

multifactorielle, mais où le champ émotionnel tient une place considérable. Sans minimiser la part du remords, de la mauvaise conscience, ou la tentation de gommer de la mémoire des moments de l'histoire dérangeants, le désir d'identification en dit plus et exprime autre chose. Dans la France de la Libération, l'appropriation de la Résistance est une tentative de réappropriation du futur.¹³

Le 'désir d'identification' dont parle Laborie renvoie bien à l'identité, et même, plus précisément, à la quête d'identité, à la projection de soi vers un soi en devenir ou souhaité. Et l'on voit bien comment ce regard vers le futur s'accorde parfaitement avec la définition chère à Sartre de l'homme comme 'projet', choisissant son futur et non son passé. Confondre appropriation et instrumentalisation de la Résistance, c'est confondre la mémoire de la Résistance et le résistancialisme: c'est contribuer à faire de la Résistance un mythe. Or, et Sartre le savait fort bien, la Résistance ne fut pas un mythe.

¹ Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'Choisir son passé: Sartre mémorialiste de la France occupée', *La Naissance du 'phénomène Sartre', raison d'un succès 1938-1945*, éd. par Ingrid Galster (Paris, Seuil, 2001), pp. 213-37 (repris, en anglais, dans son ouvrage récent *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 13-35).

² Selon le mot d'Henry Rouso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy de 1944 à nos jours* (Paris, Points Seuil, 1990), pp. 42-48.

³ Suleiman parle d'un 'héroïsme démocratique accessible à "chaque Français"' in 'Choisir son passé', p. 223.

⁴ Suleiman, 'Choisir son passé', p. 236.

⁵ Joseph Gilbert, *Une si Douce Occupation* (Paris, Albin Michel, 1991) et Jean-François Sirinelli, *Deux Intellectuels dans le siècle* (Paris, Fayard, 1995).

⁶ Ce sont les mots qu'utilise Jacques Lecarme dans 'Sartre et Drieu devant le fascisme', *Etudes Sartriennes*, 6 (Nanterre, RITM, 1995), pp. 261-83 (p. 270). Voir aussi Juliette Simont, 'Sartre et la question de l'historicité: réflexions au-delà d'un procès', *Les Temps modernes*, 613 (2001), pp. 109-30.

⁷ Principalement dans *Les Lettres françaises*, le journal clandestin du Comité National des Écrivains, la principale instance de la Résistance littéraire qu'il rejoint en 1943 quand le Parti Communiste Français, très influent en son sein, décide d'élargir sa base. Voir, par exemple, Gisèle Sapiro, *La Guerre des écrivains* (Paris, Fayard, 1999), pp. 490-92.

⁸ Sur ces points, voir Jonathan Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre and The Jewish Question* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska, 2006), pp. 81-96 et Ingrid Galster, 'Résistance intellectuelle et soutien passif de Vichy? Réflexions sur un paradoxe dans l'itinéraire intellectuel de Sartre', *Les Intellectuels et l'Occupation*, éd. par Albert Betz et Stefan Martens (Paris, Autrement, 2004), pp. 151-69.

⁹ Voir Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre, 1905-1980* (Paris, Gallimard, 1985), pp. 224-44.

¹⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Autoportrait à soixante-dix ans', *Situations X* (Paris, Gallimard, 1976), pp. 133-226 (p. 180).

¹¹ Voir, par exemple, Jean-Paul Sartre, *Lettres au Castor*, II (Paris, Gallimard, 1983), pp. 89-94 (lettres datées des 23 et 24 février 1940).

¹² Pierre Laborie, *Les Français des années troubles* (Paris, Points Seuil, 2003), p. 276.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

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POETRY AND MUSIC: A DOOMED LOVE AFFAIR?

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Baudelaire's famous sonnet 'La Mort des amants' paints a scene of idealised love only attainable beyond the grave. Readings of this sonnet have typically explored the inter-related notions of love, death and transcendence, relating these to Baudelaire's overall œuvre and the Symbolist aesthetic. Few readings, however, have explored the 'music' of this sonnet, even though one of the earliest critical reflections on this particular text, by fellow poet Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, refers to the

sonnet's latent 'musicality'.¹ Following Villiers's example, it seems, other contemporary poets and composers also began to explore the sonnet's relationship with music. This poem has been subject to a disproportionately large number of musical settings (ranking alongside other more obviously musical poems such as 'Harmonie du soir'). That one of these settings was by Debussy indicates that this was a poem that attracted significant musical interest.² This musical interest on the part of composers working in the same aesthetic milieu as Baudelaire should enable us to understand how poetic texts and music are able to intersect. What arises, however, is something far more problematic, as the intersections between poetry and music become tangled in a web of relationships apparently doomed to failure and resisting clear explanation.

In spring 1861, Villiers wrote in a letter to Baudelaire that he perceived there to be some kind of 'théories musicales' in 'La Mort des amants'.³ However, we know that Baudelaire himself was no musician, let alone a musical theorist. As Alan Raitt points out: 'Baudelaire lui-même ne dut pas être médiocrement surpris d'apprendre [...] qu'il avait appliqué des théories musicales dans *La Mort des Amants*.'⁴ The implication is that when Villiers deploys the word 'musicales', he is referring to something that is, in essence, a property of poetry, whether this be manifested in alliteration, assonance, choice of metre, overall diction, or a combination of these elements. Villiers's comment seems to signal a fractious, and yet enticing, relationship between poetic language and musical properties in this sonnet which he is at a loss to explain.

Villiers's choice of the term 'musicale' is especially problematic. As Peter Dayan, following Baudelaire on Wagner, elaborates in his study *Music Writing Literature, from Sand via Debussy to Derrida*:

What actually distinguishes a musical poem from an unmusical one? As soon as we try to explain, we find ourselves hearing the poem's siren voices, telling us things we cannot believe; we hear what we do not understand; and if we try to translate those voices, the result is laughable — as laughable, perhaps, as Baudelaire's epistolary translation of the feelings inspired by Wagner's music would have been — unless we can ourselves write as poets do.⁵

If it is indeed the case that only poetic language is up to the task of explaining the relationship between the poetic and musical, this means that current academic scholarship in the field of word and music studies face a critical dilemma: should scholars attempt 'standard' academic discourse at all? In order to alleviate the difficulties, scholars should turn first of all to what other poets of the era have to say about the subject in order to verify whether this premise holds true. This is where the case of 'La Mort des amants' is particularly helpful.

What other poets do by way of 'explaining' the sonnet's 'musicality' is to turn it into music by composing a song setting. It is clear that Villiers's comment on Baudelaire's 'théories musicales' cited above does not help us very much in understanding the nature of the affair between poetry and music. However, Villiers did compose one of the earliest settings of 'La Mort des amants' in the mid-1860s which demonstrates a romantic sensitivity to Baudelaire's text by granting a certain freedom to the vocal line. Villiers's setting was never published in his lifetime, since his musical prowess did not extend to being able to write it down in musical notation; the notated versions (by friends more skilled in the technical aspects of music) concur in the way they imply a need for rubato which grants

greater weight to the role of the vocal line over the (rather simple but effective) underlying harmonies.⁶ Has Villiers, himself a poet but this time working through the medium of music, succeeded in ‘explaining’ the ‘théories musicales’ in his setting? Is music itself up to the task? In order to evaluate this, we need to turn to other settings of the poem by other poet-composers. Whilst we could hardly claim that Debussy is a renowned poet, he did, nonetheless write and set his own poetry to music. His setting of ‘La Mort des amants’ (in 1887) represents one of the pinnacles of French *mélodie* composition, in part because of its harmonic complexity.⁷ Rather than ‘explaining’ the music of Baudelaire’s poem, however, it grapples more with Wagner, citing semi-veiled Wagnerian references (specifically to *Parsifal*).⁸ Villiers’s setting is by a poet who dabbled in music, where Debussy’s setting is by a composer who dabbled in poetry. Both reveal their natural inclination to one or the other art form rather than an attempt at perfect union between the two, or a clear explanation of how that union might work.

If we are to find someone who qualifies as both poet and composer, Maurice Rollinat initially stands out as not only a published poet and composer, but also someone who set ‘La Mort des amants’. His most successful poetical publication (from 1886) was *Les Névroses*, a collection clearly inspired by Baudelaire. These poems were written during the same period in which he also published song settings of Baudelaire’s poetry with Heugel.⁹ However, Rollinat’s success in composition and subsequent performance is not necessarily guaranteed, and this calls into question the poet’s ability to explain how the relationship between poetry and music can work. As Verlaine’s scathing critique of Rollinat in *Les Hommes d’aujourd’hui* notes, Rollinat needed the support of music in order to rescue his own poetry. Verlaine comments on the manner in which Rollinat performed, writing that ‘Les amis de M. Maurice Rollinat lui attribuent un réel talent de déclamateur au piano qui n’aurait pas nui au *débit* de ses vers.’¹⁰ The Goncourt brothers, meanwhile, are more complimentary of Rollinat’s skill when it is assisted by the work of Baudelaire, writing in 1883 that ‘Cette musique [qu’il a faite sur quelques pièces de Baudelaire] est vraiment d’une compréhension tout à fait supérieure.’¹¹ Notwithstanding the Goncourts’ apparent praise, Rollinat’s setting of ‘La Mort des amants’ is in fact a rather repetitive, strophic setting, which uses the rather simplistic device of switching between D minor and D major for each verse. Moreover, because Rollinat re-uses the same material throughout, the melody and harmonisation deployed for the quatrains is then re-used verbatim for the tercets. This inevitably creates a conflict between the demands of the musical phraseology and those of the poem itself. In order to overcome the fact that the melody is made up of a four-phrase structure where the tercets constitute only three phrases, Rollinat simply adds an additional line by repeating the middle line of each tercet.¹² Rather than demonstrating a perfect union between poetry and music, Rollinat — as the figure who seemed at a first glance to be the best qualified to elaborate the relationship between poetry and music — has in fact distorted Baudelaire’s text the most. This would seem to refute the hypothesis that only poets are able to write about the relationship between poetry and music, even when (or perhaps especially when?) that writing is in music itself.

Rollinat’s endeavours suggest that even poets steeped in the Symbolist aesthetic, an aesthetic in which the love affair between poetry and music was exploited so extensively, can fail to elaborate effectively on that relationship. Were it not for the

masterful Debussy setting, it would be tempting to say that any attempt at setting ‘La Mort des amants’ to music would destroy the poem’s own latent ‘musicality’ which remains necessarily difficult to elucidate or pin down. Villiers’s own setting offers a different angle from which to explore his analysis of the poem as one which demonstrates Baudelaire’s ‘théories musicales’ but ultimately the relationship remains problematic. What I hope to have demonstrated, however, is that, contrary to what Baudelaire outlined in his article on Wagner, and contrary to what Peter Dayan still maintains today, we do not all need to be poets in order to be able to write about the relationship between poetry and music; we must just make sure that when we do so, we accept the inherent critical difficulties that such a task entails.

¹ Where it has been carried out, it is only in brief. In his study of ‘La Mort des amants’, Jacques Drillon, for example, dedicates only a short final section to musicians’ relationship with the sonnet. See Jacques Drillon, *Les gisants: sur la mort des amants de Baudelaire* (Paris, Gallimard, 2001).

² ‘La Mort des amants’ is the final setting in Debussy’s collection entitled *Cinq poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* composed between 1877–1889.

³ Villiers tells Baudelaire that he considered ‘La Mort des amants’ to be a ‘tour de force [...], où vous appliquez vos théories musicales.’ Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, *Correspondance générale*, 2 vols, ed. by Joseph Bollery (Paris, Mercure de France, 1962), I, p. 46.

⁴ Alan Raitt, *Villiers de l’Isle-Adam et le mouvement symboliste* (Paris: Corti, 1965), p. 64.

⁵ Peter Dayan, *Music Writing Literature, from Sand via Debussy to Derrida* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006), p. 38. Dayan draws on Baudelaire’s comment in the article on Wagner in which he states: ‘Le lecteur ne sera donc pas étonné que je considère le poète comme le meilleur de tous les critiques.’ Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Claude Pichois, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2 vols (Paris, Gallimard, 1975–1976), II, p. 793.

⁶ See, for example, the reproduction of the version notated by Charles de Sivry in 1898 in *Lettres à Baudelaire*, ed. by Claude Pichois (Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1973), p. 385, originally published in *Les Quat’z’arts*, 3 April 1898.

⁷ See the *Prose lyriques* composed 1892–1893.

⁸ Katherine Bergeron’s analysis of this setting, whilst it does not address the critical problems raised by word/music relations in sufficient depth, follows Robin Holloway’s view in *Debussy and Wagner* (London, Ernst Eulenberg, 1979) that Debussy is haunted by *Parsifal* in this setting, citing the ‘Good Friday’ cadence. See Katherine Bergeron, ‘The Echo, the Cry, the Death of Lovers’, *19th-Century Music* 18:2 (1994) pp. 136–151 (pp. 146–147).

⁹ In the collection entitled *Six nouvelles poésies de Ch. Baudelaire*, published c.1885–1887, the third is a setting of ‘La Mort des amants’.

¹⁰ Paul Verlaine, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris, Vanier, 1905), V, p. 358.

¹¹ Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal: Mémoires de la vie littéraire*, 3 vols (Paris, Flammarion, 1956–1989), II, p. 1011.

¹² See <http://fsb.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/ktp033/DC1> for a full recording of Rollinat’s setting of ‘La Mort des amants’, with Helen Abbott (soprano) and Sholto Kynoch (piano). Recorded at Bangor University with the kind assistance of Prof. Andy Lewis. This recording was made during Sholto Kynoch’s residency at Bangor University funded by The Leverhulme Trust. Recording for illustrative purposes only.

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QUÉRIES, REQUESTS, INFORMATION

As part of my hunt for a copy of Vigné d’Octon’s *Terre à galons*, I posted a request for information on the Francofil website on 4 June 2008. It elicited two responses within the day. On the one hand, Michel Rapoport suggested I contact Charles-Robert Ageron, the eminent specialist of North-African literature; unfortunately, by the time I could do this, he had died aged eighty-five, in September 2008, after a long illness. On the other hand, David Adams drew my attention both to the existence of an issue of *L’Assiette au beurre*, the periodical comprising