

MARCEL PROUST AND REYNALDO HAHN
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by

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INTRODUCTION.

The question of Proust and music is a large one, for here, more than with perhaps any other author, the subject is particularly pregnant. Not only is there extended discussion of music in Proust's works, but also the fictional Vinteuil in A la recherche du temps perdu is elevated to the rank of an artistic "hero," a "phare" in the Baudelairian sense. It is no accident that Vinteuil's music is more of a revelation for the narrator than the works of Bergotte the writer or Elstir the painter, for Proust virtually raised music to the highest art-form, or, rather, it is the art-form which came closest to his own idea of "essence," the medium by which souls can communicate.

Critics have not been slow in pointing this out: music is dealt with in all the standard biographies and critical works.¹ Its effect is seen not only in incidental passages of Proust's works, but also in the whole conception of these works, particularly A la recherche du temps perdu. In other words, critics have seen a musical form--symphonic or operatic--at work in Proust's great novel. The principal commentators who have dealt with this aspect are Coeuroy, Fiser, Hier and Piroué.²

Following on from consideration of the general overall plan of A la recherche du temps perdu, the question naturally arises as to what were the particular musical

influences acting on Proust. Once again, the critics are unanimous on this point: the greatest single influence was, without any doubt, Wagner. Parallels abound. The mere scope of Proust's work recalls the vast canvas of Wagner's operas; the technique of the "Leitmotiv" ("leading-motive") is common to both artists; and the works of both Wagner and Proust, though written in different media, betray a common concern for the fusion of all the arts.

Yet Wagner was not the only musical influence on Proust; there were many others. Amongst them was a particularly close friend, in fact perhaps the closest friend Proust ever had: Reynaldo Hahn, a composer once very popular, but now almost forgotten.

Hahn is mentioned by most critics in dealing with Proust and music, yet no one ever seems to have come to a firm decision as to his influence on Proust. Even Georges Piroué, who leaves no stone unturned in his excellent study, does little more than remain on the anecdotal level, and comes to the disappointing conclusion that Hahn acted merely as a musical informer for Proust.

Yet if this were all that could be said of the two men's relationship, it would be a sad state of affairs. It is difficult to define why a friendship exists, as Montaigne discovered in connection with La Boétie (Essais, I, 28), yet if one looks hard enough one can always find at least some concrete reasons. Such I believe to be the case with

Proust and Hahn.

However, this study is not concerned with "proving" a case, but rather in laying out in one place long-available material on Proust and Hahn which has until now been scattered in various places.

I have tried as far as possible to avoid the anecdotal, and to concentrate on purely musical facts, for it is on the musical level, not on the level of everyday life, that the Proust/Hahn relationship is of the greatest interest to scholars.

Thus the first chapter of the present study deals with the musical scene in France at the turn of the century and Hahn's place within it--essential background material. The second chapter treats the direct presence of Hahn in Proust's works, and the third examines Proust's correspondence with Hahn and the musical issues raised in it. The fourth and fifth chapters are complimentary, comparing and contrasting the musical theory and tastes of Proust and Hahn. It seemed to me that Hahn's many writings on music had been too much neglected in the past: examination of them has proved to be most rewarding from a Proustian point of view.

Finally, two appendixes are provided: the first is a brief résumé of Hahn's life and works; the second, an index to the composers mentioned in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn.

The following abbreviations are employed:

PJ: Les Plaisirs et les jours.

JS: Jean Santeuil.

CSB: Contre Sainte-Beuve.

RTP: A la recherche du temps perdu.

CG: Correspondance générale.

Hahn: Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn.

For the editions, see the bibliography.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION.

¹ One could quote, as representative of critics' views of music in Proust's works, the following "larges principes" of Florence Hier:

(i) La musique correspond à une vérité spirituelle qui a sa source dans une expérience de l'âme. Elle est conçue et comprise dans la plénitude de la vie intérieure.

(ii) Le compositeur possède une qualité personnelle, individuelle, qui le fait lui et aucun autre.

(iii) Le progrès dans la musique et dans tous les arts ne peut être représenté chronologiquement par une ligne horizontale, selon le principe que Debussy est supérieur à Wagner parce qu'il vient après lui; la ligne va plutôt en sens vertical vers les profondeurs et vers les cimes. La ligne de notre compréhension va dans le même sens.

(Florence Hier, La Musique dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust [New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, 1932], p.36.)

² André Coeuroy, Wagner et l'esprit romantique (Paris: Gallimard, 1965).

Eméric Fiser, Le Symbole littéraire (Paris: Conti, 1941).

Florence Hier, La Musique dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust (New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, 1932).

Georges Piroué, La Musique dans la vie, l'oeuvre et l'esthétique de Proust (Paris: Denoël, 1960).

CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL PICTURE.

1. French Music at the Turn of the Century.

As in the rest of Europe, the musical scene in France at the turn of the century was a complex phenomenon. Schools of composition abounded, each trying in its own way to solve the problems posed by an aging tradition. Looking back on this period from the present-day, one can see in all the various movements a preparation for the revolutionary new techniques which the century was to usher in. Many composers considered important at the time we now look on as failures, because they pursued paths which led nowhere, while others, who were considered minor composers by their contemporaries, we now see as historically more important.

In France, the situation was particularly confused, as the question of foreign influences was of considerable importance. The supremacy of German music was this time the burning question. The last great French composer had been Berlioz (1803-1869), and the impact of his music, while great in the 1850's and 1860's, had died away by the 1880's. His example had proved that Frenchmen were capable of becoming great composers, yet no one had stepped into his place immediately. Thus the way was left open for the resurgence of German music, of which the principal representative at this time was Wagner (1813-1883).

Now Wagner, of all composers who ever lived, probably caused the most passions to rage, both from a musical and from a personal point of view. Followers and adversaries were equally violent, particularly in France. This had already begun in 1861, when the first Paris performances of Tannhäuser prompted near-riots. Thus the seeds for future controversy had already been sown, and by the 1880's one was either a pro-Wagnerian or an anti-Wagnerian.¹

This is no doubt an over-simplification, but when things are viewed in this light, the whole musical scene becomes much clearer. On the one hand, it is possible to distinguish those who followed Wagner, and on the other, those who rejected him. Very few composers fall into neither of these categories.

Of the composers of the Wagnerian camp, the first who should be mentioned is César Franck (1822-1890), who, although a Belgian, lived in France for most of his life. Musically, he took one step further the harmonically-based language of Wagner, and spiritually he expanded on the religious element inherent in much of Wagner's music. The religious element was particularly important, as it was to become a sort of trade-mark of the majority of French post-Wagnerians, who were in the main Catholics. Franck's principal works were the organ pieces, the Symphony in D major, the Piano Quintet and the String Quartet. These last two works were to inspire Proust in the conception of

Vinteuil's Septet, and the character of Franck himself was to play a great rôle in the formation of the character Vinteuil.

Franck's most important pupil was Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931), who took the important step of transforming Franck's post-Wagnerian aesthetic into a formulated method. His principal works were the operas Fervaal and L'Étranger, two symphonies, and the Symphonie sur un thème montagnard, though only the last of these is occasionally heard today.

D'Indy's greatest importance lies not in his music, which tends to be pedestrian, but in his activities as a teacher. In 1894 he founded, with Charles Bordes, the "Schola Cantorum," a sort of rival to the Conservatoire, where all formal teaching had previously been centred. Thus the "Schola Cantorum" constituted a new alternative to the Conservatoire, which by this time was showing signs of reactionism, and at the same time it provided a center for those with Wagnerian sympathies, among whom were Chabrier and Chausson. The most convenient epithet to describe the music which issued from this group, marked by an extreme seriousness in all matters, is "heavy."

This can scarcely be said of the other mainstream of music towards the end of the nineteenth century. Rejection of Wagner seems to have carried with it a concern for simplicity, lightness and delicacy. At least, these are the principal characteristics of the non-Wagnerian composers.

The first of these who should be mentioned is Bizet (1838-1875), whom Nietzsche took to opposing to Wagner after his break with the latter. Nothing could be further from the Wagnerian world than Carmen, whose extrovert freshness and charm still continue to captivate audiences. Apart from Carmen, Bizet wrote incidental music for Daudet's play L'Arlésienne, and this link with Daudet provides a link with Proust and Hahn, for they were both, as we shall see, habitués of Daudet's salon. Besides, Proust was a great friend of Lucien Daudet, as well of Mme Straus, Bizet's widow, and Jacques Bizet, her son.

The other principal non-Wagnerians of the period were Charles Gounod (1818-1893), Jules Massenet (1842-1912) and Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), all of whom were connected with the reactionary Conservatoire. Their musical productions are sufficiently well-known to require no comment here. However, it is interesting to note that Massenet, although definitely belonging to the non-Wagnerian camp, shows distinct traces of Wagnerian influence, seen particularly in a penchant for lyrical outpourings. And as time progressed, Wagnerian techniques were used more and more. This is particularly evident in the music of Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), which seems to belong to both camps at once.

A similar remark could be made of Claude Debussy (1862-1918), yet this composer was really the first who was capable of combining the two mainstreams and at the same time

creating something original. In fact, Debussy began the musical revolution in France towards which the last years of the nineteenth century were working. Parallels in other countries were Schönberg, in Austria, who was evolving towards the dodecaphonic system of composition, and in Russia Stravinsky was giving music a new rhythmic basis. Revolution was the order of the day, and it was no longer fruitful to follow in the steps of Franck and d'Indy or Bizet and Massenet. The general tone of the various musical generations of this century is revolutionary, and each generation, by rejecting older forms, creates something entirely new. Thus one can already distinguish four musical generations in France, those of Debussy, "Les Six," Messiaen, and Boulez, each quite different from the preceding one.

Returning to the last years of the nineteenth century, I think it is important to look briefly at the various places of musical entertainment at this time. Paris was particularly fortunate in possessing a large number of concert organisations catering to all tastes. The concerts of the Conservatoire faithfully reflected the conservative teaching of the institution, while the concerts of the "Schola Cantorum" provided a stage for post-Wagnerian composers. Apart from these two, there were also the Concerts Colonne (from 1874) and the Concerts Lamoureux (from 1881). These maintained the traditional repertoire and at the same time gave new composers, of either camp, an opportunity to

be heard. Grand opera was accommodated at the Paris Opéra and the Opéra-Comique, the latter also serving as a stage for new compositions of young composers. Innumerable halls existed for the performance of operettas, which, as in the rest of Europe, were enjoying an enormous vogue at this time. It would be no exaggeration to say that Offenbach was the most frequently performed composer in Paris. In a still lighter vein, revues and cabarets abounded, particularly in the form of the "Café-concert," a sort of solo concert of popular songs, often performed with considerable artistry. A present-day survivor of this genre is Maurice Chevalier. Then, of course, there were the salons, in which chamber music, often in a light vein, was performed to the elect, aristocratic few. One can see reflections of all these milieux in the writings of both Proust and Hahn; they faithfully reflect the atmosphere of musical Paris at this time.

2. Reynaldo Hahn's Life and Works.

Reynaldo Hahn was born of Jewish parents on August 9, 1874, in Caracas, Venezuela. At the age of three he moved with the family to Paris, where he was to make his home for the rest of his life. His musical studies began at an early age, for in 1885 he entered the Paris Conservatoire, where his teachers were Massenet and the professors of harmony Théodore Dubois (1837-1924) and Albert Lavignac (1846-1916).

Hahn was musically precocious, and 1890 none less than Alphonse Daudet asked him to write the incidental music to his play L'Obstacle. This early contact with literary circles enabled him not only to advance in "salon" life (where he played his Chansons grises, to words by Verlaine, with enormous success), but also to advance his claims, by this means, as a composer and performer. Hahn's appearances in salons have frequently been described, by the Goncourts,² by Cocteau,³ and by others.⁴ Here is one of Lucien Daudet's descriptions:

M. Reynaldo Hahn venait souvent à la maison, mes parents l'aimaient infiniment et quand il venait dîner, M. Edmond de Goncourt disait à mon père: 'Il n'y aura pas moyen de parler au maître de maison, le petit Hahn sera là, lui fera de la musique tout le temps, et nous n'existerons plus.' (Je crois que c'était vrai; les mélodies de M. Reynaldo Hahn et sa voix avaient pour mon père la douceur d'un plaisir, et sur son mal la force d'un anesthésique.)^o

In the world of high society he ascended high enough to dine with King Edward VII in Paris and subsequently to be invited to Buckingham Palace; and in the world of musical interpretation he attained the distinction of being asked to conduct at Salzburg.

After the Great War, in which he served at the front, Hahn's reputation seems to have undergone some decline. Not that his social life was any less elevated, but that the advent of a new musical generation (in France, predominantly "Les Six") had tended to throw his own music into a rather less favorable light. In other words, it was

found to be dated. Hahn only partially managed to rally against this, as we shall see, and it remains true that his position, musically speaking, was never afterwards very secure, even while serving as musical critic for Le Figaro from 1934-1940. During World War II a shadow again fell over Hahn, as he was forced into "exile" at Toulon. His return to Paris after the liberation was, however, triumphant: he was appointed musical director of the Opéra in 1945, where he successfully managed to rebuild the company after the war years. This success was to last for only two years, however, as Hahn died after a short illness on January 28, 1947.

Considering the eventful life Hahn led, it is remarkable that he managed to compose as many works as he did. I have already mentioned the early success of the Chansons grises, "un album de quelques mélodies si légères, si vaporeuses et fugitives, qu'en musique même, ainsi qu'en poésie, elles sont à peine des 'impressions'."⁶ This reputation for delicacy was extended in the piano pieces, Portraits de peintres, which Hahn wrote for Proust's poems of that title, and in the Polynesian idyll L'Ile du rêve, and it is this element alone which has been salvaged in the present-day.

Hahn's attempt at a larger theatrical framework with La Carmélite in 1902 proved to be not very successful,

though the element of increased "exteriorisation" (as opposed to the more intimate atmosphere of the earlier works) did produce some effect on critics:

On assure, depuis la Carmélite, que M. Reynaldo Hahn n'est pas un musicien de théâtre; on a peut-être raison. Mais on aurait tort, même avant la Carmélite, de l'appeler seulement un musicien de salon. Il fut quelquefois davantage.

In effect, Hahn tried out all the musical genres. The next important work was a setting of the choruses from Esther (cf. CSB, pp. 127-128), to be followed by a "poème lyrique" for choir, soloists and orchestra, Prométhée triomphant, which scored a moderate success:

Plusieurs pages ont une élégance très noble; d'autres, une héroïque mélancolie; d'autres enfin ne sont pas éloignées d'atteindre à la véritable grandeur. Et dans les rythmes et dans les timbres, dans la disposition aussi des voix, on signalerait plus d'une trouvaille pittoresque et d'un effet heureux.

The next important work, Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este, "cette évocation joliment colorée de l'Italie de la Renaissance,"⁹ was a suite for small orchestra which Hahn conducted at Buckingham Palace before Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and La Fête chez Thérèse, which followed it, was a ballet in which Hahn carried off "un beau succès de compositeur" (Tatry, art. cit., p.7). Another critic, writing in 1922, takes however a different view:

L'exhumation de la Fête chez Thérèse semble être le piteux corollaire de l'intrusion de M. Hahn dans les choses de notre Opéra lequel, par facétie plutôt baroque, l'afficha les mêmes soirs que l'oeuvre de M. Maurice Ravel. Si l'administration circonspecte crut, par cet expédient transactionnel, ménager le primarisme présumé de la foule et la susceptibilité de telles digestions abonnées, elle s'est bien trompée. Le contraste

fut éloquent. Ce ballet fastidieux et somnifère, de quoi le premier acte n'est un peu tolérable que grâce à deux chansons populaires empruntées, ne répandit dans l'auditoire qu'une froideur glaciale. Le public y bâilla autant qu'il s'éjouit à l'Heure espagnole.¹⁰

This criticism is indicative of the completely changed atmosphere in musical matters after the Great War. Any claims which Hahn may have possessed to being a considerable composer were now swept aside. He was still reviewed by critics, to be sure, but in general the reports are very matter-of-fact, even indulgent. Some indeed are quite violent, for instance that of Jean Marnold writing of Nausicaa, which he terms as "assurément la partition la plus nulle qu'ait publiée M. Hahn, et ce n'est pas peu dire."¹¹ But other critics were more indulgent; one of them points out certain novelties of the score:

L'orchestration discrète, tendre et où l'emploi des flûtes et des hautbois n'est point abusif (comme dans les compositions à sujets antiques), a été bien étudiée. Un piano a été ajouté aux instruments de l'orchestre. Ses sonorités tintantes y ont été fondues avec un goût et une adresse toujours en éveil.¹²

The reception for Le Marchand de Venise (1935) was generally more favorable ("La partition fourmille de trouvailles d'écriture," wrote one critic¹³), though this momentary success was apparently due to the supposed "modernities" of the score, including jazz-effects. One imagines Hahn to have felt himself obliged to adopt such techniques in an attempt to bring his music up to date.

One considerable success did however mark the inter-war years. Ciboulette, a light opera first performed at the

Théâtre des Variétés on April 7, 1923, was immediately hailed as a true successor in the line of French operettas:

[Ciboulette] nous ramène à la vraie opérette que pratiquaient nos pères. N'entendez pas par là qu'il s'agisse d'une réédition des opérettes de jadis. Non, le livret nous conte une fort agréable historiette, et la musique sait se souvenir à propos, que certaines dissonances, jadis abhorrées des techniciens, ont reçu leurs lettres de grande naturalisation. Et tout cela chante, vit, se trémousse avec une bonne humeur, une élégance, qui contrastent avec le débraillé, la désolante vulgarité de l'opérette moderne, - et nous enchantent.¹⁴

Apparently, Ciboulette still continues to enchant today, as it has known several revivals. In fact, apart from the early songs, this is the only work of Hahn's which is occasionally performed in modern times. One of the more recent productions was at Munich, and it aroused at the time (1961) an element of interest in international music circles. Critics were not slow to point out the influences visible in the music, but they were very far from condemning it for this reason:

Zu [der] nicht gerade originellen Handlung schrieb Reynaldo Hahn zunächst einige hübsche, lebhaft Nummern, die einen orchestral etwas aufgeputzten Offenbach erhoffen lassen. Aber dann wird er zusehends gefühlvoller, und nicht mehr Offenbach, sondern Massenet und Puccini sind seine Wegweiser.¹⁵

There is no doubt that Ciboulette did enjoy, even measured against greater productions of greater composers, a considerable success. One of the first critics declared that "[la] partition de Ciboulette est un véritable régal,"¹⁶ while Robert Tatry, writing as late as 1962, could even say:

Chacun connaît la triomphale carrière [de Ciboulette]... et au moins un air, le fameux et pimpant duo: 'Nous avons fait un beau voyage'. (Tatry, art. cit., p.8.)

Ciboulette seems to have been the work--probably the only one--in which the best aspects of Hahn's music all managed somehow to combine: the lyrical element of song, the intimate cadre of operetta, the imaginative handling of choruses which was noticed in Prométhée triomphant, but above all delicacy and charm.

At this stage one could perhaps hazard a definition of Hahn's musical style. The characteristic of "charm", which I have just alluded to, is the element almost always first pointed out by critics. It is employed indiscriminately in describing both the man and his music, and one must say that, in spite of its having become a cliché, it fits surprisingly well. An indication of this may be seen in the mere titles of his works. These somewhat "precious" titles demonstrate immediately that Hahn does not belong to the followers of Franck's pupil, Vincent D'Indy. Further investigation confirms this, and attaches him strongly to the other main-stream of composition I referred to above, namely that of Massenet. Robert Tatry states outright that he was "formé à la sûre école de Massenet" (art. cit., p.8), and certainly one recognises in this "music a constant, delicate concern for melodic line and subtle harmony. Camille Bellaigue (like Hahn, a "chanteur de salon") sums this up well in a review of La Carmélite:

Si la musique de M. Massenet, - on l'a dit avec malice, - est la fille de celle de Gounod, la musique de M. Reynaldo Hahn pouvait bien être une petite-fille de celle de M. Massenet. La parenté se reconnaît à certain 'air' de famille et même à plusieurs: à cette mélodie entre autres, avant toutes les autres: O délice douloureuse! qui fait le thème fragile du principal duo d'amour. Par la grâce des contours, et par les détours aussi, par le rythme et le mouvement général, par les intervalles augmentés et les chutes mourantes, ce motif imite ou rappelle la manière, - et la plus maniérée, - de M. Massenet. De son professeur encore, M. Hahn a reçu le secret ou la formule de telle phrase (chantée par le Roi) qui descend et se déroule en spirale brillante. Et le sentiment, autant que le style du maître, s'est reflété sur l'oeuvre de son élève. M. Hahn se plaît à mêler dans le rôle de Louise la passion et la piété, l'amour divin avec les humaines amours.¹⁷

This last-mentioned aspect of love is a marked feature of the music of Massenet's school. After the Great War, with the advent of a more brutal realism, it went out of fashion: in 1923, Jean Marnold, in one of his characteristically virulent attacks, refers to "la vaseline émoullissante de [...] Massenet".¹⁸ Witty though this may be, it would be untrue to say that Hahn followed the "old style" blindly, as Marnold presumably intended to prove. By the time of Le Marchand de Venise (1935), at any rate, most critics are prepared to drop the "idées reçues" on Hahn and appreciate the development in the music:

On a souvent parlé de l'influence massenétique chez Reynaldo Hahn, et vous pensez bien que les censeurs ne sous-entendaient pas le meilleur Massenet! En entendant Le Marchand de Venise, on ne peut penser un instant à Massenet pas plus qu'à toute autre influence. On se rappelle seulement le fervent idéal du musicien qui chantait jadis, dans l'atelier désuet de la rue de Monceau, Mozart, Gounod, Chabrier et Fauré. Du musicien dont la culture est telle que toute musique, classique ou moderne, qu'il l'aime ou ne l'aime pas, lui est devenue familière au point de ne pouvoir jamais influencer

son inspiration.¹⁹

I have already pointed out the novelties of the score of Le Marchand de Venise: it is a point not to be neglected that Hahn's earlier music is by no means all in the vein of Massenet. Even in the early 1890's one can notice considerable differences in the "worlds" of the Chansons grises and of the Etudes latines, and even between individual songs of each collection. These differences cannot be ascribed merely to differences in influence: one must also give credit to a certain amount of individuality which is not explicable by reference to possible concrete musical influences or to Hahn's declared musical tastes.

As far as Hahn's activities as a conductor are concerned, it would seem that the element of "charm" noted above in respect to his own music provides a key to his activities in the concert-hall and opera-house. It undoubtedly led him to the music of Mozart, of which he was one of the foremost French interpreters of his day. It is true that many critics are unkind, if not even violent towards Hahn's interpretations of Mozart,²⁰ but it must be remembered that the style of interpretation of Mozart in the early years of this century was in general what we would call "romantic", with large orchestras à la Stokowski. What Hahn aimed for was a delicacy in texture reached by faithful adherence to the score and by using an orchestra of reduced, and authentic, proportions. One can prefer the judgement of René Dumesnil, an enlightened

musical critic, over that of Jean Marnold:

Au pupitre, le chef d'orchestre gardait la même précision, la même netteté, le même souci des nuances, le même respect des oeuvres. On n'oubliera point de si tôt ses interprétations des opéras de Mozart, et, tout récemment, celle du Joseph de Méhul qu'il tint, en prenant direction de l'Opéra, à remettre en scène.²¹

He even went to the extent of having the recitatives accompanied by a forte-piano, and the authenticity of this procedure is only recently beginning to be granted. Descriptions of the charming recitals Hahn used to give of his own songs are well known, and I have quoted from one above. It is surely not unreasonable to recognise that this charm flowed over into his more formal music-making; at least, it seems extremely unlikely that Hahn would have been invited to conduct at Salzburg unless his conception and practice of Mozart were not in some way authentic and acceptable to a cosmopolitan audience.

This, then, is the picture which Reynaldo Hahn has left to posterity. Let us now turn to an examination of the picture he presented to his contemporary and friend-- Marcel Proust.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE.

1 These were the years of the Revue wagnérienne, founded in 1885 by Édouard Dujardin.

2 E. et J. Goncourt, Journal (Paris: Flammarion/Fasquelle, 1896), IX, 136.

3 Jean Cocteau, Portraits-souvenir 1900-1914 (Paris: Grasset, 1935), p.188.

4 E.g., Jacques Rouché, "Souvenirs," Revue des deux mondes, 15 June, 1953, pp.704-707; Robert Tatry, "Reynaldo Hahn, compositeur de charme," Musica Disques, XCVI (1962), 4-8.

5 Lucien Daudet, Autour de 60 lettres de Marcel Proust (Cahiers Marcel Proust, no. 5) (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), pp.11-12.

6 Review of Camille Bellaigue, Revue des deux mondes, LIII (1919), 459.

7 Review of Camille Bellaigue, Revue des deux mondes, XIII (1903), 448.

8 Review of Camille Bellaigue, Revue des deux mondes, XLIV (1908), 708.

9 Robert Tatry, "Reynaldo Hahn, compositeur de charme," Musica Disques, XCVI (1962), 7.

- 10 Review of Jean Marnold, Mercure de France, CLIII (1922), 766-767.
- 11 Mercure de France, CLXVIII (1923), 226.
- 12 L. Rohozinski, ed. Cinquante ans de musique française (Paris: Librairie de France, 1925), I, 191-192.
- 13 Review of D.-E. Inghelbrecht, La Revue de France, XV, (1935), 715.
- 14 Review of Louis Schneider, La Revue de France, III, (1923), 446.
- 15 Review (anonymous) in Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, CXXIII (1962), 79.
- 16 Rohozinski, op. cit., I, 320.
- 17 Revue des deux mondes, XIII (1903), 446.
- 18 Mercure de France, CLXVIII (1923), 226.
- 19 Review of D.-E. Inghelbrecht, La Revue de France, XV (1935), 714.
- 20 The ever-virulent Jean Marnold provides some amusing comments in this respect:

La présence de M. Reynaldo Hahn au pupitre se hisse aux proportions d'un scandale. On n'a jamais su par quel mystère ce compositeur de salon, dénué de tout talent [...], s'est acquis parmi les gens exagérément inavertis une réputation de compétence spéciale à l'endroit de Mozart. L'indéniable, c'est qu'après nous avoir stupéfiés jadis par la maestria avec laquelle il

massacra Don Juan, place Boieldieu, it s'est surpassé cette fois dans ce genre d'exercice au dam de ce charmant Enlèvement au Sérail [...]. Certes, on ne peut contester que M. Hahn n'ait une manière spéciale et bien à lui de diriger la musique de Mozart, d'en métamorphoser la grâce en sécheresse, la fluidité lumineuse en pesanteur opaque, la verve ailée, vibrante, en flasquicité terne. C'est un don que du Ciel il reçut en naissant, mais auquel on préférerait que nos scènes subventionnées ne procurassent point, d'une candeur têtue, l'occasion de sévir. [...] Qu'il parte donc pour la Syrie: notre opéra aurait tout bénéfice à lui en payer le voyage. (Mercure de France, CLIII (1922), 765-766.)

M. Hahn comprend Mozart selon son goût et l'interprète en conséquence. Trahit sua quemque voluptas. Le malheur est qu'il le comprend à rebours. Toute subjectivité est à priori légitime et on n'en saurait faire aucun grief à M. Hahn, s'il s'y livrait chez lui, à porte close, et ne l'imposait point à son prochain. Mais attendre la dorienne beauté de la Flûte enchantée de Mozart et entendre à sa place les coq-à-l'âne de sa caricature antipodale est à la longue un vrai supplice. La version, ou, mieux, l'inversion de M. Hahn engendre cet agacement énervant

'Où le désir s'accroît quand l'effet se recule,'
et on souffre un tourment plus cruel que le martyr de Polyeucte.

(Mercure de France, CLXII (1923), 218.)

21 Mercure de France, CCXCIX (1947), 728.

CHAPTER TWO: HAHN IN PROUST'S WORKS.

In the absence of precise references in the works and in the correspondence, few things have proved more difficult to assess than the direct influence of Hahn's music on Proust, and thus critics have in general tended to regard Hahn's influence as minimal. While it is true that one cannot draw any irrefutable conclusions in this matter, I believe it is possible to go somewhat farther than most critics have done thus far. I shall deal first with the fictional works of Proust, which, however, offer little in the way of substantial material. The more important evidence lies in the correspondence (Chapter III).

In Les Plaisirs et les jours, Hahn merits but a single mention, but it is an important one. It comes in the section entitled "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet," and merits quotation in full: .

Mais l'objet de leurs plus vifs débats était Reynaldo Hahn. Tandis que son intimité avec Massenet, lui attirant sans cesse les cruels sarcasmes de Bouvard, le désignait impitoyablement comme victime aux prédilections passionnées de Pécuchet, il avait le don d'exaspérer ce dernier par son admiration pour Verlaine, partagée d'ailleurs par Bouvard. 'Travaillez sur Jacques Normand, Sully Prudhomme, le vicomte de Borelli. Dieu merci, dans le pays des trouvères, les poètes ne manquent pas', ajoutait-il patriotiquement. Et, partagé entre les sonorités tudesques du nom de Hahn et la désinence méridionale de son prénom Reynaldo, préférant l'exécuter en haine de Wagner plutôt que l'absoudre en faveur de Verdi, il concluait rigoureusement en se tournant vers Bouvard: - Malgré l'effort de tous vos beaux messieurs, notre beau pays de France est un pays de clarté, et la musique française sera claire ou ne sera pas, énonçait-il en frappant sur la table pour plus de force. (PJ, pp.110-111.)

Whereupon follows an indictment of Wagner on the part of Pécuchet.

I shall deal in more detail with "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet" later in this section, when treating the problem of Proust's attitude to composers other than Hahn. I shall only remark at this stage that, although one can scarcely read into this any really deep appreciation of Hahn's music on the part of Proust, the latter seems to be aware, even at this early stage, of the diverse critical views remarked on in the previous chapter. In this passage Hahn is linked resolutely to the school of Massenet, and, incidentally, is thereby opposed to the followers of Wagner (though, as we have seen, Massenet himself does not entirely escape Wagner's influence). And the implication that Hahn's music is one of "clarté" ties in with the general view of charm and delicacy noted in the previous chapter. We cannot assume that Proust indicates a preference for the type of music enjoyed by Pécuchet, for as we shall see, he appreciated the favorites of both Bouvard and Pécuchet. Yet it is noteworthy that even at this early point in Proust's acquaintance with Hahn, Proust is fully aware of the nature of Hahn's music.

Before leaving Les Plaisirs et les jours, it should be pointed out that Hahn wrote accompanying music for the four Portraits de peintres which appear in Les Plaisirs et les jours. I shall not linger over this, as the subject has

been more than adequately discussed in a recent article,¹ but I shall return to the implications of this literary-musical collaboration later. In addition to this direct association of Hahn's with Les Plaisirs et les jours, he seems also to have been in Proust's mind in the Introduction to the work. Although the dedication is to Willie Heath, Proust makes reference (p.16) to two people who have "ajouté, l'un la poésie de sa musique, l'autre la musique de son incomparable poésie"--scarcely veiled allusions to Hahn and Montesquiou.

Jean Santeuil need only detain us briefly, as there are no direct references to Hahn's music. Nevertheless, some traces remain of "literary transposition" of Hahn into the characters of Henri de Réveillon and of the marquis de Poitiers. These transpositions have however little musical significance,² yet the element of Hahn's charm comes through clearly in the delightful descriptions of the cigarette-smoking pianist marquis de Poitiers (JS, II, 293-297). Similar remarks can be made about A la recherche du temps perdu, which, surprising though it may sound, contains only one reference to Hahn, and that an indirect one. It occurs in Le Temps retrouvé, and is an allusion to L'Ile du rêve, but only insofar as it affects the clothes which Cottard took to wearing late in his life:

Cottard assistait maintenant aux réceptions [de Mme Verdurin] dans un uniforme de colonel de L'Ile du Rêve, assez semblable à celui d'un amiral haïtien. (RTP, III, 769.)

However insignificant this reference may appear to be, it does at least indicate that Proust had not, towards the end of his life, forgotten a production of his friend's work which took place some twenty years in the past.³

As far as Contre Sainte-Beuve is concerned, the material is a little more substantial. The passage in question (CSB, pp.127-128) describes a family evening at which Reynaldo Hahn is present. The weight of the passage is borne by the narrator's parents themselves, and particularly by his mother, but the fact that Reynaldo himself is present in this intimate family gathering is significant. It is a period when the narrator, though ill, is perfectly happy, and the effect of his mother's timidly attempting one of "ces choeurs divins que Reynaldo Hahn a écrits pour Esther" seems to add to his appreciation of his happy position. It is reasonable to assume that if he had not been at least moderately fond of the music, the occasion would not have appeared so perfect. Yet even if Proust did consider Hahn's music second-rate, there is reason to believe that his attachment to it would be no less profound, as we shall see later (Chapter IV, part 2).

As I stated earlier, little in the way of conclusions can be drawn from Hahn's appearances in Proust's fictional works. There is, however, one critical document which is exceptionally fruitful for our survey of the explicit

appearances of Hahn in Proust's writings. It is an article first published in Annales: Revue mensuelle de lettres françaises in December, 1923, and subsequently reprinted in the Textes retrouvés.⁴ Kolb has dated the article to between 1909 and 1914, which, it should be noted, is well after the initial period of great friendship of the two men.

Proust begins his article with the famous quote from the Goncourt Journal (see Chapter I, note 2); and continues by discussing Hahn's relations to literary figures--Daudet, Mallarmé, Anatole France--and the admiration they expressed for him and his works. A short section is then devoted to Hahn's musical criticism (which I shall discuss in detail in Chapter V). This is followed by a passage dealing with the supposed reactionary nature of Hahn's music, which I must quote in full:

Si Reynaldo Hahn excite de grandes admirations auprès des artistes, peut-être a-t-il rencontré plus de résistances de la part de cette classe si utile, si puissante, mais plus fervente que toujours parfaitement clairvoyante, qui a pris de nos jours une importance et des proportions considérables, qui se qualifie elle-même du nom d' 'amateurs' et qu'on est trop sévère en qualifiant du nom de 'snobs'.

La vérité est que, de tout temps, les amateurs dits 'avancés' ne peuvent concevoir ce qu'ils appellent l'Art d'avant-garde que comme usant des procédés mis à la mode par la révolution technique la plus récente. Pour prendre un exemple hors de la musique, tous les amateurs 'avancés' qui vivaient à l'époque d'Ingres croyaient de bonne foi qu'Ingres était un 'pompiers'[,] un 'arriéré' et lui préféraient infiniment des élèves médiocres de Delacroix qu'ils s'imaginaient plus 'avancés' parcequ'ils usaient de l'écriture à la mode. Si on parle aujourd'hui à M. Degas, peut-être aussi 'avancé' que lesdits amateurs, de

ces mauvais élèves de Delacroix, il hausse les épaules, tandis qu'il proclame Ingres un des plus grands peintres de tous les temps. Je ne veux pas dire par là qu'un grand artiste, parce qu'il est en réaction apparente sur un poncif courant, soit plus grand pour cela même. Mais c'est une erreur de croire qu'il soit moins grand. Stendhal, en plein romantisme, disait trouver son modèle dans le Code civil, et se moquait du lyrisme romantique. Aujourd'hui, nous le plaçons aussi haut que les plus grands romantiques. Ceci pour répondre à ceux qu'une apparente affectation de réaction contre certaines formules modernes, de la part de Reynaldo Hahn, pourrait tromper. En réalité, aucun vrai musicien ne s'y trompera.

In this section, not only has Proust realised the apparent reactionary nature of Hahn's music as it appeared to many of his contemporaries, but he has gone one step further in affirming the positive value of such apparently backward-looking productions. The way in which Proust does this is worthy of attention. It is a noticeable fact that in his criticism, Proust frequently has recourse to arts other than the one he is principally concerned with, in order to emphasise a point he is trying to make. Such is the case here, and it seems to me that Proust speaks with extraordinary conviction.

The article continues with a brief review of Hahn's early works, and then exposes hopes for the future. One should not, however, neglect the earlier works, as they "embaument encore de ces fleurs qui se fanent si vite ensuite et qu'on ne retrouve plus." This idea is fortified by references to early works of Anatole France, Victor Hugo and Anna de Noailles: "Ne revenons-nous quelquefois

chercher dans ceux-ci [i.e., the early works] cette spontanéité plus naïve, l'accent inimitable, l'irretrouvable douceur d'une première promesse, du premier aveu?"

Yet Proust already senses a distinct forward movement in Hahn's music, a "paring-down" in search of truth, "la vérité intime, psychologique:"

Elle n'est que la vie même de l'âme, la substance interne du langage, libérée, s'élevant, s'envolant, devenue musique. C'est à force de respect pour les paroles, qu'il les dépasse, c'est en s'asservissant à elles qu'il les plie à une vérité plus haute qu'elles contenaient en germe, mais dont la musique seule développera les 'virtualités'. C'est au contact même du texte, qu'il prend la force de s'élever plus haut que lui, comme ces aviateurs qui courent sur la terre avant de se servir de leurs ailes, mais pour mieux s'envoler et plus haut. Tandis que ces Muses de Douleur et de Vérité conduisent Reynaldo Hahn à travers son oeuvre mélodique par des sentiers de plus en plus difficiles et plus beaux, tandis qu'il arrive à rendre, comme dit Verlaine:

Tout ce que la parole humaine
Contient de grâce et d'amour,
son oeuvre dramatique suit la même évolution.

In insisting here on the inspiration Hahn takes from poetry, and how he transforms it by way of his own music, Proust has hit upon perhaps the most essential aspect of his work; at least, it has proved to be the longest-lasting, as I have already remarked. And in comparing the effect to "la vie même de l'âme," Proust is drawing a distinct parallel with his own theory of music. I shall deal with this aspect of the criticism later, in attempting to correlate Proust's musical theory with the theory and actual productions of Hahn himself.

References to Hahn in Proust's correspondence are far more numerous than in the works. However, the vast majority of them are non-musical, and are concerned solely with the relations between the two men as friends, and not at all as artists. In fact, I have been able to trace only one letter of Proust's to someone other than Hahn where there is a significant mention of the latter's music. It occurs in a letter to Robert de Montesquiou, dating from May, 1905:

Le jeudi 25, on donne pour la dernière fois une chose que Reynaldo a faite cette année, dont il est plus content que de ce qu'il a fait jusqu'ici et qu'il désirait infiniment que j'entende. Mais comme cela ne s'est jamais donné que le jour, et une fois le soir où j'étais malade, je n'ai pu y aller. Je lui ai promis que, si par hasard le jeudi 25 j'étais bien, comme c'est le soir, j'irais. J'y tiens d'autant plus que je n'ai pu y aller à une seule des diverses auditions qu'il a données, qui je n'irai pas demain au concert qu'il dirige, ni dans huit jours, puisque c'est l'après-midi, que je n'ai pu aller à une seule de ses Esther chez Mme de Guerne, etc... (CG, I, 133.)

The conscientiousness exhibited in this letter may seem rather exaggerated (this may partially derive from the fact that Proust is writing to Montesquiou), but it at least indicates that Proust was fully aware of Hahn's musical activities at this time, and in enough detail (precise dates, etc.) to imply that he was genuinely concerned about his inability to go to the various events. Though one cannot rule out a certain feeling of obligation on Proust's part; however, this seems to me to be slight.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO.

¹ J. Theodore Johnson, Jr.: "Proust's Early Portraits de peintres," Comparative Literature Studies, IV, 397-408.

² On this aspect, see Georges Piroué, La Musique dans la vie, l'oeuvre et l'esthétique de Proust (Paris: Denoël, 1960), pp.25-30.

³ L'Île du rêve was first performed at the Opéra-Comique (Salle du Châtelet), on March 23, 1898, Messager conducting. It received nine performances, the last being on May 12 of the same year. See Stephane Wolff, Un Demi-siècle d'Opéra-Comique (1900-1950) (Paris: André Bonne, 1953), II, 229.

⁴ Marcel Proust, Textes retrouvés, recueillis et présentés par Philip Kolb et Larkin B. Price (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968).

CHAPTER THREE: PROUST'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HAHN.

The vast majority of direct references to Hahn's music naturally occur in the Proust/Hahn correspondence.¹ This is perhaps not surprising, as it would have been very difficult for Proust to write to a professional musician without ever mentioning music in general, and the addressee's music in particular. Nevertheless, interpretation and analysis of these letters is a very tricky, and often dangerous, exercise. Proust's habit of dealing out excessive praise to his correspondents is well known, and in tackling these letters to Hahn one has to be constantly on one's guard against interpreting too conveniently and too favorably phrases which may be no more than mere flattery. Yet upon close examination of these letters, I believe it is possible to sift out the genuine from the false.

1. Proust's Attitude to Hahn's Music.

What particularly concerns us at this point is the manner in which Proust reacts to actual musical productions of Hahn. There is no need to treat in detail all the various mentions of Reynaldo as singer and pianist, and the few mentions of Hahn as critic I shall discuss in Chapter V when dealing with the latter's published criticism and its direct relevance to Proust's musical taste and theory. As

far as mentions of specific works are concerned, it is interesting to observe that in these letters (which cover the years 1894 to 1915) there appears to be a distinct increase in awareness of Hahn's music on the part of Proust as the years proceed. This may be mere accident, due to the survival of only certain letters; but the early years are sufficiently well covered (apart from the years 1897-1904) to make this possibility seem unlikely. It is an interesting fact that the principal references date from the years following 1907, and thus correspond in date to Proust's article on Hahn in the Annales, discussed above. I have already remarked that this period comes well after the two men's initial infatuation with each other; by this time their relations had cooled off somewhat.

In these letters, Proust speaks of many of the works of Hahn which I dealt with in the first chapter. Apart from innumerable songs and piano pieces, several major works are mentioned: L'Ile du rêve, La Carmélite, Esther, La Pastorale de Noël, Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este, La Fête chez Thérèse, Le Dieu bleu, Méduse and Le Ruban dénoué. All references to Hahn's music are accompanied with praise, and, as I said above, little can be extracted from the mere mention of works, followed by flattering remarks. What is more interesting is when Proust begins to be genuinely critical and introduces comparisons with other composers:

Je n'ai pu vous parler, vous dire merci et merci pour

m'avoir fait venir pour Béatrice d'Este dont je vous dirai simplement que je préfère le (je ne sais pas quel n^o) morceau (vous devinerez lequel) à la sonate de Beethoven où est ce vif chant pastoral que j'aimais plus que tout au monde, que je préfère le morceau (n^o plus loin) à Siegfried Idyll, murmures de la Forêt etc, le 1^{er} et le dernier à l'Ouverture des Maîtres Chanteurs bien qu'ici il n'y ait pas de rapport. Enfin j'en suis fou et je voudrais savoir si Maman l'avait entendu. Je trouve que vous avez admirablement conduit--génialement--le 1^{er} morceau et toute la fin (mieux que Risler ne joue l'ouverture des Maîtres Chanteurs). Dans le reste vous faites trop de blagues, trop de manières, trop de grimaces. J'ai compris aujourd'hui pour la 1^{re} fois ce que veut dire une jolie orchestration et n'ai jamais vu tant de puissance dans la pureté. Quoique vous n'ayez pas de baston, je devinais dans vos doigts la baguette magique qui allait réveiller juste à temps, dans un coin de l'orchestre éloigné, un triangle endormi. J'ai admiré que vous ayez réussi à forcer tant de gens du monde à s'arrêter à écouter une fontaine qui pleure dans le silence et dans la solitude. (Hahn, pp.132-133.)

This strange mixture of the profound and the trivial is a constant aspect throughout Proust's letters to Hahn. Just when Proust is getting into the substance of the matter in hand, he veers off into more superficial fields, such as anecdotal description. Here the anecdotal interest is greater than is normally the case, as it is possible to see in the scene of Hahn's conducting Béatrice d'Este a prototype for Morel and the Vinteuil Septet in La Prisonnière (RTP, III, 248-265). This would be an interesting point to take up elsewhere. As far as the comparisons with other composers are concerned, it is perhaps significant that Proust draws on the two most important nineteenth-century composers, and in this respect it is clear that Proust's apparent claims for Hahn's music are exaggerated. However, it is important to note that he himself sees the real lack of connection ("bien qu'ici il n'y ait pas de rapport").

What Proust is pointing out is a similarity in spirit which the works have in common. Nevertheless, Proust is not beyond making technical remarks: here it is the orchestration, and he has caught the point of Hahn's style well in terming it "puissance dans la pureté," a most perceptive remark.

A letter dating from later in the same year (1907) indicates that Proust did not immediately forget Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este, as he had intended to have this work performed at a soirée he gave at the Ritz on July 1, 1907; the "Société des Instruments à vent" was, however, out of Paris at the time, and the programme chosen was mainly of piano pieces performed by Risler. (Hahn, p.137)

A very touching reference to the effect on Proust of one of Hahn's songs is provided in a letter dating from 1909:

Ce soir j'ai demandé aux tziganes s'ils savaient quelque chose de Buncht et quand ils ont commencé Rêverie je me suis [mis] à pleurer en pensant à mon Binibuls dans la gde salle à manger vide entouré de vingt garçons consternés qui ont pris un air de circonstance! Le maître d'hôtel ne sachant comment me témoigner sa commisération est allé me chercher un rince bouche. (Hahn, p.175.)

This anecdote might appear slightly exaggerated, but to question its veracity too much would be to doubt the truthfulness of Proust and, above all, his well-known sensitivity. In the first place it is noteworthy that he should have asked the gipsies to play something by Hahn, and in the second place Proust's reaction, even if it is exaggerated in detail, in its essentials denotes a distinct

element of identification with the music and, via the latter, its composer. And the fact that this reaction is not one of mere detached appreciation is evident even if the most dispassionate view is taken of this anecdote.

An allusion to a similar reaction occurs in letter CXXIX, which Kolb has dated to March 4 or 5, 1911. Here, Proust "a un peu pleursé de voir bon accueil du Dieu bleu." This letter (also important from the point of view of Proust's attitude towards Debussy, an aspect which will be dealt with later) contains in addition a passing reference to La Fête chez Thérèse, which is compared to Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande as possessing "une fine et légère et toujours originale et charmante musique." (Hahn, pp.202-203.) Here, it is not Proust's vague wording which is important, but the mere fact that he has remembered the nature of Hahn's score over a year after its first performance.²

Another important letter is one to Mme Carlos Hahn, Reynaldo's mother. It dates from January, 1912, and registers Proust's pleasure at the success of Méduse. Although Proust did not actually hear the work, the letter merits examination here:

J'ai été ivre de joie du triomphe de Méduse, j'ai bien senti combien il était réel. Madame Lemaire m'a aussi écrit pour me le dire et elle s'en réjouissait profondément, car quoique Reynaldo puisse croire, elle l'aime énormément, d'une affection jalouse mais immense. Quelles années pleines d'oeuvres pour Reynaldo quelles années bénies depuis Prométhée, quel travail! (Hahn, p.221.)

This eulogy does not possess the air of mere formality, nor is it entirely exaggerated adulation for the benefit of Reynaldo's mother. The tone carries genuine conviction, even when one makes the normal allowances for Proust's florid letter-style. And what Proust points out in the final sentence is, factually, quite true, for in the three years preceding 1911, Hahn had produced three major works, Prométhée triomphant, Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este and La Fête chez Thérèse.

The last letter I have chosen for comment in connection with Proust's attitude to Hahn's music is also the last in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn. As it is by far and away the most important, it demands quotation at length:

Reynaldo je ne peux vous écrire en détail étant un peu malade, et malgré ma gde compétence comment l'union de la pureté de Rimsky et de la profondeur du vieux sourd est un des moindres miracles de vos valse [i.e., Le Ruban dénoué]. D'ailleurs le nom de Rimsky est un blasphème car s'il dit les choses purement il a peu de choses à dire, et chez le vieux sourd l'expression est souvent alourdie. Dans vos valse est atteint l'absolue coïncidence (au sens géométrique du mot) où l'expression est tellement débarrassée de tout ce qui n'est pas ce qu'elle veut exprimer qu'il n'y a plus qu'une seule chose, art ou vie je ne sais pas, et non pas deux. Cher gentil, que vous devez être heureux dans votre malheur de vous être incarné pour toujours dans ces formes immortelles et comme vous devez vous f. de tous ennuis après cela! Que je vous envie! Vous avez plus d'Incarnations (car c'est dans ce sentiment religieux que je les adore) que Vichnou. Je dis plus sans préciser parce que je ne me rappelle pas combien il y a de valse ([...] Que dirait Suzette!) et vous avez fait aussi d'autres petite choses dans votre vie, mais aucune aussi genstille, aussi sublime. Vous avez là vos filles immortelles, que je préfère beaucoup à Leuctres et à Mantinée. Je voudrais vous copier le commentaire qu'on donne de l'andante du VII^e Quatuor. Cela pourrait être un commentaire de votre dernière valse. Mais même écrit par vous, tout

commentaire étant en mots c'est à dire en idées générales, laisserait passer cette particularité intime, inexprimable, qui fait que les choses sont pour nous ce qu'elles ne sont pour personne au monde par exemple quand nous sommes ivres (ivres de vin, ou de chagrin, ou de promenade, etc.) et que votre musique va chercher au fond insondable de l'être de Reynaldo et nous rapporte, alors que Reynaldo lui-même en parlant ne pourrait nous le rendre. = Génie. (Hahn, pp.256-257.)

As can be seen, this letter is a rich source of material. Here, Proust speaks with great conviction, and the tone, though flattering as normal, is by no means excessively so, for the fact that Proust did admire Le Ruban dénoué is indicated in a letter to Mme de Madrazo, where he speaks of "les sublimes valse de Reynaldo."³ The comparison with Rimsky-Korsakov is a sign of a comparatively recent development in Proust's musical taste, for in the last ten years or so of his life he was becoming more familiar with, and appreciative of, Russian music. This was in large measure due to the presence in Paris of the Ballets Russes⁴, for which Hahn himself wrote a score: Le Dieu bleu. It is significant that the pure, "mystical" aspect of Rimsky-Korsakov's music is linked to Beethoven, Proust's old favorite, and that Proust sees this aspect in Hahn's waltzes as creating an effect of sublimity and engendering "[des] filles immortelles." And in drawing a direct, parallel with Beethoven's 7th. Quartet, Proust is bestowing on Hahn the highest praise he can give.

The implications of this letter are, however, greater in attempting to assess similarities between Proust's

musical theory and the theory and actual productions of Hahn himself. This is an aspect I shall treat in detail in Chapter V.

2. Proust's Musical Tastes.

In addition to the light these personal letters shed on Proust's appreciation of Hahn's music, the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn provide a rich source of material for consideration of the important question of Proust's more general tastes in music. This question has been so widely treated in the past by critics that there is no need to linger over it here. However, it is interesting to see whether what has been affirmed in the past holds true in the light of the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn.

Briefly, the composers Proust mostly admired were Beethoven, Debussy, Schumann and Wagner. At least, these were his preferences towards the end of his life, and are faithfully reflected, in terms of proportion, in A la recherche du temps du temps perdu. The position is similar in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, where, out of references to about twenty more or less major composers,⁵ a preponderant position is held by Beethoven, Debussy and Wagner. Schumann, however, merits only two mentions. Nevertheless, the proportions are not wildly disturbed by this omission, and there is no ascendance of any other composer, with the important exception of Fauré.

The way in which Proust writes to Hahn about Wagner and Debussy is particularly instructive in many respects. Let us examine how they are treated.

3. Wagner.

The case of Wagner is particularly interesting, as critics have in general tended to regard Proust as the "perfect Wagnerite," and Hahn as the model of the anti-Wagnerian. Both of these assumptions are very far from the truth.

Admittedly, much of what Proust says about Wagner in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn ties in with the general interpretation of Proust as an ardent Wagnerite, the man who, in André Coeuroy's words, "lived" Wagner and who was inspired to climb a ruined tower by Bertrand de Fénelon's humming the "Good Friday music" from Parsifal.⁶ As early as 1894, a reply to a supposed objection on the part of Hahn confirms this impression:

Je vs trouve sévère pour Lohengrin. Le rôle du héraut et du roi t^t entier, le rêve d'Elsa, l'arrivée du Cygne, le chœur du juste, la scène entre les 2 femmes, le refalado, le Graal, le départ, le présent du cor, de l'épée et de l'anneau, le prélude, est-ce que t^t cela n'est pas beau? (Hahn, pp.24-25.)

This certainly indicates complete familiarity with the work on the part of Proust; but what should not be overlooked is the fact that Proust is able to catalogue episodes, something which would be completely incomprehens-

ible to any addressee unfamiliar with Lohengrin. In other words, whether or not Hahn liked Lohengrin, he must have been conversant enough with the work to be able to appreciate Proust's "catalogue;" Hahn cannot at least, one reads from this, have been one of those who condemn Wagner out of hand after having heard merely an extract or two.

Certainly, as Proust states, Hahn had objections to Lohengrin, and the case is similar with Tannhäuser (Letter XXIX). Yet Proust himself is making objections here:

Je me suis fort ennuyé à Tannheuser [sic] jusqu'au récit. Et malgré les exclamations admiratives de toute la salle cette languissante prière d'Elisabeth m'a laissé glacé. (Hahn, p.47.)

So Proust is not the "perfect Wagnerite" after all. He does have objections, even though, as the rest of this letter confirms, his faith in the Wagnerian method remains unshaken.

The next importance reference to Wagner comes in a letter of 1911, after fifteen years of relative silence about his music:

Genstil, je vais vous agacer horriblement en parlant musique et en vous disant que j'ai entendu hier au théâtrephone un acte des Maîtres chanteurs (puisque quand Sachs écrit sous la dictée de Walther le Preislied, il ne sait pas que Beckmesser le lui chippera, pourquoi écrit-il ces mots ridicules - inexplicable) et ce soir... tout Pelléas! (Hahn, pp.198-199)

Proust seems here to be apologising abjectly to Hahn for having listened to these two works, but in reading on in the letter, it is noticeable that it is only the work of Debussy for which he is apologising. In fact, he even

brings Wagner into his "defense" in declaring that "cela [i.e., Pelléas] ne m'a pas paru si absolument étranger et antérieur à Fauré et même à Wagner (Tristan) que cela a la prétention et la réputation d'être." (Hahn, pp.198-199.) Assuming, therefore, hostility towards Debussy on the part of Hahn (see Chapter V), one must also assume that it was "safe" for Proust to mention Wagner to Hahn, as a sort of mitigating element.

The very next letter (dating from less than two weeks later) shows a distinct reversal of the traditional rôles of Proust and Hahn as pro-Wagnerian and anti-Wagnerian respectively. Here it is Hahn who, in an article (in Le Figaro of March 4, 1911) alluded to by Proust, has taken up the defense of Wagner on a point with which Proust cannot concur:

Votre éblouissant article sur les Maîtres chanteurs met en relief avec une délicatesse prodigieuse la contradiction qui m'avait frappée [sic] et à laquelle tu attribues une profondeur que Wagner n'a certainement pas eue etc. (Hahn, pp.200-201.)

We shall see many examples later of Hahn's defense of Wagner.

4. Debussy.

A few paragraphs back, we encountered for the first time Debussy, mentioned alongside Wagner. In fact, Letter CXXVIII (1911) contains the first reference to the work of Debussy, in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, and it explodes

most dramatically into the correspondance. Here without a doubt was a revelation for Proust, and he finds it difficult to restrain his enthusiasm in the face of what would appear to be considerable opposition from Hahn. The tactic he adopts is a profession of his incompetence in musical matters, and I have quoted the beginning of this above. He continues as follows:

Je connais trop peu de théâtre musical pour pouvoir savoir qui avait fait cela avant. Mais cette idée de traiter un opéra à une époque de si grande richesse, dans le style de Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre et en atteignant parfois à

Ah! si je dois être vaincue

Est-ce à toi d'être mon vainqueur

demandait tout de même de l'initiative. Il est vrai que comme les étrangers ne sont pas choqués de Mallarmé parcequ'ils ne savent pas le français, des hérésies musicales qui peuvent vs crisper, passent inaperçues pour moi, plus particulièrement dans le théâtrophone, où à un moment je trouvais la rumeur agréable mais pourtant un peu amorphe quand je me suis aperçu que c'était l'entre'acte! (Hahn, p.199.)

One can only smile at these excuses of incompetence which Proust proposes (there are in fact four separate occasions on which he does this in this letter alone). Proust knows perfectly well that the technical aspect of musical productions is only one part of the whole, and has really very little to do with the final effect produced. It is irrelevant to him what the differences in technique are between Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner and Debussy: what is important is the final effect, the "world" which the composer creates (cf. RTP, III, 258).

In the next letter, dating from less than two weeks

later, Proust is strengthened in his convictions about Debussy:

J'ai en effet dit q.q. bêtises dans ma lettre sur Pelléas, mais si vous remplacez Marlbrough par le Roi de Thulé c'est irréprochable. (Hahn, p.201.)

And he adds that the charm of the work "s'exerce sur moi avec un ensorcellement que je n'ai pas connu depuis Mayol. Je demande perpétuellement Pelléas au théâtrophone comme j'allais au concert Mayol." (Hahn, p.202.) The "concessions" which Proust makes in this letter, apart from those mentioned above, are much more interesting than any attempts to pander to Hahn's taste. For one thing, they are much more personal and are concerned with Proust's attempting to reconcile Debussy's method with his own ideas on what music should be. For instance, before the above-quoted reaction of Proust's to the "charm" of Pelléas et Mélisande, there comes the following:

Peut-être sans valeur, peut-être justement pour cela je sens s'exercer en littérature sur les non littérateurs une chose qu'ils appellent le charme et est ce que je déteste le plus et qui signifie le moins le mérite, le charme qui avec une continuité qui s'appellerait de la monotonie ou de la personnalité selon les dispositions de l'auditeur, s'exerce sur moi avec un ensorcellement que je n'ai pas connu depuis Mayol. (Hahn, p.202.)

This quotation may be considered typical of Proust when talking of musical matters. The constant reference to literature (often to precise works) is a very distinct feature of his musical criticism (we have seen an example of this in Chapter II). The feeling that Proust is incapable of viewing each of the arts entirely in isolation

without reference to the others--indeed, that each of the arts is in some way a fragmentary realisation of Art as a concept--comes through in strength in A la recherche du temps perdu. But that this was in no way a consciously "artistic" fabrication on the part of Proust is well demonstrated in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, where it is possible to see that this conception was a natural function in his life.

The rest of the letters which deal with Debussy continue this trend: Proust does not cede an inch in the face of Hahn's objections, and he remains faithful to his musical tastes throughout.

5. Schumann and Beethoven.

In spite of his importance elsewhere, there are only two references to Schumann, both of them minor, in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn. One of the mentions is in a list of compositions which Proust has played at his soirée at the Ritz on July 1, 1907 (Hahn, p.137); the other is a discussion of the "Schumannesque" quality of a part of d'Indy's opera Fervaal (Hahn, pp.236-237).

Proust's liking for Schumann's music is well-attested. This admiration is transparent, for example, in certain texts involving Albertine, Mlle Vinteuil, and Vinteuil himself: a "tendre phrase familiale et domestique du septuor" creates for the narrator "le même moelleux arrière-plan de

silence qui pacifie certaines rêveries de Schumann, durant lesquelles, même quand 'le Poète parle', on devine que 'l'enfant dort'." (RTP, III, 253.) On occasions such as this, it seems to me that Proust is speaking from his own person, with no intervening transposition.

In contrast to Schumann, Beethoven is frequently mentioned in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn. In fact, he comes second only to Wagner in the number of references. We have already seen some examples of Proust's reaction to Beethoven in connection with Hahn. It is therefore unnecessary to enter into much detail at this point, except perhaps to stress that Beethoven was one of the great revelations of Proust's life, especially towards the end. He takes every opportunity he can to hear the late quartets in particular:

C'est que depuis 8 jours je me soignchais pour aller entendre 3 quatuors de Beethoven que le q[ua]tuor Capet jouait ce soir Salle Gaveau. Et j'ai eu une crise tellement monchant qu'il m'a été impossible de me lever. Et je ne peux te dire comme je suis fasché. (Hahn, p.235.)

The idiosyncratic spelling might appear to detract from the sincerity of the emotions, yet we know as a fact that Proust felt a great affinity for these works: they were among the pieces performed in private by the Quatuor Capet at Proust's apartment (v. Painter, II, 244). And in a letter to Ernst Robert Curtius, Proust evokes "le thème sublime du finale du XV^e quatuor, qui exhale une si puissante tendresse humaine qu'on ne peut l'écouter sans sentir s'élargir son coeur." (Quoted in Benoist-Méchin, Retour à Marcel Proust,

p.21.)

This quotation leads us directly on to consideration of what music essentially meant for Proust. What were his fixed musical tastes, and what relationship does his musical aesthetic bear to them? It is now time to hazard upon this dangerous territory.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE.

¹ Marcel Proust, Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, ed. Kolb (Paris: Gallimard, 1956).

² La Fête chez Thérèse was first performed at the Paris Opéra on February 13, 1910, and received seven performances in that year, the last being on June 21. It was revived for two performances in 1921 (on this, see the judgment of Jean Marnold above, Chapter I, note 20).

³ Quoted in Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.256, n.2.

⁴ The Ballets Russes visited Paris several times between 1910 and 1914: in 1910, they presented notably Stravinsky's Firebird, Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade and the "Polovtsian Dances" from Borodin's Prince Igor; in 1912, Stravinsky's Petrushka and Ravel's Daphnis et Chloë; in 1913, Debussy's Jeux; and in 1914, Richard Strauss's Josephslegende and Stravinsky's Rossignol. See L. Rohozinski, ed., Cinquante ans de musique française (Paris: Librairie de France, 1925), I, 96.

⁵ For the proportions of distribution in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, see Appendix 2.

⁶ André Coeuroy, Wagner et l'esprit romantique. Paris, Gallimard, 1965, passim.

CHAPTER FOUR: MUSIC FOR PROUST.

1. Proust's Theory of Music.

It seems to me that the key to Proust's whole approach to music lies in the episode in La Prisonnière which deals with Vinteuil's Septet (RTP, III, 248-265). This section is so full of generalisations on the nature of music, and they are treated with such obvious conviction, that one can make no mistake in transferring these emotions from the world of the novel to Proust's own personal convictions. In other words, I believe this to be one of the few passages in A la recherche du temps perdu where no distinction can be made between Marcel Proust and the narrator. It should also be noted that the passage represents a mature stage in the development of Proust's thought; by this time, his musical tastes had solidified and they formed a firm basis for his mature aesthetic of music. Even the briefest study of the vocabulary of this section reveals that what we are essentially dealing with here is a "moment privilégié:" the constant references to "patrie inconnue" (RTP, III, 257) and "patrie intérieure" (RTP, III, 255), as well as the mention of the recurrence of a certain phrase from the Sonata "la même et pourtant autre" (RTP, III, 259), lead one inevitably to this conclusion, and Proust himself even points to a parallel:

Je savais que cette nuance nouvelle de la joie, cet appel vers une joie supra-terrestre, je ne l'oublierais jamais. Mais serait-elle jamais réalisable pour moi? Cette question me paraissait d'autant plus importante que cette phrase était ce qui aurait pu le mieux caractériser - comme tranchant avec tout le reste de ma vie, avec le monde visible - ces impressions qu'à des intervalles éloignés je retrouvais dans ma vie comme des points de repère, les amorces pour la construction d'une vie véritable: l'impression éprouvée devant les clochers de Martinville, devant une rangée d'arbres près de Balbec. (RTP, III, 261)

And the idea he has of music's being the purest form of communication, "la communication des âmes" (RTP, III, 258), while confirming this impression, also provides, I believe, one of the principal keys to Proust's musical tastes.

In the previous chapter we saw that Proust's favorite composers were Beethoven, Debussy, Schumann and Wagner. At least, these are the four which the majority of critics have singled out. I am inclined to add to this list the names of Franck and Fauré, who, as is well known, contributed important elements to Vinteuil's music.¹ Let us see, then, in what way the above-mentioned composers could have appealed to Proust.

It will be noticed that all these composers except Debussy and Fauré lie within the great romantic² period of music, and even Debussy and Fauré lie close enough to that period to partake of some of its "flavor." What all composers of this period had in common, it seems to me, was a concern for a certain "transcendence" of the human condition: Beethoven, Wagner and Franck in chileastic strivings,

Schumann, Debussy and Fauré in a delicate intimacy. These are of course over-simplifications, yet they represent the essence of these composers' greatest works: Beethoven's symphonies and the late string-quartets, Wagner's Ring des Nibelungen, Franck's Quartet, Quintet and Symphony, Schumann's piano pieces and songs, Debussy's chamber-music and his Pelléas et Mélisande, and Fauré's chamber-music and songs. And it is precisely these works for which Proust evinces the greatest enthusiasm, in his correspondence and in his works. It is surely no accident that Proust's loves should have fallen in this particular sphere of distinctly non-concrete, or, as I termed it above, "transcendent" music. Only in those works in which he found a "patrie inconnue" and "intérieure", and where he could sense the voice of the soul, could he feel at home and see in them the essence of what music is. This final clarification of Proust's musical philosophy is not the work of his last years only: the seeds were already there early, when, at the age of twenty in reply to a questionnaire, he stated his favorite composers to be Beethoven, Wagner and Schumann.³

In connection with this, it is interesting to note that Schumann figures amongst the four composers evoked in the Portraits de musiciens in Les Plaisirs et les jours (pp.137-140). The others are Chopin, Gluck and Mozart. The poetry is generally of a very low standard, with reminiscences

of most nineteenth-century poets, but "Schumann" is distinctly more successful than the others. Proust speaks of Schumann's music as a "Jardin pensif, affectueux, frais et fidèle," and in it there appears the "enfant qui rêve." This image becomes a veritable obsession with Proust, as we have already seen.

It is difficult to decide whether Proust was at all influenced by Hahn in his choice of Chopin, Gluck, Schumann and Mozart as subjects for poems. They may well have been written before Proust met Hahn. In any case, they are composers whom Proust nowhere else denigrates, and for Chopin in particular he becomes quite enthusiastic (see RTP, II, 814-818).

Yet this picture of a Proust contemplating starry-eyed the most profound manifestations of musical art must not be over-exaggerated. There is a place in Proust's life for lesser composers - composers who do not aim for the heights, yet who, like Hahn, possess a distinct attraction.

I mentioned earlier the importance of studying "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet" from Les Plaisirs et les jours (PJ, pp.99-112) in connection with Proust's attitude to music as a whole. It seems to me that this story symbolises a drama which played in the mind of Proust and to which he could find no suitable conclusion. The section which concerns us here (the second) describes scenes of musical argument between "Bouvard" and "Pécuchet,"

the former idolising Beethoven and Wagner, the latter, Saint-Saëns and Massenet. Now Proust did, at least in his early years, genuinely admire the type of music represented by the enthusiasms of Pécuchet. In a letter of 1912 he could still speak admiringly of Massenet:

Poème d'Octobre est bien joli. Et Cette Ville où j'ai vu s'envoler aussi. Et encore beaucoup. Et je suis sûr que malgré la méchanceté de Jullien tout cela sera toujours aimé et charmant. C'est cela le seul naturel, le naturel de quelqu'un qui a de la grâce et de la singularité, le naturel de la musique de Massenet et de la prose de Musset ou de ses contes en vers. (Hahn, p.227.)

Proust is writing to Hahn, which detracts somewhat from the conviction of the sentiments. Yet surely Proust would not have wasted such an essentially "Proustian" phrase ("C'est cela le seul naturel...") on a composer whom he found unworthy of consideration. In this respect, it is perhaps best to look on "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet" as a sort of catharsis which Proust forced himself to undergo, before arriving at a relatively fixed aesthetic, based on the composers admired by Bouvard. Yet even if this is accepted, one must still account for Proust's continued love, all through his life, for light music of few or no pretensions--for he did love it, as many critics have pointed out, and as we shall now see.

2. "La Mauvaise Musique."

The starting-point for the study of this aspect of

Proust is a most remarkable document: "Éloge de la mauvaise musique," part 12 of "Les Regrets, rêveries couleur du temps," in Les Plaisirs et les jours (PJ, pp.201-203).

"Détestez la mauvaise musique, ne la méprisez pas," it begins, and continues in pointing out the enormous influence this music has had on "l'histoire sentimentale des sociétés." This beginning, though striking, does possess a certain ring of sentimentality, but the tone changes noticeably towards the end, where there are unmistakable prefigurations of the language Proust is later to use when talking about music, notably in A la recherche du temps perdu:

Le peuple, la bourgeoisie, l'armée, la noblesse, comme ils ont les mêmes facteurs, porteurs du deuil qui les frappe ou du bonheur qui les comble, ont les mêmes invisibles messagers d'amour, les mêmes confesseurs bien-aimés. Ce sont les mauvais musiciens.[...] Un cahier de mauvaises romances, usé pour avoir trop servi, doit nous toucher comme un cimetière ou comme un village. Qu'importe que les maisons n'aient pas de style, que les tombes disparaissent sous les inscriptions et les ornements de mauvais goût. De cette poussière peut s'en voler, devant une imagination assez sympathique et respectueuse pour taire un moment ses dédains esthétiques, la nuée des âmes tenant au bec le rêve encore vert qui leur faisait pressentir l'autre monde, et jouir ou pleurer dans celui-ci. (PJ, pp.202-203.)

Much of the vocabulary of this passage is similar, if not identical, to that in the episode in La Prisonnière describing the effect on the narrator of Vinteuil's Septet. The phrase "invisibles messagers" is particularly striking, and the reference to "la nuée des âmes" given a glimpse of the other world is an exact parallel to the effect of

Vinteuil's music on the narrator.

But problems arise when one attempts to define what Proust means by "bad music." Georges van Parys, in a recent article,⁴ deals with this question:

Pour moi, la mauvaise musique, c'est aussi bien une symphonie prétentieusement ratée, un opéra ennuyeux, qu'une chanson bassement vulgaire. Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait de la petite ou de la grande musique; il y a celle qui est réussie dans son genre et celle qui ne l'est pas. Une chanson qui frappe l'oreille du premier coup et qui est bien écrite me plaît davantage qu'un quatuor dont l'inspiration s'essouffle à la deuxième page.

Marcel Proust partageait cette opinion. S'il se sert d'une autre terminologie, c'est avec une pointe d'ironie: la musique qu'il qualifie de "mauvaise", c'est la musique légère, 'la petite musique' comme disent les imbéciles en faisant la moue. Mais Proust aime, lui, cette 'mauvaise musique' dont il fait si tendrement l'éloge; il aime ces refrains d'opérette et de café-concert qui ne l'obligent pas à 's'élever pour atteindre jusqu'à eux'.

These perceptive remarks clarify to a great extent the sense of bewilderment one feels when contemplating the vast differences between the levels of music Proust mentions and comments upon. The disparity between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" is thus no longer a barrier to comprehension. One could perhaps even maintain that Proust abolishes any sense of hierarchy, but this would no doubt be going too far. It is more reasonable to see that "bad music" served the double purpose for Proust of being a relaxation from the effort needed to appreciate highly serious works, and at the same time of being a more "diluted" and popular manifestation of the essence of what music is about. It is

my proposition that much of the music of Hahn, falling in-
to this category, fulfilled this very function for Proust.
But before dealing with this, let me take up a point men-
tioned by van Parys in his article.

He remarks on Proust's love of "ces refrains d'opér-
ette et de café-concert," a fact which, to a person
acquainted only with the basics of Proust's thought, would
appear to be the most unlikely of propositions. Yet a read-
ing of the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn reveals a Proust who is
an habitué of the café-concert. In this correspondence,
there are three important references to Félix Mayol, a
prominent "chanteur de café-concert."⁶ In one letter,
Mayol is termed "sublime" (Hahn, p.193); in another Proust
"demande perpétuellement Pelléas au théâtrophone comme
j'allais au concert Mayol" (Hahn, p.202),--a distinctly
august juxtaposition. These letters date from 1910 and
1911 respectively, but Proust's enthusiasm had already
begun in 1907, a time when he appears to have been rather
more critical:

Je viens d'aller entendre Mayol, seul (moi, seul) à
la Scala[...]. J'y avais pris une baignoire pour
écarter les fumées et y trônais poétiquement. Mayol me
plairait s'il chantait de vraies chansons, ce qui me
plaît en lui c'est que c'est du chant dansé, que tout
son corps suit le rythme. Mais il se retient, on a dû
l'en plaisanter, et ses chansons sont trop peu lyriques
et trop mauvaises, il a peu de succès, relativement. Si
je pensais pouvoir pour une somme modique le faire venir
et lui faire chanter Viens Poupoule et Un Ange du pavé
je le ferais. Il a q.q. chose de Cléo qui dansait en
marchant." (Hahn, pp.147-148)

Despite his reservations, Proust reveals himself here as a

connoisseur of the café-concert. Mayol was not just a free evening's entertainment for him: he took precautions enough that he would fully appreciate it (by taking a box), and the genre of the Music-hall song was evidently familiar enough to him for him to be able to discourse on the merits of Mayol's particular variety. And yet, his criticisms have not allowed him to forget the titles of two of the songs and to entertain the possibility of having Mayol perform them to him in private.

As far as Hahn is concerned in this respect, I believe it is significant that, of all the references Proust makes to his music in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn and the article in Annales (both dealt with in Chapter 2), very few are to the more pretentious compositions. The greatest praise is reserved for the works in lighter vein--the early songs, Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este and Le Ruban dénoué. These works certainly fit in well with van Parys's definition of Proust's concept of "la mauvaise musique:" Compositions which purposely limit themselves in scope, and on which a technique appropriate to their proper expression is made to work. The Chansons grises, for instance, no one could term pretentious: they are the epitome of musical simplicity, and make Fauré's and Debussy's settings of Verlaine appear unnecessarily complex. In choosing poems with a simple, direct meaning, Hahn chose just the right works to correspond to his own basically simple and direct musical

language. The same can be said, without of course the literary parallel, of Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este and Le Ruban dénoué, and if Proust had lived to see Ciboulette, one would certainly have had to add that operetta to the list.

In this sense, then, Hahn's music corresponds exactly to the concept of "bad music" seen in "Éloge de la mauvaise musique." It is perhaps this, above all, which provides the closest link between Proust and Hahn, and I shall come back to it in my conclusion. However, it scarcely redounds to the credit of Hahn as artist and as man: almost anybody could have fulfilled Proust's "requirements." But there are specific reasons why it should have been Hahn, as we shall now see.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR.

¹ On this, see J. M. Cocking, "Proust and Music," Essays in French Literature, no. 14 (Nov., 1967), 13-29;

E. Lockspeiser, "Gabriel Fauré and Marcel Proust," The Listener, June 1, 1961, p.985; and G. D. Painter, Proust (2 vols., Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1959, 1965), passim.

² I use the word "romantic" in a broad sense, to embrace most of the great composers of the nineteenth century.

³ The questionnaire is reproduced in André Maurois, A la recherche de Marcel Proust (Paris: Hachette, 1949), pp.47-48.

⁴ Georges van Parys, "Marcel Proust était-il musicien?" Les Annales, no. 203 (Sept., 1967), 15-38.

⁵ Georges van Parys, art. cit., p.35.

⁶ Félix Mayol (1874-1941), a famous popular singer of the day. He had the reputation of being a homosexual.

CHAPTER FIVE: MUSIC FOR HAHN.

In examining the relationship between Proust and Hahn, critics in the past have tended to neglect the writings of Hahn himself. It seems to me that this is a detail which should not be overlooked, as Hahn's published works can give us a distinctly clearer impression of what Hahn's musical tastes and theory were, without resorting to convenient pigeon-holing.

Altogether, Hahn published five books.¹ Of these, La Grande Sarah is of little interest to us in this study, but the others--Du Chant, Notes (Journal d'un musicien), L'Oreille au guet and Thèmes variés--provide invaluable information on the man, the artist, his friends and his ideas. One of the more surprising aspects of all the works is the extraordinary range of composers whom Hahn talks about. His comments are by no means restricted exclusively to his "masters" Mozart, Gounod, Massenet and Saint-Saëns; the whole spectrum of Western music passes by in procession. It is not surprising to hear Hahn say:

Il m'est impossible de mettre de l'ordre dans mes admirations. Je n'arrive même pas à faire une liste de mes prédilections en musique, en peinture, en poésie; je ne puis jamais m'arrêter définitivement sur aucun nom: il s'en présente toujours un autre qui me fait hésiter. (Notes, p.10.)

Yet this does not prevent his drawing up, in L'Oreille au guet, what could be considered a list of his favorite

works (L'Oreille au guet, pp.128-129). It includes works by Dukas, Mozart, Beethoven, Gluck, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Bach, J. Strauss, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Franck, Massenet, Chabrier, Lulli, Haydn, Wagner, Gounod, Fauré, Bizet and many others. Whether or not Hahn intended this list to be a sort of personal "canon", it certainly corresponds, with a few exceptions, to his principal concerns in his writings.

These writings are instructive on two levels: firstly, in seeing how Hahn deals with those composers who we have seen to be Proust's favorites, and, secondly, in seeing how Hahn's musical theory corresponds to that of Proust.

1. Hahn's Musical Tastes.

I have already dealt with Proust's attitude towards Schumann, Fauré, Franck, Beethoven, Debussy and Wagner. It seems to me essential at this point to ascertain Hahn's reaction to these composers, by examining his writings.

As far as Schumann is concerned, Hahn succumbs to the magical poetry of this composer, finding in him "la nervosité tourmentée du poète" (Notes, p.176), recognising his individuality:

Est-il rien de plus morne, de moins assimilable que le Manfred de Byron? Mais que la musique de Schumann est belle! Quelle richesse! Quelle sève substantielle et fluide. Le souvenir de Mendelssohn vient parfois

en charmer et guider le cours. Mais dans l'accent harmonique, mais dans la physionomie générale de la mélodie, Schumann se révèle puissamment par ce je ne sais quoi d'amer, de généreux, de chaudement sympathique, de malade et de souriant qui n'est qu'à lui. (Notes, pp.247-248.)

It is not difficult to recognise the enthusiasm in these words. It seems to me particularly striking that Hahn's approach is scarcely what one would expect from a musician. His is very far from a pedantic, technical approach; one would term it more a "poetic" approach, with its appeal to the senses. It recalls a passage in Proust's Chroniques (from "Rayon de soleil sur le balcon"), in which Proust describes a scene as possessing "quelque chose de fantasque, de mélancolique et de caressant, comme à une phrase de Schumann." (Chroniques, p.105.) And in a more general way, it recalls Proust's technique of discussing one of the arts in terms of another. We shall see more examples of this procedure as we advance in Hahn's works.

An example of this is seen in the way Hahn deals with Fauré. The effect on him of a Fauré song recalls the effect of Wagner and Vinteuil on Mme Verdurin, though without the comic overtones:

Pour l'artiste, un tel morceau [i.e., Pleurs d'or] est captivant; pour le profane, il est dangereux; il produit une petite secousse dans l'organisme par l'acuité harmonique, par l'équivoque rythmique, par des contacts douloureux qui, pour le musicien, ne sont que d'ingénieux et charmants tissages, mais qui touchent pernicieusement les nerfs du mélomane sensitif et ignorant. (Notes, pp.171-172.)

Any reservations Hahn has about Fauré's music in this

extract are dispelled in a later account (Thèmes variés, pp. 135-138) of a festival arranged in memory of Fauré on June 20, 1938. The occasion prompts Hahn to reminisce on his past contacts with Fauré, of a trip to Venice with him, and in particular of a soirée given at Versailles in 1910, at which Fauré was the principal participant. Fauré's music, combined with the magic of the occasion, produced an unforgettable effect on Hahn:

Dans l'obscurité, dans le silence total, sans rien qui rappelât un salon ou une salle de concert, ces choses se belles, chantées d'une voix bien médiocre, hélas! mais avec ferveur, et accompagnées par le grand poète qui les avait imprégnées de son âme [i.e., Fauré], paraissaient comme renouvelées... Et enfin, comme je prononçais ces mots: 'Au calme clair de lune, triste et beau...' la lune parut soudain au-dessus des arbres, et son reflet sur l'eau sembla prolonger comme un écho lumineux les dernières notes de l'exquise et mélancolique ritournelle. Alors Fauré ferma doucement le piano et nous restâmes quelques instants sans parler... (Thèmes variés, p.138.)

This whole scene appears similar to a Proustian "moment privilégié", in a primitive state.

As far as César Franck is concerned, there are no lengthy passages in Hahn's works dealing with his compositions. Yet on one occasion he refers to him as "un illuminé doucement joyeux, souriant, un Fra Angelico, un émule de sainte Cécile" (Notes, p.99), and on another as "l'artiste le plus ingénu, l'homme le plus tolérant et le plus tendre qu'on puisse imaginer" (Thèmes variés, p.115). These allusions certainly indicate a distinct element of admiration, and in the first of them--with the reference

to Fra Angelico--we have another example of Hahn's constant paralleling with other arts.

Hahn uses this procedure almost consistently, and in the case of Beethoven, the next composer we have to consider, the parallel is with Michaelangelo, a rather grandiose juxtaposition, from which Hahn swiftly withdraws in declaring "combien [Beethoven] est rapetissé à mes yeux par l'agrandissement d'hier!" (Notes, p.194). But later, he is able to make a more balanced judgement:

On peut faire - et on ne s'en prive pas - des réserves sur certaines particularités du style de Beethoven, sur son écriture, ses développements, son orchestration et, pour ma part, je m'accuse non sans confusion de rester parfois insensible ou même rebelle devant des splendeurs que je perçois sans pouvoir m'y délecter. Mais il est impossible, quand on est musicien et surtout quand on est un musicien, de méconnaître l'extraordinaire beauté qui rayonne dans bien des pages de Fidelio. (L'Oreille au guet, p.133.)

One should set against this passage the extract quoted earlier from Proust's Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn in which Proust is comparing Hahn's Le Ruban dénoué to Rimsky-Korsakov and Beethoven. Proust has the reservation that "chez le vieux sourd l'expression est souvent alourdie" (Hahn, p.257), which seems to me to be precisely what Hahn is essentially saying in the passage from L'Oreille au guet, but in a much terser manner.

Having established briefly, though I think sufficiently, Hahn's position vis-à-vis Schumann, Fauré, Franck and Beethoven, it is time to pass to consideration of those two composers who bulk largest in the Lettres à Reynaldo

Hahn. The implication from the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn was that Hahn was hostile to Debussy, but more enthusiastic towards Wagner than past critics had allowed. Let us see how these provisional interpretations fare in an examination of Hahn's writings.

Debussy is treated in exactly the manner one would expect from the implications of the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn. It is not that the criticism is violent; it is merely that Hahn scarcely mentions him at all. In fact there are only two references of any significance, and one of these is relegated to a phrase in parentheses:

On a beaucoup parlé de Debussy à l'occasion des intéressantes représentations de Pelléas et Mélisande que donne actuellement l'Odéon. Mais en revanche on a, semble-t-il, fort peu parlé de Fauré. Rien d'étonnant à cela; on parle toujours beaucoup plus de Debussy que de Fauré (et cela pour des raisons dont l'énumération et surtout les commentaires qu'elles comportent m'entraîneraient trop loin et me brouilleraient peut-être avec des personnes dont l'amitié m'est précieuse) (Thèmes variés, p.139.)

This is clear indication of indifference, if not antipathy towards Debussy on the part of Hahn. It is interesting that it is to the advantage of Fauré, who, as we have already seen, adumbrated many of the elements of Debussy's style. It is strange that Hahn seems to have been blind to this fact. Even more strange that on another occasion he can refer to Debussy as a "grand musicien:

Dire que Gounod n'a pas été influencé par Mozart, 'qu'il ne s'en inspira pas' est proprement une sottise. C'est pourtant Debussy qui l'a dite dans un article dédaigneux, et confus comme ce grand musicien se plaisait parfois à en élaborer. (L'Oreille au guet, pp.90-91.)

It is clear, however, from the context, that Hahn was employing the very technique he attributes to Debussy--in other words, in calling Debussy "ce grand musicien" he was being ironic and committing a "sottise." In the light of these criticisms, then, it becomes easier to appreciate Proust's cautious approach to Debussy in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn.

Now we come to the case of Wagner, with whose music Hahn, as we have already seen, was at least conversant. In fact, after a reading of Hahn's works one comes away with the impression that he was an ardent Wagnerian. Quotations abound, and I choose several at random:

J'étais à Monte-Carlo et me promettais un grand plaisir d'une représentation de Lohengrin chanté par M. Jean de Reszké. (Du chant, p.66.)

J'ai entendu Vogl chanter, à près de soixante ans, le rôle de Tristan, à Bayreuth. (Du chant, pp.146-147.)

Le public crut [...] que la mélodie était absente de cette musique [wagnérienne], alors qu'elle y abondait, intarissable. [...] Je crois que l'École wagnérienne n'est pour rien dans la décadence du chant. (Du chant, p.153.)

Now the above three passages are significant in dating from a period when Proust was still alive. Although Du chant was published in 1920, the body of the work consists of lectures which Hahn delivered in 1913,² and thus at a particularly crucial stage in Proust's career. To see Hahn at this time sharing the same enthusiasms as Proust is certainly fascinating, and indicates that in this respect at least a very close rapprochement in musical

tastes can be made.

As one reads on in the works, it becomes clear that Hahn's enthusiasm for Wagner is not at all restrictive; all the operas (with the exception of the very early ones) are mentioned. Of Die Meistersinger he writes:

Tout s'y tient si indissolublement, la musique y est si intimement liée à l'action et à la parole, les scènes s'y enchaînent si naturellement, si logiquement entre elles, que c'est tout ou rien, qu'il faut tout connaître des Maîtres Chanteurs ou renoncer à y rien comprendre. (L'Oreille au guet, p.64.)

And in Parsifal, Wagner has revealed "à l'univers entier une oeuvre sublime." (L'Oreille au guet, p.69.)

One could even go as far as to say that Hahn went on Wagnerian "pilgrimages," for he says he has heard Tristan at Bayreuth, Munich and Hamburg, conducted by Mottl and Nikisch (L'Oreille au guet, p.74). And his approach to the music is typically that of an ardent Wagnerian, with its stress on the subjective and sensual:

Je serai toujours subjugué par le Prélude [de Tristan]. Dès les premières notes, qui me causent une sourde et profonde secousse, je suis pénétré d'un vague effroi. Et jamais je ne me lasserai de voir ensuite apparaître un à un ces 'thèmes' qui se cherchent, se joignent, s'entre-choquent et s'entremêlent. Ce sont des caresses inexprimables qu'ils suggèrent, des blessures délicieuses, de sombres ou radieuses voluptés, également mortelles, c'est tout un monde de bonheur et de douleur, un conflit orageux de tous les espoirs, de toutes les angoisses, de toutes les ivresses, de toutes les larmes, de tout ce qui fait l'horreur et la beauté de l'amour. (L'Oreille au guet, p.73.)

When confronted with such passages as this, one cannot hesitate for a moment in attributing to Hahn a profound love

for the music of Wagner, a love which we know was shared by Proust.

One can conclude similar things from quotations I have given above concerning the other principal loves of Proust, with the exception of Debussy, though whether Hahn influenced Proust in these particular musical matters, or vice versa, is of course impossible to say. One must take with a grain of salt Hahn's assertion towards the end of his life that Proust was introduced to all the music he knew through Hahn.³ In such matters one must be wary, and the most one can say is that there was mutual appreciation, and possibly illumination. The case seems to hold also for another aspect of Proust's musical tastes which I mentioned earlier; namely that for light music, and in particular for Mayol. Hahn displays the same enthusiasm in terming Mayol "ce maître incontesté du geste et du débit" (L'Oreille au guet, p.246). And very shortly in date after the mentions in the Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn concerning Mayol, Hahn is able to say:

La précision rythmique de M. Mayol est admirable, et elle lui fournit mille trouvailles piquantes de geste et de diction. (Du chant, p.213.)

This seems to me significant indication that Hahn's attitude towards the café-concert was similar to Proust's, and thus that their musical tastes correspond in this respect too.

2. Hahn's Theory of Music.

As far as Hahn's musical theory is concerned, there is very little material to work on, apart from inferences taken from the way in which he speaks about certain composers. We have seen some examples of this above. However, it is possible to extract certain passages for comment in connection with Proust; the following seems to me particularly fruitful:

Bien des gens pensent à tort que les émotions artistiques doivent, pour être complètes, avoir ce caractère intensif et ne se déclarent satisfaits que lorsqu'ils reçoivent des 'coups de botte dans l'estomac'. Beaucoup de compositeurs partagent cette erreur et c'est ce qui donne lieu à tant d'oeuvres forcenées, où la passion, la violence, le vacarme et le raffinement maladif se disputent avec furie l'honneur d'affoler, de terrasser, d'assourdir et d'intoxiquer les auditeurs. Ces gens-là ignorent le prix des sensations graduées, la valeur parfois immense d'une émotion légère et fugitive, le délice douloureux des larmes, la douceur d'un soupir, le charme exquis et amer de la mélancholie, comme ils méconnaissent tout ce qu'il peut y avoir de désespoir dans un sourire ou de tristesse dans un rayon de soleil. Laissons-les donc à leurs transports et demeurons parmi ceux qui ne rougissent pas de goûter parfois des sensations moyennes, communes à tous les hommes et vénèrent le cénacle divin des artistes équilibrés. Ceux-là seuls savent que c'est une faute grave contre l'art de 'flanquer sans cesse des coups de botte dans l'estomac'; et ils méprisent l'émotion qu'on obtient par ces procédés pugilistiques. (Du chant, p.127.)

One could compare this passage to certain aspects of the music of Vinteuil. For one thing, the man himself is, in his life, very definitely an "artiste équilibré," even going so far as to be perfectly merged into bourgeois society.

It is true that Hahn's words call to mind none of the almost chileastic visions which Vinteuil achieves in his

Septet. Yet the element of the everyday, "mediocre" even, which Hahn stresses, plays a distinct part in Vinteuil's music. For instance, when the phrase from the Sonata returns in the Septet, it is "enveloppée [...] de sonorités brillantes, légères et douces comme des écharpes" (RTP, III, 249). And the narrator's joy at having "rediscovered" the phrase "s'accroissait de l'accent si amicalement connu qu'elle prenait pour s'adresser à moi, si persuasif, si simple" (loc. cit.). And later in the Septet, another phrase passes "jusqu'à cinq et six fois, sans que je pusse apercevoir son visage, mais si caressante, si différente [...] de ce qu'aucune femme n'avait jamais fait désirer, que cette phrase-là, qui m'offrait d'une voix si douce un bonheur qu'il eût vraiment valu la peine d'obtenir, c'est peut-être [...] la seule Inconnue qu'il m'ait jamais été donné de rencontrer" (RTP, III, 260). In this stress on the subtler aspects of the sensual, Proust is approaching very closely to Hahn's idea of "sensations graduées." And the last sentences of the quotation from Hahn come very close to Proust's conception of "les célibataires de l'Art" (RTP, III, 891-892).

An early passage from Du chant even recalls the "cris de Paris" episode (RTP, III, 126-128):

J'ai toujours chanté d'instinct et mes rares notions techniques je ne les ai acquises qu'en analysant après-coup ce que j'ai fait, en le comparant à ce que font les autres, en observant de mon mieux tout ce qui peut se rapporter au chant, depuis les sanglots d'un enfant jusqu'au cri d'une marchande des quatre saisons; depuis

l'ouverture des voyelles chez le sergent de ville qui m'enjoint de 'circuler' jusqu'aux inflexions d'un ministre cherchant ses mots à la tribune de la Chambre. (Du chant, pp.13-14.)

This is a minor point of comparison, to be sure, yet there are others more important. They are particularly fascinating when Proust himself is mentioned by Hahn:

[...] être ému en entendant Lilli Lehmann interpréter Fidelio, c'est vibrer coeur à coeur avec Beethoven. Or, c'est cette possibilité-là, c'est le privilège sans égal d'éprouver, comme dit Proust; 'ces minutes profondes' dont on nous prive à jamais en biffant, par un petit trait de plume sur une page de catalogue, le numéro d'un disque précieux. (L'Oreille au guet, p.182.)

True, Hahn seems to be reducing the unique significance of the Proustian "moment privilégié" to a repeatable experience in the form of a gramophone record. Yet the essence of what he is getting at is not far removed from Proust's experience of "brimming moments." Hahn may have a less fully realised interpretation of their significance--in fact, may not have experienced them so deeply, as he envisages their controlled repetition--, yet the fact that he can go as far as to draw the parallel himself is at least sufficient indication of his awareness of the basic "element" of Proust's life.

Proof of this awareness exists in the article "Promenade" which Hahn wrote for the Hommage à Marcel Proust, published in 1927,⁴ and Professor Johnson⁵ claims that Hahn was able to transpose it into music. However, it seems to me that Hahn does not become fully aware of its personal relevance to himself until later in his life. In Thèmes

variés, after a list of favorite art-songs, there occurs the following remarkable passage:

Toutes ces belles oeuvres et bien d'autres encore du même ordre sentimental et poétique, tous ces échos de 'voix intérieures', toutes ces pages chargées de particularités personnelles, de tout ce qui constitue le fond d'une âme d'homme et d'artiste s'adressent, je le répète, à des auditoires reserrés, tendus, en état de sympathie, de docilité, de réceptivité cérébrale. Où les trouver, si ce n'est dans des intérieures bien clos, confortables [,] harmonieux, propices à une étroite communion des coeurs et des intelligences, en un mot dans des 'salons', dans ces salons si impertinément décriés il y a un quart de siècle par tout une catégorie de musiciens et de critiques?

J'ai regardé le souvenir de quelques-uns d'entre eux et des 'minutes profondes', comme dit Marcel Proust, que j'y ai vécues parfois. Je m'abstiendrai d'énumérer ces lieux d'élection, de nommer ceux qui les fréquentaient, de décrire les fêtes musicales qu'on célébrait, parfois même avec quelque mystère, par exemple quand il s'agissait d'y révéler une oeuvre nouvelle ou d'y exécuter quelque chef-d'oeuvre du passé, entre soi et pour soi. (Thèmes variés, p.181.)

This passage shows a great advance in comprehension of the Proustian "moment privilégié." For one thing, there is no hint that the experience can be repeated at will; one assumes that if it is repeated, it will be, as in Proust, by pure chance. And the conception of this experience as a purely personal one--incidentally, in restricted company, which recalls the scene of the performance of Vinteuil's Septet in La Prisonnière--is in the true Proustian spirit. The mention of "voix intérieures," too, recalls Proust's conception of the "patrie intérieure" of Vinteuil's music (RTP, III, 257).

Could Hahn have been influenced by Proust in such

passages as these? I would be inclined to say no, but I believe it would be reasonable to say that Hahn's own ideas reached their final clarification with an element of "help" from Proust's works. It may be an imperfect clarification, but the mere fact that the name of Proust is mentioned implies that Hahn had meditated over his experiences. However this may be, one could on no account say that knowledge of Proust's works "prompted" Hahn to these experiences: they must have existed there already, in however primitive a form. The fact that they are to a certain extent less "realised" than with Proust in itself seems to indicate this. In other words, there was a distinct element of correspondence between the two friends on this most basic ingredient of Proust's thought.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE.

- 1 Du chant. Paris, Pierre Lafitte, 1920.
La Grande Sarah. Paris, Hachette, 1930.
Notes (Journal d'un musicien). Paris, Plon, 1933.
L'Oreille au guet. Paris, Gallimard, 1937.
- 2 Thèmes variés. Paris, Janin, 1946.
- 2 The lectures were given at the "Université des Annales" between November 22 and December 24, 1913 (see Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.242 n.).
- 3 On this, see the account of an interview between Reynaldo Hahn and Jacques Rosebaum in Dorothy Adelson, "The Vinteuil Sonata," Music and Letters, July, 1942, pp.228-233. Hahn's remark is: "Contrary to popular opinion, Proust was not in the least a musician. Almost all the music he knew he heard through me." (p.232.)
- 4 Reynaldo Hahn, "Promenade," in Hommage à Marcel Proust (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), pp.33-34.
- 5 J. Theodore Johnson, Jr., art. cit., p.404.

CONCLUSION.

The points raised in the last chapter seem to me of the greatest significance in connection with study of the relationship between Proust and Hahn. Even if parallels in the musical tastes of the two men might--and justifiably so--be considered as mere accident, the distinct parallels we found in the musical theory of both Proust and Hahn seem to me conclusive. Yet even on the surface level of musical tastes, one must not overlook the fact that Hahn, as we have seen, frequently uses the same procedures as Proust when describing his favorite works. In this way, the rapprochement becomes even closer.

What, however, does this definitely prove? One thing, at least: that Proust was not unique in his conception of music. Commentators too often blithely refer to the novelty and individuality of Proust's view of it. Another thing it demonstrates is how close Hahn really was to Proust, not on the anecdotal level of everyday life, but in the most essential, inward aspects of life. If one could draw numerous parallels with other artists in the matter of musical tastes, it would be difficult to find others who correspond so exactly in both tastes and theory as Proust and Hahn.

It seemed to me that it was in this manner, and this manner alone, that examination of the relationship between

the two men could be undertaken. As I stated in the Introduction, I felt it unwise to indulge in anecdotal detail, which has a tendency to being apocryphal, but rather to concentrate on (predominantly) musical facts, as it is in the sphere of music that the relationship is most significant. What may appear to be mere juxtaposition of texts is in fact intentional, for, apart from direct collaboration, as in the music Hahn wrote for Proust's "Portraits de peintres," it is, as I have already remarked, difficult to ascertain influences as opposed to similarities. However, I have hinted at some during the course of this study, whenever they appeared to be reasonably safe inferences.

With some of them, one could--though with less "safety"--go even farther in drawing inferences. For instance, the parallel I drew between Hahn's music and Proust's conception of "la mauvaise musique" in Les Plaisirs et les jours could become a definite case where Proust had Hahn in mind when writing those words. One has only to look at Hahn's early, and immensely popular, song Si mes vers avaient des ailes, (Hugo) to appreciate this. This song was--and for that matter still is--a stock number in salon recitals, and no wonder: it is the salon song par excellence, romantic and sentimental, and musically unoriginal. In other words, it is bad music, but, as history has shown, it has a high sentimental value.

Yet again, the parallel I drew between the musical theory of Proust and Hahn could justifiably lead one to imagine that the two men held discussions together on the nature of music, and that each contributed something to the "joint effort." The supposition is reasonable, for we know as a fact that Proust and Hahn read Chateaubriand's Mémoires d'outre-tombe together, and that Proust read the first draft of Du côté de chez Swann to Hahn in private.

Apart from these--perhaps rather rash--inferences, there is, however, another important justification for studying Reynaldo Hahn in the mere fact that basic information on him is important background material for examination of his relationship to Proust. Even minor details hold a certain interest for the Proustian. Additionally, the very dispersal of information relating to Hahn prompted me to assemble the greater part of the essentials in one place. In this way, other possibilities can easily be followed up by way of the footnotes and bibliography.

One of the most obvious of these possibilities would, of course, be a full-scale analysis of Hahn's music and his musical language. This would be valuable both on the musical level (there is no biographical or musical study of Hahn) and also in relation to Proust, where more precise parallels might be found between the two men.

Another point which could be followed up is Hahn's contact with other literary figures. In Chapter I, I

mentioned that Hahn was an habitu  of aristocratic and literary salons; in them he met a large number of writers and held conversations with them. In his own writings, Hahn betrays considerable sensitivity towards literature, and it is reasonable to assume that at least some of his literary acquaintances were similarly sensitive to music.

These are just a few of the possibilities which would justify deeper study of Reynaldo Hahn. It is my hope that the present study has gone some of the way towards making these possibilities more evident.

APPENDIX ONE.

Hahn's life and works.

- 1874 August 9, born in Caracas, Venezuela.
- 1877 Moves to Paris, to remain there most of the rest of his life.
- 1885 Begins study at Paris Conservatoire (teachers: Massenet, Dubois, Lavignac).
- 1890 Incidental music to Daudet's L'Obstacle.
- 1891 Chansons grises (Verlaine), Études latines (Leconte de Lisle).
- 1892 Fin d'amour, pantomime.
- 1894 Spring: meets Proust for the first time.
- 1895 Fall: at Mme Lemaire's, Dieppe, and at Beg-Meil, with Proust.
- 1896 Summer: five weeks spent in Hamburg, where he frequently spends the summer in subsequent years. Illustration pour le jardin de Bérénice (Barrès), symphonic poem dedicated to Marcel Proust (unpublished).
Portraits de peintres, piano pieces composed for Proust's poems of the same title.
- 1897 Nuit d'amour bergamasque, symphonic poem.
- 1898 L'Ile du rêve, Polynesian idyll (Opéra-Comique, December 16).
- 1900 Ode on the death of Ruskin, for female voices and harps.
- 1902 La Carmélite, comic opera in 4 acts (Opéra-Comique, December 16).
Incidental music to Croisset's Deux courtisanes.
- 1905 Incidental music to Racine's Esther, to Hugo's Angelo, and to Catulle Mendès's Scarron.

- 1906 Easter: visits Constantinople and London.
 March 23, 26, 29: conducts three Mozart concerts in Paris, with Lilli Lehmann and Maggie Teyte.
 August: conducts Don Giovanni at Salzburg.
 December: at the last moment, cancels a proposed trip to the United States.
- 1907 February: dines with Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in Paris.
La Pastorale de Noël, Christmas mystery.
- 1908 Prométhée triomphant, symphonic poem.
- 1909 Naturalised French.
 Critic of the musical magazine Le Journal from June 1, 1909 to July 10, 1914.
Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este, ballet.
- 1910 La Fête chez Thérèse, ballet.
- 1911 February-March: in St. Petersburg.
 July: with Sarah Bernhardt, Belle-Ile-en-Mer (Morbihan).
 Incidental music to Magre's Méduse and to Hugo's Lucrèce Borgia.
- 1912 July-August: military service.
 November: lectures in Bucharest.
Le Bois sacré, pantomime.
Le Dieu bleu, ballet.
- 1913 September: military service.
- 1914 August: mobilised. At Melun, then at Albi, then at the front. Leaves taken in Paris.
- 1915 Le Ruban dénoué, suite of walyzes for two pianos (first public performance at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, December 30, 1917).
- 1919 Nausicaa, opera (Monte-Carlo, April 10).
Fête triomphale, opera (Paris Opéra, July 14).
- 1921 La Colombe de Bouddha, opera (Cannes).
- 1923 Piano Quintet (F sharp).
Ciboulette, light opera (Paris, Théâtre des Variétés, April 7).
- 1925 Incidental music to Sascha Guitry's Mozart.

- 1926 Incidental music to Wolff's and Duvernois's
Le Temps d'aimer.
- 1927 Violin Sonata (C maj.).
- 1928 Violin Concerto.
- 1930 Concerto provençal (Paris, 1946).
- 1931 Piano Concerto (E maj.).
Brummel, operetta.
- 1933 O mon bel inconnu, operetta.
- 1934 Becomes musical critic of Le Figaro.
- 1935 Le Marchand de Venise, opera after Shakespeare
(Paris Opéra, March 29).
Malvina, light opera (Gaité lyrique).
- 1937 Aux bosquets d'Idalie, ballet.
Winter season in Cairo. Conducts Gounod's Mireille
and his own Ciboulette, with great success.
- 1938 Records his Piano Concerto with Magda Taglia-
ferro.
- 1940 Goes into "exile" at Monte-Carlo and Toulon.
- 1944 String Quartet (A min.).
- 1945 Appointed musical director of the Paris Opéra.
- 1947 January 28: dies in Paris.
- 1949 Le Oui des jeunes filles, musical comedy, completed
by H. Busser.

APPENDIX TWO.

Index to the more important Composers (other than Hahn)
mentioned in the Proust/Hahn correspondence.

- Adam: p. 184.
- Bach: p. 149.
- Beethoven: pp. 38, 133, 137, 148, 202, 235, 256-257.
- Chabrier: pp. 137, 169.
- Chopin: p. 137.
- Couperin: p. 137.
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