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Céline Frigau Manning, *Ce que la musique fait à l'hypnose: Une relation spectaculaire au XIXe siècle*. Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2021. 377 pp. Figures, notes, bibliography, and index. €28.00 (pb). ISBN 978378961749.

Review by Katrin Schultheiss, The George Washington University.

Decades before Freud made hypnosis a central feature of psychoanalysis, the practice enjoyed widespread popularity among medical professionals and the general public across Europe. Scientific interest in hypnosis grew significantly in the second half of the nineteenth century amid claims that the practice offered insight into mental illness and access to the unconscious workings of the mind.

For the general population, hypnotism was just one of a number of parapsychological phenomena such as seances, telepathy, and visions of otherworldly spirits, that attracted increasing interest among all classes of society, from the highly educated to the illiterate, drawing in medical doctors, cultural elites, and the general public alike. Popular hypnotists capitalized on the theatrical potential of hypnotic suggestion by putting on shows in which subjects were led to perform acts ranging from the humorous--imitating a cat, to the dangerous-- entering a cage with a lion, to the incredible--speaking in a foreign language that the subject had never learned. But, as Céline Frigau Manning stresses in her intriguing new study, the line between medically authorized and popular hypnotism intended as entertainment was anything but stark. Not only did popular hypnotizers sometimes offer insights into the practice, but the sessions performed by doctors often embraced elements of the spectacular, welcoming cultural elites--including journalists, writers, and critics--alongside medical students and visiting physicians to what were sometimes called "spectacles d'hypnose" (p. 7).

Frigau Manning's book is not a history of hypnotism, a topic that she notes has been explored in numerous studies. Instead, it is an investigation--in the form of four interconnected essays--of the relatively underexamined relationship between music and hypnotic phenomena. Observers in the nineteenth century, however, had a lot to say on the subject. For example, Frigau Manning writes, psychologists and physiologists, especially in the second half of the century, maintained that both hypnotism and music acted directly on the senses without the mediation of reason. Both, experts noted, are associated with a loss of control and a loss of a sense of self and, as a result, both could induce trance-like states or even hallucinations. Psychologists and other medical professionals stressed the critical role of mental images (the raw material of the imagination) in both music and hypnotism, positing that the powerful effect of music on mental states was rooted in the fact "qu'elle agit directement...sur l'imagination, qu'elle active et nourrit

d'images changeant" (p. 39). This was the same mechanism that was frequently invoked to explain hypnotic suggestion.

Frigau Manning, a historian of performance and music and professor of Italian Studies at Jean Moulin University in Lyon, is interested less in how music is like hypnosis than in the actual role that music played in various settings that made use of or invoked hypnotism. She draws on a wide array of primary sources--most of them French, but also some from Italy and Argentina, including professional medical case histories, memoirs, and fictional and non-fictional accounts in the popular press--to argue that the practice and meaning of hypnotism in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European (really, French) culture was fundamentally shaped by music. Her analysis pays close attention not only to the purposes to which music was put, but to the specific pieces of music that were used. She insists, for example, that it matters that one young woman became entranced when she heard Gounod's *Ave Maria* and another when she heard a particular Verdi aria. In some instances, she explores the aesthetic and theoretical qualities of specific pieces and in others, she insists on the importance of a composition's creation or performance history. While these discussions are often interesting in and of themselves, the significance of this context for understanding her specific case studies is at times elusive.

The book's first chapter, entitled "Soulager, anesthésier, transcender la douleur" ("Relieving, Anesthetizing, Transcending Pain"), focuses on the role of music in producing mental and physical states such as ecstasy, disassociation of mind and body, and compulsive movement, all of which were also associated with hypnosis. Frigau Manning uses examples from the early nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth to show that music, like hypnosis, was long understood to have profound psychological and physical effects, even if the mechanisms for those effects remained mysterious. In a pseudonymously published story from 1889, the physiologist Charles Richet recounted the romantic adventures of a young doctor who is described as especially interested in magnetism. While out walking, the sensitive man is captivated by the sound of a sickly young nun, sister Marthe, playing Gounod's *Ave Maria* on the organ. When the doctor is later called to examine the ailing Marthe, he learns that the sound of the *Ave Maria* sends her into a state of ecstasy that catalyzes the emergence of a second personality. He concludes that in the case of sister Marthe, music acts like a hypnotic agent, revealing "des existences multiples" that normally "se cachent dans le personnage principal" (p. 59).

The uniquely powerful effect that music had on the mind could potentially have dramatic physical effects as well. This mind-body connection drew widespread scientific interest beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. Frigau Manning notes that doctors in Italy and France, including the world-famous expert on hypnotism Jean-Martin Charcot, speculated on the causes of the apparent compulsion to dance evident in women performing the tarantella. Music was also thought by some to enhance hypnotic states that could serve as anesthesia during surgery. Frigau Manning offers the example of an American woman at mid-century who recounted her experience of undergoing a mastectomy without anesthesia. The woman entered what Frigau Manning calls a state of "extase mystique" that was enhanced by her reciting of a "hymne religieux" at the "apogée" of her trance-like state (p. 97). "Les liens entre douleur, hypnose et musique," Frigau Manning concludes somewhat vaguely, assume a variety of forms, "qui montrent combien ils peuvent former un système" in which "la douleur est subie" (p. 97).

The second chapter, "Altération, raison et réalité chez les Aïssaoua" ("Change, Reason and Reality Among the Aïssaoua"), examines French observers' accounts of musical religious ceremonies

performed by the North African Aïssaoua, a sect of mystics founded in fifteenth-century Morocco, and which existed throughout the Maghreb by the nineteenth century. French doctors, as well as cultural commentators like writer and critic Théophile Gautier, were fascinated by the Aïssaoua's elaborate dances that seemed to induce trances, hallucinations, and other strange behaviors. Exposed to these performances for the first time at the 1867 Paris Universal Exposition, astonished French audiences marveled at the "sauvagerie" and "bestialité" exhibited in the dances (p. 108). For influential doctors like the renowned hypnotism expert Hippolyte Bernheim, the Aïssaoua revealed the reality of the "les peuplades sauvages," living in a state of "l'enfance prolongée," who lacked all civilizing education and moral inhibitions. Bernheim explicitly connected the behaviors on display to hypnotic phenomena, marveling that during the mystics' performances "le son...de tambourins frappés avec la même cadence dans l'obscurité de la nuit produit l'hypnotisme extatique" (p. 103).

The many French descriptions of Aïssaoua performances must be understood within the context of French imperialism, Frigau Manning cautions, especially given that most French observers encountered them in the explicitly colonial setting of the Paris World's Fairs of 1867 and 1889. She points out that for all of the French commentators' fascination with the effects of sounds on the Aïssaoua's behavior, they refused to consider those sounds as music, insisting instead that they were primitive sensory expressions that had the effect of inducing hypnotic effects. "Si la musique des Aïssaoua attire l'attention," Frigau Manning argues, "elle ne vaut pas tant comme art" but rather because of its role in stimulating wild, primitive behavior (p.173). Like hypnotism, the Aïssaoua performances offered the French a display of the irrational unconscious mind.

Chapter three, entitled "Scènes cliniques: pathologies musicales et sexualité féminine" ("Clinical Scenes: Musical Pathologies and Feminine Sexuality"), returns to the medical discourse of chapter one but this time with a focus on the role of music in causing or exacerbating mental illness in women. Frigau Manning is particularly interested in late nineteenth and early twentieth century accounts of musical obsession in girls and women. She opens with one of the best-known fictional examples of musically induced pathology, Georges Du Maurier's 1894 novel *Trilby*, which famously centers on the musician Svengali's use of hypnosis to transform the titular poor young woman into a musical phenomenon. Frigau Manning is less interested in the famous scenes of Svengali's complete hypnotic control over Trilby's mind than in the novel's early chapters, which show the powerful effect that mere sounds and words emanating from Svengali--including the utterance of his own name--have over the pathologized female figure. Frigau Manning argues that in these passages, Trilby is depicted as the victim of her own illness, "l'obsession auditive" (p. 188), rather than simply as the victim of Svengali's nefarious actions.

The idea that susceptibility to hypnosis was a symptom of mental illness (specifically hysteria), a theory championed by Jean-Martin Charcot and his many students and admirers in France and elsewhere, dominated late nineteenth-century thinking about the practice. Many understood music or other sounds as powerful hypnotic agents that could reveal latent psycho-pathologies. In a case of "auto-érotisme" (p. 239), originally described by the Italian psychopathologist Edoardo Audenino and recounted by the Argentine psychiatrist Jose Ingenieros, a follower of Charcot's, an Italian widow succumbs to sexual "autosuggestion" induced by playing the piano (p. 239). Ingenieros attributes this experience primarily to the physical movements involved in playing the piano. To the extent that Ingenieros is interested at all in the specific music that arouses the patient, Frigau Manning notes, it is only to remark on the associative effects of the title of the work, Grieg's *Erotikk*. Ingenieros observes that with each playing of the *Erotikk*, the

intensity of the autosuggestion grew, leading ultimately to “des intentions morbides ‘très intenses’” (p. 239).

For Frigau Manning, the “langage musical” of the specific piece matters (p. 240). She devotes several paragraphs to modern and contemporary explications of Grieg’s “petit poème musicale intense” (p. 240), noting that Ingenieros not infrequently referenced the evocative capacity of Grieg’s compositions, along with that of Chopin and Schumann. Yet, like all of the doctors whose cases she considers in this book, Ingenieros confined his analysis to established psychiatric concepts like association and auto-hypnosis. Just as the medical gaze did not engage with the specific *langage musical* of the piece, Frigau Manning writes, so too does it refuse to interrogate the actual contents of the autosuggestion whose effects alone it explores. Thus, Ingenieros and the other physicians concerned with auditory obsession and other musically induced psychological pathologies remain largely and, in Frigau Manning’s telling, seemingly willfully oblivious to the possible meanings of the musical choices and experiences of their pathologized female patients.

The final chapter of the book is devoted to the stories of two women who defied the familiar roles of passive and pathologized objects of hypnotic experiments to attain, in Frigau Manning’s view, the status of artists with their own subjectivity. In “L’art de l’hypnose musicale” (“The Art of Musical Hypnosis”), Frigau Manning explores the lives of Lina de Ferkel and Magdeleine G., who gained a measure of fame at the turn of the twentieth century for their hypnosis-induced interpretive musical performances. Displays of so-called musical hypnosis usually took place outside medical settings, in the homes of bourgeois cultural elites. The sessions had all the hallmarks of popular hypnotism entertainments: a woman would be put in a hypnotic trance by a man—sometimes a doctor—versed in the techniques of hypnosis; musicians would then begin to play. The woman proceeded then to use gestures and poses to interpret the meaning and sentiment of the music. Or in any case, Frigau Manning notes, that is what viewers believed. Once the woman emerged from the trance, she had no memory of her performance.

The cases of de Ferkel and Magdeleine G. stand out not only because, unlike so many other hypnotic subjects, they came from bourgeois backgrounds, but also because they were the subjects of extensive, published accounts of their public performances in which they emerge as narrative subjects, in both words and photographs. Those accounts suggest, Frigau Manning maintains that “bien que le sujet soit présenté comme subissant le contrôle masculin...qui le plongent dans un état modifié, son consentement est clairement établi, et l’autodétermination de ses gestes l’investit d’une capacité d’agir susceptible de s’opposer au pouvoir masculin” (p. 304). Both of the men who documented these women’s performances stressed their subjects’ capacity for resistance, Frigau Manning insists. “Magdeleine accepte ou refuse la musique” played at her sessions; “Lina refuse tout objet qui ne s’accorde pas avec la musique et n’accepte les castagnettes qu’au son d’une dans espagnole” (p. 304).

In Frigau Manning’s analysis, the tension between the hypnotized women’s subordinated position and their independent artistic subjectivity is epitomized in Lina de Ferkel’s professional relationship with the renowned baritone and teacher, Victor Maurel, who developed a new method of acting rooted in emotion and imagination rather than conscious imitation. Frigau Manning maintains that the hypnotized Lina’s uncanny ability to embody all the principal roles of Verdi’s *Otello* (especially the parts that Maurel himself had performed) made her an early example of the hypnotic subject’s emergence as a creative, even self-realizing artist.

Ce que la musique fait à l'hypnose is a complex, multi-tiered study that should be of interest to cultural historians of France and of music. In some instances, Frigau Manning's insistence on the significance of the specific aesthetic and historical qualities of the music featured in the various case studies feels a bit forced. She also often devotes more attention to modern theory than to historical context, leaving the reader to wonder if the relationship between music and hypnotism changed over the course of the nineteenth century and, if so, why. In the end, Frigau Manning argues that music and hypnosis were bound together in a relationship that is best characterized as mutually constructed; that nineteenth-century ideas about how the mind, body, and senses worked informed understandings of music and hypnotism alike. The intimate connection between hypnosis and music, she concludes, allows us to see that music was not sealed off in an "univers esthétique" but rather was "infusée des savoirs de son époque" and, likewise, that the impact of hypnosis was not limited to medicine, but rather expanded into "le champ de l'imaginaire et de l'art" (p. 336). Our understanding of the ways in which culture and science intersected and informed one another in the nineteenth century is enriched by this original if somewhat recondite work.

Katrin Schultheiss
The George Washington University
kschulth@gwu.edu

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