

Musical productions at the Opéra-Comique during the Vichy era:
from the viewpoint of new French works performed for the first time there

Naomi TAZAKI

The aim of this study is to analyse musical productions at the Opéra-Comique in Paris during the Vichy era (1940-1944). The focus is on new works by French composers first performed there during that time. The study examines the characteristics and context of these works including how they reflect French national policy towards the arts. The works are compared with works from the previous Consultative committee period (*Comité consultatif*, 1936-1938) from the following points of view: contemporary administrative policy; the nature and the frequency of the performances; and the characteristics and the musical styles of the productions.

If the whole repertoire is considered there seems to be a certain continuity in the musical activities at the Opéra-Comique from the pre-Vichy period to the Vichy. However there were some changes in the attitude of the administrative authorities towards new French works or particular features of them. There was a clear policy to promote the works of French artists by decree. There was also a policy to promote frequent revivals of these works. An awareness of French folklore and the idea of the French revolution (*la Révolution nationale*) can also be seen especially in new works first performed in 1942.

This study suggests that the pattern of performances of new works at the Opéra-Comique during the Vichy era demonstrated a national policy towards the arts in France that sought to reestablish French nationalism and French identity. Naturally it also showed the strategy of the general manager and the musical director of the Opéra-Comique of developing a thriving and active musical theatre.