

## ESSAYS

# THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF HAYDN'S 'PARIS' SYMPHONIES

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Haydn composed his 'Paris' Symphonies, Nos 82–87, in 1785–1786 on commission from the Concert de la Société Olympique, whose orchestra gave the first performances, probably in 1787.<sup>1</sup> This essay considers aspects of these first performances – the audience, the venue and the performers, about which there is all too little information and a certain amount of confusion.<sup>2</sup>

The twelve annual concerts of the Concert Olympique were not public – they were reserved for the subscribing members of the Société, who were required to be members of the sponsoring Masonic lodge, the Loge Olympique de la Parfaite Estime, or its affiliated women's lodge (*loge d'adoption*). In 1787 the combined membership (the potential audience for these concerts) may be estimated as about five hundred persons.<sup>3</sup> About seventy-five per cent of the men were members of the aristocracy,<sup>4</sup> including some of the highest aristocrats of France, such as the Duc de Noailles and the Duc d'Orléans. The others were ecclesiastics, bankers and other commoners. A number of prominent musicians were among the subscribers, including Méhul, Viotti and the well-known amateurs the Baron de Bagge and Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon. There were also about twenty-four *associés libres* – 'free associates' – who, as 'Artistes professeurs ou Amateurs, dont les talents sont necessaires au Concert',<sup>5</sup> did not pay the annual subscription of 120 livres. Since several of them were composers, including Cambini, Framery, Francoeur and Philidor,<sup>6</sup> their function seems to have been to compose music for the concerts or to perform occasionally (only two of them, however, were

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Thanks to Michael Barbour for his many helpful suggestions.

- 1 Considerable background information is given in the opening chapters of Bernard Harrison's *Haydn: The 'Paris' Symphonies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Harrison concentrates on the Concert Spirituel, for which, as he says, 'the most complete information exists' (5).
- 2 The chief primary sources are the two surviving membership directories of the Société Olympique, each of which contains an orchestra list – *Liste des membres qui composent la Société Olympique. Avec leurs qualités et demeures pour l'année 1786*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), H18 751, and *Tableau des membres qui composent la R. L. de la Parfaite-Estime et Société Olympique. Avec leurs qualités civiles et demeures pour l'année 1788*, BNF, Baylot FM2 153 – and a cultural guide to Paris of 1786: Luc-Vincent Thiéry, *Guide des amateurs et des étrangers voyageurs à Paris* (Paris, 1786).
- 3 The male membership in 1786 was 363, according to Pierre Chevallier, 'Nouvelles lumières sur la Société Olympique', *Dix-huitième siècle* 19 (1987), 137. By 1788 the numbers stood at 357 men and 231 women, according to James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 75.
- 4 Gerardo Tocchini, *I fratelli d'Orfeo: Gluck e il teatro musicale massonico tra Vienna e Parigi* (Florence: Olschki, 1998), 219, provides the most complete breakdown of the male membership figures for the year 1786. David Hennebelle, 'Nobles, musique et musiciens à Paris à la fin de l'Ancien Régime', *Revue de musicologie* 87/2 (2001), 395–418, is informative and thought-provoking on the evolving role of aristocratic patronage as private orchestras in Paris were gradually superseded in the 1770s and 1780s by institutional, semi-public orchestras such as that of the Concert Olympique.
- 5 *Liste des membres 1786*, preamble.
- 6 Jean-Luc Quoy-Bodin, 'L'orchestre de la Société Olympique en 1786', *Revue de musicologie* 70/1 (1984), 98–99, gives a more complete listing of the musicians among both the subscribing members and the *associés libres* in 1786.



members of the orchestra: the leader, Navoigille, and Rivière *cadet*, a violist), or possibly to act as an advisory board. In the *loge d'adoption* the wives and daughters of male subscribers are among those listed, as well as women well known in their own right, such as the memoirist the Marquise de La Tour du Pin.

As of 1786 the concerts were held in the Salle des Gardes on the main floor of the Palace of the Tuileries (see Figures 1, 2, 3, 4).<sup>7</sup> Access was by way of the spacious open vestibule directly beneath the Salle des Suisses. From here one ascended the grand staircase to the Salle des Suisses (where the Concert Spirituel had been held until 1784), thence into the Salle des Gardes.<sup>8</sup> The dimensions of this room were approximately seventy-five and a half by thirty-two feet (an almost identical size to the Hanover Square Rooms in London, where the first nine of Haydn's 'London' Symphonies were premiered in 1791–1794). The ceiling was twenty-three and a half feet high.<sup>9</sup> As had been done next door for the Concert Spirituel, a platform for the orchestra was placed at the south end of the room, in front of the fireplace.<sup>10</sup> A tiered arrangement of seating was installed along the other three sides.<sup>11</sup>

The full Olympique orchestra in 1787 may tentatively be estimated as numbering between sixty-five, the 1786 membership, and the seventy-two listed for 1788.<sup>12</sup> On the 1786 list forty-three of the players were professionals, twelve were amateurs (all string players, except for one flautist) and ten have not been identified.<sup>13</sup> The proportions in the 1788 orchestra were similar. The increase from 1786 to 1788 was all in the

7 Not the Salle des Suisses, as stated by, among others, Quoy-Bodin, 'L'orchestre', 97, who misreads Thiéry, *Guide*, 383 and note 1.

8 If, as one presumable eyewitness asserts, the Queen, Marie Antoinette, occasionally attended these concerts (her faithful friend, the Princess Lamballe, was a subscribing member), she would have had, via the south terrace and the Salle des Suisses, direct access to the Salle des Gardes from the pied-à-terre on the main floor of the south wing of the palace, garden side, which she kept so that she could avoid the ride back to Versailles after evenings out in Paris. Jacques Marquet de Montbreton de Norvins, *Souvenirs d'un historien de Napoléon: memorial de J. de Norvins*, Publié avec un avertissement et des notes par L. de Lanzac de Laborie (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1897 (but completed by de Norvins in 1847)), volume 1, 158. De Norvins (17 June 1769 to 30 July 1854), the distinguished man of letters and historian of Napoleon, was only seventeen or eighteen years old in 1787. But nothing in his description of the Concert Olympique is refuted by the documentary sources, and his account of having attended one of its concerts on Ash Wednesday, probably in 1789 (157), rings true.

9 Mathieu Couty, 'Le château de 1789 à 1799', in *Les Tuileries au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Emmanuel Jacquin (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1990), 69. This book contains much information about the history and architecture of the palace.

10 Daniel Heartz, 'The Concert Spirituel in the Tuileries Palace', *Early Music* 21/2 (1993), 240–248, shows eighteenth-century drawings of the arrangements for the Concert Spirituel, as does Jacquin, *Les Tuileries*, 28–29.

11 Thiéry, *Guide*, 383 ('Des gradins disposés en amphithéâtre sur les côtés de cette salle, servent à placer des banquettes au pourtour'). Barry S. Brook, in his *La symphonie française de la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Publications de l'institute de musicologie de l'université de Paris, 1962), volume 1, 340, shows an illustration of the 'Salle de spectacle de la Société Olympique' (woodcut, collection André Meyer, no date) which, however, cannot be the Salle des Gardes, since it represents an actual theatre with boxes. It may well be the theatre, built in 1795, which was used from 1801 by the 'Société Olympique' (a post-Revolutionary revival) for Italian opera. See Jean Mongrédien, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism 1789–1830*, trans. Sylvain Frémaux (Portland, OR: Amadeus, 1996), 112, 114. H. C. Robbins Landon, equally mistaken, apparently refers to the same theatre in his discussion of Haydn's 'Paris' Symphonies in *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, volume 2: *Haydn at Eszterháza, 1766–1790* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 593.

12 Not seventy-four, as stated in Johnson, *Listening*, 76 (and in Elizabeth Cook, 'Paris', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2002), volume 19, 92), who perhaps counted as four players the two trumpet players doubling as trombonists. Since the directory-brochure of 1788 contains an almanac for the year 1788, it probably was published towards the end of the previous year. If so, then the orchestra list may reflect the membership for 1787. On the other hand, the Société's season apparently began in January (we know that it began on 11 January in 1786; see Thiéry, *Guide*, 384, note 1), so that the orchestra membership for the 1788 season may have been known already in time for publication.

13 Quoy-Bodin, 'L'orchestre', 104.

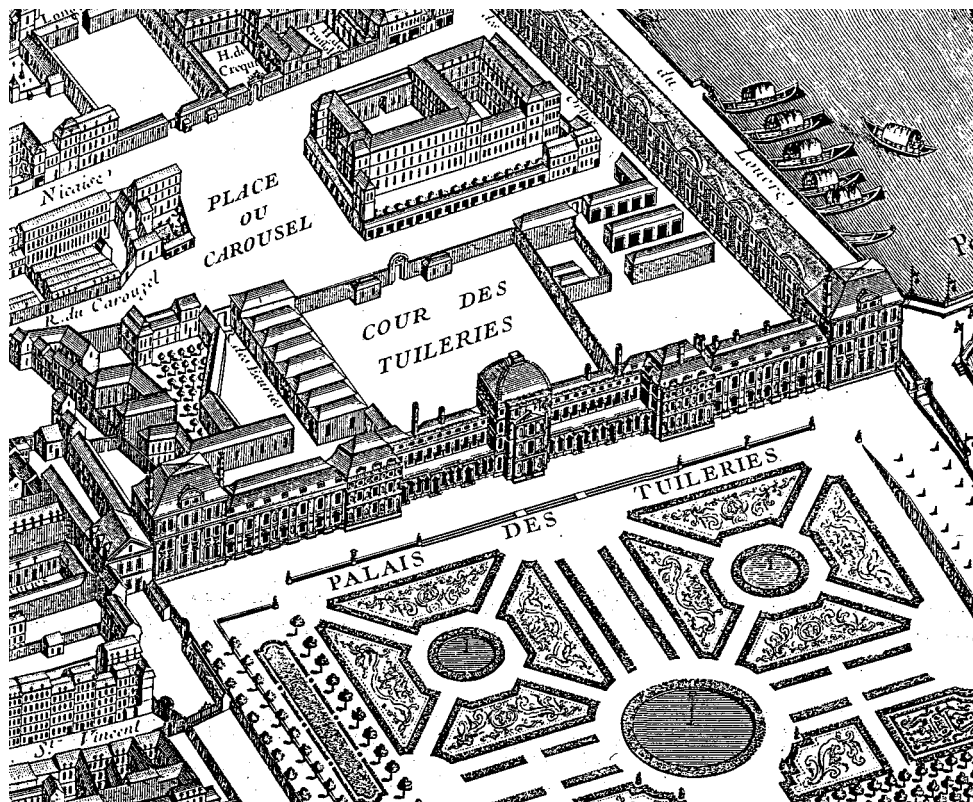


Figure 1 The Louvre and the Tuileries: 'Plan Turgot', 1739. This area remained much the same until the Revolution. The Louvre is connected to the palace of the Tuileries by the long gallery extending along the bank of the Seine. (The northern extension was begun by Napoleon in the early nineteenth century.)

strings – from forty-nine (14, 14, 7, 10, 4) to fifty-six (16, 15, 9, 12, 4).<sup>14</sup> The rest of the orchestra remained stable at sixteen players (3/2, 2, 2, 2/3; 4, 2; 1), the only change being the migration of the amateur flautist to the bassoons.

Research in the last twenty or thirty years into late eighteenth-century orchestras has taught us that it is hazardous to generalize about such matters as orchestral size, disposition, balance among and within sections, rotation of personnel, reduction of the orchestra for certain types of pieces, use of keyboard continuo and leadership (first violinist / keyboardist / baton wielder). These elements differed widely from time to time, from place to place and, in any particular place, from one type of orchestra to another. Haydn's 'Paris' Symphonies were performed not only by the large orchestra (of some seventy players, as I argue below) that commissioned them, but also by the Esterházy orchestra of some twenty-five players.<sup>15</sup> There is very little information about the other repertory of the Concert Olympique – information which might have thrown light on some of these matters. There is no reason not to suppose, however, that Haydn's symphonies were as central to its repertory as they were to that of the Concert Spirituel. This is suggested by the commission of Symphonies Nos 90–92 by the Comte d'Ogny, one of the founders of the Concert Olympique.

14 The balance among the string sections, including the hefty cello section, was similar to that of the orchestra of the Concert Spirituel, which in 1787 numbered about fifty-six to fifty-nine players.

15 See A. Peter Brown, 'Performance Practice: Orchestral Music', in *Oxford Composer Companions: Haydn*, ed. David Wyn Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 283.



Figure 2 The palace of the Tuileries, west façade, facing the garden, seen from the Quay d'Orsay: painting by Nicolas Raguenet, 1757 (Musée Carnavalet). The central pavilion housing the Salle des Suisses is flanked by two terraces. Six windows of the Salle des Gardes overlook the south terrace. © Photothèque des Musées de la Ville de Paris (ou PMVP) / Cliché: Abdourahim

Further, as with the Concert Spirituel, vocal music figured in its programmes – as indicated by the presence of a chorus in the directories of both 1786 and 1788.<sup>16</sup>

With only seven wind (1, 2, 0, 2; 2) in Symphonies Nos 83, 84, 85 and 87, plus two trumpets and timpanist in Nos 82 and 86, the ratio of strings (probably at least fifty players, extrapolating from the two orchestra lists) to non-strings for the performances of the 'Paris' Symphonies would have been disproportionately weighted in favour of the strings, even allowing for illness or a system of rotation.<sup>17</sup> Since the orchestra gave only twelve concerts annually, a rotation system seems unlikely. The obvious alternative is that the wind was doubled in the tutti.<sup>18</sup> (Some of the extra players required for this were available in the existing roster: the four

16 The Concert Olympique had a roster of eleven singers (seven men and four women, including the celebrated tenor Garat, who was an *associé libre*) in 1786, sixteen (eight men, including the tenor Mengozzy, and eight women, including soprano Saint-Huberti) in 1788. See also Cherubini's two Masonic cantatas (see note 33 below). G. G. Ferrari, in his (generally reliable) *Aneddoti piacevole e interessanti occorsi nella vita di Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari di Rovereto* (London, 1830), tells us that about February 1791 he composed an aria, 'Belle Enée abandonate', for his friend, the bass C. Rovedino, 'who sang it for the first time at the Concert Olympique' (239). This date, by the way, indicates a longer survival of the Concert Olympique after the outbreak of the Revolution than is generally assumed.

17 Neal Zaslaw has shown that in the 'full Classical orchestra' a string section of about twenty-three players characteristically balanced about fourteen non-strings; see 'Toward the Revival of the Classical Orchestra', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 103 (1976/1977), 183.

18 According to Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 456, 'many orchestras [in the period 1774–1796] with string sections larger than 20 must have doubled their wind parts'. See also the same work, Table 12.2, in which are cited the recommendations of the theorists G. Scaramelli, *Saggio sopra i doveri di un primo violino direttore d'orchestra* (Trieste, 1811) and G. Weber, 'Besetzung', in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaft und Künste*, ed. J. S. Ersch and J. G. Gruber (Leipzig, 1822), volume 9, 284–285, for wind doublings to balance string sections of more than thirty-eight and of forty-six to forty-seven players respectively. The same author's 'Toward the Revival', 181, cites Francesco Galeazzi, *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica con un saggio sopra l'arte di suonare il violino* (Rome, 1791–1796), who 'tells us that if the number of violins exceeded 16, it was necessary to double the winds'.

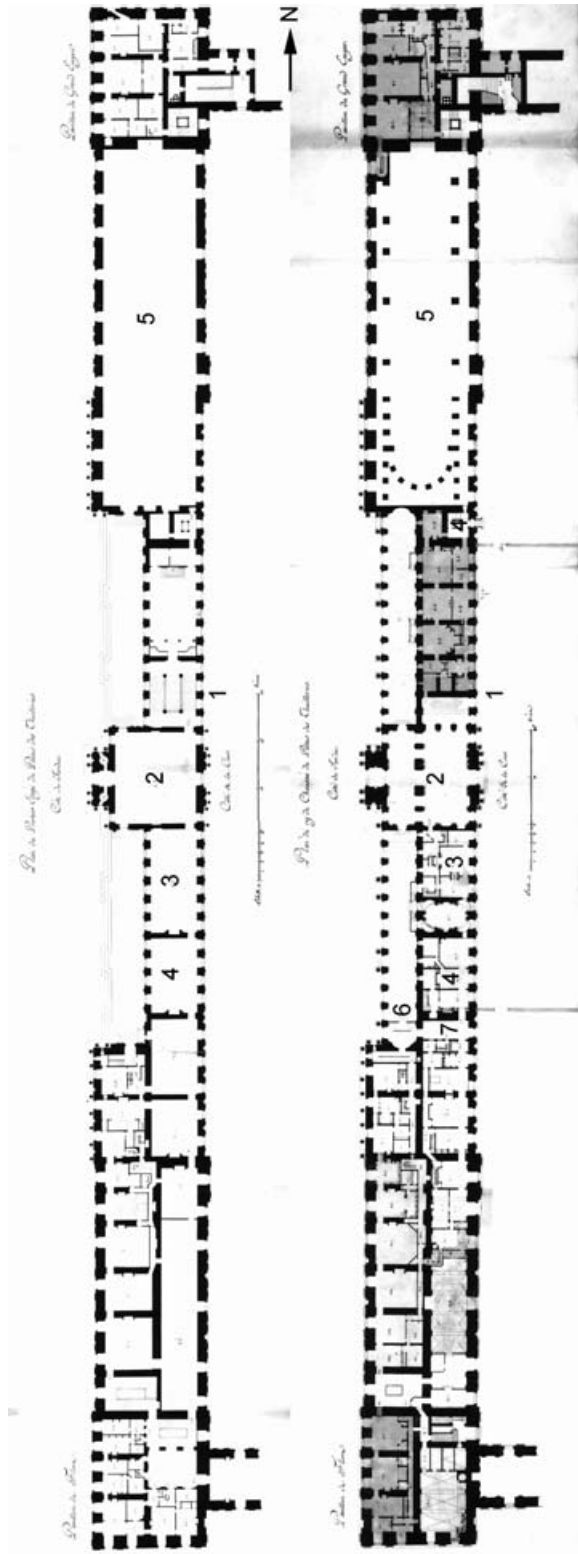


Figure 3 Plans of the palace of the Tuileries (probably 1789): ground floor (below) and main floor (above). Archives Nationales, CPVA59, pièces 15 et 16. Scale shown but illegible. 1, Grand Staircase; 2, Salle des Suisses; 3, Salle des Gardes; 4, Antichambre du Roi; 5, Salle des Machines; 6, stairs in the gallery under the south terrace; 7, Passage from the Cour du Carrousel to the south gallery

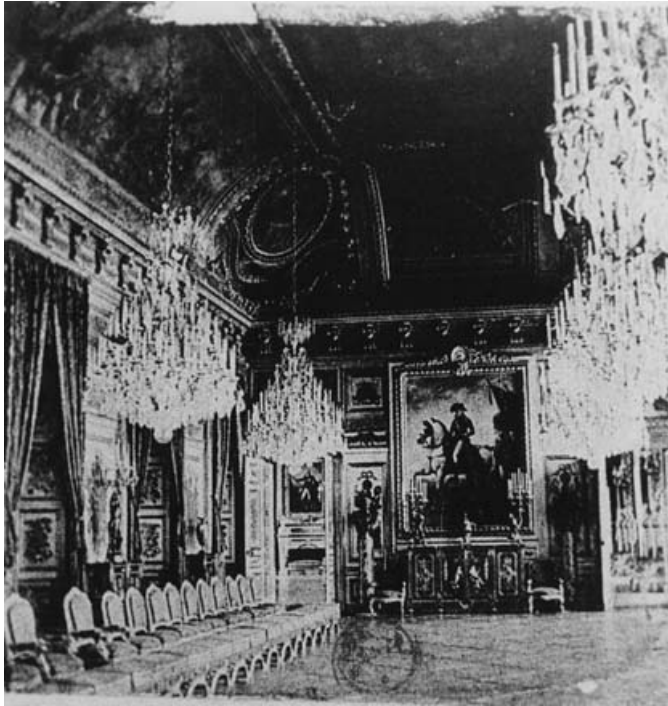


Figure 4 The former Salle des Gardes, later the Salon Blanc or Salon du Premier Consul. Anonymous photographs, c1860 (cliché Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département Estampes et photographie). The upper photograph is a view towards the south end, where the stage for the Concert Olympique was placed; the lower photograph gives the opposite view. By the time this photograph was taken, the terraces overlooking the garden had been enclosed, but this does not appear to have affected structurally the Salle des Gardes. However, the doors visible on the west side at both ends of the room were not there in the eighteenth century, as can be seen in the plan in Figure 3. The ceiling decoration, by Nicolas Loyr, still in place, consisted of mural paintings and low reliefs of mythological and allegorical scenes of military triumphs, battles, trophies, marching armies and the like



horns,<sup>19</sup> the two clarinetists, who might well have been able to double on oboe, and the flautist who could play the bassoon.) This makes for about seventy players, let us say 15, 15, 8, 11, 4; 2, 4, 0, 4; 4, 2; 1 – an exceedingly large orchestra, considering the size of the hall, larger, even, than the orchestra of slightly more than sixty players that gave the premieres of Haydn's last three symphonies in 1795 in the King's Theatre, London, which was a considerably larger hall (ninety-seven by forty-eight feet). It is possible that the strings were reduced for these performances, but against that one may ask for what repertory would the full string section have been used, if not the latest symphonies by Haydn? Our knowledge in this area is scarce. There is evidence, for example, that for concerts of the Vienna Tonkünstler-Societät in the 1780s the orchestra of about eighty players was reduced for the performance of concertos, while playing oratorios at full strength.<sup>20</sup> As for symphonies, the documentation is too incomplete and contradictory to permit firm conclusions. In the absence of contrary evidence, I see no reason not to suppose that the Olympique orchestra would have performed Haydn's 'Paris' Symphonies with its full complement.

It is possible, however, that a certain number of the string players were designated as a *grand choeur* – remaining silent for the soloistic wind passages and other delicate passages – analogous to the ripieno practice for certain concerto performances in the late eighteenth century in which the *ripienisti* played only the tutti.<sup>21</sup> With such a large string section as that of the Concert Olympique this practice does not seem inconceivable.

Considering the relatively complex textures of the 'Paris' Symphonies and the attendant problems of ensemble, as well as the uncertain competence of the amateur players, it would have been a difficult task for the first violinist to lead such a large orchestra from his chair. We may note in this connection that the amateur players were dispersed evenly throughout the string section: in both 1786 and 1788 there was only one desk with two amateurs. The presence in the violins of several desks with four players (there were also desks in the violins, violas and cellos with three players, and in 1788 the third desk of the first violins had five) may indicate that the players stood, allowing them to get slightly closer to their parts than if they had been seated. Sitting or standing, three players might just have been able to share a part (by candlelight, it must be remembered), but four or five? Probably not. It is more likely that there were two parts on a desk. One account has it that some of the members of the orchestra 'played in embroidered suits, with lace cuffs, their swords at their sides and their feathered hats on the seats'.<sup>22</sup> But this description raises more questions than it answers: on *which* seats did they place their hats? And if they wore their swords at their sides, is it not unlikely that they were seated? As always, the cellists are exempted from this consideration.

A conjectural seating (or standing) plan of the Olympique orchestra for the first performance of Haydn's 'Paris' symphonies, and of the audience seating plan as well, is shown in the scale drawing in Figure 5. It assumes a complement of seventy, including the two trumpets and the timpanist needed for Nos 82 and 86. I have drawn upon Neal Zaslaw's hypothetical reconstruction of the plan of the orchestra of the Concert des Amateurs,<sup>23</sup> which seems appropriate since the preamble of the 1786 directory asserts that the Concert Olympique was intended to replace the Concert des Amateurs, dissolved in 1781. The stage may have had

19 In the performances of Haydn's last three symphonies in the Opera Concert of 1795 in London the horns were apparently not included in the wind doubling. See Brown, 'Performance Practice', 283. But there seems no reason why they might not have been doubled for the Olympique concerts.

20 See Dexter Edge, 'Manuscript Parts as Evidence of Orchestral Size in the Eighteenth-Century Concerto', in *Mozart's Piano Concertos*, ed. Neal Zaslaw (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 429–431.

21 Zaslaw, 'Toward the Revival', 179 and note 43, refers to the division of Parisian orchestras into *petits* and *grands choeurs*. See also Edge, 'Manuscript Parts', 438–441, and the same author's 'Mozart's Viennese Orchestras', *Early Music* 20/1 (1992), 80 ('... even symphonies could conceivably have been performed [in the 1780s] with a division between tutti and solo passages'). Both articles, admittedly, deal with Viennese, not Parisian, practice.

22 De Norvins, *Souvenirs*, 159. The question arises as to which members of the orchestra were so attired – possibly only the Masonic amateurs? It is sometimes stated (for example, in Landon, *Haydn at Eszterháza*, 593) that these costumes were sky-blue in colour, which is not borne out by de Norvins's description. Perhaps there has been a conflation with the ornament required to be worn by subscribers attending the concerts: a silver lyre on a sky-blue field.

23 Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 321, figure 9.1.



several semicircular levels, like that in the Salle des Suisses for the Concert Spirituel. Even assuming that it took up the entire width of the room (thirty-two feet), the size of the orchestra necessitated an extremely deep disposition. In fact, the stage must have occupied more than a third of the length of the room, even with the most compact arrangement of the orchestra.<sup>24</sup> (My placement of eight desks of violins along the front of the stage affords the players the bare minimum of space, about four feet for each desk with its players.) What remained of the room for the audience could not therefore have accommodated more than 250–300 persons. (The audience seating in the diagram is based on Thiéry's description quoted in note 11). I have presumed the absence of a keyboard player, there being none listed in the sources.<sup>25</sup> However, the sheer size of the Olympique orchestra may have necessitated a keyboard to help hold the orchestra together in *forte* passages, for example, where 'many-note chords [are] frequently restruck'.<sup>26</sup> In any case there were several qualified keyboard players among the subscribers and *associés libres* of the Société Olympique. Of course the presence of a keyboard instrument would have necessitated a still larger stage than that shown in Figure 5.

I have taken literally the arrangement indicated in the two orchestra lists, that several desks in the first and second violins, including the first desks of both sections, had four players. And I hope it not far-fetched to suggest that the leader and the principal second violinist could have been placed as the innermost of the four violinists at their respective desks. Here the leader would be closer to the rest of the orchestra, particularly to the principal cellist and the principal double bassist, and could surely exert his leadership more effectively than from the outside end of a row of four players. This would be particularly true from the seated cellists' point of view if the violinists were standing. Another possibility is that the leader sat or stood on a podium, though this would suggest he had his own desk.

There has been much conjecture as to the identity of the 'conductor' (leader) of the orchestra of the Concert Olympique. The two prominent violinists Joseph Boulogne de Saint-Georges (1739–1799)<sup>27</sup> and G. B. Viotti (1755–1824)<sup>28</sup> are most often proposed. Saint-Georges was a member of the Masonic Loge des Neuf

24 The stage would have to have been even deeper if space were allowed at the front for singers (see note 16).

25 On the presence or absence of keyboard continuo in the performances of symphonies in the late eighteenth century, see Zaslav, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 318, 466–468; James Webster, 'On the Absence of Keyboard Continuo in Haydn's Symphonies', *Early Music* 18/4 (1990), 599–608; Ellwood Derr, 'Basso Continuo in Mozart's Piano Concertos: Dimensions of Compositional Completion and Performance Practice', in Zaslav, *Mozart's Piano Concertos*, 408. According to Graham Sadler, 'The Role of the Keyboard Continuo in French Opera 1673–1776', *Early Music* 8/2 (1980), 153, a keyboard was no longer present in the orchestra of the Paris Opéra after 1776.

26 Zaslav, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 468, paraphrasing Salvatore Bertezen, *Principi di Musica* (Rome, 1780; second edition 1781), as cited in Hugo Goldschmidt, 'Das Cembalo im Orchester der italienischen Oper der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in *Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag Sr. Excellenz des Wirklichen Geheimen Rates Rochus Freiherrn von Liliencron*, ed. Hermann Kretschmar (Leipzig, 1910; reprinted Westmead, 1970), 87–92.

27 H. Barbedette, 'Haydn: Sa vie et ses oeuvres', *Le Ménestrel* (24 December 1871), 27, was, as far as I can determine, the first to propose Saint-Georges ('C'est le chevalier de Saint Georges, alors premier violon conducteur de cette Société qui avait été chargé de cette négociation [with Haydn, for the commissioning of the symphonies in 1784–1785]'; Barbedette was followed by, among many others, Landon, *Haydn at Eszterháza*, 592 ('chef d'orchestre'), and Quoy-Bodin, 'L'orchestre', 96 ('directeur'). Gabriel Banat, 'Saint-Georges, Joseph Boulogne', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 22, 101, goes so far as to assert that 'Saint-Georges founded the Concert de la Loge Olympique'. None of these sources, however, specifies that Saint-Georges was the conductor of the orchestra at the time of the first performances of the 'Paris' Symphonies.

28 As far as I can determine, de Norvins, *Souvenirs*, 159, was the first to name Viotti, and he is the only one who may claim to have been an eyewitness (see note 8). He is followed, among others, by Michel Brenet, *Les concerts en France sous l'ancien régime* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1900; reprinted Da Capo, 1970), 365; Boris Schwarz, 'Viotti', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1966), volume 13, column 1792; Jean Mongrédien, 'Paris: The End of the Ancien Régime', in *The Classical Era*, ed. Neal Zaslav (London: Macmillan, 1989), 69; and Valerie Walden, 'Jean-Louis Duport', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 7, 726. According to T. Lassabathie, *Histoire du Conservatoire impériale de musique et de déclamation* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1860), 63, Viotti was among the instrumental soloists for the Concert Olympique, and his second *Symphonie concertante* was performed there



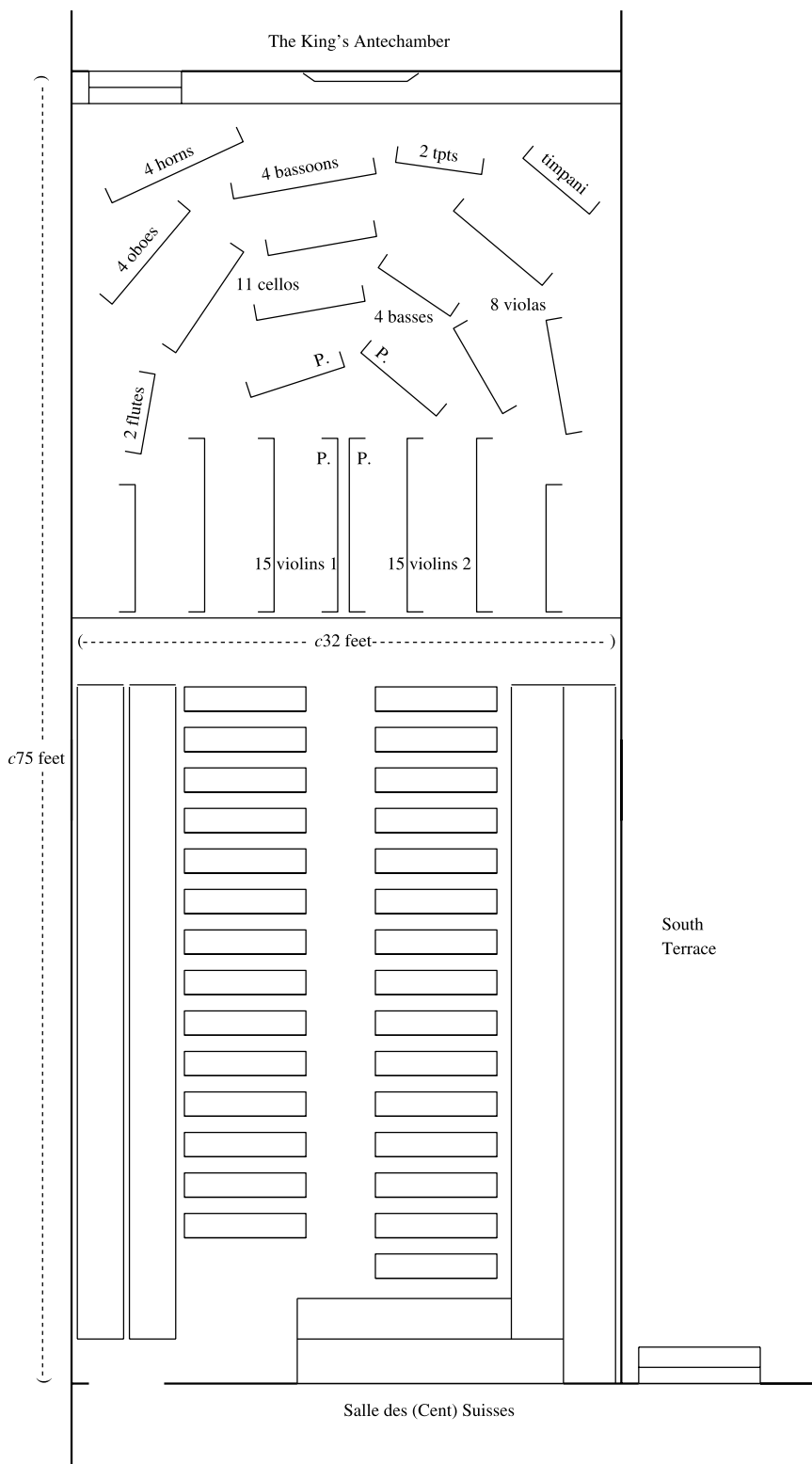


Figure 5 A hypothetical disposition of the orchestra and audience of the Concert Olympique in the Salle des Gardes for the performances of Haydn's 'Paris' Symphonies, 1787. Scale: 1:125. P.= principal. In an engraving in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 15, 139, showing a concert in the Hanover Square Rooms, 1843, the disposition of the audience is remarkably similar



Soeurs and had been the leader of the orchestra of the Concert des Amateurs. However, his name appears in neither the 1786 nor the 1788 directory of the Concert Olympique in any capacity. Saint-Georges apparently went to London at the beginning of 1787, and took part in a fencing exhibition in the presence of the Prince of Wales on 9 April at Carlton House.<sup>29</sup> Viotti's name appears on the list of subscribers but not on the orchestra list in the 1786 directory, and not at all in the 1788 directory. Other than this there is, to my knowledge, no solid evidence of any kind linking either Saint-Georges or Viotti to the orchestra of the Concert Olympique. The hard fact is that in both orchestra lists [Guillaume Julien] 'Navoigil[l]e' (c1745–1811) is given as the first of four players at the first desk of the first violins, albeit in the 1788 list with [Isidore] 'Bert[h]eume'<sup>30</sup> (c1752–1802) appearing immediately below his name as an alternate. Furthermore, in 1788 Navoigille *l'aîné* is listed among the Officiers Dignitaires with the rank of Second Expert, an indication, surely, that at the very least he had not left the orchestra in 1787. It is possible that either Saint-Georges or Viotti or both were the leaders in, say, the years from 1783 to 1785 or after 1788. But it seems inescapable that it was the journeyman Navoigille (and/or Bertheaume), not the more glamorous Saint-Georges or the more distinguished Viotti, who led the first performances of Haydn's 'Paris' Symphonies – unless, of course, someone else was invited especially for the occasion.

De Norvins asserts that the orchestra of the Concert Olympique was a 'good orchestra . . . thanks to the frequent rehearsals conducted by the greatest masters'.<sup>31</sup> If taken literally, this suggests that the orchestra was an exception to the eighteenth-century practice of only one rehearsal per concert, and, further, that guest conductors were invited. But in that case, how did they lead the orchestra – from the leader's chair? If so, what was Navoigille's function (or Viotti's, as de Norvins has it)? Could the guest conductors have stood and used a baton?<sup>32</sup> Or by 'grands maîtres' does de Norvins mean composers who conducted their own works from the keyboard, possibly sharing the leadership with the principal violinist? Haydn, of course, never went to Paris.

Listed below are the names of some of the well-known musicians who played in the orchestra in both 1786 and 1788 unless otherwise indicated; it is probable that they were members in 1787 as well.<sup>33</sup> (There was in fact

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under his direction by [Henri] Guérillot and [Jean-Jacques] Grasset. Though Lassabathie is generally accurate about the Concert Olympique, I have been unable to corroborate this assertion. I am grateful to Denise Yim for bringing it to my attention. Viotti's earliest biographers, d'Eymar (1792), Fayolle and Choron (1810–1811), Miel (1827) and Fétis (1844), do not mention the Concert Olympique.

29 Lionel de La Laurencie, 'The Chevalier de Saint-George, Violinist', trans. Frederick H. Martens, *The Musical Quarterly* 5/1 (1919), 78.

30 Jean Gribenski, 'Bertheaume, Isidore (oder Julien?)', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, second edition, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999), Personenteil 2, column 1444, suggests that Bertheaume's name may have been Julien instead of Isidore. But there must have been two Bertheaumes: in both 1786 and 1788 a Bertheaume sat at the third desk of the second violins. This must have been Olivier-Julien (thus Quoy-Bodin, 'L'orchestre', 101, who, however, gives him the same dates as Isidore).

31 'bon orchestre . . . grace aux fréquentes répétitions conduites par les plus grands maîtres.' De Norvins, *Souvenirs*, 159.

32 In a letter of 1816 Viotti refers to 'my old baton' having been returned to him from France, where, presumably, it had been in the safe keeping of a friend. We may infer from this that Viotti had used this baton during his Paris years. Viotti to William Chinnery, 12 February 1816, Sydney, Powerhouse Museum, Chinnery Family Papers, 94/143/1–14/27.

33 It is sometimes asserted (for example, in H. C. Robbins Landon's foreword to *Joseph Haydn: Critical Edition of the Complete Symphonies*, second, revised edition, ed. Landon (Vienna: Universal, 1981), volume 9, xv) that Luigi Cherubini participated as a violinist in these premieres. Cherubini composed two cantatas for the Société Olympique and, according to Reichardt (Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Un hiver à Paris sous le Consulat, 1802–1803* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1896), 25, letter of 15 November 1802), he heard and admired Haydn's symphonies at both the Concert Spirituel and the Concert Olympique. But although Cherubini apparently became a member of another Parisian Masonic lodge, Saint-Jean de Palestine, in 1784 (see Alain Le Bihan, *Francs-maçons et ateliers parisiens du G. O. de France (fin du XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1966), 124), his name appears in neither of the Olympique directories and there is no evidence of which I am aware that he joined the Société Olympique or that he ever played in its orchestra.



a degree of stability in the orchestra's personnel: of the sixty-five members in 1786, fifty-seven were also members in 1788.) All of these players had solo careers in Paris – international careers in the case of Yanevitz, Duport and Janson. All except Lebrun were the composers of published works for their own instrument(s), and most of them were the composers of published chamber works and symphonies; three (Blasius *l'ainé*, Devienne and Plantade) were also known as composers of works for the stage. Four of the violinists were leaders of other Parisian orchestras: Isidore Bertheaume (Concert d'Emulation, 1786; Concert Spirituel, 1789–1791), M. F. Blasius (*cadet*) (Comédie-Italienne, 1790–?), Guénin (Opéra, 1783–1800) and Lefèbvre (co-leader(?), Théâtre Feydeau, ?1791–?).<sup>34</sup>

violin 1: Alday (probably Paul, *le jeune*), Blasius *cadet*, Guérillot, Yanevitz (1788 only)<sup>35</sup>

violin 2: Blasius *l'ainé* (in 1786 at the first desk of the second violins, in 1788 at the first desk of the first violins, next to the leaders),<sup>36</sup> Guénin, Imbault, Lefèbvre

viola: [Julien] 'Navoigille *cadet*' (1788 only)<sup>37</sup>

cello: Bréval (principal); Duport *le jeune* (in 1786 at the last (fifth) stand, in 1788 sharing the first stand with Bréval); Janson (whether *l'ainé* or *le jeune* is not indicated), 1788 only

double bass: Plantade<sup>38</sup>

flute: Devienne (principal)

oboe: Sallantin (principal)

bassoon: Ozy (principal)

horn: Le Brun (principal)<sup>39</sup>

It seems reasonable to suppose that some space was made available to the orchestra for a kind of green room where the musicians could warm up and leave their instrument cases. The adjoining king's antechamber, or part of it, seems the most likely place. (Although parts of the Palace were occupied by royal dependents, except for a very brief period during the minority of Louis XV the monarchy itself had not been in residence here since 1671, when Louis XIV moved his court to Versailles. The ceremonial rooms on the main floor, Carrousel side, remained unoccupied.) Access to this antechamber, without the awkwardness of passing through the 'auditorium' to get backstage, could be had by way of the stairs beneath the south terrace, which could be reached from both the garden and the Carrousel side (see Figure 3). On the other hand, it may be wrong to assume that the same notions of physical and aesthetic separation of performers from audience prevailed in the Concert Olympique as do today, or, for that matter, as may have done in other late eighteenth-century Parisian concerts, notably the Concert Spirituel. It is well to remember that the

34 According to Philip Robinson, 'Lefèbvre, Joseph', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, first edition, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), volume 10, 606, Lefèbvre became 'first violinist at the Théâtre Feydeau' after 1794, 'and in 1801, when the Feydeau and Favart troupes united to form the Opéra Comique, he was made *chef d'orchestre*'. There is no article on Lefèbvre in the second edition of *The New Grove*, but Jeffrey Cooper, 'La Houssaye, Pierre' (volume 14, 117–118), describes the two violinists as sharing the position of 'orchestra director' at the Théâtre Feydeau from 1791.

35 Yanevitz (Janiewicz) may not have arrived in Paris in time to join the Concert Olympique for its 1787 season. His first public appearances in Paris were at the Concert Spirituel in December of that year.

36 The other noteworthy example of 'upward mobility' in the ranks was one Philippeaux, who in 1786 played at the last (fourth) desk of the first violins, in 1788 at the first desk.

37 Navoigille *cadet*, beginning in 1789, was the principal of the second violins of the Théâtre de Monsieur.

38 Charles-Henri Plantade (1764–1839) is designated a cellist by Laurie Shulman, 'Plantade, Charles-Henri', in *The New Grove*, second edition, volume 19, 893, but he played in the double bass section both years and he became the principal double bassist of the Théâtre de Monsieur in 1789 (later the Théâtre Feydeau, for which he also composed operas).

39 Sallantin and Le Brun performed a *symphonie concertante* by Bréval for oboe and horn (Op. 30) in the Concert Olympique in the spring of 1785, and the title page of an arrangement of the same work for flute and bassoon (Op. 31) bears the inscription 'Du Répertoire de la Loge Olympique', suggesting that Devienne and Ozy had performed it. See Richard Viano, 'Jean-Baptiste Bréval (1753–1823): Life, Milieu, and Chamber Works' (PhD dissertation, The City University of New York, 1983), volume 1, 67.



amateur players in the orchestra were Masonic brethren of the members of the audience and included, for example, the two founders of the Concert Olympique, the cellist d'Ogny and the violinist de la Haye. It is not difficult to imagine the members of the orchestra gathering in the Salle des Suisses and processing in their concert regalia into the Salle des Gardes, through the audience, to the stage.

The complete absence of contemporary newspaper announcements or reviews of the Concert Olympique, in contrast with the relatively abundant coverage of the Concert Spirituel, can be accounted for by its restricted membership: there was no need to inform the public – it was not invited – and subscribers had no need for announcements or reviews in the public press. Consequently its activities remain one of the uncharted regions of late eighteenth-century music – an unfortunate lacuna, to judge from the importance of the Haydn commission and the works that resulted.