

TOWARDS A TOPOLOGY OF AESTHETIC DISCUSSION CONTAINED IN *LA REVUE MUSICALE* OF THE 1920S

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The themes treated in *La revue musicale* under the direction of Henry Prunières are characterized by both their richness and their diversity. Whether it is a question of music history, of modernity, of non-Western musics, or simply of the relationship between music and the other worlds of art, the range of subjects broached not only serves to elucidate the intellectual ferment that characterized the interwar period but also the refinement of results proper to musical epistemology. In studying the journal I have uncovered a train of thought that not only reveals the richness of these reflections but also permits one to grasp the position of the different writers with regards to the intellectual discourse of the period and the musicological challenges it confronts (i.e., aesthetic interests). Themes recur in a variety of guises. The value of art, its anthropological scope and artistic perfection provide inexhaustible sources of discussion for the review's various authors. Furthermore the authors make conscious efforts to elevate the quality of the discourse and its heuristic impact in order to force the music lover to consider such lofty aesthetic and moral concerns as what constitutes a masterpiece and how it may be identified as such. For the researcher the vast aesthetic field that this line of inquiry presents opens up the possibility for a classification of aesthetic interests and thus accordingly the themes treated and the methods of argument used in the different articles. This classification in turn provides a means of evaluating the quality of the discourse during the period in addition to its heuristic and epistemological value *vis-à-vis* the context in which it is found.

In order to better demonstrate and evaluate the multitude of aesthetic interests and the arguments which define them, the present study is divided into two parts. The first part questions the notion of what constituted aesthetics for the people of the period and the fields of investigation that served to define it, resulting in a topology of aesthetic interest in relation to the themes broached and the structure of inquiry. A substantial part of the analysis is given to the themes of the articles and the elements that cap the defended discourse. Thus the aesthetic interests are revealed in all of their specificity. Only representative examples will be used to support the proposed topology. Albeit

confined to the 1920s, the exhaustive nature of the subjects discussed provides more than enough material for the present study. A more accurate panorama of aesthetic concerns emerges from the aforementioned analysis that facilitates a better understanding of the epistemological preoccupations guiding an intellectual *milieu* in ferment over all facets of modern art and the resultant reevaluation of art as a whole.

AESTHETICS IN *LA REVUE MUSICALE*: A POLYMORPHOUS INTEREST. It is impossible to derive a classification of aesthetic interests without first understanding what the people of the period understood as aesthetics. What was meant by the field of aesthetics at the time? is the most logical question to ask before beginning this study. The question is complicated by the fact that in the history of the discipline aesthetics has not ceased to clad itself in different guises by questioning the very nature of its being and heuristic modalities. Even today no single aesthetic viewpoint can be identified. Aesthetics is by its very nature ambiguous, thereby permitting (no doubt strategically) the treatment of a plethora of themes linked by concepts of sensibility and the “art work”. In order to better appreciate the issues from the interwar period it is important to identify the concepts that are grouped together today under the umbrella of “aesthetics”.

The ambivalence that has always characterized aesthetics derives from its double but not dualist nature. On one hand we have the reflection on the “art object”, the questioning of its artistic value—and the type of language used and what it can reveal. On the other, we have the reflections questioning the reception of the “art work” and the sensory experience attached to that reception. If the first leans towards the poetics—where the compositional aspect effects a return to the aesthetic—the second brings about a contrary movement. This ambivalence is only apparent *a priori* since far from defining a fixed reality, the two categories are deployed conjointly to address the subject at hand. *La revue musicale* of the 1920s does not escape this ambivalent use of the concept of aesthetics. While the field of aesthetics is often invoked to investigate the particular experience to which the musical object refers, it is more often used in the investigation of the art object and its creation via discussions on the modality of its existence. During the period authors of the journal unceasingly questioned the genesis of art works and the poetic mechanisms which contributed to their creation. In the article “Psychologie et musique” by Boris de Schloezer,¹ the Russian musicologist strives to understand the psychic element that he feels forms the basis of artistic creation. For Schloezer, the artist is at once thoughtful and emotive—it is the artist who realizes the art work from a unique position which defines it. By concentrating on the hermeneutics of the poetic strategies unique to the composer, Schloezer tries to grasp the essence of the musical and the specific. The author’s study, however, does not concentrate solely on an investigation of poetics. He also considers the psychological functions that form the basis of reception in conjunction with the formal character of the art work. Thus the inherent ambivalence of aesthetics unfolds in Schloezer’s article into the search for an original perspective taking into account the two fundamental poles of the work of art: its creation and its reception, both subject to the contingencies of psychism.

A sign that this ambivalence has permeated all bodies of knowledge is that we also find it in the secondary musicological discipline associated with music aesthetics. The lexicographic entry in the 1980 edition of *The new Grove* defines “aesthetics of music” as

¹ *La revue musicale* 2/8 (June 1921) 244–56.

“The philosophy of the meaning and value of music”.² The entry is significant in that from the outset of the definition philosophy is linked with the field of aesthetics as though the two were inseparable. When it comes time in turn to define music aesthetics, a plethora of subjects are treated, ranging from beauty in music to the specificity of artistic practices. This last phrase leaves no doubt as to the problem posed by the heuristic positioning of music aesthetics: “The word ‘aesthetics’ is also often used more broadly, to include all the intellectual enterprises we have just ruled out; and more narrowly, to apply only attempts to establish a rational basis for enjoyment and evaluation.”³ Thus we have passed from an ambivalent notion to a field that encompasses the ensemble of intellectual enterprise consecrated to music and the rational foundation of knowledge that permits one to evaluate it (music). Is this not what Adler called systematic musicology?⁴ Sign of the time? Perhaps. But above all, it signifies a growing awareness that saw *The new Grove* of 2001 group music aesthetics under the heading “Philosophy of music”;⁵ thus underscoring the fact that aesthetics in music is differentiated primarily by the conceptual baggage to which it has recourse and is justly influenced by philosophy. Philosophical discourse on music therefore shares an epistemological “ground” connecting the anthropological and the ontological to the value of music. It is important to stress the scientific relevance of these discussions by linking them to the vast field of philosophical knowledge—in a way similar to Schloezer’s affirmation that “aesthetics submits artistic phenomena to scientific inquiry”.⁶

One must not forget, however, the more traditional notions upon which aesthetics has long been based: beauty, taste, appreciation, sensibility. Albeit a very broad definition of aesthetics, it is yet apt. Carducci-Agustini says of aesthetics that it is “the study of the notion of art and that the notion itself cannot be extracted from the problem of all knowledge.”⁷ This in some senses echos the preoccupations of *The new Grove* of 2001. But this definition also reminds us of the more elementary enterprise which forms the basis of aesthetics—to separate art from what it is not, to evaluate the quality of the art work, its worth and the many notions that constitute the concept of “beauty”. The problem is approached in this very way in *La revue musicale*—in the discussion by Raymond Petit who writes: “aesthetics in and of itself—the ideas man forms of ‘the beautiful’—all of this appears difficult to separate from the more general views of the world.”⁸ Here Petit expresses the need to link the study of art to larger discussions on the state of anthropology or the future of humanity—to question the social utility of art and its contribution to the well-being of man.

² F.E. Sparshott, “Aesthetics of music”, *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan; New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 1980) vol. 1, 120.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See Jean-Jacques Nattiez, “Linconfort de la musicologie”, *La musique, la recherche et la vie: Un dialogue et quelques dérivés* (Montréal: Leméac, 1999) 219–35.

⁵ Andrew Bowie, Stephen Davies, Lydia Goehr, and F.E. Sparshott, “Philosophy of music”, *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001) vol. 19, 601–31.

⁶ “L’esthétique soumet à la science le phénomène artistique.” Boris de Schloezer, “Réflexions sur la musique: Esthétique musicale”, *La revue musicale* 6/10 (August 1925) 172.

⁷ “L’étude de la notion d’art, et que cette notion ne peut être abstraite du problème de la connaissance tout entier.” Edgardo Carducci-Agustini, “Rapports entre la musique et les autres arts”, *La revue musicale* 7/10 (August 1926) 133.

⁸ “L’esthétique en elle-même, les idées que les hommes se forment du beau, tout cela paraît bien difficilement séparable de vues plus générales sur l’ensemble du monde.” Raymond Petit, “Musique supra sensible et musique humaine”, *La revue musicale* 8/8 (June 1927) 292.

Others have a more normative view of the birth of art. In an article by Moch, also written for *La revue musicale*, aesthetics is defined as a science capable of “releasing a few laws common to all the arts.”⁹ Somewhat surprising from a contemporary standpoint is the constant need of the period’s authors to establish a series of laws that serve to proscribe the “true” rules for creation that will culminate in works worthy of the term “art”. While not always expressed overtly, this preoccupation remains constant for the various writers of *La revue musicale*. In a way, in all of the articles directly or indirectly treating the subject of aesthetics, the authors attempt to establish a set of normative criteria to ennoble artistic creation and the performance of art, thereby supporting the concepts of “the musical” and the ideologies they defend. When Jimenez affirms that “aesthetics as a separate discipline is authorized to reflect on art—on works forging a conceptual universe building ‘a knowledge’,”¹⁰ he encapsulates the ideal to which the aesthetic reflections of *La revue musicale* point. Such criteria also provide a means of linking “the musical” to the larger artistic discourse in order to better overcome the marginalised nature of “sound art”. The period is more relativist on the topic of art. Indeed arguments strongly marked by the search for normative general “truths” by which to group art either in terms of common objectives or destiny (according to social or anthropological efficiency) are often overwhelmed by constant intellectual gymnastics.

While a more in-depth analysis of the discussion on what aesthetics represented for the authors of *La revue musicale* lies beyond the scope of this paper, the brief discussion in the previous paragraphs nevertheless brings to light certain key notions of the period that play a structural role with regards to the ideas promoted in *La revue musicale* and the arguments themselves. Beauty, normative criteria, the establishment of universal laws, musical sensibility—all of these together helped to create a system of concepts, a veritable theoretical “ground”, upon which music lovers of the period could reflect and which they could put to work in making sense of art and music. Thus aesthetics constitutes one of the primary functions of knowledge. In a single phrase, Jimenez captures the essence of what is found in *La revue musicale* of the period: “This system circumscribes a theoretical space, a veritable epistemological environment, where one can speak, be understood but also confront and contradict those who would discuss aesthetics.”¹¹

THE CLASSIFICATION OF AESTHETIC SUBJECTS. The aesthetic interests of *La revue musicale* can be grouped into three general categories: (1) the aesthetic reflections expressed or revealed through explorations of the extramusical; (2) reflections that concentrate on the aesthetic object itself; and (3) reflections touching on general epistemology. Limiting the scope of the aforementioned categories can only furnish a partial delineation of the subjects broached and the interests manifested therein. The aforementioned categories are in no way intended as hard and fast rules, and yet they are self-contained. In order to achieve a better classification of the many branches of

⁹ “Dégager quelques lois communes à tous les arts.” F. Moch, “Réflexions sur l’esthétique, la poésie et la prosodie”, *La revue musicale* 10/9 (September–October 1929) 232.

¹⁰ “L’esthétique, quant à elle, comme discipline à part entière, s’autorise à réfléchir sur l’art et sur les oeuvres en forgeant un univers conceptuel constitutif d’un savoir.” Marc Jimenez, *Qu’est-ce que l’esthétique?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997) 20–21.

¹¹ “Ce système circonscrit un espace théorique, un véritable lieu épistémologique où peuvent se parler et se comprendre, mais aussi s’affronter et se contredire, ceux qui entendent traiter d’esthétique.” *Ibid.*, 25.

aesthetic discussion presented in *La revue musicale* of the 1920s, these three categories may be further broken down into subcategories.

Category 1: Aesthetic reflections expressed or revealed through explorations of the extramusical. Extramusical interests are omnipresent in *La revue musicale*. For example, numerous articles strive to describe the relationship between certain mythic figures of Western culture and music. Armand Machabey's essay on Montaigne and music,¹² Maurice Barrès's article on the pleasure of music chez Stendhal,¹³ that of Gabriel Marcel consecrated to the possible interpretation of Bergson's philosophical ideas in music¹⁴—all constitute examples of this type of article. The overriding concern for each author is the linking of music to the larger cultural field by using the encounter between a canonized genius and music as a point of intersection. Further examples of this are found in the articles on Goethe, Rousseau, Delacroix, and Proust. In a culture strongly influenced by literature, particularly French, there is an effort to counter the marginalisation of music by linking it to other domains of art and culture, thereby underscoring its importance for the human genus—for all time and all periods. In the "Chroniques et notes" section of the review, for example, the section titled "La musique et les lettres" comments on the aesthetic preoccupations that lie at the core of musical study. The link between music and literature was established during the 1920s by the review's senior editor, André Coeuroy. In 1923, Coeuroy authored a work on music and literature in which he explains his aesthetic position: "I propose here to persuade writers that the musical idea is not negligible to musicians, that literature is not an Ivory Tower—to all intellectuals—that music is not on the margin of intellect. The most noble undertaking of intelligence strives towards a convergence of all arts."¹⁵

Coeuroy's statement exemplifies the preoccupations inherent in the first extramusical category. This tendency to group writers and musicians together according to a common theme is also true of the other arts, most notably dance, painting and cinema. Two subcategories emerge: one represented by the interest in linking music and literature; the other, music and the whole ensemble of the arts. In the article "La couleur en mouvement décor rationnel de la musique",¹⁶ Carol-Bérard suggests an ideal way of integrating music with the visual in order to heighten perception. In a text by Lionel Landry entitled "Musique et cinéma",¹⁷ the author confronts the artificial segregation of the arts by highlighting the role music plays in perception during the screening of a film. In the aforementioned articles those elements deemed extramusical only appear as such. Their function is to return focus to the music in such a way as to better elucidate that which links it to the other arts; to prove how the arts share a common conceptual ground which in turn may be used to achieve better comprehension.

¹² Armand Machabey, "Montaigne et la musique", *La revue musicale* 9/9 (July 1928) 260–71; 9/10 (August 1928) 342–50; idem, "La musique au temps de Montaigne", *La revue musicale* 9/11 (October 1928) 465–74; 10/1 (November 1928) 37–45.

¹³ Maurice Barrès, "Stendhal et la musique", *La revue musicale* 1/ 1 (November 1920) 22–27.

¹⁴ Gabriel Marcel, "Bergonisme et musique", *La revue musicale* 6/5 (March 1925) 219–29.

¹⁵ "On se propose ici de persuader les écrivains que l'idée musicale n'est pas négligeable, aux musiciens que la littérature n'est pas une tour d'ivoire, à tous les intellectuels que la musique n'est pas en marge de l'esprit. La démarche la plus noble de l'intelligence s'achemine vers la convergence des arts." André Coeuroy, "Musique et littérature", *La revue musicale* 5/4 (February 1924) 187.

¹⁶ *La revue musicale* 3/8 (August 1922) 147–61.

¹⁷ *La revue musicale* 8/4 (February 1927) 136–41.

Category 2: Reflections that concentrate on the aesthetic object itself. In writings touching on musical language, it is the notion of the work that is queried—all the benefits derived when the human dimension of music is considered. Ideas concerning the very essence of creation are questioned: the psychic and physiological that lead to a work's creation and the value that may be given creation in light of established normative criteria. In other words, the aesthetic reflections attached to the work of art result in a certain humanization of a field that would otherwise be solely determined by the technical nature of language. The work is therefore treated in its entirety through aesthetic discussion that reveals an order which constitutes part of a broader discourse. Within this category, three subcategories can be discerned. The first is characterized by reflections on a musical language where the artistic goal is to achieve maximal procedural efficiency with regard to certain characteristics such as balance, size, beauty, harmony, unity. One of the masters of this type of study is without a doubt Charles Koechlin. His numerous articles often aim at warning young musicians against facile musical means and the excesses of certain musical procedures. An example of this can be found in the articles "D'une nouvelle mode musicale",¹⁸ "Le retour à Bach",¹⁹ and "Modernisme et nouveauté".²⁰ Koechlin's aesthetic preoccupations often center upon the involvement of the artist in moral values in order to assure heightened spirituality as poetic catalyst. Thus one can perhaps understand why some authors of the period try to establish rules in order to better comprehend musical creation; the effects of art being so fundamental that not to study them would be neglectful.

The second subcategory is particularly interesting. It is the one which treats the aesthetic of a given composer. At first glance, aesthetics in this latter context appears to be confounded with style, since the majority of articles in this subcategory constitute thorough investigations of procedures and idioms used by a given composer. The goal, however, is to better understand what it is that makes the composer unique—not to catalogue compositional practices. The article "L'esthétique d'Albéric Magnard" by Claude Laforêt best exemplifies the articles of the second subcategory.²¹ By concentrating on Magnard the artist, and by endeavoring to comprehend the originality of his musical writing, the author attempts to do justice to the composer's music by emphasizing traits such as "authenticity", "grandeur", "uniqueness". The aesthetic interests manifested in this subcategory should not be equated with style because they include overarching concepts that serve as the foundation of the work in its quest to be original, allowing for an appreciation of the work from another perspective.

Aesthetic reflections centered on the attraction of the "other" (i.e., the non-Western) constitutes the third and final subcategory. The number of articles about non-Western musics increased over the decade. These articles represent a form of ethnomusicology for which the objective was to arrive at a better understanding of musical difference. The articles, however, are always written with the goal of evaluating the quality and pertinence of these "other" musics in relation to contemporary Western art. What can the study of "other" musics bring us? To what extent do they invite us to reconsider our own music and musicological tools, even our general comprehension of "the musical"? This is the type of questioning confronted in the aesthetic reflection of this third subcategory.

¹⁸ *La revue musicale* 2/10 (August 1921) 132–46.

¹⁹ *La revue musicale* 8/1 (November 1926) 1–12.

²⁰ *La revue musicale* 8/9 (July 1927) 1–13.

²¹ *La revue musicale* 1/1 (November 1920) 28–33.

The article “Musiques persanes” by Henri Furst²² is constructed around the author’s impressions and appreciation of music heard in Tehran. During the course of the article various comparisons are made with Western music. The same observation holds true for Alfredo Casella’s article “Matière et timbre.”²³ Demonstrating how 20th-century music proceeds towards the exploration of timbre, Casella eventually extolls the virtues of Chinese music, its beauty deriving from the quality of the musical matter used. Finally included in the third subcategory are all of the reflections on the value of jazz, which fed a number of musical debates during the period. Reflections on jazz underscore the prominent place held by aesthetics in contemporary evaluations of music—the notion of a work as the result of creation that emerges when it is endowed with a human dimension that guides it, and leads it to the possibility of establishing a masterpiece.

Category 3: Reflections touching on general epistemology. The final category includes everything that relates to the general knowledge of music that is heavily informed by philosophical reflection and discussions of the relationship between aesthetics and the art work. Epistemology will be used here in two ways: first to establish the concepts that will be used to define the theoretical and heuristic field of comprehension and of the apprehension of the music of the period; second to demonstrate their limits while at the same time proposing a critical discourse for better evaluating the works and better discarding unfounded aesthetic pretensions. Despite the plethora of subcategories open to analysis I have chosen to concentrate on only three of the most characteristic of the aesthetic reflections of the period. The first subcategory pertains to an investigation of the essence of the musical, summarized in Boris de Schloezer’s debate with Lionel Landry on the question of musical reality;²⁴ the first proclaims that it is found in the work; the second speaks of the power of sound and hearing as the constitutive element of the musical. This study, fundamental to the field of aesthetics, has no other motivation than to reveal the truths upon which music rests in order to exist—to discover that which truly gives rise to music and lends it its seductive power for the human, and thus to discover the definitive heuristic key for understanding music and for unraveling all of the implications arising from creation and knowledge. The undertaking is substantial and would explain why authors often end up supporting opposing positions like Schloezer’s, whose argument is based on the objectivity of the neutral object, and Landry’s, who argues for auditory complicity as essential to the musical work.²⁵ For other authors such as Carducci-Agustini,²⁶ the search for this essence of the musical becomes the moment of taking ownership of the mechanisms fundamental to artistic creation.

The second subcategory consists of discovering the role that musical sensibility plays in the acts of creation and reception. It is important to mention the two extremes

²² *La revue musicale* 7/5 (March 1926) 228–35.

²³ *La revue musicale* 2/6 (April 1921) 39–43.

²⁴ See Lionel Landry, “Le pouvoir ses sons,” *La revue musicale* 10/5 (March 1929) 132–37; idem, *La sensibilité musicale: Ses éléments, sa formation* (Paris: Alcan, 1927); Boris de Schloezer, “Réflexions sur la musique,” *La revue musicale* 8/10 (September 1927) 178–81. See also idem, “Notes en marge: À la recherche de la réalité musicale,” *La revue musicale* 9/3 (January 1928) 214–28; 9/4 (February 1928) 48–52; 9/5 (March 1928) 133–37; 9/6 (April 1928) 244–49; and Charles Koechlin, “Du rôle de la sensibilité dans la musique,” *La revue musicale* 10/3 (January 1929) 200–21.

²⁵ See Danick Trottier, “Pour une esthétique de l’objet musical: Le recours à l’herméneutique comme rempart au relativisme,” *Perspectives de l’esthétique musicale: Entre théorie et histoire*, ed. by Alessandro Arbo (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007) 125–44.

²⁶ Carducci-Agustini, “Rapports entre la musique et les autres arts,” 133–40.

of objectivity and subjectivity, because some would like to avoid discussions of both—so dear to the authors of the period—in favor solely of subjectivity thereby making the content of the work abstract. Awareness of both extremes facilitates a better understanding of the middle-of-the-road position that Schloezer adopted on many occasions between 1921 and 1926—choosing a position half-way between objectivity and subjectivity by returning to psychological considerations, notably by speaking of the effects of music on the conscience resulting from music as sound object.²⁷ The multiple facets of reception and the place that emotions play in the hearing of music constitute the main issues questioned under the heading musical sensibility. In an article by Nicholas Obouhow on emotion in music, the author defends an idea that aptly summarizes the problems that surround this notion: “It is only at this point that music revived by the balance found between intellect and sensibility would be able to continue (in keeping with its nature) its work of leading humanity towards ‘the Ideal’.”²⁸ The themes dear to aesthetic discourse are evoked here but from the particular angle of the reception of the musical; that only sensibility will permit the listener to perceive the richness and the message of the work. In other words, it is less about affirming that the artist should address sensibility and more about putting into perspective the psychic and the physical experiences that serve to better the appreciation of music. But how to attain a more elaborate discussion worthy of the term “criticism” with regards to the ability to judge?

The third subcategory that appears to fascinate the thinkers of the period may be found in the writings of various authors, as Koechlin and Schloezer, who crossed intellectual swords over the role that musical criticism should play or assume in aesthetic discourse.²⁹ The question also has a bearing on the ability to judge, in the sense of discerning the value of critical judgement with respect to art and to the function that it could assume as a guide in the research of the masterpieces and the defense of established norms. Criticism is, in the end, the conduit of aesthetic idealism upon which the large corpus of writings of the period are focussed; anxious to base their conception of the musical on stable criteria that contribute effectively to the argument. While some believe that criticism may only take place *a posteriori* of the work, as in the case of Moch who says that “the critic ... can only reveal and codify that which he finds ready-made in the work of the poet”,³⁰ others are of the opinion that criticism should be placed *a priori*, significantly relying on the theoretical field, defining its scope and thus the concern over the quality of works of art. This is Schloezer’s position: “The critic will not penetrate the intimate essence of the work, will not discover its specific character unless he adopts an exclusively aesthetic point of view, i.e. formal.... But for such an analysis to yield results it must refer to certain general concepts, that is to say, it should be guided by theoretical views.”³¹ Inevitably this third and final subcategory pertains above all to the vast field

²⁷ See for example Boris de Schloezer, “Réflexions sur la musique: Théories et critique”, *La revue musicale* 5/2 (November 1923) 83–87; idem, “Réflexions sur la musique: Esthétique musicale”, 171–74.

²⁸ “Ce n’est qu’à partir de ce moment que la musique redevenue vivante par l’équilibre retrouvé entre l’esprit et la sensibilité, sera à même de continuer, conformément à son origine, son oeuvre d’évolution de l’humanité vers l’Idéal.” Nicolas Obouhow, “L’émotion dans la musique”, *La revue musicale* 8/7 (May 1927) 172.

²⁹ Charles Koechlin, “Le compositeur et la critique musicale”, *La revue musicale* 8/10 (September 1927) 108–16; Schloezer, “Réflexions sur la musique”.

³⁰ “Le critique ... ne peut que dégager et codifier ce qu’il trouve, tout fait, dans l’oeuvre du poète.” F. Moch, “Réflexions sur l’esthétique, la poésie et la prosodie”, 235.

³¹ “Le critique ne pénétrera l’essence intime de l’oeuvre, il ne découvrira son caractère spécifique qu’en se plaçant à un point de vue exclusivement esthétique, c’est-à-dire formel.... Mais pour qu’une telle analyse soit féconde..., elle doit nécessairement se référer à certaines conceptions générales, elle doit se laisser guider par des vues théoriques.” Schloezer,

of theoretical knowledge placed at the forefront in order to anchor musical aesthetic knowledge and to identify what is worthy of heuristic interest.

It goes without saying that these three categories and their offshoots—self-reductive and oblivious to self-contradictions and intermediate positions—are primarily useful in evaluating a first approach to aesthetic interests contained in issues of *La revue musicale* during the 1920s. Aesthetics appears thus to open a vast theoretic discourse that permits the perception of the various guises of “the musical” in, to-date, less explored heuristic avenues. One therefore has the impression, on a number of occasions (perhaps influenced by a contemporary perspective), that musical aesthetics is confounded in the period with musicological reflection as separate from the history of music. Schloezer actually makes this observation, and gives one pause when he writes: “In aesthetics, theory is a work tool; a means of research.”³² Thus aesthetics was perceived at the time, and certainly for the writers of *La revue musicale*, as the principal heuristic tool of musicological reflection particularly with respect to the well-explored paths of the biographical genre, historical work and purely technical analysis. But even in these three paths, the questions of artistic worth and normative criteria are also subjects of discussion. Thus aesthetics must be considered the primary tool for musicological reflection of the period. All of the aforementioned interests revolve around a common center and the same function *vis-à-vis* musical epistemology—the study of sense, or, the significance attributed to art in terms of its symbolic, ontological, metaphysical and anthropological import. When Jimenez affirms that “aesthetics holds its own if it responds to the increasing demands of interpretation, elucidation and signification”, he elucidates the major role assumed by aesthetics in *La revue musicale* of the 1920s.³³ The aesthetic interests presented in this study constitute an integral part of the daily artistic discourse of the period. At time when many were confronted by the quandary of modern music in all its forms, aesthetics allowed them to circumscribe music within a boundary of logic.

“Réflexions sur la musique: Théories et critique”, 86.

³² “La théorie en esthétique est un instrument de travail, un moyen de recherche.” Ibid.

³³ “L’esthétique tient son pari si elle répond aux demandes croissantes d’interprétation, d’éclaircissement et de sens.” Jimenez, *Qu’est-ce que l’esthétique?* 431.

