

*French Empire and Musical Exoticism
to the end of the Nineteenth Century*

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Abstract

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French Empire and Musical Exoticism to the end of the Nineteenth Century

Thomas Cooper

ABSTRACT

The thesis places the exotic music of French nineteenth-century composers in the context of the history of the French Empire and the ideas underlying French imperial expansion. French composers were in general unavoidably bound up in their own culture's attitudes to natives and their music. It is not the purpose of this study, however, simply to identify and criticise the racist views of a previous era. Rather, the thesis examines the ways in which representations of other cultures were constructed by the French, and what part these constructions have played in creating the conditions for and reinforcing the imperial project.

The Introduction gives a broad overview of the subject of exoticism and its links to overseas Empire, both direct and indirect, and outlines some of the difficulties facing French composers who sought to use genuine native musical material or characteristics in their works for French audiences. Chapter One follows the history of the Empire and the exotic to 1798. The period from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt to the Bourbon invasion of Algeria in 1830 is covered in Chapter Two. Chapter Three covers the intermediate period in the history of the Empire, from 1830–65, when significant developments in French musical exoticism took place, and focuses on the music of David. Chapter Four concentrates on events between 1865, the high-water mark of French musical exoticism, and 1889. The momentous exposure of French composers to genuine native music in the Exposition Universelle of 1889, and further developments to the end of the century, are explored in Chapter Five. Debussy's piano piece, *Pagodes*, dating from the early twentieth century, is included here as its roots lie in experiences gleaned during the last years of the nineteenth century. The Epilogue underlines the connections between the Empire and the exotic. It argues that the exotic genre is a discursive space across which Western concepts of race and power compete. Within

this Occidental construct, native music resists incorporation, rendering Western attempts at appropriation impotent and ultimately affecting the structure of Western music itself.

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PREFACE

The subject of this thesis is the exotic music of French nineteenth-century composers, set in the context of the history of the French Empire and the ideas underlying French imperial expansion. The music, while enormously popular at the time it was composed, now seems extremely dated in many cases, and as a result of its perceived ephemeral nature it has been generally ignored in mainstream studies of French music. With only a few exceptions, it has to be said that these works could not qualify for a purely musical study on the grounds of quality or compositional interest. However, even the weakest example of the exotic genre has a great deal to tell us about the constructions placed on issues of race and visions of empire in the nineteenth century. In this thesis, therefore, I have in most cases laid greater stress on the issues of Empire and attitudes to the colonised peoples than on the exotic music produced by French composers writing for contemporary French audiences.

Due to the visual appeal of the exotic in the nineteenth century, the musical material on which I draw for my argument is mainly operatic. But the thesis also considers other genres, such as piano pieces, songs, cantatas and orchestral works, where appropriate. The popularity of the exotic is such that the total of exotic works produced during the period is colossal. Many of these proved so ephemeral that the music has disappeared, while others are now extremely difficult to access. Therefore I have not attempted to list or investigate every French exotic work produced during the nineteenth century. Instead I have selected those works which best seem to encapsulate the various approaches of contemporary French composers to the vexed issues of exoticism, race and identity which underlie the genre, and which most clearly illustrate its historical development. These include both well-known and more obscure examples.

In order to prevent the thesis becoming unmanageably vast, the exotic works on which I focus are mostly those written by French composers, rather than those written for the French stage by foreigners, although the influence of composers such as Rossini is noted. Exceptions are made for certain extremely influential composers who wrote a significant amount for Paris and whose works have become synonymous with French opera, such as Spontini and Meyerbeer. Due to the lack of availability of some full scores, vocal scores are occasionally used. The order of instruments has been modernised throughout in the music examples, and additions or amendments to the text are enclosed within square brackets. All translations are my own except where indicated, and the titles of works are given according to modern usage.

The approach to the subject varies between chapters, and has been chosen as the most relevant to the period concerned. A geographical approach has been pursued for much of the thesis for reasons of clarity, particularly in those chapters which are concerned with charting the periodic growth of the French Empire. The sources for French musical exoticism encompassed a vast area of the globe in the nineteenth century, with examples as far flung as Tahiti, Madagascar, Siberia and Scotland - anywhere foreign being then regarded as potentially exotic, regardless of its climate. In order to relate this huge variety of subject material to the subject of the French Empire, I have concentrated on those sources of the exotic which correspond most closely to the territories of the Empire itself: Africa, Arabia, India, Asia, the South Seas and America. Thus the significant number of exotic works relating to Spain are only mentioned where particularly relevant to the imperial theme, as are the much smaller number of works with a Russian subject. Likewise I have generally excluded those works dealing with classical or biblical antiquity, with a few exceptions which are noted where they occur. My choice of subject matter does, however, reflect the preference of the vast number of composers of exotic works in France during the period. For the French of the

nineteenth century, exoticism was largely identified with the South, and particularly the East, of the globe.

The Introduction gives a broad overview of the subject of exoticism and its links to overseas Empire, both direct and indirect, and outlines some of the difficulties facing French composers who sought to make use of genuine native musical material or characteristics in their works for French audiences. Chapter One follows the history of the Empire and the exotic to 1798. The period from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt to the Bourbon invasion of Algeria in 1830 is covered in Chapter Two. Chapter Three covers the intermediate period in the history of the Empire, from 1830–65, when, however, significant developments in French musical exoticism took place. Chapter Four outlines events between 1865, the high-water mark of French musical exoticism, and 1889. The momentous exposure of French composers to genuine native music in the Exposition Universelle of 1889, and further developments to the end of the century, are explored in Chapter Five. A work by Debussy, dating from the early twentieth century, is included here as its roots lie in experiences gleaned during the last years of the nineteenth century. The Epilogue seeks to determine the purpose of French musical exoticism in the broadest possible sense, relating it to recent developments in critical theory.

The sources on which I have drawn for the preparation of this thesis comprise historical, musical, ethnomusicological, cultural, critical and racial studies, as well as scores. I have indicated in the text where I have drawn upon a particular source for a view or fact, except where these are commonly accepted or known (for example, the 1830 French invasion of Algeria). Sources are fully detailed in the endnotes to each Chapter, and in the Bibliography. Abbreviations, such as those for journals, are as in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980).

INTRODUCTION

(i) The Scope of Musical Exoticism

The aim of this thesis is to explore nineteenth-century French music involving the exotic representation of other nations, and to consider these representations in the light of the development of ideas underlying the expansion of the French Empire during the period. The term 'exotic' carries with it a range of suggestive references. It literally denotes something 'introduced from abroad',¹ and as such might encompass an enormous range of objects, words and customs. The sources of the exotic could likewise span the entire globe, since every country or culture is potentially 'exotic' to every other. In Europe the term has generally been taken to refer to non-European cultures and countries, most notably those of the Orient. Depending on the geographical position of the country within Europe, however, countries on the periphery of Europe may also be included, most commonly Spain and Russia. This study follows the broad definition quoted above, concentrating largely, but not exclusively, on those works of musical exoticism whose subjects coincide with the territories of the French Empire in Asia, Africa and America.

The history of musical exoticism in France is broadly echoed in other European countries. It appears to have become fully established in the seventeenth century, at a somewhat later date than exoticism in either French pictorial representation or literature. This may well have been because the sounds of authentic music of other cultures were unacceptable to French ears at this time.² Musical exoticism was from the first associated with the staged genres of opera and ballet, which gave the greatest possible scope for exotic spectacle. The connection between opera and the exotic remained strong in France throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, operas account for the vast majority of such exotic compositions, outnumbering the next most numerous category, that of song, approximately eightfold. Other vehicles for the exotic genre in French music, while less numerous, include cantatas, orchestral works and keyboard pieces.

Taken as a whole, the incidence of exotic works in French music shows definite peaks and troughs. Although it frequently recurs from 1600 onwards, exotic representation began to make a greater impression in the 1720s, and rose to its first peak in the years 1790 to 1800. This is followed by a levelling-off until the 1840s, when production increased towards its zenith in the 1860s. This high plateau was then maintained with only a slight falling-off until the 1890s, when it began to descend gradually to the pre-1860 level. The following graph illustrates the overall shape of exotic production in French music to 1900, and the prevalence of opera.³

Fig.1: Overall Incidence of Exotic Works of Music in France by Decade, 1660–1900 (Totals are approximate)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Totals</i>	<i>Totals of Exotic Operas</i>
1660	2	2
1670	2	1
1680	3	2
1690	1	1
1700	2	2
1710	5	2
1720	13	10
1730	5	5
1740	6	6
1750	2	2
1760	8	8
1770	5	5
1780	11	11
1790	20	18
1800	16	16
1810	11	10
1820	16	14
1830	16	12
1840	25	16
1850	27	21
1860	46	37
1870	34	27
1880	43	31
1890	30	25

Of the whole of the nineteenth century, the single most productive year for French exotic music is 1865. The range of subject matter and variety of genre for which these works were composed is fairly typical. Several showed a concern with Africa, and specifically with Algeria. *L'africaine*, the last opera of Giacomo

Meyerbeer, concerned Vasco da Gama's voyages to India; the fourth Act was set in an unnamed island probably intended to be Madagascar. The now little-known composer Salvador Daniel's *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles* was published, presenting native Algerian song in Europeanised form. Louis Boieldieu's cantata, *France et Algérie*, and Léo Delibes's cantata, *Alger*, were more straightforward celebrations of French achievement, probably connected with Napoleon III's visit to the colony in the same year. Gounod's songs *Chanson arabe* and *Medjé* continued the year's fascination with the Arabic theme. The reasons for some of this activity are difficult to pinpoint with certainty. A great deal of chance would seem to be involved, as for example with *L'africaine* itself, which Meyerbeer had been working on since 1838 but which he had repeatedly shelved in favour of other projects.⁴ A response to ephemeral public taste must also be considered, particularly with more prolific or commercial composers such as Gounod or Offenbach. Nevertheless it is noticeable that the period of maximum production of exotic works in French music coincides with that of the greatest expansion of the French Empire.

Historically, there have been three French Empires in the modern period. The first, developed between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, comprised a few African and rather more Indian possessions, some South American territory and a vast tract of North America and the Caribbean. A great deal of it was lost by the late eighteenth century as a result of extended colonial wars with Britain. The second Empire (in chronological terms - this phase of French imperialism is labelled 'the First Empire' by historians) was gained and largely lost under Napoleon. It briefly included Egypt but consisted mainly of European territory, stretching at its greatest extent from Spain to the Ukraine and encompassing a large part of the North Mediterranean littoral and the Atlantic, North Sea and part of the Baltic coastlines. The third and largest of the French Empires was accumulated more gradually than the second, through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This phase includes the period known to historians as the 'Second

Empire', so-called by Napoleon III to claim the imperial legacy of Bonaparte, but also covers the later and more extensive expansion of the Empire under successive Republican governments. Large stretches of this empire remain in French hands, most notably numerous South Pacific islands. This empire included relatively little American or Indian territory, but otherwise at its height extended over vast areas of the globe. Second only in size to the British Empire, the French Empire at its fullest extent included a large part of Africa and an extensive tract of South East Asia.⁵ Thus the exotic was not just a distant dream for the French, but a real terrain over parts of which they ruled more or less without interruption for four hundred years.

However, although there may be a chronological convergence of exotic music on one hand and the Empire on the other, connections between the two are not this simple. The subjects of French exotic works, for example, while as broadly located as the possessions of the French Empire, are not equally distributed. Relatively few compositions deal with Indo-China or the territories of Equatorial Africa, with the exceptions of works such as Louis Bourgault-Ducoudray's *Rapsodie cambodgienne* (1882) and Victor Massé's *Paul et Virginie* (1877). Even fewer are concerned with the islands of the South Pacific such as Tahiti, a protectorate since 1849.⁶ More numerous are those works which deal with lands only marginally occupied by the French Empire, such as Charles-Simon Catel's *Les bayadères* (1810) and Delibes's *Lakmé* (1883) which take Indian subjects, and André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry's *Le huron* (1768) and Étienne-Nicolas Méhul's *Cora* (1791), among others, which are concerned with America. Even territories over which the French flag never flew, such as Japan, feature as much as if not more than some colonial subjects in the exotic works of French composers. An important example of such a case is André Messager's *Madame Chrysanthème* (1893), based on a novel by the French romance-and travel-writer Pierre Loti. However, by far the most frequent subject is that of the Arab world. Many compositions draw their material from the colonized territories of Algeria, Morocco and Tunis, and many more take Egypt,

Turkey or Persia as their theme. Also, a great number of exotic works deal with the Arabia of legend, which has an essentially mythical location.

(ii) The Characteristics of Musical Exoticism

Subject matter alone, however, whether set in a colony or not, cannot be used solely as a means of identifying these works as exotic. Europe had been influenced by the musical customs, instruments and cultures of others (particularly of the Arab world in the Middle Ages) for thousands of years, and these influences had been incorporated into European culture in a way which prevents their being seen as 'exotic'. The main characteristic which appears to mark particular art-works out as exotic in the customary sense of the term is the manner in which the subject matter is treated. The most notable feature of this treatment is the level of imagination used to depict the subject matter, allied to a constant reminder of the distance and difference between the 'foreign' object and the 'domestic' audience which observes it.

Usually there is little or no accuracy, except of the most superficial kind, in exotic representations of native life. This may be due in part to the lack of a systematic methodology, particularly in many early descriptions of foreign lands, peoples and cultures. A consequent scope for misunderstanding arose, both on the part of commentators themselves and those who relied on their observations. The music of other cultures was particularly open to incomprehension, misrepresentation and inaccurate transcription. Oriental song, for example, follows a different tradition to that of the West both in voice production and pitch. Instead of the highly polished *bel canto* style typical of Western music of the nineteenth century, Arab singers favour a more nasal intonation. Their music is typically highly ornamented, producing microtones which lie outside those of normal Western tuning. While these pitches may be approximated by Western voices or by strings, they lie completely outside the province of such Occidental instruments of fixed pitch as the piano. In addition to the problems posed by the accurate

reproduction of pitch, Oriental music, which uses tuning systems other than that of equal temperament is not easily transcribed with accuracy for Western orchestral instruments. Western notation is not designed to accommodate the intermediate pitches of much Oriental music, although some French composers appear to have thought it was adequate to the task.

Another feature of much non-Western music which is problematic for European composers is its relative lack of harmony. In the West, music from the Renaissance up to the end of the nineteenth century has tended to focus on developments in harmonic language rather than on melody or rhythm. The reverse is the case in Arabic music of the same period, for example, which tends towards melodic and rhythmic complexity but is largely monophonic. Any Western setting of original Oriental material suffers not only from the difficulties of responding to an alien tradition of performance and voice production, and of different systems of tuning, but also faces the dilemma of whether to harmonize the melody or not. In the event, hardly any Western composers of the nineteenth century have followed the latter course. Instead, the Oriental material is almost invariably forced into the straitjacket of the existing tonal system.

Naturally, this need be no more of a contentious issue than the superficially similar borrowing of the Italian style commonly undertaken by German, French and English composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It would be difficult for anyone but an advocate of the strict maintenance of cultural purity to object in principle to the establishment of a synthesis between Occidental and Oriental styles in music. However, while the Italian style became a fully integrated part of the musical language of those European composers who drew upon it, the principal feature of exotic treatment of all periods is that it insists on maintaining the distinction between the 'exotic' culture which provides the spectacle and the 'domestic' audience which observes it. The whole point of such an exotic musical cliché as the augmented second, still held to denote things Arabian in the West, is that it remains recognizable as foreign and does not easily become incorporated

into European musical language.⁷ Other common signifiers of exoticism include the use of the minor mode, grace notes, drone basses, repeated rhythms (particularly in accompaniments) and an array of instruments, mostly percussive, such as tambourines, triangles and the occasional use of the *pavillon chinois*. Later in the nineteenth century exoticism also became associated with lush scoring.

Musical exoticism emphasises the 'otherness' of foreigners as part of a general insistence on their difference from what is seen as 'normal', that is, Western. This concentration on 'otherness' is particularly apparent in the colonial period. When the source from which the exotic material is taken comes from a subject-race, as the Arabs of Algeria or Tunis were to the French of the nineteenth century, the borrowing could be interpreted as akin to the appropriations of imperialism itself.

The imaginative treatment so apparent in most exotic works of art serves to create and evoke popular perceptions of the subject material which, over time, take on the solidity of popular 'truths'. There is a coherence and tradition to be observed in exotic representation which is often quite independent of the actual political or material fortunes of the subject country, people or culture. A typical example of this is the Western conception of Egypt which tends to concentrate on the ancient past of the country and to ignore its present.⁸ Several separate traditions can be traced in exoticism, forming distinct genres within it. In the realm of opera, they include those dealing with the harem, the 'noble savage', the native girl who sacrifices herself for the European hero, and the native who turns out to be European. Each of these has an internal coherence which is basically separate from external factors and genuine native characteristics.

(iii) Approaches to Musical Exoticism

Despite the frequent overlap between the subjects of exotic works and the territories of the French Empire, there is rarely a direct historical link between the two. Often some time elapsed between the exploration and conquest of a new colony and the emergence of exotic music dealing with it. For example, Napoleon's

Egyptian Campaign of 1798–1801 had a profound impact on the arts in Europe, leading to the immediate introduction of furnishings and costume inspired by the publicisation by the French of their new discoveries of Egyptian antiquity. Yet there appears to have been no musical exotic work directly celebrating the glories of this particular part of the conquered Orient by a French composer until Berlioz's *La mort de Cléopâtre* of 1829.⁹ Likewise, while isolated references to Algeria occur in several examples of French musical exoticism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, none appear to have been produced specifically to popularise Algeria until 1865, thirty-five years after the initial conquest. This contrasts sharply with the pictorial responses of artists such as Delacroix and Géricault, numbers of whose exotic works directly concerned with Algeria date from the 1830s and 40s.

There are instances of an exotic work being known to have an explicit connection with political life, for example Gaspare Spontini's *Fernand Cortez ou Le conquête du Mexique* (1809). The subject is thought to have been suggested to the composer by Napoleon, who wished to inflame the French public with enthusiasm for his Peninsular Campaign by the depiction of the fabulous riches at Spain's disposal. In this case propaganda failed, as the audience were apparently more dejected than exhilarated by the depiction of their opponent's valour in achieving the conquest of Mexico, and the government had the opera suppressed. Dismal failure also attended the première in 1865 of the lesser-known opera *L'aventurier*, likewise set in Mexico. The composer, Prince Józef Poniatowski, had dreamt up the story when the attempt to set the Archduke Maximilian on the throne of that country and establish a new sphere of French influence in America was still meeting with success. By the time the opera was produced the French had been defeated and forced to leave Mexico ignominiously on the insistence of the United States. P.J. Walsh drily notes that 'the failure of Maximilien's expedition was matched by the failure of Poniatowski's score'.¹⁰

Yet this overt connection between music and politics does not obtain with the

majority of exotic works of the nineteenth century, such as David's *Le désert* (1844). Despite the long-lived influence of the French in the Near-East, David's presence in Egypt and Syria had no immediate connection with imperialism. *Le désert* includes no call to arms on the part of the French to conquer the barren territory which is depicted so romantically. Nevertheless, David's work does contain covert links with imperialism, as he was in the Near-East as a direct consequence of the search by exiled Saint-Simonians for lands to colonise. Such hidden references lie concealed in the context of many exotic works.

But the production of musically exotic works does not necessarily reflect an individual composer's own travels in exotic lands. The number of French composers who did travel widely during the nineteenth century (of whom Saint-Saëns must be the epitome) is more than matched by those such as Bizet who never left Europe and yet produced exotic works based on lands as varied as South America, Arabia, Spain and Ceylon, some of which are held in some quarters to express artistic truths about their subjects even today. Nor have those composers who did travel always made use of their musical experiences. An example is André Destouches, who accompanied the first French Embassy to Siam in 1687, and whose works show absolutely no trace of this fact in terms of musical exoticism.¹¹

One way of considering the emergence and enduring popularity of exoticism in French music is to place it in the context of the wider knowledge of the world becoming increasingly available to the countries of the West since the fifteenth century. According to some supporters of this explanation, exotic representation arises spontaneously out of simple interest in the music of other cultures by Western composers and their audiences, and reflects their increasing opportunity to hear it. K.M. Randles expresses this opinion in *Exoticism in the Mélodie*, when she states: 'As expanding trade and colonization exposed Europe to the world beyond, French composers began to imitate other music in primitive ways'.¹² While this is undoubtedly true as far as it goes, Randles leaves many questions not

merely unanswered but, more significantly, unasked. Europe was, in one way, 'exposed...to the world beyond' during the colonial period, yet it is surely the case that the rest of the world was much more exposed to European penetration and conquest. Randles's formulation does not take into account the power relation between the observer and the observed which came to exist in exotic representation, and which calls so simple a notion as innocent curiosity into question. The means by which exotic musical information was gathered was due, not to the exposure or laying bare of the French to outside influence, but to their increasing ability to penetrate exotic territory and master it through artistic representation.

The evasion of this uncomfortable point is also demonstrated by Helen Myers in her recent *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*. Here she states that 'during the 18th and 19th centuries, missionaries, civil servants and world travellers took an interest in "exotic music", resulting in studies of... Arab music by Guillaume-André Villoteau'.¹³ Myers omits to mention that Villoteau's study arose directly as a consequence of the French conquest of Egypt in 1798, and that he was included in the invasion force, along with a multitude of scientists, engineers, linguists, surveyors and cartographers, with the express purpose of investigating and laying bare the body of Arab culture to the West.

Far from merely imitating 'other music', with the accompanying suggestion of innocent exploration and experiment, French composers were in general unavoidably bound up in their own culture's attitudes to the natives and their music. These attitudes are often plain to see in the treatment of the subject in exotic music, and may be present whether or not there is any overt intention on the part of the composer to reproduce them. It is not the purpose of this study, however, simply to identify and express disapproval of the racist attitudes of a previous era. This would be a pointless exercise given the prevailing accepted racial assumptions of the time. Rather, the intention is to examine the ways in which representations of other cultures were constructed by the French, and what part

these constructions have played in creating the conditions for and reinforcing the imperial project.

Concepts of race obviously form one of the principal ideas underlying the expansion of the French Empire. The notion that people might be identified as evil, idle, bloodthirsty or decadent simply as a consequence of their skin colour and facial particularities is one which has been argued over by all nations for a considerable period. French attitudes to foreigners have, of course, varied widely. Perhaps the most basic is that shown by Rabelais in his description of the Turks as a nation of 'droll savages', intending to roast his hero Panurge on a spit.¹⁴ Conceptions of foreigners such as this were based not so much upon personal experience but 'on an essentially theological conception of [their] status... as non-Christians'.¹⁵ This attitude persisted even after it was shorn of its religious justification, and was expressed as such by the anti-clerical Voltaire, both in his description of Mahomet as a poisoner, imposter and debauchee in *Zaïre* (1732) and in his famous enquiry of an intending historian of the Turks: 'If all he could hope to explain was how one barbarian succeeded another, where could be the advantage to mankind?'¹⁶ The discovery of the New World unsettled the use of purely scriptural authority for determining the status of others, and eventually led to new ways of classifying them. Various consequences flowed from the racial theories of the colonial period. No matter how diverse their opinions concerning their colonial subjects, French commentators by and large agreed that foreigners were culturally, if not biologically and morally, inferior. As a result, natives were seen as being incapable of ruling themselves as well as the French could rule them. 'La mission civilisatrice' provided an ample justification for imperial rule.

These varying conceptions may also be traced in French musical responses to other cultures. In an essay entitled 'Constructing the oriental "Other": Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*', Ralph Locke notes with a certain amount of humour the colonial aspect of what he calls the 'paradigmatic plot' of nineteenth-century exotic opera:

Young, tolerant, brave, possibly naive, white-European tenor-hero intrudes, at risk of disloyalty to his own people and colonialist ethic, into mysterious, dark-skinned, colonised territory represented by alluring dancing girls and deeply affectionate, sensitive lyric soprano, incurring wrath of brutal, intransigent tribal chieftain (bass or bass-baritone) and blindly obedient chorus of male savages.¹⁷

Although Locke recognises the colonial situation in his article, it is generally unquestioned in the works of musical exoticism which form the basis of this thesis. However, all kinds of attitudes to race are displayed in these works, ranging from the 'noble savages' depicted in Jean-François Le Sueur's *Paul et Virginie* (1794) to the 'blindly obedient chorus' of Delibes's *Lakmé*.

One of the most important conceptualisations of colonial subjects for the study of Empire is the belief that their culture is equivalent to what European culture was like in remote times. This idea is still commonly expressed regarding Australian aborigines, among others. The same concept is also to be seen in many descriptions of the music of other cultures by Europeans. In his *Essai sur la musique* of 1780, concerning the music of China, Jean Baptiste de La Borde remarks:

None of the ancients knew of more than parts at the unison or at the octave [La Borde refers to the monophonic texture of Chinese music]; and in this respect, *as in many others*, the Chinese are like the ancients [my italics].¹⁸

Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his *Structural Anthropology 2*, describes this theory as 'false evolutionism', 'an attempt at suppressing the diversity of cultures while pretending to recognize it fully' by treating the 'different states of human societies, both ancient and distant, as *stages* or *steps* of a single development which, starting from the same point, must converge towards the same goal'. Humanity is indeed conceived of as one, but 'this unity and identity can only be realized progressively'.¹⁹ This view came to be applied to practically all non-Western music, and many ethnomusicological studies still equate 'Ancient' and 'Oriental' music.²⁰ This notion of historical hierarchy is of obvious use to imperialism as it

acts as a precedent and starting-point for other hierarchies of tutelage and domination. It permits the division of cultures into those with and those without history. The former are, according to this view, the progressive, advanced, European imperialist nations, and the latter those seen as the backward, childlike or degenerate subject races.

The concept of the 'noble savage', put forward most famously by Rousseau in his *Discours* of 1754, appears to take a more positive view of other cultures. Rousseau argues that a decline in the quality of human life set in after the invention of metallurgy and that modern Europeans were neither as happy nor as innocent as in previous ages. The ideal state of human existence was, according to Rousseau, best exemplified by the American Indians who lived closest to the original condition of mankind. However, this is only to state the historical argument in a different way. Any idea of 'noble savages' possessing a valid culture of their own is omitted from Rousseau's argument, as it was from La Borde's; it is merely the value placed upon that perceived lack which differs.

Not all Europeans focussed totally on difference in their conceptualisation of other races. However, those who emphasised shared characteristics between the races still tended to highlight qualities which might be identified with the values of European culture. Rousseau, in his *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768), for example, compares a Chinese, a Persian and two American Indian melodies, on which he comments:

We find in these pieces a conformity with the modulations of our music, which gives rise to an admiration of both the harmoniousness and universality of our rules...²¹

At first glance, such universalist views should operate in favour of subject peoples by assuming a shared humanity between them and their conquerors. In practice, however, the differing customs of others struck the French, in common with other Europeans, as a sign that native peoples were sub-human as they did not live up to 'universal' standards of behaviour. Representations of such native groups in music

frequently show differing Western racial views contesting with each other for mastery. At stake is the position which the spectator can be prompted to take regarding the subject material.

Exotic representation of the modern period in Europe essentially stands outside any underlying cultural process of assimilation and synthesis. It seeks to put forward some kind of vision or interpretation of the subject rather than simply attempt an accurate depiction of it. Such representations stand in for the subject material, replacing its reality with symbols. These in turn are understood specifically by the audience for which the representation is produced, and may have little or no relevance to the meanings which the subject material might possess for its own culture. An understanding of the ways in which these representations are constructed is essential for a comprehension of the relationship between culture, politics and the arts, and is what the following chapters seek to achieve.

ENDNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol.I (London, Guild Publishing, 1990), 704.
2. Examples of this view abound from the sixteenth century onwards, as will be seen in Chapter 1. More recently, Richard Rodgers, when asked why there was no authentic Thai music in *The King and I*, replied 'Western ears wouldn't be able to stand authentic Thai sounds for very long'. While this may be the case, it obviously ignores the question of why authentic native music should be so off-putting. The opposite views of native music as merely cacophonous, or as requiring more understanding on the part of Europeans, compete throughout the nineteenth century, as we shall see.
3. The graph (which is my own compilation) is intended to give an overall impression of the incidence of exotic works performed in Paris. Details were gleaned from a variety of sources, including Sadie, S (ed.) *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, Macmillan, 1980) and the same editor's *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (London, Macmillan, 1992). While I have attempted to discover as many works as possible, it would be impossible to be sure that every exotic work was listed, due to the enormous popularity of the genre (particularly in the nineteenth century) and the ephemeral nature of many of the works produced.
4. Meyerbeer died in 1864 before completing *L'africaine*. The opera was prepared for production by Fétis and produced in the following year.
5. The Russian and Chinese Empires were in fact both bigger than the French or British, but were disregarded by European historians as they were designated as Asian. French ambition would have enlarged the French Empire still further had not the First World War forestalled the partition of China between the Great Powers. Notwithstanding that lost opportunity, the fall of Germany and her ally Turkey in that conflict enabled the addition of further

territories in Africa and the Near East.

6. An odd omission for music, when compared with the rich visual response to Tahiti in the works of Gauguin in the 1890s. The main exception, Reynaldo Hahn's opera *L'Île du rêve* (1898), is discussed in Chapter 5.
7. The augmented second was scrupulously avoided by Bach, for example. It does occur in some of the *Magnificats*, however.
8. This view of Egypt is equally seen in the *Description de l'Égypte* drawn up by the team of scientists and surveyors accompanying the French invasion force of 1798, and in artistic representations of Egypt such as Verdi's *Aida* (1871).
9. The opportunity to set an exotic opera on the subject was grasped by a German composer named Rummel. Entitled *Alimann, oder Bonaparte's Armee in Aegypten* [sic], it was extremely unlikely ever to have been performed in France. French interest in the region was perhaps sufficiently sustained by contemporary performances of Grétry's *La caravane du Caire* and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (known in Paris as *Les mystères d'Isis*) and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. The Italian composer and favourite of Napoleon, Ferdinando Paer, wrote a scene entitled *Cléopâtre* (1808), which may have had the effect of reminding the Paris audience of one of Napoleon's more spectacular exploits, but by this time the audience would have had new conquests to consider. Berlioz's cantata *La mort de Cléopâtre* was the first work by a native-born French composer to take an Egyptian subject as its theme. The issues raised by this gap are explored in Chapter Two. However, the adoption by the Prix de Rome panel of an exotic text shows that exoticism had official backing.
10. Walsh, P.J.: *Second Empire Opera: The Théâtre Lyrique, Paris 1851-1870* (London, Calder, 1981), 187 (Walsh uses the French spelling of the Archduke's name). Similar examples with an overt political connection are common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when occasional pieces

were produced celebrating specific victories and peace treaties. Examples include Rameau's *Les fêtes de Polymnie*, which was produced to celebrate the French victory at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745.

11. Such an appearance of native melody in European music would have been exceptional at this date.
12. Randles, K.M.: *Exoticism in the Mélodie: the evolution of exotic techniques as used in songs by David, Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Roussel, Delage, Milhaud and Messiaen* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1992), 3.
13. H. Myers (ed.): *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction* (London, Macmillan, 1992), 3.
14. In the second book of *Pantagruel*, written in 1535. In the same book Moorish dancing is referred to as 'Mahomet's disease'. Rabelais is, of course, not entirely serious in his hyperbolic description of Panurge's adventures among the Turks, although his low estimate of their humanity was also shared by more earnest Christians. Rabelais, F.: *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Vol. I (London, Dent, 1946), 183-5.
15. Appiah, K.H.: 'Race' in Lentricchia, F. & McLaughlin, T. (eds.): *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990), 277.
16. Quoted in Davidson, B.: *Africa in History* (London, Paladin, 1978), 67.
17. Locke, R.P.: 'Constructing the oriental "Other": Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 3/3 (1991), 262-3.
18. La Borde, J.B. de: *Essai sur la musique*, Vol.I (Paris, Ph-D. Pievres, 1780), 134.
19. Lévi-Strauss, C. (trans. M. Layton): *Structural Anthropology 2* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987), 330-1.
20. An example is the first volume of the *New Oxford History of Music* (London, Oxford University Press, 1957), which juxtaposes 'Ancient' and 'Oriental'

music in precisely this way (see title page).

21. Rousseau, J-J.: *Dictionnaire de musique* (New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969), 314.

I

'Foreign novelties above all else': French Musical Exoticism to 1798

(i) The Emergence of Musical Exoticism in France

The origins of musical exoticism in France are, in common with that of the music of other European countries, obscure. Various views have been put forward as to its first appearance in French music. David Charlton and Richard Langham Smith cite Lully's *Xerxes* (1660) as a significant ancestor of the exotic genre.¹ A 'maure nu' appeared in Molière's *Le Sicilien* of 1667, and there is a Moorish scene in *Le bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670).² Graham Sadler identifies the even later *Les fêtes grecques et romaines* of Blamont (1723) as establishing the vogue for opera-ballets on mythological or legendary subjects.³ Jean Mongrédien makes the somewhat extraordinary claim that 1794 'marks the appearance of exoticism in French musical drama', the occasion being the first performance of Le Sueur's *Paul et Virginie*.⁴ This is, quite clearly, far too late a date; yet even the more realistic assessments of Charlton, Langham Smith and Sadler are possibly too late by as much as a century. A 'moorish melody' is noted by Arbeau in 1588, as we shall see. But it will probably never be possible to assign a single date to this phenomenon, due to the difficulty of identifying the gradual emergence of the exotic genre out of a previously existing body of music already strongly affected by foreign influence.

Throughout the Middle Ages the Orient was Europe's most powerful rival in terms of religion, trade and conquest. The Orthodox Eastern Roman Empire, already separated from Catholic Europe by a religious schism, came under increasing pressure from the potent military force and vibrant culture of Islam. Christian Europe itself only narrowly maintained its independence from Arab conquest by victories such as the Battle of Poitiers in 732 which largely confined Muslim rule to south of the Pyrenees. The countries of the Arab world surpassed those of the West throughout the Middle Ages in culture, riches and military skills.

More than half of Spain was under Muslim rule until the latter part of the thirteenth century. Even after the Arabs had lost their hold on Spain, the most magnificent of the Muslim Empires, the Ottoman, controlled a vast area from its capital Istanbul. At its peak around the beginning of the seventeenth century, this Empire extended from Baghdad to Mauretania, and from the Danube to the Sudan. Its power over the West was in part based on its geographical position astride all the known trade routes overland to the more distant countries of Asia, India and Africa. Under the shadow of this powerful and persistent presence, it is not surprising that European culture absorbed such a large number of artistic and other influences.

Arab influence on Medieval European culture as a whole was extremely wide-ranging and penetrating. The poetic forms and content of the lays of the troubadours, for example, were deeply influenced by Oriental models, largely as a result of the increased and prolonged contacts fostered by the Crusades, which began in 1095.⁵ European music also owed an enormous debt to Arab culture for the preservation of a large body of theoretical treatises of the Greeks which were lost to the West following the collapse of the Roman Empire.⁶ Arab theorists continued to add to the number of important theoretical works throughout the early Middle Ages, during which time European scholarship stagnated.⁷ Much of the West's knowledge of both the new Arabic and the old Greek theory came by way of Spain, whose universities (such as the renowned University of Toledo) had been established by the Arabs in the eighth century, long before any European ones. Arab musical instruments, such the *rabāb* (rebab), *naqqāra* (naker) and *al-'ūd* (lute), spread throughout Medieval Europe. The consequences of the introduction of the lute were probably highly significant for the development of Western scales and tablature, and other Arabic practices similarly affected European musical terms, rhythms and forms.⁸ These influences have generally been absorbed into the fabric of European culture in a way which prevents their being identified as exotic.

Many European folk-customs, such as the widespread Morris (Moorish) dance or *moresca*, show strong affiliations to Arab culture, although with the significant difference that they may contain a certain measure of conscious reference to Arab custom as distinct from European practice. It is probably in the genre of the *moresca* that exotic representation of the East can be first identified in a musical context. The dance was widespread in Europe during the Renaissance and included an exotic element through costumes, movements and scenes of stylised battle between Moors and Christians. Arbeau recounts seeing the dance performed by a young man with blackened face and bells and records the tune, 'Air de la Morisque', in his *Orchésographie* (1588).⁹ *Morescas* also formed a part of court entertainment, where they were often danced by professionals and were accompanied by spectacular effects. At the Feast of the Peacock given by Gaston IV, Comte de Foix and Prince of Viane, at the Abbaye de Saint-Julien de Tours in 1475 for a party of Hungarian ambassadors, for example, part of the festivities included exotic displays such as 'a simulated castle with boy singers inside...a tiger fighting a serpent...[and] a mountain with young savages dancing a moresca'.¹⁰ It is unlikely, however, that any of these were accompanied by music which attempted to be exotic, judging from examples which have been preserved such as those of Arbeau.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the *moresca* was particularly associated with Italian *intermedi* (also popular in France, where they were known as *intermèdes*). These were entertainments, often elaborately staged and frequently involving dance and song, which took place between the acts of plays. While many drew upon classical mythology, others had an exotic appeal. An *intermedio* which took place as part of the celebrations surrounding the marriage of Lorenzo de' Medici to Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne in Florence in 1518 included 'three richly dressed Moors' who played upon lutes. Another, performed before Pope Leo X in Rome the following year, ended with 'a *moresca* that portrayed the tale of Gorgon'. An *intermedio* showing the explorer Amerigo Vespucci's ship in an

elaborate staging of a tropical sea, produced in 1608 at the wedding of Cosimo II de' Medici to Maria Maddalena of Austria, was the first to choose a historical subject, but significantly also showed the allure of the exotic in its staging and costumes. Little music survives from these entertainments, although it seems unlikely that any of it was exotic.¹¹

The emergence and popularity of an identifiably separate category of the exotic in art is contemporary with the establishment of the European Empires. The almost simultaneous rise in the late fifteenth century of the nation state in England, France and Spain, among other countries, gave new powers of centralised control to their rulers at a time when important technological developments in many fields relevant to overseas expansion were being placed in their hands.¹² These brought about a gradual change in the balance of power between the countries of Western Europe and the rest of the world, which in turn altered the relationship between European and non-European cultures. This change is reflected in those works of post-Renaissance Western art which deal with exotic subjects.

At the same time as Europe was reshaping itself politically, technologically and militarily, it was also doing so culturally. During the Renaissance, Europe rediscovered the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome (the title of the period itself refers to this rebirth of ancient learning). This rediscovery may well have assisted Europe to redefine its own cultural roots during the period as being distinct from those of the East. An early example of a new art-form specifically referring to this newly-discovered past is that of opera. The composers of this rediscovered medium consciously sought to reproduce what they believed was 'the Greek manner' in setting their libretti to a continuous recitative. Naturally the subjects for their operas were, like the style in which they were treated, taken from Greek sources. These subjects could not be described as 'exotic' in the usual sense, as early composers of opera were not drawing upon so much as constructing the necessary models. Notations of Greek and Roman drama did not exist in sufficient quantity to provide a model, nor were those that did well understood. A large

degree of imaginative reconstruction was employed in the creation of the new medium, as Peri showed in the Preface to his opera *Euridice* (1600):

I judged that the ancient Greeks and Romans (who in the opinion of many sang their staged tragedies throughout in representing them upon the stage) had used a harmony surpassing that of ordinary speech but falling so far below the melody of song as to take an intermediate form.¹³

Modern scholarship takes the view that almost all the Renaissance ideas about the manner of staging Greek dramas were inauthentic. Instead they represent a contemporary synthesis between late-sixteenth-century European culture and what was then understood of Greek originals. As the European style of opera became established, its adherence to subject matter taken from Greek legend began to be remarked upon. Voltaire's remark that those who were Christians at Mass were 'pagans at the opera' reflects the overwhelming preponderance of such mythical plots in France.¹⁴ At this date, however, little else but the story, settings or costumes could be described as exotic about the production. Brian Trowell concludes that 'there was little attempt at realism or local colour...Serious attempts to reconstruct the true dress of classical times did not become the rule until the generation of Gluck'.¹⁵

(ii) Arabian and North African Subjects in French Exotic Music to 1798

Lully: *Roland* (1685)

The plots of these early operas, however, were not exclusively classical. Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516) is an example of a frequently used source which is set not in the familiar Arcadia of classical legend but in the Middle East. It even makes forays into more unknown territories such as Africa and Cathay, then only recently opened up to European seaborne exploration. Libretti based on the poem were produced and set many times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the story was still sufficiently popular in France to be used by Marmontel for

Piccinni's first Parisian opera, *Roland*, in 1778.¹⁶ The story was used by Quinault in his libretto for Lully in 1685 under the title *Roland*. In Ariosto's original story, blame is placed on Orlando for unworthily allowing himself to fall in love with the pagan Angelica (an attitude which will be encountered again in many later exotic plots, such as that of Delibes's *Lakmé*). While Quinault's libretto also follows this line, Angélique and Médor (as they are named in the French text) are not demonised or treated as 'exotic'. Rather, their demeanour is that of any other conventional European character. There are almost no traces of exoticism in the music, any more than there are in the characterisation or behaviour of any of the protagonists. The use of oboes in the music accompanying the wedding of Angélique and Médor (shown in Ex.1.1) may be intended to imitate the sound of Oriental shawms, although it is more likely meant to represent European pastoral music with its characteristic melodic movement in parallel thirds. Neither do the three-bar phrases appear to be of exotic significance in this context.

Ex.1.1 Lully, J-B.: *Roland* (Paris, Ballard, 1685), 236.

'musique champestre'

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top two staves are for Oboe (Ob.) and the bottom staff is for Bassoon (B.C.). The music is in 3/4 time and features parallel thirds in the oboe parts. The dynamic marking is [mp]. The score is labeled 'musique champestre'.

One cause for the lack of musical exoticism in this and other early works could be the general distaste of the time for Oriental music. The difficulty of understanding another culture in its own terms is reflected in the report of one Adam Olearius, written in 1647 and translated into French in 1656, in which he describes the music he heard in Persia:

As we marched along, we had before us our loud Musick, which consisted in Hawboyes, Timbrels, Cornets, and Tabours...making a noise, which hath not only nothing of harmony in it, but is more like a dreadful howling than any thing of Musick.¹⁷

Nor did the situation improve when Olearius reached his journey's end:

We had Musick, while we were at Meal. The Musick consisted of Lutes and Viols, very poorly plaid on: as also of Tabours and Voices, which made a wretched kind of Harmony.¹⁸

The lack of tolerance of some aspects of the culture of others seen here is prophetic of future attitudes of Europeans to all aspects of Oriental culture.

Despite its exotic setting and the provenance of the lovers, the concerns of *Roland* are overwhelmingly European. Again, this foreshadows future attitudes to the exotic.¹⁹ Some of the means by which interest is focused on the Western point of view in the opera are also those followed by later examples of the exotic. The most effective characterisation in *Roland*, for instance, is that of the hero himself, whose vocal lines are almost always active, rapid and vehement. This is contrasted with the more languid utterances of the other characters, who happen to be Orientals. However, Oriental characterisation in *Roland* is otherwise undeveloped.

While musical exoticism in the work could only be described as incipient, the figure of the invincible Western hero casts a long shadow over the subsequent history of both the exotic genre and imperialism. It calls forth a prophetic utterance from Angélique, trying to save her African lover's life by dissuading him from combat with Roland: '...to resist is useless. Nothing will serve us but cunning'.²⁰ This could almost be a nineteenth-century motto for the West's image both of itself in arms and of its perfidious native subjects. In the long run, the West turned out not to be invincible, and the natives had more frequent recourse to arms than to subtlety in their resistance to imperialism. However, in the short term the myths of both Western supremacy and Oriental deviousness became well established in representations such as these.

Early French Attitudes to the Ottoman Empire

The links between France and the territory of *Orlando furioso*, the Middle East (ruled by the Ottoman Empire), were from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries

largely those of trade and diplomacy, not of military contest.²¹ An alliance with the Ottoman Empire was pursued by Francis I to counteract the power of the Habsburg Empire, with which France was then at war, and a treaty was signed in 1536 which granted generous trading rights to the French. Both the French and German ambassadors gave favourable reports of what they saw of Ottoman rule at this time, and were particularly impressed by the magnificence and power of the Sultan. These accounts were very popular throughout Europe, where interest in the Ottoman Empire was acute. Between 1492 and 1609, for example, almost twice as many books were published in France on Turkey than on the subject of the New World.²² However, as we have seen, European attitudes to the Ottoman Empire, while generally respectful before the eighteenth century, increasingly began to assume an air of contempt. This was particularly noticeable in those accounts which derived from countries which lay at some distance from Ottoman territories. Here was a case of distance lending disenchantment to the view. Ironically, the preservation of distance from the object of fantasy became essential in preserving a romantic view of the exotic in the nineteenth century.

Campra: *L'Europe galante* (1697)

The continued importance of the Ottoman Empire to Europe is perhaps reflected in the more exotic treatment given to the characterisation of Orientals in André Campra's opera *L'Europe galante* (1697). In the Preface to the work the librettist, Houdar de la Motte, underlines the connection between the exotic and the stage and compares the characterisation of several different nationalities:

We have chosen those nations which are most contrasting and which offer the greatest potential for stage treatment: France, Spain, Italy and Turkey. We have followed what is normally considered to be characteristic behaviour of their inhabitants.

The Frenchman is portrayed as fickle, indiscreet and amorous, the Spaniard as faithful and romantic, the Italian as jealous, shrewd and violent.

Finally, we have expressed, within the limitations of the stage, the haughtiness and supreme authority of the Sultan and the passionate nature of the Sultanas.²³

The fact that the Europeans come under as much scrutiny as the Turks may be a sign of the respect still generally accorded to the Ottoman Empire at this period, especially as the French themselves are criticised for their conduct in love. It is also significant that the Turks are included in a work which, as its title declares, seeks to portray the nations of Europe. However, the characterisation of the Turks in *L'Europe galante* is important as it shows an early example of the most familiar and long-lived images of the Orient, those of despotism and sensuality, in that classic exotic setting, the harem.

The harem is, perhaps, the single most enduring and powerful symbol of the East in the repertoire of Western representation. Examples abound in literature, the theatre and particularly in painting, where the opportunity to present multiple images of naked femininity was eagerly seized by generations of European artists.²⁴ At a time of increasing regulation of public displays of sexuality in Western middle-class life, the genre of harem paintings provided a perfect setting for a more or less direct appeal to European male fantasies. The most obvious of these is that of masculine domination of women. Primarily this is represented in such paintings by the absolute power of the Sultan, but it is also apparent in the curtailment of the physical freedom (itself symbolic of sexual freedom) of women by the impenetrable walls of the seraglio. By their luxurious setting, harem representations also suggested the fabled sensuality of Oriental women (and, by extension, all women), while occasional hints of lesbianism provided additional titillation for the predominantly male viewing public. The women depicted in harem settings are not by any means all Oriental. One of the aspects of the institution which seems to have appealed most to male Westerners, judging by the frequency with which it appears, is the multi-national character of the female personnel. French, Italian and English women make almost as many appearances as Arabs in

the harems of opera libretti of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example.²⁵

The action of 'La Turquie', the fourth *entrée* of *L'Europe galante*, is set in the seraglio gardens of the Sultan, with the harem apartments in the background. The heroine, Zayde [sic], sings of her captivity and her initial fear of her captor, which has now turned to love. Her statement plays on the familiar Western characterisation of women as able to be won over by displays of superior masculine strength: 'At the beginning of my captivity, when I was brought to this magnificent palace, it seemed to me a den of savagery... I was terrified by the sovereign whom I now adore. But, at last, his presence conquered my fears, and now I am happy to be captive near to him'.²⁶ This exposition of the myth of female desire for male domination is made even more flattering to men by its placement here in the mouth of a woman. This aspect of representation, which makes the figures of those represented themselves the justifiers of their own repression, is common in the depiction of women and of native peoples in Western art.

After this display of misogyny, the focus of the *entrée* moves to the nature of the Oriental despot. The Sultan Zuliman [sic] is characterised as sensual and tyrannical, as he switches his affections to the heroine and commands the deposed favorite, the madly jealous Roxane, to be obedient to his will. This is an early appearance of a figure who becomes increasingly popular in Western depictions of the Orient, and it is remarkable how little the stereotype of the Oriental despot has changed since. The music of this *entrée*, however, is entirely Western in style, with no recognizable exotic features.

The depiction of Orientals in French opera continued intermittently through the early years of the eighteenth century, with works such as Jean-Claude Gillier's *Arlequin sultane favorite* (1715) and *Les pèlerins de la Mecque* (1725). Public interest in such subjects may have been fuelled by the circulation of Galland's popular translation into French of *The Arabian Nights* (1704-17). More important composers such as Couperin now made use of the continuing popular interest in the

Orient, for example by the choice of title for the sonata *La Sultanne* (1710). Couperin was well aware of what he called 'the keen appetite of the French for foreign novelties above all else'.²⁷ As with many of his works, however, this title seems arbitrary, and the music is similar in style to his other sonatas. The fact that no appreciable change in style is apparent in this piece may suggest that no clear musical characteristics of a Turkish manner had yet been identified and made known to the French public.²⁸ This is in marked contrast to the characterisation of Turks themselves which, as we have seen, was already fixed in the popular Western imagination by the end of the seventeenth century.

On the other hand, the more formal styles of music, such as court opera or the sonata, may have been more resistant to the inclusion of exotic material than certain popular forms such as comic opera. Certainly the growth of the bourgeois audience during the eighteenth century had a profound impact on the content and style of stage entertainment, leading composers to adopt more accessible and popular material in both libretti and music. A great deal of this new style and substance was provided by models taken from Italian comic opera.²⁹

Rameau: *Les Indes galantes* (1735)

The appearance of Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* in 1735 marks a watershed in French musical exoticism, and the work has overshadowed earlier representations in the genre.³⁰ Here the *entrées* focus on exotic settings to the exclusion of European ones, although European characters appear in three of the *entrées* and the Prologue. Two of the *entrées*, 'Le turc généreux' and 'Les fleurs', deal with Arabian subjects. 'Le turc généreux' received the greatest acclaim. Fuzelier drew upon the true story of the generous Grand Vizier Topal Osman.³¹ Like 'Le Turquie' in *L'Europe galante*, 'Le turc généreux' is set in the gardens of the Turkish ruler, and the scene opens to reveal the heroine, Emilie, an inhabitant of his harem. However, she does not repeat the sentiments of the Turkish Zayde, overcome by the Sultan Zuliman's potency. Instead, as may befit a European

woman, she attempts to escape the unwelcome attentions of the Pacha, who appears in scene IV. The music draws on a much greater range of effects than those of Lully or Campra, as may best be seen in the storm in scene II. However, the opportunities provided by the plot for exotic musical characterisation are still generally not taken, although the final dances include two *tambourins*, the first of which (Ex.1.2) has a definite 'Turkish' look. Here the drone bass in fifths makes an early appearance as a sign of musical exoticism. The semiquaver movement between notes a third apart is also a feature of what will become the 'Turkish' style, and is a foreshadowing of similar practices in such pieces as Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca*.

Ex.1.2 Rameau, J.-P.: *Les Indes galantes* (Paris, Durand, 1902), 145.

However, this music was first associated with the entrance of the European sailors some thirty pages earlier in the score. Thus, while certain characteristics of what was to become the 'Turkish' style are apparent in 'Le turc généreux', they are not necessarily associated with Orientals.

Grétry: *La caravane du Caire* (1783)

Grétry's opera-ballet *La caravane du Caire*, produced in 1783, was one of the most successful French comic operas ever written. As one might expect from its date, it shows a much fuller range of Oriental effects than those so far mentioned. The orchestra enlarges that of Rameau still further and makes common use of the tambourine in exotic numbers.³² These numbers are clearly defined as scenes of

parade, ceremony and native dance, all others following European models. The possibilities which were implied in these scenes in Lully's *Roland* are now more fully exploited. The effects used in the exotic representations of *La caravane du Caire* remain basically the same throughout the nineteenth century. Typical are the orchestration and melodic features of the 'Danse générale dans le bazar' (Ex.1.3) from Act II. In Ex.1.3 the augmented second, still commonly used as a sign of exoticism in the West, puts in an early appearance (at 'x' in both parts). The effect of this melodic device is here enhanced by the spare two-part writing.

Ex.1.3 Grétry, A-E-M.: *La caravane du Caire* (Paris, Basset, 1783), 116-7.

'Danse Générale dans le Bazar'

Vn.1
Tamb., Ob., 2^e Violons, Bassons avec les Cors.
Basses
Alto avec les Basses.

The characterisation of the Arabs in the opera is generally hostile and dismissive, probably reflecting the disrespect with which the West regarded the by now decrepit Ottoman Empire. The figure of the Pacha, who purchases the heroine Zéline, is largely rendered by the usual clichés of tyrant and sensualist. The slave-master, Husca, supplies comic relief with his greed and stupidity. The characters and plot have obvious affinities with many other 'harem' operas, including Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (produced the previous year). Nevertheless, the characterisation of Orientals in Grétry's work has a different emphasis from that of Mozart. Unlike that opera, the Pacha in *La caravane du Caire* is a sung role. Far from enhancing his importance, however, several of his airs are in Italian *buffa* style, which serves to present him in a comic light and so reduce his dignity. He is

also given certain reactions more typical of Westerners to some Oriental situations. For example, he sings of the limitations of a dissolute life, lamenting that 'this is the sole cause of my misfortunes; it leads to indifference... and lassitude',³³ an argument more commonly expected to come from the lips of European moralists. Natives who express distaste for their own customs and praise those of the West remained favourite characters of exotic opera. However believable such sentiments as these may have been at a time when France and the Ottoman Empire had stood as equals, they become much harder to credit once the relations between the two countries became that of master and servant, as they did in Cairo itself in 1798. The dignity and menace of Pacha Selim and the rich characterisation of Osmin in Mozart's opera are replaced in this work by the kind of amused contempt and patronising tolerance which was to be made manifest in future French dealings with the inhabitants of the Middle East, both in representation and in reality.

(iii) American Subjects in French Exotic Music to 1798

The development of the first major phase of European imperialism was a direct consequence, both in material and conceptual terms, of the voyages of exploration undertaken by Columbus and da Gama. Materially, the wealth and vast extent of the territory disclosed by Columbus's voyage of 1492, and the comparative military weakness of its inhabitants, held out great opportunities for the West. Conceptually, the New World provided the nations of Europe with a blank canvas on which to project images of themselves and others. This opportunity for the construction of representations free from restraints was of great importance to the creation of European power.

The east coast of North America had been vaguely known to Europe for centuries through the quasi-legendary voyages of the Vikings and St. Brendan, and the fisheries off Newfoundland had been exploited for some time. The voyage of 1492 was marked by a new conceptualisation of such explorations. European theories of race were stimulated as a result of the discovery of the New

World. Representations of the native Indians were unhampered compared with contemporary ones of the powerful Ottoman Empire. The colonisation of the Americas provided a breeding ground for racial attitudes which later came to be applied to the countries of the Old World once the West had become strong enough to subject them in their turn.

French involvement in the New World dates from 1524, when Francis I sent the Italian navigator Verrazano to search for the passage to China and India which was then still thought to exist north of the Caribbean. Cartier's exploration of the St. Lawrence River in Canada in the 1530s and 40s was initially a similar attempt to discover a north-west passage to the Orient. As the extent of the newly-discovered territories became apparent, European interest shifted from the search for a quick route giving access to the traditional trading goals of India and China towards the exploitation of the resources of the New World itself. This process began early with the Spanish conquests of Mexico (1521) and Peru (1534), in which the main target of the conquistadores was the fabled Indian gold supply.

Even before this date, however, in 1515, the Spanish had begun the export of sugar from their American colonies such as the Caribbean island of Hispaniola [Cuba]. The speedy and almost total extermination of the Indian population of the islands, due partly to the introduction of European diseases against which the natives had no natural defences, led to a shortage of forced labour in the plantations. The shortfall in labourers was made up by the slave trade from Africa. The first shipload of slaves going direct from West Africa to the West Indies was carried by the Portuguese, at that time the chief European exploiters of African contacts, in 1518. The success of the plantation system, and the consequent large profit from both the sugar and slave trades, led to the gradual participation of other European nations in the colonisation of the New World.³⁴ The power of the Spanish and Portuguese in mainland America nevertheless prevented other European nations from being directly involved in such profitable trades as that in silver.

The Caribbean was frequently visited by the French, and the explorer Villegagnon sailed along part of the Brazilian coastline in the 1550s. Colonisation, however, was beyond French resources in any but small numbers until the seventeenth century, when Canada, Guiana and several Caribbean Islands such as the Antilles and Martinique began to be settled. The sugar plantation colony of Saint Domingue (which occupied the western half of the island of Haiti), ceded to France by Spain in 1697, became the French Empire's most valuable single overseas possession until it gained independence in 1804.

Accounts of the Americas and their inhabitants were available to the French both as a result of Cartier's and Villegagnon's *expeditions and as translations of* Spanish accounts, such as Lopez de Gomara's *L'Histoire générale des Indes*, translated into French by Fumée in 1578. Later accounts in French, often written by Jesuits, included Jean-Frédéric Bernard's *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (1723), which incorporated American material, and Jean-François Lafitau's *Mœurs des sauvages américains comparés aux mœurs des premiers temps* (1724). Some of these accounts dealt with Indian music, and they were for the most part extremely derogatory in their reaction to it. Bernard described Indian singing as 'irregular and artless',³⁵ and Lafitau found the dances of the Iroquois 'barbarous [and] revolting'.³⁶ Some Frenchmen were impressed, however. The earliest was probably Jean de Léry, who recalled the singing of five hundred male Tupinambá Indians, which he had witnessed nearly thirty years before, as a pleasurable experience in his *Histoire d'un voyage fait en terre du Brésil* (1585).³⁷ One hundred years later, the Jesuit Claude-Jean Allouez saw Indian dances performed 'all with astonishing exactness, promptitude and agility' in his *Relation de ce qui s'est passé...en la Nouvelle France és années 1657 et 1658* (Paris, 1659).³⁸

Rameau: *Les sauvages* (c1728)

The Indian love of dancing was well documented. Montaigne, following his various sources, expressed the common belief that 'they spend the whole day

dancing',³⁹ and it was Indian dance that first prompted a European musical response to the New World in sixteenth-century court spectacles. The luthiste Ennemond Gaultier witnessed a group of six Tupinambá Indians dancing in 1613, and based a lute sarabande (now lost) on their performance.⁴⁰ American dances became a staple of the court ballets and opera-ballets of the seventeenth century, for example those of the *Ballet de l'amour de ce temps* (1620), Lully's *Le temple de la paix* (1685), and Destouches's *Issé* (1697).

The most famous early example of a French musical response to the natives of America is that of Rameau, whose keyboard piece *Les sauvages* was composed around 1728. Roger Savage takes the view that the simple, mostly two-part texture of the piece represents the two dancers 'uncluttered by European breeding, learning, even clothing'⁴¹ that Rameau saw at the Théâtre Italien in 1725, and that the shapes of the melodic phrases follow those of native American tunes in their downward curves. If so, this piece (shown in Ex.1.4) is one of the finest examples of one culture being represented in the terms of another. The music has some shared features with the 'Danse générale dans le bazar' from Grétry's *La caravane du Caire*. Both pieces are in the minor mode, and both make use of two-part writing. It is likely that such texture and tonality were regarded as exotic at this period. While the minor mode continued to be used in this way, later composers tended to revel in lush textures to express exoticism.

Ex.1.4 Rameau, J-P.: *Les sauvages* (Kraków, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, [n.d.]), 45, bars 1-8.



However, it is not clear from the description in the *Mercure* of September 1725 of the dance witnessed by Rameau that there was any music accompanying the Indian dancers other than a drum, specified only in the third dance. It seems unlikely that Rameau knew of other sources of American Indian music, which may place in doubt the extent to which he drew upon native models for the piece. While it is possible that the 'considerable harmonic and enharmonic strangeness in the two *reprise*-trios' noted by Savage may be, as he says, intended to 'mirror the turnings on every side with many motions, the grimaces and contortions'⁴² noted by many French commentators on Amerindian dance, these harmonic features are also a customary part of Rameau's style in non-exotic works. Tempting though it may be to do so, *Les sauvages* should perhaps be seen less as a supreme example of cultural synthesis than as following the tradition of the *passacailles* and *sarabandes* which routinely accompanied exotic dances in the opera-ballets of the seventeenth century.

Rameau: *Les Indes galantes* (1735/6)

The second version of *Les Indes galantes* contains two *entrées* concerned with America, 'Les Incas du Pérou' and 'Les sauvages' (which replaced the original third *entrée*, 'Les Fleurs', in 1736). In 'Les Incas du Pérou' the scene is set in a Peruvian desert with a volcano in the background. Exotic interest in the *entrée* is centred around scene V with its lengthy Sun Festival, preparation for human sacrifice and volcanic eruption. The last is conveyed by similar techniques and orchestration to the storm in 'Le Turc généreux'. The first consists of a prelude in A minor of striking simplicity, contrapuntal poise and expertise (Ex.1.5). The combination of flutes and strings, while used extensively in non-exotic works, is particularly suited for the expression of the solemnity tinged with wonder which the situation here requires. This scoring is used by many later composers to similar effect.

Ex.1.5 Rameau, J-P.: *Les Indes galantes* (Paris, Durand, 1902), 169.

'Prélude pour l'adoration du Soleil'

Gravement

This opportunity for spectacle is mingled with conventional European dances in the traditional opera-ballet style. Thus scene I begins with a *ritournelle*, and scene V with a prelude and air. The Peruvians dance to a *loure en rondeau*, and the volcanic eruption begins during a *gavotte*.

The third *entrée*, 'Les sauvages', takes a completely contrary view of the nature of Amerindian savagery. In 'Les Incas du Pérou', the natives are depicted as cruel, superstitious and treacherous, particularly their leader, Huascar, who has no redeeming features whatsoever (he is crushed to death by burning rocks at the end of the *entrée* as a fitting punishment for his villainy). Only the native heroine, Phani, is given a more civilised character, and she is shown to be in love with the Spanish hero, and a secret convert to Christianity. In 'Les sauvages', however, it is the natives who are portrayed as truthful and open, while the Europeans are characterised as devious, proud, possessive and flighty. The scene is placed more firmly in a colonial setting than was the case in 'Les Incas du Pérou'. The stage directions state that:

The theatre represents a grove in an American forest, neighbouring on the French and Spanish colonies, where a peace-pipe ceremony is being celebrated.⁴³

Once more musical exoticism appears to lag behind that of character, costume and setting. The Indian warriors dance to the music of two minuets during the

peace-pipe ceremony, and a general concluding ballet is performed to a chaconne. The earlier keyboard piece *Les sauvages* appears, first in orchestrated form as a 'Dance of the peace-pipe performed by the savages' and then as a chorus in praise of peace. If Savage's interpretation of this piece as a synthesis between American and European styles is accepted, this is one of the few examples of *couleur locale* in *Les Indes galantes*, albeit of a very refined kind.

The theme of *Les Indes galantes* is that of the universal power of love, shown at work in territories as far removed from Europe as Asia, the Indian Ocean and America, and equally affecting the natives of these countries as well as Europeans. Native conduct, as well as that of some Europeans, appears to be viewed with approval in the work, which could thus be interpreted as non-racist. While the natives of 'Les sauvages' are undoubtedly among those placed in the best light, other native individuals also fare well, most notably the Pacha Osman and, to a lesser extent, the timorous Peruvian maid Phani. Nevertheless, certain drawbacks of the universalist approach to racial issues are also apparent in the work, which underline the opera's relevance to the development of ideas underpinning the growth of the French Empire. The universal virtues approved of in the work are largely those of European conception, such as the matrimonial fidelity shown by the American Indians in 'Les sauvages', and the magnanimity displayed by Pacha Osman in 'Le turc généreux' (who declares himself to have been schooled in this quality by the French hero Valère).

Further, the prioritisation of the concept of universal values in general has the effect of glossing over cultural difference between Europe and the other countries portrayed in *Les Indes galantes*. An effect of this in the opera is perhaps shown in the rendering of all the dances of the different nations into European equivalents, and the transformation of their utterances into French.⁴⁴ Thus the cultural and linguistic identity of the natives in *Les Indes galantes* is assimilated into that of the French, who happen also, in the case of 'Les sauvages', to be their colonial masters. It does not require much imagination to see how this subjugation works

potentially to the advantage of Empire. The choices for its native subjects are stark: either their indigenous culture is shaped in the rulers' own image through the latter's control of representation, or they are marginalised by their attempts to speak in their own language.

Grétry: *Le huron* (1768)

By the time that Grétry's *Le huron* was first performed in 1768, all French possessions in North America had been lost to the British. However, the exotic figure of the American Indian lived on in French representation. Grétry's opera, which was a great success in its day, gives the figure of Rousseau's 'noble savage' a slightly different twist. The music contains no exotic references whatsoever to the Huron's origins, all the numbers being written in the style of French airs of the period. Marmontel's libretto closely follows the story *L'ingénu* by Voltaire (1767), which contrasts the innocence of the Huron with the sophistication of the French as a satire on the corruption of the latter. Typically for Voltaire, the story was also intended as a critique of Christianity, though this aspect of the original is not pursued in the opera. The Huron turns out to be French himself, a common plot device in exotic works of this period.⁴⁵ However, the hero is not 'easily able to be assimilated into Society'⁴⁶ as P.J. Smith states: on the contrary, his ingenuousness causes all kinds of problems. Yet, even if the effect of the discovery of his French identity is discounted, the Huron is nowhere treated in the opera as simply a comic savage. While certain aspects of his behaviour are lampooned, he gives vent to some prevailing sentiments of the period concerning the superiority of natural behaviour over artifice, truth over deception, and feeling over calculation. The underlying shared humanity between the offshoots of such different cultures is emphasised by the final chorus, in which all join to sing 'None are savages in the Empire of Love'.⁴⁷ Yet the problems of inter-racial relations are not faced in the opera, but side-stepped. The discovery of the hero's French-Canadian identity undermines protestations of the need for tolerance and

understanding by making these qualities essentially unnecessary.

(iv) African subjects in French Exotic Music to 1798

Early European involvement in Africa centred around two main preoccupations. The first, and earliest, was the search for gold along the West Coast; the second, following the opening up of the sea route to India, concerned navigation around the land mass on the sea route to the Far East. The search for gold was largely replaced after 1518 by the insatiable demand for slaves among the European nations, who established small trading centres along both coasts of Africa which also acted as slaving depots. There huge numbers of slaves were delivered to the Europeans by the coastal tribes with whom they traded.⁴⁸ Only very rarely before the nineteenth century did Europeans venture inland themselves. Descriptions of the music of the African tribes by Europeans are therefore few and far between.

One such account concerns the Congo, whose king became Christian in 1506, and where contacts were generally more developed than elsewhere. It describes a journey undertaken by two Jesuits through the country in 1666–7, and was translated into French in 1680. As in so many such accounts, the attitude of the Europeans to the natives is one of contempt. Music which is judged to be primitive is taken to be a sign of sub-humanity in those who practice it:

The Men... play upon certain Instruments, which are wretched and ridiculous enough, till night, being altogether strangers to melancholy... they fell a-playing upon several Instruments, a-dancing, and shouting so loud, that they might be heard half a league off... They beat their Drums with open hand... they hollow it within, and cover it top and bottom with the Skin of a Tiger, or some other Beast, which makes a hideous noise when they beat it after their manner.⁴⁹

This attitude to the African natives and their music remained current until this century, and possibly explains the relative dearth of black African subjects in French exotic music until the 1900s.

Le Sueur: *Paul et Virginie* (1794)

An exception, however, is provided by the the use for a libretto of the novel *Paul et Virginie*. This once enormously popular work deals with the sugar plantation island of Mauritius. French interest in the region dated from 1570 when a base had been established on neighbouring Madagascar partly to act as a revictualling station for ships travelling to India and China. The story, by the adventurer Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, was published in 1787 and immediately came into vogue. The appeal of the novel was due in part to its sympathies with the doctrine of the 'noble savage', but the depiction of lush exotic landscape associated with Mauritius was also an important factor. Leconte de Lisle, who was himself brought up in Mauritius, praised the work for its 'charm and precision in descriptions of customs and countryside'.⁵⁰ However, it is clear that Saint-Pierre, contrary to the image presented by the book, was oppressed by the atmosphere of the island when he was actually there, describing it as monotonous and barren. In a letter home he wrote: 'Here the countryside is without vegetation, the roadsides without trees'.⁵¹ The luxuriant landscapes of the novel in fact existed only in his imagination. His fictional transformation of this landscape and, even more, the endorsement of the supposedly authoritative de Lisle, underlines the essentially imaginative nature of much exotic description.

The plot of the novel was based in part on a real event, the shipwreck of the *Saint-Géran* which took place off the coast of Mauritius in 1744. In the story, Virginie drowns because she refuses to take off her clothes and throw herself into the arms of the sailor who could have rescued her, preferring to die modest rather than to live with the shame of exposure. The book, however, does not endorse this behaviour, and emphasises the unnaturalness of such scruples. Instead, the innocent and naked childhood of Paul and Virginie, growing up in the natural environment of the tropical island, is held up as a model. This idyll only ends when the heroine's interfering aunt sends for her to be educated in Paris. Virginie's refusal to marry the suitor of her aunt's choice precipitates her dismissal to

Mauritius and the final catastrophe.

Along with adaptations and illustrations in other media, the popularity of the novel led to its adaptation as an opera. The first of such versions were the separate productions by Le Sueur (1794) and Rodolphe Kreutzer (1791), and the novel was still being adapted for this use by Massé in 1877.⁵² Le Sueur's librettist, Alphonse du Congé Dubreuil, introduced some important changes into the plot, the most significant of which was the substitution of a happy ending. It is the means by which this happy ending is achieved that makes this work unusual in the exotic genre. The essence of Saint-Pierre's story is retained in Le Sueur's opera (although without any nudity – a chance Meyerbeer would surely not have missed had he set the libretto!) until the imperious summons from the heroine's aunt, delivered by a wicked captain. Instead of her compliance and journey to France, however, Virginie resists and is carried off by the officer and his men. Her rescue is effected not by the hero, but by a group of unnamed natives who, in an extended pantomime, board the ship, throw the captain into the sea, and return in triumph with the heroine as the ship is struck by lightning. This historic scene not only signals a change of attitude to oppressed peoples, but also marks the beginning of an increased emphasis on the role of the chorus in opera.

The obvious source for this change of emphasis is the context of the French Revolution itself. The opera presents a sympathetic portrayal of the native Indians and escaped slaves that make up the chorus partly because such people had suffered under the autocratic rule of greedy French planters. The Republic abolished slavery in all French colonies in 1794, the same year as the production of the opera, and France was the first European country to do so in its overseas possessions.

However, some aspects of the opera show more ambivalent views of the relative positions of masters and slaves. The slave-girl Babet has the character (and music) of a typical *buffa* servant, pert and capable, but the presentation of the other two named slaves in the work, Domingo and Sara, is more problematic. Domingo's servitude is established on his first appearance in Act I scene VII, when he

addresses Paul as 'master'.⁵³ In love with Babet but unable to speak to her himself due to shyness, Domingo asks Paul and Virginie to speak for him. Frequently during the opera attention is drawn to Domingo's speech, which is portrayed as either excessive (it is marked *con caricature* in several scenes) or deficient.⁵⁴ This provides a typical and striking image of the attitude of Europeans to what was seen at the time as the comic inarticulacy of blacks.

In scene IX, Sara, a runaway slave, makes a similar appeal to the hero and heroine, this time for help against her cruel mistress. Like Domingo, she is enchanted by their promises of protection and assistance, gives them abject thanks and kisses their hands.⁵⁵ These are conventional scenes of the goodness and might of Europeans, and their unquestioned right and power to determine the fate of others. There is no suggestion here that the wrongs of slavery should be righted by the abolition of the system. Instead, the solution is presented as being merely the adoption of fair and humane treatment of the slaves by the masters. This has the dual advantage of placing the masters in a benevolent light while allowing the economic system from which they profit to remain intact.

An example of the increased emphasis placed on spectacle and the greater use of theatrical space in Revolutionary opera occurs in Act II. In scene II, set amid rocks and jungle, Paul and Virginie appear high above the level of the stage. In a pantomime, they clamber down the scenery rocks, matching their movements to the corresponding rhythms and percussion of the orchestra. This effect was obviously considered to be one which audiences would find irresistible, as librettist and composer use it three times in the same scene. Next, Domingo climbs down the rocks in his turn to join the hero and heroine. On its third such use, however, the effect is made much more spectacular (and difficult to achieve) by the employment of the entire chorus in descent, in time with the music, as extensive stage directions make clear (Ex.1.6). The use of the chorus in such a mobile and dramatic fashion (repeated later in the opera when they effect the rescue of the heroine) is something new in French opera, and a direct result of the need for

Revolutionary principles concerning the role of the people to be portrayed on stage. It also points towards the extended importance of the chorus in later works, such as those of Spontini.

The increased importance of the chorus is also implied by the musical layout in this scene. The thinly-textured accompaniment of violins, cellos and basses, playing *pianissimo*, must have made it difficult for the chorus to follow the instructions of the score and match their movements to the music, simply by relying on their ears. Even if some visual prompting were provided by the leader of the orchestra, a great deal of rehearsal must have gone into the successful realisation of the stage directions. The music also draws attention to the chorus parts. The contrary motion of the voices may be intended to provide an aural equivalent of the serpentine movement of the chorus across the scenery. Some unexpected sounds appear to be created by this means. If the G in the middle voices in the second bar of Ex.1.6 is not a misprint for F, the resulting ninth may be intended to express the savagery of the Indians. This is reinforced by the *staccato* marking, which lends the whole episode a breathless quality (it is frequently employed for this purpose in exotic music). If this is so, it may go some way to excuse the rather craven attitude of Paul, Virginie and Babet, who all 'tremble with fear' (the A natural in the middle voices of the chorus in the following bar is extremely unlikely to be more than a misprint for A flat; if so, it would be a rare example of an extraordinarily advanced attitude to dissonance for this period).

Ex.1.6 Le Sueur, J-F.: *Paul et Virginie ou Le triomphe de la vertu* (Paris, Naderman, 1794), 198-9.

[Allegro poco vivace]

Virginie *sotto voce*
 [pp] Ciel quel bruit je tremble je

Babet *sotto voce* se serrant contre Domingo
 [pp] Ciel quel bruit je tremble je

Paul *sotto voce*
 [pp] Ciel quel bruit je tremble je

Domingo [pp] à Babet
 ne crains rien calme toi

Les sauvages descendant par les détours de la montagne.

Choeur des Indiens du Sauvages
 [pp] ce sont eux ô bonheur ex-trême ce sont eux ce sont eux
 [sic]

[pp] ce sont eux ô bonheur ex-trême ce sont eux ce sont eux
 [pp] ce sont eux ô bonheur ex-trême ce sont eux ce sont eux

Vns [pp]

Vc. et Cb. [pp]

Gossec: *Le triomphe de la République ou Le camp de Grand Pré* (1792)

A chorus of slaves also put in an appearance in François-Joseph Gossec's *Le triomphe de la République ou Le camp de Grand Pré*, a *divertissement lyrique* in one act produced in 1792 in response to the first victory of the infant Republic over the Prussian army at Valmy. This work is often cited as an early example of the depiction of black Africans on the European stage.⁵⁶ Their inclusion among the peoples to whom liberty is offered by the French underlines the difficulty of combining egalitarian liberalism with colonial rule. The chorus of slaves here take a more conventional passive role than in Le Sueur's opera, joining in the masque in

praise of Liberty with representatives of other nations such as Britain, Spain and Switzerland. After a long chorus praising the Republic, the work concludes with several dances for the various nations including the English (possibly intended to be Americans, as their dance is alternatively entitled 'Bostoniene' [sic]).⁵⁷ The dance of the negroes, however, hardly justifies its frequent citation as it is scored for strings and shows no identifiably exotic features. At their previous entrance, however, the chorus of 'Nègres avec leurs petits' is introduced in the score by an elaborate stage direction describing their *tambours*. These are made from 'the peel of a fruit resembling a pumpkin... on which a skin is stretched', which they play with their fingers.⁵⁸ The score does not specify their rhythm, or when they begin or cease playing, but the fact that they do so on stage is a sign of the increasingly active role of the chorus in Revolutionary spectacles. The music (shown in Ex.1.7) has the character of a *tambourin*, such as those in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*. Standard exotic elements, such as might be found in any exotic work of this period, include the use of drones, grace notes and repeated rhythms. More unusual features, which point to future developments in the genre, include the use of percussive scoring for cellos and basses (which reinforce the percussion played by the chorus) and the combination of 2/4 and 6/8 rhythms. The scoring also points the way ahead to later usage, with a haunting combination of horns, oboes and piccolos set against a dark background of strings and bassoons.

Ex.1.7 Gossec, F-J.: *Le triomphe de la République ou Le camp de Grand Pré*
 (Paris, Naderman, 1792), 171.

[Allegretto]

The image shows a musical score for six instruments: HD. Pic. Fl., Bassons, Cors. [in A], Vns., Violes, and B.C. The score is in 6/8 time and marked [Allegretto]. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns and dynamics, including piano ([p]) and pizzicato (pizz.) markings. The bassoon part has a prominent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

(v) Indian, Chinese and Siamese Subjects in French Exotic Music to 1798

India

After Vasco da Gama's voyage to India in 1498, the Portuguese at first held a virtual monopoly of sea trade in the Indian Ocean. It was more than fifty years before other European nations were able to force an entry into the lucrative Eastern trade. France began founding stations at which her ships could revictual on East Madagascar in 1570, and the first of many French East India Companies (which were set up and made bankrupt with alarming regularity) came into being in 1604. The first French trading post in India was founded at Pondicherry in 1672, and other French stations, mostly on the east coast of the country, followed.⁵⁹

Monsigny: *Aline, reine de Golconde* (1766)

The sea trade to India and China was one of the few which actually yielded high profits for those engaged in it. As in South America, legends abounded concerning remote and fabulous centres of wealth in the sub-continent, one of the most ancient of which concerned the kingdom of Golconda. This inland city and realm

was famous for the production of diamonds. It forms the subject for Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny's opera *Aline, reine de Golconde*, composed in 1766. Like Grétry's *Le huron*, Monsigny's work was written after the French had lost control of their colonial possessions in the sub-continent. At their short-lived period of greatest extent, from 1746–57, these territories eclipsed those of the British East India Company in size, and included Madras, the Deccan and Carnatic regions.⁶⁰

The situation, form and almost total lack of dramatic force of the opera show an adherence to the somewhat outworn conventions of French lyric opera. There are certain affinities with works such as Lully's *Roland*, for example in the pastoral scenes of Act II and the scenes of court ceremonial and popular acclamation in Acts I and III. Like the earlier work, there is no obvious attempt at an exotic depiction of Indian music. However, the lengthy description in the libretto of the Oriental splendours of the staging show how such spectacle became ever more important when dealing with exotic subjects.⁶¹ The opera shares many of the features of Grétry's *La caravane du Caire*, such as the ways in which the natives are made to hail the noble qualities of the French. It is likely that the opera played upon French nostalgia for their lost rule of the region, and presented a scenario in which French characters (including, in this work, the Queen of Golconde herself) had a natural affinity with the Indian natives surpassing that of their current British rulers.

China and Siam

China was one of the Empires with which Europe was most anxious to trade. Long before Europeans had made direct sea-voyages to the region, the Chinese had ended their own exploration of the Indian Ocean and the East Coast of Africa and had embarked on an isolationist policy.⁶² This policy, which was adopted mainly as a result of the hostile attitude of the ruling elite to both trade and foreigners in general, left China vulnerable to exploitation at sea by the very barbarians whom the country's rulers sought to exclude. By the mid-1500s the Portuguese were able to persuade the Chinese to permit them to establish their trading post of

Macao on Chinese territory. Thereafter it was Portuguese sea power, rather than Chinese hostility, which prevented other Europeans from following suit. Partly due to this competition, French presence in China before the nineteenth century was limited, and their activity in the region concentrated instead on Annam and Siam. Their contacts with all these countries consisted mainly of Jesuit and diplomatic missions, often with an extremely precarious hold on the goodwill of rulers whose attitudes to foreigners were influenced by Chinese thinking.⁶³

The records of these missionaries and diplomats occasionally refer to Chinese and Siamese music, although, as with so many early ethnomusicological observations, their conclusions are often strongly critical. Jean Baptiste du Halde, for example, writing in 1735, makes a general critique of Chinese musical activity:

If you will believe the *Chinese*, they are the first Inventors of Music, and they boast of having formerly brought it to the highest Perfection: but if what they say be true, it must have strangely degenerated, for it is at present so imperfect that it scarcely deserves the Name...⁶⁴

Simon de la Loubère, writing in 1691, shortly after the expulsion of all foreigners from Siam, was equally contemptuous of the music of that country. At the same time, his account is more informative concerning his perception of its characteristics than Halde was to be concerning Chinese music:

They make Airs by Fancy, and know not how to prick them by Notes. They have neither Cadence, nor quaver no more than the *Castilians*.. I have not remark'd one single Air, whose measure was triple, whereas those are without comparison the most familiar to the *Spaniards*.. They understand not more than the *Chineses* the diversity of Parts in composition, they understand not the Variety of the Parts; they do all sing Unisons. Their Instruments are not well chose, and it must be thought that those, wherein there appears any knowledge of Musick, have them brought from other parts.⁶⁵

Loubère makes a strange choice of comparison between Spanish and Siamese music, which possibly indicates the equally exotic potential of both countries to the French of the period. The attitude to monophonic music as lacking the sophistication of western harmony is marked in this passage, as is the disparaging comment that any knowledge of music must have come from elsewhere. These attitudes reappear in the late eighteenth century when the French came into closer contact with the music of Egypt, as will be seen in the following chapter.

La Borde, in his *Essai sur la musique* (1780) reports that the Siamese manifest a 'love of joy - albeit with a little melancholy', the archetypal Western image of the Asian. For him,

Of all Siamese instruments, that which is most pleasing makes a sound somewhat like that of two of our violins in perfect accord played at the same time. But there is nothing more disagreeable than the diminutive version of this instrument, which is a type of violin with three strings made of wire.⁶⁶

Rameau: *Les paladins* (1760)

Representations of the Chinese in French music followed the pattern of the depictions of exotic nations discussed earlier in this chapter. While staging in particular showed the appeal of the idea of the Chinese to the eighteenth-century French mind, their music is completely unrepresented. A typical example of the exotic depiction of the Chinese appears in Rameau's *Les paladins* of 1760, which included a Chinese spectacle in Act III. The production illustrates the lengths to which the management would go at this period to achieve authenticity of dress and setting. This contrasts sharply with the attitude of the composer, who was perfectly happy to ignore genuine musical features.

The *Mercure* of March 1760 reported that 'the Chinese ballet of the 3rd Act has... received applause'.⁶⁷ Favart was responsible for the libretto, and a letter dated March 1760 reveals how essential staging and costume were to the exotic

spectacle, and how frequent were such entertainments:

The Chinese divertissement is a copy of those which have been given at the Opéra-Comique and the Comédie-Italienne, with the difference that the costumes in the present case are neither Turkish, nor Mongol, nor Chinese; they are a combination of all of this... When I gave the *Noces chinoises* at the Théâtre-Italien for the first time I had purchased from the supercargos from the court of the Indies costumes of the country, which made a very fine effect; and the decoration, the furnishings, down to the least accessories, were painted and modelled on the patterns.⁶⁸ ↗

Rameau's failure to draw similarly on authentic musical models was not due to ignorance of Chinese music. The composer was in touch with Halde at the time of the opera's composition, and knew several Chinese melodies through his friend's correspondence. However, he chose to avoid any recognizably Chinese idiom or quotation, probably because the audience would simply not have recognized the music as being exotic in the way they obviously considered costumes and settings to be. Rameau does make use of flutes (continually used to evoke a Chinese atmosphere in exotic situations) in Ex.1.8, which sound when the garden first appears, but their material is completely French in substance. This example and Ex.1.5, taken from *Les Indes galantes*, show in their contrapuntal approach the basically European provenance of the music in both cases. Significantly, the exoticism of these passages appears to be thought appropriate for locales as geographically separate as China and Peru. This probably reflects the opinion of many at the time that music of other cultures was no more than an academic curiosity. At this period it was only beginning to possess exotic significance.

Ex.1.8 Rameau, J-P.: *Les paladins* (New York, Pendragon Press, 1986), 206-7.

Lent

Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Anselme
Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Basses

Gout au superbe palais s'élève vers les hauts Cieux?

6 9 6/5 4-7

(vi) Conclusion

Taken as a whole, French works of musical exoticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show certain common distinguishing features. Exoticism is most apparent in the realm of stage production such as opera and ballet, within which it is largely confined to sets, costumes, racial characterisation, and plots. While in these departments representation may be rich and developed, with many references to the colonial situation, strictly musical exoticism at this period is generally limited to a small repertoire of easily-identified clichés. Likewise, the plots themselves tend to fall into tried and tested routines. Various categories and plot twists emerge and are used repeatedly, such as the 'harem' plot and the device of the native who turns out to be European.

The role of convention in exotic opera, as in French opera as a whole, is marked. This is particularly apparent during the period to 1789, when fairly rigid conventions controlled not only courtly but also bourgeois styles. An example is Monsigny's *Aline, reine de Golconde*, which fits completely into the lyric mode of composition. Rameau's works, while allowing the composer room to show off his genius, likewise reveal their roots in codes of courtly convention, as do such works as Destouches's *Issé*. Following the Revolution, these conventions are replaced by

the equally pressing need for composers to present large-scale works which embody Republican values for a large audience. After 1790, musical effects frequently draw upon larger orchestras, with more penetrating sounds being obtained as a result of imaginative scoring. While these effects may originally have been required due to the large (and often open-air) locations of their productions, composers also found them appropriate in the period which followed, as will be seen in the next chapter.

A particular feature of exotic works to 1798 is the frequency with which they confuse and conflate the geographical, racial and cultural identity of their exotic subjects. This characteristic is widespread and takes many forms. Examples occur in *Les Indes galantes*, such as the ballet of flowers in 'Les Fleurs'. Here Turkish and Persian odalisques are joined by figures derived from pictures on Japanese and Chinese vases, in what amounts to an encyclopedic survey of the Orient. While this generalised spectacle of the East was acceptable to an audience accustomed to *ballets des nations*, the setting of 'Le Turc généreux' on a Turkish island in the Indian Ocean struck even the most easy-going of contemporaries as problematic. A critic of the opera, writing in the *Mercure* of November 1735, exclaimed at length:

The generosity of Topal Osman is a sparkling subject, very well treated in the first *entrée*. But... how inconvenient it is that the action should be set in some maritime African kingdom, where one happens to find the same morals and maxims as those of the Ottoman Empire! For my anxiety about the eventual happiness of the lovers is not in the least calmed by the imaginary placing of a Turkish island in the Indian Ocean...⁶⁹

The strictures of this critic over the lack of authenticity in the setting of the production both underlines the importance of spectacle to contemporary audiences and shows an increasing desire for that spectacle to be founded in fact. This thirst for authenticity eventually leads to the adoption of genuine native musical practices in later exotic works. This may be said to have already begun at this time in a

limited way with the use of percussion instruments in works by Gibert, Rameau, Grétry and Gossec. It is a feature which would be further developed in the works of composers during the nineteenth century.

However, the confusion of identity noted in many exotic works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also continues into the nineteenth century. This may be seen as primarily resulting from contemporary ignorance of the genuine traits of the natives, or even of the geographical location, topographical characteristics or climatic features of their territory. While this may be so in some remote or obscure cases, such as the mountains of Peru, it is more difficult to credit in the case of Monsigny's *Aline, reine de Golconde*, for example. Here the setting, in the south-east of India, is represented as resembling sylvan France to such an extent that the French hero does not know upon awakening which of the two countries he is in.⁷⁰ The effect of such a confusion is, as in other cases, to gloss over diversity and present the European model of culture and even geography as the norm worldwide.

The majority of examples of French musical exoticism take the Middle East, particularly Persia, as their subject, or have a setting in a mythological Middle Eastern location. This may reflect France's geographical position as well as her political interests. France differed from Northern European countries such as Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and the smaller principalities of Germany, in having an extensive Mediterranean coastline, and a consequent overriding interest in the Mediterranean region as a whole. Certainly the great cultural centres of Italy, such as Venice, Florence, Milan and Naples, also manifest the overwhelming interest in Middle-Eastern exoticism which is so common in French music of the period.

Relatively few French exotic works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are actually set in the colonies, with the exception of some American Indian and African subjects mentioned earlier. This may reflect the mixed fortunes of the colonies themselves during the period. In marked contrast to the interest shown in

exoticism, the status of the colonies was, with some exceptions (such as the phenomenally profitable Saint Domingue), generally low in France before the nineteenth century. Throughout the colonial period the French never emigrated in such numbers as was the case, for example, from Britain. The loss of the major colonies in North America by 1765 may have been a factor in the lessening of public interest in those territories.⁷¹ This may be reflected in the relative scarcity of American subjects among later French exotic works.

France's continual involvement in expensive European wars such as the Seven Years War (1756-63), which drained the treasury and engrossed public attention during this period, may also have played a part. European events were considered by the governments of the time to be of more consequence for French interests than mere colonial gains or losses. Thus it was that, while occasional successes may have enlarged the Empire, significant strategic gains might, at an opportune moment, be relinquished according to the requirements of peace treaties with a wholly European focus. An example of this occurred in 1762, when the French ceded the vast North American territory of Louisiana to the moribund Spanish American Empire, and thus lost their strategic advantage in the continent. Such advantages might even be left to fail through lack of metropolitan support, as was the case in Annam in 1787, when the hard-pressed government refused to support French involvement in the revolution which placed the Francophile Emperor Gia Long on the throne.⁷²

The history of French colonialism must inevitably be bound up with financial considerations. The government could not afford to finance European and overseas imperialist expansion simultaneously, particularly when faced by the threat of British naval activities worldwide. Not until the nineteenth century could the expense involved in these grandiose plans be considered worthwhile. The first phase of French imperialist expansion proved abortive, leaving France in 1798 with little more in the way of colonies than she had claimed in 1650. However, the steady growth in quantity, subject matter, and detail of exoticism in general

throughout the period reveals continued public interest in 'foreign novelties' which was prophetic of future interventions. The increased popularity of Indian subjects in the nineteenth century is an example of public fascination transcending colonial limitations.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Charlton, D. & Langham Smith, R.: *France* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Vol.II (London, Macmillan, 1992), 271. The first French play with an exotic subject, by contrast, appeared as early as 1561 (Gabriel Bounin's *La Soltane*).
2. See Powell, J.S.: 'Pierre Beauchamps, Choreographer to Molière's Troupe du Roy', *ML*, 76/2 (1995), 173.
3. Sadler, G.: *Fêtes d'Hebe, Les* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992) Vol.II, 175.
4. Mongrédién, J.: *Paul et Virginie* in *ibid.*, Vol.III, 920.
5. See Harvey, P. & Heseltine, J.E.: *The Oxford Companion to French Literature* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969), 279.
6. According to H.G. Farmer, Europe 'only knew the Greek theorists through scraps interpreted by Martianus Capella, Boëthius, and Casiodorus' while 'the Muslims possessed complete Arabic translations of Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Nichomachus, Euclid' and several more. See Wellesz, E. (ed.): *The New Oxford History of Music*, Vol.I (London, Oxford University Press, 1957), 465.
7. Arab treatises of the Medieval period include those by Al-Kindi, Al-Jurjāni, Al-Fārābi and Ikhwān al-Ṣafā. The only European theorist of the period, Isidore of Seville, is described by Farmer as 'unoriginal'. See *ibid.*, 465.
8. See *ibid.*, 467-71.
9. Arbeau: *Orchésographie* (Langres, 1588), f.94v.
10. See Cazeaux, I.: *French Music in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1975), 66-7. Such spectacles are obvious forerunners of those of later exotic operas, such as the volcanic eruption of *Les Indes galantes*, and the various conflagrations and shipwrecks of Spontini and Meyerbeer.

11. See Nutter, D.: *Intermedio* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol.IX (London, Macmillan, 1980), 260, 263, 267-8.
12. The sciences of navigation, shipbuilding and armaments were all developing fast in the West at this period. See Elton, G.R. (ed.): *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol.II (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962), 395, 494-8, 505.
13. Quoted in Headington, C. et al.: *Opera: A History* (London, Bodley Head, 1987), 22.
14. Quoted in *ibid.*, 44.
15. *Ibid.*, 49.
16. The continued popularity in France of libretti based on *Orlando furioso* may well be due to the Roland's French origins as the hero of sagas such as the Medieval *Song of Roland*.
17. Quoted in Harrison, F.: *Time, Place and Music* (Amsterdam, Frits Knuf, 1973), 155.
18. *Ibid.*, 156.
19. European concerns were expressed under the guise of exoticism in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1722), for example, which was a disguised attack on French absolutism.
20. Lully, J-B.: *Roland* (Paris, Ballard, 1685), 149.
21. Louis XIV contemplated the invasion of Algeria, but it was never attempted during his reign.
22. Coles, P.: *The Ottoman Impact on Europe* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1968), 152.
23. Quoted in Anthony, J.R.: *Europe galante, L'* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992) Vol.II, 88.
24. Such representations are particularly common in the nineteenth century. Ingres produced many, the most famous of which is probably *The Turkish Bath* (1859-62) in the Musée National du Louvre, Paris.

25. Examples include Gibert's *Soliman second ou Les trois sultanes* (1761), Jomelli's *La schiava liberata* (1768), Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), and Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* (1813) Another example of the exotic genre drawing on historical fact is provided by the use of actual events, for example Racine's *Bajazet* (1672) to which Campra's *La Turquie* is linked. Campra, however, does not include the more murderous aspects of the story of Bajazet in the *entrée* (Bajazet was murdered by his half-brother Mourad I in 1635).
26. Campra, A.: *L'Europe galante* (Paris, Ballard, 1724, repr. Farnborough, Gregg Press, 1967), 210-12.
27. In the Preface to his chamber-music piece *Les nations*. Quoted in Higginbottom, E.: *François Couperin* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1980) Vol.IV, 860.
28. Couperin appears to have attempted to reproduce the Italian style in *La pucelle*, a part of *Les nations*, and even claimed that the sonata had come from Italy. Later he renamed it *La françoise*, an admission either of defeat or of a mischievous intention to deceive the gullible listener. The second movement, *L'espagnole*, was originally entitled *La visionnaire*. See *ibid.*, 860-1, and Kenneth Gilbert and Davitt Moroney's notes to their edition of *Les Nations* (Monaco, l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1933, rev. 1986), 13.
29. The struggle between the old-fashioned courtly style and the new bourgeois manner was fought out in France during the 'Guerre des Bouffons' which occurred after the first Paris performance of Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* in 1752. See Masson, P-M.: *The New Oxford History of Music*, Vol.V (London, Oxford University Press, 1957), 241-2.
30. Other examples of exotic works by Rameau include the opera-ballets *Les fêtes de Polymnie* (1745) and *Les fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour, ou Les dieux d'Egypte* (1747), and the tragedie *Zoroastre* (1749), one of the most spectacular.

31. Rameau, J-P.: *Les Indes galantes* (Durand, Paris, 1902), xli. Topal Osman's actions resemble those of an opera plot, particularly in his clemency towards a bitter enemy.
32. Percussive effects used to denote Turkish music probably derived from the European adoption of Janissary music, which originally accompanied the Turkish force (traditionally, the soldiers of this fighting elite were drawn from European slave stock). The instruments, which generally consisted of a Turkish crescent, kettledrum, bass drum, cymbals and triangle, were introduced into European army bands in the early years of the eighteenth century. By the time of Gluck's *La rencontre imprévue* (1764), composers were using the ensemble for local colour. See Farmer, H.G. & Blades, J.: *Janissary music* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1980) Vol.IX, 496-7. Other common features of the 'Turkish' style included leaping melodies based on repeated thirds, grace notes and harmonically static bass lines.
33. Grétry, A-E-M.: *La caravane du Caire* (Paris, Basset, 1783), 102-3.
34. For a history of African slavery, see Davidson, B.: *Discovering Africa's Past* (London, Longman, 1978).
35. Quoted in Savage, R.: 'Rameau's American dancers', *Early Music*, xi (1983), 445.
36. Quoted in *ibid.*, 445.
37. See *ibid.*, 448.
38. Quoted in *ibid.*, 446.
39. Montaigne, M. de (trans. M.A. Screech): *The Complete Essays* (London, Penguin, 1993), 234.
40. See Savage, R.: *op. cit.*, 447.
41. *Ibid.*, 447.
42. *Ibid.*, 447.
43. Rameau, J-P.: *Les Indes galantes* (Paris, Durand, 1902), 228.
44. Even though this practice has its roots in European convention rather than

political opportunism, the effects can still be argued to be the same.

45. Other examples of a native turning out to be European include those in Monsigny's *Aline, reine de Golconde* (1766) and Galuppi's *L'inimico delle donne* (1771). In both of these it is the heroine who is thus revealed. This plot convention may be derived from that of the Wild Man of Medieval European literature. American Indians were associated with this figure by the first European explorers. According to Stephen Greenblatt, 'the Wild Man of Medieval and Renaissance literature often turns out to be of gentle blood, having been lost, as an infant, in the woods'. See Greenblatt, S.: *Learning to Curse* (London, Routledge, 1992), 21. This is a racist variant of Rousseau's notion of the 'noble savage': this savage is noble because he/she is European. This is the case in Grétry's *Le huron*.
46. Smith, P.J.: *The Tenth Muse: A Historical Study of the Opera Libretto* (London, Gollancz, 1971), 138.
47. Grétry, A-E-M.: *Le huron* (Paris, Montulay, 1768), 173-4.
48. The combined European trade in slaves is thought to have been responsible for the forced shipment of 14 million men, women and children from Africa to the American plantations between 1550 and 1850. By contrast, the Arab trade in slaves in the same period totalled less than 3 million. See Welland, J.: *Samarkand and beyond: A History of Desert Caravans* (London, Constable, 1977), 102-7.
49. Quoted in Harrison, F.: *op. cit.*, 93-4.
50. See Levi, A.: *Guide to French Literature*, Vol.I (London, St. James Press, 1994), 61-4. The novel itself sold more than a complete edition each year for 150 years after its first publication, making it one of the most popular novels of all time. Saint-Pierre was brought up in the port of Caen, and had a lifelong connection with the French colonies, beginning at the age of twelve when he sailed on his uncle's ship to Martinique. After a chequered career, in which he trained as a military engineer and visited Malta, Russia and Finland

(posts from which he was usually dismissed), he was sent in 1768 to assist in the covert re-establishment of Fort Dauphin, the French base on Madagascar. After a quarrel with the head of the mission there he continued to the Île de France (now Mauritius, occupied by the French since 1710), where he worked for two years as a civilian engineer repairing buildings. On his return to France he wrote several works based on his African experiences and worked, with Rousseau's encouragement, on nature studies. It was the third edition, published in 1787, of his book on Africa, described by Levi as an 'extraordinary assembly of scientific, moral, sociological, economic and educational ideas', which included the story *Paul et Virginie*, which Saint-Pierre described as a *pastorale*. Thereafter, the story was published separately. Its popularity inspired a 'Virginie' hairstyle; scenes from the novel were painted, etched, engraved and carved; at least 300 non-authorized editions were published, and the story was translated into many languages.

51. *Ibid.*, 63.
52. Other contemporary productions include Reeve's English version, *Paul and Virginia*, which was produced at Covent Garden in 1800, and Steibelt's version for the Russian stage, produced at St. Petersburg in 1809.
53. Le Sueur, J-F.: *Paul et Virginie ou Le triomphe de la vertu* (Paris, Naderman, 1794), 86.
54. *Ibid.*, 87. An example of Domingo's speech marked *con caricature* occurs on page 220. Elsewhere the tongue-tied slave is directed to speak 'avec précipitation', and lines end in a comic expression 'ouf' (page 161). This foreshadows comic black speech in Hollywood films, where it seems to have been particularly prevalent in the 1920s-50s.
55. *Ibid.*, 101.
56. See Fend, M.: *Gossec, François-Joseph* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992) Vol.II, 491.
57. Gossec, F-J.: *Le triomphe de la République ou Le camp de Grand Pré* (Paris,

- Naderman, 1792), 176.
58. See *ibid.*, 171.
 59. These stations included those at Karikál and Yanaon in Madras, and Chandernagore in Bengal, near present-day Calcutta. The Portuguese had possessions on the west coast, of which the longest established was Goa. The English presence in India dated from 1641, when the station at Fort Saint George was established at Madras.
 60. Other operas on the same story include Berton's of 1803. India furnished the subject for many European stage entertainments of the period, such as Naumann's *Alessandro nelle Indie* (1768), Grétry's *L'amitié à l'épreuve* (1770), Reeve's *Tippoo Saib* (1791) and *Ramah Droog* (1798), and Catel's *Les bayadères* (1809), to name only a few.
 61. Monsigny, P-A.: *Aline, reine de Golconde* (Paris, 1766), 9, for example: 'The theatre represents a salon magnificently ornamented in the Asiatic style; a throne, on one side, elevated above the floor up several steps'
 62. In 1405 the Chinese admiral Cheng Ho began a series of voyages to Africa and the Red Sea, bringing back tribute and presents such as a giraffe. These voyages, far in advance of contemporary European exploration, were made possible by Chinese expertise in navigation and the use of the compass, itself a Chinese discovery. The voyages were discontinued by the change in official policy in 1433.
 63. See Cady, J.F.: *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1967), 1-15.
 64. Quoted in Harrison, F.: *op. cit.*, 162.
 65. Quoted in *ibid.*, 87.
 66. La Borde, J.B. de: *Essai sur la musique*, Vol.I (Paris, Ph-D. Pievres, 1780), 435.
 67. Quoted in Rameau, J-P.: *Les paladins* (New York, Pendragon Press, 1986), xxiv.

68. *Ibid.*, xxvii.
69. Quoted in Rameau, J-P.: *Les Indes galantes* (Paris, Durand, 1902), xliii.
70. Monsigny, P-A.: *op. cit.*, 114. The hero, St. Phar, later exclaims 'Am I in France? Am I in Asia?' (*ibid.*, 210).
71. See Fieldhouse, D.K.: *The Colonial Empires* (London, Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1966), 35-47, 120-22, 155.
72. See Cady, J.F.: *op. cit.*, 13-15.

II

'Egypt is not made for us': The Imperial Dream and the Colonial Nightmare, 1798–1830

(i) The French Invasion of Egypt (1798–1801) and the *Description de l'Égypte*

The gradual decline of the first French Empire ended in chaos caused by the Revolution and the financial collapse that preceded it. Victories by the Revolutionary armies had briefly enlarged French rule over territories on the borders of France between 1792–6. However, British sea power ensured that almost all France's remaining colonies were lost during the same period. This situation was dramatically altered by the campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte. Commencing in 1796 with the Italian campaign, Napoleon's army conquered a large part of Europe by 1807, and eventually established French domination over much of the continent, including Poland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Spain. By far the most significant event for the future conceptualisation of Empire, however, was the Egyptian Campaign of 1798–1801.

The choice of Egypt as a theatre for French imperial operations at this time appears to have been governed by a number of factors. Military historians frequently cite the supposed strategic advantage that control of the Red Sea area would give the French in their plan to threaten British rule in India.¹ Napoleon himself hinted at an even grander design, perhaps in emulation of the conquests of Alexander, when he addressed his secretary, Bourrienne, thus: 'We must go to the East; all great glory has always been gained there'.² The implications of the conquest of Egypt were more than merely strategic or personal, however. The inclusion in the invasion force of five hundred scientists, linguists, artists and other experts of various kinds made the military conquest only a prelude to the project to survey, measure, and record the country in every conceivable way. This type of surveillance, the most sophisticated of its kind yet, was a significant departure from any other previous imperial adventures undertaken by any country. It was to be copied in many other subsequent imperial conquests, and could be

argued to be an archetypal characteristic of modern imperialism.³

Although the survey of the Institut de l'Égypte, which culminated in the 24-volume *Description de l'Égypte*, was the most thorough to date, it was not the first such attempt to describe the country by a Frenchman. Earlier accounts show how French views of the Orient changed little over a long period of time, and also how dependent the French of the late eighteenth century were on such descriptions to interpret what they found in Egypt. French connections with and knowledge of Egypt were already well established at the time of the 1798 invasion. The traditionally close relations between France and the Ottoman Empire, dating from the 1530s, had led to the establishment of ambassadors in various Ottoman capitals from the seventeenth century onwards. One such official was Benoît de Maillet, Consul General to Louis XIV, who was appointed to his post in Cairo in 1692. In a record of his impressions of Egypt, written after 1699, Maillet mentions the already established French familiarity with Egypt's principal wonders, such as the Pyramids, the ancient practice of the mummification of the dead, and the Nile. His concentration on the ancient past of the country, to the exclusion of its present, is followed by many later accounts. Maillet's description is also significant in the way in which it evokes an image of a potentially fertile country, waiting only for the right rulers to be made fruitful. Such descriptions of territories which would later fall under French imperial rule were common.⁴

At the close of his account, Maillet sums up the current state of Egypt as a degradation from that of ancient times, and succinctly describes the prevailing condition of the country as 'ignorance and barbarism'.⁵ Significantly, Maillet blames this state of affairs on a long line of Ottoman rulers, not on the Egyptians themselves.⁶ The attempt by Europeans to distinguish between the 'original' inhabitants of a colony (who are often seen to possess sterling qualities which make them deserving of patronage) and their decadent former conquerors is one which often occurs in imperial history of the modern period. This argument even reappears in later French studies of Algerian music, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

The unchanging nature of these views of the East is shown by parallel comments from those involved in the Egyptian Campaign of 1798. In a letter to his brother from the French flagship *L'Orient* off Aboukir, General Joubert wrote of his impressions of what he saw as the distinction between present decay and ancient grandeur:

Alexandria is a heap of ruins, where you see a paltry hovel of mud and straw against the magnificent fragments of a granite column... This image of desolation is rendered the more striking by being within view of two objects which have passed uninjured through the lapse of ages that has devoured everything around them. One is what is called Pompey's Column, but which was raised by Severus; the other which is called Cleopatra's Needle.⁷

Napoleon's early dispatches describe Egypt in very much the same terms as Maillet had. In one, he states: 'It is hard to imagine a land more fertile'.⁸ However, a different tone soon began to emerge in private letters. After the thrill of the initial conquest had worn off, the French had to come to terms with living in the country, and the consequent daily encounter not with the idea of the East, but its reality. A letter from General Damas to General Kléber makes it clear how difficult this was to do, and how easy it was to fall back on racial stereotyping as a way of explaining what was experienced. Describing Cairo, Damas declared:

This execrable doghole of a city is inhabited by a lazy set of wretches, who squat all day before their filthy huts, smoking and taking coffee, or eating pumpkins and drinking water. It is easy to lose oneself for a whole day in the stinking narrow streets of this illustrious capital.⁹

This same exclamation of incomprehension and disgust at the 'otherness' of native life could have come from almost any imperial official practically anywhere in the French Empire at any time during the nineteenth century. Even Bonaparte, writing to his brother Joseph, confided that Egypt 'is utterly barbarous',¹⁰ and one of the team sent to carry out the survey of Egypt summed up the disillusion of the French succinctly with the words (in capitals for emphasis) 'EGYPT IS NOT MADE

FOR US'.¹¹

When it came to artistic representations of Egypt, however, the prevailing feelings of dismay and incomprehension of the artists on the spot were not generally revealed at the time. The *Description de l'Égypte* portrays a more detached, sanitised version of modern Egypt than that of the private accounts. As well as recording their present ruinous condition, the *Description* indulges in many grandiose imaginative reconstructions of the vast edifices of the ancient sites. A typical example is the ornate representation of the interior of the Temple at Denderah, which is shown complete with a procession of Ancient Egyptians composed of servants bearing and escorting a litter, on which reclines a woman dressed as a Queen. Musicians are depicted accompanying the ceremony, playing instruments of the trumpet and shawm families. The Temple itself is treated after the manner of a stage set, with the emphasis on grandeur, scale and perspective, enhanced by rows of columns and a light source from the upper left hand corner of the scene.¹² The engraving is strikingly similar to a scene from an opera; Verdi's *Aida* springs to mind. The increased use of theatrical space already seen in Revolutionary operas such as Le Sueur's *Paul et Virginie* may well have received added impetus from the French publicisation of their finds in Egypt. An increased sense of spectacle is an indispensable part of opera during the period of Napoleon's rule, as we shall see. Certainly Napoleon appears to have learnt much from the grand spaces of Ancient Egyptian architecture when designing public buildings for his own capital.

Musical instruments are depicted in great detail in the *Description*. Identifiably Arabic instruments include shawms, double flutes, bagpipes, single flutes, trumpets, cymbals, tambourines and drums. All these are contained in a section entitled *Vases, meubles et instrumens* [sic], among which they form part of an extraordinarily jumbled collection of illustrations in which fly whisks are found next to astrolabes, horse furniture mingled with inscriptions in Arabic, and body decorations with plates and jugs.¹³ Thus, while the *Description* is indeed

encyclopedic as regards many aspects of Egyptian life, both past and present, it reveals its imperialist project by detaching these artefacts from their culture and usage, showing them not as part of a process of living but as strange objects laid out for the European viewer's gaze.

The result of this spurious objectivity is also, by association, to detach the native people from the conditions in which they live, and thus expose them to the biased scrutiny of the imperialist observer. The result of this may be, as in General Damas's letter quoted above, to imply that their poverty is not caused by the political system under which they live, but is an inescapable effect of their own inherent racial character. As we have seen in Chapter 1, these conceptualisations of Orientals originate in racial theories developed in the West over many centuries. Their implications were to be worked out even further in imperialist practice and theory throughout the nineteenth century.

(ii) French Exotic Music in the Directory and Consulate Periods, 1798–1804

Boieldieu: *Le Calife de Bagdad* (1800)

It is a peculiarity of the exotic genre that no new opera based on an Egyptian subject was produced during the French campaign. Performances of the still hugely popular opera *La caravane du Caire* took place until 1829 (its continued appearance in the repertoire of the Opéra was commented upon adversely by Berlioz in 1825). During the same period Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, perhaps significantly renamed *Les mystères d'Isis*, was performed 134 times in Paris from 1801 and proved to be a significant influence on future exotic works. Its depiction of the trials of the lovers, with hints of Masonic ritual, may have struck a chord with contemporary audiences still eager for 'foreign novelties'. Racist overtones are also provided in the characterisation of the villainous Moor, Monostatos, as a stereotypical mixture of cruelty and sensual lust. It is equally likely that the portrayal of the idealised community of enlightened scholar/priests in the opera

would have appealed to the atmosphere of the time. The team of *savants* who drew up the *Description de l'Égypte* were themselves such a group (at least in their own estimation), and Napoleon liked to be known as a supporter of the Arts and Sciences. The appeal of Mozart, which was beginning to be felt in Paris at this time, may have been strengthened by the relevance of this opera and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (performed in Paris, perhaps significantly, from 1798) to the contemporary political situation.

However, such relevance is not shown in contemporary works of French musical exoticism. The only new French exotic work dealing with an Ottoman subject during the Egyptian Campaign was François-Adrien Boieldieu's *Le Calife de Bagdad*. The opera was first produced at the height of French success in Egypt, in 1800. There are no references in the work to the current political situation. Instead, the opera has reference merely to earlier examples of the genre, particularly Grétry's *La caravane du Caire*. In several respects, Boieldieu's work is the less advanced of the two. While the libretto makes equal use of the harem setting, the orchestration is less impressive than that of Grétry, and uses no trumpets.

Boieldieu's opera also provides an example of what may be described as 'reversed exoticism'. This feature, apparent in several exotic works of the early nineteenth century, takes the form of a catalogue in which a native describes the stereotypical character of various European nations. In Boieldieu's work, it is the *soubrette* character, the maid Késie, who describes the characteristics of the various nationalities of the women who inhabit the harem. Each one – French, Italian, Spanish, Scottish, German and English – is represented by a suitable musical style. Thus the Scots are characterised by a lugubrious folk-song in b minor, the Germans by a waltz, and the English by a hornpipe. Ironically, the only nations not characterised in the opera are the Orientals themselves.

The apparent lack of interest in the musical characterisation of Orientals at this time is shown by contrast with one of the more striking passages of Késie's air.

Ex.2.1 shows the opening of the section describing the typical Spanish woman. The bolero had already become a popular entertainment outside Spain at the end of the eighteenth century, and this section draws on its characteristic rhythm. An authentic bolero, however, is always in triple time rather than the duple time of Késie's song. As a further attempt at local colour, Késie is directed in the score to 'appear to play the guitar', and the strings which accompany her to play *col legno*. This is an early occurrence of this technique, and illustrates how the search for exotic effect may have led composers to explore new ways of producing sounds from the instruments that were already available³ to them.

Ex.2.1 Boieldieu, F-A.: *Le Calife de Bagdad* (Paris, Erard, 1800), 58.

Moderato
 ([Késie] semblant de pincer la guitare)

The musical score consists of four staves: Violin 1 (Vn1), Violin 2 (Vn2), Alto, and Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The score is for a section where the character Késie is described as appearing to play the guitar. Performance instructions include 'fp stacc.' (fortissimo staccato) and 'avec le dos de l'archet' (with the back of the bow) for the strings. The score shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Isouard: *Le médecin turc* (1803)

Nicolas Isouard's *Le médecin turc*, an *opéra bouffe*, produced in 1803 after the French defeat and withdrawal from Egypt, is nevertheless a potentially more interesting example of musical exoticism as it introduces two French characters into the opera, who interact with an otherwise Oriental cast. However, as in Boieldieu's work, the situation is copied from previous examples of the exotic genre of the eighteenth century, and does not reflect the recent changes in the balance of power between the Ottoman Empire and France. This is particularly strange, as it was due to the French invasion of Egypt that Ottoman decrepitude had been fully exposed. It was only Nelson's victory at Aboukir Bay which led to a

French defeat, as the army became cut off from its supplies in Europe. The Ottoman armies finally succeeded against the French when they were able to use modern weaponry supplied by the British. Although it ended in defeat, the French invasion of Egypt decisively marked the end of Ottoman supremacy in the Middle East and North Africa.

In the opera, however, we are placed back in the eighteenth-century world of Ottoman splendour, the world of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. The French characters in the opera, a husband and wife, are both slaves of the Turks. An important source both for plot and music is again Grétry's *La caravane du Caire*, with the important difference that in that opera the enslaved wife of the French hero was herself an Arab.¹⁴ The racial origin of hero and heroine in *Le médecin turc* facilitates a straightforward polarisation between the inventive and capable French and the cowardly, greedy, yet powerful Turks.

In *Le médecin turc*, as in *Le Calife de Bagdad*, there is very little play with Orientalism or the 'Turkish' style in the music. This may possibly be explained by the continued ignorance of more than the most superficial aspects of Arabian music among the majority of the French public at this period. The musical experiences of those involved in the invasion of Egypt, for example, could have had little more than an anecdotal impact on French knowledge of Arabian musical customs, as the findings of the team of scientists were not to be published for several years. This argument might be convincing were it not for the fact that the Oriental clichés used in Boieldieu's and Isouard's operas are less varied than those employed by Grétry and others during the previous century. These effects are fewer both in quantity and type. The augmented second noted in the 'Danse générale dans la Bazar' in *La caravane du Caire*, for example, does not appear to be utilised in either Boieldieu's or Isouard's operas. The overture to *Le médecin turc* includes the characteristic exotic instruments of triangle and cymbals in the scoring, but little use is made of these instruments in the opera itself. The only faintly exotic note is struck by the occasional mention of the *tambour de basque* in the stage directions, where,

however, it frequently accompanies some piece of comic business.¹⁵

The Turkish characters in Isouard's opera are exclusively and typically comic, and their music is cast entirely in the light style ultimately derived from Italian *buffo* opera. The opera mainly focusses on the French hero and heroine and their various schemes to be reunited. An exotic effect which parallels that of Késie's Spanish bolero in Boieldieu's opera is found here. The heroine, Adèle, is shown in a typical harem setting, surrounded by *odalisques* who hold various instruments with which they accompany their song. The heroine herself plays a lyre. Ex.2.2 shows the means of evoking the sound of this archaic, rather than Oriental, instrument. The combination of bowed and *pizzicato* unisons in the violins creates something of the plucked resonance of the lyre, while the plangent sound of the C clarinet may be intended to resemble the timbre of the Oriental shawm. The musical material, however, is totally French in substance.

Ex.2.2 Isouard, N.: *Le médecin turc* (Paris, Brunet, 1803), 27.

Allegro con spirito

Clar. en Ut

Vn.1

Vn.2

Altos

Bass

At the end of the opera the hero and heroine have outwitted their captors to ensure their release from slavery and return to European freedom. Such a release was customary at the close of every 'Turkish' opera from the *entrée* 'Le turc genereux' in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* to Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* and beyond. There is, however, an increasing tendency through the period for this

freedom to come about as a result of the superior cunning of the European slaves rather than through the goodwill of their masters.¹⁶

The French and India; Berton: *Aline, reine de Golconde* (1803)

The theme of India continued to be a popular vehicle for the exotic in French opera in the early nineteenth century. The nostalgia implied in this unrealisable hankering after a lost Indian Empire is implicit in many of these works. An example is the opera *Aline, reine de Golconde* by Henri-Montan Berton, produced in 1803. The work was dedicated to Monsigny (who also wrote an opera on the same subject, discussed in Chapter 1). Berton's work basically follows the same plot as Monsigny's, concerning French rule in India through the person of the eponymous heroine, the widow of the Golcondois ruler Akebar [sic]. Several important additions make the opera more profoundly imperialist than the earlier one. For example, a new subplot is added, featuring Indian characters. However, instead of lending more depth to the situation, the Indians introduced into the story serve merely to highlight European superiority still further by their stereotypical characterisation as either malcontents or comics. As in many earlier exotic works, the natives are made to praise the moral qualities of their European ruler. In addition, Aline is almost preternaturally aware of any wrong doing or conspiracy among her Indian ministers. She shows a ruthlessness in dealing with any native threat to her power which is strikingly reminiscent of French attitudes to the natives in Egypt.

The potential troublemakers of the opera are similar to those targetted by French propaganda in Egypt. One historian sympathetic to the French view of the Egyptians reports that 'Bonaparte did his best to pacify the Moslem inhabitants by fraternising with the scholars and priests and ruling through the notables...'¹⁷ while a proclamation printed in Arabic, Turkish and French shortly after the occupation of Cairo addressed the 'Cadis, sheiks, imams', exhorting them to 'tell the people that we are friends of the true Moslems'.¹⁸ Likewise these figures felt

the wrath of the French when Cairo rose in rebellion in October 1799. The insurrection was brutally repressed; Napoleon wrote to General Reynier: 'Every night we have about thirty heads chopped off, many of them belonging to the ringleaders. This I believe will teach them a good lesson'.¹⁹ The contemporary Egyptian chronicler El Djabarti recorded: 'Many people were killed, and their corpses thrown into the Nile. Only God knows how many died during those few days'.²⁰ This story is repeated almost exactly in the eventual fate of the conspirators against the French in the opera.

The eventual reunion of the Queen and the French hero is also given a more racist interpretation in Berton's opera than in Monsigny's earlier work. Instead of being merely a happy ending to a romantic tale of separation and endurance, the reunion is seen as a reaffirmation of Aline's French identity. The importance of remaining true to one's roots in a foreign land had never before been so forcefully expressed in an French exotic work. It recalls the historical relationship between the French and the nations among whom they found themselves during their imperial adventures. Early instances of French military advisers to the Ottoman Sultans, for example, show how compelling was the necessity for them to conform to the customs and religion of the country.²¹ By 1803, however, European attitudes to such conformity had altered. Napoleon's secretary, Bourrienne, recounts such a moment in the Egyptian Campaign:

The General [Bonaparte] had a Turkish dress made, which he once put on as a joke... As soon as he was recognised, he was received with a loud burst of laughter. He sat down, very coolly, but he found himself so ill at ease in his turban and oriental robe that he soon threw them off and was never tempted to [re]assume the disguise.²²

A hostile response now awaited any European who embraced Oriental ways. Describing General Menou's conversion to Islam, which took place in the last year of the French occupation, an army captain named Vertray records:

One day in a mad fit he [Menou] announced his resolution to accept the law

of the Prophet and become a Moslem. This news provoked much mirth among us... He took the name of Abd-Allah, Slave of God... These acts made him perfectly ridiculous in the eyes of the army and all the French residents in Egypt.²³

In contrast to the staunch adherence of the heroine of the opera to her French roots, her Indian subjects are seen to be only too eager to dress up as Provençal peasants. They are depicted as relishing their new roles and the freedom they bring from their own culture's restricting conventions. The young Golcondois girls in particular take every opportunity to abandon the meekness required of them under Indian custom, and be as coquettish as their French counterparts. For a native in the opera, the chance to play the part of a Frenchman or woman is one to be accepted gladly, and is not conceived of as involving either a struggle of loyalties or any kind of cultural loss. While this attitude remained relevant only to the members of opera choruses (who were of course the French dressed up as Golcondois), it could be argued that not much harm could be done. However, a serious attempt to force the inhabitants of Algeria to abandon their customs and religion was to be made by the French after their conquest of the country. The opera makes the commonly held assumption that French ways are always the best, and that natives lose nothing when called upon to abandon their habits anyway, as they cannot be said to have a culture comparable to that of Europe. Any natives who show resistance to European ways are instantly labelled as dangerous malcontents.

The music of the opera is closely based on that of Monsigny's work. Perhaps as a result, opportunities for musical exoticism are frequently disregarded. The entrance of the *bayadères*, the dancing-girls of Indian legend, has a more varied orchestration and more exotic effect than most scenes in the opera. In Ex.2.3, the chorus offer the hero an image of fleshly delights which contradicts what we have been told earlier concerning the French Queen's edicts against the exploitation of women. Somewhat unexpectedly considering the promise of the words, the key is f

sharp minor. This is a clear indication of the habitual association between exoticism and the minor mode in the West at this period. Despite the addition of percussion instruments, particularly the triangle and *tambour turc*, the music is presented sparsely in a striking unison between orchestra and chorus, two octaves apart. This is close to the genuine native musical practice of Egypt and North Africa, although the melodic material may be seen to be completely French in substance.

Ex.2.3 Berton, H-M.: *Aline, reine de Golconde* (Paris, Berton, 1803), 73.

[Allegro molto]

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is for woodwinds (Ob, Fl, Cl, Vn 1+2) and strings. The second staff is for percussion (Gr. C, Cymbales, Tambour Turc). The third staff is for the Triangle. The fourth staff is for the Chorus, with the lyrics: "Iof. fions l'i-ma-ge du plai-sir au héros qui aime la vic-tore". The fifth staff is for the Basses, Alti, and Fagot. The music is in G major and 2/4 time, marked [Allegro molto].

(iii) French Exotic Music in the Empire Period, 1804-14

The French and China; Dalayrac: *Koulouf ou Les chinois* (1806)

The turmoil brought about by the Revolution caused long-standing French ambitions in South East Asia to be temporarily abandoned during the period to 1830. Ironically, on the eve of the Revolution, an unofficial French army, led by the entrepreneur Pigneau de Behaine, had assisted in establishing the Francophile Emperor Gia Long on the throne of Annam. Although Behaine himself was killed in 1799, several other Frenchmen attached to his force became high-ranking

mandarins in Gia Long's government, and the last of these returned to France as late as 1824. During that period, few attempts to capitalise on existing French influence in the country could be made due to the situation in Europe. Trade links were maintained, but efforts to increase the French presence in the area were resisted by both the native governments and other European Empires, most notably the English and Dutch.²⁴ Possibly because of the lack of contact with or potential for action in the region, artistic representations of China during the period to 1830 tended to remain similar to those of the eighteenth century. An example of this is Nicolas Dalayrac's opera *Koulouf*, which was produced in 1806.

The plot of the opera is an ancient fable of mistaken identity, and its use here is possibly derived from *The Arabian Nights*. The music is almost entirely conventional, tuneful and with transparent orchestral accompaniment. As is customarily the case, exotic effects are limited to scenes of ceremony and dance. However, the orchestration is sometimes expanded far more than is usual in the exotic scenes of Boieldieu, Isouard and Berton, as Ex.2.4 shows. The melody here is shared between bassoons, violins and solo piccolo, a far more imaginative combination than is usual at this period in French exotic music. Exotic touches include the repeated rhythms played insistently by the flute and second violins, sudden changes of dynamic on offbeats, the minor mode, and the enlarged percussion section. The *pavillon chinois* joins the more usual timpani, cymbals, triangle and tambourine.

Ex.2.4 Dalayrac, N.: *Koulouf ou Les chinois* (Paris, Pleyel, 1806), 117.

Allegro

The musical score is for the piece 'Koulouf ou Les chinois' by Dalayrac, from the opera 'Koulouf ou Les chinois' (1806). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It features a variety of instruments: Flute Solo, Clarinet in C, Bassoon, Horn in E-flat, Timpani, Cymbals, Triangle, Chinese Pavilion, Tambour, Violin 1 and Flute Solo, Violin 2, Viola, and Bass. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The second measure is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The third measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The fourth measure is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The instruments are arranged in a standard orchestral layout, with the Flute Solo at the top and the Bass at the bottom. The Chinese Pavilion and Tambour are positioned between the strings and the woodwinds. The score is a full orchestral score, showing the parts for all instruments.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the exoticism shown here derives not from China, but from the usual 'Turkish' sources. The application of the same type of

music to all exotic situations is a constant feature of the exotic genre, as was seen in Chapter 1. In Dalayrac's opera there is a further example of the transplantation of exoticism. As we have seen in Boieldieu's *Le Calife de Bagdad*, composers of the period saw no difficulty in simply replacing one kind of *couleur locale* with another. In Act III of Dalayrac's work there is a large section marked 'Boleros' in the score, a sample of which is shown in Ex.2.5. In contrast to the bolero in Boieldieu's opera, however, Spanish flavour here is not evoked simply through the imitation of guitar timbre. In addition to purely rhythmic means, such as the bolero rhythm played (in the correct triple time) by the second violins, the melody has a characteristic melismatic shape, reinforced by the use of the minor mode.

Ex.2.5 *Ibid.*, 289.

Boleros

Allegro moderato

The use of a bolero in an opera set in China might seem rather startling to modern ears. In the context of Dalayrac's work, it shows how contemporary audiences

were still happy to accept any recognisable style to represent the exotic, no matter where the subject was set. The simple adoption of a non-French idiom would suffice. This is a feature which is frequently encountered in exotic works of this period, and one which later audiences, with perhaps an increasing knowledge of the world, appeared to find harder to accept in some cases. Possibly it underlines the devotion to a particularly narrow set of conventions which is particularly marked during the early years of the nineteenth century in exotic works, and which seems to have frequently prevented composers from adopting as many exotic features as their predecessors.

The American Colonies and the Imperial Adventure; Spontini: *Fernand Cortez* (1809)

French fortunes in the Americas declined even further during the period 1798–1830, due mainly to the supremacy of British naval power and the almost total absorption of French energies in purely European campaigns. For these reasons, France lost several of her remaining Caribbean colonies, such as Martinique, St. Lucia and Guadeloupe, to British naval action during the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon's sale of Louisiana to the United States in 1803 lost France her strategic advantage in the continent, although it is difficult to see how French interests could have been protected in the face of increasing American pressure for westward expansion.

By far the greatest blow to the Empire in the West, however, came from the revolt in the twin colonies of Saint Domingue and San Domingo, which each occupied roughly half of the island of Haiti.²⁵ Both colonies were of major economic importance to France, as their slave-run sugar plantations produced by far the most profit of any imperial activity at the time. More than half the French shipping from the American colonies came from Saint Domingue, for example, and there was additional trade with the United States and other nations through the colony's three free ports.

The rebellion in Saint Domingue had begun in 1791 in the wake of the Revolution in France. The original uprising was organised by the plantation owners, who realised that they could make more profit from trading independently from French trade restrictions. A republican assembly, styled on that of France, was set up, but the planters refused any of the rights to slaves that were at that moment being debated by the French Assembly. The resulting slave uprising was bloodily suppressed, but more risings followed in 1793 following the announcement of the impending move by the French Republic to free all slaves in the existing colonies. These successful risings were led by the brilliant negro general Toussaint L'Ouverture, who governed Saint Domingue for a time. After Toussaint's betrayal by his officers to the French in 1802, rebellion again broke out in the colony after Napoleon had reintroduced slavery in Guadeloupe. French troops in Saint Domingue had to be rescued by their enemies the British, in a classic example of imperialist solidarity in the face of colonial unrest.²⁶ The history of the various uprisings illustrates the difficulty of combining liberal egalitarianism with colonial rule. The attempt to find a way of salving French consciences over this incompatibility was perhaps one of the driving forces behind much of the development of racial theory which took place in France throughout the nineteenth century, as we shall see in later chapters.

Given the mixed fortunes of the French in the region at this period, it is perhaps not surprising that very few exotic works took any aspect of the area as their subject. A striking exception is provided by Gasparo Spontini's *Fernand Cortez ou La conquête du Mexique*, produced in 1809, which was very loosely based on the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish in 1521. However, there was a good reason for the choice of subject. Napoleon had suggested it as part of the propaganda connected with his Peninsular Campaign which began in 1808, apparently convinced that it would put the Parisian public in a suitably bellicose frame of mind. The plan backfired, as opera-goers were instead disheartened by the portrayal of Spanish valour in tackling such a difficult enterprise. The

government promptly had the opera suppressed, as we have seen, although it was produced again after the Restoration in a second version. While it seems incredible that anyone could have been influenced to support the Peninsular War simply as the result of seeing an opera, the involvement of Napoleon himself in the work's production shows how seriously the establishment took the propaganda value of such lavish entertainments.

There were many aspects of the production which could be seen as responses to the Napoleonic legend. *Fernand Cortez* is only one of several operas of the period expressly intended to revive the grandeur of the old spectacle opera, and to harness it to more general political aims. While this tendency may be traced back to spectacles of the Revolutionary period, as we saw in Chapter 1, several examples occur after Napoleon's rise to personal power. As P.J. Smith points out, Le Sueur's opera *Ossian ou Les bardes* (1804) and Louis Persuis's *Le triomphe de Trajan* (1807), on which Le Sueur also worked, both contain references to Napoleon's own exploits. The latter work ends with the raising of Trajan's column, a direct imitation of the contemporary erection of the column in the place Vendôme. The involvement in the writing of the libretti of both this opera and of *Fernand Cortez* of the poet, censor and police spy, Jules Esménard, provides a further link with the promotion of an officially approved construct of grandeur and legitimacy associated with the regime.²⁷

In *Fernand Cortez*, the eponymous hero was intended to be identified with Napoleon, and the fact that this identification apparently eluded the audience may have been at least as serious a defect in the eyes of the establishment than any other failures of propaganda in the opera. Several of Cortez's character traits give a clue to this link. The speeches of Cortez convey the air of impersonal grandeur frequently associated with Napoleon. Cortez often speaks of himself in the third person, the favoured style of the Emperor when dictating his memoirs.²⁸ Speaking of his destiny to conquer Mexico, Cortez announces that 'the star of Cortez cannot be dimmed'.²⁹ Napoleon's belief in his own personal 'star' was widely known at the

time. The impersonal nature of his speeches inhibits Cortez's love scenes with the Mexican heroine, Amazily. While she regards him with adoration amounting to idolatry, his relationship to her is more that of a protector than a lover. There is a strong suggestion here that, as in many other exotic works, the native heroine is intended as a personification of her country; her relationship with the European hero therefore symbolises an idealised relationship between rulers and ruled. From this imperialist perspective, the colonised show devotion to France, while the metropolis exercises benevolent paternalistic power over them.

The plot of the opera shows another common feature of exotic works in its dependence on earlier models. It is extremely similar to that of the *entrée* 'Les Incas du Pérou' in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*, with the same attitudes to the natives at the heart of the story. Like the native heroine Phani in Rameau's work, Amazily expresses her detestation of her own people's religion, for example in the air 'Dieu terrible' in Act II. The spectacles of *Fernand Cortez* fall short of those of *Les Indes galantes* by omitting a volcanic eruption (although there is an earthquake), but this is more than made up for by the inclusion of the destruction of the Spanish fleet, Amazily's leap into a lake and, most notably, a full scale cavalry charge on stage, involving seventeen horses.

As with so many exotic works, musical exoticism in *Fernand Cortez* is confined to the scenes of parade, ceremonial and dance, for which the plot gives the fullest possible scope. The first entry of Mexicans in the opera is the march accompanying the appearance of the Mexican ambassadors in Act I. In Ex.2.6, the relatively restrained nature of the exoticisms used by Spontini is apparent. These are drawn from the prevalent 'Turkish' style, and include dotted rhythms, employment of thirds and acciaccaturas, the use of percussion instruments such as triangle and cymbals, and the ever present minor mode. This also provides an early instance of triple time being used for an exotic march. This feature is found later in the Carthaginian 'Marche pour l'Entrée de la Reine' in Act IV of Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (1863), and elsewhere.

Ex.2.6 Spontini, G.: *Fernand Cortez ou La conquête du Mexique* (Paris, Imbault, 1809), 118-9.

Andante di marcia

Timbales en sol et ut
en sourdine

Vn. 1^o et 2^o
pp

Altos
pp

Vc. et Cb.
pp

Hb.
p sf

2 Cl. en Ut
p sf

2 Bassons
p sf

Timbales en sol et ut

Triangle
p

Cymbales et Gr. C.
Cymbales étouffées
Grande Caisse pp

Vn. 1^o et 2^o

Altos

Vc. et Cb.
sf [div] [unio.]

The penultimate dance of the suite that follows the march contains an example of *couleur locale* unusual for the period, although it is one which became more common in later exotic music. The dance is announced by a genuine Mexican instrument, named in the score as an 'Ajacatzily', and sounded by a dancer who is also directed to play *ad libitum* during the dance. As Ex.2.7 shows, the use of this instrument is solemnly announced by a pair of horns.

Ex.2.7 *Ibid.*, 226.

Allegretto moderato

The musical score for Ex.2.7 is written for a full orchestra. It begins with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 6/8 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto moderato'. The score includes parts for Horns (Hb.), Bassoons (Bassons), Cor Anglais (Cor en Mib), Violin I (Vn I), Violin II (Vn II), Alto Saxophone (Alto sax), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Horns and Bassoons play a melodic line starting in the third measure, marked with a *p* dynamic. The Cor Anglais plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked with a *f* dynamic and the instruction 'Soli'. The Violin I part includes a performance instruction: 'un silence pour attendre trois coups d'Ajacatzily'. The Violoncello and Contrabass parts play a simple harmonic accompaniment, marked with a *p* dynamic.

Although the score does not specify the kind of sound it made, the *ajacatzily* was probably a kind of *maraca*. An *ayakastli* is described in Lavignac and Laurencie's *Encyclopédie de la musique* as follows:

The instrument consists of a resonating body of wood, gourd, metal or terracotta, in which are enclosed pieces of gravel or pellets of clay. It is fixed

on a wooden rod which serves as a handle. Its external dimensions are those of a large pomegranate. The dancers take one in each hand and shake them with rhythmic arm movements which cause the gravel to sound against the envelope. Such instruments are found equally among the Quechuas and the Mexicans...³⁰

It is ironic that, after such an introduction, the dance that follows should be so bland and utterly Western in origin. The only feature which may indicate an attempt at exoticism is the peculiar slide marking in the second oboe and bassoon parts in bars 4-7 of Ex.2.7. If, as seems possible, this was intended to signify a lipping-up of notes, it may have been meant to provide an aural equivalent to the movements of the dancers, who were elaborately dressed in feathered Indian costumes. Needless to say, this is an extremely rare effect in exotic music of the period and it is not used elsewhere in the opera.

The second act introduces the Mexicans in a much less sympathetic light. In general, the portrayal of the natives in *Fernand Cortez* is extremely hostile, and strikingly reminiscent of the French attitude to the natives in their Egyptian Campaign. Except for the heroine and her suite of dancing girls, the Mexicans are almost all depicted as bloodthirsty and barbaric in the classic manner of exotic opera choruses. Act III, which takes place at the doors of 'a temple dedicated to the God of Evil', allows these qualities full play. On their entry into the temple for the sacrifice of the Spanish prisoners, the Mexicans are 'given over to transports of fierce delight'.³¹ Of the orchestra which accompanies their cry for blood, shown in Ex.2.8, the exotic instruments include the tamtam among the more customary tambourines and cymbals. These last two are directed to be played by members of the chorus; others to be played off-stage. This is not the first instance of chorus members playing instruments on stage, as we have seen, for this also occurs in Isouard's *Le médecin turc*. As yet, the huge chorus of Spontini's opera do not have the same mobility as that of Le Sueur's *Paul et Virginie*, being content merely to process on stage and remain *en masse* during choral scenes. However, their use of

instruments on stage is a clear indication of the increased role of the chorus in grand opera which was to be made more explicit in the later operas of Meyerbeer among others. Their increasing participation in the action is signalled by the visual importance of their performance on the exotic instruments. The prominence of the percussion is further emphasised at this point in the action by the limitation of the orchestral accompaniment to that of the strings, although wind and brass join in later in the chorus. Dotted notes, acciaccaturas and accented notes are again used as signs of exoticism, and the repeated tamtam strokes would have created an ominous atmosphere throughout the chorus.

Ex.2.8 *Ibid.*, 478-9.

[Allegro feroce marcato]

The musical score consists of several staves. At the top, three staves for Tam-tam instruments (Tambourin, Tam-tam ex. v., and Tambourin) show a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. Below these are the vocal parts for the Chorus, labeled A, B, and T. The lyrics are in French. The instrumental parts include Violins 1 and 2, Alto, and Violoncello/Contrabasso, all playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents and dynamic markings of *mf*, *sf*, and *p*.

Many of the choruses in Spontini's operas follow the same plan of beginning quietly offstage, getting louder as the chorus approaches, and ending with a *fortissimo* version of the opening. This is an obvious procedure when organising movements for chorus, and one which had been used previously by other

composers. However, in the context of the large theatres and huge resources available to grand opera under the Empire and Restoration regimes, this procedure acquires new meaning. On the one hand, there is an obvious intention to make the fullest possible use of theatrical space through the device of the procession which, as it winds its way about the stage, emphasises its extent and depth. On the other, the smooth organisation of the chorus in this large space could be seen as symbolic of the subservience of the citizens to the will of the state which was desired by the propagandists. The stage directions of *Fernand Cortez* frequently draw attention to this manipulation of both space and people. In addition, the sets are often described in a similar style to the descriptions of the ancient Egyptian monuments found in the *Description de l'Égypte*.³²

The Empire and India; Catel: *Les bayadères* (1810)

The period from 1804 to 1814 saw the production of several more exotic works based on Indian subjects. Examples produced in France include Dugazon's version of *Aline, reine de Golconde* and Spohr's *Jessonda*, which was based on a play by Lemièrre entitled *La veuve de Malabar*. Both operas were staged in 1823, although neither achieved much success in Paris.

One of the more influential examples was Charles-Simon Catel's *Les bayadères*, which was later used by Eugène Scribe as a model for Auber's more famous version of the same story. Catel's work, produced in 1810, makes prominent use of the Indian custom of suttee, which had first come to the attention of the West in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Its use as a plot device in Catel's opera is probably the first such appearance of the practice in a French exotic work of music.³³ The word 'suttee', meaning 'faithful wife' in Hindi, refers to the custom, prevalent in some parts of India, of the widow of a notable personage either throwing herself or being forcibly placed on her husband's funeral pyre. The custom struck the European imagination strongly, as can be shown by the frequency of depictions of it in literature.³⁴ It was generally condemned in the

West, where it was seen principally as a measure of the barbarism of those who carried it out.³⁵

However, the response to the custom of suttee in the West was not simply that of condemnation. In common with many other alien practices, most notably the institution of the harem, suttee occupied a powerful position in European exotic mythology. Such practices transcended the permissible bounds of Western behaviour, and were thus naturally a source of horror. They were also powerful reminders of the 'otherness' of those who continued their use in the face of Western protests. Yet at the same time, they also appealed to attitudes suppressed in Western society, particularly when, as in the cases of suttee and the harem, these practices touched upon the vexed questions of women and sexuality.

As with so many customs of other nations, Europeans were frequently driven to explain suttee in terms understandable to the West. For example, the quality of heroism seen to be implied in the preparedness to undergo such a horrific death was sometimes admired. This was particularly the case when such a willingness could be seen as being motivated by romantic love or self-sacrifice, both concepts dear to the Western imagination, particularly concerning the nature of women. It is these motives that urge the heroine of Catel's opera to seek death in the arms of the hero. In this opera, the plot contrives a happy ending, and we see no more than the exotic preparations of suttee on stage. Nevertheless, this plot device forms another example of the common link between sexual consummation and death which is found so often in opera, and particularly in exotic opera.

Catel's opera provides yet another instance of a work which introduces a new device into the repertoire of exotic clichés in the plot, but provides very few exotic effects in the music itself. By avoiding even the more customary percussion instruments in many exotic numbers, the orchestration remains stubbornly impervious to the sensual atmosphere often specified in the libretto, and appears content merely to be charming. The music of *Les bayadères*, like that of Berton's *Aline, reine de Golconde*, seems itself to mirror the nostalgia inherent in French

longing for lost colonies in India, as it adheres wholly to the effects, melodies , harmonies and orchestration of the previous century.

(iv) French Exotic Music in the Restoration Period, 1814–30

No further musical responses of note by native French composers to Arabian exoticism took place for some years after the production of Ferdinando Paer's *scène lyrique, Cléopâtre* (1808). Paer had been employed by Napoleon since 1807, and it is possible that this work might have been intended as some kind of homage to the Emperor's Egyptian Campaign. On the other hand, the subject may have simply been seen as historical, in common with other subjects taken from classical antiquity so often chosen for court entertainments from at least the seventeenth century. Napoleon admired Paer's music because of its conservatism, and it is unlikely that any exotic effect was noticeable in the piece.

The genre of Arabian exoticism continued to be popular in France, as is shown by the enduring popularity of Grétry's *La caravane du Caire*. Following the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1814, new sources of exoticism entered Paris with the rise of Rossini. *L'Italiana in Algeri* (first Paris performance, 1817), *Semiramide* (first Paris performance, 1825) and *La siége de Corinthe* (first Paris performance, 1826) all dealt with Near Eastern subjects. The first of these, like the operas of Boieldieu and Isouard discussed previously, follows the traditional mode of such exotic representations in its exclusively comic depiction of Orientals and the relative paucity of exotic effects. The other two operas by Rossini are more serious in intent and musical style. The story of *Semiramide* had been used as an *opera seria* plot for years, and *La siége de Corinthe* was a tragedy based on the historical events surrounding the Ottoman capture of Rhodes in 1522. Both of these are more significant for their contribution to the development of French grand opera than that of exoticism. Another foreigner who did well with the exotic genre in France during this period was Manuel García, whose *Il Califò di Bagdad* was staged with success at the Théâtre Italien in 1817.

French energies during the same period appear to have been focussed elsewhere in exotic music. Perhaps due to the overwhelming popularity and power of Rossini, relatively few exotic works seem to have been written by French composers at this time. Some of those who did write appear to have introduced new exotic subjects. These include Catel's *Wallace ou Le ménestrel écossais* (1817) set, as one might expect, in Scotland, and Berton's *Les créoles*, set in the Caribbean. More usual sources of exoticism included a mythical Arabia in Lebrun's *Zéloïde ou Les fleurs enchantées* (1818) and Berlioz's song *Le cheval arabe* (1822), and Spain in Onslow's *L'alcade de la vega* (1824). The most important contribution to the genre during this period was Isouard's *Aladin ou La lampe merveilleuse* (1822). However, this was more significant for its development of visual effects, particularly those involving lighting and dioramas, than the music.

Berlioz: *La mort de Cléopâtre* (1829)

With the appearance of Berlioz's *scène lyrique* entitled *La mort de Cléopâtre* in 1829, a new phase of the depiction of the Orient in Western music began. The work, which was composed as Berlioz's third attempt at gaining the *Prix de Rome*, was heard by few people other than members of the jury, and could not itself have had a wide influence on contemporaries. However, the means by which Berlioz represents the East in the piece is prophetic of that of future composers in several ways. He avoids any reference to previously existing clichés such as the use of the 'Turkish' style or the percussion instruments which had sufficed for Rossini in works such as *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Instead, Berlioz attempts what might be described as a psychological analysis of the frame of mind of the Egyptian Queen as she prepares for death.

The musical means by which this is achieved go far beyond the customary style of the day, and illustrate how deeply the ideas of Romanticism had affected the composer. While aspects of Berlioz's musical style are clearly derived from earlier masters such as Le Sueur and, in particular, Spontini, the differences outweigh the

similarities. A principal characteristic is the intensity of utterance, which is noticeable throughout. It is marked in the opening of the work, shown in Ex.2.9, by the powerful effect of unison strings playing an energetic figure. There are parallels with passages in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*, but the sense of onward movement here is particularly the composer's own. The example also illustrates such features of Berlioz's music as the characteristic cross-rhythms and the high degree of chromaticism.

Ex.2.9 Berlioz, H.: *La mort de Cléopâtre* (New York, Kalmus, n.d.), 1.

Allegro vivace con impeto.

Allegro vivace con impeto.

Allegro vivace con impeto.

Cleopatra's music, also, is characterised by intense chromaticism. This is especially marked at her death, where she sings a descending line broken by anguished pauses signalling her approaching end. These chromaticisms in particular are entirely expressive in intention, and in no way attempt to evoke the chromatic nature of much native Arabian song. What they seek to illustrate is the essential nature of

the subject, as Berlioz's own writings on the piece show. Berlioz's aim, as so often in his works, is to enter into the emotional world of his characters. In his *Mémoires*, he comments:

Here was an idea worth expressing in music. I had often in my imagination conceived a musical equivalent of Juliet's wonderful monologue, 'How if, when I am laid into the tomb', a passage that had something in common, at least in its sense of dread, with the feelings contained in the invocation which our French rhymester had put into the mouth of Cleopatra.³⁶

The concern to portray the inner life of the subject in the piece leads Berlioz to the rejection of such external trappings as the clichés of musical exoticism. This is a more positive and complex response to the portrayal of the exotic in music than had been attempted up to this time. While it might be argued that there is little here that is not also used by the composer in non-exotic works, Berlioz's portrayal of the Egyptian Queen is fundamentally different from those composers who had simply combined French music with exotic sets and costumes. Apart from his strong musical personality, Berlioz's sympathy with the character inspires him to provide Cleopatra with much memorable music. The heroine is treated with more dignity than in most other exotic works of the period, and this approach was to result in music of an even higher quality for the death of Dido in *Les Troyens*.

However, there are some more problematic sides to this point, particularly in an exotic context. Berlioz has achieved his effects in a typically Romantic way, by entering into a sympathetic understanding of the essential nature of his heroine. But implicit in any such 'understanding' of the position of others is the question of who decides what the 'essential nature' of that other is. When the 'other' is a member of a subject race, the decision concerning his or her essential nature may be particularly problematic if it is taken by a member of the ruling nation. This difficulty is sidestepped to a certain extent in *La mort de Cléopâtre* because the heroine is, as Berlioz's memoirs show, at least as much Shakespearean as Oriental in the mind of the composer. Berlioz's treatment of *La mort de Cléopâtre* is

informed by the principles of romanticism, not those of the exotic. Nevertheless, the work is an example of the way in which an exotic subject is frequently used as a vehicle for wholly Eurocentric concerns. In *Les Troyens*, which deals with a much more recognisably colonial subject, it is significant that Berlioz does not rely on psychological understanding to such an extent when dealing with the natives other than Dido. The importance of Berlioz's attempt at a psychological understanding of his heroine in this work becomes more apparent when it is applied to more obviously colonial subjects by later composers. The whole question of the 'essential nature' of subject peoples is one which increasingly occupied the French during the nineteenth century, as we shall see.

v) Conclusion

French exotic works of the period 1798–1830 remain, as in previous years, an indicator of popular attitudes to foreigners. Due perhaps to the practical difficulties of the Empire during this period, relatively few are concerned with an appeal to a contemporary imperial situation, with the exception of oblique references such as those contained in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*. Nevertheless, their numbers show an increase on most previous years, with the exception only of the 1790s. While statistics may prove little, they do show the continuing vitality and popularity of the exotic genre even in this generally lean time for overseas imperial adventure. The major exception to this picture of decline is the Egyptian Campaign. This was a key moment in the history of the French Empire. It revealed the relative weakness of old adversaries such as the Ottoman Empire, and emphasised the military superiority of the West. It also provided a conceptual framework for the control of subject races through the West's mastery of representation. This aspect of Western imperialism becomes more marked as the nineteenth century progresses, as we shall see. These concepts were to be tried out again when France invaded Algeria, the significance of which is discussed in Chapter 3.

The exotic genre itself during this period generally shows little change from that

of earlier years, but such changes as there are may be argued to be highly significant. The exotic works of the period show several common features. They are almost exclusively operas, and are generally comedies, in which the humour is increasingly at the expense of the foreigner. Those of more serious tone, such as *Fernand Cortez*, tend to show the native as barbaric, fanatical and implacable. The belief in qualities universal to the human race, such as are seen in some eighteenth century exotic works such as *Les Indes galantes*, appears to be replaced in this period by a concept of a hierarchy of races in which the Europeans are definitely placed first. If natives are seen as deserving, it is generally because they either recognise the superiority of European ways, or are in love with individual Europeans and prepared to sacrifice themselves for them.

The music to which these libretti are set is generally in contemporary European style, as was mostly the case in earlier exotic works. A significant feature appears to be the relative dearth of exotic effects compared with earlier works in the genre. On one hand, the effects themselves are fewer and less varied, with a very few exceptions in the cases of *Le Calife de Bagdad* and *Le médecin turc*. On the other hand, the exotic effects which are used, almost all of which originate in the eighteenth-century 'Turkish' style, occur in every exotic work regardless of the region taken as the subject. The Mexicans of *Fernand Cortez*, the Indians of *Aline, reine de Golconde* and *Les bayadères*, and the Chinese of *Koulouf*, are all characterised musically by a single exotic type.

This may point to no more than the increasing conservatism of French music after Napoleon came to power (his favourite composer was Paisiello). The thorough-going institutionalisation of the theatres and opera houses of Paris carried out by the Emperor as part of his comprehensive plan of modernisation placed them under increasingly firm state control. This situation often tends to produce art which stays within acceptable limits.³⁷ The majority of composers of the Empire and Restoration periods were content to remain within these boundaries. Judging by the views of Auber and Boieldieu reported by Berlioz,

composers were aware that their public would not accept anything which strayed too far from what they were used to hearing. Knowledge of genuine native musical practices was becoming more readily available during the Restoration period, as a result of the publication of studies such as the *Description de l'Égypte*. The fact that composers generally did not make use of these studies in their exotic works shows that audiences were likely to have been perfectly happy with well-worn effects, and had no curiosity to hear new ones.³⁸ Nevertheless, it is tempting to see in the use of one type of exotic effect to stand in for all exotic regions a particular view of foreigners, in which they are all regarded as basically the same, and fundamentally inferior.

A significant shift is noticeable in the last year of this period, signalled by the composition of Berlioz's *La mort de Cléopâtre*. Written in a highly-charged Romantic style, it signifies a radical break with the past in its description of an emotionally turbulent East. Earlier French composers such as Rameau and Spontini had depicted villainous, tyrannical or sensual Orientals, but these depictions tended to focus on external features of characterisation. By seeking to enter into the inner world of his subject, Berlioz showed a new seriousness in attitude which was to be repeated in his treatment of the North African heroine of *Les Troyens*. Even more significant would be the responses to this attitude by other composers such as Delibes. After 1829, Westerners became increasingly interested in penetrating what they took to be the essence of the Orient.³⁹ This search also began to effect exotic music. While the superficial external features of earlier compositions did remain in circulation to a large extent, French composers more frequently sought to reveal authentic aspects of native music, as we shall see in the following chapter.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. See, for example, Lloyd, C.: *The Nile Campaign* (Newton Abbott, David & Charles, 1973). This supposed advantage must surely have been lessened by the vast distance, much of it desert unexplored by Westerners, which still separated the French army in Egypt from India. In addition, the British navy would have made it impossible for the French to have invaded India via the Red Sea. Nevertheless, Napoleon planned two more invasions of India, in alliance with Russia, in 1801 and 1807-8. Both proved abortive, but illustrate the strength and endurance of French imperial dreams concerning the country.
2. Quoted in *ibid.*, 8.
3. See Said, E.: *Orientalism* (London, Penguin, 1991), 79-87. Said is inaccurate on some minor details of the Egyptian Campaign, but his assessment of the implications of the venture for the future of imperialism remains unequalled.
4. According to Said, Napoleon drew on the Comte de Volney's *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie* (1787) and *Considérations sur la guerre actuel des Turcs* in formulating his ideas for the conduct of the Egyptian Campaign. The importance of early Western accounts is, in Said's view, that they shaped later responses to the country more than first-hand experience of it did. See *ibid.*, 81.
5. Maillet's account was published later by the Abbé Le Mascrier. Maillet, B. de: *Description de l'Égypte*, Part II (Paris, Rollin, 1735), 180.
6. Maillet begins his list of harmful rulers with Saladin, who became Sultan of Egypt in 1171 (*ibid.*, 190). His remark that 'foreign blood has always reigned here' could be taken as an incitement to colonial conquest by the West (*ibid.*, 107).
7. Quoted in Lloyd, C.: *op. cit.*, 35-7.

8. Quoted in *ibid.*, 60. Napoleon's description echoes Maillet's earlier account of Egypt as a 'rich, fertile, abundant, delightful country' (Maillet, B. de: *op. cit.*, 107), which was also only partially truthful.
9. Quoted in Lloyd, C.: *op. cit.*, 65.
10. Quoted in *ibid.*, 66.
11. Quoted in *ibid.*, 66.
12. Fourier, J-B-J. (ed.): *Description de l'Égypte ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'Armée française* (2nd. ed.), Vol. IV (Paris, Pankoucke, 1821), Pl.30.
13. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Pl. AA, BB.
14. This is highly unusual in works of this period. Miscegeny resurfaces later in the nineteenth century in works such as Delibes's *Lakmé*, but usually leads to tragedy.
15. For example, in Isouard, N.: *Le médecin turc* (Paris, Brunet, 1803), 120, where the Turkish doctor interposes himself between the French hero and heroine in a last effort to keep the heroine for himself. His action is timed to coincide with a beat on the *tambour de basque* in the score, in the manner of pantomime effects.
16. The enslavement of Europeans by Turks and North Africans still caused concern at the time of the opera's production, although the days of pirate raids on the villages of Southern Europe were speedily passing. Several punitive raids were mounted by the United States and Britain against North African ports which were identified as centres of piracy. Both Tripoli and Algiers suffered bombardment by the United States Navy in 1815, and in the following year the British Navy repeated the exercise in Algiers harbour, causing extensive damage. The most famous of these punitive raids was that carried out by the United States Marines in 1805, overland to Tripoli from Egypt. Some historians sympathetic to the targetted Muslim states hold the view that these operations were little more than excuses for the

demonstration of superior Western power, and that the real threat to the West from piracy had begun to diminish before the beginning of the nineteenth century. See, for example, Prochaska, D.: *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870–1920* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 55.

17. Quoted in Lloyd, C.: *op. cit.*, 57.
18. Quoted in *ibid.*, 59. The Arabic version read 'we are true Muslims', but the Egyptians were not convinced.
19. Quoted in *ibid.*, 72.
20. Quoted in *ibid.*, 57.
21. See Davison, R.H.: *Turkey: A Short History* (Huntingdon, The Eothen Press, 1988), 69–70. According to Davison, Count Bonneval, a military adviser to the Ottoman army in the 1730s, became a Muslim under the name Ahmed Pasha. After 1774 another French adviser, the Hungarian-born Baron de Tott, was employed to train artillery and engineer units. Significantly, he did not become a Muslim.
22. Quoted in Lloyd, C.: *op. cit.*, 35.
23. Quoted in *ibid.*, 108. This contrasts with the attitude to the adoption of native ways by the later nineteenth-century writer Pierre Loti, discussed in Chapter 5.
24. See Cady, J.F.: *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1967), 13–15.
25. The island of Haiti was originally ruled wholly by Spain. The western half had been ceded to France in 1697, and became the colony of Saint Domingue. The eastern half remained in Spanish hands as the colony of San Domingo until it was ceded to France in 1795.
26. The whole island was conquered by Toussaint L'Ouverture during his short period of control. After the second rebellion broke out in 1804, San Domingo split from Saint Domingue and again came under Spanish rule until 1822.

Meanwhile, the Restoration government in France decided that a further attempt to retake Saint Domingue was too risky, and eventually the Republic was recognised in 1825. The pattern of progress towards independence of these colonies was to be closely repeated in many other French territories during the twentieth century.

27. Jane Fulcher takes the view that it was during the Restoration period that grand opera acquired the same political function that operatic spectacle had under the Revolution. However, this seems to underplay the developments in the genre during the Consulate and Empire, and the undoubted propaganda emphasis that was placed on theatrical productions by the regime. See Fulcher, J.: *The Nation's Image: French Grand Opera as Politics and Politicised Art* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 8.
28. Napoleon deliberately copied the use of the third person from the memoirs of Julius Ceasar. The Empire period drew heavily on imagery supplied by the Roman Empire in a conscious attempt to claim legitimacy as their heirs, another example being the place Vendôme column.
29. Spontini, G.: *Fernand Cortez ou La conquête du Mexique* (Paris, Imbault, 1809), 95.
30. Lavignac, A. & Laurencie, L. de la (eds.): *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1922), Première Partie, Vol. V, 3339.
31. Spontini, G.: *op. cit.*, 476.
32. *Ibid.*, 509.
33. The custom of suttee does make an early appearance in Metastasio's libretto for *Assesandro nell'Indie* as a plot device, and it was set by composers as late as 1824 (Pacini, Naples). Catel's opera was, however, likely to have been the first to include suttee in an exotic rather than a classical setting.
34. Jules Verne's *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1873) is perhaps the best known example. The servant Passepartout saves the Rajah's beautiful

young widow from being thus burnt alive, and is pursued by an angry mob.

35. The suppression of the custom formed a powerful argument for the extension of imperial rule by the British authorities in India, who prohibited it in their dominions in 1829. The practice is still occasionally reported, even in the late 1980s.
36. Berlioz, H. (trans. D. Cairns): *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz* (London, Gollancz, 1977), 122.
37. Jane Fulcher argues that where opera escaped the bounds of censorship, as in the case of Auber's *La muette de Portici* (1828), this was due to a miscalculation on the part of the establishment who had not anticipated the public's reaction to the story of rebellion. It is doubtful, however, whether audience response was ever so easily controlled, even with the most promising material – the reaction to Spontini's *Fernand Cortez* is an illustration of this, as we have seen.
38. An exception is provided by Weber's *Oberon* (1826), which makes use of an Arabian melody in Act I, and a *danse turque* (taken from La Borde's *Essai sur la musique*) in Act III. It is perhaps significant that Weber's style and ideas were much more obviously Romantic than the majority of his French contemporaries.
39. A new generation of guides to the Orient began to appear during the same period, with the emphasis on portraying the essence of the East. Examples include Victor Hugo's *Les Orientales* (1829) and Alphonse Lamartine's *Voyage en Orient* (1835). A significant ancestor of these, although imbued with ideas derived more from Rousseau, was François-René de Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* (1811), which 'inaugurated the vogue for a new sort of exotic travel writing which would be taken up by most of the major romantic writers'. See Levi, A.: *Guide to French Literature: 1789 to the Present* (Chicago & London, St. James Press, 1992),

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III

'Manners and Customs': Authenticity and Empire in French Exotic Music, 1830–65

(i) The Invasion of Algeria and the Rise of the French Empire

Between 1830 and 1865 the modern French Empire began to be established. This has survived in vestigial form to the present day, and was the third to be conquered by the French.¹ The enterprises of successive regimes from 1830 onwards succeeded where the earlier efforts of the Valois and Bourbon dynasties, and even the military genius of Napoleon himself, had failed. This underlines the scale of the energies and resources placed by the French in the service of the Empire during this period. The success of these ventures is commonly explained as arising from the rapidly increasing gap between the military and economic capabilities of the West in relation to the rest of the world. The question as to why these often unrewarding enterprises were undertaken at all is not so easily answered.

The modern French Empire arose from a very small base in the 1830s. This is particularly apparent when it is compared with the British Empire, which was expanding rapidly in the South Seas, South Africa and Asia. Only a few former colonies were still in French possession following the end of the Napoleonic Wars: a few towns in India, some territory in Senegal, some islands off the east coast of Africa, and a small area in and around the Caribbean. From this miniscule beginning was constructed a vast empire, which at its height around 1933 controlled more than twelve million square kilometres of territory in four continents, with a population of nearly seventy million people.

The conquest was a gradual and complex process. Historians identify two main phases: the first lasted from 1830 until around 1880; the second from 1880 to the 1930s. The differences between these two phases lie not so much in the number of territories annexed or the methods used, but in the intention behind the conquests. In common with all the other European empires of the period, the early growth of

the French Empire was largely the result of opportunism. It depended chiefly on various successive governments making the most of circumstances to seize foreign territories and was thus generally unplanned. Nevertheless, the expansion of the French Empire during the early and mid-nineteenth century could be said to have been intentional in that it arose from a much smaller base after 1815 than, for example, the British Empire did.

The longevity of the French Empire was ensured by French military, naval and economic power. It also depended on the construction of a systematic and continuously evolving policy of management, protection and control of the newly acquired areas. The period from 1830 to 1865 presents many examples of the opportunistic seizure of territory, but marks only the beginning of the emergence of those theories of empire which were to become so significant for French conceptualisations of imperialism. These theories were themselves particularly associated with the French style of colonial government and their adoption led, in many cases, directly to further imperial expansion later in the nineteenth century.

The opportunistic rationale behind so many imperial conquests is perfectly demonstrated by the French invasion of Algeria in 1830, as is the complete lack at this time of a systematic imperial policy. Some time after the conquest, Algeria came to be represented by the French as the heartland of their Empire. Their control there was retained until 1962, long after imperial rule had been abandoned in many other former colonies. However, the original intention in undertaking the conquest was to mount a limited punitive expedition on the margins of French territory. It was aimed specifically against the ruling elite of Algeria, rather than with the intention of occupying the entire country, and it does not seem that permanent occupation was originally envisaged as part of the project. The real purpose was to mount an external diversion which would be popular with the French public. This had already been tried out with great success in 1823, when a lightning invasion of Spain had been mounted in support of the Bourbon King Ferdinand VII. The expedition to Algeria was intended to distract a dissatisfied

French population with foreign adventure at a time of domestic crisis for the unpopular government of Charles X. Ironically, the success of the invasion did not save the Bourbon monarchy, which fell before the initial conquest had been consolidated.

Hostility between Algeria and France had been growing for some time before the invasion of 1830. One cause of friction, put forward by the French at the time as a justification of their invasion, was Algeria's role as a base for piracy in the Mediterranean. This activity had already attracted the retribution of the West, as we saw in Chapter 2. However, Algeria had also for centuries acted as a grain-producing area, and since Roman times had supplied wheat to Europe. At the time of the French Revolution an agreement was made between the Algerian and French governments to supply grain on credit. The restoration of the monarchy in 1814 had given the French government an excuse to repudiate the debt. Eventually, argument between the Turkish ruler of Algeria and the French consul over payment degenerated into physical violence, and the Dey struck the Frenchman in the face with a fly-whisk.²

Although this incident, which took place in 1827, was used as a justification for the invasion, the French government did not act upon it immediately and continued to encourage the designs of the Egyptian ruler, Muhammad Ali, on the area until shortly before their own conquest began. Despite the intention of the government to influence public opinion through the success of the expedition, the timing of the invasion itself was ineptly handled. The large invasion force began landing in Algeria on 14 June 1830.³ However, news of its success had not reached France before the forced election of 23 June struck the government a devastating blow. The fall of Algiers came on 5 July, two days after the result of a second election had made the government's position untenable. The commander of the expedition, General Bournment, nevertheless issued a propagandist communiqué claiming that in twenty days France had 'destroyed a state whose existence had wearied Europe for three centuries'.⁴ More tangible results from the invasion were delayed, but

eventually included the capture by the French in 1832 of the personal treasure of the Dey, amounting to 15,500lbs of gold and a further 220,000lbs of silver, enough to pay for the whole expedition.

One difficulty for the government in influencing public opinion in their favour may have been their choice of venue for the exercise. One commentator thought that 'the men of 1830 could only conceive of war and glory as something in Europe, across the Rhine and across the Alps'.⁵ While this may be an oversimplification, many historians state that, in the period 1830-65, the French public were not particularly interested in specifically imperialist ventures and that they remained indifferent to them until the scramble for empire among the great powers in the 1880s caught the public imagination.⁶

The French did not face a uniformly spirited defence. Apart from Algiers, Oran also fell into French hands along with much of the coastal plain early in the campaign.⁷ This may have been due in part to French manipulation of the ancient hostility between coastal and hill dwellers; the former in some cases welcomed the invaders. However, the fierce resistance to French occupation by the latter prompted a severe response, and in order to protect their coastal gains the French were drawn into campaigning further and further inland. Eventually nothing short of a full occupation of the country by the most draconian of regimes could secure French rule. This, however, was only partially achieved in 1847 with the capture of the Algerian resistance leader, Abd al-Qder. Some hill regions remained unsubdued until some time after the 1870s, and the areas outside the towns always remained dangerous for both soldiers and colonists.

The enforcement of French rule required an expenditure out of all proportion to the rewards obtainable from the colony, even by the most unjust means. Almost all French settlement took place on land appropriated from the native inhabitants, who were generally uncompensated as they could not produce legal claims to their property. These massive and widespread acts of injustice did not benefit the average settler, however. While some large colonial landowners eventually made

fortunes, many of the early settlers were themselves poor and unable to contribute to the wealth of the colony. Neither were they able to combat the guerilla tactics of the despoiled native population, and they gradually abandoned the countryside which had been so expensively and ruthlessly cleared for them and took refuge in the towns.⁸

Algeria thus forms a striking example of the problems of establishing empire in the face of local hostility, and the tendency of the measures adopted to achieve this to contribute to eventual imperial collapse. Its history was to be repeated more or less exactly in most other colonies of the French and other empires.

(ii) Algerian, Egyptian and Arabian Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1830–65

Orientalism in France after the Conquest of Algeria

By far the largest number of exotic works during the period from 1830 to 1865 continued to take the territories associated with Arab culture as their theme. It is, however, a strange anomaly of the exotic genre that no work of French musical exoticism relating to Algeria appeared until thirty-five years after the initial conquest, with the exception of a single movement in Reyer's *Le sélam*, discussed below. The parallel with the similar (though not so extensive) gap following Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign is striking. This is particularly apparent when the lack of interest in Algeria as a setting is contrasted with the continued French absorption in the exotic potential of India, where only a vestigial imperial presence was possible.

Algeria may have been considered an unlikely setting for an exotic work by composers for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was the relative obscurity of the region, which possessed no world-famous monuments or sights to compare with those of Egypt, for example. The French generally took the view that Algeria had no history prior to its conquest, referring to the period before 1830 as 'des siècles obscurs'. The invasion army carried in its wake a body of surveyors and

archaeologists who produced a survey along the lines of the *Description de l'Égypte*, entitled *Exploration scientifique de l'Algérie pendant les années 1840, 1841, 1842* (Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1844-67) which ran to 39 volumes. But it is perhaps significant that this is much less well-known than the *Description de l'Égypte*, which dealt with more famous and spectacular sights.

Secondly, the disturbed situation in the country, in which native revolt was a continual feature and martial law was imposed until 1847, would have made drawing upon Algeria as a subject unattractive. The dangers for French settlers in the region were very real despite (or perhaps because of) the draconian military regime in place there. In addition, the country was used by successive governments as a penal colony. 450 survivors of the second insurrection were deported there after the revolution of 1848, and 9000 after Louis Napoleon's coup of 1851. The majority of voluntary emigrants to the colony returned to France within a few years until after 1870, when an identifiable colonial society finally began to emerge.⁹ Even those who stayed were by no means all French; a significant proportion of them came from Italy, Sicily, Malta and Spain. Thus, due both to the fluidity of its settlement patterns and the diverse origins of its members, colonial society in the early years of the conquest in Algeria did not possess an identifiable characteristic that could easily be represented by an outsider seeking an exotic subject. Neither did native life appear to provide a spur to musical creativity. These arguments might seem convincing were it not for the early response to Algeria found in the visual arts, particularly in the paintings of Delacroix, such as *Women of Algiers* (1834).

Whatever the reasons, the lack of a sufficiently widespread artistic interest in the colony worried the government enough for them to pay for the novelist Alexandre Dumas *père* to visit Algeria, in company with his son and the painters Eugène Giraud and Louis Boulanger, in the hope that propagandist works of literature and art would result. Despite the fact that his incentives included free passage to and from Algeria in a French warship, Dumas did not fulfil these

expectations. He appears to have been unimpressed by Algeria, writing of Bône, which he visited in 1846, that 'the city does not contain anything very curious'.¹⁰ His most lasting response to Algeria was to bring back with him some Arab workmen who recreated an 'Arab room' in his house at Marly-le-Roi.

It may be that Dumas's response gives a clue to the problem. The workmen whom he imported were described not as Algerians but as 'Arabs', and the decorative space which they recreated for the novelist in suburban Marly-le-Roi was an 'Arab' rather than an Algerian room. This echoes the Eurocentric attitude to foreigners noted in the previous chapter: that they are basically all the same. If this is the case, there would be no particular need to set an exotic work in Algeria rather than in Turkey or Persia, as the exotic effect would be held by the audience to be the same anywhere in the Arab world. Egypt might well take precedence, as being the most ancient as well as the most prestigious Arab country known to the French.

Lane: *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836)

A similar point is made at the very start of one of the first serious studies of Arab culture by a Westerner, Edward Lane's *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, which was first published in 1836. Lane remarks that Cairo

must be regarded as the first Arab city of our age; and the manners and customs of its inhabitants are particularly interesting, as they are a combination of those which prevail most generally in the towns of Arabia, Syria, and the whole of Northern Africa, and in a great degree in Turkey.¹¹

Lane, who had not visited all the places he describes as being represented by the inhabitants of Cairo, takes the typically Western view that the society he observes there acts as a kind of microcosm for the whole of the Arab world.¹²

Lane also appears to treat Arab culture as something that is, and should be, basically unchanging. This attitude is frequently found in descriptions of the Orient

by Westerners. In fact, before and during the time in which Lane lived in Cairo, life there had changed markedly due to the modernizing efforts of Muhammad Ali. The Egyptian ruler had risen to power after the Turkish recapture of Egypt in 1801. His overriding interest lay in establishing and maintaining a large, Westernised army along French lines. The necessary economic centralisation involved in this project led to the adoption in Egypt of a coherent interlinked system of education, agriculture, industry and bureaucracy based on European models which amounted, according to a recent historian of Africa, to an 'attempt to create the first industrial state outside Europe'.¹³ None of this ongoing and far-reaching enterprise of state control, which caused noticeable disruption at all levels of Egyptian life, is reported by Lane, who focusses almost entirely on the more picturesque aspects of traditional culture. When he does notice the cataclysmic changes which were at work in Egypt at the time, Lane mentions specifically only the alteration it causes to surface appearances. He writes regretfully that Muhammad Ali

has obliged the tradesmen to paint their shops... Cairo has, in consequence, lost much of its Arabian aspect... the people of Cairo were required to whitewash their houses externally; and thus the picturesque aspect of the streets was further marred.¹⁴

This concentration on surface appearances is significant as it provides a striking illustration of the (literally) superficial nature of many Western approaches to foreign cultures. This is more than usually relevant in this case, as Lane was, in general, a sympathetic commentator on Egyptian life. For example, writing of Egyptian music, Lane describes what he identifies as the Arab custom of the division of tones into thirds, instead of the standard Western division into semitones. He states:

The most remarkable peculiarity in the Arab system of music is the division of tones into thirds. Hence I have heard Egyptian musicians urge against the European systems of music that they are deficient in the number of

sounds.¹⁵

Lane comments approvingly on the effect this causes, remarking that

These small and delicate gradations of sound give a peculiar softness to the performances of the Arab musicians, which are generally of a plaintive character: but they are difficult to discriminate with exactness, and are therefore seldom observed in the vocal and instrumental music of those persons who have not made a regular study of the art... I must confess that I generally take great delight in the more refined kind of music which I occasionally hear in Egypt... though, at the same time, I must state that I have not met with many Europeans who enjoy it in the same degree as myself.¹⁶

Lane's description of Egyptian life has one great advantage over the encyclopedic approach of the *Description de l'Égypte*, in that he places the artefacts, implements and decorative objects of everyday life in the context of their owner's ceremonial or daily occupations. He describes musical instruments almost always in terms of their practical use. Those of the musicians present at a pre-circumcision parade 'are commonly a hautboy and drums', while the musicians at a marriage-night celebration sing to the accompaniment of tambourine and drum.¹⁷ Lane records many of the tunes played by these musicians, including in his list street cries, popular songs and religious chants. Two of these are shown in Ex.3.1.

Ex.3.1 Lane, E.W.: *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, Dent, 1963), 330-1.

1. Se-beel Al-láh Yá'at-shán

2. El-gen-neh wa-l-magh-fi-reh

lak, yá sá - heb es-se-beel.

Lane was not trained as a professional musician, and even had he been he would not have had specialist knowledge to enable him to transcribe with accuracy the

features of Egyptian music which he notes. Ethnomusicology did not exist as a discipline at this time, and any commentators on the music of other cultures were by definition amateurs. However, while his descriptions of native music remain tantalisingly incomplete, Lane does give valuable information as to the verbal content of Egyptian song. He records that, along with the love-songs perennially associated with Arab music in the West, there were some with more mundane concerns. These include several satirical protest songs, with such diverse subjects as the unjust rule of a tyrannical governor or the suffering caused by the income tax.¹⁸ Lane does not hold a high opinion of these, as his comments indicate; however, he does go to the trouble of recording them, incidentally making clear their function as a means of spreading news and voicing popular opinion:

The airs of these [songs] are not always sung to the same words; but the words are generally similar in style to those which I insert, or at least as silly; though often abounding with indecent metaphors, or with plain ribaldry.¹⁹

Such satirical songs were common throughout Africa, but are entirely unrepresented in Western depictions of native music.

David and the Saint-Simonian Mission to Egypt, 1833-5

In many instances Lane provides a useful comparison to the music of Félicien David, who was resident in Egypt at the same period, between 1833-5. Ralph Locke has documented fully the circumstances of David's journey to Egypt in his *Music, Musicians, and the Saint-Simonians*. Both his account and the much inferior one of Paul Gradenwitz, however, repeat some cultural assumptions which are still widely held by those writing about the Orient. For example, Gradenwitz, who is by far the more guilty of these lapses, repeats a description of the natives as 'barbarians' without comment.²⁰ Such attitudes are uncritically adopted direct from nineteenth-century accounts of David's travels, which take a basically imperialist attitude to the subject.

This Eurocentric view is felt on many occasions, particularly in Gradenwitz's account of an anecdote in which David was offered the chance to teach the piano to the women of the Cairo harem. This he accepted with alacrity, but then refused when he discovered that he would have no access himself to the inhabitants but would have to give his lessons through a harem eunuch as an intermediary. Gradenwitz pretends to condemn the institution of the harem, while vicariously wishing to penetrate, with the composer, into its forbidden interior. He remarks that David 'refused the unprofessional as well as unattractive and unreasonable demand', although it is clear from his account of the incident that he was thinking no more of pedagogic principles in recounting David's ultimate refusal than did David himself in carrying it out.²¹ Locke echoes this view, giving a similarly fulsome account of the tale, which he dismisses as 'a charming story, perhaps apocryphal'.²²

Neither author has taken fully into account the imperialist context of David's residence in Egypt. The history of French involvement in the country from the time of Napoleon's campaign onwards is only superficially recounted by Gradenwitz, for example, with little comprehension of the implications of the facts he records. Gradenwitz blandly ascribes the possibility of David's travels as 'facilitated by the gradual opening of the minds of these people to Western ideas and by the weakening of barriers between the civilizations'.²³ This hardly reflects the realities of contemporary European imperialism.

The role of the Saint-Simonian expedition to the Orient was far from innocent of imperialist overtones. The group originally went to Constantinople, partly in search of the female Messiah, 'La Mère', but also to seek lands to colonize. They were expelled after only five days, and deported first to Smyrna and then to Alexandria. Here the group became involved in a scheme to build a Nile dam, for which David wrote several arrangements of Arab tunes to be played at the site for the encouragement of the workers. It was the failure of the dam project, combined with an outbreak of plague, which led to the collapse of the mission and the return

to France of several of the company, including David, in 1835.²⁴

At the same time, other Saint-Simonians were visiting Algeria, and these eventually included the leader of the sect, Père Enfantin, who visited in 1839–41 and again in 1844–5. Several important theories of colonization resulted from these visits, including an ingenious justification for the state's appropriation of land from the Algerians which was later used extensively by the French authorities. In 1843 Père Enfantin published a book on colonialism as a result of his overseas experiences. The Saint-Simonians were therefore not merely objective observers of the scene, but were actively involved in several schemes in different parts of the Orient which were to be of eventual benefit to the French Empire itself.²⁵

David: *Mélodies orientales* (1836)

The music of oriental reference that David produced during and after his residence in Egypt falls into three categories. First came the piano pieces, published under several titles, initially that of *Mélodies orientales* (1836). Next to be published was the *ode-symphonie Le désert* (1844), which was succeeded by the songs of *Les perles d'Orient* (1846). Several of these short songs were, however, written earlier, some of them at the same time as David's piano pieces. In order to capitalise on the success of *Le désert*, the piano pieces were again published in the mid-1840s under the titles of *Brises d'Orient* and *Les minarets*, in which form they included pieces not found in the original collection, such as 'Le harem' and 'L'almée', both written at the beginning of David's visit to the East. These works mark the emergence of a new arena for the expression of exoticism in music (earlier keyboard pieces, such as Rameau's *Les sauvages*, are isolated exceptions). Its emergence here, and the successful sales which followed their second publication, reflect the growing interest in the exotic of the mainly bourgeois public for such works.

The piano pieces of *Mélodies orientales* are all given titles, dates and places of composition, lending the music an air of authenticity never before attempted in

French exotic composition.²⁶ The first piece in the collection is entitled 'Une promenade sur le Nil'; a subtitle tells us that it was composed in Cairo on 20 December 1833. As a further sign of authenticity, David marks the middle section 'Air arabe'. The piece describes a voyage up the Nile. The opening, shown in Ex. 3.2, depicts the departure from the shore. The rising two-and-a-half-octave chromatic scale, marked *pressez*, is perhaps intended to convey the mounting excitement of the European onlooker.

Ex 3.2 David, F.: *Mémoires orientales* (Paris, Pacini, [1836]); I/1.

'Une promenade sur le Nil'

Andantino

The chromatic scale may be intended solely to convey the exotic nature of the Nile voyage. However, this seems unlikely, as the chromatic passage is underpinned by a continuously reiterated dominant seventh chord which serves to arouse expectation of typically Western significance by its creation of harmonic tension through repetition. Chromaticism in David's exotic piano pieces generally seems to have no particular melodic function, but to be subservient to the harmony. David's 'Arab' melodies are mostly diatonic, thus avoiding entirely the difficulty of how to imitate the subtle chromaticism mentioned by Lane and other commentators on Egyptian music.

The section which follows, shown below in Ex.3.3, is marked 'les Rameurs', and is thought by Gradenwitz and Locke to be based on an original Nile boatmen's

song. The movement of the rowers is here characterised by two contrasting phrases which are repeated many times. There is little harmonic contrast between the phrases, and little harmonic movement until the repeats of the melody are modified to lead to changes of key several bars later.

Ex.3.3 *Ibid.*, 1.

Allegretto non troppo

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece titled 'Les Rameurs'. The score is written for piano and is in 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto non troppo'. The piece starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The first phrase is marked *p* and is followed by a second phrase marked *f*. The piece concludes with a final phrase marked *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

This basic contrast of dynamic and texture is employed by David in practically all his exotic works, and is noted by Locke in the earlier piece by David, not published in this collection, entitled 'Le harem'. In describing these features, Locke notes their ubiquity and goes on to characterise them as

...a free alternation of barbaric and idyllic moods. The barbaric passages... are characterized by bare octaves and pounding chords, sudden juxtapositions or shifts of key, and preference for duple meter and minor mode. The idyllic passages are generally written in gentler 6/8 meter... the pianistic glitter occasionally pulls one back with a jolt into the drawing rooms of the Occident. But the barbaric/idyllic contrast is nonetheless sharp and telling.²⁷

A further possibility is that David is imitating in passages such as the second phrase of Ex.3.3 the characteristic octave doubling of parts commonly found in Arab music. The employment of harmony in the sense in which it is used in the first phrase of Ex.3.3 is unknown in the music of the region, whereas many European musicians record the monophonic nature of Arabian music, still noticeable today. A particularly striking example of this practice being carried out even on European instruments is noted by the French composer and early ethnomusicologist Salvador Daniel, himself a friend of David, who described the

performance of the band of the Bey of Tunis in the 1850s. This ensemble, he relates, was composed of 20 Western brass instruments, '...all that comprise a military band. All these play in unison without any other accompaniment than the rhythm marked by a big drum and two side drums'.²⁸

David retains the same time-signature and tempo for his 'idyllic' middle section of the piece, inscribed 'Air arabe' (see Ex.3.4). This is introduced by a repeated B in both hands, in octaves in the left hand, in a continuous rhythmic passage of quavers and semiquavers marked 'le tarabouka'. This native instrument appears in Lane's discussion of Egyptian music, where it is called a 'darábukkeh'. He describes it as being made of inlaid wood or clay, about fifteen inches long, in a goblet shape. It has a membrane of fish-skin, is open at the bottom, and is placed under the left arm and played with both hands.²⁹ Typically, Lane also records the circumstances of its use which, he says, is associated particularly with the harem. It is thus a fitting instrument to introduce David's 'idyllic' episode, although whether it would have been commonly heard on a tourist's boat on the Nile is open to question.

Ex.3.4 illustrates the opening of this section of 'Une promenade sur le Nil'. The accompaniment is a straightforward repetitive one, which uses only two notes, the tonic and dominant of the new, and rather distant key of E major, in a repeated quaver/semiquaver rhythm which simplifies that of the 'tarabouka'.

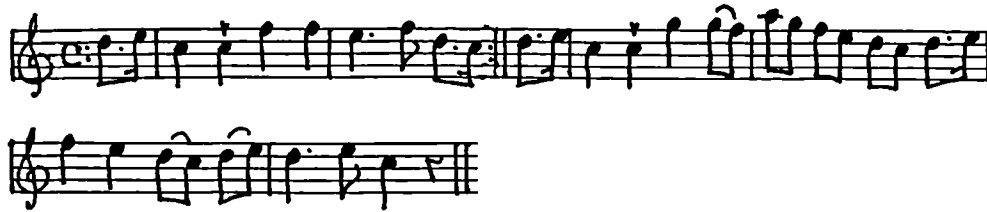
Ex.3.4 *Ibid.*, 2.

le tarabouka

The image shows two musical pieces. The first, 'le tarabouka', is a short piece in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features a rhythmic melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both marked with a piano [p] dynamic. The second piece, 'Air arabe', is in 2/4 time with the same key signature. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system includes the instruction 'p sempre staccato' and a piano (p) dynamic marking. The melody is characterized by internal repetition and a duple metre.

The melody is characterised by internal repetition, duple metre and the major mode. This is a departure from the previous mainstream view, which particularly associated the exotic with the minor mode (these features also occur in the Nubian love-song noted by Saint-Saëns on the Nile in the late nineteenth century, as will be seen in Ex.5.18). David's melody is virtually identical to one recorded by Lane, except for the notation of certain passing notes, the time-signature, and the fact that Lane has written his version a minor sixth higher (see Ex.3.5). Neither Locke or Gradenwitz mention Lane, or that David used exactly the same melody again in the second section of *Le désert*, where it is marked 'Rêverie du soir' and is sung by the solo tenor. In this later usage the tune appears in the rhythmic version of Ex.3.4, but has the same higher starting note as Lane's melody.

Ex.3.5 Lane, E.W.: *op. cit.*, 375.



There can be no doubt, therefore, that David was employing an authentic Egyptian song here. It is difficult to determine with certainty whether he or Lane most closely approached the original, or whether they heard it in two different versions. However, it appears from the way in which David⁹ has smoothed over some passing notes to create appoggiaturas at the ends of phrases that his version is the more Westernised. On the other hand, Saint-Saëns recorded similar phrase-endings in his Egyptian melodies, which may give more weight to David's version.

The accompanying voice which David has added, usually at an interval of a sixth to the melody, constitutes a significant alteration to the original. It places the melody more in the context of Western harmony than does the left-hand accompaniment, which is an imitation of the standard drone accompaniment used in much Arabian music (as well as most Western exotic music). The interval of the sixth, on the other hand, appears to be peculiarly European, and is strongly reminiscent of composers such as Schubert and Brahms. The practice of adding sixths below the melody is frequently followed by David and other Western composers such as Daniel when using authentic native material.³⁰

Nevertheless, the interaction of the various elements in 'Une promenade sur le Nil' forms a more generally convincing synthesis between the practices of Orient and Occident than is found in previous exotic works. An example of this integration is shown in Ex.3.6, taken from the passage-work linking the 'Air arabe' to the reprise of 'les Rameurs'.

Example 3.6 David, F.: *op. cit.*, 2.

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The right-hand part (melody) is marked with a 'Bra' (bravura) and a fortissimo 'ff' dynamic. The left-hand part (accompaniment) is marked with a piano 'p' dynamic. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. A '[sic]' marking is placed above the right-hand melody in the fourth measure. The second system is a smaller grand staff, also with a treble and bass clef, marked with a piano 'p' dynamic. The key signature and time signature are consistent with the first system.

At first sight this might seem to be, in the words of Locke, merely 'the pianistic glitter' that 'pulls one back with a jolt into the drawing rooms of the Occident'. However, the rhythm of the right-hand figurations exactly matches that of the 'tarabouka' heard immediately before the 'Air arabe', and thus neatly frames the appearance of the melody in the structure as a whole. Another example occurs at the end of the piece, which unexpectedly concludes in E major with a reprise of the 'Air arabe', which then fades out to the accompaniment of the rhythmic drone figure of the left hand.

None of the other pieces in *Mémoires orientales* offer so much material for comment, and three of the remaining six are indistinguishable from many other French salon compositions of the period. The pieces which contain Arab references all use techniques of contrasting dynamics and texture found in 'Une promenade sur le Nil', with widespread use of accompanying voices a sixth apart from the melody and repetitive drone basses.

David: *L'égyptienne* (c1840)

The songs of *Les perles d'Orient*, despite their exotic title, are generally closer in style to those piano pieces of David which show little or no traces of oriental influence. David's other exotic songs, many of which were written around 1840

after his return to France, reveal more noticeable (albeit isolated) exotic touches, such as that shown in the accompaniment to the song *L'égyptienne* in Ex.3.7. The accompaniment consists of the repetitive rhythm and static bass line characteristic of David's more authentic oriental settings. However, the melody is less likely to be authentic, as it contains a leap of a sixth in bar 3. The occurrence of particular intervals in melodies is thought to be one of the chief means of determining their authenticity. Many native melodies use a much narrower range of intervals than is customary in Western music. According to Lane's recorded melodies, only seconds, thirds, fourths and occasionally fifths are found in Egyptian song. The notes in bar 3, encompassing the common chord of the tonic (E minor), also carry implications of Western harmony which are foreign to Egyptian usage.

Ex.3.7 David, F.: 'L'égyptienne' *Album de Chant* (Paris, Schlesinger, [1846]),2.

Tempo moderato

Ex.3.8 shows the refrain of this song. Here the characteristics of accompaniment and melody noted earlier are intensified as the left hand of the accompaniment imitates a drone bass while the vocalist executes a melodic line strongly reminiscent of the French waltz song in the major mode. The Western provenance of this section is stressed by the right hand of the accompaniment

repeating the waltz melody in imitation. This technique is derived from Western tradition and is likewise foreign to Arabian music. The repetitive nature and limited scope of David's accompaniments is a serious drawback to much of his exotic music, though it may be due to his attempt to imitate authentic native practice. However, such accompaniments also figure in David's non-exotic works, which suggests that his musical imagination concentrated on the potential of exotic melody.

Ex.3.8 David, F.: *Ibid.*, 3.

The song, to words by David's fellow traveller in Egypt, Jacques Cognat, describes the playful rejection of an unbeliever (the literal meaning of *giaour* in Ex.3.7) of unspecified nationality by the Egyptian maid of the title. It shares the emphasis on love and sensuality with most of David's other Oriental songs, and indeed Western representations of Arab song in general.

David: *Le désert* (1844)

The characteristics noted above in his earlier pieces in oriental style are also apparent in David's most successful work, *Le désert*. This broke new ground in the depiction of the Orient in several ways. Firstly, it relied upon authentic (or authentic-sounding) melodies which gave it an aura of realism. Secondly, David presented the music without the trappings of costume, plot and set which had characterised almost all previous French musical exoticism. However, this did not mean that audiences were more inclined to concentrate on the music as a result of the lack of superficial distractions. On the contrary, the concert setting of the

work appears to have had the opposite effect, allowing the audience to let their imaginations run riot over a whole field of exotic dreams. The effect on contemporaries is shown by reviews such as that of Berlioz, who acclaimed the composer ecstatically, saying:

a great composer has just appeared; a masterpiece has been unveiled... David writes like a master: his movements are carved out, developed, and transformed with as much tact as science and taste, and he is a great harmonist. His melody is always distinguished, and he orchestrates extraordinarily well.³¹

Berlioz's remarks are mostly concerned with atmosphere rather than musical detail. He comments extensively on 'the aspect of immense solitudes' conjured up by the piece, particularly commending the effect of the first note, which is

a sustained sound which, by being prolonged thus without end, without movement, without harmony, without nuances, immediately brings to life in the soul of the listener the image of the desert.³²

Possibly the lack of musical detail in Berlioz's fulsome and 'Romantic' review underlines a limitation of the music which he was later to realise more fully. While the piece similarly impressed contemporaries with its atmosphere, it is not in itself a distinguished musical work (without a considerable stretching of the imagination).

One cause of the wide-spread enthusiasm which greeted the piece for many years throughout Europe may have been the variety of styles included in it. *Le désert* includes orchestral interludes and dances, choruses, solos, and narration over sustained chords. This last feature was one of which David was proud, and he appears to have considered that he had invented it himself.³³ He had already employed it in several works for the Saint-Simonians at Ménilmontant in 1832. The opening, shown in Ex.3.9, sets a solemn tone to introduce the description of the desert with which the narration commences. The passage, orchestrated until after the second section of narration entirely for strings, begins with a held C on second

violins and violas which persists throughout the introduction until the entry of the chorus in bar 38. The narration makes it clear that this long note is intended to represent the boundless space and infinite solitude of the desert. Against this is heard the slowly unfolding melody played by cellos and basses, with a chromatic adjustment at its second appearance.

Ex.3.9 David, F.: *Le désert* (Mayence, Schott, [1870]), 1.

Andante

This depiction of the East was itself new, both in means and subject, as Berlioz noted. The long-held notes in violin and viola provide an evocative musical image of space, night and mystery, whose effect is to make the chief character of *Le désert* the desert itself. While the desert had featured in earlier exotic works such as Grétry's *La caravane du Caire*, it had been seen mainly as a place of danger. This new conception of the desert was made possible by the emergence of Romanticism.³⁴

Ex.3.10 shows the opening choral invocation to Allah, with the same alternation of unison and harmonised phrases seen in 'Une promenade sur le Nil'. The static C major accompaniment is dramatically jarred by the sudden appearance in the horns of a dissonant pedal on E (bars 3-4), whose high pitch, cutting into the harmony, may well be intended to convey the microtonal quality of Arab music. It certainly prevents the audience from being too much lulled by the sustained opening into a false sense of security, and dramatises the sudden melodic expansion of the chorus. This kind of dramatic touch, while more frequent in *Le désert*, is unfortunately

rare in David's work as a whole. The rather ordinary melody of Ex.3.10 is much more typical of David's exoticism, though its irregular phrasing is not without interest, and the early move into the minor mode would have been an unmistakable sign of exoticism to a contemporary audience.

Ex.3.10 David, F.: *Ibid.*, 2-3.

The musical score is written in F major and consists of 12 measures. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- Flute (Fl.):** Solo, marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Horn (Hb.):** Solo, marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Clarinet in E-flat (Cl. en Ut.):** Solo, marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Trumpet (Bns.):** Marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Cor Anglais (Cors en Ut.):** Marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Tenors (Ten. 1 and 2):** Marked *pp*. Sing the lyrics: "Al-lah, Al-lah! à toi je rends hom-ma-".
- Basses (Basses 1 and 2):** Marked *pp*. Sing the lyrics: "Al-lah, Al-lah! à toi je rends hom-ma-".
- Violin 1 (Vn. 1):** Marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Violin 2 (Vn. 2):** Marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Alto (Alto):** Marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.
- Violoncelle and Contrabasso (Vc. + Cb.):** Marked *pp*. Features a melodic line with some grace notes.

Cont. overleaf

(Ex.3.10 cont.)

The musical score for Ex.3.10 cont. includes the following parts:

- Fl.** (Flute): Treble clef, melodic line.
- Hb.** (Horn): Treble clef, melodic line with a "Solo" marking.
- Cl. enlt.** (Clarinet in E-flat): Treble clef, mostly rests.
- Bns.** (Bassoon): Bass clef, melodic line.
- Cors enlt.** (Cor Anglais): Treble clef, melodic line.
- Tén. 1** (Tenor 1): Treble clef, vocal line with lyrics: "ge; Al-lah, Al-lah, à toi je rends hom-ma - - ge;".
- Tén. 2** (Tenor 2): Treble clef, vocal line with lyrics: "ge; Al-lah, Al-lah, à toi je rends hom-ma - - ge;".
- Bass es 1** (Bass 1): Bass clef, vocal line with lyrics: "ge; Al-lah, Al-lah, à toi je rends hom-ma - - ge;".
- Bass es 2** (Bass 2): Bass clef, vocal line with lyrics: "ge; Al-lah, Al-lah, à toi je rends hom-ma - - ge;".
- Vn. 1** (Violin 1): Treble clef, melodic line.
- Vn. 2** (Violin 2): Treble clef, melodic line.
- Altos** (Viola): Bass clef, melodic line.
- Vc. + Cb.** (Violoncelle + Contrebasse): Bass clef, melodic line.

The score features various musical notations including dynamics (p), articulation (accents), and fingerings (e.g., [6-] for sixths).

The unison passages of this and most of the other choruses in *Le désert* are likely to reflect authentic native practice heard by David in Egypt. However, the same technique was used much earlier by Grétry in *La caravane du Caire*. Ex.3.11 shows the voice-parts of a chorus of male slaves in the first scene of the opera, with identical use of unison and harmonised phrases.

Ex.3.11 Grétry, A-E-M.: *La caravane du Caire* (Paris, Basset, 1783), 10-11.

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Tenor (Ten.) and Basses (Basses). The music is in 6/8 time and D major. The lyrics are: "Sur ce triste ri-vage — he-las ver-sons des pleurs — li-vrés a l'es-cla-vage". The Tenor part starts with a piano dynamic [p] and has a forte sf marking at the end of the phrase. The Basses part also starts with a piano dynamic [p]. The score is written on two staves, with the Tenor staff above and the Basses staff below.

It seems unlikely that Grétry was imitating perceived characteristics of Arab music in his use of unison voices for his chorus of slaves, and the reason for his setting may simply have been the wish to create a dramatic form of utterance. Nevertheless, it is something of a coincidence that both composers should have used what so closely resembles an authentic native practice in some of their exotic music.³⁵

It is difficult to determine with certainty the authenticity of the themes used by David in *Le désert*, with the exception of the melody shown in Ex.3.4 which is used in the 'Rêverie du soir'. Several other tunes in the work share a similar outline to melodies recorded by Lane, but differ principally in incorporating the alien concept of modulation (unknown in Egyptian music) and a wider range of notes than in any of the recorded originals. Typically, David's melodies modulate at the end of each phrase. These features can be observed in a comparison between Ex.3.12 and 3.13. Ex.3.12 shows the first tenor line of the invocation to Allah at the opening of *Le désert*, while Ex.3.13 shows a corresponding prayer recorded by Lane. A comparison of the features of these tunes shows the characteristic changes David has made to original melodies. The time-signature is shared between the two examples, although in several other invocations recorded by Lane there is what he calls a 'neglect of measure' in which a bar of compound duple time may suddenly intrude into simple common time.³⁶ The rhythmic pattern of notes is more varied in Lane's than in David's example, although the first and last phrases of Lane's melody share the same order of note values. Dotted notes are less frequent in David's melody. So far, David's adjustments are all on the side of making native melody more regular. However, a comparison of phrase-lengths between the two

examples shows that David's is more irregular than Lane's. Both use syllabic word setting, although this feature needs to be approached with caution in Lane's examples as he admits that he has not included all the grace notes so characteristic of Egyptian singing in his transcriptions. Note repetition in David's example, which accounts for almost half the notes, is also a feature of native usage. However, with regard to intervals, David clearly exceeds the normal bounds of native practice. While he mostly employs seconds (also the most used interval in Lane's example), David also employs a fourth, two fifths and an octave. The range of notes in David's melody also goes beyond that of normal Arab practice.

Ex.3.12 David, F.: *op.cit.*, 2-6.

Ten. 1

Al-lah, Al-lah! a toi je rends hom-ma-ge; Al-lah, Al-lah, a
 toi je rends hom-ma-ge; Al-lah, Al-lah! de ton im-men-si-te, de
 ton é-ter-ni-té, je suis, je suis la vi-vante i-ma-ge.

Ex.3.13 Lane, E.W.: *op.cit.*, 452.

Lá i-lá-ha il-la-l-láh. Lá i-lá-ha i-l-la-l-láh. Lá i-
 -lá-ha il-la-l-láh.

A number of David's modifications to Arab usage are probably inevitable in order to produce a musical result that is attuned to Western ears. Thus the range of notes and intervals used in David's melodies would seem to be a creative expansion of native melody for Occidental purposes. Enough original material – note repetition, the use of the interval of the second, certain melodic shapes and phrase endings, phrase length – remains embedded within David's melodies for them to sound 'authentic' to contemporary French audiences in a way which had not previously been attempted. In a move reminiscent of Berlioz's practice in *La mort*

de Cléopâtre, David's use of an exotic instrument such as the *tambour de basque* is extremely sparing. It appears only in the accompaniment to one dance in the second section of *Le désert*. The orchestration, despite the implications of Berlioz's comments, otherwise relies on traditional combinations of strings and wind, such as is found in the majority of exotic works up to this period. But through his use of some authentic melody, and the effective musical image of the desert, David appears to have tried consciously to express musical exoticism using different means from those of the past.

The text of *Le désert* was written by a fellow³ Saint-Simonian, Auguste Colin, who was in Egypt as a member of David's company and who remained there after the latter's departure for France in 1835. Several of the incidents in the text, such as the sandstorm in the first section of the piece, were supposedly experienced by David himself during his stay in Egypt. Several choruses, notably those sung before and after the sandstorm, exalt 'the freedom and vigor of life in the desert', thus supporting Locke's view that the text of *Le désert* is concerned with Arab life.³⁷ However, this view ignores other important aspects of the text and the effect they have on the set pieces featuring Arab personnel.

The first of these aspects is the manner in which the text places the desert and its inhabitants at the disposal of the European onlooker, who regards the scene objectively from a superior position of surveillance strongly reminiscent of the attitude of the *Description de l'Égypte* noted in Chapter 2. The purpose of the desert and its interest for the Westerner is, as the opening narration makes clear, principally to provide the onlooker/tourist with an uplifting sublime experience:

À l'aspect du désert l'infini se révèle,	In the appearance of the desert the infinite is revealed,
Et l'esprit exalté devant tant de grandeur,	And the spirit, exalted before such grandeur,
Comme l'aigle fixant la lumière nouvelle,	Like the eagle fixing upon a new light,

Dé l'infini sonde la profondeur.	Sounds the depths of the infinite.
Au désert, tout se tait: et pourtant, ô mystère!	In the desert, all is silent: but nevertheless, what mystery!
Dans ce calme silencieux,	In this silent calm,
L'âme, pensive et solitaire,	The soul, pensive and solitary,
Entend de sons mélodieux.	Hears melodious sounds.
Ineffables accords de l'éternel silence!	Ineffable harmonies of eternal silence!
Chaque grain de sable a sa voix;	Each grain of sand has its voice;
Dans l'éther onduleux le concert se balance:	In the undulating ether the chorus sways:
Je le sens, je le vois!...	I sense it, I see it!... ³⁸

This image of the desert, which has retained its power in the Western imagination to the present, crucially (and inaccurately) depicts the landscape as unchanging and without an internal life of its own. It is seen as subject only to violent external intervention either from human agency (the caravan) or natural phenomena (the sandstorm, the night). There is a clear parallel between this representation and the typical Western view of the Orient. The Orient, like the desert, is seen as being immemorially static, uniform and fixed in character, the stage set within which the dynamic West moves and acts. The desert thus takes its place alongside the harem as an enduring Western image of the Orient.

Further, what is identified as the sublime character of the desert is depicted pointedly as being capable of being comprehended chiefly by Western minds, in the person of the narrator. This opens the possibility of the desert being seen more as the proper sphere of action for the discriminating West than it could possibly be for the uncomprehending natives. There is a parallel here with the colonial myth

that natives and their country could be better understood by the foreign dominators than by the natives themselves. Such myths were current in both the French and British Empires, and were expressed in such exotic works as Berton's *Aline, reine de Golconde* discussed in Chapter 2.

Viewed in this light, the choruses of Arabs declaiming sentiments of delight in their desert life and their view of its hostile environment as their homeland become deeply ironic, particularly as they are expressed at a historical moment when the Sahara Desert in Algeria was coming increasingly under the military control and possession of the French. An example of such a chorus arises in the second part of the work, 'La nuit', where the male choir express their sense of possession of the desert with the words: 'For us the sun and space, for us the shining mirage, for us the passing cloud, for us the panting steed; for us the sands that sparkle, and the desert for a pillow; for us the stars that shine, and that watch us sleep'.³⁹ Even as they are being enunciated by the chorus, these aspects of the desert are appropriated by the text and setting and become the true possession not of the supposedly Arab speakers, but of the Western audience.

This appropriation, amounting almost to a recreation of the desert in the image given it by the Western imagination, is strikingly illustrated in the travel writing of the Comtesse de Gasparin, an enthusiast of the exotic who undertook a journey following in David's footsteps in the late 1840s. Writing of the scenery she observed in Egypt, the Comtesse states:

Tonight we saw a painting à la Claude Lorrain. The sun sets behind a forest of palm-trees and bathes their trunks in luminous rays, and disappears... As our eyes are lost in this ocean of fire, there rises in my heart the magnificent hymn from *Le désert*: "Allah, Allah, à toi je rends hommage"... Félicien David does not *imitate* the silence of the solitudes; he creates it in the musical order. He evokes a new world, and this world obeys... If this is not creation, where is it? What is it?⁴⁰

This is the Romantic view of the desert, and of the power of the artist to create a

world of his own. The difficulty for exotic representation lies in the moment when that world comes into brutal contact with the real world of subject peoples. In the Romantic view of the scene, natives are not as important to the onlooker as the effect they and their environment produce on the Western observer. The quasi-imperialist nature of this masterful vision is encountered in other extra-colonial contexts of later years, for example in Pierre Loti's descriptions of Japan.⁴¹

Reyer: *Le sélam* (1850)

The impact of David's work on the representation of oriental exoticism in French music was far-reaching, and can be traced in many subsequent compositions by others in the genre. Immediately following the production of *Le désert*, there were a number of imitations, usually in the form of short songs. However, the supply of small-scale replicas of David's effects soon faltered, probably due to the overwhelming popularity of the original. Whatever the reason, there seems to have been a relative dearth of exotic works dealing with the Arab world in the 1850s. An exception was the *symphonie orientale* by Ernest Reyer entitled *Le sélam*, which appeared in 1850. Reyer was well qualified to write such a work, as he had lived for many years in Algeria. This large-scale piece was directly modelled on *Le désert*, and the many similarities are striking. It is in four parts and, like David's work, combines orchestral, choral and solo vocal numbers. It shares a similar time-scale to that of *Le désert*, with a depiction of night in the middle of the piece and dawn, accompanied by a call to prayer, at the end. However, the subject of the piece is not as focussed. The concentration in *Le désert* on the simple yet evocative setting of the desert and the caravan passing through it is replaced in Reyer's work by a context of more settled, yet diverse, village life. As a result, the work does not appear to encapsulate the Western idea of the Orient in the way David's does. Nevertheless, it gives a more authentic view of some aspects of native Algerian life. These include a *razzia* or raiding party, a group of shepherds tending their flocks, and an exorcism of *djinns*.

Like David's work, *Le sélam* was not intended to be staged, and the imaginations of the audience had to be fired simply by the texts and music. As we saw earlier, this may have been difficult to do with a purely Algerian subject, and in fact the piece makes no direct references to the colony (although a note at the head of the score describes an exorcism which the composer witnessed at Constantine, and drew on for the second movement of the piece). Instead, the activities of the Arabs are also diverse in origin, associated with North African life in general. This broad frame of reference is emphasised by the final 'March of the Pilgrims', which is described in the score as taking place in Cairo. Paradoxically, this approach makes the piece seem diffuse in comparison to *Le désert*. There, the concentration on the simple scheme of the desert and the caravan presents a unified image of the Orient, albeit one that is partly fictional. In Reyer's work, the result is slightly confused. In addition, there is no narration to help the audience bridge the gaps between numbers, and the movements sometimes lack a sense of continuity.

Musically, the means which Reyer uses to convey his exotic scenes often show his indebtedness to earlier works in the genre. Some numbers, such as the last two movements (the 'Chant du soir' and the 'Hymn to Allah' which ends the work), are recognizably derived from David's style and use similar accompaniments, rather to their disadvantage. The opening orchestral introduction also makes use of the unison writing frequently employed by David. However, occasionally Reyer's treatment of harmony is freer than that found in *Le désert*. This is particularly the case in the second movement, the 'conjuration of djinns'. Here the bass pedal underpins slightly more adventurous chords than those used by David, as shown in Ex.3.14.

Ex.3.14 Reyer, E.: *Le sélam* (Paris, Bureau central de musique, [1850]), 45.



This is combined with a use of native instruments such as the 'tarbouka' (encountered in David's 'Le promenade sur le Nil'). A note in the score explains that these instruments are used as an aid to exorcising evil spirits. Other effects in the work include many more equivalences of native vocal practice than in David's works, including vocal trills and other ornamentation.

The relative scarcity of exotic works with an Arabian subject in the 1850s does not indicate that the French public became tired of musical orientalism, as throughout this period *Le désert* itself continued to enjoy phenomenal success. Following 1860 the oriental genre resumes its key importance in French musical exoticism with the production of many new works.

During the period from 1844 to 1850 the production of oriental pieces was mainly represented by songs, including examples by Adam (*L'oasis*) and Meyerbeer (*Chanson persane*), both composed in 1845, Halévy's *Les plages du Nil* and Offenbach's *L'arabe à son coursier* (both written 1846), and Lalo (*Adieux au désert*, 1848). Several of these show the influence of David's songs in their handling of both melody and accompaniment. Ambroise Thomas's comic opera *Le caïd* was also produced during this period, proving a success at the Opéra-Comique in 1849. In the 1850s, those works which did appear tended to be operas, including Pilati's *Les étoiles* (1854) and a bowdlerised version of Weber's *Abu Hassan*, which had a deservedly limited success at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1859.

Other works of oriental exoticism reflected the pre-eminence of *Le désert* in different, although characteristic, ways. Offenbach was quick to produce a parody of David's work under the same title, which was performed at the house of the

Comtesse de Vaux in 1846. It described the wanderings in the desert of a bourgeois Parisian, one Citrouillard, who badly misses coffee-houses, dislikes the climate, and is afraid of the night as he thinks the desert is full of tigers! The choral episodes of the original were parodied by clownish street songs and dances. It may be significant, however, that this witty send-up was produced privately and does not appear to have enjoyed the broad popularity accorded to other parodies by Offenbach. Bizet's *Rondo Turque* for piano, composed in 1858, shows how the old 'Turkish' style of exotic music was still occasionally used. This, too, could be seen as a parody of (or perhaps a homage to) the eighteenth-century 'Turkish' piece such as Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca*. The music does not appear to seek to be exotic in the customary sense, being more concerned with historical than contemporary exoticism. Parodies such as these perhaps show how inward-looking the European exotic genre tends to be.

Berlioz: *Les Troyens à Carthage* (1863)

Following 1860 and the revival of Arabian musical exoticism in terms of numbers of compositions produced, Bizet wrote the opera *La guzla de l'Emir* (1862), now lost. Other works from this period include Offenbach's *Barkouf*, Ymbert's *Les deux Cadis* and Reyer's opera *La statue* (all 1860). Gounod and Audran produced operas in the same year as Bizet's *La guzla de l'Emir*, Gounod's work, *La reine de Saba*, being something of a disaster at the Opéra. Berlioz touched most notably upon the exotic genre in the monumental *Les Troyens à Carthage* set in North Africa (1863), although effects such as those of David and his imitators are rare in the score. Berlioz showed an interest in the exotic at various times throughout his career. As was seen in the example of *La mort de Cléopâtre*, the exotic was always likely to be subsumed in the romantic in Berlioz's approach, particularly if a Shakespearean situation was involved. Such procedures as may be taken to represent the exotic are, in Berlioz's vastly extended repertoire of orchestral and compositional effects, to be paralleled in his other non-exotic

works and cannot easily be identified as purely exotic in themselves.

Nevertheless, in *Les Troyens à Carthage* Berlioz makes use of such typical exotic devices as modal scales and complex metres. While the latter are used most notably in the *Combat de ceste* ballet (in act I of the complete opera), the former serve to characterise the ballet and song of the Nubian women (performed in 1863). The Nubian slaves play on the drum which we encountered in David's 'Une promenade sur le Nil', here designated a 'tarbuka', to the familiar accompaniment of open fifths and pedal notes. The *Pas des almées* (No.33a in the complete score) has typically exotic sighing chromaticisms at the opening. Elsewhere in the work, Berlioz is concerned more with creating an effect of antique rather than oriental instrumentation, such as the famous use of a double quartet of saxhorns for the *Marche troyenne*. In other works Berlioz occasionally makes use of a recognisably exotic style, although this often takes place in compositions with an otherwise classical or biblical setting. An example is the use of the transposed Phrygian mode in the music for *Le songe d'Hérode* in *L'enfance du Christ* (1854).

However, a recent lecture given by the cultural critic Edward Said draws a number of parallels between the opera and the contemporary colonial situation.⁴² Said argues convincingly that the Trojans, as the founders of Rome, stand in for their imperial heirs, the French. Such pedigrees of empire were a particular preoccupation both of Napoleon Bonaparte and his lesser namesake, Napoleon III. The Carthaginians, equally, are equated with the contemporary North African natives who were under French rule in Algeria. The compulsion placed upon Aeneas and his companions in the opera to keep moving on towards their imperial destiny is paralleled with contemporary French conceptions of their 'obligation to empire', as Said has termed it. In connection with this argument, Said successfully draws parallels between the musical characterisation of the contrasting nations and their imperial destiny. The Trojans are active, mobile and forward-looking, their music frequently martial and Western. The Carthaginians, on the other hand, are characterised as passive and static. Their music is Oriental in colouring, marked by

sensuality and lassitude. While there is much that is thought-provoking in Said's analysis, he possibly does not stress sufficiently the influence of the exotic genre itself on Berlioz when he was composing the music for the Carthaginians. It is at least as likely that Berlioz was following contemporary musical convention in his characterisation of the natives *en masse* in *Les Troyens à Carthage*. Of course, this does not invalidate the main point of Said's argument, which is that such clichés have a recognisably imperialist function.

(iii) American Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1830–65

Monpou: *Le planteur* (1839)

In a manner similar to their continued fascination with India, the French continued to respond to exotic works based on North and South America during the period 1830–65. Several of these works were hugely successful, including Monpou's *Le planteur* (1839). Set in New Orleans in 1806, only three years after the sale of French territory in North America (which included New Orleans) to the United States government by Napoleon, the opera rather unexpectedly does not include any noticeably French characters. Indeed, it is rather surprising to find all the American clichés, such as the corrupt Sheriff, the devoted black domestics and the Southern belle heroine, daughter of a plantation family, already in place in this work. Despite its early development of new fields of exotic setting, however, *Le planteur* seems a backward-looking example of the exotic genre, both as concerns plot and music.

The story concerns the embroilment of the heroine, Jenny Makensie [sic], in a plot to sell her into slavery by her father's wicked creditors, aided by the Sheriff. There is a strong parallel here with the plot of Le Sueur's *Paul et Virginie*, and attitudes between the heroine and her own black slaves echo precisely those between the hero, heroine and the escaped slave Sara of the earlier work. In response to Jenny's sympathy for them, her slaves in *Le planteur* respond: 'Lordy!

She is so good!' ('Dieu! qu'elle est bonne!') and sing a chorus of praise in her honour.⁴³ Unlike the earlier opera, however, the chorus of black slaves do not act to release the heroine from her predicament. Instead she is liberated by the more conventional means of the hero's efforts.

The musical means by which the story is represented also draws on earlier models. As Ex.3.15 shows, a particularly strong influence is the Italian *buffo* style, as in the operas of Boieldieu and Isouard discussed in Chapter 2. The spirit of Rossini never seems far away from this example, taken from the introduction to Act II. This leads to the entry of the chorus who, to the same melody, lament the heroine's unfortunate sale into slavery and comment on how her song lightens their own labours. The chirpy tunefulness and lively rhythms of this introduction are typical of the musical style of the opera as a whole. Its use here contrasts somewhat with the situation of the characters, and suggests that the success of the production lay entirely in its high spirits and attractive melodies. Except for the use of the triangle on the main beats, there is no apparent exotic appeal either here or elsewhere in the work, although *staccato* writing is frequently used in an exotic context.

Ex.3.15 Monpou, H.: *Le planteur* (Richault, Paris, 1839), 160.

Allegro bien rithmé [sic]

The musical score for Ex.3.15, Monpou's *Le planteur*, is in 2/4 time and consists of five staves. The staves are labeled: Tri-angle, Vn.1, Vn.2, Altos, and Vc. or Cb. The Tri-angle part is marked *pp*. The Vn.1 part is marked *pp* and *mf*. The Vn.2 part is marked *pp* and *mf*. The Altos part is marked *pp* and *mf*. The Vc. or Cb. part is marked *pp pizz.* and *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

David: *La perle du Brésil* (1851)

A later example of American exotica, David's opera *La perle du Brésil* (1851), was also a great success with Parisian audiences. This work, like *Le planteur*, draws upon previously existing exotic tradition in its representation of American Indians as 'noble savages'. Their closeness to nature is shown in the opera by their susceptibility to the 'Song of the Great Spirit' sung by the heroine Zora, a Europeanised Indian Princess whose utterance calms them when they are about to fall upon the Europeans shipwrecked upon their shore. The basis for this characterisation is that of many eighteenth-century French writers of whom the most significant is Rousseau. It is shared with many other exotic works such as Rameau's entrée 'Les sauvages' in *Les Indes galantes* and Le Sueur's *Paul et Virginie* discussed in Chapter 1. The characteristics of the Europeans are more complex, but appear to derive from the tradition of grand opera. Certain aspects of the plot, such as the paternalistic love relationship between the heroine and her protector, the Portuguese Admiral Salvador, are reminiscent of Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*, while a rather confused and contradictory sub-plot, which has the Admiral exposed as the murderer of the hero's father, seems to have more in common with Italian grand opera such as Verdi's *Il Trovatore*.

The tendency of exotic opera to centre around one or two set pieces is strikingly illustrated in this work by the primacy of the 'Ballade de Grand Esprit' shown in Ex.3.16. The piece, an invocation to peace and harmony, appears in its entirety twice in the opera, firstly when the heroine is describing her royal origins to the hero, and secondly at the climax of the opera when she prevents his death at the hands of her compatriots through her song. The musical characteristics of the song can be easily traced to David's earlier works based on Arab sources, and provide a further example of the indiscriminate application of exotic characteristics of one region to another noted in Chapter 2. The largely static drone bass and sustained accompaniment, the melismas and ornaments of the vocal line, are all to be observed in David's earlier songs. The choice of minor mode for the ballad also appears to indicate its conventional association with the exotic.

Ex.3.16 David, F.: *La perle du Brésil* (Heugel, Paris, [1851]), 115.

[Andantino con moto]

Cl. en La [p]

Bns. [p]

Zora avec mystère [p] En-ten - dez - vous dans les sa-va

Vn1 [p]

Altes [p]

Vc. et Cb. p

Cl. en La

Bns.

Zora nes

Vn1

Altes

Vc. et Cb.

Certain musical devices used in the opera may draw upon earlier examples, such as the 'coup de Tam-tam' which signals the emergence of the vengeful Indians from their forest in Act III. This is reminiscent of the 'trois coups d'Ajacatzily' in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*. Yet there seems little sign of the 'Brazilian local colour' described by Hugh Macdonald in the music, even though this is much in evidence in the stage directions, costumes and settings.⁴⁴

(iv) African Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1830–65

In Africa, the French Empire began to expand from existing possessions in Senegal and Gabon, with extensions into Dahomey. This activity was organised directly by the state (in that it involved the military) and took place from 1857 when the expansion of French rule inland from Dakar began. Shortly after this date, serious efforts were being made by the French to cross the Sahara, thus establishing an overland connection between their North and Central African possessions.⁴⁵ A similar scale of operation was required for the establishment of a French outpost in Madagascar in 1843, which was designed to enable future French access to the Indian Ocean, China Seas and Pacific. French interest in African exoticism seems to have been extremely slight during this period, with attitudes to black Africans remaining negative.

One exception is Meyerbeer's grand opera *L'africaine*, produced in 1865. It is of particular relevance to colonial history as it deals with the voyage of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama to India in 1497. This voyage, which established the main European sea-route to the East until the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, was significant as the forerunner of all later European imperialist enterprises in the Orient. The opera is also of note as it was one of the most successful exotic works ever written. Approximately 460 performances had taken place at the Opéra in Paris by 1893, more than twice as many as those of Verdi's *Aida* during the same period.⁴⁶

The main appeal of the opera lies in the extraordinary spectacle presented by the action, particularly in the last three acts. These are all set off the coast or on the land of an unnamed country, thought to be Madagascar. Act III takes place on a full-sized replica of a ship at sea. In the Paris production, the stage set was moveable in order to represent the ship's rolling motion. This effect is surpassed by the shipwreck of the vessel and the massacre of the crew by hordes of bloodthirsty natives at the end of the act. Act IV features a scene of ritual marriage before a temple, and Act V a promontory overlooking the sea, on top of which grows a

poisonous tree which neatly dispatches the native protagonists.

Effects such as these had always been the staple of operatic production, and particularly of exotic representation. While the increasing use of technology in the opera house encouraged them to be ever more elaborately staged, the same basic effects were continually repeated. The spectacular scenes of *L'africaine* are all strikingly reminiscent of those in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*. There, also, we see the wanton destruction of shipping, albeit by gunpowder rather than shipwreck; the grand temple, before which take place the preparations for a ritual (though of sacrifice rather than of marriage); and the high promontory. However, in the earlier work this is used as a springboard for the death-defying leap of the heroine rather than as a suitable habitat for her deadly native flora.

The plot of Meyerbeer's opera also resembles that of Spontini. Typically for a Scribe libretto, the personnel are much increased in comparison to those of earlier operas such as *Fernand Cortez*. These additions primarily facilitate the plot complications, thereby helping to sustain the inordinate length of the opera. The differences between the two operas are at least as important as their similarities in illustrating some of the changes of attitude to the exotic during the nineteenth century. Prominent among them is the character of the European heroine Inès, to whose arms the hero is eventually returned by the native heroine Sélica in the working-out of a typical operatic love-triangle. The inclusion of Inès in the opera provides an excuse for Sélica's renunciation and death. More importantly, however, Inès's stubborn survival of the vicissitudes of the last three acts of the opera conclusively prevents the miscegeny between Vasco and Sélica. The hostile reaction to the idea of inter-racial union found in the pages of Renan and others (discussed in Chapter 4) may account for the fate of the native heroine in the opera. Other characters in the opera could be taken from almost any exotic plot. The savage but loyal fanatic, the High Priest and the chorus of bloodthirsty natives, are found equally in works by Rameau, Spontini and others.⁴⁷

Steven Huebner correctly remarks on the 'restrained use of musical *couleur*

locale.. in the opera as a whole'.⁴⁸ This surprising lack of exotic reference is illustrated by the scenes of ritual and dance, which could be expected by this time to call forth the most exotic effects that a composer can muster. In the case of Ex.3.17, it can be seen that these are very meagre indeed. This example is taken from the beginning of the fourth act, which opens on a scene complete with palm trees and a huge Indian temple. The music is energetic and dramatic, but creates little sense of a specifically exotic occasion, for example using the tambourine only in the prelude to the march which follows. The subdued orchestral colouring of low strings and wind, punctuated only by paired strokes of the bass drum and cymbals, seen in this example, is later made more brilliant by the inclusion of the rest of the wind and strings. However, the orchestration and even the musical style recall nothing so much as those of the *Marche de Mexicains* in *Fernand Cortez*. The use of dotted rhythms is also strongly reminiscent of the musical characterisation of the Mexicans in that work. Nevertheless, the music, while not marking a radical departure from previous exotic works, is equally not entirely derivative. Meyerbeer's skill as a composer of dramatic set pieces is fully evident in *L'africaine*. The use of darker woodwind sounds, such as the clarinet, is frequent in the music for the natives. The choruses and dances which typify their appearance are much less static than the similar ensembles of Spontini.

Ex.3.17 Meyerbeer, G.: *L'africaine* (Paris, Brandus & Dufour, n.d.), 516.

le mou! bien tenu. (♩=72)

All.^o mod.^o un peu plus vite que l'Entr'Acte précédent. marquez bien les sforzati mais tout le re

Clar.

Bous

Gr^e C. et Camb.

Tamb.^{mf}

Alto

Vc.

Cb.

ste légèrement.

Clar.

Bous

Gr^e C.

Alto

Vc.

Cb.

The most exotic music in the opera appears in the lullaby sung by the love-sick Sélícia to Vasco while they are both languishing in prison during Act II (shown in Ex.3.18). Such exotic musical characterisation as is evident here is entirely derived from the familiar source of North Africa. The lower strings provide the drone bass, while the triangle adds an exotic touch at the end of each bar. Here again the musical line seems distinctly European, with none of the melismas associated with North African vocalisation.⁴⁹

Ex.3.18 *Ibid.*, 177.

And.^{te} grazioso.

Cor à pistons en Miq

Triangle

Vn. solo

Vn. 1 avec sourd.

Vn. 2 avec sourd.

Alto sourd. avec sourd.

Sélícia
(Sélícia chante Vasco avec son éventail indien en plumes.)

Vasco

Vc. sourd. avec sourd.

Cb.

I. Solo.

touchez légèrement.
(et très mesuré les triples croches)

pp

div:

très doux.

Sur mes ge-noux fils du so- leil

lourd.

And.^{te} grazioso.

The libretto reveals a jumble of African, Indian and Arabian exotic identities, particularly in the identity of the exotic land of Acts III-V, which is variously described as African, Indian and Madagascan. Much of this confusion derives from

the opera's lengthy gestation, during which the plot changed significantly. The title, for example, was the choice of Fétis, who prepared the work for production. Originally, it was to be called *Vasco de Gama* [sic], but Fétis felt this title would not mean anything to the audience. Nevertheless, this confusion of identity has more significance than being merely a lapse in verisimilitude. The historical context of both the opera's action and its composition is a time of expanding European colonisation. The European hero of the work bears the name of a historical figure, noted for his advancement of the Western imperial project. While the sphere of his operations is presented in wholly fictional terms, it also has references which link it to major contemporary French areas of colonial activity in Africa, the Far East and even America. While the European hero is a real individual, the natives are no more than abstractions. This is underlined by the quality of the music for Vasco, whose utterances call forth the most effective numbers in the work. This is notable in the case of his expression of wonder at the beauties of the 'unknown land' in Act IV: 'Pays merveilleux'.

The similarities between *Fernand Cortez* and *L'africaine* may be thought to reveal the latter work as old-fashioned on its appearance. Yet the opera was a huge success, and held the repertoire until at least the end of the century. Significantly, it was also a success with colonial audiences, with performances in colonial theatres such as those of Tunis and Algiers. It is likely that its conservatism, rich scoring and spectacular nature explains part of its appeal, combined with the negative attitude to interracial relationships noted earlier and its glorification of the imperial project.

(v) Indian and Singalese Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1830–65

Auber: Le dieu et la bayadère (1830)

India continued to exert fascination over the French of this period, and this interest continued undiminished until after the end of the nineteenth century despite

the practical impossibility of any French imperial designs on the country. The works of musical exoticism drawing on Indian subjects number less than a quarter of those based on Arabian subjects during this time, and slightly less even than those concerned with the Americas. Nevertheless they remain important due to the frequent success of their production as well as their links with a territory where France had a colonial history. An early example of such a case in this period is Daniel Auber's opera *Le dieu et la bayadère*, produced in 1830.

The work has obvious links with Catel's *Les bayadères*, on which Auber's librettist, Eugène Scribe, is thought to have based the plot. However, there are also strong connections with other exotic operas based on Indian subjects, particularly Berton's *Aline, reine de Golconde*, also discussed in Chapter 2. From the first opera are taken the characters of the flirtatious yet loyal dancing girls, and from the second the villainous native chiefs who further their own selfish interests while pretending to administer justice to an oppressed native population. The hero, whose name is unknown at the beginning of the opera, is discovered to be the God Brahma in disguise. He falls in love with the European heroine Zoloé, a non-singing role played in the original production by the famous dancer Marie Taglioni. The device of the mimed role for the heroine had previously been used with success by Scribe and Auber in *La muette de Portici* (1828). After many unnecessary trials of her love for him, he eventually rescues her from the tyrannical power of the villain Olifour by appearing in his divine form and taking her to Paradise.

The opera repeats the imperialist concepts concerning the natives' lack of ability to manage their own affairs found in the two earlier operas by Catel and Berton. The reaction of Brahma to the injustice of Olifour's rule links him firmly to Western criticisms of native administration, while the heroine's staunch response to the needless trials placed in her way by her divine lover emphasise her adherence to European ideals of womanhood.

In the musical depiction of exoticism, too, the opera is indebted to earlier

examples. The inspiration here is firmly that of the eighteenth-century 'Turkish' style, as may be seen in Ex.3.19 which shows the beginning of the dance of the bayadères from Act I. The melodic structure of thirds, use of grace notes, static and repetitive bass lines, and the employment of percussion instruments such as the triangle, indicate this influence.

Ex.3.19 Auber, D.: *Le dieu et la bayadère* (Paris, Troupenas, [1835?], 152.

Allegro assai

Fl. et P.A.
Hb.
Cl. en La
Bns.
Corns en Mi
Corns en La
Trombones
Ophicleide
Tymbales Mi-La
Triangle
Cymb. et Sn. C.
Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Altos
Vc. et Cb.

David: *Lalla-Roukh* (1862)

The comic tradition of exotic works based on Indian subjects is reinforced in David's *Lalla-Roukh*, produced in 1862. The plot, set in Kashmir and Samarkand and based on Thomas Moore's book of the same title, is very similar to *Le dieu et la bayadère*. It also has a disguised hero, the King of Samarkand, who pretends to be a poor poet in order to test the love of the loyal heroine of the title, who is betrothed to the King but has never met him. The important comic character of the overseer Baskir is descended from eighteenth-century 'Turkish' originals, of whom the most striking example is Osmin in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.⁵⁰ Like Osmin, Baskir is depicted as cruel and hectoring, but with the weaknesses of cowardice, fondness for wine and susceptibility to the charms of flirtatious women. As such, he joins the long line of opera characters who sum up the enduring Western image of the corrupt, sensual oriental tyrant.

Despite its reliance on conventional stereotyping of oriental characters and situations, the musical style of David's opera shows a significant advance on the traditional devices which had sufficed for Auber's work. However, David does not attempt to reproduce any characteristics of native Indian music in his score, preferring instead to draw upon the musical devices he established in *Le désert* and his earlier oriental works. In this he is also following the French tradition of representing the Far East through music derived from the Near East. However, his means are more inventive and fresh than those adopted by Catel, Berton and Auber. A sample of David's effects can be seen in Ex.3.20, which shows the introduction to the hero Nouredin's love-song to the heroine Lalla-Roukh. The accompaniment is scored for strings, percussion and oboe, a combination used particularly in the second part of *Le désert*, and the time-signature of 3/4 is the same as that used for its tenor solo 'La nuit'. The similarity to David's Arabian songs may be seen in the static, repetitive bass lines and accompanying rhythms. Touches of (Arabian) local colour are provided by the oboe solo, providing melismatic counterpoint to the song when it eventually appears, and the tremolo of

the *tambour de basque*, whose player is directed to 'slide the finger over the skin' of the instrument to achieve this effect. The low notes on the timpani also add an unexpected resonance to the exotic effect, and show how David's sensitivity to orchestral sonorities had expanded during his career.

Ex.3.20 David, F.: *Lalla-Roukh* (Paris, Girod, [1862]), 113-4.

Andante

The musical score for Ex.3.20 from *Lalla-Roukh* (measures 113-4) is in 3/4 time and one sharp (F#). It features several parts:

- Horn (Hb.):** Starts with a rest, then enters with a melodic line marked "1. Solo" and "dolce".
- Timpani (Timb.):** Plays a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes.
- Mi-Si:** Plays a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes.
- Tambour de basque (Tcimb. de basque):** Plays a melodic line with a "pp" dynamic and the instruction "en faisant glisser le doigt sur la peau." (making the finger slide on the skin). It includes a "tr mmmmm" marking.
- Violin 1 (Vn.1):** Plays a melodic line with a "p" dynamic.
- Violin 2 (Vn.2):** Plays a melodic line with a "p" dynamic.
- Alto (Altos):** Plays a melodic line with a "p" dynamic.
- Violoncello/Contrabasso (Vc. et Cb.):** Plays a melodic line with a "p" dynamic.

The characterisation of the cast, plots and situations in the opera adheres to the French tradition of exotic representation. The music also follows this tradition in its reliance on basically Arabian musical characteristics, even though it moves beyond some of the effects inherited from eighteenth-century works. It is difficult to agree with Hugh Macdonald that 'its dreamy atmosphere and aromatic orchestration make it his masterpiece',⁵¹ for instances like Ex.3.20 are the exception rather than the rule in *Lalla-Roukh*.

Bizet: *Les pêcheurs de perles* (1863)

The exotic music produced by French composers up to 1860 was generally unimaginative, both in its interpretation of native originals and their transcription for western orchestral and vocal forces. Feeble tunes, insipid harmonies and repetitive rhythms were commonplace in the works of such composers as Auber, Monpou and even David. That the exotic genre could be capable of portraying drama and intensity rather than mere decoration and spectacle became more apparent with the première of Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* in 1863.⁵² The libretto, the weakest part of the opera, uses one of the oldest exotic plots, that of the virginal priestess who falls in love and violates her vow of chastity, thus incurring the wrath of the superstitious natives led by their implacable high priest. *Les pêcheurs de perles* differs from many other exotic operas, however, in having only native characters. Thus it is not by the action of a European hero that the priestess Lélia is saved, but by the selfless sacrifice of the native chieftain, Zurga.⁵³ Several stock characters and situations appear, such as the high priest, Nourabad, and his gleeful preparation for ritual human sacrifice at the beginning of Act III. The music, also, sometimes falls into familiar modes, following a long line of models through Spontini, David, Meyerbeer and Gounod.⁵⁴ However, Bizet transcends his models to remarkable effect in many numbers, both choral and solo, combining oriental and Western devices in a previously unattempted and masterly fashion.

The opening chorus and dance effectively set the scene and introduce the essential dramatic element. The methods by which this is achieved are taken from David's oriental works, most probably *Le désert*. The *ostinato* rhythms, use of pedal notes and melismatic melody are clearly derived from passages such as the Arabian dance in Part 2 of that work.⁵⁵ These oriental characteristics, which in David's work tend to be merely superficial decoration, are here suffused with a greater expressive intensity as a result of Bizet's superior rhythmic vitality, orchestral skills and sense of drama. Pedal notes are given energy by the use of

varied rhythms, rather than the short *ostinati* used by David. While such rhythmic groupings as Bizet uses may place his music further from genuine native practice than David's, the effects here and elsewhere in Bizet's exotic stage works are far more effective in their Western setting for their enhanced musical and dramatic continuity. This simultaneously expresses the vitality and already hints at the fanaticism of the pearl fishers, thereby providing a more intense background to the action of the principals as well as suggesting the dangers that they run as a result of their actions. The orchestration also provides an increased palette of colours. The opening melody and its harmony are given to three wind soloists while the pedal notes are played on violas and cellos with the addition of tambourine and triangle. Bizet also carries his harmonic procedures further than David, for example by building increasingly dissonant chords over his opening pedal note in the opening passage seen in Ex.3.21.

Ex.3.21 Bizet, G.: *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Paris, Choudens, [1863]), 4.

[Allegro non troppo]

The opening off-stage chorus of Act II shows the rhythmic vitality of the previous examples transferred to the bass voices, who vocalise the rhythm accompanied only by the tambourine. The remaining chorus sing a Westernised melody a sixth apart (*à la David*), but even here Bizet introduces chromaticism which, while suggesting oriental sources, also works within the Western tradition

by saving the conventional melody from banality. A masterstroke of Bizet's orchestral skill follows where, to the wordless bass chorus, he adds an off-stage duo of piccolos, their shrill tone adding a contrasting note of brilliance to the lyrical impulse so far heard. Ex.3.22 illustrates this moment.

Ex.3.22 *Ibid.*, 86.

[Allegretto]

The musical score for Ex. 3.22 is set in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features four staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor/Bass (T/B), and Piano (P). The tempo is marked [Allegretto].

- Soprano (S):** [mf] - eux. — L'ombre des.
- Alto (A):** [mf] eux. —
- Tenor/Bass (T/B):** [mf] la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la
- Piano (P):** (P^{tes} Fl. dans la coulisse.) *ff* *croisez les mains.*

The piano part includes trills (tr) and a dynamic marking of *ff*. The vocal parts are marked with *[mf]*. The lyrics are in French.

The chromatic alteration of notes is widely used for exotic effect throughout the opera. A dramatic example is Nourabad's announcement that the hour of the sacrifice has arrived in Act III, illustrated in the following example (Ex.3.23). Nourabad's vocal line typically recalls psalmody, while the use of a prolonged augmented fifth chord builds tension, which mounts as Nourabad's B and D naturals cut into the harmonic sense of the accompaniment. The emergence into E major in the last bar of this example graphically expresses Léïla's acceptance of her fate, and also illustrates the kind of harmonic progression that contemporaries found hard to accept (they would surely have expected a second inversion chord on D flat under 'Ciel'). Such chromatic ingenuity represents a developed facet of Bizet's earlier musical style.

Ex.3.23 *Ibid.*, 174.

Andante moderato. $\text{♩} = 72$

NOURABAD.

And.^{te} mod. Entends au loin ce bruit de fê-te L'heure est ve-

PIANO

LÉILA.

Et la victime est prête Pour moi s'ouvre le Ciel

ZURZA.

-nu e -Allez!

Andante.

suivez. *pp*

The composer also makes innovative use of the melismatic style of melody already associated with Arabian song.⁵⁶ Ex.3.24 shows such a passage, taken from Léïla's invocation to Brahma at the end of Act I. This now-obvious cliché is employed here not merely for exotic effect but as a result of the dramatic situation. Léïla is ostensibly addressing the Gods, but is also knowingly singing for the benefit of the hero Nadir who remains out of sight. The dual function of her invocation is emphasised as the off-stage chorus respond with a unison pious exclamation in even quavers. Apart from providing musical contrast, this also serves to underline the motivation of the chorus: they are at this point unaware of

the developing romance between the hero and heroine which will enrage them upon its discovery.

Ex.3.24 *Ibid.*, 74.

The musical score is for a scene from an opera. It features a vocal line for LÉILA and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Largo' and the mood is 'sonore'. The lyrics are in French. The score includes a vocal line for LÉILA and multiple off-stage vocal parts, along with piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'O Dieu Brahma!', 'O maître souverain du monde', '(dans la coulisse) O Dieu Brahma! O Dieu Brahma!', and 'O Dieu Brahma! O Dieu Brahma!'.

Nadir's chanson 'De mon amie', sung as he approaches Lélia on her precipitous rock in Act II, combines many of the exotically inspired features employed in the opera. The melody includes melismas at the ends of phrases, based mainly on the turn as were those of Lélia's earlier invocation quoted above. The oboe introduction and the off-stage harp accompaniment to the chanson add further

exotic touches. The tonality typically shifts between minor and major, and the key signature varies flexibly between 12/8 and 9/8. These alterations, which are redolent of composers such as David, do not by any means all come from any genuine native practice but are nevertheless those which are recognizable as Western symbols of the exotic. The difference between Bizet's usage of these exotic fingerprints and those of earlier composers is that Bizet employs them not merely as decoration but as an integral part of the drama. The various exotic elements in the music emphasise the increasing danger and erotic charge of the situation, as Nadir gradually approaches the forbidden spot in which Léïla has been immured by Nourabad. An example is the melismatic turns in Nadir's and Léïla's solos. These are not a decoration which Bizet applies to the ends of their phrases for want of any other ideas; instead, they have a dramatic purpose, symbolising the shared love of hero and heroine.

The exotic elements of *Les pêcheurs de perles* are more subtly developed and integrated into Western musical language than hitherto. However, certain aspects of their use remain unchanged from earlier examples. Chief among these is the source of the exoticism, which is basically that of North Africa. The action of the opera is set in Ceylon, then under the influence of the British Empire, but which was still an exotic locale of charm and mystery to the French. This may have been due in part to its proximity to an area of India which had been under French control in the eighteenth century. However, the exotic music does not draw upon any recognisably Singalese characteristics. This is hardly surprising considering that the setting was not originally intended to be Ceylon, but Mexico. Also, much of the musical material was borrowed by Bizet from his own earlier works with settings as diverse as Russia, Italy and Arabia.⁵⁷

This willingness to represent the exotic through the use of characteristics drawn from a single source is almost inevitable in French music up to this time, as we have seen. It appears to reflect a lack of interest in distinguishing between different races or foreign cultures. Winton Dean, writing from a very different cultural

perspective in his book on Bizet, finds that this causes a loss of credibility in *Les pêcheurs de perles*, remarking that '...the whole background is false. It is impossible to believe in these "Indians"...They are the regulation sopranos, tenors etc. with their faces blackened. Consequently no illusion is established, and none of the characters comes to life'.⁵⁸ However, speaking of *Carmen*, Dean presents a problem as to how such a fostering of credibility and the creation of illusion in an exotic work could be achieved:

It is not the business of a composer whose scene is set in a foreign country to imitate the music of that country. This could only result in pastiche, for the native can obviously do it better than the foreigner. All Bizet had to do was to conjure up a Spanish background for French listeners...⁵⁹

This, he suggests, is to be done not through imitation, but by the composer's intuitive perception of essential racial and cultural characteristics:

...he created, apparently by instinct, music so deeply imbued with the Spanish spirit that listeners have been misled into supposing that this was one of his principal aims.⁶⁰

The reasons why the atmosphere should convince in *Carmen* but not in *Les pêcheurs de perles* are left unclear by Dean. As he himself argues, *Carmen* is no more a Spanish opera than *Les pêcheurs de perles* is a Singalese one.⁶¹ In the last resort, appreciation of a particular country's 'spirit' in an exotic work remains subjective, reliant upon the recognition of well-known symbols of that spirit rather than on any genuine native characteristics. In deciding what is the 'spirit' of a particular country, questions should be raised concerning who defines it and what is the power relation between the representer and the represented. These are questions that Dean does not address. Contemporary French efforts to establish the principles of essential racial difference will be considered in Chapter 4.

Bizet's treatment of native personnel in *Les pêcheurs de perles* is certainly not that of pastiche. However, the characters are convincingly characterised through the use of musical means derived from exotic sources, albeit those of North Africa.

The difference between Bizet's treatment of his native figures and that of earlier French composers is that Bizet integrates them far more into the drama, taking their individual identities seriously rather than treating them as merely decorative ornaments. Thus the high priest Nourabad and the chorus are depicted as implacable not simply because they are Indians, as was the case in many previous exotic works, but because they contribute to the dramatic tension of the work by so being. This is borne out by the highly effective music given to them at key moments in the opera.

While Bizet's treatment of natives in *Les pêcheurs de perles* may mark a real advance on that of earlier exotic works, his treatment of the heroine Léïla may be regarded as more suspect. Léïla is a classic example of the close links between the exotic and the erotic in opera libretti. The figure of the temple virgin who disobeys her vows of chastity is rendered more potent here by the physical setting of her surrender. The barren rock on which she is placed by Nourabad at the close of Act I acts as a symbol of her withdrawal from the world. Nadir's secretive ascent to and penetration of the sanctuary could also be taken to symbolize the moment of her surrender. The songs of the heroine and hero in this situation are both suffused with similar exotic musical imagery, even as the erotic tension mounts. However, a striking exception to this occurs just before Nadir's appearance, when Léïla sings an extraordinary *cavatine* 'Comme autrefois' in which she reminisces about how, when they first met, Nadir used to come and hide in the undergrowth at night in order to watch her.⁶² She greets this dubious action with delight, saying that as a result 'I can sleep and dream in peace'.⁶³ There could hardly be a more graphic reminder of the cultural attitudes to women of the time when the libretto was penned than this now distasteful text. Given the voyeuristic nature of the words, it perhaps shows some restraint on Bizet's part that he sets the song in an entirely European style, complete with a coloratura cadenza, rather than indulging in exotic decoration.

(vi) Chinese, South-East Asian and South Seas Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1830–65

Extensive fields of potential activity for the French Empire existed in South East Asia and the Pacific. During the period 1830–65 these areas began to be occupied, although the period of maximum expansion was still in the future. French involvement in China centred largely around the joint expeditions undertaken by French and English forces to enforce trading access to Chinese ports. Such expeditions were mounted in 1857 against Canton and in 1860, when the joint force occupied Peking following the Boxer rebellion.

French interest in Chinese artefacts grew steadily during the period. Articles on Chinese music had begun to appear in the *Revue musicale* from 1827 and continued intermittently thereafter. However, French reactions to genuine Chinese music were in general as negative as they had been in the eighteenth century. As late as 1851, the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* remarked: 'It is possible that there is Chinese music, but it is not the music of human beings'.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the spectacle provided by China retained its previous popularity, and the appearance of shops in Paris specifically devoted to Chinese and Japanese artefacts underlined the point. Following the imposition of foreign trade on isolationist Japan by America in 1853–4, France signed a treaty with the country in 1858. Japanese goods began to arrive in France in 1859, and the following year *La Porte Chinoise* opened in the rue Vivienne in Paris, selling tea and lacquer wares. Works of musical exoticism with a Chinese subject were, however, less represented in this period than any other in the history of the genre in France, and there were as yet none with a Japanese subject. Only two works of this period took a Chinese subject: Auber's *Le cheval de bronze* of 1835, described as a 'chinoiserie', and Offenbach's *Ba-ta-clan* of twenty years later. Also described as a 'chinoiserie musicale', this one-act entertainment for the Bouffes-Parisiens included the classic exotic plot of a native who turns out to be a European. The joke here was that all the Chinese in the comedy are revealed to be Frenchmen in disguise.

French involvement in the South Pacific and South-East Asia was not generally initiated by the state. The important intermediary and frequent precursor of French imperialism in these regions were the missionaries, who came into almost inevitable conflict with local rulers and populations in carrying out their roles. This occurred in Tahiti, which had been first visited by French missionaries in 1835. By 1842 their complaints of ill-treatment forced the government to act, and the island was placed under French rule. Further clashes between rival French and English missionaries led to additional French state involvement after 1844. A similar situation arose in New Caledonia, annexed by the government after native attacks on French missionaries in 1853. French interest in the exotic potential of these territories, however, remained somewhat undeveloped at this time, perhaps echoing the view expressed by Louis-Philippe that the islands were no more than 'a few grains of tobacco in the Pacific'.⁶⁵ Only one work of musical exoticism was produced with a South Seas subject during this period, again by the resourceful Offenbach. Entitled *Oyayaié, ou La reine des îles* and produced in 1855, this one-act *anthropophagie musicale* (as Offenbach termed it) has an unusually original plot for an exotic opera. It tells the story of a shipwrecked double-bass player who entertains the native cannibals on his instrument, then escapes by using his instrument as a boat!

In South-East Asia, the occupation of the Mekong Delta, which began in 1858, the occupation of Saigon in the following year, and the eventual annexation of Cochinchina in 1862, were all initiated by French missionary activity. The rulers of the region had been particularly hostile to missionaries for many years, although previous persecutions such as those between 1832-40 could not be countered by the French government of the day due to lack of resources, internal upheavals, and lack of will to intervene.⁶⁶

An attempt was made to present the missionary calling to the French public as an exotic activity, and Gounod's song *Le départ des missionnaires*, composed in 1852, may be in a small way such a representation. Interest in this strophic song is

focussed very much on the words, and Gounod has unusually not troubled himself to match music to text in any but the first verse. The song, to words by Charles Dallet, promises the reward of an eventual return to 'la patrie'. Reference to foreign lands in the text does not draw an exotic response from the composer, who appropriately keeps the music within the bounds of the parlour ballad. Pagans are depicted in conventional terms, 'plunged in cold night,/ Without truth, without God, without hope,/ Unfortunate ones! Hell swallows them up', and their 'distant lands' are those 'Where reign Error and Death!'.⁶⁷ The music is very similar to that found in David's songs, and was widely used by many composers in all kinds of contexts, not merely exotic ones. Nevertheless it is appropriate that a technique particularly associated with exoticism should be used here, by harmonising one phrase and treating the next in unison. This moment of the piece (Ex.3.25) is also typically set in the minor mode.

Ex.3.25 Gounod, C.: *Le départ des missionnaires* (Paris, Choudens, [1852]), 2.

[Moderato maestoso]

[mf] Oh! qu'ils sont beaux sur ces lointaines terres où règnent l'erreur et la mort!

The ability of the missionaries and of Catholic Christians to affect French international policy was at its height between 1832 and 1870. The role of France as a protector of Catholics in the Near East dated from informal agreements reached between Francis I and the Ottoman Empire in the 1520s, and had roots in earlier French involvement in the Crusades. Napoleon III took the propaganda value of such a role seriously, especially where a dramatic gesture could be made at relatively little risk. This was illustrated by the punitive expedition to Syria in 1860, mounted against the moribund Ottoman regime which had recently been

persecuting Maronite Christians in the region. From this expedition dated concrete French ambitions in the area which were to be realised under a Republican administration after the First World War. In general, however, the governments of Republican France were hostile to the Catholic Church and disinclined to alter policy in order to protect its interests. It is ironic that, far from slowing the accumulation of territories whose acquisition was often of debatable worth, the growth of the French Empire increased dramatically under successive Republican governments.

(vii) Conclusion

The French music of this period which takes foreign lands as its source of inspiration is more varied than that of previous years, drawing upon a broader range of material for its subject matter. This appears to reflect the actual diversity of territory seized by the French in their imperial adventures. In some cases an increasing knowledge of native music is reflected in the musical means by which French composers represent indigenous peoples in their works. However, the high plateau of the production of exotic works only began at the end of this period, and many works continue the tradition of exotic representation established in previous years. This period may therefore be seen as transitional as far as musical exoticism is concerned, and shows some attempt to redress the relative ignorance of genuine native musical characteristics shown by most earlier French composers. The reliance on the 'Turkish' style to represent all native musics, no matter what their origin, began to be less common and was supplemented over many years by a more informed knowledge of and interest in truly indigenous music.

This is not to say that European representations of the native definitely became more objectively accurate or less open to racial bias during this period. The amount of objectivity in these representations is difficult to establish due to the still generally unsystematic nature of the records available. These records also tend to be exclusively European in origin and thus incapable of comparison with native

accounts. This is due in part to the problem of establishing a means of accurately hearing and notating music which often differed greatly from European norms. The most obvious effect of these difficulties has been the consequent lack of reliable evidence. This only became available with the invention and increasing use of recording devices in ethnomusicological research.⁶⁸ The real characteristics of the native music heard by Europeans at this time is therefore open to conjecture, although some conclusions may be drawn by comparison between different accounts of the same material and with certain features of modern native music which are believed to have survived unchanged over many years.

The continued application of European value judgements in their own assessments of native music also presents problems in a modern understanding of what the early researchers heard. Frequently such serious studies as there were of native music, and of native culture as a whole, were undertaken not for their own sake but in order to demonstrate European superiority. Nevertheless, despite their many ideological shortcomings, such studies are of importance, both in demonstrating changing European attitudes to native cultures, and as a step towards the more widespread and subtle adoption of certain musical practices of other cultures which began to be undertaken by European composers later in the nineteenth century.

It is significant for the future development of the genre that innovations generally derived from a study of musical characteristics of the regions of the Near East, in particular from David's Egyptian travels. French concentration on this area, which already had a long history, continued to be of great importance to musical exoticism. During the period, Algeria was increasingly conceptualised as the seed of the modern French Empire. While musical exoticism based on an Algerian subject was as yet limited to only one movement in Reyer's *Le sélam*, the centrality of the area both to French imperialism and to French exotic music was to be emphasised by the appearance of several important exotic works in following years.

While the pride in imperial possessions may not yet have reached its height in France in the period up to 1865, the incidence of works of musical exoticism there points to a decided French interest in the exotic spectacle such territories could provide. During the 1820s and 1830s, a similar number of works of musical exoticism were produced. This was somewhat less than the number produced in the 1790s, but was, nevertheless, more than any other decade in the period up to 1800. During the 1840s, however, the incidence of such works increased dramatically, and grew to embrace more consistently genres other than opera. The most notable examples from this decade include the songs, piano pieces and *ode-symphonie Le désert* of Félicien David, which had a huge impact on the exotic genre over a number of years. David was primarily responsible for presenting musical exoticism in different forms, and thus assisting in its proliferation. The piano pieces are particularly significant for this reason. This break from the previous dominance of opera in exotic representation increases the importance of David in the history of the exotic genre.

The importance of David's works rests, perhaps, more on their impact than their quality. The extraordinary popularity of *Le désert*, noticeable throughout Europe, spread the allure of musical exoticism to a much wider audience than before. 1844 was also a crucial time for imperial history, when the French Empire was just beginning to be reconstructed. The increasing importance of public opinion in the determination of state policy during the period meant that the level of enthusiasm concerning imperial activities was of vital interest to the authorities. The proliferation of exotic music into areas other than opera, particularly in the hands of David, was thus an extremely significant event in the relationship between the exotic and empire.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. The term 'Second Empire' refers to the personal rule of Napoleon III from 1852, when he was proclaimed Emperor, to 1870, and reflects the regime's desire to be associated with the glamour of Bonaparte's Empire.
2. The rulers of most Ottoman provinces, such as Tunis, were given the title 'Bey', with the exception of Algiers, where the ruler's title was 'Dey'.
3. The force consisted of 38,000 troops and 4,500 horses, transported by 103 warships and 469 merchant vessels. The forces opposed to them were few and ill-equipped, but the French government was obviously taking no chances.
4. Quoted in Johnson, P.: *The Birth of the Modern* (London, Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1991), 969.
5. Bury, J.P.T.: *France 1814-1940* (London, Methuen, 1949, repr. 1985), 43.
6. This is the view taken, for example, by Eric Hobsbawm in his book *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London, Abacus, 1995). In 1857 the French commentator Corcelle expressed the opinion that the incoming government of Louis-Philippe only decided to retain their foothold in Algeria in 1830 in order to snub the British, who had insisted on French withdrawal. See Bury, J.P.T.: *op. cit.*, 58.
7. The main coastal towns of Algeria were (from West to East) Oran, Algiers and Bône. Constantine was the main inland town.
8. This view is not shared by apologists of empire such as Bury, who tend to overlook the harshness of French rule and instead emphasise the savagery of the natives and the benefit which the experience of the war gave to the French Army, which acquitted itself well in the Crimea as a result. The anti-colonialist view is expressed in Prochaska, D.: *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990) and elsewhere.

9. Prochaska dates the formation of a distinctive colonial society in Algeria as late as 1890, when the number of the European inhabitants of Algeria who had been born in the colony began to outnumber those born in Europe (*ibid.*, 223).
10. Quoted in *ibid.*, 248. Flaubert, who also passed through Bône on his way to Tunis where he researched for *Salammbô* in 1858, agreed. He described the area as a 'desert, beastly and dismal'. For further details of Dumas's visit, see Levi, A.: *Guide to French Literature: 1789 to the Present* (Chicago & London, St. James Press, 1992), 206.
11. Lane, E.W.: *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, Dent, 1963), 26.
12. Lane's argument appears to go further than merely making the observation that there are underlying similarities between various societies in the Arab world. Such a proposition would be hard to oppose, just as it would be impossible to deny some shared cultural heritage between the countries of Europe. However, exactly as one could not hope to understand the full national and regional diversity of Europe from a few years spent in one capital city, so one could not expect to comprehend fully the variety of Arab culture after a sojourn in Cairo, contrary to what Lane appears to suggest.
13. Iliffe, J.: *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 163. British hostility to Egypt's economic independence led to the collapse of the Egyptian economy by 1849.
14. Lane, E.W.: *op. cit.*, 563-4.
15. *Ibid.*, 360.
16. *Ibid.*, 360.
17. *Ibid.*, 59, 179.
18. *Ibid.*, 314.
19. *Ibid.*, 375.
20. Gradenwitz, P.: 'Félicien David (1810-1876) and French Romantic

- Orientalism', *MQ*, lxii (1976), 477, from a contemporary account by Paul Granal in *Le Temps* of September and October 1837.
21. Gradenwitz, P.: *op. cit.*, 478.
 22. Locke, R.P.: *Music, Musicians and the Saint-Simonians* (London, University of Chicago Press, 1986), 192.
 23. Gradenwitz, P.: *op. cit.*, 474.
 24. See Locke, R.P.: *op. cit.*, 151, 185–6, 193–5. None of David's arrangements of these melodies appear to have been preserved.
 25. See Prochaska, D.: *op. cit.*, 68.
 26. Contemporary artists such as Delacroix were also travelling to North Africa to record authentic scenes in on-the-spot drawings.
 27. Locke, R.P.: *op. cit.*, 185.
 28. Daniel, S. (trans. H.G. Farmer): *The Music and Musical Instruments of the Arab* (London, Reeves, 1914), 77.
 29. Lane, E.W.: *op. cit.*, 373.
 30. Though David does not add them to the same melody in *Le désert*.
 31. Quoted in Holoman, D.K.: *Berlioz* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989), 314, from Berlioz's review published in the *Journal des Débats*, on 15 December 1844.
 32. Berlioz, H.: *Les musiciens et la musique* (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1969), 229.
 33. This melodramatic technique had been previously used by a number of composers, among them Benda, Mozart, Weber and Schubert. It seems unlikely, however, that David would have known of these as, according to Locke, he was largely self-taught and ignorant of the music of others.
 34. Literary examples of the Romanticisation of the desert include Shelley's poem *Ozymandias* (1817).
 35. Locke describes another coincidence, in which Napoléon-Henri Reber, a Saint-Simonian composer who remained in France during the Egyptian voyages of David and his companions, and who was therefore presumably

- unaware of authentic Egyptian musical practices, composed a work for chorus and band entitled *À l'Orient* in praise of the Egyptian trip, in which 'the verse... is sung... in unison, and only the refrains... in harmony'. Locke assigns the reason for this of making it simple to sing. See *ibid.*, 184.
36. Lane, E.W.: *op. cit.*, 402.
 37. Locke, R.P.: *op. cit.*, 208.
 38. David, F.: *Le désert* (Mayence, Schott, 1870), 1-2.
 39. *Ibid.*, 80-2.
 40. Quoted in Gradenwitz, P.: *op. cit.*, 505.
 41. For a discussion of the impact of Loti's writings, see Chapter 5.
 42. Said, E.: '*Les Troyens* and the Obligation to Empire', given at Cambridge University, 20 May 1997.
 43. Monpou, H.: *Le planteur* (Paris, Richault, 1839), 61.
 44. Macdonald, H. & Locke, R.: *David, Félicien* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992) Vol. I, 1087.
 45. The French had for some time been at the forefront of desert exploration. René Caillié became the first European to return from Timbuktu on the Niger River after crossing the Sahara in 1828. Louis Arnaud reached Marib, the capital of Saba in the Arabian Desert, in 1843. Travel was never easy or safe for Europeans; the French explorer Henri Duveyrier only got as far as Murzuk in the Southern Fezzan as late as 1860 before being forced to turn back. See Hibbert, C.: *Africa Explored: Europeans in the Dark Continent 1769-1889* (London, Allen Lane, 1982) and Welland, J.: *Samarkand and beyond: A History of Desert Caravans* (London, Constable, 1977).
 46. For the popularity of *L'africaine*, see Pistone, D.: *La musique en France de la Révolution à 1900* (Paris, Librairie Honoré Champion, 1979), 69-70.
 47. In Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*, Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* and Delibes's *Lakmé*, for example.
 48. Huebner, S.: '*L'Africaine*' in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992), Vol. I, 33.

49. Melismatic writing does appear on later pages of Séllica's 'Air du sommeil', but it derives from coloratura figuration rather than North African models. See Meyerbeer, G.: *L'africaine* (Paris, Brandus & Dufour, n.d., reprinted New York and London, Garland, 1980), 178–9.
50. It may be no coincidence that there was a production in French of this opera at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1859.
51. Macdonald, H. in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992) Vol. I, 1087.
52. However, this was not apparent to contemporaries who, according to Dean, were 'more surprised than pleased by the vividness of the scoring and the boldness of certain harmonic effects'. The critics were uniformly hostile, with the sole exception of Berlioz who devoted one of his last critical articles to the opera. See Dean, W.: *Bizet* (London, Dent, 1975), 51.
53. In the original version Zurga sacrifices only his love, allowing Nadir and Léïla to escape. In later versions, produced after Bizet's death, he also loses his life.
54. One of the most glaring examples of the influence of the last is the hymn to Brahma in Act I, which Bizet unfortunately repeats at the end of Act II. Berlioz criticised the chorus 'Ah chante, chante encore', which is similarly inspired by Gounod, saying the rhythm 'is one of the things one doesn't dare write nowadays'. Quoted in Dean, W.: *op. cit.*, 52.
55. A similar passage from David's earlier piano piece 'Un promenade sur le Nil' is quoted in Ex.3.3. Bizet's third *envoi* from Rome had been performed in a concert with *Le désert* in January 1863. See *ibid.*, 50.
56. Bizet also used this feature in non-exotic works. Dean cites the close of the *Adagio* of the Symphony in C major (1855), and similar melismas occur in the main theme of the same movement. However, David's influence does seem to be clear in exotic works such as *Les pêcheurs de perles*. See *ibid.*, 134–5.
57. Bizet appears to have made use of some of the music from the abandoned *La*

Guzla de l'Emir, composed in 1862, and certainly drew on *Ivan IV* (1862–3) and *Don Procopio* (1858–9). See *ibid.*, 162, 169. The musical styles of North Africa would have been equally inauthentic for a work set in Mexico, but there were precedents for this in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez* and David's *Christophe Colomb*.

58. *Ibid.*, 170.
59. *Ibid.*, 229.
60. *Ibid.*, 229.
61. *Ibid.*, 232.
62. Bizet, G.: *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Paris, Choudens, [1863]), 98–103.
63. *Ibid.*, 99.
64. Quoted in Pistone, D.: *op. cit.*, 163.
65. See McPhee, P.: *A Social History of France, 1780–1880* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993), 198, 270.
66. Particularly after the establishment of Louis Napoleon's regime, such actions on the part of the region's native rulers met with increasing French opposition, with the consequences noted above. See Cady, J. F.: *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1967), 2, 15.
67. Gounod, C.: *Le départ des missionnaires* (Paris, Choudens, [1852]), 1–2.
68. Bartók and Kodaly pioneered the recording of folk-music, using an early Edison phonograph, in 1906.

IV

'Claims to Glory': The Expansion of the French Empire and French Exotic Music, 1865–89

(i) The Expansion of the French Empire, 1865–89

During the period from 1865 to 1889 the French Empire expanded at a startling rate, though in many respects this activity was a continuation of policies pursued in previous years. This was particularly so in South-East Asia, where French involvement, begun in the early 1860s, increasingly broadened its scope to include the territories of Tongking, Annam and Cambodia in the 1880s. A similar programme of expansion was followed in the Pacific, building on the control of Tahiti and some areas of New Caledonia that was first established in the 1850s. In Africa the division of the continent pursued a particularly hectic pace, as all the imperialist nations took part in the 'Scramble for Africa'. Although some conquests, such as that of Tunisia in 1881, were conducted from neighbouring territories already under French control (in this case Algeria), others struck out into areas previously untouched by imperial interests. These included the establishment of territorial claims to vast areas of Central Africa in Gabon and the Congo as a result of the explorations of Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza in 1878. By 1889 French conquests in Africa also included Somalia, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria and the Sudan, bringing the French the status of possessing the second largest of the European empires after Great Britain.

However, the conquest was by no means easy or continuous. As before in the history of the empire, initial expansion was frequently dependent on the chance decisions of local entrepreneurs and colonial officials, and was only later ratified, often with great reluctance, by central government. An example is the seizure of Hanoi by the entrepreneur Dupuis in 1873. The consequent French official occupation of Tongking was later maintained by only one vote in the crucial debate of December 1885. The French also continued to meet with considerable hostility and resistance from the native population throughout the empire, and native

opposition to colonial rule grew more frequent during the period. The brutal repression of many of these uprisings, such as the Kanak rebellion in New Caledonia in 1878, often led to the further expansion of imperial rule (as it had previously in, for example, Algeria).¹ On this occasion the French took possession of a large number of other islands in the region, many of which are still under French control. Other examples include the resistance of guerrilla fighters in Annam, which commenced soon after the French took control of the country in 1883. In contrast to their success in suppressing the Kanak rebellion, the resistance of the guerrillas in Annam was a problem which the French were never able to overcome, and which they bequeathed to their American successors seventy years later.² In general, however, these rebellions were too isolated and limited in their effects to shake the imperial edifice seriously at this time.

More ominous signs of resistance began to surface during this period, however. Occasionally, a native rebellion attempted to take advantage of a crisis in French government. In 1871, French troops were withdrawn from Algeria to assist in the suppression of the Commune (local French troops had proved to be sympathetic to the Communards). The actions of these troops against their own countrymen and women in Paris were successful, resulting in the speedy destruction of the Commune through the reduction of a large part of the city to ashes and the deaths of more than 25,000 people. Meanwhile the native population of Algeria, which that same army had never been able completely to subdue, promptly revolted, driven not only by their sense of grievance over former French rule, but also by the increased powers granted by the infant Republic to the colonists following the collapse of Napoleon III's rule the previous year. The Algerian revolt was promptly crushed by the return of the troops posted to Paris. On this occasion the revolt was unsuccessful; however, the natives had shown a wider awareness in the timing and siting of their efforts, which in the long term would be repeated with greater success. Increasingly, too, the natives were assisted in their resistance by their own growing identification with the idea of nationality. This concept, which was

previously largely unknown to the conquered peoples, arose as a direct result of their anti-colonialist struggles. Examples were isolated at first, as in Mexico (1865) and Egypt (1881), but eventually became a major feature of native resistance throughout the empire.³

After the secure establishment of the Third Republic, the political prisoners who had not been executed were transported to distant colonies, as had been the practice in 1848 and 1851. Ironically, some 4,000 who were exiled to New Caledonia were granted their pardon and allowed to return to France in 1880 following their enthusiastic participation in the brutal suppression of the Kanak rebellion mentioned earlier.⁴ The action of these former radicals in the face of native revolt underlines the increasing continuity of empire between different regimes which was to be a feature of the French Empire until the end of the Second World War ushered in the era of speedy decolonisation.

As we saw in Chapter 3, the Algerian conquest was retained only by the narrowest of margins by the incoming regime after the collapse of Bourbon rule in 1830. Following the fall of Napoleon III in 1870, however, the Empire was enthusiastically embraced by the Republic. There are several reasons why this should be so. The Empire was, by 1870, much larger and more established than it had been in 1830. It was increasingly seen as lending prestige to France, even if the economic advantages of its possession were as yet questionable. Its abandonment would have had much greater international political impact than would have been the case forty years earlier, especially as the other European powers could be expected to take maximum advantage of any loss of control by the French over their colonies. This was particularly the case in South East Asia where French control of territories adjoining the perceived market opportunities of China were in advance of any other European power at the time. Internally, also, the political importance of the Empire had grown from the days when the average French citizen was thought to be uninterested in territorial acquisitions unless they were in Europe. At a time of national shame, such as the aftermath of the defeat of 1870,

the French may have clung more fiercely to the shreds of glory still to be gleaned from the possession of Empire. However, an even more potent and positive force for the retention of empire could be found in the growth of influential theoretical ideas concerning the significance and desirability of European rule over other races.

The Racial Theories of Renan and Gobineau

While the French had a strong tradition of philosophical writings on racial issues, these had generally been of limited effect, addressed mainly to a small audience. The rapidly expanding French Empire from the 1860s placed these ideas in a new and more urgent context. The populist philosopher Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, whose doctrines were later used by the Nazi party, wrote at length on the desirability of European domination of the world in 1855 in his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. His more intellectual contemporary, the philologist and Hebrew scholar Ernest Renan, also wrote on the same theme in his *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques* (1855). The importance of these and other writers is twofold. Firstly, they strikingly illustrate what Tzvetan Todorov has called 'the ordinary anonymous racist ideology of the period',⁵ the kind of emerging received opinions that might be expected to find favour with the average French citizen of the time (and which still find favour with many, both within and outside France). Secondly, they mark the emergence of a new kind of racism founded on pseudo-scientific theory rather than one based upon the simple dislike of the unfamiliar which has preoccupied all nations since antiquity.

The ideas expressed by Renan in many works between the late 1840s to the 1890s may be taken to be representative of the racist thought of the period. Renan takes as his starting point the idea that the races of the world, which he perceives to be divided mainly by the immediately visible signs of skin colour and facial characteristics, have different rather than common origins. This notion opposes both Biblical and humanist tradition, and is in conflict with the idea of the

brotherhood of man nominally espoused by the French and American Republics. It is a strange paradox that, while Renan's and Gobineau's theories were conceived during the apartheid-based colonial rule of Napoleon III, they should have had maximum influence during the Third Republic which officially adopted the notion of assimilation with regard to subject peoples.

From Renan's notion of the separate origins of the human races arises a justification for European domination of other peoples, on the grounds of the supposed inherent and unavoidable characteristics of the different types. Thus, for Renan, the 'inferior races' – Negroes, American Indians and Australian aborigines – have 'an absolute lack of capacity for organization and progress'.⁶ They are 'non-perfectible races', 'doomed to remain stationary'.⁷ Above them in Renan's world order are the 'yellow races' – Chinese, Japanese, Tartars and Mongols. These are, according to Renan, 'incomplete and defective',⁸ having 'gone from a period of infancy straight into old age without ever achieving a true maturity'.⁹ The white races, whom Renan defines as Aryan and Semitic, 'appear everywhere with a certain degree of culture... We must therefore suppose that the civilised races have not gone through the savage state and that they have borne within themselves, from the very beginning, the seeds of future progress'.¹⁰

This determinist doctrine is specifically linked to the imperial project in Renan's works. The white races, Renan argues, 'are destined to conquer the world and restore unity to the human species'.¹¹ In the resulting new order, each of the races will have their allotted sphere of activity. Renan states that 'Nature created a race of laborers, the Chinese...; a race of field-workers, the Negroes...; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race'.¹² Despite the breathtaking arrogance of his theories, in which he characterises entire races from the most superficial evidence, Renan did not consciously intend harm to the 'inferior races'. The full recognition of these racial characteristics, Renan argues, would lead not to repression, but happiness for all concerned: 'Let everyone do the work he is intended to do, and all will be well'.¹³ However, a more sinister note is struck in

Renan's conception of a future of gradual decline and eventual extinction for the 'inferior races', as, in comparison to the white races, 'the rest of the world counts... only as experiments, obstacles, or auxiliaries'.¹⁴ Within his definition of the white races, Renan is keen to stress the superiority of the 'Indo-European race'; he states that 'the Semitic race... represents an inferior combination of human nature'.¹⁵ In a passage which looks forward directly to the genocide practised by Nazi Germany, Renan wishes to see 'the destruction of the peculiarly Semitic element' in the otherwise pure white race.¹⁶

Following this reasoning, the notion of assimilation, of turning the conquered peoples into model French citizens espoused by the Republic, is a hopeless endeavour. Gobineau agrees with Renan that 'the primitive instinct, covered over in vain by our varnish, breaks through',¹⁷ and instead of increasing conjunction predicts 'the eternal separation of the races'.¹⁸ For Renan, the subject peoples are best viewed (apart from their use as labourers) as subjects for scientific study. Writing of renewed French efforts to conquer the internal regions of North Africa in the 1870s, he confidently claims that 'the scientific exploration of Algeria will be one of France's claims to glory in the nineteenth century, and the best justification for a conquest'.¹⁹ This sentiment is reminiscent of the French attitude to the Napoleonic conquest of Egypt in 1798. However, the nature of the repression of subject peoples is subtly changed by Renan's work. While certain attitudes of the different phases of imperial rule may be similar, earlier conquests tended to rely on the purely military ability of the conquerors to hold on to power. The important difference for imperialism, following the widespread acceptance of Renan's racialist theories, is that the position of the subject peoples with regard to their imperial masters has been fixed conceptually as well as politically by their being fully integrated into a theoretical system. This goes a step further in the subjection of native peoples than the surveillance noted in the *Description de l'Égypte* in Chapter 2. The power of these ideas over the Western imagination goes some way towards explaining the extraordinary longevity of the European empires into the mid-

1900s.

Salvador Daniel and the emergence of ethnomusicology

These ideas become relevant to the music of the period in the ways in which they affect portrayals of native characters, moods and places. They can also be found in some works of the then infant science of ethnomusicology. The treatment of the natives and their music as subjects of research often has strong resonance of Renan's comments quoted above. An example of such a work written at this time is the *Essai sur l'origine et les transformations de quelques instruments*, a study of Arabian music by Salvador Daniel.

Daniel, whose interests in Arab music had been fuelled by friendship with Félicien David, travelled widely in both Arab lands and those influenced by Arab music, such as Spain and Malta. The *Essai* first appeared in the Madrid journal *España artistica* in 1858, but was reprinted in book form in Algiers, where Daniel mostly lived, in 1863. In the years following Daniel's return to France in 1865 the *Essai* became recognized as the standard work on Arab music, and remained widely quoted until the researches of the ethnomusicologist Jules Rouanet modified Daniel's findings in the early 1900s.

Daniel's reactions to Arab music are illuminating, and shed some light on the difficulties of a European musician coming to terms with another culture in the mid-nineteenth century. Of his first impressions of native music, he states that

Like everyone else, I at first recognized in [Arab music] only a frightful medley, devoid of melody or measure... I certainly distinguished a kind of rhythm, but it seemed to me to have no relation to that of the tune.²⁰

However, Daniel persisted in his attempts to understand this music, and became a persuasive supporter of it in France. His various *Fantaisies arabes* for orchestra were performed in concerts of ancient and oriental music given at the Maison Pompéienne in Paris in 1867 under the patronage of Prince Napoleon.

The equation of 'ancient' and 'oriental' categories of music here is perhaps

indicative of the attitude alluded to by Renan in his writings, and one which has also been taken by many histories of music to the present.²¹ In Daniel's *Essai*, this attitude is also apparent in the link posited by him between contemporary Arab and Ancient Greek music. In the *Essai* he describes Arab music as representing 'the infancy of the art'.²² Further, he says, 'this present-day music of the Arabs was the same as that which existed up to the Thirteenth Century' in Europe. By means of studying Arab music 'it is possible to reconstruct the music of the first centuries of the Christian era and thus, with the study of the present, fill the gap in the musical history of the past'.²³ Daniel was undoubtedly incorrect in this view, as later scholars such as Rouanet did not hesitate to point out. However, the appeal to a Eurocentric view of Arab music is notable in this context.

French Exotic Music, 1865–89

Turning to the exotic music of the period, it is noticeable that more exotic works appeared between 1860 and the end of the nineteenth century than had been created in the previous hundred years. However, the numbers of works produced do not show a direct parallel with the continual expansion of the French Empire. Instead, production appears to have generally remained at a high level compared with previous decades, but to have fluctuated slightly within that level. Nevertheless, the most productive decades in the whole history of exotic music are the 1860s and 1880s, and are thus broadly aligned to periods of territorial expansion of imperial rule.

The subjects of these works remained extremely diverse, but also maintained the emphasis on Arabia and North Africa noted in earlier chapters. During the period 1865–89, more than five times as many works were produced with an Arabian subject than any other category. The next most popular subjects, India and the Far East, were closely balanced, showing a reawakening of interest in the exotic potential of China, and particularly a growth in Japanese exoticism. Certain countries, such as Cambodia, were represented in French music for the first time

during the period, and a small number of works explored the exotic nature of Africa. So many works were produced that, as in the previous chapter, only selected ones will be discussed here.

(ii) Arabian and North African Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1865–89

Daniel: *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles* (1865)

The continued importance of this region to French exoticism is underlined by the sheer volume of works produced with Arabian or North African subjects during this period. These range from operas, such as Bizet's *Djamileh* (1871), to cantatas, for example Delibes's *Alger* (1865), to orchestral pieces, such as Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne* (1879), and songs such as Daniel's *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles* (1865). The last-named set of songs was remarkable as the first complete work of French musical exoticism showing a direct connection with Algeria. Nine of the songs had been published separately by 1863, but it was not until 1865 that the complete set of twelve songs appeared. The songs draw on authentic Arab melodies as David's songs did on Egyptian melodies. They are set for voice and piano and are taken from a variety of locations. Four are described as 'chansons mauresques d'Alger', and four more as 'chansons kabyles'. The others come from Tunis, Malta and Spain.

The melodies had been collected by Daniel in Algeria during his residence there between 1853 and 1865. The impression of authenticity in the melodies is reinforced by Daniel's apparent retention of various Arab modes, to which the composer refers in the subtitles to some of his songs. Daniel himself stressed the importance of preserving the original identity of native melodies in transcriptions of this kind. In the *Essai sur l'origine et les transformations de quelques instruments* he criticises the liberties David had taken with the original materials of his songs, remarking that David 'has modified Arab melody to apply it to our harmonic system... we, on the contrary, would like the application of a system of harmony appropriated to the

scale of each mode, without altering the character of the melody'.²⁴ In this passage Daniel summarises the problems facing a composer who wishes to use native melody.

However, there are several considerations to be taken into account in assessing the success of this aim in Daniel's *Album*. First, it is difficult to be certain of the authenticity of Daniel's melodies. It is likely that the differences in Oriental performing style would have made accurate transcription difficult, as in the case of David and others. Second, there are no other contemporary records of Algerian melody with which to compare them. The records which are nearest in time to Daniel's settings are those of the ethnomusicologist Jules Rouanet, noted down around fifty years later. While commentators consider that Arab music changed little over this period, it is clearly impossible to be certain that the comparison here is apt. However, in the absence of other material, a comparison between these two sources may give a clue to the accuracy of Daniel's claims.

Daniel's Kabyle melodies may be taken as representative of the set as a whole.²⁵ Comparisons between these melodies and Kabyle songs noted by Jules Rouanet in the early 1900s show that Daniel has, in fact, introduced a large number of changes to what he heard. These involve the range of the melodies, use of non-authentic intervals such as the fourth, fifth and octave, avoidance of note repetition and alteration of time signature and tempo. The word setting tends to be unlike that of authentic native song, and the structure of the melodies shows definite European tendencies in its adherence to larger and more regular structures than the native originals. The first part of a melody noted by Daniel (Ex.4.1) is placed next to a Kabyle song transcribed by Rouanet (Ex.4.2) to illustrate some of these alterations.

Ex.4.1 Daniel, S.: 'Le chant de la meule', in: *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles* (Paris, Richault, [1865]), No.2, opening.

Andantino



Ex.4.2 Rouanet, J.: 'Chanson kabyle', in: 'La musique arabe', Lavignac, A. & Laurencie, L. de la (eds.): *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1922), Première partie, V, 2888.

[Andante]



The differences between the originals and Daniel's settings are, of course, more marked when considering both words and accompaniment. The use of the piano transplants the songs from their native environment into the European salon. Ex.4.3 shows the accompaniment to the opening of 'Le chant de la meule'.

Ex.4.3 Daniel, S.: *op. cit.*, 1.

Andantino

dolce

Al-

lons, ma meu-le, tourne-co - - - re; Le mai-tre re-vient ce soir. re-

vient - - - ce soir.

This accompaniment is unvarying in texture, layout and rhythmic emphasis throughout the song, and is typical of Daniel's accompaniments to the collection as a whole. Their function appears to be as much rhythmic as harmonic. The simple off-beat rhythms, similar to those recorded as accompanying Kabyle song by Rouanet, are intended to represent the diversity of native rhythm, although in a much simplified form. In genuine Kabyle practice the accompaniment might consist merely of hand-clapping with the occasional use of a drum. Rhythms in this type of

accompaniment typically consist of repeated fragments which form complicated counterpoint with the melody. These survive only in a much attenuated form in Daniel's accompaniments.

A more fundamental change is introduced by Daniel in his use of Western harmonic patterns. These can be clearly identified in Ex.4.3 as being derived from traditional European, not Arab, sources. Like David's accompaniments to his songs, they are extremely simple. The frequent use of broken chords appears to imitate the guitar, and makes these accompaniments seem like primitive forerunners to those found in works such as Albeniz's *Suite espñoła* of 1886. Harmony in this sense is unknown in Algerian music of the period. Occasionally in native performances a song may be performed with the accompaniment of a drone, but otherwise all accompanying instruments play the melody monophonically in unison or at the octave, or heterophonically. Daniel's use of harmony thus represents a significant step away from authentic native practice towards that of European usage.

The texts of Daniel's songs are all in French, but the words of the Kabyle songs are stated to be 'imitating those of the original'. This in itself is likely to introduce further changes into the original melodies, due to the speech patterns of the French language. The native author of one of the songs, 'Stamboul', is named as 'S[heik] Mohammed Said Ben Ali Cherif Agà des Illoulen ou Sammer et des Beni Aïdel'. All of the songs of Daniel's *Album* are love songs, with the exception of the first song, 'L'ange des déserts', which is an invocation to a guardian angel for protection. However, the first verse of Sheik Mohammed's song, 'Stamboul', describes a much more contentious episode in Arabian history, as it concerns the warlike preparations of the Sultan Abdul Medjid and his warriors for the enslavement of the northerners.

'Stamboul'

Ah Stamboul lève sa bannière
Et ses peuples pour la guerre
Defilent au bruit du tambour

'Stamboul'

Ah Stamboul raise your banner
And your people for war
To the sound of the tambour

Abdul Medjid et ses braves	Abdul Medjid and his warriors
Font les gens du nord esclaves	Go to make the northerners slaves
ah!...	ah!... ²⁶

This is a unique reference, albeit oblique, to the conditions in which the native Algerians found themselves after the French conquest. Songs of war were certainly not unusual in the Kabyle repertoire: Daniel himself transcribed a 'Kabyle song made upon the Expedition of General Pélissier against the Kabyles, 1851' in the *Essai*, in which he also mentions another about Marshal Bugeaud's punitive campaigns of the 1840s.²⁷ It is perhaps significant that Daniel does not record the text of these songs, and in fact 'Stamboul' leaves the potentially vexed area of armed resistance after the first verse and returns to the safer subject of love.

Love songs did form a large part of the subject matter of native Algerian song, but other subjects also found expression in them. These are not represented in European renditions, as the example of Daniel and the earlier songs of David illustrate. While this concentration on love may in part reflect European convention, it is also possible that it serves to perpetuate the myth of the sensual, corrupt Oriental which had been a staple of exotic representation in Europe since the eighteenth century. Daniel appears to support this interpretation when, in the *Essai*, he describes one Arabic mode as 'sad, pathetic, effeminate and lead[ing] to indolence'.²⁸

There are many points of similarity between the settings of native material by Daniel and David, not least that both now seem insipid and musically unadventurous. The interest of both, and particularly of Daniel's songs, is that they are the first such works to deal with areas of importance to the French Empire. In the case of Daniel, this was also at a time when colonial rule was at its height, lending a political significance to the songs out of proportion to their musical worth. An example of the kind of resonance between the songs and their historical context is the fact that Daniel chose to distinguish carefully between Arab and Kabyle songs in his collection of melodies from Algeria. While it is not likely that he did this with any overt

political intention, it does nevertheless reflect a division between the two cultures which was of great importance to the French in their practical administration of the colony.

The attitude of colonial officials to the natives in Algeria was variable, but particularly during the rule of Napoleon III it tended towards the protective and paternalistic. Kabyles were preferred to Arabs by many administrators for what was seen as their rugged and independent spirit. They were held to represent the 'true' Arab character, while the Arabs of the plains were generally regarded as degenerate. Daniel maintains this view of Arabs in the description of the mode quoted above. In contradistinction he describes a Kabyle mode as 'warlike.. proud and savage', a characteristic which is 'even found in some [Kabyle] love songs'.²⁹ The importance of the distinction drawn by the French between the two cultures was that it opened up possibilities of using a tried and tested means of controlling the natives, that of 'divide and rule'. There were in fact some differences between the two cultures, mostly linguistic. Nevertheless Kabyle and Arab were much less distinct than the French wished to believe, particularly in their joint adherence to Islam.³⁰ In a classic imperial disregard of the facts, French historians, politicians and colonial officials continued to stress what they saw as the differences between Kabyle and Arab at every opportunity, and it is likely that Daniel was influenced, albeit innocently, by this policy. The romantic notion of rugged hill tribes has proved to be another persistent Western image of the Orient, taking its place alongside the concept of the boundless spaces of the desert.

Bizet: *Djamileh* (1871)

Bizet's opera *Djamileh*, composed in 1871, presents a very different perspective on the exotic potential of the Orient. Instead of having an acknowledged foundation in the genuine native music of actual places, as did Daniel's *Album*, the opera is closer to the world of imaginary location familiar from previous exotic representations. The action takes place in a timeless Egypt but, apart from the

opening chorus describing sunset over the Nile, it could just as well be set anywhere in the Arab world. The plot, concerning the love and eventual captivation by the heroine slave-girl of the title of her dissolute master Haroun, closely resembles those of earlier examples of the genre such as Campra's *L'Europe galante* (1697) and Grétry's *Le caravane du Caire* (1783).

The music follows the practice Bizet set up in *Les pêcheurs de perles*, with exotic effects mainly reserved for scenes of ceremonial and dancing. The type of exoticism Bizet had used in that work is also employed in *Djamileh*, with more authentic effect as it has its roots in certain North African musical practices. At the same time, the dramatic and atmospheric power of these exotic moments transcends the tired clichés of the exotic genre, breathing new life into them. The transformation is, perhaps, even more effective than in the earlier work. An example is the opening chorus, the first part of which is shown in Ex.4.4. Atmosphere is created here by the simplest of means. Quiet sustained chords in the off-stage orchestra are enlivened by a repeated rhythm on the tambourine. Against this background the sopranos sing a tune which, in its delightful modulations, is reminiscent of the modally inflected melodies of authentic narrow-intervalled Arab song without being a direct imitation. The male voices complete the effect by filling out the orchestral chords with hummed notes.

Ex.4.4 Bizet, G: *Djamileh* (New York, Belwin Mills, n.d.), 14-15. [Molto mod^o.]

Sop. *p*

Tén. *res* Le so_ leil s'en va; — ra — me — ne ta voile C'est la fin du

2^{es} Basses *pp* *res* [à bouches fermées]

Tambour de Basque

pp [Orch. dans la coulisse]

Ped. * Ped. *

jour; Et — vers l'O — ri — ent. — vers l'O — ri — ent — la première é —

Ped. * Ped. *

- toi — le S'al — lu — me,

* Ped.

Bizet, alone among French composers since Rameau, here achieves a convincing creative synthesis between elements of native music and those of European style. However, these are still allied to the kind of exotic sentiments in the text which are common throughout the history of the exotic genre, with its 'invitation to love' . Thus, while it is possible to agree with Winton Dean that Bizet here creates 'an exotic background that is interesting in itself',³¹ the crude stereotyping of the libretto prevents even this ravishing music from being more than an accompaniment to a familiar Oriental spectacle.

Ex.4.5 shows the opening of Djamileh's 'Ghazel' (or ballad), which tells of a young girl's unrequited love for her master. The music shows features familiar from Bizet's exotic writing in *Les pêcheurs de perles*. The repeated rhythms of the accompaniment, the lengthy pedal points under and above changing harmonies, the use of the minor mode, and of the chromatic scale (at the close of the introduction), are features which are also found in David's and Daniel's settings. Yet the subtle chromaticism of Bizet's harmonies is far beyond their limited capabilities. Despite drawing on European rather than Arab tradition, Bizet's harmonic accompaniments seem far more appropriate to this style of melody than the stiff, unimaginative ones of David and Daniel. Bizet's accompaniments form a sophisticated counterpart to the serpentine contours of the melody, which also presents a more convincing synthesis between Western and Oriental styles.

Ex.4.5 Ibid., 58.

Andantino. (Djamileh prélude)

PIANO. *P.* *cre - scen -*



do. *f* *mf* *p* *pp* *p*

DJAMILEH. *p* *simplément.*

Nour-Eddin, roi de La - ho - re, Est fier comme un dieu! —



pp

Il est beau com - me l'au - ro - re — Il est



pp

cresc.

beau, Ses yeux — sont de feu! —



As was his practice in *Les pêcheurs de perles*, Bizet's harmony is frequently chromatic at moments of emotion such as the refrain of the 'Ghazel' shown in Ex.4.6. The strength of such passages partly derives from their function in the drama, which here emphasises the sadness of the song and the heroine's desperate position, rather than merely the exotic situation. This is emphasised by the marking *douloureusement* in the score. However, the music is also exotic in its allure, sensuality and pungent chromaticism, which are all more sophisticated and daring than in earlier exotic works by other composers.

Ex.4.6 *Ibid.*, 60.

[Andantino]

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a common time signature. It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and the instruction *douloureusement*. The lyrics are "la la la la la". The vocal line has a melodic line with some chromaticism. The piano accompaniment is in the lower staves, starting with a bass clef and a common time signature. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) in the later part of the excerpt.

Passages such as these horrified critics of the original production such as Moreno, who accused Bizet of an 'absence of tonality'.³² To ears accustomed to the more static (not to say pedestrian) harmonic accompaniments of composers such as David, Bizet's exotic music must have seemed particularly incomprehensible. Ernest Reyer was more complimentary, stating that 'the exotic element... never transgressed the boundary separating art from realism'.³³ Reyer was probably more familiar with the sound of authentic Arab music than hostile critics such as Moreno. His remarks on *Djamileh* imply that he understood precisely the extent to which Bizet had adopted and transformed native music. Reyer states the problem of a composer making use of ethnic material succinctly; he also makes it clear that his

own sympathies lie with those who achieve a workable synthesis between native and European styles.

The other major exotic number in the opera is Djamilah's dance, *L'Almée*, shown in Ex.4.7. As before, Bizet makes use of repeated rhythmic patterns, but varies these by setting them against other complimentary rhythms in the bass voices. The melody, played by a cor anglais, is a fascinating mixture of major and minor modes reminiscent of Nadir's 'De mon amie' in *Les pêcheurs de perles*. In the Arab context of *Djamilah*, however, this more rapid alteration serves as a Westernised interpretation of the melismatic modality of genuine Arab music, representing its essence without either being an exact imitation or resorting to cliché. The use of the distinctive timbre of the cor anglais is also intended as an exotic touch. Other ways in which Bizet might have envisaged the expression of exoticism include the sinuous shape of the melody. While it is too wide-ranging to be completely authentic, it undoubtedly possesses a great deal of atmosphere. Western ears would be comforted by the fact that the melody remains in a recognisable time-signature of 4/4 throughout, and that there are complete triads on strong beats. Yet the exotic atmosphere is maintained by the syncopation of the bass pedal-points and the careful avoidance of a complicated texture.

Ex.4.7 *Ibid.*, 91.

Andantino quasi andante.

SOPRANI.
(Esclaves et musiciens)

TÉNORS.
(Amis d'Haroun)

BASSES.

Andantino quasi andante. (♩=63) [cor anglais]

PIANO *pp*

The score consists of several systems. The first system shows vocal staves for Soprano, Tenor, and Bass, and a piano accompaniment for the English Horn. The tempo is marked 'Andantino quasi andante' with a metronome marking of 63 quarter notes per minute. The piano part is marked 'pp' and features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line for Basses with the lyrics 'Froide et len - te, In - do - len - te,'. The fourth system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'Et les yeux as - sou - pis,'. The piano accompaniment continues throughout.

In *Djamileh* Bizet again expanded the possibilities of representing the exotic in Western music. Some elements of his exotic writing derive from genuine native practice, but these are subtly varied continually to avoid either undue imitation or repetition. Native elements tend to be reinterpreted, and effects are made for dramatic purposes as well as exotic effect. In all these ways Bizet is ahead of his time. His libretti, however, are much less effective, and diminish his achievement.

These changes underline the complex relationship between authenticity and the exotic throughout the history of the genre, and particularly in the nineteenth century. Without recourse to some aspects of authentic native practice, the music failed to capture enough atmosphere to convince the audience. However, audiences were not really interested in ethnomusicology. They wanted something which would express otherness, without being too alien, scholarly, or dissonant. Exotic representation continually sought a balance between the familiar and the unfamiliar. As a comparison between the works of Daniel and Bizet shows, getting the balance right is partly beyond the control of the composer. At the time that they were composed, Daniel's melodies received more public approval than Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* or *Djamileh* did. Yet the skills of the latter composer have since, quite rightly, far eclipsed those of the former. To contemporary audiences, however, the difficulty of appreciating Bizet's harmonic freedom, and his lush use of the orchestra, outweighed any approval of his exotic effects. Later in the century, as we shall see, the merits of such practices were more easily grasped.

Saint-Saëns: *Suite algérienne* (1879)

With Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne*, subtitled *Impressions pittoresques d'un voyage en Algérie* (1879), we move away from the Arabia of legend back to the colonial experience. This is underlined by the title of the last movement, *Marche militaire française*. Exotic interest lies in the other movements, *Prélude (en vue d'Alger)*, *Rhapsodie mauresque* and *Rêverie du soir (à Blidah)*. Genuine native elements in the music appear to be surprisingly scanty, given Saint-Saëns's own

familiarity with Algeria. For example, there is no use of the characteristic tambourine except in the second movement. Some of the more baffling limitations of this music may be explained by the fact that Saint-Saëns only visited Algeria on holiday, and only those parts of the country which were firmly under French control.³⁴ It may be that he did not hear much in the way of authentic native music, as the colonial areas of the cities were for the use and entertainment of Europeans only. While native Algerians were allowed in to work, they mostly lived in a separate part.³⁵ Possibly Saint-Saëns heard Algerian musicians playing a version of native music for tourists, which would explain the kind of melodies he uses in the work. If so, the native musicians themselves could be seen as creating a new kind of 'native music', one which presents their own imagined synthesis between native and Western styles. However, the position is complicated by the political and economic imbalance between the natives and the Europeans. It is hard to see such a synthesis as being creative in these circumstances, but rather forced on the native population as part of their domination by the imperial power. The *Suite Algérienne* thus possibly represents a new phenomenon, a tourist version of the country, with the colonial presence being at least as much marked as the native elements in the music. This view is borne out by the appearance of the *Marche militaire française* as the culminating movement.

It is possible that Saint-Saëns's own style was unsuited to incorporate much in the way of exotic elements, particularly at this stage in his career. The texture of the *Suite algérienne* frequently seems unduly thick and the handling unimaginative. The most successful movement is the final *Marche militaire française*, with its use of military fanfares on cornets. Despite the promising title of the third movement, the music is generally stilted and repetitive after an atmospheric opening, and it does not mark a significant advance on the second movement of David's *Le désert*. The opening of the *Rêverie du soir* is shown in Ex.4.8. Here exotic atmosphere is created through the complex string texture, Saint-Saëns's equivalent of the familiar drone effect. Floating above this, the flutes play a pleasantly lazy syncopated arabesque-

like melody. Unfortunately these effects are not developed elsewhere in the movement, which loses interest as it goes on. The picture created remains a static, sanitised and superficial one, as if it was the musical equivalent of the postcard scenes of the colonies becoming popular at this time.³⁶ Nevertheless, this would not necessarily detract from its exoticism for a contemporary audience, who would have responded to the texture and rhapsodic melody. It is likely that, with his reliance on the style of earlier composers such as Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns was the perfect French exotic composer of the mid-to-late nineteenth century in terms of the musical balance between the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Ex.4.8 Saint-Saëns, C.: *Suite algérienne* (Paris, Durand, [1881]), 56-7.

[Allegro quasi andantino]

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne*. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes the following parts: Flute (Fl. div.), Violin I (Vn.1 div.), Violin II (Vn.2 div.), Viola (Vc.1), and Cello/Double Bass (Vc.2 + Cb.). The key signature is two sharps (D major or F# minor), and the time signature is 6/8. The score begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The flute part features a melodic line with some grace notes and a fermata. The string parts are primarily accompaniment, with some pizzicato (*pizz.*) and *sim.* (sordina) markings. The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes and rests.

A greater variety of effects appear in the second movement: *Rhapsodie mauresque*. Some approach to the complex rhythmic accompaniment typical of Algerian music is seen in Ex.4.9 in the 6/8 rhythms of the tambourine and timpani against the 3/4 flute melody, which appears to be more authentic, with its mixolydian inflection. Nevertheless, the range of the melody is suspiciously large, as most native melodies tend to remain within the compass of the octave. Saint-Saëns

appears to carry further Bizet's idea of retaining the drone accompaniment while varying the harmonic implications above it. In the last four bars of this example, the melody of bars 1–2 seems to restart in G major, creating a mildly bitonal effect. It is, however, significant that this takes place at one of the most transparent moments in the score, and the impression is too fleeting to make an impact as distinct or as daring as the chromatic clashes in Bizet's exotic numbers.

Ex.4.9 *Ibid.*, 48.

[Allegro moderato]

The musical score for Ex. 4.9 is written for three instruments: Flute (Fl.), Timpani (Timb.), and Tambourine (Tamb. de basque). The music is in 3/4 time and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Flute part is marked '1° solo' and 'p'. The Timpani part is marked '[pp]' and the Tambourine part is marked '[pp]'. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the Flute, Timpani, and Tambourine parts. The second system shows the Flute, Timpani, and Tambourine parts. The Flute part features a melodic line with some chromaticism and a bitonal effect in the final bars. The Timpani and Tambourine parts provide a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment.

(iii) Indian Subjects in French Musical Exoticism, 1865–89

Delibes: *Lakmé* (1883)

The appeal of India as an exotic subject for musical representation appears to have waned slightly during the period 1865–89. The numbers of works almost exactly match those written during the previous thirty-five years. However, considering the large overall increase in the number of exotic works in this period, this possibly represents a small decline in interest compared to other categories. India was becoming ever more dominated by Britain, especially after the crushing

defeat of the Indian Uprising in 1859.³⁷ After the reorganization of Indian rule under the direct control of the Crown in 1860 and the coronation of Victoria as Empress in 1876, India's borders were further fortified against external assault by the expanding British influence over Burma, completed with the conquests of the country in 1885 and 1890. Nevertheless, one of the most popular works of French musical exoticism, Delibes's *Lakmé*, produced in 1883, has an Indian subject.

Originally an *opéra-comique*, later turned into a grand opera by the replacement of spoken dialogue with recitative, *Lakmé* remained in the repertoire for eighty years with hundreds of performances in France and elsewhere. Hugh Macdonald takes the view that this 'resounding success' can be explained by the opera's inclusion of the 'favourite features of the age: an exotic location (already popular from Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* and Massenet's *Le roi de Lahore*), a fanatical priest figure, the mysterious pagan rituals of the Hindus and their bewitching flora, and the novelty of exotically colonial English people'.³⁸

It may be thought doubtful whether the last named would have been sufficient recommendation to the French. In fact the only European characterised as specifically 'English' in the opera is the comic figure of the governess, Mistress Bentson. Her behaviour has much in common with that of the unattractive older woman of comic opera cliché at her first appearance in Act I. However, her consternation at the insistence of the market vendors and thieves in Act II, ending with her comic threat 'Enough! I am the governess to the Governor's daughter!',³⁹ appears intended to mark her out as English with its mixture of pomposity and ineptitude. The other Europeans, as is customary in such works, may be considered to be 'honorary' French men and women.

The choice of 'exotic location' of the opera is an interesting departure from the novel on which the libretto was based. The 'exotically colonial... people' in that work were originally the French themselves, and the location was Tahiti. The semi-autobiographical novel *Rarahu* (later entitled *Le mariage de Loti*) was written by one Julien Viaud, who later adopted the pen-name of Pierre Loti. Loti's novels are,

perhaps, the most significant source materials for the exotic in the nineteenth century, and formed the basis for several operas by other composers such as Messager, Hahn and Puccini. *Rarahu* was first published in 1880, and recounts the story of a naval officer who settles down with, then abandons, a native woman, in his search for new impressions in a life blighted by cynicism.

The details are altered in *Lakmé*, an example being the substitution of the more idealistic Gérald for the disillusioned protagonist of the novel. However, the core beliefs expressed in the novel concerning the relationship between colonisers and colonised are firmly in evidence in the opera.³⁹ Loti writes about his native lover, Rarahu, that

between us there were gulfs, terrible barriers, never to be surmounted...
between us who had become one flesh remained the radical distinction of race,
the divergence of elementary concepts about all things... We were children of
two separate and very different natures, and the union of our souls could only
be transient, incomplete, and tormented.⁴⁰

In the opera, it is not Gérald but his friend Frédéric who expresses these thoughts. Speaking of the nature of Indian women, he describes their love as different from that of Europeans: 'Love seizes them without restraint!... Their hearts are intoxicated with the pleasures of love, and for them, to live is to seduce'.⁴¹ Later in the opera he unsuccessfully attempts to persuade Gérald that Lakmé's love for him is merely 'the intoxication of a day... the caresses of Spring',⁴² due to her Indian nature.

The opera engineers the required break between Gérald and Lakmé not through the heartless abandonment of the native woman by the European found in Loti's novel, but through the self-sacrifice of the heroine for her lover. Nevertheless the impression of the union of the races being nothing more than an unattainable dream is underlined. The similarity between the concepts of race in Loti, *Lakmé* and the doctrines of Renan explored earlier are striking. Although the opera prefers to contrive this by the self-sacrifice of the native heroine, the return of the hero to his

rightful racial sphere, both in terms of his affections and his duty, is firmly accomplished. Later libretti of exotic operas (like *Madama Butterfly*) were to be less sentimental concerning the hero's treatment of his native lover, although equally negative about miscegeny.

The plot of *Rarahu* makes clear how artificial are the characters of the 'fanatical priest figure', Nilakantha, and his amorphous crowd of devoted followers. Typically in Loti's works, native men hardly appear except as procurers for their European masters. Instead, the exotic country in which the hero disports himself is represented almost solely by women. The connection between the exotic and the erotic is manifest in such works. The colonial situation is a perfect opportunity to state the essential differences between rulers and ruled in sexual terms. The function of Nilakantha and his band of fanatics in the opera is secondary to the main crisis of the drama, which concerns the ultimate impossibility of an inter-racial relationship. They merely provide an excuse for Lakmé's sacrifice, and an exotic background for the action. In the exotic tradition, they have a long pedigree going back to Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*. Similarly, the 'bewitching flora' of the Hindus referred to by Macdonald derive from earlier exotic works such as Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*.

The musical means by which Delibes evokes exoticism in *Lakmé* derive to a large extent from Bizet. Modality is widely used, as in Ex.4.10 which shows the opening of Lakmé's prayer to the Gods from Act I. The melodic contours, rhythms, orchestral accompaniment and layout are all strongly reminiscent of Léïla's invocation to Brahma in Act I of *Les pêcheurs de perles*. The passage also reflects the growing importance of the harp as a vehicle for exotic atmosphere. Again, this effect is probably derived from Bizet's earlier usage in *Les pêcheurs de perles*.

Ex.4.10 Delibes, L.: *Lakmé* (Paris, Heugel, n.d.), 6-7.

Moderato. (♩=76) - LAKMÉ. (dans la coulisse):

Blan - che Dou - ga, Pa - le Si -

(Tous les Hindous se prosternent)

Moderato. (♩=76)

les 2 Ped. (Harpe dans la coulisse) * Ped. * Ped. *

- va! Puissant - Ga - ga! O vous, que cré -

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

(♩=72)

- a Brah - ma!

(♩=72)

Ped. * les 2 Ped. *

Certain procedures of Bizet, such as the use of melisma, are much extended in places in Delibes's opera. An example, illustrated in Ex.4.11, is the opening of the *scène* preceding the *Légende de la fille du paria* in Act II.

Ex.4.11 *Ibid.*, 145.

The image shows a musical score for Ex.4.11. The top staff is for Lakmé, starting with the name 'LAKMÉ.' and the instruction '(Sans mesure)'. The music begins with a melisma marked 'mf', followed by a section marked 'p', and then another melisma marked 'mf'. The bottom staff is for the orchestra, starting with 'Ah!' and '[Orch. tacet]'. The music then begins with a melisma marked 'Lent.', followed by 'mf', 'p', 'f', 'p', and finally 'long.'.

Delibes also adopts some other exotic devices not used by Bizet. He makes use of unison passages in moments of particular significance to the plot, such as Lakmé's description of the lovers' ritual union through drinking from a sacred ivory cup in Act III. This effectively lends solemnity to an event of crucial importance, as it concerns whether Gérald will henceforth live with Lakmé as a native. This passage is shown in Ex.4.12, and can be seen as a forerunner of the even more sentimental practices of Massenet and Puccini.

Ex.4.12 *Ibid.*, 231.

[Allegretto non troppo]

LAKMÉ (gravement)

Quand ils ont ef-fleuré, — de leurs lèvres brû-
lan-tes, La même cou-pe, ils sont u-nis, ils sont u-nis et pour tou-
-jours. — Et les dées-ses bien-fai-san-tes Veillent sur leurs a-mours, —

Other practices of Bizet used by Delibes include the employment of chromatic scales against pedal notes or, in the case of Ex.4.13, against martial music. The dramatic effect of such moments is apparent here, as it was on similar occasions in *Les pêcheurs de perles*. Here, Lakmé realises that Gérald is lost to her as his

attention is drawn by the music of his brother officers rather than her own pleas for his love. Two different musical timbres express this, with the sound of the off-stage piccolos set against the lower strings and their rising chromatic tenor line.

Ex.4.13 *Ibid.*, 255.

[Récit.]

LAKMÉ (Avec déchirement, après avoir essayé vainement d'attirer son regard)

Tout est fi - ni!..

Mouv! de la Marche.

pp (Fifres dans la coulisse)

(Orch.)

(Pendant que Gérard écoute, Lakmé va cueillir)

Another point of similarity between Delibes and Bizet is the source of their exoticism, which is basically North African in origin. No recognizably Indian motifs, modes or orchestrative touches are used anywhere in *Lakmé*, and the dances of Act II are all Arabian in their musical expression. The only original touch here is the frequent inclusion of the augmented second of Arabian cliché. A moment where this occurs is shown in Ex.4.14, taken from the end of the second dance, entitled *Terâna*.

Ex.4.14 *Ibid.*, 123.

[Andante]

Ped. *

Ped. *

The famous 'Bell Song' belongs more to the tradition of *coloratura* arias. It is difficult to know exactly how exotic such effects would have appeared in themselves to Parisian audiences. In the context of the Indian scenery and plot, however, they were obviously acceptable as a symbol of Lakmé's exotic and alluring nature, providing another example of the balance between the elements of exoticism and European style which composers needed to find in order to create an acceptable and appealing whole.

A telling example of the consequences of the reliance on North Africa for the characterisation of Indian exoticism comes from one of the minor characters. Lakmé's servant, Hadji, is simply another devoted slave figure familiar from many exotic works, and in himself is unremarkable. However, his name, which signifies a Moslem who has accomplished the pilgrimage to Mecca demanded of all believers in Islam, is an unlikely one for a devout Hindu. The confusion of identity this reveals also has parallels in many exotic works, and is a further illustration of European unconcern with the actual identity of personages whose primary function, in Western eyes, is simply to appear exotic.

(iv) American Subjects in French Exotic Music, 1865–89

European involvement in the Americas during the nineteenth century was increasingly limited by the insistence of the United States on the Monroe Doctrine. This statement, originally made by President Monroe in 1823, declared the continent to be out of bounds to European imperial expansion. Spanish rule was already declining rapidly in South America at the time of the declaration.⁴³ In following years the Doctrine was largely observed by European nations. The American Civil War of 1861–65 offered the first real opportunity to take advantage of the temporary preoccupation of United States interests in home affairs. Most European nations were prudent enough to avoid this temptation. However, in a characteristically foolhardy gesture Napoleon III initiated the French Expedition to Mexico with the intention of placing the Archduke Maximilian on the throne and creating a new region of French influence. The expedition set out in 1863. In the face of a Mexican revolt, the French eventually abandoned the country, leaving Maximilian to be shot by the victorious Mexicans. A similar miscalculation was to be made by Napoleon in embarking on a war with Prussia in 1870, with disastrous consequences for France.

Poniatowski: *L'aventurier* (1865)

The impossibility of further European imperial involvement in the Americas may go some way to explain the almost total lack of works of musical exoticism with an American subject during this period, with one important exception. In a rare example of a work of musical exoticism responding directly to the political situation, the composer Prince Józef Poniatowski seized the opportunity to write an opera on a Mexican subject during the campaign, entitled *L'aventurier*. According to T.J. Walsh, Poniatowski thought of the story while the Mexican expedition was going well. However, on its production in 1865, which coincided with the ignominious defeat of the expedition, the opera failed dismally. Walsh drily comments that 'the failure of Maximilien's expedition was matched by the failure of Poniatowski's

score'.⁴⁴

While he does not specify the content of the opera, Walsh gives the impression that it was in some way bound up with the expedition, perhaps glorifying French achievement in a way that was to be contradicted by the outcome of the campaign. This is far from the case, however. Almost the reverse is true, in that some situations, and much of the music, are commonplaces of the genre which seem particularly threadbare in this context. However, *L'aventurier* presents an alternative to most exotic situations, being markedly more sympathetic to the plight of the natives than was normal at this time. Although the music is generally conventional and somewhat repetitive, it is occasionally far more interesting than Walsh's brief description suggests. In fact, the opera's failure may be accounted for politically more by the ways in which it problematises foreign domination of the country, rather than by being unrealistically jingoistic. From a musical point of view, failure was probably at least partly the result of the unevenness of quality and dramatic approach in the work.

The scene is set in Mexico but, instead of being at the time of the French expedition, the action takes place in the days of Spanish rule. This dates the action before 1821, when Mexico declared independence from Spain. There are no French characters in the opera, although the villain, the Mexican grandee Don Annibal, claims to have completed his education 'above all in Paris'.⁴⁵ The adventurer of the title is Don Manuel, an impoverished Spanish nobleman, who has come to Mexico to seek his fortune. His open, almost painfully honest nature, and his excruciating sense of humour, show him to be a direct descendant of the tiresome hero of Grétry's *Le huron* (1768).

The discursive plot seems close in spirit to the moral tales of the eighteenth century. It is, however, unusual in that the real hero of the story is not the European Don Manuel but Quirino, an oppressed Indian miner. The story tells how Quirino regains his faith in the goodness of human nature as a result of Don Manuel's selfless actions. Quirino's initial bitterness exceeds what is expected in what

is basically a comic opera. He is treated not as the usual humorous grumbler, but as a tragic figure, and this element, it could be argued, unbalances the opera. Quirino's despair is caused by the treatment of the Indians at the hands of the imperialists. Quirino returns to this theme continually throughout the opera, emphasising his hatred of the white race and his plans of vengeance against them. He recounts the foreign conquest of his nation in harsh terms, describing how the greed of the conquistadors led them 'to search for gold in our very blood, making corpses of our sons and companions!'.⁴⁶ Ex.4.15 illustrates the simple musical style to which these sentiments are set. The sparse accompaniment and straightforward melody are typical of much of the opera and show Poniatowski's debt to earlier Italian composers such as Donizetti.

Ex.4.15 Poniatowski, Prince J.: *L'aventurier* (Paris, Parent, [1865]), 26.

[Lento]

QUIRINO.

Ain - si que le sanglant vau-tour Dont l'aile sombre bend - la

ri - ve, Dans no-tre pai-si-ble se-jour --- Votre race blanche est ve-nu - e!

Gold is a recurring theme in the opera. The plot hinges upon the Viceroy's need for money in order to maintain the rule of Spain in Mexico. This jars oddly with the political situation at the time of the French Expedition. A straightforward appeal to 'la gloire' might have been more understandable if the intention was simply to play

on the patriotism of the French public. This would have been particularly appropriate as there was a direct precedent, coincidentally also associated with Mexico, in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez* (1809). In *L'aventurier*, however, the regime's difficulties are attributed to their lack of financial resources rather than the savage nature of their opponents. This underlines the mundane and unheroic side of the conquest. The Viceroy sums up the difficulties of sustaining colonial rule prophetically, declaring that 'our government in this country is impossible! I have found an empty treasury... the troops unpaid... a people weighed down with taxes... sedition everywhere! And I have neither gold nor arms with which to combat it'.⁴⁷

Act III of the opera boasts what must be the strangest location of all in an exotic work, as it takes place five hundred feet down a gold mine. The contrivances of the plot to bring together all the characters in this setting may be thought to place a particular strain on the credulity of the audience. However, in many ways this act is the most convincing in the opera. There are some effective choruses, such as the first in which the miners enquire 'For what do we toil? It is wasted time'.⁴⁸ There is also a sombre 'Ballad of the Black Miner', a demonic figure who haunts the mine, sung by Quirino, who again takes the opportunity to curse the Spanish for their greed. The most extraordinary piece of music in the opera is sung by Dona Fernande, the heroine, who has come to the mine in search of the hero. The miners ask her to sing them a new song. She replies with what the score calls a *boléro*, shown in Ex. 4.16. The music is remarkable for its time signature, which changes in almost every bar between duple and triple time. This characteristic is definitely not that of a bolero. It probably derives from the *zortzico*, a form common in Basque folk-music but not familiar at this time outside the region.⁴⁹

Ex.4.16 *Ibid.*, 157-8.

[Allegro moderato]

DONA FERNANDE

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of five systems of music. The first system includes the vocal line with the lyrics "[f] Ah! qu'il é-tait donc beau, Pé-dro, Lors-que sur sa mu-leau Ran-cho," and the piano accompaniment with dynamics *f* and *pp*. The second system continues the vocal line with "Il pour-taien croupe l-né-sil-le, pour-y danser le bo-le-ro!" and piano accompaniment with dynamics *pp*, *leggiero*, and *f*. The third system features the vocal line with "oh! oh! oh! oh! qu'il é-tait donc" and piano accompaniment with dynamics *p*, *legato*, and *sfz*. The fourth system shows the vocal line with "beau, Pé-dro!" and piano accompaniment with dynamics *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamic markings, articulation marks, and multi-measure rests.

The score contains few other exotic references, although castanets are used in the orchestra in the third act. None of the melodies appear to be modelled on actual Mexican song. The music of *L'aventurier* does show a definite predilection for the minor mode, and a fondness for *staccato* accompaniments, both features, as we have seen, of a much earlier exotic style in opera. The harmonies are conservative for the time, and show considerable overuse of the diminished seventh at moments of drama

(though this is equally true of early Verdi).

L'aventurier ends with the usual scene change half-way through the fourth act (set in a Mexican prairie). After a loud explosion, Quirino reveals an enormous cache of gold which he had hidden beneath a boulder. He gives the treasure to the hero, who is thus able to marry the heroine by passing it on to her uncle, the Viceroy. The opera ends with extended choruses in praise, not of the Viceroy or the happy couple, but of Quirino, 'the King of the mine'.⁵⁰ This unlikely ending, with Spanish rule being saved for the future, may be thought to reflect the French intention of placing the Habsburg Archduke Maximilian on the throne. However, nowhere in the opera is Spanish rule justified for its own sake, as might be expected if it was to symbolise that of Maximilian. Instead, the Viceroy is shown to be conniving at the marriage of his niece to the villain for money, even though he knows that Don Annibale's fortune was acquired through fraud and corruption while exercising his privileges as Inspector of Mines. The imposition of foreign rule over the country is rendered even less justifiable in the opera by the frequent references of Quirino to the sufferings of his people.

L'aventurier reveals a strange mixture of ideas, many taken from much earlier operatic situations. Combined with these are potentially explosive notions concerning the treatment of indigenous peoples and the injustices of imperial rule which were to gain weight in Europe only in this century. These various strands of thought do not coexist comfortably in the opera, and instead give an impression of confusion. Ironically, this uncertainty also characterises twentieth-century responses to colonialism. While other composers and librettists may have created more consistent exotic operas, few have touched upon the negative effects of imperialism for rulers and ruled in such a pointed manner. That we are left with the feeling that this is unintentional, adds to the poignancy of the colonial situation. The unacceptability of the work to French audiences of the period may reflect the unease caused by these untimely references at a period when the superiority of Western peoples over their native subjects was becoming increasingly unquestioned.

(v) South East Asian Subjects in French Musical Exoticism, 1865–89

Saint-Saëns: *La princesse jaune* (1872)

The period 1865–89 saw the development of two new fields of interest in French musical exoticism. Japan had recently been opened to Western commerce as a consequence of American action in 1853–4. Following this, Japanese goods began to appear in Europe. The first work of French musical exoticism to take Japan as a subject was Saint-Saëns's one-act *opéra-comique* *La princesse jaune*, produced in 1872. Little was known of Japan at this time. The Japanese had proved themselves capable of self-protection, gaining respect from Europe for their military prowess by their attacks upon their neighbours. This ensured that there were no imperial designs on the country by the Western powers. The opera underlines the perceived remoteness of Japan by making the exotic setting entirely a figment of the imagination of the hero. The action is actually set in the rather less exotic location of the Netherlands.

The music often uses methods derived from familiar North African sources such as drone basses. However, the most significant touch to emerge from the work is the establishment of pentatonicism as a recognisable musical image of the Far East in European music. This feature is first used in the overture, and reappears whenever Japan is mentioned in the libretto. It is particularly noticeable during the fifth scene, when the hero imagines himself in Japan. Attitudes to Japan in the opera are ambivalent, and the parody lying just beneath the surface becomes obvious in moments when the Dutch heroine is expressing her annoyance at the hero's fixation on the fictional Japanese princess, Ming. Ex.4.17 shows the chorus which accompanies the hero's hallucinatory experience of Japan. The use of Japanese words is reminiscent of the Arabic words used by David in the muezzin of *Le désert*, while the unison vocal writing underlines the exotic effect of the pentatonic melody. However, a truly original exotic effect is provided by the accompaniment of off-stage bells, which sound throughout the chorus. The use of this evocative timbre

anticipates the exoticisms of later composers such as Debussy and Ravel.

Ex.4.17 Saint-Saëns, C.: *La princesse jaune* (Paris, Durand, 1906), 40.

[Allegretto (più mosso)]

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. The top system is for the voice, labeled 'CHŒUR' and '1^{re} Dessus (dans la coulisse)'. The lyrics are 'A - na - ta wa - do na - sa -'. The bottom system is for the piano, with the instruction '[Cloches dans la coulisse]'. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, with some chords and rests.

The newly-conquered territories of South-East Asia, on the other hand, were from the first a very real and present fact to the French. The conquest was on a scale larger than that of any other European power in the Far East, with the exception of the British in India. The development of French control of the region was seen to present a serious challenge to British rule in the sub-continent, and the subsequent British occupation of Burma was intended to counter its effects. Siam was tolerated by France and Britain as a neutral buffer state between their spheres of influence, and thus remained the only state in South-East Asia not to come under direct foreign control.

French possession of the area also had a more positive significance. It was seen as a significant step towards the eventual partition of China which was being seriously proposed by the European powers before the First World War. The enormous Chinese Empire was the third largest of Empires worldwide after the

British and Russian Empires. It was also considered to have the largest population, with nearly 400 million inhabitants. It is possible that this huge area would always have been too difficult for the European Empires to partition, even supposing they could have operated in concert. Nevertheless the market opportunities represented by such a vast population were viewed with eager anticipation by Western nations. Unlike the Japanese, the Chinese were widely thought to be decadent and incapable of defending themselves. A view of their national characteristics as basically comical is common in later nineteenth-century exotic representation. An example from this period is Charles Lecocq's comic opera *Fleur-de-thé*, produced in 1868. The opera was Lecocq's first big success. Described as a 'chinoiserie', it included stock comic characters with pseudo-Chinese names such as Tien-Tien and Kaolin. These graphically portray current Western attitudes to the Chinese people.

Western Imperial expansion is frequently represented in both pro- and anti-imperialist writings as a triumphal progress against little or no real native opposition.⁵¹ While this may be true of some imperial campaigns, the conquest of South East Asia by the French is an example of the opposite. The French continually suffered major setbacks in their gradual conquest of the region, and were defeated by the Chinese in Tongking in 1874, and in Hanoi and Bac Lé in 1883. Their worst losses followed the invasion of the Chinese island of Formosa (now known as Taiwan) in 1884 and the subsequent attempt to reach the Chinese border. Here they were heavily defeated and lost all their previous gains (1885). French control over the region was only secured when the Chinese were forced to yield sovereignty in order to concentrate their efforts against Japanese aggression on their eastern borders. The French also suffered from continual guerrilla activities among the conquered peoples of Cambodia and Vietnam. It is a strange anomaly of imperial discourse that, in the face of these military defeats, the Chinese and Indo-Chinese peoples continued to be represented by Europeans as decadent and spineless.

The clash between the Chinese and French Empires at this time was not merely military but cultural. Despite their frequent military successes against the French,

the Chinese seem never to have grasped fully the nature of the European threat. Unlike the Japanese, who understood the need to adopt European methods if they were not to be conquered by the West, the Chinese neither saw the necessity, nor were able, to adapt. Throughout the conflict the French were commonly regarded in Peking as merely an 'unruly frontier tribe'.⁵² By the 1890s, the resources of the Chinese government were exhausted by the attempt to repulse her enemies. The French were later able to take advantage of China's resulting weakness to secure concessions in trade, mining, railways and communications in the southern Chinese provinces. These were traditionally ways in which to prepare a region for full annexation.

Bourgault-Ducoudray: *Rapsodie cambodgienne* (1882)

The appearance of Louis Bourgault-Ducoudray's *Rapsodie cambodgienne* in 1882 in some ways parallels that of Salvador Daniel's *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles* in 1865. Both deal with a colonial subject, and both are the first complete works of French musical exoticism to treat their particular areas. Both also regard the colonial subject sympathetically as more than simply an exotic background. The contrast between this view and those of most contemporaries is particularly marked in the case of Bourgault-Ducoudray. The *Rapsodie cambodgienne* displays a much less subjective view than is found in similar contemporary works such as Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne*. Bourgault-Ducoudray's position as regards exotic music was basically ethnomusicological, while Saint-Saëns, in his work, emerges as a typical tourist seeking exotic sensations.

Parallels between Bourgault-Ducoudray's and Daniel's works also extend to some of the methods employed in composition. In the Preface to his *Trente mélodies populaires de Grèce et d'Orient*, published in 1876, Bourgault-Ducoudray echoes Daniel in his emphasis on the importance of subjugating the harmony to the needs of the native melody. He remarks that 'the only harmonies which we have excluded are those whose character is opposed to the modality of the melody'.⁵³ Bourgault-

Ducoudray's practice in these songs is considerably more successful than Daniel's, with far more adventurous harmonies applied to more accurately transcribed melodies. Similar features may therefore be expected to distinguish the *Rapsodie cambodgienne*.

Along with the more positive features of Daniel's approach there are some which are more questionable, as was shown earlier in the section on the *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles*. Bourgault-Ducoudray shares some of these views. One, also expressed by Daniel in his *Essai*, is that oriental melody represented a survival of music current in Europe at the time of the emergence of plainchant.⁵⁴ However, Bourgault-Ducoudray stresses a different conclusion to this argument from that of Daniel. Instead of using 'the study of the present' to 'fill the gap in the musical history of the past', as Daniel did,⁵⁵ Bourgault-Ducoudray recognises the beneficial influence exotic music may have on that of the West. Speaking at the Paris Exhibition of 1878, he remarked that

No element of expression existing in a tune of any kind, however ancient, however remote in origin, must be banished from our musical idiom. All modes, old or new, European or exotic, insofar as they are capable of serving an expressive purpose, must be admitted by us and used by composers. I believe that the polyphonic principle may be applied to all kinds of scales. Our two modes, the major and the minor, have been so thoroughly exploited that we should welcome all elements of expression by which the musical idiom may be rejuvenated.⁵⁶

This attitude to other music was nothing short of revolutionary in the way it considered the benefits to Western music that might accrue from the adoption of other styles. It was in direct opposition to the prevailing concept of superiority with regard to all things European embodied in the writings of Renan. It offered, as an alternative to the customary view of exotic music as merely a curiosity, a vision of an active, cooperative role for exotic music in forming a synthesis with Western musical styles.

The *Rapsodie cambodgienne* is written for a large orchestra, with the inclusion of two harps and an extended percussion section. The subject of the piece is described in a Preface as the Cambodian 'Festival of the Waters', held to celebrate the subsidence of the annual floods and the return of the land to cultivation. The first movement illustrates the struggle between the Spirit of the Earth and the Spirit of the Waters, in imitation of a folk-tale. The second movement 'expresses the sentiments of joy which make up the character of a popular festival, carnivalesque and religious'.

The first part, marked *Légende*, opens with an expressive melody played on the flutes, shown in Ex.4.18.

Ex.4.18 Bourgault-Ducoudray, L.: *Rapsodie cambodgienne* (Paris, Heugel, [1882]),

1.

Largo

1^o.
et 2^e.
Fl.

3^e.
Fl.

à 2

p

dim.

cresc.

cresc.

pp

This carefully shaped and phrased opening retains some features of Cambodian folk music. Although the sources of the melodies are not noted in the score, it is probable that the themes of the *Rapsodie cambodgienne* are genuine examples of native music. As in the case of Daniel's *Album*, there are no contemporary records of Cambodian melody with which to compare Bourgault-Ducoudray's examples. The writings nearest in date to the composition of the *Rapsodie cambodgienne* are those of the ethnomusicologist Gaston Knosp, compiled in the early 1900s. Comparison between the two reveal some information concerning contemporary Cambodian practice, and form a basis for a judgement on the extent and nature of Bourgault-Ducoudray's adaptations of native music in this piece. They also place in a strongly contrasting light the different racial perspectives of the composer and the ethnomusicologist.

The scale used in the opening melody is hexatonic, resembling E flat major with the exclusion of the fourth degree of the scale. This scale corresponds to examples noted by Knosp, who comments on the varied nature of the Cambodian scales, and particularly the frequency with which the Cambodians add extra notes to the basic pentatonic scale.⁵⁷ The graceful and symmetrical curve of the opening melody is also, according to Knosp, a specific feature of Cambodian music. Knosp considers Cambodian melody to be a great improvement on that of the Chinese, and to be 'incontestably superior to Annamite melody'.⁵⁸ However, here Knosp leaves the realm of ethnomusicology and begins to make judgements on the essential nature of the natives of South East Asia, using their level of musical attainment as a guide. The notes of the pentatonic scale in Cambodian melody are, according to Knosp, grouped 'with more taste than the Sino-Annamites', and he concludes that the Cambodians 'have taken great advantage of a scale in which the Sino-Annamites have found nothing but puerile and non-musical airs'.⁵⁹

Unlike Bourgault-Ducoudray, Knosp's views on the Indo-Chinese appear to be closely bound up with the racialist theories of the time. In a manner reminiscent of Rouanet's thoughts concerning the Arabs, Knosp attempts to relate the perceived essential nature of the race under discussion to their musical expression. The relation between the supposed characteristics of the 'Sino-Annamites' and their 'puerile... airs' is, for Knosp, easily drawn. In the case of Cambodia, however, Knosp has to admit that this relation breaks down. He considers that 'in general, the intellectual life of Cambodia is as nothing compared to that of the other Indo-Chinese countries'.⁶⁰ He links this to the notion that there is 'in Cambodia much less taste for music than in Annam... an Annamite can pass hours playing an instrument, completely alone, without a single listener, for the sheer pleasure of hearing the sounds... one finds nothing of this in Cambodia, where the instruments are infinitely superior to those similar products of Annam'.⁶¹ The answer to this dilemma can only be that 'there has been a loss of musical ability... We find ourselves faced with a degenerate people, who have inherited all the artistic riches which they possess

from their forefathers. The ruins of Angkor are like a last vestige of their ancient artistic ability'.⁶²

Bourgault-Ducoudray also provides some comment on the nature of the Cambodian people in his Preface, albeit indirectly. However, his observations are of a very different nature, and imply different conclusions to those of Knosp. In a manner similar to that of Lane describing the music of the modern Egyptians, Bourgault-Ducoudray describes Cambodian music in terms of its use in the ritual of the water-festival, which is central to the livelihood of the natives. He emphasises the mood of 'joy and pomp' which accompanies the festival.⁶³ This emphasis on 'the sentiments of joy' in native life could be seen as merely the manifestations of the idea of the 'noble savage', a recurrence of a basically eighteenth-century notion, and a sentimentalisation of native existence. However, the insistence on active verbs in Bourgault-Ducoudray's account, which closes with the exhortation to 'sow the fields and reap the harvest', forms a parallel to his ideas of the positive potential of native music in a Western context.⁶⁴ The interplay between Western and Cambodian musical elements are evident throughout the *Rapsodie cambodgienne*.

In traditional Western style, the opening theme, especially the first half of the melody, provides the material for the rest of the movement. The melody is repeated with a good deal of unison playing throughout. The employment of unison textures reflects native usage in Cambodian performance practice where, according to Knosp, 'unison dominates for the most part'.⁶⁵ Ex.4.19 shows a more elaborate accompaniment taken from the second movement. As in the first movement, the melody here avoids the use of the fourth degree of the scale. The theme, which appears throughout the movement in both major and minor modes, is shared by oboes and divided muted first violins in this example. Drone accompaniments are heard on the clarinets and bassoons, while the solo harp alternates between following the melodic contour and returning to the main note of the drone, D. The flutes provide a chattering accompaniment of discordant notes, in which the fourth degree of the scale (c) is used in flutes 2 and 3. As in the previous example, interest is

maintained by careful attention to balance, phrasing, articulation and accent. The combination, contrast and variety of timbres is also imaginative. These features are more Western than native, but provide a successful means of treating native melody to form a synthesis with European musical style.

Ex.4.19 *Ibid.*, 35.

[Allegro ma non troppo]

The image shows a musical score for Ex.4.19, titled "[Allegro ma non troppo]". The score is written for a full orchestra and includes the following parts: Flute (Fl.), Horn (Hb.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bns.), Harp (Hp.), and Violin 1 (Vn. 1). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is marked with various dynamics and articulations, including *p* (piano), *sf* (sforzando), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *pp* (pianissimo). The Flute and Horn parts are marked *p léger*. The Harp part is marked *Solo*. The Violin 1 part is marked *Div.* and *sempre sordini*. The score is written in a Western style, with a focus on phrasing and articulation.

Examples of similar tunes are recorded by Knosp, who also notes chordal accompaniment to melodies similar to that of the example above.⁶⁶

Ex.4.20 shows the application of Bourgault-Ducoudray's favourite method of composition to native scales. The use of polyphony, which the composer had thought could be applied to all native scales, is here represented by the extensive use of canon between conventional orchestral groupings of oboe and violins, and bassoons, violas and cellos. A more unusual timbre is created by the use of single strongly accented notes on horns and second cellos, and the timpani who rhythmically reinforce the canonic imitation. Carefully varied phrasing and articulation markings emphasise the character and shape of the melody.

Ex.4.20 *Ibid.*, 53-4.

[Andantino]

These techniques show predominantly Western influence, and reflect Bourgault-Ducoudray's Conservatoire training. Although Knosp admits that 'polyphony appears here and there', it does not represent a common practice of Cambodian music in the way that the chordal accompaniment to Ex.4.19 does.⁶⁷ The melody in Ex.4.20, in a key centre of b minor which includes all the notes of the scale (with flattened sixth and seventh), may possibly be of more Western provenance than some of the others in the piece.

Ex.4.21 shows an accompaniment which appears to look forward to the usage of slightly later French composers such as Debussy. Taken from the appearance of the religious chant in the middle of the second movement, it shows a striking orchestration of the theme shared between horns and solo harp. A syncopated upper

pedal on the oboe adds to the rhythmic interest of the passage. However, the main feature is the repeated flute fragments which chime against the stark statement of the theme to magical effect. The hemiola groupings of this accompaniment prevent the music from becoming static, and add considerable interest to the solemn theme.

Ex.4.21 *Ibid.*, 57.

[Moderato]

The musical score for Ex.4.21 is written for a chamber ensemble. It consists of five staves: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Hb.), Clarinet (Cor.), and Harp (Hp.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked [Moderato]. The Flute part features a melodic line with repeated eighth-note fragments, marked with *[pp]* and *Solo*. The Oboe part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a hemiola rhythm, also marked with *[pp]* and *Solo*. The Clarinet part is marked *Soli. religioso* and *p*, playing a steady accompaniment. The Harp part is marked *p* and *Soli*, providing a rhythmic and harmonic foundation. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In the *Rapsodie cambodgienne*, Bourgault-Ducoudray travels a long way towards the kind of exotic music produced in the twentieth century by French composers such as Debussy, Roussel and Messiaen. That the adoption of native styles would have a major effect on the hitherto mainly secure body of Western harmony is underlined by the final chord of the piece, which combines a conventional statement of E major with an unashamed D natural.

(vi) Conclusion

Two distinct tendencies become apparent in French musical exoticism in the period 1865–89. The first is the increasing influence of racialist arguments concerning the essential natures of subject peoples, with a particularly negative view

of inter-racial relationships. These arguments are apparent in Delibes's *Lakmé*, although they also appear to inform other works such as Saint-Saëns's *La princesse jaune*. Works of ethnomusicology, both of this period and later, are also prone to adhere to these essentialist arguments.

Contrasting to these views are more positive responses to native musics, shown by the works of Bourgault-Ducoudray. While these are unlikely to have wielded any great influence, they are remarkable for introducing a new attitude to the subject, which actively seeks a creative synthesis between Western and native styles (Bourgault-Ducoudray was later to become more influential as a teacher of music history at the Paris Conservatoire, under the directorship of Fauré, who made his classes compulsory for composition students). The adoption of elements of native music in the works of Bourgault-Ducoudray are not without effects on the structures of Western harmony in his music. Thus, it could be argued, the music of the conquered peoples resists absorption into the body of Western musical representation, and instead begins to make more permeable its previously closed practices.

Midway between the two positions lies the music of Bizet, who emerges as the most significant composer of exotic music of the period. Despite having less interest in authenticity than Bourgault-Ducoudray, and a readier response to racial stereotyping, Bizet produces works which effectively combine Western and North African styles. Even his weaker libretti are transformed by his powers as a musical dramatist. Having said this, *Les pêcheurs de perles* emerges as more effective than *Djamileh*, which is a less dramatic work. Although it lies outside the scope of this study, *Carmen* is another example of certain musical traits of the nation taken as a subject being brought into a creative synthesis with a modern French style. It is also a classic example of the connection between the exotic and the erotic, and marks the true birth of 'realism' in opera.

The connection between the exotic and the erotic is strongly maintained in this period. It acquires additional urgency with the plots of operas, such as *Lakmé*, in

which the native heroine sacrifices her life, thus allowing the European hero to continue his imperialist activities unhindered. The native woman is increasingly identified as the personification of the exotic in works such as these, replacing the native male as a focus of interest. Figures such as the Sultan of earlier exotic operas give way to the sultry exotic female, who is often seen as detached from her native society. Gérald's relation to Lakmé forms a parallel to the European view of the relationship between the colonized country and the imperial power. The importance of the native heroine is, like that of the native country, that she represents for the European the opportunity to exercise power, to observe and possess the available riches, and then return once again unscathed to the home land. The novels of Pierre Loti form a striking example and illustration of this view. The bathetic equivalent of Gérald is the tourist, the protagonist of such works as Saint-Saëns's *Suite algérienne*. The explicit connection between the exotic and the erotic is of considerable force in explaining the attraction of exotic works to the European audiences of the late nineteenth century.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. See McPhee, P.: *A Social History of France, 1780-1880* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993), 270. On the role of colonial officials and entrepreneurs, see Darcy, J.: *France et Angleterre: Cent Années de rivalité Coloniale: Afrique* (Paris, 1904), 222, which states that '...in the history of the origins of our colonial Empire, the calculations of men of state count for much less than the whim of some audacious colonist, or the initiative of an intelligent officer'. Quoted in Ajayi, J.F.A. & Crowder, M. (eds.): *History of West Africa*, Vol.II (London, Longman, 1974), 353.
2. See Stone, N. (ed.): *The Times Atlas of World History* (London, Times Books, 1989), 248-9.
3. While nationalism played an increasing part in organising and motivating native revolt, the first nationalist parties in French colonies were not founded until the early 1900s. Examples include the Tunis Al-Fatat (the Young Tunisian Party), founded in 1910, and the Viet Nam Quang Phuc Hoi (the Association for the Restoration of Vietnam), founded in 1913. The British, with the experience of the eighteen-month long Indian Uprising behind them, were apparently more conciliatory to native feeling, themselves founding the Indian National Congress in 1885. Originally intended merely to act as a way of containing Indian unrest, the Congress had become a focus of nationalist resistance by the early 1900s. The Kuomintang (National People's Party) was organized in 1905 to resist increasing Western intrusion into Chinese political and economic life.
4. See McPhee, P.: *op. cit.*, 217.
5. Todorov, T. (trans. C. Porter): *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought* (London, Harvard University Press, 1993), 106.
6. Renan, E.: *Histoire générale*, 585. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 107.

7. Renan, E.: *L'Avenir du science* (1848, pub. 1890), 153, 155. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 107.
8. Renan, E.: *Histoire générale*, 588. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 108.
9. Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 108, summing up Renan's argument on this point.
10. Renan, E.: *Histoire générale*, 581. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 109. Other racialist writers, such as Gustave Le Bon and Gobineau, exclude the Semites from the highest rank in the hierarchy, placing them among the second-ranked 'yellow races'. See *ibid.*, 109, 130.
11. Renan, E.: *L'Origine du langage* (1858), 115. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 111.
12. Renan, E.: *La Réforme intellectuelle et morale de la France* (1871), 390. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 111-2.
13. Renan, E.: *La Réforme*, 391. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 112.
14. Renan, E.: *L'Origine du langage*, 115. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 111.
15. Renan, E.: *Histoire générale*, 145-6. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 121.
16. Renan, E.: *Histoire générale*, 164. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 121. Renan and Gobineau are two of the most prominent of a group of writers of the period with similar views, whose influence in France extends to those of the present-day Front National. Wagner met Gobineau in Rome in 1876, and read his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, which he cited in his own *Heroism and Christianity* (1881). See Millington, B.: *Wagner* (New York, Vintage Books, 1987), 105.
17. Gobineau, J-A. de: *Derniers Essais* (n.d.), 106. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 124.
18. Gobineau, J-A. de: *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-5), 274. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 130.
19. Renan, E.: *La Société berbère* (1873), 550. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 112.
20. Daniel, S. (trans. H.G. Farmer): *The Music and Musical Instruments of the*

- Arab* (London, Reeves, 1914), 43, 45.
21. The *New Oxford History of Music*, Vol. I (1957), is an example.
 22. Daniel, S.: *op. cit.*, 52.
 23. *Ibid.*, 47–8.
 24. *Ibid.*, 165.
 25. The Kabyles (known to the English as Berbers) were the French name for what they identified as a group of tribes living mostly in the mountainous regions of Algeria. They were thought to be descended from the original inhabitants of the region, whose ancestors had been conquered by the Roman Empire. Later they were conquered again by the Arabs. Since then they had been converted to Islam and largely intermingled with Arab peoples. The French sociologist Doutté, writing in 1901, was one of the first to disagree with this view, stating that 'the word "Berber" has no precise sense except a linguistic one in which it designates a group of dialects closely allied to one another'. See Montagne, R. (trans. D. Seddon): *The Berbers: Their Social and Political Organization* (London, Frank Cass, 1973), xxv. Nevertheless, it is clear that, for at least some of the nineteenth century, the French used the term 'Berbère' alongside that of 'Kabyle' (See, for example, Renan's *La Société berbère*, 1873).
 26. Daniel, S.: *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles* (Paris, Richault, [1865]), No.9, 1.
 27. Daniel, S.: *op. cit.* (1914), 209–10, 99.
 28. *Ibid.*, 97. The *Mezmoum* mode is the one thus described. Another Arabic mode, identified by Daniel as the *Djorka* mode, is characterised as 'voluptuous... tender and plaintive' (*ibid.*, 99–100).
 29. *Ibid.*, 99.
 30. This policy was noted and condemned by Doutté in 1901. See Montagne, R.: *op. cit.*, xxv.
 31. Dean, W.: *Bizet* (London, Dent, 1975), 195–6.

32. In *Le ménestrel*. Quoted in *ibid.*, 98.
33. Quoted in *ibid.*, 100.
34. Saint-Saëns visited Algeria many times from the 1870s onwards.
35. See Prochaska, D.: *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870–1920* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16–19, 22. According to Prochaska, 75–80% of the population of Algiers were European between 1881–1926.
36. See *ibid.*, 215, for an outline of the development of postcards known collectively as 'scènes et types'. These presented individuals as types, engaged in generic activities (such as making cous-cous) in generalised locations ('sous la tente' was a popular setting). Prochaska identifies this as a process of turning the natives 'into two-dimensional consumer goods for mailing to friends in the métropole'.
37. Previously described by historians as the Indian Mutiny. This terminology is now discredited as it gives a limited impression of the scale of the uprising and is favourable to imperialist interpretation. See Judd, D.: *Empire: The British Imperial Experience, from 1765 to the Present* (London, Harper Collins, 1996). However, it is still used by some conservative historians e.g. Stone, N.: *op. cit.*, 230.
38. Macdonald, H.: *Lakmé* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1992) Vol. II, 1083.
39. Delibes, L.: *Lakmé* (Paris, Heugel, n.d.), 106–7. Libretto by Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille.
40. Loti, P. (trans. E & W. Frierson): *The Marriage of Loti* (Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1976), 112. Quoted in Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 313.
41. Delibes, L.: *op. cit.*, 38–9.
42. *Ibid.*, 239–41.
43. The break from colonial rule in the continent was initiated by the Americans in 1775. Of the former Spanish colonies, Venezuela and Paraguay declared independence in 1811, followed by Argentina (1816), Chile (1818), Mexico and

Peru (1821). The last major European colony to secede was Brazil (1822). The imperial connection was maintained in an oblique form in some cases by the new state declaring itself to be an Empire, e.g. Haiti (1804–6), Mexico (1821–23) and Brazil (1822–89).

44. Walsh, T.J.: *Second Empire Opera: The Théâtre Lyrique in Paris 1851–1870* (London, Calder, 1981), 187. Walsh uses the French spelling of the Archduke's name.
45. Poniowski, Prince J.: *L'aventurier* (Paris, Parent, [1865]), 67. Libretto by J.-H. Vernoy de St. Georges.
46. *Ibid.*, 28.
47. *Ibid.*, 67. A similar lament came from other imperial administrations, e.g. India following the Uprising.
48. *Ibid.*, 125.
49. The title *zortzico* describes a number of tunes in different time signatures in Basque folk music. One variant groups the tune in alternating bars of 3/8 and 2/8. The groupings of bars in Poniowski's *boléro* appears to be more irregular than that found in an authentic *zortzico*. Also, the rhythms used by Poniowski appear to be very different from those found in genuine *zortzico* melodies. This is partly a consequence of Poniowski writing his music in alternating bars of 3/4 and 2/4, which alters the rhythmic foundation. The use of irregular groupings of bars in Poniowski's piece (e.g. two bars of 2/4 following each other) may perhaps reflect Andalusian usage, or it may simply derive from the composer's misunderstanding of Basque originals. Poniowski possibly learnt of the *zortzico* from the researches of ethnomusicologists into regional French music, which began to gather pace during the reign of Napoleon III.

Considering its rarity in art music at this period, it is peculiar that this folk-music style should be used by Poniowski. Even stranger is the appearance in the score of *L'aventurier* of a piece entitled *Zorzico* [sic] shortly

before the *boléro*. This, however, has none of the actual characteristics of the *zortzico* (*ibid.*, 148–50).

50. *Ibid.*, 257–9.

51. Compare, for example, the agreement on the concept of unimpeded imperial progress in both the anti-imperialist analysis of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (London, Penguin, 1991), and in the positive view of imperial achievement presented in Kennedy, P.: *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London, Fontana, 1988). Said later modified his view to accommodate a recognition of the presence of native resistance to Empire throughout the history of Western Imperialism, particularly in his *Culture and Imperialism* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1993).

52. This observation was noted by A.R. Colquhoun in his *Across Chryse* (1883), Vol. II, 201. Quoted in Kiernan, V.G.: *The Lords of Human Kind* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), 150. Kiernan also notes the Chinese idea, expressed at this time, that Europeans had webbed feet (*ibid.*, 165).

53. Bourgault-Ducoudray, L.: *Trente mélodies populaires de Grèce et d'Orient* (Paris, Lemoine, [1876]), 8.

54. *Ibid.*, 7.

55. Daniel, S.: *op.cit.*, 47–8.

56. Quoted in Brody, E.: *Bourgault-Ducoudray, Louis* in Sadie, S. (ed.): *op. cit.* (1980) Vol. III, 111.

57. Knosp, G.: 'Histoire de la musique dans l'Indo-Chine' in Lavignac, A. and Laurencie, L. de la (eds.): *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1922), Première Partie, V, 3130.

58. *Ibid.*, 3129.

59. *Ibid.*, 3130, 3031.

60. *Ibid.*, 3129–30.

61. *Ibid.*, 3130.

62. *Ibid.*, 3130. The impressive ruins of the temple city of Angkor Wat in

Western Cambodia were a major discovery by the French following their takeover of the country. The ruins were cleared, surveyed and turned into a spectacle for European consumption (through, for example, the creation of a particular type of photographic representation), in a manner similar to the French treatment of the antiquities of Egypt following Napoleon's invasion of 1798. While the technical accomplishment that went into their construction was admired, their decline was seen as a visible sign of Cambodian decadence, and their restoration of European mastery. This style of packaging of what were seen by Europeans as the essential images of an exotic country was common during the colonial period (c.f. nineteenth-century photographs of Egypt, India, Palestine and Algeria) and is still prevalent today.

63. Bourgault-Ducoudray, L.: *Rapsodie cambodgienne* (Paris, Heugel, [1882]), no page number.
64. *Ibid.*, no page number.
65. Knosp, G.: *op. cit.*, 3131.
66. *Ibid.*, 3131.
67. *Ibid.*, 3131.

V

Imperial Myth, Colonial Reality: the East in Western Dreams French Exotic Music, 1889–1900

(i) The Exposition Universelle of 1889: Debussy and the gamelan

The Exposition Universelle of 1889 is considered by many to mark the true beginning of the influence of native music on that of Europe. The revelatory and inspirational effect of the music of the Ammanite theatre and Javanese gamelan on Claude Debussy is held to be typical of the reaction of many French musicians of the time.¹ However, the customary way of looking at these influences is in a depoliticised framework in which the composers are held to have taken a pure interest in the music of other cultures, without any ideological slant. This view often extends to the Exhibitions themselves, which have frequently been represented as simple collections of a variety of material, devoid of political context. Such a view is stated by K.M. Randles, who declares that 'the exhibitions were originally concerned with displaying the technology and commerce of the participating nations. Later, exhibiting countries included art as a way of encouraging tourism'.² Randles here fails to mention that the arena for the expansion of tourism was specifically colonial. She further implies that the typically Western practices of technology, commerce and tourism can be detached from their imperial background and seen simply as material facts, devoid of political or social context. This attitude forms a direct analogy with Randles' positioning of the interest of French musicians in native music during the period.

The Paris Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900 have attracted a large amount of critical attention in recent years. Most commentators are now agreed that the presentation of Empire was at least as much part of the project of the Exhibitions as the demonstration of a purely metropolitan technical and economic progress. Eric Hobsbawm, for example, speaking specifically about the Exposition Universelle of 1889, states that the 'world expositions... gave the Republic the legitimacy of prosperity, technical progress - the Eiffel tower - and the global colonial conquest

they took care to emphasize'.³

Strange parallels appear between the presentation of the colonial exhibits mounted by the state in the Exhibitions and the approach to native music so frequently taken by French composers. Verisimilitude was less important to the official bodies preparing for the Exhibitions than the overall exotic effect. In a classic example of Orientalism at work, the officials themselves seem not to have been aware of the extent to which they may have been manipulating the image of colonial reality. In his book, *The Age of Empire*, Hobsbawm describes the 'increasingly elaborate "colonial villages"... in the great International Exhibitions' as 'not documentary, whatever their intention. They were ideological, generally reinforcing the sense of superiority of the "civilized" over the "primitive"'.⁴ Likewise, it can be seen that it was in fact rarely the case that a composer's exotic works were not connected in some way to the imperial theme, no matter what the original intention may have been. This is true even with such obviously sincere and serious observers of native culture as Bourgault-Ducoudray.

The colonial image was present and emphasised at the Exhibition of 1889, as it had been in previous exhibitions. From an early date, presentations of colonial exhibits included displays of native music. Despite its claims for the greatest impact on Western composers, the exhibition of 1889 was not the first to feature music from other lands, for ethnic music was first heard in that of 1867. The 1878 exhibition had even more on offer, although ethnic artefacts and practices were viewed merely as 'curiosities of an anthropological nature' at this time.⁵ The Exposition Universelle of 1889 was larger again, and included new ways of presenting the exhibits to the public.

All the Paris Exhibitions were intended to be 'educational, encyclopedic and morally improving'.⁶ However, the fun-fair atmosphere was much increased in 1889. Sights on offer included a 'world tour', which contained a mixture of such spectacles as a Swedish chalet, an Indian palace, Greek sculptures, and a Japanese garden. The startling juxtaposition of geographically disjunct sites was reflected by

the frequent conflation of fiction and fact in the exhibits. An early version of a theme park, placed opposite to the reconstruction of the Bastille (which was itself combined with an 'olde worlde' rue St. Antoine street market, complete with vendors in quasi-historical costume), was based on fairy tales. These were designed to appeal to adults as well as children. Among the delights on offer was 'the exotic dancing of "la belle Féridjé"', held inside the 'giant belly of the Blue Elephant from "The 1001 Nights"'.⁷

Exotic exhibits were popular at successive exhibitions, and frequently drew on imperial themes. In 1878, exhibits included not only native artefacts but whole villages from colonies in Central and North Africa and the Far East. Some of these, such as the reconstructed Tunisian market, came from territories as yet independent of direct French rule, but of considerable importance to French imperial designs (Tunisia was invaded by the French three years after the 1878 Exhibition). Likewise, displays from countries significant in French colonial history were popular, such as those concerning India and Egypt. In 1889, the most popular exotic exhibit was the 'rue du Caire', which comprised Arab cafés, old houses, and souks. In this setting there were also displays of belly-dancing which, according to one historian of the Exhibition, fascinated Parisians so much that it became a dance craze which survived the Exhibition for some years. Edmond de Goncourt wrote at length about the dance, and expressed a wish to see it danced by a naked woman (for the purposes of anatomical study, he hastened to add).⁸

The displays of ethnic music in 1889 were primarily concerned with the territories of South East Asia and Java. An Annamite theatre was one of these. The building was of medium size, holding between 400 and 500 people, and performances were given eight times a day. The productions were taken from traditional Annamite legends, presented in a much abbreviated form for Western consumption.⁹

The Javanese Gamelan in Paris, 1889

A different kind of colonial discourse can be identified with regard to the Javanese gamelan performances in 1889. The Javanese contingent were made available by courtesy of the Dutch, who then ruled the country. The performers at first refused to make the journey to Paris, and were apparently persuaded to go only on the condition that their entire families came too. However, the personnel involved did not form the homogenous group that the exhibit led the observer to believe. The whole group, numbering some 60 people, including 20 women, came from five different provinces of Java. The description of their antecedents in the original dossier quoted in Anik Devriès's description of the Far Eastern music at the Exposition illustrates the frequent lack of awareness of the significance of this kind of confusion in writings of the period. The absence of comments upon it in Devriès's work also indicate the frequent insensitivity to the underlying significance of such information in the work of many researchers, even those as otherwise painstaking as Devriès.

It is significant that the places from which the personnel of the Javanese village originate are identified by a kind of shorthand reference to their position in the hierarchy of colonial administration or economic status. The dossier quoted by Devriès remarks that '32 came from Preanger, known for its coffee, 11 came from Batavia, the capital of the country, and the remaining 17 came from Bantam, the most westerly region of the island. From the point of view of race, 50 were "soendanaï", a tribe of the western region, the 10 others from central Java: 8 were from the Sourakarta Empire and 2 from the Sultanate of Djogjakarta'.¹⁰ One would expect the original dossier, with its encyclopedic approach to Empire, to present such a bald list of biographical detail without further comment. It does seem strange, however, that Devriès should not have commented on the likely impact of an ensemble of such diverse origins on the music they played. One would expect, with such a localised tradition of tuning, instrumentation and performance styles as is manifest in gamelan music, that players with such widely differing

experience would have had at the very least to reach some hasty compromises in order to produce any kind of coherent performance.

The music that accompanied the performances of the Annamite theatre are today justly famous, chiefly due to their impact on the music of Debussy. Contemporary reactions to them were more mixed. The performances were described by the ethnomusicologist Julien Tiersot, among others who were less qualified to comment knowledgeably. Tiersot restricted his comments to rather derogatory technical statements concerning vocal production and the nature and distribution of instruments. He also mentioned that there was 'excessively little harmony in Far-Eastern music'.¹¹ Tiersot's choice of the word 'excessively' implies a definite lack.

Debussy's own comments, while few in number, show a much more positive attitude. Although elsewhere he appears to denigrate 'free exchange in art',¹² it is obvious that on such occasions he is referring to the adoption of Wagnerian style by contemporaries such as Chabrier and Reyer. In some ways, Debussy's appreciation of what he identified as the characteristics of Far Eastern music may have been heightened by its contrast to what he saw as the overly dense treatment of Wagnerian practice. It is significant in this respect that mention of Wagner enters immediately, like a *leitmotif*, into Debussy's later comments on the music of Annamite theatre:

The Indochinese have a kind of embryonic opera, influenced by the Chinese, in which we can recognise the roots of the *Ring*. Only there are rather more gods and rather less scenery! A frenetic little clarinet is in charge of the emotional effects, a tam-tam evokes terror – and that is all there is to it. No special theatre is required, and no hidden orchestra... And to say that none of those concerned even so much as thought of going to Munich to find their formulae – what could they have been thinking of?¹³

Debussy's concerns with the music of the Far East may therefore be seen to be linked with his interest in combatting the dominance of Wagner in French music.

Other equally Eurocentric attitudes to the natives are also evident in his remarks concerning their music. For example, Debussy consistently equates the natives and their music with a simple and natural life. He describes some favoured nations as 'wonderful peoples who learn music as easily as one learns to breathe'. Instead of learning through the barren rules of conservatoires, they are schooled by 'the eternal rhythm of the sea, the wind in the leaves, and a thousand other tiny noises, which they listen to with great care, without ever having consulted any of those dubious treatises'.¹⁴ Debussy nevertheless considers that the results of this simple approach can be very complex, stating that 'Javanese music obeys laws of counterpoint that make Palestrina seem like child's play'.¹⁵ His apparent assessment of Far Eastern music could not be placed higher when he tells us that, in comparison, 'our own music is not much more than a barbarous kind of noise more fit for a travelling circus'.¹⁶

The opinions expressed by Debussy here, when they are not concerned merely with expressing what the composer saw as the pomposity of Wagner, are those derived from the French tradition of the 'noble savage'. The figure of the unschooled native, who instinctively knows far more than the civilised Westerner through his own superior closeness to nature, is one which still captures the Western imagination. This opinion, attractive though it may be, is extremely questionable. It shares some features with much less superficially acceptable ideas concerning subject peoples, which identify them as what has been called 'ignoble savages'.¹⁷

The basis of both opinions is that such natives have no culture or civilisation of their own. This conclusion is reached by believers in both theories, due on the one hand to the supposed proximity of the natives to the teachings of nature, and on the other to their perceived savagery. One school of thought imagines that natives have no need of culture or civilization because they respond to nature instinctively; the other because they are on a level with brute existence. The problem with the view of natives as 'noble savages' is that they are denied social structures of their

own as a consequence. It can be seen that this view may easily lend itself to a paternal and protective attitude to natives who are so identified, and thus used to reinforce the imperial arguments against them.

Elsewhere in his writings, Debussy echoes less positive views of Orientals, although (again following French tradition) he frequently uses such criticisms to attack his real enemies, who are rival contemporary European musicians. Thus, describing the practices of these composers, he says that 'some blindly continue to follow their forebears, like the Chinese who forever respect Confucius for having put life in such readily accessible formulae'.¹⁸ Debussy makes it clear that his own principle regarding composition is the basically Romantic notion of originality for each new work, the equivalent to what on another occasion he called 'mon plaisir'. Speaking again of the music of the Far East, he writes that 'others find a new way of serving up things that are really as old as the hills. Rather than drawing upon any instinctive ingenuity within themselves, they dig up ideals whose foundations were laid in the Stone Age, or serve up crude imitations of Javanese music'.¹⁹ The 'crude imitations' that Debussy may have had in mind were possibly the transcriptions for piano by Louis Benedictus entitled 'Procession des musiciens javanaises' and 'Danse javanais', produced at the time of the Exhibition of 1889, although unfortunately these compositions now appear to be lost.²⁰

Debussy's own compositions based on Far Eastern music include one in which he might himself be accused of serving up an imitation of Javanese music, though this could hardly be described as crude by even the most hostile critic. While its date of composition places it a little outside the scope of this work, its interest as an example of the fusion between Western and Eastern styles in music makes *Pagodes* of abiding concern for the history of French musical exoticism. The piano piece appears to have drawn on music which Debussy heard at the Exhibition of 1889, although it was not written down until 1903 when it was published in company with another 'exotic' piece, *La soirée dans Grenade*, and the familiar toccata *Jardins sous la pluie*, under the title *Estampes*. The grouping of the first

two pièces is another illustration of the equal status of any subject that was not French.

Various difficulties arise when considering Debussy's possible source for the piece, the music which he heard at the Javanese display in 1889. The first of these is the kind of instruments that the musicians played. Describing these, Tiersot notes:

except for a single bowed instrument, a *rebab*, a sort of two-stringed violin..., all the instruments of the gamelang [sic] were struck by hammers or sticks: the *gambang*, a type of xylophone, formed of resonators of laminated wood; the *saron-barong*, different from the above in that the resonators are made from metal...; the *bonang-ageng*, made of metal bowls resting on tight cords, struck by sticks wrapped in fabric (this last appears to be the principal instrument of the gamelang, at least the origin of those sounds which one best perceives; it forms some sort of family, as it may be subdivided into two instruments, one low and the other high); then gongs of various types and all dimensions, up to the biggest, which made a notably deep sound, and were used after the manner of timpani.²¹

Despite the proliferation of assorted gongs in Tiersot's description, many of the standard instruments of the gamelan ensemble, such as the *peking*, *demung*, *gender*, and the end-blown flute or *siter*, are missing from the list. This is hard to account for, even supposing the set of instruments to have been a smaller ensemble such as that customarily employed in West Java (only 17 of the 60-strong contingent of players came from this area, although 50 are described as belonging to a tribe of the western region).

In addition to the doubt over the exact nature of the instruments played at the Exhibition, commentators have been confused as to their origins. While all gamelan instruments obviously originate from the Far East, it seems odd that the players apparently did not perform on a larger ensemble of instruments, such as operated in Central Java, and which one would have supposed would be suited to their own

familiar practice. One might expect such an ensemble to have been shipped over to France with the performers and their families by the Dutch authorities. However, one recent writer on the gamelan, Neil Sorrell, puts forward the idea that 'it was, and still is, common practice for visiting troupes to save money and trouble by borrowing instruments which are already in the country they are visiting'.²² If this is the case, the musicians may have been playing a gamelan, consisting of sixteen instruments, donated by the Minister of the Interior for the Dutch East Indies to the Paris Conservatoire in 1887. This was a set which came from a court in Cirebon, West Java, with a distinctly different performance tradition from the central provinces, where most of the performers of 1889 originated. Thus at the heart of the Javanese performance of 1889 lies a confusion and mixture of identity and musical tradition which seems at variance with its interpretation by Debussy in such natural terms as 'the eternal rhythm of the sea'.

Obviously it is impossible to be sure of the kind of music Debussy heard this hybrid ensemble play, but it seems likely that it would have had many of the features of melodic shape, tempo and sonority found in *Pagodes*. Gamelan music operates on a principle of different levels of activity, with the deepest instruments marking out large areas of structure, slightly higher-pitched instruments creating sensations of pulse and metre, tenor-region instruments marking out the melodic structure, which is then filled in and elaborated upon by the fastest acting instruments in the treble. All instruments (except occasionally the deepest) appear to make frequent use of syncopation. This positioning of different levels of activity in the music can be seen in a simplified form in the opening bars of *Pagodes*, shown in Ex.5.1.

Ex.5.1 Debussy, C.: *Pagodes* in *Claude Debussy Piano Music (1888–1905)*

(New York, Dover, 1973), 93, bars 1–4.

The tuning which Debussy heard on the gamelan in 1889 appears to have been that known as the *slendro* scale. As with so many scales employed by non-Western nations, such as the Arabs, Africans and Indians, Indonesian scales cannot be exactly reproduced on instruments with Western tuning, particularly inflexible ones such as the piano. The nearest approximation possible is that of the pentatonic scale, which Debussy uses extensively in *Pagodes*, although he adds an A natural to the scale as early as bar 5. It is important to note that the tuning of the scale in every gamelan ensemble is slightly different from every other, thus making every set distinct. If the set played at the Exhibition of 1889 was hybrid in origin, as seems possible, the tuning would have been irregular between the instruments, causing further difficulties for the Javanese performers.

The melodic shapes of gamelan music rely heavily on repetition and ostinato, with slight variants in shape and stress particularly apparent in elaborations of the melodic outline. This technique is also frequently employed by Debussy in *Pagodes*. A typical moment is shown in Ex.5.2, where the elaboration in the right hand imitates the overall arch shape of the left hand melody, while moving at at least four times the speed. The separation and repetition of the second half of the right

hand ostinato in the second bar of the extract is a typical master stroke of the composer, and shows an interesting fusion of Eastern and Western styles. It serves at once to alter the timbre of the passage, permit the left hand to reach its melody notes unhindered, and allow the right hand to add further chimes at a higher register, while at the same time emphasising the rise in pitch of the melody. The technique which Debussy adopts here is derived from Javanese practice; but the variation, shape and technical accomplishment it introduces into the piece are rooted in Western tradition. Nevertheless the effect is wholly satisfactory, and indeed is hardly noticed in performance, so great is the composer's skill.

Ex.5.2 *Ibid.*, 95, bars 37-8.

[sans lenteur]

dans une sonorité plus claire

The musical score consists of two staves. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and moving up stepwise to D5. The left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic ostinato of chords, primarily on G2, B2, and D3. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction '[sans lenteur]' and '*dans une sonorité plus claire*'. The notation includes various articulations such as slurs and accents.

It is difficult to generalize on matters of structure in gamelan music, as this will depend to a large extent on the basis of the piece in either an agreed melodic foundation (or *balungan*) or song, in which case the number of verses will have an effect on the structure of the music. However, according to Neil Sorrell, 'a typical performance would begin with the *buka* [solo introductory piece] (on the *rebab*) leading into the first section (A), slowing down... [and] going into the *lik* [second section of a gamelan piece, characterized by a higher tessitura] (B) and thereafter following an A-A-B form'.²³ The structure of *Pagodes*, on the other hand, relates more to the traditional A-B-A format of Western piano pieces since at least the early nineteenth century. Higher tessitura is reserved for the accompaniment to the return of the first theme near the end of the piece, where the rustle of extremely fast *pianissimo* figuration forms a magical screen over the sonority of the single melodic line, underpinned by deep bass notes. This moment, shown in Ex.5.3, is

not an 'imitation of Javanese music', but a recreation in Western terms of an Eastern compositional principle. The effect on Debussy's music elsewhere is obvious and profound, and has consequent repercussions across much of the music of the twentieth century. The connection between pitch and duration seen in *Pagodes* is of obvious significance for the later ideas of Messiaen, for example. Other features of enormous impact for music of the twentieth century include the polyrhythmic nature of the music, and the way in which layers of sound are superimposed on each other.

Ex.5.3 *Ibid.*, 98, bars 79-81.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano, corresponding to bars 79-81 of a piece. The first system is labeled '1º Tempo' and features a treble clef staff with a complex, ascending melodic line characterized by eighth-note patterns and fingerings (8, 5, 1, 5, 8, 5, 1, 5). The bass clef staff contains a lower, more sustained accompaniment. The second system continues the melodic line in the treble clef, maintaining the intricate rhythmic and fingering patterns. The third system shows a similar texture with triplets (3) appearing in the treble clef. The overall texture is dense and layered, typical of Debussy's style in *Pagodes*.

While the timbre of an actual gamelan can obviously only be approximated by Western instruments, Debussy has chosen his vehicle for attempting this well. The use of the sustaining pedal, required throughout the piece to maintain the value of the long bass pedal notes, results in a merging of sound in the middle and upper registers, and a consequent release of a wealth of overtones, which may be felt to

approximate the characteristic sound of the gamelan. When the piece is played with the light, liquid touch required by the balance and layout of the notes, a further approximation to the characteristic whispering sound of the gamelan may be produced. It is in the last pages of *Pagodes* that Debussy comes closest to making the pianist realise his ideal of a 'piano without hammers', and to realising Javanese musical principles in Western terms.

(ii) Messenger: *Madame Chrysanthème*, Puccini: *Madama Butterfly*: Japan and the West in Dreams

The setting of Japan for exotic works became increasingly popular in France towards the end of the nineteenth century, following the lead of such works as Saint-Saëns's *La princesse jaune* of 1872. Foremost among such works in French *fin-de-siècle* music was Messenger's opera *Madame Chrysanthème*, produced in 1893. Like Delibes's *Lakmé* and Hahn's *L'Île du rêve*, the opera is based on a novel by Pierre Loti. The novel, likewise entitled *Madame Chrysanthème*, was written in 1887 and was also used as a source for Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904). The world-wide renown of the latter work has eclipsed Messenger's opera. This is unfortunate as, quite apart from the significance of the work in the history of French musical exoticism, Messenger's opera possesses many fine musical qualities.

As with Loti's earlier exotic novels, *Aziyadé* and *Rarahu*, the novel *Madame Chrysanthème* describes the visit to a foreign country by the European hero, his relationship with a native woman, and his abandonment of her on his return to his native land. *Madame Chrysanthème*, the last of the group of three novels to share the same basic plot, is also the most detached from its subject. Whereas the protagonist of the previous two novels felt love at some level for the native woman, in the novel the hero (Pierre Loti himself) treats his relationship with the Japanese girl of the title as a joke. He cannot take her, or Japan, seriously, as the people seem so comic to him.

At the moment of his departure, Loti states that 'I can only find within myself a

smile of careless mockery for the swarming crowd of this Lilliputian curtsying people, – laborious, industrious, greedy of gain, tainted with a constitutional affectation, hereditary insignificance, and incurable monkeyishness'.²⁴ This last quality is also applied to Madame Chrysanthème herself, who is constantly described as either a monkey or a cat. When she is not equated with animal life, she appears to Loti as a doll or a toy. The ending of the novel is, as a result, not tragic (contrary to the ending preferred by the librettists of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*). As Loti leaves, he notices that Chrysanthème is contentedly humming a tune, and is concerned only to make sure that the coins with which he has paid her are genuine. While Loti is shocked and disappointed to find that he does not have the fatal power over Chrysanthème that he had over the native women of the two earlier novels, he is nevertheless relieved to find that he will not have Chrysanthème's death on his conscience.

The libretto of Messager's opera, by Georges Hartmann and André Alexandre (who later worked with Loti himself on the libretto of *L'Ile du rêve*), follows the book closely in most respects. However, the protagonist in the opera is made a little more sympathetic than the novel's cynical opportunist, and is definitely shown to feel love for Chrysanthème. While falling short of committing suicide like Butterfly, she is also seen to be more affected by the hero's departure than the Japanese girl in the novel, writing him a pathetic note assuring him of her love (earlier in the opera there are hints that she will die after her abandonment, like the native women in Loti's previous exotic novels and the heroines of *Lakmé* and *L'Ile du rêve*). The reasons for these changes are undoubtedly to ensure the justification for the conventional love duet between the principals, which duly takes place in Act IV. Nevertheless, such changes to the tone of the work have an impact on its implications for the exotic genre.

Generally, the libretto remains faithful to the vision of Japan presented in the novel. The comic character of the people presented so noticeably in the book is also heavily marked in the libretto (the effect of the music on this crude

characterisation will be discussed below). As in the novel, the Japanese go-between and procurer of women for European men is seen as the principal source for comedy – even his name, Monsieur Kangourou, is intentionally ridiculous, and reinforces the equation of the Japanese and animals. At this intersection of book and libretto, wider concerns of the exotic genre appear. The reasons for this characterisation are specified in the libretto and the novel as Monsieur Kangourou's hybrid racial nature. He speaks comic French ('vi, missieu'), and dresses not in traditional Japanese costume but in imitation of Westerners.²⁵

As Tzvetan Todorov has pointed out, the novel here takes up a position similar to that which might be held by a contemporary Japanese nationalist.²⁶ The ridiculous aspect of Japan, according to Loti, is that it should attempt to imitate the West instead of retaining its own character. However, this is not due in either the opera or the novel to any feeling of respect for Japanese institutions, but rests on a belief in the impossibility of there being any genuine point of contact between the two races. Loti here states the racist position of viewing nations not as parts of a wider human family but as separate species. According to this view, interaction between them should not take place, as they are as distinct as horses and dogs.

While subscribing to this view, Loti further deplores racial intermingling as it reduces the exotic charm of the unfamiliar. This, for him, is the only reason for the existence of other races – to provide the European male with exotic experiences. However, his action in successive novels in forming an (albeit temporary) sexual relationship with a native woman raises the question of exactly what the exotic is, and where it is located. Does it reside, as Loti's novels appear to suggest, in a geographical location inhabited by real people? If the allure of the exotic is its unfamiliarity, then actually visiting the country designated as exotic will only lead to the loss of its exotic effect. The possession of the native women in his novels leads inevitably to their abandonment by Loti. He has destroyed what he travelled so far to seek, simply by finding it.²⁷

The operatic convention by which the tenor-hero is shown to be genuinely in love with even a native heroine (*Lakmé* is an obvious example) sidesteps such questions. The development of ideas concerning the exotic, practicable in a novel, is reduced in an opera libretto to a simple matter of personal feeling between the principals. Nevertheless, Messenger's opera does contrive to address some of the issues tackled by Loti's novel. While these are not pursued consistently, they are at least present in a more complex form than in other works based on Loti's novels, notably *Lakmé*, *L'Ile du rêve* and *Madama Butterfly*.

The search for the realisation of the hero's exotic dreams is made manifest at the opening of the opera, and informs even its structure. Here the opera departs from the resources of the novel in an effective manner. The opera opens with a prologue set on board the French naval vessel in which the hero Pierre is travelling to Japan in company with his officer friend, Yves. The haunting music with which the opera opens (Ex.5.4) sets the scene of the slow rolling motion of the warship at sea just before dawn, and also establishes the dream-like character of the hero's destination, Japan. Slow moving chromatic chords over a G pedal are heard, pianissimo. The influence of Bizet and Delibes is clearly marked, and is noticeable throughout the opera. Another possible influence is the early music of Debussy.

Ex.5.4 Messenger, A.: *Madame Chrysanthème* (Paris, Choudens, 1893), 2.



In the conversation which ensues between the hero and his friend, Pierre reveals that he has already imagined exactly what Japan, and Japanese women, will be like, giving a minute description of the girl he intends to 'marry' when he reaches the shore.²⁸ At the mention of Japan, the music responds with the introduction of a pentatonic melody in the orchestra, shown in Ex.5.5, very much as Saint-Saëns

responds in *La princesse jaune*.

Ex.5.5 *Ibid.*, 5.

Allegretto

YVES

Je me ma-ri-ai Aussitôt ar-ri-ve là-bas!

In his song 'Au milieu d'un petit jardin sombrè', Pierre imagines the location of the typical Japanese 'paper house', filled each dawn with exotic flowers. The nature of Japan is thus established from the first as existing principally in Pierre's mind, and only secondarily as a real geographical location.²⁹

Act I opens with a scene of hectic activity at Nagasaki Roads. The treatment and music are very similar to the market scene in *Lakmé*, with haggling merchants, vendors' cries and bustling themes.³⁰ A group of 'Guéchas' [Geishas] appear, led by Chrysanthème who sings a parable of love – the butterfly on the plant succumbs to its nectar, and dies. The music is strikingly reminiscent of *Lakmé's* invocation 'O blanche Siva' or Ex.4.10 in melodic outline and accompaniment, as shown in Ex.5.6.

Ex.5.6 *Ibid.*, 28.

Moderato

CHRYSANTHÈME

La mous-mé dans ses doigts frê — les

The treatment of the chorus draws more heavily on earlier models. An example is the invocation to the gods by priests and people at the beginning of Act III. This is strongly reminiscent of similar scenes in *Lakmé* and *Les pêcheurs de perles*, with

unison melodies, ritualistic even rhythms, and slow chordal accompaniment. The accompaniment has a flavour of pentatonicism, but otherwise the scene could appear in almost any exotic context, with a change in the names of the gods. Local colour of a more authentic kind is found elsewhere in the opera. The dances, traditional in opera (and particularly exotic opera) provide the perfect opportunity. These form part of the Festival scene in Act III. The second dance is shown in Ex.5.7. Here the typical repeated chord accompaniment is given a pulsing rhythm similar to examples in Bizet's operas. The melody is strictly pentatonic, and contour and rhythm both suggest that this is possibly a genuine Japanese melody.

Ex.5.7 *Ibid.*, 164.

[Andante]

The musical score is for a piano accompaniment. It is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked [Andante]. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords, starting with a G major chord (G-B-D) and moving through several other chords in a sequence. The bass staff contains a simple, rhythmic accompaniment of quarter notes, starting on G and moving through a series of notes that correspond to the chords in the treble staff. The word 'cantabile' is written below the bass staff. There are some markings like '[p]' and '[f]' indicating dynamics.

Act IV is set in the garden of Chrysanthème's house. At the opening of the act, the voice of Chrysanthème's friend, Oyouki, is heard singing an invocatory melody, the outline of which is again familiar from *Lakmé* and *Les pêcheurs de perles*. However, Oyouki is accompanied by what is specified in the score as a genuine Japanese instrument, the samisen. This plays arpeggiated chords in the key of G flat major.³¹ Neither the samisen nor its player appear on stage, presenting the strong possibility that it is actually the harp which is employed at this moment. If the samisen was actually used in performances, this probably would have been the first appearance of the instrument on the Western stage. It is likely that the instrument would have been identifiable to at least some in the audience from its use in performances of Japanese music at successive Exhibitions. Nevertheless, the instrument was still at this time little described in dictionaries of music. That of Lavignac and Laurencie, for example, while printed in the 1920s, draws entirely on

a book' written in English by F.T. Piggott, published in 1893 (coincidentally, the same year as the production of *Madame Chrysanthème*). The instrument is said to be the most popular in Japan, but is rather insufficiently described merely as 'a type of violin'.³² Ex.5.8 illustrates the opening of Act IV.

Ex.5.8 *Ibid.*, 200.

[Andante]

OYOUKI

Les harpes d'or qui chontent

dans la coulisse

The treatment of the Japanese in the libretto as principally a source of comedy has already been referred to. The music with which they are characterised, however, frequently puts them in another perspective. The continual activity and adaptability of the music for Monsieur Kangourou, for example, presents him in a different light. The comic stereotype presented by the words is undermined by the energy of the character's utterance. A frequently changing time signature illustrates Kangourou's ability to vary his pace and style to suit the particular service he is selling to the Europeans.

The market scene in Act I and the festival scene in Act III also display characteristics of frenetic energy and kaleidoscopic change of mood which undermine the often complacent tone of the libretto. This contrasts strongly with the mainly internal world of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, where the Japanese are seen to be less in control of events. It is noticeable that there is far less emphasis on ritual in Messager's opera. The alternation of acts set in public and private spaces also adds another dimension to the experience of Japan related by the opera *Madame Chrysanthème*, reminding us forcibly of the existence of a teeming world which is ultimately beyond the control of Europeans. Here the opera transcends its

origins in the novel, which is principally concerned with the narrow sphere bounded by Chrysanthème's garden fence within which the European hero reigns supreme.³³

The Epilogue of Messenger's opera also presents a wider view than the narrow concerns of the novel. It is set once more on board the warship as it leaves Japan. The orchestra repeats the music of the Prologue, framing the action as in a dream. Pierre receives a letter of apparently heart-broken farewell from Chrysanthème, but continues to doubt whether she was really in love with him. At the end, he is forced to agree with an aphorism uttered by his friend Yves in the Prologue: 'Women are the same everywhere!'.³⁴

This is the very statement which Pierre had travelled to Japan to question. The full knowledge of the exotic is here shown to reveal its similarity with what we have left behind. Further, the inability of the European male to have full control over the inner life of the subject country (represented in the opera by Pierre's doubts over Chrysanthème's fidelity) casts doubts over their continued domination over its external features.³⁵ Pierre's departure from Japan in the opera thus takes on more of the character of taking refuge in a dream rather than the self-satisfied return to normality of the protagonist of the novel. There is also a significant contrast here between Pierre's ultimate inability to comprehend and master Chrysanthème and Pinkerton's complete dominance and possession of Butterfly. While superficially more sympathetic to the plight of the colonized peoples than Messenger's work, Puccini's opera is revealed by this contrast to be far less potentially subversive in its treatment of the Japanese.

(iii) Saint-Saëns and the exotic tradition

Saint-Saëns was the most prolific composer of exotic music in France in the last years of the nineteenth century. His prominence in the genre at this time is emphasised by the overall fall in the numbers of exotic works produced during the period. The decline in numbers was as yet gradual: nevertheless it is coincident

with the beginning of a change in attitude to the exotic. Following on from the experiments of Bizet and others earlier in the century, the impact of musical practices derived from exotic sources was slowly beginning to penetrate the structure of Western music. This tendency became more apparent early in the twentieth century in certain compositions of Debussy and Ravel.

In this context, the exotic works of Saint-Saëns represent a continuation of the tradition typified by Félicien David. Basically this consists of the application of a veneer of superficial exoticism overlying a thoroughly impervious and completely Western base. This characteristic is underlined by the concentration in Saint-Saëns's exotic works on the traditional source for exoticism or 'otherness' in French music, that of North Africa. By contrast, Messager, Saint-Saëns's nearest rival in terms of numbers of exotic works produced during this period, draws on Japanese and Spanish settings in addition to the traditional North African location.

Saint-Saëns's geographical limitation in his exotic music runs counter to the overall development of the exotic during this period. Possibly as the result of influences such as the wide-ranging exhibits of the Exposition Universelle and the popularity of the novels of Pierre Loti, the focus of French exoticism shifts perceptibly eastwards in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Works concerned with the Far East and India double in number compared with the previous decade, while there is a slight fall in the total of works set in North African and Arabian locations. However, Saint-Saëns's apparent failure to penetrate the newest arenas of exoticism should not be overstressed. Exotic works set in an Arabian location still outnumbered those from all other settings put together.³⁶ Also, Saint-Saëns had himself produced one of the first exotic works set (albeit rather obliquely) in Japan, as we have seen. Yet it does seem strange that the composer's own extensive travels are not more fully recorded in his exotic music, especially as he evidently relishes exotic material in his compositions.

Saint-Saëns's geographical focus in his exotic music is limited to the territories

of North Africa and the Middle East, with a particular focus on Egypt. The two main works to reflect this interest are both written for piano and orchestra. These are the Fifth Piano Concerto, known as the 'Egyptian' (1896), and the *Africa* fantasy (1891). A short salon piece for solo piano, entitled *Souvenir d'Ismailia* (1895), continues the Egyptian theme. An exception to the composer's fascination with Egypt is provided by the opera *Samson et Dalila* (first French performance in Rouen, 1890), which is set in Palestine in biblical antiquity.³⁷

It is perhaps significant that the areas in which these works are set are all either former or current French colonies or spheres of interest. While this in itself is not necessarily more than a coincidence, it is notable that Saint-Saëns was writing at a time of increasing public support for Empire. The themes used as exotic material in the composer's works could be regarded by the French of the period as properly 'theirs', in the sense that the colonies were increasingly being regarded as a European birthright.³⁸ It may not be too far-fetched to note a certain pride of possession in the mastery of the exotic themes used in Saint-Saëns's works.

The *Africa* fantasy is a typical example. Here seven separate themes are used, the majority of which share features readily identified as exotic from their traditional appearance in such works from the time of David. These include the use of drone basses, off-beat accents, augmented seconds in the melody, modal modification of scales, pedal notes, melismatic cadenzas and characteristic orchestration involving the colourful use of triangle and oboes. Ex.5.9 shows the opening of the piece. All of the above characteristics are present, with the exception of the melismatic cadenza (which does, however, follow a few pages later).

Ex.5.9 Saint-Saëns, C.: *Africa fantasy* (Paris, Durand, n.d.), 1.

Molto allegro

Ex.5.10 shows the third theme of the piece, again played on the oboe. The piano takes an accompanying role, providing material which is used extensively later in the piece as passage work. This is an example of Saint-Saëns's adherence to Western structural principles. Against the reiterated patterns of the piano, the melody weaves an off-beat melisma of repeated fragments, in imitation of genuine North African practice.

Ex.5.10 *Ibid.*, 22.

[Tranquillo]

The similarities between the approaches to the exotic of David and Saint-Saëns are underlined by the genesis of the Fifth Piano Concerto. Like David's *Mémoires orientales*, this piece was written on the spot, during a trip up the Nile by boat and at Luxor. The physical circumstances of the tour intrude particularly at two points, when the sound of the boat's chugging motors is heard at the opening of the last movement, and when a Nubian love song appears in the second movement (Saint-

Saëns noted this melody down on the cuff of his shirt).

The second movement is the most exotic in the piece, and includes several new exotic effects among those which are more familiar. Among the latter are moments such as that in Ex.5.11. Here the piano declaims the melody doubled in octaves, with the accompaniment of a drone bass. This is a direct imitation of the homophonic nature of North African music, noted by Lane and others and still present in North African music today.

Ex.5.11 Saint-Saëns, C.: *Concerto for piano and orchestra No.5* (Paris, Durand, [1896]), 66.

[Andante]

The image shows a page of musical notation for the beginning of the first movement of Saint-Saëns' Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 5. The tempo is marked [Andante]. The score is arranged in a system with a piano part at the bottom and an orchestral part above. The piano part is marked 'scapriccioso' and features a melisma in the harmonic minor scale. The orchestral part includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Horn in B-flat (H. b.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horns (Horns), Trumpets (Corns), and Trombones (Tromp.). The piano part is marked 'p' and 'scapriccioso'. The orchestral parts are marked 'p'.

The piano uses the harmonic minor scale, maximising the clashes between its melismas and the held chords below. The traditional use of the minor mode to

express exoticism is heightened by this means into a dramatic utterance which is far in advance of David's effects. The impression of free arabesques is emphasised by the regular syncopated rhythm in the strings. This would have sounded markedly more exotic to audiences accustomed to Saint-Saëns's earlier works in the genre. It is possibly a reflection of the need for composers to find ever more striking and elaborate exotic effects as the nineteenth century drew to a close.

New effects introduced by Saint-Saëns in the second movement centre round the characteristic resonance of the piano. Ex.5.12 shows the passage preceding the return to the opening rhythms. In the first system, the piano moves in parallel major chords (with false relations) over a dominant pedal in the timpani. The spacing between the hands creates a haunting effect of overtones, expressive of mystery, but with a hint of menace.³⁹ In the second system, the pedal is used to hold a widespread D major chord, and simultaneously to blur the *pianissimo* run up in sixths, creating an exotic harp-like effect.

Ex.5.12 *Ibid*, 88.

[Più mosso]

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system features a timpani part on a single staff with a *pp* dynamic marking. Below it, the piano accompaniment is shown in grand staff notation. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *dim.*, along with the instruction *ad lib. capricciosamente*. The second system is marked *A tempo* and shows the piano accompaniment with dynamics *f*, *dim.*, *pp*, and *FP*. It also includes the instruction *Div. pp arco* for the strings.

The appearance of the Nubian love song in the movement seems more straightforwardly traditional. Shown in Ex.5.13, it is first heard on the piano to the familiar accompaniment of pedal-points in the second violins and piano right hand. Except for the impossibility of reproducing the characteristic native tuning of the notes on a Western instrument (especially the piano), the melody is authentic, as can be seen by comparison with examples from Lane and David (Ex.3.1/4/5). Nevertheless, the diatonic nature of this native melody ironically makes it sound less 'exotic' than Saint-Saëns's effects noted above. Later repeats, with a fuller accompaniment, show how easily the composer's habitual harmonic and textural style could be applied to such a melody. As a result, the most authentic moment in the piece most reveals its basically Western provenance.

Ex.5.13 *Ibid.*, 73

All.^{to} tranquillo quasi and.^{to}

p

mf cantabile

Unis
ppp 3^e Corde

Vcllo et C. B.

dim.

While there are several passages of new exotic suggestion in the Fifth Piano Concerto, the feeling of true intermarriage between Western and Eastern musical influences, apparent in certain works of Debussy, is never present here. Instead, a superficial perspective on the exotic scene is always strictly maintained, as if viewed from the cocooned safety of a tourist environment.

The *Souvenir d'Ismailia* is typical of such a piece. It is in the tradition of pianistic impressions of exotic places epitomised earlier in the century by composers such as Louis Gottschalk. Examples written during the century are legion, and include many by composers otherwise noted for more serious musical reflections, for example Isaac Albeniz. Typically, this kind of piece provides a sequence of readily recognizable musical images of the exotic land under scrutiny, as a kind of musical postcard.

The *Souvenir d'Ismaïlia* provides further examples of Saint-Saëns's typical practice in the treatment of exotic material. The opening of the piece is shown in Ex.5.14. Here the main melody is introduced by a melismatic cadenza made up of a repeated fragment ending in a falling stepwise movement. This figuration is also used frequently by Saint-Saëns elsewhere in his exotic music, for example in the *Africa* fantasy. The tune which follows has several features of an original Egyptian theme, particularly in phase endings. There is a small amount of note repetition within the rather wide compass of a seventh, but the repeated rhythmic patterns, uneven phrase lengths and shapes of the phrases are similar to genuine examples of Egyptian melody noted by Lane, David and Saint-Saëns himself (c.f. Ex.5.13). Where Saint-Saëns departs significantly from native practice is in his harmonisation of the native material. Instead of the drone basses and chromatic chords often employed by Bizet, Saint-Saëns retains the simple tonal harmonies seen in David's accompaniments, and he even uses some similar simple imitation. A tendency to harmonise using root position chords is notable, particularly in later, more texturally dense renditions of the theme. The effect of this is to fix the genuine features of the native melody within the unyielding framework of Western harmony. The drawing of a parallel between this musical practice and the political structure of the colonies is extremely tempting.

Ex.5.14 Saint-Saëns, C.: *Souvenir d'Ismailia* (Paris, Durand, 1895), 1.

Piano

Vivo
mf

Rit.

cadenza ad lib.

Andantino

mf espressivo

The final page of the *Souvenir d'Ismailia*, shown in Ex.5.15, reveals another feature of Saint-Saëns's practice when dealing with exotic material, which has a similarly Westernising effect. The passage work, harmonies, textures and chromatic excitement combine to signal a typically Occidental ending. The superlative pianistic technique of the composer cannot be repressed, but bursts out with a display of virtuosic mastery, as in the finale of the 'Egyptian' concerto, much of which would not seem out of place in Mendelssohn.

Ex.5.15 *Ibid.*, 13.

[Allegro vivo]

The image displays a musical score for a piano and string ensemble. The score is organized into five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano and a single staff for the strings. The piano part is characterized by rapid, ascending and descending runs, often marked with '8' for octaves. The string part provides a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment, with some sections marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'stringendo' (increasingly). The tempo is indicated as 'Allegro vivo'. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

Particularly in the normally bland context of the 'souvenir' genre, this ending acts as a powerful reminder of the technical superiority exercised so frequently by the military forces of Western imperialism against its colonial subjects. Directly contemporary with Saint-Saëns's displays of technical prowess in his exotic works

are the crushing of Somali resistance to British rule in Upper Egypt (1891), the French military occupation of Dahomey (1892), and the capture by the French of Timbuktu (1894). In 1895, the same year as the composition of the *Souvenir d'Ismailia*, French military rule was finally exercised over the whole of the turbulent colony of Madagascar for the first time. As an attempt to remove a focus for further rebellion, the Queen of Madagascar was deported to Algeria. In retrospect, this move is an illustration of life imitating art, as it is strikingly reminiscent of the peregrinations of the native heroine in Meyerbeer's *L'africaine*.

Saint-Saëns's opera *Samson et Dalila* stands somewhat outside this context. Firstly, it is set (like Berlioz's *Les Troyens* and Reyer's *Salammbô*) in a distant past, rather than a colonial present. Its biblical provenance further distances it from the contemporary imperial scene. However, while the opera may be regarded as only partly exotic, it introduces some important considerations into the ideas surrounding French musical exoticism which are more properly explored in the Epilogue to this thesis.

(iv) Hahn: *L'Île du rêve* and the representation of Tahiti

The three-act 'Idylle polynésienne' *L'Île du rêve*, composed by Reynaldo Hahn, appeared in 1897. It has the distinction of being one of the first operas to be based on a Tahitian subject. This is a strange anomaly for music when compared with the rich response to the region in the paintings of Gauguin. The opera is set in the present and takes place in various exotic locations on Tahiti (Act I, for example, is set beside the Fataoua waterfall). The libretto is based on the novel *Rarahu* by Pierre Loti, the same novel previously used as a basis for Delibes's *Lakmé*. However, here, in addition to providing the inspiration for the plot, Pierre Loti is not only named as one of the librettists (along with André Alexandre and Georges Hartmann), but also appears on stage as one of the characters.⁴⁰ In the list of personnel at the beginning of the score he is named as 'Loti (Georges de Kerven), officer in the French navy'. Here it is the choice of given name rather than pen-

name that is mysterious, as Loti's real name was Julien Viaud (as we have seen). Even on the author's appearance as a character in his own work, a veil is thrown round his identity. This appearance marks a further stage in the creation of the myth surrounding the figure of Loti, and the comparisons between the actions of the protagonist in the opera and the novel on which the libretto is based are fascinating.

In the original novel, Loti's desertion of his native concubine is presented quite baldly, without any need for extenuating circumstances or disguise. After his experience of sex with a native woman has palled on his already jaded palate, the author simply abandons his lover and returns to his imperial milieu. In the opera, however, the motivation of the character is presented very differently. Loti appears in Act I under the name of Kerven, and is marked from the first by his melancholy attitude. This is caused not by the lassitude of a worldweary character, as in the novel, however, but by sincere grief for the demise of a brother officer. Loti's friend, known to the Tahitians as 'Rouéri', died on his return to France from the colony. Rouéri had taken a native lover during his stay on Tahiti, whose name was on his lips as he died. The opera charts the progress of Loti's recovery from his grief through his own love affair with a native singer, Mahénu. This recovery is given a curiously baptismal quality by the re-naming of Kerven as 'Loti' by Mahénu herself when she first meets him (strangely, the native girl herself has been renamed for the opera: in the novel, her name was of course Rarahu).⁴¹

Mahénu confers a name of great exotic potency on Loti as, of course, in real life he later becomes an extremely influential exotic writer. The fact that this name is presented as being given by a native, and not chosen by the author himself, allows Mahénu a claim to authority herself. However, she behaves in a typically powerless fashion elsewhere in the opera. This is especially so once she has committed herself to life with Loti. It is true that the opera presents the initiative in love as coming from Mahénu, and not from Loti. However, this is more a reflection of what is seen as Mahénu's overheated native sensuality rather than the

empowered sexual independence of a Carmen.

Mahénu's essential passivity becomes apparent at the end of the opera. Here the action departs from the novel in a striking manner. When the order to depart arrives, Loti's reaction is one of resignation and sorrow (rather than relief) and he counsels Mahénu on the merits of Christian endurance. Thus far the opera merely replaces the heartless selfishness shown by Loti in the novel with hypocritical sympathy. However, faced with Mahénu's emotional collapse at her realisation of Loti's imminent departure, Loti declares his love for her anew and goes off to arrange her own passage to France on another vessel.

This unique step in the tangled history of exotic opera plots is, despite its apparently good intentions, doomed to frustration. The island princess, Oréna, intervenes after Loti's departure, and explains to Mahénu that she cannot follow her lover. When Mahénu exclaims that she will die following the separation, Oréna compares her to a native plant which will 'wither in the land of exile'. At this, Mahénu accepts her lot and, according to a note in the score, 'falls gradually into a vague and melancholy reverie'.⁴²

The blame for the abandonment of his native lover is thus laid in the opera not at the door of the European hero, but as a consequence of her own immutable nature. Mahénu has no more choice about departure than a native plant: it is not the hero's fault that she cannot be transplanted. The equation between the natives of the island and nature itself is commonly drawn in the opera. Mahénu compares herself to a bruised flower when she first hears of Loti's intended departure. Loti, in response to Mahénu's attempt to beautify herself for his pleasure, declares that he was captivated rather by her natural charms when they first met. This reflects current thinking on the differences between races which finds its echoes in the writings of Debussy quoted earlier. The Tahitians are seen as the essence of the 'Island of Dreams', literally inhabiting a different world from that of their active European conquerors.

The problem for the opera of depicting so many scenes of slow reflection and

languor' is not satisfactorily solved by Hahn. The music frequently employs subdominant harmony and plagal cadences, with long periods of complete stasis and very slow tempos. The effect is one of monotony, and is not helped by frequent recommendations in the score of 'très lent', 'tristement' and 'tranquille'. This flaccidity derives from Massenet, who was Hahn's teacher at the Conservatoire, and is found equally in several of his exotic works of the period, such as *Thaïs* (1894). An example of some of these features in Hahn's work is shown in Ex.5.16, taken from the moment in Act I when Mahénu names Loti. The tempo marking of 'Tranquille', additionally required to be delivered 'in a slightly ceremonial manner', takes a typically subdominant turn at the pronouncement of the name 'Loti'. The influence of Massenet is particularly apparent in this harmonic trait, and appears at a similar moment in the duet between Athanaël and Thaïs in Act II of *Thaïs*, 'Baigne d'eau mes mains'.

Ex.5.16 Hahn, R.: *L'Ile du rêve* (Paris, Heugel, 1897), 28.

[Tranquille]

MAHÉNU

Au pa-ys des chan-sons, Au pa-ys où ton ai-meur Lo-ti, Lo-ti se-ra ton nom su-prê-me!

Apart from the characterisation of tempo and harmony, most of the music in the opera does not show any signs of local colour in the use of native instruments

or melodies. This loss is finally made up in the final act, where use is made of what the composer describes as a Tahitian song. The song, shown in Ex.5.17, is marked 'Air populaire de la Polynésie' and is accompanied by a note describing how to pronounce the Tahitian words. No translation is given of the text, underlining the lack of relevance of the song to the opera. Its inclusion is obviously merely to provide a colourful background, and in this way it is treated rather as are the Fataoua waterfalls in Act I, as a natural adjunct to the scene. The accompaniment is restricted to appropriate simple chords which punctuate the verses of the song.

Ex.5.17 *Ibid.*, 88.

Choeur lointain et chantant fort.
à l'aise, mais pas trop lent. (avec une certaine langueur.)

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Soprano (S) and the middle staff is for Tenor (T). Both vocal staves have the lyrics 'Ti hi u-ra té-ié I-te va-i to-e to-é' written below the notes. The piano accompaniment is shown in the bottom two staves, with the instruction 'accomp. tacet' written in the left hand. The music is in a key with two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The vocal lines are simple, with some slurs and accents. The piano part consists of simple chords.

In exotic opera the scenery and costumes often appear more authentic than the music, and *L'Ile du rêve* is no exception to this basic rule. The waterfall scene in Act I is used as an opportunity to present a spectacle of bathing beauties in a manner reminiscent of the famous bathing scene in *Les Huguenots* (though with rather different music). Act III takes place in the garden of Princess Oréna at night, lit by torches. The scenery represents palm trees, shadows and the Southern Cross. A prominent feature of the stage directions here is the description of the 'Tahitians of the court', dressed in silk robes with long trains, and with long uncovered hair.⁴³ The mention of these accoutrements underlines the fact that Tahiti, according to the opera, appears to be populated solely by women (we hear the tenors singing the Tahitian song, but the chorus sings offstage). The only

native man represented in the opera is, perhaps significantly, the aged adoptive father of the heroine, Tairapa. This equation of an exotic country exclusively with its female population is familiar in exotic works, the novels of Loti being a prime example. This has the effect of eroticising the relationship between coloniser and colonised. As Todorov remarks, 'the visitor loves the foreign country as the man loves the woman, and vice versa'.⁴⁴

This equation has been consistently observed throughout the history of exotic representation, and acts as a strong justification for colonial rule. The resulting objectification of the subject land is underlined by an extraordinarily prophetic utterance by the hero. Apostrophising Tahiti, Loti says: 'You also, one day, will perish in some flame of fire, O charming isle, paradise of the soul, made of the perfume of love and the kisses of woman!'.⁴⁵ While Loti is undoubtedly referring here to the volcanic activity surrounding Tahiti, his words carry a different implication following continued French use of their rule of the region to carry out nuclear testing in the face of native opposition. It is not an exaggeration to see a link between the attitude to subject lands and peoples of nineteenth-century exotic works and the positions of such present day imperialism as survives.

(v) **Bourgault-Ducoudray: Dreams of Empire and *Le songe de Vasco de Gama***

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the inauguration of an increasing number of anniversary celebrations throughout Europe. In France, these included the choice of Bastille Day as the focus for national celebrations, a practice which commenced in 1880. As in this particular case, these traditions were often consciously invented and promoted by state governments. The reasons for the construction of these 'traditional' celebrations were usually to do with the manufacture and maintenance of national identity. The purpose of the Bastille Day ceremonies in France was, as Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, 'to transform the heritage of the Revolution into a combined expression of state pomp and citizens' pleasure'.⁴⁶

Similarly, the celebrations of 1898 surrounding the four hundredth anniversary of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India were not merely the innocent recognition of a date in the calendar. The anniversary created the opportunity to comment symbolically on the foundation and maintenance of Empire, at a time when increasing stress was being placed upon the importance of imperial rule.

Da Gama's original voyage was itself of tremendous significance to the development of Western imperial designs. By demonstrating the viability of a direct sea route to the rich trading markets of India and China, it permitted the eventual marginalisation of the powerful Ottoman Empire. It also signalled the growing emergence of the West as the leading world force in technological achievement. Although other nations, most notably the Turks and the Chinese, had proved themselves technologically capable of equally impressive ocean crossings, a combination of geographical, strategic and cultural factors led to their voyages having less impact on their societies. In Europe, by contrast, da Gama's voyage of 1498 marked, perhaps even more significantly than Columbus's voyage of 1492, a change in Western conceptualisation of the world. This change was particularly notable in those European maritime countries with easy access to the Atlantic seaboard. These included Portugal, Spain, France, Britain and Holland.

Celebrations of the 1898 anniversary were marked in France by the production of a huge commemorative volume incorporating a large number of homages and offerings by French admirals, painters, writers and musicians. Among the major public figures involved were the poet Stéphane Mallarmé, the painter Carolus Durand and the ubiquitous novelist Pierre Loti. Musicians who contributed works included Alfred Bruneau, Théodore Dubois, Vincent d'Indy, and Camille Saint-Saëns. The tone taken by these contributions was, not surprisingly, one of respect and admiration. The transcendental effect of the voyage on European concepts was stressed by many of the contributors. The figure of da Gama himself was given a uniformly heroic cast, in a manner notably reminiscent of an opera plot. The presentation of the navigator was closer to the noble, far-seeing and somewhat

remote character of Cortez in Spontini's *Fernand Cortez*, rather than the truculent and egotistical hero of Meyerbeer's *L'africaine*.

The preface to the album by Gabriel Marcel sets the tone for the commemoration as a whole, and also offers interesting examples of contemporary glosses on imperial history. While we learn that the voyage 'completely overturned the economic relations between Europe and the East', its main importance for the West is felt to be that it 'revealed religions, peoples and customs of which we had the most incomplete and incorrect ideas, and of whose existence we knew almost nothing'. The primacy of knowledge over economics is further stressed by the author's statement that Asia, 'a whole continent, of which we knew nothing but the most fabulous tales, of whose arts we were ignorant, is the cradle of humanity'. In the following phrase Marcel presents the opposing character of the East as 'the homeland of almost all the peoples who for so long have ravaged Europe'.⁴⁷

This presentation of the East is typical of its time, but is, of course, misleading. Much that was accurate was known of Asia in previous ages, due to a great extent to widely developed trade routes which had been used for thousands of years. It was only with the rise to power of the Ottoman Empire in the late Middle Ages that overland communications between Asia and Europe were seriously disrupted.⁴⁸ Da Gama's voyage was a direct response to the impasse in the eastern Mediterranean. The emphasis placed by the author on medieval ignorance and superstition serves to disguise the enormous power and influence of the Ottoman Empire, a potency which later generations consistently attempted to ignore.

It is also significant that the East is almost entirely spoken of in the past tense, characterised as 'the cradle of humanity'. This emphasis on antiquity in relation to the Orient is a common feature of Western representation from at least the time of Napoleon's *Description de l'Égypte*. One of the main conceptual consequences of da Gama's voyage was that it set a precedent for the eroticised image of a passive, supine, alluring East penetrated by an active, virile, positive West. The importance of this conceptualisation for the future of imperial rule is demonstrated perfectly by

Marcel. The author uses this argument to justify the violence visited by da Gama upon various peoples of Africa and India. According to Marcel, the carnage and destruction wrought by da Gama's expedition was not gratuitous, or even made necessary by a particularly dangerous situation. Instead he implies that its function was to ensure that the essential roles of West and East were maintained: the West actively ruling, the East passively submitting. Those natives who resisted are significantly described as 'malcontents'.⁴⁹

It is against this background that the composer Bourgault-Ducoudray contributed a commemorative cantata to the album, with words by Simone Arnaud. Bourgault-Ducoudray had previously shown great interest in, and a sensitive response to, native music, and his contribution had been particularly notable in the context of Cambodia. It is somewhat surprising, then, to find his name linked so prominently with more vocal and conservative supporters of Empire such as d'Indy and Saint-Saëns, in the production of a piece glorifying imperial rule. However, the cantata sidesteps the issue of Empire by presenting the rewards of the voyage as personal fame resulting from the discovery and exploration of previously unknown territories. This is of course a common device, still used to disguise the less palatable consequences of dubious expeditions from liberal consciences.

The work takes the form of an address to da Gama by 'La Gloire'. The sumptuous eroticism represented by the voyage in the Western imagination is manifest in the text from the opening. La Gloire begins by offering herself to da Gama as his 'eternal lover'. She continues the erotic theme by offering a vision of the splendours of India, personified as an alluring woman, 'immortal, infinite... ready to reveal to you her inexpressible treasures'.⁵⁰ The text is set for soprano voice accompanied by piano. The music is frequently highly chromatic, with many daring and sudden changes of key. Several more customary exotic features are used, such as modal adjustment of scales, use of drone basses and off-beat accents. Several of these features are shown in Ex.5.18, taken from near the opening of the piece. This example also reveals the skill and imagination of this particular work,

whose main flaw appears to be the extremely outmoded text.

Ex.5.18 Bourgault-Ducoudray, L.: *Le Songe de Vasco de Gama* (Paris, Guillard and Aillaud, 1898), 7-8.

Religieux et soutenu

Voi-ci l'in- - - - de sa

cré - - - e, im - mor - tel - - - te, in - st

ni - - - - e, sf

While the music does not appear to draw on authentic Indian modes, unusual textures are discovered in the following example (Ex.5.19) by the very fast repetition of the right-hand chords outlining the melody, which appear to imitate an orchestral tremolo. This is a striking effect, especially when combined with the various augmented seconds in the tenor melody.

Ex.5.19 *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Même mouvement (Cette mesure vaut 2 des mesures précédentes)

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the voice, written in a soprano clef with a key signature of two flats and a 6/4 time signature. The lyrics are "I - ci terre et Cieux — Sont des Dieux:". The bottom staff is for the piano, written in a grand staff with a key signature of two flats and a 6/4 time signature. The piano part begins with a *pp* dynamic marking. Below the first measure of the piano part is a circled 'o.' (crescendo hairpin). Below the second and third measures are *p.* dynamic markings. A fermata is placed over the final note of the vocal line.

Bourgault-Ducoudray's cantata is one of the few complete new works by musicians in the album, and the composer obviously took great care over its production. Others, such as Saint-Saëns and Dubois, produced fragments, while Bruneau and Holmès were content to quote from works published elsewhere. While occasional works such as this tend to betray such signs of their genesis as to make them subsequently unperformable, in this case the music at least deserves to be heard again.

(vi) Conclusion

At the end of the nineteenth century the exotic genre in French music was still showing itself to be vigorous. While a slow decline in the numbers of works had set in, the situation stabilised for a short period between 1900-1930, during which output remained at a little more than half its peak in the decades 1860-1890. In exotic music, the genre to show most decline during the first years of the twentieth century was the opera. Certainly it appears that the conventions of exotic opera became increasingly stretched beyond even the credulity of bourgeois audiences following 1900. However, statistics such as these must not be taken too seriously, as operatic production as a whole was obviously affected by the First World War.

What is clear is that as the twentieth century progressed the nature of exotic music itself altered. The surface exoticism of much of the nineteenth century was increasingly replaced by works such as Roussel's *Padmāvati* (1923), which made

extensive use of Indian modes for the first time in Western music. Compositions of the 1940s, such as Messiaen's *Harawi* (1945), *Turangalila* (1948) and *Cantéyodjayâ* (1948), continued this trend. Superficial exotic clichés appear to have moved much more readily into the realms of film, first of all in piano accompaniments and later as soundtracks, where to a large extent they still remain.

While this shift in attitude to exotic music was gradually taking place, the French Empire was, paradoxically, still expanding. It reached its fullest extent after the First World War, following the acquisition of former German territories in Africa and areas previously subject to Turkish rule in the Middle East. It could be argued that these final acquisitions marked the beginning of the end of the Empire. Having once reached its fullest extent, it had nowhere to go but down. Also, once the first thrill of possession had passed, the French (like the other imperial powers) had to continue the less inspiring business of ruling the conquered territories. As before, during the nineteenth century, it is important to note that the French were continually faced with native hostility to their rule in the twentieth century, in (for example) Madagascar, Cambodia, Tunisia, Morocco, Annam, Vietnam and, once French rule had begun there, Syria and Lebanon. The glamour of the Empire could thus be seen to become increasingly tarnished as the twentieth century progressed.

Nevertheless, relations between rulers and ruled remained at first as they had been through much of the nineteenth century. The complete refusal of the colonial powers to countenance the idea that the subject peoples might soon be able to rule themselves caused enormous problems when the colonies were suddenly given independence after the end of the Second World War. The notion of native incapacity for self-rule is still brought out to support continued European rule over distant lands, such as French control of Tahiti. D.K. Fieldhouse, a major historian of Empire, is of the opinion that 'excessive paternalism' rather than abuse of power was the problem for all the colonial empires. Fieldhouse states that 'the common defect of all alien rule was its cautious conservatism' which embalmed indigenous social and economic systems and insulated them from change.⁵¹ This is an arguable

point, as much irreversible destruction to traditional ways of life was also visited upon subject peoples, including the frequent reduction of them to wage slaves, destruction of the environment, and pillage of natural resources.

The end of Empire in this century has led to debate among historians concerning what purpose the Empires actually served. Similarly, one might also ask what was the purpose of exotic music. These questions are interconnected, and will be considered in the Epilogue.

ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Satie's *Gnossiennes* (1890), for example, were written after the composer's exposure to the Oriental music he heard in 1889, although they have no connections with the French Empire or the mainstream of musical exoticism in France.
2. Randles, K.M.: *Exoticism in the Mélodie* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1992), 11.
3. Hobsbawm, E.: 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914' in Hobsbawm, E & Ranger, T. (eds.): *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), 271.
4. Hobsbawm, E.: *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London, Abacus, 1995), 80.
5. Randles, K.M., *op. cit.*, 12.
6. Rearich, C.: *Pleasures of the Belle Époque* (London, Yale University Press, 1985), 119.
7. *Ibid.*, 121. The Blue Elephant was later moved to the Moulin Rouge, which had been opened to profit from the influx of visitors to the Exhibition.
8. *Ibid.*, 139.
9. Details of the theatre can be found in Devriès, A.: 'Les musiques d'extrême-orient a l'Exposition universelle de 1889', *Cahiers Debussy*, Nouvelle série No.1 (1977), 25-37.
10. *Ibid.*, 33. The dossier is stamped *Va 271h (tome IX)*, BN Paris.
11. Quoted in *ibid.*, 30.
12. From an article in *Gil Blas*, 2.2.1903. Quoted in Langham Smith, R. (trans. & ed.): *Debussy on Music* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1977), 122.
13. From an article in *SIM*, 15.2.1913. Quoted in *ibid.*, 278-9.
14. *Ibid.*, 278.
15. *Ibid.*, 278.

16. *Ibid.*, 278.
17. This term is used in Meek R.L.: *Social Science and the ignoble savage* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).
18. From an article in *SIM*, November 1912. Quoted in Langham Smith, R.: *op. cit.*, 264-5.
19. *Ibid.*, 265.
20. Debussy may also have had Koechlin's *Suite Javanaise* (Op.44 bis) in mind. Koechlin's 'Gamelang Palag (Sultanat de Yogyakarta)' and 'Gamelang Salandro (Sultanat de Yogyakarta)', the first two movements of the suite, were performed at a SMI concert in the Salle Gaveau on 4 May 1910. The second movement was published in the *Revue SIM* in October 1910 (pp.548-63), to which Debussy is known to have subscribed. Although far more skilful than those of Benedictus, these were basically attempts to transcribe Javanese music literally for a large and varied European orchestra, including (along with flute, piccolo and violin) piano, organ, celeste, xylophone, harp and an array of percussion. The pieces had been originally collected by Debussy's friend, Louis Laloy.
21. Devriès, A.: *op. cit.*, 34, 36. The rebab, like the gambang, is commonly found in Javanese gamelans. The gambang is made in the way Tiersot describes, although the sound little resembles that of a xylophone, being neither so percussive nor as metallic. The other instruments in his list, the saron-barong and bonang-ageng, are also commonly used, although Tiersot appears to have confused their names slightly. The 'saron-barong' of his list is a particular instrument of the *saron* family. Constructed according to Tiersot's description, these instruments play the main melodic line of the composition. Modern accounts identify a *bonang berung*, which borrows elements of both names in Tiersot's list. This instrument is described in a recent book as resembling 'small bedframes with a number of open squares through which pass two parallel lengths of cord. The gongs rest in these

individual squares and are supported by the cords' [Sorrell, N.: *A guide to the gamelan* (London, Faber, 1990), 37]. Typically, these instruments have 12 or 14 gongs, depending on their tuning. The name Tiersot gives the family of instruments is misleading and probably relates only to the lower of the two he describes, as *ageng* means 'large' in Javanese. His idea that the *bonang-ageng* 'forms some sort of family, as it may be subdivided into two instruments, one low and the other high' is also only partially correct; the higher of the two instruments is called a *bonang panerus*, but there are several other (mainly larger) ones constructed upon similar lines, including the *kenong*, *kethuk* and *kempyang*, which Tiersot does not mention. The *bonang* plays an elaboration of the melody at a faster level than that of the *saron*.

22. Sorrell, N.: *op. cit.*, 7.
23. *Ibid.*, 120.
24. Quoted in Todorov, T. (trans. C. Porter): *Of Human Diversity* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993), 313.
25. See Messenger, A.: *Madame Chrysanthème* (Paris, Choudens, 1893), 47–8.
26. Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 314.
27. An echo of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive' (*Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881). Stevenson later had personal experience of this 'truth', when he settled in Samoa after 1890. His life there has been described in idyllic terms, but was in fact often extremely miserable, reflecting the common experience of Westerners coming to terms with life in a foreign country during the nineteenth century.
28. Messenger, A.: *op. cit.*, 5–6.
29. *Ibid.*, 8–9.
30. *Ibid.*, 15–23.
31. This key was in any case rare in the nineteenth century, and certainly not part of the harmonic language of Japanese music. Massenet probably chose it

for its ease of use in creating pentatonic effects, although this can of course be achieved in other keys, as Massenet does in various numbers in the opera.

32. Lavignac, A. & Laurencie, L. de la (eds.): *Encyclopédie de la musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1922), Première Partie, I, 251.
33. *Madama Butterfly* follows the novel more closely in seeing the appearances of Japanese characters as intrusions into Cio-Cio-San's enclosed world, although earlier versions of the libretto (and the first, unsuccessful version of the opera) focussed more on Butterfly's relationship with her family.
34. This echoes Mozart's 'Così fan tutte', and many similar examples of popular male wisdom concerning the essential nature of women.
35. The inability of the Europeans to contain or control the natives successfully in the opera is prophetic of the collapse of Empire in the twentieth century.
36. Arabian subjects outnumbered the nearest rival, that of the Far East, by nearly 3 to 1, and African subjects by 6 to 1.
37. The opera was eventually performed at the Paris Opéra in 1892.
38. The change in attitude is noted by Eric Hobsbawm in his *The Age of Empire* (London, Abacus, 1995), 57-60.
39. Debussy's use of parallel chords dates from the suite *Pour le piano*, where they are especially noticeable in the Sarabande (1894). Ravel used them in 'Entre cloches' from *Sites auriculaires* (1897), though neither composer intended an exotic effect of the kind that Saint-Saëns was seeking, particularly in Debussy's Sarabande where the effect is one of recreated modal antiquity.
40. Previously Loti had appeared in *Madame Chrysanthème* only as Pierre, but in Hahn's work he is finally given his full name, and unequivocally linked with the living author.
41. The name was possibly changed for ease in singing, 'Mahénu' being more

practicable than 'Rarahu'.

42. Hahn, R.: *L'Île du rêve* (Paris, Heugel, 1897), 137.
43. *Ibid.*, 86.
44. Todorov, T.: *op. cit.*, 314.
45. Hahn, R.: *op. cit.*, 107-8.
46. Hobsbawm, E.: 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914' in: Hobsbawm, E & Ranger, T. (eds.): *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), 271.
47. Marcel, G.: in *Album commémoratif* (Paris, Giullard & Aillaud, 1898), 5.
48. See Welland, J.: *Samarkand and beyond: A History of Desert Caravans* (London, Constable, 1977), 67-70, who records the closing of the overland route to China by the end of the fifteenth century, although significantly he does not make it clear why it was closed. Welland also records some of the mistaken beliefs of early writers concerning the East. Pliny, writing in the first century A.D., confidently described the Chinese as 'tall, red-headed, blue-eyed, and lacking a language in which to communicate their thoughts'. Much has been made of misconceptions like these, to the exclusion of the accurate knowledge which the Middle Ages possessed, often through Arab intermediaries.

Maps showing the position of India relative to Europe and Africa, while devoid of accurate detail, were produced in Europe from the Middle Ages, e.g. the 'Psalter' World Map (c.1260), and the *Mappa Mundi* (13th century). These were largely based on Christian doctrine concerning the organisation of the world, showing Jerusalem as its centre. Classical accounts, such as that of Claudius Ptolemy (c.AD150), also described India and were widely known and copied before da Gama's voyage. Centuries of trade via the Middle East, not to mention missionary activity, had also made the territories of India and Cathay (China) well known by repute to Europe by the thirteenth century. The widespread reports of the travels of Marco Polo to China, India and the

Red Sea (1271-95) had provided Europeans with fuller details of the region. On his voyage to America, Columbus based his reckoning of the distance to Cipango (as he called Japan) west from the Canary Islands on the accounts of Ptolemy, Polo and others (his calculations were 8000 miles short, leading to his belief that he had landed on the east coast of India when he had actually reached the West Indies).

49. Marcel, G.: *op. cit.*, 7. For an accurate account of da Gama's treatment of Indians and Africans, see Subrahmanyam, S.: *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).
50. *Ibid.*, 44. The poem is quoted separately from the music on this page.
51. Fieldhouse, D.K.: *The Colonial Empires* (London, Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1966), 377.

VI

Epilogue

The adoption of exoticism in French music of the nineteenth century was not the only sign of musical eclecticism in the period, and many influences from elsewhere in the world had an equal impact. The influence of Rossini, for example, is clear in the operatic style adopted by many French composers of the 1820s and 30s, such as Auber and Boieldieu. Later in the century, the music of Wagner had an equally dynamic impact on composers such as Reyer, Chausson and Chabrier. While the direct influence of Beethoven seems to have proved resistible to many French composers, by 1860 other Germans, such as Schumann and Mendelssohn, appear to be increasingly imitated – a trait that was to persist in the music of Saint-Saëns in particular. At the very end of the century the influence of Russian composers such as Mussorgsky also gained ground, for example in the early music of Debussy.

Exoticism, therefore, could be seen simply as a part of the process of drawing on outside influences, which is an inescapable condition of human (and artistic) existence. However, earlier in this thesis we have seen that musical exoticism lies essentially outside this process both in the context of the borrowing – that is, imperialism – and in the treatment of the resulting material. This tends towards an emphasis upon difference rather than a search for synthesis. A truly eclectic spirit with regard to the treatment of exotic material is apparent only in a very few composers before the beginning of the twentieth century, the most prominent example being Louis Bourgault-Ducoudray.

Nevertheless, composers such as Bourgault-Ducoudray, however good their intentions, could not be said to have produced the most successful exotic works, judged on artistic merit. Neither could they be said to have directly influenced other composers to produce more effective syntheses of Occidental and Oriental music. Similarly, Salvador Daniel's *Fantaisies arabes*, performed at the Maison

Pompéienne in the 1860s, were truly ground-breaking attempts to reveal more genuine characteristics of North African music to a Parisian audience. Yet it seems clear that Daniel's pioneering efforts, quite apart from their own limitations, did not produce any change in the depiction of North African music by French composers. This remained largely dependent on a series of established formulae, inherited mainly from the eighteenth century and supplemented by the works of Félicien David, as in the celebrated *Le désert* (1844). Even the surviving works of Daniel himself show almost total allegiance to these procedures, despite the composer's declared intent to introduce more authentic and ethnomusicologically based practices.

Far more successful than the exotic works of these figures are those of the great pantheon of French composers, particularly Bizet and Ravel. While Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* retains to a large extent the exotic clichés of earlier examples of the genre, these are injected with such passion and drama as to transcend the musty conventions of operatic tradition and bring the cardboard figures of exotic opera plots to life.

In this context it is noticeable that composers such as Bizet responded with far more interesting music when their imaginations were fired by a suitable libretto. From those encountered during the nineteenth century, it appears clear that much of the mundane and formulaic quality of French exotic music may well be a consequence of the stock characters and clichéd situations reproduced continually by their writers. Indeed, French composers of the period could be held to be doing nothing more than clothing such uninspiring texts in appropriate musical garb: anything more musically effective would simply have exposed the banality of their libretti to an even greater extent. This effect can certainly be seen in some scenes of *Les pêcheurs de perles*, where the music significantly transcends the libretto. The opposite is also occasionally true, as in Poniatowski's *L'aventurier*, where the (albeit infrequent) originality in situation and attitude of the book is ill served by its conventional musical setting.

Despite their reliance on convention, composers and librettists frequently turned to exotic material in their search for a successful opera (or to other genres, such as the cantata or piano piece). This reflects the increasing popularity of the exotic in the nineteenth century. This popularity is the more astonishing given the generally mundane artistic level of the majority of exotic works of the period. The role of the exotic in the *imagination* of the nineteenth century will be examined more fully below. However, it is significant that a large number of the most successful operas of the century were exotic in origin: *L'africaine*, *Lakmé*, *Thaïs* to name but a few. In the non-operatic field, the outstanding example is David's *Le désert*. These works were popular for a number of different reasons. In the case of *Le désert*, the novelty of the setting and musical treatment were regarded as important, while *L'africaine* possibly depended for its effect more on the tradition of the grand manner evinced by French stage productions at the Opéra. As with so many spectacular productions, the exotic scenery made the music *seem* so.

The prime motivation for the choice of an exotic setting for a work appears in many, if not most, cases to have been commercial. Exoticism was a sure-fire winner with nineteenth-century French audiences, and its appeal can still be seen in other popular twentieth-century media, such as the cinema. The commercial potential of the exotic is even respected by those who could see the more ludicrous side of the genre. Offenbach frequently parodied exotic situations and musical settings in his works, the most barbed of which was his satiric version of *Le désert* (which was, perhaps for this reason, produced privately).

Nevertheless, the commercial appeal of the exotic cannot completely explain its popularity, nor the hold exoticism had over French composers of the nineteenth century. One explanation may be the wider scope the exotic setting offered for the use and development of many different musical practices, such as reiterated rhythms, alluring arabesque-like melodies, and evocative scoring.

The exotic genre in music, then, may be seen for French composers as both potential and limitation. On the one hand, musical imagination could be given free

rein to experiment with harmony, melody, rhythm and orchestration. On the other, established clichés in music, and particularly in libretti and situations, acted as a brake on composers, and probably contributed to them simply repeating traditional gestures. The response to the exotic varied with each individual. Some (such as Bizet) instinctively inclined towards experiment, while others (such as Saint-Saëns) remained within traditional, and often Germanic, bounds. This reaction was completely independent of the composer's own experience of foreign travel, or their first-hand knowledge of native music, as can be seen in the comparison above; Bizet never journeyed beyond Italy, while Saint-Saëns must have been one of the most widely-travelled men of his time, visiting South America, Asia and Africa as well as undertaking extensive travels in Europe. Earlier examples also occur, such as that of André Destouches, whose travels to Siam in the seventeenth century evoked no response in his music.

As we have seen, the reasons for the lack of interest in any genuine native musical characteristics are often those of Eurocentric distaste for the culture of others, and a complete lack of sympathetic understanding of their musical practices. This attitude, as has been shown, was widespread until at least the early years of the twentieth century. Authentic native music was rarely heard in France until the advent of the Expositions Universelles, especially that of 1889. However, the reaction to whatever was on show there was generally negative. The most frequent response was to doubt the humanity of the people to whom such a cacophony could be pleasurable. This explains to a large extent why authentic native music did not appear to any great degree in exotic works by French composers. Salvador Daniel's experience of the music of North Africa *in situ* led to his growing understanding and appreciation of it, as we have seen. Yet those of his own works which draw on that material seem today almost totally French and bourgeois. While it is obvious that Daniel was not a very gifted composer, it is also possible that he was judging expertly the capacity for aural tolerance in his audience. This also explains why ethnomusicological studies (which only began to

acquire the coherence of a discipline in France following the researches of David and Daniel) did not in general have an impact on Western music until the present century. What audiences required was not authentic musical material, but something that sounded superficially authentic: that put them in mind of the basically *imaginary* world of the exotic, without what was perceived as the unpleasant reality (either musical or colonial) being present. The imagination of the listeners was allowed full rein by such visual stimuli as the exotic scenery and context, which in turn affected appreciation of the music. Where works were unstaged, such as David's *Le désert*, the imagination filled the gap (as it clearly did for Berlioz), clothing the music with a lustre of myth and, in the process, remedying any defects in the exotic representation in the score.

The example of Daniel illustrates another difficulty for French composers when dealing with native musical material, particularly when that material was taken from areas under French colonial rule. This difficulty lay in the possibility of the composer becoming aware of the low status of the native under French domination, and consequently becoming concerned to present them in a more acceptable light to the conservative metropolitan audience. It is clear that most composers thought little about such matters, being content merely to appropriate a melody here, or an instrumental timbre there, simply in order to create a striking, but ephemeral sound. Judging by their surviving writings, most seem to have shared the common view of the period, which saw the natives as inherently inferior to Europeans. According to this view, at best the natives should be treated as children (as were the colonial subjects in South East Asia) and at worst, attempts should be made to exterminate them (as in the case of the Kanaks of New Caledonia). Xenophobic views are equally apparent in the writings of composers of the best, as well as the worst, exotic music of the nineteenth century. Both Berlioz and Bizet, for example, who never travelled to any of the colonies and rarely made more than passing comment on colonial natives, nevertheless made their feelings of superiority over the Italians plain during their stays at the Villa Medici. Only a very few musicians

stood outside this view. Bourgault-Ducoudray, as we have seen, placed the music of other nations on an equal footing with that of Europe, and hoped to achieve a rejuvenation of the European style as a result of fusion between them. Earlier in the century, Salvador Daniel placed a similar value on Arab music, although significantly he did not have a comparable vision of its role. Daniel ranks among the most courageous musicians of the nineteenth century, as he made trips through territories which were extremely dangerous for Europeans in his researches into native music. However, his representation of the importance of his research reveals him to be less idealistic than Bourgault-Ducoudray, as he indicates that, in his view, Arab music is worth study mainly in order to reveal what early medieval European music would have been like.

Similar Eurocentric agendas lie beneath the attitudes of other composers to native music and cultures. Debussy's apparent regard for the music of South East Asia reveals a common view of the native as being 'natural', in touch with instincts which the 'civilised' Westerner has lost. As was shown earlier, this attitude is not as simple as it appears, and hides a set of assumptions about natives which are much less palatable. Nevertheless, it is important not merely to condemn the musicians of the nineteenth century for sharing the views of the vast majority of their countrymen and women on the subject of race. On the contrary, where efforts were made to present a more positive view of the native to the metropole, this should be noted, as in the cases of Bourgault-Ducoudray and Salvador Daniel.

The exotic, as we saw earlier in this thesis, was a dynamic part of the European nineteenth-century imagination, perhaps particularly because of its connection with the erotic. In the exotic setting, fantasies concerning women could be played out in a much more explicit way than would be possible in a work with a contemporary, or even historical, European setting (although Meyerbeer certainly did his best in the bathing scene in *Les Huguenots*). The frequent use in such works of the central image of the Orient in the West, the harem, is an example of the potential of the exotic to enable an unleashing of the Western male imagination in an erotic fantasy

which is, at the same time, safely confined within the sphere of the opera house or concert hall. There is a strong parallel here with the often violent or exploitative actions of colonial administrators, business men or soldiers, whose fantasies of domination could be most easily played out in the colony.

Many questions concerning the purpose of exotic music, like that of the French Empire itself, have remained largely unanswered. Historians still wrangle over the reasons for the creation of an Empire which, as one writer rather disarmingly concedes, had 'no definable function, economic or otherwise'.¹ Eric Hobsbawm suggests that it was the idea that colonies would provide almost unlimited economic potential for markets and resources that lay behind most imperial expansion, and 'the fact that this was often disappointed is irrelevant'.² R.I. Moore gives up entirely on a unified explanation for imperialism, regarding it as basically a baffling phenomenon at best explained by totally different causes in each separate case.³

However, it does seem possible to discern some kind of pattern in the uses to which exotic music has been put. The first conclusion is that exotic music is intended to demonstrate the superiority of the West over the East, in racial as well as musical terms. One has only to think of the endless list of comic or villainous natives in numerous exotic operas to be forcibly reminded of this stock characterisation. In music, the superiority of the West is most openly stated in writings upon it, particularly in the work of ethnomusicologists. F.J. Fétis, who is often considered to be the founder of this discipline, provides abundant examples in his writings. In a book on music produced for an uneducated audience in 1844, Fétis explains that not all nations use the same scales in their music. However, he takes the view that such native scales show 'logical defect' compared to standard European ones.⁴ From this, Fétis concludes that those nations who delight in such disorderly sounds must themselves be lacking in certain moral qualities which, by logical extension, are to be found only in European nations.

Like many conservative musicians, Fétis warns against tampering with the Western musical system. However, he combines the threat of musical disorder with

that of racial degeneration. Speaking of the Western major scale, he states that 'it cannot be denied that its propriety, in the arrangement of the sounds, is perfect, and that another order could not be substituted for it, without greatly affecting melody as well as harmony, nor, consequently, *without changing the nature of our sensations*'.⁵ For musicians such as Fétis, such change is unthinkable as it involves loss of superiority. This seems to go a long way to explain why so much exotic music places its local colour in such a notably Western framework, and why exoticisms tend to be instantly recognizable and so often similarly repeated. It is a way of managing the subversive potential of the exotic material.

However, musical exoticism goes further than merely expressing superiority over the native. It can be seen, along with many other manifestations of Western representation, as a demonstration of power over the subject. A source for this view is the work of the cultural critic Edward Said. In his book, *Orientalism*, Said states that Orientalism is 'more valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient'.⁶ This argument is borne out by many exotic works directly relevant to the imperial theme, such as those operas (of Delibes, for example) which yield no musical or, indeed, any other kind of information on India, but merely demonstrate European conventions concerning the country and Western dominance over it. The exercise of this power is not simply political in its effects, however. In granting the Western observer the ability to move at will through the exotic domain, observing the scene without the limitations of culture or custom that restrict the natives, the exotic genre is conferring pleasure to a high degree. This pleasure in surveillance was noted earlier in this thesis in the *Description de l'Égypte*, as well as in exotic compositions such as *Le désert*. The fact that this sensation of omniscience is largely illusory does not appear to have diminished its appeal to audiences.

In a recent article Ralph Locke has discussed Saint-Saëns's opera *Samson et Dalila* in the context of European power and knowledge. Locke's main focus of interest is not on the opera itself, but in determining the purpose of exoticism in

the work, and more broadly, that of musical exoticism as a whole. Locke takes the opera as an atypical example of musical exoticism, which nevertheless illustrates its connection with many of the ideas concerning race and identity which underlie the genre. There is comparatively little in the article on the music of the opera. Locke notes the prevailing musical characteristics of the work, presenting a summary of their largely modal character, which he describes as 'that single most distinctive sign of temporal or geographical displacement in Western music of recent centuries'.⁷ However, such a list is, for Locke, a limitation, and a sign of a reductive approach to exotic works. Following this line of treatment of the subject, Locke argues, leads merely to a simple search for 'genuine' features in the music, which, of course, cannot usually be found. To avoid what he sees as this cul-de-sac, he presents his aim as being 'to consider a broader range of operatic techniques, including how individual figures are characterised'.⁸ In this context Locke argues that the biblical setting of *Samson et Dalila* reinforces the relevance of the opera to those Western ideas which underlie the foundation of Empire. Taking the captive Hebrews of the opera to represent the West, Locke states the opera's discursive practice as a 'binary opposition between a morally superior "us" (or "collective Self") and an appealing but dangerous "them" ("collective Other")'.⁹

Locke presents here a wholly opposing view to his earlier writing on the orientalisms of David, which, as we have seen, was innocent of any understanding of imperial, racial or theoretical context. As his use of technical theoretical terms indicates, he is concerned to show a sophisticated awareness of the potential of exotic music to 'signal Otherness'. Locke's aim is now to treat exotic music 'as works inscribed with an ideologically driven view of the East, a view now generally known as "Orientalism"'.¹⁰ In so doing he is discussing properties of Occidental meaning and structure using a methodology and terminology derived from the work of critical theorists. These properties, discussed below, should not be understood to be consciously apparent to the protagonists, but to be inherent in

the constructions of meaning fabricated in the West.

It is, therefore, in his investigation into the purpose of musical exoticism that Locke's main contribution lies in this article. Locke presents a convincing analysis of exoticism, claiming that 'the primary aim of nineteenth century Orientalism was to "represent" the East to the West'.¹¹ He goes on to say that 'the drive to portray, to capture these unfamiliar regions was often motivated, though not always consciously, by Westerners' needs and desires'.¹² Earlier in this thesis we have seen many examples of such representation being placed at the service of Western ideas, for example the (fictional) distinction drawn by Daniel between Arab and Kabyle in his *Album de chansons arabes, mauresques et kabyles*. Locke expands the argument further by forming a parallel between the ideas of imperialism and those of other discourses of domination in European culture, such as the relationship between men and women.

Locke returns to his initial observations concerning the limitations of a purely musical analysis of exotic works in his conclusion. He states that the 'cultural products of Orientalism... may be hopelessly outdated as any kind of statement about the non-Western regions they ostensibly portray, but... [what] they tell us about the West's uneasy relationship to the larger world - and about the West's many internal dissymmetries: of race, religion, gender, social class - still rings hauntingly true'.¹³

Locke's analysis of musical exoticism is one of the first attempts to open up the subject to the ideas of critical theorists. As such it is an enormously important contribution. However, there are some aspects of Locke's argument which could be taken further in the search for an understanding of the purpose and function of musical exoticism. The first stage of such an expansion is the idea, mentioned by Locke, of 'binary oppositions'. In brief, a binary opposition consists of two terms, of which the second is derived from, and inferior to, the first.¹⁴ In *Orientalism*, Said illustrates this argument by describing how 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate

and even underground self'.¹⁵ The essential character of the races is constructed and reinforced by this means. In Said's words, 'the Oriental is irrational, deprived (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal"'.¹⁶ In the first chapter of this thesis, we have seen how the early 'inventors' of *intermedii* and opera used what they took to be Greek and Roman classical models to create a new musical form. In the process they also reshaped the musical history of Europe, emphasising their new-found independence from Arab influences by reaching back to an imagined past. It is therefore particularly appropriate that opera should be the main vehicle for exoticism in nineteenth-century French music, and that the images of Orientals presented by the form should generally be comic, lustful, cruel or weak.

From this it is clear that, far from exotic works being 'about' the 'non-Western regions they ostensibly portray', they are actually concerned on a deeper level with constructing not Oriental, but Western identity. The views of the Orient seen repeatedly in exotic works are not 'hopelessly outdated', as Locke rather too generously suggests. They are rather entirely fictional, being a reiteration of binary oppositions which have the function of asserting the power of the West, not only over the Orient, but over itself through the formulation of its own identity.

However, the construction of identity is not all that follows from the system of binary oppositions, any more than it is all that takes place in nineteenth-century opera. By resting content solely with this limited reading, Locke is himself offering a somewhat reductive interpretation of musical exoticism. Resulting from the creation of such a systematised alterity are two effects which Locke does not consider in his article, but which are particularly important in a consideration of the relationship between exoticism and imperialism. These are termed 'desire' and 'resistance'.

'Desire' is a complex condition which arises inescapably from the Western construction of identity. Identity arises not from the labelling of things which already exist in the real world, but from the creation of a system of differences

and binary oppositions, out of which a particular conception of 'reality' is constructed. This means that identity is not founded on fixed properties, but is contingent, arising from its difference from other things. The recognition of this unsettling difference which lies at the heart of the construction of identity is termed 'lack', and it leads to an attempt to appropriate and contain 'otherness'. It is this complex of ideas which is termed 'desire'.¹⁷

The above formulation itself gives an impression of negativity and anxiety surrounding the painful process of constructing identity. However, although the condition of 'desire' may arise from the instability of meaning, the search for fixity of signification is also attended by a pleasure principle. In addition to the pleasure of power over the other, shown, as we have seen, in the Western treatment of native music, is another potential pleasure: that of absorption. The 'other', while primarily an object of fear and distaste, is also a powerful attraction, appealing but dangerous. The combined threat and allure of the 'other' is one of the qualities which gives it its power over the Western imagination. This can be seen in full force not only in exotic works, but particularly in images of women. Where the two combine, as in the heroine of *Carmen*, the image may be elevated to an unparalleled representative status. The concept of desire helps to explain why, at the deepest level, musical exoticism cannot be ignored by Western composers or audiences. It is literally the case that, did it not exist, it would have to have been invented – and it was.

The addition of the idea of desire to the notion of binary oppositions in the discussion of the meaning of the exotic broadens the conception of the subject from a rigid and reductive 'either/or' to that of a discursive space in which various meanings compete for dominance. This conceptualisation places the study of the exotic much closer to the similar battle of meanings going on in the physical world of the empire, particularly when the concept of 'resistance' is also introduced.

The system of binary opposites operates, as we have seen, through the construction of two terms, of which the latter is 'other' to the former. In the case

of exoticism, the two terms are, at their simplest, Occident and Orient. However, the material which constitutes 'otherness' in this exchange of meaning also has its own identity and its own voice. It may reach conclusions about its position in the order of things which differ completely from the perceptions of the dominant mode of constructing identity. It would be more accurate in this context to speak of 'competing perceptions of reality', rather than any difference between 'reality' and 'construction of meaning'. The recent aim of some feminist writers has been to attempt to articulate a resistant voice and reshape a separate identity, independent from the formulations imposed by patriarchal structures of language and meaning. This determination to avoid incorporation into the dominant structure of meaning is termed 'resistance'. In the history of the French Empire, we have seen that native resistance generally took the form of armed opposition to their colonial masters. This took place far more frequently than imperial mythology has previously allowed, even though these moments of resistance were largely unsuccessful in producing contemporary political change.

Musical exoticism may at first seem to present a different set of possibilities. Exotic native material can easily be seen to be passive, not possessing a will of its own or an ability to resist appropriation. There was nothing to stop David, Daniel or Saint-Saëns noting down a North African melody and using it in their compositions, unless they had been physically prevented (this scenario is not as far fetched as may first appear, and did often happen in the case of European archaeologists attempting to copy inscriptions from monuments in Arabia, until modern times). Nevertheless, authentic native musical material *did* resist simple incorporation into Western musical style, as may be seen repeatedly in exotic works. European musicians were continually faced with other facets of resistance in authentic musical material, such as the problems of how to record melodies in suitable notation, how to interpret performance style, and whether to harmonise melodies, to name but a few. When recognisable features of native music were incorporated into Western music, as in the case of Debussy, they tended not

simply to be a passive decoration but to have a profound effect on the established tonal system.

Thus it is possible to see a more constructive role for an observation of the presence or absence of genuine native musical characteristics in European exotic works than is given by Locke. If this absence or presence is simply noted, then admittedly not a great deal of knowledge is gained. However, if this is placed in the context of the contemporary knowledge, exploration and conquest of the territories concerned, and the resistance of the material to incorporation is fully explained, as has been the intention in this thesis, then arguably some understanding of the complex processes of Western ideology, cultural exchange and the construction of identity has emerged.

The phenomenon of musical exoticism in nineteenth-century French music may thus be regarded as intricately bound up with the Western mode of constructing meaning. Nevertheless, musical exoticism is not simply a self-reflective process. The personnel of French exotic works may well be seen to be 'Frenchmen in disguise'; but in the appearance of, and at the same time the resistance to appropriation of native musical material, the 'other' in this equation insists that its presence be noted. In an analogy to the physical battles over the territories of the empire itself, musical exoticism becomes a discursive space across which opposing discourses compete. It seems likely that, as long as the West adheres to its present mode of constructing meaning, the exotic, like the poor, will always be with us.

ENDNOTES TO EPILOGUE

1. Fieldhouse, D.K.: *The Colonial Empires* (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1966), 381.
2. Hobsbawm, E.J.: *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, Abacus, 1994), 66.
3. Moore, R.I. (ed.): *The Hamlyn Historical Atlas* (London, Hamlyn, 1981), 124.
4. Fétis, F.J.: *Music Explained to the World* (London, Clarke, 1844), 25.
5. *Ibid.*, 26 (my italics).
6. Said, E.: *Orientalism* (London, Penguin, 1991), 6.
7. Locke, R.P.: 'Constructing the oriental "other": Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 3/3 (1991), 266.
8. *Ibid.*, 262.
9. *Ibid.*, 263.
10. *Ibid.*, 262.
11. *Ibid.*, 266.
12. *Ibid.*, 265.
13. *Ibid.*, 302.
14. This concept comes from the ideas of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, particularly expressed in his *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), which have formed the basis of modern psychoanalytic theory and much feminist theory.
15. Said, E.: *op. cit.*, 3.
16. *Ibid.*, 40.
17. For a fuller discussion of these terms, see Moi, T.: *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London, Routledge, 1988), 99-101.

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