “older forms of culture.”\(^{56}\) Magazines, as Majerus uses for her example, featured nineteenth- and twentieth-century elements side-by-side, “perceiving no contradiction between them.”\(^{57}\) “In addition to their significance as popular venues for modernist art, criticism and ‘news,’ popular modernist magazines were unusual because they address their discussion of modernism to women readers and connected modernism with women artists.”\(^{58}\)

Remarkably appropriate for my research here, Majerus uses Marie Laurencin as one of her examples of a popular-modernist artist who was featured in the pages of *Vanity Fair*. On this subject, Majerus is worth quoting at length:

Marie Laurencin is another artist *Vanity Fair* took a particular interest and pride in, celebrating both the modernist and “feminine” elements of her work. …although she was influenced by cubism, Dadaism, and primitivism, most of her large body of work is seen as too feminine to fit neatly into any clearly modernist category. …Laurencin’s [femininity] has led to her continued neglect by many museums and departments of art history. Many of Laurencin’s paintings work in a soft palate and depict graceful women draped in gauzy costumes, often accompanied by large-eyed animals, qualities that for some modernist art critics limited her stature as a great artist. Despite their prettiness, however, Laurencin’s most pastel paintings are often striking and at times disturbing due to their haunted, alienated mood and the expressionistic anonymity of her portraits. … *Vanity Fair* embraced both Laurencin’s feminine and deviant qualities and gave her the great and quite uncommon honor of nominating her twice for its Hall of Fame (in November 1923 and September 1927). Although she often received attention as the mistress of Guillaume Apollinaire and an intimate of Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein, *Vanity Fair* lauded Laurencin on her own merits. Presenting her work as both feminine and experimental, the magazine emphasizes her “lightly feminine

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\(^{55}\) Ibid., 621.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 620, 622-623.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., 620.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 623.
grace” and the innovative and fantastic elements of her “essentially exclusive vision,” which “refuses to come to terms with reality” in paintings that “completely captivate a public habituated to realism.”

Laurencin’s feminine style was not out of place within popular culture, and this very facet of her style is what made her appealing and popular as it did not alienate her among the high-modernist elite. Majerus concludes her chapter by finding that popular modernism and its magazines “embraced various forms of ‘feminine’ culture and celebrated many different kinds of women. … Vanity Fair, along with a few other magazines that promoted modernism to a wide public, celebrated the New Woman, but not necessarily at the expense of the ‘old woman’.”

Though Majerus chose Laurencin for her example, recall from my previous chapter that Perdriat was featured in Vanity Fair, likely in a similar manner and certainly under the same auspices now defined as popular modernism. Applying Majerus’s widened explanation of popular modernism to Le marchand d’oiseaux heightens the applicability of the term to the ballet. If popular modernism represents a combination of feminine, traditional, modernist, and popular elements packaged by women for large audiences that consist largely of women, then the ballet fits all aspects of this definition. If Majerus uses Marie Laurencin and Pablo Picasso to epitomize the differences between popular and high modernism in the art world, then I posit Le marchand d’oiseaux and La création du monde as epitomizing the differences between popular and high modernism in the ballet world.

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59 Ibid., 628-629.
60 Ibid., 634.
61 Or L’homme et son désir, or Skating Rink, or Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel, or Relâche.
I like the term popular modernism because it presents an oxymoron, at least if one believes that popular and modern are in fact opposites. Susan C. Cook feels that these two terms and all that they represent have been positioned at opposite poles to the detriment of one – popular – and the benefit of the other – modern. In her 2001 article on the issue, Cook calls for banishing the popular/classical dichotomy that underlies musicology. Classical is Cook’s term, but modernist could easily be substituted, as Cook is establishing a dichotomy between so-called “high” and “low” arts. For her, this dichotomy hierarchizes Western art music (high) with popular musics like folk, jazz, and pop (low). But this hierarchy exists within Western art music itself, whereby innovation, a marker of modernism, is valued over widespread success, a marker of the popular. Because her article so clearly calls for that which popular modernism achieves, I offer several lengthy quotes:

The most troubling legacy of twentieth-century modernism perpetuated by twentieth-century scholars regardless of their historical foci has been the creation and maintenance of hierarchical – and largely fictitious – dichotomies of all kinds. One of the most fiercely believed in draws a distinction between “classical” and “popular,” or “serious” and “popular,” or “cultivated” and “vernacular.”

… What bothers me about our fictional categories like “popular” and “classical” is that they are set into tension with one another. They don’t simply exist as a pair of labels, resting comfortably side by side, but are almost always set up in inequitable relationships of power and prestige wherein “the popular” gives “the classical” its worth; the “classical” is worthwhile only if the “popular” is worthless. And the hierarchies keep replicating internally so that within the “classical” you uncover the further delineation of populars that can similarly be dismissed or discounted.

… Popular music is faddish, it’s common, it’s uneducated, it’s ingratiating, it is neither timeless nor transcendent, it’s tainted by the marketplace, it’s

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accessible, it’s not of the mind, rather it is the undervalued, and in this case often dancing, body. To use Naomi Schor’s imagery, popular music is the ornamental, excessive frippery – the ribbons and ruffles – of changing female fashion. Or to draw more graphically from Kristeva and Butler, popular music, in its otherness, is “the abject,” something that must be expelled by culture, left behind quite literally on the dung heap.

... I would like to see greater numbers of feminist musicologists engaged with the popular, wherever they find it, calling into question our musical categories of prestige and revealing them for what they are: feeble constructions. ... We need...to figure out how something was popular and on what grounds, and to explore what identifying it as popular meant then and, more importantly, means now.63

Popular modernism in its very name manages the questioning that Cook argues for so passionately. It collapses the hierarchy that has privileged one over the other. It legitimizes a revision of historical narratives that have perpetuated a hierarchy between popular and modern.64 It is from this position that I close my chapter and my work on Le marchand d’oiseaux by positing a revision of the historical narrative of ballet in 1920s Paris through the lens of popular modernism.

Revisiting and Revising Historical Narratives

I already outlined, at the beginning of the previous chapter, the reigning narrative of ballet of the late 1910s and early 1920s. Modernism is king and Satie’s Parade and Relâche, Milhaud’s La création du monde and L’homme et son désir, Honegger’s Skating Rink, and Les Six’s Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel represent his

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63 Ibid.

64 Cook has a word of warning in her article that is pertinent to the ballet. “A note of caution: ‘The popular’ is not paradise. It’s neither a safe place nor one presenting any fewer obstacles than any other terrain we could explore as feminists. Given the history of racism in the United States, for example, what we’ll likely uncover are musics that reinscribe a host of ‘othering’ practices all the more powerful because they were so widely available and accessible,” (144-145). Le marchand d’oiseaux is precisely one such work that presents an instance of “othering,” here with the race, age, and profession of the stranger who woos the older sister, as I addressed in the previous chapter.
Having established, though, that Tailleferre’s *Le marchand d’oiseaux* and other more accessible works by the Ballets Suédois were far more popular during the early 1920s, I complicated this narrative from the beginning. Now, understanding *Le marchand d’oiseaux* within a larger frame of popular modernism, I posit them – *Le marchand d’oiseaux* and popular modernism – as necessary to a full understanding of ballet in 1920s Paris. But in order to properly convince the reader of my revision to the historical narrative, I must (re)address several important scholars of this period.

Lynn Garafola has long established a multi-layered narrative of 1920s ballet from the viewpoint of the Ballets Russes. Her recognition of three dominant styles in the company’s œuvre accounts for more than high modernism as defining the period, adding necessary nuance to balletic and musicological narratives.65 Her categories of “retrospective classicism” and “choreographic neoclassicism” elucidate and legitimate classicizing trends in many of the company’s works.66 Retrospective classicism encompasses a conservative and nationalist alternative to modernist trends, where ballets and operas of the *grand siècle* of Louis XIV were revived, sometimes reorchestrated, and presented in an entirely traditional or classical aesthetic (without any modernization). Garafola’s second category, choreographic neoclassicism, legitimizes and categorizes women’s contributions to ballet. Garafola uses this term to explain the choreography of Bronislava Nijinska (1891-1972). Nijinska, Nijinsky’s sister, choreographed for the Ballets Russes in the 1920s, including *Les noces* (1923), *Les biches* (1924), and *Le train bleu* (1924). Garafola sees Nijinska reclassicizing

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66 These aesthetic categories are discussed throughout her chapter.
ballet by bringing back the pas de deux and by refocusing on the ballerina and refeminizing her with a return to pointe shoes.\textsuperscript{67} Nijinska’s style was not entirely classical, though, as the female form was often presented in an androgynous manner and as the settings, especially for \textit{Les biches} and \textit{Le train bleu}, were contemporary. But Garafola limits Nijinska’s position and influence by subjugating choreographic neoclassicism to other trends in high modernism. \textit{Les noces}, \textit{Les biches}, and \textit{Le train bleu} are primarily categorized as neoprimitivism (\textit{Les noces}) and “lifestyle modernism” (\textit{Les biches} and \textit{Le train bleu}) (to be discussed in a moment) and choreographic neoclassicism secondarily.\textsuperscript{68}

Garafola’s third category, and its recent adoption – over the other two – into musicological narratives, renarrows the focus of the era on high modernism. Garafola explains lifestyle modernism as being “associated with Jean Cocteau’s art of the sophisticated commonplace.”\textsuperscript{69} Where \textit{Parade} and \textit{Les mariés de la Tour Eiffel} privilege the more surreal aspects of Cocteau’s aesthetic, works like \textit{Les biches} and \textit{Le train bleu} reflect common experiences of Parisian life: a party and a day at the beach. Furthermore, Garafola explains Cocteau’s aesthetic principles – and \textit{Les biches} and \textit{Le train bleu} – as merging modern and elite, at the expense of tradition.\textsuperscript{70} Calling the ballets “deliciously modern” and categorizing them by their modern and contemporary

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\item \textsuperscript{67} Garafola, “Reconfiguring the Sexes,” in \textit{Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance} (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 186
\item \textsuperscript{68} Garafola, “The Twenties,” 134.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 98.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 99, 108.
\end{itemize}
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features, Garafola firmly entrenches them and lifestyle modernism under the umbrella of high modernism.

Richard Taruskin’s keen adoption of Garafola’s term and his subsequent focus on *Les biches* and *Le train bleu* brings productive nuance to the high modernist narrative. In fact, in his *Oxford History of Western Music* he addresses these ballets over the usual focus on the avant-garde works like Milhaud’s *La création du monde.* But with its focus still on high modernism, the term does not allow for a detailed explanation of the decidedly neoclassical scores of the ballets. In *Les biches* and *Le train bleu*, Poulenc and Milhaud respectively shed all vestiges of avant-garde, jazz, and Brazilian musics, which dominated their styles to this point. The case is made especially clear with Milhaud, as direct comparison can be made between ballets – *La création du monde, L’homme et son désir,* and *Le train bleu.* In fact, the scores for *Les biches* and *Le train bleu* present as many influences of and allusions to baroque, classical, and early romantic musical styles and composers as does Tailleferre’s score for *Le marchand d’oiseaux.*

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71 Ibid., 108.
73 *Les biches* offers a fascinating opportunity for comparison with *Le marchand d’oiseaux,* for both works have two female creators. I have already noted that Nijinska choreographed the work and Garafola has explained her traditional and re-feminizing choreography. Joining her and Poulenc as creators is none other than Marie Laurencin, who designed the sets and costumes, and whose feminine style I summarized Kahn as explaining at length. In addition to Garafola, other dance scholars view Laurencin’s and Nijinska’s creative efforts as juxtaposing femininity and androgyny, especially in the character of the Girl in Blue. Considering their similarities in creative teams and in feminine aesthetics, it might be especially interesting to consider why *Les biches,* and not *Le marchand d’oiseaux,* is included in ballietic and musicological narratives. For scholarship on gender and sexuality in *Les biches,* in addition to Garafola’s work, see Ramsay Burt, *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1995); Peter Stoneley, *A Queer History of the Ballet* (London: Routledge, 2007).
Mary Davis, in *Classic Chic*, adds further nuance to these narratives by linking modernist music of the 1920s with popular culture through magazines and fashion.\(^{74}\) Her book undeniably offers a new understanding of relationships between art music and popular culture, using the popular presses and their female readers as a means to expand the narrative.\(^{75}\) The limitation of her book, though, is that she continues to privilege composers and music associated with high modernism, focusing her attention on Stravinsky, Satie, Cocteau, and *Les Six*. Like Taruskin, she adopts Garafola’s lifestyle modernism, but does not question its appropriateness to Milhaud’s music of *Le train bleu*.

I want to posit popular modernism as offering a useful additional opportunity for understanding musical, artistic, and balletic aesthetics of this period. While lifestyle modernism offers productive nuance to a high modernist narrative of ballet, it does little to critique the exclusivity of the narrative itself. Popular modernism, though, with its concerns of commercial success, women, and gender questions the androcentrism of modernist narratives and offers wider and more inclusive opportunities for analyzing works from the period. Popular modernism makes a place for *Le marchand d’oiseaux*. Musicological narratives that privilege high modernism have long excluded *Le marchand d’oiseaux* and its female creators, Perdriat and Tailleferre, from scholarly and performing canons. Such exclusionary practices often still exist, permitting only narrow understandings of both canonical and non-canonical composers and their works alike. *Le marchand d’oiseaux* offers a strategic position  

\(^{75}\) Davis, *Classic Chic*, 1-2.
from which to critique musicological hierarchies and to offer a more inclusive alternative. Tailleferre’s position as a member of Les Six, as a modernist insider, as a known composer, allows me to uncover the ballet and situate it in relation to canonical composers and their works without having the added task of having to uncover and situate her. Similarly, her ballet’s position within the oeuvre of the Ballets Suédois allows me to situate it within a known company with rich archival resources without having to start from scratch. For these reasons, Le marchand d’oiseaux is perhaps the best ballet to expand the outdated, high-modernist narrative with the inclusive narrative possibilities of popular modernism. Now that the narrative possibilities have been expanded, the Ballets Suédois, the Ballets Russes, and other known and unknown companies, composers, artists, and performers offer a wealth of opportunities for scholars to contribute to this evolving story of ballet in 1920s Paris. Recall those other now largely unknown works on the list of the Ballets Suédois’ ten most-performed ballets – my work on Le marchand d’oiseaux is only the beginning.
“A Fit of Madness:” Shooting, Miscarriage, Divorce

During the summer of 1929, Tailleferre endured the unimaginable. Childless still at the age of thirty-seven and married to her first husband, New York caricaturist Ralph Barton (1891-1931), for two-and-a-half years – enduring his frequent trips back to the US, his jealousy of her career, and his tumultuous temperament – Tailleferre became pregnant. After learning the news, her mentally unstable husband tried to shoot her in the stomach in order to kill the fetus. Recounting the bizarre events in her 1970s memoir, Tailleferre describes hearing gunfire as she hid near their home in southern France:

In effect, Barton had become terribly nervous and, on the other hand, loving a ravishing compatriot, so much that his existence in France had become intolerable.1 One spring evening, having learned that I was pregnant, he took suddenly to a fit of madness and asked me abruptly to agree to him firing a gunshot at my stomach in order to kill the child. He vowed that it would be nothing, that I would be treated afterwards without pain! ... To my horror, he became more and more threatening; he had visibly lost all reason. My only duty was to my safety. I hid in the shrubbery, because this place was deserted and there were no neighbors. I had expected no help; I heard shots. I reached in time the Grand Hôtel de Sanary where one of Ralph’s friends took me under his protection.2

This chapter will appear in a slightly altered form in Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture 15 (2011) published by the University of Nebraska Press.

1 Barton had suffered from various anxiety and nervousness issues, largely because of his long-running obsession with his third wife, Carlotta Monterey. My interpretation of this passage in Tailleferre’s memoir is that the “ravishing compatriot” to whom Tailleferre refers is Monterey. Barton’s biographer, however, interprets this passage as suggesting that Barton was actually having an affair with another woman, something that may be true, though I have not seen any proof. In any case, Barton was not devoted to Tailleferre alone. See Bruce Kellner, The Last Dandy: Ralph Barton, American Artist 1891-1931 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 194.

2 Germaine Tailleferre and Frédéric Robert, “Mémoires à l'emporte-pièce,” Revue internationale de musique française 19 (Feb. 1986): 61 (ellipses original). “En effet, Barton y était devenu affreusement nerveux et, d’autre part, l’amant d’une ravissante compatriote, si bien que son existence en France lui devenait intolérable. Un soir de printemps, ayant appris que j’étais enceinte, il fut pris subitement d’un accès de folie et il me demanda brusquement d’accepter qu’il me tire un coup de revolver dans le ventre.
Though not shot, Tailleferre miscarried as a result of the events. She also never saw her husband again: he returned to New York, she filed for divorce, and he committed suicide.

The following day, this friend also left the south for Paris. He took me with him after having made all of the arrangements with Barton for proceeding with our divorce. I would never again see Ralph, because the following year, he committed suicide. When he had learned that this dramatic nighttime escape had led to a miscarriage, his joy was so great that he sent me – ordered from New York where he had found out! – an amount of flowers so large that the clinic literally became submerged, and the nurses completely dumbfounded at this floral profusion; they envied me for having such a good and generous husband!¹

With the benefit of several decades of reflection, Tailleferre took stock of her marriage and its violent and devastating end in her memoir, ultimately finding that it was an intrusion on her career.

Once I had found calm and health, I no longer wanted to postpone working. My musical career had been interrupted for two-and-a-half years; the time missed by this marriage had profoundly affected me. I had, in reality, sensed that this pleasure would be temporary and false, and I had more or less been waiting for this sort of outcome. At the present, I no longer hoped for a married life, nor for love; I thought only of adopting a child and of raising it alone. But, as I did not have the age [youth], I was forced, if I wanted a child, to have one myself. However, I refused to accept any new idea of marriage; the experience

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¹ Ibid. “Le lendemain, cet ami quittait également le Midi pour Paris. Il m’emmêna avec lui après avoir fait tous les arrangements avec Barton pour procéder à notre divorce. Je ne devais jamais plus revoir Ralph, car l’année suivante, il se suicidait. Quand il avait appris que cette fuite dramatique dans la nuit avait abouti pour moi à une fausse couche, sa joie fut si grande qu’il me fit envoyer – commandées depuis New York où il se trouvait! – une quantité de fleurs si abondante que la clinique en fut littéralement submergée, et les infirmières complètement ébahies devant cette profusion florale; elles m’enviaient d’avoir un mari si bon et si généreux!”
that I had just lived through was enough to leave me disgusted [with marriage] forever. I resumed with joy my musical life.\(^4\)

And return to music she did, wasting no time.\(^5\) In June of 1929 Tailleferre experienced gunfire, miscarriage, and divorce, and by August she had composed her *Six chansons françaises* (Six French Songs; see Appendix 4 for a timeline of events surrounding the songs’ composition):\(^6\)

I. “Non, la fidélité…” (“No, faithfulness…”)
II. “Souvent un air de vérité” (“Often an air of truth”) 
III. “Mon mari m’a diffamée” (“My husband defamed me”)

\(^4\) Ibid. “Une fois que j’eus retrouvé le calme et la santé, il ne me resta plus qu’à me remettre au travail. Ma carrière musicale avait été interrompue pendant deux ans et demi, le temps de ce mariage manqué qui m’avait profondément atteinte. J’avais, en réalité, pressenti que ce bonheur serait provisoire et faux, et je m’étais plus ou moins attendue à ce genre de dénouement. A présent, je n’espérais plus rien de la vie conjugale, ni de l’amour; je ne pensais qu’à adopter un enfant et à l’élever toute seule. Mais, comme je n’en avais pas l’âge, force m’était, si je voulais un enfant, de l’avoir moi-même. Cependant, je me refusais à toute nouvelle idée de mariage; l’expérience que je venais de vivre avait suffi à m’en dégoûter pour toujours. Je reprenais avec joie ma vie musicale.”

\(^5\) Tailleferre’s idea that the end of her marriage freed her to return to her musical life should not be construed as suggesting that she set music aside entirely during her marriage. In fact, she completed eight works during her marriage and had various works published and performed. But if her production was maintained, it was in spite of various strains brought about by her jealous and controlling husband. In her memoir, Tailleferre recalls how Barton hated to be called “Monsieur Tailleferre,” suggesting that he was jealous of any career successes she had (see ibid., 54). She also explains that he worked – at their home – day and night and could not stand to hear any noise, leaving Tailleferre unable to compose or to play the piano (see ibid., 50). With this said, during 1928, Tailleferre composed six works (she had completed two works in 1927). It is my assumption, then, that this relief at being able to “return” to her musical life represents a feeling of freedom, rather than a literal return from an absence.

\(^6\) The timing of the shooting, miscarriage, and composition of the songs has not been communicated clearly by Tailleferre’s biographers. In fact, the songs were written between June and August 1929: see Robert Orledge, “A Chronological Catalogue of the Compositions of Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983),” *Muziek en wetenschap* 2, no. 2 (1992): 136. The shooting occurred in June 1929, as did presumably the miscarriage (see Kellner, *The Last Dandy*, 194). In their respective biographies of Tailleferre, though, Laura Mitgang and Caroline Potter imply that the songs were written before the shooting and miscarriage. Furthermore, both biographers believe that the songs were not directly reflective of Tailleferre’s marriage. Mitgang, having conducted interviews with Tailleferre in 1982 and 1983, notes that Tailleferre then called the songs “*très drôles*” and writes that “she wanted to write something ‘more gay than tedious’ to counteract domestic problems she and Barton were facing.” Potter, having very intriguingly called the songs “a sort of *risqué Frauenliebe und –leben,*” writes in a footnote: “It is tempting to interpret Tailleferre’s choice of texts as a reflection of her disappointment in her marriage to Barton, though the composer denied this was her intention.” Potter does not explain when the composer asserted this denial. See Laura Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre: Before, During, and After Les Six,” *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective* 2 (1984-1985): 196, and Caroline Potter, “Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983): A Centenary Appraisal,” *Muziek en wetenschap* 2, no. 2 (1992): 116.
IV. “Vrai Dieu, qui m’y confortera” (“True God, who will comfort me”)
V. “On a dit mal de mon ami” (“They spoke badly of my lover”)
VI. “Les trois présents” (“The three presents”)

If Tailleferre’s memoir is invaluable in elucidating her retrospective view of her first marriage and its appalling end, her *Six chansons françaises* can be interpreted as documenting a more immediate response to the event. Though Tailleferre may have felt joy at being able to return to her musical life, the weighty issues of marital unhappiness and infidelity explored in the texts of her songs show that the challenges of her marriage were not yet behind her. In this chapter, I analyze the *Six chansons françaises* from an autobiographical perspective, interpreting the songs as central to Tailleferre’s recovery from the trauma of her turbulent marriage and devastating miscarriage. I combine traditional musicological strategies of biographical research, literary and musical analysis, and reception analysis, with ideas borrowed from trauma theory and feminist historical scholarship to uncover the details of the relatively little-known songs and to explore the songs as an expression of Tailleferre’s post-traumatic efforts to redefine her identity. I find, though, that Tailleferre’s musical and textual choices mask the songs’ relation to her personal experiences and downplay their potentially controversial messages. As a result of this, critics have long misunderstood

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7 In positing such an interpretation, I in no way mean to support essentialist arguments that women’s music is always a reflection of its composer’s sex/gender and therefore a personal expression that is inferior to men’s presumed gender-neutral and universally expressive music. Sally Macarthur presents a relatively recent discussion of this issue and establishes her position in the last chapter of her book in which she grapples with the possibilities of finding feminist aesthetics in music. See Sally Macarthur, *Feminist Aesthetics in Music* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002). Bonnie Gordon also addresses such issues in her study of Tori Amos’s expression of personal trauma in her song “Me and a Gun.” Gordon sees that in popular musics, the term “confessional” has been long used pejoratively to categorize songs by female singer-songwriters expressing personal experiences. In Amos’s case, then, Gordon sees this term as problematic both for its essentializing and hierarchical implications, and for the limitation that it places on Amos’s and her audiences’ opportunities for empowerment. See Bonnie Gordon, “Tori Amos’s Inner Voices,” in *Women’s Voices across Musical Worlds*, ed. Jane A. Bernstein (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 187-207.
the songs, with descriptions like “pleasant enough trifles” showing their obliviousness to the songs’ critiques of the institution of marriage. Finally, I explore the songs’ six female dedicatees – Tailleferre’s friends and possible confidants – revealing a gynocentric network that likely served a central function in Tailleferre’s process of recovery.

This chapter has resulted from both rich and frustrating research. Sources like Tailleferre’s memoir and the 1931 recording of the songs with Tailleferre at the piano, accompanying Jane Bathori, are precious artifacts that reveal much about the songs themselves and about Tailleferre’s own retrospective view of her marriage. My research relies heavily on both of these sources – if digital files could degrade like pages in a book or grooves in a record, my copies of the two would be long-damaged from overuse. But the memoir itself is uneven in its information. To say nothing of the challenges of interpreting a composer’s decades-removed telling of her life, Tailleferre gives no explanation of the songs, despite all of the details of the marriage, shooting, miscarriage, and divorce. Similarly, I have thus far found no personal documents (letters, journals, etc.) addressing the issues at hand, nor any that shed clear light on the relationships between Tailleferre and the six dedicatees of the songs. As a result, it is important for me to emphasize that my interpretation of the Six chansons

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8 The recording has been recently re-released: Jane Bathori, Jane Bathori: The Complete Solo Recordings, recorded 1928-1930, Marston 51009-2, 1999, compact disc.

9 The songs were undoubtedly not far from her mind when she was writing her memoir. Though no mention of the songs directly, she signs off her memoir with the last line of the sixth song: “That is all. I have only to write that which I put in music in the Six chansons françaises: Good day, good evening, and good night” (see Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 78). “C’est tout. Je n’ai plus qu’à écrire ce que j’ai mis en musique dans une des Six chansons françaises: Bonjour, bonsoir et bonne nuit.”

10 My search for potential relevant primary source materials took place at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, in Paris, during the summer of 2008.
françaises as textual traces of Tailleferre’s marital trauma is just that – an interpretation. But while the challenges that arise from incomplete information may pose frustrations, they do not limit the scope of my project, for ultimately the primary documents to which I have had access – the memoir, the songs, and critical responses to the songs – permit plenty of work into understanding identity relative to biographical events and social and cultural norms. In fact, in many respects, I have found myself motivated, rather than frustrated, by gaps in source literature and holes in my narrative. Though I have worked hard to find as much information as is available about this work, it is precisely the gaps and holes that allow me even to pose my interpretation. In any case, I am comforted in situating my own partial narrative among other similarly incomplete stories of women and music recently published by Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon, and by Sherrie Tucker. Feldman and Gordon’s multidisciplinary anthology on courtesans and the arts demonstrates the necessity and success of a thorough approach to even the most elusive of topics.11 Tucker’s frustrations over the privacy maintained by her interview subjects for her work on “all-girl” bands of the 1940s force her to address her own assumptions about her topic and help her form a more nuanced understanding of the ramifications of social norms.12

11 Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon, eds., The Courtesan’s Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). A passage from their introduction illuminates the intangible quality of their topic: “Notwithstanding our varied methods, sources, and perspectives, all of us in this volume are tied together by our engagement in projects of reconstruction – of putting together stories and situations from the barest scraps of history, or the faintest traces of ethnography. … Yet it is precisely this seductive vagueness, this endless deferral, as Davidson describes it, that has made the courtesan so enticing to her consumers and critics and that keeps even those who vanished thousands of years ago still entangling us in their bright web” (5).

12 Sherrie Tucker, “When Subjects Don’t Come Out,” in Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity, ed. Sophie Fuller and Lloyd Whitesell (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2002): 293-310. In this chapter, Tucker reflects on the unwillingness of many of her interview subjects to address questions of sexuality and their experiences as “all-girl” band members. Tucker’s frustrations with not being able to
Similarly for my own work, acknowledging source limitations and inconsistencies in Tailleferre’s level of disclosure ultimately allows me to theorize even more convincingly the *Six chansons françaises* as functioning in the post-traumatic recovery process.

**“Modern Woman:” Theorizing Identity and Trauma**

Before delving into my analysis of the *Six chansons françaises*, it is necessary and helpful first to locate and theorize the two central issues of my study: identity and trauma.¹³ Recall my discussion in chapter one of Mary Louise Roberts’s research on gender identity in France in the period after WWI, when Tailleferre and many French women were challenged by stark changes in gender dynamics. The demographics of French society changed severely after so many men were killed during the war that many young women were left without marriage prospects. While burgeoning feminist convictions may have led some self-identified “modern women” to shun marriage and family in favor of careers, many women experienced these new possibilities not by choice, but by necessity when they failed to meet an appropriate husband. Roberts tell the “complete” story in her monograph *Swing Shift: “All-Girl” Bands of the 1940s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) led her to question closetedness and outness and changing values placed on each.

¹³ Though I focus on a handful of scholars to provide the theoretical framework for my chapter, various musicologists have similarly examined music and musical activities as expressing composer identity. In her article on Smyth’s opera *The Wreckers*, Suzanne Robinson combines close musical and literary analysis with a thorough explanation of social and political atmospheres of the periods in question to show that the opera reveals Smyth’s radical political leanings well before she took to expressions of public anarchism: Suzanne Robinson, “Smyth the anarchist: fin-de-siècle radicalism in *The Wreckers*,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 20, no. 2 (July 2008): 149-79. Philip Bullock’s work on Tchaikovsky’s songs reveals them as a genre that allowed Tchaikovsky to negotiate the various facets of his identity, simultaneously revealing and concealing himself to his audience: Philip Ross Bullock, “Ambiguous Speech and Eloquent Silence: The Queerness of Tchaikovsky’s Songs,” *19th-Century Music* 32, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 94-128. *Daphnis et Chloé* offered Michael Puri an opportunity to understand Ravel’s ballet as self-portraiture stemming from his dandyism and its narcissistic characterizations: Michael J. Puri, “Dandy, Interrupted: Sublimation, Repression, and Self-Portraiture in Maurice Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé* (1909-1912),” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 317-372.
identifies three categories of female identity that shaped post-war France and that helped society refashion itself after the trauma of war. Roberts constructs the post-war search for gender identity in a sort of dialectic: the “mother” and the “modern woman” stand opposed to each other, representing respectively women’s traditional domestic marital role and the new possibilities for women outside the home. Roberts’s third category of gender identity, the “single woman,” bridges these two extremes and establishes a category of unmarried, self-supporting women similar to the modern woman, but without the stigma of self-identified feminism.

Tailleferre undoubtedly reflects this image of the single woman. In the first phase of her career, until her marriage, she even leaned toward the identity of the modern woman: she prioritized (or appears to have prioritized) a career over a husband and family, and she supported herself. During the mid-1920s, Tailleferre made several trips to the US looking to find steady employment after her fame as a member of Les Six was waning. She explains this in her memoir:

> It was imperative for me to change my existence; the great exaltation provoked by Les Six was beginning to fall. I continued to live with the little celebrity that I had acquired. My daily life was hardly enhanced [by fame]. I always had the same anxiety about money; my mother was aging and her health was becoming more and more worrying. I resolved to leave for America no matter what the cost. … I had hoped to find, as Darius [Milhaud] would later, a position of professor in a college, permitting me to spend six months in America, then six

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months in France, and composing with material tranquility [i.e., without monetary worries]. But it was to be totally different.\textsuperscript{15}

During the course of three trips to New York, Tailleferre was unsuccessful in acquiring a professorship. She hit the proverbial glass ceiling, and thus her identity as a modern woman was challenged. Whatever the reasons for her difficulty finding a professorship (her sex, her limited knowledge of English, her relatively unknown status in the US), her failed job search delegitimized her identity.

After Tailleferre’s third trip to New York, instead of returning to France as a professor, she returned a wife after a courtship so fast it was practically nonexistent. The couple met at a party hosted by Blanche and Alfred Knopf on 15 November 1926. Tailleferre attended the party with two good friends and painters Bernard Boutet de Monvel and Georges Lepape, but Barton drove her home.

\textit{…Barton proposed to drive me home in his superb French car, a white Voisin that made a sensation in New York, and he said to me very simply: “Do you want to marry me tomorrow?” It was the first marriage proposal for which I was the addressee; I thought he was joking. It was nothing! “Think about it,” he added. “I will call you tomorrow evening around dinner time to get your response.” I was mute in amazement.}\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 48. “Il était impérieux pour moi de changer d’existence; la grande exaltation provoquée par le Groupe des Six commençait à tomber. Je continuais à vivre sur la petite célébrité qui m’était acquise. Ma vie quotidienne ne s’était guère améliorée. J’avais toujours les mêmes soucis d’argent; ma mère vieillissait et sa santé devenait toujours plus inquiétante. Je résolus donc de partir pour l’Amérique coûte que coûte. … je pouvais espérer trouver, comme Darius plus tard, une situation de professeur dans un collège, me permettant de passer six mois en Amérique, puis six mois en France, et de composer en toute tranquillité matérielle. Mais il en fut tout autrement.” This paragraph from Tailleferre’s memoir demonstrates the fluidity of Roberts’s identity categories. Even though Tailleferre was pursuing a career like a modern woman, her concern for her mother’s health shows that she had familial obligations that simultaneously cast her in the nurturing and domestic role of the mother.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 49. “…Barton proposa de me raccompagner dans sa superbe voiture française, une Voisin blanche qui faisait sensation à New York, et il me dit tout simplement: “Voulez-vous me marier demain?” C’était la première demande en mariage dont j’étais l’objet, je crus qu’il plaisantais. Il n’en était rien! “Réfléchissez, ajoute-t-il, je vous téléphonerai demain soir à l’heure du dîner pour avoir votre réponse”. Je restai muette de stupéfaction.”
Tailleferre agreed to the marriage. Barton had “an irresistible charm” and a love of all things French, including the language. Ultimately, though, for Tailleferre it was not a marriage of love. Tailleferre had been hopelessly in love with violinist Jacques Thibaud (1880-1953) since their first meeting a few years earlier. Though her memoir is slim on details, she tells of brief meetings, worked out around his touring schedule, which ultimately left her unsatisfied and lonely. By the time Barton proposed, Tailleferre had given up both on Thibaud and on love generally: “It was evidently a marriage of reason, because I was frustratingly affected by my unfortunate love for Jacques Thibaud. It seemed to me that I could never again have loved anyone.” Thus Barton’s marriage proposal – however unexpected – offered Tailleferre a chance to reclaim a legitimate identity, albeit as mother, quite the opposite of the modern woman. Though this analysis of Tailleferre’s biography through Roberts’s identity categories may be speculative, it quite plausibly suggests that because a legitimate and stable career was unattainable for Tailleferre, marriage allowed her to occupy a recognizable position in a changing post-war society.

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17 Ibid., “un charme irrésistible.”
18 Ibid., 50. “C’était évidemment un mariage de raison, car j’avais été péniblement affectée par mon amour malheureux pour Jacques Thibaud. Il me semblait que je ne pourrais jamais plus aimer personne.” See also pages 44-5.
19 The term “mother” should not necessarily be taken literally here, especially in Tailleferre’s case with her marriage to Barton, but should be read as representing the woman defined by traditional patriarchal domesticity, or as Roberts explains, “the bourgeois ideal of female identity that flourished in France throughout the nineteenth century: the self-sacrificing ‘angel of the house’…” (Civilization without Sexes, 8).
20 Though the war brought about specific challenges to women’s identities, French female composers and musicians had faced similar struggles prior to the war. Annegret Fauser’s comprehensive assessment of identity politics and women’s participation in the Prix de Rome not only details women’s entrée into this central musical establishment, but also posits an intentionality on the part of female composers in crafting public personae that appeased public expectations while challenging traditional gender roles: Annegret Fauser, “‘La Guerre en dentelles’: Women and the ‘Prix de Rome’ in French Cultural Politics,” Journal of the American Musicological Society 51, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 83-129.
If Tailleferre’s difficulties securing a job resulted in a challenge to her identity as a modern woman, her divorce and miscarriage obviously challenged her identity as mother. And if marriage seemed to provide the solution to her first identity crisis, a return to her career – to music – was Tailleferre’s strategy for solving her second. But at this point, Tailleferre’s task would have involved more than reclaiming her identity as a modern woman. She also would have had to heal the extreme trauma of her marriage’s end and her miscarriage. In her seminal book on the subject, *Trauma and Recovery*, psychiatrist Judith Lewis Herman theorizes a dialectic of psychological trauma – one that is immensely useful in understanding the nuances of Tailleferre’s songs and their positionality in response to trauma.

The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from the consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the word *unspeakable*. Atrocities, however, refuse to be buried. Equally as powerful as the desire to deny atrocities is the conviction that denial does not work. … Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims. The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma.

In addition to establishing recovery as a conflict between secrecy and disclosure, Herman establishes three common steps of recovery: “The fundamental stages of...

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(Tailleferre seems to have narrowly missed being included in Fauser’s telling of female *Prix de Rome* entrants from the pre-war period. Though it appears that she never entered the contest, she writes in her memoir of the year 1910: “…I worked with determination to prepare for the famous competition for Rome.” See Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 15. “…je travaillais avec acharnement à la préparation de ce fameux concours de Rome.”) Florence Launay’s extensive work on French female composers of the nineteenth century addresses marriage, motherhood, and feminism, among other things, as she painstakingly constructs an understanding of the issues facing female composers in the first part of her book: Florence Launay, *Les compositrices en France au XIXe siècle* (Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2006).

21 Ultimately, Tailleferre desired a child, and thus married lawyer Jean Lageat in 1931 and had with him a daughter, Françoise. Tailleferre’s marriage to Lageat was also unhappy, as she describes in her memoir.

recovery are establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community.”

These two fundamental tenets of recovery have become central to examinations of trauma in the arts. Two examples offer compelling frameworks for Tailleferre’s situation, and so I situate my work on the *Six chansons françaises* among them.\(^2^4\) Suzette A. Henke applies Herman’s work to women’s literature, specifically life-writing, a genre that she conceives of broadly as including any version of fiction or non-fiction, published or private writing that allows the author “to fashion an enabling discourse of testimony and self-revelation, to establish a sense of agency.”\(^2^5\) Henke views life-writing as permitting its author to successfully negotiate a balance between secrecy and disclosure because of a distance between the author and audience:

If Herman’s analysis is correct, then a major impetus behind autobiographical literature in general, and women’s life-writing in particular, may be the articulation of a haunting and debilitating emotional crisis that, for the author, borders on the unspeakable. What cannot be uttered might at least be written – cloaked in the mask of fiction or sanctioned by the protective space of iteration that separates the author/narrator from the protagonist/character she or he creates and from the anonymous reader/auditor she or he envisages. Testimonial life-writing allows the author to share an unutterable tale of pain and suffering, of transgression or victimization, in a discursive medium that can be addressed to everyone or no-one – to a world that will judge personal testimony as accurate historical witnessing or as thinly disguised fiction. No

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 3.  
\(^{24}\) Other examples of locating trauma in music deal with overt expressions of the composer’s trauma or with expressions of fictive trauma (trauma experienced by an operatic character, for example): see Elliott Antokoletz, *Musical Symbolism in the Operas of Debussy and Bartók* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mary Lee Greitzer, “‘Tormented Voices’” (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2007); and, Gordon, “‘Tori Amos’s Inner Voices.’”  
matter. It is through the very process of rehearsing and reenacting a drama of mental survival that the trauma narrative effects psychological catharsis.\textsuperscript{26}

In ethnomusicology, Joshua Pilzer fashions his dissertation on the songs of Korean survivors of sexual slavery after Herman’s theories of trauma and recovery. As with Henke’s work on women’s life-writing, Pilzer sees the Korean women’s songs as allowing a simultaneity of secrecy and disclosure.

Following Judith Herman’s 1992 \textit{Trauma and Recovery}, a seminal study of survivors of domestic and political violence, I believe that as survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery resurrected, modified, borrowed and composed songs in this atmosphere of secrecy, they were engaged in a most basic act of recovering from trauma. They were composing life stories, which gave them a sense of coherence and uniqueness as well as a feeling of connection to the social whole. The women made history out of song because song’s opacity allowed them to express themselves without exposure, which might mean a ruined relationship with a husband or family or other sorts of social disgrace. Making these songs part of a life story diffused the disruptive power of traumatic memory by assimilating experiences to an idea of an agentive self.\textsuperscript{27}

In my analysis of Tailleferre’s songs, Herman’s concepts that have so deeply informed recent literature on expressions of trauma occupy a central place. Just as with Henke and Pilzer, I view Tailleferre’s songs as embodying the second and third stages of recovery – giving voice to the traumatic events and finding support through community – and as operating within the dialectic of psychological trauma that Pilzer terms “opacity” and that negotiates secrecy and disclosure.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., xix.

\textsuperscript{27} Joshua D. Pilzer, “‘My Heart, the Number One’: Singing in the Lives of South Korean Survivors of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery” (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2006), 10. In “The Queerness of Tchaikovsky’s Songs,” Bullock also explores the idea (outside of the traumatic context) that singing and song are somehow simultaneously public and private.

\textsuperscript{28} The very fact that Tailleferre chose song as the genre with which to return to music makes this piece almost unique among her output thus far. Twenty-eight of her compositions prior to the \textit{Six chansons françaises} were instrumental. Three works are for solo voice and/or choir, one of which is for wordless choir: \textit{Berceuse du petit éléphant} (1925), \textit{Ban’da} (1925, wordless), and \textit{Nocturno/Fox} (1928). None of
Mal mariée: Analyzing Text

Tailleferre’s *Six chansons françaises* occupy a sort of middle ground between the literature and songs examined by Henke and Pilzer respectively. Henke is examining original works of literature; the women of Pilzer’s study sing songs written by others, though often adapted by the women who sing them. In Tailleferre’s case, she relies on other authors for the texts, for which she supplies the music: the *Six chansons françaises* belong firmly to the Western art-music tradition of setting preexisting poems to music. As my analysis of the songs’ texts shows, Tailleferre’s reliance on other authors for their words permits her the precise balance between secrecy and disclosure that is so central to the recovery process. On one hand, Tailleferre’s textual choices critique institutions of marriage and patriarchy, thus allowing her to give voice to her experiences and find solace in knowing that other women can sympathize. Though the collection lacks unity in terms of a single narrative voice (something that is often a key characteristic of a poetic or song cycle), it achieves cyclic cohesion by presenting multifaceted, yet interrelated meditations on marriage and infidelity, duty and passion. On the other hand, by choosing centuries-old texts with various authors, multiple lyric subjects, and diverse styles, each of which either trivializes or masks its patriarchal critique through humor or metaphor, Tailleferre creates substantial distance between her personal experiences and her songs.

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29 Pilzer, “South Korean Survivors,” 128-131, explains the various ways that Korean women reproduce, alter, and improvise already existing songs.
The texts of the six songs represent three hundred years of French literary traditions. Three of the texts, “Mon mari m’a diffamée,” “Vrai Dieu, qui m’y confortera,” and “On a dit mal de mon ami,” are from the fifteenth century and are anonymous. The texts of the first and second songs, “Non, la fidélité...” and “Souvent un air de vérité,” are from the eighteenth century and are by Gabriel-Charles de Lataignant (1697-1779) and Voltaire (1694-1778) respectively, while the text for the last song, “Les trois présents,” is from the seventeenth century and is by Jean-François Sarasin (1614-1654). All three known authors were prolific writers, and Lataignant was also a priest.

I have not been able to determine definitively how Tailleferre chose the poems or the sources she used. There are, however, some small clues regarding this issue. I have determined that all six poems were published in the same source printed on at least two occasions in the 1910s. While this particular publication does not appear to be the source for Tailleferre’s songs (the anthologized version of “Mon mari m’a diffamée” contains one less stanza than does the text of Tailleferre’s song), at least the existence of this anthology confirms that the poems were circulating in the early twentieth century and that they existed in the same publication, making them

30 Tailleferre is not alone among Parisian composers of the time in selecting centuries-old poems to set to music. Though many of her colleagues set modern poems by writers such as Guillaume Apollinaire and Cocteau, in the 1920s all of her Les Six colleagues (with the exception of Durey) as well as Ravel and Satie set poems from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and/or eighteenth centuries. Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) was a particular favorite.

31 These spellings are in keeping with the publication of the Six chansons françaises. In fact, two of the authors’ names more often appear as Gabriel-Charles de Lattaignant (or sometimes de l’Attaignant) and Jean-François Sarrazin or Sarrasin.

32 La chanson française du XVe au XXe siècle; avec un appendice musical (Paris: Jean Gillequin). The copy I was able to view (in the library holdings at Stanford University) did not indicate its publication date. However, Google Books indicates that the anthology was printed both in 1910 and 1912. The six poems are on pages 19, 21, 36, 101, 170, and 172.
accessible despite their range of dates and authors. Additionally, I have been able to
determine that Bathori herself may have been involved with the songs as more than a
performer. In an extended lecture from late in her life, Bathori lists the *Six chansons
françaises* as one of Tailleferre’s best works. She also claims to have instigated their
composition: “It was at my insistence that she composed the six songs and I recorded
them with the composer at the piano.”

Unfortunately, Bathori gives no indication as to whether she suggested the specific poems or if Tailleferre already had them in mind. The little information available about Bathori’s marriage to singer Emile Engel (1847-1927) suggests that perhaps Bathori herself could sympathize with the messages of the text. Engel, thirty years older than Bathori, was her vocal instructor before the couple married in 1905. In 1921, they divorced apparently because of differing political beliefs and because of Engel’s relationship with another younger woman.

Furthermore, the age difference between them seems never to have been overcome, as a friend recalls Bathori always referring to him as “Engel” and never “my husband” or “my late husband.” If Bathori did in fact experience challenges in her marriage, perhaps her husband’s death in 1927 freed her to express these tribulations through the *Six chansons françaises.*

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35 Jane Bathori, *The Complete Solo Recordings.* In his liner notes to the reissued recording, Victor Girard gives some “personal remembrances” of his relationship with Bathori, including this observation of her references to Engel: “Curiously she always referred to her late husband as ‘Engel’ and never as ‘mon mari’ or ‘mon feu mari.’ It was always ‘Engel’ did this or ‘Engel’ did that or ‘Engel and I’ sang here or there. Perhaps the thirty-year difference in their ages brought about a certain formality.”
Though the potpourri of poetry results in a collection of somewhat disparate styles, they are unified by their thematic focus. In sometimes mocking, sometimes melancholy, sometimes nostalgic, and sometimes philosophical tones, the six poems explore marriage, love, and infidelity. As a result of the diversity of texts, the cycle consists of multiple lyric subjects, several of whom are women – women who have challenging marital situations.

Most clearly from women’s points-of-view, the middle three poems reflect the subgenre of *mal mariée* poetry within medieval courtly love traditions. Such poems engage with the unhappiness that women can feel within marriage and share specific common tropes and imagery. The husband is old, ugly, lazy, and/or hurtful, though wealthy or socially esteemed; the wife is often confined, literally or figuratively; the marriage is an arranged union where the wife had no choice in the matter; the wife dreams of or takes a lover; and, the lover, quite the opposite of the husband, is young, handsome, active, and kind. Song four, the middle of these three anonymous texts, presents perhaps the most typical *mal mariée* portrayal of an unhappy, controlled wife. In the first stanza, the woman laments her arranged marriage to an old, jealous, deceitful, lazy, unhappy man: “True God, who will comfort me / When this deceitful jealous man holds me / Locked up alone in his room?” (Refer to Appendix 5 for complete song texts). In the second stanza, she expresses her desires for a young man: “I need a sprightly young man / Who is thirty years old.” In this same stanza, the

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appearance of the nightingale – symbolic of illicit love – emphasizes her need for a relationship based on mutual respect and attraction.

But while in this text infidelity is only a dream, the women of the other two anonymous texts enter into affairs and are empowered by them. The woman of the third song endures beatings from her husband and scorn from those who know of her unfaithfulness, but finds the pleasure she experiences in her affair outweighs these ordeals. The refrain, “I will be worse than before,” that appears at the end of three of the four stanzas encapsulates her attitude: nothing will stop her from seeking pleasure in love. Though somewhat more melancholy in tone, the fifth poem expresses a similar defiance, ending with the lines: “And, even if they were all mad, / I would go to bed with him!”

While Tailleferre may not have shared this desire for or experience of infidelity, there are various aspects of these mal mariée texts that could have appealed to her. They present strong female characters from whom she could gather inspiration as she tackled divorce and the loss of her pregnancy. Herman’s work on trauma and recovery is again pertinent, this time for her emphasis on empowerment. “The first principle of recovery is the empowerment of the survivor. She must be the author and arbiter of her own recovery.” Tailleferre’s empowerment comes in part from an understanding that hers is not an entirely unique experience. The mal mariée texts pit love against duty – the irrational against the rational – much as Tailleferre explained herself as doing in accepting Barton’s marriage proposal. Though approximately five hundred years separated Tailleferre from the women of the mal mariée poems, a

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37 Herman, *Trauma*, 133.
woman’s marital duty remained almost unchanged. For fifteenth-century women, marriage was a financial and social transaction between families; for early-twentieth-century women, marriage was still a cultural expectation, even if post-war demographic changes meant that this was often impossible. As her memoir shows, Tailleferre wanted love, but, spurred by an unconscious societal duty and a longing for a child, chose marriage instead. The trope of imprisonment that runs through the mal mariée texts expresses the reality of this rational choice and suggests that it is the institution of marriage itself that was the source of trauma both for the mal mariée women and for Tailleferre. As I have already revealed, Tailleferre did not marry Barton out of love. It is also apparent in her memoir that she did not grow to love him – quite the opposite, in fact. Though they seem to have had some happy times during their marriage – dinners with friends in New York and many entertaining evenings spent with friend Charlie Chaplin – Tailleferre also writes of Barton’s jealousy, demanding nature, and moodiness. Though she does not give details, she implies that he had violent episodes that were reminiscent of arguments that she would witness between her parents when she was a child. These episodes worsened while the couple lived in Paris, to the point that Barton left to return to the US (before the couple

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40 Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 51-2. Barton filmed many of these gatherings, and some of these home movies were compiled into a film, “Camille,” released as supplementary material on Charlie Chaplin et al., *A King In New York; A Woman of Paris* (Burbank, CA: Mk2 Editions, 2003). In addition to Charlie Chaplin and various other celebrities and socialites, the film notably includes two of the dedicatees of Tailleferre’s *Six chansons françaises*, Denise Bourdet and Marie-Blanche de Polignac (along with their husbands and the husband, Bernard, of a third dedicatee, Delfina Boutet de Monvel). See Kellner, *The Last Dandy*, 251-2.
moved to the south of France). Throughout this tumult, Tailleferre was often even unable to find solace in music, as Barton could not take the noise she made at the piano. Thus, though the shooting and miscarriage at the end of Tailleferre’s marriage caused acute trauma, the mal mariée texts reveal the chronic trauma of Tailleferre’s loveless marriage. It is, then, the institution of marriage – not divorce, not infidelity, not abuse – that is ultimately responsible for stifling women’s self-determination and sexual agency. The texts expose a deep despondency with patriarchal social and religious institutions, such that the poems are not necessarily a literal reflection of Tailleferre’s personal experiences, but rather a more general critique of the institution of marriage. Adultery was certainly not sanctioned, yet in mal mariée poems the ill-treated wife is justified and supported in her thoughts and actions precisely because of the institutions that have led to her imprisonment. In supporting love and glorifying female adultery, mal mariée texts are directly opposed to their contemporary social behavioral codes, and mal mariée women unabashedly defy the institutions that stifle them. For Tailleferre, then, not only might the mal mariée women themselves have provided a model of confidence and agency, but also the texts more generally may have illuminated that her marital challenges went well beyond her own husband’s mental instability.

The later texts that bookend these mal mariée poems present multifarious views on the subject of infidelity. The first seems to be from a male point-of-view and glorifies pleasure and freedom. With its short lines and repeated singsong syllables,

41 Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 58.
42 Ibid., 50.
43 Evans, “Marie de France,” 162.
the text presents a carefree attitude. On one hand, the frivolity of this poem foreshadows some of the more light-hearted lines of the *mal mariée* texts. On the other hand, though, it does nothing to presage the seriousness of the topics of loveless marriages, entrapment, and slander. The second poem, by Voltaire, is quite the opposite: again likely from a male point-of-view, it is more serious in tone and laments the toll of infidelity, but suggests that love is more valuable than anything else. It lacks the joviality of the first poem, instead presenting a hazy dream. The sixth and shortest poem is simultaneously succinct and ambiguous. Taken seriously, the poem could present a lovers’ parting; taken ironically, the poem could present an ill-treated wife deciding to leave her husband and offering him no choice in the matter. In any case, it offers a witty end to a diverse cycle.

As with this ironic interpretation of the sixth poem, all six of the texts share a detached treatment of their emotionally challenging and potentially controversial subject. Though sometimes bold and other times melancholy, they convey little of the distress and anger – the trauma – that almost inevitably is associated with infidelity. This emotional detachment is strengthened by the anonymity of texts three, four, and five, the centuries-old age of all of the texts, and the multiplicity of lyric subjects. Herman’s work is helpful again here, this time in understanding detachment as a reaction to trauma. To use her terms, “repression, dissociation, and denial” are common to the recovery process. She elaborates: “The survivor’s initial account of the event may be repetitious, stereotyped, and emotionless. … It does not develop or progress in time, and it does not reveal the storyteller’s feelings or interpretation of

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44 Herman, *Trauma*, 9.
events.”

Dominick LaCapra, approaching trauma studies from within the humanities, also addresses the dissociation often apparent in representations of trauma:

Trauma is itself a shattering experience that disrupts or even threatens to destroy experience in the sense of an integrated or at least viably articulated life. There is a sense in which trauma is an out-of-context experience that upsets expectations and unsettles one’s very understanding of existing contexts. Moreover, the radically disorienting experience of trauma often involves a dissociation between cognition and affect. In brief, in traumatic experience one typically can represent numbly or with aloofness what one cannot feel, and one feels overwhelmingly what one is unable to represent, at least with any critical distance and cognitive control.

While Tailleferre’s songs may not be her first account of the traumatic event and while they are not even in her words, they certainly conform to this typically detached reaction: they are repetitious, stereotyped (or exaggerated), and emotionless (or lacking extremes of emotion). Furthermore, the humor or perkiness of some of the poems (especially songs one, three, and perhaps six) presents an ironic tone that delegitimizes any overtly emotional reaction. Ultimately, though, this detachment and irony serves not to obscure, but only to temper the texts’ critical portrayals of marriage.

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45 Ibid., 175.

46 Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 117. LaCapra later points to the trend towards expressing trauma through literature and art beginning in the late nineteenth century: “In literature and art, one may observe the role of a practice that is especially pronounced in the recent past but may also be found earlier, notably in testimonial art, to wit, experimental, gripping, and risky symbolic emulation of trauma in what might be called traumatized or posttraumatic writing or signification. This markedly performative writing may be a means of bearing witness to, enacting, and, to some extent, working over and through trauma, whether personally experienced, transmitted from intimates, or sensed in one’s larger social and cultural setting. Indeed such writing, with significant variations, has been prevalent in various figures since the end of the nineteenth century” (137). Though Tailleferre’s songs themselves are not directly about trauma, LaCapra’s findings at least help situate them within twentieth-century trends towards expressing trauma through art.
“A contrario:” Analyzing Music

If elements of the texts prevent an autobiographical reading of the songs, the music goes even further to preclude disclosure of any challenging messages or personal connections. Taken together, the text and music of the songs present some sort of generic contradiction: the work is derived from traumatic autobiographical events and the texts are potentially damaging to patriarchal hierarchies, yet Tailleferre’s neoclassical modernism – and neoclassical modernism generally – is inherently non-emotive. Reconciling the combination of these two distinct agendas presents an interpretive challenge that I have chosen to undertake here by separating my analyses of text and music in order to emphasize this discord. Ultimately, though, the texts and music are not diametric opposites, as I find that the restrained neoclassical aesthetic of Tailleferre’s musical settings of the Six chansons françaises in fact deepens the irony and detachment of the texts. In addition to augmenting the expected detached reaction to trauma, this neoclassical restraint is reflective of a rhetorical strategy of expression through opposition employed by Tailleferre’s contemporaries.

The six poems in this set may be called a cycle because of their common theme, although no clear narrative or shared character connects them. Similarly, the six songs achieve cyclic unity through stylistic relationships even though they are not linked melodically. All six of Tailleferre’s songs reflect the aesthetics of their classical lineage in their melody-plus-accompaniment texture; their generally simple and predictable phrasing, form, and harmonies; and, their unassuming presence. All of

47 Traditional harmonic means for defining a song cycle are also evident in the key relationships between the first and last songs, in A minor and C major respectively.
the songs are structured around four-bar phrases; most have regular meters; all have clear binary, ternary, or strophic forms, and, all are based in functional, diatonic harmonies, though understated dissonances resulting from chord extensions are abundant. The opening eight-measure phrase from song six illustrates these characteristics (see Figure 29). The melody outlines tonic and dominant harmonies, while the piano peppers the simple harmonies with some parallel chromatic motion.

**Figure 29: Six chansons françaises VI. “Les trois présents” measures 1-8**

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The opening phrase of song six also draws attention to the most prevalent musical technique common to all of the songs: pedal tones. Each of the songs employs pedal tones on multiple occasions for at least four measures at a time, but often up to eight, ten, or twelve measures. Song two of Tailleferre’s cycle is the most extreme in its employment of this technique, using a tonic pedal almost throughout (see Figure 30).

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48 Song two is probably more precisely through-composed, though its brevity and the appearance in the vocal line at the end of the work of a distinctive motive from the beginning give it a rounded binary sense.
These two songs are also illustrative of the more lyrical songs in the cycle. In fact, the six songs alternate between lively and lyrical modes: songs one, three, and five have a lively character, while songs two, four, and six are more lyrical in style. The two examples discussed thus far employ Tailleferre’s lyrical style, but similar characteristics and techniques are also prevalent in the lively songs. The three lively songs are also rife with quick recitativo-like patter, requiring meticulous enunciation.

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49 While the metronome markings do not necessarily reflect these styles (for example, the lively third song at $\texttt{=96}$ is metronomically much slower than the lyrical sixth song at $\texttt{=126}$), the songs’ meters do align with their alternating styles. The first, third, and fifth songs – the lively songs – use duple divisions of the bar as is common to up-tempo works (marches, etc.), while the second, fourth, and sixth songs – the lyrical songs – use longer measures (triple and common times).
from the singer. Song five, with its near-monotone vocal line is the most exaggerated instance of this practice (see Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Six chansons françaises V. “On a dit mal de mon ami” measures 1-14**

This patter is a distinctive feature of the cycle: it gives the work an edgy vitality. My deliberate choice of somewhat neutral terms – lively and lyrical – to describe the two contrasting styles should be clarified at this point. In fact, the lively songs are more than just that; they are biting, urgent, insistent. The text moves with the quick pace of someone who has so much to say that she trips over her words trying to get them out. In Tailleferre and Bathori’s recording, Bathori highlights this, conveying a sense of breathlessness (no doubt deliberate, rather than genuine) as she reels towards the end of each phrase. Coupled with the sharp wit of the texts, these lively songs become that much more pointed. In fact, on the Bathori and Tailleferre
recording, this fifth song betrays the most marked affect from the performers. In the scant forty-two-second-long song, Bathori’s enunciation progresses from crisp to spitting, such that the final two lines, “And, even if they were all mad, / I would go to bed with him!” are remarkably emphatic. Additionally, the piano’s brief interludes and postlude, with their repetitive descending scales, add a sense of haste to the already hurried song, and Tailleferre performs them more forcefully than any of the other brief piano solos in the collection.

For the most part, in these lively songs, their strophic structures and recitative vocal lines leave little room for word painting. Instead of highlighting textual meaning, Tailleferre focuses on syntax and scansion and general atmosphere. But on one occasion in the first song, Tailleferre highlights two particularly intriguing words. On “Sans liberté?” (“Without freedom?”), the piano holds a single chord, and the singer enjoys a turning flourish that is completely out of character with the rest of the song (see Figure 32). Choosing these particular words to emphasize, Tailleferre almost encourages autobiographical analysis. While Tailleferre may or may not have felt sexually stifled by her marriage as the poem’s text implies, she expresses in her memoir how her marriage stifled her creatively, and this could, as I have already pointed out with all of the mal mariée texts, also be interpreted as commenting on the lack of freedom for women generally in marriage.50

If the lively songs are in fact biting and witty, the lyrical songs are smooth, sincere, and melancholy, containing none of the spiciness of the lively songs. If strong dominant-tonic motion at cadential points in the lively songs makes the singer’s urgency even more emphatic, in the lyrical songs suspensions, deceptive cadences, dovetailing of cadences with phrase openings, imperfect cadences, and chromatic and modal inflections are employed to create a languorous, rather than decisive mood. The final stanza, and especially the piano postlude, of the fourth song illustrates this, employing localized chromaticism in the piano, tonicizing the flattened mediant rather than the dominant (measures 37-8), and, though a brief dominant appears in passing on the last chord of measure 41, ending with a plagal cadence (see Figure 33).
But at this point I fear that my description of the lively songs as biting and the lyrical songs as melancholy is still not precise enough (though it does give the reader a glimpse into my own experience with the work after repeated listenings – my
progression in this paper from the benign lively and lyrical to the distinct biting and melancholy reflects my own changing understanding of the songs. Rather, both extremes are reined in by an all-encompassing musical subtlety. The songs may be pointed, but they are not angry, they are not demanding, they are not spiteful.

Tailleferre’s music has a uniformity and objectivity achieved through an adherence to classical textures, proportions, and harmonies; a restraint from virtuosity; and, an employment of similar compositional techniques, namely pedal tones and vocal patter. This objectivity operates within the alternating lively and lyrical, or biting and melancholy styles to dull their impact and lessen their contrasts. Just like their texts, the songs do not convey the extremes of emotion that one might expect to be associated with infidelity (or shooting or miscarriage). Again, Herman’s description of a detached reaction to the traumatic experience is pertinent. But with respect to the music, its detachment comes not only from Tailleferre’s response to trauma, but also from the pervasive objectivity of her characteristic neoclassical aesthetic.

Neoclassicism generally is a reaction against the perceived excesses of emotion – decadence – in various fin-de-siècle aesthetics. As Scott Messing and Richard Taruskin describe, French neoclassicism was explained as (and praised for) avoiding the emotional or psychological foundations of German music.51 Messing recounts critic Boris de Schloezer’s descriptions of French neoclassicism, including one from a 1923 review of works by Milhaud, Poulenc, Auric, and Tailleferre: “Pure music, stripped of all psychological meaning; the sentiments, emotions, and desires, which

are at the root of all artistic creation and which try to exteriorize themselves and to manifest themselves freely, are here enclosed in a rigorous form which subdues them, purifies them, and gives them an exclusively resonant existence.”52 With this and many other reviews, especially of her 1923 ballet *Le marchand d’oiseaux* and her 1924 Piano Concerto, Tailleferre’s music is firmly understood as neoclassical.53 As a result, then, both the actual attributes of Tailleferre’s neoclassical style – regular phrases, simple textures, and (relatively) predictable harmonies – and the assumption of non-emotionality in neoclassicism generally could have precluded expression or perception of emotion.

From the viewpoint of trauma, Tailleferre’s restrained neoclassicism aligns with the opacity that Pilzer theorizes as negotiating a balance between secrecy and disclosure. This opacity could also be interpreted as similar to a rhetorical strategy employed by some of Tailleferre’s contemporaries and explained by Vladimir Jankélévitch as expression through opposition. Jankélévitch focuses on Ravel and Satie, both mentors to Tailleferre:

In *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, expressing himself *a contrario*, Ravel composes five serene, smiling dances for five friends killed in the war. A musician who expresses himself this way, in reverse, is also confiding in us, but in an indirect or oblique way, which one must interpret counterintuitively.

Sometimes music does not express ‘the opposite’ but ‘something else.’ This is the function of humor and the puzzling ruse in Satie. Humor is always good as an excuse: it is the alibi and the pretext that allows one to say serious things in


53 In part, my dissertation research on *Le marchand d’oiseaux* in the previous two chapters analyzes the neoclassical elements of the ballet’s score and details its reception. This ballet marks a turn in Tailleferre’s oeuvre – and certainly in perceptions of her style – away from a more impressionistic approach and towards neoclassicism.
similarly to ravel and satie, tailleferre’s songs ultimately contain serious messages about marriage, sex, and love presented with subtlety and amusement. jane fulcher has a similar interpretation of tailleferre’s music. also using roberts’s descriptions of women’s identities in post-war france, fulcher finds that tailleferre could not afford to adopt the same overt rebelliousness as her male colleagues in le six. being a female composer was already defiant enough, and thus, her goal was to fit in rather than to stand out. tailleferre’s challenge would have been to negotiate between the two expectations for her as a female composer: she could either be rebelliously feminist or traditionally feminine. she manages to avoid the two stereotypes by “consciously, ironically, and trenchantly adapting techniques of her colleagues to comment on them.” fulcher’s example is the six chansons françaises, “where [tailleferre] both invokes and undermines the expected female persona, with a disquieting and yet humorous effect.” it is certainly plausible that tailleferre could have comprehended her precarious position as a female composer and used her musical style to negotiate a balance between rebellion and submission. perhaps she recognized that the personal nature of the texts and their relationship to her individual

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55 Fulcher, Composer as Intellectual, 193-5.
56 Ibid., 194.
57 Ibid. Fulcher’s very brief analysis of just the first song is focused on finding likenesses between tailleferre’s music and that of her mentors, in this case satie and stravinsky. tailleferre’s biographers have briefly analyzed the songs as well. potter likens tailleferre’s phrasing and modulations to poulenc and focuses her attention on a particular modulatory technique by ascending tones and semitones. mitgang explains very briefly a few characteristics of the melody and accompaniment. she also notes the alternating faster and slower feels within the collection. potter, “germaine tailleferre,” 116 and mitgang, “germaine tailleferre,” 196-7.
experiences run contrary to the dominant aesthetics of her fellow modernist and avant-garde composers. Had she composed music that accentuated the content of the poems, she would have risked singling herself out from her colleagues, highlighting her gender, and illuminating her modern woman status, with a public announcement – on the concert stage, no less – of her inability to find satisfaction in her traditional marital role. In this case, Tailleferre’s neoclassical style could be viewed as deliberately masking the autobiographical elements of the texts as a necessary strategy to avoid accusations that her professional successes were responsible for her marital failures. Thus, in reading the songs as simultaneously conforming to and critiquing expectations of femininity, Fulcher’s interpretation of the songs is remarkably gratifying. Unfortunately, though, Fulcher’s explanation as to why the songs are illustrative of Tailleferre’s efforts to negotiate expectations of women falls flat. Rather than mining the obviously rich textual and biographical resources of the songs, Fulcher instead only briefly and unsatisfyingly credits Tailleferre’s dissonances and sudden modulations alone.\(^{58}\) I argue, though, that Tailleferre’s success at balancing femininity and feminism in the *Six chansons françaises* is only evident if textual and musical elements are understood in combination: the feminism of the texts and the objectivity of the music combine for a superficially tantalizing, but ultimately harmless collection of songs.

\(^{58}\) I also struggle to accept Fulcher’s understanding of Tailleferre’s awareness of her position. Fulcher writes: “Aware of her dual marginality as both avant-garde and a woman, she mingled the formal experimentation of the former with a critique of female identity that we would today call ‘feminist.’ For Tailleferre realized that for her male colleagues such ‘transgression’ or questioning of fixed meaning and ‘paternal authority’ was a conscious choice, while for her it was inherent in her ‘otherness,’ or alterity,” 194. Fulcher may very well be correct in her interpretation of what Tailleferre did, but her having had full consciousness of her various outsider statuses is impossible to state definitively.
“Pleasant Enough Trifles:” Tracing Reception

Critical responses to the *Six chansons françaises* over the past near-decade conform to my reading, revealing that the controversial nature of the texts and their autobiographical connections were masked under a veil of neutrality. Reviews reflect assumptions that Tailleferre’s subtle, restrained music is a natural result of her gender – her “femininity” – consistently failing to acknowledge details in Tailleferre’s choices of music and text that would suggest a critique of expectations of femininity and womanhood consistent with the post-war figure of the modern woman. No reviewers mention the songs’ autobiographical elements (though I cannot confirm it, I doubt any reviewers would have been aware of an explicit personal connection), nor do they question the nature of the particular texts. Few even notice the content of the texts at all, and those who do describe them in a way that suggests they are not taken seriously.

Reviewers of 1929 and early 1930s performances used words like fresh, spontaneous, and delicate to describe the songs. A couple of sentences from René Lévy’s 1930 review in the prominent journal *La revue musicale* shows the general attitude towards the songs and the ignorance on the part of the reviewers towards the textual content: “It is possible that these six songs ‘are nothing special,’ and this is perhaps their most beautiful quality. They are simple, without pastiche, and [they] emit a perfume of romance, which is exquisite.”

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premiere admires the songs’ clarity and grace and gives subtle hints that there may be more to them:

For her part, Mme Tailleferre offered us a series of *Six Chansons Françaises* that Mme Ritter-Ciampi sang with authority and in a justifiably strong manner. Mme Tailleferre is not the enemy of the voice, far from it. She only charges it with lines shaped with clarity, having priority over polyphonic experiments. Her song has grace, a distinguished and smiling grace which is not abused by corrosive harmonies, or tarnished by excessive brilliance from the orchestra. It is clear, spiritual, with, at times, a charming touch of tenderness. *Mon Mari m’a diffamée* seemed to me the most successful of the six pieces, for its alert and caustic twist.\(^60\)

Purporting to know the composer personally and hearing a pastoral quaintness in her songs, another reviewer writes:

The songs by Mme Germaine Tailleferre are of a lively, alert, fresh, and spiritual musicality, of a frank and elegant melodic line, simple and natural like the cornflower and the poppy in the fields. This music, finely orchestrated, is a faithful reflection of the agreeable personality of the author. Mme Ritter-Ciampi elaborated with skill this bouquet of wildflowers. [A] great success for the interpreter and the happy author.\(^61\)

It is entirely possible, though, that his association of pretty music with a sympathetic composer is simply another example of the expectation of women, rather than an indication of a personal friendship. The few reviewers that appear to recognize the potentially controversial elements of the texts tend to mention it only in passing. One

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\(^60\) Paul Le Flem, “À l’orchestre symphonique de Paris,” *Comoedia* 24, 6325 (12 May 1930), 2. “Pour sa part, Mme Tailleferre nous offrait une série de *Six Chansons Françaises* que Mme Ritter-Ciampi chanta avec autorité et dans un sentiment fort juste. Mme Tailleferre n’est pas l’ennemie de la voix, loin de là. Elle ne lui confie que des lignes dessinées avec netteté, ayant droit de priorité sur les recherches polyphoniques. Son chant a de la grâce, une grâce distinguée et souriante dont n’abuse aucune harmonie corrosive, que ne ternit aucun éclat d’orchestre excessif. C’est clair, spirituel, avec, par moments, une charmante pointe de tendresse. *Mon Mari m’a diffamée* m’a semblé la plus réussie de ces six pièces, pour son tour alerte et mordant.”

explains, “…the texts are, incidentally, more daring than the music,”\textsuperscript{62} and another
 describes “passages of constant freshness, alternately impulsive and mischievous.”\textsuperscript{63}

Reviewers of more recent 1980s recordings are hardly more perceptive with
 regards to the texts. One writes of the songs: “They’re pleasant enough trifles, spiced
 up with the occasional ‘wrong’ note.”\textsuperscript{64} Another: “Tailleferre…wrote in a distinctly
 simple and unaffected manner. Lyric soprano Carole Bogard…here makes a valiant
 effort with songs rarely of emotional depth.”\textsuperscript{65} One critic published separate reviews
 of two different recordings. In the first, he at least indicates recognition of the source
 and vague genre of the poems, writing of “the breezy songs of Germaine Tailleferre,
 who delighted in late medieval erotic poems.”\textsuperscript{66} But his later review confirms a
 superficial reading: “Mme Tailleferre’s impudent, lighthearted sensuality continues to
delight.”\textsuperscript{67} And finally, in this thorough yet not exhaustive compilation of reviewers
 who grasp only the humorous aspects of Tailleferre’s songs: “In Tailleferre, we come

\textsuperscript{62} Felix Longaud, \textit{Le monde musical} (31 December 1930). “Mme Ritter-Ciampi fit acclamer…les
 spirituelle \textit{Chansons francaises} de Germaine Tailleferre (dont le texte est d’ailleurs plus hardi que la
 musique).”

\textsuperscript{63} Claude Alomont, “Les grands concerts: orchestre symphonique de Paris; Mardi 6 Mai 1930,”
\textit{Ménestrel} (May 1930). “Il y avait deux ‘premières auditions’: \textit{Six chansons fran\c{c}aises} de Mlle
 Germaine Tailleferre, pages d’une constante fraîcheur, tour à tour primesautières et malicieuses,
auxquelles Mme Ritter-Ciampi donna leur juste sens, et \textit{Divertissement Sarrasin} de M. Henri Martelli.”

\textsuperscript{64} James Miller, “Collections: Vocal,” \textit{Fanfare} 6 (September 1982): 402-3.


 over Tailleferre as the preceding phrases indicate: “Poulenc was one of the outstanding exponents of the
 French art song. \textit{Le Tombeau}, perhaps the finest song on this record, exemplifies his qualities: a
 ravishing melody punctuated with dissonances, ending with a magical modulation for the singer. The
 piece is leagues away from the breezy songs of Germaine Tailleferre, who delighted in late medieval
 erotic poems.”

to a composer without pretensions, yet remarkably gifted in the pointing of words, with a jolly streak of ribaldry.”

Only long-time music critic Robert P. Commanday, in response to a performance of the *Six chansons françaises* at Mills College in 2001, expresses clear comprehension of the political nature of the texts. But, in understanding and presumably accepting the songs’ feminist messages and in reading them as unconcealed assertions, Commanday then finds the incompatibility of Tailleferre’s musical settings evidence of her lesser talent. Having already discussed works by Milhaud, Poulenc, and Honegger on this program titled “Darius Milhaud and *Les Six*,” he turns to Tailleferre:

[Sara] Ganz and [Belle] Bullwinkle also presented a song set by the female member of *Les Six*, Germaine Tailleferre. Her *Six Chansons françaises*, based on ironic texts from the 18th (Lataignant and Voltaire), 17th (Sarasin) and 15th centuries, have a witty sardonic and sharply feminist twist that Ganz made the most of. The vocal parts are persuasive, while the accompaniment is undistinguished, consisting of empty or mechanical figuration which might have been better served had Bullwinkle played it down, played it for sheen and pastel coloring.

Aside from the pleasure of hearing the up-front feminism of the longest surviving member of the group (Tailleferre died in 1983 at 90), this set and the little else of her music that is performed hardly justifies her being grouped with Milhaud, Poulenc and Honegger, and never mind Georges Auric and Louis Durey. But for a chance notion of a critic, history would have remembered *Les Trois* or possibly *Les Trois et cie*.

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69 Robert Commanday, “Revisiting, and Rethinking *Les Six*” *San Francisco Classical Voice* (14 September 2001), accessed 31 September 2010, [http://www.sfcv.org/arts_rev/six_9_18_01.php](http://www.sfcv.org/arts_rev/six_9_18_01.php). While Milhaud is often singled out as the most prominent member of *Les Six*, in this case the title of the concert is chosen because of Milhaud’s faculty position at Mills College from 1940 to 1971 and because of the concert’s sponsorship by the 1945 Darius Milhaud Performance Endowment. Otherwise, Commanday is part of a long line of scholars and critics who hierarchize members of *Les Six*, generally putting Durey and Tailleferre at the bottom of the list.
Commanday’s assertion that Tailleferre’s talents were somehow lacking in comparison to her colleagues is hardly new, as I show in chapter two. Setting aside subjective assessments of talent, Commanday’s critique – and the concert itself – perpetuates the seeming inseparability of Tailleferre and Les Six. As I argue, in part, over the remainder of this chapter and in my dissertation as a whole, as important as Les Six was to Tailleferre’s music and career, distancing her from the group – resituation her in gynocentric social and professional networks – allows for a more thorough understanding of her music and career.

*Les six femmes: Examining a Gynocentric Network*

The community of women that Tailleferre created through the dedicatees of the *Six chansons françaises* is an example of a gynocentric network and an alternative network to Les Six. In dedicating her songs to six individual women, Tailleferre can be understood to surmount the third step of Herman’s recovery process, whereby the survivor reconnects with her community. In providing as much detail on the six women as I do here (as much detail as I am able), I aim to legitimize this group of women as an alternative network to the male composers of Les Six. Additionally, I show that Tailleferre selects dedicatees who may have both provided her with support through her trauma and offered models of strength in her recovery. Using Pilzer’s work on Korean survivors of sexual slavery, I illustrate that the dedicatees could function as a supportive community for Tailleferre, even when she was alone.
Each of the songs bears its own dedication to a friend of Tailleferre.\textsuperscript{70} The details of some of the relationships between the women are difficult to ascertain, but each was undoubtedly close to Tailleferre. Song two, “Souvent un air de vérité,” is dedicated to Charlie [Charlotte] Tailleferre, Germaine’s sister-in-law (her brother’s wife; Germaine was the youngest of three boys and two girls).\textsuperscript{71}

Three of the dedicatees were musicians and friends with whom Tailleferre would play both privately and publicly. Tailleferre recalls in her memoir being introduced to Marianne Singer, the dedicatee of “On a dit mal de mon ami,” in 1917 while in the Atlantic-coast town of Biarritz.\textsuperscript{72} Tailleferre notes that Singer was Jean Cocteau’s cousin, though Tailleferre had yet to meet Cocteau himself. Calling Singer “a delightful friend,” Tailleferre remembers them spending much time playing the piano and singing together.\textsuperscript{73} Tailleferre dedicated “Les trois présents” to singer Suzanne Peignot (1895-1993), whom she likely came to know in the late 1910s or

\textsuperscript{70} The majority of compositions written during her marriage were dedicated to her husband. During her marriage, Tailleferre wrote eight compositions; four of the compositions included dedications, three to Barton (the fourth composition contained two dedications, both to men). Prior to her marriage, Tailleferre had made ten dedications to women in eight different compositions. Of Tailleferre’s eight other multi-movement works written before the \textit{Six chansons françaises}, only two contain individual dedications for each movement. Therefore, the \textit{Six chansons françaises} are not unusual among Tailleferre’s previous output in being dedicated to women; however, they are somewhat unusual, though not entirely unexpected, in including individual dedications for each song. Data gathered from Orledge, “Catalogue.”

\textsuperscript{71} Charlie is named as Tailleferre’s sister-in-law in Georges Hacquard, \textit{Germaine Tailleferre: la dame des Six} (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998), 92, but I have found no more information about her. Mitgang, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 179, counts Tailleferre siblings.

\textsuperscript{72} I have not been able to find Singer’s birth and death dates. Also, while their common last names suggest a familial connection, I have not been able to find a relation between Marianne Singer and the Princesse de Polignac, née Winnaretta Singer.

\textsuperscript{73} Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 23, “une amie délicieuse.”
early 1920s, as she performed many works by members of Les Six.\textsuperscript{74} Peignot would perform the Six chansons françaises in 1930.\textsuperscript{75} Marie-Blanche de Polignac (1898-1958), the dedicatee of “Vrai Dieu, qui m’y confortera,” is related by marriage to the Princesse de Polignac. Née Marguerite de Pietro, Marie-Blanche was the daughter of fashion designer Jeanne Lanvin. A talented singer (she sang in Nadia Boulanger’s vocal ensemble\textsuperscript{76}) and the future head of her mother’s fashion design company, Marguerite was rebaptized Marie-Blanche de Polignac upon her 1924 marriage to the Comte Jean de Polignac, nephew to the Princesse de Polignac.\textsuperscript{77} Tailleferre recalls in her memoir spending a vacation in Bretagne with various members of the Polignac family, including Jean and Marie-Blanche, during which she and Marie-Blanche, whom she calls “an admirable musician,” would play together often.\textsuperscript{78}

The remaining two dedicatees, along with their husbands, were more prominent in Tailleferre’s life in the second half of the 1920s as friends of both her and Barton. Bernard Boutet de Monvel (1884-1949), husband of “Mon mari m’a diffamée” dedicatee Delfina (1896-1974), receives much attention in Tailleferre’s memoir. As already noted, he was one of two painters who accompanied her to the party at which she met Barton. The day after the party, Tailleferre recalls rushing to

\textsuperscript{74} Suzanne Peignot’s (and Marie-Blanche de Polignac’s) close relationship with Francis Poulenc is documented in Susan Joanne Musselman, “Cohesion of Composer and Singer: the Singers of Poulenc” (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2007).

\textsuperscript{75} At a musicological conference in Liège. See Catherine Miller, Jean Cocteau, Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Claudel et le groupe des six: rencontres poético-musicales autour des mélodies et des chansons (Sprimont: Mardaga 2003), 114; Robert Shapiro, Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 51.

\textsuperscript{76} Carl B. Schmidt, Entrancing Muse: A Documented Biography of Francis Poulenc (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001), 483.

\textsuperscript{77} Kahan, Music’s Modern Muse, 238.

\textsuperscript{78} Tailleferre and Robert, “Mémoires,” 43, “une admirable musicienne.” It is unclear exactly when this vacation occurred, though it was likely in 1920 or 1921.
Bernard’s house to seek his advice about Barton’s marriage proposal; he urged her to marry Barton immediately, giving him a glowing reference and requesting to act as witness at their wedding:

The next day, I hastened to Bernard Boutet de Monvel’s home to ask him what I should do, and here is what he told me: “Get married immediately, this can offer you the best. Barton is the most exquisite American that I have ever known. I want to be your witness.”

After their marriage, Barton and Tailleferre hosted Bernard often at their home during evening gatherings. Though Delfina was likely a part of these events, as she and Bernard were married soon after World War I, she is only mentioned in Tailleferre’s memoir when Tailleferre sought her assistance when Barton charged her with making tapestries for their Paris home. Despite including several beautiful portraits of her, the illustrated biography of Bernard describes Delfina only briefly (using her maiden name): “Delfina Edwards-Bello [is] a young Chilean heiress who has as an ancestor the South-American writer and politician Andrès Bello.”

Finally, “Non, la fidélité…” is dedicated to Denise Bourdet (1892-1967), a journalist, writer, and salonnière. Her books outline a fascinating sort of “who’s who” of her and her husband’s social network, but unfortunately do not seem to include

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79 Ibid., 49. “Le lendemain, je me précipitai chez Bernard Boutet de Monvel pour lui demander ce que je devais faire, et voilà ce qu’il me dit: ’Mariez-vous tout de suite, c’est ce qui peut vous arriver de mieux. Barton est l’Américain le plus exquis que j’aie [sic] jamais rencontré. Je veux être votre témoin.’”

80 His biography does not give a marriage date, though it was likely around 1920. See Stéphane-Jacques Addade, Bernard Boutet de Monvel (Paris: Les editions de l’Amateur, 2001), 193.


82 Addade, Bernard Boutet de Monvel, 193. “…Delfina Edwards-Bello – une jeune héritière chilienne ayant pour aïeul l’écrivain et homme politique sud-américain Andrès Bello…”
mention of Tailleferre or Barton. She and her husband, Édouard (1887-1945, a dramatist known for addressing sexual and psychological themes such as lesbianism in his 1926 play La prisonnière) were friends with Tailleferre and Barton both in New York and in France. In fact, Édouard encouraged Barton to purchase a home near him in Sanary (southern France). Living close to each other, the two couples would often take walks together. Though Tailleferre does not directly credit the Bourdets with helping her during the subsequent shooting and miscarriage, she implies that they may have been of assistance during this difficult time (and their close proximity alone makes this a safe assumption).

Detailing the relationships of these six women to Tailleferre is challenging enough – the information provided thus far was the result of hours of online searching and examinations of numerous secondary sources, eventually resulting in this still rather incomplete picture of Tailleferre’s network of female acquaintances. (I wish, for example, to be able to identify Delfina Boutet de Monvel apart from her husband and male relatives.) But finding direct connections between the six women and Tailleferre and the Six chansons françaises is even more complex. In the absence of any personal correspondence between Tailleferre and the six women, I am left wondering why Tailleferre choose to dedicate these particular songs to these particular women, and whether these women had experienced marital problems as well – it is tempting to

84 Édouard Bourdet, La prisonnière (Paris: Librarie théâtrale, 1928).
85 Kellner, The Last Dandy, 189.
87 Ibid., 59-60.
think that the six dedicatees shared Tailleferre’s condition of being *mal mariée*. But, without more information on these women and their interactions with Tailleferre, I cannot provide sufficient answers. The furthest I can venture is with two hypotheses regarding Denise Bourdet and Marie-Blanche de Polignac. If Denise Bourdet was one of the first people from whom Tailleferre sought council and comfort after the shooting and her miscarriage, Tailleferre’s dedication to her may have been in thanks. In the case of Marie-Blanche de Polignac, Sylvia Kahan (in her biography of the Princesse de Polignac) tells of the unhappiness she experienced during her first marriage in the early 1920s, at a time when she was falling in love with Jean de Polignac. Perhaps, then, Marie-Blanche in fact could sympathize with Tailleferre’s difficult marriage. It also may be pertinent to locate Tailleferre and the dedicatees within the Princesse de Polignac’s circle. Though Kahan describes the Princesse’s circle (and salon) as relatively more closeted compared to that of the contemporary literary salon of Natalie Barney, Kahan also sees it as a “comfort zone” for both the Princesse and her gay and lesbian friends. Thus while Tailleferre’s songs were not commissioned by the Princesse (who did commission her first piano concerto from 1924) and while they may or may not have been performed in the Princesse’s salon (I have found no indication either way), the Princesse’s homosexual community at least offered a safe space within which to question marriage and heteronormativity.

Even if the details of Tailleferre’s relationships with these women remain elusive, the community of women that she created through these songs is evident. In

89 Ibid., xx, 226.
performing publishing, and recording the *Six chansons françaises*, Tailleferre cements and proclaims her friendships with these six women. Though the public nature of these declarations of friendship may be unusual, Tailleferre’s efforts to strengthen her personal relationships are in fact a key element in recovering from trauma. Herman places much emphasis on the importance of relationships in the recovery process. Reengaging friendships helps the trauma survivor build her own confidence and learn to trust others again.90

The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores her humanity.91

Herman is talking about the kind of community that is created through group therapy, through sharing painful and shameful secrets with others who can commiserate.

Pilzer’s work with Korean survivors of sexual slavery examines this in great detail, as he visits women at the House of Sharing, a live-in community founded in 1992 for survivors.92 At the House of Sharing, recovery through community is central to the place and its mission. Its museum educates visitors by sharing deeply private and intimate experiences. Its residents seek healing and comfort through sharing with each other. Pilzer discusses a new resident to the House of Sharing who used music as a means of forming connections: “She sang in small groups with other women; she sang when asked by volunteers in private, and she attended song parties that volunteers would put on for the women and themselves. Over time she began to share more and

90 Herman, *Trauma*, 197.
91 Ibid., 214.
more of her favorite songs with me, and we sang together. She enjoyed how, in the act of sharing, something personal became something that bound us together." This kind of organized and formalized group therapy was undoubtedly not available for Tailleferre in the 1930s, but as Pilzer explains, the therapeutic benefits of a sense of community could be found even outside of the group. For this same woman, music created a social connection even when she was not around people. For her, silence was both lonely and traumatic, as it provided an opportunity for her to remember her painful experiences. She would fill the silence with song – in fact, with songs of a traditional genre associated with socializing, remembering, recovery, and identity – thereby creating a sense of community even when she was alone:

She was trying to replace the terrible incoherence of traumatic memory with the coherent sociality of sound and music. Since she thought of songs like people, she grasped popular songs and made them her own family, so that she might not be alone and vulnerable. Song could provide a sense of social connectedness without necessitating contact with others, because it was itself like a person, and because it was about relationships.

I posit that Tailleferre’s Six chansons françaises and their dedicatees functioned similarly. Tailleferre may not have had a House of Sharing or group therapy, but she sought a similar connectedness through her songs and their dedicatees. In the initial composition stage, in the period immediately after the shooting and miscarriage, she might have used her songs to dispel silence and loneliness and manage her traumatic thoughts through music’s inherent sociality. But as the songs were published,

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93 Ibid., 122.
94 Ibid., 118-20.
95 Ibid., 119-20.
performed, reviewed, and recorded in 1930 and 1931, her gynocentric social network became realized.

**Music as Therapy**

In closing my chapter on Tailleferre’s *Six chansons françaises*, it is helpful for me to recall my experience with these songs in my research. My initial approach involved situating the songs within the gynocentric network that their dedicatees reveal, as I have just done. In doing so, however, it became clear that the function of the group – as a tool in Tailleferre’s recovery process – was as interesting (if not more so) than their mere existence, and that this should be the framework for my narrative and analysis. As a result, then, I conclude my chapter here with some reflections on the songs and their connections to trauma theory.

I show the songs to occupy a central place in Tailleferre’s recovery process, providing an opportunity for her to address the necessary facets of recovery, especially narrating the trauma and reconnecting with community. The therapeutic powers of art and music in response to trauma are now well documented, with music and art therapy growing as fields of practice and study. Music therapists associate creativity with empowerment and anxiety control. “Creating something new is an act of defiance in the face of destruction… Some of those who have successfully negotiated [recovery] describe arriving at new understandings and insights by processing events creatively.”¹⁹⁶ Feminist art therapists have theorized two functions of art as therapy:

The practice of art therapy may take place on two different levels. One is the personal: the use of art, writing or performance by individuals experiencing

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psychological or physical trauma, distress or social disadvantage in the attempt to express visually or verbally their embodied sensations and emotions. This art may not be seen by others (beyond the therapist or perhaps others in a therapy group); its purpose is purely self-expression and catharsis. The practice of art therapy at this level, therefore, tends not to challenge the broader social and cultural conditions in which the individual finds herself constructed as ‘other’. Indeed, such practices may actually work to individualise social and economic disadvantage by focusing the person’s problems at the level of her personal biography and personality. The other use of art therapy is the overtly political, in which art is used to express and critique the socio-cultural context in which pain, illness, disability or social stigmatization or inequality are experienced. This type of art is primarily designed for public display in the attempt to instigate social change. It may critique current visual and linguistic representations, seeking to overturn them or alter them. Activist art seeks to challenge dominant practices in the medical or psychiatric treatment of illness and disability, or to draw attention to the ways in which certain social groups such as women, the poor, the disabled, gay men and lesbians, the elderly, the unemployed and immigrants are routinely stigmatized and disadvantaged in the dominant culture.97

These understandings of the therapeutic functions of music and art, however, are conceived from a contemporary standpoint, where group therapy and expressions of individual trauma are (arguably) socially acceptable. I view my research on Tailleferre’s *Six chansons françaises* as offering a historical precedent to organized art and music therapy. While she may not have been able to articulate or understand the position that music occupied in her recovery process, and while the songs do not fit neatly into either the personal or the political “level” of art therapy, they offered both personal therapy and political critique in a fashion and at a time when neither were consciously recognized. Analyzing them now through the lens of music therapy offers not only a richer understanding of the songs themselves, but also a historical understanding of music as therapy.

Ultimately, just as gynocentrism led to an understanding of the songs and their community within the context of trauma and recovery, so too does the lens of trauma and recovery reveal possibilities for understanding Tailleferre beyond its biographical explanation of the songs’ existence. Thus, my interpretation of Tailleferre’s *Six chansons françaises* presents a web of issues stemming from and extending beyond trauma and recovery. Using Roberts’s work on gender identity in post-war France, I hypothesize the challenges that Tailleferre faced in achieving professional success and personal satisfaction. Analyzing the poetic content and compositional style of the songs, I show that their feminist messages are veiled by Tailleferre’s neoclassical compositional choices and by the understanding of an inherent non-emotiveness in the neoclassical aesthetic. My interpretation of the songs, then, moves well beyond assessments of the collection as mild expressions of feminine sensibility and sensuality that have dominated their reception to this point. Together, this web of issues forms a more thorough understanding of and explanation for Tailleferre’s *Six chansons françaises.*
POSTLUDE

My dissertation begins with a rather saddening historiographical analysis of Tailleferre’s life and career that reveals a persistent devaluing of her music under androcentric value systems. What follows, though, illuminates the exciting and rich historical, biographical, musical, and critical narratives that can be uncovered and created through a gynocentric value system. Whereas Tailleferre’s music is often seen as failing to succeed within androcentric value systems, a gynocentric approach reveals more appropriate measures of valuation, such as tradition, popularity, community, and healing. Furthermore, a gynocentric approach by its very nature uncovers female artists, musicians, dancers, and music consumers who may be left out of or subordinated within androcentric narratives. Approaching Le marchand d’oiseaux from a gynocentric perspective reveals that women were central in the creative and performing teams and that the work was performed within a commercial culture that was increasingly geared towards female consumers. Approaching the Six chansons françaises from a gynocentric perspective reveals a network of women who had both professional and personal significance to Tailleferre. A gynocentric approach, then, is interesting and helpful for the female networks it reveals, and also for allowing the critique of long-standing musicological narratives and the construction of new valuation systems. These new systems debunk traditional dichotomous oppositions, instead valuing the complex interplays between personal and political, feminine and feminist, public and private, popular and modernist. The consequence on scholarly understanding of Tailleferre is a richer picture of her compositional activities apart from Les Six and an appreciation for the complex
personal, professional, and societal issues that she faced in the 1920s. Her status as a woman among men – *Les Six* – was already established (if often misogynistically); my research reveals her status as a woman among women.

The two studies in my dissertation are by no means the only possibilities for gynocentric analyses of Tailleferre’s music. I have mentioned at a couple of points that Tailleferre’s early string quartet was performed by an all-female ensemble. Applying a gynocentric approach to the quartet would pose a new challenge in that it would involve the study of an absolute work, in comparison to the two programmatic works that feature in my dissertation. Additionally, since the quartet was central to Tailleferre’s involvement in *Les Six*, the study would have to situate the gynocentric network of Tailleferre and the four string players within the male-dominated network of *Les Six*. Again, already mentioned, Tailleferre’s 1924 Piano Concerto firmly situates her within the gynocentric network of the Princesse de Polignac, who commissioned the work. Additionally, the Princesse commissioned Tailleferre’s *Ouverture* (1930, revised 1932), which, like the Piano Concerto, has become a central work in Tailleferre’s oeuvre. Sylvia Kahan has already examined the Princesse’s gynocentric network in great detail, making several connections between her and the composer.¹ An examination of the relationships of the two women through the Piano Concerto and the *Ouverture*, however, could reveal more nuances and could situate the Princesse as a vital supporter of Tailleferre’s career. Perhaps a gynocentric study of the concerto and the quartet would liken the Princesse – a generation older than

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Tailleferre – to the composer’s other better-known supporters and mentors, Cocteau, Satie, and Ravel. Additionally, a cursory glance through Robert Orledge’s list of works reveals various dedications to women, and two intriguing (from a gynocentric perspective) works: the four operettas that make up *Du style galant au style méchant* (1955), for their female librettist, Denise Centore, and the chamber opera, *La petite sirène* (1957), for its telling of Hans Christian Andersen’s tale of the little mermaid.² With so many works and so little existing scholarship, the opportunities for future research are seemingly endless.

BACK MATTER
Appendix 1: Le marchand d’oiseaux: Texts and Translations of All Existing Scenarios

1. Scenario in published two-piano score

Dans une petite maison vivent deux soeurs. L’aînée est orgueilleuse, la cadette humble et douce.

In a little house live two sisters. The older is haughty, the younger humble and sweet.

Devant leur porte elles découvrent deux bouquets. Chacune choisit selon son goût: la plus jeune prend celui de fleurs des champs.

In front of their door they discover two bouquets. Each chooses according to her taste: the younger takes for herself the wildflowers.

Et voici que des Enfants de Marie passent qui vont vers l’Église. Des écolières se moquent de leur attitude modeste et les entraînent dans une ronde.

And all of a sudden the Enfants de Marie pass while going towards the church. The schoolgirls mock them for their modest attitude and lead them in a round.

Surgit le marchand d’oiseaux. C’est un jeune étranger. L’aînée le repousse, la cadette lui sourit.

The bird merchant appears suddenly. He is a young stranger. The older dismisses him, the younger smiles at him.

Un inconnu s’approche, richement vêtu. La soeur orgueilleuse est séduite. Mais une écolière espiègle tomber le masque et l’on reconnaît le vieux marchand noir du port.

A richly dressed stranger approaches them. The haughty sister is seduced. But a mischievous schoolgirl pulls off his mask and everyone recognizes the old, black merchant from the port.

La soeur aînée s’enfuit honteuse, tandis que la jeune danse avec son bien-aimé.

The older sister runs away ashamed, while the younger dances with her beloved.

2. Scenario from letter from Tailleferre to Jacques Hébertot, Director of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées

Dans une petite maison vivent deux soeurs. La plus jeune est de cœur humble et doux, l’aînée orgueilleuse et coquette.

In a little house live two sisters. The younger has a humble and sweet heart, the older haughty and flirty.

Pendant leur sommeil on depose à la porte deux bouquets. La servante les découvre,

During their sleep someone leaves on the doorstep two bouquets. The handmaid

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appelle ses maîtresses, elles s'émerveillent devant les fleurs.

Puis chacune choisit selon son humeur, la cadette prend le modeste bouquet des champs.

Et voici que paraissent les Enfants de Marie se rendant à l'Eglise, elles ont des robes raides, blanches, de couronnes fleuries et des rubans bleus.

Elles rencontrent les écolières qui se moquent de leurs yeux baissés, les pour suivent et les entraînent dans la fonde.

Des jardinières passent leurs arrosoirs à la main, des fruits aux plis des tabliers.

Soudain toutes s’arrêtent étonnées, car le marchand d’oiseaux qui vient en balançant ses cages est un jeune étranger.

Il parle aux deux soeurs mais l’aînée le repousse dédaigneusement. La cadette sourit au jeune marchand, caresse les oiseaux et reconnaît avec joie son bouquet aux barreaux de la cage.

De nouveau un inconnu s’approche, richement vêtu et masqué, il séduit la soeur orgueilleuse, celle-ci ravie s’abandonne, quand une écolière espègle coupe soudain les cordons du masque…… Et toutes reconnaissent le vieux marchand noir du port.

La soeur aînée s’enfuit honteuse, poursuivie par les rires, le jeune homme danse avec sa bien aimée, et la ronde moqueuse entraîne le vieux marchand d’oiseaux heureux et grimaçant.

discovers them, calls her mistresses, they marvel before the flowers.

Then each chooses one according to their temperament, the younger taking the modest bouquet of wildflowers.

All of a sudden the Enfants de Marie appear returning to church, they are in their stiff, white dresses, with crowns of flowers and blue ribbons.

They meet the schoolgirls who make fun of their lowered eyes, and who lead them into the background.

The gardeners pass, their watering cans in hand, fruit in the folds of their skirts.

Suddenly everyone stops in surprise, because the bird merchant who comes balancing his cages is a young stranger.

He speaks to the two sisters, but the older dismisses him scornfully. The younger smiles at the young merchant, strokes his birds and recognizes with joy his bouquet attached to the bars of the cage.

Again, a stranger approaches, richly dressed and masked, he captivates the haughty sister, this delights her to abandon, when a mischievous schoolgirl suddenly cuts the ties of his mask…… And everyone recognizes the old, black merchant from the port.

The older sister runs away ashamed, chased by laughter, the young man dances with his beloved, and the mocking round carries away the old bird merchant happy and grimacing.³

³ This final sentence is problematic. It likely should indicate that the old port merchant is carried away grimacing and the bird merchant is happy and dancing with his beloved.
3. Numbered scenario from letter from Tailleferre to Hébertot

No. 1. Le rideau s’ouvre sur la scène sans personnages.
No. 1. The curtain opens on a scene without people.

No. 2. La servante ouvre la fenêtre et découvre les bouquets. 
Gestes de surprise, elle disparaît.
No. 2. The handmaid opens the window and discovers the bouquets. 
Gesturing in surprise, she disappears.

No. 3. She returns with her mistresses, marveling before the flowers. They each choose their bouquet and express their joy in dance. Tender and sweet joy from the younger sister, haughty joy from the older sister.

No. 4. Entrée des Enfants de Marie.
No. 4. Entrance of the Enfants de Marie.

No. 5. Entrée des écolières jeux et danses des deux groupes, ronde (caractères différents.)
No. 5. Entrance of the schoolgirls, games and dances in two groups, round (different characters).

No. 6. Entrée des jardinières.
No. 6. Entrance of the gardeners.

No. 7. Entrance of the young bird merchant, he dances alone offering his birds. (important dance) rebuff from the older sister, disdain. Cheerful welcome from the younger sister.

No. 8. Grande danse des deux amoureux.
No. 8. Important dance of the two lovers.

No. 9. Entrée de l’Inconnu masque, rencontre avec la soeur aînée, leur accord…….(Bref)
No. 9. Entrance of the masked stranger, encounter with the older sister, their harmony…….(Brief)

No. 10. Surprize, rires, l’écolière coupe les cordons du masque. Le vieux marchand noir apparaît. La soeur aînée s’enfuit honteuse, joie, moqueries, les groupes entraînent le vrai marchand d’oiseaux qui a repris ses cages, pendant que le jeune homme danse triomphalement avec sa bien’aimée.
No. 10. Surprise, laughter, the schoolgirls cut the mask’s strings. The old, black merchant appears. The older sister runs away ashamed, joy, mockery, the groups lead the true bird merchant who has picked up his cages once again, while the young man dances triumphantly with his beloved.
4. Cues and titles from published score (italics) and manuscript at Dansmuseet (plain), with corresponding measure numbers indicating placement

| M. 56 | La servante apparaît | The servant appears |
| 59 | geste de surprise | gesture of surprise |
| 60-61 | Elle doit faire sur chaque temps un mouvement de tête allant d’un bouquet à l’autre | She must make time and again a movement of her head going from one bouquet to the other |
| 62 | Elle disparaît | She disappears |
| 72-73 | Elle revient avec les deux soeurs | She returns with the two sisters |
| 82 | La soeur cadette s’approche de son bouquet | The younger sister approaches her bouquet |
| 83 | la soeur ainée de l’autre | the older sister the other |
| 84 | La soeur c’se rapproche l’autre également | The younger sister compares the other equally |
| 85 | enfin la soeur c’se décide | finally the younger sister decides |
| 86 | elle s’avance de plus près et…le prend | she advances closer and…takes it |
| 96-97 | La soeur ainée s’avance et commence une danse | The older sister advances and begins a dance |
| 98 | Danse de la soeur ainée | Dance of the older sister |
| 99 | Danse de la soeur cadette | Dance of the younger sister |
| 153-156 | pendant ces 4 mes – qui scrivent elle doit traverser la scene en faisant des points | during these 4 mm. – which are written she must cross the stage doing [it] on pointe |
| 161 | La soeur ainée danse avec elle | The older sister dances with her |
| 172 | la soeur ainée continue sa danse ridicule | the older sister continues her dance of ridicule |
| 177 | Entrée des Enfants de Marie | Entrance of the Enfants de Marie |

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| 188 | Entrée des Écoliers [sic] | Entrance of the Schoolgirls |
| 223 | Entrée des Jardinières | Entrance of the Gardeners |
| 274 | on entend au loin le MARCHAND D’OISEAUX | everyone hears in the distance the BIRD MERCHANT |
| 276-280 | Les jardinières reprennent leur danse en désordre et sous de nouveau interrompues | The gardeners resume their dance in chaos and with new interruptions |
| 283-284 | Le MARCHAND D’OISEAUX apparaît | The BIRD MERCHANT appears |
| 285 | Danse du Marchand d’Oiseaux | Dance of the Bird Merchant |
| 310-311 | Le MARCHAND D’OISEAUX offre ses oiseaux à la soeur ainée | The BIRD MERCHANT offers his birds to the older sister |
| 313-314 | refus et raillerie de la soeur ainée offre à la soeur cadette qui | refusal and mocking from the older sister |
| 317 | s’avance vers lui en faisant des points… | offers to the younger sister who advances towards him on pointe… |
| 324 | DANSE du Marchand d’oiseaux et de la soeur cadette | DANCE of the Bird Merchant and of the younger sister |
| 359 | Entrée de l’Inconnu | Entrance of the Stranger |
| 371 | Danse grotesque et sentimentale la soeur ainée emerveillie le suit et danse avec lui | Grotesque and sentimental dance the older sister marvels[,] follows him and dances with him |
| 379-380 | l’inconnu est devoilé surprise generale | the stranger is revealed[;] general surprise |
| 389 | Danse final avec tout le corps de Ballet | Final dance with all of the corps de Ballet |
| 508 | Sur l’accord final, tout le ballet doit s’incliner en faisant une réverance jusqu’à terre au public – C’est effet étant très tradition française au XVIII\textsuperscript{me} siecle et dans l’esprit de ce final. | On the final chord, all of the ballet [company] must bow almost to the earth in making reverence to the public – It was a French tradition of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and is in the spirit of this final. |
Appendix 2: Passage on *Le marchand d’oiseaux* from Memoir

Börlin, premier danseur et chorégraphe de la troupe, était un médiocre danseur, mais il témoignait d’une très grande gentillesse et d’une extrême modestie. Aussi était-il toujours ravi quand les auteurs réglaient eux-mêmes la mise en scène et la chorégraphie. Paul Claudel en usait presque entièrement pour *L’Homme et son Désir* dont le début est une des plus belles pages de Darius Milhaud. Pour moi qui n’avais aucune expérience de la danse, c’était mon premier essai: j’étais inquiète, après chaque répétition, de ne constater aucun progrès et surtout de ne voir aucune danse réglée. La première danseuse, Karina [sic] Ari, était peu encourageante; sur le plateau, tout le corps de ballet esquissait quelques pas. Börlin prenait des poses plastiques, se regardait longuement dans une glace, et rien n’arrivait, sauf la répétition générale… dont la date avait été avancée!... Devant une telle inertie, il me fallut donc décider de faire moi-même la chorégraphie, au grand soulagement de Börlin qui n’attendait que cela. Le maître de ballet cherche les pas de quelques mesures, les indique aux danseurs et, de mesure en mesure, on établit une séquence. La danse s’inscrit uniquement dans la mémoire des danseurs. Ignorant tout des pas, n’ayant aucune idée de cette technique, je résolus de faire faire [sic] au moins des mouvements par groupes, afin d’éviter l’horrible spectacle des danseurs disposés en rangs d’oignons et levant tous la jambe en même temps… ce que me proposait Börlin!

Après une nuit de travail, j’arrivai à une répétition et j’expliquai à Karina Ari mon plan du final. Les danseurs, qui attendaient tout de moi, se montrèrent ravis de faire enfin quelque chose mais, comme je n’étais pas danseuse, je provoquais un fou-rire général quand j’essayais d’expliquer ce que je voulais, et que je me livrais à une démonstration. Dans l’enthousiasme et l’inconscience, je me mis à danser ou plutôt à courir d’un bout de la scène à l’autre, soulevant avec mes souliers un nuage de poussière. C’était, pour la joie de tous, un patapoum [sic] tonitruant qui sonnait comme une charge de cavalerie.

J’ai compris, à cette occasion, l’incroyable légèreté des danseurs qui, eux, ne font pas sortir la poussière jusqu’aux cintres! Toutefois, le départ ayant été donné avec l’intelligence et le talent de Karina, nous avons réglé un final enjoué, mouvementé, où tout le plateau, grouillant de couleurs et de rythmes, apportait enfin de la vie à ce ballet qui, dans les premiers jours, semblait plutôt voué à l’immobilité.¹

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Appendix 3: Tailleferre, “Quelques mots de l’une des ‘Six’”

Adapter scrupuleusement le texte musical au caractère de mes personnages si divers, leur tailler un thème mélodique bien ajusté, esquisser tantôt la parodie d’une valse romantique à la Chopin, tantôt celle de toutes les valses romantiques, jusqu’à la viennoise, m’amuser, en un mot, à faire allusion à certaines écoles et, notamment, à celle du dix-huitième avec ses petits ballets légers et pompeux, étincelants de bonne humeur, voilà quelles furent, en vérité, mes intentions écrivant Le Marchand d’Oiseaux, bagatelle composée en un mois, dans laquelle toutes les influences qu’on voulu trouver ne sont que des allusions voulues, préméditées.

J’aurais pu choisir aussi bien les impressionnistes, les nordiques ou les italiens; en vérité, n’avais-je pas le droit de prendre mon plaisir innocent à ces jeux d’écritures?

Si je trouve opportun de faire cette petite déclaration, c’est que l’accueil qui m’a été réservé par la critique me fait plaisir, m’étonne et m’effraie un peu à la fois.

En vérité, je suis heureuse qu’on ait bien voulu remarquer, grâce au talent de Carina Ari et à l’autorité de M. Inghelbrecht, cette oeuvre courte et si hâtivement conçue; j’en conclus - pourquoi ne le dirais-je pas - que les jeunes auteurs ont, aujourd’hui, une chance extraordinaire, chance qu’ils ne possédaient pas avant la guerre.

Il est bien rare qu’un artiste qui a un tout petit peu de talent n’arrive pas, aujourd’hui, à se faire jouer en bénéficiant des facilités que lui accordent tant de concerts symphoniques et d’ensemble musicaux. Ceci me console en pensant qu’il ne dois plus y avoir d’exemple de génies méconnus; de ces compositeurs hâves et chagrins qui noircissent fébrilement leur papier réglé dans la froide et classique mansarde.

Voici ce que j’ai à dire. Ce n’est, comme on le voit, ni un programme, ni une profession de foi. Si le public limité qui connaissait déjà mes oueuvres, a crus voir, dans ce petit ballet, des influences, un assagissement craintif, un retour vers de sévères discipline, qu’il trouve ici mes sentiments, ou, s’il préfère, ma justification. M’étant beaucoup attachée, récemment, à la musique ancienne, j’ai coloré de-ci, de-là, mon oeuvrette de tons effacés, pris aux vieilles palettes, sans croire une second à une évolution de mon tempérament et de mes instincts

Puis, les écoles, les compartiments et les méthodes, tel a toujours été le seul lien qui a, jusqu’ici, réuni étroitement les «six» dont, avec Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc, Satie et Auric, je fais partie.


1 Germaine Tailleferre, “Quelques mots de l’une des ‘Six’,” L’intransigeant (3 June 1923).
Appendix 4: Timeline of Events Surrounding the Six chansons françaises

15 Nov. 1926 Germaine Tailleferre meets Ralph Barton in New York
3 Dec. 1926 GT and RB marry
May 1927 Couple returns to Paris
1927-early 1929 Couple spends much time apart (RB travels to the US often)
10 Apr. 1929 Couple moves into their new house in Sanary (Southern France)
June 1929 GT miscarries after RB attempts to shoot her abdomen
June-Aug. 1929 GT composes Six chansons françaises
15 Nov. 1926 GT dedicates three works from this period to RB
10 Apr. 1929 Couple moves into their new house in Sanary (Southern France)
June 1929 GT miscarries after RB attempts to shoot her abdomen
6 May 1930 Orchestral version premiered
2 Sep. 1930 Piano version performed by dedicatee Suzanne Peignot
29 Nov. 1930 Orchestral version performed
1930 Piano version published by Heugel
20 Apr. 1931 Divorce finalized
20 May 1931 RB commits suicide

Literature on Tailleferre is unreliable and unclear as to many of the events listed above. None of her various biographers includes sufficient detail to construct such a timeline, and the biographers contradict each other in their implied timelines. For example, some biographers imply that the Six chansons françaises were written before the shooting, miscarriage, and divorce. It is clear, though, in examining all of the pertinent sources and selecting the most reliable information from each, that this is not at all the case. I have included footnotes to individual entries in the timeline in order to indicate the source that provides the most reliable information for that entry.

3 Kellner, The Last Dandy, 161
6 Kellner, The Last Dandy, 191.
7 Kellner describes this and the divorce filing as happening in “mid-June.” All of the sources that recount these events are based on Tailleferre’s description in Germaine Tailleferre and Frédéric Robert, “Mémoires à l'emporte-pièce,” Revue internationale de musique française 19 (Feb. 1986): 61.
8 Exactly who filed for divorce and where is somewhat confusing. In her memoirs, Tailleferre says that the friend who helped her leave Sanary for Paris also “made arrangements” with Barton for their


12 At the Salle Pleyel: Gabrielle Ritter-Ciampi, soprano; Orchestre symphonique de Paris, Pierre Monteux, conductor. See Orledge, “Germaine Tailleferre,” 136; Robert Shapiro, *Germaine Tailleferre: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 50. Shapiro references a premiere date of January 1930, but gives no information about the location, performers, etc. Since many aspects of Shapiro’s scholarship are unreliable, I have chosen to depend on Orledge here.


14 At the Théâtre Pigalle: Gabrielle Ritter-Ciampi, soprano; [Concert Siohan orchestra], Robert Siohan, conductor. See Felix Longaud, *Le monde musical* (31 December 1930).


Appendix 5: Six chansons françaises: Texts and Translations

I. “Non, la fidélité…” (“No, faithfulness…”)\(^1\)

Non, non, la fidélité
N’a jamais été qu’une imbécilité.
J’ai quitté par légèreté plus d’une beauté,
Vive la nouveauté!
Mais quoi…la probité!
Tra, la, la, la
Puérilité,
Le serment répété!
Style usité;
A-t-on jamais compté sur un traité
Dicté par la volupté
Sans liberté? la, la, la,
On feint, par vanité, d’être irrité;
L’amant peu regretté
Est invité;
La femme, avec gaîté,
Bientôt s’arrange de son côté.

No, no, faithfulness
Was never anything but stupidity.
I thoughtlessly left more than one beauty,
Long live novelty!
But what…integrity!
Tra, la, la, la
Childishness,
The repeated oath!
Common style;
Has one ever counted on a treaty
Dictated by sensual pleasure
Without freedom? la, la, la,
One feigns, out of vanity, to be irritated;
The lover, slightly missed,
Is invited;
The woman, with cheerfulness,
Soon arranges herself at his side.

II. “Souvent un air de vérité” (“Often an air of truth”)

Souvent un air de vérité
Se mêle au plus grossier mensonge;
Une nuit, dans l’erreur d’un songe,
Au rang des rois j’étais monté.
Je vous aimais alors et j’osais vous le dire.
Les dieux, à mon réveil, ne m’ont pas tout ôté;
Je n’ai perdu que mon Empire.

Often an air of truth
Is mixed with the crudest lie;
One night, in the delusion of a dream,
I had risen to the rank of kings.
I loved you then and I dared to tell you.
The gods, on my awakening, did not take everything;
I lost only my empire.

III. “Mon mari m’a diffamée” (“My husband defamed me”)

Mon mari m’a diffamée
Pour l’amour de mon ami,
De la longue demeurée
Que j’ai faite avecque lui.
Hé! mon ami,

My husband defamed me
Because of the love of my lover,
Because of the long time
That I spent with him.
Hey! my lover,

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\(^1\) I consulted two translations in preparing my own. See translations by John D. Wiser and Natalie Shea included as liner notes in Maria Lagios, *Songs of Les Six* (Spectrum, SR-147, 1982), 33\(^1/3\) rpm, and translations by Laura Decher Wayte and Nathalie Fortin included in the program notes for their performance on 17 October 2010, Campbell Recital Hall, Stanford University, California.
En dépit de mon mari qui me va toujours battant,
Je ferai pis que devant.
Aucunes gens m’ont blâmée,
Disant que j’ai fait ami;
La chose très fort m’agréée,
Mon très gracieux souci.
Hé! mon ami, en dépit de mon mari
Qui ne vaut pas un grand blanc,
Je ferai pis que devant.

Quand je suis la nuit couchée
Entre les bras de mon ami,
Je deviens presque pâmée
Du plaisir que prends en lui.
Hé! mon ami
Plût à Dieu que mon mari
Je ne visse de trente ans!
Nous nous don’rions du bon temps.

Si je perds me renommée
Pour l’amour de mon ami,
Point n’en dois être blâmée,
Car il est coïncé et joli.
Hé! mon ami,
Je n’ai bonjour ni demi
Avec ce mari méchant.
Je ferai pis que devant.

IV. “Vrai Dieu, qui m’y confortera” (“True God, who will comfort me”)

Vrai Dieu, qui m’y confortera
Quand ce faux jaloux me tiendra
En sa chambre seule enfermée?
Mon père m’a donné un vieillard
Qui tout le jour crie:
Hélas! Hélas! Hélas!
Et dort au long de la nuitée.

Il me faut un vert galant
Qui fut de l’âge de trente ans
Et qui dormit la matinée.
Rossignolet du bois plaisant,
Pourquoi me va ainsi chantant,
Puisqu’au vieillard suis mariée?
Ami tu sois le bienvenu;
Longtemps a que t’ai attendu
Au joli bois, sous la ramée.

Why are you singing for me thus
Since I am married to the old man?
Lover, you are welcome;
For a long time I have waited for you
In the pretty woods, under the branches.

V. “On a dit mal de mon ami” (“They spoke badly of my lover”)

On a dit mal de mon ami,
Dont j’ai le coeur bien marri,
Qu’ont-ils affaire quel il soit,
ou qu’il soit beau ou qu’il soit laid,
Quand je lui plais et qu’il me plait?

They spoke badly of my lover,
Which thoroughly upsets my heart,
Why are they concerned how he is,
Or if he is beautiful or if he is ugly,
When I please him and he pleases me?

Un médisant ne veut onc bien:
Quand le cas ne lui touche en rien,
Pourquoi va-t-il médire?
Il fait vivre en martyre
Ceux qui ne lui demandent rien.

A slanderer does not want goodness:
When the case does not touch him at all,
Why does he speak ill?
He makes them live in martyrdom
Those who ask nothing of him.

Quand j’ai tout bien considéré,
Femme n’est de quoi n’est parlé.
Voilà ce qui m’avance
De prendre ma plaisance.
Aussi dit-on bien que je l’ai.

When I considered everything,
Women are always talked about.
This leads me
To take my pleasure.
Also, they say that I have him.

Plût or à Dieu qu’il fut ici
Celui que j’ai pris et choisi,
Puisqu’on en a voulu parler!
Et, dussent-ils tous enrager,
Je couherais aveque lui!

Please now God if he were here
The one that I took and chose,
Since they wanted to talk!
And, even if they were all mad,
I would sleep with him!

VI. “Les trois présents” (“The three presents”)

Je vous donne, avec grand plaisir,
De trois présents un à choisir.
La belle, c’est à vous de prendre
Celui des trois qui plus vous duit/plait.²
Les voici, sans vous faire attendre:
Bonjour, bonsoir et bonne nuit.

I give you with great pleasure,
From three presents, one to choose.
Beauty, it is for you to take
That which drives/pleases you most.
Here they are, without delay:
Good day, good evening, and good night.

²The score indicates “duit” above “plait,” as if the song should be repeated, though none is indicated.
Bathori and Taillefer perform the song only once, with Bathori singing “plait”: Jane Bathori, Jane Bathori: The Complete Solo Recordings, recorded 1928-1930, Marston 51009-2, 1999, compact disc.
Works Cited

All items examined in the scrapbooks at the Dansmuseet are listed with shortened bibliographic information. The full citation information, beyond the information specific to each article, would appear as in the following example: Ballets Suédois. Books of Reviews, Press Clippings, etc., Book 5, CD V, 05-190-01. Dansmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden. Since only the book, CD, and item numbers are unique to each item, all pertinent citations below include only these as indications of the items location at the Dansmuseet. The following explanation of the document number 05-190-01 explains how the number should be interpreted. The first two numbers, 05-190, indicate that this article is found on the 190th page of the 5th scrapbook. The third number, 01, indicates that multiple digital copies were made of this page and that this article is found in the first digital copy. (If only one digital copy of the page was made, then this number is omitted from the document number, as in 07-71, indicating an article on the 71st page of the 7th scrapbook.) As in the example of Book 5, CD V, 05-190-01, the digital copy of the article is found on the 5th CD of digital copies of the pages of the 5th scrapbook.


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