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Alan R. H. Baker, *Amateur Musical Societies and Sports Clubs in Provincial France, 1848-1914: Harmony and Hostility*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. xi + 350 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, and index. €93.59 (hb). ISBN 978-3-3195-7992-4; €74.96 (eb). ISBN 978-3-3195-7993-1.

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Many ensemble musicians recoil when their work is equated to that of a sports team. And yet, there is something apt about the analogy. Being a former athlete and a performer myself, I can appreciate the parallels. As an ensemble singer, I am just one of a larger whole; no matter what my individual contribution is, I cannot give the performance without the other musicians in the group. Similarly, as a conductor, I am powerless without the rest of my “team”: the singers. The music is silent without them and our *collective* effort and commitment both to the music and to each other. In Alan Baker’s *Amateur Musical Societies and Sports Clubs in Provincial France, 1848-1914: Harmony and Hostility*, readers can assess for themselves just how similar musical and sports associations were, and how both played significant roles in the development of France in the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries.

There is a reservoir of information in this book: dates, association names and locations, membership numbers, and countless vignettes about the life of voluntary associations that were dedicated to music and sports in the French provinces between 1848 and the outbreak of World War I. This is mostly uncharted territory, certainly so for musical associations at least, as relatively little scholarship on such groups has focused on regions outside of Paris. As such, this is an important study for anyone who wants to know the details of music-making and sports organizations in the French provinces. Relying on hitherto unexamined primary sources from all corners of France, Baker offers a dense, data-rich volume that will surely assist scholars who examine French culture and its influence on political thought and social practice in the period.

Baker, a decorated scholar in the field of historical geography, divides his book into four chapters, the two largest of which focus on its central theme: the roles that amateur musical societies (choral ensembles, and brass and wind bands) and sports clubs (shooting clubs, gymnastics, and cycling most predominantly, but not exclusively) played in the modernization of France. On either side of these are two chapters that frame the discussion, giving space in both to evaluate the relevant historical and cultural literature, and to position his current research within that scholarship. This approach is especially helpful in chapter four, where he offers an assessment of the relevant work of Eugene Weber, Annie Grange, Jean-Pierre

Chaline, Carol Harrison, Pierre Goujon, Michael Marrus, Jean-Claude Farcy, Pierre Arnaud, and Laurent Martin, noting where his own work amplifies or challenges their findings.

Chapter one begins by introducing us to the landscape of voluntary (as opposed to compulsory) not-for-profit associations. He links the phenomenon of such societies to two philosophical concepts: sociability and the French Revolution's idea of *fraternité*. Baker situates sociability within the historical and geographical foundation established by Maurice Agulhon in his essays on the political and cultural life of Province (and by extension, the whole of France) from the late eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth centuries. Baker's angle, though, both here and in chapter four, is to consider sociability in the context of the Revolutionary motto "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*," which found a particularly effective and enduring presence in voluntary associations such as musical societies and sports clubs. From there, Baker traces the history of *fraternité* as an ideal, how it was debated in the first half of the nineteenth century, how it evolved as a concept, and how, at the turn of the twentieth century, it was frequently replaced by the word *solidarité* (p. 4). Whereas liberty and equality speak to individual rights and goals, fraternity speaks directly to collective aims, which are at the heart of these ensembles and teams. In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, as France looked to establish its own national identity and to negotiate modern ideas of the Third Republic, the three Revolution-era concepts resurfaced. And as Baker argues, fraternity became the most influential of them. The idea that musical societies in particular helped to foster a sense of fraternity and belonging, and that they did so in a democratic way, was not new in the second half of the nineteenth century, nor is it something that one saw only in the French provinces, as musicological research from the 1990s and early 2000s has shown.^[1] What is new, here, at least from a music perspective, is Baker's in-depth look at what was happening in the provinces in this context, which to my knowledge have not been studied in this way as a group until now.

What becomes so apparent in reading Baker's work is just how similar musical societies and sports clubs were in this period. Of course, there were the obvious differences, but more times than not one can see how each type of association, musical and sport, was alike: from their membership (in terms of gender, age, and occupational representation) and leadership structure, to their expectations for participation, their aims to guide members morally, politically, and sometimes spiritually, and their roles in promoting philanthropy and civic engagement. And whether it was explicit in a group's expressed goals or not, the idea that they incorporated the ideals of fraternity is clear, and it is a point to which Baker repeatedly returns throughout the book.

Evidence of how the concepts of fraternity and sociability were reflected in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century musical societies and sports clubs can be seen repeatedly in the pictures Baker paints in chapters two and three, which he puts together from an impressive array of primary sources preserved in local archives scattered throughout the provinces. In these chapters, which comprise some 255 pages, Baker offers detail after detail to show how societies and clubs looked, sounded, acted, succeeded, and failed. The overall impression is one of great diversity in terms of the people involved, their representative occupations, politics, and religious beliefs; and in terms of each group's institutional motivations. Along the way, some common themes emerge from these associations' various objectives, among them the need to instill discipline and to teach good morals for the common good. Many ensembles and sports clubs aimed to keep their younger members out of trouble, distracting them from the ills of alcohol, gambling, the cabaret scene, and "bad company" by providing a means for socializing

and camaraderie (p. 49). These men--the groups were overwhelmingly populated by men--not only sang, marched, and played together, they socialized too: they ate and drank together, and engaged with each other in a host of leisure activities. Of course none of this is singularly French, and one need only look to America at this same time (to pick just one example; Germany is another) to see some of these same developments going on, and for many of the same reasons.[2] Yet, Baker believes there is a critical difference between what one sees elsewhere, and what was happening in France. Although he acknowledges that musical societies and sports clubs, "were integral components of the cultural histories and geographies of Britain and many European countries,"--he doesn't mention the United States--"in none of them, it seems, were the Revolutionary concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity--and especially the last of these--as crucial a part of debates about [musical societies' and sports clubs'] form and functioning as they were in France" (p. 312). This is an interesting assertion, one that I would have expected Baker to explore. Unfortunately, he doesn't; not only does he remain silent, he ends the book on this point. For me, this was a missed opportunity to engage with the broader implications of how these kinds of organizations affected and ultimately shaped their communities and society at large.

Musical societies and sports clubs fostered the idea of community and reinforced societal bonds; as such, they were often tremendous sources of local civic pride. The presence of a musical society or sports club in one location often inspired neighboring towns to establish similar groups of their own (p. 38). One of the visible manifestations of this pride was the construction of public bandstands. As Baker observes, these were not just functional structures; rather, they "reflect[ed] their period's emphasis upon a new aesthetic urbanisation and the fashion of reshaping cities as places of socially controlled leisure and recreation as well as work and habitation" (p. 128). Additionally, they served as important cultural symbols. Bandstands, Baker writes, "extended the Revolutionary tendency towards the democratisation of society. Music moved from closed and exclusive concert halls and *conservatoires* into open and inclusive places.... Bandstands staged music for the people played by the people.... They promoted a mixing of generations and of social classes. They accelerated the diffusion and democratisation of musical appreciation" (p. 128). Similarly, *vélodromes* were cycling's equivalent to the bandstand, and from the mid 1880s, the new construction of these "striking landscape icons of modernity" for racing added to the increasingly commercialization of the sport (p. 256). In short, then, these structures provided dedicated space that offered greater access for a much broader range of people. The impact this had on the modernization of France in the provinces during this period is significant, and Baker's work goes a long way in demonstrating that fact.

Regional and national competitions, both for sports clubs and for musical societies, were commonplace in this period too, and these were also good for promoting internal enthusiasm and a sense of fraternity, as well as bonding these groups with their local communities. But, as Baker rightly notes, they also played an important role in the modernization of France as they exposed group members to new environments. Members travelled from their hometowns to other parts of France to compete, thus interacting with new people who had different life experiences, and who held different philosophical and political views. The goal of these competitions, then, was to build a sense of national connection, to "encourage members to transfer their geographic loyalty *from* their own locality (*pays*) *to* the country (*patrie*), or at least to cultivate a dual geopoly" (p. 190).

Understanding the terrain of this work took some doing, and Baker is to be applauded for combing through the mountain of information he found so successfully. Reading through the copious facts and figures, one begins to get a real flavor for how these associations worked. We learn about their rules and expectations--no smoking, no taking instruments out of town, no dogs!--about their individual squabbles (sometimes leading to physical altercations), and about their ensemble and club rivalries. We see how some of the financial pressures these groups faced have not changed much in the intervening century, as costs for sports equipment, facilities (room rental, heating and lighting), association paraphernalia (uniforms, banners, flags), sheet music, instrument purchase, and storage, all had to be covered by members' dues, fundraising, and sometimes (mostly for shooting and gymnastics clubs) government support, which was unpredictable at best. We also get a peek into local politics--partisanship and religion were frequent internal flashpoints--where mayors or prefects routinely refused to issue performance permits because of personal disagreements, jealousies, or conflicting ideologies, citing concerns about traffic disruptions, disturbing the public peace, or other threats to the public order. (Apparently, a favorite defiant response to such refusals was to sing or play in the street outside the mayor's house for hours at a time.) Baker offers many anecdotes such as these; enlivening as they are, though, the book would be more reader-friendly had he been more selective in the details he chose to include and summarized the rest a bit more.

Perhaps because so much of this information is unearthed here for the first time, there are few noticeable lapses.^[3] My most significant quibble, other than the overwhelming amount of detail offered, which makes the book more of a reference work than a readable history, is that there is a significant amount of repetitiveness within and between chapters. Some repetition is understandable and even unavoidable in this kind of work, but I would have wished for less of it here. Additionally, as a music historian, I was disappointed that Baker did not mention anything about the repertoire involved: what societies sang and played, its relative degree of difficulty, and what it might reveal about changing musical tastes.

The rise of musical societies and sports clubs during this period, and of volunteer associations in general, reflects how French society was changing, how it was becoming more modern. Looking at these two specific types of associations allows us to view how these changes evolved in organizations that had similar structures and goals, and that functioned in similar ways. Making the facts available, as Baker does here, is an important first step. If details are not one's interest, chapters one and four are good points of departure and summary respectively; just a few claims are a bit too broad.^[4] Scholars interested in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French cultural history, and music's and sports' intersection with it, will find this book to be very useful. One hopes a more nuanced exploration of what the data mean for France and how it might compare or contrast with similar associations in Europe and the United States will be forthcoming.

NOTES

[1] See, for example, Katharine Ellis, "A tale of two cities: class, democratisation and the regeneration of early choral musics in France, 1861–1874," in Bödeker and Veit, eds. *Les sociétés de musique en Europe 1700-1920. Structures, pratiques, sociabilités* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2007), pp. 269-88; and Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For an account of earlier musical societies in Paris specifically, see D. M. Di Grazia, "Concert Societies in Paris

and their Choral Repertoires c.1828–1880,” 2 vols., (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University in St. Louis, 1993).

[2] See, for example, N. Lee Orr, “The United States,” in Donna M. Di Grazia ed., *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 475–99.

[3] Baker observes, for example, that the amateur male *orphéons* and *sociétés chorales* that developed in Paris in the early part of the century were created to “add lustre to religious ceremonies” (p. 28); in fact, an overwhelming number of them were founded for other reasons, mainly to educate the working class.

[4] For example, Baker relies on the work of Paul Gerbod (mainly from the 1980s), rather than that of later scholars, to assert that his own research “confirms” Gerbod’s view that 1870–1914, and the 1880s and 1890s in particular, were the “Golden Age” for amateur music societies “in the whole of France.” Although this may have been true for *fanfares* and *harmonies*, and it seems to apply to music societies as a whole in the provinces, it is not true when one takes into account the considerable number of *orphéons* and *sociétés chorales* in Paris from much earlier in the century.

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