

Auguste Mimart and His Brass Chamber Music in 1850s Paris

Sandy Coffin

Introduction

In 1860 sets of published parts for small brass ensembles were deposited in the library of the Paris Conservatoire. They languished there, and subsequently in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, for over 150 years, until 2015, when ophicleidist Anthony George rediscovered *6 Septuors pour 7 instruments de cuivre*, composed by A. Mimart and published by chez Lafleur, Paris. While there was no publication date on the original parts, the handwritten note “Dépot 1860” appears on the title page (see Figure 1), which was used for both the *Septuors* and a set of *Quintettes faciles*. The title of *Chef de Musique* and the references to works for *musique militaire ou fanfare* show that Mimart had military connections and had composed a substantial body of works for larger ensembles, including an *Air Varié* for *cornet à pistons* with band accompaniment and various types of light music, such as marches, boleros, and quadrilles.

The published editions did not include scores, a standard practice at that time, but the parts for the septets were complete: *petit bugle*, *cornet*, *bugle* (flugelhorn), *saxotromba*, *trombone*, *ophicléide*, and *basse* (bass saxhorn, an early euphonium). Anthony George and John Wallace corrected some publishing errors in the original parts to create a set of performance materials for *Septuor No. 1*; The Wallace Collection gave the first known modern performance, using period instruments, in June 2017 at a joint conference of the Galpin Society and the American Musical Instrument Society in Edinburgh’s St Cecilia’s Hall. An enthusiastic response to that and subsequent performances led to a collaborative project, in which this author was involved, which created complete sets of scores and performance parts of all Mimart’s septets and quintets. Recording sessions of the *Septuors* in Autumn 2020 provided an opportunity to develop performance practices; the recording of the *Quintettes* followed in 2021. The recordings and critical editions of all twelve works are due to be released in 2022.

But this process also raised several questions, which this article sets out to answer: Who was “A. Mimart”? For whom was he writing and, particularly, why quintets and septets for brass instruments? How did these pieces fit into the repertoire of the period, and into his body of work? Were they intended as or even considered to be brass chamber music at that time?

Mimart’s Personal History

Auguste Mimart was born Paul-Auguste Mimard¹ in Besançon, Doubs, Bourgogne-Franche, France, on the evening of 14 July 1828, the son of Paul-Auguste Mimart, a lieutenant in the 13th Regiment de Ligne, garrisoned in Metz (and awarded *Chevalier*

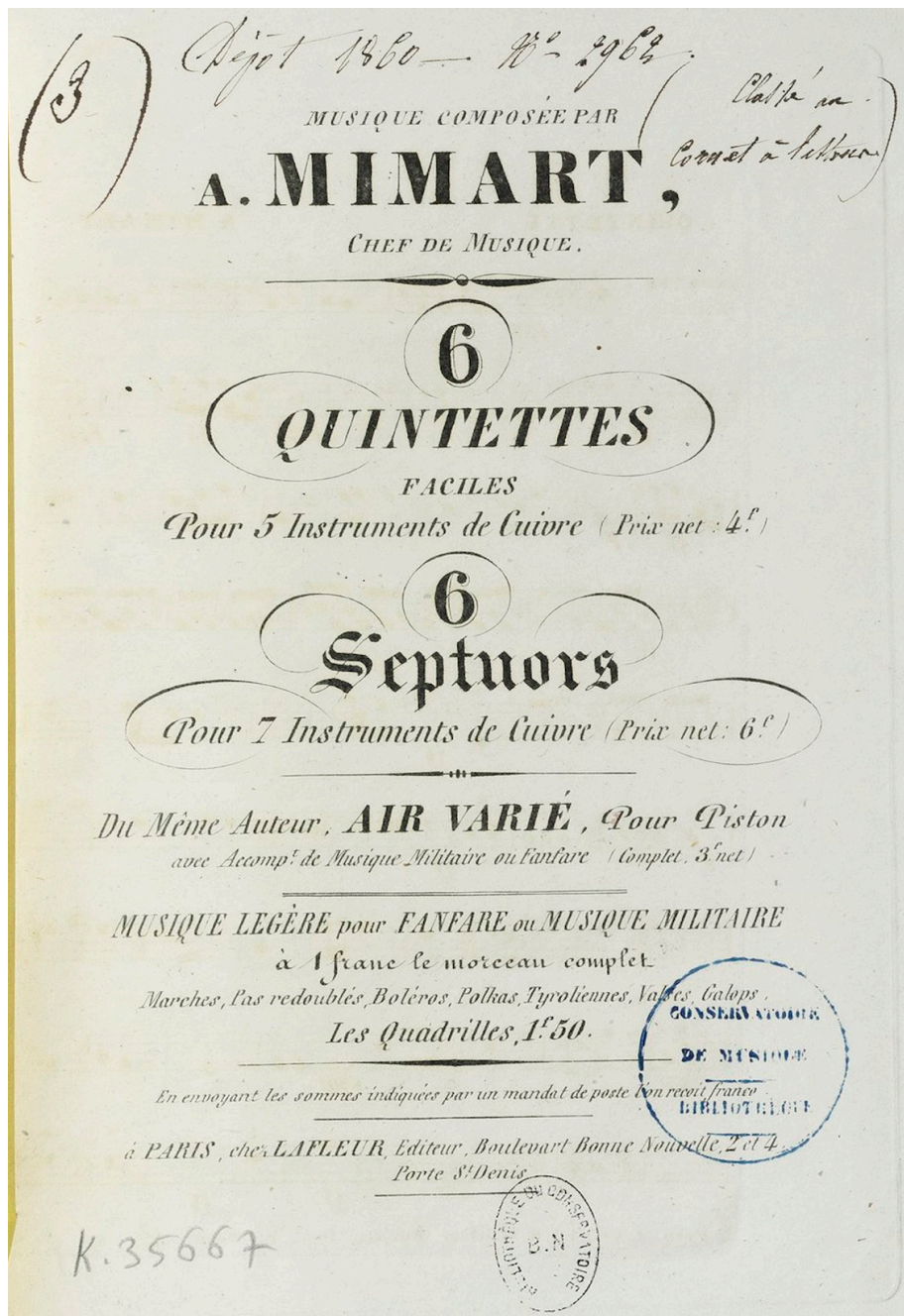


Figure 1: Cover of Auguste Mimart, *Septuors pour 7 Instruments de cuivre*, Bibliothèque de Conservatoire, Deposit Copy, 1860.

de la Légion d'Honneur in 1830), and Ermangarde Céphise Mimart (née Quétier de la Cour).² He first appears in the Paris Conservatoire records (as Paul Auguste Mimard) on the *cor à pistons* class exam lists for 9 December 1844, with Joseph Meifred, the institution's distinguished horn professor, writing "Going well, very accurate since his return."³

This comment implies that Mimart had already been studying with Meifred prior to the autumn 1844 term. It is quite possible, given his father's military career, that he

had begun playing with one of the regimental bands as a child. The fact that he was returning to Meifred's class at the Conservatoire at age sixteen would suggest that he demonstrated early musical talent. He is still listed in Meifred's class for June 1845, but a comment is lacking and there is a line through the entry, indicating that he did not attend or withdrew at some time during that term.⁴

Mimart reappears in the Conservatoire records in 1854, having been awarded the *Deuxième Prix* for *cor à pistons*,⁵ and in Professor Meifred's class reports of June 1854 with the comment "Excellent student, strong progress!"⁶ Meifred mentions him again in the June 1855 Conservatoire reports for having been awarded that prize, indicating that his position in the army, with the start of the Crimean War, had halted his studies:⁷ "The needs of the army have deprived my class of three students—Mimard, Lesler and Carre, who could have presented at the competition and one of whom has already obtained a Second Prize."

His position in the military is further documented in the subscription list printed in the first edition of *La Presse Musicale* on 23 November 1854 (see Figure 2): "MIMART (Auguste) adjutant sous-directeur de musique, Gendarmerie de la garde impériale."⁸

This listing is the first reference found using the name Auguste Mimart, rather than Paul-Auguste Mimard. Directly above that reference in the list is MIMART (Prosper [-Agénor]), "officier directeur de musique, gendarmerie de la garde." Prosper-Agénor Mimart had gained a *Première Prix* (clarinet) in 1850 at the Conservatoire, had become a clarinetist with the Opéra-Comique and with Adolphe Sax's *La grande harmonie*, and was Auguste's brother, the youngest of his older siblings. Interestingly, Prosper-Agénor does not appear in the Paris Conservatoire records until July 1847, three years after his younger brother.⁹ It is clear from their combined successes at the Conservatoire and in their musical lives that there was support for and access to high-quality musical training within the family, most likely beginning through the military bands.¹⁰

Auguste Mimart married Elisabeth Youf on 15 April 1856 in Paris.¹¹ They had one son, Paul Joseph, born on 2 October 1863, during a family visit in Brittany. Their Paris residence address at that time was listed on the son's birth record as 15, Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honore.

Auguste Mimart's Career

As shown in the *Presse Musicale* subscribers list, Auguste's military career was clearly in place by 1854, although details of his enlistment and first appointment are not included in his military file.¹² The *Gendarmie de la Garde impériale* (Paris) of which Mimart was a *sous-directeur*, along with the *Régiment des Guides* (Fontainebleau), were elite ensembles, consisting of highly trained musicians, many of whom were Conservatoire Lauréat recipients and/or classmates of Mimart during his periods of study. Concert tours by these ensembles, such as those to London in November 1854 and May 1858, were widely followed by the British press and the performances, especially in 1854, received high praise for the ensemble's beautiful sound, accuracy, and musicianship.¹³

Première liste.

MM.		
BOURGUY	chef de musique	5 ^e cuirassiers.
LE CORPS DE MUSIQUE		5 ^e cuirassiers.
GINTZBURGER	chef de musique	2 ^e léger.
LE CORPS DE MUSIQUE		2 ^e léger.
SAXE	chef de musique	8 ^e d'artillerie.
MARTIN	chef de musique	11 ^e chasseurs.
BINON	chef de musique	9 ^e hussards.
COQTERRE	chef de musique	13 ^e d'artillerie.
BARBET	chef de musique	8 ^e chasseurs.
LUTHARD	chef de musique	5 ^e du génie.
JUDE	chef de musique	5 ^e hussards.
CRESSONNOIS	chef de musique	2 ^e cuirassiers.
CHARLES LAURENT	mar.-des-logis de musique	2 ^e cuirassiers.
PIERROT	chef de musique	3 ^e lanciers.
HENRICET	chef de musique	4 ⁸ e de ligne.
ANSELME GORNAU	officier	27 ^e de ligne.
DE FRIESS	capitaine	8 ^e léger.
CHARLES MARTIN	chef de musique	6 ^e hussards.
LOUIS MAZEROUX	chef de musique	30 ^e de ligne.
LE CORPS DE MUSIQUE		30 ^e de ligne.
SCHALLER	chef de musique	14 ^e d'artillerie.
MICHEL	brigadier de musique	14 ^e d'artillerie.
LEFÈVRE	musicien	14 ^e d'artillerie.
SEILER	musicien	14 ^e d'artillerie.
DALBARET	chef de musique	6 ^e chasseurs.
MAYER	chef de musique	2 ^e d'artillerie.
FLAMENS	chef de musique	3 ^e chasseurs.
AILLY	chef de musique	1 ^{er} cuirassiers.
KIEFFER	capitaine, aide de camp du général Mellinet	
BOUSQUIER	chef de musique	7 ^e lanciers.
→ MIMART (Prosper)	officier directeur de mu- sique	gendarmerie de la garde.
→ MIMART (Auguste)	adjutant sous-directeur de musique	gendarmerie de la garde impériale.
BRUNOT	musicien de 1 ^{re} classe	id.
ROSE	musicien de 1 ^{re} classe	id.
LECERF	musicien de 1 ^{re} classe	id.
DUBOIS	musicien de 1 ^{re} classe	id.
SIMONETTI	musicien de 1 ^{re} classe	id.
ELIE	} musiciens de 2 ^e classe	id.
MOUGÉ		
FERNOUILLE	} musiciens de 2 ^e classe	id.
STUTZ		
MICHIELS	} musiciens de 2 ^e classe	id.
MAURY		
BONNEFOY	} musiciens de 2 ^e classe	id.
DOMMANGE		
ROMEDÈNE	} musiciens de 2 ^e classe	id.
ROME		
PANÈS	} musiciens de 3 ^e classe	id.
LONGEVILLE		
CLEMENCET	} musiciens de 3 ^e classe	id.
ESPAIGNET		
DE GAUTIER DE SAVIGNAC	} musiciens de 3 ^e classe	id.
MORVILLIERS		
DUFOUR	} musiciens de 3 ^e classe	id.
SAURET		
DUCLOS	} musiciens de 3 ^e classe	id.
ERAMBERT		
MOREAU	} musiciens de 3 ^e classe	id.
HOLZEM		
VIALON	professeur d'harmonie	id.
BLANCKEMAN	chef de musique	72 ^e de ligne.

Figure 2: *La Presse Musicale*, Initial subscribers list (23 November 1854).

In December 1855, Mimart submitted a *Pas redoublé* (see Figure 3) to a composition contest for *sous-directeurs* as part of the promotion process to becoming a full *chef de musique*. The manuscript of that work offers insights into his compositional ideas, which will be discussed later in this article, although the genre set for that competition would not have allowed full expression of the creativity that became more evident in his small ensemble music.

On 15 February 1857 Mimart conducted a well-advertised¹⁴ massed *musique militaire* performance in the Jardin d'Hiver of the *Bataille de Tracktir*, written in honor of the 1855 Battle of Chernaya, a decisive victory for the Allied forces in Crimea. The listing in *Le Nouvelliste* reads:

At the Jardin d'Hiver, today at one o'clock, an extraordinary festival. A large vocal and instrumental concert, with the competition of distinguished artists. The military bands, combined under the direction of Mr. A. Mimart, will perform the *Bataille de Tracktir*, whose first hearing achieved a legitimate and declared success.¹⁵

Figure 3: Page one of Mimart's *Pas redoublé* submission from December 1855 to a contest for *sous-chefs de musique*. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

ID: Cote L-4820. Record ID 44871529.

Le Ménestrel further describes the concert as being “under the direction of Mr. Mimart, *chef de musique* of the Gendarmerie impériale,”¹⁶ indicating that Mimart had achieved the rank of *chef de musique* prior to 1857. It is unclear whether this was a composition of Mimart’s; the score is not extant.

As expected in his position, Mimart’s catalogue of works show that he was composing primarily for military bands during this period. However, he was clearly composing in other genres as well; in July 1857, *Le Bibliophile* includes his *La Ritta: valse pour piano* among the new pieces which had been released that June.¹⁷ It seems probable that the *Quintettes* and *Septuors* were also written during the period from 1854–59; these are discussed later in this article.

On 11 October 1859 Mimart embarked as *chef de musique* on the naval vessel *Renommée*, setting sail from the garrison at Rochefort bound for the China seas, most likely on a mission in support of the military actions occurring in what became French Indochina.¹⁸ This tour included time in French Polynesia; a list in the *Messager de Tahiti* of April 1861 shows mail being held for him in the postal office in Papeete.¹⁹ On 1 December 1861 he transferred to *L’Impératrice Eugénie*, although the location of this tour of duty is not specified. On 24 May 1862 Mimart disembarked in Toulon and returned to Paris. It is unclear whether he continued working with any of the garrison bands, but he was certainly active as a composer and in the musical life of Paris.

In August 1862, the orchestra of the Pré Catelan (a restaurant in the Bois de Boulogne, noted for both the high quality of its orchestra and its idyllic location) gave at least eight performances of Mimart’s *Valse chinoise*, a work for full orchestra composed, or at least conceived, during his time in the China Seas and Polynesia.²⁰ In a review that first appeared in *L’Orchestre* on 18 August and ran in subsequent issues as well, T. Saint-Felix writes:

The musical performance given by Musard, last Sunday, at the Pré Catelan, was most beautiful ...

The Chinese work [*Valse chinoise*] of Mr. Mimard, which recommends itself by its originality, was received with the greatest favor. This music, of perfect local color, lacks neither style nor rhythm. [...] This combination of bells, tam-tams, triangles, and human voices, mixed with the chords of the orchestra, produces a strange effect that pleases and makes one burst into applause. Here is a chinoiserie that all of Paris would want to hear.²¹

This *Valse* was also arranged for piano by Maximilien Graziani, with whom Mimart collaborated on several projects, and was published by Lafleur in 1862 as *Valse Chinoise* “*Tchin–Tchin.*”

That same week, on 19 August 1862, the *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh) included the following item under “General Intelligence”:

The chief of the musical department of the French navy employed in the Chinese seas, a M. Mimart, has been playing the part of a musical savant during his sojourn in the Celestial waters, and has, it is said, collected a vast amount of original Chinese music, which he intends to publish, and states to be very peculiar. No doubt of it.²²

While that may be a slight misinterpretation of his title *chef de musique*, such mention in the Scottish press indicates a British awareness of Mimart as well as the musical activities in Paris and an interest in the unusual. The establishment of Laffleur and Sons at 15 Green Street, Leicester Square, in 1861 was an expansion of chez Laffleur, Paris, providing more direct exposure to the British market of many of the most popular French methods, works by prominent and popular French composers, solos and collections of songs, transcriptions for brass instruments, and many works for *musique militaire* arranged for brass bands and other smaller ensembles. Mimart's *Quintettes* and *Septuors* were republished in London between 1870 and 1880, rescored specifically for British brass band instruments. This serves to highlight both recognition of Mimart as a composer and the use of these works to promote brass chamber music within brass bands, a trend which took root later in the century with the rise of the brass band quartet genre—generally a group of players drawn from the members of a band playing small ensemble music separately from the large ensemble works; this was often two cornets, tenor horn, and euphonium or a group of four trombones.

Additionally, a limited investigation of 1863 concert listings and reviews in British newspapers show numerous performances of several of Mimart's band pieces, particularly his bolero *Carlotta* and tyrolienne *Bellinzona* by the bands of The Constabulary of Ireland, the 2nd Lancashire Rifle Volunteer Band, and the 1st West Yorkshire Artillery in Leeds.²³ Both works were originally published by Laffleur in Paris in 1859; *Carlotta*, presumably referring to the internationally renowned ballet dancer Carlotta Grisi, may have been included in the repertoire for the *Garde's* British tour in 1858.

Announcements in *Le Ménestrel* on 9 November 1862 and in *Le Figaro* in February 1863 show a one-act operetta, *Adam et Eve*, that Mimart co-composed with Maximilien Graziani. Jules Lovy wrote in *Le Ménestrel*:

Mr. Sari, director of the Délassements-Comiques, just received an operetta in one act, *Adam and Eve*, words by Messieurs Émile Chavalet and de Beauvrat, music by Maximilien Graziani and Auguste Mimart. Four authors for one operetta! If unity is strength, we can hope for something solid.²⁴

On 10 May 1863 another of Mimart's orchestral pieces, *La Prière du Pauvre*, was performed on a benefit concert for unemployed workers given at the Pré Catelan. The review in *La Comédie* reads:

Musard's orchestra, at Pré Catelan, adds to its fame every time it plays and is heard.—Sunday, at the fete given for the benefit of the unemployed workers, we especially applauded Mr. Legendre who, in “The Carnival of Venice,” produced the most lively sensation. Verses for the occasion, entitled “The Prayer of the Poor,” were perfectly sung by M. Guyard, of the Conservatory of Music, with the accompaniment of a large orchestra. The music, very colorful and full of feeling and grace, is the work of Mr. Mimart, a maestro who has long proven himself. The poem is a happy inspiration from M. Th. Saint-Felix.²⁵

On 10 June 1865, Mimart again embarked as a Marine *chef de musique*, serving aboard the steam frigate *Thémis* out of Toulon on a tour of duty that began off the coast of Newfoundland. He served on board until 1 October 1867 and presumably returned to Paris. He died on 26 February 1868, aged thirty-nine, in La Faouët, a small town in the Morbihan department of Brittany, and a family home.²⁶ Auguste Mimart was posthumously awarded the *Medaille militaire*, the third highest honor in France, one level below the *Légion d'honneur*, on 11 March 1868.²⁷

Influences and contexts

The records of Mimart's studies at the Conservatoire in 1844 place him in Paris at a pivotal period for chromatic brass instruments. Adolphe Sax and his competitors were revolutionizing brass instrument technologies and creating new possibilities for composers. Mimart would have overlapped at the Conservatoire with such horn Première Prix recipients as Frédéric-Antoine Schlotmann and Louis-Alfred Boulcourt, both students of Jacques-François Gallay (although Schlotmann later switched to cornet), who also featured in performances of Jean-François Bellon's brass quintets and other of his works for Sax instruments in 1850.

It is not yet clear when or with whom Mimart may have studied composition. From study of his extant works, he seems to have drawn inspiration from the wide variety of music flourishing in Paris at that time—the operas of Rossini, Donizetti, Halévy, and Meyerbeer, the popular music of Musard's and other orchestras, Sax's *La grande harmonie*, and the works of Berlioz, Bellon, and others.

On 23 November 1854, Albert Perrin launched his weekly journal *La Presse Musicale* with a primary readership among the military musicians; as noted earlier, Mimart was one of the initial subscribers. The second edition, from 30 November, includes an article by Edmond Roche (a violinist and Wagner's translator for *Lohengrin*) on the importance of chamber music, its use in developing a large ensemble, and the lack of significant ensemble music for winds (including brass) other than that of Anton Reicha and Bellon:

Chamber music is one of the most important parts of the musical art. Without it, there could be no perfect orchestra; because it is by making chamber music

that one is initiated into the style of the masters and that one understands the laws of the whole in the execution....

These works are always written for the stringed instruments and the piano. One does not know of good music for wind [including brass] instruments except the quintets of Reicha and those of Mr. J. Bellon, to whom we will devote a special article soon.²⁸

Such statements are likely to have encouraged the composition of small ensemble works for brass, including the use of the Sax instruments that were being played in the *musique militaire* at that time. As a *sous chef de musique*, and later as *chef de musique*, Mimart, in addition to training younger musicians, would have been in constant contact with highly trained musicians fully capable of engaging with challenging new repertoire.

The discussion regarding brass compositions as chamber music had already begun in the spring of 1850. Performances of individual movements of Bellon's quintets had taken place on 31 March 1850:

Last Sunday, in one of the study rooms of the Music Conservatory, Messrs. Schlotmann, Boulcourt, Urbin, Louff, and Lahou performed various quintet fragments by Mr. Ballon [*sic*], for small flugelhorn, horn, cornet, trombone, and ophicleide. These quintets are in the style of string quintets and perfectly written for each instrument.²⁹

On 19 May 1850, reviews in several newspapers gave high praise to a *Soirée de musique d'harmonie* given at Salle Sax by Sax's *Société de nouvelle harmonie d'instruments de cuivre*.³⁰ This event included a performance of Bellon's *Symphonie in ut mineur* for fourteen saxhorns and saxophones; among the soloists were Boulcourt and Schlotmann. In the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, Léon Kreutzer wrote:

Mr. Sax has the happy privilege of being of great interest to composers and the public. Composers see him as providing them with inexhaustible resources, which will allow them to achieve effects unknown to the old masters. The public, accustomed to dreading the explosion of brass instruments, almost equal to the crash of an artillery piece, is happily surprised at the effects full of delicacy and charm which Mr. Sax knows how to get them to produce.

Mr. Sax judiciously thought that at the point of perfection to which his brass instruments have arrived it was possible to entrust to them works of a greater harmonic complication, of a higher musical value. **Mr. Sax, in short, wanted to create chamber music for brass instruments.**

"What madness!" would have thought the amateurs of yesteryear. "In the midst of an intimate society, in this place where virtuosos perform the delicate

masterpieces of Mozart and Haydn, would appear the bellowing trombone, the trumpet with its sound harsh and crude! **No, that is not possible.**"

It is quite possible, and Mr. Sax is proving it.

Mr. Bellon's Symphony in C Minor, very remarkably written by the way, is a first step in this new direction... one gets pianos as soft, as fine, as velvety as any we've heard, or [one] can also moderate the strength of the sound, especially in a small room ...³¹ [bold markings are the present author's]

A few months later, the program for the August "Fête d'alliance des lettres, des Arts et de l'Industrie" included "Quintet for petit Bugle d'Alphonse Sax, Piston, Cor à Piston, Trombonne[sic] and Ophicléide, composed by Mr. Bellon."³² The review published in the *Revue et gazette* on 1 September read: "In addition to these instrumental and vocal masses, there was, during the day, a delicious concert of virtuosos. The quintet which M. Bellon composed for the instruments of Sax was performed there."³³

Although not defined specifically as chamber music, Bellon's quintet was clearly considered music which could be described as virtuosic. It should also be noted that Bellon had formed the *Société calco-philharmonique* in the first part of 1854. An article in *Le Ménestrel* on 28 May 1854 reads:

An interesting ensemble has been formed in this past period under the direction of Mr. J. Bellon. It has taken the name *Société calco-philharmonique* [freely translated: "Society of Metal Instruments"]. Its purpose is to make heard the symphonies composed for brass instruments and performed by special artists. Six musical matinees were given by this society in the Salle de l'Athénée, rue de Valois. Mr. and Miss Casimir-Ney, Messrs. Gouffé, Klosé, Archambaud, Mauprey, and Miss Colin (pianist) have joined in this laudable venture, which we hope will be repeated next winter.³⁴

We know that Mimart was at the Conservatoire during this period, since he received a *Deuxième Prix* in June 1854. It seems probable that he would have been aware of, if not involved in, these performances, although the exact repertoire performed on these concerts is still a matter of conjecture.

Compositions and instrumentation

The similarity of some aspects of Mimart's quintets to materials found in contemporaneous method books, such as David Buhl's *Méthode de trompette* (1824), indicates possible use as ensemble training material in line with Roche's comments, as well as for more formal performances on the bandstand or as background music for military events and officer's meals. For example, the Buhl method contains a quartet for four natural trumpets (in three different keys) entitled *Prière* (see Figure 4), aimed towards developing a lyrical playing style, with dynamic shaping and contrasting dotted rhythms.

Mimart's *Quintette No. 1*, "Andante religioso," explores similar hymn-like melodic ideas and rhythmic figures, with a similar interjection of the dotted rhythm and the wide dynamic contrasts in a more expansive chromatic setting (see Figure 5).

The cover sheet used for the various Lafleur Paris editions includes the title *Quintettes Faciles pour 5 Instruments de Cuivre*, further suggesting that these were published with an eye to amateur ensembles as an additional market. As discussed by Jean-Yves Rauline, amateur music societies followed trends set by the military practices; Sax instruments, particularly saxhorns and saxotrombas, were adopted almost immediately.³⁵ Rauline also provides the 1857 recommendations by Jules Simon (head of the Orpheonic authorities who oversaw amateur ensembles) of instruments for smaller brass bands, including those of five, eight, or nine players, but not, notably, for seven players.³⁶

Each of Mimart's quintets and septets is a single movement and can be performed separately, although the structure of tonalities, tempos, and moods suggests that each group of works was conceived either as a divertimento (a continuous suite of six movements) or, perhaps more likely, as a collection from which separate movements could

PRIÈRE.

N° 2.

1^{re} Trompette en M1 b.

2^e Trompette en LA b 8va

3^e Trompette en SI b.

4^e Trompette en M1 b.

1565

Figure 4: *Prière* from David Buhl's *Méthode de trompette* (1824).

Andante religioso [$\text{♩} = 60-72$]

9

Piston en SI b *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

Bugle en SI b *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

Sax-tromba en MI b *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

Trombone *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

Basse SI b *ppp* *ff* *ppp* *ff*

Figure 5: Auguste Mimart, *Quintette No. 1* (Bibliothèque de Conservatoire, Deposit Copy, 1860), opening. Realization of the score by the author.

be chosen and organized in an order to suit the occasion. Mimart frequently plays with the duality of major and minor, moving quickly between contrasting moods, enriching the range of expression of these new chromatic instruments.

Commonly recurring ideas in Mimart's works include cascading figures that descend through all the instruments or at times ascend from the lowest instrument—in these works the *basse*; angular themes combined with ascending thirds; cantabile melodies that are vocal or operatic in nature; dance-like and driving rhythms with interesting harmonic motion; brief fortissimo interjections into soft passages; and wide dynamic contrasts and echo effects.

Quintets

A rising melodic figure consisting of an eighth note followed by two ascending sixteenth notes in the sixteen bars before the *da capo* of his *Pas redoublé* submission appears nearly identically in *Quintette No. 3*, scored in the saxotromba as an accompanying figure to the cornet melody. *Quintette No. 5* is reminiscent of many an opera overture, with its florid figures, lyrical melodic theme, and repetitive cadences in the final bars. In *Quintette No. 6*, bugle calls and military rhythms contrast with the cornet solo of the middle section, perhaps offering a musical glimpse of the different aspects of life as a military musician.

The original (Paris) editions of the *Quintettes* are scored for *piston en Sib*, *bugle* [flugelhorn] *en Sib*, *sax-tromba en Mib*, *trombone* (in C, bass clef),³⁷ and *basse* [saxhorn] *en Sib* (bass clef). The idea of the quintet of brass instruments had been established by Bellon and would not have been completely unfamiliar by 1854. There is no specification of valve or slide trombone, but images of the 1854 Crystal Palace performance by the *Régiment des guides* appear to show slide trombones, although either would certainly be possible; there is nothing in the trombone part that would require the agility of valves. The use of the B♭ cornet and B♭ bugle (as opposed to the E♭ *petit bugle* as in Bellon's *Quintettes*) would have been consistent with intended use by non-virtuoso performers, be they military or civilian. However, the instrumentation of the quintets does vary from the recommendations of the Orpheonic authorities regarding the use of trombone: valved trombones are specified for bands of fifteen or more musicians, while for smaller ensembles the baritone saxhorn in B♭ is recommended instead.

The overall key structure of the quintets keeps within the comfortable keys for the B♭ and E♭ instruments. It is not clear whether the numbering or order of the quintets was decided by Mimart or by the publisher, but they appear as follows (concert pitch):

- No. 1, in E♭ – “Andante religioso”
- No. 2, in B♭ – “Allegro vivo–Andante–Allegro vivo”
- No. 3, in F – “Allegro moderato”
- No. 4, in A♭ – “Allegro”
- No. 5, in F – “Allegro”
- No. 6, in B♭ – “Allegro vivo”

The frequency of shifts between major and minor within each piece would make labeling the modality somewhat misleading.

Septets

The *Septuors pour 7 Instruments de Cuivre*, on the other hand, present greater challenges to the individual players and to the ensemble as a whole and were likely to have been tailored to the capabilities of more highly trained musicians such as those of the *Garde impériale*. Private performances could account for the lack of reviews or listings in any of the press of the day. It is significant that these are scored using both the *petit bugle* and the ophicleide; this extends the sound world of the septets beyond that of the quintets.

The *Septuors* are filled with inventive musical ideas, evidence of Mimart's fertile musical imagination. As with the quintets, it is not clear who decided the numbering or order but the septets are presented as (concert pitch):

No. 1, in B♭ – “Andante non troppo–Allegro vivo”

No. 2, in C – “Andante”

No. 3, in E♭ – “Allegro moderato”

No. 4, in A♭ – “Allegro vivo”

No. 5, in F – “Allegro moderato”

No. 6, in B♭ – “Allegro moderato”

However, within this overview, the harmonic language is remarkable for the manner in which it explores the capacity of these new instruments to modulate freely and daringly through many keys in a short space of time. This is immediately apparent in *Septuor No. 1*, which moves from B♭ major through G minor to G♭ to F within the first ten bars, with similar modulatory passages throughout.

The *Septuors* are scored for *petit bugle* (*en Mi♭ ou trompette à cylindres, piston en Si♭*, bugle [flugelhorn] *en Si♭*, saxotromba *en Mi♭ ou cor à pistons*, trombone *en Ut*, ophicléide *en Ut ou baryton* [saxhorn], and *basse* [saxhorn] *en Si♭*. Use of the primary instrumentation affords an interesting contrast of timbres, which serves to highlight the melodic development of these works. Contrasting timbres sharing similar lines was a technique used effectively by Bellon, and Mimart extends this practice in his septets. For example, in *Septuor No. 1*, the cornet, bugle and ophicleide compare and contrast their dexterity in negotiating an ornamented cadential figure. In *Septuor No. 2* Mimart builds the opening C-minor chorale, beginning with the saxotromba, adding first the ophicleide, and then the *basse*; the contrasting allegro theme in C major begins in the bugle. Similar pairings and contrasts appear throughout each of the septets.

The alternate instrumentation offered for each part would have been consistent with the changing landscape within the military bands during this period, as well as with the instruments suggested for amateur bands. However, the septet was not a standard ensemble at this time, and to my knowledge no other works for seven distinct

brass instruments have been found prior to Mimart's. Two quadrilles by Prudent-Louis Aubéry du Bouley, both from 1856 and based on Crimean War songs, are scored for septets of 2 cornets, alto saxhorn, 2 trombones, and 2 bass saxhorns.³⁸ There are earlier examples of brass nonets—those of Félicien David, one by Juvin, and references, although not music, for at least one *Nonetto pour instruments de cuivre* by Alexandre Fessy from a concert at the Jardin d'Hiver on 23 March 1851.³⁹

While there is occasional doubling of lines, a practice which adds considerable power to brass writing, these works are for seven independent voices. Further, the rich variety of timbres afforded by the addition of the *petit bugle* and the ophicleide, as well as the bugle in juxtaposition to the saxotromba, seem to have inspired Mimart's imagination in compositions full of timbral and harmonic color.

A British tour by the musicians of the *Garde de Paris* in May 1858 included solo concerts at the Crystal Palace. The repertoire listed in newspaper accounts of the concerts on that tour included solos for *petit bugle* (*French March, with variations for the "Petit Bugle Soprano"* by Marie, performed by Mr. Gobin)⁴⁰ and ophicleide (*L'ophicléide sentimentale* by Lamotte, performed by Mr. Feiss).⁴¹ As shown in a lithograph of the ensemble at the Crystal Palace (Figure 6), in addition to the saxhorns, they were using either handhorns or *cors à pistons* as well as *petit bugle* and ophicleide. Whether the septets were written at this time, and whether these particular players or others might have performed the septets in Paris remains a matter of speculation.

The rescoring of these pieces for the British market was clearly intended to provide music for brass ensembles drawn from brass bands. The septet rescoring as shown in the



Figure 6: Band of the Garde de Paris at the Crystal Palace.
Illustrated London News, 10 May 1858.

MIMART, Six very good Quintetts; Principal Cornet, First Cornet, E flat Tenor, Trombone or Euphonium, and Bass	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	0
MIMART, Six very good Septuors; Principal Cornet, First Cornet, E flat Soprano or Solo Tenor, E flat Tenor, Solo Euphonium, Trombone and Bass	...	..	...						6	0

Figure 7: Lafleur and Sons, London, catalog listing of Mimart works rescored for brass band instruments, ca. 1870.

Lafleur and Sons (London) advertisements (see Figure 7) indicates “Principal Cornet, First Cornet, E flat Soprano or Solo Tenor, E flat Tenor, Solo Euphonium, Trombone and Bass,” a combination that sacrifices the interesting timbral contrasts in favor of greater uniformity, especially if a Solo Tenor were to replace the E \flat Soprano.⁴²

Conclusions

Mimart would have operated in the same network as the top brass musicians working in Paris during the period 1854–59, many of whom had been classmates at the Conservatoire and were colleagues in the bands of *Garde impériale*. This would have afforded him the opportunity to write for specific people and to experiment with the developing possibilities of chromatic brass. Several of these players also had direct connections with the works of Bellon, whose works Mimart was likely to have heard.

That Mimart’s quintets and septets are all single-movement works suggests that they were used primarily for lighter performances such as outdoor events, bandstand concerts, and possibly as background music for private events. The lack of mention in the press of any of these works supports this.

The *Quintettes* were originally written for a primarily homogeneous sound; this can be very beneficial when working with less experienced players. Lacking the composer’s manuscripts, we cannot know whether the instrumentation was set by Mimart or changed by his publisher (Lafleur) in the marketing process, but the lack of alternative parts in the quintets supports their use for ensemble training.

However, the diverse timbres of the primary instrumentation of the *Septuors*, as well as the instrumental demands throughout those works, suggests they were originally written for more advanced players. They appeared at a time when chamber music was an important part of musical life in Paris and brass chamber music was an emerging genre. Connections with London helped spread this repertoire across the Channel, providing a starting point for the development of brass chamber music within the British brass band movement. While the musical forms are not as extended as those of the Bellon quintets, when viewed as a complete six-movement divertimento, the Mimart *Septuors* are a significant example of highly innovative music for small brass ensemble.

Sandy Coffin is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, investigating mid-nineteenth century brass solo and chamber music repertoire, particularly that written during periods of major innovation and societal shifts. Sandy has performed internationally as a trumpet soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician. She organized the May 2021 virtual Historic Brass Symposium “Pond Life: Crosscurrents over the Atlantic” and serves as Chair of the HBS Events Committee. She continues to work as an educator, arranger, freelance musician, and project manager. Sandy earned degrees in trumpet and Latin from Oberlin College and Conservatory and a master’s from the Manhattan School of Music. She would like to thank John Wallace, Arnold Myers, John Miller, and her colleagues at the RCS for their continuing guidance and encouragement.

NOTES

¹ His birth record, listed in the Archives du Doubs, shows his given name as Paul-Auguste Mimard. This name is also shown in the records of the Paris Conservatoire and his marriage record. From 1854, however, references in the press and his military records, which include only his naval service from 1859–68, show “Auguste Mimart.”

² Registre des naissances, 18281E650 Mémoire Vive patrimoine numérisé de Besançon Lot 1/1. 190/387. <https://memoirevive.besancon.fr/ark:/48565/nk3zprfmv1bg/724a4c25-bcc8-4975-b6c4-720d4dc191be>

³ “Va bien, très exact depuis la réintégration.” Paris, Archives nationales de France, AJ/37/263, 11. Classe de flûte de M. Tulou; Classe de hautbois de M. Vogt; Classe préparatoire de hautbois de M. Veny; Classe de clarinette de M. Klose; Classe de basson de M. Darizel; Classe de cor de M. Gallay; Classe de cor à pistons de M. Meifred; Classe de trompette de M. Dauverne; Classe de trombone de M. Dieppo. https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/FRAN_IR_054954/d_78542735/FRAN_0181_00757_L

⁴ Paris, Archives nationales de France, AJ/37/264, 5. Classe de flûte de M. Tulou; Classe de hautbois de M. Vogt; Classe préparatoire de hautbois de M. Veny; Classe de basson de M. Darizel; Classe de clarinette de M. Klose; Classe de cor de M. Gallay; Classe de cor à pistons de M. Meifred; Classe de trompette de M. Dauverne; Classe de trombone de M. Dieppo. https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/FRAN_IR_054954/d_78542744/FRAN_0181_00850_L

⁵ The most significant references are in Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation*. First on p. 646: “Cor à pistons—Lauréats”; and with biographical information, p. 814, “Dictionnaire des Lauréats.” The results of the Conservatoire Prix were also published in *Le Ménestrel*.

⁶ “Excellent Élève. fort avance!” Paris, Archives nationales de France, AJ/37/273, 5. Classe de flûte de M. Tulou; Classe de hautbois de M. Verroust; Classe de basson de M. Cokken; Classe de clarinette de M. Klose; Classe de cor de M. Gallay; Classe de cor à pistons de M. Meifred; Classe

de trompette de M. Dauverne; Classe de trombone de M. Dieppo. https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/FRAN_IR_054954/d_78542981/FRAN_0181_03720_L

⁷ “Les besoins de l’armée ont privé ma classe de trois Elèves—Mimard, Lesler et Carre, qui auraient pu le présenter au concours et dont l’un a de jà obtenu un Second Prix.” Paris, Archives nationales de France, AJ/37/274, 5. Classe de flûte de M. Tulou; Classe de hautbois de M. Verroust; Classe de basson de M. Cokken; Classe de clarinette de M. Klose; Classe de cor de M. Gallay; Classe de cor à pistons de M. Meifred; Classe de trompette de M. Dauverne; Classe de trombone de M. Dieppo. https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/FRAN_IR_054954/d_78543004/FRAN_0181_04029_L

⁸ *La Presse Musicale*, Albert Perrin, editeur. This paper ran for six issues, 23 November–28 December 1854.

⁹ Paris, Archives nationales de France, AJ/37/266, 16. Classe de flûte de M. Tulou; Classe de hautbois de M. Vogt; Classe préparatoire de hautbois de M. Veny; Classe de basson de M. Darizel; Classe de clarinette de M. Klose; Classe de cor de M. Gallay; Classe de cor à pistons de M. Meifred; Classe de trompette de M. Dauverne; Classe de trombone de M. Dieppo; Classe de solfège et d’harmonie orale de M. Pastou. https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/media/FRAN_IR_054954/d_78542809/FRAN_0181_01623_L

¹⁰ Prosper-Agénor’s first son, Prosper, was a clarinet professor at the Paris Conservatoire (1904–18) and was the dedicatee of Debussy’s Première rhapsodie. His second son, Paul, was a clarinetist (1905–06, 1917–18, 1919–20) and bass clarinetist (1920–39) with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

¹¹ Marriage record of Auguste Mimart and Elisabeth Youf. Etat-civil, Archives de Paris. Reference ECR75-1856-496849. <https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-14002/france-church-marriages-civil-marriages?s=1164890791>

¹² Changes in the record-keeping methods of the military along with different methods for the marine services, the change of the format of his name, and possible confusion with the records for his father may all be contributing factors in the gaps in his service records.

¹³ The November 1854 tour is well documented in both the English press and in *La Presse Musicale*; it included performances at the Crystal Palace, Windsor Castle, Exeter Hall, and other locations by express permission of Napoleon III. The May 1858 tour was also well documented in the English press of the time.

¹⁴ *Le Charivari*, 15 February 1857, [4]; *Le Nouvelliste*, 15 February 1857, [3]; *Le Ménestrel*, 15 February 1857, 4.

¹⁵ “Au Jardin-d’Hiver, aujourd’hui, à une heure, fête extraordinaire. Grand concert vocal et instrumental, avec le concours d’artistes distingués. Des musiques militaires, réunies sous la direction de M. A. Mimart, exécuteront la Bataille de Tracktir, dont la première audition a obtenu un légitime et éclatant succès.” *Le Nouvelliste*, 15 February 1857, [3].

¹⁶ “...concert-monstre sous la direction de M. Mimart, chef de musique de la gendarmerie impériale.” *Le Ménestrel*, 15 February 1857, 4.

¹⁷ *Le Bibliophile*, 19 July 1857, 23.

¹⁸ Vincennes, Ministère des armées, Centre historiques des archives. File MC/CC7 Alpha No 1775. Letters documenting Mimart's naval service in response to an enquiry by his wife, Elisabeth, regarding his pension following his death.

¹⁹ "Liste des lettres en dépôt au bureau de la poste à Papeete, au 11 mars 1861." *Messenger de Tahiti*, 10^e Année, no. 14, 7 April 1861, 53.

²⁰ *L'Orchestre: revue quotidienne des théâtres*. Concert listings on p. [4]. Program listings for Pré Catelan on 10 August 1862, 16–22 August 1862, and 1 October 1862.

²¹ "La fête musicale donnée par Musard, dimanche dernier, au Pré Catelan, a été des plus belles... L'œuvre chinoise de M. Mimard, qui se recommande par son originalité, a été accueillie avec la plus grande faveur. Cette musique, d'une couleur locale parfaite, ne manque ni de style, ni de rythme [*sic*]. ... Ça mélange de cloches, de tam-tam, de triangles et de voix humaines, mêlés aux accords de l'orchestre, produit un effet étrange qui plaît et fait éclater les applaudissements. Voilà une chinoiserie que tout Paris voudra entendre." T. Saint-Felix, "Concerts d'Été," *L'Orchestre: revue quotidienne des théâtres*, [3]. First appeared on 18 August 1862, repeated 19–25 August.

²² "Chinese Music." *Caledonian Mercury*. 19 August 1862, 2.

²³ "Fashion and Varieties." *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin). 2 July 1863; 15 July 1863; 16 July 1863; 1 August 1863; 5 September 1863.

²⁴ "M. Sari, directeur des Délassements-Comiques, vient de recevoir une opérette en un acte, *Adam et Eve*, paroles de MM. Émile Chevalet et de Beauvrat, musique de MM. Maximilien Graziani et Auguste Mimart. Quatre auteurs pour une opérette! Si l'union fait la force, nous pouvons espérer quelque chose de solide." *Le Ménestrel*, 9 November 1862, 396. Émile Chavalet was a librettist for Offenbach (*Le Violoneux*, 1855); de Beauvrat has not yet been further identified.

²⁵ "L'orchestre de Musard, au Pré Catelan, ajoute à son renom chaque fois qu'il est donné de l'entendre.—Dimanche, à la fête donnée au profit des ouvriers sans travail, on a surtout applaudi M. Legendre qui, dans le Carnaval de Venise, a produit la plus vive sensation. Des strophes de circonstance, intitulées la *Prière du Pauvre*, ont été parfaitement chantées par M. Guyard, du Conservatoire de musique, avec accompagnement de grand orchestre. La, très colorée et pleine de sentiment et de grâce, est l'œuvre de M. Mimart, musique un maestro qui depuis longtemps a fait ses preuves. Le poème est une heureuse inspiration due à M. Th. Saint-Felix." *La Comédie*, 10 May 1863, 7.

²⁶ Death record of Auguste Mimart. Vannes. Archives du Morbihan. Reference EC56057-1868-D-005202-0000000844. <https://www.myheritage.com/research/record-14003-120060732>. The same town is indicated on the civil death record of his father in 1849, and of his mother in 1885.

²⁷ Military records of Auguste Mimart. Vincennes, Ministère des armées, Centre historiques des archives. File MC/CC7 Alpha No 1775.

²⁸ "La musique de chambre est une des parties les plus importantes de l'art musical. Sans elle, il ne pourrait exister de parfait orchestre ; car c'est en faisant de la musique de chambre qu'on s'initie au style des maîtres et qu'on comprend les lois de l'ensemble dans l'exécution ...

"Ces morceaux sont écrits toujours pour les instruments à cordes et le piano. On ne connaît de bonne musique d'ensemble pour les instruments à vent que les quintettes de Reicha et ceux

de M. J. Bellon, auquel nous consacrerons avant peu, un article spécial. Edmond Roche, “De la musique de chambre,” *La Presse Musicale*, 30 November 1854, [2].

²⁹ “Dimanche dernier, dans l’une des salles d’études du Conservatoire de musique, MM. Schlotmann, Boulcourt, Urbin, Louff [*sic*] et Lahou ont exécuté divers fragments de quintette de M. Ballon [*sic*], pour petit bugle, cor, cornet à piston, *trombonne et ophicléide* [*sic*]. Ces quintettes sont dans le style des quintettes d’instruments à cordes et parfaitement écrits pour chaque instrument.” *La Musique: gazette de la France Musicale*. No. 13 and 14, 98. [This was a combined edition for both 30 March and 7 April 1850] Louff may in fact be G. Lauft, who appears in another article on the Bellon quintets in *La Musique* on 1 June 1851.

³⁰ This concert may have garnered additional attention as it also featured a performance by violinist Henryk Wieniawski, not yet fifteen years old, and his younger brother Józef, a pianist.

³¹ “Dimanche dernier, dans l’une des salles d’études du Conservatoire de musique, MM. Schlotmann, Boulcourt, Urbin, Louff [*sic*] et Lahou ont exécuté divers fragments de quintette de M. Ballon [*sic*], pour petit bugle, cor, cornet à piston, *trombonne et ophicléide* [*sic*]. Ces quintettes sont dans le style des quintettes d’instruments à cordes et parfaitement écrits pour chaque instrument ... M. Sax a l’heureux privilège [*sic*] d’intéresser vivement les compositeurs et le public. Les compositeurs voient leur fournira d’interminables ressources, et leur permettra d’obtenir des effets inconnus aux anciens maîtres. Le public, habitué à redouter l’explosion des instruments de cuivre, presque à l’égal du fracas d’une pièce d’artillerie, est heureusement surpris des effets pleins de délicatesse et de charme que M. Sax sait les forcer à produire.

“Jusqu’ici des fantaisies sur des thèmes d’opéra, des boleros, des valse, formaient le répertoire que M. Sax faisait entendre à son auditoire. M. Sax a judicieusement pensé qu’au point de perfection où ses instruments étaient arrivés il était possible de leur confier des œuvres d’une complication harmonique plus grande, d’une plus haute valeur musicale. M. Sax, en un mot, a voulu créer la musique de chambre pour les instruments de cuivre.

‘Quelle folie!’ eussent pensé les amateurs d’autrefois. ‘Au milieu d’une société intime, à cette place où des virtuoses interprètent les délicats chefs-d’œuvre de Mozart et de Haydn, figureront le trombone mugissant, la trompette au son âpre et dur! Non, cela n’est pas possible.’

“Cela est fort possible, et M. Sax est en train de la prouver.

“La symphonie en ut mineur de M. Bellon, très-remarquablement écrite d’ailleurs, est un premier pas dans cette nouvelle voie.... Lorsque l’on obtient des pianos aussi doux, aussi fins, aussi veloutés que ceux que nous avons entendus, on peut également modérer la puissance de la sonorité, surtout dans un petit local.” *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, 17/20 (1850), 171.

³² “Quintette pour petit Bugle d’Alphonse Sax, Piston, Cor à Piston, Trombonne et Ophicléide, composé par M. Bellon.” *La Musique: gazette de la France Musicale*. no. 33 (18 August 1850), 250.

³³ “En outre de ces masses instrumentales et vocales, il y a eu, dans le courant de cette journée, un délicieux concert de virtuoses. On y a exécuté le quintette que M. Bellon composé pour les instruments de Sax.” *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 17/35 (1850), 294–95.

³⁴ “Une intéressante société s’est formée dans ces derniers temps sous la direction de M. J. Bellon. Elle a pris le nom de *Société calco-philharmonique* (traduction libre: *Société philharmonique sur métaux*). Elle a pour but de faire entendre des symphonies composées pour instruments de

cuivre et exécutés par des artistes spéciaux. Six matinées musicales ont été données par cette société dans la salle de l'Athénée, rue de Valois. M. et Mlle Casimir-Ney, MM. Gouffé, Klosé, Archambaud, Mauprey et Mlle Colin (pianiste) se sont associés à cette louable tentative qui, nous l'espérons, se renouvellera l'hiver prochain." *Le Ménestrel* (18 May 1854), 4.

³⁵ Jean-Yves Rauline, "19th-Century Amateur Societies in France and the Changes of Instrument Construction: Their Evolution Caught Between Passivity and Progress," *Galpin Society Journal* 57 (2004): 236–45.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 243. "Annexe II: Instruments recommended by Jules Simon for Brass bands and wind ensembles (including Sax instruments)."

³⁷ While the septet parts specify Trombone en Ut, the quintet parts only indicate Trombone; it is not clear whether these were intended to be played on a trombone with a fundamental of C or of Bb, which would depend on the training of the player. However, since various language differences often create more confusion than clarification, the notation (C, bass clef) is used here to indicate that the parts were written in concert pitch in bass clef.

³⁸ Prudent Louis Aubéry du Bouley (1796–1870), *La Prise de Sébastopol, quadrille héroïque* and *La Victoire est à nous, quadrille militaire* (Paris: S. Richault, 1856).

³⁹ *La Nouvelliste*, 23 March 1851, [3]. Concert program: Jardin d'Hiver/Grand Concert. The "Première Partie" began with *Fanfares pour instruments de cuivre* by [Alexandre] Fessy, and included his *Ronetto [sic] [Nonetto?] pour instruments de cuivre*. The "Deuxième Partie" began with *Nonetto pour instruments de cuivre* by Fessy, and included another set of Fanfares as well. The remainder of the program featured works by various singers. It is possible but unlikely that the brass pieces were repeated on each half of the program.

⁴⁰ "Advertisements & Notices." *Daily News* (London), 10 May 1858, 4.

⁴¹ *The Morning Chronicle* (London), 12 May 1858, 2.

⁴² Laffleur and Son, "*Special List of Music for Brass Instruments* / published by Laffleur & Son, 15 Green Street, Leicester Square, London." Found on the back cover of several Alliance Musicale editions.

