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# Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France.

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## About the Book

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In a book that challenges modernist ideas about the value and role of music in Western society, *Composing the Citizen* demonstrates how music can help forge a nation. Deftly exploring the history of Third Republic France, Jann Pasler shows how French people from all classes and political persuasions looked to music to revitalize the country after the turbulent crises of 1871. Embraced not as a luxury but for its "public utility," music became an object of public policy as integral to modern life as power and water, a way to teach

critical judgment and inspire national pride. It helped people to forget the past, voice conflicting aspirations, and imagine a shared future.

Based on a dazzling survey of archival material, Pasler's rich interdisciplinary work looks beyond elites and the histories their agendas have dominated to open new windows onto the musical tastes and practices of amateurs as well as professionals. A fascinating history of the period emerges, one rooted in political realities and the productive tensions between the political and the aesthetic. Highly evocative and deeply humanistic, *Composing the Citizen* ignites broad debates about music's role in democracy and its meaning in our lives.

## About the Author

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**Jann Pasler** is Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. Among her books is *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist* (UC Press) and *Writing through Music: Essays on Music, Culture, and Politics*.

## Reviews

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“A notable achievement. . . Recommended.”—*Choice*

“Destined to be debated and referenced for years to come. The issues it raises have never been more timely.”—*Current Musicology*

“This inspiring and brilliantly original book will be essential reading for anyone interested in the broader impact of music in France at the end of the nineteenth century.”—*Nigel Simeone Journal Of Interdisciplinary History*

“A significant contribution to the field of French musical studies, one that will lead to new perspectives and inspire new avenues of research into the music of this most fascinating period of French musical history.”—*Michael Strasser Notes (Music Library Assoc)*

“Jann Pasler's remarkable *Composing the Citizen* reaches well beyond what any book concerned with music in society has ever attempted. Concentrating on France of the Third Republic, from the 1870s through the early 1900s, she demonstrates convincingly how music—whether new, old, popular, or élite, whether performed at institutions of state (such as the Opéra), the Folies Bergère, concert halls, or the zoo—helped to redefine what it meant to be

French under evolving political circumstances. Equally adept in the languages of history, sociology, political science, reception history, and music analysis, Pasler establishes music's cultural significance and implicitly illuminates the role it can still play in countries like the United States."—Philip Gossett, The University of Chicago and University of Rome, La Sapienza

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## Awards

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ASCAP Deems Taylor Award, American Society of Composers, Authors, & Publishers

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