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Revolutionizing 19th-Century Flute Technique: Hugot-Wunderlich's *Méthode de Flûte* (1804)

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On 1 vendémiaire an 12 of the French Republican calendar (24 September 1803), a curious necrology appeared in the *Correspondance des amateurs musiciens*, a weekly newsletter that reported on concerts, aesthetic debates, musical instruments and publications for sale, and various other items of interest to Parisian music lovers during the turbulent years following the French Revolution.¹ The notice reads, "We have just lost in a very short period of time two men who are equally dear to the art of music, to their families, and to their friends." As two of the leading virtuosi of the day, these men—François Devienne and Antoine Hugot—were especially dear to the flute world.

Devienne and Hugot's shared death notice belies the remarkable parallels in their lives. Born two years apart (Devienne in 1759, Hugot in 1761), they died less than two weeks apart. Both had established their reputations in the 1780s as composers and soloists at the Concert Spirituel, the most important French public concert series of the eighteenth century.² In the 1790s, both performed in the renowned orchestra of the Théâtre de Monsieur and its successor, the Théâtre Feydeau, with Hugot as principal flutist and Devienne as bassoonist. During the aftermath of the French Revolution, Devienne and Hugot asserted their loyalty to the Republican cause by joining the band of the National Guard; Devienne eventually rose to the rank of sergeant. Both taught in the Free School of Music and its successor, the Institut National de Musique, an institu-

tion whose mission was to provide musical accompaniment to patriotic festivals and music lessons to the children of National Guard members. When the Paris Conservatoire was established in 1795 by Bernard Sarrette, a captain in the National Guard, both Hugot and Devienne were engaged as flute professors. That the Conservatoire employed six flute instructors at its inception is a testament to this instrument's importance to military and state music functions.³ Sadly, Devienne and Hugot suffered from mental illnesses which contributed to their deaths. The obituary notes that Devienne passed away at the Charenton asylum "after a long illness that ended by altering his reason," leaving behind a widow and five children. Hugot, reportedly afflicted by a fever, stabbed himself several times with a knife before leaping to his death from a fourth-floor window.

Despite their tragically early demises, Devienne and Hugot had a broad and lasting influence on flute pedagogy and technique. Both flutists published treatises which were reprinted, translated and widely circulated during the nineteenth century. Devienne's *Nouvelle Méthode Théorique et Pratique Pour la Flute* was published by Imbault ca. 1794, and reprinted at least 28 times.⁴ Antoine Hugot's *Méthode de Flûte* appeared posthumously in 1804, having been edited and completed by his Conservatoire colleague Johann Georg Wunderlich, and published by the Conservatoire press; it was reprinted at least 12 times, including translations in Italian and German.⁵ Jane Bowers has suggested that the especially numerous reprintings of Devienne's method indicate

that it was "one of the most influential flute methods of all time."⁶ Still, it was Hugot and Wunderlich's treatise—and not Devienne's—which became the official Conservatoire teaching method in April 1804. This treatise remained in use there until the 1840s, when it was supplanted by the *Méthode de flûte* of Jean-Louis Tulou, Wunderlich's pupil.⁷

Written during a period of enormous political, cultural and musical change, the Devienne and the Hugot-Wunderlich tutors are of inestimable value to scholars and musicians interested in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century performance practices. Yet the two treatises present very different approaches to flute playing, a fact that is all the more remarkable considering all three musician-authors were working contemporaneously in the same institution. Foremost among the differences is Devienne's continued advocacy for the one-keyed flute. In his preliminary discourse, he acknowledges the usefulness of the G-sharp/A-flat and A-sharp/B-flat keys, particularly in slow movements or in sustained passages, but states that "While I do not use them, I approve of them, but only in these cases, because in passagework, they become useless and only serve to add to the difficulty; given that the simplest manner is the best manner in my view, I cannot stress enough to students to put it into practice as much as possible."⁸ Devienne's fingering charts do not include keys other than the usual one for D-sharp/E-flat, and no passages in the exercises and duets appear with indications for them.

By contrast, Hugot and Wunderlich declare a decided preference for the four-

GAMME PAR BÉMOLS
POUR LA FLÛTE À TROIS PETITES CLEFS.

(1) Voyez SOL # et LA #.

(2) Il y a deux manieres de faire le IÉ♭ ou l'UT #, cela dépend de la note que l'on fait ensuite; on peut le faire aussi en laissant toute la main droite formée.

(3) On peut doigter le MI♭ ou RÉ # d'en haut de deux manieres, la premiere comme on l'a indiqué, et la seconde en bouchant le premier trou; cela dépend des traits que l'on doit exécuter.

A fingering chart from the Hugot-Wunderlich treatise, with detailed illustration of the 4-keyed instrument's design

keyed flute in Article Two of their method ("The Composition of the Flute"):

The use of the three [recently-added] keys which we have adopted have been too lightly dismissed by several people who have objected that these additions complicate the mechanism of the instrument. We insist on their use because we consider them to be a very useful improvement; the advantages that one derives from them in terms of intonation, equality and strength in several pitches, the facility that they give in making trills and finally the strength that they add in some of the low notes more than compensate for the light mechanical work which these keys require.⁹

The Hugot-Wunderlich treatise thus became the first extant treatise published in France to both advocate for—and specifically address the use of—the four-keyed flute.¹⁰ While French musicians were relatively late to employ keyed flutes in comparison to musicians in England and in German-speaking territories,¹¹ the story of their eventual acceptance in the early nineteenth century is closely aligned with the establishment of the Paris Conservatoire and its new approach to music education.

In their *Méthode de Flûte*, Hugot and Wunderlich not only argued for the adoption of a new instrumental technology and the inclusion of a more up-to-date fingering

chart, but they also radically rethought how the flute should be taught and played. Particularly revolutionary were the new pedagogical ideals they espoused: an evenness of articulation and tone production, a more systematic approach to the development of finger dexterity through scale exercises and drills, a greater use of abstract instrumental pieces and practice etudes, and increased attention to the directions of the written score. Thus, in spite of Devienne's Republican credentials, his method continues to reflect the flute playing and instructional methods of the *ancien régime*. It is Hugot and Wunderlich's *Méthode de Flûte* that truly exemplifies the new aesthetic and ideological

goals of the Paris Conservatoire: the disciplining of music for civic and military functions, rather than for courtly entertainment.

The Conservatoire's New Pedagogy

The Paris Conservatoire was the first institution to attempt to standardize music education in France through a centralized, secular state authority. Its mission was to create a national music worthy of the people of the new French Republic. Given its origins in the National Guard and Revolutionary politics, the concepts of military discipline—along with Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—pervade the Conservatoire's foundational documents and curriculum structure. Four hundred students of both sexes were to be admitted, generally between the ages of eight and thirteen, with equal numbers from each French *département*. Led by Barnard Sarrette's directorship, the five *inspecteurs-compositeurs* (François Joseph Gossec, Étienne Méhul, André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, Jean-François Lesueur and Luigi Cherubini) were charged with the establishment of a graded regimen for the acquisition of musical skills and a standardized repertoire for all students. Musical instruction proceeded in three orderly stages or degrees: in the first degree, students were educated in solfège and the principles of music; once admitted to the second degree, they received instruction in singing and in their chosen instrument; in the third degree, they received instruction in the theory and history of music, accompaniment, and advanced lessons on their instrument. A timetable ensured regular lessons on a 10-day schedule (*décade*), in accordance with the French Republican calendar, and even practicing was enforced at fixed hours. Examinations were administered at regular intervals to test students' progress, and disciplinary infractions were swiftly punished.¹²

The Conservatoire's highly-disciplined pedagogical approach is most clearly articulated in its fourteen official instruction treatises, which were commissioned in 1796 and published by the Imprimerie du Conservatoire from 1800 through 1814. These seminal works, covering elementary music theory, solfège, harmony, and all the major instruments, were written by the head music professor(s) in each subject, and

were approved by a committee. They are indicative of a newly collectivized approach to music pedagogy distinct from the individualized, idiosyncratic approach of music treatises published prior to the Revolution.¹³ No other teaching materials but those officially sanctioned by the Conservatoire could be used in that institution.

Hugot and Wunderlich's *Méthode de Flûte*, one of the longest and most detailed of the official Conservatoire treatises at 152 pages, exemplifies this institution's new pedagogical approach. It was, firstly, a collective product: documents outlining its approval by a seven-member commission, the Conservatoire's general assembly and the director are reprinted in its prefatory materials.¹⁴ Moreover, its overall format likewise follows a similar narrative shape to the other Conservatoire methods. Carefully engraved fingering and trill charts, for both the one-keyed and the four-keyed flute, are included in the first few pages [see illustration, p. 2].¹⁵ An introductory article outlines the flute's history, culminating in its then-current four-keyed version, and a description of the instrument's composition and form. From there, the articles cover topics which range in order from the more basic and practical—such as posture and holding the instrument, embouchure formation, and the use of the tongue (Articles Three through Six)—to the more abstract—e.g., phrasing, ornamentation, tempo indications, the distinctive characteristics of the *adagio* and the *allegro*, etc. (Articles Seven through Ten).

The Hugot-Wunderlich treatise is ambitious in its size and scope, more than doubling the length of Devienne's 77-page method. As such, it offers valuable information about flute-playing in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century in regard to issues of performance practice, teaching methodology, repertoire and even instrument design [see illustration]. Part II of this article, which will appear in the next issue of *TRAVERSO*, will consider Hugot and Wunderlich's specific innovations in regard to articulation, fingering dexterity and ornamentation.

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Music from the University of Alberta, and a Performance Certificate and Second Phase diploma in Baroque and Classical flute from the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, where she studied with Jed Wentz. Her current research projects center on 18th-century improvisation, the Dutch Early Music scene, and on historical performance and 1960s countercultural movements.

Notes:

¹This periodical, published by the Citoyen Cocatrix, appeared weekly from 1802/3 to 1805; it was renamed the *Correspondance des professeurs et amateurs de musique* in 1804. A facsimile reprint is available (Geneva: Minkoff, 1972). All translations from the French throughout this article are my own unless otherwise indicated.

²The Concert Spirituel, established by Anne Danican Philidor, ran continuously from 1725-1790. Originally intended to present sacred choral music during Lent, the Concert Spirituel eventually became primarily a forum for instrumental music and an important vehicle for virtuoso performers. Flutists featured on Concert Spirituel programs included Michel Blavet and Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin, Johann Baptist Wendling, Pietro Grassi Florio and Joseph Tacet. The series also did much to promote orchestral music, and included early performances of symphonies by Johann Stamitz, Haydn and Mozart. See Constant Pierre, *Histoire du Concert spirituel 1725-1790* (Paris: Société de Musicologie, 1974).

³Loi portant établissement d'un Conservatoire de musique à Paris pour l'enseignement de cet art; 16 thermidor an III (3 August 1795), in Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation: Documents historiques et administratifs recueillis ou rencontrés par l'auteur* (Paris: Claude Tchou pour la Bibliothèque des introuvables, 2002), 124-5. Of these six instructors, one doubled as oboist. By 1796-97 (an V), this number had been reduced to five (Pierre, 408).

⁴Jane Bowers, introduction to *François Devienne's "Nouvelle Méthode Théorique et Pratique pour la Flûte"* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), 12. For a catalog of extant editions, see Thomas Boehm, "Commentary on the Present Edition," in *François Devienne's "Nouvelle Méthode,"* 31-72. A copy of Devienne's method was also purchased by the Institut national de musique in 1795. See *Dépenses pour l'institut national par le citoyen Sarrette, Floréal et Prairial III*, in Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique*, 118.

⁵David Jenkins, introduction to A. Hugot & J.G. Wunderlich, *Méthode de Flûte 1804* (Buren: Fritz Knuf, 1975), xvi-xviii. The latest extant edition dates from 1906. Wunderlich (1755/6-1819), a German, had studied and worked in France since 1776 and was hired as a Professor of the Second Class at the Conservatoire on 22 November 1795. See *Nomination du jury du concours d'admission aux emplois de professeurs, 2 brumaire an IV in Pierre, Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation*, 128-9. After the deaths of Devienne and Hugot, he became the sole flute professor at the Conservatoire until 1816.

⁶Jane Bowers, introduction to *François Devienne's "Nouvelle Méthode,"* 14. Bowers and Thomas Boehm

have catalogued 28 extant editions of Devienne's method. See Thomas Boehm, "Commentary on the Present Edition," in *François Devienne's "Nouvelle Méthode,"* 31-72.

⁷Jean-Louis Tulou, *Méthode de flûte progressive et raisonnée adoptée par la comité d'enseignement du Conservatoire* (Mainz, 1835; later edition, Paris: Brandus, 1851). According to Powell, Tulou's treatise was adopted as the Conservatoire's official text in ca. 1845. See Ardal Powell, *The Flute* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 132. Tula Giannini, however, estimates the date as 1842; see her *Great Flute Makers of France: The Lot & Godfroy Families 1650-1900* (London: Tony Bingham, 1993), 130.

⁸François Devienne, *Nouvelle Méthode Théorique et Pratique Pour la Flûte* (Paris: Imbault, [1794]), 1. Devienne also acknowledges the existence of "so-called English flutes" with footjoints descending to C and C-sharp, but he rejects these low notes as being against the nature of the instrument, inconsistent, and ruinous to the rest of the scale.

⁹Hugot and Wunderlich, 3. In this same article, the authors also acknowledge the existence of the Quantz flute with separate keys for D-sharp and E-flat, but reject it "because this key complicates the mechanism of the instrument for an unappreciable gain." It seems clear that Devienne himself was specifically targeted as an objector to the keyed flute in the above passage. Wunderlich discusses both the advantages of the keys and Devienne specifically in his later treatise, the *Principes Élémentaires et Gradués Pour la Flûte* (Paris, Benoist, c. 1812), p. 1, where he again notes of the additional keys, "This ingenious mechanism, which eliminates many of the defects associated with this instrument, is a new advantage which will surely prove its worth (*qui doit nécessairement fixer son sort*) and guarantee its stability." In a particularly poignant footnote, he adds, "In regard to the little keys, I can not ignore the observations of my old friend and colleague Devienne who, in disapproving of them, nevertheless acknowledges their role in the adagio; surely he would not have held these beliefs had he examined the simplicity of this mechanism more closely and familiarized himself with its utility in the fastest of pieces. I like to think that he would have been convinced that the complexity which struck him at first glance was unfounded. But is not such a minor mistake excusable from such a distinguished artist, who mastered the flute and the bassoon at the highest level, and whose genius enriched the musical repertoire of wind instruments with numerous well-loved works? The art of music experienced a significant loss when this estimable artist was taken away at the prime of his brilliant career by a premature death, which leaves his friends and all who knew him with profound regrets. The special fondness I held for him leads me to take this occasion to pay a just tribute to his memory."

¹⁰Several other treatises were printed in France in the ten years between those by Devienne (ca. 1794) and Hugot-Wunderlich (1804). These include Joseph Marie Cambini, *Méthode pour la Flûte* (Paris: Gaveaux, ca. 1795-97; it is unclear if a copy listed in Grove and RISM as published in Paris by Naderman et Lobry in 1799 is a second edition or an error), Armand Vanderhagen, *Nouvelle méthode de flûte* (Paris: Pleyel, ca. 1798), Mathieu Peraut, *Méthode pour la Flûte* (Paris: The author, ca. 1800), V. [François Louis] Michel, *Nouvelle méthode de flûte* (Paris: Le Duc, 1802), and [H.] Trézy, *Doigter de la Flûte* (n.d., n.p., [ca. 1802]). None makes

mention of the keyed flute.

¹¹See Ardal Powell, *The Flute* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 111-26 and Powell, Introduction to *The Keyed Flute by Johann George Tromlitz* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 31-36.

¹²The above summary is based on the following two documents: Règlement propose pour le Conservatoire de musique par le commissaire chargé de son organisation, adopté par le directoire exécutif, le 15 messidor an IV (3 July 1796) and Organisation du Conservatoire de Musique, germinal an VIII (March 1800) in Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation*, 223-30.

¹³For a discussion of these methods, see Emmanuel Hondré, "Les méthodes officielles du Conservatoire," In *Le Conservatoire de musique de Paris: Regards sur une institution et son histoire*, edited by Emmanuel Hondré (Paris: Association du bureau des étudiants du CNSMDP, 1995), 73-107.

¹⁴Included following the title page of Hugot-Wunderlich's method, the "Arrêtes relatifs a l'adoption d'une méthode de flûte" note that the tutor was reviewed by a committee of Gossec, Ozi, Domnich, Catel, X. Lefevre, Sallantin and Wunderlich, presented at the general assembly of Conservatoire members, and finally approved by Conservatoire president Bernard Sarrette on 21 germinal an 12 (10 April 1804).

¹⁵Hugot and Wunderlich, i-v. In describing the four-keyed flute I have chosen to use the modern nomenclature here. Hugot and Wunderlich consistently refer to this instrument as the "flûte à trois petites clefs": if one counts the "standard" Eb/D# key, the total number of keys is four.

¹⁶Tula Giannini has suggested that the four-keyed flute in the Hugot-Wunderlich fingering charts resembles those made by the Godfroy workshop, employing pillar and plate mounts. However, Ardal Powell argues instead that these illustrations "show mounts on saddles that probably anchor brackets, not posts." See Tula Giannini, *Great Flute Makers of France*, 80; Powell, *The Flute*, 316.

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Over the years, the newsletter has fallen behind in its publication schedule, which accounts for the discrepancy between the masthead date and the events reported herein. We are making progress in catching up, and sincerely appreciate your patience as we continue to work to get on schedule.

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Event:

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