

Performing for Napoleon: Production Quarrels at the Paris Opéra

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This study addresses the collaboration of the stage designer Ignazio Degotti (1758–1824) with the choreographer Pierre Gardel (1758–1840) in a series of works presented at the Théâtre de l’Opéra in Paris during the Napoleonic administration (1804–1815). Backstage episodes in three key performances demonstrate that although the Opéra was politically crucial to Napoleon, there were practical problems in theatre management on his watch. This study argues that the inadequacy of spaces for artistic creation and a lack of coordination among the creative team were the most pressing issues in this respect.

Keywords: Ignazio Degotti, Napoleonic theatre, Pierre Gardel, Théâtre de l’Opéra, Paris

INTRODUCTION

Eusebio Ignazio Maria Degotti (1758–1824), better known as Ignazio, was an Italian stage designer from Piedmont who settled in Paris in 1790; he was engaged initially by Gian Battista Viotti at the Théâtre de Monsieur.¹ In 1795, he started working as *peintre-en-chef* of the Théâtre de l’Opéra, a position that he held under successive management regimes and with some gaps until 1822.²

Degotti’s time at the Opéra coincided with that of the choreographer Pierre Gardel (1758–1840), who was ballet master there from 1787 until 1827. Although they were the same age and had similar responsibilities, their positions could not have been more different. Gardel was a forceful leader for over forty

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years. He managed to protect the ballet company from the turmoil of the French Revolution and out-manoeuvred his colleagues, including Jean-Georges Noverre (1727–1810), to take sole control of the Ballet School.³ In order to buttress his authority, he engaged a mild-mannered deputy, Louis-Jacques Milon (1765–1845), to ensure that there was no risk of his being overshadowed.⁴

Degotti faced many more problems at the Opéra. The administration consistently complained of his poor management of time and resources.⁵ He was frequently accused of egoism, of being more interested in his own prestige than in the efficiency of his workshop.⁶ However, in recent studies there has been a re-evaluation of Degotti which has brought to light his exceptional artistic talents.⁷ Degotti's organisation of the *atelier de peinture* (the painting workshop) was undoubtedly chaotic and – as we argue below – his commitment to dance productions was questionable. However, any judgments should make allowance for the context in which the stage designer worked at the Opéra – in a period that coincided more or less with the establishing of Napoleon's power.

Napoleon inherited a theatre system that was already under state control. After 1804, when the centralisation of power reached its apogee, performances were controlled with a quasi-militaristic discipline. Censorship – combined with a set of special decrees issued in 1807 – held sway over the all French theatres. In Paris, the main consequence of these laws was to reduce the number of theatres to eight state-controlled establishments, with detailed regulations for their productions.⁸ For example, only the Opéra had permission to present fully-choreographed ballets, with sets, costumes, and a well-developed narrative. Napoleon renamed the theatre as the *Académie Impériale de Musique*, regarding song and dance as among the most efficient of propaganda tools – and he had high expectations of them.⁹ All new ballets and operas were to be supervised and approved by the Prefecture of Paris, the Ministry of Police, and ultimately, by Napoleon himself. He could demand amendments to the libretto, ask the choreographer for different dances, and even cancel an entire production if he judged it contradictory to his views. As the publications of the composer and music historian David Chaillou have made clear, the Opéra was a political arena for Napoleon.¹⁰

Over the past decade, a number of scholars have explored in various ways the pivotal role played by the theatre through music, dance, dramaturgical choices, and censorship¹¹ in shaping the Napoleonic consensus. However, little attention has been paid in all this to what happened behind the scenes. How did the choreographer and the designer practically manage their creative process whilst obeying strict and demanding requirements? And how did these powerful collaborators deal with the practicalities of stage production?

The study that follows underlines the practical problems in managing rehearsals and other activities behind the scenes, despite the central role that the theatre played in Napoleonic politics. Performances with greater political importance brought with them pressure and high expectations, and were more likely to be accompanied by confusion and logistical turmoil. All this did not necessarily affect the success of a performance, but it tended to weaken

collaboration between the stage designer and the choreographer and had an impact on their creative work.¹²

An unpublished proposal for a more functional *atelier de peinture* throws light on Degotti's frustration with logistics and lack of space (often shared with the dancers). The difficult relationships between artists is then reconstructed through an analysis of the staging preparations for three operas for which Degotti created the settings and Gardel choreographed the divertissements: *Le Triomphe de Trajan* (October 1807), *La Mort d'Adam* (March 1809), and *Fernand Cortez* (November 1809).

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR A FUNCTIONAL ATELIER DE PEINTURE (1795)

In September 1795, two months after Degotti officially joined the Opéra, the theatre administration requested a project proposal to renovate the interior of the theatre and to create a more efficient space for the *atelier de peinture*.¹³ Degotti collaborated on this with the architect Auguste Cheval de Saint-Hubert, a noted artist in the circle of Jacques-Louis David. With David, Degotti and Gardel, Hubert was an artist actively engaged in the management of revolutionary festivals and national propaganda.¹⁴

At the time, the dedicated area for the design and storage of décor and stage sets was located in the building of the Menus-Plaisirs, between rue Poissonnière and rue Bergère which had also accommodated the Conservatory of Music since 1795.¹⁵

The idea of concentrating the administrative offices, an *atelier de peinture*, and the Conservatory in the same place might well have been planned to provide a benefit for the theatre.¹⁶ However, the project proposal indicates that in 1795 the spaces provided for the creation of stage effects and their subsequent storage were inadequate. Firstly, because the Menus-Plaisirs building was not very close to the theatre (in 1795 it faced the Bibliothèque Richelieu where Square Louvois now stands).¹⁷ Secondly, in Degotti's view, this was a crowded, communal space, shared with the administration and the newly-established Conservatory of Music (see Figures 1 and 2).

Degotti and Hubert proposed a brand-new building on the left side of the theatre and attached to a '*grande arcade*'.¹⁸ Degotti argued that a new building connected to the Opéra, would have enabled stage sets to be looked after more effectively while generating significant annual savings by eliminating the movement of scenery between buildings. For the theatre's interior, Degotti proposed different improvements; significantly, he considered the actual stage to be too narrow between the space occupied by the scenery and the walls. In his opinion, this impeded the movements of both the artists and the stage hands, especially during ballet performances with a large number of dancers and teeming triumphal marches. He argued that a larger space was needed in order

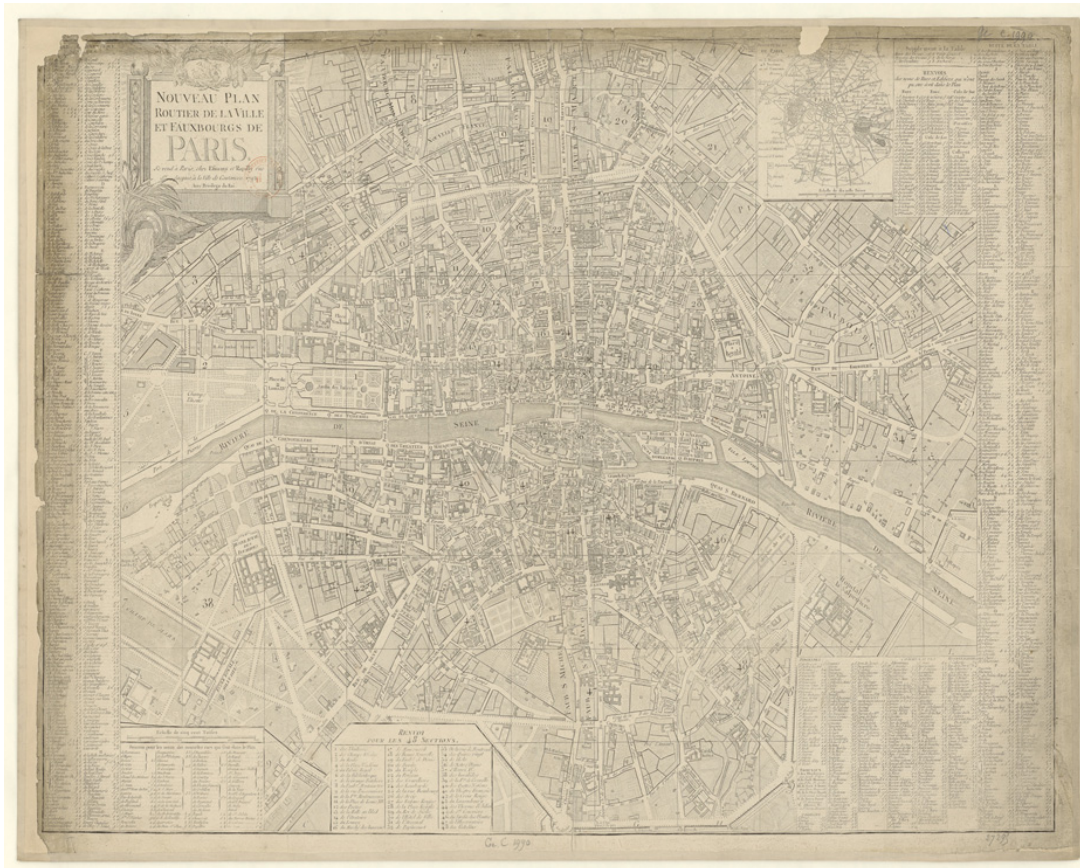


Fig. 1. Image 1. Jacques Esnault and Michel Rapilly, *Nouveau Plan routier de la ville et fauxbourgs de Paris* (1792), 77×55 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. By permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for academic dissemination.

to facilitate backstage work and prompt emergency intervention in case of fires or accidents.

As outlined below, the issue of space was to become crucial for Gardel during the Napoleonic years. As noted by the dance historian Olivia Sabe, Gardel's productions were less focused on the narrative (mimed) aspect of the performance after 1800, prioritising instead dance scenes for ensembles and large *corps* of dancers.¹⁹ This artistic choice perfectly suited Napoleonic subjects, depicting as they did military marches and processions and triumphs inspired by Ancient Rome. A journalist commenting on Gardel's ballet *La Vestale* (1807) noted that the masses of dancers moved as if they were a single group – something that was to become one of the most effective features of Gardel's choreography in this period.²⁰

In the meetings with the Opéra board, Degotti suggested that funding should be concentrated on artistic elements - materials, talent, and performances. He considered these to be 'core' investment expenses. Moreover, he emphasised that having the *atelier de peinture* annexed to the Opéra would improve artistic cohesion and co-operation between the on-stage and offstage functions. For Degotti, to limit space was to limit the imagination and creative genius of the designer, the painters, and the machine operators.²¹ However, the plans

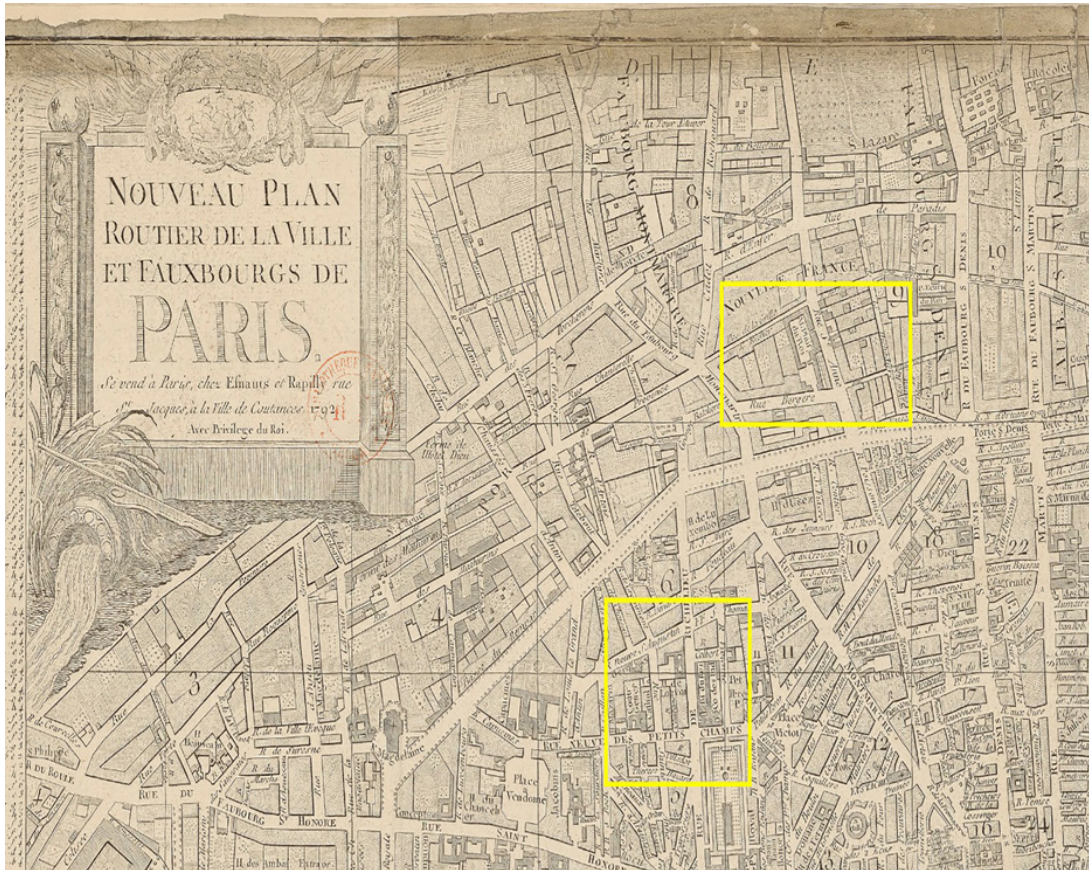


Fig. 2. Image 2, detail. Jacques Esnault and Michel Rapilly, *Nouveau Plan routier de la ville et fauxbourg de Paris* (1792), 77×55 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. By permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for academic dissemination.

ultimately did not materialise; the lack of adequately-organised spaces remained a problem for years to come.

From 1795 to 1822 Degotti continued to work at the Opéra, where he enjoyed success, was engaged in quarrels, and took periodic leave from work. After a year spent at the King's Theatre in London, Degotti returned to Paris in 1798 and witnessed Napoleon's political rise, culminating in his coronation as Emperor of the French on 2 December 1804. Like other artists of his circle (such as Jean-Baptiste Isabey and Claude Thiènon) Degotti had the opportunity to work on the construction of the new imperial image through artistic commissions both inside the theatre and outside it. Away from the theatre he worked with Jacques-Louis David, with whom he established a cordial relationship that can be traced through a correspondence that extended from 1805 to 1809.²² Inside the Opéra, Degotti in common with all of the artists, was subject to highly-controlled measures. Artists were asked to husband their resources carefully, but at the same time they were urged to devise productions which reflected the magnificence of the emperor. Under the new management, there were pressures on rehearsals which, combined with the inadequacy of the working environment, slowed down progress, and created a climate of tension at all levels in the theatre.

LE TRIOMPHE DE TRAJAN (1807): A PROBLEM OF SPACES

The lack of space for rehearsals and storage became a crucial issue during the staging of *Le Triomphe de Trajan*. This was an opera in three acts, first performed on 18 October 1807, with music by Jean-François Lesueur and Louis-Luc Loiseau de Persius, and a libretto by Joseph-Alphonse Esménard. The choreography was by Pierre Gardel, apart from one *pas de trois* by Louis Duport, and settings were by Degotti and his team. The story narrates the return of Trajan to Rome after winning the Second Roman-Dacian War. The parallel between Napoleon and Trajan had been spelled out to the audience in the introductory statement of the libretto: the glorious Roman past was made explicit in order to celebrate the power of the French present.²³

The performance was initially planned to be staged on Napoleon's birthday, 15 August 1807. However, as is apparent from the vexed correspondence between the Opéra director, the Prefect, and the Ministry of Police, there was insufficient time to set up an ambitious performance involving hundreds of characters (especially Roman soldiers), several live horses on stage, and countless triumphal architectural structures. Therefore, the first performance had to be postponed to the following October, to coincide with another anniversary: Napoleon's victory at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt (14 October 1806).

As soon as work on the production of the opera began, in February 1807, the First Prefect, Jean-Baptiste-Charles de Luçay, urged the artists to work with the utmost diligence and to strive for magnificence in every aspect of staging - while achieving a judicious measure of economy.²⁴ However, five months later, the work was still proceeding slowly and Luçay wrote to the management to ensure that the artists were working with the utmost zeal - for Napoleon was expected in Paris:

(...) les artistes ont besoin d'être souvent stimulés; et l'arrivée de sa majesté est si prochaine qu'il n'y a pas un moment à perdre. Vous sentez, comme moi, que tout ce qui tient à la célébration des victoires de l'Empereur ne doit pas souffrir le moindre retard (...).²⁵ [(...) artists need to be constantly motivated; and the arrival of his majesty is so near that there is not a moment to be lost. You feel, as I do, that all that is necessary to celebrate the Emperor's victories must not suffer the slightest delay'.]

Joseph Bonet de Treyches, who in 1807 was serving as theatre director, responded by warning Luçay that there were delays - in spite of rehearsals taking place day and night. The dance company was in need of more space and therefore the administration had hastily rented an extra theatre, the Salle Favart. This solution was adopted to help Gardel: he was working with over seventy dancers and extras, striving to finish the choreography for Act II (which included a triumphal march with dancers and horses) and to make a start on Act III.

Meanwhile, the stage sets were awaited from Degotti's *atelier de peinture*. Settings for Act I were to represent one of the entrances to the city of Rome, with a temple dedicated to Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger) on the right and a palace on the left. In the background was the gate named *Porta Capena*, the starting

point for a ‘street of triumph’ richly decorated with laurels, war trophies, and a triumphal arch.²⁶ A sequence of five scenes in Act II depicted the apartments in Trajan’s palace, followed by a change of scenery in the ninth, representing again a ‘street of triumph’ with a view of the Capitol in the background. This was the location for one of the key scenes of the opera: the triumphal march concluding the act.²⁷ Act III then opened in a peristyle within the Temple of Jupiter Capitoline, with scene six transitioning into the seventh (and final scene), the Trajan Forum with the Trajan Column in the centre, surmounted by the statue of the emperor holding the terrestrial globe surrounded by eagles, war trophies and laurel wreaths.²⁸

Chronicles of the time report that majestic choreography and staging concluded Acts II and III.²⁹ The crucial scene at the end of Act II (II, ix) was the triumphal march, for which Gardel employed ninety-seven dancers. Divided into groups, the dancers had to lead and to follow the chariot of Trajan drawn by four white horses, richly caparisoned and ridden by the Franconi brothers. A first group included dancers representing Indian, Greek and Ancient Roman characters; they preceded the arrival of the chariot, which made its entrance accompanied by female dancers sprinkling grains of incense, flowers and bay leaves on stage, while the choir sung the verses ‘Vive, vive Trajan! Père de la patrie!’ The procession then proceeded towards the Capitol, depicted in the background, and, as soon as the chariot and the choir moved on, another group of dancers appeared and extended the triumphal march.³⁰ Another significant dance moment was what the libretto calls a ‘*ballet général*’ at the end of Act III, which took place in a setting representing the Trajan Forum. This was the audience’s chance to witness the leading dancers of the company: Armand Vestris, Marie Miller (better known as Madame Gardel), and Clotilde Mafleuret danced a *pas de trois* as Indian characters, while Emilie Bigottini partnered Saint-Amant in the role of a Greek youth. The choreography for this act also included group dances with over sixty performers representing the Dacians and the Shiites.

One report characterised Gardel’s choreography overall as ‘un océan de merveilles,³¹ insisting on how perfectly it matched the beauty and the magnificence of the décor and stage sets:

C’est une question de savoir si les décorations ont fait plus de plaisir que les danses. Quoique le public ait paru très–vivement frappé de prestiges de la peinture et de la perspective, je n’oserais cependant décider la question en faveur de la toile peinte, contre les tableaux vivants des danseurs et des danseuses: j’aime mieux juger le procès à l’amiable, et dire que les décorations et les danses ont partagé la gloire du succès.³² [‘It is a question of establishing whether the decorations were more pleasing than the dances. Although the public seemed very impressed by the prestige of painting and perspective, I would not dare to resolve the issue in favour of the painted canvas, as against the *tableaux vivants* created by the dancers. I prefer to make an out-of-session judgment and say that the decorations and the dances shared the glory of success.’]

Audiences were also very impressed by the way the horses and riders were integrated into the performance. In *Le Triomphe de Trajan* Gardel co-ordinated

operations with the Franconis; he had previously worked with them in 1802, in the ballet *Ninette à la cour*, in which horses initiated the choreography, producing *a coup de théâtre*.³³

The Franconis had moved to France around 1756. The father of the family, Antonio, had started his career as an animal trainer, working especially with horses. His family toured France taking part in performances that fell under the category of *spectacles de curiosités*; they then established themselves in Paris in 1793, where they set up their permanent circus (called *Manège Franconi* and then *Cirque Olympique*) and began taking part in theatrical productions, first with the Théâtre Feydeau (in 1793 and 1794) and then with the Opéra.³⁴ The equestrian skills of this family provided a perfect fit for the Napoleonic performances, since these were intended as a tribute to and an exemplification of the military prowess of the Great Army.

The preparation of an ambitious work such as *Le Triomphe de Trajan* was inevitably attended by difficult moments. Gardel had to divide his time between the negotiations for the equestrian show and the dance rehearsals continuing in the Salle Favart. To make the best use of time and to facilitate rehearsals with the horses, Gardel requested that the Opéra director build a temporary hall behind the theatre, ideally thirty metres long, built of wood and supported by iron girders. This option was not approved by the Ministry of the Interior, who deemed that the project would breach building regulations.³⁵

Space was not the only issue Gardel had to solve. During the negotiations, the Franconis advanced the money-saving option of having the horses ridden by artists from the Opéra. The risk of allowing amateur performers to ride horses on stage, was the probable reason that this idea was rejected – for safety reasons. Consequently the Franconis themselves took part in Gardel's choreography.³⁶

Two months before the first performance, a report by the machinist Boutron, dated 14 August 1807, informed the director of the Opéra of the terrible conditions in which the brand-new stage sets were stored.³⁷ The storage space of the Menus-Plaisirs was insufficient (as predicted by Degotti in 1795) and the sets had been stored in unsuitable areas. Boutron also reported that the humidity and the rain had already begun to damage the painted backdrops and there was a risk that, if not removed, they would become unusable for the première. As Boutron reported: 'il est véritablement douloureux de voir des décorations se perdre, même avant d'avoir servi'.³⁸ ['It is truly painful to see the loss of the decorations, even before they have been used'.] A solution to the problem arrived only on 8 October when the Minister of the Interior authorised the use of some areas inside the gallery of the *Bibliothèque Impériale*, on the condition that no damage should be caused.³⁹

In spite of problematic progress, press articles reported that after eight months of work the collaboration between Degotti and Gardel had produced an outcome that drew the approval of the public:

Les artistes qui ont eu assez de talent, de connaissances historiques et d'intelligence pour disposer de tels effets de perspective et pour les animer par de tels groupes, méritent, il

faut le dire, la palme de leur art: ce sont MM Degotty pour les décorations, et Gardel pour les ballets.⁴⁰ [‘The artists who displayed such talent, historical knowledge, and intelligence in creating such perspective effects and in animating them collectively deserve, it must be said, the awards of their respective arts. These are MM Degotty for the decorations, and Gardel for the ballets’.]

There is no doubt that the combination of the majestic décor inspired by the Ancient Rome, and Gardel’s majestic choreography, and the presence of real animals on the stage of an indoor theatre, created a strong impact. Scholarly accounts, however, tend to highlight the popular success of the enterprise, neglecting to mention the logistical issues around the rehearsals. Many aspects of the preparatory phase of *Le Triomphe de Trajan* indicated that each step in the creative process was marked by time and space pressures – suggesting more generally that the success of a performance does not necessarily vouch for the existence of a perfectly-organised production schedule.

LA MORT D’ADAM (1809): A PROBLEM AMONG THE TEAM OF ARTISTS

La Mort d’Adam, which was first staged on 21 March 1809, had a libretto by Nicolas-François Guillard, music by Jean-François Lesueur, choreography by Louis-Jacques Milon for Act I and Gardel for Acts II and III, and designs by Degotti. The work, a *tragédie lyrique* with a biblical subject, had been in preparation for many years. Scheduled to be presented in 1802, it could only be mounted in 1809 due to a series of problems related to the author’s personal and professional life.⁴¹

After the French Revolution, performances with a religious subject were uncommon. Moreover, the Concordat of 16 July 1801 allowed censorship to be particularly meticulous in this category of productions. As the opera scholar Chaillou demonstrates, the political significance of *La Mort d’Adam* explained the decision to invest in its production: the libretto depicted the Emperor as akin to the figure of Jesus – a man, but also a god, whose supreme strength and dignity were unassailable.⁴²

For Act I, Gardel’s assistant, Milon, worked with an enlarged group of twenty-four female dancers and with the *première danseuses* Madame Gardel, Bigottini, and Geneviève-Sophie Chevigny, for whom he created a *pas de trois*. The décor depicted a landscape at sunrise, with the hut of Sélime (one of Adam’s daughters) placed on one side and Abel’s tomb opposite it. The larger group of women dancers represented a crowd of *jeunes filles* supporting Sélime at the end of the first scene. In the course of their dance they had to place crowns of flowers near her hut, joining a chorus of women afterwards (I, i).⁴³

Act II, choreographed by Gardel, added to the female dancers who had performed in Act I, a group of twenty-four men, twelve of them representing Cain’s descendants. The décor depicted the entrance to a cedar forest at midday.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 3. Image 3, costume 2, *Esprits célestes pour les danses de l'apothéose*. François-Guillaume Ménageot, *La Mort d'Adam et son apotheose: sept plates de costumes* (1809), different formats, Bibliothèque Nationale de France <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb409163893>. By permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for academic dissemination.

The climax of the performance, however, was the finale at the end of Act III. This was an epilogue based on the apotheosis of Adam and designed to captivate the public by means of a stand-out scene called 'Le Ciel d'Adam' (see Figure 3). Archival documents underline how Lesueur drew inspiration for this work from John Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*. He intended the dances in the epilogue to be framed by a scenic design that he referred to as 'le ciel prophétique de Mylton' (III, vii, viii, ix),⁴⁴ for which Degotti created a superb setting which he characterised as the most stunning sky one had seen or could ever see.⁴⁵ This crucial scene took place after a combat between God and Satan. Surrounded by a chorus of demons, Satan threatens to steal from God the soul of the first man. Instead, Adam ascends to heaven and reaches celestial glory. As he rises, the scene uncovers the shifting perspectives of an unbounded sky, populated by dancers richly dressed as angels and celestial spirits.⁴⁶

According to the names listed in the libretto, eighty dancers were involved in this scene. Eight male dancers performed as 'la suite de Satan' (III, vii) – a group of rebel angels that falls into an infernal pit as the audience hears thunder and sees lightning flashes illuminate the darkness of the stage. A much larger group of

seventy-two dancers, divided into equal groups of men and women, represented the celestial spirits in the two final scenes of the Act (III, ix, x).⁴⁷

The theatre journalist Julien-Louis Geoffroy retrospectively described the opera as lacking in action, though offering a very rich spectacle for the eye.⁴⁸ Audiences appreciated the dancing parts of the celestial spirits more than those of the demons, and responded to Degotti's scenic designs with great enthusiasm.⁴⁹

Archival documents allow us to reconstruct how the crucial problem behind this staging was a lack of coordination among the team of artists, mainly caused by the difficult attitude of the composer. On one hand, there was Lesueur, who had been made anxious and frustrated by the staging delays of *La Mort d'Adam*. He consequently behaved with a pedantic attitude towards his colleagues, causing stress and misunderstanding during the entire creative process. His demands were expressed through long letters filled with instructions, opinions, and expectations.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the scene designer and the choreographers as well as the machinist and the costume designer lacked proper guidance and support from the administrators, who were uncertain of how to coordinate the various elements of production.

Lesueur considered both the scenic design and the pantomime as crucial to the performance. In December 1809, three months before the première, the musician wrote to the director of the Opéra: 'Il faut du luxe dans l'ouvrage, que pour les pantomimes et pour les décorations qui doivent être variées et riches, comme la jeunesse du monde'.⁵¹ ['Luxury is called for in this work, as much for the pantomime as for the scenic design, which must be varied and rich, like the world's youth.'] The composer's exhaustive instructions provoked the creative artists concerned to meet and discuss them. On 31 January 1808, Degotti wrote to the director of the countless and incomprehensible notes about scenic design and reported that after a meeting he had with the poet Guillard, the *Maitre des Ballets* Gardel, the costume designer Ménageot, the machinist Boutron, it was agreed that the décor needed to be simplified in order to reflect its true character, since '[le] fantastique pourra être mis en scène et jamais faire des miracles'⁵² [[the] fantastic can be staged and ever work its miracles.]

Lesueur explained at length that according to his calculations, the costumes and set designs should have cost approximately 70,000 francs – in his opinion a completely reasonable sum for a work of the calibre of *La Mort D'Adam*. Lesueur claimed that for the designer, the choreographer, and the machinist, the epilogue of this performance provided a brilliant opportunity to apply their talents and to distinguish themselves.⁵³ From Lesueur's perspective this statement was reasonable, since the estimated cost of the décor for *Le Triomphe de Trajan* had been 54,300 francs, excluding the expense of the costumes.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the other artists may have compared Lesueur's requested amount to the budgets for previous works. What is unquestionable is that Lesueur had great expectations for the ballets and the scenic designs of Act III; therefore he urged Degotti and Gardel to work closely together, co-ordinating their schedules and

requirements. Degotti's contribution had to precede those of the rest of the team (choreographer, costume design, machinist) and to be communicated to them:

(...) Il faudra, ensuite, qu'avant de nous rassembler à la direction avec tous les autres chef de service, que monsieur Degotti, comme je l'en ai prié, ait communiqué avec tous les autres chef de service, que monsieur Degotti, comme je l'en ai prié, ait communiqué au Maître du ballet les praticables (...) et (...) les plans, [qu'] il lui [le maître du ballet] préparera et ménagera pour exécuter ses compositions de pantomime musicales et son autres actions des danses-célestes, quand il seront bien convenus de leurs faites, et qu'ils seront d'accord entre eux et moi, alors je demanderai à Monsieur Picard de rassembler tous les chefs de service à la direction (...) ⁵⁵ [(...) It then will be necessary, before we meet with the other creative directors of the production, that Mr Degotti, as I have asked of him, will have already communicated with them, and that Mr Degotti, as I have asked of him, will have already communicated with the *Maitre des Ballets* about . . . the props and [floor] plans which he [Degotti] will prepare and arrange for him [the ballet master] to execute his compositions of musical pantomime . . . and his other actions of the celestial dances; when they have agreement on everything, and when everything is clear between them and myself, I will ask Mr. Picard to gather together all the creative directors with the theatre management']

In the case of *Le Triomphe de Trajan* Gardel performed the crucial coordinating role, splitting his administrative tasks between negotiating for the equestrian choreography and dealing with issues of space for the rehearsal. Yet, in the documents concerning *La Mort d'Adam*, it is clear that it was Lesueur who dominated the administration of the staging elements. In both instances, the Opéra management lacked someone who could effectively coordinate the manifold production requests and the various personalities.

FERNAND CORTEZ (1809): A PROBLEM OF COORDINATION

Fernand Cortez is a *tragédie lyrique* inspired by the conquest of Mexico and of the Aztec population by the Spaniard Hernán Cortés in the sixteenth century. It was conceived as a work of propaganda, specifically requested by Napoleon to support the continuing military campaign in Spain. It was first performed on 28 November 1809 with music by Gaspare Spontini, a libretto by Victor-Joseph-Étienne de Jouy and Joseph-Alphonse d'Esménard, and décor by Degotti. The choreography for all the three acts was by Gardel.

This ambitious staging again required a great effort of coordination. As with the *Triomphe de Trajan*, the opera included many performers on stage (dancers, chorus, and extras) and its equestrian show again involved the Franconis' circus – with the Franconis participating in the performance with sixteen horses. The stage designer, with the choreographer and other creative leads, held frequent meetings with the management to ensure that the production process was managed efficiently.⁵⁶

The ballet is set in Mexico. Act I takes place in the Imperial Pavilion of the Spanish military camp: to the left a section of the beach with Spanish vessels is visible, while to the right stands the throne of Emperor Charles V, surmounted by

his portrait. Gardel's assistant, Milon, supported by Jean Goyon, another soloist, led a group of twenty dancers appearing as Spanish officers in this act. Another group of dancers represented Spanish spear carriers and gunners who performed in the fight scenes. A division of horse marched past the fighting men and rode through the theatre.⁵⁷ Thirty-six dancers (twelve men and twenty-four women) represented Mexicans, together with a smaller group of six women and one *pas de quatre* of principals (Vestris and Charles Beaupré with Madame Gardel and Mademoiselle Clotilde). This act required a greater number of Mexican women as they had to perform a voluptuous dance (accompanied by the chorus) designed to seduce the Spanish soldiers (Act I, vi).⁵⁸ Madame Gardel successfully led this group, although contemporary accounts report that the performance of Mlle Clotilde was highly appreciated: 'parmi ces nymphes séduisantes, il en est une plus fière qui semble dédaigner la volupté, une espèce d'amazone qui ne veut plaire que par ses attitudes nobles et belliqueuses; c'est mademoiselle Clotilde' [Among these attractive nymphs, there is one who is more proud than the others and seems to despise voluptuousness; an Amazonian creature wanting only to please through the nobility and beauty of her attitudes; she is Mlle Clotilde].⁵⁹

Act II discovers a mountain landscape with abundant and exotic vegetation, rocks, and a bridge over a lake on which a fight between the Spanish and the Mexicans takes place. On the other side of the bridge, stands a temple in which the Aztecs are intending to perform a human sacrifice (see Figure 4). In Act II the dance scenes are limited and mainly taken up with a military march and a combat performed by the same Spanish military personnel and riders had appeared in Act I.

In Act III the first and last scenes are set outside the lavish Aztec temple. There were only eight dancers and twelve extras in this act; there were two larger groups of Mexicans (ten men, twelve women and the additional group of thirty-six performers that had appeared in Act I). Twelve children in Mexican costumes (equal numbers of girls and boys) also appeared as extras, performing their dances on top of a ruined monument, as if they were part of the setting.⁶⁰ By contrast, there was a concentration of dance scenes in the finale – when, after many combats, the two cultural groups were united in a feast, with the conquered Mexicans recognising the superiority and magnanimity of Cortez (and by extension, Napoleon).

Degotti approached the designing of the production as a scientific enterprise; he wanted the painters of his team to acquire a precise scientific understanding of Mexican flora and customs; accordingly, he sent his collaborators to consult reference books in the Bibliothèque Impériale and the Jardin des plantes.⁶¹ Despite his good intentions, a few months into the production process, there had been several delays. The zeal and meticulousness that Degotti devoted to the creation of the décor caused delays in the delivery of the stage sets and costumes – consequently, according to the director of the Opéra, 'ni le chant ni la danse ont la possibilité d'agir de concert' [It not possible for either the singing or the dancing to act in concert].⁶² More meetings were held and by the end of July the production process for the décor had been



Fig. 4. Ignazio Degotti, Sketch for *Fernand Cortez* (Act II)
 Ink and Bistre Wash, 290×430 mm (image) Bibliothèque Nationale de France,
 Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra
 BMO ESQUISSES ANCIENNES-5 (49)
 By permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for academic dissemination.

ramped up, with some external painters having been hired. In early August, the *atelier de peinture* gave assurances that everything would be ready by the end of September.⁶³

The reports of the Opéra administration praised the rare and outstanding qualities of the designer Degotti, but also upbraided him as the main occasion of the delays in the preparation of *Fernand Cortez*. He was accused of being tardy in passing on the completed drawings and designs for the production to the chorus master and to the choreographer and, consequently, of preventing the work from progressing in an organic way.⁶⁴ Degotti's décor was rich and majestic, but according to the administration, it was also impractical in the scenes that featured horses and dancers. Degotti was accused of making such episodes difficult to stage, although they were intrinsic to the performance. Moreover, he was accused of overcrowding scenes in Acts I and III with props. This seriously compromised the choreography so that the ballets and pantomimes lost much of their charm.⁶⁵

Was this state of affairs solely the fault of Degotti? Or might it have been possible to circumvent such problems with a careful rehearsal process? After all, this was not the first time that real horses had shared the stage with performers. The administration was convinced that the problem could have been avoided if

Degotti had supplied more detailed drawings to the choreographer to study; he could then have adapted his work to accommodate the designs. The situation, however, was a complex one; for example, the equestrian display had to be closely interlaced with the dance choreography, but in the end the Franconis were only able to rehearse inside the theatre at the beginning of September 1809, a mere six weeks before the first performance.⁶⁶ The combined stage rehearsals with dancers and horses were therefore conducted after most of the décor had been finalised. Degotti visited the Franconi's race course to assist him in designing a production featuring live animals on stage; but in this case careful fieldwork failed to vouchsafe an organic structure to the staging. Gardel's idea expressed during the production process for *Le Triomphe de Trajan* (to create a temporary rehearsal hall behind the theatre) was perhaps a wise one; it might well have helped with the practical logistics of combining dances and the equestrian show.

Fernand Cortez was a popular success, although the production was withdrawn for political reasons after only seventeen performances.⁶⁷ The show also led to a temporary falling-out between the Opéra and Degotti; he was invited to remain on staff, but subject to a new contract which, in his view, limited his freedom of expression. Degotti resigned – although this proved temporary: in 1815, on the eve of the Restoration of the Monarchy, he returned to lend his services to the Opéra.

THEATRICAL LIFE AFTER NAPOLEON: THE SITUATION IN THE ATELIERS IN 1817

Poor organisation and a lack of adequate space did not cease to be issues in 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic Empire – rather, they persisted until the end of Degotti's career in 1822. An interesting and unpublished letter from Degotti reveals how, eight years after the staging of *Fernand Cortez*, and with a new administration linked once more to a reinstated Royal Family, little or nothing had changed in the way in which the spaces for dance and set design were organised.⁶⁸ The following autograph letter, dated 1 April 1817, highlights how the main problem remained a lack of a suitable space for the *atelier de peinture* and a proper division between the spaces allocated for stage and costume design and those allocated for dance rehearsals.

Degotti complains of the confusion and disorder created in the spaces used to create the set designs, since he had to share these with other activities, in particular, dance rehearsals. The rooms dedicated to the stage design were filled with large quantities of wood. For organisational reasons and to minimise the risk of fire, Degotti considered it particularly dangerous and unsuitable to share his rooms with dancers, whose activities often lasted late into the night, were rarely adequately supervised and which at the same time required additional and potentially-hazardous candlelight.

Je vous au fait observer l'effrayant danger de laisser établir un atelier de construction de menuiserie et d'accumuler cette quantité de [désordre] dans un local semblable. Et que vous avez très jugement ordonné la suppression de ce désordre en me recommandant une stricte surveillance. Les travaux pressants du service de l'opéra et des bals musiqués et la mise en scène de Roger [Roger de Sicile] et ses ballets ont occasionné encore un préjudiciable même dangereux désordre en voulant transformer un atelier de peinture en une salle de répétition de ballet ce qu'est encore visible et palpable.⁶⁹ [‘(…) I have caused you to observe the hazardous danger of allowing an atelier of carpentry to be established with the accumulation of this amount of disorder in such a space. And that you have very pointedly ordered the rectifying of this disorder by suggesting strict surveillance. The pressing work of the opera management, of the ballets, and the staging of Roger [Roger of Sicily] and his dances have caused yet another harmful, even dangerous, disorder by wanting to transform an *atelier de peinture* into a dance rehearsal room, which is now there for all to see’]

The problems that the set designer had highlighted with anger and frustration in 1817- of having inadequate working space for stage sets, – would have been avoided had his plan of 1795 for a capacious backstage area been successful. During Degotti's last period at the Opéra (1815–1822), in addition to highlighting the problem of space and the lack of coordination among artists, he persisted in his determination to exercise control over every aspect of stage design. It is debatable whether the situation improved immediately after Degotti left the Opéra.

In *La question de la mise en scène à l'époque du grand opéra*,⁷⁰ the theatre historian Nicole Wild indicates that problems with coordination would continue to be addressed throughout the course of the nineteenth century. In 1827, in order to make the production process more integrated, the director Émile Lubbert set up a *comité de mise en scène* which sought opinions on every creative aspect of production, in the quest for greater unity between the parts. In years to come, work continued to improve the coordination between staging, dance and singing.

Space organisation definitely improved when the modern Opéra Garnier was built in 1875 – the new building made better provision for each area of the artistic production process, and it was built with a fully-functioning system of gas lighting. This system reduced the risk of fire, and with automatically-controlled lights onstage and offstage, it also facilitated the organisation of space and optimised rehearsals. The Opéra had begun to use gas lighting in the late 1820s, when the theatre was relocated to the Salle Le Peletier, but it was in the Garnier building that this technology was perfected, turning the theatrical experience into a symbol of modern life, as depicted in the paintings by Edgar Degas. Even with such advances in technology – as Wild points out – a harmonious, all-encompassing and unified system of management for the creative production areas came only with the appointment as *Opéra* director of Jacques Rouché, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSIONS

With archival evidence, and taking the activity of Ignazio Degotti as an exemplary case study, this paper offers a glimpse of life behind the scenes

of the Paris Opéra during the first Napoleonic Empire. By focusing on three performances of significant political heft, this study shows how theatre artists with different areas of expertise interacted between themselves and with the theatre administration, which under Napoleon was at one with his political leadership.

The project proposal presented by Degotti in 1795 – which was to remain unrealised – was premised on the lack of adequate storage space for stage design at the Paris Opéra. Space for ballet rehearsals was also inadequate for the large number of dancers that Gardel employed for his majestic choreography, as was the case with *Le Triomphe de Trajan*. Another problem for the artists, was the absence of a general management system. Whilst the administration was very attentive to the message conveyed by the performances, and controlled it carefully, it did not organise and coordinate the artistic production team, each of them with different ideas, needs, and personalities (as the case of *La Mort D'Adam* demonstrates). Inadequate space for rehearsals and inefficient team management led to poor coordination between décor, ballet, and special effects (such as the Franconi's performances) as is shown in *Fernand Cortez*.

When Degotti stated that 'le fantastique pourra être mis en scène et jamais faire des miracles' he probably intended to convey the message that despite the aspirations to grandeur in the Napoleonic productions, there were logistical difficulties that frequently impeded a smooth staging process. This analysis highlights problematic – and also neglected – elements in the collaboration between the stage designer and choreographer, suggesting that a successful production, does not necessarily imply the presence of a fully-functioning theatre management.

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NOTES

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1. Elisa Cazzato, 'Chronicles of two Piedmontese in Paris: the stage designer Ignazio Degotti (1758–1824) and the composer Gian Battista Viotti (1755–1824)' in Iskrena Yordanova and Cristina Fernandes (eds.) *Cadernos de Queluz*, vol. 4: 'Padron mio colendissimo...' letters about music and the stage in the 18th century, (Verlag: Hollitzer, 2021), pp. 655–704. Documents consulted for this analysis are kept in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra (hereafter BnF-Opéra), in the Archives Nationales de France (hereafter ANF, folder AJ13), and in a private archive.
2. During the years of Degotti's activity at Théâtre de l'Opéra (1795–1822) the theatre changed several names. I will refer to it hereafter as Opéra. Here, Degotti played a leading role in the years 1795–1800, 1803–1810, 1815–1822. Preliminary information about his presence at the Opéra (from 1800 onwards) is to be found in Nicole Wild, *Décors et costumes du XIXe siècle*, vol. 1, *Opéra de Paris* (Paris: Éditions BNF, 1987); Nicole Wild, *Décors et costumes du XIXe siècle*, vol. 2, *Théâtre et décorateurs* (Paris: Éditions BNF, 2014).
3. Noverre held this role from 1799 to 1801, see: John V. Chapman, 'The Paris Opéra Ballet School 1798 – 1827', *Dance Chronicle* 12 no. 2 (1989): 196–220, p. 199. Of the same author:

- John V. Chapman, 'Forgotten Giant: Pierre Gardel', *Dance Research* 5 no. 1 (1987): 3–20. For an overview of the Paris ballet see Ivor Guest, *The Paris Opera Ballet*, (Alton: Dance Books Ltd, 2006).
4. Ivor Guest, *Ballet Under Napoleon* (Alton: Dance Books Ltd, 2002), pp. 62–72. See also Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels*, chapter three, (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 98–134.
 5. Mathias Auclair, 'L'atelier des décors de l'Opéra (1803–1822)', *Revue de la BNF* 37, no.1 (2011): 5–10.
 6. 'Rapport de Monsieur l'administrateur et l'inspecteur général sous M. Degotty', BnF-Opéra, AD/10, p. 159.
 7. Elisa Cazzato, *An Italian Artist in Paris: The Career and Designs of Ignazio Degotti (1758–1824)*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (Sydney: The University of Sydney, 2017).
 8. Jacques Antoine Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris (...)*, 2nd ed., vol. 9 (Paris: Guillaume, 1824), p. 266.
 9. James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1995), chapter nine, pp. 165–185.
 10. David Chaillou, 'L'opéra de Paris à l'épreuve du pouvoir impérial (1804–1814)' in Michel Noiray and Solveig Serre (eds.) *Le répertoire de l'Opéra de Paris (1671–2009): Analyse et interprétation* (Paris, Publications de l'école de Chartres, 2010) pp. 141–149 <http://books.openedition.org/enc/461>; David Chaillou, 'À la gloire de l'Empereur: l'opéra de Paris sous Napoléon I^{er}', *Napoleonica. La Revue* 7, no. 1 (2010): 88–105; David Chaillou, *Napoléon et l'Opéra. La politique sur la scène 1810–1815* (Paris: Fayard 2004).
 11. Cornelis Vanistendael 'La Ville et la Cour se Mêlèrent–Napoleon's Propaganda Quadrilles (1793–1813)', *Dance Research* 40.2 (2022): 183–205, <https://doi.org/10.3366/drs.2022.0368>; Thibaut Julian and Vincenzo De Santis (eds), *Fièvre et vie du théâtre sous la Révolution française et l'Empire* (Paris: Garnier, 2019); Katherine Astbury, Mark Philp (eds.), *Napoleon's Hundred Days and the Politics of Legitimacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Annelies Andries, 'Uniting the Arts to Stage the Nation: Le Sueur's Ossia (1804) in Napoleonic Paris', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31, no. 2–3 (2019): 153–87 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S095458672000004X>; Claire Siviter, *Tragedy and Nation in the Age of Napoleon*, Oxford Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020).
 12. Preliminary information on Degotti and choreography are in Guest, *Ballet Under Napoleon* [pp.484–487 and passim].
 13. 'Séance du 27 messidor an III', BnF-Opéra, AD/7, p. 256.
 14. Jonathan Smyth, *Robespierre and the Festival of the Supreme Being: The Search for a Republican Morality*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016). On Gardel's commitment to Revolutionary Festivals see Olivia Sabee 'Dancing the Social Contract: The White Divertissement', *Dance Chronicle* 38, no. 1 (2015): 3–26 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01472526.2015.1001201> The project was proposed by Degotti and Hubert the 9 September 1795, BnF-Opéra, ms. AD/7, p. 315.
 15. 'Séance du 23 fructidor an III', BnF-Opéra, AD7, p. 315; Pierre Constant, *Le Magasin de décors de l'Opéra, rue Richer, son histoire (1781–1894)* (Paris: Bibl. de la revue dramatique et musicale, 1894), p. 11.
 16. Vanistendael, *La Ville et la Cour se Mêlèrent*, p. 197.
 17. From 1794 to 1820 the Opéra was located in the Théâtre Montansier. This building was destroyed in 1820 after the murder of the Duke of Berry, after which the Opéra moved into the Salle Le Peletier.
 18. 'Séance du 23 fructidor an III', BnF-Opéra, AD7, p. 315.
 19. Sabee 'Dancing the Social Contract' p. 15.
 20. Ibid.
 21. Séance du 23 fructidor an III', BnF-Opéra, AD7, p. 315.
 22. Philippe Bordes, *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*, 1st ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 46.
 23. Johnson, *Listening in Paris*, p. 177–178; Chaillou, 'L'opéra de Paris à l'épreuve du pouvoir impérial (1804–1814)'.

24. ‘Lettre de M. De Luçay adressé à la Police générale, Cabinet du Ministre. Paris, 6 février 1807’ ANF, AJ13/91, folder 463 ‘Trajan’.
25. ‘Lettre de M. De Luçay adressé à la Police générale, Cabinet du Ministre. Paris, 25 juillet 1807’ ANF, AJ13/91, folder 463 ‘Trajan’.
26. *Le triomphe de Trajan : tragédie lyrique en 3 actes...* (Paris : Ballard, 1807), p.1.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 19, 35.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
29. Julien-Louis Geoffroy, *Cours de littérature dramatique (...)*, 2nd ed., vol. 5 (Paris: P. Blanchard, 1825), pp. 222–226. See Thibaut Julian, ‘Des feuilletons de Geoffroy au Cours de littérature dramatique (1800–1825)’, *Publiforum* 37 (2022): 168–182 <https://doi.org/10.15167/1824-7482/pbfrm2022.1.2136>.
30. *Le triomphe de Trajan (...)*, p. 38.
31. Geoffroy, *Cours de littérature dramatique (...)*, p. 223.
32. *Ibid.*, 223–224.
33. Guest, *Ballet Under Napoleon*, p. 118.
34. Frederic Hillemacher, *Le cirque Franconi: détails historiques sur cet établissement hippique et sur ses principaux écuyers* (Lyon: Perrin et Marinet, 1875).
35. Théodore de Lajarte *Bibliothèque musicale du Théâtre de l’Opéra: Catalogue historique...* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles : 1878), p. 45–46.
36. Documents about the negotiations with the Franconis are in ANF, AJ13/91, folder 463 ‘Trajan’.
37. ‘Boutron machiniste en chef à Monsieur le Directeur de l’Académie Impériale de Musique. Paris, 14 août 1807’ ANF, AJ13/91, folder 463 ‘Trajan’.
38. *Ibid.*
39. ‘Le ministre de l’intérieur au directeur de l’Académie Impériale de Musique. Paris, 1 octobre 1807’ ANF, AJ13/91, folder 463 ‘Trajan’.
40. *L’esprit des Journaux français et étrangers, tome XI, novembre 1807* Bruxelles: Weissenbruch, 1807), p. 257.
41. The work was initially planned to be staged in September 1802 at the Paris Conservatory, where Lesueur taught. However, Charles-Simon Catel’s *Sémiramis* was preferred to *La Mort d’Adam*. Lesueur published an anonymous pamphlet in which he accused his colleague Catel and his educational methods. He was discovered and expelled from the institution and his career was rehabilitated only in 1804, when he was engaged as choirmaster of the First Consul. Documents related to the first attempt of staging *La Mort d’Adam* are in ANF, AJ13/92, folder 469 ‘La Mort D’Adam’.
42. Chaillou, ‘L’opéra de Paris à l’épreuve du pouvoir imperial (1804–1814)’.
43. *La Mort d’Adam et son apothéose (...)*, (Paris : Roulet, 1809), p. 2.
44. ‘Lettre de Lesueur à Picard. Passy, 30 novembre 1807’ ANF, Paris, AJ13/92, folder 469 ‘La Mort D’Adam’, folio 104 ; ‘Rapport de Lesueur à Monsieur Picard. Passy, 22 décembre 1807’ ANF, AJ13/92, folder 469 ‘La Mort D’Adam’, folio 111.
45. Gustave Choquet, *Histoire de la musique dramatique (...)* (Paris : Didot Frères, 1873), p. 383.
46. For an understanding of costume in Napoleon’s operatic productions see Judith Chazin-Bennahum, *The Lure of Perfection: Fashion and Ballet 1780–1830* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
47. *La Mort d’Adam et son apothéose (...)*, pp. 46–51.
48. Geoffroy, *Cours de littérature dramatique (...)*, p. 206.
49. Henry Budget, Georges d’Heylli, *Foyers et Coulisses. Histoire anecdotique des théâtres de Paris*, vol. 1 (Paris : Tresse, 1875) p. 250.
50. ‘La Mort D’Adam, carton B’ ANF, AJ13/92.
51. ‘Lettre de Lesueur a Monsieur Picard, directeur de l’Académie Impériale de musique. Passy, 22 décembre 1809’ ANF, AJ13/92, folder 469 ‘La Mort D’Adam’, folio 111.
52. Lettre de Degotti à Monsieur le Directeur. Paris, 31 janvier 1808’ ANF, AJ13/92, folder 469 ‘La Mort D’Adam’, folio 136.
53. ‘Lettre de Lesueur à Monsieur Picard. Passy, 15 février 1808’, ANF, AJ13/92, folder 469 ‘La Mort D’Adam’, folio 138.

54. Alfred Copin, Henry Lionnet, *Talma et l'Empire*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Perrin, 1888), p. 134; 'Prix approximatif des décorations de Triomphe de Trajan nr. 1' ANF, AJ13/91.
55. 'Rapport de Lesueur à Monsieur Picard. Passy, 5 mars 1808' ANF, AJ13/92, folder 469 'La Mort D'Adam', folio 142.
56. Invitations to attend the meetings are in ANF, AJ13/92, folder 470 'Fernand Cortez'.
57. *Fernand Cortez ou La conquête du Mexique: opéra en 3 actes* (Paris: chez Rouillet, 1809), p. 26.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
59. Geoffroy, *Cours de littérature dramatique (...)*, p. 240.
60. *Fernand Cortez ou La conquête du Mexique*, p. 10, 11.
61. 'Rapport à Monsieur le Directeur. Paris, 15 mai, 1809' ANF, AJ13/92, folder 470 'Fernand Cortez'.
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63. 'Rapport à Monsieur le Directeur de l'Académie Impériale de Musique. Paris, 1^{er} août, 1809' ANF, AJ13/92, folder 470 'Fernand Cortez'.
64. BnF-Opéra, AD/10, p. 137, 159.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
66. 'Arrête du Directeur de l'Académie Impériale de Musique' ANF, AJ13/92, folder 470 'Fernand Cortez'.
67. Chaillou, *Napoléon et l'Opéra*, p. 69.
68. 'Degotti à Monsieur l'Intendant. Paris, 1 avril 1817' Private Archive Photobibliothek (Switzerland), ms. no. 12052.
69. *Ibid.*
70. Nicole Wild, 'La question de la mise en scène à l'époque du grand opéra', in Michel Noiray and Solveig Serre (eds.) *Le répertoire de l'Opéra de Paris (1671–2009): Analyse et interprétation*, (Paris : Publications de l'école de Chartres, 2010) pp. 313–320 <http://books.openedition.org/enc/461>.

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