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Artistique et d'Échanges Artistiques

Tyrväinen, Helena

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# Jean Sibelius's Legacy:

## *Research on his 150th Anniversary*

Edited by

Daniel Grimley, Tim Howell,  
Veijo Murtomäki and Timo Virtanen

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To the memory of Einojuhani Rautavaara (1928–2016)

INSTITUTIONAL REGULATION AND PARISIAN  
PERCEPTIONS OF SIBELIUS, 1924–1931:  
THE SCHNÉEVOIGTS AND THE  
ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE D'EXPANSION  
ET D'ÉCHANGES ARTISTIQUES

HELENA TYRVÄINEN

Examining some particular traits of French cultural life can lead to a better understanding of Sibelius' difficult position in France during his lifetime.<sup>1</sup> The French post-Revolution self-image of a champion of the rights of oppressed peoples, the established position of Paris as a cosmopolitan cultural capital, and a national concern for restoring the country's international prestige after its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war (1870–1)

<sup>1</sup> The article is part of my research project “Finland and France: Musical relations, cosmopolitanism, and national culture, 1880–1940,” currently supported by the Wihuri Foundation. Previously, I have analyzed Sibelius' relations with France for example in Helena Tyrväinen, “Suomalaiset Pariisin maailmannäyttelyiden 1889 ja 1900 musiikkiohjelmassa” [“Finns in the Music Programmes of the Paris 1889 and 1900 World Fairs”], *Musiikkitiede* 1–2 (1994): 22–74; “Sibelius at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900,” *Sibelius Forum. Proceedings from the Second International Jean Sibelius Conference, Helsinki November 25–29, 1995*, eds. Veijo Murtomäki, Kari Kilpeläinen and Risto Väisänen (Helsinki: Sibelius Academy, Department of Composition and Music Theory, 1998), 114–28; “La nature de primitif affiné qui le caractérise: La musique du Nord à Paris et la construction de l'altérité nordique,” *Le prisme du Nord. Pays du Nord, France, Allemagne (1750–1920)*, ed. Michel Espagne (Tusson: du Lérot, 2006), 103–30; “National, 'archaïque,' 'nordique,' 'modal:' le 'Grieg finlandais' [Sibelius] se présente à Paris,” Actes du Colloque International Jean Sibelius: Modalité, langage, esthétique, Paris, 5–7 novembre 2007, *Musurgia* XV 1–3 (2008): 119–140; “La nature de primitif affiné qui le caractérise: Sibelius' music in Paris and the construction of the Nordic 'Other,’” in *Sibelius in the Old and New World. Aspects of his Music, Its Interpretation, and Reception*, eds. Timothy L. Jackson, Veijo Murtomäki, Colin Davis, and Timo Virtanen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 401–17.

are all factors that added special importance to music's national reference in the French imagination, even where foreign composers were concerned. The relevance of the institutional regulation in Paris can be explained by the fact that in 1899 Aino Ackté—the Finnish star soprano of the Paris Opéra—following a patriotic plea by her compatriot Karl Fredrik Wasenius (known as a critic under his pseudonym Bis), failed to have Sibelius' *King Christian II Suite* included in the programmes of the Colonne concerts.<sup>2</sup> Only one year later, the Finnish composer experienced extraordinary success in the Parisian press following the concerts of the Helsinki Philharmonic Society Orchestra; significantly, the *King Christian II* music was among the successful works. But in 1900, the forum was the Paris Universal Exposition, hence the institution *par excellence* where France was expected to attend to the national expressions of other countries.<sup>3</sup> There, Sibelius was introduced to the world in Karl Flodin's words as “the master and flag-bearer of the young Finnish composers.”<sup>4</sup> The universal expositions more generally contributed to the breakthrough in the nineteenth century of the ideals of “national character” and “national style.” Of all universal expositions, those organised in Paris gave a privileged place to the arts.<sup>5</sup>

While important personal relations between Finnish and French persons diminished with the decades (I am thinking in particular of the loss of such an influential mediator as the Finnish painter Albert Edelfelt [1854–1905]), the importance of the institutions increased. This article will explore how

<sup>2</sup> Aino Ackté, *Muistojeni kirja* (Helsinki: Otava, 1925), 108. Cf. Pentti Savolainen and Matti Vainio (eds.), *Aino Ackté: Elämäankaari kirjeiden valossa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2002), 101.

<sup>3</sup> In my sense: “Institutions are ‘stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior.’ As structures or mechanisms of social order, they govern the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given community. Institutions are identified with a social purpose, transcending individuals and intentions by mediating the rules that govern living behavior.” (“Institution.” *Wikipedia*). In this article I intend to analyse the consequences of the French governmental initiative through only one important institution, the AFEEA.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Flodin, *La musique en Finlande* (Paris, 1900), 10, and Tyrväinen, “Sibelius at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900,” 120; for the political background to the Finnish representation in 1900 see also Kerstin Smeds, *Helsingfors—Paris: Finland på världsutställningarna 1851–1900* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland & Finska Historiska Samfundet, 1996), 277–9, 328–45.

<sup>5</sup> It was in the context of the Paris 1867 Universal Exposition that the nations were first asked to build their pavilions in a national style. See Smeds, *Helsingfors—Paris*, 45–7, 49, 96, 159.

the activity of L'Association Française d'Expansion et d'Échanges Artistiques (The French Alliance of Artistic Expansion and Exchange) might have influenced Sibelius' reputation in post-World War I France. The AFEEA was founded in Paris in 1922 in the nationalist climate of ideas following World War I, with the purpose of extending France's artistic influence in the world. It built on wartime activities, more particularly those run by the Service de décentralisation artistique which, following the initiative of pianist Alfred Cortot and the model of the national enemy Germany, engaged French artists in propaganda work. At the onset of peace, the French Ministry of Public Education (*Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts*) chose to retain this useful unit, now renamed Service d'études d'action artistique à l'étranger. *Le Figaro's* music critic Robert Brussel was appointed as its director. When extending governmental endeavours into the realm of international artistic relations, the AFEEA joined the public and the private initiative alongside patronage. As French international institutional relations concerning the arts were subordinated to the French foreign ministry under an 1810 decree, the founding of the AFEEA took place under the protection of the French ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Public Education.<sup>6</sup> As a consequence of this twofold allegiance, information on the AFEEA today must be searched for in two different places. The Ministry of Public Education archive concerning the AFEEA (Service d'études) is held in the music department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France under the title Fonds Montpensier.<sup>7</sup> There is also ample documentation on this organisation (Service des Œuvres) in the archive of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both archives (Service d'études and Service des Œuvres) contain many traces of the AFEEA's cooperation with several Finnish musicians.

Bernard Piniau has remarked that the operative model of the AFEEA's founders leaned largely on principles that the French Third Republic had adopted in the period 1880–1910 amid the unsettling and inglorious circumstances following the Franco-Prussian war. With the aim being the restoration of France's international prestige, the great international encounters of the past within the industrial realm, such as the universal expositions, were among the models that were adopted.<sup>8</sup> By February 1924

the organisation had already engaged 250 foreign correspondents, established an archive and files concerning artistic issues, and produced 150,000 biographical and bibliographical folders as well as 100,000 repertoires of press items written in fourteen languages.<sup>9</sup> While the Parisian Universal Expositions invited the world's artists to gather in the French capital, the AFEEA aimed at extending its authority by spreading French art and culture outside its borders.<sup>10</sup> However, the organisation also helped foreign musicians gain a foothold in France.<sup>11</sup>

### The AFEEA and the Finnish Musicians

What do the archives reveal about the AFEEA's dealings with foreign music people, and what were Sibelius' chances of profiting from it? Placed in boxes related to specific countries and folders bearing the names of individual musicians or music ensembles, the Fonds Montpensier preserves, along with other documents, duplicated press forms related to each. These AFEEA forms mainly apply to one Paris concert at the time, but one form may also contain information about several events when a single musician has played many concerts during a short period. Annotated by hand are the musician's name, the concert hall concerned, and the date. In addition, these duplicated forms contain the names of many Parisian journals. Next to them, the names of the critics who wrote about the event are marked by hand. I conclude from this material that the organisation in one way or another controlled the musicians' relations with the local press. While the AFEEA did in fact introduce the creative aspect of music from other countries to France, this seems to have been of relatively little

<sup>9</sup> Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Département de la Musique. Programmes. Associations. Association Française d'Expansion et d'Échanges Artistiques. Association Française d'Expansion et d'Échanges Artistiques, Réception en l'honneur des musiciens suisses 21 février 1914, programme.

<sup>10</sup> I have analysed the AFEEA's activities concerning Finland in a paper entitled "Journalist and Diplomat Wentzel Hagelstam: Cosmopolitan Builder of Independent Finland's Musical Life and Agent of France's Artistic Expansion," at the conference "Confronting the National in the Musical Past," Helsinki, Musiikkitalo, May 21, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Piniau, *L'action artistique de la France*, 23, 57; for a brief introduction to the AFEEA's (and later AFAA's) activities in the musical domain, see Danièle Pistone, "La musique come ambasciatrice? L'Association française d'action artistique (1922–2006): bilans et enjeux," *Relations internationales*, revue trimestrielle d'histoire 156 (hiver 2013) "Musique et relations internationales II" (Nanterre: PUF, 2014), 21–35.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Piniau in collaboration with Ramon Tio Bellido, *L'action artistique de la France dans le monde: Histoire de l'Association Française d'Action Artistique (AFAA) de 1922 à nos jours* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), 13, 21–2, 27–34, 69.

<sup>7</sup> Parts of the Fonds Montpensier's concert programmes are to be consulted under "Programmes" in the music department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. See note 9.

<sup>8</sup> Piniau, *L'action artistique de la France*, 23–6, 45, 60.

concern to the association.<sup>12</sup> Among Finnish composers, the organisation only supported one. Its cooperation with Sibelius' composition pupil—the author of the notorious *Sibelius: A Close-Up*—Bengt von Törne (known in France under his Gallicised name Benoît de Törne), in connection with a concert dedicated to his works in Salle Gaveau on May 29, 1927, was probably facilitated by his brother, Per Olof von Törne, Professor of Nordic History at the Åbo Akademi in Turku and a correspondent of the AFEEA.<sup>13</sup> There is no press form directly concerning Sibelius. Among foreign musicians, the main support was given to performers.

<sup>12</sup> However, the AFEEA organised a concert of Danish music in Paris (with works by Carl Nielsen, Peder Gram, Rued Langgaard, Peter Lange-Müller, Gustav Helsted, Hakon Børresen, Ludolf Nielsen, Louis Glass, Fini Henriques, Knudåge Riisager, Peter Heise, and Paul Schierbeck) in cooperation with Danish music societies Dansk Tonekunstnerforening and Unge Tonkunstneres Selskab, and another one dedicated exclusively to Nielsen's works. It also invited Armas Järnefelt, Sibelius' brother-in-law, principal conductor of the Swedish Royal Opera and a Swedish citizen since 1909, to conduct a concert of Swedish music in Paris on June 21, 1924 (with works by Kurt Atterberg, Natanael Berg, Wilhelm Stenhammar, Ture Rangström, and Hugo Alfvén). René Brancour, "Concert de musique danoise," *Le Ménestrel* 48 (1923): 504; Henri de Curzon, "Concert symphonique: Œuvres de Carl Nielsen," *Le Ménestrel* (October 29, 1926): 457; Pierre de Lapommeraye, "Concerts suédois," *Le Ménestrel* (June 27, 1924): 290–1.

<sup>13</sup> This concert, in which the composer conducted his own works (*Invocation*, *Poème*, excerpts from *La Basilisse*, and Symphony in F sharp minor), is the only one for which Fonds Montpensier conserves a press form. The Montpensier archive also contains several press clippings indicating von Törne's activity in France as a composer. In 1926 he organised a concert of his works in the Université Alexandre Mercetean in Paris (December 6) and another one in 1928 in the Salle Gaveau (April 25), on which occasion he conducted an orchestra of 80 in a performance of his symphony. On October 27, 1927 he conducted his *Fantaisie héroïque* in the hall of the Conservatoire and on September 19, 1932 gave a piano recital of his works in the private hall of Mme Edenkoben. *Invocation* was performed at the Monte Carlo Opera on March 28, 1928. An undated press clipping from 1927 (*Hufvudstadsbladet*) in Fonds Montpensier states that Bengt von Törne had studied music in Paris for four years. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département de la Musique. Fonds Montpensier. Compositeurs. Benoît de Törne. See also *Hufvudstadsbladet* July 3 and November 18, 1927, April 26 and 27, 1928, and *Comœdia* 1932, "Un récital des œuvres de Benoît de Törne" (May 19). The convoluted administration and the interdependence of the French ministries are revealed by the correspondence from 1926 concerning the invitation of Per Olof von Törne to be an AFEEA correspondent in matters concerning musical and theatre life in Turku. In order to find a suitable person, the director of the AFEEA first asked for the opinion of the French Ambassador to Finland Maurice de Coppet. De Coppet sent his proposition to director of the AFEEA Robert Brussel

The archives testify to the cooperation between the AFEEA and many Finnish performing musicians who gave concerts in Paris between 1924 and 1931, such as: violinist Kerttu Wanne; pianists Sigrid Sundgren-Schnéevoigt, Ernst Linko, Orest Bodalew, and Kerttu Bernhard; singers Greta von Haartman, Helge Lindberg, Aino Ackté, and Gertrud Alftan; the Viborg Chamber Orchestra; and conductor Georg Schnéevoigt. Several of these musicians even performed Sibelius' works. Violinist Kerttu Wanne played *Souvenir* and Mazurka in the concert hall of the École normale de musique (on March 12, 1930). Of the singers, Aino Ackté sang "La jeune fille revint du rendez-vous" in the University of the Sorbonne Amphithéâtre Richelieu (*Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte* in the original Swedish, March 6, 1928), Gertrud Alftan also sang some Sibelius in the Amphithéâtre Richelieu (February 1929), Helge Lindberg *Säv, säv, susa* in the Maison Gaveau (February 3, 1925), and Greta von Haartman *Den första kyssten* and *Svarta rosor* in the Maison Gaveau (May 31, 1928).<sup>14</sup>

From the group of Finnish musicians who cooperated with the AFEEA and even executed Sibelius' works in Paris, the Swedish-speaking married couple Georg and Sigrid Schnéevoigt stands out. Both were among the

and a copy of his letter to the Service des Œuvres in the French foreign ministry (March 31). Brussel thanked de Coppet for the suggestion and expressed his intention to turn to von Törne (April 16). An official of the French Ministry of Public Education inquired via a representative of the Service des Œuvres if the nominated correspondent will be approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (April 19). A representative of the Service des Œuvres informed Robert Brussel that there was no obstacle to the invitation (April 30). Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris. Archives diplomatiques. MN 417QO SEA 16/O VIII/2. Service des Œuvres françaises à l'étranger. Section littéraire et artistique Estonie, Finlande, Lettonie et Lituanie 1923/1930.

<sup>14</sup> This information about the performances of Sibelius' works only concerns those concerts of Finnish musicians for which a press form exists in the Fonds Montpensier. Basically, the same people may have performed his music in other concerts in Paris. Ernst Linko played Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Schumann, and Chopin in the Salle des Agriculteurs (January 28, 1928), and Kerttu Bernhard played Bach, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, and Madetoja's "The Garden of Death" (*Kuoleman puutarha*) in the Salle Majestic (January 22, 1929). The Chamber Orchestra of the Viborg Conservatory played Bach, Scarlatti, Locatelli, Telemann, Paul Juon, Melartin, Kuula, and Ranta under the direction of Boris Sirob in the École Normale de Musique (May 10, 1932). Fonds Montpensier. Finlande. Artistes lyriques, Virtuoses, Villes (sauf Helsinki); *Hufvudstadsbladet*, "Finländsk musik i Paris" (February 12, 1929); Jean Messenger, "Les récitals de la quinzaine," *Comœdia* (January 29, 1929); Maurice Imbert, "Concerts et récitals: Musique finlandaise," *Journal des Débats* (May 16, 1932).

most internationally successful Finns within their respective professional groups. A pupil at the Helsinki Music Institute, Sigrid Sundgren (1878–1953) had, at the age of 14, William Dayas, a former pupil of Liszt, for a piano teacher. Two years later she continued her studies in Berlin with Ferruccio Busoni, who introduced her to the Berlin public by organising a concert for her when she was 18.<sup>15</sup> At the age of 20 she married her compatriot, the cellist and future conductor Georg Schnéevoigt. Sigrid Sundgren-Schnéevoigt was an experienced pianist with an international reputation when, in 1923 at the latest, she started to play concerts in Paris. In 1927 she settled there permanently.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, Georg Schnéevoigt (1872–1947) had long been enjoying European-wide renown as a skilful, hypnotically energetic orchestral conductor. A rival of the nationally authoritative Robert Kajanus, conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic, Schnéevoigt had gained his laurels mainly outside Finland. He could include in his curriculum vitae the directorship of the Munich Kaim orchestra (from 1903), the founding of the Riga symphony orchestra in 1909, success as an orchestra builder in the service of the Stockholm Concert Society from 1914, responsibility of the Christiania (Oslo) Concert Society orchestra from 1919, and appearances as guest conductor with a great number of European orchestras, for example the Berlin Philharmonic. He had left the Stockholm Concert Society in 1924 and the same year accepted a position as *Generalmusikdirektor* in Düsseldorf. He became the musical director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 1927.<sup>17</sup> His name appeared in the French press many years before his Paris debut.<sup>18</sup>

In his opening Paris concert in December 1924, Schnéevoigt conducted the first French performance of Sibelius' Second Symphony, a work he adored<sup>19</sup>. Until then, only two performances of a Sibelius symphony had

<sup>15</sup> Margit Rahkonen, "Piano-playing Pulsating with Life," *Finnish Music Quarterly* 1 (2010): 30–3.

<sup>16</sup> Elsa von Born, "Professor Schnéevoigt hemma," *Astra* (February 12, 1927). Tip (pseudonym) "Hos Sigrid Schnéevoigt i Paris," *Veckans Krönika* (November 30, 1929).

<sup>17</sup> Vesa Sirén, *Suomalaiset kapellimestarit Sibeliuksesta Saloseen, Kajanuksesta Franckiin* (Helsinki: Otava, 2010), 85–90, 205–214. A German translation of Sirén's book will be published in March 2017 titled *Finnlands Dirigenten. Von Sibelius und Schnéevoigt bis Saraste und Salonen*, trans. Roman Schatz and Benjamin Schweitzer, ed. Felicia Englman (Scoventa Verlag).

<sup>18</sup> Concerning Schnéevoigt's successes in Spain, Holland, Norway (Christiania), and Sweden (Stockholm), see *Le Ménestrel*, March 18, 1921, September 30, 1921, May 27, 1921, and January 5, 1923.

<sup>19</sup> Sirén, *Suomalaiset kapellimestarit Sibeliuksesta Saloseen*, 213, 223, 224, 248.

taken place in France, both of them under the direction of Kajanus: the First Symphony during the Universal Exposition of 1900, and the Third Symphony together with works by other Finnish composers on May 13, 1920 in a concert of the Padeloup orchestra, partly financed by the Finnish government. For some reason, there are no press forms in the Fonds Montpensier for the Schnéevoigts' first Paris concerts.

### Georg Schnéevoigt's Paris debut with Sibelius' Second Symphony

On Monday evening, December 15, 1924, Schnéevoigt conducted a programme consisting of Sibelius' Second Symphony, Mozart's D minor Piano Concerto, K. 466, and Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, Op. 73, with the renowned US pianist Eleanor Spencer as a soloist, and another favourite work of his, Ravel's *La Valse*, in the Conservatoire concert hall. The printed programme states that the orchestra consisted of 80 members of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire orchestra. The concert was not organised by the Société des Concerts but by the A. Dandelot & Fils concert agency "in accordance with Mme L[ola] Bossan."<sup>20</sup> It would not be possible to interpret the position of all foreign AFEEA associates in the light of the AFEEA's dealings with Georg Schnéevoigt. Judging from the materials of the Fonds Montpensier, he was by far the most highly appreciated Finnish musician among those who performed in Paris. From the Schnéevoigt file a network of actors emerges, consisting of the conductor himself, Mme Lola Bossan, the AFEEA and its director Robert Brussel, and the body of Parisian music critics. Schnéevoigt is generally best remembered as an interpreter of German music. True, his repertoire included such masterworks of contemporary French music as Debussy's *Nocturnes* and Ravel's *La Valse* and *Daphnis et Chloë*.<sup>21</sup> Also true, the French press noted an all-French programme with works by Berlioz, Saint-Saëns, Dukas, Chausson, and Ravel which he conducted in Stockholm in 1922.<sup>22</sup> Yet, in the correspondence preceding his Paris visit and later, in the

<sup>20</sup> Concert programme of Schnéevoigt's Paris debut concert. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département de la Musique. Fonds Montpensier. Finlande. Virtuoses. Georg Schnéevoigt.

<sup>21</sup> Sirén, *Suomalaiset kapellimestarit Sibeliuksesta Saloseen*, 85, 187, 220, 229, 232. From Debussy's *Nocturnes*, at least the movement *Fêtes* was part of Schnéevoigt's repertoire: he conducted it in Helsinki in February 1927. "Georg Schnéevoigt," *Svenska Dagbladet* (February 9, 1927).

<sup>22</sup> See *Le Ménestrel* (January 5, 1923).

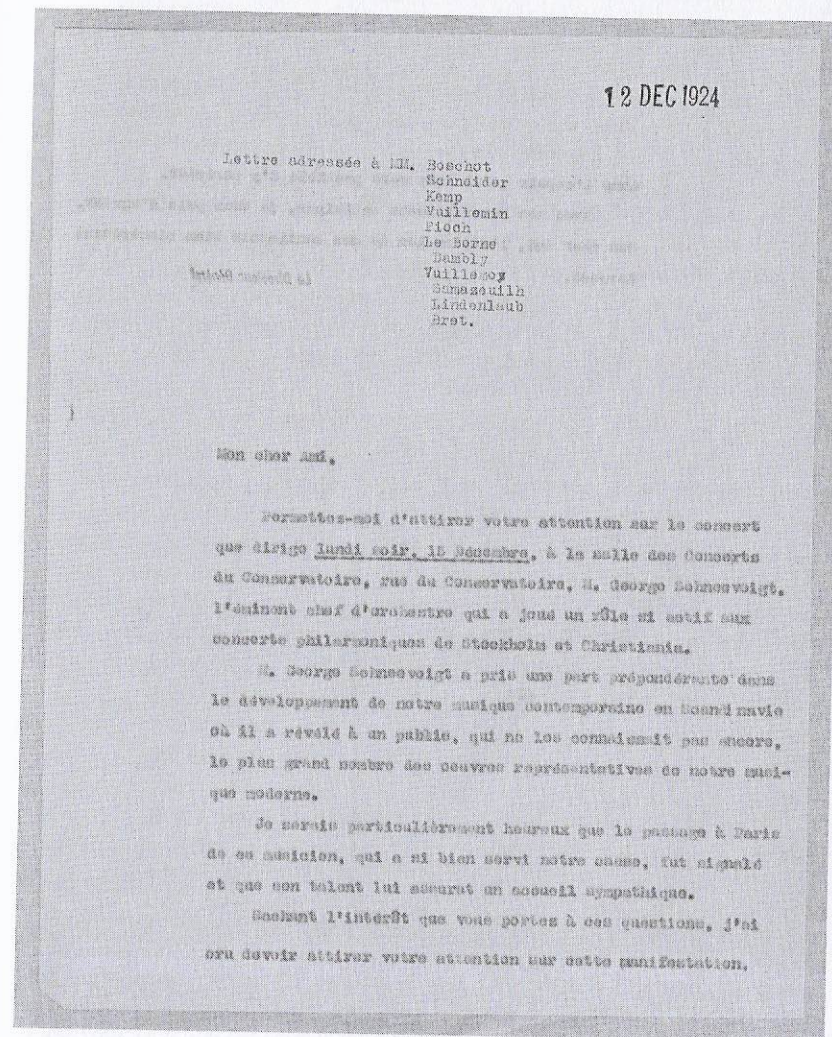
French press accounts of his concert, his services to the new French music assume constrained proportions. This emphasis appears tendentious.

On December 4, 1924, Lola Bossan wrote to Brussel, referring (with reference to his letter of July 31) to his promise to provide her with information. She was organising a concert for a Finnish conductor and anticipated a positive reaction from the Parisian press and public. This was justified, she claimed, since the musician in question, though unknown in Paris, had been a determined propagator of French music and French musicians, and had already been awarded membership of the Légion d'Honneur for these services. Bossan even reported her intention to gather French composers around Schnéevoigt. The aim was to have their works played in the numerous concerts given by the conductor abroad. Bossan invited Brussel to the concert and on behalf of her client asked for organisational assistance.

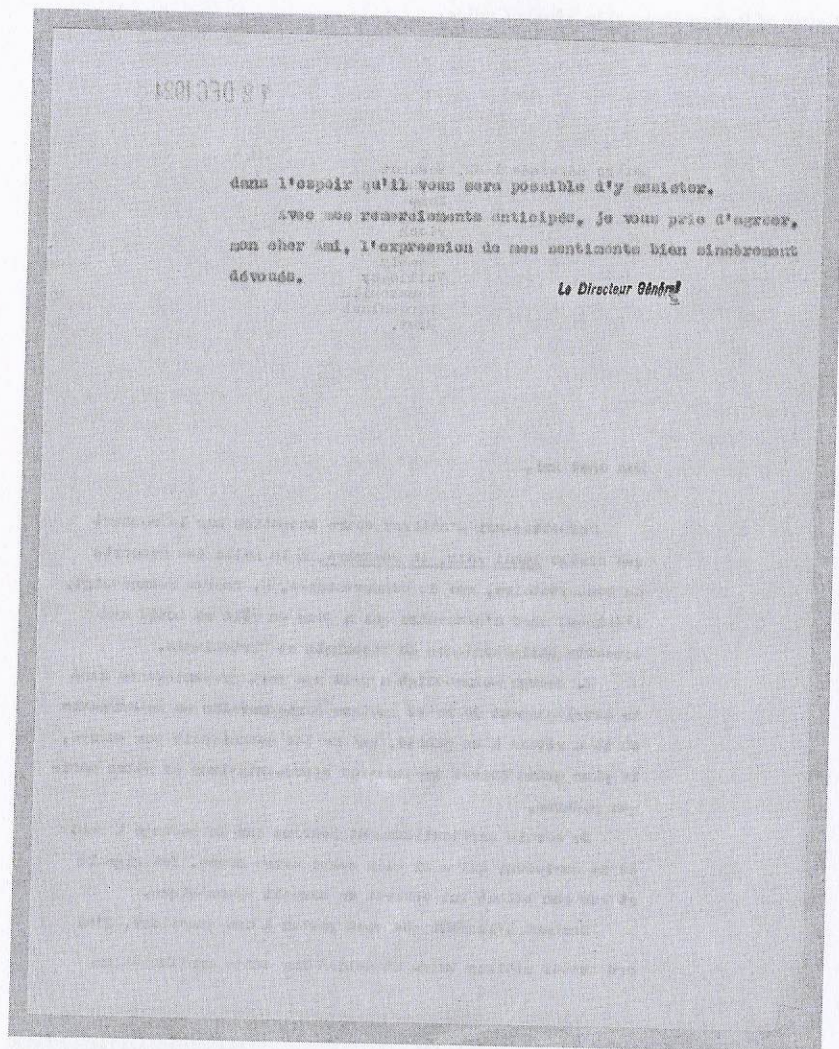
On December 10, Brussel wrote (in German) to Schnéevoigt at his Düsseldorf *Cäcilienallée* address, thanking him for a letter he had received dated November 30. He expressed his delight at the Finn's upcoming concert in Paris and asserted his intention to invite the best Parisian critics to write about the event. He asked Schnéevoigt to oblige the concert agency by providing him with additional information. The same day, Brussel wrote to Bossan telling her that he had received her letter of December 4. He added that he had even received a letter from Schnéevoigt. He would be happy to come to the concert and intended to draw the attention of his colleagues from the "great Parisian press" to it. He wished to know for which critics a seat would be reserved, but he also expressed his concern at the composition of the programme, for two piano concertos were included. From the viewpoint of the press, he said, it would have been more opportune to introduce nothing but new, unknown orchestral compositions.

Letter of Robert Brussel to Music Critics.

Fonds Montpensier, Finlande, Département de la musique, Bibliothèque nationale de France.







On December 12, Brussel addressed a letter to eleven Parisian critics telling them about a concert to take place on December 15 in the hall of the Conservatoire. This was sent to Adolphe Boschot, Louis Schneider, Robert Kemp, Louis Vuillemin, Georges Pioch, Fernand Le Borne, Paul Dambly, Émile Vuillermoz, Gustave Samazeuilh, Théodore Lindenlaub, and Gustave Bret. The conductor Georg Schnéevoigt, he said, played an active role in concerts in Stockholm and Christiania. In accordance with Bossan's

view, he stated, this conductor adopted a leading position in the promotion of contemporary French music in Scandinavia, to whose audiences he introduced modern French music more than anybody else. Brussel pleaded:

I would be particularly happy if the passage to Paris of this musician who has so well served our cause were announced, and if his talent would assure him a sympathetic reception. Knowing your interest in these matters I have considered it my duty to turn your attention to this event, hoping that you will be able to attend.<sup>23</sup>

Due to Brussel's leading position in the AFEEA and his close relations with French colleagues among the Parisian music critics, this letter is powerful evidence. The letter exposes the extraordinary interest, specific to 1920s' Paris, in what is new and unprecedented. Apart from that, Schnéevoigt's usefulness to French music appears important. There is no mention in Brussel's letter of either Schnéevoigt's nationality or of Sibelius.

If the AFEEA propaganda had been successful, this would have been evident in the press accounts of the Brussel circle. Judging by a small sample of writings, this seems indeed to be the case. Unlike what happened during the 1900 Universal Exposition, the positive artistic value of a foreigner was no longer considered in terms of their national roots. In Brussel's own appraisal in *Le Figaro*, Schnéevoigt's services to modern French music, his Finnish origins and, belatedly, his Swedish residency are brought up, while his current position in Germany is bypassed. In the contemporary French context in which Classicism was valued, the shrouded reserve regarding Sibelius' symphony would have appeared markedly. Brussel writes: "He is a magnificent conductor, full of authority and passionate accents, meticulous too, and has the most powerful feeling for rhythm. He conducted in the hall of the Conservatoire Ravel's *La Valse*, of which he made a dazzling tableau, and Sibelius' Symphony in D, in which he excels and which suits particularly well his vehement temperament."<sup>24</sup> The review in *L'Excelsior* by Émile Vuillermoz

<sup>23</sup> "Je serais particulièrement heureux que le passage à Paris de ce musicien, qui a si bien servi notre cause, fut signalé et que son talent lui assurât un accueil sympathique. Sachant l'intérêt que vous portez à ces questions, j'ai cru devoir attirer votre attention sur cette manifestation, dans l'espoir qu'il vous sera possible d'y assister." Robert Brussel, a letter to French critics dated December 12, 1924. Fonds Montpensier. Finlande. Virtuoses. Georg Schnéevoigt.

<sup>24</sup> "C'est un chef magnifique, plein d'autorité et d'accent passionné, soigneux aussi et ayant du rythme le sentiment le plus fort. Il a conduit à la salle du Conservatoire, la *Valse* de Ravel, dont il a fait un tableau éblouissant, et la *Symphonie en ré* de

(composer, writer on music and, alongside Ravel, a former member of the cultural group *apaches* and a founder of the Société Musicale Indépendante), notes that Schnéevoigt is Finnish, has founded a philharmonic orchestra in Christiania, and is a professed propagandist of French music. Vuillermoz writes that Ravel's *La Valse* was animated with taste, and that Schnéevoigt's conducting was extravagant, but did not neglect the scores' nuances. The critic praises the piano soloist Eleanor Spencer for her interpretations of Mozart and Beethoven, but does not say a word about Sibelius.<sup>25</sup>

Sibelius did not go unnoticed by Louis Schneider, writing in French for *Le Gaulois* and in English for the *New York Herald*. According to *Le Gaulois*, the Second Symphony was entirely at the feet of German thought, contained commonplaces, and was pompous in style. He wrote that Schnéevoigt had worked for a long time in Stockholm and had promoted French music, and commented that the Finn was in turn a remarkable conductor whose baton technique was excellent. He showed all the nuances to his musicians without losing sight of the larger movement. The rhythms of *La Valse* were splendid, and even the piano soloist was good.<sup>26</sup>

In English, Schneider wrote:

I only half relished the 2nd Symphony of Sibelius, in D major, where the classical influence is modified by modern German tendencies with their abuse of incidental phrasing, repetitions and a leaning to a pompous style. But the execution of this selection was quite remarkable.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the composer was bad and the conductor good. I shall come back to this later.

It would be difficult not to regard Schnéevoigt's choice of work as a mistake. He seems to have relied excessively on the appeal of his favourite symphony without paying heed to the context. In a first performance during the 1920s, many Parisian critics expected to hear the voice of their own time—the first French performance of Sibelius' Second Symphony took place two decades too late. Knowing that, according to Schnéevoigt, the poetic content of this work was about the Finnish struggle for national

Sibelius, où il excelle, et qui convient si bien à son tempérament véhément." Brussel, "Les concerts," *Le Figaro* (December 22, 1924).

<sup>25</sup> An unsigned press clipping from *L'Excelsior*, dated December 25, 1924. Fonds Montpensier, the Georg Schnéevoigt file.

<sup>26</sup> Louis Schneider, "Les Concerts," *Le Gaulois* (December 25, 1924), 5–6.

<sup>27</sup> *New York Herald* 1924 (December 17), "Music in Paris by Louis Schneider," press clipping in the Georg Schnéevoigt file of Fonds Montpensier.

independence,<sup>28</sup> we may also ask if a subtler exponent could have generated a more positive response from the Parisians. Was not Schneider's experience of "pompousness" in the symphony a consequence of Schnéevoigt's well-known and often-criticised manner of accentuating contrasts excessively?

On January 5, 1925, Robert Brussel addressed a warm letter to Schnéevoigt in German, regretting not having had the opportunity to meet the conductor personally.<sup>29</sup> Later, Georg Schnéevoigt returned to the French capital for concerts at the helm of the Padeloup orchestra (February 28, 1925), the Orchestre Philharmonique de Paris (December 2, 1925, January 5, 1927) and the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris (November 17, 1929).<sup>30</sup> With the exception of the 1927 concert, the Fonds Montpensier preserves the press forms concerning these events. Sibelius' music was only included in the 1929 concert. As he had done at the moment of his 1924 Paris première, Schnéevoigt chose even here not to introduce the Finnish composer's more recent orientation; far from it, he gave Parisians an opportunity to hear the First Symphony once more, already familiar from the 1900 Universal Exposition.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Sirén, *Suomalaiset kapellimestarit Sibeliuksesta Saloseen*, 123.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Brussel to Georg Schnéevoigt in a letter dated January 5, 1925. The Georg Schnéevoigt file of Fonds Montpensier.

<sup>30</sup> On February 28, 1925 in a concert by the Padeloup orchestra, Schnéevoigt's programme consisted of Beethoven's Third Symphony, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor with Zino Francescatti as a soloist, Strauss' *Don Juan*, vocal numbers (Rachmaninov *À mon champs bien aimé*; Louis Aubert, *Le vaincu*; and Mussorgsky, *Hopak*, with Alice Derlange), and Wagner's Prelude to *Tannhäuser*. In two concerts by the Orchestre Philharmonique de France, he conducted Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie pathétique*, Ravel's *La Valse*, the Finale of Alfano's *Danse de Sakuntala*, songs of Richard Strauss (on December 2, 1925), Wagner's Prelude to *Die Meistersinger*, Beethoven's First Symphony, orchestral numbers from Vittorio-Gnecchi's scenic works, and a "cello concerto by Boccherini" (on January 5, 1927). (*Le Figaro* 1925 [March 1], *Petit Journal* 1925 [December 11], *Le Ménestrel* 1927 No. 1.) In his monumental study of Finnish conductors, Vesa Sirén only devotes two non-specific mentions to Georg Schnéevoigt's French career. Sirén, *Suomalaiset kapellimestarit Sibeliuksesta Saloseen*, 216, 221.

<sup>31</sup> The constraints of this publication do not allow me to discuss the reactions of the press. In addition to Sibelius' First Symphony, Georg Schnéevoigt performed on November 17, 1929 in the Salle Pleyel Weber's Overture to *Freischütz*, Haydn's Symphony No. 13, and Mendelssohn's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 with Zino Francescatti as a soloist (*Comœdia* 1929 [November 24], *Écho de Paris* 1929 [November 18]).

### Cosmopolitan Finnish Musicians in Post-World War I Paris

The earliest information about Sigrid Sundgren-Schnéevoigt's concert activity in Paris dates from 1923, but there are no traces from that time of cooperation with the AFEEA.<sup>32</sup> On April 10 she shared, modestly, a concert with three other musicians in the Salle Gaveau. Her programme consisted of a Rondino (possibly Op. 68 No. 2?) and a Valse (Op. 34?) by Sibelius, Selim Palmgren's "Nuit de Mai" (*Toukokuun yö*, Op. 27 No. 4) and Prélude (Op. 45 No. 1?), three Chopin pieces, and, together with Mr A. Lévi, Rachmaninov's Cello Sonata in G minor.<sup>33</sup> During the period 1926–31 she played several recitals in this concert hall, of which the AFEEA press forms from 1927–31 are conserved in the Fonds Montpensier. From Sibelius' catalogue, she performed the E major Sonatina, Op. 67, on January 19, 1927, the Valse, Op. 34, and the C sharp minor Rondino Op. 68 on May 7, 1928. No Sibelius was programmed in the 1929 recitals (October 14, October 25, November 13) or those in 1931 (June 10), but his Valse was again included in her share of a marathon concert by several musicians organised on February 19, 1933 by the newspaper *Le Journal*. The pianist proved to have been somewhat more faithful to her compatriot Palmgren, who was a family friend, than she was to Sibelius.<sup>34</sup> In 1927, she played "Chant d'oiseau" (*Fågelsång* Op. 17 No. 19), "Mer" (*Havet* Op. 17 No. 12), and Étude; in 1928, Prélude, Op. 45 No. 1; in 1931, *Valse impromptu*, Op. 34; and in 1933 (19 February), *Valse-impromptu* and *Étude de concert*.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> This conclusion is based on information in the Sigrid Schnéevoigt scrapbook in Brages Pressarkiv, Helsinki, and the Sigrid Sundgren-Schnéevoigt file in the Fonds Montpensier.

<sup>33</sup> *Le Figaro* 1923 (April 10); *La Semaine à Paris* 1923 (April 6), 34.

<sup>34</sup> Kimmo Korhonen, *Selim Palmgren: Elämä musiikissa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2009), 514–15, 581–9.

<sup>35</sup> Concert program of March 5, 1926 in Fonds Montpensier; *Guide du Concert* 1927–1929, 1931; *Le Journal* (February 17, 1933).

Programme of Sigrid Schnéevoigt's 1927 Concert  
Fonds Montpensier, Finlande, Département de la musique, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Bureau de Concerts : Marcel de VALMALET, 45, Rue La Boétie, Paris-8<sup>e</sup>  
Téléph. : Elysées 06-72

MAISON GAVEAU (Salle des Concerts), 45-47, Rue La Boétie, Paris-8<sup>e</sup>  
Samedi 29 Janvier 1927 à 21 heures  
(Ouverture des portes à 20 h. 50)

UNIQUE RECITAL  
SIGRID  
SCHNEEVOIGT

PIANISTE

PROGRAMME			
I. Chaconne . . . . .	BACH-BUSONI	III. La Sérénade interrompue . . . . .	DEBUSSY
Prélude et Fugue en mi-majeur . . . . .	BACH	Valse . . . . .	de FALLA
Prélude de choeur pour orgue . . . . .	BACH	Andalucia . . . . .	
(Un jour est, un jour)	BACH-BUSONI	Deux Rituelles du Feu (Amor Brujo)	
II. Sonatine en mi-majeur op. 67 . . . . .	SIBELIUS	IV. Scherzo et Juke-miseur . . . . .	CHOPIN
Allegro — Andantino — Allegro		Trois mazurkas la mineure . . . . .	
Chant d'Oiseau . . . . .	PALMGREN	et majeure . . . . .	
La Mer . . . . .		et deux mineure . . . . .	
Étude de Concert . . . . .		Ballade en la bémol mineure . . . . .	

PIANO GAVEAU

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It would be hard to presume any other reason for Sigrid Schnéevoigt's dropping Sibelius' works from her Paris programmes except for the modest response they evoked. The review from 1927 of Robert Brussel's friend Pierre Leroi in his capacity as critic for *Le Gaulois* is symptomatic:

From the pianists we heard this week it is appropriate to praise Mme Sigrid Schnéevoigt highly. It is in the great works of Bach in particular that this beautiful artist appeared in her full measure, for she did not exclusively show very solid technical qualities, but was even capable of restoring to these pages their complete sublimity and architectural greatness. She presented works of Sibelius and Palmgren, works of poetic sentiment and drawn from popular sources, and a successful selection of pieces of Debussy, de Falla and Chopin, these with a mindful and delicate care, embellished by a reserve of the best of tastes.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> "Parmi les pianistes que nous avons entendu cette semaine, il convient de louer hautement Mme Sigrid Schnéevoigt. C'est surtout dans les grandes œuvres de Bach que cette belle artiste donna toute sa mesure, car elle fit montre non seulement des qualités techniques d'une grande fermeté, mais elle sut restituer à ces pages toute leur sublimité et leur grandeur architecturale. Des œuvres de Sibelius et Palmgren, d'un sentiment poétique puisé aux sources populaires, et un choix heureux de

According to Stan Goléstan, writing for *Le Figaro* in 1928, the pianist's "style and technique were perfect" in her compatriots' works.<sup>37</sup>

Such seemingly polite but stereotypically small remarks on the "poetic sentiment" and "popular sources" of Sibelius' and Palmgren's compositions were due to a not insignificant extent to the great number of piano recitals in the metropolis. In Paris, Sigrid Sundgren-Schnéevoigt performed in an extremely competitive environment, and any mentions of performers were generally brief. It happened that Arthur Rubinstein played an all-Chopin evening in the Gaveau hall just a couple of weeks before she did the same. In the resulting comparisons between musicians, Sigrid Schnéevoigt was praised for her solid technique, her mastery of large-scale forms, and for a strength considered to be unusual for a woman, while her sensitivity and spontaneity left something to be desired.<sup>38</sup>

As a performing artist, Sigrid Schnéevoigt obviously suffered less than Finnish composers from the limited French interest in Finnish music. Her technique was solid, and her European repertoire was versatile. In addition to works by the great German composers (Bach and arrangements of his works, Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms) and the romantic masters of the piano (Chopin and Liszt), she played from the contemporary French (Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Debussy, Migot, Rhené-Baton), Spanish (de Falla, Albéniz, Infante), and Russian (Rachmaninov, Scriabin) repertoires. The three recitals with three different programmes she gave in Salle Gaveau within one month in the autumn of 1929 are strong evidence of her sovereignty. She had opportunities to perform as the soloist of an orchestra (Grieg Concerto in Théâtre des Champs-Élysées with the Padeloup orchestra and conductor Rhené-Baton on October 14, 1928, and Saint-Saëns's Second Piano Concerto in the hall of the newspaper *Le Journal* with an orchestra conducted by Henri Tomasi on February 17, 1933) and to make recordings.<sup>39</sup> She, like her husband, was a true cosmopolitan.

pièces de Debussy, de Falla et Chopin fut présenté par elle avec des soins attentifs et délicats, paré d'une réserve du meilleur goût." Pierre Leroi, "Concerts et virtuoses," *Le Gaulois* (February 6, 1927), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Stan Goléstan, "Séances musicales," *Le Figaro* (May 20, 1928), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Pierre Leroi, "Concerts et virtuoses," *Le Gaulois* (May 13, 1928); Jean Messenger, "Concerts et recitals de la semaine," *Comœdia* (May 15, 1928); George Mussy, "Concerts et recitals," *Le Figaro* (October 28, 1929); Mussy, "Concerts et recitals," *Le Figaro* (November 2, 1929); Jean-André Messenger, "Récitals et concerts," *Comœdia* (November 1, 1929); Messenger, "Récitals et concerts," *Comœdia* (November 23, 1929).

<sup>39</sup> *Le Journal* (February 17, 1933). Sigrid Schnéevoigt's recordings made in Paris in 1931 (Albéniz's *Castilla* and *Granada* from *Suite espagnole* Op. 47, and

Many of the AFEEA's methods and operations remain to be clarified. Since musicological research has so far dealt little with its 1922–31 period,<sup>40</sup> conclusions concerning its influence should be cautious. Clearly, the top-down strategy reaching from the French government to the grassroots of musical life, and the standpoint which Jann Pasler accurately called "music as public utility,"<sup>41</sup> are worth noting. However, the AFEEA's network does not stand out distinctly from its social background. We have seen that Robert Brussel led Parisian public opinion, but his activities and views are themselves symptomatic of the French climate of ideas. The identity question, which at the time of the 1900 Universal Exposition stimulated French curiosity about the cultural expressions of other nations, appears to be reduced to a politically motivated rivalry concerning international leadership. We find the world of music polarised: Parisian critics were keen to distinguish a commitment to the archetypal enemy, Germany, within romantic expression. Many of these music critics were themselves composers, and the French-classical ideal was widely accepted in this circle. Georges Migot's 1922 article on Sibelius is exceptional.<sup>42</sup>

In December 1924, even critics who were not contacted by Robert Brussel could discuss the Second Symphony in terms used by those who did receive his letter. This may be a consequence of the publicity material: the printed programme of Schnéevoigt's concert mentions his services to French music and his distinction of being an Officer of the Légion d'Honneur. Thus, Pierre de Lapommeraye in *Le Ménestrel* calls Schnéevoigt a great conductor who had toured just about everywhere with the exception of France. Sibelius' symphony, he thinks, is ultra-romantic, often pompous, has commonplace motifs and heavy orchestration, while Mr Schnéevoigt could extract from it "unexpected effects that sustained

Chopin's Valse in B flat, Op. 64 No. 1 and Études Op. 25 Nos. 1 and 9) can be consulted on the webpage of the Finnish national library (<https://viola.linneanet.fi>).

<sup>40</sup> For AFEEA's activities in the field of music education, see Marie Duchêne-Thégari, "Les élèves musiciens étrangers en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres," *Littératures et musiques dans la mondialisation, XXe-XXIe siècles*, dir. Anaïs Fléchet & Marie-Françoise Lévy (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2015), 45–56.

<sup>41</sup> Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Georges Migot, "Jean Sibelius," *La Revue musicale* No. 5 (March 1, 1922), 256–61. See also Tyrväinen, "La nature de primitif affiné qui le caractérise," 103–30; Tyrväinen, *Sibelius in the Old and New World*, 401–17.

the interest.”<sup>43</sup> Gustave Doret in *Le Courrier Musical* calls Schnéevoigt “a great Finnish conductor.” However, to his mind, concision is not among the qualities of Sibelius’ symphony, exposing too obviously the influence of Wagner. He finds the orchestration too rich.<sup>44</sup>

Considering the politicised media strategies and Sibelius’ invisibility on the Parisian scene, it would be difficult to suggest which of his works might have guaranteed him success in 1920s’ Paris. It is the performing musicians with their cosmopolitan repertoires who profited the most from the cooperation with the AFEEA. Mentions of the Schnéevoigts in the French press often brought up, besides their country of origin, their former residencies and international careers. Indeed, it would be arbitrary to draw a direct comparison between their nationality and the substance of their art, considering especially that the couple lived abroad for years without ever setting foot on Finnish soil—their “exile” was over with Georg Schnéevoigt’s appointment in 1932 as the conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra as successor to Kajanus.<sup>45</sup> Beneath the surface of more or less genuine interest from the French side, the danger of schematism was hidden. The AFEEA’s archive was an abundant data source, but without fresh supplies a certain backwardness emerged.<sup>46</sup> I wonder, for instance, why a programme note in the Fonds Montpensier from 1928 of the Finnish soprano Greta von Haartman (who even performed Sibelius’ songs) leans on ideas of Finnish music written for the 1900 Trocadéro Finnish concerts.<sup>47</sup> Sibelius too was a cosmopolitan, but his reputation in France extended the national image that was forged at the moment of the 1900 Universal Exposition.

Of all artistic disciplines, music was a privileged field of activity during the AFEEA’s early phase. The association’s strategies changed together with the organisational reform of the early 1930s; the impact of musicians and of international cooperation diminished. Renamed the Association Française d’Action Artistique in 1936, it directed its activities outside its

<sup>43</sup> Pierre de Lapommeray, “Concert Schnéevoigt—Eleanor Spencer,” *Le Ménestrel* No. 4625 (December 19, 1924), 536.

<sup>44</sup> D., G. [Gustave Doret], “Eleanor Spencer et Georg Schnéevoigt,” *Le Courrier Musical* 1 (1925).

<sup>45</sup> Von Born, “Professor Schnéevoigt hemma”; Tip, “Hos Sigrid Schnéevoigt i Paris”; *Hufvudstadsbladet* (March 23, 1930). “Sigrid Schnéevoigt till Helsingfors,” cf. Sirén, *Suomalaiset kapellimestarit Sibeliuksesta Saloseen*, 226.

<sup>46</sup> See Piniau, *L’action artistique de la France*, 30.

<sup>47</sup> An unsigned programme note entitled “La musique finlandaise” in Greta von Haartman’s concert programme of May 31, 1928, including *Den första kyssten* and *Svarta rosor*, Fonds Montpensier. Finlande. Artistes lyriques. G. von Haartman.

borders.<sup>48</sup> This would be the reason why, from the early 1930s onwards, press forms in Fonds Montpensier concerning Finnish musicians ceased to exist. It is only logical to conclude that this evolution led to the decrease of Sibelius’ visibility in France.

<sup>48</sup> Piniau, *L’action artistique de la France*, 23–4, 37–46, 54–7.

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