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Louis K. Epstein, *The Creative Labor of Music Patronage in Interwar France*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2022. xv + 236 pp. Tables, musical examples, bibliography, and index. \$115.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 9781783276691; \$29.95 U.S. (eb). ISBN 9781800104358; \$29.95 U.S. (epdf). ISBN 9781800104341.

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The notion of musical patronage has a very longstanding history, as one element within a much wider concept of the arts that also embraces painting, sculpture, ballet, literature, architecture, garden design, and so on. Inevitably in terms of music studies, one thinks back especially to courtly patronage across Europe, including the celebrated eighteenth-century example of Joseph Haydn's extensive work across nearly thirty years for the Esterházy court. The other obvious, and arguably most substantial, patron was the church, which provided employment for so many European musicians across the centuries in exchange for their artistic labor as composers and often also as organists. But there have been various other significant patrons too, in Europe and elsewhere: for composers particularly, the often overlooked or undervalued realm of publishing—with its historically important centers of Leipzig and Paris, but also New York—has proved crucial in disseminating and promulgating their musical output.

This, then, is a brief context for Louis Epstein's book, which seeks to argue for two main correctives to what he terms certain "myths": first, musical patronage is not, in fact, an outmoded concept by the time one approaches the study of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries: "Music scholarship overwhelmingly treats early music as the *locus classicus* for patronage" (p. 4); second, and more significant, the composer/patron relationship works both ways: that beyond producing their waltzes, patrons actually contribute to the artistic endeavor at hand. Hence, we come to the title of this study as invoking the idea of "the creative labor of music patronage". While some may find "creative labor" a slightly awkward expression, especially beyond the United States, its meaning is clarified on the back cover, which expands on Epstein's claim: "This book recasts patrons and patronage as creative forces that shaped the sounds and meanings of new French music between the world wars." Moreover, continues the cover text: "twentieth-century French patrons collaborated closely with composers like Igor Stravinsky, Erik Satie, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, and Germaine Tailleferre, translating commissions for new music into opportunities to express their own artistic values"; in terms of its research methods, the book "blends cultural history with primary source study and music analysis." These are refreshing, but quite bold claims, and we shall see during this review the extent to which they prove justified.

A few words about the origin and genesis of the book. A brief look within the bibliography reveals that this monograph is an expanded, updated version of Epstein's 2013 doctoral thesis, a decade or so on.[1] In part, this explains why reference to more recent bibliographic sources is somewhat circumscribed, yet there is a surprising amount of reference to North American theses. As a nice, performative touch in a study about patronage, the institutions that provided financial support and the individual scholars who offered critical feedback during its gestation are credited. It is however distinctly debatable that, even in jest: "if you were named in these acknowledgements, if I have thanked you for your contributions to my process, then you are nearly as responsible as I am for any mistakes found within this book" (p. xv).

The work commences with an "Introduction: Redefining Patronage," before a chapter exploring what is presented as "The Patronage Problem." There follow five further substantive chapters that effectively serve as case studies to examine in greater depth a particular manifestation of music patronage, including the relationships between the patron and composer protagonists, and the resulting artworks. These comprise: "Aristocratic Commissions," "Entrepreneurial Patronage and Concert Dance," "The Publisher as Patron," "Jacques Rouché: The State's Patron," and "Nationalizing Music Composition," together with a final chapter on "Transatlantic Legacies." There is no formal conclusion as such. I shall consider each in turn.

"Redefining Patronage" begins appropriately with the case of Maurice Ravel, whose *œuvre* involves a substantial amount of commissioned work as a form of patronage. Where *Boléro* is concerned, the point is made that "Neither Ravel nor Rubinstein fully determined the outcome of their work. Both deserve credit as its creators" (p. 2). This is certainly true but it is not a new observation. It is possible that an earlier book on *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel: Creation and Interpretation* might be relevant here (and in chapter three).[2] Similarly, reference should be made to Manuel Cornejo's splendid, authoritative edition of Ravel's correspondence and writings.[3] Later on, the redefining of the patronage concept argues aptly for a generosity of inclusion. The private patronage of the salon still impacts the public domain (after Jeanice Brooks and Myriam Chimènes); purchasers of artworks are also patrons (after Jacques Barzun), as are publishers and opera impresarios. It is pleasing that the "creative labor" perspective is seen as a way of recognizing and engaging with "the agency and creative contributions of women" (p. 11). The introduction is thorough and wide-ranging--invoking Pierre Bourdieu, Marcel Mauss, and Saidiya Hartman, amongst others--though some of it does retain the feel of a doctoral literature review. This impression is added to by occasional, presumably unintentional, repetition: "patronage...as a hermeneutic, discursive, and historiographical lens" (pp. 9, 10). A more thorough proofread here and elsewhere would have eliminated several slips of date and expression.

"The Patronage Problem" (chapter one) outlines the evolving pros and cons of patronage as perceived by composers and critics in their writings from the period of the First World War through the interwar years. In his response (p. 18) to the damning indictment of the critic Charles Tenroc in respect of Les Six ("Their music sounds like commissioned music. They produce on command."), Epstein begins by "[p]utting aside the fallacy that commissioned music has a certain 'sound'". But of course, on a more individualized level, this possibility is exactly what he is interested in. Essentially, the Romantic idealism of entirely free, independent musical composition, unfettered by materialism and, therefore, patrons, was tempered by the need for basic financial security, especially after the repercussions of the 1929 Wall Street Crash. Conversely, for patrons, composers enjoyed a high artistic status and therefore represented a

means of acquiring cultural power and securing impact. Amongst the most successful of these patrons was the Princesse de Polignac, who commissioned what would become Stravinsky's *Renard*. Historically, the discomfort that some composers felt, however, about a potential "fear of co-optation" was to some extent later mitigated by the idea of "public patronage" and "state support" (p. 35).

Chapter two focuses on several "Aristocratic Commissions," including those by the de Beaumont and de Noailles society families. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge usefully enters the discussion since, despite being based in the United States, she did much to support the creation of many new works, especially chamber music, in Europe. Indeed, Ravel's *Chansons madécasses* (1926) was one such instance. Although Epstein looks to maximize the input of patrons within resulting artworks, he has to admit that "nowhere in Coolidge's correspondence is there evidence that she explicitly instructed composers to write in a particular style" (p. 57). Similarly, "[i]t would be an exaggeration of their influence to credit de Polignac and Coolidge with inspiring the trend toward small ensembles and toward the neoclassical genres" (p. 57). To be fair, the case is more nuanced where Francis Poulenc is concerned: patterns can be observed between the character of certain works and their distinctive patrons during the later 1920s and early 1930s (p. 69). One might caution though, that, given other extraneous variables (date, maturation, genre, and so on), establishing whether such correlations are actually causal is a more challenging quest. In this chapter, we find six music examples of Tailleferre, Satie, and Poulenc—more than half the book's total of eleven—but the light touch of the treatment does not fully justify the claim to music analysis made on the back cover.

Public entrepreneurship and commerce constitute the focus of the following two chapters by means of the examples of concert dance/ballet companies and music publishing, respectively. "Entrepreneurial Patronage and Concert Dance" explores the main dance companies that sought to rival Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets russes—the Ballets suédois, Ballets Ida Rubinstein, and Étienne de Beaumont's short-lived Soirées de Paris—with their similar emphases upon commissioning new music as part of a public arts spectacle. The most interesting and original content relates to that of the Soirées, for which some archival materials are held at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, together with others found in Paris. The point is rightly made that the patronage style of the likes of Rolf de Maré and Ida Rubinstein displays a shift in approach from that of the nineteenth century when it would have been unseemly for upper-class society figures to be directly involved in entrepreneurial activity. But, equally, that theirs was a tough act to follow: "While there were echoes of their creative labor, the extraordinary expenses incurred by concert dance meant that true successors were few and far between" (p. 106).

The publishing case study selected for chapter four concerns the Viennese firm Universal Edition (UE) in relation to the most prolific composer of Les Six, Darius Milhaud. Epstein argues that its director Émile Hertzka operated "as a patron with a disproportionate impact on Milhaud's career" (p. 15). Certainly, it is a fair assessment that Hertzka and his staff went above and beyond in setting up performance opportunities for Milhaud's work across Europe. But Epstein goes further in suggesting that such support may, in fact, have been a hindrance to success at home: "Milhaud's relationship with Universal Edition was key to his belated acceptance in France by Rouché and state officials" (p. 109). (On Jacques Rouché, see below.) Conversely, we might argue that Milhaud only developed his connection with Universal Edition precisely because, as Epstein notes: "Every work submitted to Rouché had been rejected" (p. 108). So the situation might perhaps best be summed up as one of chicken-and-egg. As is rightly acknowledged, "Milhaud's

reputation [in France] also suffered from chauvinist, anti-Semitic criticism that fixated on his 'German' and/or 'Jewish' stylistic tendencies" (p. 111). The best-known and most substantial instance of the UE phenomenon was, of course, the premiere of Milhaud's large-scale opera *Christophe Colomb* at the Berlin State Opera in 1930.

The next pair of chapters consider the domain of the French state as patron, via the connector of *Maximilien*: the first of Milhaud's operas to be premiered by Jacques Rouché in 1932. Rouché was the highly influential, affluent, and powerful director of the Paris Opéra who held sway for some thirty years through to 1945. Despite his tardiness in recognizing Milhaud's talents, Rouché generally played a positive role in creating new productions in very challenging times, often investing his own money. Fascinating, detailed accounts of the Opéra's troubled finances that consistently operated with a deficit are presented here. For Epstein (p. 16), "Rouché's greatest contribution to new French opera, however, was securing the nationalization of the Opéra by the French government in 1939," the entry of the French state into patronage being aptly viewed as the "signature defining transformation" of the interwar years. This leads naturally into discussion of a government initiative ("Nationalizing Music Composition") to tackle composer unemployment, just prior to the Second World War, where "inaugural recipients of state commissions" included the female composers Elsa Barraine and Tailleferre (p. 181). It also connects, via the Fédération musicale populaire, to the contemporaneous political notion of music as in some sense belonging to, indeed being of, its people.

Finally, chapter seven examines the patronage of new works through philanthropic foundations. Given, however, that the most celebrated patrons already discussed—including de Polignac, de Maré, and Coolidge—also set up foundations, the defining *raison d'être* seems to be to present a case study on Serge Koussevitzky, as a way of effecting a shift from France back to the United States (an agenda not explicit in the book title). As Epstein argues, "Through the concerts he produced and conducted in Paris between 1920 and 1928, he [Koussevitzky] engaged in the creative labor of conducting, certainly, but also of designing programs, facilitating performances by emerging composers, and commissioning new works" (p. 191). Later, Koussevitzky would focus on the Boston Symphony Orchestra and his own foundation. Whatever one's structural reservations here, the idea of patrons ensuring their legacies through foundations is undoubtedly a fitting one for a closing chapter. Equally, this conceit enables a brief updating of the patronage concept beyond the Second World War—on either side of the Atlantic—to embrace orchestras, universities, and other organizations. The book closes with a stark statement, with which we may all identify: "art music has never survived and will never survive without significant patronage" (p. 200).

While some claims may have been slightly overstated, particularly in respect of patronage impacting the real musical substance, this book offers a thought-provoking new perspective on French music of the interwar years through the lens of musical patronage. It contributes to a rebalancing of scholarly discourse, from a strong emphasis upon musical product to one concerned also with the various hands involved in its process; from a typical focus solely upon artistic values to one that engages also with those of commerce, social and cultural power.

NOTES

[1] Louis K. Epstein, "Toward a Theory of Patronage: Funding for Music Composition in France, 1918–1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2013).

[2] Deborah Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel: Creation and Interpretation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006; repr. 2016).

[3] Maurice Ravel, *L'Intégrale: Correspondance (1895–1937), écrits et entretiens*, ed. Manuel Cornejo (Paris: Le Passeur Éditeur, 2018).

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