

THE DESCRIPTIVE MINIATURES OF ALPHONSE HASSELMANS  
AND HENRIETTE RENIÉ: AN EXAMINATION OF THE  
PEDAGOGICAL AND ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE  
OF SALON PIECES FOR HARP

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## ABSTRACT

Characterized by the ascendance of the double-action pedal harp and a resulting evolution in harp literature and performance practice, the modern French school of harp developed at the *fin de siècle*. Belgian harp virtuoso and composer Alphonse Hasselmans (1845-1912) founded this new method after his appointment as professor of harp at the Paris Conservatory in 1884. Championed by his most beloved student, harp prodigy and composer Henriette Renié, the French school of harp flourished in the early twentieth century. This document offers an examination of the relationship between Hasselmans and Renié, as well as a study of their salon pieces for harp.

Chapter one, an overview of the political and religious environment of France during the Third Republic, explains how government and gender stereotypes affected the lives of these musicians. It also provides a concise history of the role of the harp in Parisian salons and assesses the importance of program music during the *belle époque* to illustrate how Hasselmans' and Renié's descriptive works fit into a broader cultural and musical context. Chapter two provides a detailed study of the close, but at times tumultuous, rapport between these composers. The analysis of their relationship is supported by unpublished primary source material, including letters from Hasselmans to Renié and anecdotes from Renié's memoirs, from the Henriette Renié (1875–1956) and Françoise des Varennes (1919–2004) Papers located at the International Harp Archives at Brigham Young University. Building on the previous discussion, chapter three details the compositional influence of Hasselmans' works on those of Renié through similarities in genre, form, and compositional style. Chapter four discusses the pedagogical features of the

salon pieces that resulted from this collaboration. Although the works are recognized for their pedagogical value, harpists today rarely appreciate their worth as performance pieces. To correct this oversight, chapter five illustrates the artistic showcases that the performance and recording of these works offer to seasoned performers.

Despite their vital contribution to the harp community, scholars have too frequently ignored Hasselmans and Renié. This document seeks to encourage further biographical research and to inspire performance and recording of their works.

## DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my loving and generous parents, Tommy and Ann Crocker, and to my best friend and sister, Jeanna Crocker. Each has provided me with untold encouragement to pursue my passions and interests in every stage of my life and career. This project would not have been possible without their invaluable emotional and financial support and advice.

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I would like to thank David Day and the entire staff of the International Harp Archives at Brigham Young University for all of their help in my research of the Henriette Renié collection and for being kind enough to grant me permission to use images from the collection in my document. I am also grateful to Elaine Smyth and the staff of the Hill Memorial Library at Louisiana State University for their assistance in my research of the Louis Hasselmans Papers and for granting me permission to take photographs of the collection for my personal research. I would also like to thank Alphonse Leduc for granting me permission to use musical examples from the works of Alphonse Hasselmans and Henriette Renié, and I express my appreciation to Dr. Donald Fader for his review of my translations of letters from the Renié collection.

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## PREFACE

The Henriette Renié (1875–1956) and Françoise des Varennes (1919–2004) Papers are housed at the International Harp Archives located in the Harold B. Lee Library of Brigham Young University.<sup>1</sup> In 2002, the collection was donated by Renié’s godchild, Françoise des Varennes, who wrote a biographical tribute entitled *Henriette Renié, harpe vivante* in the 1980s. The collection contains a great quantity of materials des Varennes compiled and wrote in preparation for her book, and much of this material was never published. In addition to official documents, photos, and handwritten manuscripts, it includes thousands of letters, hundreds of original concert programs, and the majority of Renié’s spiritual diaries. Although this collection contains a vast amount of irreplaceable material, it has remained practically untouched for a number of years; and with the exception of Jaymee Haefner’s document *Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié’s Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective*, no information has been published.

Despite the abundant collection of primary source documents concerning the relationship between Renié and her harp teacher Alphonse Hasselmans, and despite their profound influence on harpists throughout the years, little scholarly attention has been paid them. No books and few articles are published about Hasselmans, and little is known about his youth outside of his musical studies at the Strasbourg Conservatory, where his father was director. Most articles address only Hasselmans’ tenure at the Paris Conservatory. Although more published information is available for Renié, these sources were written as tributes rather than as scholarly

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the Henriette Renié (1875–1956) and Françoise des Varennes (1919–2004) Papers will be referred to as the Renié Collection.

biographies; thus, information is lacking in comparison to the scope of her influence in the harp community. This document attempts to provide a better understanding of the works of, and the relationship between, Renié and her professor Hasselmans to show the importance of their combined contribution to the harp community, especially through their foundation of the French school of harp.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND*

The *belle époque* marks not only a period of prosperity in France, where Paris was the epicenter for artistic and scientific innovation, but also a time wrought with political and religious controversy.<sup>2</sup> Although gender roles in this period were still rooted in the nineteenth-century paradigm of men in leadership roles and women tending the house and children, some brave women began to break the barrier separating these spheres to pursue careers of their own.<sup>3</sup> Salons of the *belle époque* remained a purview for women and a popular venue for the exchange of thoughts and the introduction of new artwork, literature, and music; the harp played a central role in these gatherings.<sup>4</sup> The following survey of the political, religious, and cultural milieu of turn-of-the-century France provides a context for examining the importance of the salon character pieces for harp composed by Alphonse Hasselmans and Henriette Renié.

The political and religious climate in France by the end of the nineteenth century had been shaped by a constantly evolving series of governments, set into motion by the French Revolution beginning in 1789. By 1871, France established its Third Republic, having

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<sup>2</sup> Eugen Weber, *France, Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Hélène Laplace-Claverie, "Being a Dancer in 1900: Sign of Alienation or Quest for Autonomy?" chap. 7 in *A "Belle Epoque"? Women in French Society and Culture, 1890-1914*, ed. by Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 153. See also: Françoise des Varennes, *Henriette Renié: Living Harp*, 2d. ed., trans. Susann McDonald (Bloomington, IN: Music Works—Harp Editions, 1990), 58, 61.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Joachim Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by Mark Palkovic (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 4.

transitioned through the two previous republics, the two empires of Napoleon I and Napoleon III, and a period of constant turmoil oscillating between revolutions and the monarchies of Louis XVIII and Charles X.<sup>5</sup> Political uncertainty characterized the Third Republic, in part because of this contentious past. Fearful that the Republic could find itself under threat at any moment, Republican leaders sought to stifle all opposition.

Although hopes of reinstating the monarchy had dissolved by the 1880s, the Third Republic continued to be defined by political factionalism. The people of France were staunchly divided over the type of government they preferred and the role that government should play. Moreover, active Royalists and Authoritarians vied with Republicans for power within the government.<sup>6</sup> Scholar Jane Fulcher parallels the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Enlightenment ideals prospered but were not universally accepted, with the late nineteenth contention concerning models of government and the relation between Church and State.<sup>7</sup>

The constant arguments over the balance of power between Church and State marred Republican politics. Beginning in 1879, the government began passing laws aimed at weakening the position of the Catholic Church. Republicans considered the Church a political threat because of its affiliation with Royalists and nobility who supported class hierarchy. In a period of only a few years, priests were released from administrative committees of hospitals, chaplains were removed from the army, and most importantly, the Catholic Church lost control of public schools. Fearing that propaganda of anti-Republicanism would permeate the schools if they continued to be run by the Church, the government took control of all educational institutions,

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1996), 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 1-2.

Royalists were those in support of a monarchy. Authoritarians, like Napoleonists, were in support of a dictatorship.

<sup>7</sup> Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics & Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

and religious instruction in laic schools was forbidden.<sup>8</sup> Then on December 9, 1905, in the midst of the political turmoil exacerbated by the Dreyfus Affair, the government passed a law separating Church and State, forever weakening the role of the Catholic Church in politics.<sup>9</sup> This law also intensified discrimination against devout Catholics within educational organizations and within the military.<sup>10</sup>

Born in Belgium and not a French citizen until the early twentieth century, Alphonse Hasselmans avoided the political and religious contests that defined much of Henriette Renié's life. A devout Catholic, Renié sacrificed many of her personal interests to her ardent and outspoken religious beliefs.<sup>11</sup> In 1898, Renié's spirituality reached a new height as she began attending mass and writing spiritual diary entries daily, a practice she would maintain until her death in 1956.<sup>12</sup> Renié was not only a devout Catholic, she was also a committed Royalist.<sup>13</sup> Candid about her beliefs and always sporting a gold cross around her neck, Renié proudly listed her religious and political affiliation as "Catholique 'droite' royaliste!" ("Catholic 'right wing' royalist!") in an illustrated *Who's Who in Music* questionnaire form from 1949 (Figure 1.1).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 17-18, 71.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 78. See also: Maurice Larkin, *Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1974), 138-41.

For more information about the Dreyfus Affair, please refer to Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 51-59.

The law separating Church and State abrogated Napoleon's 1801 Concordat. Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 64-65.

The *affaire des fiches* was a political scandal in France during 1904-1905. The anticlerical War Minister under Emile Combes, General Louis André, was determining promotions based on religious behavior. Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 64-65.

<sup>11</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 74.

<sup>12</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 50. See also: Odette de Montesquiou, *The Legend of Henriette Renié (Henriette Renié et la harpe)*, ed. Jaymee Haefner, trans. Robert Kilpatrick (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2006), 12.

These spiritual diaries, or meditations, are preserved at the International Harp Archives located at Brigham Young University.

<sup>13</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Who's Who in Music* questionnaire, [1949-50], Box 22, Folder 7, Henriette Renié (1875-1956) and Françoise des Varennes Papers, Music Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. Image used by permission of the International Harp Archives.



Figure 1.1 *Who's Who in Music* questionnaire form (1949-1950)

WHO'S WHO IN MUSIC  
545 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK CITY 17, N.Y., U.S.A.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BIOGRAPHEES

Full name: RENIE Gabrielle Henriette Marie Renié

Principal profession(s) or specialization: Artiste, Musicienne, Pianiste, Compositrice, Professeure  
(e.g., symphony orchestra conductor, grade school music teacher, research musician, dance soloist, publisher, orchestra for movies, disc jockey, hymnologist, etc. See prospectus folder for suggested categories.)

Performing medium (what voice and/or instrument):  
Current specific employment or activities:

Birth date: 18 septembre 1875 Birth place: Paris

Father's full name: Jean-Benoit Renié Mother's full maiden name: Gabrielle Marie Morel

Color of your eyes: noir Color of hair: noir et gris Weight: Height:

Any other members of your family who have made or are making music careers: pas de parents

Full name of wife or husband with exact date of marriage: pas de

Names and years of birth of children:

Chronological history of your institutional education, with dates and degrees: Conservatoire de Paris: 12 ans de harpe, 1891-1901. École de Musique de la Cour de France à Paris: 1891-1901.

Chronological history of private music study, with teacher names, dates, and places: de 1891 à 1901, à Paris, chez M. de Bériot, professeur de harpe. De 1901 à 1905, à Paris, chez M. de Bériot, professeur de harpe. De 1905 à 1911, à Paris, chez M. de Bériot, professeur de harpe.

Dates and places of debuts or important appearances or works: 1891, à Paris, au Conservatoire de Paris. 1901, à Paris, au Conservatoire de Paris. 1911, à Paris, au Conservatoire de Paris.

Chronological history of career or employment: 1891, à Paris, au Conservatoire de Paris. 1901, à Paris, au Conservatoire de Paris. 1911, à Paris, au Conservatoire de Paris.

Military record: pas de

Religious and political affiliation: Catholique, "droite", royaliste.

Recipient of any distinguishing honors or awards: Prix de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts, 1911. Prix de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts, 1911.

Name and exact address of your manager or agent, if any: pas de

Titles of any compositions or writings, with publishers and dates of publication: pas de

Residence address: 55 rue de Valenciennes, Paris 10.

Business, studio, or office address: pas de

Military record: pas de que la harpe a toujours la place? instrument écrit - F.

Religious and political affiliation: Catholique "droite" royaliste.

These forthright beliefs eventually began to affect Renié's career negatively. In 1911, she applied for the harp professor position at the Paris Conservatory at Hasselmans' request when he decided to leave his teaching post due to illness. Yet, despite support from numerous members of the faculty, the government denied her the position because she was officially labeled "Catholic and reactionary" by the Republic's administration.<sup>15</sup> Ten years later, this same dossier prevented her from being awarded the Legion of Honor.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, political and religious discrimination was not the only injustice Renié faced during her lifetime, as gender stereotypes also greatly affected her career as a professional musician.

Nineteenth-century gender ideology dictated that respectable women stay home while men actively engaged in public life. Fame and success were considered inappropriate for women

<sup>15</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 80, 93. See also: Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," (D.M. document, Indiana University, 2007), 10.

<sup>16</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 93.

Both of these events will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

in society, and a career or position in the arts was also unacceptable.<sup>17</sup> Fortunately, Renié's exceptional talent enabled her to overcome most of these obstacles in spite of her difficulties with the government. As des Varennes testified:

But Henriette's incontestable musicianship immediately placed her beyond any problems of discrimination. She had become such an imposing figure that even at the age of twenty-five, it overshadowed the fact that she was a woman.<sup>18</sup>

Female harp students were not unusual at the Paris Conservatory, but a female enrolled in composition and harmony classes was. That Renié was admitted a year early to these classes by special exception further distinguished her among her colleagues.<sup>19</sup> Only two well-known female composers in France, Clara Holmes and Cécile Chaminade, had succeeded in overcoming gender barriers; the limited participation of women in these fields made Renié reluctant to show her work to anyone despite encouragement from her professors Charles Lenepveu, Théodore Dubois, and Jules Massenet.<sup>20</sup> Yet, when Renié finally gained the courage to show her work, it was so well-received by her professors and classmates that she began composing her Concerto in C Minor.<sup>21</sup> This composition proved to be a monumental success, and she was invited by Camille Chevillard to perform it in 1901 at his prestigious *Concerts Lamoureux*.<sup>22</sup> Not only did this performance mark the first time the harp was performed in public as a solo instrument with

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<sup>17</sup> Hélène Laplace-Claverie, "Being a Dancer in 1900: Sign of Alienation or Quest for Autonomy?" 153.

<sup>18</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 61.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 61. See also: Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1982), 206.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

In the late nineteenth century, the *Concerts Lamoureux* became increasingly popular, eventually attaining audiences of two or three thousand for their great Sunday concerts which occurred in twenty-four week seasons. Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," 39.

orchestra, it was also astonishing that a piece composed by a woman was performed at all.

Renié's talents enabled her to break with the gender conventions of her time.<sup>23</sup>

Yet Renié could not escape all of the restraints placed on women. In 1890, at the young age of fourteen, Renié decided to sacrifice the prospect of marriage for her career in music.

Although taken with her brother's friend Maurice, Renié realized his career in the military would eventually prevent her from pursuing the harp.<sup>24</sup> In her *Souvenirs*, she remembered the night she made the decision to reject marriage: "He is an officer. I am an artist. He will spend his life moving from garrison to garrison. I cannot share his life unless I give up my career, my art."<sup>25</sup>

Although women in this era did not typically marry until their mid-twenties, Renié knew at this early age that considering marriage would mean the loss of her career. Although her performances were generally received with acclaim, not everyone approved of her fame. Women achieving success in the public eye was considered indecorous; after a concert, she was once asked if it was embarrassing to see her name on a poster.<sup>26</sup> As was customary, Renié was never allowed to go to a concert, lecture, or lesson without being accompanied by her governess, even to the lessons she was teaching.<sup>27</sup> Despite these challenges, Renié managed to overcome much of the discrimination that women faced and paved a path for future female artists and musicians.

### *FRENCH SALONS AND THE ROLE OF THE HARP*

Despite political uncertainty and religious dissent, Paris thrived during the *belle époque*. The 1889 World's Fair and the defeat of Boulanger ushered in a period of peace and prosperity. This new affluence not only allowed the educational, scientific, and medical institutions to

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>25</sup> Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 46.

<sup>26</sup> Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 43.

<sup>27</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 41.

emerge as European leaders, but also enabled the arts to flourish.<sup>28</sup> The visual arts were marked by the continued success of Post-Impressionists like Paul Gauguin while also making room for budding artists such as Fauve Henri Matisse and Primitivist Henri Rousseau.<sup>29</sup> Stemming from the earlier nineteenth-century interest in anything considered exotic, artists continued to draw on foreign influences and produced works with oriental elements. The well-recognized *Art Nouveau* style associated with architect Hector Guimard emerged during this era, as well as works by Symbolist poets Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine and Realist and Naturalist authors Guy de Maupassant and Émile Zola.<sup>30</sup>

Influenced by other artistic disciplines, music reflected the various movements in literature and the visual arts; particularly notable are the Impressionist and Symbolist works of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. Society's obsession with entertainment and the popularity of cabarets and music halls fueled the growth of genres such as operetta and dance music, which greatly influenced composers such as Eric Satie. Other notable composers who drew from these inspirations were Camille Saint-Saëns and his student and friend Gabriel Fauré.<sup>31</sup> The music of the *belle époque* was also largely characterized by program music for the salon. Small-scale descriptive pieces, as well as large-scale programmatic works for orchestra, remained popular from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Unlike program music based on a poem or legend and meant to tell a story, descriptive character pieces carried titles or nicknames that suggested an image or evoked a certain mood. Some of the most famous of these pieces were found in piano repertory; examples include the collections of preludes by Chopin

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Gildea, *France, 1870-1914*, 19-23; Charles Rearick, *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque: Entertainment & Festivity in Turn of the Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 120-121.

<sup>29</sup> Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: the Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I* (Salem, New Hampshire: Ayer Company, Publishers, Inc., 1969), 45ff.

<sup>30</sup> Ruth E. Iskin, "Popularising New Women in Belle Epoque Advertising Posters," chap. 7 in *A "Belle Epoque"?: Women in French Society and Culture, 1890-1914*, ed. by Diana Holmes and Carrie Tarr (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 98-110. See also: Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years*, 187ff and Weber, *France, Fin de Siècle*, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Rearick, *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque*, 91, 95. See also: Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years*, 113-114.

and Debussy and many works by Liszt.<sup>32</sup> Just as these salon works greatly impacted the piano repertory, the descriptive miniatures of Alphonse Hasselmans and Henriette Renié made their impression on the early twentieth-century harp repertory.

Although originating in Italy, salons grew rapidly in popularity in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Intended as a venue for participants to expand their knowledge, especially of literature and the arts, salons maintained their prevalence throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> In addition to discussion of literature or the arts, one of the main components of these gatherings was the performance of music. Indeed, many composers began to write descriptive music expressly with this intimate setting in mind. The featured performers were often young ladies attempting to increase their chance of marriage, and the harp became the preferred instrument of these women.<sup>34</sup>

After the development of the single-action pedal harp by the German luthier Jacob Hochbrucker (1673-1763) in 1720, harp manufacturers in Paris gradually began to perfect the instrument, and in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the harp was quickly adopted as a favorite instrument of Parisian salons.<sup>35</sup> Its popularity in the French capital also grew rapidly after 1770, as it was the favorite instrument of the Dauphine Marie Antoinette.<sup>36</sup>

This new harp was greatly admired as the focal point of aristocratic salons, and the harp quickly became the favorite instrument of the aristocratic salons. Virtuosos, teachers, and luthiers were active in these, and the harp quickly became the favorite instrument of the female nobility served by these musicians.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 384-385.

<sup>33</sup> Steven Kale, *French Salon: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the revolution of 1848* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 14.

<sup>35</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), 134. See also: Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 5.

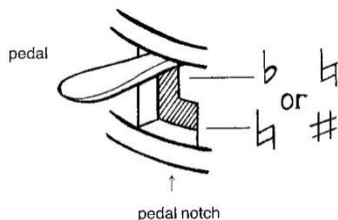
<sup>37</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 4.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the double-action pedal harp gradually replaced the single-action pedal harp, and although the newly developed upright piano became a ubiquitous instrument in the nineteenth-century salon, the harp maintained its dominance.

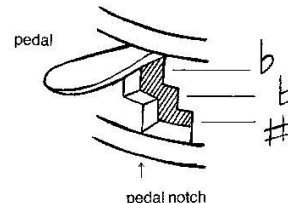
Harp compositions underwent a radical style change with the advent of the double-action harp. The tension on the single-action harp was loose, making highly ornamented piano music easily adaptable to the harp, but it was still limited tonally by the number of keys in which it could play.<sup>38</sup> The single-action pedal harp had seven pedals, one for each note in the diatonic scale, with two notches for each pedal (Figure 1.2). Tuned to the key of E-flat, when all pedals were in the uppermost notch, the instrument could be played in eight major and five minor keys.<sup>39</sup> Although the Érard double-action harp also had seven pedals, there were three notches for each pedal, enabling the harp to play in all major and minor keys (Figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.2**

**Single-action harp pedal<sup>40</sup>**



**Double-action harp pedal<sup>41</sup>**



Harp scholar Hans Joachim Zingel describes the compositional stylistic changes brought about by the new advantages of the double-action pedal harp:

The double-action pedal harp provided new tonal potential [. . .] The tone was more consistent in the high and low registers, and the sound spectrum was richer than that of the old harps. [. . .] Idiomatic writing for the harp became a prominent feature of many musical works. Harp compositions emphasized tone color over thematic material, and, for

<sup>38</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 127.

<sup>40</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 128.

This double-action mechanism is still used on harps today.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

the first time, certain musical effects could be intentionally introduced. The conventional close interval figuration of the old school, with its trills and Alberti bass, was abandoned in favor of a broader, more drawn-out playing style that used arpeggiated chords.<sup>42</sup>

This new compositional style marked a separation of the harp from the piano, since the two were often considered interchangeable during the previous century, and the composers of salon works for the harp repertoire sought to exploit the special nature of the instrument.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of descriptive salon miniatures for harp, indeed almost all of the repertoire for harp in the nineteenth century, was written by virtuoso harpists because many composers and musicians considered the pedal harp, whether single-action or double-action, an inferior instrument. Fortunately, harpists composing for their own instrument produced an extensive repertoire of idiomatic and virtuosic pieces. Zingel also describes this new style of salon work for the harp:

[. . .] the development of smaller, more-intimate forms that often corresponded to lyric piano pieces. These character pieces had titles such as *Nocturne*, *Abenlied*, *Elegy*, *Prelude*, *Lullaby*, *Reverie*, and *Dance*. They appeared as independent and separate works in a sparse, practical, and distinctive style. [. . .] The older, stricter forms, such as the Sonata and the Suite, moved completely into the background. Since the composers were mainly active as harpists and were musicians of some position and status, they were exceptionally well prepared to write for the harp.<sup>44</sup>

The harp fit this descriptive style of composition exceptionally well, and virtuoso harpist Elias Parish-Alvars once referred to the harp as an *instrument de la poesie*.<sup>45</sup>

Hasselmans' and Renié's salon character pieces serve as prime examples of this type of composition. Works such as Hasselmans' *Nocturne* and *Élegie* and Renié's *Rêverie* and *Petite Valse* fit directly into the idiom of salon harp music described above. Not only did their works

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<sup>42</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 26

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>45</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 39.

Elias Parish-Alvars (1808-1849) was an English virtuoso harpist and composer. His harp playing was admired by famous composers such as Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt.

endeavor to express an image and mood, they also displayed the most unique aspects of the harp's sound spectrum through the use of harmonics, enharmonics, *glissandos*, and other special effects.<sup>46</sup> All of the salon works by both composers have descriptive titles which echo the obsessions of nineteenth-century artists with exoticism and nature. Brilliant effects such as the imitation of a Spanish guitar in Hasselmans' *Guitare* and depictions of water in works like Renié's *Au bord du ruisseau* ("At the Edge of a Brook") exemplify how these composers were influenced by literature and art.<sup>47</sup>

Although salon harp pieces remained popular until the early twentieth century, many scholars and harpists often dismiss the pieces for today's performers, believing them only useful for the beginning to immediate harpist; yet, their pedagogical and artistic value has never been fully examined. Informed by a discussion of the relationship between Hasselmans and Renié and the influence of his compositional style on her works, the examination of these character pieces will demonstrate their pedagogical value, and will rebut claims that these pieces are no longer valid for the professional concert harpist.

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<sup>46</sup> This new pedal mechanism also provided harpists with the means to create enharmonic doublings on adjacent strings. For example, the harpist could set the C pedal into the sharp position (to sharpen all the C strings), and the D pedal into flat (to flatten all the D strings). In this way, the harpist could play the notes C# and Db (which sound identical in pitch) on adjacent strings. This technique opened a myriad of virtuosic capabilities for the harpist, including tremolo and glissando effects and a more varied repertoire. Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," 16.

<sup>47</sup> A more thorough discussion of the turn-of-the-century style and characteristics of these composers' works will follow in chapters three and four.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HASSELMANS AND RENIÉ

The virtuoso harpist Alphonse Hasselmans and his student Henriette Renié shared a special relationship that not only greatly affected their personal lives, but also influenced their compositions. Following the brief biographical sketches of both Hasselmans and Renié that provide a context of each harpist's family life and career accomplishments, an examination of their relationship illustrates three periods marked by either admiration or turmoil. Their connection as not only a teacher and student, but also as close friends, enabled them to overcome volatile disputes. Moreover, Hasselmans' lifelong influence on Renié's personal and professional life, as well as her salon character pieces, provides a testament to their enduring friendship.

#### *BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ALPHONSE HASSELMANS*

Alphonse Jean Hasselmans was born on March 5, 1845, in Liège, Belgium.<sup>48</sup> He grew up in a musical family; his father, Joseph H. Hasselmans (1814-1902), was a harpist, violinist, composer, and conductor.<sup>49</sup> Joseph Hasselmans studied harp with Antoine Prumier in Paris and is credited with inspiring two schools of harp playing: the French school founded by his son, Alphonse Hasselmans, and the German (or Berlin) school begun by his student Karl Konstantin

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<sup>48</sup> Wenonah Milton Govea, *Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Harpists: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, Bio-Critical Sourcebooks on Musical Performance Series, ed. John Gillespie (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 121. See also: Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Hasselmans," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/>; Internet; accessed September 2, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Hasselmans," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*.

Ludwig Grimm.<sup>50</sup> Joseph Hasselmans became the director of the Strasbourg Conservatory in 1854 and served as the director of the *Ochestre philharmonie de Strasbourg* from 1855-1871, where he was succeeded by conductors Franz Stockhausen and Hans Pfitzner.<sup>51</sup> He was also involved with the Grand Theatre of Marseilles, he taught at the Marseilles Conservatory, and he was known by and corresponded with noted composers such as Richard Wagner and Hector Berlioz.<sup>52</sup>

Although Alphonse Hasselmans began studying the harp with his father, he continued his harp studies with Xavier Désargus in Brussels and Gottlieb Krüger in Stuttgart, Germany.<sup>53</sup> He also studied in Paris with Ange-Conrad Prumier and Félix Godefroid.<sup>54</sup> Beginning in 1865 in Brussels, his early career was spent as harpist with the Théâtre de la Monnaie for five years.<sup>55</sup> Then in 1871, he became the harpist for the *Bilse'sche Kapelle* formed in 1862 under Benjamin Bilse. This ensemble later separated to found the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.<sup>56</sup> Hasselmans left Bilse's ensemble in 1874 to continue his orchestral career in Paris as harpist for the

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<sup>50</sup> Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Hasselmans," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. See also: Louis Hasselmans Papers, Mss. 865, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

Although Alphonse Hasselmans is credited with the foundation of the French harp school, a question still exists as to the extent Alphonse learned these techniques from his father; this instruction would make Joseph the true founder of the technique. Yet, all that can be stated for certain is that Alphonse was inspired by his father.

Ludwig Grimm (1820-1882) was appointed harpist to the Royal Berlin Opera in 1844 and his playing was praised by Franz Liszt and Hans von Bülow. His students Rosalie Spohr, Franz Poenitz (1850-1913), Wilhelm Posse (1852-1926), and Albert Heinrich Zabel (1834-1910) championed the Berlin school of harp. Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 169; Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 46, 87.

<sup>51</sup> Louis Hasselmans Papers, Mss. 865, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University.

<sup>52</sup> Louis Hasselmans Papers, Mss. 865, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University.

<sup>53</sup> Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Hasselmans," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. See also: William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," *The American Harp Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1967): 5.

Xavier Désargus (1807- after 1848) was the son of the famous French harpist also named Xavier Désargus (ca. 1768-1832), who wrote a treaty on harp playing in 1809. The young Désargus was solo harpist at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. In 1832, he moved to Brussels as solo harpist at the Monnaie Theatre and taught at the Conservatory. In 1848, he left the music profession and returned to Paris.

Gottlieb Krüger (1824-1895) was a German harp virtuoso and the harpist for the Royal Chapel of Wurtemberg. He was a pupil of Elias Parish-Alvars. Govea, 121.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Hasselmans," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. See also: Landy Andriamboavonjy, "Henriette Renié: harpiste, compositeur, pédagogue," (Mémoire de Maître, Faculté de Lettres de Lyon II, 1990), 50.

<sup>56</sup> Landy Andriamboavonjy, "Henriette Renié: harpiste, compositeur, pédagogue," 50.

l'Orchestre du Théâtre National Lyrique, and two years later, he was offered a position with the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique.<sup>57</sup> After a series of eight successful solo concerts in Paris in 1877, he also claimed positions as harp soloist with the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts and the Paris Opéra.<sup>58</sup> Due to Hasselmans' growing fame in the French capital, the director of the Paris Conservatory, Ambroise Thomas, invited him to become the professor of harp at the Conservatory, which he accepted at the age of thirty-nine on May 1, 1884.<sup>59</sup> Initially, the harp class consisted of only two or three students, but it quickly grew under his direction.<sup>60</sup> He was professor through the directorships of Ambroise Thomas, Théodore Dubois, and Gabriel Fauré, and he also cultivated close relationships with many other famous composers and musicians at the Conservatory. He was particularly close to Gabriel Fauré, and Théodore Dubois dedicated his *Fantaisie* for harp and orchestra to him.<sup>61</sup> Hasselmans became a French citizen in 1903 and, only two years later, was awarded the Legion of Honor for his work at the Conservatory. In his last public performance with orchestra, he played Charles-Marie Widor's *Choral and Variations* and Gabriel Pierné's *Concertstück*.<sup>62</sup> He was partially paralyzed on his left side for several years due to Parkinson's disease, and his health began to fail drastically in 1911.<sup>63</sup> He died in Paris on May 19, 1912.<sup>64</sup>

Hasselmans had two children who were also gifted musicians: Marguerite (1876-1947), a talented pianist and the long-time mistress of Gabriel Fauré, and Louis (1878-1957), a skilled

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Hasselmans," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>59</sup> Govea, 121. See also: "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5.

<sup>60</sup> Landy Andriamboavonjy, "Henriette Renié: harpiste, compositeur, pédagogue," 51. See also: Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," trans. and ed. by Carl Swanson, *The American Harp Journal* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 11.

<sup>61</sup> William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5.

<sup>62</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 164.

<sup>63</sup> Govea, 122. See also: Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>64</sup> William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5.

cellist and conductor.<sup>65</sup> Many of Fauré's works are dedicated to, or were premiered by, Hasselmans' children; these include his Sonata in D Minor for Cello and Piano, op. 109, dedicated to Louis and his *Fantaisie*, op. 111, premiered by Marguerite.<sup>66</sup> Louis founded the Société des Concerts Hasselmans and became a respected conductor in France and the United States, conducting the first performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Metropolitan Opera.<sup>67</sup>

Many of Hasselmans students at the Conservatory became famous, but Henriette Renié's talent overshadowed the rest. Hasselmans recognized her exceptional gift and fostered her career. Renié quickly developed a close relationship with Hasselmans and his entire family.

### *BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HENRIETTE RENIÉ*

The only daughter born to parents with four sons, Henriette Renié was a treasure to Jean-Emile Renié and Gabrielle Mouchet Renié. Although Renié was influenced by both of her parents, she gained particular artistic inspiration from her father, who had abandoned his career in architecture after the death of his own father to pursue painting and sculpting.<sup>68</sup> To support his artistic endeavors, Jean-Emile began acting and was quite successful; during one of his theater productions, Giochino Rossini discovered him.<sup>69</sup> Impressed with his beautiful bass voice, Rossini encouraged his singing and soon he was invited to join the Paris Opéra. After gaining popularity in the arts, his distant cousin who was also artistic, Madame Mouchet, began inviting him to her soirées. At these salons, Jean-Emile met Madame Mouchet's sixteen-year-old

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., See also: Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long: A Life in French Music, 1874-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 38.

<sup>66</sup> Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long*, 38. See also: William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 37. See also: William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5.

<sup>68</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 21.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 22.

daughter, Gabrielle Marie Mouchet, and quickly fell in love with her.<sup>70</sup> Although Monsieur Mouchet was initially vehemently opposed to an engagement, Madame Mouchet eventually convinced him to approve the match; he agreed, but only on the condition that Jean-Emile leave the theater to pursue painting before they married. Jean-Emile began studying with Théodore Rousseau, and his paintings were often sold fraudulently abroad as works by his teacher. In addition to selling paintings, Jean-Emile continued to sing and tour to support his family.<sup>71</sup>

Gabrielle Henriette Marie Sophie Renié was born to the couple on September 18, 1875.<sup>72</sup> As part of Gabrielle's dowry, the couple lived with Monsieur and Madame Mouchet, so Renié was surrounded by musical and artistic talent from a young age while attending her grandmother's popular soirées.<sup>73</sup> At age five, she began piano lessons with Madame Pêtri, or as Renié referred to her, the *petit professeur de quartier*.<sup>74</sup> She advanced very rapidly on the piano, practiced over two hours each day, and often played four-hand duets with her grandmother.<sup>75</sup> It was also at the age of five that Renié first encountered Hasselmans and the harp. After this meeting, her life would ever be changed.

### *THE RELATIONSHIP: HASSELMANS AND RENIÉ*

A thorough examination of the many facets, positive and negative, of the relationship between Hasselmans and Renié will rebut the commonly held belief that Hasselmans was a cruel teacher. Divided into three periods, the relationship commenced as a supportive teacher fostering his most talented student (1880-1889). Soon after, Hasselmans began to struggle when Renié's

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<sup>70</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 22.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>72</sup> *Who's Who in Music* questionnaire, [1949–50], Box 28, Folder 6, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>73</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 23.

<sup>74</sup> Fragments from Renié's *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>75</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 26. See also: Montesquiou, *Legend of Renié*, 2,4.

success appeared to overshadow his own, resulting in several disagreements during the middle period (1890-1910). Despite many unpleasant exchanges, the admiration the two felt towards one another was revealed near the end of Hasselmans' life (1911-1912). The new interpretation of their relationship below informs the discussion of Hasselmans' influence on Renié's career and compositions that will be presented in chapters three and four.

Often referenced in tributes and articles, Renié's first meeting with Hasselmans took place when she was five years old at a concert in Nice, France. Hasselmans was performing with Renié's father at this concert, and she fell in love with the harp during Hasselmans' performance. On the train ride home, she focused intently on Hasselmans, who was sitting across from her. As described by Renié in a Swiss radio program recorded many years after this encounter, she declared to her father, "That man is going to be my harp teacher."<sup>76</sup> Often noted for his gargantuan stature, Hasselmans was amused by this comment from such a tiny girl and responded, "When you are bigger, we shall see, Mademoiselle!"<sup>77</sup> Despite Renié being "thunderstruck" by the harp at such a young age, she was not allowed to begin lessons with Hasselmans until she turned eight years old, three years after their initial encounter, because of her small size.<sup>78</sup> Renié spent every summer in Étretat with her family; the summer of 1883, her father invited Hasselmans to come and she first studied with him for six weeks that summer.<sup>79</sup> Hasselmans never accepted payment for a single harp lesson with Renié.<sup>80</sup> Practice time was then split between piano and harp, with the harp receiving a half hour of attention and the piano receiving two hours of attention. Soon Renié's love for the harp reversed this schedule, and the

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<sup>76</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 26. See also: Montesquiou, *Legend of Renié*, 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Fragments from Renié's *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 67.

harp began to dominate her practice.<sup>81</sup> In fragments from her *Souvenirs*, Renié recalls the beginnings of her harp practice:

I am not able to think without a tender recognition about my parents who spent a lot of money to rent a harp (15 francs then, 2000 at present) [. . .] It was in the workshop of the villa that Hasselmans taught me 2 times per week; alone I worked a half hour per day. Impassioned by the playing, I had the idea that I had given the first half-hours poor attitude enough. Then, I had a taste of it. I willingly went to my harp, proud to touch this mysterious instrument that my cousins and friends watched wide-eyed! Hasselmans showed that he was very content, assured my father that it was worth the money to continue. I continued to work in Paris, my solfège and my piano for two hours! And my education, I would devote no more than one half hour to the harp. Having ignored the very decided tastes of interest: 2 months after returning to Paris, it was two hours that I gave the harp and one half hour at the piano, which bored me infinitely!<sup>82</sup>

In the beginning of Renié's harp studies, Hasselmans had not yet been appointed harp professor at the Conservatoire Nationale Supérieur de Musique in Paris, but soon after, on May 1, 1884, he joined the faculty.<sup>83</sup> After his appointment, the trip from Paris to the suburb of Passy where Renié lived became unfeasible for Hasselmans, so teacher and student began to meet for lessons at the workshop on the Rue du Mail where the Érard Company's harps were built.<sup>84</sup>

Renié describes this arrangement in her *Souvenirs*:

M. Hasselmans lived opposite of the quartier of the rue Singer. I was not in good health; I believe that it was the prior winter that I continually had sporadic fevers. Shortly, my professor decided – and with my gratitude – for it is infinite! – that he would meet at the workshop half of the way to come two times a week to give me lessons at the Maison

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<sup>81</sup> Fragments from Renié's *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 27.

<sup>82</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker. Fragments from Renié's *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

“Je ne peux songer sans une tender reconnaissance à mes parents qui firent la grosse dépense de louer une harpe (15 francs d'alors, 2000 d'à présent) [. . .] C'est dans l'atelier de la villa qu' Hasselmans me faisait travailler deux fois par semaines; moi je devais travailler une demi-heure par jour. Passionnée par les jeux, j'ai idée que j'ai du donner les premières demi-heures d'assez mauvaise grâce. Puis j'y ai pris goût. J'allais volontiers à ma harpe, assez fière de toucher ce mystérieux instrument que mes cousins, amis regardaient avec des yeux écarquillés! Hasselmans se montrait fort content, Assurant à mon Père que cela valait la peine de continuer. Il fut convenu qu'ayant a travailler à Paris, mon solfège, mon piano deux heures! Et mon éducation, je ne consacrerai pas plus d'une demi-heure à la harpe. On avait omis les goûts très décidés de l'intéressée: deux mois après le rentrée à Paris, c'est deux heures que je donnais la harpe et une demi-heure au piano m'ennuyait infiniment!”

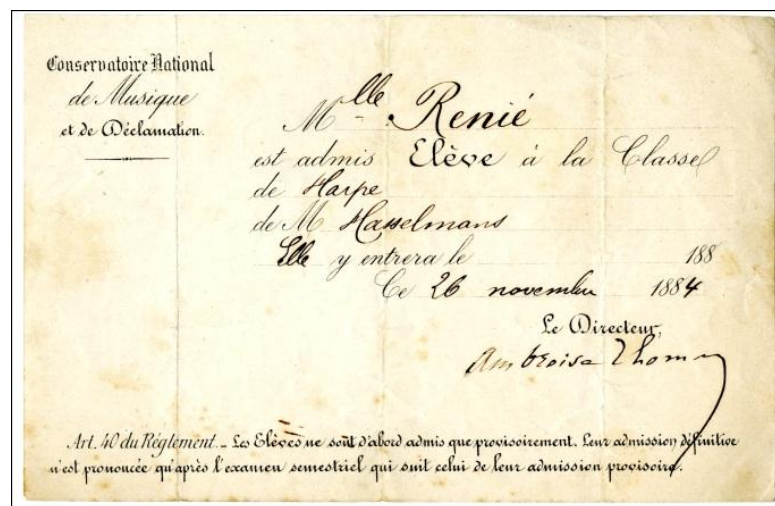
<sup>83</sup> Carl Swanson, “Hasselmans Remembered by His Students,” 10.

<sup>84</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 27.

Érard: in the room where they made and repaired the harps. It was in the middle of this room that I worked with Hasselmans.<sup>85</sup>

Taking lessons in this environment enabled Renié to see the construction of harps, and it exposed her to important figures in the field. Even more so than the piano, Renié advanced quickly on the harp and was allowed to begin auditing Hasselmans' class at the Conservatory in 1884 (Figure 2.1).<sup>86</sup>

**FIGURE 2.1 Renié's Official Entrance Certificate to the Conservatory**



At the Conservatory, Hasselmans had the reputation of being a demanding, intimidating, and, at times, cruel teacher.<sup>87</sup> In the article “Hasselmans Remembered by his Students,” S. de Chamberet recalled, “All of his students were afraid of him because he was very demanding about practice. [. . .] he was severe and intransigent.”<sup>88</sup> In affirmation, another student, Lily Laskine, admitted, “[. . .] Hasselmans inspired in me an absolute terror. He was very large, very

<sup>85</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker. Fragments from Renié's *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

“M. Hasselmans habitait à l'opposé du quartier de la rue Singer. Je n'avais pas bien forte santé; je crois que c'est l'hiver précédent que j'avais eu indéfiniment des fièvres intermittentes. Bref mon prof. decida – et ma reconnais – pour cela est infinié! – qu'il ferait à l'atelier où on moitié du chemin pour venir deux fois par semaine me donner des leçons à la Maison Érard: dans travaillait pour faire où réparer les harpes. C'était au milieu de cette pièce que j'ai travaillé avec Hasselmans.”

<sup>86</sup> Official entrance certificate to the Paris Conservatory, Box 9, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers. Image used by permission of the International Harp Archives.

<sup>87</sup> Carl Swanson, “Hasselmans Remembered by His Students,” 11.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.



robust, excessively cold and possessed a love of teasing that bordered on meanness.”<sup>89</sup> Taken out of context, these quotes cause many harpists and scholars to dismiss Hasselmans as simply cruel. Yet, despite his inflexible methodology, each student also expressed a profound respect for him. The same students who described this imposing figure also confessed that “thanks no doubt to this firmness, he obtained exceptional results and formed some excellent harpists. I think that all his students miss him, and are enormously thankful for him, myself first among them.”<sup>90</sup> Lily Laskine went even further, explaining that,

[. . .] he was an extraordinary teacher, [. . .] He had an astonishing sonority that he bequeathed to his students, a sonority at the same time full and mellow. He liked to play in lessons and class very much. He would grab the harp with a single finger, turn it towards himself and play – more for his own pleasure, I think, than for the student. Years later, I still see his hands in my mind’s eye: large hands, with a truly unique touch.<sup>91</sup>

Although severe in the classroom, Hasselmans sought opportunities for his talented students.

When Maurice Ravel came to him for a recommendation for a harpist to play his newly composed *Introduction and Allegro*, Hasselmans did not hesitate to offer his student Micheline Kahn: “I have a youngster who just got her 1<sup>st</sup> prize. I’m sure she can do justice to your piece.”<sup>92</sup> Kahn premiered Ravel’s *Introduction and Allegro*, one of the most performed pieces in the harp repertory today. Pierre Jamet, one of Hasselmans’ most famous students who also went on to become a harp professor at the Paris Conservatory, similarly exposed a kinder side of Hasselmans:

Though Hasselmans’ demeanor as teacher was upright and intransigent, he was also, in the last years of his life, relaxed and smiling. He had accepted an offer from my father (a painter) to have his portrait painted for the Exhibition of French Artists, and it was in his office at Avenue Wagram, after having taught my lesson, that he posed. There he spoke freely, abandoning his rough façade and joking with much humor. I felt great affection

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 14.

for him, and had the impression that, through these lighter moments, he was showing his confidence in my future career. This gave me enormous courage.<sup>93</sup>

These tributes reveal that although austere and cold, Hasselmans' personality was more complex than his severe classroom persona. "In all the tributes to Hasselmans by his students there is an underlying respect, awe, and what seems to be an unrequited affection that shines through despite all his coldness, intransigence, icy discipline, and heavy demands."<sup>94</sup>

Examining Hasselmans' multifaceted personality is necessary for understanding his unique relationship with Renié. Hasselmans viewed Renié differently from his other students, no doubt recognizing her enormous gift at such a young age, and he favored her in many ways. Renié recounted in her memoirs that she, like many of his other students, found Hasselmans intimidating. Yet Renié's interactions with him end in quite a different way than those of her peers because, unlike his other students, Hasselmans would apologize and explain his perceived severity towards her. One of these incidents occurred at a soirée to which Madame Mouchet had invited Hasselmans, who was a frequent performer at her salons.<sup>95</sup> Renié was asked to perform a piece on the harp, and it was received with so much success that Hasselmans urged her to play another piece. She resisted, having forgotten the other piece, either the *Sérénade* by Gounod or Schubert. Yet Hasselmans insisted, and she recalled that she "floundered about, tried to recover by beginning again, and ended pathetically by having to stop!"<sup>96</sup> Renié mustered all of her strength to remain calm after her embarrassment, and she quickly retreated to her bedroom. Renié then describes the events that took place:

Left alone, I began to cry quietly. Soon I heard footsteps, and there before me stood the towering silhouette of Monsieur Hasselmans in person! [. . .] He sat down on my bed,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>94</sup> Govea, 122-123.

<sup>95</sup> Fragments from Renié's *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 28.

<sup>96</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 28.

gave me a big hug, and tried to comfort me: ‘A little girl who wants to become an artist ought to have several pieces under her fingers. With your facility, that would be nothing. You would be able to give pleasure to others, and honor me, since I am so proud of you!’ As I adored him, that display of affection touched me to the bottom of my heart...and I worshipped him more than ever!<sup>97</sup>

Hasselmans’ response indicated a particular fondness for his student Renié, a fondness which she clearly returned. The sentiment expressed in this memory also discredits a statement made by the scholar Govea: “Renié, of all his students, seemed the least in awe of him, although in later life he broke their close relationship.”<sup>98</sup> Although their relationship would sour, at this point not only was Renié “in awe” of Hasselmans, she “worshipped” him.<sup>99</sup>

A similar situation between Hasselmans and Renié occurred in the classroom at the Conservatory. Hasselmans required his students to learn an etude by memory and a page from a piece every two days.<sup>100</sup> Renié performed the *Andante* from Naderman’s third Sonata. She recounted performing it musically save one passage which was extremely difficult to perform with her extended pedals.<sup>101</sup> She recalled thinking to herself, “Oh, well, that will get by!”<sup>102</sup> Instead, Hasselmans suddenly slammed the music shut beside her face. She was devastated, but was too proud to cry in front of her peers. At the end of class, Hasselmans signaled to her to stay behind. She remembered, “He sat down and drew me to him. ‘You must be an example for the class, because I expect more from you than the others. That is why I seem so hard to

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 28-29. See also Fragments from Renié’s *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>98</sup> Govea, 121.

<sup>99</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 28-29.

<sup>100</sup> Carl Swanson, “Hasselmans Remembered by His Students,” 10.

<sup>101</sup> Fragments from Renié’s *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

Renié had to use pedal extensions created by either her father or Hasselmans due to her extremely small size. Prior to this, she would have to jump off her chair to move the pedals.

<sup>102</sup> Fragments from Renié’s *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also translation in: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 29.

please... ”<sup>103</sup> Once again, Hasselmans demonstrated his favor for Renié and his confidence in her extraordinary talent.

When Renié began teaching her first student at the age of nine, she imitated many of her teacher’s classroom mannerisms. This first student was her brother’s friend Fernand Maignien, who she recruited by declaring to him one day that she would teach him the harp.<sup>104</sup> In emulation of her professor, she would often slam the etude book shut if Ferdinand prepared the pieces poorly, but then she would quickly invite him outside to play when the lesson was over.<sup>105</sup> In a fragment of her *Souvenirs*, Renié recalled the day Hasselmans found out that she had started teaching:

Who told Hasselmans that his very young student constituted herself a professeur? I will never know! But a certain day in July (since I was working at the harp, I did not go to Étretat with my parents) – was a Sunday where as custom M. and Mme. Hasselmans would come to spend the day at rue Singer, with their children, Marguerite and Louis (Guiguite and Loulou) [. . .]<sup>106</sup>

When he arrived Hasselmans playfully announced, “Well! It came out that you have a student! I would have liked to have heard it from you!”<sup>107</sup> Renié was embarrassed by her oversight and offered to have her student play a short piece for her “dear professor.”<sup>108</sup> She then described Hasselmans’ reaction to Fernand’s performance:

[. . .] So my Fernand played correct, but with thumbs straight and stiff!...This did not shock M. Hasselmans who had seen so much compared to me in his 50 years; he found

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Fernand Maignien went on to become the harpist for the Paris Opéra.

<sup>105</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 30.

<sup>106</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker. Fragments from Renié’s *Souvenirs* (typescript), Box 24, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.

“Qui a dit à Hasselmans que sa très jeune élève, s’était constituée professeur? Je ne l’ai jamais su! Mais un certain jour de juillet (depuis que je travaillais la harpe, je n’arrivais à Étretat qu’avec mes parents) – un Dimanche où comme de coutume M. et Mme. Hasselmans venaient passer la journée rue Singer, avec leurs enfants, Marguerite et Louis (Guiguite et Loulou).”

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

“Mais! Il paraît que tu as un élève! Je voudrais bien que tu me le fasses entendre!”

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

“Je rougis beaucoup, j’appelle Fernand, et très émue, je la fais jouer une petite chose qu’il venait d’apprendre, à mon cher professeur!”

the child well begun, complimented me, and encouraged the family of Fernand to continue to his lessons, offering to take him as an auditeur....and to be the director of his studies! I was very proud [. . .]<sup>109</sup>

This recollection reveals Renié's joy and pride when Hasselmans complimented her work as a harp instructor and demonstrates that she also sought his approval. As her memories illustrate, Renié and Hasselmans shared a unique, emotionally charged relationship; yet, not all of their interactions were serious in nature. A short but amusing anecdote titled *Tu es une mangeuse de morceaux!* found in fragments of Renié's *Souvenirs* describes Hasselmans' amusement at her natural propensity to learn pieces quickly and displays a more jocular side of their relationship:

In the meantime, I played 5 pieces from *l'Ecole melodique* of Godefroid, the serenade of Gounod arranged by Oberthür, and also a certain menuet of Godefroid, difficult enough that I learned them very quickly, that made my maître say (one says: M. in these times!) 'You are a piece eater!' – There was unfortunately a setback to this honor! When I finished a piece, I could never play it again – and I would forget it very quickly, in turn, that affected me a lot.<sup>110</sup>

Although Renié had a loving, sometimes humorous relationship with Hasselmans, she had very few friends her own age. The majority of the other students in the class at the Conservatory were twice her age, and most of her own students were also older. She met her one close childhood friend through Hasselmans, his daughter, Marguerite.<sup>111</sup> Nearly the same age, Renié and Marguerite initially became friends because Hasselmans asked Renié to teach his daughter the harp.<sup>112</sup> This delegation of responsibility again demonstrated Hasselmans'

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

"[. . .] Donc mon Fernand joua correct, mais quels pouces droits et raides!...ca ne choquait pas M. Hasselmans autant que moi depuis une cinquantaine d'années; il trouva l'enfant bien commence me complimenta et incita la famille de Fernand à le faire continuer, offrant de le prendre comme auditeur....et d'être directeur de ses études! J'étais très fière."

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

"En attendant je jouais les 5 morceaux de l'École melodique de Godefroid, le sérénade de Gounod arrange par Oberthür, et même un certain menuet de Godefroid, assez difficile que j'appris très vite, ce qui faisait dire à mon maître (on disait: M. dans ce temps-la!) "Tu es une mangeuse de morceaux!" – Il y avait malheureusement un revers à la médaille! Quand j'avais fini un morceau je ne le rejouais jamais – et je l'oubliais grande vitesse, ce qui fut cause d'un tour qui m'affecta beaucoup."

<sup>111</sup> Govea, 122.

<sup>112</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 31, 43.

enormous admiration for his pupil. Marguerite and Renié remained very devoted friends throughout their lives, sharing deeply personal spiritual experiences and supporting one another through hard times and scandal.<sup>113</sup> A brief excerpt from a letter from Marguerite to Renié displays their close friendship and the esteem in which Marguerite held Renié: “[. . .] you [Renié] had reason in all that you told me! With your sure and penetrating judgment, your transcendental idealism and your intelligence – you see the eternal Beauty and Truth above all ephemeral realities.”<sup>114</sup>

In October 1885, Renié became a regular student at the Conservatory, where she had previously audited classes. Yet shortly after she enrolled, she became ill for three months. Hasselmans was distressed by her absence, but when she returned, she worked diligently to prepare for her first examinations in 1886. She wanted to play the same piece that the adults were performing, and hoped merely for an honorable mention.<sup>115</sup> Before the competition began, her father asked what she would do if she won a second prize. Only ten years old, Renié thought that this was a ridiculous question and replied in jest, “I’ll snap my fingers at the public.”<sup>116</sup> Although Hasselmans approved of her performance, he was disappointed by her sight-reading of the piece by Delibes. While waiting on the announcement of the prize winners, he teased, much to Renié’s chagrin, “Even if you don’t get a prize in harp performance, you will certainly get one for improvisation!”<sup>117</sup> Soon after, her name was announced as a second prize winner in harp performance; the other second prize winner was Samuel Meerloo, who was twenty-five years

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<sup>113</sup> Govea, 122.

Marguerite Hasselmans faced much scrutiny because of her affair with Gabriel Fauré, who was twice her age.

<sup>114</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker. Letter from Marguerite Hasselmans to Renié [n.d.], Box 27, Folder 1B, Renié and Varennes Papers. Please see Appendix C for original letter, used by permission of the International Harp Archives.

“[. . .] vous avez raison en tout ce que vous me dites! Avec votre jugement sûr et pénétrant, votre idéalisme transcendant et votre intelligence – qui voit le Beau et le Vrai éternels au dessus des réalités éphémères.”

<sup>115</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 31.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

At this time in France, snapping your fingers was akin to sticking out your tongue or thumbing your nose.

<sup>117</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 32.

old. As promised to her father, Renié went on stage snapping her fingers! Later, it was learned that Renié had initially been voted as the first prize winner, but Ambroise Thomas, the director of the Conservatory, did not believe she should win at such an early age and after only two and half years of instruction.<sup>118</sup>

Fortunately, Renié did not have to wait long for her victory; a year later in July 1887, Renié completed her second year of examinations and unanimously won the *Premier Prix* playing the Oberthür *Concertino*.<sup>119</sup> The audience was wild with excitement, and the reaction of the crowd is often compared only second to Sarasate's performance on violin.<sup>120</sup> This year, Samuel Meerloo had lost to Renié, who was only eleven years old.<sup>121</sup> After winning the *Premier Prix*, Renié could no longer take lessons, so Hasselmans guided her by taking her on a tour in October 1887. On this tour, she played for Hasselmans' former student Marie-Henriette, Queen of Belgium; she also played for the deposed Emperor of Brazil and Princess Mathilde, cousin of Napoleon III.<sup>122</sup> Renié was never allowed to receive payment for these performances, but she was given gifts such as jewelry in recognition of her efforts. Charles Gounod also requested to hear Renié play that autumn, and she took her harp to his house where he could listen more comfortably in his old age. She was taken with Gounod, and sat down confidently and started playing Zabel's fantasy on Gounod's own *Faust*! Despite only praise from Gounod, years later, she recalled being very embarrassed by her musical selection.<sup>123</sup> Although she was offered many

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<sup>118</sup> After winning the *Premier Prix*, the winner is considered a professional and is no longer required to take lessons. If Renié had won, she would have only taken lessons for two and half years before becoming a professional.

<sup>119</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 32-34.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>121</sup> Despite his loss, Meerloo had already been assigned as a substitute in the Brussels Opera, and became professor at the Brussels Conservatory two months after this competition.

<sup>122</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 38-39.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

contracts from international companies presenting phenomena to the public, her father refused all offers insisting that his daughter was not “a trained monkey.”<sup>124</sup>

As Renié’s performance career reached new heights, she also discovered a love for teaching and composing. In addition to her tour, the autumn of 1887 marked the beginning of Renié’s professional teaching career as students began to seek her out following her *Premier Prix*.<sup>125</sup> One day while Renié was outside playing, a woman named Madame Delorme appeared in the garden and requested that she teach her the harp. Only twelve years old at the time, Renié ran inside to ask her mother’s permission.<sup>126</sup> A year later, in the fall of 1888 when Renié had just turned thirteen, she gained special admittance, one year early, to the composition and harmony classes at the Conservatory.<sup>127</sup> She was the only female in a class with eighteen men.<sup>128</sup> In these classes, Charles Lenepveu, Théodore Dubois, and Jules Massenet all urged her to compose, but she remained reluctant.<sup>129</sup> She finally overcame her fear, and her first composition, *Andante Religioso* for harp and violin, was praised.<sup>130</sup> Renié went on to receive the *Prix d’Harmonie* in 1891 and the *Prix de Countrepoint, Fugue, and Composition* in 1896.<sup>131</sup>

Although Hasselmans’ and Renié’s relationship began as a teacher fostering his most talented student, their rapport took a sudden decline because of an unintentional mistake involving Renié’s first public performance, a solo recital in Paris in 1890. This altercation

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>126</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 38.

<sup>127</sup> Normally, one was required be fourteen to enter these classes.

<sup>128</sup> Henriette Renié, “Recollections of a Harpist,” trans. by Renée Blyth, *The American Harp Journal* 1, no. 4 (Fall 1968): 18.

<sup>129</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 41.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> *Who’s Who in Music* questionnaire, [1949–50], Box 22, Folder 7, Renié and Varennes Papers.



initiated a series of deceptions by Hasselmans, resulting in a tumultuous relationship from 1890-1910. In her memoirs, Renié recounted their first disagreement in 1890:<sup>132</sup>

[. . .] this year I again performed with an orchestra, and played the Reinecke Concerto written for harp (Reinecke was the director of the Berlin Conservatory), and the *Danse des Fées* by Parish-Alvars for whom the father of my teacher [Alphonse Hasselmans], Joseph Hasselmans, had written the small orchestral accompaniment. The concert was the cause of my first fight with Hasselmans. Then, at one of our meetings he asked me to remove a Godefroide piece to replace it with one of his own, which I did with pleasure. About eight days before my concert, I was giving a lesson to his daughter Marguerite (he had asked me to teach her harp and harmony) [. . .] He had a bit of a formal and solemn air, not his usual demeanor [. . .]<sup>133</sup>

Hasselmans was angry because she had failed to print his name on her concert posters as the orchestra conductor, which was not an intentional slight but the inadvertent mistake of an inexperienced performer unfamiliar with protocol. Hasselmans further explained his anger: “You know very well the orchestration of the *Danse de Fées* is by my father. It would give the poor man pleasure to see his name. Did you not think of this!”<sup>134</sup> Renié responded coldly, “I will have the posters reprinted if you want.”<sup>135</sup> Hasselmans delivered a final blow: “Finally, there is a question a lot less important (It was evidently the principle) you asked Cazella to play the violoncello, but this was an opportune time for Louis to play with an orchestra under my direction [Louis was Hasselmans’ son].”<sup>136</sup> Renié responded that Louis still had only a second

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<sup>132</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 42.

<sup>133</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker. *1er brouille avec Hasselmans* (typescript), Box 3, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

“Cette année encore je le donnais avec orchestra, et devais y jouer un Concerto de Reineck écrit pour harpe (Reineck était le directeur du Conservatoire de Berlin), et ‘La Danse des Fées’ par Parish Alvars pour laquelle le vieux père de mon Maître, Joseph Hasselmans, avait fait un petit accompagnement d’orchestre. Ce concert fut la cause de ma première brouille avec Hasselmans. D’abord, à l’une de nos entrevues, il m’a demandé d’enlever un morceau de Godefroide pour mettre un des siens, ce que j’ai fait avec plaisir. Huit jours environ avant mon concert, j’étais en train de donner une leçon à sa fille Marguerite, (il m’avait demandé de lui faire travailler la harpe et l’harmonie) [. . .] Il avait l’air peu gourmet, et pas sa figure habituelle [. . .]”

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

“Tu sais très bien que l’orchestration de la Danse des Fées est de mon père, cela aurait fait plaisir à ce pauvre homme de se voir mentionné. Tu n’y as même pas pensé!”

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

“On pourra refaire les programmes, si vous voulez.”

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

prize from the Conservatory, and she remembered Hasselmans saying that no one should play in public without a first prize: “You say this to your own students!”<sup>137</sup> Hasselmans claimed that this case was different. She returned to her lesson with Marguerite upset and shaken. When she arrived home, she recounted the incident to her parents. They decided to have the programs and posters reprinted, but she refused to replace Cazella with Louis. She apologized profusely and reprinted the posters with her own money. Scarred by these events, Renié never asked Hasselmans to conduct one of her concerts again.<sup>138</sup>

In 1903, another incident that widened the separation between Renié and Hasselmans was the premiere of Gabriel Pierné’s *Concertstück*, dedicated to Hasselmans and intended for him to premiere at Colonne.<sup>139</sup> Yet in his performance, Pierné found him “so nervous that he asked Hasselmans to recommend one of his students.”<sup>140</sup> Although Hasselmans recommended Ada Sassoli, Pierné asked Renié to perform instead.<sup>141</sup> A month later, Renié also performed the *Concertstück* with *Concerts Lamoureux* under Camille Chevillard.<sup>142</sup> Renié’s performances undoubtedly made Hasselmans jealous because the piece was originally written for him, and Renié was upset that he did not recommend her for the part instead of Ada Sassoli.<sup>143</sup> Yet, many

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“Enfin, c’est une question beaucoup moins importante (c’était évidemment la principale) tu as demandé à Cazella de venir jouer du violon celle, alors que cela eut été une occasion pour Louis de jouer avec orchestra sous ma direction. (Louis était son fils).”

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

“Il disait cela pour ses élèves!”

<sup>138</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker. All quotes in the paragraph come from: *1er brouille avec Hasselmans* (typescript), Box 3, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>139</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 66.

Founded in 1873 by Édouard Colonne, the Colonne Orchestra is a French symphony orchestra still in operation today. The Concerts Colonne placed particular emphasis on the contemporary music of the time, and premiered works by composers such as Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Fauré, and countless others.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 62, 67. See also: Legend 16

<sup>142</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 63.

Please refer to the footnote in chapter one for more information about this concert series.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 67.

of his students and audience members still admired Hasselmans' original performance of the piece. His student Micheline Kahn reminisced:

I heard Hasselmans in his last concerts. It was admirable! He was really the greatest of harpists, and I hold an unforgettable memory. I heard him also in the Choral and Variations of Widor and also the première of the Pierné Concertstück. After that, he restricted himself to teaching.<sup>144</sup>

These circumstances represent a clear misunderstanding between Hasselmans and Renié that marred their relationship for several years. Hasselmans felt that he had been surpassed by his favorite student, and Renié began to feel that she was being denied the support from her professor that she received as a young student.

That same year, Renié struggled with Hasselmans' refusal to recommend any professional students to her.<sup>145</sup> The students who he did recommend were ladies like the Baronne de Rochetaillée's daughter who viewed harp performance as a way to become more marriageable.<sup>146</sup> The teacher that at one time did all that he could to promote his prize student now seemed to be withholding opportunities from her. Hasselmans' decision to keep serious students away was in part out of concern for his own career; he often lost students to Renié because of her more approachable personality. One of his prize students, Lily Laskine, wrote of Hasselmans:

Unfortunately, because of his personality, his lack of human warmth, many of his first prize students did not continue to work with him. Most went to Renié, who had a great reputation as a teacher. Her collection of Bach preludes, dedicated to her students, all [former] first prize-winners [who had studied with Hasselmans], testifies to that.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 14.

<sup>145</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 99.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>147</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11.

Sensitive to his jealousy and determined to avoid offending him, Renié tried to hide the serious pupils who did seek her out; yet successful students like Marcel Grandjany soon became too widely recognized to remain hidden.<sup>148</sup>

In 1903, Renié presented her student, the eleven-year-old Grandjany, to the Conservatory. Out of spite, Hasselmans only allowed Grandjany into the Conservatory as an auditor the first year, but then had to accept him the next year.<sup>149</sup> Hasselmans was especially cruel to Grandjany his entire time at the Conservatory; for example, he would often cross through fingerings Grandjany learned from Renié while muttering a rude remark about her.<sup>150</sup> Grandjany and his cousin Juliette Georges related all of Hasselmans' harsh remarks to Renié.<sup>151</sup> Micheline Kahn, a fellow student at the Conservatory, remembered Hasselmans' malice towards Grandjany:

Hasselmans cut an imposing figure, and at this time Grandjany, who was still a child, was never able to answer, 'Oui, Maître.' One heard only a muffled grunt, and Hasselmans was exasperated by this unintelligible sound and timidity.<sup>152</sup>

Later, Renié's student Marie-Amélie Regnier was destined to face the same harsh treatment by Hasselmans at the Conservatory.<sup>153</sup>

One of the most damaging events of these tumultuous years involved Hasselmans' distribution of untitled and anonymous fragments of Renié's recently composed and still unpublished work *Légende* to his Conservatory class.<sup>154</sup> The gravity of this offense lies in the fact that the groundbreaking techniques for harp found in this work could have been claimed by

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<sup>148</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 70.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 71 and Govea, 122 and Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>151</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 71.

<sup>152</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11.

<sup>153</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 79., Box 1, Folder 1

Marie-Amélie Regnier was the mother of Renié's goddaughter, Françoise des Varennes.

<sup>154</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 71.

anyone. Hasselmans' explanation was filled with disdain, "I would present nothing of yours in competition."<sup>155</sup> Their exchange proceeded as follows:

Renié: "You will present nothing of mine!"

Hasselmans: "When you are an old professor, you will see how sad it is to be treated by one of your students the way you treat me. I would never have believed that our relationship would end like this."

Renié: "It has not ended, and you would be wrong, Maître, to stop treating me like a friend, Because I defend *everything* that concerns you!"<sup>156</sup>

Although this dispute did widen the rift between Hasselmans and Renié, their relationship did not ultimately end because it.

A few years later, Hasselmans approached Renié after her concert on March 19, 1911. Conducted by Hasselmans' son, Louis, she performed Théodore Dubois' *Fantaisie* for harp and orchestra.<sup>157</sup> Hasselmans came to Renié with tears in his eyes and said, "Ah, in the *Andante* you had such thumbs! I was so moved! But I want to tell you something very serious: I am going to leave my class at the Conservatoire."<sup>158</sup> By this time, Hasselmans had become partially paralyzed, and in 1911 his health began to fail drastically.<sup>159</sup> Despite his deteriorating health, Renié disputed Hasselmans' announcement. But the teacher persisted, "Yes, yes, I know what I'm saying! I am too exhausted, and I *can demonstrate no longer*. You are the only one who can continue my work."<sup>160</sup> After many years of turmoil, Hasselmans' positive opinion of Renié remained intact. Renié understood female professors could not teach advanced instrumental

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 71.

Renié was referring to the scandal that Hasselmans' daughter, Marguerite, was having an affair with Gabriel Fauré, which was in fact true.

<sup>157</sup> Concert Program, Box 29, Folder 3B, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also: Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>158</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 79.

Hasselmans was referring to Renié's ability to bring out the melody line, commonly placed in the thumb in harp music.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. See also: Govea, 122. and Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>160</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 79.

classes at the Conservatory.<sup>161</sup> Aware of this fact, but unconcerned, Hasselmans responded, “What does it matter! There is no one but you! You can’t refuse. Besides, I have spoken to Fauré.”<sup>162</sup> Renié did not refuse. She began meeting with the class twice a week with Hasselmans until the examinations took place.<sup>163</sup> Over the course of the next year, Renié and Hasselmans exchanged numerous letters that re-established their close friendship. Only a few months before Hasselmans’ death, he wrote to Renié:

Paris, January 26, 1912

Understood for the 7<sup>th</sup> of February my dear Henriette, I will go with the most great pleasure. Very beautiful program! Revive yourself and be amazing as always.

Your old friend,  
Alphonse Hasselmans

Affectionate thoughts to your dear mother and to all of your loved ones.<sup>164</sup>

One of the last moments Hasselmans and Renié shared was on the day of the examinations. Hasselmans was tired and asked her to tune the harps for him; Renié recalled that he watched her “with a tenderness that she would never forget.”<sup>165</sup>

Although Renié had agreed to succeed Hasselmans and had many other supporters at the Conservatory, her appointment was contingent upon the approval of the government. The Conservatory was a government institution, and all appointments had to be approved by the

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Translation by Sarah Crocker and Donald Fader. Letter from Alphonse Hasselmans to Renié [January 26, 1912], Box 28, Folder 4, Renié and Varennes Papers. Please see Appendix C for original letter, image used by permission of the International Harp Archives.

“Entendu pour le 7 Février ma chère Henriette, j’irai avec le plus grand plaisir. Très beau programme ! Rétablis toi tout à fait et sois épatante comme toujours. Ton vieil Ami, Alphonse Hasselmans, Affectueux souvenirs à ta chère maman et à tous les tiens.”

Hasselmans is referring to a concert given by Renié on Feb. 7, 1912 at the Salle Érard. She performed solo works such as Vienné’s *Rhapsodie* and Debussy’s *Passepied*. She also premiered her own *Feuille d’Automne* and *Danse des Lutins*. Concert Program, Box 28, Folder 8, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>165</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 79.

Ministry of National Education.<sup>166</sup> The government, however, had labeled Renié “Catholic and reactionary.”<sup>167</sup> One night while Gabriel Fauré dined with Hasselmans and Marguerite, Fauré intimated that the government would not allow him to choose Renié as Hasselmans’ successor because of her religious and political sentiments. Hasselmans passed away that evening, May 19, 1912, the issue remaining unresolved.<sup>168</sup>

The following morning, Hasselmans’ students at the Conservatory learned of his death. His student Pierre Jamet recalled that the class waited for him after their jury examinations, but they were instead met by the director, Gabriel Fauré, who told them the sad news.<sup>169</sup> In her memoirs, Renié provides a more detailed account of the day after Hasselmans’ passing:

On Friday morning, I was at 50, rue de Madrid at 8am waiting for Hasselmans who didn’t come. At ten past nine the usher said: ‘Begin the class.’ I was given the keys and began. I was making the first pupil play when Micheline Kahn burst in, very upset and shouted: ‘Monsieur Hasselmans is dead!’ Of course the session ended at once and I ran to my poor old teacher’s home, in the fine flat, avenue du Bois, where he only occupied a small room at the end of a corridor. [. . .] I still remember praying beside my poor teacher and taking off the little gold cross which I wore on my dress and laying it on his breast. Then I told his daughter, saying: ‘Your father was a very Christian man, and it would grieve me to see him go like this.’ The next day she gave me back the cross and thanked me.<sup>170</sup>

Placing her gold cross, an object she wore every day, on Hasselmans’ chest, Renié cemented her affection for her teacher.

After Hasselmans’ death, Fauré encouraged Renié to continue pursuing the Conservatory position.<sup>171</sup> Yet the process of selection, as Théodore Dubois explained in a letter to friend and cellist Raymond Feuillard, was fraught.

You must imagine how much I desire the nomination of our friend H. to the Conservatoire! Nothing could be more justified! But, I have been looking into it, and

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<sup>166</sup> Jaymee Janelle Haefner, “Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié’s Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective,” 10.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 80, 93.

<sup>168</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 80.

<sup>169</sup> Carl Swanson, “Hasselmans Remembered by His Students,” 15.

<sup>170</sup> Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>171</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 80.

among the responses that I am receiving, one is worded thus: ‘Therefore, she will have my vote, and I hope that she will have many others; but I am advised that in the ministerial group of the Council, sympathies run towards Tournier, and that he has the best chance of being selected.’ This frightens me, and I was more afraid of this after a conversation I had with the clerk! It would be a gross injustice, but they are capable of it!<sup>172</sup>

Dubois’ concerns were well-founded; in 1912 the government appointed Marcel Tournier, a young harpist and composer who was also a student of Hasselmans, to the Conservatory.<sup>173</sup> After the decision, Dubois went to the Ministry to view Renié’s file himself. When the government worker delivered the file marked “very orthodox and reactionary” to Dubois, he said, “She must have taught a catechism class, not the harp.”<sup>174</sup> Shortly after her denial, Alfred Cortot offered to create a harp class for Renié at the École Normale de Musique, but she hastily refused.<sup>175</sup> Ten years later in 1922, the same dossier prevented Renié from attaining the Legion of Honor.<sup>176</sup> The achievement was a great loss, as the honor was rarely bestowed upon women.<sup>177</sup>

Despite the injustice displayed by the loss of appointments and awards, Renié nevertheless became one of the only publically recognized female composers in France. She contributed numerous large works with new techniques to the harp repertory and she founded the first international harp competition, the *Concours Renié*, funding the prize money herself. She also funded and established the charity organization *Petite caisse pour artistes* to help fellow musicians during WWI. In 1926, she participated in the first radio broadcasts from the Eiffel Tower and she made several recordings for Columbia and Odéon.<sup>178</sup> The recordings sold out in

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<sup>172</sup> Letter from Théodore Dubois to Raymond Feuillard [June 22, 1912], Box 11, Folder 5A, Renié and Varennes Papers. See translation found in: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 81-82.

<sup>173</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 82.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 83-84.

Many distinguished faculty taught at the École Normale de Musique, including Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas.

<sup>176</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 93.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 98-99.



three months, and she also won a Prix du Disque for her composition *Danse des Lutins*.<sup>179</sup>

Toscanini had even offered her a contract in the United States, but she was unable to go because of her mother's poor health.<sup>180</sup> One of Renié's last public performances occurred in 1944; Charles Delvincourt, the director of the Conservatory, invited select *Premier Prix* winners back to perform their competition pieces.<sup>181</sup> She was a tremendous success, with colleagues and contemporaries requesting her autograph.<sup>182</sup>

In a serendipitous turn of events in 1948, Marcel Tournier left the Conservatory after more than thirty-five years.<sup>183</sup> Charles Delvincourt eagerly offered the position of harp professor to Renié. She firmly rejected the offer on the grounds that Tournier had held the position for so many years, and she was four years his senior. Despite the offer coming far later than deserved, Renié gained the respect from the Conservatory that she had been deprived of so many years before, and she agreed to become a voting member of the Superior Council.<sup>184</sup>

After she was denied the Legion of Honor in 1922, numerous colleagues and artists insisted that she reapply for the award.<sup>185</sup> Renié no longer desired the award, stating, "I will ask for nothing from a government that I despise."<sup>186</sup> Yet, she agreed to fill out the form for her goddaughter. Finally, she received the award in 1954. In a letter dated March 9, 1954, Claude Delvincourt wrote, "everything comes to pass in this world. For four years I requested that you

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>183</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 165.

<sup>184</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 111.

<sup>185</sup> After Maurice Ravel refused the award in 1920, the government required everyone to fill out a request form. Varennes, *Living Harp*, 122.

<sup>186</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 122.

be awarded the rosette. [. . .] Twice a year I created an uproar about this oversight...demanding they make amends for this injustice.”<sup>187</sup>

Although Renié never attained the position of professor of harp at the Paris Conservatory, the distinction Hasselmans wanted so much for her, the significance his recommendation marked the reconciliation of the professor and his student. Despite their many disagreements, the care and adoration demonstrated in the beginning and end of their relationship portray their true sentiments toward one another. The examination of their relationship not only reveals the admiration and respect each had for the other, but also Hasselmans’ profound influence on Renié.

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<sup>187</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 123.

## CHAPTER 3

### COMPOSITIONAL INFLUENCE

#### *SURVEY OF COMPOSITIONS BY HASSELMANS AND RENIÉ*

Both Hasselmans and Renié composed many salon pieces, and more specifically, character pieces which were a staple in the nineteenth-century repertory for harp. A survey of these compositions reveals Hasselmans' influence on Renié's works through similarities in genre, form, and compositional style. His influence is also illustrated by Renié's performance of his compositions throughout her career and her dedication to teaching his works and method to her own students. Hasselmans' influence on Renié emerges in the latter's compositions. Studying these compositions thus reveals the compositional and pedagogical similarities that together established the basis for the French school of harp playing.

Although Hasselmans composed over fifty-four works, they are exclusively small character pieces for harp.<sup>188</sup> Several of his works, including op. 3, op. 6, and op.8-20, have disappeared and the majority of his extant works have not been dated; others, such as his *Ballade* and *Patrouille*, have no opus number.<sup>189</sup> The only ventures outside of his salon works were several transcriptions, which are still commonly performed by harpists today, and a few

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<sup>188</sup> William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 7.

<sup>189</sup> Appendix A provides an updated list of Hasselmans' works, including dates, arrangements, and transcriptions.

arrangements of his existing harp pieces for harp and cello.<sup>190</sup> Almost all of his works were published with his own descriptive titles, some referencing a specific literary work. For example, his work *Rêverie*, op. 26, bears the subtitle *Esquisse poétique d'après la Mignon de Goëthe*, meaning “poetic sketch” on the character Mignon from Goëthe’s novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.<sup>191</sup> Like many composers, artists, and writers of the nineteenth century, Hasselmans was fascinated by exoticism, and many of his pieces contain elements that demonstrate this captivation. Examples include his *Gitana* (“Gypsy”), op. 21; *Orientale*, op. 38; *Gondoliera*, op. 39; and *Guitare*, op. 50. Works like *Aubade*, op. 30; *Chanson de Mai*, op. 40; and *Nocturne*, op. 43, center on another favorite subject of nineteenth-century artists and musicians—nature. Although all of his works are too numerous to name, a few more examples illustrate the range of subjects that Hasselmans evoked in his character pieces. *Rouet* and *Fileuse*, op. 27, both depict a spinning wheel and *Chasse*, op. 36, portrays a hunt, while *Follets*, op. 48, and *Gnomes*, op. 49, evoke mysterious creatures. Like Renié, Hasselmans was also religious, as seen in his works *Prière*, op. 22, and *Au monastère*, op. 29, which convey a reverent and spiritual atmosphere. Hasselmans worked squarely in the nineteenth-century idiom of salon music, demonstrated by the themes of his compositions. Yet he not only composed the pieces for salons, but also frequently performed his own works in Parisian salons, including that of Renié’s grandmother Madame Mouchet.<sup>192</sup> His works were also studied and performed in concert by his students, including Renié, at the Paris Conservatory.

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<sup>190</sup> His arrangements of *Confidence* and *Prière* for harp and cello can be located at the International Harp Archive at BYU, and were most likely arranged for performance by Hasselmans and his son, Louis, who was a noted cellist.

<sup>191</sup> Goethe’s *Mignon* was the subject of many works from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, including *lieder*, operas, and instrumental works. Ambroise Thomas, director of the Paris Conservatory during Hasselmans’ tenure, wrote an opera titled *Mignon*.

<sup>192</sup> Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

By contrast, Renié was a pioneer of modern harp composition, and the majority of her works are difficult concert works that are still played today. Her first solo harp composition was her Concerto in C Minor. In 1901, Renié's performance of this piece marked the first time that a harp concerto was presented on a concert stage. Formerly viewed as only a salon or orchestral instrument, the harp had finally attained recognition as a valid solo instrument.<sup>193</sup> Over a hundred years later, this concerto is still considered a staple in harp literature. Her *Deux pièces symphoniques* is another large work for harp and orchestra. She composed several concert pieces for solo harp, primarily programmatic like her smaller works and the works of Hasselmans. These include her *Ballade Fantastique*, based on *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe; *Lègende*, based on Leconte de Lisle's poem *Les Elfes*; *Danse des Lutins* based on a few lines from the poem "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" by Sir Walter Scott; and *Promenade matinale*, based on lines of text describing her walks on the cliffs of Étretat, France.<sup>194</sup> Renié also composed a small number of chamber works including some for harp and strings, like her *Scherzo-fantaisie* for harp and violin and her *Trio* for harp (or piano), violin, and cello, and works for harp and voice such as *Près d'un berceau*. The portion of Renié's oeuvre that is most overlooked is her salon works, which have often been overshadowed by her larger works in the harp repertoire. Yet in addition to her large innovative works, Renié enjoyed composing small character pieces in the style of Hasselmans. The most unique aspect of Renié's small works, in contrast to Hasselmans who was composing at the height of nineteenth-century salons, is that she composed most of her small character pieces after 1912, some published as late as 1943. Her

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<sup>193</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 60-61.

<sup>194</sup> These lines from Sir Walter Scott depict the joyful dancing of goblins: "See their agile feet, listen to their sweet music." The importance of this quote is not lost on any harpist who plays this work, which requires nearly 300 pedal changes to be made in only three minutes of music. Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," 20. The text for the two pieces of *Promenade Matinale* are: 1. In the distance, in the greenery, the calm and mysterious sea... 2. In the sunny countryside, the dew glistened...

character pieces for solo harp consist of *Feuille d'Automne*, *Grand'mère raconte une histoire*, *Six pièces*, *Feuillets d'album*, and *Six pieces brèves*. She also wrote a few chamber works in this style: a charming harp duet titled *Les pins de Charlannes* and a collection of pieces for harp and narrator titled *Fêtes enfantines*. Like Hasselmans, some of these works were also based on literary works; *Feuille d'Automne* is based on poem by Victor Hugo.<sup>195</sup>

One of Renié's first character pieces, *Feuille d'automne*, premiered in 1912 alongside one of her last large concert works, *Danse des Lutins*.<sup>196</sup> Following the death of Hasselmans and the loss of his influence and friendship this same year, Renié turned exclusively to these small salon works.<sup>197</sup> The evolution in Renié's compositional style was also initiated by her shift in focus from performance to pedagogy. Renié loved teaching from a young age and dedicated much time to her students, but the majority of her early career was consumed by nightly performances. When numerous health problems limited these public performances, she turned to teaching, writing her *Méthode complète de harpe*, and composing in the programmatic salon style that was Hasselmans' specialty.<sup>198</sup> Renié dedicated all of these character pieces to her students.<sup>199</sup> Though written and performed in the twentieth century, after the nineteenth-century salon era had passed, Renié's composition and performance of salon works illustrate that these pieces not only serve a pedagogical function, but also succeed as performance works in their own right.

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<sup>195</sup> Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," 82.

"Let us request: Here the night! The serious and serene night. / All suffering and all complaints. Wearied nature, / A time for sleep, a time for love."

<sup>196</sup> Concert Program [February 7, 1912], Box 29, Folder 1A, Renié and Varennes Papers. See also: Montesquiou, *Legend of Renié*, 75.

<sup>197</sup> Montesquiou, *Legend of Renié*, 74-76.

<sup>198</sup> Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," 83.

Beginning at a young age, numerous health problems plagued Renié. At the age of twenty-one, she suffered a serious stomach illness that left her health permanently fragile and caused her to cancel many concerts.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

## EXAMINATION OF COMPOSITIONAL INFLUENCE

Hasselmans' influence on Renié's salon pieces is illustrated through parallels in genre, form, and compositional style. First, Renié's pieces share with Hasselmans' compositions similarities in the genre. Like Hasselmans' compositions, Renié's salon works are short character pieces which have descriptive titles. For example, her collection entitled *Feuillets d'album*, meaning "album leaves," includes three pieces which each have a different mood and character, much like the pages of a real album. The first piece is an improvisatory musical "sketch," *Esquisse*, followed by the *Danse d'autrefois*, a dance from "another time." The collection ends with *Angélus*: a reverent piece which begins with a bell-tone effect that evokes the Angelus devotion of the Catholic Church. This religious work can be compared to Hasselmans' religious descriptive works, *Prière* and *Au monastère*. Found in the small chamber work by Renié for harp and narrator entitled *Fêtes enfantines*, *La vierge à la crèche* ("The Virgin at the Manger") and *Cloches de Pâques* ("Bells of Easter") offer additional examples of her religious character pieces. Renié's descriptive works also evoke similar images to those depicted in Hasselmans' works; some even share the same title. Renié's first character piece *Feuille d'automne* ("Autumn Leaf") recalled Hasselmans' collection of three small pieces entitled *Feuilles d'automne* written many years before. Both composers also wrote a piece on the subject of the Christmas story titled *Conte de Noël*. Like Hasselmans' *La Source*, Renié embraced the subject of nature and water with her *Au bord du ruisseau* ("At the Edge of a Brook"), found in the first suite of *Six pièces*. Lastly, both composed several short dance pieces, each writing a piece titled *Petite Valse*.

In addition to compositions with the same descriptive topics and similar titles, Hasselmans' and Renié's works also share many structural similarities. For instance, both wrote several pieces in the form of an *esquisse* or "musical sketch," and each frequently gave the piece

that title or subtitle. All of these pieces have a short, improvisatory quality and are in a ternary form, ABA', where the B section has a contrasting character. Examples include Hasselmans' previously mentioned *Rêverie*, subtitled *Esquisse poétique*, and his *Au Monastère*, subtitled *Esquisse pour harpe*. Renié's *Feuille d'Automne* is labeled *Esquisse pour harpe*, and there is the piece titled *Esquisse* that is found within the three piece set *Feuillets d'Album*. In Hasselmans' *Au monastère*, the B section comprises mm. 11-32 with a clear return to A material in m. 33. Similarly in Renié's *Esquisse*, the B section begins at m. 21 and A returns in m. 35 (Example 3.1).

### Example 3.1

#### Alphonse Hasselmans, *Au monastère, Esquisse pour la harpe*, op. 29

mm. 1-2 (A)

mm. 11-12 (B)

mm. 33-34 (A')



#### Henriette Renié, *Esquisse* from *Feuillets d'album*

mm. 1-3 (A)

mm. 21-22 (B)

mm. 35-37 (A')

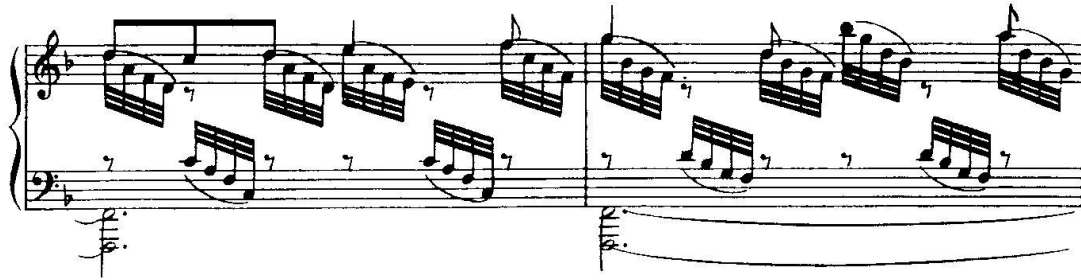


In addition to parallels in genre and form, Renié's compositional style is influenced by Hasselmans' works. One example of this compositional similarity is the placement of melody. Often, both composers will place the melody in the right hand thumb in a pattern of descending arpeggios. A comparison of Hasselmans' *La Source*, op. 44, and Renié's *Cloques de Pâques* demonstrates this technique (Example 3.2).



### Example 3.2

Alphonse Hasselmans, *La Source*, op. 44, mm. 8-9



Henriette Renié, *Cloques de Pâques* from *Fêtes enfantines*, mm. 4-5



At other moments, the composers place the melody in the left hand, while the right hand has a pattern of arpeggios. The similarity between Hasselmans' *Au Monastère* and Renié's *Esquisse* and *Au bord du ruisseau* is striking (Example 3.3).

### Example 3.3

Alphonse Hasselmans, *Au Monastère*, op. 29, mm. 1-2



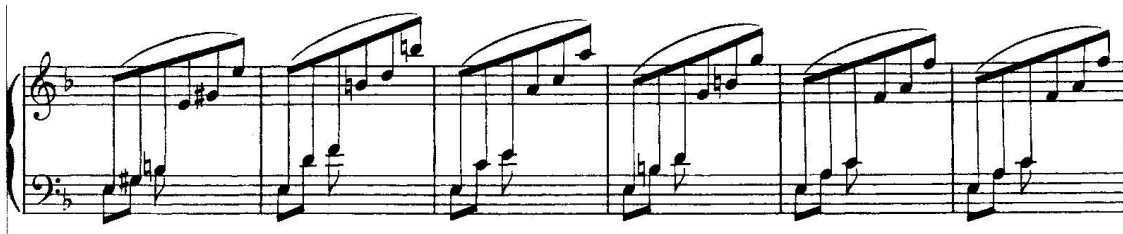
Henriette Renié, *Au bord du ruisseau*, mm. 4-7



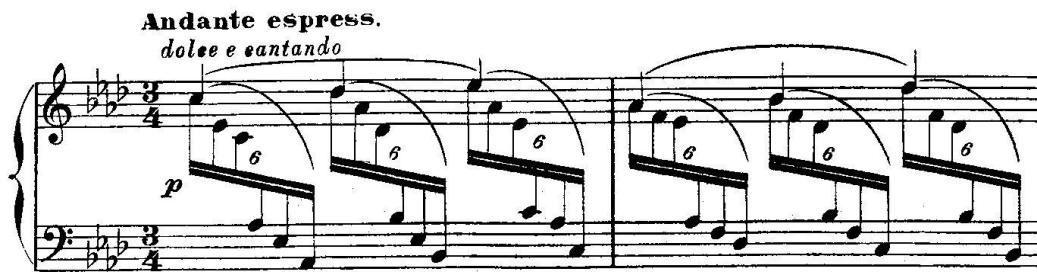
Similarities in compositional style can also be seen in works with similar descriptive subject matter. Hasselmans' *Rêverie*, found in his collection *Trois petites pièces faciles*, contains patterns of ascending arpeggios in a 3/4 time signature. Likewise, Renié's *Rêverie* from *Six pièces brèves* also contains a pattern of arpeggios in 3/4, but they are descending (Example 3.4).

Example 3.4

Alphonse Hasselmans, *Rêverie* from *Trois petites pièces faciles*, mm. 29-34



Henriette Renié, *Rêverie* from *Six pièces brèves*, mm. 1-2



In addition to Hasselmans' significant influence in terms of genre, form, and compositional style, Renié also programmed many of Hasselmans' works throughout her life. Although this was not unusual early in her career, especially while she was still studying with

him, her dedication to continually programming these so called “instructional pieces” in her adult career as a virtuoso harpist is telling.<sup>200</sup> Despite their tumultuous relationship in the 1890s, Renié continued to perform numerous works by her professor on a range of concerts, demonstrating her admiration for him beyond their arguments. One of the oldest concert programs in the collection is from February 2, 1892; on this concert, she played Hasselmans’ *Valse de Concert*, op. 4.<sup>201</sup> One of her favorite works to program in the 1890s was his *Aubade*, op. 30, performed on concerts taking place at the Salle Erard on February 4, 1895, and at the *Exposition des Bruxelles* on September 15 and 23, 1897.<sup>202</sup> In the spring of 1898, she played *Aubade* at least four times: in Versailles on February 9<sup>th</sup>, February 15<sup>th</sup>, March 25<sup>th</sup>, and April 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>203</sup> She also programmed his works *Gitana*, *Rêverie*, *Orientale*, *Lamento*, *Nocturne*, and *Guitare* in the 1890s and *Guitare*, *La Source*, *Follets*, *Gnomes*, *Prelude*, *Nocturne*, *Aubade*, *Elegie*, and *Gitana* in the 1900s.<sup>204</sup> Although she played many of his works in the 1890s and 1900s, she continued to perform many more throughout her career. In a concert on May 29, 1923, she programmed his *Prière* and as late as 1946, she performed his *Ballade* and *Follets*.<sup>205</sup>

In addition to her own concerts, many programs for Renié’s students’ recitals reveal that they also performed Hasselmans’ works. In a student recital at the Salle Erard on February 16, 1913, almost a year after Hasselmans’ death, her students performed his *Deuxième Prélude*, *Patrouille*, and *Gitana*.<sup>206</sup> Renié continued to teach her students Hasselmans’ works throughout her life; in a student recital given at her home studio on March 14, 1937, students played four

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<sup>200</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 42.

<sup>201</sup> Concert Program [February 2, 1892], Box 30, Folder 1B, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>202</sup> Concert Programs, Box 29, Folder 2C; Box 30, Folder 1B, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>203</sup> Concert Programs, Box 29, Folder 3C; Box 30, Folder 1C, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>204</sup> Concert Programs, Box 29, Folder 3C; Box 30, Folder 1B and 1C; Box 50, Folder 4, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>205</sup> Concert Program, Box 29, Folder 3B and 2C, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>206</sup> Concert Program, Box 28, Folder 8, Renié and Varennes Papers.

works by Hasselmans: his *Petite Berceuse*, *Prière*, *Deuxième Prélude*, and *La Source*.<sup>207</sup> As late as June 8, 1950, during a pre-concert recital performed by “Quelques jeunes Harpistes” (“Some young Harpists”), her student played Hasselmans’ *Berceuse*.<sup>208</sup> Renié also admired Hasselmans’ works enough to arrange them for harp ensemble. One example is in a concert on May 18, 1909; her harp sextet *Le Sextour Renié* performed an arrangement of Hasselmans’ *Follets*.<sup>209</sup>

Informed by the discussion of the close relationship between Hasselmans and Renié, the illustrations of similarity in genre, form, and compositional style of the works of Renié to those of Hasselmans demonstrate the influence that he had on her compositions. In addition, the numerous examples of Renié programming his works on not only her own concerts throughout her life, but also many student recitals ranging from the 1910s to the 1950s, display the admiration she had for his works. Choosing to compose her own works in the nineteenth-century salon style in the early to mid-twentieth century, when most composers were begin to turn away from this style, also exhibits the pedagogical and performance value Renié believed these small character pieces possess.

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### PEDAGOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### *BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HARP CLASS AT THE PARIS CONSERVATORY*

Hasselmans and Renié founded the modern French school of harp playing. A brief overview of the history of the harp class at the Paris Conservatory and the development from the single-action pedal harp to the double-action pedal harp will inform the following discussion of the establishment of the French school of harp playing by demonstrating how the double-action pedal harp, the four finger method, and a supple hand position became the tenets of this technique.

François-Joseph Naderman established the first harp class at the Paris Conservatory in 1825, and at that time, his family's harp company manufactured the premier single-action pedal harp in France.<sup>210</sup> Although the double-action pedal harp had been patented in 1810 by Sébastien Érard, Naderman rejected Érard's harp for his class in favor of his company's own single-action harp.<sup>211</sup> Despite the obvious technical advantages of the double-action pedal harp, Naderman's denunciation of Érard's double-action mechanism caused the single-action harp to remain the dominant harp in France until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>212</sup> After his death in 1835,

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<sup>210</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 162.

F.J. Naderman (1781-1835) was the son of harp maker and music publisher Jean-Henri Naderman, and he took over his father's business of producing the single-action pedal harp. He was also well-known as a virtuoso, teacher, and composer. Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 144; Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 5-6.

<sup>211</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 5-6. See also: Varennes, *Living Harp*, 51-52, and Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 148.

<sup>212</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 51-52.

Naderman was succeeded by several of his students: Antoine Prumier from 1835-1867, Théodore Labarre from 1867-1870, and Ange-Conrad-Antoine Prumier, son of Antoine, from 1870-1884.<sup>213</sup> While Françoise des Varennes and scholar Hans Joachim Zingel indicate the double-action harp did not become established at the Conservatory until the arrival of Hasselmans, there is a discrepancy as to which style of harp prior Conservatory professors had used.<sup>214</sup> Scholar Roslyn Rensch states that “with Naderman’s departure the double action harp finally replaced the single action instrument at the school.”<sup>215</sup> Regardless of whether other professors used the single-action harp, double-action harp, or both, Hasselmans’ use of the double-action pedal harp when he began teaching at the Conservatory in 1884 forever weakened, and practically eliminated, the use of the single-action pedal harp in France. Yet, his choice of instrument was not the only innovative change Hasselmans would make to lay the foundation for the modern French school of harp, he also revolutionized harp technique.

#### *FOUNDATION OF THE FRENCH SCHOOL OF HARP*

While harp construction was evolving throughout the nineteenth century, new techniques for playing the harp were also being developed. In 1802, Felicité de Genlis published her *Méthode de harpe* promoting the use of all five fingers when playing the harp, as opposed to the more customary use of four fingers.<sup>216</sup> Madame de Genlis influenced many prominent male

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<sup>213</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 162-63, Alphonse Hasselmans, “La harpe et sa technique,” *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, Partie II, vol. 3, edited by A. Lavignac (Paris, 1913), 1939.

Antoine Prumier (1794-1868) ; Théodore Labarre (1805-1870) ; and Ange-Conrad-Antoine Prumier (1820-1884).

<sup>214</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 51-52. See also: Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 5.

<sup>215</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 163.

Roslyn Rensch (1923- ) is a harpist and musicologist who spent her career expanding the amount of scholarly information available about noted harpists and the history of the harp.

<sup>216</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 134-35.

Most commonly referred to as Madame de Genlis (1746-1830), she was a harp virtuoso who led a colorful life and was known for her unmatched harmonics on the harp. She was very influential to many prominent male harpists of the nineteenth century. Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 10.

harpists; both father Antoine Prumier and son Ange-Conrad Prumier favored using five fingers and taught this method to the students of the Paris Conservatory during their respective tenures.<sup>217</sup> In 1809, the father of one of Hasselmans' teachers, Xavier Désargus the elder, published his *Traité general sur l'art de jouer de la harpe*, which also promoted the use of five fingers.<sup>218</sup> Désargus greatly revised his original treaty in 1816 by including exercises for both the use of four fingers and five fingers, titling the new version *Cours complet de harpe, redigée sur le plan de la méthode de piano du Conservatoire*. He expanded his treaty a third time in 1820.<sup>219</sup> Hasselmans, who studied with both Désargus' son and Ange-Conrad Prumier, undoubtedly received some instruction in the five finger technique; yet, he rejected this technique in favor of the four finger approach that he learned from his teachers Gottlieb Krüger and Félix Godefroid. In his article "La harpe et sa technique"(1913), Hasselmans explained:

One of our predecessors at the Conservatoire, inspired by the method of Mme de Genlis [. . .] taught the use of all the fingers.[. . .] the little finger is normally much shorter, it is necessary then, to permit the player to reach the chords, to modify the hands in such a way, that the quality of sound is altered in a very noticeable and disastrous manner. This truth, however evident, did not prevent this method from flourishing.<sup>220</sup>

Hasselmans also pointed to Parish-Alvars as the founder of the modern technique of the harp.

"[. . .] and above all others this [technique] of Parish-Alvars, who was not only a great virtuoso, our Paganini, but also the true creator of the modern technique for harp."<sup>221</sup> Although the use of

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<sup>217</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 163.

<sup>218</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 10. See also: Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 162-63, Alphonse Hasselmans, "La harpe et sa technique," 1936. See also: Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Xavier Désargus," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, available from

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44003>; Internet; accessed September 2, 2012.

<sup>219</sup> Alice Lawson Aber-Count, "Xavier Désargus," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44003>; Internet; accessed September 2, 2012.

<sup>220</sup> Translated by Sarah Crocker. Alphonse Hasselmans, "La harpe et sa technique," 1936.

"Un de nos prédécesseurs au Conservatoire, s'inspirant de la méthode de Mme de Genlis [. . .] enseigna l'utilisation de tous les doigts. [. . .] le petit doigt étant normalement de beaucoup le plus court, il fallait, pour lui permettre d'atteindre les cordes, modifier de telle façon la position des mains, que la qualité du son en était altérée de très sensible et désastreuse manière. Cette vérité, cependant si évidente, n'empêcha pas la nouvelle méthode de prévaloir."

<sup>221</sup> Translated by Sarah Crocker. Ibid., 1940.

the double-action pedal harp and the decision to use the four finger method for harp were crucial elements in establishing the French school of harp, Hasselmans' innovative ideas about hand position ultimately created a new sonority for the harp that would become the cornerstone of this school of harp technique.

A modification to the hand position was necessary due to the nature of the double-action harp. Single-action instruments were not only smaller, but also had a very loose tension on the strings; the new double-action harp, by contrast, was larger in size and possessed a greater string tension which required amending the hand position to achieve the best sonority. One of Hasselmans' most successful students, Micheline Kahn, described his steadfast dedication to teaching students proper hand position:

On one point he was obstinate, and that was the hand position. He wanted above all the thumb straight (not bent) and both hands placed in a manner so as to play the string with the fleshy part of the finger and a good articulation into the hollow of the hand, you have a beautiful sound; playing on the side creates a vigorous sound, but not a mellow sound. He held strongly to this principle, and in this way he found a beautiful sonority for the harp.<sup>222</sup>

The three pillars of Hasselmans' technique, a straight and high thumb, placing the "fleshy" part of the finger on the string, and closing the fingers all the way into the palm after plucking the string, converge to create a sound that is mellow and round, as opposed to the severe or harsh sound as often occurs when playing with the side of the finger. This position also allows the player to avoid the "buzzing" noise that occurs when fingers accidentally hit a vibrating string because the thumb is too low or the fingers do not close entirely into the palm. One of the most valuable innovations concerning Hasselmans' harp technique involves thumb position. This position is crucial to perfect because the thumb often carries the melody in harp pieces as it does

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"Et, tout à fait hors celui de Parish-Alvars, qui fut non seulement un grand virtuose, notre Paganini, mais aussi le véritable créateur de la technique modern de la harpe."

<sup>222</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11.



in piano works: “[For a pianist] the thumbs find themselves then in the upper part in each hand, this is also the case for the harpist.”<sup>223</sup> Not only does he explain this hand position, but he also describes the best way to produce harmonics, *sons étouffés*, *sdruciolandi* and *glissandi*, and the use of enharmonics.<sup>224</sup> He lists many composers of orchestral harp parts and describes briefly how to write for harp, explaining the different characters of the harp’s registers.<sup>225</sup> These tenets of harp technique were the foundation of Hasselmans’ method and were taught to all of his students.

When Hasselmans arrived at the Conservatory, there were only two or three students in the harp class, but it quickly grew to twelve students under his direction.<sup>226</sup> The addition of the double-action pedal harp, a larger class, and a technique which produced a resonant sound formed the basis of the modern French school of harp. This tribute by Pierre Jamet best articulates Hasselmans’ contribution to the harp community:

Hasselmans established our French method of harp playing. He was the first who corrected the hand position, thus abandoning the old methods of Naderman and Bochsa of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hasselmans’ method permitted all the harpists of our generation to obtain sonorous strength on the harp. His disciples were many, some of whom became great harpists and virtuosi. They owe it all to Hasselmans.<sup>227</sup>

This technique was championed by a long list of his famous students: Ada Sassoli, Micheline Kahn, Marcel Tournier, Pierre Jamet, Lily Laskine, Marcel Grandjany, Carlos Salzedo, and of course, Henriette Renié.

Although Hasselmans is credited with creating the French school of harp playing, Renié’s contribution to establishing this method in France and throughout the world is no less significant.

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<sup>223</sup> Translated by Sarah Crocker. Alphonse Hasselmans, “La harpe et sa technique,” 1939.

“[. . .] les pouces se trouveront alors à la partie supérieure de chaque main, ce qui est la cas pour le harpiste.”

<sup>224</sup> Alphonse Hasselmans, “La harpe et sa technique,” 1936-38.

Hasselmans differentiates between *glissandi* and *sdruciolandi*.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 1939.

<sup>226</sup> Carl Swanson, “Hasselmans Remembered by His Students,” 11.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 15.

During WWII, Renié accepted the publisher Alphonse Leduc's offer to write a method, and she was the first person to document the French harp technique created by Hasselmans with her two volume *Méthode complète de harpe*.<sup>228</sup> Leduc expressed the urgent need for a modern harp method in a letter from November 6, 1940. He explained to Renié: "Your instruction, crystallized in a limited number of pages, must remain as a plan of work for posterity: this is a duty for you and for French music."<sup>229</sup> As opposed to the limited information gleaned from Hasselmans' brief article and tributes by his students, Renié's comprehensive method took many years to complete.<sup>230</sup> The cornerstone of Renié's technique was suppleness. "If one treats nature as an enemy, it rebels, and this is reflected in an invincible stiffness which interferes with everything."<sup>231</sup> For a harpist to achieve a beautiful sonority, Renié believed s/he must be fully relaxed and achieve the most natural hand position possible. Her studies with Hasselmans resonate in her description of hand position:

One uses only four fingers. The fifth is too short and would have to assume a contracted position which would be harmful to the tone. The three fingers are slanted downward without crowding one another. [ . . . ] The tip of the thumb is slightly aslant on the string; the base of it extends outward forming a curved space between the thumb and second (index) finger. The hand is hollow on the inside, and round on the outside. The base of the thumb is away from the strings.<sup>232</sup>

In her method, Renié included many exercises and small studies that she composed, but she also included excerpts from Hasselmans', Grandjany's, and other contemporary composers' works to demonstrate various principles of harp technique. Both playing an integral role in developing the French school of harp playing, Hasselmans and Renié made significant contributions to the harp community by establishing the double-action pedal harp, creating a natural hand position, and

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<sup>228</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 108. See also: Henriette Renié, *Complete Method for Harp*, trans. by Geraldine Ruegg (Paris: Leduc, [1966]).

<sup>229</sup> Renié, Henriette. *Complete Method for Harp*, Preface.

<sup>230</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 108.

<sup>231</sup> Renié, Henriette. *Complete Method for Harp*, Forward.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

writing a method book. The methods of this school are still taught in France and around the world.

### *A STUDY OF SALON WORKS BY HASSELMANS AND RENIÉ*

Many harp virtuosos and scholars point to Hasselmans' and Renié's works as pedagogically important; yet, there has never been a thorough examination of the elements that make these works useful for beginning to immediate harp students.<sup>233</sup> An analysis of selected passages from works by both composers will demonstrate the many techniques and principles of harp playing that can be gleaned through a student's extensive study of these works. The intermediate difficulty level, promotion of natural hand position and fingerings, highly melodic nature, use of special techniques and effects, and expression of mood and character converge to create an ideal pedagogical piece for students to master the foundation of harp technique and performance.

Scholar Roslyn Rensch promotes the instructional use of these composers' works in her book *The Harp: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire*. Her appendix offers lists that suggest useful pieces for school programs centering on different seasons or holidays.<sup>234</sup> For example, Renié's *Feuille d'Automne* could be placed on a program about the music of autumn, and Hasselmans' *Prière* on an Easter program.<sup>235</sup> She also gives examples of pieces that would work well in a school theater production. For "fantasy" or "mysterious" music, she points to many pieces by Hasselmans, such as *Follets*, *Rouet*, *Ballade*, and *Rêverie*.<sup>236</sup> Whereas, Renié's works

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<sup>233</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 42. See also: William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 6.

<sup>234</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *The Harp: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1969), 213-223.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 213, 215.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 217-218.

*Danse d'Autrefois* and *Menuet* could be used for dance music in the theater.<sup>237</sup> Because Hasselmans and Renié composed in the turn-of-the-century idiom of character pieces for the salon, the works' programmatic nature enables them to be performed effectively in school productions. Rensch places them in specific categories according to the image or mood they are meant to evoke. Although salons are rare today, the descriptive nature of pieces can be applied as instructional tools for students.

One of the elements that makes the salon works by Hasselmans and Renié useful for beginning to immediate harp students is their difficulty level. Hasselmans' student Lily Laskine asserts:

He wrote a quantity of pieces whose style is out of fashion today but which should absolutely not be scorned for teaching. Each one of these pieces, of medium difficulty, very melodic, teaches the student, without discouraging him, the very essence of the instrument and natural fingering.<sup>238</sup>

Because all of the pieces are written at an intermediate level, the student will be challenged to perfect his/her technique while also displaying musicality; yet, the pieces are not so difficult that musicality cannot be achieved because the student is struggling to overcome difficult fingerings or hand position. Although all of the pieces are written at an intermediate level, there is still a range of difficulty within that spectrum; Rensch catalogues numerous pieces by Hasselmans and Renié by grade of difficulty as examples of study pieces for the harp.<sup>239</sup> On a grading scale where Grade IV is the most difficult for an intermediate harpist, pieces such as Hasselmans' *Au Monastère* and Renié's *Esquisse* are placed on a Grade III level, while pieces like *Aeolian Harp* and *Rêverie* by Hasselmans are placed on a Grade IV level alongside Renié's transcriptions of

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 218-219.

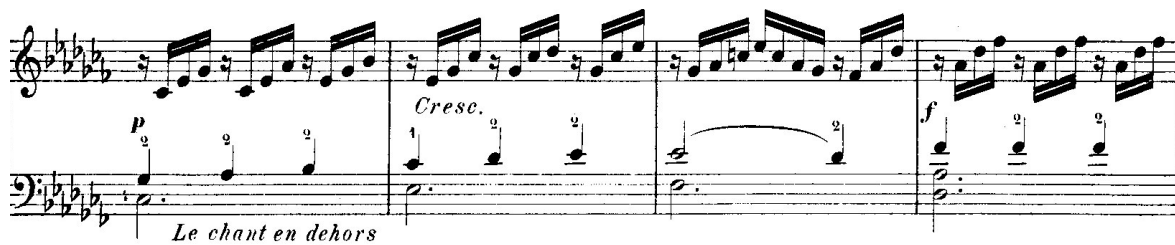
<sup>238</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11.

<sup>239</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *The Harp*, 220.

Debussy's *Premier* and *Deuxième Arabesque*.<sup>240</sup> This grading demonstrates that the pieces benefit a broad range of students, from advanced beginners to advanced intermediate students.

One of the most important skills that students gain by studying these works is the development of a natural hand position and fingerings. Because the pieces are written by harp virtuosos for their own instruments, each piece contains idiomatic harp gestures that the student will encounter in pieces throughout his/her career. In addition, these natural gestures enable the student to perfect hand position without struggling against difficult fingering patterns and idiosyncrasies often found in transcriptions and in the compositions of non-harpists. An excerpt of Renié's *Esquisse* from *Feuillets d'album*, listed as Grade III by Rensch, illustrates idiomatic writing for harp that promotes natural fingerings and hand position. In this excerpt, the melody is placed in the left hand (Example 4.1). The student can emphasize the melody easily because each note of the melody can be played by the second finger or thumb, which produces the strongest quality of sound.<sup>241</sup>

**Example 4.1 Henriette Renié, *Esquisse* from *Feuillets d'album*, mm. 21-24**



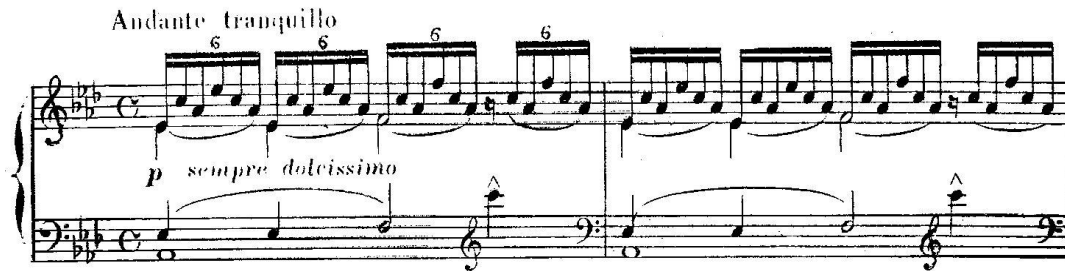
The right hand consists of simple chordal arpeggiations which are standard in harp repertory. A very similar passage is seen in Hasselmans' *Au monastère*, also one of the Grade III pieces listed by Rensch. Hasselmans also placed the melody in the left hand with chordal arpeggiations in the right hand. Although the chordal arpeggiations are not separated like those in *Esquisse*, the

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 221-223.

<sup>241</sup> In harp practice, the thumb is the first finger, the index finger is the second finger, the middle finger is the third finger, and the ring finger is the fourth finger. The little finger is not used.

arrangement of notes allows for a fingering that easily connects one arpeggio to the next (Example 4.2).

**Example 4.2 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Au monastère*, op. 29, mm. 1-2**



Renié's *Grand'mère raconte une histoire* provides an example of familiar passages in harp music: a bass ostinato in the left hand accompanied by the melody elaborated by chords in the right hand. This passage also appears later in the piece transposed one octave higher. As seen in the fingering of the left hand, the student oscillates between the fourth and second finger, enabling the notes to ring without the “buzzing” that would be produced if using the third finger and thumb instead (Example 4.3).

**Example 4.3 Henriette Renié, *Grand'mère raconte une histoire*, mm. 1-4**



In the right hand, the eighth notes between chords can be easily placed at one time, in lieu of the student having to grab for each note as it comes. For example in m. 4, the student can place all four fingers on the notes of beats two and three before beat two begins; therefore, they will not have to come off the strings to play the chord in beat three. This placement allows for fluidity and ease in the music that would not exist if the player had to come off the string between each

note. Hasselmans uses bass ostinatos in many of his works, especially those meant to depict the exotic. This example shows the ostinato as imitating the sound of a Spanish guitar (Example 4.4).

**Example 4.4 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Guitare*, op. 50, mm. 41-44**



Although more involved than Renié's ostinato, it is still written so that the player can easily finger the notes to play at a quick tempo. Likewise, the pattern of the notes in the right hand can be easily connected, limiting the amount that the player has to leave the strings. Examples of idiomatic fingerings and reinforcement of natural hand position are too numerous to include, but the few examples above illustrate that Hasselmans and Renié composed with care in regards to the harpist's ability to connect notes in a fluid and natural way.

The highly melodic nature of these salon works is another essential pedagogical tool because it helps students develop their musicality. This style enables the student to learn how to find a melody within a thick texture, and in turn, how to enhance the melody without overpowering it with decorative arpeggios or chords. Lily Laskine emphasizes the importance that these works have in the student's development as a musician:

I am convinced, to take an example, that the art of singing is acquired not in the sublime melodies of Schumann, Schubert, Fauré, or Duparc, who represent a pinnacle, but in the methods, the vocalizes, and the lyric works that our present taste rejects with disdain. Musical cultivation is one thing, technique is another.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11.

Laskine stresses that students must engage with works, like those in the salon style, which highlight the melody. A prime illustration of this opportunity for musical development is seen in Renié's *Au bord du ruisseau*. In the beginning of the piece, the melody is found in the left hand while the right hand has chordal arpeggiation, similar to the examples from *Au Monastère* and *Esquisse* seen above. In m. 11, the melody switches to the right hand while still being elaborated by ascending arpeggios. The student's task is to not only find the melody as it switches between the left and right hands, but also to emphasize the melody (Example 4.5).

#### Example 4.5

**Henriette Renié, *Au bord du ruisseau* from *Six pièces pour harpe*, mm. 4-7**



**Henriette Renié, *Au bord du ruisseau* from *Six pièces pour harpe*, mm. 12-14**



In the opening measures of *Au bord du ruisseau*, it would be typical for a student to overpower the melody in the left hand by playing the arpeggios in the right hand loudly. Students must learn to play the arpeggios lightly, only adding color to the melody. Likewise, when the melody moves to the right hand in m. 11, the player might tend to play all the notes at one volume. The student

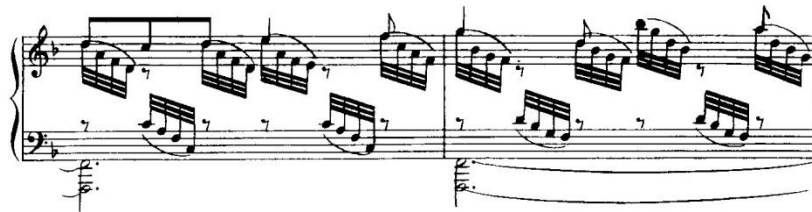


should learn how to only emphasize the notes of the melody, while playing the other notes in the arpeggios as decoration.

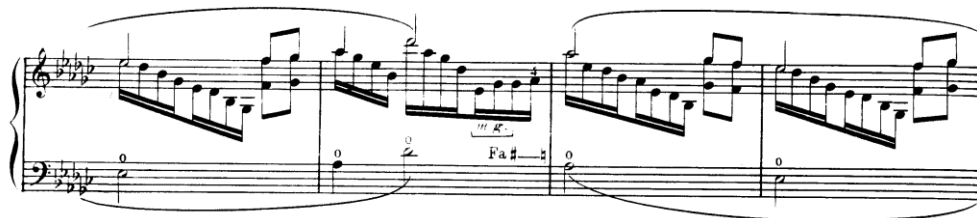
As these examples demonstrate, a common compositional technique of the harp repertoire is a melody embedded in a pattern of arpeggios or rolled chords. In most pieces, the melody is found in the right hand thumb and, therefore, the student must learn to locate the melody and emphasize the thumb more than other fingers. In Hasselmans' *La Source*, the student must discern the melody from a pattern of descending arpeggios and learn to emphasize that melody in the right hand thumb. The development of this skill is crucial to beginning harpists because a vast amount of advanced repertoire uses this compositional technique. Learning to bring out the melody in Hasselmans' *La Source* or Renié's *Au bord du ruisseau* enables the student to easily project the melody in the theme of Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* (Example 4.6).

#### Example 4.6

Alphonse Hasselmans, *La Source*, op. 44, mm. 8-9



Maurice Ravel, *Introduction and Allegro*, mm. 27-30



Similarly, after learning a piece like Renié's *Recueillement* from *Six Pièces Brèves*, the student will find it easier to avoid overpowering a melody embedded in a series of rolled chords like those found in the introduction of Debussy's *Danses sacrée et profane* (Example 4.7).

### Example 4.7

Henriette Renié, *Recueillement* from *Six Pièces Brèves*, mm. 1-3



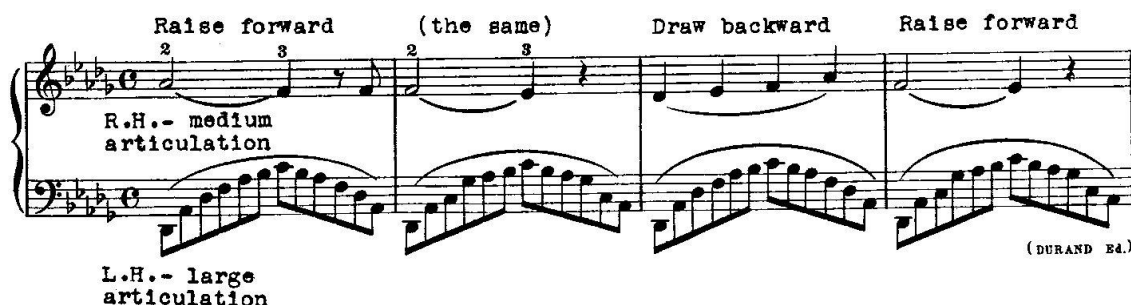
Claude Debussy, *Danses sacrée et profane*, mm. 8-12



René also addresses this issue of expression in her harp method. She cites an example from the *Deuxième Prélude* by Hasselmans, and states:

Expression can only be produced by a more or less intense pressure of the finger on the string. Otherwise, the tone may be beautiful, but it remains inexpressive. Only exerting pressure on the string would make the sonority brusque and loud, or even worse! To avoid this, *the wrist must accompany the movement of each finger by following the melodic line*: this will produce an expressive and connected sonority without any shock.<sup>243</sup>

Example 4.8 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Deuxième Prélude*, op. 52<sup>244</sup>



<sup>243</sup> Renié, Henriette. *Complete Method for Harp*, 141.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

The works of Hasselmans and Renié also introduce students to numerous special techniques and effects used in harp literature. The player gains the experience of using these techniques in a work of intermediate difficulty before s/he is expected to perform them in the repertory for advanced students. One of the most common techniques used in harp literature is the use of harmonics. The hand positions required to perform left hand and right hand harmonics are radically different, and each requires an enormous amount of practice to produce the most pleasing tone. Renié's *Feuille d'Automne* not only requires harmonics in both hands, but also demands double and triple harmonics in the left hand (Example 4.9).<sup>245</sup>

**Example 4.9 Henriette Renié, *Feuille d'Automne*, mm. 16-17**



**Henriette Renié, *Feuille d'Automne*, mm. 50-51**



Later in the piece, a right hand harmonic is used to echo the sonority of a chord played on the previous beat which is still ringing (Example 4.9). The student must recognize this echo effect

<sup>245</sup> Double and triple harmonics are very difficult techniques which require more than one finger to produce a harmonic at the same time.

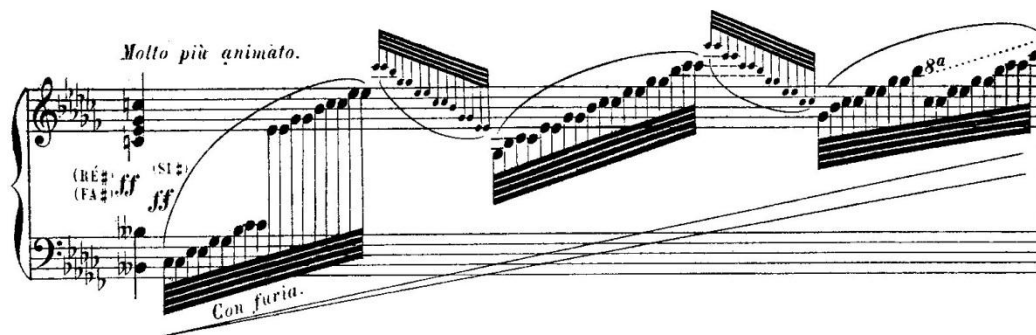
sounding an octave higher to produce the correct character. A passage in Hasselmans' *Gnomes* uses a series of left hand harmonics to sound as the note immediately succeeding it a sixteenth note later (Example 4.10). This technique also produces a charming echo effect.

**Example 4.10 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Gnomes*, op. 49, mm. 53-56**



In addition to harmonics, *glissandos* are extremely common in harp literature. Although seemingly simple, *glissandos* serve many different purposes and are meant to produce varying effects according to the piece. Students must learn to interpret differences in *glissandos* to prevent making grave mistakes that will disrupt the character of a piece. In her harp method, Renié uses an example from Hasselmans' *Ballade* (Example 4.11).<sup>246</sup>

**Example 4.11 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Ballade*, m. 95**



Rather than carelessly playing the *glissando* up and down without any concern to the notes, the player must notice that each *glissando* is separated by a particular interval; they must take care to

<sup>246</sup> Renié, Henriette. *Complete Method for Harp*, 88.

start and stop the glissando on the precise note that is written and alternate the *glissandos* between both hands. The intent of the right hand descending *glissando* is to produce an echo effect to preceding left hand *glissando*. By contrast, Renié's *Angélus* contains examples of *glissandos* executed by one hand and without a break between the ascent and descent, and the indication *ad lib* gives the player freedom to play the *glissando* as s/he interprets it.

**Example 4.12 Henriette Renié, *Angélus* from *Feuillets d'album*, mm. 1-2**

Another character of *glissando*, illustrated in Hasselmans' *Gitana*, is the ending flourish. These *glissandos* are intended to produce a brilliant end to a piece and have an energetic quality.

**Example 4.13 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Gitana*, op. 21, mm. 217-218**

Hasselmans stresses the distinction between *glissando* and another term meaning “slide,” *sdruciolando*: “Let us continue our discussion about a technique that is unique to our instrument [the harp], and which constitutes many curious resources. It is the *sdruciolando*, incorrectly

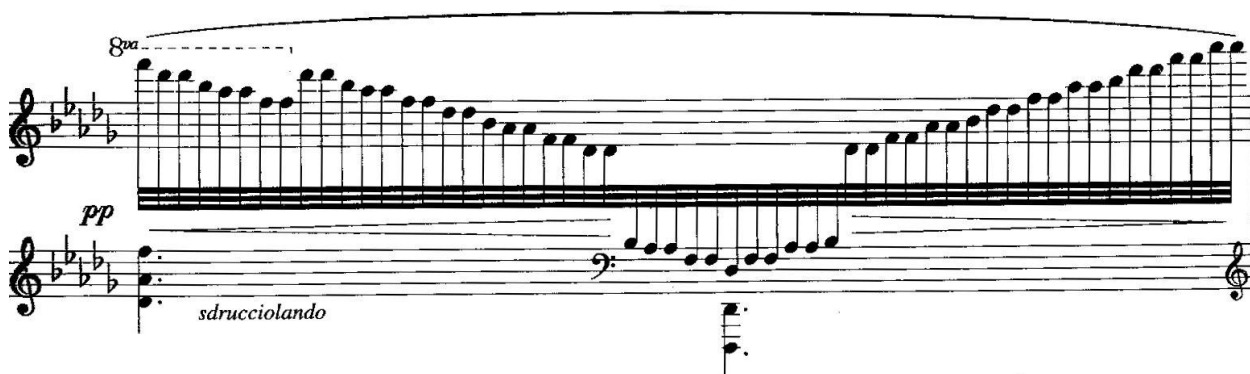
called *glissando*.<sup>247</sup> The *sdruciolandi* are played more on the surface of the string than a measured *glissando*, giving them a freer and lighter character. Although very few harpists today make this distinction, it is worth noting since Hasselmans made a special effort to mark the two differently in his scores. In the example from *Gitana* above, he clearly notates *glissando*, while in his *Orientale*, the slide is written as a *sdruciolando* (Example 4.14).

**Example 4.14 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Orientale*, op. 38, mm. 18-19**



In the closing measures of *Chanson de Mai*, Hasselmans also makes the distinction of a *sdruciolando* instead of a *glissando* (Example 4.15).

**Example 4.15 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Chanson de Mai*, op. 40, m. 86**



Another technique vital to a beginning harpist's education is muffling. Since the harp does not have a dampening pedal like the piano, the player must be adept in knowing the right

<sup>247</sup> Translated by Sarah Crocker. Alphonse Hasselmans, "La harpe et sa technique," 1937. "Ceci nous conduit à parler d'un genre de trait tout à fait personnel à notre instrument, et qui en constitue une des ressources les plus curieuses. Il s'agit du *sdruciolando*, incorrectement appelé *glissando*."

**Example 4.16** Henriette Renié, *Feuille d'automne*, m. 15

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented on two staves. The top staff is for the voice, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a half note B4. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, featuring a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a half note G2, followed by a quarter note A2, and then a half note B2. The tempo is marked 'p sub.' (piano). The time signature is 4/4. The score is for a single system, with the first measure of the voice part starting on a G4 and the first measure of the piano part starting on a G2.

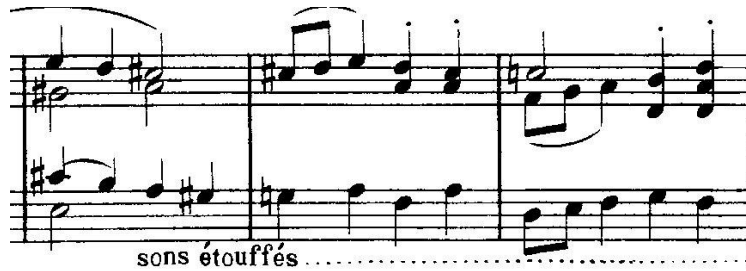
<sup>248</sup> Alphonse Hasselmans, “La harpe et sa technique,” 1937.

**Example 4.17**

**Alphonse Hasselmans, *Ballade*, mm. 109-110**



**Henriette Renié, *Gavotte* from *Six pieces brèves*, mm. 12-14**



Although not as common as harmonics and *glissandos*, other special techniques are employed in these salon works. One effect, the *bisbliagando*, produces a unique “murmuring effect” on the harp.<sup>249</sup> A key example of this effect is found throughout Hasselmans’ *Les Follets*, meaning “Will-o’-the-Wisp.”

**Example 4.18 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Follets*, op. 48, mm. 9-11**

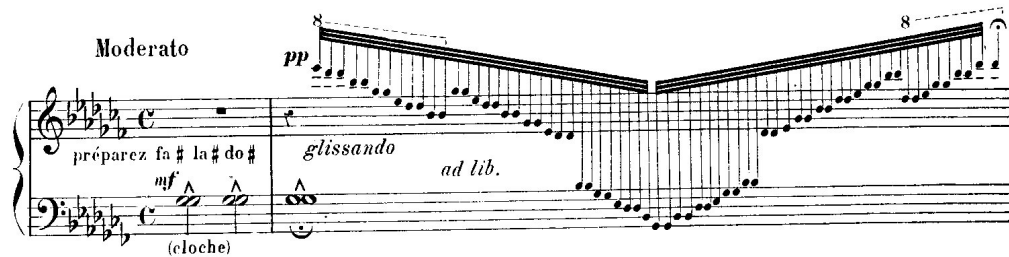


<sup>249</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *The Harp*, 176-77.



Enharmonics are used in harp literature to achieve a unique effect that only the harp can produce. In Renié's *Angèlus*, she uses enharmonics to produce a bell-like effect at the beginning of the work.<sup>250</sup>

**Example 4.19 Henriette Renié, *Angèlus* from *Feuillets d'album*, mm. 1-2**



Enharmonics are also commonly used in chords, arpeggios, and *glissandi* to give the sound of the player rapidly repeating the same note, when the player is actually playing two separate notes on the same pitch due to pedal placement. The *glissando* in the example above also uses enharmonics; the player does not repeat each note as notated, but actually plays Eb, Db, C#, Bb, A#, etc. (Example 4.19).

Lastly, these works demonstrate a special effect called *près de la table*, often indicated as *p.d.l.t.* or with a wavy line underneath or above the passage meant to be played in this manner. The harpist plays the string close to the sounding board, creating a marked change in timbre similar to a guitar (Example 4.20).

**Example 4.20 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Gnomes*, op. 49, mm. 27-28**



<sup>250</sup> The title of this work carries special meaning because in the Roman Catholic Church, *Angelus* is the term for a commemorative prayer for the Annunciation, accompanied by a bell call. Jaymee Janelle Haefner, "Virtuoso, Composer, and Teacher: Henriette Renié's Compositions and Transcriptions for Harp in Perspective," 83.

Another pedagogical tool found in these descriptive miniatures is the necessity of expressing a character, mood, or story with music. Many students struggle to overcome the difficulty of harp technique and pedaling to develop their musicality. Students use pieces of intermediate difficulty to perfect their technique and to focus on expressing the musical character intended by the composer. The student can envision the composer's intentions clearly through the image or mood given in the title. The student then learns to relate certain musical gestures on the harp with a particular type of character. In Hasselmans' *Follets*, the student expresses a quick, spritely character with the *bisbliagando* effect.

**Example 4.21 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Follets*, op. 48, mm. 9-11**



All of Hasselmans' and Renié's works are programmatic in nature, and the player must learn to represent the image expressed in the title through music. In Renié's *Au bord du ruisseau*, she writes a series of ascending and descending arpeggios to evoke the image of moving water.

**Example 4.22 Henriette Renié, *Au bord du ruisseau* from *Six pièces pour harpe*, mm. 4-6**



Hasselmans depicts the constant motion of a spinning wheel in his *Rouet*. The player must emphasize the repetitive nature of a spinning wheel through the constant pattern of descending arpeggios (Example 4.23).

**Example 4.23 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Rouet* from *Trois petites pieces faciles*, mm. 4-7**



By contrast, the player must convey the solemn and reverent mood in their performance of works like Renié's *Angélus* and Hasselmans' *Prière* and *Au Monastère*. Learning to discern what emotions to portray in a character piece builds the student's facility to make educated artistic decisions when faced with an advanced piece with no descriptive title. The student will recognize idiomatic gestures learned in salon pieces, and be able to relate those to passages they will encounter in more advanced repertoire.

The illustrations above provide a mere survey of the central pedagogical tools found in Hasselmans' and Renié's character pieces. With the combination of natural hand position and fingerings, melodic lines, the use of special techniques and effects, and the expression of a mood or character, the descriptive miniatures of Hasselmans and Renié provide an extensive repertoire of works ideal to build a foundation for the beginning to intermediate harpist.

## CHAPTER 5

### ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although Hasselmans' and Renié's descriptive miniatures are pedagogically beneficial, many contemporary professional concert harpists fail to program and record them. The opportunity for musical expression is abundant in these works, but they are commonly dismissed as trivial or superficial, works only enjoyed during the era they were written. Nineteenth-century music scholar Hans Joachim Zingel laments, "The harp music of the nineteenth century is generally held in low esteem today, considered shallow and of secondary importance. It has also been ignored and neglected by musicologists."<sup>251</sup> Scholar Arnold Schering even referred to the nineteenth-century era in harp music as a "jumble of short-winded salon pieces."<sup>252</sup> Even in articles or tributes that praise these composers, authors unintentionally undermine the importance of these works by deeming them "out of fashion."<sup>253</sup> Hasselmans' own student Lily Laskine dismissed his pieces as useful only for teaching purposes: "He wrote a quantity of pieces whose style is out of fashion today but which should absolutely not be scorned for teaching."<sup>254</sup> Considering that Lily Laskine performed and recorded many of Hasselmans' works before this statement was made, her comment that they are only pedagogically useful seems ill-considered.<sup>255</sup> Hasselmans' entire repertoire and a significant portion of Renié's work has, as a result of this mindset, been relegated to beginning harpists and destined never to be heard on the

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<sup>251</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 1.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Carl Swanson, "Hasselmans Remembered by His Students," 11.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5. See also: Figure 5.1.

concert stage. Zingel also pens an unintended condemnation of Hasselmans' salon works in *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*:

[Hasselmans] limited himself to the small forms with sincere modesty. In some of his works, he was able to overcome fashionable sentiment and realize the inherent possibilities of the harp. [. . .] there are many musicians today who would rather not hear this salon art anymore.<sup>256</sup>

Zingel's statement implies that Hasselmans rarely had any artistic intention when composing and that he only wrote to please the audiences of the day. Yet, the author ignores the possibility that music that is pleasurable can at the same time be artistic and valuable. Hasselmans was not the only composer who received veiled criticism. In a review of her innovative Concerto in C Minor, which was an overwhelming success, a local music critic condemned Renié's style: "[. . .] a solid work, but somewhat in the vein of salon music."<sup>257</sup> Because her large-scale concerto with orchestra was criticized for being in the salon style, her smaller salon pieces would be discounted entirely. To refute claims that these works are only pedagogically valuable, the musical interpretation and expression offered to seasoned performers by these salon works will be examined. The following discussion also presents evidence of Renié's belief that advanced harpists should perform and record this style of music, and that many scholars and musicians today concur.

The lack of modern recordings of both Hasselmans' and Renié's salon works indicates the extent to which today's harpists dismiss their works as merely pedagogical. With the exception of Hasselmans' *La Source*, out of the over fifty-four works he composed, almost no others have been recorded since the early to mid-twentieth century. Those recordings were made by some of his prize students from the Paris Conservatory, who naturally recognized the importance of his

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<sup>256</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 42.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 78-9.

works. All of these recordings exist on the outdated technology of the 78 and 33. The following chart lists early recordings of Hasselmans' works (Figure 5.1).<sup>258</sup>

**Figure 5.1 List of Early Recordings of Hasselmans' Works**

| Title            | Performer        | Record Company    | Catalogue No. | Medium      |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Valse de Concert | Ada Sassoli      | Victor (1912)     | 70088         | 78 rpm disc |
|                  |                  | Victor, re-issued | 55102         | 78 rpm disc |
| Menuet           | Ada Sassoli      | Victor (1910)     | 45194         | 78 rpm disc |
| Gitana           | Ada Sassoli      | Victor (1912)     | 70087         | 78 rpm disc |
| Prière           | Ada Sassoli      | Victor (1910)     | 70027         | 78 rpm disc |
|                  | Carlos Salzedo   | Columbia Records  | A-1206        | 78 rpm disc |
| Patrouille       | Lily Laskine     | Victor            | 4438          | 78 rpm disc |
| Les Follets      | Lily Laskine     | Victor            | 4438          | 78 rpm disc |
|                  | Mildred Dilling  | Urania USD        | 1088          | 33 rpm disc |
|                  | Mildred Dilling  | Urania            | 138           | 33 rpm disc |
|                  | Annie Challan    | Argo Recording    | 458           | 33 rpm disc |
|                  | Ada Sassoli      | Victor (1910)     | unknown       | 78 rpm disc |
| La Source        | Mildred Dilling  | Columbia Records  | 17069-D       | 78 rpm disc |
|                  | Geneviève Gérard | Decca             | G-20638       | 78 rpm disc |
|                  | Annie Challan    | Argo Recording    | 458           | 33 rpm disc |
|                  | Ada Sassoli      | Victor (1908)     | unknown       | 78 rpm disc |

Despite Renié's works being more well-known within the harp community, recordings of her character pieces are even rarer than those of Hasselmans. There are dozens of recordings of Renié's works, but they are almost exclusively of her large concert works for solo harp. *Angélus* is one of the only small works by Renié that is sometimes recorded.

In recent years, a few well-known harpists have begun to champion the importance of these turn-of-the-century pieces for harp and have recorded more small works by these composers. Internationally acclaimed Xavier de Maistre is a particular presence in these recordings.<sup>259</sup> His two volume set *Pièces pour Harpe*, devoted entirely to smaller works for harp,

<sup>258</sup> Compiled from William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5-6, Appendix 1 from Roslyn Rensch's *The Harp*, and the Victor Recording Label archives.

<sup>259</sup> Xavier de Maistre (1973- ) is a critically acclaimed French harpist. At the age of twenty-five, he became solo harp of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, a position he held until 2010.

includes Hasselmans' *Petite Berceuse*, *Trois petites pièces faciles*, and *Guitare* and Renié's *Grand'mère raconte une histoire*, *Six pièces brèves*, and *Feuillets d'album*.<sup>260</sup> Although de Maistre originally recorded these works as a companion CD for beginning to intermediate harpists to use as they learn, they have become recognized recordings in their own right. These recordings are only a small sampling of works by these composers, but they will hopefully influence more harpists to recognize the value in recording salon works. Susann McDonald's *Caprice, French Music for harp* with Hasselmans' *Follets*, Sarah Hill's *Classical Harp* with Hasselmans' *Trois petites pièces faciles*, and Josef Molnar's *Moldau: The Art of Josef Molnar II* with Hasselmans' *Fileuse* are other recent recordings notable for their inclusion of salon works.<sup>261</sup>

In a concert setting, the style of these works enables expressive and creative opportunities. Showcasing the musicality necessary to create imagery implied by the descriptive title of a character piece is one of these advantages. The ability to create a visual image or particular mood with music is a skill that is often achieved most successfully by seasoned performers. The musician must gain knowledge of what s/he is meant to portray and enhance the parts of the music that display it most clearly. The sensitivity of this artistic discretion is difficult to achieve for beginning harpists because they are primarily focused on honing their technique. For example, in a performance of Hasselmans' *Gitana* ("Gypsy"), the harpist must recognize the many elements that create an exotic sound and produce the improvisatory quality of a lively gypsy dance. One must identify the idiomatic rhythms of gypsy music, and produce these

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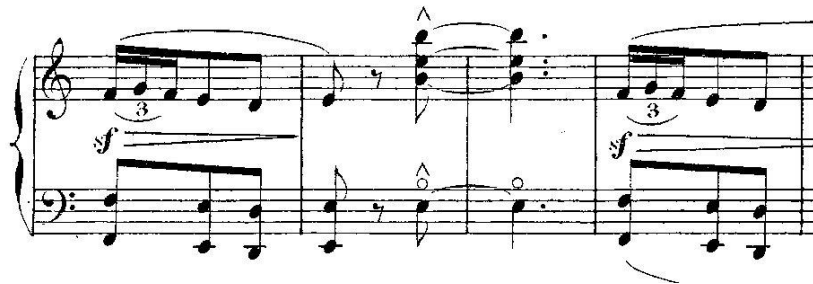
<sup>260</sup> These recordings were originally part of a 4-CD series entitled *Easy Pieces for the Harp*.

<sup>261</sup> Klavier, Catalogue No.: KCD-11133, 2002; The Gift of Music, Catalogue No.: CCLCDG1048; Meister Music, Catalogue No.: MM1186.

rhythms as if playing on a violin or clarinet, the traditional instruments of the gypsy style (Example 5.1).

### Example 5.1

Alphonse Hasselmans, *Gitana*, op.21, mm. 17-20



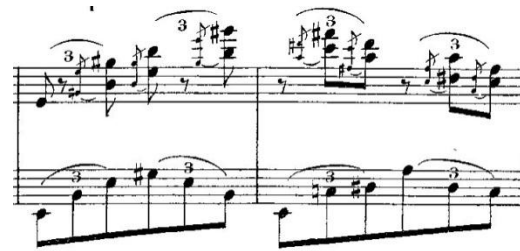
Gypsy music is also marked by the rich use of ornamentation, and the harpist must enhance this when performing *Gitana*. Often certain ornamentation is meant to produce a bouncing effect typical of the gypsy idiom (Example 5.2).<sup>262</sup>

### Example 5.2 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Gitana*, op. 21

mm. 33-34



mm. 47-48

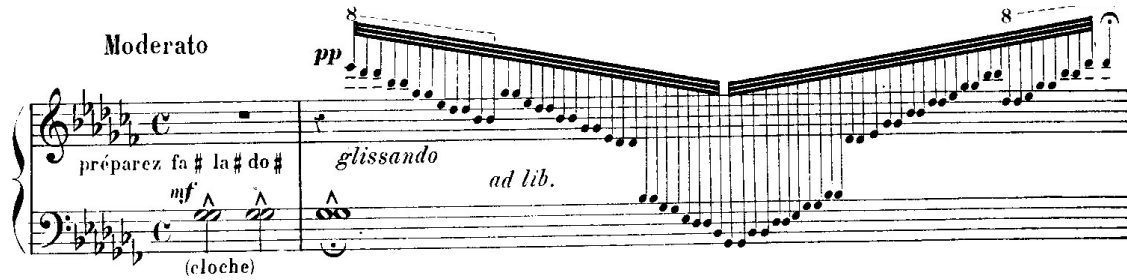


Likewise, in Renié's *Angèlus*, the harpist must understand the religious subject suggested by the title. Unless the performer understands that the Angelus devotion is accompanied by the tolling of bells as the call to prayer, he will not understand the necessity of enhancing the bell-tone effect produced by enharmonics at the beginning of the work (Example 5.3). The performer is also responsible for setting the reverent tone required of religious pieces.

<sup>262</sup> Irén Kertész Wilkinson, "Gypsy music," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41427>; Internet; accessed September 10, 2012.



**Example 5.3 Henriette Renié, *Angèlus*, mm. 1-2**



These works provide a few examples of how an advanced musician is required to perform these descriptive pieces to their full potential. Executed by an experienced performer, the character of each composition will evoke the composer's intended imagery and mood.

In addition to showcasing the descriptive qualities of these salons works, the highly melodic nature of these pieces provides an opportunity for skilled harpists to demonstrate their expressiveness and musicality through melody. Like the songs of Schumann, the melody in these compositions plays a crucial role. Scholar William Trezise also compares the works to the songs of Felix Mendelssohn: "[Hasselmans'] pieces are also reminiscent of the works of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, for many of them are songs without words written in a distinctly nineteenth century idiom."<sup>263</sup> A skilled harpist must, in effect, sing the melody commonly placed in the right hand thumb. If not executed properly, the melody is easily buried in arpeggios or chordal decoration. A prime example of this song-like style is Hasselmans' *Chanson de Mai* (Example 5.4).

**Example 5.4 Alphonse Hasselmans, *Chanson de Mai*, op. 40, mm. 1-3**



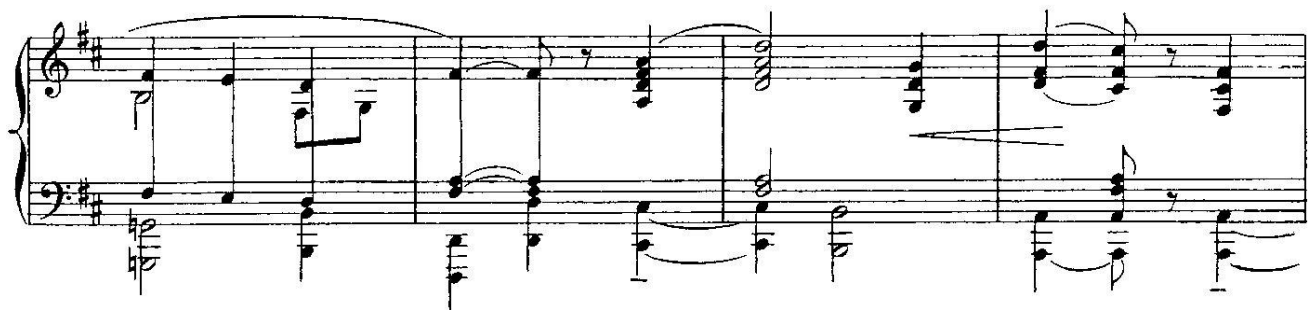
<sup>263</sup> William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 5.

Throughout this work, the performer must highlight the melody found in the upper voice of the pattern of ascending and descending arpeggios. If each note in the arpeggio is played with the same intensity, the melody and inherent musicality in the composition is lost. While a student would be prone to play all of the notes at the same volume, an experienced harpist has the skills to enhance the melody to make the work sound as if it is being performed by a vocalist with accompaniment. Trezise again emphasizes the crucial role the melody plays in these works.

[. . .] [Hasselmans'] works, which may be considered somewhat related to those of Saint-Saens in that they are the result of a creative process quite content to use the musical formulas handed down from an earlier generation, but a process devoting its energy to a delicate and highly melodic idiom.<sup>264</sup>

Renié's *Feuille d'automne* provides an excellent example of the need for this important skill. In this work, the melody is embedded in a series of chords instead of arpeggios. It is even easier to bury the melody in this type of writing since the notes in chords are not separated. The performer must take care to bring out the upper most voice in each chord for the melody to ring through the thick texture.

**Example 5.5 Henriette Renié, *Feuille d'automne*, mm. 4-7**



As Trezise also notes, these descriptive miniatures are similar to works by Chopin, such as his Preludes.<sup>265</sup> Yet, comparing these works to those of Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Chopin, which are considered the pinnacle of the nineteenth-century salon idiom, it is necessary to note

<sup>264</sup> William J. Trezise, "Alphonse Hasselmans: Postlude for an Era," 6.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 5.

that works by these composers are still performed regularly in today's university and concert settings. If Hasselmans' and Renié's works are considered parallels with these well-known pieces, the vital question is why these similar works for harp are often rejected as valid concert works, while the works written for piano and voice are accepted readily.

Although salon pieces should not substitute standard large-scale concert works of the harp repertory, they complement them, offering a charming and practical way to open a concert or providing a break for the performer midway through a recital. Because most of the pieces are of intermediate difficulty, they provide an ideal opening piece for a nervous performer; the harpist can overcome his/her initial nerves and play expressively without worrying about passages with difficult pedaling or technical requirements, while at the same time introducing the audience to the harp's broad spectrum of timbres. Similarly, programming one of these pieces in the middle of a concert provides an opportunity for the harpist to regain strength between large works that drain the performer's endurance without sacrificing quality of performance.

In addition to the showcases offered by performing these works, there are many scholars and musicians who defend the value of salon pieces for professional performers. They stress that although these pieces are commonly learned by students in the beginning stages of their instrument, in the hands of a seasoned performer, the works are truly done justice:

The works of Hasselmans appear in the lives of harpists much as do the *Inventions* of Bach in the lives of pianists: They study them as children and remember them only as childhood performances. The Bach *Inventions* are not study pieces in the hands of an artist such as Ralph Kirkpatrick, nor are Hasselmans' in the recordings [by Ada Sassoli, Carlos Salzedo, and Mildred Dilling] cited in this article.<sup>266</sup>

Roslyn Rensch touts not only the advantages to learning character pieces as a young harpist, but also the benefits to incorporating them into a repertoire as an advanced harpist. She stresses the

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 6.

importance of performing this style as “period pieces” which “fill a need” in today’s concert programming.<sup>267</sup>

[ . . . ] it is certainly true, as any harp student who has progressed from Hasselmans’ *Prayer* to his *Ballade*, *Aeolian harpe*, *La source*, etc. knows. Set aside for a while, then recalled, these solos become valuable period pieces, to be enjoyed for the excellent manner in which they successfully fill a need. *Follets (Will-o’-the-wisp)*, *Gitana*, *Menuet*, *Patrouille*, *Prayer*, and *Valse de concert*, recorded individually years ago at 78 rpm (mostly on Victor labels, by Ada Sassoli and Lily Laskine) attest to Hasselmans’ ingenuity within the limits of his pedagogical intent.<sup>268</sup>

Zingel also reasons that the importance of learning and performing works from this period is necessary to understand the modern works which are commonly performed today. He contends that without an awareness of the music from the nineteenth century, a musician does not have the proper experience to begin learning the innovative techniques and harmonic structures of the harp music of the twentieth century:

This historical background is so important that the music of the twentieth century can hardly be understood without a knowledge of the music before 1900. Studying selected works of this epoch offers harpists practical experience and remains an indispensable requirement for the teaching of technique and for the tonal mastery of modern music for harp.<sup>269</sup>

Beyond the need to learn these pieces to program as period works or for pedagogical purposes, the descriptive miniatures of Hasselmans and Renié deserve to be performed simply because they are well-written compositions. Composed by the most highly regarded harp virtuosos of their time, the works express a wealth of timbres and techniques that could only be written by those who fully understand the instrument. A high level of mastery is required to compose these pieces that so clearly convey an image or mood in such a short amount of time. Zingel describes the worth of these compositions:

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<sup>267</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 165.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Zingel, *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, 82.

He combines stability of form and genuine French charm in these small masterpieces to show the best side of the instrument [. . .] it is important that composers exploit the unique, unparalleled, and distinctive sound spectrum of the harp. Hasselmans character pieces do so by exhibiting subtle differences in rhythm, melody, and timbre.<sup>270</sup>

Zingel further defends this point, declaring that these salon pieces have a unique place in the harp repertoire regardless of the time in which they were written:

Even without taking into account the appropriate historical perspective, the general opinion of harp music of the period [. . .] is that it is not only a distinct body of literature but also unique from an esthetic point of view.<sup>271</sup>

Yet, the most telling advocate for the inclusion of salon pieces on concert programs was Renié herself. Though deemed a prodigy since youth, she continued to program smaller works throughout her life. She especially favored Hasselmans' and even began to program more small-scale works as she matured as a musician. She valued these works that many, even during her time, overlooked as simple pieces for students. She mused, "I was beginning to get rid of the virus of thinking that we only give pleasure and reveal beauty when something is difficult [. . .] Oh if only our age, smitten as it is with acrobatics, would come back to these principles!"<sup>272</sup> The decision to embrace simplicity was also influenced by Hasselmans' criticisms early in her career; Through Marcel Grandjany, Renié learned that Hasselmans would often correct her fingerings and make negative comments about her need to play everything too fast to appear virtuosic. He told Grandjany, "There is no need to join the School of Speed Playing!"<sup>273</sup> In her *Souvenirs*, Renié recalled reaching her full maturity as an artist in 1919; she was forty-four years old and had not given a concert in four years due to WWI.<sup>274</sup>

I arrived not at the height of my career, as I had been there for fifteen years, but at the height of the blooming of my life in the most elevated sense: moral, intellectual, artistic,

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>272</sup> Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

<sup>273</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 71.

<sup>274</sup> Typescript, Box 1, Folder 1, Renié and Varennes Papers.

and spiritual. And my concert programs took on a totally different form. They were better, more coherent musically, more involved with art than with virtuosity [. . .] I began to get rid of the bane which consists in that one touches the public and beauty only by speed and by conquering technical difficulties. On one program, I began with Rameau's Minuet of *Castor et Pollux* which is so often assigned to beginners... but precisely because of its simplicity it must be played with great artistic mastery, or it will indeed sound infantile.<sup>275</sup>

Renié, touched morally, spiritually, and artistically by the pain and damage caused by WWI, was only in her adulthood able to reject the need to please audiences by exclusively playing virtuosic showpieces. She realized that only a true artist can convey the musicality of simple and smaller works, and although these character pieces are often relegated to beginners, they provide a vehicle for developing and portraying virtuosic musicality.

In conclusion, Renié's and Hasselmans' salon works serve many different purposes to harpists in all stages of their musical development. While beneficial for beginning harpists because of an idiomatic writing for the harp that promotes a natural hand position, these works can just as easily captivate an audience from the concert stage. Although deemed trite by some scholars and musicians in the harp community, the prevailing opinion supports the performance and recording of salon works and values the artistic significance they hold for the seasoned performer.

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<sup>275</sup> Varennes, *Living Harp*, 91-92.

## CONCLUSION

Displayed in the analysis of interactions, letters, and arguments between Hasselmans and Renié, three distinct periods defined the evolution of their relationship. Although often characterized by his students as cruel and intimidating, Hasselmans supported Renié in her youth, fostering her deep admiration and respect for his work. This fondness persisted even through Renié's many disagreements with Hasselmans during her adult career. Impaired by his illness, Hasselmans began to sense that the end of his career as a virtuoso harpist and pedagogue was approaching, and his sensitivity towards Renié's wild success led him to make brash comments and poor decisions concerning their relationship. Yet, Hasselmans evidenced his lasting affection for his star pupil by asking Renié to be his successor at the Paris Conservatory.

Moreover, Hasselmans' influence over Renié exhibited itself clearly in her salon works. Not only do their descriptive miniatures share characteristics in genre and form, but their compositional style is also strikingly similar. In addition, Renié's love for her professor's compositions is displayed in her performance of his works throughout her lifetime and in her dedication to teaching his compositions and method to her own students.

Renié's insistence that her own students perform Hasselmans' works exhibits the value of studying these salon works as a beginning or intermediate harpist. Both composers' character pieces allow the student to develop a natural hand position, learn to project a melody, and perfect the special techniques required to master advanced repertoire for the harp. Studying descriptive works also enables the student to advance their musicality by learning how to express a certain image or mood through music.

Although the pedagogical benefits of these pieces are clear, their ability to be performed in the concert setting has often been controversial. Yet, their acceptance into the performance repertory has begun to grow, marked by a modest but steadily increasing number of recordings being made of these works. The opportunity to showcase virtuoso musicality through expression of character and melody make these pieces valuable performance works when carefully placed on the beginning or middle of a program. Lastly, Renié's own realization that the worth of a musician does not have to be displayed through speed or acrobatics validates the inherent artistic possibilities of these works.

The staggering importance of Hasselmans' and Renié's combined contribution to the harp community and salon repertoire is often overlooked by today's harpists and scholars, represented by the lack of scholarly information published about these composers. Hopefully, the new insight into the lives and works of Alphonse Hasselmans and Henriette Renié provided in this document will inspire more harpists to learn and perform their works and encourage more scholars to research and expand the information available about their lives.



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## APPENDIX A

### THE WORKS OF ALPHONSE HASSELMANS

This works list for Alphonse Hasselmans builds on the repertoire list compiled by William J. Trezise in the Spring 1967 issue of the *American Harp Journal*. The earliest known dates of publication are listed for each piece. From these publication dates and known performances of Hasselmans' works by Renié and Hasselmans, the general time frame that each piece must have been written has been provided. The current publisher of each piece is listed when possible, and the former publishers found in the article mentioned above are provided in parentheses. Fortunately, almost all of Hasselmans' original works can be purchased today, although some are only available through European vendors. Many of the works are also available for download via the Library Archive of the International Harp Archive at Brigham Young University and from IMSLP.org.

In addition to the new information provided by composition and publication dates of his original works, a list of known arrangements of his own compositions for cello and harp and known transcriptions and editions for solo harp have also been provided.



## Original Works

| <b>Title</b>                  | <b>Opus</b> | <b>Date<br/>Composed</b> | <b>Date<br/>Published</b> | <b>Publisher</b>                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Petite Berceuse               | 1           | Prior to 1883            | 1900                      | Alphonse Leduc                     |
| Berceuse                      | 2           | "                        | 1883                      | Gérard Billaudot Éditeur (Durand)  |
| Valse de Concert              | 4           | Prior to 1887            | 1895                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Sérénade                      | 5           | "                        | 1890                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Barcarolle                    | 7           | "                        | 1887                      | Lyra Music Company (Durand)        |
| Ballade                       | None        | "                        | 1887                      | Alphonse Leduc                     |
| Gitana                        | 21          | Prior to 1890            | 1900                      | Durand                             |
| Prière                        | 22          | "                        | 1910                      | Salvi Publications (Boston)        |
| Lamento                       | 23          | "                        | 1900                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Confidence                    | 24          | "                        | 1890                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Petite Valse                  | 25          | "                        | 1910                      | Gérard Billaudot Éditeur (Lacombe) |
| Rêverie                       | 26          | "                        | 1891                      | Lyra Music company                 |
| Fileuse                       | 27          | "                        | 1892                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Trois Petites Bluettes        | 28          | "                        | 1910                      | Alphonse Leduc                     |
| 1. Istorietta                 |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| 2. Ländler                    |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| 3. Carillon                   |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| Au Monastère                  | 29          | "                        | 1892                      | Lyra Music Company (Durand)        |
| Aubade                        | 30          | "                        | 1900                      | Lyra Music Company (Durand)        |
| Mazurka                       | 31          | "                        | 1892                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Harpe d'Eole                  | 32          | "                        | n.d. (1920)               | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Conte de Noël                 | 33          | "                        | 1895                      | Lyra Music Company (Morley)        |
| Menuet                        | 34          | "                        | 1895                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| Etude Mélodique               | 35          | "                        |                           | Durand                             |
| Chasse                        | 36          | "                        | 1900                      | Durand                             |
| Etude                         | 37          | "                        | 1890                      | Durand                             |
| Trois Petites Pièces          | None        | Prior to 1892            | 1892                      | Durand                             |
| Faciles:                      |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| 1. Rêverie                    |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| 2. Rouet                      |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| 3. Ronde de Nuit              |             |                          |                           |                                    |
| Orientale                     | 38          | Prior to 1897            | 1900                      | Lyra Music Company (Durand)        |
| Gondoliera                    | 39          | "                        | 1897                      | Gérard Billaudot Éditeur (Durand)  |
| Chanson de Mai                | 40          | "                        | 1897                      | Salvi Publications (Durand)        |
| Deux Romances sans<br>Paroles |             | Prior to 1898            | 1906                      | Rouhier                            |
| 1. Cantilène                  | 41          | "                        |                           |                                    |
| 2. Simple mélodie             | 42          | "                        |                           |                                    |
| Nocturne                      | 43          | "                        | 1899                      | Lyra Music Company                 |
| La Source                     | 44          | "                        | 1898                      | Salvi Publications (Durand)        |
| Feuilles d'automne            |             | Prior to 1899            | 1899                      | Durand                             |
| 1. Sérénade                   | 45          |                          |                           |                                    |

|                 |              |      |               |      |                             |
|-----------------|--------------|------|---------------|------|-----------------------------|
|                 | mélancolique |      |               |      |                             |
| 2.              | Crépuscule   | 46   |               |      |                             |
| 3.              | Calme        | 47   |               |      |                             |
| Follets         |              | 48   | Prior to 1900 | n.d. | Salvi Publications (Durand) |
| Gnomes          |              | 49   | "             | 1900 | Durand                      |
| Guitare         |              | 50   | "             |      | Alphonse Leduc (Gay)        |
| Trois Préludes: |              |      | "             | 1900 |                             |
| Prélude no. 1   |              | 51   |               |      | Lyra Music Company          |
| Prélude no. 2   |              | 52   |               |      | Lyra Music Company          |
| Prélude no. 3   |              | 53   |               |      | Lyra Music Company          |
| Patrouille      |              | None | "             | 1900 | Lyra Music Co. (Philippo)   |
| Elégie          |              | 54   | Prior to 1910 | 1910 | Gérard Billaudot Éditeur    |
| Romance         |              | None | "             | 1910 | Lyra Music Company          |

### Arrangements

Confidence, op.24, for cello and harp

Prière, op.22, for cello and harp

### Transcriptions and Editions

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Bochsa, R.N.C. (1789-1856)    | Vingt Etudes, vol. 1 & 2<br>Vingt-Cinq Etudes, vol. 1 & 2<br>Quarante Etudes, vol. 1 & 2<br>Cinquante Etudes, vol. 1 & 2 |
| Braga, Gaetano (1829-1907)    | La Serenata  |
| Chopin, Frederic (1810-1849)  | Valse de Chopin, Op. 64, No.1  |
| Dizi, F.J. (1780-1840)        | 48 Etudes<br>Grande Sonate for Harp Solo<br>Sonate Pastorale for Harp Solo   |
| Dolmetsch, Victor (1852-1904) | Cantilène for cello (or violin) and harp   |
| Durand, Auguste (1830-1909)   | Chaconne (1910)  |
| Fauré, Gabriel (1845-1924)    | Romances sans Paroles, Op. 17, No. 3   |
| Godard, Benjamin (1849-1895)  | 1re gavotte, op. 16 (1900)   |
| Haydn, Joseph (1732-1809)     | Thème varié  |
| Heller, Stephen (1813-1888)   | Six etudes de Stephen Heller (1888)  |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Labarre, Théodore (1805-1870)   | Grande etude pour la harpe: compose de huit caprices, Op. 30                      |
| Larevière, Edmond (1811-1842)   | Exercises and Etudes, Op. 9   |
| Mendelssohn, Felix (1809-1847)  | Chanson de Printemps: Romance sans paroles  |
| Naderman, F.J. (1781-1835)      | Sept Sonates Progressives, Op. 92   |
| Pierné, Gabriel (1863-1937)     | Concertstuck<br>Sérénade, uv. 7 (1889), originally for string orchestra           |
| Rubinstein, Anton (1829-1894)   | Mélodie, Op. 3, No. 1 (1890)  |
| Saint-Saëns, Camille(1835-1921) | Le Cygne<br>Romance, Op. 27 pour Violon, Piano ou Harpe et Organ                  |
| Schumann, Robert (1810-1856)    | 3 Melodies de Schumann  |
| Schütt, Eduard (1856-1933)      | Etude mignonne, Op. 16, No. 1(1900)   |
| Thomé, Francis (1850-1909)      | Sous la Feuille for Harp Solo<br>Simple aveu: Romance sans paroles, Op. 25 (1900) |

## APPENDIX B

### THE WORKS OF HENRIETTE RENIÉ

This works list for Henriette Renié has been compiled from handwritten lists and concert programs in the Renié Collection, Françoise des Varennes' *Henriette Renié, Living Harp*, and Odette de Montesquiou's *The Legend of Henriette Renié*, edited by Jaymee Haefner. Some confusion exists between composition, first performance, and publication dates for selected works, and other works are still not dated. In these cases, the dates have been taken from original concert programs and handwritten lists from the Renié collection.

Only Renié's original solo harp compositions and chamber works are included in this works list. For a complete list of Renié's many transcriptions for harp, please see the works list available in Odette de Montesquiou's *The Legend of Henriette Renié*, edited by Jaymee Haefner.

## Method

**Méthode complète de harpe**, in 2 volumes (Paris: Leduc, 1946)

*Complete Method for Harp*, English translation by Geraldine Ruegg (Paris: Leduc, [1966])

Vol. 1: *Technique* (Technique)

Vol. 2: *Syntaxe—Appendice* (Syntax—Appendix)

## Compositions

| Title   | Instrumentation   | Date<br>Composed | First<br>Performance   | Publication<br>Date |
|---|---|------------------|--|---------------------|
| <i>Andante religioso</i>  | Harp and violin<br>(or cello)   | 1895             | 1895   |                     |
| <i>Ballade fantastique: d'après Le coeur révélateur<br/>d'Edgar Poe</i><br>(Fantastic Ballad: based on "The Tell-Tale<br>Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe)   | Solo harp   | 1902             | Feb. 19, 1907  | 1910<br>(ed.1912)   |
| <i>Celle que j'aime</i> (This that I love)  | Mezzo soprano<br>and harp   |                  | June 2, 1912   |                     |
| <i>Concerto en ut mineur</i><br>.   | Harp and<br>orchestra   | 1895-1901        | Mar. 24, 1901  |                     |
|   | Reduction:<br>harp and piano  |                  |  |                     |
|   | Reduction:<br>1st movement-<br>harp and string<br>quartet with<br>double bass,<br>ad lib. |                  |  |                     |
| <i>Contemplation</i>  | Solo harp   | 1898             | Aug.15, 1898   |                     |
| <i>Danse des lutins</i> (Dance of the Goblins)  | Solo harp   | 1907             | Feb 7, 1912  |                     |
| <i>Deuxième ballade</i>   | Solo harp   |                  | Feb. 1, 1911   | 1912                |
| <i>Deux pièces symphoniques</i><br>1 <i>Élégie</i> (Elegy)<br>2 <i>Danse caprice</i> (Capricious Dance)   | Harp and<br>orchestra   | 1904             | Elegy:<br>Dec. 9, 1906<br>Dance<br>Caprice:<br>Feb. 19, 1907 |                     |
| <i>Fêtes enfantines</i> (Children's Celebrations)<br>1 <i>La vierge à la crèche</i> (The Virgin at the Crib)<br>2 <i>Mascarada</i> (Masquerade)<br>3 <i>Cloches de Pâques</i> (Bells of Easter) | Harp and<br>narrator, ad lib.   |                  |  | After 1945          |
| <i>Feuillets d'album</i> (Album Leaves)<br>1 <i>Esquisse</i> (Sketch)<br>2 <i>Danse d'autrefois</i> (Dance of the Past)   | Solo harp   | 1902             |  | 1943                |

### 3 *Angélus* (Angelus)

|  |                                |                  |              |            |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>Feuille d'automne</i> ( <i>Esquisse</i> )<br>(Autumn Leaf [Sketch])   | Solo harp                      |                  | Feb. 7, 1912 | 1912       |
| <i>Grand-mère raconte une histoire: petite pièce très facile pour la harpe sans pédales</i><br>(Grandmother Tells a Story : a small easy piece for harp without pedals)  | Solo harp                      | 1926             |              |            |
| <i>Légende: d'après Les elfes de Leconte de Lisle</i><br>(Legend : based on [the poem] "The Elves" by Leconte de Lisle)  | Solo harp                      | 1901             | 1902         |            |
| <i>Le long des chemins</i>   | Voice and harp                 |                  |              | After 1945 |
| <i>Op. 1</i> ( <i>Six pièces</i> )<br>1st Suite:<br>1 <i>Menuet</i> (Minuet)<br>2 <i>Au bord du ruisseau</i> (At the Edge of the Brook)<br>3 <i>Petite valse</i> (Little Waltz)<br>2nd Suite:<br>4 <i>Air ancien</i> (Ancient Air)<br>5 <i>Lied</i> (Song)<br>6 <i>Valse mélancolique</i> (Melancholy Waltz)                       | Solo harp                      | 1905/6           |              |            |
| <i>Op. 2</i> ( <i>Six pièces brèves</i> )<br>1st Suite:<br>1 <i>Conte de Noël</i> (Tale of Christmas)<br>2 <i>Recueillement</i> (Meditation)<br>3 <i>Air de danse</i> (Dance Tune)<br>2nd Suite:<br>4 <i>Invention dans le style ancien</i><br>(Invention in the Ancient Style)<br>5 <i>Rêverie</i> (Daydream)<br>6 <i>Gavotte</i> | Solo harp                      | 1919             |              | 1919       |
| <i>Pièce symphonique: en trois épisodes</i>  | Solo harp                      | 1907             | Feb. 4, 1909 | 1913       |
| <i>Les pins de Charlannes:</i><br><i>petite pièce très facile pour la harpe, sans pédales, avec piano ou seconde harpe</i><br>(The Pines of Charlannes:<br>a small easy piece for harp without pedals,<br>with piano or second harp)   | Harp duet or<br>harp and piano | 1928             |              |            |
| <i>Prière a la Vierge</i>  | Mezzo soprano<br>and harp      |                  |              | 1905       |
| <i>Près d'un berceau</i> (Near a Cradle)   | Harp and<br>narrator           | 1897             |              |            |
| <i>Près d'un berceau</i>   | Mezzo soprano<br>and harp      | Prior to<br>1914 |              |            |

|  |                                    |           |               |      |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------|
| <i>Promenade matinale: 2 pièces pour harpe</i><br>(Morning Walks : two pieces for harp)<br>1 <i>Au loin, dans la verdure, la mer calme et mystérieuse. . . .</i><br>(In the distance, in the greenery, the calm and mysterious sea. . . .)<br>2 <i>Dans la campagne ensoleillée, la rosée scintilla. . . .</i><br>(In the sunny countryside, the dew glistened. . . .) | Solo harp                          | 1913      | Feb. 15, 1922 | 1923 |
| <i>Scherzo–Fantaisie</i>   | Harp (or piano) and violin         | 1895-1901 |               |      |
| <i>Le sommeil de l'Enfant Jesus</i>  | Voice and harp                     |           |               | 1936 |
| <i>Sonate</i>  | Piano and cello                    | 1907      |               | 1915 |
| <i>Trio</i>  | Harp (or piano), violin, and cello | 1901      | Feb. 21, 1905 | 1907 |

## APPENDIX C

### ORIGINAL LETTERS CITED FROM THE RENIÉ COLLECTION<sup>276</sup>

#### Marguerite Hasselmans to Henriette Renié [undated]<sup>277</sup>

Bien chère Henriette,

Je m'excuse de venir un peu tardivement  
répondre à votre précieuse lettre, mais un petit  
délitement de ma vie solitaire m'en a empêché.  
C'est que j'ai voulu faire une sévère retraite avant  
ma communion qui a eu lieu Dimanche à l'église  
même et pendant tout ce laps de temps, des ser-  
vices religieux avec prières ont été officiés près  
de mon lit, pour ma guérison.  
Je n'oublierai jamais cette bénie communion  
à laquelle j'ai pleuré de bonnes larmes d'émotion,  
de joie et de reconnaissance.  
Après avoir compris le mystère de l'Eucharistie  
— que l'ange gardien de chaque église apporte, au  
moment de la bénédiction du vin et du pain, des  
fluides du Seigneur même et les se pose dans  
le petit vase sacré — vous pouvez penser avec  
quelle humilité, reconnaissance et amour j'e-  
rai approché de ce sacrifice divin.  
J'ai passé des moments inénarrables où mon âme  
baignée d'une forte lumière intérieure, se sentait  
embrassée par les divins effluves.  
Mais je ne vous ai pas oublié tous mes prières  
d'alors, comme dans celles de tous les soirs, où  
votre nom est prononcé avec un culte presque  
mystique.  
Et à propos de Dieu. Comme vous avez raison  
en tout ce que vous me dites!  
Avec votre jugement sûr et pénétrant, votre  
idéalisme transcendant et votre intelligence  
qui voit le Beau et le Vrai éternels au dessus

<sup>276</sup> All images used by permission of the International Harp Archives.

<sup>277</sup> Box 27, Folder 1B, Renié and Varennes Papers.



des réalités éphémères - vous m'avez parfaitement éclairé sur la personnalité harpistique de M<sup>lle</sup> T. et la valeur de son œuvre.

Certes, il n'a jamais saisi le sens divin de l'art et ses vœux s'arrêtaient à un idéal tout matériel, ignorant complètement la vision d'un monde supérieur abstrait.

La technique est tout pour lui. La poésie de la musique - cette révélation intérieure, qui semble comme un ascension dans le grand soleil - ne le préoccupe point. Le poète est l'écritain. Je vivrai avec Beethoven: c'est beau les paroles, mais on aime parfois d'autres braves!

Comme la belle comprendrait bien votre manière d'envisager le côté élevé de l'art et de ce subtil instrument d'expression sa harpe et ~~vous~~ ses récentes lettres abondent de déclarations d'amour et de fidélité à la musique et à son instrument. Voici quelques-unes: «mon art, ma harpe, sera à moi et moi je serai à jamais à elle. Elle restera la plus chère et la plus fidèle compagne de ma vie». «C'est pour moi un très grand bonheur d'être la musicienne, que je ne sacrifierai jamais pour autre chose de la vie. Quelle est belle la lumière que l'art m'a fait entrevoir...»

Pourtant nous voilà gagnés la bas! Il faut bien mener tout à bonne fin. D'autant plus que M<sup>lle</sup> T. est excessivement bon et aimable envers la petite, à laquelle il porte un intérêt tout particulier. En plus il lui donne ces leçons gratuitement - étant au courant des impossibilités de change auxquelles les citoyens roumains qui habitent l'étranger sont astreints par l'état.

Une somme fixe est <sup>disponible</sup> accordée. Autant c'est la somme bonté qui peut faire face aux nécessités. Et Dieu sait que nous nous sommes pas de excès-là!...

Doine ne craint point ses relations avec vous, mais n'osait venir vous importuner sans être invitée. Elle serait heureuse de retrouver un peu contact avec vous si vous lui indiquez quelques-unes de vos heures favorables.

Quant à M<sup>lle</sup> Baquay-Ritte, je la considère comme une providence heureuse pour mon enfant et ne saurais jamais le remercier pour tout ce qu'elle fait de si grand cœur.

Et maintenant, en me consacrant de vous retenir peut-être un peu trop, je renouvelle mes très sincères remerciements pour le précieux intérêt que vous portez à Doine et vous prie de recevoir l'assurance de nos sentiments de vive reconnaissance et profondément.

Affectueusement à vous.

Marguerite



123, AVENUE DE WAGRAM

Attendre pour le 7 Février ma  
chère Henriette, j'irai avec le plus  
grand plaisir.

Très beau programme!  
Rétablis toi tout à fait et sois  
épatante comme toujours.

Ton vieil Ami.

Alphonse Hasselmans

Affectueux souvenirs à ta chère  
maman et à tous les tiens.

Paris 26 janvier 1912.

<sup>278</sup> Box 28, Folder 4, Renié and Varennes Papers.