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Fourteen National Waltzes of London

Making "Real" Viennese Music Through Machines and Scores Around 1813

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Abstract: In 1813 in London, Charles Wigley, a shopkeeper and curiosities exhibitor, printed and sold two sets of waltzes as a complement to the performances of his Panharmonicon. This was a mechanical orchestra, crafted by the Viennese inventor Joseph Gurk, and presented to the public by Wigley, at his premises. The scores came as souvenirs for visitors, who could thus reproduce the music heard there at their homes. These *National Waltzes of Vienna*, initially played by the machine, were indeed arranged for piano by the composer Henry R. Bishop, whose name, in the absence of the composer's, remains on the title page. This article explores the process that led to the publication of these waltzes through the musical entrepreneurial links developed between Vienna and London at the turn of the nineteenth century. In addition to clarifying the authorship of this work—which, through the cross-referencing of various documents, can be attributed to František Pecháček—this contribution links their specific case to broader trends in the musical culture of the period. It does so by following the themes of audiovisual simulation, orchestral timbre, and commercialization, which were central to the gradual emergence of new aesthetics across Europe. This investigation reveals the synthetic nature of a musical text that brings these various aspects together to promote the "authenticity" of its music. A key factor in characterizing these compositions as "Viennese waltzes" was the distance separating their listeners from their supposed place of origin. The article shows how the score extends the process initiated by the machine and establishes this distance by seeking to abolish it. In this way, it prompts reflection on the enduring links and tensions between effectful representations, technical means to carry them out and localizations of the real.

Keywords: nineteenth century; entertainment; Joseph Gurk; London; mechanical music; military music; orchestra; Panharmonicon; František Pecháček; reality; technology; timbre; Vienna; waltz

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Introduction: On Some (Very) Long-Prepared Illusions

> Any sense you're not actually in the presence of the band dissolves.[1]

When he reviewed the virtual show ABBA Voyage, which commenced in May 2022 in London, journalist Alexis Petridis emphasized its effect of realness. According to him—and many others[2]—the four digital avatars, occupying the stage of an arena specifically designed to host this production, are so convincing that they simply *become* the original members of the Swedish group, who split up in 1982. He concludes his article by stating that the show is "the kind of triumph that's destined not merely to run and run but be repeatedly copied."[3] In this article, I suggest we reverse the perspective and consider what ABBA Voyage, as a cultural phenomenon, is itself a consequence of.
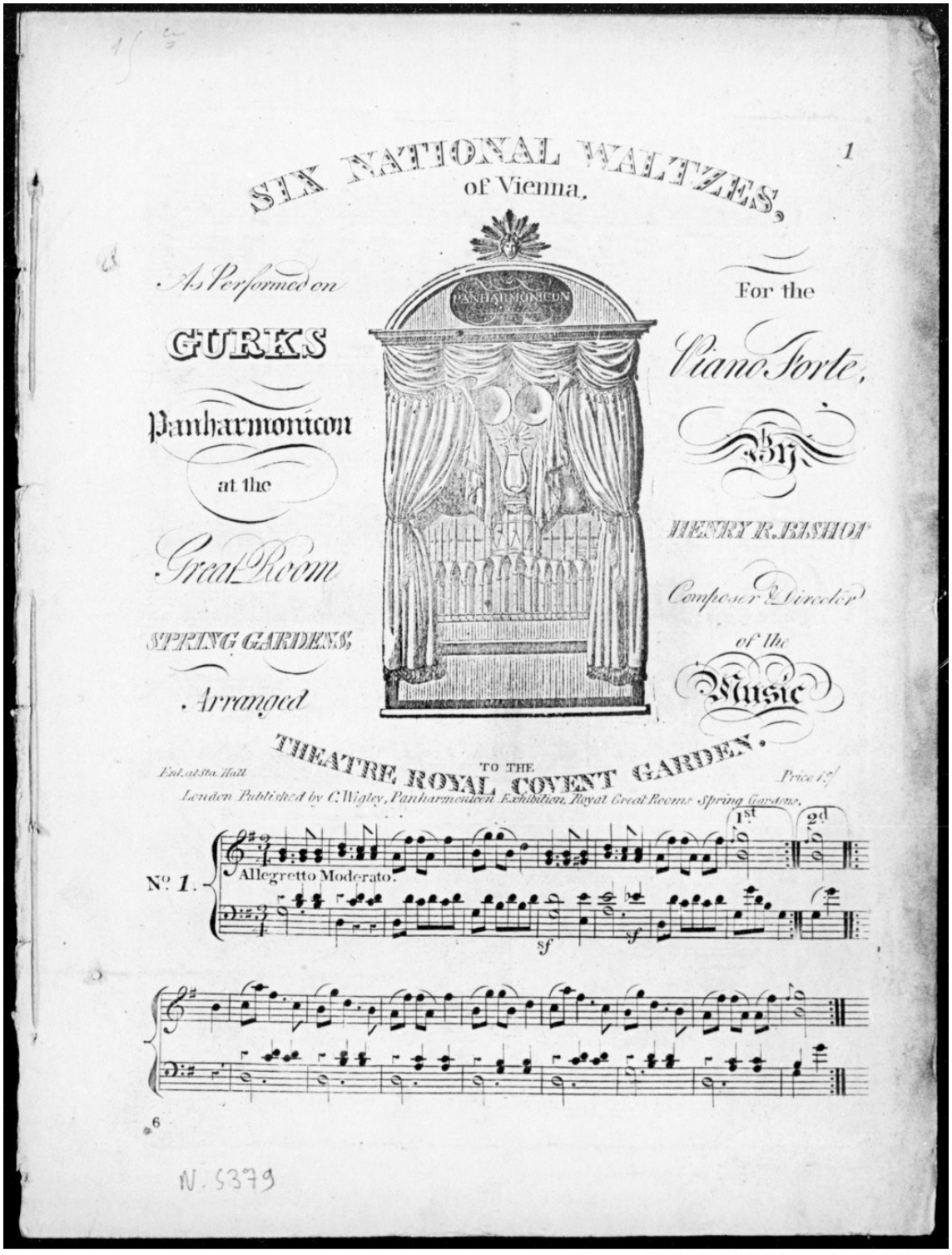
To do so, we need only stay in the same place, in London, but go back more than two centuries. A few years before the end of Napoleonic Wars, the city was brimming with entertainments and spectacles of all kinds, spread across theatres, concert rooms, and exhibition venues. Many of these divertissements sought to simulate reality, such as panoramas[4] and automata. One of these attractions, a mechanical orchestra called the Panharmonicon, built by the Viennese engineer Joseph Ignaz Gurk (1773–1835), took part in the fierce competition—then as now—between entrepreneurs vying to entertain well-off Londoners in their leisure time. The instrument was designed not only to reproduce the sound of a large orchestra but also to document and recreate musical events associated in particular with the city of Vienna. This paper analyses the achievements for which this machine was advertised and the very grounds on which they could be considered as achievements. By detailing the Panharmonicon's processing of repertoire and sound, I examine how it contributed to an early, general fascination with an artificially produced reality.

Some music directly linked to the Panharmonicon has survived, consisting of two printed scores from 1813. The complete title of the first one is *Six National Waltzes, of Vienna, As Performed on Gurk's Panharmonicon at the Great Room Spring Gardens, Arranged for the Piano Forte by Henry R. Bishop Composer &*

Director of the Music to the Theatre Royal Covent Garden (fig. 1). The title of the second score is identical, except that there are eight waltzes instead of six—in this paper, the fourteen pieces in total will be conjointly referred to as the *National Waltzes of Vienna*. Until now, their composer's name has not been published, and libraries' metadata include only the name of the arranger, Henry Rowley Bishop (1786–1855).

This article examines how these documents and the context in which they were made can shed light on a pivotal period in the history of music, particularly with regard to the social hierarchization of musical activities. It does not only identify the author of the waltzes, František Martin Pecháček (1763–1816), but, more importantly, it traces the web of acquaintances and business connections that led to the composition of this music and its performance by an orchestra machine at a London entertainment venue. It also offers a virtual audio reconstruction of the Panharmonicon, providing a better understanding of why and how its timbral qualities helped to define, in the minds of its listeners, what exactly a waltz was. Fundamentally, this paper outlines a local "labeling" process taking place in London and linking a dance practice to another location, Vienna. At the center of this process lay the reproducibility of a musical performance and the promise to enjoy it just as it originally was, hundreds of miles away from its exhibition environment.

Here, I am interested in how an expanding music market exploited the interplay between the recording of a performance and the potentially great distances that such a recording can travel. I argue that the transportable musical experience made possible by technical means fueled the need to pinpoint exactly where that experience came from. In turn, the need to attribute a clear origin to the music heard contributed decisively to defining its genre. As we shall see, in the London of 1813, if waltzes were recognized as such, it was primarily because of the emphasis placed on the distance between English audiences and the supposed origin of this dance—a sense of distance implied by the adjective "national." In sum, this paper clarifies the role played by impressive devices like the Panharmonicon to establish the defining qualities of the music they played. Considering both the sound produced directly by this machine and the reflection of this sound given by the scores, we gain a fresh perspective on the development of commercial and cultural patterns that remain prevalent today.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

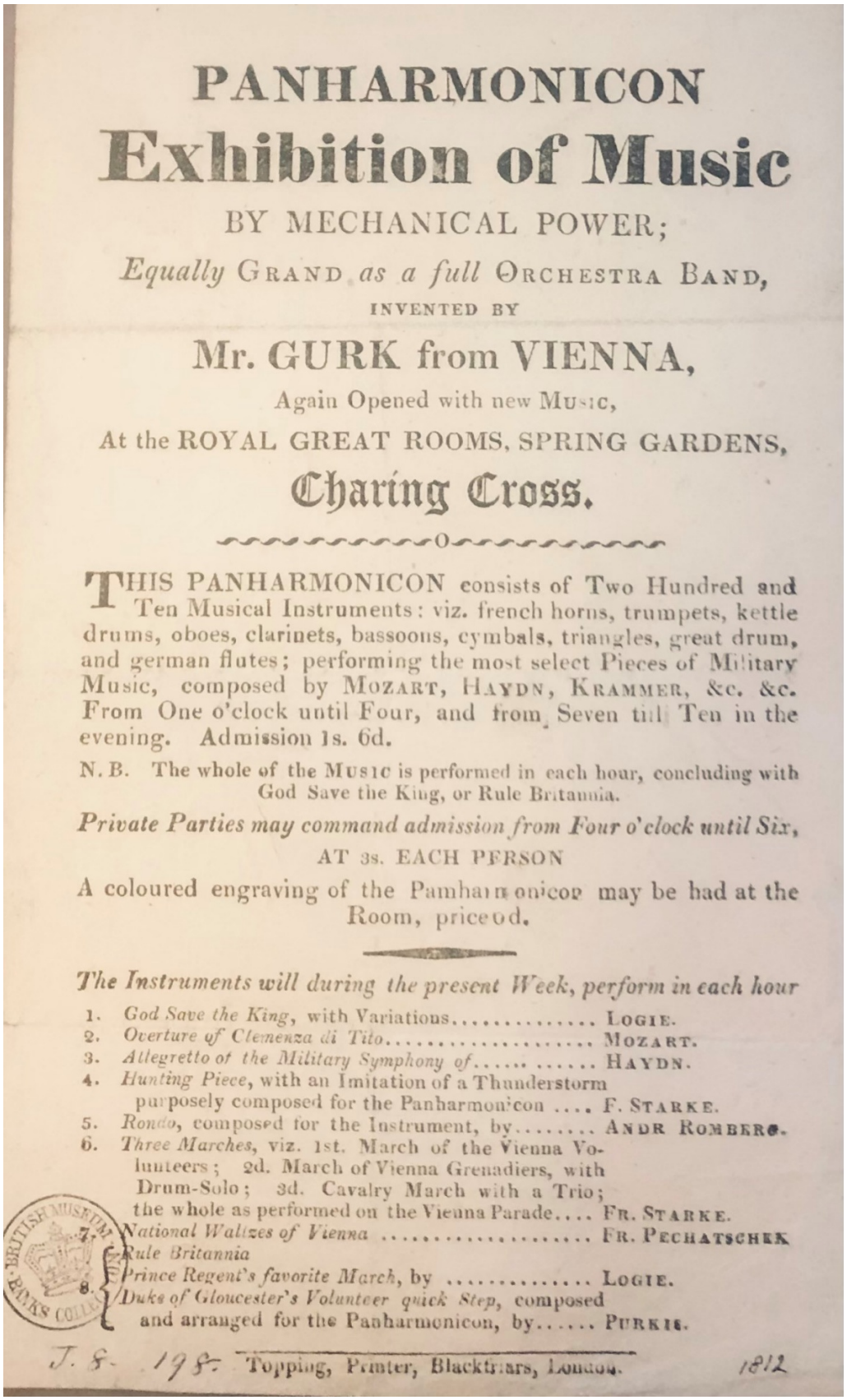
Figure 1: František Martin Pecháček, Six National Waltzes, of Vienna (...), 1813. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique, N–5379.

Finding Pecháček: What's Next?

Linking the *National Waltzes of Vienna* to a document revealing their author's name is not an original contribution of the present article. This was achieved by Dominic James Ruggier Bridge, who examined the demonstration of the Panharmonicon and the sale of its music as an example of one of the many possible forms that the sheet music trade could take during the long eighteenth century in England.[5] However, informative as it is, this connection appears to be the result of a mistake.

In his dissertation, Bridge describes the career of Charles Wigley (fl. 1782–1824), who supplemented his main occupation as an accessories salesman[6] by publishing and selling sheet music and organizing paid exhibitions in the building adjacent to his shop. The acquisition of Gurk's Panharmonicon by Wigley in 1811, the instrument's display on his premises at Spring Gardens, London, and the publication, in 1813, of the *National Waltzes of Vienna* are recounted, along with a reproduction of the title page of the score, featuring an engraving of the Panharmonicon.[7] Bridge explains that this image "was recycled from the engraving which was used by Wigley in a playbill advertising the exhibition in the previous year."[8] Yet the 1812 playbill specifically cited by Bridge (fig. 2) contains no illustration. Furthermore, Bridge makes no reference to the musical program listed at the bottom of the document—which includes, as the seventh number, the *National Waltzes of Vienna*, by "Fr. Pechatschek." It is possible that Bridge mistook this playbill for another piece of promotional material, dated 1811, which does indeed feature the same image as on the score—but no detailed program—a reproduction of which is shown in an article by Emily I. Dolan.[9]

In any case, identifying the author of the *National Waltzes of Vienna* is only a first step, as the author's name matters less than the network of practices within which his work is situated. Indeed, Pecháček remains a rather obscure figure, the most significant biographical work on him being a short article by Robert Haas, published in 1955.[10] In his day, however, he held a central position in the Viennese musical entertainment milieu and wrote, among other things, numerous collections of *Deutsche*, minuets, *Écossaises*, *Ländler*, and waltzes. The first dance musician able to make a living from this profession,[11] Pecháček was influential in the growing ubiquity of the waltz as a musical and social practice. Alongside Johann Baptist Vanhal (1739–1813), Carl Friedrich Ebers (1770–1836), and Michael Pamer (1782–1827), he played a key role in



PANHARMONICON

Exhibition of Music

BY MECHANICAL POWER;

Equally GRAND *as a full* ORCHESTRA BAND,

INVENTED BY

Mr. GURK from VIENNA,

Again Opened with new MUSIC,

At the ROYAL GREAT ROOMS, SPRING GARDENS,

Charing Cross.

THIS PANHARMONICON consists of Two Hundred and Ten Musical Instruments: viz. french horns, trumpets, kettle drums, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, cymbals, triangles, great drum, and german flutes; performing the most select Pieces of Military Music, composed by MOZART, HAYDN, KRAMMER, &c. &c. From One o'clock until Four, and from Seven till Ten in the evening. Admission 1s. 6d.

N. B. The whole of the MUSIC is performed in each hour, concluding with God Save the King, or Rule Britannia.

Private Parties may command admission from Four o'clock until Six,

AT 3s. EACH PERSON

A coloured engraving of the Panharmonicon may be had at the Room, price 0d.

The Instruments will during the present Week, perform in each hour

1. *God Save the King*, with Variations..... LOGIE.
2. *Overture of Clemenza di Tito*..... MOZART.
3. *Allegretto of the Military Symphony of*..... HAYDN.
4. *Hunting Piece*, with an Imitation of a Thunderstorm purposely composed for the Panharmonicon .... F. STARKE.
5. *Rondo*, composed for the Instrument, by..... ANDR ROMBERG.
6. *Three Marches*, viz. 1st. March of the Vienna Volunteers; 2d. March of Vienna Grenadiers, with Drum-Solo; 3d. Cavalry March with a Trio; the whole as performed on the Vienna Parade.... FR. STARKE.
7. *National Waltzes of Vienna* ..... FR. PECHATSCHEK
8. *Rule Britannia*
   Prince Regent's favorite March, by ..... LOGIE.
   Duke of Gloucester's Volunteer quick Step, composed and arranged for the Panharmonicon, by..... PURKIS.

J. 8. 198 Topping, Printer, Blackfriars, London. 1812

BRITISH MUSEUM BOOKS COLL

Figure 2: Anonym, Playbill: Panharmonicon, Exhibition of Music, 1812. British Museum, prints and drawings department, J,8.198.

the early dissemination and popularization of a dance that was to become a lasting feature of nineteenth-century cultural paradigms in all of Europe, while remaining closely associated with the city of Vienna.[12] The *National Waltzes of Vienna* offer a privileged perspective on this process, shedding light on the underlying dynamics and the somewhat unexpected forms of cooperation that sustained it.

This music provides an interesting case study in that each of the terms included in its title raises one or more problems. On examining this collection and the circumstances of its publication, one is indeed led to wonder (1) in what sense these waltzes might be considered "national," (2) what defines these pieces as "waltzes," and (3) why it is said that they are "of Vienna." The events and context surrounding the publication of the scores show that it is impossible to link this music definitively to one specific place: Its very form and existence are due to a series of movements and connections that extended far beyond the political, linguistic, and cultural boundaries of the time. Likewise, the seemingly simple categorization of these musical pieces tells us far more about the shifting temporalities and multiple adjacent states of a cultural concept being shared than about any fixed and stable typology.

Serious Showmanship: The Viennese Brand

The third part of this thorny title ("*of Vienna*") is perhaps the least difficult to start with. While the composer of the set was born in Wildenschwert (today Ústí nad Orlicí), Eastern Bohemia,[13] the inventor of the instrument that played it is said to be a "native of Vienna" in a promotional article of 1811.[14] Little information remains about the life of Jospeh Ignaz Gurk (1773–1835), whose first known employment was as library assistant at the Esterházy court.[15] There, he worked under the supervision of Primitivus Niemecz (1750–1806) who was not only a librarian and a priest but also the maker of musical clocks for which Mozart and Haydn specifically composed several pieces. Presumably, a technical know-how acquired from Niemecz allowed Gurk to develop his Panharmonicon, which he presented in 1810 at the Leipzig fair[16] and in Berlin a few weeks later.[17]

We do not know how the instrument's subsequent journey to London was arranged, nor how contact between Gurk and Wigley was made. However, it seems very likely that networks closely linked to those that made Haydn's residencies in London possible were behind this. While it can be safely assumed that the story according to which Haydn suggested the name "Panharmonicon" to Gurk shortly before his death[18] was a fiction to attract paying visitors at Wigley's premises,[19] it is certain that the two men knew each other personally. In London, the main intermediaries were part of the circle that founded the Philharmonic Society in 1813—the year the *National Waltzes of Vienna* were published. Not only was Henry Bishop one of the Philharmonic's thirty founding members, but so too was the violinist and impresario Johann Peter Salomon (1745–1815). To these we must add Johann Baptist Cramer (1771–1858), who is known to have traveled to Vienna in 1799, during which time he had a happy reunion with Haydn.[20] These three individuals were prominent figures in a musical circle that fostered regular exchanges between London and Vienna—a circle that naturally included a number of lesser-known agents, one of whom might have had contact with Gurk.

Bishop must have played a key role in organizing the installation of the Panharmonicon at Spring Gardens, as he was Wigley's nephew. This relation is revealed in the autograph catalogue of Bishop's works, partly published in the *Musical Times* of October 1895. It is worth quoting the following passage at length because, beyond Bishop's family connection, it strikingly encapsulates certain familiar themes:

> The first song I remember to have had printed … was published in 1800 or 1801. … I was then in partnership (!) [*sic*] with my cousin, William Wigley, a musicseller in Spring Gardens …. I also, about the same period, composed a set of six Waltzes, which were engraved and printed by one Riley, at No. 6 or 8 in the Strand; and, in the year 1801, I composed and published a characteristic piece entitled "The Battle of Alexandria," the idea and programme of which were furnished me by Mr. Samuel Arnold, who at that time was painting a Panorama on the same subject for exhibition at my uncle's great rooms in Spring Gardens.[21]

This account raises a number of points to consider. First, it suggests a pattern, extending beyond the specific case of the Panharmonicon, linking musical spectacles, the waltz, and the sheet music trade. Bishop mentions various activities—printing, engraving, the design of visual devices, management, and marketing—in which he, as a composer, was involved at this early stage of his career. The miscellaneous nature of these projects—not to mention

Bishop's original ambition to become a jockey[22]—may come as a surprise when considering one of the most established figures in British musical institutions in the first half of the nineteenth century. But Bishop was precisely one of the people who helped bring such institutions into being.

In their erratic appearance, Bishop's beginnings correspond to the peculiar period in London's musical life that spanned Haydn's departure, in 1795, and the founding of the Philharmonic. Due to a retrospective narrative—partly driven by the Philharmonic itself—this period has often been regarded as less dynamic, if not barren, because of the limited availability of orchestral concerts.[23] Ian Taylor has challenged this view by detailing the wide range of initiatives undertaken by organizations and individuals during those years to enable instrumental music concerts to take place. One of the main selling points used to promote these performances was the use of a "full and complete band,"[24] and, in this respect, it is telling that on the playbill mentioned above, the Panharmonicon is touted as being "equally Grand as a full Orchestra Band."

As demonstrated by Dolan, the concept of the orchestra was then still emerging.[25] This means that any musical content described as "orchestral," in order to be played, generated practical and logistical issues that had not yet been resolved through the establishment of norms and standards. What the collaboration between Pecháček, Gurk, Bishop, and Wigley reveals is the inventiveness of actors working before the solidification of the referential frameworks that orient our current comprehension both of instrumental music and of orchestras—generally as discrete and independent notions. By contrast, for these actors, there existed ambiguities and overlapping concepts that led, for example, to a recurring nexus between symphonic works, military timbre, and automata.[26] Orchestral content could not be clearly isolated from its means of performance. Likewise, there was no consensus on what an orchestra should be, nor on the aesthetic and social values it should embody. In these conditions, there was a possibility that the symphony, the major instrumental genre of the coming century, could be only a passing fad—or that machine-based performance would eventually become the main way to play it. In other words, showcasing orchestra machines was by no means a less "serious" activity than organizing series of concerts.

Evidence for this is provided by the fact that, in the same year, 1813, a composer as renowned as Beethoven was writing music for the inventor and showman Johann Nepomuk Mälzel's (1772–1838) own Panharmonicon.

Wellingtons Sieg oder die Schlacht bei Vittoria, Op. 91, is remarkable in several respects. As a battle piece, it had an event-driven nature, as it was triggered by a fast-evolving military and political situation. It had also, and foremost, a representational purpose, both in its object and its implementation. Indeed, just as Bishop's *Battle of Alexandria* had been conceived in relation to a panorama, Beethoven initially wrote his work to be played by a simulation device.[27] Although *Wellingtons Sieg* was eventually premiered by a human orchestra—to acclaim as huge as it was short-lived[28]—the organization of the concerts remained in the hands of Mälzel, who, following his falling out with Beethoven over the rights to the work, would eventually arrange at least part of it for his machine. The following year, it was Mälzel's turn to set off to London to present his instrument—a journey on which Beethoven was originally supposed to accompany him.[29]

As Terrance Riley has pointed out, a "strictly businesslike attitude"[30] characterized the Beethoven–Mälzel collaboration. The business aspect of *Wellingtons Sieg*, along with its ready-made features, often was, and remains, the focus of criticism, based on a perceived dichotomy between "true" art and "formulaic" or "commercial" art. But here again, these are conventions that had not yet become firmly established in the early decades of the nineteenth century. However uncomfortable this may still seem to music scholarship—despite the efforts made in recent decades to challenge the dominance of the canon—the figure of the composer as a showperson, or as part of the entertainment world, deserves to be taken seriously. Deirdre Loughridge, for example, envisages "Haydn as Savoyard" to better understand how his oratorios—*Die Schöpfung*, Hob. XXI:2, in particular—were received.[31] In this case, again, the representational dimension of the work is key and induced discussions about its aesthetic qualities and the kind of performative context it conjured up. As James Webster acknowledges, "Haydn's triumph with the *Creation* was in substantial part 'arranged' … —without, of course, compromising Haydn's artistic integrity."[32] This suggests a cultural terrain where some strong dualisms, between art made to please and sincere art, burgeoned without having yet taken hold.[33] Paradoxical as it may sound, it is even possible that the very concept of "artistic integrity" stems from the familiarity that composers gradually developed with the business model of street performances and cabinets of curiosities.

To identify this terrain, we can choose either the broad European context of "audiovisual culture" from 1760 to 1810, as delineated by Loughridge, or

the more specific "First Viennese Modernism" coined by Webster—covering the same timeframe. In any case, this was a basis for the development of Romantic attitudes and categorizations regarding aesthetics. One of the most prominent of these subsequent categorizations is the exclusive divide between "serious" and "trivial" music, which, according to Derek Scott, "was caused primarily by an intense dislike of the market conditions that turned art into a commodity."[34] This implies that these market conditions applied to most music before ideological and political efforts were made to single out a specific part of the production as canonical. Now, what makes things interesting is that the spectacularization of music in the early nineteenth century was itself part of these efforts. Machines such as Panharmonicons and musical clocks were not merely used to reproduce the performance of musical works: They served to preserve them. Hence, as shown by Dolan, they were among the earliest examples of a monumentalized repertoire, reflecting a commitment to ensure the posterity of musical creation.[35]

Here, Vienna appears as a point to which a set of diverse attitudes concerning music anchored itself. This set of attitudes—or cultural tendency—has primarily manifested itself as a mode of consumption that did not distinguish the elevated art lover from the seeker of mere sensations. It was against such a backdrop that the mechanical execution of a set of waltzes could be advertised as a worthy model for home piano practice. Arguably, the name of the city inscribed on the title page of scores functioned mainly as an index of this type of consumption and valuation. Similarly to the *Wiener Walzer*, published in Leipzig by Ebers in 1807—the first printed occurrence of waltzes branded as Viennese—the actual geographical origin of the composition mattered far less than the entanglement of learned routines and representations that Vienna evoked for distant customers.[36] It is in fact the very distance separating London from Vienna—and all the "businesslike" relationships such a distance entailed—that justified this localizing epithet. In the following sections, I show how, beyond this label, the music contained in the score and its so-called national character depend on the same network of relationships.

From Military Waltzing to Printed Waltzes

In addition to the playbill discussed above, the advertisement for the Panharmonicon published in the November 28, 1811, issue of the *Times* also links Pecháček to the *National Waltzes of Vienna*:

> Of the compositions which the Panharmonicon now performs, the celebrated allegretto of Haydon's [*sic*] military symphony, a rondo by Romberg, and a set of German waltzes purposely composed for the instrument by Pechatscheck, seem to be the most popular.[37]

The fact that Pecháček's pieces were composed specifically for a machine that may never have been publicly exhibited in Vienna supports two important points of the analysis presented so far: first, the commonplaceness of collaborations between composers and entertainers, and second, the propensity of such collaborations to thematize remoteness. Be it a battlefield in the Basque Country or in Egypt, a scene in the wilderness,[38] or even the realm of death,[39] it was always an area beyond the reach of the general public that would be reconstructed through the combined efforts of sound, image, and mechanics. These waltzes are no exception, as they are systematically part of batches of musical pieces intended to evoke both "Germanness" and "Vienneseness." As we read in another newspaper, from November 17, 1811:

> German Waltzes, and full pieces by Mozart, Romberg, and Starke, are performed with great correctness; but the "watch relief" of the Emperor's guard, at Vienna, is peculiarly grand, from the powerful effect of the horns and trumpets.[40]

This changing of the guard music consists of three marches composed by Friedrich Starke (1774–1835), "as performed on the Vienna Parade" (fig. 2). The representational paradigm that determines most of the works discussed so far applies here as well. In the case of the Panharmonicon, this paradigm governs not only the musical evocation of a distant object but also the production of sound itself. This means that Londoners who came to see and hear Gurk's machine could witness a double simulation: that of a Viennese military ritual and that of a "full Orchestra Band." This also brings us back to the unstable nature of the orchestra, which oscillated between a technical procedure—that of representation—and the material arrangement designed to carry out this procedure. As demonstrated by Dolan, the central concern brought on by orchestras—either human or mechanical, both of them being equally businesslike matter—was that of effect.[41] The successful achievement of the desired effect outweighed the question of whether it would be produced by living musicians or by an array of pipes, bellows, and gears. Here, the prime object of representation and intended effect is military timbre, which was perhaps the most sought-after kind of sound by audiences at the time.[42]

In the next section, I will discuss how the "foreign" character of the *National Waltzes of Vienna* was asserted. First, it is necessary to examine more closely the content of the score, starting with two simple questions: Why was this music chosen to be sold as merchandise to the people who came to attend the Panharmonicon's performances, and, more fundamentally, why did the Panharmonicon play it at all? As mentioned above, military music was the main repertoire to which the instrument was devoted, and, at first glance, it may seem strange that it was not a more explicitly military work—such as Starke's set of marches—that was selected for arrangement, printing, and sale. Waltzes, however, proved to be a judicious choice, as a complementary spin-off of the Panharmonicon experience, in that their performance by this machine, at this time, was largely what defined them, precisely, as waltzes. Indeed, both the mechanized execution and the pursuit of the military timbre played a role in familiarizing London audiences with this dance.
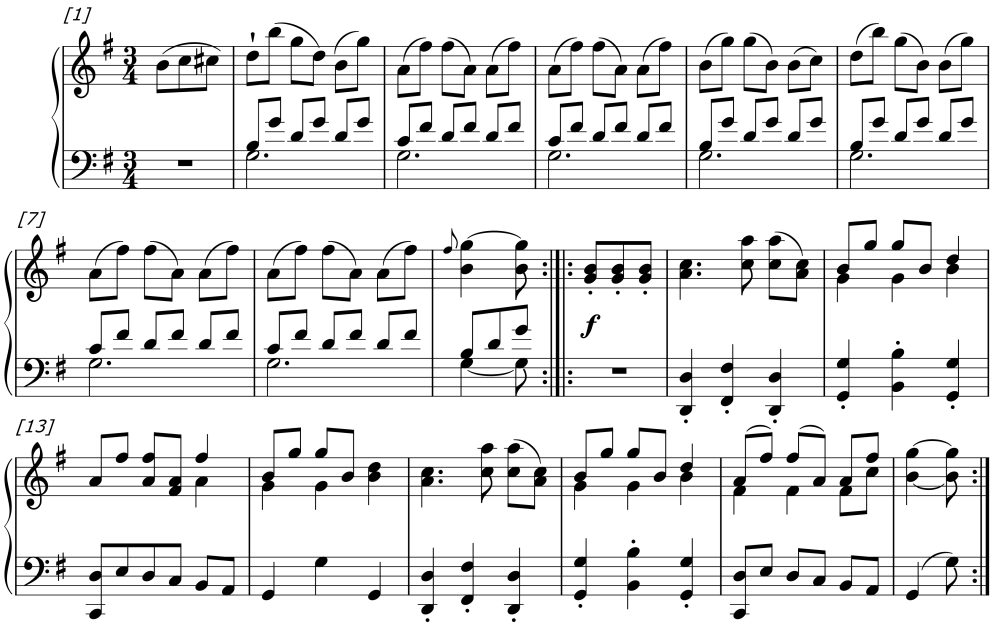
That military music constituted the bulk, if not the entirety, of the Panharmonicon's repertoire is made explicit in the playbill (fig. 2). The instrument is described as "performing the most select Pieces of Military Music, composed by Mozart, Haydn, Krammer[*sic*] &c. &c." With regard to the Haydn piece in question—the second movement of Symphony No. 100, Hob. I:100—such a qualification seems appropriate. It might be more debatable in the case of Mozart, but the opening and closing bars of the overture to *La Clemenza di Tito*, K. 621, and the timpani interventions throughout undoubtedly lend it a martial quality. The last name of the list leaves us with nothing but conjecture. To my knowledge, no "Krammer"—nor Franz Krommer (1759–1831), who here is perhaps more likely to be referred to than Cramer mentioned above—appears in any other document relating to the Panharmonicon and its repertoire. Adding to this the marches and patriotic tunes listed on the program, it is clear that most of the pieces shared compositional features typical of functional and ceremonial music linked to the context of the army.[43]

What about the waltzes, then? To better understand their inclusion and their prominent place within this collection of works, one must consider their melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic features alongside what is perhaps an even more decisive factor: timbre, which gave Gurk's invention its significance. Indeed, while the Panharmonicon could mechanically reproduce sequences and simultaneity of pitches at the desired speed, its most advertised asset was its ability to imitate the tone corresponding to each of the musical lines

combined in a given work. This ability relied largely on the fact that the machine contained actual wind and percussion instruments—strings were substituted by organ pipes.[44] Each orchestral voice had a corresponding set of instruments connected to the windchest. As each individual instrument was assigned to a single pitch, the set it was part of equated to an organ stop.[45] The list and number of instruments contained in the Panharmonicon vary from one source to another. However, in addition to the twenty flutes, four horns, and fourteen trumpets that are consistently mentioned[46]—to which a number of oboes, clarinets, and bassoons must be added—the same percussion set keeps reoccurring: timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, and triangle.

Such a configuration of drums and idiophones—which, by no coincidence, is almost the same that gave Haydn's Hundredth Symphony its nickname—obviously influenced the way in which the music played by the Panharmonicon was understood. If there could be any doubt about the military dimension of the works arranged for the machine, its regimental sonic features assigned them with certainty to this category. More generally, this shows that listening took priority over compositional parameters when it came to describing the music. Bishop and Wigley themselves acknowledged it, as their score's title specifies that the *National Waltzes of Vienna* are printed "as performed on" Gurk's machine—whereas it could have said "as written for" it. This emphasis of the sonic result over the text might be one of the reasons why Pecháček is not credited as the composer. Moreover, it increases one's curiosity about what the Panharmonicon actually sounded like.

It is this curiosity that leads me to include in this article a proposed reconstruction of the execution of one of these waltzes by the instrument (ex. 1). To do this, I propose an arrangement of the piece using the instruments listed above. While this virtual attempt in no way claims to offer a "realistic" rendition, it does, however, provide an insight into the timbral effect of the Panharmonicon.[47] In particular, it invites reflection on how such an effect would come to define the relative novelty that was the waltz for a British audience in 1813. To gauge this effect better, I also provide a piano version of the same piece.

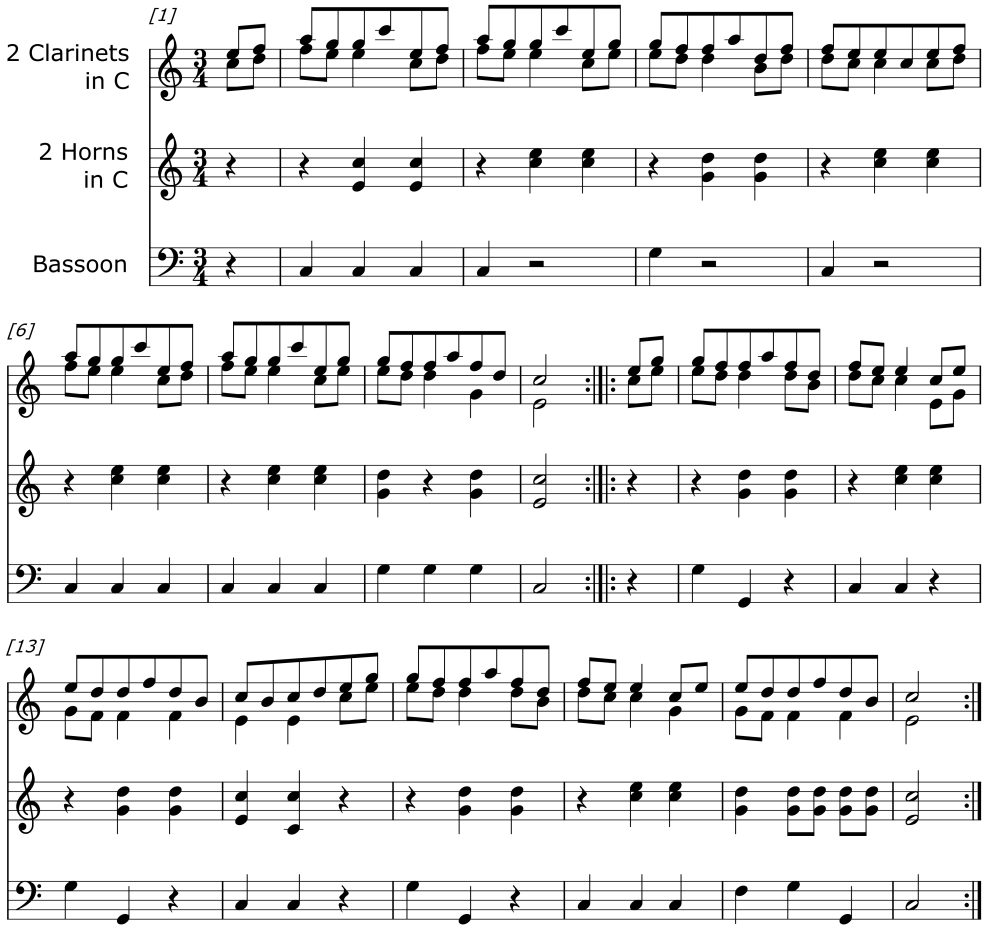


Example 1: František Martin Pecháček, Six National Waltzes, of Vienna (…), no. 2. Audio: https://soundcloud.com/waltzes-of-london.

I selected the second piece from the first set of waltzes because its compositional structure is made particularly clear by my hypothetical reconstruction. Except for the final piece from the second set—which includes a coda—this structure is the same in each of the fourteen waltzes contained in the two collections. It consists of two sections, each totaling eight bars and repeated once. While the first one establishes the tonality through a frequent and regular alternation between the tonic and the dominant, the second leads to the conclusion by permuting this harmonic structure and introducing different melodico-rhythmic patterns.

A marked difference in character between the two sections—here made particularly noticeable by the change of dynamics and the new, distinct melodic motive in the bass, which makes use of the hitherto unheard lower part of the register—helps to distinguish waltzes from other dances, such as the *Ländler*, with which they share a strong formal similarity. A comparison between our waltz and a *Ländler*, also composed by Pecháček (ex. 2), shows strong resemblance in overall structure, rhythm, and harmonic layout. However, the contrast between the two eight-bar halves is typically less

pronounced in the *Ländler*. Indeed, the second section, while based on a variation of the initial harmonic sequence, retains the same eighth-note figures as in the first, the continuous use of which is generally distinctive of this kind of dance.[48]



Example 2: František Martin Pecháček, 12 Ländler für II Clarinetten II Hörner und Fagott, no. 7, 1801. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Mus.pr. 248.
Audio: https://soundcloud.com/waltzes-of-london/12-laendler-7.

As revealing as these stylistic features may be, it is unlikely that they had any influence on how a waltz was defined for or by a British audience in the early nineteenth century. At that time, the first criterion used to identify a waltz—by far the most important—was the way in which it was danced. The choreographic configuration of the waltz, so heavily criticized by moral and political authorities because of the dancers' close embrace as they spin around, was in fact the primary element used to define its music.[49] As documents pertaining to the waltz's introduction in England show, both

its musical structure and its dance steps were described in various, even divergent ways prior to the first attempts at standardization—which were not themselves necessarily in line with what was happening in Vienna or elsewhere in Europe.[50] The unifying element—and the hallmark through which the waltz would spread as a new trend, particularly through literature and the press—remained the tight clasp that the dancers, face to face, applied on each other's body.

This must be borne in mind when considering what was marketed as a waltz in piano scores. Here, the waltz denomination functions essentially as a reference to waltzing as a physical practice and, therefore, to the context in which this practice took place: the dancehall. This brings us to the musical resources employed in such a context and, consequently, back to the orchestral and military timbre of the Panharmonicon. There is little doubt that Pecháček's original composition was orchestrated for the machine from the outset. The example of *Wellingtons Sieg* supports this idea, as well as the fact that it would have been redundant for Bishop to make a piano arrangement if the waltzes had already existed in a reduced version. Moreover, at that time, the existence as piano pieces of most waltzes—and other dances based on the generic model of the *Deutsche*, such as the *Ländler* or the *Dreher*—resulted foremost from a transcription process.[51] The case of Vanhal's *12 Deutsche Taenze für das Clavier übersetzt* (1792) provides an interesting parallel, as the title page mentions that these pieces were "performed at the imperial and royal *Redoutensaal* in Vienna,"[52] undoubtedly by a large orchestra or even, perhaps, a military band.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, *Redoutensäle* attracted large numbers of people from various social backgrounds and became the emblems of a distinctive ball culture that has been considered typically Viennese.[53] Moreover, the rise of dance music went hand in hand with that of military music in Vienna,[54] as the use of regimental bands for entertainment purposes became commonplace throughout Europe.[55] This is what informed the perception of the *National Waltzes of Vienna*, played by a device that could sonically reconstruct a parade ground, as well as a ballroom. For London audiences of the time, the representation of these venues and what took place there—in the case of the ballroom, waltzing—was the main point of interest. Likewise, the evocation of waltzing performed by the Panharmonicon was a necessary step to the identification of its music as waltzes. Such a process, once again, relied on the distance between the object being represented and the act of representation itself. It is to the links between the effect of distance

and successful representation—or between remoteness and reality—that the final section of this paper is devoted.

Basing Reality on "Foreignness"

At this stage, if any doubt could still arise concerning the attribution of the *National Waltzes of Vienna*, it would paradoxically come from the fact that Bishop never claimed to have composed them. He was only the arranger.

In 1821, he would also be credited as the arranger of a collection entitled *Melodies of Various Nations*. Twenty-one years later, he was knighted, allegedly on the grounds that Queen Victoria adored one "Sicilian Air" included in the collection.[56] In the meantime, the pseudo-folk tune had been reworked by Bishop and included as a song in his 1823 opera *Clari*, through which it became both an instant hit and an enduring favorite, eventually leading Bishop to admit that he was in fact the composer of the original melody. The history of "Home, Sweet Home"—as the retitled air entered posterity—thus reveals a messy interplay between documentation, invention, reuse, and publicization that echoes in the term "national."

This case, remarkable as it is, is just one example of the way in which European composers of that era dealt with a peculiar kind of musical material. The distinctive feature of this material was not only that it predated the work of arrangement, orchestration, or transcription: it was also attributed a collective origin, linked to a specifically defined group of people.[57] "National music"—the term used prior to "folk" music—was widespread, notably in the market for domestic music-making.[58] The *National Waltzes of Vienna* were thus part of a significant sheet music trade, giving amateurs the opportunity to collect and play tunes purportedly from Ireland, India, or Switzerland, among others.

Anonymity was regarded as a fundamental criterion for establishing the authenticity of a piece of folk music, and this would, at first glance, seem to explain the absence of Pecháček's name on the score. But then, how to explain the fact that he was mentioned in the playbill and in a newspaper? Moreover, there is another name on the title page: Gurk's. He, according to another emerging Romantic dichotomy, embodied the counterpart to the spontaneous creativity of the people, namely individual genius.[59] This is made explicit in the *Times* advertisement:

> He [Gurk] communicated his [Panharmonicon] idea to several celebrated professors at Vienna, who considered it impracticable … To men of genius difficulties are but incitements! Partial success encouraged the German's perseverance. … We could not help admiring a country … which, even in its present (we hope temporary) state of oppression, continues to delight surrounding nations by a multiplicity of pleasing as well as useful inventions, by its productions in the liberal arts, and by its literary works.[60]

Here, Gurk is substantially associated with his country, which seems to act directly through him—although it is difficult to say exactly which country this is. The language used in this promotional report is thus characteristic of the rhetoric of a "national spirit," said to be the primary cause of all the cultural expressions of a given people.[61] This explains the parallel drawn between the development of the Panharmonicon and German-language literature, which was then enjoying growing popularity in England and Europe.

Two very different texts, both published in 1813, bear witness to this enthusiasm: Germaine de Staël's influential essay *De l'Allemagne* and Lord Byron's satirical poem *The Waltz: An Apostrophic Hymn*. While the first is a tribute to German art and philosophy, the second is a reaction to the spread—encouraged by the Hanoverian rule over Great Britain—of a lifestyle deemed typical of the Germans, best exemplified by their trademark dance, and unworthy of English traditions.[62] Despite their opposing viewpoints, these two works are based on a shared premise. Byron draws on the idea that dance expresses the ethos of the land it is from,[63] and at the very end of her book, de Staël proposes that "folk songs and national dances" can "reveal the mores and genius of a country."[64] However, although both authors attempt to articulate a certain Germanness, they each refer to two distinct situations leading to the construction of "national repertoires." De Staël emphasizes direct contact with the primary agents of the folk—identified, since Herder, with the peasant classes,[65] whom she explicitly equates with "nature"[66]—while the object of Byron's satire is a practice typically "reformulated … for consumption by a cultured elite."[67]

For anything claimed to be "national" to achieve consistency, the trick is usually to assume that these two situations are sequential, the latter following from the former. In other words, "raw," "spontaneous," and "natural" material lends its authenticity to its own "artifactualization," which makes it practicable—and salable—for new audiences.[68] This is the implicit process suggested by the *National Waltzes of Vienna*. It went hand in hand with the representational procedures explored in the previous sections, which

consisted in the reproduction both of military timbre and of this specific cultural terrain labeled as "Viennese." Just as Pecháček's waltzes had to reflect a common creative ground putatively shared with Haydn's symphonies and Mozart's operas, and just as Gurk's machine aimed to recreate the atmosphere of a Habsburg ballroom, so too did the Germanness of this music have to be captured by Bishop's and Wigley's editorial work.

This work involved not only claiming to reproduce authentic material but also emphasizing its authenticity by making it appear exotic. Just as the waltz was all the rage throughout London, one can see the obvious commercial advantage of releasing pieces that had been composed in faraway Vienna—but, once again, for an instrument that was destined to tour across Europe. Pecháček was an entrepreneur as much as a composer,[69] yet through the publication of his waltzes, his status as Bishop's counterpart is replaced by that of an agent of the folk. At this price, compositions designed to be part of a cosmopolitan music market could be heard as the real sound of German balls.

As noted above, whether the compositions possessed the required stylistic characteristics was of secondary importance and did not suffice to commodify them adequately. Consumers, be they an enthusiast piano player or a disapproving Byron, literally had to look elsewhere, toward a distant—and, to some extent, imaginary—place to assess the actuality of what they were doing. Most of the work necessary for making the waltz a concrete practice was indeed carried out locally, by people generally described as mere receivers of a finished and stable object. In fact, they took an active part in making it what it was and what it meant, but this tends to be obscured by their own emphasis on the "imported" nature of the dance. To embrace the waltz or to denounce it thus amounted, in both cases, to inventing its foreignness, to linking the dance directly to some original native ground, and to bypassing the multiple mediators which transformed it at each stage of its transmission. There appeared a machine, which seemed capable of doing this. Both an immediate connection to a musical source and an affirmation of its remoteness, the machine shows how a certain sense of reality can be built on the concealment of what is nearer: work, meetings, deals, business. In this sense, the Panharmonicon opens a field of reflection on our current media environments and their various social and political implications.

Conclusion: Territories That Feed the Real

Many new technologies of the early nineteenth century—orchestras, Panharmonicons, panoramas, and others—built their appeal on the evocation of distant places or transcendent worlds. As they made it desirable to "look elsewhere," they contributed, at least virtually, to extending the immediacy of reality. Bringing the remote in front of their audiences, they also trained them to locate the true and the real in an ever-distant horizon, potentially out of reach. This, of course, would become central to Romantic aesthetics. What the *National Waltzes of Vienna* help us to understand, therefore, is through what kinds of networks a form of idealism can be articulated and constructed. Moreover, they offer us a valuable perspective on current attitudes toward music, its performance, and its perceived reality, as this idealism has, in Western contexts, shaped various modes of cultural reception.

Among such modes, the pervasiveness of exoticism has been rivaled—and perhaps surpassed—by that of nostalgia. When one looks for authenticity in distance, temporal remoteness comes up almost automatically as a parallel alternative to geographic outer reaches. Or, rather, even as their counterpart: The identification of bygone eras with far-off places has indeed become a conventional feature of post-Enlightenment modernity.[70] This proves true also in the way such remoteness is conjured up. Not surprisingly, comparable procedures aim at both the evocation of foreign cities and the revival of old times. Objects and discourses, combined as technologies, allow a momentary dissolution of the distance, which we nevertheless must constantly keep in mind in order to marvel at the achievement of the performance. As one such "kind of triumph that's destined to be repeatedly copied," the Panharmonicon was thus among the many precedents for the amazed reactions of audiences and critics to a contemporary production such as ABBA Voyage.[71] Promoting the potent effect of the "just as if," it paved the way for the reassuring pleasures so many people keep seeking in well-crafted returns of the past.

This article has examined the context in which Gurk's mechanical orchestra was developed and demonstrated. It showed the significance of its performance context for determining the nature of the waltzes that were played, and it shed light on the links between the sale of this music and the emergence of a nationalist ideology. More than solely ascertaining the author of the *National Waltzes of Vienna*, I have explored the various levels at which the very notion of their authorship could extend and unfold in more complex

ways. From the collaborations between clockmakers, composers, and music sellers to the assumption of an authenticity rooted in a country's genius, via the performative primacy of the machine, there emerged an entanglement of actors and procedures that does not fit the usual narratives of individual creation. Yet the use of this music by an influential production circle suggests that, at that time, such an entanglement was probably more usual than not. The question therefore remains as to how other works—from Haydn's symphonies to ABBA's songs—had and still have us connected to the real, and through which documents, simulations, and territories this occurs.

Notes

1. Alexis Petridis, “Abba Voyage Review: Jaw–Dropping Avatar Act That’s Destined to Be Copied,” *The Guardian*, May 26, 2022, accessed June 3, 2026.

2. “Reviews,” ABBA Arena, Google Maps, accessed June 3, 2026.

3. Petridis, “Abba Voyage Review.”

4. Peter Otto, “Between the Virtual and the Actual: Robert Barker's Panorama of London and the Multiplication of the Real in Late Eighteenth-Century London,” *Romanticism on the Net*, no. 46 (2007).

5. Dominic James Ruggier Bridge, “Selling the Score: Entrepreneurs and New Markets for Printed Music in Eighteenth-Century England” (PhD diss., University of Liverpool, 2023), 61–66.

6. The items listed on his trade cards include such a wide variety of objects as swords, toys, cutlery, mourning rings, and garters. (“Charles Wigley,” The British Museum, accessed May 7, 2026).

7. Bridge, “Selling the Score,” 251. Bridge used a copy that is held at the British Library and consists only of the first set of 6 waltzes.

8. Ibid., 66.

9. Emily I. Dolan, “The Origins of the Orchestra Machine,” *Current Musicology*, no. 76 (2003): 15.

10. Robert Haas, “Franz Martin Pechatschek: Endlich richtig bestimmt,” in *Mozart–Jahrbuch 1954: Herausgegeben von der internationalen Stiftung Mozarteum* (Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, 1955), 73–77.

11. Norbert Linke, *“Es mußte einem was einfallen”: Untersuchungen zur kompositorischen Arbeitsweise der “Naturalisten”* (Hans Schneider, 1992), 102.

12. Philipp Ther, *Der Klang der Monarchie: Eine musikalische Geschichte des Habsburgerreichs* (Suhrkamp, 2025), 185–211.

13. Haas, “Franz Martin Pechatschek,” 73.

14. Anon., “Panharmonicon,” *The National Register*, November 17, 1811, 731.

15. Helmut Kowar, “P. Primitivus Niemecz (1750–1806): Seine ‘musikalischen Spieluhren und Maschinen,’” *Das Mechanische Musikinstrument*, 38, no. 115 (2012): 8–10.

16. Ibid., 10 (note 11). Dolan writes that “the instrument was first exhibited in Vienna in 1810” but provides no evidence to back this up. Dolan, “The Origins of the Orchestra Machine,” 13–14.

17. Anon., “Korrespondenz-Nachrichten, Berlin, 23 Juni,” *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, July 14, 1810, 672.

18. Anon., “Panharmonicon (Advertisement),” *The Times*, November 28, 1811, 4, quoted in Dolan, “The Origins of the Orchestra Machine,” 14.

19. The name “Panharmonicon” appeared as early as 1807 to describe Johann Nepomuk Mälzel’s own orchestra machine. Anon., “Nouvelles,” *Feuille de Valenciennes*, March 5, 1807, 143.

20. Jerald C. Graue and Thomas Milligan, “Cramer, Johann [John] Baptist,” *Grove Music Online* (2001), accessed May 5, 2026.

21. F.J.W.C., “Sir Henry R. Bishop,” *The Musical Times* 36, no. 632 (1895): 663.

22. Nicholas Temperley and Bruce Carr, “Bishop, Sir Henry R(owley),” *Grove Music Online* (2001), accessed May 5, 2026.

23. Ian Taylor, *Music in London and the Myth of Decline: From Haydn to the Philharmonic* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

24. Ibid., 137.

25. Emily I. Dolan, *The Orchestral Revolution: Haydn and the Technologies of Timbre* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

26. On the historical analogies made between orchestras, armies and clockworks, see John Spitzer, “Metaphors of the Orchestra—the Orchestra as a Metaphor,” *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (1996): 234–64.

27. 1813 was also the year in which Mälzel developed and presented the *Conflagration of Moscow*, a large diorama depicting the city’s burning during its evacuation by Russian troops. John F. Ohl and Joseph Earl Arrington, “John Maelzel, Master Showman of Automata and Panoramas,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 1 (1960): 57–58.

28. Jonathan Kregor, “Disavowing the Instrumental Battle Piece,” *Journal of Musicological Research* 34, no. 3 (2015): 204–5.

29. Terrance Riley, “Composing for the Machine,” *European Romantic Review* 20, no. 3 (2009): 369–70.

30. Ibid., 370.

31. Deirdre Loughridge, *Haydn’s Sunrise, Beethoven’s Shadow: Audiovisual Culture and the Emergence of Musical Romanticism* (The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 163–99.

32. James Webster, “Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: ‘First Viennese Modernism’ and the Delayed Nineteenth Century,” *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2–3 (2001): 125.

33. It is on such a terrain that we can envisage, on the one hand, Mozart’s noted rebuff of Muzio Clementi—another founding member of the Philharmonic Society—as a “mechanicus” and a “charlatan” and, on the other hand, the admiration aroused by the music Mozart composed for a mechanical clock built by Niemecz—a clock that was itself part of a waxwork exhibit in a cabinet of curiosities. Annette Richards, “Automatic Genius: Mozart and the Mechanical Sublime,” *Music & Letters* 80, no. 3 (1999): 366–89.

34. Derek Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 87.

35. Dolan, *The Orchestral Revolution*, 180–210.

36. Ther, *Der Klang der Monarchie*, 197.

37. Anon., "Panharmonicon (Advertisement)," 4.

38. As suggested by the fourth work listed on the playbill, a "*Hunting piece*, with an Imitation of a Thunderstorm purposely composed for the Panharmonicon," by Friedrich Starke (fig. 2).

39. Richards, "Automatic Genius," 388–89.

40. Anon., "Panharmonicon," 731–32.

41. Dolan, *The Orchestral Revolution*, 194.

42. Dolan, "The Origins of the Orchestra Machine," 19–20. See also Eamonn O'Keeffe, "Military Music and Society During the French Wars, 1793–1815," *Historical Research* 97, no. 275 (2024): 108–28.

43. This was a kind of music whose codification was still relatively new at that time. Trevor Herbert, "Military Musical Instruments and the Culture of Perfection in the Long 19th Century," in *Shaping Sound and Society: The Cultural Study of Musical Instruments*, ed. Stephen Cottrell (Routledge, 2024), 232–35.

44. Anon., "Nachrichten. *Etwas von der Leipziger-Mess-Musik, von einem Leipziger-Mess-Fremden*," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, June 6, 1810, 563.

45. Dolan, "The Origins of the Orchestra Machine," 14.

46. Anon., "Korrespondenz-Nachrichten, Berlin, 23 Juni," 672; Anon., "Panharmonicon," 731; Anon., "Panharmonicon (Advertisement)," 4.

47. This can be compared to similar attempts led by Erica Buurman, ed., "Maelzel's Panharmonicon: A Virtual Exhibition of a Musical Automaton from Beethoven's Era," Digital Archives, The California State University, accessed May 5, 2026, and Helmut Kowar, ed., *KV 608 Mozarts Allegro und Andante (Fantasie in f) für eine Orgelwalze im "Laudon Mausoleum": Eine Virtuelle Rekonstruktion*, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, OEAW PHA CD 24, 2006, compact disc.

48. Rudolf Flotzinger, "Walzer," Wiener Walzer, *MGG Online* (2016 [1998]), accessed May 27, 2026.

49. Catherine Dulin, "The Emergence of the Waltz in Vienna: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of the Dancing Embrace," (PhD diss., University of Roehampton, 2019).

50. Paul Cooper, "The Waltz in England, c.1790 to 1820," in *Proceedings of the EDC Biennial Conference in May 2018 at St Katharine's, Frieth*, ed. Barbara Segal and Sharon Butler (Early Dance Circle, 2018), 41–56; Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis*, 118–19.

51. Sophia Grobler, "The Life and Death of the Piano Waltz" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2007), 7.

52. "in dem K.K. Redouten Saal in Wien aufgeführt." Johann Baptist Vanhal, *12 Deutsche Taenze für das Clavier übersetzt* (Artaria, 1792).

53. Flotzinger, "Walzer," Ländler und Walzer.

54. Simon Kotter, *Die k. (u.) k. Militärmusik: Bindeglied zwischen Armee und Gesellschaft?* (Universität Augsburg, 2015), 69.

55. Herbert, "Military Musical Instruments," 234.

56. Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis*, 10.

57. Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87–93.

58. Simon D.I. Fleming, "Dances and National Airs in Domestic Music Manuscripts: Two New Sources from the 1820s," *The Musical Times* 162, no. 1955 (2021): 49–64.

59. Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music,"* 11.

60. Anon., "Panharmonicon (Advertisement)," 4.

61. Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music,"* 257.

62. William Childers, "Byron's 'Waltz': The Germans and their Georges," *Keats–Shelly Journal* 18 (1969): 81–95.

63. Ibid., 85.

64. "Do they believe they know the Earth, do they believe they traveled, those who don't have a strong imagination? … Do folk songs and national dances reveal to them the mores and genius of a country?" ("Croient-ils connoître la terre, croient-ils avoir voyagé ceux qui ne sont pas doués d'une imagination enthousiaste ? … Les chants populaires et les danses nationales leur découvrent-ils les mœurs et le génie d'une contrée ?"). Germaine de Staël, *De l'Allemagne* (John Murray, 1813 [H. Nicolle, 1810]), vol. 3, 408–9).

65. Anthony Shay, *Folk Dance and the Creation of National Identities: Staging the Folk* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 3.

66. De Staël, *De l'Allemagne*, 409.

67. Anne-Marie Thiesse and Catherine Bertho-Lavenir, "Folk Culture and the Construction of European National Identities Between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Century," in *Modern Roots: Studies of National Identity*, ed. Alain Dieckhoff and Natividad Gutiérrez (Routledge, 2001), 121.

68. Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 48.

69. Linke, *"Es mußte einem was einfallen"*, 102.

70. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

71. "Perhaps the single most important category of exhibitionary attraction in the nineteenth century encompasses those various techniques of display whose allure was simply their relative efficacy at providing an illusory reproduction or simulation of the real." Jonathan Crary, "Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Grey Room*, no. 9 (2002): 11.